

The Meerkat's Telescope



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

The Meerkat's Telescope

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



On the warm golden savanna, where the grass whispered and the acacia trees spread wide, lived a small meerkat named Milo. He stood upright on his hind legs, sandy tan fur glowing in the sun, a little green satchel slung across his body. Milo loved to collect shiny bits and curious things. But most of all, he loved the sky above him.



Every evening Milo sat on his favorite flat rock and watched the sky turn from blue to pink to deep, dark purple. One by one, tiny lights blinked awake. "Stars," he whispered, his dark brown eyes wide. "So many stars. I wish I could see them closer." He tapped his black nose and thought hard.



His best friend Hana the hornbill swooped down and landed beside him, her glossy black and white feathers ruffled by the breeze. Her long curved yellow beak held a tiny twig, and her red scarf fluttered. "Still watching the sky, Milo?" she asked warmly. "Always," said Milo. "Hana, what if we could look at the stars up close?"



Milo opened his green satchel and pulled out an old round lens he had found near the river. "Look! If we hold this just right, things look bigger!" Hana tilted her head, her bright amber eyes shining. "Then let's build something to hold it," she said. "A star-looker! A... telescope!" Milo jumped so high his thin tail curled. "Yes! Let's build a telescope!"



They gathered sticks and tied them with strong grass into a long, hollow tube. Milo found shiny bits of mica and smooth pebbles, and he tucked them into place with his clever little paws. Hana steadied the tube with her wing while Milo pushed the old lens into the end. "Careful," she said gently. "Almost... there!"



The telescope wobbled. It tipped. It fell with a soft thump. Milo's ears drooped. "It's too wobbly," he sighed. Hana hopped around it, studying every side. "Not too wobbly," she said. "Just needs a stronger stand. Let's find a forked branch to hold it steady." Milo grinned. "You always spot what I miss!"



They searched until they found the perfect forked branch, strong and straight. Milo dug it into the ground and balanced the telescope on top, and Hana held it still with her wing. "Now we wait for night," said Milo, bouncing on his toes. So they waited, sharing berries and telling jokes while the sun sank slowly toward the hills.



At last the sky grew dark, and the stars came out one by one. "You look first," said Hana, stepping back politely. Milo put his eye to the lens and gasped. "Oh! Hana! The stars are so bright! They're not just dots—they sparkle!" He laughed, a happy little chirping laugh, and his tail flicked with joy.



Then it was Hana's turn. She leaned her long yellow beak close and peered through the lens. "Beautiful," she breathed. "They look like tiny lanterns hanging in the dark." They took turns, one after another, each finding a new star to point at. "There's one! And there!" they cried, laughing together under the wide night sky.



Suddenly Milo froze. "Hana," he whispered. "Look here. Near the bright one. Do you see that?" Hana leaned in. "A shape," she said slowly. "A pattern I've never seen before." Four stars made a crooked line, and three more curled beneath them like a hook. "Nobody has seen this," said Milo. "We found it first!"



Hana fluttered her wings. "Quick! We must remember it!" She pulled a smooth bark sheet from Milo's satchel with her beak. Milo found a burnt stick and drew carefully, dot by dot, line by line. "There," he said. "Exactly as it looks." They checked the drawing against the sky, and it matched perfectly.



"It's like a little question mark," said Hana, tracing it with her wing tip. "Or a hook for catching dreams," said Milo, and they both laughed. The night wind rustled the grass, and the strange new pattern twinkled above them as if it were smiling. "We should give it a name," said Hana. "But maybe tomorrow."



Milo yawned a big meerkat yawn. "Tomorrow," he agreed, "we'll look for more." They rolled up their drawing and tucked it safely into the green satchel. Hana wrapped her red scarf snugly around her neck. "The sky is full of surprises," she said softly. "And we'll find them together, one star at a time."



Milo leaned against Hana's warm feathers, and she rested her beak gently on his shoulder. Above them the stars glittered like spilled sugar, and the little pattern they had found seemed to wink just for them. "You know," said Milo sleepily, "looking at stars is wonderful. But looking at stars with a friend is much better."



Hana nodded. "That's the truest thing you've said all night." They stayed a while longer, quiet and content, watching the slow twirl of the sky. Then they curled up beneath the telescope, the bark drawing safe between them, dreaming of bright stars and crooked hooks and all the wonders waiting for tomorrow.



And from that night on, Milo and Hana came back to the flat rock again and again. Each evening they found something new—a bright cluster, a wandering light, a pattern like a beetle or a crown. But their favorite was always the first: the little hooked shape they had discovered side by side. Learning, they agreed, is sweeter shared.