

Grade 3-5  
Short Story  
1<sup>st</sup> Place

Merielle A.

## Tala and The Sirens

"I'm flying!" she cried, as her father spun her in the air.

She loved when her father twirled her around. She made him do it until his back hurt. The girl was a Filipina with shiny brown hair and striking eyes. Her name was Tala, which was Filipino for star.

Tala grew up straightforward and headstrong. She wanted to be just like her dad, who was a sailor and lived right next to the dock. She was quick and smart. She got into fights... sometimes. Just sometimes. One evening, Tala got into a fight at school. She went home beaten up and sore. Her dad welcomed her home and tried to pick her up and swing her around, but touched one of her sorest spots. He quickly realized what he had done and tried to apologize, but she was already running up the stairs, screaming. She walked straight into her room and slammed the door.

Her room was decorated with paintings of Greek myths. The Minotaur, Hydra, and Sphinx, and more. However, not all of them were monstrous creatures. There were women too like Arachne, Circe, Medusa, and her favorite, the Sirens. On the wall was an illustration of the Sirens, sitting on a rocky mountain, singing in unknown languages. It was said that the Sirens would sing and hypnotize sailors to crash their boats on the rocky shore of their island and drown them. If the sailors somehow survived, the Sirens would then show them their deepest desire then lure them onto the shore where they would be finished off.

Tala stared at the painting with tears in her eyes. Amidst all her emotions, an idea popped into her head. *Why not? It can't be that bad.* Her plan was to find the Sirens, hear her deepest desire and hopefully make it home safely. Her dad tucked her into bed that night, but Tala didn't sleep. In the middle of the night, she got up from bed. Tala sneaked out to the dock and went on her boat. She had a backpack full of her favorite snacks. She started the boat and steered it aimlessly with no idea where she was going. She could barely make out the boat around her. All she had was herself and the dim moonlight.

After hours of traveling, Tala started noticing strange things. Her watch was ticking much slower than usual. Every second seemed slower. She thought it was just her watch, but the waves got slower as well. A couple of times, she felt like someone was watching her. She was scared and tired. All she wanted to do was sleep. Sleep. The word echoed in her mind. Tala didn't realize it, but she was probably dozing in and out. Once, she woke up and thought she heard singing.

Sunlight was finally starting to break through the dark sky. She got up and ate breakfast, which was a PB&J and a soda. Then she saw land. It was a rock mountain surrounded by even more rocks. She steered straight towards it. *I did it*, she thought. She heard the singing and saw the Sirens, but she couldn't understand them. Tala frowned in confusion. They were the most beautiful people Tala had ever seen. The Sirens saw her coming and waved excitedly, as if they had never seen a female sailor before. Another Siren who looked smaller poked out from behind a rock and waved shyly. The others noticed this and shooed her away.

"Umm... hi!" Tala said nervously.

"Hello!" one of the Sirens said. She seemed to be the eldest.

"My name is Tala. I came here to meet you all," Tala said.

"Welcome! I will bring you to a place where you can stay. You must be so tired after such a long journey," another said sweetly. The Siren led her off her boat into a room. To her amazement, it was an exact replica of her room at home, complete with the painting of the Sirens, which seemed to have to an extra sparkle.

There in the room was the smaller Siren the others made fun of. Tala turned around to thank the one that led her there, but she was gone, and the door was shut. Tala felt a tap on her shoulder and turned around. The Siren was using sign language in an attempt to talk to her. Tala didn't understand, so she looked for a pen and paper, which she found in a drawer. She scribbled down a few words and gave it to the girl.

*My name is Tala, what's your name?*

In response the Siren wrote, *My name is Ariadne. I was born mute. They don't like me. I don't like it here.*

While Ariadne was writing the note, Tala was looking at the painting of the Sirens. It seemed strange. Their eyes were a little darker, their smiles a little menacing. It was as though a toddler had ruined a family painting, and the parents had attempted to draw over its ugly scribbles. She snapped back to reality as Ariadne handed her the note. They communicated over the paper for the rest of the day, and Tala slowly but surely learned to finger spell. The pen and paper were set aside as they adjusted to communicating with their hands.

The next morning, Ariadne was awoken by another Siren banging on the door, so she got up to answer. The Siren at the door sang it was time to eat. Ariadne shook Tala awake and they went to go eat. She loved it! There were dozens of different choices for breakfast which ranged from cereal and fruit to Eggs Benedict. Tala settled on a fluffy waffle with a scoop of fancy-looking ice cream, while Ariadne got Lucky Charms cereal. After they finished eating, Ariadne motioned for Tala to follow her.

They came to a cliff overlooking a beautiful garden, which Tala was surprised to see considering they were on a mostly rock island. They sat down and began sharing stories about each other as they enjoyed the view. Ariadne's life was tough being mute, because singing was a Siren's job. Tala's life was hard since she was always getting into fights at school. Then Tala heard a twig break. That was when they came into view. The Sirens were watching them.

Suddenly, Ariadne's eyes darkened. She turned to Tala with an evil tone of voice, "You know, you aren't different from the others."

