Dark Stranger in the Storm by Robert Tackett

She found herself driving along an old two-lane deserted road, way out in the middle of nowhere. It was getting late and the skies were promising a serious rain storm. Hoping to beat the storm, she pressed on the accelerator and sped down the forlorn road. She hadn’t gone far when the large heavy drops began pelting her windshield.

She was on her way to visit her best friend. She was going to finally catch up with an old friend who had moved away some years before. Her friend had just had a new baby and she was looking forward to meeting her for the first time.

 “Why the hell would you move way out here”? She asked to no one in particular. She already knew the answer. It was a good place to raise a family, away from the bustle and crime of the big cities. Away from the rat race where you did not even know your neighbors.

 Her GPS was working. Great, informing her that her destination was sixty-one miles away. The drops began slowly at first. Then faster, harder. Soon she could barely see the road. She slowed down and was startled when the lightning streaked across the sky sideways! And a loud, deafening boom of thunder cracked almost immediately!

 Without warning, she felt the car lurch and she heard a loud “pop” as the car immediately pulled to the left. Into the oncoming lane! She expertly let her foot off of the gas pedal, firm grip of both hands on the wheel and she hoped no cars were coming from the darkness. She gently allowed the car to roll to a stop while guiding it to the right-hand side shoulder of the road.

 “Boom”! another flash of lightning lit up the dark sky. Rain was coming down in sheets as loud as a waterfall. She knew instinctively that she had a flat tire. The rain was really coming down hard now. Sporadic electrical streaks lighting up the sky in brilliant colors.

 “This would be absolutely beautiful, if I wasn’t the one stuck out in it”. She spoke allowed with a slight laugh in her words. She was actually terrified of this harsh and sudden storm. She quickly pushed thoughts of tornadoes and hurricanes out of her thoughts.

 With the engine still running, to keep the car heated, she took stock of her situation. Should she change her tire in this weather or call a tow truck to do it for her. “Too easy”. She said out loud, using one of his favorite phrases. Pulling out her cell phone, she stared in dumb silence. No Service could easily be read. No bars. No signal. “Not so easy”, She added.

 It was very dark now and the rain pounded mercilessly with it’s loud roar it beat against the metal shell of her car. “I can change a tire, she thought”. She ensured her lights were on and her flashers were blinking. She steeled herself to make the dash to the trunk in order to gather everything she needed to change her tire. She was going through her mental checklist while the sky flashed and rained.

 Put her jacket on first. Wait! She had not brought a jacket. She vaguely remembered checking the weather forecast and it had said sunny. No mention of any storms. Odd. It was still summer and she had not worn a bra. Who would see her out here in the middle of nowhere anyways? She was just coming to visit a friend, not go to a business meeting, she tried to tell herself. There were no people around or expected so she had just worn a plain white t shirt and blue jeans. Very casual and relaxed. She did have a change of clothes in her bag, which just happened to be in the trunk on top of the spare tire.

 Speaking of the tire, did she have all the necessary tools to change it? She wondered. She went through the process of changing the tire in her mind. Open the trunk of the car, look for and pull out the spare tire. Did it even have air? When was the last time she checked it? Why hadn’t she checked it before this trip? Hope for the best. Get out the jack. Get the lug wrench. Oh crap! She didn’t have one! Her neighbor had borrowed it and hadn’t returned it yet. There was no sense in getting out of the car now. “Great”! She thought defeatedly. “Just great”.

 She quickly checked her fuel gauge. Half. She flicked her high beams on to check how far down the road she could see. Not far at all, only rain, sheets and sheets of rain. Rolling hills could be seen when the lightning lit up the surrounding countryside. But not one car or house lights could be seen. In fact, she did not remember even seeing any cars since she has been on this road. “How long has that been”, she wondered quietly. “About an hour”. She answered herself. “Patience”, she thought. Someone would drive by and help. Or she would be here a long time!

 She checked her gauges again. Fuel half full. Battery good. Oil temp good. No engine warning lights. Good. “Everything’s good. I just need a lug wrench”, She added. She tried to explain it to herself. That it would be crazy to try and walk the sixty miles in this weather, hoping someone picks her up. Maybe a murderer! She waited.

