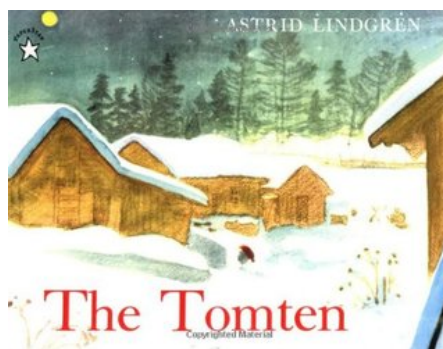




The Tomten

Astrid Lindgren , Harald Wiberg (Illustrator)

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No one knows when he came to the farm, no one has ever seen him, but everyone knows it is the troll Tomten who walks about the lonely old farmhouse on a winter's night, talking to all the animals and reminding them of the promise of Spring.

The Tomten Details

Date : Published October 6th 1997 by The Putnam & Grosset Group (first published 1961)

ISBN : 9780698115910

Author : Astrid Lindgren , Harald Wiberg (Illustrator)

Format : Paperback 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Holiday, Christmas, Fantasy

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From Reader Review The Tomten for online ebook

Mathew says

I love Astrid Lindgren and Kitty Crowther so much that I ended up buying this little picturebook in French and, painfully, translating it. It was only after reading about other work by Kitty that I found someone has already done it...

Stupidity aside, this is such a lovely little story about a little troll (the Scandinavian like their trolls who, I suppose are similar to Brownies) whose job it is, in the winter, to ensure that the people and livestock of a remote household are safe and well and feel comforted.

Kitty was granted the privilege of illustrating the story after it was unearthed in a cupboard belonging to the Lindgren estate (it was penned in the 60s). Kitty's capturing of the little Tomte, the snow, the green thrum of the Northern Lights and the sense of peace and calm within the land is simply beautiful. Go buy it! In English...

Chris says

Quite a lovely book.

QNPoohBear says

This book is a family favorite to read at Christmas time. My grandmother grew up hearing stories about Norwegian nissen (very similar to tomten) from her grandmother so this story has a special place in all our hearts. Astrid Lindgren's soft, sweet words translate the poem beautifully. It's easy for small children to understand. We got so into the idea of leaving rice porridge for the Tomten, we leave rice pudding for JulNissen at Christmas (along side Santa's cookies and milk). The illustrations are a little dark but they convey winter very well. We never thought they were gloomy. I haven't tried reading this to the nieces and nephews yet. It may be too gentle and slow for their generation.

Randie D. Camp, M.S. says

First, let me say how thrilled I was to discover that Astrid Lindgren adapted this book. Pippi Longstocking was one of my favorite books/characters as a child and it just thrills me to read more of her work. Second, let me share that I have always admired gnomes and I have a special gnome that sits on my favorite bookshelf to protect my favorite books...I am such a dork :).

The Tomten is Lindgren's adaption of a classic poem written by Rydberg (For the record, I prefer Rydberg's verses). Lindgren writes in rhythmic, well-paced verses. I admire her careful word choice because it is very descriptive and lends itself well to evoking imagery, which is a critical aspect of quality poetry. The repetition offers structure to the story and is most likely a reflection of the poem's ties to classic folklore. One of the repeating phrases, "he talks to them in tomten, a silent little I language..." struck me because I would have liked to see some foreign tomten symbols to represent this magical language. The illustrations complimented the story nicely but did not correspond well with my own mental imagery of the poem. The tomten's eyes appear to be creepy in a few scenes—particularly the page with the sheep...his eyes appear to

be glowing and the darkness of his presence is more troll-like than gnome-like. Overall, I really enjoyed this book and look forward to reading Lindgren's follow-up Tomten books.

Hilary says

This was a favourite bedtime read of my children when they were small. Despite having read this at least a hundred times, it is still a joy to look through. Harald Wiberg's illustrations are exquisite, his snowy landscapes are excellent, he is wonderful at depicting animals and scenes using light and dark.

The Tomten goes about the farm at night, reassuring the animals that although it is a cold night he will do all he can to help them, he brings them more straw and food and tells them that summer will come. After he sees the animals he tiptoes in to the sleeping farmhouse before going back to his cosy corner in the hay loft with a saucer of milk for a cat.

This is a beautiful bedtime read, the text is soft and gentle, the illustrations of the sleeping animals and people and the reassuring idea that someone is there whilst you sleep caring for you and keeping you safe.

