

Sukhomlynsky News



Stories from *An Ethics Anthology*

The young apple tree

In the spring, grade three students Yura and Misha planted a young apple tree near the school. They watered it and decided that during the holidays they would come to school so they could keep watering the young tree. They agreed that Yura would water it on the first day, then Misha on the second day, then Yura again, and so on in turn. Then the young apple tree would keep growing and gradually get stronger.

The holidays arrived. 'It's my turn to water the apple tree,' thought Yura, 'But will it really matter if it is not watered for one day? Misha will go and water it tomorrow...'

The next day came. Misha lived quite a long way from the school. He thought, 'Yura watered the apple tree yesterday... It won't really matter if it is not watered for one day. Tomorrow is Yura's day again, and he lives a bit closer to the school, so he can water it.'

The days passed. Yura counted on Misha doing the watering, and Misha counted on Yura, so for several days nobody watered the young apple tree.

A little grade one student named Andreika came to the school every day to feed the fish in the aquarium. He noticed that nobody was watering the young apple tree and that it would soon die. He began to water the young tree every day, and it gradually grew stronger and grew fresh green leaves.

Autumn arrived, and with it the first of September—the first day of school. All the children returned to school. Yura could not wait to see if Misha had watered the tree, and Misha was curious to see if Yura had watered it. The boys both walked to the young apple tree. They walked without talking, and when they saw the green leaves on the tree, they both felt so ashamed that they just looked at the ground. They both thought, 'It was just me who did not water the tree, while my friend watered it.'

The two boys just stood there next to the tree hanging their heads until the bell went. They were too ashamed to look each other in the eye.



New Year wishes

Dear reader,

I hope you are keeping well.

As we embark on a new year, I hope and pray that we can move in the direction of becoming a more peaceful, harmonious and united world, and that we can address the serious environmental issues we face.

I hope also that the translations appearing in this newsletter can contribute in a small way to the promotion of positive values and help show a way to live more in harmony with each other and with Nature.

*The stories in this month's newsletter, taken from Sukhomlynsky's **Ethics Anthology**, illustrate values such as responsibility, honesty, tactfulness, humility and courage. I hope you find them interesting.*

Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill



Stories from *An Ethics Anthology*

From the poplar to the willow

At one end of a quiet, wide street grows a poplar, and at the other end grows a willow. The end of the street where the willow grows is slightly higher, and the end where the poplar grows is slightly lower, so it is downhill from the willow to the poplar and uphill from the poplar to the willow, though the slope is hardly noticeable.

In winter boys like to skate on this street. Two brothers, Yurko and Pavlyk, came to ride their sled there. Yurko is in grade three and Pavlyk is in grade one. They did not have any skates, but they brought a light sled with iron runners. Yurko said, 'We can ride our sled here.'

'All right,' said Pavlyk. 'But how can we ride our sled here? There is no slope...'

'I will pull you from the willow to the poplar, and you can pull me from the poplar to the willow,' suggested Yurko.

'All right,' agreed his brother with delight.

Pavlyk sat in the sled and Yurko pulled him from the willow to the poplar. He galloped along and the sled raced over the snow. When they reached the poplar, Yurko sat in the sled and Pavlyk pulled him all the way back. The sled now moved slowly. 'Why can't I pull you as fast as you pulled me?' asked Pavlyk.

'Because you are small,' answered Yurko. 'You are still weak and not as strong as me.'

Pavlyk felt ashamed to be weak. He tried to pull Yurko faster. They pulled each other back and forth several times, Yurko pulling Pavlyk from the willow to the poplar, and Pavlyk pulling Yurko from the poplar to the willow.

Grandpa Karpo was sitting in the sun nearby, on a dry tree stump. Yurko boasted to him, 'Look, grandpa, how strong I am. The sled is racing along... But Pavlyk is weak.'

'He might be weak, but he's honest,' answered the old man. 'And you might be strong, but you are tricking your weaker brother.'

Yurko stopped and hung his head. Pavlyk was surprised and asked the old man, 'Grandpa, why is Yurko dishonest?'

Visiting a sick child

Mariika has been sick for a long time. She cannot get out of bed. Sometimes her friends come to visit her. Today Oksana and Valia have come to visit her. They have brought her two books. They talk about their Pioneer meet and then they sit in silence by her bed. Mariika also sits in silence, and she feels very uncomfortable.

During this moment of tense silence, the sun comes out from behind a cloud and sunlight fills the room. Oksana and Valia are delighted. 'At last, the sun is warming up,' twitters Oksana. 'As soon as it is a little warmer, we can go for a walk in the forest and to the river.'

