

## The half-blood

Somewhere in the East among the trees of a dense forest, on a dark stormy night a special foal was born. His parents called him Opal and raised him with special care. The foal loved them very much and the place where he lived, but no matter how much love surrounded him he could not hide who he was. His coat was pale gray with tiny horn on his forehead and tiny wings on his back. He was half-blood. Half unicorn, half pegasus.

His mother taught him magic and tried to raise him as a unicorn but with his tiny horn Opal found it very difficult to cast a spell and the other unicorn foals always made fun of him.

His father taught his son to fly among the pegasi but his small wings could barely keep him up in the air so he could only fly very short distances. Pegasus foals never played with him because of this.

Opal was forced to play alone. He had learned everything he could but no matter how hard he tried he couldn't fly or use the magic perfectly.

As he grew a little older he decided to do something to change the situation. One day he called his parents together for a serious conversation.

"Mother, Father. I know I'm neither a unicorn nor a pegasus" he began "I also know that you loved me for who I am and I will be grateful for the rest of my life. But I need to find out what my purpose is in life. And I am asking for your help."

The unicorn and the pegasus looked at each other sadly. They did not know their love was causing so much trouble and that Heaven would give their only child such a difficult fate. Maybe they made a mistake. Perhaps there was a reason why any kind of relationship between the two races was forbidden.

The pegasus stepped forward and hugged his son with his huge white wings.

"We understand if you're not feeling good here and we're aware it's all our fault. But we love you and we want you to be happy. That is why we will support you in everything and stand by you for as long as we can."

"Thank you, Dad!"

Then the unicorn approached him rubbing her nose against the foal's neck, tears streaming down her snow-white fur.

“You are the most beautiful gift in our life. The forest has never seen a more beautiful creature than you. Don’t care about what others say, always be yourself and wherever life takes you never forget where you came from and who you are.”

"Thank you, Mother," Opal replied and gently rubbed his nose against her mother's neck. "Please help me, where should I go? Where should I look for my path?"

"If you cross the river and head West where you see the top of the high mountains in the distance you'll find Milith. Talk to her. She will know what to do." said the unicorn.

“Thank you! I'm leaving right now” the foal stomped on the ground and said goodbye to his parents then turned and galloped away.

"May the spirit of the enchanted follow your way, son!" his father shouted after him then flew up into the air and watched his son until he disappeared into the endless grey of the evening.

Opal ran as fast as his legs could go. He didn't know what was waiting for him, would he ever find what he was looking for? He wasn't even sure if he could see his parents again. But he had to go, he had to change his life at any cost. He didn't want to be different anymore excommunicated by others because he wasn't snow-white in the color of his fur or just couldn't fly and cast magic very well. If he can not be like the others at least he wanted to do something that makes him accepted.

After a long run he rested by the river for the first time. He drank from it's crystal clear water and wondered if he was doing the right thing. He could still turn back. But why would he do that?

Before he could change his mind, he saw something familiar across the river. He saw two unicorns galloping along the bank. Opal didn't know what to do. He would have liked to go to them but he was afraid that they might make fun of him or chase him away because he was different.

Then he saw something else. Huge gray wolves ran after the unicorns clenching their teeth bloodthirsty. No doubt they got into trouble and tried to find help on the riverbank. But Opal knew exactly that they were running to the wrong place. Wolves can swim well and they have no chance crossing the water.

He neighed loudly and started running towards them. He was a lightning fast runner and had little to no competitor on the ground, so he quickly caught up with them. Then he bounced off the ground, slipped through the air over the river and landed in front of the wolves. He faced the evil animals, pointed his horns at them and concentrated. With little of his magic he used a low level spell scattering a dazzling light across the river. He knew that wolves were creatures of darkness and light was the only thing they feared and his plan worked. The wolves fled back into the dark woods.

Opal was proud of himself. Looks like his strength is still worth something and he is capable of great things!

"How did you do that?" he heard a kind voice from behind him.

He turned around and saw that those he had rescued were standing behind him looking at him with widely opened eyes gleaming with admiration. They looked similar but a little younger than him and they had no horns or wings instead their bodies were covered with brown hair.

"Well, I did magic," he said in embarrassment.

"Wow!" they shouted at once.

"Who are you guys?" Opal asked. He had never seen such creatures before.

"We're wild horses, we wandered a little off the herd and stumbled upon these evil wolves. I don't even know what would have happened if you weren't here" one of them confessed with pinned ears.

"My name is Breeze" said the other one "And this is my friend Storm. What is your name?"

"I'm Opal"

"Opal! What a beautiful name!" smiled Breeze "Where are you going? Are you in a hurry?"

"I'm actually looking for Milith. I have a very important question for her. Do you know where I can find her?"

"We do! Of course we do!" Storm laughed "Our herd is going exactly where she lives, come with us!"

Opal nodded and the three of them ran together. He was amazed by how kind these two foals were to him. Even though he looked very different. For the first time in his life he seemed to have been accepted and this filled his heart with warmth. Running a race they galloped along the river with the wind until they found the herd.

Brown, black, multicolored horses, foals, and adults grazed peacefully together. They greeted the foals with great delight and welcomed the newcomer warmly. Just like Storm and Breeze the others did not question who he was, they were not afraid of him or hated him because he was different. Rather, they thanked him a hundred times for saving the lives of the two naughty foals and promised him they will help finding Milith.

