

THE STORM GAME

There's a new cloud in the sky. Max Million was his name;
He was there for ONE reason...to play the '*Storm Game*.'

He came over from Texas, full of gumption and style.
He had great, big, broad shoulders and a self-assured smile.

"I'm here to play the '*Storm Game*'," he announced with great glee.
"And I will challenge ANY cloud that would like to play me!"

I can beat any cloud, because I'm ranked NUMBER ONE!
You see, over in Texas, I am second to NONE!"

Other clouds quickly gathered and formed a large crowd.
All had been listening to this "BIG TALKING" cloud.

"Whoa! What did he just say?" asked one cloud with a frown.
"Did I hear him just put all my closest friends down?"

"Yup, I think he sure did," said a bird, flying by.
"I believe he said he could beat any cloud in our sky."

The clouds were disgusted with all this bold talking.
A cloud this conceited they found rather shocking!

"Well, I know what to do," said a small cloud named Freddy.
"Let's go get ol' Baltazor. For the '*Storm Game*', he's READY!"

"Yeah, go get Baltazor," yelled a large cloud named LeMatt.
"Baltazor can beat anyone. I CAN GUARANTEE THAT!"

"Our Baltazor is a LEGEND! Our Baltazor is a WINNER!
Our Baltazor can beat him eight times before DINNER!"

Max Million then smiled at the small cloud he was with.
"This Baltazor sounds scary, unless, (giggle), he's a MYTH!"

Max Million then chuckled as he puffed out his chest.
"This Baltazor doesn't scare me, because I am the best!"

Thus, the challenge was issued. Max was ready to roll!
He was pumped. He was jacked...for the 'STORM SUPER BOWL.'

Well, it was later that afternoon, on the 6th of July,
when our hero, our Baltazor, arrived in the sky.

"GREAT DAY for THE STORM GAME," he said, as he smiled.
"It's not sticky, nor hot. It's just perfectly MILD!"

Then the two faced each other and each began scowling.
Their eyes started squinting and their voices were growling.

Baltazor was disgusted, and on his face it did show.
As he stared at Max Million, his anger did grow.

"Those things that you've said have me really quite riled.
'Cause I've won EVERY Storm Game, since I was a child.

I suggest that you stop your tongue from that wagging,
because every cloud in our sky is tired of your bragging."

A group of large clouds then arrived carrying whistles.
With stripes on their shirts, they must be the officials.

One looked at his watch, and then looked up toward the sky.
Then he nodded at Baltazor and stuck his finger up high.

"I am the Sky Judge," he yelled, as he looked all around.
"I'm the cloud that's in charge when the winner is crowned."

As he looked at the competitors, his whistle he blew.
"It's time for the contestants to meet the game calling crew!

First, on the very far left, is the Sound Judge for our game.
He's very good as a judge. He's in the Noise Hall of Fame.

Loud thunder won't faze him. Loud sounds cause no fears.
He has started jet engines and never covered his ears."

Then the Light Judge moved forward. "He has experience galore.
When the dark obscures vision, well, his eyes can SEE MORE!"

The Charge Judge then nodded. "I know a lot about lightning;
A Trillion Volt Slammer? To me, that's not frightening!

The Sky Judge spoke again, "We'll be judging this game.
And we'll judge by the rules and treat you exactly the same.

Now it's time for the coin flip. This will decide who goes first.
And then we'll discover, who's the best and who's worst!"

The crowd was very quiet as the coin spun in the air.
Then Max yelled "HEADS" loudly, with a great deal of flare.

"HEADS, IT IS!" yelled the Judge, and he heard the crowd groan.
"This is not a good start," said LeMatt, in a quiet, soft tone.

Max Million looked at the judge and smiled a big smile.
"I shall pick the first event to be the Rapid Rise Mile."

The Rapid Rise Mile is when clouds 'tower' in the sky.
They billow and they bluster, as they rise very high.

"This event is so easy, 'cause I can climb like a flash.
I call the Rapid Rise Mile --- my own Vertical Dash.

And I billow as I tower MORE than just a mere mile.
And I do it with FASHION, and, I do it with STYLE."

Both clouds seemed ready as the start gun was shot.
And Max rose very quickly...but Baltazar did NOT.

Max did seven somersaults as he climbed through the sky.
Baltazar seemed rather slow.. and nobody knew why!

"Event One to Max Million," all the judges did say.
And the big crowd groaned. It was not a good day.

Now it was Baltazar's turn to pick Event Number Two.
The clouds all leaned closer to see what he would do.

"Let Max choose again," said the big, gray-green cloud.
A mystified, loud groan was then heard from the crowd.

