

The Daily Market

By A.C. Hall

Procrastination sat alone on a warm rock in a remote corner of the open air market place. He spent most of his time there, waiting to get up and move on to his many tasks that he planned on getting to soon. He was shielding his eyes in an attempt to keep the sunlight out of them and couldn't help but again glance longingly at the shady area beneath a tree just a few feet away. He had always meant to drag his rock over so that it would sit under the tree but hadn't quite gotten around to doing so yet.

Procrastination desperately wished it would rain and slowly he began to wonder where weather came from. He started to have a day dream about what it might be like but the sounds from the nearby market distracted him and he lazily turned his head to take it in. He wasn't sure how long he had been sitting but it looked to be mid afternoon now as the stalls in the market were all busy. Various ideas and entities moved about from stall to stall, haggling with the vendors to get the best prices. The square was closed in by stocky buildings that didn't seem to house much of anything and more and more customers were filling the market as they tried to get their turn at the vendor's stalls. The entire scene made him sleepy and Procrastination decided to day dream after all.

"Rain! Get in here RIGHT NOW!" The Sky yelled.

Each word he spoke boomed like an explosion. Heat radiated from his throne of air and it was clear that he was not in a good mood. Dark Cloud and his two sons Thunder and Lightning stood before him silently, their heads bowed. None of them dared look at The Sky right now, not while he was this angry.

"RAIN!" The Sky bellowed.

Dark Cloud was growing more nervous with each passing second. He didn't like getting Rain in trouble. It wasn't usually wise to be the one that had to tell The Sky that his son had screwed up again. Even though Dark Cloud was The Sky's first

cousin he still worried that his master wouldn't like the idea of him reporting on Rain.

"Perhaps it is I who misread the schedule and was in the wrong place," Dark Cloud offered, trying to diffuse the situation.

"Nonsense," The Sky boomed. "I've turned a blind eye to the incompetency of my son for too long now. It's time he started living up to his responsibilities around here."

Dark Cloud said no more on the matter and several more minutes passed as they all waited in silence for the arrival of Rain.

"RAAAAAAAAAAIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNN!" The Sky screamed.

His voice was so loud and powerful that the entire throne room shook and the burst of heat emanating from his throne was so great that it seared away some of the far edges of Dark Cloud.

"Geez dad, I'm coming."

The high pitched, whiney voice of Rain was unmistakable and for the first time Dark Cloud glanced up at The Sky. The annoyance written across him was unmistakable but he seemed to soften as Rain stepped into the room. The Sky had a rather massive soft spot for his aloof son and even at times such as these he was clearly happy to see his boy.

"Why all the yelling pop?" the Rain asked flippantly.

Another burst of heat shot out from the throne but this time at a much lower intensity.

"Where have you been?" The Sky asked sternly.

"With Hurricane," Rain answered.

"Doing?"

"Nothing dad, just hanging out."

"Is that so?"

With a wave of his hand The Sky brought into existence a transparent screen in the air in front of him. On it was a raging hurricane battering the coast of Florida. After playing for a moment the screen dissipated.

"You call that hanging out?" The Sky asked angrily.

“Come on dad, what’s the big deal? We were just messing around.”

“The schedule is the big deal!” The Sky yelled, more heat pushing out into the room from his throne. “Not only did you put on a non-scheduled weather event but you missed an appointment to put on one that was scheduled!”

For the first time Rain looked over at Dark Cloud.

“Oh that? That was just a small shower pop, no big deal,” Rain said.

“There is no such thing as a SMALL shower. Do you think I spend the majority of my existence slaving over the schedule because it’s fun? Or because it’s not important?” After a moment of silence The Sky continued. “Well? Is it my hobby, Rain? Do I do it for weeks on end without a break for fun?”

“Fine, I get it dad. We’ll go and do the shower. Just let me run to my room real quick.”

Before his father could object Rain zipped from the throne room.

“If he gives you any more trouble come see me immediately,” The Sky said.

“Of course,” Dark Cloud responded.

He and his sons were almost out of the throne room when The Sky spoke again.

“And if you see that no good sister of yours tell her that her husband isn’t too pleased with the quality of the son she gave him.” The Sky said as he stood up from his throne.

For the first thousand years Dark Cloud had always corrected The Sky when he referred to Bright Cloud as his sister. In fact, the two of them weren’t related at all. Even so, Dark Cloud felt closer to Bright Cloud than he had even to his own wife when she had still been around. Although he had never dared act upon them he couldn’t help the thoughts he had any time Bright Cloud was near.

As he and his sons entered into the entry way of the palace he saw her. She appeared around the corner as if summoned by Dark Cloud’s thoughts and he quickly sent his two sons home so he could speak to her in private. He admired her curves as she floated gracefully towards him. It was easy to see why The Sky had chosen her as his wife, for she was the most beautiful thing ever to exist.

“Hello Dark Cloud.”

Her voice was sweet and smooth.

“Hello. You look beautiful as ever.”

“You’re the only one who ever says such a thing,” Bright Cloud said sheepishly.

“Any who looks upon you and doesn’t utter such words are fools,” Dark Cloud said, knowing full well that he was inadvertently speaking ill of The Sky.

Bright Cloud drifted closer until she was almost touching her so called brother.

“I think of you often,” she said quietly.

“And I of you,” Dark Cloud answered breathlessly.

Being near her was intoxicating and at that moment he would give almost anything to float the inch it would take to close the gap between them and to finally touch her.

“Move it or lose it Dark Cloud! I’m off to do this with or without you!”

The whiny voice of Rain echoed through the entry way as he went speeding past and out the front door. His presence caused Dark Cloud to drift away from Bright Cloud so as not to arouse suspicion.

