

The Theater Mouse



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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Under the wooden stage of the Grand Old Theater, in a cozy hole lined with velvet curtain scraps, lived a little mouse named Pip. Pip had soft grey fur, round pink ears, and a bright red neckerchief tied at his throat. Every night, he peeked through the floorboards to watch the shows. He loved the music, the lights, and especially the sound effects.



Pip was a secret mouse, and he liked it that way. During the day, he practiced making sounds with his tiny paws and his squeaky voice. He could squeak like a rusty hinge, patter like raindrops, and even make a tiny drum sound with a thimble. The theater was his home, and he knew every creaky board and dusty corner.



One evening, the theater was packed for the big show. The actors wore bright costumes, the audience buzzed with excitement, and the lights dimmed. Pip took his usual spot under the stage, ready to enjoy the show. But just as the curtain rose, a loud CLUNK came from the sound-effects machine. Then there was silence.



The actors on stage looked confused. The sound-effects machine had stopped working! The audience began to murmur. Backstage, the stage manager wrung his hands. Pip's heart raced. He knew the show needed sounds: stomps for the giant's footsteps, quacks for the farm scene, and squeaks for the mouse character. Without them, the show would be a disaster.



Pip took a deep breath. "I have an idea!" he squeaked, though no one heard him at first. He scurried out from under the stage and ran to the backstage area. There, he found Bertie the bear, a kind stagehand with shaggy brown fur and a blue cap. Bertie was worried too. "The machine is broken," he said. "What can we do?"



Pip climbed onto a toolbox and waved his paws. "We can make the sounds ourselves!" he said. "Bertie, you can stomp like the giant! Flossie the duck can quack, and Toby the cat can squeak!" The animals looked at each other. They were not sure. But Pip's bright eyes and red neckerchief gave them hope.



Bertie nodded slowly. "I am big and heavy," he said. "I can stomp!" He practiced a gentle thump. The floorboards shook a little. "Perfect!" said Pip. "Now, Flossie?" Flossie the white duck, with her pink ribbon and trailing ducklings, quacked happily. "I can quack and flap!" she said. Her ducklings peeped in a row.



Toby the ginger tabby cat twitched his tail. He wore a small silver bell on his collar. "I can patter softly and squeak like a mouse," he said. He crouched and crept, his bell jingling. "And purr like a engine," he added with a grin. Pip clapped his tiny paws. "Great! We can do this together!" he said.



The stage manager was desperate. "We need sounds now!" he cried. Pip ran to him and squeaked loudly. The stage manager looked down. "A mouse?" he said. But then he saw Bertie, Flossie, and Toby ready to help. "All right," he said. "Let's try." He signaled the actors to continue. The show went on, and the animals waited for their cues.



On stage, the giant appeared. Bertie stomped his big feet: BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! The audience gasped. It sounded just like giant footsteps. Then the farm scene began. Flossie quacked and flapped her wings, and her ducklings peeped in a row: QUACK, QUACK, PEEP! The children in the audience giggled. The sounds were even funnier than before.



Next came the mouse character, who was supposed to squeak. Toby the cat crouched backstage and let out a tiny "squeak, squeak!" Then he purred, and his silver bell jingled softly. The audience clapped. Pip watched from the shadows, his heart swelling with pride. The animals were doing it! They were saving the show with their own funny sounds.



During the finale, the whole cast sang and danced. Bertie stomped the beat, Flossie quacked the chorus, and Toby patter-pattered like raindrops. Pip couldn't resist. He ran onto the stage and squeaked the highest note of all. The audience cheered and clapped louder than ever. The theater filled with happy noise.



After the show, the stage manager found Pip. "You little mouse," he said, smiling. "You saved the performance!" Pip blushed under his fur. "We all did," he said. "Bertie, Flossie, and Toby helped too." The animals gathered around, and the stage manager shook Pip's tiny paw. "From now on, you are the official sound-effects crew," he said.



That night, the animals had a party under the stage. Flossie brought breadcrumbs, Bertie brought honey, and Toby brought a ball of yarn. They laughed and told stories about the show. Pip looked at his friends and felt warm inside. He had learned that even a small mouse could do big things when friends worked together.



The next day, Pip peeked through the floorboards as usual. But now, Bertie, Flossie, and Toby peeked with him. They watched the audience arrive for the next show. "Ready for our sounds?" asked Bertie. Pip nodded. "Ready!" he squeaked. And from that day on, the theater had the best sound effects in the whole world, made by the best of friends.



Pip still lives under the stage, but he is not a secret anymore. He wears his red neckerchief proudly and leads his team of animal sound-makers. Every show is a little different, with stomps, quacks, squeaks, and purrs. And every night, when the audience claps, Pip smiles. He knows that everyone can contribute to a shared goal, no matter how small they are.