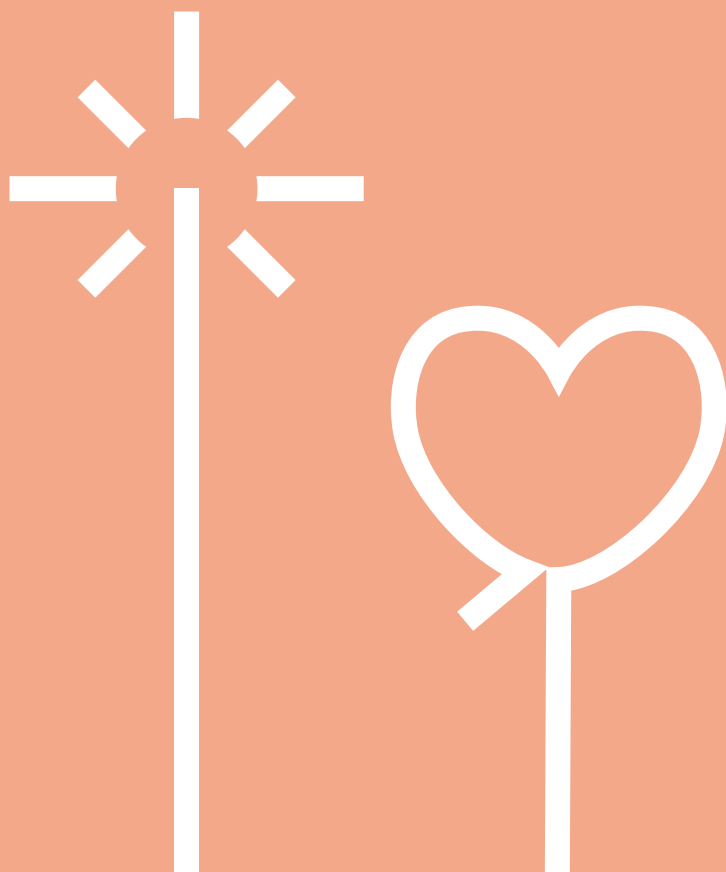
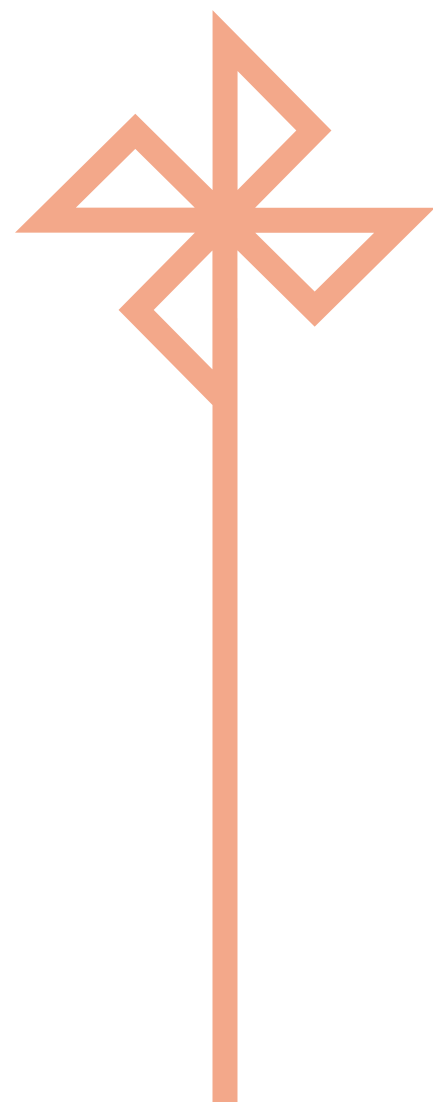


NEW HUNGARIAN

2024

# CHILD LIT

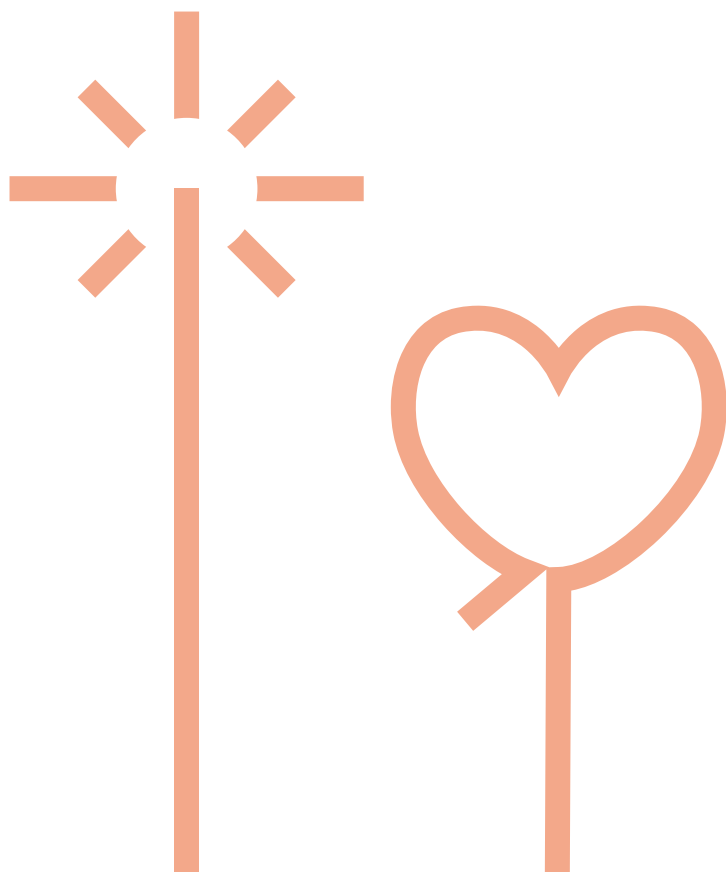




NEW HUNGARIAN

2024

# CHILD LIT



**editor-in-chief**  
Balázs Keresztes

**responsible editor**  
Margit Garajszki

**selected and written by**  
Margit Garajszki  
Artemisz Harmath

**layout and illustration**  
Leticia Dorka Lévai  
Eszter Kiss

**translation**  
Thomas Cooper

ISSN 3004-2526

**publisher**  
Petőfi Cultural Agency Nonprofit Ltd.  
1033 Budapest, Hajógyár u. 132.

**responsible publisher**  
Szilárd Demeter

**printed by**  
VIRTUOZ



21

**Krisztina Rita Molnár**  
The Angel's Tale



41

**Csenge Virág Zalka**  
Big City Folktales



25

**Noémi László**  
Jack in the Box



45

**Csaba Mikó**  
Saving the Lucretia



5

**Anna Alács**  
A Postcard from El Idyllio



29

**Tamás Leó Szecsődi**  
My Widening World



49

**Miklós Eszterházy**  
Raspberry and the Rattletraps



9

**Lilla Turi**  
If the Giraffes...



33

**Ádám Berta**  
Dusty, the Mouse Fairy



53

**Ildikó Boldizsár**  
The Real Path



13

**András Dániel**  
Everyone's Bustling  
This Way and That



37

**Mária Bajzáth**  
Folktales of the Dells and Dales



57

**Ferenc Molnár**  
The Paul Street Boys



17

**Borbála Szabó**  
Adventures in the Horse Group





Cover the drab with

**brilliant  
SPLOTCHES  
of COLORS!**

## Anna ALÁCS

completed her studies at Eötvös Loránd University, where she majored in Scandinavian Studies and Swedish. She studied graphic design at the Buda Drawing School and illustration at the Corvin Drawing School. She lives in Budapest and works as a visual designer.



5

## A Postcard from El Idyllio

Gallo the rooster spends his dull, wearisome weekdays in an egg factory. The only moment of joy he has is during his lunchbreak when a yellow songbird on the windowsill tells him stories about faraway lands. But one day in late autumn, as Gallo is waiting for his little friend to come entertain him with his tales, the little bird doesn't come. And the next day, Gallo again waits in vain for his friend. The days pass, and Gallo becomes more and more despairing. Soon, the first snow falls, and Gallo notices that his bright crimson plumes have turned completely gray. One day, he happens across an old, yellowed envelope on the factory conveyer belt. Inside the envelope is a postcard with a picture of a sunny seaside town, El Idyllio. Gallo's gaze often wanders to the postcard, as it is the only bright spot in his dreary days, and one day, he notices a little yellow bird perched on the tip of one of the towers, the very bird who had once told him such exciting tales about the big, wide world. Gallo quits his job at the factory and sets off in search of this seaside city, where he hopes at long last to find his old friend.

What happens when our gray everyday lives make us gray too? Are we bold enough to consider trading the familiar for the unfamiliar? We happens if we dare strike out and embrace change, but things don't always turn out to be as easy as we might have imagined in the new lives we carve for ourselves? Does being in our homes mean the same thing as being at home? Illustrator Anna Alács's tale of burnout, the search for new paths, new friendships, and new opportunities in life will be an engaging, captivating read for young and old alike. The images in the book, which are accompanied by a few lines of text, are rich with color and carefully designed textures. The treatment of space is also remarkably varied, and the perspective shifts from a narrow focus to a wide angle. The stark contrast between the two kinds of life, drab and gray on the one hand and exciting and colorful on other, is brilliantly captured in the images. This book, which is Anna Alács's first as an author, offers us a panorama of beautiful natural landscapes, hectic cityscapes, and buildings of all kinds, as well as an array of unusual human and animal characters.

author/illustrator  
Anna Alács

title  
A Postcard from El Idyllio

publisher  
Csimota

year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
60

size  
200 x 200 mm

recommended age  
3–6

rights contact  
Dóra Csányi  
dora.csanyi@csimota.hu





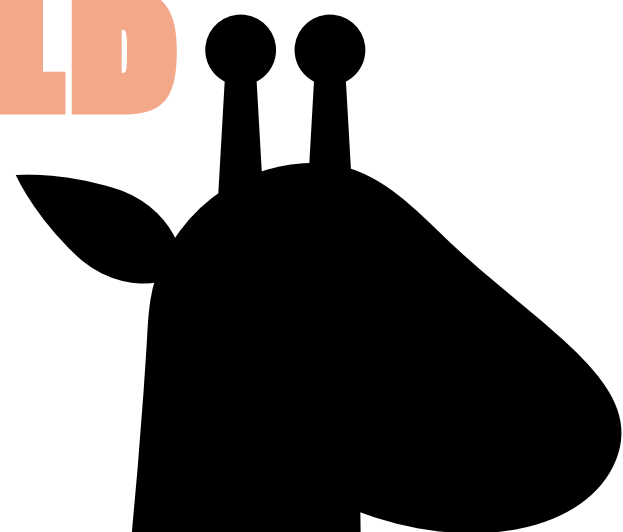
Gallo tells his old friend that he traveled to the distant city to find him because he missed him so dearly.





The

# WORLD



from the  
*point of view* of a  
**GIRAFFE**

## Lilla TURI

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



9

# If the Giraffes...

Lilla Turi is one of the most exciting artists in contemporary Hungarian illustration. Her images bring an engaging mix of bold colors and flares of joy, whether as book covers or double-page illustrations.

In her recent picture book for kindergarteners and schoolchildren, which has an interestingly elongated form well suited to its subject, Turi creates a city of giraffes. She invites us to play a game and offers possible answers to the questions she raises: if giraffes lived in buildings, they would have to be very tall buildings, but of course the giraffes would also sleep in soft beds (probably long beds!), and they would have various hobbies, just like we do. And they might very well fall in love, much as we do.

The narrator guides us into this fantastic city in which giraffes live like humans, and anyone who happens to see much of the world from below, say a kindergartner who looks up at the kitchen cabinets, will now have a chance to see things from a different perspective, since after all, from the point of view of a giraffe, the world must look very different! Suddenly, rooftops are no longer an invisible world, and one can easily gaze into attic windows. And there's hardly a need for cranes in Giraffe City! It's always interesting to see things from a different perspective, even for a school-age child.

The book offers children an eye-opening experience by inviting them to reflect on how things look when seen from a different point of view, which of course always helps remind us that the world often looks different to different people.

Lilla Turi is both the author and the illustrator of the book, in which the images are the primary element and the text is used to complement the drawings. One cannot help but notice from the moment one opens the book the engaging boldness in her use of colors and lines, including in the shapes she uses for the letters and even the format of the book itself. Turi's playfully exaggerated drawings seem to keep the creative process alive. We have the impression that we are not looking at images that have been completed and become sterile. Rather, they remain vividly alive. Turi always seems to place emphasis on the moment, and we have the sense that we are watching her craft both image and tale as we turn the pages.

Turi uses an innovative mixed media technique, usually creating her compositions quickly by hand and then enhancing them with digital methods. Her palette is an endless array of shades and tones, and her drawings are bold and arresting, much as in the case of her earlier tale about the fate of the Trojan horse.

If the Giraffes... reminds us that the world is a diverse and colorful place, and it is always changing. By seeing this world from a different perspective, we are perhaps encouraged to be more accepting both of others and ourselves. Turi's images convince us that others do indeed live different lives, and what may be quite simple or easy for us may be complicated and quite challenging for others, and vice versa.

author/illustrator  
Lilla Turi

title  
If the Giraffes...

publisher  
Csimota

year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
40

size  
155 x 265 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Dóra Csányi  
dora.csanyi@csimota.hu





If giraffes lived in cities like we do, I bet they'd live in Giraffe Metropolis. Every morning, they'd wake up in long, comfortable beds in their high-ceiling bedrooms in their high-rise apartment buildings. They'd read the paper while eating breakfast and munching on yummy cereal. And then of course they'd hop on their bikes or on the bus and head off to work.





# Coming **THIS** way, going **THAT** way

## András DÁNIEL

was born in 1966. He lives in Budapest. He is a self-taught fine artist, graphic designer, and writer. He works in a diverse array of mediums, and he has done illustrations in a wide variety of genres and contexts, including title pages of magazines. Many books are tied to his name. He made an animated film series based on the *Kuflik* book series. He has won the Beautiful Hungarian Book Award, the Book of the Year prize in the illustration category, and the Book of the Year prize in the innovation category.



