

The Boy and the Kakapo



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Milo was eight years old, with warm light-brown skin, short curly dark-brown hair and large hazel eyes. He loved exploring. One sunny Saturday, he pulled on his mustard-yellow t-shirt, tied his red sneakers and packed his green backpack. He tucked a small sketchbook under his arm and a pencil behind his ear. Today, he was going into the forest to draw whatever he found.



The forest was green and quiet, full of tall trees and soft moss. Ferns curled like little green springs, and sunlight made spots on the path. Milo heard a strange, deep booming sound. Boom! Boom! It rolled through the trees like a drum. Milo stopped and listened. What kind of bird could make a sound like that? He walked slowly toward it, his heart going thump-thump-thump.



A tall ranger in an olive-green uniform stepped onto the path. She wore a wide-brimmed hat, and her long black braid swung as she walked. "Hello there," she said with a wide, friendly smile. "I'm Ranger Hana. Are you looking for something?" Milo told her about the booming sound. Her dark eyes twinkled. "Ah! Follow me. I know exactly who that is."



Ranger Hana led Milo to a mossy clearing. There, waddling over the roots, was the strangest parrot Milo had ever seen. It was round and plump, about the size of a large chicken, with mossy green and yellow feathers and brown speckles. Its face was pale and owl-like, with big dark eyes. A tiny leaf was stuck on its head like a little hat.



The kakapo blinked at Milo and took a wobbly step closer. Its short stubby wings flapped, but it did not fly. "Hello," Milo whispered. The parrot made a soft, gentle sound and tilted its head. Milo laughed. "You're funny! You look like a fuzzy green ball with a beak." The kakapo puffed itself up proudly, as if it agreed completely.



"This is a kakapo," Ranger Hana said quietly. "It's a parrot that cannot fly. It walks everywhere on its strong legs. It makes that booming call to find other kakapos far away in the forest." Milo opened his sketchbook and began to draw. He drew the round body, the big grey beak and the owl-like face. The parrot watched him, curious and calm.



"Are there many kakapos?" Milo asked. Ranger Hana shook her head. "Not many at all. They are very rare. They need our help to stay safe." Milo's pencil stopped. He looked at his new friend, so gentle and funny, and a warm, determined feeling grew inside him. "Then I want to protect him," Milo said. "But how can I help?"



Ranger Hana knelt beside him. "The best way is to tell people," she said. "When people know about kakapos and the forest, they care for them. You could make something to share what you've learned." Milo looked down at his sketchbook, at the drawing of the round green parrot. Slowly, a big, gap-toothed smile spread across his face. "I know what to make," he said.



Back home, Milo worked all afternoon. He drew the kakapo on every page, waddling and puffing and blinking its big eyes. He wrote simple words in bright letters: Kakapos are rare. Keep the forest green. Stay quiet near nests. He colored the pages cheerfully and stapled them together. It smelled of pencil and crayon, and it was full of his new friend.



The next day, Milo took his little booklet everywhere. He showed it to his neighbors, his teacher and the children at the park. "This is a kakapo," he told everyone. "It cannot fly, and it needs our help." People leaned in close to look at the drawings. They smiled at the round, funny parrot with the leaf on its head and asked lots of questions.



Ranger Hana helped him share the booklet at the forest visitor center. Visitors read it and learned how to care for the forest and its unusual birds. "Keep the trees safe," they read. "Pick up your litter. Stay on the path." A family promised to plant trees. A shop owner put a drawing in her window. The little booklet began to travel from hand to hand.



Weeks later, Milo returned to the mossy clearing. Ranger Hana was there, and more people were helping to look after the forest. The trees were green, the ferns were curling, and the path was tidy. Milo listened. He heard a soft rustle, then a gentle waddle. Out from the ferns came his friend, round and plump, with a fresh leaf stuck on its head.



The kakapo stopped beside Milo and blinked its big dark eyes. Milo sat very still. Then, deep and proud, the parrot boomed: Boom! Boom! It was the happiest sound Milo had ever heard. Ranger Hana laughed. "He's calling to his friends," she said. "Maybe he's telling them a kind boy helped keep his home safe." Milo beamed from ear to ear.



Milo opened his sketchbook and drew one last picture. He drew the kakapo standing tall on a mossy root, with the forest glowing bright and green all around. Underneath, he wrote: The forest is home to everyone. Keep it safe. He tucked the drawing into his pocket and walked home slowly, happy and proud. Protecting one little friend had made a big difference.



From that day on, Milo kept sharing his booklet with everyone he knew. People read it, learned and lent a hand. More trees were planted, and more people walked quietly on the path. The kakapo waddled safely through the green forest, booming its gentle call to its friends. And Milo kept a pencil behind his ear, ready to draw whatever wonderful thing he found next.



And so the boy and the kakapo became the best of friends, and the forest stayed green and safe. Milo learned that even a small person with a sketchbook can make a big difference. One drawing, one booklet, one kind voice can help protect the unusual creatures that share our world. The kakapo boomed happily in the trees, and Milo smiled all the way home.