

(3) Maple the Mountain Mouse (525 字/F-K Scale 4.0)

Maple was a quiet, clever mouse who lived under a tall pine tree on a breezy hill. Her cozy home was filled with feathers, acorns, and smooth stones. Though small, Maple always paid close attention to everything around her and made thoughtful choices.

Each season, Maple explored forest trails using her hand-drawn maps. She helped neighbors carry food, guided lost squirrels, and welcomed guests during rainy days. Her maps showed hidden roots, curvy paths, and safe ways through thick bushes. Maple walked for hours, noticing low branches, loose rocks, and turns in the trail. Her maps became trusted by everyone who needed help to find their way.

One spring morning, Sora the sparrow brought news. “Tomorrow is the Great Climb,” she said. “The first to reach the top of Pebble Peak will earn the Golden Acorn.”

She hoped that climbing the big mountain would teach her something, even if she didn’t reach the top first.

At sunrise, animals gathered at the mountain. “You?” asked Bruno the badger. “You’re too small.” Maple didn’t reply. She smiled and began her steady climb.

Some animals rushed ahead, trying to win. Others slipped or got too tired. Maple moved carefully, stopping to help or to look closely at tricky parts of the trail.

Even when she was tired, Maple gave water to a chipmunk, shared her blanket with a bird, and helped a turtle cross a muddy log. She also showed a raccoon a better way to go. Helping others gave her strength to keep going.

Later, on a narrow ledge, she found a porcupine stuck between two large rocks. Maple took her time, moving the rocks one by one until the porcupine was free. That night, Maple rested under a large tree. She placed her feather under her head and watched the stars flicker above.

Maple saw animals slipping on loose rocks. She tied vines between trees to mark the safe path and warned others. At dawn, Maple rose quietly. Only a few climbers remained. Some had turned back, tired or discouraged. Maple pressed on, her paws steady, her heart calm.

Maple smiled and lifted the acorn. “Winning isn’t just about being first,” she said. “It’s about how you climb.” She smiled and held the acorn high. “Winning isn’t just about being first,” she said. “It’s how you climb.”

The next morning, animals gathered again at the base of the hill. Some carried little bundles of food, others had walking sticks. But all of them talked about Maple. “She helped everyone,” said one squirrel. “She showed us what climbing really means.” Bruno stepped forward and said, “You earned it, Maple. We all saw what you did.” Maple smiled and raised the acorn. “Winning isn’t always about being first,” she said. “It’s about how you climb.”

Every spring after that, young climbers heard Maple’s story before starting their journey. And many carried kindness in their packs, just like she did.

Animals often shared Maple’s story. When young ones asked how to climb the mountain, the elders said, “Climb like Maple—with kindness, courage, and care.” She was remembered not for her speed, but for her helpful and brave heart.