

"Teh..."

by Bram Floria

.....*"Ta, ta, ta, teh, teh, teh...."*

The misshapen mass in front of him stuttered and shuddered. As far as he could tell, that is. This cloying darkness swallowed everything. Even his sanity, it would seem. How could it be THIS dark at THIS hour? The sun should be halfway to the horizon putting these jagged beams in stark relief. Now, nothing.

Yet somehow... that red. Was it even a man, anymore? More a crimson tumor – reaching... Where? No one was coming to save him. Like a child, he had screamed for his daddy. And then...

The Fear. It seemed to flow **from** the dying man and **to** him.

The Black. It seemed to swallow him. Or was He swallowing **it**?

The Centurion could barely keep his head up against the weight of all this. His men had already taken a knee and were rattling their helmets to clear their heads.

.....*"Teh, teh, teh..."*

It was more rasp than word.

The ground roiled under his feet. Or maybe it was his own insides going to liquid. He sensed a coming attack. He forced himself to look in every direction. The thin line of remaining light at the western horizon was rapidly retreating - fleeing this onyx hammer.

God this is oppressive...

Not another man on the ground remained standing. The only other two who remained upright were nailed in that position. The last face he could still see was defiant and straining for a last look. It was that woman the others called a prostitute. The one who wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. How was she still standing? God how those eyes blazed. She stood guard over the crumpled mass of the older woman and her son. The Centurion locked eyes with her.



Why was the oil sputtering? The choking smoke of an extinguished flame soured the room. The light was dying.

Everywhere.

All day the bleating and the bleeding had paraded outside the door. The blood not human to cover the human soul poured to overflow the drains. Yet sound was overwhelmed by the ragged breath coming from the Lamb on the other hill. All around - Death, and Hope was dying with it. For hours there had not been a twinge from the seat upon which sat the inhabitant of this room. The constant conversation of Three had dwindled to One. How could this be?? With eyes all around, straining to heavens in every direction, but no. the universe has collapsed. Vision was failing.

Eyes left unlit, the Blinded summoned Father in whisper; called in confusion; screamed in growing conviction. "Where are You going??"

"Son!! Where are You??" How can I abide here? Why will no one answer??

.....***"Teh, teh, tehhehhh.."***

The soldier was terrorized by the sound behind him. Frozen by the eyes before him. Then, the last flash of horizon light began to flicker in the woman's eyes.

.....***"Teh..."***

"TETELESTAI!!!"

The Resident of the dark room was shattered by the scream. Father remained as silent as Death. The Black landed as an iron lid.

The howl from within the sanctuary echoed back to the hill and the Blinded thrashed out through the dank blanket, throwing it aside in shreds. Leaping from the seat of judgment, mind made up, Spirit flooded out across the mount.

"Son. Where are You??!!!"

The Agony poured down the alleys smelling its way along the blood trail, scraping over the souls of fallen men. It rushed out the walls, felt the edge of Gehenna and sped to the place of skulls.

'WHERE ARE YOU??'

Spirit, still-blinded, raged to flatten anything in its path in pursuit of Son. It collided with a soul redeemed and the fragile one shuddered. Spirit surged forward.

The Centurion captured the flash in her eyes - something different - something fierce. The color of desperation. And in that flash he knew it was coming for him. The Wall met his soul full in the face and spun him around. It roamed the hill, pouring over and over the beams. Everything between the soldier's ears and behind his ribs was in shards.

The Desperation was still... Searching.

'WHERE ARE YOU??'

"FATHER!! WHERE IS HE??"

The Centurion saw it casting to and fro. It rushed away to seek that which was not to be found in all the earth. And still the darkness wouldn't relent. But it sagged. Spent. Stumbling, he fell forward vowing not to fall to his knees. He fell into the cross, instead. That red, still imprinted on his brain even in this lightlessness horrified him. He held onto that iron peg to steady himself.

"Surely..."

"Surely, this..." His hand slipped into the congealed wetness behind the peg. He retched.

And then the darkness began parting, filaments of grey filtering down through the cracks of unforgiving, iron resolve. Its purpose served, the darkness began to decay. It collapsed under its own weight and the ants below scrambled along their mound in confusion, surveying the damage.

Eventually, the natural night returned to its rightful place and covered the world in its familiar blanket. An attempt to comfort its own Creator, perhaps.

Twice more Night and Day attempted to sabbath what remained inconsolable in earth or heaven. Weary greys of dawn and tarry blackness of blank skies devoid of stars. All creation seemed forever spent.

And then...

