TORNADO LOVE

A Whirlwind Romance

by Shawn Deal

ISBN: 978-1-61588-590-9

HEUER PUBLISHING LLC
P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406
TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011

TORNADO LOVE

A Whirlwind Romance

by Shawn Deal

SYNOPSIS: A magical realism love story about a girl and a storm.

DURATION: 40 minutes.
PLACE: A town.
TIME: Present day.

CAST OF CHARAACTERS

(1 female, 2 either)

TORNADO (m/f)..... This is exactly what it is, a Tornado. Can be played by anyone. The character should look like a tornado in some way shape or form. How you want to achieve this is up to you. It can be a costume. It can be with the help of sounds and projections or a tornado background. *(39 lines)*

AMIA (f)..... a teenage girl. *(41 lines)*

WEATHER REPORTER (m/f)..... *(5 lines)*

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play can be done very simply as a dual scene between two actors and a voice over. It can also be done with just an empty stage. However, it can be done with a background of a storm or tornado and some sort of field. The use of sound of wind, rain, or any tornado like sound can be liberally played to help the illusion of the Tornado character.

Amia can have a permanent wind blown look and appearance. Tornado can look like a storm or be in a straight color that may match a tornado projection or painting of some kind.

The Weather Reporter can come on stage to report the weather, can have their own set, on stage right or left that is a weather map and desk or a weather projection or can be a voice over completely. A radio could be used to show the audience where the reports are coming from.

SCENE 1

WEATHER REPORT

AT START: *This can be a voice over, walk on/walk off or a staged set.*

WEATHER REPORTER: We have storm watch conditions. The National Weather Service is announcing a rare high level, severe thunderstorm threat today, listed as a five on the bad scale.

Everyone within our broadcast range needs to be especially careful and to look out for worsening conditions in your area.

This storm watch encompasses much of a four state area. The cold front coming down from Canada is about to intersect with the dry line near the center of our state. Tornadoes are a strong possibility, although no warnings have been officially designated at this time. There is a possibility of high winds, large hail and flash flooding.

We have low pressure rapidly deepening throughout the state signaling the real start of inclement weather conditions. These conditions can produce storms that will be severe right away. We are talking about a super charged air mass with dew points in the 60's and 70's.

Please prepare your safe area with portable water, food, clothing and bedding. More than likely there will be widespread loss of electricity as this storm moves through the region. Be prepared for worsening conditions. Stay safe. And stay tuned.

SCENE 2

AMIA'S BEDROOM

AMIA: I was home alone—a terrible time to be home alone. We, my entire neighborhood, were under a severe weather watch. I should have gone to the store with my mom. She asked me to go with her and help out. It was supposed to be a stormy week and she was going out for extra supplies and stuff.

I told her I would stay home, clean up the pantry and make extra room for everything she was going to bring home.

I kind of meant it.

Really, I was staying home because of Chad Everson.

When I was at my high school, earlier today, I was late for English. Someone in the crowded hallway had bumped into me, as I was turning from my locker, and all my books and papers I had been holding, went flying to the ground.

I scrambled to pick them all up. Not one person stopped to help me. And it was impossible to pick up everything until the hallway emptied of people. I scooped up everything as quickly as possible and hugged it into my chest, as I started running for my classroom, hoping against hope not to get a late detention. I rounded a corner and that's when I saw Chad, my supposed boyfriend, pressing Sofia Adams against a row of lockers and kissing her.

The bell rang, signaling the start of fourth period. They ran off to class without really noticing me and I stood in the middle of the deserted hallway, thunder struck.

Chad had kissed Sofia.

I ended up skipping English Literature.

So, I didn't go with my mom, because I was struggling. I was trying to understand and process what I had seen in that hallway. I was hoping to have a mother/daughter talk tonight when she got back and I had to have the time to really think about it all and know what I was feeling.

I honestly tried to make room in the pantry, but my thoughts kept wandering back to that kiss and I really didn't get anything of significance done.

