



## Book 6: Rosie's Prayer

By Brian Combs

The Homestead Kids Book Series

[www.thehomesteadkidsbooks.com](http://www.thehomesteadkidsbooks.com)

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## Chapter 1 - The Storm

Ten-year-old Rosie's heart was racing. She sat in the living room, eyes glued to the window as if in the darkness she could somehow see the true severity of the approaching storm. Suddenly, only blinding flashes of brightness shone through, temporarily blurring her vision.

Immediately following the bright flash was a piercing crack so loud it hurt her ears and shook the house. She took breaths in short, panting gasps as she tried to stay calm. She swallowed.

Michelle and Adee, her 8 and 6 year-old sisters, were on the floor playing a board game together, trying to ignore the storm. They weren't too scared, especially since Dad was home, but it was so loud it made them nervous. Adee had jumped at how loud that last crack of thunder had been but then went back to playing, hoping that collecting the money her sister owed her from landing on one of her properties would distract her.

"Ten dollars, please! St. Charles's place is mine." Adee said smugly to Michelle.

Michelle slid out a \$10 bill from her pile of play money and handed it over. "Don't get too excited. You'll land on one of my blue ones soon, and I've got houses on those. You'll owe me a ton then!"

Suddenly, the muffled sounds of heavy rain falling on the roof changed. Rain sounded with occasional thick thuds as something bigger and heavier hit the roof. Occasional higher-pitched pings sounded against the windows, but the heavy thuds

landing above the girls' heads sounded ominous.

Mom, holding two-year-old Faith balanced on her hip, walked into the room just then and had Michelle and Adee move their game up against a wall on the other side of the living room as far from the window as they could get.

Mom looked out the window. "I thought so – that's hail. And some of those hailstones look really large," She said with dismay as she peered into the darkness. Her face was lit up briefly with another flash of lightning. "I hope the animals had sense enough to stay in their shelter," she added with some concern.

Rosie sat still, just listening to the thuds landing on the roof, the pings on the windows, her heart pounding in her own ears sounding loudest of all. She reminded herself to breathe. She felt so anxious suddenly that she wanted to cry, but since her sisters didn't seem scared, she didn't want them to tease her. But all she could do was imagine her beautiful forest of towering pine trees that reached so high

into the sky that it hurt her neck to look all the way to the top. What if one of those beautiful - huge - trees fell on their animals? Their house? And now, as she listened to the now steady thud landing on the roof - good grief, it sounded like baseballs! - she imagined the hailstones crashing down and killing one of their animals. She shook her head and closed her eyes, trying to close her imagination to the thoughts.

She'd heard of tornadoes breaking entire houses down. Do tornadoes happen in East Texas, she wondered? Suddenly a thought struck her, "Mom, where's Dad?"

Mom's anxious face immediately smoothed out as she calmly said, "He'd gone out to the barn to ensure the animals were penned up before the storm hit. I'm sure he's fine in there, but he won't want to try to get back to the house until the hail stops."

"He's outside?" Rosie said, her voice rising as her stomach twisted into yet another knot. She bit her lip to hold back all the things she wanted to say. She needed to calm down, but every second just seemed

worse and worse. Even Michelle and Adee looked up from their game with worry. Adee immediately went to look out the window.

“No, Adee, you need to stay back from the windows. If one of those hailstones comes in here, the glass will be everywhere. I'm sure Dad's fine in the barn; he just won't try for the house until the worst of this has passed.

All three girls sat staring out the window. Suddenly, Mom began to pray out loud. “Lord, please help Dad as he tends the animals, keep him and the animals safe. Thank You for all You've given us, the protection of our safe home and barn, and the animals You've entrusted to us. Please, Lord, calm our hearts and minds and help us trust You. Help us not be afraid. It's easy to trust in You when everything is nice but help us trust in You, especially in the storm. In Jesus name, Amen.”

The girls who had stopped everything to listen to her pray joined in with “Amen.”

Michelle and Adee went back to their game, Adee rolling the dice while Michelle

counted the board squares announcing, "You just need a 6, 7 or 9 and you'll hit my blues Adee, come on down and stay in my lovely houses!"

Rosie sat down in a nearby chair, away from the window, but facing it, watching the storm. As she watched she noticed that she felt calmer. She was still anxious about the storm but didn't feel that same panic that she'd felt before. She looked over where Mom was sitting. She'd found a book and was reading "Donkey Wonkey" to Faith.

Rosie wondered at the fact that she felt so much better after Mom had prayed. Did God really, just now, right in front of her, do something?

She knew God was supposed to do stuff, and that you should pray and such, but she'd never actually seen Him do anything. Adults always said animals or sunrises, and such were beautiful acts of God but that didn't feel special enough to Rosie. Oh they were nice, but it didn't feel like something specific God was actually doing.

