

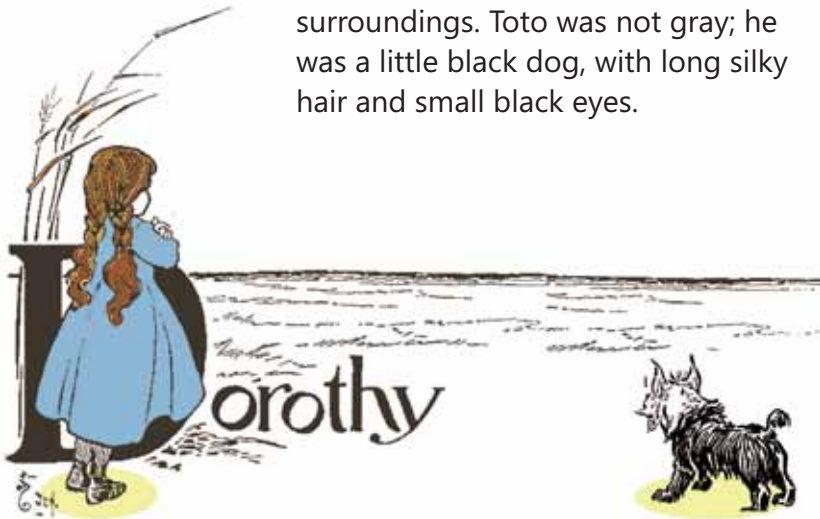
# The Cyclone



Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies<sup>1</sup>, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer's wife. Their house was small, for the lumber<sup>2</sup> to build it had to be carried by wagon many miles.

There was no garret<sup>3</sup> at all, and no cellar<sup>4</sup>—except a small hole dug in the ground, called a cyclone cellar, where the family could go in case one of those great whirlwinds arose, mighty enough to crush any building in its path. It was reached by a trap<sup>5</sup> door in the middle of the floor, from which a ladder led down into the small, dark hole.

When Dorothy stood in the doorway and looked around, she could see nothing but the great gray prairie on every side. It was Toto that made Dorothy laugh, and saved her from growing as gray as her other surroundings. Toto was not gray; he was a little black dog, with long silky hair and small black eyes.





Today, however, they were not playing. Uncle Henry sat upon the doorstep and looked anxiously at the sky, which was even grayer than usual. Dorothy stood in the door with Toto in her arms, and looked at the sky too. Aunt Em was washing the dishes.

From the far north they heard a low wail<sup>6</sup> of the wind, and Uncle Henry and Dorothy could see where the long grass bowed in waves before the coming storm. There now came a sharp whistling in the air from the south, and as they turned their eyes that way they saw ripples<sup>7</sup> in the grass coming from that direction also.

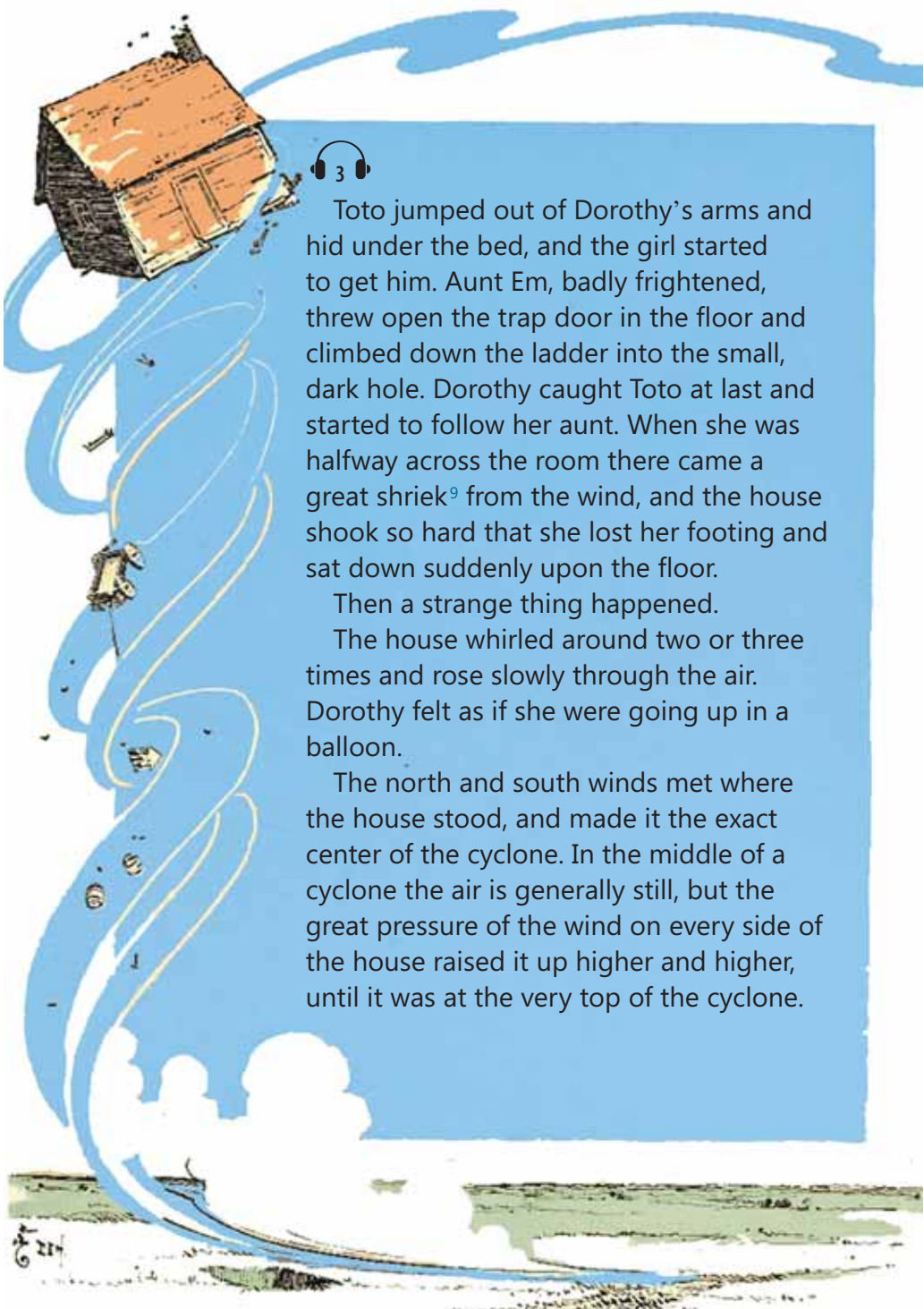
Suddenly Uncle Henry stood up.

