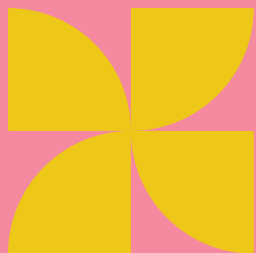
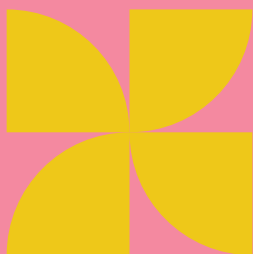
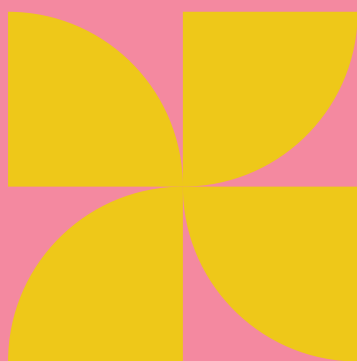
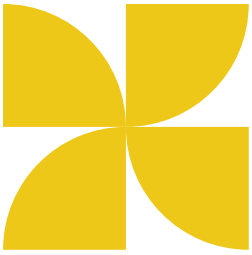
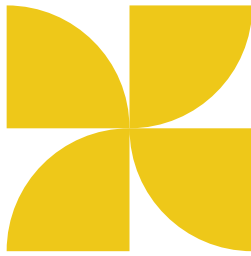
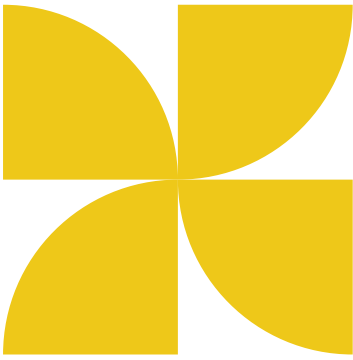


NEW HUNGARIAN

2025

# CHILD LIT





NEW HUNGARIAN

2025

# CHILD LIT



NEW HUNGARIAN

2025

# CHIDLIT

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Is my  
**w**orld  
your world  
too?



## MARIANN MÁRAY

Mariann Máray is a visual artist and author who works in illustration and painting. She has made substantial contributions to numerous books, including picture books. Her artwork has been exhibited at such places as the 2017 Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava, the Bologna Children's Book Fair Illustrator's Exhibition in 2017 and 2022, the Silent Book Contest Finalist Exhibition in 2019 and 2020 in Bologna, and the CCBF Chen Bochui Original Illustration Exhibition in Shanghai in 2020.

# Unreachable

In the latest picture book by children's book illustrator Mariann Máray, we explore the world and the emotional ups and downs of an isolated, autistic child and this child's search for a path in life. The story, which unfolds in the engaging images, can be traced precisely in time and space and is not hard to follow. It tells us the tale, quite simply, of the journey of an autistic child from birth to adulthood. *Unreachable* was inspired by Máray's own experiences with her autistic child. The bubble that seems to surround the child in its interactions with the surrounding world is sometimes a safety net, sometimes a barrier. One of the highlights of the book is the moment when the outside world forces the child out of this protective dome. The counterpoint to this moment of violent intrusion is the peaceful relationship that later evolves between the child and a painter under a shared dome. For Máray, the process of creation is itself a kind of therapy.

Máray saw storytelling through images as a means of conveying a message about autism, which remains a subject that is difficult for many to grasp, without falling into the trap of didacticism. Picture books, after all, bring the perception of the world through the senses to the foreground. Instead of a text-based message, the reader (or viewer) becomes more sensitive to other methods of perception and understanding. This genre is thus particularly suited to themes that are difficult to grasp through the medium of text without oversimplification. The motif of the dome, for instance, which appears on every page of the book, embodies the often impenetrable world of neurodivergents.

The picture book as a genre and this book in particular invite free associations. The story that unfolds in the images conveys multiple meanings and emotional effects that would be far harder to express in words. *Unreachable* thus allows for a number of unique readings. In addition to being read as a foray into the world of the experiences of a neurodivergent, the book also provides a more universal example of an encounter with otherness. The ultimate message of the book is not that we should labor to eliminate the bubble. Rather, we should endeavor to find a way to get under the bubble so that the person already under the bubble does not experience our presence as aggression.

**AUTHOR / ILLUSTRATOR**  
Mariann Máray

**TITLE**  
Unreachable

**PUBLISHER**  
Csimota Publishing House

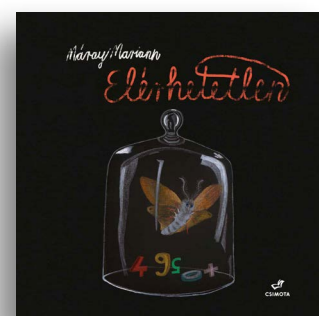
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Unreachable







“Discover the secrets of the underground world, from tunnelling shields to

# MOSAIC TITLES

Fotó: Gábor Bankó



## TAMÁS GYÖRGY KOVÁCS

Tamás György Kovács is an urbanist and landscape gardening engineer. His first children's educational book, *The Tram*, won both the Children's Book of the Year Award and the Beautiful Hungarian Book Award. He also works on urban development and themed city walks.



## DÁNIEL SZINVAI

Dániel Szivai is an illustrator and graphic designer. He graduated in graphic design from the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design. His illustrations are characterised by clean, bright colours, dirty textures, loose lines and elaborate details, as well as by their multi-layered visual and conceptual qualities. In 2024, his work *The Tram* won the Children's Book of the Year Award and the Beautiful Hungarian Book Award.

# The Metro

The book presents metro systems in major cities all over the world, highlighting their unique characteristics, histories, and architecturally distinctive features. The overview begins with the history of the Budapest metro system, which started in the late 1800s, with the first metro line in continental Europe and the third in the world opening in the center of the Hungarian capital in 1896.

The world's first underground opened in London in 1863. Subsequently, cities all over the world have created similar underground mass transport systems, adapted, of course, to local needs. In Chicago, for example, the loose, marshy soil prompted developers to create an elevated train system, while in Moscow, ornate, palatial metro stations were intended to emphasize the importance of the everyday people of the city. In Stockholm, cave-like stations carved into the granite are adorned with works of art

The book offers detailed discussions of the construction techniques and the various challenges that engineers have faced, such as soil structure, depth, and water infiltration. It also outlines how transport infrastructure has evolved over the years, with the relatively new fourth metro line in Budapest, which was built using modern construction techniques, being a good example.

The book also explores the specific solutions used in each city. In Athens and Rome, archaeological finds were often discovered during metro construction, slowing down the work but revealing invaluable treasures. In Tokyo, “oshiyas,” metro workers wearing white gloves, push people into the metro cars to ease morning and afternoon rush hour congestion. In London, the Elizabeth line is implementing a new concept that links the city center and more outlying areas, reducing car traffic and making life easier for commuters.

The book thus explores both the technical and architectural details of the world's metro systems and the cultural and social aspects of how transport needs have evolved over time and how the various solutions that have been devised reveal something about the individual characters of the cities. And it does so in an engaging, entertaining style with many surprising “fun facts.”

In 2024, Kovács and Szinvai's previous book, *The Tram*, won the Children's Book of the Year Award in the educational category and was shortlisted in the illustration category.

## **AUTHOR**

Tamás György Kovács

## **ILLUSTRATOR**

Dániel Szinvai

## **TITLE**

The Metro

## **PUBLISHER**

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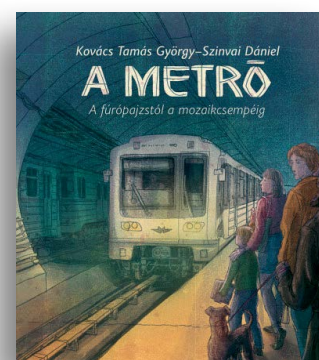
40

## **AGE GROUP**

8-99

## **RIGHTS CONTACT**

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## Ok, but what's a metro anyway?

When one hears this word, one thinks perhaps first and foremost of railways running underground. But in reality, a “metro” is any means of transport that can carry a large number of passengers within a city or between a city and smaller towns around it. It runs on a completely separated fixed track, i.e. some kind of rail, and is not part of the rail network. It can run elevated, on the surface, or underground.

Sometimes, it's easier to build an underground metro line by first constructing parts of the tunnel on the surface and then burying the completed structure. This is known as an open construction method.

The term closed construction refers to the method of building a metro line by using a tunnelling shield to dig underground. The knives and discs in the head of the shield rotate to cut the soil into small bits, and these bits are then transported through holes in the shield to a conveyor belt, from where they are taken to the surface on smaller trolleys. Depending on the composition of the soil, it is usually possible to cover between five and twenty meters a day using a tunnelling shield.

Behind the tunnelling shield is a huge tunnel boring machine, often more than 100 meters long. This is important because, once the tunnel has been made using the tunnelling machine, the various construction elements that hold the tunnel in place must be continuously built. Otherwise, the tunnel will collapse.

The word metro is like the word banana. It's an international word that is used in many languages. In many places, other words are used. The metro system in London, for instance, is officially known as the underground, but people usually just refer to it as the tube, and everyone would probably know what you're looking for if you were to ask them where the nearest subway stop is. To make things even more complicated, although all three names suggest that this elaborate metro system

is all underground, half of the network in London runs above ground.

### BUDAPEST

Budapest was one of the fastest growing cities in the world in the late 1800s. Seeing this, two competing tramway companies applied for (and received) permission to build an underground line.

### CHICAGO: THE SUBWAY IN THE SKY

In the late 1800s, on another continent, the United States was also bearing witness to the growth of cities. One of the fastest growing urban centers was Chicago.

### THE FIRST TUBE IN LONDON

In 1825, the modern railway was born in England. It was the first railway to be opened to the public, with steam locomotives running at the front of trains.

### METRO CONSTRUCTION IN PARIS

In Paris, as the metro system grew, tunnels and stations were built in a variety of different ways, but this was true of all the emerging urban centers in which metro lines were built.

### PALATIAL METRO STATIONS IN MOSCOW

Moscow has many enormous, fancy metro stations. They resemble palaces. When construction began



magas-  
peron

faali (talpfa)

perontető

vágányszámok

1 = 2

osiják



on the Moscow metro system in the 1930s, the Soviet leaders wanted to show that the people who lived in the city were more important to them than those who lived in palaces. So they built palaces for Muscovites underground.

#### ABANDONED STATIONS IN NEW YORK

Changing the route of a metro is a much bigger hassle than changing the route of a bus. But sometimes you have to, especially where there is a large network. As the city changes, many other things change, such as who builds the metro tunnels and how the people of the city use them. It's no wonder that dozens of stations in New York City are now defunct. Some, in fact, were never finished.

#### MEANDERING AND CHANGING TRAINS IN BERLIN

A city cannot function well without public transport. In Berlin, for example, people take the subway, train, bus, tram, or bus roughly 1.5 billion times a year. That's the equivalent of all the inhabitants of Europe travelling twice a year in the city.

#### CAVE STATIONS IN STOCKHOLM

Whether the metro is built in loose soil, sticky clay, or hard rock makes a big difference. Engineers always work hard to find out everything they can about the ground beneath the city before building a metro system so that they can devise the best solutions for every possible situation and make sure nothing goes wrong during construction.

#### THE PRAGUE METRO DRIVER

You would think it would be easy to avoid the need for a driver on a metro system. The trains run on rails, always in the direction of the tracks, and nothing crosses your path. But the driver still has to pay attention to many things, including not exceeding a safe speed, stopping at the right place, making sure passengers can get on safely, starting when they need to, not catching up with the train in front of them. Everything has to be carefully coordinated. Plus, unexpected situations can always arise, such as a dog running into the tunnel. The work of the driver is supported and controlled by other workers and complex safety and train control systems. There are lots of them, some simple and some very elaborate.

#### WHO RUNS THE METRO IN SANTIAGO?

Santiago, the capital of Chile, is home to more than 6,000,000 people. New metro lines are being built almost continuously. The construction of line 6 (purple), for example, is expected to bring development to the run-down neighborhoods where the new stations are being built.

Only vehicles with computers that can work out what to do in the event of a malfunction can be left completely on their own. There are four levels of metro automation, with lines 3 and 6 in Santiago at the top. These are self-driving vehicles without even a cab for a driver. Passengers can look out of the front and the rear of the vehicles, so anyone can observe what the driver would see. If there were a driver, that is.

