

## **This is a story**

a story about a little stream, a main stream and a wide open sea.  
a story of a past, a present and a future.  
a story with an open mind, an open heart and an open ending...

There is gentleness in this story  
and there is pride and fierce resolve.  
There is disbelief  
and the energy to achieve,  
there is feeling small  
and walking tall,  
whatever happens  
moving on...

There is the voice of reality,  
and a whisper of magic,  
and there is Love.

Yes, Love  
and Hope.

No, no, not the kind of love and hope  
that hushes you to sleep  
without giving it a second thought,  
but the kind that wakes you up  
to create even more  
of what is needed to go on.

To be honest, we are not sure if the story ends well.  
As we all know: some stories do, some stories don't.  
However, the most important thing about this story  
is that it is told.

So, without further ado  
this is how it goes...

Once upon a time  
there was a little stream  
that dreamt of finding a way to join  
the largest river of its time,  
the big big big Main Stream.  
It wanted to immerge in its waters,  
to change its course,  
to flow together to the river mouth  
and add all of its beauty  
to the sea.

This little stream was particularly beautiful  
and as diverse as the many drops in its bedding.  
It was as silent as it was vibrant,  
it was as slow as it was fast,  
it was as colorful as it was silver white,  
it shone as much in the light as in the dark.  
The little stream did not judge  
any of its appearances,  
it enjoyed life  
and saw the wonder of it all.

Life for the little stream was not always easy though.  
It happened to live in a world where the big Main Stream governed land and laws.  
A world where little streams were often disregarded, discriminated, belittled...  
A place full of barriers not always easy for the little stream to travel through.  
The little stream longed for respect and dignity,  
empathy and understanding,  
freedom and connection.  
“Why can't the Main Stream see the richness I can bring to the river and to the sea?  
Why does it stop me from flowing to places  
where I could bring all of my sparkles, my drops,  
my splashing, my murmuring,  
my fluidity, my stuttering,  
my ups, my downs  
and my endless wisdom of how to navigate it all?  
It is unfair.  
It is my right to be part of the whole.  
I am as much water as the Main Stream is.  
There is no reason for me to withhold.  
I should fight for my rights,  
fight for what is right!”

So came the day that the little stream  
did not want to be silent any more.  
It decided to build a boat.  
In all its wisdom it knew  
it couldn't do this alone,  
so it called upon the winds and the woods,  
the moon and the sun,  
it tickled the sky  
and woke up the earth,  
it swayed and swell  
and spoke of its dream,  
until enough of them took note

and did their part.

With the help of all these forces,  
sooner than later the boat was built  
and travel began.  
1 year, 2 years, 10 years went by,  
up stream, down stream,  
on the boat went,  
sometimes getting stuck,  
sometimes going slow,  
sometimes flying swiftly around the bend,  
but always carried by the power of a dream:  
the little streams wish to let its drops flow  
in sync with it all.

As the boat travelled and travelled and travelled,  
through landscapes never seen before,  
remarkable things started to occur.  
The boat became bigger and stronger,  
more colorful and bright,  
even at night a shining light.  
Also the little stream grew  
in beauty and strength,  
meandering steadily for days on end.  
And the sun and the moon,  
the sky and the earth,  
the winds and the woods,  
they watched them go and smiled upon them :  
we are your allies, they whispered,  
please go on!

Finally the boat and the little stream  
– not so little anymore –  
reached the place  
they were hoping for :

a huge huge gate  
with a huge huge sign.  
Main Stream, it said, Accessible for all.

The little stream and the boat sat for a while  
watching the gate  
and the boats passing by.  
“How strange” said the little stream,  
after some time went by,  
“No matter how big I became and how hard I try,

I can't seem to fully enter the waters behind.  
The sign on the gate must be a lie,  
I can only flow through  
a few drops at a time..."

Suddenly the voice of the Main Stream roared:

Little stream.  
There you are.  
What is going on?  
I saw your boat,  
I heard your call,  
I recommended a law,  
made a new vow,  
and created this sign,  
accessible for all.  
Is that not what you have been asking for?

Little stream sighed.  
"Main Stream, it is a start,  
and it brought us here,  
at least we talk.  
But please do understand:  
words alone are not enough.  
How can I add my beauty to the sea,  
if you only accept a drop or two,  
if I can not be fully part of you?"

Main Stream groaned...

"It is hard to change the course of an old river like me...  
It is the past that flows through me,  
in many different ways telling me  
where to go and what to be.  
What lays ahead I can hardly see,  
and there you are, little stream  
telling me about the sea.  
But go on, what do you need from me?"

The little stream took a deep breath and said:  
"I want to stream into you,  
all of me  
every difference, every inch of my quality  
I need your hospitality."

As the little stream spoke,

the boat started waving its colorful flags,  
and tens of drops popped up out of the stream  
all of them adding a different voice:

- We need to turn hope into action
- We do not need heroes, we need ideas
- Let us put our ego to the side
- Together we are stronger
- Unity is our strength
- Let us co-construct
- Side by side
- in all our diversity
- still equals alike
- connected in a web
- here and beyond
- in every city
- in every theatre
- in every company
- in every town
- we are more than just a drop
- we are business
- we are politics
- we should constantly be on your mind

Even more drops joined the choir:

- Let us be creative
- And think before we build
- Help us understand
- Where to go, what to do
- in everyday life
- and in case of emergency
- If we can land on the moon
- then we can also do this
- Do not use force
- Listen to us
- Even if this takes time
- Don't forget about us
- We will twitter and shout

Then a Serbian drop spoke out loud:  
Pristopatsjnost ! Accessibility !  
Jedenakost ! Quality !

And finally a quiet drop that needed some more time to find its words said  
slowly but surely:

“we need to meet  
to understand who we are  
we need to make that shift  
from separating streams  
and excluding drops  
from the way things have always been done  
to including us all  
to becoming one...”

It was silent for a while.  
Then the little stream added quietly but firmly:

“The day we fully flow together  
I should not have to ask for your support  
I should not have to ask for anything anymore  
I am water, just like you  
We are water, through and through...”

The Main Stream had become quiet.  
“He looks tired”, the little stream thought. “He needs me.  
But he does not understand why or how yet.  
I will have to knock on his door again tomorrow.  
And I will.  
I won't stop now.  
This is the time.”

Together they sat and watched the sun go down.  
And they dreamt of a sea  
where many different streams  
from all over the world  
played with the waves  
and many different boats  
unafraid of winds and storms  
sailed safely into the night.

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