

The Girl and the Little Seal



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Maya loved the ocean more than anything. Every morning, she pulled on her red rubber boots and bright yellow raincoat. She grabbed her canvas satchel with her notebook and pencils. Then she ran down to the rocky shore to watch the waves. The ocean was full of surprises, and Maya wanted to find them all.



One sunny morning, Maya heard a soft sound. It was not a gull or a crab. It was a tiny, squeaky bark. She followed the sound around a pile of rocks. There, on the quiet shore, lay a little seal pup. It had soft grey fur with dark speckles and huge round black eyes. A small blue tag shone on its flipper.



Maya gasped. "Hello, little seal!" she whispered. The pup peeked at her and wiggled its whiskers. It looked shy but curious. Maya wanted to get closer, but she remembered her father's words: "Wild animals need space." So she sat very still and watched from a distance. The seal pup blinked its big eyes and relaxed.



Just then, a tall man with a white beard and a green cap walked over. He wore a green volunteer jacket with a small seal badge. "Hello there," he said kindly. "I'm Mr. Hale, the coastal warden. I see you've met Pip, our little seal pup." Maya nodded. "I'm Maya. I didn't want to scare him." Mr. Hale smiled. "That was very wise."



Mr. Hale knelt beside Maya and pointed to Pip. "Seals need quiet, safe spaces to rest and play," he explained. "When people get too close, it scares them. They might not come back to this shore." Maya looked at Pip, who was now snoozing peacefully. "So we should watch from far away?" she asked. Mr. Hale nodded. "Exactly. And we should keep calm and quiet."



Maya opened her satchel and took out her notebook. "I want to help," she said. "Can I make a guide for visitors?" Mr. Hale's eyes twinkled. "That's a wonderful idea!" He showed her how to keep a respectful distance—about five big steps away. "And never feed them," he added. "Their food comes from the ocean." Maya wrote it all down carefully.



Maya drew a picture of Pip on the first page of her guide. She wrote: "Stay back and stay calm. Seals need rest." Then she added: "Keep the beach clean and quiet." Mr. Hale gave her a clipboard to hold her papers. "You're a natural wildlife helper," he said. Maya felt proud. She couldn't wait to share her guide with everyone.



The next day, Maya and Mr. Hale set up a small table near the beach path. They put up a sign that said "Seal Viewing Guide." Maya handed out her papers to visitors. "Please keep your distance," she said politely. "And please don't make loud noises." People smiled and took the guides. Some even asked questions. Maya answered them all.



A family with a barking dog started to walk toward the seals. Maya ran over. "Excuse me," she said. "Could you keep your dog on a leash? The seals need a safe space." The family looked at her guide and nodded. "Good point!" said the dad. They moved away quietly. Maya beamed. Her guide was working!



More visitors came to the shore. They read Maya's guide and stayed far back. They spoke in soft voices and kept their dogs close. The seals rested and played without fear. Pip even peeked out from behind a rock and gave a little bark. Maya waved from a distance. "Look, Mr. Hale! Pip is happy!" she said.



Mr. Hale put a hand on Maya's shoulder. "You've made a real difference," he said. "Because of your guide, people are watching wildlife without disturbing it. That's how we protect the habitat." Maya looked at the calm, quiet shore. The seals were safe and peaceful. "I'm glad I could help," she said softly.



That evening, Maya sat on a rock and watched the sunset. Pip swam in the waves with other seals. They splashed and dived and played. Maya knew they felt safe because people respected their space. She felt warm inside. Helping coastal wildlife was the best feeling in the world.



The next week, Mr. Hale asked Maya to make her guide official. They printed copies and put them in a little wooden box by the beach. The box said "Take one, please." Visitors came from all over to see the seals. They followed the guide and kept the shore clean and quiet. Maya's guide helped everyone enjoy the seals safely.



Maya visited Pip every day. Sometimes Pip would swim close to the shore and look at her with his big round eyes. Maya would wave and whisper, "Hello, Pip!" She never got too close. She knew that respecting wildlife was the best way to show love. And Pip seemed to know it too.



One afternoon, a group of schoolchildren came to the beach. Maya showed them her guide. "Seals need safe spaces," she told them. "We can watch them if we stay calm and keep our distance." The children listened carefully. They watched the seals from far away and spoke in whispers. Maya felt like a real teacher.



As the sun set, Maya walked home with her notebook. She thought about Pip and all the seals. She had learned that coastal wildlife needs safe spaces. And she had helped create a guide so everyone could enjoy them without harm. Her heart felt full. She couldn't wait to come back tomorrow.