



BEDTIME  
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STORIES  
—  
FOR  
—  
PLANTS



# BEDTIME STORIES FOR PLANTS

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Welcome to the first ever bedtime story book for plants!  
This collection of short stories is designed for devoted plant  
parents to read to their plant babies before bed – helping  
them grow and flourish to their full potential.

*The SpareRoom Team*



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# THE THREE FERNs



Once, in a nursery far away, three ferns stood side by side. They shared the same green feathery foliage and the same metal stand, but apart from that, they were as different as could be.

The first fern was tall and leafy, with lofty ambitions. *“I plan to get away from here,”* he said. *“I will stand on a fancy shelf in a fancy house.”*

The second fern was wide and bushy. She squabbled with the first. *“You think that you’re the best, but I’ll show you. I will end up in the finest location.”*

The third fern was the smallest and wispiest of the three. *“I hope you get everything you wish for. I don’t mind where I end up as long as my new owner cares for me.”*



An inquisitive bumblebee buzzed by...

*“Time will tell; we soon will see,  
who’s the finest of you three.”*



One day, a couple walked towards them, pushing a trolley stacked full of expensive plants. They wore designer clothes and matching sunglasses. *“They look like my kind of owners!”* exclaimed the first fern, stretching himself up to his full height. The pair put him in their trolley straight away.

The bumblebee soon brought news of him back to the other ferns.

*“Your haughty friend was whisked away  
And taken to a fine soir e  
The house was filled with plants and flowers  
The guests were there for many hours  
But once the partygoers left  
Your friend was feeling most bereft  
He’s on a fancy shelf, it’s true.  
But now he’s living in the loo.”*



*“Oh dear,”* said the second fern, *“The toilet! What a sorry place to end up!”* But she didn’t sound very sorry. She ruffled her leaves and put on a decent display for the next buyers. *“Let’s see if I can do better. These people look as though they have money.”*

*“Good luck!”* whispered the littlest fern as they lifted her from the shelf. But the second fern didn’t even look back.



The third fern was left all alone. Without her friends, she shrank right back, half-hoping that the customers wouldn’t spot her.

The bumblebee soon brought news of the second fern's fate.

*“Your friend was happy to arrive  
At a huge house with a sweeping drive.  
With three vast floors, a running track  
A pool and garden at the back.  
But the next day she quickly found  
Children shouting all around.  
Children – such a noisy lot  
Pushing past her fragile pot.  
Her stately home with swimming pool  
Was actually a primary school.”*

The third fern found it difficult to imagine her superior friend in a hectic school corridor. It was not the glamorous location she'd had in mind.

She felt sorry for her and hoped that her own new home would be a better fit.

## **And then it happened.**

A woman walked past. She had swept-up hair, and paint-spattered trousers. She also had kind eyes and an empty trolley. She took her time looking at many different houseplants, until she came to the littlest fern. She picked the fern up by the pot and smiled. *“Oh I do like you!”* she said, popped her into the trolley, went to the checkout and made her purchase.

The littlest fern had a new home: a large loft space filled with sunlight and other plants. There were cacti, succulents – even air plants. Their owner was an artist – a painter. She worked away on her canvases with the radio blaring and every so often models would sit for her and chat away. The environment was jolly and carefree and the littlest fern thrived. She grew so tall that she was soon unrecognisable from the straggly little plant she had been.

