

# “The Night of the Terrible Rain”

## *A Sadora Chronicles Short Story*

*By Meagan Naso*

The sky was black with darksome clouds as mounting sheets of rain poured from the angry sky. Lightning and thunder cracked and boomed for hours. Radio hosts urged citizens to stay indoors, particularly the Fairies, to protect their wings from the downpour. “Yes, that’s right folks. Creatures all over the kingdom are already putting this one in the history books. They’re calling it the Night of the Terrible Rain—”

“Good gracious! Do they really have nothing else to report?” groaned Peggy Marcher, secretary to the Mind Reader Advisor, William Osan, as she switched her radio off. She was a sixty-six year old Mind Reader woman who still had her wits and sharp tongue, who hadn’t spoken in hours. The rain has slowed everything in the kingdom, leaving little work for Peggy. She looked up at the clock that hung above the stone fireplace. It was just after four. Another hour until she was done for today. With nothing to keep her occupied, she pulled out her copy of *Sadora Lifestyle*, the kingdom’s leading magazine on all things glamorous.

Peggy particularly liked the section dedicated to the royal family. She loved seeing Queen Angelica’s photographs. The woman had not only dazzled Peggy, but most creatures around the world. She’s been nicknamed the Aflamed Queen due to her flaming hair, tall stature, and charcoal eyes. She’s always been fearless in wearing the royal jewelry collection. In every picture Peggy ever saw of her, she sparkled in all sorts of diamonds, rubies and pearls. Peggy loved to read about the history of each piece the queen wore. When Peggy turned to the Royals & Socialites section, she was immediately graced with a beautiful new picture of the queen.

She stood tall with her dark eyes narrowed to the camera. Though the picture was in black and white, Peggy could imagine the luscious colors that the camera failed to capture. Peggy imagined the Queen’s dress to be a deep forest green color. The thick straps and tight bodice of the dress were outlined in small neat pearls as strings of pearls came down throughout the rest of the gown. The Queen held her staff in her left hand. Standing just at the height of her shoulder, Peggy could imagine the staff gold and shiny with its deep ruby on top. The speckles in the photograph made it clear that the precious ruby was freshly polished; shining so bright it could barely be photographed. But it wasn’t the only thing shining in the picture.

A shimmering necklace wrapped around the base of the Queen’s distinguished neck had a center diamond so spectacular on it that Peggy gasped when she noticed it. It was a pear-shaped diamond that was so big and bright that even in black and white, it illuminated the page with the rainbows of its reflection. The Queen had her opposite hand at the base of the diamond because the article was all about that magnificent jewelry the Queen wore to her children’s first royal concert. The first piece the article mentioned was the necklace then her infamous earrings. Peggy recognized them immediately. Pear shaped rubies encrusted in small diamonds and pearls; they were a gift from the King on the Queen’s thirtieth birthday. She was now thirty-eight and looking as young and fabulous as ever. Her flaming hair was wrapped high with pins made of diamonds and pearls to reveal the glittering earrings hanging from her small ears. They too were magnificent.

Then, of course, in typical Queen Angelica fashion, she wore a crown. In the last few generations of the monarchy, the royal family opted out of wearing the crown jewels at all times. But Queen Angelica wanted to uphold this tradition, making her the most photographed Sorceress in the world. Peggy clutched her chest as she continued to stare at the picture. She couldn’t decide what was more magnificent: Queen Angelica’s necklace or the crown she wore on her head. This crown

was simply something else. Oval shaped rubies the size of Peggy's palms came around the gold crown. Each of them were encrusted by pearls and the finest diamonds. Teardrop pearls stood at each pointed top majestically, accented by the smallest diamonds and rubies Peggy ever saw. She audibly gasped and covered her mouth when she saw it. *It had to be custom made*, she thought to herself. There was simply nothing like it. She walked the government halls for so long, she's seen most of the portraits of the royal family. She claimed to have seen almost every piece of royal jewelry that exists in the royal archive. But she's never seen something like this.

The children sitting at the piano far across from her were the opposite: dressed plain and lacked any sort of amusement in the picture. Peggy wasn't sure if she should laugh or pity the poor children. They looked absolutely miserable! Though, she could neither blame them or the Queen. Reflecting on her days raising children, she knew it wasn't easy to dress up young children or pose them. Peggy was sure that they must have whined and complained and probably cried. She could only imagine how that could have exhausted the young queen. And yet, the children in the picture were barely ten-years-old. So, she decided to pity them.

