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B1-B2

easyOriginal

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS

001 REFLECTIONS EVERYDAY SHORT STORIES



ENGLISH

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When Life Gives You Lemons

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When Life
Gives You Lemons



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Chapter 1

The Lemon Tree That Wouldn't

It was the gardening¹ magazine that gave me the idea. "Grow Your Own Mediterranean Garden," said the bright cover. Inside was a photograph of a beautiful lemon tree covered in yellow fruit. "Even in Britain's climate," the article promised², "you can grow citrus with care."

I should tell you that my fingers are not green³. Plants usually look at me and decide⁴ to die. But something about that lemon tree called to⁵ me. Perhaps it was the grey February day outside my window. Perhaps it was the promise⁶ of bringing a bit of sunny Italy to my small Cotswold⁷ cottage.

"How hard could it be?" I said to my cat, Marmalade. He blinked slowly, which I took for⁸ encouragement⁹.

-
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | gardening - Gartenarbeit |
| 2 | to promise - versprechen |
| 3 | green finger – grüner Daumen |
| 4 | to decide - entscheiden |
| 5 | to call to - ansprechen |
| 6 | promise - Versprechen |
| 7 | Cotswold - Cotswold (eine Region in England) |
| 8 | to take for - halten für |
| 9 | encouragement - Ermutigung |

The next day, I visited Green Thumb¹⁰ garden centre. Mrs Wilson, who knows everything about plants, raised her eyebrows¹¹ when I mentioned a lemon tree.

"Ambitious¹²," she said, which I later realised was her polite¹³ way of saying "impossible¹⁴."

But she sold me a small lemon tree anyway, plus special soil¹⁵, plant food¹⁶, and a large pot¹⁷. "Keep it warm," she warned¹⁸. "And don't overwater¹⁹."

At home, I gave my tree the sunniest spot²⁰ by the kitchen window. I named it Sunny and spoke to it every morning.

"Good morning, Sunny," I would say. "Isn't it a lovely day for making lemons?"

For three weeks, Sunny looked happy. Then the leaves started to turn yellow—and not in a good, lemony way.

"More water?" I wondered, reaching for the watering can²¹.

-
- | | |
|----|--|
| 10 | Green Thumb - "Grüner Daumen" (Name eines Gartencentres) |
| 11 | to raise one's eyebrow - die Augenbraue hochziehen |
| 12 | ambitious - ehrgeizig |
| 13 | polite - höflich |
| 14 | impossible - unmöglich |
| 15 | soil - Erde |
| 16 | plant food - Pflanzendünger |
| 17 | pot - Topf |
| 18 | to warn - warnen |
| 19 | to overwater - überwässern |
| 20 | sunniest spot - sonnigster Platz |
| 21 | watering can - Gießkanne |

That weekend, my neighbour Bill came round²² for tea. Bill has an award-winning²³ garden and hands that are permanently²⁴ marked with soil.

"You're drowning²⁵ it," he said immediately upon seeing Sunny. "Mediterranean plants don't like wet feet²⁶."

Over lemon biscuit (shop-bought²⁷, I admit²⁸), Bill explained what Sunny needed: less water, more light, and patience²⁹. "Growing lemons in England is a bit like trying to wear shorts in December," he said. "Possible, but not always comfortable."

Bill helped me move Sunny to a better spot and showed me how to check the soil before watering. As he left, he gave me a small paper bag.

"What's this?" I asked.

"Lemons from my tree," he said with a wink³⁰. "Just in case."

The next morning, I examined³¹ Bill's lemons. They weren't perfect—smaller than shop lemons and slightly uneven³² in

22 to come round - vorbeikommen

23 award-winning - preisgekrönt

24 permanently - dauerhaft

25 to drown - ertränken

26 wet feet - nasse Füße

27 store-bought - gekauft

28 to admit - zugeben

29 patience - Geduld

30 wink - Zwinkern

31 to examine - untersuchen

32 uneven - ungleichmäßig

shape. But they had grown here in Oakfield, which seemed magical to me.

I decided to make lemonade. Not from a recipe, which would have been sensible³³, but from childhood memory. I squeezed³⁴ the lemons, added sugar and water, and took a sip³⁵.

My face puckered³⁶ immediately. Too sour³⁷! I added more sugar. Now too sweet! This continued until I had a very large jug³⁸ of barely³⁹ drinkable lemonade.

"It's the thought that counts⁴⁰," I told Marmalade, who watched from the countertop⁴¹ with obvious⁴² judgement⁴³.

