

FARMER HUBERT



and the witch forest

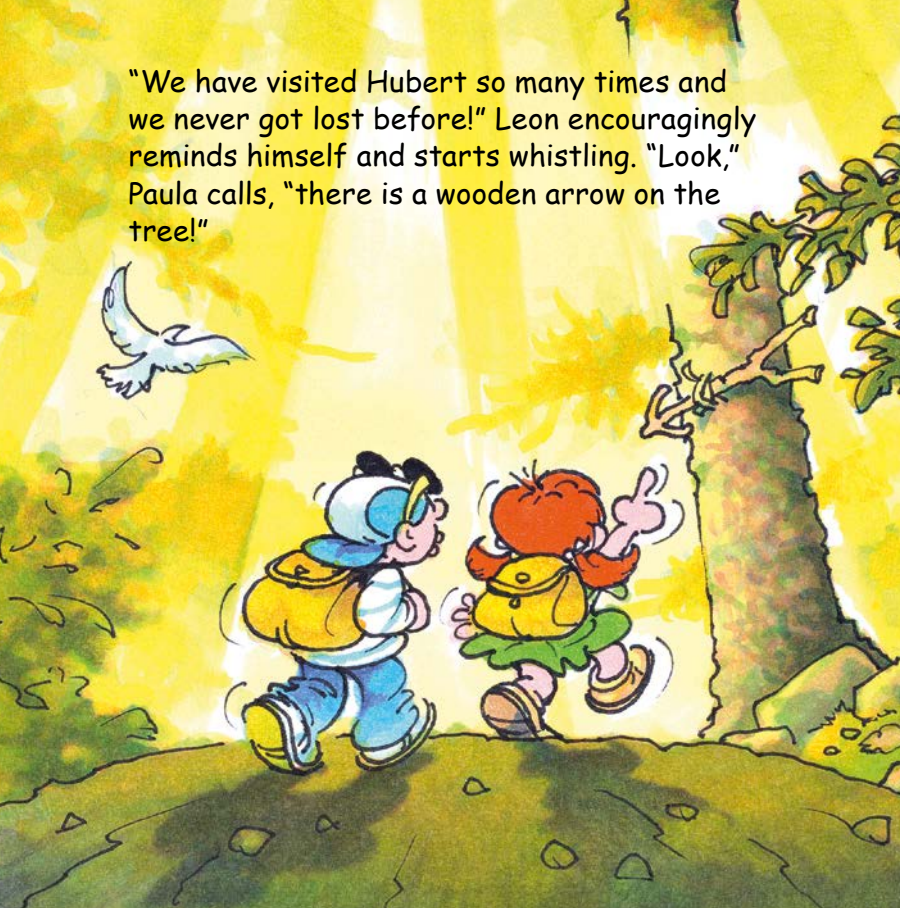
Paula and Leon are visiting their friend Farmer Hubert again. This time getting to him is very exciting; Hubert has written the children that they will only be able to find him if they follow his signs.

"Do you think we're on the right track? The forest seems to be much wilder here than I remember ..." Paula is a little bit worried. "Don't be afraid! Leon, your hero, is at your side!" boasts Leon.

