

The Castle on Wheels



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Once upon a time, in a land of green hills and winding roads, there lived a kind king named Hugo. He had warm brown skin, a thick silver beard, and eyes that twinkled when he laughed. King Hugo loved books and children and believed that learning should travel to every corner of his kingdom. One day, he found an old, abandoned castle on a hill and had a wonderful idea.



King Hugo decided to turn the castle into a school on wheels. He asked carpenters to build four giant wooden wheels, each as tall as a house. They attached the wheels to the castle with strong wooden axles. Inside, King Hugo filled the rooms with books, games, and colorful maps. He even tucked a favorite book into his leather belt, ready to share.



When the castle was ready, King Hugo climbed into the driver's seat and gave a loud whistle. The castle creaked and groaned, then slowly began to roll. It rolled down the hill and onto the road, like a giant snail with a stone shell. King Hugo drove from village to village, and children came running to see the amazing castle on wheels.



In the first village, a girl named Pip spotted the castle from far away. She had short messy red hair, freckles across her nose, and a gap-toothed grin. Pip ran to the village square, waving her arms. 'Come quick!' she shouted. 'A castle is rolling into our village!' The children dropped their toys and followed Pip, eager to see this wonderful sight.



The castle stopped in the square, and King Hugo opened the big wooden door. 'Welcome to the traveling school!' he boomed. The children gasped at the shelves of books and the games on the tables. Pip stepped forward bravely. 'Can we really learn here?' she asked. King Hugo nodded. 'Of course! And you can borrow books to take home, too.'



From that day on, the castle rolled from village to village. In each place, children climbed aboard to read stories, play games, and learn new things. King Hugo taught them songs and showed them maps of faraway lands. The children shared their own stories and drawings with him. Everyone loved the castle on wheels, and word of it spread across the kingdom.



One afternoon, as the castle rolled toward a new village, the sky turned grey and rain began to fall. The road led through a muddy valley, and the wheels sank deep into the soft earth. The castle tilted and stopped with a great squelch. King Hugo tried to drive forward, but the wheels only spun and sank deeper. 'Oh dear,' he said. 'We are stuck.'



Pip was visiting the castle that day, helping King Hugo sort books. She looked out the window and saw the muddy mess. 'Don't worry, King Hugo,' she said. 'I know these valleys. I'll go for help!' She pulled her red boots tight and splashed out into the rain. Pip ran to the nearest village, where she found her friend Mira, a tall girl with two long braids and a calm smile.



Mira listened to Pip's story and nodded thoughtfully. 'We need planks to put under the wheels,' she said. 'And strong teams to pull.' She put on her straw hat with the blue ribbon and called her farm ox, Ollie. Ollie was huge and gentle, with curved horns and a red harness that jingled as he walked. 'Ollie can pull harder than anyone,' Mira said.



Pip and Mira sent messages to all the nearby villages. 'Bring ropes and planks!' they called. Soon, children from many villages arrived, each carrying something useful. There were girls and boys with ropes, boards, and even a cart full of stones. They gathered around the stuck castle, ready to help. King Hugo looked out and smiled. 'What a wonderful sight!' he said.



Mira took charge. 'We'll lay planks under the wheels to give them grip,' she explained. 'Then we'll tie ropes to the castle and pull together.' The children worked as a team, sliding planks into the mud and tying strong knots. Ollie stood at the front, his brass bell jingling softly. 'Ready?' Mira called. 'One, two, three—pull!' Everyone pulled and pushed with all their might.



At first, the castle didn't move. The children grunted and strained. 'Again!' cried Pip. 'Don't give up!' They pulled harder, and Ollie leaned into his harness with a mighty heave. Slowly, the wheels began to turn. The castle creaked and groaned, then lurched forward onto the planks. With a great squelch, it rolled out of the mud and onto solid ground.



Everyone cheered! King Hugo stepped out and hugged Pip and Mira. 'You did it!' he said. 'All of you, working together, freed the castle.' The children laughed and patted Ollie, who looked very pleased with himself. That evening, they celebrated with a feast of bread and cheese, and King Hugo told stories under the stars.



From then on, the castle on wheels visited every village, and the children always remembered the day they worked as a team. King Hugo gave each child a special book to keep. 'Sharing what we have makes everyone richer,' he said. The children nodded, understanding that big things are possible when people help each other.



The castle rolled on, leaving deep wheel tracks in the soft earth. But those tracks were like a path of friendship, connecting villages far and wide. Pip and Mira often rode along, helping King Hugo welcome new friends. Ollie plodded behind, his bell ringing merrily. And wherever the castle stopped, children gathered with open arms and curious minds.



So the traveling school continued its journey, bringing books, games, and happy lessons to every corner of the kingdom. King Hugo knew that the castle was more than just a building on wheels—it was a symbol of sharing and teamwork. And every child who climbed aboard learned that when we work together, even the heaviest castle can roll free.