



“All My Relatives”

Text and illustrations by [Piret Raud](#)

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Storybook, fiction

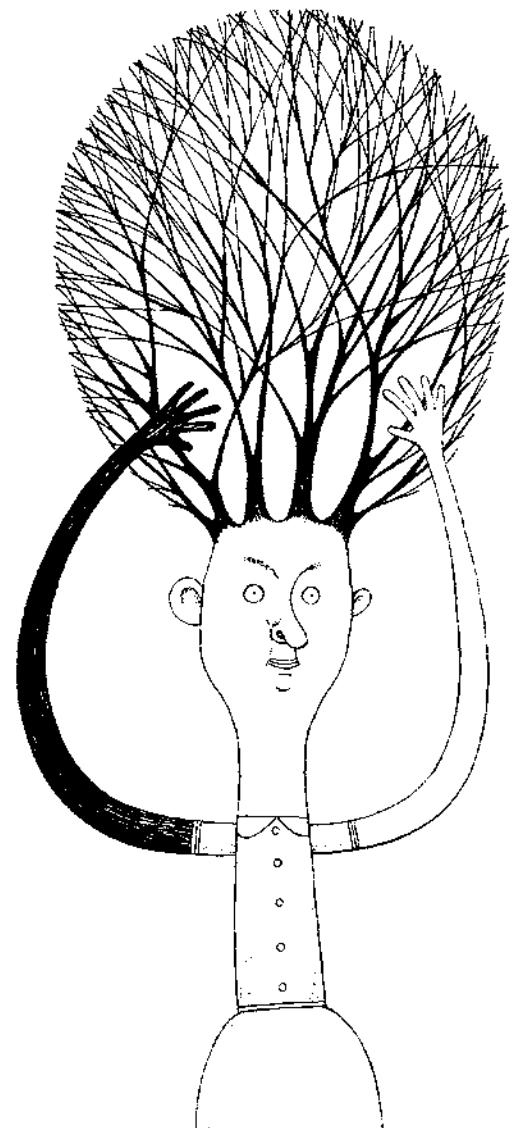
Age: 7+

Right sold: French

One day, Adam’s teacher gives him an assignment to draw his family tree. The boy starts writing down his relatives and finds that they certainly won’t all fit on the tree – he’ll have to make a centipede with one relative for each leg! He can’t fail to include his Aunt Mari, who treasures curiosities, his Uncle Kaupo, who just won’t give up smoking, his foulmouthed Uncle Marko, his little brother Abe, who gets into all his things, or his football-fanatic older brother Tony; not to mention his Aunty Airy, who is almost unnoticeable. As Adam’s dad says: “You don’t choose your relatives.”

Award:

2017 Good Children’s Book



Reading sample

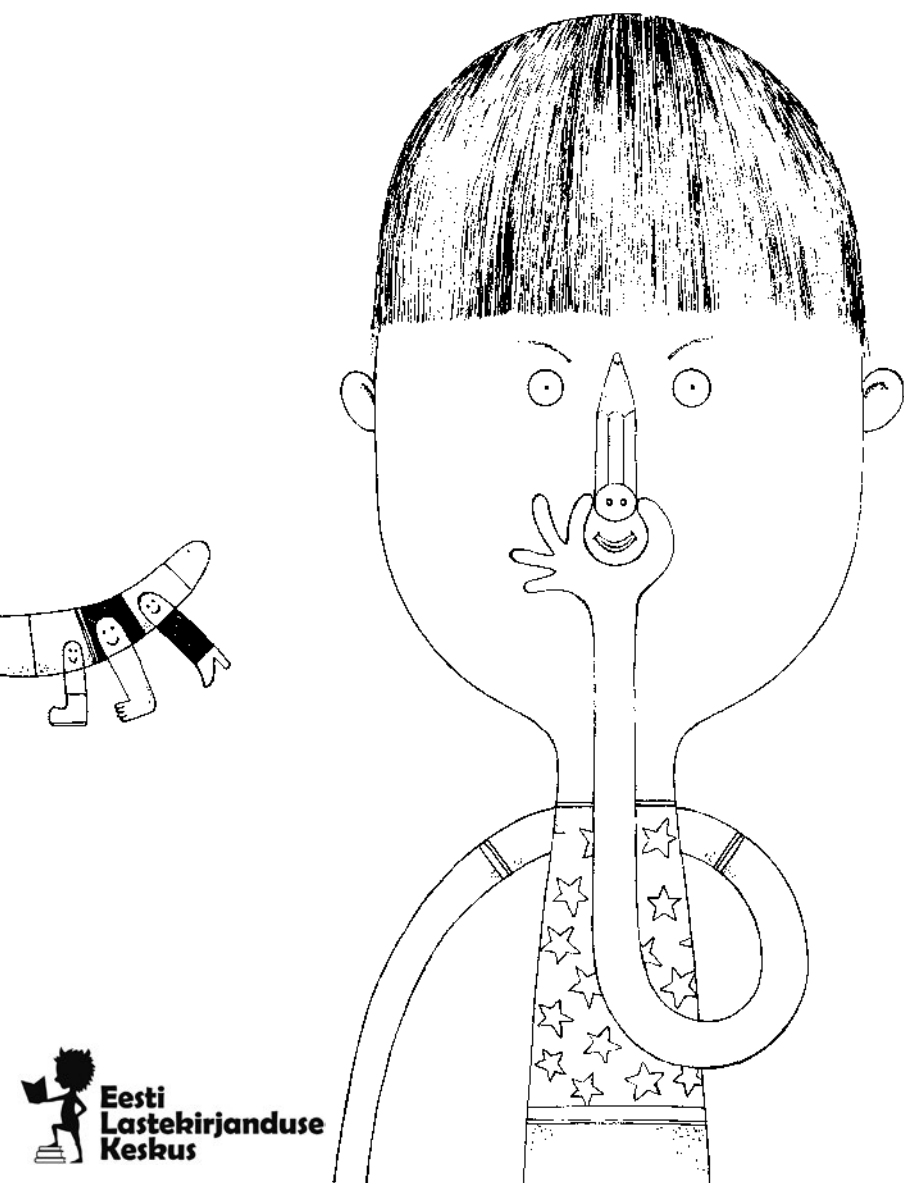
Hi! I'm Adam and I already go to school. Apart from me, my family is my Dad, my Mum, my sister, our dog and my two brothers. Our family is quite big but our extended family is even bigger. At school once, I had to draw my family tree. I had to draw it so that I was the tree-trunk and all my relatives were the branches. There were so many that there was no way I could fit them all onto a tree so I decided to draw a centipede instead. Each of the pictures on the centipede's legs was one of the people in my family and because they are all completely different, all of the legs were completely different too.