# The adventures



of a city  
**fox.**

Fotó: Kriszta Szalmás



## ANDREA RÁDAI

Andrea Rádai was born in 1979 in Budapest. She graduated with a degree in Hungarian Language and Literature, English Language and Literature, and German Literature from ELTE University. She served for a time as the editor of *szinhaz.net*, the online portal of *Színház folyóirat*. She translates children's and young adult literature from Dutch and English and has also published her own fairy tales, *Fairies in the Taiga* and *Frederick the Fox on Margaret Island*.



## FANNI SIPOS

Illustrator Fanni Sipos graduated from the Budapest Metropolitan University with a bachelor's degree in graphic design and later a master's degree. Within her work in graphic design she turned to illustration. She used an array of different techniques and tools in her work. She particularly enjoys experimenting with craft techniques. Her silent book for teenagers, *Puparium*, won the Sixth ArtHungry Award in the illustration category.



# Frederick the Fox on Margaret Island

The world of Andrea Rádai's *Frederick the Fox* offers a colorful backdrop for a captivating tale. The mischievous characters of the tales resemble our own, sometimes clownish friends from school. Frederick the Fox, our welcoming host, sometimes disguises himself as a dog, and Stanley the Stork from time to time pretends to be a sculpture on the bow of a ship. The dialogues introduce us to our heroes, who are sometimes a bit naïve, sometime sly and slick, but always eager for adventure. Frederick hunts around in the refuse people have left on the island at the close of day, and he and his friends discover all kinds of treasures, captured in the lively illustrations by Fanni Sipos. Frederick makes the acquaintance of two young gentleladies, Julie and Sarah, and the three of them set off on an adventure in one of the little pedal cars that tourists so often use to explore Margaret Island, the famous island in the center of Budapest. They find a letter from Stanley, and we learn of a time when they helped Stanley make his way Africa. Now, they manage to get back Julie's stuffed giraffe and to save the butterflies. They get help from Alex Crow, a bird enthusiast who is little too in love with his smartphone, and Lilli the Lizard, a microscopic dragon. We even learn of the presence of the underhanded Neggie the Crone. The island is transformed through the stories and the illustrations into a fantastic world full of mystery and adventure.

The illustrations are remarkably varied. Sipos uses an engaging blend of documentary meticulousness and artistic creativity. The colors create a warm harmony, while the treatment of line and shape craft a certain abstract poetry. We find a half-finished letter that has been torn by a crocodile's teeth, a soggy note glued into the book, the labyrinthine world of the foxhole, and events from the past presented in a monochrome mix of shades of brown. Like the stories themselves, the illustrations merge magic with the familiar elements of the life of an average child. Mystery, witchcraft, and adventure intermingle with the everyday. The adventures continue in the 2024 book *Frederick the Fox and the Unusual Tuesday*.

**AUTHOR**  
Andrea Rádai

**ILLUSTRATOR**  
Fanni Sipos

**TITLE**  
Frederick the Fox  
on Margaret Island

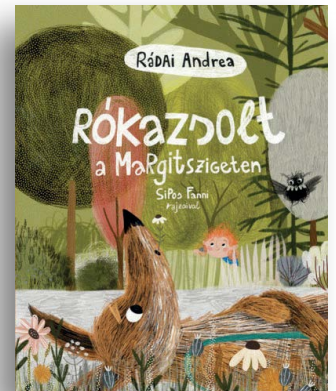
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**RIGHTS CONTACT**  
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Rókazsolt

## Chapter One

in which we get to know Frederick the Fox and the island that is his home, and we find out what bologna stuffed with cheese means to him

He was a city fox to the core. He lived on an island in the heart of Budapest, the bustling and restless capital of Hungary, in the hollow of a huge pine tree. Underground, however, his dwelling stretched into a veritable cave empire, enclosed by the roots of the tree.

He had a bedroom, a living room with an spacious kitchen, a pantry, a ballroom, of course, and a guest room where his relatives visiting from London, Singapore, and the city of Zrenjanin often stayed. He also had a huge storage room, where he kept the things that he had found on the shores of the island, the things people left at the end of the day and never came back for.

These various things included, for example,

- 354 towels
- 124 half-completed puzzle books
- 44 arm floaties
- 54 water pistols
- 19 cooler bags (one was missing the top)

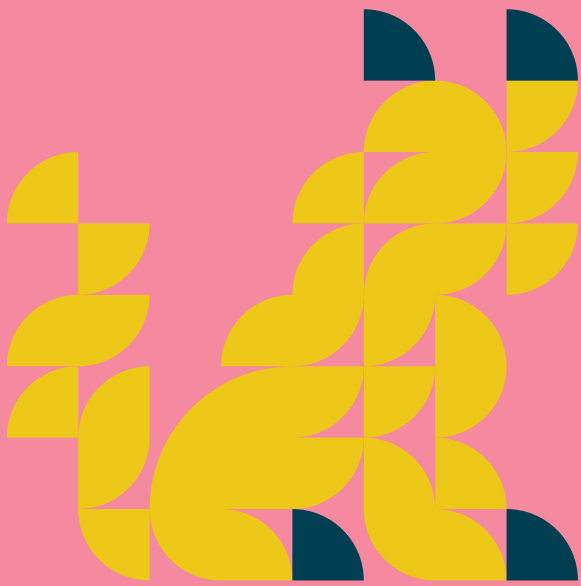
And lots of other strange and unusual objects. For example, he had a purple wig, a collection of pressed flowers, a porcelain reclining sheepdog, a toilet plunger, and a packet of Spiderman napkins. He treasured a shoehorn of grinning piglets, given to him by his world-traveled uncle, and wouldn't have parted with his grandmother's prize-winning quince jelly for the world.

But everything else he generously shared with his pals. When the animals on the island needed something, they just went to Frederick's place and looked around. His dwelling was a bit like a supermarket, but you didn't have to pay.

Frederick was very busy in the summer. In the evenings, when the many people who strolled down the paths on the island or took a plunge in one of the many swimming pools had left, he would pick up the various things that had been left on the beach and, in return, he would get something to eat from the Seagull snack bar: some sausage, maybe a frankfurter, fried meat, crepes with jam. But his real weakness was bologna stuffed with cheese. Oh yes, he couldn't resist a good slice of bologna.

And when the sun had set, then he really set out! That was his favorite time of day, not just because he was a nocturnal animal, but also because it was when he and his friends could have fun on the shores of the island, which were always too cluttered with people during the day. They would storm the pools and spend the night swimming, frolicking, shooting each other with water pistols, and just floating on the water on one of Frederick's inflatable rubber boats.

A PURR-FECT MIX  
of mystery, humor, and  
feline future – with



**PRIUS**  
and

**GORDIUS**



## IMRE VÉGVÁRI

Imre Végvári is a father of three and a distinguished communications expert. He has been instrumental to organizing TEDx event series in Europe, where he has served as founder and curator. His involvement in this platform reflects his deep interest in future-oriented topics (such as AI, robotics, space travel, and smart cities) and innovative ideas. This passion for exploring the future is evident in his literary work, notably in his book *Prius & Gordius - Future Ventures*.



## NORBERT NAGY

Norbert Nagy graduated with a degree in graphic arts from MOME in Budapest in 2003. He currently works as a graphic designer and book illustrator. He mixes analog and digital techniques in his illustrations.

# Future Ventures

Every child wants to know what the future holds, yet they know so little of what is yet to come. What kinds of seemingly fanciful technologies will become part of everyday life on a decade or two, when these children are starting to become young grownups? Self-driving cars are already in the making, as are clothes that change color and texture and 3D printers that can build houses. And these technologies are just the beginning. We are even bearing witness today to the creation of medical nanorobots and smart household robots.

But what if we suddenly found ourselves in the future? Although time travel is not among the innovations with which we are experimenting at present, when dad is telling tales, the future is only a hop, skip, and a jump away. He will tell the story of Prius and Gordius, two quick-witted cats who accidentally steal a time machine that takes them to the year 2050.

## How to prepare our children for the future?

In the age of exponential changes sweeping the globe, this has become one of the most difficult questions we face, as adults, parents and as educators. It is of utmost importance that we find good answers to this question, because we are living through the greatest generational divide in the history of mankind - and the success of our children might just depend on how well prepared they arrive into their future reality. Since there are no proven solutions available, we experiment with a variety of tools on our journey. Apps, online lectures, specialized summer camps, to name just a few. Yet we seem to have overlooked a simple, long-standing and powerful option - namely that of telling tales.

The tales we tell our children are mostly about the past or are set in a fictional universe. When we sit by their beds and read to them, they are eager to listen to us, yet we neglect the opportunities their openness offers us. Hungarian writer Imre Végvári, who delights in exploring the horizons of the future in his children's stories, seeks to take advantage of these opportunities in his tale *Future Ventures*, which tempts us with visions both of the future and of adventure.

**AUTHOR**

Imre Végvári

**ILLUSTRATOR**

Norbert Nagy

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6+

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“Hey Gordius, wake up!”

“Leave me alone! I want to sleep.”

“Wake up already!”

Gordius rolled over to his other side, but Prius refused to let him sleep. He yanked the blanket off him, leapt onto the bed, and started rolling poor Gordius off. Unfortunately, cats don't actually fall on their feet when they're still half asleep, so Gordius ended up falling to the floor with a loud thump.

“Have you lost your mind?” he muttered. “What's the rush?”

“There's trouble a-paw,” Prius mewed. “Come on, I need your help!”

The terrified Prius yanked his brother over to the wall of the dimly lit room. They stopped in front of a bookshelf, from which hard little marbles were rolling down in a continuous stream. Gordius stared in disbelief at the growing pile of marbles on the floor, which was almost as tall as a cat. Then something went click and suddenly the clattering shower of marbles stopped.

“What did you do, Prius?”

“Nothing. I was just having trouble falling asleep.”

“So that's where this ocean of marbles came from?”

“Well, I was looking for something to do, so I climbed up on this bookshelf to see if there were any toys on it or something, and there weren't. It was totally bare. I looked up and down, and then I hummed a little something to myself, and all of a sudden these marbles started plip-plopping on my head.”

“I see. So what was this little something you were humming?”

“Nothing at all! Just a little goobly-garbly-moobly-marbly...”

The bookshelf started shaking and again a shower of marbles came crashing down on the two cats. Gordius quickly clapped his paw over his brother's mouth.

“Watter-u-doowing?”

“I don't know what's going on here, but maybe you'd do better to keep your trap shut! Maybe that'll make

this marble storm stop, and then we can get rid of them before anyone wakes up.”

Prius' eyes lit up.

“I know a good spot! Let's hide them in the closet by the main door.”

“Why there?”

“Because there's plenty of room.”

“Prius!”

“And, well, also because maybe there's something there you can help me with too. I was looking around over there earlier, and we had a little difference of opinion.”

“You and the closet?”

“Come on, I'll show you,” Prius said, and he quickly turned, gave a wave of one paw, and scampered off towards the main door. Gordius just shook his head and went stumbling after him in the darkness. When they reached the front hall, they both stopped. In front of them, there was a mountain of boots and jackets and umbrellas and the like.

“What is this?” Gordius asked, looking at his brother with a quizzical glance. “Prius, did you empty out the closet?”

“Yes, but he started it!” Prius said in protest. “He threw a boot at me. I was just thinking about how nice it would be to go outside and get some fresh air once it stopped raining, and he threw a rubber boot at me! I wasn't going to let him get away with that, so I took everything he had all tucked away and tossed it out here in the middle of the hallway.”

“So you tossed everything out here, and now we get to put it all back?”

“Shouldn't we fix the bathroom first?”

“What do you mean fix the bathroom?” Gordius spluttered. “Which door is the door to the bathroom?”

“First one on the right.”

(...)

The little room could well have been a bathroom, but it looked a lot more like the cockpit of a spaceship. There were dark blue lamps hanging everywhere, and on one of the walls, there were dozens

of switches and buttons and levers. Enough to send a tremor of terror through the bravest feline. The facing wall was a mirror top to bottom, and it had a welcome message running across it, followed by tiny drawings.

“Very strange indeed,” Gordius muttered.

“What could possibly be the explanation for all this?” he said, casting curious glances left and right.

“Ah ha!” he suddenly said, stopping in front of a row of buttons. “Look at this!”

And then he pressed one of them.

The lid of the toilet in the corner of the room popped open.

“I see,” Gordius said, pressing his paw to his chin in deep thought.

(...)

The two cats slipped quietly back into bed. Soon, Prius began to snore. Now, it was Gordius who couldn't sleep.

(...)

