

The Little Nebula



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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High above the world, in the soft dark of space, floated a little nebula named Nebby. Nebby was small and round, a fluffy cloud of pastel pink, lavender, and pale blue dust. Big round dark blue eyes blinked among the sparkles inside the cloud. A tiny silver star was tucked in the dust like a hair clip. Nebby loved to watch the stars twinkle and dreamed of making beautiful patterns of stars, too.



Every day, Nebby tried to shape the dust into lovely patterns. Nebby swirled and swooshed, puffed and pushed, but the dust only drifted apart. "I want a pattern right now!" Nebby said. "A big, shiny star pattern!" But the stars would not come. The dust stayed messy and loose. Nebby felt a little sad. Making patterns was much harder than it looked.



One morning, a warm golden light glowed beside Nebby. It was Orla, an old and wise star. Orla had a rounded star shape with soft points and kind crinkly eyes. A thin ring of pale gold stardust floated around her like a shawl. "Hello, little one," said Orla gently. "Why are you swirling so fast?" Nebby sighed. "I want beautiful star patterns, but nothing works!"



"Patterns take time," said Orla with a gentle smile. "Every cloud of cosmic dust grows in its own way and in its own time." Nebby frowned. "But I want mine now!" Orla twinkled softly. "Watch the stars around you. They did not shine all at once." Nebby looked up. Some stars were bright, some were faint, and some were still growing. None of them hurried.



Just then, a tiny star zipped by with a blue comet tail trailing behind like a scarf. It was Twink, small and silver-white, with big cheerful eyes and rosy cheeks. "Hi! I'm Twink!" the little star chimed. "Want to play a twinkle game?" Nebby sniffled. "I can't make patterns, so I'm sad." Twink twinkled. "That's okay! Let's float together and see what happens."



Twink and Nebby floated through space, side by side. Twink zipped in loops, leaving a silver trail. Nebby tried to copy, but the dust puffed out in lumpy clouds. "See?" Nebby sighed. "It's no use." Twink landed on a soft puff of Nebby's dusty edge. "Don't give up! Orla says growing takes time. Maybe your pattern will come when you're not looking."



Days passed. Nebby kept floating and swirling, but slowly, without rushing. Sometimes Nebby felt impatient and grumpy. "Why can't I be like that big bright nebula over there?" Nebby asked, pointing to a swirling cloud of many colors. Orla floated near. "That nebula is much older than you. Every nebula is special, and every one grows differently. Your time will come."



Nebby tried to be patient, but it was hard. Some days the dust felt heavy and dull. Twink stayed close, telling silly jokes and playing hide-and-seek behind floating rocks. "Look!" Twink cried. "Your dust is making a tiny swirl!" Nebby looked. There was a small, faint curl in the pastel cloud. It wasn't much, but it was something. Nebby felt a little spark of hope.



Nebby began to watch other nebulas. Some made long, wispy shapes. Some made round, bubbly shapes. Some sparkled with many colors. "They all grow in their own way," Nebby whispered. "Maybe my pattern will be my own, too." Orla nodded. "That's right, little one. Your pattern will be as special as you are. Just keep floating and growing."



Nebby stopped trying to force the dust. Instead, Nebby floated gently and let the dust drift. Twink floated beside, humming a soft space song. "Your dust looks pretty today," Twink said. "It's all pink and blue and sparkly." Nebby smiled. "Thanks, Twink. Maybe it's okay to be a fluffy cloud for now." And Nebby felt a little lighter inside.



One quiet night, Nebby noticed something new. The faint swirls in the dust had grown into gentle curves. Tiny stars were gathering along the curves, like beads on a string. "Oh!" Nebby gasped. "Look, Twink! Look, Orla!" The patterns were not big or bright yet, but they were there, soft and lovely. Nebby's big blue eyes shone with wonder.



Orla floated close, her golden glow warm and kind. "You see, little one? Patterns come when we are patient. Your dust has been growing all along, even when you couldn't see it." Nebby twirled with joy. "I did it! Well, we did it!" Twink zipped around, leaving a happy blue trail. "Hooray for Nebby!" The little nebula felt proud and warm inside.



From that day on, Nebby kept floating and growing, and the patterns kept changing. Sometimes they looked like spiral seashells. Sometimes like sleepy moons. Sometimes like flowers made of light. Nebby learned to enjoy each small change. "Growing is like a surprise," Nebby told Twink. "You never know what pattern will come next. And that's the best part."



Orla watched Nebby with a proud smile. "You have learned patience, little one. That is a great gift." Nebby nodded. "And I learned that every nebula is special. Even the little ones." Twink twinkled. "And every star, too!" The three friends floated together, a warm golden star, a tiny silver star, and a fluffy pastel nebula full of sparkles.



Nebby still had days of wanting things to happen fast. But when that happened, Nebby would remember Orla's words and Twink's cheerful games. Nebby would take a deep breath, or as deep as a nebula can, and let the dust float. Slowly, the patterns would grow. And Nebby would smile, because growing takes time, and that is perfectly okay.



So if you look up at the night sky, you might see a little nebula with soft pink and lavender dust, making gentle patterns of stars. Nebby is there, floating patiently, growing a little every day. And every nebula, big or small, is special in its own way. The end.