"Y-you can talk?" Tala stammered in shock.

"Yes, I can. The stories say that the sailors just swim to their deaths. Sometimes they are unaffected and come onto land," said Ariadne, grinning wickedly.

"So we've got to get rid of you somehow," said the eldest. And with that, Ariadne pushed Tala off the cliff. Her feet slipped off the rocks and she began to plummet. One last thought crossed her head. *I'm flying.*

Then she woke up.

Grade 3-5  
Short Story

2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Marc N.

*The Earth's Swansong*

1-8-5

Hello! My name is Todd, and ever since I was little, I've been fascinated by Earth and why humans left it. Don't get me wrong, Mars has been a great place for humans for billions of years, but I have always wondered why we left what we used to call "home".

If history class has taught me anything, it's that all great civilizations have their downfall, but for an entire world to be abandoned is unreasonable. It also feels like people would rather forget about Earth nowadays. It's always brought up in history class, but we've never seen any pictures of it. I realize now that committing theft isn't the best way to find out why humans left Earth. However, it's too late to turn back. I've already locked the security officers out of the building, and all I need to do is push a button to start up the ship and then. BOOM! I can hear shouts in the distance, and my ears feel so hot, but I can already see space. I just need to reroute this ship and then I'll be on a direct course to Earth.

Some time has passed now, it's been years since spaceships were first constructed, so they're very fast in space nowadays. Soon, I can make out a dark blue planet in the distance, but it's missing chunks and pieces. It almost looks like Earth got blasted by something. My thoughts are cut short though, as I realize that I'm getting closer and closer to Earth! I brace myself for the impact and then. BAM!

I wake up approximately an hour after the crash landing. I look at my surroundings. There are ashes everywhere, but I can just barely make out some kind of huge tower in the distance. That's when I realize, that's no tower, it's a monument, the now ancient Washington Monument. It is actually in pretty good condition, with the exception of the scorch marks and cracks all over it. I take a good look at my surroundings, my spaceship certainly isn't going to be in the air for quite some time. That's when it hits me, I'm relatively 20 minutes from the White House! I hastily got some leftover supplies from the spaceship and embarked on my journey towards it.

It doesn't take long for me to find a road, in fact there's an off-road vehicle simply waiting for me on the side of it. I decide that it will be best to head over to the desolate town nearby, or at least what's left of it.

The so-called "town" I enter is littered with meteorites and all sorts of overgrown plantations. Eventually, I stumble upon what seems to be a run down donut shop. I park the car in the driveway, and after I check the gas tank, I know for a fact that I won't be going anywhere without some gas. The door is locked when I try opening it, so I decide to just step over the destroyed wall surrounding said door. Needless to say, I decide to head into the kitchen and set up camp for the night, since there is still a roof and walls protecting it. However, once I enter it I immediately get cold feet. Hovering in the air are two drones, but they're certainly not as big as the ones on Mars. The next thing I knew, the drones are all over the place, but I manage to hear this come from them, "Hello human, our names are Peace and Quiet!".

It turns out that the two drones are named Peace and Quiet and aren't that bad, they can just get a bit chatty from time to time. However, when I gave them a minute to let everything out, they became quite polite, or at least Quiet was. "So let me get this straight", said Peace. "How come your kind can just abandon us for thousands of years, even though we could've come with them!". I want to say something positive, but the truth is, I don't know anything about the past, that's why I came here. Quiet can tell that I'm at a loss for words, so he decides to switch things up. "Well, the last time I checked the Sun was on the brink of exploding!". I immediately find my voice after hearing this. "There used to be a sun that exploded?", I ask. "Well of course!", said Peace.

"Peace! Don't be so rude to him.", says Quiet disdainfully. "Anyways," continued Quiet. "A very long time ago the sun did indeed explode. Sending flames and meteorites in all directions."

"It must've missed Mars though, since you're here.", mutters Peace. The sun exploding made so much sense! That's why there were meteorites and ashes everywhere! With this newfound knowledge, I decided to take a very long nap.

The next morning, I daydream that I'm still on Mars. However my daydreaming is rudely interrupted by Peace's morning routine of bickering with Quiet. "I'm telling you, the chicken comes first.", says Peace. "No, I'm pretty sure it's the egg.", says Quiet. I've heard this same

*The Earth's Swansong*

argument being made one-thousand times before, so I decide to look outside instead. Just like on Mars the sky looked relatively the same. "Hey, you two wouldn't happen to have any gas around here, would you?", I ask. "We may have one or two cans in the storage room", says Quiet. Indicating a corner that had mold all over it. The door was pretty much a tetanus shot waiting to happen, but I used Peace as a battering ram to knock it down. When I got into the room, I realized that it was actually the manager's office. There was ash everywhere, but I could make out a few newspapers that were barely readable. They read "Missing Moon Crises at Large" "Missing moon?", I ask aloud. The only moons I knew of were the ones surrounding Jupiter. "Boy, do you ask a lot of questions.", comments Peace.

