

The Girl and the Swan Lake



Jane MEADOW

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Once there was a girl named Maya who loved to visit the quiet lake near her home. She wore her mustard yellow raincoat and carried a small canvas satchel with a sketchbook inside. The lake was calm and still, and the tall reeds whispered in the breeze. Maya liked to sit on a flat stone and watch the water for hours. (66 words)



One misty morning, Maya tiptoed along the muddy path in her dark green rubber boots. She heard a soft rustle in the reeds and stopped to listen. Through the grass, she saw a woven reed nest with pale eggs tucked inside. A mother swan sat on the nest, her white feathers slightly ruffled. Maya held her breath and stayed very still. (63 words)



The mother swan had a long, arched neck and a bright orange beak with a black base. Her dark eyes watched Maya calmly. Maya sat down on the grass and opened her sketchbook. She drew the swan's elegant shape and the nest among the reeds. The lake was so quiet that she could hear the swan's soft breathing. (59 words)



Soon a father swan glided into view, larger and prouder than the mother. His white feathers gleamed, and he had a black knob at the base of his orange beak. He circled the nest on the calm water, then settled nearby. Maya smiled. She knew the swans felt safe because the lake was peaceful. (57 words)



Maya returned to the lake every day after school. She watched the swans from her flat stone, always keeping a good distance. The mother swan stayed on her nest, keeping the eggs warm. The father swan glided around, alert and steady. Maya's sketchbook filled with drawings of the graceful birds. (54 words)



One sunny Saturday, a group of visitors came to the lake. They chattered and laughed, pointing at the swans. Some stepped close to the water's edge, and one held binoculars. Another raised a camera. The mother swan lifted her head and shifted on the nest, looking worried. The father swan swam in quick, tight circles. (60 words)



Maya saw the swans grow restless and knew she had to help. She walked over to the visitors with a friendly smile. 'Excuse me,' she said politely, 'but the swans are nesting. We need to stay back and keep our voices low so they can rest.' The visitors looked at her curiously. (52 words)



A man with the camera asked, 'Why can't we get closer? We just want a picture.' Maya pointed to the nest. 'If we get too close, the mother swan might leave her eggs,' she explained. 'And if we're loud, the swans feel scared. They need a quiet, safe place to care for their nest.' (59 words)



The visitors listened to Maya's gentle words. They looked at the mother swan, so calm on her nest, and the father swan, gliding protectively nearby. One by one, they stepped back from the water's edge. They lowered their voices to soft whispers. The man with the camera put it down. 'You're right,' he said. 'Let's give them space.' (63 words)



Maya showed the visitors a good spot to watch from behind a big willow tree. 'We can see them from here without disturbing them,' she said. The group gathered quietly. From a distance, they watched the swans settle back into peace. The mother swan tucked her head, and the father swan glided close to the nest. (58 words)



The lake grew quiet again, just the way Maya loved it. The swans rested and cared for their nest, and the visitors smiled as they watched. 'Thank you for telling us,' a little girl whispered to Maya. 'The swans are beautiful, and now they're happy.' Maya nodded, her gap-toothed smile bright. 'They just need peace and quiet,' she said. (58 words)



After that day, Maya made a small sign from a piece of driftwood. She wrote in careful letters: 'Quiet please, swans nesting.' She placed it at the edge of the path. Visitors read the sign and remembered to stay back. The lake stayed calm, and the swans stayed peaceful. (54 words)



Weeks passed, and one morning Maya heard tiny peeping sounds. She peeked from behind the willow tree and saw three fluffy grey cygnets waddling near the nest. The mother swan watched them proudly, and the father swan glided close. Maya's heart filled with joy. Her quiet care had helped the swan family grow. (59 words)



The visitors returned often, but now they always kept their distance and spoke softly. They pointed at the cygnets and smiled. Some brought friends and told them about the sign. The lake remained a peaceful haven for the swans and all the creatures who lived there. (48 words)



Maya sat on her flat stone and drew the cygnets in her sketchbook. She felt happy and proud. She had learned that even small actions can protect wildlife. By asking people to stay back and stay calm, she had kept the lake quiet and safe. The swans could rest and raise their family in peace. (60 words)



From that day on, Maya visited the lake whenever she could. She always remembered that wild creatures need quiet, safe places to live. And whenever she saw the swans gliding gracefully across the water, she smiled. Her kindness had made a difference, and the peaceful lake would always be a special place for her and the swans. (61 words)