

CHAPTER 1

The Beginning Of The End

“911, what’s your emergency?”

A tsunami of screaming and crying reverberated into the dispatcher’s ear. It was a symphony of horror that smothered all hope as if it were the end of days. Despite the wailing and shrieking, a singular soul-shattering sob of a pleading child stood above all.

“P-Please, help... The monsters t-took my mommy!”

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Officer Doron slammed through a wrecked car’s windshield as he dived out of the path of an arrow and what he believed to have been a fireball. Groaning, he fumbled with shaky hands to reload his pistol as explosions lit up his surroundings. Every blast created a firestorm of sparks and flames that rained down without mercy onto the city as civilians ran screaming. Officer Doron managed to get the magazine into his pistol, chambered a round, and grunted as he repositioned himself and took aim at one of the creatures that fired the arrow at him.

The creatures were the size of a typical ten-year-old child, but their green skin and large devil-like faces set them apart from anything recognizable as human. Each wore a unique mix of leather straps, fur, and loincloths. A few wore armor and helmets, which appeared to Doron to be made from a collection of rusted iron, bones, and unusual skulls he did not recognize. Never had a human laid eyes upon these monsters, and yet deep down, he knew what they were. They were goblins!

Taking a deep breath, Officer Doron fired his gun at the creatures. The crunching of his clenched jaw and grinding teeth was loud enough to obscure the sounds of gunfire from Doron’s ears as he pulled the trigger again, again, and AGAIN! Nonetheless, like all the times before, his bullets bounced off a glowing sphere that briefly popped into existence with each impact.

The monsters just smirked at Officer Doron as they casually strolled toward him. Nearing the end of his magazine, Doron nearly cried out in frustration accepting his demise, when one of his bullets

flew past the sphere with a glass-shattering effect and into the creature's chest. The goblin dropped his bow and staggered to a halt. The other monsters nearby also stopped their advance on the city to observe their fellow monster lift up a long black-clawed finger and poke at the bleeding hole in its' chest as if it were a cruel joke. It looked up, locked eyes with Doron, and gave him a snaggletoothed smirk before collapsing face-first.

One after another, the goblins beat their chest and stomped the ground, their chanting warcry picked up in beat throughout the area as the city held its breath. Officer Doron returned to fumbling with his pistol as he reloaded his last clip, knowing it would not be enough.

Trapped, Doron's mind ran ramped on how this all started. He was ending his patrol for the day when he heard the first of many screams. Doron remembered watching in horror as creatures from myth, fables, and movies snatched people up and dragged them back through a translucent hole of what he could only explain as the fabric of reality and nightmares, all while they were kicking and screaming. The creatures beat and pummeled those that fought back until they were unconscious wrecks of themselves and dragged them through the hole like the rest, all while they cheerfully laughed with childlike amusement. He remembered a few civilians covered in mild burns and many more with arrows in their knees, but nothing he could recall appeared lethal. The fire and arrows the goblins used seemed to cause only widespread suffering and panic now that Doron thought about it.

The images left him shaken, and Doron refused to be taken alive. His imagination of what was in store for those taken was unspeakable. Nonetheless, he was now stuck in a wrecked vehicle with approaching goblins, and while he couldn't understand their screeching babble, he could tell they were pissed, for he had done the impossible and killed one of the wretched demons.

Taking a deep breath, he exhaled what he considered his final words, "well... Shit!"

Like a descending angel, a distinct repetitive sound filled Officer Doron with hope and knocked him out of his misery. Confirming what he was hearing, Doron watched the goblins' shields lighting up like a strobe light as they were repeatedly assaulted by a hail of bullets. Taking the goblins' moment of confusion, he rolled out of the wreckage he was hiding in and took off on a dead sprint in the direction of a ten-man SWAT team.

"I'm glad to see you guys," Officer Doron gasped out between breaths as he got behind their wall of ballistic shields.

“What the fuck are those things,” a SWAT member bellowed.

“They’re not going down,” another replied.

Officer Doron looked back and noticed that the goblins were now aiming their arrows at them, but unlike all the times before, there was no humor, pleasure, or compassion behind those demonic eyes.

“Focus on one target, and you’ll eventually overwhelm their force field,” Doron yelled.

“Did just he say force field?”

“We don’t have enough bullets for this shit,” another team member yelled.

Doron watched in dismay as several arrows blasted at them like lightning and through the ballistic shields the SWAT team was carrying as if they were made out of tinfoil, separating six officers from their heads and torsos upon impact. Doron picked up an assault rifle that one of the dead SWAT members dropped and took aim.

