

The winds had come up with the threat of another storm. During the last 30 days it would storm and then clear for a few days, only to repeat the cycle. It was during the calm times when she would come out to the porch with her coffee and watch the waves churning against the rocks. There was one spot that sheltered her from most of the wind, but still gave her the view she wanted. This was the spot she was in now.

The weather beaten beach house had been the first in a series of surprises. It looked like it had been there forever, snug between trees and sand. When the wind blew the sand would swirl on the porch and between her toes.

Today the wind was coming from the water; the smell of brine coated her nose. She licked her lips and tasted the salt. It was the start of another storm, a storm not unlike the one going on in her heart. For the last month there had been emotional storms that threatened to overcome her.

Thirty-five days ago she had been let go when her company downsized. It was a shock. She had been there almost eight years and thought she would be there many more. The day after she had been let go she was sitting at the breakfast table when there was a knock at the door. It was a special delivery letter requiring her signature. The adventure had started.

It took a couple of days to make the arrangements, that is after she realized the letter was true and not some cruel joke. One bus, two planes and one rental car later she had arrived at the beach house, nestled in a small town in Northwestern Washington.

The beach house was small. There was a large room with a simple kitchen, dining area, living room with a rock fireplace against a far wall. A bedroom and bathroom were at the back of the house. The key in the envelope had fit the lock, so she knew she was in the right place.

She spent the first few hours going through the contents of the cottage. Many items were labeled. One picture said it was her mom and grandmother. The quilt on the bed had a note attached to it that simply said, "This was made for you before you were born". But the diary was the greatest treasure of all. It was the diary, in combination with the letter, which answered all the questions she had had. Many emotions tumbled through her, at one moment she found her self in wracking sobs, the next she was numb, and unexpectedly her feelings turned to relief and a sense of finally belonging.

She sat in her sheltered spot going over all she had uncovered during the last 30 days; reading the letter again.

Dear Anna,

I have been searching for you for a long time. It took me years to learn that your mom, my daughter Jennie, had died giving birth to you. She had been listed as a Jane Doe and you were placed in the system. They said she had been found outside the hospital unconscious with no ID.

Jennie had moved to Seattle for work. She would go for months without contacting me, but when I hadn't been able to get a hold of her for a time I went to the city to find her. Her apartment manager said he hadn't seen her in several weeks. He was kind enough to let me in. That is when I learned about you.

It was impossible to get any records on you at that time, but I never gave up trying. It was only in the last year that I had the funds to hire an investigator to locate you. If you are reading this then he found you after I died.

As my only living relative and one who may have suffered not knowing who she is, I leave to you this beach house. I hope this will help you find your heritage. I have labeled pictures and items to help you learn about yourself. The only thing I ask is that you stay at the house for 30 days. If you decide to keep it, sign the papers and mail them to my attorney.

That was all the letter had said. A note attached to it said they had found the letter and key when they were clearing out her things at the hospice house. What it didn't say, the diary did. Her grandmother's diary had been in the bedside table drawer. It was from those pages that she learned her mother had been a victim of rape. Anna had always thought her mom had been some teenage girl who accidentally got pregnant from her boyfriend. She never dreamed she was the result of rape. It was the letter, the diary and the things in the house that gave a background to her roots, a life she could have had. Now, it was all she had. Between the beach house and the trust fund, she would be able to start a new life here on the other side of the country.

She held the envelope under her hand on her leg, the wind bending the other edge of it making it flutter as she reached into her pocket to get the pen. With this pen she would secure a new life, a new place and new memories.