13

## Everyone's Bustling This Way and That

"I don't know what it's like for you, my mind is sometimes a pretty crowded, hectic place. Unusual characters are pushing this way and that, like passers-by on a busy city street on a weekday afternoon. Every now and then, while I'm scribbling something, one of them will just wander out onto the piece of paper, say if I happen to start talking on the phone or just stare into space, or if I lose myself in thought or if there's something really boring that I'm supposed to be paying attention to. Except that, as you know, the scribbles usually end up in the wastepaper basket anyway, or at the bottom of a drawer. And I felt like that needed to change! Hence this book, where I let the figures in my head and on the pieces of paper roam free and do as they please! And you can look at them and even make up their stories. Because they all have a story, I'm sure of that!"

András Dániel made the remarks above when asked about the origins of his latest book, *Everyone's Bustling This Way and That*. The uniqueness of the volume, which can be leafed through as a so-called "Wimmelbilderbuch" or hidden picture book, lies in the small details, the touches of humor, the references, and the visual games. As usual, Dániel has created a book about absurd little things, without any overarching story or moral. Instead, he offers a visual world of diversity, as well as the simple joy of discovery. A playful cheerfulness radiates from the pages. There are touches of irony and even the grotesque, as well as totally ordinary things, strange yet utterly familiar characters, as well as linguistic and visual play. Dániel thus creates a world populated by awkward, cute, and comic figures. This volume is a storybook, a Wimmelbilderbuch, and an interactive picture book. It is amusing, entertaining, imaginative, and unique. It is a brilliant book about how pictures affect us and how we create stories in our minds based on what we have seen.

András Dániel has been writing and illustrating children's books since 2012, producing a series of increasingly grotesque works written with absurd humor, in which he has found his own voice. His books *Old Mister* and *Missus Tiny* and *The Rabbit-Shaped Dog* were awarded the Beautiful Hungarian Book Prize, and his *What Was Jacob Doing Under the Bed?* was chosen for HUBBY Children's Book of the Year. Today, András Dániel is one of the most prominent children's book authors and illustrators in Hungary.

author/illustrator  
András Dániel

title  
Everyone's Bustling This Way and That

publisher  
Pagony

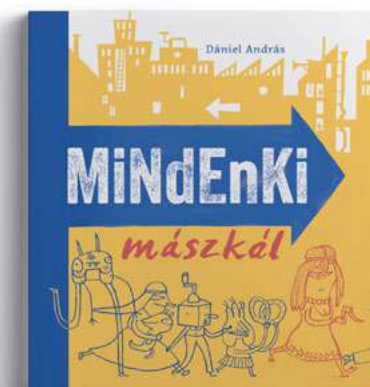
year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
24

size  
200 x 220 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Júlia Moldova  
julia.moldova@orchardglobal.eu







"There are days when I don't want to do anything but close my eyes and watch the people as they come and go."



# Absurdities of the WORLD

from a **childlike**  
pespective



## Borbála SZABÓ

is a playwright, writer, dramaturg, and literary translator. She graduated with a major in Hungarian and English from Eötvös Loránd University and then studied theater at the University of Theater and Film Arts, where she obtained her doctorate. She writes plays for several theaters and works as a dramaturg for both children's and adult productions.

## András BARANYAI (b)

graduated from the Hungarian University of Applied Arts in 2004 and began a career as a versatile illustrator and graphic designer. He has done illustrations and visual materials for textbooks, storybooks, advertisements, steampunk comics for adults, and posters in Hungary and abroad. With his distinctive vector computer drawings, he made a dramatic contribution to the renewal of Hungarian illustration in the 1920s.



## Adventures in the Horse Group

Books about life in preschool and school are always of great interest. Children need to be able to process their daily lives both intellectually and emotionally. Borbála Szabó's book also helps children view familiar situations from a different perspective. With the help of humor, jokes, and the absurd, *Adventures in the Horse Group* presents the most typical elements of everyday life in preschool but with surprising playful twists. For example, the preschoolers in Ms. Woodson's class are known as the kids in the "Horse Group," since animals names are given to the children in the different classes in Hungarian preschools. The children want to change the name of their group to "Ladybug," but in order to do this, they have to go to the government office and file their request. That doesn't solve the problem, though, since they also have to visit a riding association and a ladybird society. When they want to do away with the obligatory afternoon naps in school, they head to parliament to take action and bring about change in their daily lives. Their problems are all basic situations, well-known by anyone who has ever attended preschool or who has children who are still in school. The familiar situation is amusing in and of itself, but there are entertaining twists as we turn the pages! Borbála Szabó's tales of the life of preschoolers turned upside down offer a captivating read both for school-age children and parents and teachers, who are sometimes weary at the end of the day because of their hopeless attempts to keep up with school children.

The stories are refreshing and new specifically because they are not didactic. They do not fall into the trap, all too common in tales supposedly written for children, of trying to explain what is allowed and what is not allowed, what is right and what is wrong. The preschooler children still do the right thing instinctively. For example, though the school nurse separates them into two groups (those who have lice and those who don't), by the time the parents arrive, the kids are already playing together, side by side. This is where the strength of the Horse group lies: they plan everything together and then carry it out together. And if readers are looking for a lesson to be learned, they get it, for at the end of the book, the children come to the realization that the group is not the same as its individual members separately.

Borbála Szabó has a profound understanding of how young children think. Her richly illustrated book of eight short stories shows, with humor and cheerfulness, that the imaginary world and the real world go together well and that children's daily lives and the visions they weave with their imaginations are naturally intertwined.

author  
Borbála Szabó

illustrator  
András Baranyai (b)

title  
Adventures in the Horse Group

publisher  
Manó

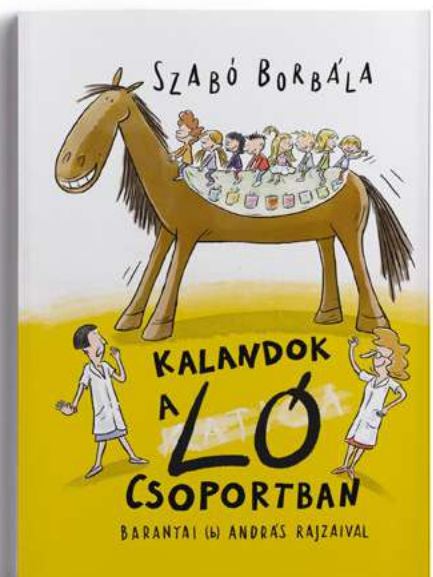
year of publication  
2023

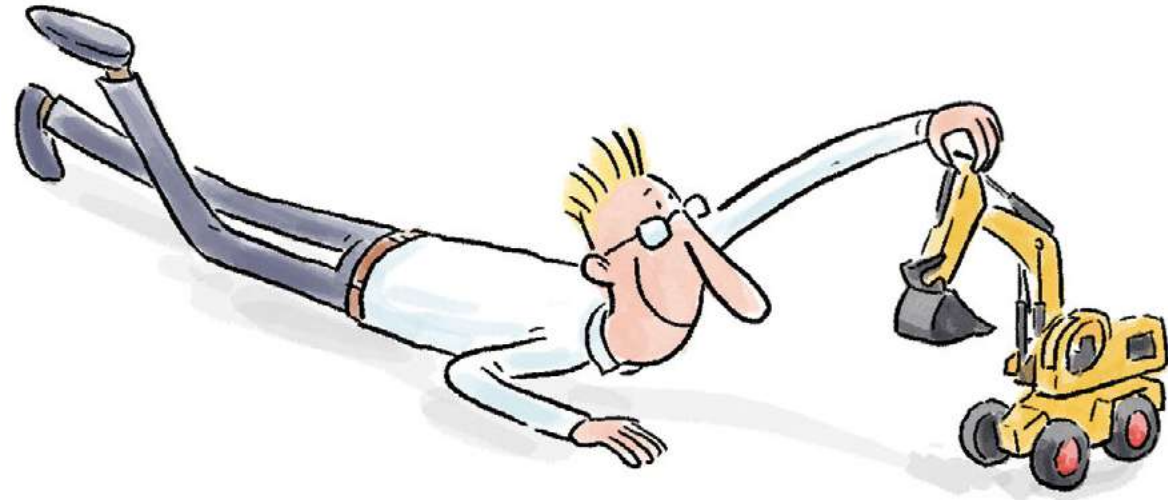
number of pages  
40

size  
235 x 163 x 10 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Júlia Moldova  
julia.moldova@orchardglobal.eu





"I've had enough of these tantrums every morning!" Christie's father suddenly said in a burst of anger. "If you hate going to preschool so much, I'll go instead!" "Fine," Christie shrugged, "go. But you're not going to have much fun. It's a pretty boring place."

"I think I'll like it," her father replied. "It's been a long time since I was able to spend all day playing in the playground!" Christie obviously had assumed her father was joking, so she had been all the more shocked when Ms. Woodson, her preschool teacher, had given her consent and agreed to allow Christie's father to come to school one day instead of Christie.

"Christie," Ms. Woodson had said, "your father and I have agreed that today he will be the preschool child instead of you. Perhaps it will be better for everyone, since you are always complaining about how boring school is. I've already asked your mom to come pick you up and take you home. Wait here in the changing area, please." Christie's dad started jumping for joy, making the shelves in the changing area shake. Christie was mortified.

"Really Ms. Woodson? My dad going to school instead of me?" "Why not!" Ms. Woodson exclaimed, politely ushering her new student into the classroom. Christie's father was a bit shy at first and spent most of his time just standing in the corner. Ms. Woodson kindly approached him. "Well, young man, what would you like to do? We have lots of toys here in the Horse Group." "Oh look!" Christie' father exclaimed, "a backhoe!" His eyes lit up. Ms. Woodson then decided it was time to introduce Christie's father to Vince, the strongest boy in the class. "Vince," she said, "I would like you to meet our new kindergartener. The two of you can play together with the backhoe." Vince looked up suspiciously at this strange grownup. "Isn't that Christie's dad?"

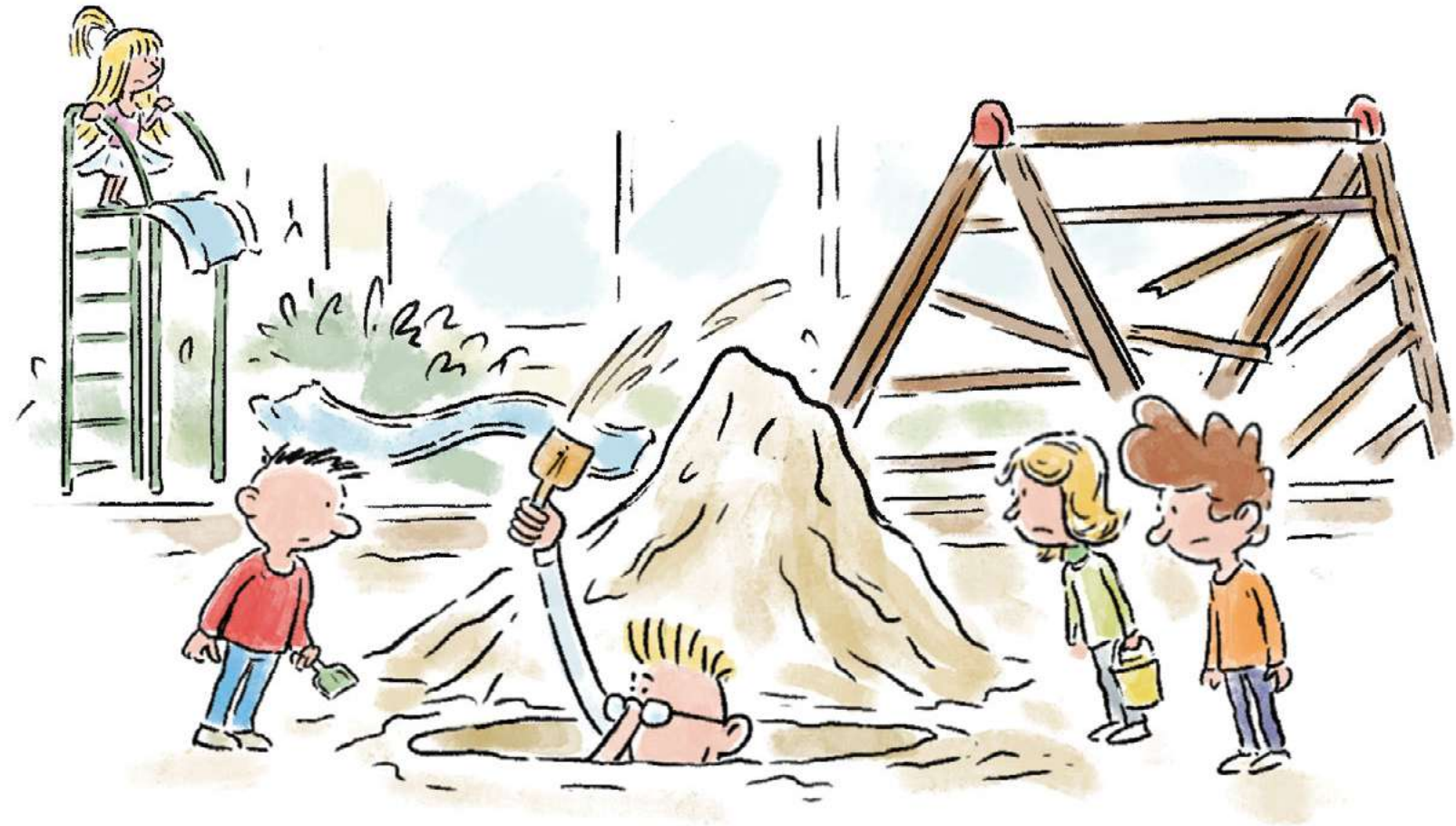
"Indeed it is," Ms. Woodson replied. "Let's make sure he has some fun while he's here!" Christie's father and Vince had a wonderful time playing with the backhoe. Soon, some of the other children joined them. Dani, one of the really popular kids in the class, Marci, who told the best jokes, and even Abel, who usually cried all day about how much he missed his mother but now seemed to have forgotten all about her. And Christie's father, they discovered, could even reach the toys on the top shelf. He could even reach the light switch! "Now, now, young man," Ms. Woodson said in a reproachful tone, "only the teachers can turn the lights on and off. Don't go getting into mischief just because you're tall!"

