



By
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A cloudy dawn broke over Joplin on May 23, 2011.

Tara Prosser and Lily woke to a new world. Though their house suffered only cosmetic damage, the landscape surrounding them was greatly altered.

Lily and Tara were sent to search the Home Depot on Rangeline. Rangeline is the aorta of Joplin, running right through the middle of town, host to major shopping centers, day cares and the high school. The Home Depot was split wide open by the storm, its contents spilling across the ground.

When Tara and Lily arrived, they encountered an alien world. It was a foreign war zone. It could not be Missouri. It could not be her hometown. First, there was the lumber. Everywhere. Businesses and trees had simply become piles of wood, strewn about in every direction, as if monsters had shaken life-size Lincoln Logs across the ground.

Then there was the glass. It sparkled, a fine sheen across the wreckage, a deceptively dangerous dusting of glittering ice. It could not be avoided. Glass embedded itself in Lily's paws. The ground was littered with sharp objects. Tara stepped on a nail. She saw twisted metal. Automobiles bent, crushed as easily as tin cans. She saw the impossible, everywhere.

Then, there was what was no longer there. Street signs. Stoplights. Roads. Tara used her phone's GPS to navigate her own town. The daycare was missing. So was the roof of the high school. The park, whole neighborhoods were gone. And every, single tree. It was another planet to Tara and Lily.

They slowly picked their way through the wreckage, as they began their search

CHAPTER 6: The Aftermath

through the roofless, rickety remains of the Home Depot. More storms rolled in. Lightning flashed in the sky above the roofless store. Dark clouds showered a city that already seemed beyond repair.

Joplin saw no relief. Cold rain poured over the wreckage, followed by a humid, searing heat as rescue work continued.

At first, Tara and Lily, along with other search and rescue teams, searched for survivors. Tara was terrified about Lily's



health. She knew that the heat was hard on her furry companion. She worried about the glass in her paws and how her so recently ill body would hold up during the long days of rescue work.

Luckily, veterinarians in the area flocked to Joplin, setting up tents to serve as makeshift animal clinics. The vets checked on Lily everyday, making sure she was feeling well and handling the heat. They cleaned the glass from her paws and tended to her needs.

For 14 days, Tara and Lily plodded through the remains of Joplin, picked over the glass and then returned at sunset to their own home, its structure miraculously saved by some kind of good grace. Tara luxuriated each night over a microwavable dinner and a shower. She knew others weren't as lucky. They camped out in churches and makeshift

shelters. They squatted amongst what was left of their homes and belongings, protecting them from looters, dishonest people who might try to steal anything of value left in the rubble.

Looting happened. But goodness happened too. Cases of bottled water were left at stoplights for anyone in need. Residents of neighboring towns arrived bearing food and supplies. Hugs were given freely. Someone painted a single, surviving tree in a smattering of bright colors, hanging birdhouses on every available branch, so that the winged residents of the treeless town could find a perch and a home. Volunteers were everywhere. The President arrived to assess the wreckage.

Lily and Tara picked through the shards of Joplin. They searched for survivors, attempted to offer closure to those missing loved ones, tried to help Joplin to move forward and began to put their home back together piece by little piece.

Dig A Little Deeper!



Tara used GPS to navigate her way around Joplin after the tornado. Visit the Library of Congress Everyday Mysteries website: loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries/global and find the five questions that GPS can answer? What are the three segments of GPS?

In the News: Tara enjoyed the luxury of a hot shower and a microwavable meal. Use the newspaper to find examples of necessities (needs) and luxuries (wants). Create a T chart labeled "necessities" and "luxuries" and write your examples in the appropriate column. Explain why you classified each item as such.

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