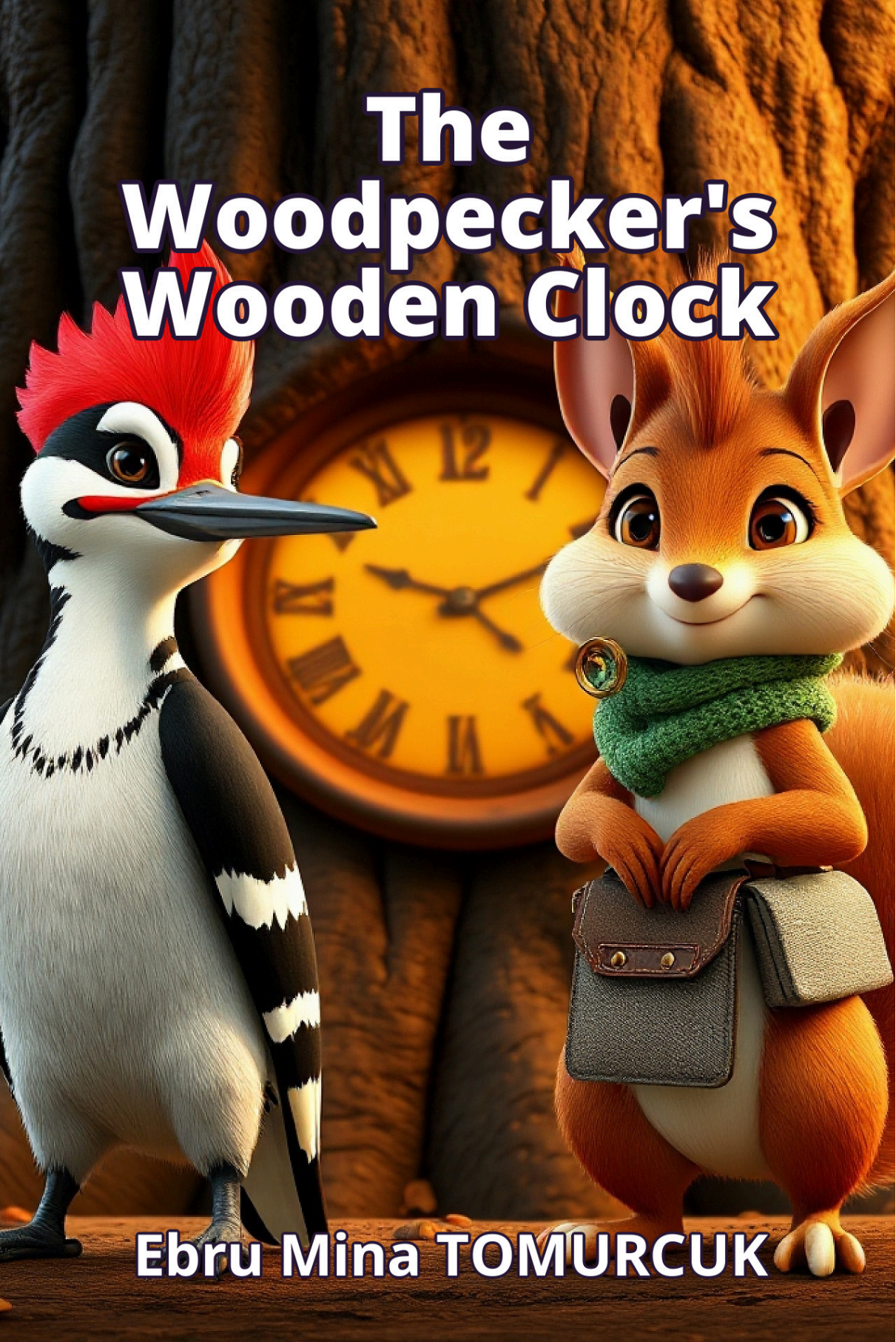
The Woodpecker's Wooden Clock
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High in the great oak tree, Percy the woodpecker tapped softly on the bark. His bright red crown bobbed as he listened to the hollow sound inside. This tree was special—it was going to be his workshop. Percy wore a small leather tool belt filled with tiny wooden tools and a brass magnifying loupe. He was the forest's only clockmaker, and he had a big idea.

