

The Girl and the Koi



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Mika loved to visit the garden pond at the end of her street. She wore her yellow rain boots and blue overalls, ready for adventure. The pond sparkled in the sunlight, and bright koi fish swam in lazy circles. Mika leaned over the edge and smiled at them. 'Hello, fishies!' she called. The koi wiggled their long fins as if they were waving back.



The koi were the most beautiful fish Mika had ever seen. Their scales shone with orange, white, and gold patches, like little suns in the water. One koi had a golden spot on its head, and Mika named it Sunny. Sunny had round, friendly eyes and tiny whiskers. Mika giggled as Sunny swam right up to her hand. 'You're my friend,' she whispered.



Every day after school, Mika ran to the pond. She watched the koi glide through the water and nibble at the plants. Sometimes she brought crumbs from her lunch, but she was careful not to give too much. 'Fish need healthy food, too,' she said. The koi seemed to listen, their round eyes watching her. Mika felt happy just being near them.



One afternoon, Mika noticed something strange. The pond water looked cloudy and green, not clear and sparkly like before. The koi swam slowly, hardly moving their long fins. Sunny stayed near the bottom and didn't come to say hello. Mika frowned. 'What's wrong, little fish?' she asked. But the koi just drifted, looking dull and sad.



Mika hurried to find Grandpa Sato, who took care of the garden. He wore his straw hat and green apron, and his glasses glinted in the sun. 'Grandpa Sato,' Mika said, 'the pond looks dirty, and the koi are so slow!' Grandpa Sato nodded wisely. 'Let's take a look,' he said. They walked to the pond together, and Mika pointed at the cloudy water.



Grandpa Sato knelt by the pond and dipped his hand in the water. 'The water is not clean,' he said gently. 'When water gets dirty, fish can't breathe well. They feel slow and sad.' Mika's eyes grew wide. 'So that's why Sunny won't play!' she said. 'We must help them!' Grandpa Sato smiled. 'You're right, Mika. Clean water keeps fish healthy and happy.'



Grandpa Sato explained that leaves and mud had fallen into the pond and made the water dirty. 'We need to clean the pond and add fresh water,' he said. 'Can I help?' Mika asked. 'Of course!' said Grandpa Sato. He gave her a small net. 'You can scoop out the leaves,' he said. Mika nodded, ready to work.



Mika scooped floating leaves and twigs from the pond with her net. Grandpa Sato used a rake to pull out slimy weeds. It was hard work, but Mika didn't stop. 'These fish are my friends,' she said. 'I want them to be healthy.' The koi watched from the murky water, their fins barely moving. Mika worked carefully so she wouldn't scare them.



After they cleared the leaves, Grandpa Sato showed Mika how to add fresh water from the hose. 'Not too fast,' he said. 'We don't want to shock the fish.' Mika held the hose and watched clear water flow into the pond. Slowly, the cloudy water began to look cleaner. 'It's working!' Mika cheered. The koi started to move a little more, curious about the fresh water.



Grandpa Sato also added a special liquid that helps keep the water healthy for fish. 'This makes the water safe,' he explained. Mika watched as the pond began to sparkle again. 'Will the koi be happy now?' she asked. 'They will,' said Grandpa Sato. 'But we must take care of the pond every day.' Mika promised to help. She felt proud to be a pond keeper.



The next morning, Mika ran to the pond as fast as she could. The water was clear and bright! Sunny swam right up to her, its orange and white scales shining in the sun. The other koi darted playfully, their long fins flowing like ribbons. 'You're all better!' Mika laughed. Sunny splashed a tiny bit of water, as if saying thank you.



Grandpa Sato came to see the koi too. 'You did a good job, Mika,' he said, his wrinkled eyes twinkling. 'Clean water makes a big difference.' Mika beamed. 'I'm going to check the pond every day,' she said. 'I'll pick up leaves and make sure the water stays clear.' Grandpa Sato patted her shoulder. 'That's the spirit of a true friend.'



Mika learned that animals need the right kind of home to stay healthy. Just like people need clean air and good food, fish need clean water. She watched the koi swim happily and felt warm inside. 'I'll always take care of you,' she promised. The koi seemed to hear her, for they swam in a joyful circle, their golden patches gleaming like tiny treasures.



From that day on, Mika visited the pond every afternoon. She scooped out any fallen leaves and checked that the water was clear. Sometimes Grandpa Sato joined her, and they talked about fish and gardens. The koi grew lively and bright, and Sunny always swam to greet her. Mika knew that caring for the pond was a special job, and she loved it.



One sunny day, Mika brought her friend Lila to see the pond. 'Look how clean it is!' Mika said proudly. Lila gasped at the shining koi. 'They're beautiful!' Mika told Lila all about cleaning the pond and keeping the water healthy. 'Animals need good homes,' Mika explained. Lila nodded. 'Can I help too?' she asked. Mika smiled. 'Of course!'



Mika and Lila sat by the pond, watching the koi dance in the clear water. Sunny swam close and flicked its tail, splashing them gently. Mika laughed. She knew that with care and love, the pond would always be a happy home for her fish friends. And every day, she would keep her promise to take good care of the water, the pond, and the koi.