Children of the Moor

Laura Fitinghoff

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Children of the moor

Title: Children of the moor

Author: Laura Fitinghoff

Commentator: Clara Whitehill Hunt

Illustrator: Gustaf Tenggren

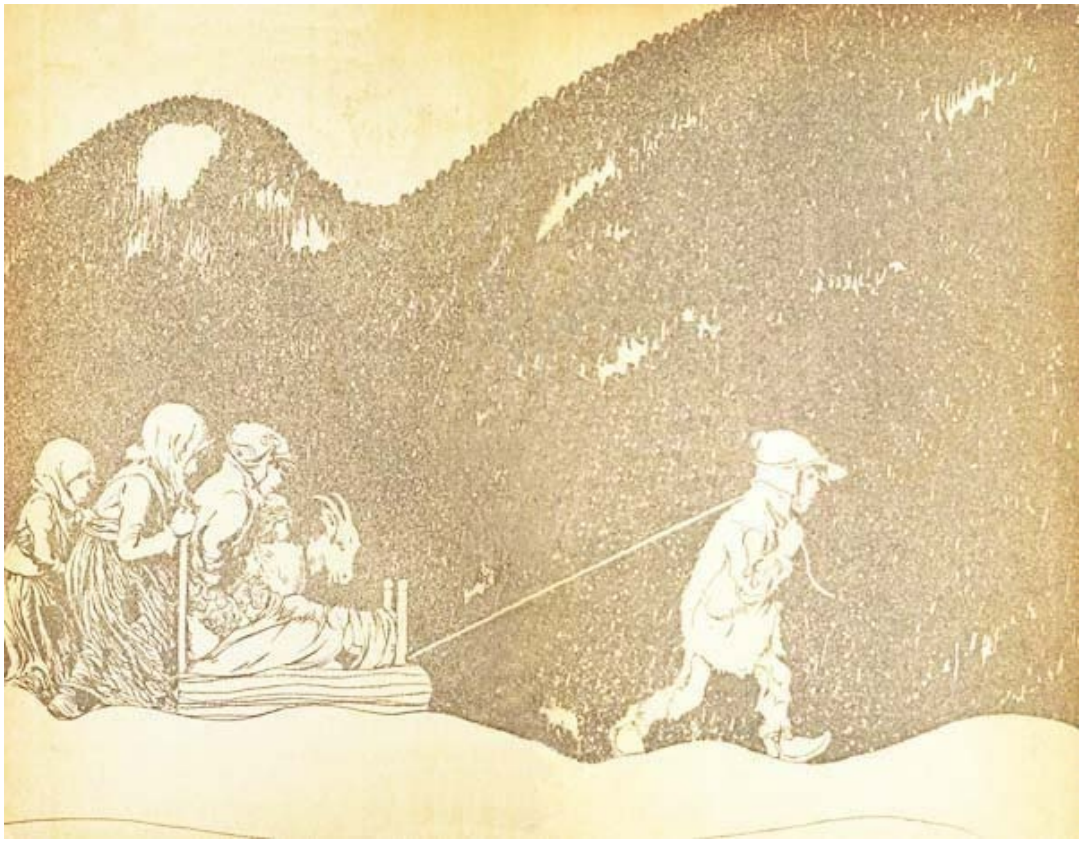
Translator: Siri Andrews

Release date: May 23, 2025 [eBook #76142]

Language: English

Original publication: Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927

Credits: Susan E., David E. Brown, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at https://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive)



CHILDREN OF THE MOOR

THE CHILDREN FROM BARREN MOOR

CHILDREN OF THE MOOR

BY

LAURA FITINGHOFF

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH BY

SIRI ANDREWS

With Illustrations by

GUSTAF TENGGREN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Press Cambridge

1927

CHILDREN OF THE MOOR

BY

LAURA FITINGHOFF

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH BY

SIRI ANDREWS

With Illustrations by

GUSTAF TENGGREN

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

The Riverside Press Cambridge

1927

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

INTRODUCTION

W one has been watching for many years the apparent efforts of story-book-makers and others to standardize the minds of our children, to come upon ‘Children of the Moor’ is like finding a spring of water in a thirsty land. It is surprising that a book which has run through nine large editions in Sweden, and has been published in Germany, Denmark, Norway, Holland, and England waited all these years for a children’s librarian to go to Stockholm to discover it for American children.

The author, Laura (Runsten) Fitinghoff, grew up in a large and wealthy parsonage in Ångermanland, Sweden. She was one of five children in a home ‘where music and spiritual nourishment were given the children just as naturally as milk and bread were given other children,’ writes her daughter. In the parsonage were entertained such distinguished people as Jenny Lind, King Charles XV, and King Oscar II, but the poor of the great parish, too, were welcome guests. During famine years, when groups of starving people wandered over Sweden, none were turned away empty-handed from Pastor Runsten’s door; and the scenes of one particularly sad famine year so impressed a gifted daughter of the house that the beautiful and moving story of ‘Children of the Moor’ was written.

We are so accustomed to prosperity in America, and so tenderly careful to protect our children from hardship, that there is danger of our leaving out of their training the lessons which can be learned only from suffering. How can a child be stirred to pity and sympathy and unselfish giving who is not allowed even to hear that there are sad and hungry people in the world? Child readers of ‘Children of the Moor’ will be deeply interested in the strange and eventful wanderings of the brave children of this story; they will rejoice in the happiness that finally comes to the brothers and sisters, and their mental outlook will be wider, and their sympathies deeper for traveling, in imagination, with these story-book companions.

We owe Miss Andrews a debt of gratitude for bringing the book to America and for her beautiful translation of it.

C

B , 1927

CHILDREN OF THE MOOR

CHILDREN OF THE MOOR

CHAPTER I
SEVEN FRIENDLESS CHILDREN

I is a year of famine up in Norrland.[1] ‘A year of famine’ means that one is almost without food in those places where the flock of children is large and the bit of ground small, from which one has to live.

In good years there are gladness and laughter and noise wherever one turns. One has sweet white turnips to eat, and peas in full pods grow in the fields. Enough of bread, butter, cheese, and of other nice good things is found even in tiny cottages and poor men’s homes.

But in *years of famine* one sees little happiness. The snow lies on the ground until toward midsummer. The turnips, which are planted as seed in the ground, have hardly time to become as big as small potatoes before the frost comes and makes the ground around them so hard and crowded that they cannot grow any more. The pea-pods hang withered like little blackened rags out in the pea-field—not a single pea in them. The same with the ears of barley which used to hold themselves so proudly on their high waving stalks; they hang on the short green blades as if broken.

So you can understand that in a year of famine no grain and no peas come to the mill to be ground, and if, on some farm higher up, the frost has come more sparingly, the grain is still so weak and queer that the flour becomes gray-black, and the pancakes one bakes of it are like a thin mud puddle. One mixes the bark of trees in the flour to make bread.

There is not much nourishment in such food. The children soon become thin. Their rosy cheeks take on a grayish color and their eyes no longer shine.

When the children in groups follow their parents down to the frost-free districts to beg for food, they look like little old men and women. It cuts one to the heart to see them.

During the awful year of famine late in the 1860’s, just such a group came wandering down from Barren Moor away up in Norrland, a group of seven children who wandered alone through lonely, impoverished winter settlements. No father or mother accompanied them: seven emaciated little ones, and the one who led them was only twelve years old. His name was Andy, or really Anders.

The children were from Barren Moor, where the frost had been hardest.

Their father, weakened by bark bread and starvation food, had fallen under a giant pine which he had been helping to fell in the woods, and had been killed.

His wife, worn out by trouble and sorrow and hunger, died soon after. Her greatest anxiety had been the children for whom she had worked and suffered. She feared that they would have to go to the poor-house, or, still worse, ‘be put up at auction’ for those who would take them for the little sum of money the community would pay, in such a year when all must earn in order to live.

But Andy promised: ‘We’ll go away from here, mother. We’ll put the little girls on the sled and go from farm to farm like other grown-up, wandering people. The school-teacher’s Carl says that his father says that people in the settlements have both grain and potatoes. You’ll see, mother, that there is enough for us too.’ And she was comforted.

Mother was hardly in the grave before the men of the parish came together to put the children in the poor-house or auction them out.

But the day they came to the tumble-down cottage where they expected to find the children, it was empty.

The shelter of boards near by, where the goat used to be, was also empty. In the cottage, everything was scrubbed and tidy, as if orderly grown folk had intended to leave it to others.

The children they came to seek had apparently set out the day before. But the men agreed that they would not have to wait long before they had them back again. Telephone and telegraph were not to be found up there in the wilderness, and nothing could be done about finding them. All the horses which belonged in the village were in the lumber camps. And if they had been at home, who would have had time to go out on a hunt for mere youngsters?

So the children wandered away undisturbed. But during the day the two littlest girls, Brita-Carrie and Martha-Greta, began to whimper and whine.

They did not cry because they were so cold that nose and hands were as blue as cornflowers and toes so frozen that they could not stand on their feet. No, they wailed and wept from hunger. They would have eaten the hardest crust of bread or the tiniest potato with gusto. But the road through the Great Woods was twelve miles long, and they had not been within the door of a cottage all day long. They stayed away from houses first for fear they would be held and sent to the poor-house, and later of necessity, because there was not even the poorest kind of hut in all the woods.

‘Come, Golden Horn,’ coaxed Andy at last, ‘I can’t stand hearing the children cry like that. You’ll have to pull at her again, Anna-Lisa.’

‘Yes, but it is a sin the way we have torn at her for milk to-day,’ objected Anna-Lisa, who was ten.

‘But be quiet then, children. You’ll get another drop of milk. Golden Horn, nice good little girl, come now so I can milk you. The children are starving to death.’

Golden Horn, the thin yet splendid goat, emerged from the low firs beside the road where she had made a good meal. She stood quietly beside Anna-Lisa, who squatted down and drew a few streams of milk into a small wooden bowl she held in her left hand.

‘Give me too! Give me too!’ whimpered Per-Erik and Magnus.

‘You should be ashamed! Big men like you. You, Per-Erik, are five years old, and you, Magnus, six.’

‘No, sir, I’m five! Mother said so, and she gave me milk sometimes too.’

‘But you’ll be six at Candlemas, and it is only a week until then. We men-folk mustn’t give up like that. Run ahead and hold on to Golden Horn’s fur and then your hands won’t be cold.’

It was Andy who talked and commanded, and the little boys knew no other way than to obey, and especially since Golden Horn, ‘who had human sense,’ as they firmly believed, came close to them with her warm woolly coat.

‘Bring Golden Horn here, so we can get warm too,’ cried the little maids on the sled.

‘But you must be good. Think if mother heard her little girls whine like that. You’ve just had milk that was both sweet and warm.’

‘But that was like nothing,’ wailed Brita-Carrie. ‘Like nonnin,’ repeated Martha-Greta, with tears in her great sorrowful eyes.

‘It was two spoonfuls each. And now soon we’ll come to some big farm where you’ll get food. Sit down on the sled—you too, Maglena, then you can warm each other. So there now, good little girls who don’t cry any more. Mother would be so happy if she saw you.’

Andy stroked the blue-cold cheeks of his little sisters, tucked their stiff cold hands in the ragged shawls they had tied crosswise about their waists, and bundled the worn old sheepskin robe tightly around their feet.

‘Now you push, Anna-Lisa, so we’ll get out of the woods. The school-teacher’s Carl said that as soon as we saw what was left of the hut where the Lapp Israel died, we shouldn’t be far from the settlement.’

‘Yes, but he told me that wolves wandered around in the mountains. He said I was crazy to go off with you.’

Anna-Lisa walked stooped forward and pushed the sled. Her tears fell on the little sisters’ bundled-up heads. She sobbed so that it sounded as though she hiccoughed.

‘I won’t bother to answer when you talk so foolishly,’ shrieked Andy in a loud voice in order to make himself heard. He walked far ahead and pulled with the rope over his shoulder. ‘Perhaps you think that Carl would have taken care of you, given you food and clothes. Maybe they don’t have the house full of children themselves.’

‘But then I wouldn’t have to starve, and freeze to death!’

‘Just as if they had wanted to have you there! You would have been in the poor-house this day with leprous Barbara and crazy Lars.’

‘They don’t starve, and they don’t freeze to death either.’

‘Ugh, what a girl! This morning you ate all the water gruel you wanted, and you had as much as we did of the goat’s-milk cheese and bread that Sven Paul gave us. But because you can’t eat the whole day long you whine and want to turn back, and to the poor-house besides.’

‘Well, where do you think we’ll come to now, then? I suppose you think of taking us to the king. Boo-hoo-hoo,’ sobbed Anna-Lisa.

‘As far as that goes, I could do that too—and ask him to take you. You could at least watch his goats for him. That would be something big, that would, instead of sitting and staring in front of the poor-house fire.’

‘How many goats do you suppose he has, the king?’ piped Maglena out of the shawl opening.

She thought that at this talk about the king, life began to brighten a bit. To tell the truth, she had agreed with Anna-Lisa the whole time, though she thought it unfair that both of them should attack Andy, who, she knew, had not tasted a bite before they left in the morning until all the rest had had enough.

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ said Andy, ‘how many goats the king has. Little-hut people like us can have one, a cottager five or six, a big farmer twenty or more.’

‘Goodness, then the king must have a hundred. I certainly can’t take care of so many.’

Anna-Lisa let go of the sled, and wiped the tears out of her eyes.

Even Andy stopped, so the rope hung slack. He took off the moth-eaten fur cap which had been father’s and wiped the sweat from his beautiful forehead. His blue eyes shone indignantly as he looked back at his sister.

‘Maybe the king has one hundred goats, maybe he has a thousand—yes, just as many as a Laplander has reindeer. But do you think the king hasn’t sense enough to figure out how many goats a little one like you can watch? If he thinks you can take care of a hundred, then you can, for then he has a special kind of easily watched goats, maybe from Jerusalem, or maybe he has some wonderful goat watchdogs that can call them together.’

‘Just think how fine you’ll be, Anna-Lisa. Maybe you’ll have shoes with elastic sides and a silk shawl on your head and a skirt with little roses on it so you will look like the briar-rose hill in the summer. To think that you’ll be so fine!’

Maglena drew the shawl from her nose and tried to turn so she could gaze at Anna-Lisa. A sweet little lass was Maglena, with golden brown hair, bright and curly, and big deep blue eyes glowing with kindness. It was as if she believed that Anna-Lisa, who walked behind and pushed the sled, was already dressed in elastic shoes and a briar-rose dress and silk headcloth, just because she imagined her so.

Anna-Lisa did not look especially attractive at this moment, with a gray-black woolen scarf wound about her head and tied in a knot at the back of her neck, with mother’s old striped jacket, the waist of which reached her knees, and mother’s ragged run-down shoes. The hay which they had stuffed in for warmth and filling stuck out through the holes.

It certainly was not easy to walk through the woods for many, many miles in such an outfit, and it was perhaps not to be wondered at that Anna-Lisa’s otherwise not unpleasant face with the blue eyes and light hair now had a dark and bitter look.

She and her brother struggled on again with the sled. Anna-Lisa muttered and mumbled to herself, but Maglena was in high spirits—in her mind’s eye she saw the glorious existence of the king’s goatherd.

‘Per-Erik, Magnus, wait,’ she called to the two brothers. In ragged Lapp shoes and father’s clothes, so hopelessly ill-fitting, they pattered away, one on either side of the goat, their hands in her coarse hair.

The boys stopped and waited. They were thoroughly disgusted, and tired of the endless journey. ‘Men-folk,’ if you like, and five and six years old as much as you please, hunger gnawed in small stomachs just the same, the cold bit into fingers and toes, and the clothing had more weight than warmth. But enough that they were sufficiently manly to keep their whining and complaints to themselves, though tears ran down the blue cheeks and small shoulders sometimes shook with suppressed sobs.

‘What is it now?’ they said with manly superiority, when they were beside the sled. ‘Shall we help you pull? You must be getting tired, Andy.’

Magnus pushed up over his forehead the cap, which had been grandfather’s at Sven Paul’s and which reached down over his ears, and stealthily rubbed away any possible traces of altogether too unmanly tears.

Andy spat in his hands, took hold of the rope so that it cut a deep groove in the homespun jacket just on the shoulder, where, old and worn as it was, it could not stand much more wear.

He strained and pulled as if the uphill they had just reached were a slanting downhill stretch, and paid no attention to Magnus’s pitiable suggestion. Even the rounded back seemed to show how miserable he thought it was.

‘You can’t pull us all; any one knows that such talk is only boasting,’ said Maglena, who felt talkative and wasn’t so cold now that the little sisters were squeezed close against her and were still, for they had fallen asleep. ‘But now you’ll hear something nice. Do you know, Anna-Lisa is going to be goatherd for the king! He has many hundred goats, bigger than our Golden Horn.’

‘No goat is like Golden Horn, if you please,’ said Magnus, and looked threateningly at Maglena.

‘Is that so? Have you seen goats from Jerusalem, maybe? They have horns that look exactly like the moon when it is new and shiny, just like that they shine. And they come in hundred thousands, and you can see them running over the marshes and eating berries.’

‘If we only had some here! I could eat a thousand quarts,’ sighed Per-Erik.

‘Yes, they eat berries.’ Maglena’s voice had a longing, dreamy sound. ‘They eat berries, for the whole marsh is full of them—and cream out of big troughs; the king never thinks twice about it.’

‘And as much clap-bread[2] as we could carry on the sled,’ added Per-Erik with a disapproving glance at the useless burden it then carried.

‘Of course the king’s goats eat clap-bread.’ Maglena continued her description without in the least minding her brothers’ lack of interest in the subject and their perpetual return to the question of food. ‘Yes, they eat clap-bread out of the little mangers.’

‘I thought they were out in the marshes just now. Goats certainly aren’t indoors that time of the summer,’ remarked Andy, who, in order to hear what Maglena said, even if it was silly, had pushed his cap up sideways away from his ears so that it

was on the point of falling off his head altogether.

‘I suppose they must come in in the evening because of the mosquitoes and insects and because of old Bruin. They can’t be free of old Bruin even at the king’s, can they?’

‘Who’d want to be out and watch goats all night anyway, for that matter?’ Anna-Lisa graciously entered into the conversation. ‘Be out and watch goats when you should be in eating the pork that they fry at the king’s so the grease runs and it smells so—yes, so that——’

Anna-Lisa could not find words to express how wonderful the smell of fried pork was at the king’s.

‘And whole kettles full of potatoes,’ added Magnus eagerly.

‘That have cracked in their jackets, and that you can eat by the peck,’ said Per-Erik.

‘Yes, after the goats have had theirs. Listen. They come over the marsh and they have eaten so much that they are just as round as the sow they killed at Sven Paul’s this fall.’

‘Then they can’t jump so much either, and it will be easier to look after them,’ said Anna-Lisa approvingly.

‘No, they walk just like the sow walked, waddling like that. And then they climb up on the mountain. It is as bright as the rooster on the church at the king’s dairy farm. And then the goats come there, you see, and it is perfectly light from all those hundred thousand horns that are like the moon when it is new.’

‘And how they’d milk, such goats!’ said Magnus with yearning in his voice. ‘You could have some then.’

‘And make cheeses so that you’d burst, you could eat so much,’ from Per-Erik.

‘Yes, but you see the king must have as much as he can eat first, and all his men-servants and maids,’ said Maglena, all eagerness.

‘Besides, you know, children, the king can have much finer things even than pork and potatoes and goat’s-milk cheese. He can have fresh salmon if he wants it,’ said Andy loftily.

‘Not in the winter, though. When the salmon creeps along the bottom of the river to the big water, then it isn’t good to take,’ remarked Anna-Lisa.

‘In the winter he eats fine things, anyway.’ Andy settled the question without allowing himself to be put out of countenance. ‘Then he eats the finest food, and it is like a catechism party[3] every single day.’

‘Then does he have meat-balls and Christmas fish[4] and prune soup?’ questioned Maglena. Her eyes sparkled at the thought of such an existence.

‘Yes, and rice gruel as much as he is able to eat.’

‘And coffee, of course,’ put in Anna-Lisa. ‘And he never drinks a drop without having bread to sop in it as much as he wants. Oh, but that coffee would be strong and salty!’[5]

‘Oh, if we only were the king so we could have all that!’ cried Magnus from the depths of his heart.

‘And then he has a big, big house, where it is nicer than the parsonage, truly like a golden house; and then he knows where he is going to sleep, not in such an old shack as ours was,’ muttered Anna-Lisa.

‘As ours was! Isn’t that good enough? If we were lucky enough to own that! With a little vegetable garden and the big fine bird-cherry tree. If it were so that we could be there again, Golden Horn and all of us, then I think that we should be just as well off as the king.’ Andy, who spoke, looked earnestly at his brothers and sisters. ‘You see, it is something that mother was there—and died there, and never shall we find such a hut again.’

CHAPTER II
WOLVES' TRACKS

I began to grow dark, and still the children were in the woods. Andy was more and more inclined to stop and listen to their chatter, even if it was so full of grumbling and complaining that it cut into his heart like knives. But he himself was so tired, so hungry, and, too, so thoroughly down-hearted. For, after all, it was he, Andy, who had partly coaxed, partly forced, his brothers and sisters to leave a known world thus alone and unprotected.

He had not been able to bear the thought that the little girls whom mother had loved so tenderly should go to strange people. He was afraid that the community would put them up at auction so that any poor creature at all, in this year of need, could take them, only to get a coin from the parish.

Even if the little girls, and the boys too, should get food at the places they went to, it was not said that they would hear a kind word or be taught what mother held to so sturdily. She had insisted that they tell the truth, be courteous, and do well whatever they were set to do. She had taught them not to whimper without cause, but to know and understand that when they were alone without father and mother, they still had One who cared for them, the good and powerful Father in heaven.

Andy had felt, therefore, that it was altogether right and proper that he, now that they were alone, should hold them together. Food and what they needed he believed they would get when they reached the people and settlements which had not suffered so much from the frost, and which therefore would surely have something left for them.

But already, even the first day, he felt into what hardship he had brought them. It was worst of all that he himself grew tired, since he had eaten sparingly of both the water gruel, the goat's-milk cheese, and the bits of bread that kind people had given them after their mother's death: so tired that his legs bent under him, and the little sisters on the sled seemed to him as heavy as blocks of wood.

All the signs told him that more snow was coming. The cold had broken; he felt that, warm as he was pulling the sled, and knew it too because the snow no longer creaked and shrieked under feet and sled-runners as it had all day, ever since early morning, when, under the northern lights and moonlight, they had left the little gray cottage, which, with the dying fire gleaming through the little window-pane, had gazed somehow sadly after the departing children.

That snow was coming and a real storm, Andy knew because of the squirrels that darted like arrows between the firs. They took the cones between their paws, threw off the sharp scales, and gathered together the soft fragrant mass that remained. They ran with such dizzy haste that it was hardly possible to follow their movements with the eye. Even the wood-grouse, which in fair weather moves calmly and with dignity, developed haste. Mountain-ash trees with berries were not so plentiful in a pine forest, and to live only on pine and pine needles was too monotonous, thought he. A real snowstorm could keep one in the nest quite long enough.

Rabbits in white winter outfits checkered the snow with comical tracks, three and three, in clusters like an embroidered pattern.

Fox tracks extended in a straight line with small round holes. And then——!

Andy—who was awake to all signs in the woods, even where it was level, laid waste by forest fires, or cut down—Andy suddenly saw big coarse slightly oblong tracks in a row. Tracks that went abreast of each other, tracks of several, of many feet, of *wolves'* feet——!

He seized the rope anew, twisted it fast around cold-stiffened fingers, and pulled his cap down over a forehead wet with the cold sweat of agony and fear.

Then he turned square around to the children behind him.

'You talk too much. We'll sing now, instead, and then we'll soon be out of the woods. You start, Maglena.'

Maglena complied with her brother's command without hesitation. In a ringing voice she took up the song about Canaan:

'What has my Jesus done for me?
Yes, He descended into Canaan.
Heavenly Canaan.
Come, let us go to Canaan.'

All the children sang, while Maglena with her sweet ringing voice led the song.

They went on through the forest, gloomy in the early twilight, over which arched a leaden gray sky, heavy with snow.

But now it seemed as though they had never thought of or known anything except singing. The little girls, who sat enfolded in Maglena's arms, woke up, hungry, stiff, shivering with cold. They did not cry, though at this moment they certainly wanted to, but hearing the others singing, they joined in, as had been the habit in the little gray cottage with mother.

'Heavenly Canaan,
Come, let us go to Canaan.'

The song rang out so beautifully among the firs and pines. It was as if an angel choir were advancing. The wood held its breath to listen. Not a sound of yelping fox, of frightful hooting horned owl or small owl. Only the children's song was heard.

Andy sang, too, strongly and loudly. He kept his eyes lifted beseechingly toward the dreary, comfortless sky. He sang in the belief of help, though his strong voice really served best to reach and wake the wolves, the child murderers, so many tracks of which he had just seen abreast of each other.

Of course Andy had known before that the wolves in this winter of need had begun to sneak about out in the open, and of course on stormy nights when it was so cold that the corners of the cottage rumbled and creaked he had heard their starved howlings in the wood.

But this far down in the settlements he believed that they would be free of them. Andy thought that he and the children had gone so far from the home parish that all conditions would be changed. And now to see such tracks! One comfort was that *he alone* understood what they meant.

Now the Canaan song was over. He himself started a new song, and the others joined in:

‘I know a land of purest light, which—’

Andy got no further.

‘Children! There is smoke, and sparks flying out of the chimney of a house! Thank God, we are in the settlements, and I hear dogs barking.’

He seized the rope more firmly and began to run as if he were pulling an empty sled. Anna-Lisa pushed the scarf up from her face so violently that her eyebrows were pulled up toward her hair, giving her Chinese eyes. She lifted her feet as lightly as though she already wore the royal shoes.

But Maglena crept into her shawl hiding her whole face. She was shy and afraid of strange people—especially those who lived out in the settlements. One could never know whether they were as real people ought to be, whether they looked as did the people in Barren Moor. Maybe these had one eye in the back of the head and one in the forehead; and maybe they walked on their hands and ate with their feet.

Ugh, but it was awful——! What sort of language would they talk, do you suppose? The Barren Moor language was of course especially fine, so you couldn’t really expect that such people outside the parish should speak like that. After journeying as far as they had this day, any one could understand that everything would be different and topsy-turvy.

Golden Horn felt as Maglena did, that it was most unpleasant to come to strange people, where dogs could already be heard whining and barking, and she fell back behind the sled with her nose between the sled and Anna-Lisa, whom she imperiously pushed aside.

Per-Erik and Magnus were brave men from the very moment they heard the barking of a village dog. They spat, to find out which one of them could throw the spittle farthest, and they put their hands down into mother’s old jackets which they had on as overcoats and convinced themselves firmly that they thrust them into pockets. They chattered and wondered if there was any one in the crowd who possibly had been tired or frightened on such a day and on such a long dangerous journey. For their own part, they had conducted themselves bravely. One isn’t men-folk for nothing!

They were in such high spirits that they condescended to play with the little girls. They made their very worst and ugliest faces at them, and seized them by the throat to make them laugh.

In this happiness of spirit the children now came out of the forest toward a village. The main road which they had followed through the wood was marked closely on both sides with small firs. This was so that one would be able to drive right in the road with the snow-plough when there was so much snow that one could not otherwise know where the road was.

Only a narrow path tramped down in the snow led to the nearest house, a little gray cottage much like their own. It was not exactly easy to get through with the sled. The gray dog there barked too, as though he wanted to eat them all up. Perhaps it would have been better for them to go to one of the big houses, which shone red with white corners against the snow. But the little gray cottage up under the mountain looked so safe and cozy that they went there without hesitation.

They understood the gray dog's barking well. He said, like all gray dogs, and such were to be found at nearly every house, that there were people coming.

The children understood, too, by the barking that the dog did not have much respect for them.

'Bow-wow!—only trash! Shall I chase them away, I wonder!'

The gray dog was silent a moment. He stood still on the little steps that took the place of a porch outside the cottage. Then he lowered his head and growled thoughtfully.

'Only little people, after all, puppies so to speak. Such can't hurt either people or house——'

He bowed his head, yelped meaninglessly, though dutifully, as a conscientious gray dog always does. But then he got scent of the goat, his eyes on Golden Horn who peeped out with her head between the sled-posts and Anna-Lisa.

'Aha, that's another matter! Not ordinary people! Not with honorable dog guard! They have a goat as a dog! Impudence!'

The gray dog began to bark, growl, and yelp as angrily as if he had seen thieves in a church.

The children slackened their pace. None of them opened their mouths.

'It is only because we are so poorly dressed,' mumbled Anna-Lisa at last. 'If we came like Sven Paul's children at catechism parties with "bought" clothes and leather shoes, then the dog would fawn on us and bark as if inviting us to come in and make ourselves at home.'

'But, girl,' objected Andy, 'now we are *not* coming to a catechism party, but to ask people for food and a place to sleep. The dog sees that, and knows that they don't have much in the little cottage, and that's why he's mad.'

'Here—here!' called Andy, and tried to get into the favor of the angrily barking dog, who now rushed at them.

Maglena rolled out of the sled.

She tore the shawl from her head, ran toward the dog, and bent down toward it with outspread arms.

'Here—here! You aren't mad at us! You can see that we are small and alone!'

It seemed as though the dog understood her. He became quiet, sidled uneasily sideways, yawned, as dogs do when ashamed. Suddenly he pricked up his ears as if he had seen something threatening from the mountain-side. And then he began to bark and yelp, with his head in that direction, dry, affected, without meaning in his bark: barked like that until the children were in the cottage.

CHAPTER III
THE SPECTACLE MAN

A burned in the grate when the children, clinging together, creeping close to one another, came slowly into the cottage.

And yet Magnus was missing. He insisted that he couldn't very well leave the goat out there alone. Really he thought it only right that Andy should receive the first blow among strangers. One was naturally uncertain about what could happen in an altogether unknown place. Maglena's ideas had gradually become his too, so he stayed calmly outside while the rest trudged away in.

'Close the door!' thundered a coarse voice.

If Andy at this moment had made half a movement toward the door, the whole flock would have dashed out headlong, away from a roof over their heads, warmth, and the hope of food, so frightened were they.

The roaring voice came from some one over by the hearth, who, exactly as Maglena had foreseen, surely had one eye at the back of his head. Yes, it looked almost as though both eyes were there, for big black spectacles shone in the middle of the head. He had fiery red hair and did not seem to need to turn around or even move to see who had come in.

But the children stood absolutely quiet, like a terrified flock of bewildered little lambs. All of them stared at the gleaming black eyes in the red head, and at the man's hairy arms, bare to the elbow, which rose and fell with something glittering and sharp which he held in his coarse clenched hands.

'It's a Turk we've come to!' whispered Maglena, her teeth chattering with fear.

'Then he'll eat us up! I'll go out and see what Magnus is doing to Golden Horn, I will,' said Per-Erik. He pushed the door open quietly with his foot and glided out more hastily than he had come in.

Anna-Lisa was about to follow him; but she saw some cold mush on a plate on the hearth, and the sight of that somehow held her fast.

Maglena and the little girls clung to Andy until he was almost lifted from the ground. He whispered to them to be quiet—they ought to know what was expected when you first come in; to stand at the door and be quiet until spoken to.

But Martha-Greta, the smallest little girl, mother's golden heart as she had been so lately, could not be quiet. She was frightened, and she was hungry, and she felt miserable in every way.

'Mother!' she screamed. 'Ata-Eta 'ants to go to mother!'

And now all dams burst. She shrieked as though some one were sticking her with knives. It was the most enticing signal to Brita-Carrie, who had an even stronger voice than the smaller sister's.

Maglena's lips began to tremble suspiciously. She who, better than the others, had known to what sort of people they were coming, she who had foreseen these awful horrible people who had eyes at the back of their heads, she became wild with

fright at seeing these eyes stare and stare, still, shining, black. She had known before that that ‘back-eyed’ man *was* a Turk who could not think of anything pleasanter than to take small children to slaughter and salt down for other Turks to eat.

So Maglena could not hold out any longer either, but gave forth a quivering cry not unlike the little girls’ shrieking.

Anna-Lisa—yes, it seems strange to tell this, for she was a big girl in her eleventh year. Maybe the day’s burdens had been too heavy for her or else that plate of cold gray mush she saw before her, without hope of reaching it, caused it. At any rate, the sad truth is that even she joined in the not especially harmonious choir which she, for the sake of a change, enlivened with shrill, piping sobs.

Andy turned pale, he turned red. It is awful the way shrieking and wailing can be catching. No one had ever heard it said that a man in his thirteenth year could begin to—begin to——! No, even if he had walked a whole winter’s day without food, dragged small sisters on a heavy sled, and been in agony because of what he had brought them into. Not even if he had been tortured with an agony of terror over the approaching greedy wolves, and now lastly felt the shame of coming with the whole flock to beg for food for them all and himself and also—for a bed—— But still!

Andy was angry at the tears that wanted to come and at the disgusting sobs which began to shake him. He clenched his fists and bit his teeth to control what a man, who had many little ones to guide and take care of, must control.

‘Children! But, children—are you crazy? We are with strangers! They’ll drive us out if you keep on like that!’

Was it likely that the ‘children’ would be quiet after such a trembling, half-sobbing warning? If Andy looked like that, and if he sounded so queer and ready to cry, then there was real danger.

Oh, oh, what a wailing clamor arose!

‘Where are these people from who have such a dreadful way of greeting? Good-day and God’s Peace is more customary.’

The Spectacle Man turned slowly around. Now all the children became silent with astonishment. Can you imagine, he had eyes even on the other side of his head, in his face like ordinary people, and he looked at them with a heavy but not at all evil expression!

‘Who has had so little sense as to let out such little folks now in a hard year, and when the wolf sneaks around the corners?’

Andy stepped forward as far as he was able with the heavy train of small legs.

‘No one has let us out. We have come ourselves, because the little house was empty of both father and—mother——’

Andy’s voice began to tremble alarmingly.

‘But your community must have some way of taking care of the poor. This parish will just have to see that such a crowd gets back there.’

‘It is a hard year. Every one at home is poor. No one wants the little girls except for the money—and mother was so careful of them.’

Andy was silent again—swallowed and swallowed—clenched his teeth.

‘So that’s the way of it.’

The Spectacle Man spat and whistled.

‘But you must have a poor-house, in the Name of Peace?’

He turned away round on the chair—the children began to tremble at the coarse rumbling voice.

‘They’re always quarreling there, every one; the children wouldn’t learn what mother wanted them to know. There wouldn’t be any one to keep after them to remember what mother taught them. And then crazy Lars is there, he talks shamefully; and leprous Barbara is there too.’

‘So that’s the way of it—and here I am alone in the house. They have gone—all of them have gone. So that’s the way of it. And now maybe you thought you’d get something here——’

A tremulous sigh shook the group as if from a single breast.

‘So that’s the way of it. Well, I have some cold mush and herring; yes, you can put that on the grill there and fry it. And ale; you can have ale with your mush, for you see I got a jug from the juryman when I left to-day. And maybe there’s a little sirup left in the jar to mix with it too. Such little folk maybe have nothing against sirup.’

A bright smile of relief flew like a ray of sunshine over the little pale faces that, a while before, had been so troubled.

‘A little coffee too. Oh, well, that’s possible. Coffee, but without cream or milk, for see—milk, you see, children, that you don’t have when you sit in a back shanty and make shoes for the whole parish; then you live on other drinks.’

The Spectacle Man stood up with a groaning sound. He leaned heavily on a thick knotted stick he had beside him. It was plain that he had rheumatism and it was hard for him to move. Besides, it was easy to see that he was without a woman’s help in the cottage. In the firelight could be seen how the sweepings were piled up in the corners. Herring bones and potato shells were left on the table. In the one-time white painted bed along one wall, the straw stuck out through the ragged cover. The sheepskin pelt was worn bare, and the yellow striped pillow-case on the bolster had certainly not been in the wash for many a long day. The Spectacle Man, with much puffing, brought out salt herring and bits of bread from the old blue corner cupboard with red roses on the doors. He even took down a coffee-mill into which he put roasted coffee from a birch-bark box.

‘Maybe I could grind it,’ said Anna-Lisa timidly. Already she stood several steps nearer the plate of mush.

‘Then I’ll go out for a little more wood for the fire,’ added Andy. Without waiting for an answer he was outside.

‘Please let me put the herring on the grill—I used to at home,’ said Maglena eagerly.

‘Div me a b’oom an’ I ’weep the f’oor,’ piped Brita-Carrie, who hungrily watched the herring begin to frizzle and sputter on the grill.

‘Ata-Eta ’weep f’oor too,’ eagerly from the smallest two-year-old, who stretched out her hand for something to sweep with.

The Spectacle Man burst out into a grunting laugh. Who’d ever seen such a little maid!

Andy came in with his arms full up to his nose, of wood from the hillside where he had seen it when he came in.

Per-Erik and Magnus followed at his heels. They pushed the door shut against Golden Horn, who for a second peeped in through the crack, but, when she was left outside, gave forth a heartrending bleat.

Andy dropped the wood on the floor. He stood with downcast eyes; he had completely forgotten, in all the strangeness about him, that a goat too accompanied them.

And the Spectacle Man was angry.

What sort of a notion was this! Who had ever heard of dragging goats along in the winter-time when one went out—— He was about to say ‘begging.’ But something in Andy’s earnest, steady eyes held him back.

‘The goat wouldn’t have minded being put up at auction, would it?’

‘Golden Horn is used to being with the children, and since she had kids she milks so well. The little girls would have given out long ago if it hadn’t been for her. I promised mother when she died that Golden Horn should go with us. Mother knew that a goat can do a lot of good when you don’t have any food for the little ones—and so I took Golden Horn with us.’

