

The Brave Elk and The River of Fear

In a lush forest surrounded by snow-capped mountains, there lived an elk named Gary. Gary was known for his strong antlers, swift legs, and his ability to jump over rocks and rivers like no other elk in the herd. But there was something Gary wasn't so sure about: crossing the Great River.

The Great River flowed at the edge of the forest. It was wide, with rushing water that bubbled and splashed against the rocks. The other elk warned Gary about the river, saying, "It's too dangerous! No one should ever cross it."

But Gary was curious. Every day, he would stand at the riverbank, watching the water sparkle in the sunlight, wondering what was on the other side.

One day, a wise old owl named Olive flew down and perched on a branch near Gary. "Why do you look so troubled, young elk?" she asked.

Gary sighed. "I want to cross the river, but I'm scared. What if I slip on the rocks or get swept away by the water?"

Olive tilted her head. "Sometimes, the thing that scares us the most is also what helps us grow. The key is to be brave, but also wise."

Gary thought about what Olive said. He didn't want fear to hold him back, but he knew he had to be smart about it. So, he spent the next few days preparing. He studied the river and found a spot where the water was calmer, and the rocks weren't as slippery. He practiced jumping between boulders near the riverbank to build his confidence.

Finally, the day came when Gary felt ready. He stood at the river's edge, took a deep breath, and leapt onto the first rock. The water rushed beneath him, but Gary stayed steady. He jumped to the next rock, then the next, until—splash!—he made it to the other side!

Gary looked back at the river with a big smile. He had done it! His heart raced with excitement, not just because he had crossed the river, but because he had faced his fear and succeeded.

On the other side, Gary found a beautiful meadow full of fresh grass and flowers. It was a place no other elk had ever seen. Gary realized that the reward wasn't just in crossing the river—it was in being brave enough to try.

When he returned to the herd, they were amazed at his bravery. "How did you do it, Gary?" they asked.

Gary smiled. "I learned that being brave doesn't mean you're never scared. It means you face your fears, even when it's hard. But remember, you also have to be wise and think things through."

From that day on, whenever the elk faced something new or scary, they thought of Gary the Brave Elk and remembered that courage is about doing what's right, even when it feels scary. And in doing so, they discovered new strengths and adventures, just like Gary.