

THE MOONLIT MELODY

THE MYSTERY OF
THE FALLING STARS



ROBIN WICKENS

The Moonlit Melody: The Mystery of the Falling Stars

Written by Robin Wickens
A Rob's Books Publication

Copyright:

Text copyright © Robin Wickens.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the author or publisher, except for brief quotations in reviews or educational use.

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, places, or events is purely coincidental.

Printed in the United Kingdom.

Dedication:

For the dreamers who look up at the night sky and
imagine stories hiding between the stars.

Content:

The Moonlit Melody: The Mystery of the Falling Stars 1

Copyright: 1

Dedication: 1

Note to the Reader: 3

Copyright: 4

Where the Story Began 5

THE NIGHT THE STARS TREMBLED 6

A GLOW IN THE FERNS 10

THE SILVER PATH THROUGH THE PINES 15

THE WHISPERWILLOW’S WARNING 20

THE ECHO IN THE HOLLOW 25

THE LANTERN MOTHS TAKE FLIGHT 31

NOVA’S HIDDEN MEMORY 36

THE STORM OF SILENT SPARKS 41

THE SONG BENEATH THE MOON 47

WHERE THE LIGHT BELONGS 53

Acknowledgements: 59

About the Author: 59

Activity: Make Your Own Night Melody: 60

Series Teaser 60

EPILOGUE 60

Thank You: 62

Note to the Reader:

Dear young reader,
This book was written just for you.
To read under blankets.
To whisper before bedtime.
To dream about long after the light is switched off.
Whenever you feel small, remember: even the tiniest
star shines in the dark.
With wonder,
Robin Wickens

Copyright:

Text copyright © Robin Wickens

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without written permission from the publisher.

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Printed in the United Kingdom.

Dedication:

For every child who has ever looked up at the night sky and wondered.

Note to Young Readers

This story was written just for you – to read under blankets, by lamplight, or tucked up in bed.

May these pages carry you gently into dreams and remind you that every small bravery shines bright.

Where the Story Began

Before this book ever existed, I walked through a quiet wood on a late summer night.

The trees were perfectly still.

The sky seemed impossibly wide.

And I wondered:

What if a star fell into a forest one night...

and landed softly enough for someone to find it?

From that single spark, this story grew.

Some of the lore in these pages comes from old British woodland myths:

- The idea that ancient trees hold memories
- That animals understand the sky better than humans
- That moonlight is a kind of magic all on its own

The rest comes from wondering what might happen if curiosity, courage, and friendship met beneath a silver sky.

The Secrets of the Night Sky

*Some say the stars whisper to each other
across the velvet dark. Some say they
listen instead.*

*If you ever find yourself under a clear sky,
hold your breath.*

*You might just hear the soft hum of
ancient light.*

THE NIGHT THE STARS TREMBLED



The trouble began on a night so still that even the wind seemed to be sleeping.

Liora, a small owl with silver-flecked feathers, sat on the highest branch of the Moonlit Oak. It was her favourite place to watch the sky. She liked the way the stars shimmered when they thought no one was looking—like sleepy children trying to stay awake.

But tonight... something was different.

The stars trembled.

Not a twinkle.

Not a flicker.

A tremble.

Liora blinked. She tilted her head the way owls do when they're thinking very hard. She watched again.

There—

a ripple across the sky, as though someone had brushed the heavens with a giant invisible hand.

"That," she whispered to no one in particular,

"is not supposed to happen."

Down below, a rustling began in the bracken. Bramble the badger waddled out, his fur in its usual state: wild, stubborn, and slightly muddy.

"You're muttering to yourself again," he said.

Bramble always sounded as though he'd just woken up, even when he hadn't slept in days.

"The stars are behaving oddly," Liora said.

Bramble squinted upward. "They look the same as always. Small, bright, and far too numerous to count.

Why anyone would keep that many lights switched on at once—"

Then he stopped.

Because one star—a rather bold one—wobbled.

Bramble's jaw dropped. "It... it wriggled!"

“Exactly!” Liora fluffed her feathers. “Stars don’t wriggle.”

“And they certainly don’t—”

The bold star fell.

Not fast, like a shooting star streaking across the night.

Not gently, like a drifting ember.

But with a hesitant wobble, as though undecided about the whole business.

A soft silver glow floated down, down, down into the forest, far beyond the pines.

Liora’s eyes widened. “It landed!”

Bramble gasped. “It what?”

“Landed! In the woods!”

“Stars do not land,” Bramble insisted. “They fall. They burn. They do whatever stars do. They do not land.”

“Well, this one just did.”

Another rustle sounded behind them. A very small dormouse nose poked out from beneath a curled leaf, followed by two trembling ears and a tail that always seemed one thought away from tangling itself.

Pip had arrived.

“I heard a thud,” Pip squeaked.

“That was the star,” Liora said.

“That was NOT a star,” Bramble said, crossing his paws.

Pip looked up at the sky.

“Are the stars meant to be... quivery?”

“No,” Liora said.

“No,” Bramble admitted, after a pause long enough to establish that he did not like being wrong.

Pip swallowed. “Should we... do something?”

Liora nodded. “We should follow it.”

Bramble blinked slowly. “Follow the falling star. Into the forest. At night.”

“Yes.”

“Sounds dangerous,” Pip whispered.

“Sounds impossible,” Bramble grumbled.

Liora spread her wings. “Sounds important.”

They looked at each other. The air felt different now—charged, expectant, glowing with mystery.

Some stories begin with loud bangs or daring adventures.

But not this one.

This one began with three friends following a trembling star into the unknown.

And the forest, as though sensing their decision, let out a soft sigh of wind that had not been there moments before.

“Right then,” Bramble muttered. “If we get eaten by anything, I’m blaming the sky.”

With Liora leading, Bramble stomping behind her, and Pip scurrying nervously at the rear, the three friends stepped into the dark embrace of the Whispering Woods—

toward the place where the star had fallen.

Whatever waited for them there...

was only the beginning.

A GLOW IN THE FERNS



The Whispering Woods were not trying to be frightening. They rarely did.

They were, however, very good at being mysterious. As Liora glided overhead and Bramble stomped (quietly, for a badger) beneath her, the trees began their usual nighttime murmuring—soft creaks, gentle rattles, the occasional sigh from a particularly elderly oak who felt the damp in its bark.

Pip scurried between them, keeping close enough to Bramble's hind leg that he occasionally tripped over it. "It fell this way," Liora whispered, dipping lower and scanning the forest floor.

