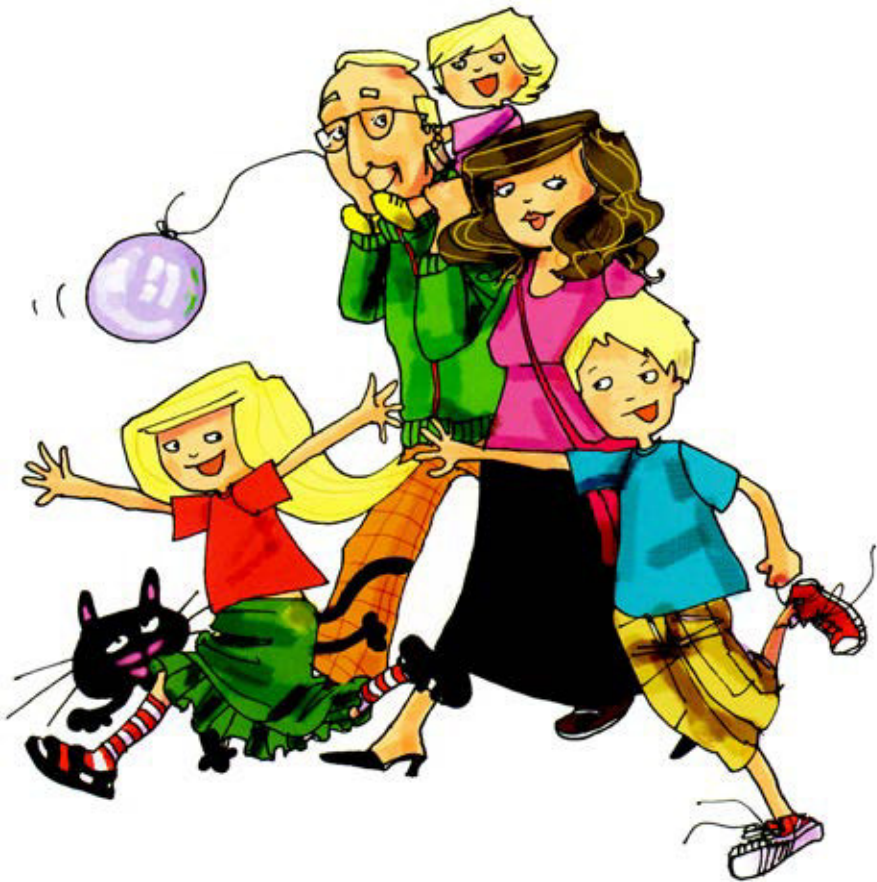


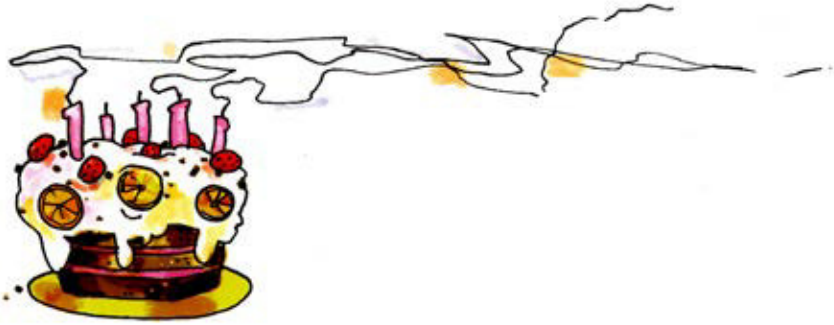
Pooting Joseph and the Rest of the Family



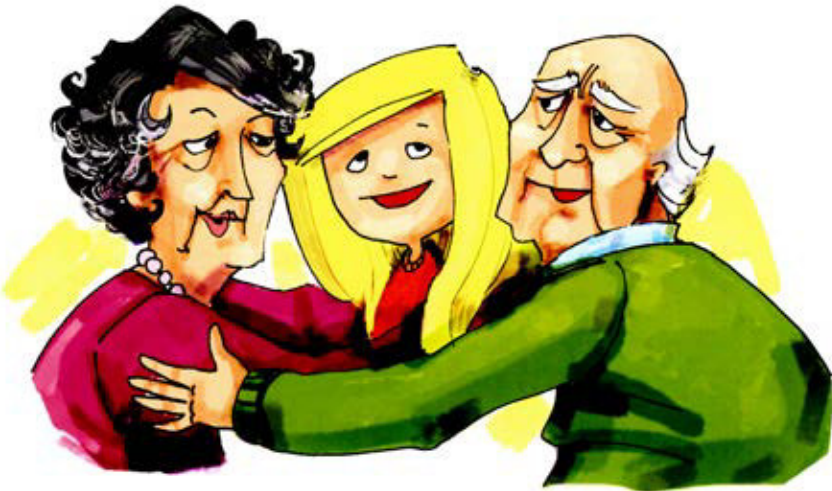
It was a wonderful morning. The sunshine that was coming in through the window had heated up the yellow carpet so that it was quite warm. Lucy stretched her legs down from the upper bunk. There was absolutely no doubt in the fact that home was the best place in the world, she thought.



