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The Seed That Waited

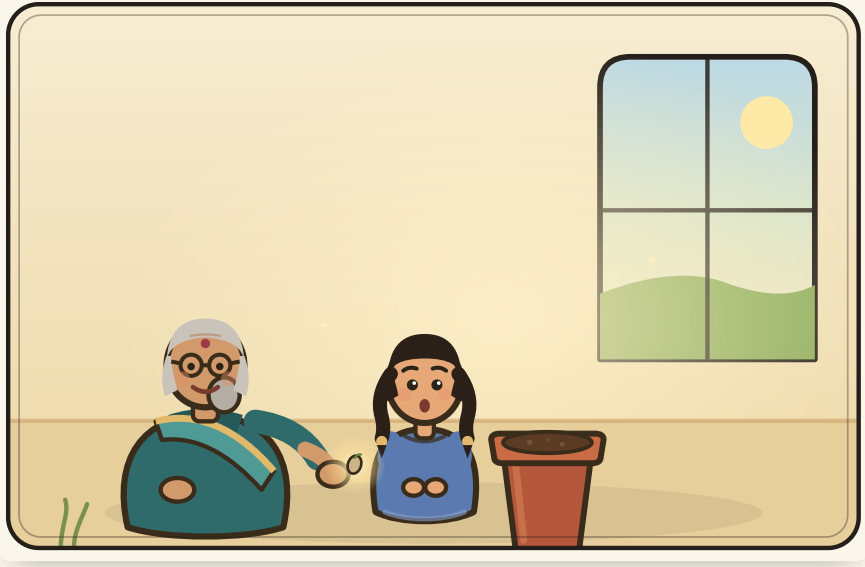
Written & illustrated by Navritto.

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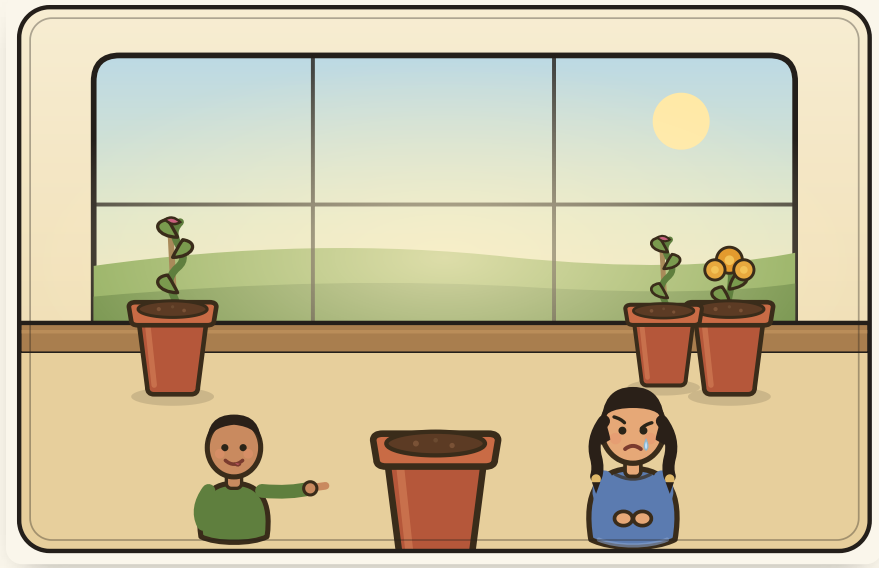
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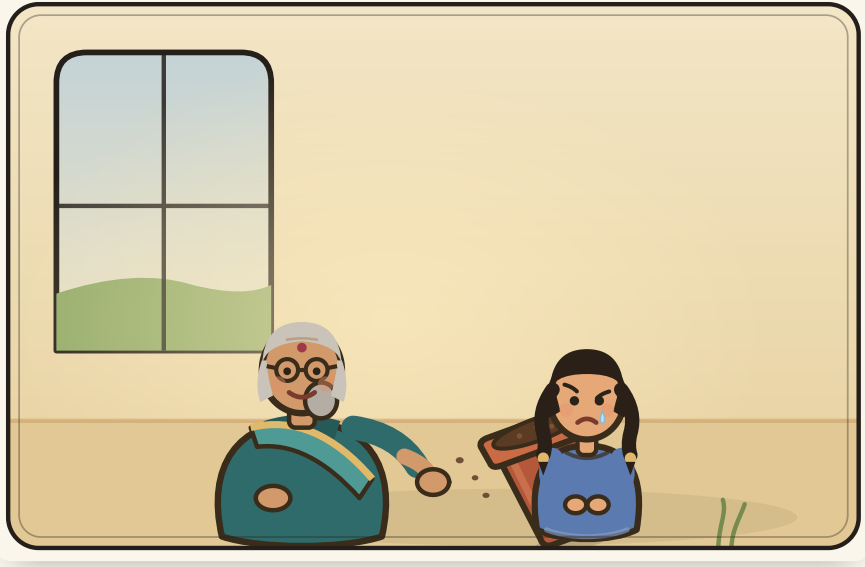
Neela's grandmother pressed one small seed into her palm, no bigger than a teardrop. "This is a moonflower," she said softly. "It grows taller than any flower in the garden — but it grows slowly, in its own good time."

