

NEW  
HUNGARIAN  
CHILDLIT

THE  
TALES

*Dreams are  
Private Stories  
& Stories are  
Shared Dreams*

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ALES

TWENTY TWENTY-TWO

Petőfi  
Cultural  
Agency



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& Stories are  
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NEW  
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ALES

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TWENTY TWENTY-TWO

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WHEN *the*  
SMALLEST  
AMONG US IS  
*the* MIGHTIEST

The very premise of László Kolozsi's dystopian adventure novel is sure to capture the imagination of young readers. The exciting events unfold from the extraterrestrial setting with great dramaturgy. Kolozsi also has a unique sense of humor and a gift for poetic imagery that make the text an engaging page-turner. The plot moves at a gripping pace and the tone of the narrative is distinctive and amusing. Even the sternest, most stoic reader will be moved. "Pedro did not like life. He didn't tell anyone, but he did not like life."

# *The Moon's Memories*

Pedro, the hero of the story, is an astronaut, so on the memorable day when memories vanished from people's minds, he was in space. Pedro watched as far below him, a mysterious radio wave surrounded the earth. When he returned to earth to see what had become of its inhabitants, he realized that no one remembered anything from their lives before the wave had hit. From one moment to the next, everyone had forgotten everything.

Or rather not quite everyone. In addition to Pedro, a nine-year-old girl named Matilda had not lost her memories, nor had a brain surgeon named Béla Zoltán Adorjáni. The three of them team up to try to find out what has happened and to give people back what they yearn for the most: their memories.

Matilda, a girl with a voice as sweet as a daffodil, is the gentle, lonely child heroine in this story. Matilda has unusual talents, and her style of communication is very distinctive. She does not resemble the clichés about young women. "You don't have to speak to me as if I were a little girl," she says. The brain surgeon Béla Zoltán Adorjáni is both witty and knowledgeable, and together, the three of them set out to unravel the mystery. Many others join them in their struggle to save humanity. They must take many risks and make many sacrifices, on in other words, as so often happens in tales, the good must fight against the bad, but fortunately, the good examples they set are followed by others. As they pursue their mission, they develop a strong sense of camaraderie, and their faith in the bonds that unite us is strengthened. Gradually, it becomes clear that we are not alone in the universe. There are other intelligent forms of life, though it's not immediately obvious that this is good news. There are references in the story to Greek mythology, family conflicts, fearful illnesses that strike the elderly, and much, much more. The tone of the narrative is often sarcastic, but the perspective is one of empathy. A captivating and rare mix!

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Dániel Szinvai

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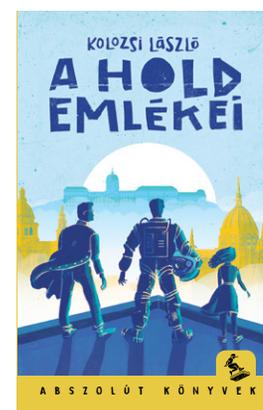
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“Hello,” Pedro said. He used the English greeting because on the ship, they spoke English. The others looked at him surprised, as if they didn’t recognize him. Pedro saw a strange look of confusion in their eyes. They had been flying together for a long time, and they had fought a great deal. He knew al-

most every move they made, but he had never seen such confusion on their faces.

“Is something wrong?” he asked, in English of course. He wondered what in the heck was going on.

“Hi,” the Dutchman said. Or more precisely, “hello.” And that was all he could say.

They had seen the wave too. They too sensed that something terrible had come to pass.

They were acting strangely. The Englishman, Henry James, adjusted the collar of his shirt and spoke.

“Earth isn’t responding.”



“That’s bad,” Pedro said. The others nodded. Very bad.

They were stern. Everybody in the control room was stoic. No one said a word.

Pedro tried to recall what he had seen. There had been a big flash, and this big flash had then surged into a wave that had circled the earth. This ripple had been a bit like what one sees in the summer heat over slick asphalt roads.

Pedro wondered what it had been. He had never seen anything like it before. Perhaps he had read about similar things in physics books, or any of the books had had read in training, but nothing came to mind.

“Did you see it too?” he asked the others, but they just looked at him dumbfounded. Pedro might as well have been a cat staring at them. He thought they were behaving as if they had been playing some stupid video game for too long and had forgotten how to think. He wasn’t far from the truth.

“Hello!” he said, waving his hand in front of their noses as one might do with a child lost in a trance.

“Pedro,” the Korean officer groaned.

“Bird,” Pedro said.

Kim, the Korean officer, had said that Kim was such a common name in Korea that he wanted them to call him Bird instead. He liked Bird better than Kim. The others hadn’t argued.

But all of a sudden, the Korean officer didn’t seem to understand why Pedro was calling him bird. He looked left and right as if trying to find a bird that had flown into the control room. One of the lights in the control room flickered red, and a low hum started coming from the engine room.

“A bird?” the Korean officer asked.

“Kim,” Pedro said.

“Kim,” the Korean officer said slowly, as if he had just woken up from a long sleep.

“That’s me!”

“Good,” Pedro said. “That’s one step forward. I saw something out there, above the earth.”

“We saw it too,” Kim said.

“Something’s gone terribly wrong,” Henry James said, turning towards them. It was all he could add.

“What?” Pedro asked, already a bit tense. And hungry. And he would have liked to have had a few bites to eat with Bird. Who, true to his name, preferred just to nibble on the canned food.

“I know what these instruments are for,” Henry said, looking at the control panel and the monitors. “But I don’t know what happened. I don’t know if it would be worth going back to earth. No one down there is answering our questions about what happened. The earth seems to have gone mute. It seems to be empty.”

Pedro walked over to Henry, put his hand on his shoulder and gave it a shake. He didn’t like Henry. Once, about a hundred and sixty days earlier, they had had a fight that had been so bad that they hadn’t spoken to each other for one hundred days.

“Then we have to go,” Pedro said.

“I’m not sure,” Henry said. “I don’t know if it’s worth it. What if you see something down there that makes you want to come right back here? I don’t know what’s waiting for us on earth. But I’m afraid. I don’t know what I can do. It’s possible that there’s no one waiting for us down there at all. It’s possible we’re the only ones left.”

As he said this, he pressed the alarm button.

The room went red, and in the flickering

red light Pedro shouted, “turn it off!” Henry turned off the alarm.

“I want to go down and see what has happened,” Pedro said. “I didn’t want to be down there. Here, at least I can really and truly be alone. But now I feel like there is something important for me to do down there, and I have to go. I have to see what happened, perhaps some catastrophe, and I have to see if there is anything I can do.”

At this, Van Hilden, the Dutchman, who had been standing mute behind them, spoke up, but in a voice so quiet that they could hardly hear him.

“I don’t want to go home anymore.”

Pedro called ground control and the dispatcher from the US base in Houston replied, but he was rambling on and on, something about how he had spilled food on his suit and there was no more ham left. It was clear as day, even the days on the base, which were very clear after the sun had risen in the mornings, that something had gone terribly wrong down there.

Everyone at ground control seemed puzzled, and one of the dispatchers, who sounded like a finch who had learned to talk, was almost weepy.

“I don’t know what happened, but I have lost the will to live,” he said. “My wife called me a few minutes ago. I knew it was her, but I couldn’t remember a single detail of the lives we have shared. I couldn’t remember why I loved her. I remembered having proposed to her, but I couldn’t remember why I did it.”

Pedro was utterly baffled by what he heard. Everyone on earth must have gone mad, he thought. Or perhaps everyone, including them. They had lost their minds, it seemed, perhaps only for a short time, but perhaps not.



YOU NEVER

KNOW *just*

*who* YOU MIGHT MEET

*in the* **SANDBOX**

“There is never any justification for striking a child! Unless the child is choking, in which case the child should be laid face down across one’s knees and rhythmically patted on his or her back.”

When a storyteller also happens to be a lawyer, it’s perhaps not surprising that she might write a moving tale which reminds us of a message that is important the world over: child abuse is unacceptable.

# *The Sandpiper*

Katalin Tasi’s carefully paced text does not present this essential message with didactic tools intended for adults. It speaks, rather, to children, capturing their perspectives with humor, understanding, and empathy.

An understanding of the pain we can cause others with bullying and even physical abuse is essential for every child, and of course not only for children, but also for adults. Tasi’s story open her reader’s eyes to the seriousness of this tragically common problem. It will be particularly useful in educational settings as a book with which teachers can help their students understand this message while also reminding themselves of the prevalence of abusive behaviors. It also offers an enjoyable read as a stand-alone story.

