

Lilly's Lost Acorns

A Thistledown Lane story · Series 1 · Episode 3



Some mornings on Thistledown Lane are slow and quiet, with nothing to do but watch the leaves come down.

This was not one of those mornings.



“Bramble. Did you hear that?” said Moss.

“Hear what?”

“That. It went past my ear. Twice.”



Something small and orange came down the wall so fast that the leaves spun round behind it.

“Hello! Hello hello hello. You haven’t seen an acorn, have you?”

“I’m sorry,” said Bramble, “who are you?”



“Lilly. I live in the big tree at the top. I’ve got a hundred acorns hidden for winter.”

“A hundred?” said Moss.

“Well. Somewhere between forty and a hundred. That’s rather the trouble.”

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“You’ve forgotten where you put them,” said Bramble.

“I’ve forgotten where I put ALL of them.”

“Oh dear.”

“Then we’d better start looking. Come on.”

And that is how Bramble and Moss met Lilly, and lost their whole morning.



They tried the big green field first, where the grass grows taller than Moss's ears.

"I definitely hid one here," said Lilly. "Or possibly over there. Or possibly not here at all."

"That's three different answers."

"I know! Isn't it exciting?"



They searched the long grass on their paws and knees. And then Bramble stopped.

“Lilly. Is this one?”

“That’s one! That’s ACTUALLY one! Oh, you clever hedgehog.”

“One down,” said Moss. “Only ninety-nine to go.”

Lilly popped it in her satchel, and off they went to the woods.

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Under the trees the light came down in stripes, and the ground was thick with leaves.

“Right. I hid four here. Or five. Under something.”

“Under what?”

“Something brown.”

“Lilly,” said Moss. “Everything here is brown.”



They looked under leaves, and under roots, and under one very surprised beetle.

“Found one!” said Bramble.

“Wonderful! Now, where were the other four?”

“You don’t remember.”

“Not even slightly.”

“We’re going to be here till Tuesday,” said Moss.

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By the time they reached the hedge, Moss had sat down in the middle of the path and refused to move.

“It’s no good. There’s too many. We find one, and she loses the next.”

“I’m sorry,” said Lilly. “I do go rather fast.”

“You do,” said Bramble. “But you’re not the problem, Lilly. The problem is remembering.”

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And that is when Moss, who had been very quiet, sat up straight.

“Then don’t remember.”

“Don’t remember?”

“Put something on top. Every time you hide one, put a little stone on top. Then you don’t have to remember at all. The stone remembers for you.”



“Moss. That’s a very good idea,” said Bramble.

“That’s the BEST idea! Why didn’t I think of that?”

“Because you were going too fast.”

“...That’s fair.”

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So all afternoon they went up and down the lane, and every time Lilly hid an acorn, Moss set a small white stone on top.

A stone by the wall. A stone by the gate. A stone at the foot of the big tree.

“Look at them all! It’s like a little trail of moons.”

“And next time you’ll find every single one.”

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And then Bramble had an idea of her own.

“Lilly. What if we drew it?”

“Drew it?”

“A map. All the stones, on one piece of birch bark. Then you’d have it for keeps.”

So home they went, to the warmest kitchen on the lane.



“Well now,” said Mam. “Three of
you, and one of you I’ve not met.”
“Lilly. I’ve lost about ninety acorns today and found eleven.”
“That sounds like a day that wants a bun in the middle of it.”



So they sat round the table with the birch bark flat between them, and drew every stone they had laid.

“That one’s by the gate,” said Moss.

“And that one’s the big tree,” said Bramble.

“And that one’s… do you know, I actually remember that one.”

“There you are,” said Mam. “That’s what friends are for.”



Lilly folded the map into her satchel, next to her eleven acorns.

“Can I come back tomorrow?”

“Only if you go slower,” said Moss.

“I’ll try. I won’t manage it. But I’ll try.”

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“If a job’s too big to remember, don’t remember it.
Make a mark, and let the mark do the remembering.”

And that’s how the acorns got
found, down on Thistledown Lane.

Thistledown Lane

The lesson: **If a job's too big to remember, make a mark, and let the mark do the remembering.**

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