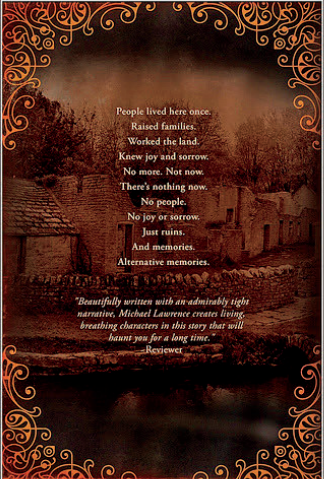


An hourglass with golden sand is the central focus, resting on a dark, textured surface. Beside it, a pair of round, vintage-style glasses lies on the same surface. The background is dark with a grid of glowing points, suggesting a night sky or a digital display. The entire scene is framed by an ornate, golden, scrollwork border.

THIS RUINED PLACE

MICHAEL LAWRENCE

A sepia-toned photograph of a village in ruins. The buildings are made of brick and stone, many with missing roofs and crumbling walls. The scene is overgrown with trees and bushes, and the overall atmosphere is one of desolation and decay. The image is framed by the same ornate, golden, scrollwork border as the top cover.

People lived here once.
Raised families.
Worked the land.
Knew joy and sorrow.
No more. Not now.
There's nothing now.
No people.
No joy or sorrow.
Just ruins.
And memories.
Alternative memories.

"Beautifully written with an admirably tight narrative, Michael Lawrence creates living, breathing characters in this story that will haunt you for a long time."

—Reviewer



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