



“Mr. Nightingale From Nightjar Street”

Text by **Ellen Niit**

Illustrated by **Priit Pärn**

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Storybook, fiction

Age: 6+

Mr. Nightingale loves doing everything a little differently than other adults do. He dresses differently, takes baths differently, and eats apples and ice cream in unusual ways. More than anything else, Mr. Nightingale enjoys riding his scooter and climbing trees in the park. He doesn't like night work very much, but he just grits his beak and bears it. Mr. Nightingale has a great friend, whom he can rely on in hard times and is always up for an adventure: Marcus Stampfoot won't turn down an invitation to go to the theatre or the beach, or to watch interesting shows on the TV set named Brighteye. The two friends things together just the way they like!

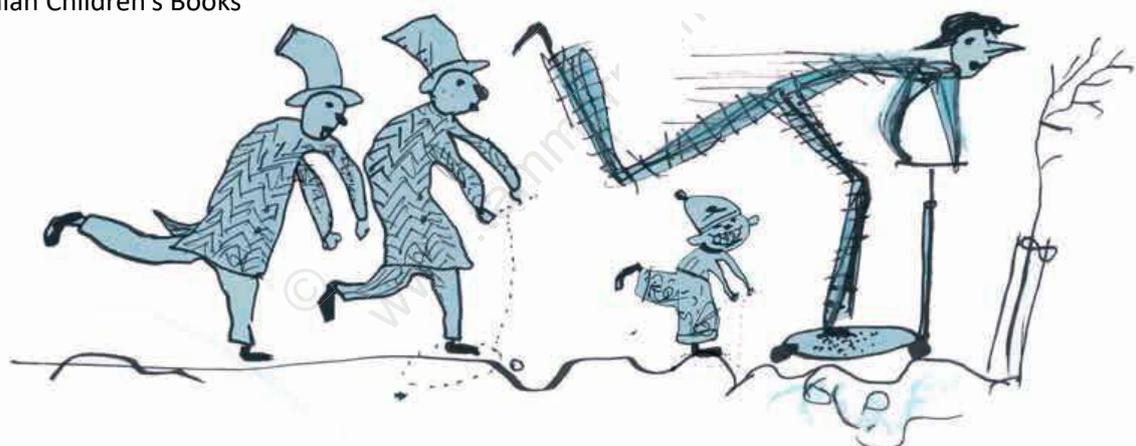
The stories in Mr. Nightingale from Nightjar Street were originally published in the children's magazine Täheke starting in 1974, and have also appeared in various collections. The 2017 work illustrated by Priit Pärn is the first time they have been published together.

Awards:

2018 The White Ravens

2017 Good children's book

2017 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books



Reading sample

How Mr Nightingale gets dressed

Mr Nightingale gets dressed very, very slowly because he doesn't have a Mum. First of all, Mr Nightingale sits on the edge of his bed for a while and looks at his toes. To tell you the truth, Mr Nightingale does this in the middle of the day because he sleeps all morning and gets up at lunchtime. Mr Nightingale works the night shift.

At first, Mr Nightingale usually completely forgets to put his vest on under his shirt. Then he realises and hastily puts his vest on inside out. He realises this too, and hastily puts it on upside down. Finally, he accidentally puts his vest on the right way up and the right way round.

Mr Nightingale's pants are often lost. When he's got his vest on, Mr Nightingale looks for his pants. It takes some time. Putting his pants on inside out and upside down takes time too, especially when both his own legs end up in one leg of the pants. Mr Nightingale is thoroughly fed up with it.

Mr Nightingale doesn't put his shirt and trousers on inside out. His Mum did manage to teach him that much when he was little. He first puts them on upside down and then the right way round. It's very unusual for him to put his trousers on over his vest and his shirt on over his pants and then have to swap them over.

Mr Nightingale always puts his jumper on back to front because it has no buttons, and that makes it difficult to know which way it should go. Fortunately no-one else understands it either. To finish, Mr Nightingale puts his hat on his shoulders, his coat on his head and hurries off to work the night shift.

How Mr Nightingale takes a bath

Mr Nightingale loves to have a bath. It's fun to push the little blue boat down and make a coral island out of the soap bubbles. Singing in the bath is cool too:

Soap, soap,

this is soap,

all the time

it gets in your eyes

just in your eyes.

When Mr Nightingale lies on his back in the bath, propped on his elbows, he is almost afloat. Mr Nightingale often pretends to be a submarine. He makes a buzzing noise and rises to the surface, then makes the buzzing noise again and dips to the bottom of the bath. Just his head sticks out, like a periscope.

Sometimes Mr Nightingale takes a big black umbrella with him into the bathroom because it's really fun to take it into the shower. When you're standing in the shower with it and you close your eyes you can imagine it's summer and the warm rain is falling. And besides, it's fun to soak your slippers on the bathroom floor.

When Mr Nightingale washes his hair, he always cries loudly for help. He knows, of course, that no-one is coming to his rescue. He cries for help just because it's the thing to do and it entertains the neighbours.

When Mr Nightingale gets out of the bath, the ends of his fingers and toes are as wrinkled as a shelled walnut.





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How Mr Nightingale rides his scooter

Mr Nightingale loves riding his scooter with all his heart. And the best thing about Nightjar Street is the off-roading.

In fact, Nightjar Street is forever having roadworks. One time, there was a black trench along the left side of the road, and another, blacker trench on the right side. And as often as not a small, brownish ditch ran across the road, with a plank over it to act as a crossing place.

Mr Nightingale had fallen into the trenches several times on his scooter. But it was nothing. He always came back out again.

When Mr Nightingale takes his pink scooter into the yard, all the other folk who live in Nightjar Street crowd round the gate.

“Please, Mr Nightingale! Please, Mr Nightingale!” they clamour. “We’d just like a little ride! We’ll give you some sweets, Mr Nightingale.”

“No!” replies Mr Nightingale. “I’m going to have a little ride myself first.” And he rides up Nightjar Street to Humming Top Street twenty-six times and rides down Nightjar Street to Tiger Moth Alley twenty-six times and back again.

When the others begin to tire of his riding, Mr Nightingale gets off his scooter and the others can ride it. They each ride it once as far as Humming Top Street and once as far as Tiger Moth Alley. And so on, one ride each back and forth until night starts to fall.

But just as night is falling, Mr Nightingale has to go to work the night shift. He brings his pink scooter into the hallway amid cries of disappointment. And there it stays until the next time.

How Mr Nightingale eats ice-cream

Mr Nightingale loves clotted cream ice-cream in a waffle cone best of all. He can often be spotted with the others standing near the ice-cream kiosk.

On pay-day, Mr Nightingale he immediately sorts his wages into piles: one pile is for buying sweets, one

pile is for buying lemonade, the third (and largest) pile is for buying ice-cream. He sets one small pile aside for buying borage. It goes as well with ice-cream as salad does with meat.

One spring morning on his way home from work, Mr Nightingale bought twenty-four ice-creams all at once because he had been paid a bonus on top of his normal wages. Mr Nightingale went home, ate all the ice-creams in one go and went to bed happily.

Fortunately an ambulance drove past Mr Nightingale’s house that morning. The driver noticed that Mr Nightingale’s house was covered in frost even though it was May and the weather was decidedly warm.

The driver pointed Mr Nightingale’s house out to the emergency doctors and one of them realised what was happening straight away.

He rushed into the house with the emergency nurses, carried Mr Nightingale, who had been frozen by all the ice-cream, away on a stretcher, and took him to the nearest hospital to thaw out. So everything ended well.

Just think what might have happened if Mr Nightingale had eaten all those ice-creams in January.

Translation by Susan Wilson

