

This is a Jixemetri CWP#5 entry. The title comes from the Live song of the same name.

## Lightning Crashes

by Dana

Sixteen-year-old Trixie Belden stood shivering while she watched her boyfriend change the tire on his jeep. Jim Frayne, a sophomore at Michigan State University, was home for spring break and had taken his girlfriend to dinner in White Plains to celebrate the fact that they were about to spend a whole week together. They had enjoyed a wonderful dinner with dancing afterward, but had managed to get a flat tire on the way home after driving over some shattered glass.

Trixie had thought about helping Jim but quickly realized the advantages of just watching him flex his strong muscles as he expertly changed the tire. Despite the pleasant view, Trixie was still trying to keep warm in the chilly March air.

"For once I actually look forward to wearing a dress to look nice for Jim and now I'm wishing I wore pants," Trixie muttered to herself. To take her mind off the cold, she thought of the slow dances she and Jim had shared earlier. She sighed happily as she remembered dancing to Anne Murray's "Could I Have This Dance?"

Jim finished changing the tire and looked up to see his girlfriend standing there shivering. "You could have waited inside the car, Trix. Even with my jacket on, you're shivering."

Trixie smiled good-naturedly, her grouching of a few moments ago forgotten. "It's okay. I wanted to be out here with you. Besides," she grinned wickedly, "I'm sure you'll find a way to warm me up."

Jim laughed. "You're amazing. And, yes, I will do my best to warm you up, my sapphire girl," he said, giving her a hug and a kiss on the forehead. "But it sure looks like we're in for a dandy of a storm. That's why the temperature has dropped so fast. We'd better hurry back to Sleepyside. Now, where did I put those keys?" he asked absently as he looked around for where he might have left the keys.

Trixie looked up at the dark sky. Instead of the twinkling of stars, she managed to barely make out the outlines of what looked to be very black, very angry clouds. Off in the distance she saw almost continuous flashes of lightning. "It looks like Sleepyside is already getting the brunt of the storm. The lightning looks pretty bad in that direction," Trixie noted.

Jim looked toward Sleepyside and agreed. "Maybe we should just try to find a place to stay and wait out the storm." Just then a strong gust of wind added an exclamation to Jim's suggestion, and the two hurried into the Jeep to get out of the icy air. "Where are those keys?" Jim repeated as he looked in the ignition and then in the Jeep's inner console.

"As much as I would love to be holed up with you somewhere to ride the storm out, I think we should get back. I'm sure it will be fine." Despite her optimistic words, Trixie wondered about that last statement as she listened to the angry wind howl outside the Jeep.

Jim was now searching through the pockets of his coat. "A-ha! Keys!" He said triumphantly and started the engine. "Okay, we'll try to make it to Sleepyside. We're halfway there anyway so it seems kind of silly to turn around and head all the way back into White Plains."

Trixie leaned over and gave Jim a kiss. "I have faith in your abilities to get us home safe."

Jim smiled and set his mind to the task of getting them home safely. He would never do anything to break Trixie's faith in him. Come hell or high water, he would get them home safely.

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Honey couldn't believe how close she had gotten to Dan lately. While Trixie was busy constantly emailing Jim or spending hours on IM with him and Di was wrapped up in Mart, the two Bob-Whites still in Sleepyside and still unattached had started spending time together. At first, it had been just rides through the game preserve or ice skating on the Wheeler's frozen lake, but it had progressed to burgers and fries at Wimpy's and movies at the Cameo.

Now, Honey and Dan were out walking through the game preserve. Dan had called Honey and said he needed to get some fresh air—would she like to join him? Honey, having just read an unwelcome letter from Brian, had agreed wholeheartedly. It was better to get out and do something rather than stay home and nurse a broken heart. A walk with Dan was just what she needed.

She had met Dan near Mr. Maypenny's cabin, and the two had headed toward the center of the game preserve on one of the labyrinthine paths that criss-crossed each other throughout the woods. Despite the fact that Dan obviously had something on his mind, and Honey did too, their conversation remained innocuous. Their discussion about the movie *King Kong* (which Dan had just won in an eBay auction) had somehow lead into a debate about the season finale of *The X-Files*. They had been walking along about an hour, Honey wondering if Dan was going to tell her what was on his mind, when they felt the wind pick up.

Dan looked skyward. The twinkling stars had been replaced with angry, black clouds. "I think we're about to get caught in a storm. We'd better try to get you home."

Honey looked up and quickly agreed with Dan's assessment. Before they had even gone five steps, however, they began to be pelted with raindrops, the large, splattering kind that came without warning just before a really hard downpour. Sure enough, within 30 seconds the two were caught in a deluge of water falling from the sky. Honey involuntarily shrieked as the sky lit up with light, which was almost immediately followed by a thunderous roar and a great shaking of the ground. Dan put his arm around Honey and tried to comfort her.

