

Small Wonders

Brambles and the Balloon

Pinnetti the Puppet finds a balloon that has an unfortunate meeting with Brambles' sharp quills.

Lesson Link: Forgiveness. Forgiveness is an essential part of our relationship with God and with each other. Jesus told a story about a man who was forgiven a great debt, and how he later refused to forgive the smaller debt from another. The lesson is clear: God forgives us, so we must forgive others.

Brambles the Porcupine was feeling more prickly than usual.

She had awakened that morning in a bad mood. Since then, everyone and everything annoyed her. So she went to the park, found a spot of sun, and sat down on the grass. *This is cozy, she thought. This will put me in a better mood.*

She closed her eyes.

"Look what I have," a voice said to her.

She opened her eyes and saw a pair of feet. They were Pinnetti the Puppet's feet. She knew that because they were the kind of feet only he would have.

"Look!" he said again.

"I can't look because my eyes are down here and you're way up there," Brambles said and closed her eyes again.

"But you'll like it," Pinnetti insisted.

"Leave me alone," Brambles said sharply. She kept her eyes closed.

All was quiet again. She hoped he had gone away.

Suddenly, his voice was very close to her ear. "Just open your eyes. It's right here," he said. "It will make you smile."

She groaned and opened her eyes.

Pinnetti held a large red balloon in front of her face.



"I found it, and Manifold blew it up for me," Pinnetti said happily.

Brambles felt the anger boil up inside of her. "You bothered me because of a *balloon*?" she shouted.

The happiness drained from Pinnetti's face. "It's a big red one," he stammered. "I thought you would like it."

"Is that what you thought? Well, here's what I think." She stood up so quickly that the pointy quills on her back jabbed into the big red balloon.

There was a loud *pop*.

Pinnetti cried out, "My balloon!"

Brambles knew right away she was wrong.

"I'm sorry!" she called out to him. But he had already run away.

Brambles growled. She tried to tell herself that it wasn't her fault because she'd had a bad day; after all, she had told Pinnetti to leave her alone, and he didn't. But she knew those reasons were just excuses and that she should have been nicer to Pinnetti.

She scampered after Pinnetti as fast as her little legs would let her.

Brambles found him sitting on the porch of his house. He was holding the string with the shreds of burst balloon tied to the end. He looked sad.

She slowly came up to him and said, "I'm so very, very sorry that I popped your balloon," she said. "It was mean. I'm sorry. *Please* forgive me."

Pinnetti raised his head to face her. "I know you didn't mean to do it. Or even if you meant to do it, you didn't *really* mean to because you wouldn't have meant to at any other time," he said.

Brambles wasn't sure what he meant.

"I forgive you," he said.

"Thank you," she said, relieved.

He smiled at her, and she smiled back.

As she walked home, she thought about how good she felt because Pinnetti had forgiven her. *It would have been terrible if he had stayed angry and never spoke to me again*, she thought. Then she remembered that she had a blue balloon in a little box where she kept things like paper clips and buttons and erasers.

I'll give it to Pinnetti! she decided. She raced home and fetched the blue balloon from the box. Being very careful because of her quills, she blew it up and tied a string to the floppy end. Then she hurried for Pinnetti's house.

She wasn't very far when Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus saw her.

In a few quick steps, he was blocking her way. "You have a balloon!" he said with great excitement. "May I see it?"

"Not now," Brambles said impatiently.

"Please, please, please?" he insisted.

She rolled her eyes and held up the balloon. "There."

"Let's bounce it back and forth with our heads," he said.

And, just as Brambles was about to say "No, we might break it," Pencil-Neck dropped his enormous head to bump the balloon and—*pop!*—the balloon was nothing but small little blue pieces on the ground.

"My balloon!" Brambles screamed at Pencil-Neck.

Pencil-Neck's eyes went wide. "Oh, I'm so very, very sorry, Brambles. It was an accident. I'm sorry. *Please* forgive me."

Brambles yelled, "It was a present! It was the only one I had! How can I forgive you for that?"

Pencil-Neck's mouth quivered, then big tears fell. He sobbed as he bounded away.

Brambles was about to turn to go home again when she saw Pinnetti the Puppet standing on the path. He looked at her sadly. "I forgave you, but you couldn't forgive him?" Pinnetti asked her.

Brambles lowered her head. She felt deeply ashamed.

When she looked up again, Pinnetti was gone.

Questions:

1. ***Is it always easy to forgive someone? (No.)***
2. ***What does Jesus say about forgiving others? (That we should forgive others just like we want Jesus to forgive us.)***