

The Girl and the Sleeping Swan



Ebru Mina TOMURCUK

The Girl and the Sleeping Swan

Ebru Mina TOMURCUK



Mira lived in a cottage at the edge of a whispering wood. Every morning she walked the mossy path with her small cloth satchel bouncing at her side. Her wavy black hair was always in two low braids, and her mustard-yellow dress peeked out from under a blue knitted cardigan. She loved to explore and listen to the birds.



One misty morning, Mira followed a trail of tiny silver feathers. They led her to a hidden pond where a great white swan lay on the soft grass. Its feathers had a faint silver sheen, and its eyes were closed with silver lashes. A small golden crescent mark glowed on its forehead. A silver ribbon with a tiny bell was tied around its neck.



Mira knelt beside the sleeping swan. 'Are you hurt?' she whispered. The swan did not move, but its soft glow warmed her hands. She noticed a folded leaf near its wing. On it, in shaky writing, were the words: 'Only the missing lullaby can wake me.' Mira's amber-brown eyes grew wide. She knew she had to help.



Mira hurried to Granny Fern's cottage. The old woman sat by the fire, her silver hair in a loose bun and her moss-green shawl around her shoulders. 'Granny,' Mira said, 'I found a sleeping swan! It needs a lullaby.' Granny Fern smiled. 'Ah, the old song. I remember the first verses, but the rest is lost.'



Granny Fern took her carved leaf walking stick and led Mira to a dusty shelf. 'The lullaby has many parts,' she said. 'You must be patient and gather them one by one.' She sang the first verse in a soft, crackly voice: 'Sleep, sweet swan, on the silver lake, dreams will come and gently wake.' Mira listened closely and repeated every word.



Mira practiced the first verse all the way home. She sang it to the swan, but the swan only breathed slowly. 'The song is not complete,' Mira said. 'I need more.' She searched her satchel and found a tiny blue feather. It was not from the swan. Maybe it was a clue. She decided to follow it.



The blue feather led Mira to a hollow tree where a family of wrens lived. 'Excuse me,' she said politely, 'do you know a lullaby?' The mother wren chirped, 'We sing a sleepy tune at dusk.' She sang: 'Stars above and moon so bright, close your eyes and say goodnight.' Mira thanked the wrens and wrote the words in her mind.



Mira sang the two verses to the swan that evening. The silver ribbon's tiny bell jingled softly, but the swan's eyes stayed closed. 'Patience,' Mira whispered. She noticed a faint glow coming from the reeds across the pond. She waded through the shallow water and found a shiny pebble with a word carved on it: 'Listen.'



Mira sat quietly by the pond and listened. She heard the wind in the reeds, the frogs croaking, and the water lapping. Then she heard a faint humming. It came from a dragonfly hovering nearby. 'You hum a lullaby?' Mira asked. The dragonfly nodded and hummed: 'Rest your wings and rest your heart, gentle dreams will soon depart.'



Mira now had three verses. She sang them to the swan with all her heart. The swan's glow brightened a little, but its eyes remained closed. Mira felt a tiny pang of worry. 'Maybe I need one more verse,' she said. She remembered Granny Fern's words: 'Patience matters.' So she kept searching.



Mira returned to Granny Fern and told her about the wrens and the dragonfly. Granny Fern's dark eyes twinkled. 'You are learning the song piece by piece,' she said. 'I recall a final verse my grandmother sang.' She closed her eyes and sang: 'When the lullaby is true, magic wakes and dreams come true.' Mira clapped her hands.



Mira practiced all four verses until she knew them by heart. She walked to the pond at sunset, her red ankle boots crunching on the leaves. She knelt beside the swan and sang softly, verse by verse. The air began to sparkle with tiny golden lights. The swan's silver lashes fluttered. Mira's heart beat fast.



As Mira sang the last word, the golden crescent on the swan's forehead glowed brightly. The swan opened its eyes—two deep, wise pools of blue. It lifted its long curved neck and looked at Mira. The tiny bell on its silver ribbon rang a happy note. Magic sparkled all around them, and Mira laughed with joy.



The swan bowed its head and nuzzled Mira's cheek. 'Thank you, patient girl,' it said in a soft, musical voice. 'You woke me with your kind heart.' Mira hugged the swan's warm neck. 'I'm so glad you're awake,' she said. 'Will you stay with me?' The swan nodded. 'I will be your friend, always.'



From that day on, the swan followed Mira everywhere. They walked through the whispering wood together, and the swan's silver ribbon bell jingled as they went. Granny Fern smiled when she saw them. 'You see,' she said, 'patience and a kind heart can wake even the deepest sleep.' Mira nodded, her amber eyes shining.



Mira learned that patience matters more than anything. She had searched everywhere and never given up, and now she had a magical friend. The swan sang the lullaby back to her at bedtime, and its soft glow filled her room. Mira smiled as she fell asleep, knowing that some things are worth waiting for.