

THE MOONLIT PAGE

The Missing Note



The kitchen radio had accompanied Joel and Tamsin's breakfast for so long that they sometimes began swaying before the music did.

On Tuesday it produced a low hum and nothing else. Joel turned it off. They would take it to the repair shop later.

Tamsin buttered the toast in silence. Then she began humming a little tune they both knew, although neither could remember where they had first heard it.

Joel supplied a few uncertain notes. Halfway through, they both stopped at the same gap.

From the open window came one small, exact note.

A brown bird stood on the sill. It tilted its head towards them, then looked back at the garden.

"Better memory than either of us," Joel said.

They started again. This time Tamsin remembered the missing part before the bird could offer it.

Joel put down his knife and held out one hand. She left the toast on its plate, and they took two slow steps beside the counter.

The bird flew away. They lost the tune once more and hummed something else, less confidently but at the right speed for their kitchen.

When the toast was eaten, Tamsin set a folded cloth over the silent radio to keep off the crumbs. Joel moved the chair back, leaving their little patch of floor clear.

To remember

1. The breakfast radio stops working
2. Joel and Tamsin hum but forget the same note
3. A windowsill bird supplies one exact note before flying away
4. They keep swaying to their own uncertain tune and leave a clear space beside the counter.