A new child joins a kindergarten class and behaves very differently from the other kids. The kids start calling him Sandpiper because he refuses to go inside and is always playing alone in the sandbox. He is a bit wild, even a bit strange, but the kindergarten teachers are loving and patient and try to help him join the other children and become part of the group. The other kids, however, laugh at him and tease him. They resent the fact that he has apparently appropriated their favorite yellow shovel. One day, a woman walking down the street next to the kindergarten playground strikes the boy’s hand to punish him for scattering sand on the sidewalk.

The Sandpiper speaks up for the very first time: “There is never any justification for striking a child!” At that moment, the other children suddenly realize that they too have often been victims of different forms of abuse, all too frequently at the hands of adults. These children, who until now have been nameless in the tale, are given names and individual stories. They begin to reflect on the times when they were bullied, and they now turn to the new kid in the class with compassion. We learn that his name is Peti, and Peti goes from being someone who takes refuge in the sandbox to a welcome member of the class.

The story is accompanied by Ilka Mészely’s playful illustrations, which conjure the visual world of children’s drawings.

*author / illustrator*  
Katalin Tasi  
Ilka Mészely

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The little blond-haired boy who always had at least one bruise on his knee was thinking that this kid was a complete moron.

The boy with glasses was wondering why the kindergarten teacher wasn't scolding him.

The little girl with the pigtails and the pink skirt thought that if she barely just touched his leg under the table, he would probably kick her.

The twins, who always wore the same clothes, were thinking about how their parents would have made them sit in the corner a long time ago if they had done anything like that.

The little girl with brown hair and a cherry-red hairband was thinking about how glad she was that she didn't have to sit next to him.

The quiet little girl who always played alone just wished it was story time already.

The sweet little girl was simply thinking, "oh dear, poor thing, whatever he's going through must be quite dreadful if he's squirming like that."

The others were just disgusted with him. They turned their eyes away and acted as if he weren't even there, and they waited impatiently for lunch to be over.

And the biggest boy, who was almost old enough to start elementary school, kept thinking to himself that he badly wanted to punch this kid right in the face.

Interestingly, the kindergarten teacher did not scold him. She took the others aside and told them to have a quiet break, and then she sent the Sandpiper out to play in the garden with the groundskeeper.

The children found him there later that afternoon when they went out to play after having had their midmorning snack. He was standing next to the fence with his **BIG YELLOW SAND SHOVEL** in one hand. He was rhythmically banging it against the metal bars while he poured little balls of sand onto the concrete base of the fence. A little bit of the sand

may have spilled out into the street. The boy probably would have continued rattling his shovel against the fence and shoveling the sand onto the concrete until evening fell, but as it so happened, a woman came strolling by pulling a shopping cart behind her. She stopped and fixed her gaze on him.

"What a silly little boy you are," she said. "Don't scatter sand all over the sidewalk!"

The Sandpiper probably didn't even hear what the woman had said, for he poured another shovel of sand on top of the pile, and most of it spilled over onto the sidewalk.

The woman wasn't simply going to stand idly by and watch a boy misbehave. She smacked the boy's hand, which he was using to hold on to the fence.

"You bad little boy! You should be ashamed of yourself!"

And what do you think the boy did? Did he burst out crying? Did he stare down at the ground in shame? Did he say a quiet "excuse me" to the woman? Nothing of the sort!

The Sandpiper, who until then had not said a single word, fixed his gaze on the woman and started yelling.

"There is never any justification for striking a child! Striking a child is strictly off limits!"

He paused for a moment and then quietly added, "unless the child is choking, in which case the child should be laid face down across one's knees and rhythmically patted on his or her back."



He then continued, almost as if he were a tape recorder.

“Several other things are also strictly off limits, including

slapping,  
bashing,  
smacking,  
biffing,  
bopping,  
pinching,  
thumping,  
and scratching.

Also strictly off limits are

yanking,  
throttling,  
hair pulling,  
shoving,  
pushing,  
poking,  
tripping, and even  
kicking them in their backsides.

The woman was so shocked that she simply turned around without saying a word and stormed off.

The other kindergartners stood and stared in speechless wonder. The Sandpiper, it seemed, however strange he may be,

1. Could talk!
2. Was right!

And they were all thinking of something.

The little blond-haired boy who always had at least one bruise on his knee was thinking about how unpleasant it had been at the last big family lunch when his cousin, of course taking care to ensure that none of the adults present noticed, had hit him on the back of his neck so hard that his neck had popped, and then his cousin had chuckled

and said, “bet you’re going to burst out sobbing, you little wimp!”

The boy with glasses was thinking about how much he hated it when his grandfather’s neighbor would playfully bonk him on the head, because even though he acted as if it were just a game, it still hurt minutes later.

The little girl with the pigtails and the pink skirt was thinking about how she still had a mark on her shoulder from the scratch she had gotten on the playground two weeks earlier.

The twins, who always wore the same clothes, were thinking about how every time they fought, they would pull each other’s hair, and it always hurt a lot.

The little girl with the brown hair and the cherry-red hairband was thinking about how on a couple occasions she and her brother had gotten into such a big fight that they had even bitten each other, and the memory of being bitten sure sticks in your mind.

The quiet little girl who always played alone was thinking about how, when the ballet teacher had yelled at her in front of all the other girls for having messed up a step, that had been as bad as a punch in the stomach.

The sweet little girl was thinking about how she wanted to go up to the Sandpiper and give him a big hug. Or at least take his hand in hers.

The others were all thinking of something. Like how much it hurts when someone smacks

you on the back. Or how humiliating it is when someone trips you, and then as you’re lying on the ground, trying to hold back your tears, all the others are laughing at you.

Others were thinking about how your eyes burn with tears when you get pinched when you’re playing, and how bad it feels when someone deliberately pushes you when you’re playing tag.

And the biggest kid, the one who was almost big enough to start elementary school, was thinking about how scared he was and how much it hurt when his father would smack him on the weekends for not putting away his toys in time, and about how he would cry in secret.

The kindergarten teacher immediately ran over the Sandpiper, of course, and she wrapped him in her fragrant sweater, stroked his hand, and whispered gentle words in his ear. The little boy started to cry, loudly for a while and then just muffled sobs. And soon, he had stopped crying. Once he had calmed down, he stood up and took his **BIG YELLOW SAND SHOVEL** to the biggest kid in the class, the one who would soon be going to elementary school, and he handed it to him.

“I’m not Sandpiper,” he said. “I have a real name.”

The other kids just stood there, a bit taken aback, and they all remembered something about how striking a child is strictly off limits.



*the* **WHOLE**  
**WORLD**  
*in* **A SINGLE**  
**BOOK**

*“Dreams are private stories, and stories are shared dreams.”*

Samuel Allo

Two Stars - The Stories of a Wandering Storyteller, a collection of stories collected by Samuel Allo and accompanied by illustrations by Hajnalka Szimonidesz, is a unique work on the children's book

## *Two Stars*

market. The very story of this collection itself resembles something of a folk tale. Samuel Allo, a widely traveled storyteller from Breton, roams from village to village with neither money nor a telephone (in the twenty-first century no less!) gathering and retelling stories. Perhaps it was no coincidence that he happened to be picked up by an independent Hungarian children's book publisher when he was hitchhiking in Hungary.

Allo, who speaks French, English, and Spanish, spent a few days telling stories of faraway lands to the family that had picked him up before moving on. The head of the Kisgombos Publishing House, however, could not get the many stories from countries as far away as South Africa, New Zealand, Mexico, and Syria out of her head. After Samuel's umpteenth visit, these stories were reincarnated in a new language in translations by Kata Gombos. They were also given a shared home in this exceptionally beautiful volume.

These distinctive folk tales, heretofore unknown in Hungary, are vessels of wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. In these retellings by Samuel Allo and the vibrant translations by Kata Gombos, they offer testimony to shared human experience in a shared world. In other words, they remind us that no matter where we live, we share values that span both centuries and continents.

Hajnalka Szimonidesz has created a visual backdrop for these tales consisting of images that might well be characterized as paintings, for the word “illustration” does not quite capture the feeling that one has when one takes the book in hand and thinks, quite simply, “this is the most beautiful collection of stories I have ever seen.”

*author / illustrator*  
Samuel Allo  
Hajnalka Szimonidesz

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One night when I was in Burkina Faso, Africa, I didn't have a place to sleep. The villagers suggested that I knock on the door to Aruna's house, as Aruna was a storyteller himself. Aruna welcomed me warmly, and in exchange for a few stories from me, his six-year-old son told me the following tale, a story which he had learned from his father.

### *The Story of the Tailor*

Once upon a time there was a tailor. He lived with his family at the edge of a small village, where the fields begin to fold into rolling hills lifting themselves towards the sky.