“We need to straighten up around here. We can't leave the place such a mess. And besides, what if someone gets up before we do?”

He tip-pawed out into the hallway and started putting the jackets and boots and umbrellas back into the closet. When he had finished, he quietly closed the door. Suddenly, the closet began to hum softly.

Gordius was terrified. He knew that at any moment he might get struck in the head by a flying rubber boot, so he scampered back to the room as quickly as his paws would carry him. But alas, he had forgotten that the floor was covered with marbles. He slipped and slid and slammed right into the corner of the bookshelf.

“Like I said,” he muttered, climbing to his paws and rubbing his bruised forehead, “we need to straighten up around here.”

He then began shoveling up the marbles and setting them neatly on the bookshelf. He heaved a heavy sigh when he had finished and gave a look around, yet much to his utter astonishment, the marbles were gone. The bookshelf was bare.

“What in the name of heaven?” he stammered. “But I just put them all back in orderly rows! Alas, I always end up ruining everything, though all I wanted to do was straighten up. Then I'll fix that bathroom real quick and go to bed!”

He scampered to the bathroom and pressed one paw against one of the sketches on the mirror. The lid of the toilet was closed, but lukewarm water began to drip from the bathroom ceiling, right from the spot above Gordius' head. Within a few seconds he was soaking wet. The poor cat plodded back to the bedroom. His fur a tangle of knots. He tried to slip quietly under the blanket, but Prius had just opened his eyes and was squinting at his bedraggled brother.

“What on earth happened to you? Did you fall headfirst into the toilet?”

“No, no, no, just leave me alone!” Gordius grumbled.

“So you went swimming then?” Prius asked with a drowsy yawn.

“Very funny!” Gordius snapped, as he struggled to wring the water from his coat. “Let's try to get some sleep. We'll need our energy. I've got a feeling that the coming year will be full of surprises.”







How  
do we

handle  
our fears?

Fotó: Lenke Szilágyi



## GÁBOR SCHEIN

Gábor Schein is the highly acclaimed author of over nine volumes of poetry and five novels. He has been awarded the Attila József Prize, the Artisjus Prize, and the Prize of the Society of Hungarian Authors, among many other distinctions. His books has been translated into many European languages. He is the author of three children books. 2010 he has been awarded the Prize of HUBBY with his volume "Irijam and Yonibe". It was translated into Slovenian: Malinc 2017, Transl. by Maja Likar.

Fotó: Norbert Hevesi,  
Hstudio



## ALEXANDRA GRELA

Alexandra Grela was born in 1974 in Poland. In 1999, she completed her studies in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. She has been living in Hungary since 2005, where she teaches painting to young people. In 2006, she began to do illustrations, making images for tales, poems. In 2012, she completed a Doctorate of Liberat Arts at the Krakow Academy of Fine Arts.

# Dad Has Metamorphosized

The father in the tale imitates animals as part of the games he plays with his children, Gregory and Rose. These everyday games, which include pretending to be animals like squirrels, monkeys, an even rodeo bulls, create a fun backdrop for family life, and we see shared moments of laughter and, of course, the natural joys of play. The story becomes more intense, however, as the questions of fear and suspense turn into something of a horror tale resembling the Grimm tales of old. Dad turns into a wolf. First he is taken to the mountains of Hungary, both to rescue him but also to keep his family safe from him. A new system takes form. The family members continue to keep in touch with their wolf father, and they are amazed by his transformation. But alas, despite warnings and even a legal prohibition, he is shot by hunters. At this point in the tale, the images, which until now have been highly expressive and colorful, become shocking evocations of horror. For instance, we see an image of the wolf-father fighting for his life in a deserted operating room. The backdrop is captured with strong, thickly drawn black lines. And soon we see the poor father again, now a large, helpless lump, surrounded by IVs and other tubes.

The mother and children get together to form a crisis team, and they decide that, as soon as father is strong enough, he should be taken to a higher mountain range. But that doesn't happen. Dad turns back into a human, with only one ear left as a wolf's ear.

The story and its climax, the metamorphosis, are just close enough to the fairytale genre to allow the reader to absorb the traumas in the tale and reflect on the traumas of his or her life. These traumas include, for instance, the behavior of an abusive, addicted, or mentally ill parent, the sense of panic and shame felt by a child, the workings of a dysfunctional or atypical family, the everyday life of a child living in fear, and the challenges faced by children of divorced parents. We see the ebb and flow of trauma and recovery in hospital settings, as well as the challenges of replanning and family bonding in moments of emergency.

**AUTHOR**  
Gábor Schein

**ILLUSTRATOR**  
Alexandra Grela

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**RIGHTS CONTACT**  
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On the third Sunday, we asked dad to turn himself into a dog. He was really good at barking, you see. He was in a good mood, so we didn't have to pressure him for long. He barked like one of those little dogs old women carry around in their purses but that always seem to think that they are fearsome guard dogs who have been entrusted with the task of defending an estate. He kept trying to nip at Rose, and little Rosie just kept shooing him away. "Shoo, shoo," she'd say, "you're frightening me," but then she'd stretch out her arm and give him a chance to nip at her again, and dad would nip and nip, though of course he never actually bit her.

On the fourth Sunday, however, we skipped the game, because we had grandma over. We never played games like that in front of her. Dad's always a little odd when she's at our place. He asks grandma if she'd like a cup of coffee or a slice of cake, and even he feels like the whole thing is a kind of strange. And then he's quiet, and we're all quiet, and grandma starts telling stories about life in the village when she was a child, and she talks about all these relatives that none of us have ever met, but even she's not quite certain about which one was which, but she talks about them all afternoon, and evening.





# Every human life is a labyrinth.

Fotó: Nicolas Richter



## KRISZTINA RITA MOLNÁR

Krisztina Rita Molnár was born in 1967 in Budapest. She graduated from Eötvös Loránd University with a degree in Hungarian and Library and Museum Sciences. She also studied art history. She started her career as a poet. Her first major work of prose is the novel *Maléna's Garden*, published in 2013. The diary novel *Chalk Drawing* (2016) and the calendar *Cheerful Weekdays* (2017) are linked to the book.



## CECÍLIA SIMONYI

Cecília Simonyi illustrates picture books and poetry. She studied illustration at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, Belgium and at the Macerata University of Fine Arts in Italy. She mainly works with printmaking methods, aquarelle, ink, and cyanotype. She loves to experiment with materials and invent and blend techniques. For more than 20 years, she has been working with children, using art and storytelling pedagogy. // [ceciliasimonyi.com](http://ceciliasimonyi.com)

# Maléna's garden

The protagonist of Krisztina Rita Molnár's fairytale novel is ten-year-old Maléna Füge, a child of parents who are very busy. Maléna spends her afternoons alone. She does her homework alone, eats alone, and goes to afterschool tutoring sessions alone. Her parents work all the time, and she can only keep in touch with her grandparents, who live far away, through the mail. Maléna does little more than dutifully try to be a good girl and fulfil her obligations. Her only confidant is Sibyl, the old cricket who lives at the base of the linden tree and is the conductor of the cricket orchestra. She is Maléna's best friend, constant conversationalist, and chief advisor.

As Maléna's birthday approaches, she's more and more stressed about finding a way to tell her father that she doesn't want a pink mobile phone without hurting his feelings. Instead, she wants to build a treehouse in the yard with the postman, Bikey. It would be the perfect place for her to hide out with her parents in the summertime, and maybe her dad would take out his guitar again and not just focus incessantly on building his career.

Drawing on her family's past, Maléna gains more and more self-confidence and becomes better able to express her own wishes. She also becomes more and more open to the outside world and starts making friends. This charming, idyllic story is told at a slow pace in a sophisticated, delicate style. The book is interspersed with various cultural and historical references. As Sibyl plays the violin and Maléna plays the piano, there is considerable discussion of Bach, Mozart, and Vivaldi. Maléna's mother is a museologist, so the topics range from Egyptian cat culture to Bronze Age sculptures. Molnár clearly wrote the book in part with an educational intention in mind, and she has included small panel texts, set off from the main text with varying colors, containing various bits and pieces of interesting information. She uses these texts to explain foreign words, for instance, or to share additional details about the topics at hand. At the end of the novel, the reader finds an appendix with song lyrics and recipes.

The warm, compassionate mood of the story and Molnár's ability to capture the essence of life's little moments in her prose make *Maléna's Garden* a very engaging reading experience, as do the depictions of important human connections and the magic of shared moments.

This captivating, soul-stirring book contains finely crafted copper etchings by artist Cecília Simonyi. It also has eight full-page color collages illustrating the tale, each of which could stand alone as a striking work of art.

**AUTHOR**

Krisztina Rita Molnár

**ILLUSTRATOR**

Cecília Simonyi

**TITLE**

Maléna's garden

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All week, Sibyl had been acting like someone who had finally gone on her first vacation in a long time. She hadn't been her usual solemn, serious self. She had even joked at times, and she was all light and spry in her movements. Every single moment seemed to fill her with glee, and she expressed her joy by leaping about and shouting and even bursting into song. Maléna might even have gone so far as to compare her behavior to that of a child had the idea of Sibyl acting anything like a child not seemed so utterly absurd.

When they were alone on the last night, neither of them spoke for a long time. Not once that week had Sibyl been as quiet as she was then. They had walked all the way to the end of the bay, to where the sandy beach, scattered with snow-white stones polished by the waves of the sea, widened out under the cliff that rose up like a bastion. And here they had sat down.

"Are you cold?" Sibyl asked.

"No, not at all," Maléna replied. "The weather is quite pleasant."

She took one of the smooth, round stones in the palm of her hand.

"The stones are still warm," she said.

"Yes, they retain heat for a long time. They only cool down at dawn, after the tide. When the sea cools them."

They sat for a while in silence again. The quiet of the evening enveloped them. The stars danced on the backs of the dark waves like tiny tightrope walkers.

"Maléna," Sibyl said, "I want to thank you."

Her voice was now like it had always been back home, during their conversations under the oak tree.

"Thank me?" Maléna said. She was surprised. It had always seemed to her that she was the one who had something to thank Sibyl for.

"Yes," Sibyl said, "to thank you. If you hadn't been so brave, if you hadn't forced me to make a decision on the afternoon before we left, I don't think ever would have seen this place, which is the most beautiful place I have ever been."

"Perhaps, Sibyl," Maléna replied, "but I don't think..."

She didn't quite know what to say. For a moment or two, she just rolled the little stone around in her palm.

"I don't think I ever would have had the courage to force anyone to make any decision had it not been for you. To tell dad I don't want a pink smartphone, to tell him how much more fun it would be to build a tree house in the linden tree. And to tell him to get out his guitar, to spend some time at home with us, not always to hurry off somewhere. Or to tell mom to spend more time with me. Or to tell you that you'd have to make a decision before nightfall as to whether or not you were going to come."





“That may be so,” Sibyl said, “but whatever the case, whichever of us owes the other one a debt of thanks, it sure is good to be here. Because it’s good here.”

Sibyl took a deep breath of the salty air. Maléna put down the stone, leaned back on her hands, and looked up at the stars. She felt she could sit there forever.

Then Sibyl spoke again.

“Nowhere is there such calm. Such endless calm. Here you don’t even think about going anywhere else.”

“Maybe because the path ends here, under the rock. It’s a good place to rest.”

“Yes, as you say, a good place to rest. The road doesn’t go any further from here. It’s getting late, Maléna. I think it’s time to turn in for the night.”

“Well, let’s go then,” Maléna said.

She stood up and brushed the sand off her palms.

“I think I’ll stay here,” Sibyl said. “I want to go to sleep here. But you go, so they won’t worry about you.”

“You mean...?” Maléna asked. She was taken aback.

“Yes, go,” Sibyl replied. “They’re waiting for you.”

“And you... Are you sure you don’t...?”

“I’m sure, Maléna. I’m sorry, but I don’t want to go. I’m very happy here. Remember, it was thanks to you and the help you gave me that I made it back here. To the shores of the endless blue sea where I was born. And you’ll manage without me, won’t you?”

“Without you? I don’t know, Sibyl.”

Maléna didn’t move.

“But if this is what you really want...”

“It is.”

“Then I will try my best,” Maléna said.

