

# Children's Books from

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**CENTRE FOR  
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ON LITERATURE**

**BLAŽKOVÁ**  
Matlovičová

**2021**

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**SALMELA**  
Matlovičová

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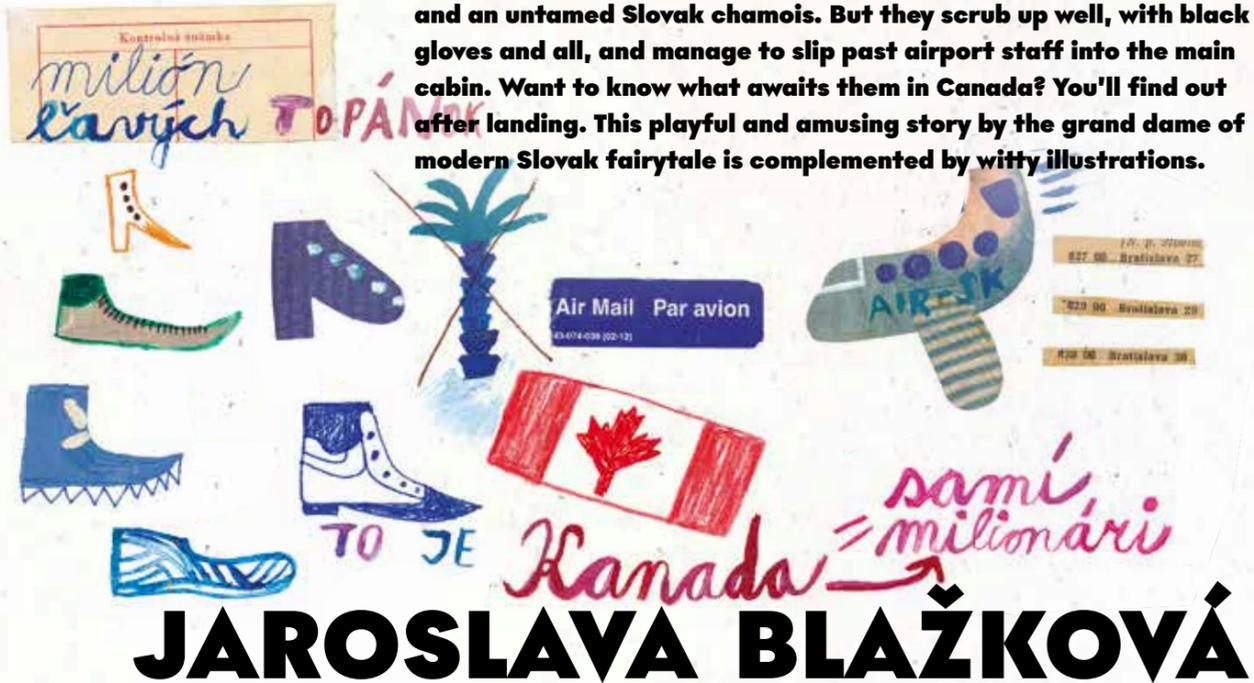
**GÄRTNER**  
Matus

**SLOVAKIA**

# Pussycats Fly to Canada

AN ENTERTAINING STORY FEATURING TWO PUSSYCATS, MISSIE AND LIZZIE, WHO SET OUT TO VISIT THEIR AUNT JOSEPHINE IN CANADA.

One day two pussycats, Missie and Lizzie, receive a letter from Aunt Josephine inviting them for a visit in Canada. Not any old visit, but a visit by air! They will be famous globe-trotting pussycats! Packing for the big journey, they cram everything they can find into their suitcase. The pussycats are worried of having to travel in cargo, in a cage with a big and a small dog, a green owl and an untamed Slovak chamois. But they scrub up well, with black gloves and all, and manage to slip past airport staff into the main cabin. Want to know what awaits them in Canada? You'll find out after landing. This playful and amusing story by the grand dame of modern Slovak fairytale is complemented by witty illustrations.



**JAROSLAVA BLAŽKOVÁ**  
**Martina Matlovičová**

'Hurrah, we're going on an expedition!' Missie exclaimed happily.  
'Yay, we'll be famous explo... explo... explosions – I mean, explorers,' said Lizzie, jumping for joy.

'We'll see all the wonders of the world'

'We'll meet all the wonderful tomcats!'

'We'll be millionaires!'

'Yes, indeed!'

'Canada is chock-full of millionaires.'

Everyone knows that.

'What kind of millionaires?' asked Lizzie.

'The kind that has a million shoes for their right foot. Millionaires who have a million shoes for their left foot. And millionaires who have a million bowls of whipped cream.'

A million cream rolls.

A million golden cuckoo clocks.

That's what it's like in Canada, everyone knows that.

'Is that really true? Goodness, we'll be world-famous globetrotting pussycats. Yippee!'

And they started packing straight away.

They took out their little suitcases. Missie, the one with pink eyes, took out a pink-and-blue suitcase. And Lizzie, the one with blue eyes, took out a blue-and-pink suitcase, to make sure they didn't mix them up. Here's what went into each suitcase:

A bar of soap.

A single sock.

A length of rope

And an alarm clock.

'Have we got everything?' Missie asked.

'Have we got all we need?' Lizzie asked.

'I know what we'll do! I have an idea,' said Missie, jumping up.

'Let's go around the room and have a good look. Anything important that we see, we'll pack.'

And off they went:

The pussycats jumped around the room skippety-hop.

The pussycats hopped around the room skippety-bop.

'I've got it!' shouted Lizzie. 'The sofa! Our sofa! It's really important. What if we suddenly... got tired while travelling and needed a nap and... and... we had no sofa?'

'Oh, come on, Lizzie, we can't put the sofa into our suitcase!'

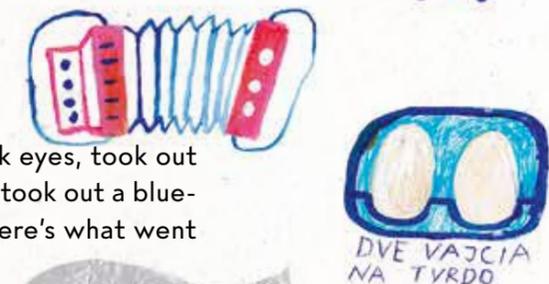
'Why not?'

'Because it's screwed to the floor.'

'Oh dear, too bad!'

'Let's keep on looking.'

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Selected Awards – Jaroslava Blažková

• 1964 H. Ch. Awards – IBBY Honour List

• 2006 Anasoft Litera Prize – Readers' Award

Selected Awards – Martina Matlovičová

• 2009 Bratislava Biennial of Illustration – The Golden Apple

• White Raven 2014

Selected Translations:

Ako si mačky kúpili televízor

(*Pussycats Buy a TV Set*)

Môj skvelý brat Robinzon

(*My Brilliant Brother Robinson*)

CZECH

Jahniatko a grandí (*A Lambkin*

*and the Grandees*)

BULGARIAN, CZECH



**Pussycats Fly to Canada**

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2020, 48 p.

ISBN: 978-80-8124-113-0

Translation Rights:

booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk

**JAROSLAVA BLAŽKOVÁ**  
1933 – 2017



Despite living most of her life in exile in Canada, Blažková continues to be regarded as one Slovakia's most important 20th century writers. In 1956 she was dismissed from the editorial staff of *Smena* newspaper for political reasons and banned from publishing her work. The ban was lifted with the arrival of a political thaw in 1958 and she was one of the most distinctive contributors to *Mladá Tvorba* (Young Writing), a magazine which from the late 1950s provided a platform for a young generation of writers. In 1968, following the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia, she emigrated to Canada, settling in Toronto with her family. Her works were blacklisted again and were not published in Slovakia until after 1989. Her books for children, full of humour and imagination and written in a lively children's language, have remained popular with new generations of readers. Her storytelling skilfully combines the poetic with the educational, while making use of a wide range of literary devices known from detective or adventure fiction.



**MARTINA MATLOVIČOVÁ**  
1975

She studied animation but concentrates mostly on book illustration. The colours in her work are always bright, deep and dominant and reflect the artist's humour, emotion, intelligence and creative inventiveness as well as her courage to break certain strict conventions. In 2009 she won the Golden Apple award at the Bratislava Biennial of Illustration for her illustrations of the Slovak translation of Tracy's *Tiger* (published in 2009) and *Drevený tato* (*Wooden Daddy*) (2007).

