



The Beginning

It was well past nine o'clock but Marilyn was still awake.

“Where is the Sandman, I wonder,” she thought to herself and started to count sheep out of an old habit. Marilyn could easily count up to a hundred now and even further but it didn't really help. Every time she got to about fifty, the sheep started to play tricks on her. Some put out their tongue; some started to dance instead of leaping over the fence, and some just stumbled on the fence lath and fell down like a sack of flour.

“You haven't seen anything yet,” a voice suddenly said from somewhere near the footboard. “Once I had kangaroos, elephants and Santa Clauses instead of sheep. They kept on leaping over the fence, and when one fell, all the others fell on his back. The Santa Claus came first, the kangaroo right after him and then the elephant on the top of all. Once the

Santa Claus managed to get out from under the kangaroo and the elephant, he was so flat that the wind carried him away to the meadow, like a kite.”

“Hi, Sandman!” Marilyn said happily. “I’m so glad that you finally returned!”

“Oh, cut it out,” the Sandman said reluctantly. “It’s me who is glad that you finally returned. And you know what? I won’t waste a grain of sleep sand on you today but I will tell you an almost true story instead.”

“What do you mean by an almost true story?” Marilyn asked.

“Well, I added little bits to it myself,” the Sandman



smiled and quietly giggled to himself.

“But only a tiny bit...” He made himself comfortable, sitting next to Marilyn, and started to tell the story.

A Sparrow in Hand, a Pigeon on the Roof

“You know, not a long time ago I visited a strange man called Hans. He was very fond of all sorts of wise books and sayings.

One hazy summer afternoon, an old folk saying started to twirl in the man’s head. It went “Better a sparrow in hand than a pigeon on the roof.”

The man spent long hours staring at sparrows and pigeons from his window and tried to understand the meaning of this piece of folk wisdom.

„A sparrow in hand, a pigeon on the roof...” he kept on repeating to himself and couldn’t get any sleep even late in the evening. Well, then I went and sprinkled some sleep sand in his eye.”

„And that was it?” Marilyn asked, disappointed.

„Oh no,” the Sandman snickered. “In the morning, the man went to the store and bought a butterfly net. He wanted