Lina and the Gentle Night



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For Lina, who is never alone, with all our love



Lina was six years old, and she had a very best friend named Noisette. He was a small stuffed rabbit with soft, floppy ears. Everywhere Lina went, Noisette went too, tucked safely under her arm.



Every week, Lina's grandmother Odile took her by the hand and walked her to the garden. The path smelled of warm earth and green leaves. Lina skipped along, and Noisette bounced beside her, as happy as a rabbit can be.



In the garden, Lina and Grandma Odile watched a bee visit the flowers. "Grandma, where is God?" Lina asked. Odile smiled. "He is close, my darling, just like the sunshine on your face, even when you cannot see it."



Lina closed her eyes and felt the warm sun and a gentle breeze. She listened to the birds and the soft hum of the bees. Something in her heart felt calm and safe, as if someone kind was sitting right beside her.



On school mornings, Noisette waited on her pillow. Lina's tummy felt a little fluttery as she walked toward the school gate. But she remembered the garden and thought, God is close here too.



In class, the teacher asked everyone to draw their favorite place. Lina's pencil stopped. Then she took a deep breath, remembered she was not alone, and began to draw a garden full of flowers.



At recess, a little boy sat alone by the wall. Lina walked over and offered him a smile and a place in her game. Soon they were laughing together, and she felt that warm, safe feeling again.



Back home in the evening, the kitchen was full of soft light and good smells. Lina told Papa Samuel about her day, her drawing, and her new friend. He listened to every word and gave her a big hug.



Every night, Lina and Papa Samuel said a prayer together before sleep. Lina folded her hands, and Noisette sat in her lap. They said thank you for the garden, for Grandma Odile, and for the whole day.



Then Papa Samuel kissed her forehead and turned off the light. The room became very dark. Lina held Noisette tight, and her heart went thump, thump, thump.



"Noisette, I am a little scared," Lina whispered. Then she remembered Grandma's words. God was close in the garden, and close at school. Maybe he was close in her room too.



Lina opened her eyes. A soft silver light from the moon came through the curtains, and tiny stars twinkled outside her window. The dark was not empty after all. It felt gentle, like a big blanket.



"Thank you, God, for being near," Lina whispered. Her eyes grew heavy, and Noisette snuggled under her chin. Lina fell asleep, peaceful and warm, knowing she was never alone.

The end

Written and illustrated with the help of an artificial intelligence