

The Desert

by Free Idealist

Nothing is more vast than the desert. Space in all its glory cannot compare. In the desert, the heat bares down on your back. It seeps through your clothes, into your body, and saps your strength. Have you ever felt your skin become so dry that it cracks and bleeds? Have you ever witnessed your own blood evaporate in the rays of the sun? Then the night comes. For a moment you feel relieved, only for your body to feel the opposite sensation as it did. Now you're longing for a blanket. Now you miss the harsh sun.

Nothing is more vast than the desert. Things here aren't what they seem. Is it even worth it to carry on? Would it not be easier to lay down and let the flame in the sky take you onto the next life? Why then do you persist? You don't know. It's probably best that you don't. If you had a reason aside from that innate, indescribable instinct, then you might begin to doubt. You might question your purpose. You might wonder if there's any point at all in reaching the other side, if there is one. You hallucinate out there. The heat causes your mind to melt away and let strange things pass into sight that aren't really there. Water, food, shelter, and even women. You know they're not there, but you're tempted nonetheless.

Nothing is more vast than the desert. Time doesn't move here. The sun goes up, and it comes down, but it means little of worth. Hot, cold, hot, cold. More sand. You can taste it in your mouth and feel it in your lungs. It's all pervasive. Why are you here? Didn't you know that it would be this way? Fool. You didn't have to come. No one forced you out here. Now look at you. You're out of water already. Already? How long has it been? How many days and nights? You don't know. You don't care to know. It makes little difference. You must hurry. But your horse. Your poor horse. Can he make it as well? Does he suffer as you do? For now he carries you forward. Maybe the last of your wa-

ter went to him.

Nothing is more vast than the desert. The oceans of sand aren't like those of water. They're far less kind. There is no spray to wash off your sweat. No moisture to wet your lungs. Only the distant dunes of dry, devilish sand. That awful dust that bites at your skin. You hate it, don't you? You long to be free of it. It fills your boots. It stings your eyes. It dries your already barren mouth. Surely it will be your tomb. No? You carry on. Does it not deter you? Don't you wish to turn back? It will be quicker than trying to cross over what's left. Do you think you'll be rewarded for your effort? There's nothing at the end. Just more wilderness. It's a fool's errand.

Nothing is more vast than the desert. No sight more welcoming than that which you now see. Not a mirage. Oasis. Water in the midst of this barren land. Your horse slowly makes his way to the edge of the pool. You fall from the saddle as you try to will your stiff body to move. Nothing is more sweet than the first taste. Nothing can compare. The most divine foods. The most beautiful women. The most gorgeous song. It's all nothing. In this moment, you are happier than ever before. You remove your clothes and lay in the water. It's as if you've been raised from the dead. Your horse, that faithful companion, is just as delighted. No one else is there. You close your eyes, and drift off to sleep. The best of your life.

Nothing is more vast than the desert. The journey never ends. The hardship is eternal. Yet, in the midst of it all, there remains the oasis. Space in all its glory can't compare. The water shines brighter than a thousand stars. Things here aren't what they seem. The tasteless fluid is sweeter than any chocolate. Time doesn't move here. It's as if a piece of Heaven has been left for you. The oceans of sand aren't like those of water. They don't crash against you and pull you from rest, or send storms to drag you to your death. They remain as they are, in their simplicity. You awake. As you move on, a part of you remains. Nothing is more vast than the desert. Except, perhaps, the pleasure of crossing it.