“How can you possibly know?” Bramble said.

“Everything down here smells like moss and damp leaves.”

“That’s because you always sniff at ground level,” Liora replied. “If you tried smelling the air above the ferns—”

“I am not sniffing above ferns,” Bramble said. “Ferns make me sneeze.”

Pip squeaked quietly. “Ferns make me nervous.”

“Everything makes you nervous,” Bramble muttered.

But then—

the forest shifted.

Not in a swaying-branches or rustling-leaves sort of way.

More in a holding-its-breath sort of way.

Liora paused mid-flight.

“Do you hear that?” she whispered.

“No,” Bramble whispered back.

“Good,” Liora said. “Because it wasn’t a sound.”

The pause grew thicker.

Quieter.

As though even the insects had stopped their songs.

Then Pip, whose eyes were astonishingly sharp when he wasn’t busy panicking, tugged Bramble’s fur.

“There,” he whispered.

Bramble followed Pip’s trembling paw—

and saw it.

A faint glow, small as a curled hedgehog, nestled deep in a patch of tall, arching ferns.

Not yellow like fireflies.

Not green like foxfire fungus.

Silver.

Soft silver.

“Is it dangerous?” Pip whispered, because it was his favourite question.

“Probably,” Bramble said automatically.

“Possibly,” Liora corrected. “But only one way to know.”

She swooped down, landing silently on a log. Bramble puffed himself up, ready to protect Pip from anything—including falling stars, glowing mushrooms, and particularly unfriendly beetles.

Together, they edged closer.

The ferns shifted—not with wind, but with something breathing.

Something alive.

Liora held out a cautious wing and moved a fern frond aside.

The glow brightened.

Then brightened again.

And then—

it blinked.

“AAAH!” Pip squeaked so loudly he fell backwards into a patch of moss.

“Stop that!” Bramble hissed. “You’ll wake the whole forest!”

But Liora wasn’t listening to either of them.

Because nestled in the middle of the ferns was not a stone, or a lantern moth, or anything remotely normal.

It was a tiny orb of trembling light.

The size of a robin’s egg.

The colour of moonlit snow.

The brightness of a star that had accidentally wandered too close to earth.

As Liora leaned in, the glow shifted again—into the faint outline of a small face.

Two gentle, shimmering eyes looked back at her.

The light pulsed in a soft, nervous rhythm.

“Oh my...” Liora breathed. “You’re not just a star. You’re... someone.”

Bramble blinked. “Stars aren’t ‘someones.’ Stars are... well, stars.”

The glowing creature blinked again, timid and flickering. Then it spoke.

A tiny, wavering voice—soft as a moth’s wing, bright as a tinkling bell:

“I... I didn’t mean to fall.”

Pip fainted immediately.

Bramble muttered, “Oh, brilliant.”

Liora stepped forward, her heart swelling with curiosity and something else—protectiveness.

“I’m Liora,” she said gently. “These are my friends Bramble and—well, Pip, though he’s temporarily unconscious. And you are...?”

The light flickered uncertainly.

“I... I don’t know.”

Liora exchanged a look with Bramble.

The creature continued, voice trembling like the stars had earlier:

“I can’t remember.

But I know I wasn’t supposed to be here.

I know I was supposed to be... up there.”

It lifted its gaze to the sky.

The stars above trembled again, faintly, as if answering.

Bramble rubbed his nose. “Right. Brilliant. A lost star with no memory. This is already shaping up to be a very complicated night.”

Liora ignored him.

“Don’t worry,” she said softly to the glowing creature.

“We’ll help you. Whatever you’ve forgotten, we’ll find it.” The light steadied a little. “Really?”

“Really,” Liora said.

Even Pip, coming round at that moment, squeaked out,

“Yes?”

The creature brightened, just a little.

Then its glow weakened again—faint, flickering.

“I feel... tired,” it whispered. “And... wrong. Like part of me is missing.”

Liora’s feathers tightened. This was no ordinary star.

Something had shaken the entire sky.

“Come on,” she said gently. “We’ll take you somewhere safe.”

Bramble sighed heavily. “Fine. But if that thing explodes, I want it noted that I objected strongly.”

The tiny fallen star pulsed softly with gratitude.

“My name...” it whispered, light finally settling for a moment.

“I think it might be... Nova.”

And just like that—

their mystery had a name.

THE SILVER PATH THROUGH THE PINES



Liora had flown through the Whispering Woods hundreds of times, yet she had never seen a path appear quite like this.

It began the moment Nova—still glowing faintly in Liora’s wings—let out a small sigh.

A ripple of silver light spilled from the star’s form and drifted across the pine needles underfoot like a whisper of frost.

The forest responded.

The tall pines straightened, their branches shifting with a soft *hrrmmm* as though stretching awake.

The air brightened, not with daylight, but with a cool, moonlit sheen that seemed to wrap itself around the trunks.

Bramble eyed the glowing trail suspiciously.

“I don’t trust sparkly paths,” he announced.

“They’re never straightforward. Always curving off cliffs or leading into suspicious caves.”

“It’s not suspicious,” Liora said, though she wasn’t entirely convinced.

“It’s... guiding us.”

“Guiding us where?” Pip whispered, clutching Bramble’s fur.

“To answers,” Liora said, with far more confidence than she felt.

They followed the shimmering trail into the heart of the pine forest.

Here, the trees rose taller than cathedrals. Their trunks were wide enough that ten badgers could stand nose-to-tail and still not reach all the way around. The air held a resinous scent—rich and comforting—and the pine needles cushioned every step with a soft crunch.

But beneath that softness was something else.

Something listening.

The forest, ancient and thoughtful, was paying very close attention.

Nova’s glow pulsed weakly.

“What’s happening to me?” the little star asked, its voice thin as drifting smoke.

“You’re tired,” Liora said gently.

“Falling must have taken a lot out of you.”

“Stars aren’t meant to fall,” Nova murmured. “We shine. We guide. We stay.”

“But something made you fall,” Bramble added bluntly.

“Perhaps some sky nonsense. A cosmic hiccup.”

“Bramble!” Liora hissed.

“What? I’m trying to help.”

Nova flickered. “I don’t remember anything except light... and then darkness... and then fear.”

Pip, who found fear entirely relatable, patted Nova with a tiny paw.

“It’s all right. We’re afraid all the time and we’re still here.”

“Not helping, Pip,” Bramble muttered.

The silver trail wound between the towering trunks, glowing brighter whenever Nova was close, as if the forest itself recognised the fallen star.

