

World Peace is Inevitable

From *Animals for Peace* by Kiser Barnes. Illustrated by Nancy Barnes

Once a grasscutter named Plip wanted to end war in his village.

Grasscutters are large rodents. They look like beavers, except their fur is grey. The animals love running across fields, tending their gardens, and making their villages charming.

But all the grasscutters in Plip's community spent their lives cutting the fastest growing weeds ever known. When the greedy plants were cut down, the stems immediately shot up two inches. If left alone, each stalk of weed would take all the food and water from the soil and grow two feet a day!



The abnormal growth had baffled all scientists in the animal kingdom. No one could stop it. Over the years, the animals started to believe that a "secret weapon" existed somewhere which could defeat the weeds. Plip was determined he would find it.

He yearned for love, a friend, someone with time for him. He longed for wrestling matches with his father. He hurt inside for lazy days at home, his belly full with berries and nuts, basking in the warm glow of a normal life. His heart was set on designing beautiful gardens, if only his mother had time to teach him. But Papa and Mama Grasscutter were always too tired for anything except weeding, eating and sleeping.

The sad struggle in the weed-grown village was endless – nipping, slicing, gnawing and dragging away fallen plants. The desperate grasscutters, scurrying from weed to weed, resembled frantic army ants on the march. The sounds of grasscutters at parties, picnics and racing contests in other villages increased Plip's determination. But try as he might,

the weeds' attacks could not be broken. The village was an ugly weedy.

Once, when he was younger, Plip had told his parents, "Let's leave this ugly village! Any place, where these super-growing weeds don't exist." "Never!" Papa and Mama Grasscutter had cried. "Grasscutters don't run away from challenges! We struggle until we win! And," Papa Grasscutter asked, "how will we solve problems in the new village? Keep moving about, like homeless creatures, unwilling to keep faith and take action? There's a secret weapon that'll conquer weeds. And we'll discover it!"

One morning the winds carried across Plip's village the voices of children singing: "World Peace is not only possible but inevitable."

The animals were startled. "Will this singing lead me to the secret weapon?" Plip wondered in a flash. He ran to his father.

"What means 'inevitable'?" asked Plip.

"It means, son, something which is certain to happen. Nothing can keep it from being achieved," Papa Grasscutter answered, smiling, "because it's part of the plan of God. It's inevitable that we'll conquer these weeds. But, ... peace among men, ... inevitable? I'm not sure."

Ignoring Papa Grasscutter's order, "Don't listen to the silly children," Plip ran towards the singers.

Across a field, shimmering with green lawns, rose bushes, sun-flowers, and fruit trees, Plip saw the three Bahá'í children who had been singing enter the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (Bahá'í House of Worship). He knew they were students on the way to their classes because they wore the same furs (uniforms). He let out a wild yelp, which meant, "Don't go in! Help me!"

Curiously, on a sudden impulse the children whirled around, ran out into the morning sunlight, and with shining faces and twinkling eyes sang once more, "World Peace is not only possible but inevitable." Then, laughing and holding hands, without the slightest idea Plip was near, they walked smartly through the open door.



"They have the secret weapon!" Plip cried. He believed the children had sung just for him. Something mysterious was about to happen. Inspired by the sense of that good and powerful force that blows the sweet winds, and lights the insides and faces with smiles, Plip ran up a tree. The lighthearted creature sprinted across a branch and leaped onto a window sill high up on the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. He trembled with excitement. At last his world was filled with hope. Plip listened with panted breath as the children's teacher presented Bahá'í Teachings of world peace.

Thirty minutes passed – a long time if you're itching to end a war. Finally, Plip said to himself: "The prayers are wonderful. So are the songs. Such beautiful teachings – one language for all people, the oneness of humankind, world citizenship. But they're useless for the animal kingdom."

Plip was confused. A kind of hurting disappointment flickered in his eyes. Feeling empty, he gave off a terrible scent of doubt. In that instance, Plip remembered he had left his village without permission. He would be punished as a deserter. He decided he wouldn't go home. He would remain in the jungle, without a friend or community.

Suddenly, Plip lifted his round head high. His blunt muzzle spread wide and his short neck stiffened. The teacher had told the children how God's promise of universal peace would be fulfilled. The secret was clear as sunlight. He flung his thick-set body onto the ground and raced for home.

"Father! Mother!" Plip cried, gasping for breath. "I have the secret weapon! The children taught me!"

His parents were standing in a patch thick with weeds zooming upwards for the stars. The entire grasscutter community, hissing and snorting and grinding their teeth, gathered around Plip.

"Attack these weeds!" Mama Grasscutter cried, trying to delay her son's punishment.

“No!” Papa Grasscutter objected. “He betrayed us. Not only a deserter but a liar! Learn the secret weapon from children? What do children of the people who change their furs (clothing) know about our fast-growing weeds?”

“Imeka, he’s just a child,” Mama Grasscutter declared, “too young to understand that the old ways of fighting weeds are best. He’s no coward.”

“I understand,” Plip asserted. “Here’s my plan.”

“No more lies,” Papa Grasscutter cried. “Biting squad prepare!”

“But, I’ve discovered...” Plip protested.

“The only thing you’ve discovered is lying and desertion!” Papa Grasscutter declared.

The Biting Squad commander leaped for Plip’s throat.

“Watch!” Plip cried, pouncing upon a patch of weeds, barely escaping the gleaming rows of sharp teeth.

Instead of nipping the weeds at the base, as grasscutters had done for ages, Plip drove his claws deep under the roots and dug up the whole plant, root and all. He placed the roots on a rock pile. They died immediately.

Fresh grass stems and flowers popped up over the spots where weeds had stood. The village was fragrant with the soft smells of young stems and buds bursting with life. With the weeds plucked up by the roots, the war for sunlight and food was over. The root cause of war had been pulled out. The grass and flowers grew happily in peace.

Papa Grasscutter, Mama Grasscutter, the Biting Squad, Plip, and all the grasscutters almost went wild with joy. Some rolled over and over, kicking their legs at the sun. Others leaped high into the air and licked at the delicious fragrances of fresh-sprouted blades of grass and frisky flowers, flinging their perfume into the breezes. A warm sense of well-being flowed through every grasscutter.

Plip and Mama Grasscutter pressed their heads together, shoved back and forth, until she gently pushed him over. She chased him round and round, laughing all the while. Plip felt content in himself with all this attention. He was feeling a security he had not known before.

“How did you discover uprooting weeds was the secret?” Papa Grasscutter asked.

“I learned it from a Bahá’í children’s class,” Plip answered, his bright eyes full of wonder. “In the big meeting den with nine mouths (doors), the teacher explained that talking and wishing by themselves will not establish lasting peace. The root cause of war – disunity – must be removed from men’s hearts. This made me realize that cutting down weeds only fights their fast growth. The cause of war must be eliminated. Pulling out the roots is the secret.”

Papa Grasscutter reared up on his hind legs in the wrestling position. Plip, laughing with the sun on his face, moved quickly from side to side trying to escape his father’s tickles.

“Let’s go!” Mama Grasscutter cried, anxious to begin the adventure.

And off Plip, Mama Grasscutter, and Papa Grasscutter went cutting around the world, spreading the glad tidings that the root solution for achieving world peace is the secret for ending conflicts in the animal kingdom, as well.

