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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

## The Water-lily's Lover

There was once a water-lily that grew in a pond alongside her sister lilies. However, unlike the others, she only opened half her petals at sunrise. She seemed hesitant to be seen and admired, peeping out cautiously. One morning, the other lilies approached her, questioning why she didn't fully open to greet the sun. They wondered if she believed herself to be less beautiful than them.

The water-lily confidently replied, "Yes, my sisters, I am sure I am more beautiful than any of you. But my beauty is reserved for someone special, the one I love most dearly."

"Isn't the sun our lover?" they asked in confusion. "The sun loves us all, and we love him. Why not open your heart and let his warm rays embrace you?"

"The sun is not my lover; he belongs to all of us. The one I love must love me alone. I cannot share my love," the lily explained.

The other lilies found her reasoning foolish. "None of us can have a lover all to ourselves. We have the sun, what more could one desire?"

"Having a lover all to oneself must be uncomfortable. He would expect you to always bloom beautifully and emit a sweet fragrance. Our sun lover embraces all of us. If one of us is not as beautiful as the others on any given morning, he finds no fault," they remarked.

Undeterred, the water-lily continued to open only halfway each morning. But one day, she didn't open at all. Instead, she nodded on the smooth surface of the pond, while her sisters bloomed wide to the morning sun.

Concerned, they asked, "What is the matter with our sister? She seems sound asleep. Surely she should awaken with the rest of us."

The passing butterfly overheard their discussion and revealed, "If you had been awake all night like her, you wouldn't be awake this morning either."

Curious, the lilies inquired, "What kept our sister awake all night? How do you know she has a lover?"

The butterfly explained, "Her lover is the moon. I witnessed it with my own eyes. I had fallen asleep on a bush by the pond, and when a breeze stirred, I had to fly for my life. It was a close call, let me tell you."

"But what does that have to do with our sister? How do you know about her lover?" the lilies pressed.

"Oh, I forgot to mention," replied the butterfly. "Your sister lily's lover is the moon. I saw them together. That's how I know." And off it went, leaving the lilies astounded.



Later on, the sleeping lily opened her petals halfway and peeped out. Her sisters approached her, saying,

"We have discovered your secret. Your lover is the moon."

Defiantly, the lily opened wide and proudly declared, "Yes, the moon is my lover, and he loves only me."

"But why choose the cold moon as your lover? He is not as warm and affectionate as the sun, and he is so far away," the other lilies questioned.

"The sun is far from us, yet we love him," the lily replied. "Besides, when one loves, time and space hold no significance."

"But why have a lover who requires you to stay awake all night when you could have the sun, sleep at night like us, and share him with the rest of us?" her sisters wondered.

"Have you never heard that time and space mean nothing to those who love?" the lily asked. Her sister lilies remained silent. That night, as the moon shone high in the starry sky above the pond, they sleepily glanced at their sister and her lover. They witnessed the moon looking directly into her beautiful face, which appeared ethereal and pure in the silver light of his smile. She seemed to belong to a world beyond their own.

"Isn't she beautiful?" one lily said to another. "I had never realized her beauty surpassed ours before."

"It's love, sister," the other lily responded. "She loves the moon, and her love's radiance shines through when he smiles back at her. To be loved for oneself alone and possess an exclusive lover must be truly enchanting."

"But she has to stay awake all night," the other lily remarked. "I could never do that for anyone."

"He who loves little receives little in return," the lily replied. "Our sister has learned many things unknown to us."

As night fell, all the lilies closed their petals tightly and peacefully slept. Only the water-lily who loved the moon opened her waxen petals wide, basking in the moon's smile. Softly and quietly, she whispered, "Time and space mean nothing to those who love."