

Against the Fading of the Light

Stu Jones

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This surprising apocalyptic novel is edgy within its faith-based genre, and has the action of a wartime thriller.

Against the Fading of the Light is the third gripping and graphically violent installment of Stu Jones's Action of Purpose trilogy, which explores the struggle to maintain faith against the powers of evil.

This novel focuses on one man's quest to save his children, and the world, during an apocalyptic battle against demonic forces. Dark entities possess and control legions of murderous people. Their ultimate goal? To find "the machine" that will rend the veil that divides the natural and supernatural worlds and grant themselves power that they expect will be greater than God's.

Kane Lorusso accepts that he and his ragtag group of resistance fighters may be the only chance of preventing world annihilation. But their numbers and strength are small. Their only hope is to trust in God, though so much of what they live through, including the words of evil voices, suggests that God cannot, or will not, intervene. Grotesquely violent battles test the resistance forces and their faith. As they seek a way to win this impossible fight, they rush to save Kane's children, captured by the evil Malak for his own demonic purposes.

The novel explores the fight to hold onto faith, even when evil seems likely to overwhelm. Questions are raised: Can God truly get people through their darkest moments? Can people find it in themselves to sacrifice for what is right? Deep, often theological questions like these are thoroughly considered.

Such topics come through characters who struggle inwardly, are imperfect, and are thus relatable. Their reluctance and weaknesses, even in belief, add powerful elements to moments in which they stand strong. The storyline utilizes well-crafted cliffhanger moments to create consistent intrigue, such as when Malak lets the children's cries of unspecified pain and terror lull him to sleep.

A Christian apocalyptic perspective directs the text, and its sense of spirituality is woven in well. The abundance of profanity, employed by those under the control of evil, is surprising within this religious context. Additionally, aspects of the story diverge from standard theological perspectives in areas such as how the earth was created—in the novel, for example, God uses an orb-like "machine" to "speak" the world into existence.

Most striking, perhaps, is the story's graphic violence. The gore is presented in visceral detail, with limbs and brain matter flying throughout the text. At times, this edges on gratuitousness and detracts from the story. Some language verges on grandiose: one character "seemed possessed with the power of a thousand men."

Against the Fading of the Light, surprising within its faith-based genre, is a dark, violent, and graphic religious apocalypse novel with the nonstop action of a wartime thriller.

DIANE GARDNER (March 4, 2016)

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