"The lightning is close, but we're right by that old deserted schoolhouse that Jim, Brian, and Trix got stuck in during that blizzard."

Dan was correct and within minutes the two had found the shelter of the old schoolhouse, but not before two more flashes of lightning and cracks of thunder had struck.

"Whew! That was close!" Honey exclaimed as they shut the door and breathed a sigh of relief. Dan groped around in the dark and found the battery operated lanterns that Mr. Maypenny kept in the schoolhouse ever since Trixie, Jim, and Brian's stay during a blizzard a couple of winters back.

"We're soaking wet, but I think we can handle a little water. It was getting fried that I wasn't looking forward to!" Dan joked.

Honey laughed as she wrung out her hair. "At least we're out of that icy wind, too. That storm came up fast!"

Dan smiled. "We must have been so engrossed in our debate that we didn't hear the rumble of the thunder as it approached."

Honey grinned mischievously. "I still say it's an alien baby and not Mulder's!"

"Get real!" Dan exclaimed. "Of course it's Mulder's. They've been doing the nasty for years!"

Honey pretended to look shocked at Dan's words but the twinkle in her eye gave her away.

Dan loved it when Honey looked happy. She had been doing a good job of being cheerful that evening, but Dan could tell that something was weighing on her mind. He was willing to bet that that 'something' was Brian. He cleared his throat.

"Should we build a fire? Mr. Maypenny keeps matches and logs in here now. I guess he figured that some Bob-Whites might need this place for shelter again sometime."

Honey nodded, and Dan went about preparing a fire in the wood-burning stove to keep them warm. Honey found a couple of blankets and tried to get herself dry and warm. Dan soon had a roaring fire going, and the two of them settled in front of the stove. Honey handed Dan the other blanket and he wrapped himself in it. The two huddled together for warmth.

"I'm hungry," Dan announced.

Honey giggled. "You sound like Mart."

"I was just thinking I could go for some of your cook's pecan pie."

"Yum," Honey agreed. "Or some of Mrs. Belden's cheesecake." Honey suddenly laughed.

"What?"

"I heard Mr. Belden calling it 'sex on a plate' one time when he thought none of us kids could hear him."

Dan joined in Honey's laughter. "If anything could match sex, it would be Mrs. Belden's cheesecake."

Honey stopped laughing as the meaning behind Dan's words hit her. Dan, too, abruptly broke off, realizing what he had just admitted.

Geez, he thought, *why did I just say that?*

The sudden silence in the schoolhouse emphasized the howling wind and crashing thunder outside. Unexpectedly, the two friends seemed nervous around each other, and it went deeper than Dan's admission. Honey knew she wanted to tell Dan what had been bothering her but was afraid of his reaction. Similar thoughts were going through Dan's head, but he had learned long ago that taking the bull by the horns was the best way to go.

"Honey? Do you want to know why I asked you for a walk?"

"Yes," Honey said, eager to hear the explanation, and yet shy about hearing it at the same time.

"I had a call from Hallie this evening," Dan said and then paused. "She wants me to come visit over Easter vacation next month."

Honey felt a pang of disappointment at hearing his words. She knew that Trixie wanted to visit Jim at Michigan State again and that Mart and Di were heading down to Myrtle Beach with a bunch of Di's drama club friends. Both Trixie and Di had invited her along on their trips, but Honey knew she would just feel like the third wheel, just like she had at Christmas time. Now, with Dan gone, Honey was sure she was in for a lonely week.

"Do you want to go?" Honey asked, proud that she was able to keep disappointment out of her voice.

"It *is* my senior year. Lots of the guys are going on spring break. I hadn't really planned on going anywhere, just kind of hanging out here, but Hallie was really insistent."

"What did she say?"

Dan sighed. "Well, she and I did get pretty close when she was here for Juliana's wedding, but she was pretty disappointed when I couldn't go camping with you all that next summer." Dan smiled ruefully. "Heck, I was disappointed, too. I really wanted to see her again."

Honey wondered why a lump was forming in her throat. Why should she care what Dan did on spring break? She tried to tell herself that she had feelings for Brian and not Dan. But deep down she knew that her disappointment did not stem entirely from the prospect of a lonely week. She didn't want Dan to go see Hallie.

"And now?" Honey had to ask. She had to know.

Dan took a deep breath. "And now I don't think about Hallie so much anymore."

"You don't?"

Dan looked intently at Honey. "No, I've decided that maybe someone closer to home might be a better match for me."

Honey's heart began to beat faster. "Ruthie Kettner? Faye Franklin? Patty Morris? Jane Morgan?"

*Shut up!* Her brain screamed. *Why am I prattling on like this? Why are my palms sweating?*

Dan smiled at her. "You haven't figured it out yet, Honey?"

