

# THE BOY WHO WANTED TO SAVE THE PLANET

A boy brings his friends together for nature preservation, giving simple examples of how this mission can be accomplished.

João José da Costa

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THE BOY WHO WANTED TO SAVE THE PLANET, BY JOÃO JOSÉ DA COSTA

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Children's story that integrates with the natural fantasy and creativity of children and young people, entertaining, educating and adding to the development of character, moral values, citizenship, ecological awareness, family values, culture, knowledge, spirituality, respect for educators, encouragement to study, order and discipline. This book is for children and young people who enjoy intelligent, sensitive, cultural, educational readings and themes of social reality. It is a book with largest literary content, a better reading exercise.

*Synopsis:*

*The book tells an educational story of Nichola, a child who decides to save the planet and is able, through personal efforts and examples, to attract his friends who are aware of the need to play an active role in preserving nature and the environment, giving simple examples of how this mission can be accomplished. Nichola and his friends mobilize in a joint effort to improve the environmental conditions of their own neighborhood. The book addresses the main current themes about environmental and ecological issues embedded in a story that stimulates reading. It conveys precious knowledge of ecology and preservation of the environment.*

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to all those who reserve part of their lives to educate children in some way, as a mission and a belief that in them is the hope of a better world.

In special to parents, teachers and grandparents, the basic triangle of early childhood education.

I thank God for the child that He still allows to exist in me.

João José da Costa

It was normal at Nichola's house the family to gather at night in the small living room, where each one would get distracted doing some activity.

His mother Deborah rested watching her favorite novels, his father Alexander was reading the newspaper of the day, his grandfather Antony, better known as Grandpa Tony, took naps most of the time and his grandmother Emily sometimes knitting, sometimes lowering her glasses to see what was on television.

Nichola, oblivious to this scene, played on the living room rug, with his little cars, train and, especially, with his miniatures of farm animals.

Nichola didn't really know what a farm or a natural forest were. However, he was strongly drawn to everything that reminded him of nature themes.

In the humble neighborhood where he lived, there were no more trees, woods, clean water streams, fresh air and no wild animals. Everything had been replaced by dry land, dust, sewage that ran in the open, air pollution. The green was limited to some points of abandoned bush or some trees planted in the backyards of houses or sidewalks.

Garbage decorated this whole scene with colorful objects that remained there forever - cans and bottles of soda, plastic bags, packaging of a thousand of products.

The only representatives of the fauna were the scorpions, rats, cockroaches and even some vultures, who fought over the remains of food in the rubbish thrown along the streets.

This was the reality of Nichola's life.

Television was the only window that opened for Nichola to see know the world beyond his neighborhood.

Playing quietly, Nichola only focused on television when he heard news of wild animal seizures, burning, forest tree falling, river and sea pollution, air pollution, wildlife extinction. And he was very sad about this news.

Something that terrified Nichola was when he heard of such a hole in the ozone layer that could destroy humanity. He imagined a hole in the sky that would swallow every human being one day.

Turning to what he liked to do – to play with his toys - Nichola kept his ears on the television news and listened to an interview from a scientist to the reporter.

Nichola, of course, understood almost nothing of what the interviewed scientist said and, as he always did, resorted to his grandfather Tony. He was the only one who was willing to give him some explanation at this time, and he did so quietly so he would not disturb his father and mother who watched a television program.

“Grandfather! What does the man mean?”.

“Nichola, he means that for hundreds of millions of years nature has recycled, that is, absorbed and returned the materials produced and consumed in the world”.

“However, with the expansion of cities and civilizations this process of nature is disorganized. Thus, the seas, the lands, the air are undergoing profound changes”.

“This can have very serious consequences, not yet well understood by scientists, and may even make it impossible to maintain the life of man, animals and plants on our planet”.

“He is saying that everyone needs to be aware of these problems and take some steps now to solve them”.

“He says that we need to implement a new behavior in people, a new way of thinking so that everyone can take better care of ecology and help to conserve the world better”.

“Grandfather! I always hear the word ecology. What is ecology?”.

“Silence! Stop talking you two! This is the time to watch soap opera!”. Deborah intervened, ending the lively conversation between Tony and Nichola.

So, the explanations about ecology went until the morning of the next day, when Nichola returned to this subject with his grandfather after he came back from school.

“So, grandpa, what is ecology?”

“Ecology? Let's look at the simplest way I can explain the meaning of this beautiful word!”

“If you, Nichola, look closely at the life of any organism - animal or plant - you will find that this life never occurs in isolation”.

“In addition to the location, which can be a forest, a river, a sea, a land, and in addition to food and water for these organisms to grow and multiply, there is also a need for a variable number of other species, such as which this organism lives with”.

“This set of physical, chemical and biological elements and factors are necessary for the survival of any organism, plant and animal, and we call this environment, or simply the natural environment”.

“Ecology is the study of the relationships between living beings and the environment where they live”.

In the days that followed, Nichola began to think hard about what the scientist said on television and what his grandfather said.



As he walked the streets of his outskirts he began to look around and notice that this environment was unnatural and did not seem to fit into an environment in accordance with the concept of ecology. Or did it fit?

Nichola noted some relationships between the local living things, animals, and plants. He could see that the plants closest to the trash were prettier than those on the driest ground. He saw that the rat ate the leftover food in the trash and that the cat ate the rat. He watched scorpions eat cockroaches and chickens eat scorpions.

"Is this environment and object of study of ecology?". He wondered with doubts, pledging himself to ask his teacher one day.

"Grandfather! I realize that few children are concerned about environmental protection and other ecology issues. They don't even know what this means. It seems that they are very happy with the environment in which they live. They play all the time, play ball, take the garbage to the streets, throw stones at the vultures, laugh, make dams to put boats in the sewage water that flows through the streets. I feel that this happens with almost all the people who live here. If ecology is so good for people, how can they live well without it?".

"Nichola, most people act and raise their children like moles!". His grandfather said retiring to his room when the clock struck 9 pm. This time was late for him.

“Moles? What do you mean, grandpa?”. Nichola insisted.

“Moles are small animals, very similar to rats, but with very large and sharp teeth that live all their life underground, digging tunnels and more tunnels”.

“Their skin is thin and clear since they do not take sunbathing and they know nothing about what happens around them on earth. They dig and dig tunnels for roots of plants to eat to satisfy hunger and thirst. They know nothing else, not even the plants from which they eat their roots”.

“Today's children are being raised inside their homes and apartments, living indoors in man-made environments such as malls, movie theaters, with little or no contact with nature”.

Thus, they are unaware of the importance of protecting nature, its fauna and flora. They don't know what this is, they don't live, they don't depend, they have no idea how nature influences their lives. It's a pity, it's a pity”.

“Wow, grandpa! It's a truth. That's why it's so important to study ecology in schools before it's too late, isn't it?”.

On certain days Nicolas forgot about ecology for a moment and indulge in jokes with his friends on the streets of the neighborhood.

He was flying a kite, playing soccer, walking barefoot through the sewers, throwing stones at the vultures. The boys said that vultures are an unlucky signal. Poor vultures!

However, at night Nichola could see on television that there were more beautiful and manicured places, with paved streets, parks and gardens with lots of trees and flowers, larger, well-built houses, playground areas for children.

Anyway, when television opened windows to the world, he wondered if the world he lived in was good enough or if it could be improved. And of course, it could be improved.

"But why don't people improve where they live?". He wondered.

"Nicolas, this is not just Government's fault. They even try to take care of poor neighborhoods. But, look what happens. When the city builds a square and plants trees, in a few months everything is destroyed. We do not do our part. We think everything the government has to do. We are a very rude people. Deborah clarified and mourned.

"One day, when Daddy earn more money, we'll move from here to a better place!". Alexander promised.

Both answers did not seem to satisfy Nichola's curiosity and perseverance.

Blaming only the government didn't seem right, moving to a better place and leaving his friends didn't seem fair.

These feelings began to awaken in Nichola that something needed to be done. And why not by him?

Nichola remembered the scientist's report on television:

*We need to be aware of these problems and take some steps now to solve them. It is necessary to implement a new behavior in people, a new way of thinking, an ecological and conservationist mentality in a world of solidarity, so that everyone can take better care of ecology and help to preserve the world better”.*

His grandfather Tony, when he was younger, used to walk in lakes and rivers hidden in the forests. He had a good memory of those times when the advance of civilization had not yet registered its mark of destruction. So, his grandfather was the right companion for Nichola to clarify his doubts and talk about his willingness to do something.

“Grandpa, what is an ecologist? Television always talks about them and the struggles they face to defend nature! One day I saw a boat of environmentalists stopping in front of a fishing boat to protect the whales and they were severely attacked. They almost drowned!”.

“Nichola, we can say that there are ecologists on many levels, from the ordinary citizen, like us, to the most

radical and fanatical. There are rich ecologists, as there are poor ecologists”.

“There are those who contribute only with money, others with actions. Some set up nature protection organizations, some buy large areas to protect the remaining nature reserves for future generations”.

“Finally, the important thing would be that all people, absolutely all people, think and behave better about ecology. And, more importantly, for these people to do something, even small, in favor of ecology”.

“Remember what the scientist said? If we fail to protect our environment, we could have a critical situation on our Planet, making it impossible to maintain the lives of men, animals and plants!”.

“Grandpa, what is an ecologist? Nichola insisted”.

“OK, how could we define an ecologist? I once read a beautiful article in a nature magazine defining what it is to be a heart ecologist. Let me see if I remember. It was something like this:

*He is the true lover of the nature. He is one who cares about what is happening in the environment for the environment, not just for himself and his survival. He is that who is touched by a waterfall, who see poetry in flowers, life in the song of birds. He is who wants to embrace the world in order to protect it! A dreamer? It*

*may be... but he may also be a realist outraged by what he sees happening in the world... A poet? Maybe... maybe someone who barely knows how to write, but who knows how to value a life's worth. There is no profile of the true 'heart' ecologist. There is a feeling... there is a certainty... there is a willingness to do something, however small, to save what has not yet been destroyed, polluted, devastated, extinguished... by greed and selfishness, which unfortunately are today qualities of the majority of humans. If you don't fit in with these last ones, courage, you can help this planet, you can build a better future... just with your goodwill and attitude!*

"Great, how beautiful and how easy it was to understand now. Even a child can understand what the author of these sentences meant. He was very happy when he wrote this!".

"Nichola, fortunately, people interested in protecting nature in all its manifestations are increasingly coming!".

"Grandpa, I already know what I'll be when I grow up! I will be an Ecologist! And I will save the planet!".

What seemed only a manifestation without major consequences, in fact, proved over time to be a very firm and definitive decision by Nichola. Nichola would focus his life on defending ecology, although his grandfather thought it was too early for him to define himself about his future.

"Nichola! It is too early for you to say what it will be like

when you grow up. Children start by wanting to be firemen, truck drivers, soccer players, doctors, policemen and so on. Only time will show you the way of your destiny!”.

“Grandpa, I'll be an Ecologist and that's it! But, grandpa. Where should I start? What should I do to save the planet?”.

"Nichola, this you should try to find out by yourself first, looking at things as they are and how you would like them to be".

“If you work alone, you will achieve something. If you can bring several friends to your cause, you will achieve much more and more quickly! Saving the planet alone will not be a very easy task! One thing you can be sure of - you can count on me!”. His grandfather Tony answered, letting out a discreet smile.

Nichola returned to his routine of school classes, games, television at night with his family, but in no time, he forgot his commitment to be an ecologist. He wondered what to do first. His grandfather's words hammered his head: “Nichola, this you should try to find out by yourself first, looking at things as they are and how you would you like them to be”.

He felt he would need help: “If you can bring several friends to your cause, you will get much more and faster! Saving the planet alone will not be a very easy task!”.

Nichola believed that he could count on a few close friends who were somewhat dissatisfied with the conditions of their environment - Carol, Cassius, Thiago and Selma. They all studied in the same class and could count on the guidance of Professor Missai, who always draws the class's attention to the problems of environmental destruction, nature reserves, animal extinction, and ecology.

She often says that Brazil still has the largest reserve of continuous tropical forest in the world - the Amazon - and that it should be preserved as the greatest wealth the country can have and offer to the world. In one of the classes with Professor Missai, Nichola decided to ask about what he noticed in some relations between the living beings of the place, animals and plants, where he lived.

He commented that he saw that the plants closest to the trash were prettier than those on the driest grounds. He saw that the rat ate the leftover food in the trash and that the cat ate the rat. I watched scorpions eat cockroaches and chickens eat scorpions.

“Is this environment and object of study of ecology?”. He asked Professor Missai doubtfully.

Missai, thinking a little about Nichola's question, explained:

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“Nichola, yes, that would be an example of ecological imbalance. This situation you have described really shows relationships between living things in the place where you live. However, it is a relationship altered and deformed by the action of men”.

“And this is harmful to the environment and to men themselves. In this resident-created environment, rats and scorpions are proliferating, threatening the health and safety of residents’.

“This is what happens when man destroys a part of the forest to grow a certain product, such as corn, soybeans or cotton. Almost always, a predatory insect will grow in such a large number, because it no longer has the natural predator, which will force the farmer to use a large amount of insecticides, contaminating the product itself, the soil, the waters, killing other wild animals”.

“This is the case of the grasshopper plague. In the normal environment, grasshoppers are eaten by frogs, bats, spiders, birds, snakes and even monkeys, keeping track of their numbers. When they no longer have these predators, they grow by the millions, destroying everything that lies ahead”.

“Ah, now I understand Professor Missai. Thank you!”. Nichola concluded, pleased with the explanation.

After the class ended, Nichola, enthusiastic about the ecological ideas, proposed to his friend Thiago:

“Thiago! This afternoon we are going for a walk in our neighborhood and will try to find out what is not good and what could be improved, ok?”.

“What do you mean, Nichola? Isn't everything good?”.

“No, it's not good! Look around our homes. Rubbish are scattered everywhere, no flowers for hummingbirds and butterflies, no fruit trees so birds could feed and nest. We don't have a beautiful, healthy place to play. No, it's not all good!”.

“Nichola is right”. Selma and Carol agreed.

“Folks, I have an idea. Let's try to get the other kids together and discuss how we can improve our environment and what can be done!”.

Deborah and the mothers of Thiago, Selma and Cassius, found this initiative of the children funny and decided to help by popping popcorn, making lemon juice and some sandwiches.

They spread a towel on the little field, where the children played, organizing a picnic. From afar they followed the group's lively discussion.

The five friends, accompanied by one of the other children in the neighborhood, started the picnic devouring everything that had been served and sipping all the juice. In the end, Nichola started a conversation about his plans.

"Friends, this picnic has a very important goal for all of us! Look around you. What are you seeing?"

In response to Nichola's question, his friends took turns answering:

"The little field where we play football. It's cool!"

"The street above, where Peter and Marcel live, just after the dirt ladder at the end of the football field, and the street below, where there is Mr. Fernando's shop, the portuguese man. There you can find ice cream and soda to buy".

"These bushes, where we play hide-and-seeK".

"Our wooden school far away, behind the goal post".

"I see there are still things left to eat from this picnic!"

The answers were all to this end, to Nichola's frustration, who for a moment remembered his grandfather's story about moles.

"You are right, but I mean what you see around you that you think is not good!"

Following this new orientation from Nichola, the answers began to emerge in the direction expected by him:

“I think there is a lot of garbage scattered on the streets and in the bushes!”.

“I think these tossed cans and glass can hurt people and animals!”.

“These food scraps attract a lot of mice; besides the horrible smell it leaves”.

“This sewage that runs through the streets is very stinky!”.

“There are no trees so we could protect ourselves from the sun!”.

“Yeah! And birds could nest and eat fruits and seeds”.

“Very good, guys! These are comments that I wanted to hear!”. Nichola vented in joy, continuing the conversation.

“This is the purpose of our meeting. What do you think we can do to improve this situation? But you don't have to give an answer today. Think about it and talk to your parents. Next Sunday, after football, we will talk about this again. It's okay like that my friends?”.

And everyone went home with this mission in mind and wondered: “What can I do to improve this situation?”.

At night Nichola looked for his grandfather Tony and asked him the same question:

“Grandpa, what do you think we can do to improve the situation in our neighborhood?”

“Nichola, a lot can be done, a lot. I kept in my notebook a list of simple attitudes that can mean a lot in terms of ecology, which I once read in a magazine. It is a list of what to do and what not to do. I'll look for you! But before you see this list, I think you and your friends should discuss what should be done and what should not be done before comparing your ideas with the list. This will be much more valid!”

“Ok, I will! I will do it tomorrow!”

The next day Nichola met with his friends to resume the discussion about what should be done to improve the conditions of the place, especially the little field where they played all day.

“I think we need to pick up all the plastic bags that have been spread out and make our places ugly”.

“Someone should sort out all iron, tin and plastic to sell. With the money, we could buy tree seedlings to plant”.

