

(1) Camping at School

It had been raining heavily every day and every night for a week. Megan looked outside one morning and saw that the river was overflowing. “Dad! Look!” she called. “There's water everywhere!” Dad was worried. He quickly turned on the radio. The first thing they heard was a flood warning for their area. “It's an emergency” said Dad. “We have to evacuate as soon as possible.”

“What does that mean?” asked Megan. “It means we have to leave our house and go somewhere safe,” answered Dad. Dad and Megan packed some warm clothes and their sleeping bags. They rolled up rugs, lifted chairs onto tables, and put books on high shelves.

“Where are we going?” asked Megan, as they loaded the car in the heavy rain. “The radio said to go to the school,” answered Dad. “It's on a hill, so it'll be safe if there's a flood.”

Dad drove slowly and carefully. It was difficult to see the road through the pouring rain. Megan was amazed that there could be so much rain. She thought of all the water near their house. “Will our house be okay?” she asked. “I hope so,” answered Dad. When Dad and Megan finally arrived at the school, a lot of people were already there. It was very noisy and it smelled like wet clothes.

“Look at all these people,” said Megan. “And a lot more will be coming,” said Dad. “Let's see how we can help.” They went into the kitchen. Some people were making hot soup and others were making lots of sandwiches. Everyone was busy. It was like a big school camp, especially when Megan saw her teacher, Mrs. Hill. Another teacher, Mr. Cunningham, came up to talk to Dad. Dad listened very carefully.

“Mr. Cunningham has asked me to join a rescue team,” Dad told Megan. “A family is trapped by the flood. You can help Mrs. Hill while I'm gone.” Megan didn't want her dad to go, but she thought about the family that needed to get

to a safe place. "You go, Dad," she said. "I'll be fine. Maybe I can help Mrs. Hill serve the soup."

While her dad was away, Megan kept busy helping Mrs. Hill. She helped serve soup, and she looked after the small children. Soon it was night. Megan was very tired, but she couldn't sleep. She sat on her sleeping bag and waited for her dad.

It was late when Dad finally came back. "Did you rescue the family? Are they all right?" asked Megan anxiously.

"Yes, they're safe now," answered Dad. "Mrs. Hill says you were a big help here." Megan told her dad how she had read stories to the children and played games with them. Then she took him to the kitchen, where she had saved him some soup.

Dad gave her a hug and told her she'd really helped in the emergency. Then Megan crawled into her sleeping bag and went to sleep. When Megan woke up the next morning, the rain had stopped. It was safe for everyone to leave the school and go home.

Megan was very happy to see that their house was safe and sound. "There was one thing I liked about all that rain," she said. "What was that?" asked Dad. "I liked camping at school," said Megan. "But I hope we never have to do it again!"

(2) The Special Table

Dad, Mum, Gina and Joe were cleaning out the garage. There were lots of old things in there.

“We should throw out this old table,” said Dad. “The paint is scratched and one of the legs is broken.”

“Why don’t we try to fix it instead of throwing it out?” asked Mum. Dad looked at Joe and Gina. “I suppose we could fix it,” he said. “It would be a big job, but maybe we could make it a family project!”

Joe and Gina looked at each other and sighed. “Oh, Dad,” they said. “Not another family project!” Dad wrote a list of everything they needed for fixing the table. “Let’s go shopping!” he said. But Mum wanted to add a few things to the list first. Gina read the list. “Why do we need the extra things?” she asked. “You’ll find out,” Mum replied.

At the hardware store, they bought nails, wood, sandpaper and brown paint. They also bought Mum's extra things. There were some little cans of paint in different colours and brushes in different sizes.

“We've got everything we need,” said Mum. “Now let's go home and make our special table.”

“What do you mean?” asked Joe. “You’ll find out,” Mum replied.

First, they dusted off the table. Next, Dad measured and cut the wood for the new leg so that it was the right length. Mum carefully attached it to the table. Then it was time to sand the table. Everyone rubbed the sandpaper back and forth--again and again and again. It was hard and dusty work!

When the table was smooth, they washed and dried it and gave it a new coat of brown paint. “Look at it now!” said Dad. “It's almost as good as new.” “It’s not finished yet,” said Mum. “Remember, this is going to be a *special* table.”

As soon as the brown paint had dried, Mum opened the little cans of paint. She dipped a little brush in light blue paint and started decorating a corner of the table. She painted a blue bird. Then she dipped a brush in pink paint and painted some flowers.

“See,” said Mum. “This is how we make a special table. Come on! You can all help. There are plenty of colours to choose from.” “Great!” said Gina. She picked up a brush and painted bright red strawberries with big green leaves. Joe painted orange butterflies and purple beetles. Dad painted white clouds and a bright yellow sun.

“There's room for us to paint lots of things,” Joe said, as he made red swirls and purple zigzags. “I'm going to paint some shapes,” said Gina. She made orange squares and yellow circles. Dad made wavy white lines, and Mum made little green spots. “It's beautiful!” said Mum. “I knew we could make a special table!”

The next day, Joe and Gina helped Mum and Dad make lunch. They took the food outside to the special table and sat down to eat.

“Look at these old chairs,” said Dad. “They're falling apart.” “Let's fix them,” said Mum. “It can be a family project!” Joe and Gina laughed. “Not another one!” they said.