

Bedtime stories about gardens.

3 stories to read aloud at bedtime, each with its own picture and a calm, sleepy ending. Written for ages 3 to 8.



Labels for the Windowsill Garden

about 3 min

Where the Watering Cans Sleep

about 3 min

Everyone Who Came Through the Gate

about 3 min

Reading times assume a slow bedtime pace of about 110 words a minute. Every story is also free to read online at pimlo.app/bedtime-stories/gardens.



Labels for the Windowsill Garden

Sunny's garden wasn't outside. It was on her bedroom windowsill, in a row of five small pots. Her grandpa had helped her plant them, and now everything was growing: a tomato plant, some basil, a cactus, a sunflower that was much too tall for the window and a pot where something green was coming up that nobody could remember planting.

"They need labels," said Sunny one evening, "so they know who they are." Grandpa found a handful of craft sticks and a pen, and they sat together by the windowsill while the sky outside turned pink.

Sunny wrote TOMATO on the first stick and drew a little red circle. She wrote BASIL on the second, and Grandpa showed her how to rub a leaf, so the room smelled green and sweet. The cactus got a stick that said CACTUS, PLEASE DON'T TOUCH, with a picture of a pointy face. The sunflower's label said SUNNY, because they almost had the same name.

That left the mystery pot. Sunny and Grandpa looked at it closely. The leaves were small and round. "Maybe a pea," said Grandpa. "Maybe a bean. Or maybe it's a surprise." So Sunny wrote WAIT AND SEE on the last stick and pushed it gently into the soil.

Now every pot had a name. Sunny gave them each a little drink of water from the cup by her bed. Outside, the pink sky had turned dark blue, and the first star came out above the sunflower's head. "Goodnight, Tomato. Goodnight, Basil. Goodnight, Cactus. Goodnight, Sunny. Goodnight, Wait and See," said Sunny. Grandpa turned out the light, and the little garden on the windowsill grew quietly in the dark.

The end. Goodnight.



Where the Watering Cans Sleep

At the end of Hazel Lane there was a community garden, where neighbors grew vegetables and flowers in long wooden beds. Everyone watered in the evening, when the sun was low. Mrs. Duarte had a big green watering can. Mr. Finch had an old silver one with a dent in the side. And Tobias, who was six, had a small red one shaped like an elephant.

Every evening, when the watering was done, the cans were left wherever their owners had finished: one by the beans, one by the gate, one tipped over in the strawberries. And every evening, everyone wandered around looking for them. "We need a proper place for the cans to sleep," said Tobias one night.

So the three of them looked around the garden. "By the shed?" said Mr. Finch. But the shed was damp and shady. "Under the apple tree?" said Mrs. Duarte. But the apples might fall on them. Tobias walked all the way around, slowly, and stopped by the old brick wall at the back, where the last of the sun was still warm.

There was an empty shelf along the wall, low enough for Tobias to reach. They lined the cans up on it: the big green one, the dented silver one and the little red elephant at the end, with its trunk pointing out over the garden. Mr. Finch painted a small sign right there and then, and hung it above them: WATERING CANS SLEEP HERE.

From then on, the last thing anyone did in the garden each evening was put their can on the shelf. The cans sat in a row by the warm wall, dripping their last few drops into the soil below. That first night, Tobias walked home along Hazel Lane, looked back once at the three cans in the dusk and went to bed, knowing exactly where his would be tomorrow.

The end. Goodnight.



Everyone Who Came Through the Gate

At the front of Esther's cottage there was a small wooden garden gate, painted blue, with a latch that went clack. The gate couldn't walk or talk, but it could remember. And every evening, when the garden went quiet, it remembered everyone who had come through that day.

First, in the early morning, there was the mail carrier, who opened the gate with one hand and held the letters in the other, and always remembered to close it behind her. Clack. Then Esther herself came out in her gardening hat, with a basket for the beans. She came through twice, because she had forgotten her gloves.

At lunchtime, two children from next door came to ask if they could pick some raspberries, and they swung on the gate, just a little, before they remembered they weren't supposed to. The gate didn't mind. It quite liked being swung. In the afternoon, a delivery driver came through with a parcel, and a bee came over the top without opening it at all.

Later, Esther's grandson came for tea, and he held the gate open for a long time while he said goodbye, so the evening air came in and the smell of the roses drifted out. And last of all, after the sun had gone down, a rabbit came hopping along the path and squeezed underneath the gate, where there was a gap just the right size for rabbits.

Then Esther came out one last time, in her slippers, to close the gate for the night. She lifted the latch and let it fall: clack. The garden was dark and smelled of roses. The rabbit nibbled quietly somewhere in the clover. And the little blue gate stood still in the moonlight, remembering everyone who had come through, one by one, until morning.

The end. Goodnight.