The idea that He might have really just now heard Mom's prayer was impossible to Rosie. He heard her? And immediately helped with what she'd asked Him to do?

If God had helped with Rosie's fear, does that mean He would help with the animals and keep Dad safe out in the barn, too? A warm feeling spread through Rosie as she considered this. If God just heard Mom's prayer and helped...and maybe He was going to take care of Dad and the animals, maybe she didn't have anything to worry about after all. There was nothing she needed to fear if God was going to handle it. If He could somehow reach inside her own head and make her not so scared, then you'd think He could handle Dad and the animals too.

Eventually, the thudding sounds on the roof slowed, and only the light pinging sounds against the window remained. Rosie sat in her chair watching the window. Mom's cell phone startled everyone with a blaring noise that turned out to be an emergency alert telling them there was a

severe thunderstorm warning. Michelle rolled her eyes and laughed, "Good thing they let us know, or we might have wandered around outside wondering why we're all wet."

Just then, they heard the door burst open, and Dad appeared in the hallway, stomping his feet and shutting the door quickly behind him. He was drenched with rain. He pulled his boots off and saw all the faces staring at him in the living room. "Give me a minute, girls. All the animals I could see were fine, but I need a minute to get into dry clothes. That rain is cold!" His socks made squishing noises as he carefully made his way across to Mom and Dad's bedroom to change.

Mom asked Rosie to finish reading the story to Faith so she can dry off the floor so no one will slip. But even as Rosie read "Hee Haw," using her best donkey sounds, she was still thinking about how calm she felt. Does God really actually love us as people? Not just the whole world, but the US? Rosie? Mom? Dad? He loves us and is actually alive and doing stuff, so is he going

to help us, protect us, and help us feel better when we're upset?

"Book!" Faith said loudly.

Oops, Rosie had stopped reading while her thoughts raced. "He was a lanky, honky-tonky, winky, wonky donkey," she read. Faith giggled and leaned back against Rosie.

If God really does love us, Rosie considered, maybe I should try praying more.

## Chapter 2 - Snake!

The next morning, as soon as it was light, Dad had gotten up and was planning to head outside to check for any damage from the storm. He was sliding his boots on when Rosie came out of her room and saw him. "You're going outside? Can I go with you?" Rosie asked.

Dad paused, considering his answer, so Rosie rushed to add, "I'll hurry! I can be dressed and back here in 5 minutes, please Dad?"

"Alright, Rosie, I'll wait on you, but make it take a little longer and do your

hygiene. Hair, teeth, and deodorant. I only want clean-smelling classy ladies on my arm when I tour a farm," Dad added with a grin. He headed back towards the kitchen to grab a leftover pancake from the fridge. He microwaved it and spread it generously with a thick strawberry jam Mom had made last week. He rolled it up and sat down to eat. He opened his Bible to go over a chapter he'd read earlier that morning. There was a portion that hadn't quite made sense to him, so he wanted to read it again while he waited.

Rosie, meanwhile, was racing as quietly as she could. She didn't want to wake Michelle, and since they shared a room, it was harder to hurry and get her clothes without waking her. Rosie kept rummaging in her drawer and finally found two socks that matched, snatched them up and tiptoed out the bedroom with them. She broke into a sprint as soon as the door was shut so she could get to the bathroom to change.

Quickly brushing her teeth and hair she raced back to the bedroom slowing

again to a crawl at her door. She entered the room silently, and slowly put her pajamas back into the drawer and slid it closed silently begging the drawer not to squeak.

Seeing that she'd been pretty quick, she went ahead and took a second to make her bed. It didn't look as good as it could have when she was done, but at least the sheet and comforter were pulled up fairly straight. It was definitely better than nothing, she told herself hopefully.