But otherwise everything went smoothly that morning. At lunch, however, a problem arose. Christie's father felt that the portions were too small. He hadn't been given enough vegetable stew, and he was still hungry. "Take small bites and it will last longer," Ms. Jones said, the cafeteria woman. She had been saying that for some forty years now. Christie's father, however, did not take kindly to the suggestion. He dipped his spoon into the bowl next to Janka, who happened to be Christie's best friend, and threw the spoonful of stew on Ms. Jones' apron. The boys around him, inspired by his example, immediately followed suit. "Christie's father is a genius!" they shouted with excitement. "My goodness!" Ms. Woodson shouted. "Young man, I am shocked! I had thought you were a trustworthy engineer. Now I find out you are a mischievous little boy!"

Christie's father had to stand in the corner until afternoon nap time, and of course he had to apologize to Ms. Jones. When the children lined up to go outside to the playground, he was a good boy and followed Ms. Woodson's instructions to the word, and he was very well behaved when he washed his hands in the bathroom too, though the sinks were way too low for him. But when naptime finally came, he had a hard time fitting in the cot. He fell out several times, and once or twice he even uttered a bad word.

"What does that mean, Ms. Woodson?" Janka asked in a whisper. "Never you mind!" Ms. Woodson whispered back. "It doesn't mean a thing!" "But my dad sometimes says that word too," Janka replied. "So does my mom," Vince chimed in. "Mine too!" Abel said. Then Ms. Pritchard, who was the assistant teacher and who was a bit stricter than the others, told the children in the Horse Group to stop talking, put their heads on their pillows, and take their afternoon naps, and in the meantime, she would tell the old folktale about the adventures of the ball of yarn. Christie's father ended up having a very good nap. Indeed, it wasn't easy to

wake him up. Ms. Woodson, Ms. Pritchard, and Ms. Jones could not budge him from his little bed, so while the other children played, he continued to snooze in the middle of the classroom. When he finally did wake up, he started turning the knob on the radiator in the changing area. "Now, now, young man, don't play with that! You might break it." "I'm a heating engineer," Christie's father replied. "Don't be silly! You're a child in preschool. Tomorrow, we'll call old Julius, the maintenance man, and he'll give it a look!"







## 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.

## Hajnalka SZIMONIDÉSZ

was born in Budapest in 1968. After completing a degree in social pedagogy, she studied visual culture and drawing at the Eötvös Loránd Savaria University Center. Alongside her work as a painter, she has been doing illustrations for children's literature since 2007.



# The Angel's Tale

One evening, four children and their mom are left without electricity at home. They light advent candles, make French toast on the gas stove, and then the youngest child says she has seen an angel in the darkness. The violet-colored angel told her about ten occasions when he brought messages to people. It turns out angels are postmen, just without the green uniforms and the leather bags. Like postmen, they bring messages, but these are not always written messages.

A message can be a soft melody, the smell of freshly baked bread, a lonely swing on the playground, or cool shade in the summer heat. The little girl tells her family members about all ten occasions in her own simple, childlike way. Her tales of magical moments and situations are heart-warming stories with lovable characters and moments of enchantment.

The reality of everyday life is mixed with miracles, and the intimate atmosphere is seasoned with humor. Krisztina Rita Molnár has a good sense of proportion: sentiment never turns into sentimentality, and the most subtle emotions are portrayed with great sensitivity.

The poetic text is complemented with dreamlike, delicate illustrations by Hajnalka Simonidesz, which take the reader on fantastic travels. Simonidesz mainly uses gouache and acrylic on watercolor paper, a time-consuming technique requiring great precision. Digital software is only used for the preparation of the drawings for printing. Simonidesz not only illustrates the text, she also creates a visual world that comes to life and, through the shapes, moods, compositions, and colors, brings joy and comfort to children and adults alike.

author  
Krisztina Rita Molnár

illustrator  
Hajnalka Simonidesz

title  
The Angel's Tale

publisher  
Cerkabella

year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
36

size  
190 x 190 x 10 mm

recommended age  
3–6

rights contact  
Nyulas Ágnes  
agnes.nyulas@cerkabella.hu





## The Angel's Tale



"She was exactly that color! A bright shade of purple."

"Bright purple? What are you talking about, Lili?" Morcka snapped at her little sister. Lili frowned.

"Well, Violet. That was her color. I told you. The angel. Don't you get it?"

"What angel?" Adam also asked.

"The purple one. Don't you understand?" Lili was almost in tears. She felt helpless and frustrated. No one understood what she was talking about.

"But, Lili, angels are white, you know, and they have beautiful white wings," Gergő explained, trying to talk in a gentle voice. He made every effort to speak like an understanding adult would to a small child. He was twelve years old, after all.

But Lili just shook her head.

"No, they don't!" she muttered. "That's just what everyone thinks. But it's not true at all. Violet told me."

"Let's all let Lili tell us what Violet told her," their mother said, nodding scoldingly at Lili's siblings and flipping the slices of French toast in the pan.

Morcka, Adam, and George looked at one another. Morcka heaved a sigh.

"Okay, tell us. I can't wash my hair anyway, not with the electricity out."

Lili thought for a moment, because she didn't want to skip any of the important details. She wanted to tell them all exactly what Violet had told her, word for word. She wasn't at all sure she could, but in the end, she summoned the courage and started talking.

"Well, before it got dark, Violet slipped out of the socket. When I was sitting on the beanbag. She was so beautiful! She was bright and so small and bendy. Like a little glowing thread. She sparkled, too. She said hello, and guess what, she even

knew my name! She was very cheerful and excited. She said it was because she had never just slipped out of an electrical socket before. And then she told me she was an angel. And I knew she was telling the truth, because I wasn't the least bit scared. She said children are never scared of angels, only adults, but adults almost always are. If they even notice them, that is. When I asked her how old she was, she just laughed and said he had no idea, but at least five thousand years, maybe even a few more."

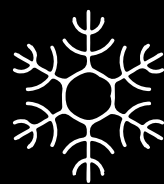
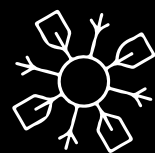
Lili paused for a moment. She suddenly felt a little uncertain. She could only count to twenty. But only at home, ever since Adam had taught her how to. At preschool, they only counted to ten in class. She wasn't quite sure if she remembered the number five thousand correctly. She looked at her mother, but her mother was lifting the first of the finished slices of French toast out of the hot butter, and she had to focus, given how dark it was.

"Violet said that she had a very exciting life," Lili continued. "She said she's been playing hide and seek ever since she was created. And that she never quite knows what shape she's going to take. She said that she's been so many things, hidden in so many places that she can't even name them all anymore. She only told me ten, one for each of my fingers."

Lili started listing these things, one finger at a time, starting with the thumb of her right hand.

"First, she told me about the time she hid in music. Or rather came out of the music. And she noticed that everyone who was listening to the melody was healed of the wounds to their souls. Like as if the ache in my knee went away. I figure it must be like that."





# Tales for the *faithful* and those of **LITTLE FAITH**

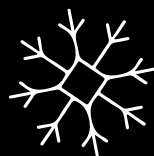
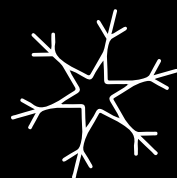


PHOTO: GYULA CZIMBAL

## Noémi László

was born in Cluj-Napoca in 1973. She graduated with a degree in Hungarian and English from Babes-Bolyai University, and in 2011 she completed a PhD in Modern English Literature at Eötvös Loránd University. In the autumn of 2020, she was made editor-in-chief of the children's literary magazines *Napsugár* and *Szivárvány*.

## Tünde Tomos

was Born in Brasov in 1981. She studied painting at the University of Fine Arts and Design in Cluj-Napoca. Since 2000, her works have been regularly exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, and her works for children have been published in the children's magazines *Napsugár* and *Szivárvány*. She has illustrated several books and also makes theater puppets.



# Jack in the Box

The folktale, a type of fairytale of medieval origin, is making something of a comeback in Hungary at the moment. It has been reborn in a variety of forms, penned down by renowned authors. *Jack in the Box*, a new collection of short stories by Transylvanian-Hungarian author Noémi László, offers a wonderful display of frolicsome humor, deft skill with language, and poetic wit.

László recounts twelve tales of the manly deeds performed by a familiar cast of traditional characters, such as the youngest prince, the poor shepherd boy, and the struggling apprentice. In each tale, the boy who rushes to the aid of the princess is named Jack. Though returning in the form of a different character in each tale, Jack is always kind-hearted, generous, modest, gentle, and certainly persistent. He gets knocked down, but he always gets back on his feet and pops up like the age-old children's toy. He fights against a world of bustle and rush, of long-windedness, of insatiability, and nine other problems. After all, in any good fairytale, the youngest lad has to prove himself by performing a seemingly possible task.

Each story takes place in a different fairytale land, such as Miraculum, Elokwencia, Brrrrgengovia, Kamuka, and Turpia, and each has a main theme, such as silence, music, food, or clothing. These themes are related to the test the hero must pass, and they appear in the title of the individual chapters: "Tale of Silence," "Tale of Music," "Tale of Food," "Take of Clothing," etc. Each theme is connected to some negative human quality or behavior that can be overcome.

It is good to have someone who knows how the minor characters, with their witty, telling names (such as Chancellor Fee-Fi-Fo, King Goosebump, Queen Rime, and Princess Gale the Baleful) can be free of the hustle and bustle and fuss, the impudence and impertinence, or who knows how to satisfy a gluttonous king. Jack in the Box, show us how!

author  
Noémi László

illustrator  
Tünde Tomos

title  
Jack in the Box

publisher  
Gutenberg

year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
80

size  
165x 210mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Andrea Kürti  
andrea@gutenberg-art.ro





The Tale of Cold

Once upon a time, in a distant land where the leaves never fall from the trees, there was a kingdom called Brrrgengovia. In this land, it was so cold that anyone who stopped hustling and bustling about for even a moment immediately froze like a statue. And there was indeed a great hustle and bustle. Everyone continuously waved their arms and scampered to and fro to keep from freezing to the ground. And yet even so, on some of the town squares and street corners, you could espy a cat who had paused for a moment or a man who had stopped to take a puff from his pipe or women who had taken just a second to trade bits of gossip, all of them now motionless, frozen solid.

“Look there, child, they are living statues to laziness,” the grandmothers hurrying home from the market say, pointing to the slothful idlers. “Pick up the pace, or you too will freeze!”

It was quite unnecessary, of course, to nag the children. Even in the middle of the night, they did not lie motionless under the quilts. They rolled this way and that until the morning came so that when the sun rose, they would be able to leap out of bed. Not so the adults, who crawled slowly out of bed every morning, their arms and legs numb and stiff.

King Goosebump worried paced the corridors of his palace, back and forth, back and forth.

“What will become of us!” he lamented. “Anyone who stops to talk or look around immediately freezes, and then someone wags a reproachful finger and insists that they were lazy. I haven’t chatted with Queen Rime for years, and Princess Gale the Baleful is almost impossible to see, she’s so hurried.”

“You are pausing to think again, your Majesty,” Chancellor Fee-Fi-Fo cautioned. “This will not end well. You’d better go to the far end of the garden and cut a bit of wood from the sacrificial tree. Every minute spent engaged in useful activity is a blessing for the people of Brrrgengovia!”

“I cannot, good chancellor,” the king replied. “If we keep chopping wood at this rate, soon there will be no more wood to chop, and then all the creature of my kingdom will freeze in terror. Stop for a moment, look around! Not a tree, hardly any bushes. All the gardens are barren, Princess Gale the Baleful wanders at will, Lady Rime roams the bare hills above. If we go on like this, we won’t have a people anymore, just a ragtag crowd of creatures desperate to survive the winds, and our kingdom will be naught by the eye of a whirling storm.

“Then should I do nothing?” the chancellor bellowed from under his shaggy moustache. “What are you saying, your Majesty? If your Grace will not take the axe in hand, I shall do what I must.”

And with that, he strode away to the far end of the garden. Soon the crack of the axe could be heard on the trunk of the only remaining tree in the realm. King Goosebump hurried to his desk and put pen to paper.

OUR COUNTRY HAS FALLEN PREY TO THE WINDS:  
WHOSOEVER WILL SAVE MY PEOPLE FROM THEIR DIRE FATE,  
I WILL GIVE HIM THE HAND OF THE PRINCESS GALE THE BALEFUL,  
AND HALF MY KINGDOM.

The king printed the proclamation on strips of paper on his little hand printer and hid the slips in Princess Gale’s basket. The princess flew this way and that, and the slips were scattered from the basket on her arm.

There lived in a far corner of the kingdom a gardener’s lad named Hansel. His neighbors thought he was a slothful chap, for instead of looking for wood to cut on the hills like a normal boy, he spent his mornings and evenings on the land his father had left him. He dug, hoed, watered, tied, or just watched to see where the sun shone. One morning, the wind blew a slip of paper at his feet. Hansel picked it up and read it.

“This is my chance!” he muttered, and with that, he loaded up his cart, covered the load with a sheet, and set out for the royal palace.

“My lord and king,” Hansel said as he stepped into the throne room, “the winds must be barricaded behind trees, but the trees must be planted, and then we must wait till they grow tall. Give the order that trees be planted in all the gardens in your realm! I have brought saplings, I shall bring give them to the people!”

