

Judy Moody & Stink

The Big Bad Blackout



Megan McDonald illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds

An illustration of a storm scene. The background is a light blue sky with white diagonal lines representing rain. In the foreground, there are several brown tree branches, some of which are broken and falling. Green leaves are scattered around the branches. The text "Crash Landing" is written in a large, bold, black font in the center of the image.

Crash Landing



Bump! Thwump!

“Ghost!” Judy yelped, bolting awake from a crash on the roof. Her heart beat louder than a ticking clock. “That sounded like a giant bionic squirrel landing on the roof, Mouse. Or all nine of Santa’s reindeer.”

Mouse covered an ear with one paw.

Ba-bump-bump-bump.

“Eeeeeee! What if it *is* a ghost? And he’s bowling—up in the attic!” Judy held her cat close. “Don’t be scared, Mouse. I’ll protect you.”

Judy scrambled down from her top bunk and grabbed a Grouchy pencil and her Women of Science ruler. Brandishing one in each hand, she rushed out the door and bumped headlong into . . .

Stink! He waved a lightsaber and yelled, “The sky is falling! The sky is falling!”

“Hey, Chicken Little! Did you hear what I just heard?” Judy asked.

“If you mean the giant spaceship that just crash-landed on the roof, I heard it.” Judy and Stink flew down the stairs, Mouse at their heels. They skidded into the kitchen on sock feet, looking for Mom and Dad.



Computer? On. TV? On. But no Mom or Dad.

Just then, Mom came out of the laundry room, tugging on her rubber boots.

“Ghost!” Judy pointed to the attic with her ruler.

“Spaceship!” said an out-of-breath Stink.

“Bionic squirrel! Reindeer!” Judy spouted.

“Alien! Invasion!” Stink hiccupped.

“Crash landing!” Judy sputtered.

“Roof!” Stink nodded.

“It’s this storm,” said Mom. “The wind has kicked up like crazy. Dad’s outside checking the roof right now.” Mom shrugged on her raincoat and grabbed



an umbrella. “You kids sit tight. I’m going out to look, too.” She opened the back door to step out, and a flurry of wet leaves blew in.

“Great,” said Stink. “Aliens just crash-landed right here in Frog Neck Lake, Virginia, and we’re supposed to sit tight.”



Rain, rain, and more rain. Rain drummed on the roof. Rain hammered against the house. Judy watched it run in rivers down the windows.

When she turned around, Stink had his ear pressed up to a . . . flashlight? A talking flashlight!



“AlleyOop Charter, Clara Barton Elementary, Crabtree Elementary, closed.”

“What did the flashlight say to the second grader?” Judy teased.

Stink looked up. “I don’t know? What?”

“It’s not a joke, Stink. You’re listening to . . . a flashlight?”

“Hardee-har-har. It’s a flashlight, but it’s also a radio.” He jiggled the antenna. “I’m trying to find out if school’s canceled.”

Wind rattled the back door. “It’s not a snow day, Stink. Whoever heard of a *rain* day?”

“It could happen,” said Stink.

“Yeah, right. And pencils grow on trees.”



“Uh . . . pencils *are* made from trees,” said Stink.

“Oh. Right.”

“*Franklin Elementary, Hall Elementary, closed.*” Stink crossed his fingers on both hands.

“*Say Virginia Dare Elementary!*” he shouted at the radio.

“It’s raining cats and dogs out there,” said Mom, coming through the back door, her umbrella turned inside out.

“Any guinea pigs?” Stink asked slyly.

“Dad’s still trying to find out what made that awful noise on the roof. I couldn’t see a thing.”

“*Our Lady of Peace School, Plum Creek Middle School—closed.*”



Dad came in the back door next, dripping a pond-sized puddle on the floor.

“So?” asked Stink. “Was it a spaceship?”

“Or Santa?” said Judy.

“Aliens?”

“Reindeer?”

“Guinea pigs?”

“Tent,” said Dad, shaking water from his hair like a dog. “Your Toad Pee Club tent was up on the roof.”

“You mean to say the wind picked up the tent and blew it all the way across the yard,” Stink said, waving his arms wildly, “and then—*bing, bang, boom!*—up on the roof?”



“Yep,” said Dad.

“Whoa. Crash landing! Just like the house in *The Wizard of Oz*,” said Judy.

