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Ruby and the Rainbow Unicorn

A forest. A shimmer. A unicorn.
Let the adventure begin.

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Ruby and the Rainbow Unicorn

A story for Ruby

Ruby did not consider herself an ordinary girl.

Ordinary girls, in Ruby's opinion, did sensible things like:

- keeping their socks in pairs,
- remembering where their pencils lived, and
- walking from one room to another without getting distracted by something shiny, wobbly, or vaguely suspicious.

Ruby, on the other hand, collected adventures.

Also: sparkly things, half-finished art projects, and mysterious sticks that were probably wands. Her bedroom looked a bit like a craft store and a costume closet had collided and then decided to live together in chaotic peace.

She lived in a small village tucked between rolling green hills, where roofs were mossy, chimneys leaned at interesting angles, and everyone knew who baked the best pies (her mom) and who told the wildest stories (her dad).

The village was perfectly nice. Cozy, even. But Ruby was fairly sure it was secretly magical.

You could just tell.

Maybe it was the way the morning light poured over the meadows like liquid gold. Maybe it was the way the ancient trees at the edge of the forest stood very, very still, as if they were listening. Maybe it was the way the wind sometimes sounded like it was trying to say something important and then forgot halfway through.

Whatever it was, Ruby woke up one bright morning with that buzzing feeling in her chest—the one she got whenever an adventure was lurking nearby, trying to look casual.

She threw back her blankets, bounced out of bed, and crossed the minefield of sketchbooks and colored pencils on her floor with only minor danger to her toes. She yanked on her favorite jeans (paint on one knee, glitter on the other), a t-shirt with a unicorn she'd drawn herself, and her purple sneakers with the fraying laces.

Then she grabbed her backpack.

This was not just any backpack. This backpack had seen things. It had gone to school, to sleepovers, to the theater camp where Ruby played a woodland fairy who accidentally stole the show, and to the meadow approximately seven billion times.

Inside, she packed the essentials:

- her sketchbook (half drawings, half ideas),
- three pencils (because one would vanish, one would break, and one might survive),
- a small box of crayons,
- a water bottle with stickers all over it, and
- two cookies wrapped in a napkin her mom had decorated with a little heart.

She slung the backpack over her shoulder and dashed into the kitchen.

Her mom was at the table, rolling out pie dough. Her dad was peering into a cupboard with the resigned expression of a man who had once again misplaced the cinnamon.

“Morning, Ruby,” Mom said, flour on her cheek. “You’re up early.”

“I have a feeling,” Ruby said, as if that explained everything. “I’m going exploring.”

Her dad turned, eyebrows raised. “A feeling, hm? Is it the mysterious-twisty kind of feeling, or the ‘I just remembered there are cookies’ kind of feeling?”

“Mysterious-twisty,” Ruby replied. “Possibly involving magic. Or at least something interesting.”

“Well, we can’t argue with that,” he said. “Be careful. And if you meet any dragons, ask if they like pie.”

“Got it,” Ruby said. “No dragons without pie.”

“Stay where you know the paths,” Mom added. “And be back before dinner.”

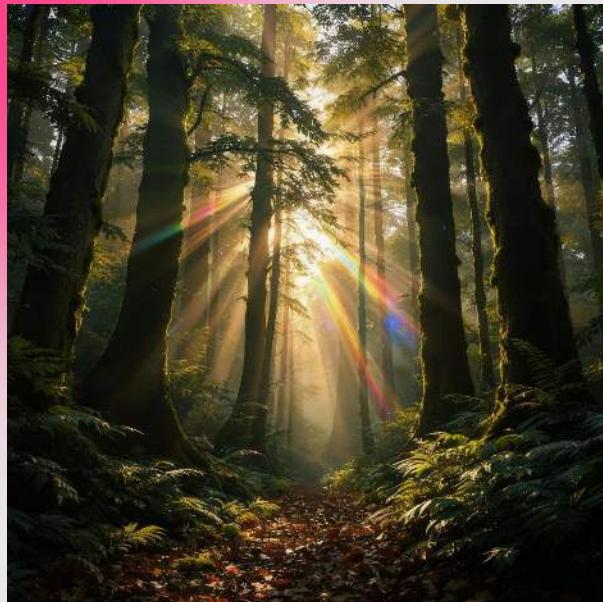
Ruby kissed her mom’s floury cheek, hugged her dad from the side, and called over her shoulder, “I’ll bring back a story!”