SCENE 3
WEATHER REPORT

WEATHER REPORTER: (*Voice over, or weather reporter, can refer to maps. If you want you can put up local maps and change county and city names to reflect your area)*

We have a tornado warning. I repeat this is a tornado warning.

This will be for most of the North Eastern part of the state covering Morris, Bloomberg, Everdell and Tonaka counties.

We have a severe thunderstorm capable of producing a tornado or multiple tornadoes in any of these areas. The storm is going to move Southwest very quickly hitting the towns of Hatchcook, Vokesville, and Cullaby Lake. This storm can produce a tornado with hurricane strength winds.

Move immediately to your safe secure location. That will be the on your lowest floor, away from windows, and put as many walls in between you and the outside as you possibly can. If you have some sort of bunker or cement walled room, go to it now.

SCENE 4
OUTSIDE

TORNADO: I came from chaos. A chaos of winds and thunder that combined into a storm. Not just any thunderstorm but a peculiar one with just the right combination of winds.

The air rises within that thunderstorm and as it rises, it is pushed by wind moving in a horizontal direction and then it’s jostled again by yet more wind.

Those horizontal winds are moving at different speeds and at different elevations and cause the rising wind to spin.

This is all happening way up in the clouds. But as the air spins, it begins to sink to the ground and spreads out. Gusts of warmer air rise and gusts of colder air sink. And in my case, there was enough rising air to begin spinning near the top of the thunderstorm while cooler air began to spin at the bottom.

The spinning air becomes faster and faster like what happens when a figure skater moves their arms into their body.

Although, since I form over land, I don't think of myself as an ice skater but more as a dancer.

I dance across the sand.

TORNADO twirls across the stage.

There's a power that continues to grow as I dance and a freedom to go anywhere I want. I'm a dancer. I've become a tornado.

SCENE 5

OUTSIDE AMIA'S HOUSE

AMIA: I was in a fog. Not a real fog, more like a brain fog. And it had engulfed me ever since I saw Chad and Sofia kiss in the hallway.

Damn her for kissing him! I thought we were friends.

Damn him for making me believe that I was loved and special.

Damn them both!

The klaxon sound of the tornado warning system went off, and I had to rush outside, dropping everything, to get to the cellar.

And I did, but it felt as if I was moving in slow motion. No matter how much I knew I needed to hurry intellectually, I couldn't make myself physically hurry.

I felt like I was walking through pudding or wet cement or something like that.

As soon as I got to the cellar, I, of course, dropped the keys into the long grass. And that was only after I remembered where they were in the first place. They lived on a hook by the back door, one I walk past almost every single day.

So I had dropped to my hands and knees trying to find the cellar keys. It really wasn't a cellar anymore. At least, my family didn't use it as a cellar anymore. It was only used now as a tornado bunker. But this was the first time I had ever been by myself at the time one had formed. Figures.

Before I could find the keys, the tornado was practically upon me.

My emotions overwhelmed me. I should have continued to look for the keys, until the bitter end, but I just didn't have the mental strength. I frankly didn't have the will.

I stood up, turning towards the tornado, tears flowing from my eyes, I opened my arms.

AMIA demonstrates all this.

SCENE 6

OUTSIDE AMIA'S HOUSE

TORNADO: I was dancing here and there, churning, spinning, exploring. Enjoying my birth and my existence, and everything that came with it.

I had no direction in my life just pure freedom to go anywhere I wanted.

I spun.

I destroyed.

I had the time of my life.

I went whisking through fields of corn, hay and buildings. I watched and felt as I ripped apart buildings, and homes, lifting up tractors and cars and throwing them around, hither and dither.

It was so easy and so fun.

And then I came upon her.

AMIA: I faced the storm knowing that I was going to be swept away. Frankly, I was kind of hoping it would just sweep me up and carry me off, throw me around, as my life seemed to be doing to me now.

My mood was dark and grey, just like the clouds above me, ominous and foreboding, angry and emotional.

I watched them churn and smash together as the clouds fought each other to take up all the space in the sky.