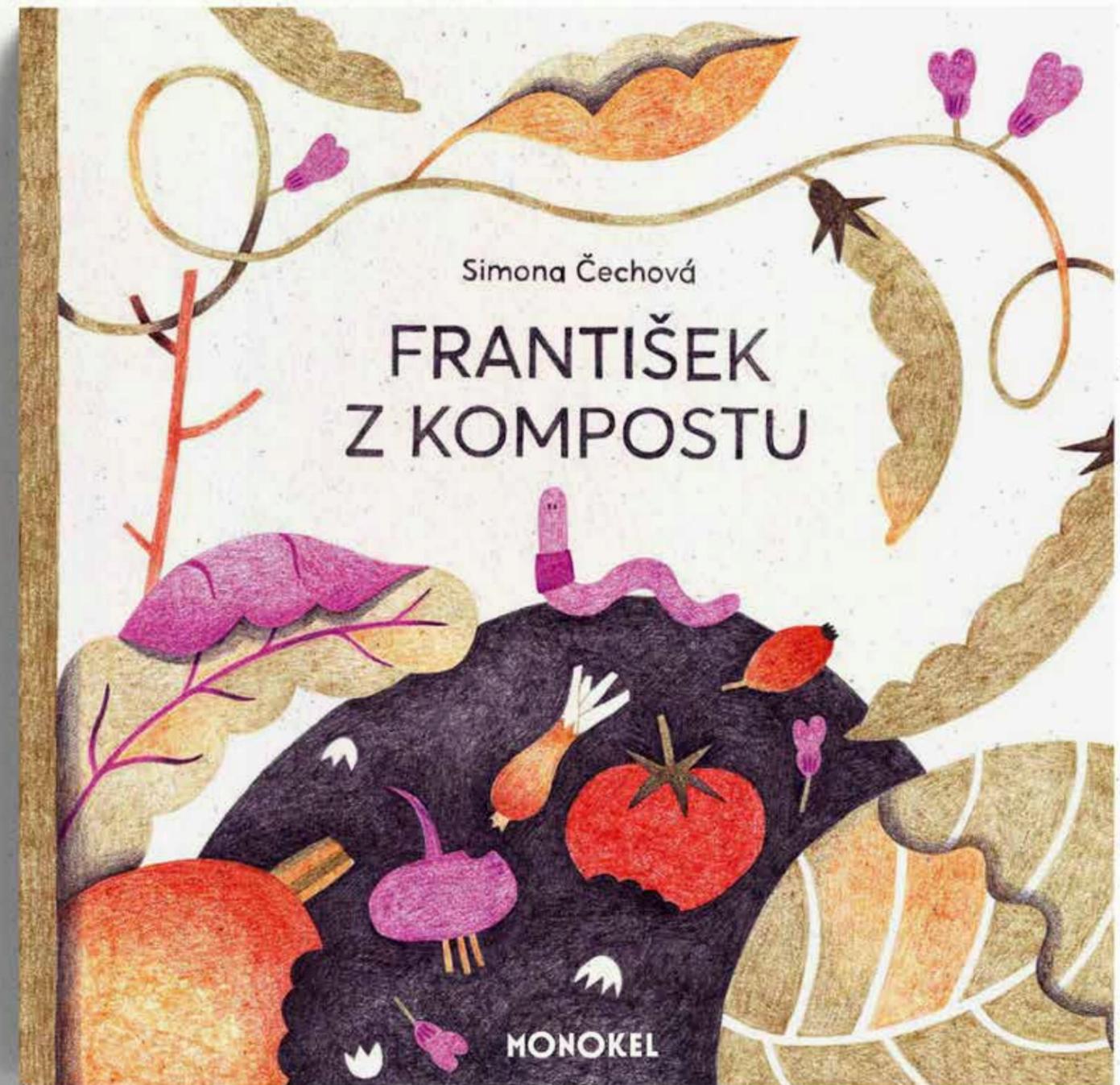


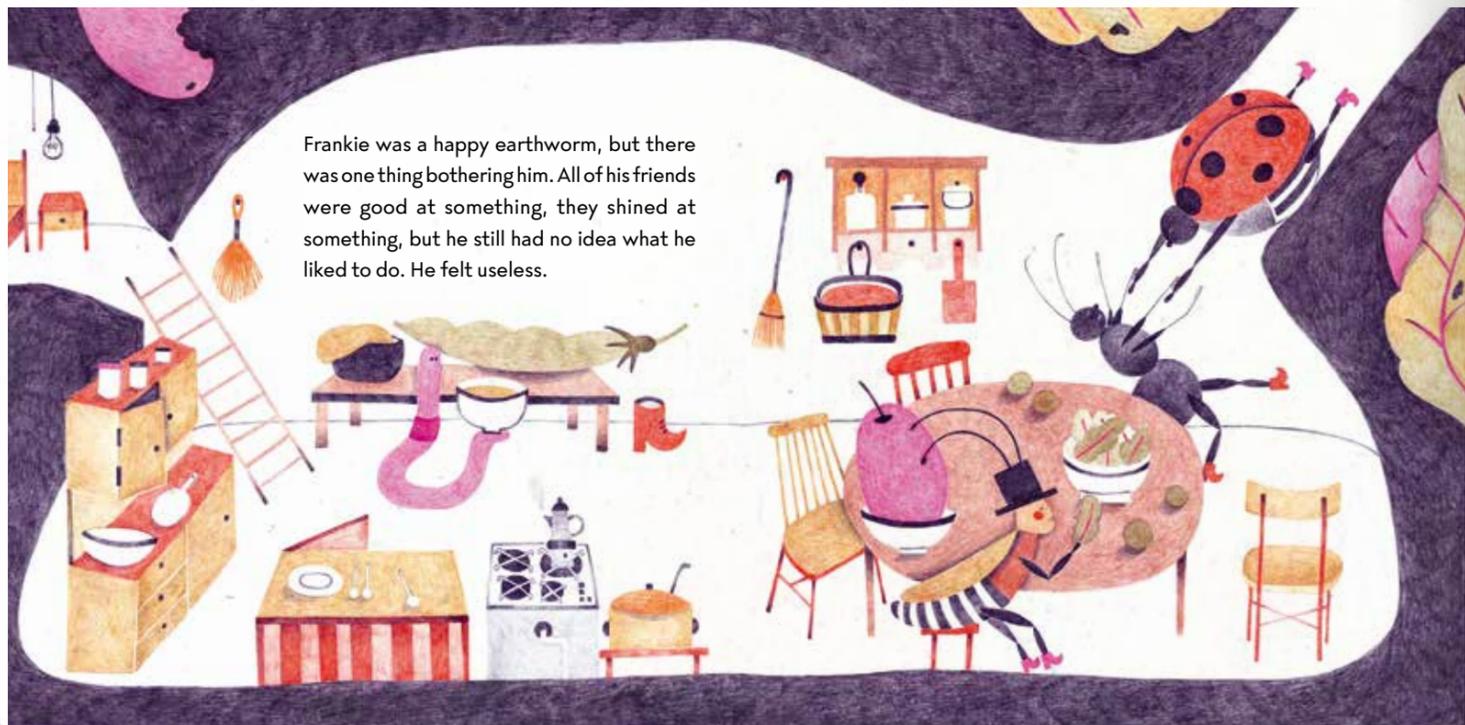
# Frankie from the Compost Pile

**WE ALL HAVE OUR PLACE ON THIS EARTH, EVEN THOUGH WE MAY SOMETIMES FEEL AS INSIGNIFICANT AS A SMALL AND SEEMINGLY USELESS EARTHWORM.**

In a compost pile at the end of a garden, under the eggshells and apple peel, lives a small creature – Frankie the earthworm. And although he is by nature a cheerful fellow, it bothers him that unlike his friends from the garden, he cannot do anything useful – the ant builds houses, the spider makes webs, and the bee pollinates flowers. But František, who only digs small tunnels in the ground all day long, feels useless. Is he really, though? In addition to a story that carries a strong ecological message, Simona Čechová's new illustrated book also provides instructions for making your own compost pile.

**SIMONA ČECHOVÁ**





Frankie was a happy earthworm, but there was one thing bothering him. All of his friends were good at something, they shined at something, but he still had no idea what he liked to do. He felt useless.



Steve played the penny whistle, and all of the inhabitants of nearby gardens came to listen to his music. He was going to be a musician one day.

What does and doesn't belong in the composter?

Earthworms and their friends don't eat everything. In order to end up with good, fragrant compost, you have to know what you can put into the composter. Things you can put into the composter:



Toilet paper rolls



Coffee grounds



Leaves, twigs



Fruit and vegetable scraps



Eggshells, paper containers

Selected Awards – Simona Čechová:

- 2020 Slovak Design Award: Honorable Mention for Exquisite Illustrations in Communication Design
- 2020 Best Children's Book of the Year (The Library for Children and Young Adults Košice)
- 2020 Books of the Year (Martinus)

Selected Translations:

Včelár Jožko (*Joey the Beekeeper*)  
 František z kompostu (*Frankie from the Compost Pile*)  
 CZECH, HUNGARIAN,  
 KOREAN, ITALIAN, FRENCH,  
 SIMPLIFIED CHINESE



**Frankie from the Compost Pile**

Published by: Monokel, Bratislava  
 2020, 40 p.  
 ISBN: 978-80-973386-6-4

Translation Rights:  
[booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk](mailto:booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk)



**SIMONA ČECHOVÁ**  
**1988**

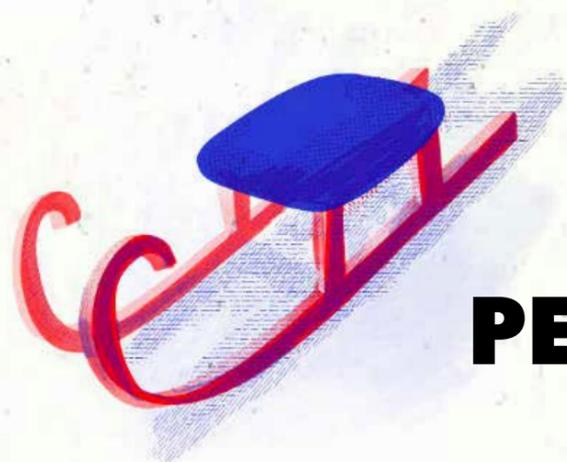
Simona Čechová is a freelance illustrator based in Trnava, Slovakia. She studied advertising design at the University of Bedfordshire in England (2010) and international marketing at Edinburgh Napier University in Scotland (2011). She's a member of ASIL – the Slovak Illustrators Association. When she is not drawing, you can find her beekeeping, hiking, exploring cities, or finding beauty in ordinary things.



