smiled and quietly giggled to himself.

"But only a tiny bit…" He made himself comfortable, sitting next to Marilyn, and started to tell the story.

A Sparrow in Hand, a Pigeon on the Roof

"You know, not a long time ago I visited a strange man called Hans. He was very fond of all sorts of wise books and sayings.

One hazy summer afternoon, an old folk saying started to twirl in the man's head. It went "Better a sparrow in hand than a pigeon on the roof."

The man spent long hours staring at sparrows and pigeons from his window and tried to understand the meaning of this piece of folk wisdom.
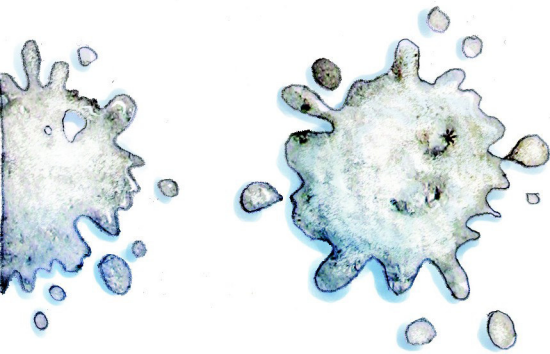
„A sparrow in hand, a pigeon on the roof…" he kept on repeating to himself and couldn't get any sleep even late in the evening. Well, then I went and sprinkled some sleep sand in his eye."

„And that was it?" Marilyn asked, disappointed.

„Oh no," the Sandman snickered. "In the morning, the man went to the store and bought a butterfly net. He wanted

to try out himself whether the folk wisdom was true or not."

Hans spread some bread crumbs in the yard and stayed lurking behind the corner with the butterfly net in his hand. When sparrows discovered the bread crumbs, he jumped at them with his net and, indeed, managed to catch one. He put the bird in a cage and stared at him.
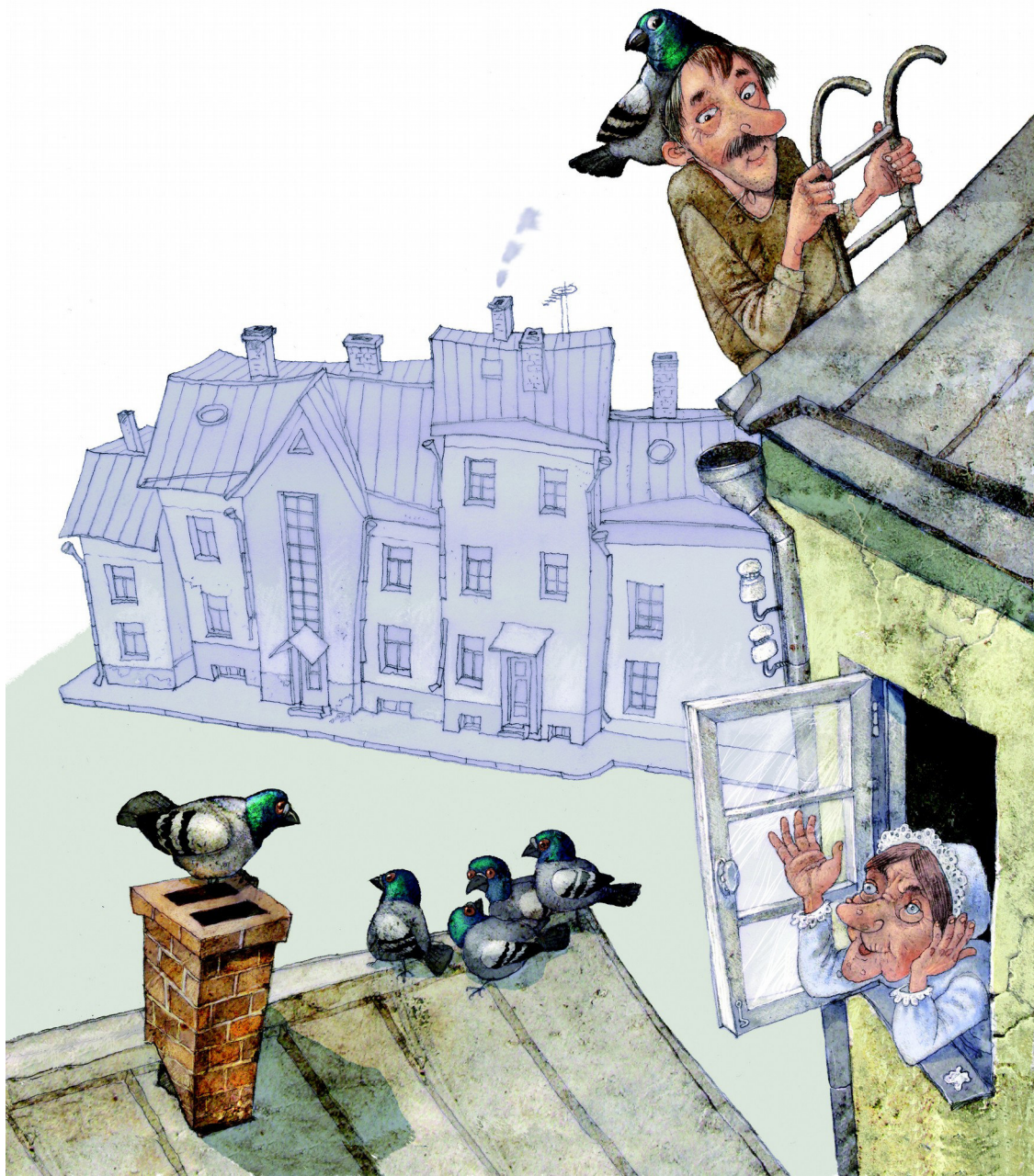
"You are a real sissy," the sparrow said, breaking what had been a long silence. "Look at the pigeons laughing up on the roof. Catching tiny birds like me is a piece of cake!"

