

Existential Tread

It was just after dawn when the seismometers registered the first series of quakes. Cars clogged the interstates and city streets as people went to work. High in the sky, office workers prepared for the day ahead, paying little mind to the tremors. The vibrations may as well have been included in their morning routines.

Over the course of a normal day the tremors would weaken and fade. Today, they intensified into quakes. Skyscrapers swayed dangerously. Mugs tumbled off of desks and crashed to the ground while elevators caught between floors. People froze, having forgotten how to react to such an emergency.

They fared little better when a wall of air subsequently slammed into the city. Dark clouds, gathering on the horizon, arrived moments later with a sonic boom. Rubble spilled across the roads and stood in place of what had been buildings.

Plumes of dust filled the air. They hung low and close to the ground as visibility dropped to nothing. People panicked as they struggled to take in the scope of the calamity.

What life remained slowed to a halt when an even greater disaster, a shadow, swallowed them up. Heads tilted back, the survivors gasped. A foot, matted with a city much like theirs, swung overhead as sunlight forced itself through the gaps between its toes. Steel and concrete boulders rolled free from the wrinkles lining the sky-filling sole and crashed to the earth below.

The rest of the foot soon followed. Buildings, those still standing at any rate, collapsed in on themselves as the upper floors smashed through the lower ones. Darkness, heat, and silence suffocated the city.

The foot lifted. Not even a crater remained as it peeled the ruins, now embedded into its grey sole, up along with it.

Sitting on the side of her bed, Nikki yawned. Her parted jaws revealed rows of sharp white teeth that glistened in the morning sunshine. Smacking her lips, the shark slouched forward and closed her eyes. Back and forth she shuffled her feet against the carpet. The fibers, coarse and thick, felt nice against her soles.

Tiny onlookers, as unaware of Nikki's existence as she was of theirs, gasped at the abrupt appearance of mountain range sized toes. They twiddled against the earth and city-flattening tremors radiated out from them in response.

Arms resting at her sides, Nikki pressed her hands against the mattress and rose to a stand. She stumbled in place as her weight shifted to her feet. Back and forth she rolled upon them, alternating between standing on the balls of her feet and her heels.

Sole shaped craters, embedded deep into the earth, expanded outwards with every stomp. Cities that had thought themselves spared, sitting along the edges of the imprint, gave way as the ground shifted out from beneath them. Panicked screams accompanied the avalanche of asphalt and buildings sliding down the slopes.

Nikki rubbed at her eyes while she blindly fumbled for her sandals. Her sensitive soles, scuffing against the carpet, knocked against smooth leather. With a grunt, the shark slid her feet along the bright blue, and well worn, insoles. She scrunched her toes, unaware of the civilizations built into the faintest wrinkles in the leather.

Unheard shrieks echoed throughout the city below. In horror, people watched as two walls of grey, approaching from opposite ends of the horizon, came together. Skyscrapers, trains, and interstate exchanges piled up alongside the sides of the shark toes before crashing together with a muted rumble.

Arms stretched up above up above her head, Nikki rested her head against a bicep. She slowly wandered towards the kitchen, yawning once more, and thought about what to make for breakfast.