

A Den for Sorrel

A Thistledown Lane story · Series 1 · Episode 6



It was a breezy morning on Thistledown Lane, and Sorrel came trotting down the wall with leaves stuck all over his back.

“Sorrel, you’ve got half a hedge on you,” said Moss.

“I slept in it. It was a very scratchy hedge,” said Sorrel.



“Where did you sleep the night before?”

“In a different hedge. That one had a hedgehog in it. Not you. A cross one,” said Sorrel.

“And the night before that?” said Lilly.

“Under a wheelbarrow. It was lovely until it rained.”

“Sorrel. Haven’t you got a home?” said Bramble.

“I’ve got lots of homes. They just keep being somebody else’s.”

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And Bramble looked at Moss, and Moss looked at Lilly, and they all had exactly the same idea at exactly the same time.

“We’ll build you one,” said Bramble.

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First, they went to ask Mam, because Mam always knows how things are built.

“A den? Well. You’ll want it somewhere sheltered. Out of the wind, and where the rain runs off,” said Mam.

“Where’s that?” said Moss.

“The hedge path. By the big mossy stone. The hedge keeps the wind off, and the ground slopes away.”

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“And it’ll need something soft inside.”

Bramble went to the cupboard, and came back with her own old blue blanket, the one with the patch on the corner.

“Your baby blanket? Are you sure, my love?” said Mam.

“I’m too big for it. Sorrel’s exactly the right size,” said Bramble.

So they went down to the hedge path, beside the big mossy stone, and they began.

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Lilly fetched sticks. And more sticks. And more sticks than anybody could possibly use.

“Is this enough?” said Lilly.

“Lilly, that’s enough for a castle,” said Moss.

“Sorrel might want a castle.”

“I would quite like a castle,” said Sorrel.

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Bramble leaned the sticks together against
the hedge, in a little pointed shape, like a tent.

And Moss tucked soft green moss into every gap, so the wind couldn't get in.

"It's called moss. Like me. That's why I'm good at it," said Moss.

Then they laid big golden leaves on top, one over the other, like the tiles on Mam's roof.



Old Wren flew down to the hedge to have a look.

“Hmm. Leaves overlapping, top to bottom. That’s how a bird does a nest. Who taught you that?” said Old Wren.

“Mam,” said Bramble.

“Then it’ll hold.”



And last of all, Bramble laid her blue blanket inside, and smoothed it flat.

“There. Sorrel, it’s yours,” said Bramble.

Sorrel stood and looked at it for a long time.

“Nobody’s ever made me anything before,” said Sorrel.

“Well, now somebody has. Four somebodies,” said Moss.

“Five. I did the inspecting,” said Old Wren.

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That night, the rain came. It pattered on the leaves of Thistledown Lane, and on the round door of Mam's kitchen.

Bramble lay awake in bed, listening to it.

"Mam? Do you think the den will hold?" said Bramble.

"Did you overlap the leaves like I told you?" said Mam.

"Top to bottom."

"Then go to sleep, my love. It'll hold."



In the morning, the whole lane was shiny and wet. And four friends ran all the way down to the hedge path.

“Sorrel? Sorrel, are you all right?” said Moss.

For a moment there was no answer. And then a small, sleepy, orange face poked out of the den.

“Good morning. I’ve been dry all night. Dry and warm and blanketed,” said Sorrel.



“It held! The castle held!”

“It’s not a castle. It’s better than a castle,” said Sorrel.

“What’s better than a castle?” said Bramble.

“A home that your friends built.”

“A home isn’t the sticks, or the leaves, or even the blanket. It’s who helped you build it.”

And that’s how Sorrel came to live on Thistledown Lane, in a den by the big mossy stone.

Thistledown Lane

The lesson: **A home isn't the sticks, or the leaves, or even the blanket. It's who helped you build it.**

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