

I SURVIVED

BOOK CLUB

Name: _____

I Survived The Joplin Tornado, 2011



READ-ALOUD

Assign roles to your family and friends for this read-aloud from *I Survived the Joplin Tornado, 2011*, in which Dex wakes up after the tornado has destroyed Dr. Gage's SUV.

CHARACTERS

Narrator

Dex

Jeremy

Sara

Jimmy

Mom

Dad



Narrator: As Dex wakes up in the SUV, he realizes three things—he's alive, the tornado is gone, and Dr. Gage is no longer in the car with him.

Dex: Dr. Gage! Where are you?

Narrator: Dex looks around, then his blood turns to ice: Dr. Gage is sprawled on the ground, not moving. Dex crawls out of the SUV to get to him.

Dex: Dr. Gage? Can you hear me? Please tell me you're okay.

Narrator: Dr. Gage's eyes flutter open.

Dr. Gage: Dex. You made it.

Dex: So did you! We both did!

Dr. Gage: Hey, can you do me a favor? Look at my leg and...tell me...what you...

Narrator: Dr. Gage's voice drifts off as his eyes shut again. Dex looks down at Dr. Gage's leg to see a pool of blood forming. Dex starts to panic.

Dex: I don't—I don't know what to do, Dr. Gage. I'm sorry. My brother Jeremy—he's a Navy SEAL. He would know—he would carry you on his back all the way to the hospital. But I'm not him.

Narrator: Dex sits down on the cold, wet ground and closes his eyes. His exhausted and overwhelmed mind starts to drift away... and then he hears a voice in his head as clear as day.

Jeremy: As a SEAL, there are times when you are terrified, lost, bleeding. But you can't

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READ-ALoud (CONTINUED)

quit. Your team is depending on you. So no matter how you feel, you need to complete your mission. Think, Dex—what do you need to do right now?

Narrator: Dex's eyes snap open.

Dex: The first aid kit!

Narrator: Dex staggers back to the car and manages to wrench open the wrecked glove compartment where Dr. Gage keeps his first aid kit. As he grabs it and heads back to Dr. Gage, he hears Jeremy's voice again.

Jeremy: *What did you learn in that first-aid class Mom made you take? The one you complained about nonstop?*

Dex: Put on the gloves. Cut the fabric away from the wound. Don't vomit at the sight of blood.

Jeremy: *I don't think that's one of the rules, but I'll allow it.*

Narrator: Dex would smile if he weren't so worried about Dr. Gage. Instead, he rips open a package of gauze and presses the gauze to the wound to stop the bleeding. And then he hears a beautiful sound—Sara and Jimmy's truck.

Sara: Dex! We found you!

Jimmy: Oh no—Dr. Gage!

Narrator: They jump out of the truck and kneel next to Dex.

Dex: I'm trying to stop the bleeding. That's all I can think of to do.

Jimmy: Looks like you're doing the right thing.

Sara: Come on, let's get him in the truck. I'll

ride in the back with him.

Jimmy: Dex, you ride up front with me.

Narrator: Dex shakes his head, surprising everyone—including himself.

Dex: I can't. I need to go find my mom and dad. I need to go home.

Sara: It's bad out there, Dex. Really, really bad.

Jimmy: It's miles and miles of destruction. Parts of Joplin are completely gone.

Sara: Just come with us to the hospital. Then we'll help you find your parents, okay?

Narrator: Dex shakes his head again, even though he wants nothing more than to stay with Sara and Jimmy.

Dex: I'm sorry. I can't.

Narrator: Sara and Jimmy exchange a look.

Sara: Okay, we get it. You have to do what you have to do.

Narrator: Dex helps them load Dr. Gage into the truck, then watches as they drive off, wondering if he made the right decision. He turns and heads toward his neighborhood, but when he gets there. He barely recognizes it.

Dex: There's nothing here. There's nothing left.

Narrator: Stunned, Dex climbs onto the pile of ruins where his house should be and starts throwing aside hunks of wood and plaster, calling for his family.

Dex: Mom! Dad! Zeke!

Mom: Dex!

Narrator: Dex looks up to see his parents

READ-ALoud (CONTINUED)

and his dog Zeke coming toward him as fast as they can, climbing over debris. Dex practically flies toward them.

Dex: You're all right! I thought you were all in the house!

Mom: We were driving home from graduation when the siren went off. We made it to the basement of a restaurant.

Dad: We got out of the car right before the tornado sucked it up in the air—it's gone. Where's Gage? Is he okay?

Dex: His leg is hurt really bad, Dad. I did what I could—I put pressure on the wound, and I think I slowed down the bleeding—but I don't know what's going to

happen to him.

Mom: Where is he now?

Dex: Sara and Jimmy took him to the hospital. I don't know if I did enough. What if he—

Narrator: The tears that Dex has been fighting off since he first saw Dr. Gage lying on the ground overtake him, and his father pulls him into a hug.

Dad: You might have saved his life, Dex. Let's focus on that.

Mom: We're safe. Right now, nothing else matters.

Narrator: Dex and his parents hold each other tight, grateful and relieved, knowing that together, they can get through anything. ■