“People should bury the trash with food scraps!”.

“Residents need to make a deeper ditch for the sewage to run and not spread through the streets!”.

“Women could plant flowers to attract butterflies and hummingbirds!”.

The ideas were born from the observation of Nichola's friends. He took note of everything so as not to forget any details. When the list was complete, he rushed to show it to his grandfather.

“Grandfather! See how many ideas my friends came up with to improve neighborhood conditions!”.

Tony read the suggestions and, being a first list, thought it was very good. He then gave Nichola a list of recommendations on what to do and what not to do to improve the environment and protect the ecology he had copied from a long-read magazine article.

#### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1 - Teach nature love and preservation awareness. Teach other children and their families love and respect for everything that comes from nature. Children must grow up learning to love and respect animals and plants, so that feeling will grow with them and they will be a future heart-hearted ecologist. Teach by acting! Example is the best way to teach.

2 - Separate paper, glass, cans and plastics for recycling. This will help to reduce accumulated waste and obtain raw materials without having to extract from the environment.

3 - When buying a product, prefer those with returnable or recyclable packaging. Prefer glass to plastic packaging, for ease of recycling. Try to avoid Styrofoam packaging.

4 - Prefer rechargeable batteries. The batteries, once discarded, release metals into the environment, such as zinc, mercury, cadmium, among others, which have harmful effects on the ecosystem and the health of people and animals.

5 - Plant a tree. If you have the opportunity, plant it! And take care as it grows! In addition to helping to produce oxygen, they attract small animals with their flowers and fruits, their roots hold the earth from letting rain carry it (erosion), help maintain soil moisture and much more!

6 - Plant flowers. They attract hummingbirds, honey-producing bees, beautify and brighten the environment, and the contact and care with them help the learning to love nature.

7 - Use biodegradable products. These products degrade in contact with air, water, heat and do not pollute the environment.

8 - If you enjoy hiking, bush walking, eco-tourism and camping, always remember this motto: Take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time, take nothing beyond of memories.

9 - Clean up the planet whenever possible, help clean up the green areas, beaches and rivers you are on. If you go bushwalking or go to the beach, bring plastic bags for cans, bottles and other packaging. Pass this information on. "One swallow does not make summer" but your unique behavior can serve as an example.

10 - If you find an abandoned or injured animal, take it to an entity that can treat it. If possible, adopt him!

11 - Say it whenever you encounter something wrong that may harm the environment. Make your voice heard, your message read. Write, send e-mails to magazines, newspapers, entities, authorities. Your opinion surely has strength and can help raise awareness!

12 - Give preference to products whose manufacturers do not test it in animals. Preserve the riparian forests. Riparian forests are those that border the rivers, protect their banks from erosion and prevent sedimentation.

## WHAT NOT TO DO?

1 - Do not buy wild animals. Wild animals that are sold in some places across the world have been illegally removed from their habitat. Sometimes even criminally. This habit will eventually lead to such an imbalance that threatens the continuation of these species. Not buying such an animal discourages hunting. Buying to protect the animal or handing it over to a zoo or other protective entity may seem right at first glance, but make no mistake, these



attitudes stimulate their trade. There is no illegal sale if no one buys.

2 - Do not remove flowers or foliage from the woods. Often, even with good intent, some types of plants are removed from their natural habitat that, with this practice, may become extinct.

3 - Do not buy or use products made out of animals or any other cruel or illegal means. When you do not purchase one of these products, you discourage these practices. Without a buyer, there is no market.

4 - Do not contribute with the market that grows at the expense of animal abuse. Examples: animals that are used to be photographed with tourists in the forests, mistreated and kept tied. Or in other places, where sloths are kept in captivity (to attract tourists and at the same time market them) and inadequately fed, which can lead to their death.

5 - Do not throw trash out of the trash basket. Garbage thrown anywhere pollutes. It pollutes water, pollutes the land, pollutes rivers and eventually the sea. Waste thrown into green areas harms the ecosystem. The garbage thrown in the cities clogs manholes, providing floods, attracts rats and the diseases they cause. Garbage thrown on the beaches pollutes the sand, attracts insects that can bring disease, and when it is carried by the tide, pollutes the sea, damaging all marine fauna and flora.

6 - Do not mistreat animals or plants. Do not mistreat and do not let people mistreat them. Every living being has a function. An ecosystem is made up of thousands of little pieces, by protecting one of them you'll be helping to protect the whole. Think about it!

7 - Never buy, use or give slingshots gift. They are not toys, they are weapons! When they don't kill, they maim! An unaccustomed child from an early age will not be able to preserve any life as an adult, perhaps not even his own.

8 - Don't waste it! Water, electricity and food demand an expense in its production, treatment, distribution. These expenses are not only economic, they are also raw material, fuel, which contribute to the increase of the temperature of the atmosphere (greenhouse effect), the greater extraction of minerals (with the consequent devastation in the areas of the deposits), the increase of deforestation, and so on. The gifts of nature are precious, you need to be aware of that.

9 - Do not drop balloons. They are beautiful on the way up. A disgrace when they fall. They can cause burning in the woods, kill animals, people, destroy houses. A few minutes of your fun can create a tragedy. Would you like this responsibility in your hands?

10 – Do not participate in or bet on cockfights or canaries. These animals are forced to fight, usually blades are

placed on their paws, which hurts them a lot if they do not mutilate or kill them. Report it when you know of any.

11 - Do not light a match or leave the campfire badly lit or any flammable material in the woods. The consequences can be catastrophic, like a big fire that destroys many acres of green, killing animals and even people.

12 - Even though it is fashionable, do not use natural skin. Do you think it's fair that some animals die just to satisfy a vanity? Did you know that puppy skin is preferred because it is softer and that capturing the puppy often ends up killing the mother?

13 - Don't buy stuffed animals that look real. They are made of the animal's own fur! Dogs and cats die so that their fur can be used to make stuffed animals.

14 - Avoid drinkers with sweetened water. To attract hummingbirds, it is common to use special drinkers with water with sugar, honey or brown sugar, but these mixtures ferment, generate proliferation of fungi and pathogenic bacteria, and can cause diseases such as tongue ringworm, and even the death of birds.

Nichola, enthusiastic about the complete and wonderful list of what to do and what not to do in terms of ecology, said excitedly to his grandfather:

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“Grandpa, this list is really excellent and complete. This list will be our ecological bible. I will copy it and distribute it to all my friends!”.

Nichola's friends showed a good interest in ecology issues. They compared the list provided by Nichola's grandfather to the list they made and vibrated when the items coincided, shouting: “Bingo!”.

At night, in the routine of his home, Nichola focused on the interview that a scientist was giving about the greenhouse effect.

At the end of the interview, Nichola asked his grandfather:

“Grandpa, I didn't quite understand this greenhouse effect!”.

“Nichola, tomorrow we will visit the plantation of vegetables that Akira has, using a greenhouse. There you will understand well what the scientist meant!”.

The next day, Tony accompanied by Nichola sought the farm where Akira grew vegetables, especially lettuce.

Tony already knew Akira, and this facilitated the contact. Inside the farm, Nichola could observe the large greenhouses that covered the plantations. They were large growing areas sheds built of white plastic on the roof and supported by wooden or iron columns.

“See, Nichola. This is a greenhouse!”.

“Ok, I see! But what does this have to do with the greenhouse effect that television talks about so much?”.

“Nichola let's get a little inside Akira's greenhouse”.

Thus, Nichola could feel that the temperature inside the greenhouse, where Akira grew lettuce, was much higher than the outside temperature.

“The temperature in here is higher because the heat of the sun comes in but is held back by the plastic. Thus, Akira can grow lettuces at any time, even in the cold seasons”.

“But, grandpa, how does Akira's greenhouse relate to Earth's greenhouse effect?”.

“Calm down, Nichola. Patience is not your strong point! Nichola, Grandpa is not an expert on this subject. I just try to read to satisfy my curiosity. But as I understand it, the Earth is covered by a layer of various gases and this layer protects it from the sun's and determines the temperature that we, animals and plants, have been used to for thousands of years. This layer has always been formed by gases produced by nature. But now human civilizations are producing much more gas, with industries, with the millions of cars driving on the streets, with the burning of woods and forests. These gases are blending

into the natural gas layer, making these layers thicker. Thus, the greenhouse effect is forming”.

“But, Grandpa. How Akira's greenhouse can explain this? I still do not understand!”.

“Look, Nichola, the greenhouse covered by white plastic. This white plastic would be the normal, natural ozone layer we know that protects us from the sun's rays and maintains a life temperature on Earth. But think about covering the entire greenhouse, including the sides with thick black plastic. In this case, it would be like the Earth being covered by a giant plastic, like in the greenhouses of Mr. Akira. Thus, temperatures are rising beyond normal and already causing great damage to the Earth and all plants and animals, including men. This black plastic would be compared to the pollution we throw into the normal ozone layer”.

“And, grandpa, what do you mean? What damage are these?”.

“Nichola, scientists point at least four major impacts on planet Earth with the greenhouse effect. Rising temperatures will cause more evaporation of the oceans, further increasing the greenhouse effect. Winds are influenced by temperatures. Thus, there should be a change in the direction of certain currents, which will alter the rhythm and distribution of rainfall and soil moisture, bringing negative consequences for agriculture and livestock across the planet. Most scientists believe that the

process of defrosting the polar ice caps has already begun due to temperature increases. This defrost could raise sea levels causing flooding in coastal areas. With all these and many other changes that increase in the greenhouse effect may cause, it is expected that major ecological changes will occur through the increase of pests and the disappearance of various plant, animal and microorganism species, with the consequent loss of biological diversity”.

Nichola was imagining all the damage that the greenhouse effect could cause...

*So, he saw the temperature of the Earth rise and everyone felt very hot. The rivers and springs dried up and no one had any more water to drink. Many were already dying of thirst. Cities near the sea were being overrun by the waters, including the city near a beach where his cousin lived. Great gusts broke down the houses and drove the clouds away, killing all the crops and livestock. Small insects grew large, such as ants and spiders, and began to eat the people who still lived.*

When Nichola told his grandfather these thoughts, saying that he was terrified, his grandpa laughed and reassured him:

“Nichola calm down! Things don't happen that fast. To get to this situation you are imagining, tens and tens of years will pass. What is important is that men begin to discuss this important subject, as indeed they are already doing, and begin to come up with measures and solutions to

alleviate the evils of the greenhouse effect! But this is too big problem for a small ecologist like you. This is a fight for big people. For now, keep making your contribution as you are doing with your friends. It is already too good!”.

“Well, Grandpa, I feel better now. Anyway, it was nice to have known a bit of the greenhouse effect. Let's avoid making too many bonfires to not increase the atmosphere's gases! But, Grandpa, just one more thing. What is this terrible hole in the ozone layer that everyone talks about?”.

“Nichola, ozone is a thin gas that concentrates in the upper layers of the atmosphere, forming a kind of shield, about 30 km thick, that protects planet Earth from the sun's ultraviolet rays. This protective shield has been losing thickness and features a hole over Antarctica. Reducing the ozone layer increases exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. This causes the growth of skin cancer and eye diseases such as cataracts. For scientists, the Antarctic hole delays the arrival of spring in the region and causes breaks in the food chain of the local fauna. The hole in the ozone layer can help to increase the temperature and accelerate the thawing of the polar ice caps. And the main responsible for this reduction of the ozone layer is the chlorine present in compounds with the name difficult to pronounce - chlorofluorocarbon or abbreviated CFC. This CFC is used as a propellant in various types of products such as: sprays, airplane engines, refrigeration circuits, plastic foam, porous plastic shapes and trays, computer chips and solvents used by



the electronics industry. Humankind's challenge is to find other products that can replace CFC that is so harmful to the ozone layer. But, Nichola, look at that Akira greenhouse, that older one from the back!”.

“I see, Grandpa. The one that has a hole?”.

“That's right, Nichola! See it has a big hole in the plastic. Notice how the sun goes farther through the plastic hole and hits the lettuce plants harder”.

“I see, Grandpa. Even the lettuce plants have the most burnt leaves on this side!”.

“Exactly, Nichola. Exactly! This hole in the plastic can be said to be equivalent to the hole in the ozone layer. It is as if the Earth's natural greenhouse had a hole through which the most damaging rays of the sun penetrate, bringing harm to plants and disease to animals and humans”.

“Grandpa, you're the greatest teacher in the world!”.

Nichola forgot for a while about the greenhouse effect and the hole in the ozone layer. They were very big problems. They are problems the size of the world. They are too big problem to fit in a child's head. Children have this divine gift of not worrying about big problems.

Nichola thus resolved to turn to his little problems. Small problems but of great importance. Small enough that he could do something.

That same afternoon, he returned to the subject of improving neighborhood conditions with his friends.

"Folks! Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and start working to save the planet! Who would like to lead the group that will pick up the wind-blown plastic bags that make our places so ugly?"

Carol said she couldn't, because she had a lot of lessons to do and she didn't like to touch dirty things thrown on the floor. And she was followed by her friends...

A little frustrated with Carol's response, Nichola tried the boys:

"Guys, it's time for the boys! What are we going to do to save the planet?". Nichola asked.

Hearing no manifestation, Nichola insisted:

"Who could help me pick up all iron, tin, plastic and glass bottles? Look around! There are plenty of them everywhere!"

And Thiago broke the silence.

“Nichola, I think this service should be done by the waste collectors! They are more used to doing this. Besides, I have English and Judo classes and couldn't do this. And I confess that I also wouldn't want to risk cutting my finger in a shard of glass!”. And Thiago was followed by his friends...

Likewise, Cassius and Selma were unwilling to help Nichola in his attempt to save the Planet. They gave the most diverse reasons and lack of time.

And it was at this moment that Nichola discovered a great truth of humanity, to his surprise. Everyone realizes that things are not right in the environment where they live, and that the planet is in serious danger. But few are willing to do anything concrete to reverse this horrible and dangerous situation! They get carried away by self-indulgence and throw responsibility on others, freeing themselves from blame, as if they were not part of the solution.

That night was sad for Nichola. And his grandfather Tony soon realized and decided to talk to him:

“Nichola, how was the meeting with your friends? Have you managed to form a team to help you save the planet?”.

Nichola looked at his grandfather, unable to hold a tear that fell from his black eyes.

“Grandpa, unfortunately not! My friends are very busy and have not found a little time to save the planet! Some did not want to get their hands dirty or were afraid of being injured, others felt that doing this is a function of the neighborhood waste collectors”.

His grandfather Tony hugged Nichola, trying to comfort him and give him strength:

“So, Nichola! You are a strong and smart boy. Save the planet alone! Do each day a little in this direction! And show your friends that you believe in a better world and that even alone can make a difference!”.

The next morning Nichola woke up with another enthusiasm. Frustration gave way to motivation. The lack of support from his friends gave way to a mission and a personal challenge. And Nichola went to fight to save the planet, even alone.

Nichola asked his mother Deborah for some large empty garbage bags and began the hunt for windblown plastic bags that left the football field and the grounds in front of his house very ugly and unhealthy.

It was a rush just looking for the hundreds of plastic bags that were scattered everywhere. After days and days and hours and hours of hard work, Nichola had all the trash bags full of tiny multicolored plastic bags.

Around the little field where they played there was not a scattered plastic bag.

The full garbage bags were taken to the garbage collection site by the city hall. This first task was done and very well done!

Nichola would come home dirty, sweaty and tired. But, very happy for the duty done. A sensation he had never experienced before. And his action was observed by his friend Carol who began to feel remorse and regrets for refusing to help her great friend Nichola.

When he widened the area around the little field where the kids used to play, he had a surprise.

“Hi Nichola! Can I help you?”. Carol asked, holding in her hand several empty trash bags.

And she was accompanied by Selma, who also said:

“Hi Nichola! I want to help too!”.

Nichola looked at them with great joy and emotion, hurrying to answer.

“But of course, you can! This way we can clear this area in less time and do other tasks!”.

“Let's see who fills the remaining garbage bag first!”. Carol said, trying to encourage and challenge her collaborators.

Nichola knew the portuguese man´s junkyard, where Mr. Fernando bought pieces of iron, cans, glass and plastic. He paid little money, but in large amounts of materials they could earn extra money that would be used in another very important project.

Thus, after cleaning the plastic bags, Nichola now scheduled the collection of all objects made of iron, tin, plastic and glass bottles. And it wasn't hard to find dozens of them! They were everywhere around him and everywhere in the neighborhood!

This would be a heavier task and Nichola borrowed from his grandfather Tony a cart and this would facilitate the transportation to Mr. Fernando´s junkyard.

So, Nichola, with the strength of his motivation and enthusiasm, began to take care of everything that was recyclable – glass bottles, aluminum cans there, plastics thrown away, metal objects, among others. Soon the first cart was full and very heavy! When Nichola tried to take the cart with the recyclable material, he felt the weight. He couldn't ride the cart for long and Mr. Fernando´s Junkyard was far away.

