

Earthquakes and Broomsticks

Protecting My Family, Using One Broom at a Time

By Are We There Yet



Photo credit: Roger RBR via Roll Bama Roll

I was in the living room with my mother, cleaning up piles of ripped paper, ribbons and empty chocolate wrappers scattered everywhere after our Christmas frenzy, when the floor rumbled.

I jumped, but before I had time to process anything, the floor moved again.

Only this time it didn't just rumble, it outright *moved in a wave with a weird sound*, like a long piece of sheet metal waving up and down. I screamed, and heard my father yell and run down the hallway. My father does not yell, and he does not run. At all. But there he was, running down the hallway with full force, shouting: "There's something under the bed! It moved the bed, it lifted the whole thing in the air with me on it!"

Neither the bed, nor my father, are small. That thing had to be massive to move the two of them.

In a state of total panic which I masked with utmost calm, I realized I had to save my family.

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Fast. As my parents live in the forest, I decided it must be a racoon (where we come from, racoons are steroid-size, rabid and very scary) and quickly closed the door to the kids' room, since obviously it was a giant, kid-eating racoon which was going to have my children for dinner.

Praising myself for my quick thinking, I ran around slamming all the other doors in the hallway shut, in case the beast decided to sneak into another room, hide and stake us out.

Feeling like I was now getting the situation under control and moving with the lightning speed of a warrior, I grabbed the two biggest weapons in the house, and passed one to my dad. He got the mop, I got the broom. Solid wood handles, nothing but the best. My mom was on escape watch, standing by the open front door with a flashlight, ready to blind the animal into confusion and show it out the door.

Wielding my broom handle all Luke Skywalker-like, I sent my dad in first to check out the moving bed. Not that I was scared. I just wanted to be closer to the door to protect my children.

We poked under the bed. Nothing. We threw things under the bed. Still nothing. We finally looked under the bed. Empty.

The only other thing that could make that much noise, and be that strong, is a bear.

Bears regularly hang out by my parents' house. After all, they are in the forest. And if you don't keep your doors closed, they walk right into your house and make themselves at home. Which means you then have to leave your home, as bears really do tend to eat people.

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Since we determined there were no animals *in* the house, the only other possibility was that a bear had broken through the garden door leading into the garage and was crashing around, having a party in the storage underneath the bedroom.

Tiptoeing downstairs, we listened at the garage entrance. No crashing, no growling. Only silence. Bears are not known for their finesse when in confined spaces. If there was a bear in there, it would be making noise. Lots of it.

We listened and waited. We heard absolutely nothing. Slowly, fearfully, but with broom handles still raised, we opened the garage door. It was empty.

Now I was really confused. I was relieved that there were no giant, kid-eating racoons in the house or bears in the garage, but what, then, had happened?

I looked across the street and saw the neighbours had all their lights on. I phoned their house, apologizing a thousand times for calling at midnight before hesitatingly asking: “Did you happen to notice anything at your house?”

“Notice anything??” they cried. “We just had an earthquake! Walls are shaking, the whole province has been rocked, the emergency news is on! Is everyone all right, are you ok?”

Suddenly I didn’t feel like Luke Skywalker anymore. I just felt silly. There I was, valiantly defending my family against imaginary wildlife, and there was an earthquake going on.

On the other hand, it *was* exciting and everyone was ok. There were no injuries, no damage.

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Beds rumbled and dishes shook, but people and houses were still standing. And I did learn that I'm really good with a broomstick. Maybe next time I should just go looking for witches instead.

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