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Opening extract from

The Exploits of Moominpappa

Written by

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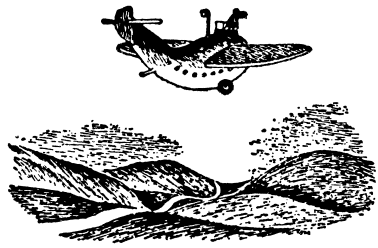
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PREFACE

I, MOOMINPAPPA, am sitting tonight by my window gazing into my garden, where the fireflies embroider their mysterious signs on the velvet dark. Perishable flourishes of a short but happy life!

As a father of a family and owner of a house I look with sadness on the stormy youth I am about to describe. I feel a tremble of hesitation in my paw as I poise my memoir-pen.

Still, I draw strength from some words of wisdom I have come across in the memoirs of another remarkable personage: 'Everyone, of whatever walk in life, who has achieved anything good in this world, or thinks he has, should, if he be truth-loving and nice, write about his life, albeit not starting before the age of forty!'

I feel rather nice, and I like truth when it isn't too boring. I will attain the suitable age on 9 August.

Yes, I really think I must yield to Moomintroll's persuasion and to the temptation of talking about myself, of getting into print and being read all over Moominvalley! May my simple notes bring delight and instruction to all Moomins, and especially to my dear son, even if my memory isn't quite what it has been.

And you, foolish little child, who think your father a dignified and serious person, when you read this story of three daddies' adventures you should bear in mind that one daddy is very like another (at least when young).

I believe many of my readers will thoughtfully lift their snout from the pages of this book every once in a while to exclaim: 'What a Moomin!' or: 'This indeed is life!'

Last but not least I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the people who most of all contributed to forming my life into the work of art it has become: Hodgkins, the Hattifatteners, and my wife, the matchless and exceptional Moominmamma.

Moominvalley in August



CHAPTER I

In which I tell of my misunderstood childhood, of the tremendous night of my escape, of the building of my first Moominhouse, and of my historical meeting with Hodgkins.

ONE cold and windy autumn evening many years ago a newspaper parcel was found on the doorstep of the Home for Moomin Foundlings.

In that parcel I lay, quite small and shivering with cold, and without the least idea of where my father and mother were. (I've thought sometimes how much more romantic it would have been if mother had only laid me instead on green moss, in a small straw basket. But she probably hadn't any.)

The Hemulen who had built the Foundlings' Home snorted her customary snort and clamped a numbered seal on my tail to avoid mixing me up with the other Moomin-children. There were a lot of us, and we all soon became grave and tidy youngsters, because the Hemulen had a most solid character and used to wash us more often than she kissed us.

Still, she had one little weakness; she was interested in astrology, and every time a Moominchild was found on