And it was at this moment that Nichola heard a familiar voice. It was Thiago's voice:

“Nichola, let me take the cart myself!”.

It was one of Nichola's friends who joined his fight to save the planet! Thiago was back, offering his contribution. And Cassius, who was following, said:

"Nichola, while Thiago takes this cart, we will continue to find recyclable material. So, when he comes back, more carts can be filled!". He was one more Nichola's friend joining efforts to save the planet!

Nichola was very pleased and redoubled his enthusiasm. Embracing his two friends, he simply said:

"Thank you very much! I knew you would come sooner or later. And you came earlier than I expected!".

Thiago was a very strong boy, so much so that his nickname was Taurus. Thus, he had no difficulty in transporting the cart with recycled material collected on several trips.

This task took several days. But in the end the football field and the surrounding areas were clean of plastic bags, trash and recyclable material.

The appearance was already much better!

Before the three friends went to Mr. Fernando's junkyard to find out how much the collection had yielded, Thiago asked:

“Nichola, we cleaned a very small piece of the planet. And how do you think about saving the planet?”.

Nichola thought for a moment. Thiago's question made sense. That little piece of land was nothing compared to the size of the planet! Then Nichola answered:

“Thiago, every action, every attitude, every gesture we take to improve the environment we live in, shows that we are already working to save the planet, we are already doing our part. The planet is very big, it's huge. But billions of people live on the planet. If each one does their part, wherever they live, the planet will be saved!”.

Thiago and Cassius liked Nichola's response and were more motivated to continue improving the small part of the planet where they lived.

Several trips with the cart were made to Mr. Fernando's junkyard.

Hundreds of pieces of irons, many cans, dozens of plastic containers and glass bottles were collected. The football field and adjoining areas were clean and already starting to look good. In the end, this work yielded the importance of US\$ 200.00.

“With the money, we can buy tree seedlings to plant”. Selma proposed, and her proposal was accepted by everyone.



Mr. Akira had a nursery for fruit tree seedlings to sell and Nichola and his group rushed there, taking the US\$ 200 they had made.

“Mr. Akira, we want to buy all the fruit tree seedlings that can be bought with these US\$ 200.00!”. Nichola said.

Mr. Akira was surprised. It was the first time a group of boys and girls had come to their farm to buy tree seedlings.

“Where are you thinking to plant these seedlings?”.

“Around the football field. Then we'll plant elsewhere when we get more money!”. Carol answered excited.

“Tree saplings are like children. They need to be taken care of. It's not just to dig a hole in the ground and plant them. They need compost, wet and good soil, they need to be staked. Need attention every day. Otherwise if you do not do this they do not go forward! Are you willing to do this?”.

“Yes!”. They all answered with one voice.

“Well, let's see what we have here in my seedlings nursery. We have blueberry, avocado, mango, khaki, jackfruit, plum, orange, acerola, cherry, peach, and a few banana and papaya seedlings next to it”. Akira said.

“Can we buy how many with these dollars?”. Nichola asked.

“You can buy about 20 seedlings; it depends on which you choose”. Akira answered.

“Well, let's take 2 of each!”. Nichola decided.

“But 2 of each sum 40 seedlings!”. Akira confirmed and then completed:

“But it's alright. As your movement is fair, I'll sell the 40 seedlings, 2 each, for the dollars you got!”.

“So, let's take them all now!”. Selma replied impatiently to run and plant the small seedlings.

“But you can't take it now! You must first prepare the pits to plant them!”. Akira answered.

“But how can we do this?”. Selma asked.

Akira saw that he was facing a group of well-meaning children, but inexperienced in plant cultivation, especially fruit trees. He spent more time explaining to the children the techniques for planting a fruit tree.

“You will dig holes about 40 cm wide by 60 cm deep. Use this digger. I have others here. After opening the hole, you have to throw compost and farmyard manure. You can find this manure mixed with earth near the places

where people throw rubbish, or you can use cow or ox dung that grazes around here! Leave a space of at least three meters between one tree seedling and another”.

Nichola and his group left, borrowing the digger from Akira. Quietly, they felt that this mission would not be as easy as the others. Digging 40 holes in the land, as Akira commanded, and filling it with compost and farmyard manure to make a good soil would require a lot of effort from everyone. But no one gave up.

On the other hand, the girls thought they should look for some more plastic bags scattered around, running away from this job! Nichola and the boys threw themselves into the fight. The order was to dig at least 8 holes a day. This would take all week. Taking turns, the boys were digging the holes with great difficulty. Some parents, to their delight, volunteered to help, and that was very good.

With everyone's help, by the end of the week, 40 holes were opened along the little field, with compost and farmyard manure, watered, ready to receive the seedlings. And so, it was done. The soccer field, the area with the highest concentration of children in the neighborhood, was getting better and better. In the distance could be seen the seedlings of fruit trees, protected with a piece of bamboo.

There were no plastic bags, no irons, no plastic containers, no scattered bottles. Ecological work increasingly excited children and now even their parents,

who at first did not give much credit to the children's movement.

All the trash, with food scraps, fruit peels, vegetable scraps, was buried by the children.

After a few weeks, a rich land was available to plant flowers to attract birds and butterflies. And that would be the next goal, a mission that would be entrusted to the girls.

"But what kind of flowers should we plant? I don't understand any of this!". Carol asked.

"Let's ask Akira. He sure knows!". Cassius assured.

Akira once again made his contribution:

"You can plant several types. I have almost all of them in my seedlings nurseries!".

Carol and Selma soon realized that these flowers could not be planted anywhere. They would have to make a fenced garden so that no one would disturb the hummingbirds and butterflies that came in search of flower nectar.

With wood remains of construction made a large fenced area with approximately 150 square meters. Inside, they would begin to prepare the soil, following Akira's guidelines, digging holes and placing compost and

farmyard manure. The boys held a competition for those who brought more cow dung. It was just laughing!

Before long, the large garden was ready to receive the seedlings of flowers. Now they must choose the type with the help of Akira.

Akira set out to offer the seedlings free of charge, as long as they could put a sign in the garden: SPONSORSHIP MONTE FUJI OF AKIRA ANDO. No one objected, of course.

Akira, encouraged by the work the children did in planting the fruit tree seedlings, was enthusiastic about helping in the flower garden.

With his guidance and their work, the girls dug holes, planted the flower seedlings, made arbor for the plants to support as they grew, scattered compost and farmyard manure over the seedlings. Then they watered everything so that the soil would get very wet. It was all set! Now, just wait for the flower plants to grow and the hummingbirds and butterflies to appear!

As for the sewage, which was spreading through the streets, the children's parents helped to make a deep channel so that it would run without presenting the danger to their children.

They also made a movement in the neighborhood, with posters and marching through the streets, so that the

government of the city could channel the sewage. And they even got a promise that it would be done next year!

The girls tended the flower garden and the boys the fruit trees planted along the soccer field.

The children organized a selective waste collection system whereby housewives separated what was plastic, paper, cardboard, glass and organic material. The sale of recyclable materials to Fernando's junkyard yielded a monthly sum that paid for the purchase of new seedlings, dung, and quality earth.

Time went by, passing by...

The flowers grow, spreading colors around the arbor and distributing nectar to dozens of butterflies, bees, beetles, hummingbirds who visited them every day.

The fruit trees were beginning to bloom for the first time.

The first fruits would be generated for the food of many birds and also for the people. On their branches, not infrequently, several types of nests could be seen.

In its shadows, benches were installed to sit where another generation of children came to rest and shelter from the intense sun.

Excited by this experience, Nichola thought he could take it to other places in the neighborhood. Friendly and well-

spoken, Nichola decided to prepare, together with his faithful friends, posters about the importance of ecology represented mainly by the importance of a tree.

He talked to teacher Missai about his plans - to take to all the neighborhood classrooms the idea that every child in the neighborhood should plant at least one tree in the backyard of their houses. He would give presentations on the ecological importance of a tree, how to plant it, how to care for it using posters.

This project would definitely have a great multiplier effect.

Teacher Missai gave her full support for this important initiative by Nichola, giving him some important advice:

“Nichola, in addition to the posters that you will put up on the classroom walls, try to summarize the most important items of your presentation about trees. Also, prepare a quiz for all students to take home, show their parents, and confirm if there is room and interest in planting a tree and what kind of tree!”.

Nichola, listening carefully to his teacher and with a loving look of thanks, nodded his agreement.

Well, now it was time to launch the project with a lot of dedication and work. Cardboards, paint brushes, and other necessary materials were provided by teacher Char.

Thus, the posters began to emerge:

*Trees are important elements for maintaining and balancing life on Earth. Photosynthesis happens in all plants, a process that consumes carbon dioxide removed from the atmosphere and returns oxygen to it. Photosynthesis ensures fresh air to breathe.*

*Its roots stabilize the soil, preventing it from being carried by rainwater. Its leaves exude huge amounts of water vapor. Thus, the soil is preserved, preventing erosion, and water vapor helps in forming new rain clouds and in balancing the ambient temperature.*

*There are about 40 million km<sup>2</sup> of forests on Earth. Its trees provide food for millions of people and animals. There are trees that can remove 50 liters of water from the soil a day, sending them into the atmosphere.*

*The trees give us shade, fruits, shelter bird nests, and provide refuge for many wild animals. It is from your wood that we make our furniture and homes.*

*No man should pass through the Earth without planting a tree, having a child, or writing a book.*

*Plant a tree. If you have the opportunity, plant it! And take care that it grows! In addition to helping to produce oxygen, they attract small animals with their flowers and fruits, their roots hold the earth from letting rain carry it (erosion), help maintain soil moisture and much more!*



*Trees help lower the room temperature on hot days by up to 5 degrees!*

Nichola's presentations were a real success. The thrill and conviction in which he addressed the students in the classes thrilled everyone. Everyone saw in the little presenter a great defender of nature and an ecologist at heart.

Students were enthusiastic about having one or more trees planted in their backyards and many forms came back signed by their parents agreeing to the planting.

Nichola demonstrated how to dig a pit, how to use the leftover leafy vegetables and eggshells to fertilize the pits. Finally, as far as possible, he taught the children to plant and care for their tree.

"You will be the godfather of the trees you plant! Life and nature will be eternally grateful to you! I'm counting on you!". Nichola said.

Nichola also suggested for school children to use long-life milk containers to plant tree seedlings that could be found in the hundreds under the mother trees, whether fruit trees, as well as flowers or shade trees. Another alternative would be planting stones of mango, avocado, plum fruits, among others, directly in the dug hole.

Many students dedicated themselves to making this seedling nursery from the empty milk packages. And it

was very interesting to follow the growth of the small transplanted seedlings or the birth of small trees from the seeds and fruits stones.

Thus, these nurseries started to provide seedlings of various types for their own homes and the excess was donated to those who had interest and space, or the seedlings were planted in the empty land of the neighborhood. This experience was a real success.

(If you, dear reader, want to go through the magical experience of giving life to a tree, grab a package of long-life milk, make a few holes in the sides, put a good earth and plant an avocado or mango stone you can have when your mother buy these fruits, water every 2 days. After a few weeks you will live this fantastic experience, you will feel like the father of the little tree that will come to life through your hands, no matter if you live in an apartment. When you have a small, well-grown tree that is about 20 cm tall, look for a friend's yard, a relative's place, or even empty land in front of your house and plant it. Do not forget to water it on dry days. If you do this, you have already accomplished one of the three great missions of our life. You just have to have a child and write a book!).

Nichola was happy and accomplished with his first major project. He had started on his own, but soon his example was followed by his close friends and other children from the neighborhood and school. The football field and surrounding grounds were clean and beautiful with fruit and flower trees. Everyone could see and admire the birds

that came to the area for food and protection. The biggest show was the multicolored hummingbirds and butterflies of various kinds.

Fruit tree seeds. That is, the birds themselves were helping to plant more fruit trees! How wonderful, isn't it?

Nichola and his friends discovered something very important for nature and the environment - dozens of seedlings of fruit trees began to spontaneously grow on the field and around them, without any of the children having them. planted! And they soon found out why - in some bird droppings they saw fruit tree seeds. That is, the birds themselves were helping to plant more fruit trees! How wonderful, isn't it?

And to record this moment, Nichola organized together with Professor Missai, a photography contest. Interested children should take pictures of the birds from the camp and hand over the best copy to Missai. The contest was called the FLY BECAUSE I WANT YOU FREE - BIRDS OF THE NEW FOOTBAL FIELD.

The top three photos won prizes, consisting of books, notebooks and crayon boxes. The first photo awarded was that of Tucano, eating the plum fruit. And do you want to know who took this photograph? Thiago, our common friend Taurus! Thiago won a beautiful set of colored pencils. But he vented to a friend:

"I'd rather prefer it was a ticket for me to eat lots of hamburgers!".

And it was a surprise the amount of photos received, and the contest showed that approximately 50 species of birds were identified at the site.

But Nichola knew that new projects would come and that would require his attention. And this soon happened.

One day while he was heading for a walk in the city's ecological park, a short distance from his neighborhood, a fact happened to a boy he didn't even know... Peter!

The day dawned beautiful. The sun painted the sky yellow, wiping the dewdrops from the leaves of the plants that had formed the night before.

Peter was still sleeping, but his mother was preparing to wake him up. Another day of study was waiting for him at school.

Peter, as usual, got up drowsily and did everything as if he were a robot. It looked like he was half awake and half asleep! He washed his face, brushed his teeth, dressed, combed his hair, picked up his school supplies, and went to the breakfast table.

In fact, Peter turned off his robot way only after breakfast. After that he was back to be the smart and cheerful child everyone in the house knew. He enjoyed

studying and went to school as much motivation and enthusiasm.

At the ecological park, the bait of the animals in search of their daily food had already begun at sunrise.

The ecological park was Peter's favorite place to play and walk. He liked to have contact with nature, to hear the birdsong, to smell the flowers.

The ecological park was near Peter's house. There were many trees, a large lake, and trails for people to hike. It also had a park with several toys. This was the favorite place for the kids.

And in the anthill in the ecological garden park the movement was already great! And the ant commander gave the orders:

*"Worker ants! Proceed toward your job of cutting and collecting fresh leaves!"*

*"Choose a plant with many leaves, but do not cut all the leaves!"*

*"Be careful! And remember that many animals like to eat us, such as birds, lizards, frogs and anteaters!"*

*"You ants that will stay in the anthill, clean the anthill by throwing out the trash, make repairs to the anthill,*

*transport the food to the cubs, and especially to our queen!”.*

*“And finally, soldier ants must take care of security and always be alert to invasions of other insects and other ants!”.*

Following the commander's orders, each ant occupied his post and began their work.

And, as they did every day, the worker ants walked happily and happily on a trail from a tree to the entrance to the anthill.

They carried small pieces of cut leaves on their backs, much larger than themselves.

And they sang, forming a choir that only the small, hardworking ants could hear:

*Let's go happy and together,  
Take these leaflets  
To our anthill.  
They are our food,  
Given by the little plants,  
Our livelihood all year long!*

But suddenly a terrible tragedy interrupted the little ants' march. And the warning shout was given!

*"Watch out! Run away! We are being attacked!". Some ants said.*

*"But by who? Any birds, any frogs? Or was it a lizard or even an anteater?". Others said.*

*"No, none of them! It's a giant!". Other ants shouted.*

And a giant appeared and, without pity or mercy, began to smash the ants with his huge feet.

One by one they were trampled and crushed along with their pieces of little leaves.

The alert and cries for help reached the anthill.

The soldier ants sought the enemy to defend the colony. Marching worker ants scattered aimlessly through the bush around the trail, trying to save themselves. The giant kept smashing everyone he could find.

Some soldier ants managed to reach the giant's leg by applying painful stings. But none of this was any good. He kept treading and crushing the poor little ants until he got tired.

Peter still took a stick and dismantled the anthill entrance. Then he buried the stick in the anthill's front door, making the ants unable to leave or enter.

The ants remained panicked and frightened for many days. But they had to eat and go looking for their leaves.

So, they sought to follow their destiny. There was no alternative.

In the anthill the work was even more intense. The ants had to rebuild various parts of the anthill destroyed by Peter, build a new entrance hole. In addition, they would have to wait for many other young to be born in time to replace the dozens of dead ants.

And Peter just stopped killing ants and dismantling the anthill when Nichola, passing by, talked to him:

“Hi, boy, why are you killing the ants?”. Nichola asked.

“Ah! I'm kidding!”. Peter answered.

Nichola started the conversation while he saw the despair of the poor ants.

“What is your name?”. Nichola asked.

“Peter!”.

“So, Peter. I'd like to tell you a story and then, if you want, you can keep killing the ants. Do you want to hear my story?”. Nichola asked.

