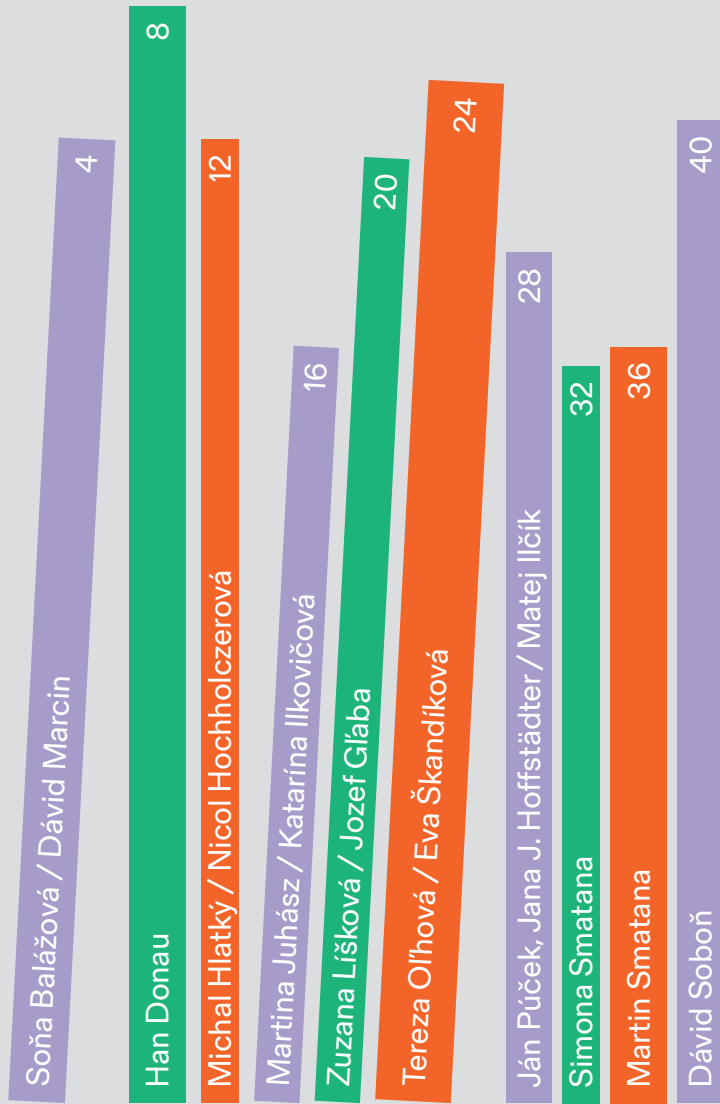


Children's Books From Slovakia 2024



Slovak
Literary
Centre

The Slovak Literary Centre is a public organisation aimed at providing organisational and financial support for literature written in Slovakia, its authors and translators.

Slovak
Literary
Centre

One of the Centre's primary objectives is promoting Slovak literature abroad through literary translation, events, international conferences and festivals of literature, and international book fairs. We seek cooperation with foreign publishers interested in Slovak literature, and strive to provide financial support for the publication of translated works of Slovak authors abroad. The Centre also supports and promotes Slovak authors within Slovakia and educates readers about their work and about Slovak literature in general.

SLOLIA Grant Programme

The Slovak Literary Centre runs a grant system called the Slovak Literature Abroad Grant System (SLOLIA). The main goal of the grant is to support the publication of Slovak literature in translation. Foreign publishers may apply for financial support for the publication of books by Slovak authors.

Deadlines for sending applications are:

31st January

30th April

31st July

31st October

You can find more information at

www.litcentrum.sk/en/institution/slolia

slolia@litcentrum.sk

I Heard You Were Alive: A True War Story from Košice

Soňa Balážová / Dávid Marcín

Imagine that you find out that your great-grandfather was a hero. He saved the lives of many people during World War II and fell madly in love while doing it.

An adventurous love story from Košice, which took place during World War II. Imagine that you find out that your great-grandfather was a hero. He saved the lives of multiple people during World War II and fell madly in love while doing it. What would you do? Oliver decides to talk about it, but gradually discovers that not everyone considers his great-grandfather a hero. Stories like this need to be remembered so they won't be forgotten; they are here to stop evil from spreading again and from history repeating itself.



Soňa Balážová / Dávid Marcín

I Heard You Were Alive:

A True War Story from Košice

E.J. Publishing, Bratislava, 2023, 103 pp.

ISBN 978-80-99954-21-3

E.J. Publishing, Jana H. Hoffstädter

jana@ejpublishing.sk

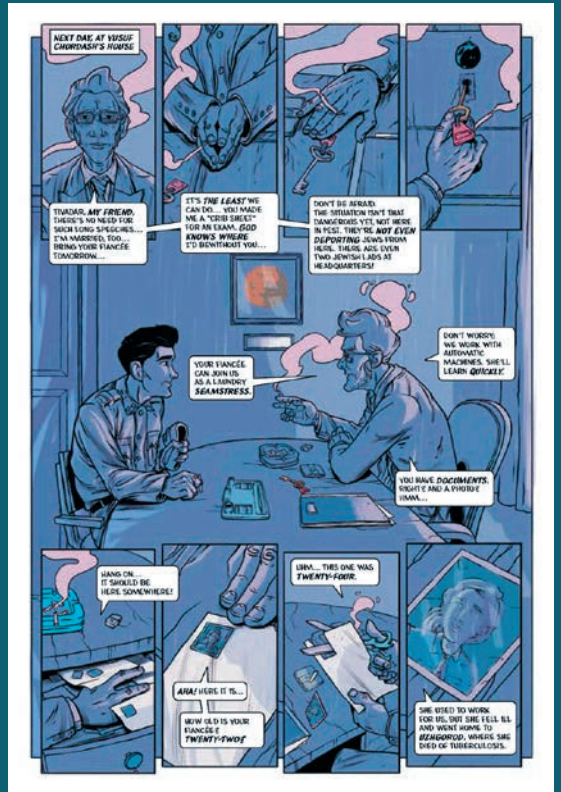
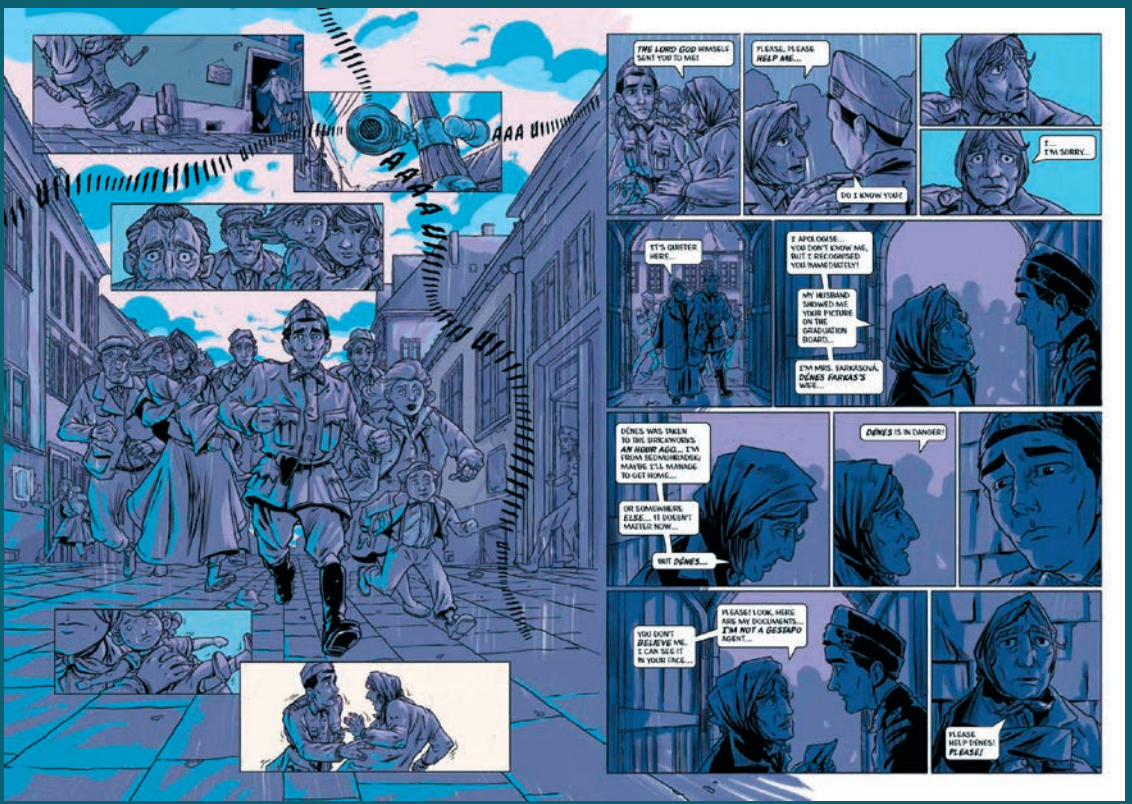




THIS IS MY GREAT-GRANDPA, OLIVER RÁCZ.

