

War Story¹

I awoke with a start. The tent where I had been sleeping was deserted and I could hear shouting and a lot of commotion outside the tent. My first impulse was to hide, so I slid off the camp cot onto the tent floor. No sooner had I done so when I saw a legion of soldiers with rifles and spears marching past the open tent door. Either they didn't see me, or they didn't consider me a threat. I watched them march by- row by row, and I kept hidden, waiting. I wondered what they were after, what they were looking for, or why they were interrupting our church campout.

Several minutes later when the soldiers had passed, I crept out of my hiding place. They had marched straight through the row of tents. I could see them in the distance. Maybe my daughter Lili was ok. I snuck out of my tent and turned the corner. I entered the tent two tents away that held three cribs. One of the church members had offered to let Lili use the crib to take a nap. I thought she would sleep better there and I'd left Lili in here for a nap thinking that she'd get better sleep in a crib. But all three cribs lay empty now.

I left the tent and crept along the path away from the soldiers. There was a clearing ahead where we had roasted marshmallows and sang camp songs the night before. One of the Bishoprick members was there in the clearing. He said, "We are under attack. We are trying to get everyone to safety. Get to your car and go."

I asked him if he knew where Lili was. He said no. I tried not to panic. Had one of the ward members picked her up to help her flee? Or had she been kidnapped by our enemies?

I felt in my pants pockets and discovered that I had my car keys with me. I made my way to the car, unlocked it, got inside, and locked it behind me.

What was I to do? I couldn't leave without Lili. Was she safe? Was she with one of the ward members? Or was she in danger? Was she already dead? I would do anything to get her back, or die trying.

A horde of people came by. At first I didn't know if they were friend or foe. They pressed upon the car and shook it violently. I didn't know what they wanted. At length they passed and fled into the woods to escape the attackers.

With trembling hands I attempted to dial the Relief Society president hoping that she would know what happened to Lili or who had taken her. There was no answer, or no service, or the signal was jammed.

I had taken it for granted that I would be safe in my car. I was lucky that the windows had not broken. I realized that the people did not have weapons, they were just scared. They seemed desperate to get into my car to save themselves, but there were too many of them. I could not have not have held them all. They were desperate to drive away from danger. Perhaps they would have thrown me from the car when I refused to go without my daughter. My little car only had four other seats besides mine.

¹ Inspired by a dream that I had on Jan 4, 2017