'Perhaps we can even go for a swim,' says Valia happily.

'And we can pick some flowers and go out in the boat,' Oksana chatters away happily.

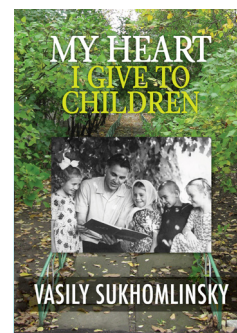
Mariika looks at them in silence and tears fall from her eyes onto her pillow. Oksana and Valia see that Mariika is crying and are surprised. 'Why are you crying, Mariika? Is something hurting? Perhaps we should bring you another book? Why don't we go to the shop and buy you some sweets...'

'I don't need books or sweets,' whispers Mariika.

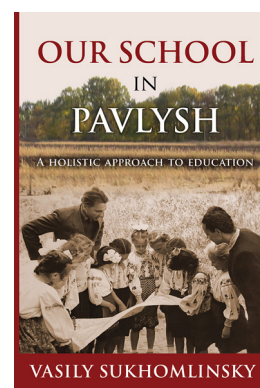
 **REALLY GOOD
BOOK SHOP**

<http://www.thereallygoodbookshop.com.au/>

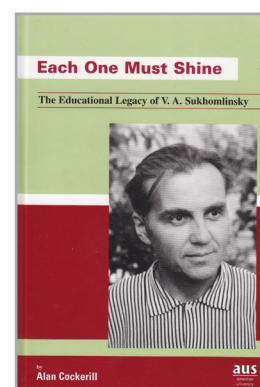
Pricing from
The Really Good Book Shop



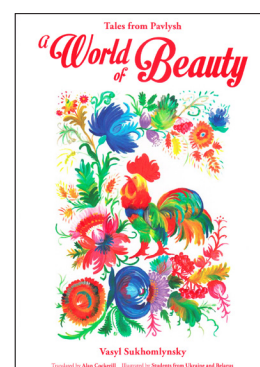
AUS\$24.95 (special price)



AUS\$34.95



AUS\$34.95 (original hardback)



AUS\$14.95 (original edition)

The rooster and the sun

The rooster dozes on its perch. It wakes up, yawns comfortably, and goes back to sleep. But it always crows just before sunrise—cock-a-doodle-doo!—and all the hens wake up. The rooster says, 'You see, I crow, and morning comes. If I did not crow, there would be no morning. You can see how important I am!'

This happened many times. One day the rooster was angry with the people that fed him. They had not given him enough grain, and he thought to himself, 'I'll make you sorry—I won't sing in the morning. The sun won't rise, and what will you do then?'

Night came. The rooster smiled to himself in his sleep and gloated, 'You're going to be so sorry!' The time came for the rooster to crow but he remained silent. He just closed his eyes and went back to sleep. When he woke up, he saw that the sun was shining brightly. The hens had all got up from their perch.

The rooster felt ashamed, and he turned his back on the sun.

How Andreika carried Nina

Andreika and Nina were walking home from school. On the way they had to cross a gully. The sun was quite warm and had melted the snow, and water was now flowing through the gully. The swift flowing water was making quite a noise, and Andreika and Nina stopped when they came to it.

Andreika walked straight through it and reached the other side. He turned and looked at Nina and suddenly felt ashamed. He was wearing boots, but Nina was only wearing shoes. How was she going to get across? 'I've done the wrong thing,' thought Andreika. 'Why didn't I see that Nina is only wearing shoes?'

The boy crossed back over to Nina and said, 'I just wanted to see how deep it is. Now we can cross together.'

'How?' asked Nina in surprise. 'I've only got shoes on.'

'Sit on my back,' said Andreika.

Nina sat on Andreika's back, and the boy carried her to the other side.

He punished his hand

A mother sent her five-year-old son Petryk to the shops.

'Here are fifteen kopecks,' she said. 'Hold them in your right hand, so you don't forget that they are for you to buy a loaf of bread. And you can hold these fifteen kopecks in your left hand. They are for you to buy yourself an ice-cream.'

Petryk ran off to the shop. A few minutes later he came back, eating what was left of his ice-cream.

'Where's the bread,' asked his mother.

'I didn't buy it.'

'Why didn't you buy it?'

'I lost the money.'

'You lost the money? Then you should have bought the bread and not the ice-cream.'

'But I lost the fifteen kopecks that were in my right hand,' said Petryk, 'And not the fifteen kopecks that were in my left hand.'

His mother just shook her head.

They sat down to have supper. Petryk's mother poured soup into the bowls, but there was no bread to eat with it.

'Mum, is there any bread?' asked Petryk.

