

A photograph of a single, vibrant green leaf lying on a textured, brownish ground surface. The ground appears to be a mix of soil and small stones, with some faint, circular patterns. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong light source from the upper left, creating a bright highlight on the leaf and casting a soft shadow to the right. The overall mood is contemplative and natural.

# A PART OF LIFE

**ChatGPT & TIHOMIR RANKOV**

## April and the Changing Seasons

April had always hated goodbyes. It wasn't just people—she hated when summer ended, when her favorite shoes wore out, even when the last pages of a good book came too soon.

Her grandmother used to say, *"Everything in life is a season, April. Things come and go, but that's just the way the world turns."*

April never liked that answer. Why did things have to change? Why couldn't everything stay the same, safe and familiar?

One autumn, she found herself facing a change she couldn't avoid. Her best friend, Elena, was moving across the country. They had spent years together—bike rides in the park, late-night movies, whispered secrets under the stars. April couldn't imagine life without her.

The day before Elena left, they sat on the swings at their favorite playground. The leaves had started to fall, golden and crisp, swirling around them like the closing scene of a movie.

"I don't want you to go," April admitted, staring at her shoes.

"I don't want to go either," Elena said, swinging gently. "But...it's part of life, right?"

April looked up, startled. It was the same thing her grandmother always said.

Elena smiled. "It's like the seasons. Summer doesn't last forever, but that doesn't mean winter is bad. And just because I'm moving doesn't mean we stop being friends."

April thought about that. She thought about how spring always followed winter, about how the leaves always grew back. Maybe life wasn't about holding on so tightly—maybe it was about knowing that even when things changed, some things stayed.

The next day, she hugged Elena goodbye. It was hard, but something in her heart told her that this wasn't an ending—it was just a change.

And change, she realized, was simply a part of life.

## **A Part of Life**

John had always been a planner. He mapped out every step, from his morning coffee to his five-year career trajectory. Life, however, had other plans.

One rainy Monday, John was running late for an important job interview. As he sprinted out of his apartment, a speeding car sent a wave of dirty water splashing all over his neatly pressed suit. He stared at his reflection in a nearby window, drenched and defeated. The interview was a disaster. The hiring manager seemed unimpressed, and John left knowing he wouldn't get the job.

Frustration bubbled up inside him. "Why does this always happen to me?" he muttered. He had done everything right. He had prepared. He had worked hard. Yet, things still went wrong.

That evening, John visited his grandfather, who always seemed to have the right words for every situation. After listening patiently, his grandfather chuckled.

"John, let me tell you something. You see this old table?" He tapped the wooden surface, which was scratched and dented in places. "I've had it for 40 years. It's seen spills, scratches, and all kinds of accidents. But is it any less of a table?"

John shook his head.

"Exactly," his grandfather said. "Because wear and tear is a part of life. Things go wrong. Plans fall apart. But that doesn't mean you stop trying. It just means you adapt."

The words stuck with John. Over time, he began to accept that not everything would go perfectly. He still planned, still worked hard, but he learned to embrace the unexpected.

A few weeks later, another job opportunity came up. He walked into the interview with confidence—not because he expected everything to go smoothly, but because he knew he could handle it even if it didn't.

And this time, he got the job.

Because setbacks? They weren't the end. They were just a part of life.