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### **The Sweater and the Sun**

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How could one lure the moles overground? What happens to a toothpaste that is slithering out from the house? How to catch a mosquito on a picture? Is it possible to preserve a summer in a jar? Who to present with your useless milk teeth? Who is hiding inside a Sema costume? How did a cloud visit a Midsummer's celebration? What are the odds of a gooseberry asking your hand for a marriage? Which animal is closest to a pickle and what do dragons eat?

These are the questions that The Jumper and the Sun will answer but that's not all. Reading this book will not only make you wiser, it will give you invaluable conversation starters at the party. Success guaranteed.



## Reading sample

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### The Dragon and the Fried Potatoes

Mom was frying potatoes in the kitchen. She'd cooked up a whole panful. The mouth-watering slices were golden brown and sizzling deliciously. Artur couldn't wait to eat them.

But suddenly, totally out of the blue, a dragon flew in through the open kitchen window! He wasn't all that big and not all that scary, but a dragon through and through, long-tailed and fire-breathing. He circled above the stove, grabbed the pan of fried potatoes in his claws, and flew back out the window.

"Hey!" Artur cried. "Where'd you go with my fried potatoes? Give them back!"

"You shameless beast!" Mom yelled after the dragon. "What do you think you're doing?"

They quickly pulled on their coats and ran outside to chase the dragon. He hadn't flown very far: they found him crouched on top of an old chimney where storks roosted in the summer. The dragon had hidden the pan of fried potatoes under his belly.

"You should be ashamed of yourself for stealing like that!" Artur said. "Give us our pan back this minute!"

"Dragons always steal gold," the dragon replied importantly. "It's just the dragon way. We steal gold and then sleep on it."

"Gold? Those are ordinary fried potatoes!" Mom said.

"Try it if you don't believe us!" Artur encouraged him.

So, the dragon fished a fried potato out from under his belly and swallowed it. His eyes went wide in delight.

"Oh, how tasty!" he exclaimed, then quickly devoured the whole panful and even licked it clean.

"Mom cooked those for me!" Artur yelled angrily.

"Don't worry, we have more potatoes at home. I'll fry you up a new batch," Mom reassured him and stroked his head.

But the next panful of golden-brown potatoes was barely cooked before the dragon swooped in again and snatched them up in his claws.

"Hey, now!" Mom and Artur both

cried. "That's very naughty of you! Give them back!"

But the dragon simply ignored them, flew back to his stork's nest, and gobbled it up as well. He smacked his lips and sighed happily.

"That was scrumptious! Much better than ordinary gold! That's why all the other dragons starved – gold isn't fit to eat. From now on, I'm only going to steal fried potatoes."

"Well, you just go ahead and try!" Mom sighed gloomily before fetching a pot and starting to make meatball soup instead. It was another one of Artur's favorite meals.

Before long, the dragon appeared outside their window again. He flew back and forth and looked very worried.

"Don't make soup! Fry up some potatoes instead!" he demanded.

"I don't think I will," Mom replied. "We're in the mood for soup."

"Are you going to fry potatoes tomorrow?" the dragon asked.

"No, tomorrow I'm making buckwheat porridge."

The dragon started to cry.

"Where will I get fried potatoes then? I can't live without them anymore!"

"Fry some up yourself," Mom suggested. "You've already feasted on two panfuls of ours. Frying potatoes isn't hard at all. I can give you the recipe."

And that's exactly what she did. The dragon discovered that frying potatoes really is easy, especially when you have sharp claws for peeling them and a fire-breathing mouth for frying them golden-brown in just a few seconds.

From that day on, there was always a delicious smell wafting from the stork's nest, and you could watch from far away as flames erupted from the dragon's mouth while he fried potatoes on two pans at once.

[pp. 65–66]

### The Mosquito's Photo

Laura turned seven years old and got a phone for her birthday. She would be going to school in autumn and every student needs a phone. What else can you use to take pictures of your new friends?

