

Once upon a time there was a deep and wide forest inhabited by an abundance of magical dancing fairies. The trees there were tall and wide-limbed and cast long shadows over the woods and glades around, sometimes obscuring the sky and sometimes creating inviting pools of light on the mossy earth. Through the centre of the forest ran an ancient path which described a clear and unmissable passage through the woods. It meandered and twisted in its timeworn course from one end of the forest to the other, never losing its way and never letting the many creatures who followed it lose theirs. Certain bends in its progress were covered by fallen leaves and in some places the occasional branch lay across it's way, but its steady line was never hidden from sight and never, if one kept to it's twisting and turning passage, would one find oneself lost in the shadows of the trees.

Sometimes she would become so enraptured by the music of the forest that, in some of her movements and shapes, her toe would unknowingly step just off the path and the other Fairies would invariably gasp when they witnessed it. Hardly noticing, she would then draw it back in, and spin off again in her dance among the butterflies and buzzing bees.

The other Fairies and Sprites would always stay safely on the path, sensibly heeding their elders' warnings, and when they were tired of leaping and cavorting around the woods, they would sit themselves down on stumps and mounds of leaves to watch their sister still dancing her endless dance, oblivious to their gazes, and untiring in her leaping and her twirling.

It happened one afternoon, when the sun was casting hypnotic patterns through the branches above, that from somewhere out of sight, a new and unheard music reached the delicate ears of those magical creatures. It began as a flute but then turned into a pipe. It moved like a drum but then pulsed like a stamp. The music reached high and yet still rumbled down low and it moved them all as it filtered to them so invitingly from its origin unknown.



The fairies and sprites glanced around for the source of this enchanted music. Their little feet were tapping and their shoulders swayed without them knowing. Some of them forgot their tiredness and drew themselves up again to dance one last time before heading back to their hollows and one or two lay still with their heads and ears to the ground, drinking in the rhythms and absorbing the vibrations through the roots and earth beneath them.

