



Milo and the Slipped Book

Rrff, rrff, rrff, went something under the bed just as Milo, a small ginger kitten, tucked his paws beneath his chin. His night-light made a puddle of honey-coloured light on the floor. “I want to know what is making that sound,” Milo said, though his whiskers gave a worried twitch.

He listened very hard. The room made its ordinary bedtime noises: the little click of the radiator, the far-away swish of a car outside, Mama washing a cup in the next room. Then Milo shifted his tail. Rrff, rrff. The sound came again, low and papery, from the shadow beneath his bed.

Milo tried his first idea. He stood tall on the mattress and peered over the edge. From up high he could see his blue blanket, one sleepy slipper, and a stripe of floor. But under the bed was dark behind the bedspread. Nothing showed itself.





“Perhaps it is only my blanket,” he told himself. He caught the blanket in both front paws and gave it one careful tug.



The blanket slid over his head instead. Milo sat inside a blue, woolly tent with his ears making two funny bumps at the top. He wriggled free, but as the blanket flopped back onto the bed, the sound answered him. Rrff, rrff.

This time Milo did not pretend he was not bothered. He looked at the glowing night-light and whispered, “That sound makes me feel worry.” Saying it aloud did not make the shadow disappear, but it made his next thought easier to find.

He remembered the thin picture book Mama had read after supper, the one about a young fox packing his red school bag for his first day back at school. Milo had been looking at the bright pictures before he climbed into bed. Had he left it near the edge?

Milo put one paw on the floor. Then he put down the other. He did not crawl under the bed. Not yet. First, he walked to his bedroom door and called, “Mama, I have a worry under my bed.”

Mama came in straight away, wearing her green cardigan and carrying no more than her gentle voice. She crouched beside Milo. “I hear you,” she said. “A new sound can feel worrying. Shall I stay right here while you take one small look?”



Milo nodded. Mama sat beside the bed, close enough for him to brush her ankle with his tail. The kitten lay flat on his tummy and stretched his head past the hanging bedspread. His eyes blinked in the dim space.

There it was: the picture book, half-hidden under the bed. Its cover had slipped face-down, and its loose pages were brushing the rug whenever Milo moved on the mattress. Rrff, rrff. It was not a mysterious creature at all. It was the fox book, shuffling its own pages.





Milo reached one paw underneath and hooked the book's corner. It scraped softly toward him. He pulled once, then twice, until the whole book came out. Mama held the bedspread up so it would not tickle his ears, but Milo did the pulling. He pushed the book safely beside the bed, where it could not slip again.

“Now I know,” Milo said. His worry had become a small, ordinary thing with a bright cover and bent pages. Mama smoothed the blue blanket over him and set the night-light to its smallest glow.

Milo curled into a warm ginger comma. The book rested neatly beside the bed. No pages brushed the rug. The radiator clicked once, the house grew still, and Milo's breathing went in and out as softly as a sleeping paw.





Good night.



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After the story



THE MAIN IDEA

A small, thoughtful step can make a difficult moment feel safer.

TALK ABOUT IT AFTER READING

After reading, ask which moment felt the warmest or bravest today.

AND TOMORROW...

The next evening, Milo may discover why a tiny patch of moonlight keeps moving across his bedroom wall.





Milo and the Slipped Book

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Milo and the Slipped Book

When a rustling sound comes from beneath Milo's bed, the worried little kitten gathers his courage to look. With Mama nearby, he discovers that bedtime worries can have small, ordinary answers.

5 minutes of reading



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