

The Little Maskmaker



Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN

The Little Maskmaker

Yavuz DEMİRKİRAN



In a sunny classroom, Mira sat quietly at her desk. She was small and slight, with warm brown skin and short curly black hair. A small paint smudge dotted her cheek. While other children laughed and talked, Mira watched and mixed colors in her mind. She loved to paint, but words felt tangled in her mouth. So she painted what she felt instead.



At home, Mira had a special box. In it were masks she had made: a happy mask with a big red smile, a sad mask with blue tear drops, and a brave mask with strong, straight eyebrows. Each mask was made of paper and paint. Mira wore them sometimes, just for herself. When she put on the brave mask, she felt tall and strong. The masks helped her show what was inside.



One Monday, the teacher announced a school play. Everyone would sing and act on stage. Mira's heart did a flip. She wanted to be in the play, but the thought of standing before everyone made her tummy feel wobbly. Theo, a tall boy with floppy blond hair, looked nervous too. He whispered, 'I'm singing a solo. I'm scared.' Mira had an idea. 'Maybe my masks can help,' she said.



After school, Mira showed her masks to Theo. His green eyes went wide. 'These are amazing!' he said. Mira smiled. 'You can wear the brave mask while you sing,' she said. Theo put it on. His shoulders relaxed. He hummed a little tune. 'I feel braver already,' he said. They decided to bring the masks to play practice the next day.



At practice, Priya, a cheerful girl with a long black braid, saw the masks. 'Can I try the happy one?' she asked. She put it on and danced around the room. Everyone laughed. Jonah, the smallest boy, watched from a corner. He had a bandage on his knee and looked sad. Mira handed him the sad mask. 'It's okay to feel sad,' she said. Jonah put it on and nodded.



The play was about a rainbow. The teacher said, 'We need more actors.' Priya wore the happy mask and invited others to join. 'Come on, it's fun!' she said. Theo wore the brave mask and practiced his solo. Jonah wore the sad mask and then the happy one, and he began to play. The masks helped everyone show their feelings. Mira felt proud of her masks and her friends.



But on the day before the play, something went wrong. The wind blew open a window, and the masks flew off the table. They landed in a mud puddle. The happy mask's smile drooped. The brave mask's eyebrows bent. Theo looked worried. 'What will we do?' he cried. Mira took a deep breath. 'We can fix them,' she said. 'Let's work together.'



They carried the masks to Mira's house. Mira's tool belt held brushes and paper. She showed her friends how to clean the masks gently. Priya wiped the happy mask. Theo straightened the brave mask's eyebrows. Jonah patted the sad mask dry. 'We're a team,' said Priya. Mira felt warm inside. Making masks together was even better than making them alone.



The next morning, the masks were dry and bright. Mira added a new mask: a surprised one with round eyes and an open mouth. 'For the rainbow's surprise!' she said. The children practiced once more. Theo sang his solo and his voice was strong. Jonah acted out a little dance. Priya beamed. 'We're ready!' she said. Mira nodded. She felt brave too, without even wearing a mask.



On the night of the play, the children gathered backstage. Theo's hands shook. He put on the brave mask. 'I can do this,' he said. Jonah peeked out at the audience and felt scared. He put on the sad mask, then the happy one. 'I'm okay,' he whispered. Priya wore the happy mask and gave everyone a thumbs-up. Mira stood by the curtain and watched.



The play began. Theo walked onstage in his brave mask. He sang his solo, and his voice filled the room. The audience clapped. Jonah wore the sad mask and acted out a rainy day. Then he switched to the happy mask and danced in the sunshine. Priya wore the happy mask and invited everyone to join. The stage was full of color and feeling. The masks helped everyone shine.



After the play, the audience cheered. Children crowded around Mira. 'Your masks are wonderful!' they said. Mira blushed. 'They helped us show our feelings,' she said. Theo took off his brave mask and smiled. 'I felt brave because of you,' he told Mira. Priya hugged her. 'You made us all brave,' she said. Jonah nodded and gave Mira a high-five.



The next day at school, the children made more masks together. They painted happy, sad, brave, surprised, and silly masks. They played games with the masks, pretending to be different characters. Everyone laughed and shared. Mira noticed that when they wore the masks, they talked about their feelings more. It was easier to say 'I'm sad' or 'I'm scared' when a mask was on.



The teacher saw how the masks helped. She asked Mira to teach the class how to make them. Mira stood in front of everyone, her heart beating fast. But she remembered the brave mask. She took a deep breath and began to show them how to cut and paint. Her friends cheered her on. 'You're a great teacher!' said Priya. Mira smiled. She felt brave, all on her own.



Soon, the whole class had masks. Children wore them at recess and during sharing time. They understood each other better. When someone looked sad, a friend would say, 'Do you want to talk about it?' The masks reminded them that everyone has feelings. Mira made a special mask for the classroom: a caring mask with a gentle smile. It hung on the wall, a symbol of their kindness.



Mira sat at her desk, painting a new mask. This one was for herself—a mask that showed her quiet, kind heart. She didn't need to wear it to be brave anymore. She had her friends, and they had each other. The masks had brought them together. And Mira knew that sharing feelings was the best way to care for one another. She smiled and dipped her brush in bright yellow paint.