

The Little Saiga



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

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On the wide green grasslands, where the wind runs like a playful puppy, lived a little saiga antelope. His coat was sandy-tan, soft as dust in the sun, and his belly was lighter still. He had short slender legs and a tiny pair of budding horns. But the best part of him was his nose—an oversized, soft, trunk-like snout that wiggled when he sniffed the flowers.



The little saiga loved to explore. He knew every path and hollow of the grasslands, every cool shade and every sweet patch of grass. His small upright ears twitched at every sound, and his dark gentle eyes missed nothing. "This way is soft," he would murmur to himself, tapping the ground with one small hoof. "That way is bumpy. I know them all."



One morning, a great shadow slid over the grass. The little saiga looked up and saw a steppe eagle soaring high above. The eagle had broad dark-brown wings and a golden-brown nape that shone in the sun. His sharp amber eyes looked down, calm and watchful. "Hello down there, little one," called the eagle. "What a fine nose you have!" The saiga wiggled it proudly.



The eagle landed on a flat rock, folding his powerful wings. "I am a steppe eagle," he said. "I see far across the plains. From the sky, everything is small as seeds." The little saiga tilted his head. "And I know the ground," he said. "Every stone and hollow." They looked at each other—one who walks, one who flies—and something warm began.



Day after day, the two friends met on the grasslands. The little saiga showed the eagle the softest paths, and the eagle told the saiga what the far hills looked like. "There is a river beyond those hills," said the eagle, his amber eyes gleaming. "It shines like a silver ribbon." The saiga's nose wiggled with wonder. "I have never seen it," he said. "But I would love to."



Then one evening, the herd leader called everyone together. He was the tallest saiga, with long ridged amber horns and a weathered face. His steady dark eyes swept over the herd. "The grass here is drying up," he said. "We must cross the wide grasslands to the far river. But the way is long, and we do not know which route is safe."



The little saiga stepped forward, his heart beating fast. "I have a friend," he said. "A steppe eagle. He sees far from the sky." The herd leader frowned and shifted his sturdy legs. "An eagle?" he said. "Eagles belong to a different world. Can we trust him?" The little saiga looked up bravely. "I trust him," he said. "He is kind, and he sees what we cannot."



The next morning, the eagle came. He circled above the herd on broad wings, and his golden nape caught the light. "I see a wide valley ahead," he called down. "But there is a marsh on the left and sharp rocks on the right. Follow me, and I will show you the safe route." The herd leader watched him, still doubtful, but the little saiga nodded. "We will follow."



So the journey began. The steppe eagle flew high above, his sharp amber eyes scanning the grasslands. "Turn left here!" he called. "Soft ground ahead!" The little saiga walked at the front, his oversized nose sniffing every step. "This way feels good," he said. "The earth is firm beneath my hooves." Behind them, the herd moved together, calm and close.



They crossed a wide, windy plain where the grass whispered secrets. The eagle saw a dark storm cloud far away and turned them gently toward a sheltered hollow. "Wait here," he called. "The storm will pass." The little saiga led the herd into the hollow and stood close to the smallest calves. "We are safe," he said softly. "My friend is watching from above."



When the storm had gone, the herd leader came to the little saiga. His weathered face was softer now. "I was wrong to doubt," he said. "Your eagle sees what we cannot. And you know the ground better than anyone." The little saiga's nose wiggled with happiness. "We help each other," he said. "One walks, one flies. Together we find the way."



Then the eagle called down, his voice sharp and clear. "The river is close! But there is a deep gully ahead, and the path around it is narrow." The herd grew nervous. The little saiga trotted forward and sniffed the edge. "I know this gully," he said. "There is a safe path along the ridge. Follow my steps, one by one."



The eagle flew low, guiding them from above. "Keep to the left!" he called. "The ridge is firm there!" The little saiga led the herd along the narrow path, his small hooves sure and steady. The herd leader kept everyone calm, his long ridged horns shining. "Stay close," he said. "We are almost there." Step by step, the herd crossed safely.



At last, they reached the river. It shone like a silver ribbon, just as the eagle had said. The saigas drank the cool water and rested on the soft green bank. The herd leader bowed his head to the eagle. "Thank you, friend of the sky," he said. "You have saved us." The eagle dipped his broad wings. "Thank you for trusting me," he said.



The little saiga stood between his two worlds—the ground and the sky. He looked at the steppe eagle, and the eagle looked back with his sharp amber eyes. "We are so different," said the little saiga. "You fly, and I walk. But we found the safe route together." The eagle nodded. "Different worlds can join," he said. "And when they do, they help each other."



From that day on, the herd always had a friend in the sky. The steppe eagle watched over the grasslands, and the little saiga led the herd along the safest paths. Their friendship grew strong, like grass in the spring. And whenever a young saiga asked how they found the way, the little saiga would wiggle his nose and say, "One walks, one flies. Together, we are never lost."