Hansel left a few saplings in each yard, and he told everyone that they must be planted by an adult, watered by a child, and sheltered from the wind by an old man. From the palace tower, King Goosebump watched the people of this kingdom gathering in their yards to plant the trees. Miraculously, no one froze, though from time to time people did pause to exchange a word or two.

Queen Rime and Princess Gale the Baleful joined the dragon who was watching from the tower.

“My good lord, they have dug up the hills,” the princess gasped. “Never you mind, my little girl,” the king replied, “you won’t have time to rush this way and that after this. Do you see that lad over there? From now on, he shall be your lord and master, and half my kingdom is also his! And so we learn of the young lad who made himself king of half the realm!





# A fabulous compass for a **FABLED** world



## Tamás Leó SZECSŐDI

was a Franciscan monk and pastor in 1988–2003. Since 2003, he has been a secondary schoolteacher and writer. He has written novels, textbooks, and storybooks. His novel *The Sons of Sirach* paints a vivid picture of what it meant to be a figure of the church at the time of regime change in Hungary. His stories offer children something of a compass for the world around us.

## Krisztina GYETKÓ

is a graphic designer. She studied at the Budapest Metropolitan University. She spent her childhood close to nature, and her love of the natural world is still very much a part of her work as an illustrator. She has also developed a series of games and puzzles called *Kicsikeve* which acquaints children with the natural world of Hungary while also helping them develop memory skills. .



## My Widening World

We might well have the feeling, when we take Tamás Leó Szecsődi's new book in our hands, that we are holding a collection of folktales, but this would be a mistake. Though they build on the structure and twists of classic European folktales, these new stories serve as excellent points of departure for family or group discussions, for children from the age of four to the elderly among us up to 99. Szecsődi writes short, clearly structured tales that nevertheless catch us by surprise. And most importantly, they further the development of a sense of emotional security. We read stories that call our attention to the secrets of the world, the values of human life, the natural world and the people around us, the functioning of human emotions, desires, and attitudes. Indeed, Szecsődi seems to want to help orient us in a complex world inhabited by complex human beings.

Szecsődi clearly has faith in the power and the message of ancient symbols, ancient mythological creatures, and fairytale characters of the medieval world (kings, princes, princesses, clowns, ghosts, angels, and the like). And he entrusts them with important tasks. But he also transports us to beautiful landscapes and exciting places colored by his powerful imagination. It takes patience to come to know the images that flicker in our inner minds and to understand our complex inner worlds and feelings. *My Widening World* helps both teachers and parents take the necessary time to allow this process to unfold. Szecsődi guides us through three chapters, from “Me” to “Me and the World” and then “Me and the Supernatural.” At the end of the stories, we find questions and ideas which help us further ponder what we have read.

The first tale in the book, “Memories of Ithaca,” reminds us that everyone has a unique story and a unique past, and it is always worth knowing more about our family histories. A farmer who has always felt like something of a stranger in the village in which he and his father before him were born discovers that long ago, his forefathers' forefather was a sailor who braved the seas. Only one of the brave daughters in the story “Cradle Rocker” reaches her goal, because the others either ask too many unnecessary questions or are too afraid to ask the fateful question that could unlock the mysteries they confront. “The Stalwart Oak on the Mountaintop” tells of how something in us begins to wither when we isolate ourselves from people who are different from us, much as a tree become sick when it drives away the birds. It turns out these noisy creatures actually help keep the tree healthy and strong by picking at the pests that would otherwise infest its trunk. The stories and illustrations touch on deep truths, but they avoid any hint of didacticism and always keep the magic of the fairytale genre.



**author**  
Tamás Leó Szecsődi

**illustrator**  
Krisztina Gyetkó

**title**  
My Widening World

**publisher**  
Manó

**year of publication**  
2023

**number of pages**  
268

**size**  
105 x 145 mm

**recommended age**  
7-12

**rights contact**  
Kinga Csapody  
csapody.kinga@lira.hu



Memories of Ithaca

Somewhere deep in the interior of the great mainland, there once lived a farmer. Every day, he ploughed the land, sowed his seed, hoed the soil, and reaped and threshed. All things in their season.

And happy he would have been had not the other people of the village where he lived not kept their distance from him and his aging parents. He had hardly a single friend, for as far as the people of the village were concerned, they were strangers to the land. And yet he had been born in the village, as had his parents and their parents before them. But there were rumors that his ancestors had only come here a few centuries earlier, from some distant, foreign land. The people of the village passed these memories down from generation to generation, and they still did not accept the farmer and his kin as their own.

One afternoon, as the farmer finished his work for the day, there were still a few spare hours of sunlight before eventide, so he went up to the attic of the house to see if perhaps the roof were in need of repair. In the attic, he saw some unusual things. There was an object in one corner that was very strange. Even the farmer himself could not have said what it was. It was a little bit like something made of bone, a little bit like something made of porcelain. It was very pretty, a creamy color with little brown spots. As he looked at it and turned it this way and that in his hands, the farmer noticed that there was a hole in the middle of the strange object, so he could see inside it, just a bit. It looked like the armor or house of some animal that had lived in it long ago and had moved out. The farmer stared at it with wonder. Then he put it to his ear, and he heard a humming sound, or rather a low rumbling sound, which he had never heard before. He was startled.

“What could that possibly be?”

Then, as he let his gaze wander a bit more around the attic, he saw another strange object. It was propped against the wall. It looked like a shovel one might use to scatter grain, but it would hardly have been of much use, for it would not have held much grain. It had a long handle and an end that resembled a slender spoon. The farmer turned it this way and that in his hands and brooded over these strange things he had found.

“What on earth is this? And what shall I do with it?”

And suddenly he had an idea.

“Tomorrow, I shall find our village sage, the man who can look back into the past, and I shall ask him.”

And so he did. The next day, he put the shovel on his shoulder, picked up the little piece of shiny porcelain or bone, and set out.

The sage was standing in front of his house.

“What brings you here, friend?” he asked.

“Look at these odd things I have found,” the farmer said. “Can you tell me what they are?”

The sage turned his gaze to the sky. He seemed suddenly to have aged several decades or more. He was traveling back in time. After several moments had passed, he spoke.

“Never have I seen such things in my life, but my old master, a wise man of olden times, tells me that your ancestor, who came here from a foreign land, brought with him this grain-scattering shovel on his shoulder and the other strange object in his sack. He had almost nothing else with him but these two things. Then he settled here among us and began to work.”

The sage’s words left the farmer burning with curiosity. That afternoon, he went up to the attic again. He looked in every corner and rummaged through all the clutter, and under one of the big buckets, he found an old book. Trembling with excitement, he grabbed the book and scurried down from the attic, and once evening had fallen, he opened the book and began to read it by candlelight.

My Widening World

This book was about a sailor, a man who wanted nothing more than to return home, but the sea was angry with him and would not let him find his way homeward. The man had all sorts of adventures. He fought one-eyed monsters, and he ended up on islands where his sailors were transformed into animals. Indeed, all his men were lost on the way, but the man remained determined to return home.

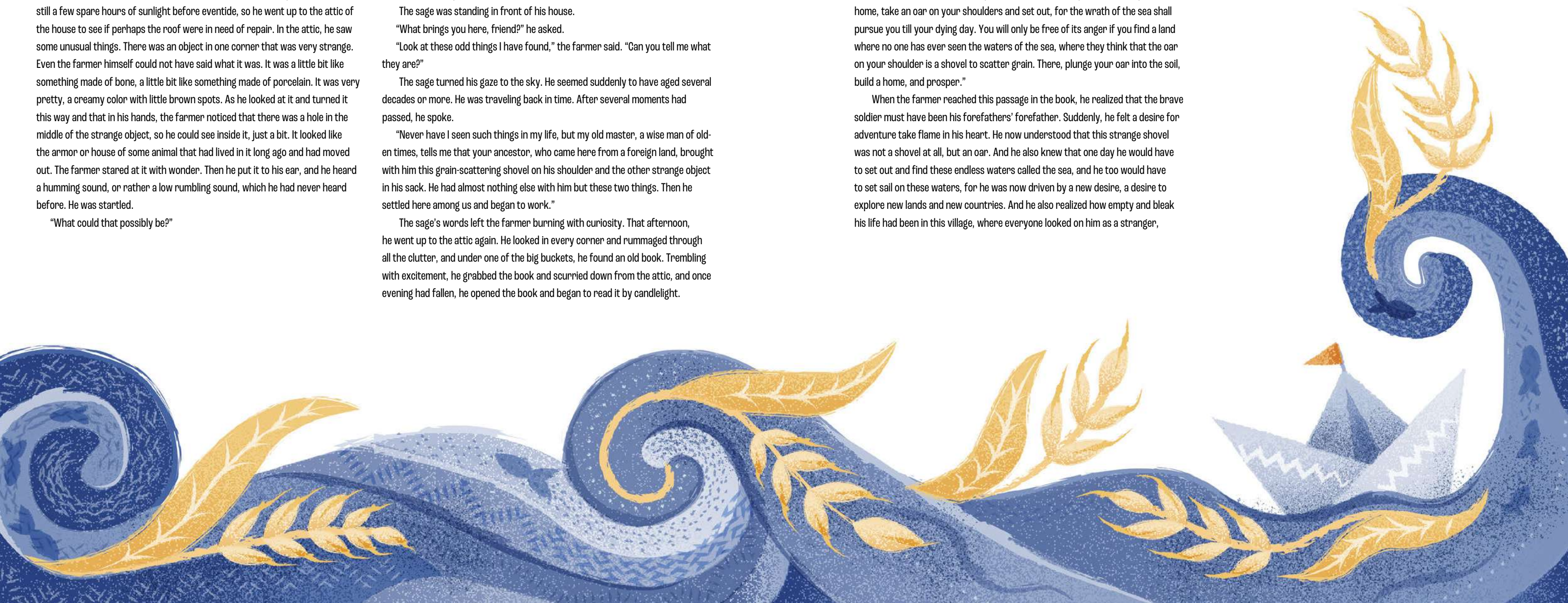
The farmer was enthralled by the story, and he could not help but think what a brave man this sailor must have been. But the book was also strange, for the farmer had never heard tales of distant lands where only specks and splotches of the world are land, and the rest is water, water stretching all the way to the sky on the horizon. The farmer also learned from the book that this water is called the sea.

During this sailor’s perilous travels, he even reached the middle of the earth, and there he was told a prophecy. “Sailor,” the prophecy said, “if ever you reach home, take an oar on your shoulders and set out, for the wrath of the sea shall pursue you till your dying day. You will only be free of its anger if you find a land where no one has ever seen the waters of the sea, where they think that the oar on your shoulder is a shovel to scatter grain. There, plunge your oar into the soil, build a home, and prosper.”

When the farmer reached this passage in the book, he realized that the brave soldier must have been his forefathers’ forefather. Suddenly, he felt a desire for adventure take flame in his heart. He now understood that this strange shovel was not a shovel at all, but an oar. And he also knew that one day he would have to set out and find these endless waters called the sea, and he too would have to set sail on these waters, for he was now driven by a new desire, a desire to explore new lands and new countries. And he also realized how empty and bleak his life had been in this village, where everyone looked on him as a stranger,

a foreigner, and even though he had lived in peace, ploughing his fields, sowing and reaping his crops, something that was very important in life had always been missing.

He told no one of his new vision. He just quietly gathered what he had, made his preparations for the journey, and one day, like his ancient ancestor had done, he took the oar on his shoulders and stepped out of the gate of what had been his house to wander until he reached the edge of the sea, from which his forefathers’ forefather had once set out for the inland.





If we go

**TOGETHER**

we'll get there faster

**FASTER**



PHOTO: PAMELA PAPRASZ

## Ádám BERTA

published his first book of fiction in 2012, followed by six more. He is the author of five novels and two collections of short stories. *Rusty, Fairy Mouse* is his first work of children's literature. He has won several awards, including the Hévíz Literary Prize (2020) and the Baumgarten Prize (2021).

PHOTO: PAGONY.HU

## Írisz AGÓCS

is one of the most widely recognized illustrators in Hungary today. Her illustrated books have been published in Sweden, Slovakia, Poland, South Korea, and Hungary, where more than 600,000 copies have been sold. She has collaborated with Shona Innes, the author of the books in the *Big Hug* series, and thus has become a name familiar to a wide international readership.



# Dusty, the Mouse Fairy

Two little creatures, Dusty, the mouse fairy, and Flat Spike the hedgehog, set off, one to return to their family and the other to find the place they has always longed for, where green moss always grows. Their journey takes them through places that cannot necessarily be found on a map, through cacti, canyons, and volcanoes, from ocean to river, from cave to cave. Along the way they encounter a variety of creatures, both familiar and unfamiliar. This road-trip tale, with all its magical elements, has deep philosophical layers and can be seen as a story about growing up and finding one's identity. The first storybook by Ádám Berta, who has published several volumes and has distinguished himself as a gifted literary translator, is not really a fairytale at all. It is, rather, a philosophical tale about nature conservation, friendship, exclusion, and travel, or more specifically, the journeys we take as we come to know ourselves and one another.

The story is interrupted several times by episodes that are seemingly unconnected to the journey. The narrative is rich with precise detail, but Berta also leaves much to the reader's imagination when it comes to the arc of the tale, thus raising many questions that he leaves open. There are no clear-cut endings. Rather, this is a tale of possibilities. Nor can we quite determine whether we are reading a real story or a dream. As we read the story again and again, we discover new layers. One of the main features of *Dusty, the Mouse Fairy* is that it will appeal to readers of all ages, both children and adults, in part because it is rich with clever use of language. The sixteen chapters, which are only two or three pages long each (with text that is an appropriate font size for beginning readers), make the book suitable for children who are just learning to read.

