

A BRIGHT LIGHT



It was the middle of the summer, and the days were long and hot. The sun stayed in the sky past 9:00 pm, which made going to bed at 7:30 pm very hard for Tommy. His parents said he needed to go to bed early so he would have lots of energy for the next day. He knew better. His parents wanted him to go to bed so they could watch their favorite TV shows without him.

School started earlier than ever before. It was August and they had already been in school for a week.

Tommy lay in his bed every night listening to his friends playing in the street. He wished he could be with them. He wanted to play instead of being alone in his room. The fan in the window did not help much to cool the air. He put a wet cloth on his forehead to cool the sweat from his face. He just lay on his bed looking at the ceiling listening to the other kids play. Sometimes he would sit up and look out of the window to watch the kids, but it made him feel sad when he did.

The best part of summer was watching the fireflies as they blinked in the night. He was usually in bed before he could see them, but on Friday nights, he was allowed to stay up later. Then he could play outside, chase the fireflies and put them into a jar. He hid them under the sheets on his bed and watched them glow. In the morning, if they were still alive, he would let them go.

One night while Tommy was looking out the window, watching his friends play, he saw a bright light in the sky. At first, he thought it was a star, but it was still light

outside, so how could it be a star? It was up high above the clouds. It did not move, or so it seemed.

He wanted to yell to the other kids to look up in the sky, but he knew if he did, his parents would come and punish him. He had to be quiet or they would send him to bed even earlier the next night. He tried to wave at his friends to get their attention, but they were too busy playing to notice.

He stared out of the window at the bright light trying to figure out what it could be.

Maybe it was a spaceship from another planet and the aliens inside were looking down on Earth to try to figure out a way to destroy it.

Maybe it was a falling star and it was going to crash into the Earth, and it was going to kill everyone.

Maybe God had a big flashlight, and He was trying to find something He had lost on the Earth.

Maybe a piece of the Moon had come loose and was floating in space.

He came up with so many ideas of what that bright light in the sky might be.

Tommy liked to look at the stars through his telescope. He got a new one on his last birthday. He had many books about the stars and planets. Maybe one of his books would tell him what the thing was.

He quietly got out of his bed and got two of his books from the shelf. He hid under his blanket with his flashlight and began to read. He searched and searched through his book. There was nothing there.

It was starting to get dark, and the light in the sky got brighter. The other kids were already in their homes so the street was empty and quiet.

Tommy put his telescope in the window and aimed it at the bright light. He looked through the lens and focused on the image. What he saw was a bright light in the sky, only it was bigger in his telescope. He still did not know what the thing in the sky was.

He continued to read his books until he finally fell asleep.

The next morning he ran into the kitchen to tell his parents what he had seen. He

told them about the bright light in the sky and how it did not move. He told them that he read his books, and there was nothing in them about the light in the sky.

His parents were not happy.

“Weren’t you supposed to be asleep? Weren’t you supposed to be in your bed?” his parents scolded him. “Why are you making up such silly stories?”

This surprised Tommy. He thought that they would be excited that he had read the books they had given him and that he had used the telescope to look at the bright light. Instead, they were angry with him.

He decided he did not need to get into any more trouble so he kept quiet and ate his breakfast.

On his way to school, he asked his friends if they had seen the bright light in the sky.

They laughed at him.

“Bright lights in the sky? Ha ha. We think you were having a nightmare!” they teased him.

When he got to school he wanted to tell his teacher all about what he had seen, but he was scared she would tease him as well, so he just sat at his desk and got ready for the school day.

Mrs. Roberts, his fifth-grade teacher, was absent. Mr. Thomas was the substitute.

“Hello, my name is Mr. Thomas, and I’m your teacher for today. Mrs. Roberts has an appointment, but she will be back tomorrow. She left me your assignments for today so open your science books to page ninety-three.

Tommy searched inside his desk to find his science textbook. He suddenly remembered that he had left it on his desk at home. He had put his astronomy book in his bag by accident.

