

Tove Jansson

TALES FROM  
MOOMINVALLEY



A PUFFIN BOOK

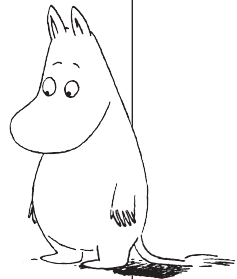




PROPERTY OF

---

---



**Copyrighted Material**

**Copyrighted Material**

TOVE JANSSON was born in Finland in 1914 to Swedish-speaking parents. She began her career as a painter and illustrator and went on to write and illustrate many books for adults and children. She drew her first Moomin in the 1930s, just for fun, and in 1945 he became a character in a children's story. Tove became world-famous for her Moomin books, which began with *The Moomins and the Great Flood* in 1945, closely followed by *Comet in Moominland* in 1946, *Finn Family Moomintroll* in 1948 and six more Moomin novels.

Tove lived and worked with her long-term partner, artist Tuulikki Pietilä, spending the winters in Helsinki and moving in the summer to a beautiful remote island in the Gulf of Finland.

Tove Jansson received many prestigious awards during her lifetime, including the international Hans Christian Andersen Award. She died in 2001, aged eighty-seven.

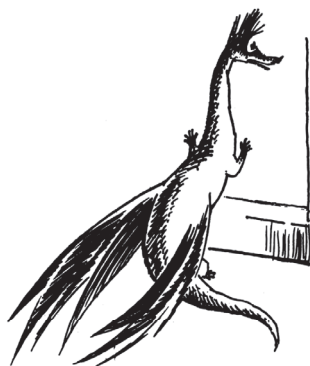
**Copyrighted Material**

*Books by Tove Jansson, published in  
A Puffin Book*

COMET IN MOOMINLAND  
FINN FAMILY MOOMINTROLL  
THE EXPLOITS OF MOOMINPAPPA  
MOOMINSUMMER MADNESS  
MOOMINLAND MIDWINTER  
TALES FROM MOOMINVALLEY  
MOOMINPAPPA AT SEA  
MOOMINVALLEY IN NOVEMBER

**Copyrighted Material**

# TALES FROM MOOMINVALLEY



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

*Tove Jansson*

TRANSLATED BY  
THOMAS WARBURTON



Copyrighted Material

PUFFIN BOOKS

UK | USA | Canada | Ireland | Australia  
India | New Zealand | South Africa

Puffin Books is part of the Penguin Random House group of companies  
whose addresses can be found at [global.penguinrandomhouse.com](http://global.penguinrandomhouse.com).

[www.penguin.co.uk](http://www.penguin.co.uk) [www.puffin.co.uk](http://www.puffin.co.uk) [www.ladybird.co.uk](http://www.ladybird.co.uk)



Penguin  
Random House  
UK

First published in Finland as *Det osynliga barnet och andra berättelser* 1962  
This translation published in English by Ernest Benn Ltd 1963  
Published by Puffin Books 1973  
Reissued 2019  
This edition published 2025

001

Text and illustrations copyright © Tove Jansson, 1962, Moomin Characters™  
English translation copyright © Ernest Benn Ltd, 1963

For more about the Moomins and Tove Jansson visit: [moomin.com](http://moomin.com) and [tovejansson.com](http://tovejansson.com)

The moral right of the author/illustrator has been asserted

Penguin Random House values and supports copyright.

Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes freedom of expression and supports a vibrant culture. Thank you for purchasing an authorized edition of this book and for respecting intellectual property laws by not reproducing, scanning or distributing any part of it by any means without permission. You are supporting authors and enabling Penguin Random House to continue to publish books for everyone.

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner for the purpose of training artificial intelligence technologies or systems. In accordance with Article 4(3) of the DSM Directive 2019/790, Penguin Random House expressly reserves this work from the text and data mining exception.

