



Sterlington Stairlift Stories For Children

The Trapped Trio

Chapter One

Sakina had a brother named Chico.

They lived with their mum, whose name was Terri Drake, and sometimes they had lots of fun together.

For instance, one day they got stuck upstairs in an empty building and couldn't get out for ages.



How did that happen?

They had been to the beach on a warm sunny day because some people were having a running race. It was called a charity race and the idea was to get some money to help scientists find out what made people ill.

The people who did the running would ask their friends to sponsor them. That means if they finished the race the friends would give them some money for the scientists.

It was a good idea because it brought lots of people together, helped the runners to keep fit, and helped to find ways to stop people being ill.

Sakina was quite tall, with slim legs and she loved running. When they were at the beach she ran alongside the people in the race to see if she could keep up with them.

She wasn't old enough to join in the race properly but that didn't matter because she enjoyed it.

The race was for girls and women only but Chico ran with his sister anyway. He was a bit younger than Sakina and his legs weren't as long as hers but he could still move quite quickly, at least until he got out of breath!

When the race was over the three of them, Terri plus her children Sakina and Chico, didn't have any plans.

Chapter Two

"What shall we do next?" asked Sakina, who always wanted to be doing something.

"You choose!", said Terri. "As long as it's not something disgusting, or outrageous, or creepy, or illegal, or involves spending a lot of money".

"I know", piped up Chico. "Let's go over there and see what that high building is". He pointed away from the beach and across a road, to a tall building with no writing on it and no curtains in the windows.

"That's a boring looking place.", said Sakina. "But it might be fun round the back so let's go and explore it!"

"OK", Terri agreed, "But no mischief, you two horrors!"

They walked across the road and up to the front of the building, but it seemed to be deserted. There was no fence at the front, no number, no name board or signs, nothing. So they walked around the corner to look at the side of the building. Nothing.

Then they walked back to the front and along to the other side. Nothing.

Then they walked along an alley at the back of the building and found some old rubbish bins.

There was a door but it didn't have a bell or a knocker, or a number, or a name plate. Nothing.

"This is a very weird kind of place", said Chico. "Nobody seems to want us to know anything about it. "I wonder if somebody lives here or works here or anything".

Terri was also rather curious about what kind of building it was and why there was no kind of sign or number or anything. Was it an office, a block of flats, a council building, or what? She just didn't know and couldn't guess.

Sakina pushed the door at the back of the building and it opened a bit.

"Helloooooo!" she called. But there was no answer.

"Helloooooo!" she called again. But there was no answer.

"Shall we go in?" asked Chico, who was always inquisitive.

"We shouldn't really" answered Sakina. "Someone might come and tell us off".

"Come on", said Terri "Let's have a bit of fun in our lives and see what's in here!"

So the three of them went into the building.

There was a staircase near the door and a lot of concrete stairs that went up and up and up and... you know... up.

They went up the first set of stairs and there was a landing, then another set of stairs on the right, then another landing, then another set of stairs on the right and ...Well, you know ...

After the first three sets of stairs there was a doorway but the door was locked.

So they went up the next three sets of stairs and there was a doorway, but... well, you know, the door was locked.

So they went up the next three sets of stairs and Sakina said "My legs are beginning to ache!"

"Just try one more landing" said Terri, whose legs were also beginning to ache.

So they went up the next three sets of stairs and on the way Chico said "I want to do a wee, mum!"

"Oh dear", said Terri. "Hold on and we'll see if there's a toilet on the next landing". She whispered silently to herself "Please, please, please, let there be a toilet".

Do you know, there was. On the very next landing there was a door that was open and just inside was a toilet that had clean water and a roll of soft white toilet paper.

There was even a little water fountain so they all had a drink, went to the toilet, and washed their hands. The only problem was there was nothing to dry their hands with.

But it was summer time and quite warm, so they waved their hands about in the air to dry them and Terri began to sing "Oh them golden slippers, Oh them golden slippers", just messing around the way mums do with their children.

"I wonder if someone heard us and will come and tell us off and throw us out on the street and call the police and charge us an exorbitant amount of money for the toilet paper we used" said Sakina, suddenly looking very serious.

"Now where did you learn a long word like exorbitant?" asked Terri, wondering if her little girl had a secret dictionary under her pillow at home or something.

