

THE MOONLIT PAGE

The Leaf That Stayed Put



A fallen leaf lay on the garden table between Esther and her younger neighbour, Lin. Esther had once made prints for a small press. Lin was making a page for the neighbourhood autumn display.

The first pencil rubbing showed more smudges than leaf.

Esther laid the pencil almost flat. "Try the side, lightly."

Lin watched the veins appear beneath the paper. She slowed her hand. The leaf emerged a little at a time, its fine branching lines darker than the spaces between them.

Then a breeze lifted the sheet. They put it back, but the next lines doubled.

Lin fetched two small pieces of tape from her bag. She fixed the top edge of the paper to the table, making a loose hinge. Now they could lift it to check the leaf without losing the place.

Esther tried. The paper rose, then settled exactly where it had been.

"I used to pin everything," she said.

"This comes off more easily."

They began again on a fresh part of the sheet. Esther held the leaf while Lin lowered the paper, then they took turns with the pencil.

At the bottom, Lin wrote both their names. Esther added the date. They left the real leaf beside the rubbing while they gathered the pencil shavings into one small pile.

To remember

1. Esther shows Lin how a pencil's side reveals leaf veins
2. A breeze shifts the sheet and doubles the lines
3. Lin tapes one edge into a hinge that returns the paper to place
4. They make a fresh rubbing together and add both names and the date.