

The Boy and the Little Turtle



Aysel Banu YAVUZAL

The Boy and the Little Turtle

Aysel Banu YAVUZAL



Ben loved the pond near his home. Every morning, he put on his bright yellow t-shirt and green rubber boots. He carried a small canvas satchel with his notebook inside. At the pond, he watched the little turtles swim. One turtle had an olive-green shell with yellow markings. It was about the size of Ben's palm. Ben wrote down everything he saw.



Ben's best friend, May, often came with him. She had two puffy afro-puff buns and a bright cheerful smile. She wore an orange overall dress and carried a small red bucket. 'What are you writing today?' May asked. 'I'm counting the turtles,' Ben said. 'There are five!' May laughed. 'You're like a turtle scientist!' They sat quietly and watched the turtles poke their tiny heads out of the water.



Ben's mother, Mrs. Lee, walked to the pond with them. She wore a teal shirt and a wide straw sun hat. 'Turtles need clean water to live,' she said. 'They eat plants and insects in the pond.' Ben nodded. He wrote in his notebook: Turtles need clean water. May looked at the pond. 'The water looks a little cloudy,' she said. Ben frowned. He wanted to know why.



The next day, Ben saw something floating in the pond. It was a plastic bottle! Then he saw a crumpled bag and an old can. 'Oh no,' Ben whispered. 'This trash is bad for the turtles.' The little turtle with the olive-green shell swam near the trash. It looked sad. Ben's large dark-brown eyes grew wide. He knew he had to help.



Ben ran to find May. 'The pond is dirty!' he said. 'We need to clean it.' May grabbed her red bucket. 'Let's do it!' she said. They picked up trash along the edge, but there was too much. 'We need more help,' Ben said. 'Let's ask everyone!' May smiled. 'I'll tell the kids at school,' she said. 'We can do this together.'



Ben talked to his mother. Mrs. Lee listened carefully. 'That's a wonderful idea,' she said. 'Let's have a pond conservation day.' She put on her cloth work gloves. 'I can gather supplies and ask the neighbors.' Ben made a list in his notebook. May drew posters with bright colors. They wrote: Help clean the pond! Protect the turtles! Soon, everyone in the neighborhood knew about it.



On conservation day, many people came. Ben's friends brought gloves and bags. May's family brought rakes and nets. Mrs. Lee wore her straw sun hat and gave everyone jobs. 'We'll pick up trash from the water and the shore,' she said. 'Then we'll make sure the pond stays clean.' Ben felt proud. His small hands were ready to work.



Everyone worked together. Ben and May waded in their boots and picked up bottles and cans. May's red bucket filled up quickly. 'Look at all this trash!' she said. 'No wonder the turtles were sad.' Ben's neighbor, Mr. Chen, used a net to pull out a floating bag. 'Good job, kids,' he said. 'This pond will be much better.' The sun shone on the water.



After hours of work, the pond looked cleaner. But Ben noticed the little turtle hiding under a lily pad. 'Is it okay?' he asked. Mrs. Lee knelt beside him. 'It will be,' she said. 'Turtles are shy. They need a safe, clean home.' Ben watched the turtle poke its small head out. It looked curious. Ben smiled. 'We'll keep it safe,' he said.



The next day, Ben and May returned to the pond. The water was clearer. The little turtle swam up to them. It wiggled its tiny legs. 'Look! It's happy!' May said. Ben opened his notebook. He drew the turtle and wrote: Clean water makes turtles happy. He promised to visit every day and check the pond. May said, 'We should remind people to keep it clean.'



Ben had an idea. He asked his mother, 'Can we put a sign by the pond?' Mrs. Lee smiled. 'That's a great idea.' Ben and May made a sign that said: Please keep our pond clean. Protect the turtles! They painted it with bright colors. Mrs. Lee helped them hammer it into the ground. Now everyone would know to take their trash home.



May said, 'We should tell more people.' So Ben and May visited their neighbors. They showed pictures of the turtles and explained why clean water matters. 'Even small hands can help,' Ben said. People listened. Some promised to pick up litter. Others said they would watch for trash. Ben felt happy. His small hands had started something big.



That afternoon, Ben sat by the pond. The little turtle swam right up to him. It looked healthy and playful. Ben held out his hand, and the turtle rested near it. 'You're safe now,' Ben whispered. May sat beside him. 'We did it,' she said. Ben nodded. 'But we have to keep helping,' he said. 'Every day.' The turtle splashed its tiny feet.



Ben learned something important. Even small hands can protect nature. He always reminded people to keep ponds clean and protect the turtles. He carried his notebook everywhere and wrote down new things he saw. May helped him, and they became pond guardians. Mrs. Lee said, 'I'm proud of you both.' Ben smiled his gap-toothed smile. He knew he would always care for the pond.



One evening, Ben and May watched the sunset. The little turtle and its friends swam in the clean water. 'Do you think they're happy?' May asked. 'Yes,' Ben said. 'They have a clean home now.' He looked at his hands. They were small, but they had made a difference. 'We can do even more,' he said. 'Let's keep protecting the pond.'



Ben still visits the pond every day. He watches the little turtle grow. He writes in his notebook and tells everyone about the turtles. 'Remember,' he says, 'keep ponds clean!' His friends and family help too. The pond is a safe place for turtles and other animals. Ben knows that even small hands can protect nature. And he always will.