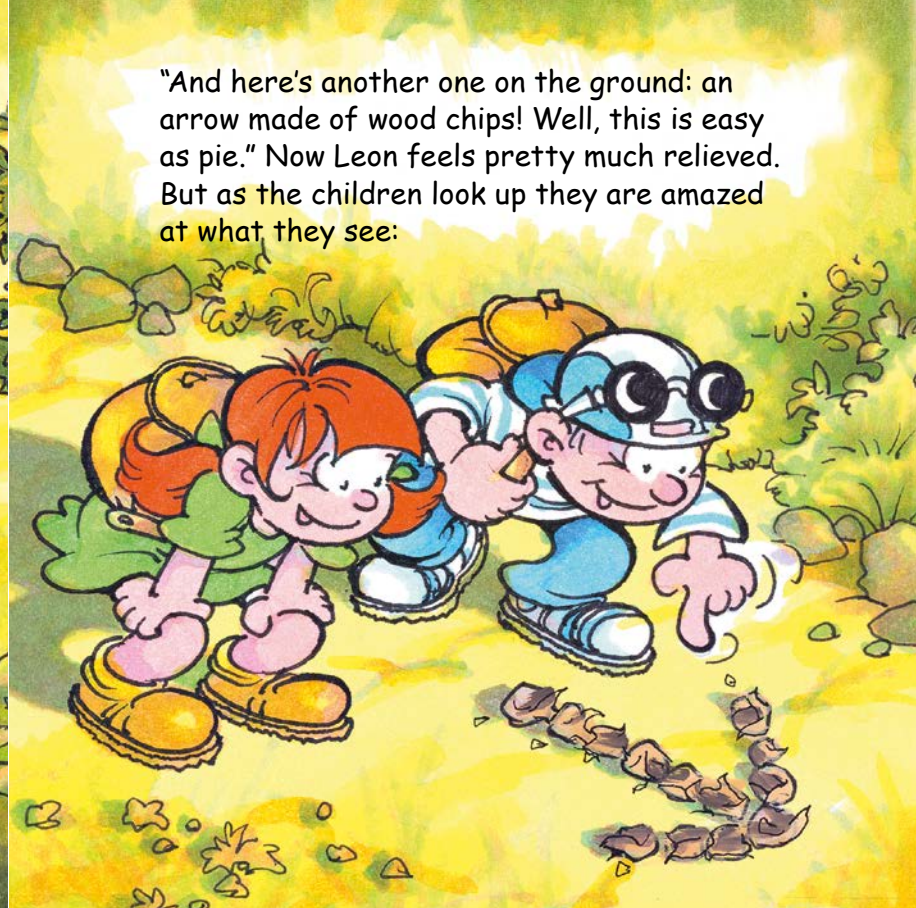


Told and drawn by Michael Ryba

"We have visited Hubert so many times and we never got lost before!" Leon encouragingly reminds himself and starts whistling. "Look," Paula calls, "there is a wooden arrow on the tree!"



"And here's another one on the ground: an arrow made of wood chips! Well, this is easy as pie." Now Leon feels pretty much relieved. But as the children look up they are amazed at what they see:



"I can't believe this! A witch's house!!! It's like in a fairy tale ..." Leon stammers out. "All that's missing is a witch ..." Paula whispers, frightened. The words are barely out of her mouth when a witch shuffles out of the house and beckons to the children:

"Nibble, nibble, little mouse, who is nibbling at my house? I hear the sweet voices of children, it's Paula and Leon, I reckon," the witch cackles.



"Huuuubert! You scared the wits out of us!"
Leon and Paula are relieved. But they are also
a bit put out.



"I hope I haven't scared you too much with
my scavenger hunt!" Hubert laughs. "I
wanted to show you that the forest is full of
magic! But now, please come in to my ...



... witch house! I will make you a hot witch
chocolate!"

"This cottage here, which I turned into a witch house for you, is actually my tool shed for my work in the forest, that I ..." Hubert is interrupted, because all of a sudden:



"Don't be afraid!" Hubert leads the children outside. "It's only the lumberjacks and their chainsaws. They're over there making firewood," Hubert explains while waving to the lumberjacks.



"Oh no!" Paula calls out, anxious. "Are they cutting down all these wonderful trees?! What about the forest and all the animals?" "No, Paula, they aren't cutting down all the trees," Hubert soothes. "The forest will be just fine, more beautiful even!"



"For some time now, we've only cut down as many trees as new ones that grow. This preserves the forest, which is constantly regenerating and never disappears.



Grown-ups call this 'sustainable forestry'."

"But you are right, Paula. If the forest was thoughtlessly clear-cut, there wouldn't be any usable trees for a long time and the forest's animals would be driven away. That wouldn't be good for us humans, either."



"If the forest is preserved, everyone benefits: we have wood for paper production and for building houses, wood for heating, making windows and doors, and even for cough syrup!"