"Ah yes, eventually the moon disappeared from view. Causing many issues." says Quiet. "There ain't much we know about it.", interrupts Peace. "You should probably get back to finding that gas of yours."

I stand there in utter shock for a moment and even Quiet is silent for a second. This might have been the first time Peace tried to help me meet my goal. I decide not to comment though, and I'm soon able to find a canister of unleaded gas lying around. After a few hours of me, Peace, and Quiet trying to figure out how to fill a car with gas, since humans now use something entirely different to power their cars. Finally, the car starts up after Peace uses Quiet to "teach the car a lesson" as he put it. Before I leave though, I realize the situation Peace and Quiet are in. They're forced to sit out this never-ending post apocalypse. If only...

For an essentially 20 minute drive, it takes me a day and a-half to get to my destination. However, I'm devastated at what I see next. Instead of the legendary White House, there is a damp uneven hole with debris everywhere. I couldn't believe it. After everything I'd done, the White House wasn't there. However, before I can finish planning out what to do, several dog-like robots lurch out at me from every direction.

I'm still in shock at seeing more robots, but they're nothing like the other artificial intelligence I met. One of them bites at my arm, even though robots don't have teeth. I decide that these aren't the robots that would be willing to chat over some bagel bites, so I grab the



robot attached to my arm and swing it at the rest of the robots. From there, I start bashing robots in with my bare fists! I guess all those martial arts lessons on Mars weren't for nothing. However despite their only being three bots left, they manage to surround and knock the wind out of me. However at the last minute, a much taller and bulkier robot emerges from the shadows. Despite none of them being human, I still don't have the guts to look at what happens next. Next thing I know, there's oil and wires all over the bigger robot. "Are you all right?", asks the robot in a fancy, but polite voice. "Rogue robots can be quite...", the robot pauses. "Oh my goodness, a human!". The robot swiftly picks up me and my supplies. Carrying me to what looks like a regular warehouse. However, once I look inside and see all of the spaceships lined up for rows, I instantly know what's happening.

"Wait!", I say urgently. "Don't send me back to Mars yet!". "Why not?", asks the robot. "The reason I came here was to learn why humans left Mars.", I reply "I've gathered some information already, but I don't have the full story yet."

There is a long pause of silence after I say that, but the robot eventually replies. "I suppose I should introduce myself... My name is Clara". I chuckle, all of the names are so human sounding. "My name is Todd." I reply, now realizing that I never shared my name with Peace and Quiet. "Well then," continues Clara, "Let me tell you a story. You see, ever since the universe was created, the moon ever so slowly continued moving from Earth. At the time, this seemed irrelevant, but when the moon did leave, the world was doomed. Global warming had already made a dent in the population on Earth and people had cracked the code to living on Mars. So by the time people heard about the moon leaving, and that the Sun would explode, people just gave up on Earth." That story broke my heart. It was so simple, humans had simply given up on Earth. After that I said my goodbyes to Clara and went on one of the spaceships. I thought of all the sites I had gotten to see and remembered the artificial friends I made, so instead of leaving with a frown, I left with a remorseful smile.

I certainly didn't know of the future, but I did know of the past now.

Grade 3-5  
Short Story

3<sup>rd</sup> Place

Jacob B.

### The Grinch Halloween

The Grinch hates Halloween more than anything! The Grinch lives just North of who town all alone in his haunted house. Mr.Grinch hates all the treats, treats, treats, and how the kids play, play, play. "I must stop Halloween from coming once and for all." Said the Grinch. But then he had a horrible great idea. He was going to sneak into everyone's house and steal all the candy, and take the Halloween parties.

So once all the trick-or-treaters were gone and having fun in their parties the Grinch took all the candy! When the who's went to eat the candy the Grinch took everything else! The Grinch Stole HALLOWEEN! The Grinch quickly slithered out of who town and went back to his haunted house just north of who town. Celebrating that he finally stopped Halloween from coming or so he thought.

When the kids came back they were devastated to learn that all their candy was gone! So the kids made a plan to get it back!

The kids sneakily went into the Grinch's base. They had to sneak past traps. Left and right traps we're going off. Finally, they found all their candy, and they got it all back. Now all they had to do was get out, but suddenly the alarms went off and red lights were flashing. "Who dares step foot in my lair?" Said a mysterious figure. But the kids knew exactly who it was. It was the Grinch! "Come back here little kids." But the kids were off running down the hallway. They were so close to the door, but the Grinch had long large legs and was getting close to the kids. It was close but the kids managed to do it! So Halloween was restored and everyone lived happily ever after until the Grinch strikes again! In the Grinch's secret laboratory, the Grinch has

plotting. "They think that they can come into MY house MY laboratory and steal from me oh no my friends this will not stand!

The Grinch gathered his trusty friend Max and went to town for a final stand. He got to the town just in time before the punca was cut. But what the kids said next well the Grinch could have never thought that the kids would say it.

"We know your pain, it can be hard to be all alone." "No, you don't know what I had to go through." Said the Grinch. "Come let's have some pumpkins." Said the kids. And the Grinch did, he had fun for the first time in 34 years, and he had some pumpkin.

The End