Liora studied the light thoughtfully.

“It’s almost like the forest wants us to follow it.”

“Wants? Forests don’t *want* things,” Bramble insisted.

“They sit. They stand. They drop branches on you when you’re minding your own business.”

At that exact moment, a pine cone dropped neatly onto his head.

Bramble growled at the sky.

“See? Always judging.”

But Liora wasn’t listening. She had spotted something ahead:

The trail had split—

one branch leading deeper into the pines, the other curving towards an ancient hollow tree.

“Erm,” Pip said, tugging Liora’s wing. “Do paths normally... multiply?”

“No,” Liora said.

“Which means we must choose.”

Bramble groaned. “I hate choosing. Especially when both choices look equally doomed.”

Nova’s glow dimmed, almost trembling.

“I... I know this feeling,” the star whispered. “One way is familiar. The other is frightening.”

Pip swallowed. “Which is which?”

“I... I don’t know,” Nova admitted, voice quivering.

The silver light shimmered uncertainly between the two paths, like a candle caught in a breeze.

Liora closed her eyes and let the forest sounds wash over her—

the hush of needles falling,

the distant croak of a night frog,

the heartbeat-like pulse of Nova’s light.

“We follow the stronger glow,” she said quietly.

And indeed, one path pulsed brighter, as though calling to them.

The forest seemed to lean in, listening.

Bramble huffed but nodded. “Fine. But if this leads us into a sinkhole, I will never let the sky forget it.”

Together, the three friends and the trembling little star stepped onto the brighter path.

The moment they did, the forest changed.

The air cooled.

The pines tilted inward, forming a high archway of interwoven branches.

A rumbling groan echoed through the woods—
deep, ancient, weary.

Pip squeaked and grabbed everyone available.

“W-what was that?”

Liora swallowed. “Something old.”

Bramble narrowed his eyes. “Old doesn’t worry me.

Hungry worries me.”

The rumble came again—

not angry, not threatening, but insistent.

A warning.

Or a welcome.

Liora turned to Nova. “Do you recognise this place?”

Nova’s glow deepened, turning a faint shade of gold.

“I think...” the little star whispered,

“...something important is waiting ahead.”

Liora felt her feathers prickle.

Bramble shifted his weight uncertainly.

Pip hid behind Bramble’s tail.

The silver path led onward into the pines—

toward the source of the ancient groan.

And the forest, in all its age and mystery, urged them forward.

THE WHISPERWILLOW'S WARNING



The path ended not with a clearing, nor a cliff, nor any of the dangerous things Bramble had confidently predicted.

Instead, the silver trail led them to the oldest tree in the entire Whispering Woods:
the Whisperwillow.

Even the moon seemed to hold its breath around it. The tree's massive trunk twisted like strands of braided rope, each ridge carved with knots and swirls that might have been patterns... or might have been faces, depending on how brave you felt. Its branches arched high and wide, forming a canopy that shimmered faintly with something like starlight caught in leaves.

Liora felt her feathers flatten with awe.

Pip whimpered and immediately hid behind Bramble.

Bramble hid behind nothing, but only because nothing was big enough.

Nova's faint glow brightened in Liora's wings.

"I know this place," the little star whispered.

"It feels... old."

"It *is* old," Liora replied in a hushed voice.

"Older than the pines, older than the hills, older than—"

"Don't say older than *me*," Bramble snapped.

"I'm sensitive."

But the tree seemed indifferent to their presence.

It was thinking.

Or... remembering.

As the four of them approached, a breeze curled lazily through the forest, but it wasn't like any breeze they had felt before. This one carried words woven into the rustle of leaves.

A low creaking voice reached them.

"Who... comes?"

Pip tried to faint again but was already too low to fall anywhere.

Bramble made a noise like a squeak wearing a disguise as a grunt.

Liora stepped forward.

"We're sorry to disturb you," she said politely.

"We're searching for answers. A star fell tonight."

A long pause.

The branches shivered, sending tiny sparks of light drifting down.

"I... know," the Whisperwillow murmured, its voice deep and woody, like logs shifting in a fire.

"The sky trembled. The forest felt it. All things felt it."

Nova pulsed weakly.

“Can you help me?” the little star asked. “I’ve forgotten who I am.”

The Whisperwillow’s leaves rattled sharply—not with anger, but with urgency.

“Memory stolen,” it whispered.

“Light dimmed.

Star unmoored.”

Pip squeaked, “That sounds a bit—er—serious.”

Liora leaned closer. “Stolen? By whom?”

The Whisperwillow groaned, trunk cracking ever so slightly as its ancient weight shifted.

“There is a shadow in the sky tonight,” it said.

“A shape that does not belong.

A thing made of hunger, drifting where only light should be.”

Bramble frowned. “The sky has a... sky-thing? A hungry sky-thing?”

“Yes,” the tree said simply.

Pip clutched Bramble’s tail. “I don’t like hungry things!”

“You never like hungry things,” Bramble muttered.

The Whisperwillow lowered one of its larger branches, sweeping aside the pine needles to reveal something carved into the earth beneath: a smooth spiral pattern that glowed with the same silver as Nova.

“The sky sent warnings,” the tree said.

“But the warnings fell silent.

Something smothered them.”

Liora’s feathers ruffled. “Smothered? How?”

“Silence,” murmured the Whisperwillow.

“Silence with weight.

Silence with hunger.”

Nova flickered violently, dimming almost to nothing.

“I... feel it,” the little star whispered. “Something pulling at me... something taking pieces of me.”

Liora wrapped a wing protectively around Nova.

“We won’t let it happen.”

Bramble cleared his throat and stepped forward.

“Excuse me, ancient tree of vast knowledge and deep, mysterious powers, but what exactly should we *do* about this hungry sky-thing? Because I’m a badger, you see, and my qualifications are mostly digging and complaining.”

The Whisperwillow let out a sound that might have been a laugh, or might have been a branch cracking very politely.

“You must go,” it said.

“To the Hollow of Echoes.”

Pip’s ears shot up. “Not the Hollow! It’s dark in there!”

“It is always dark in there,” the Whisperwillow replied.

“That is the nature of hollows. But it is also where the lost voices gather. The star’s memory may still linger.”

“But beware,” the tree added, voice sinking low.

“Shadows walk there tonight.”

That did not reassure anyone.

Liora dipped her head. “Thank you, Whisperwillow. We will go.”

“Take care,” the ancient tree murmured, its leaves shimmering like a sigh.