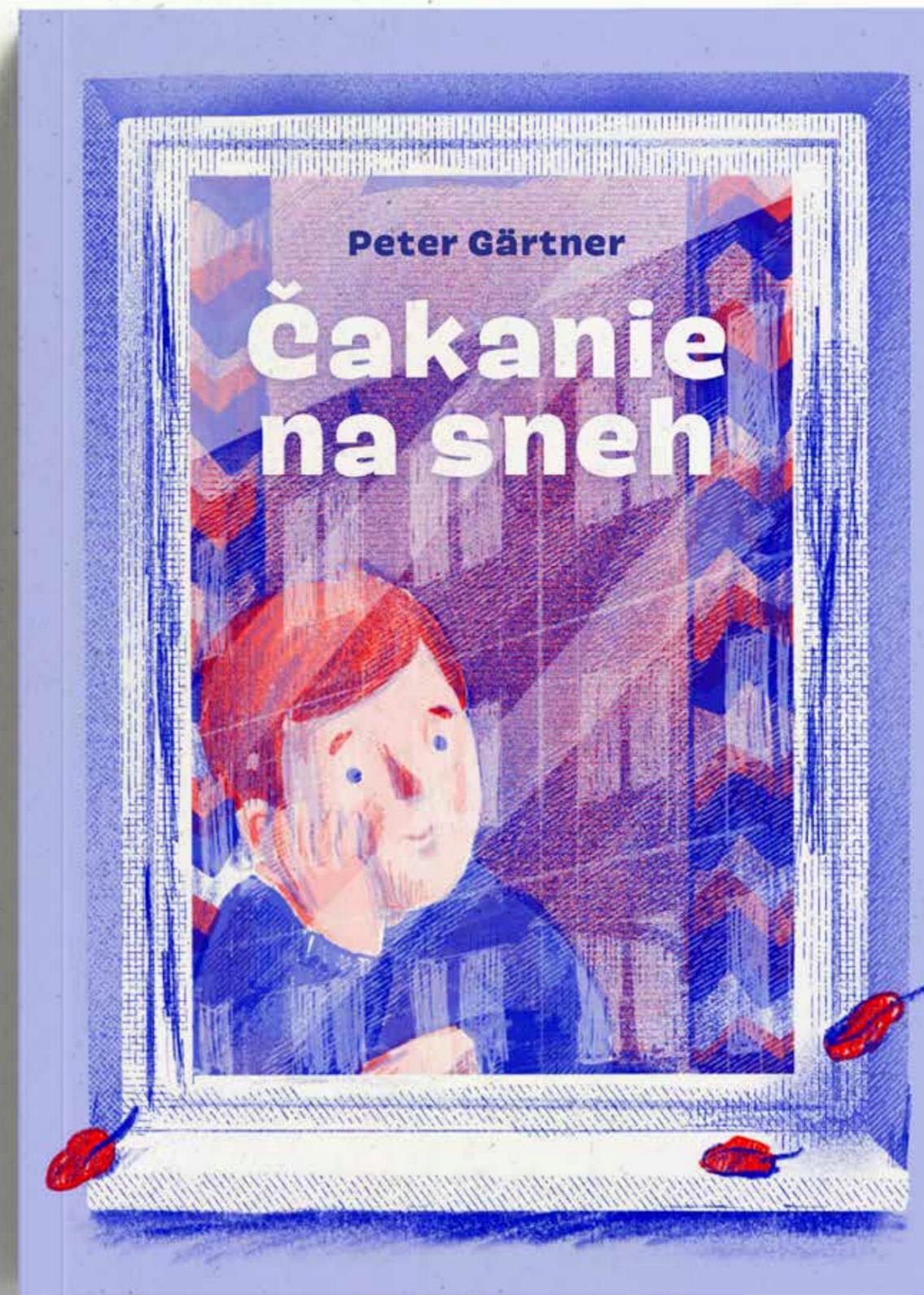
# Waiting for Snow

**A STORY ABOUT A BOY AND HIS FRIENDS WAITING FOR THE FIRST SNOW OF THE YEAR. A STORY WITH THE POWERFUL POETIC ATMOSPHERE OF A CHILD'S AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE.**

The protagonist of the story is a boy who shares everyday adventures during the autumn and pre-Christmas period with his friends. With the first cold, there comes a tingling in the belly in anticipation of the smell of the first snow. The stories depict those childlike rituals and customs which create the magical and authentic atmosphere of a child's world. The verbal and non-verbal exchanges between the children and their parents show a love which is caring but also gives the children the freedom to experience life on their own. Although the story takes place in an unspecified time, much of its setting evokes the eternal essence of childhood.



**PETER GÄRTNER**  
**Marta Matus**  
**Mészárosová**



For several days now, there's been a hint of snow in the air. When mums pick up their children from school, they all look up at the sky wondering when it will start snowing. Even when I'm at school, I stare out of the window and think about my sledge waiting for me. I go to the pram storage room to check on it when I come home in the afternoon. There's a lot of old stuff in that room: bicycles, flowerpots, a playpen, buckets and spades for the sandpit – and my sledge hiding in the back. Just as I manage to pull it out, Stano enters and unlocks his mountain bike. I quickly put the sledge back pretending I'm looking for something else. Stano smiles and reveals a small gap between his teeth – I'm sure he knows why I'm there.

In the morning I don't feel like getting out of my warm bed. I'm glad though that my stockings have dried on the radiator since last night and are warm now. My mum pulls them up my legs, then grabs them by their elastic waistband and lifts me up so high that the stockings cut into my bottom. We laugh together. The weather forecast on the radio says: "We expect the arrival of a cold front in the next few days."

"Hurray! We'll have a snowball fight!" I shout excitedly.

"And what do you want to make snowballs from – mud?" Mum replies.

In front of the school gate, Mum gives me a kiss then swiftly walks off to catch the bus. I'm among the first ones in the school yard. Only Matúš is there. He has a fur hat on his head from under which his blond fringe sticks out. He is sitting on his shoe bag.

"Is it already snowing in Svrčinovec?" I ask without saying hello.

"Yeah, Grandma called yesterday and said they've had some."

There's a sound of jingling keys coming from the door – the school caretaker in a purple apron opens it.

During the lesson, the maintenance man in blue overalls enters the classroom and bleeds the radiators. The teacher is very happy about it.

"Finally! If you hadn't come, we would all freeze in here."

The maintenance man gives a smile so broad that his moustache appears thinner. It's cold outside and a layer of ice is forming on the puddles. The school bell rings, and we all run outside. We meet by a single puddle in the school yard. Someone steps on it, but the ice cracks beneath their feet and they end up standing ankle-deep in water. We burst out laughing.

After a few days it has got really cold, but there is still no trace of snow. I come home feeling disheartened. Suddenly, the doorbell rings.

"Hey, come down here!" Matúš calls from under the window. "The river's frozen already!"

"By the weir or under the bridges?" I ask.

"I've only been by the bridges, but I'm sure the water by the weir's frozen, too," Matúš replies.

It's only a ten-minute walk to the bridges. If we hurry up, I'll be back home by five and my mum won't find out. But I haven't finished my homework yet and Mum told me to wait for her at home.

"I'll get dressed and be right there."



## PETER GÄRTNER 1986

The author is a writer and playwright, who graduated from the Department of Screenwriting and Dramaturgy at the Academy of Performing Arts (VŠMU) in Bratislava in 2011. His literary debut was the children's book *O čertovi Kolofóni* (*About the Devil Kolophon*) based on a puppet play of the same name. Before becoming a novelist, he devoted his time to puppet theatre, and in addition to writing plays for his own theatre, he also wrote the screenplay for a production of *Lovci Duchov* (*The Ghostbusters*) at the Žilina Puppet Theatre (2019). His debut novel was *Veľký román* (*The Great Novel*), published by Zum Zum production, 2019. Among other things, he also writes screenplays for television, reviews and blogs, and organizes various cultural events.



## MARTA MATUS MÉSZÁROSOVÁ 1995

The author is a graduate of the Studio of Illustration at the Academy of Performing Arts (VŠVU) in Bratislava. During her studies she completed an exchange semester at Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule in Halle, Germany. She devotes her time to children's illustration, collage, painting, digital illustration, and comics. She has illustrated the books *Grip. Had, ktorý chcel mať nohy.* (*Grip. The Snake Who Wanted to Have Legs*, E.J. Publishing, 2019), *Marcipán má veľký plan* (*Marzipan has a Big Plan*) (Albatros, 2019), *Etiketa. Pravidlá slušného správania* (*Etiquette. The Rules of Polite Behaviour*) (Slovart, 2020), *TO SME MY* (*This is Us*, E.J. Publishing, 2020) a *Hurá, ide sa na výlet!* (*Hooray – we are going on a trip!*) (Albatros, 2020). She illustrates the children's magazines *Sniečko* and *Bublina* and teaches subjects in the fields of Graphic Design and Graphic and Space Design at the School of Design in Bratislava.



### Waiting for Snow

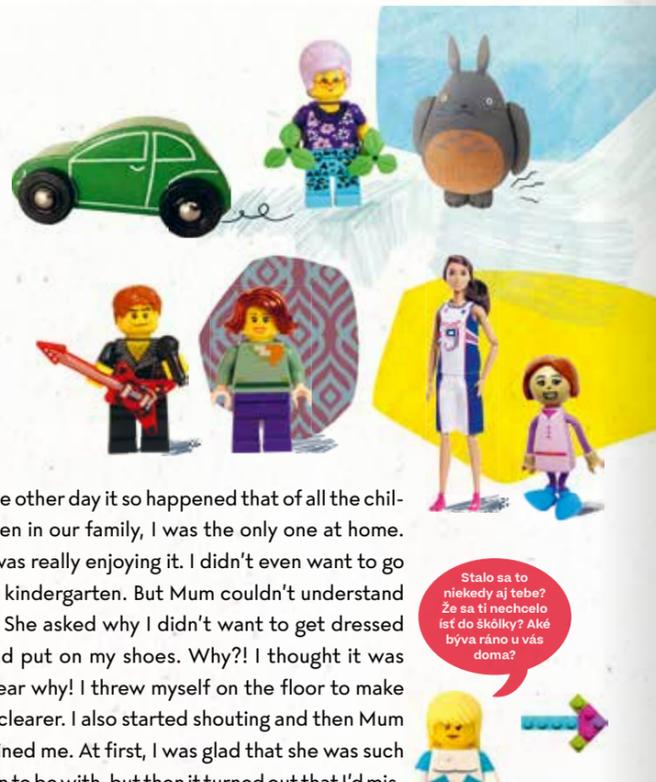
Self-published by the author,  
Bratislava 2020, 64 p.  
ISBN: 978-80-570-2306-7

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booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk





A patchwork family – that's us. I am its fixed point. Well, me and my mum... and my dad, too. My brother and my sisters sometimes leave and then come back. It took me a while to understand what was going on. My sister Ester and my brother Maťo visit their dad regularly – we share the same mum. My eldest sister Tereza switches between living with us and with her mum – we share the same dad. But now she's spending a year with a completely different family (just in case you're not confused enough already).



The other day it so happened that of all the children in our family, I was the only one at home. I was really enjoying it. I didn't even want to go to kindergarten. But Mum couldn't understand it. She asked why I didn't want to get dressed and put on my shoes. Why?! I thought it was clear why! I threw myself on the floor to make it clearer. I also started shouting and then Mum joined me. At first, I was glad that she was such fun to be with, but then it turned out that I'd misunderstood why she was shouting.

Stalo sa to niekedy aj tebe? Ze sa ti nechcelo ist do škôlky? Aké byva ráno u vás doma?



As I've said before, today is the day when we're meant to pick up Ester. We've been waiting for ten minutes outside her art classroom, but she hasn't come out yet. I'm bored, so I'm pulling the threads out of the seat. Suddenly, Mum jumps up in her seat and shouts – Is it really that late, where is she?! – and bangs her head on the roof of the car. I thought that was really funny, I'm sure you would too.



She gets out of the car and goes to look for my sister. Of course, nobody cares that I've been strapped into my seat for twenty minutes now. I can see Mum looking for her phone in her bag. She doesn't even notice that my toy car and a used handkerchief have fallen out of her bag. When she finally finds her phone, she puts it to her ear but then looks at it and frowns. She probably says a bad word, too. But then she gets into the car playing it cool, starts the engine and plugs her phone into the charger. Just then, the phone beeps with a message.



Selected Translations:

Cesta na svet (*Travelling into the World*)

CZECH

## JANA HOSCHEK HOFFSTÄDTER 1980

She has founded and runs the small publishing house, E. J. Publishing, and also translates from German, edits books, and occasionally writes. She is the author of the unique children's book *Cesta na svet (Travelling into the World, 2016)*, which sensitively but truthfully solves the mysteries surrounding a baby in its mummy's belly: how did the baby get there and why is it there of all places? The author also contributes to the online feminist magazine *Kurník*. In 2020 she published her second children's book *To sme my (This is Us, 2020)*. She plans to publish another book for children titled *Teporingo* in 2021. In the past she worked for the SME daily newspaper as an editor of foreign news and for years she worked as a lecturer of the German language. For almost a decade she lived in Vienna where she finished her studies. She has also lived in Belgium and USA and spent a year in Mexico with her family. Currently, she lives in Bratislava, is married and has a twelve-year-old son.



