

The Turtle and the Thinking Tree

Inspired by Socrates
Written by Sundeep Parmar



LITTLE KEYS
to the Universe



LITTLE KEYS TO THE UNIVERSE

The Turtle and the Thinking Tree



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DEDICATED TO

Ria & Mia



Big Lessons. Little Stories.



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In the heart of the glowing forest stood the thinking tree, an ancient tree whose roots were deep with mystery. Each morning it whispered a riddle into the wind. Creatures of all kinds would gather beneath its shimmering branches, eager to solve its puzzles. Every morning, Tavi the turtle arrived first. She had a quick voice, a confident tone, and an answer ready before the question had even finished floating through the air. Easy, the sun, it's obviously a rock.



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Come on, that's too simple. Tavi believed being smart meant answering fast. She loved being right. It made her feel important, in control. The others admired her confidence, but some grew quiet around her, unsure if there was room to wonder out loud. One animal who didn't seem bothered was Roo, a soft-spoken rabbit who liked to think before she spoke. Tavi teased her once. You never answer. Don't you know anything? Roo smiled and said gently, I like to know what I don't know.



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Tavi didn't understand what that meant, but she laughed it off and returned to the tree the next day with her usual certainty. That morning, the thinking tree whispered, what grows shorter as it grows older? Tavi scoffed. Obviously, a baby snake. I'll prove it. Follow me. A group of young animals, eager to learn, followed her shortcut through the brush. But it wasn't a shortcut at all.



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They landed in a patch of stinging nettles. Thorns scratched their fur. The chipmunk cried. The mole held her paw. Tavi froze. She felt a strange twist in her chest. Not embarrassment, not anger. Something deeper, regret. I just thought, whatever, she muttered. You didn't have to follow me. That night, she sat beneath the thinking tree, quiet for the first time in a long while.



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Her shell didn't feel like a safe place to hide. She kept hearing the chipmunk's cry, the look on Roo's face. What if I'm not as smart as I thought? Just as she thought about not coming back, Roo appeared beside her. She didn't blame her. She didn't scold. She simply asked, what if being smart isn't about having the first answer? What if it's about understanding better than before? Tavi didn't respond, but something in her shifted.



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The next day, the thinking tree offered a new riddle. Tavi arrived late and quiet. She stood at the edge of the crowd and simply listened. She felt awkward, uncertain. But then she noticed things she had never seen before. She saw how Roo turned a question over in her mind, asking, why? And what if? Instead of shouting, I know, Tavi started doing the same. One question, then another. The thinking tree glowed a little brighter.



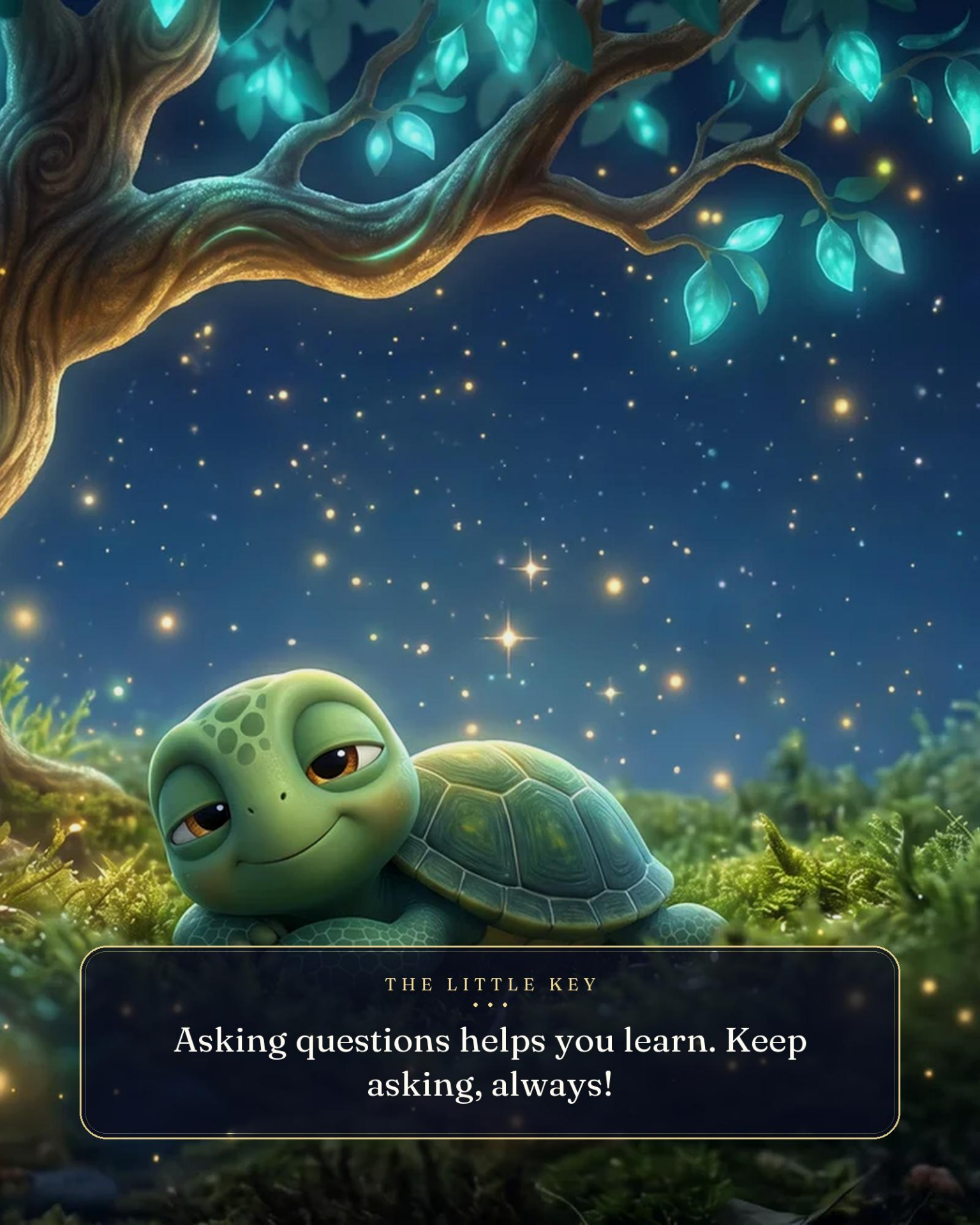
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In time, her answers became slower, but wiser. She didn't stop being clever. She just learned how to think wider. Her mind stretched like a path through the woods, no longer a straight road, but one filled with wonder and turns and soft pauses. She even began to say something she had never said before. I don't know, yet. And something magical happened. Others began asking, too. Not to impress, not to rush, but to grow.



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And so Tavi the turtle discovered that being wise isn't about knowing everything. It's about being brave enough to stay curious. She still visited the thinking tree every morning, but now she brought younger animals with her, not to show off, but to wonder beside them. And the thinking tree, in all its quiet brilliance, always shone brightest when someone asked their first honest question.



THE LITTLE KEY
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Asking questions helps you learn. Keep
asking, always!



WONDER LEADS TO WISDOM

A curious turtle learns that wondering and asking questions is the very beginning of wisdom. A gentle bedtime story about curiosity.

For kids full of questions — a reminder that asking is how we grow smart.

Big Lessons. Little Stories.

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