

FIRST FLIGHT

Rex, the smallest dragon in the valley, had one dream—to fly. Every evening, he watched the elder dragons soar across the sky, their wings slicing through the clouds, their roars echoing over the cliffs. His own wings, though bright and sturdy, had yet to lift him off the ground.

“Today’s the day,” he told himself, stretching his wings as he stood on a grassy ledge.

Below, his human caretaker, Lily, grinned up at him. “You sure about this, little one?”

Rex huffed. “I’m not little.”

With a determined flick of his tail, he leapt forward—and promptly plummeted into the soft grass below.

Lily laughed, brushing dirt from his snout. “Maybe just a little.”

Undeterred, Rex trained every day. He flapped his wings in the meadow, leapt off rocks, and even let Lily toss him into the air—only to land in a pile of leaves with a squeaky yelp. Despite his endless tumbles, he never gave up.

Then, one fateful evening, the storm arrived.

Dark clouds rolled over the valley, and the wind howled through the cliffs. Rex and Lily huddled in their cave, watching the rain hammer against the trees. But then, a frightened chirp echoed from outside.

“Anna!” Lily gasped.

Rex’s heart clenched. Anna, the tiny fox kit they had rescued, was caught outside. Without thinking, he bolted through the rain, his claws sliding on the slick rocks.

The storm raged, and in the distance, Anna clung to a swaying branch, his tiny body drenched. A raging river churned below.

Rex’s wings trembled. He knew what he had to do.

He climbed the tallest rock he could find, heart pounding like a war drum. The wind howled, pulling at his scales, but he spread his wings wide.

This is it. No more falling.

With a deep breath, he jumped.

For a heartbeat, he felt the familiar drop—but then something changed. The wind caught his wings, lifting him upward.

He was flying.

Rex rode the air, soaring over the river. He tucked his wings slightly, angling downward. Just as Anna lost her grip, Rex swooped in, snatching the fox onto his back.

He flapped hard against the wind, muscles burning, but the cave was just ahead. With one final push, he landed, skidding to a stop.

Lily rushed to them, wrapping Rex in a tight hug. “You did it!”

Rex blinked, rain dripping from his snout. He looked back at his wings, then at the stormy sky. A slow grin spread across his face.

“I did it.”

That night, nestled beside Lily and Anna, Rex gazed at the stars. He had dreamed of flying, but he had learned something even greater—bravery wasn’t about wings. It was about heart.

And now he was ready to soar.