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*A talented young writer, third generation member of the Wellington Swiss Club, Zita Keller, sent us the following story. Zita has just started Intermediate; we hope she still finds time to go on writing stories. Watch her progress!*

# Moonlight

Rosie snuggled into bed. Her mother was just about to read her a story. It was her favourite kind, a story about the moon. In Rosie's world, there was no moon, stars or sun. You had to carry lamps during the day as well as night. The people ate a strange sort of plant that tasted like rubber. But since there was no sun, what else could they grow? Rosie knew that long ago, there were no stars or sun, but there was a moon. Then some wicked men angered her, and she refused to show her beauty again until someone who had never told a lie came and found her. Her mother snapped the book shut. "Time to sleep, Rosie" she said. "Yes mum," replied Rosie, and she drifted off to sleep.

## 10 Years later

Many years had passed since that dark night. Rosie was now a girl of twenty, beautiful and silent, and she had never told a lie. She was determined to find the moon and send her back into the sky again. She was on a ship, sailing in search of Moonbeam Island. As there was nothing in the sky, there were lamps hanging on every available place on the ship. Rosie's intention was good, but somebody else's intention was not. Sir Richard the Great, a famous man, was in search of this island too. Sir Richard was a bad man, and since he had told a great many lies, he had to follow Rosie to be able to find the island. Since the moon had great power, Sir Richard wanted to use her for wicked things. Suddenly Rosie saw a dark shape, not far in front. She grabbed one of the lamps, and held it out as far as she could. Could it be? Yes! "Moonbeam Island," Rosie whispered.

Rosie had acquired a map, showing exactly where the island was, what challenges were on it, and how to get through them. The first challenge was the Axe of Torus. Only one who had never lied could get through. Rosie passed under the axe. It grazed her head, but it didn't fall. Now Sir Richard was in trouble. He couldn't follow her, but if he didn't, he would never get to the Moon. Then he noticed that the axe was still arranging itself back into its normal position. So, quick as a wink, he slipped underneath the axe. The axe came down almost immediately, but it was too late. Sir Richard had already passed. Silently, he followed Rosie to the next challenge.

Rosie walked for a while, until she came to a stop in front of letters that were carved into big blocks of stone in the ground. She looked at the map, and it said that this peculiar challenge was called the Alphabet of the Sun. I wonder what a sun is, thought Rosie as she tried to decipher the challenge. Maybe, I have to spell Sun! She put her foot on an S in the first row of letters, and immediately knew she was wrong. Two slabs fell from either side of her, and tumbled into a crevasse beneath. Rosie just managed to stay on, and she quickly jumped back onto solid ground. Not sun, so maybe moon? Cautiously, she placed a foot on the M closest to her. As soon as the K and R on either side started to fall, she jumped back. What else can

I spell? Rosie thought. Temple? Moonbeam? Phoenix? Phoenix! Of course! But in case she was wrong, Rosie threw a rock onto P near her. It didn't collapse. Cautiously, she jumped onto the P. When nothing happened, she spelt out the rest of the letters and then leapt to safety on the other side. Sir Richard followed her.

This challenge looked like a queen's wardrobe. There were clothes neatly hung up on branches of the trees, and folded on the forest floor. This challenge was called garment forest. A peculiar name, thought Rosie to herself. It appeared she had to pick out the clothes that she liked best, and then laid them on the forest floor. She decided she liked the dress with the jewels on it, and gently picked it up and laid it on the floor. Suddenly, a gigantic tree fell, and Rosie jumped out of the way just in time. Nope, thought Rosie. She thought hard. Maybe the Phoenix's clothes? No, that was silly. Birds didn't wear clothes. What about the moon's clothes? Rosie thought back to the pictures in the books her mother used to read her. She ran around the trees and looked for the familiar white dress. Just when she was about to give up, she spotted it, hanging on the branch of a small tree tucked away behind a very big one. Carefully, she laid it on the floor. Immediately the trees parted, showing a pathway. Carefully, hardly daring to breathe, Rosie made her way along the path.

At the end of the path, there was a small, broken down hut, tilting to one side and looking like it needed a *really* good clean up. When Rosie pushed open the creaking door, she saw a small table with a scratched, uneven surface. On it, there was a beautiful, clear glass globe, looking a bit like a fortune teller's ball. Only, this glass ball shone with a soft light, and looked much nicer than a simple fortune teller's ball. Next to it, lying on the table was a beautiful orange rose. It shone just like the ball, except it shone with a bright sort of light, rather than the soft white light coming from the ball. Just as Rosie reached for the flower, she heard a voice behind her say, "Is *this* the Moon's home? It's so ugly!" Rosie whipped around to see Sir Richard standing in the doorway. "The moon takes whatever form she likes" said a mysterious voice, making both Rosie and Sir Richard jump out of their skins. Suddenly, the dirty hovel transformed into a beautiful palace, and the flower grew into the Phoenix, and the globe transformed into... the moon. "I choose whatever form I wish to, man," said the moon. The moon was a girl of about twelve, with a long, pure white nightgown and she had shoulder length, jet black hair. The Phoenix looked like a bird, with orange-red feathers, and flames flickering about its body. Both the moon and the Phoenix were letting off some kind of light; the moon shone with a soft silver glow, and the Phoenix shone so bright that it was hard to look at. "I want your power!" said Sir Richard suddenly. "Give me your power!" "Most certainly not!" said the moon, frowning down at Sir Richard. "Then I'll torture the girl until you do!" screamed Sir Richard, and he lunged for Rosie.

Suddenly, he slammed into an invisible wall. Rosie was being protected. "How dare you!" said the moon. "I will look after this girl, and keep her somewhere where she is safe from you." Then the moon waved a hand and the Phoenix, the moon and Rosie all started to disappear. "The Phoenix shall become the sun, and may those who love what is right and good rejoice in its warmth. This girl shall become Sirius, the first star, and may future generations look up at her and remember her story. And I shall become the moon, ever shining, ever glowing, and showing the way for those who are lost."