“The forest watches. The sky listens.

And the shadow... hunts.”

Even Bramble gulped at that one.

Nova trembled in Liora’s wings.

Pip trembled on Bramble’s back.

Bramble trembled because it seemed like the sensible thing to do.

And so, guided by the Whisperwillow's warning, the four friends turned toward the path leading to the Hollow of Echoes—

their steps slow, their hearts brave, and their future brighter than Nova's faint light could yet remember.

THE ECHO IN THE HOLLOW



The Hollow of Echoes was not the sort of place anyone visited willingly.

It crouched at the base of three ancient hills, hidden behind a veil of twisted roots and moss-heavy branches. Even in daylight it seemed dark; by moonlight it looked as though the night itself had curled up inside and refused to leave.

Which made it slightly unfortunate that this was exactly where Liora, Bramble, Pip, and Nova had to go.

The path narrowed as they approached, the silver light from Nova weakening with every step.

“If this gets any darker,” Bramble muttered, “I shall have to start navigating by smell alone, and believe me, no one wants that.”

Pip clung to Bramble’s fur with such determination that he resembled a small, terrified backpack.

“Why is it called the Hollow of Echoes?” Pip whispered.

“You’ll hear,” Liora said softly.

“That’s what I’m afraid of,” Pip said even softer.

The entrance appeared suddenly—a low arch of stone and roots, its interior swallowed by a darkness so deep it seemed to drink starlight.

Liora paused.

“This is it.”

Nova trembled in her wings. “Something is in there. Something... familiar.”

“That doesn’t sound comforting,” Bramble said.

“It sounds like the beginning of one of those stories where someone says ‘Don’t worry, everything will be fine,’ and then it absolutely is not.”

Liora took a deep breath.

“Stay close. The Hollow echoes more than sound.”

“What else does it echo?” Pip squeaked.

“Thoughts,” she replied.

“And fears.”

Pip fainted again. Bramble caught him mid-fall with the ease of long practice.

“Right,” Bramble said. “Let’s get this over with before someone breaks something other than Pip’s nerves.”

They stepped inside.

The darkness was not empty.

It *moved*.

Not like a creature, but like a memory shifting in its sleep.

Shimmering ripples drifted through the air—transparent, soundless waves that looked like the moment after someone whispers your name just out of sight.

Liora whispered, “Echoes...”

And the Hollow whispered back:

“...echoes...”

Pip whimpered. His whimper echoed, multiplied, stretched until the air trembled with dozens of tiny, frightened Pip-sounds.

“Make it stop!” he squealed.

“Stop!” the Hollow squealed back.

Bramble glared at the darkness. “You leave him alone! Or echo something more useful!”

“Useful...” repeated the Hollow, though admittedly in a rather unhelpful way.

Liora stepped forward, heart steady.

“Nova,” she said, “do you feel anything? Anything at all?”

Nova’s trembling form brightened faintly.

Then, in a voice that sounded far away:

“I hear... music.”

“Music?” Bramble frowned. “In here? Are you sure it’s not Pip’s teeth chattering?”

“No,” Nova whispered. “A melody. Soft. Old.”

Liora listened.

She could hear the faintest hum—a note so thin it was almost air.

A sound like starlight trying to become song.

“It’s your memory,” Liora said gently.

“Follow it.”

Nova drifted a little from her wing, glowing more brightly, hovering toward the centre of the Hollow.

The stone walls shimmered.

A ripple of echo-light enveloped them, and then—

A voice spoke.

Not from outside.

From *within*.

Liora recognised it instantly.

The Whisperwillow.

But the Whisperwillow was nowhere nearby.

This was an echo-memory—one the Hollow had collected long ago.

The deep, ancient voice rang through the darkness:

“When the star forgets its shine,

Seek the place where echoes gather.

For memory lies in fragments,

And light can be stolen...

...but never destroyed.”

The echo faded.

Nova brightened violently. “I remember something—just a flicker!”

“What is it?” Liora asked eagerly.

Nova strained, glowing, shuddering.

“A shape,” the star whispered. “A... shadow. With edges like smoke. It touched me. It took something from me. I—”

A sudden cold gust surged through the Hollow, snuffing half the drifting motes of echo-light.

Pip yelped.

Bramble stiffened.

Liora’s feathers bristled.

Nova’s glow shrank to a single frightened spark.

A silence fell—heavy, unnatural, choking.

Then a sound like breath drawn through a broken flute seeped through the darkness.

Something moved at the far end of the Hollow.

Something tall.

Something thin.

Something that didn't reflect the silver light...
because it swallowed it.

The shadow the Whisperwillow had warned them about.

Pip whispered, "I've changed my mind. I don't like echoes."

The shadow inched closer, drawn to Nova's trembling light.

Liora stepped in front of the little star, feathers spread wide and brave.

"You can't have them," she said.

"Not one more piece."

Bramble growled, surprising even himself. "You want Nova, you go through me!"

The shadow paused.

The air tightened like a held breath.

Then—

It retreated.

Slowly.

Silently.

As though studying them...
and deciding to wait.

Bramble exhaled, deflating. "Well. That was horrible."

Nova flickered faintly. "It knows me. The shadow. It wants my light."

Liora wrapped a wing around the little star.

"We won't let it take anything else."

Another echo drifted through the Hollow—this one faint, warm, melodic.

Nova brightened.

“My memory... it’s not gone. Just hidden.”

Liora smiled. “Then we’ll help you find the rest.”

Bramble nodded firmly. “Even if it means dealing with more unpleasant caves.”

Pip whimpered but nodded too.

Leaving the Hollow behind, the four friends stepped out into the open night, where the stars trembled faintly overhead.

The shadow had retreated.

But it had not gone far.

THE LANTERN MOTHS TAKE FLIGHT



The air outside the Hollow of Echoes felt lighter, as though the forest itself had been holding its breath while they were inside. Now, with a soft exhale of night wind, the world brightened again.

Nova's trembling glow steadied a little, no longer flickering like a frightened candle.

Bramble, meanwhile, announced, "Right! That's enough caves, hollows, and echo-nonsense for one night. I say we go home, have a snack, sleep until midday, and pretend none of this ever happened."

But the sky disagreed.

A streak of silver light darted overhead—
not a falling star this time,
but something smaller, softer, and entirely alive.

Liora gasped.

“The Lantern Moths,” she whispered.

Pip peered out from behind her wing. “They’re real? I thought they were just something owls made up to scare small creatures!”

“We do not make things up to scare small creatures,”

Liora said primly.

