

Dreamland

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Dreamland

Litnor is lying on a reindeer skin outside, staring at the sky. It's a beautiful day and she smiles softly, shutting her eyes in the bright sunshine. After a moment, she peers up and spots an enormous bird flitting above her – almost as though it were looking for something.

The clouds cover the sun and the bird sails behind the clouds, shrieking one last time before it disappears. Litnor sits up and scouts for the bird, but it's vanished just like last year's snow. She's a bit puzzled by the strange feeling the bird left in her chest but forgets about it as soon as she gets back inside the house.

Litnor and her sisters are staying with their Great-Grandmother for a few weeks. They're on summer break and it's always a lot of fun to spend time on the edge of the *tundra*. They usually live in a bigger town where they also go to school.

Great-Grandmother lives in a small village called *Geaidnojávri* – Path Lake – because there are old migration trails that run in three different directions. She lives in a tiny little house. There isn't any running water, so she fetches it from a well next to the woodshed and she only has an outhouse. There's no electricity, either, but she has a wood stove, and there's a big kitchen and a small bedroom.

Great-Grandmother has a boat at the lakeshore. Everyone in the village has their own boat. They put their fishing nets out each evening, check them in the morning, and eat fresh whitefish.

Some sparrows have nested under the eaves of the house. Great-Grandfather likes to say that the sparrows «know» Great-Grandmother. They practically land on her hat when she goes outside! This is how the sparrows show that they trust her.

There is a lot of life at Great-Grandmother's house early in the morning. The sparrows flutter around, hunting mosquitoes and chirping as they feed their hungry young. Lurfi, Great-Grandmother's dog, doesn't bark at the sparrows; he just curls up.

Great-Grandmother is a special person who knows a great deal about many things – but not even the crows understand her, the children like to say.

Strange things already start happening the first very day they're there – and when you're on summer vacation, the more strange things that happen, the more fun it is.

Litnor is in her early teens and spends lots of time reading all kinds of thought-provoking books. Máiiot is ten and can be a little bit controlling – but she doesn't like that word herself. She shows a great deal of concern for others and often puts a lot of effort into keeping her sisters in check. Gáiiá is the youngest – an eight-year-old who's always running around and who isn't afraid of doing things the others find to be dangerous.



Great-Grandmother has three young girls staying with her whose different needs and moods she must try to cater to.

The lakeshore is an exciting place for Máiiot, who loves to swim. She also likes to be alone, which is why she spends a lot of time in the turf hut. Sometimes she says she's a bit like a *háldi* – a guardian spirit – but she isn't one, even though she prefers to be alone just like *háldi* do.

Gáiiá likes Great-Grandmother's tall storehouse. She often sits on the roof, studying everything she can see and hear. People often say she's just like Grandmother-Ingá, who is incredibly curious, but Litnor doesn't think of herself like this, even though she'd rather be up high looking for this and that. She's similar to Grandmother-Ingá, but not *just* like her.

Litnor thinks Great-Grandmother's bedroom is the nicest place to take a little snooze. There's an ancient, brown wooden bed where many dreams have been dreamt and many people have slept.

The three girls always look forward to spending a few weeks at their Great-Grandmother's house. Everything is always so exciting. They've been looking forward to this trip.

The three little girls have scoured every nook and cranny in Great-Grandmother's house, hoping to find something special. They've checked every tree trunk and looked under every stone, trying to find things they can play with in their turf hut.

All of this activity has really tired Litnor out, even though she's the oldest. She goes to Great-Grandmother's bedroom and lies down on the old bed to nap for a bit.

Strange things are already swirling around in her head before sleep overcomes her. It seems like Great-Grandmother's old bed is swaying as she lies there – almost as if it's about to set sail. Then, sleep takes her off to Dreamland.

She hasn't been asleep for long before she finds herself in another world. Everything is covered in snow, like a spring snowstorm has just blown through. The only thing that can be heard is Lurffi's barking. Litnor then sails off with the wind. As the world grows lighter, it suddenly starts getting greener. The sky is just like it usually is during the summertime.

A birch tree at the edge of the cliff seems incredibly familiar to Litnor, as does a big, pointy rock. Litnor marvels at how this place seems to be both familiar and foreign at the same time.

She spots a tall mountain in the distance that she's seen before, but she doesn't remember where. Perhaps it could be *Boaimmášbákti* – Buzzard Mountain? She lies down on her back and watches the clouds float by. It feels like summertime and the sun warms her face. She falls asleep in the peace and quiet.

Suddenly, a shadow crosses over her. When she opens her eyes, she spots a bird she's seen before. It frightens her, as it seems to be watching her, somehow. Litnor shouts:



«Shoo, bird! Get out of here!» She waves her hands to try to scare it off. «Do you think I'm a lemming or something? I'm not *that* small», she thinks, feeling a bit nervous.

The bird stops right above her. It shrieks so loudly that Litnor covers her face, afraid that it will peck out her eyes if she looks up at it. When she finally dares to take a peek, the bird has continued on and seems to be hunting for mice. Litnor shouts again. The bird rises up and flies back over to the area where she is lying.

«Get away! Stupid bird!»

But the bird isn't scared off this time. It stops directly above her head – then starts flying straight at her!

«You crazy bird! Why are you doing this to me?», she shouts in fear.

Litnor crawls over to the birch tree and huddles up beneath the safety of its branches. All of a sudden, she sees Lurfi approaching, wagging his tail at the bird as if he knows it. Litnor sits completely still and doesn't hear anything else. After a while, she succumbs to sleep, resting against the trunk of the birch tree.