

A Land Before Thyme

In the beginning, there were no seasonings. But that's only because there wasn't anything at all, since the universe had not yet begun.

Then, suddenly, the Big Bang occurred, producing a giant, gaseous ball of hydrogen that eventually became light, matter, energy, pelicans and racism. But something was missing.

The earth's first creatures, the dinosaurs, didn't notice, because their brains were tiny and incapable of abstract thought. Carnivores tore greedily into the bland, unseasoned flesh of their prey, not realizing that they lacked a single crucial ingredient; herbivores, on the other hand, turned to eating rosemary, sage, and cardamom seeds, all the while longing for an herb more flavorful, homonymic, and metaphysical.

In Ancient Greece, female chef-wenches prepared supper for their male boyfriend-wenches, but, lacking a single ingredient, they instead added poison.

Early man was also unaware of this herb, and therefore had no conception of past, present, future, braised pork loin with lemon-ginger glaze, or himself. As he gradually ascended to terrestrial supremacy, early man sampled the various comestibles that he found near rocks, under rocks, on top of rocks, and inside rocks, but eventually decided that they all lacked something, some indescribable taste, like a lemony-planty-bittery-rosemary-ish flavor that he imagined would rhyme with "thplime."

Many years later, in Ancient Greece, female chef-wenches tried to prepare supper for their male boyfriend-wenches, but, lacking a single ingredient which they could recall but not exactly describe, they

instead added poison. In Ancient Puerto Rico, they resorted to sugar cane, and, later, poisonous sugar cane. And in the ancient city-state of Cannibal-Topia, they turned to human flesh, and also poison.

Centuries passed, and mankind was troubled. A cantankerous, wily, drunk, and often flatulent Irishman entered a homonym contest at his local bog, but, having unfortunately chosen "time" as his entry (which at that point had no semantic meaning, much like "weasel-weasel-wowse!" or "glanker"), he lost. Similarly, an ugly poet entered an ugly poetry contest at his local uglery, and also lost, for being unable to rhyme the last line of his sestina entitled "Climb, mime, lime, and lickory-shimmy-shime."

And still, mankind was troubled, for lacking this momentous, incomprehensible, but seemingly-infinite herb. A wiser man might have said that mankind was running out of [this herb], that [this herb] was up, that [this herb] was of the essence, that [this herb] was money, and that it was Hammer-[this herb], but said wise man simply could not find the word to express himself. The human condition, it seemed, was [this herb]-less.

Hence, mankind resorted to other, more comprehensible herbs. A mildly-famous Polish inventor, wishing to travel to the past in order to re-eat his favorite pierogi, invented a paprika machine, and subsequently traveled nowhere (but did sneeze). Similarly, a Kiswahili artist-cum-pirate-cum-shaman developed a method of mustard-seed-lapse photography by which he almost, but never actually, managed to capture motion on film by means of projecting mustard seeds onto light-sensitive paper. These technological advances were impressive, but still tasteless—that is, until a German Jewish physicist, Albert Einstein, proposed his ground-breaking theory of relativity, which, by its concept

of the space-Chinese-five-spice-continuum, completely revolutionized science's understanding of the cosmos, the effects of seasoning, and the Chinese.

The absence of this herb affected art, as well. At the famous Scarborough Fair, singer-songwriters Simon and Garfunkel performed their little-known folk song, "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Celery Salt With Natural Flavoring," which was met only by boos and hisses from the audience; subsequently, however, the song was re-written and later re-published as the smash-hit we know today: "Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, Celery Salt With Natural Flavoring, and More Sage." Cindi Lauper, inspired by this performance, later recorded her everlasting hit pop song, "Dill After Dill." Unfortunately, the trend stops there, as the animated children's movie "The Land Before Coriander Seeds" was less well-received, and later banned.

Even today, this haunting flavor goes unnamed. Every day, roast chickens are spit out in disgust. Incomplete seasoning cabinets are ripped from the wall and thrown across the room. Stopwatches never stop. Terrorism plagues the nation. We would go on, we really would—but we can't. There's no hope. There's no future. Mankind has simply run out of...nutmeg. ☹

THE LAND BEFORE TIME PREQUEL:



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