

# Infinity in the Palm of your Hands

## By Mohammad Khan

*“The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Our posturing, our imagined self-important, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.”*

A dying recording plays from a dying gramophone in a dying world. The world has been taken over by flora and fauna. Animals roam the lands, slowly regaining their lost kingdom.

Two brothers are listening to the ancient gramophone. Both wearing tattered clothing and hunting gear. Years of experience and age separating them. Liam, the younger one wears a tattered green clothing while Isaac wears dark clothing. Both wear rifles on their shoulder. A emblem of a cobra is on the backs of their jackets. .

“Liam”, speaks Isaac. “C’mon. Let’s getta move on. Gordon said to reach the Baldwins before nightfall. They need this intel.”

“What did you do with these?”, replied Liam. “Sit around and listen to it? I mean what were you doing with your time?”

“We were enjoying life. Now let’s go.” Isaac spoke sternly.

“I’m taking it with me.”

“Fine. Though I don’t know why someone decided to put Carl Sagan on a record. That’s a disgrace”

Liam takes the record and places it in his bag.

“Who?”

“He’s an astronomer.”, said Isaac chuckling. “Studied the stars, planets, galaxy, and the universe.”

The two of them walked down the street. It used to be a metropolitan street lined with people and cars, now shattered glass and broken stores paint the landscape. Not a human in sight.

“They cleared fast didn’t they?” Liam peaked into the broken stores. The shelves have been looted and other supplies are scattered on the ground.

“When shit hits the fan globally, you panic real fast.”

The sun is high in the sky as Isaac and Liam walk down the street.

Isaac’s stomach begins to growl. “We need to find some food.”

“Costco’s should have food. They have everything.”

“If it’s not looted already.”

They hear a sounds in a store in front of them. Both of them stop immediately, and proceed forward slowly and hide behind a car’s trunk.

Isaac draws his rifle and aims into the store.

The world’s quiet now. Difficult to tell if there’s anyone else here. The trees gently sway in the breeze.

A fawn stumbles out of the store with barbed wire tangled on it. Each step is excruciatingly painful for the fawn. It’s a few feet in front of the the store as it continues to bleed.

“It needs help”, whispers Liam.

“Shush”, responds Isaac with his rifle staying on the fawn.

Liam tries to stand to help it, but Isaac immediately pulls him down. They duck behind the trunk again.

A moose walks from the store as well. Antlers protruding from its head in a 6 feet span. It barely fit in the store. A crown atop its head. It pays no attention to the inebriated fawn and continues to walk on.

The moose walks towards the car that Isaac and Liam are hiding behind. The two of them slowly moving towards the driver side of the car as the moose walks by them on the passenger side.

Behind them, there’s a quiet growling of two wolves.

Isaac looks slowly behind them at the wolves feet.

“They’re after the fawn”, whispers Isaac. He places a calming hand on Liam’s shoulder.

The wolves, seeing no threat, move towards the fawn and silently strangles the fawn until it dies, putting the fawn out of its misery.

The moose continues to walk down the street. A pack of wolves surround the moose. Through an epic coordination of teamwork, the wolves subdue the enormous moose.

Another moose comes to avenge the dead moose. A battle ensues between wolves and a grief-stricken moose.

“Move slowly”, whispered Isaac.

The two of them slowly back into the store behind them away from the wolves.

They make their way through a back exit of into a pasture. There’s grass covering the backroad that used to be there.

“Sun’s getting low”, Isaac says. “Let’s find a place to stay”

“What about the apartment building on 3rd?” Liam points at a building a few blocks towards the sunset. “It should be empty now. I think the Wilson’s group abandoned it a few years ago.”

“You sure? There could still be traps.”

It begins to rain heavily.

“Don’t have much a choice”, Liam said. “Let’s go!” He ran towards the building at a fast pace to get out of the rain.

Isaac chases behind Liam. He catches just before Liam enters the building.

“You gotta be careful. They’re could still be here.”

Isaac grabs a rock and tosses it in the building. They hear traps going off.

“Hunters rigged the place.” Isaac grabs his rifle. “Probably close by.””

“Any aliens?”

“Hope not. We need to find a different route quickly.”

“We can try going around back”, says Liam. He points towards an alleyway with beside the building. “Then find a different place.”

“You know the area. Lead the way.”

Isaac and Liam stand slowly. They walk down the alleyway with Liam in front of Isaac.

Liam stops and gestures Isaac to hit the deck.

