

The Girl and the Donkey



Çınar BİBER

The Girl and the Donkey

Çınar BİBER



Maya skipped down the gravel path, her red rubber boots crunching with each step. Her mustard yellow raincoat flapped in the breeze, and her curly black hair puffs bounced. Today was her first day at the donkey sanctuary, and she could hardly wait. "I wonder what the donkeys are like," she said to herself, her dark brown eyes wide with excitement.



At the sanctuary gate, a tall woman with short auburn hair and a warm smile waved hello. "Welcome! I'm Hannah," she said, her green polo shirt bright in the morning sun. "I take care of all the rescued donkeys here. Would you like to meet them?" Maya nodded eagerly, clutching her canvas satchel. She had been waiting all week for this visit.



Hannah led Maya to a big grassy field with a wooden fence. Several donkeys stood quietly in the sunshine, their long ears twitching. "Most of these donkeys were rescued from hard places," Hannah explained gently. "They need time to feel safe again." Maya looked at each one, her heart full of wonder. Then she saw a small grey-brown donkey standing alone in the corner.



"That's Rosie," Hannah said softly. "She's very shy and gets scared easily. She's been here for a few weeks but still keeps to herself." Maya watched Rosie lower her head and shuffle her hooves. The donkey's dark eyes looked worried, and her long ears drooped. Maya felt a little tug at her heart. "Can I try to say hello?" she asked.



Hannah shook her head gently. "Not yet. First, I'll teach you how to be calm around donkeys. They can sense when we're excited or nervous." She showed Maya how to stand still and breathe slowly. "Speak softly and move slowly," Hannah said. "Let Rosie come to you when she's ready." Maya practiced taking deep, quiet breaths, feeling her body relax.



The next day, Maya returned to the sanctuary after school. She walked slowly toward Rosie's corner, her red boots making soft sounds on the grass. Rosie lifted her head and stared, her long ears swiveling. Maya stopped a few steps away and stood very still. "Hello, Rosie," she whispered. "I'm Maya. I won't hurt you." Rosie took a small step back, but she didn't run away.



Maya visited every single day that week. Each time, she stood quietly and spoke in a soft voice. Hannah watched and smiled. "You're doing great," she said. "Rosie is watching you more and more. That's a good sign." On Friday, Rosie took two whole steps toward Maya before stopping. Maya's heart leaped, but she stayed calm and still. It was working!



On Saturday, Hannah brought out a soft brush. "Rosie might let you brush her now," she said. "But only if she seems comfortable." Maya held the brush and approached slowly. Rosie flicked her ears but didn't move away. Maya gently brushed Rosie's grey-brown coat, feeling the warmth of the donkey's sturdy body. Rosie let out a soft sigh. It was a quiet, happy sound.



Maya started bringing small treats from home—a carrot or a slice of apple. She would hold it out flat on her palm and wait. At first Rosie just sniffed and stepped back. But one afternoon, Rosie stretched her neck and took the carrot gently from Maya's hand. Her cream muzzle tickled Maya's fingers, and Maya giggled softly. "You like that, don't you, Rosie?"



Week after week, Maya kept showing up. She brushed Rosie's shaggy mane until it was smooth. She cleaned around Rosie's hooves and made sure her water was fresh. Hannah taught her how to check Rosie's brown leather halter for rubbing. "You're learning to care for her," Hannah said. "That's what makes trust grow." Maya nodded, feeling proud of her quiet work.



Then one breezy morning, Maya walked toward the field as usual. Rosie was standing near the gate, her long ears perked up. As soon as she saw Maya, Rosie lifted her head and let out a loud, happy bray. "Hee-haw! Hee-haw!" The sound echoed across the sanctuary. Maya burst into a wide smile and ran the last few steps. "You're happy to see me!" she cried.



Hannah came over, laughing. "That's the first time I've heard Rosie bray like that," she said. "She really trusts you now." Maya hugged Rosie's neck gently, and Rosie leaned her head against Maya's shoulder. The small white patch on Rosie's forehead was soft against Maya's cheek. "I knew you'd be my friend," Maya whispered. Rosie blinked her dark eyes and gave a little nuzzle.



From that day on, Rosie followed Maya around the field like a loyal puppy. They walked together, Maya's red boots stepping beside Rosie's hooves. Maya learned that trust isn't something you can rush. It grows slowly, like a seed, when you show up with kindness and care again and again. "I'll always come back," Maya promised. Rosie flicked her long ears as if she understood.



One sunny afternoon, Hannah let Maya lead Rosie on a short walk around the sanctuary. Maya held the rope halter with steady hands, and Rosie walked calmly beside her. "You two make a great team," Hannah said, her green eyes twinkling. Maya beamed. She had learned so much about being patient and gentle. And Rosie had learned that not all people are scary. Some people bring carrots and kindness.



Now Maya visits the donkey sanctuary every day after school. She brushes Rosie's grey-brown coat and tells her about her day. Rosie listens with her long ears and sometimes brays softly in reply. Maya's heart feels full when she's with her donkey friend. "You're the best friend I ever made," Maya says. Rosie nuzzles her shoulder, and they stand together in the warm sunshine.



Hannah often tells visitors about Maya and Rosie. "Trust grows through consistent care," she says. "Maya showed up every day with patience, and Rosie learned to trust her." Maya smiles because she knows it's true. She and Rosie are happy together, and their friendship is a special one. Maya learned that being calm, gentle, and kind can make a big difference in someone's life—even a shy donkey's.