"Going to be working late tonight, Pegs," William Osan, her current boss, announced, coming out of his office and coming to her desk.

She quickly closed the magazine. "Really? Most offices are closing early because of the rain. Is there anything I can help with?"

"No, no," he insisted as he ran his fingers through his sandy hair. "There's just a couple of things I need to get settled before the weekend." Then he looked up at her and offered, "Don't go home tonight, not with the weather like this. I already Read to my wife and she already has a room prepared for you upstairs."

Peggy could grab his face and plant a big grandma kiss on his forehead for his offer. Out of all the Mind Reader Advisors she's worked for, he was the kindest. She didn't grab his face though, she simply smiled and cooed, "Oh! And will I be able to see the little baby?"

William chuckled, dropping his head as he shook it, "Not so little anymore. Jimmy just turned five!"

"Oh, isn't that sweet!" she cheered, flashing an even bigger smile now. Her eldest daughter, Cassandra, was only a few months along in her pregnancy. Peggy just couldn't wait to become a grandmother. She had little practice with young Jimmy for William always allowed Andrea to come down to the office and bring Jimmy with her to play.

Though he was the kindest advisor she worked for, he certainly was the most controversial. During his campaign for Mind Reader Advisor, he made a big announcement that he wanted to bring an end to an end to the social hierarchy that the Chain of Powers has come to represent. It didn't go over well with many of the higher creatures such as Sorcerers and Fairies, but it won him the election among the Mind Readers. Though the man was young, he understood the pains of being a Mind Reader. As the last link of the Chain, Mind Readers were considered the least magical and least relevant. In the past, laws had been passed that overlooked the lower chain links and nothing was done about it. He simply wanted to put an end to all that. But Peggy learned to never get involved in politics. Afterall, no matter who won, as long as she had this job, she still had to be the winner's secretary after every election. So, she pushed all their politics aside and focused on getting her job done.

However, there was something about William. He had this unmatched sense of optimism that was never overridden by delusion. That's what occasionally kept him in his office so late. Even when he did work late, he still made time for his family, even allowing them to come downstairs to brighten everyone's spirits. But today, she noticed he looked quite haggard, as if he wanted nothing more than to collapse into a soft bed for a long uninterrupted sleep. She could tell in the way he stood at her desk watching the rain. William Osan was a tall man, but today he slumped his

shoulders, appearing smaller, defeated looking. When he looked up at her, she noticed a puffiness around his violet eyes—poor man probably hadn't slept in days. There was a cloudiness to his eyes too; Peggy was unsure if it was the tiredness of having a five-year-old in the house or something else. She was just about to ask him if anything was wrong when, in typical William Osan fashion, he flashed her a big smile that disregarded his tired appearance and said, "Don't wait for me to finish. Just go upstairs whenever you are ready."

*Are you sure, William?* she pressed. The other Advisors were adamant that she must address them by their title. William, on the other hand, barely answered to Advisor Osan. *You look tired. Perhaps the rain will help you sleep tonight.*

He shook his head politely at her and responded, *Oh no, not this rain. My son is terrified of thunder. He'll probably be up all night.*

Peggy hesitated as she looked out the window across from her desk. The sky was just too dark and the rain was too heavy. The thunder that did crackle in the sky sent shivers down her old spine. She knew it was nothing harmful, but Jimmy was still so little he didn't understand. She sighed as she answered, *Oh, the poor dear.*

William sighed, drumming his fingers across her desk. *Yes, I know. Andrea is a heavy sleeper in the rain, so I stay up with him and tell him the giants in the sky are playing games.*

Peggy laughed aloud as lightning flashed white in her window. *Games! Well that's a clever idea!*

His smile gleamed with pride and for the first time since he came out of his office, he looked happy. Peggy's heart wanted to burst with loving warmth to see him so proud to be a father as he replied aloud, "Yes. It's the only way to make him unafraid. We talk about the kinds of games they would play and come up with names and all sorts of things until he falls asleep."

"Really?" Peggy remarked, "and how long until he falls asleep?"

William rolled his eyes humorously as he exaggerated, "Hours, Pegs, hours."

"Oh dear! Sounds like you have a long night ahead of you!" Peggy remarked, but surprisingly, William did not return the humor. As he shook his head, the brightness in his eyes dimmed and his fingers stopped tapping on the desk. He seemed somber and this confused Peggy. What was he to be somber about? As another sheet of rain crashed onto the windowpane, Peggy blinked and shook her head. No, somber wasn't right. The man must be totally exhausted. He's barely been the Mind Reader for two years now and was still in the early stages of raising a child. All of it must be so overwhelming for him. Yes, that was the right word. William Osan was incredibly overwhelmed.