The wind seemed to rip through the air making a cacophony of noise so loud that it drowned out any other sound. In fact, it was more than that, the wind growled it's roar like any African lion would have been envious of and intimidated by. The intense viciousness of the roar squelched any other sound from even forming.

The rain came down, matching my inner sadness. It hit my face and mixed with my tears.

Here we were, a storm of intense power and fury, and a girl of sorrow and confusion, both caught up in a whirlwind of chaos, seemingly out of control.

The hairs on my arm, neck and even my head began to stand up straight.

The pelting of the rain, hay and leaves and everything else that had gotten caught up in the wind, began landing all around me.

In the sludge of melancholy that I found myself in, I accepted my new found fate. I spread my arms wide, I closed my eyes and waited for the pulverization of my body, I was sure would come.

But after a long moment, it didn't.

TORNADO: She was brave. She was vulnerable. She needed help. She needed a friend. And she looked like she was reaching out to give me a hug, to embrace me with something different than fear and loathing.

She looked complicated. Not that she wasn't constructed like any other human being I had ever seen but her face was a kaleidoscope of feelings and emotions. There was sadness, frustration and confusion for sure, and certainly there was a hint of anger.

But there was more, so much more.

She had an aura of courage that surrounded her, like a warm yellow glow.

It was clear that her face has seen lots of moments of smiles and laughter.

A resilience resided in her.

And at this moment, with her eyes closed and her arms outstretched, she looked at peace. A peace I didn't want her to lose. A peace I didn't want to destroy.

So I swerved away.

SCENE 6
WEATHER REPORT

WEATHER REPORTER: The severe storm conditions are dissipating. In all likely hood, the dangerous inclement weather has moved on. We are getting reports of tornado damage in the Cullaby Lake, and surrounding area. Damage is limited and looks like it could have been a lot worse.

I urge everyone out there to remain vigilant. This is just the beginning of what is likely to be an unprecedented year for thunderstorms. The long range forecast has these weather conditions in play for the next many months. The decline of El Niño into a rapidly developing La Niña has made these conditions quite volatile across the entire region and for a significant time to come.

So please everyone out there, get prepared and stay safe.

SCENE 7
AMIA

AMIA: The tornado had come so close to me. I was lucky to be alive. Everyone told me this repeatedly. My mom hugged me so fiercely.

Somehow for some reason I survived and I didn't exactly know why. But there was something strange in that storm, something unusual. Something I couldn't quite grasp, couldn't quite get my mind around.

I never told anyone but when I opened my eyes and saw the tornado leaving I was so relieved that I just said thank you and waved at it. It was silly. And I don't know why I did it. I just did it. Some sort of reaction in me. I didn't think about it. This I can explain, even though it is strange. It's what happened next… or at least what I think happened that doesn't make sense.

I think the tornado said you're welcome. At least I heard those words, and I shouldn't have over the roar of the wind, but yet I still

heard them very clearly. And then I saw a tendril of coiled wind come out of the tornado like a branch of a tree, or dare I say, the arm of a human, and it seemed… I swear this to be true… it seemed to wave back at me.

TORNADO: From that moment on, I became transfixed by this girl. Enraptured by her. She was the most amazing thing I had ever encountered, this girl they called Amia. I couldn't stop thinking of her, I longed to see her every chance I got.

SCENE 8

WEATHER REPORT

WEATHER REPORTER: Tonaka County has had a very unusual storm pattern established. It is much like Tornado Alley but on a smaller microcosm. Near the far edge of the county, there is a valley of sorts that harbors the perfect dry and moist conditions. It has acted as a funnel and guides these storms along a very exact path.

It's an incredible phenomenon. And let me stress, a highly dangerous one. In no uncertain terms, should anyone enter that particular valley, they would not be able to escape the destructive path of the various tornados.

These unusual conditions will last for the next several weeks if not the next couple months, based on our long-term projections. This may give climatologists a chance, from a safe distance, to study these extreme weather storms and potentially gather much more information that can be used for future forecasting.

