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NOTHING BUT FUN IN NOISY VILLAGE

My name is Lisa and I'm nine years old and I live in Noisy Village. Mum says she thinks it's only called Noisy Village because us Noisy Village children are so loud. You wouldn't believe six children could make such a racket, she says. It sounds as if there are three times as many of us, at least. As for me, I think Lasse is the loudest. He makes as much noise as ten normal boys, I know that. And Bosse and Olle are not exactly quiet, either. Britta and Anna and I are quiet at least some of the time.

Anyone who wants to come here to Noisy Village has to go up lots of steep hills one after the other,

because Noisy Village is so high up. If it was only a *little* bit higher people would be able to pull the stars down from the sky with a garden rake, says Lasse. We've got such a lovely view from Noisy Village because we live so high up. Although of course it's almost only masses of forest you can see, but there are many people who think masses of forest is beautiful to look at. And they come here and look. Once a very grand lady arrived in a car, and she had a girl with her.

'We only wanted to see the view,' said the grand lady. She was wearing a red coat and a red hat and was so beautiful. Her daughter was also beautiful and she had on a light blue dress with a little red brooch. She was called Monika, the girl, and was about my age.

Mum said wouldn't they like to come into our garden and drink some cherry cordial. She told me I should talk to Monika. I would have liked Anna and Britta to be there to help me, but they had gone to Storby Village on an errand and weren't at home. Lasse and Bosse and Olle were at home, but they didn't talk to Monika. Oh no. They just stayed behind the corner of the house, being silly.

Sometimes they peered round and said something, and laughed loudly at what they had said.

'Are those your brothers?' asked Monika.

'Only Lasse and Bosse,' I said. 'Not Olle.'

'Which one is Olle?' asked Monika.

'He's the one with not much hair,' I said.

But at that moment Lasse came striding past on his stilts. It was only to show off, I'm sure. Lasse's stilts are so high that when he's standing on them he can look in through the windows of the first floor of our house. He did that once when I was up in my room playing with my dolls. All of a sudden I saw Lasse sticking his head through the window. He lifted his hat and said:

'Good day, madam, and how are you this fine afternoon?'

I was very scared at first but then I ran to the window and that's when I saw Lasse walking on his stilts. It was the first time he had tried them.

But now he was showing off for Monika. He strode around on his stilts in our garden and shouted to Bosse and Olle:

'You get a very good view from up here!'

Agda, who helps Mum, was about to go and feed the pigs. She had stood the bucket with the food leftovers outside the kitchen door. And of course, Lasse had to blunder about and fall off right there! He tipped everything out of the bucket and then landed right in the middle of the pig food.

'Now we've got a very good view too,' said Bosse, and laughed and slapped his knees. Monika laughed as well. Lasse took himself off to the outhouse and stood under a tap to get clean. Then he came back soaking wet but just as cocky as before. He wrung the water out of his hair, looked at Monika and said:

'The things you do to make people laugh!'

Mum had him go indoors and put on dry clothes, but he was quickly back out again. And then the boys also talked to Monika. Well, not Olle of course, because he just won't talk to people he doesn't know. But then all of a sudden he said to Monika:

'Do you want to see my little sister?'

And then he ran home to his house and fetched Kerstin. Kerstin is only one and a half. Olle loves her so much. And that's not surprising because Kerstin is so sweet and Olle doesn't have any other brothers

or sisters. Olle put her on Monika's lap and Kerstin yanked Monika's hair so hard that a small handful came out. But still, that didn't make Monika cross. I expect she knew that little children always do that.

I stood looking at Monika's brooch. And then I said:

'What a lovely brooch you've got.'

'Do you want it?' asked Monika.

But I didn't—I mean, that wasn't why I said it was a lovely brooch.

But Monika took off the brooch and put it in my hand. And her mother said I should have it too. Even though my mother said:

'No, that won't do at all . . . !'

But I did get the brooch and it was full of small red jewels and it was the most beautiful brooch I had ever seen. It's mine now. I keep it in a box in my chest of drawers.

After a little while Britta and Anna came home from Storby Village, and when they caught sight of the car on the road their eyes popped wide open. Cars hardly ever come to Noisy Village because this is where the road ends, and anyhow it's so narrow

and twisty. Britta and Anna stood by the gate and didn't dare come into our garden while Mum and Monika's mum were sitting there drinking cordial, and we were talking to Monika. But then I shouted at them:

'What are you standing there gawping at? Haven't you seen people before?'

Then they came in and said hello to Monika, and Monika said:

'How many children have you actually got in this village?'

'Six and a half,' said Lasse, because he thinks Kerstin is so little she can't be counted as a whole child. But then Olle got angry and said:

'You're a half yourself!'

We told Monika that Britta and Anna live in North Farmhouse and Lasse and Bosse and me in Middle Farmhouse and Olle and Kerstin in South Farmhouse.

'I'd like to live here too, I really would,' said Monika.

After Monika's mum had finished her drink she went and sat in the car and so Monika had to go as

well, of course. Her mum looked at the view once more, and then she said:

'But isn't it terribly boring and humdrum living way out in the forest like this?'

Then Mum said:

'We have so much to do, we don't have time to think about it.'

I thought Monika's mum was a bit stupid saying what she said. It isn't boring or humdrum at all. I think we have nothing but fun in Noisy Village.

Then the car drove off and Monika waved at us until she disappeared from sight.

I don't think we'll see Monika any more. All that's left of her is the brooch. I let Britta and Anna have a little turn each at borrowing it.

Afterwards we ran up to Grandad who lives in one of the two attic rooms in North Farmhouse. He is Britta and Anna's grandad, and he is almost blind. But he so very much wants to know about everything that goes on in Noisy Village that we simply had to tell him about the car and Monika. Grandad says that if we weren't here he would never find out anything, because none of the grown-ups

in Noisy Village have enough time to come and talk to him.

We told him precisely everything. He wanted to know a lot about the car, and Bosse could tell him every single thing about it. And I let Grandad hold my brooch in his hand. I told him it was full of small red jewels, and then Grandad said he could see it inside his head and that it was a beautiful brooch. Then I told him about the thing Monika's mum had said, that perhaps it was boring and humdrum in Noisy Village, and then Grandad said:

'Heh, heh, heh. Well, I never. To think folk can be so stupid!'

Grandad thinks exactly the same as me, that it's nothing but fun in Noisy Village.



I GET A LAMB

Spring is probably the best time of all. Anna and I always try to work out when it's most fun. Anna thinks it's most fun in the summer and I think it's most fun in the spring. And at Christmas too, of course. Anna thinks that as well.

Now I'm going to tell you about something that happened last spring. We've got masses of sheep here in Noisy Village and they have lambs every spring. Lambs are the sweetest things ever. They are sweeter than kittens and puppies and piglets. I almost think they are sweeter than Kerstin, but I daren't say that in case Olle hears.