

The Weather Woman

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The lighthouse bulb circled round and round revealing the darkened desolate sea and ever-rolling hills to human eyes. It was calm tonight, it usually was when Raynie was sleeping, although an occasional nightmare would awake a rumble of thunder or clap of lightning. It was not her fault, just the way she was. Whenever Raynie was content a ray of sunshine would appear lighting up the grass strewn horizon; if she was confused or angry, streaks of water would lash against the lamp lit windows. Raynie's emotions, whatever they were, defined the weather report for the day. And there was a deafening storm due for tonight.

Clash. Waves thumped down on the sand coated shore. Smash. Lightening cried as it lit up the dark clouding sky. Gasp. Raynie awoke from her horrifying dream, filled with monsters crawling from beneath shadows and walls closing in, no doors, no windows, nowhere to run, no escape. Her bedroom door slammed open and a dark figure rushed to her aid. "Raynie! Raynie! Wake up!" shouted the silhouette. Raynie began to sob as she sat upright, wrapping her arm about her chest. "It's alright, it was only a dream," the figure soothed.

A lamp was flicked on to reveal the unknown man/ woman/ child, but it was only Auntie. Relief. Auntie was Raynie's guardian, a kind soul who had looked after Raynie for as long as she could remember. And it was Auntie who calmed her back to sleep, only to be woken next dawn by the bright early morning sun which was shining softly through the thin, net curtains that Auntie had a particular liking for.

"Raynie! Breakfast!" Auntie called. Raynie flung herself out of bed smelling the blissful fumes. She flew down the spiral staircase two at a time and sat down heavily at the rough, wooden kitchen table. A large plate was put in front of her, along with butter, toast, and homemade marmalade. It looked delightful. "Thanks Auntie," Raynie said gratefully, at the same time picking up the mouth watering food and shoving it in her mouth hungrily. "Manners Raynie," Auntie criticised, as Raynie guiltily swallowed the extremely large bite she had just taken. "Remember, I need you to clean and mend part of the lighthouse searchlight, for some reason one of the wires has snapped," Auntie reminded her. "Of course Auntie, I'll check it out when I'm finished," Raynie replied.

Snap. The lightbulb blew as Raynie tried to connect the wires for the twelfth time. "Agggggh, this is impossible!" yelled Raynie. Another shower of rain hit the top of the lighthouse's dome for the sixth time. Grumpily she stomped back inside to see Auntie happily knitting a cream pullover glancing outside at the dark rain clouds looming overhead. "Judging by the weather the wire has not managed to be repaired?" Auntie gently pouted. "No it hasn't, I'm sorry," Raynie apologised. "Don't worry dear, it happens to the best of us I'm sure. Was that thunder?" questioned Auntie. "Probably," Raynie said grudgingly. "I'm going to bed if you don't mind, I'll have another go at it tomorrow, see you in the morning." "Alright love, have a good sleep, hopefully no nightmares this time," yawned Auntie.

Raynie trudged up the stairs gloomily. As she reached the 34th step, she heard what sounded like a scream coming from outside. What on earth was that? she muttered to herself, rushing back down the stairs and pushing open the front door. Raynie scanned the open horizon and to her shock spotted a small boat wedged against the rocks, stuck and damaged, with three people struggling in the water, unable to get out due to the slippery, seaweed-coated rocks that provided no grip.

Raynie rushed out towards the shipwreck and saw a woman and two children struggling desperately to get to shore. "Help! Help!" they screamed. Raynie didn't know what to do; Auntie always said never to go near those rocks as that was where the worst currents were. But there was nothing else to do. Raynie hopped and stumbled across the rocks and launched herself into the water. Ice cold spasms engulfed her, Raynie's clothes pulled her down, somehow she managed to get herself to the surface. She swam hurriedly towards the smallest child and helped them onto her back, they were only about five, and their lips were already turning blue. Then Raynie doggy-paddled to the second child, and helped put its arms about her neck.

She tried to get back up onto the rocks, but with the weight of the children she could not, and now Raynie had no idea what to do. She felt as though it was her own fault, her anger had caused the storm after all, and that had led the boat to be stuck against these dangerous rocks. Then suddenly, out of nowhere, a hand came out in front of her, it was Auntie! She took it gratefully in her own frozen, numb hand and allowed herself to be pulled up, out of the water, along with the other children, who must have been clinging onto her back for dear life. Raynie then heard another splash and groan as the woman (who must have been the children's mother) was pulled out of the swirling water as well. As Auntie wrapped them up and led them back to the comforting, soft glow of the lighthouse, Raynie realised that they all could have been very seriously hurt, or worse. She shuddered at the thought. And as she was sitting down in front of the fire with her dressing gown on, and a warm cup of hot chocolate in her hands, what mattered most was that noone was hurt (only slightly shocked, and there was nothing better than a warm drink to fix that). So really, the facts were that everything was going to be alright.

After the woman and two children had left for home, (she found out their names were Mia, Hazel and Lottie), Raynie sat down with Auntie and had a long hug, and that, it seemed, made everything seem a little better, and in perspective of course. "Now, I want you to be a very good girl from now on and do exactly as I say, no more jumping into freezing cold, turbulent waters. Please?" asked Auntie. "Okay Auntie, I promise to do exactly as you tell me to and never do anything rash," replied Raynie, rather sarcastically. For girls her age can't help doing mischievous, dramatic things, it's just in their nature. "Hmm, now off to bed with you, and I don't want a peep out of you until the morning," announced Auntie. "I'm going, I'm going," smiled Raynie.

And later that night, when Auntie checked that Raynie was not indulging in some late night reading by torch light, she found her fast asleep. Of course her duvet had managed to wander to the floor, but she was asleep all the same. Auntie tiptoed softly over to her sleeping form and tucked the duvet back under her chin. Well, all in all, it was somewhat peaceful tonight. "Hiccup," hiccupped Raynie and a slight shower of water hit the window for a second. "Night Raynie," whispered Auntie as she padded softly back out of the room,

chuckling quietly to herself, setting in her mind that she would finish knitting the cream coloured pullover tonight, and give it to Raynie in the morning.