“Now we’ll have to have our club meetings up on the roof!” Stink said with a grin.

“No, I got the tent down,” said Dad. “But this is no ordinary storm. Weather report said winds are over forty miles per hour and we’ve had several inches of rain already. Looks like we might be in for a hurricane.”

Judy’s eyes grew wide.

Stink looked from Dad to Mom.

Dad turned up the TV. “It’s official. What we hoped was just a tropical storm



has just been upgraded to hurricane status,” the weatherman reported. “Batten down the hatches, folks. Hurricane Elmer is heading straight for the East Coast.”

“Hurricane!” cried Stink. “Shouldn’t we be doing something? Boiling water?”

“That’s if a baby’s coming, Stink. Isn’t it, Mom?”

“Then we should be breathing into a paper bag or something.”

“That’s for hiccups,” said Judy.

“Stand in a doorway?”

“Earthquakes, Stink.”

“Silver Lake Middle School, Skipwith Academy, Wee Ones Preschool, closed. This just in: Frog Neck Lake . . .”

“Shh!” Stink put the flashlight up to his ear.

“ . . . *Public Library, Frog Neck Lake Senior Center . . .*”

“Aw,” said Stink. “They’re never going to say our school.”

“Kids? You’d better get ready,” said Mom. “If there is school, you’re already going to be late.”

“*Frog Neck Lake School District . . . including Virginia Dare Elementary School—closed.*”

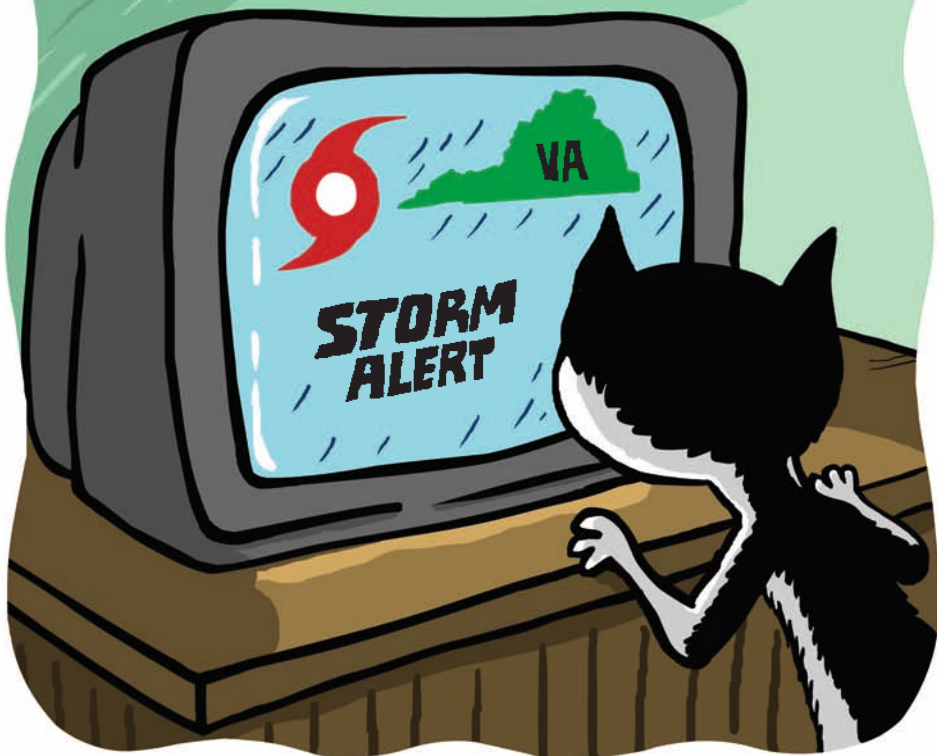
Stink looked at Judy. Judy looked at Stink.

“No school?” Stink asked.

“No school!” said Judy.

“Woo-hoo!” Judy and Stink high-fived, low-fived, middle-fived, and then they danced around the kitchen.

Elmer





Later that morning, Mrs. Moody made a quick trip to the grocery store. When she came back, Stink stood on tiptoe, peering into the bags. “Did you get marshmallows?”

“I got marshmallows,” said Mom. “They were out of tuna fish and soup and cereal, but they still had marshmallows. The shelves were almost bare with everybody stocking up for the storm.”