This tailor spent most of his days in his workshop, in a swirling sea of motley fabrics, cloths, and colorful balls of thread, tirelessly making clothes for the villagers. He worked with all his heart and soul, doing his very best to make the most beautiful garments possible. And thanks to his sedulous work and his studious craftsmanship, he was able to provide for his family, and they lived a modest but comfortable life.

One day, when the tailor came home with a roll of new cloth on his shoulder and was just about to get down to work, there came a knock at the door of his workshop.

A somber figure in a black coat entered and spoke to him in an eerily menacing voice.

"Tailor," he said, "make me a cloak!"

The tailor began to tremble, and he spoke in a voice that quivered with fear.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The answer sounded like a stern sentence delivered from on high.

"I am Death, and I have asked that you make me a cloak. I shall wait until three days have passed, and if you have not finished my

cloak by then, I shall come for you and take you with me to the land from which no man returns.

Remember tailor, you have three days!"

Death then left and closed the door behind him.

The tailor stood motionless for a time. Then he somehow pulled himself together and got back to work, but he could not think of anything but his fearful encounter with Death and the grim thought of the fate that awaited him if he could not complete the task in time.

He had just finished laying out the roll of cloth when there came another loud knock at the door. This time, without so much as giving the tailor a moment to invite him in, a frighteningly thin, pale figure entered the workshop. He spoke in a sharp, commanding voice.

"Tailor, make a cloak for me too!"

Again, the tailor's voice quivered with fear.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The pale figure spoke, and there was not a trace of mercy in his voice either.

"I am Disease, and I want a cloak from you. I shall give you three days to sew it, but if you have not finished in three days, I shall come for you and take you with me to the land from which no man returns, and I shall take not only you, but each and every one of your children too."

"But, but..." the tailor stammered.

"Do not weary me with your whimpering," the pale figure said. "Have the cloak ready for me in three days!"

Disease then left and the tailor again was alone.

Make two cloaks in three days? Impossible! What could he do? Should he sew a cloak for Death or should he sew a cloak for Disease? He was brooding over this impossible question when all of a sudden there came another knock at the door.

This time, a warm figure with a bright smile stepped in and spoke in a voice soothing and warm.

"Tailor, I too would like to ask you to make a cloak for me."

The tailor's voice shook with anger as he spoke.

"Listen, two people have already knocked at my door today, and each of them asked me to make him a cloak, and each of them gave me only three days! But I cannot sew that many cloaks in three days! It would be impossible!"

"No cause for alarm, good tailor!" the gentle figure said. "If you do not have time to make me a cloak, then do not make me a cloak. We shall see each other again when three days have passed."

With that, the mysterious figure headed for the door. The tailor stumbled along behind him in astonishment.

"But who are you?" he asked.

The figure man stopped in the doorway and turned around.

"I am Gratitude," he replied.

Troubled by these three encounters and not knowing what to do, where to begin, the tailor finally left his workshop and went into the house to find his wife. The moment she saw him, she knew something unsettling had happened. She hurried to his side.

"What is troubling you?" she asked, her voice tense with worry.

"I am afraid..." he replied quietly.

"Afraid? But of what could you possibly be afraid?"

"Strange things have befallen me," he whispered, as much to himself as to her. "I fear I am in grave peril. I do not know what to do."

The tailor told his wife everything that had happened, from beginning to end.

"It's getting late," she said. "Go to bed!"



Sleep on it for one night, and trust me, tomorrow morning, you will know what to do.”

The tailor went to bed, and just as his wife had said would happen, when he awoke at sunrise, he knew exactly what to do.

He went into his workshop, carefully smoothed out the cloth that he had laid out the day before, took his scissors in hand, and one by one, he cut from the roll the pieces he would need to make a splendid cloak. Then he patiently began to sew.

His hands were nimble and precise as he sewed stitch after stitch. He worked with all his heart and soul, as he always did, and perhaps even more so than usual.

As the sun began to set at the end of the third day, he stood up straight. The cloak was finished. It was a dazzlingly beautiful garment, perhaps the most beautiful he had ever made.

He carefully folded it up and stepped out

through the workshop door into the open air.

Outside, the stars were just beginning to sparkle in the sky.

Three figures were waiting for the tailor by the door to his house: Death, Disease, and Gratitude. The tailor walked over to them.

“Where is my cloak, tailor?” Death snapped impatiently.

The tailor looked Death boldly in the eye.

“I have not made your cloak,” he said boldly.

“What?!” Death thundered. “Then you know the fate that awaits you!”

The tailor merely shrugged.

“And what of my cloak?” Disease said with an impatient snarl.

“Nor did I make a cloak for you,” the tailor replied, staring at Disease with a determined look in his eye.

“You dare defy me? Then you know the fate that awaits you and your children!”

Again, the tailor simply shrugged. Then, smiling, he lifted the carefully folded garment that he was holding, walked over to Gratitude, and gave the cloak to him.

“What a lovely surprise!” Gratitude said. “How is this possible? If you did not have time to make a cloak for Death and a cloak for Disease, how is it that you found time to sew one for me?”

The tailor replied in a calm voice.

“Three days ago, I realized a simple truth. I realized that even if I were to sew the most beautiful cloak that the world has ever seen for Death, sooner or later, he would still come for me. Even were I to sew the most beautiful cloak in the world for Disease, he still would return to search for me, and someday he may well find me, much as he may well find my children. And so I decided to devote what time I have not to Death and not to Disease, but to Gratitude.



MO

SALICS

*from  
the* PAGES *of*

**MEMORY'S  
DIARY**

Lilla Turi's book *What I Remember* is a captivating visual narrative of memory that follows the human journey from birth to death.

Accompanied by short texts, the story, which is woven out of expressive illustrations, will capture the imaginations of children and adults alike. The impressions shared in this

# *What I Remember*

visually stunning picture book remind us that so many of our experiences, however personal and individual, are shared responses to shifting challenges in a shared world.

*What I Remember* is deeply authentic and, one could even go so far as to say, confessional in no small part because illustrator Lilla Turi drew inspiration from her own family photo archive and wrote the texts herself, striking a perfect balance between the written and visual narrative. The result is a harmonious and moving book and a unique work of art: a diary of memories that brings together slivers and snippets from various stages of life to form an arresting mosaic.

Childhood adventures, the discoveries and excitements of adolescence, friendships, university years, love, and the beginnings of life as parents to the next generation are captured in a documentary style that resembles a photo album, as the artist gradually approaches old age and wrestles with illness and death, touching on these taboo subjects with honesty and openness.

Although the story comes to an end with a life also coming to an end, one still discerns the outlines of a sequel: with their memories, children and grandchildren continue the tale... "All stories began here. When does yours begin?" This life-affirming album will serve as an excellent point of departure for conversations in which important themes and major questions of human experience are raised.

*author / illustrator*  
Lilla Turi

*title*  
What I remember

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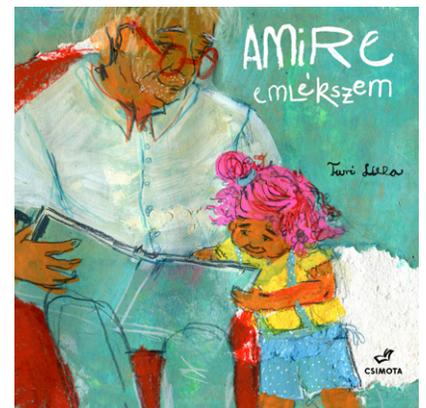
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Csányi Dóra  
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“

A dinner that we make together,  
even burnt, still tastes of home.

”





TAKE *a* FEW  
DANCE  
STEPS

*towards* YOURSELF

Eighteen-year-old author Míra Haszán's youth novel is based in part on personal experiences, but she has also drawn on the experiences of professional dancers and incorporated them into her story to ensure authenticity. The work offers rich insights into the world of ballet dancers, a world of perfectionism and immense pressures to perform at the highest level and meet demanding expectations. It is also a world of often troublingly distorted body images.

## *Pointe/Plié*

Haszán herself has experienced the psychological and physical traumas of anorexia, an eating disorder which affects many adolescents, and in this book, she describes the journey which led to this disorder openly and honestly, while also offering hope for recovery. *Pointe/Plié* is a novella with a good sense of drama and rhythm written in the vibrant language used by young people today. It offers a fast-paced narrative that will capture the attention of the age group for which it is intended.

Seventeen-year-old Iza Réti is obsessed with ballet and has been a student at the ballet institute for seven years. Since the age of three, she has dreamed of dancing the role of Princess Mary in *The Nutcracker*.

