

Whirlwind

The yellow swing rocked back and forth, the rusty metal chains moaning. Rain drops broke onto the pages of *The Secret Garden*. The girl sat on the swing, her pink flip flops slipping off her heels. It was shocking how fast the sky changed. It was as if a painter had spilled a can of gray paint across the clouds. Cherry, the border collie, sat beside the twelve year old girl, giving her a look that said "why aren't we going inside?". The drizzle turned to a shower, and page 87 was practically drenched in water.

"Josie, come inside honey it's pouring!" A tall woman stood beside the red ranch house with a wooden spoon clutched in her hand.

"Coming!" replied Josie. The wind began to toss her long blond hair in all sorts of directions. The pages of the book flipped this way and that. All of a sudden a large *crack!* sounded from inside the woods behind the house. Tree branches were falling all over. The lightning that was performing a light show in the sky. Cherry had already galloped towards the house. Josie picked up her flip flops that were buried under a puddle of mud, slipped them on, and bolted for the screen porch. She turned around once to see a humongous tree plumidith to the ground in the forest. Josie's eyes widened, but she turned and kept running, for she was only ten steps from the porch. Josie slammed the screen door behind her, and scanned the woods and grass fields. Josie and her family lived in a ranch that used to be home to a farmer. She watched as the grass fields turned into swamp land, and more trees were collapsing. She took off her muddy flip flops and started to head into the house. Inside her mother was reaching for banana bread that was cooling on the counter. Their house was rustic and was decorated to resemble a cabin. There was even a moose head atop the grand fireplace.

"Hey Mags!" Josie walked into the T.V. room where Maggie, her little sister, was reading. Everyone liked to call Maggie mini Josie because they were exactly the same: same hair, same blue eyes, etc.

Peppermint, Cherry's sister, slept next to Maggie. Peppermint was a good girl and came inside when she was called. "Cherry!" Josie called. "Come here girl." There was no response. "Where is Cherry?" Josie ran into the kitchen and looked out the window. Josie's eyes watched in horror. Cherry was outside battling the branches that came down on her. The little dog was trapped inside the battlefield of a forest.

"Maggie, watch Peppermint," Josie said sternly.

"Wait, where are you going!" they screamed in unison. She could still hear their screams as she ran out of the house, barefoot. The mud squished between her toes and the grass was so wet she was ankle deep in water. Two sheds were completely demolished, and one had a tree leaning against its roof. As she ran she kicked mud up against her back, and her eyes were blinded by the sharp rain piercing her skin. Her feet were pricked in every spot as she ran deeper towards the forest. All of a sudden the wind picked up and threw her onto her side. Far in the distance she saw it. The cyclone, rushing towards her.

"Josie! Josie! Stop!" Josie turned to see her mother inside the porch screaming for her. "Come back at once! It's not safe to be outside in this storm! Stop!" To her left, she saw her warm cozy home waiting to welcome her in her arms, and her siblings, and Peppermint, and her

mother who she loved. But to the right she saw Cherry, not moving, and bleeding in all sorts of places. She got up and began to head back to her mother.

But Josie stopped. She couldn't leave the dog who never left her. Her brain told her to go left, but her heart pulled her towards Cherry. She ran faster, her arms pumping harder than they ever had before. Her determination shielded her from the biting winds, the sharp thorns in her feet, and the worry that Cherry was gone for good. She leaped over branches and dodged falling limbs. Finally, she reached Cherry. Even though she was a larger dog, Josie scooped her up and ran across the battlefield of mud, dirt, and wind. When she reached the porch, Cherry opened her eyes and Josie was so relieved. Cherry had many wounds but in the long run she was okay. Josie didn't care what nature threw at her, she knew that if she was with this dog, they could take on anything.