

The Owl's Forgotten Birthday



Ebru Mina TOMURCUK

The Owl's Forgotten Birthday

Ebru Mina TOMURCUK



In the heart of the Whispering Woods, where tall trees touched the sky, lived a small owl with soft brown and cream feathers. Her huge golden-amber eyes sparkled like twin suns, and she wore a moss-green shawl with tiny acorn buttons. Every morning, she greeted the forest with a gentle hoot. Today was special: it was her birthday! She fluffed her tufted ear feathers and waited for her friends to wish her a happy day.



But the morning passed quietly. The rabbit hurried by with a basket of berries, her red polka-dot apron flapping, and didn't stop to chat. The hedgehog scurried past with his blue neckerchief, clutching a tiny satchel, and only waved. The mouse, wearing a yellow party hat, dashed off without a word. The owl's heart sank. 'They forgot,' she whispered, and her wings drooped low. She pulled her shawl tight and sat alone on her branch.



All day, the owl felt sad and quiet. She watched the sun climb and fall, and still no one came to say 'Happy birthday.' Her big golden eyes grew misty. She didn't notice the rabbit peeking from behind a bush, or the hedgehog tiptoeing with a lantern, or the mouse practicing a loud cheer. 'Maybe they're just busy,' she thought, but it didn't help. Her small curved beak turned down, and she sighed a deep, lonely sigh.



Meanwhile, in a cozy hollow tree, the friends were bustling with secret plans. The rabbit arranged berries on a leafy plate, her long ears twitching with excitement. The hedgehog hung tiny lanterns from branches, his prickly back brushing the bark. The mouse practiced shouting 'Surprise!' and accidentally popped a balloon. 'Shh!' hissed the rabbit. 'She'll hear us!' They worked quickly, glancing at the sky. Twilight was coming, and everything had to be perfect.



The owl, still unaware, decided to take a quiet walk. She hopped from branch to branch, her moss-green shawl wrapped tight. She passed the rabbit's burrow and saw no one. She peered into the hedgehog's den and found it empty. 'They really did forget,' she murmured, and a single tear rolled down her cheek. She didn't see the mouse hiding behind a mushroom, holding a tiny candle and feeling terrible for keeping the secret.



The hedgehog, who was shy and thoughtful, noticed the owl's drooping wings from afar. He felt a pang of worry. 'Maybe we should tell her,' he whispered to the rabbit. But the rabbit shook her head. 'It's a surprise! We can't spoil it now.' The hedgehog sighed and clutched his satchel of lanterns. He wished he could comfort his friend, but he knew the surprise would be worth it. He just hoped the owl wouldn't be too sad.



As the sun began to set, the owl sat on a low branch, her golden eyes fixed on the ground. The mouse scampered up, her big round ears twitching. 'Why so glum?' she squeaked. The owl looked away. 'No one remembered my birthday,' she said softly. The mouse's eyes widened. 'Oh! I mean—' She stopped, remembering the secret. 'Come with me,' she said instead. 'There's something you should see.' The owl hesitated, then followed.



The mouse led the owl through the twilight woods. Fireflies blinked like tiny stars. The owl's shawl rustled as she walked, her heart heavy but curious. 'Where are we going?' she asked. The mouse just smiled and pointed ahead. Through the trees, a warm glow flickered. The owl's big eyes widened. 'What is that?' she whispered. The mouse giggled. 'You'll see!' They walked closer, and the glow grew brighter.



They arrived at a grand old tree, its branches wrapped in twinkling lanterns. Berries sparkled like jewels on a leafy table. In the center sat a lovely cake, topped with acorns and cream. The owl gasped. 'Oh my!' she breathed. Her wings trembled with surprise. Then, from behind the tree, all her friends leaped out. 'Happy birthday!' they shouted. The rabbit waved her berry basket, the hedgehog held a lantern high, and the mouse blew a tiny horn.



The owl's eyes filled with happy tears. 'You didn't forget!' she cried. The rabbit hugged her. 'We could never forget! We've been planning all day.' The hedgehog nodded shyly. 'We wanted it to be a surprise.' The mouse added, 'But we should have told you we were busy. I'm sorry you felt sad.' The owl smiled. 'I should have told you how I felt,' she said. 'I thought you didn't care.' Her friends gathered around her.



'Talking about feelings helps,' said the mouse wisely. 'If you're sad, just say so.' The owl nodded. 'I will,' she promised. 'And I'm sorry I doubted you.' The rabbit poured berry juice, and the hedgehog lit the last lantern. 'Now let's party!' cheered the mouse. The owl's drooping wings lifted, and she hooted with joy. The tree glowed with warmth and laughter. It was the happiest birthday she had ever had.



They played games and told stories until the stars came out. The owl wore her shawl and felt cozy and loved. The rabbit danced a silly jig, the hedgehog told a funny joke, and the mouse sang a squeaky song. The owl laughed so much her golden eyes sparkled. 'Thank you, friends,' she said. 'This is the best surprise ever.' They all cheered and ate cake under the lantern light, feeling warm and happy together.



As the party wound down, the owl hugged each friend. 'I learned something important today,' she said. 'When we talk about our feelings, misunderstandings fade away.' The rabbit nodded. 'And we should always tell each other if we're planning a surprise!' Everyone laughed. The hedgehog gave her a tiny lantern to keep. 'So you remember tonight,' he said. The owl's heart felt full. She knew her friends truly cared.



The friends sat together under the twinkling lanterns, sharing stories and laughter. The owl looked at each one: the rabbit with her polka-dot apron, the hedgehog with his blue neckerchief, the mouse with her party hat. 'I'm so lucky to have you,' she said. They all smiled. 'And we're lucky to have you,' said the mouse. 'Happy birthday, owl!' They cheered again, and the forest echoed with joy.



The owl finally yawned, her big eyes growing sleepy. 'Time for bed,' she said. Her friends walked her home, carrying lanterns to light the way. 'Thank you for the best birthday,' she said. 'And for teaching me to speak up.' They hugged goodnight. The owl snuggled into her nest, her moss-green shawl wrapped around her. She felt warm and happy, and her heart was full of love.



From that day on, the owl always shared her feelings, and her friends did too. They learned that talking and listening keep friendships strong. The forest was filled with kindness and laughter. And every year, they celebrated the owl's birthday with lanterns, berries, and cake. But the owl never forgot that first surprise, and she always remembered: if you feel sad, speak up. Your friends care more than you know.