

PICTURE BOOKS FROM BAJALKA

Plastelina and the Newspaper

Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup

Blue Bird Thoughts

What's Your Name?

The Rainbow Masquerade



ABOUT BAJALKA

Bajalka, the Institute for Publishing and the Art of Storytelling is a non-profit organisation dedicated to publishing original literature for children and young adults. Our primary focus is on the production, publishing, and presentation of picture books. We also promote children's reading culture through storytelling, devoting special attention to gender topics.

Picture Books

Bajalka devotes particular attention to picture books, written and illustrated by the same author, which are quite well-renowned in children's literature circles. The textual and the visual components of our picture books take shape at the same time, drawing from one another's inspiration, resulting in works that are in perfect balance and harmony.



Zdenka Gajser – EDITOR

Zdenka Gajser (1962), storyteller, librarian, and poet. She holds storytelling events featuring folk and original stories across the Maribor Library network, where she works in the Department of Activities, Events, and Promotion. In addition to regular storytelling events with creative workshops, she also holds storytelling holidays, storytelling for children and adults with special needs, pedagogical library instruction for schools and kindergartens, and a variety of library tours. Furthermore, she stages illustration exhibitions and a range of thematic exhibitions closely tied to the art of storytelling. Among other things, she conducts conversations with artists and writers. Gajser initiated and co-founded the storytelling festival Fairy Tale Day in Maribor, and she is co-editor of several professional publications.

Zdenka Gajser is the recipient of the 2017 Award for Outstanding Achievements in the Promotion of Children's Literature and Reading Culture, awarded by the Slovenian Section of IBBY.

POETRY COLLECTION

- *Kaaba sanjalka*, ZKO Velenje – odbor za literaturo, Šoštanj, 1985.



Alenka Spacal – AUTHOR

Alenka Spacal is a writer, illustrator, and storyteller. She was born in 1975 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. She received her BA and MA in Philosophy, and her PhD in Sociology, all from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. As a freelance artist, she publishes her work at Bajalka, the Institute for Publishing and the Art of Storytelling. She writes and illustrates original picture books. Spacal often writes about gender issues for both adults and children. To date, she has published 5 picture books in Slovenian, namely *Mavrična maskarada* (The Rainbow Masquerade, 2013), *Kako ti je ime?* (What's Your Name?, 2018), *Modre ptičje misli* (Blue Bird Thoughts, 2018), *Fižolčica beži pred fižolovo juho* (Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup, 2019), and *Plastelinčica in časopis* (Plastelina and the Newspaper, 2022). Her first picture book, which has already been published in English, is *Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup*, 2019. Alenka Spacal narrates her stories to children through her original illustrations. Her works have been exhibited in exhibitions both in Slovenia and abroad. Her website is: <https://bajalka.si/en/>.

Awards:

- Merit, in the category Books Published, 3x3 International Illustration Awards 2023, (for the Children's Book *Plastelina and the Newspaper*).
- Merit, in the category Books Published, 3x3 International Illustration Awards 2023, (for the Children's Book *Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup*).
- Merit Award, iJungle Illustration Awards 2022 Winners (for the Children's Book *Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup*).
- Honorable Mention, in the category Books Published, 3x3 International Illustration Awards 2022, (for the Children's Book *Blue Bird Thoughts*).
- Nomination, Children's Book - Published, Hiii Illustration 2021 (for the Children's Book *Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup*).



Photo by: Gregor Salobir

Plastelina and the Newspaper



Original title: *Plastelinčica in časopis*

Bajalka, Maribor, 2022

About the picture book:

Plastelina and the Newspaper introduces children to several fields of culture – not just reading, but also visual art, theatre, music, and dance. Plastelina, a member of the Plastelinek family, learns about culture through a newspaper and the idea of clocks. First, her mother, Plastelema, tries to answer her question, “What is culture?” Then, she and her friend Plasteliza use the newspaper to make fanciful art and toys. They draw on the newspaper and hold their own art exhibition. They fold it into an accordion and stage a concert. They make masks out of it and put on a play. They crumple it into a ball and fold it into both a boat and an airplane. This is *their* newspaper culture.

For the book, author and illustrator Alenka Spacal first made all the characters out of various colours of plasticine. The carefully constructed three-dimensional models were of great assistance in producing the illustrations, since she could position them and adjust their heads and feet however she liked. As a result, these imaginative characters are truly unique and hold an immediate appeal for children. Children, after all, love working with plasticine, a soft, mouldable material designed especially for creative play. The picture book also stimulates children’s creativity by showing them fun things they can do with old newspapers. The book is intended for pre-readers and beginning readers.