Percy had always loved clocks. He loved the way their hands swept around and their gears turned with tiny clicks. One day, he decided to build a clock of his own—a wooden clock, hidden inside the big tree. He would use wood for the gears and wood for the hands. It would be the most wonderful clock in the whole forest.

Percy worked with great care. He carved each wooden gear with his long, straight beak. He sanded them smooth and fitted them together. The clock would have a wooden face and wooden hands that moved. Percy checked every piece with his magnifying loupe. He knew that a clock is only as good as its smallest gear.

At last, the clock was ready. Percy placed it inside a hollow in the tree trunk. He wound it up with a tiny wooden key. Tick, tock, tick, tock! The wooden gears turned, and the hands began to move. Percy smiled. The forest creatures came to see. They cheered and clapped. The woodpecker's wooden clock was working!

Nutmeg the squirrel was the most excited of all. She scampered up the tree, her bushy russet tail swishing. She wore a green knitted scarf and carried a little canvas satchel. "Wow! A clock in a tree!" she cried. "How does it work? Can I see the gears?" Percy showed her the tiny wooden pieces. Nutmeg's big amber eyes opened wide.

For many days, the clock ticked happily. Birds set their songs by it. The squirrel family knew when to gather nuts. Percy was proud. But one morning, the clock made a strange sound. Click... clunk... silence. The hands stopped. The wooden gears had jammed. Percy tapped the tree gently. "Oh no," he whispered. "The clock has stopped."

Nutmeg heard the sad news. She rushed over, her tufted ears twitching. "I can help!" she said. "I'm quick and small. Let me try." Percy looked at her. "It needs care, not speed," he said. But Nutmeg was already reaching into the clock with her nimble paws. She jiggled a gear. It stuck worse than before. "Oops," she said.

Percy shook his head. "The gears are made of wood. They need gentle hands. If we rush, we might break them." Nutmeg felt a little ashamed. She wanted to help, but she didn't want to make things worse. "I'm sorry," she said. "I just wanted to fix it fast." Percy smiled kindly. "Fast is not always best. Let's work together, slowly."

Percy opened his leather tool belt and took out a tiny wooden pick. He handed Nutmeg a small brush. "First, we clean the dust," he said. "Then we check each gear." Nutmeg nodded. She brushed the gears carefully. Percy used his loupe to look closely. "This one is crooked," he said. "We must straighten it without forcing."

Nutmeg held the gear steady while Percy gently nudged it. It was slow work. Her paws wanted to move quickly, but she remembered Percy's words. "Patience," she whispered. They adjusted one gear, then another. Some gears needed oil from a tiny acorn cap. Nutmeg's satchel held spare wooden gears, but they hoped they wouldn't need them.

Finally, Percy said, "Now we turn the key." Nutmeg held her breath. Percy wound the clock carefully. For a moment, nothing happened. Then... tick! The smallest gear moved. Tick, tock! The hands began to turn. "It's working!" Nutmeg squealed. Percy laughed. "Yes, but let's watch it for a while to be sure."

They sat together, watching the wooden clock. Tick, tock, tick, tock. The sound was steady and sweet. Nutmeg smiled. "I thought fixing a clock would be quick," she said. "But it was slow." Percy nodded. "Precision requires patience," he said. "Every tiny gear must be just right. And that takes time."

Nutmeg looked at her green scarf and then at the clock. "I learned something today," she said. "Being hasty can cause trouble. Working slowly and carefully makes things better." Percy patted her shoulder. "You are a good helper," he said. "You have nimble paws and a kind heart. And now you know the secret of the wooden gears."

The clock ticked on through the afternoon. Birds gathered on branches, and squirrels peeked from holes. Percy announced, "The clock is fixed!" A cheer went up from the forest friends. Nutmeg blushed. She had helped, and she had learned. The wooden clock was special—not just because it was made of wood, but because it reminded everyone that good things come to those who wait.

From that day on, Nutmeg visited the clock often. She carried her satchel with spare gears, just in case. Percy taught her more about the wooden clock and its tiny wooden gears. She practiced being patient. Sometimes she still wanted to rush, but she remembered to take a deep breath and work step by step.

And the woodpecker's wooden clock kept ticking in the big tree. Its tick-tock was a gentle song of patience. Percy and Nutmeg remained the best of friends, always ready to help each other. And whenever a gear needed care, they knew exactly what to do: work slowly, work carefully, and let patience guide their hands.