

Small Wonders

The Rules of Rules

An accident leads Percy the Possum to create new rules.

Lesson Link: God gives us rules because he loves us (The Ten Commandments). Unlike man's rules, which are sometimes created to exert power over others, or to selfishly make their own lives more enjoyable, God's rules are all directed toward love. It's important for us to identify the reasons why some people make rules, and what the good "rules" for rules are.

It was a Saturday, or it might have been a Tuesday, depending on the current Rate of Exchange. The Toys had just said goodbye to Granna the Rabbit, who had gone away to visit her many relatives in a town called the Toy Box.

Many of the Toys were enjoying the beautiful day in the Kind Garden park.

Percy the Possum was playing a game he'd made up involving a board with black and red squares, and pieces that included acorns, pebbles, and a thimble. Percy would move one of the pieces on the board and say loudly, "Aha!" and "Clever!" and "Masterful!" No one else knew how to play the game, which is how Percy wanted it.

On this particular Saturday, or Monday, depending on Daylight Savings Time, Percy had just moved the thimble and exclaimed, "Exactly!" when a large yellow ball owned by Overbite the Beaver and recently kicked by Pinnetti the Puppet bounced onto the middle of the board with a *crash*. The pieces went this way and that.

Percy stood and shouted, "And I was just about to score an own-post widget!"

"I'm sorry," said Pinnetti.

Percy said with great emotion, "This won't do *at all!* This park needs *Rules!*"



He grabbed the board and what pieces he could find and stomped away.

The next morning Percy stood at the edge of the park next to a large wooden sign that he had nailed to a tall wooden post. The sign had words made with thick red paint that everyone knew had come from a can in the barn.

"What does the sign say?" asked Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus.

"I'll tell you," Percy told him. He read his sign out loud in a thick red voice to match the paint.

PARK RULES

The Park Is for the Reading of Books and the Playing of Board Games ONLY.

No Objects May Be Thrown or Caught or Kicked, Especially If the Object Is a Big Yellow Ball.

No One Allowed in the Park Shorter Than This Line.

There, Percy had drawn a line that was exactly his height.

No One Allowed in the Park Taller Than This Line.

There, Percy had drawn a line that was exactly his height.

No Swimming Unless the Lifeguard Is Present.

Percy walked into the park, sat down on a bench, and began to read a book.

The Toys were troubled.

Some of them were not tall enough to reach the line on the sign. Others were taller than the line on the sign.

“Percy is the only one allowed in,” said Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus.

Pinnetti the Puppet observed that the park didn’t have a place to swim.

Brambles the Porcupine wondered what a lifeguard was.

“We’ll have to play somewhere else,” Tell-Tale the Mouse said.

The Toys went to the Brackenbury Forest. But there they found a sign hanging on a tree that looked just like the sign at the park. They then went to other parts of the Kind Garden and discovered more signs like the sign at the park.

The Toys soon realized that they could play only in their own homes. Percy was the only one who enjoyed his new rules.

The following Monday, or it might have been Thursday, if you count February, Granna returned from visiting her relatives. She noticed that the Kind Garden was very quiet. She walked all around the Kind Garden and saw Percy’s signs.

“Oh, Percy,” she said, sadly shaking her head.

She called for all of the Toys to meet in front of her cottage, and they did.

Granna said, “According to the Toymaker, there are *three* rules you should know about making rules.”

“Do they involve lifeguards?” asked Brambles.

“No,” said Granna. “*First*, rules can only be made by those who have the right or power to make rules.”

The Toys looked at Percy. Percy looked at the sky.

“*Second*,” Granna said, “rules are made to help, save, and protect everyone who follows them—and not only the rule-maker.”

The Toys looked at Percy. Percy looked at the ground.

“*Third*,” Granna said, “rules made out of love are the greatest of all rules.”

The Toys looked at Percy. Percy tugged at a piece of lint on his sleeve.

“Percy, please take down your signs,” Granna said to the possum.

Percy sniffed once, then twice, then a third time. Then he went to remove the signs, which Overbite the Beaver used to make a bridge across a narrow part of the stream.

“Percy’s rules were useful after all,” Overbite said.

Questions:

1. **Were the rules that Percy made for the Kind Garden good rules?** (No.)
2. **What was wrong about Percy’s rules?** (They were not made out of love and designed only to make Percy happy. Percy’s rules didn’t address the needs of others.)
3. **Are the three rules about making rules good rules?** (Yes.)
4. **Do you remember any of them?** (1. Rules can only be made by those who have the right or power to make rules; 2. Rules are made to help, save, and protect everyone who follows them—and not only the rule-maker; 3. Rules made out of love are the greatest rules.)