

The Broken Nest

A STORY BY ARKEDELIC



BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE

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The riverbank was warm, the mud soft under little hooves.
Max the hippo calf stomped along, his stubby tail swishing.

Thud, thud, squelch! Each step sent water splashing.

Zoya the hare hopped beside him, ears twitching tall.
She darted ahead, sniffing flowers and nibbling at leaves.

Behind them waddled Pokes the porcupine,
quills clicking gently as he moved.

“Slow down, Max,” he called in his calm, scratchy voice.

“I don’t want slow!” Max huffed. He puffed out his round cheeks and stamped harder, sending mud flying. **Splish!**



“Careful!” squeaked Zoya, hopping aside.
“You’ll scare someone!”

Too late. With one heavy stomp, Max crashed into a bush. A loud crack! echoed, followed by a thin, frightened **cheep-cheep-cheep!**

The three froze. Inside the bush lay a small nest, tilted sideways, twigs scattered, and two tiny chicks flapping helpless wings.

Their mother fluttered nearby, calling anxiously.

Zoya gasped. “Oh no! Max, you broke their nest!”

Pokes frowned, quills rustling. “You were too rough.”

Max’s eyes widened, then scrunched up.
His mouth wobbled.

“It’s not my fault!” he cried. “The bush was in my way!”
He plopped into the mud with a heavy plop! and let out a loud, blubbery wail. **Waaaah!**



Zoya's ears flattened. "Max, stop yelling.
The chicks are scared!"

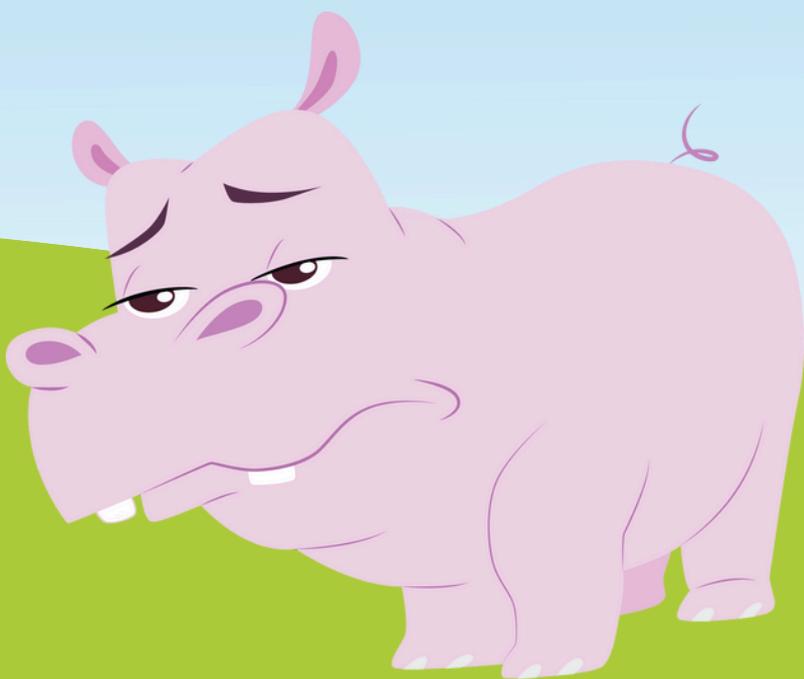
"I don't care!" Max kicked the mud, splattering
them all. "I never get to do what I want!"

Zoya stamped her foot. "Max, NO!"

The word made Max howl louder.
He rolled onto his back, legs flailing.
"I hate no! No is mean!"

The chicks huddled, shivering under a
fallen twig.

Their tiny voices cheeped for comfort.



Pokes shuffled closer, voice steady.
“Max, tantrums won’t fix the nest.
Look at them – they need help.”

Max sniffled, peeking through his tears.
The chicks blinked back at him with wide,
frightened eyes. His stomps quieted.

Zoya hopped gently to the bush.
“We’ll fix it. But Max,
you must help. You made the mess.”

“I can’t!” Max pouted.



“You can,” Pokes said firmly. “And you will.”

They began. Zoya darted for twigs, light and quick.

Pokes arranged them with his careful paws.

Max sulked, dragging his feet,
until Zoya shoved a twig at him.

“Hold this still.”

Max groaned but obeyed.

His huge snout pressed against the stick,
steadying it while Pokes tucked leaves around.

The chicks fluttered their wings, calmer now.



“See?” Zoya said. “Gentle helps.”

Max grumbled. “Gentle is boring.”

But when one chick tottered to the edge,
Max instinctively held out his muddy hoof to block it from
falling. The chick leaned against him, squeaking.

Max froze. “It’s...tiny,” he whispered.

“Smaller than your ear,” Zoya teased.

