

Sukhomlynsky News



From I'll tell you a story...

Why Serhiiko was ashamed

It was a cold winter. The orchard was carpeted with snow. Birds flew over the white carpet and called anxiously, because there was nothing for them to eat.

The grade three students made bird feeders. Every day they brought food—seeds from hemp, pumpkins or sunflowers. For the chickadees they brought pieces of lard, enclosed with netting so the crows would not steal it.

It was Saturday, and on Sunday it was Serhiiko's turn to bring food for the bird feeder. In the evening, he prepared a piece of lard and wrapped it with netting. He put some pumpkin seeds in a little bag.

'In the morning, as soon as it is light, I will take the food for the birds,' thought Serhiiko.

But in the morning, he did not feel like getting up. He woke up late, and there was a blizzard blowing outside.

'How can I go out in weather like this?' he thought. The blizzard only died down in the evening.

'All the paths will be covered with snow. And the chickadees will be sleeping somewhere cosy,' thought Serhiiko. The boy consoled himself with this thought, so that his conscience would not trouble him.

When it was dark, Serhiiko thought, 'The chickadees will not starve in just one day. Someone will feed them tomorrow.'

The next day Serhiiko's teacher went over to the window and asked, 'Whose turn was it to feed the chickadees yesterday?'

'It was my turn,' said Serhiiko, turning pale with anxiety.

'Well done, Serhiiko!' said his teacher. 'Look, you even hung up two pieces of lard, and the chickadees are still pecking at them.'

It became very quiet in the classroom. Serhiiko could hear his heart pounding, as if it was about to jump out of his chest. He was too ashamed to raise his eyes and look at the teacher.



Please share

Dear reader,

I hope you are well.

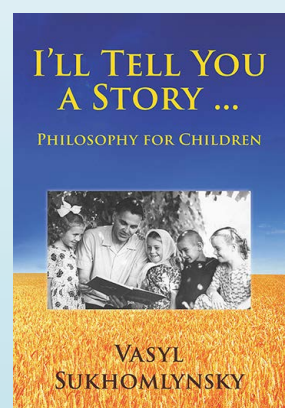
*This month's newsletter contains eleven stories from our latest publication, **I'll Tell You a Story, Philosophy for Children**. These stories have not appeared in the newsletter before.*

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Best wishes,

Alan Cockerill



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From I'll tell you a story ...

How Serhiiko learnt to feel compassion

Serhiiko was playing by the pond. He noticed a girl sitting on the bank.

When he approached her, she said, 'Please don't disturb me. I like listening to the sound of the splashing waves.'

Serhiiko was surprised. He threw a pebble into the pond.

The girl asked him, 'What did you throw into the pond?'

Serhiiko was even more surprised.

'Didn't you see?' he said. 'I threw a stone.'

'No, I couldn't see,' said the girl. 'I'm blind.'

Serhiiko stared at the girl for a long time. He could not imagine what it was like not to be able to see anything.

Night fell, and Serhiiko went to bed. In the middle of the night, he was woken by a noise outside. The wind was howling, and rain was beating against the windowpanes. It was pitch dark inside.

Serhiiko was frightened. He remembered the blind girl. Now, he no longer felt surprised, but his heart ached with compassion. 'How could that poor girl live in darkness all the time?' he thought.

Serhiiko waited impatiently for the sun to rise. He would go and see that blind girl and show her that he cared.

How Yurko was frightened

In the evening, Yurko's mother said, 'Could you please go out to the garden and fetch some apples.'

Yurko went out, climbed into the apple tree, and picked some apples. He was about to go back inside, when he noticed something black and round under the tree, just like a little ball. But the ball was moving.

'What is it?' wondered Yurko. He reached out to the ball and touched it. It was prickly. Yurko was frightened and let out a cry. He dropped the apples and ran inside. When he told his mother about the prickly ball, she just laughed. 'That was just a hedgehog!' she said.

Yurko went back into the garden to pick up the apples, but they were gone. He had to climb the apple tree again. Yurko felt embarrassed. He wanted to take another look at that hedgehog. 'This time, I won't be scared,' he thought.

But the hedgehog was nowhere to be found. Where did it disappear to?

The hermit ant

The ants worked all through the summer, building a large storehouse and collecting food for the winter. They filled the little rooms in their storehouse with grain and tiny pieces of sweet grass.