SCENE 9

AMIA

AMIA: It was strange at first. I went out to where the storms were and watched from what I thought was a safe distance. The magnificence of what I was watching was overwhelming to me. I would sit and just stare off in the distance watching these storms sweep through this area. I was a true storm watcher not a storm chaser. Those people are crazy. I understood the danger and tried to stay as close to the storm as I could but remain a respectful and safe distance away.

I couldn't stay home. I had to go and see them. I was so truly fascinated that I was pulled, compelled, to go.

At the beginning, I just watched the storms in wonder. The more I watched however the more I noticed that there was something truly strange going on. I mean just unbelievable. The storms wouldn't start until I got there and was seated and comfortable. It was almost like it was waiting for me. I know how crazy that sounds. Believe me, I understand but that's how it seemed. And I say storms, but it was really like the same storm forming day after day after day. It looked the same. I mean they say no two lightning strikes are exactly the same. But this Tornado seemed to be. It grew to roughly the same size, it followed the same path every day. It stayed for as long as I did. If I stayed and watched it for only fifteen minutes it would soon dissipate as I was walking away. If I stayed there three hours it would go back and forth along its path for three hours.

The first couple days of these occurrences could have easily been coincidental. I mean extremely coincidental but coincidental none the less. But after a week. After two weeks. No way. Something was going on I didn't understand.

Did it matter that I didn't understand it? Not really, in fact, in a way it made it more special. It seemed this was all happening just for me.

I got to think about it as my own special show or performance really. It made it more awesome, more wonderful, more personal.

And then as time went by, I couldn't help but think of the storm as being a person or at least some sort of entity I could talk to.

And that's what I did. I began to talk to it.

SCENE 10
TORNADO

TORNADO: She came every day, this girl. I was excited. I was thrilled and I was confused. I had no idea what to do or why she was there.

I was happy she was coming. Very happy. But what could I really do, considering what I am and how different from her I was. Yet I was what I was and she came every day. So that had to have meant something. What it meant, I had no idea. No idea at all. I was already confused. I was just confused by what I was and struggled to understand my own self. All the chaos and damage I seemed to create around me. I might have been to harsh on myself, but that's how seemed to me, I was just something created for chaos and destruction and nothing more.

Then this girl started talking to me. I get that it probably started with her just talking to herself. But that seemed to change quickly. It was like this girl, Amia, recognized me as being me. And not something I wasn't or at least not something I didn't want to be.

In her eyes, I was everything I wanted to be. And she gave me a purpose I would have never had before. I became so much more than a thing because of her. I became a sounding board. I became something she could talk to. Something she could express her feelings, emotions, anxieties too. I became a therapist in a way. Overtime, dare I say, I felt like I had become her friend, as crazy as that sounds. I became what I always wanted to be: I became important.

SCENE 11

AMIA AND TORNADO

AMIA: I looked forward to going out to outskirts of town every day. I went out there to watch Tornado dance through fields and while I was there I talked about anything about everything, I poured everything out to them.

TORNADO: I was important. I knew my purpose. And it was a great purpose. I took my path, back and forth, for as long as she would stay and I listened.

AMIA: I hate here. I don't mean here with you, Tornado. I mean in this small town. I hate it here. No one understands me. Not one single person, with the exception of you. Am I the only one who wants to escape and see the world. To know what lies beyond this town. Seemingly, everyone else is okay with staying. No one wants the adventure I want, at least, not as much as I want it. I want to see anything, everything that might be out there. I don't understand why the rest of my high school class doesn't want it. How am I the only one? How am I that anomaly?

My problem is that everyone thinks differently than me. What I think is important and what I think life should be about, no one around here agrees with. I'm not saying that I'm right and they're wrong. I'm not saying that at all, it's just no one seems to agree with me, and if they do, they're completely silent.

