



“Me, Mum, and Our Friends of All Sorts”

Text and illustrations by [Piret Raud](#)

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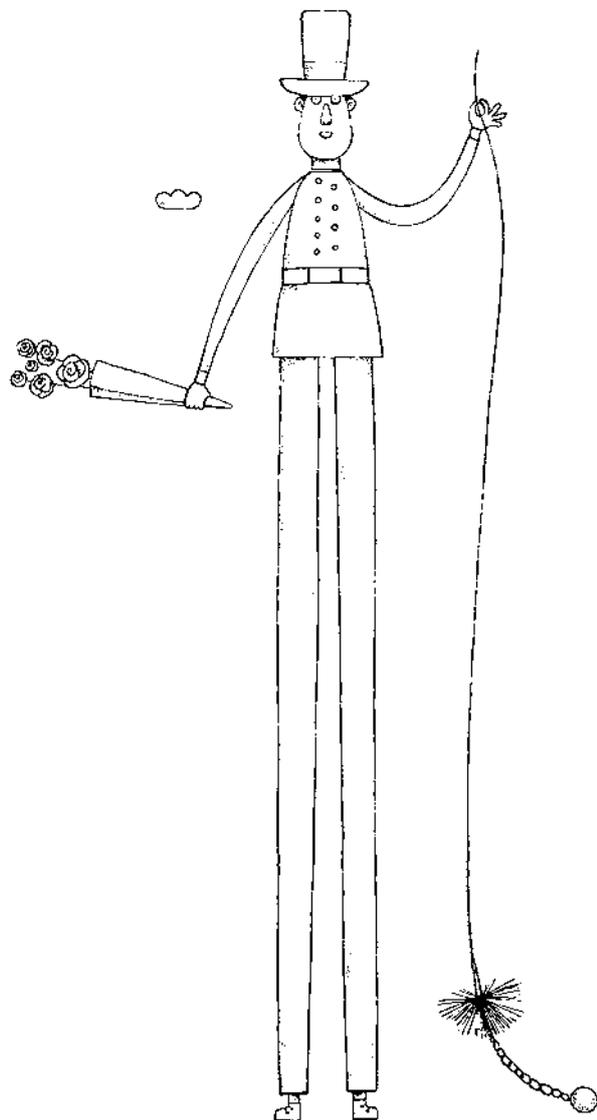
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Taavi and his mother live alone on the fourth storey of a big apartment building. In addition to his mother, Taavi has a lively sense of imagination, a strong grandmother, and an impressive collection of friends. Take for example Uku, who wants to be a dog when he grows up, and Mia, who has a fly fly into her head, and Aunt Masha, who catches trash with a butterfly net, and Uncle Jaanus, who is drowning in his own deep thoughts.



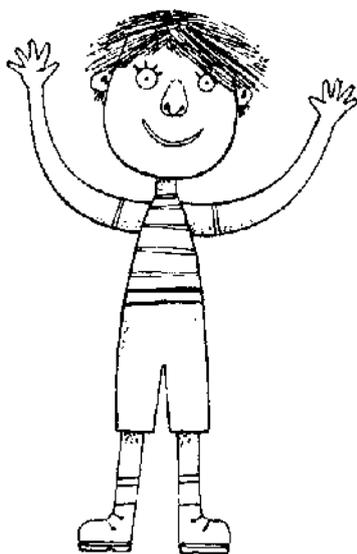
Reading sample

Me, Mum, and Our Friends of all Sorts

Hello! My name's Taavi and I live with my lovely Mum in a big block on the fourth floor where our flat is. I have a Daddy too of course, every child does! But he lives in a different house. That's why they call Mum a lone mother but I think that's really silly. Mum isn't alone – she's got me! And as well we have Grandma who loves us and a whole big bunch of other relatives and friends.

I like our friends. And not just our friends. I like the people we know a little bit and the people I haven't even met yet.

Mum says there's something beautiful hiding inside everyone if you just look. I look for it every day and I find it too. Like, the man who lives next door who has a tiger inside that snores so loudly at night that we can hear it through the walls in our lounge. And a teeny piggy lives in Aunty Helmi's tummy. You wouldn't notice it but when she comes to our house for tea you can hear the piggy grunting after she's finished eating! The coolest one though is Aunty Liisi – once she had a real live baby hiding inside! Later on the teeny tiny baby came out of Aunty Liisi and we had a new friend!



