


WHEN MY GRANDFATHER
WAS A BOY, THEY CAME.
MARAUDERS FROM THE WEST.


ONE WITH THE SAND



THEY RODE HORSES AND
HAD HEAVY IRON WEAPONS.
WE HAD ARROWS TIPPED
WITH SALT.



WHEN THEIR HORSES DIED, THE NOMADS
WERE EASY ENOUGH TO KILL. THEY HAD
NO STOMACH FOR THE DESERT.



MY GRANDFATHER
WARNED ME THAT
THEY WOULD ALWAYS
COME--TO KILL OR
TRADE--AND THEY
WOULD ALWAYS
UNDERESTIMATE US.

I WAS BORN
HERE. I WILL DIE
HERE. I AM ONE
WITH THE SAND.



GRANDFATHER
WAS RIGHT.

IN MY TIME, A SULTAN FROM
THE EAST SENT UNDERLINGS
TO PRESSURE US.



HIS VIZIER TOLD US THAT THE
KINGDOM WAS UNDER ATTACK
AND WE MUST RISE TO HELP
THEM DEFEND IT.



WHEN WE
REFUSED, THEY
THREATENED US.



THEY ALSO HAD
NO STOMACH FOR
THE DESERT.



BUT THIS SULTAN HAD
SPENT SOME TIME HERE.
HE KNEW OUR WAYS.

NEXT, HE SENT
CAMELS INSTEAD
OF SILKS. HIS NEW
VIZIER BRIBED US
WITH THINGS WE
COULD USE.



WE FOUGHT FOR THE SULTAN AND LED HIS CAVALRY ACROSS THE PUNES TO OUTFLANK THE PALE EMPIRE.



FOR ALL THEIR MILITARY MIGHT, THE PALE ONES COULD NOT OUTFIGHT THE GRIT OF THE DESERT'S SANDS.

THEY DID NOT THINK ANYONE COULD CROSS THE DESERT BEHIND THEM.



OUR VICTORY WAS COMPLETE, BUT SHORT LIVED.



IN THE NAME OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, WE ACCEPT YOUR SURRENDER.

I WISH I COULD SAY THE SULTAN WAS NOBLE AND KIND.

MY WIVES AND CHILDREN? THEY WILL BE SPARED?



BUT HE'D HAVE DONE THE SAME THING IN THEIR POSITION.

OF COURSE.

WHOK



WHAT THE PALE ONES DIDN'T KNOW WAS THEY WERE AWAKENING A SLEEPING GIANT. A LONG-DEAD MONSTER.



SPARE THEM DEATH. PUT THEM ALL IN CHAINS AND SELL THEM. I'M A MAN OF MY WORD.

STARTING A WAR THEY COULD NOT WIN.

SLIP INTO YOUR
SUNDAY BEST,
**CONTEMPTIBLE
CONGREGANTS!**
YOUR OLD UNCLE
CREEPY IS TAKING
YOU TO THE
CHURCH OF
CHILLS!

FIND YOUR
PLACE AMONG
THE **PUTRID PEWS**
AND FOLLOW THIS
SINISTER SERMON
ABOUT A TRAVELING
PREACHER WHO
FINDS HE HAS A LOT
TO LOSE WHEN
HE GETS...

a Taste of Eternity

DEAR
GOD, HELP
ME...


There is a generation,
whose teeth are as
swords, and their jaw
teeth as knives, to
devour the poor from
off the earth, and the
needy from among men.

—Proverbs, 30:14

IT WAS ON THE
ROAD FROM RED
RIVER TO CANE
RIDGE THAT I
CAME TO KNOW
THE AWFUL
TRUTH BEHIND
THESE WORDS.

THE WHOLE GHASTLY AFFAIR HAPPENED SUDDENLY, AND I COULD NOT GET A FIX ON WHAT MANNER OF BEAST HAD ATTACKED ME. I ONLY SAW THE HELLFIRE IN ITS EYES AND SMELLED THE SULFUR ON ITS BREATH.

THE SKY WAS CHARGED BY THE DISTANT LIGHT OF A COMING STORM, AND I KNEW I HAD TO SEEK SHELTER, BOTH FROM THE WEATHER AND FROM THE FEAR THAT THE BEAST MIGHT RETURN TO FINISH WHAT IT HAD STARTED.



A BLACKNESS OVERTOOK ME AND I REMEMBERED NO MORE. WHEN I WOKE, I WAS COLD AND QUITE ALONE, BUT THANKFUL TO BE ALIVE.



I THOUGHT TO REST HERE, IN THIS CHURCH WHERE I HAD PREACHED MANY TIMES, BUT WHICH WAS NOW LONG ABANDONED BY ITS CONGREGATION. JUST UNTIL THE WARMTH OF MORNING LIGHT CAME. JUST UNTIL I COULD DRESS MY WOUNDS AND FIND MY STRENGTH. JUST UNTIL THE RAIN STOPPED FALLING.



SLEEP DID NOT COME EASY. THE PAIN FROM THE WOUND SEEMED TO RADIATE THROUGH MY ENTIRE BEING. EVERY DROP OF RAIN ON THE CHURCH ROOF WAS AS LOUD AS CANNON FIRE.



RESTLESS THOUGH MY BODY WAS, MY SPIRIT FELT AT PEACE, FOR I KNEW THE HEAVENLY HOST WATCHED OVER ME.





THE BELL TOWER PROVIDED RESPITE FROM THE LIGHT, BUT MY SUFFERING WAS NOT AT AN END.

WHEN THE SUN WAS DOWN AGAIN, I GATHERED WATER, BUT NO MATTER HOW MUCH I DRANK, I COULD NOT GLUT MY THIRST. THOUGH I HAD NOT EATEN SINCE THE PREVIOUS DAY, I HAD NO APPETITE.

THE VERY THOUGHT OF FOOD MADE ME RETCH.



EVEN MY DREAMS TURNED AGAINST ME IN TIME. EACH NIGHT THAT PASSED BROUGHT VISIONS OF BLOODSHED AND ABOMINABLE ACTS, ACTS OF WHICH I DARE NOT SPEAK.

I BEGAN TO SLEEP AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE, PREFERRING TO SPEND MY TIME LOST IN READING MY BIBLE AND PRAYING, DESPERATELY SEARCHING THE GOSPEL FOR ANY WORDS THAT MIGHT BRING ME PEACE.

I HAD DEVOTED MY ENTIRE LIFE TO SPREADING THE WORD TO THOSE WHO WOULD HEAR IT. I HAD READ THE SCRIPTURE THROUGH AND THROUGH, BUT IT SEEMED SO DISTANT AND FOREIGN TO ME NOW. THE PASSAGES WERE A LABYRINTH.



SOON I COULD NOT TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MY WAKING LIFE AND THOSE UNHOLY VISIONS.

MY LUST FOR BLOOD HAD SPILLED OVER AND CONSUMED MY EVERY THOUGHT.

AMEN...