HE SAVED SEVERAL JEWS DURING
THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

I'D LIKE TO BE AS BRAVE AS HE WAS...





SOŇA BALÁŽOVÁ (1989)

is a screenwriter, editor and writer.

She loves working on projects for children and youth and enjoys working in literature and film. She studied film dramaturgy and screenwriting. She devotes herself to production in various forms for children and youth. She published the comic book series *Zlatý Zub* (Golden Tooth), which was illustrated by Dávid Marcin and later successfully published in book form. They also collaborated on one part of the series and in 2023 they published the graphic novel *Dozvedela som sa, že žiješ: Skutočný vojnový príbeh z Košíc*. In 2021, Balážová published the children's book *Klementína*, available as an audiobook. She is currently writing for children and teenagers. In the Absynt publishing house, she oversees an edition of books for young people and works as an editor of the *Slniečko* magazine.



DÁVID MARCIN (1991)

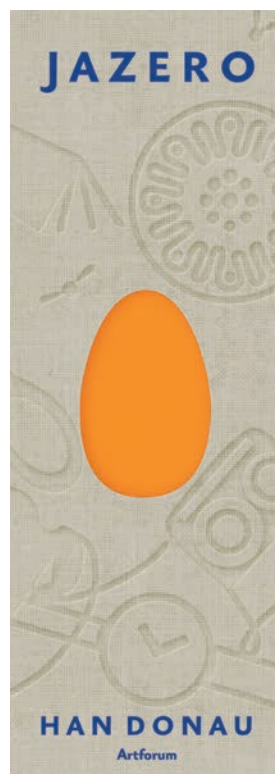
is a comic book artist, an illustrator, and an educator. He graduated from the Studio of Illustration and Printmaking at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. He has participated in various comic book projects such as *Zlatý zub*, *Nežný komiks* (Velvet comic), *Všetky tie svety* (All Those Worlds), short comics for the children's magazine *Slniečko* and his latest one, *Dozvedela som sa, že žiješ*. He is a co-founder of the Pomimo citizens' association, which organizes comic book workshops, lectures and art courses. He is the head of the Digital Painting department at the Josef Vydra School of Design in Bratislava.

The Lake

Han Donau

At first glance, this is a simple story, but in fact, it is a philosophical reflection on how we can cope with change and loss. Reading it once is not enough – it is worth having on hand and reaching for whenever we cease to understand each other.

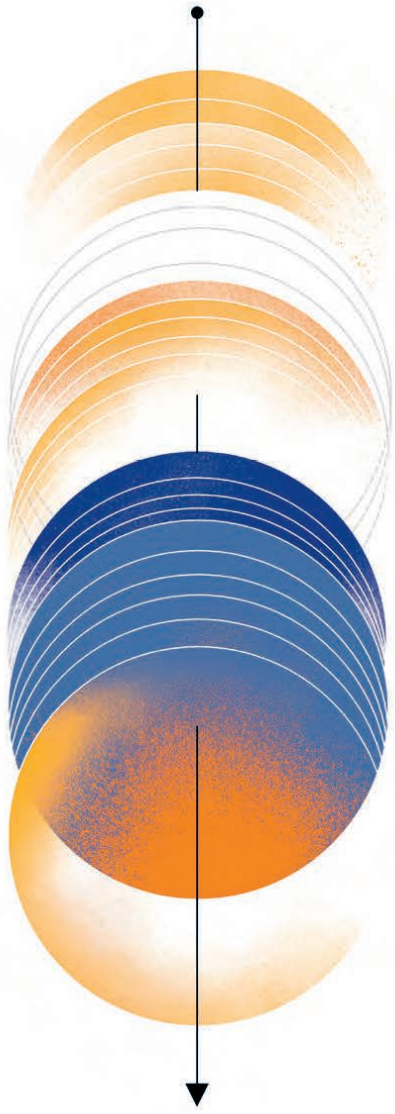
“You’re a tiny egg-shaped lake. At thirty meters deep, a short distance from your deepest point, lives an orange fish. Close to the bottom where no one can catch it.” The picture book *Jazero* (The Lake) is a poetic, delicate work of art. At first glance it is a simple story, but in fact, it is a philosophical reflection on how we can cope with change and loss. Images of distinctive authorial style lead the reader through a dream landscape with a unique atmosphere in which one can be lost but also found. This book is not only worth reading, but also having on hand and reaching for whenever we cease to understand each other.



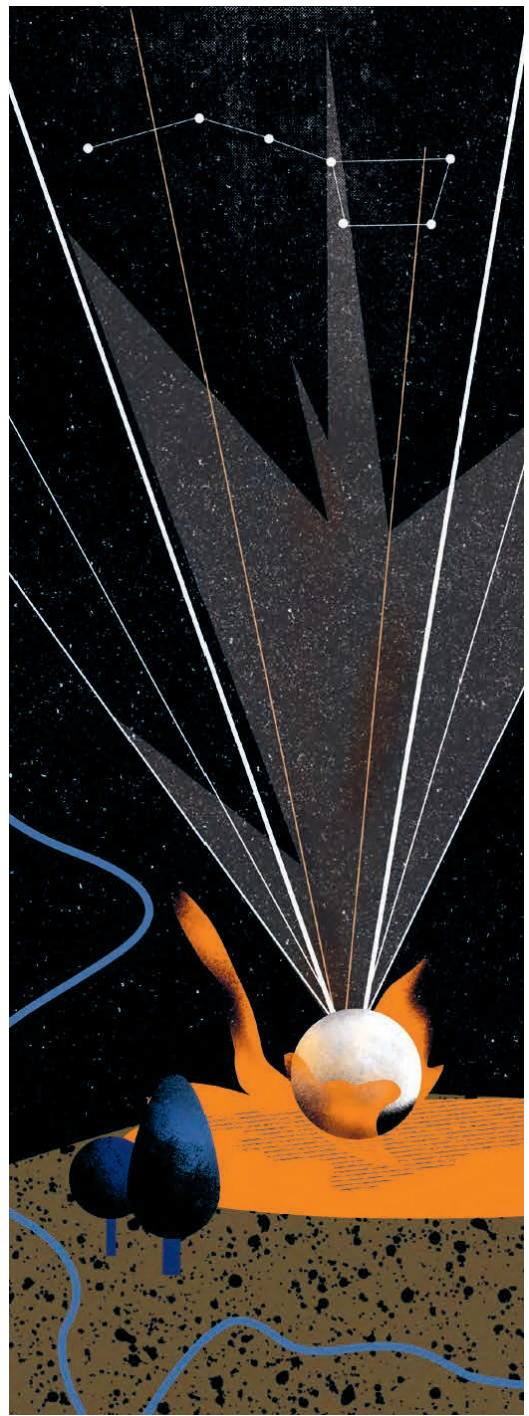
Han Donau
The Lake
Artforum, Bratislava, 2023, 40 pp.
ISBN 978-80-81503-90-0

Artforum Publishing House
michal@artforum.sk





It seems that the time stands still,
but the days flow by.



You know it, because the sun sears
you each evening when they turn
it off and it dives into you, still
scorching, head-first, so the night
can follow.



There is a fisherman, who has visited you for years —day after day since his childhood. He's got a plan.



He measured the distance from the shore to the bed, nurtured his whiskers, and waited years and decades until they grew long enough — thirty meters, exactly.

PHOTO: ALLAN MENA



HAN DONAU (1990)

is an illustrator. She studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. The subject of her work is book, product, editorial and free digital illustration. She likes to experiment with symbols, metaphors and the abstract and looks for beauty in sad things. She believes in poetry. In 2023, Han Donau took patronage over the preparation and course of the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava event both as a professional and curator. She has participated in festivals and exhibitions in Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Her most important collaborations include the Berlin newspaper Tagesspiegel, Magnus magazine, the project Čierne diery, Slniečko magazine, the Convergence festival, the Marián Varga Society and the publishing houses Artforum, Monokel, Slovart, Literárna bašta and Albatros. The picturebook *The Lake* is her first authorial book.

