

DRAGON GIRLS

Stella the Starlight Dragon

by Maddy Mara

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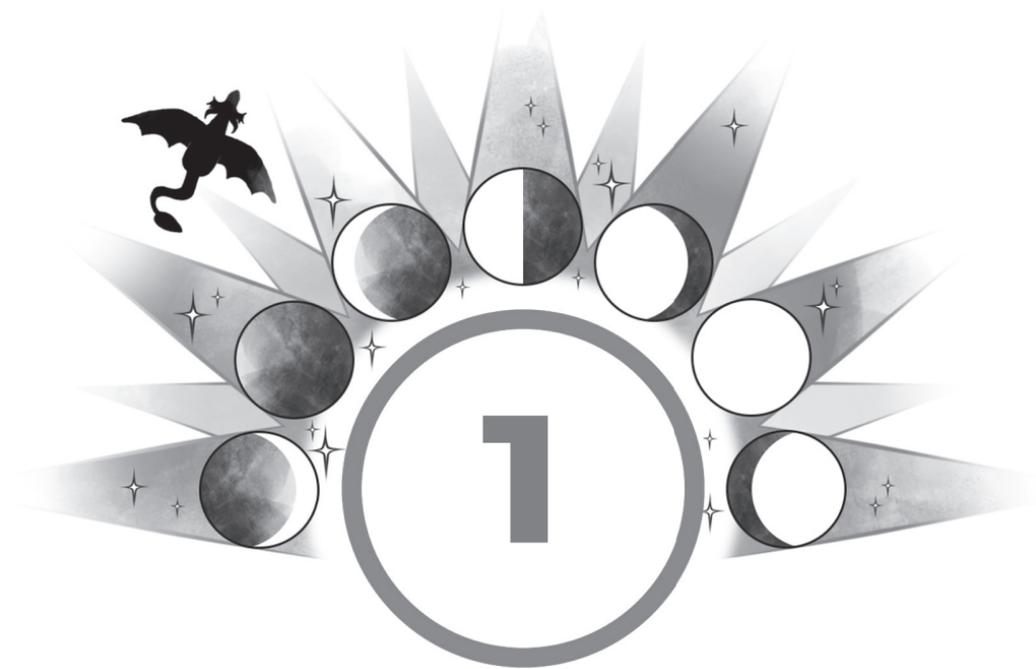
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Stella woke to the sound of her alarm. She sat up, feeling confused. Was it time to get up for school? No, it couldn't be. Starlight shone through her bedroom window. Then she saw Rosie and Phoebe, asleep on sleeping bags on the floor. Stella and her two best friends had

a sleepover most Friday nights, which meant that it was the weekend.

So why had her alarm gone off? And why was it shoved under her pillow, instead of sitting on her bedside table like usual? Stella quickly turned it off. The clock was shaped just like a star. Stella loved stars. Her name even *meant* star! But that wasn't the only reason she liked stars so much. Ever since she had been very young, Stella had wished on the first star she saw each night. Her favorite wish was always that something magical would happen.

Not so long ago, something very magical had happened. And not just to her but to her friends, too. The three girls had been

transported into the Magic Forest, where they had become Night Dragons.

Stella was the Starlight Dragon, Rosie was the Twilight Dragon, and Phoebe was the Moonlight Dragon. Stella loved everything about being a dragon. She loved how powerful she felt. She loved roaring whirls of colored smoke that were deliciously and mysteriously cool. She also loved flying, even though she was still learning how to do it the right way.

So far, the Night Dragons had twice been summoned to the Magic Forest. Stella couldn't wait until they got called again.

The glowing numbers on her clock read 11:45 p.m. Suddenly, Stella remembered why

she had set it in the first place. They were having a midnight feast! She fizzed with excitement as she pushed back the covers and stood up. The sleepover was at her house, so she was in charge of waking the others. Mostly, Sleepover Club was at Phoebe's house because she got homesick the most. But ever since they'd started going to the Magic Forest, Phoebe had become a lot braver. In fact, it had been her suggestion to have tonight's sleepover at Stella's place.

Her friends were still fast asleep as Stella knelt down beside them. "Rosie! Phoebe!" she whispered. "Time to wake up and FEAST!"

Her friends were awake in an instant.

Then Rosie smacked her forehead. “Oops! I left my treats in the kitchen. I’ll go and get them now.”

“I’ll come with you,” said Phoebe. “I put some juice in the fridge. Should I get glasses and plates while I’m there?”

“Good idea.” Stella nodded. “While you guys do that, I’ll set up a comfy spot for us here. Just be extra quiet so you don’t wake my little brother!”

As her friends sneaked out of the room, Stella got busy. She pushed the sleeping bags to one side and grabbed the quilt off her bed. Her grandmother had made it. Little silver and gold stars had been embroidered onto fabric the color of inky-blue sky.

Stella smoothed it out like a picnic blanket on the floor. Then she collected all the pillows and arranged them around the edge. From under her bed she gathered her own offerings for the feast: popcorn and candy. Perfect! Stella stretched out on the quilt to wait for her friends to return.

Stella loved nighttime. She loved the velvety blue-black of the sky, and she loved how quiet



it was once the traffic died down and everyone was asleep. You could hear different things at night. Things that were drowned out by the bustle of the day.

In fact, Stella could hear something right now. What was it? She held her breath as a soft, beautiful song floated around her.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore . . .

The song was familiar. Stella smiled and her heart began to beat faster. This song meant that soon she and her friends would be returning to the forest. From the corner of her eye, Stella saw something strange. One of the stars

on her quilt had just moved! She looked at the fabric more closely. An embroidered star shot across the quilt like a comet.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore . . .

Stella wondered if she should call out to her friends. But as quickly as she had the thought, she dismissed it. They always traveled into the Magic Forest separately.

Anyway, there was no time. The blue of her quilt floated into the air around her. Her bedroom walls began to fade away. A star shot past, sparking as it flew overhead.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, come explore.

Magic Forest, Magic Forest, hear my roar!

Stella closed her eyes as she whispered the final notes of the enchanted song. Her stomach felt very strange, like she was falling and flying at the same time. But Stella didn't mind one little bit. She couldn't wait to return to the Magic Forest!