 Lightning flashed ahead in the distance. What was that? Her eyes had caught something moving in the shadows of the rain and darkness. A few moments later, another flash of light lit up the whole sky. “Yes”! There, up ahead she saw something. A shadow maybe. A figure walking towards her. The sky went dark again. The rain continued to pour without mercy.

 Her mind raced! Who would be out here in this godforsaken weather? At this time of night? She mentally calculated how far away he had been and was trying to guess how soon he would be at her car. A hundred yards? Two minutes? Maybe. She thought about turning off her lights and trying to hide. That would be ridiculous. He had surely already seen her car and the flashers. He was already walking down this road in this direction. There was no way he would miss her anyways.

 The only thing she could think of was to lock herself in her car and hope he wasn’t a serial murderer. She suddenly laughed. She was definitely overreacting and just a bit paranoid. She calmed herself. Again, lightning flashed, revealing that the dark stranger out in the storm was closer now, Glancing around she realized she wasn’t helpless. She had her pocket knife and she knew how to use it! She thought good naturedly, “If he tries anything, he’ll be the one getting a big surprise”.

 She adjusted her wipers to keep the windshield clear as possible. Flash of lightning! He was right in front of her car! She took a good snapshot of his features for her memory, just in case! And the light went out just as quickly as it had flashed. He had looked vaguely familiar, but knew it to be impossible. He was a little taller than her, almost six foot. Dark black hair, plastered to his head. Dark eyes almost invisible and a quiet calm face. He wore a black tank top with black looking tactical jeans with the bottom tucked into his army style black military boots. He was soaked! He carried a backpack over one shoulder and in that quick flash of light, she distinctly saw a tattoo around his bicep.

 He calmly walked to her window and tapped on it, “Need some help”? He asked.

 Inching down the window just a bit, she answered, “I need a lug wrench to change my flat tire. “And I have no cell service out here”. She added, holding up her phone to prove her point. The rain continued to fall in buckets. Rain bounding inside her car from the open window. It was cold rain. Ice cold. She rolled the window back up.

 He stepped back and went to the rear driver’s side tire. Glancing at it, it was obviously flat. Going back to the window, he asked, “Do you have a spare? I can change it”. He needed to yell, in order to make himself heard over the drum of the rain and thunder. He went back to the tire and placed his backpack in the puddles and kneeled. He went through his bag until he found what he was looking for. A small flashlight he could hold in his teeth to keep his hands free to work. She watched in amazement through her side mirror as he went back to his bag, he brought out a small black box and some sort of tool she couldn’t make out in the darkness. She was trying hard to watch his every move. He was silhouetted in her flashing yellow lights. She could see his muscles as they flexed and bunched. A strong, dizzying sense of de ja vous overcame her. She immediately checked to make sure her doors were locked.

 He came back to the window and patiently waited while she cracked the window again. The rain rushed in with the storm and wind. He was holding up a socket and wrench. “It fits”! He proudly exclaimed with a smile.

 “What? I don’t believe it”! She responded incredulously. “How lucky can I be”? She wondered to herself. She stared at him, waiting. Why was he waiting? Then she suddenly remembered, her tire and jack were still in the trunk! Without thinking further, she closed her window and popped open the trunk lock. Then she unlocked and opened her door. She got out in the soaking rain as he backed up to give her room. By the time they walked back to the trunk she was completely drenched in the ice-cold rain.

 “It’s in the trunk”. She replied, lifting the trunk and showed him where the tire and jack were. He quickly pulled them out and set them by the flat. She closed the hatch and stepped to his side as he began to loosen the lug nuts of the flat. He was down on one knee when he glanced up at her, his small flashlight illuminating her.

 He smiled warmly. “I’ll be done in a sec”. He replied as he turned back the task at hand.

 Looking down at herself in the flashing yellow lights, she suddenly remembered she had no bra on! And her t shirt was now completely see through! Her ample bosom in plain view. Even her large dark areola were easily seen. She may just as well have been wearing nothing at all. She felt her cheeks flush and become hot with embarrassment. She quickly folded her arms over her chest to hide her embarrassed and quite unexpected nudity.

 Wanting to save herself from her chagrin, she began talking to hide her nervousness. “Are you from around here”? She had to ask loudly over the sound of the rain.

 Without stopping to glance up, he replied. “No, I’m just here to help out an old friend”.

