



The Owl and the Moonstar

Written by Kirsi Salonen © 2014

Once in a lifetime, it happens that you encounter a memory. A living thing that is as near and real as the patterns and lines on your palm. The funny thing is that despite the extreme rarity of this encounter, people rarely remember meeting this particular being.

This is a story about how an old bird, who had lost its flight ability and even his sight, met his memory, which he had simply named Moonstar. It had been the only glimmer he had seen in his entire life, and that was all he could ever talk about before his days were over. But let's not get ahead of ourselves, first we must tell about his wings and vision, which he held both so dear.

This bird, was just a normal night owl, he was used to take life slowly, watching the woods below him through the hole of his tree. Sometimes he stretched out his wings, brushed them carefully with his beak and took solitary flights around the woods, checking if there were easy prey available. The little mice and moles rarely ever saw him coming, since he was a very wise and knowledgeable owl.

But one evening, the wind felt colder than usual, and particularly chilling, the old owl fluffed his feathers and wrapped himself as a tight ball on his favourite branch and wondered to himself what might have caused such a sudden breeze. It was early autumn and the leaves had yet barely received any of their golden hues.

”It must be the two-legged one's fault. Nothing else could bring

an early winter to my forest,” it mumbled quietly. Then he fluffed his feathery blanket again and was about to turn around and scoff into his treehole, but then something else caught his sharp eyes.

A faint glimmer amidst the trees. A lingering.. something. A curious thing that shouldn't be. The woods around him sighed heavily, but the glimmer seemed to stay still.

The old owl had a very careful nature, he didn't frighten easily, usually he just settled to observe things around him and let them be as they were. As long as his tree remained untouched, very few things could ever bother him.

The evening deepened, until became night. The stars above shone their familiar shine on the leaves and tops of the ancient trees that were ever delighted for that nightly glow. The starlight wrapped the whole forest into its ethereal silver gown, which never had lost its power to make that forest particularly precious. A spot where the old owl lived, had its silver shine too, and he took great pride of chatting with the stars every night, as it was just as comforting that the stars never shared their secrets of the wicked two-legged creatures, that only seemed to look down rather than up, cut down rather than raise up, or destroy instead of preserving things as they were. The starlight was his silent companion, that always gently gave him just enough light so that he could see the calm night forest clearer. And moreso, the night light gave him the freedom to fly unhindered, while the rest of the world preferred sleeping.

”Whooo's there?” hooted the owl.

The forest didn't answer.

Then, softly, a faint tingling was heard behind the birch trees, where the light source still lingered.

The owl had learned not to give in to curious things that he didn't understand right away. This was definitely one of them and he shook his head and again fluffed his feathers.

”Two-legged trinkets, nothing more”, it mumbled.

The trees rattled suddenly near the light and something crawled out from the bushes. It moved like some injured animal, still it looked strange just like a two-legged. And it glowed like its skin bathed in a constant light, in blue, in cyan, in a deep ocean green covering, that seemed strangely alive.

The owl squinted his eyes, it felt uneasy for him to look at this sight, but his reluctant curiosity grew the closer the being crawled towards him.

It was indeed a two-legged, but without any covering like they usually all have. This one had nothing but skin.

It was a female...and it whimpered like a deer of the forest. A very young deer. Its limbs were very thin and as the moonlight touched it with its cold but gentle rays, she looked almost transparent.

The old owl stood there on his branch, looking at the frail creature for a

long time, in silence. He concluded that it didn't seem to go much further at this rate, it looked very weak, maybe dying, and it was shivering, and tried to cover herself with all sorts of vegetation, despite she couldn't get up and walk.

"Who-whooo are you?" asked the owl finally again, with a little more confidence, very sure that he had all figured out the behaviour of this mysterious two-legged.

Then the being startled, quickly looked up and met the large eyes of the owl.