↑ Where are you? We're at home and starving! Ester's not even had a snack today. She's just drawn a muffin.

Super! We are waiting for Ester to finish her art class.

Tereza is phoning from America. Sorry – hang on a mo.



### THIS IS US

Published by: E.J. Publishing, Bratislava 2020, 28 p. + poster  
ISBN: 978-80-99954-01-5

Translation Rights:  
booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk

## MARTA MATUS MÉSZÁROSOVÁ 1995

The author is a graduate of the Studio of Illustration at the Academy of Performing Arts (VŠVU) in Bratislava. During her studies she completed an exchange semester at Burg Giebichenstein Kunsthochschule in Halle, Germany. She devotes her time to children's illustration, collage, painting, digital illustration, and comics. She has illustrated the books *Grip. Had, ktorý chcel mať nohy. (Grip. The Snake Who Wanted to Have Legs, E.J. Publishing, 2019)*, *Marzipán má veľký plan (Marzipan has a Big Plan) (Albatros, 2019)*, *Etiketa. Pravidlá slušného správania (Etiquette. The Rules of Polite Behaviour) (Slovart, 2020)*, *TO SME MY (This is Us, E.J. Publishing, 2020)* a *Hurá, ide sa na výlet! (Hooray – we are going on a trip!) (Albatros, 2020)*. She illustrates the children's magazines *Slniečko* and *Bublina* and teaches subjects in the fields of Graphic Design and Graphic and Space Design at the School of Design in Bratislava.

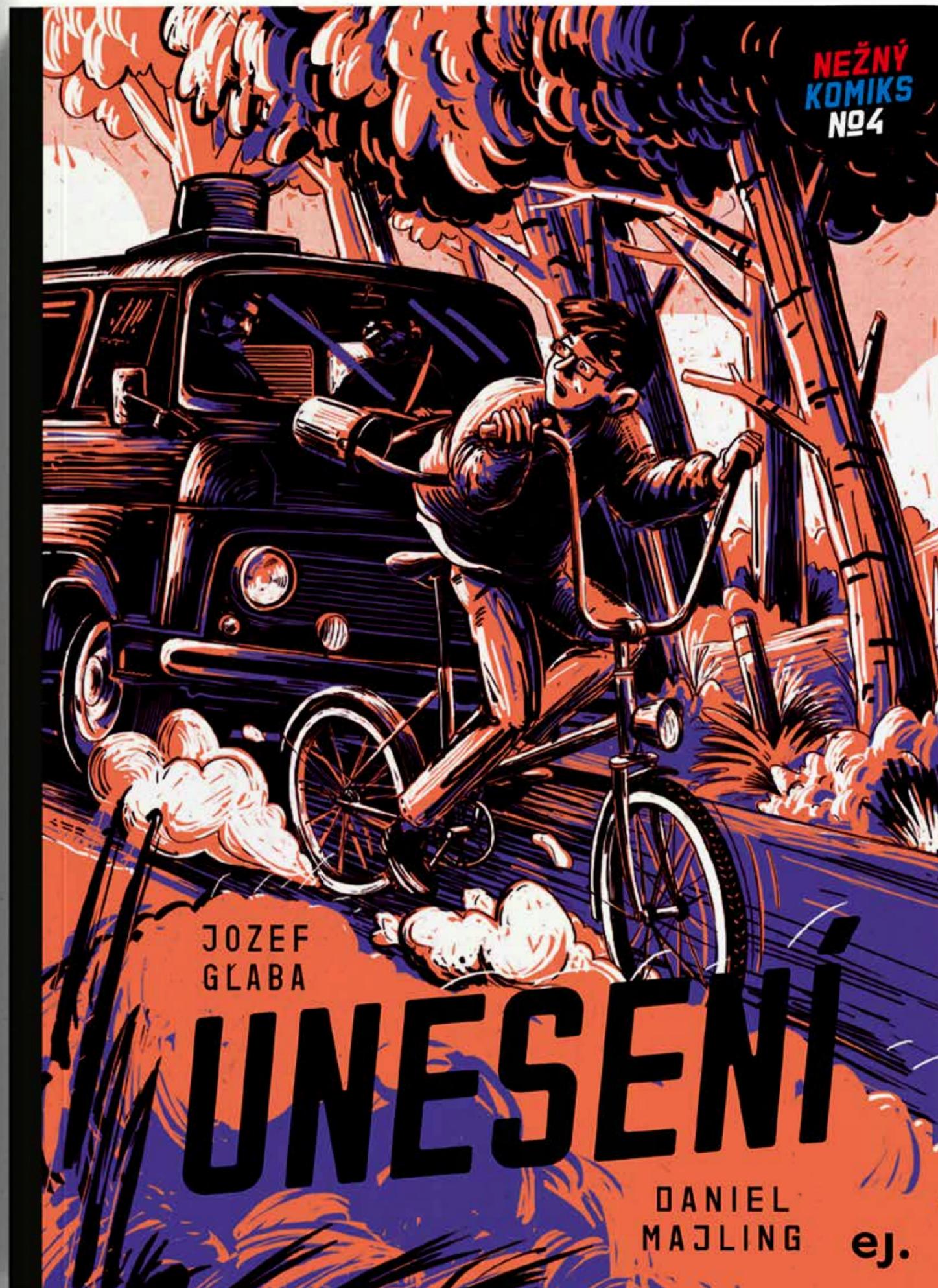


# Abducted

A COMIC BOOK ABOUT LIFE IN SLOVAKIA BEFORE THE VELVET REVOLUTION WHEN INTERROGATION AND IMPRISONMENT WERE EVERYDAY INSTRUMENTS OF POWER AND PEOPLE COULDN'T FREELY WRITE, SPEAK OR PERHAPS EVEN THINK WHAT THEY WANTED TO.

After many years, Boris bumps into his childhood friends, Ondro, Marcel and Julka in the cemetery of the village where he used to spend summers at his grandmother's. Together they recall the fateful summer of 1989. They would spend whole days outside but then children in the village started to vanish; a mysterious black ambulance similar to a police car would regularly appear to take someone away who never came back. One day their friend Julka also disappeared and their terror grew. How could they save the missing children – assuming they were still alive? Like a horror film, it all ended with a big fire and Boris never went back to his grandma's for summer. Only now, as an adult, does he find out what really happened, who had power and was controlling everything and who was too afraid to even speak out.

**DANIEL MAJLING**  
**Jozef Gl'aba**





Selected Awards – Daniel Majling

- 2018 Anasoft Litera Prize – Readers' Award
- 2018 René Prize Anasoft Litera
- 2015 Czech Republic Muriel prize in the best translated comic book category

Selected Translations:

Rudo (*Rudo*)  
 Ruzká klazika (*Russian classics*)  
 Zóna (*The Zone*)  
 CZECH

## DANIEL MAJLING 1980

A graduate of Dramaturgy at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, he works as a dramaturge in the Slovak National Theatre and has won several awards for his work. His first comic book, featuring a cynical anti-social character called *Rudo* (2015) enjoyed great success online even before publication and in 2017 he wrote a collection of "fake" short stories taken from the world of classical Russian literature and titled *Ruzká klazika* (*Russian Classics*), which won the title of Book of the Year and was shortlisted for the Anasoft Litera award. In his work, Majling likes to play tricks on his readers and makes numerous references to famous works of world literature and philosophy, often showing an ironic, even cynical view of the world. He lives in Bratislava but writes in the depths of the Slovak countryside.



## JOZEF GLÁBA 1995



### Abducted

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 Bratislava 2019, 44 p.  
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[booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk](mailto:booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk)

He studied Graphics at the Academy of Fine Arts and Designs and has also attended many art workshops as well as an internship at the Laboratory of Illustration. At present he specializes in digital illustration and so-called 'free graphics', producing work for both children and adults as well as product illustration. We can find his work in the *Kraj* grocery chain as well as the *Slniečko* children's magazine. His work is characterized by a sense of humour, clever wordplay and a careful attention to detail.