A little scared, Peter replied:

“Yes, I want!”.



Then Nichola started his conversation with Peter:

“Ants live in very well-organized colonies, and each has a specific function - the workers work, the queen is the mother of all, and the soldiers are the guards”.

“The city of ants looks a lot like the city of men. Ants are great builders and work incessantly. They build underground nests by digging the land. The anthill is formed by many rooms interconnected by galleries and tunnels”.

“These rooms, called cameras, are used as a nursery, pantry for storing food, a garbage dump and a resting place for worker ants”.

“A group of workers take care of the queen's eggs and clean the nest. Others, called gardeners, have the task of taking care of the so-called fungus gardens, which is the food of ants”.

Many persons think that ants feed on the leaves they carry. But in fact, shredded leaves serve only as a raw material for fungal proliferation. These are the main food of ants. Therefore, fungus gardens are essential for the survival of all ants”.

“These admirable insects must be very respected. After all, they have existed on Planet Earth for over 100 million years!”.

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"There are several types of ants. But the anthill of the ecological park was herbivore, that is, they produced their food from the leaves of the plants".

"Ants are very important to the ecological park where you enjoy walking and playing so much. They cut specific parts of plants, regulating their growth, accelerating the growth of flowers and fruits".

"In addition, ants accumulate large amounts of nutrients in the anthill, allowing the growth of other plants that feed on these nutrients, such as minerals and nitrogen".

"If it wasn't for the ants, the forests would not be so beautiful, there would be no fruits and flowers".

Peter heard the story told by Nichola but had not realized the dozens of ants he had killed. He was a good boy. However, that afternoon, he was very mean to the poor, hard-working ants unknowingly.

He simply thought he was joking and having fun. After all, he thought that ants were just animals that were good for nothing.

At the end of the story, Nichola asked again:

"Peter, do you still want to keep killing the ants and dismantling your anthill?".

"No!". Peter answered immediately.

In the anthill, the sadness was general. Dozens of ants did not return. The precious food of the day did not arrive, and many puppies starved to death. Even the queen cried.

Soldier ants returned much later to the anthill. They were still looking for the enemy that disappeared.

It will take many days for the anthill to return to normal. The tragedy caused by the unknown giant was never forgotten by the poor and hardworking ants.

Peter realized the harm he had done to the ants. He remained the happy child he always was...

Nichola was happy. "Mission accomplished!" He said.

None of them saw it, but Mother Nature and God crouched at the anthill's entrance door and sought to comfort and help the poor ants, encouraging them to continue their struggle for life...

Peter was delighted to hear what Nichola was telling him and at one point threw away the stick he was carrying, saying:

"Nichola! I want to be your friend. No one ever said these things to me! So, I thought ants only existed to sting us! But now, I will never kill them or dismantle their anthill!".

And Nichola answered:

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“Good, Peter! Let's be friends for sure! You are my newest ally in the fight to save our Planet!”.

God and Mother Nature, who listened and saw this scene, held hands and smiled with happiness!

Fortunately, Peter never played this game again and left the poor ants alone forever.

The ants remained panicked and frightened for many days. But they had to eat and go looking for their leaves. So, they sought to follow their destiny. There was no alternative. In the anthill the work was even more intense. The ants had to rebuild various parts of the anthill destroyed by Peter, build a new entrance hole.

In addition, they would have to wait for many other young to be born in time to replace the dozens of dead ants.

It took many days for the anthill to return to normal. The tragedy caused by the unknown giant was never forgotten by the poor and hardworking ants.

Nichola came to two major and important conclusions with this case of Peter and his experience at his neighborhood football field:

“Saving the planet is a matter of attitude, that is, of action! As we did with the football field and neighboring grounds. We rolled up our hands and went to work in an effective effort to accomplish our goals!”.

"Saving the planet is also about changing behaviors, creating a new mindset and giving a better education! That's what happened with Peter. Now more sensitive to ecology issues, he has changed his behavior from predator to protector!".

Very good, Nichola! Great and true conclusions!

And Destiny was preparing new experiences and challenges for Nichola. One day he went to visit a friend in a gated community in the neighborhood where he lived. It was in the rich part of the neighborhood. It was a schoolmate named Mary.

The day dawned gray and with many clouds in the sky. It was late winter. So, the mornings were still cold, but then the sun raised the temperature during the day.

The condominium where Mary lived was a special place. In addition to the beautiful, well-built houses, there were gardens on all sides.

And these gardens added the greatest touch of beauty to the place. Fruit and flower trees, lots of ornamentals, palm trees, extensive lawns, a lake in the center of the condominium, and especially many flowers made the condominium a wonderful place to live.

And Mary was very fond of living there. She found everything she needed to play with and distract herself. She rode her bike, ran along the lanes, played in the

playground toys for children. Rarely did she ask for a walk elsewhere.

Mary's school was outside the condo. She was a good student and she used to say she wanted to be a doctor when she grew up. Winter was in the last days. Soon spring would begin, and the condominium would be filled with flowers as it did every year.

On a leaf hidden in the garden, tiny yellow eggs began to move.

From inside the eggs came little caterpillars. They were in a hurry and scattered through the leaves of the plant to eat.

They ate a lot and voraciously the fresh leaves of the plant. At the end of the day, they would gather and form a group to spend the night. And the next day the same routine was repeated. Thus the small caterpillars soon became large caterpillars.

Spring had begun. The nights were still a little cold, but the day was hot.

One day Mary found two butterfly wings lying on the floor. She liked their colors so much that Mary had an idea: "I'm going to collect butterfly wings!".

So, she asked her father to buy a butterfly hunting net. And was promptly served by her father. He enjoyed his

dear daughter being distracted and playing in the gardens of the condo.

Mary began to hunt the butterflies she saw in the gardens.

She took off their wings and collect among the sheets of a notebook. Her collection has been increasing.

And soon Mary's fun spread to other kids in the condo. The hunt for beautiful butterflies in search of their colorful wings was intense.

Every day, several children ran through the condominium gardens, disputing who could catch the most butterflies.

And it happened that Nichola went to visit a friend who lived in the same condominium.

And soon he saw the scene of the children, led by Mary hunting the poor butterflies.

And Nichola took the initiative to talk to her:

“Why are you hunting these butterflies?”.

"Ah, because we find their wings so beautiful and colorful. We are making wings collection. I already have more than 15!". Mary answered very proudly.

And that's when Nichola intervened:

“Children, may I tell you a little story about butterflies? After hearing my little story, you can decide whether or not you want to keep hunting the butterflies! Do you agree?”.

The children looked at each other, they answered nothing until Mary said:

“I want! I love to hear stories!”.

And Nichola began to tell his story about butterflies:

“These caterpillars were created by Mother Nature for a very special mission. Once hung upside down in a cocoon attached to the leaves, they break free and become beautiful butterflies. And like butterflies they fulfill a very important mission - to pollinate flowers, that is, to mix pollens from one flower to another”.

“This allows the plant to develop fruits and seeds. In return, the flowers return this important work of butterflies by offering them nectar, a sweet honey. In addition to this eco-friendly mission, butterflies grace the gardens with their colorful wings and graceful, light flight”.

“The transformation of the ugly and bizarre caterpillar into an elegant butterfly is one of nature's great miracles”.

“And, attention! You should never catch a butterfly with your hands, because her very delicate wings lose the



scales that come out as if they were a very fine dust that, if brought to the eyes, can cause great irritation. In addition, the wings can easily break, condemning the butterfly to no longer fly”.

“Butterflies should be admired, but not touched. The butterflies are delicate, charming and colorful. When in errant flight, they seem to play among the garden flowers. No one can be indifferent when encountering a butterfly in a garden. Flowers and butterflies form a perfect and wonderful combination!”.

“If you keep hunting these beautiful butterflies just because of their wings, they'll end up in the condo. In time no one will see the beautiful butterflies visit the flowers in search of precious nectar. The trees in the condominium will have poor fruit production. Its flowers will no longer be pollinated by the butterflies whose wings are now in their collections”.

“No one else will see the beautiful butterflies with their graceful, light flights among the garden flowers. The flowers will be sad, missing the butterflies. The beauty of the condo gardens will no longer be the same. Everyone will miss the beautiful and colorful butterflies”.

With a regretful look and sad eyes on her friends, Mary guarded her butterfly-hunting net. Her friends did the same. Head down, Mary said:

“I won't hunt butterflies again!”.

Her friends repeated:

“We neither! Never! Butterflies are our friends!”.

Nichola replied:

“Very well! I really liked your answer. Now you can be sure that many other butterflies will appear again decorating and giving beauty to your Condominium!”.

After the children returned home, Nichola was very happy and said: “Mission accomplished!”.

The wings of the butterflies that were in her notebook collections over time began to crumble. They no longer had the same beauty.

One day Mary got tired of her collection and threw dozens of butterfly wings on the lawn. It was the last memory of the beautiful butterflies that once lived there.

At this moment, Mother Nature and God wept over the loss of their creations so beautiful and so useful to all...

These dead butterflies no longer fulfill their mission. They could not lay their eggs on the leaves of the condominium gardens so that new butterflies would be born the following year. Likewise, pollination of flowers was greatly impaired by their lack.

Mary and her friends continued their daily routine of cycling, jogging, playing with park toys, going to school.

From time to time, Mary and her friends would look at the flowers in the gardens and feel sad that they no longer saw the beautiful butterflies.

And they said sorry:

“The butterflies left our gardens and never came back! We were to blame!”.

The time has passed. One day the following year, a single butterfly appeared in the condominium gardens. Mary and her friends felt very happy. They laughed with joy, watching the butterfly fly from flower to flower with her graceful and light flight. She looked like the most beautiful butterfly in the world!

This time Mary and her friends just looked and admired the blue butterfly. She would be a hope that more butterflies would find in the condominium gardens the safety and food in the nectar of the flowers and repay with pollination for fruit generation, as well as giving back the lost beauty to the gardens. Mary and her friends didn't even know where the butterfly-hunting nets were anymore...

Nichola returned to the condominium on another occasion and could see with great joy and satisfaction that his conversation with Mary had had an excellent effect. He had gained one more fan for his cause of saving the planet!

And to the delight of all the local residents, hundreds of beautiful and colorful butterflies were back!

On the football field the fruit and flower trees grew vigorous and healthy. But several residents still threw trash and rubble into the grounds near the camp. This made the children very disappointed.

And one day Thiago said:

“Nichola, why don't we take this rubbish and throw it back into the homes of uneducated residents?”.

And Nichola wisely answered:

“Thiago! We will not return the lack of education to another lack of education. The best we have to do is always keep this place clean and spotless. So, we will always collect the trash thrown into our beautiful little yard and put it in the trash. The rubble, we will gather in a heap and ask the City Government to remove it”.

“But doing so they will continue to dirty our beautiful little football field!”. Thiago replied in disgust.

“Thiago! You know what? I believe that these poorly educated people with a low level of cleanliness and environmental awareness will one day change their mind!”.

"Ah! I don't know, Nichola. Wouldn't that be too much hope?". Thiago replied.

"I believe that these people when they see the football field and the ground always clean, one day they will be ashamed to soil them and will no longer throw their trash and rubble there!". Nichola replied, showing a high sense of hope in the human being".

Thiago gave a slight smile, saying:

"May God hear you! This would be great if it happens one day! But this is a truth that will depend on our people greatly improving their education!".

And there came a day when Nichola had a different weekend with his parents. They went for a walk on the beach! But a new mission was waiting for Nichola...

The beach was full of tourists. But it was not crowded as it was on holidays or vacations. And many children played in the sand and on the beach.

That way Nichola could wander around in the sand and do what he liked best - walking along the beach, refreshing his feet.

Among the tourists were several children. John and his two brothers played in the sea water. They loved to jump and play in the cool waters of the sea. They jumped, laughed, played ball, and had a great time.

John and his two brothers were good boys.

They liked to study, obeyed their parents and their teacher. And going to the beach was their favorite walk.

Everything went smoothly until John saw a small crab come out of his hole. He sought to touch the seawater brought by the wave and make his meal.

That's when John called his two brothers:

"Look, a small crab! Shall we catch him?"

And the three began to pursue poor crab. His parents laughed at the joke of their three children. John surrounded the little crab here, his brothers there. The crab was cornered.

The children could not hear, but the crab shouted:

*"Help! Someone save me from these evil giants! I am afraid to die!"*

And that's when the worst happened.

John picked up a stick that was lying on the beach sand and tried to hold the little crab's legs so he wouldn't run away. Terrified, the crab tried to get rid of it. John pressed the stick into the crab's body, and he died.

The children, seeing the small dead crab, pulled their claws out to show their parents. They were like two trophies. Everyone was funny. John and his brothers were uninterested in playing with the crab. Then they went back to the sea to jump waves, play ball.

The little crab failed to complete his life cycle. He had died before he could hide in the hole and crevices of sea stones and one day raise his own baby crabs.

Nichola saw this scene very sad ... And decided to act:

"Sir! Could I tell a story about crabs to your children?". Nichola asked.

"A story? And for what reason?". The father of the children wanted to know.

"I'm an ecology lover and would like to talk a little about the importance of crabs. I believe it will be very interesting and useful for your beautiful children!". Nichola answered.

"John, Mark, Louis! Come here. This boy wants to tell you a story!". The father said, calling the children.

The children came running to see what it was about. After all, which child doesn't like to hear stories, isn't it?

The children sat on the sand, Nichola also sat on the sand in a circle. And Nichola began to tell the story:

"I want to tell the story of that little crab cub that you have killed, since his birth".

"I believe that after hearing this story, you will admire the crabs, but no longer want to play with them and even kill them!".

The children looked at Nichola and respected him as an ecology lover. And one of them even said:

"When I'm eight I want to be an ecologist, too!".

"And you will like it a lot!". Nichola answered.

And Nichola began to tell his story:

*In the crevice of a rock on the beach, the couple of crabs were preparing to breed more cubs. The eggs would be laid in the sand at the bottom of the sea and they would be returned to the safety of the crack in the stone.*

*Dad crab was going around worried. He wanted everything to work out. He kept both claws raised, threatening any predator.*

*But the mother crab knew that many eggs would be swallowed by small fish. From the remaining eggs, small larvae would emerge that would give birth to crab cubs. However, many larvae would also be devoured by small fish and other marine animals.*



*But Nature is like that. This is called ecological balance. For this reason, Mother Nature had expected mother crab to lay hundreds of eggs on the seabed. Thus, there would always be many larvae that would turn into small crabs.*

*Born and raised in the sea, the little crabs knew they would have to search the beach sand to hide from predators and end their growing cycle. As adults, they look for cracks and holes in the sea stones. It has always been like this for millions of years. Long before men appeared on Planet Earth, crabs were already using the beaches in their breeding cycle. That is, the crabs arrived well before us!*

*In this race for life, small crabs take advantage of the waves of the sea to get very close to the sand. There they run for a safe place to make a hole in the sand and stay there until adulthood. In this race, many of them are still eaten by birds. Such is nature. But those left are enough to ensure the continuity of the specie's life.*

*Crabs are very interesting crustaceans and draw the attention of everyone on the beach, especially children. They have an oval body, ten feet and two powerful claws for defense and attack. One should never reach into holes and crevices in the rocks near the sea to avoid a painful surprise.*

*And a little crab managed to get through all these challenges.*

*From his mother's egg he turned into a larva, then a small crab, ran to the beach, made a little hole in the sand and hid himself.*

*Now he was happy in his new home and felt very safe. When the sea hit the hole of our friend crab, he went out and took the opportunity to feed on the nutrients contained in seawater.*

*Everything was fine with our little crab, until one day the afternoon was leaving the beach, the night came, when some children, which I will not name, played hunting crabs and killed him...*

*These children have returned to their home, but in the sand lay the inert body of little crab, waiting for some bird to still eat it. Crabs are very important to the life of other marine animals, such as octopuses that feed on them, as well as other fish.*

*If they are killed, many other animals will suffer from this for lack of food. These children, who I will not name, never realized that they had done a great evil to poor little crab!*

*And, like them, many children do the same thing. This is why it is difficult to find crabs on the beaches frequented by tourists today. Almost all are killed by child play or pure adult malice.*

*These kids didn't hear. But near the crab, Mother Nature and God wept and mourned the death of such a complex and important being... This is the sad story of this crab killed by these children...*

"What did you think of the story?". Nichola asked the children.

They were sad and sorry for what they did. They thought they were just kidding. And simply said:

"We shall not do this anymore! And let's not let other kids kill the crabs!". Then they got up, picked up their toys and followed their parents back home.

Once more, Nichola was happy and said: "Mission accomplished!".

On this day Nichola has learned one more obvious lesson - he will not always be able to arrive in time to prevent a predatory act against an animal. And many other people who are protective of nature and the environment will not make it in time to prevent evil and conscientious hunters from killing wild animals and acting in sneak or traps. These will remain to be judged by the laws of men and by God.

