



# The Afternoon That Began with a Seed Tray

A dull day and a small plan that does not  
wait for excitement

For ages 9-12





## Chapter 1

## Nothing Sounds Interesting

Dudy sat at the kitchen table with his chin in his hand.

It was an ordinary afternoon. No outing had been canceled. No friend had refused to come. Dudy simply felt flat, as if someone had rubbed the bright parts off the day.

Totty offered a puzzle.

"Not interested."

"A drawing?"

"Not interested."

Dudy had spent the last half hour waiting for something to sound interesting enough to begin.

Now even waiting was boring.





## Chapter 2

## A Small Job

Totty brought an empty seed tray to the table. He had washed it earlier and let it dry. He was planning indoor herbs for the kitchen windowsill.

"Will you help me write the labels?"

Dudy looked at the plain wooden markers.

"That doesn't sound exciting either."

"It doesn't have to be exciting. We could try a short bit, then see."

Dudy agreed to label three markers. Totty would check the names and do the planting later.

Dudy wrote MINT, then BASIL. On the third marker, he drew a tiny leaf beside PARSLEY.

It was not the best leaf he had ever drawn. He liked it anyway.





## Chapter 3

**Before and After**

"Was that exactly as dull as you expected?" Totty asked.

"Not exactly."

Dudy had liked making the leaf. He also liked knowing which markers were ready.

He was still not bursting with energy.

Totty did not tell him he should be. Instead they chose two small things for the rest of the afternoon: a short beanbag game together and one part of a puzzle Dudy wanted to finish. There would be a break between them.

"Do I have to enjoy both?" Dudy asked.

"No. We can notice what they are like."





## Chapter 4

## The Crooked Tower

In the beanbag game, they aimed for a wide empty basket on the floor, away from the walking path.

Dudy missed twice. Totty missed once so badly that the beanbag landed beside his own shoe.

"The basket is clearly moving," Totty said.

"It is clearly not."

Dudy laughed.

The puzzle afterward was harder. He tried to finish the tower, but three pieces all seemed to have the same crooked window.

He wanted to push it away.

Then he found one piece by checking its bottom edge. The tower remained unfinished, but a window had a place.





## Chapter 5

## What Helped a Little

Before supper, Totty asked about the afternoon.

"The game was fun," Dudy said. "The puzzle wasn't very fun. But I liked finding that piece."

"And the labels?"

"I did something useful."

Dudy had waited for a wonderful feeling before starting. A small start had given him something the waiting hadn't.

The next afternoon, he felt slow again.

He did not expect three herb labels to fix every dull day. He asked Totty whether they could begin with something short.

Together they checked the planters from the doorway. No new leaf had appeared yet.





Dudy found the parsley marker and grinned at his tiny drawing. Some things began before there was much to see.