'No, you lost the money, didn't you?'

Petryk picked up his spoon in his left hand and began to eat his soup.

'Why are you eating with your left hand?' asked his mother in surprise.

'I want my right hand to know what happens when it loses money.'

How Kolya became brave

Grade three student Kolya came to school very early today. Two girls were sitting on a bench under a poplar tree. They were looking up into the tree and in their eyes Kolya noticed an expression of concern.

Suddenly a bird rose up from a large branch of the tree and chirped anxiously. At the same time a little chick fell to the ground near the bench. Kolya understood that the chick had fallen out of its nest, and that its mother was in despair.

One of the girls picked up the chick and said, 'If there was a brave person at school, they would climb up the tree and put the chick back in its nest.'

Kolya was a very fearful boy. As soon as it got dark, he was too frightened to leave the house. Once his mother had sent him to the vegetable patch to pick a head of cabbage and he had seen a mouse and come running back to his mother. But the girl's words cut him to the quick. Did she really think he was a coward?

'I'll climb the tree,' said Kolya.

'You?' asked the girls and looked at the boy in surprise.

Kolya tucked the chick inside his shirt and climbed up into the tree. His arms and legs were shaking with fear, but he kept climbing higher and higher. The boy placed the chick carefully in its nest and climbed back down.

The girls looked at him with admiration. He picked up his school bag and went to meet his classmates.

The light in the window

Our school is on the edge of the village, next to a gully. Kolya lives on the other side of the gully and has quite a long walk to get to school—about a kilometre. In the evening, he can see the lights in the school windows very well from his home. In one window there is an aquarium with fish in it. Day and night, the water in the aquarium is kept warm by an electric lamp, which Kolya can see quite clearly.

During the winter, the frosts were severe. One day the youngest students did not even go to school, it was so cold. Kolya sat at home in the evening in his warm room, looking out the window and admiring the distant light in the school window. Suddenly the light went out. 'The lamp has burnt out,' thought Kolya. 'The fish will be dead by morning in a frost like this.'

Kolya put on his coat, fur hat and mittens, and walked to school. It was already night. By the time Kolya reached the school he was freezing. He found the caretaker and asked for the key. He opened up the school building and went into the classroom where the aquarium sat on the windowsill. The water was already cold. He fitted a new lamp. 'You'll be warm now, little fishes,' said Kolya quietly, and he locked the school building and walked back home.

That winter Kolya had to walk to school at night three more times to save the fish. Now he was not afraid of the dark, or the frost, or even a blizzard.

'You have become a brave young man, Kolya,' his teacher told him.

Why the disabled war veteran went swimming

There are very few people at the beach today. Summer has ended and autumn has arrived. The only person to come and swim is six-year-old Fedko. When his mother left for work early this morning, she told her son, 'Go straight to kindergarten and don't wander off anywhere.' But Fedko does not obey her. 'I'll go to the beach,' he thinks, 'And have a swim.' He takes off his shirt and trousers and eases himself into the water. At first the water feels cold, but then it seems to get warmer.

A disabled war veteran is sitting on the beach. He has only one leg. He has come to the beach on crutches to have a rest and breathe the fresh sea air. When he sees the little boy swimming further and further out to sea, he takes off his clothes and hops into the water. It is difficult for him to make his way into the water because he has left his crutches on the beach. It is easier for him once he reaches deeper water. He swims out to the boy

and carefully watches his little blonde head.

When Fedko has swum as much as he wants, he clambers out of the water, gets dressed, and runs to kindergarten. He has not noticed the one-legged war veteran make his way into the water after him, or how carefully the man watched over him while he was swimming, or how he struggled out of the water after him, or how difficult it was for him to get dressed.

What a shame that Fedko did not notice any of those things.

Sasha's boat

Grade two student Sasha made a cardboard boat. He took his boat outside and found a huge puddle. 'This is the Black Sea,' said Sasha to himself. 'My boat can sail across the Black Sea.'

Sasha launched his boat into the Black Sea and it sailed over the ocean waves. It sailed on and on until it could hardly be seen from the shore. When the boat reached the middle of the Black Sea, it began to get dark, and Sasha's mother called him to come inside.

'My boat can sail through the night,' thought Sasha, and he went home.

When Sasha came out in the morning, the sea had frozen over. The boat was stuck in the ice.

'Mum,' said Sasha in a worried voice, 'My boat is stuck in the ice.'

'Wait for the sun to melt the ice, and then your boat will sail on,' suggested his mother.

'No, I won't wait,' answered Sasha. 'I need to free my boat. It needs to sail further.'

Sasha took his little spade and went to rescue his boat from the trouble it was in.