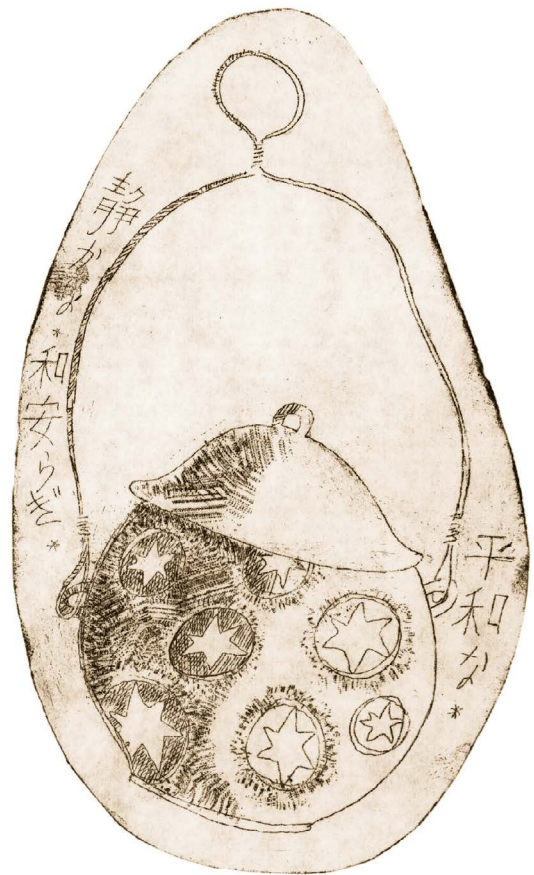
“Safe travels, Maléna!”

“Safe travels to you too, Sibyl! Or what I mean is... I’m going to miss you so much!” Maléna said, kicking the sand of the beach with the toe of her sandals.

“I know,” Sibyl replied. “But don’t be too sad. Remember what Jano’s grandmother said? People who love each other never part ways for good.”

“I remember. Then... maybe someday...”

“Yes, Maléna, someday,” Sibyl said, nodding her little head.



“Good. I believe you,” Maléna said, and then she took a deep breath and hesitantly started off down the path.

She thought of how she had perhaps guessed that this might someday happen, but she had never really imagined it. She hadn’t realized it would be so difficult. She turned to take one last look at her old friend, who was still standing on the shore of the endless sea, on the tiny white pebbles, while her tiny black figure slowly disappeared from Maléna’s sight, melting into the darkness of the sand that glistened in the starlight.

“Only the descendants  
of the witches of old can unlock

the secret  
of the herbal.”

Fotó: András Gál



## CÉLIA PIFKÓ

Célia Pifkó, Hungarian children's author, loved to adventure in imaginary worlds as a young child and decided early on that she wanted to be a writer. Her first books, "Lóci and Pötty" and "Monsters in Your Room", were written for younger children. In 2023, she published her first novel for young readers, *The Herbal*, which won the HUBBY Children's Book of the Year Award.

Fotó: Klára Szabóné Lotz



## ILDI HORVÁTH

Born in Budapest in 1977, Ildi Horváth is a graphic designer and illustrator, and since the publication of her 2018 storybook, she has been not only an illustrator but also a story writer. She graduated from the Hungarian University of Fine Arts in 2001.

# The Herbal

## FROM GUARDIANS OF THE MOONLIGHT I.

For Persica and Erinus, two siblings with the oddest of names, the upcoming summer holiday promises to be a real nightmare. They will be stuck at their scatterbrained aunt's place on a remote little island where people do the strangest things and there is neither wifi nor cellphone reception. But the siblings, who are endlessly quibbling with each other, soon find themselves caught up in an intriguing mystery. Their aunt gives them an old leather-bound book that proves very odd indeed. At first, it contains a single, very strange picture. The rest of the pages are blank, but from time to time, it starts giving off smoke, and sometimes it even drips with ink that resembles green blood. And when the children discover the meaning of the picture, another drawing, or rather a puzzle, appears in the book, and the siblings start unravelling a secret from the past, a curse on the family and a mystery that has gone unsolved for centuries.

The island, with its dark past, has a mystical atmosphere reminiscent of Celtic villages, while the siblings' quarreling and squabbling create a very contemporary backdrop familiar to young people. Célia Pifkó, a highly skilled novelist, knows the recipe for a good novel, and she concocts a brew of magic, adventure, and mystery that is enjoyable for all. She then spices it up with humor, impudent teenage characters, and unexpected twists.

The story unfolds in ever more exciting locations against a backdrop of magical herbs, a cursed garden, an abandoned old house that was once a witch's cottage, a stately manor house whose lord has important information, and a village inn where some very shady characters are lurking.

As our protagonists unravel the mystery, we also meet the eccentric inhabitants of the island, some of whom bear the names of strange plants and others who disguise their vast knowledge with their odd behavior. The local kids come out for the celebrations on Saint John's Eve. At first, they seem hostile, but they later become friendly. And naturally, there is an alluringly beautiful girl among them, with whom Erinus becomes infatuated. So much so that he is even willing to lie to his sister for her. Meanwhile, a local boy who is more pensive than the others catches Persica's eye, but their tryst takes a dangerous turn, and the island's secret draws the siblings deeper and deeper into the mystery.

Pifkó's novel won the Children's Book of the Year Award 2024 in the 12+ age category. The sequel, *The Golden Spider*, is coming out soon.

**AUTHOR**  
Célia Pifkó

**ILLUSTRATOR**  
Ildi Horváth

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## Chapter 5

# Cytus Scoparius

The children stood hesitantly in front of the old building. The dark brick walls were green with splotches of moss in several places. Above the entrance stood a small tower with red curtains covering its narrow windows. The arched wooden doorway was decorated with carved heads on its coffered wings. The faces, which were twisted into menacing grimaces, were encircled by lianas running up either side to the top of the gate, where they intertwined, as if to keep the entrance closed forever.

The huge copper handle was shaped like a man's hand, with long, bony fingers that ended in claws.

"If they're trying to get me to read, this ain't gonna do it," Erinus said shaking his head. "No way I'm putting my hand on that!"

"I'll admit, I don't really want to shake hands with that doorknob either," Persica said, "but we've got to get inside. We have to find out who this Boronia was."

"It's just ridiculous that in the twenty-first century there's a place in the world with no wifi, no internet, nothing but landlines," Erinus said, "and they only work in calm, sunny weather, which happens about twice a year."

"It's the dark ages here, brother."

"If the gate looks like this, I don't give a damn what it's like inside," Erinus said, catching a distrustful gaze on the building. But then suddenly he tugged at his sister's sleeve.

"What the hell is wrong with you?"

"Persica, I think someone's watching us from that window," he whispered, looking upwards.

"Which one?" Persica raised her gaze towards the windows of the small tower. The curtains over one of the windows had been pulled to one side, but neither of the kids could see anyone there.

"Come on!" Persica said, and she grabbed the

claw-like handle and pushed it down. The handle gave a loud creak, and the kids pushed against the heavy door, which slowly swung open.

They entered a dark staircase rich with the scents of incense. A wide spiral staircase led upwards. The huge steps of irregular stone slabs had been worn to a shiny sheen over the centuries, and they were cold under the kids' feet. Persica shuddered as she clung to the wrought-iron railing and made her way up. Erinus clattered along close behind her, trying to keep up. The flames of the lanterns on the wall cast ghostly shadows on the stairs, but even those dim flickers were muted by the covers over the lamps, which were shaped like human skulls. The light leaked out from the eye sockets, which made the children feel as if that their every move were being watched.

"I hope those aren't real," Erinus said, and he stretched his arm out towards one of the skulls.

"Don't touch it!" hissed Persica. "As clumsy as you are, you'll end up breaking something."

"Guess while we're here we might as well see if this library was built by Count Dracula himself," Erinus whispered.

Running their hands along the cold banister, they stumbled further up. At the top of the stairs, Persica suddenly stopped, so suddenly that Erinus almost fell backwards when he bumped into her. There was light filtering through the cracks in a doorway, and from within came a rough, husky growl.

"Because they all just put the books down any old where! And then I'm supposed to pick them up and put them back? What are they thinking? Where do they think they are? A flea market? Where they can just rummage through everything and then amble off? And I'm supposed to clean up after them? That's my job? Me? Cytus Scoparius, a certified expert



in cartography, heraldry, and diplomacy? That's a little too much! That they can't show even the tiniest modicum of respect! But that's people today! Like casting pearls before swine."

Cytisus Scoparius was a thin, hunchbacked man with a large hump on his right shoulder. Even in the dim light, his light brown jacket shimmered with sizeable grease stains. His dark-green woolen waistcoat had brass buttons dangling from it which jingled with every step he took. From behind his large, black-rimmed spectacles, he glared ominously at the intruders, and then he started plodding towards them, making an impatient, chittering sound with his tongue.

"Did you not hear me? I asked how I can be of service to your majesties! The last thing I need is two rude little children stealing my precious time! Do you have anything to say for yourselves? Because if not, then please, be on your way!"

"Do please excuse us for the intrusion," Persica began. Her voice was so weak and hoarse that she herself was surprised.

"Excuse you? No, no excuses!" the old man snapped. "Would one of you please find the manners to stammer out some explanation as to why you are pestering me!"

"We are here to learn more about the medieval witch trials," Persica said. "Specifically, we are interested in a woman called Boronia."

"Well, well, well," Cytisus Scoparius said, pushing his glasses up on his thin, pointy nose.

He looks like an ugly old crow, Persica thought.

"Perhaps there aren't any documents that old here," she said cautiously.

"Whether there are any documents that old here?" the librarian replied scoffingly, and then he lifted his gaze to the ceiling with a sigh and started marching slowly, purposefully towards the ornately carved wooden railing that bordered the room on the left. He came to a dramatic stop, lifted his arms triumphantly, and smiled.

"Everything that has been put on paper on the island over the course of the past thousand years is here. You just have to look in the right place."



It's not that I belong to the team,  
the team belongs  
**together.**



## GABI KEMÉNY

Gabi Kemény is a writer, story therapist, and coach. She graduated with a degree in English and French from the University of Szeged and then became a public health nurse. *The Concrete Lynx* is her first novel.



# The Concrete Lynx

Twelve-year-old Marci is a clever but somewhat scatterbrained boy, first an alternate and then a member of the school's small team that enters a natural sciences and conservation competition and ends up making it to the national finals. The finals are held in Márianosztra, and as it turns out, they have to take Marci's five-year-old brother Jancsi with them, who is very eager to have a house pet of his own.

The book covers the two and a half days when the children set off with their chaperone for the finals. An unfortunate misunderstanding forces the team to depart for the finals in a ramshackle borrowed van. They don't get very far, and they are forced to spend the night in a dark forest where they have exciting adventure after exciting adventure.

Alongside Marci, our narrator, the other protagonists are also likeable, distinctive characters. Medverács, who has several brothers and sisters, knows almost everything about the world. He is practical and shrewd and has lots of experience with survival adventures, so his presence is a tremendous blessing for the team as they struggle to make it through the night in the forest. There are also two girls on the team, Zizi, who often acts like a little child, and Berry, who speaks English as her mother tongue and who has been Marci's girlfriend since childhood.

This story of a night in the depths of the woods gives author Gabi Kemény an excellent opportunity to linger in the wondrously wild world of nature. Her love of the natural world shines through in every chapter, as does her knowledge of the ecosystem of the woods, but this knowledge is not burdensome. It does not slow down the story. It is, rather, an integral part of the tale and the reading experience. The impassioned fascination with nature that was such a prominent feature of the novels of Gerald Durrell in his day remains highly relevant in the Central European context. The forest is not simply an exciting backdrop for an adventure story. It is also a source of many important lessons.

Gabi Kemény, the author of *The Concrete Lynx* or *Two and a Half Days of Adventure with My Brother and Other Animals*, won the *Regényes Természet* competition and several other awards, including Children's Book of the Year in 2023. The book was also included in the *White Raven* catalogue in 2023.

The captivating story, which offers amusing, ironic, but never scornful portraits of a charming menagerie of characters, will be a memorable reading experience for the whole family.

**AUTHOR**  
Gabi Kemény

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Lately, I've been feeling a little annoyed with my family when we all sit down together at the table on a Friday night. Yeah, all right, not a little. Mom always makes us say something about the best thing that happened to us over the course of the week, who we had good chats with, who we had a good time with. I'd much rather be with my friends. They don't tell me what to do, and I can talk about the stuff that actually interests us. Like paintball. And lately sometimes about girls, cause girls can be so stupid sometimes that you just have to find some way to burn off all the stress they cause. But now I actually miss my parents a little.

