

River the Star Traveler

In an endless universe, where planets spun like shiny gems in the darkness, a small silver ship was flying. It belonged to a boy named River – a traveler among the stars, an explorer of unknown worlds. With eyes shining with curiosity and a heart full of adventure, he explored one planet after another. He saw worlds covered with shining crystals, floating islands in pink nebulae, and planets where trees grew from pure light. Each new discovery brought him joy until one day, his onboard navigation picked up a strange signal. It led him to a planet that was unlike any he had ever seen. It was blue and green, surrounded by a layer of white clouds.

“Strange...,” muttered River as he entered the coordinates to enter its atmosphere. “What could be hiding down there?” He didn’t know that his next step would change his journey forever. For the first time, he was about to encounter a place called Earth. River’s ship descended through the clouds and landed gently on the planet’s surface. As soon as he opened the hatch, he felt the sharp cold. All around him was an endless white world, snow sparkled under the bright sun, and ice floes floated on the surface of a frozen ocean.

“Ugh, it's so cold!” River shivered and pulled his jacket closer around his body. He took a few cautious steps when suddenly he heard a deep but calm voice.

“Welcome to my kingdom of ice and snow,” said a large white bear, who emerged from behind a snowdrift. “I am a polar bear, and this is my home – the Arctic.”

River was fascinated. “How can you live here? It’s so cold!”



The bear nodded. “Nature gave me thick fur and a strong layer of fat that protects me from the freezing temperatures. Plus, I’m a great swimmer and can hunt even under the ice.”

River considered. “So you’re perfectly adapted to life in this frozen world...”

“Exactly. But the Arctic is a fragile place, and climate change threatens it. If the ice keeps disappearing, my home will change... and so will I.”

River looked around and saw that something was growing in the white wasteland. He found small patches of moss and lichens adapted to these extreme conditions. He looked toward the horizon, where herds of reindeer grazed on those small plants. “And what about other animals? Do they live here too?” he asked.

“Yes, in this land you’ll also find other animals that are perfectly adapted to survive,” said the bear. “For example, sea birds that nest on steep cliffs, or seals that emerge from the water to rest on the ice.”

“Thank you, polar bear. Your home is amazing, but it’s really vulnerable.”

The bear smiled at him and slowly stepped closer, as if preparing to say something important.

*„I am a bear, so big and white,
I walk on ice from day to night.
The wind is strong, the air is cold,
but I am strong, brave and bold.*

*No trees, no grass, just snow and stone,
the frozen land is all I’ve known.
I hunt for seals, I swim, I wait,
I live with patience, trust in fate.*



*The nights are long, the sun is low,
the northern lights above me glow.
This icy world belongs to me,
the polar land, so wild and free.“*

And with that, the bear turned and slowly disappeared among the snowdrifts. River returned to his ship, ready to continue exploring this extraordinary planet. His ship lifted off the icy Arctic and headed south.

After some time, it landed in a hot, sun-scorched desert. The endless sand dunes stretched around him, shimmering the heat of the day. "Oh, it's hot!" said River, taking off his hat to feel the breeze. Suddenly he heard a voice, turned around, and saw a camel slowly approaching, loudly singing to himself:

*„I am a camel, strong and tall,
I walk the desert, hot for all.
The sun is bright, the sand is wide,
but I can march with steady stride.*

*No rivers here, no trees so green,
just golden dunes with heat unseen.
The wind is dry, the air is thin,
yet life still finds a way within.*



*But far ahead, what do I see?
an oasis waits for me!
Cool blue water, palm trees high,
a peaceful place beneath the sky.*

*By day it burns, by night it's cold,
the stars above shine bright and bold.
The desert tough, yet wild and free,
this endless land belongs to me. “*

River smiled. “Beautiful song, your home is fascinating.”

“Who are you?”

“My name is River. I never imagined what it's like to live in a place where there's nothing but sand and rocks,”

The camel thought for a moment before replying: “It’s hard, no doubt. But it’s in those moments that you learn how important patience is. The water we can store in our bodies protects us, and we know how to save energy. It’s not about rushing, but about endurance. The desert shows you how to be in harmony with nature.”

River nodded and continued: “Is there anything here besides sand and rocks?”

