

The Little Owl

Sophia DeLuna



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By
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Thanks, as always, to my wonderful friend and editor, Agota.

The Little Owl

In a huge dark forest, close to the edge of a small town there lived a little owl.

At night she hunted for mice. But as soon as the morning broke, she flew to her favourite place, the branch of a big old oak. There the little owl sat down, and protected by the dense foliage she slept till the sun set again.

Alas, one day the little owl was wakened by a terrible noise. And before she could fully awaken, the branch on which she sat suddenly quivered. Frightened, the little owl flew up. She flew through the forest as fast as she could to escape the noise. She flew until the noise was less loud to hear. Then she landed on a branch of a big lime tree. Her little heart was still beating so quickly from fear it took a while to calm down.

Yet, oh dear! The owl had just fallen asleep when a family of squirrels came to the big lime tree. And the squirrel children began to play tag. They chased each other up and down the tree and up again and along the branches until the smallest squirrel in its zeal bumped against the little owl. With a start, the little owl awoke from her sleep, but the little squirrel had long jumped onto another branch where it tried to catch its brother.

Again, the little owl flew up to find a quieter place to sleep. She was so tired that she didn't want to search for long, so she landed in a tall birch.

But by then the sun already stood high up in the sky, and the leaves of the birch didn't provide protection from its glaring light. The little owl squinted drowsily. It would be impossible for her to sleep here. And again she flew up in the air in search for a better place to sleep. The noise at her favourite place was still audible. Thus, the little owl sought refuge between the boughs of an old fir. Here it was darker. Shortly after, the noise at her favourite place stopped suddenly, but only a moment later a loud crash sounded through the forest, causing the little owl to wince, startled. Thereafter quietness settled on the forest, and the little owl snuggled close to the trunk of the fir tree and closed her eyes.

Alas, here, too, the little owl found no peace, because the fir was the favourite place of the blue tits, and they now sung and warbled and hopped and fluttered around, so that sleep was unthinkable for the little owl.

And again the little owl flew away. This time she flew back to her favourite place.

Alas! Where in the morning the old oak had stood, there was now a large bare clearing. Only a few leaves and smaller twigs were the reminder of the once majestic tree. Confused, the little owl flew once around the clearing when suddenly she heard the cry of a bird of prey. As fast as she could, the little owl sought refuge on the branch of a chestnut tree. With its dense foliage it provided protection from the predator as well as from the sun's rays. Tired and exhausted the little owl snuggled close to the chestnut's trunk.

But not long after, the owl heard a voice call, "Look, Mummy, an owl!"

The little owl thought about flying away again, but she was so tired and exhausted, she didn't want to search for a new place to sleep yet again. Might the humans do with her whatever they wished. And resigned the little owl awaited her fate.

"Psst," the mother put her finger on her lips and whispered then, "We don't want to wake her."

Silently, mother and son stood under the chestnut tree for a while and admired the little owl. Then the mother took her son by the hand, and they continued on their way.

The little owl however didn't notice this anymore. She had already sunken into a deep slumber.

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