Like two balls of direct, violent sunbeams hit him out of the blue, and the poor creature of the night, who had spent his entire life in that dark place, on his trusted safe tree, where he could see everything he needed to see, had no idea what happened. Strange flashing and piercing gaze dazzled him with such immediacy and made him blink and blink until he lost his balance and fell down on the ground, wings fluttering frantically. After recovering from the fall, he got himself up and looked around, but all he could see were hundreds of spots in his eyes, white hot spots, and that drove him to panic. He couldn't see a thing, not even his ever-familiar hometree! A desperate screech came out as he didn't know what to do.

More rustling around him. The bushes moved somewhere closeby, he crouched down and waited with a growing sense of uncontrollable hysteria inside him. The spots blinkered in his eyes without cease, his whole world had turned into a blinding light show. He had never been so scared and lost and vulnerable. Any predator could get him there if they wanted to eat him now, the ground was the most terrible place to be for any owl. He had to get back to the trees right now!

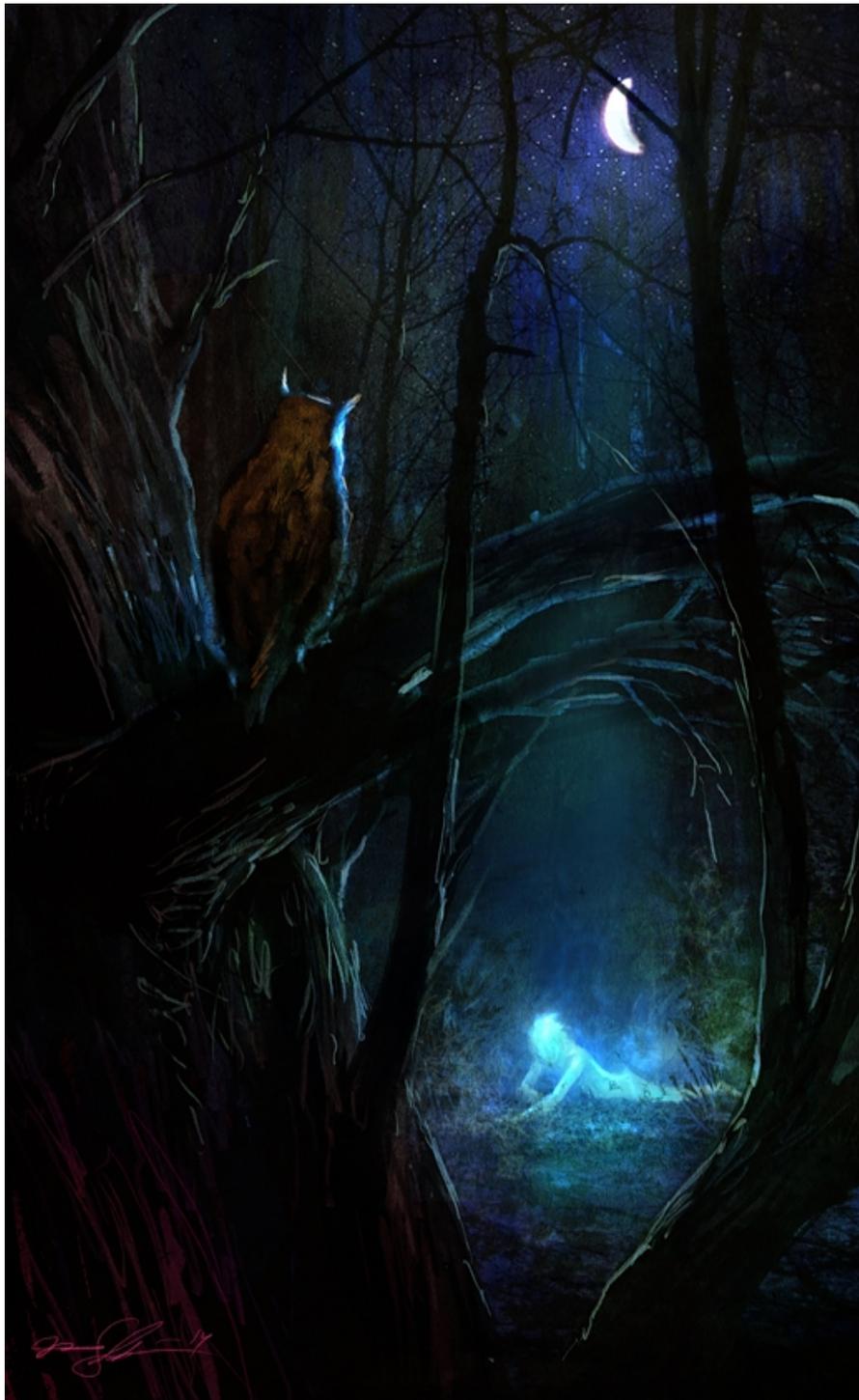
He jumped up and opened his wings and tried to take a direction straight ahead, and stumbled into a dense thicket. Feathers flew around him as he struggled to gain footing and trying again to another direction, only to bump into a tree trunk which was right beside him. Again he tried, and every attempt was more futile than the previous, and he had no idea where his hometree was anymore.