Translated and
award-winning works:

Patrik Orišek
Cesta do krajiny Draka
(Journey to the Land of the Dragon)
Monokel, 2020
Translated into: Italian,
Mongolian and Chinese
Included in the selection of
Books of the Year 2020
according to the bookshop
network Martinus

Han Donau
The Lake
Artforum, 2023
Included in the selection of
Books of the Year 2023
according to the bookshop
network Martinus



About Darkness and a Big Man

Michal Hlatký / Nicol Hochholczerová

Darkness must enter the houses at the exact moment when their residents turn off the lights. She is doing well everywhere, except for the apartment on Night Street, where Konštantín lives. Darkness feels that she could have a big problem at work, so she decides to act immediately.

The hero of the book is Nyx, or more precisely an ordinary urban Darkness, employed in the College of Night Darkness, which is commanded by the Darkest Darkness. Konštantín, a man so big that he can be seen in the dark, lives in an apartment on Night Street. If someone can be seen in the dark, it's not completely dark – and that's a problem for Nyx. She must immediately arrange for a total eclipse to occur in Konštantín's apartment after all the lights have been turned off; otherwise, Darkness will be sent to serve in a cave as a punishment. The work in the cave is terrible. Cave darkness has no right to rest. Only cave fish live there, but they are blind, and therefore do not take cave darkness seriously. What will Nyx come up with to escape punishment?



Michal Hlatký / Nicol Hochholczerová
About Darkness and a Big Man
Brak, Bratislava, 2023, 45 pp.
ISBN 978-80-97440-98-5

Brak Publishing House
vydavatelstvo@brak.sk





Chapter four, in which Nyx gets an idea

Nyx made for the flat on Night Street and tried with all her might. After a while, however, she was breathing heavily, her spirits began to fall and then, with her powers exhausted she began to fall behind the kitchen counter. When she touched the ground something nudged her. Nuit was standing next to her, looking at her with her eyes big.

“Like I needed you here...” said Nyx.

“You needed me here!” repeated Nuit, extending her hand. There was a stray marble in her palm. “Let’s play!” She clearly seemed to have forgotten the fact that Darkest Darkness would soon get them banished into a cave.

“Ugh!” Annoyed Nyx swatted Nuit’s hand away. Konstantin was gorging himself – he was smacking, chewing, huffing and puffing. But when the marble dropped and rolled beneath the kitchen cabinet, he grew quiet and listened. Nyx got an idea.

“You know what?” she asked Nuit, “We’ll play. How many of those marbles do you have?”

Nuit fumbled in her pockets and pulled out a handful of knick-knacks. Among them were more marbles, but also plastic toy soldiers and dice. All the things, that Konstantin had misplaced throughout his childhood in every nook and cranny.

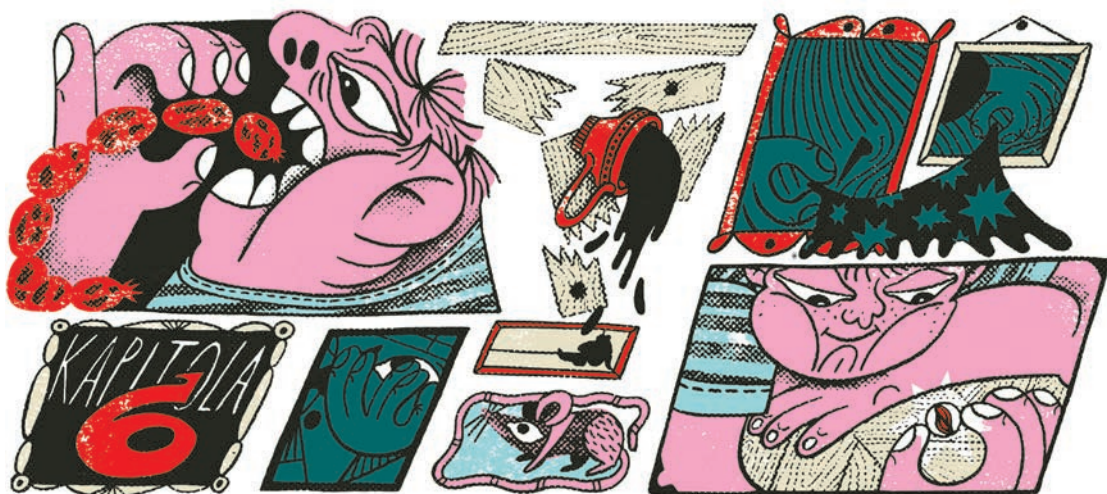
...





MICHAL HLATKÝ (1979)

is a teacher of Slovak Language and Literature and Art Education at the primary school SNP Ostredková and Literary Education at the EDULIENKA Private Primary School in Bratislava. So far, he has published the collection of short stories *Zlatý vek* (Golden Age, KK Bagala Publishing House, 2012), for which he received a premium of the Ivan Krasko Prize. His essays were broadcast on Rádio Devín and published in the Kabinet magazine. The children's book *O tme a veľkom človeku* was published by Brak Publishing House in 2023. He lives in Bratislava and Trnava.



NICOL HOCHHOLCZEROVÁ (1999)

is a writer and illustrator. She is a graduate of the Department of Graphics at the Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica, where she is currently studying for a master's degree. Her debut novel *Táto izba sa nedá zjesť* (This Room Is Impossible to Eat) was nominated for the Anasoft litera 2022 award and has already been translated into Hungarian, Serbian, Polish, Czech, Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Macedonian. English and French translations are in the process of translation. The dramatization of the book was premiered at the Municipal Theatre in Žilina (directed by Eduard Kudláč) and the director Petr Michálek from Brno is preparing a production in Czech. Director Barbora Berezňáková and producer Barbara Janišová Ferglová are already working on the script for the film. Nicol Hochholczerová also received the Young Creator Award from the Tatra Banka Foundation in 2023.

Gloria's Holidays

Martina Juhász / Katarína Ilkovičová

Gloria is a curious kindergartener with braided hair. She likes playing pranks and eating cherries. She discovers the nooks and crannies of everyday life and how things work. Sometimes she is afraid, other times she makes mistakes, but when that happens, Mom and Dad are there for Gloria; they will teach her what she needs to know and how to behave.

Gloria likes cherries, slides and butterflies. She plays pranks and learns something new every day. Not as seriously as adults, but unintentionally, as the lessons come and go. Gloria is a curious little girl who finds out why it is necessary to notice all the doors, what a postage stamp is for, why there is no need to be afraid of an injection, or what to do when she finds a treasure. Sometimes she is afraid, makes a mistake or gets into an uncomfortable situation. At other times, what adults take for granted, is new for Gloria. Mom and Dad show her how things work in the world, and what is proper and what isn't. It is all done so that she won't be embarrassed, can avoid trouble and win praise when she finds herself alone in a new environment. And with her, children who immerse themselves in her experiences, may sooner or later have similar experiences on their own.



Martina Juhász / Katarína Ilkovičová
Gloria's Holidays
Slovart, Bratislava, 2023, 48 pp.
ISBN 978-80-55662-97-8

Slovart Publishing House
fitzekova@slovart.sk





Okolo bruška si drží plávajúce koleso. Na očiach má slnečné okuliare. A na kučeravej hlave klobúk. Glória sa veľmi teší. Náladu jej nepokazí ani čakanie v dlhčom rade. Musí ho s rodičmi vyčekať, aby si od tety za okienkom kúpili vstupenky. Idú totiž na kúpalisko!

7

GLORIA AT THE OUTDOOR POOL

She's wearing a swim ring around her waist, sunglasses and a hat on her curly head. Gloria is very excited, and not even waiting in the long queue can spoil her mood. She has to stand in line with her parents, so they can buy tickets from the nice lady at the window. They're going swimming in the outdoor pool!



„Aha, ja som zebra!“ zvolá Glória o chvíľu. Po celom telíčku má totiž pruhy. Urobila si ich opalovacím krémom. Musí sa nim natrieť, aby ju nespálilo slniečko. „Radšej si ten krém rozotri, kým ťa nezje nejaký lev. Na zebra si rád pochutná,“ podpichne ju mama. Na trávu pod stromom rozprestrie deku s obrázkom levika.

„Tak už poďte!“ kričí Glória na rodičov a uteká k najbližšiemu bazénu. Je v ňom veľa šmykľaviek a vodotryskov. Vody je iba po stehná. Koleso si preto nechá na brehu a už špliecha kade-tade. „Nemôžete nám takto ujsť. Čo keď sa stratíš?“ kárhá ju ocko, keď ju doženie. Nepáči sa mu, že išla sama do vody. Navyše bez kolesa. Glória totiž ešte nevie plávať. Môže si nechtiac lohnúť vody a dusiť sa. „Kto ti pomôže, keď pri tebe s mamou nebudeme?“ dohovára jej ocko.

“I’m a zebra! Woo hoo!” cries Gloria, a little while later. She has stripes all over her body, which she made herself with sunscreen. She has to smear herself with sunscreen so she won’t burn in the sun. “Rub it in before the lion eats you. They like zebras!” her mum teases her, while she spreads out a blanket (decorated with a lion) on the grass beneath a tree.

