

The Silent Violin



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

The Silent Violin

Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN



Emma lived in a little cottage at the edge of a big green wood. She was eight years old, small for her age, with warm light-brown skin and wavy chestnut hair tied with a red ribbon. Her yellow raincoat swished as she skipped along the garden path. She loved to watch the woodland animals and wonder what they were saying to each other.



One afternoon, Grandpa Elias called Emma into his cozy kitchen. He had fair skin weathered by the sun, a bushy white beard, and kind grey eyes behind wire-rimmed glasses. He wore his brown wool cardigan and green scarf, even indoors. 'I have something for you,' he said, handing her a worn wooden case. Inside lay a small violin, old and beautiful.



Emma's hazel eyes sparkled. She tucked the violin under her chin and drew the bow across the strings. But no sound came out. Not a squeak, not a hum. She tried again and again, her freckled nose crinkling with effort. 'It's silent, Grandpa,' she whispered. 'Maybe it's broken.' Grandpa just smiled mysteriously. 'Some music is heard with the heart,' he said.



Emma took the silent violin home and placed it on her shelf. Days passed, and she almost forgot about it. Then one morning, as she dusted the strings with her finger, she noticed something outside her window. A small russet squirrel with a fluffy tail and a tiny acorn-cap hat was sitting on the birdbath, staring right at her. When she touched the strings again, more animals appeared.



Emma put on her yellow raincoat and red boots and stepped into the garden. The squirrel with the notched ear scampered down and chattered excitedly. 'I'm Pip,' he seemed to say. 'We can hear your violin's secret music!' Emma gasped. She touched the strings, and birds fluttered closer, a rabbit hopped out of the bushes, and a hedgehog unrolled at her feet. They all swayed as if listening to a lovely tune.



From that day on, Emma played her silent violin every afternoon. Though she heard nothing, the woodland animals came from all around. Pip the squirrel became her guide, pointing out which creatures arrived and how they reacted. 'The music makes us happy,' Pip's gestures seemed to say. Emma felt a warm glow. Maybe Grandpa was right: some music is heard with the heart.



But one day, the animals began acting strangely. The birds flew in frantic circles, the rabbits thumped their feet, and Pip dashed about with his tail twitching. Even the hedgehog rolled into a prickly ball and refused to come out. Emma played and played, but the animals only grew more upset. Something was wrong, and she didn't know what.



Emma hurried to Grandpa Elias. 'The animals are upset, but I can't hear what they're saying!' she cried. Grandpa adjusted his wire-rimmed glasses and patted her hand. 'Perhaps you need to listen in a new way,' he said gently. 'Not with your ears, but with your eyes and your heart. Watch them closely.' Emma nodded, determined to figure it out.



Back in the garden, Emma sat very still and watched. She noticed that when she played certain notes, Pip's ear twitched a special way. The birds tilted their heads at other notes. The rabbits thumped only when she played low. 'It's a language!' Emma whispered. 'The music is talking to them, and they're talking back!' She began to experiment, playing short patterns and watching the responses.



Emma practiced every day, learning the animals' musical language. When Pip chattered and pointed with his tiny paw, Emma played a high, quick tune. Pip nodded and led her to the old oak tree. There, Old Owl Hoot sat on a branch, his huge golden eyes blinking slowly. He wore a woven-grass band around one wing and looked very wise. 'Hoo,' he said softly, and Emma knew she must listen carefully.



Old Owl Hoot spread his mottled grey and brown feathers and began to hoot in a pattern. Emma realized it matched the music she had been playing. She copied the pattern on her violin, and the owl blinked approval. 'The animals are trying to tell you something,' Pip explained through his gestures. 'The stream has dried up, and they need your help to find water.' Emma finally understood.



Emma thought hard. She couldn't fix the stream herself, but she knew who could. She ran to Grandpa Elias and told him everything. 'The animals need water,' she said. 'Can you help?' Grandpa smiled and fetched his tools. Together, they followed Pip and Old Owl Hoot deep into the wood, where they found the stream blocked by branches and stones. With teamwork, they cleared it, and fresh water flowed again.



The animals cheered in their own way: birds sang, squirrels chattered, and Old Owl Hoot hooted a happy tune. Emma played her violin, and though she still heard nothing, she felt the joyful music in her heart. 'You listened in a new way,' Grandpa said proudly. 'That's the best kind of listening.' Emma beamed, her freckles glowing in the afternoon sun.



From that day on, Emma was known as the girl who could talk to animals with her silent violin. She learned that understanding others sometimes means listening with more than your ears. She and Pip became the best of friends, and Old Owl Hoot often visited her garden. The silent violin wasn't silent at all—it was full of secret music, just waiting for someone to hear it.



Emma still plays her violin every day, and the woodland animals still gather around. Sometimes she plays happy tunes, and sometimes she plays sad ones, and the animals always understand. She knows that the secret music is a special gift, and she uses it to help her friends whenever they need her. The little cottage at the edge of the wood is always filled with invisible melodies.



And if you ever visit Emma's garden, sit very quietly and watch. You might see a squirrel with a notched ear and an acorn-cap hat, or a wise old owl with golden eyes. They'll be listening to something you can't hear—a silent violin playing secret music. And you'll remember that the best way to understand someone is to listen in a new way.