

### “Poo and Spring”

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*Storybook, fiction*  
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Poo and Spring is one of the most popular children’s books published in Estonia over the last ten years. It consists of short stories, in which characters from the everyday world suddenly find new ways to interact. What happens when a dog turns yellow in autumn and sheds its fur? It will grow new, green fur in the spring, naturally! Or what about when poop and a dandelion meet in springtime? Everything that can happen in a kindergarten classroom can happen in this book, too!

#### Awards:

2013 Jānis Baltvilks Prize (Jāņa Baltvilka balva),  
Latvia  
2010 Nukits Competition, 1st place



## Reading sample

### **Poo and spring**

A dog squatted on the park trail and then ran away. He left a small nugget of poo laying on the trail.

“Wow, it’s beautiful here!” the poo marveled and looked around. “The sky is so blue! The trees are so green! And there is so much open space all around!”

“Hey you there, be careful!” called the sparrow. “Come off the path before somebody steps on you!”

Indeed, he could hear someone’s footsteps on the trail! Poo dragged himself off the trail and onto the grass as fast as he could.

“Oh, it’s even more beautiful here!” he said happily, “so soft and comfortable. The small blades of grass tickle under the chin and the bees are buzzing. I’m going to find some leaves and build myself a house. Then I’ll sit by the window and admire the view!”

“You know little poo, you shouldn’t build a house in the middle of the grass,” the sparrow said. “Sometimes the lawnmower comes by here. It makes loud noise and cuts everything to pieces. Dangerous thing! You should go under the lilac bush, there you’ll be safe and the lawnmower won’t reach you.”

“Thank you, wise bird!” said poo and walked toward the bush. He looked for leaves and twigs and built himself a tiny hut. There it was nice to sit and breathe the fresh air.

Poo loved living in the park: children were running and playing ball, old ladies were feeding sparrows and doves, dogs were sniffing the trees and lifting their legs. It was an exciting view from the window of the hut. But poo never had any guests and that made him a little sad.

“It would be so nice to talk to a friend and look out the window together,” he thought. “It’s a pity I’m so lonely. At least the sparrow should visit every now and then. It’s not polite to forget a friend!”

Poo looked around and spotted the sparrow. He was

sitting on the branch, next to his wife, and feeding his chirping offsprings in the nest. The poo waived to his old friend and the sparrow nodded his head in greeting, but he did not fly closer. He didn’t have time for some dog poop right now. Instead, he hugged his wife and flew off to find more food for the baby sparrows.

“Wouldn’t it be wonderful if I had someone to hug, too?” poo thought with a sigh.

Slowly the autumn approached and then the winter. The little hut was covered with snow. It was warm and cozy in there. That made the poo sleepy, and he slept a lot.

Spring melted the poo out from under the snow. He stretched and exercised under the sun. He had gone all white over the winter, but he was in a great mood. The air was so fresh and the first flowers were blooming everywhere. And – what a miracle – one dandelion pushed its head out right next to his hut!

“Hello!” the dandelion said with a small voice. “May I bloom here? I am not bothering you, am I?”

“Absolutely not!” answered the smitten poo. “You are so beautiful!”

“Oh, please!” the dandelion blushed. “I am very ordinary.”

“Not at all!” said the poo. “Believe me – I’ve been here for a whole year, but I’ve never seen a dandelion so yellow and ruffled! Do you know what – would you be my wife?”

Dandelion blushed again, and agreed. They got married right away and started their life together. They loved each other very much and hugged many times every day, much more often than the sparrow couple.

*Translated by Merike Safka*

## Dad's socks

It was Saturday. Mum was mopping the floor when she found a pair of Dad's socks under the bed.

"Hey!" she called. "What are your socks doing here? Come and put them in the dirty laundry!"

Dad came out of the kitchen, knelt down and tried to fish the socks out from under the bed. But they were so far under that he couldn't get at them.

"I'll have to get a brush," he said, but quick as a flash, Pille was there.

"Wait, Dad, I'll crawl under the bed and get them for you!"

She lay down on her stomach and wriggled under the bed.

"Can you reach them?" Dad asked. "Don't hit your head!"

"Come out of there!" said Mum. "You're not stuck, are you?"

"Dad," came Pille's voice from under the bed. "The socks have got an egg!"

"What do you mean an egg?" asked Dad in surprise. "There's an egg in the socks?"

"No, not in the socks, tucked up with them!" said Pille. "A tiny speckled egg. And they peck me if I try to touch it. I think they've laid an egg, and now they're hatching it."

"What nonsense is this now!" spluttered Dad as he struggled in under the bed. Two socks were lying right up against the wall in a tight ball. And between them, as even Dad could see, lay an egg covered in tiny brown dots.

"How did that get here?" muttered Dad as he reached for the egg. But as soon as he moved his hand, one of the socks bit him on the thumb.

"Don't touch it, let them hatch it!" said Pille. "Such a sweet little egg, I wonder what'll come out of it?"

"That's what happens, when you leave socks lying around!" said Mum, who had also squeezed in under the bed. "They start laying eggs! Now we'll just have to wait. We shouldn't disturb their nest!"

And so it was. With night-time rustlings, the socks hatched their egg under the bed. Pille crawled in to look at them every day. The socks got used to her and let her stroke them. And Dad often visited them too.

