I am a storyteller. I do not know when the gift was given to me, or when I even became aware that I had this gift. Does one sit around wondering when they learned to breathe? Stories seek me out, encapsulate me, and hold me hostage until I tell their whole existence, every minute detail. They haunt me, filling my dreams with their escapades as they romp through their lives demanding I notice and hear them, begging me not to forget them when, as the sun creeps over the horizon, I wake.

Each of them, so real to me I believe I have caught up with old friends. I do not see it as a burden or a task. I struggle only with finding the right words to paint them in the fairest light, to be sure each element of their life is known, at least to me, as I sift through each character wondering which is right for the picnic, the beach romp, the nightly gatherings around the table over a meal.

I try not to intrude, for when I do they gently push me back, and if the warning is not heeded, I'm tossed out of the way. Discarded in a corner, a heap of emptiness. For their lives are so a part of me that I do not know where one begins and the other ends.

Author's Note:

I stumbled on this small piece last week while I was hunting down a lost file. Wait, let me clarify, my file is not lost, I just couldn't remember what I'd named it… or something like that. It was one of those moments where I was in full panic mode because I'd hit the wrong key combo on my computer, which one is still an absolute mystery to me, and deleted things that the fabulous "undo" trick could not bring back. Before I admitted that I needed to hunt through the physical copies of my manuscript, and there's a lot residing in a banker's box under my desk at the moment, I thought I'd look for a digital copy. It was a complete waste of time in an attempt to spare myself a few paper cuts.

Or was it? Because I found the above piece in a file I'd created with some grand story in mind that never got any farther than the 229 words above. I sat staring at what I'd written for a while, debated adding to it. Subtracting. Attempting a short story, using it as an opening for a

larger project that's in the works. But in the end, I decided to let it live and breathe exactly as it was.

To share the wild ramblings of my writer's mind with you, Dear Reader, because this is what it's like flipping through old notebooks and journals. It's what I stumble upon when I scan through the file box, or that mysterious thing on my computer known as "the cloud". It's why I have a banker's box under my desk with at least 6 copies of my current manuscript in it.

If you were to ask me why I wrote the short piece, I'd have to be honest and say, "I'm not entirely sure." And yet, at the back of my mind is a niggling thought about a story I'd once thought of daring to write. But that's all it is, a niggling thought. Could this have been the opening lines?

I did once title one of my Nano projects *The Storyteller*. It was one of those "a lot bit true, and a little bit made up" type of stories. It also didn't turn out the way I'd intended it to, thus, it's been sitting untouched every since. I don't believe the small piece belongs to that story though, I know because I wrote a different small piece for it. That I forgot I wrote, and when I stumbled upon it wondered who wrote it and what book it was attached to so I could read it.

On the other hand, this could just have easily been one of those things I scribbled down in a mad flurry of emptying my mind one day. Sometimes those turn out to be things that aren't worth rereading, and sometimes there are small gems tucked away in the pile somewhere.