

## The River

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As the girl, deep in thought, walked through the forest, she spotted a beautiful river. There were luscious bushes and many rocks of all shape, size, and textures. The water was calm and wistfully traveled through the scenery of the forest. As she grew closer, she heard the angelic sound of a harp. She remembered reading in one of her fantasy books about a river that did not make the sound of waves, but the sound of a harp. Could this be real? Once she reached the river's edge, she carefully dipped her bare feet into the water, just enough to feel the cool water flowing through her toes. The trim of her long, blue skirt brushed the water, but she did not mind. All she did was close her eyes and listen to the river's song. It was a mystery where this sound came from...but maybe, just maybe...this forest was magical. She pondered the idea of magic as she sat down on one of the soft, mossy rocks. She envisioned herself as a fairytale cottage princess in a long, delicate, pink dress, like her favorite flower, a dahlia. She would have long brown hair, half carefully pulled back out of her face and the other resting upon her shoulders.

The vision was disturbed when she felt the water rise above her knees. She was slightly frightened because the water tickled. Then she noticed; the water had only captured her legs. The rest of the river was leveled like it was before. She stood up, and walking around, observed the water encapsulating each step she took, following

her. Should she give in to her desire to discover this magic? Should she run in fear? As she took each step, she started to dance solemnly to the melody of the forest. Each step was careful and precise. The water then wrapped around her legs, up her torso, through her arms and spouted out to her hands. It caused no harm to her, moving in harmony with her movements.

The confusion and fear she felt at first was now gone, like the stillness after strong winds. She moved with grace, with passion, with gentleness. With peace.

She had not felt peace ever since she was a little girl. She often battled with her restraining father and was held to slim and strenuous standards of his own vision of living, like a tree tangled in vines. Her way of escaping this hardship was through spending time outdoors. Nature made her feel the beauty of life and the thanksgiving of the gifts she had outside of her troubles. The forest had always been her go-to spot whenever she was feeling down. She had always somehow felt connected to it, and now dancing along the river, she felt united with it.

The water guided her movements as she spun, leaped, twisted and turned. She let go of her control and let the water take her along the magical scenery of the forest. Afterwards, she rested upon a large and smooth rock, and again, closed her eyes and began to feel. She felt not just her damp clothes or her knotted hair pushed

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against the rock, not the worries of her absence in her little home, not her father's anger when she returns, not the dirt that had been on her skin. She felt the cleanliness of the water and her soul. She felt as if she was cleansed of an impurity in mind and body. Magic was real, and it was present within her. It was not that she possessed it at that moment, but that it had been with her since her conception, waiting for her to find it and embrace it.

It was now late afternoon, and as the sun was starting to set. The girl got up and followed the river until she found her way out of the forest. She walked home in delight and feelings of warmth and great joy within. This joy was indescribable, as joy is not a feeling but a being. You may not feel joy, but you may be filled with joy.

When she got home, it was quiet, as it usually was. Her father was still off at work, and her mother had been sleeping after a long day of taking care of the house. She prepared dinner, set the table, and waited. Alas, when she, her mom, and her dad gathered together, they ate until they were full. The mother and father requested her to clean after supper, so she did. Once her parents had left the room to get ready for the night, she thought about what had happened that day. The guidance of the water, the peaceful song. Instead of a brewing storm of fear and confusion whenever she was in quarrel, she was able to handle that storm with peace and grace, which overpowered all of the evils. As she finished cleaning the last of the dishes, she entered her own room. Carefully braiding her hair for the night, she thought "So it's true, it's really true."