

Wonderful Neighborhood

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Somewhere in the wide wide world there is a place called Paradise Land. In fact this country lives up to its name. It's a beautiful and untouched valley surrounded by a wonderful mountain range. Several rivers and creeks flow down the mountains into a small lake which is situated in the valley. There are even waterfalls at the mountain sides. From this lake another three creeks flow in all directions through the valley, and keep flowing through each of the three small rock crevices which are in the mountain range. The whole valley is a colorful natural meadow with all its grasses, flowers, bushes and trees. There is even a small swamp and a moorland available in Paradise Land.

All those many animals which live in Paradise Land, have families and live in absolute harmony with another. There are dragonflies, bumble-bees, bees, beetles, grasshoppers, spiders, flies, birds, hares, mice, ermines and lots of other animals more. Of course there are also fish in the lakes and creeks, too. All those beings are harmonized.

One day a wasp family of four called Stingy moved from Grudge Yard to Paradise Land. They moved into a house near the house of the dragonfly family Billiefly. They were fed up with all those quarrels and disputes all the animals always had among each other in Grudge Yard. So they left and searched for a new homeland. They found this in Paradise Land.

Already the first week was the nicest and most peaceful week of their life. The Billieflies had welcome the Stingies in such a warm-hearted way so that they made friends immediately. That way the Stingies lived in peace for about five years in Paradise Land. They found their tasks very quickly and integrated into the community at once. They cared for all the vermin such as midges and horseflies because they were the Stingies' food. Beyond that they learnt the broad-mindedness to absolute different characters, got to know the power of forgiving and also learnt to re-define the emollience. They also learnt to live their dream of peace and harmony and comprehended that it takes as much work for keeping this happy condition as just for its creation. Just like all the other Paradise animals the Stingies worked for it a little bit every day.

One beautiful day the Paradise councils decided to import plants which eat meat and organized a town meeting to obtain the public opinion and agreement. All the animals always take part to such events because everybody does one's bit to the collective decisions. This was the very first meeting for the Stingies, and they were very excited and curious how this goes off. The Billieflies already explained everything to them.

The community hall was well visited and the drinks were distributed. The event started. First the chief council explained the current situation. Paradise Land was overpopulated with vermin such as midges, horseflies, louses and ticks hopelessly. Nobody was able to get this situation under control in Paradise Land. In this speech the chief council also gave the Stingies a high character: "Wasp family Stingy, thank you so much for having moved away from Grudge Yard and having found a new home here about five years ago. We are very happy about the fact that you have integrated into our community so well by taking help from the Billieflies and for contributing to our peace. The Stingies live on those vermin which have to be kept at bay. And this is a considerable effort."

The Stingies felt so very happy about this appreciation and they also got a very big

applause. Not for a long time they felt so lucky.

The chief council continued: "But the population of the vermin keeps on growing so that even the Stingies and some other inhabitants are not able anymore to control the vermin population. So we intend to import some carnivorous plants in order to take away the pressure off them." Again the community gave a big applause – but this time, however, the Stingies didn't.

For the Stingies the high vermin population is a land of Cockaigne. When they were hungry they simply could take what they wanted and when they wanted it every time. They didn't need to endeavor but only needed to fly around their house once and their meal was complete. They didn't do so well by far in Grudge Yard. Now they were spoiled and absolutely didn't want to give up this comfort.

So it happened that they relapsed into their old thinking and habits they had in Grudge Yard but thought to have put them off here in Paradise Land a long time ago. They forgot all the thanks before and also overlooked the very effective measures for everybody and the relieve for themselves. So they flared horribly. They absolutely couldn't agree to the import of any carnivorous plants because those plants would not only cause food shortage, they are also a big danger for the inhabitants of Paradise Land. Especially the children were easy meat for those dangerous plants. "You can't carry the death into our country", they argued.

The way the Stingies had stated their argues shook all the inhabitants of Paradise Land deeply. An unbearable silence came up in the community hall. Such gestures were absolutely unknown in Paradise Land and shocked the whole community. Even the Billieflies didn't know how aggressive their next neighbors could be. They were horrified according to that and stared at the Stingies in horror. The Stingies, however, were horrified about themselves. They left the meeting early and flew home sadly.

The following weeks were very cruel for the Stingies. They withdrew, did their job and kept on eating the vermin. They had no contacts anymore and were not involved in any collective decisions anymore. They even haven't been informed about the results of the event. They had to witness how the carnivorous plants were imported and got their place to live. Within a short time those plants had a relaxing effect on the vermin population. The balance was achieved again and remained on this level. This had also made itself felt for the Stingies. They needed to get used again to hunt their food. But they suffered from social marginalization and from the fact that even the Billieflies didn't talk any word to them anymore.

So one wonderful day Mrs Stingy took heart and contacted Mrs Billiefly in order to apologize. The Billieflies were very happy about being contacted by the Stingies and immediately invited them to a barbecue for the same evening.

Still feeling insecure the Stingies came to the Billieflies and handed over a small present to them. As the Billieflies knew how to create a relaxed atmosphere already in the beginning the barbecue sit-in started in harmony. Both families enjoyed that evening and peace was re-created again.

The Billieflies informed the wasp family about the remaining orders of event and passed their Minutes of Meeting on to them. The dragonfly family got sent this sheet also for the Stingies because everybody had been aware that the Stingies would re-integrate into the community again one day. The Stingies felt very relieved and were very glad about it. While talking about those Minutes of Meeting the Stingies noted immediately that their

contra-argues and doubts had been listed after all and were considered in the decisions. They were very surprised about that and really rejoiced. All the pros and contras had been considered so that the community decided as follows:

The carnivorous plants are needed definitely. But we cannot import and plant each one of those plants at random and without thinking. We may only bring plants into the country which are able to grow in swamps and moorlands, because the landscape there is impassable for the most Paradise animals and is avoided by them because of that. Children are forbidden to go there. Now that an attractive scent came into this country together with those plants all the families have to educate their children regarding this so that nobody will get into danger.

The Stingies were very happy about this solution and learnt that there is a solution for every problem. Furthermore they learnt how important differences in opinions are and that everyone is right in his own way. Now they also learnt that it is very important that all the various opinions come together and how to deal with them in a constructive way. Each opinion – no matter how different it is – is a very important part of one whole picture fitted together of a lot of point of views. So there is a 360 degree view of a situation possible. In this way decisions can be met which make all the participants happy. So there are no losers, but only winners. Due to those countless points of view the social and personal development can go on. There are as many ideas, opinions, worlds, realities and truths as there are living beings (especially human beings).

Learning all those facts the Stingies won a new sense of basic trust into the natural flow of life finally. There haven't ever happened such an escalation again.