

“The Rose River Fairy” by Dave Lines



“Once upon a time, there was a little fairy rock who lived in the Rose River near the tiny village of Syria in Madison County, Virginia --- not that it mattered a great deal to the little fairy rock what the name of the village was or the name of the county or even that it was in a state. You see, the little fairy rock had been around for a very long time --- a very long time indeed. In fact, the little fairy rock had been created many millions of years ago deep inside what are now called the Appalachian Mountains. So the little fairy rock had seen its share of events and changes. Oh my! What **BIG CHANGES** the little fairy rock had seen! The mountains in which the little fairy rock had begun its existence were much larger than they are today --- **MUCH** larger and **MUCH** taller. Well, as everyone knows, time has a way of changing things. Rain falls; some runs off; some causes erosion; some of the rain seeps into the soil and into the rocks; freezing water inside the rocks causes cracks to begin; big rocks break into little rocks; the rocks that were on top of the mountain eventually fall further down the mountain --- and the process repeats itself --- over and over and over. For millions of years. Big mountains become small mountains.

And that, my friends, is exactly how the little fairy rock began its journey from inside the mountain. The journey came in many starts and stops. Some moves were only a few millimeters --- some a few feet --- and when a big earthquake or a roaring flood came, the little fairy rock sometimes moved quite a distance. And the time between moves varied greatly --- from as little as every few years to as long as thousands of years. And conditions for the little rock between moves were different --- always different. Sometimes the little rock was buried deep beneath dirt and other rocks where it was always dark and cold. Often, for centuries at a time, the little rock remained buried and never saw the sunlight. But when it was very, very lucky, the little fairy rock would land right on top of the ground where it could experience days and nights and winters and summers and falls and springs. It liked springtime the best. Definitely springtime.



One day, the little fairy rock fell down into a tiny stream. It was a nice stream and it had lots of clean water. That stream became larger when it joined other streams. And before long, many streams joined together to become a river --- the Rose River. The river had lots of water and it flowed pretty fast and when it rained at great deal in a short time, the water flowed very fast. On those occasions, the current flowed fast enough to pick up small rocks and move them quickly downriver. If it rained hard enough for long enough, the river would flood and the water flowed so strongly that even very large rocks would be swept away. Of course, as you can imagine, these floods were pretty scary for the little rock fairy. Huge rocks were smashing into other rocks everywhere. These floods did not happen often, but when they did --- watch out! Everything changed in a short time. The water became muddy and filled with debris like uprooted trees and rocks could move a long way.

The little rock fairy remembered lots of floods, but the flood on June 27, 1995 was a real doozy. It rained over 30 inches in just a single day. The little rock fairy overheard people say that flood was a 500 or a 1,000 year event --- which meant that it only happened once every 500 or more years. Well, that flood certainly changed everything for the little rock fairy because it was swept completely out of the Rose River into the Robinson River.



And wouldn't you know, it landed right on top of a gravel bar.

Of course, the Rose River and the Robinson River were also the home of a whole host of rocks and these rocks were of many different varieties. The little rock fairy was a very observant sort. The little rock fairy noticed that sometimes people would pick up some of the other rocks and toss them into the river. And sometimes people would take them away. As a matter of fact, the little rock fairy noticed that the rock variety called “unakite” seemed to be a favorite. And people sometimes picked up a rock called “blue quartz”. There was another one called “metabasalt” – a funny looking rock that was made of maroon colored jasper with yellow-green epidote scattered throughout. That made the little rock fairy a bit jealous because the little rock wondered why it was never picked.

Well, it just so happened that unbeknown to the little rock fairy, a group of people, who called themselves the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club, planned a field trip to the Robinson River where they hoped to find unakite and blue quartz and other rocks. And you know what? These folks --- nine of them --- Dave, Rich, Joe, Ralph B., Paul and his wife Linda, John P., John B. and his son Carlos --- all came to the very same gravel bar where the little rock fairy was sitting right on top. They were a very enthusiastic bunch and, as soon as they arrived, they started looking at the rocks on the gravel bar. They immediately began picking up rocks. They loved rocks. And there were rocks everywhere. All kinds of rocks. They were so excited about finding rocks that it was difficult to get them to stand still and look at the camera long enough to get a group picture. But they finally did.

By the way, the weather that Spring morning in May of 2016 was gorgeous --- sunny and bright --- and warm enough, but not too warm. It was just right. The little rock fairy was also excited to see so many people that loved rocks. “Perhaps, this time, someone will find --- and keep --- me”, thought the little rock. But the little rock fairy, was also a worried, because he heard someone say, “That one is a leaverite --- just leave ‘er right there!” The little rock fairy was very concerned --- “What if they decide I am just a leaverite?”

The weather forecast that day said that thunderstorms with rain and strong winds were going to come about mid-day, so, by noon, everyone had finished looking and started comparing what they had found. There was a good deal of unakite and metabasalt found and Joe found a very large piece of blue quartz. Everyone found some good rocks --- even the two new pebble pups --- John B. and Carlos --- found some good ones. In fact, they did super.



But you know what? The neatest rock was just a little one. Paul and Linda found it. It had a “face” on it --- two red eyes made of red jasper.

And a little circular red mouth --- like someone saying "ooooo".

[* This story might sound like a fairy tale, but the events recorded are all true.]

