



Night of the Twisters by Ivy Ruckman

Subjects: Tornadoes—Juvenile fiction

Awards: Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12

Book Lists: Grade 7, Reluctant Readers

Props: Pictures of June 4, 1980 storm

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12-year-old Danny had a new baby brother. Ryan was only 6 months old but he'd already ruined Danny's life. His parents focused their attention on Ryan. They played with Ryan, oohed and aahed over Ryan, gave Danny's room to Ryan and even painted bunnies on the walls. A baby is trouble, that's all there is to it.

Then one hot muggy night in June, everything changed. Danny's friend, Arthur, was over and they were watching TV after supper. Danny's dad had gone to Grandma and Grandpa's farm to fix a tractor. Ryan had screamed for hours it seemed, but Mom had finally gotten him to sleep and was sewing when the tornado alert came over the TV. Mom decided to go tell Mrs. Smiley, a nice old lady who lived down the street about the storm watch because she didn't usually watch TV. She made Danny take a flashlight and a blanket down to the basement bathroom just in case. All the families in that part of Nebraska had storm cellars where they went when the tornado sirens sounded. Not long after Danny's mom left, he noticed that it seemed awfully dark outside, and then the lights flickered and the sirens sounded. He decided he'd better get Ryan. But when he got to his room, Ryan was sleeping so peacefully, Danny did not want to wake him up. He was afraid the baby would only start screaming again.

Danny went back to the living room and stopped in his tracks. He saw that the TV was flashing three big letters—CDE, the Civil Defense Emergency signal. The

lights started flashing again. Danny could hear the wind banging against the windows and then a really strange sucking noise started coming from the kitchen and bathroom drains. Both Arthur and Danny felt this awful pulling in their ears. Danny yelled at Arthur to get to the basement, that he'd get Ryan. But just as he reached Ryan's room, the lights went out for good. In the dark he groped his way over to Ryan's crib. He lifted him out, but Ryan got tangled up in the butterfly mobile that hung over the crib. The pressure in Danny's ears, the sucking noise and the wind kept on as he struggled with the mobile until everything suddenly stopped. Danny had a very bad feeling. Everything had become absolutely still. He ripped the mobile down, took it and Ryan with him and ran down the hall. As Danny carefully found his way down the basement stairs with no light, he hugged Ryan tight for the first time in his life. Will they make it?

Find out what happens to Danny, Ryan, Arthur and their families as they face June 4, 1980, the night when 7 tornadoes hit the town of Grand Island, Nebraska. This book is based on a real disaster. (*Show pictures of the real storm, hold up book*) *Night of the Twisters* by Ivy Ruckman.

