

## When I Saw the Moon

When I first came into existence, the moon was all that I could see. It was the land beneath my feet, the rock beneath caked over with dust and debris, my bare feet leaving delicate markings of where I had traveled back and forth. The atmosphere was anything but present, but without the reflex needed to breathe I never bothered to let my chest rise and fall. It had never been something I needed, the odd element known as air. How such insignificant things that I never would have known about otherwise became known to me is a long story. The other girls, upon which I consider my sisters in every definition, would never find the information the world has to offer like I do.

Now I find myself in a green field, no longer in the place I called home. Yet, when I look into the sky, I am constantly reminded of my home. After all, upon this night, it is the one when I first saw the moon as many others have, lingering in the sky, brightening the dark night with its hypnotic and glorious splendor.

Why, you may ask? Why was such a thing the case? How did you end up separated from your home? Well, allow me to explain.

Dreams are something that often lure the dreamer in, bringing them to an entirely different reality or an entirely different world. They long for something else within the world, and because of this, they seek solace in sleep and the worlds they find. You could imply I was a dreamer, in that sense, the long ears upon my head twitching as my body settled into the soft dust upon the Moon's surface. It was all that we had, the ground below us, and while many chose to walk rather than sleep, my body was somehow different then theirs. I required rest, something my sisters had never expressed any interest or any possibility of. I was an outcast in that sense.

However, on one particular occasion, my dreams turned into something much less of a dream. I was in a very cold place, one where a flaked white material I now know as snow danced throughout the air and gracefully landed upon the ground. There was a small group of us there, and all of us were just as confused as the other as we realized where we were. The intention of sleeping was very clearly all in our heads, or as such, we did not even remember how we had gotten here in the first place. It was a mystery how we ended up within this realm, or even why we had been brought here. At the time, I was still a naive Moon Rabbit; I was devoid of emotion, and as such, only wished to serve to assist anyone however I could. My lack of knowledge, however, made that difficult.

However, there was something very wrong with the place we had all ended up in. Besides the terrifying realization of everyone varying in shape, size, and even race entirely, some people towered over others. Double my height some were, while others were accompanied by small

creatures that either helped them, or stuck close to the owner. But besides this, some were pink with horns, while another had a soft pink tinge to their face, with deep red hair that dripped as if it were constantly moving. It baffles how she managed to keep it so tidy. Despite our differences however, there were much bigger issues at hand.

The reason to warrant distress was not by the fault of any of us, but rather, the fault of the world that we found ourselves in. I would explain everything that occurred to be considered abnormal to many, but it would be far too much to explain. What I will tell you, however, is the truth of the situation is that this place was, in every sense, *alive*. When you were not being drowned by a cacophony of bewitched voices in the trees, you would find another individual, once living, now punctured by something that very clearly was not anything any of us had ever seen before. Not only was it dangerous to be here, but even the environment itself very clearly didn't wish to hold us here.

So, to say the least, we tried to make the best of the situation in which we found ourselves in.

Upon discovering a small door leading to an underground location, me and a woman named Velvet Korolevskiy went to investigate. She was a girl of great mystery, yet very high intrigue. She had a neutral expression no matter how you addressed her, and she was the one with the crimson flowing hair as I stated earlier. She had long and sharp ears, and she smelled as if she was a type of sweet made humanoid and real. She was quite cold and standoffish to many. She was of a short disposition as well, only reaching up to about my hand despite her insistence she was recently raised to 'adulthood'. But despite it all, I found myself, over time, gaining an interest in her. Us two in particular did not have much of a choice but to go down within the basement area together, much to her confusion and apparent dissatisfaction.

As we investigated, she became increasingly confused with my lack of knowledge of very basic things to her. She took a book from one of the dingy shelves in the otherwise well-kept studies found in the basement area, and held it out to me.

"You *seriously* have no clue what a book is? Ridiculous." She said dryly, furrowing her eyebrows at me. "I'm sure you can't even read it, then."

"I apologize for my lack of knowledge, Miss Korolevskiy. I have tried my best to learn new things." I, at the time, bowed to her with a smile before continuing. "But, perhaps you could entrust that book to me? I wish to keep it as a research item, so perhaps one day I may learn to understand the contents."

For a time, she looked at me with a very neutral stare, but in her eyes I saw something

flicker in them. Her pupils were shaped into the form of a heart, the deep red they reflected in my bright red eyes told me something that, at the time, I didn't quite completely understand. In those few moments, my heart had skipped a beat, and a feeling crept up in my chest I had never felt before.