In her struggle to land the big role, Iza becomes increasingly entangled in a web of expectations placed on her both by others and by herself. Her grandmother Irina, a former prima ballerina, wants to see herself reincarnated on stage again in her granddaughter. Irina is determined to make Iza a star ballerina, and she is not afraid to use underhanded means or even to compromise Iza's health to achieve her goal. Iza's biggest rival in the battle for the lead role is her classmate Anna, who is the ballet teacher Nadja's daughter. Anna has dedicated her life to ballet. She too will do anything to land the role of Princess Mary, and her mother is almost deviously manipulative in her efforts to ensure that her daughter get the part. Tomi, Anna's dance partner and the boy she is in love with, wants to become a professional ballet dancer in spite of his soccer-player father's objections. Tomi wants to prove himself, and he puts this desire above everything else in his life, including his relationships with others.

Irina, Nadja, and Tomi manage to pressure Iza into doing physically and emotionally exhausting practice sessions and adopting a crazy, unhealthy diet. Yet as the day of the big show approaches, Iza comes to know herself and understand her anxieties better and better. She starts to set clear boundaries and arrive at her own independent understanding of the situation she is in and the people around her. By the end of the story, Iza has found herself, and she has freed herself of the need to impress others. She becomes the protagonist of her own life story, and she is able to make her own decisions about her present and her future.

*author*  
Míra Haszán

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Irina? What are you doing here?" I asked.

She furrowed her eyebrows.

"Oh, Iza, don't pester me with your stupid questions! Get ready! We don't want to be late. They're announcing who got the parts."

I quickly sat up in bed. But as I suspected, it was still dark outside.

"They won't start announcing the parts until 10:00, and," here I took a quick look at my watch, "it's only 7:00."

Irina's face hardened.

"You want to come hurrying in at the last minute? And besides, you still have to practice and stretch and do your hair!"

I climbed out of bed, still half asleep, threw on my clothes, and sat down at my makeup table. Now the only thing left was to put my hair in a bun.

Irina took the comb from my hand and started to tear at my hair with furious swipes.

"Good lord, do you ever even bother to brush your hair?" she muttered in disbelief. "It's appalling! They'll take one look at this mess and you're through! I can't fix this!"

I hated it when she did that. She was treating me like a five-year-old. I could do my hair just fine on my own.

"Where are your hairpins?" she asked.

"And where's the hairspray?" Then she started rummaging around in my drawers. "This mess is unbelievable. Who can you stand to live like this?"

"I've got it, Irinia."

The smell of hairspray filled the room, and the hairpins pulled the skin on my head tight. Irina grabbed my face and turned it towards the mirror on my makeup table.

"Now repeat what I told you the first day."

"Do I have to?"

Irina nodded.



“I have to get the role of Princess Mary, no matter what the cost! I have to shine on stage!”

She planted a kiss on the top of my head.

“Indeed, indeed!” Then she shouted to my mom, who was in the hallway. “Sonja, come look at your daughter!”

Mom burst out laughing when she saw me.

“A puckish little princess!”

Irina shot her a mean look. She never liked jokes. She regarded them as a pointless waste of time.

Once outside, she was just getting ready to start the car, but I stopped in the doorway.

“What’s wrong now?”

“Would you mind too terribly if I took the bus instead?”

“I’m not even going to bother replying to that. Get in the car now!”

I took one last look in the direction of the bus stop and then sulkily climbed into the car. As soon as we arrived at the institute, Zita came running towards me like a little bulldozer.

“Iza!” she squealed, and she eagerly threw her arms around me.

“Watch her hair!” Irina snapped.

Zoé walked towards us at a measured, graceful pace. Her hair was in a perfect bun, her lacy black dress was fabulously beautiful, and it elegantly accentuated her snow-white skin. Her face was smooth, and she stood with the composure and posture of a queen.

“Irina! What a pleasant surprise! Have you come to watch us?”

Irina’s lips curved into a smile for the first time that morning.

“Now that’s what a real ballerina looks like!”

Zita grimaced and then laughed bit, but she quickly fell silent.

The room was already a bustle of commotion, and everyone was stressed. Some of the dancers were banging their pointe shoes against the floor, others were putting on strips of kinesiology tape. Others were crying or laughing or practicing splits.

“Iza, help!” Lola said, sobbing in desperation.

“What’s wrong?”

“When I woke up, everyone in the dorm had already left, and I can’t find any of my hairpins! I’m ruined!”

I quickly gave her a bunch of hairpins.

“Calm down,” I told her. “Everything will be fine!”

“Girls,” Nadja shouted, “to the big room!”

I hated it when we went to the big room. Too much empty space, and the bright white walls were blinding.

We lined up in silence at the bar. Zoé in front, me in the middle, Anna behind me.

I grabbed the bar. My hands were trembling. I cast a glance at Zoe. She was breathing evenly and her posture was flawless. She exuded confidence. In her mind, she was going through the exercise step by step. You could tell from the way her mouth was moving. I envied her. That never worked for me.

“Lujza, let’s begin!” Nadja said, giving a wave of her hand.

Lujza, who has a gentle smile, had been the pianist at our institute for forty years. It was quite amazing, but she never once had a single sheet of music in front of her.

As soon as the music started, my legs and even my arms came to life. As we did pliés, Nadja’s voice rang in my ears.

“Heels down, butts in! Concentrate!”

I did exactly as she said. The voice in my head was still speaking. It continued speaking throughout my dance. When I finally relaxed a bit, a dark shadow towered over me: the choreographer’s cold silhouette. He was watching me like a vulture.

My stomach tightened. Was he nodding? Or shaking his head in despair? I couldn’t tell, but the way he was moving his head was clearly a fateful question.

“Concentrate!” I thought to myself. “Pretend no one else is here! Just you and the dance.” But I was still trembling.

Zita gave me an encouraging smile. Nadja was standing right behind her, shaking her head and taking notes. As if we were prisoners lined up for rollcall or something. Suddenly I heard a loud crash. Lola had collapsed.

“Don’t let friends hold you back!” Irina’s words rang in my head.

It was a cruel thought, but I had to do as she had said.

Nadja ran her fingers down Zoe’s bony back. Zoé’s hard features softened slightly, and a small smile came to her face.

It was my turn. I could almost feel Nadja’s dry hand on my back, but the next moment I was crushed. She had passed me by as if I were a ghost. She and the choreographer were exchanging glances and mumbling something. It was terrible! They already knew something I didn’t.

I wanted to stop and ask them if they needed me or not.

Big breath! Concentrate!

The next position was attitude. My arms seemed thicker and thicker, and my thighs felt as thick as an elephant’s. My face seemed droopy and saggy. I was the exact opposite of a ballerina...



HARMONIES

*that*

ELEVATE

*the*

SOUL

Harmony is the noblest type of informative book. It is moderately thorough in its educational aims and also an amazingly exciting storybook. These two functions are made possible in part by the informative and captivating visual world of the book and the user-friendly online music library (<https://www.pagony.hu/harmonia/zenetar>), both of which help the reader digest the wealth of knowledge presented.

# *Harmonia, the Realm of Music*

Illustrator András (b) Baranyai's fantastically vibrant drawings guide young readers with a sure hand and a richly evocative style.

Unlike other music education books, Ferenc Tarr's work presents music as a whole. Tarr devotes equal attention to folk music, jazz, pop, and classical music, and he offers an array of interesting facts, tidbits of information, and excerpts to listen to. In the preface to the book, he uses a playful style to invite young readers on a journey into the world of music, and he is always attentive to provide adequate guidance on the expedition. Alongside the main body of the individual chapters, one also finds informative notes in the margin with the most important contextual details, thus providing a reading that will be both useful and engaging for every member of the family, young and old alike.

Princess Melodia wants to find her own voice, so she sets out to explore the four domains of Harmonia, the empire of music: Folkia, Improvia, Poppia, and Classica. On her journey, she meets many musical instruments, styles, forms, musicians, composers, and singers, and she hears all kinds of music. Which will be hers?

Through Melodia's story, children will discover which kinds of music they like, and they will find inspiration and information which will enable them to pursue their aspirations.