Liam jumps to hide behind a dumpster on the right, and Isaac dives behind boxes on his left.

Two hunters enter the alleyway on the far end. They’re dressed in ragged clothing and wearing peculiar collars. They’re holding weapons and rope.

“The traps were set off here”, said one the hunters.

“Almost forgot about these traps. Think any of ‘em survived?”

“Maybe. Stay alert.”

Isaac tries to wave towards Liam to move before they find him, but he can’t move. He looks around and finds a small spear tipped with paralytic poison protruding from side of the adjacent building.

Isaac collapses. He falls on his back. Most of his body hides behind the boxes, but his arm sticks out slightly in the alleyway. Isaac is frozen staring at Liam, unable to do anything but breathe.

“Hey”, said one of the hunters. He stopped walking. “Someone’s there.” He points at Isaac’s arm.

The two hunters jog towards Isaac thinking he’s alone. They go right past Liam.

Liam jumps them as pass him. He hits one of the hunters with his gun. The other hunter turns around to see Liam aiming his rifle at him.

“Let me go”, quivered the hunter. “please..”

Liam aims the rifle at the hunter with his finger on the trigger.

A sharp pain goes through his body. Someone shot him.

Liam crumples to the ground and drops his rifle. Another hunter was waiting at the end of the alleyway holding a gun.

Quivering hunter grabs his rifle and hits Liam on the head.

“Don’t kill ‘em now”, said the hunter with the gun. “Once that leg’s healed, he’ll be useful. Get ‘em to the truck.”

The two hunters pick up Liam. One of them has a tattoo of a mongoose on his wrist.

Isaac lies paralyzed in the alleyway as they drag Liam away.

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2 months later.

Two people are tied to chairs in an old apartment. Both are barely conscious, small amounts of blood dripping from their tied hands. Dried blood on their face and on their clothes.

Screaming can be heard in another room behind closed doors. Someone is being tortured like the other two.

Isaac enters the apartment where the two people are tied up on the chair. He pays no attention to them. He takes out the record and puts in the player.

*“There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.”*

The record continues in the background.

He knocks up to the door behind which someone is being tortured and opens it.

One spotlight, two people are sitting in a chair, and one person watching.

One of the hunters who stole Liam is being tortured and sits in front of a large man, slouched over.

Isaac walks over to the slouched man and whispers.

“Lawrence, I need to talk to you.”

The man nods and stands. He gestures to the standing man to stay here.

“Follow me”, spoke Lawrence in soft tone. Lawrence walks with Isaac into the room with the two people tied on chairs.

“Even at death’s door, we still manage to rebuild.”, says Lawrence. “We’ve built cities. We destroyed cultures. We’ve helped others. We’ve killed people. Many quail from the power they posses because of profligacy but we’ve trudged through the muck with this power before. The power to change history.”

Lawrence gestures Isaac to sit while he looms over him.

A cobra emblem on his chest similar to Isaac’s & Liam’s.

“We have chance to end this and go back to the way things were. Finally.”

Lawrence looks at the two people tied up.

“He’s not saying much where other hunter locations, but we’ll work it out of him soon enough. Dripping water wears away all rock.”

“I’ve heard rumors of the person with the mongoose tattoo is in Springfield.” Isaac began. “I just need a horse to and I’ll-”

“That’s 100 miles from here,” spoke Lawrence. “You’d be vulnerable. Let alone we haven’t mapped out alien and hunter routes in Springfield. Who knows how many hunters are between you and this rumor?”

“I don’t know.”

“Can’t say I blame you for doing this. After I lost my brother to the hunters, I’ve gutted any I find. ”

“But, it’s a lead. It’s all I’ve got left.”

“I understand. But you need to be careful.” Lawrence walks to window.

“You can have a horse and supplies. This is your reckoning.”

Isaac stands. “I’ll be back swiftly with my brother.”

“In 3 months, we’ll be taking Angel Falls. The largest human hunter site in the country. Gordon and his people are taking care of the aliens. We’re cleaning up the hunters. It’s almost over.”

Lawrence and Issac walk to the apartment door.

“Martin will get your horse and supplies. Good luck Isaac.”

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**1 month later.**

Isaac is arriving in a small town on horseback. He’s carrying tools on his back. He rides his horse up

to a house.

He walks inside without caution and strolls upstairs to a bedroom. In the bedroom is a man tied to the bed frame. His hands tied to the frame and his feet bound together. His raisin dry skin and feeble breathing do not hide the mongoose tattoo on his wrist.

