

The Day the Land Died

by Emily Couchman, 15

Many tales have been told of the spirits and beings and creatures of old. Some tell of the adventures and discoveries; others tell of the troubles and the breakthroughs. Some tell of the failures-- this is one of those tales.

Long ago, when few men trod upon the Earth, Sorios, god of the realms, assigned eight of his many children, each their own principality on the empty planet, as was their inherent duty. Each child held responsibility over the existence of every living thing in their principality. No spirit, nor any physical being was able to exist without the allowance of the ruler.

Once all his children settled in their new domain, Sorios bade them farewell, as he was needed as ruler of all realms. Many of his children took to their new roles quite well--enjoyed them, in fact. One daughter however, detested her new position.

This daughter's name was Arid--the only child born to Sorios' fourth and favorite wife, Cherity. Arid was a beautiful goddess, with icy blue hair that fell just above her waist. Her eyes were like frigid silver pools. Arid's smile was mystifying and proud, quite like herself. Although she once had been the tiny perfect angel to her siblings and parents, over time she had grown whiny, selfish, and quite stingy.

Her parents worried, of course, when their daughter left to take up her new position. "Take care, dearest, and remember your duties," they told her as they sent her off. Arid however, sneered and snickered. Her intentions were none the such.

Arid was sent to the northernmost part of the Earth; a place called the North Pole. Understand that Arid liked things her way, and she believed that she deserved the best, so when she arrived at her new kingdom and realized it was the smallest, boringest, and barrenest continent on the planet, she was utterly appalled. "This is simply a disaster," she complained to no one at all. She explored the place with detest, and found her hate only grew with everything she found.

As the days passed on, and others came to call--creatures, plants, humans, and spirits alike, hoping to make the empty land their home-- she rejected their wishes and requests, with spite.

“Please,” they begged, “This land could be perfect! We’ll take care of and nurture it as it grows.”

“No,” she hissed, “This is desolate land, and that’s how it shall stay.”

After countless rejections had been given by Arid, life itself began to stray away from the land. All that had been there shriveled and died. Even the Sun refused to shine over the decaying land. Darkness hung like a thick black drape. What Arid once thought was desolate seemed ridiculous compared to what had become her land.

“So be it,” she declared to the darkness. “You were worthless all along, yet only I could see that.”

What Arid didn’t quite understand, was that land was life itself, and that she had murdered every last hope this life had.

“How I ever got stuck here, I would like to know,” she growled, “I’m leaving this place the second I get a chance.”

The more she ranted insults at the land, the angrier it grew. The ground shook and creaked, like the wailing of a child. She screamed in horror as the land on which she stood, cracked and shattered, as if it had been struck with some great force. Down she fell into the fiery depths of the Earth, never to be seen again.

The Earth spread its mighty seas over the empty pit where once was something that could have been something greater, but was never given the chance. To this day, nothing can be found there but waters icy and cruel, like the goddess they swallowed.