



## Barnaby's Big Night

By Yogesh





In the heart of a sleepy old oak tree lived a little bat named Barnaby. While all the other bats couldn't wait for the moon to rise, Barnaby would pull his wings over his eyes. He wasn't a fan of the dark. "It's just so... big and quiet," he'd whisper to his favourite teddy bear.





One evening, a gentle voice asked, "Not going out to catch moonbeams, little one?" Barnaby peeked out from under his wing. A large owl with spectacles perched on his beak was looking at him kindly. "I'm Professor Hoot. And you look like a bat with a worry."





"I... I don't like the dark," Barnaby admitted. "It's too quiet." Professor Hoot smiled. "Quiet? Oh no. The night has its own special secrets. You just have to learn how to listen. Come on." He led Barnaby to the edge of the branch. "Let's use our super listening ears! Can you cup your hands around your ears like a bat?"





Barnaby listened. At first, he heard nothing. Then, a soft creak-creak sound started up. "What's that?" he whispered. Down on a leaf, a little cricket was rubbing his legs together. "That's my song!" chirped the cricket proudly. "I'm Cecil. I'm the night's musician!"





"A song?" Barnaby said, surprised. "But I still can't see very well." Professor Hoot chuckled. "Let's find the night's lanterns, then." He pointed his wing towards the roots of the tree. A tiny, soft green light was glowing. "Hello up there!" a tiny voice called.





They fluttered down and met a little glow-worm named Glimmer. She was shining her light on a dewdrop, making it sparkle like a diamond. "The dark helps my light shine brighter," she explained. "My friends and I make our own stars on the forest floor." Can you wiggle your finger like a glowing Glimmer?





Suddenly, the forest floor wasn't dark anymore. It was twinkling with hundreds of little glow-worm lights, and Cecil the cricket's song filled the air. It wasn't scary at all. It was magical. "It's beautiful," Barnaby breathed.





"See?" said Professor Hoot. "The night is full of friends. Are you ready to see it from above?" Barnaby looked at the twinkling lights and the starry sky. He nodded, feeling a fizz of excitement. He stretched his wings, which suddenly felt strong and brave.





Barnaby pushed off the ground and... he was flying! He swooped through the cool night air, with Professor Hoot gliding beside him. He saw the glow-worms like a second starry sky below and heard Cecil's music on the breeze. He wasn't scared. He was an explorer! Can you stretch your arms wide and pretend to swoop through the sky?





As the sun began to peek over the horizon, Barnaby flew back to his oak tree, his heart full. "Thank you," he said to his new friends. He snuggled into his nook, but this time he didn't pull his wings over his eyes. He watched the last star fade, dreaming of all the adventures the next night would bring. Goodnight, brave Barnaby.