March brought storm that rattled⁴⁴ my cottage window. I worried about Sunny, moving him further from the draughty⁴⁵ window at night and back again each morning. My kitchen

-
- 33 sensible - vernünftig
 - 34 to squeeze - auspressen
 - 35 sip - Schluck
 - 36 to pucker - sich verziehen
 - 37 sour - sauer
 - 38 jug - Krug
 - 39 barely - kaum
 - 40 to count - zählen
 - 41 countertop - Arbeitsplatte
 - 42 obvious - offensichtlich
 - 43 judgement - Urteil
 - 44 to rattle - klappern
 - 45 draughty - zugig

routine now included checking soil moisture⁴⁶ with my finger, just as Bill had taught me.

One particularly wild night, I actually brought Sunny into my bedroom. "Just until the storm passes," I explained to Marma-lade, who seemed offended⁴⁷ by this addition to our household⁴⁸.

April arrived with soft rain and occasional⁴⁹ sunshine. I noticed small bud⁵⁰ forming on Sunny's branch⁵¹, which sent me rushing to Bill's cottage.

"Is it happening? Will there be lemons?" I asked, barely saying hello.

Bill laughed. "Those are flower bud. Come back in a few weeks."

The first blossom⁵² opened on a Wednesday morning. I was so excited I took photograph and showed them to Mrs Parker when I went to buy bread.

"Lovely," she said. "But don't count your lemons before they've grown."

By June, Sunny had produced exactly three flower, all of which fell off without forming fruit. Bill assured⁵³ me this was

46 moisture - Feuchtigkeit

47 offended - beleidigt

48 household - Haushalt

49 occasional - gelegentlich

50 bud - Knospe

51 branch - Zweig

52 blossom - Blüte

53 to assure - versichern

normal for a first-year tree. I wasn't convinced⁵⁴.

"Perhaps Sunny needs friend," suggested Mrs Wilson when I returned to Green Thumb for advice. "Citrus tree sometimes do better with company."

This led to my purchase of herb⁵⁵ plant—rosemary⁵⁶, thyme⁵⁷, and basil⁵⁸—to arrange around Sunny's pot. My sunny kitchen corner now resembled⁵⁹ a miniature Mediterranean garden. It smelt⁶⁰ wonderful, even without lemon.

Through summer, I cared for my little garden. The herb thrived⁶¹, especially the basil, which I used in everything from sandwich to pasta. Sunny remained healthy but fruitless.

In September, Bill invited me to help harvest⁶² his own lemons. His tree, ten years old and thriving in a perfect south-facing conservatory⁶³, was heavy with fruit.

"The secret," Bill said as we carefully cut lemons from branch, "is patience. And accepting what British weather will allow."

54 convinced - überzeugt

55 herb - Kraut

56 rosemary - Rosmarin

57 thyme - Thymian

58 basil - Basilikum

59 to resemble - ähneln

60 to smell - riechen

61 to thrive - gedeihen

62 to harvest - ernten

63 conservatory - Wintergarten

We spent the afternoon making marmalade—with orange and Bill's lemon. The kitchen filled with citrus steam⁶⁴ and conversation. Bill told me about his late wife, who had started the lemon tree, and I shared story of my London life before Oakfield.

When I returned home with jar of marmalade and more of Bill's lemon, I looked at Sunny with new eye. My tree hadn't given me lemon, but it had given me something else: a friendship, new knowledge, and a kitchen corner that made me smile every morning.

In October, with winter approaching, I noticed something remarkable⁶⁵: a single tiny green bump⁶⁶ on one of Sunny's branch. Too small to call a lemon yet, but definitely something growing.

"Look at that," I told Marmalade. "A miracle⁶⁷."

Three month later, Sunny still hasn't produced a proper lemon. But the leaf are green, there was one more tiny white flower last week, and that small green bump remains, stubbornly⁶⁸ holding on through winter.

Bill checks on Sunny when he comes for our weekly cup of tea, and I've learnt more about plant than I ever expected.

64 steam - Dampf

65 remarkable - bemerkenswert

66 bump - Beule

67 miracle - Wunder

68 stubbornly – hartnäckig

Sometimes I use Bill's lemon to make lemonade (from a proper recipe now), which we drink whilst discussing Sunny's progress.

And I've discovered something important: the joy wasn't in the lemon after all, but in the friendship that grew alongside my struggling⁶⁹ tree.

Perhaps next year Sunny will give me lemon. But even if not, life has already given me something better.

69 struggling - kämpfend

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