

The Parrot and the Rabbit



Jane MEADOW

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In a sunny meadow, a bright emerald-green parrot named Polly lived in a tall oak tree. Her chest was sunny yellow, and her wing tips were vivid blue. She wore a sky-blue ribbon around one leg. Polly loved to talk from morning till night. She chattered to the flowers, the clouds, and the wind. Everyone in the meadow knew Polly's cheerful voice.



Not far away, in a cozy burrow under a bush, lived Benny the rabbit. He had soft cream-white fur, long floppy ears with pink inside, and gentle brown eyes. Around his neck, he wore a little mustard-yellow scarf. Benny loved quiet afternoons. He would sit and watch the butterflies, listening to the soft rustle of leaves.



One day, Polly flew down and landed on a branch near Benny's burrow. "Hello! Hello! What a beautiful day!" she squawked. Benny twitched his pink nose and smiled shyly. "Hello," he said softly. Polly kept talking and talking. Benny listened, but he didn't say much. Still, he liked Polly's happy energy, and Polly liked Benny's calm smile.



Polly and Benny became friends. Every afternoon, Polly would visit. She would perch on Benny's shoulder and chatter about everything she saw. "The clouds look like cotton! The bees are buzzing! I saw a shiny beetle!" Benny would nod and occasionally say, "That's nice, Polly." But sometimes Benny just wanted to sit quietly and watch the sunset.



One afternoon, Benny was very quiet. He didn't smile. His long ears drooped, and his brown eyes looked sad. Polly didn't notice at first. She was too busy talking. "And then I flew over the river and saw a fish jump! And the wind blew my feathers all fluffy!" Benny sighed, but Polly kept chattering.



"Polly," Benny said softly, "I don't feel like talking today." But Polly was already onto a new story. "Oh! And I found a shiny red berry! It was so sweet!" She hopped from foot to foot, her coral beak moving quickly. Benny turned away and stared at the ground. His little nose twitched, and a tear rolled down his cheek.



Polly finally stopped. She tilted her head and looked at Benny. His ears were flat, and his shoulders were hunched. "Benny?" she said. "What's wrong?" Benny didn't answer. He just sat there, looking small and sad. Polly felt a strange feeling in her chest. She didn't know what to say. So she said nothing.



For a moment, the meadow was silent. Polly sat very still on the branch. She watched Benny's sad face. She saw his paws trembling. She wanted to help, but she didn't know how. Then she remembered how Benny always listened to her. He never interrupted. He just let her talk. Maybe that was what Benny needed now.



Polly hopped down from the branch and landed softly beside Benny. She folded her bright wings and sat close. "I'm here, Benny," she said quietly. "You don't have to talk." Benny looked up, surprised. Polly wasn't chattering. She was just sitting with him. It felt nice. Benny took a deep breath and leaned against her warm feathers.



After a while, Benny spoke. "I lost my favorite scarf," he whispered. "The mustard-yellow one. It blew away in the wind." Polly's eyes widened. She knew how much Benny loved that scarf. "I'm sorry," she said. "That's really sad." Benny nodded. "I looked everywhere, but I can't find it." Polly stayed quiet and listened.



Benny talked about the scarf. He told Polly how his grandmother had given it to him. He told her how it kept him warm on chilly nights. Polly listened to every word. She didn't interrupt. She didn't talk about herself. She just listened. And as Benny talked, his ears slowly lifted, and his eyes grew brighter. It helped to share his feelings.



Then Polly had an idea. "Benny," she said gently, "I can fly high and look for your scarf. I have sharp eyes." Benny's face lit up. "Would you?" he asked. Polly nodded. "Of course! But first, let's sit here a moment. You seem calmer now." Benny smiled. "You listened, Polly. That made me feel better."



Polly flew up and circled the meadow. She looked in trees, under bushes, and by the stream. Finally, she spotted a flash of yellow near the old fence. It was the scarf! She swooped down and grabbed it gently in her beak. Then she flew back to Benny and dropped it in his paws. "You found it!" Benny cheered. "Thank you, Polly!"



Benny wrapped the mustard-yellow scarf around his neck and hugged Polly. "You're a good friend," he said. "You talked less and listened more. That's exactly what I needed." Polly felt warm inside. "I learned something today," she said. "Sometimes the kindest thing a friend can do is listen." They sat together as the sun set, happy and peaceful.



From that day on, Polly still loved to talk. But she also learned to be quiet when Benny needed her to listen. Benny still loved quiet afternoons, but now he enjoyed Polly's chatter too. They balanced each other perfectly. Polly would talk, and Benny would listen. Then Benny would share, and Polly would listen. That's what friends do.



So if you ever visit the sunny meadow, you might see a green parrot and a cream-white rabbit sitting together. Polly might be chattering away. Or she might be quiet, listening to Benny. Either way, they are happy. Because good friends know when to talk and when to listen. And that is the best kind of friendship.