

The Tribulation by Vincent Lakes

VINCENT LAKES



THE TRIBULATION

The Tribulation by Vincent Lakes

The Tribulation

by

Vincent Lakes

Published in June, 2012

Distributed by the official Vincent Lakes website:

www.vincentlakes.com

Other stories and additional material available online!

Contact by e-mail: vincent@vincentlakes.com

Unauthorized distribution and any modification of this intellectual property, in part or in entirety, are strictly prohibited by local and international copyright laws. Please, refer to official documentations and settings for more information. This literary work has been exclusively published for the internet audience. All commercial and non-commercial printing and/or reprinting requires a written consent of the author. An exception applies to printing for your own private use for increased reading comfort.

"Something new is born when something old dies"

- Petri Walli

Copyright © 2012, Vincent Lakes. All rights reserved.

THE TRIBULATION

A figure clad in shining armor of platinum and silver, a long, golden hair flying in the nil wind, turned to face the others. His harsh face wore the crinkles of sorrow and tension caused by the morbid events of late. The brooding silence of the hall echoed despair in these times of reckoning, when all hope of the people had died, and the deities that once were celebrated had fallen from grace. Brothers had turned against each other; sisters had betrayed their own, the delicate order of the world had collapsed and sunken into crimson mist known as the War of the Immortals.

Wrapping his snow-white cloak around himself, the glittering figure sat down on one of the large, but otherwise very modest wooden chairs around a grand table that used to be the Chamber of Council at the heart of now ruined City of Helberoth. The birds had ceased singing, the spirits of fallen warriors had left the hall, the songs of legends had died. Time itself seemed to stall in place as, for the first time since the creation of stars, all ten Immortal Spirits had gathered to this one place - this one realm envisioned by Avareth, the White Paladin. Even his eternal nemesis, the wicked Sagriel, the Queen of the Night, had attended this convent that would determine the fate of Telwar. And even she, the master of deceitful trickery, kept her forked tongue behind her teeth, staring at others as silently and grimly as Avareth. Alongside with her brother, she had lost something very dear that day. The children of these two Immortals had descended to an infinite dream, where they would wait for the day when the Skywhales dived from the clouds and returned to their original home, the vast oceans, breaking the world thus giving it back to the Dark Veil from whence it was once created.

But this was not the day, although some facets strongly disagree.

"Everything is ready," a serious woman said emotionlessly. Leileth, the Keeper of Time, had summoned them, which was the first time she took an active role in the flow of events that shook the world of Telwar.

"I have received an agreement from each of you - an agreement for covenant that will change this world forever. The time of deities has passed, and the time of mortals is about to begin." As she continued speaking with steady, colorless voice, each Immortal laid their darkened gaze to the table, embracing the words in their hearts, knowing that what they were about to do was the only thing that could still save this world from complete destruction.

"Once the spell is complete and the change is set in motion, we must leave and never come back to this world again. Only as whispers and shadows we may manifest ourselves to our

followers. Without shape or form we may wander, but we may not interfere or affect the gift of free will that we are blessing the survivors of this world with. They shall decide on their own fate from now on, and once given, it cannot be revoked.”

Sagriel's eyes flashed in anger, but she could not interrupt Leileth, for she, along with everyone else, had sworn to obey the covenant. No more she could control the people of Telwar. No more she could rule them with illusion and fear, but faithful to her true nature, the sorrow for her children was already fading and new plans were forming in her mind. A barely visible smile appeared on her garnet lips as a faint sign of things to come.

”How are they going to survive without us?” Anduniel, the Lady of the Trees, lamented.

”Much better than they have been doing so far, I'd say,” Tharos added skeptically while grooming his long beard, gaining a rather frigid glance from his upset sister. But as usual, he ignored such gestures with a careless shrug. He was confident that his own children, the Darfins, would outlive this unfortunate tribulation by staying inside of their sturdy vaults and halls beneath the mountains.