*author / illustrator*  
Ferenc Tarr  
András (b) Baranyai

*title*  
Harmonia, the Empire of Music

*publisher*  
Pagony Publishing House

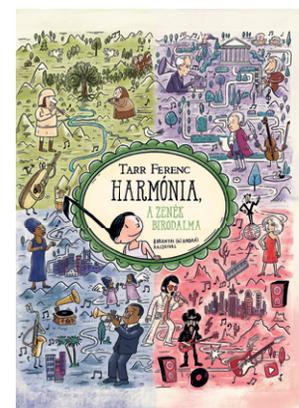
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There are moments in life when words fail you. When they don't come, and when they don't seem willing to bring to the surface the feelings that lie deep inside. Melodia faced this grim truth for the first time when she met her parents again after having been separated from them for a long, long while. She had imagined a thousand times what it would be like to see them again, what she would say when she stepped in front of them, quite unexpected, but in vain! Not a word came from her lips, and a moment later, she could not have said anything even if she had known what to say, for her mother and father were holding her so tight in their embrace that her head was almost trapped under King Major's arm, and she could hardly breathe. Her eyes filled with tears, undoubtedly not simply because her head was stuck, and indeed soon the tears were streaming down her face, a bit like the symphony in *Classica*. There is a saying in *Harmonia*: **"music begins where words are powerless to express."** In King Major's palace, the most wonderful music in the world was

playing silently. When they finally let go of one other, Queen Minor, who was still wiping away her tears, spoke.

"The heir to the throne should not do such a thing to her mother!" she said. It was all she could say. All three of them burst out laughing. Melodia could sense that everything was just as it once had been. Or not quite as it once had been. And that was just as well!

"So tell us, did you at least find what you were looking for?" her father asked.

"My voice?" Melodia replied. "No, that I did not find."

"What?" the king said, his voice suddenly overflowing with indignation. "You've been gone all this time and you haven't even found your voice? Do you know what you put us through?"

"Let her be," the queen said. "I'm sure the whole thing was not in vain."

Melodia found this new setup, her mother protecting her from her father, a bit unusual, but she liked it.

"I've learned a great deal," she said, "but it's true, I haven't found my voice. I'm sorry! And

I'm also sorry that you were so worried about me. But you don't have to worry anymore."

"Well, it's time for lunch," Queen Minor said cheerfully. "You can tell us the whole story from beginning to end, every victory and every defeat."

And so they sat down to lunch and Melodia began recounting her adventures. She began at the very beginning and told them of everything she had seen and done, each of her triumphs, each of her bitter disappointments. Soon enough, they had finished lunch. Then they finished their tea and crumpets. And then they finished dinner. It was quite late by the time Melodia reached the part of her story when she finally returned to her parents' palace and threw her arms around mother and father, which, having finished her tale, she now did again.

And no sooner had she wrapped her parents in her embrace than a strange and wonderful thing came to pass, a veritable miracle. Melodia clearly heard her melody, more clearly than she had ever heard it before. It had the purity of *Folkia*, the looseness of *Improvia*, the

sleek professionalism of Poppia, and the sophistication of Classica. It was so simple, so natural, so heartwarming, so beautiful that she began to tingle from head to toe. It was as if she could neither see nor hear, only feel, but it was a feeling she had never experienced before, and she immediately knew that from this moment on, every feeling she ever had would be different. From this moment on, everything would be different!

As gradually she began to see the world around her clearly again and the outlines of the elegant dining chamber emerged, the first thing she noticed was the quizzical look on her parents' faces.

"You couldn't possibly mean to suggest?"

"Yes!" Melodia replied, and she immediately began to laugh out loud. "I traveled every inch and acre of Harmonia, and it seems I never needed go any farther than the dining chamber!"

Melodia and her parents wrapped their arms around one another for the third time, and they began to shake with laughter. They did not realize, of course, that at that very moment, at that very late hour, as they were hugging in the dining chamber of the royal palace, that the springs of Pentatonica were flowing again. That when the familiar group met at the Blue Note Bar, all of them burdened with great sadness, and Satchmo

blew a sorrowful sigh into his trumpet, that a normal tone came from the instrument, and all of a sudden, the city of Improvia was again filled with the sound of swing. That Lala called Gitfiddle at this late hour and told him that he had to admit that they had thrown together a pretty good song, and Gitfiddle apologized for having driven the group so hard. That a piano, after having stared bitterly by candlelight at some sheet music, suddenly began to hear the music it was reading, and soon it heard the rich harmonies of the composition by Rachmaninov. And that all sorts of other music was being played in Classica without any conductor. They didn't all know this, of course, but they still sensed that something had fallen into place, and they knew that this was good. In Harmonia that night, everything was perhaps even more harmonious than ever before.



TAKE *a* MOMENT  
*to* HIDE FROM *the*  
PRESENT

Illustrator Jacqueline Molnár's album *Hide-and-Seek* is an interactive storybook for children born or growing up during the COVID19 pandemic. The pandemic, which has affected every aspect of people's lives the world over since 2020, has caused a serious economic and moral crisis, and children have been the hardest hit.

# *Hide-and-Seek*

This search-and-find book is a kind of therapeutic album for children, offering a recreation of the game of hide-and-seek in book form.

The book is intended to offer a diversion for children and a bit of relief from the stresses of the pandemic by inviting them to take part in an amusing variation on the game of hide-and-seek. When they peek through the hole in the middle of the album, they find a path that leads them into a fairy-tale world. In Jacqueline Molnár's world, the "mask" is not a sterile doctor's mask. It is, rather, a magic mask: the creature behind it could be a mouse, a monkey, a little girl, an astronaut, or a strange imaginary being.

The short accompanying texts, which are also the work of Jacqueline Molnár, are written from the perspective of a child, who tells the story of a strange pandemic which has crippled the world. Thus, any child anywhere in the world will be able to identify with the tale.

The arresting images by Molnár, who is an internationally acclaimed illustrator, also grab the reader's attention and create a visual world with which any child can identify. Molnár has used the simple styles of children's drawings to create clownish figures with comically exaggerated features. The illustrations are also easy to trace and copy because of the strong, simple lines out of which they are composed, thus encouraging young readers to try their hand at the art of drawing.

*Hide-and-Seek* is a perfect search-and-find book for use in a family or an institutional setting. It offers a playful way to alleviate some of the stresses of life in a time of pandemic by allowing us to escape, at least for a little while, from the realities of the present.

*author / illustrator*  
Jacqueline Molnár

*title*  
Hide-and-Seek

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3+

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“

It's always so fun to play with mom!  
Last time, we helped each other  
put on makeup. When dad came  
in the room, he said, “wait, who's  
this fairy-tale beauty?”

”

**NEW**  
**VISIONS**

*of a* HERETOFORE  
SHROUDED WORLD

Imagine a society where it is a sin to see. And among the blind, even someone with only one eye can never be king, for anyone who is caught breaking the supreme law, according to which the “lid” covering one’s eyes must never be removed, will be sent into exile at best or will simply be executed.

## *Lidless*

In András Gáspár Gáspár’s novel, which is intended to capture the imagination of a young adult readership, a tribe lives on a remote island somewhere in the farthest reaches of the Indonesian archipelago. The members of this tribe are blindfolded by pieces of skin sewn over their eyes when they are born, and they are never permitted to remove this veil, meaning that they have to live their entire lives blind. But what happens when a stranger arrives on the island? What happens if one member of the tribe experiences the gift of sight? How does the cruel, false system of the cult of blindness unravel?

In this fantastic, dystopian world, where in principle happiness reigns and no one ever cries, the shaman’s cruel strictures and implacable tribal law dictate every moment of daily life. The people who live in a world of smells, sounds, tastes, and things they can take in hand, people whose minds are shaped by the menacing ideology of songs sung in tribal ceremonies and the terrible tales of ancient legends, determinedly profess to be content as they live lives full of fear, tension, and stress.

This book is an allegory: an allegory about blindness, about not wanting to see. It is also an adventure novel, with dire tragedies and fateful moments, but it is not without elements of the mysterious, since dreams and myths play an important role. The world of the novel is distinctive and unique, one might say, but it is also familiar, for we hear in it echoes of the Englishman Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and works by Portuguese Nobel Prize-winning author José Saramago.

*author / illustrator*  
András Gáspár Gáspár  
Marcell Gulyás

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**T**he Lid is made of animal skin. Its nature and composition have been modified and transformed by sacred acts. The fine fibrous film, which is sewn over the eyes when the child is still an infant, reacts to the human skin, bonding with it and then growing as it grows. The Lid does not allow any light to pass through, but it permits the skin

to breathe. The fluids which collect, primarily when the child is still very young, drain through a tiny tear duct along the lower edges on either side of the lid. The sacred ritual of making the Lid and sewing it over the eyes has been handed down from generation to generation over the course of the many millennia of the tribe's history. The ritual is known

only to the shaman of the tribe. Following the birth of the child, the shaman sews the sacred Lid to the infant's skull using a needle made of ore. The shaman's eyes are also covered by a Lid, but as the sacred movements of this rite of initiation was handed down from generation to generation in the tribe, the ritual became more and more refined over time. Usually, the shaman passes his knowledge on to a successor of his own choosing. Thanks to the strength of this tradition, in the more recent times of skilled shamans only a few infants have perished during or as a consequence of the decades-old ritual, usually because of infections or an injury to the skull caused by the brass needle. After the initiation rite, the members of the tribe wear the ancient sacramental Lid for life. According to the teachings of tribal rituals, the wearing of the sacred Lid is a precondition for contentment. Without the Lid, the ancestors of the tribe once strayed down the paths leading to hell and damnation. Dutifully and respectfully following the guidance given by the shaman, the members of the tribe protect and take care of their holy Lid. From time to time, a Lid is damaged or injured. For the most part, these misfortunes befall careless youths who have just entered adolescence. As the principal healer for the tribe, the shaman himself cares for unfortunates who have injured their Lids. He must first determine whether the hapless soul has any chance of recovering and rejoining the community. Alas, the people of the village know of very few cases when the shaman was actually able to save someone who had injured his Lid from damnation."

