

Tale on a music instrument from Turkey

The journey from the reed bed

Once upon a time, there was a faraway reed bed, where there were large patches of reed in shallow, fresh water. It was a habitat for many rare birds as well as some mammals such as otters and beavers. In spring, you could hear the chattering songs of migrant birds and could see spectacular dragonflies from April onwards. In autumn, you could see the arrival of thousands of ducks, geese and swans.

Among those large patches of reed was a young reed who was not quite comfortable with himself. He often compared himself with the other living creatures in the reedbed and thought he was useless and worthless. He thought birds could create joyful sounds which would brighten up the day; otters were perfect for diving and swimming; beavers were very good at creating ponds; and colorful dragonflies could fly at great speed. What about himself! He could not even move. He used to spend his days miserably wishing he had another life and could do more like the others in his habitat.

The young reed's best friend was a beaver. They often had long conversations. The young reed loved to listen to the beaver telling stories about the outer world that he would love to see. The beaver, on the other hand, would listen to the young reed constantly telling how worthless he felt. Although he felt really sorry for the young reed, there was nothing he could do other than listening and trying to understand his friend. He only wished the young reed could one day discover his own self and worth.

On that day while the young reed was listening to the Beaver's stories as usual, the young reed heard some strange noise. He wondered and looked around. The older reeds were cheering up. "What is this noise? and why are you so happy?" asked the young reed to the older ones. "It is the harvest time. Your long journey may begin soon, if you are chosen." they said.

As the young reed was just going to ask what that journey was about, someone picked him up. Everything happened so quickly that the young reed did not even have time to say goodbye to his best friend, the Beaver.

The young reed was taken somewhere where he saw some other reeds. He had to stay there for a long time, almost a year. When he felt really impatient and bored at times, the other reeds would tell him that he had to wait patiently for the good things to happen. But he would not listen to them; he thought that his life would end there. After waiting for almost a year and becoming dry, he went through a series of processes. First, he was kept in oil for some time. He felt stronger after this process. Then, 26 holes were carved on this body with such great care that he did not feel any pain at all. He was transforming into something, but what? The young reed felt different. He was different!

Then, after that miraculous breath blown into the reed, he heard that sorrowful and touching sound it could make. Now the reed was a precious musical instrument called the Ney. Since then, its sound has been giving voice to humans longing for the place they were separated from.