

When You Drive Through a Storm

The wind whipped the dry snow into drifts around their car. If only he had stayed on the main roads they would be at the hospital by now. The car shook with Sally's sobs. They had waited years for this baby and now he had destroyed their chance of a family by a stupid decision on their route. Maybe, the emergency services could have reached them in time but he had left the mobile at home.

"I'll get some help, love. I promise," Jack said, before opening his door, forcing back the drift.

The road was icy, deep snow on the verges and the wind unrelenting. Every passing second of his slow progress felt like the countdown to disaster.

He had never prayed before but now he heard himself crying out. "Oh God, please help me. Save Sally and our baby."

The snowing seemed to ease and he saw red lights flickering ahead. Someone must be there. His rising hope was dashed when he reached a car, jammed against a tree. He scraped the snow off the driver's window and could see a woman slumped against the steering wheel.

He pulled the door open. "Are you all right?"

The woman stirred. "I think so," she said, "I was attending a birth. I'm not going to make it now."

"Oh my God, you're a midwife," Jack gasped, "I desperately need your help. My wife's having a baby in our car down the hill."

"I've hurt my hands but I can tell you what to do," the woman said. "Use my phone first to ring for an ambulance."

Sally was panting when they reached her.

"It's going to be all right, love. I've got help."

"Help your wife into the back of the car," the midwife said, "and get some water."

Jack found a lunch box and melted snow in it on the car bonnet.

"Now sit with your wife and do exactly what I say."

He saw a glimmer of hope in Sally's eyes before the strength and frequency of the contractions overwhelmed her. For the next twenty minutes, Jack gave control of his mind and body to the midwife. She paced the road outside the car, giving instructions to him. Then came that

moment of incomparable joy and Sally, exhausted but comfortable, cradled their son.

“Wind up the window and keep your family warm,” the midwife said, “you’ll be fine now. I’m off back to my car.”

“How can I thank you? You answered my prayers,” Jack called after her as she disappeared, cloaked in white.

“Who were you talking to?” Sally mumbled.

“The midwife,” said Jack, “I couldn’t have delivered our baby without her.”

Shortly after, an ambulance edged its way down the hill.

“You’ve been lucky,” the paramedic said, “not like the woman in the car ahead, she skidded and was killed; one of our most caring midwives, always answering calls for help, in any weather.”