



By Kenzi Parsons

(Based on a true story)

"When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me" (Micah 7:8).

Ellie snuggled into the couch with her bag of Christmas chocolates. This was the best part of the movie! Mom and Dad were watching it with her. Her brothers were in the kitchen building their new toy robots, and her sisters were looking at their new animal books. Ellie popped a chocolate into her mouth. It was the perfect end to a perfect Christmas.

Suddenly the TV shut off and the room went completely dark. Ellie's sisters shrieked.

Her brother Joseph shouted from the kitchen. "Hey! Who turned out the lights?" Ellie could hear him stumbling around in the dark.

"Ouch! Watch where you're going!" Michael snapped.

Ellie and Mom peered out the window. Their neighbors' houses were dark too. Mom said she'd call the power company.

"Everybody to the family room," Dad called. "I'll grab some candles."

Soon everybody was huddled on the floor, wrapped in blankets and very grouchy.

"I was almost done with my robot," Joseph whined.

"Well, I was at the best part of my new movie!" Ellie said. Why did this have to happen on Christmas? It wasn't fair.

Dad lit the candles, filling the family room with warm light. In the kitchen, Mom filled a kettle with water and lit the stove with a match.

"We can have some hot cocoa in a minute," she said. "And the power company said we should have power in a little while."

Everyone grumbled. Ellie slumped against the couch and stared at the blank TV, wishing it would magically turn on. It didn't.

Jeanie started crying, and Beth hugged her. "I want the lights to come back on," Jeanie said.

Dad pulled a book from the shelf and sat down with them. "Here, let's read a story."

"Which one?" Beth asked.

As Dad flipped open the book, Ellie recognized it as Dad's old Bible from his mission. "The Christmas story," she said with a smile. Mom sat next to Ellie and put an arm around her shoulders.

Everyone grew quiet as Dad began reading from the book of Luke. He read about Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem and about the shepherds on the hillside. The candles made Ellie feel like she was in the stable in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. As Dad read about the angels and the baby Jesus, Ellie's heart

felt warm and happy. Today was Christmas. Today was the day they celebrated Jesus's birth! She had been so focused on her presents that she hadn't even thought about why Christmas was so important.

Suddenly the lights flickered back on.

"Wait, the story's not over!" Jeanie said.

"Can we turn the lights back off?" Ellie asked Mom.

"Yeah! We have to finish the story," Michael said. Mom and Dad smiled.

Mom switched off the lights, and they all sat together again, listening to Dad read about the Wise Men.

After the story, they all sat at the table sipping hot cocoa. Ellie realized she was the happiest she had been all day. "Can we do this every Christmas?" she asked.

"That's a great idea," Dad said.

Remembering the story of Jesus being born made it feel like Christmas. And it had nothing to do with presents. ●

The author lives in Arizona, USA.