“The desert is full of life, if you know how to look. It may seem empty, but on hot days there are all sorts of creatures, snakes, scorpions, even birds that can fly long distances to find an oasis where there is plenty of water. They sleep during the day, come out at night and search for food”

River paused and looked out at the endless landscape. “It’s strange. On one side, immense beauty; on the other, harsh survival. I think all of this has opened my eyes,” said River. “Thank you, camel. I never thought the desert could be so . . . alive.”

The camel smiled. “Life always finds a way, if you’re patient and willing to adapt.” With those words, the camel turned and slowly walked back into the sea of sand. River returned to his ship, ready to continue exploring this diverse planet.

The ship lifted off and this time headed east. After some time, it landed in a dense tropical rainforest. When he got out of his ship and looked around, he saw tall trees full of rich greenery; the air was warm and humid. As he walked through the forest, he heard rustling in the treetops. He looked up and saw a large orang-utan swinging among the branches. “Hello, I am the master of these forests,” the orangutan called out. He looked at River and continued:

*"I am an orangutan, strong and free,
the jungle is the place for me.
The trees are tall, the leaves so wide,
a green, wet world on every side.*

*The rain falls down, the rivers flow,
the air is warm, the flowers grow.
The ground is soft with moss and mud,
the jungle thrives with life and blood.*

*The birds fly high, the insects hum,
bright butterflies, they dance and drum.
The vines hang low, the monkeys play,
the jungle wakes at break of day.*

*I swing on branches, high and low,
through emerald leaves, I love to go.*



*This wild, deep world belongs to me,
my home, my life, my canopy."*

River nodded. "Thank you for showing me your home and sharing your story."

And remember: Trees give us the air we breathe, they cool the Earth and hold water. Without them, the world would turn into a dry wasteland. It's important to protect this environment." With those words, the orang-utan returned to the treetops, and River continued his journey, enriched by another experience from this diverse planet. The ship rose from the tropical rainforests and headed to a new destination.

When the ship landed, River immediately felt the change. Instead of cold, he was greeted by a warm breeze. Around him stretched an endless landscape full of tall grasses, glowing golden in the sunlight. The horizon was wide and open, unconstrained by any trees or mountains. He took a few steps, when suddenly something small and brown passed in front of him— quick, sharp-eyed, and as fast as lightning. "Hello!" called River. The creature stopped and stood upright on its hind legs. "Hi, who are you?"

"My name's River and I'm traveling across this planet. And you?"

"I'm a ground squirrel! I live here, in the steppes," the little creature said proudly. "This is my home — a place full of grass, flowers, and life." And then the ground squirrel began to rhythmically recite:

*I am a ground squirrel, small and quick,
I run through grass, so dry and thick.
The steppe is wide, with golden light,
the wind is warm, the sky is bright.*



*I dig my burrow, deep and long,
a cozy home, safe and strong.
The fertile soil, so dark, so rich,
black earth below, where plants will stitch.*

*The grass waves high, the flowers grow,
the river shines, it moves so slow.
An eagle flies so high, so free,
I hide so fast, it won't catch me!*

*The steppe is big, so wild, so wide,
my home, my place, where I can hide.*

River thought for a moment. “Your home is completely different from the Arctic, but still beautiful. It seems like every place on this planet has its own rhythm.”

The ground squirrel nodded. “Exactly! And everything is connected. The earth gives us shelter, food, and water. Without it, we couldn't live.” River looked into the distance. “I'd like to other parts of the world and see how everything connects.”

The ground squirrel smiled. “Then you should continue your journey. But don't forget – every place you visit has a story. Listen to it.”

River smiled back. “Thank you, ground squirrel. I'll remember that.”

After a while, the spaceship landed in a temperate climate zone, where vast deciduous and coniferous forests spread out. The air was fresh and warm, with a gentle breeze rustling through the tree crowns. As River walked through the forest, he heard a rustle in the leaves. He turned around and saw a small squirrel in the trees gathering nuts. The squirrel raised her head, looked at River, and softly said:

*„I am a squirrel, small and quick,
I jump on branches, high and thick.
The forest green, so big, so tall,
with leaves that change in summer and fall.*

*I find some nuts, I dig, I hide,
I store my food, I run inside.
The trees are home, so strong, so wide,
a place to play, a place to hide.*

*Mushrooms grow on forest ground,
red and brown, they can be found.
A fox walks by with silent feet,
its bushy tail and nose so neat.*

*The birds sing songs, the wind is light,
the forest glows in golden light.
This peaceful place, so wild, so free,
the forest home belongs to me. “*



River clapped: “That was beautiful! Your poem perfectly captures the beauty of the forest. Thank you, squirrel.”