Abigail says

In the quiet of a cold and snowy winter night, on a farm "deep in the middle of the woods," a tomten - tomstens (known as nisse in Norway and Denmark) are small, dwarf or gnome-like beings from Scandinavian mythology, said to guard and care for a farm and its inhabitants - makes his rounds, checking on all the animals, and on the human inhabitants as well. From the cows to the sheep, Dobbin the horse to Caro the dog, the tomten speaks to each in his silent tomten language, that only animals and babies can understand, offering consolation, and the promise of spring (and happiness) to come. Pondering his human charges, who (unlike the animals) sleep the night away, and never know he is there, the tomten concludes his rounds, ending up with his feline companion, who demands milk, and his company. Winters may come and summers go, the narrator concludes, but all throughout the year, in the dead of night, the tomten will be there, to ensure that all is well...

Based upon a poem by Viktor Rydberg, published in 1881 in the magazine *Ny Illustrerad Tidning*, this delightful picture-book from acclaimed Swedish children's author Astrid Lindgren has a gentle charm that slowly and subtly works upon the reader, drawing her into its quiet, comforting world. I liked the repetitive structure of the tale - this probably owes something to the original poem - as it creates a rather soothing rhythm, and emphasizes the reassuring nature of the story itself. The tomten is there - *every* night he is there - and he is sure to get to all the residents of the farm, during the course of his nightly duties. The accompanying artwork, done in muted tones by Harald Wiberg, has a soft, indistinct quality to it that is ideally suited to the wintry nighttime scene, and perfectly captures the quiet feeling of enchantment to be found in the text.

All in all, The Tomten is a superb little book, and I am quite grateful to the *Picture-Book Club* to which I belong for choosing it as one of our selections this month. Our theme this time is "mystical/magical creatures," and this surely fits the bill! I will definitely be seeking out a copy of Lindgren's The Tomten and the Fox, as well as the Norwegian story, The Nisse from Timsgaard ...

Manybooks says

It is a long winter's night, and the Tomten (a small, ancient gnome, who lives quietly and mostly unnoticed on a remote Swedish farm) awakens. He watches over the farm's livestock, encouraging the winter-weary animals with the promise of spring (talking to them in *Tomten* language, a silent language that the farm animals, from cows to barn cats, are able to understand). The farmer and his wife, although also under the Tomten's watchful eyes, are unaware of the Tomten's presence and unable to understand *Tomten* language, although if their children were awake, they would be able to perceive the Tomten and comprehend his language. Throughout the night, the Tomten continues making his rounds, and as long as there are people and animals on the farm, he will faithfully keep watch over them, night after night, season after season, year after year, continuously repeating.

Astrid Lindgren's [The Tomten](#) exhibits a sparse, sweetly poetic, but also somewhat repetitive narrative style. For some, the repetitiveness of the text might well seem a trifle monotonous, but for me, it gives this little gem of a story a wonderful and palpable sense of security, of hope for the coming of spring. In many ways, [The Tomten](#) reads and feels almost like a magical lullaby, conveying peace, love and protection (like a fluffy blanket, or cozy hearth, the Tomten's words surround the reader, the listener with magic, warmth and kindness). And Harald Wiberg's luminous, at times almost mystical accompanying illustrations are a perfect complement to Astrid Lindgren's poetically warming and calming narrative, demonstrating a similar sense of peace, of magical, fairytale-like serenity. I recommend [The Tomten](#) for children interested in *The Little People* (and it would be the perfect bedtime story for a winter's evening, peaceful, relaxing, hopeful).

Astrid Lindgren adapted the text of [The Tomten](#) from Viktor Ryberg's 1881 poem Tomten (the gnome). Although not essential (and basically this is just my own academic curiosity speaking), I think it would have been enlightening and of interest if Lindgren had also included Viktor Ryberg's original poem as an author's note (I did finally find the poem on the internet, in its original Swedish, and with an accompanying English translation, but it took rather a bit of research). And I also wish I were fluent in Swedish and could thus read and compare this here English language translation to Astrid Lindgren's original Swedish text ([The Tomten](#) is in every way a wonderful, a lovely book, a sweet and to and for me perfect marriage of text and image, but I am always curious how translated texts, especially ones which are poetic or based on poetry, compare and hold up to the originals, and I do find it kind of strange and actually even a bit annoying that the translator is not even mentioned by name).

Natalie Ahern says

A traditional scandinavian folk tale best read around Christmas time for maximum enjoyment and relevance as it is set in winter.

The Tomten is a little troll also affectionately known as a gnome. The Tomten wanders round solitary farms looking after and talking to the animals that live there. He also keeps a watchful eye over the children to ensure that they come to no harm while they sleep.

I read this book to my year 2 class under the visualiser. It took me about 10 - 15 minutes to read. They must have enjoyed it as they all listened attentively. The illustrations in the book support the story really well.

I would recommend this as a book to read with the class. I used it as a stimulus for an Art Club where the children had to use different materials to create their own winter scene. Great for nursery children to those in year 4.

Miriam says

The lower illustration is the same scene in this book versus an older version of The Tomten.

