

The Little Moon Gardener



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Nora lived in a little house at the edge of town, where the night sky was wide and sparkly. Every evening she sat by her window and stared up at the moon. It glowed like a round silver lamp. "I wonder if flowers could grow up there," she whispered. She drew moon gardens on every scrap of paper she found.



Nora had a green canvas tool belt with a tiny trowel and three seed packets tucked inside. Her tortoise, Moss, wore a small red knitted scarf around his neck. He followed her everywhere with a slow, steady waddle. "Moss," Nora said, "someday we will grow a moon garden. Just you wait and see."



One morning, Grandpa Sol came to visit with a jar of gray dust. He wore his wide-brim straw hat and round glasses. "This is moon soil," he said, his dark eyes crinkling. "A friend who studies stars sent it to me. Would you like to try planting something in it?" Nora gasped. Her wish had started to come true.



Nora filled a little pot with the gray moon soil. It felt soft and powdery, like flour that had slept in the dark. She poked a tiny hole with her trowel and dropped in one sunflower seed. "Grow, little seed," she said. Moss watched with his bright amber eyes. Nora watered it and set the pot on the sunny windowsill.



Every morning Nora ran to the pot. Every morning there was only gray soil. No tiny green tip. No sprout. No leaf. Moss nudged the seed packet toward her with his wrinkled nose. "Not yet," Nora said. She planted another seed. Then another. Still nothing grew. Her round cheeks drooped like a wilted petal.



Grandpa Sol sat beside her on the porch steps. "Moon soil is strange and new," he said gently. "Good ideas need many tries, little gardener." Nora nodded and pressed her lips together. She would not give up. She carried the pot to a different window. She tried watering less. She tried watering more. The gray soil stayed gray.



Nora planted beans, daisies, and even a pumpkin seed from her breakfast. She sang to them. She read them stories. She tucked them in with warm words at night. But not one little sprout appeared. Moss rested his mossy green shell against her boot, quiet and loyal. "Maybe moon soil is just too cold," Nora sighed.



That night Nora lay awake, watching the moon through her window. Then a thought popped into her head like a firefly. Maybe the seeds were cold or lonely or thirsty in the wrong way. Maybe they needed a special home, somewhere warm and safe. She jumped out of bed and grabbed her green tool belt.



In the morning she ran to Grandpa Sol. "I want to build a greenhouse!" she announced. "A little one, just for moon seeds." Grandpa Sol's beard split into a wide smile. "Now that is an idea worth trying," he said. He pulled out his pocket watch and checked the time. "Let's get started right away, little gardener."



They gathered thin sticks and clear plastic sheets. Nora measured with her trowel and marked spots in the dirt. Moss carried small twigs on his shell, slow and proud. The frame wobbled and fell twice. "Trying again," Nora said each time. Grandpa Sol held the corners while she tied the knots. The little greenhouse slowly stood up straight.



Nora moved her pots inside the greenhouse and tucked the moon soil in snug. The clear walls caught the sun and kept the seeds warm all day. At night, the greenhouse glowed like a tiny lantern under the moon. "It's like a little moon garden," Nora whispered. Moss settled beside the door as if he were guarding something precious.



Days passed. Nora checked every morning, patient and stubborn in the best way. Then one day she saw it: a tiny green tip pushing through the gray soil! She squealed so loudly that Moss poked his head out of his shell. "Grandpa Sol! Come quick!" she shouted. Her heart thumped like a happy drum.



More sprouts appeared, one by one. They grew taller every day, with silver-green leaves that shimmered in the sun. Then tiny buds opened into flowers, round and white and glowing like little moons. The whole greenhouse sparkled. Grandpa Sol clapped his hands. "Moonflowers," he said softly. "You grew moonflowers, Nora."



Nora stood in her little moon garden, warm brown hands on her hips. "I tried and tried and tried," she said. "And now look!" Moss waddled between the pots with his red scarf flapping. The flowers were small but bright, and she was proud of every single one. "Good ideas need many tries," she told Moss. "You were right, Grandpa."



Neighbors came to peek at the glowing greenhouse. Nora gave each of them a tiny seed packet and a big smile. "Plant it," she said. "And if it doesn't grow, try again. That's the secret." Her two puff buns bounced as she showed everyone her moonflowers. The little moon garden glowed on, small and bright, like a wish that refused to give up.



That night Nora sat by her window with Moss on her lap. The moon floated above her greenhouse, round and silver and close. She thought about gray soil and wobbly sticks and all the seeds that did not grow. "Trying again," she whispered, "can make wonderful things come true." She smiled her gap-toothed smile and fell fast asleep, dreaming of gardens on the moon.