Írisz Agócs's crisp red and black drawings fit the story well and give the tale a vivid visual backdrop. The story compels Agócs to think in large panoramas and to visualize new worlds. She began by creating several studies and background drawings, and thus the book, envisioned by book designer Tamás Seres, has highly sophisticated illustrations consisting of two colors. This use of shades of gray and red allows the important details to stand out, and the pictures in the book themselves tell a story.

author  
Ádám Berta

illustrator  
Írisz Agócs

title  
Dusty, the Mouse Fairy

publisher  
Cser

year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
46

size  
200x 200mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Gerda Turzai  
gerda@cserkiado.hu



Once in the distant lands of the Americas there lived a hedgehog. Their name was Flat Spike, because back then, that was the kind of name hedgehog children were given in the distant Americas.

For as long as they could remember, Flat Spike ate only one thing: green moss. Not that they were picky, but moss was the only thing their stomach would tolerate. Fortunately, they liked the way it tasted, and they never tired of it.

But when the dry season came, green moss was hard to find. So Flat Spike had to take longer strolls than usual to find enough, and in the end, they often went to bed with an empty belly.

One day, for the first time ever, they could not manage to find a single tuft of moss. They walked all the way to the far edges of the meadow, they looked under all the rocks, tromped down all the paths, but they could not find a single tuft of moss anywhere. Not a single bite of moss to quiet their hunger, which was perhaps why, when they went to bed, they had strange dreams. They arrived home an hour after the sun had set, and they soon fell asleep, for they had almost walked their legs off, and they soon fell into a restless slumber.

Flat Spike called their home a cave, but in reality, it was little more than rocky gully, with needle-leaf and lichen at the bottom where they could stretch out and sleep comfortably.

They often had the most wonderful dreams while they slept. More than once they dreamed of the vast old cave where his mother and father had tucked them and their brothers and sisters in at night when they were little, a cave Flat Spike had left long ago.

Flat Spike had recently turned five years old. They had been living on the edge of the meadow for at least three years. They had no intention of setting out in search of a new home. And they certainly wasn't going to leave the meadow just because they was now having trouble finding moss. Or at least not just because they were having trouble finding moss. That was a problem they would have been able to solve somehow. They were quite confident that, were they to look in a different spot the next day, they would surely find something to eat, and they would not have to return to their cave or, rather, their gully, with an empty belly when eventide came.

It is quite possible, as noted before, that poor Flat Spike had strange dreams that night because they had gone to bed on an empty stomach, for as they dozed restlessly, they dreamed of giant cacti basking in the light of the setting sun. When they woke up, all they could remember was how beautifully the reddish light had shone on the giant cactus spines in the warm glow of twilight. They felt as if they had something in common with the cacti.

They tended to his morning chores, and the day got off to a slow start. They set off a bit wearily, scouring the ground for moss, but otherwise not thinking of anything in particular. They happened across a leaf on the path. It was pale blue, a strange pale blue, an almost translucent pale blue. They tried to pull it to one side to see if there was any moss underneath it, but when they tugged at it, they were surprised to find that they could not make it budge.

"How big this leaf is," they muttered, "and almost see-through!"

They had never seen a leaf like it before. When they finally managed to yank it to one side, they suddenly remembered other bits and pieces from their dreams the previous night. Indeed, in the space of a single moment, the details of the dreams rushed over them and were vivid in their mind.

They had dreamed of the strangest thing! A mouse fairy!

Yes, they remembered now. In the middle of the night, a fairy mouse had stood before them in their dreams. And their ears and their wings and their everything had shimmered with the same pale blue hue as this leaf.

"I am Dusty," they had said.

In the dream, Flat Spike had forgotten to introduce themselves, though their mother had taught them that it was polite always to introduce yourself when greeted by a stranger.

Dusty had seemed to be in a very good mood, for they had been grinning ear to ear.

"I'm amouse fairy," they had said in a voice squeaky yet sure.

"Hello Dusty," Flat Spike had replied, and they know remembered, as they held the strange leaf in their hand, that they had held out one paw to the mouse fairy as a friendly gesture.

They had shaken hands.

"Perhaps you could tell me," Flat Spike had said, "what is a mouse fairy?"

In reply, Dusty had made a strange gesture. Was it the first flutter of flight? Or merely a shrug of their shoulders? Flat Spike wasn't quite sure. It was as if this creature was just giving a nudge of their elbow and leaving the rest up to them.

"All right," they muttered, "never mind." For they were a curious creature, but also not one to push the issue.

In the meantime, since Flat Spike had not found any moss under the big, strange leaf, they turned to set out in another direction, but then they heard a flutter of wings behind them. They looked back, but a thick tuft of tussock grass hid the source of the noise.

"Flat Spike! Flat Spike!" someone shouted, and Flat Spike suddenly saw Dusty lying on their backside on the tussock. Their wings were as ragged as the pale blue leaf.

"Surely you remember me?" they asked. "I flew into your cave last night."

Flat Spike rubbed their eyes.

"I thought you were just a dream," they muttered.

"Not at all!" they replied. "We even shook hands. Do you remember now? But you were very drowsy. You asked me where I had come from, but as soon as I started to reply, you dozed off again!"







PHOTO: PÉTER MÁTÉ

Mária BAJZÁTH

is the inventor of the Folktale Treasury storytelling method and the author of a series of books on the subject. In 2011, she completed a degree with a major in pedagogy at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, and she has been working with children since 1990. She holds lectures, training courses, and story work-shops for parents and teachers to help them learn the method and to further efforts to support children’s development through storytelling.

Dóra ÓNYA-OLÁH

was born in 1992 in Kanjiža, a town in Serbia with a large Hungarian-speaking population (Magyarkanizsa by its Hungarian name). She currently lives in Hungary. She completed her studies at the Ist-ván Tömörkény Secondary School of Art in Szeged and then studied graphic design at the Károly Eszterházy University in Eger. She does graphic design and illustration work for books, websites, and festivals.



Folktales of the Dells and Dales

Why didn't the centipede marry the earthworm? Which animal won the race? Why does the sun shine during the day and the moon at night? It can give honey, it can bring poison. What is it?

*Folktales of the Dells and Dales* is an eye-catching selection of folktales and drawings about the treasures, riddles, and secrets of the world of nature. The stories and legends usher us into the landscapes of Hungary and acquaint us with the wildlife of this country in the Center of the Carpathian Basin. They are accompanied by informative texts and various ideas for games. The book focuses on tales concerning the wild world of Hungary, but it also includes a selec-tion of stories from other lands. Together, this collection of tales from various parts of the world reminds us of a simple but important truth: beyond our homes and homelands, we are part of a larger world: the world of nature.

The book, which is the fourth volume of the Folktale Treasury Plus series, offers a selection of Hungarian and international folktales for families and teachers based on a sophisticated storytelling pedagogy method, the Folktale Treasury Storytelling Pedagogy. This method, which has become quite popular in Hungary, is based on repeated story-telling sessions which include elements of dance, singing, and games between teacher and pupils, offering participants engaging personal experiences and a sense of joy and satisfaction.

As we read the folktales of the dells and dales, our journey takes us from the boughs of the trees to the clouds in the sky, or in other words, from the ground below to the lofty heights above. And these stories remind us that we are part of a larger world that goes beyond our homes and homelands. We are part of the world of nature.

The various chapters contain stories and legends, as well as scientific texts about mushrooms, for instance, and wildflowers, weeds, grasses, insects, bugs, snakes, frogs, beetles, bushes, shrubs, animals of forests and fields, animals and plants of the water, birds, celestial bodies, and even many of the hidden secrets of the natural world. And there are several pages at the end of the book which have been left blank so that readers can write down their own stories about their encounters with nature.

The tales selected for this volume are a message about the joys and difficulties of living in unity and harmony with nature, a message that is vitally important for all of us in the twenty-first century.

author	Mária Bajzáth
illustrator	Dóra Ónya-Oláh
title	Folktales of the Dells and Dales
publisher	Lampion
year of publication	2023
number of pages	240
size	147 x 203 mm
recommended age	7-12
rights contact	Eszter Anna Balázs eszter.balazs@centralmediacsopot.hu





Centipedes and Worms

Centipedes have anywhere from 15 to 177 pairs of legs. If a centipede loses a pair of legs, another pair grows in its place, and the new legs grow a little longer with each molt. Centipedes are nocturnal creatures and tend to live solitary lives. It is not entirely surprising that they avoid one another, since centipedes sometimes eat their own kind, along with insects, worms, and snails.

The earthworm is a very special creature. It has no lungs, eyes, or ears, but it has five hearts. If it loses one end of its body, that end grows back.

The male earthworm lives alone in the wet ground in a system of tunnels of its own design. It only looks for other earthworms when mating. Centipedes are among its natural enemies.

Who do you think moves faster, the centipede or the worm?

Some people say that hate's a curse, but some will say that love is worse.

### The Centipede and the Earthworm — A Korean fairytale

A long time ago, I heard a tale from a white wagtail about why the centipede didn't marry the earthworm and why the earthworm didn't marry the centipede. Long ago, there was a beautiful centipede who lived under an old stone. She was beautiful, but she was also very vain. She spent every hour of every day looking at her hundred slender, graceful legs. Indeed, by the time she had gazed on each and every one of her legs, usually eventide had fallen. She did little else. No washing, no cooking, just staring all day long at her lovely legs. Next door to her old stone home lived a long earthworm. This earthworm was a hard-working lad. He dug and he dug all day long, creating a veritable maze of windy tunnels underground. And he was quite content with his fate. One day, after a huge rainstorm, he poked his head out of his underground world and saw the lovely centipede with her beautiful, graceful legs. He immediately fell in love with her, and he knew that he must have her as his wife. The earthworm sent suitors to the centipede, and they told her of his love for her and asked her if she would take the adoring earthworm as her husband. The centipede said yes, and soon preparations were underway for the wedding. Word quickly got around. Worms, beetles, and bugs heard the news, and they all began to worry and whisper and whine.

"Have you lost your mind?" they asked the earthworm. "You mean to bring this creature back to your home as your bride? You can buy her fancy pairs of shoes, or at least you can try! But you'll have to buy fifty pairs each and every time!"

"If only shoes were the problem!" others said. "You will have to buy her fifty pairs of boots when winter comes. Where on earth will you find the money? And

imagine the noise she will make! Every time she takes off her fifty pairs of boots, what a clamor and clatter there will be in the house! This will not turn out well, good earthworm."

In the meantime, the centipede's friends were also trying to talk some sense into her.

"What a strange fellow your bridegroom is! He hasn't got a single leg! The unhappy wretch crawls along in the mud!"

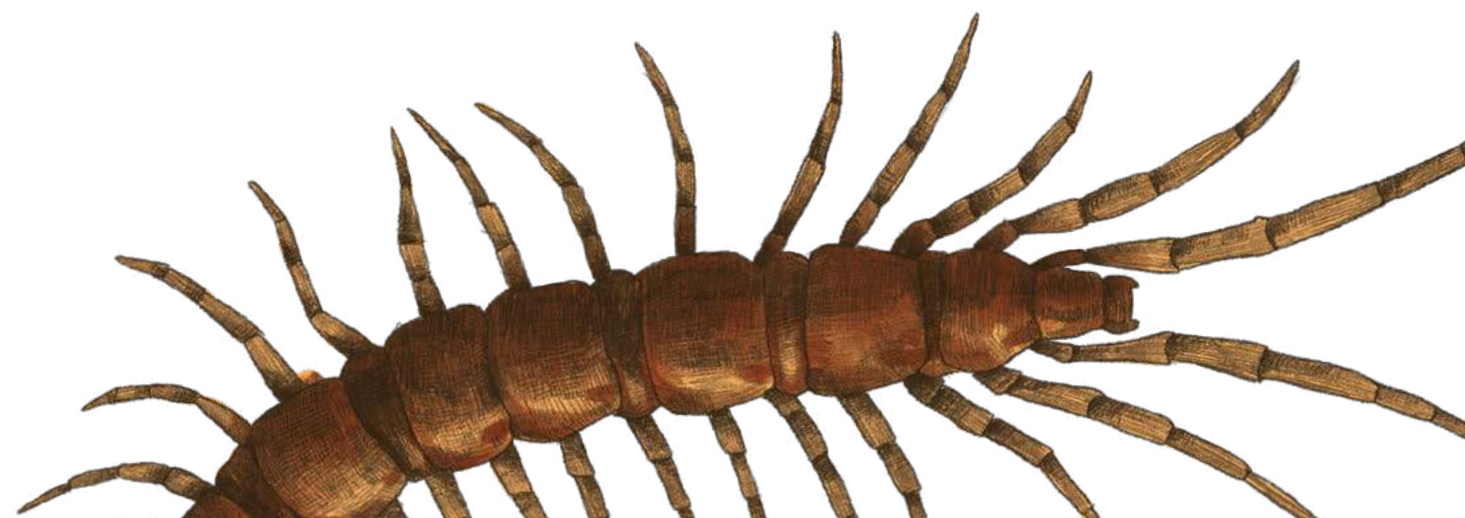
"Think of all the washing and ironing you'll have to do!" others said. "All day long he slides along the ground! Every evening he'll bring home a filthy shirt to clean, or two or three! And you will spend every morning, noon, and night washing and ironing."

The centipede maiden began to ponder her good friends' words of advice, and the more she thought about it, the more she realized they spoke the truth. She hastily found a piece of paper and an envelope, and she wrote a letter to the earthworm. She had reconsidered her decision, and she would not become his wife."

The earthworm, in the meantime, had also done some thinking.

"Alas, I am doomed! How can I possibly buy her so many pairs of shoes and so many pairs of boots? And besides, this centipede lass is a vain creature! Vain and no doubt slothful. She spends half the day looking at her own legs! She would hardly make a good wife."

And so he took it upon himself to write the centipede a letter and told her to find herself another fool for a husband. And the centipede received the earthworm's letter, and the earthworm received the centipede's letter. And the wedding was cancelled, and the love they had hoped to find in each other was lost. And the centipede and the worm have been angry at each other ever since. And now you know why.





