

The Girl and the Moon Deer



Ebru Mina TOMURCUK

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Lily lived in a little cottage at the edge of the forest. Every night, she watched the sky from her window. She loved the moon most of all, especially when it was big and round and full. On those nights, the forest seemed to whisper secrets. Lily always wondered what secrets it held.



One full-moon night, Lily put on her sky-blue dress with white daisy embroidery and her yellow knitted cardigan. She tied her red ribbon in her wavy chestnut hair and stepped outside. The moonlight made a silver path through the trees. Lily followed it, curious and brave, her brown boots crunching softly on the leaves.



Deep in the forest, Lily saw a shimmer of silver. A deer stood in a clearing, its coat glowing softly like moonlight. Its antlers were tipped with pearl light, and tiny star-like speckles dotted its back. Around its neck hung a moonstone on a woven grass cord. Lily gasped. 'Hello,' she whispered. The deer's pale blue eyes blinked gently.



The deer stepped closer, shy but curious. 'I am the Moon Deer,' it said in a soft voice. 'I only come out when the moon is full.' Lily smiled her gap-toothed smile. 'I'm Lily,' she said. 'I'm glad you came out tonight.' The deer's starry back twinkled. From that night on, they met every full moon.



They played hide-and-seek among the ferns and told stories under the stars. Lily brought apples, and the Moon Deer showed her secret paths. They laughed at the fireflies and counted the moon's craters. Each full moon, their friendship grew, and Lily's freckled cheeks glowed with joy. The forest felt like a second home.



One night, the Moon Deer was not in the clearing. Lily searched and found it standing still, its head bowed. 'My moonstone is gone,' it said sadly. 'I lost it while leaping through the trees.' The deer's glow seemed dimmer. Lily took a deep breath. 'Don't worry,' she said. 'I promise I will help you find it.'



The Moon Deer looked at Lily with trust in its pale blue eyes. 'It shines like a tiny moon,' it said. 'But without it, I feel lost.' Lily patted its silver neck. 'We'll search together,' she said. 'Where did you last see it?' The deer pointed its pearl-tipped antlers toward the dark part of the forest. 'Near the old oak tree.'



They set off through the forest, following the moonlight that filtered through the leaves. Lily's red ribbon bobbed as she walked. The Moon Deer's starry speckles twinkled like tiny lanterns. 'Do you see it?' Lily asked. 'Not yet,' said the deer. 'But I'm glad you're here.' They walked side by side, listening to the hooting owls.



At the old oak tree, they searched among the roots and fallen leaves. Lily got down on her knees, her daisy dress brushing the moss. 'Here's a shiny pebble!' she cried. But it was just a wet stone. The Moon Deer sighed. 'We'll keep looking,' Lily said. 'Trust me.' The deer nodded, its antlers catching the light.



They crossed a stream, hopping from stone to stone. The Moon Deer slipped, and Lily caught its neck. 'I've got you,' she said. The deer nuzzled her cheek. 'Thank you, Lily.' They walked on, helping each other over logs and around brambles. With every step, Lily felt braver, and the deer seemed less sad. Their trust grew like a sturdy vine.



Suddenly, a tiny glimmer caught Lily's eye. Under a hawthorn bush, something sparkled. 'Look!' she cried. The Moon Deer hurried over. There, nestled in the grass, was the moonstone, shining softly. 'You found it!' the deer said. Lily picked it up gently. 'We found it together,' she said, tying it back onto the grass cord.



The Moon Deer's glow returned, bright and warm. It nuzzled Lily's shoulder. 'I was afraid I'd lost my magic forever,' it said. 'But you helped me find it.' Lily hugged its neck. 'Friends help each other,' she said. The moonstone gleamed on its chest, and the deer's starry back sparkled brighter than ever. The forest seemed to hum with happiness.



That night, they sat together in the clearing, watching the moon. 'You kept your promise,' said the Moon Deer. 'You trusted me, and I trusted you.' Lily smiled. 'And we found it,' she said. 'Because we worked together.' The moonstone glowed softly, and the deer's antlers shone with pearl light. Their friendship felt as big as the sky.



From then on, every full moon, Lily met the Moon Deer in the forest. They shared apples and stories and laughter. The moonstone hung safely around the deer's neck, a reminder of their adventure. Lily's freckled face often broke into a gap-toothed grin. She knew that trust and kindness could light up the darkest night.



The Moon Deer taught Lily to listen to the forest's whispers. 'The moon sees everything,' it said. 'And she saw how you helped me.' Lily looked up at the silvery moon. 'I think she's smiling,' she said. The deer nodded. 'Because you are a true friend.' They sat close, and the moonlight wrapped around them like a cozy blanket.



And if you ever wander into the forest on a full-moon night, listen closely. You might hear a girl's laughter and the soft steps of a silver deer. They are out there, sharing secrets and shining bright. For when you trust a friend and help them, your friendship can shine as bright as the moon.