

# A Storm A-Brewin'

by Christopher E. Hilliard

On the TV, the weatherman says, "Hurricane Joaquin is due to make landfall in the next 12 to 24 hours, or it could bounce off the coast and head back out to sea..."

An older man with a head full of grey hair sits by the window staring out at the beach. He says, "I reckon it'll hit sooner than later. Just look at the surf."

On the floor of the living room, a little girl with blonde hair looks up and asks, "Mama, is the hurricane gonna get us?" A boy, younger than the girl, with the same blonde hair looks up from his toy cars and looks down again.

In the kitchen, a woman gathers dishes into the sink and wipes the counter. "We'll be fine, Tina. Dad, don't worry the kids."

"I'm just saying," the older man continues, "We oughta be ready in case she hits."

"We'll be fine," the woman says. "We've weathered every storm that's ever come through here just fine."

The grey-haired man turns from the window and asks, "Angie, does Mike have any plywood?"

"I don't know, Dad. Why don't you ask him?"

"Mike!"

"Dad," the woman says. "Don't shout, you'll wake the baby."

"Oh, right, sorry. Tina," the older man looks at the girl on the floor. The girl looks up. "Will you ask your pop if he has any plywood?"

"Dad, let her play. You can get up and ask him yourself."

"Right, right. Sorry," the older man stands and walks down the hall. "Mike!"

"Dad! The baby."

In the other room, the baby cries. The woman drops the rag on the counter and unties her apron. Tina stands up and says, "Don't worry, Mama. I'll get him."

"Thank you, Tina. Let me know if he needs anything." The mother ties her apron again and reaches for the first of many dishes piled up in the sink.

"Mama," the little boy calls from the floor, "Should we go to the bathroom? Mrs. Wagner says we should go in the bathroom when hurricanes come."

The woman doesn't look up from her dishes and says, "Don't worry about that right now, sweetie."

"But Mrs. Wagner says it's better safe than sorry."

The mother looks up from her dishes and says, "Mrs. Wagner is right, it's better safe than sorry, but we don't need to worry about that now. If it makes land, we'll go in the big bathroom, okay?"

"Okay," the boy says and returns to his cars.

The older man appears from the hall and announces, "Mike's got plenty, and he says he wants to start boarding up the windows in an hour or two."

"Can I help?" the boy jumps up from the floor.

Tina appears from the other room. "The baby's sleeping again."

The mother drops her hands by her sides and says, "Thank you, Tina. Dad, go for it. Ricky, why don't you play in the living room?"

"But Mama," says the boy, "I wanna help."

"Come on, Angie, let the boy help," the older man says. "He's old enough."

"Fine!" the mother shouts. "Just be careful."

The baby cries in the other room, and the mother drops the dishes into the sink full of water.

