

The Icicle, the Worried Milk, and Othes

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Tänapäev, 2015, 78 pp
ISBN 9789949276943
Storybook, fiction
Age: 6+

Have you ever wondered what things do when they're all by themselves? What they think about or feel when people use them? Aino Pervik's collection of stories gives objects that usually just sit quietly, waiting to be used, a chance to speak. And so, we embark on a TV remote's wild adventures, meet a fork who never wanted to be a fork, and share in the joys and troubles of a pot who likes to cook healthy foods.

Awards:
2015 Nominee of the Annual Children's
Literature Award of the Cultural
Endowment of Estonia



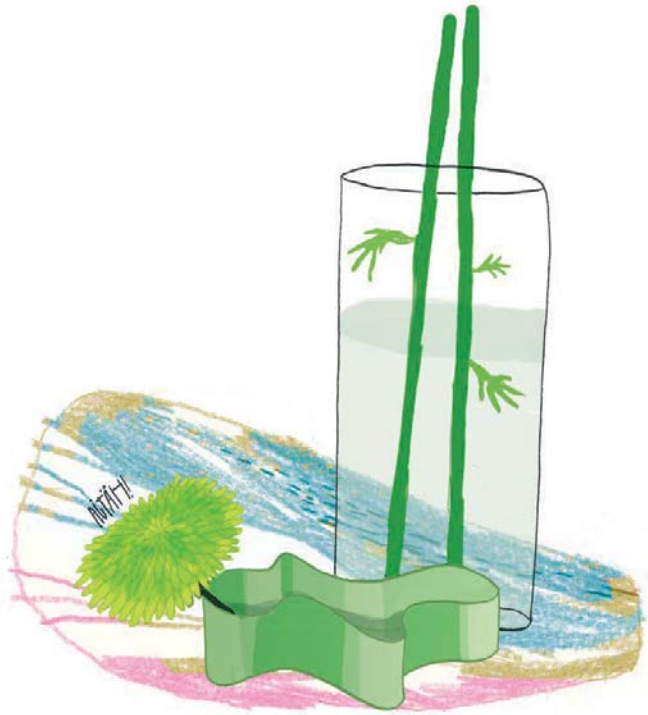
FIVE LITTLE CANDLES

Today was Saskia's birthday. Saskia was turning five. It was still morning. There were a few little presents and sweets on the living room table. Pleasant-smelling pink sweet-peas stood in a vase. In the middle of the table was a whipped-cream, raspberry-, and meringue pie. Mommy carefully pressed five little pink candles into the meringue. The candles were very excited and tried hard to stand up straight. Mommy lit the birthday candles. The candles burned with big, bright flames. They wanted to look as festive as possible. Mommy and Grandpa started singing "Happy Birthday" in loud voices. Daddy wasn't home. Saskia's daddy worked in a foreign country. And then, Saskia came out of her room! She was wearing her pajamas and her long hair was all tangled up. Mommy and Grandpa gave Saskia hugs and wished her a happy birthday. Saskia sat down at the table and started opening her presents. She got a darling stuffed elephant, a book with pictures of crocodiles, and a box of Legos that could be used to build a gorgeous garden with rose bushes and lawn chairs and a table and a swing set. Grandpa filmed everything as it happened. Saskia was moments away from blowing out the candles and making a wish. A wish that was bound to come true. The candles were very nervous and worried. They weren't entirely sure whether or not they would be able to help Saskia's wish come true. Saskia might wish for something that wasn't even possible! Saskia took a deep breath. Grandpa circled around and around, filming Saskia. "You don't have to tell us what you wish for!" Mommy told Saskia. But she did, anyway. Saskia said: "I wish that every day was my birthday! Birthdays are so fun!" And she blew with all her might. The five little pink candles were shocked! "A birthday every day?!" one of the candles said in fright. "Does that mean she wants to turn a whole year older each and every day?" another candle asked, astonished. "If that happens, then she'll be three hundred and seventy years old on her next real birthday!" a third candle said. "Nobody in the world lives that long!" a fourth candle whispered. "Oh, no!" a fifth candle exclaimed. "We can't let ourselves be blown out for such a silly wish!" So, the candles gathered up their courage and burned on even more brightly. Saskia filled her lungs with another deep breath. She blew as hard as she could, and the candles burned on as hard as they could, too. This happened several times in a row.

