



Lace

“Catch!”

A plethora of voices shouted from outside. Elizabeth watched with great intent. She wished she could be there.

“Elizabeth, focus!” The shrill voice of her grandmother had startled her immensely. It was at that moment Elizabeth remembered she was supposed to be practicing piano, and not staring out the window.

“Elizabeth,” her grandmother lectured, “You are a very fortunate girl to have the privileges you have. Not everyone’s father happens to be mayor of such a well-off town. You must not abuse it.”

“But Grandmother, can’t I go out to play. It will only be for a little while and-“

Grandmother sucked in a big breath and clasped her hands together. “Elizabeth! You can’t mean that! All those children are at a much lower status than us. Some of them could be pick-pockets or criminals! Besides, you would get that new, lacey dress of yours all soiled. “

Elizabeth sighed. “Grandmother, they are children, just like me.”

“No! I will not hear of it! Just practice your piano like a well behaved child should.”

Later that afternoon Elizabeth was staring out the window yet again. This time she saw three girls playing Double Dutch. She yearned to be out there with them. It seemed like such fun and quite a challenge.

One of the girls did a cartwheel in between the ropes. Elizabeth burst out laughing, amused. She thought the girls were very talented and wished she could do something as daring as that.

When she laughed the girl in the middle tripped and the other two looked up in surprise. Quickly they gathered their ropes and ran off towards the direction of the river. Elizabeth sighed. She wanted so much to be their friend. Suddenly she had an idea.

“Wait for me!” she shouted. She skipped over the rocks just as she had as a little girl. Although Elizabeth noticed the rocks were a bit slippery, she pushed the thought to the back of her head. *I will finally get a chance to play with the other children. Perhaps I can even be normal.*

She slipped and fell into the river. Since it was April the river was unusually deep. Her heavy, lacey dress dragged her down, down, down. She couldn't swim. Her lungs were burning, gasping for air. Suddenly, everything went black.

When she awoke Elizabeth didn't feel quite herself. Then she gasped. Her legs were gone from under her dress! She couldn't believe it. She passed a hand through where her legs should have been. A tear slid gently down her cheek. And then another. She reached up to wipe it away. Instead of soft flesh there was hard plaster. Her face had been replaced with a mask of some sort.

More tears started to pour down her mask of a face. Then she heard voices and laughter of children. She remembered why she had come to the river in the first place. She realized that now that she was a ghost she could finally play with the other children.

I have finally gotten what I wanted. I am free. And she floated off in the direction of laughter.