

The Boy and the Parrot



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Miles loved Saturdays more than any other day. That was the day he visited the parrot sanctuary near his home. He would swing his canvas satchel over his shoulder and walk quickly down the sunny path. Today, he was extra excited because Rosa, the head caretaker, had promised to show him something special. Miles pushed open the gate and heard a chorus of squawks and whistles.



Rosa met him at the gate. She wore a green sanctuary polo shirt and a tool belt with work gloves tucked in her pocket. Her silver-streaked black hair was pulled back in a low bun. "Ready for a tour?" she asked with a warm smile. Miles nodded, his big dark brown eyes shining. He followed Rosa past large aviaries filled with colorful birds.



They stopped at a cage where a small scarlet macaw named Pip was swinging upside down. Pip had bright red feathers with blue and yellow wing tips, a white face patch, and a curious amber eye. "Parrots are very smart," Rosa said. "They need puzzles and games to keep their minds busy. Otherwise, they get bored and unhappy." Miles watched Pip climb the bars. He wanted to help.



Rosa led Miles to a workbench in the shade. "We make safe puzzles for the birds," she explained. "Things they can chew, sort, and solve." She showed him a simple puzzle made of wooden blocks and food treats. "But we always need new ideas," she said. Miles thought about Pip. "Can I help make some?" he asked. Rosa smiled. "Of course! Let's start with something simple."



Miles opened his satchel and pulled out a cardboard tube, some soft rope, and a few wooden beads. "What if we hide a treat inside the tube and cover the ends with paper?" he suggested. Rosa nodded. "That's a great idea. But we must make sure the paper is safe to chew." She handed him a roll of plain paper. "Use this. It's not bleached or dyed." They got to work.



Rosa introduced Miles to Tomas, the senior caretaker. Tomas had deep brown skin, short grey hair, and round glasses. He wore a blue work shirt with rolled sleeves and a brown apron with seed-pouch pockets. He always whistled softly. "I know each parrot's habits," Tomas said. "Pip is bold and clever. He'll test every puzzle you make. So we must be careful."



Together, they designed puzzles that were safe and fun. One puzzle was a box with holes where the birds could reach in for treats. Another was a hanging rope with beads to slide. Miles tested each one with Rosa and Tomas. They checked for sharp edges and loose parts. "Safety first," Rosa said. "Then fun." Miles wrote notes in a little notebook. He felt proud to help.



The next day, Miles brought his puzzles to the sanctuary. Pip was the first to try the tube puzzle. He nibbled the paper, peeked inside, and pulled out a piece of apple. "He did it!" Miles cheered. Pip squawked happily and then hung upside down, as if to say, "That was easy!" Rosa laughed. "Pip is a smart one. He'll keep you on your toes."



Word spread about the new puzzles. Other caretakers asked Miles to make more. He visited every week and learned each parrot's favorite treat. Some liked nuts, others liked dried fruit. Miles made puzzles with different shapes and colors. The parrots were busy and happy. Their feathers looked brighter, and they chirped more. Miles felt glad. He loved seeing the birds at play.



One afternoon, a new parrot arrived at the sanctuary. It was a small green parrot with a hurt wing. Rosa and Tomas gently placed it in a quiet cage. "We need to keep it calm," Rosa said. "But we also need to check its wing." The parrot looked scared. Miles wondered how they could help it without causing stress. Then he had an idea.



Miles remembered that Pip was calm and friendly. "Could Pip help?" he asked. Rosa thought for a moment. "Pip is good at showing other birds that humans are kind. But we must be careful." They decided to put Pip's favorite puzzle near the new parrot's cage. Pip played with it, showing how fun it was. The new parrot watched and slowly relaxed. It even nibbled a treat.



With the new parrot calmer, Rosa and Tomas could examine its wing. They cleaned the wound and wrapped it gently. "Good thinking, Miles," Tomas said. "Your puzzle helped Pip stay calm, and that helped the new bird feel safe." Miles beamed. He realized that puzzles weren't just for fun—they could also help with rescue and care. He felt proud to be part of the team.



From that day on, Miles became the official puzzle-maker for the sanctuary. He visited every Saturday with new ideas. He made puzzles from safe cardboard, untreated wood, and natural rope. The parrots loved them. Pip always tested them first. Miles learned that intelligent animals need stimulation to be healthy and happy. And he was glad he could provide it.



At home, Miles started drawing plans for even more puzzles. He thought about different sizes and shapes. He wanted every parrot to have a puzzle that suited its personality. His satchel was always full of supplies. His mom joked that he had more puzzle parts than toys. Miles didn't mind. He knew that his puzzles made a real difference.



One sunny day, Rosa gave Miles a special badge. It said "Junior Caretaker" in bright letters. "You've earned this," she said. "Your puzzles have made our parrots happier and healthier." Miles wore the badge proudly. He looked at Pip, who was busy solving a new puzzle. Pip squawked and bobbed his head. Miles knew they would be friends for a long time.



Miles learned that caring for animals means more than feeding them. It means giving them fun and challenges, too. He was happy to help the parrots at the sanctuary. And every time he saw a parrot playing with one of his puzzles, he smiled. He knew that smart animals need stimulation, and he was glad he could provide it. The end.