”Cold as a lifeless stone is your heart,” Anduniel whispered, mourning the fate of her precious Luthans, her beloved adherents. Many of them would die during the following days, but this price they would have to pay was going to make them stronger than ever before - just like all the other nations of Telwar. That was the only comfort she had as she turned to her brother, still hoping in her heart that he could somehow end this madness and make everything better with a single gesture of his hand - but it was far too late for such amends. The damage that had been done by allowing open war between the Seers and Darklings, two races of deities that acted as paragons for the world for countless aeons, had been too dire and horrid to leave hope for resurgence without extreme measures.

”Arguing will not help anyone,” Morbane spoke. ”Every moment we allow to slip through our fingers pushes this world a step toward its doom.”

”And why does King of the Dead care about that?” Anduniel sobbed, drying her misty eyes with the silvery-blue sleeve of her gown.

”Do not mock me, my sister,” Morbane said solidly, and his black eyes turned at Anduniel, who faced his deadly stare with silent defiance. ”I have been a part of building this world as much as you have. Do not dare to question my concern for it.

Despite the cold calmness about him, Anduniel knew in her heart that her brother was honest, and after a few fiery seconds of dreadful silence, she turned her head away from him,

The Tribulation by Vincent Lakes

feeling embarrassed by her poorly considered question. Succumbed in helpless despair and frustration, the Immortals shared the same feelings of loss and yearning they would have to adapt to, for the world could no longer thrive alongside with their overwhelming presence - nor anything that was able to exploit their might in the same degree as the Seers and Darklings had done.

Then Avareth rose from his seat and spoke. "It is time," he said. "Join me in this last spell that grants freedom for Telwar and provides the natives a chance to begin life anew. Join me in this spell and return this world to the innocence it deserves. Let our children forge the future that we have failed to secure. Let them forget this dark age and live their lives in harmony as it was intended from the beginning." His voice grew in strength with every word, bouncing off the walls and echoing in the hills outside. And they all approached him, forming a perfect circle in the middle of the hall.

"Take my hand," Avareth urged. "Become a part of this one last song we sing for this world!"

"So be it," Galadin, the Keeper of Balance, said steadfastly, and grasped the hand of his brother. Others followed his example until the circle was completely connected, unbreakable and steady. The rulers of death and deception joined together with the guardians of light and life, and a spell that had not existed since the birth of the world began to form as a fragile hum from Avareth's lips.

Then a new voice joined the first one, strengthening it with a new color, adding depth and volume. This was repeated over and over again as each Immortal became a part of the majestic hymn that grew and spread across the entire world. Every voice brought something new to the song; every voice had their own role within the song. The grandeur of this magnificent creation required exquisite precision from everyone involved. The complexity and difficulty of the spell was something what a mere mortal could never comprehend. It grasped the very foundations of Telwar, drilling deep into the core of the planet, and at the same time it reached far out into the skies, gaining strength from the mighty winds of the atmosphere. Then it began to perform the task it was woven to do: To wash away the stains of blood, the bitter hatred, the abysmal pain and sorrow caused by the everlasting war that had ruined the once beautiful dream - everything this tortured planet had gone through during the millenniums of its existence.

The sky darkened and the winds escalated into a howling storm, tearing off trees from the ground with their roots and flying them across the scenery like leaves in the autumnal breeze. The Skywhales disappeared behind a dark wall of clouds, almost as if they covered their eyes from the

The Tribulation by Vincent Lakes

approaching doom. The waves of the oceans rose, the earth crumbled and cracked as severe quakes shook the entire world. No one was safe from it - no one could hide from it. The end of everything was at hand.

Those who were left in the battlefields, crippled and injured, died as the atrocious winds brought massive hailstorms that hammered everything into pieces, splitting skulls and crushing bodies like they were just bark beneath a felling axe. Houses were ripped apart, leaving no shelter for the terrified mothers and their children. The hails and debris pounded them to the ground, leaving their lifeless bodies lying in the violently whirling dust. The angered sea created higher and higher waves as the bottom of the ocean cracked and broke causing enormous tidal waves that billowed upon the endless shores of the world, reaching the higher ground of inland crushing everything in their path. And as it turned out, the Darfins found no safety in their halls as the very stone itself separated and boiling lava swallowed their sturdy buildings. Tharos cried for the fate of his children, but he found no comfort in tears as every Immortal watched, terrified and distraught, as the world they had all been creating in the beginning of time was falling apart.