He hooted and screeched senselessly in his desperation, until he was exhausted and so afraid he couldn't take it anymore, until something grabbed him and held him still. Despite the constant flashing in his eyes, he could still see that the blue glow coming from the two-legged one was shown through the horrible chaos.

"There there, little bird. Calm down a bit, or you'll get a heart-attack", she said.

The owl was so terrified that it almost forgot to breathe. A two-legged touching his delicate feathers. No, absolutely no! This was the end of all things, he was surely going to die now.

The blue colour was still kind of comforting amidst the flashing white fireworks. He only hoped that she wouldn't look at him again - ever.



She spoke to him quietly, like a ripple of a wave, being careful not to sound scary: "Little owl. You've seen this forest through and through, and this is very wrong that you should stay like that because of me. If you let me, then I promise to try to make up for your lost vision, since I too am a stranger in this place. The Moon was my home, and solar winds grabbed me and tossed me here, and Earth won't let me go back there ever again. You know so many things I could never see, and your wings can carry your light body to places I could never visit. I am sorry for disturbing your peace. Let me try to bring some of it back, together? What do you say?"

The owl wept. It was the only thing he could do. He understood her request, but his answer came only with tears. He wished he had never met that cursed two-legged. She had ruined his whole life. What use is of an owl who couldn't see or fly? Nothing at all.

The glowing translucent blue and sapphire-green being nodded and felt ashamed of herself. She was the cause of the owl's pain, so how could she ever be forgiven.. but Earth couldn't be that merciless. Moon was still up in the sky, now so far away, but still she could be there when she closed her eyes and remembered it. She recalled the lightness, the ease of her steps across its surface, the silky dust puffing around her, the easyness of the gravity of it all. It was a good memory to have, despite the sadness of her injuries she had now. Her legs felt so very weak, her back seemed like it was made of those enormous stiff trees that could never rise up from the ground. Always just reaching upwards, but never get up in the air, the roots were like chains for every creature here. The poor owl was such a lucky creature to be able to be in the air.. she felt evil and unwelcome in that sacred place. But she was also a child of the Moon. The stars around her had sung her songs which could never be heard on Earth.

”Dear bird.. let me stay with you for a little while, and you could teach me some of your wisdom you have learned so far, and I can teach you some of the songs from a place I come from? That light in your eyes will change once you learn to understand it. Through my songs I can show you how. Is this something you could agree with?”

The owl slowly stopped crying, after a long pause. It didn't fight back as she picked him up and held her close to her strange humming heart, as they sat there for a long time, under the owl's home tree. They waited for the sunrise together, quietly listening the night around them, and recalled their memories.

Dawn would always come after a long night. But they weren't afraid of it anymore, since they had a lot to learn.

Like the sea of stars above them, so the chaos in that little owl's eyes slowly calmed down, and like paintings over a canvas, he learned to see with ways the owls of the Earth can only dream of. The whole world became new for that old solitary life, who never could have guessed how vital their moments together were, especially for a blue Moonstar, who could never return home.

The End.