

The Village Beyond the River

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A. Rowan

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Dedication

For readers who keep the light on.

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About the Author

CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1: The Last Ferry

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Chapter 5: A Door Without a Room

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Chapter 6: The Last Ferry

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Chapter 9: The Orchard Wall

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The ferry arrived before the fog had decided where the river ended. Mara stood at the rail with the brass key in her pocket and watched the village appear one roof at a time. Nobody on the landing waved, although three people had come to meet the boat.

At the inn, the clocks disagreed by seven minutes. The woman behind the desk noticed Mara comparing them and turned the smallest face toward the wall. She said the room had been kept exactly as requested, then would not say who had made the request.

Rain began after supper, a careful tapping against the glass. Mara opened the ledger on the narrow desk and found her own surname written in a hand she recognized from childhood. The date beside it was next Thursday.

She read the line twice. Downstairs, a chair crossed the floor, paused, and crossed it again. The key in her pocket had warmed against her palm, though the room was cold enough to cloud her breath.

Morning cleared the roofs but not the question.

The baker remembered her mother, the ferryman remembered the key, and the librarian remembered a door that the council had removed from every plan of the town. Each person stopped speaking at the same part of the story.

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By evening, the answer had changed the question.

CHAPTER 10

Chapter 10: A Door Without a Room

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Acknowledgments

This demonstration story was written for Coverfairy's public formatting tests.

About the Author

A. Rowan is a fictional byline used for reproducible production examples.