He was not sure what to do so he opened his astronomy book to page 93 and pretended to be doing his work.

While he was reading, Mr. Thomas walked by his desk and noticed that Tommy’s

book looked different from all the other students.

“What is this? Is this your science book?” Mr. Thomas asked.

“Ah, no. I left my science book on my desk at home by mistake. I was reading this book last night, and I put it into my bag by mistake,” Tommy replied.

“Let me see that,” Mr. Thomas said as he reached down to take the book. “This is very interesting. Do you like astronomy?”

“Yes I do,” Tommy responded. “It’s my most favorite thing in the whole world. I have a telescope and five books on astronomy that my parents gave me for my birthday.”

“I studied astronomy in college,” Mr. Thomas said. “I have always enjoyed studying the stars and the planets. Is there anyone else in this class that loves astronomy?” Mr. Thomas asked.

A couple of the kids put their hands up. They really did not like astronomy; they just wanted to impress Mr. Thomas.

“I have a question for the class. Does anyone know what Telstar is?” he asked.

No one answered.

“Last month the United States put a brand new satellite into space. It is called TelStar. It is the biggest thing ever placed into space. It’s used to send television and telephone signals around the world. Last night, TelStar was high in the sky over our town. It is so big that thousands of people all over the city saw it. It was the brightest light in the sky.” Mr. Thomas told the class.

Tommy raised his hand.

“Yes Tommy, what is it,” Mr. Thomas asked Tommy.

“Was that the bright light that started about 8:00 and lasted most of the night?” Tommy asked.

“Yes, that was TelStar. Did you see it Tommy?” Mr. Thomas asked.

“I saw it from my room, and I looked at it with my telescope, but no one believed me this morning,” Tommy replied looking at all of his classmates.

Tommy’s friends turned and looked at him. Tommy had a big smile on his face

because now he knew what the bright light in the sky was, and his friends no longer thought that he was crazy.

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. satellite _____ | a. strange, weird |
| 2. astronomy _____ | b. used to look at the stars |
| 3. fireflies _____ | c. propose, recommend |
| 4. telescope _____ | d. not old, immature |
| 5. alien _____ | e. communication device |
| 6. spaceship _____ | f. from another planet |
| 7. crazy _____ | g. study of the stars |
| 8. before _____ | h. used to go to space |
| 9. young _____ | i. blinking insects |
| 10. suggest _____ | j. in front of |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. The light in the sky was a big star. | T / F |
| 2. Mrs. Roberts was Tommy's teacher. | T / F |
| 3. Tommy forgot his astronomy book. | T / F |
| 4. Mr. Thomas liked astronomy. | T / F |
| 5. Tommy was in the first grade. | T / F |
| 6. Tommy's parents liked to watch TV. | T / F |
| 7. Tommy liked to eat fireflies. | T / F |
| 8. Tommy's parents bought him a telescope for Christmas. | T / F |
| 9. All of Tommy's classmates like to study astronomy. | T / F |
| 10. The light in the sky was called Telephone. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What did Tommy see in the sky? ____
 - a) an air plane
 - b) the man on the moon
 - c) a bright light
 - d) a telescope

2. Why wasn't Tommy's teacher in school that day? ____
 - a) she had an appointment
 - b) she was in the hospital
 - c) she went on a long trip
 - d) she quit her job

3. What book did Tommy leave at home? ____
 - a) astronomy book
 - b) history book
 - c) math book
 - d) science book

4. What subject did Mr. Thomas study in college? ____
 - a) accounting
 - b) biology
 - c) astronomy
 - d) physical education

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What was the name of the bright light in the sky?

2. Why did Tommy go to bed early during the summer?

3. What were Tommy's friends doing while he was in bed?

4. What did Tommy look through to see the bright light?

5. What did Tommy's parents say to him about the light in the morning?

6. Why did Tommy have a cloth in his bed?

7. What was Tommy's teacher's name?

8. Why did Tommy's teacher not come to school?

9. What grade was Tommy in?

10. What did Tommy's friends say when he told them about the light?