Maybe it's cause we're so close to the forest. For as long as I can remember, we've always done a lot of hiking together. The woods are like a second home to us. A home where there's always something exciting going on. Mom would always be super excited when we arrived, as if we were on a treasure hunt. She would show us the tiny flowers and talk about their medicinal qualities. She would crouch down and show us how the big, black beetle rolls marches along in the dirt. We would eat strawberries and blackberries when they were ripe. Dad would always say that if we could just shut our mouths for two seconds we'd see a deer or a stag on the trail right in front of us. Johnny would always get really excited at the prospect and start yammering on about how he wanted a deer as a house pet, and about he would do anything, really, anything if he could just have a pet of his own. And then dad would say that he doesn't have to do anything, just shut his mouth for two seconds. But that's not something my brother can do. To be honest, neither can mom. She always shrieks when she sees a snake or cries out with joy when she spots a lizard or a hedgehog. And then she starts talking about all the plants and animals. She shows me the frost cracks on the trunks of the oaks. If I got five minutes on the iPad for every time she told me how those cracks are formed (the sap of the tree, originally Mediterranean, starts flowing down the trunk in early spring, but then comes a nasty late frost, and the moisture in the tree freezes and cracks the bark), I'd be the best gamer in the whole school. But I don't. Once or twice, Johnny wanted to try to catch a legless lizard as a pet. Because it wouldn't run away from him. But dad didn't let him. He said that animals are happiest in their own homes, just like humans. To which Johnny said that we should move to the forest, because we are always happy there.

And when we're on a hike and there's nothing exciting going on, dad takes out a rope and some carabiners from his bag, finds a valley cut by a stream, and makes a mini adventure course above it. We've been to lots of adventure parks, and they can be fun, but they're never as fun as the ones you build yourself.

And dad has a pretty good sense of adventure. When I was seven, he took me on a ten-kilometer competitive night hike. That was also here, in the mountains in northern Hungary. In the woods, in the mountains. It was a summer evening, and we were the last two people to set out as the sun set. The birds were already singing to one another about the important things that had happened that day before they started getting ready to turn in for the night. Then they quieted down, and we set off into the forest. We'd gone maybe two kilometers when a real summer thunderstorm hit. At first, it just poured. Then it started to thunder and lightning. We kept slipping in the mud. We could only hope that we were still on the trail, because we could hardly see a thing. Then there was a deafening burst of thunder and lightning struck a tree right up the trail in front of us. We heard the tree crack and split. There were even some flames, but the rain put them out after a few seconds. My ears were ringing for minutes, and I wasn't much in the mood for hiking anymore. But dad managed to paint such a mouthwatering picture of the cake and hot chocolate that was waiting for us when we finished that after a few minutes of plodding onward in the mud I was almost cheerful. And then, just as quickly as it had come, the storm passed, and a little man appeared behind us out of nowhere. At first, I was terrified by the thought that he was the Seven-winged Skull-sized Gnome come to take us to the depths of hell, but he just laughed and told me it was much worse than that. He said he was the sweep. I've heard stranger nicknames than that, I thought. But it turns out that the sweep is the person who comes after all the others have set out. If he overtakes you, you're out. Dad offered him some chocolate and then almost started interrogating him about how to organize these kinds of hikes. By the time he had finished, I swear, I could have organized a night hike in the forest myself. It was dark, but I set out in front of them almost at a run. We ended up making it to the finish line before the sweep, true, only by a few steps, but still. And we got hiking badges, a certificate, pins, and a slice of cake and hot chocolate. Our clothes were so muddy that when once they had dried off, they stood up on their own.



A thrilling crime story  
based on real events in

## Victorian London.

Fotó: Kriszta Szalmás



### ORSOLYA RUFF

Orsolya Ruff was born in 1977 in Mór. She studied Communication, International Studies and English Studies. She worked for many years as a cultural journalist, with a special interest in contemporary children's literature. In 2018, she published her first children's novel (*The Secret of the Green Cat*), the first part of a trilogy. *The Adventures of Mimi Orczy*, the first volume of her youth series (*The London Diamond Heist*), was published in 2023 and won the 2024 HUBBY Children's Book of the Year Award. The fourth volume in the series is due in summer 2025.



### ZSÓFIA MAGYAR-ÉSIK

Zsófia Magyar-Ésik is a graphic designer, illustrator, book designer. Since 2011, she has been working as a graphic designer, first as a freelancer and then founding a graphic design studio. She has also worked as a technical coordinator for a book publisher, so she is familiar with all phases of book production.

# The London Diamond Heist

from **THE ADVENTURES OF MIMI ORCZY I.**

In the first part of this thrilling crime series, Victorian London is the backdrop and the year is 1888, when Jack the Ripper is holding the city in the grip of terror. The protagonist of the series is Mimi Orczy, a courageous, inquisitive girl based in part on a real-life novelist and playwright, Baroness Emma Orczy, one of the most widely read women writers in world literature and author of *The Red Pimpernel*.

Mimi can't decide whether she'd rather be a writer or a detective, but while she's daydreaming about books in front of the window of the Golden Rabbit, a London antiquarian bookshop, strange, unsettling things are happening on the streets. Later, a fire breaks out in Her Majesty's Theatre, and as Mimi and her mother flee the building with the rest of the audience, Lady Mortimer's beautiful diamond necklace disappears. Mimi is plunged into a crime story, and an extraordinary adventure begins.

As the investigation unfolds, Mimi finds herself faced with an array of perils. Her most precious ally in this quest is the resourceful maid Anka, who knows her way around London's back alleys and the more dangerous nooks and crannies. Her other ally, however, is a rather suspicious young man who remains something of an enigma, even to Mimi.

The settings, characters, and the different social classes of contemporary London all come to life in the pages of this exciting novel. The increasingly tangled threads, true to the tradition of carefully crafted, suspenseful crime fiction, lead much further than we initially suspect, making the investigation increasingly difficult for the protagonist and her friends. Fortunately, they are brave and resourceful, and they cleverly disguise themselves to blend in with the suspicious figures who lurk in London's deepest underbelly and the fancy fops who move in the most exclusive circles.

This crime story, which is the first in the series about the adventuresome Mimi, won the Children's Book of the Year Award in 2024 (in the 6-12-year-old category). It cried out for a sequel, and since Mimi can hardly be stopped, she has now continued her investigations in two more books, as she seeks to solve the mysteries of *The Parisian Heir Turned Camphor* and *The Mysterious Map of Budapest*.

Posters, invitations, and placards that conjure the mood of the Victorian Era have been included in the book, providing the reader with an engaging visual experience and also offering clues to further the investigation.

**AUTHOR**

Orsolya Ruff

**ILLUSTRATOR**

Zsófia Magyar-Ésik

**TITLE**

The London Diamond Heist  
(The Adventures of Mimi Orczy I.)

**PUBLISHER**

Manó Books

**YEAR OF PUBLICATION**

2023

**NUMBER OF PAGES**

250

**SIZE**

197x140mm

**AGE GROUP**

10+

**RIGHTS CONTACT**

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## Chapter IV. The Phantom Face

Preparations were in full swing in the parlor. Valets wearing elegant white gloves were pushing in carts loaded with crystal glasses and China plates. Mimi carefully closed the door of her room behind her and bent over the newspapers spread out on her bed. She was not distracted in the slightest, in her reading, by the crumbs on page three that were covering the face of the Governor-General of India, who was being welcomed for an audience with Queen Victoria.

The London papers were still running headlines about the serial murders that had gripped the capital for days. Journalists were gleefully listing the gory details, and editors were bidding against one another to find the most skillful illustrators. Mrs. Green was so horrified by the sketches that she didn't even use the papers to catch the potato peelings in the kitchen, so when she wasn't watching, Anka quickly slipped the papers under her apron.

Mimi shook the crumbs off and pulled out Punch, which her mother never would have permitted in the house, but fortunately she hadn't noticed when Mimi had smuggled in a copy under her coat that afternoon. It had a depiction of the Ripper as a phantom with the face of a monkey. Effective, no doubt, at rousing fears among the readership, but Mimi just frowned. This was hardly how she had imagined the murderous fiend, as she told Anka, who had finally managed to slip into the room unnoticed.

Anka threw herself down on the bed, crushing the Ripper, who was screaming like some spirit of the night amidst the newsprint, under her bottom.

"I want to know everything about last night!" she said, crossing her arms over her starched apron.

Mimi sighed.

"I have already told you everything," she said. "According to father, there was never any real fire. It was just parts of the set smoking. But it scary!"

She popped another chocolate biscuit into her mouth.

Anka rubbed her temples thoughtfully.

"Which was pretty handy for the thief! Or thieves!"

Mimi knelt on the bed and began to rummage wildly through the papers spread out on the quilt.

"You're right! Father couldn't imagine how the set could have caught fire. He said so many precautions are taken every night."

Anka fiddled a little with her hair, which was done up in a bun, and then smoothed down her skirt. Her simple attire contrasted sharply with the sumptuous decor of the room.

(...)

Mimi knew that the cream of the social world in London would never understand how a lady of good breeding like herself could be friends with a maid like Anka. But Mimi knew no one among the girls who was cleverer or more resourceful than Anka. No one among the boys either. Mother and father were perfectly happy for her to have Anka as a friend, because they knew she was safe with Anka. Only Mrs. Green grumbled a little every time her helper vanished upstairs again. Luckily, Mrs. Green had plenty of other helpers that evening, because mother had hired half a dozen waiters and kitchen maids for the soirée, so Anka was able to sneak out of the kitchen unnoticed. She was dying with curiosity to know everything about the performance, and something was making her restless.

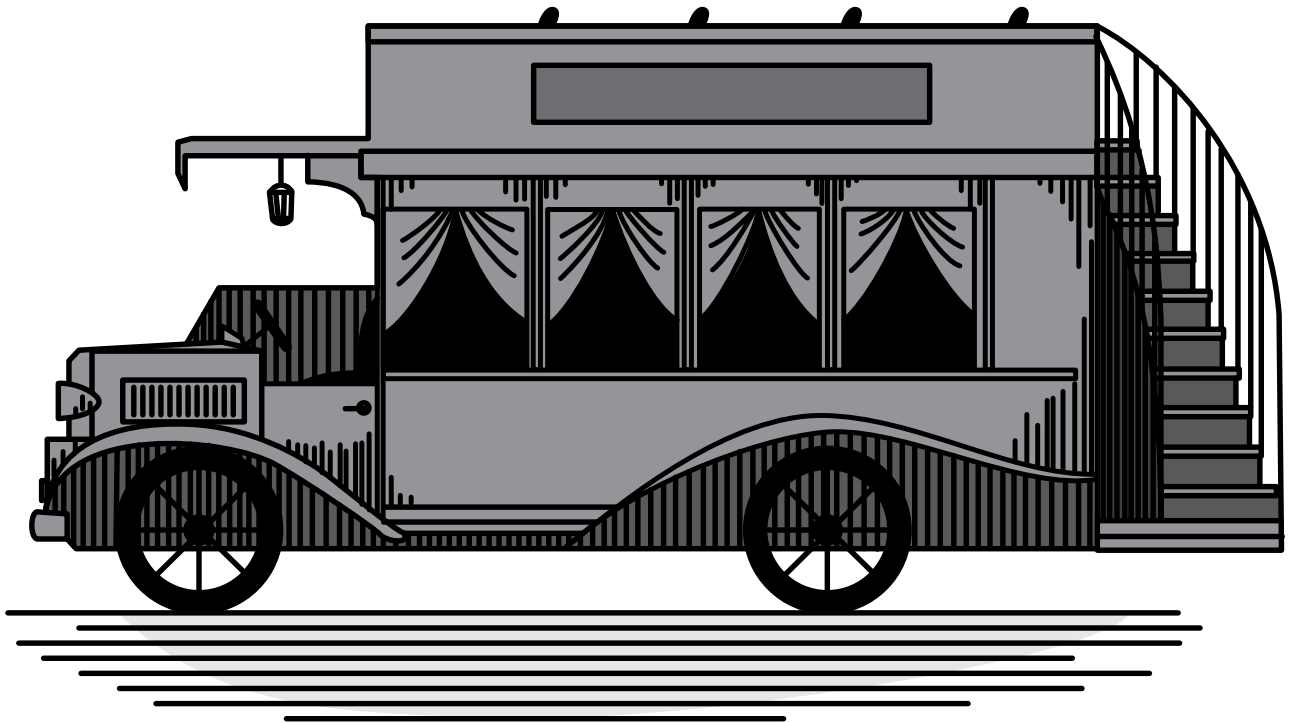
"Are you saying that someone deliberately started a fire in the theater?" she asked.

Mimi shook her head.

