



Lotte's Journey South

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One day, Lotte the dog girl finds a tired little chick who has been left behind by the other migrating birds. Since the little birdie dearly longs to find her way to her grandmother in southern lands, the big-hearted Lotte decides to extend a helping paw. Luckily, the dog-girl of Gadgetville has a score of things they'll need for their voyage, such as a flying machine! Lotte's father Oskar is the best inventor in town! The globetrotting Klaus joins them with his map of the world, and the travelers set off. A wide range of challenges await the adventurers. They encounter prehistoric rabbits and fever-stricken polar bears, cross deserts, and are shipwrecked, but finally, the southern lands are in sight!

Award:
2004 Nukits Competition, 2nd place



Reading sample

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Little Pipo

Actually, our whole village loves Migratory Bird Day. Take Uuno the Cat for example: a few months before, he starts saying that this year he'd fly south with the birds, solemnly saying his good-byes to everyone, boarding up the doors and windows of his house, building wings out of old strips of wallpaper and practising flying by jumping off tree-tops. So far he's not managed to stay in the air for long and every year he has to use pliers to prise off the boards that he'd nailed to the windows, but Uuno the Cat is as stubborn as they come. This year he and his wings once again graced the top of a birch tree, and when the migratory birds arrived he called like a crane and threw himself, headfirst, from the treetop. Usually he would plummet down and land with a thump, but this time Uuno's braces caught on a branch and he felt like he was finally flying! Then of course he swished his wings and called like a bird but didn't move forward, instead dangling over the same spot, like an apple.

As always, my family and I were in the tower watching the birds, but there were plenty of other interesting things to see up there. At the Pigs' – they're our neighbours – they'd all rushed to the window but hadn't noticed that the porridge was bubbling on the stove and beginning to boil over. In the end the whole kitchen was full of porridge and began to drip onto the backs of the Pigs at the window. But the Pigs paid no attention, just staring, their eyes bulging, at the birds and brushing off the porridge creeping down their backs – as if telling it to stop pushing in!

Finally all the migratory birds had gone, Uuno the Cat's braces snapped and he plummeted down from the treetop, and the porridge pushed the Pigs out of the window, taking the frame with them. And just as we were about to go down the tower, another bird flew over our house – a teeny-tiny one. She was obviously dead tired because she was panting as she flew and had tears in her eyes as the other birds were already out of sight and she could not catch them up. And then suddenly she just dropped out of the sky. Right into my lap!

We hurriedly brought her indoors and Mum gave her some warm milk and broke a sandwich into teeny-tiny pieces so that the chick, whose name was Pipo, could peck at them. But she had no appetite at all. All she did was cry and say that her Grandma was waiting for her in the south. Then she picked herself up to continue flying after the other birds, but she was too tired and collapsed again. She was so pitiful to see that I found myself wondering whether we could take the chick south ourselves. On an aeroplane! Because we have an aeroplane

you know. I know I've told you before that my Dad's an inventor. We've all sorts of amazing things in our shed, not just an aeroplane – we've got a submarine that Dad sometimes drives into the well, or the carrot-harvesting crane that's so big that there isn't enough room in the garden for it and lifts a carrot so high after pulling it out of the ground that you have to climb a ladder to reach it. So I told Pipo to wait – she would get to the southern lands, I'd make sure of it myself! I ran to Mum and Dad and said that Dad had promised to take me on a plane trip one day, and now would be the best time, because in the first place it was the school holidays, and in the second place it would be great to help Pipo and take her to the southern lands in the plane, seeing as she was in no fit state to fly there by herself.

And what do you think? Dad agreed! Amazing! We began packing straight away, Dad picked up his telescope and compass and hunted for the box where he kept his maps so that we'd always know which direction we would need to fly to reach the southern lands. Without them we might dash off in the wrong direction and end up on an iceberg somewhere! Why would we go there! Then we had a slight setback, because it emerged that the box where Dad stored his maps was home to a kind of beetle whose favourite food was maps. And all that was left of the maps was an itty-bitsy scrap that the beetle was planning to have for his birthday cake! Dad was indignant.

"Who's ever heard of a cake made of maps!" he shouted.

"But maps are so delicious!" the beetle said. "Have you ever had them? Try some! They taste extra good with globes! Maps have a tartness about them but globes are sweet as sugar – they make your mouth water!"

He was in fact a very kindly creature and agreed to forego his own birthday cake there and then if we needed it. But such an itty-bitsy scrap was not worth arguing over and it suddenly seemed that the journey to the south may come to nothing because we didn't have a decent map.

But fortunately Dad has an old friend, Klaus the Dog Wanderer, who has travelled all over the world during his life and now in his old age is living in the cabbage patch behind our house in his own travelling trunk. The trunk was his hiding place for all kinds of useful travel objects, including a wonderful map that would make it very easy to find the southern lands. I had seen it and immediately hurried over to Uncle Klaus' house. Uncle Klaus agreed straight away to lend us the map, but when he heard about the wonderful adventure awaiting us, he asked if he could join us. He said he'd been pining to set off on his travels as living in one place had lost its shine, and that one day to his surprise he had discovered that his travel trunk had begun to gather moss and was already home to bilberries and a mushroom. It was then that it dawned on

him that it was high time for a change of scenery! We happily agreed because Klaus has done a great deal of travelling around the world and having him as a travel companion would always come in useful. Klaus carried his trunk into the aeroplane and then we were ready to set off.

Pipo was as happy as could be when she realised that we were planning to take her to the other birds in the southern lands. She stopped crying completely, cheered up hugely and hopped around the aeroplane, unable to contain her excitement about us finally taking to the air. But first we had to say goodbye to Mum! And then Uncle Klaus made the fire in the grate under the aeroplane and the hot air filled the sails and we took off! We waved to everyone on the ground below and they waved to us and the Pig family squeezed together at the window again and I could see the milk bubbling up the pan and boiling over onto the stove behind them. And in another moment we were too high to see anyone and were flying towards unknown lands and great adventures.