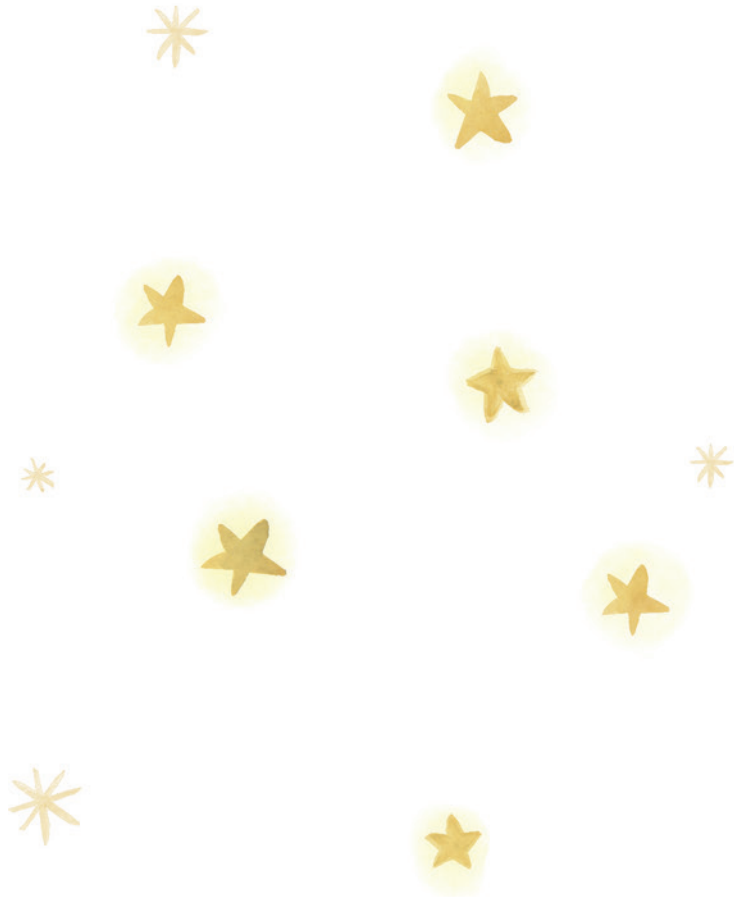
One day, her new owner moved her to a table draped with blue fabric, and placed her next to a bowl of fruit. It took her a while to realise that she was the subject of her owner’s new painting. What an honour. She grew another couple of millimetres with pride.

The project took several weeks to complete and the little fern enjoyed the warm feeling of sitting for her owner. When she saw the finished work of art, the little fern could hardly believe she was looking at herself: it was truly beautiful. And for her, that was the happy ending. She had found her forever home. But the inquisitive bumblebee discovered more. The painting of the littlest fern was sent to the city's most famous gallery, frequently visited by members of the royal family.



The bumblebee buzzed from place to place, telling the other two ferns  
(and anyone who would listen):

*“The third fern’s portrait has been seen  
By none other than the queen.  
And now I think we all can see  
Who’s the finest of you three.”*



THE END



# LONGING



In an urban, modern flat, a solitary trailing vine hung from the ceiling in a macramé holder. He had everything he could ever wish for: light, water and the occasional dose of houseplant food.



**Still, something was missing.**

**He was lonely.**



His owner worked all day and went out most evenings.

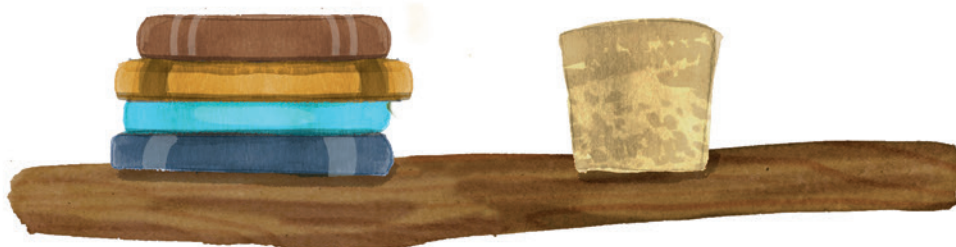
In between, she ate from small plastic trays in front of the flickering blue lights of the television, or moved her fingers urgently over the screen of her phone.

The vine knew that his owner would never care for him in the way that she cared for those screens and there must be more to life. To his left was a wall-mounted shelving unit; a stylish set of three mango wood shelves. His owner had artfully arranged a few possessions on each shelf.



On the top shelf  
stood a vase, a plant  
pot and a round  
wooden clock.

On the middle shelf was a small cluster of books, their  
spines displaying complementary hues.



But the bottom shelf was the one that drew the vine's attention.

On that shelf, next to two scented candles, stood a vision of beauty.  
She was smooth and white, draped in robes, with a raised shoulder  
and a tilted head.

