

Two Rural Boys Watch the Apocalypse

by

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Inspired by the poem "Rural Boys Watch the Apocalypse" by
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TWO RURAL BOYS WATCH THE
APOCALYPSE

(A seemingly endless stretch of space.
The lights are just slightly too
bright. SAM watches the sky. JESSE
enters, carrying a football.)

JESSE

Sam, are you coming? The football field--

SAM

Jesse.
Are you looking?
Have you seen them?

JESSE

The shooting stars? Sure, everyone's been talking
about them since last week.

SAM

They're not shooting stars. They're angels.

JESSE

They're not angels.

SAM

I can see their wings.

JESSE

(Softer)
They're not angels.

SAM

They're not stars.

JESSE

... Maybe not.

SAM

I thought there'd be more.

JESSE

More angels?

SAM

More wings.

SAM (Continued)

They're supposed to have six. That's what the Bible says, right?

JESSE

I haven't read the Bible. Not for a long time.

SAM

Six wings, and lion-teeth, and a hundred thousand eyes. A spinning wheel of creature parts that makes up a whole angel. They're supposed to say, "Do not be afraid" when they come down to earth, because you'd be afraid if a six-winged-lion-angel showed up in your kitchen.

JESSE

Are you afraid?

(SAM doesn't answer.)

JESSE (Continued)

They're gonna start tearing up the football field in an hour. Digging trenches and fortifying walls and stuff. It's large and flat, and the doomsday nutters are sayin' that, since school's canceled, we won't be needing it, so we gotta turn it into something useful.

SAM

What do you want me to do?

JESSE

Come with me.

(SAM looks at him for the first time.)

JESSE (Continued)

I don't want to be by myself when it happens.

SAM

You can play football without the field.

JESSE

Maybe they won't dig it up. The angels might fall on it. You'd like to see that, wouldn't you?

SAM

It's still getting destroyed, whether or not I'm there.

JESSE

Please.

SAM

Why's it matter so much to you?

JESSE

Same reason you're out here watching the stars. I'm scared.

SAM

I'm not--

JESSE

I was gonna make my future on that field. I was gonna go to college. I thought. And I was gonna get a jersey with a number on the back and my name above it, and people were gonna know who I was.

SAM

I know who you are.

JESSE

Sure.
Do you think this is it? The End?

SAM

I don't know. I thought it would be wilder. Mountains crumbling, and rivers of blood, and fire scorching everything. Real doomsday stuff. This is so...

JESSE

Lame?

SAM

Quiet.

JESSE

I just hoped we'd never wake up, somehow. Like the nuclear blast would go off in our sleep and so we'd never have radiation sear into our eyes, never know what happened. Just disintegrate into ash in our beds.

SAM

That'd be a pain to get out of the sheets.

JESSE

Or that it wouldn't happen for thousands of years, right? Like, why us? Why now? What made us the people who have to watch the earth shrivel and crack in the sun?

SAM

Maybe we're at the height of evolution, and He has to start back at square one.

JESSE

Last time God wiped out everyone, it was a flood. Seems much less dramatic than falling angels.

SAM

He's God. Maybe He likes a little showmanship.

JESSE

I'd appreciate it more if it didn't mean watching the world crumble.

Do you remember that book we read in English? *The Road*? By that tarmac guy.

SAM

Cormac McCarthy?

JESSE

They died in the end, didn't they?

SAM

No. The dad died. The dad died, but his kid lived. He found another family, and he lived.

JESSE

I always wondered how they just. Kept going.

SAM

I guess it's like the book says. There was a road. They followed it.

JESSE

This seems an awful lot like that.

SAM

I mean, it was a book about the apocalypse.

JESSE

But it's like, in the end, they just die. And you know that by the end of the book, so when you go back and try to read the beginning again, it all seems so pointless. You know they die in the end, so why would you read it?

SAM

Cause it's like, hope, right?

JESSE

I mean, that's what the SparkNotes said, but what hope is there in your dad dying in the end?

SAM

Well... they made it to the ocean. They walked and walked down that road, and they had to kill other people and eat things out of molded cans and sleep outdoors, and all that was keeping them going was getting to the ocean, and they did it. Even with all that, they made it to the ocean.

JESSE

But after that.

SAM

After that's when the dad dies.

