**A Daring Speech**

The first crash of thunder silenced the crowd. In that moment, every cheer and whispered conversation vanished, swallowed by the sky’s trembling voice. Lightning shook light poles and hearts.

That’s when the wind surged into chaos. Rain pounded the plaza like drumming fists. The crowd scattered. Vendors abandoned their stalls. Mara stood there frozen as the storm took her chance away. Her goal was to deliver a small speech at the town gathering but all hope has collapsed under the storm’s power.

As a gust flung water into her face, a faint image flickered. A flash of sea breeze, of childhood summers. She was seven years old, watching the angry storms roll off her grandmother’s porch. Wind whispered secrets past her ear as Mara’s eyes lit up at every strike of lightning. She saw her grandmother’s hand resting on her shoulder while thunder cracked overhead. That time, fear had gripped her until Grandma whispered, “The storm passes, dear. So do the troubles.”

That brief vision, triggered by the sound, the rain, the electric scent in the air. It had brought clarity.

Snapping back, Mara inhaled a lungful of storm‑laced air. She realized her task wasn’t ruined, it was transformed. Instead of timidly calling people back under cover, she raised her voice, letting it carry across the storm‑rattled square.

“Friends! This storm reminds us how quickly calm can flee, but it also shows us how power returns. Stand with me!”

Her speech, carried with honesty and rooted in memory, drew people back to her side. Shelter mattered less than connection. The storm eased as she spoke, as if listening. Everyone clapped, her daring bravery leading a speech even while the darkness swallowed all hope. Mara was the spark to the fire in the darkness.