

Michelle K.

Nothing ever happens in Tohoku, Japan 2011. Dad goes to work, and I stay home playing with Skipp or hanging out with friends.

I was in the living room at the time watching the news and petting Skipp, when dad called out, "I am leaving for work. Do you have anything planned for today?"

"I might take Skipp on a walk, before it rains." I said.

"Ok well I'm going to go, Bye, be careful."

"Bye."

Maybe I'll go now and miss the rain, I thought.

"Come Skipp." I called. She jumped up like a lightning bolt and ran straight to the door. I chuckled as I grabbed her leash. Out the door we went, down the street, up the hill and towards the ocean. At the beach Skipp was having the time of her life rolling in the sand and getting very dirty. Then, I felt a small drop of rain on my arm and the sky was becoming dark as the storm approached.

"Come on Skippy" I yelled to her as we started to run back up the hill home.

"Crack, Boom" in an instant it started pouring.

I thought I would make it home when I realized the rain wasn't the only problem. I slowly turned around to see the ocean water flung back as far as I could see. Running was the only thing that came to my mind. I grabbed Skipp, she was shaking like crazy, and tried to run to shelter.

I knew I wouldn't make it into town for safety, so instead I looked for something to float on. I had learned about tsunamis in school and the stories were scary but it was nothing compared to real life. I couldn't find anything, lost track of where I was, and could barely see anything. I started to cry, although you couldn't see it because of the rain. I squeezed Skipp as I felt the rain start to harden, almost like a punch when each one smacked you. I could hear the water now and in a split second I was carried along with an enormous wave.

My most prized possession is and always will be Skipp. When my mom died she was my only light. Anytime I got irritated or felt alone she was there scratching on my room door. So naturally my first instinct when I was doing somersaults under the water was Skipp. I knew just like me she was going to need to breathe. So I used all my balance to stay upright and push to the surface. At first, I couldn't tell the difference between underwater and the sky. It was just as dark, muddy and scary. I could see pieces of houses, broken tree branches, broken glass in the water going every direction. I made sure Skipp got a breath and even with all the debris floating around and hitting me. I started to look for something to use as a raft. There were many options that seemed sturdy but each was difficult to get onto. I choked for another breath as a branch hit my side. Then there it was ahead a sturdy piece of roof that seemed easy to get on to.

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Without another thought I dove down, still gripping Skipp and swam that direction. The swim was exhausting and excruciating. I pushed Skipp on it and she immediately turned around and waited for me. A large object smacked into me, causing me to lose my grip on the roof. I held my breath as I used all my strength to push myself back up on the roof. I was so weary I immediately laid down, pain shooting all over my body from all the scratches and bruises. I grabbed Skipp and pulled her in for warmth and comfort. I stared at the sky, slowly the sky started to change colors and relieve rays of sunshine. I knew this would be over soon. I was relieved but also worried about how much destruction it has caused.

I jumped up, startling Skipp, I must have passed out I thought. Skipp stood up looking straight at me with hope in her eyes.

“Look Skipp, The water is receding.” I could see a hill coming up on the horizon. I splashed my hands in the water, paddling as fast I could toward land. Soon I could feel the dirt below me and stepped off my makeshift raft. I fell to my knees at the feeling of ground again. I picked Skipp up and off the raft and put her on the ground. She barked with excitement and jumped around. I could see some people that had also been affected by the tsunami.

“Another Survivor” one of them said.

Do any of you have a phone?” I immediately asked.

“We already called the police and they are sending helicopters.” A boy said.

A girl walked up to me and handed me her phone. She had ripped clothes, many scrapes and looked a little older than me. I put in my dad's number and prayed that he would answer. To my relief, the ringer stopped and a soft voice said “Hello”

“Hi!” I said back, my hope sparking up.

“Lyla!” my dad bursts into tears. “Where are you?” he asked.

“I don't know but I am ok and help is on the way. I have Skipp with me.”

“Of course you do. I am so happy you're ok.”

“Me too” and with that I could hear the sound of a helicopter approaching.