P luvi ophilia

‘Aoife!’ cried Deirdre. ‘You’ll get sick!’ Aoife hardly heard the words, for the rain tha t streamed past her ears swallowed all other sounds under its velvet tongue. ‘Aoife!’ her mother yelled again. She tossed the towel i nto the kitchen sink and marched across the porch, down the steps and out among the gia nt, pale gums.

Aoife sat, placid, oblivious, face tilted upward to catch the raindrops on her skin.

She’d stood this way since the shower started. She relished the sensation, it coated her whole body in the soft embrace of home, wa s a haze that took her in its cupped hand and sheltered her from the fearsome heat that caused all other days to wither.

Aoife felt a sudden warmth on her arm. Deirdre.

‘Aoife,’ she said. ‘Now.’ She wrenched the girl from whe r e she stood. ‘Mammy…’ Aoife blinked, her mother slowly coming into focus. ‘I like the ra in.’ ‘You’ll catch a cold. Watch the rain from the window. I’ll start the fire.’ Deirdre used to love the rain… here, she despised it. She never wanted to come, no, she just followed he r da mned husband — ‘We’ll strike it rich a nd live out a drea m!’ he’d said. It was a wretched place. Such a freak of nature even the rain fell wrong. No m an i n the house for days on end… yet not a spot of gold to be seen!

Deirdre had started preparing dinner when the rain picked up, hammering against her wooden walls. She glanced outside, only to see Aoife right where she’d been, watching

the raindrops fall into her wide eyes.

Deirdre tutted and tapped her foot, but went after her. The rain was mean and feral now, biting at Deirdre’s side.
‘You’ll kill me someda y, child,’ she grumbled, snatching up Aoife’s wrist. She cursed

the sky for its temperament. Her skirts were now splattered with mud and her fingers so

numb they could fall off.
As she came to the steps, she looked down and realised Aoife was gone. She saw her own hand, skeletal and clenched, but ë晦柱.ふ抇䒒ᢍt o

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