

A Story For All The Children In This World

Once upon a time there were a queen and a king, and they were very happy together. They lived in a beautiful castle surrounded by the lush forests and meadows of their extensive kingdom, but their greatest joy were their four children.

Each child was something special, and since they were so different in their own ways, the royal couple had four towers built for them and styled entirely to their individual wishes and needs.

The eldest son was a Reflector, and his name was Raphael. His tower was covered with ivy and surrounded by old trees, which housed a lot of different animals. The birds and the squirrels and the deer and the bunnies came to greet Raphael each morning, and in some special nights the little Reflector even slept outside under the stars and the moon. He loved to watch the moon making it's way across the sky, and he felt very connected to it and just as changeable and different each day and night.

When Raphael spent time with other children or grownups, he could sense what they feel, and that surprised him each time. He actually felt like a mirror: „Depending on who I am with, I see myself in a different way. Only when I'm alone I'm truly myself again“, he thought.

Despite his youth, Raphael was a precious advisor to his parents, because he could also sense the needs and moods of the entire population in his parent's kingdom.

The second son was a Manifestor, his name was Maximilian, and he had similar experiences with his fellow human beings and with being alone. He also loved nature and all animals and the peace and quiet in the woods like Raphael, and he also felt that being with others changed him, but unlike his brother Maximilian felt great discomfort by that.

His tower therefore was hidden behind oak and cottonwood trees, birch and larch. He loved exploring the open countryside for hours alone on his horse and with his dogs, because that gave him peace and strength. Initially, his parents were very worried about these long retreats, but they learned to trust their son, because he always informed them before he left and as soon as he was back.

Every now and then the boy wanted to be with other children and grownups, and when he went to see them, he quite naturally assumed leadership and invented new games and projects for them. He patiently explained the tasks, rules and goals to each of the players, who were very excited to dive into the elaborate adventures Maximilian had created for them. But the little prince himself didn't join the games, he preferred to retreat to the peaceful quiet of his tower where he watched the fun and projects from afar.

The royal couple meanwhile was delighted by the new parks, playgrounds and innovative housing sites that were sprouting around their kingdom from these games.

The queen and king's first daughter was a Generator, and her name was Greta.

She was a very animated and chipper little girl, and as soon as she awoke in the morning, she would jump around and skip through her tower, which was painted in many bright colors and filled with ladders, ropes, swings and mattresses. Then she ran through her garden-playground, skipping of course, onwards to the castle to speak to the people, further on through the splendid rooms and halls to greet everybody, and even further to the stables and gardens until she had met everybody.

Greta loved to be with people, and when someone asked her for help and she felt her little belly move in accordance, she loved to do so. She helped the cook in the kitchen and the gardener with planting and weeding, she combed down the horses and fed the dogs – nothing was beneath her, on the contrary. She saw this work as gre-

at fun and found it to be very satisfying, and when she got tired, she simply laid down somewhere and fell asleep until she felt refreshed and could go back to play - or work, as some would say.

In the evenings, Greta would retreat to her colorful tower to be fast sleep and dream happy dreams of her active life. And through Greta, the people and the royal couple learned how fulfilling and blessing the right kind of work can be.

The youngest daughter was a Projector, and her name was Paulina.

Her tower had balconies, porches and patios all around, which gave her glorious views and ultimately led to the castle's gardens. A beautiful rose climbed up the wall of the tower, and its scent blew softly through the rooms.

Despite her young age, Paulina could join the dots and see solutions like nobody else. Accordingly, she loved it when people asked her to show them easier and faster ways to take care of things. It gave the little Projector girl a sense of pride and success to be invited this way, and everybody recognized and appreciated this special ability of hers.

Like her two brothers but other than her sister, Paulina tired easily when she spent too much time with other people, and she needed to retire and rest in her tower regularly. On those occasions she liked to lay on her bed, surrounded by fragrant flowers and reading one of her numerous books until she would finally calm down inside and fall asleep.

The royal couple was amazed by their youngest child and how effortlessly yet determined she was able to guide and help people of all ages.

Although the four royal children were so different, they loved each other dearly and complemented each other perfectly, while marveling at each others uniqueness. They liked to meet and play a lot, and they felt great closeness and attachment to each other.

The queen and king were very proud of their children's development and how they inspired everybody around them to always be truthful and respectful to each other. People saw how much easier even the toughest work could be handled this way, and everybody was singing and laughing and did what they could do best. So everybody made their contribution, and this kingdom was the most prosperous and beautiful of all.

One day though, news arrived that the queen's father had fallen seriously ill, so the royal couple immediately prepared to travel across the sea and beyond the big mountains to support the old man. They decided to give all responsibilities to their smartest minister, because they thought he was the best to govern the kingdom while they're gone.

