



Crystal Tuition: Creative Writing

The story below has been written by one of my students and is the winning entry to the Crystal Tuition end of year creative writing competition (July 2020). This piece of writing has not been edited by me or anyone else. All intellectual and creative rights belong to DH.

'The Storm before the Calm' by DH (Year 5 student)

Darkness engulfed the night sky ominously; it was as dark as a bottomless well and caused Leo to furrow his brow in worry. Frantically, he paced up and down like a caged circus bear in their holiday cabin; he realised his father would not even have the light from the moon to illuminate the ground. BOOM! RUMBLE! A violent, malicious, angry storm suddenly crashed and howled overhead. Leo could not remember whether his father had taken a torch to search for Rocky but his mobile phone had been going to voicemail for hours and he had been gone far too long in the unfamiliar sprawling lush forest. He had only recently turned eighteen and was now the only man left in the chalet; he had to leave and search for them both.

"Leo! Please! You can't go out in this storm! Dad will be back soon! He's probably just sheltering until the storm calms!" His mother begged, grabbing hold of his arm trying to stop him.

"Mum, it's been five hours since the dog ran off and dad left to find him! It's now pitch black and they're both lost out there in horrendous torrential rain! We can't even phone anyone for help as we the storm has stopped our phone signals! Please, stay here and look after Lara." Leo bellowed back.

Leo's jet-black hair framed his deathly pale and angular face. He had suddenly shot up in height that summer and had acquired the nickname 'Lanky Leo' due to the fact he now towered over all his University friends. Although he was lean, he had the heart of a lion and was never one to shy away from danger. Grabbing a backpack with supplies, he ventured into the darkness with his torch to find his father and dog.

The wind whipped his face like a cat on nine tails striking its next victim as he trekked through the marshy earth relentlessly. Decaying, dry, russet-red leaves crunched beneath his feet as he tried to imagine which way his father could have gone, 'Dad!! Rocky! Dad!! Rocky!!' he wailed in desperation. Where could his father had been all this time? Was he hurt? What would he do if he found him unconscious? What would happen to his mother and little sister if something happened to him? All these thoughts swirled around his head trying to drown him before other more worrying thoughts poured in. Howling noises convinced him the forest was alive with unseen creatures and he tried to move faster but found he actually moved slower as the boggy mud swallowed his shoes up. An overwhelming dread washed over Leo like a tsunami as he feared he would end up lost too but his adrenaline kept him trudging on.

Shivering from the piercing cold in his bones and with his teeth chattering, Leo jumped in the air as lightning tore through the sky, and the thunder cackled like a demented witch. The storm was getting angrier and angrier like a raging bull and he tried desperately to see if there was shelter or anywhere to hide. Suddenly, he saw in the distance an ancient imposing, vast, towering tree with an enormous hollow where Rocky and his father were sheltering. Rocky began to bark furiously as Leo approached rushing towards him in joy. Leo saw that his father must have fallen as dried up blood stained his head and clothes. Exhausted from his ordeal his father could not jump up but he smiled weakly and said, 'Leo, how glad am I to see you son! I tripped on a rock and must have lost consciousness, I kept losing my way back!' The two men hugged each other tightly, whilst Rocky tried to join in by leaping up on them.

Patiently, they waited for the storm to end – huddling together to keep warm. As the eerie ghostly gloom of the night disappeared it was replaced by the calmness of the glorious shimmering morning dawn. Honey-yellow radiant, shining sun-beams danced happily in the peaceful dense majestic forest spreading its rutilant rays. They were ready to make their journey back and tried again to phone for help. As all three rambled home they listened in awe to the melodious symphony of birdsong that echoed around them; each breathed in the fragrant aroma of pine and heather scents mixed with the petrichor. A cacophonous mobile ring sounded and the men smiled at each other jubilantly. Leo knew everything was going to be alright...

By DH