



# The Night *the Magic Came*

*written by*

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*This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, and events are products of the author's imagination.*

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*To my Friends*

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*Friends help friends.*

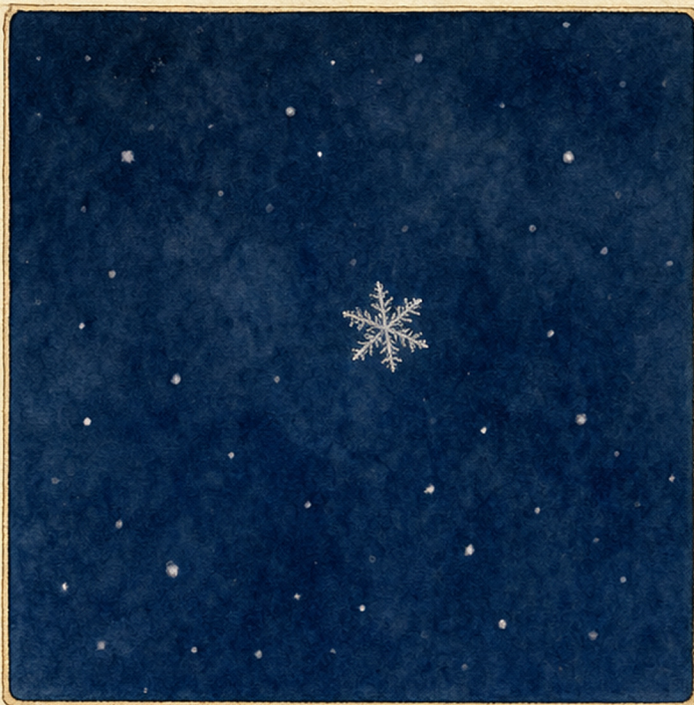




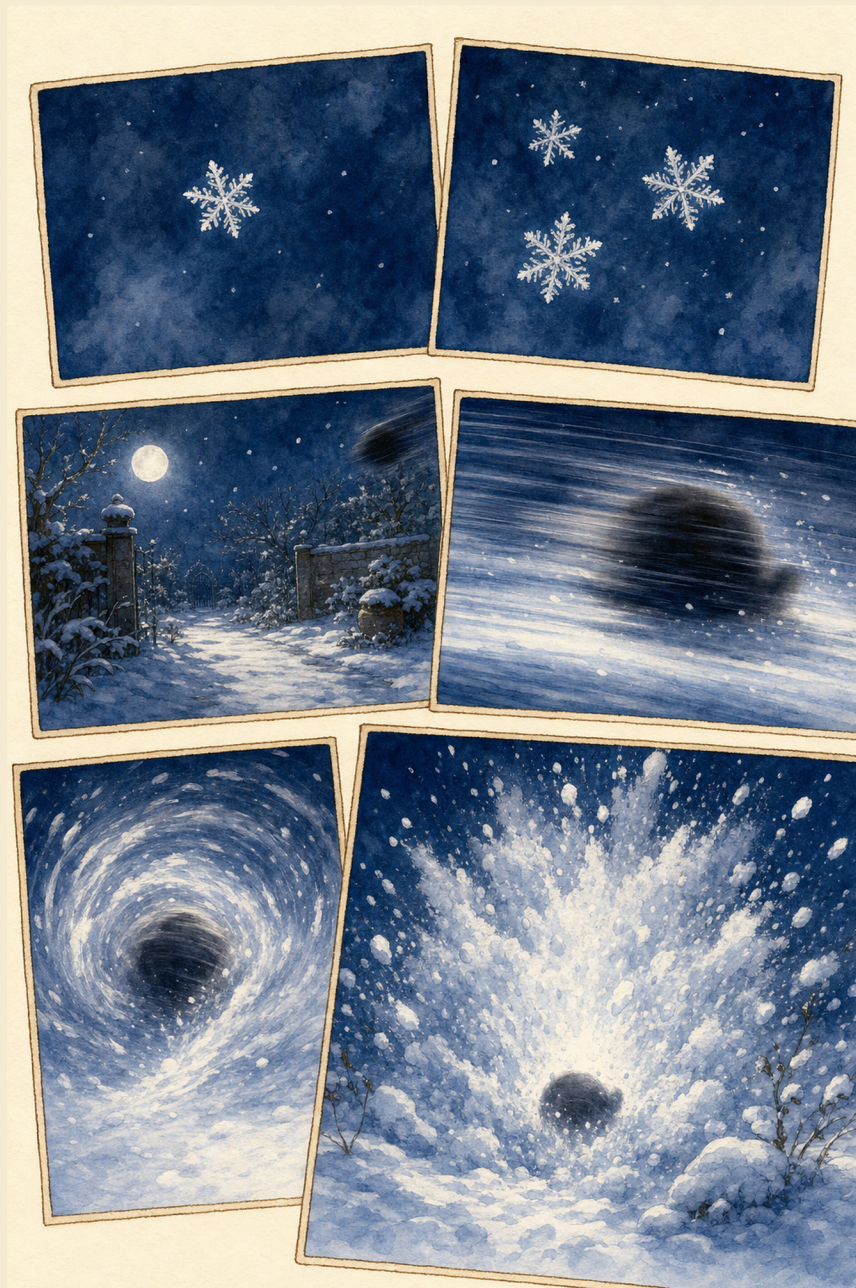
Luna loved her mushroom.  
Every night she climbed it to the top.  
Slowly. Very slowly she climbed.  
There she loved counting the stars.



