Honest Ladybirds

Educational Value
Trustworthiness and honesty

Moral of the story
Honesty is valued by all, and when we are dishonest, people lose faith in us.

Story

A strange legend has it that ladybirds forgive but don't forget. Apparently, at first they didn't have their distinctive black spots. The ladybirds had been pushed to the verge of extinction when, while being led by their famous guide, Caius Insectus, a storm flooded the path they were travelling. Caius Insectus disappeared into the flood, and the few ladybirds who survived had to choose a new guide and leader. They decided that their new leader would be the first ladybird to successfully travel south to the Great Lake and return to describe it.

Many young ladybirds eagerly launched themselves into this adventure. One by one they returned and told of how beautiful the southern lake was at that time of year, with its crystal clear waters, bordered by flowered meadows. However, the last of the ladybirds was late in getting back. They waited for him for three days, and when he finally returned, he was downcast and embarrassed. He hadn't managed to reach the lake. Everyone criticised him for his slowness and stupidity, and they prepared to continue their journey the next day.

Following their new guide, they spent a morning walking northwards until they reached some tall thick grassland, where they halted, astonished. In front of them was the Great Lake! But there were no crystal clear waters, or flowered meadows. The heavy rain had turned it into a huge green puddle surrounded by mud.

Everyone understood what had happened. Without realising it, they had been swept beyond the lake by the flood. When the ladybirds had gone out looking for the lake, they had gone in the wrong direction. Now they could see that, apart from that one late ladybird, they had all wanted to be the Great Guide, and they had not had any qualms to lie in order to get what they wanted.

And so, the late little ladybird, the only one who they now really trusted, was made the Great Guide. They also decided that every time one of them was discovered lying they would paint a black spot on that ladybird's back, so there'd be no way to erase it. Nor would a ladybird know how many spots they had on their back. From then on, when a ladybird looks at another's back, it can tell whether that ladybird is trustworthy.

Likewise, when people show themselves to be dishonest other people paint spots on their impressions of them. It's enough to have just one black spot to change from a simple red insect into a ladybird. So, no matter what the prize may be, we should not allow anyone to paint that spot upon us.

Author...
Pedro Pablo Sacristán