

The Koala's New Neighbor



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Kora the koala lived in a big gum tree at the edge of the forest. Her tree had the softest leaves and the best branches for napping. Every morning, she munched leaves and watched the sunrise. She loved her quiet home and knew every knot and bump on its bark. Kora had a small leaf-green pouch bag that she wore across her chest, and in it she kept her favorite eucalyptus leaves for a snack.



One day, Kora heard a rustle in the tree next door. A possum family was moving in! There was a father possum in a brown bark vest, a mother possum with a yellow flower behind her ear, and a tiny joey with a red scarf. They climbed up the trunk and looked around. Kora frowned. She did not like new neighbors in her forest. She liked things to stay the same.



Kora watched as the possums explored. The father possum had a long pink tail that curled at the tip. The mother possum had soft grey fur and a cream face. The joey was small and bouncy, with big round ears. Kora grumbled, 'This is my tree, and that is their tree. But I do not want to share my gum leaves.' She turned her back and pretended to sleep.



The next morning, Kora saw the possum father carefully pruning a branch. He did not break it; he just trimmed it gently. He noticed Kora watching and said, 'Good morning, neighbor! We will be very careful with this tree. We only take what we need.' Kora said nothing, but she was surprised. The possum father was polite and considerate.



The possum mother gathered fallen leaves and made a soft bed for the joey. She hummed a quiet tune. The joey peeked at Kora from behind a branch. It had big bright eyes and a tiny pink nose. The joey waved a little paw. Kora tried not to smile, but the joey looked so silly with its oversized ears that she almost did.



Later, the joey bounced over to Kora's branch. 'Hello!' it said. 'I am Pip. Do you want to play?' Kora was not sure. She had never played with a possum before. But Pip's red scarf fluttered in the breeze, and its curly tail wiggled. Kora said, 'I am Kora. I am busy eating.' But she did not send Pip away.



That afternoon, a gust of wind blew Kora's leaf-green pouch bag off her branch. It landed on a lower limb, just out of reach. Kora stretched and stretched, but she could not get it. The possum father saw her trouble. 'May I help?' he asked. He climbed down and gently hooked the bag with his curled tail. He handed it back to Kora with a polite nod.



Kora felt a warm feeling in her chest. 'Thank you,' she said. The possum father smiled. 'We are neighbors now. Neighbors help each other.' The possum mother brought over some fresh gum leaves and said, 'These are from the lower branches. They are very tender. Would you like some?' Kora tried one. It was delicious. She shared some of her own stored leaves in return.



The joey, Pip, showed Kora a game. They took turns hiding behind leaves and surprising each other. Kora laughed for the first time in days. She had not realized how lonely she had been. The possum family was friendly and kind, and they were careful with the tree. Kora started to think that sharing might not be so bad after all.



That evening, Kora watched the possum family settle into their new home. They were tidy and quiet. They did not take more than they needed. Kora thought about how the father had helped her and how the mother had shared leaves. She thought about Pip's funny games. She decided that tomorrow she would do something nice for them.



The next morning, Kora picked a bunch of the juiciest gum leaves and put them in her leaf-green pouch bag. She climbed over to the possums' tree. 'Welcome to the neighborhood,' she said. 'I brought you a housewarming gift.' The possum family was delighted. The mother possum tucked a yellow flower behind Kora's ear. 'Thank you, Kora,' she said.



Kora helped the possums find the best places to build their nests. She showed them where the sweetest leaves grew and where the shade was coolest. The possum father said, 'You are a wonderful neighbor.' Kora felt proud. She realized that being kind to newcomers made everyone feel at home. Sharing her tree had made her world bigger and happier.



From that day on, Kora and the possums were good friends. They shared the trees and the leaves. They played games and told stories. Kora learned that hospitality helps newcomers feel included. And she learned that sharing feels good. Her leaf-green pouch bag was always full of treats to share with her new friends.



One sunny afternoon, Kora and Pip sat on a branch, watching the sunset. 'I am glad you moved in,' Kora said. Pip hugged her. 'Me too,' said Pip. 'You are the best neighbor ever.' Kora smiled her sleepy, friendly smile. She knew that her big gum tree was now a home for all of them, and that made it even more special.



The possum family settled in nicely. The father possum kept the branches tidy. The mother possum planted pretty flowers around the base of the tree. Pip and Kora played every day. The forest was full of laughter. Kora discovered that welcoming new friends made the whole neighborhood a happier place. She was never grumpy about sharing again.



And so, Kora the koala learned a big lesson in her big gum tree. She learned that a neighbor is a friend you have not met yet, and that kindness makes everyone feel at home. She learned that sharing does not mean giving up something; it means making room for more joy. And she and the possums lived happily together, side by side in the trees.