

Sand

There was so much sand. I really don't think that I've ever seen that much sand before. I mean, everyone has been to the beach. You've got the sand, then the ocean. It's exactly the same, except there wasn't any ocean here, just so damned much sand. I had lost track of how far I had gone. It was just one footfall after another now. Up and down and up and down the dunes, stretching out as far as the eye could see. It might have actually been pretty, if it were green, instead of yellow. With each step, the burning sand flowed between my toes, scorching my paws and sticking to everything it touched. Everything below my knees had taken on the same hue as my surroundings, and no amount shaking or fluffing seemed to dislodge the tiny grains. To say that I had forgotten how I came to be here would be incorrect. I simply did not care to remember. Did I lead myself here, or did some unknown entity guide me here? Was it my choice to be in this place of endless horizons, or was I placed here by a force beyond my control? It mattered little. I was aware of both my hunger and thirst, but paid them no mind. After all, I could not die for lack of either water or food. I simply placed one foot in front of the other, onward and onward.

How long had it been since the last conscious thought had crossed my mind, rising above the tedium to be noticed? Again, the answer escaped me. The ever-shifting hills of dust had remained constant for so very long, yet before me lay something incongruous, something new. Such a strange thing, it roused me from my stupor, drawing my gaze as would a beautiful woman performing an exotic dance. My stride lengthened, my pace quickened, my path changed, surprising even myself. I stumbled once, twice, three times and nearly slid down the slope before the gradient gave way to level ground. My own legs, once so familiar and faithful, now seemed to possess a mind of their own. I would have claimed it to be a mirage, but I knew it was not. Such apparitions had not disturbed me thus far, why should they begin now? On and on I went, sensation slowly making itself known once more, after the long absence. My legs began to ache, my paws begged for respite, and my throat burned as the dry air passed in and out. My pace began to lessen, an inquisitive, yet apprehensive air settling over me. From a distance, I may have convinced myself that my eyes did deceive me, but now, so close, it was unmistakable. The muffled shuffling of the sand gave way to the harsh clack of my claws on the stone bricks, as ice compared to the unforgiving sand. A long forgotten scent passed my nose, reminding me of my parched throat. My paws clasped the stone rim and my back arched as I peered into the well. There, at the bottom, in the still, yet clean water, a strange visage peered back.