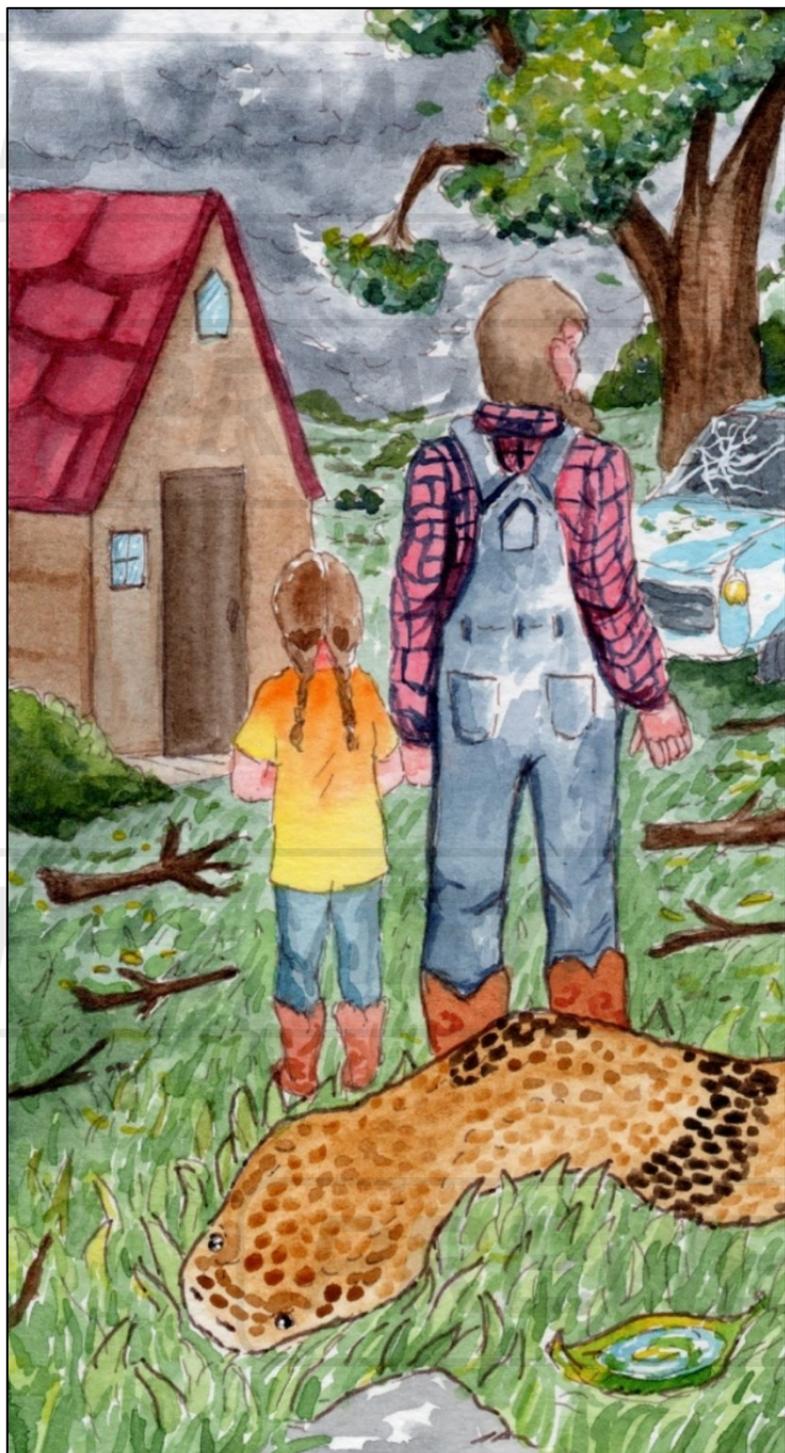
The house was so quiet she could hear the big wall clock Mom had put on their wall. Tick, tick, tick, tick. Mom had put it there, hoping it would help the girls learn to tell time with an analog clock. It had hands that moved around the clock, and both Rosie and Michelle still had trouble with it. Rosie could generally get the right time, but it always confused her if the shorthand was close to the next hour; she'd always think it was the next hour. Maybe she'd get it one day, but in general, she and Michelle always tried to avoid using that clock and would check the time on the microwave.

Rosie quietly shut the door behind her and headed to find Dad in the kitchen. "I'm ready, Dad," she said quietly.

"Alrighty, let's get out there and see what we can see," he said as he stood up. He closed his Bible and put it away and then snagged the last bite of pancake off his plate and popped it in his mouth as he went to put the plate in the sink.

As he took care of the plate, Rosie put on a light jacket and her rain boots. She knew it'd be pretty muddy out there after yesterday.

Dad and Rosie went quietly out the door. Not even making it off the porch Rosie stopped in her tracks and gasped. They could see Dad's truck from where they stood and could tell that the windshield was ruined. Rosie counted at least 6 different circular shapes where a large hailstone must have hit the glass window and shattered it. The windows were still intact but the hundreds of spidery lines where the glass had cracked made it impossible to see through.



“Oh, Dad,” Rosie said softly, “That's awful! I'm so sorry for your truck.”

Dad sighed but said, “The family is safe, the house is safe, and it seems like the animals are safe – though we still need to check better to confirm – but a car window is a small thing and not nearly as important to me. We can fix this.”

Taking Dad's hand they walked around. Some small limbs were down, one had fallen into the chicken run area and had to be moved before they could open the gate fully to get the gate open far enough to squeeze through, but even that limb hadn't broken anything.

They found Mom's car to be in the same shape as Dad's, the windshield was ruined and would have to be replaced. Dad had another old car under a tree that he worked on occasionally, since it didn't run well. Sure enough, the windshield of that car was shattered as well.

“Well, it got three out of three cars. I'd say that storm had good aim!” Dad said, trying to make a joke even while he was

very disappointed at the work and cost it would take to get all 3 vehicles fixed.

