

This short story tells you how Earth is like after Cecil's bombardments.

[Warring era arc] [6] [Literal hell] [9670]

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Looking at the dark gray clouded sky with ash snow falling right onto my bloody face, I wonder what has gone wrong in my life.

But it doesn't matter because I am dying in middle of nowhere.

Doesn't matter ...

About 90 days after the bombardment of Earth, I finally got to contact an old friend of mine who was living on America continent. It was probably the first time since the bombardment that I felt some sort of joy.

"Dude, you are alive! Good to see you," I exclaimed with some joy toward a holographic screen that was displaying a bald stocky man. He was an old friend of

mine who was living on American continent. Bombs hit that continent hard, and I feared the worst for him.

“Getting by, barely,” He shook his head as he made his response. Then the screen blinked a few times afterwards. His face was somewhat dirty. His hair was a mess.

“You there?”

The screen came back. “Yeah, I am here. I am lagging really bad.”

The bombardment targeted infrastructures specifically as well as several strategic points such as the Ark, the Bau council as well as ENN HQ. Basically, everything important was taken out, leaving civilians in limbo.

He told me me, “My town has just placed a rudimentary communication tower, but we are lacking materials, especially copper, to make it properly work.”

“How are things over there? I heard the bombardment hit the content numerous times.”

He sighed deeply and downcast his eyes. “I’ve seen a field full of badly burnt humanoid bodies. There were tens of thousands of them. I cannot fucking believe the Crimson wizard actually bombarded Earth. What atrocity!”

“Your family?”

“They are fine. I live in a rural area. That’s how I survived. If I lived in the city, I would have been one of the burnt bodies on some field.”

I recalled the day the bombardment occurred. I saw objects shooting down to the surface, then boom! Shockwaves, tsunami, earthquakes, and whatever.

I lived on New Zealand zone which is probably why I survived. Official communications had been cut off ever since the bombardment, but words in the air said not to travel to any major cities if one values his life. I had been hearing that bandits were rampant which was ridiculous. This is Earth, the most advanced planet in the universe! How the fuck is this happening?

“How are you doing, friend?” He asked me with a worried look.

I sagged my shoulders and beamed him a weak grin. “You know where I live. I guess I should thank that for my survival though.”

He nodded, repeatedly. “True, my friend. True.” Then he glanced at something off screen. “Look, my house is currently on battery power, and I have only few hundreds of Watt hours left. I need to conserve power.”

“Wait, you don’t have power?”

“Haven’t had one since the day.”

“Then how have you getting power?”

“Solar panels. I know what you are thinking. Despite the clouded sky, it still works but only at 10% of its efficiency.”

“Ouch, man. That sucks. I have power here at least. I guess I should be thankful for that.”

“You should be. I don’t even have water here. Been collecting the dirty rain and purifying them.”

Fucking hell...

“See you later, bud. Peace out,” He said as he cut the comm.

Sighing, I looked out through a window to see the gray sky with ash snow falling. I had power and water here, so I was in a better position than a lot of people, it seemed. My town had a few wind turbines which I assume was the source of electricity.

I will be honest. I am in a far better condition than my friend over on American continent but there are a lot of things missing in my life right now, like entertainment. TV channels have all gone. There is an internet connection but it seems crippled heavily.

Speaking of TV channels, I don’t know why they took out ENN. However, once ENN’s dominance was gone, smaller media outlets from Moon began to flow into Earth’s channels unofficially. It’s the only thing I can watch right now.

Their take on the bombardment is not what I expected. They fucking rejoice it, saying that Earth deserved whatever they got.

Fucking hell, what did I do? I haven't done anything to deserve this. Maybe, the bureaucrats at the Ark did.

Well, we all dreaded a fact that the planet would be ruled under the Crimson wizard. I mean the dude has murdered millions of us and still got away. But he didn't. Instead, Emuel came in. At first, we were happy to hear that he was taking over. He was Jupiter administrator as well. He was one of us.

Well, how fucking wrong we were.

We asked for a humanitarian aid. That was more than 60 days ago. Not a single drop has been made.

In fact, no drop of any kind was made. We had been literally forgotten. Earth no longer had any natural resources especially in metal. We didn't even have any industrial zones. It's been that way for thousands of years. In short, we simply did not have any capacity to build anything on our own.

In other words, we were deeply fucked. I didn't believe we will be able to repair our infrastructure on our own. My pal won't have his power and water back any time soon. I may even lose power at any moment.

Something had to be done.

"Hello? Hello? Is anyone there?"

I was calling 911. Alas, there was no response.

“What the hell, even the emergency line is gone?”

It used to be functional. I had called 911 after the bombardment before. Or it could be that my signal isn't reaching.

I attempted to contact 911 over a course of several days. At one point, someone answered. It was voice-only.

