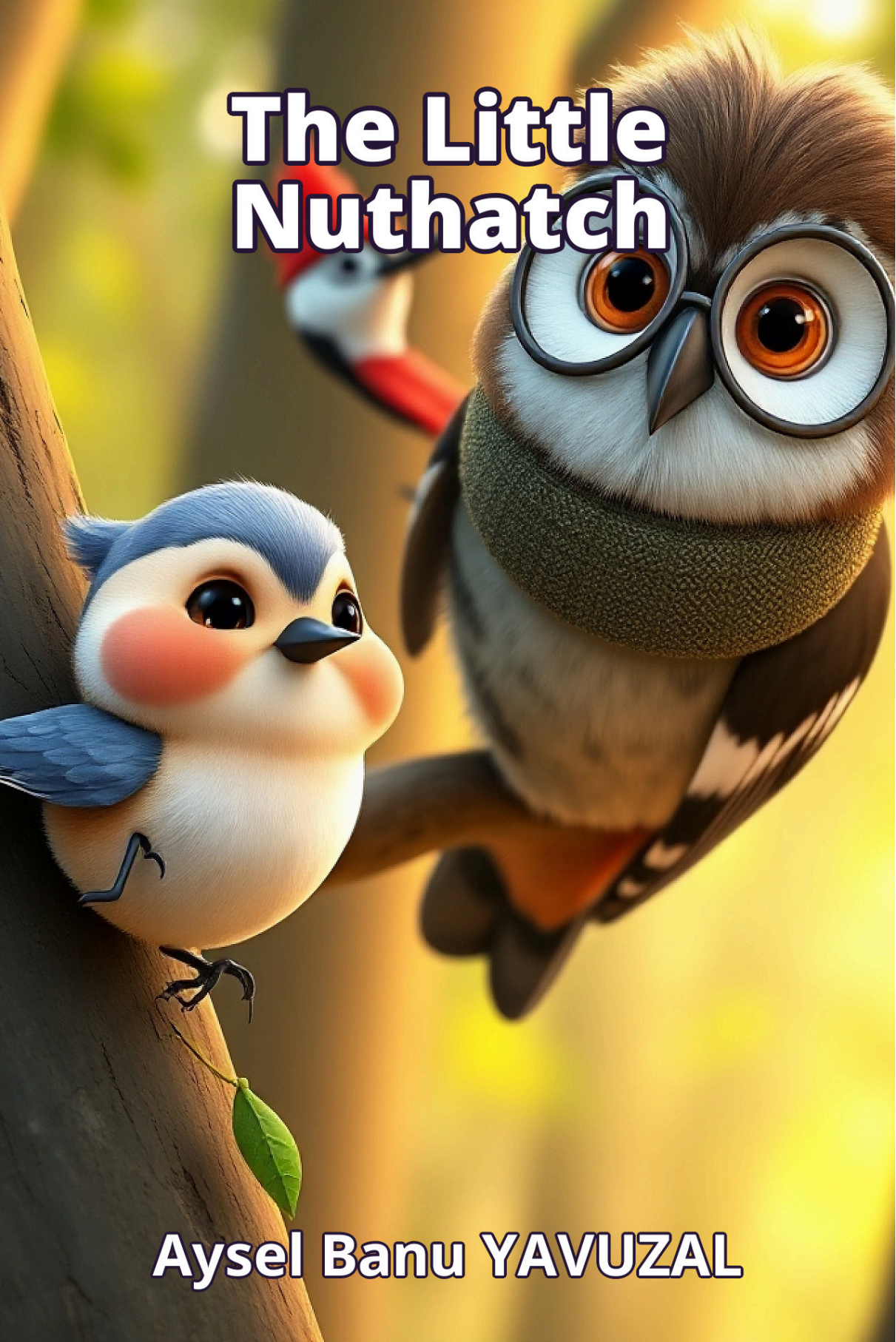


The Little Nuthatch



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

The Little Nuthatch

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



In a tall, green forest, a little nuthatch lived in a cozy nest. She had a soft blue-grey back and a warm peach-orange belly. Her bright black eyes sparkled with curiosity, and she carried a tiny green leaf satchel. Every morning she climbed down tree trunks headfirst, looking for seeds and bugs. The forest was full of songs, and she wanted to sing along.



One sunny day, a loud tap-tap-tap echoed through the trees. The little nuthatch followed the sound and found a busy woodpecker. He had black-and-white barred feathers, a bright red crown, and a long chisel beak. A small red scarf fluttered around his neck. 'Hello!' chirped the nuthatch. 'What are you doing?' 'I'm looking for tasty beetles,' said the woodpecker, tapping again.