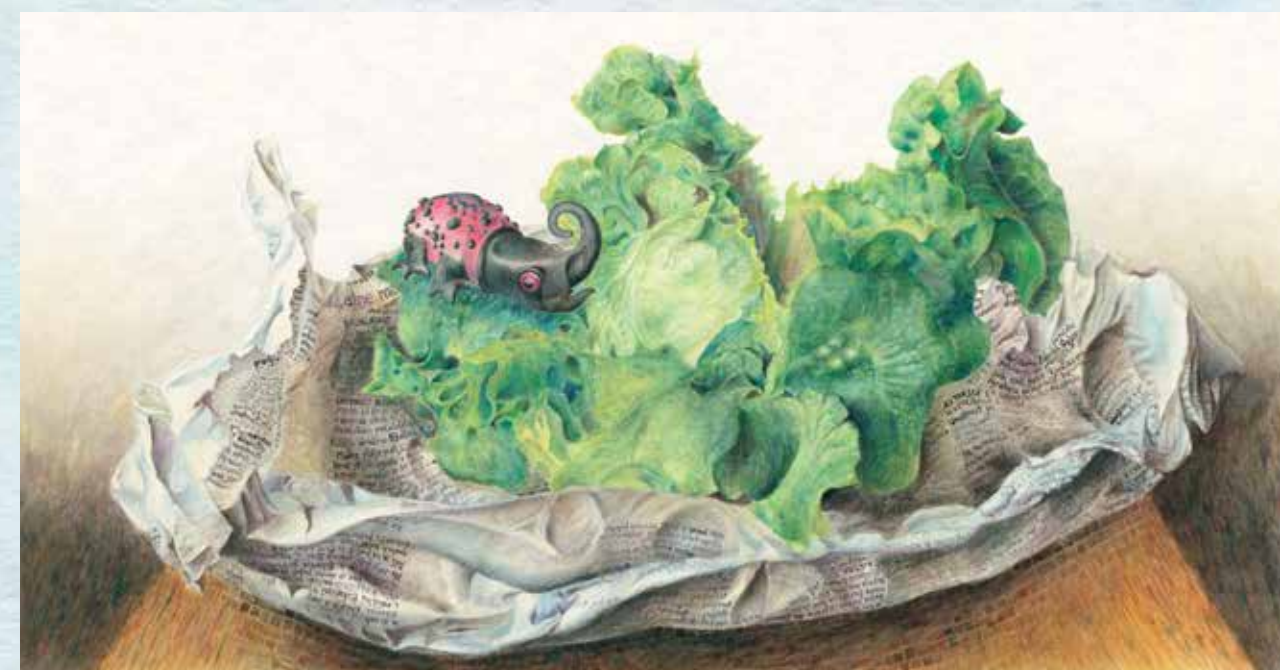
All the illustrations were hand-painted with the finest of brushes. Spacal used watercolours on top of acrylic paints in order to make the newspaper look as realistic as possible, especially in the pictures depicting the crumpled newspaper. She used tiny brushstrokes to render the typography for imaginary newspaper articles on the topic of picture books. Thus, the book pays tribute to the culture of print newspapers, an ever more endangered medium in the digital age.

Translated by Rawley Grau

Excerpts:



I’m Plastelina and my family are the Plastelinek.
Every morning, there’s a newspaper waiting for us at home.