"I heard Dad say it" said Sakina. "Then I asked him what it meant so he told me. Probably I won't forget either because of the WAY he told me".

"Oh, really" said Terri. "And what way was that then, smarty pants?"

"He, my special, handsome, clever dad told me the way girls love best, with chocolate!" said Sakina and licked her lips thoroughly and slowly just to show her mum how much she had enjoyed the chocolate.

"That was very exorbitant of him" said Terri, then tickled Sakina under both arms, winked at Chico and ran out to the next set of stairs.

Chico got the message and ran out after his mum, then Sakina followed.

They went up the next three sets of stairs and there was a door, but it was locked.

"Time for a pow-wow" said Terri. They all sat down on a concrete step to decide what to do next.

"We can go back down now, or..." started Sakina.

"Or we can go up another set of stairs" said Chico.

"Or we can stay here and see how long it takes someone to miss us and send out a search party to find us" said Terri.

"Well, we started an adventure so really we should finish it" said Chico. He liked to finish things he started and unusually for a small boy, when he was at home, Chico put toys and books and things away when he had finished with them.

"Hands up all those who want to go onward and upwards" said Terri.

Six hands went up in the air and without saying any more Terri, Sakina, and Chico stood up and started walking up the stairs again.

They were very patient and as their legs grew tired they slowed down a bit, but they carried on.

Something they knew was they if they walked all the way down again it would be much easier than climbing up.

After every three sets of stairs was a door but each door was locked ...until they got to the eleventh floor.

"Somebody must be working here" said Sakina. Near the door were big letters painted very neatly on the wall: "FLOOR 11".

"Someone must be decorating this floor" said Terri. "I wonder why they started on this floor instead of at the bottom or at the top of the building". She knew there were more floors above FLOOR 11 because she could see more stairs going up, and up , and... well, you know... up!

Chapter Three

They went in through the unlocked door.

There was a toilet, rather like the one they used downstairs, except that this one had some paper towels for drying hands.

Past the toilet another open door led to a very large open room. The door has some big locks fixed to it and it looked as if the door might have been locked recently because the locks had clean oil on them.

Inside the room were some builders things, a few large pots of paint, some cement, a large plastic bag with pebbles inside, an old table with a few bits of paper on it, some metal spike things and a ball of string.

The three adventurers walked over to the windows and could see right over to where the charity race had been and right down to the beach. It was a lovely view and only spoiled a bit because the windows were so dirty.

Even though they had achy legs, Sakina and Chico couldn't resist running around in the large open space with their arms out like aeroplane wings.

"Brrrr" went Chico, making sounds like an engine with his lips.

Almost as soon as he stopped being an engine there was a very loud "Bang".

"What was that?" asked a worried looking Sakina.

"Sounded like the door" said Terri, who also looked rather concerned.

They all walked over to the doorway and, sure enough, the door was shut.

There was no handle on the inside and they couldn't open the door.

They shouted and screamed, called out very loudly, then spoke softly and pleaded for someone, anyone, to open the door and let them out.

After a while it was very obvious that nobody could hear them and they were trapped.

Terri who liked adventures, Sakina who liked chocolate, and Chico who liked to leave things tidy. All trapped.

But at least they had been to the toilet, and washed their hands, and had a drink of water.

Just as well because they were now trapped in a room and couldn't even get to the toilet with the paper towels, or to the water fountain.

Gosh, what a mess!

Chapter Four

"Stay calm" said Terri. "There must be a way out of this". "Let's see what is at the other end of the room then have a pow-wow".

At the other end of the room was a very small room like a tall cupboard and on the door was a label which read "Service Duct 11SW".

Inside the "Service duct" cupboard were some pipes, electrical boxes, and a hole through the wall with a kind of grille over it. The grille looked loose and it seemed as if someone had been painting around the edge of the hole.

The hole was too high to reach properly but when Terri picked Chico up and sat him on her shoulders he could see into it.

"The hole goes through the wall to the outside" he said. "I just saw a bird fly past so it must be the outside!"

"Let's have a pow-wow now" said Terri.

They went near the middle of the large room, sat on the floor in a circle with their feet touching, and talked about what they could do to try to get out of the dreaded locked room.

Sometimes they had a pow-wow at home when they needed to agree something. Instead of one person making all the decisions and telling the others what to do it was better if they talked about things and helped each other. It was like sharing ideas.