The woodpecker smiled. 'I'm Woody,' he said. 'And I'm Nutty,' said the little nuthatch. They quickly became friends. Woody showed Nutty how to brace his stiff tail feathers against the bark. Nutty showed Woody how she could climb down a trunk headfirst. 'Wow!' said Woody. 'You can go where I can't!' They laughed and played among the branches until the sun began to set.



The next morning, while exploring a quiet part of the forest, they found a very old tree. It was huge and mysterious, with a dark hollow near the top. 'Look!' said Nutty. 'A hollow tree! I wonder what's inside.' Woody tapped the trunk. 'It sounds empty,' he said. 'But I can't climb down to see.' Nutty's eyes sparkled. 'I can!' she said. 'Let's explore together!'



Nutty scurried up the trunk and then climbed down headfirst into the hollow. It was dark and cool inside. 'It's big!' she called. 'But I can't see much.' Woody tapped around the opening. 'I hear a different sound here,' he said. 'Maybe there's a secret room.' They decided to investigate more. Nutty climbed out, and they made a plan to return with more light.



They asked their forest friends for help. A squirrel lent them a tiny lantern. A mouse gave them a piece of string. 'We'll need to be careful,' said Woody. 'The hollow might be deep.' Nutty nodded. 'With your tapping and my climbing, we can figure it out.' They promised to return the next day. The forest buzzed with excitement about the mysterious tree.



That evening, they met Owl the Forest Keeper. He was old and wise, with huge amber eyes behind round spectacles and a moss-green knitted shawl. 'I heard about your discovery,' he said gently. 'That tree is very old. It has many secrets.' 'Do you know what's inside?' asked Nutty. Owl smiled. 'Some things are best discovered together. Use your skills, and you will find the answer.'



The next day, they returned to the hollow tree. Nutty climbed down headfirst, holding the tiny lantern. Woody tapped above her. 'Tap here,' he said. 'Does it sound hollow?' Nutty listened. 'Yes! There's a soft spot.' She used her slender beak to poke gently. A small door creaked open. 'You found something!' cheered Woody. Inside was a tiny room filled with acorns and soft moss.



They realized the hollow was a storage room for the forest animals. But the door was stuck, and the animals couldn't get their food. 'We need to fix this,' said Nutty. Woody tapped around the door. 'The wood is swollen,' he said. 'If we make a small hole here, it will open easily.' Nutty climbed down and pecked a tiny hole. The door swung open! 'Hooray!' they shouted.



The forest friends came to see. Squirrel, Mouse, and Rabbit cheered. 'You found our winter food!' said Squirrel. 'We thought it was lost forever.' Woody and Nutty beamed. 'It was teamwork,' said Nutty. 'Woody's tapping and my climbing made it possible.' The animals thanked them with berries and nuts. That night, they had a feast under the stars, celebrating their friendship and their success.



Word spread about the clever nuthatch and the busy woodpecker. Owl the Forest Keeper called them to his branch. 'You have shown that different skills work best together,' he said. 'Nutty, your headfirst climbing is special. Woody, your tapping and listening are unique. Together, you solved the mystery.' He gave them each a shiny feather from his shawl as a reward. They felt proud and happy.



From that day on, Nuttu and Woody were best friends. They went on many adventures, always helping others. When a bird was lost, Nuttu climbed high to look, and Woody tapped messages to guide them home. When a nest needed repair, Woody tapped the weak spots, and Nuttu climbed down to fix them. Their friendship made the forest a happier place.



One afternoon, they sat on a branch overlooking the hollow tree. 'Remember when we first found it?' asked Nutty. Woody nodded. 'We were so curious.' 'And now we know that being different is wonderful,' said Nutty. 'Yes,' said Woody. 'I can't climb down, and you can't tap like me. But together, we can do anything.' They chirped a happy song.



Owl flew over and landed beside them. 'You two have taught the forest a valuable lesson,' he said. 'Everyone is special in their own way. When we help each other, our different skills fit together like pieces of a puzzle.' The animals gathered around and cheered. Nutty and Woody looked at each other and smiled. They knew they would always be friends.



That winter, the hollow tree became a warm shelter for many animals. Nutty and Woody decorated it with leaves and moss. They took turns keeping watch. One night, a cold wind blew, but inside the tree, everyone was cozy. 'Teamwork keeps us warm,' said Nutty. Woody tapped a happy rhythm. The forest echoed with grateful chirps and taps.



And so, the little nuthatch and the busy woodpecker lived happily in the forest. They showed everyone that different skills complement each other. When we share our talents and help our friends, we can solve any mystery. Their story spread from tree to tree, reminding all the animals that friendship and teamwork make the forest a wonderful home.