

I survived extract #3

Hurricane Katrina 2015 by Lauen Tarshis

“Barry! Barry!”

Dad was pounding down the stairs. He splashed through the water, grabbed Barry by the arm, lifting him up, and pulled him toward the staircase. Furniture and other objects floated around them like bath toys --- the new couch Mom had saved for a year to buy, the little square lamp table where Gramps used to play chess, framed pictures of Barry and Cleo from school. The water was rising fast! It was up to Barry’s waist by the time they reached the stairs -- and it kept getting higher. It was like their house was a bucket being filled up by the biggest hose in the world.

Where was all this water coming from? The water in Gramp’s stories hadn’t been this wild.

Mom burst out of her room with Cleo in her arms as Dad and Barry made it to the top of the staircase.

She looked down the stairs and gasped. She wrapped her free arm around Barry, pulling him close.

“The levee, Roddy,” she said to Dad.

“The levee broke?” Barry asked, picturing the Industrial Canal. The canal was five miles long and very deep. Was all the water pouring into their neighbourhood?

Mom and Dad seemed frozen, staring at the rising water.

Panic boiled up inside Barry.

“What will happen?” Barry asked? “What will we do? What ...” His voice trailed off. He wasn’t even sure he wanted to know the answers to his questions.

They all stood there, huddled together, watching the water move up the stairs.

“We need to go up to the attic,” Dad said.

“Now.”

Dad pulled open the hatch in the ceiling and a blast of hot air came down. Barry had been up there only once in his life. It was a tiny space, dark and hot like an oven, with a ceiling that sloped down so you couldn’t stand up straight.

Cleo started to cry.

“No!” she yelled. She tried to run away. “No go up!”

Dad caught her. “Cleo!” he said. She struggled to escape, screaming and squirming. There was no way they could force her up the rickety stairs.

“It’s all right,” Barry said, taking hold of his sister’s hand.