

“Tiu and the Dove”

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Storybook, fiction

Age: 6+

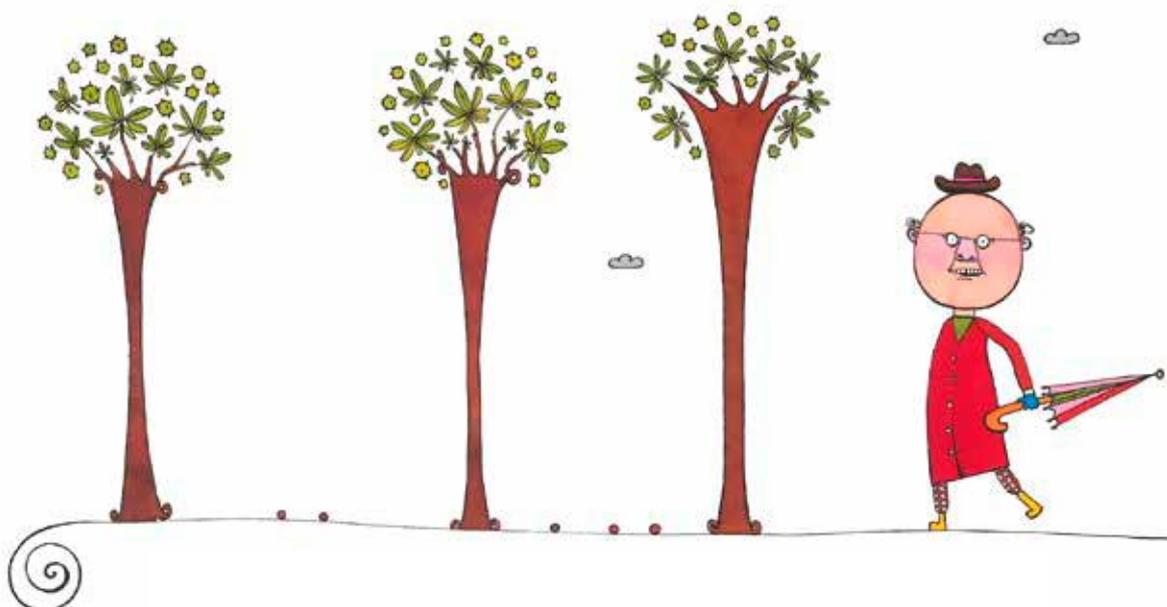
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President Pontus is a very special president of a very special country. He certainly works as diligently as the presidents of every other country do – giving many speeches, taking part in parades and state visits, and making important decisions – but he does it all a little uniquely. In addition to his usual presidential affairs, President Pontus likes collecting shiny eggs beneath the palace chestnut trees in fall, going sledding with friends, and spending time with his dear grandchild.

Awards:

2015 Jānis Baltvilks Prize (Jāņa Baltvilka balva),
Latvia

2008 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children’s
Books



Reading sample

The President's Wish

The President had already lived a long life before he was elected. He had always had so many things to do and so little time. He never managed to do what he really wanted.

Every autumn the President had had one heartfelt wish. Ever since he'd been a young boy he'd longed to collect conkers. But there had been no conker trees where he lived. And now that he was now a grown man he had no time to go foraging for conkers.

And then suddenly, one day, he was voted President of the entire country. Not that his new job gave him much pleasure. The work of a President is very hard indeed. No-one is ever happy with what the President does.

And on top of all that, he now had to move out of his own house and into the President's castle. It couldn't be helped. That's life.

And so, one foggy autumn day, the President woke up in his new home. It was very early: even the sun had not yet risen. But the President found himself unable to drift back to sleep in this strange place.

In the end he slipped out of bed and silently put on his clothes. He didn't want to wake the others. "Let them sleep," he thought, there was no reason to disturb anyone else.

The President tiptoed out. He planned to take an early morning stroll in the grounds of the Presidential Castle.

In actual fact, the President wasn't supposed to go anywhere without his security guards because some cantankerous crackpot might spring out from somewhere wanting to pester him. But the security guards were sleeping so sweetly that he really didn't have the heart to wake them. And in fact what the President really wanted was to go for a walk by himself. He wanted to do what he wanted to do.

The President sauntered among the tall trees in the morning mist and it felt really good.

Suddenly something hit him on the head.

"Crikey!" was the President's first thought. He really should have asked the security guards to come with him. This is it! Some nutter has thrown a bombshell at me!

Then the President realised that a conker had fallen on his head, and was still hiding in its spiny case. There were no nutters around at all.