“That’s what foxes are for,” Bramble added.

A glow spread through the treetops as dozens—no, hundreds—of shimmering golden moths rose into the sky.

Their wings flickered softly, as though catching moonbeams and warming them.

Pip’s jaw dropped open in awe. “They’re so... so... glowy!”

“They light the forest when shadows grow strong,” Liora explained.

“It’s said they can sense darkness moving where it shouldn’t.”

Nova floated out from Liora’s wings slightly, their own glow resonating with the moths’.

“They feel... familiar.”

Bramble snorted. “Everything feels familiar to stars. You lot stare at everything from above all day long.”

But even he was staring with reluctant wonder.

The Lantern Moths drifted lower, swirling around the four friends in a soft golden spiral. Their wings made no sound—only the faintest hum of warmth, as though each one carried a little sigh of comfort.

One moth hovered close to Nova, brushing a wing against the little star.

Nova brightened.

Then brightened more.

“Liora,” Nova whispered, “I feel... stronger.”

The moths responded with a soft flare, their collective glow pulsing gently.

“The Lantern Moths help lost things find their way,” Liora said.

“They’ve come to guide you.”

Pip clutched Bramble’s fur. “Guide us where? Please say ‘home’. Or ‘somewhere with pie’.”

Bramble patted him absent-mindedly. “It’ll be somewhere awful, you’ll see.”

But the moths knew exactly where to go.

They began to drift in a single direction—north, toward the deeper parts of the forest where the trees grew taller and the moonlight struggled to reach the ground.

Liora felt a tug inside her chest.

“They’re leading us,” she said.

“To your next memory, Nova.”

Nova glowed with hope. “Do you really think I can remember everything?”

“Yes,” Liora said.

“Because nothing truly lost stays lost forever.”

“If someone hasn’t eaten it,” Bramble mumbled.

“Bramble...”

“Fine, fine. Very inspiring.”

They followed the swirling golden cloud.

The moths lit the path with warm radiance, making the trees look less daunting and the shadows less sharp. Even Pip walked with his head slightly higher, his whiskers tingling with comfort.

But as they moved deeper into the forest, the moths slowed.

A hush fell over the woods.

Liora glanced around. "Something's changed."

The moths formed a glowing circle around them—a protective halo of warm light.

Pip squeaked. "Are they... hiding us?"

Bramble's fur bristled. "From what?"

The answer came quickly.

A cold wind rushed past them, carrying no sound but the faint hiss of something sliding between the trees.

A shape moved in the corner of Liora's eye—thin, rippling, like smoke deciding to take form.

The shadow.

It had followed them.

Nova froze.

The Lantern Moths dove, swirling in front of Nova like a living shield, their wings glowing fiercely.

The shadow recoiled—just an inch—before slowly circling them, as though testing the strength of the golden barrier.

Liora's voice was calm, but her feathers fluffed in alarm. "It hates the light."

"Then why's it here?" Bramble growled softly.

Nova whispered, trembling, "It wants... something it stole. Something I need. Something I must get back."

A moth landed gently on Nova, its glow blending with the star's fading light.

Liora spread her wings over her friends.

“Stay close. Stay in the light. The moths will protect us.”
The shadow hissed—a long, low sound full of hunger.
But it could not enter the circle of golden glow.
Not tonight.

The Lantern Moths rose as one, forming a glowing funnel
of light that guided the group forward again. The shadow
did not follow—

not while the moths kept the dark at bay.

“Where are they taking us?” Pip whispered.

Liora looked ahead at the now-glowing forest path.

“To the heart of the Whispering Woods,” she said.

“Where the oldest memories sleep.”

Bramble sighed heavily. “I preferred the snack idea.”
And together—protected by a thousand shimmering
wings—

they walked deeper into the forest,
towards the next piece of Nova’s missing light.

NOVA'S HIDDEN MEMORY



The Lantern Moths flew ahead in a soft, glowing procession.

Their golden light was warm—warmer even than moonlight—and seemed to push back the darkness with gentle determination.

Pip clung to Bramble less tightly now. Liora walked with calm purpose.

And Nova... Nova's glow pulsed steadily, no longer flickering like a frightened candle.

They were getting closer.

Liora could feel it in the way the moths moved—forming patterns instead of chaotic clouds, drifting with purpose rather than chance.

Bramble noticed as well. “They seem awfully sure of themselves,” he muttered.

“That’s because they’re lantern moths,” Liora replied.

“They always know where they’re going.”

“Well, that makes one of us,” Bramble grumbled.

The moths slowed near an ancient fallen log, half-covered in moss and silver-blue mushrooms that shimmered faintly in their light.

Pip sniffed the air. “Something’s glowing.”

“Everything is glowing,” Bramble said. “That is our life now. We are permanently surrounded by glowing creatures, glowing plants, and glowing problems.”

But this glow was different.

A soft, silvery swirl rose above the moss—

not moth light,

not moonlight,

not forest magic.

Starlight.

Nova drifted forward—drawn, trembling, hopeful.

Liora felt a tug in her chest. “Nova... is it one of your memories?”

The little star hovered close, its glow resonating with the swirling constellation above the log.

A tremor ran through Nova’s light like a heartbeat skipping.

“Yes,” Nova whispered.

“It’s mine.”

And then everything changed.

The swirl of light expanded, blossoming like a flower made of stars.

Lines of silver connected each glowing point, forming shapes—

patterns—

something halfway between a map and a song.

Pip gasped. “It’s beautiful...”

Bramble nodded stubbornly. “Yes, well. It’s also sort of worrying. Nothing this sparkly ever leads to a quiet nap.”

Nova drifted into the centre of the constellation.

The light wrapped around the star like gentle ribbons.

Images flickered in the air—

not quite pictures,

not quite memories,

but feelings.

Warmth.

Purpose.

Belonging.

Nova’s voice echoed softly, as though speaking from far away.

“I remember this.

I was a Guide Star.”

Liora’s feathers ruffled. “A Guide Star? One of the constellations that help travellers find their way?”

“Yes,” Nova whispered.

“I was small. But important. I sang the Path of Light. It helped lost stars return home. It helped the sky stay steady.”

Bramble frowned deeply. “Stars... sing?”

Liora answered. “Of course they do. We just never hear it.”

Nova glowed brighter—almost strong again.

“But one night... the melody broke. I felt something pulling me away from my place in the sky. A cold... emptiness.”

The constellation flickered violently, as though disturbed by a silent wind.

