

NATURAL ALARM CLOCKS 1

Many years ago I still lived at the end of the sandy beach between two big bushes that provided enough shade for a comfortable sleeping place. I had planned to spend a day on Naxos. Nothing exciting, nothing urgent, just to pick up fresh money from the machine, doing a little shopping, strolling around. I needed to get up at seven to be at the harbour in time. Of course I never have an alarm clock with me. My friends who would have lent me theirs had left two days earlier. So in the evening I cuddled up in my sleeping bag, just hoping to wake in time somehow, and then I fell asleep.

All of a sudden my sleep was interrupted, I was overpowered by a wet'n'sandy something, that tried to dig itself into my sleeping bag at my neck, joyfully whimpering and wagging its tail. It was Dolly. Light brown, long haired, four months old Dolly, the youngest four legged family member in my favourite taverna. Like every morning she'd been swimming in the sea, probably chasing her beloved flock of ducks back out onto safe land, and then finishing the ritual with an extensive roll in the sand. Fresh, fit and awake she was wild with joy to have sniffed one of her playmates so far from home.

Eyes shut tightly, I blew and spat out sand from my nose and mouth, while I tried one handed to fend off the attack of the enemy. This was misunderstood as an inviting signal for continuing the game. She somersaulted joyfully on top of me, licked my face and slobbered my ears. Still half asleep and slightly disgusted I pulled my sleeping bag over my head once more. Just pretend to be dead, then it'll be all over right away, I thought. Dolly tried a few more times to get me going, but then she lay down beside me with sad sounds of despair, pressing her pretty, salty, wet'n'sandy back hard against my belly in an attempt to revive me.

Carefully I looked around. Morning had already broken, but the beach was still without sun. With mixed feelings I pulled out my watch: It was seven sharp!