



# Lily's Little Leaps of Bravery

Maheswari Senna





Lily peeked from behind the big, comfy armchair, her eyes wide with worry. Even the gentle rustle of leaves outside made her jump, and her own shadow seemed to stretch into a scary monster on the wall. She wished she could be as brave as the squirrels she saw from her window.



One sunny morning, her mom pointed to a tiny, bright red ladybug crawling slowly on a green leaf. Lily usually shied away from anything that moved, but this little creature was so small and delicate. Her mom smiled, "Look, Lily, isn't it pretty?"



Lily watched the ladybug intently, her curiosity slowly outweighing her fear. She took a tiny, shaky breath, and with a fingertip as light as a feather, she gently touched the ladybug's smooth back. A little giggle escaped her lips as it tickled slightly.



The next day at the park, a small wooden bridge spanned a trickling stream. It swayed ever so slightly with each step, and Lily's eyes grew wide. She clung tightly to her mom's hand, convinced the bridge would tumble into the water.



Her mom held her hand firmly, encouraging her with a warm smile. Together, they took slow, careful steps across the wobbly bridge. Lily squeezed her eyes shut at first, but when she opened them on the other side, a tiny spark of pride flickered inside her.



Further into the park, a fluffy golden retriever bounded towards them, its tail wagging like a happy pendulum. Lily's usual reaction was to hide or run, but this time, she just stood frozen, observing the dog's playful barks.



The friendly dog nudged her hand with its wet nose, whimpering softly. Remembering her ladybug moment, Lily slowly reached out her hand. She gently stroked its soft fur, feeling the warmth of its head against her palm, a big smile spreading across her face.



Near the end of their park visit, a towering, twisty slide gleamed under the sun, filled with the joyous shouts of other children. Lily had always admired it from afar, but the thought of climbing so high and sliding so fast made her tummy do flip-flops.



Taking a deep breath, just like she did before touching the ladybug and crossing the bridge, Lily marched towards the slide. She climbed the steps, her heart thumping, then pushed off with a squeal of delight as she zoomed down, landing with a triumphant laugh.



Now, Lily played with boundless energy, her face bright with confidence. She chased butterflies, splashed in puddles, and even greeted new friends with a cheerful wave. She had learned that bravery wasn't a giant leap, but a collection of many wonderful, little ones, making every day an adventure.