The bird climbed out from between the cage bars and flew away through the window. Hans remained sitting at the table and staring at the roof of a three-storied house next door. Just as to tease him on purpose, a fat pigeon flew to Hans's window from the roof, clunked on the window sill for a while and then flew back, leaving a large white blotch behind.

"This is it," Hans decided, and went to the theater nearby to rent a pigeon costume. He put it on and climbed up to the roof of the house next door using the fire escape.

He huddled on the roof and waited.Finally a cocky young pigeon came up to him and asked:

"What's up?"

"Oh, you know. I was wondering which was better - a sparrow in hand or a pigeon on the roof." At the same time, Hans was thinking to himself that the pigeon was about to attack him in a second.

"Are you stupid or something?" the pigeon laughed and stepped back. "Oh, but I know you! You are the loony guy from the third floor of the house next door!" He cooed, laughing, and flew away. Hans stayed up on the roof for a while but no other pigeon flew to him anymore.

An old lady from the flat next to Hans's was watching all this. She clapped her hands with astonishment, shook her head and called the emergency number.

"My neighbor has turned into a pigeon and is climbing up on the roof! Please do come and help!"

The rescue team came and brought the pigeon down from the roof. One firefighter wanted to look smart and said:

"It's better to have a pigeon in hand than on the roof!"

"You are an extremely stupid man!" Hans said and went to return the pigeon costume to the theatre.

On his way home he thought he would stop by at a friend's place His friend loved animals a lot. He had many cats and dogs, and a huge pigeon cage on the porch.

"Listen, my friend, do you think I could hold the pigeon for a second?" Hans asked.

"Sure," his friend said, and Hans held the pigeon in his hand for a while.

"It feels really good," he said to his friend.

"I know," the friend said and put the pigeon back in the cage.

Hans went home and felt at peace. He didn't think about pigeons or sparrows anymore.

"This firefighter wasn't such a stupid man after all," he thought before falling asleep.

The Sandman could hear Marilyn snoring and he didn't mind at all. You don't have to hear every bedtime story until the very end. Sandman patted his sand sack and hurried to work.