# Village folktales

hidden in

# BIG CITIES



## Csenge Virág ZALKA

was born in 1986 in Győr, Hungary and currently lives in Budapest. She mainly tells folktales and traditional stories in Hungarian, English, and Spanish. She completed a master's degree in storytelling and a PhD in cultural studies in the US. She won the Children's Book of the Year Award for the book *Ribizli at the End of the World* (2019).

## Annabella OROSZ

was born in Gheorgheni, Romania. She pursued studies in Cluj-Napoca, Romania and Katowice, Poland. After completing her master's degree, she worked for advertising companies in Bucharest, Moscow, and London. She has done illustrations for numerous books.



# Big City Folktales

Urban environments are often regarded as dirty, noisy, crowded places with no stories to tell. In the foreword to *Big City Folktales*, Csenge Virág Zalka tells us that throughout her career as a storyteller, she has often heard people speak of how children in big cities have lost their roots, their connection to folktales and the tradition of storytelling. However, cities have stories, too. These stories can be found in guidebooks, on city walks, and in local history lectures. Still, somehow folktales don't find their place on the crowded streets and in the blocks of apartment buildings. Thus, for this collection, Zalka has selected folktales connected to the daily lives of children in the big city: the playgrounds, the trees in the parks, the birds sitting on the statues. What she has collected is not the tales of a specific city, but stories related to the phenomena and creatures usually found in cities.

The tales in this volume are all old: real folktales and legends. Readers thus can connect to centuries-old traditions of storytelling. The colorful imagery and timeless symbols of folktales from all over the world elevate us from the everyday world and surround us with magic. While selecting the stories, Zalka paid particular attention to how animals and plants appear in them. She firmly believed that the natural world around us should not just be mentioned in the stories, but should play an essential role. She also wanted to make sure that these animals and plants appeared as characters with positive qualities, since in old tales, elements of the natural world are often presented as hostile or sinister, or they have been transformed into what they are as punishment for some transgression. *Big City Folktales* contains stories that highlight the special beauty of the small details and the people of the urban world around us.

At the end of the book, Zalka invites her readers to play an interactive game: she encourages them to immerse themselves in the world of fairy tales, to look around and explore what they have read about in the stories, and to share their findings and insights and thus connect with the other explorers.

author  
Csenge Virág Zalka

illustrator  
Annabella Orosz

title  
Big City Folktales

publisher  
Móra

year of publication  
2023

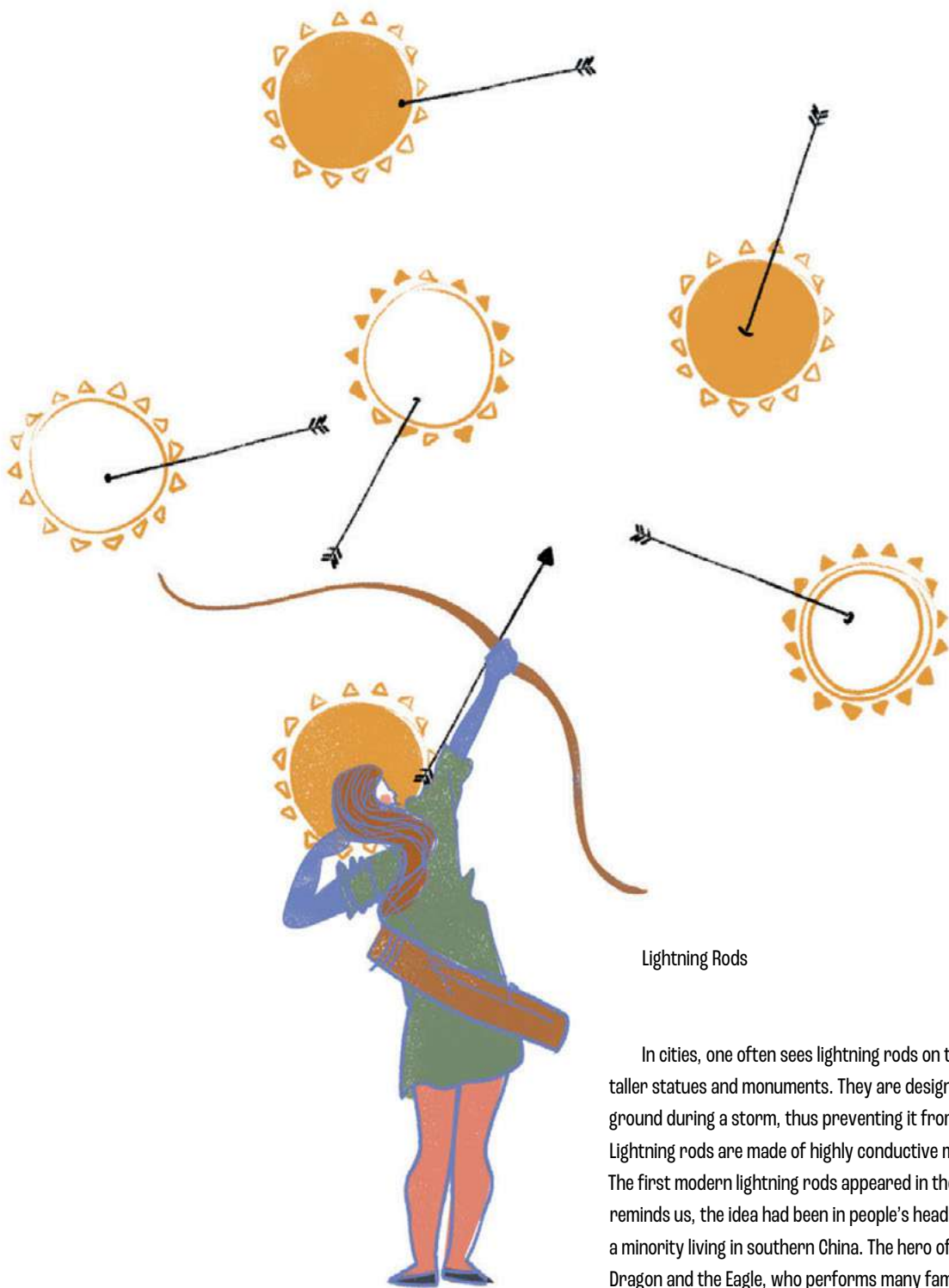
number of pages  
108

size  
220 x 165 x 9 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Katalin Vas  
katalin.vas@mora.hu





Lightning Rods

In cities, one often sees lightning rods on top of the buildings, towers, even taller statues and monuments. They are designed to guide lightning safely into the ground during a storm, thus preventing it from damaging whatever it has struck. Lightning rods are made of highly conductive materials, often copper, for example. The first modern lightning rods appeared in the 1700s, but as the legend below reminds us, the idea had been in people’s heads long before that. The Yi people are a minority living in southern China. The hero of their epics is Zhige A-lu, son of the Dragon and the Eagle, who performs many famous deeds.

Zhige A-lu and the God of Lightning  
—A legend of the Yi people, an ethnic minority in southern China

Once upon a time, there lived a famous hero named Zhige A-lu. His very birth was a special event, for he had been born in the year of the dragon, in the month of the dragon, on the day of the dragon, and he had cried so loudly that the heavens and the earth had trembled. His mother, frightened by this strange, powerful infant boy, hid the child in a cave. It so happened that the cave was inhabited by dragons, who, on returning home, first were quite bewildered to find this crying child in their cave and then decided to raise him as their own. And so it was that Zhige A-lu grew up among the dragons. They nursed him, dressed him, and taught him to speak their dragon language. When he grew up, he became a valiant warrior and an excellent archer. He has many feats to his name. He slew much feared monsters, did battle with demons, and even saved the entire world from destruction when he shot five suns from the sky. For back in the beginnings of time, there had been six suns in the sky, and they had scorched the earth so badly that food cooked in their beams. From the top of a tree, Zhige A-lu had shot his arrows until there had been only one sun and one moon (for there had seven moons before). From then on, life became much more pleasant for all the inhabitants of the Earth.

Once upon a time, our great hero was traveling the world, and he came upon a beautiful mountain village. He knocked on the door to an old woman’s house and politely asked her to give him a bed for the night. He was also very hungry, so he asked if he might also have some buckwheat dumplings for dinner. Buckwheat dumplings, you see, were his favorite food. But the old woman had just shaken her head.

“Most certainly would I give you food and shelter,” she said, “but alas, you ask the impossible. Look, and you shall see that I do not even dare bring the buckwheat seeds into my house to dry them by the fire.”

She pointed to the window, and Zhige A-lu saw that there were buckwheat seeds drying on a blanket in a field behind the house.

“What silliness is this?” he asked. “Would it not be simpler to dry them over the stove?”

“You have come a long way, you do not know how things are done here,”

the old woman said. “Even were the buckwheat to dry, we could not grind it into flour. The god of lightning hates the smoke that rises from people’s houses, and the squeaking of the hand mills hurts his ears. Whenever someone builds a fire or grinds flour, the deity casts his thunderbolts from the firmament and sets their house on fire. Many have lost their lives because of his wrath. He strikes when he pleases. We all live in fear of angering him.”

When he heard this, Zhige A-lu was overcome with rage. He could not bear to see innocent people suffer at the whims of a capricious god. He marched out of the house and soon returned. He brought with him a large copper cauldron, a branch, and a bit of copper wire. With the wire he made a dense net, and he then climbed up to the roof of the house.

“Old woman,” he shouted, “light a fire in the stove!”

Hardly had the puffs of smoke begun to twist and curl over the roof of the house when the sky suddenly filled with thunder. A moment later, the god of lightning appeared. He cast a blinding bolt of lightning at the house, but Zhige A-lu held the cauldron up above his head with the branch, and the lightning struck it. From the cauldron it slid down into the copper net, which Zhige A-lu had tied to the cauldron with the copper wire. Our hero stood unharmed on the roof.

“You are known, I have learned, as a cruel tyrant,” he shouted to the diety, “a demon who terrorizes innocent people. Fight me! If I lose, do what you will! But if I defeat you, you must do as I command.”

No one had ever dared challenge the god of lightning to a duel. He could not help but laugh at this foolhardy mortal’s courage.

“If it is a fight you seek, then let there be a fight!” he bellowed. “I fear no son of man!”

He then cast another mighty thunderbolt, but Zhige A-lu’s copper cauldron again caught the flash of lightning before it could do any harm. The shimmering bolt merely slipped into the copper net. The lightning god cast six more thunderbolts, hurtling them at Zhige A-lu with all his might, but all in vain!

I'll watch  
**YOUR**  
back,

you watch  
**MINE!**



PHOTO: GERGŐ NAGY

## Csaba MIKÓ

is a prose author and playwright. In 2004, he wrote his first young adult novel, *Hemp Seed and Lucretia*. In 2022, his steampunk youth crime thriller *The Stuntman* was published, followed in 2023 by *The Witch of Gellért Hill*, which was published as the first part of the *Myth Hunters* series of crime thrillers for teenagers, which deals with the urban legends of Budapest.

## Orsi VARSÁNYI

was born in 1996 in Budapest. In addition to her interest in landscape architecture, she also works in graphic design, illustration, and web design.



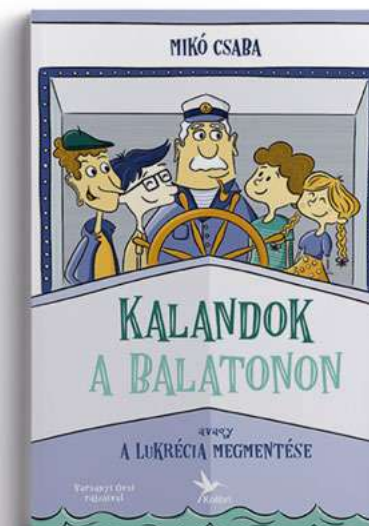
# Saving the Lucretia

*Adventures on Lake Balaton*, or *Saving the Lucretia* is the first novel in Csaba Mikó's young adult detective fiction series. The protagonist is eight-year-old Gergő, who spends the summer at his uncle's place in Balatonszemes. On his first day, while enjoying playing soccer and splashing in the lake, he notices a steamboat named Lucretia. He meets the captain, Sir Morton, who immediately names Gergő his boatswain. Yet it soon turns out that a mysterious man wants to take the boat and tow it to the mainland to turn it into a restaurant.

The former owner of the steamboat was Captain Morton's best friend, Balfari the Elder, who died and left the ship to his son, Balfari the Younger. According to the will, Sir Morton could live in the cabin of the boat as long as the Lucretia was owned by Balfari the Younger. If, however, Balfari the Younger were to sell the boat, the captain would lose his home and end up in a retirement home. Gergő and his friends, the thin and bespectacled Mukka and the curious, pigtailed Zsófi, want to prevent this by all means. They start an investigation and make a battle plan to save the pride of Balatonszemes and its captain.

Saving the Lucretia is a great summer read full of humor, lovable characters, clumsy villains, spectacular locations, exciting adventures, and surprising plot twists, all accompanied by Orsi Varsányi's captivating black and white drawings.

*Celtic Treasure*, the second volume in the *Adventures on Lake Balaton* series, is based on a Balaton legend: the lost gold of the Celts is hidden in one of the hills near Balatonszemes. Gergő, the protagonist of the first book, is now a grown man, and he works for the Balaton lakeside police. One day, he comes home to his children with a worn-out dog that he has rescued from a lonely boat on the stormy lake. Gergő and Zsófi's two eight-year-old children set out to find the dog's owner, but soon they find themselves in the middle of a treasure hunt, which ends with a surprising twist.



author  
Csaba Mikó

illustrator  
Orsi Varsányi

title  
Saving the Lucretia

publisher  
Kolibri

year of publication  
2022

number of pages  
178

size  
198 x 128 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Orsolya Orbán  
orban.orsolya@kolibrikiado.hu





Not far from the boat, by a gray, musty dock, three men were talking. They looked like they were up to no good.