“How much longer does this have to be Ernie?” Isaac shuts the door behind him.

“sss-screw you man”, says Ernie. “I ain’t t-telling you.”

Isaac gives Ernie some water which he graciously gulps down.

“Now, now. You aren’t the only one in need of water.” Isaac pulls up a chair next to Ernie. “We have another person to join us.”

Isaac leans back and opens the door to the bathroom revealing another person tied up and unconscious in a chair. A young boy caught in the crossfires. He looks slightly similar to Ernie with the same mongoose tattoo on his wrist.

Ernie looks up and begins to struggle.

“So you know him”, Isaac spoke devilishly. “Good.”

Isaac takes his rifle and aims at the boy in the bathroom. “Where is he”, asks Isaac.

Ernie struggles to break free from his bonds.

“Where!?” Isaac fires near the boy’s feet.

“I - I don’t know!” Ernie cries “I don’t know where they’ve taken him.”

“Maybe he knows.” Isaac points to the boy. “I’ll ask him.”

“I’m. I-I’m- we’re not the only one with the mongoose tattoo. There-there’s more of us.” Ernie speaks gasping for each breath. “You could be looking for them.”

“You were there in the alleyway. You shot my brother with an arrow.”

“I don’t remember you”, whimpers Ernie.

“Where did you take him?”

“dead”, cried out Ernie. “he’s probably dead. My arrow injured him permanently. He was useless on the farm so aliens took into their ship.”

Isaac sits back in his chair for a moment to process what happened to his baby brother. He looks at the kid tied to the chair in the bathroom.

Isaac looks between the two of them. He fires at the boy striking him in the chest. The boy doesn’t

move, his head dangles in front of him.

Ernie screams at Isaac through his chains and struggles to break free.

“I’ll fuckin kill you!” Bellows Ernie. “I’ll hunt you and END you.”

Isaac stands. “I know.”

He shoots Ernie in the head.

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**1 month later**

Lawrence analyzes the layout of angel falls ranch. Isaac enters the room.

“Lawrence, you needed me?”

“Good to see you’re alive Isaac. Take a look at this.” Lawrence takes the map closer to Isaac. “So there are forests then clear fields to the ranch. We can clear out the forest to make sure no hunters catch us by surprise, but we need someone in the fields as well. I need you to stay in the tall grass and wait for them. We’ll drive a few hunters your way if there are too many. We’ll have a few more marksmen to back you up.”

“Alright...”

Isaac turns to leave.

“Isaac”, calls Lawrence one last time. “Did you finish things on that end?”

“Yeah. It’s done.”

“Good. We leave at nightfall.”

The scorpions gang ride towards angel falls ranch as soon as the moon rose into the sky.

They quickly reach the edge of the forest clearing. Dismount and slowly guide their horses through the forest.

Angel falls ranch is a brightly illuminated by floodlights with the hunters roaming the grounds. It can be spotted a mile out, but it’s heavily fortified.

Lawrence, Isaac, and the rest are trudging through the forest. Lawrence ushers for Isaac and a few others to hide in the tall grass.

Isaac dives into the tall grass and prepares his rifle. He has a good view of the ranch, the forest, and the open field in front of him. His two other comrades do the same some distance away.

Lawrence and his men mount their horses and charge towards the camp with their rifles. The hunters on angel falls ranch see them and mount their charge.

A sea of horses and men colliding in front of Isaac.

Isaac prepares his rifle and aims at one of the hunters. Fires. BANG. One hunter dead.

Lawrence dismounts his horse and moves closer to the forest to shoot at the hunters from a distance.

“HEY!” Shouts a voice from behind Isaac.

Isaac turns around.

It’s the boy from Springfield. The one he tied up in the bathroom and he’s 20 feet away, aiming a gun at Isaac, bloodthirsty for revenge.

Isaac turns to aim at the boy, but the boy fires his shot first striking Isaac in the chest.

Lawrence hears the shot and looks for the origin. He sees Isaac falling down  
Lawrence runs towards Isaac.

The boy walks up to Isaac and looks him in the eye.

“Fuck you.” The boy unloads the chamber into Isaac’s chest. Using the tall grass to his advantage, the boy dives into the grass and crawls away.

Lawrence reaches Isaac to find him struggling to breathe. He holds Isaac.

“M-m-mon-mn-mongoose.” Isaac suffocates in his own blood.

Lawrence holds the dead Isaac.

“I’ll kill them. I’ll kill them all.”

**THE END**