

## Synopsis for *I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children*

### 2-line Summary:

*I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children* is a collection of over 800 stories for children by the eminent Ukrainian educator Vasyl Sukhomlynsky, accompanied by his reflections on values education.

### Short Synopsis:

*I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children* is a collection of over 800 stories for children by the eminent Ukrainian educator and children's writer Vasyl Sukhomlynsky. The stories are accompanied by Sukhomlynsky's reflections on how to teach children values in families and in schools.

### Medium Synopsis:

*I'll Tell You a Story ... Philosophy for Children* is a collection of over 800 stories for children by the eminent Ukrainian educator and children's writer Vasyl Sukhomlynsky. The stories are accompanied by Sukhomlynsky's reflections on how to teach children values in families and in schools. As we read Sukhomlynsky's reflections and stories, we are prompted to examine our own values, and we gain fresh insights into the principles that govern our lives. Among the hundreds of little stories, there are many gems that will move us and that we will want to share with the children in our lives.

### Long Synopsis:

*I'll tell you a story ... Philosophy for children* is a collection of over 800 of Vasyl Sukhomlynsky's ethical tales for children and his reflections on values education, compiled by his daughter, Professor Olha Sukhomlynska. The book has been translated from Ukrainian.

The ethical tales in this collection were written to support the values education program at the combined primary and secondary school in the village of Pavlysh, in central Ukraine, where Sukhomlynsky served as the principal from 1948 until his death in 1970. The stories also served as models for the children's own writing. The stories in this book are organised in sections, with each section having a theme and being introduced by reflections on values education relating to that theme.

The inculcation of values was at the heart of Sukhomlynsky's holistic approach to education. He considered the development of humane qualities to be even more important than the development of intellectual or vocational skills. In one of the reflections in this book Sukhomlynsky writes:

*Children meet each other every day at school, in the corridors, in the classrooms. They look each other in the eye, share secrets, argue, enjoy each other's company, get upset, sometimes fight, nursing injuries great and small. Sometimes in our daily work we lose sight of the subtleties of these human relationships. Dear educators, do not forget that understanding these human relationships is your first responsibility. How each of your pupils views other human beings, what they discover in them, what they impart to others, and what remains in their hearts from others—this is a hundred times more important than whether or not they have completed today's homework.*

Sukhomlynsky believed that whatever vocation his students chose, their happiness would be determined to a large extent by their ability to harness their energies to creative ends and develop positive relationships

with others. He also considered the development of strong character to be an area in which anyone could excel, regardless of their physical, intellectual or artistic abilities. In the moral sphere there were limitless opportunities for every individual to shine.

The stories in this book cover a broad range of themes and are oriented towards varying ages, from preschoolers to young adults. The stories for very young children often feature animals, while those for senior students and adults may examine parenting issues and the development of positive relationships between teachers and students. The themes covered include: developing an appreciation of beauty, the development of empathy and love for others, respect for elders, developing a sense of duty, the nature of maturity, the role of parents, the development of a conscience, self-discipline and the modification of desires, hard work, generosity, kindness and cruelty, curiosity and the quest for knowledge, the role of teachers, the development of talent, acceptance of diversity, the role of tact and good manners, patriotism and self-sacrifice.

As we read Sukhomlynsky's reflections and stories, we are prompted to examine our own values, and we gain fresh insights into the principles that govern our lives. Among the hundreds of little stories, there are many gems that will move us and that we will want to share with the children in our lives.

### **5 Points of Interest about the Book:**

1. Sukhomlynsky (1918–1970) was an eminent Ukrainian educator and children's writer. His books have been read by millions of people around the world, but he remains relatively unknown in English-speaking countries. This book has never before been translated into English. The translation is the result of a collaborative effort between Alan Cockerill and Berta Karaim in Australia, and Nataliya Bezslova in Canada.
2. Sukhomlynsky's stories, fables and vignettes are very short and pithy, often making a strong impression in a one or two pages of text. (e.g. 'Dad came home' (p. 183), 'Straw hats' (p.326))
3. A key feature of Sukhomlynsky's approach to education was the conscious fostering of the personal quality of empathy. The stories in this book often show great psychological insight into the inner worlds of children, parents and grandparents. (e.g. 'A smile' (p. 301), 'Mariika's thoughts' (p. 319), 'Why a mother ran from the field' (p. 179), 'The oriole' (p. 128), 'The wooden stork' (p. 185))
4. Sukhomlynsky's stories are set in rural Ukraine in the aftermath of World War II and give insights into the history and culture of a country that is once again under siege. (e.g. 'Put that letter in the drawer' (p. 184), 'A grandson's request' (p. 291), 'A hut in the forest' (p. 324))
5. Sukhomlynsky's stories are frequently read in schools in Ukraine, and his educational legacy may have contributed to the strength and resilience shown by Ukrainians in the current war.

## Book Details and Purchase Information

**Book Title:** *I'll tell you a story ... Philosophy for children*

**Written by:** Vasyl Sukhomlynsky

**Translated by:** Nataliya Bezslova, Alan Cockerill and Berta Karaim

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The book can be purchased through major online retailers or ordered through your local bookshop.

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**Recommended retail price paperback:** 29.95 USD, 39.95 CAD, 44.95 AUD, 25.95 EUR, 19.95 GBP.

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