



## Remember when...? – Fire

### Description

House fires or forest fires could be devastating for some. I have heard of sad stories of families losing their home, their belonging, or worse, their loved ones. Up until now, I never lost anything or anyone to a fire, but it could have come close. Yet, this story turned out to be kind of funny.

### Quiet Sunday afternoon

It was Sunday afternoon, after all the chores were done. Cleaning was done, laundry was just finishing, and I was sitting, quietly, in the livingroom, watching TV. My mom was in the kitchen, cooking something, probably for dinner (although it was still mid-afternoon).

### FIRE!

The kitchen and the livingroom were at the very opposite of each other, in the apartment. I could not see my mom and she could not see me. But I suddenly heard her yell “FIRE! Get out!” My first thought was that she was burning something, and something might have caught fire on the stove. So I got up, went toward the kitchen to see what was happening, only to see the top half of the kitchen wall on fire.

### There is a fire!

I immediately went for the door and ran to the neighbour (we lived in a duplex), frantic. As she opened the door, the only thing I could say was “Fire, fire, fire”, but she didn’t understand and asked me to repeat. “Fire, fire, fire”. Then, her husband came and he understood me, and proceeded to call the firestation.

### Where is mom?

As I was standing on the sidewalk, I was waiting for my mom to come out. She didn’t. I went to the

door and yelled for her. She replied, saying she was ok.

## **Firetruck on the street**

The firestation was within walking distance from our house so it didn't take long for that truck to come over and that was attracting a lot of curious bystanders, of course. A couple of firemen came out, carrying fire extinguishers (I didn't even have the chance to see them use a hose!). I didn't see what they did inside but my mom, who had stayed inside explained all to me afterward.

## **What happened to mom?**

In fact, what had caught fire was the electrical box. After my mom saw it, she turned off the stove and proceeded to go to the front door (why not the back door? no idea), but the fire quickly diminished so she felt she had time to take the phone book to look for the firestation number (we didn't have 911 back then). She had a bit of a hard time finding that number and by the time she reached the station, the fire was already out, from what she could see.

When the firemen came in with the extinguisher, they didn't really need it but they pulled out the whole electrical box out of the wall, to make sure the fire was not running inside the wall.

## **Where is the main box?**

You might think that was the end of the story, with a nice and safe ending (although left without power!) but the fun part starts here. Since it looked like an electrical fire, they needed to see the main electrical box. That was housed in the garage, but the landlords were away on vacation. We had no way to reach them.

The fireman didn't want to knock down the garage door so he asked if there was another way to reach it. The only other way we knew was through the basement apartment. He went to ring the doorbell for the tenant in the basement. No answer. However, that lady's car was parked on the street, so if she was not home, she was not very far.

## **An open window**

The fireman could not just wait all day in case she came back, so he asked if there was another way in. The only other possible way was through a basement window. OK, let's look for an open window. And yes, he found one. Proceeded to open it completely and slipped in, with his full uniform. Can you now imagine the tenant's reaction when she woke up, to the sight of a fully dressed fireman! I think I remember hearing a ... scream!

## **We got in**

Finally, the fireman was able to reach the garage and the main electrical box. I don't know what he did to it. I don't even know if the power was out in the other apartments, but I guess I didn't really care. The

fire was out, everyone was safe, and my mom was so grateful the fire happened after all the chores had been done: she would have been embarrassed to have the firemen see an untidy apartment!

Did you ever have an experience with a fire? Hopefully it is not a very sad story, but whatever it is, share it with us.

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