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The Star And The Lily

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Once there bloomed in a garden a beautiful white lily, on a long stalk so tall that she towered over all the flowers that bloomed near her.

Of course, the sunflowers at the back of the garden were much taller and the hollyhocks that grew in front of the sunflowers were taller, too, and also the sweet peas. But they were not near the beautiful lily. Beside her bloomed pansies and poppies, and many other beautiful flowers, but they were not so tall as the lily.

A rose-bush growing near the lily noticed that she drooped and did not look as happy as usual one morning, and she asked what had happened.

"Oh, I am thinking of some one I love," answered the lily, with a sigh.

"That should not bring a sigh or make you look sad, my fair friend," said the rose. "Love should make you happier than anything else in the world."

"Yes, I suppose it should," answered the lily, "but my love is so far away I am not sure that I am loved in return."

"Oh, immodest lily!" said the rose. "I thought you the most modest of all of us, and here you are in love with some one you do not know. Tell me about it, do?" said the rose, alert with interest.

"I will tell you, dear rose," said the lily, "and perhaps you can tell me how to win the love of my beloved, or how I can overcome my great love for him."

"I will do anything I can for you, my dear," said the rose, "but do tell me quick all about your love-story."

"One night," began the lily, "when everything was quiet in the garden and all the other flowers were fast asleep, I happened to raise my head and open my petals. The moonlight was streaming over the garden, and I looked around at all the sleeping flowers and wondered how I happened to awake at that hour, when, looking up to see the moon in all her splendor, I beheld a beautiful star looking



down at me.

"At first I thought it was looking at the whole garden, but then I knew all the others were asleep and I must be the one it was smiling at, for it twinkled and brightened as I gazed at it.

"I lowered my head and slyly looked again, and still the star was looking, and every time it saw me raise my head it would twinkle a smile at me. The next night I wanted to make sure it was I that the star really smiled at, and when it was bedtime I only bowed my head and did not sleep.

"Then when the garden was still and I was sure you all slept I again raised my head and saw my star smiling straight down at me.

"This time I was sure I was the only one that the star could be smiling at, and I raised my head and opened my petals and let all the perfume of my heart go up to him, and I did not feel that I was bold, for we were all alone and he smiled down upon me, his love for two nights.

"But now I am sorrowful, for it is day and I cannot see my beloved. He seems only to show his love for me at night. What shall I do, dear rose? I am not strong enough to stay awake all day and all night too. Soon I will die if I do, and yet I cannot live if I do not see my star each night. That is why I sigh and look so sad, for I might sleep all night some time and my star will think I do not love him."

The rose shook her head. "I cannot advise you, my friend," she said; "you are in love with some one far above you, and are not even sure you are loved in return. Be wise and sleep through the night as the rest of us do, and give up this uncertain lover."

But the lily only drooped her head and sighed, and that night looked for her lover again, but the sky was dark and no bright smile greeted the poor lily. All night she gazed into the dark sky, and when the first light of day came she was still looking for her lover.

The rose looked at her when the sun came upon them that morning, but the lily did not raise her head; she was too full of sorrow to lift her face to the sun, and by and by the rose saw that she was drooping lower and lower, so she spoke to her.

"Lily," she said, leaning closer to her, "raise your head and let the sun cheer you. You will die if you do not open your petals and get the light and air."

But the poor lily was past caring for sun or air; her petals were limp and her stalk withered.

The rose leaned closer to her as she faintly answered, and this is what she heard:

"Good-by, my friend; I shall bloom no more. My bright star hid his face from me last night and I have no desire to live longer. Perhaps I may see him after I am gone from here, and if that is true I shall be happy, but I cannot live here and not see his face."

The wind blew through the garden just then and took the lily from her stem, scattering her petals far out of the garden.

"Poor lily!" murmured the rose, "she went the way we all will go, but her heart was broken and she died before her time. If she had only looked for love here in the garden instead of looking so far above her she might be blooming now, poor lily."

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