

The Pebble Painter



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

The Pebble Painter

Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN



Rosie the rabbit lived in a cozy burrow near the wide, winding river. Every morning, she tucked her wooden paint box under her arm and skipped down to the water's edge. There, she gathered smooth, round pebbles and painted them with flowers, animals, and swirls of bright color. Her blue smock was always splattered with paint, and her little paws were stained with every shade of the rainbow.



Rosie's best friend, Willow the squirrel, loved to watch her paint. Willow's bushy tail twitched with excitement as Rosie mixed colors on a flat stone. 'What will you make today?' Willow asked, her amber eyes shining. Rosie painted a tiny sun on a gray pebble, then a spotted beetle on another. 'Each pebble tells a little story,' Rosie said, smiling. 'And I like to leave them along the path for everyone to find.'



All along the riverbank, Rosie's painted pebbles sparkled like jewels. Birds stopped to admire them. A family of mice used one as a doorstep. Even old Mr. Badger paused to study a pebble painted with a bright red apple. Rosie's kindness spread quietly, pebble by pebble, and the woodland felt warmer and friendlier because of her art.



One afternoon, the sky turned dark and heavy rain began to fall. It rained and rained, drumming on the leaves and rushing into the river. Willow hurried to Rosie's burrow, her red rain boots splashing in puddles. 'The river is rising fast!' she squeaked. 'I saw it from the top of my tree. It's flooding the low paths!' Rosie grabbed her paint box and followed Willow outside.



The river had swollen wide and brown, swirling over the banks and swallowing the usual trails. On the far side, a small woodland community was cut off. Rosie could see a round hedgehog in a green vest waving his arms. It was Bramble, the elder of the far woods. His neighbors huddled behind him, looking worried. 'We can't reach higher ground!' Bramble called. 'The water is too deep!'



Rosie's heart thumped. She knew every path and every hidden stone near the river. She also knew that the safe route to higher ground was hard to find when the water covered the markers. Then her eyes fell on her wooden paint box. 'Willow,' she said, 'we can paint new markers! Bright pebbles that show the way!' Willow nodded. 'I'll help carry them!'



Rosie worked quickly. She painted pebbles with big arrows, bright suns, and bold stripes of red, yellow, and blue. Each one was beautiful and easy to spot. Willow lined them up in a row, ready to carry. 'We'll place them where the path is safe,' Rosie explained. 'Then everyone can follow the colors to higher ground.' Her paint-stained paws flew over the stones.



Willow scooped up a pawful of pebbles and scampered along the flooded edge. She set each one on a dry stone or a fallen log, where the water couldn't wash it away. Rosie followed, painting more pebbles as fast as she could. 'Follow the bright colors!' Willow called to Bramble. 'They mark the safe path!' The rain still fell, but the painted pebbles glowed like tiny lanterns.



Bramble adjusted his wire spectacles and studied the first pebble. It was painted with a bright yellow sun and an arrow. 'This way!' he shouted to his neighbors. 'The colors show the safe path!' The hedgehog led the way, his short legs splashing through shallow puddles. Behind him, rabbits, mice, and moles followed the trail of painted pebbles, one by one.



Willow carried more pebbles ahead and placed them carefully. Rosie painted a blue arrow on one stone and a red flower on another. The path wound upward, away from the flood. The two communities followed the markers, helping each other over slippery rocks. Bramble's satchel bounced as he walked, and he kept calling, 'Stay together! The pebbles will guide us!'



At last, the path led to a grassy hill above the flood. Everyone gathered there, safe and dry. Bramble turned to Rosie, his small black eyes twinkling behind his spectacles. 'Your painted pebbles saved us,' he said. 'They were beautiful, but more than that, they were useful.' Rosie blushed. 'Art can be both,' she said softly. 'And kindness makes it shine.'



That evening, the rain stopped and the river calmed. The two communities shared food and stories on the hill. Willow passed around a basket of acorns, and Bramble told a tale about the old woods. Rosie set out her paint box and painted a pebble for each new friend. The far woodland folk and the river folk laughed together like old neighbors.



Rosie learned something important that day. Painting pretty pictures made her happy, but painting pebbles that helped others made her heart feel full. She painted a special stone for Bramble, with a green vest and spectacles. 'For the friend who trusted the colors,' she said. Bramble tucked it into his satchel and promised to keep it safe.



The next morning, Rosie returned to the riverbank. The water had gone down, leaving fresh smooth pebbles in the mud. Willow joined her, and together they painted new markers along the repaired path. This time, they painted flowers and animals and bright patterns that everyone could enjoy. 'These are for beauty,' Rosie said. 'And for kindness, too.'



Word spread about the pebble painter and her helpful art. Animals from both communities came to paint with Rosie. Hedgehogs, squirrels, and rabbits sat together, brushing colors onto stones. Bramble painted a careful stripe. Willow painted a wobbly sun. Rosie smiled at the happy mess. 'Art brings us together,' she said. 'And that's the best picture of all.'



From that day on, painted pebbles lined the paths between the two woodlands. They marked safe routes and told little stories. Rosie still painted every morning, her blue smock splattered and her paws bright with color. And whenever someone found a pebble with a flower or a sun, they knew it was a gift from a friend—a small, colorful reminder that kindness makes everyone neighbors.