Nia the Night Owl Fairy
Special thanks to Narinder Dhami

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“Hold on tight, Kirsty,” Rachel called to her best friend, Kirsty Tate. “We’re almost there!”

“I’m right behind you, Rachel!” Kirsty called back.

The girls were walking carefully across the wobbly bridge in the Forest Fun Adventure Playground. The wooden
bridge was part of a high-ropes course. It was strung between two trees way above the ground. It swayed and wobbled gently as the girls moved across it, making them shriek with laughter.

“Oh, this is too much fun!” Kirsty gasped. “I love Camp Stargaze, Rachel. There’s so much to do here.”

The girls and their parents were spending a week of summer vacation at Camp Stargaze, and the Forest Fun playground was in a clearing in the woods on the edge of the campground. There was a treetop walk, a few hideouts, and two ziplines next to each other, as well as the wobbly bridge. The biggest tree in the clearing, the one the girls were heading toward on the wobbly bridge, had a wooden treehouse in its branches.
There was also a twisty slide that wrapped around the tree’s trunk and led all the way down to an underground fort built below the roots of the tree. It was late afternoon, just after snack time, and the girls were still enjoying the warmth of the summer sun.

“I know,” Rachel agreed. “Camp Stargaze is amazing. And not only that, we’re in the middle of another exciting fairy adventure, too!”

Shortly after Rachel and Kirsty had arrived at the camp, their fairy friends had asked for their help once again.
The girls soon met the Night Fairies, who were responsible for making sure that the hours between dusk and dawn were peaceful in both the human and fairy worlds. They did this work with the help of their special bags of magic fairy dust. But while the Night Fairies were at a party under the stars, Jack Frost and his goblins had stolen the magic bags from them! Jack Frost was determined to cause nighttime chaos. With his icy magic, he sent the goblins to hide the bags in the human world. But Rachel, Kirsty, and the Night Fairies had already found four of the seven bags, and they were hoping to find the others, too.

“Rachel, Kirsty!” a voice shouted. “We’re over here.”

The girls glanced up and saw their new
friends Matt and Lucas hanging out of one of the treehouse windows. Rachel and Kirsty wobbled to the end of the bridge and went to join them inside the big treehouse. “Have you been on the ziplines yet?” Lucas asked with a grin.

Kirsty shook her head. “I think I need to recover from the wobbly bridge first!” she replied.

Matt was still hanging out of the window. “Look, Lucas,” he said, pointing down at the ground below them. “There’s your mom and Lizzy.”

Lucas’s mom and his little sister were wandering through the clearing. They
waved up at the treehouse, and Lucas, Rachel, Kirsty, and Matt waved back.

“Let’s go down the twisty slide and say hi!” Rachel suggested.

The top of the silver slide was just outside the treehouse door. Rachel climbed onto it and then immediately shot down with a shriek of surprise.

“It’s really slippery!” she cried as she disappeared from view.

“Watch out, Rachel!” Kirsty yelled as she jumped on the slide, too. “Here I come!”

Laughing, Rachel zoomed around the trunk of the tree, then through the
trapdoor to the underground fort at the bottom. She tumbled off the end of the slide and onto a soft cushion. Kirsty came flying into the underground house a few seconds later, and the two girls grinned at each other.

“Here come the boys!” Rachel said as they heard Matt and Lucas sliding toward them.

First Matt, and then Lucas, tumbled into the underground fort. Next, all four of them climbed out and ran to join Lucas’s mom and Lizzy. They were staring very closely at a large, leafy bush.

“What are you looking at?” Lucas asked curiously.
“Porcupines,” Lucas’s mom replied. Both her and Lizzy’s eyes were wide with delight. “Look!”

Rachel and Kirsty peeked into the bush, and saw two small porcupines scampering around in the leaves.

“Aren’t they cute?” said Rachel as the porcupines scurried back and forth.

Just then, Kirsty heard a rustling noise in the undergrowth behind them. She spun around and caught a glimpse of gray fur and a black-and-white striped head. Quickly, she nudged Rachel.

“There’s a badger over there!” Kirsty whispered.

Rachel, Lucas, and the others watched
in amazement as the badger came into view. He was sniffing through the leaves in search of something to eat.

“This is great!” Matt said, looking excited as the badger hurried past, not even noticing them. “I’ve never seen a badger or a porcupine during the day before.”

Kirsty frowned. “Matt’s right,” she said to Rachel. “Don’t porcupines and badgers usually come out at night?”

“Let’s go up to the wildlife hideout in the treetops and look for more animals,” Rachel suggested. The hideout was a special shelter where people could watch
animals without scaring them away.

“We’re going back to camp to play football,” Lucas told the girls. “See you later.”

The wildlife hideout was hidden behind a canopy of leaves in the branches of one of the trees. Kirsty and Rachel climbed the ladder and then hurried along one of the wooden walkways that connected the treetop trail. When they arrived, the hideout was empty. There were wildlife posters on the walls. Two pairs of binoculars lay on the seat in front of the window.

“Look, Rachel, we can see the camp,”
Kirsty pointed out, picking up a pair of the binoculars.

“And past the camp, too,” Rachel added. She took the other binoculars and looked through them. “We can see the river we sailed up to get to the camp. And I can see cows and sheep in the field across the river—OH!” Rachel looked startled.

“What is it?” Kirsty asked.
“The farm animals are all fast asleep!” Rachel told her. “Isn’t that strange?”
Kirsty focused her binoculars on the field across the river. Now she could also see that the cows and sheep were all sleeping happily!
“But it’s still daytime!” Kirsty pointed out, confused. “Why are the nighttime creatures like the badger and porcupines awake during the day? And why are the animals like cows and sheep, who should be awake, sound asleep?”