



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



• **Lesvos Island**  
• **UNESCO**  
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# I am a Geoparker!

A global educative project

## The Refugee Island

Once upon a time, just 20,000,000 years ago, two great beasts roared, the ocean of Tethys with the land of Aegeus. Tethys and Aegeus are fighting relentlessly about who will prevail in the Aegean Zone. This fierce confrontation brought the two undisputed fighters into such a fierce clash between them that submarine tectonic plates began to vibrate and devour, with their enormous waves, Aegeus.

It is said that the power of evil brings forth the supreme forces of the good, who knows how to recreate, instinctively, through the ashes of destruction, nature, life itself.

The creation of the Archipelago was the cause of the conflict, but not the befriending, of the two gladiators, with Lesvos being separated from Northwestern Asia Minor and cut off southeast by Chios, Lesvos was now an independent island.

In the Middle Pleistocene the melting of the ice struck the Aegean region as the waters streamed down, away from the broken ice that seemed to want to remain freezing the earth, but in stubbornness of the times, were forced to dive into the sea as a violent hand, changing their natural perpetual position on the land.

The adaptation was immediate for the flora and fauna of the area. Nature knows to be avenged, but knows and cares, to protect her

"children". all surrounding space with beings and non-beings were linked to one another with a connection that only nature could make.

But no one could imagine the destruction that was about to take place. They said it was a fiery giant who suddenly began to stir, as if he felt uncomfortable with the pressure of the sinking African plate under the Eurasian into the inner basin of the Aegean Sea.

Lesvos, a terrestrial paradise, does not seem to worry. Sequoias, pines, plantains, oaks, beeches, palm trees, cypresses, lilies, canopies, poplars, laurels, oaks and other tall trees, guardians of the region, look out to the sea, proud for their lustfulness. Springs gurgle happily as their waters seep into ferocious waterfalls, taking care of the natural irrigation of the trees. Water did not cease to be the source of life in this "leaf" of the Aegean, in a region where the Deinotherium, this massive animal, found shelter in the tropical forest on the west side of the island. How difficult it must have been for this area to protect its flora and fauna?

Maybe in an imminent volcanic crisis, the water would "boil", the trees and animals would turn to stone? And the people; would logic be more useful than speed, parcel, hoof or skin in endurance or self-defense?

The seismic shocks of the earth increased and so did the concern of the "locals". The roots of the trees as underground antennae caught all the warnings signals nature was emanating, which seemed to be calling "Go, while you still can!" But how would that be? Their land, this land, has been feeding them for centuries. Would it not be betrayal if they fled? It would be self-exile from their own home. While animals, plants, and people, stateless and unaccompanied, would stoically accept their

fate. The fate of nature is, moreover, closely related to with that of man.

The eldest Sequoia, gifted with experience and wisdom, calls together a council to share its concerns. Nature, moreover, "knows" from instinct to be more agitated than man. It is a sacred maternity bond, a conceivable umbilical cord, which connects effortlessly the mother to her child. Sequoia knew well that the volcano had become a threat, the rival awe of life itself. The great risk, perhaps, was a disaster for all, or a secret agreement, an unwritten natural law on the course of life from destruction to regeneration, from acme to decay, from supremacy to recession.

The trees stood in favor of the Sekoya and seemed to share their concerns. Birds, on the contrary, saw the future more optimistically. They had confidence in their forces. With their feathers strong enough to tear the air, they could flee away as far as they were. The only thing they were sorry about was that they would lose their terrestrial paradise. Large animals, on the other hand, may have been muscular, but cumbersome on long and inaccessible distances.

To this invitation, Nisiopi, the fairy of the forest, had also responded. Her home was the forest itself. The whole island was deviated from her beauty. In this council she proved to be particularly reassuring, ready to oppose the times disproportionately to her powers. She was nothing more than an air, a sensitive existence, literally defenseless against the power of evil. She did not know about migration, expatriation, violent persecution of nature, what is called the rath of God. On the contrary, she considered nature friends of all beings and felt grateful for this, which, like an elf, could find its own fairy tale in the world of people.

Despite the frustration, Nissiopi wanted to take part in the forest council and talk to her trees about the third generation of rights - not yet known to man - that was no less than respect of nature and her creations. It was as if the disaster that was going to hit the island was human will. Together they had to see the truth, hear, listen to the monster that roared every now and then, almost ready to destroy everything in its way. She wanted to shout that everyone has a right to life, to dignity. She said nothing of all that seemed to worry her. She limited herself to saying a few words, like pebbles of pure water, sounding seductively, as the waves of the sea rush over them: "This is our homeland!" What did she mean by this simple phrase? Who doubted their origin, indigence, selfless love for their land? Did she personally want to ensure the moral commitment of everyone to not escape from her? Or maybe to confirm her concern, which was not only her own, but also her roommates in the woods?

The Volcano could wait, but not for the animals. They were afraid day by day that the evil would break out. They were not persuaded by the fairy. She was by nature made to be ethereal and to see things from a distance. The only thing they could not accuse her for was evil and deceitfulness in concealing her anxiety. On the contrary, she was justified by her unconditional love for this place for she wished that it would stay unchanged throughout time. The Deinotherium, one after another, began to express their doubts for the safety of their own and their children. Together they declared their decision to flee. First their elderly, women and children, that is to say the sensitive groups, would depart and then their strongest. The strip of land, which connected Lesvos with the opposite coast of Asia, would be salvation for those who did not know how to swim.