Kathryn says

4.5 STARS

A beautiful, gentle (adapted from the wonderful poem by Rydberg) story lovingly illustrated about the Tomten (gnome) who keeps watch over a family's small, lonely farm and encourages the animals in the winter while they dream of spring. I adored how the Tomten was friends with all the animals, and I think young children would love to imagine a tomten outside their house and keeping a kind, watchful eye on things while they sleep. The rhyme scheme makes this a very gentle, story, almost like a lullaby--I did wonder why the rhyme wasn't repeated throughout, it changed with the chickens and the dog-- but that did not diminish my enjoyment of the tale. I thought the illustrations were marvelous; gentle, beautiful, just the right blend of realism and magic. And, the tomten is just so adorable! :-)

Julie says

It's official. . . I'm obsessed with Astrid Lindgren. I just ordered every possible title that I do not possess from the library, then ordered the remaining books from Amazon. (In case my husband reads this review, I would like to add that I was able to find MOST of her work at the library).

I want to read everything Ms. Lindgren wrote, whether it's for adults, children or animals. Or aliens.

This is actually a re-telling of the poem *The Tomten* by Viktor Rydberg and is illustrated by Harald Wiberg (rather than Ilon Wikland), and it is a TOTAL DELIGHT.

A little *tomten*, who looks like a little gnome to this American, only appears at night, but "no one has seen the tomten." Only his footprints can be seen in the morning snow.

The tomten is a little guy with a big heart who calms all of the farm animals at night, and one of the illustrations of him tending to a cold dog in his kennel actually brought tears to my eyes.

This book has the calm, quiet power of Margaret Wise Brown's *Big Red Barn* and Jan Brett's *The Mitten* and my girls did not speak through the read.

They let Ms. Lindgren cast her spell in peace.

Jeniece Goellner says

I remember hearing the story of the tomten when I grew up from my Grandpa who grew up in Sweden and

this folklore was common. I never knew about the poem or that Astrid Lindgren wrote a children's picture book based on the poem. So when I was an adult, introducing my fiancé to our Swedish traditions, I found The Tomten.

I was so pleased to find this story. It was a sweet tale about the tomten's night activities, silently providing help and comfort on the farm where he lives. The illustrations by Harald Wiberg are beautiful. Warm, soft, moonlight scenes painted with great detail elevate the story. This is a Christmas staple in my house and I highly recommend it to everyone.

God Jul! Gott Nytt År!

Isa Lot says

Me ha gustado mucho, es un cuento precioso e ideal para el invierno, pero le doy un cuatro porque me gusta más la versión en inglés, tanto por los dibujos como por el texto. En esta traducción pierde un poco y se lia con cosas como que dice que el duende cuida de todas las casas y no es así, cuida de esa granja en particular, es el típico duende casero: tomten, brownie o kobold, o lo que J. K. Rowling llamaría elfo doméstico. Pero en general está bien y es muy bonito.

Jessaka says

What a sweet story. I had listened to the audio of this when I would have rather had painted drawings of the farm house and the Tomten, who is a little gnome. A “Tomte” translates as “homestead man” who is a protector of the farm in which he lives.

So this is a story about a winter gnome in Scandinavian folklore that lives on farms to protect it. He wears shabby clothes, a long white beard, and a red cap. He checks on the animals, telling them that summer is near, and then he checks on the the children in the house by peeking in the window. Adults can't see him, but children can, and yet he only checks on them at night when they are fast asleep.

Some people read this book or one like it at Christmas time in Sweden, and some people put out porridge with butter on it on Christmas Eve to feed the Tomten because that is all he requires for his protection of the farm.

TOMTEN RICE PORRIDGE

1 ½ c. water
1 T. butter
½ t. salt
½ c. rice
4 ½ c. milk
Cinnamon, sugar, and butter to taste

1. Rinse the rice well and drain.
2. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, bring 1 1/2 cups water, butter, and salt to a rapid boil over high heat.
3. Pour in the rice, stirring constantly to prevent sticking.
4. Reduce the heat to low, stirring the rice until boiling is reduced to a simmer.

5. Cover the pot and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until the rice has absorbed most of the water.
 6. Add the milk to the rice, stirring to incorporate. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring constantly, then immediately reduce the heat to low.
 7. Once boiling has reduced to a simmer, cover the pot and allow it to cook, without stirring, for 45 minutes. Be careful here to avoid it scorching.
 8. Serve warm with cinnamon-sugar and butter to taste. You can also serve it with cold milk to pour over the top.
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Dolly says

We recently reread Hedgie's Surprise by Jan Brett, so we already had an idea about what a Tomten was. This book is similar, but depicts the Tomten in a slightly less mischievous manner. The narrative is repetitive and soothing, and the story is perfect for bedtime reading. The illustrations are also softly muted, showing the quiet of night. We really enjoyed reading this story together.

This story was selected as one of the books for the April 2012 - Mystical/Magical Creatures reads at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.
