

The Boy and the Kestrel



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

The Boy and the Kestrel

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



On the edge of a wide, sunny meadow, a boy named Sam sat very still. He wore a mustard yellow jumper and forest green trousers, and his red canvas satchel held a sketchbook and pencils. Every day after school, he came to this same spot. He had warm brown skin, short curly black hair, and dark brown eyes that missed nothing. He was waiting for his friend the kestrel.



The kestrel was a small falcon, about the size of a pigeon. It had a rusty brown back with dark spots, a pale cream breast, and a slate grey head. Its wingtips were black, and its hooked beak was yellow. On one leg, it wore a thin silver ring. Each afternoon, it hovered above the meadow, wings spread wide, bright dark eyes searching the grass below.



Sam had first seen the kestrel weeks ago, and now he came every day. He would sit on a flat stone, quiet as a mouse, and watch. The kestrel hovered in one spot, beating its wings quickly, then dropped like a stone into the grass. Sometimes it caught a vole, sometimes not. Sam learned that patience was the key. He opened his sketchbook and began to draw.



Day after day, Sam waited and watched. Some days the kestrel did not come, and Sam simply sat and listened to the wind. He noticed how the meadow grass waved like a golden sea. He saw beetles crawl and butterflies flit. His thin thoughtful eyebrows drew together as he concentrated. He learned that if you are patient, amazing things happen right in front of you.



One afternoon, the kestrel landed on a fence post near Sam. It tilted its slate grey head and looked at him with bright watchful eyes. Sam hardly breathed. He slowly reached for his sketchbook. His pencil moved quickly, capturing the rusty brown feathers and the pale breast. The kestrel stayed for a long moment, then launched into the air and hovered again.



Sam filled page after page with drawings. He drew the kestrel hovering, its wings spread like a fan. He drew the open grassland, the tall grass, and the winding path. He drew the fence post and the wide blue sky. His red satchel grew fat with sketches. Each drawing helped him see more details, and each detail made him love the meadow more.



At school, Sam kept his sketchbook in his desk. One morning, his teacher, who wore a teal cardigan and round glasses, noticed him drawing during break. She had a warm smile and a tiny silver bird pin on her collar. 'May I see?' she asked gently. Sam hesitated, then showed her the hovering kestrel. Her eyes widened. 'These are wonderful,' she said. 'Would you share them with the class?'



Sam felt nervous, but he nodded. That afternoon, he stood at the front of the classroom. He held up his sketchbook and showed the kestrel hovering above the golden meadow. 'This is a kestrel,' he said quietly. 'It needs open grassland to hunt voles. Without it, the kestrel cannot find food.' The class leaned in to look.



A classmate in a blue striped t-shirt and denim dungarees raised a hand. 'Why does it hover like that?' she asked, her hazel eyes wide with curiosity. Sam explained, 'It stays in one spot to spot its prey. It has sharp eyes that can see a tiny vole from high up.' The classmate grinned, showing a gap-toothed smile. 'That's actually really cool,' she said.



Sam turned the pages and showed more drawings. He showed the kestrel's long tail and its black wingtips. He showed the meadow in different seasons. His classmates asked question after question. They wanted to know where the kestrel lived and what it ate. Sam answered patiently, just as he had watched patiently. He realized that sharing what he loved made it even more special.



The teacher smiled and adjusted her glasses. 'Sam has shown us something important,' she said. 'Wild meadows are homes for many creatures, not just kestrels.' She looked around the room. 'What do you think happens when meadows are built over?' The class grew quiet. The classmate in dungarees spoke up first. 'The birds would have nowhere to hunt,' she said. 'We should protect places like that.'



Sam felt a warm glow in his chest. He had never thought his drawings could teach others. The teacher suggested they make a class poster about wild meadows. Everyone agreed. Sam's eyes shone as he passed around his sketches. The classmate in the blue striped t-shirt said, 'I want to see the kestrel too!' Others nodded. Sam promised to show them the best watching spot.



The next week, the class visited the meadow. Sam led them to his flat stone and pointed to the sky. They waited quietly, practicing patience. After a long while, a small shape appeared. The kestrel hovered above the grass, wings spread wide. The classmate gasped. 'There it is!' she whispered. Everyone watched, silent and amazed. The kestrel dropped, then rose again, a flash of rusty brown and slate grey.



Sam smiled as he watched his friends' faces. They saw what he had seen: the beauty of patience and the wonder of a wild bird. The classmate in the blue striped t-shirt said, 'Now I understand why the meadow matters.' The teacher nodded. 'Careful observation helps us care,' she said. Sam opened his sketchbook and added a new drawing: his classmates watching the kestrel, all together.



Back at school, the class made a big poster with Sam's drawings and facts about kestrels. They wrote, 'Wild Meadows Matter!' and hung it in the hallway. Other classes stopped to read it. Sam felt proud. He had learned that patience and sharing could open eyes. His red satchel still held his sketchbook, ready for the next drawing. And the kestrel still hovered, day after day, above the golden meadow.



Sam returned to his stone the next afternoon. The kestrel was there, hovering in the blue sky. He sat quietly and watched, his thin thoughtful eyebrows relaxed. He knew that if you are patient, you can see amazing things. And if you share them, you can help others care too. The kestrel dipped low, then rose, a small wild dancer in the wide, open meadow.