The door closed behind her with a soft thunk, and the adventure officially began.

The air outside smelled like summer and sunshine and a little bit like Mrs. Pennington’s laundry soap, which she used generously enough that the entire village could identify it with their eyes closed.

Ruby headed down the familiar path that led to the meadows. Wildflowers nodded as she passed—yellows, purples, and whites—and bees hummed important bee business all around them. The sky was a clear bright blue, the kind of blue that looks like it's been freshly painted.

She walked, then skipped, then briefly tried to choreograph a dramatic entrance in case anyone was watching. No one was, except a squirrel, who did not appear to appreciate theater.



At the edge of the meadow, the forest waited. Tall, ancient trees stood close together, their leaves whispering secrets Ruby almost understood.

“Good morning,” she told them, because it seemed rude not to.

The forest didn’t answer with actual words, but a soft breeze moved through the branches, like a shiver of hello.

Ruby stepped under the canopy, and the world changed. The sun turned from bright and open to dappled and mysterious. Moss turned the ground into a green carpet, and little shafts of light made everything look like a stage set for a magical play.

She walked deeper. Birds chattered. A squirrel scolded her from a branch as if she’d interrupted something. A beetle, shiny and determined, marched across the path.

It was all perfectly normal forest stuff.

Until it wasn’t.

Ruby noticed it out of the corner of her eye—a flicker of light that wasn’t behaving properly. Sunlight normally streamed or flickered or made patterns through the leaves. This light... shimmered.

It had colors in it. Rainbow colors. And it pulsed softly, like it was trying to get her attention.



Ruby stopped. "Well," she said aloud. "That's suspicious."

When magical rainbow light appears in a forest, there are two options:

1. You ignore it completely and go home.
2. You follow it, because obviously.

Ruby chose option two.

She pushed aside some low branches, ducked under a twisted limb, and squeezed between two tree trunks that were clearly not designed for squeezing.

On the other side, she stepped into a clearing she'd never seen before.

It was like walking into a secret painting.



The grass glowed a rich green, sprinkled with wildflowers in every color Ruby could name and a few she would have to invent names for later. Butterflies drifted lazily through the air, their wings patterned like tiny stained-glass windows. The sunlight poured down in soft golden beams, and the air smelled faintly of something sweet and just a little sparkly.

In the very center of the clearing stood a unicorn.

Not the “maybe if you squint it could be a horse” kind of unicorn, but a real one. Her coat was bright, clean white, so smooth it caught the light like silk. Her mane and tail shimmered in stripes of pink, blue, green, gold, and violet, like they’d been braided out of actual rainbows. Her horn spiraled from her forehead, thin and shining, casting little glints of light wherever she moved.

Ruby stopped walking. She also temporarily stopped breathing.

The unicorn lifted her head and looked directly at Ruby.

For one long moment, they just stared at each other—the girl who collected adventures and the unicorn who looked like one.

“You’re real,” Ruby blurted out at last.

The unicorn’s lips curved into what was unmistakably a smile. When she spoke, her voice sounded like crystal bells and soft flutes and all the pretty music in the world had decided to speak at once.

“Of course I’m real,” she said. “What else would I be? A potato?”

Ruby let out an accidental giggle. “Well... no. I guess that would be weird.”

“Indeed.” The unicorn swished her rainbow tail. “And you must be Ruby.”

Ruby blinked. “How do you know my name?”



The unicorn tilted her head. “You’ve been walking around this forest for years, humming loudly, talking to trees, and narrating your thoughts. The wind carries things, you know.”

