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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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# The Old Lady And The Slugs

Once upon a time there was an old lady that worked diligently in her garden. She grew the most beautiful flowers and cultivated the most delicious vegetables in all of the land. Yes, this woman was a very happy lady. She did however have one big frustration. Every year slugs would eat half of her harvest. Her land was wet, moist and not too hot and filled with the most delicious foods, so the slimy little creatures flourished.

Over the years, she had tried all sorts of gardening techniques to get rid of the slugs. She had put her crops in large trays and covered them with netting. She had tried to surround her crops with sawdust as that used to annoy the slugs. She even tried biological granules specially produced to keep the animals away. But none of it helped as the animals had evolved and learned to evade her obstacles.

Every year, she got more and more angry towards the slugs, until one year, she came up with a sly plan. She went out to the woods and reached out to a nest of six mice. "My dear little mouse friends", she said, "I offer you a paradise filled with thick, fat slugs. There's enough for all of you. Follow me and you'll never be hungry again."

So the mice followed the lady and they feasted on the slugs. Because there was so much food, all the mice in

the nest started to make babies. And what you may not know is that mice can make babies up to eight times per year and get around six mouse pups each time. So, after only six months the nest of 6 mice had grown to 24.576 mice.

Now there were so many mice that the slugs alone didn't provide enough food for them. So the mice started eating away from the fruits and vegetables from the old lady. This of course angered the lady, so she went to the forest again and reached out to a skulk of foxes: "My dear fox friends", she said, "I offer you a paradise filled with thick, fat mice. There's enough for all of you. Follow me and you'll never be hungry again."

So the foxes followed the lady and they feasted on the mice. Because there was so much food and foxes are social animals. Word spread far and wide in the fox community about this paradise garden with unlimited mice. Over three hundred foxes made their way to the garden and they each ate over 30 mice per day. So within a month there were no more mice for the foxes and they started to eat the berries in the old ladies garden.

The old lady almost exploded with anger and she went into the forest again and she called upon the toughest wolf pack in the forest. "My dear wolves", she said. "I offer you a paradise filled with thick, fat foxes. There's enough for all of you. Follow me and you'll never be hungry again."

So the wolves followed the lady and feasted on the foxes. Because wolves can eat a lot of food at once,

they finished the three hundred foxes very quickly. Since wolves are true carnivores, they weren't interested in the fruits and vegetables in the old lady's garden, but instead they tried to eat the old lady. She narrowly escaped their terrible teeth.

Looking purple from anger, she went into the forest again and stepped into the hunter's cabin. "My dear hunter friends", she said, "I offer you a paradise filled with thick, fat wolves. There's enough for all of you. Follow me and you'll never be hungry again because I'll share the foods of my garden with you."

So the hunters followed the old lady and they killed the wolves. But hunters are hungry fellas and the old lady watched sad and powerless how everytime fruits and vegetables became ripe the hunters would eat it all, leaving nothing for her.

If things weren't bad enough, she also saw a thin and friendly looking slug crawling towards her. "Old lady", the slug said, "we were so happy in your garden and we always shared the food equally, why did you scare us away and let the hunters eat all your food?"

"I was angry because you ate half my food", said the lady, "but now I'd do anything to go back to how things were."

The slug thought for a moment and said: "I have an idea. There's only two of us left, but we can lay over 500 eggs. So, in a couple of weeks, we can have a small slug army. The hunters will by then have eaten so much that they'll fall asleep in the garden. As they sleep, we'll crawl all over them. That should scare them away."

The old lady agreed and watched for weeks in distress how the hunters kept eating all her foods. But then, after a lot of rain had fallen and the hunters had taken a nap in a sheltered part of the garden, she saw hundreds of slugs making their way towards them. The slugs crawled in the most nasty places. When they were in position, the old lady took two pans from her house and loudly banged them together.

That scared the hunters tremendously and they jumped up in the air. As they jumped, they felt slugs in their underpants, on their nose, in their ears, between their toes and on their lips. The hunters screamed in anguish and ran into the forest and were never seen again. The slugs quickly jumped off the hunters and lived happily ever after in the garden together with the old lady.

