



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



RIIHIMÄKI, an industrial town

Main story: Drop of luck

Väinö had been an apprentice at the glass factory since the time he was first allowed in the studio in the early years of the factory. He used his meagre income to help his family, his mother and three sisters. His father had died in a construction accident and the family did not have much to live on.

Even though he was still a boy, Väinö has become an assistant at the glass factory. He is interested in everything one can make from glass. Sometimes, he secretly stays behind at the factory to watch the glassblowers work, because he wants to learn, and maybe to experiment with what he himself could make and how.

One night he falls asleep and wakes up, in the middle of the night, to blow the most beautiful glass bubble, in which a fairy seems to be dancing. The treasure is made of thin glass, so it is very fragile, and no-one would believe that Väinö made it anyway.

Where should Väinö hide his treasure? Where would it remain intact and could it help Väinö to earn a fortune that would help him in his life? Life next to the railroad tracks kept clattering on, and Väinö was watching the events with his whole heart, as a part of this growing town.

City Museum: Great news!

Dear family,

When I arrived at the Railway Engineers' Building, I passed the beautiful park near the station, went up the cobblestone streets to the hill and to the right. This is an impressive, red building with a beautiful yard.

Railway engineer Nikolai Thuneberg's wife showed me to my room in the attic and to my chores. The family and guests visiting the building told me about the town. In my free time, I went to the park next to the station, and I could recognise the highly respected stationmaster, Anton Wilhelm Öller, and the restaurant and hotel owner, Olivia Axéen.

The garden of the Railway Engineers' Building is tended by a young man called Johan, who is the son of a railway worker. I often end up with chores in the laundry room and at the well. Johan has told me much about Riihimäki.

Once, Johan came to pick me up and took me to the station. We walked the cobblestone streets and went to the restaurant that is famous across the country. That evening, I decided to stay in Riihimäki. Johan and I became engaged. I feel that everything is possible here, in this young railway town! Even having a house of our own with a big enough garden for children to play at.

Children from Riihimäki.

Sincerely,



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



Anna

Riihimäki Art Museum: Farmer's girl and the hidden rings

"This is surprisingly heavy," an art conservator called Olli thought to himself when he picked up a bronze statue of a girl's head, made by Carl Wilhelms. The statue was called "Farmer's girl". Olli was examining the condition of the sculptures.

As he looked closer, he noticed something inside the hollow statue. It turned out to be a heavy bundle that was tied tightly with brittle string. Olli was excited as he unwrapped the package. What was this?

There was a bunch of gold rings inside! A total of 147 gold rings were discovered inside the sculpture, the oldest of which dated to the late 1800s. Most of them were plain engagement and wedding bands.

It is now known that these were ordinary people's rings. After the war, they were used for barter in exchange of cash or goods. The assumption is that the art dealer Pentti Wähäjärvi, who donated his collection to the Riihimäki Art Museum, had hid the rings inside the sculpture because he was scared of thieves and later forgot them.

Wähäjärvi had many other gold caches, too.

Riihimäki Art Museum: A letter on the back of a painting

The head of the Tornator bobbin factory in Lahti, G. A. Enbom is smoking a cigar and reading a letter dated 12 April 1933 in Tammissaari. Enbom had inquired about an angel painting.

The letter has been sent by the artist who painted the piece: Helene Schjerfbeck. She had made sketches for a work in which angels were positioned under the arms of Christ, with a black lake and white-crusted waves in the background.

"I did not seek a pretty style: I wanted it to be gloomy and heavy. But I was too weak to paint it." The black-haired girl from the neighbour had modelled for the pink-winged angel. "They told me that she found God after that, and I never even told her what she was modelling for!"

Helene suspects that maybe her letter was too lengthy, but that she is delighted that the painting is a source of joy for someone. The letter is concluded: "With utmost respect, Helene Schjerfbeck".

Enbom is pleased. He looks at the work with new eyes and feels it has come alive!

The letter was found on the back of the painting at the Riihimäki Art Museum. Did Enbom hide it so that the work could still come alive decades later?



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



Finnish Glass Museum: Tapio Wirkkala takes the stage

One morning, an unknown man enters the glassblowing studio. He takes off his green corduroy jacket and places it on a sooty coat hook in the studio, rolling up his sleeves.

“Come closer, to the light, and I’ll tell you what I’ve thought we’ll do first.”

The man spread sheet boards in front of the men. They featured charcoal sketches of oval plates. To the other group, he gave a sketch of a vase that looked like a large mushroom. It was called ‘Chanterelle’ as well.

"You look at that while I tell the Kivelä boys about the other one. And by the way, can we forget about the titles? My name is Tapio."

That is how the team got a new member: a designer.

Tapio became a familiar sight at the factory. He kept cool and listened to the glassblowers’ opinions. He was interested in every object and each glassblower.

Väinö had even bought some objects that Tapio had designed, for example the Tapio glasses that he had in the glass case. The bubble in the foot of the goblet catches Väinö’s eye. There it is, the bubble, the home of the fairy.

Väinö shakes his head. An old man like him, coming up with such things.

Silmäkeneva hunters

4800 BC

A thin spiral of smoke was still visible, rising from the lush hill on the island in the middle of the lake. The hearth was surrounded by stone chips from the arrowheads that had been made there. One of the clay pots had not been properly treated by firing, and it had cracked when the meat was stewing. This still bothered the man whose aspen dugout was gliding towards the mouth of the river. The beavers and elk were waiting for him upriver.

1450 AD

Cutting up the elk and carrying it from the wet bog to the patch of land had been hard work. He had to lie down on the hide while the meat was smoking. After eating the marrow of the thigh bone stewed under the ashes, he smashed the bone into small pieces following tradition. This way, villagers troubled by envy could not cast their spells.

2018 AD

Trees are growing hopelessly thick on the drained bog. Luckily, a cleared gas distribution line goes through a small hill in the middle. In the past, before the motorway fence was built, this was a great watching spot. You can still see animal traces: a small pine tree without bark and snapped after an elk rubbed off its antler velvet against it. There is a crackle on the VHS earbud: the dog has been set free.



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



The main story continues...

"It was a beautiful morning in June", Väinö, now already an old man, tells his grandchildren.

"I am not sure if it was dream or true, but there was a dewdrop, and a ray of sun made it glow and dance in the rising sun. You can find beauty like that everywhere, if you just take your time and look around carefully."

The children were quiet, carefully listening to Grandpa Väinö. They knew that Grandpa had the best stories.

"Many beautiful artefacts were made at the glass factory. Only some people have the ability to create beauty, but anyone can see

it, if you just practice and let go of all the distractions. The beauty archives are located in your heart and stay there throughout your life."

Väinö worked at the glass factory until his retirement. He was a respected worker, and careful with his money, so he could buy a house and start a family. He was engaged in the life of the growing city in many ways: he held positions of trust, for example. Everyone who knew him respected him. He was a hard-working Finnish man, maybe a bit rough on the outside, toughened up by life. He did not have much schooling, but his heart was full of wisdom.