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The Punishment of Sauron

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The Punishment of Sauron

A Hypothetical Parable by Christopher Barczak

In the uppermost realm of the Undying Lands, in the Over-Heaven, separated from Middle Earth by the Sundering Seas that no mortal could ever cross, the First Valar stared across an expanse of infinity.

He wondered at the question that plagued him as his eyes surveyed what was below him.

He frowned.

And the Second Valar saw him frown, and as he spoke his words mingled with the twilight they sat upon.

"Friend, it is only once before I have seen you so."

Above, the stars glittered, pinholes of light penetrating a hollow, quiet blue.

"Yes, once before."

The silence moved in the Heavens. Yet elsewhere, not of this world, there were those that rejoiced.

"As I recall, Morgoth was the fallen shadow that darkened your face then."

"Yes. . ."

That was a different Age, was it centuries, or seconds that had passed?

Still the First Valar spoke:

"This is the time for Eru to judge that servant, Sauron, who burned his will upon lands, darkened that which was bright, whose borrowed power twisted others."

"But what is the trouble? Eru has never erred in judgment. . ."

"Only once before did he pass judgment on one such as Sauron."

But now Eru entered, and the voices of those that dwelt in the higher realm rose in an awesome chorus that underscored the presence of the One as a pulsating glow of light surrounded a throne above all, now occupied.

Then the silence once again prevailed as a darkened figure climbed the stairs, and stopped. His defiant eye left the rest of him in vagueness. No aura, that.

From the throne, light and words intermingled and flowed and flooded upon the stiff figure.

"Sauron, you have replaced another who went before you, and he lives on in you. I must admit, as Lord of All, I am at a loss of how to punish you, for how can even an eternity of suffering change the devastation of Middle Earth you have caused? The misery and horror can never be changed. You have tried to play God and you have destroyed much."

Now the Second Valar, and the others, understood, and the understanding weighed heavy upon them, bowed their shoulders at the shock of this cold hard wave.

Never since the beginning had Eru spoken as such.

And Sauron was strong, and drew himself to his full height. His eye looked about, nothing escaped his vision there. He knew his advantage.

It lay in shadow.

He spoke:

"If you are truly above me, and if you are truly just, then you must know that my punishment will be just."

Eru knew.

"Then I ask, Almighty One, that you grant me that I punish myself."

The darkness of Sauron scorned those about him, defied the twilight, challenged the throne.

Now, the words that came of Eru spread as rays from sun.

"Because I am above you, I grant you your request."

"Then I request that you let me sit where you sit, and have what you have!"

If those words had been spoken on Middle Earth, a tremor would have run through an entire realm, and cracks in the land thrown up black smoke to choke the living.

But Eru knew.

"Granted, here is my Throne."

Thus Sauron mounted, and in that second the flames leaped to the stars, and the dark figure lost all substance, his fragments scattered, his charred bit swept away by the winds of the Undying Lands.

And the Valar knew.

* * * * *

A LOST PAGE FROM THE RED BOOK OF WESTMARCH, continued from page 25

And closing his tired eyes he felt himself borne on the flood of time, the great torrent of liquid silver plunging through buds and leaf-fall, tumbling into possibility, rolling into mystery like the white roll of Andurien down the falls of the Rauros. And roaring brimmed his senses. The scene stole from his unwilling eyes like bees from the jonquils of a fading summer--stole into dream and into sun-blessed fields passed, ever so far, into the harvests of time.

So he passed, to world's ending, to fire and red ruin from which he knew he must not escape, as the pounding of hooves were a wonder he could not escape, the wonder of coming peace in the slow pulse in the throat of the maiden far beyond fair. And as he passed the world beyond the world he knew, he sang a song . . .