The Boy and the Little Swan

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On a bright Saturday morning, a boy named Leo skipped into the park. He wore his bright yellow raincoat and red sneakers. In one hand, he held a small green notebook and a pencil. Leo loved to watch everything in the park, from the tall trees to the busy ducks. Today, he wanted to see something special by the lake.

Leo walked slowly to the lake at the edge of the park. The water sparkled like a giant mirror. Then he saw them: two beautiful swans gliding across the lake. One was big and white. The other was small, with soft white feathers, a black beak, and a thin silver band on its leg. Leo stopped and stared.

The little swan moved quietly, its long neck curved like a question mark. Leo wanted to get closer. He took one step, then two. The little swan turned its head and paddled away. Leo frowned. 'Why did it swim off?' he whispered. He sat on a bench and opened his green notebook to draw the swan.

Just then, an old man in a green uniform jacket and a wide-brimmed hat walked up. He leaned on a wooden walking stick. 'Hello, young man,' he said with a warm smile. 'I'm the park keeper. I saw you watching the swans.' Leo nodded. 'They're beautiful, but the little one swam away from me.'

The park keeper sat beside Leo. 'Swans need quiet space,' he said gently. 'They feel safe when people keep a good distance. If we get too close, they think we might hurt them.' Leo looked at the little swan far out on the water. 'So I scared it?' he asked. 'Not on purpose,' said the keeper. 'But now you know.'

'What else should I know?' Leo asked, pencil ready. The park keeper pointed to the lake. 'Swans need clean water and safe places to rest. We should never chase them or feed them. Bread can make them sick. And we must keep the park clean so they stay healthy.' Leo wrote it all down in his green notebook.

Leo thought for a moment. 'I could make a guide for visitors!' he said. 'A guide that tells everyone how to watch swans kindly.' The park keeper's eyes twinkled. 'That's a wonderful idea,' he said. 'A guide from a child might help other children understand.' Leo smiled his gap-toothed smile and began to write.

Leo worked all afternoon. He drew a picture of the little swan with its silver leg band. He wrote in big, clear letters: 'Watch from afar. Keep the park clean. Never chase or feed the swans.' He drew a happy sun and a blue lake. When he finished, he had a bright, cheerful guide. He put it on a post near the lake.

The next day, a girl in a pink hoodie and denim overalls came to the lake. Her curly black hair bounced in two puffs. She saw Leo's guide and read it carefully. 'This is great!' she said. 'I didn't know bread was bad for swans.' She folded a copy of the guide and put it in her pocket.

The girl walked to the lake's edge, but stopped far back. She watched the little swan glide peacefully. 'Look!' she called to Leo. 'It's not swimming away!' Leo grinned. 'Because you're giving it space,' he said. The girl nodded. 'I'm going to tell my friends about this guide. They should read it too.'

Soon, more children came to the lake. They read Leo's guide and followed it. They watched the swans from a safe distance. They picked up litter and put it in the bin. They never chased or fed the swans. The little swan swam closer than before, calm and graceful. The park keeper smiled and gave Leo a thumbs-up.

Leo felt proud. His little guide was helping everyone share the lake kindly. The girl in the pink hoodie came back with three friends. 'We read your guide,' they said. 'Can we help make more copies?' Leo's heart swelled. 'Yes!' he said. 'The more people know, the safer the swans will be.'

The park keeper brought paper and crayons. The children drew pictures of swans and wrote the rules in bright colors. They hung new guides on trees and posts around the lake. The little swan watched from the water, its black beak shining. It seemed to know that these children were friends who kept a safe distance.

One afternoon, the little swan swam close to the shore and looked at Leo. It didn't swim away. Leo sat very still and watched. The swan tilted its head, as if to say thank you. Leo whispered, 'You're welcome, little swan.' The park keeper saw this and said, 'You've taught everyone well, Leo. The swans are happy here.'

Leo closed his green notebook and smiled. He had learned that wildlife deserves safe distances. Now other children followed his guide, and everyone enjoyed the swans safely. The lake was a peaceful place for both people and swans. And Leo knew that even a small boy with a notebook could make a big difference.

The sun set over the lake, painting the water pink and gold. Leo waved goodbye to the little swan. 'See you tomorrow,' he called. The swan lifted its wing—the one with the grey tip—as if waving back. Leo walked home with his guide tucked under his arm, feeling proud and happy. He couldn't wait to visit his swan friend again.