This minister was a great planner, and since he wanted to prove his worth by creating more goods and greater profits, better security and more free time, he immediately laid down new rules to reorganize the whole country. In his blind ambition, he didn't take into account which talents the people had or what they really liked to do. Now, everything had to be done according to plan, so the minister's goals could be fulfilled on time. He called this „efficiency“.

The royal children had to abide by those new rules as well. They had to get up at the same time as everybody else, eat the same meals at the same time, learn their school lessons each day at the same time, do their chores at the same time, and finally go to bed and turn the lights out at the same time. Only in their so called „free time“ from 4 to 6 p.m., they were allowed to play a little or be by themselves.

Raphael, the Reflector, felt very ill at ease. He could sense the drastic changes in the people of the whole kingdom and in those closer around him. He was also quickly exhausted by spending too much time with people, and by working too much, and by being constrained by too many rules. He tried to explain to the minister what he perceived, but the man wouldn't listen.

On the contrary, he additionally cut down all the beautiful old trees around the castle, even those around Raphael's tower, because „the useless scrub and the filthy animals were obsolete and created a mess“, he would say. All the flora and fauna had to make room for more and more „efficiency“, and Raphael was overwhelmed with disappointment and sadness, because the castle and the whole kingdom had turned into a place he didn't like anymore.

His brother Maximilian felt great anger arising in his chest, when he saw all the constraints and wrongfulness that burdened his siblings and his people, and he himself felt suffocated by the new rules, which made no sense to him, and because he couldn't decide for himself anymore.

But when Maximilian tried to resist and give room to his anger, the minister gave away his beloved animals, and he forced the boy to spend even more hours of hard work. „Those who don't work are of no value in this world“, the minister liked to say, and so he broke Maximilian's will and entrepreneurial spirit. The boy retreated within himself, talked to no one anymore, and looked like a ghost, skinny and pale.

Greta, the little Generator girl, was not allowed to work out of joy anymore or when she was asked to help; now she was forced to do chores she could barely fulfill day in and day out. She was not allowed to sleep when she grew tired, but when everybody else had to settle for the night, after a stale dinner that was served by unhappy servants.

Very often she couldn't sleep, and she was very disoriented and frustrated. Greta's friends, the cook, the gardener and the other people in the castle had become disgruntled and unfriendly, and Greta felt her life power slip away. She felt enormously tired and sad, she drooped her shoulders and her head and she dragged herself through the castle, barely being there at all.

Paulina, the Projector, watched the events with dismay. She too had to work all day on tasks unbecoming, and she was not allowed to retreat to her tower either. She kept trying to explain to the minister that he could reach his precious efficiency in different ways, but he just pushed her aside, saying „small children should be seen, not heard“. Paulina's books were burnt, nobody asked her for advice anymore, and she felt invisible, useless and powerless. The rose bush in front of her tower had become a spiny thorn shrub, and the little girl felt just the same: bitter and exhausted.

After a very long time the royal couple finally came back, and when they crossed the border of their kingdom, they could already see that something was terribly wrong. The further they advanced towards the castle, the more obvious the sorrow of the people became, and the deterioration of nature, and how everything had become grey and dirty, and how men and animals hung their heads, and that there was no more song and dance, at all.

As the royal couple arrived at the castle, they immediately called for their children, and when they saw how miserable these were and that they were mere shadows of themselves, who wouldn't even speak anymore, the queen and the king were stupefied with horror. As a consequence, the queen called for the minister and demanded an explanation for these terrible conditions.

The minister answered that he wanted to acquit himself and that he was going to create more wealth and happiness for all. For that purpose everybody had to join the effort, and the royal children were supposed to be an example of how individuality and creativity just get in the way of progress, while hard work can turn that around. He just needed more time to show success...

So the king asked the minister: "Which season is the most important of the year, and which one makes no difference at all? Spring, summer, fall or winter?" The minister had no answer to that, so the king showed him the only apple left on the tree in the castle's inner yard, and he said, "you see this apple? For this to grow and ripen, the tree needs the quiet of winter, the warmth of spring, the summer sun, and the maturation that comes with fall. All four seasons are equally important, none is lesser than the other. And that is how it is with all people and with our children: everyone has their special quality and their very own contribution in their own time, so we can all prosper together."

The minister understood this analogy, and he looked around, and for the first time he could see clearly how mistaken he had been, and that the consequences were severe. He retreated from his post voluntarily, and he wanted to leave the kingdom in shame, but since neither queen nor king believed in punishment, he was allowed to stay and pass on his experiences as a teacher.

He was actually very good at that, and he found this new job very satisfying. After a while he even started to paint, preferably the apple tree in the inner yard, since the king's story had made such an impression on him. The royal children, as well as the whole people, recovered quickly from the minister's misguided regency. The castle was brought back to life and laughter, and nature around it and everywhere came back to shine and bloom even brighter than before. Everybody was striving to listen and support each other - and they all lived happily ever after.

THE END