

# Sukhomlynsky News



## More stories from *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children*

### Important news

On the north side of a pond was a small house. An old woman lived there. On the opposite, southern side of the pond, there was a large and spacious house. The old lady's grandson Sashko lived there. He was already going to school.

In summer, Sashko rarely visited his grandmother, because the pond was wide and, to reach his grandmother's house, he needed to walk around it, which was a long way. In winter, he visited his grandmother every day, because it was very easy to cross the pond when it was frozen and covered with ice.

The grandmother would sit by the window waiting for her grandson. He would come in the evening and tell her all about his adventures and discoveries.

Spring arrived. A warm south wind was blowing, and the sun was shining brightly. In the morning, the pond was still covered with ice, but by the afternoon its surface was covered with water.

Sashko's grandmother sat by the window and sadly thought to herself, 'Sashko won't come today.'

The grandmother spent the whole day waiting for her grandson. In the evening, she saw him running along the bank of the pond. She recognized him immediately and rushed to hug him. 'Grandma!' exclaimed Sashko joyfully, 'Look, the ice is gone! I came to tell you that the ice is all gone. Spring has arrived!'



## *I'll Tell You a Story ... more tales from our new book*

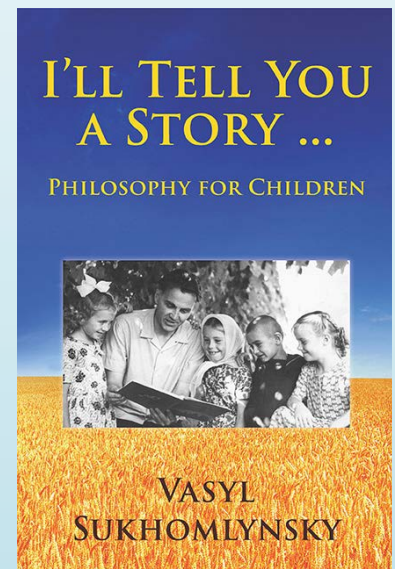
Dear reader,

*I hope you are keeping well.*

*This month's newsletter contains another ten stories from **I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children**. These stories have not previously been published in the newsletter. They are just a small sample of the many tales in our newly published translation.*

*Best wishes,*

*Alan Cockerill*



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## From I'll tell you a story ...

### Missing a father's words

Sashko and Oleksii went skating till late at night and did not do their algebra homework. The mathematics teacher, Ivan Petrovych, wrote the same comment in both of the grade six boys' homework diaries: 'You should only play when your work is done. Someone who plays without first doing their work is an idler.'

On the way home, Oleksii called in to Sashko's house to collect a book. Sashko's father had just come home. He said to Sashko, 'Show me your diary. Let me see how you are going with your work.'

Sashko handed over his diary. His father read the comment and began to tell his son some home truths. He told Sashko, 'School is your workplace. When you go to school, you are going to work. You have no right to study any old how, let alone badly.'

Sashko listened to his father with his head bowed.

When the father had finished speaking with his son, Oleksii took the book, and went home.

Oleksii did not have a father.

He took his diary out of his schoolbag and put it on the table.

His mother pushed the diary aside and put dinner on the table.

Oleksii leant on his elbows at the table and sat silently for a long time.

'Why aren't you eating?' asked his mother.

Oleksii could not answer. He felt ill at heart.

### Daddy's eyes

Little Olenka's daddy became very ill and was taken to the hospital. One day, Olenka woke up in the middle of the night and heard her mother crying. The little girl started crying as well: it was so hard without her daddy.

Olenka's mother visited the father at the hospital every day. One day, she came home very happy. In a week, the father would be released from the hospital.

The week passed, and Olenka's mother went to the hospital to bring the father home. Olenka stayed at home. She could not wait to see her daddy. At last, she heard her mother opening the door. A man with a black beard walked into the room. He seemed strange and familiar at the same time. Olenka's mother followed him in, smiling.

The man also smiled, picked up a towel, and covered his beard. Olenka clapped her hands, 'Daddy, it's you! I've missed you so much!'

She hugged and kissed him. The towel fell off, and Daddy once more became a man with a black beard.

'You're not afraid of the beard, are you, Olenka?' asked her mother.

'No, I'm not afraid of it. Daddy isn't the beard; he's the eyes!'

