Kenji and the Lantern Fox

An enchanted forest adventure starring Kenji



STARWREN



Kenji loved exploring the woods behind his grandmother's house, even when the sun was going down. Tonight a soft blue light flickered between the trees. "Fireflies never glow blue," he whispered.



He followed the light to a hollow oak and found a small silver fox with a glowing tail. “I’m Ember,” said the fox. “The forest lanterns have gone dark, and I can’t find my way home.”



“The lanterns light the path for every creature,” said Ember. “Without them, the Moonlight Market can’t open.” Kenji looked down the dark path. He gulped, straightened his satchel, and said, “I’ll help.”



At the Mossy Bridge sat an old toad. “To cross, answer my riddle,” he croaked. “What grows bigger every time you share it?”



Kenji thought of sharing his lunch with his little sister. “Joy!” he said. The toad grinned, and the first lantern flickered on as Ember’s tail touched it. Golden light spilled across the bridge.



Deep in the forest, the second lantern hung high in a giant tree. Kenji climbed the twisting roots one at a time. His hands trembled, but he remembered Grandma’s words: brave means going on, even when you’re scared.



The lantern was caught in a tangle of vines, right beside a sleeping bird's nest. Kenji worked very slowly and very quietly, untying each vine without waking a single feather.



Click! The lantern glowed, and the whole branch lit up like a string of stars. From up here, Kenji could see tiny lights waking all across the forest. “We did it,” whispered Ember.



The last lantern, the Moon Lantern, was in the middle of a clearing, but thick mist hid the way. Ember’s tiny glow wasn’t enough. Kenji stopped. “Maybe,” he said slowly, “we don’t have to do this alone.”



Kenji called out softly. One by one, a deer, two rabbits and an owl stepped out of the shadows, each with a little glow of their own. Together their light cut a path through the mist.



Ember touched the Moon Lantern, and it blazed silver-gold. Lanterns, stalls and tiny doors lit up everywhere. The Moonlight Market was open! Ember's whole family ran out to meet him.



Ember gave Kenji a little glowing leaf. “So you remember,” said the fox. Kenji walked home to the warm light of Grandma’s window. Whenever he felt unsure, he held the leaf and remembered: the smallest light can still show the way. The End.



Made just for Kenji

One night in the woods, Kenji met a fox who needed help, and learned that even the smallest light can show the way.

For Kenji. (Sample book: Kenji is a fictional child.)

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