“Come on, come on, come on!” Gloria shouts at her parents, as she runs to the nearest pool. It has a lot of slides and water jets. The water only reaches to her thighs, so she leaves her swim ring on the side and splashes to her heart’s content. “You mustn’t run away from us like that! What if you get lost?” her dad scolds her, as he catches up. He doesn’t like the fact that she went into the water on her own, and what’s more, without her swim ring – Gloria hasn’t learned to swim yet! She could unwittingly swallow water and choke. “Who will help you if Mum and I aren’t there?” says Dad crossly.



Glória má veľmi rada šmykľavky. V bazéne preto vyskúšala všetky. Mama potom navrhuje, aby šli do iného bazéna. Hlbšieho. „Uvidíme, či si niečo pamätáš z minulého leta,“ povedala jej. Glória sa už učila trochu plávať. No aby koleso vôbec nepotrebovala, musí ešte trénovať. „Juj, ale tu nedočiahnem,“ zľakne sa Glória a nalepiť sa na ocka. „Nepúšťaj ma!“ prosíka ho. Ocko ju silno drží a pomáha jej plávať.

Zakrátko sa Glória osmelí. Ocko ju drží čoraz menej, až Glória pláva úplne sama. Nádych nad vodou, výdych pod vodou. Ruky dopredu, nohy dozadu. Vyzerá ako žabka s plaveckými okuliarmi. Nakoniec priplávala sama až ku kraju bazéna. „Videli ste to? Ani som sa nepotopila!“ výska od radosti Glória. Už sa teší ako sa pochváli kamarátom v škôlke. Ešte chvíľu trénovala, no zrazu bola hladná ako vlk.

10

11

Gloria loves the water jets and has tried out every single one in this pool. Mum then suggests that they go to another, deeper pool. “Let’s see if you remember anything from last summer,” Mum says. Gloria learned to swim a little, but she needs to practise a lot more before she can stop using the swim ring. “Oooh, but I can’t touch the bottom there!” says Gloria, scared, and clings to her dad. “Don’t let me go!” she begs him. Dad holds her firmly and helps her to swim.

Before long Gloria feels braver. Her dad is holding her less and less, until she’s swimming all on her own! Breathe in above the water, breathe out in the water. Arms forward, legs back. She looks like a frog in swimming goggles. Finally she swims all by herself to the edge of the pool. “Did you see that? I didn’t sink!” Gloria whoops with joy. She’s already looking forward to bragging to her pals in nursery school. She practises a bit longer, but suddenly she is as hungry as a wolf.



V bufete si kúpili pečenú rybu a hranolky a pre Glóriu aj veľký džús. „Musím ísť cikať,“ vraví zakrátko. „Mám ísť s tebou?“ pýta sa mama. „Nemusíš,“ odpovie Glória. Záchody boli hneď vedľa. Lenže mali dvere z oboch strán. Nielen od bufetu, ale aj z druhej strany od bazénov. Glória vošla jednými dverami a vyšla druhými. No vôbec si to nevšimla. Prekvapilo ju, keď nevidela mamu a ocka. Začala sa báť a rozplakala sa.

„Čo sa ti stalo? Kde máš rodičov?“ opýtal sa jej zrazu cudzí ujo. „Neviem ich nájsť,“ vzdychala uplakaná Glória. „Stratila si sa?“ opýtal sa. Glória nesmelo prikývla. Ujo ju zobral za tetu, ktorá predáva vstupenky. Tá do rozhlasu na kúpalisku vyhlásila, že Glória je pri nej. „Neboj sa, rodičia si po teba hneď prídu,“ povedala jej teta. No Glória mala taký veľký strach ako ešte nikdy predtým. Zmizol, až keď ju mama s ockom stískali. Spolu sa poďakovali tete aj ujovi. Glória si odvtedy viac všimla okolie, aby vždy našla cestu späť k rodičom.

They buy fishfingers and chips in the buffet, and a big juice for Gloria, too. “I need a wee,” she says, before long. “Should I come with you?” her mum asks. “You don’t have to,” Gloria replies. The toilets are not far away, but with a door on both sides – the buffet side and the pool side. Gloria goes in by one door and out through the other, and doesn’t even notice, but she is surprised that she can’t see Mum and Dad. She starts to cry because she is scared.

“What’s happened? Where are your parents?” a strange man suddenly asks her. “I can’t find them!” sobs Gloria tearfully. “Are you lost?” he asks and Gloria nods timidly. The man takes her to the nice lady who sells the tickets. The lady announces over the loudspeakers that Gloria is with her. “Don’t worry, they’ll come for you right away,” the lady says, but Gloria is more scared now than she’d ever been before. Her fear vanishes when Mum and Dad hug her. They all say thank you to the nice lady and the man. Since then Gloria has paid more attention to her surroundings, so she can always find the way back to her parents.



MARTINA JUHÁSZ (1990)

is a writer and journalist. She has a loving husband and amazing daughters, Glória and Vilma. They are her whole universe, and so they spontaneously became the main heroines of her children's books. She debuted with the trilogy *Glória vo veľkom svete* (Gloria in the Big World, 2022), *Glória v záhrade* (Gloria in the Garden, 2022) and *Glória na prázdninách* (Gloria's Holidays, 2023). Soon, this trilogy will be joined by a series of three more books, in which the adventures of her two daughters will be presented. Martina Juhász studied journalism. Currently, she is the head of the Bratislava section of the daily SME. She also wrote for *Hospodárske noviny*, the weekly *Trend*, or *Bratislavské noviny*. She is the editor of the book *Po stopách dávnej Bratislavy* (In the Footsteps of Ancient Bratislava).



KATARÍNA ILKOVIČOVÁ (1982)

is an illustrator. She studied graphics at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow, Poland. After graduation she worked as a graphic designer, but in her free time she devoted herself to illustration. Since 2007, she has illustrated dozens of books that have been published not only in Slovakia and the Czech Republic but also in Portugal, Italy and Taiwan. She works with classic techniques such as acrylic, gouache, watercolour and combined techniques. In addition, she also devotes herself to digital illustration. She contributes to children's magazines and is a member of the Association of Illustrators. For her work, she has received The Most Beautiful Children's Book of Winter 2007 and The Most Beautiful Children's Book of Autumn 2014 awards.



Summer Courage

Zuzana Líšková / Jozef Glába

In the middle of the hot summer, Miro would rather be lying in the tub. Tóno would like to leave the apartment. But they can't. They must take care of their grandmothers. Which one of them will gather enough courage to go search for a family secret?

Two boys are spending a hot summer with their grandmothers. Holidays should be carefree and free – but they're not. Miro has to take care of his grandmother's farm and garden. Tóno is stuck in the block of flats at his grandma's. How will they deal with these difficult circumstances? Which one of them will gather enough courage to go search for a family secret? Get started on a story full of adventure and more importantly, fun.



Zuzana Líšková / Jozef Glába

Summer Courage

Zum Zum Production, Bratislava, 2022, 80 pp.

ISBN 978-80-89896-17-2

Zum Zum Production

zuzka@zumzum.sk



MIRKO THE FARMER

Okay, I have to say goodbye to my bathtub kingdom, it's too obvious as a hideaway. So I turn towards the opposite side of the half-scorched garden. I walk towards the animal sheds. Other than the chicken, Gran also keeps three elderly rabbits, one ram and two young sheep. Together it's a proper farm. Except someone's got to look after it. Every living thing needs to be looked after. I mentioned before that Gran can't walk around in the sun and how great that is. But there are also downsides. Logic = I look after the livestock. Bloody hell. At home, I'm only allowed to look after the fish and the computer. But I couldn't even bring my PC here because I'm supposed to enjoy a real summer. Oh, I'm really enjoying myself here! Gran forces me to: mow the grass, cut the nettles, rub the turnips, mix cornmeal, pull hay from the hayloft. Feed the chickens, take eggs from the hens, chase the rooster, drive the chickens into the coop. Feed the rabbits. Feed the ram and the sheep. And a thousand other, inescapable tasks. And Gran, when she's feeling particularly unwell, stands on the balcony and watches me from the lookout. Even if she can't see me, she knows. If I don't finish what she ordered me to do in the morning, she shouts:

“Mirko, Mirko, where are you dilly-dallying again?!”

No answer.



“I’ll find you, Miro. I’ll find you and you’ll regret it!”

No answer.

“Miro, you nasty little troublemaker! I’m running downstairs to show you what for!”

“Granny, don’t shout, you know it’s bad for your heart!” I roar back at her.

