

Deerskin

One beautiful star shone night a young girl stepped out into the moonlight.

It was the fifth night of a full moon and it hung in the sky like a pendulum.

The soft pads of her soles moved gracefully, heel to toe along the bleak tarmac road. She had no idea where she was heading, the distant horizon maybe. All she new was that she was heading somewhere special and that she herself was special, in an extraordinary sort of way.

Twelve years earlier, on a similar night such as this one , her mother had bought her into this world with an unknowing she would never forget. She screamed when Agatha was placed in her arms. It was not so much the look of her that made her cry out, it was the delicate, softening gaze of her sad hazel eyes that made her heart stop. They looked as if they had lived a life already, a life of unprecedented sadness that had left her without a covering of skin. She was raw and thus all the more vulnerable to the world. The poor mother could hardly contain her heartache and died a few months after Agatha was born.

So Agatha found herself in a world that did not accept her and she grew lonely.

She learnt to disguise her difference. She would buy high collared blouses with small, intricate mother of pearl buttons that ran all the way down her back. She wore the softest kid gloves that reached up to her elbow and she would always tuck the cuffs of her shirt sleeves inside them. Her skirts swayed down to the floor and she loved her long black boots that she had had specially made for her. All the clothes she wore were lined with a sort of bandage dressing, in order to protect and cushion her skinless body.

On this particular night, in the shadow of this particular moon things were about to change. For Agatha had a secret. On the fifth night of a full moon Agatha would bathe naked in its light. The moonlight would actually clothe her body with an iridescent skin. She shone with a brilliance and a beauty that allowed her loneliness to subside, if only for a night.

A long straight road lay ahead of her, the area either side was covered in dense woodland. Agatha's heart longed for love. She wanted to know what it felt to be held dear in someone's arms and to be kissed on the mouth by a lover.

She decided to venture into the forest. She had heard a noise in the distant of some sort and wanted to follow it, she felt as though it were calling to her. Her footsteps moved swiftly through the dappled moonlight of the forest, her skin changing with it. Burning bright and then mattefying in the darkness. Eventually she reached a small narrow stream and there, on the opposite side of the bank stood a beautiful she wolf. It's eyes shone with a brilliance similar to Agatha's skin. It's belly looked deflated and sagging from a recent pregnancy. Agatha wanted very much to cross over the stream and sit with the she-wolf. As she approached the water's edge , she noticed her reflection. Her shimmering fleece had changed into a covering of milky white skin. She touched her body with the tips of her newly covered fingers and felt it's smoothness. She raised her head and looked across at the she-wolf, who gazed at her with a sense of knowing and understanding. Agatha crossed the stream and stroked the she-wolf's back. In kind return the she-wolf licked and washed Agatha's skin as if she were a new born cub. Agatha felt loved at last.

She never left the forest and remained there until her death.

A legend sprung up around her story, of a girl who lived in the forest with skin as white as snow and eyes that shone as brilliant as stars.