Pip hid behind Bramble’s tail. “Is that the shadow? The hungry-sky-thing?”

Nova trembled. “It stole part of my song. The part that kept me anchored. Without it, I fell.”

Liora stepped closer, her voice soft and strong.

“We’ll help you get your song back.”

The constellation brightened, responding to Nova’s presence.

Little strands of silver light drifted toward the star—memories returning, reconnecting.

Nova’s glow strengthened until it filled the clearing with warm radiance.

Pip’s whiskers quivered. “You’re getting brighter!”

“I’m remembering,” Nova breathed. “I’m remembering who I was.”

“But not everything,” Liora said gently.

Nova’s glow dimmed slightly.

“No. There’s still something missing. The melody... it’s incomplete.”

The constellation maps began to fade, settling back into the moss like soft starlight rain.

Bramble crossed his paws. “Let me guess: the missing part is held by the shadow.”

Nova nodded, trembling.

“Yes. The shadow stole my guiding note. Without it, I can’t return to the sky.”

Liora’s voice was calm. “Then we’ll get it back.”

Pip squeaked. “We’re going to chase a shadow?”

“Yes,” Bramble said grimly. “Apparently.”

Nova floated back to Liora, glowing faintly with new strength but heavy with fear.

“The moths brought us this far,” Liora said.

“The rest... we’ll have to face ourselves.”

As if in agreement, the Lantern Moths rose again—but this time, fewer were glowing.

Their lights flickered nervously.

Pip stared upwards. “Is something wrong with them?”

Liora’s heart tightened.

“The shadow is close. The moths can sense it.”

A cold breeze swept through the clearing.

The air thickened.

The trees seemed to lean in.

Bramble’s fur bristled, his voice low.

“We need to move. Now.”

Nova’s light quivered. “The shadow knows I’m remembering.”

Liora lifted the little star into her wings.

“Then it’s time,” she said quietly.

“We face it before it steals anything else.”

The moths gathered once more—

but this time, they flew with urgency, lighting the path ahead with fierce golden sparks.

Together, the four friends stepped forward.

Toward the shadow.

Toward the lost note.

Toward the song that would restore the sky.

Nova’s hidden memory had returned.

But the hardest part still lay ahead.

THE STORM OF SILENT SPARKS



The Lantern Moths guided them deeper into the Whispering Woods, but now their wings flickered with urgency instead of calm.

The warm gold of their glow was slowly dimming, washed pale by something colder—something rising in the distance.

Liora felt it before she saw it.

Not wind.

Not sound.

A pressure.

A hush.

As though the world were waiting for something terrible to breathe.

Bramble shivered despite his thick fur. “I don’t like this feeling.”

“You don’t like *any* feeling,” Pip said in a trembly whisper.

“This one is different,” Bramble insisted. “This one feels like the moment before someone hits a saucepan with a spoon.”

“Why would anyone hit a saucepan with a spoon?” Pip asked.

“Chaos,” Bramble said gravely.

Liora didn’t answer.

Her feathers prickled.

Nova trembled in her wings.

Because ahead of them, the forest sky had turned bright.

But not with moonlight.

With sparks.

They drifted upward in a shimmering spiral—tiny glimmers of silver light, silent as falling snow. Thousands of them. Millions, perhaps. They rose and fell in strange waves, as though caught in a breeze no one else could feel.

“The Storm of Silent Sparks,” Liora whispered.

Pip blinked. “Is that good or bad?”

“Yes,” Bramble answered. “Obviously.”

Nova’s glow pulsed sharply.

“This... this isn’t right. Sparks aren’t meant to fall. Not like this.”

“What are they?” Bramble asked.

“Pieces of sky-song,” Liora said softly. “Fragments of constellations. Echoes of light.”

Pip clutched his own tail. “Why are they falling?”

Because the sky was broken.

Nova didn’t say it aloud, but the truth hung trembling in the air all the same.

The Lantern Moths circled tighter, wings fluttering in frantic patterns. Their golden light collided with the falling sparks, sending tiny glittering streams across the undergrowth.

Liora lifted her head.

“The shadow is near.”

The trees whispered, branches clattering together despite the still air.

Bramble bristled. “Where?”

Liora didn’t need to answer.

The sparks shifted.

A wave of them suddenly bent sideways—
pulled by something unseen—
as though gravity itself had tilted.

Pip squeaked, “That’s not normal!”

From the darkness between the trees, a shape slithered into view.

Not a creature.

Not smoke.

Not mist.

A patch of absolute blackness that swallowed the silver sparks around it, leaving only empty air where light should have been.

The shadow.

It drifted toward them, drawn to Nova’s glow like a silent hunger.

Nova whimpered. “It took my guiding note. It wants more. It wants *all* of me.”

Bramble moved in front, baring his teeth.

“Try me first, you ghastly bit of sky rubbish.”

The shadow paused.

For a moment, the world felt frozen.

Then—

It lunged.

Liora leapt into the air, sweeping Nova out of reach.

“Run!” she cried.

The Lantern Moths burst upward, exploding into urgent golden light that collided with the descending sparks, creating a swirling storm of brightness and darkness.

Pip darted beneath ferns, Bramble thundering behind him, but the shadow was swift—far swifter than anything without legs had a right to be.

Liora soared above her friends, keeping Nova close, feeling the cold pull of the shadow stretching behind them like a silent scream.

“Hold on!” she whispered to the little star.

“I—I can’t!” Nova cried. “It’s pulling at me! It wants the rest of my memory!”

The forest bent and twisted as they ran—every branch, every root thrown into chaotic shapes by the storm of sparks.

A huge burst of silver light erupted ahead—the sparks forming a wall of swirling brightness.

Bramble skidded to a halt. “Oh, that’s promising.”

“What do we do?” Pip whimpered.

Liora landed beside them, her wings shaking.

“We go through.”

“THROUGH?” Bramble yelped. “Through the magical-spark-wall-of-danger that might explode, freeze us, or turn us into glowing compost?”

“It’s the only way,” Liora said.

Nova trembled. “I... feel something. Beyond the sparks. A memory. My last one.”

The shadow screeched—a soundless screech that echoed only in their bones.

The sparks brightened, swirling faster, forming a protective funnel around the friends.

Liora looked at Bramble and Pip.

“Ready?”

“No!” squeaked Pip.

“Absolutely not!” growled Bramble.

“Excellent,” Liora said. “Let’s go.”

With Nova glowing brighter than ever, they sprinted into the storm.

The silver sparks exploded around them—not with sound, but with sensation.