‘She wouldn’t be happy with any one else either,’ assured Maglena proudly.

‘Yes, and for that matter I’ve brought fodder along for Golden Horn, so no one has to worry about that,’ said Magnus importantly, and strode forward. He had stood and looked at the Spectacle Man, who for him, who had seen him from the front at once, was an ordinary person with eyes where they ought to be. Eyes which, especially for one who, like Magnus, had looked at them by stealth, were only kind. Not like the voice, which was coarse and frightening.

‘So that’s the way of it—still more little folk. Here one and there another—two, three, four, five before. Are there just as many left out there that are just as bold as these last two? They have carried fodder for the goat! Cluck, cluck——’

It sounded as though the man were laughing.

‘Where does the little man think of keeping the goat to-night, if there is only one—or maybe you have taken fodder enough for twenty goats? Well, break the news right away if you have several.’

‘No-o, we have only one,’ assured Magnus with a wide, earnest glance up at the peering eyes.

‘Do you keep her in bed or on the hearth, eh?’

‘It’s all the same to her. When it was real cold in the straw on the floor where we boys slept, we took Golden Horn with us there. She seemed to make it warm!’

‘Yes, and there she didn’t have to freeze outside. That’s what worried you most,’ interposed Maglena.

‘So that’s the way of it—the goat needs to have a bed made for her.’

‘No-o, she doesn’t mind, ’cause she lies down, anyway, even if there isn’t a bed,’ assured Magnus. ‘She’s never particular, is Golden Horn.’

‘Cluck, cluck.’ The Spectacle Man’s shoulders shook. ‘Maybe you’ll ask her to step in and make herself at home with what we have to treat on.’

Magnus went to the door in greatest glee.

‘Please step in, Golden Horn, and make yourself at home.’

In stepped Golden Horn with head held high. She looked around among the children, sighted Anna-Lisa who was whipping sirup in a bowl, tripped up to her, and gave her a little push with her horns.

‘Goodness gracious, child! She wants to be milked. It’s that time now—and the way we’ve pulled at her all day.’

A tender, caressing murmur rose among the children.

‘Good Golden Horn, nice doll, little pearl.’

They fell on their knees around her on the floor, stroking and petting her as they had never caressed mother or each other.

‘She thinks we’re hungry, of course, the little girl.’ Maglena drew the goat’s slender nose over her thin cheek.

‘So that’s the way of it—she thinks of such things too,’ clucked the man who also gave the goat a caress over the back.

‘Yes, and now she has come with cream for the coffee we’re going to have. It’s ready now,’ smiled Anna-Lisa, for whom the dream about the cold mush seemed more and more a reality.

She lifted the three-legged coffee-pot from the flame in the grate; and, as the custom was, added a couple of good pinches of salt and poured in a little cold water to hasten the settling.

Andy and Maglena had cleared off the table. The mush plate and old mush remains from the box out on the steps were set forth with the sirup drink. The herring, which smelled freshly fried and was so salty that it sputtered, was there too, and bread, truly as much as they could eat.

It was with great devotion that the children with folded hands read grace before such a feast.

The Spectacle Man blew his nose and limped around the room, murmuring, ‘So that’s the way of it. There would have been just so many, but all are gone.’

‘Isn’t Madam Goat going to be at the table?’ he questioned when he bumped against Golden Horn, who stood meditatively by the fire and chewed her cud.

‘Yes, if she may. She eats peelings and bones and everything that’s left over. Here you are, Golden Horn!’

Magnus pushed down everything they could get along without and let the goat eat at the same time that he himself ate.

Suddenly the little girls rolled down on the floor, sound asleep.

The Spectacle Man had gone out. Anna-Lisa poured coffee into unmated but gorgeous cups which she had found in the cupboard.

It did feel good to get the nice warm coffee inside one after the cold but still so welcome food.

The man came back with his arms full of straw. ‘I guess this will be enough for both folks and animals.’

He spread out the straw on the floor, far enough away from the fire to be out of reach of the sparks.

Golden Horn showed her appreciation by immediately nipping off some of the empty ears and then proudly and gracefully stalking into the straw and lying down for the night.

Andy remained at the table with bowed head and thanked God for the food. Then he stood up, took the little girls one after the other, peeled off their scarfs and shawl rags and laid them in the straw bed with their heads against the goat’s warm fur.

‘So that’s the way of it—cluck, cluck.’ The Spectacle Man stood and stared at the little ones there on the straw. Dear, sweet children they were, with light curly hair, delicate little faces, though so pale, so thin, with frost-bitten little noses.

He drew the cover from his own bed and wanted to put it over them. But Andy held him back.

‘Please don’t; don’t take away from yourself. We have the sheepskin robe out on the sled and the clothes we take off.’

‘I have a skin in the little room too. Take this one.’

The Spectacle Man went through a door behind the fireplace into what was no doubt the ‘little room.’ He came out again with a really fine skin over his arm. He stood a long time looking at the little flock of children in the straw. They slept heavily in the same position in which they had thrown themselves down. Pale little things, but so innocently, tranquilly sleeping that it seemed to him that some of God’s angels were in the house keeping watch over them.

Golden Horn lay in the middle of the group, chewing with half-closed eyes and a disdainful superior attitude.

CHAPTER IV
A BLEAK MORNING BOTH INSIDE AND OUT

T little girls were awake earliest of all in the morning. That is, except the Spectacle Man, Ladd-Pelle[6] as he was otherwise called when he was sober, and who made really wonderfully fine shoes.

He had been up a long time. So surprised was he at being clear-headed so early in the day that he went about clucking to himself with pleasure.

The water for the mush was boiling in the kettle, and besides he had washed a few potatoes so that the children could have some with their salt herring.

Ladd-Pelle had not felt so light of heart in many years. He really wondered how he had come to go home the evening before, he who usually stayed over at the inn days at a time. Yes, it really was strange. Already he sat hard at work, for he had orders for many pair of shoes, enough to keep him busy both night and day. People still wanted more of him.

‘Ita-Tawie,’ Martha-Greta’s voice was heard from the straw bed. ‘Up! Tee new doll.’

‘Ita-Tawie,’ otherwise Brita-Carrie, was wide awake at once. She crept on all fours over the others, still sleeping soundly, to Martha-Greta, who too had worked her way over them all alone and then rolled over to the fire. There she had found a stick of wood which she had wrapped up in scarfs and a ragged apron, and now held up toward her sister with proud happiness. ‘Tiss her!’

Brita-Carrie pushed out her little mouth as far as she could in order to reach in through the many thicknesses to the wood itself, which sure enough received a resounding kiss.

‘Has she had any milk?’ asked Brita-Carrie eagerly.

‘Nonnin.’ Martha-Greta shook her head with a troubled expression. ‘Nonnin ’tall.’

‘Wait, I div her, like mother dave little brother.’

She put the stick of wood close to her breast, looked down at it with great tenderness, rocked slowly back and forth, and whispered, ‘Sing now, Ma’ta-G’eta, and she go to s’eep.’

‘What hat my Jetut done for me. Hennenly Tana; yet, he tended to Tana. Hennenly Tana.’

Martha-Greta was fully convinced that she sang correctly, ‘What has my Jesus done for me.’ ‘Hennenly Tana’ meant ‘heavenly Canaan.’ Any one who couldn’t understand that certainly didn’t have human understanding.

The children were all very proud that Martha-Greta, who was not two years old, could ‘say everything she wanted to say,’ really ‘talk plain.’

‘Dollie ’ants muk.’ Interpreted: ‘Dollie wants milk.’ That such food or drink was given the doll when Brita-Carrie held it to her breast did not seem to enter her mind. ‘Muk’ she must have; she, like Ata-Eta herself, must be terribly hungry and

thirsty.

‘Anna-Ita up! Ata-Eta ’ants muk an’ mus.’

Anna-Lisa, who sat up in the straw bed dazed with sleep, understood at once that Martha-Greta wanted milk and mush. She looked up shame-faced. When one is among strangers, as they all were, one must ask prettily for what one wants, not demand it, no matter what it might be.

Andy was also quickly on his feet. His first thought was Golden Horn, who was not in the cottage. For it was she who had milk for the little ones.

He said good-morning to the host, who sat by the fire and drew the waxed thread through the stiff homespun, and looked as though he were alone in the cottage. Andy noticed with deep satisfaction the preparations for breakfast on the fire.

But then he went out in real fright about the goat. One could never know what had become of her when she got out in a strange place.

Andy could hardly open the door because of the awful west wind that swept in between the mountains, roaring like thousands of wild animals. The wind carried snow with it, so much snow that one could hardly hold one’s eyes open and see what was in front of one—hardly see one’s hand.

Gray Dog had crept up on the step, but with eyes and ears wide open. A good dog must be on his guard on just such stormy days when both wolves and foxes and owls might seek their way to human dwelling-places.

To-day the dog had still another reason for being suspicious.

That goat, which went and swaggered as if it were a dog, had irritated the gray dog almost into rabies when it actually went into the cottage to stay all night. A dog with a sense of honor could not be in there in such company and listen to that disgusting bleating. Now he had lain and sulked and been offended all night. Such a monster with horns, without a tail, and with the pupils of its eyes length-wise instead of round in its head, was allowed to lie indoors when such a fine old gray dog, who had protected the place night and day, and who had pulled his master out of many a danger, must lie outside. In such a storm, too, when no one ought to be able to drive out even a dog.

To think that that monster actually pleased to go into the house! And then to see it come bounding out in the morning, as confident and bold as though it had lived there always. The gray dog was so ashamed that he crept under the step, for he really could not stand and bark at any one that came *out of* the cottage. The dog that could have acted in so topsy-turvy and ill-mannered a way has certainly not yet been created.

But it was well to have eyes and ears open to see what became of one who, unfamiliar and without a dog’s power of smell, set off outside the yard in such weather.

Gray Dog barked, shortly and with suppressed spite, almost as if he were laughing to himself.

He turned away his head, shook himself, and growled a trifle threateningly when Andy came out and began to call and make a row. Time after time the boy called the crazy name of ‘Golden Horn.’ If it had only been ‘Brownie’ or ‘Goody’ or ‘Curious,’ but ‘Golden Horn’! Andy climbed down from the step, wading in snow

to his waist, and shaded blinded eyes with his arm held up in front of him.

‘Golden Horn! Little goat! Where are you?’

Andy thought of the wolves’ tracks he had seen yesterday, and remembered how much the wolf liked goat’s meat.

Not a trace of the goat in the snow. The storm roared so that Andy actually felt how his voice was drowned in the din. That was why he didn’t hear how Golden Horn bleated in answer to his calling.

For she had heard him long ago. But she thought she might as well swallow the breakfast she had found in a ramshackle old shed before she made herself known.

Sometime there must have been cattle in the shed. The withes hung down in two larger stalls, and a little row of four smaller goat stalls could be made out in one corner. It was coal black and terribly dirty in there. Golden Horn would never, except in greatest need, have been able to force herself to go in, but she had found some dried sheaves of leaves in a boxed-off corner. She even found a few stalks of hay and bran, those fine remains of flowers and leaves that fall from the grass that is cut and dried for hay, and that cattle love to eat.

Well, Andy would have to flounder around in the snow out there awhile, thought Golden Horn, and call and coax. He would not die of that. But for all that she hurried her eating so that her jaws went like a threshing machine. She no doubt had a little guilty conscience; but she remembered, too, that she had to gather milk for the children in there in the cottage.

Andy climbed through the snow up to his armpits. He had almost reached the big highway. What should he do if he did not get milk for the little girls? And how heavy and sad it would be to think that wolves had torn their fine splendid Golden Horn to pieces!

‘Ma-a-a!’ Andy thought he heard. ‘Ma-a-a-a!’

He turned quickly, and almost had Golden Horn in his arms as she came hopping and diving in the drifts.

‘Golden Horn, you mustn’t scare me like that!’ said Andy with an alarming tremble in his voice. ‘You ought to know that it is you and I who are responsible for all the little ones in there and we must keep together.’

CHAPTER V
ALL HANDS ON DECK

T uneasiness and troubled spirits in the cottage changed to real happiness when Andy and Golden Horn came in again. Anna-Lisa got more than a quart of foamy warm milk from the goat. It was enough for the mush and even to add to the water gruel. It seemed as though it was a regular party.

But the way it looked in the strange cottage! Old ragged shoes that Pelle was to mend thrown all over the floor; the straw scattered. If the blessed fire had not burned on the hearth and lighted up the room, darkness would have reigned indoors all day, for the inside of the window was gray-black with dirt, and now the snow fastened itself outside as well.

Andy and Anna-Lisa set to work to clean things up a bit.

Maglena searched out the brass comb in the knapsack. It was her duty to-day to comb the hair of the little ones, who gave howl after howl under her zealous efforts to make curly hair look sleek and straight hair lie flat.

Then there were sore chilled toes and chafed little heels to be looked after. A small birch-bark box was taken out of the knapsack. It was full of homemade soft soap, the welcome gift of a neighbor at home.

It was great fun to splash and wash their feet with soft soap and warm water. In spite of Anna-Lisa's warnings, the children splashed so violently that she deemed it best to soak the whole floor and, first as last, to scrub it.

Andy, Maglena, and she took each a scrubbing broom. They sprinkled sand over the floor, already flushed with warm water, put bare feet on the brooms, and rubbed so hard that the splinters flew from the worn darkened wood.

The floor had evidently not been washed in years, or since 'they all' had gone from the cottage and left the poor lame old man alone.

The little girls sat up in the old man's bed and made dolls out of sticks of wood and splinters. The little boys washed the wooden bowls and wooden spoons and scraped the mush kettle with an ear-splitting din.

Ladd-Pelle was actually frightened at the number of ragged shoes the children threw over to him at the fireplace. But he felt quite content when he thought how welcome he would be when he came with them all finished. Otherwise it was well known that Ladd-Pelle would rather drink than work.

He stood up painfully, put the coffee-pot on the fire, and blinked smilingly into the room.

'Shall we have a cup of coffee, eh?—Good gracious,' he mumbled to himself, 'the girl actually had sense enough herself to wash the window.'

The children smiled at him, warm and rosy, as if they had been fighting. The little girls sang their babies to sleep with soft, sweetly ringing 'Hennenly Tana.'

Magnus and Per-Erik pounded and scratched with knives and scrapers in the iron kettle, laughing and bellowing:

‘Neptune he plays in the blue, blue waves!’

Not enough with that. They took up a verse that Andy did not like because it seemed to be about him:

‘Andy was a cheerful fellow,
Busy as two ants, or more;
Quick was he as the quickest man,
And strong as any four.’

It seemed to be making fun of him, and he became angry and said they might hit on a better song. And, besides, they needn’t scrape a hole in the bottom of a stranger’s kettle.

‘The iron kettle will hold all right,’ Pelle intervened. ‘It’s so pleasant to hear the children sing. They have never done that before. Both the woman and the children quarreled all the time before they went to America, and there I didn’t want to go. Well, there is such a storm to-day that you’ll have to stay here, for you couldn’t even get to the main road before you’d be buried in all this snow. But I don’t have much to treat on, except spoiled flour for the mush, and herring, and then coffee.’

‘Isn’t that enough?’ said Andy, as he straightened up. He had been bending over, scraping the floor with birch-bark to make it white and dry after the scrubbing.

‘We think it is so comfortable to stay here,’ added Maglena. ‘When we get it ever so little cleaned up here, it will be almost like it was at home, only there we had flowers in the window.’

‘Oh, my goodness!’ continued Maglena. She actually started. ‘I brought the cactus with me in the knapsack.’

She ran to the knapsack which hung on a hook near the fire, dug among the stuff they had gathered together there, and got hold of a big sort of horn, wrapped up in a scarf.

‘See! It’s still alive, think of it, the dear beautiful little cactus! The earth is left too. Please give me a birch-bark box to put it in.’

Pelle pointed to where they were.

And Maglena put into one the rumpled plant, which then hardly gave reason for the description ‘fine and pretty.’

She whispered eagerly a moment with the older brother and sister. Shyly, with a solemn expression, she then went up to the host.

Maglena asked with a trembling voice if he would be so good as to accept her sweet little cactus. The school-teacher had given it to her, and there would be beautiful flowers on it, fiery red, and bigger than a coffee-cup. But it had to be where the sun could shine on it through the window—and it needed water every day.

Ladd-Pelle certainly did not know much about flowers. This one he thought looked more like a beaver’s tail with sharp little needles on it. But he did know enough to understand that the girl was giving away something she prized very highly, so he raised his hand, though he had no cap on to take off, and held out his hand to thank her.

‘You’re welcome,’ said Maglena, as royally condescending as though she had given away a whole flower garden.

‘I don’t know at all what we’re going to do, ’cause I’m altogether out of bread,’ wondered Pelle and pushed his glasses to the back of his head. ‘You see, I didn’t use to bother very much about what I ate. That was silly, but it’s true.’

‘If you only have flour, then we can bake,’ said Anna-Lisa airily. ‘We can heat up the oven.’

‘Well, I do have flour, but it is spoiled, so I don’t know that you can make bread of it.’

‘It was worse for us to make bread last winter and this year, when we had to mix bark and straw in the dough,’ said Anna-Lisa eagerly. ‘Andy,’ she went on, ‘go after wood and heat up the oven. I saw a kneading-trough in the cupboard awhile ago, that I’ll get. And you, Maglena, take the kettle from the boys and put it over the fire, and I’ll put water in it for the dough. It’s a good thing we have chalk here, so we can whitewash the fireplace after we’ve baked.’

‘But,’ continued Anna-Lisa in a troubled voice, ‘it is too bad we haven’t any old carpets to put on the clean floor.’

‘So that’s the way of it, that we are to live like fine folk. Well, go into the little room and bring out the carpets that are there. Take the sheepskin, too, so we can put it over the straw in the corner. Why, it’s going to be just like Christmas. Yes, better, for that matter. I haven’t kept much track of Christmas lately. Come, now, boys, and I’ll show you how to make shoes.’

Magnus and Per-Erik were given waxed thread, bits of homespun, and awls. It was wonderful beyond words to pull the thread high in the air, force the awl through the hard cloth and leather, and instantly feel like accomplished shoemakers.

The fire was soon burning in the oven. Anna-Lisa and Maglena struggled with kneading the dough, and carving out thin cakes on the table.

Andy was responsible for the oven. He took the cakes of bread that the sisters rolled out, pricking them with a pricker made of hen’s feathers fastened together, which made the cakes thick with holes. Then he pushed the cakes into the blazing oven and baked them one at a time near the oven door, where the hearth was newly swept. He had to watch carefully to turn and twist the cakes with the wooden baking-spade so that they would not burn.

The little girls were, of course, included in the baking activities. They had their own baking-table on a not too clean wooden chair. The dolls slept with their wooden heads on the dirty pillow-case which was going to be in the wash before evening.

Altogether there was a hubbub and rumpus in the cottage, life and industry.

Dinner must be made, too.

Pelle came with a suggestion to make pea pancakes in the warm oven. He had pork grease in a crock, so it would be a fine dinner with the fresh bread. It was gray, of course, and hard, and so tough that one could almost pull out one’s teeth with it, but in spite of that boundlessly good, as bread generally is when the children have baked it themselves.

Golden Horn went out and found food as she had before. Afterwards she had remains indoors too. Then she gave milk in quantities. Pelle had been used to other things. Brandy had most often taken the place of both food and drink here.

CHAPTER VI
THE SPECTACLE MAN ALONE AGAIN

T children had stayed with the Spectacle Man two whole days. They laughed at themselves when they told him how he had scared them at first: he who was pure kindness and fun.

The storm had ceased. One saw men driving the snow-plough over the highway. Pelle and Andy had been out to try to tramp a path that far.

The next morning the children were to leave, and they went to bed early. When they had fallen asleep, which was as soon as they touched the straw, Pelle went out. He limped down to the village. People who saw him said, 'Now Pelle is going to the inn again.'

But Ladd-Pelle did *not* go to the inn.

He bought meal at the store with the finished shoes he had with him. He bought sugar and a little pork, also small wheat buns, fourteen of them. He was thinking of the children and that they should have two each the next morning before they left.

When he came home, he sat down to sew with the haste of despair. It was late at night before he went to bed.

But then there were three new pairs of shoes beside the straw bed on the floor.

The little girls had been practically without shoes on their feet, which looked like pieces of meat, red and swollen, when Andy had taken off the rags in the evening. And Anna-Lisa had had such blisters on her heels that they had bled and she had cried when she loosened the ragged shoes from her feet.

Pelle had now done everything he could for them. But he thought it was hard to have them leave the cottage. It seemed as though both warmth and light would leave with the children.

If he could only keep the goat, that fine animal who milked so well! It would be easier to give up brandy, thought Pelle, if he had sweet milk to drink whenever he was thirsty, after the salt-herring breakfast and dinner. Besides, the poor children couldn't drag a goat with them the whole way, he thought, so he asked them if they would give up the goat and leave it with him. He'd get money to pay for it. But it was not to be expected that they would let Golden Horn go. She who gave them warmth, food, who was their good friend, and who was old and homelike to have along.

Father mustn't be angry. But they wouldn't give up Golden Horn for much money, not for any price.

'So that's the way of it, that you are good friends of hers too, and can depend on her. Well, then, I'll have to try to get along without her,' said Ladd-Pelle resignedly.

'It's been so nice here, and many thanks for all of us.' Andy put out his hand and looked up at Ladd-Pelle with such a pure and earnest look that he thought he could never bear being without them.

‘Oh, please, don’t forget that the little cactus needs sunshine and water every day. When we come back again, I’ll have another big beautiful plant for you, father,’ said Maglena. She, too, took his hand and thanked him.

Of course Anna-Lisa thanked him. She could not fully show or say how absolutely delighted she was over the new shoes.

The little girls were lifted up. Martha-Greta stretched out her arms, puckered out her mouth into a pout. ‘Tiss fa’r—oo div Ata-Eta p’itt s’oes.’

‘She wants to kiss you, she says, because you gave her pretty shoes.’

‘So that’s the way of it! And I, poor soul, not worthy to come near such a God’s angel——’

Ladd-Pelle turned abruptly away from the children and went alone into the cottage, empty, but now so neat. He sat down by the fire and sniffed as though all joy in life had left him.

The gray dog, who had been happy to see the unpleasant company leave and had joyfully wagged his tail as a farewell out on the step, now whined mournfully and sympathetically when he found his master in such low spirits in the cottage.

CHAPTER VII
SEPARATED

T little group of children passing through the mountain village attracted little attention. It was altogether too common a sight in those hard times to see whole starving households set out to beg for food.

The Barren Moor children followed Ladd-Pelle's advice and took their way along the river. At first they were both frightened and disheartened, and talked longingly about the Spectacle Man.

But it was so beautiful with so much snow; it was so free and jolly to be out. Before long they were quite content and happy once more. It had cleared, and the drifts stood in high banks along the roadsides. They were so funny, too, the heavy snowdrifts. They lay like thick white blankets on the roofs, blankets which hung away down against the windows. Juniper bushes and low fir trees had comical high pointed caps, and over the old fences the snowdrifts lay in folds like thick woolly white garments.

What a lot there was to see this day! Red two-story houses and small gray cottages they paid little attention to. All this was just as it was at home in their own parish. But women, who climbed through snow over their knees to come to the barns which lay sunken in the white drifts, children who swept and shoveled steps and walks, and men who were busy harnessing and getting ready to drive timber in the woods.

Toward noon the children went into a large red farmhouse near the edge of the settlement. Here they were given food, bread, and boiled herring. Even a bowl of buttermilk was set out for them on the hearth. But they left, quiet and disheartened. The mistress, who had given them of God's loan, had looked so bitter, had thrown the food at them, and muttered, so that they all heard it, that one was absolutely eaten out of house and home by beggars from the mountains.

The master, who had come in and seen them eating, standing in a row at the hearth, had said that such a crowd would be best off in the poor-house, and that, if all his horses weren't in the woods, he'd be wise to take them back.

The children there looked as sullen and sour as though they had lived in the poor-house instead of on a big farm where they were so rich that they had six copper kettles on the shelf above the door and splendid cupboards, and silver spoons in a whole row highest up on the cupboard shelf.

'Even if it was nice there, I think it was finer at Per's,' said Magnus. 'Now he was a nice man.'

'It wasn't finer,' put in Anna-Lisa. 'Think how awful it looked when we came! The floor was dirty and the fireplace black; it hadn't been whitewashed in years; and the window so dirty that you couldn't see through it, and the sheets and pillow-case awful, before we washed them. No, it wasn't finer. It isn't finer now when the floor is white and is covered with carpets, and the fireplace is clean, and the window clear—I don't know——' Anna-Lisa stared puzzled and perplexed before her.

‘No, I don’t know either,’ mused Andy. ‘The bread we got here was of better flour and light and fine too. We got food here, and still I’m kind of mad at them.’

‘And mother, who said we mustn’t be mad, Andy. No, I’m not mad,’ said Maglena. ‘But when I think of them, then I get scared of the people we’ll meet in the settlements. I’m afraid of people that have big farms. They have so much, anyway, that a hard year doesn’t hurt them——’

‘But, anyway, it was better at Per’s.’

The brothers and sisters walked in a group around Andy. They had so much to talk and think about.

‘And there was no mother at Per’s,’ remarked Magnus.

‘No; for then he could have had it comfortable, anyway, and neat in the corners,’ concluded Anna-Lisa.

‘If the mother had been like our mother, before she died——’ added Maglena with a dreamy upward glance.

‘We’ll have to hurry up if we want to get over the river before it gets dark,’ said Andy, and cast a glance around him.

‘It is beginning to blow from the northeast and that’s never a good wind.’

‘But how is it with the little ones now?’ Andy stopped the sled, bent down over the little girls, and tucked the robe about Martha-Greta, who sat rather uncomfortably in front of Brita-Carrie.

‘Martha-Greta says she wants wings so she can fly like the angels,’ said Brita-Carrie.

‘Ata-Eta ’ants two big wings—and fly up to hennenly Tana, ’way to hennenly Tana.’ Martha-Greta’s big deep blue eyes looked earnestly out through the shawl opening.

‘Hear what she says. She wants to fly to heavenly Canaan. Mother is in heavenly Canaan,’ confirmed Maglena, and pushed the shawl back to kiss the little sister who was so dear to the hearts of all of them.

‘Here is a bun for you. I saved it just for you.’

Maglena popped the bun, big as it was, into Martha-Greta’s mouth.

‘Maglena! Do you want to choke our baby?’ said Andy, and jumped to the rescue of the half-choked little one. Then he fed the bun, bit by bit, into her eager mouth.

‘And here you have a little milk to warm yourselves with. She’s a good milker, Golden Horn is.’

Anna-Lisa came forward with quite a large wooden bowl full of foaming warm milk.

‘Go’n Ho’n. Brave Go’n Ho’n!’ came Martha-Greta’s caressing voice from the shawl.

Go’n Ho’n’ pushed her slender nose through the shawl opening.

And then they were away again with renewed strength. The big farm and the angry feelings it had awakened had vanished. The road was already comparatively open. A herd of reindeer had apparently gone by a little while before and tramped down

the snow. The thousands of feet had opened the road a good distance. A ragged cheese vat of braided roots, such as the Lapps use when they make cheese of reindeer milk, lay in the middle of the road.

Maglena picked it up and hung it on the branch of one of the small firs that marked the road.

‘Come, and let it lie there,’ growled Anna-Lisa.

‘It wasn’t comfortable and the little tree begged me to make it nice,’ laughed Maglena. ‘But now I’m beginning to get tired.’

Her voice showed that she was not as gay as she pretended to be.

‘Stand behind on the runners awhile and rest,’ said Andy. ‘Anna-Lisa and I can manage with all three of you a good bit. I am afraid there is snow there in the northwest over the big mountain. But it can’t be long before we can leave the river and reach the village Pelle told us about.’

They went quickly forward over the level road which led over the frozen stream. The little girls were asleep, or at least they were absolutely quiet. And the others were also quiet. There was something threatening, something almost awesome in the air.

A blast of wind came with a long wailing cry.

‘Hu, you would think there were wolves after us, the way the wind howls,’ said Anna-Lisa, and drew the thin cloth closer about her head.

‘But isn’t it easier for you to walk now, anyway, when you have such good shoes?’ asked Andy with a glance at the shoes, which, though most certainly clumsy, were new and fine.

‘I should say so! I can jump in them, and they stay on, anyway.’ Anna-Lisa gave a few awkward jumps forward.

It was as if she thereby irritated a flock of snowflakes which lay in wait for the children, for all of a sudden driving sharp snow enveloped them. Angrily it forced its way through scarfs and shawls. It threw itself in masses across the road, which soon lay in uneven waves. If the little fir trees had not marked the way, the children would soon have gone astray on the wide river plain.

It became harder to pull the sled through the drifted snow. Andy called to Maglena that she would have to jump off the runners now.

Maglena obeyed, and soon afterwards came panting forward to the others, who, with the goat between them, made a close group.

The sled had suddenly become so light.

‘It’s awful how heavy you are. Now it’s as light as nothing,’ said Anna-Lisa, and jerked the rope toward her. She had an altogether different temper since she had new shoes and no longer suffered from blisters.

‘I don’t think it’s easy to get anywhere in this snow,’ muttered Magnus, who was just then in the middle of a drift.

‘But I go along between the drifts, I do,’ panted Per-Erik. ‘It’s a little back and forth, but I can’t climb straight through any more.’

‘Do you think it is far to the village?’ whispered Maglena, and slipped her hand closely into Andy’s.

‘I don’t think so,’ answered Andy, who with wide-open eyes tried to see through the wildly whirling, lashing snowflakes.

‘We must stop and tuck in the little ones first, so they’ll be warmer, and then we can go faster afterwards.’

Andy turned toward the sled. He thought it looked queerly empty through the snowy dusk. In a couple of steps he was beside it. He gave a shriek, a strange, hoarse cry, such a cry as they had never heard from Andy, who was always so quiet and self-contained.

‘What in all the world is the matter with you, boy?’ called Anna-Lisa.

‘Martha-Greta! Can’t you see—Brita-Carrie, listen!’ Andy shook Brita-Carrie, who slept steadily on.

‘Where is Martha-Greta?’

‘I don’t know—she was here all the time.’

‘If you can go on alone, I’ll go back after Martha-Greta,’ said Andy firmly. ‘Walk just fast enough to keep warm, and keep between the trees. Yes, you must do as I say,’ repeated Andy bravely, but thoroughly miserable. But now the group gave a howl of fright, sorrow, and terror at the thought of being left alone without Andy’s comfortable protection.

‘You, Anna-Lisa, ought to be able to be quiet, and you, too, who are men-folk. I must go back and look for Martha-Greta. She probably tumbled off the sled soon after Maglena had jumped off the runners. If you had stayed there, you would have seen it. But I had to get lazy, of course, and not pull so many.’

‘Oh, dear, don’t stand and fuss about it,’ sobbed Maglena. ‘Go and find our Martha-Greta. We’ll go on like big folks. We have the piece of pork to eat, and bread too.’

‘Take care of the children, Anna-Lisa.’

‘Look for the cheese-vat wreath on the tree. When I hung that there, we were all together, and then you needn’t go farther,’ called Maglena after Andy, who, half-running, with wind and driving snow now on his back, was away into the drifted snow-field.

CHAPTER VIII
WHERE IS MARTHA-GRETA?

A quieted and calmed Brita-Carrie with baby talk and a little warm milk. The little one, now youngest, was tucked in solidly on the sled. Maglena, for safety's sake, now walked behind and pushed. She kept her snow-blinded eyes wide open to watch that this little one too should not roll off and be lost to them. Andy's warnings were not necessary—they plodded slowly and heavily through the drifts, tired, frightened, hungry. They walked in heavy grief over little Martha-Greta, who, with her funny talk, her comical little ways, had been such a joy to them all. They forgot entirely how tiresome she had been sometimes, too, when she had cried all night, and had needed to be looked after, dressed, and fed, carried and fussed over in every way.

'I always thought she was a fairy child' (destined to die young), said Anna-Lisa, with tears in her voice.

'Yes, it flew over me, too, when she said she wanted to go to mother in heavenly Canaan,' added Maglena with an old person's sad, troubled expression.

'Well, if only the wolf hasn't taken her,' remarked Magnus, with the wise air of an old man. 'He is dangerous in the winter. Up in Barren Bay he's been away up to the houses.'

'Oh, please keep still!' fumed Maglena. 'Do you want us to go here thinking that the wolf has torn up little Martha-Greta? If Andy doesn't find her, then she flew up herself to "hennenly Tana" and mother has been here after her, even if we didn't see it in the snow.'

'You can't be so sure of that either,' objected Per-Erik warily, and spat in front of him. 'Bostrom at home scared a bear out of his hole, and now he's running around starving, of course. Maybe old Bruin got her.'

'Of course,' Maglena mocked Per-Erik with a whining voice. 'And all the way from home here, where it's nearly the end of the world, he came to eat up our little Martha-Greta. I suppose the big pig at Sven Paul's has come after her too, and the big ram at the school-teacher's, so he can gore her to death.'

Maglena burst into tears. 'You're so horrid to think of such awful things when it's awful enough, anyway, that I—that I get mad. It's nicer to think then that mother flew down after little Martha-Greta, her darling. If she only could, she'd have taken Brita-Carrie and me with her too.'

'Don't begin to talk as if you were a fairy child too.' Anna-Lisa interrupted her sister's angry outburst. 'I think we'd better not think anything till we hear what Andy says when he comes after us.'

'Well, I suppose he'll never find us,' muttered Magnus.

But he did. He came climbing through the snow when the group were so tired, so exhausted that they had strength neither to talk nor to be 'mad' at each other. They couldn't even feel to see if there were any bits of food left.

If only Anna-Lisa had stopped or sat down to rest in a drift, the whole company would have followed her example, first of all the little boys, in their heavy, troublesome clothes. It was Golden Horn, who, most of all, prevented them from sitting down and going to sleep for always. If one of the children only turned to the side with that purpose, she ran off with a loud bleat. And then they had to follow, so afraid were they of losing her. But they could not follow even her much longer.

Magnus, who long had walked stumblingly, fell forward and snarled angrily when Anna-Lisa wanted to help him to his feet and start him off again.

So it was like a miracle when Andy finally came, for with him new life came into the children again somehow.

But he came without Martha-Greta!

He had gone back all the way to the cheese-vat wreath, but had not seen a trace of their little girl.

‘The wolf takes care of what he gets,’ remarked Magnus with a doubtful side-glance at Maglena, who, with a bright look upward, was sure that then she had been right when she said that mother had taken Martha-Greta up to heavenly Canaan. The wolf would surely leave at least some rags, she insisted eagerly.

‘Oh, he probably took her away with him with her clothes on,’ said Magnus stubbornly.

‘What do you think, Andy?’ said Maglena, and crept, trembling with fear, up to her brother.

‘I don’t know. There was only white snow across the road the whole way, Maglena. I can’t bear to think that the wolf has taken little Martha-Greta. It is so awful—as if it were my fault.’

‘You ought to be glad instead, because, you see, mother has taken the little one up to her.’

Maglena stroked her brother’s cheek with her ice-stiffened mitten.

But it did not comfort him. The tears fell and melted together with the lashing, driving snow as he walked on, bent forward dragging the sled, now far too light. He scarcely felt relief when he caught sight of the road up the bank which led from the river to the solid earth again. And now, for the first time, Andy noticed that the storm had passed and the western sky was clearing.

CHAPTER IX
‘HENNENLY TANA’

F [7] was on the way home on exactly the same road over which the children had plodded the last days. He had passed close to the little gray cottage up in Barren Moor, gone through the Great Woods, and, like the children, had had to stay over in the first mountain village because of the storm.

You may be sure he had not thought of staying with the Spectacle Man, not he; he had lived at the inn, and eaten a good breakfast with cheerful old friends. And so he had started away rather late.

Now he was going down the crooked, troublesome road along the river-bank where the children had just passed, to reach the river road. He sat in his little single-horse sleigh in a wolf-skin coat, fur cap, and fine reindeer-skin boots that reached over his knees. The lashing snow did not trouble him much, especially since he would soon have the wind from the side.

The forester intended to cut across and take the direction that only Skylark, his horse, and he himself knew about: across the river, up toward the ridge, and to the big church-village[8] where he had his home.

Just as he was opposite the dwarfed fir which stood farthest out on a point near the road, and which was his landmark for his own short-cut, Skylark shied, and with both forelegs jumped carefully over something which lay right in the middle of the snow-hidden road. Then the horse stood absolutely still, turned her head, and looked at her master.

The forester jumped lightly out of the sleigh. He bent down under the horse.

What in the world was this? A child, alone in this desolation, a poor little one with pale cheeks shining with tears and wrapped in poor man’s rags.

The forester stood awhile absolutely at a loss, with the child in his arms. Was it asleep or dead?

No, it lived—it breathed, began to cry—‘Mother. Andy. Go’n Ho’n. Ita-Tawie.’ The child sobbed, and screamed, and shook with cold.

The young man stood there, stupid and perplexed. He was married and had a home, but he had absolutely no experience or knowledge of how small children should be handled, for he had none himself.

Skylark looked as if she understood the affair better. She scraped in the snow with her front feet, tossed her head, and looked at her master. What was simpler than to take this little human colt which she had nearly trampled to death, and rush home with it? There it would have warmth and care.

As if the forester had understood the horse’s thought, he suddenly knew what to do. He took the little screamer and thrust her inside his fur coat. But with rather decided unwillingness, for the forester was a very refined and neat person, afraid of dirt and rags, most of all afraid of crying, smutty-nosed youngsters. And this one was both crying and smutty-nosed in highest degree.

