

Charlie Changes into a Chicken

As soon as Charlie and his mum and dad got home from visiting SmoothMove, Charlie ran straight upstairs to his bedroom. He dived into his bed, under his duvet, and tried not to think about the 'big scan' that his brother had just been telling him about. After a while, he wiped his eyes and propped the duvet up with a tennis racquet to turn his bed into a tent. Once the tent was steady and stopped collapsing, he switched on his torch and began reading his favourite book. Charlie's favourite book was about volcanoes. It had pictures of massive explosions and orangey-red lava, and he liked to imagine he was escaping certain death by sliding down the volcano, surfing lava and dodging explosions.

The sound of his parents arguing downstairs rumbled through the house, low like thunder. Charlie closed his book. He couldn't concentrate. Darkness had fallen outside, and the street light outside Charlie's window was making uncanny shadows on his bedroom wall. The silhouettes of the tree branches looked a little too much like long, clutching witches' fingers for Charlie's liking, so, quick as a flash, he sprang out of bed and pulled his curtains together.