“Assignment?” Bright Cloud asked.

“A small shower over London. It was supposed to be earlier but Rain was off causing trouble.” Dark Cloud said.

The two of them stood for a long moment, looking at one another. The feelings Dark Cloud had for her were so strong he was sure they were visible. They emanated from him like the heat from The Sky’s throne and he wanted so badly to be with her, to take her away from her ignorant husband and to love her as she deserved to be love. But, just as it always did, his courage left him. He drifted away from her slowly, towards the door.

“I suppose I should go after him and do my part,” he said.

“Or...” Bright Cloud said quietly.

Dark Cloud turned back towards her.

“Or?”

“You could stay here with me,” she answered, her voice shaking slightly as she did. “The Sky will be working on the schedule for at least another week.”

Fear welled up inside him. The two of them had danced around their feelings for so long and while they had always both known this was the first time she had spoken

so openly. He wanted so desperately to be courageous, to accept her invitation, but again found himself drifting towards the door.

“Its midday in London with clear skies and heat,” he muttered.

“So?”

“People get freaked out when it rains without clouds.”

She hesitated for a moment and then glided towards him quickly. This time she didn't stop beside him but instead touched him.

“So let them be freaked out,” Bright Cloud said with a smile.

Their edges blended together, the darkness of his cloud turning a light grey as it mingled with her white cloud. All of his fears and hesitations were gone in that instant and Dark Cloud was overcome with emotions of happiness and love.

His attention span for his daydream exhausted, Procrastination opened his eyes and instead held out his hands, hoping to feel rain drops falling from the cloudless sky.

“Hmmp,” he exclaimed angrily as he felt nothing but the heat of the sun.

The market wasn't quite as busy now and he realized that much time had passed while he had daydreamed about a living weather system. The warm sun was just about to dip behind the line of buildings on the horizon and the vendors weren't overwhelmed with customers. Procrastination had wanted to go and make a purchase of his own but thought about it only for a moment before dismissing it.

“I'll do it later,” he muttered to himself.

For some time he simply stared at the sun as it slowly slipped from view. Gradually the sky turned from blue to orange to purple and finally to black. Lights were activated to illuminate the market so that it could continue to operate in the darkness.

Out of the corner of his eye Procrastination noticed one of the customers entering into the market. It took him some time but eventually he turned his head to observe him as he made his way past. No one had ever dared to ask him his real name but everyone called him Mr. Monday. As he moved past Procrastination shivered as Mr. Monday's auras washed over him. The man was a walking embodiment of stress,

hurriedness, tiredness and several other negative feelings that Procrastination didn't like feeling. The sensation wore off as Mr. Monday got further away and approached one of the vendor stalls. Seeing who his customer was the vendor rolled his eyes and spoke.

"Would you like to purchase some Thursdays?" he asked with a smirk.

Mr. Monday simply stared at him but the tired vendor wasn't going to give him the satisfaction of fulfilling his order without being told what to get.

"You know what I want," Mr. Monday said in a low growl, his voice full of tension.

"And what would that be sir?" the vendor asked, still refusing to make it easy on the troublesome customer.

"A case of the Monday's!" Mr. Monday yelled, banging his fist on the counter.

The playfulness in the vendor's face disappeared instantly and he quickly ducked behind his stall to get what his customer had asked for. Even from across the market Procrastination could feel the negativity coming from Mr. Monday. He silently reminded himself not to joke with the man like he had been planning on doing for several years but had never gotten around to.

As Mr. Monday collected his crate and left the market a nervous chattering arose as people spoke about the mysterious entity. Someone must've made a joke about him because several of the vendors and their customers broke into a loud round of laughter. Procrastination wished that he had heard the joke but when the laughing cut off immediately he changed his mind, thinking that it probably hadn't been that funny after all. When he finally realized that not only had the laughter stopped but so too had all sound and movement he slowly turned his head, trying to figure out what was going on.

And then he saw it.

Striding purposefully into the market was a familiar figure. It was massive, easily twice as big as anything else that regularly shopped in the market. The sword strapped across his back was as tall as he was and the figure himself wore a heavy cloak of black smoke that obscured every bit of his form underneath. Procrastination

realized that there may not be any figure at all under there. Theories among market regulars varied but they had all adopted a name for this arresting being.

They called him Armageddon.

Just as he always did, the walking embodiment of the end of days slowly moved through the market, his shrouded head turning towards each of the stalls as he passed them. Procrastination could remember at least a hundred times that Armageddon had visited the market and each time it was the same. His presence alone was enough to stop everyone in their tracks but it was the implication of what he could do that really caused them all to hold their breath. Once he purchased a day then that would be it, at least according to conventional wisdom. And yet, he never bought anything. He moved from one end of the market to the other and then back again, slowly surveying each stall.

Procrastination wondered why he hadn't yet bought the day and sealed the fate of the world. Was he waiting for the mood to strike him? Or perhaps he was waiting on a signal from God. Either way it was something that Procrastination had seen play out plenty of times and he didn't care enough to keep staring. He laid back on his rock and looked up at the rooftops and night sky above them. He could feel himself drifting off into a nap when something caught his eye. The figure of a man on one of the rooftops.

He had a beard and long hair and was dressed in a simple robe and sandals. Under his arm was tucked a day that he must've just picked up from behind one of the stalls while the vendors were fixated on Armageddon. Procrastination squinted and just barely was able to make out which day it was that the figure had before he leapt off the rooftop and disappeared into the night.

And for the first time in tens of thousands of years Procrastination got up off of his rock and rushed out of the market.

1 Thessalonians 5:2

For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night.