

The Soup of Seven Smiles



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

The Soup of Seven Smiles

Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN



In a cozy village nestled between green hills, Grandma Hazel lived in a little house that always smelled of something delicious. Grandma Hazel had warm tan skin, wavy silver hair in a low bun, and kind brown eyes behind round glasses. She wore a soft lavender apron over a cream dress, and a wooden spoon peeked out of her pocket. Her granddaughter Emma, a cheerful girl with curly dark brown pigtails and a mustard yellow sweater, loved visiting her.



One sunny morning, Grandma Hazel pulled out a dusty old cookbook. 'This is the recipe for the happiest soup in the world,' she said, her eyes twinkling. Emma leaned in close. 'What makes it so special?' she asked. Grandma Hazel smiled. 'It needs vegetables and seven mysterious smiles,' she whispered. Emma's hazel eyes grew wide with curiosity.



Grandma Hazel set a big pot on the stove. 'To collect the smiles, you must do kind things for others,' she explained. 'Each smile will make a new ingredient appear in the pot.' Emma put on her red sneakers and grabbed her canvas satchel. 'I'm ready!' she said. She wondered where she would find seven smiles in one day. Grandma Hazel handed her a list of vegetables to gather first.



Emma skipped down the lane to the village garden. There she saw a neighbor, tall and sturdy, wearing an orange work shirt and a straw hat. He was struggling with a heavy basket of vegetables. 'May I help you?' Emma asked. The neighbor's friendly dark eyes crinkled with relief. 'Thank you, little one!' he said. Together they carried the basket to his door.



When they finished, the neighbor gave Emma a warm, wide grin. 'You have a kind heart,' he said. Just then, a shiny carrot appeared in Emma's satchel. 'One smile!' she whispered, amazed. She waved goodbye and hurried back to Grandma Hazel's kitchen. She dropped the carrot into the pot, and it bubbled happily. Grandma Hazel nodded. 'Six more to go,' she said.



Next, Emma visited her friend who lived down the lane. Her friend was small and thin, with straight black hair and a shy, quiet face. She sat alone on her doorstep in a soft green hoodie. 'Would you like to play?' Emma asked gently. Her friend looked up with sad eyes. 'No one ever asks me,' she said. Emma sat beside her and shared her favorite story.



As Emma read, her friend's shy expression softened. A tiny smile appeared, showing faint dimples. 'That was nice,' her friend whispered. 'Will you come back tomorrow?' Emma promised she would. Suddenly, a plump tomato appeared in Emma's satchel. 'Two smiles!' she cheered. She hugged her friend and ran back to the kitchen, where the tomato plopped into the pot with a splash.



On her way home, Emma saw an old man sitting on a bench. He looked tired and hungry. His clothes were patched, and his shoes were worn. 'Excuse me,' Emma said politely. 'Would you like some bread and cheese?' The old man's eyes lit up. 'Bless you, child,' he said. Emma shared her lunch and watched him eat with a grateful smile.



As the old man finished, a bright red pepper appeared in Emma's satchel. 'Three smiles!' she exclaimed. She skipped back to Grandma Hazel's house and added the pepper to the pot. The soup smelled richer and sweeter. 'You're doing wonderfully,' Grandma Hazel said, stirring with her wooden spoon. 'But you still need four more smiles. Think of other ways to be kind.'



Emma thought hard. Then she had an idea. She remembered the neighbor with the straw hat had said his garden needed weeding. Emma hurried back and spent the afternoon pulling weeds. Her hands got dirty, but she didn't mind. When the neighbor saw his tidy garden, he beamed. 'You're a treasure!' he said. A green bean appeared in Emma's satchel. 'Four smiles!' she giggled.



Next, Emma visited the village school. She saw a new student crying because she couldn't find her pencil case. Emma reached into her satchel and gave the girl her own favorite pencil. 'You can keep it,' she said. The girl's tears turned to a thankful smile. A yellow corn cob appeared in Emma's satchel. 'Five smiles!' Emma whispered, feeling warm inside.



Emma remembered her shy friend with the green hoodie. She ran back and invited her to Grandma Hazel's house. 'Would you like to help make soup?' Emma asked. Her friend's face lit up with a real, happy smile. 'Really? I'd love to!' she said. A big potato appeared in Emma's satchel. 'Six smiles!' Emma said. She and her friend walked hand in hand to the kitchen.



Now Emma needed just one more smile. She looked around the kitchen. Grandma Hazel was stirring the pot, looking tired but happy. Emma picked up a cloth and gently wiped the flour from Grandma Hazel's sleeves. 'You work so hard, Grandma,' she said. Grandma Hazel's eyes sparkled, and she gave Emma the warmest smile of all. A shiny onion appeared in the pot. 'Seven smiles!' Emma cheered.



The soup was finally ready. It bubbled and glowed with a golden light. Grandma Hazel lifted the pot and carried it to the village square. Emma ran through the streets, calling everyone to come. 'Soup for all!' she shouted. The neighbor with the straw hat came, and the shy friend with the green hoodie, and the old man from the bench, and the new student from school.



Everyone gathered around a long wooden table. Grandma Hazel ladled the soup into bowls, and the delicious smell filled the air. As they ate, something wonderful happened. People began to talk and laugh together. The shy friend told a joke, and the old man shared a story. The whole village felt warm and happy, all because of a soup made with kindness.



Emma looked at Grandma Hazel and smiled. 'The soup really is the happiest in the world,' she said. Grandma Hazel nodded. 'That's because happiness grows when we care for others,' she explained. 'Every kind deed added a smile, and every smile made the soup sweeter.' The village agreed, and they promised to share kindness every day, just like Emma did.