### Why is mum praising me?

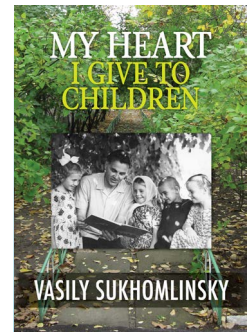
A mother went to work and left her six-year-old daughter Liuda at home by herself. Liuda was not old enough to go to school yet. The mother told her to feed the chickens and water the flowers. The girl did what her mother told her, and then she thought, 'I'll make some borshch. Mum will be very tired when she comes home from work. If I cook, she can have a rest.'

Liuda made some borshch and tried it. It did not taste very nice. She

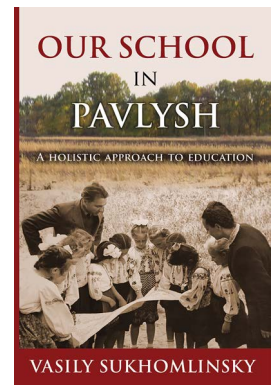
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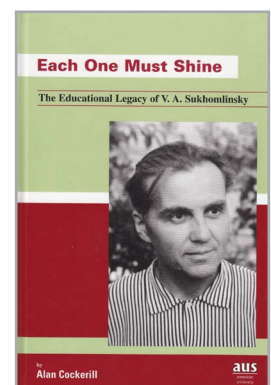
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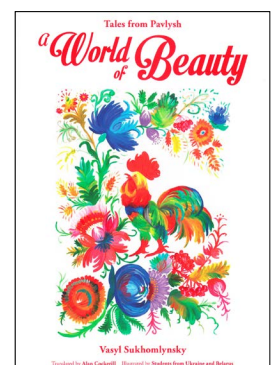
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was worried that her mother would scold her for making borshch like that.

Liuda's mother came home. She was surprised that her little daughter had made the main course from scratch all by herself. She served herself some borshch, took a mouthful, and exclaimed, 'Oh, what delicious borshch you have made, Liuda!'

Liuda was embarrassed to hear such praise, because she had tried the borshch herself and knew that it was not very nice. 'Why is Mum praising me?' she wondered.

### **The grandmother and the chrysanthemum**

A little girl's grandmother fell ill. She fought the illness for a long time, but it was stronger, and, one gloomy autumn day, she passed away.

The little girl grieved for her grandmother. She could not imagine life without her, so, in the spring, she walked to her grandmother's grave and said, 'Dear Grandma, in your memory, I will plant a chrysanthemum on your grave.' While she was speaking, a lark started singing high in the blue sky, and a cuckoo started cooing in the oak grove.

'That must be Grandma telling me to go ahead and plant the chrysanthemum,' thought the little girl.

She brought a chrysanthemum bush and planted it in the shade of an oak tree. In autumn, its pink buds opened, and the chrysanthemum flowered.

On the first anniversary of her grandmother's death, the girl went to visit her grave again. Among the many pink flowers, a single large white chrysanthemum had opened up. The girl smiled, and then she saw a dove settle on the grave's cross and start cooing.

'That must be Grandma telling me that she wants me to have a soul as bright and pure as this beautiful white flower,' she thought.

### **Grandma's felt boots**

Vira was already studying in grade one. In winter, when it was bitterly cold, her feet would be freezing by the time she walked home from school. So, when she came home, Vira would take off her shoes and put on her grandmother's felt boots. They were large and warm, and her feet would warm up as quickly as if she was toasting them by their big brick oven.

Vira would wear Grandma's felt boots while she ate her dinner and told her grandma all about her day at school. In the evening, she would quickly undress, jump into her grandma's bed and snuggle up to her. Her grandma's blanket and pillow were as warm as

her gentle hands. Then her grandma would lean over her and tell her the story about the grey wolf and the little straw bull.

Vira was afraid of the grey wolf, but she knew that all her fears would melt away if her grandma was with her.

In the morning, Vira would wake up in her own bed, but she would dive straight back into her grandma's warm felt boots.

But then, something terrible happened. Her dear old grandma became very ill and died. They took her to the cemetery and buried her.

But when Vira came home from school, her grandma's felt boots were still waiting for her. Now the little girl almost never took them off.

Then, one day, Vira came from school and could not find the felt boots anywhere.

'Where are Grandma's felt boots?' she asked her mother.

'I took them to the farmers' market and sold them,' her mother replied. 'What use are they to us? I bought you some nice new warm shoes.'

Vira burst into tears. Her heart was pounding, and she felt empty inside.

'Why ... Why have you sold them?' she asked her mother quietly. 'I could still feel the warmth of Grandma's feet when I wore them.'

The mother tried to console Vira, but in vain. The little girl was inconsolable.

### **Dreaming of a father**

Natalka did not have a father. She only had a mother. Before Natalka started going to school, she sometimes asked her mother where her father was, but her mother never answered. When the little girl started going to school, she stopped asking.

