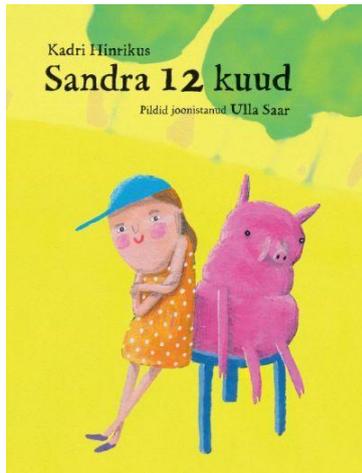


## Sandra's 12 Months



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53 pp

Age: 6+

Little Sandra lives in a pink house together with her mother, father, grandmother, and older brother Sten. The girl doesn't know exactly how the months and seasons show up one after another, but they do all the same. Quite a lot of exciting things happen with her family over the course of a year: they play with water guns and cause a minor flood; celebrate Mother's Day and walk through a muddy park; help out her Great Uncle Vello, who has a big yard, a big dog, and a big tummy; stack firewood; and more.

### Reading sample

*Translated by Adam Cullen*

#### MAY

The flowers blossom wildly in May, and Mother's Day has come. Stan gives his mother a story he wrote at school as a present. The story goes like this:

"My mom is the very best. She has brown hair. She teaches other kids at school. She always wears jeans. Mom makes oatmeal for me and my sister every morning, but she loves to drink coffee. I don't like coffee because it is bitter. Sometimes Mom puts on lipstick. My sister and me try to be good for Mom. And sometimes we are too."

Mom really likes Stan's story. Sandra wants to give her mother a gift, also.

"How about you draw me a picture?" her mom suggests, and heads to the kitchen to bake a cake. Stan goes outside to play while Sandra starts drawing a picture of her mother making oatmeal. After a little while, Sandra calls her mom over to look at the picture.

"Oh, what a beautiful picture you've drawn!" her mom says, leaning in for a closer look. "But, my darling daughter, why did you have to draw it in Stan's math workbook?"

"Because the workbook was so boring. It just had numbers in it. I like books and workbooks with pictures in them."

The sweet smell of cake is already floating in from the kitchen, so Mom hurries to take it out of the oven. Stan also comes back inside when he smells the delicious dessert. He has ripped a hole in his new sweatpants while climbing trees.

"This is the best cake in the whole world!" Sandra and Stan compliment between big mouthfuls.

"Mother's Day sure is a great day!"

Mom serves them each another helping of cake, after letting it cool first. She thinks that Mother's Day is a great day, too. The only chores she has to do today are to mend Stan's sweatpants and hurry to the store to buy him a new math workbook. The starlings outside won't quiet down before nighttime.

## JUNE

The thermometer outside the window already shows a mild, warm summer temperature. Dad, who is sitting in the armchair, claps his book shut.

"Hey, let's go for a drive—we can take sandwiches and coffee along for a picnic. That'd be really nice." Mom, Sandra, and Stan agree in an instant.

"Yes-s-s! Let's go to where Aunt Marta lives. There are horses there," Stan pipes up with his good plan.

"No, let's go to where they have that really big swing. I want to go swinging," Sandra demands, climbing up on Dad's lap.

"I was actually thinking we could head to the river," Dad proposes. "I'd take my fishing pole along and do a little fishing. Maybe they'll be biting today."

"Oh, I'd like to go to the sea," Mom sighs. "We could stretch out on the warm sand—think of how wonderful that'd be."

"No, Aunt Marta said she'll let me get on a horse's back—I want to go horse riding!"

"I want to go swinging!"

"I want to go sunbathing!"

"But I want to go fishing!"

"Horse riding!"

"Sunbathing!"

"Swinging!"

"Fishing!"

The argument is a loud one. It's so loud that the telephone rings five times before anyone even hears it. After she picks the phone up and chats for a little while, Mom comes to a decision.

"We're going to go visit Great Uncle Vello. He asked for our help splitting and stacking firewood."

Dad sinks down into the armchair's cushions: "I lost my axe."

"Uncle Vello has two axes," Mom says firmly.

Great Uncle Vello lives in an old wooden house just outside the city. He has a big yard, a big dog, and a big gut. There is a big pile of firewood in the middle of the yard.

Dad and Great Uncle Vello chop wood the whole sunny day, while Mom and Stan stack the pieces.

Sandra and the big dog find three butterflies, two worms, five ladybugs, and one frog in the yard.

That evening, once the job is done, Great Uncle Vello grills sausages on a pan for everyone. Dad lights a bonfire. It's big—almost as big as the ones we light on Midsummer Eve. Mom is relaxing on the sun lounger and warming herself by the fire. Stan is galloping around with a wooden horse that Great Uncle Vello gave him. Sandra is bouncing on Dad's knee. Great Uncle Vello and Dad are exchanging fishing stories. The big dog goes around begging for big bites of sausage from everyone. The logs of firewood are whispering to one another about the thrilling day, when they grew into an impressively tall woodpile.

No one feels tired at all, because the sun forgot to set.

## AUGUST

Mom, Dad, Sandra, and Stan drive to the beach. The sun has been scorching hot for several days in a row. The sea is warm. Sandra and Stan are splashing around in the shallows while Mom and Dad are lounging on a beach blanket.

"Let's pretend that you're a fish and I'm a fisherman," Stan proposes to Sandra.

Sandra agrees to play. She ducks and dodges away from the fisherman as best as she can. Stan runs after her. The water splashes and foams around them. Stan really is a strong, skilled fisherman. But the fish isn't any worse, either. Sandra fights for her little fish-life, zigzagging here and there, falling down and getting back onto her feet in an instant. Finally, the fisherman gets ahold of the fish. The

fish squirms as hard as she can, but the fisherman tugs her back to shore.

"Now, I'm going to fry you up," Stan announces.

"Go ahead and try," Sandra says.

Stan lays Sandra down onto the beach blanket next to Mom and Dad.

"I've already got two other fish frying here. That way, you'll all get nice and cooked at the same time."

"Mom-fish and Sandra-fish are really bony," Dad says, rolling over. "Make sure the bones don't get stuck in your throat, son."

Stan looks up at the sky.

"I'll turn the heat down a little, otherwise you'll burn," the fisherman-cook says. A thin, white tuft of cloud floats in front of the sun.

Stan stands next to the blanket, keeping an eye on his catch.