

Four Natural Disasters (One Outcome)

Part II *(Prologue)*

It seems like most movies produced today have three basic plots.

#1 A former assassin or special forces guy's wife is killed, he looks for revenge.

#2 Hostages are captured in Afghanistan and must be rescued.

#3 Disaster

Others are historical dramas based on true stories. Jews and Nazis. Kings, emperors, and fallen empires.

For this story I chose disasters.

The Hurricane (Chapter 1)

Jake's dream was to retire in a peaceful environment and live the rest of his life healthy and happy. He had been resourceful and had adequate money to do this. He researched many places for the best benefits. The Philippines were a top choice. South America also has many economical benefits. Parts of Europe and Asia were tops on retirees lists. He chose the Philippines. Why? After his divorce, he had been looking for a new partner. At first, he just wanted to find someone near him in the US. During his career he had witnessed many ethnicities and liked the Asian cultures and mannerisms. His first attempt to hook up with someone online took him completely by surprise. After posting his dating credentials, he did get some local responses. He did try to connect, but did not find anyone with the similar interests. He got dozens of responses from all over the world though. At first he was reluctant to even converse with anyone. He was not a spring chicken. In his late 50's, he was still in good shape and kept up his health with exercise and a reasonable diet. One woman in particular caught his eye. He started an online conversation with her. Her name was Tala. Meaning "star," particularly the morning star (Venus).

He learned through the emails that she had a daughter, but was divorced and her ex-husband had custody of the daughter. The daughter chose to live with

her dad thinking that her mom was selfish not giving her dad a second chance. Her dad had had an affair with a younger woman. Not all that uncommon. She didn't believe in second chances. Cheat once and you would probably do it again was her thinking. So I felt sorry for her situation, but not having her daughter living with her was probably a good thing. I didn't need to try to raise someone's else's child if things worked out with us.



Tala

One advantage of meeting a Filipino woman was that English is the standard language along with Filipino. Tagalog is the local native language.

While Filipino and Tagalog are closely related and often used interchangeably, they are not exactly the same. Filipino is the standardized, national language of the Philippines, while Tagalog is a regional language spoken by the Tagalog people, with Filipino being based on Tagalog, but incorporating elements from other Philippine languages.

Some say Filipino woman, along with Chinese, are the most beautiful woman in the world. I was not disappointed when I met her.

She met me at the airport in Manila. I had booked a room at the Savoy Hotel near the airport, right on the coast.



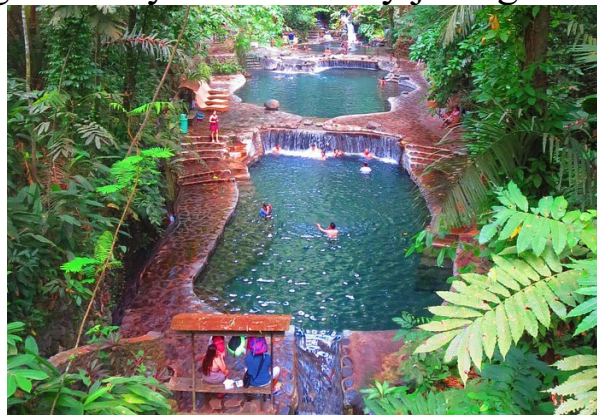
We took a taxi to the hotel and I told her that I was jet-lagged and needed some rest. She said she would accompany me to my room. Once inside, she didn't waste any time getting to know me. Her comment was that we were not teenagers dating and if we weren't compatible it was better to find out sooner than later. From our email correspondence and photos, you seemed like an honest guy with integrity. You didn't fly all the way here to just look around. Unless you lied, I think we would be compatible. I liked her no-nonsense logic. I found her very compatible.

Getting that out of the way made our next days truly enjoyable and relaxing. I had never been to the Philippines. What is there to see in your city? Let me show you around.

The first tour we did was experience Intramuros while riding bamboo bicycles.



Intramuros is one of the oldest areas in Manila. It was built during the Spanish colonial period. The walls are still strong, and the buildings are still beautiful. This well-preserved district offers a rich tapestry of historical landmarks along with amazing architecture making it a cultural heritage. Hidden Valley Springs was my favorite. My jet lag melted away.



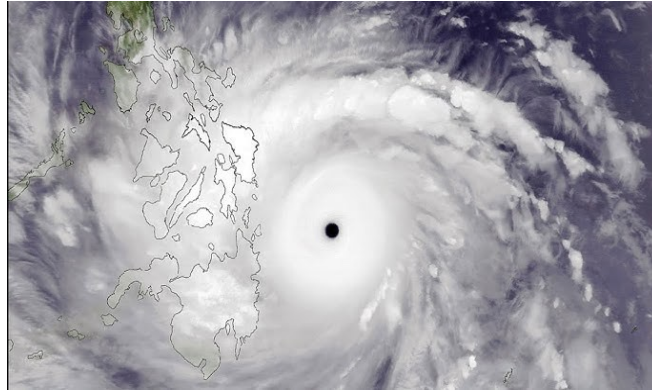
And of course the food. I always like to try the local favorites.



