





The Dreamflute

To Shazia

Lina was living with her uncle and her aunt. Her grandfather also had a small room in her uncle's house. Her uncle was a fisherman. Her parents had moved to another country. They had been farmers, but several dry years had cost them their farm and they had left to earn a living elsewhere. She really loved her uncle, who was a kind man. She also loved her grandfather dearly. Loving her aunt was not as easy. She really made life hard for Lina. She was always complaining that they had to feed and house her husband's poor relatives, speaking of Grandfather and Lina. Whatever Lina did, to her aunt it was wrong. Lina should behave, as if she was not actually there, noiseless and invisible. It is not easy for a child to live that way. How could she be silent at all times?

She was not allowed to play in or near the house and she was also not allowed to stray far from the house. Only when she was on the boat with her uncle, was she free from the harassment by her aunt. She loved being on the boat with her uncle when he went fishing. On a good day she could see the dolphins. She liked to watch them. They were such graceful creatures.

One day grandfather gave her a present. He had carved a flute for her. Lina was happy about the flute and started playing, well, making noise. Nobody can play a flute or another musical instrument on the first day, except maybe for the triangle. Her aunt got angry about the noise and even broke the flute. Lina went crying to her grandfather. He smirked and told her, he would carve her a new flute, a better one. The new flute she could use for learning, how to play, without angering her aunt.

It took grandfather several days to carve the new flute and when she tried to play it, it did not make a sound. "Grandfather," she said, "what is wrong with it? I can't hear its music!" He just smiled and said, "This is a very special flute. You don't listen to it with your ears. You listen with the heart. I will teach you how to play your fingers on the flute for the different tunes."

Two days she tried and practiced on the silent flute very hard but still she could not hear a sound. Grandfather reassured her, she would in time be able to hear its music. She just needed



to open her heart to its tune. On the third day she was out on the sea with her uncle. It was fair sailing on a sunny day. The wind played with her hair and she decided to play with the wind. She was dancing with the wind, moving to its touch and its whispered tune. And in her dance, following a whim, she put the silent flute to her lips and started to play along. Looking over the waves, she saw the dolphins and the dolphins danced. In their dance they were getting closer to the boat. Lina stopped.

The dolphins were not getting closer anymore. After a while they left.

She told Grandfather and he asked, “Did you hear the music, when you played?” She was not sure, could not remember, if she had danced to the wind alone or also to her own tune. She only remembered that for a moment she had danced with the dolphins.

She started practicing with her flute with vigor again. The next time she went on the boat with her uncle, she played her flute and looked out over the waves. After a short time the dolphins were coming. They were moving to her music, in their way dancing and she danced with them. The sailors thought the dolphins escorting them a lucky sign. They asked for her to come along more often, as the dolphins always came to her. She went with them almost daily and when she played the dolphins came. In the night, during her sleep she was dreaming of the dolphins. She had dreamed about dolphins before, but now the dolphins were talking to her in her dreams. They praised her song and the dance. She practiced and got always better with the flute. She really could hear its music now, only besides herself and the dolphins nobody could.

She asked her grandfather to carve her a new ordinary flute, so that she could play for the sailors and others too, pleasing her fellow humans. The dreamflute she kept on playing too, living dream and life alike.

Still the dolphins flock to sailing ships, dancing and questing for Lina's tune.

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