"For cough syrup?!" Paula laughs. "I didn't know that you could drink wood! Hubert, I don't think you can see the wood for the trees!"



"Yes, indeed, it sounds strange, Paula! But cough syrup consists of ingredients that come from wood!"

"Yes, and another very important thing is," Leon explains, suddenly wagging his finger, "that the roots of trees store water like a sponge and release it into the water cycle. This is of great significance for our climate!" Hubert and Paula are stunned:



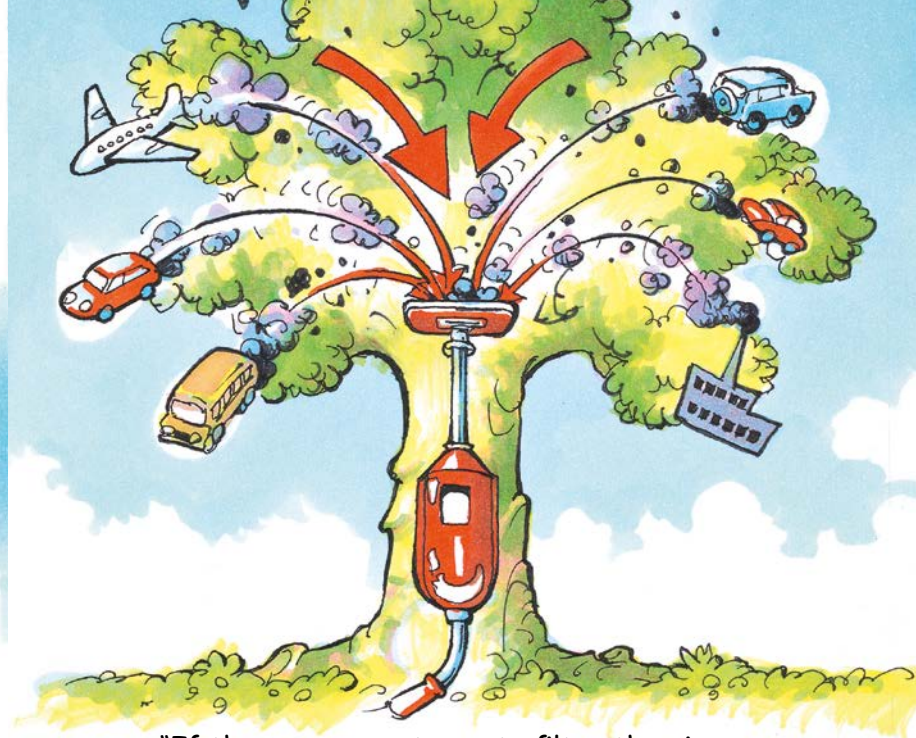
"Where did you find THAT out?!" Leon giggles: "I read it in a book in your cottage!" Hubert has to laugh and Paula giggles: "Oh boy! Now I need a break!"

"A forest like this is so beautiful!" Paula
snuggles into the soft bed of moss. "Yes, you
can really have a good time and simply relax
in the forest with all its animals and plants!"

"Just like the hikers over there!"
Leon shouts.

