Hood and the Heavy Stone

A story about guilt... and the regret that repairs

For ages 5 to 9



Child Protection Office

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Mama said: **“The ball is for the garden, Hood.”**

But Hood said to himself, “Just one kick…”
and started playing ball in the living room.



The ball flew… and hit Mama’s blue vase, a present from Grandma!

The vase fell… **and broke!**



Hood was very scared.

He quickly gathered the pieces... and hid them under the sofa.



Mama asked: **“Hood, have you seen my vase?”** Hood said: “No… I don’t know.”

Suddenly, he felt a heavy stone in his chest.



And the stone grew. Hood couldn’t eat his dinner, and he didn’t go out to play with Sami.

The stone was heavy… very heavy.



That night, he couldn’t sleep, so he called Mama and cried: **“Mama... I broke the vase, and I hid it!”**

Mama took a deep breath, then hugged him and said: **“Thank you for telling me the truth. I’m sad about the vase... but I love you.”**



Then she asked: **“What were you telling yourself all day?”**

I’m a bad boy! **Mama will never forgive me!**

I deserve a big punishment!



Mama said: **“There are two feelings, Hood. Regret says: I did something wrong, I’m sorry, and I’ll fix it.**

And heavy guilt says: I’m bad… so I hide.

Regret makes us fix things… guilt makes us hide them.”