Some legs were big and hairy like Daddy, and some were teeny and smooth like my little brother Abe. Some legs were strong and were kicking footballs like my big brother Anthony, and some were old and frail like Great Aunt Aime and couldn't quite keep up with the others. Some legs were rough and trod on their neighbours' toes and heels, and some were so

gentle and careful that they crept along on tiptoe. And there were also some old legs – they were my oldest ancestors. I even drew one of them with a sword between his toes to make it easier to understand the sort of person he was.

There was a whole tribe of legs and although they were all moving at different paces they were all going in the same direction, all firmly determined to carry the centipede's big, thick body. The body was the thing that joined all the members of the family together. "The family spirit" is what my Grandma calls it.

The teacher said that my picture was rather unexpected and surreal, and when I explained to her exactly what one or two of my living relatives are actually like, she agreed that my family really is more like a centipede than a tree, and gave me an A*.



Gail's eyes

The people of this world have eyes of all kinds of different colours. In our family, half of us have brown eyes and half of us have grey. Me, Dad and Abe have brown eyes, but Mum, Anthony and Mia have grey ones. As well as brown or grey eyes, our family has people with green eyes and even people whose eyes are bright blue.

But the most interesting eyes of all are those of my cousin Gail – she's already a young lady and goes to university. One of her eyes is blue and the other is green. Her blue eye is as blue as the sky and her green eye is as green as a lake and if you look at them very closely you can even see birds flying and clouds scudding across the blue eye, and fish swimming and plants growing in her green eye. When Gail's in a good mood, a bright sun shines in her blue eye and its rays sparkle back in a green reflection. When she's in a bad mood her eyes darken and rain falls from the sky-blue eye while her lake-green eye begins to flood.

Gail herself is very proud of her differently coloured eyes. She claims that if you look carefully you can see her thoughts shining in her blue eye and her feelings in the green one. I think that that kind of talk makes it all too complicated, but perhaps students like her like to make themselves more important than they really are.

What definitely is true is that Gail's eyes are attractive. Or as my brother Tony put it – magnetic, which just means that you can't help but gaze into them for ages. Someone else who found her eyes magnetic was a particular fly that landed on Gail's nose one lovely summer morning.

"Ooh!" said the fly. "Would you look at those eyes? So deep that I could just sink into them, you beautiful thing you!"

Gail said nothing in reply. She merely smiled.

