

Water Whisperer

By Caleb Eno

Word Count: 634

I always had a curiosity about water. From as far back as I could remember, the stuff fascinated me. I could spend hours watching waterfalls as a kid. To most, it's the same patterns over and over again. But to me, I saw every change, every variation. Each second held new wonders to discover. I suppose it's no mystery then, why I currently found myself floating on my back in the great, dark blue expanse of Lake Relentia. Every fish that swam and every breath of wind turned the lake into a giant liquid sapphire.

For what seemed like hours, I had been focusing on clearing my mind. I needed my body to quiet so that I could move with the water. Over the past year, I'd perfected my technique: Imagine the memory, conversation, or noise that's distracting me, see it, cast a net over it, and then throw it into the dark blue recesses of my mind.

If I worked and waited long enough, I nearly became the lake itself. I only had to do one more thing. I turned over and inhaled.

Water in the lungs is a terrifying sensation, one which any normal person would seek to avoid. In my case, the action of breathing in water provided a means to an end. I took a second breath, followed by a third. One by one, I moved through my muscle groups making sure they were relaxed. I reassured them through their instinctual attempts to fight my actions that I was not drowning.

My body, now oxygen starved, began to pass out. Only seconds remained before my mind would fade out of consciousness. I felt myself drift off to sleep, nestled in a bed of cool water perfectly conformed to my body.

Then the gong sounded. A deep, resonating noise reverberated through every waterlogged cell of my body. My eyes snapped open. In place of the depths of Lake Relentia, I saw a beautiful expanse of stars. Thousands upon thousands in a rainbow of color spread in every direction. Reaching out with my mind, I tried to focus on the invisible eddies flowing about me. They lead everywhere. Forward and backward. Here and there. I listened to the flow around me till one called my name.

Without hesitation, I reached out and grabbed at the sound. My hand caught a sliver of the eddy. I shot off and rode the wild surf. It carried me into the star field. We passed many radiant orbs on the way to our destination. Some shown like crystal globes, others like glistening emeralds, and others still like the white-hot blaze of the sun over Relentia.

Eventually, the destination became clear. One star, a deep, blood-red orb remained directly ahead as the others fell behind. The surf slowed till it left me hovering before the great being before me.

Words came. Old, sorrowful, and filled with power and resonance, "Traveler, have you brought me a gift to cool my grief?"

I opened my mouth and began to exhale the water from my lungs. The stream spread out and covered the great being like jewels. The dark inner core of the star brightened. The now intense red fire reached out and wrapped me in its warmth.

The voice resounded through my chest, "Traveler! Your gift is a great blessing. Open your mind to me! And see what it is that I have to show!" The star turned me towards a small marble which grew bigger the longer I looked. "See this world that I protect. There is great beauty, if you're willing to look for it."

We traveled through the clouds and came to alit on a ledge overlooking a unfamiliar mountainous valley.

