

When Lightning Strikes

The First Pages

by

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EXT. HILL BENEATH STORMY SKIES - NIGHT

Lightning bolts electrify the dark skies above.
Bolts of deep blue and purple split the clouds in two.

Below, on a damp hilltop, overshadowed by a well-lit city just off to the horizon, a STRANGE MAN appears. Approaching from the steep slopes of the hillside, this strange man continues walking towards the peak.

All around him, rain hammers down with brute force and the city beyond casts some light onto his figure.

This fellow looks to be a grey-bearded man wearing a white robe. By the looks of it, he does seem to mimic the appearance of a Wizard!
Or perhaps even a biblical illustration of God Almighty!

His robe wades along the wet blanket of grass beneath his feet.

After several moments of slightly laboured walking, he arrives at the summit.

He gazes up at the storm in almighty awe, studying it as if it were his holy creation.
Flashes of lightning cast light onto his face, exposing the fragility of his complexion.
By the looks of it, he's at least sixty years old.

From his robe, the man then pulls out a preserve glass jar.

He places it on the ground.

He then reaches into his robe for something else...
A metal rod with a claw on one end and a trigger on the other.

The rod's shaft shoots downwards and doubles in length - the claw now level with the ground.
The claw grips the glass jar and the man raises it high into the air, now extending the shaft yet again.

It doubles in length once, a second time and then a third, reaching towards the clouds.

The man waits in awe as he studies the sky.
The lightning builds within the clouds, charging up and readying for the perfect time to strike.

The claw continues extending to well over one hundred feet, then... STRIKE!

The lightning chooses to instead strike a tall building somewhere off within the city beyond.

The man turns towards the building, looking disappointed.
He continues to extend the claw higher and higher.
He bites the inside of his cheek...

STRIKE! The lightning strikes the jar and the man pulls on the trigger, causing the lid to close shut.

He's now caught lightning in a bottle!

Ecstatic, the man grins an almighty grin and once again pulls on the trigger. The jar plummets down towards the surface and he grabs hold of his new gift.

The lightning pulses in all directions as if trying to escape - like if were some caged animal.

The man smiles sharply, then his teeth begin to show. Suddenly, the smile becomes a grin... Then the grin erupts into a striking laugh!
A laugh of complete and utter satisfaction.
And yet - also a laugh of overpowered, godly menace!

This is truly a momentous night!

Within the skies, lightning strikes another location...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

THUNDER echoes within the walls of Jack's bedroom. Lightning strikes outside the curtains.

JACK - twenty five years old, scrawny, well dressed in uniform smart casual attire - rests with his head on his desk and a pile of blank pages beneath him.

After a moment, he starts to perk up, lifting up his head slightly... The storm must have woken him up.

He presses his fingers against his tired eyes and examines his unanimously unproductive body of work.

Jack flicks through the hidden pages that are buried beneath all the white. Still, it appears that it's nothing but more of the same.

JACK
(under breath)
Fuck.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Someone is thumping on the door.

VOICE
Jack?

JACK
(reluctantly)
Yep?

VOICE

Come and open the door, it's important.

JACK

(sarcastically)

I doubt it.

Jack doesn't appear in the mood for guests. He pulls himself to his feet and slowly walks towards the door.

His room, as it appears in it's full glory, looks an utter pigsty - Bed unmade. Clothes dotted about the place. Shit everywhere. You get the picture.

Jack opens to door, only to see a vastly more tailored and well groomed version of himself. He smiles right away, piercing Jack with a cheeky grin. Jack looks continually bemused.

JACK

What?

The man looks to be hiding something behind his back.

VICTOR

I got you this...

Yes, this man is called VICTOR. He looks to be roughly in his mid-twenties, like Jack, and he has just forced a McDonalds brown paper bag in Jack's face!

Jack stares at it with disdain.

JACK

That stuff is poison, you know that?

VICTOR

Sure it is. Hasn't stopped me so far though, has it?

JACK

Better you than me.

VICTOR

Sarcastic cunt.

Jack attempts to close the door in Victor's face but he soon intercepts and sticks his foot in the way.

VICTOR

Alright Jack look...

JACK

What?

Jack, looking unenthusiastic, sticks his head through the door and raises his eyebrows - To Victor, that simply means

"Fire away."

VICTOR
Did you hear about that virus going
around?

JACK
What virus?

