

THORN OF SECRETS by B. Truly

EXCERPT

The power of the wind beating against the windows becomes too much—two of them shatter. Glass explodes everywhere. Justin uses his body as a shield, keeping the invading glass from hitting me. Tanya screams bloody murder.

Jackson shouts from down the hall. “Move your asses, people!”

Justin ushers me in that direction quickly. As I move, I notice putting weight on my right foot is painful. It gives out against my will, then I’m hobbling.

Tanya rushes into the half-bath. Justin stops and scoops me up, carrying me the rest of the way, making me feel like a helpless child. It’s more than humiliating. We huddle in the half-bath. The room doesn’t have windows, thank goodness. Since the house doesn’t have a basement, this makes the half-bath the safest spot.

A flashlight propped up on the counter is our only source of light. Jackson’s forehead is wrinkled. Tanya is sitting on the toilet with the lid closed with her arms wrapped around herself. Justin is near me as I crouch in the corner, shivering uncontrollably. The house feels like an earthquake has gotten a hold of it—shaking under the wrath of the cyclone.

My heart is slamming against my ribcage. The sound blends in with the rumbling of the foundation. With the expressions on the others’ faces, I’m not imagining it. The tornado is right on top of us, and I’m certain the house is inside of it. For a couple of seconds, all sound seems to cease. The vroom of the monster is muted.

“Is it gone?” Tanya wonders.

My senses are waving red flags. The cyclone is nowhere near done. It’s only getting started. My intuition is confirmed when the roaring picks up again and, to my disbelief, is even louder. The theory about the eye is wrong. The center of the storm is not peaceful, only a momentary calm before the beast unleashes its full wrath. The wind is so ferocious, it takes everything in me not to cry.

Tanya lets out her fear. “Why is the house shaking? Why is it so loud?”

A moment later, it becomes clear why the house is trembling. It has been defeated and can no longer stay rooted. The roof cracks open. The cracks spread quickly, like worker ants determined to snag a meal, and then the roof rips off completely.

“Ah, hell!” Jackson yells.