



The Day Melissa Danced

JUSTIN MARSH



Jane and Peter, best friends with bright smiles, giggled as they chased butterflies in a sun-drenched park. The sky was a brilliant blue, and fluffy white clouds drifted lazily overhead. They loved playing hide-and-seek among the tall, swaying green trees.



Later that day, grown-ups gathered around the television, their faces a little worried. A friendly-looking weather reporter on the screen pointed to a swirly cloud on a map. "Hurricane Melissa is on her way!" the reporter announced, making Jane and Peter's eyes grow wide.



Everyone sprang into action! Jane helped her dad bring in all the outdoor toys, while Peter and his mom taped up windows. They gathered cozy blankets, yummy snacks, and bright flashlights, making their homes ready for the big storm. It felt like preparing for a very unusual camping trip.



As evening fell, Hurricane Melissa began to dance. The wind howled like a friendly, giant wolf, and rain splattered against the windows in big, exciting drops. Jane and Peter watched from inside, feeling a little bit scared but mostly safe and curious.



Inside their homes, Jane and Peter played board games by the flickering light of flashlights. They made silly shadow puppets on the wall, turning the stormy night into a cozy, magical adventure. The sound of the wind outside just made their laughter echo louder.



The power went out with a soft 'pop!', plunging the room into darkness. But Jane quickly grabbed her trusty flashlight, making funny faces with its beam. Peter, with his own light, pretended it was a spaceship, ready to explore the moonlit living room.



Suddenly, the wind softened, and the rain slowed to a gentle patter. It was the eye of the hurricane, a quiet moment in the middle of the big storm. Jane and Peter peered outside their windows, seeing a world briefly paused and glistening with rain.



By morning, Melissa had danced away, leaving behind a sleepy, damp world. The sun peeked through the clouds, casting golden light on puddles and fallen leaves. A few small branches lay scattered, like nature's confetti after a grand party.



Neighbors emerged from their homes, blinking in the morning light. They greeted each other with warm smiles and helping hands, clearing branches and sharing stories of the night. Everyone worked together, making their street tidy and cheerful again.



Jane and Peter, with tiny rakes and big smiles, helped sweep leaves into colorful piles. When their work was done, they splashed happily in a giant puddle, grateful for the sunshine and for all their friends and family being safe and sound after Melissa's big dance.