The Hollow Log Hotel
HOTEL
Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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Rosie Raccoon and her brother Rusty lived in a cozy den under the old oak tree. One morning, they found a giant hollow log lying in the meadow. It was as long as three bears and as round as a barrel. “Look!” cried Rusty, his dark eyes shining. “We could make this into a woodland hotel!” Rosie smiled, her amber eyes bright. “With dozens of tiny rooms for animal guests!”

Rusty pulled a pencil from his blue work apron and drew a plan on a leaf. Rosie tied her red neckerchief and packed a small brown satchel with keys. They swept the hollow log clean and made tiny beds from moss and leaves. “Every room needs a window,” said Rusty, carving little round holes. “And every guest needs a warm welcome,” said Rosie, placing a smooth pebble as a doormat.

By sunset, the hollow log hotel was ready. Rosie hung a sign made of bark: “Welcome to the Hollow Log Hotel.” Rusty added a tiny bell for guests to ring. They waited by the entrance, their fluffy ringed tails swishing with excitement. “Who will come first?” whispered Rosie. Just then, a tap-tap-tap echoed through the trees. A woodpecker with a red crown patch landed on the log.

“Hello!” said the woodpecker, adjusting his tiny round spectacles. “I’m Mr. Peck. I’ve traveled far and need a room for the night.” Rosie welcomed him warmly. “You’re our first guest! Room One is just for you.” She handed him a tiny key. Mr. Peck fluffed his yellow scarf and hopped inside. “What a lovely hotel!” he chirped. “I’ll be up early to drum on the trees.”

Next came a tiny golden dormouse named Dozey, wrapped in a knitted grey blanket. “I’m so sleepy,” she yawned, her long whiskers twitching. “I need a quiet corner.” Rosie led her to Room Two, far from the entrance. “Here you’ll have peace and quiet,” she said softly. Dozey curled up in her lilac nightcap and fell fast asleep. “Thank you,” she murmured. “You’re very kind.”

Before long, a family of squirrels arrived, all chatter and energy. “We need three rooms!” said Mama Squirrel, her tail flicking. “And a place to store our acorns.” Rusty showed them Rooms Three, Four, and Five. “The acorns can go in the hollow by the door,” he said. The squirrels dashed about, chattering and giggling. “This hotel is perfect!” they cried. But the noise woke Dozey, who peeped out, looking tired.

Early the next morning, Mr. Peck began his drumming. Tap-tap-tap-tap! His sharp black beak hammered a tree right beside the log. Dozey the dormouse covered her ears with her grey blanket. “Too loud!” she squeaked. The squirrels complained too. “We can’t sleep with that racket!” they chattered. Rosie hurried out. “Please, Mr. Peck,” she said gently, “could you drum a little later?”

Mr. Peck looked surprised. “But I always drum at dawn!” he said. “It’s how I wake up.” The squirrels grumbled and Dozey sighed. Rusty scratched his head. “Maybe we can find a better spot for drumming,” he suggested. “Somewhere far from the bedrooms.” Mr. Peck ruffled his feathers. “I don’t want to be a nuisance,” he said. “But where else can I go?” The guests all talked at once, and nobody listened.

The next problem came at lunchtime. The squirrels wanted to play tag in the main hall, but Dozey was trying to nap there. “Shh!” said Dozey. “You’re too noisy!” The squirrels looked hurt. “We just want to have fun!” they said. Then Mr. Peck wanted to practice his drumming on the log itself, and the squirrels said the hollow echo was too loud. Everyone began to squabble. Rosie and Rusty looked at each other. “We need a plan,” said Rusty.

That evening, Rosie and Rusty sat on a stump and thought. “Hospitality is harder than I thought,” said Rusty, rubbing his striped tail. “Everyone wants different things.” Rosie nodded. “We need rules that are fair to everyone.” She took out a leaf and a pencil from Rusty’s apron. “Let’s listen to what each guest needs.” They called all the guests together and asked, “What would make you happy here?”

Mr. Peck spoke first. “I need a place to drum where I won’t bother anyone.” Dozey whispered, “I need a quiet room and a calm spot for naps.” The squirrels chimed in, “We need space to play and a place for our acorns.” Rosie wrote everything down. Then she said, “Let’s make sharing rules.” Rusty added, “Like drumming only after breakfast, and playing tag outside.” The guests nodded slowly.

Rosie wrote the rules on a big leaf and hung it by the door. “Rule One: Quiet hours after dark.” “Rule Two: Play tag outside, not in the hall.” “Rule Three: Drumming on the far tree after breakfast.” “Rule Four: Share the nap corner with anyone who needs it.” She smiled. “And Rule Five: If something bothers you, talk about it kindly.” Mr. Peck adjusted his spectacles. “Those seem fair.”

The next morning, Mr. Peck drummed on the far tree. Tap-tap-tap! Dozey slept peacefully in her quiet room. The squirrels played tag outside, leaping from branch to branch. When Dozey wanted to nap in the main hall, the squirrels tiptoed by. “Thank you for being considerate,” she said. Mr. Peck shared his breakfast seeds with everyone. “These rules make us all happier,” he chirped. Rusty grinned. “Rosie’s idea worked!”

As the days passed, the Hollow Log Hotel became a favorite spot for traveling animals. Word spread about the kind raccoon hosts and their fair rules. New guests arrived: a shy hedgehog, a chatty blue jay, and a family of field mice. Rosie welcomed each one with a warm smile and a tiny key. Rusty fixed up more rooms and added a little library of leaf books. “Every guest is special,” said Rosie.

One evening, all the guests gathered in the main hall for a story. Mr. Peck told a tale about a faraway forest. Dozey shared her knitted blanket with a chilly mouse. The squirrels passed around acorn cookies. Rosie and Rusty looked at their happy guests and felt proud. “We learned that hospitality takes patience,” said Rosie. “And fairness,” added Rusty. “And a little kindness makes everyone feel at home,” said Dozey, smiling sleepily.

The Hollow Log Hotel still stands in the meadow, welcoming travelers from all over the woodland. Its tiny rooms are always filled with laughter and gentle snores. The sharing rules hang by the door, a reminder of that first busy week. Rosie keeps the keys in her satchel, and Rusty keeps his pencil ready for new ideas. And every guest leaves with a warm heart, knowing that kindness makes the best welcome of all.