

The Dormouse's Doorbell



Ebru Mina TOMURCUK

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In a hollow under the old oak tree lived a little dormouse named Hazel. Her home was tiny and cozy, with a round door and a mossy mat. Hazel loved visitors, but every knock on her door sounded like thunder. She would jump and spill her tea. "Oh dear," she sighed, "I need a gentler way for friends to say hello."



Hazel was clever with her paws. She wore a sky-blue apron with a pocket full of tiny tools. She snipped and glued and tinkered. First, she hung a little bell above the door. But when the wind blew, it jingled all night. Next, she tried a soft rope to pull. But it was too slippery for paws. "Hmm," said Hazel, adjusting her spectacles. "A doorbell needs just the right sound."



One morning, a rabbit neighbor hopped by. Her long ears twitched at every sound. "Good morning, Hazel!" she called. "I came to visit, but I didn't want to knock too loudly. Your door is so small and your walls are so thin." Hazel smiled. "That's just my problem!" she said. "I'm trying to invent a doorbell that rings softly." The rabbit's warm brown eyes lit up. "What a kind idea!"



Just then, a glossy green beetle landed on the mossy mat. His shell shimmered with copper, and his amber eyes sparkled. "I heard you talking about a soft sound," he said. "My name is Barnaby. I'm a beetle, and I know a thing or two about gentle noises." He tipped his tiny brown tool belt. "May I help?" Hazel clapped her paws. "Oh, yes, please!"



Barnaby pulled out a small magnifying lens on a cord. He listened closely to Hazel's bell. "Too tinny," he said. He tapped a hollow acorn. "Too thumpy." Then he spotted a spider's silk thread. "Aha! Let's try this." They stretched the thread across a tiny frame. When Hazel plucked it, it hummed a soft, sweet note. "That's lovely!" she whispered.



But the thread was too fragile. The next day, it snapped. "We need something stronger," said Barnaby. He flew to a nearby reed patch and brought back a thin, bendy stalk. They fixed it to the door with tiny pins. When tapped, it made a gentle ping. Hazel beamed. "That's much better!" But when the wind blew, it pinged all by itself. "Hmm," said Barnaby. "We need a cover."



They tried a tiny mushroom cap as a shield. It muffled the sound too much. They tried a leaf, but it rustled loudly. "What about a snail shell?" suggested Hazel. They found an empty shell and fixed it over the reed. When tapped, it made a soft, round ding-dong. "That's just right!" cried Barnaby. They tested it again and again. Each ding-dong was gentle and clear.



The rabbit neighbor came to visit. She tapped the snail-shell doorbell. Ding-dong! "Oh, what a lovely sound!" she said. "It didn't startle me at all." She hopped inside for tea. Soon, a mole neighbor shuffled up. He wore a round green cap and carried a small satchel. He tapped the doorbell with his big pink paw. Ding-dong! "Even I can hear that," he said softly. "It's perfect for my underground home."



Hazel and Barnaby were delighted. "Everyone should have a gentle doorbell," said Hazel. "But each home is different." The mole's door was round and low. The rabbit's door was tall and narrow. So Hazel and Barnaby made a special doorbell for each. For the mole, they used a hollow root that made a soft thump. For the rabbit, a stretched grass blade that hummed. Each one rang just right.



Word spread through the tiny neighborhood. Soon, a family of field mice came. A hedgehog with a prickly back asked for one. Even a slow snail wanted a doorbell for his shell. Hazel and Barnaby worked together, measuring and testing. Barnaby's tool belt jingled with tiny gears. Hazel's apron pocket grew full of spare parts. They laughed and tinkered all day.



One afternoon, a strong wind blew through the oak tree. It rattled the branches and shook the doors. The snail-shell doorbell on Hazel's door began to swing wildly. Ding-dong-ding-dong! It rang and rang. Hazel covered her ears. "Oh no! The wind is too strong!" Barnaby held on to his lens. "We need a wind guard," he said. "Something that lets the gentle tap through but keeps the gusts out."



They thought and thought. Then Hazel had an idea. "What if we put a tiny curtain of moss in front?" she said. "The wind will ruffle it, but a paw can push through." They gathered soft moss and hung it over the doorbell. When the wind blew, the moss swayed but the bell stayed quiet. When the rabbit tapped, the moss parted and ding-dong! It worked! "Kindness and teamwork," said Barnaby, "make the best inventions."



Soon, every tiny home had a doorbell that rang just right. The mole's thumped softly underground. The rabbit's hummed a happy tune. The field mice had a tiny chime. And Hazel's snail-shell bell went ding-dong, gentle and clear. Neighbors visited without knocking loudly. They brought acorn tea and seed cakes. Hazel's tiny home was always full of friends and soft, cheerful sounds.



One evening, the rabbit and the mole came to visit. They brought a tiny wooden sign. It read: "The Dormouse's Doorbell — Ring Gently." Hazel hung it above her door. "Thank you," she said. "But it was Barnaby who made it perfect." Barnaby blushed under his glossy shell. "We made it together," he said. And they all sat down for tea, listening to the soft ding-dong of friendship.



From that day on, Hazel's doorbell rang often. Each ding-dong meant a friend had come to say hello. And every time, Hazel smiled. She had learned that a small idea, born from a real need, could grow into something wonderful. With a kind beetle and helpful neighbors, her gentle doorbell had made the whole tiny neighborhood a happier place.



And if you ever visit the old oak tree, listen closely. You might hear a soft ding-dong, then a little dormouse in a sky-blue apron opening her door. She'll invite you in for tea, and you'll see that the best inventions start with a need and a friend. The end.