VICTOR
Aw, you haven't watched the news,
have you?

Jack looks down to the floor and let's out a sigh.

JACK
How many times have I told you
Victor... I hate the news... How
many times do I have to keep going
over the same stuff with you?...
No news, no phone calls, no
interruptions. Got it.

Jack now succeeds in closing the door.
He turns around and, this time, attempts to walk back over
to his desk... But sure enough, VICTOR'S VOICE CALLS OUT...

VICTOR
You're just pissed because you've
got writer's block again, aren't
ya.

Jack freezes. The words make him look hopeless - Hopeless
and helpless. He gazes at the unproductive mess on his desk.

Jack opens the door again.

VICTOR
(sympathetically)
Maybe if you watched the news,
you'll get a bit more inspiration.

Jack stares at Victor for a moment, then pulls the door open
all the way. He turns to the side and leans against the side
wall.

JACK
I've only got two days left.

VICTOR
Mate, why don't you do what the
rest of us do? It's literally a
life saver.

Jack looks doubtful.

JACK

(pause)

Because I've got a point to prove... I can do it on my own.

Jack is about to close the door. Victor, now with something important to say, sticks his foot in the door yet again.

VICTOR

What? And end up like your dead parents?

Jack stares at Victor with intensity for a good several moments. He looks both angry and sad at once.

JACK

If that's what it comes to.

He gives Victor a fleeting smile and then closes the door.

Jack begins walking back over to his desk. He freezes for second and turns back to the door, waiting to see whether Victor's footsteps begin to move away... They do, though Jack looks like he's still immersed in their conversation - Victor's words still taunting him.

Jack's legs then lazily give way and he plummets back onto his seat.

It seems his chair has the option of spinning around - and so Jack rotates around the room, scanning his environment for anything that will catch his eye.

He stops when he sees a GLASS BOTTLE on his shelf.

And a fraction of a second after that, there's a bright flash of lightning and a roaring of thunder.

The bottle appears to be thick with dust.

Jack, looking a little restless in his chair, turns his head towards a small crack in the curtains.

It's the perfect opening to allow lightning to come through... For this time, the lightning shines directly onto his face.

The bottle gleams like a gem when the lightning casts its energy onto it.

And Jack, now appearing ingrained within the strange bottle on his shelf, now looks like he has an idea...

EXT. STORMY ROAD - NIGHT

Jack drives passed a sign post marked, 'Welcome to New Hope. Drive carefully!', as rain hammers down and the storm continues to rage on.

He's driving down a long country road with nothing but empty fields beside him and an infinite highway ahead of him - The atmosphere is understandably eerie to say the least.

INT. JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack grips the steering wheel, watches as the windscreen wipers clear the view to the road beyond. Alas, only to ill-effect - He can barely see a thing.

A LIGHTNING BOLT then strikes the field just beside him. Jack nearly bites his tongue in shock.

Up ahead, he can see something lying on the road. He narrows his eyes.

It looks like a light source - something only four-by-seven inches, contained within some invisible shell.

EXT. STORMY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car approaches what appears to be a glass jar holding a lightning bolt. The car begins to come to a halt.

INT. JACK'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jack looks bewildered as he stops the car and stares.

More lightning strikes, lighting up the screwed up look on his face - those slightly squinted eyes causing his brows to fall like arrows that are now pointing down at his nose.

The lightning bottle does indeed look like a picture - It looks strange yet beautiful amidst the backdrop of the nightly highway.

Jack takes a deep breath, appearing to think through his choices for a moment.

He grabs the car key, nearly about to restart the car. As he exhales, Jack's breath seems to end with a sigh.

JACK
(under breath)
Fuck it.

Jack exits the car.

EXT. STORMY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Not seeming to care much about getting drenched, Jack slowly exits the vehicle and stands for a moment by the door.

The lightning within the bottle pulses in all directions - rather like a caged animal that's trying to escape.

Jack begins to approach, marveling at the bottle, then turning his head to the left and to the right... Surely someone must be around! Is this a trap or what?

As he gets closer, the bottle seems to emit some sort of strange humming sound... Actually, the lightning itself also seems to be getting more erratic in nature. It almost looks like it wants to be set free.

Jack waits a few feet away, looking out again into the blackness of night... ... But there's nothing. No one. A coincidence? Maybe not.

...

TO BE CONTINUED