

The Little Marmot



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High on a sunny mountain, where the grass was soft and the sky was wide, lived a little marmot. He had soft golden-brown fur, a lighter cream belly, and bright dark eyes that sparkled with curiosity. Every morning, he sat up straight on his sturdy little paws and watched the sun rise over the peaks. He loved his mountain home and knew every sunny rock and shady nook.



The little marmot spent his days exploring. He knew the warmest rocks for napping and the sweetest patches of clover. He knew which little caves stayed dry when it rained and which slopes were safe to dig. His round body bustled from place to place, and his short bushy tail wiggled with joy. He was cheerful and generous, always ready to share what he knew.



One bright morning, a bird swooped down and landed nearby. It was a chough, a mountain crow with glossy black feathers and a bright yellow-orange beak. Its red-orange legs hopped closer, and its dark intelligent eyes looked friendly. 'Hello, little marmot,' said the chough. 'I am new to this part of the mountain. Can you tell me where to find a safe place to rest?'



The marmot sat up tall and smiled. 'Of course!' he said. 'Follow me. I know a cozy spot behind that big rock. It is dry and warm, and the wind cannot reach it.' The chough followed, hopping and flapping its slender wings. When they reached the spot, the chough nodded. 'This is perfect,' it said. 'Thank you, little friend. You know this mountain well.'



The chough wanted to repay the kindness. 'I fly high above the mountain,' it said. 'I can see paths that you cannot see from the ground. Let me show you the best ways to go.' The marmot's eyes grew wide with excitement. 'Yes, please!' he said. And so the chough flew up, and the marmot watched from below, learning the shapes of the mountain.



From that day on, the two friends shared everything they knew. The chough showed the marmot the wide, safe paths that wound between the rocks. 'See that ridge?' the chough would say. 'It is smooth and easy to cross.' The marmot showed the chough the safe places to rest, tucked away from the wind. 'This hollow stays warm all night,' he would say. They made a good team.



One day, the chough flew down with important news. 'The cold days are coming closer,' it said. 'I can feel it in the air. Soon the snow will fall, and the mountain paths will be hidden. We must find a safe passage for everyone to cross before the snow comes.' The marmot nodded. 'Then we will find it together,' he said bravely.



They set off early the next morning. The chough flew high, its wide open wings catching the wind. 'The upper path looks clear,' it called down. 'But there is a deep drift near the top.' The marmot scurried along the ground, testing the rocks with his sturdy paws. 'This lower way is solid,' he called back. 'The ground is firm and safe.'



They worked all day, checking every path and every turn. The chough's sharp eyes spotted a narrow gap between two peaks. 'Look there!' it cried. 'That could be a passage.' The marmot hurried to see. He sniffed the ground and tested the rocks. 'It is good,' he said. 'The ground is steady, and there is room to walk. But we must check the other side.'



The chough flew over the gap and circled back. 'The other side is clear too!' it reported. 'There is a gentle slope down to the valley.' The marmot clapped his little paws. 'Then we have found it!' he cheered. 'A safe passage through the mountain!' But the chough looked at the sky. 'We must hurry,' it said. 'The snow is coming soon.'



They rushed back to tell everyone. The marmot called to the other marmots, and the chough called to the other birds. 'Follow us!' they said. 'We know a safe way across the mountain!' The animals gathered, nervous but hopeful. The marmot led the way on the ground, and the chough flew above, guiding them with its clear calls. Together, they started across.



The wind blew colder, and gray clouds gathered. But the two friends did not stop. The chough flew ahead, its bright beak pointing the way. The marmot scurried beside the others, showing them where to step. 'This way!' he called. 'The ground is safe here!' The passage was narrow but steady, and everyone followed carefully, one by one.



Just as the first snowflakes began to fall, the last animal reached the other side. The chough landed beside the marmot, and they looked back at the mountain. 'We did it!' said the marmot, his dark eyes shining. 'We found the passage before the snow!' The chough flapped its glossy black wings happily. 'We did it together,' it said. 'Your knowledge and mine.'



The snow fell softly, covering the mountain in white. But the animals were safe and warm in the valley. They thanked the little marmot and the friendly chough. 'You saved us,' they said. The marmot smiled at his friend. 'We saved each other,' he said. 'Friends share what they know, and that makes everyone safer.' The chough nodded. 'That is the best kind of friendship.'



And so the little marmot and the chough stayed friends through the long winter. They shared stories and laughter, and they planned new adventures for the spring. The marmot knew the warmest spots in the valley, and the chough knew the best seeds to find. They helped each other every day, proving that small friends can solve big problems when they work together.



When spring came, the snow melted, and the mountain path was clear again. The animals crossed safely, thanks to the passage the two friends had found. The little marmot sat on his favorite rock, and the chough perched beside him. 'We make a good team,' said the marmot. 'Yes,' said the chough. 'Because friends share useful knowledge, and that makes the whole mountain a happier place.'