

The Girl and the Hedgehog House



Jane MEADOW

The Girl and the Hedgehog House

Jane MEADOW



Olivia loved her garden best at dusk. That's when the little hedgehogs came out to play. They snuffled through the flowerbeds, their tiny black noses twitching. Olivia watched from the window, her round brown eyes wide with wonder. She wore her mustard-yellow raincoat, ready for any adventure. The garden felt like a secret world just for her and the prickly visitors.



One evening, Olivia noticed something worrying. The hedgehogs seemed to be searching for a place to sleep. They wandered under the bushes, but the ground was cold and damp. Olivia frowned, her freckled nose wrinkling. "They need a proper home," she said to herself. She decided right then to help her little friends. After all, everyone deserves a warm, safe place to rest.



The next morning, Olivia ran to the kitchen. Mum was washing carrots at the sink. Dad was sipping tea, his round glasses fogged up. "I want to build a hedgehog house!" Olivia announced. Mum smiled, her silver earrings twinkling. Dad chuckled, his stubbly smile warm. "That's a wonderful idea," they said together. Olivia beamed, her dark-brown hair bouncing with excitement.



Dad grabbed his leather work gloves. Mum pulled on her green wellington boots. Olivia put on her red rubber boots and grabbed her canvas satchel. Together, they walked to the garden. "We need a quiet corner," Dad said, scanning the yard. He pointed to a shady spot under the old oak tree. "Perfect," Mum agreed. Olivia nodded, her green hair clip catching the sunlight.



Dad showed Olivia how to build a sturdy frame. He lifted strong sticks and placed them just right. "Like this?" Olivia asked, copying him. "Exactly," Dad said, his round glasses slipping down his nose. They worked side by side, making a little doorway and a solid roof. Olivia's small hands were careful and steady. The frame grew taller and stronger with each stick.



Mum gathered a big pile of dry leaves. "These will make a soft bed," she said. Olivia scooped up handfuls of leaves and tucked them inside the house. The leaves rustled and crunched. Mum also brought soft grass and a few twigs. "Hedgehogs love to burrow," she explained. Olivia patted the leafy floor, making it cozy and warm. Her mustard raincoat rustled as she worked.



Olivia found a perfect spot to place the house. It was quiet and hidden, just right for shy visitors. Dad helped her lift it into place. "There," he said, wiping his brow. "A proper hedgehog home." Olivia stepped back to admire their work. The little house looked snug and inviting. She hoped the hedgehogs would like it as much as she did.



That night, Olivia waited by the window. The moon rose, and the garden grew dark. Then, a rustle in the leaves. A small hedgehog appeared, its brown-and-cream quills catching the moonlight. It sniffed the air, its tiny black eyes curious. Olivia held her breath. Would it find the new house? The hedgehog crept closer, its little paws silent.



The hedgehog sniffed the entrance of the house. It poked its nose inside, then pulled back. Olivia's heart thumped. "Go on," she whispered. The hedgehog took a step forward, then another. Soon, it disappeared inside. Olivia clapped her hands softly. "It likes it!" she cheered. Mum and Dad came to watch. "You did a good job," Mum said, hugging her.



More hedgehogs arrived. One carried a small leaf on its back, like a tiny umbrella. They sniffed around the house, their little noses wiggling. One by one, they squeezed inside. Olivia counted five! They curled up together, warm and safe. The garden felt like a friendly home for everyone. Olivia's heart swelled with happiness. Her kindness had made a real difference.



The next day, Olivia checked the house. The hedgehogs were sleeping soundly. She smiled, her freckles dancing. "They're safe," she told Mum. Mum nodded, her gardening gloves tucked in her pocket. "You built them a shelter," she said. "That's a big heart, Olivia." Olivia felt proud. She had made a warm, dry place for her prickly friends. It was the best feeling in the world.



Dad came out with a mug of tea. He saw Olivia peeking at the house. "How are our guests?" he asked. Olivia grinned. "Sleeping," she whispered. Dad put an arm around her. "You did a kind thing," he said. "Kindness can be practical, too." Olivia nodded. She liked that idea. Small acts of care could make a big difference. The garden was a happier place now.



That evening, the whole family gathered in the garden. Mum cheered, "Hooray for Olivia!" Dad clapped his hands. Olivia blushed, her cheeks turning pink. The hedgehogs peeked out of their house, curious about the noise. Olivia laughed. "They're saying thank you," she joked. Her family cheered louder. The garden was full of love and kindness. Everyone felt warm and happy.



As the sun set, Olivia sat by the hedgehog house. She watched the little animals stir. One hedgehog uncurled and looked at her. Its tiny black eyes were bright. Olivia whispered, "You're welcome." She knew she had made a difference. With a little help and a lot of care, she had created a safe shelter. Her kindness would keep them warm all winter long.



The garden became a friendly home for everyone. Olivia's hedgehogs stayed, and they brought their friends. Mum and Dad were proud of their kind daughter. Olivia learned that even small hands can do big things. She wore her green hair clip like a badge of honor. Her mustard raincoat was always ready for the next adventure. And the hedgehogs always had a warm place to sleep.



Every night, Olivia watched the hedgehogs from her window. They snuffled and played, happy and safe. She knew that her kindness had made their lives better. And that made her heart feel full. The garden was a little wilder, a little friendlier, and full of love. Olivia smiled, her freckled face glowing. She couldn't wait to see what tomorrow would bring.