

- Summary of The Day The River Spoke

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The story "The Day The River Spoke" by Kamala Nair is about a young girl named Jahnavi who lives in a coastal village in India. Jahnavi dreams of going to school and learning about the world, but her family does not allow her to attend. One day, while sitting by the river and crying, she hears a mysterious murmuring voice, which turns out to be the River itself speaking to her. The River encourages Jahnavi to be brave and try to go to school. With the River's support, Jahnavi gathers courage and manages to attend school, where the teacher promises to help her continue her education. Jahnavi dreams of becoming a teacher herself one day, to help other girls in her village learn. The story highlights themes of courage, education, and the importance of following one's dreams.

### Key Elements

- **Characters:** Jahnavi (the young girl), the River (a personified natural element), Jahnavi's family, the teacher.
- **Setting:** A coastal village in India, near a river and a school.
- **Theme:** The importance of education, especially for girls; courage to overcome obstacles; the connection between nature and human life.
- **Plot:** Jahnavi's desire to go to school, her conversation with the River, her eventual success in attending school.

### Textual Evidence

Jahnavi says, "I want to go to school. I want to learn to read like Ettan and Meena." The River replies, "Seems to me little girls can do as much as little boys." The teacher says, "If you really, really want to come to my school, Jahnavi, we'll talk to your father about it." These quotes show Jahnavi's determination and the support she receives.

## Solved Example

**Question:** Why was Jahnavi scared to go to school initially?

**Answer:** Jahnavi was scared because she thought the other children would chase her out and she was not used to being in school. She was also worried about being accepted since she had never attended before.

## Practice Set

### Level 1 – Easy

- Who is Jahnavi?
- What does Jahnavi want to do?
- Who spoke to Jahnavi by the river?

### Level 2 – Moderate

- Describe Jahnavi's feelings when she first heard the River speak.
- What advice did the River give Jahnavi?
- How did Jahnavi's family react to her desire to go to school?

### Level 3 – Challenging

- Explain the significance of the River as a character in the story.
- Discuss the theme of education and gender in the story.

- Analyze Jahnavi's transformation from fear to courage.

## Answer Key

- **Level 1 Answers:** Jahnavi is a young girl who wants to go to school. The River spoke to her by the riverbank.
- **Level 2 Answers:** Jahnavi was startled and scared but curious when she heard the River. The River advised her to be brave and try to attend school. Jahnavi's family was initially hesitant but later supportive after the teacher spoke to her father.
- **Level 3 Answers:** The River symbolizes nature's support and encouragement, representing a guiding voice for Jahnavi. The story highlights the importance of education for girls and challenges traditional gender roles. Jahnavi grows from a scared girl to a confident student, showing personal growth and determination.

## Quick Reference

- **Jahnavi:** Protagonist, a young girl who wants to study.
- **The River:** Personified voice encouraging Jahnavi.
- **Theme:** Education, courage, gender equality.
- **Setting:** Coastal village, riverbank, school.

## Glossary

- **Splashed:** Fell in drops, making a sound.
- **Slithered:** Moved by sliding from side to side.
- **Murmuring:** Speaking in a low voice.
- **Startled:** Surprised suddenly.
- **Thicket:** A dense group of bushes and trees.
- **Shrieked:** Made a high-pitched sound.
- **Rustle:** Light sound made by leaves rubbing against each other.
- **Conspiratorially:** Secretly or in a whispering manner.
- **Clump:** A small group of trees growing together.
- **Rattling:** Noise made by shaking things.
- **Catamaran:** A type of boat with two parallel hulls.
- **Wailed:** Complained loudly or cried out.

