

The Boy and the Little Seal



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Leo loved the ocean more than anything. Every morning, he pulled on his bright yellow raincoat and red rubber boots. He grabbed his canvas satchel filled with paper and crayons. Today, he was exploring a new beach near the coastal reserve. The salty wind ruffled his short curly dark brown hair, and his round brown eyes sparkled with excitement.



The beach was quiet and peaceful. Leo saw smooth pebbles, tangled seaweed, and a line of gentle waves. Suddenly, he spotted something small and round near the rocks. It was a little seal pup! The seal had sleek grey fur with pale mottled spots, big dark glossy eyes, and tiny flippers. Leo's freckled nose twitched with surprise.



Leo wanted to run closer, but he remembered the ranger's words: "Wild animals need space." So he stayed still and watched from a safe distance. The little seal yawned and stretched its soft white belly. It seemed happy to rest on the quiet beach. Leo smiled his bright open smile and whispered, "Hello, little seal."



Just then, a tall ranger in a khaki uniform and wide-brimmed hat walked over. Her green coastal reserve badge gleamed in the sun. "You're doing a great job keeping your distance," she said with a calm smile. "Seals need quiet beaches to rest and grow. They also need clean water to swim and find food." Leo listened carefully.



The ranger pointed to the little seal. "This pup is still learning about the ocean. If people get too close, it might get scared and use up energy it needs to grow strong." Leo nodded. He thought about how he would feel if someone big and noisy came too close to his bed. He wanted to help protect the seal's habitat.



Leo opened his satchel and took out his paper and crayons. "I can make signs!" he said. "Friendly signs that remind people to keep their distance and keep the beach clean." The ranger's green eyes twinkled. "That's a wonderful idea," she said. "Let's make them together." They sat on a log and started drawing.



Leo drew a picture of the little seal with big glossy eyes. He wrote in his best handwriting: "Please watch from a safe distance. Seals need rest." He added a smiling sun and a blue wave. The ranger drew a sign that said: "Keep our ocean clean. Pick up your trash." They made five colorful signs in all.



As they worked, a girl in a pink sun hat and mint green T-shirt ran over. Her name was Mia, and she was visiting the reserve with her family. "What are you doing?" she asked, her dark eyes wide. Leo showed her the signs. "We're helping the seals," he said. "Want to help?" Mia grinned, showing a gap-toothed smile.



Mia was eager but a little impatient. She wanted to see the seal right away. "Can I go closer?" she asked. Leo shook his head. "We have to stay back so the seal feels safe. Let's watch quietly from here." Mia frowned but then nodded. They sat together on the sand, watching the little seal snooze in the sun.



The ranger helped Leo and Mia place the signs along the path to the beach. Each sign had bright colors and simple words. "These will remind everyone to respect wildlife," the ranger said. Leo felt proud. His yellow raincoat flapped in the breeze as he hammered a sign into the sand. "This is fun!" he said.



Soon, more visitors arrived. They read the signs and smiled. Instead of rushing toward the seals, they stopped at a safe distance and watched quietly. A family with a picnic basket picked up their trash. Mia pointed at the little seal, who was now playing with a piece of seaweed. "Look! It's happy!" she whispered.



Leo felt a warm glow inside. He realized that watching from a safe distance was the kindest way to show respect. The little seal flipped its tiny flippers and slipped into the water. "Seals need quiet beaches and clean water," Leo said. "And we can help by keeping our distance and keeping the ocean clean."



The ranger gave Leo a high-five. "You've made a real difference today," she said. "Many people will learn from your signs." Leo's freckled face beamed. He took out his crayons and drew one more sign: "Thank you for respecting our seal friends!" He placed it at the entrance of the beach.



As the sun began to set, Leo packed up his satchel. Mia waved goodbye. "I'm going to tell everyone at school about the seals," she said. Leo waved back. He felt happy and excited. His heart was full of pride. He had helped keep the ocean a happy home for wildlife, one sign at a time.



On the walk home, Leo thought about the little seal. He knew it would sleep well on the quiet beach tonight. The ocean sparkled under the evening sky. Leo smiled his bright open smile. He couldn't wait to come back and check on his signs. Maybe he would make even more!



And from that day on, the coastal reserve was a peaceful place for seals and people alike. Everyone watched from a safe distance, and the seals rested and played in the clean water. Leo learned that even a small boy with a big heart can make a big difference. The ocean was a happy home for wildlife, thanks to him.