

The Library That Lit Up at Night

Bruna lived across the street from a small library with a green door and two round windows. Every afternoon, when she came home from school, she would stop to look at the books displayed in the window. There were pirates, distant planets, absent-minded cooks, and animals that could talk.

But lately, Bruna hadn’t been going in. In class, she had been asked to read aloud and had stumbled over three words. Some of her classmates had laughed. Since then, when she opened a book, the letters seemed like ants running too fast.

One night, Bruna woke up because a golden light was coming through the window. It wasn’t coming from the moon. It was coming from the library.

The green door was open.

“How strange…” she murmured.

She put on her slippers, crossed the street with her mother, and they both went inside. There was no librarian inside. Yet the spines of the books shone like candles.

Suddenly, a very thick volume fell from a shelf.

Plop!

A mouse wearing glasses popped out.

“Finally!” he exclaimed. “You’re the reader we’ve been waiting for.”

“Me?” said Bruna. “I’m not a very good reader.”

“We’ll see about that. My name is Puntet, and tonight we have a huge problem.”

The mouse led her to the story room. All the books were open, but the pages were blank.

“The words have run away,” Puntet explained. “They’ve hidden themselves because no one was reading them carefully. If they don’t return before dawn, the stories will disappear.”

Bruna felt a chill. A world without stories seemed to her like a world without windows.

“How can we find them?”

“By listening,” the mouse replied.

They moved forward among the shelves. Under a table, they heard a murmur:

“Forest… leaf… moss…”

Bruna lifted the tablecloth. Three green words trembled in a corner.

“Don’t be afraid,” she told them.

“People walk past us too quickly,” complained “moss.” “No one stops to imagine us.”

Bruna closed her eyes.

“When I say ‘moss,’ I imagine a cool carpet underfoot. When I say ‘leaf,’ I hear the wind. And when I say ‘forest,’ I see a path that I don’t yet know where it leads.”

The three words smiled and flew back to their book.

In the poetry aisle, they found “butterfly” caught in a spiderweb. In the science section, “galaxy” had hidden inside a globe. In the kitchen, “chocolate” was leaving brown footprints everywhere.

Bruna pronounced them slowly. Some were long. Others had difficult sounds. When she made a mistake, Puntet didn’t laugh. He waited.

“Words aren’t in a hurry,” he reminded her. “You can start again.”

Dawn was approaching when only one word remained missing. It was the most important of all.

They searched for it in the drawers, behind the maps, and under the pillows. Finally, Bruna spotted a tiny light hidden inside the book she had tried to read in class.

The word was “courage.”

“Why did you hide?” the girl asked.

“Because you thought you didn’t have any,” the word replied.

Bruna looked at it. It had many letters and an “r” that stood upright like a lamppost.

“Cour-age,” she read, separating the syllables.

The word glowed.

“Again,” Puntet asked.

“Courage.”

“And something louder.”

“Courage!”

All the books in the library lit up at once. The words returned to the pages, and the stories breathed anew.

Before leaving, Puntet gave Bruna a golden bookmark.

“It’s not for marking how far you’ve gotten,” he explained. “It’s for reminding you that you can always continue.”

The next day in class, the teacher asked for another read-aloud. Bruna felt a flutter in her stomach. She opened the book and saw the golden bookmark.

She began to read. She stopped at a difficult word, took a breath, and tried again.

No one laughed. And even if someone had, she would have continued.

Because Bruna already knew that reading wasn’t about rushing. It was about opening a door, entering calmly, and letting each word ignite its light.