“Who is this?” It was a male voice. There was a lot of background noise. It sounded... almost like a bunch of people whacking things.

“Hello? 911?”

“9-what?”

Confused, I blurted back, “What?”

Then there was a short silence between us. I had no idea what's going on but I was not liking this. Then I overheard a voice, presumably from a distance.

“Track down the signal. Let's get him.”

It was this point that I terminated the communication at once. I began to feel cold sweat from my back. They were looters, I was almost positive.

“Fuck, fuck!” Uttering with anger and confusion, I nervously dashed toward a window and cautiously surveyed outside. I saw nothing but ash snow slowly falling from the sky, obviously.

I mean, even if they tracked down my signal, it'd take time for them to get here. I had considered fleeing from my home. Where would I go through? I lived in a village with population of about 250 people. A city was about 10 minutes away by a shuttle. Walking to the city was not an option since the air quality is so bad that I would risk damaging my throat and lung. Besides, it would take at least a day of walking to reach the city.

I was stuck.

For the next few days, I had been nervous as fuck. I had been constantly on high alert in case those looters track me down. But nothing happened. Even after a week, nothing.

When I finally started to feel safe, power went out.

"The hell? How come?" Uttering, I dashed out of my house to see the wind turbines going down in flames. Apparently, there were three shuttles in the air and they were shooting down the turbines.

I was starting to feel cold sweats on my back. Instinctively, I knew that it was them, the looters I heard from the 911 call.

I saw several others running out of their homes and watch the turbines going down in flames.

"Oh, my God!" One of them yelled.

"What is going on?!" Another shouted.

What should I do? What should I do?!

I quickly dashed into my house and grabbed a backpack. I literally ransacked my own house for essentials, like few rolls of toilet paper, a communication device just in case, cans of food, lights, a battery pack with a solar panel. Finally, I grab my wallet and push it into back of my pants. I wish I had a tent but living in the wilderness was never a hobby of mine.

I didn't look back as I run out of my house and I simply run into wilderness. The others were preoccupied with the event that nobody saw me dashing away.

When the flame and smoke was nothing more than a dot, I felt safe, for the time being at least, and relaxed on ground for some air. Then I dozed off, for how long I had no idea.

By time I woke up, it was pitch black. Thanks to the clouded sky, night was really pitch black. Without a light source, it was virtually impossible to navigate.

Attempting to find a flashlight made me realize that I had forgotten to grab one.

At the same time, I brought my battery pack which had a flashlight built in.

When I was about to turn it on, I hesitated; I didn't want to give my location away.

In the end, I decided to go on without a light which would make my life harder.

It was at this point that I realized my throat had a slight burning sensation. Of all things, I had forgotten a mask. But going back was not an option I had.

Sighing, only to cough hard, I lazily stood up and decided to walk to ... somewhere. But that didn't last long because I tripped at one point and tumbled down somewhere.

It was a mistake, a really bad mistake because I broke my leg and then something pierced right through my neck. It was a fucking mistake to have tried to even move in pitch black....

"Oh, Gods....!" I uttered with great pain. Attempting to reach out my backpack also made me realize that I lost it during the fall.

In short, I was deeply fucked. At that time, I didn't think I'd die because death sounded more like a fiction from movies and such.

Again, I was wrong. My body started to feel cold and then it was becoming numb. I was drooling with my cheek punctured with something which I felt was a sharp wooden stick. My saliva would have probably been mixed with blood.

I could barely move, and the pain was getting only worse. But, being unable to do anything, I simply stayed where I was and hoped for daylight to come.

I must have dozed off because, when I opened my eyes, I saw light. I was looking at a ground.

"Oh, Gods...!" I uttered.

I had apparently fallen into a trap hole. It wasn't just some random wooden stick that punctured my cheek. My whole body was punctured by tens of sharpened wooden sticks. I didn't trip. I fell into a trap hole.

The reason I could not move was because the wooden sticks were holding me in its place.

It soon struck me that I was indeed dying. I could see my own pool of dark red blood at the bottom of the hole. Moving my head as best as I could, I saw my left arm which was in unpleasant dark blue color. The worst of all, I was feeling anything below my abdomen.

There was nothing I could do. I was simply waiting for my consciousness to fade away. It didn't feel real but I was indeed dying.

I didn't know how long it had passed, and my consciousness was fading. When I felt like I was half-asleep, I felt my body was being dragged out by something or someone. My vision was hazy but I felt like I saw a group of people.

"We are gonna have a feast today!" One of them shouted in glee.

"This fucker has a lot of loot as well!" Another said out loudly.

Cannibals, they were. Not that I could care anymore at this point.

I simply looked, or at least tried to look, at the ash-clouded sky. I wonder what had gone wrong....

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