Of course, some things weren't discussed in a pow-wow. For example, when Terri or their dad said to the children "Go to bed" or "Clean your teeth" it wasn't something to be talked about. It was something that they had to do, whether they wanted to or not.

In the locked room on FLOOR 11 all three of the poor trapped souls needed as many ideas as possible to help them get out.

Some good ideas came out of the pow-wow. Chico said they could throw some of the pebbles out of the hole in the wall in Service Duct 11SW. Sakina said they could use a piece of paper with a pebble wrapped in it to send a help message down to the ground. So they tried doing those things.

But there was nobody about in the road below so nobody saw any pebbles falling down. To write a note on one of the pieces of paper from the table they needed a pen or pencil but they didn't have one. Then Terri found a lipstick in her handbag and wrote a note with that.

"If Passionate Rose from my Max Factor Elixir Giant Pen Stick doesn't bring them running I don't know what will!" said Terri with pretended optimism as she wrote the note.

She winked at each of her children in turn and said "I love you guys" as she wrapped the note around the pebble.

Luckily Terri used to play in a girls darts team and was a pretty good shot. She dragged the table from the large room to Service Duct 11SW and by standing on the table managed to throw the note straight through the hole in the wall.

But it didn't go very far past the wall and just fell down, landing about two metres from of the front of the building.

Chico and Sakina were watching from the window as their mum threw the note and realised that it could be days or never before anyone found it.

"We need to get a note further away from the building so people will see it", said Chico. Terri and Sakina agreed. But how to do it was the problem.

So they had another pow-wow. This time, though, they didn't sit with their feet touching. They sat further apart and put things from their pockets and from Terri's handbag in the middle of the circle.

Chapter Five

Sometimes at home Terri and Sakina joked about mums and daughters always having to do all the ironing and wondered why boys didn't like ironing clothes and things.

"I like ironing SOME things" asserted Chico. "I like things that are neat and fold nicely".

So at home one day they had a pow-wow and agreed that Chico could iron things he liked sometimes. Usually he liked ironing cotton handkerchiefs and Pillow cases.

Today, in the locked room, he had a nicely ironed white cotton handkerchief in his pocket. It didn't have any initials embroidered on it or anything else. It was just a nice handkerchief.

Chico put the handkerchief on the floor in the middle of the circle.

Terri had all sorts of things in her handbag. Some of them were too weird to mention in a nice story like this and they wouldn't help anyone to get out of a locked room, so we'll ignore them.

But Terri did have something that proved helpful. It was a plastic canister that used to have a roll of camera film inside. Terri used it to put loose change in. The plastic canister could hold fifty pence pieces, two pound coins, and smaller coins.

They sat for a few minutes and looked at their collection of bits and pieces, then the things in the room.

"We need to get the note further away from the building, as if it was floating on air." said Sakina.

"Got it!" said Chico, "We can make a parachute!"

"With what?" asked Terri.

"Let me show you", said the inventive Chico.

He opened his handkerchief, picked up his mum's nail clippers that she'd found in her handbag, went to the ball of string in the room and used the clippers to cut four pieces of string all the same length.

Then he took the lid off the plastic film canister and made a hole on the middle of the lid, using the end of the nail file which his mum had also found in her handbag.

Sakina and Terri watched with amazement as littler Chico tied one piece of string to each corner of the handkerchief.

Then he got the other ends of the pieces of string, passed them through the hole in the plastic canister lid and knotted them together.

He got a piece of paper, asked Terri to write a note on it, folded the note carefully, then put the note and a pebble in the canister and snapped the lid on.

When he finished he had a parachute with a weighted container on the end.



"We must try it" he said.

They had a test to see who could throw things the furthest. Sometimes children can throw things very fast but not very far.

All three tried and they found Terri was the right person to test the parachute. The ceiling of the locked room was quite high and they thought it might be just high enough so they had a go. Terri bent down then threw the parachute upwards as hard as she could.

The canister hit the ceiling, started to fall straight away, but as it fell the handkerchief billowed open and slowed it down so the whole thing just glided down to the floor.

"YES! It worked", they all shouted together.

"Only one problem" said Terri. "The only way we can throw the parachute out of the building is through the hole on the wall of Service Duct 11SW and that is quite small.

Even if I throw it out the wind can blow the parachute back towards the building and nobody will see it".

