

The Night Market's Missing Morning



LITTLE
STORY MAGIC



Merry Moth was choosing a ribbon at the night market when Mister Button hurried over.

"Morning's missing!"

Merry looked up at the stars.

"It is still night."

"Morning the cockerel. Little brass bird. Very loud crow."

"Ah," said Merry. "A smaller sort of missing morning."



His perch beside the shop door was empty.

"He crows when it's time to close," said Mister Button. "Then everyone goes home for breakfast." Pebble patted his satchel.

"I've saved a bun. Beautifully wrapped. No peeking before breakfast."

Merry bent towards the ground.

"Look low. Listen close."



Beneath the perch lay a golden brass feather.
Beside it were little prints in spilled flour.
Three pointed toes.
Three pointed toes.
Merry put her fingertip beside one print.
"Little bird feet. A long way from his perch."
She followed the trail.



Pebble's satchel rustled.

Merry stopped.

"Your breakfast is moving. May I look?"

"Probably crumbs," said Pebble. "And paper rustles."

He held the flap closed.

"I wrapped my bun beautifully."

Merry tilted her head.

"All right. We'll follow the feet."

She looked low.

She listened close.



The prints passed the ribbon stall.
A golden curl peeped from a basket.
"Another feather?" asked Mister Button.
Merry lifted it.
It drooped over her finger.
"Ribbon. Morning's feathers are stiff brass."
She put it back.
"And his feet went THIS way."



The little prints ran beneath the stall.
Merry crouched.
Pebble crouched.
Mister Button tried.
His tall cap bumped the counter.
He took it off and tried again.
On the other side stood a bench.
The prints went straight to it.



An empty paper bag lay on the bench.
"That's where I ate my bun," said Pebble.
Merry looked at his satchel.
"You saved your bun."
"My SECOND bun."
"And where was your satchel?"
"On the bench. Open. Beside me."
Merry leaned close to the floury marks.
They stopped beneath the bench.
None led away.



"Morning could have hopped up," said Merry. "Your open satchel was right there."

A little sound came from the bag.

Tik.

Merry lifted her antennae.

"Paper rustles. Brass goes tik."

Pebble looked down.

"I think," said Merry, "your breakfast has company. May I look now?"

Pebble set the satchel on the bench.

"Carefully."



Merry opened the flap.
There lay the beautifully wrapped bun.
Beside it slept a round brass bird.
His three pointed toes curled into the soft lining.
"Morning," whispered Mister Button.
Pebble stared.
"You might have asked."
Morning snored a very small—
"Kuk."



Merry picked up the empty paper bag from Pebble's first bun.

She folded down its top.

"He found a soft bed. Let's give him one of his own."

Mister Button held out both hands.

Morning opened one eye.

Then the other.

He hopped into the waiting hands.



Back at the shop, Merry set the paper nest on the low perch.

Mister Button lowered Morning into it.

The brass bird stretched his neck.

"COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO!"

Stalls folded their awnings.

Lanterns winked out along the lane.

"Breakfast," said Pebble.



At home, Pebble unwrapped his saved bun.
Merry poured two cups of tea.
Pebble broke the bun in half.
From his satchel came a rustle.
They both looked.
One last crumb rolled out.
"Crumbs," said Pebble. "As I suspected."

A little more to share

A little detective game

Which clue changed Merry's mind? Look back for the stiff feather, drooping ribbon and last floury print. Pause for guesses if your child enjoys it.

Look and listen together

Compare the sound of crumpling paper with a gentle tap on a spoon. Words such as stiff, soft, shiny and quiet can describe what you notice. Morning is an imaginary brass cockerel whose crow tells everyone this night market is closing.

Made for sharing

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NAEYC: describing materials and observations