She sat fast now inside the warm coat. Gradually she quieted down, lulled by the rocking of the sleigh over the unbroken snow, and by the pretty jingle of the sleighbells that rang out lustily. For no matter how hard it was to get through the snow, Skylark plodded on with all her strength. She knew it was important to get home with this poor little frozen human.

A strange feeling came over the forester, who at first had held the little one straight up in front of him, fast inside of his belt, like a stick of wood, when he felt the thin little body tremble with gradually lessening sobs.

What a happy feeling to be able to comfort and help such a little one! He pulled her up into an easier position inside the coat.

What could such a poor mite need in the way of food? ‘God help me,’ he thought. ‘In spite of all I ate and drank this morning, I haven’t so much as the tiniest bit of bread for such a little one.’

‘You’ll have to hurry, my girl,’ he warned the horse.

Skylark sniffed and lifted her head. Hadn’t she been hurrying against a wild snowstorm that tore at mane and tail—waded in the snow to the belly sometimes! But, of course, she could speed up a little more! Yes, she could break her wind, run until she dropped on the spot too, if her master wished it! her master, whom she had served for ten years, and journeyed with in woods and mountains.

The road up through the big forest they now approached was open. Skylark dashed off so that the very bell-collar rang. Toward twilight she had reached the big mountain parish that spread out over the wide valley. Up a steep hill it went. White-stemmed birches marked the way.

They rode through it, turned off to a bright red painted house, with a balcony and veranda in green and white. Firelight shone through the windows, and the smoke rose, straight as an arrow, into the air, which was high and clear with the afterglow of the sunset a rosy red, and already stars gleamed in the sky.

‘Welcome home again, Arthur,’ called a young woman from the veranda. She stood still there with a big woolen shawl over her head. The face which peeped out was delicate and pale, with light hair which curled about in front of the shawl.

‘Thanks, little woman! Ask Dordi to come and get what I’ve got with me.’

Dordi, the old servant who had taken care of the forester’s wife as a child, came jovially down the steps. It happened sometimes that the forester had something especially good in the way of food, or something else with him, a bear steak, a wolf-skin, or different kinds of birds. So Dordi was prepared to be loaded down. But she drew back in alarm.

‘Goodness gracious, master! What have we to do with such a thing? Go in, ma’am, it’s cold.’

But now came a cry from the sleigh, a disconsolate, forlorn baby cry.

The young mistress threw aside the shawl. She ran down the stairs in a couple of steps, took the crying bundle of rags in her arms and carried it up. ‘Little mite—poor little mite—what have they done to you? Hush, hush, now. We’ll soon be where it’s warm and can get some food into the poor little body.’

Mistress Gerda was not afraid of screaming, dirty-faced youngsters. She was used to little children from her own childhood home where there had been a big family of children. To her deep secret sorrow, she herself had no children. Her wish for a foster-child was not approved by her husband. He did not want to 'take the responsibility of other people's children,' and suffered at the very thought of 'naughty, disobedient, crying, dirty children.' Any other kind of child he could not imagine. And now it was he himself who had brought a child to the house!

Later in the evening, after he had eaten and rested, the forester sat and watched how his wife quickly and cleverly made big garments into little ones; how she, in a marvelous way, got together a little dress, light blue in color, a little apron, little bits of underwear.

She was so eager, his little wife. Her light hair curled down over her forehead, and the cheeks that were otherwise so pale were a rosy red, with eagerness and sewing. She looked up at her husband with glowing eyes.

'Arthur, we *may* keep her for the present? You should see her! She's lying, all tucked in, in a big clothes-basket out with Dordi.'

'Till the one she belongs to comes, I suppose she'll have to stay. We can't exactly throw her out on the road. It's a wonder that none of the wolves that have been around these days came upon her.'

'Ugh, and you shot two of those beasts the day before yesterday. Oh, if only no one owned her! Her name must be Henrietta, for she calls herself "Ata-Eta." She is so sweet! And do you know, she folded her hands when I gave her gruel and bread, and said, "T'ank oo," and she talks so funny.'

'I can imagine what such a half-year-old youngster, or whatever she is, can say.'

'She's more than a half-year old, my dear; why, she has her whole mouth full of small white teeth, and she walks around so prettily. She must have a good mother.'

'I hope so, for the child's sake, if it ever gets back to her.'

'Oh, no, Arthur! We can't let her go! She must have a sister or other good friend who gives her milk, for when she got milk right after she came, she called, time after time "Go'n Ho'n." "Ita-Tawie" she says often too. I used to be good at guessing baby talk, and my guess is that she means "little kitty." To-morrow I'll try to get a cat for her. When she was in bed, after we had warmed her poor frozen little feet, she folded her hands again and sang, do you know, with a really good voice, such a sweet song.'

'With words, too?' asked the forester, a little mockingly, although he could not help listening with obvious pleasure to his wife's description.

'Words, of course, but I couldn't make out what they meant. She sang the same words over and over again, so sweetly with her head on the side, "Hennenly Tana."'

'Oh, "Many, many swans"! That is a song my mother used to sing to me at bedtime when I was a child, a song about many wild swans. I believe it was that song that made me love the woods and animals so well that I became a woodsman.'

'But it is certainly strange that this poor mite away from the north and the western famine districts should come here and sing a song that you, who are a Scanian,[9] fell asleep to when you were small. And then that you, who never thought of

understanding baby talk, now understand right away what she sings. There must be some meaning in it.'

'Yes, it is strange. I don't deny that,' said the forester, quite flattered at his wife's appreciation of his ability to understand baby talk.

'If no one comes and demands her, she may stay, for me. It will be hardest for you, who'll have to take care of her.'

'For me! Oh, Arthur, after I've longed so for a little child!'

The forester drew his wife close.

'Do you know, so have I sometimes.'

He went out whistling 'Many, many swans,' a song he had not sung since he was a little boy.

CHAPTER X
A DAINTY LITTLE MAID

E days later the children came slowly, with tired, dragging feet, up the steep hill toward the bright red house where the forester lived. It was a little by-way off the main road, and Andy and Anna-Lisa had not really been in favor of taking it. Maybe they'd hardly get a piece of bread in return for the long, tiring walk. With so many famine people passing through this whole winter, it was easy to understand that people would get tired of giving.

But Maglena thought that the bright red house up on the hill looked as though it were painted with red whortleberries and cream, and as if it laughed and winked at them with the small windows that looked like eyes up under the roof.

Golden Horn had the same thought as Maglena. She turned abruptly in on the road up to the wooded hilltop, and almost ran, so that the children simply had to follow her.

As usual, they became quiet and timid when they approached the house. The big dog that barked at them did not scare them, however. He looked more dignified and stately than angry. The children turned their steps toward the kitchen and left the sled outside. This time they meant to leave Per-Erik with Golden Horn.

Suddenly, before the children had had time to go in, they saw a lovely young lady coasting down toward the yard from a short hill a little higher up. She had a little girl in front of her on the sled. The little one was dressed in a white kid-skin coat, a little white knitted cap, and had small shoes on her feet. She laughed and jumped in the lady's lap, plainly delighted at coasting. The lady stood up, lifted her up, and kissed her.

'You darling little Etta child, now we must go in. The child must eat and take a nap, and grow to be mother's fine big girl.'

'*Go'n Ho'n! Go'n Ho'n! Andy! Ita-Tawie! Alena!*'

The little one wriggled wildly to tear herself away from the arms that held her so tenderly.

Mistress Gerda turned quickly. She put down the child, who ran eagerly away from her, dropped her arms, and stood still: a picture of sorrow and desolation.

The children seemed petrified. They stood absolutely silent, immovable. But Golden Horn took in the situation at once. She gave a bleat and ran forward to Martha-Greta. What was it to her that the little one was as dainty as a princess? Wasn't it still the same little man-kid that she used to give milk and warm with her coat?

'Go'n Ho'n!'

Martha-Greta threw her arms around the goat's head that was bent down to her.

She stretched out her arms.

'Tiss! Nite Andy! Andy tate Ata-Eta!'

And Andy picked up the little sister in his arms. He stroked her cheeks, her hands. ‘Little girl! Our little baby! Our own dear Martha-Greta. It’s been so hard without you!’

Martha-Greta held her arms around his neck as though she would never let him go. But then there were the others who also wanted their share; little Brita-Carrie and the rest had made a circle around her and pulled the arms and legs of their restored treasure to get hold of her and caress her and pet her, they, too.

‘Martha-Greta, nice dear sweet little girl,’ whom they had missed so deeply. The same little one even though she was dressed in fine clothes. They did not let her go, but when they came as beggars into the kitchen they had the little white-clad, well-cared-for youngster right in their midst.

CHAPTER XI
TWO LITTLE MAIDS

W the Barren Moor children set out again from the forester's home, they were only five. Brita-Carrie had been allowed to stay with the little sister. So the two little maids were together again.

It was the forester himself who had wished it. Orderly person that he was, he noticed and marveled when the new little ragamuffin who, he thought, would scarcely know enough to feed herself, came into his room to thank him for her meal and at once saw his paper-knife under the table. 'Is a knife under table,' she piped, in a sweet voice and crept down after the object in question.

And sure enough, the paper-knife he prized so highly and had searched for in vain lay under the deerskin there.

'Won't you give it to me?' he said, and stretched out his hand toward her.

Brita-Carrie went to him at once and gave him the knife.

The forester, who knew how hard it was to teach dogs to retrieve, was taken aback. He had thought that it would be harder to get a child to mind.

'Ita-Tawie, tom, new doll, sin' hennenly Tana to new doll.'

Martha-Greta, who was already at home in the forester's pretty pleasant rooms, came toddling in and pulled Brita-Carrie with her. She wanted to show her a new doll, a real one, with clear eyes in a fine porcelain head, and she wanted them to sing it to sleep as they used to with other dolls.

The little ones put the doll to bed in a sewing-machine drawer in the bedroom. In there, with her foster-parents, Martha-Greta now had her own pretty little bed. Brita-Carrie put her doll too in the machine-drawer, a stick of wood wrapped up in rags. Then they sang sweetly and devoutly their song about heavenly Canaan to the two sleepy dolls, while they rocked the drawer between them.

Gerda, the foster-mother, ran after her husband. He must hear and see them, see and compare the already rosy-cheeked, happy-eyed little foundling in neat pretty clothes, with the other, the little paleface with suffering in her eyes, and in thin worn-out rags. Gerda knew well why she wanted to give her husband this glimpse of them.

The two stood close to each other, and listened to the children's song.

'Arthur, they're singing about "Heavenly Canaan." Listen to the new little one, and it *isn't* about "many, many swans,"' she added shyly. 'You don't think you've been fooled by the little angel?'

'No, indeed! I'll tell you now I absolutely do not want to be without her. It would be altogether too empty and quiet in the house again.'

'Arthur, do you remember the proverb that says, "The kettle that cooks for one, cooks just as well for two"?'

'You mean—well, God knows——'

The forester looked thoughtfully at the two little ones there on the floor, who continued to sing and rock the machine-drawer. One of them he would, and wanted to keep. But the other—the pale little being with thin cheeks and the dark, suffering eyes—Well, she must go out on the roads again. And no mother and father owned them, his wife had said.

'Well, then, *let* the kettle cook for two,' he said at last.

The children sang and sang, while the foster-parents, serious, with bright faces, went out to the older children who sat in the kitchen and talked with Dordi. They did not want to take the little ones without the consent of the older ones. And one can well understand that in a little house, where the very windows smiled and winked up under the eaves, and where the house itself seemed painted with red whortleberries and cream, there would be a good place for the little ones to stay.

CHAPTER XII
EARNINGS AND THE MONEY QUESTION

W the rest of the children went on their way, they were no longer so unhappy. They had so many wonderful things to talk about. First of all about the lovely lady with the gentle eyes, and then about the sheets with lace edgings and about the red quilts in the little girls' beds, and about the fine food the little ones would have every day now.

'And, you know, they have come to really good people, the kind mother would have liked,' said Andy earnestly. 'The lady sat by the bed last night and heard the little ones' prayers, and then she said that they should pray God to protect their brothers and sisters who were homeless and make them good. I liked that, and that is why I let them stay.'

'You would have had to let them stay at the big farm if they had wanted them there, even if the people there were mean and sour,' said Anna-Lisa a little sneeringly.

'Never in all the world!' said Andy vehemently. 'Don't you dare say that!—there where the master swore so terribly. All sorts of evil can come to such a house, and the little girls would suffer from that too.'

'But they had four horses and a gun on the wall, and the master had a sheath-knife that was real fancy, so the girls would have been well off in a way,' thought Magnus.

'You should see the sheath-knife I got from the forester,' interrupted Andy. He showed a knife in a sheath, a knife with a shining black handle and a leather sheath, a knife with a gleaming sharp edge and a slender point.

'Well, I never!' Magnus stopped in the middle of the road as if turned to stone. 'He must have a thousand kronor[10] if he can give away such a thing. How did it happen that he did that?'

'I was going to help Dordi cut kindling wood and had only my old knife. I don't know whether she said something to the forester, but when I went in to thank him for all of us, he gave me the knife. And then he said that a good Swede who knows how to use a knife right can always get along and live with honor.'

'It sounds beautiful, such talk,' said Maglena dreamily.

'The lady there was so awfully good too, she gave me such nice yarn. Look here ____'

Maglena took out a paper bag from the shawl which was bound about her waist. They stood still now, for they were in a grove of trees and away from the eyes of people. She sat down on the sled.

'Look here—red yarn for roses and green for leaves and brown for stalks.'

'But where—where in all the world are they going to be?' asked Anna-Lisa, looking just as surprised as all the others, who gazed in the greatest astonishment at Maglena's splendor. It included even a bone crochet hook, and a set of knitting needles stuck through a ball of gray yarn, in which sat also a shining darning

needle.

‘This is what she said to me, that nice lady: “Can you knit?” said she.’

‘Good gracious! I should hope so,’ sniffed Anna-Lisa.

‘Yes, and I said so, so there! You might let me finish! “Yes,” said I.’

‘“Look here,” said she.’

‘What did you see then?’ asked Per-Erik, deeply interested, letting his hand slide over the yarn as if he wished to caress it.

‘Honestly, you ask and fuss until I eat up what I was going to say and can’t remember it.’

‘You were going to see something,’ Andy helped her.

‘So I was, but be quiet now. She showed me a pair of mittens, such nice mittens that you’ve never seen the like.’

‘They cost a lot of money, of course,’ said Magnus thoughtfully.

‘Yes, they did, but not for those who made them—then it costs only the yarn.’

‘The yarn, yes, but that doesn’t cost so little either,’ mused Anna-Lisa.

‘You’re all so awfully bothersome, the way you hunt up troubles, that I hardly want to finish,’ grumbled Maglena. But she graciously took out a half-finished mitten, to which the white worsted still clung.

It was crocheted, the way the women in Norrland used to crochet fine warm mittens with a little bone crochet hook. And on that half were sewed, with yarn, red roses, green leaves, and brown stalks.

‘Do you suppose you can guess now where the roses and leaves will be?’ Maglena let the little half-mitten pass between her brothers and sister.

‘Yes, but who is going to make them? You certainly can’t do anything so fine and so pretty,’ said Magnus superiorly, and with crushing conviction.

‘No, of course not,’ answered Maglena saucily. ‘I suppose you think you could do it better—you who darn stockings as if you were tying up a sack of flour, just pulling the hole together, no matter how big it is.’

‘Careful, Maglena, don’t be saucy,’ warned Andy. ‘It’s never nice when women-folk are like that.’

‘Well, then he can keep quiet when he doesn’t know anything about it.’

‘It’s because he doesn’t know that he asks,’ continued Andy patiently. ‘I don’t know either how you are going to make such roses or when you’ll have time for such things.’

‘Yes, but I know. When you were out yesterday and carried in wood for them and shoveled snow, I was with the lady and she helped me mend my jacket. And she let me sew this apron for myself.’

‘She let me sew one for me too,’ said Anna-Lisa proudly.

‘And when that was finished, she showed me how to crochet. Look here, now. But it is awfully hard, of course.’

With stiff, frost-reddened fingers, her mouth solemnly pinched together, Maglena showed what the others considered her marvelous ability to crochet.

‘And now comes the most wonderful.’

Importantly she threaded a tapestry needle with red yarn.

‘Then, you see—comes the really strange thing—that I can—sew—so beautifully.’

She sewed only a couple of stitches, but it aroused noticeable respect among the rest.

Suddenly she jumped up, tucked away the yarn, and beat the air wildly with her arms, for the place in the snow in zero weather was not the best for a sewing school.

‘After that, you see, I’ll knit mittens and sew roses on them and—*sell* them, you see—and get money—and I’ll buy us a little house that looks like raspberries and cream and has windows that laugh up under the roof. The little girls and all of us will make mittens. *Swedish* mittens—’cause the lady said that anything we do we should remember that Sweden’s name goes with it, and you must do everything you do so that you don’t shame your country, of course. As soon as spring comes, I’ll begin to knit while I walk. She said that women used to do that. I’ll knit stockings in the daytime, and in the evening, while we sit in some birch wood, I’ll crochet and sew roses that will be just as pretty as real briar-roses.’

‘Not that I’m going to start knitting mittens,’ said Magnus, as he straightened up and tucked in the overflow of long, dragging coat-sleeves at the wrists. ‘No, for my part, I am going to America and dig up so much gold that I can buy the whole Barren Moor parish and the church too, if I want to, and fill it with berries and cheese, raspberries and pork, and——’

Magnus flew to the side of the road. Shrieking and frightened he put his hand to his cheek. A box on the ear burned there. Andy, who had never punished the children while mother lived, and who had a marvelous patience with them, became suddenly furiously angry.

Magnus got a box on the ear, and Andy now continued to shake him as if he had been a sack of potatoes in which one needed more room.

‘Boy, aren’t you ashamed? Are you going to care more for a foreign land than for our own? “Go after gold”—like our uncle who was lost there? And, besides, that you should take that gold to buy the church, just so you could buy the beautiful church where they preach about God, for a storehouse? That’s making light of great things, Magnus, and I won’t stand such talk.’

The children walked quietly, considerably impressed by Andy’s unexpected outburst of anger, Magnus sulking and bellowing by turns.

‘It is better for a man to make mittens with honor than to take up sacksful of gold and use it for what is wrong—remember that, Magnus,’ continued Andy, still panting with indignation. He climbed through the drifts into the forest of low trees, and with the sharp knife cut off the top of a tree, on which the little branches sat so closely together as to make a good kitchen whisk. He was trying to be good again.

‘Now that the little girls don’t sit on the sled any longer,’ said he, ‘I thought I could carry stuff on it to work on in the evenings, when we come to some farm where there is fire on the hearth or in the laundry or in the farmhands’ room.’

‘Do you intend to make kitchen whisks and brooms?’ asked Anna-Lisa with a certain respect in her voice for the brave brother.

‘I’ve thought about it. Wooden spoons too. Grandfather at Sven Paul’s was good at making wooden spoons, but I never had a knife to try too.’

‘And I’ll paint them for you,’ called Maglena to Andy in the grove. ‘Such pretty little blue roses and daisies. I’ll make paint the way mother did, out of leaves and flowers and roots.’

‘May I help you make spoons when I get big?’ mumbled Magnus when he came near Andy out in the road.

‘That you shall, boy. Here, you can have my old knife, and then you can begin to get stuff together now, even if you are small.’

‘We can sell the spoons, too, Andy, and get money. But I won’t buy the church, because then the minister can’t read there.’

‘No, and we can’t sit there and listen, and sing and read, so that we get to be good people as mother wanted us to be.’

CHAPTER XIII
IN THE PLACE OF THE DEAD

W the children, a few days later, had emerged from the poorest of the mountain districts, they came one evening to a farm where sickness and sorrow reigned. It was a big rich farmstead. The eldest girl had just died, only ten years old. And now the little boy, the only son, seven years old, lay sick with the same disease of which the sister had died. The wife, a stately, beautiful woman, stood over the fire and whipped barley-meal into the boiling water, when the little group of children with, as usual, shy, timid faces, came in.

She had a stern husband, and had to do her work well and as usual, even though sorrow filled her heart and anxiety over the little one who, too, might be taken from her, tortured her.

She turned toward the door when it remained open so long in order to let in all the five children.

To-day they pushed Anna-Lisa ahead of them. It was always so hard for those who were poorly clad to come into such a big fine house, and ask for food and sleeping room.

The wife stared at Anna-Lisa.

‘Come up to the fire, child,’ she said with a sad, gentle voice. She put out her hand to greet Anna-Lisa, who was much impressed. It wasn’t usual to be greeted like that when one was one of the famine people.

‘What may your name be, girl?’ asked the wife, and pushed back the scarf from Anna-Lisa’s light hair.

‘Anna-Lisa,’ she answered, and looked up into the mistress’s sad eyes with her honest blue ones.

‘No, that can’t be possible! “Anna-Lisa,” like our Anna-Lisa, whom the Lord took away!’

The wife put both hands to her head, and sank down on the hearth bench. She had already removed the gruel kettle from the fire.

‘Yes, it is true,’ assured Andy, and stepped forward. ‘Her name is Anna-Lisa, like our grandmother, who is dead.’

The husband came in, followed by the two farmhands. They were covered with snow, although out on the step, they had stamped off the worst of what had covered them in the woods where they had been driving timber.

Though he was still a young man, he walked with bent head.

‘How is our little chap?’ he asked his wife as he passed her.

‘Same as the girl. The Lord will probably take him too.’

The master went silently to the table, sat down, and said grace. He took a wooden spoon and ate out of the same dish as the men, though each one had his own wooden bowl of milk. There were also goat’s-milk cheese, bread, and butter on the

table.

‘Has Mother Gullen gone?’ he asked in a low voice.

‘She left before noon, but then she couldn’t do anything more for little Karl. Even if we drove the ninety miles to the doctor’s, it wouldn’t help any. He’s half-unconscious now—we’ll soon be childless.’

The man ate spoonful after spoonful, but it was plain that sorrow filled him, as well as his wife, who, outwardly calm, stood by the table and cut up rye bread for the woodsmen, who also looked depressed.

‘But there’s no scarcity of little people, otherwise, I see,’ said the master bitterly. ‘When one can’t keep and feed one’s own, it’s best to send other people’s children away.’

‘That would be a sin, it seems to me,’ said the wife patiently. ‘If we’ll soon be without children, these poor things, I hear, are without parents. I think that is just as hard.’

It was perfectly quiet in the big kitchen, which the fire lighted up brightly. The copper kettles over the door shone in a long rich-man’s row. The built-in beds were provided with red striped curtains. The tall Dalecarlian clock was quite gorgeous, painted blue with red roses. There were neat rag carpets on the white scrubbed floor. And inside the shining window-panes, with their airy hand-woven curtains, were seen flowers, myrtles, balsamines, snap-dragons, fuchsias. So it was an unusually pleasant room, which was not put to shame by the three spinning-wheels, pushed to one side for the moment.

‘Go and greet father, Anna-Lisa,’ said the wife, and pushed the girl toward the master with a sad, meaningful smile.

Anna-Lisa reddened painfully when she went forward alone. She looked gentle and sweet at this moment, pleasant, neat, and combed, though her clothes were poor and worn.

The master looked up surprised.

‘What in the world is *your* name, girl?’

‘Anna-Lisa.’ She looked timidly and anxiously over at her sister and brothers.

The master put his hands to his head as if confused, just as his wife had done.

‘Heavens, Brita Dea, she looks just exactly like our Anna-Lisa before she was sick!’

‘I thought, too, when I saw her here, that our Anna-Lisa went away so that this one should come in her stead.’

The wife looked steadily and earnestly at her husband. She took Anna-Lisa’s hand, and put her arm slowly, almost caressingly, around the girl’s neck, while she led her back to the rest beside the fire.

When the men, after thanking God for food, left the table, she set it for the children. Milk and mush, and, what wasn’t often their lot, sandwiches of the fine, and at that time highly prized, rye bread.

Then she went quickly and quietly away. The children understood that she went to see the sick boy.

They sat around the table, restless and thoughtful. The talk about Anna-Lisa's staying worried them.

The wife came out of the little room off the kitchen, where the sick child lay. She went swiftly through the kitchen and out.

'Maybe he is dead,' whispered Anna-Lisa. 'Then they'll be angry with the Lord, and will chase us away.'

'No,' objected Maglena. 'Didn't you see that her eyes were shining? More likely the boy is better, and then they will be glad and want to thank the Lord, and then they'll take you, Anna-Lisa.'

Again the children sat in depressed spirits.

Suddenly Anna-Lisa put her head down on her hands which were folded on the table. She wept—wept, though so quietly that no one could hear it. But her shoulders shook, and the hopeless position of her head betrayed her.

The children munched their fine sandwiches in anxious silence.

'Please, Anna-Lisa, please,' said Andy, and tried to draw her hands away. It seemed to him so hard, so unusual, to see Anna-Lisa, who was generally so quiet and calm, weeping so helplessly.

Anna-Lisa raised her face, red with weeping.

'I don't want to be without you—first the little girls, I miss them awfully—and then all of you.'

'Well, it will be hard for us too,' said Andy gently. 'You've been so good to the little ones, and to all of us, for that matter.'

'And who will milk Golden Horn—and mend for the boys—and wash and keep you in order?' sniffed Anna-Lisa. She looked at the two smallest at the table with a troubled, motherly eye. 'You don't wash or comb yourselves if I don't keep after you.'

Magnus and Per-Erik lowered their eyes guiltily. Brave men as they wanted to be, they thought it terribly bothersome, all this combing and washing. It wasn't any fun either on Saturday nights to have to pull off the shirt which wrapped around their bodies so warmly, and then struggle to get their arms into another which would be icy cold, yes, even wet, thought the boys, since it had lain in the knapsack where snow and the cold wind had got into it. And no shirt ever really fitted them either. The shirt, as well as other garments, came always as a surprise to them—sometimes it was so big it hung down and dragged. Another time it was so small and tight that your nose got squeezed when the change took place.

Anna-Lisa used to rub their necks and ears and eyes with soft soap and water, and wipe them with old clothes that were washed but not mangled, of course, and so hard that 'they scratched like wolves' claws,' insisted the little men when they rose in opposition.

They sat at the table truly alarmed lest Anna-Lisa should stay here; though they didn't have the same worries that she did about the coming lack of neatness and order. The only thing that would comfort them in her absence was just the suddenly flaming hope that without her they should go free of water, soft soap, and towels.

‘You’d be well off here, Anna-Lisa,’ said Andy with an attempt at cheerfulness in his voice. ‘You’ll have a real bed to sleep in and this kind of food all the time.’

‘And you’ll all be on the roads, and I’ll be thinking that you are sleeping in some cold shed where you’ll get vermin from other famine people, and that you never have enough to eat.’

‘We’ve had that too sometimes. Don’t you remember the big farm where they had such a lot of children, anyway, and we got a whole kettleful of pea soup? They cooked it just especially for the wandering people.’

‘Yes, and I’ll probably stand here and cook for such people too,’ continued Anna-Lisa complainingly, ‘and think that you are hungry and do not know a single day in advance where you are going to get a bed for the night.’

‘Oh, but that isn’t so bad,’ Maglena’s soft voice chimed in. ‘We’ve never had to sleep outside, and pretty soon it is going to be so light all night that we can sleep out on the ground with the flowers.’

‘And then I’ll be lying in a bed,’ said Anna-Lisa with the same complaining voice.

But at the same time she smiled a little shame-facedly. And with that a bright feeling of relief went through the rest.

‘It is awful how hard it is to be satisfied,’ said Andy contemplatively. ‘I’ve gone all this time and thought how nice it would be if we all came to really fine good people —that mother would like—and now——’

Andy became quiet; it was evident that he found it hard to think of possibly leaving the thoughtful, capable sister behind them.

‘You must go with us, wherever we go, Anna-Lisa,’ murmured Maglena with the last bit of bread in her mouth. She wiped nose and fingers on the mended, washed-out apron, and rubbed her head against Anna-Lisa’s cheek.

‘You see, it’s always fun to be outside—even if it isn’t so comfortable, you always see so much. The snow gets into such queer shapes on everything. And it’s fun to see the tracks in the snow when it is smooth on the marshes and fields. There are long ripples in it, just like lace. Rabbits and foxes and dogs and magpies and crows all mark the snow with their feet in different ways, so it is nice enough for a wedding.’

‘I don’t see anything like that. I see only you,’ murmured Anna-Lisa sorrowfully.

‘Yes, you must come with us again, Anna-Lisa, do you hear? Now it will soon be spring and the big streams open up and they sing so beautifully. We have Golden Horn with us, so we’ll have milk to drink—and marsh berries on the marshes and blueberries and strawberries, as much as we can eat.’

‘Yes, if we’ve been out and had a hard time this winter, I guess we can get along in the summer too,’ said Magnus decidedly.

‘Girl, I think you ought to go with us,’ asserted Per-Erik. The words cost him a certain amount of self-conquest, for the threatening danger of washing and combing stood always before him.

‘Be quiet,’ warned Anna-Lisa, and raised her head to listen. ‘There was a voice in the little room; the boy is alive; maybe he wants some one.’

She tiptoed across the room and paused perplexed at the door.

‘Come here—I don’t want to be alone,’ she heard a thin weak voice call.

‘Is it you, Anna-Lisa?’ said the little patient on the sofa. ‘Sing, “Wherever I go” to me—then I’ll go to sleep.’

The boy turned his face, now damp with perspiration after a sudden turn for the better, to the wall, closed his eyes, and waited for the song.

Anna-Lisa knew the song well, but it went against her to sing alone, and in a strange place.

‘Sing, do you hear?’ called the boy in an invalid’s impatient voice.

Anna-Lisa sang softly:

‘Wherever I go, in forests, hills, and valleys,
A Friend follows me,
I hear His voice.’

While she sang, she stroked and cooled the boy’s forehead with a linen rag which she moistened in the water in a porcelain mug that stood on a chair by the bed.

The wife came in with her husband. It was he that she had gone to find and bring with her. He too should see the miracle that had happened to the boy, their only child.

The man was so moved when he saw the child, who, red with fever, had recently been throwing himself about in pain, now lying in quiet, healthy sleep, that he involuntarily clasped his hands in thanks and praise to a helping God.

Anna-Lisa interrupted her song and stood up to leave the room.

The man took her arm.

‘You shall stay with us, girl, for as happy as I am now I’ve never been in all my life.’

Anna-Lisa drew slowly away from him. Unhappy and frightened, she glanced at the door. It seemed as if all the world’s treasure that she was about to lose were on the other side of it.

‘Aren’t you glad to get away from need and trouble, and have a home and protection here all your days now, when I’ve thought you should stay here for always?’ asked the young master, surprised and almost displeased when he saw the girl’s anxious expression.

‘Yes,’ answered the girl in a low voice. ‘Only it is so hard to think of the little boys. I am the one that has washed them and combed them, and milked Golden Horn so that they had sweet milk every day. The smallest one is not so old as this boy, and he must be on the roads while I am comfortable.’

CHAPTER XIV
PER-ERIK AND ANNA-LISA

A big blue eyes filled with tears. She went out to her brothers and sister. The master followed her. He glanced keenly at the little boys.

‘So this is the little one you worry most about? My goodness, such a little fellow to have walked all the way from Barren Moor!’

‘I’m not so little. I’m going on six since Candlemas.’

Per-Erik answered the young man’s glance hastily. He scraped the dish once more, and licked off the wooden spoon systematically and with emphasis.

The master smiled a bit.

‘Maybe they wouldn’t want to let you go, eh?’

Per-Erik stared with big eyes toward the fire.

‘I don’t know what to say. I suppose it would be hard for them not to have any one to worry over, and keep after, now that the little girls were left at the forester’s.’

The wife came in. She stood and listened to the boy’s chatter with a brighter, happier expression than any she had had since her only daughter’s death.

‘Then you can’t get on without him?’ wondered the master with a little special, meaning look at Andy.

Andy met his glance soberly.

‘It isn’t worth talking about that until such a thing comes into question.’

‘There is good, real stuff in these children,’ said Mistress Brita Dea. ‘I believe they bring what is good and blessed to the house.’

‘Maybe we could let this brave little fellow stay here too for a while,’ said the farmer doubtfully. He scratched himself thoughtfully behind the ear.

‘Little Karl will probably get well quicker if he has a playmate,’ said Brita Dea.

Andy became eager too. If Anna-Lisa was to be taken away from them, it would be still harder to take care of the little ones in all the strange, often unpleasant, conditions they came upon.

There were so many bad examples; so much evil would meet the boy’s eyes, so much light-minded chatter, scolding, and quarreling and coarse swearing would reach his ears when one went thus from house to house.

‘It would be awfully nice if Per-Erik could stay at such a place, so he could grow to be a fine man,’ said Andy. His deep dark eyes looked earnestly up at the big strong farmer who stood in front of him.

‘When I get a little older, I’m going to get work as a goatherd, or chore-boy, where I can learn something, and then I’ll come back and get Per-Erik, if he may stay until then.’

‘So he may. I can’t bear to think of our little Karl being sent away and walking the roads the way this little one would be doing. There is real courage in you too, boy. And I believe you’ll do what you say you’ll do, so you can come some day and take the little one again if you keep your health.’

The wife, greatly pleased, put out her hand to Andy with a warm, strong pressure.

‘Make a bed for the boy in the north upper bed,’ said the man. ‘He seems to be clean and neat, even if he does come from the highways.’

Yes, Per-Erik well knew that he was ‘clean and neat.’ It was only Monday now, and the memory of the last Saturday bath, this time followed by a tight, nose-squeezing shirt, was still all too fresh in his mind.

‘Anna-Lisa may lie there too,’ said Brita Dea. Her face shone with happiness, and she talked with the children as if they were old friends.

The maid, who came in with the evening milk foaming in a big blue painted firkin, stopped at the door as if petrified. When she went out to feed and milk the cows, it had been quiet in the house: quiet as when death has taken and stands threatening to take still more. And now—happy, babbling child voices, the clatter of spoons and dishes being washed. In front of the fire a little maid with curly hair who was sewing red roses on a mitten. A boy, who was cutting kindling wood and sweeping the hearth, after putting more wood on the fire. Mistress Brita Dea herself at the spinning-wheel again.

‘Dear me, how cheerful this is!’ said Stina. She opened the door of a big cupboard, where clean empty milk-bowls were ranged in racks, one above the other. Then she put a sieve over each bowl in turn, and poured in the warm milk with a dipper.

The big cat that sat and stared from the bench by the cupboard was also given some in his saucer near the water-barrel at the door.

Stina helped herself to butter, bread, and cold mush from the sideboard. Then she too pulled out a spinning-wheel, and worked so that the wheel looked like a cloud, while the linen thread, fine as silk, increased on the spool.

‘Take these boys to the stable-room,’ said the mistress at last. ‘See that they have pillow-cases and a decent sheepskin cover. The girls and Per-Erik are to be here in the upper bed. Will you see if little Karl is sleeping well first?’

The mistress and Stina went in to the little room on tiptoe.

Stina looked unutterably pleased when she came out. She went up to Anna-Lisa and took her hand.

‘Welcome to us, girl—and you too, little fellow. We’ll be good friends, I feel sure.’

CHAPTER XV
GHOSTS ON THE ICE

‘U , it’s just exactly as if we were all alone in the whole world,’ said Maglena, and drew closer about her the little home-woven shawl she had been given by Mistress Brita Dea.

‘That’s true enough, but it won’t be so hard to go into a house now when we aren’t so many,’ comforted Andy.

‘When I stay out with Golden Horn, where there isn’t any place to tie her, you’ll be just two, and that can’t be anything to fuss over.’

‘Anything,’ repeated Maglena. ‘I always remember the little girls and Martha-Greta when she said “nennenin” for “anything.” She put her little head on the side and rolled up her eyes and pretended to be so miserable.’

‘And she was too, many times, when she was cold, poor thing, and was hungry and wanted mother,’ said Andy thoughtfully. ‘Mother must be satisfied now, the way the little ones are taken care of,’ he added.

‘And I’m sure she is. Maybe she came to earth and talked to the people so the forester and Karl Nilsson took the children.’

‘Yes, they’re well off all right. They wouldn’t think it was any fun to walk here on the ice with their feet slipping in all directions so that they nearly split in two,’ said Magnus grimly.

To tell the truth, he missed Per-Erik appallingly, even though he thought he could get along without Anna-Lisa. But his own feeling of loss was not unmixed with a feeling of a little sympathy also for the brother, who now, alone and defenseless, was the one on whom Anna-Lisa would descend with soap and water. Magnus had sympathetically pointed out this side of the matter to Per-Erik, who, however, with something of courage and hope in his voice, had been sure that it really wouldn’t be quite so bad. Little Karl was getting better, assured Per-Erik, ‘and you may be sure that, even if he is a rich farmer’s son, he must be both combed and washed. And especially now when there is some one like Anna-Lisa in the house.’

But although he thought about how helplessly exposed he, Per-Erik, was to such things, Magnus wished that evening that he were back with him in the light pleasant farmhouse.

That would be other than walking over ice that shone black, and glittered as if one were on open water, and have northern lights overhead besides, threatening and alarming with red and yellow and blue flames high up in the heavens. One could really believe that it was the Day of Judgment and that everything, both earth and moon and stars, was about to burn up. For just so sparkled and shone and flew the flames up there in the northern sky. And in spite of that the moon sat there in his place and laughed with his whole face, without knowing the danger that surrounded him.

Magnus could just as well have ridden on the sled, which glided lightly as a mere nothing over the ice, and then he wouldn’t have needed to suffer all this slipping

and sliding in all directions. Both Andy and Maglena had advised him to. But Magnus said that he was man enough to walk.