Nichola was once visiting neighborhood land where he could eventually start another environmental restoration project, similar to what had been done on the football field where he lived.

It was spring season. Spring is undoubtedly the most beautiful season of the year. Everybody like the cool mornings, the warm sunshine throughout the day, the flowers that open in all the gardens of the houses and forests.

And especially, spring is the season of love among most animals, especially birds. They mate and nest in the spring for the abundance of insects, flowers, seeds and fruits.

Thus, they can feed their chicks and ensure the continuity of their species.

And it was according to this feeling that Hans and George visited a rural area near a natural forest.

And there they had a sad surprise...

At the farmhouse, Joseph, the caretaker's son, and Charles, the farmer's son, were finishing two more slingshots.

The bird hunt the day before was very good, and now with these new and more powerful slingshots, they were sure they would do an even better hunt.

Joseph and Charles were two excellent boys. They helped their parents with farm work, were cheerful, and enjoyed going to school, even though the school was far from the farm.

They rode more than an hour by bicycle until they reached their school.

However, Joseph and Charles enjoyed playing hunting birds that lived in the woods near the farm.

They did this for pure fun, not realizing the harm they were doing to these poor birds and to Nature.

Nichola meet these children on the forest trail. And immediately Nichola asked the boys:

"Hi children! What are you doing?"

"We're hunting birds to bake and eat!". Joseph said very excitedly.

"And don't you feel sorry for the birds doing this?". Nichola asked.

"No... In fact, we do... But there are many birds in the woods... It will not mind if we kill some!". Charles answered.

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"Can I interrupt your hunt and tell you a little bit about the story of this bird you just killed?". Nichola asked.

"But do you know his life?". Charles asked.

"Yes, I know it very well!". Nichola answered.

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The boys lowered their slingshots and expressed interest in hearing the story of the poor dead bird on the floor, struck by a small stone in his chest.

*Once upon a time there was a bird who was very happy with her nest where she had laid three eggs.*

*She was already hatching her eggs, and soon three beautiful chicks would be born to brighten the spring even more.*

*The male bird was preoccupied with fetching insects and chunks of fruit to take to his mate in the nest. So, she didn't have to go out to feed, letting the eggs cool. This could cause the death of the little chicks forming inside the eggs.*

*But one afternoon the male bird did not return. The female bird waited all night and nothing of her mate appeared.*

*The next morning, hungry and worried about her mate's disappearance, she abandoned the nest and went looking for him. It didn't take long to find him dead under a tree.*

*The female bird was saddened by the loss of her mate. Now she would have to leave the nest, no longer hatching the eggs. There was no way to feed without leaving the nest. The three little thrushes that were to be born also died inside the cold eggs.*

*And in the days that followed, other birds appeared dead - an owl, a hummingbird, a sparrow, a parrot, among others. They had all been killed by injuries from slingshots thrown stones.*

*The forest birds had no doubt. A terrible and evil hunter was in the forest and was killing these poor and defenseless birds. But who would it be?". They asked without an answer.*

*Mother Nature and God once again wept when they saw the children doing these evils with their creations...*

*This is a big threat to nature! Many children start hunting animals for fun and play without the notion of evil. But they can turn into mean and cruel hunters when they become consciously grown up!*

*The slingshot is a primitive weapon, built with a wooden or Y-shaped wood fork, having elastic rubber strips, usually of tire canvas, at the ends of the Y.*

*These weapons can hurl small stones or glass balls at great speed and strength. And these stones are enough to crush the birds' heads or mortally wound other parts of their fragile bodies. However, many children were blinded in one eye or had serious injuries caused by other children when they missed the targets and the stones did not reach the unfortunate birds.*

*In big cities you no longer see children playing with slingshots. But in the inner cities it is very common to see children with slingshots in their hands and having fun killing birds.*

“Well, this is the story of this poor bird that you just killed. And you did not only kill him! You have killed the chicks, killed the beautiful song of the birds that resonates in the woods every day, left the female bird sad and helpless”.

“And then? Would you like to continue to hunt birds with your slingshots?”.

Charles looked at Joseph, Joseph looked at Charles, realizing the harm they had done to the poor male bird. Charles and Joseph had not realized they committed this terrible evil with the poor birds. And Charles said:

“You know, boy? I used to say that when I grew up, I wanted to have a real shotgun and hunt other bigger animals, like the deer, the rabbit, the tapir, and maybe even one jaguar! I wanted to be a great hunter!”.

And Joseph added:

“But now we do not want to hunt and not be hunters!”.

Very happy, Nichola said: “Mission accomplished!”.

Charles and Joseph grew up, they forgot their slingshots. Now they valued the approach to nature and its charms



more and gave up on having a real shotgun and being an evil hunter.

And Nichola could thus raise awareness of his two new friends and bring them to his planet-saving campaign!

Nichola, every day, found new opportunities to fulfill his mission of saving the planet. One weekend his parents decided to visit some relatives who lived in a large country town. Nichola liked to travel. From the bus window he could see the farms, the vacant lots, the few areas of environmental protection.

And it was on this trip to the countryside that he had another great opportunity to intervene in favor of nature... Nichola was preparing to attend a talk on How to Protect the Environment at a Scout Group event to which he was invited for, in an auditorium located in a city not far from where they lived.

His father Alexander accompanied him. Nichola planned to take pictures of birds in the lagoon and woods in the area just after his presentation. In the neighborhood where the auditorium was located there was a clean water lagoon.

A rare fountain of pure water sprang from a rock within the only remaining forest in the neighborhood. And this water fountain gave origin and life to the small pond.

They said that one day, a condominium of houses would be built in the area where the forest was. If this really

happens, all the trees will be felled, the water fountain will dry up and the pond will disappear. Nichola heard this story but did not believe that anyone would have the courage to destroy a forest with so many trees and plants and such a beautiful pond to build houses.

Nichola was enjoying walking along the shores of the lagoon. The lagoon was surrounded by a green forest.

And he used to take pictures of ducks and other birds that lived there.

And that's how Nichola found Beth and Rose. They loved to play and stroll along the shores of the lagoon. Beth and Rose lived near the pond and could hear the croaking of frogs and tree frogs at night:

“Croc, croc, croc”. The frog croaked.

“Cricri, cricri, cricri”. The tree frog answered.

That afternoon Beth and Rose were looking at the lake very near the shore when they saw dozens of tadpoles.

They were black and swam back and forth. When the tadpoles noticed the children, they soon swam to hide in the mud of the lake. But then they surfaced. And Beth had an unfortunate idea:

“Rose, let's get some tadpoles with a can and put in the bottle? It will be fun to look at them in the bottle!”.

And Rose immediately agreed:

“Good idea! So, we can look at them inside our homes. My bottle with the tadpoles I'll take to my room!”.

The two friends started this game for pure fun. They packed an empty oil can and began hunting for tadpoles inside the pond. Soon the bottles were full of terrified tadpoles that swam around the bottle, looking for a way out.

So, the two friends started a deadly game for the tadpoles and frogs in the pond. Other neighborhood kids found the game amusing and began hunting for tadpoles.

Nichola looked sadly at this scene and, as an Ecology Lover, did not stop approaching the children and talking to them:

“Hi friends! My name is Nichola. What are you doing?”.

The girls then told them that they were hunting tadpoles to play and that they were disputing who took the most...

Nichola, desperate and distressed to see the poor tadpoles flailing in the bottles, proposed:

“Wouldn't you like to hear a story I learned from a Scout Group that talks about frogs? It is very cool!”.

The girls got interested, set the bottles down, and sat on the lawn to hear Nichola's story. Nichola was a little nervous and anxious. After all, it was his first experience in telling an educational story to several boys and girls.

And he started his story:

*Once upon a time, there was a clean and clear water pond surrounded by woods where ducks, wild animals and birds and various species lived. And in this pond were many frogs.*

*And all the frogs sang happily:*

*The Frog knows  
Jumping in the pond.*

*The Frog knows  
He doesn't fly.*

*The Frog  
Swims,  
Swims.*

*And at every corner the frogs jumped and plunged into the lake again.*

*From afar, his parents Toad and Frog watched and cared for their tadpoles.*

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*They knew many of them would never be a frog one day. But they could do nothing but teach their tadpoles to bury themselves in the mud of the lake when they saw danger.*

*And the danger came from some fish and birds that ate the tadpoles as they were turning into little frogs. But always a part of the tadpoles turned into beautiful and healthy frogs.*

*So, the pond could always have frogs living there, brightening the nights with its croaking.*

*Frogs always remembered how it all started. They married, laid many eggs on the edge of the pond, then the eggs gave rise to tadpoles, which looked more like fish. But over time, the little legs began to grow and gradually they became frogs.*

*But one day some giants appeared and started hunting the poor tadpoles, taking them out of the lake and their homes, and putting them in bottles just for fun...*

*Toad and Frog were desperate for their tadpoles. But, didn't find them. They were not in the mud of the lake, nor on the lakeshore and anywhere else on the lake.*

*Before long, no tadpoles could be seen in the pond.*

*Toad and Frog were so sad that they no longer croaked over the following nights.*

*And because frogs eat a lot of insects, it wasn't long before the pond was full of mosquitoes and other insects.*

*Thus, these mosquitoes and insects began to make the lives of the residents hellish, causing discomfort and serious illness.*

*That year, the number of mosquitoes grew too much. Diseases spread like dengue fever. And one reason for this huge amount of mosquitoes is that there were no more tadpoles to eat the mosquito larvae.*

*Nature makes frogs have a lot of chicks.*

*Thus, they feed some birds and wild animals. But with the disappearance of tadpoles in the pond, these animals found no more food in the pond and some even starved to death...*

“This is the story I wanted to tell you!”. Nichola finished. Beth and Rose, as well as the other children, were silent, thoughtful, then took off the tops of the bottles and threw all the trapped tadpoles back into the pond...

They had understood the educational message contained in the story of the young Ecologist...

The poor tadpoles, who were swimming aimlessly, no longer finding the food they needed, the fresh air, the clean water of the pond where they lived, and who would soon die in the bottle, came back to life as soon as they

felt the fresh, pure water from the lagoon... and ran towards their parents all happy and relieved.

If the children did not release the tadpoles after a few days, they would begin to die inside the bottles. They would starve, short of breath and live in polluted water.

Everyone would lose. It would be a child's play that would turn into a great tragedy for Toad and Frog, their tadpoles, and the entire neighborhood community.

At night there would no longer be the croaking of frogs. And nobody could get close to the lake, such would be the amount of mosquitoes.

Beth and Rose forgot about this joke in the following years. They were excellent girls and, in time, realized the evil they were about to do with these little tadpoles.

Every year there are hundreds of tadpoles, taken from their lake habitat, which find death, trapped in bottles or aquariums, for the fun of children.

These tadpoles were denied life and the possibility to grow, to become frogs, to help the survival of their species. What a pity...

More and more frogs have fewer lakes and ponds. Everyone will miss hearing the frogs croaking if they disappear.

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The lakes and ponds will be sad. The frogs will cry so much that their tears will make these lakes and ponds overflow...

And their cry was followed by the cry of Mother Nature and God once again...

Only mosquitoes and insects will be happy with this...

When the lecture ended, Nichola met his father in the lagoon and Nichola told him what had happened and the happy ending he had with his story.

Very proud, Alexander shouted to his son: "Mission accomplished, congratulations my son!".

And new frogs will brighten the evening with their croaking.

And Nicolas's adventures to save the planet didn't stop. And new opportunities were coming in every moment and everywhere he went. One day Nicolas and his father Alexander returned to the beach, another beach, as a guest of one of Nichola's friends.

And there on the beach...

Who has ever seen the sea? Most kids have seen it. And they all had the same expression:

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“How beautiful the sea is! How much water! What hot waves to jump! How fresh the water is!”.

The sea is a huge expanse of water that occupies two thirds of the planet Earth and connects itself through the so-called oceans. And the sea is full of life. An estimated 2,700,000 species of animals and plants live in the oceans! And the life of the fish that live in the sea is not easy. They have to run from predators all the time. Some fish feed on marine plants. However, most feed on other fish, eating each other.

Because of this, fish moms produce thousands of eggs so that a few little fishes can reach adulthood.

But that is how Mother Nature created the harmony of plants and fish in the seas. If all the fish ate only plants, the day would come when all the sea plants would be gone, and all the fish would starve.

Mother Nature is very wise!

The little fishes as soon as they are born are called fingerlings and they instinctively seek to hide among the plants and sea cliffs so that they will not be eaten by predators.

Some fingerlings try to be very close to the sand of the beach, where the water is warmer and where predators can't catch them because it is too shallow. And they stay there until they grow a little more and return to the sea.

But what the little fish did not expect is that on the beach are also in danger and life threatening.

Winter was over. The icy sea water was now getting warmer. Spring was approaching. Mama Fish felt that the hundreds of eggs in her belly needed to be spawned.

She had done this for a few years and knew the routine very well. So, she searched the cliffs near the beach to find a hole where she would lay her eggs. And she knew most of her eggs would be devoured even before the little fish were born. And the little fishes that could be born knew instinctively that they had to look for a shallow spot on the beach to stay there until they grew older and stronger. By abandoning the protection of the hole where many of them were, their fate was also locked in the mouth of other hungry fish.

However, many of them could approach the shallow waters of the beach.

But despite all the dangers of predators, a good number of them would come back and grow into adult fish that would one day also lay their eggs and perpetuate their species. This was the life cycle of many fish in the seas.

That sunny, warm afternoon, the little fishes were very happy on the beach, enjoying the warm water and feeding on the tiny tidbits that the seawater contained. Cheerful, they joked, lined up after each other, swam to the surface of the water, then plunged deep into the

sand. Everyone had fun. "Here we are safe, and no one will eat us!". Everyone thought.

Mother Fish never had contact with her little fishes and kept going the fight for survival. She didn't know where they were, but she knew they should be protected somewhere on the beach. Maybe one day she and some of her puppies could meet at sea again!

All was well, until the young began to feel huge feet heading toward her. And these giant feet began to kick the school of little fishes by throwing many of them into the warm sand of the beach. Fortunately, others managed to escape and ran deeper into the beach. In the sand the poor little fish hit by the kicks struggled for life.

They were short of breath and burned in the bright sunlight.

Then big hands took them and threw them into huge containers containing fresh water. Those who fell into these containers were relieved but frightened. They knew they were no longer in the beach water. Other little fishes were forgotten in the sand and died stretched by the heat of the sun.

In the sand of the beach, Chubby and his sister Diana played hunting for little fishes. Her parents had bought a plastic bucket for each and they walked along the shore looking for the little fishes.

When they watched the little fishes swim together, they run and kick the poor little fishes toward the beach sand.

“I got it, I got it!”. Chubby screamed very happy.

“Let me put them in the bucket!”. Diana asked.

Chubby's and Diana's parents looked on with satisfaction at their children's play.

“I am glad they are enjoying playing on the beach!”. Their father said.

And so Chubby and Diana filled the two buckets with dozens of little fishes. Inside the bucket the little fishes thrashed, tried to find a way out of that huge container and back to the beach. The water in the bucket was getting hot and without oxygen. Some were already beginning to die.

But as the afternoon came on, the sun was already setting over the horizon and Chubby's and Diana's parents called them back to the apartment.

“Mother let me play a little longer with my little fishes!”. Chubby asked.

“Dad, can I take my bucket with the little fishes to the apartment?”. Diana asked.

“No, you cannot!”. Their father said, completing:

"Tomorrow, you play fishing again. Now throw these little fishes away and let's go!".

How Chubby and Diana had dug a big hole in the sand with the plastic paddles, forming a puddle, they threw the little fishes there and went hand in hand with their parents.

Neither Chubby nor Diana nor her parents realized the tragedy behind them. In the sand the little fishes that were not collected in the buckets were already dry and dead. The puddle of sand on the beach, which was a joke to Chubby and Diana, was slowly draining. Until all the water seeped into the sand, the puddle dried and the little fishes stuck to the wet sand and all died.

For Chubby and Diana, it was another day of play on the beach and they had a great time. For their parents, a break and a rest while they watched their children play animated on the beach.

None of them heard the terrified screams of the poor little fishes who were suffering and dying by the dozens. Thus, the sea lost dozens of fishes that could grow and, one day, serve as food for other fishes, for men themselves, and many of them, even breeding hundreds of other fishes.

Worse yet, none of them saw the tears that flowed from Nicholas's eyes and the sad look of Hans, who strolled the

beach at the opportunity and felt that they could do nothing...

Very sad, Alexander said to his son:

“Nichola, we can't always be alert! In this case, see that children have encouragement from their parents”.

