

WILLI'S DAISIES



“**T**his sucks. I want everything back to normal,” sighs Willi the wolf. It is a hard time for the wolves in 1433. Willi and his wolf buddies, Bobby and Sheila, rest by the outskirts of the woods, reminiscing over the past few weeks. “For weeks, I haven’t been able to get close to Tilda. We are only allowed to wave at each other from afar. While the others are playing together, singing, and having fun, Tilda is forced to stay at home. It’s so unfair!” At this point, Willi expects some sort of agreement and empathy from Bobby and Sheila. But the two of them just lie in silence, hiding their snouts under their paws. Disheartened, Willi turns away: “You guys just don’t understand me” he hisses. Bobby and Sheila only continue to stare at him while he makes his way down to Wolf Village.

As he trudges out of the thicket of trees, the sun glares at him from the sky. In front of him, daisies and dandelions glow in a lovely green meadow. A beautiful mix of yellow and white lines the path of long grass up until a purling river, where right next to the cold blue, a lonely apple tree paints red fruits into Willi’s view. Wolf Willi takes the scenery in, and a wave of nostalgia sweeps over him as he crosses the meadow and starts picking up daisies. “Tilda and I always loved to come here and look at the flowers when we spent time together,” he recollects to himself. “She adores daisies.” Unfortunately, no matter how much he thought about being here again with her, this was going to be impossible in the near future.

Tearily, Willi recalls the recent events that have led to his misery.

A year before, Dr. Lupo, the wolf doctor, had suddenly come running to the village. Distraught, he reported what was happening in the neighboring village, where many wolves had started to feel unwell. “They all fell ill” Dr. Lupo explained. It started with one wolf, then it spread to his family, friends, and everyone in the pack. “And then nothing was ever the same again”, mutters Willi to himself. One wolf in our village too had started to feel unwell—the same as in the neighboring village. Dr. Lupo reacted immediately. Since the sickness spread from one family to the next, the sick wolf and his family were barred from leaving their home. During this time, Dr. Lupo lamented that they knew too little about the sickness. To prevent any further spread, every wolf who started to feel unwell was ordered by the doctor to stay under house arrest. In addition, the wolves who were already ill before this sickness came in, had to be protected to ensure that they remained safe. “That’s how it came to be, that Tilda and I couldn’t see each other anymore,” ponders Willi, “because she is particularly susceptible. While the other wolves were still allowed to meet up, we weren’t supposed to be in contact.”

With his paws full of flowers, Willi sits by the apple tree, feeling the quiet wind caressing his fur. In the river, fish jump downstream towards Wolf Village, while the frogs are croaking in unison. Eyes

closed; he continues to reflect on the times that came after. "We had to be creative. Because of the house arrest, Tilda and I have been yowling to each other from a distance just to stay in touch. We chatted, kept each other updated, clowned around and played our little games. However, the monotony of it all soon caught up with us. We had nothing more to say to each other and so at some point we yowled less, until finally, we didn't yowl anymore. Then, we tried using smoke signals. Although very exciting at first, it was nothing in comparison to actually meeting face to face. Ever since then, we have only waved at each other." Feelings sweep over him, feelings that he desperately tries to fight and ignore. Full of sorrow, he throws the daisies away and weeps. "I feel so lonely..." After pausing for a moment, he stands up and leaves the meadow. The way to Wolf Village is not so far anymore.

To get home, Wolf Willi needs to walk past Tilda's house. Usually, he would try to hurry past it, but the thoughts from the meadow linger in his mind. He stands at Tilda's gate. Grey dust has sprawled across the entrance, making itself at home. The dried grass in the front yard had paled. Willi's gaze is fixed on the door. While he couldn't get himself to take his eyes off the house entrance, his legs, with a mind of their own, start wandering off towards Tilda's house. His paw inches towards the door and knocks on the cracked wood several times.

A moment later, the door opens. Through the gap, a fatigued laugh shimmies its way out. "Hey, we've not seen each other in so long!" exclaims Willi, "Are you still alive?" He lingers in front of the door. They hadn't been so close in almost forever, and he sensed a long-forgotten happiness bewitching the air as he saw the face of his long-lost friend. "It's just so nice to see you, I miss you so much," he whispers,

"I'm really happy right now." For a moment, the world is wonderful – as though everything is back to normal again.

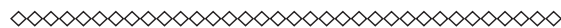
"Why aren't you saying anything?" Willi asks his friend, "You've always been chatty." An unpleasant feeling overshadows his excitement. "Tilda?" Her smile vanishes, giving way to a dry cough. Frightened, Willi repeats, "Tilda? Are you feeling unwell?" His wolf friend isn't looking so great. Only now does the young wolf notice the wad of fallen hair lying under Tilda, and her bloodshot eyes. "Ayayaya, that's exactly what Dr. Lupo described." A thought shoots through Willi's head. What can he do? "I'm fetching Dr. Lupo," he shouts and sprints off.

The wolf doctor's house is not too far away, and Willi is there in minutes. Hammering on the door, he shouts, "Help! Dr. Lupo, please help us!" The doctor quickly pokes his nose out of the front door. "Dr. Lupo, Tilda is not feeling well. She's coughing, and she needs your help!" The doctor immediately shifts gears, scrambling through his medical box. He then accompanies Willi to Tilda's house. "What's going on with Tilda?" Willi asks anxiously, shivering with fear. But the doctor doesn't reply. Instead, he disappears into Tilda's house, signalling Willi to wait outside. Willi sits on a rock and squirms, noticing a single daisy in the yard. To distract himself from the disturbing thoughts floating around in his head, his mind takes him back to the green meadow full of daisies.

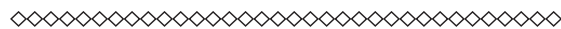
Like a white and yellow carpet of clouds in the sky, the flowers stretch from the shadows of the treetops to the riverbank. The sun beams through the clouds and dives into the meadow, shining in all of its glory, while the light breeze tickles the grass. Willi sits among the flowers, listening to the bees quietly buzzing away, while the frogs sing in the background. A

while later, he looks at the horizon and sees Dr. Lupo making his way towards him. As the doctor approaches him, Willi notices his lowered head and desolate gaze. Dr. Lupo shakes his head. At that moment, the buzzing and singing cease to exist. Willi's memories blur, and the last daisy among the grey dust withers away. Wolf Willi starts to feel unwell.

(For all risk groups, and couples and families who are separated for other reasons)



Joschka Hüllmann is a researcher at the Chair for Information Systems and Interorganizational Systems at the University of Münster and a member of the ERCIS Competence Center for Smarter Work. Besides writing academic articles, he is interested in popular science, edutainment, short stories, and the craft of writing.



Gabriella Wong is a digital marketing and communications professional who graduated from the Chair of Book Studies at WWU Münster. On top of book studies, her content has reached broader audiences in the fields of esports, contemporary art and blockchain technology. Through her work, she hopes to communicate with audiences unrestricted by borders.