“I guess we’ll have to eat marshmallow soup,” said Judy.

“Mmm. I don’t care,” said Stink. “I

could *live* in a house of marshmallows.”

Dad carried a giant blue water bottle in from the car. “Who lives in a house of marshmallows?” he asked.

“Grandma Lou!” Stink yelled.

“What? Grandma Lou doesn’t—” Judy started.

“No, I forgot,” said Stink. “I was supposed to tell you guys that Grandma Lou called. She’s on her way here to stay with us.”

“Good. Because Virginia Beach is getting slammed,” said Dad.

“Stink said her power already went out,” Judy reported.

“She had to leave or they were going to evaporate her!” said Stink.



“I think it’s *evacuate*,” said Mom. “I’m glad she left when she did. If they closed the bridge in high winds, she’d be stuck.”

“Poor Grandma Lou always seems to be in the teeth of the storm,” said Dad.

“And,” said Stink, “I’m supposed to tell you she’s not alone.”

Mom raised an eyebrow at Dad. “Oh?”

“Who’s she bringing?” Dad asked.

“Somebody named . . . Gert. And Pugsy and some other names, too. I can’t remember.”

“Maybe Grandma Lou has an evil twin named Gert and they were separated at birth and she’s bringing her here and Evil Gert will cast an evil spell on us,” Judy said all in one breath.



Dad laughed. “I hate to break this to you, but Gert is short for *Gertrude*. And *Gertrude* is Grandma Lou’s kayak.”

“Grandma Lou has a boat named *Gert*?” said Judy.

“See, right before Grandpa Jack died, he told Grandma Lou, ‘Whatever you do, don’t be an old Gertrude.’ So Grandma Lou went out and got herself a kayak. To help her stay young. She named it *Gert*. Short for *Gertrude*.”

“Phew,” said Stink. “A boat’s way better than an evil twin.”

Dad turned up the TV. “Sounds like they think Elmer will hit land later tonight on the Outer Banks of North Carolina,” Dad said.

Outside, the wind howled. Mouse leaped from her perch on top of the fridge to the floor and made a dash for the laundry room.

“The storm is freaking her out,” said Stink.

“Storms and vacuum cleaners,” said Judy. “Those make her run and hide in the laundry basket, under all the clothes.”

“Not the clean clothes, I hope,” said Mom. “Kids? You’ll have to bunk together with Grandma Lou coming. Judy, you can sleep in Stink’s room for a few nights.”

Stink pumped his fist in the air. “Yes, yes, yes!”

“No, no, nooooo,” Judy groaned.

“No moaning,” said Mom.



“Fine. There’s already a ghost in my room anyway.”

“You have a lot to do to get your room picked up before Grandma Lou gets here,” Mom pointed out.

“Ha, ha.” Stink was pointing at Judy. “School’s out and you have to clean your room!”

“Stink, you need to pick up your room, too,” said Mom.

“Ha, ha to you,” said Judy.

“I can’t pick up my room,” said Stink.

“Why not?” Mom asked.

“It’s too heavy!” said Stink. He cracked himself up again.



**Big
Bad
Blackout**



Bleep-beep-beep! Hooonk! Stink and Judy ran to the front window. The rain made a Morse code of dots and dashes on the panes. Wind bent the trees sideways. A yellow Mini had pulled into the driveway. A red kayak was strapped to the roof.

“Grandma Lou’s here!” called Judy and Stink.

Holding a newspaper over her head, Grandma Lou made a mad dash for the front door, puddle-jumping and splashing all the way.



“Kiddos!” Grandma Lou squeezed them in a big hug. “Am I glad to see you!”

“Hey! You’re getting us all wet,” said Stink.

“How was your trip, Mom?” Dad asked.

“Crazy!” said Grandma Lou. “The waves are yay high and there’s flooding in the streets. Everybody’s heading inland, so the bridge was bumper-to-bumper traffic all the way.”

“We’re glad you’re here safe and sound,” said Mom. “C’mon in and dry off.”

“First things first,” said Grandma Lou, and reached into her tote bag. Then she pulled out a wet pug and set him on the floor.



“Pugsy!” cried Judy and Stink. Pugsy shook himself off.