Natalka had a friend, Nastusia, who had a mother and a father. Her father was a diesel locomotive driver. Nastusia sometimes visited Natalka. One day she asked her, 'Where is your daddy?'

Natalka was embarrassed to confess that she did not have a father, so she answered, 'My daddy's a pilot. He's always flying all over the place. He even flies over the sea. He's hardly ever at home.'

Every day, Natalka would save a little bit of the lunch money that her mother gave her. After a few months, she was able to buy a pilot's hat at a shop. When Nastusia came to Natalka's house, she noticed the hat and asked, 'Is your daddy at home today?'

'Yes,' said Natalka. 'We have to be quiet because he is resting.'

The girls talked in a whisper.

## **My mum is the most beautiful**

A mother owl had a baby owl. He was quite big, with grey wings. He had big eyes and a big mouth. Owls only fly at night. They avoid bright sunlight. The mother owl taught her son, 'Don't leave our nest during the day. The sunlight will blind you, and you won't be able to find your way home.'

But the owl was disobedient. He crawled out of their nest, screwed up his eyes, and flew to the meadow. There he opened his eyes, looked at the sun, and was blinded. He sat in the grass and cried. A heron approached him.

'Who are you?' asked the heron.

'I'm a baby owl,' answered the bird. 'My mum is an owl. I can't see anything. Could you take me to my mum?'

'What does your mother look like?' asked the heron.

'My mum is the most beautiful in the world,' answered the baby owl. 'She has the kindest, gentlest, most tender eyes. No-one else has eyes like that. Only my mother.'

'Ha! Ha! Ha!' laughed a nightingale, a woodpecker and a thrush. 'But you are really ugly. Your mother must be just as ugly as you.'

'That's not true!' cried the baby owl. 'My mother is the most beautiful in the world.'

The owl heard her baby's cry, flew down quietly, took him in her claws, and carried him to their nest.

The baby owl looked carefully at his mother. She really was the most beautiful bird in the world.

## **The gentlest hands**

A little girl went with her mother to a big city. They went to a market. The mother held her little daughter's hand. The little girl saw something interesting, clapped her hands with joy, and became lost in the crowd. She realised she was lost and burst into tears.

'Mum!' she cried. 'Where's my mum?'

People gathered around the girl and asked her, 'What's your name, dear?'

'Olia.'

'And what is your mother's name? Tell us, and we'll find her straight away.'

'Mum's name is ... Mum ... Mummy.'

The people smiled, calmed the girl, and again asked, 'Well, tell us, what your mother's eyes are like. Are they black, dark blue, light blue, grey?'

'Her eyes are ... the kindest.'

'And her hair? Is your mum's hair dark or blonde?'

'Her hair ... is the most beautiful.'

Again, the people smiled and asked, 'Well what are her hands like ... Perhaps she has a birthmark on her hand ... Try and remember.'

'Her hands are ... the gentlest.'

So, they announced over the loudspeaker, 'A little girl is lost. Her mother has the kindest eyes, the most beautiful hair, and the gentlest hands in the world.'

And Mum came straight away.

## **Sleep, mummy, sleep**

Serhiiko fell seriously ill. He tossed feverishly from side to side, and sometimes lost consciousness. Whenever he regained consciousness, he would see his mother's exhausted face. His mother would be telling him a story.

It is believed that when a severe illness begins to retreat in its battle with the vital forces of the human body and soul, the climax of the illness occurs. If the mysterious forces of the human organism defeat the illness, the climax passes, and the sick person will breathe a sigh of relief and fall into a deep and healthy sleep.

Serhiiko had just such a victory in his battle with the illness, and health triumphed. Still weak, and covered in perspiration, the boy fell asleep. Completely drained after several sleepless nights, his mother dozed off as well. She allowed herself to fall asleep when she saw that the little spark of life that barely glowed in her son's body was not in danger anymore.

The son woke up first. He saw his mother sitting on the sofa and sleeping. He got out of bed, crept over to his mother, gently placed a pillow under her head, tucked her legs up onto the sofa and covered her with a warm blanket. Then he crept back to his bed.

When his mother woke, the first thing she saw was her son's eyes, shining with joy. 'Sleep, Mummy, sleep,' he whispered to her gently.

'Am I dreaming, or is this real?' the mother thought. 'If it is a dream, then I would like to sleep a little longer.'

Afraid of waking fully, she held her breath and then asked quietly, 'What did you say? Please say it again.'

'Sleep, Mummy, sleep,' whispered Serhiiko.