

### Waiting in Water

It felt like an anchor of iron that pulled her down wherever she walked. She was overwhelmed. She had to read the boring book. Had to write a paper. Had to finish math homework. Had to turn in missing work. Had to do this. Had to do that. There was always something to do. Something that needed to be done. Something that became a monster.

But not here.

The waves seemed endless. Always they washed up the bank, spreading tiny rivers through the grains of dirt. The ever flowing water would reach the peak of its momentum, and just for a moment... the wave ceased to be. For those few invisible moments, the water clutched onto the shore, gripping with futile grasp, begging to stay above its own body for just a couple more moments. The pleas.. never heard. The desperate peak fell back into its own depression, moaning in frustration.

She gazed out at the lake. The center of the pool seemed completely still as she looked above the water flowing back and forth over her bare feet. Always moving, but never drifting. She gazed at the center, seeing no disturbance. Still, yet flowing. But even as she looked, she could feel the water rising to her feet, tickling her toes, and sinking into the dirt beneath her. It was an enigma.

The lake was isolated from the world. Ringed by tall trees of ashen leaves, it was a sanctuary of the wild. The bank of the pool was nearly nonexistent, covered in wet, dying underbrush. No sunlight brightened the lake, as the sky has morphed into a flowing ocean of grey clouds. A fog closed in around the basin, isolating all but the first ring of trees from the rest of the world. She was alone.

She felt the water tickle her feet again. The lake was silent.. with only one noise. She did not know what it was, but she knew it came from the lake. She peered deeply into the lake, searching for whatever was calling her. Nothing could be seen but the perfectly still surface. No ripples sent minute waves across the expanse. No underwater creature disturbed its tidal abode. There was nothing to be seen.

But it continued to call.

She took one step into the water. Cold, but not freezing. Another step. The sandy dirt underneath erupted around her foot as it pressed into the soft clay. Another. The brisk water rose up to her ankle now. Another. She could feel herself being lowered into the ground. Another. The dirt floor felt like a cushion as it pressed up between her toes. Another. She was to her waist now, feeling the crisp waterline against her skin. She pressed down on her feet, and pushed off onto her belly, floating into the water. She spun around so that her back was submerged, and her face looked up at the misty sky.

She heard the call no more.

She drifted for an eternity. She was completely hidden from the world in this lake of solitude. She didn't have to worry. She didn't have to think. She didn't have to feel. Her mind became empty, and she closed her eyes, embracing the utter peace. Drifting in endless tranquility. She was alone. She was calm. She was happy.

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AIR! She needed air! Her eyes snapped open, stinging as water flowed into them. Air. She saw a hint of light above her. Air. She pumped her arms against the water, kicking her feet valiantly. Air. She felt her lungs empty, and felt her muscles strain as they were denied life. Air! Her lungs demanded her to breathe in, to take in life. Air! She fought them as much as she could. AIR! She could not open her mouth. AIR! The light was closer. AIR! Closer. AIR! CLOSER!

Air. She breathed it into her body, giving herself life as she arched her back, forcing her body to rise above the surface. The air flowed through her, into her lungs, then into each muscle, each organ, each limb, until she was full of it. She kept it inside of her for a moment, scared of letting it go. But her lungs forced it out of her, and she took in another deep breath. In and out. In and out. In and out. Eventually, her breathing became regular.

The lake was alive with sunlight. The water glistened like a field of flowing crystals, and the ripples she had caused washed over them, making waves of diamonds. The ashen trees were lit up by the sun, turned into a bright green shade. The once overcast sky had broken apart to frame a beautiful orb of light as it shone down

from the heavens. Her hair was sparkling with water crystals, and her skin was glowing with the warm sunlight. She took in another breath, and smiled.

She was alive.