“Oh,” Ruby said, cheeks turning warm. “Right. That tracks.”

“My name is Aurora,” the unicorn continued, dipping her head in a graceful bow. “And I’ve been waiting for you.”

“Me?” Ruby squeaked. “You’ve been waiting for me? Why?”

Aurora’s eyes sparkled. “Because, Ruby-who-collects-adventures, today is a very important day. Today, you get to decide what kind of magic you believe in.”

“I... do?” Ruby asked, amazed and just a little bit scared in the good, thrilling way. “And what happens if I pick wrong?”

Aurora laughed softly. “There is no wrong. There is only ‘interesting.’ Now”—she lowered her front legs, inviting—“would you like to go on an adventure with me?”





Ruby didn't have to think about that.

"Yes," she said instantly. "Yes, please. Obviously. Definitely."

She stepped forward and, with a flutter in her stomach, climbed onto Aurora's back. Aurora's coat was soft and warm, and the air around her felt faintly tingly, like standing near a storm cloud that had decided to be friendly.

"Hold on," Aurora said. "We're going up."

"Up...?" Ruby began, and then the ground disappeared.

Aurora leaped, and instead of coming back down, she kept going. Wings didn't appear—unicorns didn't need such things, apparently—but the air itself seemed to lift them, buoyed by something invisible and powerful and full of color.

Ruby clutched Aurora's mane as they rose over the treetops. Her stomach dipped and rolled, but it was the good kind of dizzy, the kind she got on swings when she pumped too high.

Below them, the forest spread out like a deep green blanket, stitched with rivers of shining blue. The village looked like a handful of toy houses sprinkled between the hills. She even spotted the slanted roof of her own home, the garden behind it, and the tiny square of their back door.

"Wow," she whispered.



They soared higher. The wind rushed past her ears, cool and exhilarating. Ruby squinted against it, tears at the corners of her eyes—happy ones.

Aurora flew over glittering rivers that twisted and turned like silver ribbons. Over valleys with fields of flowers so thick it was like someone had spilled paint all over the ground. Over mountains whose snowy tips looked close enough to touch.

Finally, Aurora began to descend, gliding down into a hidden valley Ruby had never seen before.

The air changed as they reached it. It grew warm and golden, and the breeze carried the soft smell of honey and something like starlight, if starlight had a scent.

They landed gently in the middle of the valley.

Ruby slid off Aurora's back and turned slowly in a full circle.

It was the most magical place she'd ever seen—and she had a pretty high standard for magic.

On one side, a clear stream wound lazily along, its water so transparent it was almost invisible except for the way it caught the light. On the other, a meadow stretched out, sprinkled with flowers that seemed to glow from within. Little lights—maybe fireflies, maybe just bits of magic—drifted lazily above the grass.

At the very center of the valley stood a tree.

This was not a normal tree. It was enormous, its trunk wide and strong, its branches stretching so high Ruby had to tilt her head all the way back to see the tips. Its leaves shimmered gold, not just in the light but from within, like they remembered every sunrise they'd ever seen and decided to keep them.

"Whoa," Ruby breathed. "That tree looks like it knows everything."

"Very nearly," Aurora said fondly. "This is the Tree of Wishes."

Ruby blinked. "That's... an actual thing?"

"Obviously." Aurora's mane rippled as she walked toward it. "It grants one wish to those with pure hearts. One real wish. No takebacks, no 'oopsies.' So think carefully."

Ruby swallowed. A real wish. Not pretend, not just-in-your-head, but real.

"What... what counts as a pure heart?" she asked, suddenly worried. "I mean, I sometimes wish my math homework would explode, and I once accidentally ate my cousin's cookie and didn't tell her."

Aurora smiled. "A pure heart doesn't mean a perfect one. It means you care more about others than about getting your own way all the time. You make mistakes. You try again. You love deeply. You're curious. You notice when people are lonely."



