CHILDREN’S BOOKS FROM ESTONIA
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Back cover illustrations from:
Once Upon a Time …
(Elas kord …)
Book of world fairytales
with illustrations by 12 Estonian artists:
Anne Linnamägi-Liiva,
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Publishing House Avita, 2008

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SIGNE ORA
UNCLE EDDIE

An enjoyable and colourful book about weird Uncle Eddie. He wears odd hats and likes cats and cycling trips. Eddie can always lift other people’s moods, with such things as pancakes and balloons. It makes him happy that the world is so varied and that every person is so unique. The book has blind-embossed pictures, which children like to touch.
A bedtime story beloved by Estonian children, about a baby rabbit that doesn’t want to go to bed. The bunny’s mother says: „If you don’t go to bed, a fox will come and take you by the ears.” Whereupon the baby bunny tells her: „I’m not afraid of the fox, not afraid at all! I’ll pull my ears down against my back.” He doesn’t take the threat of the wolf or the bear seriously either. His angry mother leaves the room and lets the bunny go on boasting. But it only takes a little mouse to squeak before the bunny gets alarmed and calls his mummy to come and help.

Ellen Niit
Jutt jänesepojast, kes ei tahtnud magama jääda
Illustrated by Anne Linnamägi-Liiva
Publishing House Tiritamm, 2007
www.tiritamm.ee
Soft cover, staple-bound
200×220 mm
16 pages
For ages 2-4

Translated into Italian (Riuniti, 1975), German (Hibou-Produktion, 1973) and Russian (Detskaja literatura, 1972).

ELLEN NIIT (1928) is a children’s author, poet and translator. Many of her nearly forty children’s books in prose and poetry are among the classics of Estonian children’s literature.

ANNE LINNAMÄGI-LIIVA (1966) is an illustrator and book designer.
Laísu, a police dog with a very good nose, is enjoying a peaceful retirement. Unexpectedly, his former colleague Police Commissioner Viksi invites him to solve a case that is more important than that – while walking in his rose garden, the president has lost his top hat. The hat was very vital to the president because good ideas occurred to him while wearing it.

Laísu finds the top hat very quickly, but inside it is a strange ball of fur called Krässu. Krässu and Laísu fall in love, and settle down together in Laísu’s kennel. Laísu thinks himself the luckiest dog in the world. And he’s pleased with the reward he gets from the president – a medal.
"Do you remember that summer? If you sit there on the tip of the pear-tree, you see time passing you by. Minute after minute and hour after hour, cloud after cloud and thought after thought. And you see the tree coming into bud, and from that come the flowers and leaves, until they too crumble away. And you know that soon summer will turn to autumn. But today is still a summer’s day.”

A simple, but at the same time also poetic and many-layered story of one summer day. A girl sits on the tip of a pear-tree at her grandmother’s place in the country and meditates. A dark cloud rises in the sky and thunder rolls. As the thunder passes, the sun shines again and at once the girl sees a miracle with her own eyes – how a new cloud is born out of the mist.

EPP PETRONE (1974) is a journalist, publisher and blogger. “Where did the Cloud come from?” is her first children’s book.

KAMILLE SAABRE (1970) is a painter, mural artist and illustrator, who has also written children’s books. She lives in Switzerland.
Urmans Nemvalts

STORIES OF LITTLE MEN

STORIES OF LITTLE MEN’S FLYING MACHINES

Genial and instructive stories about smart machines and flying machines.

A street-sweeping truck stops picking up the dust and the proud limousines that have been mocking it sink in the mud. A little fork-lift gets on with jobs that drive the big machines into trouble. Building a highway there are plenty of clever machines on the job, starting with the excavators and ending with a road-roller. A passenger aircraft feels inferior when it sees that there are many bigger aeroplanes than it in the world. An old pilot fits skis to his friend the light aircraft, so that it doesn’t have to languish through the winter in a hangar. A helicopter helps a fire engine to put out a forest fire; a motorized aircraft helps a glider to get up in the air.
Timbu-Limbu is a little doll girl who lives in the Birchbark Castle. Living in the castle with Timbu-Limbu are the roly-poly doll Toru-Loru, the little mechanical dog Muki, the black rubber boy doll Pambu and highly educated wooden doll Pimpelsang, who is also the chronicler of the castle. But high up on the mountain live three snow-millers, who every autumn start up the Snow-Mill. One autumn, however, the snow doesn’t come – a wicked witch has bewitched the millers to sleep. The residents of the castle travel to the snow-mill, release the snow-millers from their spell, and in the end it starts to snow.

