

# Sukhomlynsky News



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

### The glass mouse

There was a little glass mouse on Olenka's windowsill.

One day she accidentally moved it too close to the edge of the windowsill, and it fell to the floor and broke into pieces. Little Olenka was frightened. What would her mother say? She had bought that glass mouse on the same day that Olenka had brought home a kitten from her neighbour's house. The kitten had grown into a big, grey cat, but the mouse had remained little.

'What can I do?' wondered little Olenka, as she picked up the pieces. She hid all the broken pieces of glass in their large brick oven. It was the beginning of summer, and they were not lighting a fire in it.

In the evening, Olenka's mother asked her, 'Where is your little mouse?'

'I don't know,' answered Olenka, pretending to be surprised. 'I wonder where it could have got to?'

Her mother made a bit of a fuss about it, but she went and bought a new mouse at the shop.

Autumn came, and Olenka's mother cleaned out the oven, preparing to light a fire there. She discovered the remains of the glass mouse.

'Who broke it?' asked Olenka's mother.

'Probably the cat,' said Olenka, lowering her head.

'What a clever cat we have,' said her mother with a smile. 'He broke the mouse, collected all the pieces, and hid them in the oven.'

Olenka's face turned bright red with shame. The little girl thought, 'How did Mummy know that it was me that broke the mouse and not the cat.' Her mother also knew that Olenka was thinking about how she had been dishonest, and that she was too ashamed to raise her head.

Little Olenka covered her face with her hands and closed her eyes tightly. She felt as if her mother could read her thoughts.



## Free eBook

*Dear reader,*

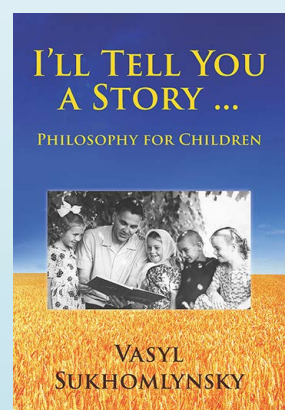
*I hope you are well.*

*This month I am offering two downloads. As well as your monthly newsletter, which contains stories from **I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children**, I am offering a download of **My Heart I Give to Children**, in the 2023 version, with a revised spelling of Sukhomlynsky's name.*

*Many of you would have downloaded the older version when you subscribed to this newsletter, and some of you may not have any version of the book, which is Sukhomlynsky's best-known work.*

*Best wishes,*

*Alan Cockerill*



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

## Ingratitude

Grandpa Andrii invited his grandson Matvii to visit him.

Grandpa Andrii placed a big bowl of honey and some white bagels on the table.

'Help yourself to some honey, Matviiko,' he invited his guest. 'If you want, you can eat it with a spoon; if you want, you can dip the bagels in it.'

Matvii ate the honey with a spoon, and then he dipped the bagels in it. He ate so much he could hardly breathe. He wiped the perspiration from his face, sighed, and asked, 'What sort of honey is that, Grandpa, linden tree or buckwheat?'

'Why?' asked Grandpa Andrii in amazement. 'I treated you to buckwheat honey.'

'I think linden tree honey is tastier,' said Matvii, and yawned. After eating so much he felt sleepy.

Grandpa Andrii felt a sharp pain in his heart. He said nothing, but his grandson continued, 'And the flour in the bagels—is that made from spring wheat or winter wheat?'

Grandpa Andrii turned pale. His heart felt unbearable pain, and he found it hard to breathe. He closed his eyes and groaned.

## They helped themselves to apples

A big apple tree grew next to an old lady's house. It bore so many apples that its branches were hanging low. Autumn came, and the apples ripened.

Three young boys—Petro, Mykola and Ivan—were walking home from school, laughing. They saw the apples on the tree, red and sweet-smelling.

Petro said, 'Let's ask the old lady if we can have some apples.'

They asked her, and she invited them to help themselves. 'Go ahead, boys,' she said, 'Pick some apples and eat them.'

The boys picked a whole bucket of apples and sat down and ate them. They threw the apple cores on the ground near the lady's house. When they had eaten their fill, they got up and went home. They forgot to thank the old lady, and just left the apple cores where they had thrown them.

The old lady got up, sighed, and went to clean up the apple cores. She collected them and gave them to her goat.

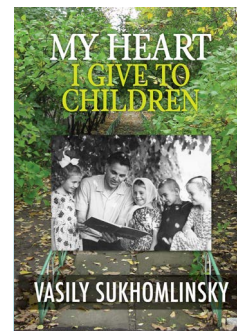
To repay kindness with ingratitude is ugly.

