

Grandma's Gift



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Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by Peekdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

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Early Sunday morning, Hana and her family were leaving their beloved homeland, Japan, to move to Australia. It was going to be a lengthy flight and a monumental change in their lives. Bags were packed.

Hana held a photo of her grandma in one hand, and her grandma's hand in the other. Hana's grandma told her she would have taught her to make silk. She wished she had more time. Hana wished she never had to leave her grandma or Japan.

After nine long hours on the plane, Hana and her family landed in Australia. Hana's younger sister, Emica, squealed with delight and exclaimed "freedom".

Hana had butterflies in her tummy and thought of the family's silk moths at home in Japan.





Hana and her family's new home has a mulberry orchard. Hana thought aloud, "I'm going to be able to make silk." Then she thought sadly to herself, "I wish grandma was here to teach me."

Hana started school and made two new friends, Ellie and Elisa. Now Hana felt a little happier living in Australia.

“Mum, Dad, can I please have some silkworms?” Hana pleaded.

Hana begged over many weeks for silkworms. Mum and Dad’s response was generally the same “no” or sometimes “no way”. Dad lectured, “You are not responsible enough yet,” and Mum exasperatedly said, “I’ll end up doing all the work”.

Hana wanted to prove to her parents she was responsible and willing to work. She helped her mum around their new home. Hana’s mum taught her to make mulberry jam, which was delectable. Hana and her mother sold their mulberry jam at the local markets.





Early in September it was Hana's 10th birthday. She was extremely excited. Hana was allowed her to invite her best friends Ellie and Elisa over to celebrate after school.

On Hana's birthday her parents gave her a strange, insulated box. Hana cautiously opened the box, that had come straight from cold storage, to discover silkworms! Excitedly, Hana hugged and thanked her parents. Her dream was finally coming true.



After the silkworms hatched, they gobbled up the mulberry leaves. Even though they had a large orchard, Hana was worried there might not be enough leaves for these hungry silkworms. She would need a plan to feed the ravenous silkworms, and fast!

At school, Hana told her friends Ellie and Elisa she needed to source more mulberry leaves. The friends shared her worry with her.

Ellie bought a fabric bag to school the next day filled with mulberry leaves from home. Elisa had a large paper bag that she and her little brother collected yesterday afternoon from the mulberry trees along the creek edge.

Hana was overjoyed, she hugged and thanked her friends. Elisa pointed out that there were enormous old mulberry trees along the edge of the school oval. The friends laughed happily together; Hana's silkworms would be fed.



Hana and her friends no longer need to gather mulberry leaves as the silkworms had made their cocoons. They were all through the large orchard.

“There are so many!” exclaimed Hana.

Hana knew the silkworms would hatch into silk moths in ten to fourteen days. Hana’s dad came up with the solution of converting an old bird aviary to keep the silk moths from flying away. Hana was grateful as she did not want to lose the silk moths or the eggs they would lay.



Once the silk moths emerged from their cocoons, Hana soaked the cocoons in hot water to loosen the sericin.

This was a hard job but was made easier by Ellie and Elisa coming over to help. The three friends joked and giggled while they worked.





Hana now needed to brush the end of the cocoon and find a loose thread of the raw silk fibre. Then she reeled the thread onto a wheel. It took a very long time to reel one cocoon onto a wheel.

Hana knew she would need help. Hana's family and her friends Ellie and Elisa joined her on the weekend. They each brushed the end of the cocoon, then reeled the thread onto a wheel. The threads could then be joined to form a long thread.

As they worked, Elisa called out, "the wheel has stopped, it feels like it could be stuck."

Hana tried to help Elisa, but it seemed to get worse.

Hana, called-out in frustration, “the wheel isn’t moving, I can’t fix it.”

Hana’s dad comforted her, “Don’t give up!” as he investigated the wheel and the position.

He discovered a thread had come loose and tangled. Hana’s dad showed the girls the issue and they were able to fix the problem by unwinding and rewinding the thread.



Eventually they finished winding the thread onto the wheels. Hana, with help from her mother, made a large loom so she would be able to weave the thread into silk cloth. Hana had tried to research how to weave but she struggled to get it right. On Sunday evening Hana's grandma phoned. She told her grandma about the weaving of the silk cloth and her struggles.

Her grandma explained how to weave in a way that Hana understood. Hana tried weaving as soon as she was off the phone. It was so much easier.



Every day after school for three months Hana wove her silk cloth. She weaved so much that her fingers, hands and arms ached.

She soaked her sore limbs as often as she could. The work was hard but Hana loved her beautiful shimmering cloth that she was making. She decided to make the cloth into a scarf.





Almost a year and a half after Hana and her family first arrived in Australia, she was due to celebrate her 11th birthday.

Her family took her to the airport for a special surprise. At the airport Hana and Emica jumped out of the car and ran toward their grandma.

Emica was squealing with joy and Hana had no words she was speechless. She was so happy. Grandma cried and hugged the girls and their parents.



When the family arrived home, Grandma gave Hana a birthday gift. It was a silver bracelet with a silk moth charm on it.

“Oh, thank you Grandma,” exclaimed Hana. Hana said to her grandma, “I have a gift for you too”.

Hana ran downstairs and got the gift and then sprinted back upstairs. She then gave her grandma the silk scarf that she had made. Grandma told her it was the loveliest silk scarf and that she would treasure it. She was so proud of her. Hana beamed, so happy with all her work.

Hana now planned on making some beautiful silk hair ribbons to give to her best friends Ellie and Elisa, as well as her sister Emica.



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