One ant did not want to work with the others. He said, 'Why do I need such a big storehouse? An ant does not need much. A handful of grain is enough. I am a hermit ant. I do not need anybody, and nobody need concern themselves about me. I am a proud hermit ant.'

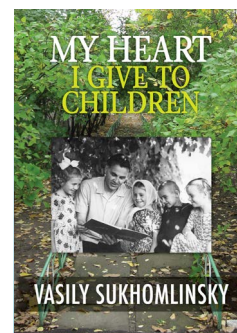
The ant built himself a little hut and sat in it and thought deep thoughts.

The ants from the large anthill built a brick factory and made bricks to strengthen the walls of their storehouse. They invited the hermit ant to join them, saying, 'Come and join us. It will be more fun with us.'

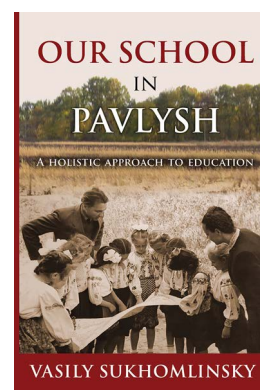
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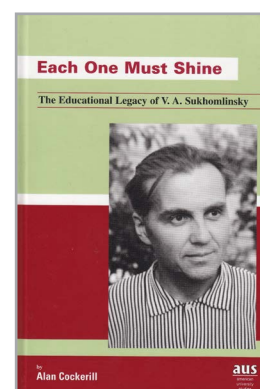
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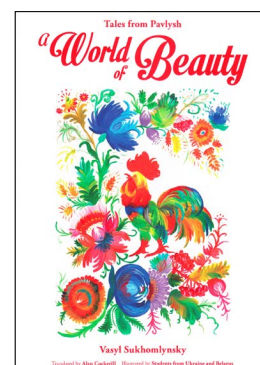
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The hermit ant said, 'Don't disturb my thinking.'
'What are you thinking about, hermit ant?' they asked.

'I am thinking about the meaning of life,' he said.

Winter came. It was warm and cosy in the large anthill, but it was cold in the hermit ant's little hut, and hoar frost appeared on the walls. And he had nothing to eat. The hermit ant shivered from cold and hunger. Finally, he could stand it no longer and left his hut. He asked to be admitted to the large anthill.

'Why don't you just think your deep thoughts, hermit ant?' said the other ants. 'It's easier to think when you are by yourself.'

'It's all right to think when you have enough to eat,' replied the hermit ant, 'But when you are hungry, you cannot think any thoughts.'

It is not so good to be a hermit ant.

A home for Riabko

Mykhailyk had a faithful friend, a dog named Riabko. One day, Mykhailyk saw Riabko running down the street, pursued by a man in grey clothes waving a stick. This really disturbed Mykhailyk.

For several days he laboured away in the shed, making a kennel for Riabko. He called it 'Riabko's house'. It did indeed look like a small house.

Mykhailyk set up the kennel next to his house. Riabko crawled inside, lay down, and poked his head out. 'He likes it,' thought Mykhailyk.

So that Riabko would not wander, Mykhailyk leashed him with a strong iron chain. When Riabko realised he was chained to the kennel, he lay down with his head between his paws and whimpered.

Mykhailyk brought Riabko some food, but the dog turned his head away from the bowl and would not touch it. He just lay there till evening and all through the night.

In the morning, sleet began to fall. Mykhailyk thought that Riabko would take shelter in his kennel, but the dog did not move. He just lay by the kennel and kept on whimpering.

Mykhailyk took Riabko off the chain and put it in the barn. Riabko wagged his tail joyfully and crawled into his kennel.

Why Olesia cried

Three-year-old Olesia was riding her little tricycle in the yard. Her tricycle had three wheels, so it would not tip over, but somehow, it did tip over, and Olesia fell onto the grass. She fell on her knee, and it was sore.

The little girl felt sorry for herself. She pursed her

lips and looked up at the window where her mother was supposed to be, but her mother was not there.

The little girl was ready to burst into tears, but what was the point if nobody could hear her crying? She stood upright, wiped the dust off her knee, picked up her tricycle and sat on the saddle, ready to ride it again. Just then, she noticed her mother sitting inside by the window. She was sewing.

Olesia started crying, perched on her tricycle. Why not, now that there was somebody to console her? Olesia's mother looked at her with surprise. 'Why are you crying?' she asked.

'I fell on the ground and hurt my knee.'

