

The Boy and the Little Frog



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Ben loved the wetland near his home. Every morning, he pulled on his bright yellow rain boots and his red T-shirt with the frog print. He grabbed his canvas satchel and notebook. Then he ran down the path to watch the frogs. The wetland was full of tall grass and soft mud. Ben could hear the frogs calling, ribbit, ribbit, all day long.



Ben sat very still by the edge of the pond. He watched a little frog with bright-green skin and big golden eyes. The frog had tiny dark speckles on its back and a pale yellow belly. It sat on a lily pad and blinked. Ben opened his notebook and drew the little frog. He wrote: Frog sits in the sun. Frog hops to the water. Frog is happy.



Ben's best friend Maya came to the pond too. She wore her purple rain boots and denim overalls. Her striped orange-and-white shirt was bright in the sun. Maya had freckles across her nose and a small bandage on one knee. She liked to hunt for tadpoles. 'Look, Ben!' she said. 'A tiny tadpole wiggling its tail!' They laughed and watched the water together.



One morning, Ben ran to the pond and stopped. The water looked dark and slimy. Plastic bags floated like jellyfish. Old cans and paper wrappers sat in the mud. The little frog sat on a rock, looking sad. 'Where did all this trash come from?' Ben whispered. He saw fewer frogs than before. The clean water was gone, and the frogs had less room to swim.



Ben hurried home to find his mom. She was in the garden, wearing her green apron and wide-brim sun hat. Her thick black braid hung over her shoulder. 'Mom,' Ben said, 'the frog pond is full of trash! The frogs need clean water.' Mom smiled gently. 'Then let's help,' she said. 'We can clean it together. I'll bring gloves and tools.'



Ben and Mom made a plan. Mom called the neighbors, and Ben asked Maya. Maya called her friends from school. Soon, a team of helpers stood by the pond. They wore gloves and carried big bags. 'We'll pick up every piece of trash,' Maya said. 'And we'll clear the weeds so the water can flow,' added Ben. Everyone nodded and got to work.



Maya led the trash-picking team. She bent down and picked up a plastic bottle. 'Got one!' she shouted. Her friends picked up cans and wrappers. Ben pulled a soggy cardboard box out of the mud. It was heavy and smelly, but he didn't give up. 'This pond will be clean again,' he said. The little frog watched from a safe rock nearby.



Mom brought big rakes and thick gloves. She showed everyone how to pull weeds without hurting the tiny plants. 'We want to help the frogs, not harm the wetland,' she said. Ben raked the slimy weeds away from the pond's edge. Maya's friends carried bags of trash to the path. Everyone worked together, and the pile of trash grew smaller and smaller.



The sun was hot, but the helpers kept going. Mom brought cold water and apple slices for everyone. They sat on the grass and rested. 'We're making a big difference,' Maya said. Ben looked at the pond. He could see the water again! It wasn't clean yet, but it was better. 'The frogs will be so happy,' he said. They finished their snack and went back to work.



By afternoon, the pond looked much better. The trash was gone, and the weeds were cleared. But the water was still a little cloudy. 'We need to be patient,' Mom said. 'Clean water takes time.' Ben nodded. He knew the frogs needed a clean home. He would wait and watch. Every day, he visited the pond to check the water. Slowly, it began to sparkle.



One morning, Ben heard a familiar sound. Ribbit! Ribbit! He ran to the pond. There sat the little frog on a lily pad. Its bright-green skin shone in the sun. Its golden eyes were round and bright. Behind it, more frogs hopped and swam. 'You came back!' Ben cheered. The little frog blinked and splashed into the clean water.



Maya came running. 'The frogs are back!' she shouted. They counted seven frogs swimming in the pond. The water was clear and cool. Ben opened his notebook and drew the little frog again. This time, he wrote: Frog swims in clean water. Frog is happy. Frog is home. Maya smiled. 'We did it,' she said. 'We helped the frogs.'



Ben's mom came to see the pond. She wore her green apron and sun hat. 'You should be proud,' she said. 'You saw a problem and you helped.' Ben looked at the little frog. 'Everyone helped,' he said. Mom hugged him. 'That's right,' she said. 'Teamwork makes a big difference.' The frogs sang in the clean water, and Ben felt warm inside.



Ben learned something important. Frogs need clean water to live and grow. When people help, habitats can be fixed. He told his class about the pond. He showed them his drawings of the little frog. 'We can all help keep water clean,' he said. His friends listened. Maya nodded. 'Every little bit helps,' she said. And Ben knew it was true.



Now Ben visits the wetland every week. He watches the little frog and its friends. The water is clean, and the frogs are healthy. Ben keeps his notebook full of drawings. He writes: Clean habitats help amphibians live and grow. He smiles. The little frog hops onto a lily pad and blinks at him. Ribbit! It seems to say thank you.



Ben still wears his yellow rain boots and red frog-print T-shirt. He still carries his satchel and notebook. But now he also carries a small trash bag. Whenever he sees trash near the pond, he picks it up. Maya helps too. Together, they keep the wetland clean. The little frog and its friends swim happily. And Ben knows that clean habitats support amphibians, today and always.