

## The Legend of the Soulmate Rings

Rosa Blanca was riding through the desert when she spied a small golden circle of light reflecting from a dune. She hastened toward the resplendent circle of light only to discover to her dismay that it had disappeared.

Assuming it was another mirage caused by the sun shining on the eternal sands of the desert, she resumed her journey. Suddenly the vision returned, this time on a much taller dune. Once again she rushed toward it, but upon reaching the spot she found only sand, shining and beautiful like all the desert sand, but not luminous like rays of the sun.

At the end of her journey, she returned to her yurt with the glowing image impressed upon her heart.

That night she couldn't sleep. The air was crystalline and silent, so she went out to observe the heavens, millions of stars glowing against a blue-black sky of malachite. And suddenly she saw it. The same brilliant circle, not gold, but luminous white, created by the rays of the moon.

Even though she believed it was another mirage, she hurried to the spot, a shiny curvy dune, her favorite, not far from her yurt. To her surprise, she discovered that the brilliant circle was still there. She took up the glowing lunar circle and slipped it on her finger. Its gleam was transformed into a white ring as luminous as the moon. Filled with contentment, she returned to her yurt to dream.

But Rosa Blanca's heart could not let go of the vision of the evanescent rays of sun. She determined to continue her search for them.

The son of the Tang Dynasty emperor was spending a night in the forest surrounding the palace when he saw a lunar circle reflected in the leaves of a white plane tree.

He admired the spherical perfection of the reflection, and he felt his heart begin to race, filling with far-away thoughts. Once he had seized the leaf with its reflection, he found that the circle had disappeared. Amazed and disappointed, he returned to the palace.

All in the court were astonished to see that every night when the moon made its appearance, the prince would abandon the palace to lose himself among the forest trees. Upon his return, his face held a look of great sadness.

One day the prince ceased going out. He did not attend to his obligations, and his melancholy affected even the rooms dedicated to his studies. Not even his father the emperor could divine the reason for his sadness.

One morning as the prince sat by the window reading in his room, a red leaf fell upon the open pages of his book. In the leaf was reflected the most resplendent ray of the sun he had ever seen. But he refused to recognize its significance, thinking it was another illusion like that of the moon he had seen before. And so he continued reading. But the leaf alighted on every page he turned. Then, playing with the leaf's sparkle, the sun slipped onto his finger to form a ring of brilliant gold.

But the brilliant lunar ring—where was it? The prince felt an irrepressible desire to travel to foreign lands in search of it.

One day the rings and their possessors found each other and, mysteriously, a brilliant, golden band appeared in the center of Rosa Blanca's shining lunar ring, lighting her heart. At the same instant, a brilliant white lunar band appeared in the center of the golden ring belonging to the prince, and the silvery harmony of the moon swept into his heart with a passionate calm.

As legend tells, at times the lovers disappear for days, only to return with a splendor that surrounds them with a twin aura of shining light.