He longed for her to turn her face towards him but she never did.

Perhaps she was hard of hearing or perhaps she did not speak his  
language, but however he tried to attract her attention, she remained  
facing the other way.



One day, after his owner had run her vacuum cleaner over the spotless geometric rug and dusted the shelves, she turned to him.

She rotated him slowly, plucked out a few older leaves and rearranged his tendrils. Then she ran her fingers down one of the strings above him.

He knew that one of the knotted sections had frayed, but it always held fast. Now his owner wrinkled her brow, removed him from the holder and placed him in his bare plastic pot on the coffee table.

She disposed of the knotted string in the wastepaper basket in the corner of the room.

## **The bin!**

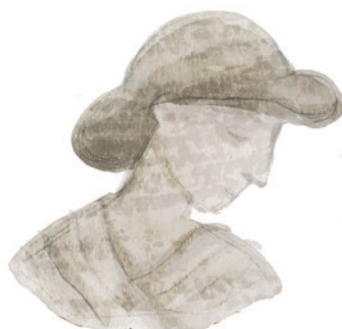
If she put his holder in the bin then what did that mean for him?

But his owner took the empty plant pot from the top shelf, blew into it to remove the dust and plonked him in.



She put him on the very top shelf and arranged his leaves to trail attractively down the front of the shelves. He had a new home! And his leaves hung just inches from his beloved. If only he could trail far enough, he would be able to tap her gently on the shoulder. By his estimation, it should take just a few days. But whenever he got close, his attentive owner snipped his trailing leaves with a pair of silver scissors. Was he destined to remain like this?

## **So near and yet so far?**




Just as he was beginning to give up hope of ever attracting her attention, his owner wheeled a red suitcase through from her bedroom.

## **She was going away on holiday!**

It was a largish suitcase so she would presumably be gone for some time. Without the constant snipping, his leaves would surely trail far enough to make contact.

*His owner wheeled the suitcase away and slammed the front door.*

A decorative arc of yellow stars is positioned at the bottom right of the page, following the curve of the italicized text above it.

The house was quieter than ever.

**Days passed.**

A stranger visited one day and gave him a drink but did not attempt to trim his leaves. Millimetre by millimetre he grew, edging towards the shoulder of his adored.



It was a gentle, barely-there touch of a single leaf. But she didn't feel as he expected. She was cold. Hard. She would never glance his way. She was not a living thing like he was and she would never love him back.

He continued to grow freely over her stone shoulder, contemplating an empty future.

Maybe he was destined to be alone.

And then his owner returned. Her key in the lock was a welcome sound, indicating that the normal rhythms of life would soon resume.

But his owner looked different, with a new pair of large earrings and extra bags hanging from her shoulders. And something else. Cradled in her arms was a plant in a steel pot. A type of ivy, full of life, with remarkable variegated heart-shaped leaves.

## **Was this plant his replacement?**

His owner walked to the shelves and considered the arrangement. But she did not move him from his top shelf position. She liked him where he was! There was room for them both. Instead she gently unwound his leaves from the sculpture's arm and moved the sculpture to nearby table.

She put the new plant in its place and poked a cane into the back of the pot.

The new plant's fresh green smell drifted two shelves up and when their leaves touched gently for the first time, he knew that he would not be lonely any more.

Mercifully, this time, his owner didn't snip.

**She wound and coiled his own tendrils**  
through the brackets of the shelf and towards the cane.  
**Then she wound a tendril of ivy** in the opposite direction, training it to grow up the cane.

His owner stood back with a satisfied look.

And the vine looked forward to a future of intertwining leaves.

**Two plants.**

**Together.**



THE END



WHAT  
GOES  
AROUND

In a busy village, a man lived all alone. Every week, he read the local newspaper and tutted to himself. A factory had shut down, putting many out of work. People were fighting and stealing and drawing on walls.

The man preferred to stay inside. He had his shopping delivered to his door. He went out for a walk every day at 10am when most people had gone to work or school. He kept his hat pulled low and tried not to speak to anyone.

He found joy only in his plants, which thrived on every surface in his home: they sat on shelves, on windowsills and by the washbasin. The plants had circular green leaves attached by stalks to a central stem.