"Ugh, you have no idea," he sighed slowly. Then he pointed at her and continued, "Listen now, don't wait up for me. If you're ready to go up now, you may. If I need you, I'll Read to you."

Despite his offer, Peggy was going to stay behind. In all her experience as a secretary, she knew it was best to wait to either leave with the boss or after the boss. But she didn't tell William that. She knew he'd protest. And besides, the fire between their offices was warm and crackling and there was a *Sadora Lifestyle* to keep her occupied. *How late could he be?* She thought to herself. Then she nodded her head and answered, "Well thank you Mr. Osan. That's very kind of you."

William said not another word; he nodded his head as he walked backwards into his office, closing the door behind him. Peggy was slightly curious about what he could be working on on a night like this, but she knew better than to ponder. This left her with her silly magazine and the comforts of the warm crackling fireplace adjacent to her desk. Squinting her eyes, she noticed that the fire was getting a bit dull. Telepathically, she picked up a few logs from the basket beside the fire and placed them in the fire. The fire roared as the logs crackled in the heat. She picked up the poking stick and set the logs accordingly. Then she wrapped her white colored cardigan over her shoulders to feel a little more cozy. As she settled deeper into her chair, lightning flashed as rain trickled down the window panes. Staying late tonight would not be too bad tonight.

Then it grew late, too late. She has finished her magazine from cover to cover. She had returned to the first article she read about Queen Angelica's look at the concert. She couldn't help but be mesmerized by the young queen's beauty and taste. Looking up at the clock above the fireplace, she saw that it read eight o'clock. Then she stared at the door of William's office. What could he possibly be doing in there on a night like this? She shook her head in disappointment. She knew better than to think those things; she must do her job. In the quiet, she turned her head to the window. The sky was so dark, she couldn't even see the rain. Curious, she walked over to the window by the fireplace to inspect. To her surprise, even the lightning was darker, turning gray in the thick black clouds that hung low in the sky. The wind was starting to pick up, making Peggy take a step away from the window and closer to fire.

Then she jumped. From the corner of her eye, she saw a flash of light behind her then heard a hard thud. Now she knew something was wrong. She dashed to William's door and knocked. "Mr. Osan?" she called, pressing her ear to the door. Her blood was pumping so loud in her ears, she could hardly think straight. "Mr. Osan? Are you alright?"

Nothing. She even Read to him, *William, please tell me you're alright*. But he didn't answer, making the old woman frantic with panic. She went to turn the knob but it was locked. That wasn't right. William never locked the door when he worked late in case he needed her. She jiggled the knob one more time, hoping she was wrong, but it still wouldn't budge.

A cold bead of sweat appeared on her thin wrinkly skin as she stepped away from the door. Then she remembered she had a key. As quickly as she could, she ran to her desk and opened the top right drawer. She extended her whole arm through the drawer to reach the emergency key tuck into the back. Once it was in her grasp, she immediately pulled out her arm and rushed to his door. Her hands were trembling as she struggled to get the key through the keyhole. Thunder rumbled like the belly of a vicious beast outside, doing nothing for her jittery nerves. When she heard the click of the lock open, she exhaled a sigh of relief and pulled open the door.

As she stepped into the office, she saw nothing. William Osan was not in the room. A crack of lightning flashed across the window so bright it caused Peggy to tremble. Where could he be? She stepped further into the room. The room was neat. An Advisor's office was never neat when they were working. There were always papers shuffled across the desk and the law books stacked on the bookshelf laid open on all the furniture in the room. But there was not a book off the shelf or a pen on the desk. It was as if no one had been in here at all. Her heartbeat quickened as she stuttered, "Mr. Osan? Mr. Osan? A-are you there?"

She stepped further into the room, passing the shelves of law books. It had gotten quiet. Even the rain had stopped being angry and became a gentle pitter-patter. That itself made her nervous, as the rain has been her spooky companion all night. She glanced over her shoulder, frightened that someone would be behind her. But no one was there. The door was shut behind her and nothing had changed in the room in the time she's been in there. She faced forward again and that's when she noticed it. His chair! It was the only thing askew in the room. It was kicked back, pressing against the opposite window, streaked with the remnants of the rain.

She turned a corner to the space between the desk and the window and drew back in horror, clutching her bony hands to the black drapes at the edge of the window.