The truth was that the owls had begun to hoot weirdly in the Black Mountain that formed a wall along the lake, and then those unpleasant northern lights were so frightening. Magnus thought that on the sled he was altogether too far away from people, that is to say, from the older brother and sister.

Andy and Maglena led Golden Horn between them. They supported her at the same time, for it was no doubt just as hard for her as for Magnus to stand on the slippery ice.

‘We must pull her,’ said Maglena. ‘Poor little girl, you slip in all directions and will soon be all worn out. Sit on the sled, Magnus, and hold on to her. She can stand there just as well as not.’

‘She’ll stand there, anyway. It’s kind of more comfortable for me to walk,’ assured Magnus, and at the same time he slipped with one foot and sat down hard on the ice.

He was angry, for it was at least the eleventh time he had sat down since he had come out on the ice, and he was frightened.

While he still sits there and whiningly rubs the part that gets the first bump when one sits down on ice, he sees something that makes the hair rise on his round head. He wasn’t very brave at heart before, of course. Yes, something comes running toward the children across the ice, something that flies as fast as the east wind which blows across the lake. It shrieks and snarls and spits. And it looks as if a little spiral of smoke stands right up from that thing that comes running.

Magnus was on his feet again, and that in a hurry.

‘Oh, good gracious! Boy! Girl! Do you see?—I think it is a ghost coming to take us.’

Andy and Maglena started back with fright. They as well as Magnus would have liked to take to their heels. But it was absolutely impossible to get away from the rapidly approaching monster over the slippery ice.

‘What in all the world is it?’ whispered Andy, staring with wide-open eyes at the dark animal which with two fiery eye-sockets, or whatever it was, seemed intending to fly at them.

Maglena had tight hold of Andy’s hand. Magnus, the little ‘man,’ forgot his manly dignity entirely. He shrieked and clung tightly to Andy with both arms and legs.

‘I’ve never in my life seen anything so awful!’ screamed Maglena. ‘Why, it’s a cat, and she can’t walk!’ Maglena took the monster, which really proved to be a cat, up into her arms without paying any attention to the way she snarled and spit; she herself trembled with fright and sympathy.

‘She has such queer feet,’ she added unhappily. ‘Andy, can you understand what is the matter with them?’

Andy looked closely at the cat’s feet. ‘It is—it—what in all the world! It’s pig’s feet that they’ve stuck the cat’s feet into! That’s why she couldn’t take care of herself, but had to go along with the east wind on the ice.’

Tears sprang to Maglena's eyes. She pulled and jerked at the instruments of torture that squeezed the cat's feet.

'Kitty, poor, poor kitty! People have done this, 'cause see how hard they're bound with sharp strings.'

It was as if Maglena saw proof in these strings that it was people who had committed the crime, and as if otherwise the cat herself would have put on the pig's feet as rubbers.

'Well, if people have done it, then they are not people, but something worse than everything mean,' said Andy. His eyes flashed in the moonlight and his hands doubled up as if he wanted to beat the people who had done this.

'It was the tail that stuck straight up that I thought was smoke,' said Magnus, who, standing by himself at a safe distance from the cat's claws, now looked her over carefully. 'I was nearly scared that time, and then it was only a cat!' He sniffed disdainfully.

'Only a cat!' said Maglena, full of resentment. 'I wish that the one who did this sat with his feet tied, and frightened and hungry and cold.'

'Yes, and had those bad northern lights over him, and the owls that hoot in the mountains, and a score of wolves that howl around him,' interrupted Magnus in order to make the punishment really severe.

'Yes, that too; and the one who did this should have to go on alone in the night in front of the east wind and not be able to stop,' went on Maglena.

She still wept, rocked, and caressed the cat as she sat on the sled with her in her arms.

'I didn't think there were such cruel people in the world,' said Andy gloomily.

'They could never have done such a thing at home at Barren Moor.'

'I should think not! Any one who did that would be disgraced forever,' concluded Maglena sternly.

'But now you must have food, poor kitty. You are as thin and dry as a knife-blade.'

If Maglena's simile was not exactly sound, there was at least that much truth in it that the cat looked wretched and rough—for she hadn't been able to lick and clean herself as cats like to do to keep themselves nice; wet—for she had been in the water; and with bleeding feet.

'There, Andy, take her while I milk a drop for her.'

Andy took the cat and held her faithfully, if not also with the same overflowing tenderness that Maglena showed in her treatment of the unhappy tortured animal.

The cat had stopped spitting and snarling, and now lapped up the warm milk from a little wooden bowl. Then she began to clean and lick her bruised and sore paws, and wash her face with the inside of her front paws which she first wet with her tongue. Then she crept up into Maglena's lap, mewing gently and gratefully. They were at once good friends, the sure friendship between rescued and rescuer.

The robe on the sled was arranged to best advantage. Magnus was ordered there again, and now he could sit there, of course, 'so that the cat shouldn't run away from them.'

With Maglena near by, who, with the same idea, walked close behind him and pushed the sled, all his manly dignity, which had so obviously disappeared for a while, came back.

CHAPTER XVI
IN A DEN OF THIEVES

M slept as he sat on the sled and rested his tired, strained bones and sinews. Kitty slept and rested deathly frightened nerves, and limbs twisted almost out of joint. Owls hooted and shrieked shrilly koo-hu-u, and kle-vitt in the mountains that were reflected in the ice so that it looked coal black near the shore.

But out on the lake the ice gleamed red, yellow, green, as the northern-light flames over the heavens were reflected on its shining surface.

Andy and Maglena, not to mention little Magnus, would have thought it both dismal and creepy to be out alone on such a night if they had not been cheered up over saving the cat.

As they now walked and talked and led Golden Horn between them, they reached the last fir on the lake. It, like the other guiding firs, had lost a solid foothold in the last thaw, and now leaned sadly to one side.

They had a more sure foothold on land on a driven road. Golden Horn dived like lightning into the thicket to get a meal of pine branches and willow buds.

Kitty didn't want to stay any longer either, but was ready at once to take to her feet. Maglena caught her. She stuffed her into her shawl and held her fast with both hands.

Andy alone drew the sled with Magnus, who still slept heavily. He bent his steps toward the first big farmhouse he caught sight of. Light shone from all the windows of a red painted two-story house a bit back from the road. They understood that there was either a funeral or a wedding going on there. So it was not for such wandering people to go to such a place. Therefore, they approached the first-named house, also a big two-story house, but this one was gray and unpainted. Not really finished either, old as it was, for boards were still nailed across some of the windows instead of glass.

The fence that surrounded the place was ragged for long stretches, and the gate hung by one hinge on the gatepost. The gate had not, as is generally done in the fall, been carried in to protect it from the heavy snow. Trash and rubbish and broken bottles lay everywhere and glittered in the moonlight.

Kitty fought and struggled in Maglena's shawl as if she had suddenly gone wild. She clawed and snarled, no matter how Maglena tried to calm her.

The door to the right in the hallway leading into the house creaked. Now there was no holding the cat. With one twist, she tore herself loose and flew like a shot away from Maglena out into the yard.

A boy about Andy's size came slouching out on the step, followed by a gray dog.

The gray dog barked and growled at them with drawn-up nose and angrily gleaming teeth.

Magnus woke up and gave a shriek. Golden Horn fled behind Andy.

But Maglena did as she used to when she, in so strange a way, succeeded in calming and taming animals.

She sat down on the ground and opened her arms to the dog without minding how he bit at her and tore away part of the shawl fringes.

‘So-o-o, so-o! You don’t want to do us any harm, we who are small and alone.’

The dog quieted down, but growled with arched back. He looked dangerous when he, with sly glances and stealthy steps, went around the children and sniffed after the goat, who had crept in between them.

‘Boy,’ called Maglena with her pretty, ringing, soft, but at the same time decided, voice. ‘Boy, call your dog. You can see that we are small and alone. You are big, and ought to help us,’ she added when the boy only whistled and did not seem to listen to what she said.

‘Call your dog at once!’ Maglena’s voice became commanding. The dog was impressed by it. He stood still as if ashamed.

The boy came down the step, kicked loose a piece of ice, and threw it into the group. It struck the dog, who whined and with a look of hatred and fear at Grels, the boy, the farm’s oldest son, lumbered out through the gateway.

Grels followed the dog out through the gate, but leered slyly back. He saw how the children went to the woodshed with the goat creature they had with them.

Yes, there she was safe, the goat!

All three children went to the shed with Golden Horn whom they tied lightly near a pile of chips. There she could lie down until they, as usual, could get her into the barn. Generally only one of them attended to Golden Horn. But to-day it seemed that they did not dare be separated a single moment.

They held each other’s hands tightly when they went up the steps into the hallway and opened the door into the big room or kitchen where light streamed out through the windows.

Yes, no doubt the room was big and fine. It could have looked exactly like the big kitchen at Karl Nilsson’s. Here, too, there was an over-bed, a rosy Dalecarlian clock, and blue painted cupboards. But it was slovenly, untidy. No curtains at the windows and no hangings in front of the beds. On the table were seen wooden bowls and wooden spoons left since the evening meal.

A well-grown, pretty, but carelessly dressed servant girl stood with one foot on a bench, and scraped the mush kettle out of which she was eating.

‘Make a move, there, grandfather,’ she screamed angrily at an old man who, tremblingly and clumsily, sat whittling kindling wood.

‘You’ve been up long enough. You’ve had all you’re going to get. Get out now!’ snapped a still young mistress with delicate but sharp features. She stood by the fire combing the hair of a girl about Maglena’s age.

Andy and the children stepped noiselessly in through the door. They felt a burning desire to turn and, if possible, flee to the wilderness again. But it was so late. They were tired and frozen and longed for something warm, for a little water gruel or mush.

Two small boys of about Per-Erik's and Magnus's age caught sight of them.

'Usch! Mother, see what a tatterpack we have here,' bawled one.

The mistress turned around. The children seemed to feel her sharp eyes and pointed nose bore into them. They crept together and made themselves as small as they could.

'What are you doing here? This ain't any hotel. We haven't any more than we eat up ourselves,' she screamed, and advanced toward the children with her hand raised.

'Barbara-Carrie—listen, you,' called a hollow voice from the lower bed. 'Don't hurt those children. It will bring bad luck to the house. I saw them in a dream last night.'

'Shut up, old woman!' almost barked the woman. But still it seemed that the words had impressed her, for she turned away from the children and went on with her work.

'Give them the cold mush that was left after I fed the chickens this morning. There is a little goats' milk on the table in a bowl, and you can give them the bread crusts that are left.'

'Give them yourself,' snapped the maid. 'I'm going to get dressed to go to the "wedding-farm" with the milk. All the rest of the milkmaids are there already. But here there is never any order with anything.'

She went, but stopped hesitatingly at the door.

Grandmother called to her from the lower bed: 'Brita, look out, girl! I laid out the cards for you to-day—and there was only poverty and no bread, with a jack of hearts between. You can take away the danger by doing something good. Well, well, look out, you.'

Brita closed the door with her foot and came in again. She threw the unappetizing bits of food at the children. More with fear than with cold, they crept tremblingly to the hearth bench where the food had been thrown.

'Oh, you got my milk-bowl,' yelled the younger boy, Johnnie.

And at once he had run forward and was trying to jerk it away from Maglena. She held fast to it, and looked him steadily in the eyes.

'Your mother said we could have it, so you can't take it away from us.'

'Mother!' He stuck out his tongue at his mother. 'I——' he said something coarse, but which meant 'I don't care for mother, or what she says.'

Strangely enough, Maglena kept the bowl. This was a disappointment to Erika, who had just jerked herself away from her mother's hands to see how the fight between the bad-tempered, stingy brother and the strange beggar girl would end.

The little wanderers ate cold, watery mush, sour milk, and crusts of bread—quiet, unhappy.

Grels came in just as the children were devoutly thanking God for food. He looked wicked and odious. The old man, who fumbled with the stick of wood trying to cut off a last piece, stood up hastily. He looked for his crutch. But as usual the children had taken it from the back of his chair and thrown it out on the floor. They howled

with laughter when the old man, half-creeping, with one leg dragging behind him, worked himself over the floor to get it.

Andy, who saw where the crutch lay, went at once and picked it up. He gave it to the old man, who with confused, bleary eyes looked up at him.

‘Where d-d-did this b-b-boy c-come from?’ he stammered with suspicion and surprise in his voice.

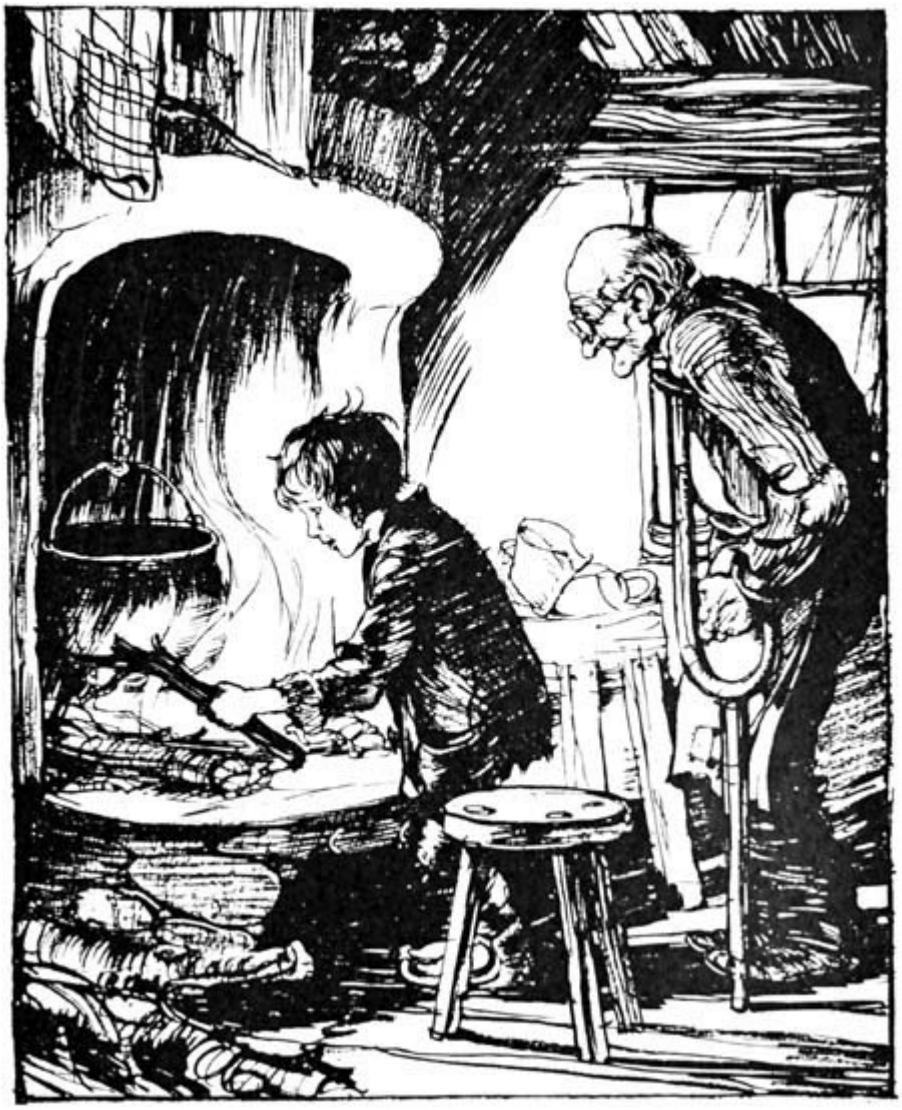
‘Get away from the fire, young ones, so I can get there with the coffee-pot,’ said the mistress to the strange children without paying any attention to the behavior of her own.

‘Andy, help grandfather; he walks like mother did at the last,’ whispered Maglena. ‘It’s so slippery on the step.’

Andy went slowly, as if ashamed, after the old man. But when he came out where no one made fun of him, he took fast hold of the old man’s arm and helped him carefully down the steps and down the slippery, uneven path that led to the little cottage where he lived.

The peasants’ old parents up in Norrland are called ‘receivers of food’ or ‘old folks’ when they have given up their farm to the son and his wife. The old people are given what they need of milk, flour, potatoes, and such things. If the children on that farm are not good and generous, it can be very hard for the old people.

The little cottage into which grandfather now stumbled was cold and uncared-for, because old grandmother was sick and lay in the lower bed up at the house. She lay there, not in order to get better care, but because no one wanted to go down and cook for the old man now that the old woman could not do it, and then one did not have to think about attending to her. The servant, who usually kept a fire and looked out for the old folks, had something else to think about to-night.



HE WAS TOO STIFF AND FROZEN TO BE ABLE TO PUT WOOD IN THE GRATE AND LIGHT A FIRE. ANDY DID IT FOR HIM

Shivering with cold, the old man prepared to lie down fully dressed under the sheepskin in the lower bed. He was too stiff and frozen to be able to put wood in the grate and light a fire.

Andy did it for him. He also put over the fire the coffee-pot that stood on the hearth.

The old man sat on the edge of the bed, and looked at the boy. To him he looked like an angel, gray and mended as his clothes were.

‘Y-you c-c-can s-sleep in the upper b-b-bed to-to-night,’ he stammered.

‘Maglena and Magnus too?’ asked Andy eagerly. He thought that life here with the old man, who looked at him with friendly eyes, in the cold, uncared-for cottage, was greatly preferable to the big light kitchen where they only quarreled with one another. Lighter of heart, he ran up to the house, after he had seen that the fire had caught and the old man undressed, and in bed.

Grels stood on the step when Andy came up. He was noticeably humble—actually friendly when he began to talk to Andy.

‘We’re going to go and look on at the wedding. Brita is going with the milk and we’re going to follow and peek in at the bride.’

‘That will be fun for you,’ said Andy, and tried to pass Grels. But he stood in the way.

‘Well, it will be just as much fun for you and the others as for us.’

‘They can’t go and look on here, can they?’

‘Any one can go to look. The boys in this village are mad at this bride ’cause she, who is so rich and pretty, took a man from outside the parish who ain’t got a homestead and is such a fool that he says “no” to gin. And so we’re going to act up to-night and scare them. We small boys from this village and others too are going to be along when it happens.’

‘But not us. Maglena and Magnus are tired and ought to go to bed.’

‘They’re the ones that want to go, and Brita and I have promised them. They don’t look as though they’ve had much fun,’ added Grels with a certain sympathy in his voice that moved Andy.

‘Well, if they want to, I’ll let them,’ said he.

Grels let him go by at once. Andy did not notice the evil gleam in his eyes.

Maglena and Magnus came eagerly to meet him. Fatigue and discouragement had left them. They were going to go and see the bride at the neighboring farm. The minister’s wife herself had dressed her, and she was so beautiful that the queen herself couldn’t be more so—in a golden crown and her whole head covered with roses, and a red silk sash and black silk skirt and bodice—and—and——!

‘Mons and Johnnie are real good to us now,’ they assured Andy.

‘Come,’ yelled Grels, and jerked Andy’s arm, ‘we’re going now. Brita is all dressed up.’

The children, strangers and farm-children together, went off. Grels pulled them with him when they wanted to stop and say good-night to Golden Horn.

CHAPTER XVII
THE ‘WEDDING-FARM’

T came to the ‘wedding-farm.’ The doors stood open and the air within was steamy with heat. Outside the windows stood crowds of people. They were peeking in to see the bride.

Just as the children came up, she came out on the step to show herself. The bridesmaids who had held the canopy over the bridal pair in the church followed her.

It was certainly true that the young bride was beautiful. She was tall and stately and wore a golden crown. Its little golden leaves tinkled when she moved or shook hands, ‘thanking’ all the girls of the Village. They had, as the custom was, come with milk for the cooked rice and the curd-cake. The bride wore roses, roses in a wreath on her head and in a garland from her shoulder to her waist; roses on the black silk skirt, and, besides, a white veil and a wide red gold-flowered sash that reached to the hem of her skirt.

She looked kind and gentle. Her eyes searched out the old, and the little children who either were not able or dared not push themselves forward. These she called to her, these she shook hands with or talked to.

‘No, but see, three children I don’t know. They must come here so I can thank them. It is good luck when wandering children greet you on such a day.’

The bride came down the steps and took Andy, Maglena, and Magnus with her up again. Something of suffering, emaciation, and yet something bright and courageous seemed to rest over them that drew her to them. Then they too were from ‘out of the parish’ as she would be in the district to which she was going, ‘down in the south country,’ where her young husband was a lumberman.

‘Now you are at a wedding, you know,’ she smiled at the children. ‘If you are from Barren Moor, you’ve eaten bark bread for a couple of years now. But to-day you’ll eat rice and wort-bread with butter, and meat, and coffee bread as much as you can eat.’

The bride called to the cook, who stood on the step of the wash-house. The children were to have a good big bundle of food when they were going, she directed.

The neighbor’s children came in and were treated according to custom. But the bride took no special notice of them.

The mountain children had a meal now such as they had never imagined. Brita, who among other people was an entirely different girl, neat, cheerful, and really kind, looked out for them quite unexpectedly. They must go up and watch the dancing and games, she said, and see her dance too, for that she really could do. She had hardly reached the door with the children before a tall, lithe lumberman came and took her by the hand.

The young people were already flying about in a round dance. A girl followed the circle, inside, with a boy at her side.

She sang in a fine clear voice:

‘Yes, you in the ring may stamp, if you like,
Marry you want to, but can’t,
Dance with me you may, if you like,
But my heart belongs to me.’

But in spite of that, the girl with the fine voice chose another boy, who thereat looked much pleased.

They swung around inside the circle, and now she sang:

‘Come, my friend, come,
Come, swing me around in the dance,
Hopp falla, la, la.
Happiness to-day, that is our law,
May sorrow never come, la, la.’

The bride and the bridegroom danced in the ring. They sang the same happy dance-song that had such a sad though beautiful melody. They looked into one another’s eyes, so young and fine and strong of heart.

Another song was taken up. Every one sang and took part in the round dance.

The boy ran awkwardly inside the circle. He sang and the girl answered.

In the same way they kept on with one game after the other.

‘Here is my friend, the very best,
The one I want to keep,
In life and death, the very best.

‘You are my rose, my very heart,
Nothing shall us ever part,
Till death has won his will.’

Dance after dance followed steadily.

Andy and Maglena stood at the door. Magnus had crept behind them and lay sleeping sweetly with his head so placed that the first comer could give it an unmeant kick, or really step on him.

Now the round dances were over. The violins, two of them, began to play. The fiddlers stamped out the time with their feet so that the floor rocked.

The bridal pair danced.

They danced a few rounds with every single person: the bride at last, even with Andy, who, shy because of his clothes, and awkward, ran along without keeping time, as if he had been a three-year-old child. The bride gave him a bright twenty-five öre piece[11] when she left him at the door with a kind glance.

Maglena, the little girl, was also to dance with the bridegroom.

She threw off the old shawl. Her hair fell down on her shoulders, curly, shining so that it made her pretty in spite of her clumsy clothes. Her cheeks were red, as if she were shy and proud at the same time. But she kept time, and she danced so well that those who looked on laughed with pleasure at the sure little feet.

She too received a twenty-five öre piece, and one ‘for the little boy with them’ too. And they were given more than one bun and good cake for their bundle.

They had so much fun that they shone with happiness as they stood there. People were so good to them.

Children who had come to the wedding crept forward and wanted to make friends.

Suddenly Maglena turned to Andy.

‘Boy, I hear Golden Horn!’

‘Don’t be silly! You can’t hear her so far, and here where there is so much noise.’ Andy looked around confusedly. For a while he had forgotten ordinary life, the responsibility and care of those who were dependent on him.

Frightened, he looked over at the fiddlers’ corner. His glance instinctively sought Grels and the two other boys whose sly, evil faces he remembered having seen there when he was dancing with the bride. Without a word, he bent down to Magnus.

‘Now we’re going to dance the crown off the bride,’ said a little girl who looked a great deal like the bride. She held out her hand with a sweet smile to Andy.

‘Hurry! We’re going to drink coffee and have coffee bread and cookies after,’ said little Anna, who had stood and looked at Andy a long time, eagerly.

Andy looked into her bright eyes that seemed to draw him. But then he pushed away her hand. ‘Girl, I must go. Maglena hears the goat, and that’s never good. She hears, even if she can’t hear.’

With these words, incomprehensible to little Anna, Andy made off with the children.

‘Come back to-morrow!’ she called after Andy.

‘Thanks, we’d like to.’

With that the children were gone.

CHAPTER XVIII
FLIGHT

J as they ran breathlessly down the yard, they met a crowd that nearly frightened them out of their senses. Magnus screamed shrilly.

It was a troop of men and boys who, with shirts spotted with red paint on top of their clothes, came stealthily up to the ‘wedding-farm.’ They had scarecrow faces of birch-bark, with big round holes for eyes, and long beards of lichen from an old fir in the woods. They swung burning torches.

With great fear the children recognized the voice of the leader. It was the man from the neighboring farm.

He recognized them too, and with a wild cry started after them.

‘Run, children, run! I’ll trip him. Run quick!’

And how they ran, Magnus and Maglena! They flew faster than they ever did as goatherds in the summer when they ran after runaway goats.

Andy stopped short when the man was just upon him. He tripped him nimbly with his foot. With a furious curse, the big coarse fellow fell to the ground.

‘Well, just wait, I’ll get you to-morrow; then I’ll beat the boldness out of you!’ bawled the man, who stood up clumsily, but ran on when he saw the rest nearing the scene of the festivities.

Andy had heard and seen enough to realize that a few of the village boys wanted to fight the out-of-the-parish bridegroom who had taken the pretty wealthy bride from their village. They had drunk gin to get up their courage. On the wedding-farm, where it had been so bright and happy, where they had sung psalms and read a prayer after the meal, and then danced to the joyous songs, there would now be uproar and confusion.

Andy ran with all his might—flew—when he heard a wailing shriek from the children.

The din came from the woodshed where they had left Golden Horn. The goat was bleating dully. Something had happened to her.

Yes, something had happened to her! Something that had nearly made an end of the good, fine old animal’s life, if Maglena, in the midst of the wedding joy, had not seemed to hear Golden Horn bleat.

Golden Horn, their little maid, big doll, golden pearl, lay on the chips, panting, bleeding at the neck and body. The children could see it clearly, for it was late at night and the moon shone right in through the little window in the shed.

Andy was as pale as a ghost. The little ones wept. They knelt beside Golden Horn.

‘Take off your apron, Maglena. I’ll put snow on the wounds and tie them up with my comforter. Golden Horn has been bitten,’ he continued harshly. ‘The one who could let grandfather creep after his crutch could do this too! And some one has sicked a mean dog to do it.’

‘Yes, they’ve held her, ’cause Golden Horn could always save herself from dogs—and look here,’ continued Maglena, sobbing. ‘Not a single hair on her horns. She didn’t have a *chance* to save herself. It was all the boys here that were here and held her; it smells of that horrid tobacco that awful Grels chews,’ sniffed Maglena.

‘That man will think up something awful for me to-morrow,’ said Andy with a moody, reflective air. ‘Mad as he was when I tripped him up.’

‘It isn’t any fun in this place at all,’ whined Magnus. ‘You feel so sort of uncertain.’

‘We’ll go away, and go this minute,’ whispered Andy.

‘The boys can’t be far away. I saw how they ran away and walked crooked down in the ditch by the fence. I suppose they got scared when we came back so soon, ’cause they maybe thought we’d stay there all night.’

‘Just as we came we heard Golden Horn bleating so queer. The boys yelled “sick ’em, sick ’em”; it was that mean gray dog that ran in and bit Golden Horn,’ related Maglena pantingly.

‘But they got scared when I came.’ Magnus entered into the conversation.

‘They’ll be at the “wedding-farm” for a while,’ interrupted Andy with a compassionate glance at Magnus. ‘Right in the middle of the fight, and the farmhand is there too, so we can’t go there, and we can’t stay here either.’

‘Golden Horn, please—nice girl, get up now, and come out on the sled,’ continued Andy.

Golden Horn, who apparently understood the children’s anxiety and shared their fears, rose painfully.

Supported by Andy and Maglena, she stumbled out. The sheepskin was carefully spread out on the sled and Golden Horn understood why. She climbed up and sank down with a groaning sigh into the box-like sled. ‘What wrong have I done here, to be treated like this?’ thought Golden Horn.

The children fussed swiftly and silently over Golden Horn.

‘We’ll go up the mountain here,’ whispered Andy. ‘They have the dog with them on the “wedding-farm.” He’ll see us if we go by and that will be the end of Golden Horn, and very likely of us too.’

‘It is a good thing that the sled tracks won’t show,’ went on Maglena. ‘There is an ice street up the path to the mountain.’

The children started. Andy pulled, Maglena pushed, and Magnus walked alongside to see that the goat was all right.

‘I don’t like to go away without saying a word of thanks to the old folks here,’ said Andy, and stopped when they had passed the barns.

‘But, my goodness! We’ve got to hurry,’ objected Maglena.

‘Yes, they can take us, and I can’t fight them alone,’ muttered Magnus.

‘Stand here just a minute, anyway,’ said Andy in a trembling voice.

In a second he was gone.

Into the cottage to grandfather he ran. The old man was sitting upright staring straight before him, listening. He knew by experience what was going on at the

wedding-farm. He used to think that such things were ‘boys’ play,’ and only a fool would not take part. But now he saw it differently. He worried also about the strange children who were so completely in his grandchildren’s power. They would be frightened, tortured, tormented. He knew well how these children treated every one they thought they could overpower, like old, weak, and sick people, poor, unprotected children, and defenseless animals.

The old man started when Andy came to him with a cup of warm coffee. ‘Look here, it is cold to-night, and the coffee was warm in the pot. I’ll put more wood on the fire. And then I want to thank you so much, grandfather.’

‘Y-you were g-g-going to s-s-sleep here?’

‘I don’t dare. They tried to kill the goat. And they want to hurt us too.’

‘That’s the w-way.’ The old man nodded in agreement. ‘I am glad that y-you c-c-came because I w-wanted to g-g-give you this w-watch.’

Grandfather took down the silver watch he had hanging on the wall.

‘It’s s-soon over w-with m-me. I d-don’t s-s-see anything either. T-take the w-w-atch. My g-grandchildren c-c-can’t have it! T-take it! And may God f-follow y-y-you.’

Andy stood with the watch in his hand—stiff with surprise and anxiety, as if he had been threatened with angry words by the old man instead of having received such a gift.

‘T-take the s-skin h-here in the other b-b-bed t-too. It is c-c-cold. We d-don’t n-need it. The old w-w-woman w-will s-soon d-die too. Hurry, boy!’ said he suddenly, without stuttering. ‘They can be back any time. *Hurry! Do you hear——!*’

‘I must thank you first, grandfather—because you’ve been so good to us. I don’t know whether I can take the watch—and not the sheepskin either.’

‘Y-you m-m-must t-take what I g-g-give you, b-boy! It isn’t too s-soon for m-me to b-be d-doing a little g-g-good here. It’s been s-so light for m-me s-s-since I thought of d-d-oing this. R-run! Now, right away.’

‘Well, thank you, grandfather—Oh, and remember me to mother there!’

Andy straightened the pillow under the man’s stiff neck, tucked in the sheepskin around him, and arranged the wood on the fire so it would burn a long time.

With the watch in his pocket and the skin over his arm, he stopped inside the door which he had already opened.

He took off the worn fur cap and bowed.

‘Many, many thanks, grandfather.’

But grandfather did not seem to hear him. He lay with the unaccustomed laboriously folded hands on the cover, mumbling to himself.

CHAPTER XIX
FIRE

‘Y were an awfully long time getting back,’ said Maglena, when Andy came running back to the sled where she and Magnus had squeezed themselves in beside Golden Horn.

‘It was a little hard to leave grandfather. But I got this from him.’ Andy’s eyes shone as he held up the silver watch that actually ticked and kept good time, as he spread the new robe over the goat.

A strange happiness came over the children; they talked about how good the old people were there, and how spiteful the children were toward them.

They chattered pantingly. The road led uphill, and was bumpy and uneven where the lumbermen had driven over it with the heavy sleds.

‘We’ve got to hurry as fast as we can,’ said Andy. ‘They can be after us any minute.’

‘A man on horseback came from the wedding-farm,’ enlightened Maglena. ‘Maybe he went after the sheriff. Several of those that had blood-red shirts have run away too in different directions.’

‘The farmhand can be home any time now too,’ said Andy.

He braced the stout hob-nailed shoes against the clumps of ice and pulled with all his strength.

It had grown very cold during the night, after yesterday’s thaw.

The crusted snow lay like a field of ice on either side of the road. They pulled the sled up away from the tiring, uneven timber-road. And then they were off over the blue snow-crust, over level meadow-land where the snow still lay like a blanket, over ice-covered rocks, streams, and marshes.

Andy took his directions from the stars, saw that Orion was in the south, and the morning star straight in front of him. In general they followed the river’s meanderings. On both sides of it lay the Dalecarlian parishes extending far up toward woods and mountains, though broken by great stretches of forest land and big lakes.

The river ran from west to east, out to the ocean, and the children followed the same direction.

But now the thing to do was to get away from the settlement and into the deep woods, to escape dangerous pursuit on the roads, and to get past the village through the protecting woods into another parish.

Morning had already come. The sun peeped out as if in play from behind the pointed mountain-tops in the distance, where Maglena thought the world came to an end. Then it hid behind another mountain-top. It looked forth again and shone on all the little cottage windows and into the eyes of sleep-dazed children. Once more the sun played peek-a-boo behind a high rounded peak.

But then it came forth, rising, shining brightly, casting a gleaming carpet of thin gold over the whole snowy country. It spread gold over mountain-tops and green firs, and over pines, gold on every single pine needle, and over tree-trunks that now shone a golden red.

It was matchlessly beautiful. The children felt no fatigue, not even hunger. They had sat down quietly on the edge of the sled and watched how the sun rose and rose.

Now it not merely shone. They began to feel warmth from it too. Maglena took Magnus by the hands. She felt free and absolutely happy far away from a settlement, not a farm in sight. Songs and dance melodies floated through her head. She wanted to dance, and she hopped out on the crusted snow in polka rhythm with Magnus.

‘You are my rose, my very heart,
Nothing shall us ever part.’

And down she plumped with one foot through the snow. ‘Did you ever? The sun tripped me up!’ She laughed and scrambled up again.

‘Yes, and drives us away into the woods to find shelter. I don’t know how we are going to find a tree with really big branches,’ said Andy, who was sun-blind and saw black and yellow and red everywhere, for he had sat and stared earnestly right at the sun, which rose so rapidly over the mountains.

They had come in upon a clearing where the snow-crust no longer hid cut timber, stumps, and brush-heaps, and hurried now into the deep woods where the snow still bore.

Golden Horn felt better, or perhaps it was because the bumps against the tree-trunks now and then did not appeal to her. Without warning, she kicked herself free of the robe and jumped away into the woods in her invalid’s bandages of apron and muffler around her stomach and neck.

With unbelievable ease the goat found the big close fir which could serve as a house, just the kind the children had sought in vain all morning.

Golden Horn stood right under the giant fir whose branches spread themselves out like an impenetrable roof. The snow had melted away under it, or perhaps it had never been able to gather there.

‘Ma-a-a,’ bleated Golden Horn. ‘Ma-a-a. Here lives a wise goat who, although she lay on a sled with an apron around her stomach, kept her eyes open. Ma-a-a. Step in, little man-kids, and I’ll treat you to warm milk, soft moss to rest on, and sweet frozen whortleberries and juniper berries to feast on. Ma-a-a, if you please!’

‘She’s inviting us in. See how big and proud she looks,’ smiled Maglena. ‘Now I’m going to stand at the door until she asks me to come in and sit down.’

Maglena lifted a heavy close branch, went in, and stood still, looking roguishly at the goat.

Magnus followed and took up the same attitude, as when one comes on a visit to people.

‘Ma-a-a-a,’ said Golden Horn, ‘you’re welcome; come in and sit down.’

She tripped in toward the big tree-trunk where the high roots made comfortable resting-places for both humans and goats.

Andy came ‘in,’ dragging the sled after him. He cleared it of the knapsack, the dry tarred wood, and the robes. Then he tipped it upside down on all four posts. Maglena set out the little bowls of foamy warm milk, and the bread and rolls from the wedding-farm.

‘The table’ stood beside the root-benches. The children repeated their little prayer before a meal, ate slowly and quietly, and felt like rich farmers in their own cottage.

Maglena ‘cleared off the table,’ arranged a comfortable place to sit on the other side of the tree-trunk, and then washed the bowls with a ‘dish-cloth’ of snow. Then she tipped them against each other in an orderly row.

She made up a bed for them all in one of the spaces between the roots, with the old robe under and the new over.

Andy and she whispered together so that Golden Horn should not hear what they said. They wondered if they could take her with them in the nicely made bed.

‘She’ll have to be the old folks with us,’ said Maglena hurriedly, when Golden Horn, who felt entirely at home, without the least doubt or thought as to whether it was fitting or not, climbed up and lay down on the robe.

‘Yes, and then we’ll have to be really good to her,’ said Andy eagerly. ‘I’ll go out and get some young birch and pine branches for her! Because, of course, she hasn’t any teeth, and it will be like soft bread and coffee for old grandmother.’

‘Just think, she is smarter than I am,’ said Magnus, coming with two fists full of frozen whortleberries for his brother and sister. He had picked them practically ‘in the house.’

‘’Cause when I went and scratched and hunted for water, she ran right down to a little creek right near here. And now she goes to bed, ’cause she thinks that we ought to do as she does, after walking all day and all night.’

‘But it’s the middle of the day,’ objected Andy, who thought that a sensible suggestion ought to come from him, and not from the little boy or the goat.