 She was mesmerized, watching his muscles move and flex as they loosened up the lug nuts one by one. Then he placed the jack underneath the car’s frame. He began a slow rhythmic motion pumping the handle of the jack up and down. Up and down. She was transfixed on his movements. Naughty images began to run through her mind. His arms continued pumping up and down, up and down. She felt her neck and her face flush with excitement. His muscles rippled in an easy manner, they way a panther might move when stalking his prey. It was a very erotic movement. She felt her nipples harden even more and stand out straight, suddenly in arousal and her womanhood became moist in this icy cold rain.

 The heavy rain covered everything. The flat tire was off now and he began putting the spare into place. Covering her embarrassment, yet wanting him to notice her condition, she stammered. “I want to thank you for helping me out”. She began, hoping he would look up. She uncrossed her arms, waiting for his gaze. “There’s no telling how long I would have been out here if you hadn’t come along”. She finished.

 Looking up at her bathed in the soft glow of his flashlight and the steady flash of the hazards, she knew she was exposed. She knew her body held no secrets for him now. Then he replied with a hint of a smile in his eyes. “No problem. Just glad I could help”. That mischievous grin! Where had she seen it before? And he turned back to finish tightening the lugs of the good tire. Where did she know him from? This was going to drive her insane until she could remember.

 She noticed his tattoo. Some sort of tribal ink. She also noticed the water running down his hair, his neck, his shoulders and his back. She imagined him in a waterfall and how he would look completely naked. Then her thoughts raced to him in a warm shower lathering up with soap and slowly allowing the water to rinse the soap off. Watching the soap trail down his body…

 “Whoa”! She exclaimed out loud. He paused to look up. Feeling sheepish, she looked away into the darkness, waiting for her embarrassment to subside, yet wanting him to keep looking over her body. “Get ahold of yourself, Girl”. She said to herself, hoping he couldn’t hear her thoughts.

 She turned back and watched him in lustful abandon as he worked that jack handle. Up and down. Up and down. It seemed to take forever as he pistoned his arms up and down. Finally, he was done. She breathed deeply and kept her hands in her pockets, doing everything she could to not instinctively cover up. She wanted him to see her. She needed him to notice her, to desire her.

 He gathered up the spare and the jack, went to the trunk and gently placed them inside, careful of her personal belongings. The rain continued to fall. Turning to her he waited.

 Ever so slowly and deliberately, she held out her hand, knowing she was bathed in the soft flashing yellow lights. “I want to thank you again for everything”. She knew he could not miss seeing her nakedness. Everything was showing, her large round breasts, her large areolas, everything was showing through her now invisible shirt. She added, “Is there anything I can do to repay you”? She asked seductively. Letting the suggestion linger in her voice. She imagined him taking her right there in the storm on the hood of her car, with the rain pounding all around them setting the heavens on fire with their lightning and thunder.

 Taking her hand in his, he gave her a firm grip and she gasped aloud. His grip was strong, yet soft and hot! This electric feeling jolted through her body and she suddenly felt dizzy. His touch was holding her up or else she would collapse. Guiding her to her door, he opened it and guided her to the driver’s seat.

Closing the door, he gently breathed, “Be safe”. He slowly backed away from the window and was swallowed up by the storm. The howling was loud as ever. The rain heavy as she remembered. Yet somehow she heard him.

She took a moment to catch her breath and clear her head. “Oh my God”! She exclaimed out loud. Thinking back, “No one has made me feel like that since…Since he left”. She finished wistfully. She felt a trace of nostalgia as she remembered him. Years have gone by since that fateful night he was taken from her. A small tear began to form at the corner of her eye. She didn’t bother to wipe it away.

Putting the car into drive, she eased back out onto the road, careful not to go too fast. As she drove away, the rain eased and soon stopped completely. She wondered wistfully, where the dark stranger had gotten off to.

As she neared her friends house, the clouds cleared and her cell phone beeped, indicating she now had service. She was connected to the world once again. Finally, pulling up into the driveway of the old, country home, she honked her horn to signal her arrival. Her best friend came running out and gave her a great big hug as she stepped out of her car.

“Sorry, I’m late”. She began. “I had a flat tire out in that horrible storm”. She tried to explain.

“Storm”? Her friend asked. “What storm”? They both glanced up at the clear night sky. “We haven’t had any rain in months now”.