“If we interfere, we may be misunderstood and an unnecessary discussion with their parents could occur. Ecology lovers don't confront, they talk and guide! We can only see which fishes are still alive on the beach and return them to the sea. And wait for this family to come home soon and leave the little fish alone and pray that one day God will enlighten their minds to make them see the evil they have done to nature”.

Nichola, very sad and his face still wet with tears, replied:

“We will be always alert father... Even in these moments... This sadness will make us stronger and firmer in our mission!”.

Alexander was proud of this response from his dear son.

Worse still, neither Chubby nor Diana saw the tears that flowed from Mother Nature's eyes and the sad look of God...

Nichola, Mother Nature and God have not stopped mourning over so many other children and adults playing who mistreat animals.

They saw people tie cans to cats' tails, who fled in panic like crazy. Many cats were run over by cars, others hid in manholes and drowned, others were wounded.

They saw people collecting beetles, pulling them out of nature and exposing them in spiky pins.

They saw people throwing stones at stray dogs, injuring them and adding to their suffering from homelessness without food.

They saw people tying their tails with lashings, tossing them against the wall or dragging them across the floor, wounding them and even killing them.

They saw people put shoe boxes on top of hamsters so they would move inside her from here to there, giving the impression that the shoeboxes were walking alone. Many of them came out with their nose bleeding and stressed. They saw people unravel the cobwebs that they had worked hard for a whole night to feed.

Thus, the spiders could not hunt insects, such as the dengue mosquito, and they did not feed for a few days.

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They saw people rip off the legs and wings of insects so that they could no longer walk or fly and enjoyed the pain of locusts, butterflies.

They saw people set traps to hunt birds who dared to eat some grains of corn or rice placed under the traps.

They saw people shoot birds with shotgun crippling them and even killing them.

They saw people step on every insect in front of them for pure fun, and they saw that children were taught by their own parents, even the little ones, to act like this: "Look a bug, kill it!".

These kids didn't even know why they were doing this. But they learned to kill animals...

Nichola, sad and crying a lot, did not want to see any more evils with the animals that day and asked his father:

"Dad, why does this happen? When will humans and their children respect animals?".

"Nichola, many men are still in the process of development. One day, they will recognize that all living beings are God's creation. They will understand that animals have soul and conscience and suffer pain like all humans. And when this happens, all animals will be respected and protected".



“But are all men acting like this, Dad?”. Nichola asked.

“Fortunately, not! Many men and their children are generous to animals and protect them. These have already been touched by the love of God! They have found that true happiness lies in life in harmony with nature, with all its plants, animals, crystal clear water fountains, bird sounds, fresh air...”.

And Alexander finished:

“Parents should never forget that children often learn by their example. And that parents who mistreat or despise animals will never raise children who respect life”.

Alexander then showed Nichola many people who like and respect animals. They were people playing and lovingly caring for their puppies, their kittens, their bunnies, their hamsters, their fish in the aquariums. Other people put fruit and seeds in the yard to feed the birds that live in big cities. Others simply admired and respected animals in their natural habitat.

And most importantly, letting all the animals go about their lives in peace.

For a moment Nichola wiped the tears from his eyes and, looking at his father, gave a smile of joy and happiness...

And Alexander concluded:

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“For you part, my son, you will always try to accomplish your mission!”.

And Nichola didn't see it, but Mother Nature, sad and crying a lot, didn't want to see any more of the children's mischief that day.

Then God carried Mother Nature into her arms to see millions of children who like and respect animals.

And right now, Nichola felt a cool breeze blowing from the woods dried his sweaty face and the fragrant smell of flowers dominated the room. And a thought suddenly came to mind:

“You are a good boy! And one of those who seek to save the planet! Congratulations! May your example inspire and encourage many other boys and girls to do the same!”.

Nichola did not know, but it was Mother Nature who looked at him, saw his actions and good deeds, whispering these words in his ears in secret!

And so, time went by. Nichola, Selma, Carol, Thiago, Cassius and so many other boys, who helped change the neighborhood environment and create a new mindset among the generations that followed, also followed their paths and their destinies. As their trees grew and spread throughout the neighborhood, and this was already felt and could be seen in every little yard, in every backyard of the houses, Nichola grew and matured, too.

At the age of 18, Nichola began to take an interest in national nature parks and this aroused in him a desire to pursue a profession – Environment Engineer.

He started working as guide for eco-tour groups and brought to ecotourists the most beautiful messages and a fine knowledge of ecology that delighted everyone. His father Alexander and his mother Deborah did not see him often, but received many letters and cards from him, which they collected and showed to relatives, friends, and neighbors.

“See! This is our Nichola! A grown man, a good man. His time is all devoted to protecting nature, the environment. We are very proud of him!”.

And as the small trees of the forest grew into mature, strong and vigorous trees, so did Nichola. He turned 18, coming of age. The time had come to decide on a career. And Nichola knew very well what he had wanted from a young age - to become a professional in nature and the environment. Thus, he entered one of the best universities for the Environmental Engineering degree in his country, having passed the entrance exams with praise.

*Do you know what is the scholar curriculum of this course? No? Would you? Then pay attention:*

*Course Objectives: The student of this Engineering modality is trained in the area of environment and*

*sustainable development. The Environmental Engineering professional is responsible for natural resource conservation projects. It should also be able to evaluate a production system and propose improvements to minimize these impacts, with consequent economic benefits for the companies, at the same time, to protect the environment from the damage caused by the actions of society. The course prepares the student for the preservation of water, air and soil quality. Main Activities: Conduct environmental impact studies, design and implement management projects. water resources, sanitation, waste treatment and recovery of degraded areas; carry out pollution control; analyze environmental risks; plan and implement Environmental Management Systems (EMS); elaborate and implement environmental education policies and programs, contributing to the population's awareness and consequent preservation of the environment; prepare reports and technical opinions in the environmental area; carry out environmental inspections and audits; prepare companies and organizations to receive environmental licenses and enable environmental certification; elaborate energy planning. Labor Market: Environmental issues and sustainability are increasingly discussed issues and the labor market increasingly seeks professionals who understand these issues. The areas of performance of the Environmental Engineer are governmental entities for control and inspection of environmental resources; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); private consulting firms; industries in general; power plants).*

And Nichola had very clear in his mind his professional goals - to work in a government agency for the control and enforcement of environmental resources and the protection of the environment in his country.

And it was at the university that Nichola met Lino, a student in Computer Science. Nichola and Lino had one thing in common: They were both interested in ecology and taking action to save the planet. And the two students made a great friendship over the course. And it was one afternoon, in the university cafeteria, after another day of school, that the two talked and had a brilliant idea:

“Lino, in my mission of saving the Planet, I found that the best way to achieve this goal is through the education of our children. Adults already have habits and behaviors that have been permanently or almost permanently fixed in most cases. Thus, adults have great difficulty altering acquired behaviors. If they have been brought up to prey on nature, destroy forests, hunt wild animals, our mission to change their behavior becomes very difficult, though not impossible. Nichola said.

“You're right, Nichola. But the worst is that most of our children today are unaware of the beauties of nature. Surely, they would feel the extinction of mammals much more than the extinction of a wild animal!”. Lino answered, smiling.

"No doubt. And most of them spend most of their day in front of a computer, playing games, having fun". Nichola completed.

"It is true! Ah the computers! What would we do without these wonderful machines! How many opportunities for fun, games, communicating with friends, research for study! And so many other utilities. However, the appeal of the computer is so great that many children spend most of their time in front of their screen! And there may be the danger!". Lino answered.

"Lino, this is giving me an idea. You are specializing in the creation of electronic games, right? What if we tried to develop a virus, but a well-meaning virus, a virus of nature's life?". Nichola asked.

"A virus? But, how can we contribute to nature by creating a computer virus?". Lino answered laughing and surprised at the same time.

"I think we could create an electronic game that would attract children's attention and even force them to be interested in ecological and nature protection issues". Nichola replied.

"I still don't understand how far you want to go, Nichola". Lino answered.

"Well, I plan on using your computer background and my ecology background to create a virus that suddenly pops

up on your computer screen. And the child would have to play with this virus to destroy it!". Nichola replied.

"But what kind of game would it be?". Lino wanted to know.

"Well, we shall have to talk more about this. But it would be a game that encourage children to play and compete, but with adventures that lead them to know more the beauties offered by nature!". Nichola clarified.

The idea was thus launched.

In the days, weeks, and months that followed, Nichola and Lino worked hard to develop a game for this purpose. And after much study, they finally created the NATURAVITAE virus. This virus would contaminate the computers of children who spent many hours ahead of their computers and could only be deleted if the user won through eco-themed and nature preservation adventures games.

And the first computer infected by the new virus was Guto's computer.

Let's tell Guto's story and how he reacted when he came across his computer infected with the NATURAVITAE virus.

Guto was chosen as the first to test the new game because he is a typical boy of the current cyber generation.

Guto from an early age saw his father glued to the computer screen for hours on end. We used to say the example always comes from above!

And both, Guto and his father were stuck in a computer, in endless national and international games and competitions. It even seemed that they disputed who stayed longer in front of a computer!

As soon as he woke up in the morning, Guto's first act was to turn on his computer, which was readily installed in his room and for private use.

And so, Guto started almost all day. Games and more games, computerized leisure, which attracted him irresistibly, and challenged him to compete and win increasingly complicated games.

Of course, the computer gave him many opportunities to develop knowledge and culture through countless educational games.

Guto's reflexes were already well adapted to this computerized life. He threw his body back and forth, kicked the air, jumped up from his chair as he became involved in the games and fought with colleagues from other sites.



Beside him, the invariably stuffed sandwich and the glass of soda. Standing motionless and doing physical sports, Guto was the image of today's cyber child - early chubby.

But he was very happy and content with his life. He didn't know what it was like to spend the afternoon playing ball with other friends, taking part in a swimming competition, or riding long stretches of bicycle.

Of course, his parents worried about this situation. But, at least for now, they saw this Guto activity as a comfortable way to keep him entertained and safe at home. After all, violence is increasingly driving children away from the street.

Guto was proud of his friends at school to have one of the largest collections of computer games. He was a true expert. On his computer were installed dozens of electronic games, the most modern and current.

Guto had been in this routine for at least four years. This was clearly visible even in its physical size, fully adapted to the chair of your computer.

Increasingly chubby, Guto sometimes worried his parents in this regard. And every effort to get him to practice sports, walk, ride a bicycle was done.

But these efforts succumbed to Guto's routine and insistence on returning to his beloved computer. So, it was common in social gatherings, the comment: "Wow

how chubby he is! We have no one in the family like that!”.

Guto, however, increasingly assumed that he was chubby and didn't care much about these comments. After all, he was a handsome, intelligent boy, adored by his parents and grandparents, and this kept his ego high.

Guto had too few friends for personal contacts. But cyber friends, many from within or outside the country. They were impersonal friendships, developed through long conversations via chat or competitions over the network.

They hardly knew each other by their names, but by the names of fantasies like Rambo, Rambo's Friend, Rambo's Brother, and so on.

And this, in a way, was not good for Guto.

Their teacher, grandparents and their parents knew that childhood development for character and personality formation also takes place in daily contact and comparison of behaviors with friends.

And they urged Guto to hang out with friends. But none of this entered Guto's consciousness or it didn't seem to matter to him.

But Guto's Fairy Godmother was preparing him a big surprise and great adventures that would completely transform his life...

Fairy Godmother? Yes! Some call it Guardian Angel.

That morning, Guto's computer looked like it didn't want to work. Something strange was happening. When he opened his favorite games, there was interference.

And Guto wondered:

“Would it be a virus? But it cannot be! I update the antivirus daily!”.

The antivirus alert confirmed: NATURAVITAE VIRUS DETECTED.

It was an unknown virus and against which there was no 'vaccine'. The new virus insisted on disrupting Guto's plans for that morning.

A figure of a beautiful young woman dressed in green leaves and flowers in her hair, tiny, floated across the computer screen from side to side, looking cheerful and mocking. She was running away from the mouse that Guto handled with mastery trying to delete her. And on the screen appeared the expressions: “Follow me! Fight against me! Try to catch me!”.

Guto was a great competitor and all he needed was to challenge himself to eliminate this terrible virus, camouflaged in a beautiful girl, who didn't let him open his favorite electronic games.

After a few good minutes analyzing the virus's movement on the screen, Guto equated the direction and speed of her movements and prepared with the mouse to click on her. And very well done! He got it!

When the virus launched quickly into the upper right-hand corner of the screen, there was Guto's mouse waiting and the click was quick and fulminating, hitting right on the Naturavivae virus.

A screen opened showing a lush nature.

Rivers with crystal clear water meandered across the plain, where a magnificent forest lined either side until it met the slopes of a mountain range. Waterfalls of various widths and heights fell toward the plain until their waters found their final course in the waters of the river. Multicolored birds flew everywhere. Several wild animals could be seen, such as alligators, tapirs, capybaras, rheas, deer, in exciting harmony.

The scene was so beautiful that Guto had not seen it before in any of his games.

"Follow me!". The beautiful girl challenged.

At this moment, a little boy appeared on the screen and Guto realized that he could move him with the mouse or the cursor. Guto soon realized that he was supposed to take over the character of this little boy and try to follow or catch the Naturavivae virus.

A new message appeared on the screen:

THIS VIRUS CAN ONLY BE DELETED IF DEFEATED IN AT LEAST FOUR OF THE SEVEN COMPETITIONS.

When he decided to start the chase, several windows appeared on the screen with the titles: TREKKING, CANYONING, MOUNTAINEERING, OFF-ROAD, BIKE, MOTOCROSS, BALONISM.

Guto understood that he could only delete this damn virus if he beat it in 4 of these 7 competitions.

And there was nothing in this life that would motivate Guto more than compete. And this challenge was something much more real and interesting than he had experienced before.

"Let's see, which window I click first?". Guto thought ahead.

And he clicked on "TREKKING".

"But what is "trekking" after all?". He asked silently.

And the game has begun!

Guto took on the character on screen, represented by a chubby boy in a tank top, shorts, sneakers and a flap cap. Then he found himself on a trail in the middle of a large natural forest, in a National Park.

In the distance, on the same trail, he could see NATURAVITAE, who was looking back with a mocking smile.

“Follow me! Fight against me! Try to catch me!”.

Guto immediately noticed some disadvantages in the competition.

NATURAVITAE seemed to be better prepared. She wore the most appropriate uniform and shoes and carried a backpack, whose contents Guto didn't know what it was.

“Come on! We are here to compete, and I will try to win!”. Guto said, highly motivated for the competition.

Time began to run.

Guto set off, trying to reach and overtake NATURAVITAE.

After an hour of walking, he began to realize the disadvantages he had.

“Since I didn't know what the competition was about, I didn't prepare myself well!” He thought already anticipating a defeat.

But as this was also an electronic game, on the way there were the real trophies that Guto could pick up, earning points and other fake trophies that would make him lose points.

The first that appeared was a comfortable boot with a non-slip sole that protected the ankle.

Immediately, Guto put it on as a replacement for deformed sneakers he worn. Bingo! Point to Guto. His gait became firmer, but the sun burned his skin and mosquitoes stung his legs.

Then came the second trophy - a light olive-green field uniform and a light brimmed hat all around it. Guto picked it up, replacing his clothes and his cap. The sun no longer burned and no longer felt the bite of mosquitoes. Bingo! Point to Guto!

Guto continued confidently on his march in search of ever-distancing NATURAVITAE.

The fresh, clean air, the green of the woods that shone in the sun, the song of the birds, the faint song of the waters that ran over stones, were beginning to give Guto an unprecedented charm. He experienced sensations never before felt:

“Wow! This game is of incredible virtual reality, which I feel like I'm on my own track!”. He exclaimed with enthusiasm.

This feeling was so strong that for a moment Guto forgot about the competition. After walking one hour, the landscapes succeeding each other more and more beautiful, with hummingbirds and butterflies prowling the

bushes and flowering trees, Guto began to feel hungry and thirsty.

“Now I begin to understand what NATURAVITAE had in the backpack! It sure was something to eat and drink and I here with nothing!”. He thought in anguish.

The next trophy was a tray of soda and natural juice. Guto, without hesitation, took the soda. Bad! Loss of points for Guto.

The soda would just fill his stomach, make it heavier and not help quench his thirst.

The next trophy was another tray of hamburger sandwich, full of gravy, and cereal bars. Guto, no doubt, opted for the burger with plenty of sauce, his favorite sandwich. Bad! Loss of point for Guto. Heavy sandwiches only hinder the walk, making the practitioner slower, lazier and without energy.

Immediately thereafter was a trophy consisting of a backpack and a water bottle and another trophy consisting of a bicycle.

“And now? Do I take the backpack and the canteen or the bike?”.

Guto could not fail in this choice. This could get you out of the competition! Guto remained for a few minutes to



make this decision while NATURAVITAE disappeared on the trail behind the mountains.

“If I take the bike, I can go faster and reach NATURAVITAE. I'm going for it!”.