It was then that the goblins stopped and began parting like the sea. A haggard-looking female goblin with glowing yellow eyes stepped past the little monsters. The female creature wore a long black feathered skirt and headdress, with everything else vital covered by piercings and a charcoal-like warpaint. Doron had only one thought when he gazed upon her demonic face that radiated unavoidable doom.

“RUN!”

None of the surviving team members argued with Doron as they rushed back and away from the horde of goblins. That was when Doron witnessed the female goblin release an orb of pure fire from her boney palm. The ball gently sailed through the air like a balloon attracted by static electricity, approaching a horrified SWAT member who flung his arms about in a desperate hope that the air would push it away from him. That was before it detonated! Officer Doron was lifted off his feet and thrown several yards along with the three last surviving team members. Only a thick cloud of smoke and red mist separated them from certain death.

“This is a fucking warzone! We need the National Guard!”

Doron looked at the fellow officer that had just spoken and noticed the name tag on his uniform, Akuji. He pointed at a nearby bar before yelling at the other two, “in there!”

No one argued as they got up and made a mad dash into the building and away from the she-goblin, who now stood beyond the smoke. Slamming the door shut, Doron started making his way towards the back of the building, only to stop when he noticed one of the members make their way straight for the liquor on display.

“We don’t have time for that. We need to get out of here before that green witch throws another one of those exploding balls of fire,” said Doron.

“We’re all about to die in a gay bar. So, if you don’t mind, I’m going to get drunk as fuck before that happens!”

“He’s right, Woodcock. We need to get out of here,” the third and last remaining SWAT member stated as she pointed her firearm at the doorway. Her name tag displaying her name as Stevens.

“Look, Emily. The explosion that killed Johnson proves we’re outgunned, so I say fuck it. Hell, I’m sure those things are already surrounding this building. It’s over. We lost! Our best bet is to dig in here and make our last stand. So, let me get drunk while we hold our ground, and maybe, if we’re lucky, a miracle might happen, and the Nation Guard shows up and save our worthless asses.”

A roar resonated through the building shaking glasses and bottles, followed by a slow, repetitive **thump!** To Doron and the others, it felt as if a t-rex was roaming the city streets.

“What the fuck was that,” Akuji cried out as he clutched his knees and started rocking back and forth.

“It’s clearing up out there. Um... I don’t see those monsters anywhere,” Stevens added.

Stevens and Doron dashed behind the bar with Akuji, who was rocking and mumbling incoherent prayers to himself. Woodcock remained out in the open as he stumbled while chugging down an expensive-looking bottle of Bourbon.

“Do you see anything,” asked Doron?

**Thump!**

“I don’t see them anywhere,” she replied.

“What were those things,” a voice called out.

Akuji let out a scream, and Woodcock dropped the Bourbon to aim his rifle at the doorway leading into the kitchen. Five civilians stood hidden, peaking around the corner at the officers and glancing out the front window at the devastation. Woodcock lowered his rifle when he noticed Stevens and Doron glaring at him.

“We don’t know,” Doron responded.

**Thump!**

“What d-do you know,” a man with a comically long mustache covered in snot and tears sniveled out?

**THUMP!**

“I know we need to get the fuck out of here and away from whatever’s making that sound,” Stevens retorted.

“Can’t you call for backup,” a woman with a shaved head cried?

“My radio hasn’t worked since those things first appeared. What about you three,” Doron asked?

“Saaame! My phone has also taken a shit,” Woodcock blurted out between gulps of another bottle he liberated.

**THUMP!**

“Holy shit, that’s a dragon,” Stevens stated as she dropped her head below the countertop.

Woodcock dropped that bottle and swayed as he leaned up against the window to take a glance. “That’sss not a fucking draaagon,” he slurred out.

“I’ve watched Game of Thrones. I know what a dragon looks like,” Stevens shot back! “That’sss

a w-wyvern!”

**THUMP!**

“W-Why’s it not f-flying,” the shaved head woman asked?

Ignoring the question, Doron snapped his head to the kitchen entrance with the five civilians clustered together. “Does this place have a back exit?”

“Through the kitchen,” a tall, broad-framed man with a bald head and goatee stated.

“I’mmm not running out therre with the fucking village people,” Woodcock garbled.

“I don’t care what the hell you do. I’m getting out of here and getting my kid. Anyone who wants to come is welcomed,” Doron growled out.

“I outrank youuu!”

**THUMP!**

“I’m not listening to a drunk ass, especially not during the apocalypse or whatever the hell’s going on. Now, if nobody else has any arguments or better ideas, we must go before that dragon gets closer!”

“Wyyyvern, you ass!”