

The Chestnut Seller and the Snails

Once there was a chestnut seller named Pepa who lived in a small cottage at the foot of a mountain. Everyone in the village knew how well she roasted chestnuts and how happily she shared them with the children. Each autumn, after the first rainy days, Pepa put on her wellington boots, picked up her wicker basket and climbed into the woods.

One damp morning, the ground was covered with wet leaves and shining drops. Pepa began to look for chestnuts, but the first one she picked up was cold and smooth… and it moved! It was a snail. Wherever she searched, she found more snails instead of chestnuts.

“How strange! Yesterday there were chestnuts everywhere,” she thought.

Then she heard a tiny voice. “Thank you for taking us with you, chestnut seller. We are the mountain’s Enchanted Snails. When rain and mist arrive, the chestnuts turn into snails to help keep the soil damp and alive. Take us to the village and we will give you a surprise.”

Curious, Pepa filled her basket and returned to the square. The villagers stared at the snails in amazement. Suddenly, the snails formed a circle and, in the blink of an eye, changed into large, glossy chestnuts that were perfect for roasting.

From that day on, Pepa always expected a surprise from the mountain. Every autumn she climbed into the woods, wondering whether she would find chestnuts, snails or perhaps both. She knew that when nature is cared for, it always keeps a little magic in reserve.