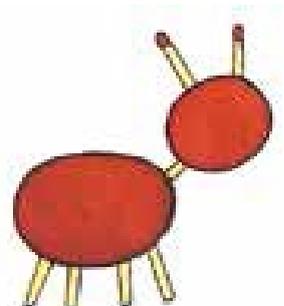
The President looked round. "Crikey!" he thought. "It's a whole forest of conker trees!"

The ground beneath the trees was covered in conkers.

The President bent down happily and began to gather them up. He filled all his pockets and went home.

"Now I'll get up early every morning and collect conkers," he mused as he took the conkers out of his pockets and placed them in a shoebox in the castle. In no time at all, the box was full. "And in the evening I can come straight home from work and look at my conkers. And on Sunday my grandson comes for lunch with his parents. Oh! And would you believe it, it's Sunday tomorrow! It'll be great to make a conker monster with my little grandson after dinner."

That morning the President went to work happily.



The first thing he was told was that he had to leave immediately for a week-long State visit to a far-off country in Africa. The visit had been postponed during the previous President's time in office. It had to take place right now, otherwise there would be serious consequences for the international situation. On the plane he would even have to practise the speech written ages before during the time of the previous President, so urgent was the situation.

The President was very sad. Yet again he couldn't do what he wanted.

With a sigh he put a conker in one of the pockets of his new suit and set off for Africa.

The President's Hat

It was the President's birthday.

Early on the morning of his birthday, the President's wife set the table for a delicious birthday meal. There was a birthday cake that the President's wife had secretly baked the night before. It was all whipped cream, halvah and lingonberry jam – the President's favourite cake.

And of course there was a candle on the top. Just the one. There was nowhere near enough room on the cake for one candle for every year of the President's age this birthday.

There were flowers too and a present. The President's wife gave the President a book that the President had been hankering after. It was a big, beautiful book full of pictures. It was a book about history.

During the day plenty of well-wishers came to see the President, bringing with them flowers and presents. The President couldn't open all his parcels! It wasn't until the evening that the President could begin to celebrate his birthday with his family.

More presents for the President! A CD and a silk tie.

The President's grandson also had a present for him. The present was inside a box. The box was decorated with animal stickers and had a blue ribbon round it.



"Now what can this be?" wondered the President.

"Open it!" shouted his Grandson. "It's a surprise."

The President untied the ribbon and opened the box. He took the surprise out.

The surprise was something soft and woolly. The woolly something had red and yellow and blue and green and white and orange and purple and black stripes.

"What's this?" asked the President.

"Put it on!" said his grandson. "It's a hat. I crocheted it myself."

The President put the hat on.

"How does it look?" he asked with a grand expression on his face.

Everyone said the hat looked fantastic. The President went into the hall to look in the mirror. His grandson went with him.

"Do you really like it?" he asked, worried. "There are some baggy bits and clumpy bits where I went wrong."

"It's lovely," said the President. "The baggy and clumpy bits are very interesting."

"It's not too small, is it?" asked his grandson. "I can't crochet very big things. Crochet's really hard."

"It's not too small at all," replied the President. "It fits my old noddle perfectly."

“Will you wear it a lot?” asked his grandson.

“Of course I will,” the President replied. The next Sunday the President went to the May fun run. It was the done thing for the President to take part in the May fun run every year. He also went to the party afterwards. A lot of people came to run just so they could run alongside the President.

There were crowds of people. They had their children with them. The President was with his grandson. And the security guards, of course. The security guards were really good runners, although they didn't run too far ahead of the President. They had to run right beside him.

The newspaper photographers immediately began to take pictures. They were especially interested in pictures of the President's hat. The President was wearing a stripy, multi-coloured crocheted hat with baggy bits and clumpy bits was too small for him. Everyone stared at that hat.

The next day the papers, radio, TV and internet were plastered with just one story: the President's hat. Hat experts had been dragged out to voice their opinions on it. All but one of them declared the hat awful and a disaster on the President's own head and said that everyone in other countries would now be laughing at us here in ours. The expert who had uttered not a single bad word about the hat began crocheting others just like it and selling them in her shop. The baggy bits and clumpy bits were very hard to do.

Stripy crocheted hats were suddenly all the rage after the May fun run. People even wore little crocheted hats with baggy and clumpy bits in the warm summer weather. The foreign tourists were especially fond of them and bought them as presents to take home. There was simply nowhere else where you could get hold of hats like them!

Translated by Susan Wilson