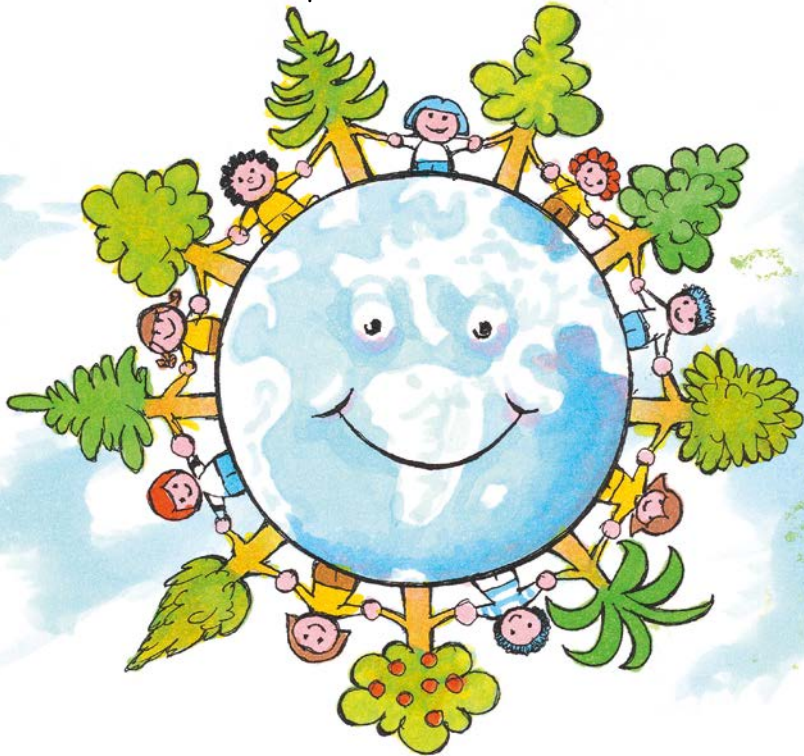


"Yes, they also want to enjoy the 'green lung'. Trees not only store water, but also filter the air and provide oxygen. We need oxygen to breathe. A 100-year-old oak produces oxygen for eleven people in one year!"



"If there were no trees to filter the air, we wouldn't have clean air to breathe because of the emissions from cars, aircraft and factories."

"That's why we need the forest, so that we can live on our planet earth!"



The children are enthusiastic and hug a tree. "Thank you, dear trees, for doing so much for us!" Paula says. Leon mischievously adds: "Thank you, too, Hubert!"



There is only one little thing ..."

"We need to get even with you for frightening us with your witch stunt!" "Exactly!" Paula shouts, "And have we got a fitting punishment for you! Into the oven with you, you bad witch!"



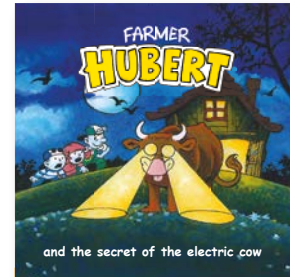
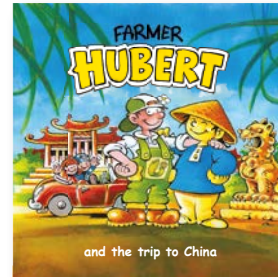
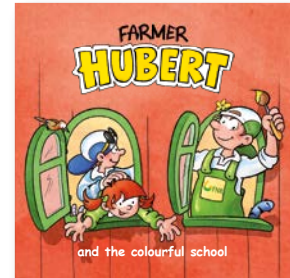
"Meeerccy!" Hubert begs laughing. "Then allow me to sustainably serve you a wonderful dinner! With cough syrup for dessert!"



Outside you can hear the three laughing away, and the forest animals shake their heads in tolerant wonder.



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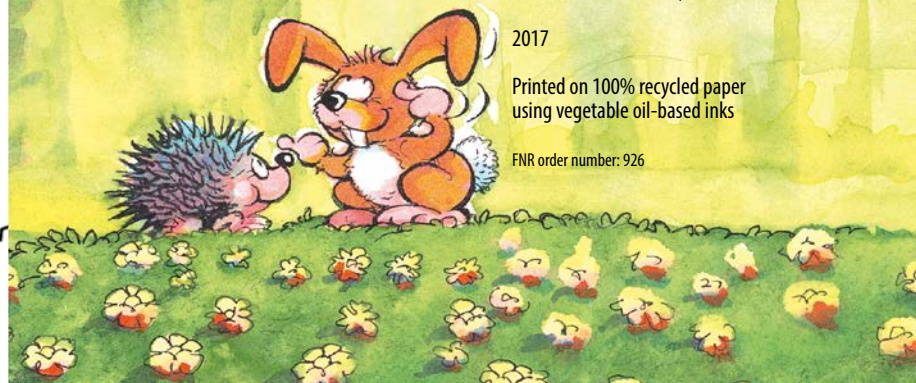
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