‘Well, then the sunshine will have to be moonlight for me,’ Maglena entered into the conversation. ‘I am so tired that I can’t even undress and dry my shoes in front of the fire.’ She pretended to warm her hands over a fire.

‘I can’t dry them for you either, Magnus,’ she added. ‘So you’ll have to put them by the bed.’ Maglena was entirely serious.

‘I think I’ll throw myself down just as I am,’ thought Magnus, ‘’cause I just came from the woods and I’m all tired out. I’ve been cutting down some small trees in the clearing and my back and arms are nearly broken.’

‘But don’t you think you ought to close the damper so it gets warm?’ smiled Andy, a little roguishly.

‘Dear me, yes! But I was almost afraid it would smoke, you see.’ But Maglena stretched herself up laboriously and pushed a branch to the side.

With the tired, worried look of the mistress of the house she dragged herself to the bed, where she found it hard to keep up the fun. ‘The old folks’ here on the farm

knew how to keep the upper hand with the children, for Grandmother Golden Horn braced herself against the stout and solid trunk and stuck out all four feet as if she meant to have the bed all to herself. If she hadn't been 'the old folks,' one could almost have been angry with her.

The mistress stood at a loss for beds for the young folks and children. But then she understood what old grandmother wanted. She was in pain. She wanted a new bandage over her stomach.

And she got it.

The whole household crept to bed in one heap, with the robe over their eyes to keep out the 'moonlight' which forced its way in between the thick, close tree-trunks and warmed the air, so that the children dreamed that they slept in a heated house with the new thick cover over them.

HERE UNDER THE TREE, WITH THE THICK BRANCHES RESTING ON THE GROUND, THEY COULD BE SAFE

Golden Horn lay on top of them to warm them and herself. She lay there chewing her cud and blinking with long narrow eyes at the rays of sunlight, listening and observant of every sound. There were wild animals in the woods to look out for, and there were people and dogs. Golden Horn heard them!

Proudly she gazed around. Here under the tree, with the thick branches resting on the ground, they could be safe; here no one could see them. The goat chewed her cud all day long with half-closed yet watchful eyes. The silver watch, which hung on a knot in the tree-trunk, ticked away hour after hour. The ‘moonlight’ paled and cooled, sank into a rosy red evening light. That too paled and died away. And all the time the children slept.

They slept when the real moon, accompanied by frost, came up into the sky, slept although distant steps and the noise of people and of barking dogs could be heard not far away, slept when the woods became quiet and dead.

But then they woke up. Something furry and warm came creeping, stealthily creeping, and slipped softly in under the sheepskin robe, at which Golden Horn, with one jump and short indignant bleatings, darted away.

‘Purr-r-r.’

Maglena and Andy sat up at the same time—absolutely astounded at the close dark ceiling that they had over them. They recognized the cat that had awakened them by her mewing. It was the spotted gray ‘ice cat.’

So surprised were they that she had been able to follow them the tortuous way they had come that they forgot to think how unpleasant it was to wake up in the dark woods in the middle of the night and without fire. But they remembered it when they were so cold that their teeth chattered.

If only they had had a match, just one, it certainly would have been possible to have a fire. The whole bunch of tarred sticks lay where Maglena had marked out the fireplace. She shook so with cold that she could scarcely talk.

‘I can’t get up, and I can’t milk. We’ll just freeze to death.’

‘There isn’t anything to do but creep down under the robe again and lie there like Charles the Twelfth’s army and wait for morning, when the sun comes,’ said Andy, and prepared bravely to creep down under the cover again.

‘But the cat must have milk; she hasn’t had any for so long, so I’ve got to get up,’ shivered Maglena.

She threw father’s old coat over her.

While she sat and milked with the coat over her shoulders, a fir cone fell down on her head with a popping sound and then hopped down into one of the yawning empty jacket pockets.

‘This is a fine cow.[12] Magnus shall have it as soon as he wakes up,’ thought Maglena, perfectly content when she put her hand into the pocket and pulled forth the fir cone, soft and pliable, sticky with resin.

Maglena felt as do all others who find anything. She felt a desire to find out if there was more of the same kind, so she dug again into the pocket where she had found the ‘cow.’

Yes, there was actually something more!

There was something which all at once drove away the awful, frozen sensation of fear of the dark which had weighed upon Maglena and tortured her as she sat in the blackness under the tree and milked.

Why, it was like a miracle—as if mother had been with her children again, and helped them. For Maglena's fingers, groping about in the pocket had found two—*matches*!

As long as they had carried the old jacket, used it as a blanket and thrown it about, they had never noticed that there was anything in the pockets.

Of course, the matches had been there since ages ago, when father still worked in the woods and sometimes smoked his little pipe.

Maglena held the little sticks in her hand. She smelled of them. Good! They had the real phosphorus smell.

She was so happy she could have shrieked aloud. Her lightning-like thought was to call the joyous news to Andy.

But—no, it was best to be quiet. For just think if the matches didn't light! Then she would only have lured Andy to be happy over something that would then become only greater unhappiness and disappointment.

Maglena, stooping and stumbling, groped her way hastily to the fireplace. Near there on a branch she had hung the knapsack.

She fumbled and searched for it, pitch dark as it was.

Yes, there it was at last. And right under it lay the bundle of dry tarred wood which she had placed in the 'pretend stove.'

Oh, if—if—*if* there only was life in the little bits of phosphorus!

She struck the match with a trembling hand, one, two, three, four times against the sole of her warm little boot, which of course she had not taken off.

But she was too eager, too impetuous. The match gleamed and shone a moment just when Maglena had seized it so bravely that—it broke—and then sank down on the wet moss—and went out.

She was ready to cry aloud with fright and sorrow. Yes, to shriek like a tiny child.

Must she give up hope of fire now when she had so nearly succeeded?

Fire! It was warmth for frozen limbs. Fire! It was light and comfort for the lonely little ones out in the wilderness. Fire! Fire meant house and home.

And only one match! Such a weak miserable little wretch.

Maglena's heart beat fast. She stood with the match between her fingers without daring to try again.

Her hands trembled, and she seemed to feel the match bending in her fingers as if ready to break.

At last she sat down determinedly on the ground—spread out her apron on the moss, placed the wood on top. Then she put out her shod foot. She struck once—twice—thrice—

Tears came into her eyes, her lips trembled.

But once more—steadily, so as not to break the match, calmly, lightly—

'Ratsch!'

A bright little yellow and blue flame sprang forth!

Quick ‘as a spark’ Maglena thrust the bright little flame against the dry stick.

It caught fire at once! It burned with a bright red light, the smoke curled up into the air, black, with the odor of tar.

‘Andy,’ called Maglena in a muffled voice as if afraid that the very sound of her voice would put out the fire.

Andy, who had lain with closed eyes and imagined that he was one of Charles the Twelfth’s doughty warriors, looked up.

He shot up like an arrow and threw the robe aside.

‘Why, girl! Well—but—Maglena! What in the world?’

Maglena told him proudly and smilingly the whole wonderful adventure of the fire.

CHAPTER XX
IN THEIR OWN GREEN COTTAGE

A soon had a fire burning, and practically in the middle of the floor.

It did not go out, though the melting snow dripped down from the trunk and the snow-wet branches.

There was still food in the knapsack. But after they had eaten, it was evening again, and bedtime.

‘We can’t go to bed again now, when it’s so nice,’ said Maglena. ‘Besides, we don’t know whether it’s the middle of the night or toward morning.’

She fussed busily over the knapsack.

‘We don’t know! I guess I have a watch that tells what time it is!’

‘It is soon morning, I feel that ’cause I feel just like working. Funny the moon isn’t higher. It was just a little above the mountain when I was out. If it isn’t going down, maybe, instead.’

‘Have you ever heard of the moon going down in the east? But—but—I don’t know what’s the matter with the watch! It’s going, but it’s altogether wrong.’

Andy listened to the watch, shook it as he had seen big people do.

‘How far wrong is it?’

‘It says eight o’clock. It can’t be eight in the morning when it is dark and the moon is up.’

‘Well, it must be eight in the evening.’

Andy began to laugh.

‘I believe some wood-nymph has bewitched our eyes.’

‘And wits too,’ laughed Maglena, ‘’cause otherwise all the signs would have told us it was evening. The snow wouldn’t bear so the sun must have just gone down, and Orion is high in the sky. But I won’t go to bed yet. It’s a long time before night.’

Andy had been out and came in with his arms full of brush that he laid on the fire.

‘I hear some yelping far away that sounds like a dog,’ he said.

‘The foxes are out, you know. No wild animals will come here as long as we have a fire, and no ghosts either,’ she added with a stealthy glance out through the fir’s black branches. ‘We’ll put the sled in front of the fire, and then I’ll sew roses. I have two mittens to sew on.’

‘Then I’ll whittle and carve out wooden spoons.’ Andy took the materials out of the sled.

‘But eat first, said the peasant when the bath-house burned. I don’t milk only for the cat, you know; I suppose we can eat at the same time now that you are master and I am mistress.’

Maglena sat down on the sled beside Andy with the wooden bowl in her hand. The cat came and rubbed herself against her, purring.

Golden Horn pushed her head through the branches near them. In 'the bed,' Magnus snored loudly.

'Oh, but it is fine here, Andy! It seems as though I can't bear to think of going out to the settlements any more.'

'You were happy at the wedding, I thought.'

'Yes, because of the songs and dances and the people that were so good to us. They danced and sang this way: "Hi, ho, you scornful girl."'

Maglena had finished her supper. She sprang up and began to repeat the songs and dances.

'The mistresses on the farms don't act like that,' remarked Andy, but he looked very happy as he sat and carved spoons with the sharp knife gleaming in the firelight.

'Goodness, no. I must darn our stockings. The roses will have to wait a while.'

She threw off her shoes and stockings and spread out her toes before the fire as she began to mend the holes, to-day quite large. It wasn't so often she had a chance to work.

'Kle-vitt, hu-itt!' shrieked an owl that flew close to the 'cottage door.'

'Nasty noise,' muttered Andy.

'He is good, I think. He calls "look-it, look it, watch out," so that mice and birds that he wants will have time to hide. Just think if he didn't say anything, just came and took them.'

'I don't like it when they say that birds talk, now like the thrush. I don't believe he says "knife thief, knife thief," when he sits up in the fir and sings all night in the spring.'

'No, I don't believe it either. And not that the other thrush that he's talking to says "poor soldier, poor soldier, why do you ride, why do you ride?"'

'And not that the other one answers "horse cannot go on, horse cannot go on." What fun would the little birds have if they only sat and made up such stuff?' sniffed Maglena.

'It's people that have invented that, of course,' said Andy, and held up the spoon against the firelight to see if the bowl was right. 'They think they hear around them what they really hear inside themselves.'

'He had stolen a knife, you think, the one that heard the thrush say "knife thief"?'

'I think so.'

'But "poor soldier." What sense is there in that?'

'I think,' said Andy, and let his work drop while he gazed dreamily into the fire, 'I think that those words are left from war-times here, you know, when the Russians were here and burned farms and were so cruel.'

'Our thrushes didn't think it was too bad about the Russians, I'm sure, or that they had to sit and ride,' muttered Maglena. 'No one could have felt sorry for the

Russians.'

'Well, it wasn't only Russians that were soldiers,' said Andy gently. 'It could be soldiers from here that the thrush talked about. Grandfather was in the war and fought. And that's why no one has been able to take our country away from us.'

'Because grandfather was a soldier?' teased Maglena.

'Because *all* the men here were soldiers, you see.'

Andy straightened up and his eyes became proud and earnest.

'The Russians couldn't take us, and no one else dared either. It was just as hard then as now, and they ate bark bread in hard years, grandfather said. But, you see, they were soldiers, anyway, every one.'

'And walked in the woods and were tired,' added Maglena, in a tender, compassionate voice. 'Of course, it was for such people that the thrush sang "poor soldier."'

'Yes, and even though the soldier was poor and tired, he was careful of his horse, anyway. You know that's the kind of people I think are real people. That's the kind of soldier I'd like to be if I could have what I want above all things on earth.'

Andy took up his work and went on with it, quietly and eagerly, with a deeply secretive air. He had mumbled the last words so softly that Maglena had not paid any attention to them.

'Take off your stockings so I can darn them,' said Maglena without the slightest doubt of its being necessary. It was also without the least objection that Andy pulled up the stiff leather strings in his coarse shoes and worked off the stockings.

'It is awfully nice to sit like this,' said Maglena. 'But you don't want to be a soldier, do you?'

'Yes, if there were war, I should. I shouldn't want to let enemy people take our country away from us, should I?'

'But you said once,' continued Maglena stubbornly, 'that you wanted to be a carpenter and think up all sorts of things to make. It was when we left the juryman's out in the Nolen parish.'

'Yes, because I'd never been in such a stable-room before.'

'You've been in a lot this winter, too.'

'That may be, and in most of them the master and men and boys have been making things. They've mended sleds. The farmhands have made traces and shafts, and the boys small shovels and rakes and such things.'

'What did they do at the juryman's that was different, then?'

'What did they do! Well, you must know, the juryman himself was working at the finest sled with a driver's seat and a nice curved front.'

'Like the sled at the wedding-farm?'

'Just exactly. All three boys, his sons and big fine fellows, were making an organ to play on. They say they have them in the lowland parishes, and the playing is supposed to sound like when people sing in church with four kinds of voices.'

'Boy, if I go to the world's end, I will see and hear such playing.'

Maglena struck her knee with her hand deep in Andy's coarse gray goats'-hair stocking.

'They had copied this after an organ at the minister's in Sola. And even though they were so fine that they could do such wonderful things, they got up at five o'clock in the morning, anyway, and went to the woods with axes, and sat on the sled and drove. Never anything stuck-up about them. Now, these are real people, and when I saw them I thought I'd be a big farmer and fine carpenter, too, of course.'

'Well, I saw that the mistress in the kitchen was fine too, but I didn't think of being a juryman's wife for all that,' mused Maglena. She saw with pleasure how the giant hole in Andy's stocking shrank under her nimble fingers.

'Was she a carpenter, the juryman's wife?' asked Andy with a mischievous gleam in his eye.

'Yes, she was! She made things in her way, and as women-folk do, when they are the right kind. If her husband put together sleds and shovels and organs, she put together linen thread and linen cloth and woolen yarn for stockings and homespun clothes and for dresses for the women-folk.'

'That's the kind of woman I'd like you to be!'

'Her little girls helped with the spinning, and went out in the barn with the maids and milked, and still they were so jolly and nice to us, Magnus and me. And the grown women sang songs and verses while they sat spinning. And I've never seen such nice spinning. Do you know,' Maglena added shyly and doubtfully, 'do you know, Maja-Greta, their daughter, said that there were fairies on their farm, nice good fairies.'

'The old farmhand said so to me too, when he was alone after the others had gone out to the peat bog.'

'He—said so! What did he say?'

Maglena threw the darned stocking to Andy and stared at him with shining, frightened eyes.

'He said that small fairies had always been there. They lived under the ground near the stable door. But they come up sometimes so they can see them. And they are good-natured to the farm-people.'

'If the farm-people do as they want them to, yes,' interrupted Maglena. 'O-oh, how the owls scream here!' She cast a frightened glance about her. 'Kitty, kitty, come here and make me feel safe.'

She took the cat that lay on father's old shirt up into her arms, caressed and fondled it.

'Do you know, Andy,' she continued, 'that once a servant swore at a horse in the stable, and he got such a box on the ear that his face was swollen for several days.'

'He deserved it. Look, what a fine spoon! Now I'm going to make some small spoons. It is hard for children to eat with these small troughs.'

'Yes, he deserved it, the servant.' Maglena took up the subject again, for, gruesome as she found it, she could not let it go. 'A maid there that said she had such a pain she couldn't spin and yet went to a dance secretly had the yarn so snarled when she was going to spin again that she was a whole skein behind the others, and she was

disgraced.'

'*She* deserved that. Otherwise the fairies aren't mean except three days before Christmas. We must remember to stay in then,' said Andy, a little doubtfully, puzzled as to whether he ought to take it seriously or not.

''Cause then Lusse is out and wants to take Christian children with him under the ground,' whispered Maglena with bright, frightened eyes.

'Yes, he told about that too, the old man,' assured Andy.

'And once, Maja-Greta told me, her grandmother had told her what she saw, when she lay in the granary, and was young and had an abscess in her throat.'

Maglena spoke as if it were a part of youth to have an abscess in the throat.

'It was midsummer,' she continued, 'and grandmother had fixed up in the granary, swept and brought in leaves and fruit blossoms.'

'And lilies-of-the-valley too, I imagine,' suggested Andy, who was deeply interested in Maglena's story.

'I don't know. But while she lay there awake she saw tiny, tiny people come up out of the floor. There were fathers and mothers and old folks, just as with us, but only half an ell tall.'

'Dressed like us?'

'Yes, in skirts and waists, and the men in kilts with belts around the waist and gray breeches and beards.'

'Then they were brownies, as we had too.' Andy settled the question.

'No, they were fairies. They were dressed nicer and weren't as old as brownies. More like people. And then, what do you suppose, up came young people and small children that were only one fourth as high; and took hands and danced in a ring. Maja-Greta's grandmother could hear the songs they sang. Maja-Greta sang them now, too, but I can't remember them. Her brother can play them on the violin and they make you sad, said Maja-Greta. Yes; they make cowards out of some people.'

'Then I don't want to hear such songs.'

'They hadn't sounded sad though, when those *little* people danced to them. They looked so awfully sweet and funny that grandmother laughed, and with that the abscess broke. The little folk were thirsty after dancing and wanted a drink and there wasn't a drop of water in the granary. Grandmother felt sorry for the tiny things, so hot, and fanning themselves with their aprons, so she got up and went to the well after water in an earthenware dish.'

'That was the right thing to do.'

'Yes, it was, and when she came with the water, they were still dancing and playing. She dozed off, and when she woke up, she was well. And what do you think, boy, there was a silver spoon in the dish, and I've seen that spoon!'

'They probably live in the woods too, the fairies,' said Andy thoughtfully.

'Those are wood-nymphs. They are women, tall, and with beautiful faces. They whirl and dance and bewitch people in the woods so that they forget God and the right. And then they laugh, and when you see their backs they are hollow like troughs. But it is dangerous to talk about wood-nymphs when you are in the woods.

Oh, goodness gracious, Andy—there is something moving out there!'

Maglena crept close to her brother.

'You must put more wood on the fire, but you mustn't leave me. See now again? No, you don't see anything; it isn't everybody that can see. It looked like two eyes right in the black branches.'

'There?—Dear me, don't you know Golden Horn?'

'Golden Horn, that lay there on the bed just now when I went after yarn?'

Maglena sounded astonished and unconvinced, as if the goat would not have been able to get out of such a well-timbered house unnoticed.

Magnus sat up yawning, not the least surprised at the 'cottage,' that was, after all, quite unusual. But of course he saw the fire and his brother and sister and Golden Horn and the cat. Maglena called to him. She had milk and bread for him beside the fire.

When he had eaten, it was much past their regular bedtime. It was nearly midnight. Magnus had to roll into bed again.

Andy looked 'out' before he curled up in bed. The moon shone still and clear. The stars beckoned and smiled like mother's eyes. He felt protected and secure.

But Maglena found it pleasantest 'in the house'; she couldn't force herself to stick her nose outside the branches of the tree.

CHAPTER XXI
MASTER AND MISTRESS

T children woke up early in the morning, long before the sun was up. It was very cold so early in the morning, so they crept down under the cover again.

It was pleasant beyond words to lie like this and hear the birds wake up one after the other.

The crows were earliest. They croaked like fire-watchmen, with rough coarse voices. They began at once to clamor about rats and birds' eggs, and soon flew boisterously out of the woods.

Magpies peeped out of their well-made nests high in the tree-tops. They did not have their beaks outside the nest before they laughed. They laughed because a fox far away had caught a rabbit, and become frightened and left part of it for their breakfast. They laughed at the spring birds that had dared come north into the snow so early. They seemed to have forgotten that nowadays there was famine, with winter lasting until the sun was high in the heavens.

'Ke-ke-ke-ke. They'll fall from the branches, every one, starved to death, frozen to death.' And they laughed at the children who had found a nest in the woods. For that matter, they knew the Barren Moor children well. More than once they had laughed at them when they had been in the woods gathering small branches and dragging their burdens to little gray man-nests. They had seen them pick berries on the wide marshes near houses. And now the foolish youngsters lay in the middle of the woods. And they had no wings to fly with or beak to peck with if any owl or a fox came upon them. 'Ke-ke-ke-ke,' the magpies laughed in chorus.

About five o'clock the yellow-hammer woke up. In the softest voice, scarcely audible, she whispered to her mate, 'Are you awake?'

He answered with a soft, sleepy 'Yes, of course, I'm awake.'

At the same time, beside each other, they stuck their small heads out of the nest.

Such exultation as sprang from their throats when they saw how spring and summer were coming.

'See-see,' said she. 'See-see, I was right. No famine this year. We can hurry with the nest.'

'And begin to think of young ones,' twittered he.

And jubilation broke forth again from them, and from other small birds that had just come north to look around.

'Nowhere in the world is it like this,' they sang. 'See the sun over the mountain. Soon it will stay all night. The woods are big. Already we can stay here as we did last year. We were cold then, we starved then. But it was nice to have a nest. We'll take it again, we'll take it again. Sun and spring. No famine. Sun and spring!' In different languages and in different melodies it rang out from small throats—'Sun and spring!' 'Nest and young ones!' Far, far out in the woods it could be heard.

The children lay still and listened. They heard the black cock calling, and knew well how funny he looked when, to the calling, he danced around, around.

And just now, just as the sun rose, the wood-grouse began his call, his mysterious whispering, his queer sucking noise with the final shriek of joy: the joy of living and having a gentle little mate to sing to.

A strong odor of resin and moist pine needles, of newly bared earth here and there, forced its way under the fir on the newly wakened south wind.

The children stuck their noses up over the cover. They drank in the air and felt the same desire the birds had to fly up, to chirp and sing.

They heard the brook; already freed, it purled near them, that, too, in a twittering exultation.

They sat up in bed: at the same time the desire to sing seized them.

Maglena started:

‘Morning between the mountains,
Running brook and flood
Springing up like fountains,
Sighing God is good, God is good.

‘Now I see day breaking,
Light comes through the wood,
Valleys now are waking,
Sighing God is good, God is good.

‘The forest birds are singing
In a happy mood,
As on a branch they’re swinging,
Chirping God is good, God is good.

‘Soul, wake up and cry
In a happy mood,
Raise a song on high,
Sing that God is good, God is good.’

‘Oh, but it’s nice and wonderful and fun to have a house and church in the woods!’ said Maglena. She sprang up when they had finished the song.

‘Now we’re going to clean ourselves and clean up the house,’ she sang to her own melody. ‘I’ll wash me and I’ll wash you, and I’ll comb me and I’ll comb you.’

Maglena danced a little schottische up to Magnus, who sat in bed and scratched his head with both hands. His face was rather spotted, for it was black with smoke from the fire, and, besides, in his sleep he had rubbed his eyes with hands that were not especially clean.

‘That isn’t any nice song,’ muttered Magnus, who was at once out of humor. ‘Wash yourself, you. Your nose is as black as the old hen at Sven Paul’s.’

‘But you are as spotted as the black-and-white goat at Karl Nilsson’s. What do you think Anna-Lisa would say? I think Per-Erik looks different from you now all

right.'

'Just as if it were any fun to take after the way he looks now. Go 'way, I'm going down to the brook after water.'

'But first, Magnus, you've got to have a clean face and hands, whether you want to or not.'

Maglena took fast hold of the wriggling boy's arm.

'I suppose you think you'll work me into the little shirt I got last week, or let me go around naked like Cain in the picture at Karl Nilsson's. Let me go, do you hear?'

Magnus sputtered and fought like a lynx, ready to protect his skin to the utmost.

'Andy, hold the boy for me!' panted Maglena. 'He hasn't been washed for three days. I thought of it to-night that I really had to try to get him washed and combed, now that he hasn't got Anna-Lisa.'

She freed one hand and scratched her head carefully and unconsciously.

Andy put down the armful of branches he had carried in, and came to Maglena's aid.

'You ought to be ashamed to look worse than a pig.'

'But you don't scrape pigs clean with snow-crust, either, and that's what Maglena was going to do to me, she doesn't know any better,' cried Magnus.

Big tears made clean paths down his cheeks that were quite rosy, giving an example of how they would look when really washed.

'Go down to the brook after water in this bowl so we can wash you clean, if you don't wash yourself,' said Andy mediatingly.

Magnus tore himself furiously from Maglena's hold. Swift as lightning he put out his tongue at her; and disappeared toward the brook, quick as an eel.

Without doubt, Maglena looked more disappointed than pleased when he, after a while, came back 'in,' his face shining and clean, dripping with water.

'Give me a rag,' he puffed pompously, 'so I can rub my face. I washed myself in the brook.'

Maglena, who during his absence had called forth the courage and strength of a lioness for a regular 'house-cleaning' of her brother, tore the sleeve violently out of father's old shirt and gave it to him.

'What in the world are you scratching me for?' cried Magnus angrily when Maglena could not resist running the rag around the boy's neck and ears a few times.

'I suppose you have eyes in the back of your head so you can see that your neck is black.'

'Gracious, girl, then I'll have to help you too, when you're going to wash, 'cause, as far as I can see, you don't have eyes in the back of your head either.'

Maglena drew back, defeated by her brother's argument. It was rather a come-down to her mother and mistress dignity to have to yield.

But her good humor soon returned.

She dropped the sheepskin she had been folding on the moss, and went with quick steps to the knapsack which she lifted off the knot in the tree. Out of it she finally fished the brass comb. With a triumphant air she turned toward Magnus with the comb in her hand.

But he was at this moment inaccessible, strong, superior, properly washed for the first time without help. Clean hands, dried with a rag!

‘Girl, go down to the brook and rub the black off your nose. Now *you* look like the pig at Karl Nilsson’s.’

But now Andy had to laugh, and when Andy laughed heartily like that, the others had to laugh too.

‘Bring the comb here,’ said Magnus, who first became serious. His expression was wildly resolute, and he took the comb as if it had been the spear with which he had been condemned to kill himself.

‘If I’m good enough to wash myself, then I guess I can manage to comb myself too, even if it has to be as often as once or twice a week.’

Maglena, who had given her brother the comb with a distrustful provoking sniff, soon came back from the brook just as shiningly clean as Magnus.

He sat sternly attentive before the fire, with his hair dripping wet, straining like small candle flames toward his neck.

Beyond a doubt, he was combed, for his scalp shone red where his hair was parted. Magnus was cold, and his teeth chattered, but his blue lips did not want to confess how little pleasant he found life in this self-cleaning process.

‘I believe you’re cold,’ said Maglena, who looked at Magnus through the curly hair that she parted and pulled and jerked at to get clean and, if possible, smooth.

‘Am I cold! Well, I guess I am cold! Look if there’s ice down the back of my waist.’

Magnus sat absolutely still, as if he himself had frozen into an ice statue and so had lost all power to move.

Maglena felt a little remorse. She twisted her hair hastily around a comb of wire with a brass edge which she fastened high at the back of her head. Then she tied the woolen scarf on again and began quickly with the morning chores. First ‘barn chores,’ of course, to get milk for the boys and the household. She had to see to the cattle, scrape and brush them. ‘The old folks’ suddenly became a whole big herd of cattle.

The mistress got breakfast for the ‘men.’ She nearly pushed the ‘farmhand’ Magnus into the fire in the struggle to get him to sit near it and the heat. He, who knew he was a servant, wanted to give the master the place at the ‘head’ of the table.

While they ate, Maglena, like a real mistress, stood at the fire and knitted mittens. *After* the men, it would be her turn to get her share of the milk and bits of bread and crusts she had saved in the knapsack. Andy put wood on the fire and sent his ‘man’ to the woods with the sled. To-day he was to get wood for the household, and he felt the importance of being both horse and servant.

Maglena had made the bed, swept the floor with a bundle of birch twigs, washed the dishes, and shaken the bedclothes. As mistress she now sat by the fire on a

folded robe, and mended the master's trousers, while the master himself crouched in the other robe and patiently waited for the garment that is rather necessary to a master.

In the meantime, she asked him questions out of the catechism, which of course they carried with them.

'What is the value of industry?'

'Industry promotes good health and prosperity, and prevents many opportunities for sin.—But, goodness, that isn't so particular. Only get that piece in the back on right,' continued Andy in the same breath.

'Well, you can't go around with a fringe at the bottom, can you, now that you're a rich farmer,' objected Maglena reproachfully.—'What is meant thereby, that God hears our prayers?' she asked in the same admonishing tone.

'That He, in His wisdom and goodness gives us either what we ask or what is better for us.—It's getting almost cold, sitting like this,' said Andy and tried to make the worn robe cover his whole body.

'Well, you'll have to take them then; the patch is finished, but I'll have to fix the bottom better to-night after you've gone to bed. If I only knew how we could stay in this nice house!' she continued.

'It's going to get warm,' remarked Andy. 'It looked like it around the moon last night, and then it will be awfully hard for us to get away from here in the slush; there won't be any crust.'

'If we only had something to eat, we'd be comfortable here in our own house.'

'But we haven't anything to eat.'

'If it only were summer,' continued Maglena.

'But it isn't summer yet,' answered Andy with a gloomy expression. 'I guess there is no other way than for us to start out again,' he finished with a sigh.

'There ought to be some way, when it's so nice here.'

Maglena tore the other sleeve out of father's old shirt briskly. She meant to sew the arm holes together and make a sort of cape.

'The best way would be for you to take our money, the three twenty-five öre pieces, and go out now on the crust. Near here is a clearing that has just been burnt, and then there must be people that own it where you can find out where the store is that little Anna at the wedding-farm talked about.'

Andy's face cleared.

'Yes, and I have wooden spoons and things to trade, and then all the twenty-five öre pieces to buy food. If I find the store I can get food and we can stay here until you get us all mended up.'

'And you'll have time to make a lot of spoons and things to sell. If it only were time for the birch leaves to come out, we could make brooms too and carry them on the sled.'

'When it's time to make birch brooms, then there won't be any sleighing,' remarked Andy with a little laugh.

He was pleased because the trousers were whole once more, and because he knew the catechism lesson he had set out to learn, but mostly because of the thought that they could stay on under the tree and not have to go around in the settlements begging food and beds.

‘Then I’ll be off,’ he said.

Maglena rubbed his old fur cap in the snow, and scraped his coat with lumps of snow-crust. She thought he looked really fine and rich when he turned to her to say good-bye before he lifted the door-branches and went out.

‘Lucky meeting, horse and man,’ he smiled at Magnus, who was coming with a load of resinous gnarled pine roots.

‘Whoa, stop, Blackie,’ said Magnus to himself. ‘It’s a fine load, isn’t it? I thought I’d pile up the wood here south of the house where the sun can shine on it and dry it.’

Magnus pointed out the spot he had in mind.

‘That will be fine. It’s a good thing I have such a good man on the farm. Now I’m going to the mill so we’ll have bread, and I’ll have to get some potatoes to plant too.’

‘Oh, dear, we haven’t any potatoes in the house either,’ called Maglena from indoors.

‘But we haven’t a kettle to cook them in,’ answered Andy with his head in the door.

‘I’ll roast them in the ashes for dinner, and fry the herring on the coals, ’cause, of course, you’ll bring home herring too.’ The mistress came out. She stood with her hands under her apron and chatted with the master and servant.

‘If you find anything good for spoons or anything, bring it along,’ said the master. ‘Good-bye, then,’ he added and set off, half-running in the shade between the trees where the crust still bore, though it had begun to get so warm that the mistress had to shield her eyes from the sun with her hand. She went in again, but called to the servant, ‘Come in and you’ll see something beautiful.’

Magnus was heard putting the horse in the stable before he came slowly in.

‘What is it?’

‘See the sun in all the drops in the ceiling here. See how it shines red and all colors on the branches and twigs. It can’t be as beautiful as that even at the king’s.’

‘No-o, it is beautiful,’ admitted Magnus, ‘and nice and warm here by the fire.’

He stood and warmed himself, much pleased.

Golden Horn too liked the fire. She lay on the robe beside Maglena, who leaned against her.

On another corner of the robe lay the cat on softly folded front paws, and stared into the fire. She purred loudly if Maglena only turned toward her.

‘You can stay in and rest awhile now, Magnus.’

‘I guess I will,’ agreed Magnus with dignity. He tried to squeeze in on the robe where Golden Horn lay, chewing her cud.

‘Move over, Golden Horn, you have more on than I have,’ he puffed, and at last managed to get a passable corner between the goat and his sister.

‘Now I thought we’d go through the Ten Commandments, ’cause to-morrow we’re going to have a catechism party,’ said Maglena in rather a coaxing voice.

She began to realize that it was best to treat Magnus with gentleness. It worried both her and Andy that the little brother should be untaught all winter.

‘I am sure I know them,’ assured Magnus confidently.

‘No use saying that,’ said Maglena indignantly. ‘Tell me at once the second commandment.’

‘Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.’

The answer came fluently; Maglena was obviously astonished. But she thought to snare him with the eighth commandment that had always troubled her.

‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.’

Magnus’s eyes shone triumphantly.

‘Now the rooster will have to crow for you[13] when Andy comes back,’ praised Maglena.

Magnus swelled with pleasure.

‘Well, you see, the catechism isn’t anything so awful for me,’ he said without any great humility. ‘I think it isn’t so easy for you,’ he added with a superior air.

Maglena felt a little guilty. But it did not occur to her to admit any inferiority in any respect.

‘How is it with the psalms?’ she went on with dignified seriousness, while she, with obvious trouble, began knitting the thumb of the mitten. ‘This one: “All the world praises the Lord.”’

‘I can’t do that,’ muttered Magnus. ‘When every other word falls like that and they follow each other so that they fall apart if a single word gets away, then I can’t remember them.’

‘But we’re going to sing that to-morrow at the catechism party, and Andy will be the minister, and we don’t want to be ashamed of one. Read it aloud twenty times, and then you’ll know it.’

Magnus really meant to follow Maglena’s advice. It was so pleasant to sit here by the fire and look up at the sun-bright drops on the walls and ceiling, and have before you a catechism party with ash-roasted potatoes and coal-fried herring.

He laid a few thick roots on the fire that flamed up brightly and warmed them. Then he sat down on the robe with his elbows on his knees, his hands under his cheeks, and the book on the ground before him.

‘All the world praises the Lord,’ he read the verse aloud over and over again.

The cat purred and purred.

Golden Horn chewed her cud.

Maglena straightened out the bright yarn. She thought to refresh herself by sewing roses on the nearly finished mitten.

The sun shone on the moss floor.

Roundabout the ‘house’ little birds were heard twittering and rustling in the trees.

Maglena sat and thought how nice everything was. Nothing could be so joyful as having their own green cottage in the woods.

Andy would certainly find his way back, too, even if it should be late in the evening when he came.

Just then both she and Magnus heard running steps, panting breaths from one who came rushing toward the tree as if pursued.

Right through the wall without looking for the door came Andy. So exhausted was he that he could not say a word, but threw himself full length on the ground. He was pale, his hair was wet with perspiration.

It took awhile before he was able to move or say a word.

CHAPTER XXII
DRIVEN AWAY

A stood up hurriedly.

‘Get together everything we have and put it in the knapsack! Hurry as if there were a fire!’ he panted, still gasping for breath.

‘What in the world, boy!’ said Maglena. Her eyes darkened with fear and her lips trembled. But quickly and carefully she packed into the knapsack everything that she had taken out to make it homelike under the tree.

‘Do we have to go away from here, anyway?’ she whispered, and looked about her terrified.

‘Yes, right away,’ said Andy, in a hoarse, muffled voice. Swiftly he bound fast the robes, knapsack, and wood for his carving on the sled. Silently, with clenched teeth, he took the rope over his shoulder again and set out through the right door.

Maglena followed, pushing the sled. She could not look back into the fine cozy cottage where she had felt that at last she had a home, the first since they had left the little gray house. Golden Horn followed, of course, close at their heels, like a dog.

‘Take the cat, Magnus,’ said Andy curtly. ‘They expect to get her, too, as well as us.’

A heavy, bitter spirit weighed him down. It was hard walking, since the sun had softened the crust and the snow was like water, so Andy sought banks, knolls, and gutters, where the earth was practically bare, and where too the sled left almost no tracks.

‘It is the man from the Wicked Farm, you know, that is after us,’ he said at length when they had gone so far that not a glimpse could be seen of the tall, thick-branched fir where they had lived.

Maglena had known the whole time that they were fleeing from these people. She shuddered so that she shook when she thought of the night in the shed in the moonlight when they heard Golden Horn’s awful bleating, and saw her lying there as if dead.

Not until they had come so far that they had another village in sight did the fugitives dare rest. They had no longer the strength to plod through the soft, uneven snow slush.

Magnus was so tired he cried. He had dropped the cat long ago. With tail straight in the air, and mewing, she followed the children as long as possible, but when she came upon the hole of a field mouse under a stump, she stopped. They knew she was so hungry she had to stop. How would they dare to go to the village for food themselves?

‘We’ll have to drink milk awhile,’ said Maglena. ‘I have two or three pieces of bread in the knapsack. Before we go to people——’

‘If we could only get down to the river and across to the other side where you see that big village, we’d be away from this direction,’ brooded Andy.

‘There is water on the ice in the river, but I suppose we can find some place to get over on good ice,’ said Maglena eagerly.

‘Poor Golden Horn,’ said she and petted the goat. ‘It’s hard for you out here in the wilderness. But before we go over the river we’ll find some little birch grove or little willows so you can get something to eat.’

Golden Horn did not complain. She did not like the villages either. So she tripped lightly before them up a winding path that led from the edge of the village to the river. Andy guided the sled. Here on the shady bank there was still sound ice.

