
A Gathering Storm

The clouds rolled in like hell riders upon the horizon. They rode on the winds blacker than soot, threatening to lay their wrath upon any that disturb their quest. The speed at which they approached was ungodly to those that watched, and suddenly they stopped, blotting out the noon sun making the day darker than the darkest night. With a boom the cloud riders drew their steel and rained fire upon the land in bolts of light, as ice crashed down from all the surface of the sky. They said that there was a storm a coming, but none suspected the like. The bolts of fire tore into the flesh of the earth leaving craters and crevices as the earth shook and quaked from the pain of the blow. Fires started and spread in the forest hissing like serpents from the Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories ice that fell upon the embers, but not could quench the flames, for they hungered only for destruction and none could falter their voyage. Vortexes then formed in the sky whipping the winds around and throwing debris in a tantrum across the land. Some touched down in the forest turning them black and lighting them up like furnaces. They shot flaming arrows of debris across the earth that took lodge in any surface they met. A hellish sight stretched from sea to sea, but even the waters did not avoid the storms devastating powers.

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The waters moaned in despair, lashing out in rage at the disturbance of its slumber. Waves rose taller than mountains Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories across the oceans plains, drawing so much waters from the deep pools of the ocean, revealing parts of the bed it once blanketed and leaving only a sheet at parts Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories that man has only dreamed of exploring. Crashing did the waves come down on the Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories lands with such Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories force it stripped it of much of its surface, like trees being stripped of their leaves were the lands stripped of their hills and valleys. What lie in the oceans wake were not but planes as bare as empty canvas, awaiting the painters brush. Though in the distance stood the stone guardians of the land.

Proud and strong they loomed above all else, some peaks stood higher than the hellish clouds that Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories now wrought destruction and turmoil across their realm. Though guardians they were, they could not hinder this powerful force without taking on wounds. With each fiery lashing that shook the ground the shield that was the mountains took its toll. The snow that Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories capped its peaks rolled down the sides as loud as any thunder the storm could produce. The stone cracked as each blade met its surface, but still the mountains did not wane. As waves crashed upon its face, the miles inland they stood, stones, rocks, and boulders, were dragged from their place of rest, but the mountains did not falter. These giant guardians of the land would protect their charge till they stood no taller than trees, and would welcome anything that tried to tear them up at their roots. So they stood, strike after fiery strike, blow after watery blow, 'til eventually the storm subsided and the evening sun revealed the devastation of the hour.

Mankind emerged from the safety of the mountains gates, which lie deep within the stone giants. There they had fled, in fear of the storm, but none knew it would be quite like this. They stared in awe at the wastelands they once Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories called

home, but they were not stripped of hope, for where there is life, life will only flourish and blossom more beautiful than before.

Supreme

You look at all that is before you. Power is at your feet; men and women line the streets to gaze upon your glory. You open your mouth to speak and silence ripples through the crowd. You smile, *who could want more*, you think to yourself, but this makes you grimace. You do want more, which is exactly why you are before your people.

“We march on Tiriad,” you exclaimed to the crowd. Murmuring washes through the crowd until you speak again, “We depart on the morrow to conquer their lands and expand our own resources,” still not the reaction you want so you continue, “I will unite all the people as one, too long has there been tension between our two states. So now I tell you this will be no more, we will live as one in peace.” The crowd roars in agreement. They hear what they want, and you still get what you desire, unlimited power and wealth. The youngest emperor, and the first, to rule all of Unigrad, every province and state will belong to you. You smile for this small victory and make your plans for the morrow.

* * *

Your army is at your back and you ride forth, you halt and make camp not more than three leagues from Tiriad. The land is flat, and leaves you in plain view of the land for miles around. You move towards the Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories capital city that lies just beyond the Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories boarder. This is where you must strike, take the head off the viper and soon the body will shrivel and die. You have a plan, deceptive, but how else will you conquer such a well-known military power with such a small force.

Inside the city walls you are brought before the Count of Tiriad, and you offer him treaty. You ask him to look it over and return to your camp with his decision. *He is an honorable man, nah or yah he will come before me and the land will be mine either decision*, you think. Your devious plan is set in motion, and glee fills you. You go to your tent and rejoice for a victory to come. You pass out from your frivolous celebrations with two lovely women to warm

your bed.

* * *

You awake to a clamor outside your Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories tent, when suddenly four armed men emerge into your gilded tent. Then a fifth emerges, decorated in silver trimmed plate armor and ruby studs in his steel gauntlets, it's the Count.

"Your treaty is denied," he says with a smile as he crushes the blood stained parchment, "and likewise are you to be destroyed."

You reach for your sword and the gilded Count hacks your arm Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories off at the shoulder. You have no chance to scream as he redirects the blade lobbing off your head...

* * *

You start awake and blink at your still attached arm and rub your unscathed neck. You look around your room and see your friends all still passed out on the floor around the TV. "Jesus," you think, "*never will I get drunk and watch Lord of the Rings again...*"

Sterben

(Volume One)

They called it the “Incineration Virus” but society had more of a biblical name for it which much better fit the Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories situation, for it came after nine unnatural occurrences around the world and this one struck everywhere. We as the human race, even the scientists gave into calling it by this name, *Living Death*. Those infected slowly died over a course of five years. Slowly and painfully decomposing while still fully conscious of all that is happening to them. The body tries to fight off the virus but this only makes it worse, as if it angers the virus. The virus feeds off of the resistance, so we had created medicines that would increase the amount of white blood cells hoping this would speed up the process and cause it to shorten the time as well as giving them extensive amounts of pain killers to numb the pain as they still lived, however it took the opposite effect. The virus seemed to last longer and cause more pain to the patient. We even tried antibiotics, but the ones who made these medicines were infected and the test only proved to spread the disease Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories rather than depress it.

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Everyone around me was being infected and there was nothing I could do. Curiosity rose in my Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories colleagues on why I was not falling to the same fate that the ones close to me had, so they performed tests on me taking blood samples and other procedures. They noticed I had a trace of the Virus in my blood, shocked and frightened of me they threw me into containment. They observed me, my actions waiting and waiting for me to die, but after fifteen years of being locked in that glass room nothing changed, except I grew stronger and far more agitated with their prodding and poking. They were no longer my Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories friends, my colleagues, they were my captors and I wanted out. After fifteen years I was ready to be free, though they were not willing to do that, for the virus was slowly dying out and I was the last living trace Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories of it's deathly effects. The last infected had died just Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories days ago and now they waited patiently for me to die. They stopped feeding me, for their use of me had been extinguished with the dying breath of that three-year-old girl. Tonight was the night, Gathering Storm: A Collection of Short Stories tonight I would escape...

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