She howled, screamed, her heart was in her throat as thunder cracked through the sky once more. William Osan was dead. His rounded violet eyes stared lifelessly at her with a scarlet gash across his head, the coloring around his lips was a mix of deep blues and purples. There was another gash across his chest, his bloodied hand over his heart. Peggy shivered. Murder. Someone had murdered William Osan.

She brought her fingers to her lips as the tears slipped down her face. A sob escaped her lips as she bent over the body. Lightning struck in the window behind her, casting a fragmented shadow

across William's body. At the streak of light, she screamed again and dropped to her knees. *Andrea!* She desperately called. *Andrea, please! Please come quickly!*

*Peggy, what happened* Andrea answered in a mirrored panic. *Is everything alright?*

Devastation and heartbreak swept through her like the thunderstorm outside. She couldn't read this to her. How could she? She swallowed a sob and shook her head. It became difficult to breathe, difficult to see, impossible to think. Agony made her feel like she was the one killed, like a sharp knife was plunging through her insides. *Come downstairs*, she finally mustered up, *to William's office.*

She reached over and closed William's eyes. It was better to pretend he was asleep. Then Andrea appeared at the doorway. Peggy's heart dropped to her stomach once more as she sobbed, "Oh dear! Oh Andrea! I'm so sorry!"

Andrea stepped further into the room gingerly and when she saw William's body, she brought her trembling hands to her face. Then she dropped to her knees, just beside William's body. Peggy heard a soft whimper as Andrea brushed a piece of William's hair away from his face. Feeling a surge of guilt and pity, Peggy read to Andrea, *I'm so sorry, dear. I don't know what happened. I . . . I heard a bang and when I came in here he was just—*

"NOO!!!!!" Andrea wailed, throwing her body over William's. Peggy felt that knife in the gut feeling again as Andrea continued to sob, "No please! William no!"

Peggy's lips quivered uncontrollably as she began to cry all over again. Her throat felt thick and hot, like she couldn't say a word. Salty tears dripped onto her lips but she couldn't wipe them away. Everything in her body was shaking. Suddenly she flushed red with embarrassment; Andrea needed to mourn her husband on her own. Peggy began to slowly back away from the heartbreaking scene. Andrea was still sobbing over her husband's body and Peggy felt every piece of her heart break inside her chest.

Then she thought of the baby. Poor Jimmy. He was only five; he'll only remember so little of his father. Peggy let out another blubber before she left the room and closed the door behind her.

With her back against the door, Peggy shivered with her whole body. The streak of lightning made her shriek as she shook her shoulders. She wiped her tears again, trying to take deep breaths. She had to help Andrea. Walking back to her desk, Peggy read to Glenn Brodrick, one of the Mind Reader guards at the entrance, telling him about the murder. *No*, Glenn retorted in disbelief, *no it can't be. No one came in. How could this be?*

*I-I don't know*, Peggy stuttered as she began to pack up her desk. *Bring extra men with you. Something is not right. Mrs. Osan is there now, mourning him. I'll be upstairs with their son.* Another shiver ran down her spine as she thought a terrible thought: who was going to tell Jimmy about his father?

Peggy's throat began to swell and she didn't wait for Glenn's response. Sniffling, she began to pack her things. She grabbed her purse and tucked it on her elbow as she snatched her *Sadora Lifestyle*, open to the photograph of Queen Angelica and her child happily sitting at the piano. She tucked that into her bag and made her way to the staircase that led to the entrance of the Mind Reader Advisor's home. In the Circle of Castles, the first floor of every Advisor home was used for business while upstairs was used as the Advisor's private home and housing guests.

Thunder roared through the sky, masking the sound of Peggy's footsteps on the brooding staircase. It seems so much longer and more daunting to her. Perhaps it was the rain. Perhaps it was her nerves. The door to the entrance of the building groaned open and she heard armed men running into the hallway. She brought her shoulders to her ears and she took another step up the staircase. At the sound of another door opening, Peggy could hear the continued wails of Andrea, causing her to bend over as if she were in pain.

She shut her eyes tight, trying to hold back tears. She had to get upstairs. Someone had to watch over the boy. With all her strength, she straightened up and made it her mission to get up the

stairs. She walked a little faster now, thinking only of little Jimmy. Andrea's sobs had stopped, but Peggy heard whispered voices from downstairs amongst the roaring rain. She shook the curiosity out of her head. She had to get to Jimmy.

As she ascended to the landing, all she could think about was how Jimmy Osan's life will never be the same.