

THE WEATHER WISH



by

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Hannah traced her finger along the cold window in her room.

Here she was, stuck indoors on another dreary afternoon in the dreariest part of the country.

Her mom appeared. Hannah flashed a look of pure misery.

"We're not going out," her mom protested.

Hannah tried anyway.

"That's why they invented coats and hats and umbrellas and boots. . ."

Her mom interrupted. "I'll be in the basement."

Rain splattered loudly against the house.

Hannah groaned loudly. She felt ready to burst.

"Ohhhhhh! If I decided the weather, I'd make it hot and sunny."

Her frustration forced her up and out of her room and down to the basement craft room. She was deep into an art project when her dad yelled: "It stopped raining."

"The park!" Hannah shouted.

Mom looked doubtful. "It may be a short break."

"Pleeeeeeease?"

"Well. Bundle up. It's still cold."

Soon, Hannah and her mom were at the neighborhood park with other determined families.

It felt so good to be outside. Hannah repeated her secret wish for an instant summer.

Everyone's jaws dropped as a brilliant yellow sun and baby blue sky wiped away the clouds.



"Weird," a woman said.

"Double-weird," Hannah's mom agreed.

The temperature rose. People shed coats and hats. Hannah wiped away sweat.

"It is unusually hot," she grumbled.

She closed her eyes, imagining gentle snowflakes tickling her face and melting on her tongue. She instantly felt cooler.

"Oh no!" she cried when opening her eyes.

Real snowflakes drifted down, turning the blue sky into a flurry of white.

"Hooray!" the kids cried.

"This is crazy!" the parents said, pulling their children toward home.

Hannah froze, snowflakes resting in her wavy brown hair. She suddenly had a strange feeling she was to blame. It was crazy, she knew. But what else could explain this?

"Don't be worried," her mom said, hugging her. Hannah's mind raced while they trudged home.

Her dad had on a TV weather bulletin.

"They're not sure what's causing this wackiness," he reported.

Hannah tiptoed to her room. The snowy silence gave her time to think. Maybe she had wished too hard for better weather. It was hard to believe, but she decided a little experiment couldn't hurt.

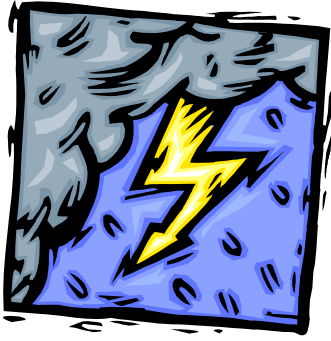
"Okay," she told herself. "If I'm really causing this, I can turn it back."

She imagined their normal weather. She waited. The snow fell quietly. Finally, she heard a familiar pitter-patter, pitter-patter.

Hannah sighed with relief and rested on her bed.

"Rain," she commanded. "Just rain like there's no tomorrow."

Kaboom!



Startled,
Hannah
jumped up to
the window.
The sky raged
with black
clouds.

Buckets of rain splashed to the ground.

"I imagined the wrong kind of rain!" she cried.

Her parents dashed to her room. "Don't be afraid, Hannah," said her dad, leaping at the sound of another thunderclap. "We'll ride it out."

"Why don't we watch a movie?" her mom suggested nervously.

"No!" Hannah said. "I'll feel better if we pretend it's back to normal."

"Well, okay," her mom said. "Let's pretend it's normal and watch a movie."

"I need details," Hannah said.

"About?..." asked her puzzled dad.

"What was the temperature this morning?"

"About 40 degrees," said her mom.

"Do we have something that feels 40 degrees?" Hannah asked.

Her dad studied the wall. "The frig?"

Hannah ran to the kitchen with her parents trailing behind. She threw open the refrigerator and let the cool air swirl over her body. Her parents stared.

"It helps me get into the moment," she explained. "Okay, describe the raindrops."

"Hannah. . ." they both complained.

"Come on," she insisted.

"Steady rain," her mom said. "Steady like a drumbeat."

Her dad nodded. "And wind," he added. "It was windy. No. Gusty."

"And it was just dark enough to need a lamp," Hannah added. "Excuse me for a minute."

She ran back to her room, lay on her bed and closed her eyes.

"Cold air. . .

"A steady beat. . .

"Dim light. . .

"Gusts of wind. . .

"Normal and boring, bland and blah...Normal and boring, bland and blah..."

Fingers stroked Hannah's face.

"Hannah. Wake up," her mom whispered. "You had a nap."

Hannah pulled the blanket over her head. "The storm passed," her mom said. "I think your trick worked."

Hannah sprang to the window. Sure enough, the wonderfully dreary weather was back.

"Alright!" she cried.

Her mom laughed. "Maybe reading a book on a rainy day isn't so bad."

"Guess not," Hannah said. Then she paused, worried she could still change the weather.

"What's wrong?" her mom asked.

Hannah imagined something just a little different. How about light mist, skies still gray, no big wind? she wished gently.

She waited. And waited. And waited. No change. Hannah collapsed with relief.

"What are you thinking about?" her mom asked, tickling her lightly.

"My wishes," Hannah said. "I'd better be more careful, just in case." She laughed at her mom's confused face and tickled her right back.