The plants listened to this carefully. You see, nature had taken root in the land, sleepless guards of the Aegean Sea, to retain the ground, to shade from the sun, to bear fruit and to feed the forest and the island. Without them soil erosion would be a threat alongside with floods for they wouldn't be able to hold back the soil and the sun would turn the area into a desert. Now, however, nature seems to be avenging and not rewarding the great good that has benefited the region for so many millennia. Captives, but proud, free but trapped, seemed to envy the animals that would escape by saving themselves and their families from a certain death. But is fleeing not a slow but safe death? If a magical hand of God would force them out violently to root elsewhere, would it not be a real salvation for them and their little ones? Who could live beyond this blessed place? Even the fairy was free to leave. A spirit, you see, cannot be imprisoned! And man? This cunning, resourceful "Odysseus"? Body, spirit and soul together! Surely something will be engineered to save them from their festive enemies, lava, this fiery creep, and this ugly and dirty ash.

Only a few millennia passed, which for the forest seemed like merely several minutes of torture. The fauna had begun to desert its forest. The few remaining animals did not seem to be enjoying life as they did before. The volcano, this daily tyrant, often would spit "blood", little in the beginning and gradually even more. This became routine to the living, it didn't trouble them anymore. They knew, they had confidence in nature, in this effortless cycle of life, birth to decay to death and rebirth. Nisiopi often appeared in her forest. She made her ceremonial visit to oversee ,with great insecurity, if everything was okay. Everyone knew deeply about the great evil. It was their unsaid shared secret. Nissiopi did not want to leave her friends. She felt a

great need to defend them until the end. In what way? The proud trees did not want the pity of anyone, not even from the ethereal, a being between human and God. Their roots were the source of their lives but also of their death. From them they collected all the nutritious juices from the soil; they felt strong and thankful for them. They would not run. It was a matter of free will and choice. They stayed there waiting for their fate.

And man? Where was man at this critical moment? Arrogant from the beginning, egotistical against the forces of nature! His excessive self-confidence for his gift of logic, of understanding, could have avoided the miserable prophecy and the disaster. It is also known that man defies danger because he underestimates it. However, nature has an empathy for danger, recognizing it by instinct. Man with his indifference and neglect to nature, he had already given the nemesis, the divine trial, which would in turn bring balance to life.

So only the Fairy of the Forest remained to exorcise the evil. With spells, however, avoidance becomes a wish, a promise, part of an utopia. she knew, she was aware that every passing hour was at the expense of all of them. The rude trees, the guardians of the ground, were left alone. Magical solutions did not exist. Everyone, who had legs or feathers, had fled. Their heart told them to stay, but their logic prevailed and warned them to leave as long as they could. The migration of the forest was a fact. The island had been deserted by its animals. Unholy, as he acknowledged its fate.

Until this morning, something strange was happening there in the depth of the horizon. Like as if the two monsters of life and death were beginning to fight making dust clouds. The sky was filled with the

volcanic ashes, one of the volcano's children, and perhaps the dirtiest. The blue sky became black and continued get even darker. The earth seemed to bleed from afar and burn, as Lava, the most threatening and relentless of the children, began to bubble unbothered, sly and sure of his power. He had lost his childish innocence and now was impatient to do what he was made for, to come out of the crater, the mouth of his "mother" and feed on the "blood" of others. He conquered the earth, spread death, free to devour the whole rainforest. It was an achievement, a feat! A "child" was spreading destruction! The instructions were clear from Mother-land: "The strongest will prevail!" Prevalence, by its very nature, involves evil, which can even "poison" a child's soul. Then the evil is good, because the Earth knows how to compose all its opposing forces in to a palindonous harmony.

Life, however, did not listen to the calls of the Ethereal to remain immortal in time, to freeze instead of being incinerated. Ash, as if it were a game, began to cover the flora of the area and in a short time isolated the organic materials of the trees from the atmosphere. She could not let her bright, but harsh in her soul, sister, Lava, plunder undisturbed, devouring whatever she found in her way. She, though gray, black, dirty, ugly and hungry, knew how to preserve life, to lull life to sleep in time. So the flora of the forest seemed to be "asleep". Even millions of years after, it still is asleep. A helping hand in this narrative was Silicus, the eldest of the children, who also wanted not to become a part Lava's destruction, to eradicate everything around them. Silicon Dioxide hurried to impregnate tree trunks with Ash and replace their organic material, transforming them into fossils in a short time period. The transgenesis had occurred.



The trees were grateful. The impossible had been achieved! They were fossilized in time, in their forest, native, keeping their roots, their branches, their foliage and their seeds. They were alive thanks to their "enemies", Ash and Silicus, who eventually proved to be their best "friends", because they were able to resist total destruction by rescuing them.

As for Nisiopi? She wanted from wind to become land, near her friends, the trees! She knew that only in this way she would be fossilized in time. It was a kind of expatriation from its animals and plants, her animals and plants, which, although different from her nature, "made room" for her to live with them. They made her feel equal to them, even though she was "different." The time has come to do something for them too. To not give up on them. To stay close to them until the very end. There was no dilemma. She had made her decision to sacrifice herself. She approached the ancient Sequoia and surrendered to this eternal sleep! Silicus and Ash began to roll into her ethereal mass. The seismic vibrations cut her sweetly, hugging her Sequoia, and drew her about a mile out the forest where she threw her anchor, unspoiled in time, looking at her forest.

She had become an island!