

The Boy and the Puffin



Çınar BİBER

The Boy and the Puffin

Çınar BİBER



On a small island in the wide blue sea, a boy named Finn lived in a little house with a red roof. Finn was nine years old, with warm light brown skin and short curly black hair that bounced when he ran. His bright yellow raincoat was the first thing you saw when he came down the path. He always carried a small camera on a strap around his neck, ready for anything.



Every morning, Finn pulled on his blue rubber boots and ran to the cliffs. Thousands of seabirds nested there, but his favorite was the puffin. Puffins were small and plump, with black and white feathers and bright orange beaks. Their orange webbed feet pattered over the rocks. Finn could watch them for hours, his dark brown eyes wide with wonder.



Finn wanted to remember every puffin he saw, so he took photos. He photographed puffins carrying fish in their beaks. He photographed puffins waddling close to his camera, bold and friendly. He photographed puffins flapping their little wings over the waves. His red backpack was full of memory cards. 'You're my best models,' he told the puffins, grinning so the gap between his front teeth showed.



One day, Finn met the island ranger on the cliff path. She wore a green uniform and a wide-brimmed hat, and her long braid swung as she walked. 'Hello, Finn,' she said with a wide smile. 'I see you watching the puffins again.' Finn nodded. 'They're amazing! But why do they nest here and not everywhere?' The ranger's dark eyes twinkled. 'That's a good question.'



The ranger led Finn to a sign at the edge of the colony. 'This island is a protected place,' she explained. 'No one can build houses here or bring dogs to chase the birds. People visit only on paths, and they must stay quiet.' Finn looked around. 'So the puffins are safe?' he asked. 'Yes,' she said. 'Protected islands support wildlife, and the puffins come back year after year.'



Finn wanted to know more. The ranger showed him how she checked the nests and counted the birds. 'We make sure the puffins have plenty of fish and safe burrows,' she said. 'And we teach visitors to keep their distance.' Finn took photos of everything. He photographed the ranger's silver badge gleaming in the sun. He photographed the paths and the signs. 'I want to help too,' he said.



The ranger smiled. 'You already help by caring,' she said. 'But if you want to do more, why not share your photos? People who never come here might not know how special this island is.' Finn's freckled nose wrinkled with thought. 'Share my photos?' he said. 'Like an exhibition?' The ranger nodded. 'Exactly. A photo exhibition to teach others about the puffins.' Finn's heart did a happy jump.



Finn hurried home and told his family about his plan. They helped him print his best photos at the island shop. He chose pictures of puffins with fish, puffins with orange feet splashing, puffins peeking from burrows. He wrote little labels with facts he had learned. 'Puffins can carry many fish in their beak at once,' one label said. 'This island is a safe home for them.'



The next day, Finn set up his exhibition in the island hall. He hung photos on strings with wooden pegs. He arranged shells and feathers on a table. The ranger brought a big sign that said 'Welcome to Puffin Island.' Finn felt proud but a little nervous. 'What if nobody comes?' he asked. 'They'll come,' the ranger said. 'Word travels fast on a small island.'



And she was right. First came the fishermen, then the schoolchildren, then families with grandparents. They crowded around Finn's photos, pointing and asking questions. 'How do you get so close?' asked a girl. 'I'm patient,' Finn said. 'And the puffins are bold.' He showed them the photo of a puffin waddling right up to his camera. Everyone laughed. The hall felt warm and cheerful.



A little boy tugged Finn's sleeve. 'I thought puffins were just in books,' he said. 'I didn't know they lived here.' Finn knelt down. 'They do!' he said. 'And this island keeps them safe.' He explained how the protected paths and quiet rules helped the birds. The little boy's eyes grew wide. 'I want to be a photographer too,' he said. Finn smiled so his tooth gap showed. 'You can be.'



The ranger stood at the back, watching. When the crowd thinned, she came over. 'You've done something wonderful, Finn,' she said. 'You've helped people understand why this island matters.' Finn looked at his photos and then at the ranger. 'I couldn't have done it without you,' he said. 'You taught me everything.' The ranger's scarred chin lifted as she smiled. 'That's what teamwork is for.'



From that day on, Finn's exhibition stayed up in the island hall. Visitors came from far away to see it. Some left notes saying they would help keep the island clean. Some asked how to protect seabirds near their own homes. Finn felt a warm glow inside. His photos were doing important work. 'The puffins have many friends now,' he told the ranger. 'And that makes me happy.'



One evening, Finn sat on the cliff with his camera. The puffin he knew best waddled close and tilted its round white face at him. It held a silver fish in its orange beak. Finn didn't take a photo. He just watched. 'You're safe here,' he whispered. 'I'll help keep it that way.' The puffin blinked its dark eyes and pattered away, its orange feet bright against the grey rocks.



Finn kept taking photos, but now he had a new job too. He led small tours for visitors, showing them where to stand and how to be quiet. 'Protected islands support wildlife,' he told them, just like the ranger had told him. The visitors listened. Some of them took their own photos. Finn loved seeing their smiles. He felt like a bridge between the puffins and the people.



And so, on a small island in the wide blue sea, a boy in a yellow raincoat learned a gentle lesson. With patience, curiosity, and a camera, he helped others see how special wild places are. The puffins still nest on the cliffs, safe and bold. And Finn still watches them, ready to share their story with anyone who will listen.