



Far Away Lights

Grace Moreton

Fable

High up in the skies above the newly formed Earth, the Mother of the world watched her creation from her nighttime castle. It was invisible to the tiny creatures below, in fact, it looked like a blue-purple-black canvas stretching as far as the eye could see to them, lit only by a changeable moon that streaked across the world each night. They were grateful for the Moon during the dark hours, its soft gentle light illuminating their way as they hunted prey or hid from predators or talked to each other quietly in their shelters, or gathered firewood- it was an extremely useful thing to have after all- but there always came one night in twenty-eight where they were afraid. Afraid of the pain and loss that would follow as the nocturnal creatures took what they wanted and they had no way of fighting back. At this time the Moon would take his well-deserved rest behind the warm glow of his father the Sun and humanity would hide away in fear.

So the Mother watched, holding her divine breath as she waited to see which of her children would make it through the black night until dawn broke and showed her the aftermath. Her tender gaze landed on a young child standing alone in the red light of the rising sun beside her home looking blankly haunted. The mother furrowed her brows in concern, the blue of her eyes overtaking the black as her stare found the little one's pain; in the dead of the night while her parents were sleeping something had come and dragged them away while she had slept on the next room. The distressed trail they left led her to the woods but the child refused to go in, instead, one of the other people from the small huts gathered at the edge of a river took her in leaving the Mother high up above with tear-stained cheeks. She scanned the rest of her creation, from the lowest bug to the tallest mountains and found that the empty night sky caused grief in all of it in some way or another. Wolves got lost from their packs, birds crashed mid-flight into trees, the trees drooped from the lack of nourishing light and humans couldn't find the kindling to light their protective fires. It was then that the

goddess decided enough was enough she had to do something.

For the next twenty-seven days, the Mother gathered resources from all parts of her creation and beyond. She visited the Father in his blinding fortress and gathered some of the life-giving light and warmth it held into a small jar. Next, she visited the Moon and asked him to temper it into a form that the creatures below would be able to see without pain. He was hesitant at first, he thought she was trying to replace him because he needed to take a day off now and then, but after she reassured her first child that she was trying to make things easier for him he agreed to do just that. He combined some of his changeable nature with his father's light and made a flickering pale white flame that could be held in the hand.

"As long as I am in the sky more than I am not, they will never go out." He promised and gave his mother a kiss farewell as she visited the Earth and where her feet touched the ground, power swam down into the roots of the world and made sanctuaries for her children to find once she returned to the heavens. It took her a while to coax the mighty whales from the depths of the oceans, their homes were a very long way below the surface of the water yet they followed the harmony of her song all the same. She asked them to give her some of their knowledge- for whales are very wise creatures and no matter how far they roam they always find their way back home- so that she could give their knowledge of what the world needed and where to her lights. In exchange, they asked for one thing from her and that was a fragment of her voice so that they could always track their loved ones among the waves and roaring seas. This is how the whales got their lonely songs.

Finally, her task complete, she went home to her nighttime castle and poured all of her ingredients into an enormous bowl before her throne and added a silky white strand of her hair into the mix. The change was immediate. The mixture began to froth and boil as a scent that sent hopeful wonder coursing through the goddess, flooded the throne room in a billowing cool cloud. From the heart of the bowl, a figure began to grow increasing in strength and beauty and the sides of the vessel groaned in pain as they were being steadily forced apart further than their natural means. An enormous crack sounded throughout the hall as a foot and then a leg stepped out of the ruined cauldron and her bright daughter stood before the Mother in her full glory. No man would ever see the first star of the heavens in this way again once she took her place on the evening canvas but for now, her shining radiance on the blackest night turned the world away from the shadows up to the joyous new ruler of the twilight skies.

"Welcome my child," her mother said lovingly. "You are as beautiful as I hoped you would be." Her silent child bathed in pale iridescent droplets wiped the hot happy tears from her face with a dazzling smile. "I'm so sorry my dear, but they need you now," The sniffing goddess gestured to the curious mortals below and stifled a sob

when her daughter nodded gently. She made her promise to return with the first light of a new day, and the Mother watched her newest and most captivating creation take flight across the night.

The opportunists and hunters below shrank back from their prey, the lost found their way back and the trees spread their branches in adoration as the first star danced her way across the world; the droplets on her skin span away landing in the skies in clusters and shapes birthing new stars that would be named by the appreciative denizens below, lighting up the world in sporadic glittering formations. Once she found she could dance no more and the darkness was beginning to turn into the blueish shade of the morning she came to rest in a ship above the southernmost reaches of the world and dwells there still. That next morning once the Father cartwheeled merrily bringing the daylight in, her mother gave her a name- Carina, the Ship of the Skies – and this is how we got the stars to light our way in the world.

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