

SEARCH & RESCUE

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It had rained for five days. We lived in the desert, so having this much rain was very unusual for us. The rain had flooded the creek and covered the road with water. The water was rising around us so we were becoming worried about our house.

Our ranch is located about twenty-five miles from the nearest town. We raise horses and cattle. The ranch has been in our family for five generations. We had never seen so much rain before.

On the first day, we watched the rain as it started. We laughed at the water as it flowed off the roof of our house. The little streams of water that ran from our house down to the creek provided a fun place to play. We took sticks and put them in the water. Then we watched the sticks as they floated down the hill and then fell into the creek. We found many things to play with in the water.

On the second day, the rain became harder. Our parents made us stay in the house. We were bored because all we could do was look out the window at the rain as it made the ground muddy and soft.

We watched TV and heard about the storm. The weatherman said the rain was not going to stop. We heard about how it was causing problems in many other places in our state.

We played games with each other as the rain made noise on the roof above us. Mama tried to keep calm, but we could tell she was worried.

On the third day, the water in the creek began to rise above its banks. The water

was moving very fast. Usually there was very little water in the creek bed, but now it was completely full. Mama told us to stay away from the creek. She said if we fell into the creek, we would be washed away, never to be seen again.

We looked out the window on the morning of the fourth day. We looked in amazement at how much water there was. The bridge was either under water or it was gone. The water covered our road to the highway. The corral where we kept the horses was so muddy the horse's legs were almost stuck.

Papa went out to feed the horses, and when he came back into the house, he was dripping wet. He told us the horses were OK, but the mud was getting deeper. He put them inside the barn so they would be out of the rain.

The cattle were out in the pasture, and they were standing on high ground. The water was flowing past our house so fast we could see trees and bushes being washed away. Papa was beginning to get worried for our family. What if the floodwater came into our house? He tried to make us feel safe, but we could tell he was worried.

It was now the fifth day. The rain was coming down as hard as ever. The water from the creek was now coming closer to our house. Papa released the horses into the pasture so they could join the cattle in the hills. Our car was now under water, as was our tractor. Around our house the water was rising.

All day long Mama and Papa, along with my older brother, had tried to put bags of sand around the house to stop the water from entering our home, but when the water went over the wall they realized it was not going to work. They stopped and came inside.

The three of them sat at the table deciding what to do next. After a few minutes, they came to the living room to make an announcement.

"We're going to have to leave the house. The car is under water, and we won't be able to walk out of here," Papa told us. "We're going to have to call for help."

Papa called Search and Rescue to find out the best way to get out of the house.

"Hello, this is Search and Rescue, what can I do for you?" the voice answered the phone.

“This is Jorge Ortigas, we live out in Verde Valley. Our house is almost flooded. I’m afraid it is going to be washed away. We need help,” Papa told the lady on the other end of the line.

“Hold on just a moment please,” the woman said.

After a few seconds, another person got on the phone. “This is Sergeant Rodriguez, is this Jorge?” the new voice said.

“Hi Berto. We are almost under water here, and we need your help. The road is flooded, and our creek is almost up to the house. Can you help us?” Papa begged.

“I’ll get a helicopter out to you as soon as possible. It may be a few hours. We’ve got many requests for help,” Sergeant Rodriguez responded.

“OK, we’ll be ready when you get here, but please hurry. The water is rising fast,” Papa answered.

Papa hung up the phone, and then he said to us, “OK kids, we’ll need to go upstairs. You can pack one small bag. When you’re finished, meet us in our room.”

We did as we were told, and after we were ready, we met Mama and Papa in their room.

“The phone doesn’t work anymore, so we’ll have to listen to the radio,” Papa told us as he turned on some music on our portable radio to calm us down.

An hour later, we heard the sound of the helicopter. We had to climb onto the roof of our house. The first floor of our house was filling with water, and it was coming up the stairs to where we were.

“Dad, look at the water!” my sister screamed.

“Hurry, go out the window and onto the roof,” dad ordered as he helped each one of us out the window onto the roof.

The wind was blowing from the helicopter. The rain was still falling making us completely wet.

The helicopter lowered a basket for us to get into. A man came down with a rope and helped my little sister into the basket. We were pulled up to the helicopter one at a

time. That part was fun.

Papa was the last one to get into the basket, and just as he did, the house began to buckle and then broke away. We watched it as it floated down the creek.

We cuddled with each other and cried. Our house was gone, but we were thankful that we were all safe.

Thank you Search & Rescue for saving our lives!

VOCABULARY (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. flood ____ | a. small flow of water, stream |
| 2. communications ____ | b. family history |
| 3. generations ____ | c. field where animals feed |
| 4. concern ____ | d. high point of a stream |
| 5. banks ____ | e. to tell, make a statement |
| 6. pasture ____ | f. too much water |
| 7. tractor ____ | g. aircraft, rescue vehicle |
| 8. announce ____ | h. vehicle used on a farm |
| 9. creek ____ | i. worry, fear |
| 10. helicopter ____ | j. radio, television, telephone |

TRUE / FALSE

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. We lived in the city. | T / F |
| 2. Papa's name was Jorge. | T / F |
| 3. We watched TV. | T / F |
| 4. The horses were in the corral. | T / F |
| 5. Our car was on the hill. | T / F |
| 6. We played in the water on the first day. | T / F |
| 7. Our cattle were washed away. | T / F |
| 8. A boat came to rescue us. | T / F |
| 9. Our family had lived on the ranch for five generations. | T / F |
| 10. It rained for three days. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Where was our ranch located? _____
 - a) in the desert
 - b) about 50 miles from town
 - c) on top of a mountain
 - d) in Texas

2. What did we raise on our farm? _____
 - a) pigs
 - b) horses and cows
 - c) wheat and barley
 - d) cactus plants

3. How many days had it rained? _____
 - a) 2
 - b) 5
 - c) 10
 - d) it was always sunny

4. What came to rescue us? _____
 - a) boat
 - b) bus
 - c) helicopter
 - d) airplane

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. Who put the horses into the barn?

2. Where did the cows go?

3. Who did Papa talk to on the phone?

4. What happened to our house?

5. What happened to our bridge?

6. Where did the horses go to be safe?

7. How long had the family lived on the ranch?

8. What came to rescue them?

9. Where was the family when they were rescued?

10. Why did it take a few hours to be rescued?
