The Weather Vane's Wish

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High above the village bakery, a copper rooster weather vane stood on a slender rod, its arrow tail curved and its beak pointed at the wind. For fifty years it had watched the sun rise and set, and it knew every breeze that blew. Its warm reddish-gold body gleamed, with soft green patina at the edges. Around its base, an iron compass cross showed N, S, E, and W.

Each morning, the baker stepped out with flour on his apron and smiled up at the vane. 'Good morning, old friend,' he said, squinting at the arrow. 'Wind from the east today—perfect for light bread.' The vane felt proud to help, but sometimes, when the wind whispered of far-off places, it dreamed of flying away to see them.

The vane often imagined the lands the wind told it about: fields of lavender, snowy mountains, and a wide blue sea. 'If only I could go,' it sighed. 'I have pointed at so many places, but I have never visited one.' The wind whistled through its copper tail, as if to say, 'Someday.'

One night, a powerful gust shook the village. It rattled the shutters and made the bakery sign swing. The wind tugged and pulled at the weather vane until—pop!—it broke free from its rod. 'Whoa!' cried the vane as it tumbled through the air, spinning over rooftops and trees. The gust carried it high and far, and the vane felt dizzy and thrilled at once.

When the wind set it down, the vane landed on a fence post at the edge of a wheat field. It wobbled, trying to find its balance. 'Where am I?' it wondered. The field stretched wide, and the sky seemed huge. For the first time in fifty years, the vane was not high above a bakery. It was on an adventure!

At dawn, a young traveler in a mustard-yellow coat and green scarf came walking down the path. The traveler carried a small leather satchel and wore a gap-toothed smile. Seeing the weather vane, the traveler stopped. 'A weather vane! Just what I need.' The vane pointed steadily, and the traveler nodded. 'Wind from the north. I'll take the south path, then. Thank you!'

As the traveler walked away, the vane felt a warm glow. It had helped someone new! But soon the wind changed, and the vane had to turn. It wobbled on the fence post, but it managed to show the new direction. All day, travelers and farmers glanced at it, and the vane realized how much they depended on its steady arrow.

The next day, the vane found itself on a wooden post near a small harbor. Fishermen checked its direction before setting sail. 'Wind from the west,' one said. 'We'll have a smooth ride.' The vane watched the boats bob on the water and felt useful. But it also felt a pang of longing for its old rooftop and the baker's friendly greeting.

A farmer with a brown felt hat and a wooden walking stick came by. He studied the vane's arrow and smiled. 'Good thing you're here,' he said. 'I need to know the wind before I harvest.' The vane pointed firmly, and the farmer nodded. 'Many depend on you, little rooster.' The vane puffed up with pride, but its copper heart ached for home.

One evening, a powerful gust lifted the vane again. It soared over hills and rivers, and the vane wondered where it would land this time. It thought of the baker, the travelers, and the farmers. It realized that its job mattered everywhere, but its heart belonged to the village bakery. 'I want to go home,' it whispered to the wind.

The wind seemed to listen. It carried the vane gently back toward the village. The vane saw the bakery roof below and felt a leap of joy. But as it landed, it wobbled—the gust had bent its slender rod. It couldn't stand straight. 'Oh no,' it thought. 'What will I do now?'

The baker hurried out, his flour-dusted cap askew. 'My old friend!' he cried, seeing the vane on the ground. He picked it up carefully and examined the bent rod. 'Don't worry, I'll fix you.' With gentle hands, he straightened the rod and placed the vane back on its rooftop. The vane gleamed in the sun, happy to be home.

The young traveler passed through the village again and looked up at the vane. 'You're back!' the traveler called. 'I followed your directions and found my way safely.' The vane's copper heart swelled with pride. It realized that its steady direction helped many people, and that was its purpose.

The farmer came by and tipped his hat. 'Glad to see you up there,' he said. 'The village needs you.' The vane looked down at the compass letters—N, S, E, W—and felt a deep sense of belonging. It had traveled far, but it had found its true home.

From then on, the weather vane pointed at the wind with renewed pride. It still dreamed of faraway places, but it knew that its place was above the bakery, helping the baker, the travelers, and the farmers. And every morning, when the baker greeted it, the vane felt a warm glow of belonging that no journey could ever replace.

The vane had learned that purpose and belonging can be found in unexpected places—sometimes right where you are. And as the wind whistled through its copper tail, it smiled, ready to face whatever direction the wind might blow.