Gran is about to explode if she doesn’t know what I’m doing. She can’t know that when she can’t see me, I pee on the hens perches in the chicken coop. The hens then wade around feet-deep in piss. I don’t actually do it on purpose, I just don’t want to go inside the house, within the reach of my snooping gran. And I don’t want to go in behind her back and know, that she knows that I’m peeing.

Sometimes, when she can’t see me, I feel like poking the ram with a broom. Once I accidentally hit him while sweeping and the ram was beside itself with fury. It kept hitting the enclosure and weirdly twisting around in circles. It was so funny. Thankfully, the enclosure was strong. It had been built back in the day by my grandad whom I didn’t get to meet. But it was well made. Logic = the ram was futile against it. It then took its anger out on the sheep.

When she can’t see me, I wake the hens on the perch. I have to do this very secretly because it’s during the time when Gran can go outside. I wake them up and they’re all groggy and irritated and the rooster is also stressed out and pecks at them because they are not behaving like he expects them to. Finally, just before I leave the chicken coop I mockingly crow at the rooster. He gets confused and puffs up his chest like he’s about to explode. He makes me laugh my head off. But the rooster is no joke. Every time I’m not looking, he jumps on my head and pecks and pecks. I don’t even know if he started to hate me first, or if I did. But now it’s mutual.

The rabbits on the other hand spend the whole day hypnotising the hutch doors, thinking if they hypnotise them enough, then the food arrives. Sometimes, almost on purpose, I forget to feed the rabbits in the morning and then I watch them blame each other, that one of them (usually the spotted one), was slacking off and didn’t do a good enough job hypnotising. They always push him from their group of three to the sidelines. And then I only feed that one. The two black rabbits are furious. And Gran is surprised, at what’s up with the animals and if it might be about time to get them slaughtered. Course, I swear I feed them. They stomp and are freaking out from the heat, I swear that too.



ZUZANA LÍŠKOVÁ (1980)

is a screenwriter, writer and an editor. She graduated in dramaturgy and screenwriting. She writes for radio and television and is a magazine publisher. She has published the books *Ako sa Ela naučila vidieť neviditeľné* (How Ela Learned to See the Invisible, 2018), *Zimná zmrzlináreň* (Winter Ice Cream Parlor, 2021), *O2H tohto leta* (Summer Courage, 2022) and her latest children's book, *OFFroad* (2023).



JOZEF GLÁBA (1995)

is a visual artist and illustrator. He collaborated on the realization of the monographic exhibition *Vážny komediant Jan Meisner* (The Serious Comedian Jan Meisner) and accompanying activities related to the exhibition (Gallery in the Attic of the Slovak Design Museum, 2016). His prints were exhibited at group exhibitions at the *Hviezdne noci* festival in Bytča (Cultural centre, Bytča, 2017), group exhibition of illustrations (Tgallery, Bratislava, 2018) and at the group exhibition *Čierne diery: 189 grafik* (SOGA, Bratislava, 2020). His bachelor's screen-printing graphic cycle was exhibited at a separate exhibition focused on illustration and graphics at the Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum (2019). As an illustrator, he devotes himself to editorial and book illustrations, product illustrations. As part of the editorial illustration, he created illustrations for magazines. He created posters for the Mareena Community Centre festival (Bratislava, 2019–2021), and a visual for a recruitment campaign for Amnesty International Slovakia (2023).

Agatha, Where Are You?

Tereza Ol'hová / Eva Škandíková

Agatha's biggest dream is to have a phone. She thinks that life with a mobile phone will be much more beautiful, and most importantly, more fun. When her wish comes true and she gets a phone, she is the happiest person in the world. Inside the phone, however, the rules are completely different than outside.

Agatha is bored, even though it would seem she has no reason to be. She has loving parents, a brother, and a friend, Nina. But in her opinion, they are all slow and uninteresting. Agatha's thoughts are focused on Christmas and her greatest wish – to own a cell phone. When she finds it under the tree, she immediately cuts out everything around her and concentrates only on the device. But it is her new phone that swallows her during Christmas night. Agatha finds herself inside the phone, alone without her brother, Oskar, wearing only a nightgown. She meets Tracy the virus, who guides her through the entire hardware. But the exciting new world that Agatha learns about with Tracy soon becomes a prison. She misses her family. What's more, Tracy, who initially acts friendly, won't let her out of her cell phone. Agatha teams up with her brother Oscar and together they devise a way for her to save herself.



Tereza Ol'hová / Eva Škandíková
Agatha, Where Are You?

Bublina print, Bratislava, 2022, 128 pp.
ISBN 978-80-97403-11-9

Bublina print



OSKAR, RESCUE ME!

Once again a big party was in full swing in the disco hall.

Agatha wandered among the zeroes and ones standing at the tables and tried to communicate with them: “Please, could you tell me how I can get out of here?”

But the zeroes and ones didn’t respond to her question. They pretended not to hear her, cheerfully drank their slushies, and, when they got tired, went to the repository for a quick nap. If the processor called on them to fulfil a function in between times, they immediately ran to him and did everything he needed to be done.

It really didn’t take Agatha long to grasp that the zeroes and ones did understand her language, but they only used a few words, such as: work, refresh, enjoy and sleep.

Verbs like run away, leave or return just didn’t exist for them. They didn’t have anywhere to return. This was their home and they didn’t need to leave.

The zeroes and ones had only basic needs; they only ever thought of themselves. They lived their lives and so couldn’t help Agatha.



Agatha realised that they were literally brainless. The wisest of them here was actually Treysy, but he treated the zeroes and ones terribly. He was so disrespectful when he weeded them out! The zeroes and ones vanished, but nobody apart from Agatha even noticed.

Agatha was miserable. She left the disco hall and walked along the dark corridors alone.

She looked up at the display and suddenly had an idea. What if she tried to write something to Oskar? She jumped onto the battery cable, which swayed gently, but Agatha kept her balance. She wanted to go a little bit further.

For a moment she felt like a tightrope-walker. She moved to the middle, closest to the display, reached out her hand and began to type the letters that gradually made up the message: OSKAR, PLEASE RESCUE ME!!! A.

This message flashed onto the screen exactly as Oskar was wondering what to do. He read it, and immediately clicked on the *System Update* icon.





TEREZA OL'HOVÁ (1986)

is a writer and screenwriter. She graduated as a screenwriter from the Film and Television Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. She is a dramaturg and writes film and television scripts. She made her literary debut with co-author Martina Slúková with a book of mail fragments called *Inak sa mám FAJN* (Otherwise I'm FINE, 2015, self-published). The book was dramatized and performed at the L+S Theatre in Bratislava (2017). She created the comic *Bežná* (Ordinary, 2018, EJ Publishing) in collaboration with illustrator Mária Kralovič. It was published on the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. The literary portrait *Nespúšťaj oči z trate!* (Don't take your eyes off the track!) was self-published in 2019. With illustrator Eva Škandíková she collaborated on the children's books *Posledný permoník* (The Last Dwarf), *Bubáci* (Bogeymen), *Agáta kde si?* (Agatha, Where Are You?), *Správa z planéty Romanesco* (Report from the Planet Romanesco). *Posledný permoník* was included in the Martinus' Books of the Year 2020 list. She contributes to the children's magazine *Bublina* and occasionally reviews for the magazine *Knižná revue*.



EVA ŠKANDÍKOVÁ (1982)

is a restorer and illustrator. In 2001–2007 she studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava in the Studio of Artwork on Paper and Photography Restoration and in the Studio of Easel and Panel Paintings Conservation and Restoration. Mainly she does digital and children's illustration and collage. She has illustrated the books *Posledný permoník* (Tereza Ol'hoová), *Bubáci* (Tereza Ol'hoová and Vlado Janček), *Agáta, kde si?* (Tereza Ol'hoová), among others. In 2021 the book *Bubáci* was awarded the prize at the Most Beautiful Books of Slovakia competition and in 2022 *Agáta, kde si?* won the competition in the category Literature for Children and Youth.

Veronika from the Block Conquers the World

Ján Púček, Jana J. Hoffstädter / Matej Ilčík

How can one become a world-renowned skier in a country that doesn't have the Alps, in a city where it snows only a few days a year, or a country that doesn't seem interested in high-performance sports? You mustn't stop dreaming! This is the true story of a Slovak slalom racer.

Climbing to the top is usually not easy. Not even if you are pulled up by a cable car or a ski lift. In our story, one persistent girl manages to accomplish this feat. Meet Veronica. Her story is about the love of skiing and the mountains, about hard work, the power of friendship, and big dreams that require great sacrifices. Read about a girl from the city, from a block of flats in a housing estate, who aspired to become a world-class skier. And she subjected everything to her dream. Plus, if you want to learn more about alpine skiing, you've come to the right place. A mini ski encyclopaedia is included. Open the book and step into it as you would into freshly fallen snow.



