

SOMBRITA

小黑

A little girl welcomes a newcomer to her family one summer. The newcomer is an injured stag beetle called Sombrita. She carefully makes a home for Sombrita, and checks on it every day, until one day it disappears....

Every summer holiday, a little girl goes with her father to Grandma's old house in the mountains. This year, they find an injured stag beetle in the woods, and take it home. They call it Sombrita. The little girl makes a special home for Sombrita, with leaves for it to rest under, and its favorite food like apple. Sombrita creates many happy memories for the little girl that summer. She never expects that one day it might disappear....

Sombrita is a picture book about meeting and parting. Author Lee Jo-Shin uses a fresh, warm visual voice, to tell the story of a little girl welcoming a new friend into her life, and other life lessons that the stag beetle brought in.

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Lee Jo-Shin writes and illustrates children's books. She teaches illustration and printmaking in the Fine Art Dept at National Changhua University of Education. Her style is affectionate and child-like: for example, in her books *Benjamin* and *Still a Family*.



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SOMBRITA

Translated by Helen Wang

p.6-7

In the summer holidays Baba always takes me to our house in the mountains.
It was Ama's old house, and it's fun there,
and very different from home.

Our house in the mountains is like a castle in the forest, surrounded by lush green leaves.
The air in the mountains is cooler and we don't need air-conditioning there.

p.8-9

Baba takes me to the river by house, where the water is shallow and icy cold.
We see little brown fish and tadpoles.
Sometimes the fish come and nibble our toes, which tickles, and makes Baba laugh.

p.10-11

There are lots of insects in the forest.
Some I recognize; some of them look peculiar and extraordinary.
I try not to go too close.
The dust on the butterfly's wings looks a bit scary.

p.12-13

We don't feel alone in the mountains.
In the morning cicadas sing "It's time to get up!"
In the evening frogs ribbit "It's time to eat!"

We love playing hide and seek in the forest.

p.14-15

Once, I was hiding behind a tree, and felt something pricking my hand.
It was a little stag beetle, injured and limping.

Baba and I decided to look after it.
We named it Sombrita.

p.16-17

We built a house for Sombrita, and hoped it would like its new home.

p.18-19

All day long we checked on Sombrita to see what it was doing.

I discovered that it loved apple, one slice would last a long time.

p.20-21

At noon, when it was warm, Sombrita would disappear.

We'd find it later, hiding under the leaves.

It was the coolest place in the box.

We moved it to the coolest corner in the house.

And sometimes spray it with water, to cool it down.

p.22-23

One day, we couldn't find Sombrita anywhere.

We didn't know where it was.

p.24-25

(wordless)

p.26-27

Baba and I were worried.

Then, in the evening, Sombrita appeared.

I told Sombrita off:

"That was naughty! We were worried."

p.28-29

It rained that night,

We heard the raindrops pitter patter

Was Sombrita like me?

Did it like to fall asleep listening to the sound of the rain?

p.30-31

Sombrita was still injured. It moved slowly, if at all.

The next day, when we changed its water, it didn't move at all.

Baba said Sombrita had gone to be an angel.

We were too sad to talk much that evening.

p.32-33

The summer holidays were almost over.
We got ready to go home.

p.34-35

On the way home I couldn't help thinking,
I shouldn't have said it was naughty.
I could see it was clever because it did let us find it.

"Shall we look for another stag beetle?"

Baba asked me.

p.36-37

I shook my head.
I wanted to remember that summer with the stag beetle.