The collection includes another 11 shorter tales.
Twenty one little stories about the daily life of a wonderful little family, seen through the eyes of 5-6-year-old Petra. They go shopping, sled-riding and to the beach, they feed ducks, do household repairs, paint Easter eggs, hold fireworks parties. Funny mishaps keep happening to both Petra and her Mummy and Daddy. While picking mushrooms in the forest, an insect gets into Daddy’s trousers, and in his fury he tramples all the mushrooms they have picked into a mess. The result of trying out washable hair-dye is the non-washable Pippi hairstyle. It’s fun to have parents for whom a sofa-spring that has been broken from being jumped on is enough reason to start thinking about a trampoline. Sometimes you can’t understand adults at all, though. Why does Daddy cry “Great!” when Petra’s glass of milk happens to fall over, and who is supposed to believe Uncle’s claim that playing basketball makes a sportsman grow seven feet tall?
Pontus is the aged president of a small country, who has very many obligations and very little time. He approves laws, goes on state visits, plays host to foreign diplomats, makes speeches, visits families with children. The president is friendly and calm, but also dares to resist public pressure. So he averts a disaster when he refuses to open a shoddily built schoolhouse. In private, the president loves to gather chestnuts in the park and drive fast cars, and he secretly brings his mongrel dog to live in the palace. Sometimes he is able to mix his public and private life, such as when he goes sled-riding with his grandchildren and the Ambassador of Funafuti. On the other hand, speeding off on his own in the official car brings trouble, and the new year greeting to the birds and animals does not reach the TV screens.
A humorous story about a slightly eccentric family in the nineteen-eighties. The family consists of a father and mother and three daughters: the schoolgirl Helen, 6-year-old Kristiina and baby Imbi. They have a dog called Lassie, and often have visits from Gran and Grandpa, and Grandma from the country. The story tells of a time when not every home had a telephone, let alone a mobile, you had to get a permit to buy a car, and they wrote with a fountain-pen and ink at school. Instead of Mother’s Day they celebrated Women’s Day, and New Year instead of Christmas. Kristiina is a cool and enterprising girl, and so things keep happening to her. On one occasion a bottle of ink breaks and Kristiina smears ink all over herself; another time she hangs her house-key round the wrong dog’s neck and the dog runs off with it; another time, at the tests for a music school, she teaches the Board how to really beat out a rhythm.

The book is full of warmth and love. The illustrator, Kirke Kangro, is Leelo Tungal’s daughter, and by the way, she is that middle daughter who inspired the author to write the book.
Princess Schele lives in a royal palace with her mother and father (who is of course a king). One evening Schele discovers in her bathroom a living skeleton, Monsieur Tonne, who lives in the king’s wardrobe and guards a box containing the king’s secrets. Schele and Tonne become friends. In order to be able to go out among the people, the skeleton puts on the princess’ clothes.

