

# Safely left in the Dark



by  
**Heather Acquistapace**

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## Safely Left in the Dark

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The room was so dark Katie could not see a thing; the silence and void frightened the young girl. She quietly sat on a wooden chair. Her wide eyes stared into the blackness and wished there was light in the room. She found none. It was cold and damp and Tom was not with her.

Her big, strong brother was always by her side; he promised to never leave her. They loved each other very much, and Tom always helped her when she needed him. Now, as she sat in the dark, she wondered if he had lied. Where was he? She needed him now! Katie could no longer see him, no longer hear his words of comfort. Tom was gone. The last thing he said was to sit in the wooden chair and stay. She had been sitting for a long time. Where did he go?

"Tom . . ." Katie whispered. "Tom?"

"Stay seated," her big brother's voice rose from the darkness.

Katie was surprised to hear him, but her lips quickly puckered as she crossed her arms. He only talks to say mean stuff, she thought. "You lied," she whispered. "You said . . . said you'd stay. Said you'd chase away the bad guys . . . I'm afraid! Tom! Come back! I want you here! Now!" There was no reply. Katie's eyes welled with tears. She leaned back and began to wail. Still, Tom did not come.

After a time, Katie sat up and wiped the tears from her cheeks. "You hate me!" she shouted as anger flashed in her youthful eyes. "I hate you, meanie!" He did not answer as she glared into the darkness. Katie pouted quietly with contempt. He doesn't like me! She thought. He'd be here if He did! She cautiously looked around. Wonder if he'll see me leave. Katie quietly placed one foot on the ground.

"Stay seated!" Tom said firmly. Katie froze. He's there! Out there! A smile blossomed on Katie's face. "Katie," Tom said his voice low and one of authority. She frowned and quickly returned to the seat. He's out there, but . . . but he's being mean again . . . She fidgeted with her hair and listened for any sign of Tom. All was silent.

"You don't love me," Katie whispered, though she knew that was not true. Silence. Katie opened her mouth to speak, but shut it. She knew nothing could be said to change her circumstance. She looked down toward the floor and remembered her thoughtless words. I meant it, she thought with a scowl. The bitterness in her eyes gradually softened as regret stabbed her heart. No I didn't.

"Tom . . ." she whispered as tears come to her eyes once more. Tears of shame. "Tom . . . I was

bad. I'm sorry. . . . Tom?" She sighed heavily and leaned back against the chair. He said to sit, she thought and looked up to the ceiling. So . . . I'll sit.

Katie sat up, wiped the tears from her eyes, and fixed her hair. She rested her hands in her lap and swung her legs back and forth as she hummed to herself. Nothing happened for a long time as Katie waited and did the last thing Tom told her to do. She stopped complaining and wondering where he was. She began to think of all the times Tom had saved her and all the nice things he had said: "I'll never leave you." "In this world, you'll have hard times. But don't be sad. I will save you!" "I will protect you, if you trust in my name."

Katie began to sing, to smile and laugh, and remember all the good they had shared. She also remembered Tom had vowed never to leave her. Tom doesn't lie, she thought. He's here; I just don't see him now.

In the midst of a happy song, the lights turned on. Katie stopped singing and blinked in the sudden brightness. She saw she was in a big room and Tom stood beside her, his finger raised over the light switch. "Tom!" Katie cried with glee as he walked to her and lifted her up in his strong arms. They tightly hugged each other.

"Look," Tom said as he motioned to the room she had been sitting in. Katie looked up and her eyes widened in surprise. A trash can sat in the center of the room and crumbled pictures overflowed from its rim. Boxes had been placed on high shelves so that no one could reach them. Within the boxes were a variety of set traps, their opened jaws pointed like teeth. Coils of wires wound from several outlets and their once bare, hot ends were now covered in duct tape. The fresh smell of paint filled the room as the newly painted walls' glossy surfaces reflected the light.

"I told you to stay in the chair to keep you safe," Tom said. "See the painted walls? A mural covered it with bad, scary pictures of monsters and devils hurting people and things. They would have terrified you. I had to paint over it and keep the light off so you would not see them. The pictures in the trash can were of things you like, but should never have. The set traps were scattered all across the floor; some were even by your chair. They would have hurt and crippled you. The electric wires would have shocked you, hurting you too. That's why you had to stay in the chair." Katie looked at Tom, amazed at the dangers she was oblivious to. "You were safe in the chair. I'm sorry I could not sit with you, but I had to get rid of all the dangerous things." Katie laid her head on Tom's chest, speechless. "And I never left you," Tom whispered with a smile. "Never."

"Thank you," Katie said and saw his love for her was deeper than she ever imagined.

"Come on," Tom said as he put her down. "I've got something exciting for you."

"What is it?" Katie asked as she took His hand.

"Oh . . . you'll see. Just keep holding My hand and I'll lead you to it." Katie nodded and saw the

glow of anticipation in Tom's eyes.

"Okay," she said with a grin. The two walked out of the room to new circumstances Tom alone knew how to properly approach.

### **Things to consider:**

\* *When have you felt like Katie, abandoned and left in the dark?*

\* *Did you become angry at God? Bitter? Untrusting? Suspicious?*

\* *Looking back, do you see the purpose of the dark time? Did God allow you to struggle to teach you? To strengthen you? To protect you?*

\* *What is God doing during your struggles right now? If you don't know, ask Him. God has a purpose for the pain and works with your well-being in mind. Trust Him through the struggles you face for there is a reason. "For God sent this suffering to keep you from a life of evil" (Job 36:21b). Through the pain, God intends to save you from what could be.*

