

TWISTER



T H E H E I G H T S



Chapter 1



Rafael Silva sat in his home office. He thought about the e-mail he just got.

Plains, Kansas, needed a watering system. Plains had a lot of farms that needed water. Rafael had been asked to design the system.

It sounded like a hard project. He talked to Ana. They decided that Rafael should do the project.

He called the mayor of Plains. And he took the job. Then he asked about housing. He decided to rent a farmhouse.

Rafael went to talk to Ana. He wanted Antonio to come with him. It was summer break.

“He’d love that,” Ana said. “Isn’t that tornado country? You know how Antonio loves tornadoes!”

“I know,” said Rafael. “I think he’ll love it.”

“Plains is near my older sister’s house. Maybe Lilia could fly with you guys. She can visit Sara,” said Ana.

“That’s a great idea,” Rafael told Ana. “I’ll get plane tickets for Monday. We’ll let the kids know tonight.”

The kids were excited about the trip. Antonio had always wanted to go to tornado country! Lilia couldn't wait to see her aunt. *Tía* Sara always asked her to visit. But Lilia never wanted to fly alone. This was perfect.

Franco had football practice. So he couldn't go to Plains.

"Have a great time," said Franco. "Stay out of danger! You know how Dad's trips turn out!"

Antonio smiled. "I wish you were coming, Franco."

"Not a chance!" Franco said. "Not after everything you've told me about tornadoes!"

"He doesn't know *everything* about tornadoes," Lilia said.

On Monday Ana kissed Lilia on the cheek.

“Have fun!” said Ana. “And don’t worry about tornadoes.”

“I’ll call you,” Rafael said. “When we get to the rental. Promise.”

They got snacks for the plane. Everyone said good-bye. Three of the Silvas were off to Kansas.

Chapter 2



The flight wasn't too bad. And their rental car was nice. But Plains was a long drive from the airport. Rafael drove. They didn't see many cars.

Antonio looked out the window. He saw nothing but flatland. Prairie land. Mostly dirt. He saw a lot of tractors.

"There's the farmhouse," Rafael said.

He pointed. Antonio and Lilia leaned forward. They looked out the window.

“It’s so little!” Lilia said.

Antonio thought the house looked small too. But it was still far away. They got closer. They saw that it was big. It made the house in the Heights look small. Everyone got out of the car.

“A creek is behind the woods.” He pointed. “My job is to get that water to those fields.”

“That’s called irrigation,” Antonio said.

“You’re right,” his dad agreed.

Lilia looked around. “This place is creepy,” she said. “There’s nothing but fields.”

“Corn is planted in those fields. Soon it will be tall. And everything will be green,” said Rafael. “Well, only if I can make the watering system work.”

“I’ll help you,” Antonio said “I know all about that.”

Antonio and Lilia got their bags. The inside of the house was nice. The kitchen was big. There were a lot of windows. Lilia looked out. She saw fields and trees.

Lilia ran to the biggest bedroom. She put her bag on the bed. Antonio was mad. He wanted the biggest bedroom. But Lilia wasn’t staying long. She was going to visit *Tía* Sara. Good! He’d move into the big room when she was gone!

Antonio's room was small. The walls were gray. There was a picture on the wall. It showed some dogs playing cards. Antonio laughed at the picture. He liked it!

Lilia and Antonio looked around the rest of the house.

"Hey, Dad, something's missing," Antonio said.

"What's that?" asked Rafael.

"A basement!" Antonio said.

Rafael smiled. "Get Lilia. Come outside with me," he said.

There was a tree outside the house. Rafael walked to it. He pointed at two doors in the ground. The doors had rusty handles.

"That's the storm shelter," Rafael said. "We go in there if a tornado

is coming. After we close the doors behind us, we'll be safe."

"How do we know if a tornado is coming?" Lilia asked.

"It almost always rains hard before a tornado," said Rafael. "And sometimes there's hail. If it hails, run to the storm shelter."

"Don't worry, Dad," said Antonio. "We will!"

"What's over there?" Lilia asked. "Is that another storm shelter?"

She pointed to another strange thing on the farm.

"That's an old well," said Rafael. "It's dry now. There hasn't been water in it for years. Let's go into town now. I need to find out about my project."

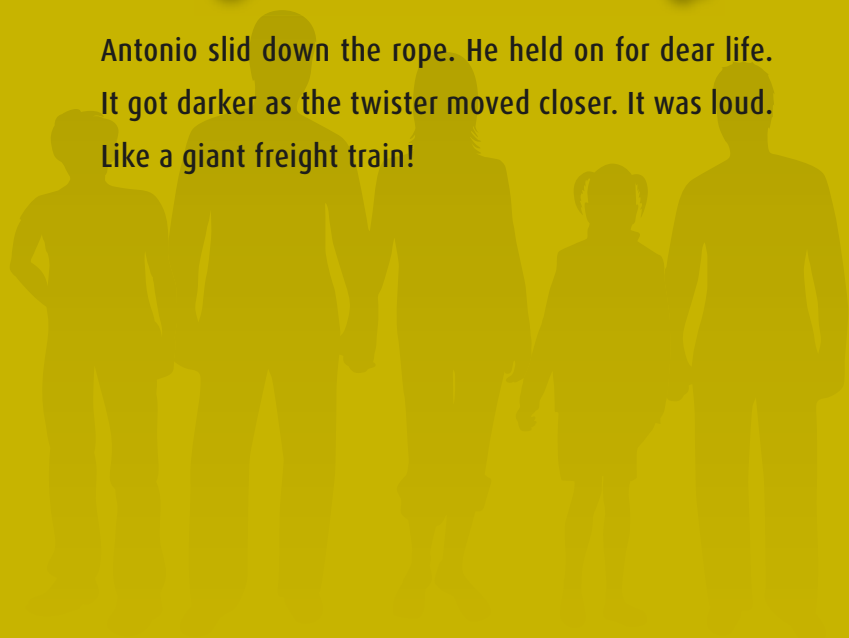
They drove toward the town.
Antonio looked out the back window.
He looked at the farmhouse. It
seemed small as they drove away.
Antonio thought a twister could
easily pick it up.

T H E H E I G H T S



Twister

Antonio slid down the rope. He held on for dear life.
It got darker as the twister moved closer. It was loud.
Like a giant freight train!



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