One, two, three she counted out loud.  
All the way to seventeen out loud.  
Then quietly to one hundred and seven.  
There was number 41.  
The brightest one. Her favorite.  
It winked at her.



Then something fell.  
One small flake. Then two small flakes.  
Then a big lazy one landed right on her antenna.  
Oh no. It has to be snow.  
Oh awe. Not snow. Not now.



*But then.*

**Plop.**

**Plop.**

**Plop.**

**Slide.**

**Whirl.**

**Turn.**

**BUMP.**



Buckshot!  
Right there in the rays of the garden light.  
Poles up. Shell shining.  
Behind him Rainbow, Flint, Moss, Fern and May.  
All of them grinning in the snow.  
“Perfect powder!” hollered Buckshot.



Luna looked at her friends.  
What were they doing with those tiny ski poles?



Flint pushed to the front.  
“Watch this.” he said.  
He grabbed his poles.  
Left. Right. Left. Right.  
And he was off.



“Catch me if you can!”  
Flint hollered back over his shell.  
He was already gone.  
Sliding and pumping through the dark.  
Leaving two shining tracks in the snow behind him.



One by one they did it.  
Rainbow first. Then Buckshot. Then Moss.  
Then Fern. Then May.  
Poles down. Left right left right.  
Off into the snowy night.



Luna watched.  
She grabbed one pole.  
Then the other.  
Left. Right. Left. Right.  
Oh.  
OH.  
She was skiing.



But wait.  
There. On the ground.  
One small sad wilted piece of lettuce.  
Luna stopped.  
She took one quick bite.  
Chewed once.  
Then off she went.  
Left right left right.  
After the others.



Up above soft quick feet pattered along the garden bed.  
Two field mice appeared.  
Whiskers twitching.  
Noses quivering.



Hardy froze.  
“Rose. Did you see that?”  
Down below seven snails carved curves through the snow.  
Poles pumping.  
Rose blinked.  
“They’re skiing.”



The mice crept to the edge and peered over.  
Snail tracks shone like tiny white roads in the snow.  
“Mind the branch!” hollered Flint.  
Behind him May wobbled.  
Caught herself.  
Left a beautiful squiggle in the snow.



Hardy whispered.  
“That’s the bravest thing I’ve ever seen a snail do.”  
Rose watched Buckshot disappear around a pebble.  
“It’s the only thing I’ve ever seen a snail do.”



