

# Lucky to Be Alive

By Carol Ann Moorhead

Despite Chicken Little's insistence that "the sky is falling, the sky is falling," I never believed him. When I was a young child, the sky was as secure above my head as the ground was beneath my feet. That was before I felt the earth quake, and before I learned that Chicken Little is sometimes right.

My sky fell one summer evening in Massachusetts. It did not fall all at once, nor without warning. It heaved and cracked with the roll of thunder of an approaching storm. It shattered into pieces with cloud-to-cloud lightning as a few raindrops began to fall. My friend

Bill and I hurried down a woodland path, making jokes about lightning and trying to remember tips about lightning safety. Not to worry, we assured ourselves. This isn't a bad storm. As if to prove us wrong, the winds picked up. Black clouds rolled in, releasing rains so heavy that we were soaked within

seconds. Our clothes clung to our bodies, and our feet slogged through instant puddles. We fell silent, fearful of the storm upon us.

Behind us bright bolts of lightning began probing the woodlands, lighting up the forest, and sparking our conversation. We made a plan: Exit the forest, skirt its edge, and re-enter on the other path. The other path, I knew from a previous hike, would quickly lead us to an abandoned car. It was the best option. The storm was gaining on us, and my own car was across an open meadow at least four football fields long.



The sky was so dark now that we could barely see. Carefully we made our way out of the forest and along its edge. Suddenly, BAM! There was an explosion of white light at my feet. I felt a sharp thrust upward, and then heard a muffled thump.

I landed on my back: Ears ringing and skin tingling, I struggled to roll onto my feet, but my legs couldn't lift me. I squatted in the darkness, trembling, and shouting, "Bill! Are you okay?! Bill!"

Bill didn't answer. I strained my eyes to see if I could see him lying near me. If I could only crawl to

him I could help, I thought, but I could see nothing but darkness. Seconds ticked by, maybe minutes. Slowly I raised myself into a skier's crouch. I shouted again, and suddenly a wet hug answered my call.

"I couldn't answer," he said. "The muscles around my mouth wouldn't move. Come on. Let's go!"

By now, the storm was centered above us. A second bolt hit the forest, then a third. Like shell-shocked soldiers, we fell to our knees each time. A fourth bolt. I don't recall being afraid, only angry – angry at this deranged storm that seemed determined to find us. Luckily, on the fifth bolt I saw the silhouette of a small car. "Oh, please," I thought, "let it be unlocked."

Bill lifted the handle. To our relief, it unlatched. We piled inside the abandoned car and shut the door.

Finally we were safe....

**Reading Mini-Assessment Grade 7**  
**LA.7.2.1.7 Form A**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions: Read the passage and choose the correct answer.**

1. Read this sentence from the passage.

**Like shell-shocked soldiers, we fell to our knees each time.**

Which literary device does the author use in the sentence above?

- A. metaphor, representing the storm as a war
- B. simile, comparing the people caught in the storm to soldiers in battle
- C. personification, giving human qualities to their feelings during the storm
- D. hyperbole, exaggerating their feelings during the storm

2. Read this sentence from the passage.

**I don't recall being afraid, only angry - angry at this deranged storm that seemed determined to find us.**

What literary device is used in the sentence above?

- A. imagery, using words to portray vivid images of her feelings about the storm
- B. irony, showing the unexpectedness of the storm's strength
- C. hyperbole, exaggerating the strength of the storm
- D. personification, giving the storm human qualities

3. Read these sentences from the passage.

**Black clouds rolled in, releasing rains so heavy that we were soaked within seconds. Our clothes clung to our bodies, and our feet slogged through instant puddles.**

Which literary device is used in the sentence above?

- A. irony, due to the unexpectedness of the amount of rain
- B. hyperbole, exaggerating the way they looked
- C. imagery, using words to portray vivid images
- D. personification, giving human qualities to the clouds

4. Which word best characterizes the overall tone of the passage?

- A. gloomy, due to the dark sky
- B. hopeless, caused by their distance from shelter
- C. tense, because of the closeness of the lightning strikes
- D. terrifying, since the storm approached without warning

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Item #	Answer
1.	B
2.	D
3.	C
4.	C