In an ice-cream parlour Tonne is attacked by a hungry dog, Muki, for whom the skeleton is just one big bone. In the confusion that follows, the box disappears, along with the king’s secrets. The tracks lead to the homeless Väino, who lives in a tumble-down wooden shack with Muki and a former teacher called Sokrates. And it is from Sokrates that the King’s great secret is found out – his school reports, where he only got poor grades. The King was ashamed to admit his stupidity to the people – kings are after all supposed to be the wisest of men. Schele begs her father to admit his mistakes and release from prison all the people who have ever criticized the king. The king promises to rule his country honestly and sincerely from that day forward.
Five stories about Vassa the Hare and Mudrik the Mole. By chance they come to be living next door to each other, but they are close friends as well. Since they are animals of such different kinds, and with rather difficult temperaments as well, their life together brings up some complicated situations, quarrels and compromises. The book teaches the art of getting along better with yourself and others, and what things should be important when friendships tend to get messed up. For the sake of keeping their friendship, they have to know how to compromise, and be ready to change their behaviour and habits.
Little Kai’s withdrawn nature and tendency to live in her fantasies create problems for her mentally limited and completely materialistic parents. The root of the problem is thought to be stomach-worms. Instead of taking medicine for worms, Kai makes friends with a stomach-worm, and together they weave extravagant fantasies, in which the brave sprat-man saves his wife from a tin, and the bread-dough swallows a grumpy little auntie. A crane turns into a giraffe, a nasty guard-dog into a lion that chases him. Kai puts her pretentious Barbie doll in her place by saying: “I’m not daydreaming any more. You’re a doll and you can’t talk,” while she and the stomach-worm giggle together under the blankets.

The story is written with a masterly hand. The mental world of the father and mother opens up through grotesque dialogues and laconic, telling descriptions. Above all, however, Giraffe is a very funny book.
Ten-year-old Mia, despite being told not to by her parents, makes friends with Konrad, a kindly homeless man. Konrad has apparently lost his memory as a result of a fire, but it has also revealed to him the supernatural ability to open and close doors just by the power of thought. The band of friends is joined by Miranda, who works in a newspaper kiosk, the clever kitten Tabby and a little unemployed man whose passion is flying kites. Konrad gets on the track of a nasty plot. Some swindlers are planning to slip a hypnotic powder into the mayor’s coffee-mug so they can trick him into signing a permit to cut down the trees in the city park and build a parking station in their place. By night the friends break into the town hall to wash clean all the cups and mugs they can find there. They get into trouble with the police and end up on the television news. The story ends happily – they all get medals from the mayor, Konrad (whose real name is Herman) is recognized as a brave fireman and life-saver, Mia becomes friends with a boy who was saved by Konrad, and the kite-flyer finds work in a circus.
Arabella is a sweet little 9-year-old girl, whose father is the famous pirate chief Daniel Trigger and whose home is a pirate ship. Daniel loves his daughter more than anything, but Arabella lives in constant fear of losing her father. Pirates are brutal and greedy; their favourite occupation, apart from carousing in the tavern, is to travel to the treasury on a remote island, to admire the gold and jewels they have stolen and share out the wealth that belonged to their dead shipmates. This last fact is the cause of so many pirates dying at the hands of their comrades. The thinning ranks of the pirates are swelled by sailors taken from ships, and only the strongest and cruellest survive. When the wandering shipwrecked philosopher Hassan comes aboard their ship, they want to kill him straight away. But Arabella buys him for herself, for the price of one very precious pearl. Hassan becomes the girl’s friend and spiritual guide, who helps her to resist evil. They have long discussions about good and evil, life and death.

As the daughter of a pirate chief, Arabella is a valuable hostage, and she is stolen by another band of pirates. Only Hassan is prepared to risk his life to rescue the girl from her captors. Under Hassan’s influence, Daniel also at last begins to regret his misspent life and destroys the evil in it, blowing up both his own and the rival pirate chief’s ships. Arabella finds a home with some kind gypsies and looks forward to the fulfilment of her great dream – to be a good mother to many children.
The main characters of “Feathery, Blower and the Black Monk” are four imaginary creatures, the forest-dwellers Feathery and Furry, the poetry-loving Blower and the Little Horror, resident of the rubbish-heap. The evil forces are represented by a werewolf and a black monk, who is actually the spirit of the notorious Pied Piper of Hamelin.

The plot of the book is the struggle of the four characters and their friends against a ghostly monk, who tries to lure all children into a black hole and thus banish humanity from the earth. By intimidation and promises of reward, he recruits the Feathery ones to himself, to carry out his evil plans. The author is drawing attention to the brainwashing that goes on through the media and the destructive power of the misused word.
AIDI VALLIK

HOW ARE YOU, ANN?

