

The Boy and the Little Salamander

A 3D animated scene set in a lush forest. In the foreground, a young boy with dark, spiky hair and large, expressive green eyes is crouching on a large, smooth, dark brown rock. He is wearing a red t-shirt, a tan backpack, and green gloves. A small, dark brown salamander with lighter brown spots is perched on the rock near his hand. In the background, a woman with dark hair tied in a bun, wearing a tan jacket over a blue plaid shirt and dark pants, stands looking on. She is also wearing green gloves and holding a black shovel. The background is filled with tall trees and green foliage, with a stream visible in the distance.

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

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Every morning, the boy pulled on his mustard-yellow rain boots and ran to the forest behind his house. The air was cool and smelled of wet leaves and moss. He loved how the ferns dripped with dew and how the ground squished under his feet. In his canvas satchel, he kept a notebook full of sketches of beetles, frogs, and wiggly worms. Today, he hoped to find something new.



The boy followed a narrow path that wound between tall trees. Sunlight filtered through the leaves and made little dancing spots on the ground. He heard the gurgle of a stream up ahead. The stream was his favorite place, with clear water that bubbled over smooth rocks. He knelt down and peered into the shallows, looking for tadpoles or water bugs.



Then he saw it. On a wet rock at the edge of the stream, a tiny salamander rested. It was about the length of his finger, with a glossy dark-brown body and pale speckles like tiny stars. Its skin looked moist and smooth, and its big round black eyes blinked slowly. The boy held his breath and watched. "Hello, little one," he whispered.



The salamander stayed perfectly still, its long tapered tail curled slightly. The boy noticed its four little toes gripping the rock. He slowly opened his satchel and took out his notebook. With careful, quiet strokes, he drew the salamander's speckled back and round eyes. He wrote: "Found by the stream. Skin is wet. Lives under rocks." Then he tiptoed away so he wouldn't scare it.



On the way home, the boy thought about the little salamander. He wondered where it hid when the sun was hot. At dinner, he asked his mum, "Why do salamanders like wet places?" Mum smiled, her dark-brown eyes crinkling. "Their skin needs to stay moist," she said. "They hide under rocks and leaves where it's cool and damp. Without wet, shady places, they can't survive."



The next day, the boy returned to the stream. He lifted a few fallen leaves and found a whole family of salamanders wriggling underneath. They were all different sizes, but they all had the same speckled brown skin and big round eyes. He carefully put the leaves back and wrote in his notebook: "Salamanders hide under leaves and rocks. They need the stream to stay clean and wet."



But as the boy walked farther along the bank, he saw something that made his stomach feel tight. Someone had left empty cans and plastic bags tangled in the roots. A broken bottle glittered near the water's edge. The stream looked messy and sad. "Oh no," he whispered. "This isn't good for the salamanders." He knew he had to help.



The boy hurried home to find his mum. She was in the garden, pulling on her green gloves. "Mum, people are hurting the stream!" he said. "There's trash everywhere, and the salamanders need it clean." Mum listened carefully. "You're right," she said. "A clean stream is important for all the wildlife. Let's ask our neighbors to help. Many hands make light work."



That afternoon, the boy and his mum knocked on doors. They told everyone about the little salamander and the trash by the stream. Mr. Okafor, who lived down the lane, nodded his head. "I know that stream," he said. "I used to catch minnows there when I was a boy. I'll bring my litter picker." Other neighbors promised to come too. The boy felt a warm hope in his chest.



On Saturday morning, everyone met by the stream. The boy wore his red shirt and yellow boots. Mum carried a big bag for trash. Mr. Okafor brought his long-handled litter picker and a wide-brim hat to keep the sun off. Together, they walked along the bank, picking up cans, bottles, and wrappers. The boy found a soggy wrapper and dropped it in the bag.



As they worked, Mr. Okafor told stories about the forest. "When I was young, this stream was full of frog songs," he said. "The salamanders were everywhere. They need damp, shady places, just like us—we need clean water and green trees." The boy listened and picked up a plastic cup. He felt proud to be helping. Even the birds seemed to sing a thank-you song.



After a while, the boy saw his little salamander again. It was peeking out from under a rock, its big eyes watching. The boy smiled and whispered, "We're making your home safe." He carefully put a leaf over the rock to keep it shady. Mum came over and said, "You're a good friend to wildlife. Remember, we must always leave nature better than we found it."



By lunchtime, the stream bank was clean and tidy. The water sparkled in the sunlight. The neighbors smiled and stretched their backs. Mr. Okafor said, "This is what community means—working together for something good." The boy looked at the clear stream and the green ferns. He knew the salamanders would be happy now. He wrote in his notebook: "Cleanup day. Stream is safe again."



That evening, the boy sat by the stream with his mum. The air was cool and damp. Fireflies blinked like tiny lanterns. "Do you think the salamanders are glad?" he asked. Mum put her arm around him. "I think they are," she said. "And they'll stay here as long as the forest stays damp and green. You helped make that happen." The boy leaned his head on her shoulder.



The next morning, the boy visited the stream again. He lifted a leaf and found his little salamander resting on a wet rock. Its speckled skin shone. It blinked its round eyes as if to say hello. The boy felt a happy warmth inside. He knew that even small hands could make a big difference. He promised to keep the stream clean and safe for all the wildlife.



From that day on, the boy took care of the stream. He told everyone how salamanders need wet, shady places. He picked up litter when he saw it. And every time he saw the little salamander, he smiled. The forest stayed damp and green, and the salamander had a cozy home. The boy knew that helping nature was the best adventure of all.