"Let's try throwing it in a straight line in this room first!" said Sakina.

"OK" said Terri and began bundling the canister, string and parachute together then throwing them along the room.

After several tries they all knew it wouldn't work. They just couldn't throw it far enough away from the building.

"What we need is a giant catapult" said Chico. "One of those would send it miles!"

"But you need a good piece of strong elastic for one of those. I know because my friend Janice Page's brother Christopher made one and he had some strong elastic.

"But we haven't got any strong elastic" said Terri. "Apart from the stuff that holds our knickers up".

They all looked at each other and laughed. Then they went quiet and looked at each other and smiled. They all understood.

One by one they went into Service Duct 11SW, closed the door, took their trousers and underwear off then put their trousers back on without the underwear.

Then they sat down in the large room and put the underwear in the middle of the circle. It was a bit colder sitting on the concrete floor without their pants or knickers on but it was still summertime and not really shivery so they didn't mind.

Terri used the pointed end of the nail file to unpick the stitching of her knickers so she could get the elastic out.

Sakina used the nail clippers to do the same with her knickers and with Chico's underpants.

Meanwhile Chico got the ball of string so he could tie the bits of elastic together and to the wall of Service Duct 11SW.

They tried the catapult along the room first.

Terri and Sakina held the ends of the elastic because they were the biggest, and Chico pulled back the elastic as far as he could with the bundled parachute held against it.

Pheeoww! It went as he let go, and the bundle shot along the room like lightning.

"Wow, no wonder my knickers never fall down" said Sakina. "They certainly make knicker elastic out of strong stuff!"

Chapter Six

"We only get one chance at this" said Terri. "No more handkerchiefs and no more plastic canisters after this."

They got the table in the right position near Service Duct 11SW, Chico tied the elastic to the wall using the holes that used to fix the grill, Terri stood on the table and pulled back the elastic with the parachute bundle held against it.

Sakina and Chico looked out of the window to make sure the wind wasn't blowing towards the building and shouted "NOW!"

Terri let go of the catapult and the bundle shot out through the hole in the wall.

She jumped off the table and ran to the window. She was almost too nervous to look, but did anyway.

The bundle stopped moving forward, was almost still in the air, then started to fall. Chico's nicely ironed white handkerchief billowed out and the canister started to glide slowly downward.

It looked to the three spectators in the locked room as if it might still be too close to the building but, as they watched, a North-East breeze rolled around the corner of the building and carried the parachute right across to the promenade.

They hoped it wouldn't get blown too far and land in the sea. They were lucky, it didn't. Instead, it nearly landed on a cyclist.

There was a cycle route near the beach and a man named Vic Carr was riding along it with his wife, Elaine.

"What on Earth is that?" asked Elaine.

"Looks like a kid's toy" said Vic. "Let's have a closer look" They moved off the cycle route, parked their bikes, sat on a bench near the beach, and looked at the parachute and canister.

"It looks like one of those old film cases" said Elaine.

Vic opened the canister and shook out the pebble and the note.

He read out loud "3 people trapped on Floor 11 in building by Montgomerie Road please help. Urgent. Terri Drake"

"I think that road is over there somewhere" said Elaine, and they turned round to look.

Terri and the children had been busy. They had managed to open one of the tins of paint and moved the table near the windows.

Using the old knickers as a paint brush Terri stood on the table, marked a large "X" on one window and "HELP" on the window next to it.

When Vic and Elaine looked across the road and upward they could see the paint and could just about make out three anxious faces at the windows.

They used a mobile phone to get help and soon Terri, Sakina and Chico were outside on the pavement again.

Nobody told them off and the policeman who came said there is nothing illegal about going into a building if the door is open, as long as there are no signs telling you to keep out.

"You might like this back" said Vic as he handed Terri the parachute bundle.

They thanked Vic and Elaine and the police for their help and went over to the road near the beach.

"There's Dad" said Sakina. "He said he might pick us up."

"What have you three troublemakers been up to?" asked Dad as the three escapees got in the car and clicked their seat belts into place.

"Nothing much" said Chico.

"Darling" said Terri "If the shops are still open could you stop near the high street, I need to buy a few items of underwear."

"Good idea, mum!" said Sakina and Chico together.

The End

Note: This story is dedicated to a doctor named Katherine who has helped many mums and children to stay alive and well.

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