That night Opal could barely sleep, he was so excited. He talked to everyone in the herd and learned a lot about wild horse life, their travels, their families, and their way of thinking. He realized that honesty and togetherness were the most important things to them, they were like a real big family. He wished unicorns and pegasi were like that. But they were much more selfish. He was always busy learning how to use the magic or fly properly forgetting what it was like to really care about one another. He knew that his parents were different, they had done much to be together, they had even broken the laws. He missed them a lot.

With the arrival of dawn the herd set off. They left the river behind with a sharp turn and headed West. They were in no hurry making sure that everyone could keep up the pace no one was left behind.

Opal continued to run together with Storm and Breeze. They talked a lot on the way, he entertained them with various magic tricks when they were bored or fanned them with his little wings when they were hot.

"We've arrived," one of the older horses remarked as they reached the edge of a forest. "You'll find Milith here."

Opal's heart was pounding in his throat. As he stood right there all of a sudden he didn't want to leave the herd he felt so good with them and he thought if he went into this forest the herd wouldn't wait for him to come back and maybe they would never see each other again. On the other hand, he wondered who was waiting for him there and what exactly he left his family for a few days ago. He has learned a lot during this time. Maybe he even changed a little bit and for a short time he completely forgot all his sorrows. But as he stood there at the crossroads he was concerned about what he had to sacrifice for the unknown. He watched the huge trees of the forest quietly, listened to the rustle of the leaves, the soft song of the wind.

"Do I really need to go in there?" he whispered.

"Don't be afraid, we'll go you!" Storm jumped beside him followed by Breeze.

"Don't be afraid of anything," the older horse reassured him. "We'll wait here and if you choose to you can continue your journey with us."

Tears welled in Opal's eyes. No one has ever been so kind to him except his parents. He would have liked to accept the offer, but somewhere deep in his soul he was afraid after a while everything would be the same as it was at home. What if one day these horses will realize that he is different and not one of them. Then what will happen? He couldn't risk it. He had to find this creature named Milith and ask her how to proceed.

"Thanks for everything!" He nodded politely to the older horse. "And I'd be grateful if you could accompany me" he smiled at the two foals.

They bounced and neighed in joy and then the three of them disappeared into the dark shadows of the forest.

Illuminated by the tip of Opal's horn he tried to navigate in the dark. They walked inside the thick of the forest where the crown of the trees barely let in any light, even though the sun was bright outside.

"Tell me, what exactly are we looking for?" Storm pulled closer.

"Um...I don't really know ..." Opal confessed as the two foals screamed.

"You do not know???" they asked aloud.

"I thought you knew since you led me to the woods."

"Milith lives here, everyone knows that," Storm said.

"But who or what she is, no one knows," Breeze continued.

Opal thought what led him here? Maybe there is no one here to help him. Maybe his parents were misled too.

He stopped, raised his horn high and whispered softly to the wind.

"Are you there, Milith?"

There was no answer. Then he flapped his wings and tried again.

"Are you there, Milith?"

Suddenly the wind intensified stirring the dry leaves on the ground hissing loudly. For a heartbeat a blinding light flashed in the woods then a beautiful creature revealed itself to the three good friends.

Opal watched with widened eyes he had never seen anything like this before. Her body was covered with pearly scales, a huge pair of wings waving on her back, long horns shining on her head. Her silver eyes were glowing of confidence.

"Are you Milith?" Opal asked in a trembling voice.

The creature shook her body gracefully, waved her wings, and introduced herself politely.

"Greetings, I'm Milith, the dreamseer. Welcome to my home."

"A dragon ..." Storm whispered in amazement.

Opal gathered all his courage and stepped closer to the dragon.

"My name is Opal. I am half-blood, unicorn and pegasus blood flowing in my veins. I came because my parents said you could help me find my place.

"Half-blood ..." the dragon repeated. "Do you think the place where you were born is not your home?"

"Yes, I believe. I don't have enough power to belong to the unicorns and I can't fly well enough to live among the pegasi. I want to know where I belong. Is there anyone out there who is just like me?"

Milith sighed heavily and shook her head.

"You've come a long way my half-blood friend. Your worries not only weigh on your shoulders but I know what you need to do. Consider what I am saying now. Don't look for your place among those you resemble. You are one of those who accept you as you are"

Opal listened to the dragon's charming voice with wide eyes. He is half unicorn yet there would be no place for him among them, and half pegasus but he does not belong to them either. So where? Maybe to the wild horses?

"Stay with us!" The foals listened carefully and without hesitation they interrupted his thoughts.

"Your heart will know where your home is, half-blood," the dragon said disappearing from the foals' eyes as quickly as she arrived.

They were watching her fading lights and just stood there for a few moments staring at the returning darkness.

"Come on, let's go," Opal smiled at his friends, then headed back down the road.

He didn't have to think much about the answer. He felt bad for having doubts about the wild horses but he finally found peace.

He decided to stay with them. He will go where they go and use his powers for their defense. He found new family, loving friends, and endless adventures in a place he didn't even expect. And the wild horses were happy for his company. For them Opal was very special, his loving heart worth more than any other gift. They would have never found a kind and loyal friend among the unicorn or the pegassi.