“Right. Okay then, one moment.” Velvet muttered, eventually. Surely enough, what I was about to witness was nearly a miracle in itself. Bringing the book and tapping it to her forehead, the book itself and Velvet's forehead glowing a soft golden light. The woman, unbeknownst to me at the time, was a very powerful and respected witch from her home land. Her familiar companion that accompanied her, a small raccoon creature with a spiky tail called Peitō, could assist her with magic whenever she needed it. They were pink and yellow, and it alternated down their body akin to stripes. They sat aside as Velvet continued to use magic upon the book, before finally handing it back to me.

“Oh my goodness, did- did *you* just perform magic? That was incredible, Miss Korolevskiy! Please, you must teach me how you did that!” My eyes sparkled with wonder and interest, not only in magic itself, but for the woman who had just done it. Little did I know, at this time, how much interest I had in her was much more than just blind care.

She paused for a moment, considering all that I was, before sighing coldly. “We may check to see if you have the potential to do so. No promises, though.” She had not said yes, nor had she denied me. She was instead giving me a chance to prove myself.

I nodded expectantly, as Velvet carefully reached to her forehead once more. Pulling a nearly identical book from there, she set it back where it once was. She then looked at me and gave a slight nod. “So the owners of this place don't get scared if there's a book missing.” She had intentionally gestured to me so that I would see that she was covering the trail for me. She wanted me to have that book.

She wanted me to know, subtly, that she was doing something for me. Even if she never intended for it to be that way, that is how I took it.

Continuing on, surely enough, she coached me through practicing the use of magic. Velvet spoke simply, telling me to “Feel magic flowing from the ground beneath me into my hands. Take a deep breath, and focus.” It was spoken so simply, so neutrally, but those words held so much meaning to me. She showed an example herself, and through this I noticed more subtle things about her that enamored and surprised me. There was a sad glint in her eyes, I could tell, as if she had very much had something on her mind. After all, there was surely a reason why she was so emotionally reserved.

My heart ached for a moment, and I always considered what I might be able to do to be able to get her to open herself up to me more. I soon found myself feeling for her, and in turn, falling for her.

“Yes, Velvet! I believe I can do such a thing.” I responded in the moment, and I mimicked the movements she did.

Her magic in particular was one that required a series of movements to execute. In that way it may be akin to a dance; it was something that was mystical to me at the time and yet seems so obvious to me now. She lended me Peitō, who, unbeknownst to me at the time, had the ability to turn into an object to hold. This object was a mace-like object, pink in color. At the end of the chains were two spiked orbs, one pink and the other yellow, matching the colored stripes.

In that moment, I mimicked what she had done well, and surely enough, flicking the mace forward caused the object to glow, and a soft yellow orb slowly trickled out from it. With my inexperience, it fizzled and slowly disappeared. However, at the time, that was all that I needed.

Velvet’s face was in absolute disbelief, her eyebrows raising as she struggled to understand how I had done this. “Wh- how did you...” Velvet said quietly, her voice trailing off. She crossed her arms. “I don’t believe it...” It was not a tone of denial, but rather a tone of shock. She had no clue how this would turn out, so to see that I had the potential to use the magic was incredibly shocking.

“M-Miss Korolevskiy, I did it!” I turned to her, and a flame of happiness slowly crept up upon me. My eyes filled with a substance that I did not understand, but I know now was tears. I smiled as brightly as the sun lingered within the dark depths, and I nearly lept to hug the woman that had taught me in the first place.

She, despite her neutral disposition, let her mouth slowly twitch into something of a smile. It was subtle, nobody would notice had they not been deeply detail-oriented. I, of course, am detail oriented.

“Okay, okay, just...stop doing that, please. You’re making me severely uncomfortable.” She said blankly, but something in her eyes made her say something different. It was completely like her. This was the moment I had fallen in love with her.

However, as much joy as I had felt in that moment, how much joy I had held to my chest, what followed would not only send me into a pit of despair, but also muddle the happy moments. It was not long after this before we separated for a bit of time. After all, there were many people

to speak to in our group, we could not just stick to each other. It was clear she obviously did not want to be around me all the time either.

Yet, despite everyone's best efforts, at some point she had found herself all alone. Nobody knows what had happened that day, but as far as I remembered, Peitō came to me in a panic. That was immediately ominous, as the familiar almost never separated from their witch, or so Velvet had told me. They seemed persistent, circling my legs and attempting to goad me into following them.

