

The Puffin's Lost Pebble



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Pip the puffin lived on a high, windy cliff beside the wide blue sea. His round body was black and white, his feet bright orange, and his beak striped with red and yellow. In his beak he always carried a small grey pebble with a soft pink streak. It was his favorite thing in the whole world, and he kept it close every single day.



The pebble was a gift from Grandma Puffin. Long ago, she had found it on the beach and pressed it into his little wing. 'Keep this,' she had said, 'and remember our walks by the waves.' When Pip held it, he felt her warm feathery hug. The pebble was small, but it carried a very big memory inside it.



One breezy morning, Pip set the pebble beside his nest while he tidied up. A sudden gust of wind whooshed across the cliff. The pebble rolled, bounced, and disappeared over the edge. 'Oh no!' cried Pip. 'My pebble! My grandma's pebble!' His round eyes grew wide and sad, and he flapped his short wings in a worry.



Pip hurried down the rocky path as fast as his orange feet could go. He searched under tufts of grass and behind grey stones. He peeked into cracks and crannies. 'Where can it be?' he mumbled. The cliff was big, and the pebble was small, and Pip felt very, very tiny and worried indeed.



At the bottom of the cliff, Pip met Tilly the guillemot. She stood tall and slim, with a neat white belly and a slender black beak. 'You look troubled, little puffin,' she said kindly. Pip told her about the lost pebble and the memory of his grandma. Tilly nodded. 'Then we shall search together,' she said.



Tilly picked up a small twig and used it to poke under bushes. Pip waddled behind her, checking every stone. They searched along the rocky beach where the waves whispered and hissed. 'Pebbles are tricky things,' said Tilly. 'But two pairs of eyes are better than one.' Pip felt a little braver with a friend beside him.



They searched near the tide pools, where tiny crabs scuttled sideways. They searched among the seaweed, green and slippery. Pip's feet grew tired, and his beak drooped. 'Maybe it's gone forever,' he sighed. Tilly gently touched his wing. 'Don't give up yet,' she said. 'The beach is big, but we are patient.'



Pip remembered how Grandma Puffin used to say, 'Little things hold big love.' He thought of her warm smile and her soft feathers. He wanted to find the pebble more than ever. 'I have to keep looking,' he said. Tilly smiled. 'That's the spirit,' she said. 'Let's try the far end of the beach, where the waves roll in.'



They walked past a tangle of driftwood and a pile of smooth round stones. Pip looked left and right, up and down. His round dark eyes scanned every inch of the ground. 'I see a grey stone!' he cried, but it was only a shell. 'I see a pink streak!' he cried, but it was only a piece of seaweed. Tilly said, 'Keep going, Pip.'



The sun began to sink low, painting the sky orange and pink. Pip's little heart felt heavy. 'We've looked everywhere,' he said sadly. 'Maybe it's time to stop.' Tilly put a wing around him. 'We've come this far,' she said. 'Let's check just one more spot, right where the waves kiss the shore.'



So they walked to the water's edge, where the foam bubbled and fizzed. Pip looked down at the wet sand. And there, shining in the last light, was a small grey pebble with a soft pink streak. 'My pebble!' Pip shouted. 'You found it! You found it!' He danced a happy puffin dance, flapping his wings and wiggling his orange feet.



Tilly smiled her calm, kind smile. 'You found it too,' she said. 'We found it together.' Pip picked up the pebble gently in his striped beak. It felt cool and smooth, just as he remembered. He held it close and thought of Grandma Puffin's warm hug. 'Thank you, Tilly,' he said. 'You are a true friend.'



Pip and Tilly sat on a smooth rock and watched the waves. Pip told Tilly all about his grandma and the walks they used to take. Tilly listened quietly and said, 'It's funny how a little pebble can hold so much.' Pip nodded. 'It's not just a pebble,' he said. 'It's a memory. And now it's a memory of today, too.'



From that day on, Pip and Tilly were the best of friends. They met on the rocky beach whenever the sun was warm. Pip kept his pebble safe in his nest, but he often brought it out to share its story. 'Small things can carry big memories,' he would tell the other puffins. 'And good friends make every search happier.'



One evening, Pip showed the pebble to Grandma Puffin. She smiled her soft smile and said, 'You took good care of it, Pip.' Pip puffed out his chest. 'I had help,' he said. 'Tilly helped me find it.' Grandma nodded. 'Friends are like pebbles,' she said. 'Small and precious, and worth holding close.'



And so Pip learned that even the smallest object can hold a big, warm memory. He learned that searching is easier with a friend beside you. And whenever he looked at the little grey pebble with the pink streak, he remembered Grandma's hug, Tilly's kindness, and the happy day they found it together on the rocky beach.