

Sheltered from the Storm

Exhausted, alone and fearful; I look up with frozen eyes to see the warm glow of light. Of civilization. Of togetherness and comfort.

With shaky legs I take one shuffling step after another toward the welcoming light. My pack nearly empty and my body mere skin and bones, I hope beyond hope that what awaits me on the other side of that door is kindhearted and giving.

Catching my breath on the landing, I peek through the frosted window to a gathering of people around a big table all smiling and laughing. I catch glimpses of meats, cheeses, and steaming drinks. My mouth starts to water.

My eyes lock with a little girl's before I move out of sight.

I shouldn't intrude on what must be a family gathering. I turn around prepared to brave the relentless winter when I hear the door open.

I turn around and see the little girl holding her hand out to me. Behind her, her family looks on with loving eyes. I take her hand and welcome the embrace of strangers.

