

### ***Reward for "Good"?***

Sitting on a shady spot under a palm tree, Angelo, the deer, reflected on his encounter with Wendy, the hyena.

About a year ago when Angelo traveled around the desert, a lone hyena was sobbing by herself. Angelo had sat quietly besides her until she stopped, after hours, and listened to her.

Wendy told him about her love for Adam, the lion, and his love for her. "That was all years ago. A lot happened during the years. At one point because we didn't want to interfere with the peace agreement between my hyena/leucrotta clan and Adam's pride of lions, he and I decided that we could not make our love public. Then last month, Adam told me that he felt that our life was too difficult, he said that we did not have a life and that he had to leave me and find a lioness in order to share a 'full life' with her. Well, actually he had already met a lioness and that was why he suddenly realized what he had been missing all these years...."

Wendy went on to tell Angelo that not only she grew up with a leucrotta brother who believed "love conquers all," but she was also brought up by a hyena mother who spent her life time being in love with and being loved by a lion.

"I am so hurt by Adam's change of heart. He was so certain for years, " Wendy continued, "I don't understand why this happened to me. Don't we always say that if you do good deeds, then you will be rewarded by goodness in return?"

Angelo had felt quit speechless on the spot. He had told Wendy that he would need some time to think about the issue of "good gets good and bad gets bad."

Far away from the hyena, sitting in the wonderful tropical climate with palm trees all around him, Angelo's thought wandered to the little duck he once met.

"He felt hopeless as well, " Angelo thought to himself, "First he had to leave Emmett, against his will. Then he had to leave the frog because she needed to 'make room' for her new friend the swan. He helped people all around while he traveled but he

couldn't find anyone who would like him around for long. That didn't seem to coincide with 'a good deed has its own rewards' principle."

Feeling restless, Angelo got up and started walking. He walked for weeks until he reached a big forest where he ran into a pair of bears who claimed to know a duck named Hope. He soon discovered that Hope was Emmett's little duck, "How interesting, he named himself Hope then, " Angelo mumbled to himself, "Last time he was complaining to me that one could not name himself. I wonder why he chose that name. Perhaps he is the one who can help me find the solution to Wendy's problem."

With that thought, Angelo said good-bye to the bears and went on his way to find Hope. It took him a good year and a half to track down the little duck. When he finally found Hope, the duck was so deep in a conversation with a frog that Angelo had to wait for his "turn."

When Hope hugged the frog good-bye, Angelo got up from where he was sitting and said "hi" to Hope. Shocked by the sight of Angelo, Hope jumped up to hug him.

After a few minutes of catching up, Angelo asked his question.

"Well, " Hope became pensive, "I'm not sure. When I first met Jack, I felt that finally all my effort had its reward—Jack was always going to be my friend. Then he met Jan, even though he still loved and missed me, he was unable to be with me or chose not to share his life with me, it doesn't matter how you see it, the result was that he and I didn't have a 'living dialogue' together anymore. I was so distraught that I started to examine the concept of 'good gets good and bad gets bad.' I began to look at things differently. I felt that if I could focus on my own fairness to others and try my best to carry out all my promises to others, then I am providing them the very sense of 'belonging' and 'home' I feel that is lacking for myself. And hopefully in the meantime I would be comforted in making sure that nobody will ever feel the way I do *because* of me. That, I suppose, is my 'reward' for my 'good deeds'."

After contemplating what Hope said for a long time, Angelo bade him good-bye and set out to find Wendy. It could just be the "cure" that the hyena needed at this moment - to become "other-focused" rather than self-absorbed. But in his heart, Angelo felt that this was not a long lasting solution.

"It just sounds so much like a resignation from life. It's as if Hope was saying, well, since I can't count on anyone else, I will just make sure others don't feel the same

way, " the deer said to himself, "But then again, it's an awfully constructive and helpful way of being, while we look for a better solution."