



Kate Shelley and Midnight Express **by Margaret K. Wettererer/ Karen Ritz** **(Narrated by Garrett Gibson)**

Kate was 15 years old. She was standing by the kitchen window with her two younger sisters. They saw lightning coming over the hills. Then the rain came. Kate went outside to the barn. She let out the two horses and showed them to a big hill so they would not drown. Then she picked up two piglets and brought them to the hill with the horses.

The men were out on the railroad tracks checking them for safety. Kate heard a train going down the railroad. Then she heard the horn going wildly. She heard a big crash and she told her mother that she had to go and make sure if any of the men were in danger.

She got a straw hat and her father's railroad lantern. Her mother did not want her to go. She said, "If Dad were working on the railroads, wouldn't you want someone to help him?"

She ran down to where the crash was at Honey Creek. She saw two men in the water. She could hear them yelling. She couldn't really make out what they saying. She called out to them saying, "I'm going to get help." She got to the Des Moines River bridge. She stared at the darkness down the railroad track. The wind had blown out the lantern flame. She was frightened but could not give up.

She started running across the bridge then she crawled on all fours. Some of the boards were missing on the train track. She got splinters and nail cuts in her hands. At last her hand touched the ground and she could see the lights of the station. She got to the station and opened the door. All the men stared at her. Her skirt was torn, mud was dripping from her straw hat. She said, "You must stop the midnight express." The men thought she was crazy.

One of the men got on the telegraph and sent a message to the train station before them. One man ran out on the platform with a lantern to flag the express down. They were able to stop the express train. Kate rode with the men to show them where the two men were in Honey Creek. Someone shouted and the men in the water called back. Kate showed them a way to get across to the other side of Honey Creek. They were able to save the two men.

This is a true story that happened in July 1881 in the state of Iowa. Kate Shelley was a real person. Her father died when she was 13 and less than a year later her brother drowned. Kate was awarded one hundred dollars and a lifetime pass on the railroad for her bravery.