

THE Moonlight MYSTERY AGENCY

The Birthday Cake Thief



Little
Gems

VASHTI HARDY

Illustrated by Agnes Sacconi

For Posy and Romy





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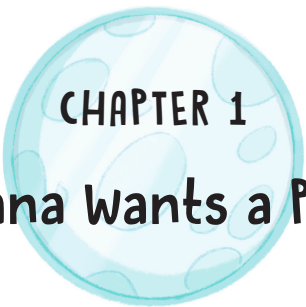
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CHAPTER 1

Hana Wants a Pet

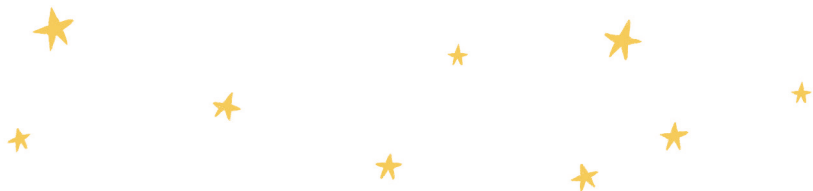
Hana had always wanted a pet. But her little brother, Arlo, was allergic to fur. So she wasn't allowed one.

Hana had never wanted a little brother. But a little brother was what she got.



Arlo was noisy and he wanted everything he saw. He even wanted Hana's teddy cat, Tibby.

One day Arlo took Tibby at dinner time. He had done that before but this time it made Hana angry.



She snatched Tibby back. “It’s your fault I can’t have a pet, Arlo! You can’t keep taking Tibby from me too.” *Silly baby*, she thought.

Arlo’s face’s went red. Then he began to cry very loudly like a police car siren.



“Hana!” Dad rushed from the kitchen. “That’s not kind. He’s only a baby.”

Hana frowned. She felt bad but she was also fed up.

“Tibby is just a toy. Your brother’s feelings are real. Say sorry,” said Dad.

But all Hana wanted was to go up to her room and draw her farm.

The farm was where she would live one day, with cats, dogs, goats, sheep, pigs, cows – and no little brothers.

Hana stormed off.



“Well, you can stay up there until bedtime then,” called Dad.

Hana was glad her bedroom was in the attic. It was up steep stairs, too high for Arlo.

She lay on her bed, drawing pictures of her farm in her art book.

Her bed was her favourite place.
Not just because she loved going to
sleep and dreaming about her farm,
but because it was special.

It had been her great-grandpa
Monty's bed when he was little. Hana's
bedroom had been his bedroom too.



The bed had a white metal frame and gold bedposts.

Great-Grandpa Monty must have loved cats just like Hana because there was a cat's head at the top of the bed frame.

Inside that cat's head was a weird hole. It looked a bit like a keyhole.

It began to get dark and Dad came to see if Hana was OK.

“Would you like a bedtime story?”
he said.



“No,” said Hana. She’d got ready for bed, brushed her teeth and put on her pyjamas by herself. “I want a pet,” she said softly.

“You know we can’t get a pet,” said Dad. “One day you can, when you’re grown up. Poor Arlo might never be able to.”

He put a glass of cold milk on the table by Hana's bed.

"Being kind to your brother is important," Dad said.

Hana turned over.

Dad sighed and switched off the light.



The moon rose over the rooftops.
Hana hugged Tibby close and looked up
at the ceiling. It was midnight blue with
gold stars. Sometimes it made her feel
as if she was flying.

She closed her eyes and thought of
her farm until she fell asleep.

But then an odd tapping sound
woke her up.