

The Girl and the Starling



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Amelia loved the evenings best. When the sun dipped low, she would climb onto the garden wall and wait. She had warm brown skin and curly black hair in two puffy buns. Her yellow t-shirt had a big star on it, and her red sneakers tapped the wall with excitement. The sky was turning pink and gold, and Amelia knew what was coming.



Then she heard them: a soft, whooshing sound like a thousand tiny flags flapping. Hundreds of starlings poured into the sky! Their glossy black feathers shone with green and purple, and their little yellow beaks glinted. They swooped and swirled, turning all at once, like a giant dancing ribbon. Amelia gasped. 'Wow!' she whispered. 'They're like one big happy family.'



Every evening, Amelia watched the starlings. They twisted and turned, never bumping, never crashing. Each bird seemed to know exactly what the others would do. 'How do they do that?' Amelia wondered. She tried to follow one bird with her finger, but it was too quick. The flock flowed like water, smooth and lovely. Amelia felt warm inside, as if she had seen a secret.



One night, Amelia had an idea. 'I could make a dance like the starlings!' she said. She ran to her room and twirled around, arms out. But dancing alone felt wrong. The starlings were never alone. They danced together. Amelia stopped and looked at her star necklace. 'I need friends,' she said. 'Lots of friends, moving as one.'



The next morning, Amelia told her teacher, Mrs. Hart. Mrs. Hart had short wavy auburn hair and thin round glasses. She wore a long teal cardigan and a silver whistle on a lanyard. 'A starling dance?' Mrs. Hart said, smiling. 'What a wonderful idea! We can practise after lunch.' Amelia beamed. 'But we need to move together,' she said. 'Like a team.'



At lunchtime, Amelia stood in front of her classmates. 'We're going to be starlings,' she announced. 'When I swoop, you swoop. When I turn, you turn.' The children giggled and bumped into each other. 'This is hard!' said Ben. Amelia nodded. 'The starlings practise too,' she said. 'They fly together every evening. We can practise too.'



They practised in the playground. Amelia stretched her arms like wings. 'Swoop left!' she called. The children swooped. 'Now right!' They turned. But some went left when others went right. 'Let's try again,' said Amelia. Mrs. Hart blew her whistle. 'Listen to each other,' she said. 'That's what the starlings do.' The children tried again, a little better this time.



Each day, they practised. Amelia watched the starlings every evening and then taught the class new moves. 'They swirl like a whirlpool!' she said. 'They stretch out like a scarf!' The children learned to watch Amelia and each other. Slowly, they stopped bumping. They began to move like one big happy family, just like the birds.



One afternoon, Mrs. Hart said, 'The school show is next Friday. You could perform your starling dance.' The children cheered. Amelia's eyes grew wide. 'Really? Our dance?' She felt nervous and excited all at once. 'We'll be ready,' she said. 'We'll practise every day.' The starlings outside seemed to cheer them on, swirling in the golden sky.



The big day arrived. The hall was packed with parents and children. Amelia wore her yellow star t-shirt and red sneakers. Her classmates stood behind her, ready. Amelia's heart beat fast. 'Remember,' she whispered, 'we're starlings. We move together.' They nodded. Mrs. Hart gave a thumbs-up from the side. 'You can do it,' she mouthed.



Music started, soft and flowing. Amelia raised her arms and swooped. Her classmates swooped with her. They turned left, then right, like a shimmering ribbon. They swirled and stretched, moving as one. The audience gasped. It looked just like a flock of starlings dancing across the evening sky. Amelia felt a happy shiver. They were doing it!



When the dance ended, the hall was silent for a moment. Then everyone clapped and cheered! Mrs. Hart clapped the loudest, her glasses shining. 'Wonderful!' she cried. Amelia's classmates hugged each other, laughing. Amelia touched her star necklace. She had never felt so proud. They had worked together and created something truly extraordinary.



After the show, Amelia went outside. The evening sky was pink. The starlings appeared, swooping and turning. Amelia smiled. 'Thank you,' she whispered. 'You showed us how.' She thought about her friends and how they had practised until they moved like one. It was like magic, but it wasn't magic. It was teamwork.



At school the next day, everyone wanted to dance again. 'Can we be starlings at playtime?' asked Ben. Amelia laughed. 'Of course! Starlings are always together.' They ran outside and swooped across the playground, arms outstretched. Mrs. Hart watched from the door, smiling. The starlings had taught them something special, and they would never forget it.



That evening, Amelia climbed onto her garden wall. The starlings danced across the sky, a swirling, shimmering flock. Amelia spread her arms and imagined she was flying with them. She felt warm and happy. She knew that whenever friends worked together, they could create something wonderful. The starlings dipped low, as if to say goodnight, and Amelia waved back.



From that day on, Amelia always looked at the sky. She knew that the starlings would dance again tomorrow. And she knew that she and her friends could dance too, moving together like one big happy family. Working together made ordinary days feel extraordinary, and that was the best feeling in the world.