Hardy looked at Rose.  
Rose looked at Hardy.  
“Let’s follow them.” said Hardy.  
“Let’s see what they are up to.”  
Rose was already moving.



The seven snails skied into the vegetable garden.  
Hardy and Rose crept along the top of the bed.  
Peering down.  
Watching every turn.  
Every wobble.  
Every squiggle in the snow.



First stop.  
The lettuce bed.  
Soft floppy leaves dusted white with snow.  
Buckshot went in first.  
“Perfect powder AND supper!” he hollered.



Then spinach.  
Dark tough leaves.  
Much harder to ski through.  
Moss wobbled.  
Fern wobbled.  
Even Flint wobbled.  
“Tricky!” said Rainbow and laughed.



Then clover.  
Low and delicate.  
Mostly buried under snow.  
May disappeared completely.  
Just two little antenna tips poking up.  
“I’m fine!” she called. “I think.”



Rose grabbed Hardy's arm.  
"What are they doing?"  
Hardy leaned over the edge.  
"It looks like they've made a ski jump."  
They watched Flint glide up and over a clump of snow.  
"Look at that one glide." whispered Hardy.



Rose's eyes went wide.

“Hardy.”

“Yes Rose.”

“Let's build them a bigger one.”

“A better one.”

Hardy was already scrambling down.



The two mice worked fast.  
Packing snow.  
Patting it down.  
Shaping it up.  
Higher.  
And higher.  
And higher still.



Buckshot came around the corner and stopped.

He looked at the jump.

He looked at Hardy and Rose.

He looked back at the jump.

“Oh.” said Buckshot.

“OH.”



Buckshot squared up to the jump.  
Poles down.  
Left right left right.  
Faster.  
And faster.  
And faster still.



Up the jump he went.  
Into the air.  
For one long beautiful moment Buckshot was flying.  
A snail.  
Actually flying.



Then.  
WHOMP.  
Right into the carrot tops.  
Feathery green fronds everywhere.  
Two little antennae poking out the top.  
“I’m good!” hollered Buckshot.  
“I meant to do that.”



Hardy and Rose peered in after him.  
The carrot tops were tall and thick.  
Like a little forest in the snow.  
“Need a hand?” called Rose.  
A pause.  
“Maybe a little one.” said Buckshot.



Hardy and Rose dove into the carrot tops.  
Quick little paws.  
Pulling and tugging.  
Out came Buckshot.  
Shell first.  
Grinning from antenna to antenna.



Buckshot shook the snow off his shell.  
“Whee.” he said.  
“That’s fun.”  
He said it very quietly.  
Like it was the best thing he had ever done.



“MY TURN.”  
Flint didn’t wait.  
Poles already up.  
Already moving.  
Already gone.



Left right left right left right.  
Faster than Buckshot.  
Faster than anyone.  
Flint hit the jump hard.



Up.  
Way up.  
Higher than Buckshot.  
Higher than the carrot tops.  
Higher than the cabbage.  
For one long cold second.  
Flint was the highest snail in the world.



Then down.  
WHOMP.  
Even deeper into the carrot tops than Buckshot.  
Much deeper.  
Only his shell showing.  
Spinning slowly.



*A long silence.  
Then from deep inside the carrot tops.*

**WHEEL**



Moss moved to the top of the jump.  
Nobody hollered for him.  
Nobody noticed much.  
Just Moss.



He grabbed both poles tight.  
Not left right left right.  
Both at once together.

Pull.

Push.

Pull.

Push.



Faster.  
And faster.  
And faster still.  
Nobody had skied like that before.



He hit the jump hard.  
Harder than Buckshot.  
Harder than Flint.  
Up he went.



Higher than Flint.  
Higher than the carrot tops.  
Higher than the cabbage.  
Higher than anyone had any right to go.



He flew so far he landed in the spinach.  
Way over there.  
In the spinach.  
Everyone's mouth fell open.  
Even Flint's.