[...]

"The Totem is a monumental human face carved into the rock at the far end of the main square behind a stone edifice as high as three men. The face's eyes are not visible. The two sockets are covered by a broad, dark strip. The Holy Lid, this is what he is called in the village. Several times a year, on the days of the tribe's ceremonious festivals, as the concluding act of the ritual, everyone comes, murmuring prayers, and marches up the thirty-three steps of the central dais to come before the great deity with bowed heads and touch the Holy Lid with humility and reverence. The people of the village do this to ask for affirmation and blessings for the rest of their lives. In return for their unconditional faith, the Lid God has granted the islanders peace and safety since time immemorial. The tribe is not at war. Its members live in peace, and the people of the land have enjoyed the gift of love and contentment for centuries. The lid people have never experienced horrific events like the cataclysms mentioned in the shamanic songs of the tribes of past worlds, of the cruel world

of hatred, recited in the ecstatic rituals of communal celebrations. These legends tell of pain and suffering. The tribe's bards chant tales of destruction at every worship service. Those who wear the lids live firm in their conviction that the God of the Holy Lid shall protect them from harm. They know nothing of suffering, and they cry only as infants. From the moment he comes to know the truths proclaimed by the tribe's shaman and experiences the blessing of the God of the Holy Lids, the young child who awakens to himself and the world around him lives the rest of his life in a state of peace and contentment. At the end of the communal ceremonies, the members of the tribe remind themselves that they are truly blessed. When they run their fingers over the face carved in the rock, the faithful shudder to think that the Totem, the one who wears the Greatest Lid, has existed since the beginning of the lid people's history. According to tribal lore, the gigantic human face was carved into the rock face at the dawn of the new age by an ancient forefather who saved his clan from the sins of its ancestors with the Holy Lid."

[...]

"The young people of the tribe, in addition to taking active part in household chores, tending to the gardens, caring for pets, and setting traps to catch game, also spend time with their mentors every day. Some of the great masters help the children become more dexterous, agile, and fleet. Others teach them about the flora and fauna in the world around them. Thus, by the time they have grown into adults, the members of the tribe can distinguish useful plants from useless or harmful ones, and they have learned how to grow and cultivate the flora they will need to survive. By the time they are of marriageable age, they have also mastered the skills of animal husbandry and game trapping. Thus, they are able to provide their families with rich, flavorful meals. Some mentors teach the children magic songs, stories, and dances, and when they find children with unusual talent, they teach them how to play instruments. Parents encourage their offspring to seek out the teachers as often as they can, for they know that the knowledge the mentors pass on will complement the experiences their children have gained from the time they have spent working around the house. The children also regularly seek out the shaman himself in the Mentor's Tent set up near the Totem. The shaman teaches them respect for the God of the Holy Lid and the other sacraments of the tribe, the importance of showing deference to the law, and the various tribal rituals. Thus, the youngsters' days are full, but there is always a bit of time for fun on the playground.



EVEN *in* DEPTHS *of* SPACE  
**WE NEED**  
**DREAMS**

*Gavarin and the Dream Antenna* is a science fiction novel written as a light space adventure tale. It is rich with striking motifs from the world of sci-fi and the adventure tale, not to mention references to books and films. The loose, humorously sketched images and the occasional theoretical digressions, which often touch on probing philosophical questions, offer an exciting and sophisticated read for children ages nine to twelve. The black-and-white illustrations by Juli Jásdi, which often resemble caricatures, make the reading experience even more engaging. For young readers, *Gavarin and the Dream Antenna* is the perfect introduction to science fiction.

# Gavarin and the Dream Antenna

Gavarin, a boy in the early years of elementary school, is woefully bored with his schoolwork and the monotonous, dull, gray weekdays. Although he finds some relief on weekends, the nightmare of Monday morning math class casts a shadow over even his happiest moments. Alas, he realizes that being an adult is hardly any better, as the adults around him resemble beasts of burden yoked to the plough. One night, Gavarin comes up with a brilliant idea. He turns his bedroom into a spaceship. Gavarin, alas, is not the kind of boy who can do handstands or climb up ropes, and when he and his classmates play tag, he's always the first kid to get tagged. But he can transform his room into a spaceship, and that is no mean feat! He writes a short letter bidding farewell to his parents, and then he fires up his spaceship, and the next thing he knows, he is rocketing through space. He has not departed on this voyage by himself. He has taken his dog Bukta with him, as well as Bruckner, the tabby tomcat, Masha, the black kitten, and even a carnivorous flower. In the course of his journey, he winds up entangled in an array of adventures, and he makes new friends along the way. On one planet, he helps a white-robed figure named Maximov recover from his addiction to gummi bears. He then takes on, as a travelling companion, Z, who has come from beyond the boundaries of the known universe. Z is a very unusual creature, for the size and shape of his body constantly shift depending on his mood. Though Gavarin has fled into space in order to escape school, he ends up attending a school far worse than the one on earth, and he and his companions have an important mission: to recover the dreams which have been stolen from the creatures of space.

*author / illustrator*  
Kornél Laboda  
Juli Jásdi

*title*  
Gavarin and the Dream Antenna

*publisher*  
Pagony Publishing House

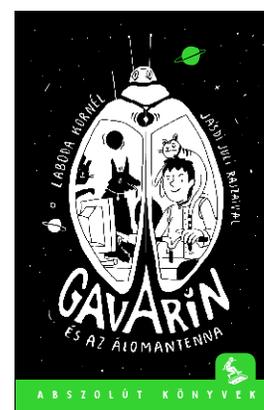
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## *Out of Dreams*

The dream repository was a pantry of sorts on the spaceship, only it wasn't full of jars of jam and sausages and pickled peppers. It was full, rather, of dreams. If one of the voyagers on the spaceship had more than one dream in a given night, they didn't use all the dreams as fuel, but only one of them, and the rest were canned up for later. These canned dreams were then kept in the pantry, or rather the dream repository. They looked pretty much like cans of liver.

"Stand back a bit," Maximov said, as he turned the handle on the door to the dream repository. "The pantry is stuffed to the brim. Last time I opened it, roughly a week ago, a whole bunch of cans came tumbling down on me. It hurt pretty bad!"

Craning his neck, he opened the door slowly and carefully.

Nothing fell out.

The first officer turned on the light.

"Well... this is...," Maximov said, scratching his head.

"Oh dear!" said poor Gavarin for the second time that day.

The dream repository was completely empty.

## *The crew's dreams*

The cosmonauts were sitting in the dining room. There were three cans of dreams on the table. They were the three cans that Maximov had intended to put in the dream repository roughly a week earlier, but the dream repository had turned out to be full (which is why the cans of dreams had come tumbling out on him). So these three cans hadn't ended up in the repository. Instead, Maximov had put them in the kitchen cupboard with the spices.

So they had three cans. More than nothing. Less than something.

The cosmonauts were now discussing their next step. Maximov was leading the discussion. This was one of his responsibilities as first officer.

"Here's what we have to do," he muttered.

"First, not panic!"

The first officer then held a short pause. His brow furrowed, he scanned Z's and Gavarin's faces. He then took a small hand mirror from his coat pocket and examined his own face.

"First task almost completed. I still seem to be panicking a little, but I'll take a few deep breaths."

He took a few deep breaths.

"Excellent. I don't think I'm panicking anymore. So first task done. Let's move on! Second task, we have to get some dreams, and quick. And third task, we have to figure out what in the world happened to our dreams!"

"Could we perhaps move the third task forward and figure out what happened to our dreams first, and then find new dreams?" Gavarin asked.