Ján Púček, Jana J. Hoffstädter / Matej Ilčík
Veronika from the Block Conquers the World
E. J. Publishing, Bratislava, 2022, 84 pp.
ISBN 978-80-99954-11-4

E. J. Publishing, Jana H. Hoffstädter
jana@ejpublishing.sk



THAT'S MY SANDWICH

I pushed skis, a rucksack, ski boots, poles, and finally my dad into the elevator. He pressed the button, the elevator descending swiftly as I sprinted down flights of stairs. You know, like a race. Now, try that at four a.m! This all happened quietly, without waking up all of the neighbours!

While I ran from the sixth to the ground floor, Dad had already unloaded the skis in the hallway and pretended to yawn out of boredom.

“So, want another go?” he asked; I responded with only an annoyed growl.

Outside it was completely quiet because most of the people on block were still fast asleep. Only the lights from the nearby bakery were on. The dawn was beginning to break in the morning sky.

A couple of boys and girls from the ski club and some of their parents were already gathered next to our red Skoda Favorit.

Nina, my skiing twin, stood dozing off as she slumped over her ski poles. We greeted each other and packed everything in the cars. With skis on the roof, ski boots and backpacks in the boot, poles under the seats, we finally managed to get ourselves into the cars as well — the parents were driving and the rest, well, it was a (free-for-all)?.

I snagged a spot by the window, behind the passenger's seat. I stuffed my travel backpack at my feet, turned on my Walkman and closed my eyes.

There was still a good seven hour journey ahead of us, to the opposite side of Austria. a couple of gas station pit stops and a wait at the border.



While my classmates get dressed in their shorts and T-shirts and hang out in town, my snow pants are definitely not boxed up at the bottom of my wardrobe. Dad is not hunting for inflatable pool floats in the basement; instead he sharpens the edges of my skis so that I can train. A bit weird, I know.

However, I really do take skiing seriously. Like seriously for real! Nina and I promised each other that we'd give it a try. We'll try to do our best.

The Austrian border guards reviewed our passports after we had waited for half an hour. They checked the car boots, and the roof, all the while muttering something under their breath. After all, a car filled with ski gear in the middle of June might have seemed slightly suspicious to them.

Once we were on the move again, I pulled a ham sandwich out of my backpack.

"You could've waited a little bit longer. You'll be hungry by the time we get there..."

I looked at Dad reproach fully, but I didn't care. It was much nicer to eat a sandwich that wasn't all mushy and didn't contain bits of napkin into which it had been packed.





JÁN PÚČEK (1987)

is a writer, journalist and book editor. He debuted with the short stories collection *Kameň v kameni* (Stone in stone, 2012). The book has won the Ivan Krasko Prize, the Ján Johanides Award in the category under 35, and the Tatra Banka Foundation Award. In 2013 he published the book *Okná do poľí* (Windows with a field view), and two years later the novel *Uchom ihly* (Through the Eye of a Needle, published in Poland as *Przez ucho igielne* in 2017). The novella *Med pamäti* (Honey of memory) followed in 2018. His most recent collection of short stories, essays and short texts is *Karpaty!* (Carpathian Mountains!, 2022). He is the co-author of documentary short stories *Your Honor Mr. President: Letters to Jozef Tiso* (2020) of American historian Madeline Vadkerty.



JANA H. HOFFSTÄDTER (1980)

is a publisher, translator and author. In 2018 she founded the small book publishing company E. J. Publishing. In addition, she translates from German, edits, and occasionally writes. She is the author of several children's books. In the past, she worked as a foreign editor of the daily Sme and as a German language teacher. She lived in Vienna for almost a decade and completed her university studies there, then went on to live in Belgium and the U.S., and later spent a year with her family in Mexico. Now she lives happily in Bratislava with her husband and teenage son. Books are her great love.



MATEJ ILČÍK (1988)

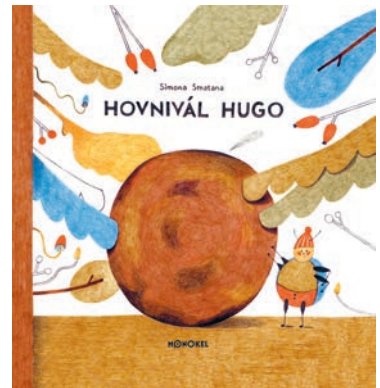
is interested in book and magazine illustration mostly for a younger audience. Five years before he started working as a professional illustrator (in 2018), he was creating digital tools for graphic designers and illustrators under his brand Guerillacraft. He illustrated several books for the publishing house B4U/Albatros Media. The non-fiction trilogy *Všetko* (Everything) was translated into several world languages. The book *Veronika z paneláku ide dobyť svet*, which he illustrated, appeared on the list White Ravens 2023 at the Frankfurt Book Fair. His most recent book is a Christmas story from Bratislava about young Mozart. He regularly contributes to the children's magazines *Bublina* and *Raketa*.

Hugo the Dung Beetle

Simona Smatana

Hugo the Dung Beetle learns about friendship and true happiness after his greedy hoarding of dung balls leads to a surprising realization.

What do you know about dung beetles? They are the beetles that push along a ball made from the poo of other animals. But one dung ball isn't enough for Hugo the dung beetle – he wants as many as possible! He stores them all around the forest and doesn't talk to anyone. But what happens when all his treasures dissolve in a few seconds right before his eyes? Hugo the dung beetle is a story about greed, the strength of friendship and what actually makes us happy, even when everything else is garbage.



Simona Smatana
Hugo the Dung Beetle
Monokel, Bratislava, 2022, 40 pp.
ISBN 978-80-82340-12-2

Monokel Publishing house
rights@monokelbooks.com





Hlboko v lese, medzi napadaným lístím a zeleným malinčím, si chrobáčik Hugo pripravuje chutnú voňavú dobrotu - guľôčku z hovienok zvierat. Keď je guľôčka veľká a krásna, odvalká si ju domov. Hugo je totiž hovnivál.

Deep in the forest, among the fallen leaves and green raspberry bushes, Hugo is making himself a treat that smells delicious – a ball of animal droppings. When he has a big, beautiful ball, he will roll it home. Hugo is a dung beetle.



Ibaže Hugovi jedna guľôčka nestačí. Je nenasytý a chce ich mať čo najviac! Chodí po lese a zbiera všetky hovienka, ktoré nájde, aj keď ich zďaleka toľko nepotrebuje.

But one dung ball isn't enough for Hugo. He is greedy and wants as many dung balls as possible! He wanders around the forest and collects all the poopoo he can find, even though he really doesn't need that much.

DUNG BEETLES

There are more than 5000 species of dung beetles, and all of them work without stopping on all continents of the world except Antarctica. They clear up the poo of elephants, giraffes, cows and horses, so it doesn't lie on the ground and cover the entire planet. After all, who would want to live with that?! So we should be

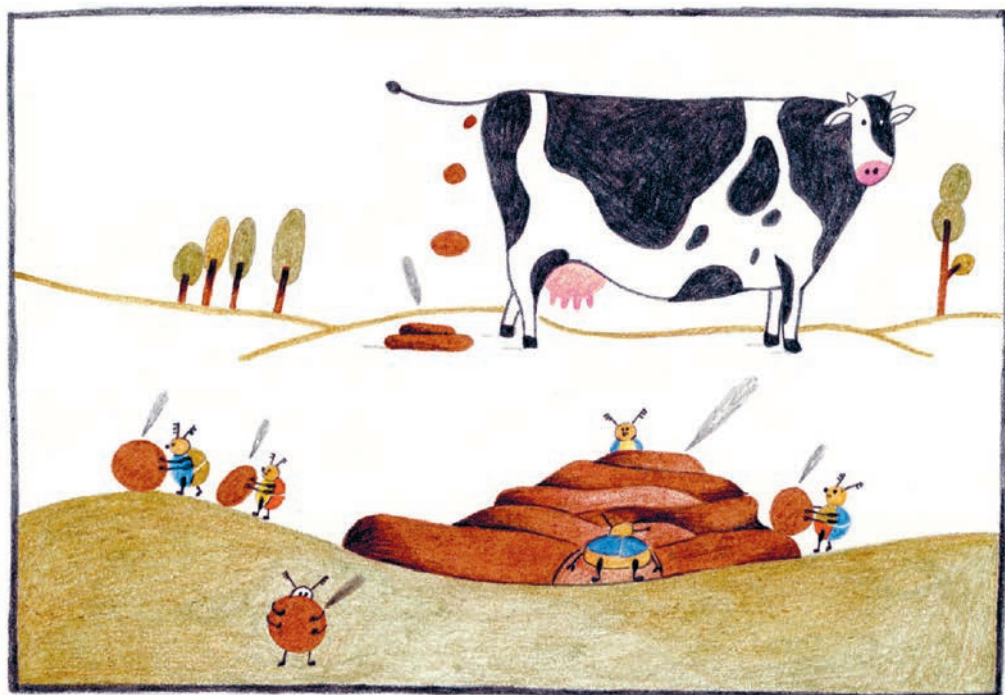
really grateful to them for their tireless work. The Dor beetle is a type of dung beetle that is widespread in Europe. It grows up to 2.5 cm in length, which is big for a beetle. Its hard, oval body is black with a blue sheen. It has six legs with spurs on them and two antennae. It lives for 2 to 3 years and can fly.



