Nia and the Rainkeeper’s Promise



Original fictional story draft with an AI-generated cover. Interior illustrations and personalised editions are still in development.

Twenty complete story scenes, conversation prompts, vocabulary, an explained puzzle and a paper activity. Make a private name-personalised PDF at partytrailgames.com/stories/create. The adventure illustrations remain fictional.

SCENE 1 OF 20

The empty cup

Nia’s bean plant had made one brave leaf. Every morning she measured it with her thumb. Today the leaf hung down. Nia tipped her blue cup. Nothing came out. The rain barrel answered with a hollow BONK. Even its echo sounded thirsty.

SCENE 2 OF 20

The wrong kind of cloud

Above the woods floated a round grey cloud. “At last!” called the gardener, Mara. But the cloud sneezed out three feathers. It was a pigeon. Nia laughed, then looked at her bean again. Beyond the garden, the little stream had stopped talking.

SCENE 3 OF 20

A trail of silver

On the dry streambed, Nia noticed a silver spot. Then another. The spots led towards a hollow tree. Inside sat a moss-green dragon hugging a glass rain jar. One shining drop rolled round its rim. “I haven’t got any,” the dragon said quickly.

SCENE 4 OF 20

The name of the rainkeeper

“Any what?” asked Nia. The dragon tucked the jar behind a wing. “Biscuits.” His stomach made an enormous biscuit-shaped rumble. Nia sat outside the tree. “I’m Nia.” After a while, the dragon whispered, “Bram.” He kept both paws round the jar.

SCENE 5 OF 20

A very long summer

Last summer, Bram said, his favourite pool had vanished. The mud cracked. Nobody had known where he slept. When rain finally returned, he caught a little in his old jar. “If I keep it,” he said, “I can’t run out again.”

SCENE 6 OF 20

What the jar could not do

Nia thought of her drooping leaf. “May I have a cup?” Bram shook his head. “Half a cup?” A smaller shake. “One dragon-sized sip?” Bram almost smiled. Then he pressed his nose to the glass. Inside, the rain looked very lonely.

SCENE 7 OF 20

The first try

Bram agreed to carry the jar to the garden. Mara held a bowl beneath it while Bram poured one careful splash. The water rushed across the hard soil and disappeared into a crack. Bram snatched back the jar. “There! Giving it away doesn’t help!”

SCENE 8 OF 20

A leaf with an idea

Nia crouched beside the crack. A curled leaf had caught a tiny puddle. Beneath the leaf, the soil felt softer. “We tried one thing,” she said. “It didn’t work very well.” Bram’s ears drooped. “That’s different from nothing working,” Nia added.

SCENE 9 OF 20

The little bowls

Mara made shallow rings of soil around the plants. Nia gathered fallen leaves. Bram made a ring with his tail and sat in it by mistake. “A very fine dragon planter,” said Mara. Bram stepped out, looking pleased despite himself.

SCENE 10 OF 20

The difficult question

Three rings waited. One round the beans, one round the young apple tree, one round a tray of seedlings. Nia held her blue cup. She wanted her bean to go first. Bram watched her. Nobody spoke for a moment.

SCENE 11 OF 20

A smaller first turn

“My bean can have a smaller drink,” Nia said. “The little seedlings haven’t grown deep roots yet.” Mara checked the soil and agreed. Bram tilted the jar. This time the water stayed in its ring. Slowly, it sank in. The leaves stopped trembling.

SCENE 12 OF 20

Not enough for everything

The jar grew lighter. There was enough for a careful drink for each thirsty patch, but no grand splash and no dragon bath. Bram stared at his paws. “What happens when this is empty?” Nia had no clever answer ready.

SCENE 13 OF 20

A place for Bram

“We make a plan,” said Mara. “And you don’t have to make it alone.” She showed Bram a shady space beside the rain barrel. Nia brought a flat stone for sitting. “That’s much too small,” Bram said. “It’s for your cup,” Nia explained.

SCENE 14 OF 20

Things a roof could do

Mara and the other grown-ups cleared the rain gutter and checked the barrel’s lid. Nia drew raindrops travelling from the roof into the barrel. Bram added a dragon with a magnificent moustache. “That bit isn’t plumbing,” Nia told him. “It’s morale,” said Bram.

SCENE 15 OF 20

The last little pour

One cupful remained in the jar. Bram held it a long time. Then he poured it into the apple tree’s ring. “I’d like to see this grow,” he said. Nia laid leaves over the damp soil. They left a clear space around the little trunk.

SCENE 16 OF 20

An empty jar

The jar was empty. Bram turned it upside down. Nothing fell out—not even a biscuit. Nia expected him to look smaller. Instead, he stretched his wings. “It’s lighter,” he said. He seemed surprised that a thing could be empty and still useful.

SCENE 17 OF 20

A night without rain

No rain came that night. The bean did not become a giant beanstalk. The apple tree did not grow apples before breakfast. Mara checked the soil again. Nia checked her leaf. Bram checked that somebody remembered his shady space. They did.

SCENE 18 OF 20

The first real drop

The next afternoon, a cold spot touched Nia’s nose. This time the cloud had no feathers. Rain pattered on the roof, hurried down the gutter and drummed on the barrel lid. Bram caught a drop on his tongue. “Needs a biscuit,” he announced.

SCENE 19 OF 20

A different kind of keeping

Bram put the jar beside the barrel. Inside it he placed the garden’s spare paper labels. On a rainy afternoon, keeping labels dry was an excellent job. Nia’s bean leaf lifted. Not far. Just enough for her thumb to notice.

SCENE 20 OF 20

The promise

When the next dry day came, Bram brought his cup to the garden. He did not hide it behind a wing. Mara checked the barrel. Nia checked the plants. “Same plan?” Bram asked. “Together,” said Nia. Under the leaves, the little stream began to talk.

Questions worth talking about

1. What did Bram think the jar could protect him from? Which part of his worry made sense?

2. Why did the first splash disappear? What did Nia notice before they tried again?

3. Nia wanted her bean watered first. What helped her change her mind?

4. What could the empty jar do at the end that it could not do at the beginning?

Read it again, differently

Look for the three times the blue cup means something different: an empty need, a difficult choice and a shared plan.

Three words to take away

scarce

Available in a smaller amount than people need.

seedling

A young plant that has recently started growing.

gutter

A channel along a roof that carries rainwater away.

Three gardens, six raindrops

Use six paper raindrops. Give the bean patch one, the apple tree two and the seedlings three. How many have you used? Now share six equally between the three patches. Does equal always mean that every plant needs the same drink?

Answer & explanation

1 + 2 + 3 = 6. Equal sharing gives each patch two. The story allocation responds to different needs; a real gardener checks the plants and soil.

Make a paper rain plan

10–15 minutes · Paper, crayons and six torn-paper raindrops.

1. Draw three garden patches and a rain barrel.

2. Move paper raindrops from the barrel to the plants. Try two different plans.

3. Draw where the next rain could be collected. Tell someone why your plan changed.

For the grown-up: Use paper rather than collected water. Grown-ups handle real gutters, barrels and garden tools.

Story & reality: Bram and his rain jar are fantasy. In real gardens, plants need different amounts of water; covering soil can help it retain moisture. This story is not a guide to drinking rainwater.

Your drawing, plan or next idea