Ruby thought of Mr. Ellis, who lived alone at the end of the lane and always seemed surprised when someone said hello. She thought of the new girl at school, who had sat by herself at lunch until Ruby plopped down next to her. She thought of how her chest hurt a little when she saw someone sitting alone.

She took a deep breath. "Okay. I'm ready."

Aurora nodded at the tree. "Go on. Put your hand on the trunk. Close your eyes. And wish with your whole heart."



Ruby walked up to the tree. Up close, its bark was warm under her fingertips, faintly humming, like a heartbeat. She laid her small hand on it and shut her eyes.

For a moment, her mind did the panicky thing and started throwing out ridiculous ideas:

I wish for a thousand unicorns! No, a million! No, a whole unicorn school! I wish for candy rain! I wish for—

She took another breath.

Then she thought of her village. Of the lady at the bakery who sometimes looked tired and sad. Of the kid in her class whose parents worked late and who always said “I’m fine” a little too quickly. Of Mr. Ellis. Of the new girl. Of her own family—her mom humming over pies, her dad telling ridiculous stories, her brother complaining loudly about vegetables.

What she wanted, more than unicorn schools or candy rain, was simple and huge all at once.

“I wish,” Ruby whispered, “that everyone in my village will always have someone. That no one will feel lonely or forgotten. That they find friends, or family, or people who care about them. I wish for them to be truly happy—together.”

The tree grew very still.

Then the leaves rustled softly overhead, though there was no wind. A warm golden light spread from where her hand touched the trunk, washing over her arm, then her shoulders, then all of her. It felt like a hug from the inside out.

Ruby gasped softly, but not because it hurt. It didn't. It felt like the moment in a play when the lights come up and you know exactly what your first line is.

Then the light faded, and she opened her eyes.

The leaves of the Tree of Wishes were brighter now, each one glowing with soft golden light.

Aurora came to stand beside her and gently touched Ruby's shoulder with her nose. "Your wish has been granted," she said quietly. "You chose well."

Ruby let out a shaky breath she hadn't realized she'd been holding. "Do you really think it will work?"

Aurora's eyes shone. "You may not see it all at once. But every time someone reaches out, every time someone sits down next to a lonely person, every time someone says, 'You can sit with me,' your wish will be there, nudging them."

Ruby thought about that. Her heart felt large and warm and a little wobbly.

"I like that," she said softly.

"Good." Aurora tossed her mane. "Now. Since you've just made a village-sized wish, I think you've earned something very important."

"What's that?" Ruby asked.

Aurora's mouth curved into a grin. "An entire afternoon devoted to fun."

They moved away from the Tree of Wishes into a sunny patch of grass. Aurora's horn shimmered briefly, and a little pouch appeared, floating in the air beside her. It was embroidered with tiny stars and tied with a bright ribbon.

"Is that a magic pouch?" Ruby asked, delighted.

“Of course,” Aurora said. “It holds everything we might need. Snacks. Art supplies. Possibly a small dragon. I haven’t checked lately.”

Ruby’s eyes widened.

Aurora’s eyes sparkled. “I’m joking. Probably.”

With a flick of her horn, she opened the pouch and drew out—of all things—a box of crayons. Not an ordinary box, though. The crayons inside shimmered faintly, their paper wrappers edged with little dancing lights.

Ruby gasped. “Are those... magic crayons?”

“The best kind,” Aurora said. “They don’t just draw. They invite things.”

“Invite things like what?” Ruby asked, already reaching for them.

“You’ll see,” Aurora said. “Let’s draw.”

Ruby settled herself onto the soft grass and pulled out her sketchbook. Aurora, not having hands, simply lowered her head and touched a crayon with the tip of her horn. It lifted into the air, hovering like a tiny rocket ready for launch.

Ruby laughed, pure delight bubbling out of her. “Show-off.”

She picked a shimmering rainbow crayon and began drawing a huge arc across the page, filling it in with bands of color—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple. She carefully blended where they met, so the rainbow looked alive.

