**Spring - Oskar Luts**

A typical country school in Estonia towards the end of the 19th century, mainly attended by the children of peasants.  It is the story of the lives of a group of children throughout their school year, from autumn to spring.  The main characters are Arno, Toots, Kiir and Teele.

When Arno and his father arrived at the schoolhouse, classes had already begun. Soon a boy leaned over and whispered to him: “What did the schoolmaster say?” Arno: “Nothing much.” The student whispered again: “Did he say that you are not allowed to read Indian stories in school?” “No.” “Have you read The Forests of America? That sure was a brave man.“ “Who was he?” “The Lion of Kentucky”, replied the boy. Later it turned out that the boy sitting next to Arno was Toots. Toots is a practical-minded prankster and an energetic doer.

One morning, Kiir found his boots missing buttons. Kiir said sadly to the teacher, “My buttons are gone.” Toots said, “Maybe rats took them. They took our cabbage-chopper too.” The teacher said firmly, “Rats can’t move big things like that.” The teacher said, “Where were your boots last night?” Kiir said, “By the bed.”

It had been Toots’s first night and he made lots of pranks for other boys. One of the boys exclaimed: “Look! A button!” A search was made under the beds. All of the buttons were found but the thief remained unknown. Toots joked, “See, I told you it was rats!”

It’s one of those days when everything seems to go wrong, and after school, something unexpected happens. Tõnisson had read only one book about the struggles of Estonians. There was another school on the church estate. One of the German students said: “So, the clodhoppers are going home.” That was too much for Tõnisson. Tõnisson threw a stone and the boy’s pipe fell on the ground. The boy tried to hit Tõnisson, but he didn’t back down. Toots ran out with a poker from the schoolhouse, shouting, “Go, Men of Kentucky! Down with the redskins!”

After school, Tõnisson had to memorise verses for punishment. Arno noticed Tõnisson was upset and asked why, but Tõnisson said nothing.

The pastor asked Tõnisson and Arno about a raft. Tõnisson did not say anything. Arno lied and said they went home together.

On the way home, Arno found out Lible was blamed for the raft. Arno asked Tõnisson if he sank it. “Do you know that Lible’s going to lose his job?” Arno asked. “Tell me, Tõnisson, did you sink the raft?” “How could I have done it?” “Then why did you ask me to tell them that we left the schoolhouse together?” He would have asked more questions, but his courage failed him. Tõnisson hesitated but finally told the truth: “That raft…. I did sink it. But don’t tell anyone. Why did they have to come and fight in our schoolyard!”

Weeks passed and Toots brought a puppy to school. Toots said Kiir wanted to buy it. The teacher said: “What do you think awaits you?” Toots gave a sad smile and looked towards the corner. “I’m not going to do that. Only, you must promise me that you will behave today.” “Yes, sir.” In the afternoon. “Take your things and leave them at home tomorrow. Never mind if you can’t do all your homework. The important thing is that you learn.” “If I can’t solve both of the arithmetic problems, I’ll do one.” “All right. It’s fine if you do even one.” Toots stuffed his property into his pockets and looked more serious than usual. After Toots left, the teacher asked Arno what was wrong. Arno confessed about the raft. The teacher found Tõnisson and he admitted it too. The teacher made sure Lible got his job back.

Toots asked Teele to dance. Toots stumbled and they bumped over the churchwarden. The churchwarden didn’t understand a thing that had happened, Toots was already gone. Kiir pointed to the door. The silence was broken by a head at the doorway. He said: “I bumped against the churchwarden! His upper lip is split like a rabbit’s. Me with a bump on my eyebrow. He thought I’d run home. I’ll be hiding here until the teacher comes.” Hardly had Toots hidden himself when the churchwarden entered.

Mr. Kiir, young Kiir’s father, wanted a name for his newborn son. Toots said he knew a name but wanted apples for it. Kiir brought them. “I’ve brought you the best I could find. We’ll also invite you to the christening.” “Tell me what kind of food you are going to have?” “Just give me the name.” “The first name is the real one. The other one is good as well.” Toots whispered: “The first is Columbus and the other is Chrisostomus.” “Chrisostomus?” Kiir was well aware who the bearer of the first name had been but the other name was a stiff one. He tried hard to remember it, repeating to himself: Chrisostomus, Chrisostomus.

As the school year ended, the teacher bid farewell to his students, reflecting on the bond he shared with them. Despite the challenges they faced, they remained dear to his heart.