

The Laughing Mom: humorous tales of motherhood

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

The big bad tornado



On the way home one afternoon, Melise, my 3-year-old daughter, asked me to tell her the story of the three bears.

I tried, but realized I had no idea how that story goes! Why did those bears leave their porridge to take a walk? And what did they do when they found Goldilocks in the bed? I didn't know, so I asked if I could tell the story of the three little pigs instead. Luckily, Melise loves that story! She said the huffs and puffs right along with me.

When we got home, Melise ran up the steps to our door and turned around to ask, "What is our house made of?"

"Mostly wood, I think." She knocked on the door frame like she was pondering its stability. I didn't think much of her question. After all, I get strange questions all the time from her.

As we entered the house, I let the storm door close, but I didn't bother to shut the main door. That is my habit. Besides, we were under a tornado warning that afternoon, which meant that I would walk out to look at the sky every few minutes. (Isn't that the proper procedure during a tornado warning?) I figured it would be easier to pace in and out if the main door was open.

Melise had recently learned how to open the storm door, so when I saw her looking out with her hand on the knob, I told her to stay inside.

"Why?"

The Laughing Mom: humorous tales of motherhood

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

“Because there might be a tornado out there, which is very dangerous.” I thought I needed to impress upon her how serious a tornado was, so I told her that it could blow the house down. You probably see where this going, but I didn’t.

Suddenly, Melise was clinging to me as I walked around the house. I didn’t notice at first, but then she asked, “Is the tornado gone yet?”

I looked down at her and was a little shocked to see her looking absolutely terrified! She was pale and staring at the window like there was a monster looming outside. I started to ask what was wrong when my brain finally put all the pieces together. I told her a story in which the Big Bad Wolf blew the little pig’s wooden house down. Then I told her a tornado might come blow our house down! What a dense mom I am. I’m sure she was thinking that the wolf has a brother named Tornado, right?

“Oh sweetheart, there isn’t a tornado outside!” I gave her a big hug.

“It’s gone?” She was sniffing a bit.

“Well, there never was one. Mommy was just worried about it, but I think it’s safe. The storm is passing us.”

“It went to somebody else’s house?”

“No ... well, maybe.”

“Is it sleeping?”

“No, honey, a tornado isn’t alive. It’s not like a person. It doesn’t sleep. It’s made of wind and

The Laughing Mom: humorous tales of motherhood

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

clouds and ...”

“You mean it’s not real? Just pretend?” She sounded so relieved that I almost agreed.

“Well, you see, a tornado is real, but it doesn’t always happen.” I started into an explanation, but as I rambled on Melise completely lost interest and started playing with the nearest toy. I stopped mid-sentence and asked, “Do you feel better?”

“Can I watch a show?”

“I guess you feel better.” And I gave her a show to watch. I wonder if she’ll ever ask for the story of the three little pigs again. If she does, I’ll check the weather first!

Holyoke Enterprise May 24, 2012