He and Rosie walked on, checking on Aggie, their ornery goat, the chickens, Diesel, Rosie's miniature horse, Mr. Gilbert Wattles, and the other pigs. All of them seemed to be fine. The sheep and cows seemed fine as well, along with the new turkeys Grandma Becky had brought with her when she arrived. They walked over towards Grandma Becky's to see how the little house Dad had built for her had handled the storm. The metal roof had some clear dents in it from the hailstones, but everything else seemed okay.

Almost to her house, Rosie gasped and jumped back. "SNAKE!" she shrieked.

Dad stepped back also, staying between Rosie and the direction she pointed while he scanned the ground, looking to see where the snake was. Finally, he spotted it. Dad shuddered. He could see its wide triangular-shaped head. Its long grey body was nearly 5' long, with dark V-shaped marks like stripes from its neck to its tail. On the tail, Dad could see the unmistakable

scales of his rattler. It was a snake, but not just any snake. It was a timber rattlesnake, very common in East Texas. But now it was a dead snake. From the flattened look on its head, he wondered if it had been killed by one of the hailstones. But there was no way to know for sure.

Bending down, he pulled out his pocket knife and cut the rattler off the snake. He offered it to Rosie. "Some people put these on their belts or hats or just to keep as a keepsake."

Rosie took it and rattled it. "Cool!" she said. She wondered if it could be sewn onto her work boots. She'd have to ask Mom if that were possible.

Looking up, Rosie saw Grandma Becky coming out the door, heading to meet them. Rosie stuffed the rattle into her pocket, grinning. She knew Grandma would not want to see her snake rattle.

"Did you see my car?" Grandma Becky asked them as they neared. Dad and Rosie looked at each other, "Oh no," Dad said, "Did the hail get your car too?" he asked.

"Boy did it! I won't be able to see to drive it for nothin'!" she exclaimed, "It's busted over and over again on the front windshield, and that little window I have in the roof, is smashed to bits too," she added sadly.

"Your sunroof?" Dad asked.

"Yep. It's going to cost a pretty penny to get all of that fixed," she said shaking her head. "And I don't know how I'll even see to drive it to town to BE fixed!" she added in frustration.

"Don't worry about that part," Dad told her, "It got all of our vehicles, so if you leave the keys with me, I'll get it to town and taken care of when I do our cars."

"Will you?" Grandma Becky asked in relief, "Oh, that would be so wonderful! Thank you!"

Dad simply smiled, but Rosie felt proud that her Dad was nice and able to help. She told herself that when she grew up, she was always going to help people too. Especially older people like grandmas.

"We'd better finish our tour," Dad told Grandma Becky, "We're just trying to

see how everything fared through the storm.”

Waving goodbye, He and Rosie carried on their walk. As they walked, they stopped several times to move larger branches from paths and from the driveway. But other than those small things, everything else seemed fine.

“God took good care of us, Rosie,” Dad said. “It may seem bad to have the cars all damaged, but it really is a small thing when you think of all the other things He protected during the storm.”

“I know!” Rosie said excitedly. She'd been wanting to talk to someone about what had happened last night, and now was her chance. “Guess what, Dad? Did you know that Mom prayed last night that God would keep us all safe and calm?”

“I didn't,” Dad said, “But I'm not surprised she did. I was praying, too, in the barn. It was quite the storm to see from just inside the barn doors. Those hailstones were as big as tennis balls.”

“Well,” Rosie started, “I was so scared. I tried to be brave, but I was nearly

sick to my stomach. I was so scared. But when Mom prayed, I felt warm all over, and I felt so much calmer. I still didn't like the storm, but I felt so different, Dad."

Dad stopped walking to look at Rosie, "Well isn't that something," He said, waiting for her to continue.

"It was like God was actually there, Dad, like He heard her," Rosie said. "Do you think He really did?"

Dad thought for a minute, "One of my favorite verses in the Bible says that the eyes of the Lord search the earth. It actually says they 'run to and fro' and I like the picture that gives me of God's eyes running around scanning all of the earth like laser beams. It says His eyes search the earth so that He can show Himself strong to those whose hearts are perfect towards Him. It's saying He's actively looking for ways to help those that love Him like we do. I like that idea. It's not like maybe He might help, but He actively wants to help us."

"God is so strong and omniscient - a word that just means He knows everything - what if He knew that the rattlesnake we

found was going to bite one of you girls, or Mom or Grandma Becky. So, He decided to stop that from happening by making a great storm that would kill it. What if all of our troubles with the car windows were such a small thing compared to one of y'all being seriously hurt or injured by a rattlesnake's bite? There isn't anything God can't do," Dad finished.

Rosie started walking again, thinking about what Dad had said.

"What do you think, Rosie," Dad asked.

"I don't know Dad. But I sure like it a lot."