

Safely through the Night

Leaning to put a pan into the oven, the house shook as thunder rumbled. I dropped the pan I was putting in the oven which clanged on the oven door. Baby Abby screamed and little Becky ran into the kitchen crying. Michael and Lizzy followed both trying to be brave but they were clearly spooked by the noise.

“Shhh, it’s okay,” I sat at the kitchen table with Becky on my knee and Abby in one arm. As soon as the children were calmed, another clash of thunder shook and the house went pitch black. Abby wailed once more and Becky whimpered. “Everyone stay calm. Let’s go to the nursery.”

“Bethany, what’s going to happen?” Lizzy asked. I felt her brush my leg with her hand. In the dark I felt the walls to see where we were going.

“Nothing! The lights will come on in a minute,” Guiding the children, we finally entered the room. “Michael can you watch Abby and Becky? Lizzy and I are going to look for flashlights. After slowly walking around the house, Lizzy and I began to search high and low for lights. “Let’s get candles, okay?”

“Why?”

“Because I think they will give more light than these things,” I held up the only two flashlights I could find. One was a key chain light and the other was about two inches long I guessed from handling them. I couldn’t see them at all.

“I don’t think we should use candles,” Lizzy wrapped her arms around my leg.

“Why not?” I ran my hand through her curly blonde hair, gently pushing her a head of me to search for candles.

“Mommy says that candles aren’t safe when the power is gone.”

For a three year old, I thought, she sure does know some things. “Okay, if it makes you feel better, we will use these,” I shifted the light on. The light only shed enough light to see twelve inches in front of us. *Well, at least there is light...* I thought.

“Residents home is burned by lighting candles during power outage last night!” The newspaper told an entire front page story about the awful incident. I read the story with wonderment. The house was only a few blocks from where I babysat last night. I had ended up staying the whole night after Ms. Collins called and told me that they would have to stay at the convention because of the weather. Thoughts rushed through my head. *What if I had lit candles last night? What if...*