Laura was delighted by her present and decided to start practicing right away. She walked out onto the stoop of their summer home and called out:

"Bugs and beetles! Hear me! A photographer has arrived! We'll start taking pictures at once! Come here and put on your best smile!"

The whole garden erupted into excited buzzing and chirping. A fly was the first to get to Laura and started doing loop-the-loops right in front of her nose.

"Take a seat on the stoop, please. I can't photograph you when you're spinning around like that," Laura said sternly. The fly obeyed at once, sitting and freezing in place until the picture was taken.

Next came an ant carrying a pine needle on its back.

"Do you want the pine needle to be in the picture, too?" Laura asked. "Okay! Hold it above your head, then everyone can see how strong you are. Smile! Great!"

Next, a butterfly landed on the stoop. It was so beautiful that Laura took ten pictures in a row. The butterfly was an expert at posing, opening its wings wide for one picture and gently closing them for the next.

The butterfly was followed by a bee. A grasshopper leapt onto the stoop the second the bee buzzed off, and after that came a ladybug. Laura photographed them all. Then, she heard a high-pitched whining, and a mosquito arrived. It sat down on the stoop and opened its tiny beak wide, apparently trying to smile.

"No, I'm definitely not taking a picture of you! Go away!" Laura yelled in shock and fled back inside.

"What happened?" her mom asked. Laura told her.

"Why wouldn't you take a picture of the mosquito? That wasn't very nice of you. I bet the mosquito is sad now."

"But it's mean!" Laura protested.

"Mosquitoes suck blood!"

"Yes, but whenever we go to the zoo, you beg to go see the lion and the tiger. They eat other animals, but you still like them. You even have a stuffed tiger at home."

Laura thought for a moment and realized her mom was right. Tigers, lions, and mosquitos are simply predators. They can't help it.

So, Laura went back outside. The mosquito was still squatting on the stoop, its wings drooping at its sides, looking awfully unhappy.

"Aw, don't pout!" Laura exclaimed. "I'll take a picture of you right now. Smile! Say 'pea soup!'"

The mosquito was overjoyed. She said "pea soup" and Laura snapped a nice photo of her.

That autumn, Laura showed her new friends at school the pictures she'd taken that summer, and the one of the mosquito was everyone's favorite.

"How were you brave enough to photograph it?" one boy asked in awe. "Weren't you afraid to get so close? Mosquitoes suck blood!"

"A photographer has to be brave!" Laura replied. "And a photographer must be fair and kind, too. Even predators want to have their pictures taken."

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### Hippos in an Aquarium

It was Markus's birthday, and he'd invited Andres and Georg to come over.

"What should we give him?" Andres asked. "A toy car? Or a puzzle?"

"Let's give him an animal," Georg proposed. "Markus really loves animals. He even tries to pet the pigeons when he goes home from school. But all Markus has is a single spider that lives on his bedroom ceiling and is so tiny that he has to climb onto his bookshelf to get a good look at it."

"My Mom says you shouldn't give animals as gifts," Andres said. "What if someone in Markus's family is allergic to cats or dogs? What'll happen?"

"Then let's not give him a dog or a cat," Georg replied. "Let's give him an aquarium instead."

"But we don't have that much

money,” Andres said doubtfully. “Fish are expensive!”

“Fish aren’t a good present, anyway. Caring for them takes a ton of work: feeding them and what all else. We’ll give him something much better!” Georg declared.

So, they went to the store. Georg headed straight for the section with all kinds of jarred and canned foods. He pointed to a jar of floating pickles.

“That’s what we’ll give him.”

“It’s an aquarium?” Andres asked in disbelief.

“Of course it is, duh!” Georg said, nodding. “Just look! A bona fide aquarium, made of glass and everything.”

“But there aren’t any fish in it.”

“Pickles aren’t fish, sure, but they look like little hippos to me.”

Andres studied the pickles. They really were similar to hippopotamuses, identically green and plump.

“They’re pretty cute,” he admitted.

