

## All Unique

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Little Wolf was unlike any other animal in the Forest School. He was introverted and less talkative. He often sat in silence and looked at the world around him in a way that others did not understand. Loud sounds disturbed him, and he didn't like sudden touches. When his classmates were talking at the same time, he would close his eyes, put his paws over his ears, and murmur his songs to calm himself.

One day, while the other animals were playing chase around the oak trees, Wolf chose to sit off to the side by a small pond, keeping his eyes fixed on the sky.

Fox saw him in the distance and stopped running. She stood out of breath and stared at him. No, he wasn't just looking at the clouds... He seemed to be watching something that wasn't visible to others. She approached him quietly and sat down next to him.

"What do you see?" she asked him reluctantly.

"The journey of the drop," he replied, without looking at her. "It came up from the lake. It went through the leaves, then higher. Now it is gathering with the others... they will become a cloud!"

Fox turned and looked up at the same sky. She didn't see any drops, only the cloud. In a moment, she smiled. She looked at the cloud again, and, for the first time, she imagined the drop.

"Drops travel! But... how?" asked Fox, impressed.

"I think in pictures...", he chanted.

But most of the animals looked at him in wonder.

"Weirdo Wolf, huh?" whispered Bat.

"Not a typical wolf", Bear agreed.

"He can't even play!" observed Beaver.

"He seems out of place," Eagle concluded confidently.

Wolf was listening to some of these comments. And the ones he didn't hear, he felt. He would not speak, but he felt them. And he felt alone.

One day, Mrs. Owl, the teacher at Forest School, gathered all the animals in the big clearing. From the branch of a huge oak tree, with her round glasses and a determined voice, she announced: "The Great Wisdom Contest will be held in three days! All animals must be divided into teams and complete three tasks. The winning team will receive the Great Wisdom Pomegranate!"

The animals began to gather in groups. At first, everyone was reluctant to ask Wolf to join in.

"He might prefer to be alone," thought Rabbit.

Sitting under his favourite chestnut tree, Wolf drew a pomegranate in the dirt and looked at it. He so wanted to join in. Not to win. He just wanted to be part of it.

And then Fox approached him with courage: "Hello, Wolf! Do you want to join the team?"

"How so?" he asked timidly, looking at the ground.

"Well... I find it hard to concentrate, but I'm active and attentive. ... I've noticed you have a unique way of thinking! And that can be helpful!" replied Fox.

His eyes lit up with an unfamiliar glow, and a faint smile appeared on his face. He knew it, but this was the first time any of his classmates had appreciated the way he saw the world!

"The truth is... we all have something unique. That can be our strength!" realised Rabbit. "Without a doubt, there are no faster feet than mine... But you, Turtle...you learn at your own pace, you have patience, perseverance, and method."

"I see the world through sounds, smells, and my unmistakable sense of touch", said Mole confidently.

And just like that, Wolf, Fox, Rabbit, Turtle, and Mole decided to join forces and create the team "All unique".

Eagle, Bear, Deer, Bat, and Beaver were an "Awesome team". The leading Eagle, who was first in everything. The organising Bear, who believed that discipline and a schedule were essential to success. Deer was quick and polite, avoided conflict, and loved harmony. Beaver, with his strong teeth and deft hands, could fix anything. Bat had a strong intuition and could help the team think in alternative ways.

And the day of the competition arrived.

The first challenge was the Maze. The rule was simple: they had to find the way out without using their vision.

"Thank God we don't have Turtle on our team! We'd be too late if we had to wait for her. We'll find the exit in record time!" whispered Eagle conspiratorially.

"I don't know how they'll get along," added Bear.

"But it'll be fun to watch them get confused!" said Beaver, laughing wryly.

The teams lined up at the entrance of the maze. The air was thick with anticipation. And so, the challenge began.

Mole took charge of leading the members of the "All unique" team - he couldn't see, but he could hear and feel everything. The trickling water, the feel of the wind on his face, the different sounds depending on whether there was an obstacle ahead, the footfall of each animal...

"That way! I can feel the wind in that passage!"

The ever-moving Fox took to going back and forth to check the route.

"Mole is right...eight steps from here, there is an opening on the right."

Their instructions turned into images in Wolf's mind, who was using his stick to draw a tactile map of the route on the ground.

"If you have trouble, step on the signs," he urged them.

"I don't mind staying last and keeping an eye out so that none of us are left behind. We should all stay together," Turtle suggested.

"I'll stay with you, and that way you won't be left far behind either," Rabbit told her.

They were moving slowly and were well behind, but they had found a steady pace of their own.

The "Awesome team" entered the maze running, shouting instructions to each other. They ended up confused.

"We must rely on our other senses to find the right path," Bear suggested.

"It's a waste of time...I've flown over the maze several times...The path is in my head...Follow me! Only I can lead us straight to the exit!" said Eagle decisively.

The group followed him. They rapidly approached the exit, but ultimately, they encountered an impenetrable wall of shrubbery that obstructed their path.

"It looked easier from above," Eagle admitted.

"I knew it... Now we have to go back!" Bear said angrily.

"We don't even know where 'back' is," Beaver realized.

"Let's take a calmer look at it," suggested Deer.