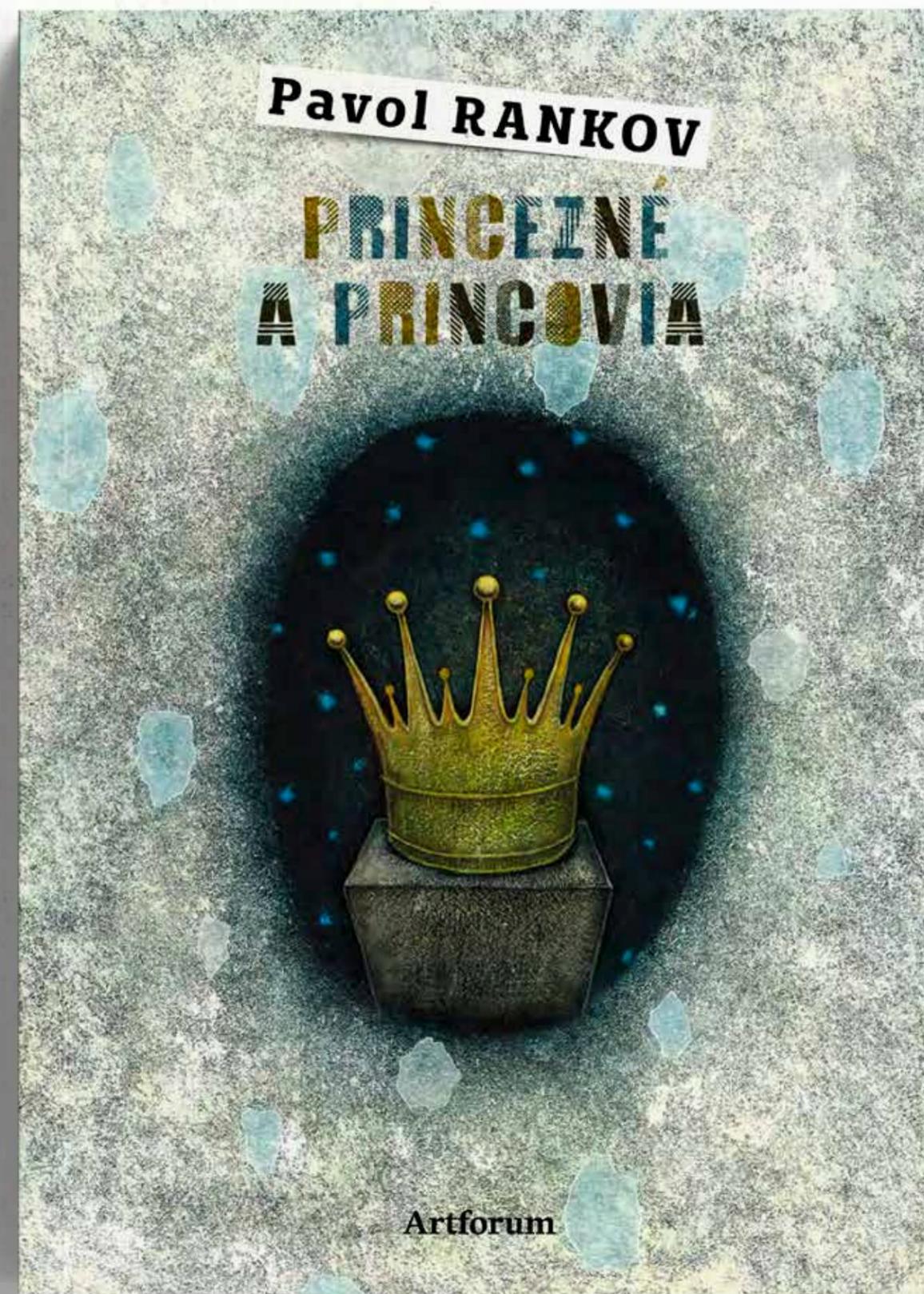


# Princesses and Princes

**DO YOU KNOW WHERE STUPIDITY AND ARGUMENTS CAN GET YOU? DO YOU HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO FORGIVE SOMETIMES OR THAT CLEVER PEOPLE CAN ALSO MAKE MISTAKES? AND DO YOU KNOW HOW THINGS CAN END UP WHEN A SUCCESSFUL NOVELIST STARTS WRITING FAIRYTALES?**

**There are traditional fairytales with witches and kingdoms and there are modern ones with robots and telephones. Rankov's fairytales, though, are neither one nor the other but combine fascinating elements of both. Their main characters are from the world of classical tales but they are portrayed in quite untraditional and humorous ways. In Rankov's book, princes and princesses are not ephemeral fairytale figures but people of flesh and blood like those all around us.**

**PAVOL RANKOV**  
**Shino Dono**



Perhaps you have noticed that princesses and princes that appear in fairytales have very special qualities. Often, for example, they are very beautiful or handsome, incredibly brave or extraordinarily clever. Princess Veroniana, the subject of the following tale, was very clever. In other fairytales, certain things may be exaggerated as the story gets repeated down the years. A father tells the tale to his son. The son grows up a few years later and tells the tale to his daughter. She grows up, remembers the tale from her childhood and repeats it first to her son and daughter and many years later to her granddaughter and great-grandson. And with each generation, something gets added in the telling. A prince, who at first was merely no fool, grows into a genius; a princess, at first pretty but nothing earth-shattering, becomes a woman of unparalleled beauty. But when we talk about the wisdom and prudence of Princess Veroniana, let no-one suspect for a moment any hint of exaggeration.

Nothing better illustrates the princess's intelligence and enlightened thinking, as well as her sense of responsibility and fair play, than the fact that after being crowned queen of the kingdom of Nížina following her father's death, she did not immediately dismiss her teachers and advisors but instead recruited new ones, both from her own country and from distant lands. Almost every young sovereign would assume that together with the crown, sceptre and royal ring, they were also gaining divine wisdom. But young Queen Veroniana went on spending long hours in discussions with her instructors in order to acquire as much knowledge as she could. In so doing, she kept in mind the advice given to her by one of her teachers when she was still a little girl: Remember that wisdom is the one thing you can share and yet still have all of. Veroniana thus wanted her teachers to share all their wisdom with her so that she could then share it with Nížina, the country she would rule.



Selected Awards – Pavol Rankov

- 2009 European Union Prize for Literature
- 2014 Angelus Central European Literature Award
- 2020 European Book Prize

Selected Translations:

Stalo sa 1. septembra (alebo inokedy) (*It Happened on the First of September (or Some Other Time)*)

ARABIC, BULGARIAN, CROATIAN, CZECH, ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, HUNGARIAN, ITALIAN, MACEDONIAN, POLISH, SLOVENIAN

Matky (*Mothers*)

BULGARIAN, CZECH, GERMAN, SLOVENIAN



**Princesses and Princes**

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Bratislava, 2020, 232 p.  
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**PAVOL RANKOV**  
**1964**

Author of four novels and five collections of short stories, is one of the most translated contemporary Slovak authors. In 2014 he won the prestigious Angelus Central European Literature award for his novel *Stalo sa prvého septembra (alebo inokedy)*. He has also been awarded the European Union Prize for Literature and more recently the European Book Prize (2020) for the same novel. *Princesses and Princes* is his first book for children.



**SHINO DONO**  
**1977**

She studied at the School of Graphics in Otaru, the Joshibi University of Fine Arts in Tokyo and the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. She lives and works in Slovakia and specializes in book illustrations and free graphics.

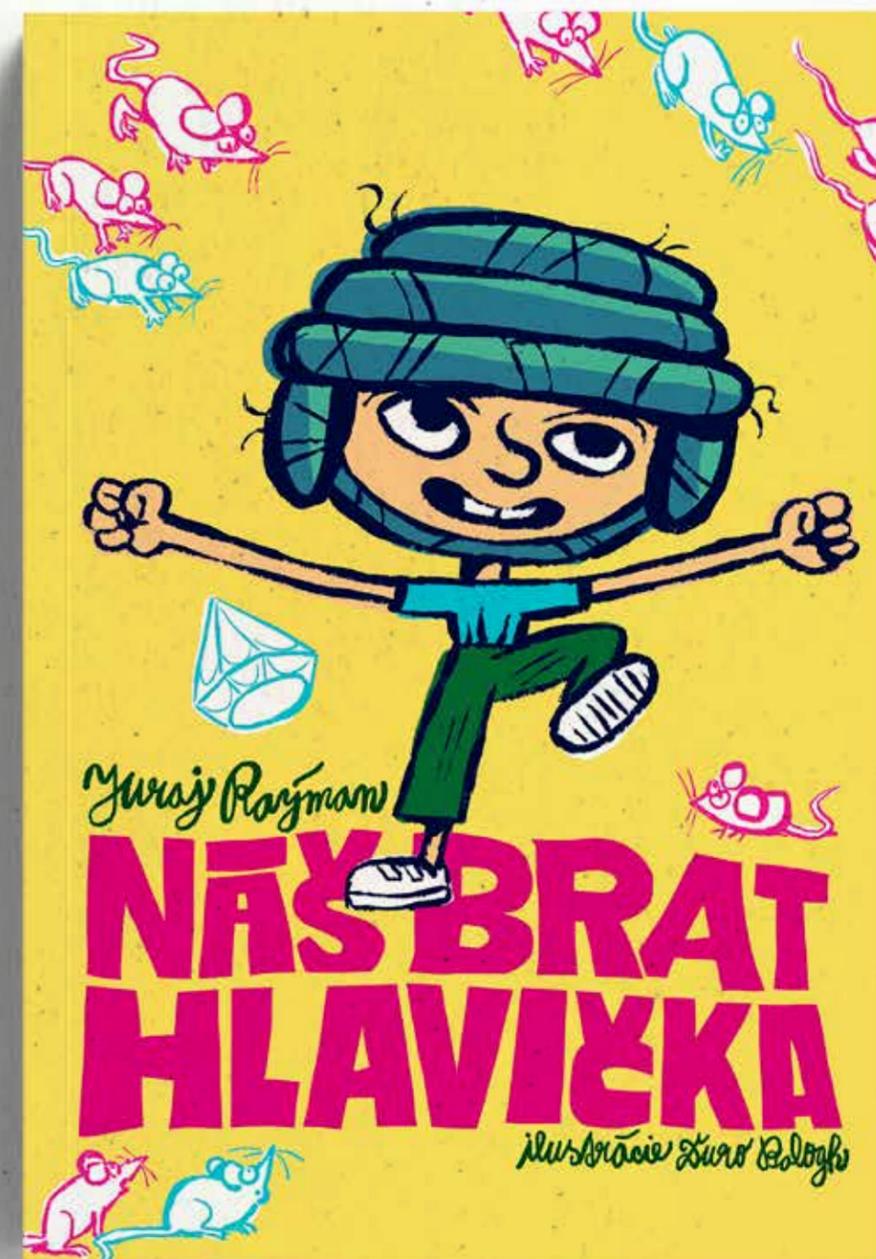
# Our Brother Bighead

**AN ADVENTURE STORY ABOUT OTHERNESS, ACCEPTANCE AND FRIENDSHIP WHICH COMES WITH A CRIMINAL TWIST, TRAINED MICE, A CRAZY PSYCHIATRIST AND THE AWAKENING OF FIRST LOVE.**

Alica is ten and has an older brother called Milan. When she was little, she gave him the nickname 'Bighead' because of the protective helmet he has to wear for his own safety even when he goes to bed. Her brother's tantrums meant that her family were not very popular in their block of flats so when they move to a remote house in the countryside, Alica decides to keep his existence a secret from the children living nearby. But when both her parents mysteriously disappear, she realizes she has to overcome her embarrassment and tell her new friends the truth. Only then can she ask them to help her find them and also involve her unusual brother in the search.



**JURAJ RAÝMAN**  
**Ďuro Balogh**



You can do lots of things with a brother. You can go on adventures, make new friends, play team sports, or just get into mischief. That is what siblings are best at. all. But not if you are Alica.

Her brother is three years older than she is. He is called Miño, though Mummy calls him Milanko and Daddy sometimes calls him Milan when he is misbehaving. He wants to make it clear that Miño is now too grown up to cause problems. Instead of replying, though, Miño often starts beating his head with his fists and no-one can go near him. At such moments, Alica is both afraid of him and afraid for him. When she was smaller, she invented the name Bighead for him, after the protective helmet which he still has to wear in bed for his own safety.

Mummy, Daddy and Alica all love Bighead and try to do everything they can to stop him beating his head so much. But there are lots of things which upset him. In the old flat on the estate, the noise of the lift going up and down in the middle of the night upset him, as did the screeching of the morning tram. And then, when these noises woke him from his sleep, he himself would make terrible sounds which upset the neighbours.

They were patient but when Dad decided they would sell the flat and move somewhere else, the whole block breathed a huge sigh of relief.

When Alica was little and Bighead much smaller, they used to play together. But then Miño got into the habit of clapping, stamping his feet or banging the table with his fists, twisting his arms or his whole body as he did so.

"Repeating certain movements gives him a feeling of security," explained one of the doctors to his mother. "Try to give him something quieter to do."