Warmth. Cold.

Soft whispers.

Distant song.

Memories not their own flickering past like snowflakes of starlight.

The shadow slammed into the spark barrier—but could not break through.

Nova gasped. “It can’t follow us!”

“Then keep moving!” Bramble roared.

The moths swirled around them, pushing aside the sparks, guiding them through the glowing chaos.

The storm grew brighter, louder (in a silent way), thicker—

And then, all at once, it vanished.

The four stood in a clearing washed with soft silver light, as calm and quiet as dawn.

Pip collapsed into a heap.

Bramble staggered. “I never want to do that again.”

Liora steadied Nova in her wings.

“You said you felt something here,” Liora whispered.

“A memory.”

Nova’s glow warmed.

“Yes... my final piece. My guiding note. It’s close.”

But the shadow was on the other side of the spark storm.

And it was waiting.

THE SONG BENEATH THE MOON



The clearing they entered was unlike any other in the Whispering Woods.

It wasn't dark, though night still draped itself across the branches.

It wasn't bright, though the moon glowed overhead like a pearl waiting to be polished.

It was *quiet*.

But not the frightful, suffocating hush the shadow carried.

This was a quiet that felt full—

as though the air were holding its breath, waiting for music to arrive.

Pip took one hesitant step forward. "It's so still."

Bramble nodded. "Too still. Like the forest cleaned the place for a special occasion and then forgot to invite anyone."

But Liora felt the truth humming beneath her feathers.

"This is where Nova's song belongs."

Nova floated toward the centre of the clearing, their glow soft but steady.

The moonlight gathered around them, settling on their surface as though recognising an old friend.

A faint note trembled in the air.

Not from the trees.

Not from the ground.

Not from the wind.

From Nova.

"A... a melody," Nova whispered nervously. "I can feel the missing part. It's here. But I don't know how to reach it."

Liora stepped beside the little star.

"Then we'll help you find it."

Pip looked around wildly. "How are we supposed to find a missing bit of music? Are we meant to sniff it out?

Does it smell like anything?"

"Stars don't smell," Bramble said.

"Everything smells," Pip argued.

"Not things made of light!"

Pip opened his mouth to argue further, but at that moment, a ripple ran across the clearing.

Not wind.

Not movement.

A ripple of *sound*—made visible as shimmering silver threads drifting through the air like soft, floating lines of song.

Nova gasped.

“My melody...”

Liora watched in awe as the glowing threads curled toward Nova, circling the little star like gentle ribbons. The clearing brightened with their movement, and for the first time since Nova fell from the sky, the star looked almost whole.

But then—

A cold breeze slipped between the trees.

The moonlight dimmed.

The glowing song-threads flickered.

And the shadow appeared.

It did not arrive with a dramatic entrance.

It simply slipped into existence—silent, smoke-like, hungry.

The song-threads nearest to it vanished instantly, devoured by the cold darkness.

Pip squeaked. “Not again!”

Bramble stepped forward, teeth bared. “Oh, I am REALLY tired of you!”

Liora spread her wings protectively around Nova.

“Stay behind me,” she whispered.

Nova trembled violently.

“That shadow... it stole my guiding note. It wants the rest of the melody.”

The shadow glided closer, its shape stretching unnaturally across the clearing like spilled ink.

More song-threads dimmed.

Nova cried out—

a painful little burst of light.

Liora stepped forward, feathers fluffed and fierce.

“No more,” she said.

“You can’t have it.”

To everyone’s surprise, Bramble stepped beside her.

“You heard the owl,” he growled.

“Pick on someone your own... shape.”

Pip, shaking like a leaf, scurried onto Bramble’s back and puffed himself up—

which made no difference whatsoever—

but the bravery counted.

The shadow hesitated.

Just enough.

Nova seized the moment.

“I remember...” the little star whispered.

“A note... a sound... deep... steady... pure.”

The threads responded—

brightening, swirling, weaving together.

The shadow lunged.

Liora leapt.

Bramble charged.

Pip squealed but charged too—

holding onto Bramble’s fur for dear life.

The shadow struck like a silent wave—

but the song struck back.

The silver threads wrapped around Nova, forming a glowing halo.

Then, with a trembling burst of radiance, the melody poured outward—

a soft, ringing note that spread through the clearing like moonlit water.

It wasn’t loud.

It wasn’t sharp.

It was beautiful.

The Song Beneath the Moon.

The clearing filled with shimmering sound, light, vibrating through the trees, brushing against the shadow like a warm breeze.

The shadow recoiled violently, shrinking, its edges fraying like torn smoke.

Nova glowed brighter—brighter—brighter—
Then everything stopped.

The melody faded.

The glow dimmed.

The shadow withdrew to the far edge of the clearing, trembling.

And Nova drifted back toward Liora—
tired, but whole.

“I... I got my song back,” the star whispered.

Liora smiled, heart swelling.

“Not all of it,” she said softly. “But enough.”

Bramble thudded to the ground with a dramatic groan.

“Well, that was terrible. I hated every second. Can’t we defeat something fluffy next time?”

Pip nodded vigorously. “Yes! Shadows are the worst. They’re like nightmares with legs.”

“Shadows don’t have legs,” Bramble corrected.

“This one felt like it did!”

Liora looked at Nova, noticing how the star shimmered with new confidence.

“What now?” she asked.

Nova gazed upward.

“The final part of my melody... the place where I belong... it’s calling me.”

Liora followed their gaze.

There, high above, the trembling stars had steadied.
The sky—waiting.

The moonlight thickened around Nova, as though preparing.

The last challenge was coming.

But the melody had begun.

WHERE THE LIGHT BELONGS



The clearing seemed to glow from within, and for a long moment none of the friends spoke.

The air felt still, complete, expectant—
as though the forest itself knew something important
was about to happen.

Nova floated slowly upward, their glow steady and
warm.

Not trembling.

Not flickering.

Steady.

“I can feel it,” Nova whispered.

“The last piece of my guiding note. The part that anchors me to the sky.”

Pip’s whiskers drooped. “You’re... leaving?”

Liora wrapped a gentle wing around him.

“They were never meant to stay on the ground.”

Bramble cleared his throat loudly. “Just so we’re all perfectly clear—when stars go *up*, and badgers stay *down*, that’s the universe being sensible.”

Pip blinked. “Are you crying?”

“No,” Bramble snapped, sniffing. “My eyes are allergic to emotions.”

But even he couldn’t hide his concern.

Nova turned to each of them, glowing brighter with every second.

