

A great storm in Scotland



This text is taken from the beginning of the novel *The Water Horse* by Dick King-Smith, first published in 1990. Read the text to see how the story starts. Read the whole book to find out what happens the morning after the great storm, when Kirstie and her brother Angus find something very strange on the beach.

In the small hours of March the 26th, 1930, a great storm struck the west coast of Scotland. The huge seas that it had whipped up smashed against the foot of the cliffs, and the tigerish tempest ran up the face of them and grabbed a small white house on the cliff top in its jaws.

The house quivered and shook in the teeth of the wind, and Kirstie, waking in sudden fright, was sure that the roof must go.

The noise of the storm was fearful. Angus will be terrified, thought Kirstie, and she jumped out of bed and ran to her little brother's room next door. Her mother arrived at the same moment carrying an oil lamp, and by its light they could see that Angus was sleeping peacefully, sleeping like the baby he had been only a few years before. Outside, the thunder banged and the lightning flashed, the wind roared and the rain poured. Angus snored.

"Back to bed, Kirstie," said her mother. "I'll stay here awhile in case he wakes."

"What about Grumble?" said Kirstie. "Is he all right?"

Grumble was Mother's father, who lived with them. When Kirstie was very small, she had heard Mother say angrily to him one day, "All you ever do is grumble, grumble," and so she had thought that it was his name. It suited him. He came stumping along the corridor now, a big old man with a thick droopy moustache.

"Can't sleep a wink!" growled Grumble to his daughter and granddaughter, as though it was their fault. "Terrible weather! The Lord help sailors on a night like this!"

From *The Water Horse*
Dick King-Smith