Magnus sat on the sled contentedly, and Maglena ran behind so fast that her shoes flew like drumsticks.

Planks had been thrown out on the ice and now floated in the slush over the black ice near the shore. But Andy stopped. They had come to a pretty grove of juniper bushes and Golden Horn must have her dinner.

It was well protected and hidden here under the steep bank. Here Andy could tell them about the dangers he had helped them escape.

Now they heard how he had run and jumped between the tree-trunks happy in the thought of coming home to the ‘cottage’ with food. He had gone far past the clearing, but guided himself by the sun so that he had gone away from where the Wicked Farm was.

He had been much pleased when he had heard voices. There were some woodcutters talking loudly between the trees. They were having fun over something, Andy heard as he hurried toward them.

But then he heard, ‘I’ll teach them that and more too. The boy that tripped me up will get all he can stand.’ It was the Finnish farmhand from the Wicked Farm speaking.

The other had laughed at the youngsters who had dared oppose grown folk. Andy had scarcely had time to crouch down behind a pile of branches and brush, from which he could see the men, before the cross-eyed Finn turned directly toward where he had crept down.

‘They’re somewhere in these woods,’ he laughed evilly. ‘It isn’t hard to see that because there is blood from the goat a couple of places on the road, where the tracks of the sled went in on the clearing where the crust still bore this morning.’

‘In this weather they can’t get far with a heavy sled and a goat that must still have trouble walking,’ the other man had answered, he too with an evil laugh.

‘The goat got as much as he could stand, I guess,’ grinned the Finn.

And then both of them had laughed so hard that the little birds had become frightened and flown away.

‘Knife, the gray dog at the farm, is just as ill-natured and bad-tempered as the people there,’ grinned the Finn again. ‘He’ll hunt out those youngsters all right, and bite their legs before they have time to open their mouths.’

‘And you lay there and listened?’ whispered Maglena, eyes wide with terror. She stood and held down a branch of swelling buds for Golden Horn.

‘I couldn’t move. The Finn stood there and stared right at the brush-pile where I was as if he suspected something. I didn’t dare breathe even because I thought he saw me when I hid there.’

‘Boy, that you didn’t die of fright!’

‘You don’t die like that,’ thought Magnus. He still sat on the sled with his legs drawn up, so exhausted that he was scarcely able to follow Andy’s story of the dangers they had escaped. ‘If I didn’t die when the cat came on the ice with fire in her eyes and her tail like smoke so that I thought it was ghosts, then no one else will die either.’

With this assurance, Magnus sank back into apathy.

‘Yes, I was scared,’ admitted Andy. ‘I wondered what would happen to you and Golden Horn, and what would become of me if the men that stood there grinning so wickedly had seen me.

‘“They can’t be far away,” said the Finn, and took a couple of steps toward my brush-pile. “Maybe they’re hiding here, ’cause I thought I just saw something move behind this brush.”

‘He picked up a stone and threw it into the pile so that it nearly took my head off.’

‘And you didn’t scream or move?’ Maglena’s voice was thick with fright.

‘No, ’cause that would have been the end of both you and me and Golden Horn. But the Finn climbed on a couple steps more.’

‘Boy, I can’t bear to hear it!’

‘But then, you know, there came a whole lot of little lemmings[14] along the ground, black and gold and those that look like a long rag carpet, that flew around his feet. He stepped on them to kill them and jumped high in the air, he was so mad, and then he looked away from me.’

‘That’s queer. They came as if sent. We haven’t seen any mountain lemmings yet, since we have been in the woods,’ mused Maglena. ‘Mother sent them, that’s what I believe. But then you ran?’

‘No-o. I couldn’t. The Finn went back to the other man, and now he said that I had *stolen* the watch and the robe from grandfather.’

‘*You stole—took without leave!*’

Maglena let go the branch. Her eyes burned black with indignation.

‘Ye-e-s, he said that.’

Andy’s face was sad and miserable. ‘It hurt me like something sharp, you see.’

‘Well, then I am ashamed to go out where there are people. “Stole,” just like Jan Ers Karl that stole from a store-keeper and was put in jail in town.’

Maglena’s lips began to tremble, the tears came in a rush.

‘Girl, you ought to know that I wouldn’t do that!’

‘But it is awful that any one has even said so. Mother would have died if she’d heard it.’

‘I guess mother can see what is right where she is now, so I don’t worry about that. I’m more worried about grandfather, at the Wicked Farm.’

‘Why?’

‘Yes, you know, Maglena, that the Finn said that when Brita came in to grandfather in the morning to make a fire, he had had a stroke.’

‘So he could not tell them that he had *given* you the watch and robe.’

‘The poor thing had had a stroke and couldn’t move out of his bed,’ repeated Andy patiently. ‘Father and mother and the little boys had come rushing down to the grandfather. They had seen that the watch and robe were gone. Grandfather had been able to say that I had got them from him. The men aped what he said. They stuttered like grandfather. “The b-b-boy h-has the w-watch and the r-robe. G-Grels sh-sh-shan’t h-have them.”’

‘Grandfather was a nice man, and good. But I suppose they were mad at him?’

‘They were that. The mother had shaken him and said he *must* take out the watch, and Grels had been so mad he had cried and said all sorts of things to grandfather.’

‘Oh, and there he was alone. No one to turn to,’ said Maglena with the tenderest sympathy in her voice.

‘Yes, he found Some One to turn to, because, you see, he died last night.’

‘Then he is just as well off as mother,’ said Maglena, relieved.

‘But Grels wants the watch and the mistress the robe.’

‘And the Finn wants to beat you,’ continued Maglena, who looked up the bank shudderingly. ‘But we ought to get away from here.’

‘They weren’t going to start to hunt us until this afternoon after they came home with the wood. But then Grels and the other children were going to be along. And Knife was going to track us.’

‘Boy, we must get over the river right away. The dog will lose the scent when we go over the water and drag the planks after us.’

They worked hurriedly over the sled. Maglena suddenly stopped her work of binding fast the knapsack.

She seized Andy’s arm.

‘Boy! Do you hear? Now they are after us, anyway, both the Firm and the children and Knife. Listen, they are almost here! They’ll come down the bank—now they are behind that cliff——’

Andy stood as stiff as a statue. He, too, heard plainly angry yelps that came rapidly nearer through the bushes that bordered the bank. Behind a steep wall that shot out from the bank urgent cries were heard in boys’ and men’s voices.

Now the branches just beside them rustled and cracked. Maglena and Magnus, who had just dragged himself up, threw themselves forward screaming, on the sled.

Andy held Golden Horn behind him by one horn.

He stood still with a bitter, utterly discouraged expression on his face.

The children—Golden Horn—Again he remembered that it was he himself who had led them into this danger, this wickedness that now threatened.

CHAPTER XXIII
AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

I was the head, the horns of a *reindeer* that now appeared before Andy's frightened eyes: a reindeer that flew past him with beating hoofs and big black frightened eyes and continued toward the river's edge.

A Lapp dog was in pursuit, tight at his heels. They plunged by without taking any notice of the children beside the sled. Of such little creatures the deer, and much less the dog, had no fear.

With a hallooing cry came a Lapp from the birch grove and ran quickly forward on broad short skiis. A Lapp boy followed in his trail.

Andy did not believe his eyes.

'*Mattes Klip!*'

It was a Lapp from their own home tract in the mountains, one who had a tent only sixty miles above their own parish.

The Lapp gave a cry.

'Isn't it Andy from High Peak village in the mountains? And, God help us, little ones even thinner than Lapp's children. Food scarce for mountain children this year!'

'Mattes! Oh, that it is *Mattes*!'

Maglena, who still trembled in every limb, went toward the Lapp.

Magnus hardly dared lift his head from the sled.

This time he really believed that fright had been the death of him, for he could not move from the spot. Besides, the thought still held him that the hallooing came from the farmhand and the Wicked Farm boys, and the barking from Knife.

Magnus could not all at once turn all these ideas upside down or downside up. He had to have time to straighten it all out within him.

So he stayed where he was, scraping the small of his leg against the edge of the sled and standing almost on his head in the sheepskin robe. It was only when a smart blow descended on that part of his body that he all too carelessly exposed that he tumbled backwards and stood on the ground.

'Little fellow scared out of his wits, big man otherwise up in the mountains,' said Mattes.

'This time they nearly did for me. It isn't any fun to think that you're going to be bitten to death by a dog.'

Mattes had taken on a sorrowful look, but his happy even Lapp temper soon came forth again.

'Good luck now that reindeer got of herd this morning. Been mad and run after it in snow-water all day. Satisfied now with running deer. Nerlja glad to stop too. Give food to you all.'

The Lapp took forth out of ‘the Lapp’s cupboard’ (the full jacket above the belt) a piece of reindeer cheese and hard bread, which Nerlja, his son, as well as the others, hungrily accepted.

‘Not far from herd now. Deer there now. To-night Swedish children will be little Lapps in tent with old Lapp.’

‘Oh, goodness, Mattes, let’s go!’ cried Maglena eagerly and pulled Mattes’s sleeve. ‘I hear a gray dog up on the bank; he’s whining and hunting a trail. I hear the boys hallooing too.’

Maglena pulled Mattes down to the ice.

Little Nerlja watched how Andy fussed over the sled. He thought that Swedish people had a lot of trouble when they were wandering; no ‘akkja’ [15] in which one could tie fast everything one wanted along and no deer to pull one through the miles of wilderness.

Their clothes were worst of all, especially their shoes.

Andy and Magnus had grown-ups’ shoes, soaking wet, and stuffed with hay. Their long trousers with patches, and their long-sleeved jackets without belts were uncomfortable wearisome things. A Lapp neither would nor could move about in such clothes.

Little Nerlja hopped and jumped, lithe as a pine-marten in his short deerskin kilts with the close-fitting trousers bound at the small of the leg with bright bands and tassels. On his feet he had the feather-weight Laplanders’ fur boots.

The blue pointed cap with the green stripe sat as lightly as a mere nothing on his head. The Lapp boy laid his skiis and ski-staff on the sled and took hold of the rope to help Andy pull.

The Lapp was much amused at their undaunted act of taking a goat with them on such a journey. A goat was nearly as easily fed and cared for as a deer. She came running from the bushes when Maglena called her, full-fed and content.

Maglena nearly fell, for she could not help looking back in the direction from which she heard clearly the barking of dogs and hallooing. When they came out to the middle of the wide river, she could see the village they had passed. Up there she saw the fields with bare spots, slopes, and ditches. She could see the dark woods where their green cottage was. And she hid herself shivering behind Mattes. There, just where the road turned toward the river, she saw a gray dog dash forward, whining and growling. Farther up on the river-bank appeared two heavy men and three boys, also a girl. Like hungry wolves they greedily hunted their prey.

Maglena took tighter hold of Mattes’s coat. Magnus held on no less tightly.

CHAPTER XXIV
THE LAPLANDER'S HUT

B them, where the road led up the northern river-bank, already clear of snow, there was apparently a forest of dry gray branches. A forest that moved slowly forward.

Lapp-Mattes gave an echoing cry: a strange, penetrating shriek as if from the throat and the palate together. One who had never heard such a sound before would have thought that Mattes yelled forth sounds and words without meaning.

But the Barren Moor children knew so much of the Lapps' ways as to understand that Mattes now, in a song made up on the spur of the moment, greeted his wife, children, and helpers. Then he told about the children so that those in the tent knew of their fate long before they had reached the herd.

'Deer ran all day,' sang Mattes. 'Find little Swedish children beside frozen water; afraid of Lapp; glad when they see it is Mattes from Bear Mountain. They share Lapp's food, lie in Lapp's tent. They are alone, no father, no mother.'

Little Nerlja strapped on his skiis as soon as he saw the forest of horns. Swift as an arrow, like a hunted sea-fowl, he flew over the ice.

Those following soon heard the barking of the watchdogs, as they ran about the herd, composed of nearly a thousand deer, to gather them together for the night.

The Lapps were going to put up their tents beside the river, on this side of the big village the children had seen from the other bank. It was hard work for both dogs and Lapps to get the often unruly animals up through the narrow pass from the river to the plain.

Mattes bore off on his skiis to help.

Magnus, Maglena, yes, even Andy, walked as if asleep, dragging their feet after them. They scarcely rallied when a little one-year-old Mattes met them on the road, tumbling about in the snow as naked as when he was born.

Sigri, his little sister, had much difficulty in capturing him and getting him into the tent.

The Lapp mother, Cecilia, was more sure of herself. She took the kicking boy, stuffed him into the 'klubb' (a long cradle of skin which can be carried on the back), into the fine deerskin bed which lined it, and bound the soft cover of skin fast about his waist and little body, wriggling with life and mischief.

The mother hung up the cradle by means of leather bands to a slender tree-trunk which was fastened to the ceiling. Sigri rocked the cradle and sang the Lapps' wild, deafening cradle-song to little Mattes, who became quiet, listened, and fell asleep.

The poor, tired little wanderers threw themselves down on the deerskins that lay like a carpet around the fire in the middle of the tent. They were awakened to drink the strong coffee which was given them.

Neither coffee nor anything else could open Magnus's eyes. But it was remarkable how wide awake Andy and Maglena became after the coffee. They suddenly felt

hunger, and how unbelievably good the reindeer meat tasted with the coarse bread. Even the strong black soup of deer's blood tasted good. But the reindeer milk which was offered them in a beautiful carved bowl, made of one single piece of wood, they refused with thanks. It is strong and bitter for those who are not used to it. To them, goats' milk tasted much better.

Golden Horn, whose rich supply of milk was offered to the Lapp household, climbed neatly over the skins and lay down comfortably on the farthest tent-skin. Magnus still slept like a boy of stone. And yet there was the worst kind of clamor outside of the tent. The Lapps yelled and hallooed when they threw the lasso over the horns of the reindeer cows that were to be milked. The cows resisted with all four feet braced in the snow slush and bare tussocks, but were pulled out in spite of themselves and held by the Lapps while the girls milked into small wooden bowls.

The cows and calves stared wonderingly at Andy and Maglena, who, hand in hand with Sigri, wandered about in the huge herd.

The Lapps walked safely among the reindeer bulls, who fought and charged each other with horns which finally became entangled, and among the lassoes which flew about their ears.

The ever-watchful Lapp dogs would suddenly see a deer who, unnoticed, wanted to get away to better pasture, and would dart after him straight through the herd. Then one had to keep out of the way if one did not want to be knocked down.

The strange, soft, yet wild, language sounded on all sides. The Lapps chattered, they pointed at the herd with vehement gestures, they yelled in order to make themselves heard. The reindeer bulls were to be captured and tamed for draught oxen. Little calves on wobbly legs must be looked after. Animals must be selected for slaughter.

The women talked caressingly, half singing, to the cows they milked; or they sat on their heels with a new little calf, soft as silk, on their knees. They fondled and caressed it, while the reindeer mother stood beside them and looked on with tenderness in the big moist black eyes.

Andy and Maglena became dizzy. They became part of the life, the funny sounds, the somehow gay bustle.

The forest of horns thinned. One pair of branches after the other sank down in the standing herd. More and more disappeared. Soon the whole herd was at rest for the night.

The Lapp dogs, who had been fed in the tent, slept there in the warmth, as Lapp dogs always sleep, with closed eyes, but with ears alert for the least sign of a wolf.

Mattes came into the tent with his elder sons and a servant. Cecilia had food and coffee ready for them. The women-folk of the family and the maids followed soon after, hungry and tired; but not so tired that they could not keep up a jolly clamor in the tent.

The men smoked short clay pipes; the older women too. They drank strong black coffee and told stories of their adventures: about the old wolf that no one could shoot; that was enchanted and that therefore neither shot nor spear could wound.

And they talked in whispers about what Mattes had 'seen' when he stood at the sacrificial stone on midsummer night. He had seen everything that was to happen in the country in the next year. He could foretell peace, war, or pestilence, a good year

or a poor. He had followed the angel of death in his Vision. If he ‘wished,’ Mattes could say whether the angel of death would take more old or more young people during the next year.

All this talk in the Lapp language Sigri translated for Andy and Maglena. She probably added a little too, and saw to it that it all became a little more uncanny.

Here among the Lapps one heard nothing of brownies and fairies. But about goblins and bewitched Swedes who had to obey and follow a Lapp because they had been insolent to him; and about goblin drums and ‘sacrifice’ and dangers up in the deserted mountain country, with ‘death’ who shrieked and wailed out on the marshes all night long.

Strange that a person can grow sleepy during such talk. But they who were sleepy were Andy and Maglena. They had thrown off wet shoes and outer clothes, and now they curled up on the skin beside Sigri and little Lisa.

Outside slept the herd of deer. Thousands of lives and yet a soundless quiet. Over it all shone spring’s gently smiling heaven of stars, just as it had shone over the homeless children’s green cottage in the woods the night before.

CHAPTER XXV
AGAIN DEPENDENT ON THEMSELVES

D and weeks had gone since that morning in the spring when the children from Barren Moor had parted from their old friends, the Lapp Mattes Klip and his family. Before then, both Andy, Maglena, and Magnus had thrown lassoes, milked reindeer, and helped pack tents and household goods and food into long rows of waiting akkjas.

Andy had even had a ride after a reindeer that was great fun, but came near being dangerous. He was given permission to creep into an akkja. A supposedly gentle deer was harnessed to it, and Mattes himself handed him the rein, which was made of deerskin. And then he was told how to manage the deer and how to use the rein, casting it to the right or to the left over the deer's horns, depending on the direction in which he wanted to go where there was the best snow. He was even told what to do if the deer became unmanageable.

So Andy had flown across the crusted snow between high firs that shone golden and violet in the morning sun which was just forcing its way into the woods.

'Hi! Hi!' Such fun! Even the eagle that flew so high above the woods could not have flown faster.

Andy was in the highest spirits. It seemed to him that he flew like the eagle; that he glided through the woods swift as an arrow, like a salmon through clear water; that he raced for miles like a colt. The deer knew how to find a road between the trees where there was no road.

But then, in a clearing, he wanted to turn back, and this attempt Andy most decidedly opposed with a jerk at the rein and threatening cries.

'Ho! Ho! You! Keep on!'

Andy threw the rein to the right of the horn and to the left of the horn, pulled and tore. He had never had such fun.

'Will you go, you cloven-hoof!' shrieked Andy, and overbearingly used abusive words to the mountain reindeer, he who was only a forest and stream Swede-boy.

So the deer became furious. Unexpectedly, swift as lightning, he turned toward the akkja to attack with horns and front legs the scamp of a boy who had called him 'cloven-hoof.'

And now it was well that Andy remembered what he had been told about ungovernable reindeer and that he of habit and necessity had become resolute and quick in action. Andy did as Mattes had taught him. He slipped out of the akkja and turned it quickly over him as a protective roof.

There he lay, what seemed to him a terribly long time, and heard how the deer beat on the akkja with his hard sharp 'cloven-hoofs.' More than discontented was the deer at not being able, in spite of his really tiring efforts, to get at the boy who had jerked at the rein so recklessly, shrieked, 'Ho! Ho! You!' and called him 'cloven-hoof,' and who now lay under the wooden akkja that was without a single weak spot. But he had to save his legs and hoofs to scrape away the crust of snow later in

the day in order to get at the desirable moss that the deer live on.

Andy raised the akkja on his back and peeped out through the opening.

So that was the way matters stood! The deer had boldly turned about and stood ready to be off to the camp! Again it was important to be quick. ‘Cloven-hoof’ was apparently ready to be off with the akkja regardless of whether the Swedish boy was in it or not. Andy had scarcely time to swing the akkja aright and tumble headlong into it before they were off again toward the tents and the herd.

Proudly, and with eyes shining with joy, he had come back to the camp and reaped applause and admiration from the Lapps. The admiration he accepted with surprising humility. No one but himself knew how truly cowardly he had felt while he lay under the akkja with the drumming of the sharp hoofs over him.

When Maglena and Magnus also wanted to be noticed and to win the applause of the Lapps by a pleasure ride in an akkja, they met Andy’s resolute opposition. He insisted that it was too dangerous for the little ones.

‘As if it were hard to ride in an akkja! Sit and hold the reins! Nonsense!’

Magnus had been quite at home with the Lapps and the reindeer. He had played with little Mattes, who in the morning was allowed to creep out of the cradle and who, with the soft deer hairs sticking to his warm little body, looked like a hairy little goblin.

Magnus was so content among the Lapps that he thought it would be much pleasanter to go home again with them than to plod along the roads and run one’s self to death on the ice to escape Wicked Farm people and dogs. He announced openly that there was nothing to hinder him from turning back except that both father and mother were away from the cottage. ‘For you see, Andy,’ Magnus had assured him—and struck one hand against the other—‘for you see, if only they were there, then I for my part would turn around and ride home in an akkja after a deer all the way to Barren Moor, and that you may be sure of.’

Magnus had walked away from Andy, superior, with hands in his trousers pockets, proud that he could resist such a fine ride home for such a slight hindrance as the fact that father and mother were not there in the little gray cottage.

It had been so drearily empty when the children and the Lapps, whom they had so recently met, went their own way; the children toward the southeast, toward well-off folk in fruitful parishes; the Lapps in a bustling journey toward the north, toward the great northern lights, toward high mountain peaks, toward wide ledges of rock that stood white with reindeer moss.

Far away, when alone, they neared the large village, they heard the Lapp-Mattes’s farewell song:

‘Wandering children go far away to see much and learn through black words in books. Poor Lapp knows nothing, cannot read black words. Lapp goes to the mountains; learns to understand words of the Great Father, learns where the herbs grow that cure sick people, learns to find the way to wolves’ hole, learns to read the stars’ omens. Poor Lapp has good Father above the mountains, goes there quickly, sings song about wandering children who made Lapp happy in hut. Wandering children have gone a dark road, but the light stands over them. Wandering children also have good Father.’

The children had stood still, listening until not a sound could be heard from the singing Lapp.

CHAPTER XXVI
THE BRIDE

S the children went on toward the more closely settled districts. They came to farms where order and happiness reigned, where work went with a vim, and newly woven linen bleached in the sun, stretched on the slopes near the houses.

Sometimes they also reached places and farms, imposing to look at, but where drunkenness and laziness had made hard hearts and eyes, and tongues as sharp as knives.

It was just after spending a night in fear and humiliation at such a place that they came to a new, strange parish. The white streams whose rushing had always sounded in their ears as they followed the road through the valleys were no longer heard.

They had reached the settlements where navigation became possible and where the big river flowed, navigable, broad, and still. Here restless life reigned everywhere. The river lay open and free of ice, and carried with it the yellow timber that was taken care of by the big sawmills. Ships from native and foreign countries lay anchored out in the calm water, surrounded by barges filled with newly sawed planks. It was summer time, with light in the air night and day, light in the hearts of every one. The work at the saws and on the ships went with a singing briskness.

The wandering children walked through lumber yards with stacks of lumber higher than houses, and where it smelled freshly of raw wood. They stopped beside a row of white-stemmed birches that lined a road on both sides up to a fine white manor house. A little steamboat, with a Swedish flag at the stern, lay beside the pier beyond the garden. A group of well-dressed people came laughing and talking up toward the birch-lined road that led to the fine house.

Maglena drew back with Golden Horn, terrified. The brothers followed. There were lots of hiding-places behind the lumber piles. Maglena realized that they themselves could not now at once follow the same road that such fine people had taken. She turned, therefore, to a small house that looked pleasant. It had small windows that laughed like eyes under a red-tiled roof, just like the forester's, only this house was smaller, bright, and yellow in color.

A green fence surrounded the yard, which was large, with a vegetable garden and a grass plot where white linen lay bleaching. Bushes and small trees were there too. The children knew now that these were trees that would bear apples. Though they had never either seen or tasted apples, they thought it was very wonderful to see such trees as were found in Paradise itself. Besides, there were flowers and roses of many kinds. So Andy thought it best to put a muzzle on Golden Horn before they took her with them through the pretty white gate.

A young woman rose from the vegetable garden south of the house. She had been weeding. With her raised arm, she shaded her eyes against the sun while she gazed at the rather unusual group coming in. Her young, pretty face took on a soft, compassionate look. Her voice sounded sadly troubled. 'If these aren't children from the famine regions, maybe from the mountains where it has been worst! Poor things, what trouble you have had and how far you have walked! My dears, come

in.'

She stepped out of the garden and hurried toward the house.

'It is *the bride*—Andy, Magnus—boys. It is *the bride*,' whispered Maglena, beside herself with eagerness and joy.

'Huh,' muttered Magnus, who was hungry. 'Have you ever seen a bride weeding a vegetable garden! Everything down here is upside down, of course—but not that much!'

'It is, though, can't you see it? It is the nice beautiful bride,' whispered Maglena. More shy than ever, and astonished, but still delighted, she crept in behind her brothers, who were ashamed of her stupid notion and were glad to hide her.

They entered a big sunny room that was as fine as the best room at a wedding, if there had not been an ordinary fireplace and, in front of the middle window, a brand-new spinning-wheel.

'The bride,' Maglena had talked about stood at a white painted cupboard, eagerly taking out food.

Magnus stood and stared at her head. That surely couldn't be a bridal crown that stood up so high under the head covering of red dotted lawn. It was more likely only braids of hair, twisted about her head and fastened with a comb.

Magnus's eyes traveled down the young mistress's figure for more reliable signs of a bride.

'Huh! Cotton blouse and home-woven blue-striped skirt.'

Just then she who was supposed to be the 'bride' turned around. She met Magnus's brooding, sharply searching gaze. He looked comical, like a wise little bear cub with his head on one side and the blue eyes fixed upon her reflectively.

'What can such a little fellow be thinking of when he looks so thoughtful?' she asked, and came smiling toward the children who stood near the door.

'Maglena says——' began Magnus.

'Be quiet, Magnus,' warned Andy and pinched his brother's arm. It was a signal to be careful in speech and behavior and do everything that one ought to do in this country that Magnus knew all too well not to obey.

'What does Maglena say?' asked the young mistress as she drew Magnus with her to the table.

'This little girl doesn't look to me as if she'd want to say anything that wasn't right and good,' she added kindly.

Maglena stood as red as a rose and with downcast eyes. She wanted to cry, she felt so ill at ease and ashamed.

Magnus, of course, dared not open his mouth again; he had the greatest respect for Andy's pinches.

'Well, but, children, you ought to tell me what Maglena said.'

Andy stepped forward, even he red to the ears. 'Maglena always says so much that is silly and that she makes up, though there isn't any harm in it. Now she said that you are—a bride.'

‘No, I didn’t say that, Andy.’ Maglena was angry over her brother’s misunderstanding of her words, and her overwhelming shyness fell away. ‘I said that she *was the bride*.’

‘I hear you—and now you say it again.’ Andy looked at his sister with stern reproach and warning.

‘*Was the bride* up at the Wicked Farm, yes!’

Maglena raised her tearful, shining blue eyes toward the mistress with a pleading expression.

The young mistress gave a cry.

‘But, children—it’s you that came as wandering children to the wedding and brought me luck when I was married!’

‘Yes, and that’s what I see and know and say,’ sniffed Maglena, provoked. ‘And I danced with the bridegroom and got a twenty-five öre piece.’

‘Oh, but it is nice to see some one from the mountains! I long to be there so sometimes, especially now in the summer. Before, I always used to be with the cattle at our dairy farm in the mountains at this time.’

The young mistress smiled and chattered familiarly with the children while she set out food for them and searched for a few garments to make over for them.

She laughed with pleasure when she thought of children conceiving of anything so truly delightful as taking a goat with them on this sort of a wandering. She must see and talk with Golden Horn, who lay with a muzzle over her nose out on the step. Goats she knew something about and wanted to own. But down here at the sawmill there was no one who owned a goat or even knew much about them, or of how much use and pleasure the animals were when one took proper care of them.

‘Maybe we will get a goat now, too, when my husband sees this one and hears how wonderful she is,’ smiled Kristina.

She was so happy, young mistress Kristina, that she took Maglena by the hands and danced around with her. The little girl must have still another dance with ‘the bride.’

‘Here is my friend, the very best,’ she sang. Maglena joined in bravely.

They stopped in the middle of the dance.

The master, the young lumberman, came in. He stopped at the door as if petrified when he saw his wife, in the middle of the day, romping around with a youngster, who, into the bargain, was dressed in beggar’s rags.

‘What in the world, Kristina! What’s happened to you?’

‘Nothing, boy!’ laughed Kristina, rosy and in high spirits after the dance. ‘But you see, I have fine company here from the mountains, so we have to have some fun together. Now we’ll go out into the garden and have coffee there,’ she continued.

Kristina took the coffee-pot, after she had divided the other coffee things among the children to carry. And they filed out to the bench that stood under the blossoming mountain ash at the corner of the house near the vegetable garden.

The man drank coffee and ate homemade bread. His wife did the same, sitting fresh and happy beside him, and talking in a low tone about the children.

‘Yes, just think how the poor little things have suffered,’ said the man. He looked thoughtfully at the children’s clothes, outgrown or grown-up’s old garments.

‘It’s impossible to talk about it,’ cried his wife eagerly. ‘Without father and mother, and such awful famine years as they’ve had. And now they have to go on like this, from door to door, whether people take them in or drive them out.’

‘I can’t bear to hear it even. It must have been worst for this little fellow. Such tiny legs he has to walk on. But he’s good at weeding, so he’ll be a real man in time, anyway.’

The master, laughing with pleasure, looked at Magnus who lay on all fours in the vegetable garden, pulling up pigweed and red-eye from the turnip bed, and throwing the weeds in a pile on the path.

‘May I give this to Golden Horn?’ asked Magnus. His face streaked with clay after wiping away the sweat, he stood in the path in front of the pile of weeds that were still fresh and green.

‘Have you ever seen any one like him, Kristina?’

‘Yes, he’s a fine boy, though the little ones often seem to be more forward up there in the mountains where they’re poor. But now they’re going to have coffee, and as much bread as they can eat, and that’s certain.’

‘Yes, give your goat the weeds, boy,’ said the master to Magnus. ‘But do you think she’ll eat such stuff?’ he went on when Magnus came back with Golden Horn, who was given ‘leave’ of the weeds and, freed of the muzzle, began to munch them.

‘Golden Horn is satisfied with what she gets,’ assured Magnus. ‘You’ve never seen such a goat,’ he added with that talkativeness that marked him when the subject was Golden Horn and he, as now, was beyond Andy’s reach.

‘Is that so? Is she so wonderful, then?’

‘Golden Horn! You bet she is! She has sense enough for twelve. She eats whether she likes it or not—the worst trash if she can’t get anything better, just so she’ll have milk for us.’

Magnus stood musing over Golden Horn’s other excellences. He continued: ‘If she sees that we are tired and hungry, she’ll come to us and say “Ma-a-a.” “Take some milk,” she means, and when we had the little girls she could say it to Anna-Lisa many times a day.’

‘And she always has milk to give?’

‘Always, and that’s one thing. And then she’ll rub her nose against us. “He-he-he,” she says then. She seems to laugh then so that we’ll be glad, and not give up. Look out, Golden Horn!’ cried Magnus in the middle of his rapturous description. ‘Don’t go into the garden or I’ll put the muzzle on you.’

‘That you can bear to torture her like that!’ said the master, a little mockingly.

‘Yes, I know,’ muttered Magnus. He stared before him. ‘But she doesn’t mind. She doesn’t want to be better off than we are.’

‘Do you wear a muzzle, then?’

‘No-o, but—how is that now again, Andy?’

Irresolute and confused, Magnus turned to his brother, who, in the greatest zeal after the lunch, sat bent over in the garden, weeding. Now he had come near the bench and could hear what the master and Magnus were talking about.

He looked up at the master as he came toward him.

‘It just seemed, when I thought of putting a muzzle on Golden Horn to keep her from gnawing and spoiling bushes and grass in the yards, as if she wouldn’t suffer any more from it than we do.’

‘You talk, too, as if you went around with a muzzle on your nose.’

The lumberman looked wonderingly at the boy who rose and stood soberly before him.

‘We don’t have a muzzle exactly that shows outside,’ he explained, embarrassed and blushing. ‘But I thought that it wasn’t any worse for Golden Horn to walk through pastures and turnip fields with a muzzle on and not get anything to eat than for—for people that go around and come in where there is food and maybe don’t get any.’

The older man’s slightly mocking air, with which he had first listened, changed to a thoughtful, serious look.

Andy was afraid that the lumberman was angry at what he had said, and that it would sound as if he himself were complaining, so he continued with as brave a voice as he could manage:

‘You see, it isn’t so bad for one who is a little grown up and has patience to wait, ’cause you always get something after a while.’

‘Well, it would be a pretty bad world otherwise,’ remarked the master sternly.

‘It’s only for little ones,’ continued Andy—‘for little ones like Magnus here that it can be pretty bad. And I think it is worse for him to see the food and not get it, even if he hasn’t a muzzle on, than for Golden Horn, ’cause she can always get something from the gutters and small bushes.’

‘The kind of a muzzle you have we all ought to have. We ought to have a muzzle when we pass the inn and when tobacco tempts us so that we think we can’t live without it.’

‘Yes, but that kind of a muzzle you’ve had ever since boyhood, my dear,’ said Kristina, who had carried away the coffee things and now came back. She put her head caressingly against her husband’s fresh brown cheek.

‘And for that I got you—the only child, and the most beautiful girl in Nolen Parish, even if I didn’t have a house and was from another parish.’

The man drew his young wife down on his knee, deeply happy.

‘I feel as big inside when I think of it as if I owned the whole world. And now,’ he continued, and straightened up as if he were about to lift a heavy burden—‘now I feel strong enough to take this little fellow as our son, because I can’t bear to think that he should go into houses with a muzzle on.’

‘Boy, how happy you make me! I’ve just been thinking the same thing!’ Kristina threw her arms about his neck and gave him a hearty kiss.

‘Just think,’ he continued, ‘I thought when I first saw the boy that I could grow fond of him, and it would be a sin to let him go begging again.’

‘Yes, I liked the little fellow at once too.’

‘And we have food and room enough too. I’ve saved enough through the muzzle I’ve had on my nose and throat so that I can take the little one who doesn’t have father or mother.’

The young lumberman stood up. Proud and fine he looked, strong of will, lithe, and powerful—it was evident that the muzzle had been good for him.

‘I think the best bank for savings is just such little fellows with good stuff in them. I am sure that the squire up at the manor house feels the same way.’

CHAPTER XXVII
A PROBLEM, A CHOICE, AND SORROW

M was chattering with Golden Horn and pulling grass for her when he was unexpectedly called up to the young pair who sat on the bench. When asked if he would like to stay there for always, he first answered slowly that he for his part had nothing against it. He wasn't exactly happy at the suggestion, just wondering and inwardly a little excited. So he hunched up his shoulders, put his hands in his 'pockets,' stared before him, and stood there, and was silent.

It was perhaps a little disappointing to the young folks who wanted to take off his 'muzzle,' and probably thought that he would cry and laugh with the joy of being free.

And then he only stood there, and was silent, and looked thoughtful.

'But, boy, don't you want to stay?' asked Kristina, surprised and really displeased.

Worried and embarrassed, Magnus turned toward the garden where the other two were weeding. And at once he knew what he wanted. It would be just good for Andy and Maglena if he left them. After this they'd have mighty little chance to pinch and comb and wash with soap! So Magnus turned to the young people with a mischievous happy smile, and said that he for his part thought it would be great fun to stay there.

He kept Golden Horn beside him so she should not hurt the young trees and the gardens. Suddenly Magnus became thoughtful again. He looked down at the goat with a wondering, frightened expression in his eyes.

'I guess,' stammered Magnus and became blood-red, and his voice began to tremble——'I guess I'd rather go away from here after all.'

'But, boy,' said Kristina, and looked gently and steadily into his eyes, 'remember that you'll never have to starve again and walk the roads tired and discouraged. You'll have a nice bed with sheets and a pillow, and a robe, and you'll have real clothes that I'll weave and sew for you.'

Magnus listened happily to the description. He knew more than well what all this meant. He certainly did not think it was any fun to walk and walk and to starve and be afraid of people and dogs and northern lights and ghosts on the ice, or to be dressed like a beggar and get his nose out of joint pulling on tight shirts that were so strong that it was impossible to tear them and so get them on more easily. No, that was no fun. It was worse, much worse, than to be pinched by Andy or washed by Maglena.

Again Magnus stood and considered. Golden Horn, beside him, chewed her cud with peaceful, contented, closed eyes. She hardly opened them when she pushed against Magnus with her nose. She wanted to be scratched between the horns.

But Magnus thought she said: 'Just think, old fellow, we won't be together. When I have a muzzle, I should think you could stand one. That is better for us both than not being together.'

‘Golden Horn can’t get along without me,’ said Magnus, troubled. He stared at the ground with round eyes and dug his birch-bark shoe into the sand so that the bare ankle above it became purple.

‘The goat!’ repeated the man, amazed. ‘Don’t you believe that the goat cares where she is! She’d just as soon go with the others whether you are along or not.’

‘In the daytime, maybe,’ admitted Magnus. ‘But at night when it is dark, in the winter when it is cold, and now too for that matter, she’s used to having me sleep with my head on her when we sleep in lofts and sheds and like that. She’d miss me terribly.’

‘She won’t think of you and won’t remember you after she has left here. You can go to the sawmill with me, and see ships from Portugal and Holland. And I’ll give you a nice jack-knife.’

‘A jack-knife,’ repeated Magnus. His eyes became still rounder and bigger, and he slackened the caressing hold he had around the goat’s neck.

‘I’ll give you a little axe too, so you can help me cut kindling wood when mother here is going to cook good things for us to eat.’

‘*A little axe!*’

There was almost a wail in Magnus’s voice as he repeated the words.

