

The Boy and the Horseshoe Bat



Ebru Mina TOMURCUK

The Boy and the Horseshoe Bat

Ebru Mina TOMURCUK



Ben was a boy who loved to explore. He had warm brown skin, short curly black hair, and bright dark brown eyes. Light freckles danced across his nose. He wore a yellow T-shirt with a small bat print and red sneakers. One evening, while playing in his backyard, he heard a tiny, high-pitched squeak coming from the old oak tree.



Ben looked up and saw a small shape flutter near the leaves. It was a bat! He watched it swoop and dive, catching insects in the fading light. The bat had soft grey-brown fur and large round ears. Its nose had a funny horseshoe shape. Ben was curious. He ran inside to find his grandpa, who knew everything about animals.



Grandpa Joe was tall with a slight stoop, and he had a neat white beard and crinkly blue eyes behind round glasses. He wore his olive-green cardigan. 'That sounds like a horseshoe bat,' he said. 'They're special because they use sound to find their way in the dark. It's called echolocation.' Ben's eyes widened. He wanted to know more.



The next day, Ben returned to the oak tree at dusk. He sat very still and listened. Soon, the bat appeared again. Ben noticed a small silver ring on one of her wings. 'You must be a friend,' he whispered. He named her Pip. Pip flew around the tree, making tiny clicks and squeaks. Ben wondered how such little sounds could help her see.



Ben asked Grandpa Joe to tell him more about echolocation. Grandpa explained, 'Pip makes a sound, and when it hits something, it bounces back like an echo. Her big ears hear the echo and tell her where things are.' Ben thought that was amazing. He decided to learn everything he could about Pip and her unusual sense.



Ben's best friend Mira came over to play. She had deep brown skin, long black hair in two braids, and a gap-toothed smile. She wore a purple hoodie with star patterns and carried a small notebook in her pocket. Ben told her about Pip. Mira asked, 'How does she see with sound?' Ben said, 'Let's find out together!'



Ben and Mira watched Pip fly at dusk. Pip made clicks, and her big ears twitched. Ben said, 'I bet she's listening for echoes.' Mira wrote in her notebook. 'We should show our friends how this works,' she said. Ben grinned. 'Yes! Let's make a science demonstration!' They started planning right away.



Ben and Mira gathered supplies: a blindfold, a pair of clickers, and a big cardboard box. They practiced in Ben's garage. Ben clapped his hands and listened for the echo. 'Did you hear that?' he asked. Mira nodded. 'The sound bounced off the wall!' They decided to demonstrate how sound can help you find your way.



They invited their friends to the backyard. Ben wore his yellow bat T-shirt for luck. He stood in the middle of the yard and said, 'Today we'll learn how a bat sees with sound!' He put on the blindfold. 'I'll clap, and you tell me if I'm close to the fence.' His friends watched, excited.



Ben clapped loudly. The sound echoed off the fence. 'The fence is on my right!' he said. He turned and clapped again. 'Now it's in front of me!' His friends cheered. Mira explained, 'Bats use echoes to find insects and avoid trees. Their unusual sense is super valuable!' Everyone wanted to try.



Just then, Grandpa Joe came out with a big smile. He held a small speaker and a microphone. 'Let's make it even more fun,' he said. He set up the speaker to play bat sounds. The children listened as the clicks sped up and slowed down. Grandpa said, 'Pip's sounds are too high for us to hear, but we can see them on this screen.'



Ben had an idea. 'Let's play a game of echo tag!' he said. One child wore a blindfold and clapped to find the others. The others moved quietly. Everyone laughed and learned. Mira wrote down what they discovered. 'Sound can tell you where things are, just like Pip's echoes tell her where to fly.'



As the sun set, Pip flew out of the oak tree. She swooped over the children's heads, catching insects. Ben pointed. 'Look! She's using echolocation right now!' The children watched in awe. Pip's big ears twitched as she listened to the echoes of her own clicks. She was a true expert.



Ben took off his blindfold and smiled at his friends. 'Pip showed us that unusual senses are valuable,' he said. 'Even though she can't see well in the dark, she can hear her way around.' Mira added, 'And we can learn from her!' Everyone nodded. They had fun and learned something new.



Grandpa Joe put his hand on Ben's shoulder. 'You did a great job, Ben,' he said. 'Curiosity and science go hand in hand.' Ben looked at Pip, who was flying back to her tree. He felt proud. He knew that even small creatures have amazing abilities. And he couldn't wait to explore more.



Ben and Mira sat under the oak tree, watching the stars come out. 'What will we discover next?' Mira asked. Ben smiled. 'Who knows? But I'll always remember Pip and her echoes.' They promised to keep exploring and learning. And Pip, the horseshoe bat, kept flying, using her wonderful sound sense to find her way in the dark.