One of them was tall and had bulging eyes. The other was chubby and had big ears. The third was skinny and had slicked-back hair glistening with oil. He did the talking.

"Idiots! I told you that we had to get that old sea dog off my boat! He was supposed to be gone by morning, but there he is! What the hell were you thinking? You want to mess with a Balfari?!"

"Sorry, boss!" the chubby man said. "Everything would have been fine if it hadn't been for this bozo! He didn't do a single thing I said. He's thickheaded! He spends his time molding statues, and that's why he missed the boat this morning."

"Liar!" the skinny man bellowed. "First of all, you have no idea where I was this morning, because you were playing cards all night, so you were fast asleep!"

"Enough!" the man with the slicked-back hair shouted. "You're two useless sacks of worthlessness, that's what you are! Even now you're pointing fingers at each other instead of getting your act together and doing something!"

"But what, boss?" Tótum asked in a wavering, uncertain voice.

"What are you, children? Are you both so dumb that I have to bash every last possible idea into your heads? I told you to finish with that Sir Morton. Get him off my ship, the sooner, the better!"

"But boss," the chubby man said, "everybody loves the captain."

"And that's why you have to get him out of here, you numbskull!" Balfari snorted. "Once he's gone, no one will care anymore, and then we can get the Lucretia out of the harbor. It's bad enough that my father didn't leave me anything but this old steam-boat. For years I've been wondering how to make a little money out of it, and now..."

There was a dull thud from the dark depths of the warehouse. It sounded like two feet hitting the smooth clay floor of the dock with a thump.

The three men stared into the darkness.

"What was that?"

"It must be the rats," Factum said. He too looked searchingly at the piles of boxes.

"Warehouses like this are always full of rats."

"Yeah, at least two rats," Balfari said, casting a contemptuous look at them.

He scanned the warehouse, but he didn't see the pair of eyes that was watching them from the darkness.

The sly one who had been spying on them while they hatched their next scheme crept cautiously, quietly along the wall, closer to the three suspicious men. He did not want to miss a word of the conversation.

"I'm not going to let you screw this up," Balfari continued, "now that someone has finally come forward who is willing to pay good money for that lousy boat."

"Who, boss?" the tall, thin man asked. "Who's the dupe?"

"I have no idea, Factum," Balfari snapped. "He insists on wearing a black mask, and he refuses to take it off no matter what. But he's giving me cash for the boat, so at least I can start living large again!"

"And us too, right boss?"

"Listen more closely next time. He's giving me cash for the boat. Not you," and he let his whole weight press on Faktum's feet. "You understand?"

"Yeah boss, you! You!"

"And do you understand?"

"I do, boss," Tótum said, nodding.

"Then pull yourselves together!" Balfari snapped, and then he turned and started marching out of the warehouse.

"I'm meeting the buyer again tomorrow," he shouted over his shoulder, "and I don't want to disappoint him. I don't want to lose my inheritance because of you two clowns, got it?"

"We got it, boss."

"Then do your job."

## Miklós ESTERHÁZY

is a writer and picture-framer. He was born in 1987 in Budapest and currently lives in Székesfehérvár. He has published two books with Magvető, *Az Öreghegy meséi* (Tales of the Old Mountain, 2021) and *Málna és a csotrogányok* (Raspberry and the Rattletraps, 2022)



The real world is as  
**RICH**  
 with the *fantastic* as even the *wildest*  
**DREAMS!**

## Raspberry and the Rattletraps

In *Raspberry and the Rattletraps*, we are transported to the enchanted land of the Old Mountain, where the bushes tremble, the animals talk, and a little girl named Raspberry finds a strange message at the base of a tree. The old characters from the earlier *Tales of the Old Mountain* have returned, including the Joey Grasscutter, who we get to know from an entirely different perspective, the family members, the animals, Ernie, the turtle who is always changing size, Ophelia, Maurice, the dogs, and the snails who crawl faster than the streaking winds of a storm. The setting is the same, as is the cast of characters, yet the mood of the new tale is completely different. *Raspberry and the Rattletraps* is an action-packed adventure novel compared to Miklós Esterházy's more contemplative first book.

Esterházy has chosen perhaps the oldest genre of world literature, the fairytale, and while he has used several elements of this ancient form of storytelling, he has crafted tales which are very much about the world in which we live today. The book ushers us into a magical world of stories and fables for children and even for adults who have not yet forgotten that they once were (and perhaps again could remember to be) children. Esterházy reminds us that even in our adult world, we have many chances to look on nature with wonder and find the child who still lives inside us, for whom the afternoons once seemed endless and everything and anything was possible.

The world that emerges in these stories is at once ordinary and mysterious, natural and magical. Closeness to nature, awareness of the richness and fragility of the natural world, forgiveness, and inner strength are all recurring themes in Esterházy's fantastic tales. His enthralling storytelling style allows us to linger over the seemingly small yet at times wondrous moments of life. The book includes a captivating array of black and white illustrations, also by Esterházy.

author/illustrator  
Miklós Esterházy

title  
Raspberry and the Rattletraps

publisher  
Magvető

year of publication  
2022

number of pages  
64

size  
188 x 163 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Ágnes Orzóy  
orzoy.agnes@lira.hu







On a small table by the door, she spotted a picture frame with a little foldout leg. From the stamp on the back, Raspberry recognized it as something that had been made in the little village of King's Quarters, but it took her a moment to recognize the person in the picture standing next to the Captain. A young lad with a confused look on his face but a warm, kindly air.

"Is that... is that my dad?"

"It is," the Captain replied. He had just returned from the kitchen, and he had a remarkably ugly belt-bag around his waist. In it were his heart medications, which he always had to take before meals.

"He looks so different," Raspberry mumbled.

"Oh, your father looked like a little prince back then," the Captain said, taking capsules out of his bag that were bigger than any pill Raspberry had ever seen in his life. "As if he had been born on some other planet."

Raspberry just stared at the picture without saying a word. The Captain noticed that her eyes were tearing up, so he generously traded his slice of bread, which he had smeared with peanut butter in record speed, for Raspberry's mid-morning snack. Raspberry did indeed stop crying, but she was still restless.

"Do you miss the water, Captain?"

At that question, the old man suddenly became very wistful. He tried to hide the fact that he was a little flustered, twirling the hairs of his beard around his trembling fingers. His beard always revealed which way the breeze was blowing, and how strong it was, and even how it was mixing with the prevailing winds. The Captain was now clinging to it as he perhaps would have clung to a ship's rope during a storm.

"They can't keep me on dry land for long, Raspberry-evich," he said, using a made-up Russian diminutive. "Soon, we'll get my ship up from the depths, and then I'll teach your father how to sail properly!"

He took a big bite of the gourmet sandwich he had so cleverly managed to acquire.

"We'll take you with us, if you want," he added with a wink.

"But there's one thing I don't understand," he said in a garbled voice as he munched on the delectable snack. "If rattletraps only live underground, how did the Great Walnut Tree's reply even reach them?"

"Maybe I could..."

But Raspberry couldn't finish her sentence because a soft piece of bread had gotten stuck to the roof of her mouth. While the Captain stooped back over the book and tried to translate the text letter by letter, she was busy trying to scrape the push the morsel of bread loose with her tongue.

When the old man had finished translating the text, they leaned forward in their chairs, with their faces almost touching the page, and read the entire message together.

Your curiosity is key,  
Your shovel hand won't help here, Rubus,  
For by the time the full moon shines,  
You may be covered up with humus.  
A passageway, a Green Door,  
The gate between their world and yours.

Raspberry's mind was overbrimming with questions, and she hurriedly flipped through the pages of the book hoping to find answers. The Captain in the meantime started making the next round of sandwiches, which this time would come with tea. Raspberry had never seen so much lemon powder and sugar in all her life. A few more munches and a few more pages flipped and finally the Captain managed to shed some light on the situation.

"Every world has an entrance," he explained, pointing at a passage of text in the codex. "You must find it. In the olden days, the rattletraps and other mythical creatures lived much closer to us. They could travel freely through the portals between their world and ours. The foundation of this freedom was mutual trust. When this trust wavered, the portals were completely abandoned. We humans lost much when we abandoned these creatures. As they perished, we lost all the abilities which we had used to nourish them. Magic is always based on mutual exchange and trust."

He stood up and wiped the crumbs from his beard. He was suddenly serious. Indeed, Raspberry had never seen him so serious.

"The rattletraps are still alive. I can sense it, because imagination in me has not withered. It's possible that the message sent by the Walnut Tree has something to do with it."

Saying this, he took the little girl's hand in his and looked deep into her eyes.

"I don't know who or what this Rubus is," he said, "but I do know who is going to get you to the entrance. You don't have much time. According to the message, you must act before the full moon. Alas, I cannot accompany you. You must find out what lies beyond the Green Door. It's not every day that one gets a message from the wise Walnut Tree. But whatever the case, there will be a full moon tonight."





## Ildikó BOLDIZSÁR

is a writer, editor, storyteller, and developer of the storytelling therapy method. She graduated from Eötvös Loránd University with a major in aesthetics, Hungarian, and pedagogy. Her first storybook, *Amália álmai - Mesék a világ legszomorúbb boszorkányáról* (Amalia's Dreams - Tales of the World's Saddest Witch), was published in 1991 and received the Artisjus Book of the Year Award. In 1997, her book *Fekete Világkerülő Ember* (Ashen Gray) was published, which also won an IBBY award.

## Katalin SZEGEDI

was born in Budapest in 1963. She graduated with a degree in applied graphic design and book design from the College of Applied Arts. She has won the Beautiful Hungarian Book prize several times, and in 2005, she won the IBBY Illustrator of the Year prize. She has also won numerous international awards. In 2006, her book *Rapunzel* was selected as one of the most beautiful books of the year by the Korean Publishers and Book Distributors Association in South Korea, and in 2010, she was nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Award.



# The Real Path

In 2023, Magvető Publishers published a limited edition of Ildikó Boldizsár's trilogy of tales, *Amália útjai* (The Paths of Amalia), with illustrations by Katalin Szegedi. *Amália álmai* (Amalia's Dreams) tells the story of the first hundred years of the life of Amalia, the saddest witch in the world. *Fekete Világkerülő Ember meséi* (Tales of Ashen Gray) tell the story of the second hundred years, and *Az igazi vándorút* (The Real Path) tells the story of the third.

Amalia lives at 3 Squinty Street in Moon Field. Amalia's Dreams tells us of how Amalia spent the first hundred years of her life: arranging her collection of polka-dotted mugs, playing with the rain in Fern Clearing or on the shores of Deepwater Lake, and dreaming dreams under her warm grass quilt. We learn who Emilia and the World-Wailing Woman were, what the Stargazing Boy longed for, why the Black Waterbird cawed three times, and what happened when the Sun and the Moon first met.

The second book in the trilogy reveals why Ashen Gray is so grim and devoid of tint and hue, for he has been abandoned by the colors: the blues, the yellows, the greens, the reds all flee when he approaches, even the whites! The central question of the book is: can the darkness which is enveloping the world be stopped, and if so, how? What happens when the saddest witch in the world meets the unhappiest man? Two wondrous beings search for the path that will unite them.

In the third part of the trilogy, Amalia sets off on a real journey to free herself of her sadness. Her companion, Ashen Gray, has disappeared, and time has stopped in Moon Meadow. The stakes of the journey are high: can she find Ashen Gray and start time again? Amalia's first journey takes her to Little Pasture Place, where it has been snowing incessantly for a hundred and two years. Here, she finds the inhabitants of seven huts, and they are all looking for something. Can they help Amalia? Together, can they find what they are looking for?

Games, love, dreams, the enthralling charm of Ildikó Boldizsár's stories for children and adults is complemented with illustrations by Katalin Szegedi. Ildikó Boldizsár weaves complex questions into her tales with remarkable delicacy and sensitivity, offering a sense of strength and reassurance to readers who are curious to know more about the secrets of true journeys.

The path to  
*arrival*

author  
Ildikó Boldizsár

illustrator  
Katalin Szegedi

title  
The Real Path

publisher  
Magvető

year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
182

size  
160 x 230 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Ágnes Orzóy  
agnes.orzoy@lira.hu







For the first hundred years, Amalia, the saddest witch in the world, put on a new skirt every day. She had skirts with frills, skirts with polka-dots, striped skirts, plaid skirts, and skirts with all the colors of the rainbow. They twirled and swirled and fluttered and flapped. If she put on the ruffled one and spun to the right, spring burst into bloom in the garden and the cherry trees blossomed. If she spun to the left, the migratory birds returned to the forest and began to build their nests. And if, when winter came, she felt like doing nothing but spinning and spinning all the livelong day, the frozen waters would melt and flood the land. With her striped skirt, she conjured summer breezes, each stripe unfurling a summer flower, and when she turned her skirt inside out at night, the air was filled with the scent of jasmine. If she wore a polka-dot skirt, the autumn colors came and rains began to fall, in heavy downpours, gentle drizzles, and everything in between. Raindrops of every shape and color fell, as many shapes and colors as there were polka-dots on Amalia's skirt. When she put her plaid skirt on, winter arrived. The sleds left deep tracks in the crisp snow, and the forest was filled with the sounds of the holidays. There was merrymaking, singing, eating, and drinking. Snowmen skated between the trees, snowballs hit the fence posts, and the wind carried scents of scrumptious apple pie.

Only once in the first hundred years did Amalia leave the left corner of the forest, Squinty Street in Moon Meadow, to look, in the lands beyond the Three Waterfalls, for the prince with whom she longed to fly over the oceans. And indeed she found him, but alas, in vain, for the prince had chosen the most beautiful princess in the world, and he would not leave her side. Amalia returned to the walnut tree alone, and from then on, she only left her home in her dreams. And so the years passed hardly noticed, with changes of skirts, skirts with frills, skirts with polka-dots, striped skirts, plaid skirts, and joys and sorrows that came and went, and dreams of the lands beyond the Three Waterfalls.

