

Storm Chasing

By Dragonien

Weather sirens blared through the air, audible even to their convoy miles outside of town. The line of heavy jeeps, buses and trucks bounced and jostled along the dirt roads along the outskirts, engines roaring as their vehicles raged far beyond both speed limits and safe driving speeds. Yet neither that, the harsh sheets of rain, the intense gusts of wind, nor the crackles of lightning dancing across the skyline stopped a half dozen of the storm-chasers from sticking their heads out of sunroofs or rolled-down windows with cameras, phones or binoculars to try to catch glimpses of the start of the real storm. To get a glimpse of his arrival. No one knew where he came from. They didn't know if the storms called him forth or if he brought the storms to him. All they knew was that, when weather fronts collided just right, he would be there.

The convoy soon skidded to a stop along the country road far on the outskirts of town, perched atop a steep hill that gave their crew a rather impressive view across the empty fields between them and the metropolis off in the distance. The bright lights coming from the city did what they could to cut through the darkness and gloom of the thick, black, cloud cover overhead but it still was barely enough to outline most of the city's skyline in silhouette across the horizon. Had they been more daring, they might have tried to get closer to the city, but even their courage and obsession with their quarry had its limits. All of them knew well enough if they were in the city in the next few minutes there was a good chance they wouldn't be leaving it. As the minutes dragged on, the crew either watching the ominous swirl of clouds overhead or working away at laptops and computer consoles showing them satellite feeds, a nagging sense of foreboding built up within them all. Just when they thought that they might have read the pattern wrong, that they had followed the wrong storm, he appeared.

A crackle of lightning arcing across the sky was what first illuminated him. the sharp flash of light momentarily silhouetting his enormous form towering above the cities landscape. No one had ever gotten an accurate measurement on him due to the dark and obscure visibility that his storms always brought, but one didn't really need an exact measurement when they could clearly see not a single skyscraper in town even reached up to his knee. His form was reminiscent of a lucario, an anthropomorphic canine with thick tufts of fur around his neck and a sharp bony spike protruding from his chest. Unlike the standard lucario they could see in those brief flashes of lightning illuminating him that, unlike the vibrant bright blue coloration they normally had, this one's fur was a pale blue nearing gray in tone. but it was neither his enormous size, nor the strange coloration of his fur that really made him out to be the ominous figure everyone feared. It was his eyes. Both of them glowed a brilliant hue dancing the line between pink and purple that shown through the darkness of the cloud cover and the haze of rain. When the lightning dimmed it gave them an almost disembodied appearance, their glowing light making it hard to notice the outline of the head surrounding them and making one think of a creature from one of Lewis Carroll's works.

The moment he had appeared everyone in the convoy was piling out of their vehicles. Some ran to get their higher-definition equipment set up in hopes of getting as much of the event on camera as possible, while others ran to hammer stakes attached to chains into the ground or set hydraulic braces onto the road to secure the vehicles. They were far, far closer than any storm-chaser team had ever dared to get and knew they were in extreme danger, but they also had come prepared both for the storm's onslaught and for the worst to pass if it came to that.

The lucario, Typhoon as many had come to call him, swept his arms around as if testing his weight and balance. As he did his weight shifted upon the ground and toes the size of buildings casually tore through the

front of strip malls and dug multi-yard deep indentations into the ground from his prodigious weight. Then, with a look of utter glee on his face illuminated by a stroke of lightning reflected off of his teeth, the titan rose up on one heel and began to spin himself about. It was an action anyone had done numerous times, twirling around on their heel, but with Typhoon it was something wholly different. As if pulled along by his movement, the air currents abruptly shifted like a dog being tugged by his leash, dragged along with the sweeping movement of the lucario's arm in a spiral around him. Instantly bits of debris from below began to rise into the air as the shifting air currents smashed together and rapidly began forming a funnel around the behemoth. By the time his first rotation had finished, the clouds were swirling above him, and with the completion of the second the funnel cloud had touched down around him.

