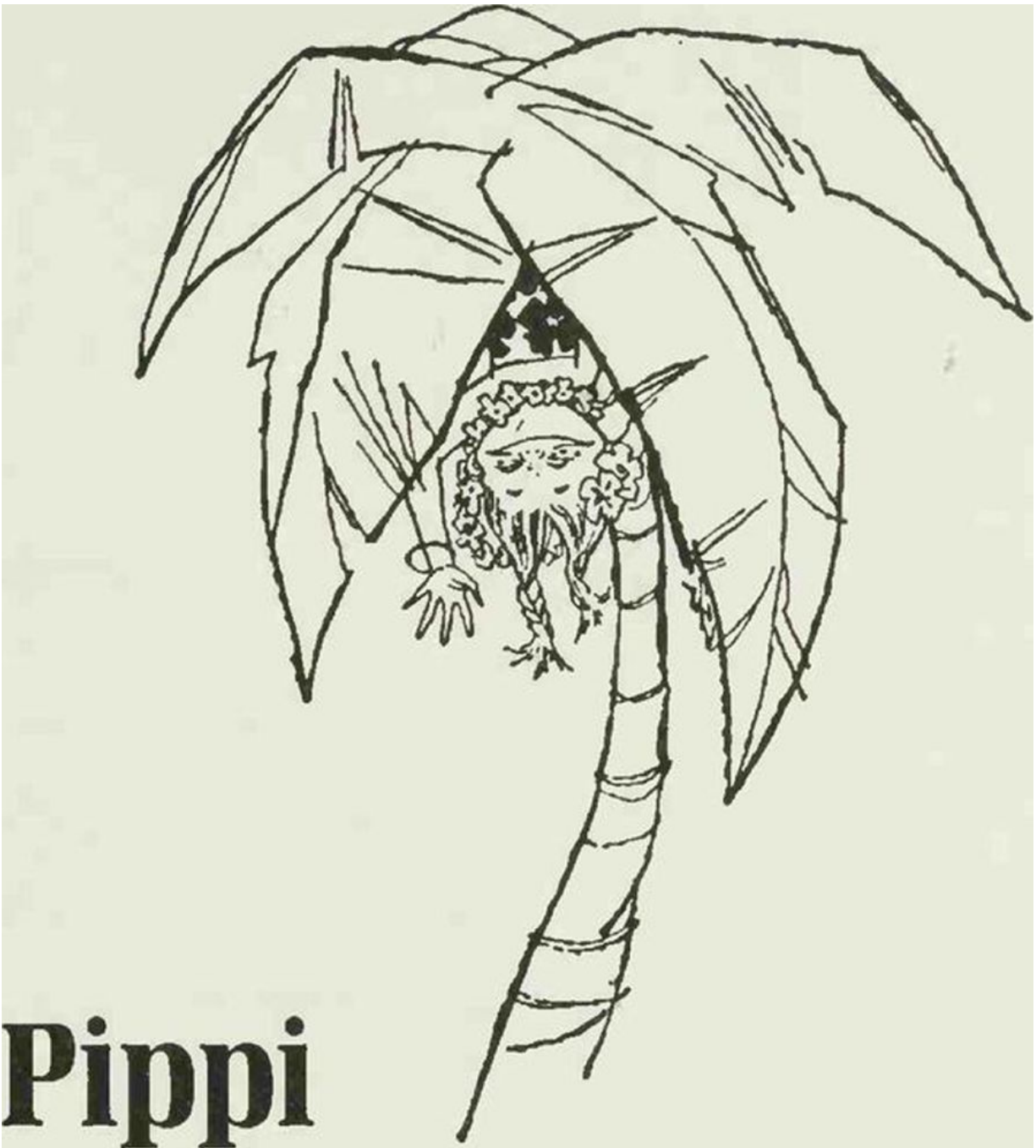


ASTRID LINDGREN

Pippi

in the South Seas





in the South Seas

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ASTRID LINDGREN

Translated by Gerry Bothmer

Illustrated by Louis S. Glanzman

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Contents



1

Villa Villekulla

The little Swedish town was very picturesque, with its cobblestone streets, its tiny houses and the gardens that surrounded them. Everyone who visited there must have felt that this would be a calm and restful place to live. But as far as tourist attractions went, there wasn't much to see—almost nothing, in fact. There was a folklore museum, and an old grave mound, and that was all. But wait, there *was* one more thing!

The people of the little town had neatly and carefully put up signs to show visitors the way to the sights. To the Folklore Museum was printed in large letters on one sign with an arrow underneath. To the Grave Mound read another sign.

There was still a third sign, saying, in rather crooked letters:

To Villa Villekulla

That sign had been put up quite recently. It had often happened lately that people would come and ask how to get to Villa Villekulla—as a matter of fact, more often than they would ask the way to the local museum or the grave mound.

One beautiful summer day a man came driving through the little town. He lived in a much bigger town and therefore he considered himself finer and more distinguished than the people who lived in smaller ones. Then, too, he had a very fine car and he was a very grand person, with shoes that were polished till they gleamed, and a thick gold ring on his finger. So it was perhaps not so strange that he thought of himself as fine and distinguished.

When he drove through the streets he honked his horn loudly so that everyone would notice him as he went by.

When the fine gentleman saw the signposts he laughed heartily.

To the Folklore Museum—how do you like that? he said to himself. I can do without that. *To the Grave Mound*, he read on the other sign. This is getting

better and better. . . . But what sort of nonsense is this? he thought when he saw the third sign. *To Villa Villekulla*—what a name!

He thought about this for a moment. A villa could hardly be a tourist attraction in the same way that a folklore museum or a grave mound was. He decided that the sign must have been put there for another reason. Finally the answer came to him. The villa was of course for sale. The sign had been put up to show the way to people who might want to buy the house. For a long time he himself had been thinking that he would buy a house in a small town, where there was not so much noise as in the big city. Naturally he would not live there all the time, but he would go there to rest now and then. In a small town people would also be much more likely to notice what an unusually fine and distin-

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guished man he really was. He decided to go and have a look at Villa Villekulla right away.

All he had to do was follow the direction of the arrow. But he had to drive to the edge of the town before he found what he was looking for. And there, printed with red crayon on a very broken-down garden gate, he read:

VILLA VILLEKULLA

Inside the gate was an overgrown garden with old trees covered with moss, and unmowed lawns, and lots of flowers which were allowed to grow exactly as they pleased. At the end of the garden was a house—and what a house! It looked as if it would fall to pieces any minute. The fine gentleman stared at it, and all of a sudden he groaned. A horse was standing on the veranda! The fine gentleman wasn't used to horses standing on verandas. That is why he groaned.

On the veranda steps three small children were sitting in the sunshine. The girl in the middle had lots of freckles on her face and two red pigtails which stuck straight out. A pretty blond curly-haired little girl in a blue checkered dress and a little boy with neatly combed hair sat one on either side of her. On the shoulder of the redheaded girl sat a monkey.

The fine gentleman was puzzled. He must have the wrong house. Surely no one would think there was a possibility of selling such a tumbledown shack?

“Listen, children,” he called out to them, “is this miserable hovel really Villa Villekulla?”

The girl in the middle, the redheaded one, got up and came to the gate. The other two trudged slowly behind.

“Lost your tongue?” said the fine gentleman before the redheaded girl had reached him. “Is this shack Villa Villekulla?”

“Let me think,” said the redheaded girl and frowned. “It isn’t the museum and it isn’t the grave

