The Girl and the Little Loris

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Maya loved animals more than anything in the world. She had a green satchel full of notebooks, and in them she drew every creature she met. Her warm brown skin glowed in the sun, and her two curly puffs bounced as she ran. One day, her class took a trip to the rainforest. Maya could not wait to see what she would find.

At the forest edge, a tall ranger named Mr. Tan greeted the children. His khaki shirt had a shiny badge, and his round glasses twinkled. "Welcome to the rainforest!" he said with a warm smile. "Remember, we are guests here. We look, we listen, and we leave everything as we find it." Maya nodded and held her notebook tight.

Mr. Tan led the group along a leafy path. Suddenly, he stopped and pointed up. "Look, but stay quiet," he whispered. High on a branch, a tiny animal clung with small hands. It had huge round amber eyes and soft grey-brown fur. "That is a slow loris," Mr. Tan said. "It is shy and gentle, and it only comes out at night."

Maya's eyes grew wide. The little loris blinked slowly and peered down at her. Its tiny ears twitched, and a dark stripe ran along its back. "It's so small!" Maya whispered. "And its eyes are like big golden marbles." She quickly sketched the loris in her notebook, her pencil flying across the page. She wanted to remember every detail.

Back at school, Maya could not stop thinking about the slow loris. She read books and asked Mr. Tan questions. She learned that lorises are wild animals, not pets. They need the forest to find food and build homes. "Many people think they are cute toys," Mr. Tan said. "But taking them from the forest makes them sad and scared."

Maya's best friend Pip loved animals too. Her backpack was covered in stickers of tigers and parrots. "I want a slow loris as a pet!" Pip declared one day. "It's so cute!" Maya shook her head. "Lorises are not toys, Pip. They belong in the wild, with their families, in the trees." Pip looked confused. "But why can't we keep one?" she asked.

Maya decided to explain with a story. "Imagine you were taken from your home and put in a cage," she said. "You would miss your family and the things you love. Lorises feel the same." She showed Pip her drawing of the little loris clinging to the branch. "It needs to be free, like us." Pip's freckled face grew thoughtful.

Mr. Tan invited Maya and Pip to the ranger station. He showed them a poster of a slow loris with a red X over a cage. "Wild animals should never be treated as toys," he said. "They need our help to stay safe." Maya had an idea. "We could make a booklet!" she said. "A cheerful guide to teach everyone how to protect nature."

Maya and Pip worked hard on the booklet. Maya drew pictures of the slow loris with its big eyes and gentle smile. She wrote simple rules: "Never touch wild animals. Keep them in the forest. Protect their homes." Pip added stickers and bright colors. They called it "The Little Loris Says: Let Me Be Wild!" It was full of fun facts and kind words.

When the booklet was finished, Maya felt proud. But then she heard some kids at school talking. "I saw a slow loris for sale online," one said. "Maybe I can buy it!" Maya's heart thumped. She knew she had to speak up. She marched over with her booklet in hand. "Wait!" she said. "Please listen to me."

Maya opened the booklet and showed them the page with the little loris. "This is a slow loris," she said. "It looks cute, but it is a wild animal. It needs the forest to be happy. If we take it home, it will be scared and sad." The kids leaned in to look. "I didn't know that," one said. "Me neither," said another.

Pip stepped forward with a stack of booklets. "We made these for everyone!" she said. "They teach you how to protect nature and keep wild animals safe and free." The kids took the booklets and read them with wide eyes. "I want to help!" said one. "Me too!" said another. Maya grinned, showing the little gap between her front teeth.

Mr. Tan heard about Maya's booklet and was delighted. "You are a true friend to the forest," he said. He invited Maya and Pip to hand out booklets at the nature fair. People from all around came to learn. Maya stood proudly in her yellow leaf t-shirt and told everyone about the slow loris. "Wild animals are not toys," she said. "They are our neighbors, and we must protect them."

That evening, Maya sat under a big tree and thought about the little loris. She imagined it clinging to its branch, safe and free. In her mind, she tied a tiny woven leaf collar around its neck as a gift of friendship. "I will always protect you," she whispered. The forest rustled softly, as if it were thanking her.

Pip ran over with a big smile. "Maya, everyone loves the booklet!" she said. "We ran out!" Maya laughed. "Then we'll make more," she said. "And we'll keep spreading the word." Pip nodded. "I'm glad I learned that wild animals aren't toys," she said. "They are amazing just the way they are—wild and free."

Maya's booklet traveled far and wide. Kids everywhere learned to watch slow lorises from a distance and never take them from the forest. Maya kept drawing and writing, always with kindness in her heart. And sometimes, when the night was quiet, she imagined the little loris blinking its big amber eyes at her, safe and free in its leafy home. That made her smile.