

The Snail Who Discovered Stardust

Inspired by Neil deGrasse Tyson

Written by Sundeep Parmar



LITTLE KEYS
to the Universe



LITTLE KEYS TO THE UNIVERSE

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DEDICATED TO

Ria & Mia



Big Lessons. Little Stories.



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Nova, the snail, lived on a big rock by the ocean. Every night she crept to the edge where waves went splash, whoosh, crash. And above her, the sky stretched wider than she could even imagine. Nova squinted at the stars, they're so big, so bright. And me? She sighed. I'm just a slimy dot with a backpack. She tried to puff herself up, but all it made was a funny squeak.



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Arrgh! Nova blushed. Great! The stars twinkle, and I squeak. Down below, seashells glimmered like tiny planets. Seafoam bubbled up like galaxy popcorn. Nova giggled when a crab scuttled by sideways. Look! A confused comet. But then a wave crashed so close that water splattered her face. Blah! Nova sputtered. The universe is spitting on me again! She curled into her shell. I don't matter.



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I'm just a speck. A deep, steady voice answered, Ah, but what a speck you are. Nova peeked out. Beside her sat Orion the turtle, his shell shiny as the moon. You're huge! Nova gasped. Orion chuckled. And you're tiny. But tiny doesn't mean unimportant. But I'm only a snail, Nova protested. Slow, small, squeaky! Orion tapped her shell gently. Do you see this spiral?



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It's the same shape as the galaxies above. Nova blinked. Wait, you mean my shell is like the Milky Way, but milkier? Orion snorted so hard he hiccuped. Hoo hoo, hiccup! Sea spray splashed onto his nose. Nova laughed. Ha! Now the universe is spitting on you. Orion grew calm again. The stars are made of stardust. And so are you. Nova tilted her head. Me? Stardust? Every speck of you, Orion said.



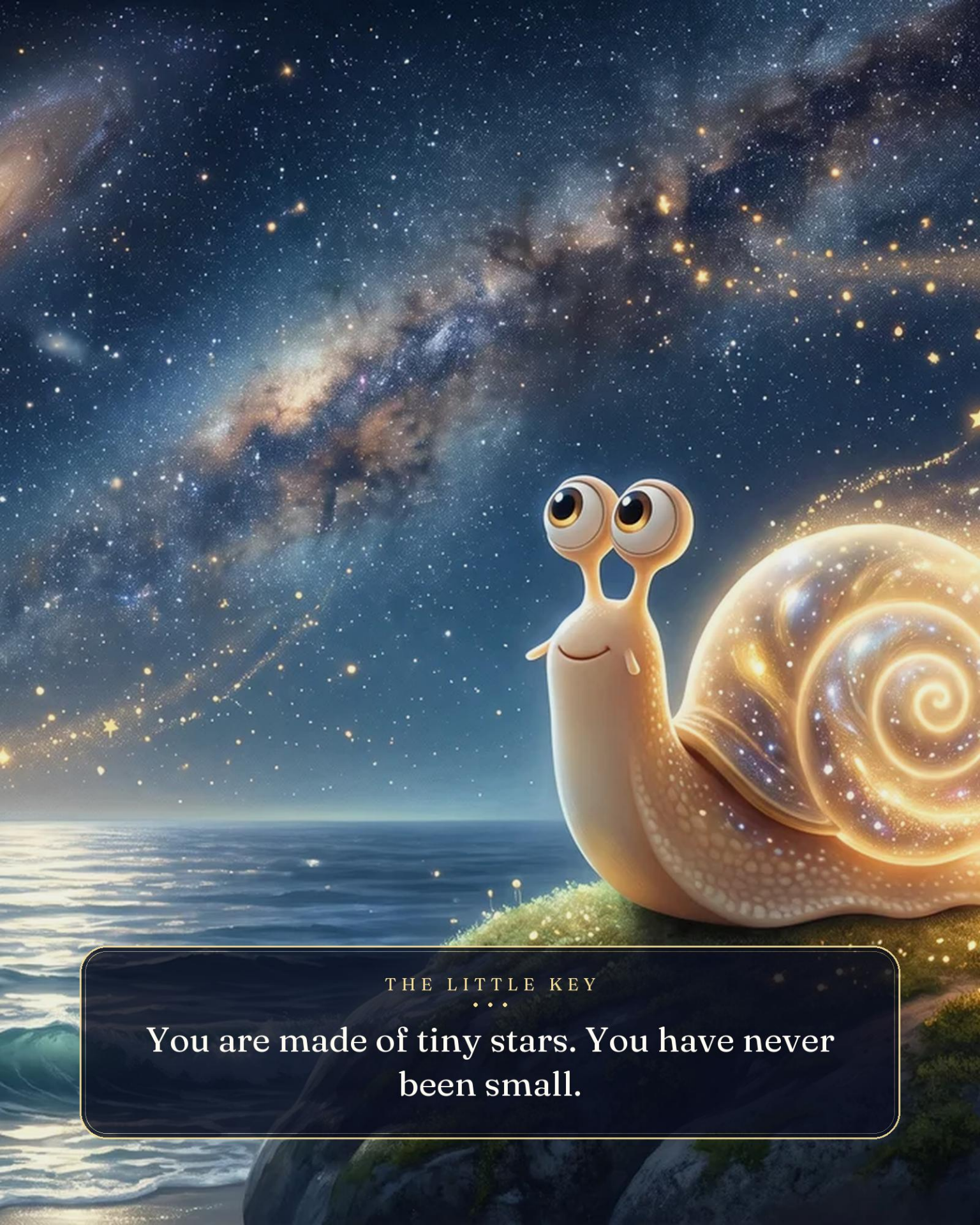
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Your shell, your slime, even that squeak. Nova whispered it slowly, trying it out. Stardust! Stardust! Stardust! Her trail sparkled across the rock in the moonlight, winding like a brand new constellation. The ocean crashed again. Splash! Crash! Crash! But this time Nova didn't curl up. She laughed. Big or small, wave or snail, we're all stardust after all. Neil deGrasse Tyson teaches us that humans are made of stardust too.



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Our bones, our breath, even the spark of our imagination. So when you feel small, like you can't reach the top shelf, or your voice isn't the loudest in the room, remember this. The same universe that made the stars made you. You are not just a speck. You are a speck of stardust. And that means you shine no matter what. Dedication. This story is



THE LITTLE KEY
...

You are made of tiny stars. You have never
been small.



MADE OF STARDUST

A tiny snail discovers that she — shell, trail, and all — is made of the very same stardust as the stars. A dreamy bedtime story about belonging.

For kids who feel small or unimportant — a reminder they're made of stardust.

Big Lessons. Little Stories.

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