



Mike's Soft Spikes: A Story About Big Feelings

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Mike was a little hedgehog who lived under a cozy, hollow log in the whispering woods. He loved rolling in the autumn leaves, but whenever he felt overwhelmed, his sharp spikes would puff out all at once, making it hard for his friends to get close.



One sunny morning, Mike tried to build a magnificent tower out of acorns, but it kept tumbling down. With each crash, a hot wave of frustration rushed through his tiny body, and his spikes clicked together sharply as they stood on end.



His friend Barnaby the rabbit hopped over to help, but Mike accidentally pricked Barnaby's soft nose when he startled him. Feeling deeply upset and embarrassed, Mike curled into a tight, prickly ball and hid away, refusing to look at anyone.



Inside his dark, rolled-up world, Mike's heart raced like a drum, and he felt completely trapped by his own big emotions. He wanted to be calm and soft again, but his prickles just wouldn't settle down.



From the branch above, Old Owl Oliver looked down with kind, wise eyes and spoke in a gentle, soothing murmur. He told Mike that feelings are like stormy weather, and just like storms, they always pass if we give them time and space.



Oliver instructed Mike to take a deep breath in through his nose, imagining he was smelling a sweet wild rose, and then blow it out slowly through his mouth. Mike took his first shaky breath, and felt a tiny bit of the tension leave his tight muscles.



With each slow, deep breath Mike took, his spikes began to relax, softening back down against his fur like grass after a gentle rain. He slowly uncurled his body and looked up at the warm sunlight filtering through the canopy.



Mike walked over to Barnaby and offered a heartfelt apology, showing his friend that his spikes were now flat and safe to touch. Barnaby smiled warmly and accepted a gentle, careful hug, proving that mistakes can always be mended with kindness.



To help manage his feelings next time, Mike decided to paint his emotions on smooth river stones using bright, beautiful colors. When he felt angry, he painted a fiery red stone, and when he felt calm, he painted a serene ocean blue.



Now, whenever a big feeling starts to prickle inside him, Mike knows exactly how to breathe through the storm. He stands proudly in the meadow with his friends, his heart peaceful and his spikes perfectly soft.