"Are you filling the little ones head with rot again Hajmul?" Queried the youthful man leaned against the doorway. If his jezail stocked enfield wasn't intimidating enough; the bleeding through his thawb from violent rotting of flesh that dotted his face and body like cowspots would be. Leaning upright after the elder and the crew of children half circled around him.  
  
"It was you who told me these stories Hashashin! You told me you had been to these great cities where buildings scraped the sky!" The elder stood from his cross legged position to grumpily scowl at the half ghoul. His age showing from the creaks in his bones; the children's eyes quickly darting between the two men with curiosity.  
  
"That was nearly two hundred years ago Hajmul. Cities do not exist, nor does the ocean. Not anymore. You would do better teaching them your craft of steel. At least that can help them defend themselves from the antlions." Hashashin rolled his eyes at the elder. "i would never have told you the stories if i thought you'd take them to heart, friend."

"Hashashin you old fool, you should know more well than anyone a human's drive to survive. Your youth some hundreds of years after the war is proof of that.  Beyond the desert, beyond our sand there is a city, and there is an ocean! i know it in my heart." The old man proudly beat his palm at his chest.  "Come children, i will tell you of a very special story, and hashashin will not stop me. For he is older, but he is not the village chief now is he?"

The children cheered happily at the victory of Hajmul against the stubborn warrior. Some of the brats even stuck their tongues out in defiance against him. "Please mister Hajmul! tell us more!" the chorus of young voices continued. Boys and girls alike, tightly wrapped in the white robes to keep the sun away scooting closer eagerly.

"Back, before the war, there was a land, with as much water as we have sand! It was a prosperous land, and everyone wanted to be there! Just as we cherish water, they would go to great lengths, just to have access to this great 'ocean'. That is what they called it. This 'ocean' was even so big, there was lands inside it, called 'islands' that had water on every side!"  
  
The children's eyes were wide, excited, hanging on every word. "They never had to be thirsty or.. Or share water i bet!" Interrupted one of the very young boys.

"You are correct Rasaj. There was so much water to go around, that everyone had enough. Nobody in the entire world was thirsty nor hungry, ever!"  
  
Hashashin snorted in disappointment, fully aware of Hajmul's blissful ignorance of the world before the war. The hatred and greed that plagued the hearts of every man, woman, and child. But knowing it would do no good to argue. With a soft shake of his head, leaving the tent frame to let them have their dreams.

Hajmul peaked up. Raising his head as their guest made his retreat. Smiling, then turning back to his young crowd. "Good. Now that he is gone, i can tell more stories. Better ones."  
  
"What could be better than the ocean?" One of the girls curiously chimed.  
  
"Oh, that’s easy my dear Emerald! How about a city of people that lived.. Beneath the ocean!"  
  
A chorus of gasps was like music to the ears of the old storyteller. His smile wide, despite his old and worn out teeth.

"There was a beautiful city! Made entirely of seashells and gold-"  
  
"Hajmul? What’s a seashell?"  
  
Hajmul laughed. "Oh, i do so get ahead of myself. Seashells, were a very rare treasure, that people would come from around the world, trading away dozens of goats, gallons of milk, or pounds of cheese, just to get a single one of them from the ocean people. But these weren't people like you or me! No, they had the legs of a fish! Whats a fish you ask? Well! The people of the ocean would harvest these fish, instead of goats. Hashashin tells me that fish were big, juicy tasting much better than even the fine meat of the Oryx our hunters bring home on blessed days! And they were so moist, eating them meant you did not have to drink." Hajmul quickly drew a picture in the sandy floor of what he believed a fish to look like. Resembling one of their sheep, but with wings instead of legs to fly through the water with.

"The people of Atlantis had bodies of men like you and me, but with great water wings for legs, and the ability to breath under the water. Letting them find the fish and seashells to trade with everyone else!"

"Mister Hajmul? What happened to atlantis?" Another of the children pleaded. In his words, the elder sensed that same sense of hope to one day see the mighty city.  
  
"Ah, Jibul, it is truly sad. In the war that left our planet destroyed by our ancestors, they sought to steal the wealth of the ocean city. So the people of Atlantis used great machines to lower the city under the water, where it would be safe from the bombs and the war. Hashashin says the ocean dried up before the war, but in that case i say, where did atlantis go? This must prove there still is an ocean out there somewhere children. Maybe one of you could even find it in your travels. That would show Hashashin, wouldn't it!" Hajmul smiled still as wide as ever, laughing along with the children who still hung from every word.

"Okay my children. Go now. Your parents would never forgive me if i kept you from your chores. Come back when the fire is lit, i'll have more to tell you about Atlantis and the ocean." The children whined and frowned in response to the thought of their chores and having to wait for more of the stories.   
"Please mister Hajmul!" They begged, to the smiling old man.  
"Come now children. You know how important it is to serve your parents. Lest the Chupacabra's come!"   
Every child tensed at the mere mention of the vile beast from before the war, who’s giant feet came and squashed children who didn’t do as they were told. "Yes mister Hajmul." They all whined, but left to do their chores regardless.