



A Good Hour

J.R. Angelella

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While later in the day he'll be let go from his job as a copywriter at an online men's zine, Ransom spent his lunch break watching the destruction of a church.

His wife, Venus, watched too and said many things. "You're wasting a good hour of your day," she also said.

"It's not your church," he said. "You should keep quiet," he said.

Tourists snapped photos of a car crushed under a telephone pole next to the church. A dog ran out from under the crushed car and whimpered at his feet.

He picked up the dog and carried it to a woman standing in the street. He handed her the dog. She pet and kissed his wet dog head.

“Sorry about our church,” Ransom said.

“Sorry about your dog,” she said.

“Your dog,” he said.

The demolition team knocked out the stained glass windows with a wrecking ball. They cleared out the inside. Construction workers in yellow hats and greased-up jeans rigged explosives. They entered in teams of two, a final sweep before initiating countdown. They sounded an air horn, scaring away any homeless seeking shelter inside.

Another air horn cut through the neighborhood.

Groups gathered to watch. Some took pictures. The construction workers retreated beyond the fence that surrounded the perimeter. An amplified voice counted down from three.

Ransom heard a muffled explosion, before the church walls collapsed in a tower of black smoke. The roof surfed the walls into the ground. Grey smoke poured out the windows as tiny fires ate at everything inside.

Tourists snapped pictures.

Ransom snapped the top of his beer can.

Venus sneezed from the dust and debris.

He said, “This is my lunch break.”

She asked, “What about the dog?”

He said, “The dog doesn’t belong to anyone I know.”

She asked, “Is it lost?”

Ransom said, “What’s wasted and what’s lost is sometimes the same thing.”

Genre: Fiction

Author Bio:

J.R. Angelella is the author of *Zombie: A Novel*. His short fiction has appeared in *Hunger Mountain*, *Sou'wester*, *The Coachella Review*, *The Southampton Review* and elsewhere. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing & Literature from Bennington College. Currently, he serves as a fiction editor at Angelella Editorial and teaches writing at the University of Maryland, College Park and Towson University. He lives in Baltimore with his wife, the novelist and editor Kate Angelella, and their dinosaur-obsessed son Geno.

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