Fourteen-year-old Ann discovers the diary from the teenage years of her strict and respectable mother, which reveals a picture of the wild life of a punk of the mid-eighties, of drinking, sex and scandal. It also becomes clear from the diary that the man she has until now taken to be her Dad is not Ann’s real father. The girl runs away from home, and there follows a series of stormy events: joining a dubious gang, sauna parties with alcohol and drugs, loss of innocence, disappointment in love, the death of a fellow gang member. Ann is supported by a mysterious motor-cyclist, who always turns up when Ann needs help or consolation. In the course of her trials, Ann begins to understand her mother better and is finally mature enough to be reconciled with her parents. The book is written in the first person, and the descriptions of Ann’s adventures are interspersed with diary excerpts. The tension and excitement continue to the last page.

AIDI VALLIK

WHAT NOW, ANN?

Aidi Vallik
Kuidas elad, Ann?
Publishing House Tänapäev, 2008
www.tnp.ee
150×220 mm
155 pages
For ages 14+

Translated into Latvian (Zvaigzne, 2004), Finnish (Otava, 2004) and Lithuanian (Gimtasis žodis, 2005).

Awards:
2008 Children’s jury prize for the year’s best book for young people (Latvia)
2008 Jānis Baltvilks Prize for the best translated book of the year (Latvian Section of IBBY)

AIDI VALLIK (1971) is a children’s author and poet, who has worked for years as a schoolteacher. The trilogy about Ann is the most successful book for young people in Estonia in the last decade.

Aidi Vallik
Mis teha, Ann?
Publishing House Tänapäev, 2008
www.tnp.ee
150×220 mm
202 pages
For ages 14+

Translated into Latvian (Zvaigzne, 2002), Finnish (Otava, 2002) and Lithuanian (Gimtasis žodis, 2005).

Awards:
2000 First place in the young people’s short-story manuscript contest
2002 Nukits Young Reader’s Choice Award, 2nd prize for text
2003 Children’s jury prize for the best young people’s book of the year (Latvia)
Fifteen-year-old Ann is having fun with her new boyfriend Gregor and his friends – pubs, wild parties, crazy car-rides (though the boys don’t have driving licences), expensive presents. The young man is nice-looking and throws his money around. He lives in a wealthy foster-family, but he hates his foster-parents because they are too demanding. Ann has a quarrel with her friend Reena, who up till then had regarded Gregor as her boyfriend. There are also problems with her other friend Kätlin, who now lives in another town and sends Ann anguished e-mail messages about her difficulties at school and quarrels with her stepfather.

Gradually Ann starts to have doubts about Gregor. It becomes clear that Gregor has been telling lies – he left school without finishing, he’s involved in extortion and drug dealing. Ann is also called by the police to give evidence. Gregor tries to arouse Ann’s sympathy, blaming everyone but himself for his troubles. Ann’s stepfather simply throws him out – in his opinion, Gregor has squandered his opportunities. He too is a boy from a foster-home. Running through the book in parallel with Ann’s story are the memories of Ann’s foster-father – a striking narrative of a man who, overcoming the inhuman conditions of a Soviet-era children’s home, struggled to get himself a higher education.

The thoughts of 16-year-old Ann’s mother and step-father are concentrated on the baby brother who will soon be born, and Ann feels abandoned. As she starts her secondary school, she has also left her old friends behind. Ann visits a web-site associated with dark forces, becomes friends with her Satanist classmate Maya and her boyfriend Seth. With the connivance of the young man Ann turns to demon-worship, so that everything will be as it used to be. When her brother is born with a heart condition, Ann blames herself for it. Relations between her parents become tense; the family is on the verge of breaking up.

Ann seeks help from God and a clairvoyant, but the only possibility of taking back her prayer seems to lie in Satanist ritual. Arriving home from abroad, her parents (after the success of the operation on her little brother in a foreign hospital) find a daughter for whom reality and imagination are hopelessly tangled. Undergoing treatment in a psychiatric hospital, Ann tries to reconstruct events. Had she really seduced Seth, given birth to a demon, caused Maya’s motorcycle accident? The hospital psychologist doubts Maya’s existence, and ultimately the truth isn’t revealed in the book. The doctors give hope of her imminent recovery, and her father and mother do everything they can to win back their daughter’s trust.
The story of the development of 17-year-old Rass into a drug dealer, written down by himself three years later in police custody. The main character lives apart from his parents, and supports himself with casual work and petty theft. The environment where he grows up, in a dormitory suburb on the outskirts of town, is characterized by violence, crime, suicide, dysfunctional family relations and alcoholic parents. Unlike his friends, Rass studies at high school, dreams of a normal family life and a job as a doctor. Getting involved in the drug business almost by chance, he starts using methamphetamine, and commits the craziest acts while he is high on it. Events lead him into involvement with the mafia, and the lives of Rass and his mates are in real danger. To pay his mafia debts he gets involved in more crimes.