This decision by Guto was fatal. In fact, the bike made him travel a few kilometers of the trail with the greatest speed. But the backpack that would allow him to carry the cereal bars and the water canteen was soon missed. Thirsty and hungry, having to carry his bike on his back to climb the trail up the mountain slopes, Guto gave up. 1 x 0 for NATURAVITAE.

On the other hand, Guto learned that trekking is a very healthy sport, consisting of long walks in natural environments such as woods, forests, fields, valleys, plains, combining physical exercise with the contemplation of wonderful landscapes of fauna and flora.

However, the trekker has to be very well prepared physically and bring the essential equipment for the adventure, according to the time and distance of the trail, difficulties of access and availability of purchase in the region.

Guto finished this first game, sweaty, red as if he had sunbathed, tired but relaxed.

His mother interrupted bringing the snack:

"Guto, here's your soda and hamburger". Why are you sweaty and your face is red? Did you go somewhere?". His mother asked him.

Guto could not answer. Perhaps he have given himself a lot to the virtual reality of this first game. He merely asked his mother:

"No natural juice and cereal bar?".

His mother was very surprised at the question:

"Wow, Guto must be sick!".

Well, Guto went to the second competition.

He clicked on "CANYONING" and started the game! Guto started this second game with two major drawbacks - his on-screen character was a little chubby about his choice of hamburger and soda and the fact that he had no idea what canyoning was.

However, his fighting spirit pushed him forward and entered the game to beat NATURAVITAE this time.

Proudly, he didn't want to ask the enemy virus Naturavitae what this sport was about. He just followed it's steps and tried to do better what she did.

Unlike trekking, Naturavitae walked beside Guto, without hurry, following his footsteps.

Guto can see her face better. No doubt she was a beautiful young woman. Her long, split hair was green on one side and yellow on the other, and her eyes were the most beautiful blue.

"Why aren't you walking fast to stand in front of me?". Guto asked.

"Because in this game what will be worth is the skill and not the speed. You don't know what canyoning looks like, do you?". Naturavitaë asked.

And Guto just looked to her with a slight nod.

"Guto, see, it's an hourglass, won't you get it?". She asked.

And Guto answered:

"But what is hourglass?"

"Hourglass is an ancient instrument that shows us time passing by. The sand from the top glass ball falls through a small hole to the bottom glass ball and it takes a long time to show us the time passing by!"

"I won't catch it!". Guto answered.

Naturavitaë just smiled and shook his head in mild disapproval.

And so, they followed the trail to a great mountain high in the range.

On the way, Naturavitae drew Guto's attention to small details that he, not used to living with nature, paid no attention to. They were butterflies and hummingbirds of various sizes and colors, feeding on flower nectar and fruit juice.

A small snake hurried across the trail. He listened to the song of the birds.

Guto saw and listened with great delight and thought how beautiful and sensitive person could be this Naturavitae virus.

"Surely it is to deceive me! I can't join her game!". Guto concluded.

Several other hourglasses passed and Guto didn't want to take these trophies that showed time passing. Naturavitae knew this failure would take him out of the competition.

But he would have to figure it out on his own.

Finally, the trail led up a great ascent, about 140 meters uphill, something like going up (and then down) around the stairs of a 40-story building.

Guto sought the answer:

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"This is the competition - who can climb these 140 meters up the mountain slope!".

Naturavitaë said he was wrong; this was not the competition.

"You will soon know!". She answered, trying to calm Guto's anxiety.

A noise of water was getting stronger and stronger. It was the approaching a beautiful waterfall.

"We're coming, Guto". Naturavitaë said.

While a group of tourists took the left trail, Naturavitaë took the right trail that led to the top of the waterfall.

"Okay, we have arrived!". Naturavitaë exclaimed with enthusiasm and slight tiredness.

Immediately, she looked for a place to exchange her trekking clothes for different ones. She put on a rubberized black outfit that stuck to her body, looking like the clothes of a frogwoman. She put on a helmet and put on non-slip boots.

Two ropes connected the top of the waterfall to the lake twenty meters below. Naturavitaë looped the rope in a device and held the rope tight with another device.

"Guto, this is canyoning. The word comes from 'canyon', word that means great depression of a terrain. These depressions can occur by sinking part of the soil or by erosion through the centuries by the waters of a river. Canyoning is a radical adventure sport. I'm going down these ropes that I'm going to command myself. Of course, that person you see down there can help me and help in case of danger. But I believe this will not be necessary. This requires a lot of strength and balance and a certain amount of courage. But, it's a lot of fun and relaxing, plus the feeling of success you get when you reach the end. On the way, I gently kick my legs along the side of the waterfall as I cool off in the waterfall".

"How amazing" The next one is me!". Guto requested with all enthusiasm.

"This will not be possible. You didn't get the hourglasses that would mark the time. If you had taken these trophies, your on-screen character would have grown to the appropriate age for this sport. A child like you cannot. You will have to wait and be content to learn the sport and postpone this pleasure for a future. Bye, Bye! See you in the next game!". Naturavitae laughed.

Naturavitae launched himself into the air, starting his canyoning, joyful and happy, bouncing off the cliff on the slopes of the waterfall, slowly descending in perfect synchronized movements, cooling off in the clear, crystal clear waters.

From time to time, she looked up and wave fondly at Guto. Guto was left to contemplate her, however, without sadness or frustration.

In a way, Guto was intrigued to look upon his enemy virus Naturavitaе as a pleasant company and almost a friend.

Guto was enjoying these new games too much. 2 x 0 for Naturavitaе.

"Mother! I am tired and hungry. What do we have to eat?". Guto asked, sweaty, with greasy hair, some dry leaves on his shirt and dust on his sneakers.

"Guto, lunch is almost done. I told you not to leave without telling me. You look like you walked miles!".

Guto looked at her and fell silent in a soft smile and with the image of Naturavitaе in his mind.

Guto, after eating the usual breakfast, headed to his computer, as it was his routine every morning, to wake up with some of his games.

He played the game of his choice for a few minutes, but he was starting to feel something - truer emotions were missing, the kind he was facing fighting Naturavitaе.

But the virus didn't stop him that morning and he went on robotically and without enthusiasm. Amazingly, he wondered:

“Where is Naturavitaē?”.

Disinterested, he turned off the computer and asked his mother if she could take him to the Ecological Park where he lived, as he would like to take a walk.

His mother, despite his household chores, did not hesitate to attend to him, since she had long been encouraging him for such a kind of walk.

Guto needed to practice more walking, to reduce his weight and strengthen his body. And there they went, carrying a bottle of water and cereal bars, at Guto's request.

At night, to Guto's delight, when he turned on his computer for a few more games and he was interrupted by the Naturavitaē virus that challenged him for the third game – “MOUNTAINEERING”.

Immediately, Guto's enthusiasm and fighting spirit returned and he settled into his chair for another battle.

“This time, I will try to better understand the game before it started!”. He promised.

And so, he sought to know about “MOUNTAINEERING”, the proper age for his practice, the equipment he should bring.



Thus, it substantially increased his chances of beating Naturavitaë.

And the game has begun. The scenario was a national park. The challenge was to climb the highest mountain. Guto was already beginning to feel that the pleasure of participating was greater than the challenge of beating Naturavitaë, because the game allowed him to experience the contact with nature and this was already a prize for him.

Naturavitaë comes out ahead, always looking back defiantly at Guto, but in a way that motivated him and encouraged him to follow her.

When the hourglasses that marked the passage of time appeared, Guto picked them up and his character on the screen grew older until he reached the minimum age of 14 years.

Guto, on screen, was already a strong, tall young man, making him a great match for Naturavitaë.

Hidden along the way, the trophies that Guto should identify and pick up - helmets, small seat, special sneakers, ropes and locks, and anchor systems. Guto was very alert and smart and did not fail to find and pick any of them.

He was equipped and walking practically along with Naturavitaë.

After a long trek, they were both on the stone shelves at the beginning of the highest mountain.

Now the game should be decided. Naturavitae took the initiative to begin the climb, followed by Guto, who sought to observe all her movements and copy them.

He strictly placed his hands and feet on the same ledges where Naturavitae placed. At times she would reach out to help him.

"But if we're competing, why does she help me?". Guto wondered.

The beginning of the climb required no more equipment. However, after the rise of a few tens of meters, the use of fixation and anchoring equipment began to be necessary.

Dealing with mastery, Naturavitae continued confident, followed by Guto. She fastened locks and staples, twisting and untying the knots of the rope, leaning against rocks, until they finally reached the top.

Naturavitae was just one step ahead of Guto when she slipped, fell and grabbed the rope a step behind Guto in distress. If Guto gave her his hand he would put her back one step ahead of him and she would win the game. If Guto didn't give him the hand, he would win the game.

And now? What should Guto do, the game was 2 x 0 for Naturavitae, could be 2 x 1. What would you do?

Guto clicked "OFF-ROAD", starting the fourth game!

Naturavitaie won the MOUNTAINEERING race and the score was 3 x 0 for her.

Guto had given her his hand to protect her from the fall! In this new OFF-ROAD mode, Guto thought he had spectacular chances, believing that this game differed just a little from the car racing electronic games he owned.

However, he tried to be very careful not to fall into any traps. On the way to the starting grid Guto picked up the hourglass trophies, making time pass to his character. He also struggled to get all the riding equipment he knew very well.

Guto felt firm and was ready for the start. The beacon of red turned to yellow and green. Guto and Naturavitaie left in a fierce dispute.

Definitely, these games provoked by Naturavitaie look like they were meant to teach Guto a lot of new experiences.

As soon as the race started, there was Guto with his off-road car turned sideways.

"But where did I go wrong?". Guto yelled.

In the distance, Naturavitaie drove away with her car, driving smoothly and carefully at low speed, skirting the numerous holes and pitfalls of the road. The terrain was

very sandy, watery, muddy, with deep holes, loose and tall stones.

Guto had to restart the race and quickly realized that the skill acquired on the racetrack of the electronic games had little to do with this type of race.

“This is slower, the routes are shortest and much more rugged field!”. He concluded.

However, the gaming experience counted a lot when driving an off-road car.

An off-road car is a car specially designed for rough terrain, has all-wheel drive (4x4) and special steering gears for riding on asphalt, mud, bog, towing. An off-road car can be driven as far as there is no normal road, hence its name off-road, which means it can be driven without roads and on all terrains.

Guto quickly got the hang of driving his off-road car, skillfully overtaking the holes, deftly deflecting the sandbanks, skirting the water mine terrain cleverly.

He was getting closer and closer to Naturavita. Although very focused on the race, trying to reach Naturavita, Guto could contemplate the renewing landscape along the way.

Beautiful lakes with hundreds of waterfowl of various species. Waterfalls that shone silvered at the sun in the

mountains, rivers in rocky rapids, with clear and crystal-clear water, the sun that illuminated everything and gave life highlighting the colors of the green of the woods and the blue of the waters.

These were sensations that Guto did not experience in other electronic games. In these games, he played and had fun. But she felt nature seep into her soul through her eyes, ears, nostrils, with unforgettable images - sounds of birds, waterfalls, wind in rare symphony; smell of the woods, sometimes dry, sometimes wet, the scent of flowers.

Naturavitaë stopped to see one of the most beautiful scenes of the trail - a blue lake, embedded in the mountains, formed by successive falls of 7 waterfalls, called Valley of Heaven.

Guto took this opportunity to overtake and gain an advantage over Naturavitaë, who was mesmerized by the landscape that she didn't even notice Guto overtake her.

Guto gained distance and looked back, no longer seeing Naturavitaë, and ran faster and faster to reach the end of the trail. Naturavitaë kept stopping to admire other landscapes, the beauty of the mountains, the calm of the hills at the beginning of dusk, not worrying about the weather and the end of the race. Guto reached the end of the trail.

"I won! I won! I won!". His screams even frightened the birds that remained in silence.

They were his only admirers at that moment...

Naturavitae was slow to arrive and Guto was anxiously waiting for her arrival to see her reaction.

Now the score would be Naturavitae 3, Guto 1. Naturavitae has finally arrived. She was blown away.

"I won, I arrived first!". Guto hurried to see her.

Naturavitae answered softly, trying to calm Guto's anxiety:

"You arrived first in the competition but lost in the excitement! The great prizes of the race you missed! You didn't stop to pick up the special gifts nature has in store for you. You have never seen the Valley of Heaven. On off-road, what matters most is not to arrive first, but to admire all the gifts that nature gives us along the way! Tomorrow, we will repeat this test, without the concern of time and the completion of the course. Let's stop and admire again all the beauties that were waiting for you and you did not give due value. Is it fine like this?"

Guto, who was already used to the idea of accepting Naturavitae advice and learning from her teachings, shook his head in agreement. And they did just that.

The next morning, they left in a single car and had a great time, talked a lot and fell in love with all the beauties delicately built through the centuries by nature.

The score was 3 for Naturavitae x 1 for Guto.

Guto clicked on "BIKE", starting the fifth game! The favorable score to Naturavitae challenged him.

He felt in this game the same firmness as the previous game. Races with the most diverse vehicles were common in his electronic games and he developed good reflexes and experience in these types of competitions.

Smart, knowing better the rules of playing with Naturavitae, Guto was careful to collect all the trophies, especially the hourglasses, disguised in various types, but with the same purpose of marking the passing time.

Appropriate bicycle racing equipment was already well known to Guto, who took precautions with water and proper foods such as cereal bars and chocolate.

The race would be in an outback road, a great challenge for the steep climbs and descents, as it passed the mountains range. Guto bet on the resistance of his character on screen and his experience.

At the start, only Guto and Naturavitae. Without whistles, gunshots or starting signals, the two began the competition just by looking at each other. Naturavitae got

off firm, pedaling hard and fast. Guto didn't want to be behind her.

What would surely decide this competition would be the breath and strength of the legs.

In this, Guto's character was evidently more distinguished from Naturavitaë.

A few meters ahead of Guto, Naturavitaë just cycled and took the opportunity to admire the good things she could admire in the city's landscape and buildings, especially the churches and houses of colonial times, very common in the outback city.

Guto looked fixedly at Naturavitaë's bike, trying not to distance himself. On the way up, Guto gained clear advantage and this advantage was increasing more and more.

On the way down to the city, Guto no longer saw Naturavitaë.

"Do I wait for her or not? What if something happened to her?". Guto thought worried.

But competition was competition and he decided to start the descent of the mountain, by the way one of the steepest he had ever seen.



Nothing from Naturavitae and Guto was close to the historical point of the city, end of the race. It had been two hours of running.

Naturavitae arrived quite late and this delay was not only due to the fact that a brief stop of Naturavitae at the top of the mountain to contemplate the horizon and the city in the distance, besides drinking water from the fountain.

Naturavitae was also delayed by the fact that the test was a great effort for her. Guto thus won his second test with great merit, being very happy with this fact.

Now the score was 3 for Naturavitae and 2 for Guto. Naturavitae tried to disguise his concern with the score, but without sadness or anger, asking Guto:

“Did you see the most beautiful scenery from the top of the mountain? The blue of the sky, the sun illuminating the forest that plummeted its green color downhill towards the desert and the city?”

Guto tried to match to her enthusiasm but did not hide the satisfaction of being almost tied with the virus Naturavitae.

“If I win two more competitions, I can delete this virus!”. Guto thought, but with a strange feeling of lack of conviction if he really wanted this.

Guto clicked on "MOTOCROSS" starting the game! He did not disguise a slight sarcastic smile in his lips. Motorcycle competitions were his biggest specialty in electronic games. Guto had a number of motorcycle racing games, and often practiced motorcycling.

Guto started fast and bravely, taking a considerable distance from Naturavitaë in the first few minutes of the race. Besides not being very familiar with motorcycle, Naturavitaë, as was her personality, walked slowly, in some parts, to contemplate the rich landscape around her.

Guto, for his part, focused on the route and the accidents on the ground, to cover the stretch in the shortest possible time and without accidents. Guto had collected the necessary trophies on the way to the start of the competition, not forgetting anything, not even the hourglass that marked the time and made his character on screen take the appropriate age for the competition. He was properly and beautifully dressed, fully equipped. Thus, the result could not be different. Guto arrived 16 minutes ahead of Naturavitaë.

The score was now Guto 3, Naturavitaë 3! On their return, they both returned without haste, talking. Naturavitaë took the opportunity to show Guto the points of the route of beautiful landscapes that he had missed. At various points, Guto stopped to admire them. This involved him to such an extent that, for a moment, he forgot that he had tied the competition with Naturavitaë and that now they should compete in the final race. The score was tied for a

3 x 3 match between Naturavitae and Guto. A final game was to decide Naturavitae's future on the computer and in Guto's life. Guto felt a weird feeling:

"I'll be maybe winning and deleting a virus I don't know if I'd like to delete it anymore!".