"What's he doing?" the crowd muttered, looking sad and upset.
"He had better get going, 'cause he's NOT WINNING YET!"

Max Million laughed loudly, when he heard he could PICK.
"Letting me choose again is like getting a FREE KICK!"

"I believe I'll pick 'THE DARK SIDE' for Event Number Two.
And you'll see I'm an EXPERT, when I'm done and I'm through."

Now, 'THE DARK SIDE' is a contest of dark versus light.
Each player must try to make the skies black as night.

Max started out strongly, as he towered, very high.
Then he puffed out dark shadows into the clear sky.

The shadows became darker as his little friend cheered.
Soon, the shadows grew together and the sun disappeared.

The sky was so very dark! It was so dark, it was scary!
Were the other clouds afraid? They would answer, "YES...VERY!!"

The light judge looked around, "It's as dark as I've seen!
With my arms out this wide, I see nothing between!"

Max Million WINS this contest. Baltazar shouldn't try.
There is no way he could make a darker, black sky!"

The crowd groaned again, as they heard that sad news.
They all whispered softly, "Will our Baltazar lose?"

Now, it was Baltazar's turn to pick Event Number Three.
Every cloud leaned even closer, each wanting to see!

"Let Max choose once more," said Baltazar, again!
Every cloud began groaning. "NOW, HE'S NOT GOING TO WIN!"

The crowd was all bothered. They all looked distressed.
"It is obvious that Baltazar is not trying his best!"

Max Million smiled smugly. "Baltazor has made a big blunder, because I choose the next event to be 'Lightning and Thunder!'

At both Lightning and Thunder, I am really outstanding. And my routine is very difficult, in fact, it's demanding."

As Max bragged even more the crowd began booing. Everyone then watched closely, to see what he was doing!

Max frowned just a little as he heard from the crowd. Then he focused his attention on just one little cloud.

Max took a deep breath, then shot a bolt through the sky. It struck the small cloud, first low and then high.

The cloud trembled and shook. And it turned bluish white. Would it fall from the sky? You would think that it might!

Max followed that first bolt with another twice as large. The little cloud groaned. It was a mammoth lightning charge!

The little cloud tried to breathe. He crumpled over in pain. He felt really awful, like he'd been hit by a train!

Max took a deep bow. That signaled he was done. "That was 'cloud-to-cloud' lightning! And I'm certain I've won!"

Well it looked to be over... at least the crowd had presumed. Max Million was the victor. Our Baltazor seemed doomed.

That's when Aristotle appeared, and he didn't seem sad. In fact, he said softly, "I'm very proud of my Dad."

"And my Dad is not finished! No, my Dad is not through!
My Dad has some terrific things to show all of you."

Baltazor smiled at his son and then he spoke to the crowd.
"You folks just saw lightning, and it WAS 'cloud-to-cloud.'

But I don't pick on little clouds, when I show off my stuff.
My lightning's 'cloud-to-ground', as you'll see, soon enough!"

Baltazor took a deep breath, and then he spun all around.
Then he threw a huge lightning bolt right down at the ground.

It hit a tree with such force that the tree exploded in air.
And when one looked for that tree... the tree WASN'T THERE!!

Then the sky, it erupted with vivid colors so bright,
one could only describe it as a most BEAUTIFUL sight.

Then the ground near that tree began to sparkle and glow.
Baltazor's big lightning bolt really put on quite a show.

Baltazor smiled at Aristotle as his lightning show ended.
And the crowd was now yelling: "That really was splendid!"

And just then a low rumble started across the dark sky.
It was the sound of BIG thunder coming down from up high.

Baltazor's thunder grew louder. It was so very, very loud.
His thunder was so enormous, it terrified the large crowd.

The thunder got so loud that the sky seemed to shatter.
And Max was so scared that his teeth started to chatter.

Max was now very scared. He even tried not to look!
MAX was so very scared that he trembled and shook!

The judges signaled "thumbs up" and the crowd, it did roar.
What did that signal mean? '***The winner is... Baltazor.***'

Baltazor took a deep bow as he heard the ovation.
He was, once again, the pride of '**CLOUD NATION.**'

Baltazor was very pleased about the game he had won.
But he was even more pleased with Aristotle, his son.

"Aristotle never doubted, even when things looked really bad.
My Aristotle BELIEVED! He REALLY BELIEVED in his Dad!"

They both hugged and high-fived in that afternoon sky.
Baltazor was the winner, and everybody knew why!

When a son and his father really believe in each other,
BIG THINGS get accomplished, ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

The clouds formed a pathway for the 'Storm Game's big winner.
Then father and son headed home, for a VICTORY DINNER !

THE END