



The Rain Dancers

Written By Karin Mainwaring

Kat

I was playing with Doug behind the tank-stand. We were bored. We were playing with a lizard we'd found, dead, in the dust. We'd poked at it with sticks trying, I think, to worry the life back into it. All we'd done was worry the flies out of it. It was full of them. There were ants too. They were going mad. It was the weather..... hot and still and humid. Everything was flat. Like the earth knew that a great weight of water was about to fall upon it. And the smell.... As if the rain coming, for it was, was a hand that held the earth in its palm, like an orange, squeezing it, fragrance spraying out like zest. The lizard was flat too. But that was the insects pulling its mass away from it. Doug and I knelt in the dust..... sticks discarded and watched it..... And from this frenzied fight for food came order..... the soft bits were triumphantly carted away first..... then ants with big claw heads came to saw and rip away the harder pieces. We pretended we were ants and ate some. It was hard to see what they were getting so excited about. Doug pretended a maggot was a witchetty grub. He ate it. I couldn't. And then it started to rain. Drops like maggots splattered around us lifting the dust into the air so that, for a second, the earth hovered under a red haze. I looked down the front of my dress, it was soaked, pink..... violet I think. I remember it had a shirred bust..... not that I had one to shirr. I always thought that was something you did to eggs. You would not believe what I thought ladies had in their dresses. Mine had nothing but dead lizard stains smeared across it. My dress was wet. I could see my underpants. They were white, waisted cottontails. Like these. Not very sexy I admit. Although Mum tells me there are some dirty men who find the sight of grown women in undies like these exciting. She calls this a fetish. She says they are perverts. They have a fixation. Doug had no such fixation. In fact he preferred me without any underpants at all. Like this. We both thought this was very funny. Nobody else did. The rain was falling in sheets, like iron, slicing through the air. It was so much like being slapped that, by the time I realised I was being slapped, it was too late to transmute the tears of joy that streamed down my face to ones of sorrow. And that was the last time I saw a man, boy, male, until I saw you in the dirt outside.