'But you're sitting on your bike,' replied her mother, not understanding.

Olesia fell silent. She was ashamed of herself. She would not have burst into tears if her mother had not been sitting by the window.

I don't want to be an ant

Tarasyk's mother baked some pyrizhky, covered them with a tablecloth, and left them on the dinner table. The hot pyrizhky filled the room with the delicious aroma of freshly baked dough and cabbage.

Little Tarasyk was sitting near the dinner table. He lifted the tablecloth and started pinching morsels of pyrizhok, one crumb at a time. His mother spotted him and scolded him, 'Please be patient, Tarasyk. Let the pyrizhky cool down and they'll be even tastier. You're not an ant!'

Tarasyk went outside, thinking, 'Why did Mum say I'm not an ant? Are ants bad? Mum often says it's good to work hard like an ant.'

Tarasyk walked over to an ant nest and threw a tiny piece of pyrizhok into it. Ants ran in from all directions and started eating it. Tarasyk imagined himself playing with other boys in the school yard, and someone suddenly throwing them a loaf of bread ...

'No, Mum, I don't want to be an ant,' said Tarasyk with a smile.



Staring and distracted

A boy was walking down the road, carrying a bucket of water. An old man was shuffling towards him, feeling his way with a cane.

'He's blind,' thought the boy.

He had never seen that old man in the village before. The boy kept staring at the old man, without watching where he was going. He tripped and spilled water onto the road. The boy was startled and jumped sideways towards the fence.

The old man stepped into the spilt water, slipped, lost his balance, and fell. He slowly got to his feet, bent over, felt the wet ground with his hand, and shrugged his shoulders. How did that water get there?

The boy felt so sorry for the old man that his eyes filled with tears. He was full of remorse. 'Why didn't I warn the blind old man and help him to walk round the slippery patch?' he thought.

The old man had already turned down a lane and was nowhere to be seen, but the boy just kept standing there, not knowing what to do or what to say.

Shame

After graduating from high school, Andrii entered a polytechnical university and moved to a big city. One day, while on holidays, he came home and visited his old school. He was instantly surrounded by his friends. He was also spotted by his former biology teacher, who came over to say hello, congratulated him on his admission to university, and wished him success in his studies.

Andrii told his teacher about the far away city. He was especially fond of the city's shady parks with their large flowerbeds.

'There are so many flowers!' enthused Andrii. 'One street is full of huge cannas. My friend gave me some bulbs ... How could I have forgotten to bring them? But I'll make sure I mail them to you, Hryhorii Hnatovych,' Andrii promised.

'I will be very grateful if you do,' replied his teacher.

The holidays came to an end, and Andrii returned to the city. A month passed, then a second and a third. Andrii forgot all about his promise. One day, he received a letter from his biology teacher.

'I'm really grateful to you, Andrii, for sending us those canna bulbs,' his teacher wrote. 'Now, there will be many beautiful flowers in our school yard.'

Andrii read that letter and felt so ashamed, he did not know what to do. He found the canna bulbs

in his bedside drawers, wrapped them in white fabric, sewed up the bundle, wrote the address on his parcel, and took it straight to the post office.

He wanted to write a letter to his teacher as well, and took up his pen several times, but he was at a loss for words. 'What can I write to him now?' he thought.

Several weeks passed, then months and years ... When he met his teacher, Andrii could not look him in the eyes. But a person who can still feel shame has a righteous soul.

The hedgehog and the moon

The moon was shining brightly. The hedgehog left his little home in search of food. Padding around on his tiny paws, he found a rosehip bush. He picked a bright red berry and stuck it on one of his spikes. His coat was very prickly, with lots of spikes, so he could carry lots of berries. When he had decorated himself all over with red berries, he headed home.

On the way, he came to a puddle, and in the middle of the puddle he could see a huge white moon. The hedgehog thought that it was a huge apple, and wanted to take it home on his spikes. He tried to gather the moon on his spikes, but the moon just quivered and laughed.

'Don't you have enough food already, my dear hedgehog?' he asked.

The hedgehog felt ashamed, and quietly made his way home.

The boastful rooster

A rooster was strutting around the courtyard. He spotted a colourful rainbow in the sky and laughed. 'I have a bright and colourful tail, even more beautiful than that rainbow,' he boasted.

At that moment, it started raining. The boastful rooster's tail was soaked and drooped right down to the ground. The rooster felt embarrassed. He scurried to his perch and never boasted again.

