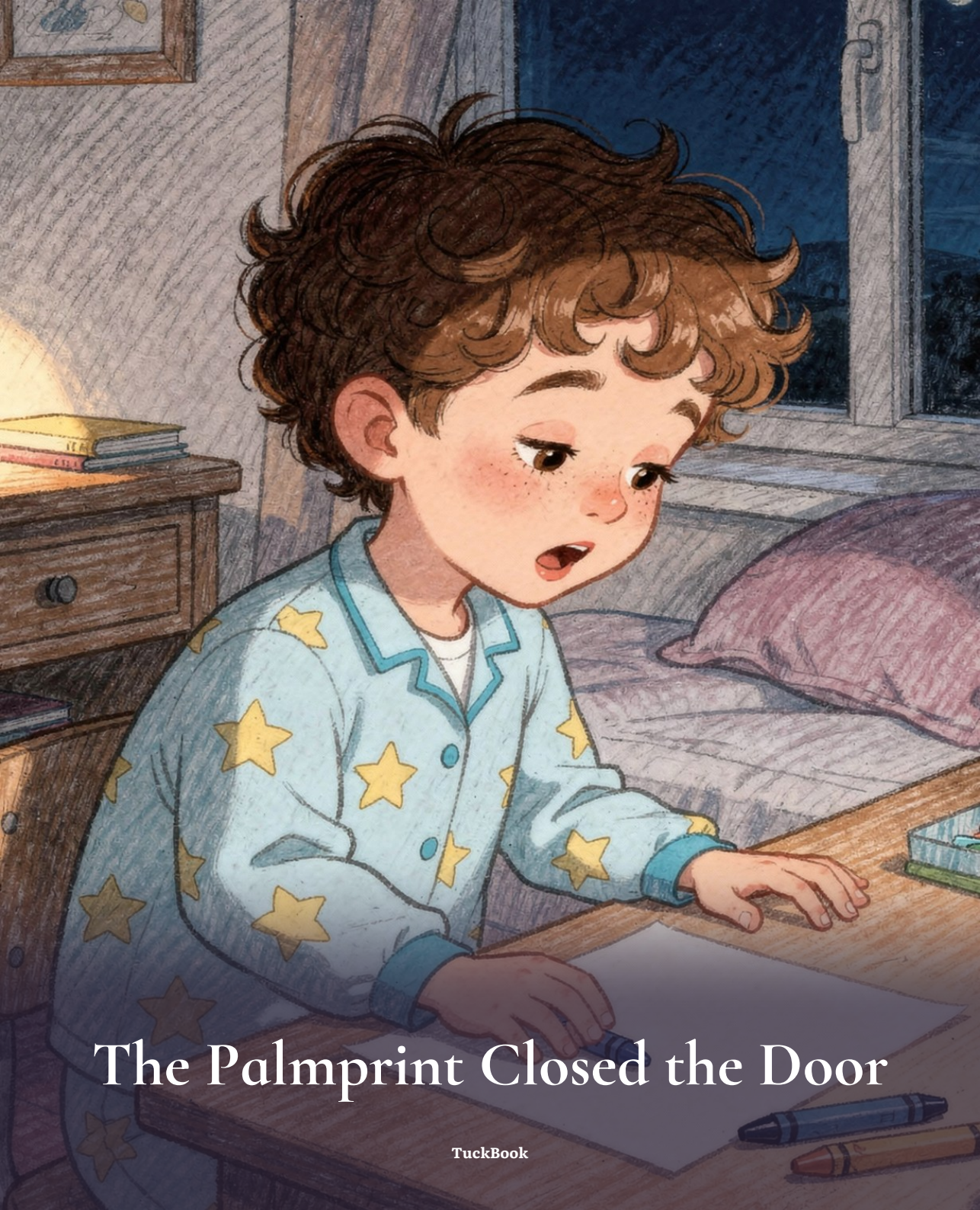




The Palmprint Closed the Door

Mum's keys made one soft clink beside the front door, and Percy stopped halfway into his bedroom. He wore light-blue pyjamas with yellow stars, and his yellow school backpack was waiting by the shoe rack for the first week back at school. Mum had to leave for her night shift. Dad was home, but Percy wanted to say goodbye to Mum without feeling as if a heavy pebble had rolled into his chest.

“Could you stay until I'm asleep?”
Percy asked, holding
the bedroom doorframe.





Mum bent down in her navy-blue coat.
“I wish I could. Dad will tuck you in,
and I’ll see you at breakfast.” Percy
nodded, but the pebble stayed put. He
hurried to the shoe rack and lined
up Mum’s boots toe-to-toe, then lined
up his own shoes beside them.





He tried to make the row perfectly straight. His elbow bumped the school backpack. It flopped open, and three coloured pencils rolled under the little bench.

Percy gave a tiny puff of a sigh. Dad crouched beside him, but Percy reached under the bench himself and found the red pencil, then the green one, then the blue one hiding in a dust fluff. He tucked them back into the case. The books were neat, the backpack was shut, and Mum still had to go.

In his bedroom, Percy pulled the soft blanket right up to his chin. “Maybe if I stay very still,” he said, “the goodbye won’t notice me.”

Mum smiled a little, though her eyes looked gentle and serious. “Goodbyes notice even very still people.” Percy peeked out. The small lamp by his bed made a round pool of light on his desk, where a sheet of white paper lay beside his crayons.

Percy picked up the blue crayon, then put it down. “I’m sad,” he said. The words came out small, but they were true. “And worried. When you go, I worry my hand will forget your hand.”





Mum held out her palm. Percy placed his palm against it. Her hand was warm and steady, and his fingers fitted between hers. Then Percy looked at the paper. “I want to make a palmprint,” he decided. “So my hand can remember.” Dad brought the washable blue paint, and Percy pressed his hand carefully onto the paper. Mum added her larger palm beside it.

Percy carried the palmprint on the paper to the front door. Mum crouched once more. They pressed palm to palm, just like the two blue hands on the page. “One small step,” Mum whispered. Percy took one small step toward his bedroom. The pebble in his chest did not disappear, but it became small enough to carry.



Mum stepped safely onto the front path while Dad stood close beside Percy inside. Percy held the paper against the wall by the door. Mum gave one last wave through the narrowing gap. Percy put his hand on the inside of the front door, and Mum pulled gently from outside. With Dad's hand resting warmly on his shoulder, Percy helped close it until the latch clicked.



Back in bed, Percy set the palmprint on the little table beneath the small lamp. Dad tucked the soft blanket around him. Percy pressed his own hand against the blue hand on the paper, breathed in, and let his eyes close. By the time the lamp was dim, he was asleep.





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...

At breakfast, Percy may discover that his blue palmprint has given him an idea for a first-day-of-school note.





The Palmprint Closed the Door

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The Palmprint Closed the Door

When Mum must leave for her night shift, Percy worries that his hand will forget hers. With Dad's help and a pair of blue palmprints, he finds a small, brave way to carry the goodbye to bed.

5 minutes of reading



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