Honey didn't know what to say. She and Dan had been spending a lot of time together but they were just friends. At least she had been telling herself that, trying to ignore her blossoming feelings for the dark-haired man. She had tried to kid herself into believing that she still wanted Brian to notice her. But lately it wasn't Brian who had been invading her thoughts; it was Dan. And the letter she received today seemed to clinch things.

Honey's mind was still racing as Dan leaned in and gave her a soft, sweet kiss.

*My first kiss*, was her last rational thought before becoming lost in the feeling of Dan's lips on hers. All coherent thoughts flew out of her head, and she was swept up in swirl of pleasing emotions as the kiss grew deeper and more passionate. Honey responded to Dan's ardor with a passion she didn't know she had inside of her. She loved this pleasurable assault upon her senses and suddenly she knew why Di spent so much time with Mart and Trixie so much time with Jim, when he was around.

The two remained locked in their embrace for quite some time, tongues tangling, senses soaring. These new emotions and sensations crashing down upon them like a lightning strike. Finally, the two drew apart, breathless.

"Oh, Honey," Dan groaned. "You don't know how long I've wanted to do that."

Honey's hazel eyes widened in surprise. "Really?"

Dan nodded. "But I wasn't sure how you felt about me. What about..."

"Brian?" Honey finished for him.

“Yeah.”

Honey reached over for her wet jacket that lay drying next to the stove and searched the pockets. “It’s missing!” She exclaimed.

“What?” Dan’s curiosity crept into his voice.

“A letter I got from Brian today. Well, it’s just as well that it’s missing. That’s one piece of paper I don’t care if I ever see again.”

“What did it say?” Dan had to know.

“He finally found the engraving on the watch I gave him for Christmas.” Dan didn’t ask what the engraving said. “He told me that he had ‘fond feelings’ for me and that ‘he hoped we stayed good friends’ but he didn’t want to ‘lead me on’ into thinking that ‘we had a future’ together.”

Dan swallowed hard. He had been so excited when Honey had responded to his kiss, but now he realized that she was just trying to get over a broken heart. She still had feelings for Brian. Not for him. Not for the former gang member. His eyes darted around the schoolhouse, looking anywhere but at Honey, and noted a bouquet of dead wildflowers that had probably been there since last summer.

*As dead as my relationship with Honey, he thought gloomily, then laughed ironically to himself. What relationship? It isn’t even going to get off the ground.*

Honey watched his eyes flickering elsewhere and realized what he must be thinking. She reached her hands out and forced him to look into her eyes.

“But I’ve realized something tonight. I was upset because I was being rejected. Not because it was Brian I wanted.” Honey saw the hope spring back into Dan’s dark eyes and smiled. “It’s you I want, Daniel Mangan.”

Dan’s heart was once again soaring and he pulled her into another passionate embrace. The two explored their passion for quite some time until Dan realized that the storm had passed.

“Probably a long time ago,” Dan grinned. “I haven’t really been paying attention.”

Honey grinned back. “They’ll be worried about us. We’d better get going.”

Dan agreed and gave Honey another lingering kiss before starting to get up. Honey held him back. “Shall this just be our ‘see-crud’ for a while?”

Dan smiled. “Whatever you want, Honey-girl.”

“Shall we seal it with a kiss?” Honey’s eyes twinkled mischievously.

“I can’t think of anything I’d rather do,” Dan smiled as he leaned in and rewarded Honey with their sweetest kiss yet.

The two finally stood and folded the blankets, made sure the fire was extinguished, and put on their still-damp jackets.

“I’m surprised they haven’t sent a search party out for us yet!” Dan said. The words were barely out of his mouth when Jim and Trixie opened the door to the schoolhouse.

“Boy, are we glad we found you!” Trixie exclaimed.

“We got back from White Plains and Mom was in a state of panic, saying you had gone for a walk in the woods and hadn’t returned,” Jim explained. “I told her that Dan knew these

woods like the back of his hands and you would be fine. After all, there are an awful lot of abandoned buildings in the preserve for you to take shelter in," he chuckled.

"You *are* all right?" Trixie said anxiously, looking at her friend and knowing *something* was different. She just couldn't quite place *what*.

Honey and Dan smiled. "We're great," they said together.

The four then headed out of the schoolhouse, and Jim whistled the Bob-White signal. It was met by two simultaneous whistles from opposite directions.

"That's Regan and Mr. Maypenny," Jim explained. "We'll all meet back at Maypenny's cabin for some hunter's stew. Sound good?"

"Sounds good," the two wet friends agreed.

"That was a dandy of a storm!" Trixie exclaimed as they made their way toward Maypenny's cabin.

Dan and Honey smiled at each other.

"Sometimes lightning crashes and you just have to do what you have to do," Dan said, philosophically.

Honey agreed wholeheartedly.

My carryover items are: mention of secondary character—Hallie (#1), bouquet of dead flowers (#2), someone losing keys (#3), cheesecake referred to as "sex on a plate" (#4), season finale—*X-Files* (SA#1).