**A Daring Speech**

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

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. This was her only chance to do something about it. About inequality in the world.

Without this only chance Mara couldn’t do anything about it. *No one* could do anything about it.

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.”

The brief vision, triggered by the storm's familiar sounds and scents, brought sudden clarity to her confused mind.

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. The storm almost seemed like it was listening. Everyone clapped, her daring bravery leading a speech. Today Mara is the spark to the fire that burnt out all darkness.