



The Little Brown Bat

There are not many stories about bats, not nice ones anyway, but this story was told to me a long time ago by a lady I met in the forest, and it has been told many times over, for many years and in many countries in the world.

This story takes place long, long ago, long before the time of mobile phones and digital watches and even clocks, when people did not really have any idea of what the time was.

They would wake up when it got light and the day began, and they would go to bed when it got dark again, and the day ended.

And so, at these times, the two most important creatures in the world, were the Golden Cockerel and the Grey Owl, would meet up every morning and every evening to make the change from day to night.

Every evening the Golden Cockerel would pack up the day into a basket and hand it over to the Grey Owl. The Grey Owl would take the basket into his strong claws and fly across the night sky from the west to the east and deliver it back to the Golden Cockerel who would open the basket letting the light out again to begin a new day.

But on one night, the Grey Owl was unable to make that journey and he looked around at the other animals to see if someone else was able to help him.... and the only animal he could think of was the Little Brown Bat.

So he explained to the Little Brown Bat what he had to do and how important it was, and that the most important thing was that he must **never ever** take the lid off the basket.

And so it was that one evening the Little Brown Bat met the Golden Cockerel who handed over the basket with the day in it and he reminded him a second time, whatever you do you must never ever take the lid off the basket.

And with that, the Little Brown Bat picked up the basket in his claws and flew off into the night.

The Little Brown Bat was nowhere near as big or strong as the Grey Owl and he began to feel tired very quickly and eventually he decided it would not do any harm if he landed in a clearing for a little while to rest his wings.

While he was resting, a Shiny Black Hedgehog came over to see him, "**What have you got in that basket?**" the Shiny Black Hedgehog asked, and the Little Brown Bat explained that the basket contained the daytime.

"**Oh!**" said the Shiny Black Hedgehog, "**I don't go out in the daytime, I only come out at night when it's dark, but it's also very cold - I'd really like a little bit of the daytime to keep me warm.**" and with that he nudged open the lid of the basket and before the Little Brown Bat could stop him, a few sparkly bits of the daylight escaped.

Quickly the Little Brown Bat put the lid back on the basket and flew off again into the sky, flying as fast as he could to make up for lost time.

But soon he felt tired again and came to rest on the edge of a wood... While he was getting his breath back a stripey Black and White Badger wandered out of the wood.

Now the Black and White Badger was very grumpy and very hungry...

"What's in the basket?" he asked, **"Is it something I could eat?"** and he pushed past the Little Brown Bat and stuck his big nose into the basket and as a result, a few sparkly bits of the daytime escaped.

Startled by the bright light, the Black and White Badger jumped back, and the Little Brown Bat saw his opportunity to snatch up the basket and flew away again.

The Little Brown Bat flew as fast as he could, but eventually he had to take another rest, dreading what nosy animal he would have to deal with this time... and sure enough a Ginger Weasel came slithering through the long grass.

'What's in the basket?' asked the Ginger Weasel, and before the Little Brown Bat could even answer, he curled around the basket and flipped the lid off, letting more sparkly bits of the daytime out.

The Little Brown Bat squeaked as loud as he could to scare off the Ginger Weasel; grabbed the basket and flew off as fast as he could to meet the Golden Cockerel... not daring to stop again.

When he had landed, the Golden Cockerel investigated the basket....

"It's not all there!" said the Golden Cockerel, **"You have let some of it escape; you will have to fly back and gather up the missing pieces or the day can't begin on time!"**

And to this day, the Golden Cockerel and the Grey Owl are still trying to make up that time and because of that, a couple of times a year, the day starts an hour later, or an hour earlier, to try and get things back on track.

And as for the Little Brown Bat? To this day you will see him, and all his family who came after him, flying frantically back-and-forth across the night sky with the basket, trying to gather up the missing pieces of sparkling daytime.... Which we call

'Stars'



Story courtesy of Ian Pearse "Chairman Stanmore Marsh"