“What did I tell you!” Georg cheered. “I’ve got an aquarium just like it at home, I keep it on my nightstand. It’s always nice to watch the little hippos bob quietly in their jar as I fall asleep. It puts me out like a light.”

So, the boys bought their friend a jar of pickles and set off for his birthday party. Markus was delighted by the gift because he really did love all kinds of animals. He placed the aquarium in the middle of the table and admired the teensy hippos.

“They’re very calm and friendly animals,” Georg said. “You just need to keep your eye on the aquarium to make sure your dad doesn’t eat them. Mine wanted to at first.”

“What happened then?” Markus asked worriedly.

“I frightened him.”

Right then, Markus’s dad walked into the room, spotted the aquarium on the table, and spread his arms wide.

“Oh, pickles!” he said cheerfully. “I’ll have one, if you’re so kind!”

“Those aren’t pickles!” Georg exclaimed. “They’re mini hippos! And if you stick your fingers in, they’ll bite them so hard that blood will spray everywhere!”

This startled Markus’s dad, so he left the aquarium alone and ate three pickled herrings instead, because they were all headless and couldn’t bite anyone.

[pp. 105–106]

## Colorful Maple Leaves

A hare was hopping through the woods, looking for something to munch on. Suddenly, he spotted a tall maple tree. Its leaves were mottled red and yellow and glowing in the sunlight. The hare froze and stared, his eyes bulging and his mouth hanging open.

“Gorgeous!” he thought, and a second later, “But leaves aren’t fit to eat.”

The hare continued on his way, but turned around after just a few hops and returned to the maple tree. Many leaves had already fallen and covered the moss like a colorful rug. The hare hesitated for a moment, but the leaves were irresistibly gorgeous, so he started gathering them from the ground.

“This is completely silly, of course,” he thought. “Leaves won’t fill my belly. But I’ll take them back to my den between the tree roots and have a nice time lounging in them.”

The hare gathered more and more colorful leaves, unable to stop himself because each one he found was even prettier than the last. Until he bumped into a wolf, that is.

“Oh!” the hare squeaked, hiding the maple leaves behind his back. The wolf looked a little startled, too. He plopped down and puffed out his tail fur. Both were silent for a few moments. Finally, the wolf spoke.

“I’m going to gobble you up.”

It didn’t sound very convincing, though, and then, the hare noticed a big bundle of maple leaves hidden under its tail.

“Are you gathering the colorful leaves?” he asked.

“No!” the wolf declared.

“You were, I can see it!” the hare insisted.

“Well... Maybe just a few,” the wolf said, looking incredibly embarrassed.

“I was gathering them, too,” the hare admitted, and revealed the bunch of colorful leaves he had hidden behind his back.

“Oh, really?! You, too!” the wolf exclaimed, and lifted his tail from the hidden

bundle. "I was thinking of taking them back to my den... Figured they'd be nice to look at, you know..."

"Yep, I was thinking the exact same thing," the hare replied, nodding.

"They're just so beautiful," the wolf sighed and smiled bashfully.

"They are, indeed," agreed the hare. "Shall we gather some more?"

But before they could begin, they heard thumping steps and a bear appeared, carrying a big heap of rowan berries. The second the bear noticed the wolf and the hare, he turned tail and started to flee.

"Wait up!" the hare called out. "What are you doing with those rowan berries? Are you going to eat them?"

"No," the bear mumbled.

"But why are you gathering them, then?"

The bear's face turned as red as the berries in his paws.

"I think they're pretty," he whispered. "I figured I'd hang them from the roof of my den and they'd be nice to look at in winter..."

"Absolutely!" the hare agreed. "They really are lovely! Where'd you find them? I'd like to go and pick a few as well. But I recommend you gather some maple leaves, too. Wolf and I already are. They're nice, aren't they?"

"They certainly are!" the bear replied, no longer embarrassed. "Gorgeous! I'll take some back to my den, too."

So, the bear gathered an armful of maple leaves to go with his rowan berries while the wolf and the hare went off to pick rowan berries for themselves. And it's certain that there were three beautifully decorated dens in the woods that winter.