POO IS THEIR BREAD AND BUTTER

Dung beetles are given their name for a good reason – their favourite food is the fresh droppings of plant-eating animals; the droppings contain plenty of undigested nutrients. They spend their evenings flying near these animals and waiting until some fresh “food” drops.

Dung beetles love the smell, so they find it very quickly. They don't wait to be asked, but immediately roll away a dungball and take it back to their burrows. Dung beetles help to reduce the population of flies and other pests by quickly getting rid of the poo that attracts them.





SIMONA SMATANA (1988)

is an illustrator, picture-book maker and beekeeper based in Trnava, Slovakia. She studied advertising design at the University of Bedfordshire in England and international marketing at Edinburgh Napier University in Scotland. Books from Simona's beloved animal stories series, including titles such as *Joey the Beekeeper* and *Frankie from the Compost Heap*, have been translated into 12 languages so far. The book *Hugo the Dung Beetle* won an award at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava 2023 and was in the selection of books of the year according to the network of bookstores Martinus and the Library for Children and Youth in Košice.



A Year of Good News

Martin Smatana

A heart-warming collection of 52 stories — one for each week of the year — to make you feel a little bit better about the world we live in, accompanied by unique illustrations made from recycled fabric.

We've got good news for you! Who wouldn't like to hear this, especially at times when it feels as if reasons to be happy are becoming quite rare? Even though it may seem that way, good news has not actually disappeared from the media; you just need to try a bit harder to find it. The illustrator and filmmaker Martin Smatana has saved you the trouble with his collection of 52 good news stories from around the globe. And to reinforce their positive message, he has crafted cheerful pictures out of used textiles to accompany them. We hope that these real stories will now also appeal to you, inspire you and cheer you up.

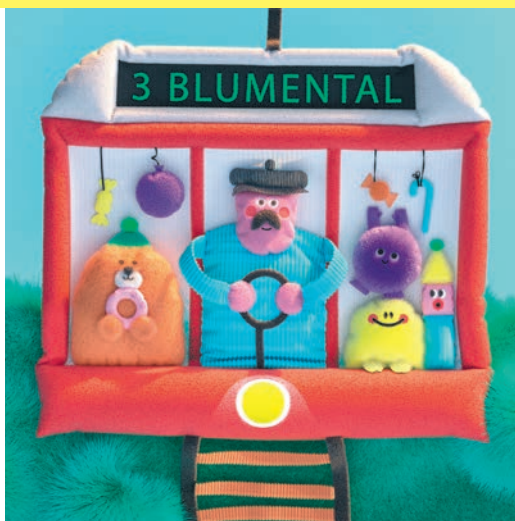


Martin Smatana
A Year of Good News
Monokel, Bratislava, 2023, 112 pp.
ISBN 978-80-82340-23-8

Monokel Publishing house
rights@monokelbooks.com



Every year for his birthday a tram driver in Bratislava decorates his car with sweets and prepares small snacks for his passengers. The tram's passengers thank him with songs, well wishes or paper notes.



EXCERPT TRANSLATED BY OLÍVIA VIŤAZKOVÁ



After the man who recorded the announcements for the London Underground passed away, his late wife visited the station near their home every day to hear her husband. Out of respect for her, her husband's voice speaks to passengers at Embankment Tube station to this day, even following the modernization of the system, during which someone else re-recorded the announcements for all the other stations.

A YEAR OF GOOD NEWS

When foxes began to invade the Australian Middle Island at low tide, endangering the colony of the tiniest penguins in the world, the locals called on two shepherd dogs for help: Eudy and Tula. Thanks to their loud barks successfully deterring foxes for years, the rare penguin colony increased to 180 members and Eudy and Tula became officially recognised as protectors of the island.



CHILDREN'S BOOKS FROM SLOVAKIA 2024



140 rescue dogs from around the world together with their trainers searched for survivors underneath the rubble following an earthquake in Turkey. The dogs, who usually have to travel in the dark, cold and loud environment of the plane's cargo hold, were on their way back home upgraded to first class by Turkish Airlines as a token of gratitude.

A man from Chile adopted 5 siblings from an orphanage so that they could grow up together without being separated.



A man from Australia has been regularly donating his plasma for over 63 years. His rare and powerful antibodies can treat a blood disease in newborns, and so far have helped save two million lives.





MARTIN SMATANA (1991)

is an animator, a graduate of Animation at FAMU Film School in Prague, Czech Republic. His graduation film *The Kite* was premiered at Berlinale 2019, selected to semi-finals of the Student Academy Awards, included in the Film Collection of MoMA and won over 60 international awards including Best Children Film at the Annecy festival and Best short film for children at Stuttgart Film Festival. He is currently developing a short animated film *Hello Summer* and continuing to collect good news stories which he turns to soft textile illustrations. *A Year of Good News* has been published in English (Boxer Books, 2023).

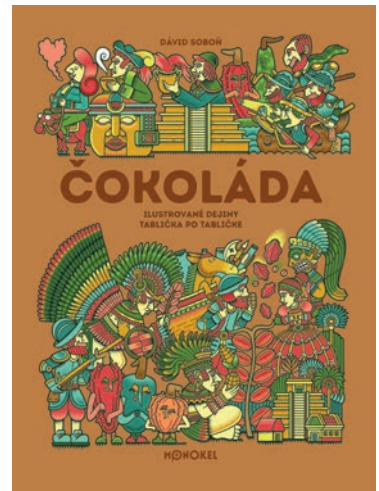


Chocolate

Dávid Soboň

This illustrated book discovers the fascinating journey of chocolate through history, from Mesoamerican cocoa plantations, through Aztec ceremonial halls, Spanish royal courts and industrial “chocolate cities” right to your secret hiding place for sweets.

Admit it, have you had a piece of chocolate today? Chocolate is guaranteed to stimulate the body and spirit, and there is no shortage of opportunities to indulge in it. While munching on it, open this illustrated book and discover its fascinating journey through history, from Mesoamerican cocoa plantations, through Aztec ceremonial halls, Spanish royal courts and industrial “chocolate cities” to your secret hiding place for sweets. And just to be certain, make sure that you have enough of it there to read – with surprising stories that David Soboň chose and drew in this book, it’s like chocolate itself – you always want to indulge in a little more.



Dávid Soboň

Chocolate

Monokel, Bratislava, 2023, 64 pp.

ISBN 978-80-82340-21-4

Monokel Publishing house

rights@monokelbooks.com



KAKAOVÉ VOJNY

Tak ako o každú vzácnu komoditu, aj o kakao viedli národy nedotlačné boje. Expanzívni Aztékovia vyrážali často na dlhé vojnové výpravy s plánom podmaniť si oblasti s najúrodnnejšou pôdou pre pestovanie kakaa.

Medzi ich prvotné ciele patrilo Soconusco. Obyvatelia z tejto oblasti museli každoročne odovzdať Tenochtitlanu, centru aztéckej civilizácie, daň vo výške 400 nákladov kakaa.

Kakao bolo aj súčasťou armádneho prísunu vojakom.



26

Aztékovia síce nepoznali chemické zloženie a účinky kakaa, ale vedeli, že ich bojovníkom dodá potrebnú silu a energiu počas dlhých pochodov a bojov s nepriateľmi.

Nosili si ju na dlhé výpravy v podobe lisovaných granúl alebo platiek, ktoré si potom rozrábali vo vode.