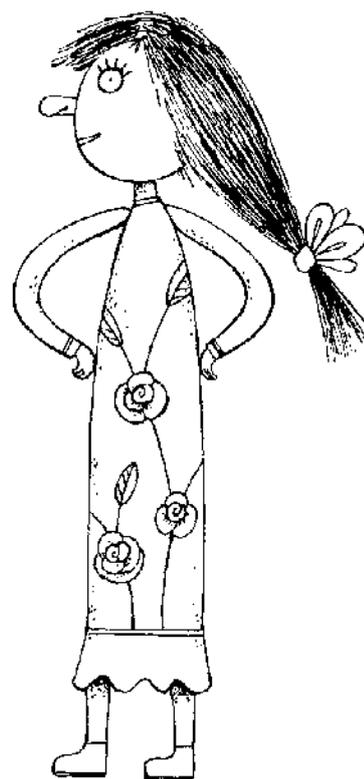
Of course not all our friends have to be people always. Aunty Laine thinks that the best friends of all are dogs and grandma says it's books. As for me, I think that a pocket knife can be a friend, especially if it doesn't cut your fingers, and of course one of my best friends is my bike.

The great thing about friendship is that everyone can be friends. Except of course for "louts" because there are some of them around as well.

Crocodile

No man or lady lives in flat number 13. Instead, number 13 is lived in by a crocodile.

When the crocodile came to live in our block a couple of years ago, some of the other people living here became really nervous. They were afraid that our new neighbour was a dangerous animal and they called a meeting of the block committee. The crocodile was lucky that the committee chairman was a distant relative of his and on his side, because it meant that he wasn't forced out of his flat even though that's what some people had called for. Instead they decided that as long as the crocodile wore a muzzle in the lift nicely, he could stay.



And so Crocodile wore a muzzle and everyone in the block actually got used to him.

Crocodile was very kind and considerate in other ways too. For example, when he spilt water on the floor while taking a bath, he would always dry it up properly. And when Aunty Helga in flat number 14 had a heavy shopping bag, he would help her carry it.

Everything might have carried on like this forever if only crocodile hadn't found himself a wife one day, a crocodile wife, one that was always cross. Mrs Crocodile didn't give a hoot about all the rules and never wore a muzzle in the lift. She splashed so much water on the floor when she took a bath that it would drip through the ceiling onto the neighbours below, and she never said "hello" to Aunty Helga at all, just snarled.

Apart from that she wasn't even nice to Mr Crocodile. For example she banned him from things like football! Mr Crocodile especially loved stretching out on the settee to watch the football on the TV. But Mrs Crocodile couldn't stand it.

"Why do you have to spend all your time watching the football?" she would grumble and turn the TV off. "Why don't you gaze at me?"

"Darling," said Mr Crocodile in a really friendly manner, "you're not round and you don't roll. And apart from that no-one must kick you! Please just let me enjoy the football!"

Did she heck!

In the main Mr Crocodile put up with it and instead of spending his evenings watching football he would watch Mrs Crocodile instead, but one night, when his wife had yet again turned the TV off at a really exciting point, Mr Crocodile snapped and put it back on.

Mrs Crocodile was consumed with an odd kind of rage that made her snap at Mr Crocodile. She snapped chunks out of him there and then in several places, several times. Mr Crocodile was crying and bleeding and Aunty Helga from the flat next door ran out when she heard his cries and quickly phoned the emergency number.

The police and ambulance came straightaway and they took Mrs Crocodile away. It made everyone living in the block happy when she was locked in a cage at the zoo.

They made a bandage for Mr Crocodile and gave him sugar water to drink. It must be a dreadful shock when your own wife snaps chunks out of you like that!

Mr Crocodile should have been able to live out the rest of his days in peace from then on and enjoy the football morning till night. But what do you know? He forgot about football completely and started visiting the zoo every day to watch Mrs Crocodile. He took her flowers and jars of honey, he took boxes of sweets, even though there were signs on the cage saying "Please do not feed the animals!". Mr Crocodile wasn't at all cross that Mrs Crocodile had snapped at him like that.

I think it was all more than just weird, but Mum says that that's what love is like. If it is then love is completely pointless. It's 100 times better to have a friend. Friends don't snap at you.

Translated by Susan Wilson

