

Lost in a Storm

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Just a spooky short story I made for creative writing.

*A young girl named Ester loses her way in the forest, what trouble will befall her?
will she come out alive??? read and find out!*

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Creative writing
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Lost in a storm

She is closing in. *little girl is afraid of the thunder. Little girl won't push the horses faster. I'll catch you yet.* She chants maniacally to herself as the whip comes down, determined.

Ester trudges down the eastbound, rainy path. Clutching her tattered grey cloak as she scans the dark pines, and firs only five feet to either side of her. She hugs herself tighter at the sound of a wolf's howl. Out of the trees and fog, a fork in the road appears.

“Father told me there was only wilderness. Where could this lead? Let's see, the name has long since faded. At least it's another village.” Ester says to the fear in her mind. The path is obviously less traveled seeing as there is a lack of wagon or horse tracks. *Must be a very isolated place.* She whispers to her aching feet as the southern road ahead of her widens and a flash of lightning reveals a drawbridge and the tall, towered castle it belongs to. Hesitantly Ester exits the protecting trees onto the unsteady planks.

The wind and rain bite through her cloak and her wet, red hair whips at her pale face. No matter how cautious her steps, the soaked boards creak under her feet. Lightning strikes a tree behind her. Startled she dashes for the gate. Finding it barely cracked, Ester squeezes in the opening. She is greeted by warm air. The walls on either side of her, however, were just out of sight in the darkness. Lightning strikes again lighting up the courtyard ahead of her. Decaying hedges make a path to an angel mounted fountain and two sets of stairs leading to another dark hall.

“Oh, all these plants must be dead because of the glass roof, perhaps when they had gardeners to tend them this had been a marvelous meeting place.” whispering, Ester made her way across the courtyard, waiting for the light from the storm to show her the way. After a few more lightning strikes her eyes become more accustomed to the darkness and she can now see, down the north hall a slight flicker of fire light reflecting off of a portrait. The courtyard seemed as though it had once been a battle ground. Cracks in the pathway, pieces of marble stair missing and her dripping wet boots result in Ester stumbling multiple times.

The eerie hall is lit by only the occasional torch, and Ester begins to notice the white paint peeling off of the red wooden walls makes them seem to bleed. Lining the halls are portraits, old and faded until they are unrecognizable as humans. Ester returns her eyes to her path, seeing a figure approaching her. Frightened she stops just in front of a bright torch. The six foot figure continues its graceful approach. The shining green eyes stand out from the pale face, and midnight black hair that seemed to blend with the dark green, dragging gown. The figure stopped just out of the light's reach.

“Who are you?” Ester asks meekly.

“I have no name” the smooth feminine voice seems to resonate within the close hall.

“Then what are you called?” the young girl tries once again.

“I have been called Empress, since a time long before you were born, child. Now follow me.” Empress turns away from the girl and begins to lead her from the light and down the dark, bleeding halls.

“Don't you want to know my name?” Ester calls after her hoping to remain in the light a while longer.

“If you wish for dry clothes and a warm bed, follow me” agitated, Empress offers only once, and the young girl obediently follows. And only then does she realize that the Empress' servants had been stalking her since her entrance into their home. *Why did they not stop me, grab me and throw me out? Or is this woman more than an empress.* Ester is not allowed more time to think as Empress signals to her servants to take her into a room.

Happy to finally bathe again, Ester takes her time to relax before donning the warm, fleece robe and return to her elegantly vaulted, candle lit room. The red and gold four post bed has a blue embroidered nightgown, perfectly fitting for Ester, hanging on a bar with the drapes. After dressing and curling under the quilts, the squeak of a door reaches her ear. Her eyes scan over the smooth mahogany furnishings, the steady beating on the stained glass windows tells her that the storm is still raging in the black of the night. Rolling again, Ester's blue eyes meet a pair of small green ones as intense as the moon reflecting the candle light.

“You're in danger, miss!” the child exclaims quietly as he crawls his way onto the bed.

“How am I in danger?” Ester whispers scooting to the other side of the bed.

“Do you know what Empress does with the wanderers? Do you know what Empress is? Mommy came here, like you. Mommy came here and had me. But Mommy disappeared and Empress turned younger. You'll disappear too! GET OUT!” the wide eyes of the child glow as he urgently whispered the last words.

“I've heard of a sorceress who stole the youth of wandering gypsy women. Could this Empress be that sorceress? Is that what you're telling me?” Ester grasped the child's hands to prevent him from leaving.

“Get out, the way she brought you, go that way and get out” the child wiggles out of her hold and slips off the bed before disappearing into the Darkness of the Castle. She quickly rises from the warm, welcoming bed and dressed back in her tattered traveling clothes. She sulks down the bleeding halls counting the torches.

5...6...7, was it here we turned?” looking doubtfully down another dark hall Ester took the west

corridor. Without realizing her mistake she slid right past the Empress herself.

“Where are you going little one? Why are you not resting?” Sweetly the harmonic voice echoed as Ester turned to face her.

“I needed to stretch my legs.” Ester squeaked. The Empress takes one long stride and towers over Ester, looking down on her. Her eyes wide, like green glowing moons.

“Really now? Perhaps the rack can stretch them for you!” Leaning forward, her shoulders just over Ester's head Empress' voice turned from hymn to hiss. Ester looks up and the Empress' neck seems to stretch out pulling her long black hair from her shoulders like a curtain trying to swallow her whole. Before she can think of a reply Ester's leg shoots out kicking the Empress in the knee. Ester never sees the Empress fall weakly behind her as she dashes for the double doors at the end of the corridor.

Instead of the front courtyard, a garden, stable, and two weather worn carriages stand in the still pouring rain. A dim light under the clouds on the horizon and still more lightning show her the way to the stables. She hears the sickly whine of the horses as she nears what seems to be a tack shed. Ester takes quick shelter in the shed but then hastens to grab two harnesses, when she hears the castle doors slam against the outer walls. She finds the healthiest looking horses and hastily pulls them to the better of the two carriages.

“Do you think that horse can carry you away from me?” the harsh yell of the Empress reaches Ester's ears none too soon. For she has the horse hitched to the carriage and is driving the horses across the bridge, when she hears the Empress scream out in anger and call inaudible words. The rain stops and the Empress comes steaming around the castle with strong healthy looking horses and a new looking carriage.

Across the bridge the horses fly, Ester pushes the horses faster as they enter the dark, dripping trees. Ester takes the horses down the original eastward path, taking a right at the fork in the road. Mud splashes at the tree trunks on either side of her. Only once does Ester glance back to see the Empress gaining on her. The Empress' face seems stretched thin and her eyes bulging, bloodshot.

Out of the trees the carriages sped, the rising sun lighting the sheer cliffs down to Ester's right, she eases up they seem to tense at the still rolling thunder. The Empress is right behind her, the shouts and whip lashes ringing clearly. She is closing in. *little girl is afraid of the thunder. Little girl won't push the horses faster. I'll catch you yet.* She chants maniacally to herself as the whip comes down, determined. The Empress knows that the road drops away after the cliff's cedar tree. She halts the horses next to the outstanding fir. She watches Ester and her horses disappear with a murderous scream.

“Another one lost, the next will come soon. The raids on the peasant villages draw them to me, I will be young forever!” her hideous cackle rang through the wet trees as she turned the carriage and horses back to the castle.