

The Harp with Strings of Longing

Once upon a time,
there was a great forest.
And in the heart of that forest
stood a crumbling castle.
And in the heart of that castle,
a chapel — silent, shadowed, strange.
And in the heart of that chapel,
a harp.

But not an ordinary harp.
This harp had no strings.

Or rather,
its strings appeared only for those
whose longing for the True,
the Beautiful,
and the Good
overwhelmed all else.

When such a Seeker entered the chapel,
the harp awakened.
Strings shimmered into being —
woven not from gut or wire,
but from the very longing of the soul.

And when they played,
they did not merely make music.
They touched something eternal.
Time stopped.
Grief dissolved.
Joy sang.



Finn dreamed of it
before he knew it was real.

In his dream,
he stood before the stringless harp.
Light spilled through the broken dome.

As he reached toward the empty frame,
strings shimmered into being —
lines of living light
drawn from his own chest.

He played.
He wept.
The music was not made of notes,
but of longing fulfilled and unfulfilled,
wound and balm,
loss and beauty.

When he woke,
tears clung to his face.
The music was gone —
but the ache remained.

He could not let it go.



He left his village.
The dream had shown him enough:
the forest,
the castle,
the chapel..

He wandered for years..
At last, he found them..
the forest,
the castle,
the chapel,
the harp.

Exactly as in the dream.

But this time it did not glow.

He reached toward it.
Waited.
Nothing.

He came back the next day.
And the next.
Still nothing.



On the third evening,
while foraging near the forest's edge,
he met a girl.

Her name was Mira.
Her cloak was too thin.
Her eyes bright and lost all at once.

They shared a fire.
Finn told her of the harp.

In the morning, she whispered, pale:

“I dreamed of it.
A harp with no strings.
And then — they came.
Strings of light,
of longing.
I played.”

Finn froze.

She trembled.
“It felt like I was remembering something
since the Dawn of Time.”



He led her to the chapel.
She stopped at the threshold.

“This is it,” she breathed.
“From the dream. Exactly.”

She approached the harp.
The air shimmered faintly —
then stilled.

In the days that followed,
Mira softened.

She hummed forgotten melodies.
Her eyes carried a deeper light.
But the harp remained silent.

And Finn ached with his own unplayed song.



One morning
he found her weeping beside the frame.

“It’s no use,” she said.
“The strings hover,
but they will not settle.
It’s as if the harp knows everything I’ve done.
Everything I’ve ruined.

I’ve failed.
I’ve hurt.
I’ve run when I should have stayed.
I’ve stayed when I should have gone.
I’ve spoken when silence was needed.
I’ve been silent when truth was required.

Maybe I have no worthy song in me at all.”

She buried her face in her hands.
Finn sat beside her, silent.



Days passed.
Meals in silence.
Walks without words.
Glances exchanged, quickly broken.

At last she whispered:

“Maybe I am not afraid of failure.
Maybe I am afraid of being seen.

If I play,
someone might hear the real me.
And turn away.”

Her eyes shone with tears.
But still — unsure.

Finn took her hand.

“The harp doesn’t ask perfection.
Only truth.

Maybe it waits not for your goodness,
but for your longing.

The voice that says you are not enough
is neither True, nor Beautiful, nor Good.
It does not belong to you.
Let it go.”

Mira shook her head.

“I want to believe that.
But something in me won’t let go.
A shadow.
I am afraid to be seen.
Afraid someone will turn away.”

He held her hand.

“Then let it be me.
I see you.
All of you.
And I will not turn away.”

From his satchel
he drew a ribbon —
his mother’s,
the last thing she touched.
His most sacred token of love.

Without hesitation,
he tied it around Mira’s wrist.

The frame shimmered.



Mira sat at the harp.
She raised her hands.

And one by one,
threads of light appeared.

Strings of longing.

She played.

Music rose —
mystical and visceral.
It sang in her bones,
her breath,
the very rhythm of her blood.

The chapel pulsed with it.
The rafters leaned close to listen.

Finn, smiling through tears,
knew the harp was not yet his to play.
But he had helped Mira
unlock her own song.

And in that moment,
that was music enough.



When the final note shimmered into silence,
Mira trembled.
Finn kissed her forehead,
held her close
as the last strings of light dissolved.

For the longest Now
he was content
to rest with Mira
in her moment of opening.

— *William Zeitler*
2025 May 19

© 2025 William Zeitler. Originally published at: GrailHeart.com