But Avareth's will was unbreakable, and at the back of their chaotic minds they all knew that what was set into motion in the ruins of Helberoth that day was inevitably essential. As the once lively, vibrant hills around the city began to fall, and the freezing water of the conquering ocean began to take over the streets, the figures of Immortals faded, turning into transparent spirits before slowly vanishing in the air. Every living creature felt the departure of their makers, and suffered from sudden and unexplainable sorrow in their already desperate, grief-stricken hearts, like something very close and dear had been lost forever, but they were unable to point out what it was exactly.

The spell continued toward its inescapable conclusion, ignoring the desperate cries and shrieks of pain echoing from every corner of the world. The land was reformed by the fearsome force that wiped everything out of its way, reforming the landscapes with its immeasurable strength. Mountain ranges collapsed and new ones emerged, oceans conquered the sinking hills and barren stone deserts appeared from the waves. The scale of destruction was so enormous that even Morbane, the King of the Dead was shaken and upset. The Immortals, like the entire Dark Veil, were born from chaos, but even the most furious turmoil has order in it, elements bound by the infinite aether - and now that very same aether was tearing this damned world into pieces. It was unnatural, and it created some unpleasant tremors in the essences of all Immortals.

The masses of earth moved, roaring like thunder as the great continent of Ara was torn apart

and sundered into several smaller continents. The unity of the world was broken and divided to create harmony that had never been there before. The new locations and conditions that would prevail on these new landmasses were the seed for something completely different: A world ruled by mortals - a world maintained by balance.

After ten days of tormenting agony, the winds began to settle, the quakes lessened and calmed away, the oceans relented, and whatever was left of Telwar welcomed a new dawn as Solari appeared from behind the dissolving clouds and shone upon the shattered world. Everything was suddenly still. The storm had passed as quickly as it had begun, but it took a little longer before the first wary and fearful creatures crawled out from their hideouts.

And as Telwar slowly recovered from havoc that would be known as the Great Storm, the ten mourning Immortals receded further away from their beloved blue planet, but their legacy would always remain in the foundations of the new world, and their spirits would always walk among the mortals, sharing wisdom and might with those who truly believed.

Only a handful of survivors, scattered far and wide in different parts of the newborn world, began to pick up the pieces of their lives and building a fragile base for a new beginning. All of the old was washed away and everyone who made it through was granted a new chance at life. It took years for new communities to form, but the remaining people were persistent and resilient. With hard work and patience, the groundwork for a better world progressed slowly, but over time new nations rose, and societies shaped to reflect the nature of each tribe they originated from.

No one knows where the prophets came from, a selected few - maddened and disoriented by the years of chaos, but they brought something very special and valuable with them. Appearing in front of several different tribes scattered around the world, they brought the gift of might in the form of ancient writings - or so it seemed. As we know now, they were damaged, but by no means were they ancient. Those writings were prepared by the Immortals themselves as a splendid gift for the world, and in those scrolls and books were the secrets of Sul'Awen described in great detail - the deepest essence and core of the new might. And it was much because of those writings that the schools of mysticism and religion were rekindled and eventually revived, reaching a glory that had never been seen before. It was the power of these wise men, and the tenacious nature of all survivors, that drew the nations from the verge of destruction and brought them back to life.

The new oceans gushed with life, the infinite forests bloomed, and the new fauna seemed to spring out of nowhere. The world recovered at an astonishing rate. The famine passed, the diseases vanished, and life itself prepared to flourish once again on every continent that had been torn off

The Tribulation by Vincent Lakes

from the original Ara.

The people slept peacefully, for they knew that the fate of the new Telwar was in their own hands, and while some facets disagree, the world had not ended - it had been returned to origin at the dawn of a new age.