

Midday Rest

By Ron Koppelberger

Wilfred Lewis lay in an unspoken serenity, unspoken in dust and asylum from the maelstrom of dirty wind. The windows were covered with the white linen he had bought at Turner's Nickel. The light was dull, smoky and tempered by dust. A single candle guttered and flickered on the nightstand next to his bed in a halo of ambient illumination. The air was tintured by the smoky layer of dust that permeated every inch of the house.

Wilfred sneezed and his kerchief came away dirty and brown. "Damn dust." he groaned. The taste of grit coated his tongue and when he clenched his jaw dirt crackled between his teeth. The fields were barren, overworked as the plains bled the life giving soil to the perpetual tempest.

Wilfred was taking his midday rest, his celebrated exception to the dust and hot dirty suffering. They said the drought would end, and soon, any day now. Wilfred drifted between sleep and restless, weary exhaustion. He thought of rain, cool cascades of life-giving moisture, in great falling rhythm with the seed, soil and heartbeat of wheat blooms, saffron melodies. He dreamed of pattering showers washing the burn of dust away. Tapety tap tap on the roof in spattering fresh breaths of life. Wilfred blinked a few times in confusion, the patter of a million tears thumped and hummed against his roof. Wilfred ran to the window, and tore at the dirty linen. Rain, in buckets and barrels poured from the sky. Thank God, thank God," he whispered, "Thank God for the rain."

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