

The World That Was

Jasyn Jones

This is the world that was:

There were cities, we know, built wide and tall. Vehicles thronged the streets and the skies. And everywhere you looked, people. Smiling, laughing, living in abundance and happiness.

There was no war, or none to speak of. There was no hunger, no poverty, no want. They had put an end to all that. It was not heaven, but it was not far from it.

All of this burned.

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It was the Spasm, the week that ended the world. And it began with the demons. One day they weren't there, the next day they'd appeared everywhere.

The appearances began at sundown, in the heart of the lands of men, and swept west with the setting sun. They happened in every city, on every continent, in every land. During a long day of horror, they just came forth, wings and talons and roiling ferocity. It was a cataclysm of blood and violence.

Nor were the demons alone. Things both great and horrible also came forth. Monsters the size of buildings, that swallowed people whole. Monsters too small to see, that ground people up from within. Monsters that roared in rage, monsters that whispered in darkness, monsters that stalked in silence, hunting men like men hunted animals.

That day also, the dead returned from the afterlife. Parents returned to their children, husbands returned to their wives, wise leaders and executed criminals spoke with all who would listen. For a long day, the dead communed with the living, then returned from whence they came.

The demons and the monsters did not.

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In many places, the great and shining cities fell to darkness. People

were slain, order collapsed, and the demons began their rule. Many people died and many more were enslaved.

But not everywhere.

In some places, people prepared themselves. They saw the sweep of the setting sun, and prepared themselves for war.

When the demons and the dead swarmed their lands, they fought back. They made war with a will that surprised even them. And, they survived.

Not that it mattered, in the end.

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It was a decision born of desperation. Despite all they could do, the demons would win. It was ineluctable. They could not be stopped.

On the day of decision, a week after the war began, the leaders of men came together and made a choice. On the lands of men, on the cities that had fallen to the enemy, on their own homes and on their own surviving people, they would call down fire.

Part nuclear destruction, part magical devastation, and greater than the sum of its parts, the weapon would leave nothing standing. Whole lands would be wiped clean of everything that was life, vast cities would crumble to dust, millions would burn with a fire that consumed the body, the mind, and the soul. The destruction would be total.

This was the fire of the world that was, and with it they burned the world.

- Traditional Tale of the Free Nation of Ullagh

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