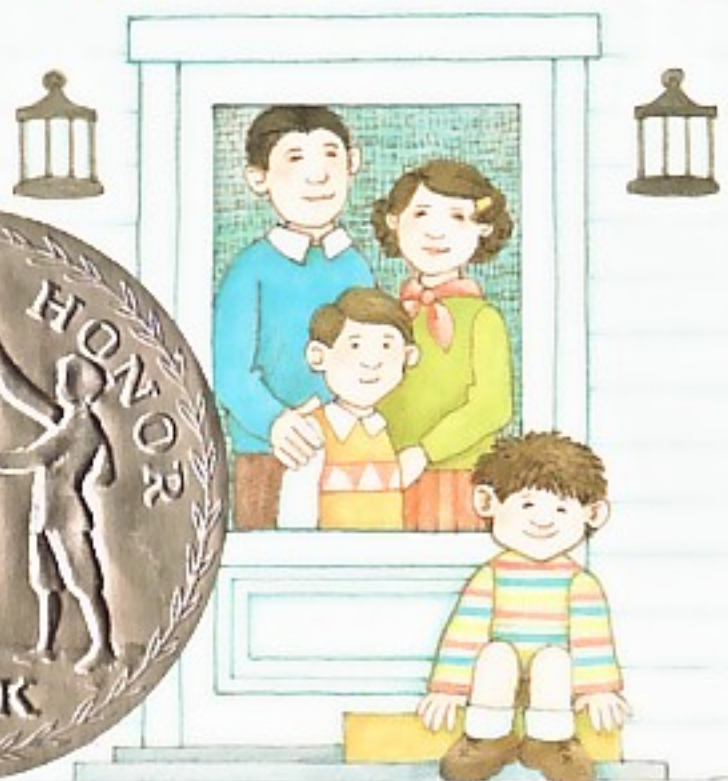


TOMIE DEPAOLA

WELCOME TO TOMIE'S CHILDHOOD HOME!

26

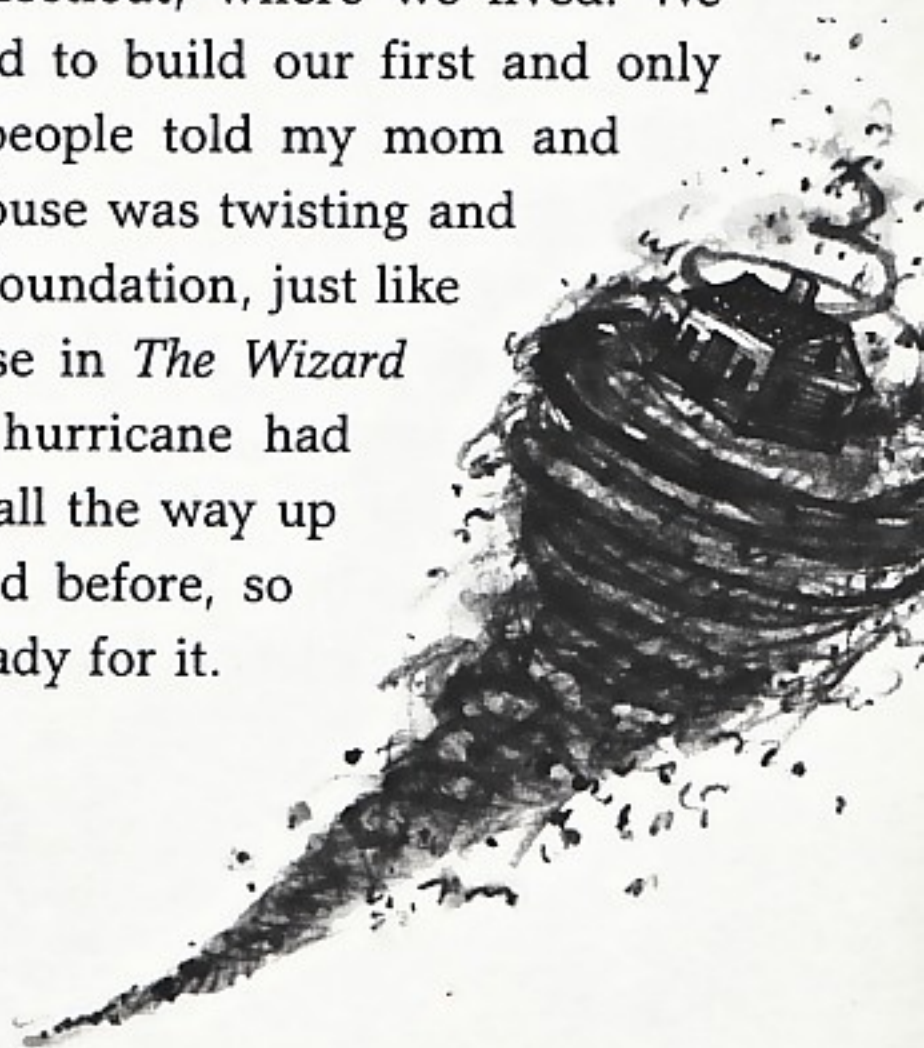
Fairmount
Avenue



Chapter One



I didn't always live in the house at 26 Fairmount Avenue. We moved there when I was five years old. I know that because in 1938, when I was still four, a big hurricane hit Meriden, Connecticut, where we lived. We had just started to build our first and only house, when people told my mom and dad that the house was twisting and turning on its foundation, just like Dorothy's house in *The Wizard of Oz*. A real hurricane had never reached all the way up to New England before, so nobody was ready for it.



We were living in an apartment on Columbus Avenue. We all lived on one floor. Another family lived upstairs, and we lived downstairs.