The squirrel fluffed her bushy tail and proudly nodded: “Thank you, River! I love my forest very much. It’s the best place in the world – safe, full of tasty nuts and tall trees. But you’re not from here, are you?”

River shook his head. “No, I travel the universe. I’m looking for new landscapes, meeting new friends... Every place gives me something.”

The squirrel hopped closer and looked at him curiously: “So where are you going next?”

River shrugged. “I don’t know. Maybe I’ll let myself be surprised. Do you know any place I should go next?”

The squirrel thought for a moment, looked around her forest, and then smiled: “You know what? I think you should visit the savanna! It’s completely different from here — the trees are different, growing on vast grassy plains where lions, elephants, and zebras roam. The sun burns much hotter than here, but they say the sky is so wide you can lose yourself in it.”

River nodded excitedly. “That sounds amazing! Thank you for the tip. But how do I get there?” The squirrel winked: “Listen to the drums of the wind — they’ll lead you to the heart of Africa.” River smiled: “Sounds like a real adventure. Your forest is beautiful.”

The squirrel playfully waved her paw: “Good luck, traveler! And say hello to the zebras!” He turned around, looked one last time at the green forest, and stepped toward the next adventure...

River climbed down the ladder from his ship and stepped into the tall grass. The sun burned his back, but the wind was warm and pleasant. In the distance, he spotted a black-and-white striped movement — elegant, graceful, with calm, deep eyes. A zebra. She stopped as he approached and looked at him with those deep, calm eyes. “You’re from far away,” she said. “Your scent is different. Strange, but not unfriendly.”

River smiled. “I’m a traveler from space, looking for places that will tell me their story.” The zebra nodded and slowly turned toward the open plain. “Then listen, wanderer,” she said gently

“Here is our story.” And then she began to recite, her voice soft as the wind through the grass:

The savanna glows in golden light,

*with endless grass, so dry, so bright.
The air is warm, the trees stand tall,
but rain is rare and rivers small.*

*The elephant walks with steady pace,
through dusty paths, he knows this place.
He finds cool water, deep and blue,
and splashes high, a shower new.*

*The lion waits in grass so high,
his golden coat blends with the sky.
At dusk he moves, so fast, so strong,
the hunt begins, it won't take long.*

*The giraffe stands where acacias grow,
she eats the leaves from high and low.
She sees the land so vast, so wide,
with rolling plains on every side.*



*The savanna sings with buzzing sound,
where life and freedom both are found.
The land is wild, the sky so bright,
our home by day, our home by night.*

River stood in silence, captivated by the words and the image the zebra had painted. “That is... beautiful,” he said at last. “I never imagined the savanna could have such a gentle soul.”

The zebra smiled — calm and strong, like the earth beneath her feet. “Many see only endless plains, but those who listen will hear the song of life.” “Your soul is like the wind, River. It doesn’t belong to just one place. But perhaps I know where you should go next.” She turned toward the horizon, where the afternoon sun was beginning to blush pink. “Across the sea, where the sun kisses the land and the wind carries the scent of rosemary and lavender, you’ll find a land full of songs. Vineyards, olive groves, and golden hills. And in the treetops — cicadas. They sing all summer, from morning to night, and each one carries the rhythm of the land. If you want to hear the next story, seek them in Spain.” “Cicadas... That sounds like music I’ve never heard.” The zebra smiled: “When you find them, just close your eyes. They will teach you to listen to the sun.”

River nodded, thanked her, and took one last look at the golden savanna. Then he returned to his ship, ready for the next chapter of his journey. And somewhere in the distance... the cicadas were already buzzing. The sun was setting over the limestone hills, and his ship quietly landed among the olive trees. The landscape around was unlike anything he had seen before – dry, fragrant, with stony paths winding between vineyards and lavender. The air was hot, but a fresh breeze danced among the trees.