All that I found when I got there was the dress that she wore. It was pink, and it had a carefully placed red sash across it. In that moment, to even remotely explain the grief that I felt would be a failure of explanation. My entire world had shattered into pieces that I myself could never even begin to put together. I was never able to properly articulate the complicated feeling that had bloomed within me, all of the lovely things that had been culminating into something completely otherworldly. It was pain, it was suffering, it was everything and nothing at the same time. It made my chest want to burst, it made my eyes sting, and it made my throat ache from sobbing.

I stayed there for hours. I was never bothered.

Eventually, however, I soon found myself facing my own fate. Miraculously indeed, I faced death just as Velvet had. I had sheltered myself within a room that had been assigned to me in the basement building. As such, Peitō and I had taken shelter there. They never left my side, and they had always been there after the death of their witch. It seemed, despite it all, I was to be her successor.

However, soon enough, a figure entered my room. A figure, at the time, I almost knew was her. It was Velvet. I don't know how, but it was her. It was impossible to discern any difference to my saddened heart. I quickly stood, my eyes trickling over with tears. Even the sight of her sent me into elation all over again.

"I-It's you, you're here!" I choked out through tears, standing still where I was in disbelief.

But, in hindsight, it was very much not her. It may have looked like her, yes, but her expression was unmistakable. This individual emoted, her face creased with purpose but also regret. In her hand she held a lamp, lit by fire. Without a word, she silently dropped the lamp, it landing and breaking upon the carpeting of the floor. I had never seen this fire before, and as such, I knew it not as danger.

The room had gotten warm. My face was warm. My tears were warm.

This Velvet slowly and quietly stepped towards me, and I did the same, slowly crouching to her level. I felt the embers licking my body, as if testing if I was worthy of kindling the raging burn. But I cared not, for in that moment, I was solely fixated on the witch that had changed my life.

“I missed you, Velvet. I never want you to leave me again, p-please...”

Her face looked so sad in that moment, as if she realized how terrible of a thing this was to do. Then, slowly, this Velvet wrapped her hands around me. They felt comforting and welcoming.

“Then...then we shall burn together.”

Those were the last words I heard as my life flickered away. Or, so were the consequences of that first life. As much as I would like to say that was it, it very much was not. Just as my eyes had closed, just as I had been so comfortable with the unbearably hot flames that surrounded me, my eyes suddenly opened. I had woken from the dream. But that dream had been a lifetime.

At the time, however, something was wrong. It is a difficult thing to explain, but it was as if the memories themselves had been removed from me. Static filled my mind where I knew thoughts should be, where memories should be of the dream I just experienced. No, it was not a dream, but I had just woken from it. The first thing I noticed was that, the static in my mind.

The second thing was, despite it all, a name in my mind. Velvet Korolevskiy. I could never forget that name, even if the world tried to pull it from my very being.

The third thing, however, was the feeling under my hands. I jolted to my feet, tears still in my eyes as if I had been crying in my sleep. Below my feet was not the dust that I knew so well, but rather, was an odd green substance that rose from the ground in blades. My feet felt soft ground rather than rough ground, an odd brown substance making its home on the bottom of my bare feet.

*Grass*, it suddenly came to me. *Dirt*, I carefully thought and realized.

Soon, as I looked at the unfamiliar world around me, I realized very quickly there were so many things that I knew not of that the names slowly came to me. *Tree*, I thought, looking at a large brown column with greenery at the top. I looked up to the sky, and rather than facing the

dark void of the sky above, I saw something that caused my eyes to sparkle with wonder, tears brimming the rims of my eyes.

It was my home. What I used to call home. It was the Moon.

Every single night, following this confusing arrival, I would sit down to watch the sun set and the moon rise. The *forest* I found myself in had enough resources to keep me living, therefore, I was able to look every night. Over time, the more I tried to clear my mind, and the more things I saw, the more things I remembered. I could see myself laughing with people I finally remembered. I could see me trying to decipher a book for hours on end.

But most of all, I remembered Velvet's face in that moment after I discovered magic. More than anything else, that slight smile. I would live a lifetime all over again if it meant I could see her face again. In that moment, as I gazed up in the Moon's tender glow, I made a promise. The moon reflected in my crimson red eyes, and I smiled as I let it go over me.

I would do whatever it takes, no matter how difficult it may be, to find her again. Then, perhaps, we might be able to see the moon together. Then, I might finally be able to tell her everything, explain it all, and make it all make sense. Then, maybe I could figure out why she was so distant.

That is what I thought of when I saw the moon.