The Girl and the Rescue Goose
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Maya skipped down the garden path in her yellow raincoat, her green rubber boots splashing in every puddle. Her curly black hair bounced in two short puffs, and freckles danced across her cheeks as she smiled. Behind the old stone wall, something rustled in the tall grass. Maya stopped and listened carefully. A soft, sad honk floated through the morning air, and she knew someone needed help.

Maya peeked over the wall and gasped. A white goose sat in the weeds, its long neck curved low and its dark round eyes watching her. One grey-tipped wing hung down, wrapped in a soft cloth, and a little blue ribbon fluttered beside it. The goose trembled and gave another small, worried honk. Maya whispered, "It's all right. I won't hurt you."

Maya ran to find her papa, who was working in the garden in his red flannel shirt. "Papa, there's a goose with a hurt wing!" He wiped his strong hands on his denim overalls and came to look. The goose tried to scoot away, but its wing would not lift. Papa said gently, "It needs rest and the right kind of care. Every animal deserves that."

Nana hurried out with her soft slippers shuffling on the path. Her silver bun bobbed as she knelt beside the goose. "Poor dear," she said, her crinkled eyes kind behind her round glasses. "A goose needs a quiet place, soft hay to rest on, and fresh water nearby." She smiled at Maya. "Shall we make a sanctuary for it?" Maya nodded so hard her hair puffs bounced.

Papa found a corner of the garden near the apple tree, safe and calm. "We'll build a low fence so the goose can't wander and get hurt again," he said, pulling his work gloves from his pocket. Maya held the wooden posts while Papa hammered them gently. The goose watched from the grass, its bandaged wing tucked close and its orange beak low.

Maya filled her small canvas satchel with soft hay and carried it to the sanctuary. Nana brought a shallow bowl and poured fresh water into it, and the water shone like a little mirror. Maya spread the hay in a snug, cozy nest. "There," she said softly. "A comfy place to rest your wing." The goose stretched its long neck and blinked at her.

The goose was shy. It did not want to step inside the fence. Maya sat quietly on the grass and waited, humming a little tune. Nana said, "Give it time, dear. Kindness is patient." Slowly, the goose waddled forward one orange foot at a time. It tipped its head and looked at Maya with one dark, curious eye.

Maya came back every single morning, rain or shine. She brought fresh water in the bowl and fluffed the hay until it was soft as a pillow. She talked to the goose in a gentle voice. "Good morning, Honk," she called it, because of its happy little sound. The goose stopped trembling when it heard her footsteps now.

Papa showed Maya how to check the fence and make sure everything was safe. "Proper care means a safe place and a clean home," he said, tightening a loose post. Maya helped him, her small hands steady and her freckled face serious. The goose watched them work, its bandaged wing resting on the warm, dry hay.

One afternoon, Nana sat with Maya beside the sanctuary. "You see," Nana said, her laugh lines crinkling, "every animal needs shelter, water, food, and gentle kindness. You gave this goose all four." Maya looked at the goose, which was nibbling quietly. "I want it to heal," she said. "It will," Nana promised warmly.

Days passed. Maya brought soft hay and fresh water, and she sat close and spoke softly. Then one morning, something wonderful happened. The goose stood up tall, shook its white feathers, and stretched its bandaged wing. It did not wince. It looked at Maya with bright, trusting eyes and gave a strong, cheerful honk.

Maya called Papa and Nana to come and see. "Look! It's getting stronger!" she cried, her gap-toothed smile wide. The goose took a wobbly step, then another, its orange webbed feet steady on the hay. Papa clapped his work gloves together, and Nana pressed her hands to her heart. The little blue ribbon fluttered as the goose stood proud and tall.

Then the goose spread its grey-tipped wing and flapped it—once, twice, three times! It stretched its long neck up to the sky and honked a happy, joyful sound. Maya laughed out loud and flapped her arms too. "You did it!" she cheered. The goose waddled over and leaned its head gently against her hand, warm and trusting.

Maya sat in the warm afternoon sun, the goose resting beside her. She felt proud deep in her heart. Her care had made a difference, along with Papa's fence and Nana's wise words. "Every animal deserves kindness and a safe place to heal," she said softly. The goose honked, as if it agreed with every word.

From that day on, the sanctuary stayed cozy and safe. Maya still brought soft hay and fresh water every morning, because kindness is something you keep giving. The goose grew stronger and flapped its wing with joy whenever she came near. Papa said, "You were a fine helper, Maya," and tied a fresh blue ribbon on the fence post.

Nana smiled and said, "The smallest hands can do the biggest kindness." Maya nodded, her curly puffs bobbing. She learned that a hurt wing heals with proper care, and a shy goose grows brave with gentle love. Every animal deserves a safe place to rest and heal. And Maya knew she would always be ready to help.