"I'm not saying it, the police are."

She pulled a crumpled paper from the pile.

"According to this, Scotland Yard inspector Horace King says that the thief or thieves used the clamor and confusion, which had been very deliberately created, to unclasp Lady Mortimer's necklace as they slipped past her in the jostling crowd. The necklace with the precious French blue diamond."



Anka's eyes shimmered with eager curiosity.

"Is that diamond really as beautiful as they say?"

Mimi nodded and held up her fist.

"It's huge, as big as my hand! The most beautiful blue, but it sparkles with a thousand colors when the light hits it. According to the papers, it had been in the possession of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette until..."

Mimi looked at her friend and gulped.

"Well, until, as we know, they came to an ugly end."

"Until they had their heads chopped off?" Anka interjected without a trace of compassion in her voice.

"Well, yes," Mimi said, throwing herself on the bed.

(...)

"In any case, the thief or thieves were careful to get everything right," Anka muttered.

But Mimi barely heard her. The clamor and clatter on the other side of the door had gotten louder. Mimi knew she would have to start getting ready for the evening if she didn't want her mother to be angry at her. Her mother was very insistent that one always be punctual, no matter what the circumstances.

Mimi jumped behind the screen and started unbuttoning her dress. Anka immediately came to her

aid, and for minutes they struggled silently with the cords and pearlescent buttons, which were smaller than a fingernail.

"Do you think there will come a time when women won't have to wear corsets?" Mimi snorted desperately as Anka gave the cords one last tug.

The maid's eyes widened.

"Impossible!" she said.

"But why?" Mimi retorted, but then she suddenly grabbed Anka's arm to keep from falling over. With the tight lacing around her chest, she felt as if she could hardly take a breath.

"Imagine what it would be like! You get up in the morning, put on a shirt or a sweater, slip on a skirt, and you're ready to go! You don't even put on stockings!"

"What?" Anka almost burst out laughing. "No stockings? What a world that would be!"

Mimi quietly shook her head.

"It would be a lovely world. All the time we save on dressing up could be spent doing something useful..."

What's outside is nothing compared to what's



Fotó: Vivien Farkas



## GYÖNGYI SOLTI

Gyöngyi Solti was born in 1965 in Tata. She is a secondary school teacher of mathematics and physics. She mostly writes short stories. In 2018, she published a book of short stories titled *City Poultry Yard*, which is based on a class reunion. She captures the life of a town and its inhabitants in a manner that resembles a collection of photographs. *We Don't Talk About It* is her first young adult novel.

Fotó: Eszter Gordon,  
Pagony



## MARI TAKÁCS

Graphic designer, illustrator, and typographer Mari Takács was born in 1971. She worked for ten years as an art director for an advertising agency. She started her career as an illustrator in 2002. She has won the *Szép Magyar Könyv* award four times. Her favorite mediums are acrylic and montage. She won the Hungarian IBBY Award for her illustrations for *On the Edge of the Morning Star* and the Ministry of Education and Culture's Special Creative Award for *The Fairy Who Can See in the Dark*.



# We Don't Talk About It

In her new novel, Gyöngyi Solti pushes her reader into a hospital ward *in medias res*. It takes some time for us to figure out, based on the various scattered fragments of information, what has happened to the protagonist of the tale. She has been hospitalized after having suffered an electric shock. On the skin of patients who have been struck by lightning, a distinctive fractal pattern resembling a fern or an ice crystal forms, a so-called Lichtenberg pattern, due to the irregularly uneven distribution of the charge.

*So-called keraunomedicine*, which is the practice in medicine that focuses on treatment for victims of lightning strikes, *deals with* the effects of electricity on the human body: the long-term, often permanent mental, nervous, and autonomic effects. *We Don't Talk About It* is partly about how a teenage girl copes with the physical and psychological traumas of a lightning strike.

This tale, however, goes well beyond Karen's health problems and touches also on the tensions of a marriage and a family in crisis. The relationship between Karen's parents has deteriorated, and her mother has taken a job abroad. Karen thinks it's because her mother can't bear the sight of her daughter, who is forever marked by the scars of the accident. This difficult situation is exacerbated by the first wave of Covid, which Karen and her brother, a video game addict, have to get through without their mother and with an uncaring father who is physically present but emotionally absent. Against this difficult backdrop, Karen has to care not only for herself but also for her younger brother.

As a consequence of quarantine, the world online, which is becoming more and more the world in which people—especially young people—live their everyday lives is increasingly home to online scams, bullying, and catfishing.

And what is it that we don't talk about? The things that hurt. What we are ashamed of. What we fear. What we think the other person won't understand or won't accept. As if not talking about a problem means that it doesn't exist, even though the secrets, taboos, and silences are stifling. Solti's young adult novel deals with serious issues, but her light, witty style and her clever insights, serenity, and sense of wonder make the book an enjoyable read. She has a clear gift for storytelling, seasoned with a tone of self-irony.

**AUTHOR**

Gyöngyi Solti

**ILLUSTRATOR**

Mari Takács

**TITLE**

We Don't Talk About It

**PUBLISHER**

Csimota Publishing House

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145

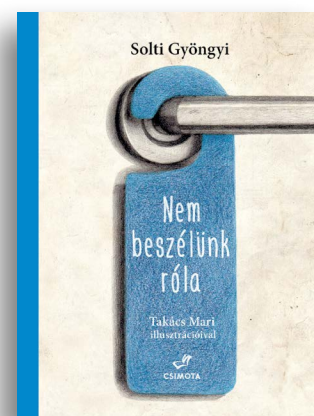
**SIZE**

137 mm x 185 mm

**AGE GROUP**

12+

**RIGHTS CONTACT**

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I think a fourteen-year-old can go to Budapest by bus on her own, I don't know what all the fuss is about. Nelli couldn't pick me up by car, and why should she, it would be a long drive for her. I'll just hop on the bus and get off in an hour. Sure, I shouldn't have mentioned it to dad, but Nelli always insists on being straight up with this kind of stuff, and Bence would have told on me anyway. At first dad was going on and on about how I couldn't leave before noon because I've got school until two, but I told him the classes are all online anyway and you don't have to attend, they just give you assignments that you can do later. I think he bought it.

I owe Imre a pizza. That's what he asked for in exchange for covering for me if dad calls. Bence asked for a thousand forints, the little jerk, even though I had everything set up, ready to go, he just had to click to sign in. I even set an alarm. Just told him not to forget to hit mute.

But then the bus ride, that set everything off. Dad called mom to ask her what to do. And mom didn't really care, of course, just let the kid go if she wants to. Guess it's lucky for me she doesn't really give a shit. It'd probably be a relief for her if I vanished somewhere between the bus station and the highway. No more burnt kid to worry about. She could come home and live in peace. I always have these kinds of thoughts. I can't help it.

And yeah, the kid, that's me, she did want to go. Though she was terrified by the thought of what it would actually be like to meet Richie. What if he doesn't like me? What if he can't bear the sight of my arm? What if he has bad breath or wears stupid clothes? Or if I act stupid or get all flustered or start yammering on and on in a squeaky voice cause I don't know what to say.

By ten o'clock, I was at the coffeehouse where Richie was waiting.

He wasn't wearing stupid clothes, he didn't have bad breath, and I wasn't yammering on and on. Because I wasn't really saying anything at all. I just sat and listened and nodded when he asked me a question. I had been talking to Ritchie on the phone a lot over the last few weeks, I hadn't had any trouble coming up with things to say then, so why now? It's like this guy sitting across from me isn't even him, and the girl sitting by this coke zero isn't me. His voice sounds strange, foreign. And mine would too if I said anything. But I don't. I just blink.

I knew he was a good guy, and he came up with something this time too. He got up, walked over to a tree, took out his phone and called me.

"Hey, am I calling at a bad time?"

He poked his head out from behind the tree and winked at me,

"No, not at all. I was just having a coke."

From a distance, the conversation went fine.

"Are you alone?"

"No, I'm on a date with some guy, but he's kind of a jerk. He got up and walked off, went to make a phone call."

Finally. Karen's voice came out of me. Richie liked it. He started laughing.

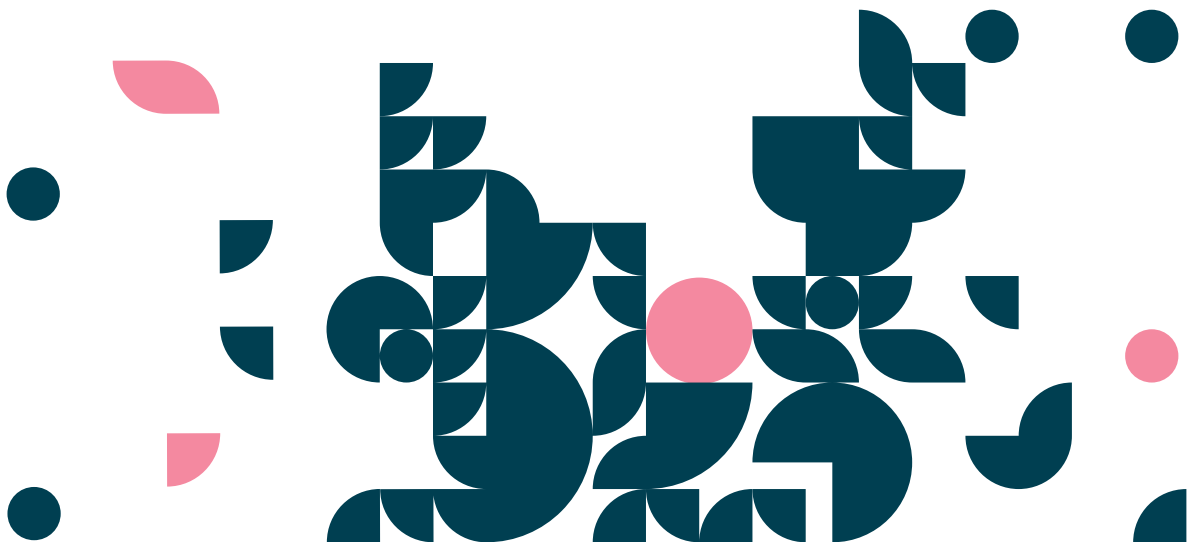
“Then let’s continue our date without the jerk. I’ll get rid of this mute chick I’ve been stuck with and we can go for a walk.”

We walked together for two hours. Karen and Ritchie, the real Karen and Ritchie, the ones who had been discussing everything in the world, the important stuff and the unimportant stuff. The Karen and Ritchie who call each other before they go to bed at night and then wait for minutes on end for the other one to hang up.

After a while it started to get hot. I had to take off my sweater. I had played the whole thing out in my head, how I’d take it off all casual like, we’d laugh about the burning mace joke, and then he’d stroke my arm, all casual like, and give me a look to let me know it was all right, it didn’t bother him at all, and everything would be fine. But he didn’t. He didn’t stroke my arm, he didn’t give me a look. I don’t think he even noticed. Maybe he just didn’t want to. Or maybe he did but he tried to pretend he hadn’t. Or maybe what we were talking about was so important that he didn’t want to interrupt our conversation for some little thing like that. It was nothing, after all. Didn’t merit mention.

We talked about things, important and unimportant, and totally irrelevant things too, and there were times when we didn’t even realize what we were talking about, what we were laughing about, or why what the other person was saying was so interesting.

I’d say I have found my soul mate in Ritchie if it wasn’t so damn corny. Cheesy as hell, but so what, I’ll say it, I can say it to myself after all. He always knows what I’m thinking, he listens to me like no one ever has. When I speak, he looks deep into my eyes, waits for me to finish, nods meaningfully. I was surprised at first. Thought he’d interrupt me at any moment and say “yeah, same thing happened to me” or “you know what, last time I” or something like that. But he didn’t. He just listened. To me. And I could see it in his eyes, and the way he holds his head. Couldn’t mean anything else.



Horrors retold for children,  
**honestly,  
upliftingly.**



Fotó: Péter Mészáros

## BALÁZS ZÁGONI

Since 2019, author and university instructor Balázs Zágoni has been a full-time lecturer at the Hungarian Film and Media Institute of Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, where he teaches screenwriting, creative writing, and film history. He has published fifteen books for children and young people, of which the first volume of the *Black Light* series, *The Sphere*, has won three awards, including the Children's Book of the Year Award in the young adult category in 2019.