Set in 12.5/16.5pt Sabon LT Std  
Typeset by Jouve (UK), Milton Keynes  
Printed in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

The authorized representative in the EEA is Penguin Random House Ireland,  
Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau Street, Dublin D02 YH68

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-241-34454-5

All correspondence to:

Puffin Books, Penguin Random House Children's  
One Embassy Gardens, 8 Viaduct Gardens, London SW11 7BW



Copyrighted Material

Penguin Random House is committed to a sustainable future for our business, our readers and our planet. This book is made from Forest Stewardship Council® certified paper.

*To Sophia*



**Copyrighted Material**

**Copyrighted Material**

## *Tales Contented*

<i>The Spring Tune</i>	I
<i>A Tale of Horror</i>	18
<i>The Fillyjonk who believed in Disasters</i>	37
<i>The Last Dragon in the World</i>	66
<i>The Hemulen who loved Silence</i>	86
<i>The Invisible Child</i>	115
<i>The Secret of the Hattifatteners</i>	136
<i>Cedric</i>	166
<i>The Fir Tree</i>	179





Copyrighted Material



### *The Spring Tune*

ONE calm and cloudless evening, towards the end of April, Snufkin found himself far enough to the north to see still unmelted patches of snow on the northern slopes.

He had been walking all day through undisturbed landscapes, listening to the cries of the birds also on their way northwards, home from the South.

Walking had been easy, because his knapsack was nearly empty and he had no worries on his mind. He felt happy about the wood and the weather, and himself. Tomorrow and yesterday were both at a distance, and just at present the sun was shining brightly red between the birches, and the air was cool and soft.

**Copyrighted Material**

It's the right evening for a tune, Snufkin thought. A new tune, one part expectation, two parts spring sadness, and for the rest, just the great delight of walking alone and liking it.

He had kept this tune under his hat for several days, but hadn't quite dared to take it out yet. It had to grow into a kind of happy conviction. Then, he would simply have to put his lips to the mouth organ, and all the notes would jump instantly into their places.

If he released them too soon they might get stuck crossways and make only a half-good tune, or he might lose them altogether and never be in the right mood to get hold of them again. Tunes are serious things, especially if they have to be jolly and sad at the same time.

But this evening Snufkin felt rather sure of his tune. It was there, waiting, nearly full-grown – and it was going to be the best he ever made.

Then, when he arrived in Moominvalley, he'd sit on the bridge rail and play it, and Moomintroll would say at once: That's a good one. Really a good one.

Snufkin stopped in his tracks, feeling just a little bit uneasy. Yes, Moomintroll, always waiting and longing. Moomintroll who sat at home, who

**Copyrighted Material**

## *The Spring Tune*

waited for him and admired him, and who always told him: Of course you have to feel free. Naturally you must go away. I do understand that you have to be alone at times.

And all the times his eyes were black with disappointment and no one could help it.

Oh my, oh my, Snufkin said to himself and continued on his way.

Oh my, oh my. He's got such a lot of feelings, this Moomintroll. I won't think of him now. He's a splendid Moomin, but I don't have to think of him now. Tonight I'm alone with my tune, and tonight isn't tomorrow.

In a little while Snufkin had managed to forget all about Moomintroll. He was sniffing around for a good place to camp in, and when he heard a brook a bit further on in the wood he went towards the sound.

The last red ray of sunlight had vanished between the birches. Now came the spring twilight, slow and blue. All the wood was changed, and the white pillars of the birches went wandering further and further off in the blue dusk.

The brook was a good one.

It went rushing clear and brown over wads of last year's leaves, through small tunnels of left-over

**Copyrighted Material**

ice, swerving through the green moss and throwing itself headlong down in a small waterfall on to a white sand bottom. In places it droned sharp as a mosquito, then it tried to sound great and menacing, stopped, gurgled with a mouthful of melted snow, and laughed at it all.

Snufkin stood listening in the damp moss. I must have the brook in my tune also, he thought. In the refrain, I think.

A small stone suddenly came loose near the waterfall and raised the pitch of the brook a whole octave.

Not bad, Snufkin said admiringly. That's the way to do it. A sudden change, just in passing. I'll have to find that brook a tune of its own.