And besides, it had been her birthday a little while ago, and she had already turned four years old.



“You’re a big girl now!” Granny had said.
“A really big girl!” Grandpa had agreed.



On the lower bunk there was her eight-year-old brother Andy, sleeping with his mouth open.



Lucy climbed down the ladder, stepping on the sun-warm carpet, bended over Andy and tickled his brother's tongue with her finger.



Andy gently bit her baby sister's finger and gently pulled her hair.



“Ouch! This isn’t fair!” Lucy complained, although it didn’t really hurt.

“When a person sleeps, it’s holy,” Andy announced.

“What does holy mean?” Lucy pretended not to understand anything. Andy thought about it for a while and replied:

“Well, my sleep. My sleep is what’s holy.”

“Does that mean that holidays are the days when Andy wants to sleep long?”

“That’s right.” Andy was very pleased with Lucy’s explanation.

“But that means that every day is a holiday!”



There was also a tiny crawling bundle in the family called Madeline.



Madeline could not yet walk or talk. But she was by far the happiest and calmest member of the family; maybe even of the entire town. Madeline could sometimes spend an hour or even longer playing all by herself. She tugged her teddy bears and bunnies, turned the wheels of her toy cars and tore the already clumpy hair of her dolls.



While doing that she was speaking something in a language that only she could understand, and sometimes even scolded.

“Madeline is quite a positive little girl,” Dad would often say.



They could hear clatter of dishes from the

kitchen and that could only mean one thing – soon it was time for breakfast. Their large black cat Joseph who had slept at Andy’s feet raised his head for a second and sniffed the air. His face looked as if he wanted to say:

“It’s too early. I will lie down for a little bit more.”



“Yes, it will take a little bit more time,” Andy assured, just as if Joseph had said his thoughts out loud.

“Breakfast time!” Mum called out from the kitchen. Joseph was the first one to reach the kitchen. Joseph was more like a dog for the family, wise and calm. He slept at Andy’s feet and growled at strangers.

Joseph's green bowl was in the corner by the stove and he usually licked it very clean.

"So what are we doing today?" Mum asked once everyone had sat at the table. Dad looked at Andy and little Lucy.



"I think that today is the perfect day to hold one mighty ice cream party!"

“Ice cream party! Ice cream party!” Lucy cheered and almost fell from her chair.



Lucy was a restless and cheerful little girl. Granny used to say:

“There is no way of keeping this girl still in a barrel or a bag!”

Andy had imagined Lucy being in a barrel and the barrel was shaking and in the end the staves fell apart and Lucy would be standing joyously, hands on her hips, among the broken barrel staves. It was quite a fine way of putting it, Andy thought.



“But we are going to have an ice-cream party on the condition that you finish your breakfast first,”

Mum said.

“Then there won’t be any room left for ice-cream in our bellies,” Lucy argued.

“Sure there will,” Mum said.

“Then I will blow up like a ball and roll down the hill into the river,” Lucy figured.



“Yes,” Andy said, “and I get to play football with you.”

“Now go on eating and stop chatting at the table!” Mum admonished.

Joseph was the first one to finish, as always, and climbed to Andy’s lap. This is the way cats are – they are full but still climb to ask for another treat.



Sometimes Andy secretly gave him a couple of mouthfuls, especially if it was something that he himself didn’t like.

“The cat is at the table again!” scolded Mum. “Get off quickly! Shoo!” She was already reaching for the towel to shoo Joseph away but the cat had

already got the point and landed on the floor under the table with a loud bump.



Nobody knew exactly whether cats actually had their revenge when they were threatened with a kitchen towel but Joseph must have done. Because every time he was shooed off the table he started pooting under the table. And when they say that cats don't poot then don't believe a word they say! They do poot, sometimes even out loud. Anyway,

Joseph was one of the best pooters among all the cats in the world.

“My god, I can’t take it anymore,” Mum gasped. “It’s a total nightmare!”

Dad grabbed Joseph and threw him into the hall. Now Joseph’s feelings were hurt exactly until lunch time.



This was like this every morning and they were so used to it that after finishing their meal they had all forgotten about it.

