

The Unicorn and the Donkey



Jane MEADOW

The Unicorn and the Donkey

Jane MEADOW



In a bright green meadow, where wildflowers nodded in the breeze, there lived a unicorn. Her coat was pearly white, her mane flowed in soft rainbow colours, and a silver spiral horn rose from her forehead. A gentle golden glow shimmered all around her, and a garland of pink and yellow flowers looped around her neck. All the animals came to see her shine.



One sunny morning, a small grey donkey trotted into the meadow. He wore a straw hat with a blue ribbon and had long floppy ears and a warm smile. The unicorn glanced at him and said, 'You are plain, but you seem kind.' The donkey just nodded and settled nearby. He didn't ask for anything, and that made the unicorn curious.



The donkey watched the unicorn help a lost butterfly find its flower and nudge a fallen nest back into a tree. 'You are kind,' he said simply. The unicorn flicked her rainbow mane. 'Everyone is kind to me,' she replied. But the donkey's words felt different, and she found herself hoping he would stay. He did, and a quiet friendship began.



The rabbit hopped over, his red scarf flapping. 'Your glow is so pretty!' he squeaked. The owl perched on a branch, adjusting his tiny spectacles. 'Indeed,' he hooted softly. The unicorn smiled, proud of her shine. The donkey stood a little apart, but his warm brown eyes were fixed on her with something deeper than wonder. He liked her, glow or no glow.



One morning, the unicorn woke up and something was wrong. Her golden glow had faded. Her horn looked dull, and her rainbow mane hung limp. She stared at her reflection in the pond and felt a heavy sadness. 'What happened to me?' she whispered. The donkey came close and said gently, 'You are still you.' But the unicorn turned away, ashamed.



The rabbit arrived, hoping to see the glow. When he saw the dull grey unicorn, his nose twitched. 'Oh,' he said, and his ears drooped. 'I... I have to go,' he mumbled, and hopped away. The owl blinked behind his spectacles but said nothing. Soon the meadow was quiet. The unicorn felt small and lonely, and tears rolled down her cheeks.



The donkey did not leave. He sat beside the unicorn and said, 'I liked your glow, but I like you more.' The unicorn sniffed. 'You do?' The donkey nodded. 'Your glow was pretty, but it isn't why I came.' He plucked a dandelion and tucked it behind her ear. 'There,' he said. 'Still beautiful.' The unicorn almost smiled.



Every day, the donkey brought fresh clover and cool water. He told funny stories about his floppy ears and made the unicorn laugh. 'Why do you stay?' she asked. 'Because you are my friend,' he said simply. The unicorn looked at his steady brown eyes and felt a tiny warmth inside her chest. It was not magic, but it felt good.



The rabbit peeked from behind a bush. He saw the donkey sharing his lunch and the unicorn smiling. He felt a little ashamed. The owl glided down and said softly, 'True friends stay when the shine fades.' The rabbit nodded. 'I want to be that kind of friend,' he whispered. But he was still too shy to come back.



The unicorn tried to find her glow. She polished her horn on soft moss. She drank from the sparkling stream. She stood in the sunlight and closed her eyes. Nothing happened. 'Maybe it's gone forever,' she sighed. The donkey shook his head. 'Maybe it's just resting,' he said. 'Like you.' The unicorn blinked at him, surprised.



That evening, a cold wind blew through the meadow. The unicorn shivered. The donkey took off his straw hat and placed it on her head. 'There,' he said. 'Warm.' The unicorn looked at his bare head and felt a lump in her throat. 'But now you're cold,' she said. The donkey shrugged. 'I don't mind.' And he smiled his warm, steady smile.



The unicorn looked at the donkey and felt something shift inside her. 'You have been so kind to me,' she said. 'Even when I was proud, even when I lost my glow.' The donkey's ears wiggled. 'That's what friends do,' he said. The unicorn leaned her head against his neck. 'Then I will be that kind of friend to you,' she promised. And she meant it.



A soft light began to flicker around the unicorn's horn. It was faint at first, then brighter. The donkey gasped. 'Look!' The unicorn opened her eyes and saw a gentle golden glow spreading over her coat. But it was warmer now, softer. 'It's back!' she cried. 'Because of you,' the donkey said. 'Because of us,' she corrected, and nuzzled his cheek.



The rabbit hopped out from the bushes, his red scarf bright. 'I'm sorry I left,' he said. 'Can I be your friend too?' The unicorn nodded. 'Of course.' The owl glided down and perched nearby. 'Well done, donkey,' he hooted. The donkey just smiled and adjusted his straw hat, which was back on his head. The meadow felt full and warm again.



From that day on, the unicorn and the donkey were always together. They shared clover and stories and quiet afternoons. The unicorn's glow continued to shine, but she never forgot that it was kindness that brought it back. 'True friends love you as you are,' she told the donkey. He nodded. 'And that's the best magic of all.'



The meadow animals often gathered to watch the two friends. The rabbit brought flowers, and the owl told wise stories. But the unicorn and the donkey knew the best part was simply being together. 'You are my best friend,' the unicorn said. 'And you are mine,' the donkey replied. And they lived happily, sharing kindness every single day.