



<sup>THE</sup>  
SECRETS  
OF  
SIMBERBURY™

AN UNEXPECTED ADVENTURE

Written by A. Storie Twister

Illustrated by Javier Gimenez Ratti

“Henry!” Mom called. “You have a package.”

Henry looked up from his puzzle. “I do?”

“It says secret,” she said with a twinkle in her eye.

Henry tore the package open and found a stuffed toy and a letter inside.

*Please give me a comfy place to call home,  
And a special name to make me your own.  
With magic sand, I'll send you off to sleep,  
Then bring you dreams forever to keep.*

*-Your Nodling*

*I wonder how it works, he thought. He squeezed the Nodling. He searched for the magic sand, or a button to turn it on, but found nothing.*



“What do you think of your surprise?” Mom asked.

Henry shrugged. “I can’t figure out what’s special about it. It seems like my other stuffed animals.”

“I bet if you use your imagination, you’ll figure it out.”

Henry blew bubbles into his milk and began to think.

That night, Henry lay in bed counting sheep. “One, two, three . . . forty-six, forty-seven . . .”

Pitter, patter. Pitter, patter.

Henry sat up and blinked in surprise. Carved into his bedroom wall was a small wooden door. And the Nodling was going through it!

Henry jumped up to investigate. He slowly poked his head through the door . . .

“Whoa!” Henry cried as he tumbled forward onto a long, twisty slide. He slid, looped, and dipped like he was riding a roller coaster!



Henry flew off the slide and landed in a giant pile of leaves. He stood up just in time to see the Nodling climbing into a rowboat.

“Hey, wait!” Henry called.

“Uh-oh,” she said, startled.

“Who are you? Where am I?”

The Nodling sighed. “I forgot to send you off to sleep, but since you’re here . . . Let’s go!”

“Who are you?” Henry asked again as they drifted downstream.

“I’m your Nodling, and you’re in Slumberbury—the place where dreams are made. I don’t have a name because you haven’t given me one yet.”

“But where is Slumberbury?”

“Slumberbury is everywhere.”

“Under every park, beneath the earth, there are hidden hollows that are all connected. We call this Slumberbury. Right now, we’re under Hopscotch Park.”

“That’s near my house!” Henry said.

“Yes! This is where we make dreams for you and all the other children nearby. The power of each child’s imagination helps us to make them,” she said, rowing fast.

Henry began to look sad.

“What’s wrong?” the Nodling asked.

“I don’t have a very good imagination.”

“Of course you do, silly. The Sandman doesn’t make mistakes. He wouldn’t have sent me to you if you didn’t have a good imagination or great ideas.”

“Who’s the Sandman? Can I meet him?”

“Sure! Let’s stop by the Sandcastle.”



The Nodling led Henry into an enormous library.

“Sandman, meet my friend, Henry.”

“Welcome, Henry,” said the Sandman. “Would you like to select a bedtime story for me?”

“Sure—but what for?”

“To read to the sand, of course. How do you think I turn all of this sand into Slumber Sand?”

Henry carefully searched the library and chose one of his favorite books. The Sandman began to read:

“Once upon a time . . .”

As the Sandman finished the story, Henry wandered toward a pile of sand.

“I wouldn’t touch that sand, Henry,” the Nodling warned. “That’s no ordinary sand. It will put you right to sleep. I carry some in my pocket, so I can sprinkle it over you before I come here to fetch your dreams.”

“Where do you get the dreams?” Henry asked.

“Let’s go—I’ll show you.”

“What’s in this garden?” Henry peered through the gate.

“This is the Garden of Ideas. When you tell a story or talk about your day, you release Idea Seeds. I catch them, bring them back to Slumberbury, and plant them in the garden.”