And this reaction from Guto was not a surprise. After all, he had had a lot of fun and learned a lot from Naturavitae. Going back to his old games seemed a little bland now. Guto told Naturavitae:

"Let's go, now, to the final game!".

Naturavitae looked deeply at Guto, with a sad look of farewell, and held on for long minutes.

"To finish this competition, I believe that there is nothing more appropriate than BALONISM!".

Naturavitae quickly climbed into its multicolored balloon and reached the skies.

Naturavitae reached the skies so quickly that Guto didn't even have a chance to fill his balloon with the indispensable warm air and he just watched Naturavitae disappear between the mountains and the blue sky.

"But she didn't follow the course of the competition! She went to a completely different side! She gave up! She ran

away! She lost, she lost! I'm the champion! 4 x 3 for me!”.

On the screen of his computer no longer appeared the interference of the virus Naturavitae and Guto could return, with some sadness and monotony, to his old electronic games.

Over the days, Guto missed Naturavitae a lot and wondered:

“Where would she be? Would she be contaminating other computers? If so, it may happen that my computer gets contaminated again by opening some file!”. He thought with obvious enthusiasm and positive expectation.

Thus, ended the competition, with the victory of Guto. He had won despite his sense of loss.

“But what is happening to me? Some time ago I wanted to destroy Naturavitae and delete this virus from my computer. Now I'm missing her and the games we have played!”. Guto thought with long longing sighs.

In fact, Guto loved to know and be with Naturavitae. And so, Guto was long sad and nostalgic, until in one night...

It was late at night, somewhere around 2 am. Guto slept heavily, as he used to do every night.

In the corner of his room, next to the door, his inseparable friend, the computer, remained quiet and turned off.

But something special was about to happen that night. The computer turned on and off several times, flashing the video screen that lit up the room. This flash of lights made Guto wake up, a little puzzled, a little scared.

“Didn’t I turn off the computer?”. Guto thought.

He confirmed that the computer was turned off. Guto returned to his bed. It was cold, autumn had begun.

But the computer turned on and off again, flashing the video screen again. Guto woke up and sat in the chair in front of the computer. A little sleepy, he waited, trying to figure out what was going on.

In the rooms next, his sister and parents slept. Only his dog Legend occasionally barked and stared at the window of Guto's room, sensing that something was happening. The computer turned on for good and a beautiful landscape appeared in the video. In a fantastic valley with mountains, cut by a river of clear water, that meandered a multicolored plain with millions of flowers.

A scent of flowers and fresh air permeated the room. Guto watched in delight.

Finally, his now-known “enemy friend” and rival mate, Naturavitaë, emerged.

With his long hair with a golden part of the sun, another part with the green of the woods, and with beautiful blue eyes the color of the sky, Naturavitaë addressed a message to Guto:

*Guto! I was very pleased to meet you and play with you. Sorry for the way I abandoned the last competition. I am just like that. I am sometimes carried by the wind, the crystal-clear waters and the falling leaves of the trees. I am in many places of our planet. I live in the song of the birds, the flowers, the dew of the night that moistens the leaves of the trees, the breeze of the wind, the morning sun, the freshness of the woods, the fresh mountain air, the cold of the glaciers, the softness of the snow. I live on beaches caressed by the sea, in a flower of a small vase or in large gardens. I live in the waterfalls and rapids of the rivers, I live under the dead and damp leaves of the forests, I live in the dry sands of the deserts. I live in many places, especially at the birth of a lifetime. I dye to the sound of a chainsaw or an ax, I dye burning in the fire of the fields and woods, I dye suffocated by pollution and the destruction of the places where I live. It's very common for people to fall in love with me when they meet me! Did you realize who I am? I am NATURE. Now you know me better and you will know where to find me. Sorry for the intrusion I made on your computer. But it was with very good intention, I wanted you to know me and wanted to arouse in you the desire to visit me in the*

*places where I live. I am absolutely sure this will bring you more enchantment, more health, more healthy leisure and reduce your time on the computer. My Master says that the truth of life lies in the interaction with Nature. Try it out! May you grow strong and healthy, intelligent and joyful, with peace and love. You can find me in millions of places in the world. In the world I still have many places of residence, although I am losing many spaces due to the perverse and destructive action of men. Search for a list of some of the many special places near you where you can visit me whenever you want and be dazzled by all I can offer you. Let's not say 'goodbye', let's say 'see you soon'! Search in your city which special places to stay with Naturavitaë.*

Guto saw and listened to Naturavitaë's see you soon in silence and a small tear streamed from his eyes.

Guto's mother heard movement in his room and got up to see what was going on.

“What is it Guto, why are you awake at this time of night?”.

Guto didn't answer but sat in the chair in front of the computer, eyes closed, asleep, the computer was off.

“Why, this boy sometimes looks like sleepwalking!”. Guto's mother said, picking him up and lovingly carried him back to his bed.

Guto slept soundly! The next morning, Guto felt that a new energy was inside his body. He ate cereal and fruit in the morning and told his mother that he would ride his bike in the next football field, then play with his friends.

His mother looked dumbfounded, but glad to see that Guto, for the first time, did not run early to his computer.

On his birthday, Guto asked for very special gifts: backpacks, special hiking boots and sneakers, water canteen and a bike.

He did so for subsequent anniversaries, replacing the demand for more powerful electronic games or computers with a host of tourism and eco-equipment.

His father joined him to a Boy Scout group, appropriate for his age to be in permanent contact with Nature.

While on vacation he was trying to influence his parents' decision about the place by showing the huge list where Naturavivae could be found.

On many occasions it succeeded.

“When I grow up, I will visit all the places where Naturavivae lives in my country. All!”. Guto promised to himself.

The electronic game created by Nichola and Lino was a success. Thousands of computers of addicted children



who spent many hours in front of a computer were infected with the NATURAVITAE virus. And these children and the youth aged people have been drawn to the opportunity that Nature offers to rediscover the true values of life in the hope of creating active defenders of our environment.

Nature is being threatened and destroyed on all fronts and everywhere with extraordinary speed, where its predators and exploiters skyrocket in number, greed and aggression and defenders shrink in number and impetus, crushed by the most varied interests.

The great hope lies in the formation of a new awareness among children and young people. However, men's society, as it is currently organized, has created its own artificial habitats, such as shopping malls, movie theaters, amusement parks, and our children are just getting to know and integrate with these habitats, without a minimum of living with the beauties of nature. What is worse, they are getting used to being happy and cheerful in these artificial habitats, not creating bond and emotions with natural habitats.

How can they defend the extinction of a tree or an animal if they do not even know what they are talking about? How will they value the preservation of a forest if they have never had the opportunity to visit it? It is important and urgent that everyone is interested in and protects Ecology and the Environment, so that an army of new defenders is formed and a real possibility of saving our

natural resources and protecting our fauna and flora is created.

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One afternoon, Deborah and Alexander received a telegram from Nichola, which said:

*Hi Mom! Hi Dad! I miss your delicious meals! Any day, I'll show up for a visit. I have something new: tomorrow, at 7:30 am, I am going to participate in a tv show about ecology on the Green Channel. Try to watch it! Kisses and I miss you. Nichola.*

Not surprisingly, Deborah and Alexander could barely sleep in that night. It would be the first time they would see their son Nichola appear on a television channel and talk about the reason of his life - ecology.

At 7 am, the television was already on Green Channel, Deborah and Alexander didn't lose a bid until, finally, the program began, when they could see Nichola sitting in an armchair, next to the reporter, ready to be interviewed.

On the air, Eco Reporter, who specializes in ecology, began the program:

*Ladies and gentlemen, good morning!*

*Another Green Channel hit show it's on the air!*

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*THE ECOLOGY - OUR GREATEST COMMITMENT, OUR GREATEST SOLUTION.*

*Today we are going to have the pleasure of interviewing Nichola, as he likes to be called, one of world´s leading experts on ecological and environmental issues. Nichola, your initial words!*

*"Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure and honor for me to be able to participate in this program, which I consider one of the most important in terms of ecological issues. Special greetings to my mother and father, Deborah and Alexander. A special greeting to my grandfather Tony, wherever he is!"*

*Reporter Eco: How do we go about protecting and preserving the environment in today's world?*

*"We have much to celebrate, but we have much to regret. We have lost more animal and plant species in this century than in the last 65 million years. Human populations continue to grow each year. We are more than 7 billion human beings. We depend on food and goods, all taken directly or indirectly from nature. Thus, the natural environment is violently assaulted every day to make way for pastures and fields. This for ecology is a real disaster".*

*Reporter Eco: But we only have to regret? What do we have to celebrate?*

*"Well, we are talking more and more about ecology and environmental protection. There is widespread concern with the preservation of wild plants and animals. But, unfortunately, I think we are still making more progress in destruction than in preservation. It is a pity. Humanity will deeply regret this at a time when, perhaps, there is no return. If you destroy an animal's habitat and it is extinguished, this situation has no return".*

*Reporter Eco: Nichola, what is your main fight flag?*

*"I strongly advocate, as so many other scholars and scientists argue, an environmentally sustainable economy. That is, the transformation of the current global economic system, which uses the devastation of natural resources to promote economic and social growth, into one based on renewable energy, such as wind and sun energy, and a system that reuses and recycles materials".*

*Reporter Eco: And with respect to ecology. How do you see the prospects for ecology?*

*"The future for ecology will depend essentially on our ability to protect our enormous biodiversity. World has not yet realized how much it is losing from its biological wealth, even before it can consciously and productively use it".*

*Reporter Eco: How could we develop a sustainable economy from the point of view of the environment and*

*ecology, in a world of constant population growth and growing consumer demand?*

*"One of the things that becomes clear to me when I look back on the so-called economic and technological progress of this century is that the fate of today's economy has no greater prospect of progress. This economy is sustained by deforestation, species extinction and water pollution, which causes terrible damage such as rising temperatures and desertification of the soil. It is necessary to rethink the entire economic system so that progress can continue in a more rational manner. What is encouraging is that we can already see some results of it in today's world. We see, for example, that the technology used in solar and wind generation has advanced greatly throughout our world. Society as a whole is blind to the real value some products should have. For example, the cigarette. This product should have included in the price all the spending that the government has to treat the diseases resulting from smoking. We need to tell the truth more. Another example: When you buy a liter of gasoline, you are not paying for the health treatment of the harm caused by inhaling the pollutant gases produced by it. The idea, therefore, is to tax these disease-causing products to cover the costs of people's health care".*

*Reporter Eco: What role would you give to the world in this context?*

*"We have in the world several environmental superpowers. Due to their infinite natural resources, these*

*superpowers have alternatives, as no other countries, to develop an environmentally sustainable economy. But the richness and health of this biodiversity is being destroyed. And that is an unfortunate mistake. In their forests may be the cure for many diseases that exist and will still exist. These superpowers therefore have everything to position themselves as leaders in this change. This means that these superpowers have a chance not to go through certain stages of destruction and degradation that other countries are going through. It can go straight to technologies that develop the use of renewable energy sources. In the future, biological resources will be more important than other current resources, such as oil. It is therefore necessary for these countries to preserve and protect its enormous biodiversity”.*

*Reporter Eco: Do you think we are moving in this direction?*

*“To be honest, I think we're walking, but very, very slowly. In fact, I think these superpowers have not yet realized their importance in this context”.*

*Reporter Eco: Nichola, do you think we are making progress in terms of ecological awareness in the world?*

*“The world still has a lot to evolve. All countries societies have much to evolve in this sense, from children to adults. But we are starting to make some progress in this regard. Otherwise, you wouldn't be giving this interview right now, would you?”.*

*Reporter Eco: What analysis do you make of preserving the environment in today's world?*

*"I don't think we have much to celebrate. On the opposite, as I said before, I think we have a lot to regret. We have lost more species in this century than in the last 65 million years. This could get even worse in the next century if we do not make major changes. The main one is to preserve natural resources in order to stabilize the climate, because if it does not stabilize, the ecosystem will not either".*

*Reporter Eco: In your view, what has led the world to such devastation in this century?*

*"What happened of devastation we could not say that it was purposeful, that is, that the devastation was promoted by the devastation simply. All the people wanted was to expand the economy and promote social improvements in view of population growth. The result is that in the last 50 years the world economy has increased six-fold. The economy has no structure to support this growth. This is the main reason for deforestation, pollution and other ecological problems affecting the world. We need to think about stabilizing population growth. We need to find ways to consume without destroying what we have left".*

*Reporter Eco: Nichola, we are coming to the end of this beautiful interview. What are your final words?*

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*"We need to make humanity aware of environmental and ecological problems. We need each person to make a daily contribution according to their social, economic and knowledge conditions. But, make any kind of contribution. We need to teach ecology and the environment as a compulsory subject in schools. We do not need to enter the new millennium to find that we are facing a serious problem with the devastation of our natural resources. We need to fix it now, right now. Finally, we need to follow the path of sustainable economy. This is the biggest challenge of our generation. If we don't fix this problem, future generations will blame us and have almost impossible challenges to solve, no matter how technology advances".*

*Reporter Eco: Nichola, one last question before we close, that our time is running out - how are we preserving freshwater in the world?*

*"Drinking water will be humanity's greatest challenge going forward. With world population growth and clean water supplies and sources running out, we will eventually collapse. Some countries are the most blessed by nature in crystal clear, pure, mineral water sources. And what are we seeing? The unbridled pollution of the rivers with domestic and industrial sewage. Deforestation is wiping out springs and water sources. The use of underground water for industrial purposes is depleting underground wells that nature took thousands of years to form. In many countries a liter of mineral water is sold more expensive than a liter of oil. We are blind to this great*



*wealth we have. The authorities and the population need to be aware as urgently as possible of the need not to pollute the rivers and to preserve the water sources. It's like we're throwing liquid gold down the drain. A real disaster in every way. It is ignorance and collective blindness”.*

*Eco Reporter Ladies and gentlemen, we have reached the end of yet another ecological moment on your Green Channel.*

*Reporter Eco: We thank Mr. Nichola for the excellent interview and for the knowledge he has given us all!*

The TV show was over. In the living room, in the same room where many years ago Nichola played with his cars, little train and his little farm toys, Deborah and Alexander hugged each other, crying silently, proud of the struggle and example of life of their only son Nichola.

Nichola used to say that Nature is like this for him:

*It is sometimes carried by the wind, the crystal-clear waters and the falling leaves of the trees. It is in many places on our planet. It lives in the song of the birds, the flowers, the dew of the night that dampens the leaves of the trees, the breeze of the wind, the morning sun, the freshness of the woods, the fresh mountain air, the cold of the glaciers, the softness of the snow. It lives on beaches caressed by the sea, in a flower of a small vase or in large gardens. It lives in the waterfalls and rapids of*

*the rivers, lives under the dead and damp leaves of the forests, lives in the dry sands of the deserts. It lives in many places, especially at the birth of a lifetime. It dies to the sound of a chainsaw or an ax, it dies burning in the fire of fields and woods, it dies suffocated by pollution and the destruction of the places it lives. It's very common for people to fall in love with it when they meet it! Such is NATURE.*

Nichola has proven that a passion for a life goal and a dedication to education can make anyone a winner, regardless of their humble or rich background.

His grandfather Tony shared this joy of Nichola of the largest and most beautiful of the ecological parks, in a very high place, in the sky, a true paradise. But, of course, from there he could contemplate the work of his ecologist grandson, a work that began at the age of 11 and never stopped.

Today, if anyone wants to talk to Mr. Albert Nichola Green, Nichola from the football field of olden days, will meet him at the remaining forests of the world, where he gives expert assistance for the creation of sustainable development natural reserves. Thus, he began to nurture dreams and set goals for working at a government environment protection organization.

Thus, in these new plans, he could have bigger dreams, think about the creation of more parks and preservation nature reserves, more sustainable development reserve

areas, more awareness campaigns and collective education, advocate more stringent legislation, more rigorous supervision, especially against wildlife trafficking.

In his mind a thousand plans were beginning to anticipate the accomplish of this new career step. But the one who knows Nichola knows what he is capable to perform. To the pride of his parents and his beloved grandfather Tony, Nichola was rising higher and higher in his career.

God had given him this noble mission, perhaps the noblest of all missions - to protect and preserve the gardens of Eden which He presented all the men of Earth. Nichola was born with this destiny and followed him for life. From an early age, he identified the true essence of life through living with nature. When he entered a forest, feeling the coolness of the air, listening to the singing of birds and the singing of water on the rocks, Nichola felt that he belonged to this environment, somehow feeling that this was his most remote origin. He used to say that nature was engraved in his DNA, could not live without it.

Nichola's great flag became the preservation of wild animals by the conservation of their habitat and environment. It is a hard, inglorious struggle, since human ambition and greed have no limit. But a fight that justifies his life and his presence on earth. Nothing else could complete and satisfy his true values and desires to serve humanity, serving nature.

THE END