

## Flat for Rent דירה להשכיר

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Translated by Rahel Halabe

(Note: original story rhymes)

In a beautiful valley, among vineyards and fields, there stood a tower with five floors.

Who lived in the tower?

On the first floor – lived a fat hen. All day long she is at home, lolling in her bed. She is so fat, she can hardly walk.

On the second floor – lived a cuckoo bird. All day long running around, visiting; Her children, you know, live in different homes.

On the third floor – a clean, coquettish black cat with ribbon on her neck.

On the fourth floor there lived a squirrel, happily cracking and munching on nuts.

And on the fifth floor lived Mr. Mouse. But a week ago he packed and left. No one knows why and to where.

The tenants wrote a sign, stuck a nail above the door, and hung the sign on the wall:

*“Flat for Rent”*

So, through paths, ways, and roads new tenants come to see the place.

First came an ant. She climbed to the fifth floor, read the sign, opened the door, stood inside and looked around.

All the neighbours came out from their flats, gathered round her, smiled and asked:

Do you like the rooms?

The rooms are nice.

Do you like the kitchen?

The kitchen is nice.

Do you like the hallway?

The hallway is nice.

Then dwell with us, Ant!

No, I won't!

Why?

I don't like the neighbours.

How can I, the ant, dwell in the same house with a lazy hen, lolling all day long in her bed? She is so fat, she can hardly walk.

The hen was hurt,

And the ant went on her way.



The ant went away, and the rabbit came in.  
She climbed nimbly to the fifth floor, read the sign, opened the door, stood inside and looked around.

All the neighbours came out of their flats, gathered round her, smiled and asked:

Do you like the rooms?

The rooms are nice.

Do you like the kitchen?

The kitchen is nice.

Do you like the hallway?

The hallway is nice.

Then dwell with us, Rabbit!

No, I won't!

Why?

I don't like the neighbours.

How can I, a mother of twenty bunnies, dwell together with a cuckoo, who deserts her children? Her children grow up in strange nests. All of them deserted, all of them neglected. What would my children learn from them?

The Cuckoo was hurt,

And the rabbit went on her way.

The rabbit went away and a pig came in.

He read the sign 'Flat for Rent'. After reading he rolled up, climbed the stairs and opened the door. There he stood, and with his small eyes looked on the walls, on the ceiling and on the windows.

All the neighbours came out of their flats, gathered round him, smiled and ask:

Do you like the flat?

The flat is nice.

Do you like the kitchen?

The kitchen is nice, but is not dirty enough!

Do you like the hallway?

The hallway is nice.

Then, dwell with us!

No, I won't!

Why?

I don't like the neighbours.

How can I, the pig, white, son of whites from the day of creation, dwell together with a black cat! This doesn't suit me! No, it doesn't suit me.

Go away, go away, pig! This doesn't suit us either! No, it doesn't suit us either!

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The pig went away and the nightingale came in.

The nightingale climbed singing to the last floor, read the sign, opened the door, looked at the flat, at the walls, at the ceiling...

All the neighbours came out of their flats, gathered round him, smiled and asked:

Do you like the rooms?

The rooms are nice.

Do you like the kitchen?

The kitchen is nice.

Then dwell with us!

No, I won't. I don't like the neighbours. How can I sit quietly and calmly, when a squirrel keeps cracking and munching nuts all day long. Oh, the noise is horrible, terrible, ear splitting. And my ears are accustomed to other sounds, to sounds of songs, to sounds of hymns.

The squirrel was hurt,

And the nightingale went on his way.

The nightingale went away and the dove came in.

She quickly climbed to the last floor, read the sign, opened the door, stood inside and looked around.

All the neighbours came out of their flat, gathered round her, smiled and asked:

Do you like the rooms?

The rooms are quite narrow.

Do you like the kitchen?

The kitchen is nice, but too large.

Do you like the hallway?

The hallway is full of shade. The hallway is very dark.

You won't dwell with us, then?

Of course I will, and gladly so, because what I like very much, are the neighbours:

The good red comb hen,

The beautiful cuckoo,

The impeccably clean cat,

The life-loving nut-munching squirrel,

I know that we can all live together, happily and peacefully, in such a good company.

The dove rented the flat and there sat every day, cooing in her room.

And thus, in a beautiful valley, among vineyards and fields stands a tower of five floors. And in the tower, to this day, live all the good neighbours together, happily and peacefully.

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