

The Boy and the Little Hedgehog



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

The Boy and the Little Hedgehog

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



One sunny morning, a boy named Leo pulled on his green rubber boots. He had light brown skin, short wavy dark brown hair, and big warm brown eyes. Today he was going to explore his garden. He packed a snack in his small orange backpack. Then he stepped outside into the bright, buzzing world.



Leo's garden was full of wonders. Bees hummed around the flowers, and a butterfly danced past his nose. He knelt down to look at a row of tiny ants. Then he heard a rustle in the leaves near the fence. Something small was moving there. Leo crept closer, very quietly.



Under a bush, Leo found a little hedgehog. It was about the size of his hand, with a round spiky body of soft brown spines. Its face and belly were creamy pale, and its tiny black nose sniffed the air. A small blue ribbon was tied loosely around one of its spines. The hedgehog looked up at Leo with shiny dark eyes.



"Hello, little one," Leo whispered. The hedgehog didn't run away. It just blinked and wiggled its tiny pink feet. Leo's mother came over, her curly black hair tied back and her denim overalls dusty from gardening. She smiled. "That's a hedgehog, Leo. They come out at night to look for food."



Leo's mother explained that hedgehogs wander between gardens after dark. They need to find slugs, beetles, and worms to eat. "But they can't climb over fences," she said. "And busy roads are dangerous for them." Leo looked at the tall wooden fence around their garden. He felt worried. How could the little hedgehog travel safely?



Just then, Mrs. Patel from next door waved over the fence. She wore a lavender cardigan and a straw hat. "Good morning!" she called. Leo ran to the fence. "Mrs. Patel, we found a hedgehog! But how does it get from garden to garden?" Mrs. Patel smiled warmly. "Hedgehogs need small gaps in fences. Then they can roam safely at night."



Leo thought hard. His neighborhood had many gardens, but they were all closed off by fences. He imagined the little hedgehog bumping into a fence and feeling lost. He imagined it trying to cross the busy road. "We have to help," he said. "We need to make safe passages for the hedgehog."



Leo and his mother visited Mrs. Patel's garden. Mrs. Patel put on her green gardening gloves. "I'll make a small gap in my fence," she said. "Just big enough for a hedgehog." She sawed a little opening at the bottom of the wooden fence. Leo clapped his hands. "Now the hedgehog can visit your garden!"



Next, Leo and his mother walked to the neighbor on the other side. Mr. Chen was watering his roses. Leo told him about the hedgehog and the need for connected gardens. Mr. Chen nodded. "I've seen hedgehogs in my garden too. I'll make a gap in my fence as well." He cut a small opening near a bush.



Word spread down the street. The neighbors met in the evening to talk about the hedgehog. Everyone wanted to help. Some brought tools, and some brought snacks to share. Leo's mother made a map of all the gardens. "If we all make small gaps," she said, "the hedgehog can travel from yard to yard without danger."



The next Saturday, everyone worked together. Mrs. Patel sawed a gap in her back fence. Mr. Chen did the same on his side. Leo's family made a little tunnel under their fence with stones. The neighbors on the corner made a safe path beside the road, with a low hedge to guide the animals. Leo helped by carrying small stones and sticks.



By evening, the gardens were connected. Small gaps and tunnels linked each yard to the next. Leo placed the little hedgehog near the first gap. "Go on," he whispered. The hedgehog sniffed the opening, then waddled through. It wandered into Mrs. Patel's garden and disappeared under a bush. Leo felt proud. "It works!" he cheered.



That night, Leo watched from his window. He saw the little hedgehog with its blue ribbon come back through the gap. It crossed the garden and slipped under the fence to Mr. Chen's yard. Leo smiled. The hedgehog could roam safely now. The whole neighborhood had helped. It felt like magic, but it was just people working together.



In the morning, Leo found tiny footprints in the soft soil. The hedgehog had visited many gardens. Mrs. Patel said she saw it eating slugs near her roses. Mr. Chen found it sleeping under his hedge. The neighbors were happy. They had made their street a friendly home for wildlife. And it all started with one little hedgehog.



Leo's mother gave him a big hug. "You did a wonderful thing," she said. Leo looked at the little hedgehog, who was now curled up in a ball of spines near the fence. He felt warm and happy inside. He knew that even small actions can make a big difference. The hedgehog was safe, and the neighborhood was closer than ever.



From that day on, the street was full of life. Hedgehogs wandered between the gardens, and birds sang in the hedges. Leo often checked the gaps and tunnels to make sure they were clear. He learned that connected gardens help wildlife, and that one child with a kind heart can bring a whole community together. And the little hedgehog with the blue ribbon lived happily ever after.