“Smaller than my paw,” Max said, eyes wide.

He held very still, afraid to hurt it.

The chick pecked softly at his skin.
Max’s frown melted.

A giggle bubbled out. “It tickles!”



Zoya smiled. “You’re good at this.”

“Better than breaking,”
Pokes added with a smirk.

Soon the nest stood firm again, tucked safer between
branches. The chicks snuggled together, their mother
fluttering down with grateful chirps.



Max watched,
chest swelling with a new kind of pride.
Not loud, stomping pride – but quiet,
warm pride.

Zoya hopped up beside him.
“See, Max? Saying no isn’t mean.

Sometimes it saves little lives.”
Pokes nodded.
“And tantrums waste time.
Helping feels better.”



Max's cheeks flushed. "I still don't like no," he mumbled.
Then, after a pause: "But...I like chicks."

The chicks cheeped again, as if agreeing.
Max puffed, this time not in anger but in happiness.
"Maybe I'll look after them tomorrow too."

Zoya twitched her ears. "Only if you behave."

Max grinned, splashing once — but gently this time.
Splish.

The jungle buzzed back to calm, the tantrum gone,
replaced with the soft sound of **cheep-cheep-cheep** and
the laughter of three friends who had learned something
important together.

— *THE END* —



ACTIVITY

The Gentle Hands Nest

YOU'LL NEED:

- A small bowl, basket, or paper cup (for the “nest”)
- Natural materials like twigs, leaves, dry grass, cotton, or shredded paper
- Optional: a bird feeder bowl or shallow container with a few grains or seeds
- A quiet space like a balcony, window ledge, or garden corner

HOW TO DO IT:

1. Talk about how Max helped fix the chicks’ broken home – and how careful, gentle, and patient he had to be.
2. Give your child the materials and ask them to build a tiny pretend nest inside the bowl. Let them arrange the twigs and leaves gently – no rushing or snapping.
3. Once the nest is done, place a few seeds inside and keep it near a safe, open spot (balcony or garden).
4. Watch quietly over the next few days to see if any birds visit.

ACTIVITY

The Gentle Hands Nest

5. Every time you refill the seeds or tidy the area, remind your child that kindness grows when we care softly, not noisily.

What it builds:

This activity turns the lesson of The Broken Nest into real action. Children experience what gentleness feels like in their hands — learning that caring, patience, and quiet effort can rebuild trust and comfort, just as Max did for the chicks. It's also a beautiful first step in nurturing empathy for living things.

5 FUN FACTS

Nature's Little Homes – The Wonders of Nests



Architects with Beaks

Birds don't go to school, yet they build perfect homes! Some weave with grass, others use mud, feathers, or even spider silk to make their nests strong and soft.

Imagine building your whole house using just your mouth and feet!

Every Bird, Its Own Design

Each species builds differently. The tailorbird stitches leaves together with plant fibre, the weaverbird knots grass into hanging baskets, and the woodpecker carves its nest deep inside a tree trunk. Imagine a city where every house looked different – because everyone built their own way!



Tiny Builders, Huge Skill

Hummingbirds make nests smaller than a table tennis ball. They stretch and grow as the chicks get bigger, using soft spider web strands like elastic. Imagine your bed growing with you as you sleep!

5 FUN FACTS

Nature's Little Homes – The Wonders of Nests



More Than Just Birds

Nests aren't only for birds – crocodiles bury their eggs in warm leaves, squirrels build round leafy nests high up in trees, and even fish create pebble circles on the riverbed.

Imagine an underwater nursery made of glittering stones!

Safe, Warm, and Loved

The shape of a nest – usually a bowl or cup – helps keep eggs from rolling out and keeps babies close to the mother's warmth. It's not just a home – it's a hug made of nature.

Imagine your home holding you safe the way a nest holds a chick!



The Cracked Pot

Complete the Story

One morning, Arin was helping his grandmother water the plants.

She handed him a small clay pot, but he wanted the bigger one. “I can carry that!” he insisted. Before she could stop him, the heavy pot slipped from his hands – crash!

Soil spilled everywhere.

Arin’s face turned red. “It’s not my fault!” he shouted, crossing his arms. His grandmother said nothing, just picked up the broken pieces gently. After a long silence, she handed him a smaller pot. “Let’s fix what we can,” she said softly.

Arin sighed, sat beside her, and began filling the new pot with soil. Together, they replanted the fallen flower. When they finished, its little green leaves trembled but stood tall again.

Arin smiled. “It’s still alive.”

What happens next?

- Does Arin find a way to make the broken pot useful again?
- Does he learn that saying sorry feels better than staying angry?
- Or does he discover that even small hands can care for big things when they’re gentle?

See you next Monday
with another interesting story!

Got feedback or a suggestion? We would love to hear it!
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