

Nopala the Cactus

An Original Story Inspired
by the Mexican tale of La
Planta de la Vida



Once upon a time in the desert, there lived a cactus named Nopala. She loved the warm sand and the blazing sun. She had lived there so long that she knew every rock and every grain of sand.

But one day, the rain stopped coming. The rivers dried up. The ground turned to dust. And all the animals were very, very thirsty.

First came a little fox. His tongue was dry, and his eyes were sad.

"Nopala," he whispered, "I am so thirsty. Is there any water left?"

Nopala looked at him with a big, warm smile. She had kept her water safe inside her for a long, long time. But she could not let the fox go thirsty. She took a deep breath, opened a small spot on her side, and cool, fresh water trickled out.

The fox drank and felt so much better. "Thank you, Nopala," he said softly. "You are so kind."

Then came a slow, old tortoise. Nopala gave her water too. "Bless you, dear Nopala," the tortoise said, nodding her wise old head.

Then, a tired owl who could barely fly. And a tiny roadrunner whose little legs could barely carry him anymore.

Each time, Nopala gave a little more of her water.

When the rain finally came back, all the animals jumped and danced with joy. Then they turned to look at Nopala — and gasped!

Every single spot where the water had flowed was now bursting with flowers. Bright yellow, orange, and pink! She was covered from top to bottom in the most beautiful blooms anyone had ever seen.

She had never looked so lovely.

From that day on, every cactus keeps water inside, ready to share. And every flower on a cactus is there to remind us that the most generous hearts are often found in the most unexpected places.