So Neela planted it in a pot by the window, patted the earth gently down, and gave it a long, cool drink of water. Then she pulled up her stool, folded her hands, and settled in to wait.



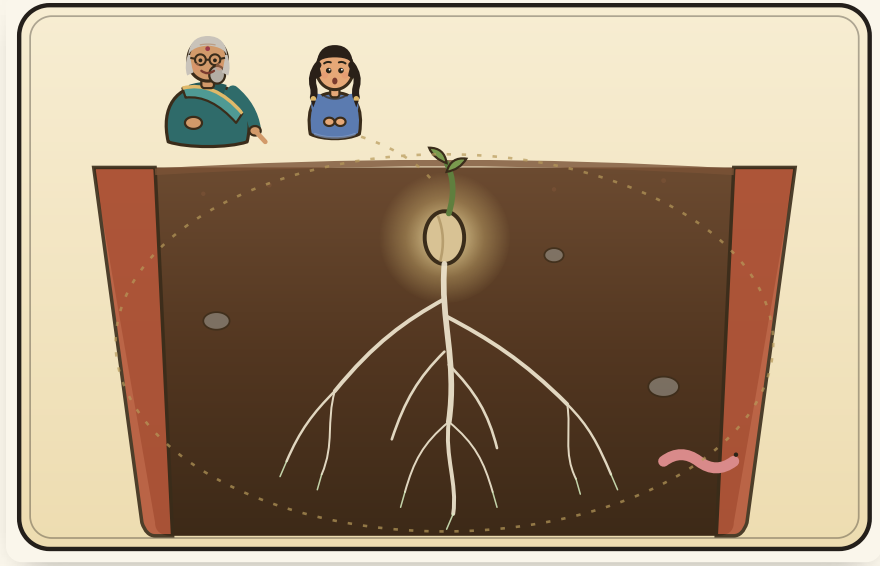
The other children planted quick beans and cheerful marigolds. In only a few days their green shoots unrolled and raced upward, curling round their little sticks and opening bright new leaves to the sun.

But Neela's pot stayed bare brown earth, flat and quiet. "There's nothing there," the others teased, peering in. "You planted a stone, Neela. A stone will never grow."



