

# The Man and His Sand

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A vague recollection of placement.

Slight hint of normality.

The thick, potent scents of smoggy city streets still haunt his clothing. A very ordinary looking man with an unshaven face, jet black hair, and dark troubled eyes hiding behind circular lenses found himself displaced on a spotless plain of white.

No shadows were cast.

Time, space and all sense of direction, suspended.

He looked towards his feet.

Cradled in his arms was a bright-red plastic bucket of sand.

He noticed the sand.

The bucket's contents twisted, spun, and danced like illuminated gold diamonds within the confines of its walls.

The thought that had been planted deep within his brain stirred, broke earth and thrived.

A burning lust for the sand clasped its icy hand over his heart.

With the dark pools of his eyes reflecting the sand's fiery glow, he raised a shaking hand and hungrily plunged it deep into the bucket.

The container plummeted to the ground with incredible force. On contact the vessel shattered into dust, and the sand roared and thundered, rushing to all sides of him as far as he could see.

Trembling with fear, he closed his eyes.

Sounds and sensations buzzed through his body and around him like serpents hissing into his ears.

He opened his eyes.

And immediately closed them to the sharp blinding light of the sun.

Squinting, he dared to peer out into his surroundings.

The previously endless plain of white had been replaced by a tortuous equally infinite dry, desolate, desert oven. The sea of sand rose and fell in frozen, towering waves.

So, he began to walk.

His wanderings seemed as short as a second yet painfully dragged out for what felt like years.

As the man labored to place one foot in front of the other, the surrounding vacuum of dry sand seemed to sap his soul. For every drop of perspiration that slid off of his shivering body, a little bit of life left him.

Looking down at the sand that lay ever before him, he saw none of the beauty that it once possessed, but now the monotonous noise of hot oranges and yellows that screeched from the sand was nauseating.

Without warning his legs buckled underneath him; the ground rose up wielding a jagged rock and knocked the wind out of him with an earth shattering force. Panicking, he tried to get a breath of air but instead sucked a mouthful of white-hot sand into his lungs.

He could no longer suppress it.

Spitting up sand and vomit, he screamed in bitter agony while tears of precious water flowed down the creases in his distorted face and into the ever thirsty sand.

How completely alone he felt.

As his screams faded away, he noticed another sound slowly taking shape.

It was laughter. But I'm alone, he thought. "Hello?"

That he noticed a strange sensation in his arm. Fearfully, the man lifted his arm to his eyes and found a semi circle haphazardly cut into the beef of his arm by a dull rock.

To his horror the wound opened its blood-caked mouth and proceeded to laugh at his pain. A horrible, sickly laugh as if from the lungs of a life time smoker

"Stop it!" the man pleaded through teeth clenched in pain.

"You have no power over me," the gaping wound retorted, allowing another stream of blood to trickle to the sand, "You answer to him."

"Who?" the man asked the wound. His tormentor only continued to laugh, but another sound consumed it. A deep, ominous, groaning frequency came from below him, as the sand sank into a gigantic cavity wielding a serpent tongue of fire.

Feeling now a burning question of anger within him, the man screamed to the sand, "What have I done to suffer you!"

"Oh, but you wouldn't live without me, you've given up everything to 'suffer' me."

"Who are you?"

"I am your child, I am your hidden pride, I am your forbidden joy, I am your darkest secrets...I am your love," the sand crooned. "You have given up all you have for me and now will have to suffer all that you have for me. I won't stop until there's nothing left of you."

In complete and total despair the man, having understood what had to be done, lifted himself from the ground and methodically approached the gaping hole of the death he deserved, ready to throw himself into it. Standing on the edge, he looked down into the dark, oven chasm, letting his eyes trail the sand's slithering tongue.

Then something happened.

At first it caught him by surprise. In the midst of a white hot despair, a cool, firm hand took hold of his shoulder. The man looked back and saw two blue eyes staring back at him. Two clear oceans deep with sympathy and love. With a caring force the stranger pushed the man back and threw himself into the sand instead. The sand collapsed over him and then erupted with sea water and every living thing that abides in it. The sand screamed and writhed in pain as the righteous force of the sea completely saturated and consumed the sand forever more.

Once-again the man found himself suspended. Only this time above a calmly tossing sea and beneath the gentle, cool blanket of an overcast sky.

The humble creature was so small that at first he didn't notice him.

But then the man found himself at eye level with a small lamb with a slash in his side carrying the same two ocean blue eyes of a sacrificial love.