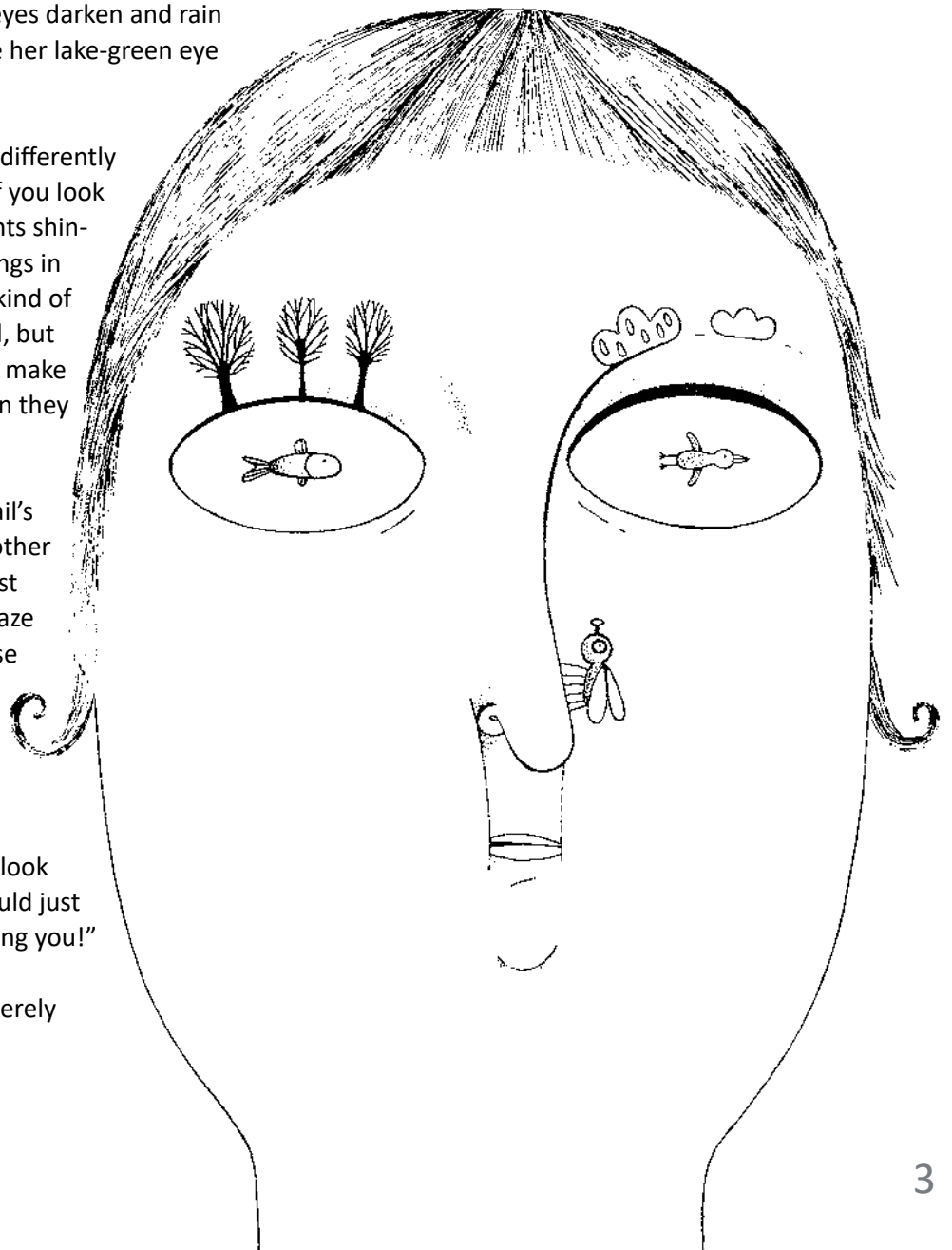
The fly admired her eyes and its own reflection in them and ventured to speak.

"Will you marry me?" it asked, bending down on one of its six knees. "It would make me the happiest fly in the world if you did."

"Well, er, no. Definitely not," Gail started to laugh.

"In that case you shall be my beloved," the fly would not give up, "and I shall be your knight!"

The fly stretched itself up and stood proud on the tip of Gail's nose. It sang to her and recited beautiful poetry, and sighed every so often. Later, when Gail went to bed and closed her eyes, her knight lost all interest and flew off somewhere else to attend to matters of its own. As soon as she opened her eyes again however, the fly immediately returned.



The fly's attentions didn't last a couple of days, but several weeks and the whole situation became a real nuisance to Gail, and that's perfectly understandable. I can well believe that it's most unpleasant to have a fly on your nose everywhere you go. Another unpleasant thing about it was that no-one noticed Gail's eyes any more; all they saw was a fly clinging to her nose. They even laughed at her and that made her sad. How could she rid herself of this persistent knight? She cajoled it with sweet words and threatened it with curses, but her unwanted admirer would not abandon the tip of her nose.

One weekend Gail went to visit her grandma in the countryside – with the fly, of course. There it so happened that for the first time in its life, the fly saw a cow. And cows as we know have beautiful eyes with long, curly eyelashes. And Gail's grandma's cow Daisy's eyes were particularly gorgeous. As soon as the fly saw them, it completely forgot Gail and flew onto Daisy's muzzle.

“Ooh!” said the fly. “Would you look at those eyes? So deep that I could just sink into them, you beautiful thing you!” And immediately continued with:

“Will you marry me?”

Daisy chuckled and replied, “Well, er, why not. You'll just have to be careful that I don't accidentally swat you with my tail.”

The fly promised to be careful and the wedding was held the very same day. Gail had finally managed to shake the fly off.

She should have been delighted, but instead she found herself missing the fly. She thought of all the songs and poems that it had created for her and started to feel very sad. In order to raise her spirits a little, Gail bought a notebook from a shop and in it she recorded all the songs and poems she'd heard the fly sing and recite. And to top it all she recited some verses herself. She didn't show the notebook to a soul, but stowed it in a drawer that she kept locked with a little key. Girls are definitely a bit weird. Especially girls who have the sky in one eye and a lake in the other.

Translated by Susan Wilson

