



Melburnas
latviešu biedrības
BIBLIOTĒKA

'MAZIE GANI' THE LITTLE SHEPHERDS

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Latvijas Nacionālā
BIBLIOTĒKA

IN THE MEADOW

It all began like a fairytale. Once upon a time, there were four shepherds. One fat, one tall, but the other two were rather small. Quite different in character from the other two.

One sunny day, while the small shepherds were herding their pigs and sheep, the fat and tall shepherds ran by arguing about a pine cone. The small shepherds had no time for this nonsense and sent them on their way.

When evening came the shepherds counted their charges, but a piglet and a small sheep were missing. They ran to tell their mistress. She thought wolves had taken the missing animals. A neighbour stated that she had seen wicked Baba near the woods with a sack and Baba has connections with the devil.

Darkness was falling and they all went home. The shepherds would begin their search in the morning.

IN THE FOREST

At first light the shepherds set off towards the forest in search of the missing piglet and sheep. But which way should they go and who could they ask?

They saw a strange looking man gathering mushrooms. His head was so heavy he bent under its weight and his beard was two feet long. The shepherds asked if he knew where to find wicked Baba! He replied: "Go through the forest for three days, but beware of the animal lairs. On the other side of the forest is a moss covered post that bends back and forth. If you ask three times which way Baba went, it will bend in that direction."

The youngsters went happily on their way, but finding the way, was not as easy as they thought.

55 646

THE WOLVES LAIR

The shepherds went deep into the forest, which seemed to go on forever, until they stumbled upon a wolves' lair.

The place looked rather dubious. A fresh sheep skin hung on the fence and over there the mother wolf was cooking meat. A hedgehog scurried through the forest calling the animals to a feast. The wolves' son was being christened. What a feast with roasted lamb and beer and a song to make things merry. When the youngsters heard the singing, they thought it might not be such a bad place after all. The wolf saw them and invited them to join the feast. But what was this on the table? Their sheep! The wolves said they took their food where they found it, so don't ask where it comes from.

The shepherds went on their way quite disheartened. Well, they may still find the piglet.

THE ELVES MARKET

Unhappily they continued on their way. Towards evening they came upon the Elves marketplace. The shepherds were by no means big but among the elves they felt like giants.

"Who are you? Why are you here?" asked two curious elves.

"We are looking for Baba" replied the shepherds, "she has stolen our piglet."

The Elves council debated what they could do to help the shepherds. Their plan was to make a kite with a basket attached to the tail. When the kite was high in the air, the shepherds could see where Baba went. The plan was good, but even though the youngsters were high in the air they could not see hide nor hair of Baba. Suddenly a flock of starlings flew by. The elves were distracted and let go of the rope.

The kite was carried away by the wind and it was night fall before it landed. It looked like rain so the shepherds sheltered for the night in a large tree.

THE DEVIL'S ESTATE

The devil and his wife returned home to find the place ransacked, their gold and livestock stolen.

As the shepherds approached the house they could hear crying that would fill an ocean. They asked what was the matter and could they help. When the devil explained what had happened, the youngsters exclaimed, that during the night they had heard villains planning a robbery and his name was mentioned. The devil was furious for the villains were in his pay. Thanking the shepherds the devil said they must stay and celebrate. The youngsters said that they must continue their search.

When the devil heard their story, he wrote a letter to Baba telling her to give back the piglet. The devils sadly let the shepherds go on their way.

BABA'S PLACE

The youngsters went happily on their way again, when quite suddenly they came upon the post that bends. They asked three times where Baba went and it slowly bent in that direction.

When Baba saw the shepherds she flew into a rage. They timidly gave her the devil's letter. She was furious but she could not go against the devil's orders. Ever so sweetly she gave back their piglet. But wouldn't they like to stay awhile?

The shepherds hurried away.

0.054-

LATVIJAS NACIONĀLĀ BIBLIOTĒKA



0320089754

WINTER'S PLACE

As they headed for home the last warmth of autumn disappeared. The Snow Maiden rose from her summer sleep and covered the countryside in a blanket of white. It became so cold the trees cracked. The shepherds trudged through the wood when they saw what looked like a house, warm and inviting.

An elf invited them in and gave them warming tea. The youngsters asked what she was doing?

Checking the list of children to see who has been good and deserves a gift this year.

How do you get on the list?

Be well behaved and study hard but most of all, be kind and loving.

The youngsters thanked her, but they were lost and wanted to go home. She told them not to worry she would show them the way in the morning.

HOME

At dawn the little shepherds set off again for now they knew the way home .

The village children were woken before dawn by the news that the youngsters had returned with the piglet. When the shepherds had finished their tale dawn was breaking. The children begged them to tell the story again from the beginning.

EL

11 JUN 1996