And so he was given a piece of paper and pencils and discovered a love of drawing lines. Straight, regular lines helped calm him down as did the silence of the pencil sliding across the sheet. They just had to make sure he didn't run out of paper.

But one day it happened that Alica was at home alone and completely forgot about Bighead.

There is no space left on Bighead's piece of paper – he has filled it up completely with his lines. The pencil suddenly slips off the paper and the line continues onto the tabletop.

Bighead hates it when something like that happens. The pencil doesn't slide so smoothly across the table, there is a soft scratching sound and the lead breaks. Bighead can hear in his ears a sound like that of the sea rushing past. He covers his ears with his hands but the whooshing sound gets louder.

Bighead is not a baby nor is he stupid, like most people think he is. Bighead knows that he has to keep calm and not panic or lose his head. But the noise is even louder now – as is the anxiety now turning into a huge wave. Bighead closes his eyes and finds himself in the middle of a restless ocean. Barefoot, he is trying to stay upright on a piece of sharp rock rising up from under the water. The wave is gathering on the horizon. Bighead can't see it yet but can feel how it is building up and coming after him with irresistible force.

Now, only Mummy with her patient tone of voice could help him. Or Daddy, who would hold Milan tight until the wave had passed. Or at least Alica...



Selected Awards – Ďuro Balogh:

- 2007, 2013, 2015, 2016:  
BIBIANA The Most Beautiful  
Book of the Season

**JURAJ RAÝMAN**  
1972

He is a Slovak scriptwriter and author. His first poems and stories were published in 1989 in the literary monthly *Dotyky*, of which he was one of the main contributors in the early 1990s. At present, he works as a creative ad writer and a radio and television scriptwriter. He is the co-author of *Drobci*, a popular cartoon series about the adventures of two brothers, which has also come out as a book. He wrote the children's book, *Emil z hôr (Emil from the Mountains)* (2017), about a boy who lives alone in the wilderness until he discovers his need for love.



**ĎURO BALOGH**  
1975



**Our brother Bighead**

Published by: Slovart, Bratislava  
2020, 128 p.  
ISBN: 978-80-556-4581-0

Translation Rights:  
booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk

At present he works as a freelance illustrator and graphic designer. He is a member of the Association of Illustrators (ASIL), an organization which brings together predominantly young Slovak artists and also works closely with the Calder Design Community graphic studio. He has illustrated dozens of children's books and mostly creates individual stylizations of figures, animals and spaces. He lives and works in Bratislava.



# The Tree

A NOVEL FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG TEENAGERS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP WITH AN ETHICAL AND ECOLOGICAL MESSAGE.

Combining humour and suspense, the author tells an allegorical tale showing how greed can ruin humanity and the world around us. In the middle of a barren wilderness, a terrible monster called Blöeglöek lives under the roots of the very last tree, which he guards with his life. In the wilderness, there is also a palace where the Princess lives. Although she has everything, she dreams one night about a miraculous tree and the most dazzling star in the universe. In her pursuit of the dream, she goes out into the wilderness where she meets various weird creatures. When the Princess meets Blöeglöek, two opposing worlds and viewpoints clash. There follows an irreconcilable struggle in which hope, the will to change and unexpected friendship are all born.

**ALEXANDRA SALMELA**  
**Martina Matlovičová**



## DREAMING BENEATH A MAGIC CANOPY

In the glorious starlight, the mean little stump had grown into the most majestic tree in the universe. It was exquisite. Blöeglök said nothing, just stared at it open-mouthed, his eyes like saucers. Some kind of liquid was running down his pock-marked face. Blöeglök licked it from his cheek. It was as salty as the sea, though Blöeglök knew nothing about the sea.

Blöeglök, the grouchy big-eared monster from the dusty hole was not the only one to be enchanted by the tree. Even the bipeds had stopped their scheming and turned their faces to the heavens.

"Gorgeous!" gasped one of them, his voice somehow softer than usual.

"Diamonds in the sky. A sky without light," marvelled another. Such darkness was quite new to them.

The night sky amazed them all. They had never seen anything like it before. When the sun was shining, the sky was as thin as paper but now it was deeper than the deepest tunnel any cluckster had ever dug into the earth. The maned bipeds lay down on their backs one after the other one and feasted their eyes on the hypnotic depths of the darkness and the patterns which the twinkling stars were making. Fat birds forgot about their fear as well as about worms and contentedly nestled up alongside the bipeds, letting the big beasts tenderly rub them under their dirty beaks. The hunters and the cluckster lay down companionably in the dust cooled down by the unexpected night. Everyone watched the heavenly performance being played out upon a stage woven from all the greens the world could offer.

They were all breathing hard, their chests rising and falling in waves. Everything was suddenly wonderful leaving them happy and contented... Blöeglök could feel the blood flowing through him and the air tickling his coarse hide. He felt alive and at one with the world around him.



"The tree is mine!" The Princess' sharp voice cruelly snapped the magical thread.

"You didn't want me to know it was miraculous, did you?" she said to Blöeglöek accusingly.

"I had no idea..." blurted Blöeglöek. He was coming round from his lovely green dream. It troubled him that the tree had never shown itself to him in all its magical beauty before. Of course the Princess didn't believe a word he said.

"What nonsense. You're a rotten liar. You envy me so much you just wanted to trick me."

But Blöeglöek had had enough of the bad-tempered little minx.

"What would I envy you for? Your diamond slippers?"

The Princess put her hands on her side and replied scornfully.

"For everything. Because ALL THIS IS MINE! ONLY MINE! And that is sitting on the top of the highest branch of the tree is all mine. The most brilliant star in the whole universe and you will never have star like that because everything is mine! Which means this tree is mine and your den is mine and there is nothing left for you. So there!"

Blöeglöek said nothing but the Princess went 'hah-hah', stamped her foot on the ground and made a noose at the end of a flashing length of hose. She then swung it around her head like a lasso and flung it high up into the crown of the tree. The hose wrapped round a branch and she then secured it with a fisherman's knot before tying the other end around her waist.

"What are you doing?!" growled Blöeglöek angrily. Again he was his old suspicious and permanently grouchy self.

"I'm going to get my star," retorted the Princess, giving it a thumbs up. And the star blinked back so brightly that the Princess had to put on some extra dark sunglasses as well as a welding mask on top. She then attached some crampons to her shoes, picked up two ice axes and rammed them into the tree.



Selected Awards – Alexandra Salmela:

- 2010 Helsingin Sanomat Prize
- 2010 Kaihari Culture Prize
- 2010 Finlandia Prize – shortlisted
- 2012 Anasoft Litera Prize – shortlisted
- 2018 Anasoft Litera Prize – shortlisted

Selected Awards – Martina Matlovičová:

- 2009 Bratislava Biennial of Illustration – The Golden Apple

Selected Translations:

Mimi a Liza 1 & 2 (*Mimi and Liza 1 & 2*)  
CZECH, HUNGARIAN, CHINESE

27 čiže smrť robí umelca  
(*27-Death Makes the Artist*)  
CZECH, DANISH, HINDI,  
HUNGARIAN, ITALIAN, POLISH

Žirafia mama a iné príšery  
(*The Giraffe's Mother and Other Monsters*)  
CZECH, HUNGARIAN, SERBIAN,  
TURKISH



### The Tree

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Translation Rights:  
booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk

## ALEXANDRA SALMELA 1980

An author who became famous abroad before gaining renown in her native Slovakia, she debuted in 2010 with her novel *27 čiže smrť robí umelca* (*27 – Death Makes the Artist*), which came out in Finland where she lives. She won the *Helsingin Sanomat* daily-newspaper prize for the best debut. She was the first person without Finnish citizenship to be nominated for the most prestigious literary award in Finland – *The Finlandia-Prize*. She wrote the popular book for children, *Žirafia mama a iné príšery* (*The Giraffe's Mother and Other Monsters*, 2013) and is co-author of the successful collection of books *Mimi a Liza* (*Mimi and Liza*, 2013, 2015, 2018) based on the children's cartoon serial of the same name.



## MARTINA MATLOVIČOVÁ KRÁLOVÁ 1975

She studied animation but concentrates mostly on book illustrations. The colours in her work are always bright, deep and dominant and reflect the artist's humour, emotion, intelligence and creative inventiveness as well as her courage to break certain strict conventions. In 2009 she won the Golden Apple award at the Bratislava Biennial of Illustration for her illustrations of the Slovak translation of *Tracy's Tiger* (2009), and for *Drevený tata* (*Wooden Daddy*) (2007). She is the winner of the 2015 Ľudovít Fulla award for Creative Work for Children and Teenagers. Many of the books which she has worked on have been among the 'Most Beautiful Books in Slovakia' in recent years.



# Earthworms

**THIS VERY SPECIAL ACCORDION BOOK TEACHES READERS ABOUT THE FAIRYTALE LIFE OF EARTHWORMS AND HELPS DEVELOP YOUNG CHILDREN'S MOTOR SKILLS.**

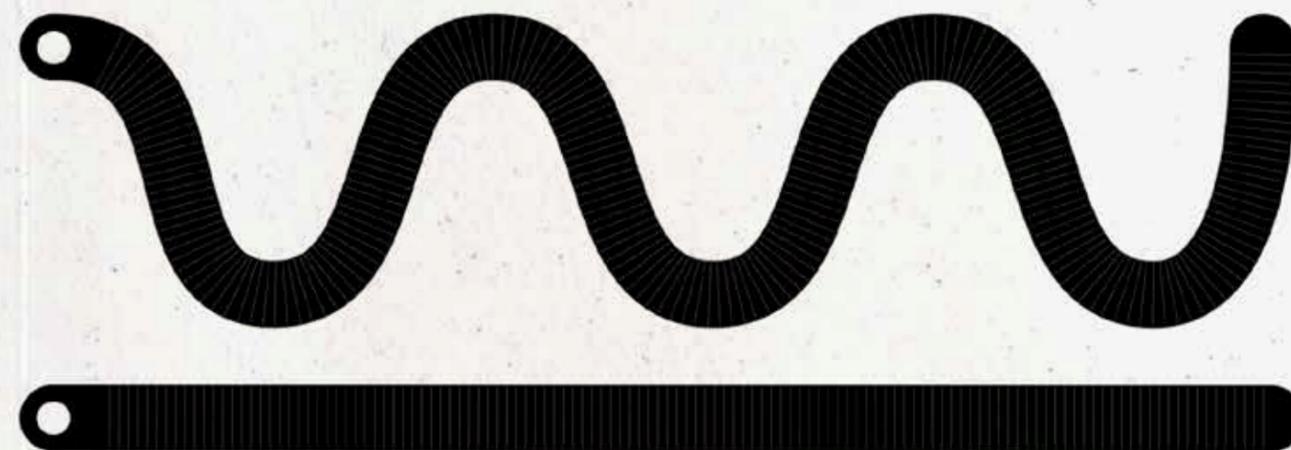
A tale about the life of earthworms and why they are called 'rainworms' in Slovak, with features inspired by the Montessori methods which are intended to help develop children's motor skills. All they need to do is run their fingers gently over the worms. If they press too hard, the surfaces will resist.

