

## Jenna

A thunderous explosion smashed the silence. Jenna shivered, groaning at the pain in her head, then raised both hands to cover her ears. A fork of lightning, daylight bright, illuminated the evening garden. She lifted her head, catching a blurred glimpse of the view before thunder rolled over her, a steamroller of sound. Jenna shivered, wrapping both arms around her crouched body, then slowly climbed to her feet using the wall to support her.

Looking up through the glass she watched the final glow of sunset swallowed by the swiftly growing storm clouds. She listened for the rush of rain tears but heard nothing. Then, moving away, the lightning flashed. She counted in her head: one, two, three. The thunder roared again. She stumbled across the room, fumbled open the doors, and welcomed the wildness of the storm.

Standing in the middle of the lawn, Jenna raised her face to the roiling darkness. Still the teardrops of rain failed. She watched the spectacular display, as the storm circled, flinching at the sound and fury. At first it was the fascination of the lightning forking against the deep grey clouds, powerful and bright with a fierce beauty. Then she began to listen to the deafening growls of thunder before they faded into the purr of some giant cat.

How long the storm lasted, she could not have said. Only that her fearful heart beat eventually calmed when the final purr of thunder faded into the distance. There had been no rain, neither viciously hard nor soft and gentle. No tears to dampen her cheeks or to wash her spirit clean of that terrible fear yet, she felt ... different. Yes, full of determined purpose. Jenna paused in the quiet, a pale statue, thinking. Then she turned back inside and headed upstairs to the bedroom. She would make the most of the still eye of the storm to prepare for what was coming.

The front door slammed, painfully violent, back against the hall wall. Jenna, in the lounge, flinched and checked her watch. He was home earlier than she had expected. The

agonising storm was about to begin. His furious shouting of her name outdid the thunder and she shivered anticipating the pain of the lightning of his cruel hands. Unconsciously she half crouched then stopped, her gaze caught by the bright red rucksack. She straightened, grabbed her coat from the back of the chair and quickly put it on. Not this time, no more pain, she touched the bruise on her cheek, a painful reminder of that afternoon's anger. His shoes clicked against the polished, wood floor before he went upstairs. Jenna grabbed the rucksack, and hurried outside. Soon he would see the computer smashed on the floor, after she had emptied their bank account of her money. A roar of fury from above and she smiled, heading quickly across the garden, through the gate and out into the gentler hell of the storm.

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