

Name _____

The Roaring Cupcake

Lila loved cupcakes. She loved baking them, decorating them, and most of all, eating them. She had a special cupcake jar on the kitchen counter where she stored her colorful creations. But one afternoon, something unexpected happened.

Lila reached into her jar to find her favorite chocolate swirl cupcake missing. Her little brother Max was sitting nearby with crumbs all over his face.

"Max! Did you eat my cupcake?" Lila's voice grew loud, and her face turned red.

Max looked up sheepishly. "I... I was hungry."

Lila's hands clenched into fists, and she felt her stomach churn like a bubbling volcano. She was so mad! But just as she was about to shout, her pet parrot, Percy, squawked from his perch.

"Warning! Warning! Anger rising!" Percy flapped his wings wildly.

Lila paused. Percy was trained to repeat funny phrases, but this one made her stop. She looked at her reflection in the shiny toaster and noticed her scrunched-up face. She felt her clenched fists and tight jaw.

"Anger rising," she thought. "I feel like a pot boiling over." Then she remembered what her mom had taught her about anger warning signs. It was her body's way of telling her to pause before reacting.

Lila took a deep breath. Then another. She opened her fists and relaxed her shoulders.

"Max," she said more calmly, "I'm upset because I really wanted that cupcake. Next time, could you ask before taking something that's not yours?"

Max nodded. "I'm sorry, Lila. I didn't mean to upset you. I'll help you bake another one!"

Lila smiled. "Deal. Let's bake together right now."

As the two siblings whipped up a new batch of cupcakes, Lila felt the bubbling volcano inside her settle. She had learned something important: noticing her anger warning signs gave her the chance to choose a better reaction.

And that day, the chocolate swirl cupcakes tasted sweeter than ever.

