

## The Orchid

*“We've got this gift of love, but love is like a precious plant. You can't just accept it and leave it in the cupboard or just think it's going to get on by itself. You've got to keep on watering it. You've got to really look after it and nurture it.”*

— John Lennon

“We’ve got this gift of love,” said the wife.

“It’s just a plant,” answered the husband.

“You are mistaken, dear. This is a *precious* plant and has much to teach. You wait and see,” she answered. “Let’s find it a spot.”

The husband shrugged and pointed to a bookshelf.

“That’s a nice place,” he said.

But the wife shook her head. “You can’t put it on a shady shelf and think it’s going to get on by itself.”

She put it on the window sill instead. It was a cozy spot with just the right amount of light and no draft to be felt.

*We will look after it and nurture it. You’ll see. It will be the most wonderful plant.*

So, husband and wife started to care. They looked after the orchid together. They watered it when it looked thirsty. They wiped its leaves clean when they were dusty. After a while, they even found themselves talking to it.

*You go, girl,* said the wife when the spike started to show.

“That’s my boy”, said the husband when the buds started to grow.

And then, one unsuspecting day became rather extraordinary. Because that was the day the orchid finally bloomed. It was magnificent indeed! Husband and wife enjoyed the orchid's flowers immensely. Once a month, they gave it a little bath in rain water. They collected it especially for this purpose. After a while, just as the wife had predicted, the flowers shrivelled up and fell off. One by one. In the end, only a barren stem stuck up, getting brown slowly.

*Should we cut it?*, the husband asked, unsure if he was prepared to let go of the last reminder of happy times.

*Let's*, she said, *so there can be room for something new to grow.*

After cutting the stem, the orchid seemed rather ordinary.

*It's nothing much to look at, really*, he thought.

There was a bunch of leaves and roots and lots of bark in which the orchid grew. The bark had the annoying tendency to stray far from the pot as if in search for a better pot to stay in.

*And now?*, he asked.

*And now, we keep caring*, she said.

And so they did. They cared for it for weeks, for months, for years.

In the seventh year, he asked: *Isn't it time?*

*Time for what?*, she wanted to know.

*Time to let go of this one*, he said gently. *This one just won't bloom.*

*Does it have to?*, she asked.

*I suppose so*, he answered. *It's a flower. It's supposed to be colorful and pretty.*

*Isn't it?*, she wondered.

He looked at her. Then he looked at the orchid. For the first time, he really looked at it.

Its leaves were shiny and of a dark, mossy green. Ever so slightly, they faced towards the sun. Its roots were thick and strong and intertwined with each other in quite an interesting pattern. Some roots even peeked out of the pot. The tips of those little explorative roots were of a light green that seemed quite tender to him. Fresh and young and full of life.

He looked at the orchid for a long time. It seemed strong, it seemed happy, it definitely flourished under their care - and he remembered all the time he spent with it and talked to it. What did it matter if it had flowers or not?

*Why*, he thought to himself, *did I wait for beauty that was already there?*

*You are absolutely right*, he said. *Even if it never blooms again, I love it just the way it is.*

The husband paused. Then he looked at his wife.

*It looks happy, don't you think?, he said, smiling.*

*Very happy, she said.*

++interessante philosophische Ideen in diesem Vortrag: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNpTMs0zgao>++

++lieben ist aktiv, lieben heißt genau zu schauen, was der andere braucht und ihm das zu geben; nicht das eigene Wollen und Denken auf den anderen projizieren++