

Wisdom From Above

'The greatest conqueror is he who overcomes the enemy without a blow ("Enemy quotes").'

I know you're wondering how I learned to read. Well, I've been hanging around here for so long I had to do something. I'm extremely glad my most recent friend loves to read. She's somewhat obsessed with quotes and this is one of my favorites. I read it over her shoulder three years ago. It gets boring up here waiting for my enemy to arrive. I hope he never comes. Not because I'm afraid, but because my friend doesn't deserve that tragedy. By the way, in case you're unsure, I'm a residential fire sprinkler and fire is my enemy.

My father is an English inventor by the name of John Carey, but I was created when this house was built. He developed the first of my kind in 1806. At the time, it was only a pipe with holes that dispersed water to extinguish the fire. I had many other Uncles such as Henry S. Parmelee and Frederick Grinnell who refined my ancestors into what I am today, but John Carey first invented the idea ("History of Fire Sprinkler Systems").

Today, when called upon, my goal is to deliver a steady supply of fire extinguishing material, usually water ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 2). I once heard a rumor that I have a short fuse. I'm offended by that notion. I have great self control and I only allow myself to spew my pent up anger at the fire. My anger manifests itself only when the air around me reaches 160 degrees Fahrenheit ("Fire Sprinkler History").

For example, if my friend leaves a candle burning in the bathroom and her mischievous cat knocks it over, this will set the shower curtain on fire. Within a minute, the flames travel up the curtain causing the air to exceed 160 degrees Fahrenheit which

either melts the link or breaks the bulb that activates the sprinkler system causing lifesaving water to rain down ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 2). A single sprinkler head can create a 20 foot spray, easily stifling the flames originally from a strawberry-mango smelling candle and a cat named Jinx ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 2).

My fellow sprinklers and I have proudly saved many lives, but we do so much more. There is a myth floating around that the water from my spout damages the house more than the fire does. That is completely inaccurate! Not only does the water do less damage, but it is also less harmful than the water from a fire fighter's hose. I can squirt out 13-24 gallons of water per minute and drown the fire while it's still in infant stage ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 3). If the fire is left to grow into a teen or adult fire, 85% more objects will perish to the flames ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 3). When help arrives, even more will be destroyed by the 100-250 gallons of water per minute spewed by the firefighter's hose ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 3).

Another huge myth I am here to dispel is that when a fire goes off in the bathroom, it triggers the sprinklers in every other part of the house. The vision of water raining down all over your home, shorting out your television, warping your cabinets, and turning your sofas and beds into sponges has deterred a lot of people from installing me. This is a fabrication due to inaccurate portrayals of my work in movies. All of the sprinklers do not activate ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 3). Only those that have their links or bulbs melt go off and fight fire.

Also, I am cheap. Do not take this the wrong way. I am thrifty and not poorly made. You have to consider this a huge benefit with the rising gas prices. Installing my system is not expensive. My kind has been known to be as cheap as \$1 to \$1⁵⁰ per

square foot ("Residential Sprinkler Systems"). This means I am readily available and more of my fellow sprinklers and I can be silently standing guard as your family sleeps.

I also want to warn you about something that scares me. It's called flashover and is a condition that occurs less than five minutes from the start of a fire ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 4). Flashovers happen when everything in the room catches fire at once ("Flashover"). They are devastating and nothing survives if caught in a flashover ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 4). I once watched as the neighbors' home was engulfed by flashover. I had to fight back tears as I waited for news about the neighbor family. Luckily they were out of town and their pets were with relatives. No one was lost, but nothing was saved. I can stop flames quickly so a flashover never occurs in your home.

You can see how I work at demonstrations sponsored by local fire departments or American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA) chapters ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 4). They normally start fires in two side-by-side trailers, one with a sprinkler system like me and one without a system. Those watching are amazed at how fast the fire spreads and the effectiveness of the sprinklers ("AFSA Scholarship Contest" 4).

I hope that by listening to my story you will understand the importance of having sprinklers like me watching over you. I could not imagine how horrible I would feel if my friend, her belongings or even that mischievous cat, Jinx, were to perish in a fire I could have stopped. Keep in mind that 90% of fires monitored by a sprinkler system are contained by the activation of just *one* sprinkler head ("Fire Sprinkler Facts"). Well, I'll let you get back to your life. I just wanted to share a little wisdom from above.

Works Cited

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