It had been raining for days and days, and some of the rivers were overflowing. There was a really weird brook near our backyard. It was called Harbor Brook. It wound all the way through Meriden, and factories dumped stuff in it. It was different colors on different days. We were told NOT TO GO NEAR IT. Right before the hurricane, the water was so high and murky that I was hardly allowed to *look* at it, much less go near it. "Come away from there, Tomie," my mom would call.

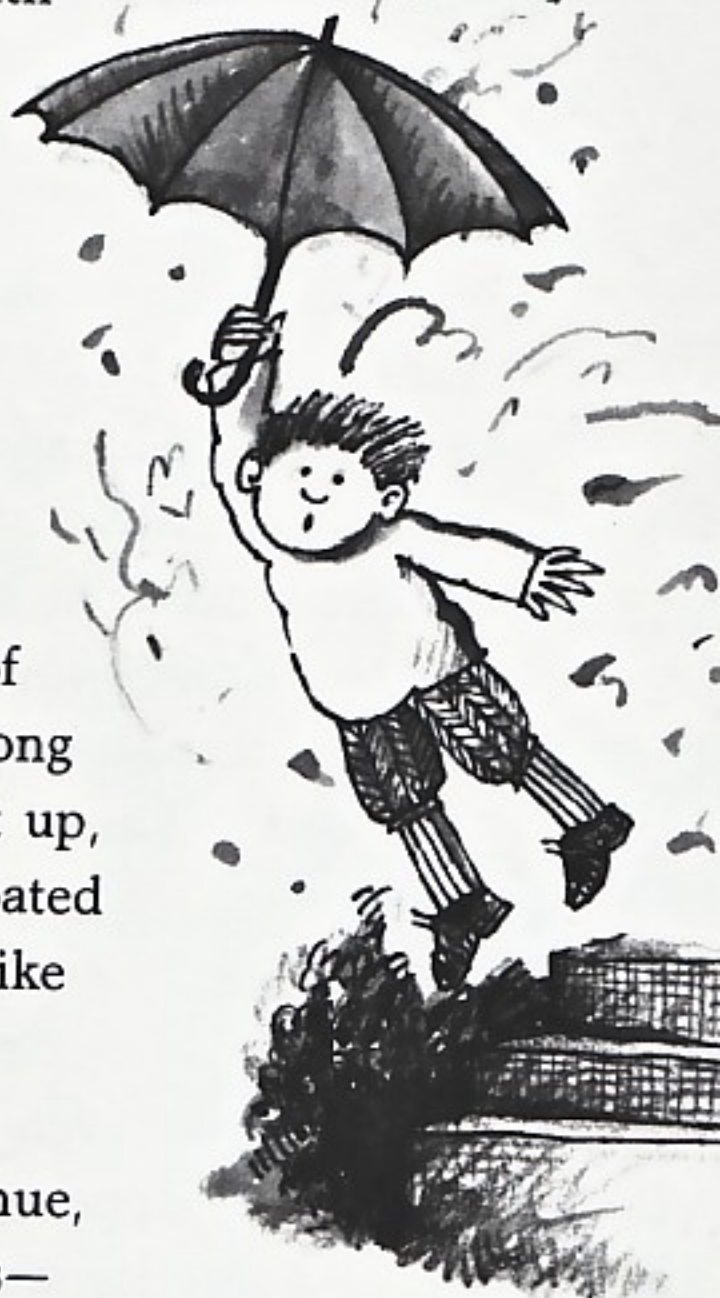
Right after lunch on the day of the hurricane, my mom was talking on the telephone when my dad came home early from the barbershop, where he worked. My brother, Buddy, who was eight, was at school. (His real name was Joe Jr., after my father.) Dad and Mom talked in the kitchen. Then Mom said to me, "Get your coat on, Tomie. We have to go

pick up Buddy and some of the neighborhood children. There's a big storm coming, and they're letting everyone out early."

We got in the car and drove to the school in the rain. A long line of cars and teachers with kids were waiting in front of the building. I looked up and saw something I've never ever forgotten.

A boy was standing at the top of the steps, holding an umbrella. All of a sudden a gust of wind blew, a really strong gust, and the boy went up, up, up in the air and floated down the stairs just like Mary Poppins.

It was scary driving home to Columbus Avenue, the car filled with kids—



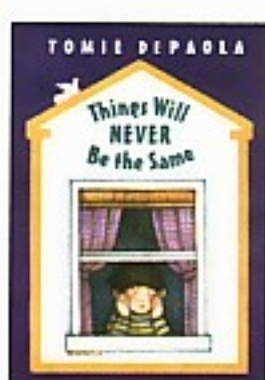
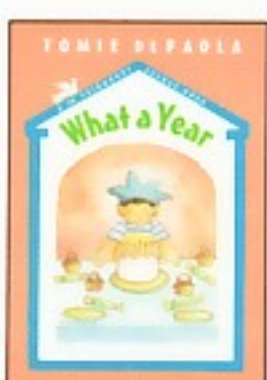
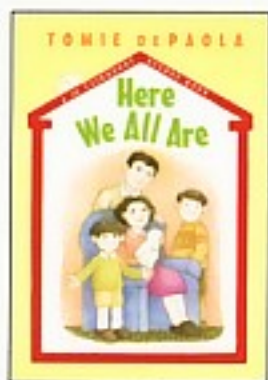


THE YEAR WE BUILT THE NEW HOUSE

Many things happen the year Tomie's family builds their new house. First, there is the hurricane of 1938, which blows down trees and turns the new dirt road to mud. Then there's Tomie's first day of school and his hilarious reaction to the movie *Snow White*. Fans of Tomie dePaola's family stories will enjoy reading his first chapter book.

★ "26 Fairmount Avenue is an address readers will eagerly revisit." —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

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BOOK ONE