“Kids, keep an eye on Pugs for a minute. Be back in a flash.” Grandma Lou dashed through the rain to her car again.

Pugsy jumped and bounced and ran through the kids’ legs, playing tag.

“Wonder who else she brought,” Mom said, moving aside the curtain to see.

Grandma Lou came back with a Critter Keeper in each hand. “This is Milo,” she said, holding up one of the crates. Two black eyes, a pink nose, and a black-and-white striped face peered out.

“P.U.! Skunk!” yelled Stink, pinching his nose shut.

“He’s not a skunk. He’s a ferret,” said Grandma Lou. “And this,” she said holding up the other carryall, “is Candy Cane.”



“Snake!” yelled Stink. Everybody backed up.

“Don’t worry, she’s friendly,” said Grandma Lou. “She’s a corn snake.”

“A corn snake named Candy Corn?” Stink asked. “Weird.”

“Candy Cane,” said Judy. “I get it. Because she has red-and-white stripes.”

“Somebody sure got pranked when they looked in their Christmas stocking,” said Stink. “Hey, wait. The



snake's sleeping in your room, right, Grandma Lou?"

"Sure. The snake will make a good foot warmer!" Grandma Lou teased.

"So, you brought a zoo," said Dad. "Anything else we should know?"

"I know. I'm sorry," said Grandma Lou. "I'm pet sitting. My neighbors are waiting out the storm at a shelter that won't take pets, so they asked me to help. I could hardly say no."

"You got skunked!" said Stink.

"You won't even know they're here. I promise."

"A snake in the house? I'll know," Mom teased. "Judy, take Grandma Lou up to your room."



“You carry Milo’s crate,” said Grandma Lou. “I’ll carry the snake.” She followed Judy upstairs.

“This is my bunk bed,” said Judy. “You can sleep on top or bottom. I’ll be rooming with Stink.” She made a sour-ball face.

“Sorry about that. You’re welcome to bunk with me.”

“That’s okay.”

Judy pointed to her bookshelves. “These are my books. You can read them, but if there’s a bookmark, don’t lose my place.”

“I hate when that happens,” said Grandma Lou.

“I’ll clear my desk off for Candy Cane,” said Judy. “But don’t let her get too close to my Venus flytrap. Jaws likes to snap!”

“I’ll remember that,” said Grandma Lou.

“This is my Band-Aid collection. You can use some, but ask me first. And here’s my pizza-table collection—don’t let Pugsy chew them, like last time.”

Grandma Lou nodded. “I’m sure Pugsy and I will be very comfy.”

“*And Milo and Candy Cane,*” said Judy. “It sure is zooey in here!”



That afternoon, while Grandma Lou took a nap, Judy and Stink played fetch with Pugsy and Mouse. Judy and Stink took Milo for a walk—around the downstairs. “How do you play with a snake?” Stink asked.

“You don’t,” said Judy.

Rain slashed the windows and thrum-drummed on the roof. “The storm is headed straight for Ocracoke,” said the TV. “It could hit land in the next few hours.”

When Grandma Lou woke up, she helped Judy and Stink write a message in a bottle. It said *Come over after the storm* in secret code.

Judy ran outside and set it free in the storm drain. “It should reach Rocky by tomorrow,” she told them.



All of a sudden, the lights blinked. Off. On. Off. On.

Thunder rumbled low like a car engine, and lightning cracked the sky. The lights flickered. The lights dimmed. The lights came back on.

Stink looked at the ceiling. “Grandma Lou? If you’re sleeping tonight and you happen to hear a loud crash on the roof, don’t be scared. It’s probably not aliens.”

“Or reindeer,” said Judy. “Or a giant bionic squirrel.”

“And it’s probably not Bigfoot,” said Stink. “Just so you know.”

“Or Sasquatch. Or the Skunk Ape,” said Judy.

“Good to know,” said Grandma Lou.

“It’s probably just a regular old ghost,” Judy teased.



Whoooo! All of a sudden, the lights went out again. The room turned ink black. The TV fell silent. It felt like the house was under a magic spell. Outside, the wind whooshed like waves pounding the shore. Chimes clanged and rain poured.

The scary dark sent chills up Judy's spine.

"Ooh, blackout!" cried Stink. "A big bad blackout!"



Judy Moody & Stink: The Big Bad Blackout

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