Cuttings were easy to take, so they multiplied quickly. One might ask why he kept them all, but he liked each and every one.

He talked to them as if they were his friends.

One day, he was busy in the kitchen, separating three smaller plants from the roots of the mother plant, when there was a knock at the door. He sighed. It would either be the postman or someone selling something he didn't want. He brushed the soil from his hands and shuffled to open the door, grumbling to himself. He found a small child with tight black curls and an open expression.

*“I am delivering flyers for the village fete. I drew the picture on the front,”* she said.

*“I don’t want one,”* he said gruffly. Then, when he saw her face fall, he added, *“I don’t get out much.”* The girl smiled and just stood there.

He just stood there too, for a moment. *“I suppose I may as well take one. Seeing as the picture is so nice.”*

She smiled and handed one over. *“Your plants are pretty,”* she said.

*“Yes. They are Pilea Peperomioides.”*

*“Pi-lee-a...”* said the girl.

*“Peperomioides,”* he said.

The girl laughed. *“That’s tricky to say but they are pretty anyway. Goodbye!”*

The girl turned to leave but he stopped her:

*“Wait!”*

He went back inside and found a particular plant in a plain terracotta pot. It was smallish but established, with its own simple beauty, like this child. He hobbled back and handed it to her.

*“Here, take this. Some people think they bring luck.”*

*“Thank you,”* she said, *“I hope the luck soon finds you.”*

*“I don’t think the luck comes to me, it comes to you,”* he said, but she had already skipped away, clutching the plant.

He left for his walk the next morning feeling a little happier than usual. As he reached his gate, he bumped into a neighbour from across the road.

Instead of looking away as he normally would, he tipped his hat and nodded a greeting. The woman smiled.

*“Hello there, I hope you don’t mind me asking, but I keep wondering what all those beautiful plants on your windowsill are?”*

*“They are Pilea Peperomioides,”* said the man, who surprised himself by adding, *“Would you like one?”*



The woman beamed with happiness when he presented her a medium sized plant in a low pot.

*“How lovely!”* she exclaimed. *“Will I see you at the village fete on Saturday?”*

*“Oh, no,”* said the man. *“I don’t get out much.”*

Later, when it was dark, he sat alone at the kitchen table, examining the flyer that the little girl had given him.



He thought of the look on the woman's and little girl's faces when he had given them the plants. He got up from his chair and began loading his treasured Pilea plants into a wheelbarrow in the front garden. He put in virtually all the plants, just leaving one in his front window. Then, on a whim, he put that one in too. They had never bought him any luck; maybe they would do better for other people.

He pushed the wheelbarrow to the village hall and left it there, outside the back door. The plant stall at the fete would be well stocked.

Saturday was sunny, and this pleased him - it would mean a good turnout for the fete. He hoped that his plants would go to good homes. A tiny part of him wished that he had gone along himself - he might have enjoyed watching other people walk away with his plants. But it was too late now. Normally at this time he would check on his plants: remove any dead leaves; polish the rest. But they were gone. Instead, he began reading a book.

There was a knock at the door.

This time his heart didn't sink at the sound; he was curious to find out who was there.

It was a woman from opposite, wearing a floral dress and holding a pot of jam.

**Homemade blackcurrant jam.**

*“We were sorry you couldn’t come along to the fete. We’ve brought some gifts to show our appreciation for the donations.”*

He saw then that there was a gaggle of people behind her, holding various items from the fete: a homemade fruitcake, a box of chocolates with a raffle number attached, even some wine from the bottle tombola.

The man blinked tears away. He had not realised that people could be so kind. And there at the back of the group was his little friend with the black hair. She was holding out a tiny flowerpot, containing the beginnings of a brand new Pilea plant. The man was confused. He inspected the pot.

*“This isn’t one of mine,”* he began.

*“No,”* said the girl. *“This is a cutting from the plant that you gave me. I thought it was time for the luck to come to you.”*

The man looked around at the friendly, laughing group on his front lawn.

*“I think it might have already  
worked its magic.”*



THE END