He took out his old saucepan and filled it from the waterfall. Then he went in under the firs to look for firewood. The ground was still wet from the spring thaw and the rains, and Snufkin had to crawl far under a brambly windfall to find any dry sticks. When he reached out someone gave a sudden shout and flashed past him and off among the firs, still crying and squeaking all the way.

Oh, yes, Snufkin said. Creeps and woodies everywhere. Funny how nervous they always seem to be. The smaller the jumpier.

**Copyrighted Material**

## *The Spring Tune*

He found a dried stump and some sticks and built himself a good campfire by the brook. Snufkin was used to cooking his own dinner. He never cooked a dinner for other people if he could avoid it, nor did he care much for other people's dinners. So many people insisted on talking when they had a meal.

Also they had a great liking for chairs and tables, and some of them used napkins. He even had heard of a Hemulen who changed his clothes every time he was about to eat, but that was probably slander.

A little distractedly Snufkin ate his meagre soup while he rested his eyes on the green moss by the birches.

The tune was quite near at hand, easy to catch by the tail. But there was time enough to wait, it was hedged in and couldn't get away. No, better to wash the dishes first, then light a pipe – and afterwards, when the campfire was burning down and the night creatures started calling for each other, then he'd have it.

Snufkin was washing his saucepan in the brook when he caught sight of the creep. It was sitting on the far side below a tree root, looking at him. Its eyes were scared but very interested, following Snufkin's every movement.

**Copyrighted Material**

Two shy eyes under a mop of hair. Just the look people have who are never noticed.

Snufkin pretended that he hadn't seen the creep. He raked up his fire and cut himself some fir twigs to sit on. He took out his pipe and lit it. He puffed a few clouds of smoke towards the night sky and waited for the spring tune.

It didn't come. Instead he felt the creep's eyes upon him. They watched everything he did, admiringly, and he began to feel uneasy once more. He clapped his paws together and shouted: 'Shoo! Be off!'

At this the creep slunk out from under the tree root – it was still on the other side of the brook – and said, very shyly: 'I hope I haven't scared you? I know who you are. You're Snufkin.'

And then the creep stepped straight into the water and started to wade across. The brook was rather too broad for it, and the water was ice-cold. A couple of times the creep lost its foothold and tumbled over, but Snufkin was feeling so uneasy that he simply didn't think of giving it a hand.

Finally a rather thin and miserable creep crawled ashore and said with chattering teeth: 'Hello, I'm so happy to meet you.'

'Hullo,' Snufkin answered equally coldly.

**Copyrighted Material**



‘May I warm myself by your fire?’ the creep continued, its wet little face shining with happiness. ‘Just think of it, then I’ll be the creep who has sat by Snufkin’s campfire. I’ll never forget that.’

The creep edged closer, laid one paw on Snufkin’s knapsack and solemnly whispered:

‘Is this where you keep the mouth organ? Do you have it here?’

‘Yes,’ Snufkin said, rather crossly. His tune was lost, loneliness was gone, all was different. He clenched his teeth around the pipe-stem and stared in among the birches without really seeing them.

‘Now, don’t mind me,’ the creep said innocently. ‘In case you’d like to play, I mean. You’d never guess

**Copyrighted Material**

how I long for a little music. I've never heard any. But I've heard about you. The hedgehog, and Toffle, and my mother, they've all told me . . . Toffle has even seen you, once! Yes, you can't imagine . . . nothing much ever happens here . . . But we dream lots and lots . . .'

