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The Moon Lady's Daughter

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Once upon a time, there lived a King and Queen who had no children, and so the Queen prayed that a fairy might come to her and bring her a baby girl, for the castle was lonely without the voices of children in its great halls.

One night, the Queen was awakened by a bright light shining in her room, and on a moonbeam stood a fairy.

"Good Queen," said the fairy, "our Queen has sent me to tell you that your prayer will be answered, but only on one condition."

"Tell me what it is," said the Queen, sitting up in her bed. "I will grant anything to your Queen if only she will send me a baby girl."

"There is only one baby girl the Queen can send you," said the fairy, "and that is a moon baby, which can only stay on the earth till the Moon Mother calls her back. Sometimes the Moon Lady will let her children stay many years, and sometimes only for a short time. Are you willing to have the moon baby sent to you even if she stays only a little while?"

"Oh yes," said the Queen. "I will be grateful for only a few years of happiness. Tell your Queen I accept the condition; only send me a baby girl."

The next morning, when the Queen awoke, there in the bed beside her lay a dainty baby girl.

In her great joy, the Queen forgot to tell the King of the fairy visitor, and so he knew nothing of the Moon Mother or that his little daughter was a moonbeam child.

The Princess grew up to be a beautiful girl, and everyone who beheld her loved her.

Suitors came from far and near to ask for her hand; there were princes and kings, but none of them would the Princess marry.

At the end of the castle grounds stood the gardener's cabin, and there lived the gardener's son too, and to him had the Princess given her love, all unknown to the King or Queen.

The gardener's son was a handsome lad and had loved the Princess when she

was a little girl, and they had played together in the castle gardens.

When the King and Queen learned of their daughter's love for the boy of lowly birth, they would not listen to her but told her she was to marry a husband worthy of a Princess; and as for the gardener's son, they ordered that he be made a prisoner in a tower of the castle until the Princess had married and gone away to a castle of her own to live.

Of course, the Queen long before had forgotten all about the fairy or the Moon Mother, and even when she did remember, she was sure she had dreamed it all; so no thought of the Princess being taken from her entered her mind.

One night, after the gardener's son was locked in the tower, the Princess was sitting by her window, weeping and looking toward the tower which held her lover.



The moon was shining very brightly, and the Princess looked at the Moon Lady and stretched out her arms. "Moon Lady," she cried, "you can see my lover and touch him. Oh, help me to see him again!"

The Moon Lady smiled at the Princess, and from her big shining seat, she sent a moonbeam path straight to the Princess's window, and a fairy appeared before her.

"Your mother has sent me for you," said the fairy. "It is time for you to return to her. Come!"

The Princess followed the fairy straight up to the Moon Lady's throne.

"I am your mother, child," said the Moon Lady, "and you are unhappy. Tell me what is making you so sad."

"My lover has been taken from me!" cried the Princess. "And I cannot live without him! If you are really my mother, give me my lover and make me happy once more."

"Moonbeam children cannot live as mortals do," said the Moon Lady, "but, my child, I will do all I can to make you happy. You shall go to your lover, and if he is willing to change his form for love of you, you shall have your lover every time I take my place in the sky."

The Princess agreed, and on a moonbeam path, she visited her lover in the tower, who gladly consented to become anything as long as he could have her with him part of the time.

The Moon Lady changed the lover into a lake in the mountains, and on the nights when the moon is shining, the little Moonbeam Princess hurries to her lover, where she stays until the morning light calls her back to her mother.

The lake is called the Silver Lake of the mountain because it looks like a sheet of silver in the moonlight, but it is really the love of the Moonbeam Princess and her lover which sheds its glory over the lake, making it shine like silver in the moon's soft light.

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