

The Boy and the Tree Frog



Çınar BİBER

The Boy and the Tree Frog

Çınar BİBER



Leo pulled on his yellow rain jacket and laced up his blue rubber boots. Today was the day he would explore the real rainforest, not just the one in his books. He clipped his magnifying glass to his backpack strap and stepped onto the muddy trail. The air smelled like wet leaves and flowers. Everywhere he looked, something was moving or growing.



Tall trees stretched up and up, their leaves forming a green roof far above Leo's head. Vines hung down like ropes, and bright flowers peeked out from the shadows. Leo heard whistles, chirps, and buzzes all around him. He felt small and happy in the big, busy forest. He couldn't wait to see what he might find.



On a wide green leaf, something tiny and bright caught Leo's eye. It was a tree frog, no bigger than his thumb! Its skin was vivid lime green, and its big golden eyes blinked slowly at him. Orange toe pads helped it cling to the leaf. Leo held his breath and lifted his magnifying glass very, very carefully.



"Hello," Leo whispered. The tree frog tilted its head and let out a small, cheerful peep. Leo noticed a blue tinge along its sides and a pale cream belly. The frog didn't seem scared at all. It hopped onto a nearby vine and looked back, as if it wanted Leo to follow. So Leo did, step by careful step.



The tree frog led Leo to a tall, leafy tree with a little pool of rainwater in a hollow. "This is my home," the frog seemed to say. "I need tall trees to climb and clean water to drink." Leo watched tadpoles wiggling in the pool. He saw how the tree held everything together, like a tiny neighborhood in the sky.



Next, the frog hopped through a patch of ferns and broad leaves. "Many plants mean many hiding spots," Leo imagined the frog saying. Bees buzzed around flowers, and a lizard sunned itself on a rock. Leo counted seven different kinds of leaves in one small space. The forest was full of life, and every bit of it seemed to matter.



Leo sat on a mossy log and opened his notebook. He drew the frog, the tall tree, the clean pool, and the tangle of plants. "So a healthy forest needs tall trees, clean water, and lots of plants," he said softly. The tree frog peeped, as if to agree. Leo felt like he had learned a secret worth sharing.



A guide walked by and saw Leo's drawing. "You've met one of our rainforest neighbors," she said with a smile. "Frogs like that one need a healthy forest to survive. When a forest has many kinds of plants and animals, we call it biodiversity." Leo said the new word slowly, liking the way it sounded. It meant a forest full of life.



The guide pointed to the canopy above. "The tall trees are like a giant umbrella," she explained. "They make homes for frogs, birds, and insects. The clean water and many plants keep everyone healthy." Leo looked up and imagined all the creatures hidden in the leaves. He wanted to remember every detail.



That evening, Leo said goodbye to the tree frog. "I'll tell your story," he promised. The little frog blinked its golden eyes and hopped back onto its leaf. Leo waved and walked back down the trail, his boots squelching in the mud. His notebook was full of sketches, and his heart was full of ideas.



Back home, Leo spread his drawings on the table. He gathered sticks, moss, clay, and a small cardboard box. He wanted to build a model of the rainforest canopy. He made tall trees from twigs and vines from string. He added a tiny pool of blue paper for clean water. Then he shaped a little frog from green clay.



Leo painted the frog's eyes gold and gave it orange toe pads. He added ferns and flowers cut from paper. "There," he said, "tall trees, clean water, and many plants." He placed the frog on a high branch, just like in the real forest. His model showed how a healthy forest is full of life. He called it his biodiversity model.



The next day, Leo brought his model to school. He stood in front of the class and took a deep breath. "This is a rainforest canopy," he said. "A tree frog showed me that forests give homes to so many plants and animals. That's called biodiversity." His classmates leaned in to see the tiny frog. They asked questions, and Leo answered every one.



Leo's teacher smiled. "You've shown us why healthy forests matter," she said. Leo felt warm and proud. He looked at his model and remembered the little frog's golden eyes. He knew that even small stories can teach big things. And he had told the tree frog's story just as he promised.



That night, Leo set his model on his shelf. The little clay frog sat on its branch, bright green in the moonlight. Leo smiled, thinking of the real frog far away in the rainforest. He whispered, "Thank you for showing me your home." Then he closed his eyes and dreamed of tall trees and golden eyes.



In his dream, Leo walked through the canopy with the tree frog beside him. Every leaf sparkled, and every pool was clean and clear. "A healthy forest is full of life," the frog seemed to say. Leo woke up smiling. He knew he would always remember the boy and the tree frog, and the biodiversity that makes a forest sing.