"I wouldn't recommend it, captain," Maximov said with a stern shake of his head. "We have a total of three cans left. We can travel for a bit more with that, but we'll have to consider carefully where we are going. If we start ventur-



ing hither and yon in our search for clues to this mystery, we won't get any new dreams, and soon enough we'll use up the dreams we have in these three cans. We'll be stuck in the middle of nowhere without a single drop of dream, forever and ever and ever. We'll just drift and drift. And wait. Ever more despairingly. Slowly, we'll run out of food. All the shelves will be empty. And then we'll be forced to eat each other. Unfortunately."

"I don't want to eat any sort of any of you," Z sputtered.

"Then I suggest we get fuel first, by any means necessary. Only then can we try to figure out what has become of our dreams."

"Can we not change the spaceship back?" Gavarin asked.

"What do you mean change it back?"

"So that it doesn't run on dreams, but rather on radiation. Like it used to. We can refuel if all we need is radiation."

"Unfortunately, no, we cannot change it back," Maximov said, shaking his head. "We would need the old turbines."

"And where are the old turbines?"

The first officer blushed.

"I traded them for something."

"For what?"

"Cotton candy," Maximov said quietly.

Gavarin nodded.

"I have an idea," Z said. "Maybe we should see if any of the members of our crew has had a dream or two."

"A splendid idea, second officer," Maximov said appreciatively, and Z suddenly grew about three feet taller.

Although the spaceship was primarily powered by the dreams of the humans on board, the dreams of animals and plants could be used as backup fuel.

When Maximov had first powered up the dream monitor (back when the whole ship had been powered by dreams), they had also looked at the dreams of the animals and the carnivorous flower.

The two cats had had very similar dreams. They were both chasing twenty-one-dimensional shapes in eleven-dimensional spaces.

Bukta's dreams, in contrast, were without exception about how there was someone trying to take a bone from him, and so he had to bury it.

And the flesh-eating flower always dreamed of death, in which precious stones were woven, and in each precious stone was a reflection of all the other precious stones and the whole web.

But now the crew didn't have any dreams either. Neither Bruckner nor Masha nor Bukta nor even the flesh-eating flower. No one.

"This is very, very strange," Gavarin said. "And I have a strong feeling that it's not a coincidence. Someone or something wants to be sure we cannot continue our journey."

"But who?" Z asked.

"Or what?" Gavarin added.

"Let's not go into that now," Maximov said, raising his index finger.

"But where can we get some dreams?"

"We have only one option," the first officer replied. "We must go to the dream factory!"



**CREA-  
TURES** *who*

**THEMSELVES** *aren't* **QUITE**

**SURE** *what*

**THEY ARE**

What do Snow White's seven dwarfs, the Smurfs, Barbapapa's family, and Gru's minions all have in common? They are groups of creatures who, although very much alike, are all distinct individuals. This is also true of the Kuflis. There is as much scientific evidence of their existence as there is of the existence of the Barba family, and they are about as stern and serious as the minions. There are seven of them, like Snow White's good friends, and like the seven dwarfs, they

# *The Kufli Tales*

also live in a little spot quite tucked away from the world, though the mound they call home resembles more a shared house with many doors.

The adventures of the Kuflis, however, contain nothing that we are used to from more traditional tales, but all kinds of things that we could not have imagined before. The tales have already been made into three feature-length animated films in Hungary. The films were produced by the Oscar-nominated Géza M. Tóth, head of the most progressive animation studio, KEDD.

With his tales, András Dániel defies storytelling traditions with unabashed freedom. As both author and illustrator of the Kufli books, he was never at the mercy of a fellow artist, and this enabled him to devise countless textual and visual jokes. In the world of the Kuflis, two-headed butterflies flutter in the sky. In the meadow where the kuflis live, eraser and pipe trees grow, not to mention cactus banana bushes. And when there are heavy rains and the meadow is flooded, all you have to do is pull out the big plug in the middle. And if the meadow happens to stand on its head, you can turn it right-side up by jumping on the edge.

And yet this bizarre world is hardly unfamiliar to children, for the surprising elements are all familiar from somewhere, and Dániel has attentively provided words and explanations for everything. For example, we soon learn where danger lurks and which direction we have to take if we want to journey to the center of the earth. And we also learn of what came before and what shall come after. And if the explanations don't help, one need merely see how the unusual creatures that swarm the colorful pages (clouds, strange looking birds, creatures with one, two, and sometimes three eyes, and even a pencil that seems to have lost its way) comment on the events.

The stories will capture the imaginations of readers of all age groups, from preschoolers to the elderly.

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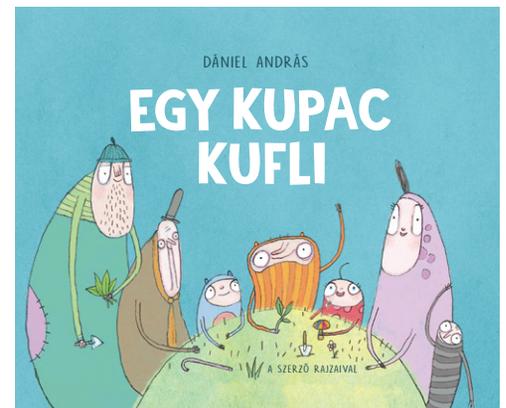
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## *A Mound of Kuflis*

Somewhere betwixt the hills there is a lonely, abandoned meadow.

In the middle of the meadow is a little mound. A modest mound, like so many other mounds in meadows far and wide. Well, almost.

For in this mound live seven kuflis. Their names are Zoz, Lilwed, Titus, Hilda, Jello, Bela, and Firdle. Zoz is the greenest. Lilwed is the reddest. Titus is the yellowest. Hilda is the most purple. Jello is the bluest. Bela is the brownest. And Firdle is the grayest, because someone has to be.

Each kufli has his or her own separate door opening out of the side of the mound, very much as one might expect in a real house. And they all have a big bell next to their door. That way, friends don't have to bang on the door or shout when they drop by. Each bell is a different color, so it's easy to tell who lives where.

If the kuflis had a flag, it would look like this. But they don't have a flag because they wouldn't really know what to do with it. They would prefer almost anything to a flag.

Once, the mound was empty. Home to not a single kufli. The meadow was full of wild oats, wild sorrel, wild spinach, wild marzipan, wild stones, wild erasers, and other such plants.

But then one night, as the fierce north wind was howling, a cluster of shivering kuflis appeared on the horizon. They were far away, but you could hear their teeth chattering from the cold.

When they got closer, you could see that not only were their teeth chattering, but they were shivering, for they were so, so cold! They had probably been wandering around too long in the terrible weather. No wonder that they

immediately fell in love with the mound! At last, a place to take refuge from the fang of the churlish winds!

One of the kuflis even found some dry twigs to make a fire. "At least we can roast our potato on it!" the kufli thought. That was all they had: one very big potato, nothing else. They couldn't remember which one of them had found it. Possibly Bela. But good thing he had! They kuflis, you see, were not wealthy.

After they'd each had a few bites of potato, they turned in for the night.

"How wonderful it would be to stay here!" they thought. "A kufli could hardly hope for a safer place than a mound like this."

When they fell asleep, they had dreams of how they were rolling and frolicking joyously in the sunny meadow. Even Zoz, who didn't much like scampering around.

When they woke up in the morning, they decided that they need go no further. Instead of continuing on their weary way, they would dig comfortable little holes in the side of the mound, and these nooks would be their homes from now on! They immediately got out their pocket picks and got to work.

Because yes, I forgot to tell you, they had pocket picks! A kufli should always have a pocket pick, lest he need dig himself a kufli hole. A comfortable kufli hole is about this big. After all, it has to have space for more than just the kufli who calls it home! All kinds of other things need to fit too.

You can dig a hole in almost any mound, as long as the soil isn't so hard that it breaks your pick.

This mound was just right: neither too soft nor too hard. The soil was not too loose and not too full of stones. The kuflis hopped around the mound a few times and took a

good look at it from all sides. From here, from there, from above, from below: they liked it from all sides.

"An excellent mound!" they exclaimed triumphantly. "Perfect for us!"

Then they each chose a spot where they would dig a hole for themselves. Zoz on the left side of the mound, Titus on the right. Hilda on the mossy side, Jello on the grassy side. Bela at the bottom, and Lilwed at the top. And Firdle neither too high up nor too low down, but somewhere right in the middle.

And they got to work. At first, they all made good progress. Zoz worked a bit faster than the rest, because Zoz was the strongest. Bela was a touch slower than the others, because Bela was the oldest.

"Can we help you a bit with the digging?" the others asked.

"Don't be silly!" Bela replied. "What do you think of me? That I'm too old to dig a decent hole?"

But he was glad that they had asked.

