

Invasion

They came at night. They came without warning.

At first, nobody saw them. Their aircrafts hovered, blending in with the clouds and stars.

There were thousands of them. Maybe millions.

By morning, Tweets failed to send. Networks short-circuited. Facebook died. Not even Instagram could escape this digital plague.

The internet ceased to exist.

There was outrage. Pandemonium. Almost anarchy.

“It’s a government ploy,” the conspiracy theorists said.

“Mom, why won’t my feed update?” Jessie asked over a bowl of Frosted Cornflakes in Montana. The girl was only twelve.

“Verizon’s down again,” families complained, forced away from their monitors and television screens. They dusted off their old Backgammon boards, shuffled playing cards, and stacked wooden blocks. Occasionally, they yelled, “Jenga!” and laughed. Some families even read books.

The Dead Heads didn’t care, either way. Casey Jones was still driving that train.

But most of the world groaned.

When the aliens introduced themselves, it was through a giant megaphone. Their spaceships flickered into existence.

“Hello,” one of them said. For some reason, the voice was Gollum’s – Andy Serkis version. “We’re sorry about your internets.”

Justin Deming

“Sounds like that thing from the movie. What’s it? The one about them little people, the habits,” Jimmy said, picking his teeth with a piece of hay. He spoke to his horse, somewhere in upstate New York.

The alien cleared its throat. “We wants you to know that we are not here for you. We’re simply here for your cookies.”

“Cookies?” strangers asked each other in the streets.

“Our ships are fueled by radio waves, frequencies, and digitized information. Bytes. It all may seem like a blessing to you now, but it’s cursed us. Now, we depends on it. We needs it.”

Humanity listened intently, hanging on every word. Cars were motionless on highways. Little boys and girls hid behind their parents’ legs.

“That’s why we’re here. To data mine. To harvest. Once we have what we needs, we’ll leave, and hope for a better tomorrow.” The Gollum impersonator coughed. It turned into a series of hacks. There was a long pause as the world held its breath. “Thank you.”

The spaceships disappeared into the clouds.

Days passed. Weeks.

People combated their withdrawals differently. Some turned to alcohol, others to God. Eventually, most accepted their predicament.

Friends connected over coffee. Playgrounds were jam-packed. Kids ran through sprinklers and made up games.

On a Wednesday evening, right around dusk, trumpets and trombones blared from above. An unmistakable jingle played for mankind: “All You Need is Love.”

Justin Deming

After the song finished, a brilliant display of fireworks illuminated the sky. People clapped, gasped, and cheered until it was over.

The spaceships took off with a *pop!* When the smoke cleared, there was nothing but a comingling of pinks and purples in the sky.

Thus, a new age began.