‘And I’ll make you a little rake. It will be painted green and you can rake and keep the yard here clean.’

The young man raised the bid. It amused him to see whether a poor boy’s love for such a lowly creature as a goat would be so strong that he could resist all the advantages now offered him.

‘A green rake too,’ sniffed Magnus, for the struggle within was so great that he wept, and tears dropped from his little red snub-nose. He could hardly control his voice enough to talk.

‘And with it you can rake here in the vegetable garden after you’ve slept in the bed and had enough to eat and are dressed in the new blue-striped clothes and have your cap on, a new one with a real visor. And you have the jack-knife in a sheath like a grown-up man.’

Suddenly and violently, Magnus pushed Golden Horn away from him. He almost kicked her.

‘Can’t you go, you goat! What do you stand here for, and stare at me and butt me and wet me with your nose? Get away, do you hear!’

Magnus stamped his foot, so furious that he snarled. His face was red, and the tears still ran.

Andy and Maglena, who were in the farthest corner of the garden, wondered what was going on. But they had had lunch and now wanted to finish weeding the beds, so they couldn’t come unless they were called.

Andy was quite worried about what Magnus was saying. But then he thought that such nice people wouldn’t mind what such a little fellow raved about.

‘Oscar, you’re not fair to the boy. Can’t you see how torn he is?’ said Kristina, who interceded compassionately. ‘There is good steadfast stuff in that little one,’ she

continued. ‘And it would be really hard to let him go now.’

The man nodded thoughtfully, looking out into space.

‘You have often said that it was all wrong for us not to have goats down here,’ he began slowly and uncertainly.

‘Of course it’s wrong. Think of the good they are! First of all, cheese and butter for your bread. You’d have to hunt for such warm mittens and waterproof socks as you get when you mix goats’ hair with wool and spin it into yarn. Kidskin is the finest you can get for robes. And every one knows what fine leather you get from goatskin. Besides, the meat of both goats and kids is good to eat. So it is altogether wrong not to have goats. They’re easy to take care of, and clean, so you can’t help liking them. A good goat gives as much milk as a young cow or an old cow, and it doesn’t take one fourth as much fodder for a goat.’

‘That time you certainly were a chatter-box,’ laughed the man.

‘Yes; and they’re wise too. I am sure that this goat sees that the boy is sad and that he didn’t mean anything bad when he shrieked and kicked at her. See what good friends they are now again.’

Magnus, perplexed, angry, worried, and repentant, had run after Golden Horn, who, repulsed, had run away a bit, but then stopped in wonder and stared at Magnus, giving forth a complaining, rather puzzled, bleating.

These weren’t any pretty words that Golden Horn spoke to Magnus. He understood that all too well. Magnus heard plainly what she bleated about. Golden Horn said that she had been good to him, given him food, warmed him, walked beside him like a good friend. And now she got a kick and angry words without knowing why. No one else heard that Golden Horn bleated forth all this. But Magnus heard it, and that was why he went back to her, bent down with his arms around her neck, and said again and again:

‘Don’t mind what I said just now; I was just talking. Are we good friends again, little pearl? You must understand that I’ll go with you forever, big doll. Little pearl, we must be together, and be good friends.’

CHAPTER XXVIII
MAGNUS AND GOLDEN HORN

N came Andy's and Maglena's turn to be called. They sat on the bench between the young couple. Serious things were discussed.

First it was decided that Magnus should stay with the young pair *as their own child*.

Then came the question of the goat. The man wondered if Andy wanted to sell them the goat. The squire had promised that he could have two sheep on the place, and instead he could just as well have a goat. He'd fence in a space with a little house for her, so she wouldn't do any unexpected damage.

And Andy considered! Maglena noticed that, as she sat beside him, both astonished and angry. Was Andy such a fool that he couldn't at once say that they couldn't get along without Golden Horn!

Now it was Andy's turn to be pinched. During the discussion Maglena pinched him harder and harder. Why, he sat there like a rabbit without will enough to refuse at once. And there! Right under Maglena's nose he accepts the price of twelve crowns that is offered for 'the goat.'

'*The goat!*' Just as if Golden Horn were a goat, a goat to sell like any trash of a goat.

And into the bargain, Andy sits there perfectly calm and says that he had long thought of finding Golden Horn some good place to stay.

'Imagine that!' Maglena was so angry that it seemed to bubble within her. She wanted to pound Andy, for he did not seem to pay any attention to her pinches, even when she used her nails.

'But are you crazy, boy?' she screamed at last, when Andy stood up and shook hands over the bargain. The lumberman was to keep the money until Andy demanded it.

'Are *you* out of your senses, girl?' he cried threateningly in answer.

'Now you can just as well sell me too!' Maglena stifled and muffled her howls as well as she could.

'Maglena, be quiet and control your temper,' whispered Andy earnestly and reproachfully. 'You should think of what you say.'

'As if I don't do that!' wailed Maglena as she half ran after Andy, who, in order to get out of hearing of the rest, hurried back of the house and out over the grass.

'Golden Horn has been mine ever since Anna-Lisa left her! I have milked her and she has called for me the minute she didn't see me. And you take her away from me and sell her, just like Joseph's brothers did with Joseph!'

Andy walked on perfectly quiet, and waited for Maglena to lose breath and give up. When she actually did become silent, perhaps to get strength for further objections, he broke in.

‘I suppose you think that it is fun for Golden Horn to have a muzzle on all the time.’

‘She doesn’t have it on all the time,’ sobbed Maglena. ‘She is free in the woods and along the roads.’

‘But you see, girl, we don’t often go through woods now. We are in big parishes where there are only fields and meadows with the grain not cut. You know we just about get the muzzle off when we have to put it on again. Wasn’t it you that said that just yesterday?’

‘Ye-es,’ moaned Maglena unhappily.

‘You said she was beginning to get thin,’ added Andy inexorably.

‘Ye-es,’ wailed Maglena almost inaudibly.

‘Would you think it was any fun to walk between a row of rolls of butter and fresh cheeses on one side of the road, and a wall of thick bread and wheat buns and coffee bread on the other side? And you’d have a muzzle on and couldn’t eat. Do you think that would be any fun?’ repeated Andy, sternly serious as Maglena was silent.

‘No-o,’ whispered Maglena, perfectly crushed.

‘Here she’ll have a little yard to run in, and a house with straw on the floor to live in, grass and clover and pine branches to eat. Or she can be tethered here on the grass all summer, so much green stuff grows here.’

‘And maybe she’ll get bread too from these good nice people here, every day, and everything that is left after they have eaten,’ murmured Maglena, who began to see that Andy’s love for Golden Horn was of a better sort than her own.

‘You see, Maglena, little girl,’ said Andy, now in the gentlest, mildest voice he could manage. In his heart and soul he wanted only to be good to the heart-broken little sister. ‘You can understand, Maglena, what a good thing it is that these people will care for Magnus too.’

‘Yes, then Golden Horn will have some one to go to when she gets lonesome.’

‘Yes, and the poor little fellow will have her too. Magnus will be sad and lonesome for us many times,’ added Andy with a heavy, thoughtful expression. ‘But it will be fine for him here with such nice people.’

‘I think it was mother that led us here too, Andy. Boy,’ she went on with a soft, deeply repentant voice, ‘are you mad at me because I pinched you so awfully? I’m afraid I hurt you.’

‘Never!’ said Andy, with a superior air.

He did still feel Maglena’s pinches and nails; but he did not want to make her unhappy because of that: she who was already in such despair and grief, and now must leave Golden Horn.

Andy had long been worried and anxious about Golden Horn. Ever since the flight from the Wicked Farm, where Golden Horn had been so cruelly treated, he had feared that some new danger would overtake her. And it hurt him every time he had to put the muzzle on her, now in the most beautiful blossoming time of the year. So Andy felt relieved at finding a good place to leave her.

CHAPTER XXIX
WHEN MAGNUS WAS LEFT ALONE

T farms lay so close together thus far down in the settlements that Andy and Maglena, who were now without Magnus, began to long for the woods where they thought they could live on berries instead of having to go to strange farms every day and stand as beggars at the door.

It had not grown easier to stand at a door and wait, often both long and well before any one bothered to greet them even, or to help them.

The children had traded whisks and egg-beaters and wooden spoons for food, or had been given a coin for them. But one couldn't do much when one went from door to door, and had no definite place to work.

It seemed empty and lonely without Magnus and Golden Horn. Maglena could scarcely bear to remember even now how sad she had felt when she had, for the last time, brushed Golden Horn's coat so that it was soft and glossy. She had polished the goat's horns with a woolen rag, had combed her beard; and she had caressed and talked to Golden Horn—had thanked her for all she had been to her and to her brothers and sisters during the hard, cold, and snowy winter. Never, never would Maglena forget Golden Horn, she promised solemnly; even if she rose so high that she came to the king, she'd still remember Golden Horn.

And Golden Horn was tenderness and understanding itself.

Magnus would have thought that she laughed 'he-he-he' to cheer them up. For she bleated so gently. It was as if she had had her own little kid before her. She nudged Maglena with her nose, and licked the inside of her hands. Golden Horn understood clearly that a parting was at hand.

Andy had found it hard, too, with Magnus, who, with Golden Horn, went with them a bit down the road. He must once again remind the little brother of everything mother wanted them to remember. Andy was so worried because Magnus still stumbled over 'Thy will be done' in 'Our Father.'

Magnus had to repeat the whole prayer three times. At last it went fluently, at least for this time.

'For you see, Magnus,' assured Andy seriously, 'mother said every one should know that prayer, both big and little, read it and really know it by heart so as to fly up to heaven more easily, and sort of read open the door to heaven every day, you know, boy. And then mother said that some time *every one in the whole world* will fly up to God through that prayer, both rich and poor. It is as if we must learn the way there till the time when we really go there. God knows your voice and then you aren't strange to Him, and can go right into heaven to God as mother did when she died.'

'You don't have to worry,' said Magnus sullenly. 'I didn't stumble once this last time, and I guess I can remember what mother said just as well as you can. I remember her and the little gray house, and I'd rather be there than any other place, if I only had her and Golden Horn there.'

With this tender and delicate assurance at the moment of parting, Magnus turned to go back, with Golden Horn, to the sawmill and the pretty little house.

He hadn't any great desire either to have Andy and Maglena see the tears that, to his great indignation and astonishment, rushed to his eyes. Since he was quite sure that he felt no regret in parting from his brother and sister, he thought the tears had no business in coming at all. With his hand clasping one of Golden Horn's horns, he went now without even shaking hands or saying a word of farewell.

Maglena stood nonplussed. It seemed like a bad dream that both of them, Golden Horn and Magnus, should now be far away from her. It mustn't be. Not like this, so suddenly. She must keep them a little while longer. And Magnus must have some souvenir of her, so that he would never forget his sister and her warnings. Maglena took the knapsack from Andy's shoulders quickly and with trembling hands. With a practiced hand she reached down to the very bottom of it.

'The brass comb!' Magnus should have from her the very brass comb itself to keep himself nice on the outside, just as Andy had given him that with which to keep himself nice on the inside.

'Magnus!' called Maglena. 'Boy, wait!'

Magnus slowed down without turning around.

He started with aversion when Maglena, who had run after him, stopped short and thrust the comb past his ear, and past his nose, which it nearly scraped.

The hated brass comb gleamed in the sun right before his eyes. Magnus was furious with a vengeance, and Maglena literally jumped backward when he turned a tear-drenched face with actually fiery eyes toward her. He jerked the comb away from her and banged it down in the road.

'I believe you want to kill me with that truck! I've gone out to strangers to get away from that cat-claw and then you come galloping after me with it. Take the comb yourself, and comb out your curls so that your hair can be smooth for once like other people's. Golden Horn and I can get along all right.'

With that Magnus set off with Golden Horn, who turned and twisted to get away in order to be caressed and petted a bit by Maglena. She, who had had to bend down to pick up the comb, stood as if petrified.

Golden Horn and Magnus melted away in the dust of the road, and became smaller and smaller. They disappeared behind a pile of boards without turning around, which, for the goat, would have been rather hard, considering the steady hold with which Magnus held her head.

Perhaps Maglena would have wondered less and felt lighter of heart if she had seen how Magnus stopped behind the pile of boards and peeped out through the cracks after her and Andy as long as he could see them. She would have been on the verge of tears if she had seen him bend down over Golden Horn and heard his warm assurances to the goat:

'Do you know, Golden Horn, now I'll call you both Andy and Maglena. I'll call you Andy in the evenings when it seems that I can't say "Our Father"; and Maglena in the mornings when I don't want to comb myself. I was so awfully mad, I don't know why; and I'm crying now, I don't know why either, when I'm mad at Maglena. The tears run whether I want them to or not. See, now Andy and Maglena

are going down the hill. Now I see only the red striped shawl on Maglena's head, and now only Andy's cap. Now they are gone. Come, now, little Andy, sweet Maglena, we have other things to do besides standing here looking at something that isn't here.'

Magnus had not turned around before Kristina, who longed for the boy from her home parish, and the goat, and understood that the little one felt sad, was beside him. She had sandwiches with her in a little basket which contained even some bits of bread for Golden Horn.

CHAPTER XXX
IN THE BERRY WOODS

I was high summer. The fields were like brides clad in blossoming clover, camomile, daisies, and blue-bells. Wild strawberries and ‘arctic raspberries’ shone bright red along the roadsides. Raspberries were ripening in the forest clearings, and the mile-wide marshes were full of unripe cloud-berries which, yellow or rosy, were still protected by the four-leaved, blue-green hard calyx of the flower.

Grindstones were turning in the farmyards to sharpen scythes. Along the house walls stood rakes painted in bright colors. For it was almost haying time, and with that came something of festivity and rush, of life and the joy of work. But it had not yet begun. The cows were still up at the dairy farms.

Andy and Maglena, who had drawn back from the settlements, heard and saw both cows and goats as they followed the forest paths between the dairy farms. If they reached one before evening, all well and good. If not, they did not think they suffered any by sleeping out-of-doors now and again.

At those times they ate their supper in some really lovely blueberry glade, and slept in the heather, although the sun, as its habit is up there in Norrland, shone nearly all night.

Andy had learned to make a horn out of split bits of pine and birch-bark, and he had hardly waked up in the morning and sat up in the moss glittering with dew, before he began to blow, greatly pleased when he was able to force out several tones in succession. He kept on with it tirelessly, when he was not helping Maglena strip fine roots and tough runners out of which they were going to make baskets to sell when they had to go back to the settlements.

One evening, near haying time, Andy and Maglena were deep in the forest wilds. It was Saturday evening, and they had found a lovely spot: had just happened upon an open place beautifully shaded by weeping birches and other leafy trees.

A little stream in whose deep clear water brook trout splashed and threw themselves about, shining like silver, flowed near by, murmuring softly. In the middle of the opening there was a huge stone. It was flat on top, and although it was so high and steep as to be almost inaccessible, Andy had climbed up, with the greatest difficulty, for he thought it was a fitting pulpit for a service in the forest church on a Saturday evening.

Maglena, who stood below, had rung in the Sabbath—‘Bing, bong, bing, bong’—and at the same time had pounded the stone with another stone that seemed to her to give forth a ringing sound.

Andy stood up there on the rocks, earnest, with bowed head and folded hands. Maglena sat on a mossy knoll, just as earnest and with folded hands.

The minister, Andy, in a solemn voice, read a psalm out of an old song-book that mother had had. Then he raised his head. The late afternoon sun shooting beams down between the tree-trunks laid a shimmer of light over his brown-skinned, angular little face with the deep, serious eyes and the dark hair.

CHAPTER XXXI
A STRUGGLE WITH OLD BRUIN

A had just begun with ‘Our text shall be—’ when he was interrupted and silenced by a frightful crashing noise of dry roots being broken and branches being snapped off. A sound like the panting and puffing of a frightened and hunted animal came nearer. At the same time came a dull and terrifying grumbling and growling, which made the very tree-trunks tremble.

Something white gleamed forth. A young heifer broke out from the woods into the open space, running the race of a death-hunted animal. A full-grown bear was at her heels, a rough brown beast, with small eyes gleaming wickedly and hungrily out of the shaggy head.

Instantly Andy threw down the book out of which he was just about to preach. Swift as lightning he seized the horn, put it to his lips, and blew with all his strength right into the bear’s ears, just as he ran past the stone after the heifer, which he was on the point of seizing.

The bear staggered backward at the ugly, unexpected noise right in his sensitive ears. It was exactly as if he had received a blow on the head, for the sounds Andy was able to force from the horn were frightful.

The bear rose on his hind legs and put one of his front paws to his ear. Then he caught sight of the boy rascal on the stone and turned his attention to him, while the heifer, bellowing and with tail in air, disappeared into the woods.

If Andy’s position up there on the stone, with the bear reaching furiously up after him with his paws, was anything but pleasant, Maglena’s, who was down below, was not much better.

She did not dare move, and she did not dare scream. Andy shrieked at her, between his roaring into the horn at the bear, to keep quiet so that the beast would not notice that she was there.

‘Be quiet!’ But it is not so easy to be quiet when one is small and alone just a few steps from a hungry, thwarted, growling bear, for whom one would be only a bite, and, besides, when one is frightened to death over a brother who is in a position almost as dangerous, and who is the only thing one owns in all the world.

But Maglena controlled herself and did not scream, though she trembled like an aspen tree when the north wind shakes it.

‘Climb up on the east side!’ shrieked Andy ferociously, in order to frighten the bear with the same voice when he no longer had the strength to blow the horn. Maglena took a few flying leaps toward the stone. Her brother’s words were a command almost as if followed by the lash.

She threw off the birch-bark shoes, stuck toes and fingers into the crevices, tore her skin, broke her nails, was purple in the face with fright and exertion—every moment on the verge of slipping and plunging down again. Andy heard her panting between the bear’s roars. He leaped back, leaned down and caught hold of her, so she got over the steepest part.

Maglena suddenly became strangely strong and brave. In comparison with being down there alone face to face with the bear, she felt safe and protected up here on the stone with Andy beside her. This feeling renewed her strength and put life into her limbs and a voice into her throat.

She had heard that one could scare a bear with shrieks and clamor and a fearless attitude. And Maglena knew well that he was afraid of the look in people's eyes, so she lay down flat on her stomach, with her head out over the stone and shrieked at the bear, who, at sight of her, stepped backward amazed, and peered up at her with a tragic-comic, almost frightened look in his eyes.

He did not look so dangerous from here either, thought Maglena. When he put his head on the side like that and whined a little, as if he had an earache from the horn's cracked roaring, he seemed simply dejected and depressed.

'Be quiet a bit, Andy,' cried Maglena petulantly; the din had become too much even for her ears. Andy lowered the horn, astonished at his sister's undaunted voice.

'Old Fellow, old Bruin,' said Maglena with her eyes fixed steadily on the bear as she used to do when she wanted to quiet other angry animals. 'Old Brownie!' Her voice sounded actually caressing. 'You mustn't be mad at us. We are small, we are, and alone, and we haven't anything to defend ourselves with against you.'

The bear scratched himself behind the ear with his paw, his eyes became less angry. The ringing, caressing voice, and the man-child's good, steady, strong-willed gaze made him uncertain and doubtful as to whether he should continue to try to get at the boy in return for the delicious heifer he had let slip, or whether he should give up and leave the poor little humans in peace.

The bear lowered himself thoughtfully, ready to stand with all four feet on the ground. Then suddenly, again embittered and *certain* of what he should do, he raised himself furiously on two.

The boy's hated horn had pierced his ears again. It made him wild and savage. It was impossible that one who brought about such a fiendish alarm should be allowed to live.

'Oh, Andy, how you spoil things!' complained Maglena, ready to cry. 'Now he's just as mad or madder, because it hurts his ears, and he doesn't know what he's doing. Can't you be quiet?'

'Be quiet when he can take hold in the cracks and be up here in one single leap and make an end of us both at once!'

Andy seized the horn again.

'But I say you must be quiet,' whispered Maglena with strangely gleaming eyes. She reached up and jerked the horn away from her brother.

She threw herself down again with her head out over the stone. The light hair, looking like gold in the sunlight, shone about her head, her eyes glowed with kindness and sympathy and agony.

'Dear, dear old Woolly Coat, old Fellow, Big Father, don't be mad, but go away. You have the whole woods to be in; you can eat all kinds of berries all summer. In the winter you sleep and don't have to go all over the country for food.'

The bear became thoughtful again. He sank down on three feet, sat waving his right front paw in the air as if to cool his roused feelings or to gather strength for a new attack.

Andy was absolutely astonished over his sister's somehow remarkable ability to quiet the wild animal. He realized that the bear flared up at the mere sight of him, and that it was Maglena's voice and words that calmed the beast. So Andy crept aside and sat down out of sight of the dangerous creature.

'Sing to him, Maglena,' he whispered. Andy felt that if Maglena's talking alone could make such an impression on the bear, her singing would have a still greater effect. 'Sing,' he repeated, 'so we can get away from here before night.'

Maglena was dizzy and beside herself in the struggle to quiet the bear's roused and angry temper, so that it did not seem stranger to her to sing than to talk, when words, no matter how caressingly or pleadingly spoken, were not enough.

'You are my rose, my very heart,'

she sang with a voice at first trembling and uncertain. The tears came to Andy's eyes when he heard her.

'No one shall us ever part,'

sang Maglena more bravely when she saw the bear take his natural position on four feet, with his head on the side and with wonder rather than anger in his eyes, and stare up at her.

'Till death has won his will,'

finished Maglena with the sweetest sadness in her voice.

Both her hair and her eyes, which never left the bear, reflected the sun's golden rays.

'Old Bruin, old Woolly Coat, Big Father,' shook himself. He felt disappointed, depressed, and embarrassed. After a moment's meditation he bowed his head as if ashamed, and plunged away into the woods without following the trail of the heifer.

'You see, he's going, poor thing; he's ashamed because he's a wild animal and we are people,' said Maglena. She gazed with a look of real sympathy after the bear, who, away from the power of Maglena's eyes, galloped away so that the branches crashed under him.

‘OLD BRUIN, OLD WOOLLY COAT, BIG FATHER,’ SHOOK HIMSELF

Andy’s spirits rose suddenly. ‘Well, now there is nothing for us to do but to get away from this stone and into the blueberry patch, ’cause I’m terribly hungry.’

‘The berries can be in peace for me. Here I’ll stay all night; I’m as tired as if I’d walked here all the way from Barren Moor in one day,’ answered Maglena, who now with a white face and trembling knees sank down on the mossy stone.

‘Then I’ll go alone and pick berries for you too, for you’re worth that and more too.’

Andy made ready to climb down. He was already over the edge with knees and toes ready to slide down when he heard a beautiful trilling yodeling not more than a quarter of a mile away.

He flew up on the stone again as swiftly as if he had had wings.

‘Maglena, girl! There are people in the woods! How can they find us when we can’t yodel back to them?’

‘Take the horn, boy,’ cried Maglena eagerly; even she had sprung up, all fatigue forgotten.

‘Listen, it’s a dairymaid calling, and one who knows how too.’

Andy took the horn and blew with all his strength—*tru, pi-ri-tu-ut, pruth-tu-hut*.

‘They’re yodeling and calling for the heifer!’

‘Answer, Andy, so we can tell them where she went.’

‘Girl, I’m ashamed, it sounds so awful when I try to blow.’

‘Are people going to be anxious about the cow and maybe lose her if she lies down in the marsh just because you are ashamed? If you hadn’t had the horn when the bear was after her, she’d have been dead now. Blow right away!’

Andy put the horn to his mouth. He called forth such terrible trumpeting and such ear-splitting noises that Maglena had to cover her ears with both hands.

But when he stopped, both yodeling and voices were nearer.

CHAPTER XXXII
UP AT A DAIRY FARM

A and Maglena stood still on the stone. They began to scream, and call, and to try to yodel themselves, so cheered were they by the beautiful sounds that echoed through the woods in ringing, rolling tones.

But when voices were heard just beside them, Maglena became painfully shy again. She crept down on the stone behind Andy. In the bushes she glimpsed a red striped headcloth and a blue cotton skirt. Soon she heard a kind, sympathetic voice call, ‘But, children, how did you get up there?’

‘And how in the world are you going to get down?’ added another voice, a child’s voice.

Maglena sat up.

‘Oh, please come down,’ called the little girl, who stood near the stone, in a pleading voice. She was well dressed, in a hand-woven blue-striped hempen cloth dress, an apron of white and red dotted printed calico, and, what roused doubt and discomfort in Maglena’s heart, she wore a *hat* with a blue ribbon around the crown. Two thick light braids were rolled up and fastened with dark blue bows at the ears. It was awfully hard to come down among such fine people.

But Andy drove her on. He worked himself down in front of her and finally got her down.

When once down, Maglena felt happy and safe, as if she had reached dry land after a shipwreck.

Sara, who yodeled so beautifully, looked kind and good. She had a little knapsack on her back. She swung this off and brought forth sandwiches and goats’-milk cheese and butter for supper.

She told the children that she was a dairymaid at the minister’s dairy farm; that Elsa was the minister’s eldest daughter, who had insisted on coming with her to the woods to look for little Golden Star, who hadn’t come home with the other cattle the evening before. They were afraid that a bear had killed her, because a young bear had been seen in the woods, and you never knew if he’d be content with blueberries or had already tasted blood.

‘It was my cow,’ said Elsa. ‘I’ve milked her every day since we came up here, and she licked me and ran after me wherever I went. I miss Golden Star terribly.’

‘Old Bruin hasn’t killed her yet, but he was after her,’ said Andy with a cocksure air. ‘He only scared her. She ran that way. There is a marsh there, so maybe she’s lying down there. But, anyway, we have time to get her up again ’cause she just got there.’

The sound of a horn came trilling from the direction of the marsh.

‘Oh, gracious, Karl has found Golden Star!’ cried Sara, her cheeks red, radiant with joy. She threw the knapsack on her back and answered with a yodeling that rang through the woods. Then she ran off in her birch-bark shoes, so quickly, so lightly,

that the children had trouble in following her.

A cow bellowed wildly and tremblingly.

When the children reached the marsh, they saw Golden Star standing there dripping wet, her otherwise red and white skin gray with mud.

Karl, who worked the minister's farm, and Sara, who had arrived a little before them, just in time to help get the cow up out of the marsh before her head sank into the thick water, stood beside her, petting her and chattering encouragingly. Sara thanked Karl as if he had saved the cow, though Elsa assured her that Andy and Maglena alone had done it. She confided to her new friends that Sara was so fond of Karl that there wasn't anything in the world she didn't believe he could do. Annika, their last dairymaid, had been just like that with Abraham before, and now they were married.

Karl had just come up to the dairy farm. He was going to carry home the butter and cheese on horseback, on Tuesday, when the cows were to be driven home for the haying, but he didn't have to come on Saturday for that! No, that was just for Sara's sake!

Elsa held Maglena's hand. Andy too walked at her side when they could walk that way in the woods and didn't have to climb over pebbly paths, jump on slippery stones in the brooks, or walk balancing themselves with outstretched arms and tongues hanging halfway out when they crossed wet narrow logs that were thrown over the swaying marsh's many treacherous pools.

Smoke was coming from the chimney when the party, with the cow, finally reached the farm. And it was already quite late at night, though as light as a clear summer day. Only so strangely quiet, since all the birds, except the cuckoo and thrush, were asleep. Cow-bells and yodeling and horns were no longer heard from the woods. The little pool that gleamed below the pasture lay calm, as if it had fallen asleep, covered with a lovely veil of mist.

But what a rumpus when Golden Star, who had caused so much worry, was seen in the group of known and unknown people. The cow ran through the open gate, straight to the barn door, followed by Sara.

Andy and Maglena stopped, terrified. Those must be fairies up there at the house. Five children, queerly clad, as if dressed only in a chemise, stood on a high flat stone just outside the door, hair hanging loosely about them, barefooted and barelegged. They held each other's hands, swung their arms slowly, and sang:

'Wagtail, robin, fallowfinch, thrush, follow one another.'

Of course Andy and Maglena could not be expected to know that the children there were singing to scare away trolls and wolves from the farm and the cattle, and that they made up different songs every evening, or that they had to be serious, and neither talk nor laugh while they sang.

They had to finish the song, though their eyes burned with wonder and curiosity when they saw the two wandering children down at the gate.

'Follow one another,' they finished the song, which Angela had made up this time, and which was pretty and easy to sing. But now they jumped down like wild animals from the stone and streaked down to the gate.

If the bear hadn't been in the woods, it is a question whether Maglena, and even Andy, hadn't fled back at once at the sight.

'Now we are wild swans!' shrieked the strange white fairies, 'and now we'll turn you into swans too.'

'Soon the sun will come up, and then we'll fly away to Egypt,' one half sang. She had red cheeks and eyes that sparkled, and hair as long and thick as a horse's mane.

'There are princesses there with curly hair, who eat on golden plates,' trilled another, a pretty dainty girl with a red belt about her chemise, and with curly hair that flew about her head as she danced.

'We'll fly over the Mediterranean Sea, and take you with us, if only we don't drown in the sea,' murmured another red-cheeked girl with a black mane of hair and big eyes.

'Plump down—crash! Sea and splash!' screamed another little one. She stood in a water puddle, and jumped up and down so that the mud flew about her and colored her feet and legs gray.

'You sing and make up something too, Sylvia, otherwise you aren't a swan,' she continued.

'I can't do anything,' answered Sylvia, a dainty little girl who looked like a lovely doll. 'You make up something for me, Ingegard, because I only know the songs big people sing, sort of fancy songs, and they don't sound pretty here.'

'No, swans don't sing that kind,' admitted Ingegard, the girl with the thick mane and the kind eyes.

'Kulleri toova,'

sang Ingegard for Sylvia, slowly and sadly as a goatherd would sing it.

'Twelve men in a wood,
Twelve men are they,
Twelve swords have they,
Me they want to lure away,
Kulleri toova.'

'Now we'll dance around you nine times against the sun, and then you'll be wild swans too,' cried Viva, who came scuttling up from the mud puddle.

They made a ring around the mountain children, almost petrified with alarm and wonder. They danced, keeping time with violently swinging arms, holding one another tightly.

'Ptroo, vall! Ptroo, vall!
Up on a dairy farm
There are goats, there are fays,
And little girls and boys to play with.'

Andy and Maglena did not look at that moment like 'little girls and boys,' to 'play' with. They stood blushing, with downcast eyes, and really felt more like crying than dancing.

Elsa came running and rescued them.

'There is food and coffee ready in the house!'

She drew Andy with her. Ingegard and Sylvia took Maglena between them and ran across the pasture up toward the house.

Sara stood in the cool, half-dark milk-room, and poured the milk into bowls. The door out into the big room stood open. A fireplace filled the corner near the door. A fire burned brightly, though it was a light warm summer night. But potatoes had been boiled over it, and the coffee for the cow-seekers.

Sara was quite content because she did not have to milk the cows now in the middle of the night. She had been much surprised to find all the cows milked, except Rose-on-the-Nose. That cow kicked and refused to give her milk when only youngsters came clattering with milk pail and stool, and tried.

Ingegard explained that they couldn’t bear to hear the cows mooing in misery because of too much milk. So they had milked.

CHAPTER XXXIII
QUARRELS AND RECONCILIATION

A the children were at last in bed and asleep. But it was terribly provoking for six of them to wake up in the late afternoon on Sunday and find the house empty of people. Still worse was it to find the cow-house empty too, all the cows they had determined to milk already out. The cows which they had ‘divided’ among them all to milk, the one most easily milked, Dancing Rose, to Viva, were grazing miles off in the woods. The goats too.

Pelle had not done as he had promised when he had come home late at night long after the others, after having been out hunting for Golden Star.

He had promised to take all the children with him to the woods as goatherds. They were going to row over the river to the mill settlement where there was a big black bull from foreign lands: a bull that had a brass ring in his nose and a chain around his forehead, and that was so furious when he saw children that he roared so that smoke came from his nostrils, and he had to be kept in a special enclosure during the day.

And Pelle had promised that they might fish for trout in a little mountain stream. And he was going to teach Andy to blow in another sort of horn that was easier than the one he had made. They were going to see a hole where robbers had lived once upon a time. You could creep in, big as you were, through a hole that you could scarcely see in the mountain and then stand there, as many as fifteen men strong.

Pelle was going to show them a place in the woods where there was a white ring right in the green moss, left by fairies who used to dance there. And he had promised to take them to a spot in the mountains where he had once seen a wood-nymph. She was dressed in green with long hair, yellow as corn silk, and she had looked at him and beckoned to him so that he was just about to follow her when he suddenly thought she must be a wood-nymph, and said the name of Jesus. Then she had slunk away and become like a kneading-trough.

And all the berries they were going to pick, and cat-gold and white marble pebbles that Pelle had promised them and that could be found only in one place! Such grumbling and discontent! Such sour faces as appeared up at the dairy farm that day, it would not be easy to find on such a radiantly beautiful sunshiny afternoon.

‘There the sun stares in at the window and pretends to be so happy and noble,’ sniffed Ingegard, and pulled at her hair as she braided it.

‘He looks as if he thought we ought to be glad just because we have him,’ muttered Gertrude, and tied a hard, provoking knot in her petticoat tape with angry, violent movements.

‘And not a spark of fire,’ mumbled Elsa. She was dressed and stood practically in the huge fireplace with an armful of sticks that she laid on the coals that really gleamed quite defensibly.

A blaze flamed up at once, and now Elsa said that she was being burned up, though just a minute ago ‘not a spark’ was to be found.

It was Sunday and surely they ought to be given coffee with the rusks they had brought from home, that day at least.

‘Don’t try to put off any skim milk on us, I tell you,’ said Angela in a monotonous complaining tone to Elsa, who, with an empty wooden bowl, went toward the milk-room. Angela’s long silky hair had tangled because she had forgotten to twist it up in curl-papers the night before. She was so irritable and impatient that Viva insisted that she fizzed when, wetting her finger, she touched her, as you do when you feel to see if a flatiron is hot enough.

‘You’re stupid! And mean too,’ said Angela to Viva, who, barelegged, pinned up her underskirt like trousers and said that she was the master of the house and had the right to be whatever she wanted to be.

Sylvia sat upright in the lower bed and wept. Everything was ‘horrid’ and she longed for her mother. ‘Boo-hoo-hoo!’ she sniffed. ‘What did I come here for? It was much nicer and better at home.’

Which remark was true enough if with the room where she was now she compared her parents’ city apartment of ten luxurious rooms containing pictures, rugs, crystal, and silver, besides great soft beds, the finest linens, and silk covers.

Yellow-green moss grew in the cracks in the plank walls. Benches and stools were actually shiny with wear, and were coarse and unpainted. The floor was unplaned, with wide cracks, the door clumsy with a big iron hook instead of a lock. The bed, where she had just awakened so out of sorts, was filled with crackling straw, covered with a coarse linen sheet. Instead of a ‘silk comfort’ she had a sheepskin robe to pull up about her, though she was so warm she wanted to throw it to the ends of the world.

‘Well, who asked you to come along?’ said Viva impudently. ‘You could have stayed at home without us—cry-baby! Just the same, you had half of the stick of licorice that we had with us for a party, and the biggest piece of sugar-candy, when Elsa divided it, and a whole cup of oat kernels when we got only a half because Angela made us believe that it is nice to let company eat up everything that’s good and that you want yourself.’

‘Oh, goodness! I believe you’re bewitched, Viva,’ wailed Sylvia, who with her elbows on her drawn-up knees still sat in bed, with her white-blond hair strained out between her fingers as her head rested on her hands, a picture of deepest misery.

‘Gracious! Licorice! You count a poor little piece of licorice! Why, I could have a whole house made of licorice, with sugar-candy windows and a butter-scotch roof, and with walls made of only oat kernels. Papa has an awful lot of money, Lina says, and I’ll ask him to build me a house like that, and you won’t even get a chance to lick the licorice threshold.’

‘You’re quite right, my little pig,’ smirked Viva, and kissed her fingers to Sylvia.

She had put a little brown birch twig between her lips and pretended to smoke as she walked back and forth with her hands in her ‘pockets.’ A fine tailor from town had lived with them a while and sewed her father’s and the men’s homespun clothes, and Viva had treasured his every move and word.

She sat down on a three-legged stool beside the bed and sang a verse of a ballad, slowly, with half-closed eyes:

‘On a flower-clad knoll sat Hjalmar and sang
About summer’s beauty and light,
And the roses’ bright heads and the leaves of the flowers
Bowed deeply and gravely their thanks.’

‘Be quiet, Viva,’ whispered Ingegard, ‘you’ll wake up the poor little things in the milk-room.’

‘Well, you see, my little sweet, that’s what I want to do,’ babbled Viva, whirling around.

‘You see, I don’t want them to be like us. There is nothing meaner, more awful than to wake up in the morning, when it is evening.’

‘He saw only her,’

continued Viva.

‘Saw the rose that burned purple on a snow-white skin,’

she bawled now right at the milk-room door. She stopped abruptly, astonished and completely taken aback.

The door opened at the same moment, and Andy and Maglena showed themselves in the doorway. Fully dressed, combed, washed until they shone, happy and beaming, they seemed to radiate sunshine.

Maglena’s hands were full of wild lilies-of-the-valley, twin-flowers, and star-flowers. Andy had made boxes out of birch-bark, six of them. He carried them carefully on one arm.

They were filled to the top with early ripe cloud-berries.

‘Are you *up*?’ asked Viva sharply, though she saw them fully dressed before her. ‘I thought you were sleeping. Why in the world did you get up?’ she continued in an envious, deeply disapproving tone.

‘Because Pelle woke us before he went off with the cattle this morning.’

‘O-oh, and the mean thing wouldn’t wake us!’ said Gertrude, almost with tears in her voice.

