

I SURVIVED

BOOK CLUB

Name: _____

I Survived The Attacks of September 11, 2001



CHARACTERS:

Narrator
Dad
Lucas
Firefighter O'Leary
Firefighter Russo
Benny

READ-ALOUD

In this read-aloud from *I Survived the Attacks of September 11, 2001*, Lucas and Dad wait for news of Uncle Benny and the other firefighters of Ladder Company 177 at the firehouse.



Narrator: Lucas and his dad arrive back at the empty firehouse after taking shelter in the convenience store. Lucas is exhausted and shaky, but he's more concerned about the firefighters of Ladder 177 than

himself. He wants to ask Dad about them—about Uncle Benny—but he can't bring himself to do it.

Lucas: What do we do now?

Dad: We wait, son, and hope for the best.

Narrator: Lucas notices that Dad looks pale. He takes his father's arm to lead him to a chair.

Lucas: Maybe you should sit down, Dad.

Narrator: Dad smiles at Lucas.

Dad: Be careful, Lucas. If you keep taking care of people, you might end up a firefighter like me.

Lucas: That would be awesome. Firefighters are real-life superheroes.

Dad: Sometimes. Sometimes we're just...human.

Narrator: Just as Dad is about to sit, a firefighter returns. Lucas and Dad jump up and go to him.

Dad: O'Leary! You all right?

Narrator: O'Leary nods slowly, as if he's not sure.

O'Leary: Yeah. A little banged up. The rig, though—she's gone.

Dad: And the others?

Narrator: O'Leary looks from Dad to Lucas and back, unsure what to say.

O'Leary: I don't know. It was pretty chaotic down there.

Dad: Okay. Let me look at that cut on your head. Lucas, can you get the first-aid kit? It's—

Narrator: Before Dad can finish his sentence, Lucas dashes over to the bunker-gear cubbies and grabs the kit from its special spot on the wall, wanting to help in any way he can. As Lucas and Dad work together to patch up O'Leary, someone else comes in—a snowman. Lucas does a doubletake and realizes it's Firefighter Russo, covered head to toe in dust.

Dad: Russo, come here. Let me look you over.

Lucas: Do you want water? I'll go get water.

Narrator: As Russo sits, Lucas grabs bottles

READ-ALoud (CONTINUED)

of water in the kitchen for everyone. He can hear his father asking about Mark, Georgie, and Chief. He notices Dad doesn't ask about Benny—maybe he's afraid to ask, too. When Lucas comes back, the men are quiet, looking at the floor. Lucas takes a deep breath.

Lucas: What about...Uncle Benny?

Narrator: Russo looks at Dad, who nods. Then Russo turns to Lucas.

Russo: Benny went up into Tower One and we're not sure if he made it out or not. But don't give up hope, okay? Miracles can happen anywhere, any time.

Narrator: Lucas feels tears coming to his eyes. He tries not to cry in front of the men, but it's hard. Dad puts his arm around him.

Dad: Lucas, if anyone could have made it out of there, it's Benny.

Narrator: For hours, Dad, Lucas, and the others watch the news and wait for the phone to ring. When it finally, it does, Dad is out of his chair faster than lightning, but Russo beats him to it.

Russo: Ladder 177, Firefighter Russo speaking.

Narrator: Russo listens, then closes his eyes and leans forward, putting a hand on the wall. After a moment, he turns to Lucas.

Russo: It's for you.

Narrator: Lucas stands on shaky legs and takes the phone, almost afraid to put it to his ear, unsure what to expect.

Lucas: Hello?

Narrator: Then he hears the voice he was worried he'd never hear again, the voice he'd been hoping to hear all day.

Benny: (*hoarse*) Hey, kid.

Lucas: Uncle Benny!

Narrator: When the others in the firehouse realize what's happening, they gather around Lucas to listen.

Lucas: What happened? Where are you? Are you okay?

Benny: I'm all right—I got lucky. I'm in the hospital. Just a few broken bones, a collapsed lung, and a voice that sounds like a frog. But I'm gonna be fine.

Lucas: You saved people, didn't you, Uncle Benny.

Benny: I managed to get someone out, so that's good.

Lucas: I'm really proud of you. And...and...

Narrator: Lucas can't find the words. Benny chuckles.

Benny: Now you got a frog in your throat, huh? Listen, I'll see you real soon. Take care of your pops for me, okay?

Lucas: I will.

Narrator: When Lucas hangs up the phone, the firefighters cheer and hug each other. Dad drops his head into his hands in relief.

Russo: See, Lucas? What did I tell you?

Lucas: Miracles can happen anywhere, any time.

Narrator: As the men high-five, Dad pulls Lucas into a giant hug. ■