

The Kid with Endless Candy

Berk had gone into a fight with his school mates again. He had a deep anger against them. But this fight was different in dimensions, because a teacher had caught them fighting. Berk was now sitting in front of the teacher's desk and waiting anxiously for his verdict. Normally, he wouldn't be scared. But he was scared of his teacher calling his parents, because his parents were out of town. Berk didn't want to ruin their holiday with such an issue. After a time of silence, the teacher started talking in a very quiet voice.

-What is it with you guys?

Berk and others started to defend themselves all at once. Everyone was putting forth their own excuses and repeatedly expressing that the others were at fault. The teachers warned the students, this time at a higher pitch. Everyone went silent and looked at the teacher. The teacher caught every one of them in glances and the atmosphere went back to its peace and quiet. The teacher started talking again.

-I am going to give you an assignment.

The teacher thought that giving them a common assignment would eliminate the coldness among them and put an end to the fight. Having entered the teaching profession very recently and still feeling the burning enthusiasm for teaching, this young teacher could not penalise the children and had found a way to alleviate their negative behaviour. He was going to teach them about solidarity, the importance of friendship, and how many can come together as a stronger unity. In fact, the assignment was researching and writing an article on the story of "solidarity and unity". He gave each one of them the titles of different solidarity unions and asked them to conduct research on these unions. Berk waited in curiosity,

having understood that the light shining in the teacher's eyes was reflecting on him. The teacher felt the pride of what he did once again and gave Berk his subject.

-Berk, you are going to research the European Union. The others will conduct research for you and collect information. This assignment will be a project for you.

Berk was greeted by his grandfather at home. Having nearly reached his seventies, his grandfather was a very knowledgeable man. Because of that, Berk wanted to ask his grandfather about his subject. He wanted to prepare a different assignment without the conventional information he could get from the Internet. So, he told his grandfather what had come to pass and asked for his assistance. His grandfather was chafing his white beard while sitting in front of the fireplace. He grasped the seriousness of the matter and knew that what he was about to tell his grandson was going to have a permanent impact. In addition, it was a special pleasure for him to see his grandson coming to him rather than his "Uncle Google". As the subject was relating to solidarity and his grandson was still in the fifth grade, he had to tell him about the European Union in an attractive, but simple manner.

Finally, he found how he needed to relate this and turned to his grandson. His grandson was waiting for him with great excitement on the other chair in front of the fireplace. His grandfather started to talk:

-My dear, there was a large neighbourhood years ago.

After this introductory sentence, the grandfather looked at his grandson with love and saw that he was listening to him quite attentively. Berk couldn't see the connection between the European Union and a neighbourhood, but went on listening to his grandfather with close attention.

His grandfather went on: "There were young people who had been friends since childhood in this neighbourhood. Some of these had had frequent fights when they were children. At times, the fights were so great that other villages and neighbourhoods were called in." While his grandfather was almost getting lost in the story, Berk interrupted him.

-Tell me, grandpa, why had they been fighting when they were children? What had they done to each other?

After a thought, the grandfather said: "Because, my son, these children were fighting for the candy carts which were newly discovered then. Most of them supported two children who were older than the others. Those children then captured almost all candy carts in the surrounding areas and they spared the highest amount of candy firstly for themselves and then for their supporters. In fact, they called the oldest child among them 'The Kid with Endless Candy'. He had candy carts all over the place. He also had a close friend who had as many candy carts as the oldest child. Then, they formed a union and gave everyone candy and started to control all candy carts." Berk interrupted his grandfather again with a curious question.

-Grandpa, you already said that most children had supported the two oldest brothers. What happened to those that hadn't supported them? Had they been able to get candy?

His grandfather was surprised at how attentive he was. He decided that he was on the right track. After thinking for a while, he started talking again: "The non-supporters formed a group, too. They didn't have as many candy carts as the others, because they had learned how to use the candy car later than them. But, the latecomers didn't lie idle. They had an older brother, too. As soon as he had learned how to use the candy car, he started

to seize the others' candy carts. He grew more. The other two brothers saw him as a threat and started to talk to him face-to-face. But, neither side gave up their candy carts. As a last resort, they found a solution. A football match.”

-So, they had a football match for the candy carts?

-Yes, my smart grandson. The winner would take all candy carts.

-So, how was the football match, grandpa?

-It was a football match with flexible rules. It went on for longer than expected. Both sides called in friends from surrounding neighbourhoods and villages. Some had a good technique, some good physical power. The two older brothers came out as winners. They took many things away from the other brother. In fact, they took so much that this brother asked for a rematch upon gathering up his power back, but he was beaten again. Months, maybe years passed. Both sides regretted what they had done. So, they came up with a solution. They were going to operate these candy machines together. First, only a few were willing to agree to this solution. Then, the others, seeing that the business is going well, joined them. Later, this was named after the neighbourhood, Birlik (Union). As the years passed, they embraced each other more tightly and started to help each other out not only for the candy carts, but for all other issues, too. They constructed buildings and had meals together. They helped each other when in need and repaired any broken carts together. Then, they had a certain standard. The level of welfare among all improved and they started to live happily. In fact, this solidarity became news for everyone else's ears. People from surrounding neighbourhoods wanted to move into this area. The inhabitants of the Union Neighbourhood came together and decided on the people they would accept in unison. This neighbourhood tried

to be the best in everything and contributed to itself greatly in time.”

The grandfather drew a deep breath and leaned back. Berk wanted to ask one last question. He was very curious about the answer inside.

-You said that this union was named after the neighbourhood. What was the name of the neighbourhood? His grandfather stood up. He leaned towards the child to establish eye contact and whispered quietly: “European Union...”

Berk was trying to match everything he had heard in his mind. The Union had been established after long fights. Friendships initiated by fights had turned into a grand union of solidarity in this story. He thought about this long and hard before falling asleep. Berk was going to review his relationships with his friends...

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