The second hundred years began with the arrival at Amalia's hut of a strange man who did not like colors. His name was the Ashen Gray, and everything that had even a tinge of color fled his presence. They told each other stories, Amalia and Ashen Gray, and slowly they came to love each other. It was not hard to fall in love. Even Ashen Gray was surprised by how easy it was, but it is not quite

so simple to remain together for a century. To do this, Amalia had to come to appreciate the many shades of Ashen Gray, and Ashen Gray had to free himself from the grip of the Deceitful Flower. This took a long time, but once they had both succeeded, for a hundred years, Ashen Gray and Amalia were surrounded by a shimmering array of colors never seen before. Ashen Gray slowly came to understand what it meant to be colorless, and also why colors were so very precious. And Amalia no longer thought of the prince, and she no longer traveled in her dreams to the lands beyond the Three Waterfalls. And they lived together very happily, and found great joy in each other, in the far left corner of the forest, in Moon Meadow, with new colors adorning the world around them every day.

And then the leaves of the trees froze still, and the snails withdrew into their shells, and the birds of the forest fell silent. Even the winds stopped blowing. The squirrels had just managed to leap to the far branch, and then they leapt no more. The bees did not leave their hives, and the grass stopped growing. Even the fluttering skirts lost all their magic power.

For weeks, Amalia did not leave the garden. It was as if she had turned to stone, but she had not. She was watching the world, but in a different way. She wanted to understand what was happening. She wanted to know why birth and death had stopped. And she watched and watched and watched and watched. More attentively than ever before.

And then all of a sudden, sitting motionless in the motionless garden, she realized that time had not come to a stop on its own.

Someone had brought it to a stop.

But who?

Who could possibly bring time to a stop?

On the last day of the three-hundredth year, Amalia decided to figure out what had happened. She had studied the firmament for so many nights, first alone, then in Ashen Gray's embrace, and well had she come to understand the twinkling of the myriads of stars. She was certain that only they, the bright guardians of the sky, knew what had happened to time.

"I must reach the stars at any cost," she thought. "I must discover who has brought time to a stop. And I must discover who or what can set time in motion again."





This is  
**OUR**  
turf!



PHOTO: RUDOLF BALOGH

## Ferenc MOLNÁR

was born in Budapest in 1878 and died in the United States in 1952. Perhaps his greatest success as a writer was his novel *The Paul Street Boys*, which has become a well-known classic the world over in numerous translations. There are also several film adaptations of the novel, which continues to hold readers' interests today. In 1934, director and screenwriter Fritz Lang made a film out of Molnár's play *Liliom*, which was the basis for the 1945 Broadway musical *Carousel*.

## Rozi BÉKÉS

graduated from the Hungarian Academy of Applied Arts (now MOME) with a degree in Book Arts and will receive her doctorate (DLA) from the MOME Doctoral School in 2017. She works as a graphic designer, illustrator, and graphic design and illustration instructor. She works on abstract theater experiments, animated films, and artist books. She has also worked as a costume and set designer in theater and film.



# The Paul Street Boys

Hungarian author Ferenc Molnár's novel *The Paul Street Boys* has been one of the most widely read and popular books in Hungary for almost 120 years. It is also one of the best-known Hungarian novels outside of Hungary and has been translated into many languages. It is compulsory reading in fifth grade in Hungarian schools and a required or recommended school text in several countries, including Italy, Brazil, and Poland.

The plot is simple. Set in Budapest in March 1889, the novel is about the Paul Street boys, who defend their playground, an empty lot they call "the turf," from the invading rival gang, the Red Shirts. The boys are aided by the puny, seemingly weak Ernő Nemecek, who is often looked down on by his peers but fights by the side despite his serious illness. Soon after the victory, however, it turns out that a house will be built on their hard-earned land.

Molnár (1878–1952) is perhaps best known for his brilliant drawing room comedies such as *The Swan and The Guardsman*. But in Hungary it was his novel for young people, *The Paul Street Boys* (1907), which ensured his lasting popularity. Translated into English in 1927 and published now with new illustrations, the novel about two gangs of boys fighting a war for a piece of land, a derelict building site which to them is a cherished symbol of freedom, is still the same fascinating story it was nearly a century ago. Mátyás Sárközi, Molnár's grandson, writes his Preface to the present edition: "There are examples of good camaraderie, loyalty, idealism, but Molnár always manages to save himself from being just a shade too sentimental. Like Mark Twain, he has the wit and the good writer's sense to mix the grotesque with the pathetic." A true world classic of its kind, *The Paul Street Boys*, which has been out of print for decades, is a juvenile classic that has lost none of its magic.

Molnár published his work as a serialized novel for young adults in a student magazine. The popularity of the story in Hungary and abroad may be explained by the fact that it is about human characters and situations that could have happened anywhere and anytime. And what are these universal human characteristics? Honesty, trust, camaraderie, and self-sacrifice on one hand; envy, betrayal, profiteering, and aggression on the other. The supportive power of a community of like-minded people, alternatives to the behavior of those seizing power, defending our most important cause that requires sacrifice, the ability to draw boundaries, remorse, the empathetic rule of second chances, the gesture of recognizing our opponents, these are but a few of the timeless messages of *The Paul Street Boys*.



author  
Ferenc Molnár

illustrator  
Rozi Békés

title  
The Paul Street Boys

publisher  
Scolar

year of publication  
2023

number of pages  
248

size  
2210 x 160 x 20 mm

recommended age  
7-12

rights contact  
Nóra Majoros  
rights@scolar.hu





Everybody jumped away from Nemecsek when he shook himself off like a drenched mutt. And they weren't sparing with their words of mockery.

"Hey frog boy."

"Did you get a good drink?"

"Why didn't you at least swim a little?"

He didn't bother replying. He just smiled with a bitter grin and stroked his wet coat.

But then Geréb walked over to him.

"How's the water?" he asked with a toothy smile and a quick nod of his head.

Nemecsek stared back at him with his blue eyes.

"It's fine," he said quietly, "Much better than standing on the shore and laughing at me. I'd rather sit in water up to my neck till New Year's Eve than buddy up with my friends' enemies. I don't mind you shoving me in the water.

Last time, I jumped in of my own accord. I saw you on the island, with the others. You can tell me to join you. You can try to make me think you're my friends. You can even give me presents, as many as you like, but I'll never want to have anything to do with you. And you can throw me in the water again, as many times as you want, a hundred times if you want, I'll still keep coming back. I'll find some corner where you won't see me. I'm not afraid of any of you. And if you come to Paul Street and try to take our turf, we'll be waiting for you. And when there are ten of us, we won't be talking to you like I'm talking to you now. Not hard to deal with just me. Whoever's got the numbers wins, I know that. The Pastor kids stole my marbles in the Museum Garden cause they had the numbers! You throw me in the water cause you've got the numbers. Not hard when it's ten against one. And I don't mind. Beat me up if you want. I didn't have to end up in the water if I hadn't wanted to. But I didn't make trouble with you. Drown me if you want, or beat me to death. I'll never turn traitor, not like some people."

He stretched out his arm and pointed at Geréb, who had been laughing but suddenly stopped. The lamplight fell on Nemecsek's handsome blonde hair and his clothes, which shone with water. He stared straight into Geréb's eyes, and for Geréb, his stare was like a weight pressing down on his soul. He suddenly grew serious and bowed his head. No one said a word. It was as if they were standing

in church in the middle of some solemn service. The only sound was the water dripping from Nemecsek's clothes onto the hard ground.

"Can I go now?" Nemecsek asked, breaking the silence.

No one said anything.

"Can I go now?" he asked again. "Or you want to beat me some more?"

Again, no one replied, so Nemecsek turned and started walking slowly towards the bridge.

The other boys stood motionless. Not one of them so much as budged. Everyone felt that this little blonde kid was the real hero, the guy who had earned his place in the world of men. The two guards at the bridge, who had seen the whole thing, were just staring at him, and neither would have dared block his way.

"Attention!" Feri Áts shouted in a shrill voice when Nemecsek reached the bridge.

The two guards suddenly raised their silver-tipped spears and stood at attention. And the boys all clicked their heels together and raised their spears in the air. No one said a word. The silver-tipped spears gleamed in the moonlight. The only sound was the clomp, clomp of Nemecsek's boots and he walked across the bridge. And then that sound faded into a squelch, squelch, like someone walking in shoes full of water. Nemecsek was gone.

On the island, the redshirts looked at one another in confusion. Feri Áts stood in the middle of the clearing, his head bowed. Geréb, white as a sheet, took a few steps forward.

"Please," he muttered, "come on..."

But Feri had turned his back on him. Geréb went over to the other boys, who were still standing at attention. He walked over the older Pastor kid.

"Please," he said again, "come on..."

But the Pastor boy just turned his back on him too. Geréb was at a loss.

He had no idea what to do.

"Guess I can beat it," he said in a voice half hoarse.

No one bothered to reply, so he turned and started off down the same path Nemecsek had taken a moment earlier. But no one stood at attention as he passed. The guards just leaned on the rail of the bridge and looked into the water. Geréb's footsteps were now the only sound in the Botanical Garden.



# HUBBY

## Book of the Year Award 2023

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. The members of the student panel of judges also vote for their favorite books from the shortlist.

The award-winning works this year include an array of engaging tales and books with captivating illustrations. Dóra Gimesi offers her reader a lyrical story about an introspective little girl who speaks out to save a sick animal. Zoltán Jeney’s humorous tale brings to life the adventures of monsters, mermaids, and a sick fairy. Gabi Kemény’s novel explores the relationship between children and nature through the adventures of a pair of siblings on a school trip. Anikó Wéber, who is an expert on the problems with which primary school children grapple, has written a crime thriller that seeks answers to a complex case involving bullying. András Dániel shows again why he is known as one of the foremost authors in Hungary of absurd stories and also a gifted illustrator. Gréta Kata Keszthelyi offers the story of the life of a teenage girl that explores the themes of individual and family control, boundaries, and responsibility. Art historian Emese Révész and painter and illustrator Alexandra Grela present the visual arts through the imaginary studios of 25 artists whose compositions were milestones in the history of art, from the Altamira cave paintings to the graffiti works of Banksy. The Great Lötty is a presentation in the form of stories of three quarters of a century of the Béla Kövér Puppet Theater in Szeged.

The winners in the category of educational works usher their readers into three different fields of endeavor. Gyöngyi Kalas presents the history of cakes and pastries, Ildi Vibók tells us of the workings of the human brain, and Mária Bajzáth’s story almanac offers a collection of Hungarian folk tales and legends about holidays, festive days, folk customs, and folk beliefs. Illustrator Anna Rubik’s Picaresque Picture Heist was inspired by fourteen paintings from the Hungarian National Gallery.

### More information about the Winners:

HUBBY

ibby.hungary@gmail.com

## Prize Winners Selected by the Independent Panel of Judges



**Book of the Year Award:  
Narrative Fiction**  
under 6 year category

**Dóra Gimesi**  
*Emma’s Silence*  
Pagony



**Book of the Year Award:  
Narrative Fiction**  
under 12 year category

**Zoltán Jeney**  
*Duck Brouhaha at Lake Balaton*  
Lampion



**Book of the Year Award:  
Narrative Fiction**  
under 12 year category

**Gabi Kemény**  
*The Concrete Lynx*  
Móra



**Book of the Year Award:  
Narrative Fiction**  
over 12 year category

**András Dániel**  
*Oh, Please No!*  
Tilos az Á



**Book of the Year Award:  
Illustration**

**Alexandra Grela**  
Emese Révész:  
*Where is Art Made?*  
Csimota

## Prize Winners Selected by the Student Panel of Judges



**Book of the Year Award:  
Innovative**

**Árpád Kollár**

*The Big Lötty*

Kövér Béla Puppet theater

illustrator: Alexandra Grela



**Book of the Year Award:  
Informative**

**Györgyi Kalas**

*Little Miss Pavlova and*

*the Dobos Cake*

illustrator: Ildikó Horváth

Pagony



**Book of the Year Award:  
Narrative Fiction**

under 6 year category

**Anikó Wéber**

*The Mind Reader*

Pagony



**Book of the Year Award:  
Narrative Fiction**

over 12 year category

**Gréta Kata Keszthelyi**

*On Thin Ice*

Menő



**Libri Award**

**Anna Rubik** illustrator

*Picturesque Picture Heist*

Pagony

**HUBBY Special Award:  
Authors**

**Judit Berg**

**HUBBY Special Award:  
Illustrations**

**Kinga Rófusz**



**Book of the Year Award:  
Informative**

**Bajzát Mária**

*The Circular Tree of Life –*

*Story Almanach of Notable Days*

illustrator: Krisztina Gyetkó

Lampion



**Book of the Year Award:  
Informative**

**Ildi Vibók**

*The Super Walnut*

illustrator: Tamás Mayer

Pagony



THE AIM OF PETŐFI LITERARY FUND IS  
TO PROMOTE CLASSICAL AND CONTEMPORARY  
HUNGARIAN AUTHORS' WORKS ABROAD  
AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOREIGN–LANGUAGE  
PUBLISHING OF HUNGARIAN LITERATURE.

## GRANTS

- grants for foreign publishers for translation costs
- grants for foreign publishers for publication costs
- grants for agencies for excerpt translation costs
- grants for theatres for translation costs

## INFORMATION CENTRE

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



## CONTACT

### ADDRESS

Petőfi Cultural Agency  
1033  
Budapest  
Hajógyár utca 132.  
Hungary

### WEB

[www.plf.com](http://www.plf.com)

### FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/petofiliteraryfund](https://facebook.com/petofiliteraryfund)

### MORE INFO

[applications@plf.hu](mailto:applications@plf.hu)



illustration by Annabella Orosz

