

Easter Island

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Listen.

Hear that?

No?

Exactly. You can't hear anything. No wind, no gulls, nothing. That's the drones; for every sound they make, they make a sound wave which cancels it out. It means they've started again.

There. Do you feel that? No, don't say anything. There it is again; you can feel the ground shaking. And again, there. Now listen again. No, not like that, move your head. Like this. Hear that? Turn your head again. Sounds like whistling, doesn't it? Got it? Now you'll hear properly. That crump-crump from – over there?

Look, and you'll see it.

Oh.

Well, that's the Law gone then.

No, there's not much of Dundee left anymore. It's smoke and dust these days, all covered in a blanket of silence. They think it hides what they're doing. Makes it easier to deal with.

D'you know I once had a dream when I was a boy? I was hiding in a ruined room in a bombed-out city. I remember it all so clearly, right down to the scurry of the rats in the walls and that distant crump-crump we just heard. I remember because, in my dream, I had the face of an old man. It was a white-bearded face, lined and sick and afraid. It's the face I'm looking at now.

I thought I'd be far away when it happened, lost in a foreign land, or caught in a war zone somewhere. But just the other day I caught sight of my face in the window, and I knew. It was always going to happen here. In a dirty room in the middle of Dundee, overlooking the Nethergate. Staring through a pane of broken glass.

No, I've not been out in weeks. Why should I tell you? Why am I even talking to you, anyway?

Everything I said would happen, happened. First, they took our livings, then they took our pensions, and then they came for us. Why? Why not? It was all insults and beatings and 'who killed the world?' That was before the squaddies came, handing out their suicide pills, and the ambulances with their 'assisted release'. They did her in that way. You wouldn't think that I'd be scared after that, would you? Well, its habit-forming, let me tell you; you know that. Once you start being afraid, no, really afraid so that you don't know what you're doing, you find that you can't stop.

Turn away from the window. I don't want to see you.

Stop looking at me like that. You know how it happened. It was obvious; it was obvious to anyone with half a brain. But no one wanted to listen, no one wanted to face up to it, no, not even when it was right in front of us. We didn't kill the world, that's bollocks. We killed ourselves.

They got her five years ago. Since then, I've only gone out when I had to. To survive. Now I don't go out at all.

There. Can you feel it?

– can you hear me?

It was like someone clamped their hands over your ears, wasn't it? That's what gunfire sounds like when it's silenced. It means they're getting closer.

D'y know that in the Middle Ages, the Nethergate led down to the sea? Well, here we are again. The water's lapping at my front door.

What are you glaring at me like that for? You look like you've seen a ghost. It's just subsidence, that's all. Another of Dundee's fine buildings being washed away, you should be used to it by now. Let me show you something else that'll scare you. See those hands on the windowsill? I can see you looking at them, an old man's hands, that's what they are. See those nasty bruises? They're spreading, aren't they? Now, raise your head, go on, look. See how your hair's falling out? Yeah, it is what it looks like.

Not much of you left, is there?

Why am I talking? Who's listening? A face reflected in a broken window? You know, I was always trying to make myself heard, always wishing that someone would just listen. Isn't it funny how things turn out? There's no one to hear these words but me.

Easter Island. That's what happened here.

Why are you staring at me as if I've gone mad? You know what I'm talking about: a small island in the middle of the ocean, miles from anywhere. It's where they built those great stone statues: weird massive heads, I think they were. They cut down all their trees just so they could build them. You know, they must've realised they were trapped on that island, but they didn't stop. Well, one day they found that all the statues on the island couldn't stop the topsoil from blowing away. By the time they were discovered, they'd toppled those statues over, and everyone was starving. Ring any bells?

Now think about our cities, those great towering blocks of metal and glass and stone. What have they become? Look around you, we've made our world into Easter Island.

Hear that? No, that's not feedback. Go to the window. No, don't look at me, look through the glass. Look outside.

That's the sound of voices. That's feet running.

Look. No, out towards Marketgait. There. Can you see them yet?

No, you don't have to say anything, those people are just the beginning. Why? You have to ask why? You've heard the silences when the bombs go off. The way they blank out the gunfire. You can hardly hear me, can you?

They've been driven here. Nowhere else to go.

Oh God, here come the drones.

– now they're all huddled around the traffic lights, looking up the road. How will that help? They'll get them again if they –

– the sea? What are they swimming out to sea for? Don't they know what they're –

– scattered. Back into the city and up Perth Road. You can run, but you can't hide from –

– they'll just keep getting picked off if they carry on like –

– I don't want to look I don't want to. Why –

Look! You have to, you're the only one who can. You need to speak because you're the only one left. They deserve that. Even if there's no-one to hear but –

– it's deafening, the silence is crushing my ears! But they can't stop me seeing. They can't stop me talking. They won't.

Look at them. Open your eyes and look! There's still some of them left. Talk about it: go on, speak. Look at them, standing in line. Can you see their faces? I think they've realised. There's nowhere to go from –

I'm hit. Saw my thermal image, didn't they? Hey you! Do you think that'll shut me up? You think you can stop me?

Look at them standing in the road. With their backs to the sea. In silence. Did you ever see anything like it? Look at them, facing the guns like they're –

I'll stop talking now. I've said enough.