Next to her, the floating crayon began to move across another page. Aurora, apparently, was an excellent artist. She sketched a meadow filled with flowers, a little stream, a tall tree, and a sky full of tiny stars—even though it was clearly daytime.

As Aurora added the last detail—a tiny rabbit near the base of the tree—the lines on the page began to glow softly.

Ruby stared. “Um. Aurora?”

“Yes?” Aurora said, completely calm.

“Is my sketchbook supposed to be... shimmering?”

“It does that sometimes,” Aurora replied.

The drawings grew brighter, as if lit from within. Then, very gently, the images lifted off the paper like mist.

Ruby watched, open-mouthed, as the rainbow she'd drawn rose up, unfolded, and stretched itself across part of the sky. The meadow Aurora had drawn rippled outward, spilling flowers onto the grass around them. The rabbit hopped once, shook its ears, and darted away, very real and very pleased with itself.

"It worked," Ruby whispered. "My drawing... came to life."

"Of course it did," Aurora said. "Magic likes to be invited. Art is one of its favorite

doorways."



Ruby stared at the rainbow in the sky, then at Aurora. "Can I... draw anything and it will come alive?"

Aurora's eyes twinkled. "Within reason. I would advise against drawing a hundred giant spiders. Unless you're in a play and you need special effects."

"Noted," Ruby said fervently. "No spiders. Maybe some extra cookies, though."

"Cookies are always acceptable," Aurora said.

They spent a long time drawing. Ruby drew more rainbows, flowers, funny little cloud creatures, and once, a picnic table covered in her favorite snacks. When that one shimmered into reality, she laughed so hard she nearly fell over.

After they'd eaten and drawn and laughed until Ruby's cheeks hurt, Aurora disappeared her sketchbook safely back into her backpack with a touch of her horn.

"Now," she said, "I believe you mentioned that your mother sometimes braids beads into your hair."

Ruby brightened. "Yes! She says it makes me look like I'm going to a fairy ball."

"And she's quite right," Aurora said. She opened the magic pouch again and this time brought out a small handful of beads.



They were beautiful—tiny globes and shapes in crystal, pearl, and glittering colors. Each one seemed to hum with gentle energy. When Aurora moved, the beads chimed softly against each other, like the faintest music.

“They sound magical,” Ruby whispered.

“That’s because they are,” Aurora said. “They hold tiny songs. Every time you move, they remember them.”

Together, they worked on each other’s hair. Ruby sectioned Aurora’s rainbow mane, carefully braiding in strands that gleamed and sparkled as she went. The beads slipped into place as if they’d been waiting for this exact unicorn for a very long time.

Aurora, in turn, lifted strands of Ruby’s hair with careful magic, braiding them back from her face and weaving in beads that chimed softly whenever Ruby turned her head.

When they were done, Ruby shook her head experimentally. The beads sang—a soft, tinkling melody, like faraway bells.

“I love it,” she said, grinning. “I feel like I’m in a musical.”

“You basically are,” Aurora said. “You sing whenever you think nobody’s listening.”

Ruby froze. “You heard that?”

“Everyone heard that,” Aurora said. “The trees, the birds, the wind... You have a lovely voice, you know.”

Ruby ducked her head, flushed but secretly pleased. “Maybe we should sing for real, then,” she said.

Aurora’s smile widened. “I thought you’d never ask.”



They began with a song Ruby knew from theater camp—one of the big, dramatic ones she loved belting in the shower. Aurora picked up the tune easily, harmonizing in a clear, strong voice that seemed to fill the whole valley.

Their voices twined together, Ruby's bright and expressive, Aurora's smooth and bell-like. The sound rolled out over the meadow and into the trees.

Animals came to listen. Rabbits hopped closer, noses twitching. Deer stepped quietly from the shadows, ears forward. Birds took up spots on branches above them, some adding their own small trills to the music.

For a while, Ruby forgot everything else. There was just her voice, Aurora's voice, the beads chiming gently, and the feeling of being exactly where she was meant to be.

When the last note faded, the valley felt full and peaceful.