The tornado was otherworldly, a swirling vortex filled with dirt and debris that it gleefully ripped up from the ground as easily as you might suck up sawdust with a shop-vac. Yet no matter how thick the clouds got with their pilfered materials; Typhoon was always clearly visible in the eye of the storm. He seemed totally unaffected by winds that could rip hundred-year oaks from the ground like matchsticks and rip apart skyscrapers like they were sand castles. On his third and final rotation his cyclone had grown to a full-blown F-5 and three other funnels each clocking in as F-2s and F-3s in their own right were touching down around him. It was like a scene out of some apocalypse movie, tornadoes tearing apart the city with wild abandon, crackles of lightning smashing into the ground and creating explosions of sparks when they hit power lines or transformers. A pair of planes that had been high above the cloud line trying to avoid the storm had found the cloud-cover abruptly surging upwards and outwards to envelope them and both had been sucked down into the funnel themselves. Both joined a cavalcade of debris from trucks, trains, Ferris wheels, entire houses and sheds, and any other number of bits of debris spiraling through the air like debris in water circling the drain.

Yet through it all, that smile stayed plastered on Typhoon's face. There was no malice in it, no evil or sinister intent that told of him reveling in the devastation he was causing. Rather, his face radiated pure, almost hilariously innocent joy. The utter glee that a child feels when running out into a storm to play in the rain, that an adult feels when they let their mature facade fade and indulge in some innocent and immature activity like a swing-set. This was no monster, no creature of death and destruction come to decimate the landscape. This was just someone playing. Yet his innocent demeanor didn't stop the city from being torn to pieces beneath him. Where the tornadoes and winds didn't rip the city apart, his feet landed with impacts akin to meteoric impacts and decimated entire city blocks beneath their width. His tail wagged and swayed around behind him and, seeming to pull the air with it just like his arms had during his spin, ripped jets of gale-force wind downwards like a whip to tear deep gouges into the earth below. All the while the storm-chasers watched in disbelief and awe at the spectacle before them.

For nearly twenty minutes they sat there, buffeted by gale force winds that would have torn their own vehicles off the road if they had not been secured and all but drowning in the torrents of rain beating down on them. Every type of recording device they could devise from high-def, slow-motion cameras to infrared to simple iPhone were recording as much footage of Typhoon as they could. When the rain started to ebb and the winds began to die down they could see the sky beginning to brighten ever so slightly. Tiny trickles of sunlight starting to peak through the heavy cloud cover and better illuminating the darkly silhouetted titan standing over what now was little more than a ruin of a city. When the titan's movements finally came to a stop, every single person on the storm-chaser's crew's eyes went wide and their blood ran cold.

He looked at them.

Those brilliantly glowing, fuchsia-colored eyes turned their gaze directly down at their little convoy. The thought was impossible. They would have been far too small for someone of his size to make out, especially at this distance and through this bad of weather. Even if they weren't, there was no way he could have possibly known they were there, miles away from the city itself. As the light grew brighter and they got one last glimpse of his stony-blue fur in the dying rain, he smiled right at them. Not a malicious smile, nor one of the same glee Typhoon had displayed during the storm. But a softer, inviting smile full of both amusement and satisfaction. Then, in a crackle of lightning that arced across the sky, Typhoon was just... gone. If it hadn't been for the wholesale destruction of the town, including the enormous footprints smashed into the earth and concrete, his disappearance was so abrupt they might have thought it had been some kind of hallucination. But it hadn't been. They had all seen it. And, more importantly, they all had it on camera. They still had no idea where he came from, how he did the things that he did, or why he did them. All they knew was that he had known they were watching, and that he had seemed amused by that. They had gotten some of the best footage anyone had ever managed of Typhoon, yet they had been left with more questions than they had answered. But that didn't deter them. They may not know much about the mysterious, storm-manipulating entity. What they did know was that he would be back again, and when he was...

He'd have his faithful audience right there watching.