River stepped out and closed his eyes. Then he heard it – a gentle, steady buzzing that filled the air like music. He followed the sound until he saw a tiny creature sitting on an olive branch. A cicada, shining and gleaming like a drop of summer light.

“Hola, River!” called the cicada cheerfully. “I’ve been expecting you. The wind from the savanna brought me word that a wanderer with an open heart was coming.”

River smiled: “I’m here to listen. Your world smells different. It smells like stories I don’t yet know.”

“Then listen,” said the cicada, lightly swaying on the branch. “This land is not silent. It sings. And I sing with it.” And then she began her song, as rhythmic as a summer day:

*I am a cicada, small and bright,
I sing my song from morning to night.
The sun is hot, the sky is blue,
the air is dry, the breeze is new.*

*The olive trees are short and wide,
with silver leaves that shine with pride.
The grapes grow sweet on vines so long,
the wind joins in my buzzing song.*

*The lavender sways, the pine trees tall,
the scent of herbs is best of all.
The land is warm, so wild, so free,
the Mediterranean belongs to me!*



River stood still, as if the words wrapped around him like a warm evening breeze. “Your song is full of light,” he said softly. “And every word smells like summer.”

The cicada laughed: “Here in the land where the sun sings and the wind whispers old stories, we never forget to listen. We live in the rhythm of nature.”

“Thank you,” said River. “Every place I’ve visited has given me a piece of itself. But here... everything sounds like music.”

The cicada buzzed contentedly and fluttered her wings. “The journey doesn’t end, traveler. To the north, deep forests whisper, and within them hides a creature that moves like a shadow — unseen, but heard in the tension of the wind among the branches... Maybe there you’ll find the next chapter of your path.” The cicada slowly fell silent, and with the wind beneath his wings, River left sun-drenched Spain.

He flew farther and farther north, until the light dimmed, the air cooled, and the horizon turned into a dense, dark green forest. An endless sea of conifers, moss, and quiet calm. This was the taiga. River descended among the trees, whose branches rustled softly, and the ground beneath him gave gently underfoot. The silence here was different than anywhere else — full of expectation, quiet strength. Suddenly, he felt he was being watched. From the thicket, a wolf silently emerged. His eyes glowed in the shadows, and his step was as graceful as a dance. He did not approach threateningly — he moved with dignity. He was the lord of this world.

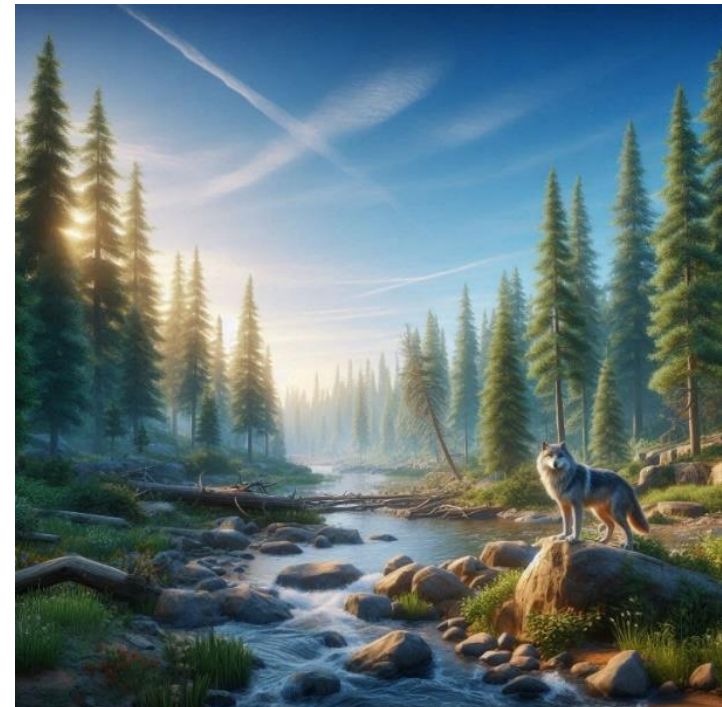
“Welcome to the depths of the taiga,” the wolf spoke quietly but clearly. “Your scent is new. Do you know where you’ve entered?” “The kingdom of silence and shadows,”

River replied with reverence. “I feel like a different language is spoken here.”