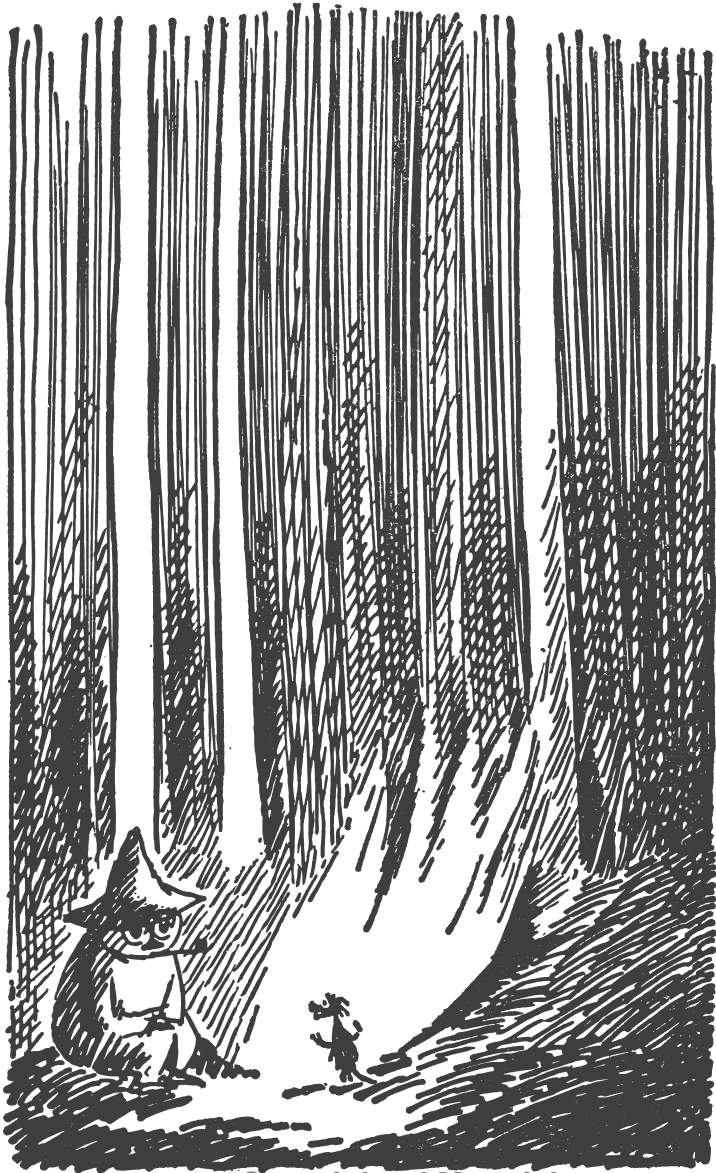
'Well, what's your name?' Snufkin asked. The evening was spoiled anyway, so he thought it easier to talk.

'I'm so small that I haven't got a name,' the creep said eagerly. 'As a matter of fact, nobody's even asked me about it before. And then I meet you, whom I've heard so much about and always longed to see, and the first thing you ask me is what my name is! Do you think . . . perhaps you might . . . I mean, would it be a lot of trouble for you to think up a name for me, a name that would be only mine and no one else could have it? Now, tonight?'

Snufkin mumbled something and pulled his hat over his eyes. Someone flew across the brook on long pointed wings and gave a long, sad cry among the trees: Yo-yooo, yo-ooo, tee-woo . . .

'You can't ever be really free if you admire somebody too much,' Snufkin suddenly said, 'I know.'

**Copyrighted Material**



Copyrighted Material

‘I know you know everything,’ the little creep prattled on, edging closer still. ‘I know you’ve seen everything. You’re right in everything you say, and I’ll always try to become as free as you are . . . So now you’re on your way to Moominvalley to have a rest and meet your friends . . . The hedgehog told me that Moomintroll started waiting for you as soon as he wakes from winter sleep . . . Isn’t it a nice thing to know that someone’s longing for you and waiting and waiting to see you again?’

‘I’m coming when it suits me,’ Snufkin cried violently. ‘Perhaps I shan’t come at all. Perhaps I will go somewhere else.’

‘Oh. Then he’ll be sad,’ said the creep.

Its fur was beginning to dry and becoming light brown and soft. It picked at the knapsack once again and asked cautiously:

‘Would you perhaps . . . You who have travelled so much . . . ?’

‘No,’ Snufkin said. And he thought angrily: Why can’t they ever let my wanderings alone?! Can’t they understand that I’ll talk it all to pieces if I have to tell about it. Then it’s gone, and when I try to remember what it really was like, I remember only my own story.

**Copyrighted Material**