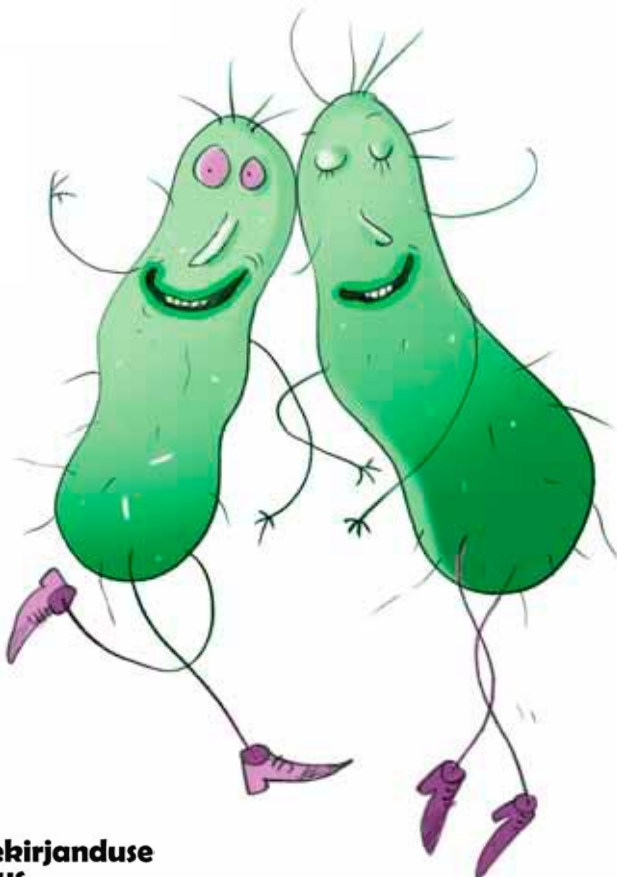
"Well, they are my socks," he explained as he offered them some biscuits. But the socks didn't want anything to eat; they just curled round the egg even more tightly and hissed at him. They were probably scared that he wanted to put them on.

One evening, when Mum and Dad were getting ready for bed, they heard a cracking sound coming from under the bed.

"Pille!" shouted Dad. "Come quick, they're hatching!"

Pille came running in in her nightdress. In no time they were all under the bed.

There were huge cracks in the egg already and peeping out of one of them was a tiny striped sock.



"It's so cute!" cried Pille in delight. "Too bad it hasn't got a brother! You can't wear one sock on its own."

Just then the egg split open. The little striped sock teetered out – and guess what! It wasn't a sock at all but a pair of tights!

"Brilliant!" shouted Pille ecstatically. "Oh Mum, can I keep them?"

"But they're too small," said Mum.

"Yes, but they'll grow!" said Dad, patting his socks. They were absolutely tame again and didn't even try to bite.

"Well done!" said Dad. "Good socks! What a lovely daughter you've got!"

*Translated by Miriam McIlfratrick-Ksenofontov*

## The Pirate Spoon

One day, a spoon decided to become a pirate.

"Enough of this boring life!" he declared. "I'm tired of lying around in this drawer! I'm going to become a terrifying one-legged pirate. Ahoi! Is that a bowl I spy over yonder? I'm going to go right over and steal it!"

A big, white bowl had indeed appeared on the table, filled to the brim with soup. Floating peacefully in the soup were meatballs, potatoes, and peas. None of them could ever have imagined what dreadful danger they were in!

The spoon quietly crept up to the edge of the bowl, and peered over it. At that moment, two potatoes were floating by and chatting.

"What a nice, warm soup!" one said. "How wonderful it is for swimming!"

"You're absolutely right!" the other replied. "And how still it is here! There aren't even any waves. It sure is nice and peaceful!"

"Arrr!" roared the spoon, and dove head first into

the soup. "You're mistaken, my dear potatoes! There's nothing peaceful here! Can't you see I'm a dreadful pirate?! You won't get away from me!"

Panic broke out: the potatoes, meatballs, and peas all tried to get away from the spoon, swimming around in circles and squealing. The spoon chased them, howling. A couple of chubby meatballs tried to resist, but the spoon was cleverer and caught them before long.

"Resistance is futile!" he yelled. "I'm a fearsome pirate and I'll get you, no matter what!"

In the end, the spoon triumphed. Only one pea was still trying to climb its way out of the bowl, but the spoon swept over and caught it, too. The soup was left empty, with only a few waves rippling across the surface.

The spoon started wondering what he should do with all his booty.

"Should I take it all to a pirate's cave? That means I'll have to find one, first! Maybe this sugar bowl will do?"

"You know what?" said a fork who had waddled up. "You'd be better off as a noble pirate—the kind who gives out all his stolen booty to the poor!"



The spoon liked this idea.

“Where can I find the poor, though?” he asked, peering around. Sitting on the floor was a shaggy dog, who was staring at the spoon with her tongue hanging out.

“Are you poor?” the spoon asked.

“Very poor!” the dog declared, panting hungrily.

“Great, then I’ll give all the plunder from my sea battles to you!” the spoon said. He poured all the potatoes, meatballs, and peas straight into the dog’s mouth. The dog swallowed – gulp! – and started wagging her tail in joy.

“Long live the noble pirate spoon!” she barked in admiration. The spoon was as glad as could be.

“Come again tomorrow!” he called out. “Then, I’ll steal a bowl of porridge!”

The dog howled happily, sat up on her hind legs, and ran outside, her claws scratching on the kitchen floor.

*Translated by Adam Cullen*