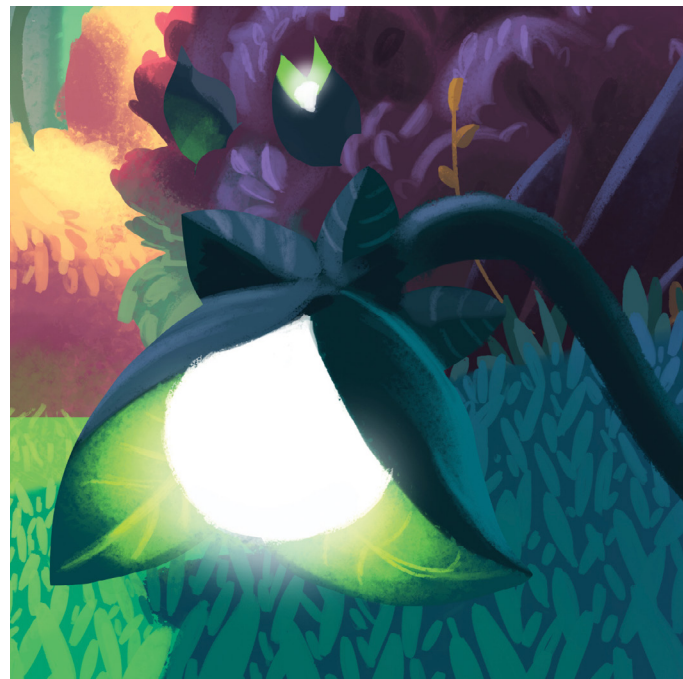
“Where they become dreams?” Henry asked.

“That’s right! We harvest the ideas and turn them into dreams. You’ve got it,” the Nodling said with a wink.

“What if I don’t have any good stories to tell? How will you catch my Idea Seeds?”

“See this one?” the Nodling asked, holding an idea. “This came from a girl who turned her bathtub into a pirate ship.”

“I’ve done that!” Henry exclaimed.



“And that super tall one over there . . .” The Nodling pointed. “That idea came from a boy who told his dad about climbing the rope ladder at the playground.”

“I do that all the time, too!” Henry replied.

“See? You have plenty of stories to tell!”

“I wonder what I could talk about tomorrow,” Henry said.

“If you’re not sure, ask your mom a question first,” the Nodling suggested.

“I guess I could ask her . . . If you could have any magical power, what would it be?”

“Good one!” said the Nodling.

They reached a dock near a huge factory with billowing clouds of rainbow steam.

“I’ll order your dream and show you the Sweet Dream Factory.”

The Nodling stood in front of a fancy machine, pressing buttons, pulling levers, and turning cranks.



Henry's eyes lit up when he saw the sparkling globe the Nodling was about to send into the factory.

"That's so cool! What is it?"

"A Dreamstone. The Dream Makers are creating dreams from all of the ideas harvested today. When your dream is ready, it will be stored in this Dreamstone."

"Will I get to see my dream being made?"

"Of course! Let's take a peek in the lab and see what the Dream Makers are up to."

*(Henry stood in the center of the factory, amazed, watching the dreams being made.)*

Henry followed the Nodling out of the factory, his imagination soaring.

The Nodling collected Henry's Dreamstone. "It's time to go home," she said.

"Will we go on another adventure together?" he asked.

“Children aren’t supposed to see their Nodlings awake, but if you give me a name and tell me your stories, I’ll bring you wonderful dreams. Perhaps you’ll see me in them.

“Now, close your eyes . . .”

Soon Henry and the Nodling were back in his room.

Henry still had so many questions to ask, but his eyes were growing heavy. The Nodling sprinkled Slumber Sand over Henry just as he thought of the perfect name. “Goodnight, Luna,” he whispered.



Luna smiled and placed the Dreamstone in Henry’s hand. “Goodnight, Henry.”

The next morning, Luna lay beside Henry, but now she was still and silent—just like his other stuffed animals.

Mom poked her head in the doorway. “Good morning, Henry. How did you sleep?”

“Great! I dreamed that I was the captain of a pirate ship!”

Henry reached for Luna, wondering if his adventure with her was a dream too. But as he picked her up, sand trickled onto his pillow.

## That night . . .

When Mom came to tuck Henry in, he grabbed Luna and climbed into bed.

“If you could have any magical power, what would it be?” he asked.

Mom thought for a moment. “I’d have the power to become invisible. What about you?”

“I’d be Astronaut King and fly into space!”

“Wow! You have a great imagination,” Mom said.

They chatted for a while about their day before Mom turned out the light. Henry held Luna tight and closed his eyes...

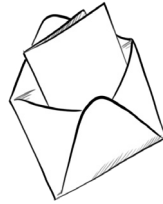
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## 5. Dream Big

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# Odds and Ends

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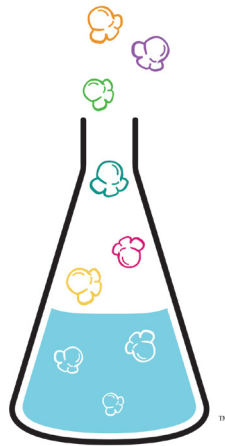
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