“You saved me,” they said softly.

“All of you. You helped me remember who I am.”

Liora bowed her head. “We’re honoured.”

“You helped me when I was afraid.”

“Frequently,” Pip whispered.

“And you protected me from the shadow.”

Bramble puffed his chest. “Of course. Not to brag, but I am extremely intimidating.”

Nova floated closer.

“But I... I can’t go until...”

Their glow dimmed slightly.

“Until what?” Liora asked gently.

“Until the shadow is gone.”

The forest grew still again.

Pip squeaked, “Gone gone? Like... vanished? Banished? Detangled?”

“Shadows don’t detangle,” Bramble muttered. “They’re not shoelaces.”

Nova trembled.

“It took part of my light. If I return without it, the sky will wobble. The constellations will lose their pattern.”

Liora’s feathers bristled. “Then we face it.”

Even Bramble stood taller.

“Well, all right. One more terrifying encounter can’t make tonight worse.”

Pip whimpered. “Are you sure?”

“No,” said Bramble. “But run now and we’ll look back on this and feel like cowards.”

Pip nodded bravely (though very quickly).

A cold wind drifted through the clearing.

The trees bowed inward.

The moon dimmed.

The shadow arrived.

No longer creeping.

No longer hiding.

It slid between the trees like ink spilled across water, a shape with no edges and too many edges all at once.

It had grown bigger.

Hungrier.

It wanted Nova’s light—
desperately.

Nova stayed close to Liora, but did not hide.

“I know what you took,” the little star whispered.

“And I want it back.”

The shadow hissed—

a soundless ripple of darkness bending toward the star.

Liora stepped forward.

“Stay behind me,” she said.

But Nova shook their small glowing form.

“No. This is my song.”

The shadow surged.
Nova shone.
The sky above flickered.
The moon brightened.
The stars trembled.
And then—
Nova sang.

It was not a song that needed sound.
It flowed from light, not breath.
It drifted through the air like warmth on a winter night.
The clearing filled with shimmering silver ribbons.
The trees glowed softly.
The moon hummed.
Pip stared, wide-eyed.
Bramble's fur stood on end.
Liora felt tears gather beneath her feathers.
It was beautiful.
The shadow recoiled, thrashing and folding in on itself.
Nova's melody wrapped around it—
not attacking,
not destroying,
but illuminating.
Shadows fear light.
But this shadow, confronted by its stolen note, had
nowhere to hide.
It unravelled.
Folded into nothing.
And finally—
disappeared.
The forest exhaled.
The night brightened.
The sky steadied.

Nova dimmed—for a moment—
and then radiated brighter than ever.
“You did it,” Liora whispered.
Nova floated close, warmth brushing her feathers.
“We did it,” the little star said.
And then they rose.

Higher.
Brighter.
Lighter.
The moonlight caught Nova’s glow and spun it into a thin
silver beam stretching upward—
a path home.
Pip cried openly. “I’ll miss you!”
“So will I,” Nova whispered gently. “But I’ll always shine
for you.”
“You’d better,” Bramble said, voice thick.
“I didn’t fight a sky-shadow for a star who forgets us.”
Nova drifted higher.
“I won’t forget.
I remember everything now—
especially you.”
Liora’s throat tightened.
“Goodbye, Nova,” she said softly.
“Go home. The sky is waiting.”
Nova glowed so brightly it was like standing in dawn.
“Goodbye, my friends.”
And with a final soft hum—
their guiding note restored—
the little star rose into the heavens,
a sparkling trail marking the path behind them.
Higher.
Higher.

Until they slipped back into their place in the sky,
a steady, shining point of light,
no longer trembling.

Liora watched the sky for a long time.

Pip curled beside Bramble, sniffing.

Bramble sat proudly, pretending not to sniff at all.

And overhead—

Nova shone.

Where the light belongs.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the forests of Britain—quiet, ancient, and full of secrets—for whispering ideas between the leaves. To the readers who believe in gentle magic. And to every small creature who ever paused to look up at the stars.

About the Author:

Robin Wickens writes whimsical, warm-hearted stories for children and families.

From enchanted forests to mischievous creatures, Robin's books celebrate imagination, friendship, and courage.

When not writing, Robin can be found wandering woodland paths, reading by lamplight, and pretending to understand owl language.

Activity: Make Your Own Night Melody:

Close your eyes.

Listen carefully to the world around you.

Write down three sounds you can hear.

Imagine how they might sound as a single, gentle song.

That is your Night Melody.

Series Teaser

The Moonlit Forest will return.

Book Two:

**THE MOONLIT MELODY: THE ECHO AT THE EDGE OF
DAWN**

EPILOGUE

THE STAR THAT NEVER FORGOT

The Whispering Woods returned to their gentle, familiar rhythms.

The Lantern Moths drifted back into the treetops, glowing softly as if sighing with relief.

The Whisperwillow settled into a deep, ancient slumber, its branches creaking contentedly.

The Hollow of Echoes quietened, its ripples settling like calm water.

And high above the forest—where the sky had once trembled—

a new, steady light shone.

Nova.

No longer frightened.

No longer lost.

No longer dim.

But bright.

Whole.

Remembered.

Liora often perched on the Moonlit Oak at dusk, watching the moment the first stars appeared. She always looked for Nova first. And Nova always shimmered back at her—three soft pulses of light, like a secret greeting.

Bramble pretended not to care.

“It’s just a star,” he grumbled, every single evening, while secretly checking the sky before anyone else.

Pip would wave both paws with wild enthusiasm, despite knowing full well that stars couldn’t see that far.

“They probably can,” Liora told him gently. “Nova’s special.”

“I’m special too,” Pip said earnestly.

“You are,” Liora agreed.

And Bramble added, “You’re something, at least.”

Some nights, when the forest was especially quiet, Liora heard a faint hum drifting down from the sky—not loud, not sharp, but familiar.

A guiding note, clear and warm.

Nova’s melody.

The sky was whole again.

But something else had changed too.
Every so often, when the moon was round and the trees
stood unusually still, a fine silver trail shimmered across
the forest floor—just for a moment—before fading.
A reminder.
A memory.
A promise that magic never truly ends.
And if anyone looked up at that exact moment, they'd
see Nova gleaming a little brighter than all the other
stars, shining in the place where they belonged.
Watching over the forest.
Watching over their friends.
And whispering to the night:
“I remember.”

Thank You:

Thank you for reading this moonlit tale.
May you always find a little light—
even on the darkest nights.