The wolf smiled slightly. “Yes. Words do not rule here. Instinct, movement, and the moon rule here.”

And then, as if letting River glimpse his soul, he began to recite softly:

*The taiga wide, with trees so tall,
I hear the birds, I hear them call.
I am a wolf, I run with grace,
through endless woods, I know this place.*



*The air is cool, the ground is dry,
the rivers shine as they pass by.
I hunt for food, I watch, I wait,
moving swift, I trust my fate.
The nights are long, the moon is bright,
my pack runs fast beneath its light.
The taiga wild, so dark, so free,
it is my home, it belongs to me.*

River had goosebumps. This wasn't a song — it was the chant of night, winter, and eternity. "Your wilderness is different," he whispered. "Uncatchable... raw... and beautiful" The wolf stood up and gazed toward the horizon, where a gentle mist began to rise between the trees.

River nodded, his eyes glowing in the twilight.

"Thank you, wolf. You taught me what it means to move in silence." "What will I find in the north?"

The wolf lifted his head and looked to the sky, where the first shadows of the northern lights were beginning to form. "The tundra — and there live many reindeer. They'll teach you what it means to be strong and free. Life there changes every day. Each day is a challenge, but if you want to understand the strength of the wilderness, you must go." River said goodbye and boarded his ship once more.

His journey continued. Below him, the landscape changed — the trees vanished, replaced by flat, open plains covered in snow, rocks, and moss. The silence was nearly absolute. And there, in the middle of the grey, stood a reindeer. His antlers branched like an old tree, his eyes deep and calm. He did not flinch — he simply watched River quietly, as if he had been expecting him for a long time.

"You've come far, wanderer," he said with a soft, firm voice. "Here the trees end. Here begins simplicity — and in it lies strength." River nodded. "This land speaks differently. Cold... but honest."

The reindeer smiled gently. “The tundra isn’t for everyone. But for those who listen, it holds its own verses.” And then, in a calm voice, he recited:

*I am a reindeer, strong and free,
the tundra is the place for me.
No tall trees, just frozen ground,
with rocks and moss all spread around.
The wind is cold, the sky is wide,
white and brown stretch far and wide.
In summer, flowers start to grow,
in winter, all is ice and snow.*

*I dig for lichen, soft and small,
beneath the frost, beneath it all.
The northern lights shine in the sky,
my tundra home, so wild, so high.*



River held his breath. Above them, the northern lights spilled across the sky — veils of green, blue, and pink. “Your land is calm and strong. I feel so... small here, but alive,” he said quietly.

The reindeer nodded. “In the tundra, man is not the master. Here, you’re only a part. And in that... is the answer.”

River listened as the song blended into the tundra’s silence. “This really is a place that’s wild — and yet beautiful,” he said as he looked out over the vast world around him.

The reindeer looked into the distance, where the white tundra met the horizon, and the sky burned with the quiet flames of the aurora. “Your journey has been long, wanderer,” he said calmly. “You’ve seen mountains, forests, deserts, and wilderness... birds that sing, creatures that whisper. Now you’re here — at the edge of the world. But what are you still looking for?”

River took a breath of cold air, full of silence and clarity. The memories of all his encounters came alive inside him — the bear in the Arctic, the camel in the desert, the squirrel in the trees, the zebra in the savanna, the cicada in sun-drenched Spain, the wolf in the taiga... and now the reindeer. Each of them had shown him a piece of truth — about nature, balance, and life.

He was silent for a long time. Then he said quietly: “I thought I was searching for something out there. But Earth... it’s bigger than I ever imagined. So many wonders. So many voices. So many stories waiting for someone to hear them.” The reindeer slowly nodded. “The Earth doesn’t call those who wish to own. It calls those who wish to listen.” River smiled. And for the first time since he landed, he wasn’t thinking about where to go next.

“I’ll stay,” he said simply. “I want to get to know every corner, listen to every voice. Not as a visitor. But as a part of it all.”

At that moment, herds of reindeer passed quietly around them. The sky glowed with colors that no words could describe. River sat down in the snow, closed his eyes, and let the Earth speak to him. And so his journey through the stars ended...

...and a journey across the blue planet began. Not into the distance, but into depth. Not away... but home.