JESSE

Yeah. So like.

SAM

But the kid gets to keep living. He finds a new family. He gets to keep going.

JESSE

(looking directly at SAM.)

If the most important person in my life died, I wouldn't wanna keep going.

(SAM doesn't meet his eyes.)

JESSE (Continued)

Yeah.

SAM

Is your family leaving?

JESSE

What? No.

SAM

Why not? Everyone else is. Our neighbors packed up their truck yesterday. They took off this morning. Tim and Mary Lot, their two girls.

JESSE

Did they say where they thought they'd go?

SAM

No. I don't know if they even knew. Doesn't seem like the angels are sparing much of earth.

JESSE

God. We don't even know how anyone is doing out there. The rest of the world could be dead, and we wouldn't even know.

SAM

I think we'd know.

JESSE

How can you be sure?

SAM

Because there's no way this shit of a town would be the one place left standing.

JESSE

I guess that's fair.

(An explosion goes off. SAM and JESSE jump and whirl around to look in the direction of the football field.)

SAM

Was that...?

JESSE

They were just gonna dig it up. They weren't gonna explode it.

SAM

Wait here, I'll run up the hill and get a better look.

(SAM runs off. JESSE watches him go. He slowly begins to fall apart. He drops his football, sinking to his knees, then dropping slowly backward until he is lying splayed out on the ground. He lies there in silence. SAM enters again, slowly.)

SAM

It's... gone, Jesse. I'm sorry. The football field...
An angel must have fallen on it.

JESSE

They aren't angels, Sam.

SAM

... Okay.

JESSE

It doesn't matter.

SAM

It matters to you.

JESSE

It did. Not anymore.

SAM

... are you okay?

JESSE

They do sort of look like angels from down here.

(Silence. Cautiously, SAM lies down next to JESSE, looking up into the sky.)

SAM

Told you so.

(They watch the sky. A few moments pass. Then, suddenly, JESSE scrambles to his hands and knees, grabbing for the football he dropped. He stands, takes a few angry steps, and throws it away from him in a beautiful pass that does not match the rage on his face.)

JESSE
DAMNIT! (He breathes.) Damn it.

SAM
Dude.

JESSE
I know.

SAM
Didn't your brother give you that football?

JESSE
Yes.

SAM
And you threw it away.

JESSE
I know.

SAM
Why?

JESSE
I gotta do all my growing up now.

SAM
Doesn't mean you have to get rid of your football.

JESSE
Yeah, well. There's no point now, is there.

SAM
You loved it.

JESSE
There's no point now. Is there?

SAM
I don't know.

JESSE
Do you think we're gonna have to fight the angels?

SAM
You're worried about that?

JESSE

They must be coming here to destroy things. And we don't want them to destroy things. So we're gonna have to fight them to keep them from destroying things.

SAM

I mean. Maybe.

JESSE

What are we supposed to do against an army of angels?

SAM

Maybe the point isn't to fight. Maybe we just have to accept it.

JESSE

I don't want to just give up.

SAM

It's not giving up.

JESSE

Did the Bible say how hard it would be?

SAM

The End?

JESSE

Yeah.

SAM

I mean... it's been hard the entire time.

JESSE

But now. The End. That was supposed to be especially hard, because we've been building up to this since the Beginning, but if we don't have to do anything, if we don't have to fight, if we're just supposed to sit back and let it all happen, then it's not that hard.

SAM

Well... It's not supposed to be a punishment. Not for everyone.

JESSE

I didn't think we were old enough to deal with this kind of thing.

SAM

We shouldn't have to deal with a lot of stuff.

JESSE

It's kinda bullshit, isn't it?

SAM

It's total bullshit.

JESSE

You hear that, God? This is bullshit!

SAM

Bullshit!

JESSE

Bullshit!

(They begin to do a sort of dance, hollering and shouting and waving their arms, screaming curse words and abuse at the sky. It's wild and frantic. It's freeing. Maybe they're laughing.)

The dance reaches its peak, and then slowly they lose momentum, tapering off into less movement, no speech. Eventually, they end up standing side-by-side, gazing outward, watching.

Slowly, SAM reaches out and takes JESSE's hand.)

JESSE

Think it'll hurt?

SAM

Hope not.

END OF PLAY