



Hell's War

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Satan always has ulterior motives, and this time proved no different. He requested to appear before God in heaven. With tongue flicking, the lying, excommunicated snake slithered to the feet of God before the throne. Satan coiled up and raised his head.

“The prodigal son has returned to the crime scene,” God greeted him. “But I warn you, don’t raise your head too high. State your business and be quick about it.”

“Release my angels from their hell cells and chains,” Satan requested, “that I may commune with them.”

“Denied!” God declared.

“Why do you punish them to hurt me?” the devil asked, trying to look offended.

With the voice of thunder that shook heaven, God replied, “They were your advisers in your first diabolical attempt to overthrow my kingdom. You are nothing without them; they are eviler than you.”

“You leave me no choice,” Satan spat out, his demeanor suddenly becoming cruel. “I wanted to avoid another war with you, but you show me no respect. I will continue to bruise the heels of your pitiful humanity, and I will destroy your army of believers filled with your Holy Spirit. I already battle for their souls and have an army of my own.

“I am the Prince and Power of the air. I will free my friends from their hell cells. If it means destroying the Earth and your images, it will be done! Take notice, God, I have warned you.”

“Before you leave, Satan, do you know Bert and Susan, who live near Black Mountain?”

“Yes!”

“Why don’t you try taking them away from their salvation? Since you were unable to take Job from me, it may be easier for you to convince them to reject my Son, Jesus. If it were me, I would tempt them to sin against my Word. Then you could capture them for ransom. But, as in Job’s case, you cannot kill them.

“Here is an incentive for you: Susan is with child but doesn’t know it yet. I granted her prayer to bear a child, but you can’t reveal that information to her.

“Lucifer, I know you value a prize; you should consider that her child could be another son of God.”

Satan showed his fangs at God and hissed as he slithered away.

Bert and Susan never imagined that digging dirt could someday change the world.

Black Mountain was the perfect location for a below-ground storage cellar, and the two were underneath their kitchen heaving out shovelfuls of dirt, one after another.

Suddenly, a white flash, visible through the small vents in the house's stone foundation, lit up their surroundings.

Susan stiffened. "What was that?"

"I don't know," Bert responded. "Let me look."

Her husband was climbing the ladder to the kitchen when a sudden blast of wind shook the house. The jolt threw him and the ladder to the cellar floor. The electricity failed, and the hole went dark. A dim yellow light peeked through the foundation vents.

"Are you okay?" Susan asked.

"I think so," Bert replied, trying to regain his composure.

The mountainside began to quake. Rocks and boulders dislodged and rolled down the hill until they slammed into the back of the couple's house. The house's foundation began to crumble; a wall and part of the roof caved in. Suddenly, everything went black.

"What's happening?" Susan cried out.

"I have no idea," Bert murmured shakily. "Hold on to me, and let's feel for the ladder. Here it is. Help me stand the ladder back up, and let's get out of this house before anything more falls and we get buried."

They climbed the ladder and entered their kitchen. To their shock, the sunlight had been reduced to a flicker of yellow.

"This isn't right," Bert said. "It's afternoon."

The couple went outside through the kitchen's back door, which was one of the few things left standing. As they gazed about the yard, they noticed numerous mushroom-shaped clouds extending above the mountain peaks on the horizon.

"Lord, what kind of clouds are they?" Bert remarked.

"Uhhh . . . who—or what—is that coming toward us?" Susan asked, staring ahead in disbelief.

A figure approached, wearing armor that looked at once both ancient and futuristic.

"Run back into the hole!" he shouted at the confused couple. "And don't come out until I come for you! A thermal fire is coming, and I will fight against it to protect you."