“That,” Aurora said softly, “is the kind of magic that doesn’t even need a wish.”





Ruby smiled, still a little breathless. “That was amazing.”

Aurora shook out her mane. “And now,” she said, mischief creeping into her expression, “I believe it’s time for a game.”

Ruby perked up instantly. “What kind of game?”

“Hide-and-seek,” Aurora said. “But the magical version. Here’s how it works: I hide. You find me. When you do, you earn a small wish. Not a giant village-changing wish—those are Tree of Wishes level. But a little one. A fun one. Ready?”

Ruby’s eyes sparkled. “I was born ready. Probably. I don’t actually remember, but it seems likely.”

Aurora laughed, then in a flash of rainbow light—she vanished.

Well, not entirely. A faint trail of sparkling dust hung in the air where she’d been, drifting away toward the trees.

Ruby narrowed her eyes. “Oh, that’s not suspicious at all,” she muttered, and took off after it.

The sparkles led her across the meadow, through a patch of flowers that giggled when she brushed against them (which she chose to accept without comment), and toward a clump of tall trees.

She circled them slowly, looking for any sign of rainbow mane or gleaming horn. Nothing.

She knelt and peeked under a low bush. No unicorn—just a very offended hedgehog.

“Sorry,” Ruby whispered. “Wrong magical being.”

The hedgehog snorted and went back to being spiky.

Ruby stood, frowning thoughtfully. Aurora was clever. Magic-clever. She wouldn’t just stand behind a tree and hope for the best.

Ruby squinted at the ground. Hoofprints, faint but visible, led toward a large oak tree with roots that curled and twisted like frozen waves.

“Hmm,” she said quietly. “If I were a unicorn trying to hide from a theater kid who likes dramatic reveals...”

She stepped behind the oak—and grinned.

Aurora stood there, perfectly still, trying not to laugh. The beads in her mane betrayed her, chiming softly when she shifted her weight.

“Found you!” Ruby crowed. “You might want to work on your bead-stealth.”

Aurora’s composure dissolved into delighted laughter. “Well done. And you’re quite right—the beads are not built for sneaking.”



“So,” Ruby said, bouncing a little on her toes, “what’s my wish?”

“Anything small and harmless,” Aurora said. “Fun, cozy, practical, or silly. No summoning an army of giant marshmallows.”

Ruby thought. A dozen ideas rushed in at once.

I could wish for a flying skateboard. Or a closet that cleans itself. Or a talking backpack. Or...

She looked up at Aurora. “Can I wish for something for both of us?”



Aurora's eyes warmed. "You may."

"In that case," Ruby said seriously, "I wish for a flower crown. One for me and one for you. The nicest, fanciest, most magical flower crowns anyone has ever seen. The kind you'd wear to a fairy-unicorn-queen coronation."

Aurora blinked, then smiled. "Excellent choice."

Her horn glowed softly, and the air around them filled with the scent of fresh petals. Flowers appeared—roses, tiny blue blossoms, soft white blooms, and trailing vines. They wove themselves into two crowns; one shaped perfectly for Ruby's head, the other curved to fit between Aurora's ears.

The crowns drifted gently down. Ruby caught hers in both hands. It was cool and fresh and impossibly beautiful.

"It's perfect," she breathed.

She set Aurora's crown in place, then reached up to place her own on her head. The moment she did, she felt a tiny electric spark of happiness, like the beginning of stage lights blinking on.

"Very regal," Aurora said, approving. "You look like the Princess of Adventures."

Ruby beamed. "I'll put that on my résumé."

They played several more rounds of magical hide-and-seek:

- One wish created a cozy blanket made of warm starlight that folded itself neatly when not in use.
- Another summoned a small box that, when opened, played a different cheerful tune each time.
- Yet another produced a set of colored ribbons that danced in the air when Ruby twirled, painting patterns that faded slowly, like fireworks that decided to be polite.

Each wish was small, but together they stitched the afternoon into something Ruby knew she'd never forget.