## Three pyrizhky

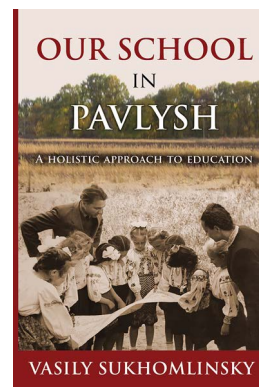
Fedko and Mykolka went to visit their grandmother. She lived at the other end of the village, so they did not see her very often.

Their grandmother was overjoyed to see them. She sat them at the table and served up a bowl of honey and three large pyrizhky filled with sweet cottage cheese. The boys each took a pyrizhok and started eating. They were delicious! And so was the honey! They dipped their pyrizhky in the honey and could not take their eyes off the third one.

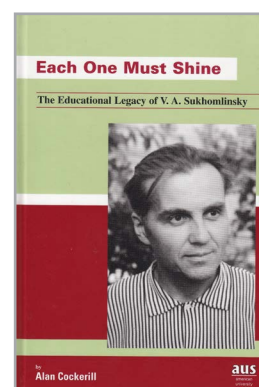
Fedko thought, 'I wouldn't mind eating another pyrizhok, but it wouldn't be fair for me to eat two pyrizhky and for Mykolka to only eat one. What can I do?'



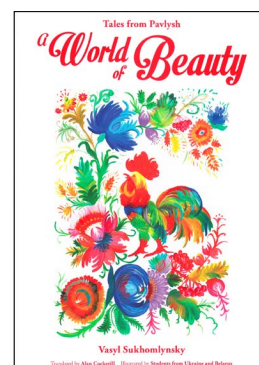
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Mykolka thought, 'I wouldn't mind eating another pyrizhok, but it wouldn't be fair for me to eat two pyrizhky and for Fedko to only eat one. What can I do?'

The boys each ate up one pyrizhok, then sat looking at the third one, sitting on the plate.

Their grandmother came over and looked at her grandsons, sitting there silently with knitted brows. 'Why aren't you eating, boys?' she asked them. The boys just looked from under their brows at the remaining pyrizhok. Their grandmother picked it up, broke it in half, and offered it to them. 'Eat up boys,' she said.

The boys hung their heads even lower, from shame, but they took half each and ate in silence.

### **Why Pylypko could not sleep**

Pylypko found a ballpoint pen on his way to school. It had two colours: blue and red. To change the colour, you just pressed a button.

Pylypko came to school and started writing with the pen he had found. During the break, Petryk approached Pylypko. He took a close look at the pen and said, 'I had a pen just like that, but I lost it.'

Pylypko felt a hot wave going through his body and he turned red. He could not look Petryk in the eyes and was relieved when Petryk finally left him alone.

After classes, Pylypko walked home, but he took a different route to his usual one. He walked along the riverbank and over the dam. As he crossed the dam bridge, he stopped and took the pen out of his pocket. He stood and peered down at the cascading waterfall and the dark whirlpool below. Then he threw the pen into the whirlpool and ran home.

The following morning, during the break, Petryk came up to Pylypko and asked, 'Where's your pen?'

'I lost mine, too,' answered Pylypko.

'That's strange,' whispered Petryk.

That night, Pylypko hardly slept at all.

### **I put my nesting box up in the forest**

The grade one students were preparing to greet the spring birds returning from warmer lands. It was agreed that each student would make a nesting box for starlings and hang it on a tree near the school.

A week passed. Every day children would bring their handmade wooden houses and hang them on the trees. The school yard was filled with children's joyful voices. One fine day, the teacher led her class out into the school yard. They gazed happily at their nesting boxes, where birds had settled into

their new homes.

'Where is your nesting box?' the teacher asked Hryts, who was standing to one side.

'I put it up in the forest,' answered Hryts.

The teacher was surprised. After a moment's silence, she asked, 'Why did you take your nesting box to the forest?'

'Because starlings want to live there, too,' said Hryts. 'There are so many starlings there!'

### **The big bucket**

Fourteen little children came to school in the evening to water some apple tree seedlings. Young apple trees need extra water in autumn, because the soil is dry after the summer heat. The teacher put fourteen buckets in the orchard: thirteen little buckets and one big bucket.

The children quickly grabbed all the little buckets, and only the big bucket was left. The only student left without a bucket was little blue-eyed Myshko. He was a very slow and thoughtful little boy.

'Never mind, Myshko,' said the teacher. 'Take the big bucket and carry it half full.'

The children began to water the young apple trees. All of them were carrying water in small buckets, except for Myshko, who was using the big bucket. And he was not carrying it half full. He was filling it up. Everyone carried their buckets easily, except for Myshko, who was finding it difficult.

