

Title:

It Was a Dark and Stormy Night

Word Count:

887

Summary:

You never know what lurks in the cloak of darkness especially when a Category 4 hurricane is upon you. Got light? You will need it in order to pierce the darkness.

Keywords:

hurricanes, fog lights, Volvo fog lights, BMW fog lights, LED flashlights, lightbulbs, batteries

Article Body:

All through the town the winds howled and the rains came down in torrents as the storm pushed through the tiny village with unrelenting and unrestrained fury. Moments earlier, what had been an eerie calm, gave way to a sudden deluge and a rapid pick up in wind intensity as the eye of the hurricane left and was quickly replaced by the ferocious back side of the Category 4 killer. Electricity had been lost hours earlier as transformer after transformer exploded and gave way to utter darkness.

Sergeant Robert Simmons laid in wait with members of his team ready to exit the police station as soon as the winds dropped below hurricane force. When the eye passed over, Simmons and his team left the station long enough to see that the driveway was blocked by a massive oak that had fallen during the height of the storm. Special equipment would need to be brought in to remove the tree and any calls for help would likely have to be handled on foot as long as dangerous downed wires did not get in the way.

With sun up approaching and the hurricane's strength showing no sign of ebbing, Simmons and crew mapped out the day's strategy in the dim light of the station's hurricane lamps. A hush fell over the room as Simmons explained that the storm would likely cause the most damage to the cottage homes located on the north side of the town. Despite mandatory evacuation, Simmons new that some of the residents refused to obey orders and were likely trapped in their homes. Some even wondered if anyone would be found alive, given the intensity of the winds combined with the heavy rains. Certainly what the winds did not destroy, the floods might have carried away.

By 7 a.m. the winds had eased enough to where Simmons and his men could uncover the plywood panel protecting the door to step outside and stand on the adjoining patio. With their backs to the building and holding LED flashlights in their hands, the officers waved their lights back and forth to survey the damage at hand. Through the sheets of rains, the sight revealed downed power lines and poles, roofing material on the front lawn, and debris scattered everywhere. It would be at least an additional half hour before Simmons would risk sending his men out to explore the area.

Immediately across from the station was a house that had been shuttered closed just hours before the storm arrived. The Pearsons, an elderly couple whom the sergeant knew, had left town to stay with relatives upstate, just far enough away to escape the hurricane's direct hit. What the Sergeant saw next stunned him as he realized that two sets of lights were shining directly from the house, in the vicinity of the garage. Waving his flashlight back and forth he seemed to attract the attention of someone there as one set of lights blinked on and off and on again.

"Those are fog lights you are seeing going on and off," reported Detective Jack Odom, one of Simmons men. "Somebody is the house and it looks like they are trying to flash an SOS!," he added. Simmons instructed his remaining men to stay behind and, together with Odom, they cautiously crisscrossed the station's front yard climbing over the downed oak, jumping over fallen power lines, and moving debris to the side obstructing their path. As they drew closer, the sky lit up with lightning and the men could momentarily make out the form of a man standing in the open two car garage. Both vehicles were parked inside and the and were on to help cut a swath through the darkness.

After what had seemed like an eternity the officers made it to the home where they found Mr. Pearson standing in the garage. "What are you doing here?" shouted Sergeant Simmons over the now gale force winds. "I thought that you had evacuated?" "We did, but we had to return home soon after we left to retrieve my wife's heart medicine. She forgot it and when...oh, never mind she is upstairs... Come quickly, I think she may still be alive!" The three men entered the house through the garage and went to the living room where they found Mrs. Pearson slumped over on the sofa. A solitary candle lit the room and even in the deep shadows everyone could see that the elderly woman's skin was blue due to a lack of oxygen. Touching her neck, Odom found a faint pulse and immediately the sergeant began CPR. Within moments, Mrs. Pearson let out a faint cough and her chest began to rise and fall with renewed vigor.

It was more than an hour before help arrived in the form of a makeshift Hummer

ambulance that soon whisked Mrs. Pearson off to the hospital. A shaken, but grateful Mr. Pearson thanked the officers for their help, but the sergeant replied, "You should thank God and be glad that you have fog lights on your car. If the storm hadn't died down we wouldn't have stepped outside and if you hadn't turned on your fog lights we would have not seen a thing through the darkness. Your wife will be okay, so go with her and we'll lock everything up before we leave."