

# The Hands

Richard A. Sternbach

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# THE HANDS

## BY RICHARD STERNBACH

*The story of the creation, in all its majesty, was written in six hundred words. Will the destruction be told as briefly?*

Illustrator: Ray Houlihan

**H**E WAS a gigantic figure, sitting there atop the mountain. He could have leaned over and dammed the river below with a finger. He sat on top of the mountain, and his beard in the wind was a white flag.

Across the plains, as he watched, there were fires glowing, and the mountain under him trembled from explosions a thousand miles away. He bent his head, and a muffled cry reverberated down the hillside and through the valley.

A smaller figure appeared beside him, looking sad.

"Try again, father," the smaller one said.

The old one shook his head. "It would be the same."

"Give them another chance."

"They would do it again."

"Just once more."

The old one shook his head again, and for a while they sat, and they watched the destruction. The fires burned higher, and the explosions shook their mountain more roughly.

At last, at the end, the old one reached down and scooped up some clay from the bank of the river. He held it in a huge, gentle hand, and the younger one smiled.

"You are good to give them another chance, father."

"Not them," said the old one.

"What do you mean?" the son asked, wonderingly.

"Something else," the majestic figure answered, starting to knead the clay. "What shall it be?"

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