# The Star and the Captain

Horror stories told to children? This gripping novel, which comes to some 400 pages, is a dynamic work of unparalleled realism published in commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of the Holocaust. It is based on real interviews, including with Holocaust survivors. With its engaging storyline, it is imbued with a sense of reality and authenticity, and yet it is neither oppressive nor overwhelming. We sometimes feel as if we were walking alongside the characters on the streets, taking refuge in the buildings, and making the difficult decisions faced by the mother.

Dávid and Péter are two eleven-year-old schoolboys. One of them is Jewish, the other is not. The world of Budapest during the Second World War is depicted for us from the perspective of their friendship and their family histories. The essential question raised here, as the author himself has confessed, is not an easy one. How far will one go to help a friend? The main characters must grapple with questions concerning the varying degrees of solidarity between individuals and the constant collision of hope and fear.

The novel is based on the story of a fabrics company. In 1944–1945, László Ocskay, a captain in the Royal Hungarian Army, rescued about 2,500 Jews as commander of a Jewish workers' unit. The writer takes his father, Dávid, to this workers' unit, but we also find ourselves with the children for whom the adults make little ice-skating rinks in the freezing-cold weather so that they can have at least a taste of childhood fun, even while their city is suffering bombing raids. We find ourselves on the (historically real) sports field with the mother and sister where Raoul Wallenberg is handing out letters that will provide people with free passage. Where everyone sleeps on the ground, including the children, and where, by chance, one family is put into the train cars headed for the extermination camps and another family is allowed to go free, depending entirely on the whim of the soldiers.

The novel may help the next generation do a better job confronting the traumas of the past than the generation to which Zágoni himself belongs managed to do.

**AUTHOR**  
Balázs Zágoni

**TITLE**  
The Star and the Captain

**PUBLISHER**  
Móra Publishing House

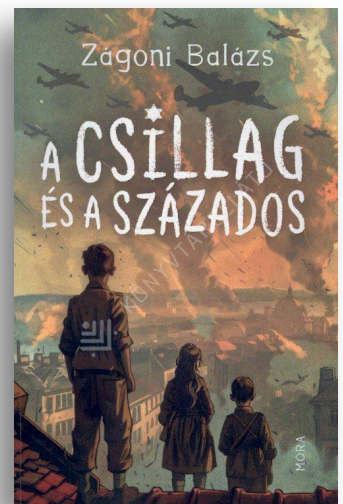
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392

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130 mm x 198 mm

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12-16

**RIGHTS CONTACT**  
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Dávid hardly had time to crawl back to the closet and hide. He heard the approaching footsteps and the rattle of keys. Kovács opened the main door to the building as if to leave, but then he changed his mind. He turned back, walked over to the closet, threw open the door, and reached in. His hand was only six inches from Dávid's head. He grabbed the broom and then hurried out by the gate.

"This is it," Dávid thought. "If he comes back, there's no way he won't find me."

Kovács looked left and right and then turned and started shouting.

"You're around the corner, are you? I'll get you!" And he set out, waving the broom.

"Now!" Dávid thought. He snuck out of the closet and slipped quietly out the main door. Kovács was still plodding resolutely towards the streetcorner without casting a single glance back. Dávid ran as fast as he could in the other direction, though he was also struggling to step gently so as not to make any noise as his feet hit the sidewalk. When he reached the next street, he turned in. He stopped to cast a quick glance back. Kovács was still standing at the far streetcorner. He was explaining something passionately to some passerby and shooting glances left and right, but not back, thank god.

But now what? Dávid hadn't grabbed his jacket with the star on it. He didn't even have papers. He wasn't even allowed to be out on the street.

"I'll do what Tata did when he grabbed a car in Füred," he thought. "But at least he had a uniform, and medals too. All I've got is a summer shirt, and it's dirty. And I'm cold."

It took him a good half hour to plod his way to Felsőerdősor Street. Back at the apartment, he had imagined that he would hide under the cars, like dad had done at night in Csepel. But it wasn't nighttime, and there were hardly any cars on the street, just people going around on foot.

He had known from the outset that he would have to avoid Teréz Boulevard, since there was an

Arrow Cross Party house there. But he wasn't sure if he'd be safer in the crowds bustling around the western train station, which would mean taking a detour, or if he should just stay on Csanády Street and go across Ferdinand Bridge, which would almost get him home. The second option seemed better, except for the bridge going over the train tracks. If anyone were to stop him on the bridge, he wouldn't have anywhere to run. A cold breeze suddenly came from the Danube, and Dávid immediately decided to head for the bridge, because that was the shortest way.

The wind was blowing so hard that he could hardly manage to take a step forward by the time he had reached Podmaniczky Street. No one had stopped him. He had seen some Arrow Cross men at the intersection with Váci Street, and some policemen too, but they either hadn't noticed him or hadn't thought him worth bothering with.

It was dark by the time he got home. Felsőerdősor Street was completely deserted. He stopped in front of their old shop. It was like a different shop now. A new door, new stuff in the window. All that was left was the old countertop and the old cash register. He remembered his dream, and he tried to imagine where the Märklin railway would run if it were really built over the deli shop. He glanced up from time to time at Péter's family's apartment in the hopes of catching a glimpse of light in one of the windows. Was it possible that they were all out again? Or had they just managed to keep the place completely dark? Not like he could just go and ring the bell! The man who oversaw their building would call the police. Dávid would have to wait for the right moment, for someone to come, preferably someone from the Nagy family. If only it weren't so cold!

His teeth were chattering. And to top it all off, he was already hungry.

"Who you waiting for, kid?"

He looked up and saw an Arrow Cross man standing right in front of him. He looked back and saw another one. They must have taken care to come quietly

to make sure that he wouldn't hear them approaching. His heart was racing, and his mind suddenly froze.

But not his mouth.

"Perseverance! Long live Szálasi!" He heard the sound of his own voice, and he noticed himself timidly stretching out his arm too. He felt like such a coward.

"Do you live here?"

"Yes," Dávid replied. He was surprised by the confidence with which he had spoken. And it was true, after all. He had been born in this building, and this was where he had grown up. Except that since June, it had not been his home.

"I wanted to drop in on a friend, but I ended up locking myself out," he said. And again he was surprised, this time by the speed with which he had come up with this lie.

"We'll see if you're telling the truth," one of the men said, and he rang the bell.

What would happen next? Was he about to be caught? Should he try to run? But where? And besides, they would catch up with him, or maybe just shoot him. All he could do was hope that the door to the building was actually closed and locked, because he hadn't actually tried to open it.

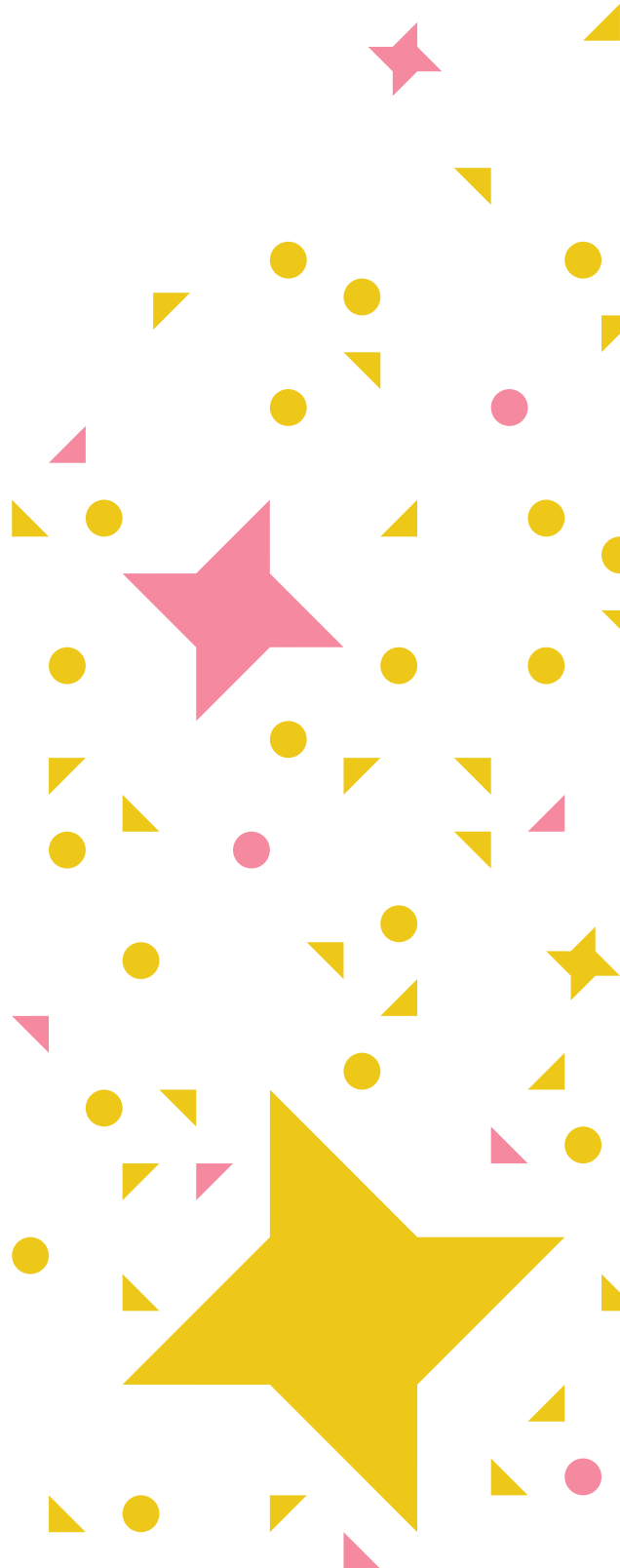
There was the sound of footsteps on the far side of the main door to the building and then a key turning in the lock.

Old Man Elek opened the door. He was wearing a shabby jacket and the usual iron soldier's helmet on his head, and he had a candle in one hand. He looked first at the two Arrow Cross men and then lowered the candle and looked at Dávid. Good thing that no one could see the look of surprise on the old man's face in the dark.

"Long live Szállasi! Does this kid live here?"

It seemed an eternity before old man Elek replied.

"Did you wander out again? When you know no one is allowed to be out on the streets? Come on, get back inside!"



Wouldn't you  
be happier if you  
**learned to love  
what you have?**



## ÉVA VERONIKA KALAPÓS

Éva Veronika Kalapos is a writer, journalist, and literary translator. She was born in 1983 in Nyíregyháza. Her young adult novel series *D.A.C.* and her novels *Dollop* and *Must We?* were published by Manó Publishing House. Her drama collection *Face in the Snow* was published by the Association of Young Writers, and her first novel for adults, *F For*, was published by Athenaeum Publishing House. *These Were the Fathers*, her most recent novel, was published in October 2021.



# I Won't Leave You Here!

Eighteen-year-old Rami and her four friends are in a hopeless situation. In the totalitarian system under which they live, they have little say over their lives and little control over their futures. Everything is controlled by an ever-present yet invisible state body, the Bureau. The Bureau keeps everyone under constant surveillance and uses unpredictable measures to ensure that everyone lives in a state of fear. The leaders have made enticing promises, including the abolition of the difference between the rich and the poor, but these young people have decided that the time has come to rise up against the oppressive regime.

Set in Budapest, this young adult novel depicts a dystopian future for Hungary while also capturing the anxieties and insecurities of teenagers in the twenty-first century. *I Won't Leave You Here!* is fascinating both as an exploration of the labyrinth of a dystopic world and as a vibrant portrayal of a group of young people whose tense conversations are rich with humor, wit, and pathos.

The denizens of this city, which is both real and imaginary, are allowed to do many things, but nothing creative and nothing that requires independent thought. The people live in a triple caste system, according to which they are marked with armbands and granted different freedoms. Rami, who wears a red armband, rejects, along with her friends, the complacency and apathy of the adults. In school, they are taught nothing but propaganda, and only couples who openly pledge to start families are given any support. The rebellion launched by Rami and her friends begins with the idea of founding a new, illegal school that will nurture free thinking.

According to author Éva Veronika Kalapos, the world of the novel was inspired by the current state of the Hungarian educational system. Kalapos could not help but wonder what might happen if the life-and-death struggles common to the genre were fought over culture.

**AUTHOR / ILLUSTRATOR**

Éva Veronika Kalapos

**TITLE**

I Won't Leave You Here!