The book *Earthworms* is intended for babies and toddlers who love geometric shapes, children of three or older who are naturally interested in reading and writing and children of pre-school and school age who like to practise writing. The tale is suitable for beginner readers and will encourage them to read other books afterwards.

**LUCIA ŠUKOLOVÁ**

Lucia Šukolová

ej.

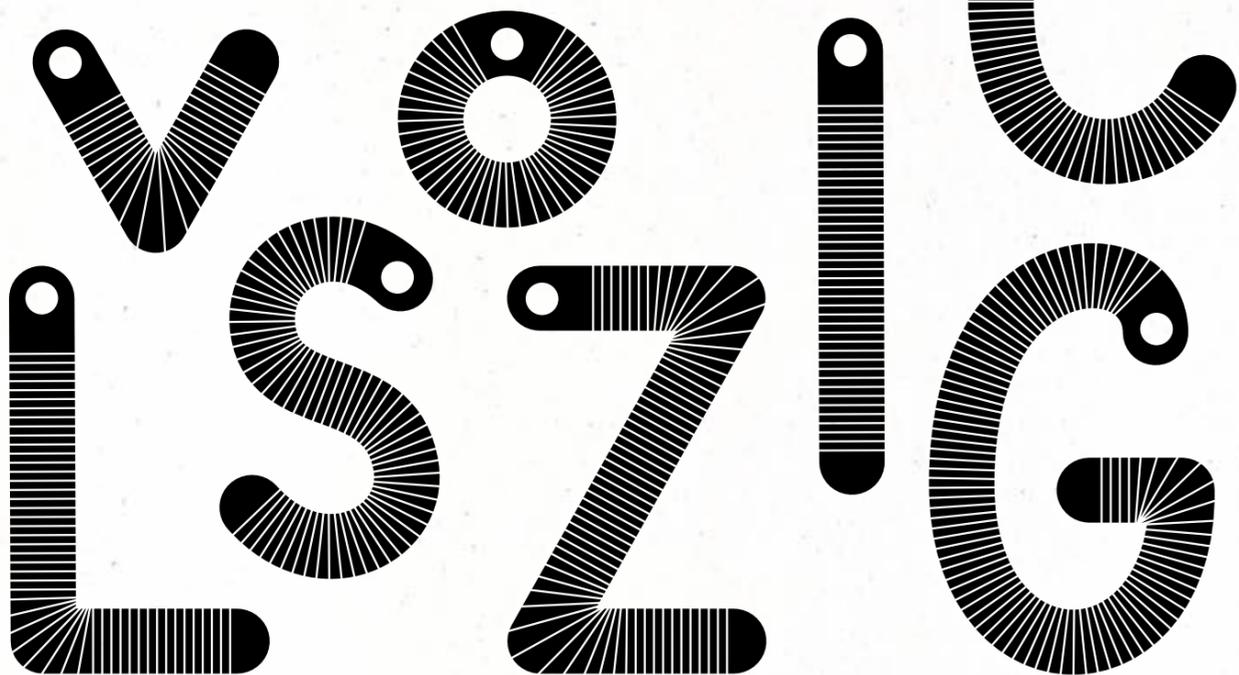


**DÁŽĎOVKY**

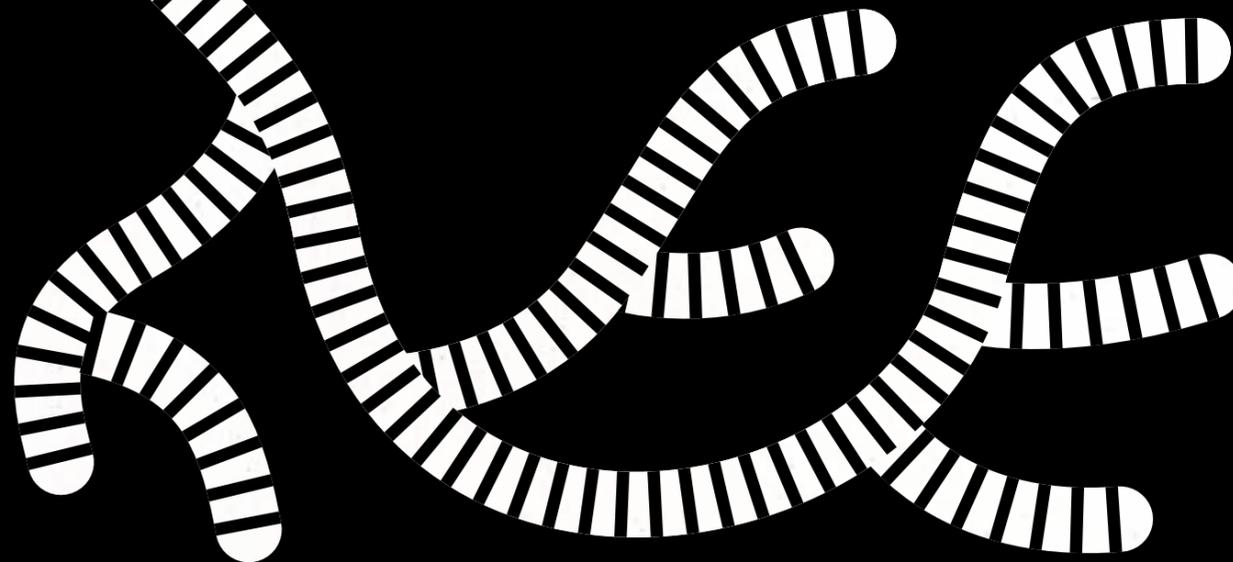
Občas sa roztrhnú mraky  
a začne pršať. Z neba  
padajú kvapky vody.



Preto keď prší, treba dávať pozor,  
kam stúpame. Všetky dážďovky  
vtedy vyliezajú spod zeme von,



Keď je príliš sucho, zavíta sa do  
zeme. Kými sa hlinou a medzi  
korenkami rastlín si vytvára úzke,  
no hlboké chodbičky.



↖ Sometimes the clouds burst open and it starts to rain. Drops of water fall from the sky.

← When it rains we need to watch where we step because that's when all the worms come up out of the ground.

↑ When it is very dry, he burrows deep under the ground, feeding on soil and making long narrow passages between the roots of plants.

**LUCIA ŠUKOLOVÁ**  
1984



**Earthworms**

Published by: E.J. Publishing,  
Bratislava 2020, 16 p.  
ISBN: 978-80-99954-05-3

Translation Rights:  
booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk

She studied Teaching of Fine Art and German at the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University. She then studied for a doctorate in German, gaining her PhD. at the Economics University in Bratislava, where she currently works. She is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Applied Languages. Lucia has attended several courses of Montessori education, which she draws on in her creative work. Outside the workplace, she likes to invent toys and various creative activities for children. She also designs and makes children's books by hand for her daughter, Stela. *Dážďovky* is her first published book.