I want to see the world. I want to see the arts of the world. The poetry of cultures. What other people create, and think is beautiful. I want to see their creations. I want to know those people. I want to know the people that bring life into this world. Life and positivity. I want to stay away from those that hate and fear. I'm too young for all that.

TORNADO: I didn't understand everything she said, not by a long shot. But I was willing to listen. I heard everything she said. Every word and I took to heart what she said. I was a vessel to talk to. I was a sponge to absorb her words. I soaked up everything she said. I loved her voice, her words, the simple fact she was talking to me, and no one else. It was personal. I felt wanted. I felt needed.

I was important to her. And because I was, I felt good and in a way fulfilled, as if this was what made my life worth living.

AMIA: Do you feel lonely, Tornado? I know I do. I feel so lonely. It's terrible to have to live in my own head 24/7 without anyone I can really relate with.

I hear myself answer my own questions and give myself advice. I'll be honest my advice is awful and even I know it.

I got to get to somewhere new and not so much reinvent myself but get discovered by the right kind of people. My kind of people. People who think like me. Value what I value.

I have no friends at high school. None whatsoever. There is a boy I kind of like but even I know what I like about him is superficial. He's cute. He seems cool. I feel an attraction to him. But I know nothing about him. He could be a total jerk as far as I know. And yet with that said, he could be the most perfect boy for me, as far as I know. That's the thing, I don't know much.

I know how odd I am. I go around school with my head buried in a Shakespeare play. The play changes about every month. If anyone talks to me, I throw Shakespearean insults at them. I get bullied a lot and I get nervous and anxious. I honestly don't know why, but when it happens I think quotes from the various plays of William Shakespeare I have read and I spout them out:

"A most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, and hourly promise breaker, the owner of no good quality."

"Come, come you froward and unable worms." That one always confuses them. Sometimes it confuses them long enough to get away.

"Go, prick thy face, and over-red thy fear, thou lily-liver's boy."

And my personal favorite, especially for the boys, because let's face it, it is mostly the boys who are bullying me: "Away, you three-inch fool." That one never fails, gets them every time.

TORNADO: The things she told me were personal and funny and made me admire her more and more every day. She was a strong person. I knew she was going to go far in life.

AMIA: What's wrong with me why am I so different?

TORNADO: This was the one thing, the one question I related to the most, since I was so different from this girl and yet I related to her so well.

AMIA: Why am I so different from anyone else? I don't get it. It doesn't seem fair. I shouldn't be. We should all be different or we should all be the same, but somehow it should be equal. I shouldn't be the only one. And yet seemingly I am. I dress differently, I understand that. *(Twirls around to show what she is wearing.)*

I read differently. *(Holds up a Shakespeare play, any will do. Says a famous quote from the play she holds.)*

(After quote.) Those are the real words. Words said so eloquently and so powerfully.

I think differently than anyone here.

And Tornado it hurts it really does. I hide it. I think I hide it well but it does escape from me through my emotions. I'm short with people. I'm aggressive but with all the bullying I endure, how can I not be. I'm getting tired of people. I people out pretty quickly these days. I don't know why people are so mean to me but they are. Maybe it's them. Maybe it's me. Maybe I just don't care.

Does anyone really understand teenage girls these days? Our life is hard. It really is. And seemingly everyone out there wants to make it harder. Why pick on us?

Tornado, I need a friend. Someone who can understand me. Someone who can listen. You have proven that. I know it's crazy to anthropomorphize you but you seem so real to me. And you are

by the far the best listener I have in my life. Not that I have many, but even if I did, you would be the best. You listen to me day after day. Without complaining, without judgement. I love that. It's exactly what I need.

TORNADO: I was needed. Truly needed. And it felt good.

AMIA: I feel like my life is stalled. I'm treading water and going nowhere.

I wish you could take me somewhere, Tornado. With those big powerful winds, blow me in a direction. Any direction, as long as it's far away from here. *(Gets herself ready to leave.)*

Goodbye, for today Tornado. I'll be back to ramble on tomorrow.

TORNADO: *(Makes wind blowing sounds, can be special effects if you like. Within those sounds says:)* Good bye.

