



# RAIN BEAT AGAINST THE WINDOW

STORY STARTER BY MARY POPE OSBORNE

Rain beat against the windows. Sitting in the cold library of an old seaside mansion, Julie tapped her cell phone. Two dogs slept beside her — a tiny terrier named Rosie and a growly mixed breed named Sam. When Julie had been invited to spend her winter break at her aunt's and uncle's isolated B&B on the Maine coast, she had immediately said yes. She knew the B&B was closed for the season, and she'd looked forward to spending a peaceful week in the kind company of her Aunt Betty and Uncle Burt.

Only now, just an hour after she'd arrived, both aunt and uncle were miles away. Aunt Betty had fallen down a step as she was serving tea to Julie. When she fell, she'd hit her head and become unconscious. Uncle Burt had called 911, and Betty was whisked away by ambulance to a Boston hospital, with Burt following in his car. During their emergency exit, her frantic uncle had asked Julie to babysit the dogs. It all happened in the midst of such chaos, that before Julie could ask questions, the ambulance drove off. And now she was alone with the dogs. She had no transportation, no neighbors, no password for the Wi-Fi, and worst of all — no bars on her cell phone.

Thundered rumbled in the sky. The lights flickered and went off. Then Julie heard the front door creaking open. Creeeek...

*What happens next? Does Julie hide? What person or creature has arrived? Is it human or animal? Real or mythical? How does the seaside setting fit into the story? The growing storm? The two dogs?*

## AN OCEAN OF STORIES

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