
Subject: Re: Home is Where the Heart Is
Posted by [Lillehafrue](#) on Sun, 29 Jul 2012 23:01:53 GMT
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From: TracyFan4Ever Sent: 9/23/2006 3:13 PM

Callie operated the Excavator as she worked to clear the debris around the school. Driving the machine through the debris, she could see the dust stirred up by the maw as it ate up the rubble like a super wood chipper, including the loud noise. Even though she couldn't see the dust coming out through the pipes in the back, she kept going forward.

"Big Mac's doing fine with the Firefly, and with both of us doing debris clearing, we can get in there and help the people who need it most." When she noticed the concrete slab on her right, she added, "Hmm...we may need the DOMO to hold up that wall later."

This was her first mission since her frightening encounter with the Hood in Malaysia. Although she was glad to be on a mission again, seeing the debris made her think back to when she was seven years old.

I remember seeing my brothers playing video games in the living room while I looked out the window at the darkening sky. I didn't really think about the weather at that moment, but Mom was worried.

Then I heard the tornado sirens going off. I thought nothing of it at the time. I figured it was the drill, but then I saw my mother's reaction when she muttered the words tornado emergency. I remember her going silent for a couple of seconds.

"Callie, boys, we need to get to our storm shelter now. We don't have any time to lose."

I wanted to go back to my room for my favorite plushie, but Mom grabbed my arm. "We've got to move...now."

The way she sounded, this wasn't the run-of-the-mill tornado warning.

Joe and Bri were so excited. "Wow!" said Joe. "Mom, is there a real tornado coming this time?"

Mom had a very serious tone of voice, and her face was set in a grim expression. "Yes, it is, and I don't want any of you to stay out here!"

After she had us shuffle into the safe room within our storm shelter, I was still having trouble understanding exactly what was going on. "Mom, what if this tornado doesn't get here?"

When it came to tornadoes, I believed Mom had some sort of sixth sense about them. "Trust me, honey, it's coming."

Strangely, for a minute or so, things had actually gotten quiet. I said I didn't hear anything and wanted to get outside.

Mom grabbed my hand. "No, honey, don't go out there! The tornado's almost here!"

Then came the roar...the unforgiving roar. When I heard it, I screamed like nobody else could. "MOMMY!"

She held onto me tightly. "Don't worry, Callie. This won't last long."

My ears popped so hard it hurt. I never knew how bad it could be inside a tornado.

Everything stopped again after just less than two minutes...at least, that part felt that way. Just then, we heard one very long siren for about a minute. "That's the all-clear," Mom said as she let me go. "Kids, stay here."

I didn't want her to go out. "No, Mommy, don't leave, please!" I was scared something could happen to her while the three of us were in the cellar.

She came back to me and held my shoulders. "It'll be okay, sweetie. The tornado has passed. I'll let you know in a minute if you can come out." When I saw her walk away, I heard the taps of her feet on each of the wooden steps. I saw a flash of light and heard the hinges of the cellar door creaking loudly. I heard a grunt coming from her, not knowing what was happening.

Probably a moment or two passed before Mom spoke again, but not hearing her voice made it feel like an eternity. "Okay, kids, you can come out now. It's safe."

The three of us came out from the cellar, and I couldn't believe my eyes. I could see the dark green sky to my east, where the tornado was going at that point. Every house in our neighborhood was either damaged or destroyed. How did a sports car end up in the second floor of someone's house? The fire hydrants gushed out more water than I could remember. I even saw a 2 x 4 go through another car's door! There was a little bit of a natural gas smell, but not enough to drive anyone away. I thought Opp was wiped off the map.

I suddenly remembered about Dad. "Daddy! What about Daddy!?" I yelled. I didn't know if he was still alive after seeing the devastation.

Brian hugged me and said, "Don't worry, sis. Dad's work place has its own set of safe rooms. I know he's okay." The way he sounded, though, didn't really help me at all.

All four of us walked around our now ruined neighborhood to see if anyone needed help. We saw many of our friends come out from their storm shelters.

One of our neighbors said he could cook up some food on his gas grill, since somehow it missed getting damaged by the twister. As fast as the storm came through, more sirens sounded, but this time it was paramedics, ambulances, and fire trucks all coming into the scene.

Joe looked around and saw a hand sticking up in debris. "Mom, I think it's Mr. Regan!"

I wanted to run up there, but Mom held me back. "No. Brian, keep Callie away. I'm going to find out if he's alive."

Because Brian did keep me away from the scene, I really couldn't tell what Mom and Joe were trying to do. All I could see were Mom and Joe. The arrival of paramedics and firefighters, though, shielded me from seeing what was going on. It took about 10 minutes, but after they finally cleared the rubble, I could see Mom offering a silent prayer while Joe shook his head.

"Bri, what happened? What's wrong with Mr. Regan?"

He looked at me and said, "Sis, Mr. Regan's dead. He didn't make it."

I started to cry, since I had lost my babysitter and my friend, Dale Regan.

I was so scared about Dad being among the dead, but he showed up a couple of hours later at what was left of our house. When I saw him, I quickly ran up to him and hugged him as tightly as possible. "Daddy!"

"Oh, Callie, honey, are you all right?"

"Yeah, but Mr. Regan...he..." I started crying.

"Oh, no," Dad said, pulling me into his arms for a long, comforting hug. "I'm sorry, sweetheart. I'm really sorry."

Mr. Regan was just one of the 13 people who died that awful day.
I never did find my favorite plushie again.

The memory was as fresh to her as the day it happened. "Mr. Regan," she whispered to herself. "This tornado's making me miss him all over again. I'll never forget that day, and I don't think I should."

"Ursa from Maverick," said Scott. "How's the work going?"

Snapping back into reality, she pulled herself together and answered, "It's going fine, Maverick. However, I'm getting a little concerned about this wall over to my right. We may need Indy to use the DOMO to hold it up while Big Mac and I keep digging."

"F-A-B, Ursa. I'll let him know immediately."

After the transmission ended, she had mixed feelings of sadness and determination. "I lost Mr. Regan, but I sure won't allow anyone else to suffer after this tornado." With that statement, she continued to clear the rubble with the Excavator.