“There’s a cyclone coming, Em,” he called to his wife. “I’ll go look after the stock.” Then he ran toward the sheds<sup>8</sup> where the cows and horses were kept.

Aunt Em dropped her work and came to the door. One glance told her of the danger close at hand.

“Quick, Dorothy!” she screamed. “Run for the cellar!”

- 1 prairie [ˈpreəri] (n.) a treeless grassy plain 大草原
- 2 lumber [ˈlʌmbər] (n.) pieces of wood used for building 木材；木料
- 3 garret [ˈgærɪt] (n.) the uppermost part of a house, beneath the roof 閣樓
- 4 cellar [ˈselər] (n.) a room under the ground floor of a building, usually used for storage 地下室
- 5 trap [træp] (n.) movable panel in floor or ceiling, same as trapdoor 活板門
- 6 wail [weɪl] (n.) a protracted high-pitched cry of pain or grief, or a similar sound 呼嘯聲
- 7 ripple [ˈrɪpəl] (n.) a small wave or series of gentle waves across a surface 波狀；波紋
- 8 shed [ʃed] (n.) a small building, usually made of wood, used for storing things 棚



Toto jumped out of Dorothy's arms and hid under the bed, and the girl started to get him. Aunt Em, badly frightened, threw open the trap door in the floor and climbed down the ladder into the small, dark hole. Dorothy caught Toto at last and started to follow her aunt. When she was halfway across the room there came a great shriek<sup>9</sup> from the wind, and the house shook so hard that she lost her footing and sat down suddenly upon the floor.

Then a strange thing happened.

The house whirled around two or three times and rose slowly through the air. Dorothy felt as if she were going up in a balloon.

The north and south winds met where the house stood, and made it the exact center of the cyclone. In the middle of a cyclone the air is generally still, but the great pressure of the wind on every side of the house raised it up higher and higher, until it was at the very top of the cyclone.



After the first few whirls around, and one other time when the house tipped<sup>10</sup> badly, she felt as if she were being rocked gently, like a baby in a cradle.

Toto did not like it. He ran about the room, now here, now there, barking loudly; but Dorothy sat quite still on the floor and waited to see what would happen.

Once Toto got too near the open trap door, and fell in; and at first the little girl thought she had lost him. But soon she saw one of his ears sticking up through the hole, for the strong pressure of the air was keeping him up so that he could not fall. She crept to the hole, caught Toto by the ear, and dragged him into the room again, afterward closing the trap door so that no more accidents could happen.



<sup>9</sup> shriek [ˈʃri:k] (n.) a short, loud, high cry or sound 尖聲

<sup>10</sup> tip [tɪp] (v.) to incline or bend from a vertical position 傾斜



Hour after hour passed away, and slowly Dorothy got over her fright; as the hours passed and nothing terrible happened, she stopped worrying and resolved to wait calmly and see what the future would bring.

At last she crawled over the swaying floor to her bed, and lay down upon it; and Toto followed and lay down beside her.

In spite of the swaying of the house and the wailing of the wind, Dorothy soon closed her eyes and fell fast asleep.

