

The Little Flamingo's Map



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In a bright wetland, where the water shines like a mirror, lived a little flamingo. Her feathers were soft and rosy-pink, and her long thin legs waded through the shallow pools. She loved to stretch her curved neck high and look at everything. From up there, the whole wetland looked like a green and blue puzzle.



The little flamingo carried a small reed satchel, dyed sky-blue, across her body. Inside was her favorite thing: a folded map she had found by the water. The map showed pools, paths, and tall green reeds. "One day," she said, "I will follow every line on this map." Her bright yellow-orange eyes sparkled with hope.



Her best friend was a young spoonbill. He wore a little green explorer hat with a wide brim, and his boots were always muddy. His long flat beak was perfect for poking softly in the mud. "Where are you going today?" he asked calmly. "Anywhere the map leads!" said the flamingo. He smiled and followed her, step by careful step.



One morning, the two friends spread the map on a flat stone. The flamingo traced a line with her small black-tipped beak. "Look! The path goes past the big pool, then through the tall reeds." The spoonbill leaned closer. "What is here, at the very end?" he asked. A tiny blue circle was drawn there, hidden in the corner.



"It says a secret lagoon!" the flamingo chirped. "A calm, sheltered lagoon, beyond the tall reeds." The spoonbill tapped the map with his spoon-shaped beak. "Then we must find it," he said. "But reeds can be tricky. The mud can be soft and deep." The flamingo nodded. "Then we will go together, and we will be careful."



They set off across the wetland. The flamingo lifted her head high and watched the path ahead. "Turn left at the big grey rock!" she called. The spoonbill felt the ground with his beak. "This mud is nice and firm," he said. "Follow me here." Step by step, the two friends moved past the shining pools, and the warm sun followed them.



Soon they reached the tall reeds. They were taller than both birds, and they swayed and whispered. "I can see a gap from up here," said the flamingo, stretching her curved neck. "But I cannot see the mud at the bottom." The spoonbill lowered his flat beak. "I can feel the mud," he said, "but I cannot see the way."



"Then we will be a team," said the flamingo. She stood as tall as she could and looked down. "The gap is on your right, just a little ahead." The spoonbill tapped the mud gently. "Soft here," he said, "and deep there. Move to the left, where it is firm." Slowly and safely, they pushed through the reeds together.



The reeds closed around them like a green curtain. It was quiet and shadowy, and the map flapped in the breeze. The flamingo held it close with her wing. "I think we are halfway," she said. The spoonbill paused and felt the ground. "Wait," he said. "There is water ahead, and the mud is soft beside it. We need a dry way around."



The flamingo rose up on her long legs and looked hard. "I see it!" she said. "A dry, winding path to the left, like a curly ribbon." The spoonbill tested each step. "Yes," he said. "This way is safe." They followed the curly path, one watching high and one feeling low, until the reeds began to thin and the light grew bright again.



Then the flamingo stopped. "Oh!" she said softly. "The map is wet from the splashing." A corner of the map had turned soggy, and the blue circle was almost gone. The spoonbill did not worry. "We are close," he said. "I can feel calm water ahead." The flamingo lifted her head. "And I can hear it," she said. "Splashing, gently."



Together they pushed past the last tall reeds. There it was: a calm, sheltered lagoon, tucked away and sparkling. The water was clear and blue, and the sun danced on it. "We found the secret lagoon!" said the flamingo, and she hopped with joy. The spoonbill smiled. "We found it together," he said, "with two different views."



The little flamingo waded into the shallow water and stretched her wings. The spoonbill splashed beside her, muddy boots and all. "You saw the way from high above," he said. "And you felt the way down low," she said. "That is why we made it through." They laughed and splashed in the warm, golden sunshine.



They stayed at the lagoon all afternoon. The flamingo looked up at the big sky, and the spoonbill felt the soft mud under his feet. "Your eyes are wonderful," said the spoonbill. "Your beak is wonderful," said the flamingo. "One view is good," they sang together, "but two views are better." The calm water rippled with their happy song.



As the sun grew low, they folded their map and started home. This time the path was easy, because they knew it by heart. The flamingo watched the sky above, and the spoonbill felt the ground below. "Same map," said the flamingo. "Same friends," said the spoonbill. "Same teamwork," they both said at once, and they laughed all the way back.



That night, beside the shining wetland, the two friends rested. The flamingo tucked the map into her blue satchel. "Different perspectives help solve problems," she said softly. The spoonbill nodded and tipped his green hat. "High eyes and low beak," he said, "make one great team." And in the bright wetland, the little flamingo and the spoonbill slept, dreaming of the secret lagoon.