‘He did what he could,’ said Andy. ‘He called and screamed here at the door, and blew the horn right outside the wall where the bed is. Sara yodeled and Karl blew his horn. The cows made a lot of noise too when they were let out, so we thought that would wake you up.’ Andy set forth the marsh berries on the little table beside the window while he made his explanation.

‘Ugh, that isn’t enough to wake us, he knows that well enough,’ sniffed Ingegard. ‘That just puts you to sleep.’

‘Have you been out having fun all day?’ asked Elsa almost reproachfully.

‘Well, I don’t know that we’ve had fun. We’ve helped in the cow-house; we milked all the goats,’ enlightened Andy doubtfully.

‘Well, that was fun,’ decided Gertrude.

‘And then we groomed the cows, before they were let out,’ said Maglena, pleased.

‘That’s just what we used to do too,’ Gertrude joined in. ‘And they’re so happy and soft and grateful. Oh, oh, *oh*! And we’ve just slept. And it’s almost the last day at

the farm. Just as if we couldn't sleep as much as we need to at home, when we go to school.'

'Ugh, yes, so awful, and it's too late to change it,' sighed Ingegard.

'And then I suppose you were in the woods and on the marsh?' asked Angela, who was still busy trying to make her locks lie properly.

'Yes, but in church, too,' answered Maglena earnestly, though a little embarrassed and doubtful.

'In church?' screamed the children all at once. 'In church!—but that is twelve miles from here!'

'Be quiet, Maglena,' warned Andy and looked mightily troubled.

Maglena put her hands under her apron and crept down on the threshold of the open door, obviously determined to obey her brother's command.

'In which church? Tell us, do you hear?' asked Elsa, going to the doorway to Maglena with a piece of bread and butter in her hand.

'It wasn't anything. I was just talking.'

'Listen, Maglena, were you in a pretend-church?' said Ingegard, who, with her bread and butter, sat down beside Maglena.

'I don't know what kind of a church,' evaded Maglena.

'Please, dear sweet Maglena, tell me, *just* me, what church were you in,' whispered Sylvia.

In her long nightgown she sprang out of bed and ran across the floor, throwing herself into Maglena's lap with her arms around her neck. 'Please, *sweet* Lena, tell me, just me!'

Maglena looked anxiously over at Andy, who sat very properly at the table and ate marsh berries and milk with Angela, Viva, and the twins, Ingegard and Gertrude.

'Tell if you want to,' consented Andy, who saw his sister's troubled look.

'To me, just to me,' whispered Sylvia.

'How did the church look?'

'Green inside with a blue ceiling.'

'Was it the woods? Was God the minister?' whispered Sylvia, suddenly very serious. 'God came to us and took back my little sister Eva that I used to have. She has so much fun now that she doesn't want to come back to me. When I get lonesome I think sometimes that I'll go up to her to God. Tell me, was God the minister?'

'No-o, he was only Andy.'

Viva had come up quietly. She heard the minister's name.

'Do you know,' she cried, 'now when we are ready and have eaten and everything, we'll go to church! Andy will be the minister, 'cause he has preached before to-day, to Maglena.'

Andy reddened up over his ears.

‘Yes, Andy, if you’re used to being minister, you’ll have to preach to us,’ said Elsa gently and seriously. ‘We have just slept and been horrid and quarreled with each other because we were mad at ourselves and you can’t quarrel with yourself. We’ve kept on like that all Sunday, ever since we woke up.’

‘Yes, we *must* get a little Sunday into us, and be good again, so of course you’ll have to preach, Andy,’ said Ingegard, and looked pleadingly at Andy with kind, radiant eyes.

‘Remember, Andy, that we’ve been mean to each other for nothing. Remember that you have to make us good on Sunday,’ said Gertrude eagerly. She folded up her skirt about her as the peasant women do when they ride to church, and put the red striped sunbonnet on, ready to be off.

‘And we’ll sing together, Andy,’ said Angela. ‘Go first now, and we’ll come after.’

Angela’s voice was so steady and convincing that Andy, without further ado, rose and led the way.

CHAPTER XXXIV
AGAIN IN THE PULPIT

A stood again in a pulpit in the woods. This time on only a fairly high stone that was entirely overgrown with a shimmering green-white moss.

'The church people' had come from all directions; some had had a long way to come. They had sought roundabout ways between the tree-trunks and around small bogs. Now they sat in a row on some old decayed moss-covered logs that had been there beside the road long before the dairy farm was built.

'Begin the song, Angela,' said Elsa. 'Take "the forest birds." The birds here in the woods have started it already.'

'The forest birds are singing
In a happy mood,'

sang Angela in a strong pure voice. All the children joined in. Andy and Maglena also, perfectly astonished that they knew the same song as these fine city children. They forgot that they did not really belong together, a feeling that had somewhat oppressed them before, but sang as they used to sing when they were all together in the little gray cottage when mother was alive.

'The forest birds are singing
In a happy mood,
As on a branch they're swinging,
Chirping, God is good! God is good!'

The song ceased. Andy stood up on the stone as he had stood there before that day and preached to Maglena. Then it had been so easy for him to talk. Every little flower in the woods, the mountain stream, their own escape from the bear, all the dangers from which they had been so marvelously delivered—about all this he had preached so mightily that Maglena had wept and wiped her nose as grown people used to do in church, though this time she had no thought of imitating them, but was seriously impressed with Andy's words. And now he stood there and twisted about and looked silly.

Maglena was actually ashamed of him. 'The church people' began to whisper and giggle.

'Hurry up, Andy,' snapped Maglena. 'They're sitting here waiting. You can make up something like you did before, I should think.'

Andy agonized and twisted. He half-closed his eyes to shut out the disturbing sight of the congregation. The audience sat like real church people waiting, with handkerchiefs ready for tears, in case Andy should preach as the minister did who was up in the Lapp mountains and preached when the chapel there was dedicated.

'Oh, Andy, but you are silly!'

Andy opened anguished eyes. A spider that sat in the shimmering web it had spun between slender birch branches struck his eye. Andy stared at it. A thoughtful look came into his eyes. He began to preach.

‘In the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Now I see a spider sitting in the middle of his web, full of food, and I just happened to think that he is like all Wrong. Because Wrong always has a net out to catch us. When we are mad at each other, he has caught us. And when we are lazy, and when we are discontented, then he has caught us.’

A loon flew with a heartrending, melancholy cry over the marsh toward the forest glade where the other ‘church’ was.

Andy noticed the plaintive sound.

‘Listen to the loon, how sad he sounds. That’s the way it sounds inside of us when we have been angry and wicked and discontented with what we have, and when we can’t stand having a muzzle on, but think that a muzzle is too hard to bear, and do not want to understand that it is God who must put it on us when He sees that we haven’t sense enough ourselves to know what we should have. We fly and fly like the loon to get to God and ask Him to like us, and to care for us again.’ Andy thought of finishing his sermon now, but the song came to his mind. ‘God wants us to like Him and see that He is good, and sing about it, the way the morning in the mountains sings about it, as “clear streams and brooks” sing and ripple, and as the forest birds chirp about it “in happy mood.” God is good to people whether they are big or little, and to animals.’

Andy, who had stood with his face turned up toward the sunbeams between the firs, thought, when he opened his eyes, that the group on the logs had increased. But the sun had blinded him so he could not really see. ‘We will sing now, “The whole world praises the Lord,”’ he announced from the pulpit. And what a singing! A singing as if you were in heaven, Andy thought. The psalm resounded at once in several parts, as did the songs on Christmas morning at Barren Moor.

CHAPTER XXXV
SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

A , who had stood singing with his eyes still lifted toward the late evening sun, gradually regained his eyesight. And what he saw brought him to earth. It was the district minister, he himself, he who had preached so beautifully in the Lapp mountains, who stood there and listened to him.

As if frightened out of his senses, Andy jumped down from the stone and fled into the woods.

Maglena more than wanted to follow his example, so terrible did it seem to be left alone among so many fine people. For two well-dressed women had just come, while Andy was preaching. They wore hats with silk ribbons, and on their hands mittens that looked like lace, and beautiful ‘bought’ dresses: shoes with elastic sides too.

And it was the district minister himself who had come with them. Maglena knew him at once, because as he stood leaning against a fir trunk, listening to Andy, something kind and bright shone from his eyes just as it did up in the little chapel. He appeared ‘revered’ and high. Maglena felt so little, so little, when he looked at her. But she could not get away and dart after Andy, because Sylvia sat in her lap and wanted to be baby. Sylvia was so slender and small, and had such thin soft clothing that Maglena could easily hold her, yes, even rock her a wee bit, and keep the mosquitoes from her delicate, pale little face.

When Sylvia caught sight of the strangers, she sat up. She called to one of them, her mother, who at once was told that she had found a ‘best friend’ up here at the mountain dairy who was never going to leave her.

Now that the sermon was over, and the ‘minister’ fled to the woods, life and uproar followed among the children.

Elsa, the eldest daughter at the parsonage to which the dairy farm belonged, was suddenly depressed when she saw her mother so early. She and the other children had made many bright plans about the reception they were going to give their parents and Aunt Gerda when they came. And now they came upon them and not a thing had been done to honor them. Now Elsa scarcely had time to greet them before she set off for the house as fast as her legs could carry her. She thought with horror of the awfully untidy room being seen by mother. Mother wasn’t *supposed* to come to the dairy until Sunday *evening*! For her, as well as for her four sisters, Angela, Ingegard, Gertrude, and Viva, who too had just got up, it still seemed morning.

However, Elsa contrived to get the always inseparable twins, Ingegard and Gertrude, with her. And as they, with united strength, rushed about, made the beds, swept, put fresh boughs on the floor, cleaned the hearth, put wood on the fire, and the coffee-pot over the fire, they had everything clean and in order when mother and the rest came in.

The joy of seeing the parents was, however, a little mixed. For now there would be an end to the wonderful week’s visit at the mountain dairy. The cows and goats

were now to be driven home for haying time, and the dairy would be closed for several weeks.

When people and cattle were to be there again in the late summer, the children would already have begun their lessons and reading. No chance then to get up to the dairy, still less to stay there.

But now it was best to forget lessons and a shut-in life. Now there was plenty to do. Pelle had just come home with a string of trout that he had caught while watching the cattle. Elsa cleaned the fish quickly and skillfully and then fried them in a pan over the coals. Ingegard cleaned potatoes, washed wooden bowls, and scoured knives.

Angela set the table that opened up and became large enough for them all. She decorated it with wild flowers and leaves that Sylvia, Maglena, and Viva brought home from the woods, while Pelle cleaned outside, raked, and carried away fallen leaves and withered boughs that had done service on the floor.

Gertrude toiled in the milk-room. She carried out bowls of clotted milk, and goats'-milk cheese, and broke up the hard coarse bread into pieces more suitable for the table. The butter jar, full of yellow butter with an almost flowery fragrance, she put in the center of the table. With the support of Ingegard, she won this place of honor for it, though Angela fussed about such a vulgar way of setting the table. Yellow brown whey butter and fresh 'cow-cheese' that was so dry that one choked on it, though when old and ripe it became soft and delicious, were also set forth.

At length, far out in the woods, a beautiful trilling yodeling and the jubilant blasts of a horn could be heard.

Apparently Karl and Sara were together and had been all day. The twins thought this *quite strange* and that it would have been better and more seemly if Sara at least had stayed at the farm until she really had them awake, even if it did take all day.

CHAPTER XXXVI
AGAIN A MESSAGE FROM MOTHER

O in the woods the minister walked alone. As usual he wanted to find the crystal-clear spring that he knew was near by. As he approached the spring silently in the soft moss, he thought he heard the sound of sobbing.

Deeply sympathetic, he hurried toward the sound. He advanced a couple of steps, but stopped in wonder and perplexity.

The boy whom he had just seen and whose courageous appearance as a preacher out in the woods had awakened his wondering surprise, lay on the ground close beside the spring, shaking with sobs.

'What good is it that I stand and make a show for people we don't belong to?' sobbed the boy. 'What good is it that I dragged the little girls and all of us away from the mountains and the little gray house there? If we had stayed, even if it had been in the poor-house, we would never have known that there was anything better for us, and thought it should be so. But now I don't think so any more, 'cause now I want something better. I must know something about everything on earth, and be like the fine children here. And now it is only heavy and sad inside of me. I don't want to walk the roads and be ashamed when I go into a house, and haven't anything to trade for food. I *don't want* to be a beggar that no one likes and cares anything about, no matter what he says. I don't want to stand on a stone in the woods and preach. I want to stand in a church and tell people what mother taught us. But I just have to walk and walk; it burns worse and worse inside me, as if I never do what is right, even though I want to. Dear God, please, care for me so that I will like to do what you want and so that I don't do like little Magnus and just want to forget it.'

Andy looked up in terror. He thought he heard a rustle, saw the shadow of a person.

It was the minister who now approached him.

Ashamed and so crushed that he scarcely dared look up, Andy came to his feet. He seized the tin pitcher Anna-Dea had thrown to him when she saw him set off into the woods toward the spring.

Andy plunged the pitcher into the spring and saw with repulsion his swollen face twistedly reflect itself in it.

'Will you give me a drink before you fill the pitcher?' said the minister's calm, gentle voice.

Andy looked up in surprise into the trustworthy, deep dark eyes that so kindly, so understandingly were turned upon him.

He did not know how it happened, but he found himself quite fearlessly wandering down the winding path toward the marsh with the man who just now, when he saw him from 'the pulpit,' had given him such a painfully humiliating feeling of shyness.

The two sat a long time on the mossy stone down by the marsh, the older man with the kind heart, sensitive to all trouble and need, and the boy with the exhausted,

shrinking, meditative spirit, now suddenly so open-hearted and cheerful.

Andy could now, as if he were talking to God, talk about everything that had weighed upon him. He could describe simply and clearly the uneasiness he had continually felt about the little brothers and sisters before he found such homes for them as he knew mother would have liked. He talked about her love and suffering and death, and about how he had promised her to look after the children and the goat.

Yes, at last Andy could talk, without shyness or fear, even about what had grown up innermost in him. He thought it had been in him since the first time, when he was only a few years old, that he went to an early Christmas morning service at the little chapel at Barren Moor. Andy now found words to express his absolutely impossible desire to be, *some time, a minister*.

The already won friend sat now silent and thoughtful. He sat a long time without, as before, encouraging the boy to open his heart with serious simple questions or little sympathetic exclamations.

At last he stood up. A holy resolution seemed to shine in his eyes.

‘It is not the work of people or an accident that put you in my way, boy. It is God’s work and will. I believe that we ought to follow the road that your mother’s prayers have opened for you.’

Andy looked up astonished, as if blinded by lightning.

‘You will have your bringing-up with us, and study at the college in the city. I am sure of God’s blessing in the undertaking both for you and for us. We, my wife and I, will be mother and father to you, always wishing you well. You will be a good son to us, and *that is settled*. God bless you, my boy!’

Andy felt a hand steadily, solemnly, placed on his head.

Foster-father and foster-son stood together out in the woods by the sleeping marsh in the summer night that was as light as day.

Andy felt himself in a dream. It seemed to him that God’s angels would appear out of the sheer hazy veil that hung over the marsh. He would not have been surprised if he had seen mother’s face in the soft mist, smiling as brightly as when she had left them with words of blessing.

CHAPTER XXXVII
MAGLENA

M came running into the cottage, but stopped, silent and embarrassed, just inside the door. She was relieved to see Andy, quite calm and at home, sitting on a three-legged stool in front of the fire.

It was still very painful for her to stay in the room where the wonderfully dressed ladies sat at the table in long white jackets, just now looking only at her.

The minister, who had been in there talking with the ladies, went out just as Maglena came in.

‘Here we have her, as if “sent for.”’ With these words the minister laid his hand softly, with a gentle pat, on the child’s head, before he went out with a kind, meaning glance at his wife.

‘Yes, here we have her, quite right,’ said one of the ladies, the one the children called Aunt Gerda, and who was Sylvia’s mother. In fact she looked a great deal like Sylvia, with soft fair hair like hers, and white and pale, but with a gentle, kind face.

She drew Maglena, who resisted warily, with her, and sat down with her arms caressingly about the stranger-child, who stared at her unbendingly.

‘Do you care anything for Sylvia?’ she asked in a soft voice.

Maglena reddened painfully. She was very uncomfortable, for she had not the faintest idea what this ‘care for’ meant.

‘Sylvia’s mother wonders if you like her little girl, and I have already seen that you do,’ said the other lady, the mother of the other children.

She looked so full of fun and happy that Maglena suddenly smiled at her, though she felt so ill at ease with the other lady.

‘Yes, I think Sylvia is nice enough,’ murmured Maglena.

‘Do you have anything against being her little friend and sister?’ went on Sylvia’s mother. She spoke tenderly, almost pleadingly.

‘Instead of the one that has so much fun up with God?’ asked Maglena, and looked up with big earnest eyes at the fine lady who had such sad ones, and who now, to Maglena’s astonishment and grief, seemed about to cry.

‘Well, but mother is there too, so the little girl must be happy,’ said Maglena in a low voice, intending to comfort the unhappy mother.

‘Do you think so, you little darling?’ whispered the lady. She lifted Maglena up on her lap and leaned her head against her bright curly hair.

Maglena sat as straight as a pin. She looked stupid and uncomfortable and wanted to slide down from her unaccustomed place.

But Andy, to whom she appealed in her anxiety, gave her a warning glance. It meant that he felt sorry for the nice lady, and that she should sit still with her as long as she wanted to hold such a big girl in her lap.

‘Talk to the child, Octavia,’ said the softly weeping, sorrowful mother. She set Maglena carefully down on the floor.

The other ‘happy lady’ with the laughing blue eyes stretched out her hand to Maglena. She kept her arm around her waist while she told her that Sylvia’s mother, together with her herself and her husband, had decided that Maglena should go with them to Stockholm as *their own child*!

‘Is Andy coming too?’ whispered Maglena, her eyes wide with fear.

‘Andy is coming to us. He is already our boy, so that is all settled.’ She nodded gayly and kindly to Andy, who raised his head from his work, pushed his hair from his forehead, and sent a bright glance, beaming with happiness, back again.

The minister’s wife smiled contentedly. Her husband had taken two poor boys before to bring up. But neither of them had shown such wisdom, such a pure sensitive spirit, and such a clear mind as she had already observed in this mountain and ‘famine-years’ son.

‘You know, my little chick, you will be just as well off in Sylvia’s home. And if you consider what is really fine, you’ll be better off.’

‘You’ll have Eva’s doll house,’ said Sylvia’s mother eagerly. She had, while she held Maglena in her arms, learned to love her and thought with hope and joy that the healthy, simple little mountain child would have a good and strengthening influence on her own beloved little girl.

‘A doll house, just think,’ repeated the other, ‘with little rooms, and small, small tables and chairs and pans and plates. Can you imagine that?’

‘And a barn and cows and goats too?’

The lady looked surprised. She had never heard of that sort of doll house.

‘We have *real* horses instead, little one, and you will ride with us in a carriage.’

‘Do you have a goat like Golden Horn?’ asked Maglena in a rather anxious, plaintive voice.

‘A goat? No, that we haven’t. No one in the city has goats,’ continued the nice lady, confused and perplexed.

‘Andy said once that the king had thousands of goats, and I thought that he lived in the city, and that the goats had golden horns and that I could watch them for the king.’

‘The king hasn’t any goats. But when you’re riding in the carriage you’ll see the king himself, and will bow prettily to him.’

‘When I think about it, Octavia,’ she continued, turning to the minister’s wife, ‘I don’t see why Sylvia and little Maglena here shouldn’t have a goat. There is room for it down in the stables. The coachman will take care of it. Old Bergstrom will do anything to please Sylvia.’

‘If we have a goat, I’ll go. But we can take care of it ourselves, Sylvia and I.’

Mistress Gerda smiled happily over the little one’s confidence and already intimate way of saying ‘Sylvia and I.’

‘You’re right in that, and it will be good for Sylvia. Goat’s milk is wonderful for tuberculosis,’ said the minister’s wife, who, with reason, was worried about her

friends' only child. 'Besides,' she continued, 'you have your pretty country place where the island will be a fine place for the goat to graze all summer. Oh, yes, that could all be arranged very well. But now you're going to hear something else that I know you'll think is wonderful.'

The minister's wife, who saw how hard Maglena found it to retain her self-possession, mostly, she knew, at the thought of separation from Andy, thought it best to give the child something else to think about.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

ALL THE SEVEN FROM THE LITTLE GRAY COTTAGE

L now heard the same story that Andy had just heard, partly from the minister, and partly from his wife, the story of himself and his brothers and sisters. Their long journey from the mountains with the goat was known in the settlements, moving and strange as it was. The forester from Bear Heath had told it when he was down there to mark the trees to be cut in the woods of the parish. He had talked to his old friends at the parsonage about 'his little girls' and spoken long and often about the happiness and joy he and his wife felt at having the children.

'You understand, Maglena, that the forester had never talked like that before, because he'd never had any children before.'

'It was our little girls, Martha-Greta and Brita-Carrie, that became their children!' cried Maglena. 'Goodness gracious, are they alive?' she continued, in her eagerness forgetting altogether her usual shyness.

'Alive! Well, I should think so! They are well, and the sweetest, dearest little girls. Their mother has grown so well and happy and strong since they came to the house. She has woven cloth for dresses for them, red and white, and blue and white cotton dresses that she herself has sewn for holidays and every day.'

Maglena stood with her arms resting on the table, looking out of the window, her eyes shining with wonder and delight. It was as if she had just heard a fairy tale.

'Yes, and then that dear mother has made them big aprons of coarser home-woven cloth. They wear these when they play or work. Can you guess what such little youngsters can do in the way of work?'

'Oh, everything and anything,' answered Maglena with such conviction that, if it had been necessary, she could have given the little ones a testimonial that they were fully capable of any household work.

'Everything?' repeated the minister's wife with an amused smile that almost offended Maglena.

'Yes, they can sweep and put wood on the fire, and rock the cradle and carry kindling wood and wash bowls and wooden spoons and—and——'

Maglena lost her breath when she came to name all the little ones' accomplishments.

'Aren't they useful in the barnyard too?'

Maglena looked surprised and a little thoughtful.

'Well, they haven't had to be in the barnyard, the little ones. Martha-Greta hasn't been able to get over the high thresholds either without help, she's too little, and, besides, I've never wanted any help,' she added proudly.

'Well, now you shall hear that the little girls will be useful in the barnyard too when they're a little bigger, for, will you believe it?—they each have a goat. The goats live in a pretty new little goat-house.'

‘I’ve never heard anything like it! I wonder what the goats there are named?’ asked Maglena. Her eyes sparkled.

‘You shall hear that too. The forester talked about that quite particularly. One was named Gold—Gold—what was it now?’

‘Golden Horn, of course,’ enlightened Maglena. ‘Andy, the goat is named Golden Horn like ours.’

Maglena could not stand still. She hopped backward and forward and clasped her hands, twisted and turned to look at Andy, at the lovely lady who smiled so gently and understandingly at her, and who now helped her to ask what the other goat was named.

‘The other is called White Tongue.’

‘Then she has two white tongues under her nose instead of a beard. That’s a good mark for milking goats, that is,’ remarked Maglena with an experienced dairymaid’s sure air.

‘And then, you must know, the little girls have two dolls. They are so nice that they have porcelain heads with thick porcelain braids, although they are tiny babies and lie in a little cradle.’

‘And I know that they sing a cradle-song, “hennenly Tana.”’

Maglena nearly burst into tears at the last words.

The minister’s wife hastened to add:

‘Anna-Lisa and Maglena are their names, those pretty babies.’

‘Andy, do you hear, how wonderful those little girls are?’

‘And what’s more. They have made themselves three boys out of sticks of wood, and dressed them, and they call them Andy, Per-Erik, and Magnus. Have you ever heard anything like it?’

Maglena turned silently toward her brother with a face that glowed with rapture.

He looked at her just as silently and meaningly. Happiness and contentment shone out of his eyes too.

‘You shall hear even more that you’ll like.’

‘Can the little girls sew roses on mittens, maybe?’

‘I don’t think so, and now the story about the little girls is at an end. But now I want to tell you that the forester had also been at a big farm.’

‘Maybe at the one where we left Anna-Lisa and Per-Erik?’ interrupted Maglena, full of expectation.

‘You’ve guessed right. You may be sure that Anna-Lisa is like the daughter of the house there. She has a little green spinning-wheel of her own. When the forester came into the big kitchen in the evening, Anna-Lisa sat there spinning flax on her little spinning-wheel, while the mistress was spinning wool for winter clothes for her husband and all three children. A fire burned in the fireplace. Two little boys ____’

‘And they were—oh, I know they were Per-Erik and little Karl,’ interrupted Maglena and gave a jump of eagerness.

‘I almost think they were so named. They came in with each an armful of dry wood that they threw on the fire so that the room became so light and bright. They sang together so happily, the mistress and Anna-Lisa and then a maid who was spinning too.’

‘That was Brita.’

‘I can’t remember what they sang. It was something about a goatherd.’

‘And the king took the goatherd so brown,
And made her his queen with a crown.’

‘Andy, *that* was the song they sang; it is sixteen stanzas long, and it’s such a jolly and funny song.’

‘That was it exactly! Well, you may be sure that the forester was happy when he recognized Anna-Lisa and Per-Erik. They were so pleased with the girl at the farm that they had given her a little blue churn so she could churn butter Saturdays. And down in the barnyard she had a whole row of goats to take care of. They stood in small stalls and ate dry leaves that she put in the mangers for them before she milked them. The biggest and finest goat there too was named Golden Horn. Wasn’t that strange? The little kid beside her was called Motherlike. Do you know why?’

‘Because he was like his mother of course,’ answered Maglena, again cheerful and alert.

‘He had been out with Per-Erik and the other little boy too, the forester. They had built a little sawmill down by a stream that is full in the spring. The wheels had turned with such force that it was a joy to see it.’

‘Yes, Per-Erik always liked to build things in the water,’ smiled Maglena, proud and pleased. ‘And he was always after father to play, when he was well, before he died.’

‘The master had made a little violin for the boys too,’ continued the minister’s wife, ‘and a little cart to carry wood in, and little rakes so that they could be along like real men when they raked the fields after haying, and help keep the yard nice and clean.’

‘Per-Erik is well off now,’ said Maglena, not without a certain regret in her voice.

‘And do you know, they had two colts in the stable there. Per-Erik, who stood in high favor with the master because he is a dear boy who has put life into his own boy, let him have his way, and one of the colts is named Andy and the other Magnus.’

‘Andy, have you ever in the world heard the like? But I suppose he was terribly washed and combed, wasn’t he?’ added Maglena, cautiously, almost with sympathy in her voice.

‘That you may be sure of. The forester said that he had never seen such shiny-faced children as those three at the farm.’

Maglena and Andy smiled understandingly at one another.

‘Well, now the story about Anna-Lisa and Per-Erik is over. But now we come to something that perhaps you don’t remember; as much as you have wandered about and as many places as you have been in, perhaps you have altogether forgotten

some one who made shoes?'

'Oh, Andy! The Spectacle Man!' Maglena laughed aloud in joy. 'He lives in a little gray house. Is he alive? Never have I heard anything so wonderful!'

'You dear little warm-hearted child.' The lovely lady smiled at Maglena. All the while she followed with the liveliest interest and eagerness the strange child's expressions. The child was to be her own, and every word, every cadence of her voice had a meaning for her.

'Yes, he is said to live in a little gray house, that shoemaker. Once in a bad snowstorm this winter, when the wolves crept about in the woods——' continued the lady.

'There *wasn't* any snowstorm, but it came,' interrupted Andy earnestly.

'The wolves didn't come either, 'cause mother asked God to follow us all the time; you know that, Andy,' came from Maglena.

'I haven't said anything else either,' remarked Andy patiently. 'But we were the ones that came there.'

'Does he still live in the little gray cottage below the mountains, the Spec—Spec—Andy, what was his name for real people?'

Maglena turned again with burning eagerness toward her who had so much to tell that was remarkable.

Andy looked up a second from his work. He was cutting kindling wood.

'Ladd-Pelle was his name.'

'Well, one evening there came seven small children to this Ladd-Pelle, quite hungry.'

'Terribly,' sighed Maglena.

'But we had had food earlier that day, remember that, girl,' came Andy's earnest voice.

'They were pretty tired too, I imagine, those children,' continued the minister's wife, who had no objection to the children's forgetting their shyness and saying what they thought, so that she could learn to know them better.

'Not so very,' said Maglena, influenced by her brother's words. 'It was mostly our legs that were tired, and our feet that were blistered. But we weren't tired ourselves when we came into the house. No-o-o, 'cause we were scared.'

Maglena stared before her. She smiled when she thought that they had been afraid of *that* man in the little gray house. So little had they known about what there was to be afraid of.

'They had a goat along.'

'Golden Horn, of course,' nodded Maglena, deeply interested in the story.

'The children had had to stay over because of the snowstorm, and they had made the house so neat, washed windows, scrubbed, spread out rag carpets, whitewashed the fireplace.'

'It was Anna-Lisa who thought of that,' announced Andy.

‘Yes, because she couldn’t stand dirt, Anna-Lisa, and there weren’t any women-folk in the house, so it was quite awful in the room.’

‘But we got lots of food, and a place to sleep too, all of us and Golden Horn, remember that, girl!’

‘Have I said that I’ve forgotten all that!’ resented Maglena eagerly. ‘It can’t be nice where there aren’t any women-folk, so that’s nothing to be surprised at.’

‘No, no,’ agreed Andy, quite convinced that his sister was right, though that point of view was not flattering to him, since he wasn’t ‘women-folk.’

‘Tell them about the flower in the window, Octavia.’

‘That’s true! Ladd-Pelle had a cactus in a fine pot in his window.’

‘Oh, my sweet little cactus, that I carried in the knapsack and loved so that we had it with us that first day!’

‘Just that cactus, of course. They say that the window at Ladd-Pelle’s is always shining now, so that the cactus will thrive, you see. When the window was clear, Ladd-Pelle himself saw how dreary the house looked inside and in all the corners. So now he keeps the whole house nice with a clean floor and white fireplace, even without women-folk.’

‘Do you hear, Maglena!’ said Andy in an almost solemn tone of voice.

Maglena ‘heard’ as she stood with a look at the same time proud and crushed.

‘But now you shall hear something that is even more wonderful. Well, Andy has heard it before.’

Maglena tramped about and twisted, red and eager. Still more wonderful than what she had already heard!

‘Can you imagine, Maglena, *he has bought a goat*, a big fine goat, and a good milker, that the forester bought for him down in Smaland, where they still have fine goats.’

‘And her name is Golden Horn, as sure as I stand here!’ screamed Maglena, altogether beside herself with delight. ‘He wanted to buy our Golden Horn, and he said that if you always had milk to cook with and for your coffee, you wouldn’t have to drink all the time. So you see, Andy, it was a good thing after all that you took us away. You’ve blamed yourself and been sorry sometimes that you took us and Golden Horn with you out into the country. But now see how good it was. You needn’t think that Pelle would have thought of keeping the house clean if he hadn’t seen our Golden Horn.’

‘Well, if Golden Horn wasn’t exactly the cause of keeping the house clean, she had a reason for being, anyway,’ smiled the minister’s wife. ‘You were pretty short-sighted, Andy,’ she added earnestly, ‘if you didn’t realize that it was a good thing in many ways that you left the little gray house when it was empty. Not only for all of you. Children who have learned what is right and wrong, from father and mother, carry *blessings with them* wherever they go in the world.’

‘It came over me just once in a while, when the little ones suffered, that I had been foolish,’ Andy excused himself, ashamed and depressed, as happy and grateful as he was. ‘It seemed that I had been so stupid, and that I had dragged them into something that I couldn’t help them out of. But now everything is fine. I don’t have

to worry about Maglena either now.'

Maglena's anxious frightened look came back at Andy's words.

'Sylvia and you shall come up here in the summer,' said the fine lady, 'or else Andy will come down to us.'

Maglena bowed her head. All light had disappeared from her face, which had smiled and beamed with happiness a moment before.

'My dear little child,' said the foster-mother and drew Maglena gently toward her. 'Andy will have many sisters here, and foster-brother too. My little Sylvia is all alone without any little sister.'

'Maybe mother has sent me to her, like when we went in to Ladd-Pelle,' murmured Maglena to herself. A deeply thoughtful look had come over her; she looked inquiringly up into the fine lady's eyes, who no longer seemed only 'fine' to her, but also so mild and gentle. Maglena was suddenly certain that mother had sent her to be a sister to the little one who had no sister. So she didn't resist any more or hold herself as stiff as a pin, but cuddled, soft in body and spirit, into the arms that opened to take her.

Father and mother and home and sister were therefore found also for Maglena, who had stood alone, the last of the seven poor little ones, who, in a year of famine, deserted, without father or mother, had left the little gray house one bitterly cold winter morning when the fire on the hearth had gone out.

THE END

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Norrland means the provinces farthest north in Sweden.

[2] Clap-bread is a dark bread, large and round, almost as thin as paper, folded twice to make four layers, dry, and almost tasteless.

[3] Catechism party. At certain times each year the people of the parish gathered together to be examined by the parish minister in the catechism as a test of their ability to read, and a feast always followed.

[4] Christmas fish. Codfish or ling steeped in lye and eaten at Christmas time; it becomes very white and fluffy and is considered a special delicacy.

[5] In northern Norrland it is customary to salt coffee.

[6] Ladd-Pelle; pronounced Ladd-Pel'le. Ladd is the name of the particular kind of shoe that the man made; his name was Per, or Peter, from which comes the nickname Pelle; so, translated, he was called 'Shoemaker Peter.'

[7] Kronhjort, pronounced Kroonyoort.

[8] Church-village is the largest village of the country parish, where the church of the parish is located.

[9] Scanian, a resident of Scania, the southernmost province of Sweden.

[10] One krona is about twenty-seven cents.

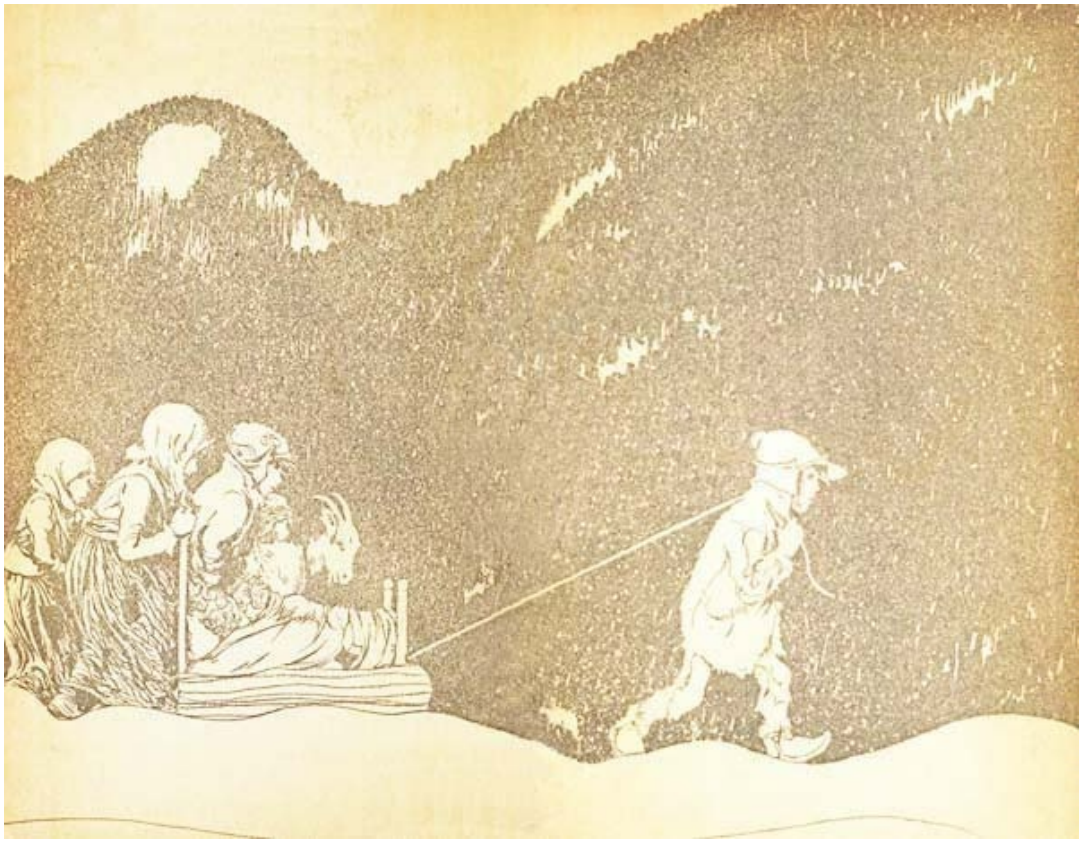
[11] Twenty-five öre = about seven cents.

[12] Swedish children have whole dairy farms of fir cones of different sizes, so a fir cone always means a new 'cow' to them.

[13] In Swedish A B C books, there is a picture of a rooster on the last page, and when a child has learned its lesson well, the rooster is said to crow, and certain it is that some reward is found between the pages afterwards, like a piece of candy or a cooky.

[14] Lemmings are a sort of Arctic wandering mice.

[15] Akkja is the Lappish word for a sort of sled drawn by reindeer, shaped like a boat, without runners of any kind, lined with furs and large enough for one person only.



TRANSCRIBER’S NOTES:

Perceived typographical errors have been corrected.

Inconsistencies in hyphenation have been standardized.

Archaic or variant spelling has been retained.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CHILDREN OF THE MOOR ***

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your

country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or

other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and

the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all

liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much

paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.