A long silence.  
Then from the spinach.  
“Oh my.” said Moss.  
Very quietly.  
Like he was a little surprised himself.



Rainbow went next.  
Both poles down.  
Pull push pull push.  
Fast. Really fast.  
Almost as fast as Moss.  
Almost.  
Rainbow landed deep in the carrot tops.  
“WOOHOO.”



Then Fern.  
Quiet at the top of the jump.  
Both poles down.  
Pull. Push.  
Just fast enough.  
Just barely enough.  
Up and over:  
Into the carrot tops.  
“Oh.” said Fern. “Oh that was lovely.”



May went to the top.  
Looked down.  
Looked at Luna.  
Luna looked back.  
“Together?” said May.  
“Together.” said Luna.



Both poles in.  
Pull push pull push.  
Side by side.  
Down the slope.

*Up the jump.  
Into the cold night air.  
And they screamed.  
Oh how they screamed.  
Two small snails.  
Flying through the night.  
Screaming their shells off.*





WHOMP. WHOMP.  
Carrot tops everywhere.  
Silence.  
Then giggling.  
Then more giggling.  
Then everyone was giggling.  
Even Hardy.  
Even Rose.  
Even Flint.



Then the clouds shifted.  
The full moon came out.  
Bright and round and brilliant.  
The garden lit up like daytime.







When the snails looked.  
The mice were gone.  
Only pawprints in the snow.



Luna stayed.  
Quiet in the moonlight.  
Looking at the small empty spot.  
Where her friends had been.



Seven snails.  
Looking at the cabbage.  
So close.



But the nettles were in the way.  
Flint slid up to look.  
Tall and prickly.  
Silver in the moonlight.



"Hardy?" called Luna.  
"Rose?" called May.  
But there was only moonlight.  
And the nettles.



Flint looked at the roots.  
"The roots don't sting."  
"We go under."



One by one they dug with their ski poles.  
Down into the soil.  
Under the nettles.  
Under the roots.  
Through the cold dark earth.



Tight and dark and muddy.  
Fern got stuck.  
Moss pushed.  
"You got this Fern."



Then out.  
Into the moonlight.  
The cabbage.  
Right there.



Under the cabbage.  
Safe.  
The leaves curling around them.  
Like a green roof.



Warm.  
Quiet.  
Safe at last.  
Everyone breathing.  
Everyone nodding yes.



Luna looked out.  
Through the leaves.  
Across the moonlit garden.  
Toward her mushroom.



Then quietly.  
Luna started home.  
Across the moonlit garden.  
Toward her mushroom.  
Alone.



Moss watched Luna's glow get smaller.  
Then he turned to the others.  
"Friends help friends."  
"Let's go with her."



Nobody argued.  
Nobody hesitated.  
Not even Flint.



All seven snails.  
Across the moonlit garden.  
Luna's gold glow.  
Leading the way.



Luna heard them.  
She stopped.  
She turned.



Left right left right.  
Pull push pull push.  
Together.

Home.



The night was wearing on.  
The snow was melting.  
The garden was changing.



Cold blue earth turning warmer.  
Dark wet earth where snow had been.  
The poles pushing through mud now.  
Not snow.



Nobody skiing now.  
Just pushing.  
Just pulling.  
Just helping.  
Friends helping friends.



A snail's pace.  
Which for a snail.  
Is very slow indeed.



The sky was changing.  
Pink at the edge.  
Gold at the edge.  
The mushroom getting closer.



Almost there.  
Almost there.  
The mushroom right ahead.  
Almost home.



Luna stopped.  
They all stopped.  
Something had happened to the mushroom.



The mushroom had grown overnight.  
Magnificent.  
Much larger than before.



It was letting go.  
The first spores rising.





Luna's face.  
Her mouth open.  
Her antennae stretched up.  
Too many to count.



All seven together.  
Looking up.



Nobody said anything.  
Some things don't need words.



The spores rising past number 41.  
Still shining.  
Just for her.



*And slept.*