

# Forces

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## Rain

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styrofoam cup against his shoe. He kicked it away.

"It was an incredible feeling, Amanda, it really was.

At twenty-four, I thought I had a few more years of playing the field before I would want to settle down, but all that went out the window in a matter of days. I had hoped you would be with me for the rest of my life, but I guess things have a way of changing whether we want them to or not. What, did God step away for a minute, and someone else dealt us this hand? I don't know. But whatever happened -- *why* it happened -- it makes my heart so heavy that I sometimes feel as if I'm going to buckle under the strain."

He stopped twisting the ring and stared at it. It was 14-carat gold with a rectangular top. The top was split into two triangles, one of which was the black onyx he had always wanted in a ring. The other half was brushed gold with a tiny diamond set in its center. Amanda had given it to him the day he turned thirty, almost six months ago.

"This is a "BILY" present," she had told him, "as well as a birthday present."

"Who's Billy? I don't understand." He wanted to scold her for spending the money, but he couldn't deny he wanted the ring. He felt a wave of selfishness come over him.

*Besides, she's a big girl and can spend her money however she wants.*

It was the same ring he had shown her almost a year ago. It was on his "Someday I'd Like To Have It" list, but he only told her he liked it a lot. He said nothing about wanting it, yet here it was on his finger.

"It's not a "who," it's a "what." A "BILY" present is a "Because I Love You" present." She kissed him on the tip on his nose. "Happy Birthday."

"I love you, too, Amanda." He picked her up and carried her into the bedroom. They made love as if it had been the first time for both of them, slowly, yet passionately.

He pushed the thought from his mind. The ring would now be a symbol of a time that was, a feeling he would more than likely never experience again.

"Remember the time we made love in my parent's bathtub when they were out of town?" He managed to smile in spite of the pain inside. It was the first time either one had used a bathtub for something other than bathing. It was quite awkward, and they both laughed afterward as they realized it was not unlike what their parents must have gone through in the back seats of their cars.

## RAIN

The pregnant clouds  
Anxious to deliver  
Her labor pains explode  
over the horizon  
Until the water breaks  
and the miracle is born.

Melanie Beggs