By the time they had finished, it was already well past noon. The mound was full of the prettiest little kufli nooks. Zoz had dug the biggest hole and Lilwed the smallest. Hilda's was the roundest, Titus' was the most like a square. Jello had the straightest up and down, and Bela had the smallest. The nook that Firdle had dug looked the most like all the other nooks. The mound now looked like a big chunk of Swiss cheese!

The only thing that was missing was doors. The kuflis set out to find leaves that they could use to make sturdy doors. After all, leaves make the best doors for kufli nooks. Though you can't just use any old leaf! It can't be too small and it can't be too big. It can't be too smooth on the edges and it can't be too jagged. And if it's prickly, then it's no good at all!

Fortunately, there were all kinds of plants growing in the lonely meadow. Pipevines, hophornbeams, eraser and pipe trees, vermilion berries, and all sorts of others. There were even a few cactus banana bushes here and there, though cactus banana bushes were rare indeed in that part of the land.

So the kufelis didn't have to look long before each found a leaf that was just right for the door to his or her nook. Not even Firdle!

Once the doors had finally been put in place, this is what their new home looked like. It's a handsome mound, no doubt about it! And it's no wonder that the kufelis were very pleased with their work.

The other creatures of the meadow, the snails, caterpillars, spiders, and all sorts of tiny beasts, were also amazed!

"Very impressive," they muttered, nodding with appreciation.

Slowly, evening began to fall. The kufelis and their guests climbed to the top of the mound and watched the shimmering sun disappear slowly on the horizon. The meadow was very beautiful from on high!

"How different everything looks from our new home!" the kufelis thought.

And they were right. And the next thing they knew, the sky was sparkling with curious stars, for night had fallen.



## THE MOON'S MEMORIES



**LÁSZLÓ KOLOZSI** was born in Szeged in 1971 and graduated from the law school in Szeged. He also studied economics for a short time and worked as a lawyer for telecommunications companies. He studied telecommunications law in Rome and then became a private lawyer. He gave up law to write. He writes screenplays and plays and teaches at MOME and other educational institutions. He also publishes music and film reviews. He is known as a writer of crime fiction and children's books. As a dramaturg, he has worked with prominent directors.



**DÁNIEL SZINVAI**, Hungarian illustrator and graphic designer, was born in Budapest in 1995. He graduated from Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design in 2019. In 2021, he won the Best Newcomer and Silent book awards at the Budapest Illustration Festival. He works as a freelancer and lately has been active primarily as an illustrator. He also teaches graphic design. He does illustrations for children's books, adult books, and magazines, and he is also involved in cover design.

## THE SANDPIPER

**KATALIN TASI** was born in 1977 in Nagykanizsa and grew up in Zalaegerszeg. After graduating from the University of Law, she was a scholarship researcher at the University of Osaka as a lawyer, which led to the publication of her first storybook, *Tales of the World*. Subsequently, as a lawyer, she worked for the Hungarian Ombudsman for seventeen years, for a long time in the field of children's rights. Her first book was followed by three paper theaters, published in Hungarian and French, almost simultaneously with her latest book, *The Sandpiper*.



**ILKA MÉSZELY** is a Budapest-based illustrator and designer who was born in Sfântu Gheorghe, Romania, in 1986. She studied textile design at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, Budapest. Since then, she has been working independently in her studio. Her works include both handmade elements and digital techniques. She loves experimenting with traditional materials, such as ink, colored pencils, and markers. She balances simplicity with details, paying particular attention to lines and textures.



## TWO STARS



**SAMUEL ALLO** was born in 1977 in a small town in Brittany, France. After graduating as a physical education teacher, he set off on a journey around the world on foot, sharing the stories and songs of his homeland with the people and cultures of other countries. He has since shared his tales, told in French, Breton, English, Spanish, and German, in nearly 1,000 schools, where he has exchanged traditional stories with students from all over the world. He happened to make the acquaintance of someone in publishing while traveling in Hungary, and this chance encounter resulted in the publication his first collection of stories.



**HAJNALKA SZIMONIDESZ** was born in 1965 in Budapest. She is a freelance illustrator and visual artist. She graduated from the ELTE Savaria University Centre for Visual Culture and Art. She started illustrating storybooks in 2007 and since then has published more than 60 storybooks. Her drawings are mainly in gouache and acrylic on watercolor paper. Her illustrations, compositions, figures, and colors are a source of joy and comfort.

## WHAT I REMEMBER

**LILLA TURI** was born in Debrecen in 1990. She graduated as an architect and completed a CBI program at the Cambridge School of Art. In 2019, she was awarded the BILLUI Young Illustrator of the Year Award, and in 2020 she was given the Illustrator of the Year Award (Szép Magyar Könyv). Her work has been selected for several Hungarian and foreign competitions (WIA, BIB, IW). She currently teaches illustration, works on children's books, and, when time allows, draws people having coffee on terraces. What I Remember is her first book as an author.



## POINTE/PLIÉ



**MÍRA HASZÁN** was born in Budapest in 2002. She attends a French-Hungarian bilingual high school and will graduate this year. In high school, she founded a school newspaper and the Pesti Notesz creative circle. She started working on her first novel at the age of 16, during the COVID quarantine. The story, a young adult novel set in a ballet institute, was published in 2021 by Móra Publishing House. Haszán sees writing as a form of therapy that helps us know ourselves better.

## HARMONIA, THE REALM OF MUSIC



**FERENC TARR** is a children's literature specialist, writer, and educator. He was born in 1986 in Leeds, England. For more than four years, he served as a board member of HUBBY - Hungarian Children's Book Forum. He graduated with a teaching degree in history and philosophy from ELTE, a teaching degree in Hungarian from the University of Pécs, and a degree as a children and youth specialist from the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church. Since 2013, he has been the managing director of the BonBon Matiné Workshop, where almost 130 musical productions are performed annually for preschool and school children all over Hungary in order to encourage more children to love the world of music and instruments. Since 2022, he has also worked as a music instructor at the Hungarian House of Music.



**ANDRÁS (b) BARANYAI** graduated from the Hungarian University of Applied Arts in 2004 and began a career as a versatile illustrator and graphic designer. He has done illustrations and visual materials for textbooks, storybooks, advertisements, steampunk comics for adults, and posters in Hungary and abroad. With his distinctive vector computer drawings, he made a dramatic contribution to the renewal of Hungarian illustration in the 1920s. With a few lines and scribbles, he can capture the essence of the society and people of our time in a humorous and penetrating way.

## HIDE-AND-SEEK

**JACQUELINE MOLNÁR** was born in Budapest but currently lives in Barcelona. She has illustrated many stories from all over the world from different cultures. She has published more than 40 books for kids and teenagers and has recently taken to writing and illustrating her own stories. She loves playing with strong colors and different techniques. With her books, she encourages children to read and let their imaginations soar. She has made several animated shorts, and she collaborates with puppet theaters and also organizes workshops as well.



## LIDLESS



**ANDRÁS GÁSPÁR GÁSPÁR** was born in 1970 in Szigetszentmiklós. He graduated from the Academy of Theater and Film Arts in 1993, majoring in acting. He also completed a degree as an economist, speaker, and cultural manager. He is an actor, theater director, and program manager for several theater festivals. He represents the independents in the National Performing Arts Stakeholder Council. As a drama teacher, he runs a drama school where he works directly with young people. He is also the author of the young adult stories *Earth 2 Final Exam* and *Lidless*, published by Móra Publishing House.

## GAVARIN AND THE DREAM ANTENNA

**KORNÉL LABODA** was born in 1984 in Siklós. After graduating from high school, he went to the University of Theater and Film Arts in Budapest, where he first pursued studies as a theater dramaturg and then as a theater director. He has since worked as a dramaturg, playwright, actor, director, scriptwriter, and prose writer. He has published two novels, *mátÉSETSOUT* (2015) and *Gavarin and the Dream Antenna* (2021). He is currently working on his third novel.



**JULI JÁSDI** is a Budapest-based illustrator and graphic designer. She graduated from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in 2019. Her focus is on digital illustration, though she also has a keen interest in drawing by hand. She enjoys experimenting with different ways of storytelling. In 2019, her diploma project, which was a picture book about alcoholism, won first prize at the Budapest Illustration Festival. She has since worked with several Hungarian children's book publishers.



## THE KUFLI TALES



**ANDRÁS DÁNIEL** was born in Budapest in 1966. His first picture book was published in 2012. As a freelance graphic designer, illustrator, and writer, he has authored some 32 children's books. He has also illustrated several books by other authors. In his work, he is primarily interested in the special connection between text and illustration. He writes and draws for preschoolers and also for older children, but in each of his books, he tries to find a way to capture the parents' imaginations as well. His picture book series *Kuflis* was developed into an animation series.

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