At one point, as they rested in the sunlight, Ruby leaned back on her hands and looked at Aurora thoughtfully.

"Aurora," she said, "can I ask you something?"

"You may ask as many somethings as you like," Aurora said. "Answers not guaranteed."

Ruby smiled. "Why are some unicorns rainbow-colored like you? Were you born that way?"

Aurora's eyes gleamed. "Ah. That is one of our favorite stories." She settled herself more comfortably, beads chiming softly. "Rainbow unicorns are rare. They're foaled at a very particular moment."

"What kind of moment?" Ruby asked, leaning forward.

"The moment after a storm," Aurora said. "When the rain has just stopped, and the sky is still a little gray but beginning to clear. A rainbow appears—bright and new. If a unicorn foal is born underneath that rainbow, the magic touches them as they take their first breath. The rainbow's colors sink into their mane and tail, into their horn, even into their heartbeat. From then on, they carry pieces of that rainbow with them wherever they go."

Ruby let out a soft "whoa."

"That's... that's really beautiful," she said. "Did that happen to you?"

“It did,” Aurora said. “I don’t remember it, of course, but the older unicorns tell the story. They say the rainbow that day was so bright that even the clouds stopped arguing long enough to admire it.”

Ruby laughed. “Do you like being rainbow-y?”

Aurora tilted her head, pretending to consider. “Well. It does make it difficult to be subtle. But yes. I like it very much.”

“I’m glad,” Ruby said. “You’re the most magical thing I’ve ever seen.”

“Second,” Aurora said.

Ruby frowned. “Second?”

Aurora nodded. “The most magical thing you’ve ever seen is what your heart did at the Tree of Wishes. Never underestimate a person who uses their one big wish on other people.”

Ruby looked away, suddenly shy. “I just... didn’t want anyone to feel alone,” she mumbled. “It’s the worst feeling.”

“And you turned that feeling into a wish big enough to wrap around a whole village,” Aurora said gently. “That’s powerful magic, Ruby.”

They sat quietly for a while. The valley hummed softly around them—birds singing, water murmuring, leaves whispering.

Eventually, the light shifted, turning warmer and more golden. Shadows stretched longer across the grass.

Aurora glanced toward the far edge of the valley, where the sky was beginning to hint at evening.

“It’s nearly time,” she said softly.

Ruby’s chest tightened. “Time... to go home?”

Aurora nodded. “Adventures can’t last forever. If they did, they’d just be called ‘life,’ and no one would ever do the dishes.”

Ruby sighed. “I liked it here. I don’t want it to be over.”

Aurora nuzzled her shoulder. “It isn’t over. It’s just... changing shape. You’ll take it with you.”

Ruby looked down at her hands—the faint shimmer of magic still on her fingers, the flower crown on her head, the beads in her hair, her sketchbook tucked in her backpack.

“Promise?” she asked quietly.

“Promise,” Aurora said. “And besides... have you ever finished a really good play?”

Ruby thought about the final performance at theater camp. The lights. The applause. The way she’d felt both happy and sad at the same time.

“Yeah,” she said softly. “I cried in the bathroom for ten minutes and then made everyone sign my script.”

“Exactly,” Aurora said. “The play ends. But the story keeps going. You talk about it. You remember lines. You become braver because you did it. That’s what this is like.”

Ruby nodded slowly.

They made their way back to the spot where they had first landed. Aurora knelt so Ruby could climb onto her back again. Ruby did, holding onto her mane with one hand and clutching her backpack strap with the other.

The valley seemed to glow brighter for a moment, as if saying goodbye.

Then Aurora leaped skyward, and they were flying once more.



This time, Ruby watched carefully, memorizing everything—the sparkle of the river, the shape of the hills, the way the clouds looked from above. The wind whipped past her ears, cool and carrying the faint scent of distant rain.

They descended toward the forest where it bordered Ruby’s village. Aurora landed lightly at the edge of the trees.

Ruby slid down, her sneakers crunching softly on the leaves. The village was not far away; she could see the path leading home.