From top left clockwise: Adobo Puti, Taho, Ginataang Bilo Bilo, Beef Salpicao, Ukoy, Kare-Kare, Kutsinta, and Arroz Caldo.

The date was October 24, 2013. I celebrated my birthday with Tala. I was enjoying the time of my life. Little did I know that a little more than a week later everything would be turned upside down. Two years earlier springtime in Japan, a Jake in a parallel universe would experience the worst tsunami to hit Japan in its history in a similar ordeal.

Tala informed me that the Philippines was in a path of an oncoming typhoon. Should we get out of here? It's not really necessary. My house has a safety cellar supplied with water and food rations. My daughter and her father have the same setup. We have weathered many typhoons in the past. We will just sit it out. We might even have our own private hurricane party.



Typhoon Haiyan over the Philippines

The strongest hurricane (typhoon) to hit the Philippines was Typhoon Haiyan (also known as Yolanda), which struck on November 8, 2013. It made landfall in the Philippines as a Category 5 storm, with winds reaching 195 mph.

The dividing line between hurricanes and typhoons is primarily the International Date Line (180° longitude). Tropical cyclones forming east of this line, in the North Atlantic, Northeast Pacific, and parts of the South Pacific, are called hurricanes. Those forming west of the line, in the Northwest Pacific, are called typhoons

I always wondered about this. Here is an explanation:

The term "hurricane" is derived from the name of the Carib/Taino storm god "Huracan," and is used in the North Atlantic and the northeastern and central North Pacific Oceans.

The term "typhoon" is believed to have originated from the Chinese word "taifung", which refers to the strong winds associated with these storms. It's used for storms in the northwestern Pacific Ocean.

In other parts of the world, like the southern hemisphere and the northern Indian Ocean, these storms are referred to as "cyclones".

In essence, while the storms themselves are the same type of weather event, the different names reflect their geographical origin and the regional dialects used to describe them.

So we did sit it out. Tala had never seen or heard anything so powerful. After the typhoon completed its destructive path, her whole house was torn down. We did ride it out safely down in her cellar.



When it was safe to come out, her first thought was of her daughter. She needed to see if she was alright. Fortunately, their house was not too far from hers. We walked through the rubble and found her daughter safe and sound. Not true for her ex-husband. He had been out doing some errand for his company and did not make it back to the house. His whereabouts and condition was unknown.

Tala's daughter's name was Mayari.

Mayari: Goddess of the moon, reflecting grace and beauty.

Here is her picture.



She was kind of wary of me. A stranger who had suddenly entered her mom's life. I suggested that she stay with us in either her shelter or Tala's. I can take care of myself. I want to remain at my location in case my dad comes back. I understand that, but even though the storm has passed, there are many other dangers. You both have clean water and food. Other survivors will not be so nice as to ask. A young girl alone will be easy prey. They will be everywhere looking for what they need. And food is not the only thing they might take.

That argument had its effect. Reluctantly, she agreed. So for the next two weeks, we survived on both of their stashes. I had gone into this adventure looking for a partner. I wasn't about to abandon her at this point. Your city and area will be useless for many months to come. I have a boat docked in a marina in Montevideo, Uruguay. Why don't you leave contact information with the local authorities with ID information about your dad? You both can come stay with me until you hear some news or it is safe for you to return.

With no other options available, they took me up on my offer. Mayari said she did not care to live on a boat. I said, no problem, I will rent a two bedroom apartment near the marina and you can stay there. When we arrived in Montevideo and saw the so called boat I owned, she changed her mind. It was just as fancy as a 5 star hotel.



Two bedrooms and a master stateroom. Three bathrooms. It was three months before we heard any news. Mayari's father had survived, but had been injured and had not been able to contact us until he got better. I gave Mayari a plane ticket to return to Manila and enough money to come back if she so desired. We both thought she would stay there with her father. Two months later, she returned to Montevideo. She said that her father was OK, but she liked living on the boat and BBQing fresh fish on the aft deck that we caught each day sailing. Actually, I think she was more interested in Mario, our deck hand whom I had hired to help maintain the boat. She assimilated more easily than Tala. Both her and I spoke fluent Uruguayan. AKA Spanish. So that was how I ended up living with a Filipino wife and step daughter in Uruguay. Yes, we did get married.

End of Part II