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22ND CENTURY FAIRY-TALE

The sun of July floats above the verdant Baltic - above pine-tree forests and blooming meadows where the life is flickering, till the orange ball of sun slowly comes down above the calm waters of the Baltic Sea. Next to the seaside dunes among pine trees some small houses can be seen - this is the Pine-village - a place where happy people are living.

The sun is about to set, but the activity in the centre of the village is still going on - youngsters are going to dance, helpers are still gathering hay in meadows and horses are pulling carts on the main road. On the highest sand hill of the village the grey-haired Pine-village granddad is sitting together and talking with granddaughter Annija:

- Grandpa, please tell me something interesting! For example, why you're called as the Grandpa of Pine-village?

- Okay, let it be your evening fairy-tale about the Grandpa of Pine-village. You must have heard the fairy-tale about one father and his sons - two were clever, but the third was a fool. A pretty similar story happened when I was a child...

Once upon a time people were living in gigantic cities that were spreading in width and height. Although, people had wide knowledge, their reasoning faculty was small and point of view was narrow. As a result the environment was being polluted every day. The dirty waters of the Daugava brought chemicals and plastic waste to the sea. But the polluted sea punished the inhabitants of the Baltic with disastrous storms and floods that overflowed Riga yearly. The society checked its shortsightedness step by step, but protests and laws were not able to regenerate the water and earth...

A mother, father and three sons were living in Riga's suburb. They had their own lovely vegetable garden where children could play all day long among cherry trees, somersault on the lawn or relax in hammock. Actually, their family was old-fashioned because their dream was a big country house with lots of space, animals and nature all around for their sons and their future families.

Oldest sons who had spent their childhood in a country environment more or less run about the nearby meadows, climbed up a tree in the birch grove or swam in the Daugava so they grew strong and healthy. Riga grew, too... Their house was enclosed by high-rises more and more and supermarkets gulped down the green quite soon leaving just a piece for the cozy garden. The youngest brother grew up as a typical city child. Although, the Youngest was clumsy and weak,

he was so keen on earth and nature that he used to dig out plants from pots and make a sandbox on the sofa when he was alone. The Youngest finished primary school, but couldn't continue his studies because of poor health. Actually, his only interests were plants and gardening from his early childhood. He was often dreaming how the nature is awakening in springtime and how the loose earth smells in vegetable beds...

But then one day a thundering explosion set fire in the closest port's oil storehouse and shattered the little house and the family in it. Due to the disaster, the water of Daugava was like a pitch for many days. It was forbidden to use water from wells and people had to leave these polluted areas soon. Parents understood that their days could not be peaceful and nice in this city anymore...

A family meeting was held and they decided: clever oldest son will study in Germany, skillful middle son will earn money in Ireland, but the parents were to return to a lonely but also peaceful countryside. Naturally, the Youngest had to take care of his elderly parents and their new country household – it was his destiny...

The oldest son studied environmental sciences in Munich and got a job in an environmental protection institution. The Oldest cared about the resources and health, so he was jogging every morning, sorting the waste and using tram to get to work. However, hard work in politics caused a terrible stress, so he often got depressed and ill, but the lack of time was the reason he couldn't afford family life...

The middle son also longed for some healthy living. He foresaw that he needs lots of money to afford it, so he settled in a successful construction work business in Ireland as many Latvians did at that time. Unfortunately, ecological lifestyle was just the newest vogue in his social circle and the highest ecological achievement was a hybrid technology car. The Middle became wealthier, bought more and ate more, but business took all his time and care. Consequently, the overworked and overweight middle son was still dreaming about his happy future...

People around the Europe were building nice houses and living in prosperity, though they felt depressed due to stress, loneliness and diseases. War against terrorism was replaced by the war for resources and political refugees were replaced by runaways from climate change. Everyone felt unstable about the future...

Eventually, a Europe-scale competition was announced to motivate scientists and businessmen to look for the express solution - something unique but simple either. A new concept of sustainable lifestyle was necessary - to ensure minimal resource consumption, clean environment and promote good conditions for healthy population and family forming. The applications were many, but only some participants could prove the effectiveness of their solutions...

Two oldest brothers were among them. The Oldest had prepared a portfolio of laws that put restrictions on polluting of the environment, to punish perpetrators and give marvelous opportunities for those living green. The Middle offered building ecological and innovative multi-storey houses. His buildings looked more like green boxes with solar cells on roof because they didn't have windows to eliminate heat loss, but walls were covered with plants.

The jury couldn't decide the winner, but then the final participant applied. He had made... just a village!

The jury arrived at the luxurious 19th century manor-house that was surrounded by many small buildings. Activity was everywhere - children were laughing in the playground, a crowd of pupils were chatting in front of the manor and diligent villagers were waiting for recently baked delicacy in the nearest bakery. The manor house was a local school but the smallest buildings were shops, craftsman workshops, medical centre, guest house and other essential institutions. Private living houses made from straw or wood were covered with grass and plant living roofs. Residential area with spacious, flowering gardens and large trees was located aside of the centre creating a kind of inhabited park.

The creator of the village told that this site has been old and poor country household with just a ruin of manor house. He had barely got by at the beginning but he has always tried to save some money - all the vegetables and fruits he has grown by himself, he also has two goats, a sheep and hens. He bought a laptop with internet access and started earning money by designing beautiful gardens when the household was renewed and winter came and got down back to field works at spring. He had understood that God intended him not to run away from this place, but transform it into an enjoyable place for living. It proved to be true because tourists and citizens came in flocks to his orderly household and guest house to relax and enjoy the nature, simplicity and freedom. Finally he started to sell the pieces of his land to wealthy people longing to live consistent with nature – that was the beginning of his sustainable village.

The jury took a shine to this village because inhabitants here could devote enough time for family and health. They didn't have to spend hours in traffic jams wasting resources because appropriate working places were located nearby. Every family had planted its garden, built an ecological house and grew its healthy food on their own, so they took care for their piece of land. Also the economical situation was well developed because of inner production trading and off-grid alternative energy resources. Consequently, inhabitants felt safe for their future and many youngsters decided to create their own little family business here and make a family.

The man who had created a paradise for him and others around won the competition. Therefore villagers named him the Grandpa of Pine-village in honor of the youngest brother. Instead of a weakling oldest brothers saw a young and energy full man when they met again after so many years. The Oldest and Middle son settled in Pine-village soon and finally made their happy families there.

All three brothers became good neighbors and lived long happy lives, of course...

Grandpa had finished his life history, but Annija asked:

- I understood that our village has been a solution for many problems, but how did you become so healthy oldster?

- See, every illness is like a conversation with God. Through illnesses God tries to tell that you are living wrong. Obviously, I made the right choice by returning back to nature and earth, back to primary sources, so I was healed from many diseases and my life was extended...

Evening set in the Pine-village and tanned villagers went to cozy straw-bale houses. People didn't know sitting around traffic jams, painful diseases, tiredness after watching TV for hours, but they knew a lot more - their land and the smell of earth, their trees and the flavor of their fruits, their family and joyful life together with friends...