

The Little Book Doctor



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Lily loved helping at the town library. Every Saturday, she skipped through the tall wooden doors and breathed in the smell of paper and dust. Mr. Abara, the librarian, always saved her a stool by the front desk. Lily was small for eight, with two puffy pigtails and round glasses that slipped down her nose. But her smile was big enough to fill the whole room.



One rainy afternoon, Mr. Abara wheeled a creaky cart of old books to the back room. 'These need care,' he said, his white beard twitching. Lily spotted a sad-looking book at the bottom. Its cover was loose, its pages were torn, and its spine was cracked. 'Oh, you poor thing,' she whispered. She gently lifted it out and held it like a sleepy kitten.



The book was called 'Tales of the Whispering Woods.' Lily turned the fragile pages. Some were ripped, and some were missing. 'Can we fix it?' she asked. Mr. Abara's crinkly eyes sparkled. 'We can try,' he said. 'A book doctor needs patience, steady hands, and a kind heart. Would you like to learn?' Lily nodded so fast her pigtails bounced.



Mr. Abara showed Lily a tray of tools: soft brushes, special glue, thin thread, and tiny scissors. 'First, we wash our hands,' he said. 'Then we look closely.' Lily put on her glasses and peered at the broken spine. She noticed something odd. A tiny folded paper stuck out from inside the binding. 'Look!' she gasped. 'There's something hidden in here!'



Lily carefully pulled out the folded paper. It was a torn page covered in faded writing. Suddenly, a tiny creature fluttered up from the binding. It was no bigger than her finger, with papery skin and wings like folded pages. It wore a red scarf and a thimble cap. 'Hello!' it squeaked. 'I'm Pip, the story sprite. I've been sleeping in this book for years!'



Pip zipped around Lily's head, leaving a trail of tiny paper stars. 'This book holds a story that nobody has read in a long, long time,' Pip said. 'But it's torn and broken. If we don't fix it, the story might disappear forever.' Lily's eyes went wide. 'We can't let that happen!' she said. 'I'll be the Little Book Doctor. I'll fix it!'



Mr. Abara smiled and handed Lily a small brush. 'Start by brushing away the dust,' he said. Lily worked gently, page by page. Pip held the torn pieces together with his needle. 'Careful,' he chirped. 'That page is ticklish!' Lily giggled. She glued a loose corner and pressed it flat. Slowly, the book began to look a little better.



Next came the thread. Mr. Abara showed Lily how to sew the pages back into the spine. 'Over and under, nice and tight,' he said. Lily's small fingers worked slowly. Pip held the needle steady like a walking stick. 'You're a natural!' he cheered. The book's cover was still loose, so Lily brushed on glue and pressed it down with a heavy weight.



While the glue dried, Lily read the torn page. It told of a fox who shared his lantern with lost travelers. 'This is a wonderful story!' she said. 'Why was it hidden?' Mr. Abara explained, 'Sometimes old books get damaged and forgotten. But a book doctor can bring them back.' Lily looked at the book with new eyes. She wanted to save every story in the library.



Pip grew stronger as the book mended. His papery wings fluttered faster. 'I can feel the story waking up!' he said. Lily turned the repaired pages and read aloud. The words seemed to glow. 'The fox raised his lantern high, and the forest was never dark again.' As she read, a warm light filled the room. Mr. Abara nodded. 'Stories have power when they're shared.'



But one page was still missing. Lily searched the cart and found a torn scrap under the book. 'Here it is!' she cried. Pip helped her fit it into place. 'It's the last piece!' he said. Lily glued it carefully. The book felt warm in her hands. 'We did it,' she whispered. Pip did a happy loop in the air. 'The story is whole again!'



Mr. Abara placed the mended book on a special shelf. 'You've done a wonderful thing, Lily,' he said. 'You've preserved a story for everyone to enjoy.' Lily smiled. She felt proud. Pip bowed, his thimble cap tipping. 'I'll stay with the book,' he said. 'But I'll always remember the Little Book Doctor who saved me.' Lily promised to visit often.



That evening, Lily told her family about the hidden story and Pip. 'I'm going to be a book doctor when I grow up,' she said. Her mom hugged her. 'You already are,' she said. Lily fell asleep dreaming of libraries full of repaired books, each one holding a story waiting to be read. She knew that fixing old books was like giving them a second life.



The next Saturday, Lily returned to the library. Mr. Abara had set up a small repair station just for her. 'For the Little Book Doctor,' he said. Lily beamed. She put on her glasses and picked up her brush. There were more books to mend, more stories to save. And Pip would be there, fluttering among the pages, ready to help.



From that day on, Lily spent many happy hours at her repair station. Children came to watch her work. She showed them how to care for books and told them about Pip. 'Every book is a treasure,' she said. 'And every story is worth saving.' The library became a place of wonder, where old books found new life and new readers found old friends.



And if you ever visit that library, you might see Lily, the Little Book Doctor, with her brush and thread. She'll be fixing a torn page or gluing a loose cover. And if you listen closely, you might hear a tiny voice cheering her on. That's Pip, the story sprite, reminding us all that preserving stories keeps knowledge alive for everyone to enjoy.