Julie liked reading, she didn’t have much time though. First, she had to go to school and school isn’t easy in 7th grade. Then when she got home she had to babysit her brother Carter and sister Lily while Mom was at work, and she was always working. Plus, Carter and Lily were super hard to babysit after Dad died. Also, while she was baby-sitting she had lots of homework, seventh grade homework. That meant night time was the only time. But she was so tired at the end of every day she just went to bed and didn’t read. Then she started the day all over again.
Eventually, summer came, and school ended for the year. "Maybe I will have some time to read now," thought Julie as she woke up the day after school ended. But just as she picked up her book Mom called "Julie! Can you watch Carter and Lily for me?"

"Yes, Mom I can," she sighed.

Julie wasn’t happy. She yelled and spoke in an irritated voice. But Carter and Lily didn’t like that. Lily cried, screamed and knocked books off the shelf! Then Carter grabbed his juice and spilled it all over her and the rug! Things were a mess! When Mom came home she was unhappy!
At supper Mom saw their sad faces. "What happened?" She asked. Julie told her everything from wanting to read and having to babysit Carter and Lily. She finished by saying "Nothing's the same since Dad died."

"I'm so sorry Julie." said their Mom, "But I really need you to babysit for me, OK?"

"I guess." said Julie, but she didn't mean it. That night she decided she would run away.
Julie packed her backpack with food and lots of books. Quietly she snuck out the front door and ran. Finally, she reached an old restaurant on the other side of town. Angrily she threw her backpack on the ground.

Why did this have to happen to her family?

Unexpectedly Julie heard a bang behind the restaurant! Tiptoeing toward the noise she saw children hungrily digging in a trash can. One found an overcooked meat patty. Each one took a little bit of it then quietly ran away.
Julie thought about this. That could be her! Was life really that bad for her, just because she couldn’t read when she wanted to? Suddenly Julie understood everyone missed Dad! Mom was trying to pick up the slack but she couldn’t do it all! Then Julie realized that she could help Mom by babysitting Carter and Lily. With renewed energy she ran home and went to bed. The next morning, she tried to keep calm. She found out that being nice to the twins worked! No one cried and nothing spilled.

When Mom came home everyone was happy and things got better.