

The Sapphire Oasis



Yavuz DEMİRKIRAN

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Lina loved exploring more than anything. One bright morning, she packed her tan satchel with a small notebook and a pencil. She tied her red sneakers and waved goodbye to her mother. Today, she would follow the winding path behind Grandpa Amos's house, where the tall grass whispered secrets and the wind smelled of wild mint.



As Lina walked, a flash of turquoise darted past her shoulder. It was a tiny songbird with a pale blue chest and one white feather on its left wing. The bird chirped boldly and hopped onto her satchel strap. "Hello there," Lina laughed. "I'll call you Pip." Pip tilted his head, then flew ahead, as if asking her to follow.



Pip led Lina through a gap in a mossy stone wall. Beyond it, Lina gasped. A hidden oasis shimmered before her. Palm trees with leaves as blue as the sky swayed gently around a clear, still pool. Dragonflies skimmed the water, and the air felt cool and quiet. "It's the most beautiful place I've ever seen," she whispered.



Lina sat on a smooth rock and opened her notebook. She drew the blue trees, the sparkling water, and Pip perched on a branch. A family of rabbits hopped by, and a turtle sunned itself on a log. Everything felt peaceful and perfect. But a small worry tugged at her heart. What if other people found this place?



That evening, Lina told Grandpa Amos about the oasis. His warm hazel eyes twinkled behind his wire-rimmed glasses. "I've heard stories of blue trees," he said, stroking his white beard. "But I've never seen them myself. You must have a special gift, little explorer." Lina smiled, but her worry stayed. She wanted to protect the oasis.



The next day, Lina returned to the oasis with Pip on her shoulder. She noticed a few candy wrappers floating near the water's edge. Someone had been here and left a mess. Pip chirped loudly, fluttering his turquoise wings. "We need to keep this place safe," Lina said. "But how?" She sat down and thought hard.



Lina remembered how her school had rules to keep everyone safe. Maybe the oasis needed rules too. She pulled out her notebook and began to write. "Stay on the paths," she said aloud. "Take nothing away. Leave no trash behind." Pip chirped in agreement. It was a start, but she knew she needed help to make the rules real.



Lina visited the park ranger station and met Mrs. Okafor. Mrs. Okafor had a thick black braid and round glasses. She listened carefully as Lina described the oasis and her worries. "You're right to care," Mrs. Okafor said, nodding. "Rare places need protection. Let's see these rules of yours." Lina showed her the notebook, and Mrs. Okafor smiled.



Mrs. Okafor read the rules and added one more: "Keep your voices soft." She explained that loud noises could frighten the birds and animals. Lina nodded. "That's a good rule," she said. Mrs. Okafor promised to visit the oasis and help put up a sign. "With kind rules and gentle care, the blue trees will stay healthy for years to come," she said.



Back at the oasis, Grandpa Amos helped Lina paint a wooden sign. He held the paintbrush with his steady hands while Lina wrote the rules in neat letters. Pip watched from a branch, chirping softly. "This sign will remind everyone to care for this special place," Grandpa Amos said. Lina felt proud. Her worry was turning into hope.



The next morning, Lina and Mrs. Okafor placed the sign at the oasis entrance. It read: "Welcome, friends! Please stay on the paths, take nothing away, leave no trash behind, and keep your voices soft. Thank you for caring." Mrs. Okafor also placed little markers along the path to guide visitors. Pip flew overhead, chirping his approval.



Soon, visitors began to arrive. A family with a picnic basket read the sign and stayed on the path. A boy started to pick a blue leaf, but his sister pointed to the sign. "We must take nothing away," she said. The boy nodded and put his hands in his pockets. Pip chirped loudly when anyone strayed, and everyone listened.



Weeks passed, and the oasis stayed beautiful. The blue trees grew tall and strong, and the water remained clear. Birds nested in the branches, and the turtle grew bigger. Lina visited often, writing in her notebook and watching the animals. She saw that the rules worked. People cared, and the oasis thrived.



One afternoon, Mrs. Okafor visited and gave Lina a small badge. "You're an official Oasis Guardian now," she said. Lina's freckled face lit up. Pip perched on her shoulder and chirped proudly. Grandpa Amos smiled from the path, leaning on his walking stick. "You've done a wonderful thing, Lina," he said. "You've shown that caring makes a difference."



Lina still explores every chance she gets, and Pip is always by her side. She knows that rare places like the sapphire oasis deserve protection. With simple rules and gentle care, the blue trees will stay healthy, and the oasis will remain a wonderful home for birds and animals. And Lina will keep watching over it, one small step at a time.



As the sun set, Lina sat on her smooth rock and wrote one last note in her notebook: "The sapphire oasis is a treasure. We must protect it with kind rules and gentle care." Pip chirped softly, and the blue trees swayed in the evening breeze. Lina smiled, knowing that the oasis was safe for generations to come.