
Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 22:39:11 GMT
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From: Hobbeth Sent: 9/14/2006 9:14 PM

Saturday, August 4; Murray Gill High School; 11:30 AM local time (4:30 AM August 5 on Tracy Island)

"And last, but certainly not least, Peter Valerian!"

A small redheaded boy with a big grin on his face was pushed in his wheelchair up to the podium by his proud mother to accept his ribbon. Everyone cheered, whistled and applauded. This was Peter's first time participating in any kind of sporting event, and although he didn't win, he had finished in fifth place and had for the first time in a long time, laughed and interacted with others outside his family.

He reached out to take the ribbon from the organizer, Michael Hart. But the wind had picked up a great deal, and the man squatted in front of him. "Peter, the breeze is getting very strong. Would you do me the honor of allowing me to put it around your neck?" The boy nodded, and Hart carefully placed the award over his head, then took one of his hands and shook it.

Peter beamed even more than he had a few moments ago. His mother watched the interchange with tears in her eyes.

Michael moved back to the podium to give a short speech and declare the Challenge Day events officially over, but just then the sirens went off, warning of an impending tornado. He glanced up and around, then said to the man sitting just behind him, "Mayor, we'd better get everyone inside the school. It's the safest place for them until this passes."

Mayor Tom Riverton nodded, and stood up, ready to assist in getting everyone inside. Michael turned back and said, "Everyone head inside the school. We'll stay there until the 'all clear' is sounded." Despite the fact that he was using a microphone, he had to shout to make himself heard over the increasingly stronger wind.

Some of the younger children were whimpering and a few were crying. Their parents gathered up their belongings and moved toward the entrance. A few people who had come to watch, help, or both grabbed as many of the folding chairs and equipment as they could quickly and followed.

Michael held the door and made sure everyone got inside before he did. As the last person entered, he heard a sound like a freight train heading straight for him. He turned and, looked to his right. "My God," he breathed, then turned back and hurried inside. "We've got to get everyone into the basement!" he shouted. "Now!"

People began screaming, and they looked from him to the mayor. Tom took one glance at Michael's face and took control. "Everyone, head through the doors on the left. Helpers, assist in getting the children down the stairs, especially those in wheelchairs. MOVE!"

The equipment and folding chairs were dropped and immediately forgotten as they obeyed the mayor's orders. His wife helped guide and comfort some of the more hysterical women, as his three teenaged sons helped get the wheelchairs down the steps. The helpers worked with them and soon they were all in the basement, and not a moment too soon.

The tornado hit, and they heard the roar of the winds, then the crashing and breaking up of the walls above them. The doors to the room were blown out and crashed into the room, as the lights went out. Screams of terror, of pain, and of anger merged with other sounds of the wind. It seemed to last for hours, but was just for a few minutes.

When it was over, there was crying and whimpering. It was pitch black. Mayor Riverton called out, "Is everyone okay?"

There were several assents, and some people saying that they had been injured, two with broken bones. A few people took their cell phones out, and were trying to call for help. One of the helpers was heard moving around, then a light came on. He said, "We keep some battery operated lanterns down here, just in case. I was able to remember where they were in relation to my location when the lights went out. I'll get the rest of them and pass them out."

"Well done, Seth," the mayor said. He moved carefully over to assist in passing the lanterns to the others, then began to see if he could find a way out. As he did, he realized he hadn't seen or heard from Michael. He knew that, since Hart had been the last one downstairs, he'd probably be closest to the entrance. After taking a moment to get his bearings, he headed in that direction.

He stopped suddenly. "Shawn, Carl, bring two more lanterns over here." His sons obeyed and he pointed in the direction he wanted the light to shine. They looked at what the lanterns showed and Carl gasped.

Debris was piled on top of the blown out doors, and pinned under them was Michael Hart. They moved the lights back and forth and saw that his left side was underneath, and there was what appeared to be a deep gash on the side of his head.. The mayor moved over to Michael and squatted down, taking the wrist in his hand.

"He's still alive, but barely. Let's see if we can get enough of this debris off of him to move him. This is our only way out, so we have to try anyway." He turned to the rest of the people. "Anyone able to help, get over here, now. Seth, is there any kind of first aid kit down here?"

"Yes, sir; I'll get it."

"I'm a nurse," one of the women said. "If you can get enough of that stuff off of him to move him, let me check him over first. We don't want to aggravate any injury."

"Good idea. We'll do that."

"We've got a couple of kits here, Mayor."

"That's good. Give them to the nurse so she can help the other injured, then come over here to help us move some of this stuff."

Seth complied, then joined the others as they began the slow process of lifting the debris off of the fallen man.