AMIA jerks around to look at TORNADO in total shock.

AMIA: Did I just hear that? Did you just say something? *(Beat.)* Did I just imagine it?

Confused, AMIA exits.

TORNADO: It was hard to admit at first. I didn't realize it immediately. How could I have? I mean I'm still me. But I felt it and it had burst upon me like a spring flower. One day it's a green bud and the next, it's a fully bloomed, wild, red flower. Beautiful with a refreshingly sweet smell. It's hard to explain the crispness of such a smell, but it defines sweetness and spring. It may have been inevitable. The more I learned the more I felt. It was the greatest experience to learn about her with everything she shared with me. Have I overplayed my hand already? Feelings, deep feelings, had formed for this wonderful girl known as Amia in her world. What was I to do? Should I tell her? Try and express how I was feeling for her. And if I was to do something like that, so bold and so brave, how was I to express myself? I was spinning for her hard.

SCENE 13

WEATHER REPORT

WEATHER REPORTER: This year of extreme weather has had no precedent. And the area around Cullaby Lake has seen the brunt of these storms throughout the year. As we have gone from winter into spring, the storms have subsided with the cold weather. But as spring begins to make its way across the calendar, warm air is again beginning to come into our daily weather picture. With this warm air, mixing with the residual moisture from the winter, it creates the conditions for storms to potentially form.

Where this won't be a daily occurrence as it once was, there is a chance for big turbulent storms to form giving the perfect conditions, which would be rare but not unheard of. This will be a prelude to our summer, which, unfortunately to say is predicted to be as active as last year. Please, as always, exercise caution, be prepared for a storm emergency, and keep checking back with us, as we bring you all the important information as it arises.

SCENE 14

VALENTINE'S DAY

TORNADO: For Valentine's Day, I tried to express the emotions I was feeling. Unable to convey in words, for all I can articulate is sounds and noises that are rough, guttural and show only aggression, I needed to come up with something else.

All that show of aggression, is not me. At least not the real me, not the deep down me, not the me I wanted Amia to see. I don't want to be known as just another storm. I want to be known for much much more. I want to be known in a present tense, as passionate, as playful and not in a past tense for all the destruction I have left behind.

I want to be known as Tornado. Not just a storm, not just any old storm. I want to be remembered for me and not for what I may have left behind. I want her to look at me with those wonderful eyes that can read me, perceive me, that can tell my true intentions and not my unintentional destructive ones.

I want to be the wind that lifts her up not leaves her behind. But how to show her all that, is the real question.

AMIA: When did I know that Tornado had feelings for me, that Tornado was in love with me? When the thousands of paper red hearts blew into my bedroom window.

The day was a beautiful early spring day, and a surprisingly warm one. Everything was in bloom, like it all exploded over night. I was excited to see all the colorful flowers, and smell sweet spring in the air. I had opened my bedroom window to catch a hint of the new fresh aroma, and to hear the birds, and feel the warmth. Suddenly they all started flying in, little red hearts. They were little children's valentine's cards with pink and red hearts of all sizes. Rose petals of red and yellow also came through my window.

They all swirled around me. Encircled me. Not in a ferocious way, not in a way that it made a disaster of my bedroom, but more like a gentle breeze, just strong enough to keep everything floating and spinning around me.

Soon candy rained down on. Chocolates, gummies, caramels and so many more wonderful sweets.

I spent the next two weeks, slowly eating it all.

While all this was spinning around me, I reached out to grab a valentine, where I missed the one I had intended to grab, another one flew directly into my hand.

It read: You are special.

That's when I realized a Tornado had fallen in love with me.

I did feel special. Tornado made me feel special.

It was the best Valentine's Day ever.

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

TORNADO LOVE

By Shawn Deal

For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script, please contact us at:

Heuer Publishing LLC
P.O. Box 248 • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406
Toll Free: 1-800-950-7529 • Fax (319) 368-8011
WWW.HEUERPUB.COM