

The Little Night Garden



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In a quiet corner of the woods, where the tall grass whispered secrets, lived a small hedgehog named Hazel. Her spines were soft brown tipped with cream, and her face and belly were warm tan. She carried a moss-green leaf satchel across her back. Every evening, when the sun tucked itself behind the hills, Hazel woke up and wondered what the night might bring.



One starry night, a pale moth fluttered down beside Hazel. Her wings were cream with silver-grey patterns, and a thin silver thread looped around one feathery antenna like a tiny ribbon. "Hello," said the moth. "I am Luna. The moon told me to find you." Hazel smiled. "The moon talks to you?" Luna twitched her antennae. "Only when the stars are out."



Just then, a tiny field mouse popped out of the grass. His golden-brown fur was ruffled, and his blue acorn-cap hat sat crooked on his head. "I'm Pip!" he squeaked, twitching his pink nose. "I heard you're making a garden. Can I help?" Hazel looked at Luna, and Luna looked at Pip. "We don't have a garden yet," said Hazel. "But maybe we should make one."



Luna fluttered up to a low branch. "I know just the flowers!" she cried. "Night-blooming ones that open under the moon and stars. They glow softly and smell like honey." She described white moonflowers, pale evening primroses, and star-shaped jasmine. "But we need someone to plant them," she said. Hazel patted her leaf satchel. "I can dig," she said. "I'm good at digging."



So the three friends set to work. Hazel dug little holes with her tiny paws, her round dark eyes shining in the moonlight. Luna carried seeds on her wings, and where she landed, a sprinkle of pollen fell like fairy dust. Pip ran back and forth with his twig walking stick, patting the soil down. "This is hard work!" he squeaked, but his cheerful eyes sparkled.



As the nights passed, the garden began to grow. First came tiny green shoots, then buds that stayed closed all day. But when the moon rose, the flowers opened wide. White moonflowers unfurled like little trumpets, and evening primroses glowed like tiny lanterns. "Oh!" breathed Luna, fluttering above them. "They're beautiful!" Hazel smiled. "They're for everyone to enjoy."



But the friends soon noticed something. The night garden was lovely, but it was empty. "Where are all the creatures?" asked Pip. "They're hiding," said Hazel. "They need safe places to rest." Luna nodded. "A garden is more than flowers," she said. "It's a home." So the three friends decided to build shelters for their nocturnal neighbors.



Hazel thought carefully. "Every creature has different needs," she said. "We must ask them what makes them comfortable." So they visited a beetle who liked dark, damp places. They asked a bat who needed a high, dry spot to hang. And they talked to a slow snail who wanted a cool, shady corner. Each answer was different.



Pip was clever with his paws. He gathered twigs and leaves and built a tiny tunnel for the beetle, with moss on the floor to keep it damp. He made a small wooden box for the bat and hung it high on a branch. "There!" he said, dusting off his paws. "Now everyone has a place." But Hazel shook her head. "We're not done yet."



Luna fluttered around the garden, checking each shelter. "This tunnel is perfect," she said. "But the snail needs a shady nook near the flowers." So Pip built a little lean-to from bark and leaves. "And the moth needs a place to rest during the day," said Hazel. Luna blushed. "Oh, I just perch on a leaf," she said. But the friends built her a soft mossy bed anyway.



Soon, word spread through the woods. The night garden was full of flowers and safe shelters. Creatures came from all around: a family of field mice, a wise old toad, a cluster of fireflies. Each found a cozy spot. "It's wonderful!" squeaked Pip, watching tiny paws scurry and wings flutter. "But is everyone happy?" asked Hazel. "Let's check."



They visited each shelter. The beetle was happy in his damp tunnel. The bat slept snugly in his box. The snail smiled from his shady nook. But one small firefly looked sad. "What's wrong?" asked Luna gently. "I like to fly at night," said the firefly, "but I need a place to rest when I'm tired." Pip thought for a moment. "I have an idea!"



Pip built a tiny hanging basket from grass and twigs. He lined it with soft thistledown and hung it near the moonflowers. "For you," he said to the firefly. The firefly's eyes lit up. "It's perfect!" she cried, and she zipped inside. Hazel smiled. "See? Different creatures have different needs, but everyone can be happy if we listen."



The night garden grew more beautiful every day. Moonflowers opened like white cups, evening primroses glowed, and jasmine smelled sweet. Creatures fluttered and scurried and hopped. Luna danced in the moonlight, Pip ran through the tunnels, and Hazel sat quietly, watching. "We did it," she said. "We made a home for everyone."



One evening, a young rabbit hopped by. "May I stay?" he asked shyly. "Of course!" said the three friends together. They found him a cozy burrow under a bush. "There's always room for one more," said Pip. The rabbit's eyes shone. "Thank you!" he said. And the night garden welcomed him with open arms.



Now, every night, the garden comes alive. Moths flutter, mice scurry, and hedgehogs dig. The flowers bloom under the moon and stars, and every creature has a safe place to rest. Hazel, Luna, and Pip sit together and watch. "A garden is more than flowers," says Hazel. "It's a home for everyone." And the night garden glows with kindness.