

## CHAOS

Shrieks split the humid air. Religious stood, hands reaching for heaven, singing hymns as tears streaked their faces. Women sobbed, men moaned, and animals whimpered. Husbands and wives clung to each other, parents pulled their children close. Lovers held each other in a finale embrace.

Every neck locked back with eyes staring upward. Flashes of light smeared across the darkening sky following two globes rocketing towards each other. One radiated a white luminosity. An intense buzz sliced through the air in pursuit of it. The second bulk fumed a dark scarlet. A deep rumble chased its maker.

Mumbles of the end of time spread like rottenness throughout the crowd.

The blazing white slammed into the red-hot fury without a sound. Brilliant lights erupted, just before the atmosphere burst into flames. In unison, the crowd gasped. Hands flew to their eyes to shield them from the blinding beam. Black devoured the light. Showers of sparks glittered, streaking the darkness with fizzling light, and then cascaded towards the earth like black snowflakes.

The murkiness lifted. Survivors wheezed for air. The filth rained upon them. The stench of sulfur stung everyone's nostrils, and bitterness lingered on their taste buds.

People stumbled to their feet, and soon, mass panic spread as every parent cried out for their children. All had vanished. Except for one, dressed in only a diaper; his stare filled with tears and his loud cry filled the air. His arms reached towards anyone that rushed past.

Ghast rolled over. "Christina, are you okay?"

"I think so." Her voice quivered.

Ghast's gagged and launched into a coughing frenzy. He mopped his mouth and glasses with his shirtsleeve, pushed himself to his feet, and slapped at the dust that covered his clothes. "Looks like only a few of us made it."

Christina glared at him. "Do you seriously not know what just happened?"

"Oh like you do." He marched off. "Damn her!" What is it with her need to make me look stupid? He kicked at the ground. Soot erupted into a cloud clogging his throat. He hacked and spit the black slop out. Christina doesn't know anything about UFO's or warfare, that's probably what just happened, an Invasion by another planet or country.

Ghast struggled to keep his five-foot-skinny body from trembling. He and Christina had been coworkers for years. She annoyed him often, and not for the reasons she accused him of. "You have issues with beautiful, intelligent women." Give me a break. He and Christina had been on a research team responsible for the first universal identification number microchip (UIN) for people: The tiny,

sophisticated microchip implanted under the skin of a person's hand or forehead made for easy scanning. The world incorporated it into every product, making Barcodes obsolete. UIN's had gone over so well, that it was impossible to buy or trade without one. Ghast stopped and turned. "Are you coming?"

Christiana stood and winced. She puckered her lips and sucked until she produced saliva, swished the make-do mouthwash and spat out a black mess. She tugged her shirt over her head and turned it inside out. Ghast stared at her. I know my beauty drives him nuts. I can only imagine what this is doing to the horny little weasel. She cleaned her face and glasses with the inside of her shirt and pulled it back on.

Ghast squinted, longing to see her bare flesh. He couldn't see much through his smudged specs, but enough to ignite his imagination. He often fantasized about her nude body. He crooked around and untucked his shirt, pulling it over the fly of his bulging jeans.

Christina walked towards Ghast. It's not like she had never considered sexing Ghast, if she thought that he was man enough to satisfy her, she would have used him for sure. She was confident it would be a short-lived experience. The freak just about has an orgasm every time I lean over him. Her lips tugged upward. The little weasel is always on the verge of exploding in his pants.

The crowd in their immediate view gathered around a priest. His deep voice trembled, "Oh Father in Heaven hear our prayers. Please dear father deliver us to safety"

Christina shook her head. Am I the only one who knows what just happened? Have none of these people ever picked up a Bible or studied the book of revelations? They all seem baffled at this sudden state of chaos and ash. I never believed any of it would happen. All those old musty tales of ascension for the innocent and suffering for the rest, but at least I am aware what is going on. These people are oblivious. She pressed her open palms against her ears. Why doesn't someone pick that crying baby up already! She thought back to the crowds of people awaiting the collision, and she shuddered at their collective stupidity as a bible Scripture flashed into her mind. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him. . .

Adrenalin rushed through her veins. If I am the only one who comprehends what happened, I have an advantage, if I play my cards right, Hell might be fun.

Christina extended her hand to a shaggy dog and made kissing noises. "Come here, boy." The animal trotted to her. She sat on the ground, and the dog sidled up and slopped his tongue over her face. His rounded snout and long fur marked him as a mutt. She rubbed his belly when it rolled over and stretched all four legs apart and up.

Christina's mind raced through her studies on the book of Revelations. She released a long breath, remembering the hours she spent studying these very times. She had enjoyed it, the way many enjoy the studying Shakespeare. It intrigued her. She loved the intellectual stimulation attempting to unravel the symbolism and extracting meaning from the book. I considered it all symbolic, until today.

I have to figure out what was metaphorical and what was literal from those oblique descriptions of the end of the world. Lucifer should be here soon to gloat. I'll be ready. Even Hell will need some sort of administration. If I play my cards right, I can be second in charge, for a while but just as Lucifer challenged his right-hand position, I will one day challenge mine. The possibilities are endless.

A deep throaty laugh escaped her lips, as she looked around the dismal world which she would one day reign over. It will have to be rebuilt. She assessed the peoples' abilities. She grabbed a fistful of ash and let it spill between her fingers. Not a hope anything will be growing in this. I'll worry about that later. I need to prepare mentally for Lucifer's arrival.

Christina observed the small group praying to God. This is going to be easy. These people's stupidity is nearly beyond comprehension. That very God they were asking for deliverance from is the same one who left people to drown as Noah and his family floated away, that asked a man to sacrifice his son, set towns full of people on fire — A vision danced in her head of the scriptures that clarified God's wrath being inflicted upon those who didn't worship him. She pulled a long breath in and released it.

The shaggy dog struggled to fit and took up her whole lap. Christina did not mind. She needed a friend right now. She pushed his nose away from her crotch and scratched behind his ears. "Stop sniffing me, you dirty dog!"

A memorised scripture rang in her head. And he causes all to receive a mark on their hand or foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666. She dropped her face into her opened hands. And we thought we were being cocky to number the research file Triple Six.

Lucifer lurked about incognito, probing into the thoughts of the members of his new society. No one seemed to detect him as he altered his baby disguise. No one noticed the lack of animals, except for one lone dog.

He was very satisfied with his flock, most pleased with the woman Christina. He would bed her soon. He nuzzled her, using the dog's sense of smell to get his first hint of her sensuality. It will be fascinating to take up Ghast's identity for a while and shock her with his sexual capabilities. So many possibilities here to amuse myself with, so much fun to be had on this novel playground among all my new toys. He licked Christina's face, and snuggled into her lap, relishing the scratching behind his ear.

Oh yes, I'll need a right-hand. Yes indeed.