Lightning

It was a cold and stormy night when I decided that I had had enough of this life. Many years later I stood atop a tall hill and looked at the surroundings of what I thought was to be my final resting place. It was peaceful and serene. The water from a nearby stream gushed its majesty below.

The forest deep below was dark and shaded and the leaves and branches of the trees rustled in the wind.

I looked at the sky and saw black cloud extending along the breadth of my vision.

I stood with my hands outstretched and called up to the clouds.

“Oh, hear me great clouds in the sky above, won’t you bring down a torrent of lightning to vanquish me of this earth!”

Thunder crackled in the sky above, but I saw no flashes of lightning anywhere near me.

I stood there for a few hours and scoured the sky for any signs of lightning.

After a few hours, I gave up. I sighed heavily and made my way off of the hilltop and back to my home.

I lived alone, in a small cottage. It was my respite from all the harsh calamities of mankind and my own repulsive desires for others.

I walked through the front door and was greeted with absolute unending silence.

I would have cried if anyone would have heard me, but there was no point. Crying would not relinquish my sorrow only a conversation could do that.

But people sucked and would not understand my problems.

I was always a solitary creature, the only people that ever truly seemed to be able to understand me, were the ones that I had created myself.

I was an author; one who was successful enough to be able to live in solitude on this hill without the need for a day job.

People loved what I did, but they did not know me. Not for lack of trying, many of my fans had attempted to contact me in order to tell me how much they loved my work. I ignored these messages. Not because I am a bad person but rather because I am amazingly pessimistic about my own species’ intentions and as such, I had never properly learned how to respond to a compliment.

I had no time for such quandaries and I moved myself into the kitchen and made myself a cup of tea.

I drank slowly for I wished to enjoy at least one part of my day before my writing sessions started.

But the session would not start because “he” appeared.

An old man appeared before me his wrinkles lined his face like leather and his light grey hair cascaded down his back and clung to his black shirt by its grease. He had a long scraggly white beard that had grown to the point that it was dangling uselessly inches above the floor.

He smiled and I saw his blackened teeth, “You still can’t do it can you?”

“Do what?” I asked although I knew full well what he was talking about.

“You can’t do it yourself, so you go up onto that hill every day and beg a bolt of lightning to come and strike you down.”

“I can do it myself,” I replied shakily.

“Then why don’t you?” The man asked as he brought his face right up to mine, I could smell the sick stench of garlic on his breath.

I breathed in shakily and explained, “If I am to die, then I want the last thing I see to be beautiful and green.”

“Then why don’t you take the knife up there?”

I walked past the man and opened up my kitchen cabinet. In it lay a lone knife. I picked it up and examined it as I had done many times before, it was a small knife, but it was incredibly sharp, it shined a brilliant silver.

I looked at it and thought about all of the other times that I had held this knife. I never used it for cooking it was a knife I bought for one specific purpose. To end life.

I had stood exactly where I stood then many times before looking at that knife and wondering “why not?” “Why don’t you just end it?”

Something always stopped me and I didn’t know what it was, but I knew that the man was wrong, I knew that fear was not the reason I couldn’t.

I had never feared death, in fact, for a large proportion of my life I had been fascinated by it. I had always wondered the philosophical questions regarding death, such as what happened after the occurrence, that curiosity was what got me to get this knife in the first place. But I never really planned on using it on myself.

I put the knife away and turned to the old figure, “it would be too painful.” I explained.

“Do you really think being hit by lightning will be any less painful?” He asked snidely.

“I don’t know”, I responded, “But it will be more fitting of an end for a fantasy writer.”

With that, I left the figure and retired to my bed.

The next day the storm was even worse; I walked up to the top of the hill again and inspected the surroundings. Once again it was cloudy in the sky above, and thunders rumble could be heard but this time the crackle of blue lightning streaks could be seen of in the distance and getting closer with each strike.

I held my arms up again and closed my eyes and waited for the oblivion I could hear the thunder and lightning edging closer and closer to me, I breathed quickly in anticipation and I shook with excitement. “Why are you doing this?” A voice asked.

Confused, I opened my eyes and saw standing before me a perfect image of myself with the same tall and thin frame and dark hair that I had become so accustomed to seeing.

The lighting drew closer, it was piercing the stream now, which told me that the next strike would be the one that hit me.

“The figure brought his mouth to my ear and whispered. “You are not supposed to die today.” Then he pushed me.

I fell backwards and onto my back as the lightning bolt struck exactly where my head had been a few seconds before and crackled in between my feet.

In those few milliseconds I was saved, had my feet have been on the ground when the lightning struck instead of elevated in the air, then the bolt would have surged through my entire body and killed me. But the figure had saved me.

I got up quickly and stumbled away from the lightning spot whilst staring at it with pure fear, my entire body shook violently and moist sweat covered my brow, there was no way that I had wanted to die otherwise I wouldn’t have been so shaken by the proximity of the electricity.

In that moment I realised that there was a lot I needed to do before the end could come and take me.

I ran down the hill crying as I did so while repeating the same line over and over out loud. “I am never doing this again. I am never doing this again!”

In truth, I was never going to try to harm myself in any way ever again for as long as I lived and breathed.