

ELLI PEONIDOU (Cyprus)

Summary:

Ta Isia kai ta Strava
(Straight and Crooked Stories)

Elli Peonidou's "*Straight and Crooked Stories*" is a collection of short stories for Primary School children. The characters are animals from the child's immediate surroundings – puppies, kittens, birds, fish, ants, butterflies, donkeys, cows, chickens, etc.

These stories which, like Aesop's Fables, deliver a message to children, are marked by tremendous humour and imagination so as not become boring. For example, we have the Crab who doesn't know whether it is correct to walk sideways like his father, or forwards like the little lizard and all the other animals. Should he be straight or crooked? Hence the title of the book. There is the coquettish butterfly who complains because she doesn't have a new dress and is forced to wear an old one so as not to miss the party. We meet the donkey who is tired of hay and demands a tastier meal but finds himself in a fix when he is invited by the frog to eat mosquitoes. And then there is the hedgehog who hates his hard, spiky hair but is comforted when the turtle is perfectly comfortable to rest her shell on his head.

The book has a threefold aim. Firstly, it wants to show children, especially those in the towns, the invisible heroes of the animal kingdom, who live beside us and yet we fail to notice them. Secondly, to deliver in a discreet manner certain morals about love, coexistence, solidarity, courage and many other virtues of life. And thirdly and most importantly, to entertain young children in a light and proper way through a well-worked use of language.