She turned back to Aurora.

“Will I ever see you again?” she asked. The question came out small, but it was very important.

Aurora’s eyes were warm and bright. “Whenever you truly need me,” she said, “do what you did today. Follow that twisty feeling in your chest. Pay attention when ordinary light starts acting suspicious. Believe that the world is still magical, even when it looks plain. That’s how you’ll find me.”

Ruby swallowed hard. “So... not with a phone call, then.”

“Alas, no reception in the rainbow valley,” Aurora said gravely. “But your heart has a very good signal.”

Ruby smiled, even as her throat ached a little. She stepped forward and threw her arms around Aurora’s neck, burying her face in her rainbow mane.

“Thank you,” she whispered. “For everything. For the wish. For the games. For the singing. For... you.”

Aurora rested her head gently against Ruby’s shoulder. “Thank you, Ruby-who-collects-adventures,” she murmured. “For finding me. For making such a kind wish. For being exactly who you are.”

They stayed like that for a moment.

Then Ruby stepped back. Aurora’s form was already beginning to glow softly at the edges.

“Go on,” Aurora said gently. “They’ll worry if you’re late for dinner. And your village has some new happiness to grow into.”

Ruby nodded. “Goodbye, Aurora.”

Aurora smiled. “Until next time.”

With a shimmer of rainbow light, she turned and trotted back into the forest. A few steps in, she faded into the air, like a painting brushing itself away.

Ruby stood very still for several heartbeats.

Then she took a deep breath, adjusted her backpack, and walked toward the village.

The sky above her was beginning to tint with the soft colors of evening. As she crossed the meadow, she noticed something.

Mrs. Pennington, who often hurried home without talking to anyone, was standing at her gate, laughing with Mr. Ellis. He was holding a small bag—probably still-warm pastries. They both looked... lighter, somehow.

Farther down the lane, the new girl from school was walking beside two other kids from their class, all three of them talking at once. The new girl’s shoulders were relaxed. She was smiling.

Ruby’s chest felt wobbly again—but in a good way.

She reached up and touched her flower crown. The petals were still soft and fresh. The beads in her hair chimed faintly when she turned her head.

Magic, she decided, felt a lot like this:
like singing with someone who understands your favorite part of the song,
like making a wish that reaches farther than you can see,
like believing that unicorns might be hiding just out of sight, waiting for you to notice.

She opened the back door of her house and stepped inside.

“You’re right on time,” her mom said from the kitchen, pulling a pie out of the oven. “How was your adventure?”

Ruby paused for a moment, rainbows and golden trees and singing beads tumbling through her mind.

“It was...” She smiled slowly. “It was the best one yet.”

Her dad looked up from the table with a grin. “Did you at least meet a dragon who likes pie?”

“No dragon today,” Ruby said, hanging her backpack on its hook. “But I made a wish.”

“Well,” her mom said, setting the pie on the counter, “I hope it comes true.”

Ruby glanced out the window, where Mr. Ellis and Mrs. Pennington were still talking, and where the new girl walked past with her new friends.

“I think it already is,” Ruby said quietly.

And later, much later, when she lay in bed with her flower crown on the nightstand and her sketchbook open to a page still faintly sparkling, she saw something through her window.

A rainbow arched faintly across the night sky, where no rainbow should be.

Just for a moment.

Ruby smiled into the dark.

“Goodnight, Aurora,” she whispered.

Somewhere, far away but not too far, a rainbow-maned unicorn lifted her head and smiled back.

And Ruby, the girl who collected adventures, drifted off to sleep already wondering—
What will my next one be?

Ruby and the Rainbow Unicorn

Ruby is not your ordinary girl; she embraces adventures and sparkly wonders in a world filled with possibilities. One fateful day, she follows a magical light into an enchanting valley where she meets a real unicorn named Aurora, and together they weave wishes that bring joy to her village. As Ruby's heart fills with newfound magic and friendship, she discovers that the most profound wishes are those that connect us all.