One girl said, 'You need to wake up, Myshko. You should have quickly grabbed a small bucket.' Someone laughed.

When they finished watering, the teacher said, 'Now you can pick some apples to take home and give a treat to your mothers and grandmothers. You can fill up your buckets.'

### **The cat was ashamed**

A cat was sitting outside the door, squinting in the bright sunlight. Suddenly he heard some sparrows start chirping. The cat became silent and watchful. Very quietly he began to creep towards the fence. That is where the sparrows were perched.

He crept right up to the fence ... and leapt high in the air. He was trying to catch one of the sparrows, but it fluttered and was gone.

The cat flew over the fence and landed in a puddle. He hopped out all wet and covered in mud.

The cat walked back to the house. He was ashamed. The sparrows flew together from all over the yard and hovered over the cat, chirping. They were laughing at the cat.



## The death of a dog

Nina ran to her father and anxiously told him, 'Dad, a dog is dying ... It was run over by a car.'

Her father was getting ready to go fishing.

'I don't have time right now,' her father said, waving his hand. 'You can see I'm in a hurry. There are many dogs running around outside.'

Nina began to cry.

'But this is Bilochka,' she said.

'What do you mean Bilochka?' asked her father in surprise.

'My Bilochka,' said Nina. 'She didn't belong to anybody. Someone threw her out when she was small, so she lived in our yard. I made a little house for her there.'

The father listened to Nina in silence, took his rods and went to the pond.

Nina went out onto the road, sobbing, and stood next to the dying dog. Bilochka looked up at Nina, and tears fell from her eyes.

The sun shone brightly in the sky, a nightingale sang in the blossoming orchard, and a swallow twittered over its nest. People walked along the road, talking about their own worries. No one knew that at that moment a dog named Bilochka was dying, and that little Nina's heart was breaking.

## Acorns for an oak grove

Mykola came home from school happy and excited. 'Mum!' he said enthusiastically, 'Today we were given an assignment. Each of us has to collect a hundred acorns in the forest and bring them to school. And guess what the acorns are for?'

'What are they for?' asked his mother.

'We are going to plant an oak grove!' said Mykola. 'Oak trees will grow from the acorns. A hundred years will pass, and two hundred, and three hundred, and the oak trees will still grow there and turn green each year. That's what the teacher told us ... Oh, Mum, I'll run to the forest straight away.'

Two hours later Mykola returned from the forest. He had collected not one hundred, but three hundred acorns. 'So that we can have a bigger oak grove!' he said excitedly, and his eyes shone with joy.

At school, they put all the acorns in a big sack, and they put the sack in a storage area at the end of the corridor. A month passed, and winter came, and the sack was still sitting at the end of the corridor. Then the chair used by Auntie Mariia—the school nanny—broke, and Auntie Mariia started sitting on

the sack of acorns instead of a chair.

Several times Mykola asked his teacher, 'Why are the acorns still sitting there? They should be put in sand over winter.'

'There's plenty of time,' said his teacher. 'By the way,' she added, 'Our school won the competition for collecting acorns. We are being awarded the challenge banner.'

The chair was mended, and the sack of acorns disappeared. Mykola was overjoyed. That meant they had finally buried the acorns in sand.

It was a long and cold winter. With all its cares, joys and excitement, Mykola forgot about the acorns. Spring came, and the blossom in the orchard came and went. Then the final day of the school year arrived. Mykola's teacher sent him on an errand to the groundsman. 'Go and ask for a sack,' she said. 'We are going to the forest to collect medicinal herbs.'

Mykola ran to see Uncle Fedir, the groundsman. He was standing next to a small table in the storeroom. When Mykola asked him for a sack, he looked in all the nooks and crannies, and then said, 'I'll just tip out these acorns, and then you can take this sack.'

He picked up the sack full of acorns and tipped them out in a corner and handed the sack to Mykola.

'What are you collecting this time?' asked Uncle Fedir.

Mykola looked at the acorns in stunned silence.

## How Petryk became angry

Little Petryk is five years old. His father told him about the heroism of a young soldier during the war against the fascists. The young man was seriously wounded, but he did not abandon his weapon. Until his last breath he kept firing his machine gun and killing enemy soldiers.

Petryk went to the bank of the pond. He wanted to cut the slender branch of an elder tree to make a folk pipe. He cut his finger, and it hurt so much that tears began to flow from his eyes. His finger hurt and he felt sorry for himself, but then he suddenly remembered the heroism of the young soldier, and he felt ashamed of himself.

Petryk wanted his eyes to stop crying, but he could not make them. 'Am I really so faint-hearted?' thought the boy. And he became angry with himself. His anger made his eyes dry up, and his finger did not hurt anymore.

