

The Girl and the Guinea Pig



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Maya was a girl with warm brown skin and curly dark brown hair in two puffs. She wore a yellow t-shirt with a carrot print and blue overall shorts. Maya loved animals more than anything in the world. She had a big, kind heart and a gap-toothed smile that made everyone feel happy. One sunny morning, her parents took her to the animal shelter.



At the shelter, Maya saw guinea pigs for the first time. They were small and round, with tiny pink noses and shiny eyes. Two of them caught her attention. One was golden-orange and white with a messy crest of fur and a bright red collar. The other was cream and grey with a lavender ribbon bow behind one ear. 'They're perfect!' Maya whispered.



Maya learned that guinea pigs are social animals. They need friends to be happy. The shelter helper said, 'These two are best friends. They should stay together.' Maya's heart swelled with joy. She decided to adopt both. She named the bold one Pip and the shy one Muffin. 'You'll have the best home ever,' she promised.



Back home, Maya got to work. She built a big, cozy habitat with plenty of room to run and hide. She added tunnels, a little wooden house, and soft bedding. She filled a bowl with fresh hay and another with crunchy vegetables. 'This is your new home,' she said. Pip popcorn-hopped with excitement. Muffin peeked out from behind him.



The next morning, Maya sat quietly beside the habitat. Pip was the first to explore. He ran through the tunnel and popped out the other side. He stood on his hind legs and sniffed the air. 'You're a brave little guy,' Maya laughed. Muffin stayed hidden in the wooden house, only her nose twitching. 'It's okay, Muffin,' Maya said softly.



Each day, Maya spent time with her guinea pigs. She noticed that Pip was bold and curious. He was always the first to try new food and explore new corners. Muffin was shy and gentle. She liked to stay in the tunnel and peek out slowly. But when Pip was near, Muffin seemed calmer. She would follow him around the habitat.



Maya gave them fresh vegetables every morning. Pip wheeked loudly and popcorn-hopped when he saw the food. Muffin waited until Pip had taken the first bite. Then she would nibble quietly beside him. 'You two are so different,' Maya said. 'But you're best friends.' She loved watching them share their meals.



One day, Maya brought a new tunnel for the habitat. Pip rushed in right away. He ran through and came out the other side, looking proud. Muffin stood at the entrance, unsure. Pip ran back and nudged her gently with his nose. 'Come on, Muffin,' he seemed to say. Slowly, Muffin followed him through the tunnel. Maya clapped her hands.



Maya noticed that Muffin was braver when Pip was close. When Pip explored, Muffin would take a few steps out of her hiding spot. When Pip napped, Muffin snuggled up beside him. They were always together. 'You need each other,' Maya said. 'Just like friends do.' She felt glad she had adopted both of them.



Maya made sure the habitat had everything guinea pigs need. There was a cozy sleeping area with soft blankets. There was a corner for hay and another for vegetables. She added a little ramp and a platform for them to climb. 'A good habitat makes happy guinea pigs,' she told her mom. Pip and Muffin loved their home.



One afternoon, a loud noise scared Muffin. She dashed into the tunnel and wouldn't come out. Pip ran to her and stayed close. He didn't popcorn-hop or explore. He just sat beside her, quiet and still. Maya watched them. 'Pip is being a good friend,' she whispered. After a while, Muffin peeked out. Seeing Pip there made her feel safe.



Maya sat by the habitat and talked to them softly. 'You know, Muffin, Pip helps you feel brave. And you help Pip feel calm. That's what friends do.' Muffin looked at Maya with her big dark eyes. Pip wheeked as if he agreed. Maya smiled. 'I want to be a good friend to you both,' she said.



From that day, Maya spent even more time with Pip and Muffin. She learned their favorite foods and the games they liked. She built them a little maze out of cardboard boxes. Pip led the way, and Muffin followed close behind. They ran and explored together. Maya cheered them on. 'You're a great team!' she said.



Maya saw that Pip and Muffin were happiest when they were together. They snuggled in the cozy house, shared their vegetables, and explored side by side. When Muffin felt shy, Pip nudged her along. When Pip was too bold, Muffin's gentle ways calmed him. 'Good friends make every day brighter,' Maya said.



Maya became their caring friend, too. She cleaned their habitat, gave them fresh food, and talked to them every day. She knew that guinea pigs need companionship to be happy. And she was glad to be part of their little family. Pip and Muffin popcorn-hopped when they saw her coming. They knew she loved them.



One evening, Maya watched Pip and Muffin snuggle together in their cozy house. Pip's red collar tag glinted in the soft light. Muffin's lavender ribbon bow was slightly crooked. They looked peaceful and happy. Maya smiled her gap-toothed smile. She had learned that friendship makes everything better. And she was their friend for life.