"Wish for something else," Mommy finally offered. "The candles won't go out—you see? I guess they don't want to grant your wish." "Okay," Saskia said. "I wish for Daddy to come home tonight!" And she blew out the candles. All in a single breath! The candles were very happy to grant that wish. Some guests came over to see Saskia that evening. Uncle Triin with Helen and Henno and Uncle Kaarel. And last but not least—Saskia's daddy arrived home off the ferry! Saskia had a truly wonderful birthday. Before going to bed, Saskia and Daddy watched the video Grandpa had taken that morning. Daddy liked the video, and he wanted to watch it over and over on repeat.

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM ACCIDENT

Grandpa always brought Mommy three long-stemmed chrysanthemums with really big blossoms on her birthday. Mommy's birthday was in fall, when chrysanthemums bloom. Sometimes Grandpa would give her white flowers; sometimes purple or yellow ones; and sometimes they were even brown or gold-colored. But no matter what, they always had really big blossoms and long stems, and Simona thought they were the most beautiful chrysanthemums in the world. Mommy had a tall vase for the chrysanthemums. Mommy had many pretty vases. One of the prettiest of them was a translucent light-green glass vase that was short, very wide, and had many bumps on it. The little green vase liked the big chrysanthemums a lot. Of course, it would have wanted to hold those lovely flowers, too. Still, the vase realized this would be impossible because it was simply too little—no matter that it was actually one of Mommy's prettiest, favorite vases. Today, Grandpa gave Mommy green chrysanthemums. "Oh, how beautiful they are!" Mommy exclaimed. "I've never seen any like these before!" Simona also liked the green chrysanthemums very much. However, the little green vase liked them most of all. It watched sadly as Mommy poured water into the tall vase and arranged the flowers in it one by one. "Oh, no!" Mommy suddenly cried out. There had been an accident with one of the chrysanthemums. One big blossom had broken off, and fell from the stem. "That's too bad!" Grandpa's voice boomed. "The bus was so full of passengers that the flower must have snapped with all the pushing and shoving!" "Such a shame," Mommy said, shaking her head.



But Simona took the little green vase down from the shelf and poured some water into it.

“Let’s put that blossom in a short vase,” she said. And so, they did.

The little green vase was happy.

Still, it was actually a little sad, too. Things had gone badly, all in all. The flower was broken. Why does it have to be that someone’s luck is another’s misfortune? The little vase certainly wouldn’t have wished for things to go that way.

Even so, the chrysanthemum blossom whispered to the short vase:

“I’m so glad that you exist!”

THE ICICLE

“Help! Help! I’m falling!” shouted a long, thick icicle hanging from the roof of the day care.

The icicle had been teensy-tiny at first. It was a little like a nice-sized carrot, only completely transparent and very cold.

Day by day, it grew much bigger. This is how it happened: there was snow piled high on the day care roof. Then, the sun started shining on it, and the snow started to melt. The meltwater dripped down the roof, then froze on the edge of the eaves, and the icicle started to grow. Each new drop of water flowed down the icicle and then froze to its side. With every frozen drop, the icicle grew a little bigger until in the end, it was quite a whopper.

Now, the icicle had grown to be so big that it wasn’t strong enough to hold onto the side of the roof anymore. It knew it might fall down at any second.

But there were kids playing down below!

The icicle realized that if it were to fall on a child’s head, then it couldn’t even imagine the accident that would happen. The little child could even die! No joke. Icicles are extremely dangerous.

The icicle screamed as loud as it possibly could to warn the children away. Unfortunately, though, the icicle’s voice was so high-pitched and weak that no one could hear it.

The icicle clung to the eaves with all its might. Still, it could already feel its strength starting to run out. The sun was shining hotly and the icicle was getting heavier and weaker with every second.

It won’t be long now... it thought sadly.

Was there really no-one around to come rescue the children and lead them to a safe distance?

And you know what? There was someone there who noticed the icicle’s trouble!

It was a little squirrel, who had left its nest to take a walk through the park in the nice weather, and the park was right next to the day care.

The squirrel heard the icicle’s shrill voice. Squirrels have very sensitive ears.

The squirrel realized that a big accident was just about to occur. He bounded quickly over to the scene.

“Wow!” the children exclaimed. “Look, everyone—there’s a squirrel!”

The kids ran over to look at the squirrel.

The icicle sighed in relief, and let go of the roof. It fell with a ka-blam! right onto the spot where Karl, Martin, Asko, and Jürgen had just been playing snow-plow with a toy car.

The car was smashed to pieces, but the children were just fine!