"Listen... my voice at this point is echoing... Let's follow the echo...!" suggested Bat.

"This way! Hurry up! We must get there first!" ordered Eagle.

Eventually, they came to an opening with three paths.

"Should we... split up to find it faster?" said Beaver.

"I'm not just going to stroll around in there for no reason!" shouted Eagle, shaking his wings in annoyance. "Let's get it over with... Let's go right!"

"I hear footsteps on the opposite side. It's the others... They're getting closer! We must go left," Bear said with certainty.

"We have to make a decision together," came Deer's calm voice.

"And mine is the right one!" insisted Eagle stubbornly.

"The path of silence hides a trap," Bat warned him.

There followed a moment when no one spoke...

Eagle decided to trust Bat and Bear: "Let's go left."

After three turns, the group finally reached the exit. They were surprised to see "All unique" waiting for them... They had come out of the maze... first!

"I didn't think you'd make it. You were lucky," said Eagle.

"We were united," Turtle corrected him.

In the second challenge, Mrs. Owl gave them a puzzle: "You have three containers - one 5 litre, one 3 litre, and one 8 litre.. How will you measure exactly 4 litres of water?"

For some time, Wolf remained silent. He was seen circling the containers, looking at them obliquely, muttering.

"Just give time..." Turtle whispered to the others.

Suddenly, Wolf said: "First, we'll fill the 5-liter container. We'll empty the 3 liters into the small one, and that will leave 2 liters. We empty the container with the 3 liters and refill it with the 2 liters left over."

Wolf's thought immediately took shape in Mole's mind as he filled in: "Then we fill the 5-liter again and empty it into the 3-liter as much water as it can hold."

"That's 1 litre..." Rabbit quickly calculated.

Fox, who had been walking back and forth between the containers the whole time, cried triumphantly: "At the end, there will be exactly four litres left in the five-litre container!"

It was correct.

The team had done it once again, and everyone was looking at Wolf with admiration. The idea had been born in his mind.

The members of the other team wondered: "How could you come up with all this?"

"I was just watching the water move in the containers," Wolf replied humbly.

"His mind works with images!" Fox added.

"My brain works with numbers... And this is maths... Leave it to me!" cried Eagle triumphantly.

"But we need a plan...Let's at least write down the steps we're going to take," said Bear.

"We need action, not thought," disagreed Beaver.

"If we do it right, we'll feel it. The water will stop just when it should," said Bat.

"All opinions make sense," said Deer calmly.

Eagle looked at her in silence; she was right. Everyone brings something useful, but only if they come together does it pay off.

"Let's not waste any more time. Maybe we'll get to the solution... as we go along. Except... I have no idea how to get started," he admitted.

"We could start by filling the 3-liter and emptying it into the 5-liter," Bat suggested.

Bear recorded and carried out the instruction, filling in:

"There's room for two more liters in the 5-liter. "

"I will repeat the procedure... Now the 5-liter is full, and there is 1 liter left in the 3-liter," Beaver announced.

"Now empty the 1 litre into the 8-litre, fill the 3-litre and add it...!" said Eagle with glowing eyes.

"That's it! 4 litres in the 8-litre container!" cried Deer with excitement.

"You were right, five brains work better than one", Eagle told her.

"Both teams have completed the mission! We're moving on to the final test. There are no puzzles or obstacles here... there is no right nor wrong," said Mrs. Owl in an enigmatic tone, leading them to a cave where there was a mirror. "Each group must stand in front of it and answer honestly: 'What do you see when you look at yourself?'"

"The Mirror of Truth!" cried Rabbit. "I have read about it in the Big Book of the Forest."

"The Mirror of our Truth!" commented Fox aptly.

The members of the "Awesome team" passed them in a hurry and stood in front of the mirror.

"I am strong and organized!" said Bear.

"What a beautiful and gentle doe!"

"A leader is born!" cried Eagle.

"The best builder," said Beaver.

"Quiet strength!" said Bat with confidence.

Mrs. Owl said nothing. She only made notes in her notebook.

Next, "All Unique" stood in front of the mirror.

Wolf looked up hesitantly: "I see new friends."

Fox added: "I see a team built with confidence in uniqueness."



Turtle said: "Words that I can not read, write, or spell...hard to explain or even understand...Today I felt them!"

Mole smiled: "I don't see, but I feel. And I feel I belong."

Mrs. Owl closed the notebook, smiled with satisfaction, and announced: "The Pomegranate of Wisdom is awarded to All Unique! You didn't win because you were right on everything. You won because you accepted each other's way of thinking. And you didn't try to change others to fit you. You made room for everyone to fit together!"

The forest was silent for a moment, and then everyone broke into applause.

Eagle lowered his gaze. "I don't like losing... I thought flying alone would get me there first. But in the end, when you fly together, you get further, just like you did!" he admitted.

"I thought of every possible solution, but I didn't think... that everyone's way of thinking is unique - and therefore, valuable," Bear admitted.

"You showed me how to ... build on each other's ideas. That has power," Beaver added.

"I didn't have the patience to understand you. You guys are awesome! Deer said admiringly.

"Unique," pointed out Bat.

"We are ALL UNIQUE!" concluded Mrs. Owl.



And our uniqueness is not the problem to be solved. It's the solution we have to discover.



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