27

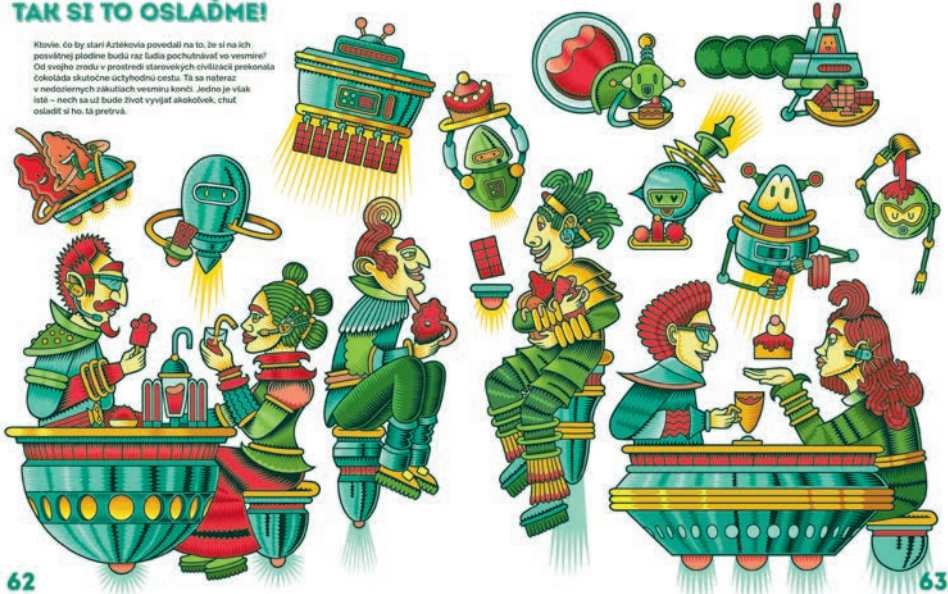
THE COCOA WARS

Bitter wars have been fought over cocoa, as they have over every precious commodity. The expansionist Aztecs often waged long military campaigns in order to conquer areas with the most fertile soils for growing cocoa. Soconusco in Mexico was one of the most important of these campaigns. Every year, the inhabitants of this region had to pay a tribute of 400 loads of cocoa to Tenochtitlan, the centre of the Aztec civilisation.

Cocoa also constituted part of a soldier's army rations. The Aztecs were unaware of the chemical structure and effects of cocoa, but they knew that it gave their warriors the strength and energy they needed during long marches and battles against their enemies. On long expeditions, they carried it as pressed granules or cakes that were then stirred into water.

TAK SI TO OSLAĎME!

Ktovie, čo by starí Aztékovia povedali na to, že si na lich porovnávnej plodine budú raz ľuďia pochutnávať vo vesmíre? Od svojho zrodu v prostredí storočných civilizácií prekonala čokoláda skutočne ťažkú cestu. Tá sa nateraz v nedostupných zákutiach vesmíru končí. Jedno je však isté – nech sa už bude žiť vyvíjať akokoľvek, chuť osládiť si ho, tá pretrvá.



62

63

THE PLEASURES OF LIFE

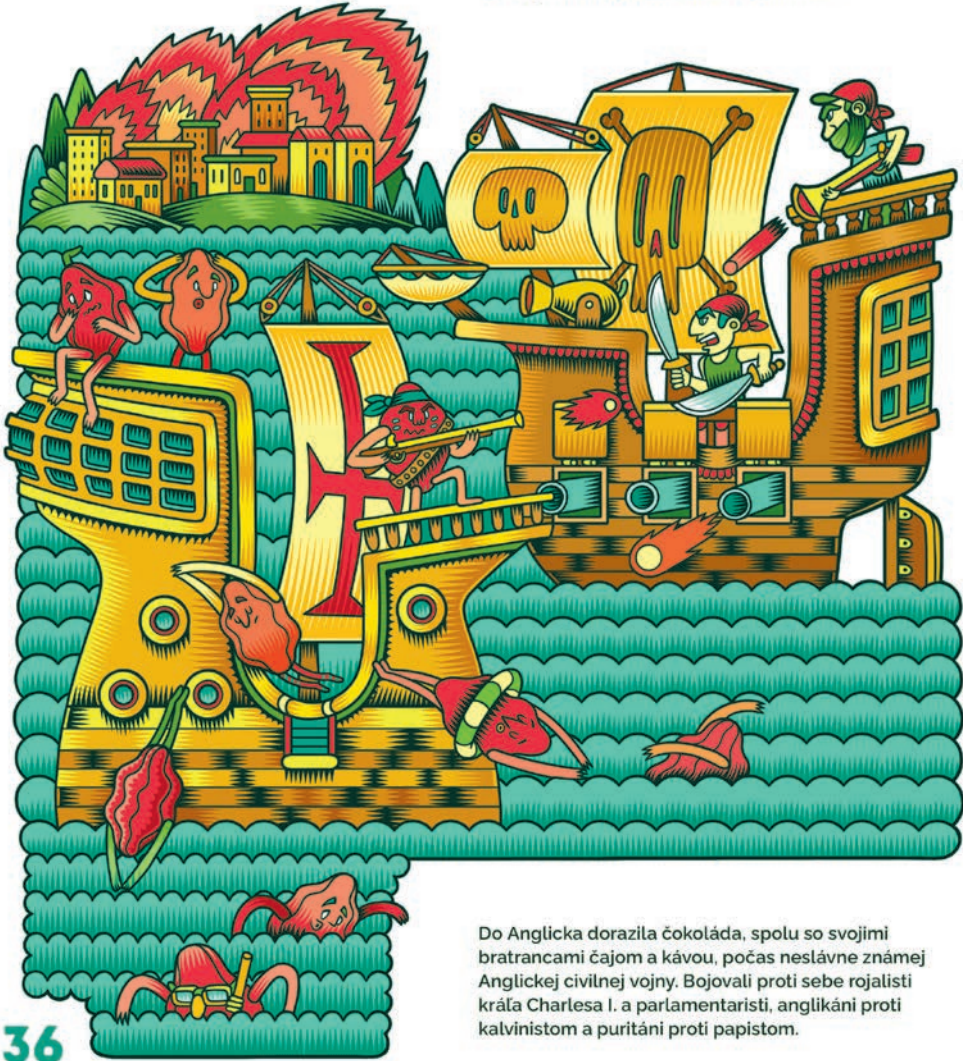
Who knows what the ancient Aztecs would say today if they knew that their sacred crop was enjoyed by people all around the world? Since chocolate was first discovered by ancient civilisations, it has made an

arduous but remarkable journey, which ends in unexplored corners of the world – at least for now! But one thing is certain: however life develops, the desire for pleasure will persist.

SLASTNÉ RADOSTI

Počas španielsko-anglickej vojny sa s kakaom ako prví stretli nebojácni anglickí piráti a korzári, ktorí napádali španielske obchodné flotily.

Spočiatku lode s nákladom kaka podpaľovali a potáпали, pretože neznáme bôby považovali za ovčí trus. V prístave Guatulco v Novom Mexiku dokonca spálili viac ako 100 000 dávok kakaových bôbov, čo už predstavovalo skutočné bohatstvo.



36

Do Anglicka dorazila čokoláda, spolu so svojimi bratrancami čajom a kávou, počas neslávne známej Anglickej civilnej vojny. Bojovali proti sebe rojalisti kráľa Charlesa I. a parlamentaristi, anglikáni proti kalvinistom a puritáni proti papistom.

SWEET DELIGHTS

The first Englishmen to encounter cocoa were the fearless pirates, or corsairs, who attacked Spanish trading fleets during the Anglo-Spanish war.

Initially they burned and sank ships bearing a cargo of cocoa, because they thought the unknown beans were sheep droppings. In Huatulco harbour, New Mexico, more

than 100,000 batches of cocoa beans, representing immense wealth, were burned. Chocolate, along with its cousins, tea and coffee, arrived in England during the inglorious English Civil War. The Royalist troops of King Charles I fought against the Parliamentarians, Anglicans against the Calvinists and Puritans against the Catholics.



DÁVID SOBOŇ (1990)

is a creative amphibian – illustrator and graphic designer. In his work, he can easily cover all areas of illustrative work – commercial, book, editorial or game illustration. Illustration is simply his life and he approaches it with his unique dose of enthusiasm. In his free time, David likes to read reportage literature, browse through his collection of picture books, drink tea or think up what new book he could create. In 2023, he received the award of the Ministry of Culture for the best illustrations of the year in the Most Beautiful Book of Slovakia competition for his first authorial picturebook *Káva: ilustrované dejiny dúšok po dúšku* (Coffee: an Illustrated History Sip by Sip).



Children's Books from Slovakia 2024
© Slovak Literary Centre

Editors

Miroslava Bilačičová, Mária Vargová

Translation

© Isabel Stainsby, Olívia Víťazková,
Zuzana Ďurfinová

English language supervision by
Suzanne Marie Strekal, Mária Modrovich

Graphic Design and Layout

© Vojtech Ruman

Printed in Slovakia by Neografia, a. s.

Contact

Slovenské literárne centrum /

Slovak Literary Centre

Nám. SNP 12

812 24 Bratislava

Slovak Republic

booksfromslovakia@litcentrum.sk