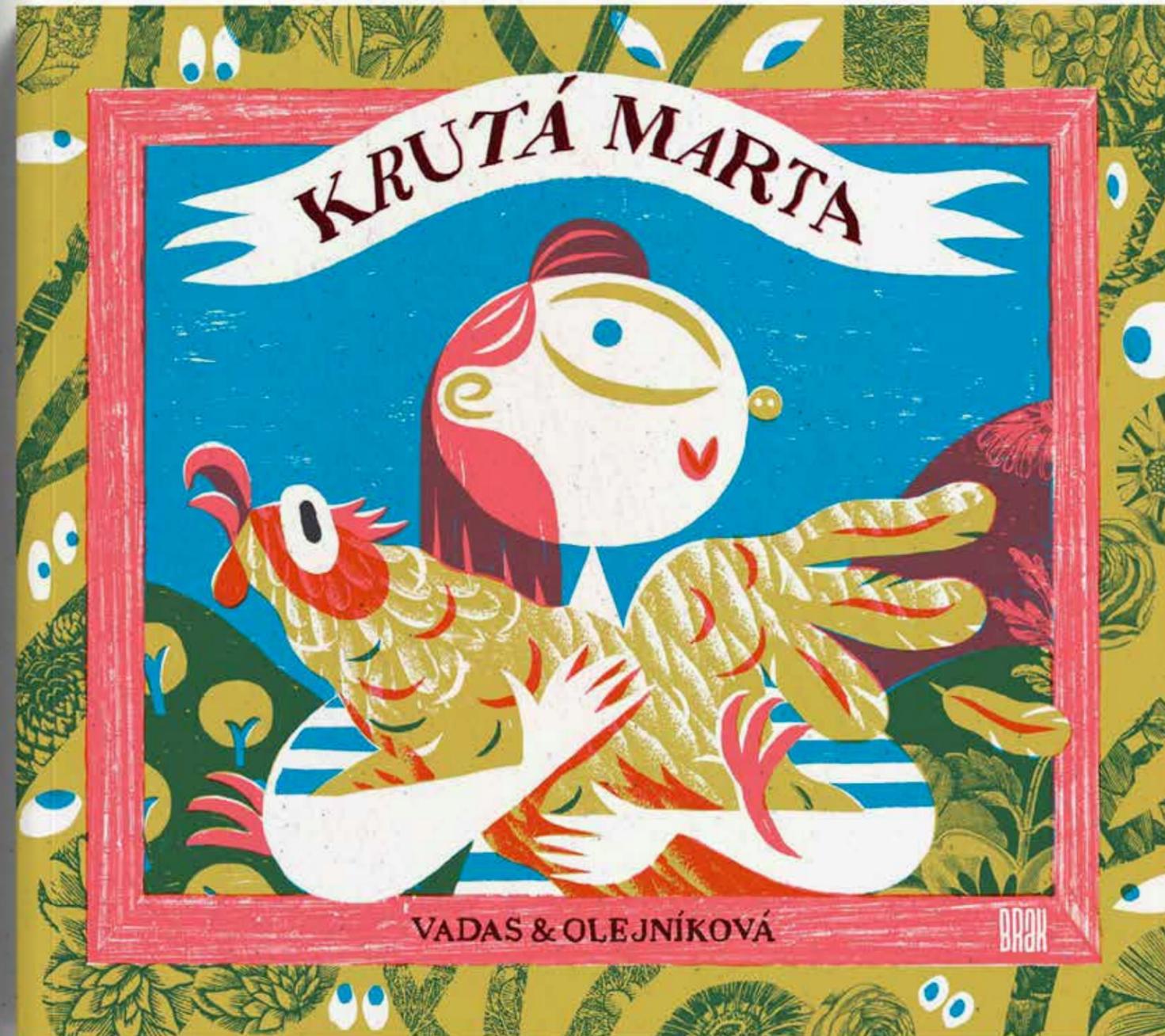


# Cruel Marta

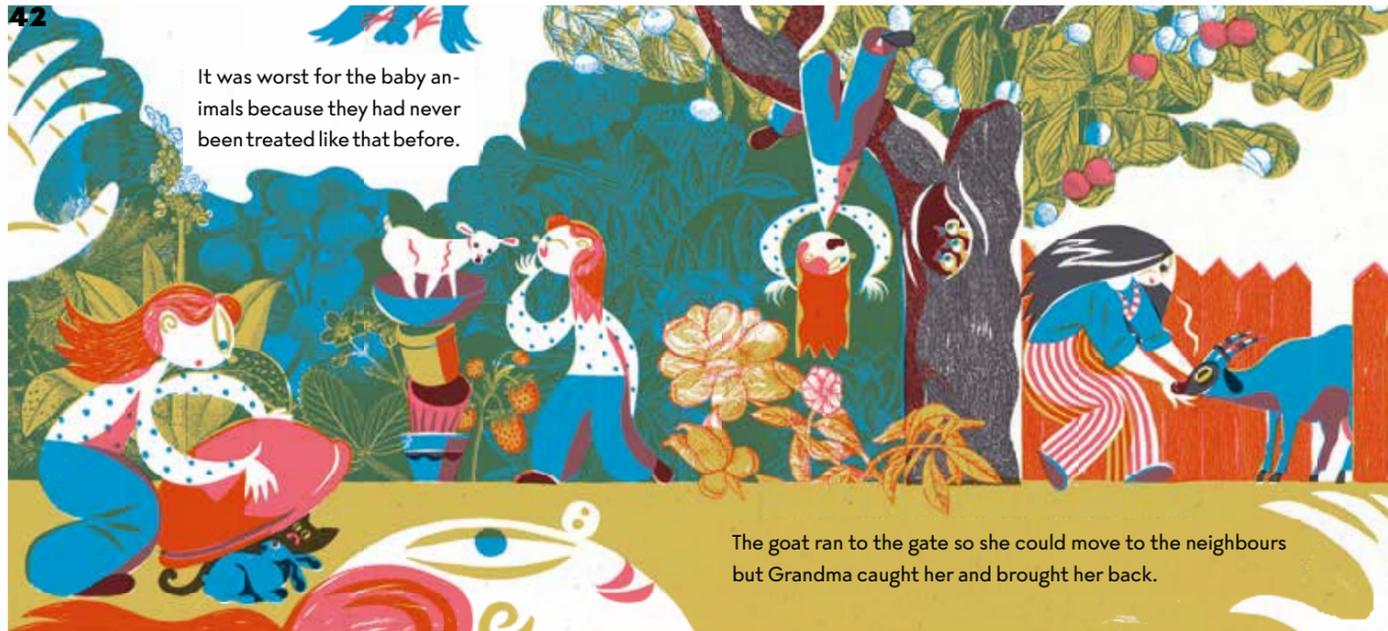
DO YOU LIKE PLAYING WITH ANIMALS? AND DO YOU SOMETIMES PULL CATS BY THEIR TAILS? MARTA LIKES DOING SUCH THINGS THOUGH THE ANIMALS AT HER GRANDMA'S ARE AFRAID OF HER WHEN SHE VISITS.

A funny picture book about the line between playing and cruelty. Cruel Marta hurts animals and so they look for a way to put things right with her. The main character is depicted as a nice girl who does bad things without even realizing it, which is the author's original way to create a story with a moral lesson. The subtle dose of absurdity and black humour in the story together with the luminosity of the Pantone colours and unusual collage of ink drawing and vintage plant drawings are sure to appeal to readers.

**MAREK VADAS**  
**Daniela Olejníková**



It was worst for the baby animals because they had never been treated like that before.



The goat ran to the gate so she could move to the neighbours but Grandma caught her and brought her back.

Marta liked the miaowing of the cat and the scattergun running of the hens. She had no idea how the animals felt when she tormented them. To her it was all a game and she never wondered if the animals enjoyed it as much as she did.

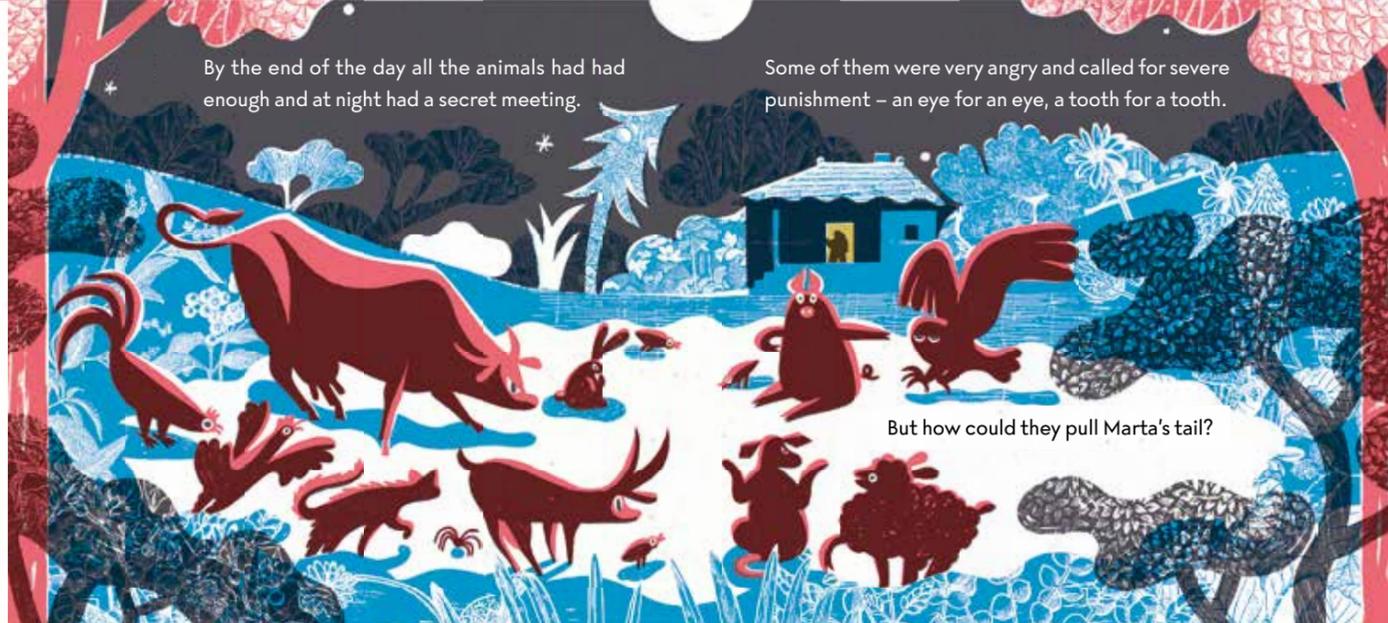
The little dog tried to explain, showing her with his paw how to play with kittens and rabbits so that they would like it. But Marta either didn't understand or paid no attention and instead ran off to pull the rabbit's ear.



By the end of the day all the animals had had enough and at night had a secret meeting.

Some of them were very angry and called for severe punishment – an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

But how could they pull Marta's tail?



Selected Awards – Marek Vadas:

- 2019 Anasoft litera Award – shortlisted
- 2019 René Prize Anasoft Litera – shortlisted
- 2007 Anasoft litera Award – winner

Selected Awards – Daniela Olejníková:

- 2017 Bratislava Biennial of Illustration – The Golden Apple

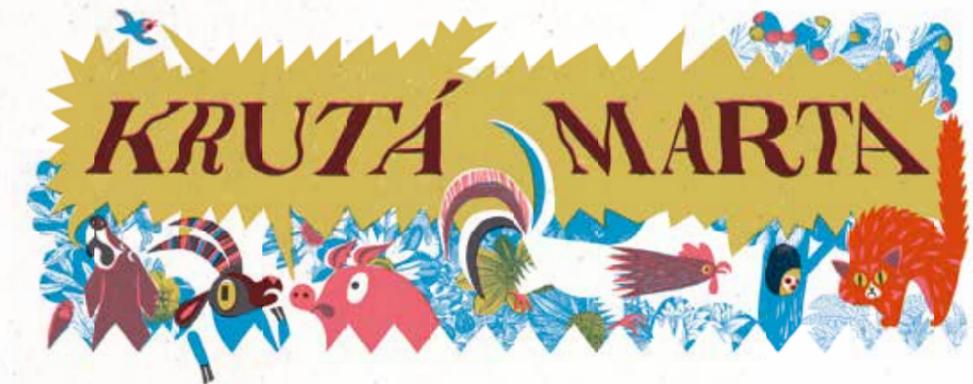
## MAREK VADAS 1971

In his books he combines traditional African storytelling with elements of European modern art. He won the Anasoft litera prize 2007, the most prestigious literary award in Slovakia, for his book *Liečiteľ* (*The Healer*). Africa is present as the backdrop in his short stories against which reality and fantasy intertwine, stories filled with irony, absurdity and dark existential tones. Even in his children's books his language is naturalistic and yet it is still attractive for young readers; his style is never infantile and is free of unnecessary frills and plot contrivances. His children's book *Útek* (*The Escape*) 2016 – the story of a boy refugee which opens the door to worlds where people have forgotten their values – has resonated among critics and readers and so far been translated into nine languages.

Selected Translations:

*Liečiteľ* (*The Healer*)  
BULGARIAN, CZECH,  
HUNGARIAN, POLISH,  
UKRAINIAN

*Útek* (*The Escape*)  
CHINESE, CZECH, ENGLISH,  
ITALIAN, KOREAN, NORWEGIAN,  
SLOVENIAN, SPANISH



## DANIELA OLEJNÍKOVÁ 1986

One of the most prominent figures of contemporary Slovak illustration, she combines in her work digital illustration with traditional art techniques such as linocut, watercolour, and screen printing. Her works make use of digital media effects such as monochrome transparent surfaces overlays, layering, and colour transitions. Despite the digital nature of her output, her works resist the artificial flawlessness of computer images and maintain a unique sense of precise imitation. She won the Golden Apple at the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava 2017, the award of the Minister of Culture of the Slovak Republic, and several other awards in the Most Beautiful Books of Slovakia and Most Beautiful Czech Books of the Year competitions.



### **Cruel Marta**

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Contact:  
[booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk](mailto:booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk)