

A DILLY OF A TALE

A story about the dangers of gossip

A cloudless blue hovered still and soundless overhead,
This hot afternoon found most Bog critters napping in their bed.
The gentle buzz of locust wings had lulled them off to sleep,
Each little body curled up tight in a brown, soft, furry heap.

Treetops shimmered in the sun; leaves twinkled with the breeze,
While napping Dillys slumbered in the tallest of Bog trees.

You see...Dillys live in treetops, a place they'd been assigned,
Because of all their whispering and the critters they'd maligned.
Years ago the critters forced the Dillys up in trees,
Sick and tired of all their gossip and the truth which it deceives.

It seemed at first as though the Dillys loved their new domain,
From this high up they could see and hear over all the Bogs'
terrain.

They could see and not be seen, they could hear and not be heard,
Like a nincompoop they could get the scoop then eagerly spread
the word.

But as of late it seemed the Dillys had a change of heart,
Missing friends and places down below, given up when forced to
depart.

Meanwhile...

The Dillys were awakened by the sound of Rumors flying,
Those large grey birds that smell real bad and look like they are
dying.

The Rumor is a mysterious bird that feeds of things decayed,
They work and sleep in shadows where they ply a seamy trade.

Pickle Dilly called these birds when things had gotten quiet,
She liked to stir things up a bit, maybe start a little riot.
Little Pickle Dilly had the biggest nose yet found,
Sticking it in others business, spreading gossip all around.

They called her Pickle as she had the sourest of attitudes,
Always looking for the worst in folks, forever critical and rude.
She always was so proud to be the first to spread some tale,
Never caring if the facts were straight or if the truth were frail.

The tree tops positively hummed and buzzed with all the Rumors
flying,
Miss Pickle in the thick of things, her loose lips always prying.
"Have you heard!?" and "Did you know...the latest on Mrs. So and
So?
Can you believe"...and "Promise not to tell...
Move over closer dearie, so I don't have to yell."

Well...On this particular day in time, the Dillys were discussing
That they'd really like to move downstairs and stop all this
gossipy fussing.
But the Rumors stuck their beaks in and it ended in much
shouting,
The Dillys huffed off angry, then hung out in branches pouting.

This delighted Pickle, so her stories grew and grew,
Truth buried by excitement in more gossip old and new.
Rumors flying overhead, Dillys pitted against each other,
It looked as if real trouble brewed, even brother fighting
brother.

Hartlie'd heard through the tree top vine that trouble was in
store,

So he scurried toward the Dilly's trees trying to head-off an all out war.

Just what this fuss was all about and exactly who was at its' root,
Was what Hartlie intended to find out then perhaps give them the boot.

As Hartlie rounded the last Bog curve leading to the Dilly trees,
He heard a lot of shouting and something crashing through the leaves.

As he looked up, he saw a Dilly flying through the air,
Kicking and screeching as he flew, twigs caught up in his hair.
Seconds later another flew in much the same distress,
Then another and another, this was a dilly of a mess!

It seems as if some Dillys found a tough but pliable limb,
Pushing other Dillys out on to it, then pulling back with vigor and vim.

It made a giant slingshot that fired each fussing Dilly,
Perilously through bough and bark, a scene most incredibly silly.

It didn't take a judge to see things were getting out of hand,
And that Hartlie needed to take control and make a righteous stand.

But...just about that time there came another flying Dilly,
Screeching shrilly as she flew through branches willy-nilly.

It was Pickle and she landed with a large resounding smack,
Her nosey nose embedding deeply in a white oak crack.

Hartlie climbed the massive oak, halting the raucous commotion,
As another Dilly sailed through the air in disastrous locomotion.
"That's quite enough! This has to stop!" Hartlie spoke with stern conviction,

"You see what this has come too, on account of your gossip addiction!

Speaking rashly leads to ruin as the Bible clearly tells,
He who wisely guards his lips, also guards his life as well!
I need you all to tell the truth...who has caused this calamitous mess?

We need to get to the bottom of this so the culprit just needs to confess!"

The treetops grew quiet and everyone turned to look at the crack in the tree,

Where Pickle was wedged, her nose stuck tight, still struggling trying to tug herself free.

She wiggled and jerked, she pleaded and cried but the oak never loosened its hold,

The sun was starting to set in the Bog and she knew pretty soon she'd be cold.

Suddenly...

Dillys started climbing out of the trees, resolved to live back on the ground,

Determined to give up the gossip, realizing it had kept them all bound.

Pickle became frantic and started to honk, "Dhont leeb me I'm eber so skeered,

Id's gonna get derk and I'll kitch a bad cod, ahl shtay shtuck in this twee ahm afeared!"

Hartlie turned his head and chuckled at the pitiful state she was in,

"Are you ready to give up the gossip?" he asked, "And ask forgiveness for this gossipy sin?"

"Ahm sawee...weewee sawee...pwees don leeb me schtuck up dis
twee...
Ah pwomise neber to do id agin, Ah pwomise I'll be a new me!"

Hartlie promised to stay for as long as it took for the tree to let
go of her nose,
"It looks like your bark's not as bad as oak's bite," said Hartlie at
poor Pickles woes.

A few days later, her nose how reduced, she and Hartlie climbed
down from the oak,
They were greeted by family and friends of old then Pickle lifted
her hands and she spoke.

"Forgive me dear friends for the pain that I caused, when I
gossiped and tainted your name,
I've had plenty of time to think over my faults and it's caused me
a great deal of shame.
But if we would put it behind us and start, down a road built on
love,
Then gossip will never take over again, that I promise by Heaven
above."

A cheer went up and peace rained down as love and trust were
restored,
The critters deciding they'd not consort with deceit, despair and
discord.
Then they looked up at the flapping of wings as the Rumors flew
high above,
They had left the treetops where they'd lived for so long, in their
place perched a beautiful Dove.

The end... or could it be...? THE BEGINNING!

THE BEGINNING

Scriptures from the Holy Bible that help us with gossip

Proverbs 25:18 Telling lies about others is as harmful as hitting them with an ax, wounding them with a sword, or shooting them with a sharp arrow.

Proverbs 12:18 Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing.

James 4:11 Don't speak evil of one another dear brothers, and sisters.

1 Peter 3:10 If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies.

James 3:2 Indeed, we all make many mistakes. For if we could control our tongues, we would be perfect and could also control ourselves in every other way.

Proverbs 25:23 As surely as a north wind brings rain, so a gossiping tongue brings an anger.

James 3:9 With the tongue, we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness. Surely my brothers and sisters, this is not right.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever would believe in Him should not perish but have life everlasting.

This series was written in an effort to help children understand that nothing can overcome us if we are walking close to Jesus, trusting in His love and obeying His commandments.