

The Girl and the Rescued Dove



Ebru Mina TOMURCUK

The Girl and the Rescued Dove

Ebru Mina TOMURCUK



Mia skipped down the sunny path to the bird sanctuary, her red sneakers crunching on fallen leaves. She loved helping Grandpa Lee feed the ducks and tidy the birdseed bins. Today, a flutter in the tall grass caught her eye. A small grey dove lay on the ground, one wing drooping. "Oh, you poor thing!" Mia whispered, kneeling close.



The dove's bright dark eyes blinked up at her, scared but still. Mia remembered Grandpa Lee's rule: never grab, always be gentle. She cupped her hands softly and scooped the little bird up. Its heart beat fast against her fingers. "It's okay," she murmured. "I'll take you to Grandpa Lee." She walked slowly, careful not to jostle the hurt wing.



Grandpa Lee's round glasses glinted in the sun as he bent to look. "A hurt dove," he said, his voice calm and warm. "We'll make it a safe place to rest." He showed Mia a small box lined with a soft towel. "Gently now," he said. Mia placed the dove inside, and it settled down with a tiny sigh. "Can we put a bandage on its wing?" she asked.



Grandpa Lee nodded. "A thin blue bandage will keep the wing still while it heals." With careful fingers, Mia wrapped the bandage just right. The dove didn't struggle. "You have gentle hands," Grandpa Lee said, smiling. Mia's cheeks flushed with pride. "Now," he said, "let's get some food and water. Doves need small seeds and fresh water every day."



Mia filled a tiny dish with seeds and another with water. She set them in the box. The dove looked at her, then dipped its beak and drank. "It's drinking!" Mia whispered, her brown eyes wide. Grandpa Lee nodded. "That's a good sign. But we must keep the box quiet and warm. A resting dove heals best." Mia placed the box in a cozy corner away from noise.



Every day, Mia visited the dove. She changed the water and added seeds. She checked the bandage and kept the box clean. "You're getting stronger," she told the dove. Its peach chest puffed up a little. One morning, the dove fluttered its good wing and let out a soft coo. Mia's heart soared. "Grandpa Lee!" she called. "I think it's feeling better!"



Grandpa Lee examined the dove. "The wing is healing nicely," he said. "But it's not ready to fly yet. It needs a few more days of rest and good food." Mia nodded. She liked taking care of the dove. It was hard work, but it felt important. "Can I help with anything else?" she asked. Grandpa Lee's eyes crinkled. "Actually, the sanctuary is making a display about doves. Would you like to help?"



Mia's face lit up. "Yes! I know all about doves now!" She skipped to the craft room, where her friend Rosie was painting a big sign. Rosie's puff buns bounced as she turned. "Hi, Mia! I'm painting a dove for the display. Want to help?" Mia nodded. "I can write facts about how to care for them." Rosie handed her a brush. "Like what?"



Mia thought about the dove. "Like giving them small seeds and fresh water every day. And keeping them quiet so they can rest." Rosie painted a tiny dish of seeds. "What else?" she asked. "Gentle hands," Mia said. "Never grab. Always scoop softly." Rosie added a pair of gentle hands to the painting. "That's a good one," she said. "Kids will remember that."



Grandpa Lee brought a photo of the dove for the display. "This is the dove you rescued," he said. "It's a perfect example of proper care." Mia beamed. She arranged the photo next to Rosie's sign. Then she wrote a small card: "Doves need a safe place to rest." Rosie read it and nodded. "Can we add a real feather?" she asked. Grandpa Lee found a soft grey feather on the ground.



The next day, the dove was ready to try flying. Mia carried the box outside. Grandpa Lee stood nearby. "Open the box slowly," he said. Mia lifted the lid. The dove looked around, then hopped to the edge. It flapped its wings—both of them!—and flew to a low branch. "It's flying!" Mia cheered. The dove cooed, as if saying thank you.



Mia watched the dove stretch its wings in the sun. "Will it stay?" she asked. Grandpa Lee smiled. "It might. Doves often stay where they feel safe." Mia hoped it would. She had grown to love the little bird. "I'm glad I found you," she whispered. The dove tilted its head and cooed softly. Mia felt warm inside, like the sun was shining just for her.



The sanctuary display was almost ready. Rosie painted a bright banner that said "Doves: Gentle Care." Mia arranged the photos and the real feather. Grandpa Lee added a small bowl of seeds for children to see. "This display will teach so many kids," he said. Mia looked at the dove, now perched on a branch nearby. "I hope they learn to be kind," she said.



On opening day, children gathered around the display. Mia stood proudly beside it. "Why does the dove have a bandage?" a boy asked. "It had a hurt wing," Mia explained. "We gave it a safe box and gentle care until it healed." Rosie pointed to the sign. "And we always use gentle hands," she added. The children nodded, their eyes wide with wonder.



The dove flew down and landed on Mia's shoulder. The children gasped. "It likes you!" Rosie said. Mia smiled. "It knows I'll be gentle." Grandpa Lee handed out small bags of birdseed. "You can help care for doves too," he told the children. "Remember: food, water, and a safe place to rest." The children promised they would.



As the sun set, Mia sat with Grandpa Lee and Rosie. The dove cooed from its branch. "You made a big difference," Grandpa Lee said. "Even small acts of kindness matter." Mia looked at her hands—the same hands that had rescued a tiny dove. She felt proud and happy. "I'll always be gentle," she said. And the dove fluttered its wings, safe and strong.