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Peter's Trip with the Man in the Moon

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Peter loved the man in the moon. Every night when the moon was full, he would sit at his window and watch the round, jolly face up in the sky until his eyes grew heavy.

One night he sat so long that he fell asleep right there, leaning against the window frame. And then something strange began to happen.

The moon grew larger. It drifted closer — past the far hills, past the church steeple, past the branches of the oak tree at the garden's edge. And there behind the nearest branch, enormous and kind, was the old man's face, grinning so wide his cheeks nearly reached his ears.

"Well, Peter! Here I am. Now how do you like me?"

"Oh," said Peter, "I think you're wonderful!"

The man in the moon laughed until the window shook. "Wonderful! Ha! There certainly isn't anyone else quite like me, that's true enough. Perhaps that's what wonderful means. Now — since you like me so well, I'll take you for a ride."

He held out his hand, and Peter stepped into a chariot made entirely of silver mist. They rose up through the cool dark air, past the sleeping town — the houses looking absurdly small already — and into the great sky.

They visited the stars, one by one. Each star had its own queen, and Peter met them all — some cool and silver, some warm and golden. Little elves and brownies lived there too, tending lights and running errands. The man in the moon showed Peter how he moved through the sky each week, turning so that children everywhere in the world could see a full moon once a month.

Peter looked down at the earth, small and quiet far below, and felt a sudden flutter of nerves.

"What if I fell?" he asked.



"Has the man in the moon ever tumbled to earth?" the old man asked cheerfully.

Peter admitted he had never heard of it. That seemed sufficient.

All too soon, a distant sound drifted up through the dark — a breakfast bell, soft but persistent. Peter opened his eyes. The window was grey with early morning, and he was sitting exactly where he had fallen asleep.

But oh, what a sleep it had been.

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