**PUBLISHER**

Lampion

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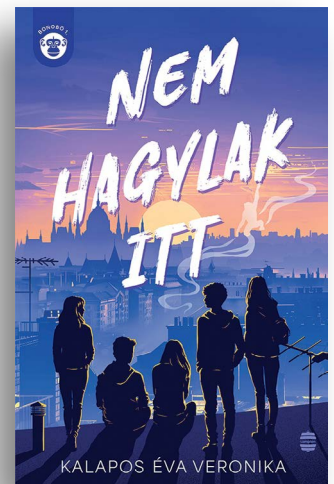
338

**AGE GROUP**

16+

**RIGHTS CONTACT**

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“Clearly they kicked them out.” Tomo’s voice seemed calm, but I knew he was bursting with anger inside.

Of all of us, he’s the one who’s most unsettled by that kind of thing. He was raised conservative, back when parents had some kind of choice in the matter, and though he’d shed most of that stuff by then, it still left him pretty upset, the helplessness, the fact that, even as a young man, there was no way for him to take any kind of meaningful stand for anything. Or against anything for that matter. But good for him. Frankly, I’m pretty alarmed by how utterly indifferent I am to that kind of news. I want to be angry and indignant, like Tomo. I want to laugh at them all, like Baldwin. I want to slither alongside them, like Hedvig, or be terrified of them, like Alda, but frankly I don’t feel anything apart from endless exhaustion. So another family is ruined because there’s no work under the table and the Bureau decides who gets the state jobs. So what? They’ll scrape by for a while, living off the generosity and pity of others, and then who know? Maybe some charitable relative will show up. Maybe the mom and pop will close all the doors and windows one night and let the little gas that every family gets leak out into the bedrooms. And if the place blows up, there’ll be a line or two about the terrible tragedy in the news, and they’ll note that the Bureau is planning to replace all the old gas furnaces and radiators with new ones, and all within the next cycle. Since, after all, we have known for a good decade now that they constitute a genuine threat to the public wellbeing.

And we never do anything more than talk anyway. Someone rattles off another tidbit of scandalous news, and we just sit and listen. Tomo clenches his fist, Alda’s eyes well up with tears, Hedvig picks at her fingernails, Baldwin somewhat begrudgingly passes the cigarette on to the next in line so that everybody can take a puff, and I just sit stone silent. Like some worthless wretch. These kinds of thoughts are flitting through my mind, but I can’t really finish the idea, because I can’t really compare us to anything, because we’re nothing but a bunch of nobodies. Five kids, almost eighteen years

old, sitting on the roof of a building sometime in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, the children of four red armband families and one white one. Our past has been erased, our present is elusive, our future unknowable. Well, that’s not entirely true, because I, for one, can see my future very clearly when I force myself to think about it. Sooner or later I’ll hook up with some guy at one of the Meetup Evenings (or Meatup, as they should be called, I get a new invitation in my inbox every week), we’ll end up on Hitched, because you can’t really get out of that, and then marriage and kids. And the Bureau will give us a couple job offers, you never really know how many, I know one guy who get ten, another just two, and we can take our pick, depending on our tastes and, of course, the needs of our family. And then soon enough we board the busses with our parents, which stop at specified times near the residential areas to take us to work and then take us home at the end of our shifts.

“Great,” Baldwin groans, taking a deep drag on the cigarette and staring at Tomo. “I can’t believe what a party killer you are.”

“Know what, I don’t really give a shit whether you want to know about all the crap going on or not,” Tomo snapped, “because either way, it’s still happening! Besides, what the fuck difference does it make to you? I could be preaching here buck naked for all you care!”

“Now that I’d like to see,” Baldwin said, but his face was stern. Again.

Sometimes I want to shake him and get him to tell us what the hell they did to him, what’s behind all the smoke, but I know I don’t have any right to. Though I’ve never seen anyone as changed as he was when he came back. As if they’d washed him out or sucked him dry with leaches. For months he was just an empty body, a soulless sack.

Tomo gave me a dismissive wave of his hand. I could see on his face what was coming.

“Don’t you want to do something?” he said, turning towards us. “Are we seriously going to let them get away with this?”

“I hear you, you know I hear you,” I say, trying to put a touch of optimism in my voice.

“Relax, superman,” Hedvig mutters. “Now you’re trying to rabble rouse! Just keep your voices down.”

“Keep your own fucking voice down!” Tomo snapped, and then he leapt to his feet and threw his arms wide. He looked laughable and incredibly beautiful at the same time.

“Is this what you want? This shit? A world where you can’t even speak up on a lousy weekday afternoon?”

“Relax,” I said. “All we really want right now is for them to leave us alone.”

I get up, walk over to him, and put my hand on his arm. It works sometimes, but I can tell it won’t now.

“We know you’re right, but..”

“But what?”

His eyes were flashing. There was no trace in the expression on his face of the introverted, reserved kid I’d known since childhood.

“You all just sit there in silence, like my parents. And you’re every bit as afraid as they are! Of what? If we don’t do something, we’re just going to rot away here! Don’t you get it? You think that by some miracle we’ll manage to pass the exit test and they’ll actually let us out of this fucking country? Or they shut down the Bureau or something? Or we’ll kick them out? Yeah right! Not a fucking thing is going to happen here if we don’t do something to get things moving, and there’s plenty of people who’d... yeah, all right, they can have you dragged off, but they can’t..”

“It’s my fucking birthday!” Alda suddenly snapped. Her voice was shaky but firm, and we all looked her way. We hadn’t even noticed that she’d stood up in the meantime, though the boys always felt awkward when she towered over them with her slender body, as she was doing now. “And I want to stay here, so enough of this shit!”

**I Won't  
Leave**

**You  
Here!**



## BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD

Every year, HUBBY, the Hungarian section of the international Board on Books for Young People (or IBBY), presents the "Children's Book of the Year Awards" to the authors and illustrators of the most outstanding children's books of the previous year. A shortlist of the five best books in each category is drawn up by a panel of experts and the winners are chosen.

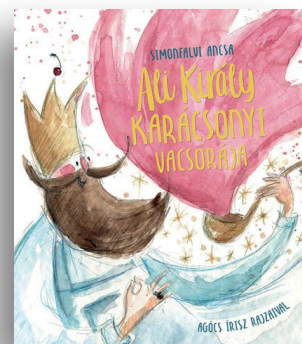
More information about the Winners: HUBBY [ibby.hungary@gmail.com](mailto:ibby.hungary@gmail.com)

## 2024 Children's Book Awards

## Debut Author Category:

**Ancsa Simonfalvi:** *Ali King's Christmas Dinner* (Published by Pagony, illustrated by Írisz Agócs, edited by Luca Csobod, 40 pages)

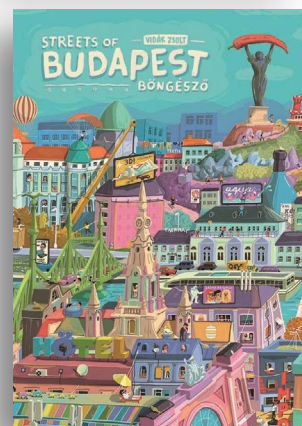
A charming Christmas story for children aged 4–6 about a missing magical ladle, a yeti, a dragon, some puppies, and the royal grandchildren, but first and foremost about cooperation and love.



## Illustration Category:

**Zsolt Vidák:** *The Streets of Budapest, a Wimmelbilderbuch* (Published by Lampion Books, edited by Eszter Anna Balázs)

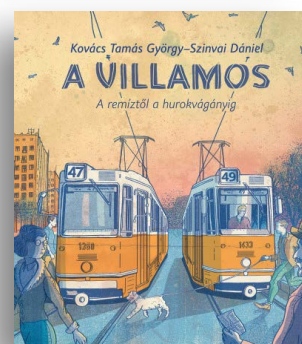
Discover Budapest through the incredible vision of a creator who sometimes sees things in a rosy light but who always has an eye for colours. This book never runs out of intriguing new details!



## Non-Fiction Category:

**Tamás György Kovács:** *The Tram – From the Depot to the Loop Track* (Published by Pagony, illustrated by Dániel Szinvai, edited by Luca Csobod, Hanna Győri)

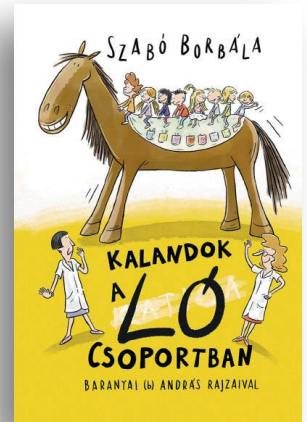
Everything you ever wanted to know about trams, or never realized you did, but now find fascinating, all brought to life with Dániel Szinvai's captivating illustrations.



## Author Category, for children under 6:

**Borbála Szabó:** *Adventures in the Horse Group* (Published by Pagony, illustrated by András (b) Baranyai, edited by Viktória Rét)

A hilarious picture book about a kindergarten group where kids handle business at the document office, find a suitor for their teacher, and solve every tricky situation that comes their way.



## Author Category, Ages 6–12:

**Orsolya Ruff:** *The Adventures of Mimi Orczy – The London Diamond Heist* (Published by Manó Books, edited by Kinga Csapody)

A historical mystery set in Victorian London, led by a curious, bold young girl.



## Author Category, Ages 12 and Up:

**Célia Pifkó:** *The Guardians of the Moonlight – The Herbal* (Published by Cerkabella Books, illustrated by Ildi Horváth, edited by Andrea Lovász)

A magical adventure story about a pair of constantly bickering siblings, the magical power of medicinal herbs, ancient witches of yore, and what they left behind.



# 2025 Children's Book Awards

## Debut Author Category:

**Dániel Szinvai:** *Parallel* (Published by Csimota Books, illustrated by Dániel Szinvai, edited by Dóra Csányi, Sára Gáspár, Sándor Szabó)

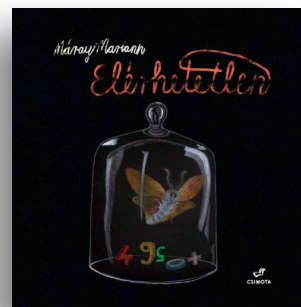
A girl arrives in one place, a boy sets off from another. In this book, which can be read from two directions, their paths meet in the middle. A poetic text with vibrant illustrations.



## Illustration Category:

**Mariann Máray:** *Unreachable* (Published by Csimota Books, a picture book)

What is it like to live in isolation under a “glass dome” that both protects and excludes? This stunning, artistic silent book tells the story of an autistic boy and the meeting of two worlds.



## Author Category, for children under 6:

**Veronika Marék:** *Greybeard and Skruff* (Published by Pagony Books, illustrated by András (b) Baranyai, edited by Eszter Kovács)

The cheerful story of a forgetful, warm-hearted professor and a lonely, lovable dog who find friendship and companionship in each other.



## Author Category, Ages 6–12:

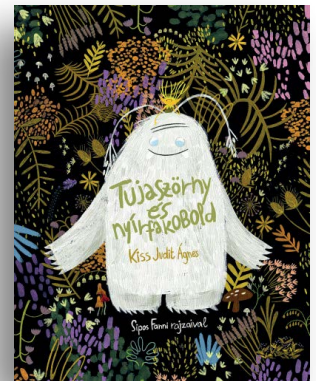
**Dóra Gimesi:** *When the Trees Began to Tell Stories* (Published by Pagony Books, illustrated by Kinga Rofusz, edited by Hanna Gyóri, 56 pages)

A magical journey spanning 150 years, following the stories of four generations of women, accompanied by the enchanting, artistic illustrations of Kinga Rofusz.



**Judit Ágnes Kiss:** *The Thuja Monster and the Birch Hobgoblin* (Published by Pagony Books, illustrated by Fanni Sipos, edited by Viktória Rét, 94 pages)

The heartwarming tale of a giant creature who looks like a monster, a tiny little hobgoblin, and their unlikely but beautiful friendship. A story about love and acceptance.



## Author Category, Ages 12 and Up:

**Anna Somfai:** *On the Far Side of the Wall* (Published by Cerkabella Books, edited by Andrea Lovász, 362 pages)

A true coming-of-age love story set in the shadow of the Berlin Wall. The heroine's rebellion against metaphorical walls, including the walls of silence, compromise, and ideology, shapes her journey.



# Petőfi Cultural Agency

THE AIM OF PETŐFI CULTURAL AGENCY IS TO PROMOTE CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY HUNGARIAN AUTHORS' WORKS ABROAD AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOREIGN-LANGUAGE PUBLISHING OF HUNGARIAN LITERATURE.

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- grants for foreign publishers for translation costs
- grants for foreign publishers for publication costs
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## INFORMATION CENTRE

- contacts of authors, translators, publishers, and agencies
- information concerning authors, books, rights

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