

The Mountain That Wouldn't Stay Put

Midnight Mischief Club

By J. Ladis and Haley Dell

Little Story Magic



Moth had made a flag for the highest hill. Pebble had packed breakfast. They meant to reach the top before sunrise, when the whole valley would turn gold. “I shall eat my sandwich in the sky.”



The hill stood behind the crooked oak. But when they reached the oak, it stood behind the mill. Moth checked their map. Pebble checked behind himself. “Hills don't usually do that.”



They hurried after it and scrambled up a mossy slope. A ridge rose beneath their feet. The ground rocked. Pebble hugged the breakfast bag. “This mountain has a very bumpy walk.”



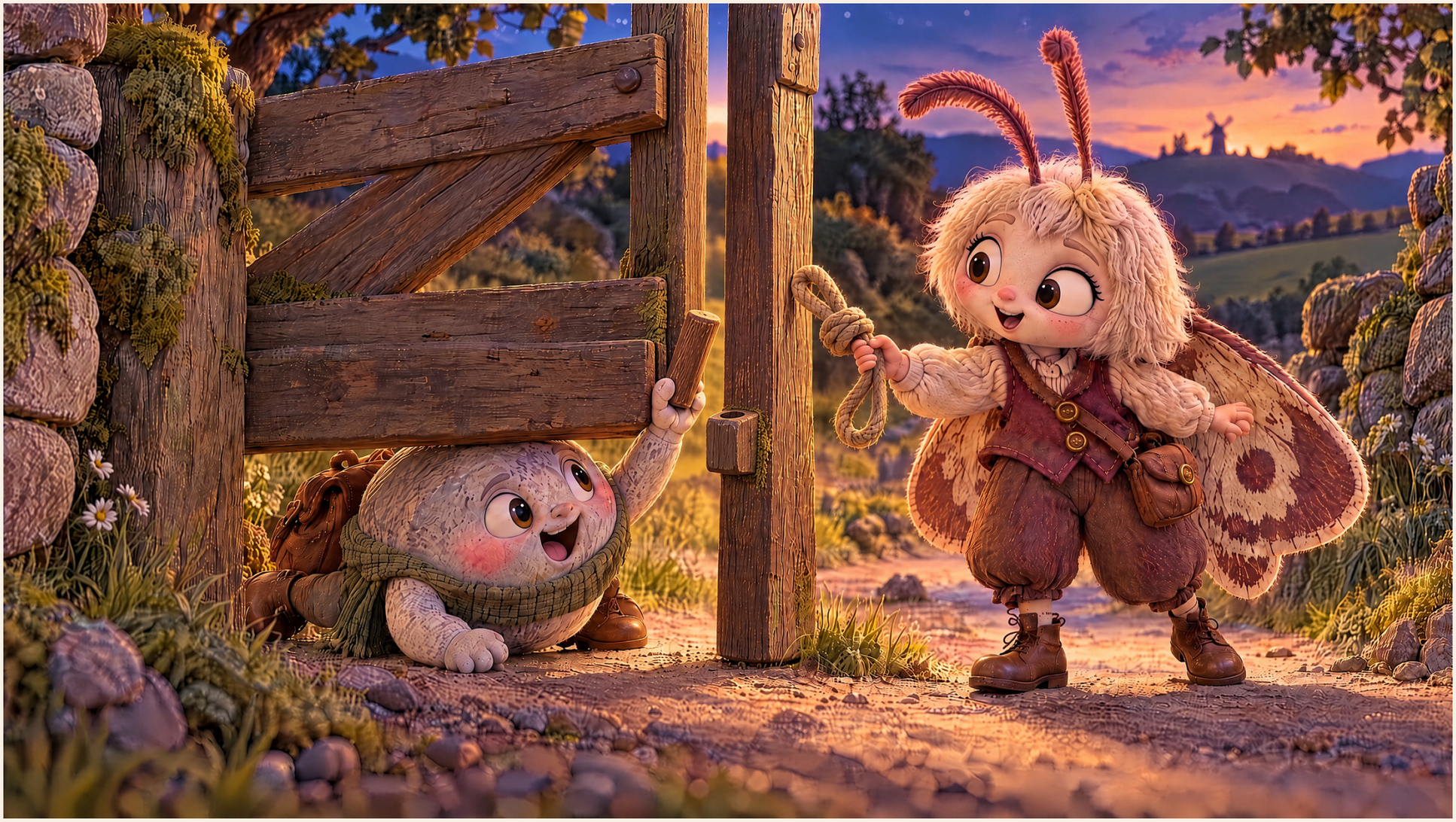
At the top, a yellow eye opened beside them. Their hill had a head, four legs, and a shell as broad as a meadow. “Good morning. Are you coming to the hatching?”



“My grandchildren are due at Sunrise Sands. I told them I would be there when they peep out.” He reached the stream and stopped. The little bridge lay in the water, all crooked and broken.



“I'll find another way!” Moth flew above the hedge. Beyond it, a sandy path led to a wide, shallow crossing. But a garden gate blocked the entrance, tied shut with a knotted cord.



Pebble slipped beneath the gate. He couldn't undo the knot, but he could lift the wooden peg that held the cord. Moth caught the loose end. The gate swung open.



Moth raised their flag beside the crossing. Grandfather Tortoise followed its bright triangle through the mist. Pebble rode behind his head, keeping both sandwiches well away from the splashes.



At Sunrise Sands, a small round egg cracked. A tiny head appeared, followed by two determined feet. Grandfather lowered his enormous nose until the new tortoise could touch it. “I kept my promise.”



Gold spread across the sand. Moth planted the flag in a cushion of moss on Grandfather's shell. Pebble unwrapped breakfast. Below them, the little tortoises were already climbing.



“We did have breakfast on a mountain.” “A mountain with somewhere to go.” Grandfather took one careful step. Pebble caught his sandwich. “And absolutely no table manners.”

Little Story Magic

The Mountain That Wouldn't Stay Put

By J. Ladis and Haley Dell.

© 2026 J. Ladis and Haley Dell.

Illustrated working edition - October 2026.

A digital reading edition. Whole-book creative review, device testing, retailer conversion and print preparation remain separate.