



Mossy and the Thistle Card

Mossy pressed one green ear against Gran Brindle's bedroom door, then pulled it away. He wanted to say sorry. He had puffed peppery smoke across Gran's neat seed labels that afternoon and snapped, "They are only for the school garden!" Now the labels lay curled at the edges, and Gran had gone quiet.

He opened his mouth. "Gr—" A tiny knot caught in his throat, tight as a burr. No sound came out except a squeak of smoke. Mossy shut the door gently and padded back to his own cozy bedroom, where his school satchel waited beside the bed for tomorrow's return to Moonbell School.



On his table stood a pot of paste, some thick cream paper, and three purple thistle petals that had fallen from the garden wall. Mossy remembered Gran saying that thistles looked prickly but fed the smallest bees. He folded the paper crookedly, pasted on the petals, and drew a green dragon with a very droopy tail.

Inside, he wrote, For Gran's garden. Then he held the charcoal pencil over the empty space beneath. Sorry, he tried to write. His claw made one small S, then stopped. The throat-knot gave a tug. Mossy rubbed out the lonely letter until a gray smudge remained.

Beyond his moonlit window, Gran was in the quiet garden. She sat on the low stone bench with a basket of new labels beside her. One by one, she copied the names again: moonbeans, candle peas, silver mint. Mossy could see her round shoulders moving slowly.

He tucked the thistle card carefully under one paw and climbed onto the window seat. The latch was already open for night air. Mossy could have called, "Gran!" from there. Instead, the knot squeezed so hard that he backed away and bumped his tail against the blanket chest.



The warm blanket slid over his tail. Mossy held its soft edge and suddenly knew what the knot was made of. It was not only the word sorry. It was worry. He was worried Gran might still be sad. He was worried she might not want to plant with him tomorrow. Saying the feeling did not untie the knot, but it made one little loop loosen.

“I am worried,” Mossy whispered to the empty room. Then he looked at the card. He could not say everything yet, but he could take it to her. That was one small thing his paws could do.





Mossy climbed through the low window and crossed the garden path without stepping on a single new label. At the bench, he did not hide the card behind his back. He placed it beside Gran's basket, with the purple thistles facing up.

Gran Brindle looked at the card, then at Mossy. "You made this with great care," she said. Her voice was quiet, not sharp. Mossy stared at his claws. "I am worried you are sad," he managed. "And I am worried you will not want me to help at the school garden."

Gran opened the card. She saw the droopy-tailed dragon and the gray smudge inside. "Sometimes worry ties words in knots," she said. "You may take your time." Mossy breathed in the smell of mint and damp earth. Then he lifted his head. "I am sorry I ruined your labels and said they were only for school. They mattered to you. I will help copy every one."

Gran's eyes crinkled. "Thank you, my dear Mossy. I was hurt, but I forgive you." She touched one claw gently to his. "And yes, you may help. You have careful paws when you choose to use them." Together they copied three labels before the moon climbed higher.





Back in his bedroom, Mossy set the thistle card on his table, where Gran could see it in the morning. He slipped beneath his warm blanket, his tail curled comfortably around his feet. Through the open window came the faint scratch of Gran's pencil and the sleepy garden smell of mint. The knot in his throat had become no more than a soft, untied thread.





Good night.



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After the story



THE MAIN IDEA

A small, thoughtful step can make a difficult moment feel safer.

TALK ABOUT IT AFTER READING

After reading, ask which moment felt the warmest or bravest today.

AND TOMORROW...

The next morning, Mossy may discover that one of Gran's freshly copied labels has named a seed neither of them remembers planting.





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Mossy and the Thistle Card

A warm illustrated story about a small discovery,
a meaningful choice, and finding a gentle way forward.

6 minutes of reading



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