

PATAKIS PUBLISHERS

Loty Petrovits-Andrutsopoulou

Mischivino's mischief or Cheato's Cheating

Picture book, ages 4+, illustrated by Nicholas Andrikopoulos

*To Manos, Anastasis and Christina,
To help them keep away from the "Cheatos" In this life*

Once upon a time, all the dwarfs lived together in their own land. Each dwarf had a small house and a big orchard. In this orchard, each dwarf would grow flowers and vegetables, but also all kinds of trees.

All the dwarfs got along famously and never quarreled. However, one of them, whose name was Cheato, was always playing tricks and cheating and upsetting all the other dwarfs. But they always forgave him, because they loved him and they kept hoping that he'd eventually mend his ways.

One morning, the chief of the dwarfs, who had been on a long journey to distant lands, sent word that he would be arriving the next day because he had missed his country. He said he longed to set his eyes once again on the beautiful flowers, the tasty vegetables, the sweet fruit and the towering trees that each dwarf grew. So he planned to visit their orchards.

The dwarfs were thrilled to hear the news. Because their chief was the kindest and wisest dwarf in the world. They immediately got busy. They watered all their plants, weeded their orchards very carefully, put on their Sunday best and then they waited for him.

The chief arrived the next morning and the dwarfs, who had all gathered in the main square, welcomed him with armloads of flowers and lots of cheering.

"Thank you, my fine friends, for this wonderful welcome," said the chief happily. "But now listen to what I have to say. In all the foreign cities and lands I visited, I heard people speaking admiringly about you and your orchards. In fact, in certain countries, the rulers gave me gifts to bring to you. The only thing is, there's not enough of them to go around. So I tried and tried to think of a way to give them out. And I think that the fairest thing would be to give them to those who deserve them the most.

"That's right! That's right!" all the dwarfs shouted in agreement.

"Let us begin, then, with this first gift," continued the chief. "It is a solid gold bracelet! This bracelet will go to the one among you who has the largest rose bush with the most roses and the most sweet-smelling ones too! I will now go and rest from my journey and tomorrow I will come and see your rose bushes."

As soon as Cheato heard the chief, he ran off to all the other orchards to see whether the rose bushes of the other dwarfs were better than his.

Some were smaller. But others were bigger and had more and sweeter-smelling roses. It was then that Cheato realized that the chief wouldn't be giving him the gold bracelet.