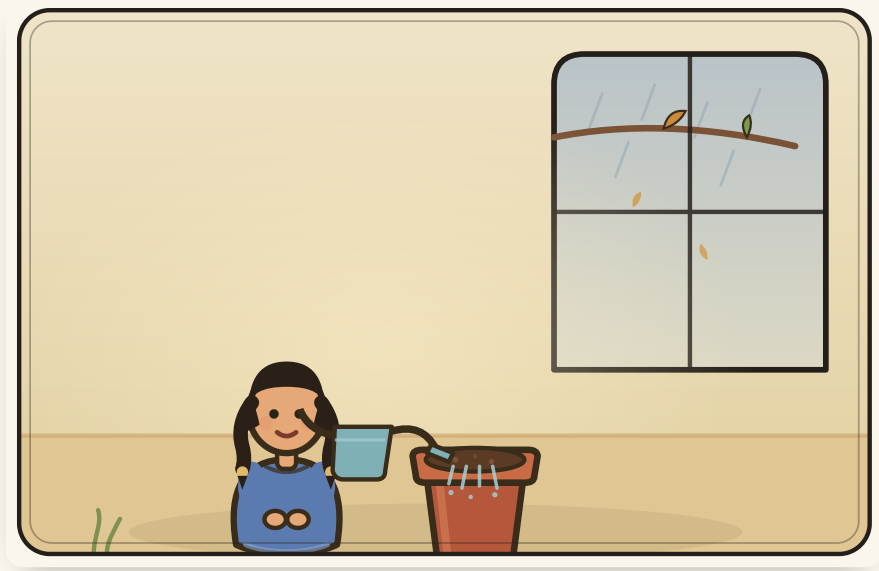
Weeks went by, and still the pot showed nothing at all. Neela's heart grew heavy. Maybe the others were right. She tilted the pot to tip the empty earth away and start again with something faster.

But her grandmother's hand came softly down over hers. "Wait, little one," she said. "Just because you cannot see it, does not mean nothing is happening."



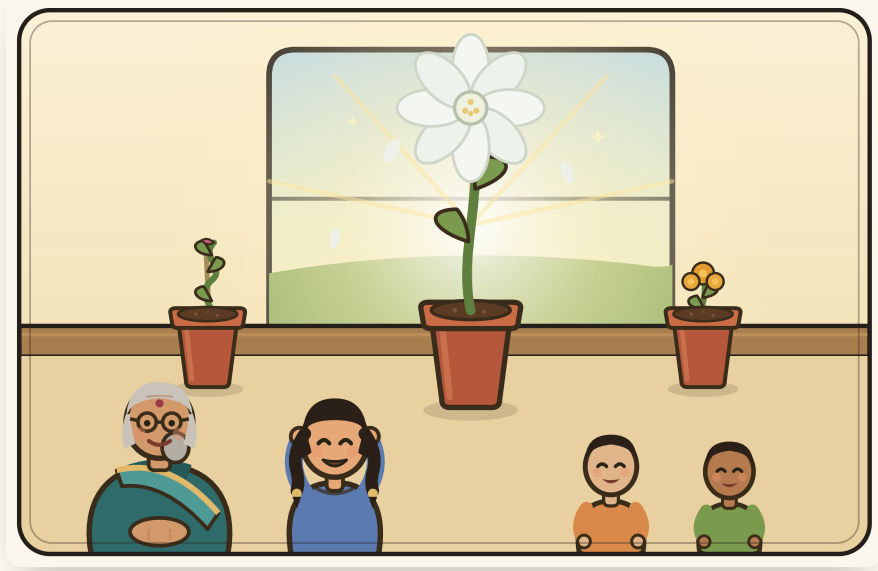
Then Grandmother showed her, in her mind's eye, the world below the soil — where the little seed had split its shell and sent out roots, fine and white as thread, spreading quietly through the dark, drinking deep and holding fast.

“It is building itself strong down where you cannot see,” she said, “before it ever dares to climb. That is the hardest, bravest part. Keep watering. Keep believing.”



So Neela watered it every single day, even with nothing to show for it. She watered it on grey mornings and on doubtful ones, when the wind rattled the window and the wanting-to-quit crept close.

One patient day followed another. Past the window the leaves turned and fell, the rains came and went, and buds waited on the bare branch — and still, faithfully, Neela poured her small cup of water into the quiet earth.



Then one morning — a single green shoot. By the next it was taller; by the next, taller still, climbing up and up, past the beans, past the marigolds, until a great moonflower unfolded, silver-white and glowing, the tallest bloom of all. Everyone gathered round to see.

And Neela understood at last: all that quiet waiting had not been nothing — the waiting was the growing. What looks like nothing at all can be roots reaching deep in the dark. So keep going, and keep believing — and never give up on what you cannot see yet.

✦ THE END

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