

Storm at the backyard

By

Miranda Dutton

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FADE IN:

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

South Florida, a majestically tree stands centre in the backyard. Tons of brown leaves lie beneath it. Uneven Shrubs and palm trees border the property.

Leaves scatter in the wind.

LEAH, Shar-pei dog, golden, chubby folds of skin and wrinkles, full muzzle resembles a hippopotamus, snobbish posture, bounds out of the house. The door slams shut.

She bypasses a couple of dog toys and litter, carelessly sashays to the tree. Circles around three times before settling down by the trunk.

BIG MAMMA, a big black cat with white spots on three paws and below the neck, like a baby bib. Squeezes out of a cat flap by the kitchen door.

**BIG MAMMA**

Good Morning, Leah. Master is on his way with Stanford to watch over us during the storm. He's arriving anytime now.

Leah twists her foreleg sideways and licks her paws.

**LEAH**

(disdainfully)  
Nope. I'll throw him out.

The cat crawls up to a disused clothesline.

**LEAH (cont'd)**

Hey, Red. The song from yesterday. It's catchy. Sing it again.

RED BIRD complies. Leah hums the song.

**BIG MAMMA**

Don't know, maybe he needs a place to stay. He's a military dog. Retired. He's got tons of honor medals.

Wind whistles. Turns an empty trash can.

DAN and DAVE. Teenage squirrels run around, making noises.

**BIG MAMMA** (cont'd)

Leah. Why you keep cleaning yourself?  
It's weird. You meow and purr like...  
a d-o-g !?

Leah inspects her nails. She chews and trims them.

**BIG MAMMA** (cont'd)

You pretend you don't like sweets.  
(laughs)  
Groom like a kitty when Master is  
around. Very strange. Good Lord!

**LEAH**

Told ya. It makes me feel good.  
People are made of all colors.  
Tolerance is the new black.

**BIG MAMMA**

We are not people!

**LEAH**

Don't know about you, but Master  
thinks I am.

**BIG MAMMA**

Who's talking tolerance?

A huge palm tree frond falls near Big Mamma. She jumps and screams simultaneously.

She falls from the pole and lands on her feet.

Leah runs toward Big Mamma. Twists her head sideways and checks for any visible injuries.

**LEAH**

Careful... Will ya'... wanna break a  
leg?

Big Mamma sits down. Takes a deep breath in relief.  
The wind persistently shakes the trees.

Leah lies flat on the ground by Big Mamma's side. Their paws almost touch each other's. Hearts still pounding.

They both stare up at dark storm clouds gathering overhead.

**BIG MAMMA**

Anyway, the guy's coming, and I'm not sure where you stand on this.

**LEAH**

Master will accommodate things for me like always. I'm a territorial beast.  
(laughs)

She hums the red bird's song louder.

**BIG MAMMA**

Not this time.

Leah stops humming and sits up.

**LEAH**

Dan. Dave. Can you stop runnin' around already! Will ya!

Dan and Dave stop immediately. They run up to the tree.

**LEAH (cont'd)**

No. This is my place. I won't allow him in. It's about property, not--

**BIG MAMMA**

Property? Good Lord. Look at the skies. A hurricane can finish with us and all your property today.

**LEAH**

On point! How can the military guy save us? Hum? How?

**BIG MAMMA**

You are Ignorant. The one that says I am this way and won't ever change.

A plastic bag flies directly into Leah's face. Impatiently, she removes it. Coughing.

**BIG MAMMA (cont'd)**

Cats are the superior kind, spiritual teachers and that's why you wanna be one of us, but you always miss the point.

(hesitates)

You're jealous!

Leah snaps so fast she grabs Big Mamma by the tail.

She holds her down. Paws on her neck and torso.

Big Mamma tries to growl and hiss but the pressure on her neck make it sound like a meow. Hardly audible.

**BIG MAMMA** (cont'd)

(fearlessly mumbles)

Ignorance is your middle name. You're  
a seamy wrinkled bitch disrespectful  
of others.

Leah sighs. She carefully withdraws and removes her weight off the cat.

**LEAH**

Who's being disrespectful? I'm not a  
bitch. Get out here... will ya.

The wind whistles.

Leah looks around. Gazes at the sky. Stretches her head up to the air and sniffs.

Sniffs. She looks around.

A branch hanging on a powerline provokes fire. Repetitive sparks occur while wind aggressively swings the lines and branches.

A line breaks loose in their direction.

Big Mamma jumps high moving the burning cable away from her friend.

Leah rolls backwards, panting and gasping for air. Dirt and leaves hit her face. Eyes closed. Mouth opened.

Inert, she gags, chokes and spits.

**LEAH**

Ugrrrrr...

A tiny bright green CHAMELEON flies from her mouth to fall not too far.

The chameleon is pale in shock.

Leah stares at him.

He's fixed on her. Alert. Frozen

Her breath blows on him.

His bright green color mutates into dark brown.

The brown color then camouflages into the dirt.

Leah observes meditative for a few seconds.

The chameleon runs off.

The wind shifts. A Cool draft whips up.

**BIG MAMMA**

It's getting coold. I'm going --

The sound of a gate opening. Footsteps.

Silence.

All animals in the yard freeze.

STANFORD, a tall strong German shepherd, older, remarkable posture, shows up around the corner and stops.

Leah and Stanford lock eyes.

Leah barks loud. Bares her teeth.

Barks louder.

Sudden silence.

She gets closer.

He does not move.

She sniffs Stanford.

Closer. She almost touches her nose to his.

Sniffs.

Sniffs more.

Firmly, Stanford puts on a fearless smile.

Leah takes one step back, check him out from head to toe.

She turns her head sideways.

**LEAH**

Ain't you too short for a Storm  
Tropper?

**STANFORD**

Hmm?

Loud laughs. Big Mamma shakes her head, giggles and then runs into the house.

Leah playfully jumps toward Stanford. He responds with excitement. Both lie down and play the bite-each-other's-neck game.

The sky abruptly darkens. Raindrops like bullets hit the dirt.

Everyone runs for shelter.

FADE OUT.