



### **Pärt In a Pickle**

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Age 7+

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Pärt is a clever little lad. He lives in a lovely small town with his mum, dad, his older brother Joosep and his younger sister Leenu. Life is peaceful and happy, just sometimes things happen that Pärt is not entirely prepared for and therefore ends up in a pickle. Like when the girl next door, Kaisa, starts to taunt him that he doesn't know how to do a backflip. Or when his dad leaves him to stand in line at the store while he himself goes to fetch the yeast he has forgotten. Or when a plump plum in a stranger's yard just asks to be picked. Pärt tries hard to come up with the best solution for everything.

One by one, I lifted the groceries out of the basket: a long sausage, a carton of milk, eggs, flour, bread, carrots, and that funny-looking green plant that looks like it has a fish tail. I also heaved the big pineapple up onto the conveyor belt—it weighed a ton, but I was brave and didn't let it show. Last of all, I sent Leenu's diapers and two cans of beer off on their way; and then, I reckoned: if Dad doesn't show up this very minute, then I'll be in even worse trouble. No matter whether I had money with me or not, the cashier definitely wouldn't sell me beer, which is alcohol! I would have to look at least eighteen years old to buy it, but even if I tried sounding gruff or stood up on my tippy-toes, I wouldn't have pulled it off.

I looked up at the cashier, who was a big lady with hair on her upper lip, and was afraid that when she scanned everything all the way up to the beer, I'd almost certainly get a proper dressing-down for it. So, I decided at the very last minute to put all the groceries back into the basket before it was too late. But oh, woe was me! The diapers and the beer had pushed all the other items so far down the conveyor belt that there was no way I could have reached the milk, eggs, and everything else.

The cashier had already scanned through all the groceries the woman in front of me was buying. The lady gave her a twenty-euro note, got some coins and a receipt back, and stuck them in her wallet. All the while, my goods were rolling towards the cash register like they were heading straight into a monster's jaws. I wanted to run away, to leave everything right there, to scamper back to the aisles to look for Dad or

maybe even outside to where our bikes were parked, but the cashier-woman with the hair on her upper lip had already grabbed my carton of eggs, scanned it through her beeping-machine, and said: "Hello, little man!"

I couldn't bring myself to reply. My mouth went crooked and my throat started to tingle.

All of a sudden, two ice creams and a little cube wrapped in pale white paper (so that was yeast!) plopped down with my groceries on the conveyor belt. I turned around and, to my delight, I saw my dad, who had finally returned. He said hello to the cashier for me and sent me through the security gates to wait for our purchases at the other end.

With our groceries in tow, we took our bikes to a park nearby, sat down on the corner of a fountain, and unwrapped our ice creams.

"It's great that you waited for me, Pärt," Dad said. "When I left you, I happened to meet an old lady who couldn't reach a granola package on the top shelf. And when I took it down for her, she couldn't read the ingredients on the package. They always write them in teensy-tiny letters. So, I read it all out loud for her. That's why it took me so long."

Would you look at that! I thought. A little old lady was in trouble and my dad rushed to the rescue without a second's thought. Dad really is a wonderful guy!

