

The Arctic Lantern



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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In the snowy Arctic, where the wind whispers soft and cold, lived a little reindeer named Piko. His fur was warm brown, with a creamy white chest and belly. His antlers were just budding, small and fuzzy. Around his neck hung a small round lantern, glowing warm amber. Piko loved to watch the sky at night, waiting for something magical.



Piko's family lived in a cozy valley surrounded by tall, snow-covered hills. Every evening, Piko's mother, Nana, would tell stories about the northern lights. 'They dance when the sky is happy,' she said, her gentle eyes sparkling. Piko listened with wonder, his big dark eyes wide. He wished he could see the lights dance right above his home.



One night, as Piko stood outside his family's den, his lantern began to glow. It glowed brighter and brighter, filling the snow with golden light. Piko looked up and gasped. The northern lights were dancing across the sky! Waves of green and purple and pink swirled above. 'They're here!' Piko whispered, his heart thumping with excitement.



But the lights were far away, over the hills. Piko wanted his family to see them close. 'I must find a safe place where we can all watch,' he said. His lantern pulsed, as if saying, 'Follow me!' Piko took a deep breath and started up the snowy trail, the lantern lighting his way. The night was quiet, and the stars twinkled above.



Piko had not gone far when he heard a rustle. From behind a snowbank popped a white hare with long ears tipped in grey. She wore a sky-blue knitted scarf wrapped twice around her neck. 'Hello!' she said cheerfully. 'I'm Mika. Where are you going with that pretty lantern?' Piko explained about the lights and his search for a safe hill.



Mika's round dark eyes sparkled. 'I know just the place!' she said. 'The open ridge has the clearest view of the sky. But it's a bit of a climb.' Piko's lantern glowed brighter, and he felt brave. 'Will you show me?' he asked. Mika nodded, her pink nose twitching. 'Follow me!' She hopped ahead, her strong hind legs carrying her easily over the snow.



As they climbed, Mika chatted about the sky. 'The lights are made of magic,' she said. 'They come out when the world is still and peaceful.' Piko listened, his small black nose sniffing the cold air. The lantern's light danced on the snow. 'I want my family to feel that magic,' Piko said. Mika smiled. 'They will, once we find the spot.'



They reached a small clearing where the trees thinned. Piko's lantern flickered, then glowed steady and strong. 'Look!' Mika pointed with her ear. 'The ridge is just beyond those trees.' But Piko hesitated. The path looked steep and dark. 'What if we get lost?' he whispered. Mika touched his shoulder with her paw. 'Your lantern will guide us. And I know the way.'



So they went on, Piko's lantern casting a warm circle of light. The northern lights rippled above, like colorful ribbons. Piko felt a tingle of wonder. 'It's beautiful,' he breathed. Mika nodded. 'And it's safe here. The ridge is open, so we can see everything.' They climbed higher, the snow crunching under their hooves and paws.



Suddenly, Piko heard a familiar sound. It was the silver bell on Nana's red-and-white leg band! He turned and saw his family coming up the trail. Nana led the way, her large curved antlers proud. Behind her came the others, keeping close. 'Piko!' Nana called. 'Your lantern led us to you.' Piko's heart swelled with joy.



Nana nuzzled Piko gently. 'You found the way,' she said. Mika greeted the family with a cheerful hop. 'The ridge is just ahead,' she said. 'It's the best place to see the lights.' Piko's lantern glowed brighter than ever, as if it knew they were almost there. The whole family followed Piko and Mika up the last stretch.



At the top of the ridge, the sky opened wide. The northern lights danced in great swirling waves of green, purple, and pink. Piko's lantern glowed in harmony with the sky. 'We're here!' he cried. The family gathered around, their eyes wide with wonder. Mika wrapped her scarf tighter and smiled. 'See? I told you it was worth the climb.'



Piko found a cozy spot on the hill, soft with snow. 'Let's watch together,' he said. Nana lay down, and the youngest nestled close. The others settled around, their warm brown fur brushing. Piko's lantern cast a gentle glow, and the northern lights shimmered above. Everyone felt safe and full of wonder, their hearts warm in the cold night.



As they watched, the lights seemed to dance just for them. Piko leaned against Nana, her silver bell tinkling softly. 'The lantern glows when the lights are near,' he said. 'It led me to this safe place.' Nana licked his fuzzy antlers. 'You were brave and kind, Piko. And you shared the magic with all of us.' Mika nodded, her scarf fluttering in the breeze.



The family stayed on the hill until the lights faded. Piko's lantern dimmed to a soft glow. 'We can come back whenever the lights dance,' Nana said. 'And we'll always be safe together.' Piko smiled, his big dark eyes reflecting the last colors of the sky. He knew that wonder was all around, and that family made it even brighter.



From that night on, Piko's lantern was a special treasure. Whenever the northern lights appeared, it glowed, and Piko led his family to the cozy hill. They would watch the sky in awe, feeling safe and full of wonder. And Piko knew that the magic of nature was best shared with those you love, under the dancing lights of the Arctic sky.