The book is energetic, tense, full of prison slang and obscenities, and at the same time very painful and raw. It will be read with interest even by young people who would hardly be likely to pick up a book.

Sass Henno

Mina olin siin. Esimene arest
Illustrated by Jüri Saks
Publishing House Eesti Päevaleht, 2005
www.epl.ee
ISBN 9985-9565-3-2
150×215 mm
Hardback
200 pages
For ages 16+

Translated into Latvian (Dienas Gramata, 2006)
Film “I was Here” 2008

Awards:
2004 Winner of novel competition

SASS HENNIO (1982) is an author, film and video director.
AUGUST JAKOBSON

ESTONIAN FAIRYTALES

The fairytales are written in a unique style, contain plenty of folk dialogue and are spiced with lively humour. This was just how the stories used to be told in the family circle in ancient times, when there were children present too. The collection includes tales of how things came to be („Why Does the Forest Rustle?“, „How Mice and Cats Were Created“), legends about natural phenomena („The Northern Lights“, „Father Frost’s Revenge“), fairies, demons that bring wealth to their owners and other supernatural beings („The Family Keeper“, „The Thieving Tont and the Honest Tont“, „Three Guests of the Merry Farmhand“), illnesses („The Plague with a Wooden Leg“), and rich and poor („The Baron’s Ride to Hell“, „The Poor Beggar and the Stingy Woman“, „The Rich Man Threshes Grain“).
Nine recognized Estonian book artists were each given the chance to illustrate two of their own favourite fairytales in F. R. Kreutzwald’s collection “Old Estonian Fairy Tales” (first appeared in 1866). The result is a beautiful, organically whole work of art in different styles. The selection contains, in addition to the title story, such well-known tales as „The Orphan’s Hand-Mill“, „The Dragon of the North“, „Woody and Barky“ and „The Powerful Crawfish and the Greedy Wife“. Photographs of the illustrators are also included.

FRIEDRICH REINHOLD KREUTZWALD
LOPI AND LAPI
OLD ESTONIAN FAIRY TALES

Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald
Lopi ja Lapi. Eesti muinasjutud
Illustrations by 9 artists
Publishing House Tänapäev, 2008
www.tnp.ee
215×278 mm
174 pages
For ages 8-12

Awards:
2008 5 Best Designed Children’s Books, special prize from Estonian Children’s Literature Centre

FRIEDRICH REINHOLD KREUTZWALD (1803–1882) is the author of the Estonian epic „Kalevipoeg“, and the initiator of Estonian national literature.

THE ILLUSTRATORS:
Estonian Literature Centre

The Estonian Literature Centre (Eesti Kirjanduse Teabekeskus) exists to generate interest in Estonian literature abroad. The centre publishes information on Estonian literature in several languages. As well as being closely involved with translators, writers and publishers, ELIC also works in close partnership with book fairs and literary events, ministries, embassies, cultural and academic institutes, other literature information centres, libraries and universities both in Estonia and abroad. ELIC organizes numerous literature events and translation seminars around the world and coordinates the Translator-in-residence programme. ELIC also maintains a database of translations of Estonian literature in other languages. ELIC was founded in 2001.

The aims of the Estonian Literature Centre
- To increase awareness of Estonian writing abroad, with particular emphasis on fiction, poetry and children’s books.
- To provide the international literary world with up-to-date information on Estonian literature and the literary scene in Estonia.
- To establish and mediate contacts between Estonian authors and foreign publishers, magazines etc.

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www.eltk.ee