

# The Little Hedgehog's Secret



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

# **The Little Hedgehog's Secret**

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



In the heart of the woodland, where the tall trees whispered and the ferns grew soft and green, lived a little hedgehog. He was small and round, about the size of a large apple, with a light brown face and a cream muzzle. His dark chocolate-brown spines were tipped with pale gold, and he wore a tiny red scarf with white dots. Every morning he trotted along the winding path, curious and cheerful.



The little hedgehog loved to explore. He carried a tiny woven satchel for berries and kept his big round black eyes open for surprises. One day, near a mossy log, he heard a tiny sniffle. He peeked around and saw a little dormouse. She was smaller than him, with golden-brown fur and a pale cream face. She wore a soft blue knitted hat with a pom-pom and a matching blue scarf.



The dormouse's huge glossy eyes were full of worry, and her long fluffy tail curled around her tiny paws. 'Hello,' said the hedgehog gently. 'Are you lost?' The dormouse shook her head. 'I'm lonely,' she whispered. 'The woodland feels so big and I don't have a friend.' The hedgehog smiled a warm smile. 'Don't worry,' he said. 'I know a secret place that will cheer you up.'



The dormouse looked at him with her big eyes. 'A secret place?' she asked. The hedgehog nodded. 'Follow me,' he said. He led her through the ferns, under low branches, and past a babbling brook. The dormouse hurried behind, her fluffy tail swishing. She felt a little scared, but the hedgehog's kind voice made her brave.



Soon they came to a thick hedge. The hedgehog pushed aside some leaves and revealed a hidden gap. 'Through here,' he said. The dormouse hesitated. 'Is it safe?' she asked. 'Oh yes,' said the hedgehog. 'It's my secret garden. No one else knows about it.' He took her paw and they squeezed through the gap together.



On the other side, the dormouse gasped. A beautiful garden opened before them, full of berry bushes and bright flowers. Sunbeams danced on the leaves, and butterflies fluttered by. 'It's wonderful!' she squeaked. The hedgehog grinned. 'I knew you'd like it.' He opened his satchel and showed her the juicy berries he had picked. 'Help yourself,' he said.



The dormouse tasted a berry. 'Mmm, sweet!' she said. Her whiskers twitched happily. They explored the garden together, hopping over stones and peeking under leaves. The hedgehog showed her a little pool where dragonflies skimmed the water. 'I come here when I want to feel safe,' he said. The dormouse felt safe too, with her new friend beside her.



They played hide-and-seek among the trees. The dormouse hid behind a bush, her fluffy tail sticking out. The hedgehog pretended not to see her. 'Where can she be?' he said loudly. The dormouse giggled. 'Here I am!' she called. They chased each other around the berry bushes, laughing and squeaking. The garden felt warm and cheerful.



After play, they rested under a big oak tree. The dormouse looked around and smiled. 'I've never had a friend before,' she said. 'Now you do,' said the hedgehog. 'And you can come here whenever you like.' The dormouse's big eyes shone. 'Really? Even when I'm scared?' 'Especially then,' said the hedgehog. 'Friends help each other feel brave.'



The dormouse thought about her lonely days. 'I used to hide in my hole,' she said. 'But now I have you.' The hedgehog nodded. 'And I have you,' he said. 'That's what friends are for.' They shared more berries and watched the sunbeams move across the garden. The dormouse's blue hat bobbed as she nodded happily.



Suddenly, they heard a rustle in the leaves. The dormouse jumped and hid behind the hedgehog. 'What was that?' she whispered. The hedgehog looked closely. 'It's just a friendly robin,' he said. 'Look.' A little bird hopped on a branch. The dormouse peeked out and smiled. 'I'm not scared when you're here,' she said. The hedgehog felt proud.



The dormouse realized something. 'I used to think the woodland was scary,' she said. 'But with you, it feels like home.' The hedgehog smiled. 'That's the secret,' he said. 'Having a friend makes any place feel safe.' The dormouse nodded. 'Let's be best friends forever,' she said. 'Forever,' agreed the hedgehog.



As the sun began to set, they walked back through the gap in the hedge. The dormouse held the hedgehog's paw. 'Will you come to my hole tomorrow?' she asked. 'Of course,' said the hedgehog. 'And then we can visit the secret garden again.' They said goodnight, and the dormouse hurried home with a happy heart.



From that day on, the little hedgehog and the shy dormouse were always together. They explored the woodland, shared berries, and played in the secret garden. The dormouse grew braver and happier, and her big eyes sparkled with joy. The hedgehog was glad he had shared his secret. The woodland felt warm and cheerful, full of friendship.



The other animals noticed the change. 'The dormouse seems so happy now,' said the rabbit. 'She has a friend,' said the squirrel. And it was true. The hedgehog and the dormouse showed everyone that even the shyest creature can bloom with a friend by their side. The woodland became a place where everyone felt safe and welcome.



So if you ever feel lonely or scared, remember the little hedgehog and the shy dormouse. A friend can turn a big, scary world into a warm, safe place. The secret garden is always there, waiting for friends to share it. And in the heart of the woodland, the two friends live happily, their friendship making every day bright and joyful.