

Hazel and the Acorn

A Thistledown Lane story · Series 2 · Episode 4



At the edge of the woods there was a great big bed of bracken, all gold and brown and crackly. And one morning, Bramble and Moss heard a funny noise coming from inside it.

“Wibble… wobble… wibble… ooh!” said Hazel.

And out of the bracken came a young deer, with big eyes, and a sky-blue scarf, and four very wobbly legs.



“Hello! Are you alright? Your legs are going all over the place,” said Moss.

“Hello! I’m Hazel. I’m practising standing still.
Watch. Wibble, wobble... ta-da!” said Hazel.

And for a moment, Hazel stood perfectly still.
And then she sat down in the bracken, plop.



“Nearly!” said Hazel.

“That was very good! … Why do you need to practise?” asked Bramble.

“So I can be big. Like the big deer. They stand so still and so tall, and they don’t wobble at all. I want to be like that. Today,” said Hazel.

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“But you’re already the tallest one here. By miles,” said Moss.

“I’m the tallest one here. But I’m the smallest deer,” said Hazel.

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So Hazel wobbled along with them, into the woods, where Lilly was very, very busy.

“Dig. Drop. Pat, pat. Another acorn buried for the winter. Oh! Hello! Who are you?” asked Lilly.

“I’m Hazel. Wibble, wobble... ta-da!” said Hazel.

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“Ooh, I like that. I’m Lilly. My best acorn is safe at Barnaby’s. These are all the others,” said Lilly.

“Lilly, where did you put the first one?” asked Bramble.

“The first one? It’s… it’s…” said Lilly.

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Lilly looked by the log. Lilly looked by the roots. Lilly looked by a stone that looked exactly like the other stone.

“I don’t know. I’ve forgotten,” said Lilly.

“What about the one after that?” asked Moss.

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“...Forgotten that one too,” said Lilly.

“What about the one you just did? Just now?” asked Hazel.

“Hmm. Let me think. No. Gone,” said Lilly.

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From over by the old tree, somebody chuckled. It was Old Wren, perched on a toadstool.

“Forgotten another one, have you, Lilly? Don’t worry. All squirrels do. Come with me. I want to show you something,” said Old Wren.

And Old Wren led them to a sunny gap between the trees. And there, all on its own, was a tiny little tree. It had a thin brown stalk, and just a few leaves, and it was no taller than Moss.



“It’s the same size as me!” said Moss.

“That is an oak tree. A baby one. A long time ago, a squirrel buried an acorn right here, and forgot all about it. And the acorn stayed in the ground, and it grew,” said Old Wren.

“A squirrel forgot it? And it turned into a tree?” asked Lilly.



“Old Wren... why do I always forget where I put them?” asked Lilly.

“Well, perhaps the woods want you to. Every acorn a squirrel forgets is a little tree waiting to happen. Half the oaks in these woods were planted by squirrels who forgot,” said Old Wren.

“So I’m not forgetful. I’m a tree-planter!” said Lilly.

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“When will it be a big tree? Like that one?” asked Hazel.

“Oh, not for a long, long time. Years and years and years. It grows a little bit every summer. It doesn’t hurry. But it gets there,” said Old Wren.

And Hazel looked at the tiny oak, and then up at the great big oak, and then down at her own four wobbly legs.

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“So the little tree doesn’t have to be big today,” said Hazel.

“No. It just has to keep growing,” said Old Wren.

“Maybe I’m like the little tree. Maybe I’m growing too. Just slowly,” said Hazel.

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“You ARE growing. Everybody is. You can’t see it, because it’s so slow,” said Bramble.

“Hazel! I know! Let’s plant you a tree. A tree of your very own.
Then you can watch it grow, and it can watch you grow,” said Lilly.

So back they went to the bracken, Hazel wobbling
in front, and Lilly carrying one fat, shiny acorn.



“Here. Right by my bracken bed. Then I’ll see it every single morning,” said Hazel.

Lilly dug a little hole, and popped the acorn in, and patted the earth down, pat, pat. And on the top went one golden leaf, to keep it warm.

“And we’ll put a stick next to it. So we don’t forget,” said Moss.

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“Good idea. I’d definitely forget,” said Lilly.

And they stuck a little stick in the ground next to it, so that this time, nobody would forget.



“I’m going to practise again. But not so I can be big today. Just so I can be a bit better than yesterday,” said Hazel.

“We’ll count you in. Ready?” asked Bramble.

And everybody said it together. Wibble… wobble…



“...ta-da!” said Hazel.

And Hazel stood still. And she stayed still. And she stayed still a little bit longer, without a single wobble, which was the longest she had ever, ever stood.

“Hazel! You did it!” said Lilly.



“I did it! And I didn’t have to be big at all,” said Hazel.

“Told you. It doesn’t hurry. But it gets there,” said Old Wren.

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“Good things take time. Like oak trees, and like growing up. You don’t have to be big all at once. You just have to keep growing, a little bit every day,” said Bramble.

And that’s how a wobbly little deer planted a tree that might, one day, be the biggest oak in all of Thistledown Woods.

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The lesson: **Good things take time. You don't have to be grown-up all at once.**

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