



Where'd the Kids Go?

Written by Indrek Koff

Illustrated by Elina Sildre

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story in verse. fiction

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2021 Raisin of the Year award for the most remarkable children's book of the year

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Life couldn't be better in the bustling little village. That is until one day when all the kids decide to run away to the woods because they feel they've been bossed around too much, which leaves their parents devastated. The grown-ups miss all the shouts of glee and the children running around, playing hopscotch, and jumping in the leaves. The mayor dispatches the army, the teacher tries luring them back with cake and candy, ornery Uncle Rein makes angry threats, and the conductor tries using Mozart and Bach, but nothing works. How can they tempt the kids to come home so there's life in the village again?



Translation sample

A Happy Town

Everybody likes our town
A visit turns frowns upside down

Our uncles smile and share their joys
As if they were much younger boys

Our aunts love to dance and whirl
As if they were much younger girls

And yet this pains the tender hearted
As our real children have departed

Yes - yesterday they just upped and left.

They felt we thought of them as fools
And crushed their souls with stupid rules

Come over here! Go over there!
Clean your teeth! Brush your hair!

Don't make noise, or shriek or talk
Line up nicely when you walk

Make sure your clothes are properly pressed
And check you are correctly dressed

No phones for you, no friends, no fun
Well, only when your homework's done

And as for letting you go online
Well we think it's a waste of time

"That's enough! We need some space
We're leaving for a different place

Somewhere without so much fuss
Where we can be truly us

The time has come for us to go
We're leaving now, so Cheerio!"

And there they were - gone.



Sadness

Oh this is such a dreadful day
No children in our town to play

To lift our lives with easy laughter
This is not happy ever after

No childish games to ease our strife
This is not any kind of life

Our schools are empty, our streets are sad
Our hearts are aching, our lives feel bad

Nobody jumps in autumn leaves
We need our children back now please

Now - Alexander's mother speaks:

"I miss my darling little boy
I long for that strange sip of joy

I even miss his cries and screams
I hear them only in my dreams"

Distraught mother. Weeping dad.
The whole town is so deeply sad

Our lives mean nothing with the children gone
Please let them return and bring back fun

We need their energy, their yells,
Without them life is living hell

We can't live in this vale of sorrow
Please bring our children home - tomorrow!

Yes - all the parents are devastated.

The Mayor

How to bring our kids back here?
Maybe the mayor has some idea?

The naughty ones, the cute, the dear,
We really need them all back here

The mayor then speaks up booming loud
"Our army's always done us proud

Our soldiers are both strong and brave
They'll save the day, the day they'll save

I'll summon them and they will come,
Marching, bugling - with a drum

Townpeople, you don't need to worry
The problem's solved now, in a hurry."

Yes - he was very pleased with himself.

They came at once and looking strong
"We'll find those children before long."

They fired guns, they raced around
A lot of mushrooms is what they found

But after all was said and done
The number of children they found was none

The mayor was covered in his shame
He knew he'd be the one to blame

His posture slumped, his face turned white
As if he'd had a dreadful fright

He confessed as he slunk away
The children were not back today.

Oh - how embarrassing!



Indrek Koff. Where'd the Kids Go? Translated by Nikky Smedley