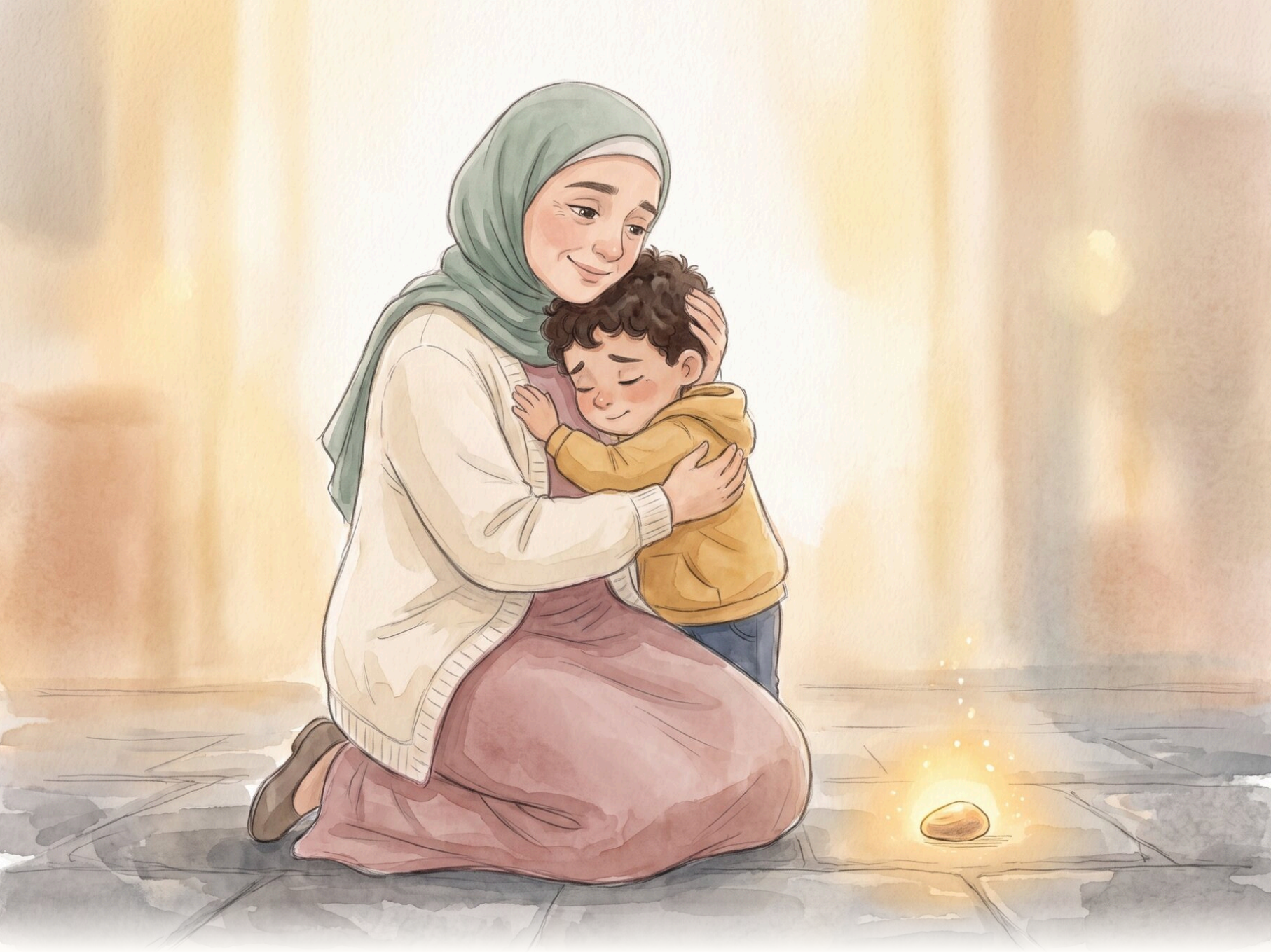


Hood put on his detective hat. Question one:

Does doing something wrong make me a bad boy?

He looked at his wall of pictures: Hood singing to Qamar, Hood helping Sami, Hood sharing his sandwich.

He said: **“I did something wrong… but I’m not a bad boy.”**



Question two: **Will Mama never forgive me?**

Mama hugged him and said: **“I forgive you, darling. I love you when you get things right... and when you get them wrong.”**

And the stone shrank until it was a tiny pebble.



Question three: **What do I do now?**

Mama taught him three steps: **I own up... I say sorry... I fix it.**

Hood said: **“I owned up, and I said sorry... now I just need to fix it!”**



In the morning, they took the pieces out from under the sofa and glued them back together with shiny gold glue.

And Hood took money from his piggy bank to buy Mama some new flowers.



Then Hood said: **“The ball is only for the garden!”**

And he went out to play with Sami on the grass.



The vase went back on its shelf, with shining golden lines and fresh flowers. Mama said: **“It’s even more beautiful than before.”**

And Hood said: **“I’m Hood, who made a mistake… owned up… and fixed it. And the heavy stone? Gone!”**

A Guide for Parents & Educators

The seventh story in the series. REBT distinguishes unhealthy guilt (condemning oneself, hiding, lying, self-punishment) from healthy remorse (regret about the act, taking responsibility, and making amends). The goal is for the child to take responsibility for a mistake without hating themselves.

1. The heavy stone

Hidden guilt grows. It shows up as loss of appetite, pulling away from play, and poor sleep. pp. 3–6

2. Guilt thoughts

- **Global self-rating:** “I’m a bad boy.”
- **Awfulizing:** “She’ll never forgive me.”
- **Demanding punishment:** “I deserve a big punishment.” p. 7

3. Disputing

- **Separating behavior from self:** the wall of good deeds. p. 9
- **Unconditional love:** “I love you when you get things right, and when you get them wrong.” p. 10

4. The three steps

Own up, say sorry, fix it: healthy remorse in a practical form the child can remember. p. 11

5. The golden repair

The vase mended with golden lines is inspired by the Japanese art of kintsugi: the break is part of the story, not a flaw to hide. Having the child help with the repair from their own piggy bank is a logical consequence, and more useful than punishment. pp. 12, 14

Questions to talk about after reading

- Why did Hood hide the pieces of the vase?
- When did the stone get lighter?
- What are the three steps?
- Have you ever made a mistake and fixed it?

Important note for parents

When a child’s confession is met with yelling or harsh punishment, the child learns that lying is safer than the truth. A child who feels safe owning up to mistakes is better able to tell their parents when they are hurt, or when someone asks them to keep a frightening secret. Make honesty safe in your home. If your child is very harsh on themselves or punishes themselves, consult a mental health professional.