

What is Lost in the Mists of Time

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Rating: K+

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He looked over the parched land and realized he couldn't remember the last time it had rained. This area used to be called 'Kansas' - fine farmland when he was young. Nothing grew here now. The land was too old. There was no water, little atmosphere. The planet was dead except for its bones and it was only a matter of days, maybe even hours before old Sol went through another death spasm and even Earth's bones would be gone.

He trudged over to the spot his mind's eye told him was the old cemetery. All the markers were long gone, but he knelt on the sand anyway.

"I miss you so much," he said to the air. "I miss... everyone... But most of all, I miss you, Lois. I wish you could see what humanity has become. I wish you were here so I could show you the worlds they inhabit. I wish..." His voice dropped to a whisper. "I wish I could be with you, to hold you one more time."

A lone tear touched the sand and disappeared.

"Grandfather, it's time," a voice intruded.

He looked up at her. He thought her name was Ariella. She claimed she was his descendant but even she didn't know how many generations separated them. She was the one assigned to watch over him today although he was certain she had better things to do than to put on human form and babysit him as he mourned his long lost past on a long dead world.

"I don't remember her voice," he said. "I barely remember what she looked like."

Ariella waited. She was good at waiting. Inhumanly good. But then, Homo Sapiens Terra had evolved past human many millennia ago. They no longer even had humanoid form except when they wanted it. They no longer needed instrumentality. They were pure thought.

He was the last vestige of what they had once been, and he wasn't even human. When they moved on, he was trapped in his material form. He had tried living in the colonies, even living with aliens, but they all moved beyond him. The bioengineering that gave the last Kryptonian super powers also kept him locked in his material form.

"Grandfather, they won't hold the portal open much longer," she said, looking up at the bloated star that had once warmed a vibrant green world. "It's very close to core collapse."

"Maybe I don't want to leave. Maybe I want to die with this world."

"There is no evidence of an after-life," she said. "There is no reason to believe that she, or anyone, is waiting on the other side."

"I think even oblivion would be better than this," he said. "I've forgotten her voice. I've forgotten..."

She wasn't listening. He had long ago learned to recognize when Ariella left her body on

automatic as she attended to more urgent matters.

Then she blinked twice and she was back. She held out her hand to him. "Come Clark. Today is not a day to die."

He looked around at the dull, flat landscape. Dead, dead and forgotten. Mom and Dad, Lois, Perry, Jimmy, Lana... all gone to dust except in his failing memory.

He sighed and took Ariella's hand. "No, I guess it isn't a good day to die."

She smiled at him and he remembered Lois's smile.