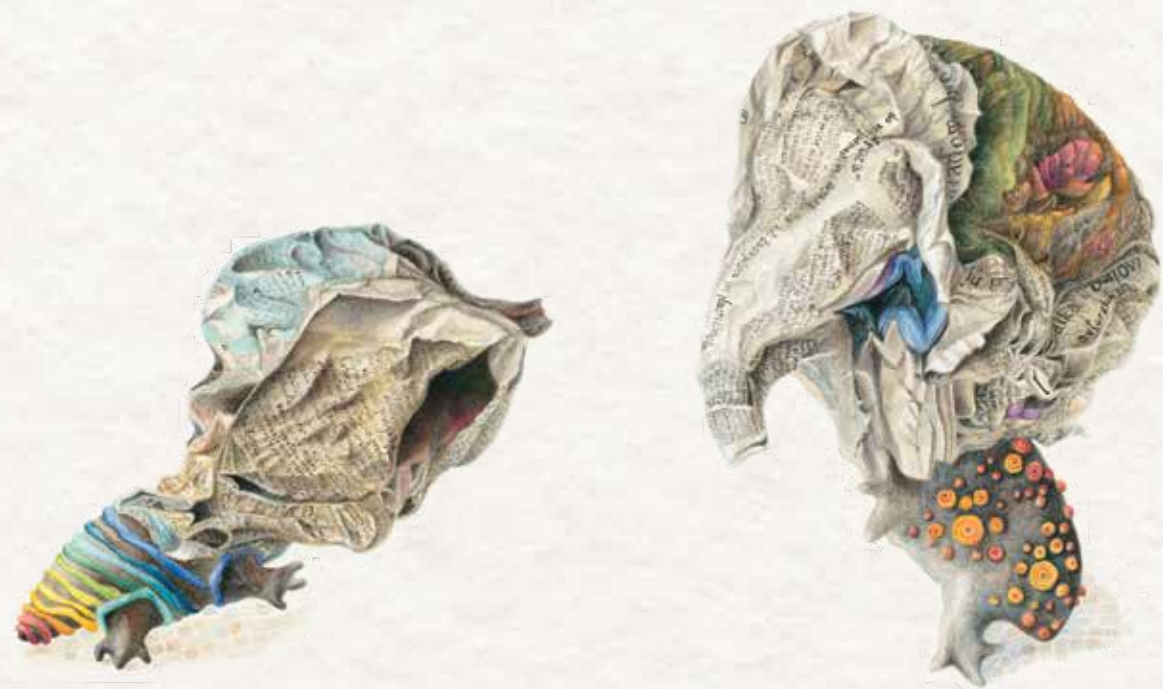
My father, Plastelado, picks through the lettuce on the newspaper.



My mother, Plastelema, likes to read the newspaper.
 Her favourite page is the one with big, bold letters that say: CULTURE.
 "What's culture?" I ask her. "Does it have something to do with clocks?"
 ...



We crumple a piece of newspaper into a ball and play catch.
 Our ball flies up, comes down, bounces, and rolls.



We both make masks out of newspaper. Then we put on a play.



We make a boat out of newspaper and go down to the river.
 "Wow! Look how fast it goes!" we shout.

Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup

Original title: *Fišolčica beži pred fižolovo juho*

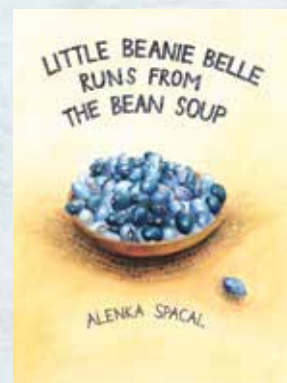
Bajalka, Maribor, 2019

About the picture book:

Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup is an original picture book about a little bean's journey. Little Beanie Belle escapes from a bowl of beans intended for hot bean soup. As she runs, rolling about on the floor and surveying the world around her from below, nothing but legs surround her. This is to mimic the perspective of children exploring their surroundings as they play and crawl about on the floor, looking up with curiosity. Whose legs does Little Beanie Belle stumble upon on her journey? Does she manage to run away from the fateful bean soup? As the seasons revolve, Little Beanie Belle's adventures end where a new bean story is just beginning.

Alenka Spacal loves bean soup. When she was little, she collected beans of various colours. She planted them in pots along with other plants and waited for them to sprout. Delighted still by the wonderful colours and patterns of beans, she has come up with a story about a little bean.

Translated by Tadeja Spruk



Bajalka also published the picture book *Little Beanie Belle Runs from the Bean Soup* in an English translation by Tadeja Spruk in 2019.

Excerpts:

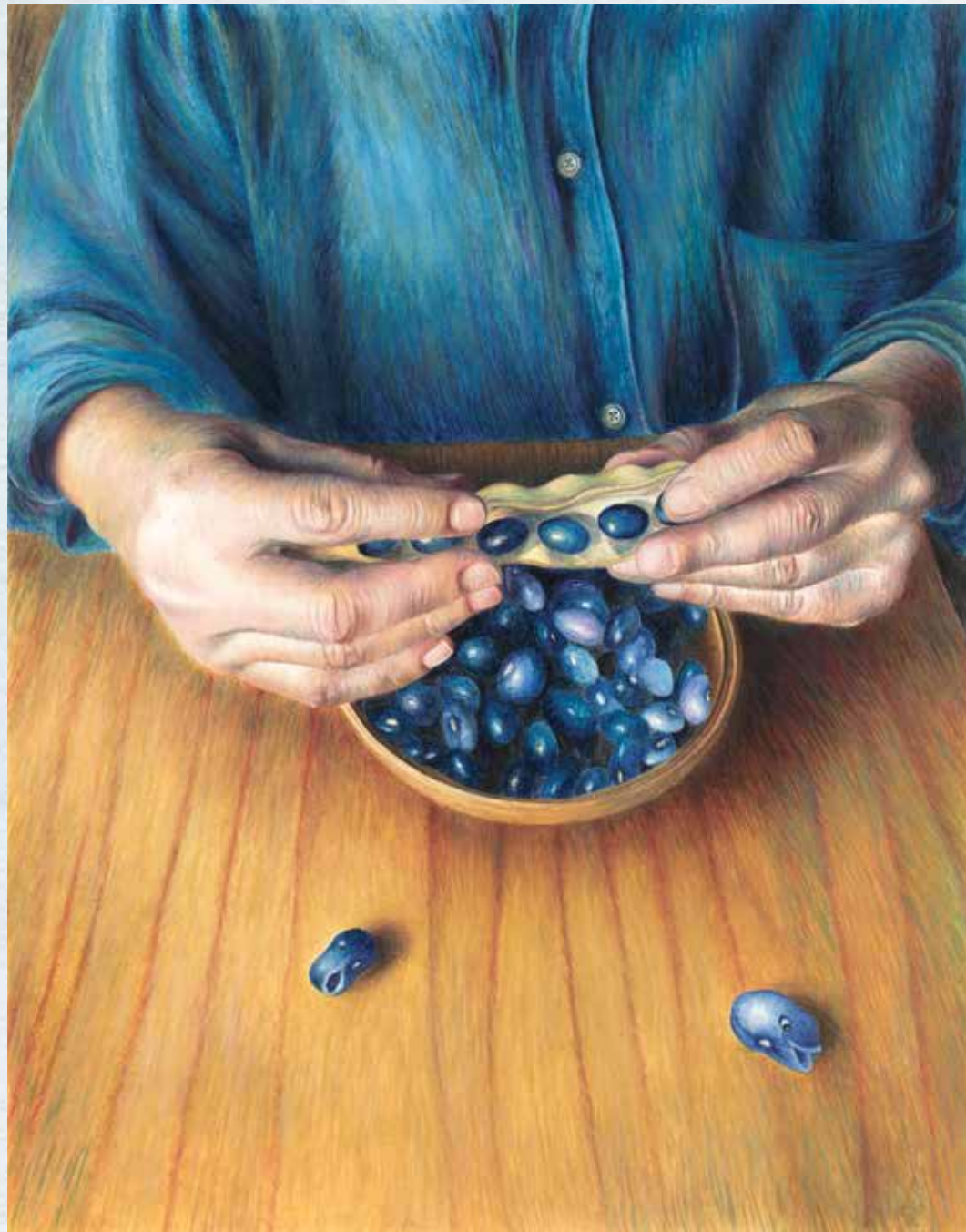
A LITTLE BLUE BEAN CALLED BEANIE BELLE LIVED INSIDE A POD WITH HER FAMILY. SHE LOVED TO PLAY WITH HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS. HER FAVOURITE THING TO DO WAS SWAY BACK AND FORTH ON HER BEANIE SWINGS. BUT EVERYTHING CHANGED ONE DAY WHEN ALL THE BEANS IN THE GARDEN WERE PICKED.



AS NIMBLE FINGERS SHELLLED THE BEANS, A VOICE SAID: "THESE ARE GOING TO MAKE A DELICIOUS BEAN SOUP!"

LITTLE BEANIE BELLE LOOKED AT HER BROTHER AND SHRIEKED: "OH NO! RUN!"

THEY JUMPED OUT OF THE BOWL. THE FINGERS SNATCHED LITTLE BEANIE BOY UP, BUT LITTLE BEANIE BELLE WAS TOO FAST FOR THEM. SHE ROLLED ACROSS THE TABLE, TOOK A RUN, LEAPED INTO THE AIR, FLEW, AND LANDED SAFELY ON THE GROUND.



... LITTLE BEANIE BELLE ROLLED OVER TO ANOTHER SET OF HAIRY LEGS. WHEN THEY SPOTTED HER, THEY STARTED KNOCKING HER ABOUT.

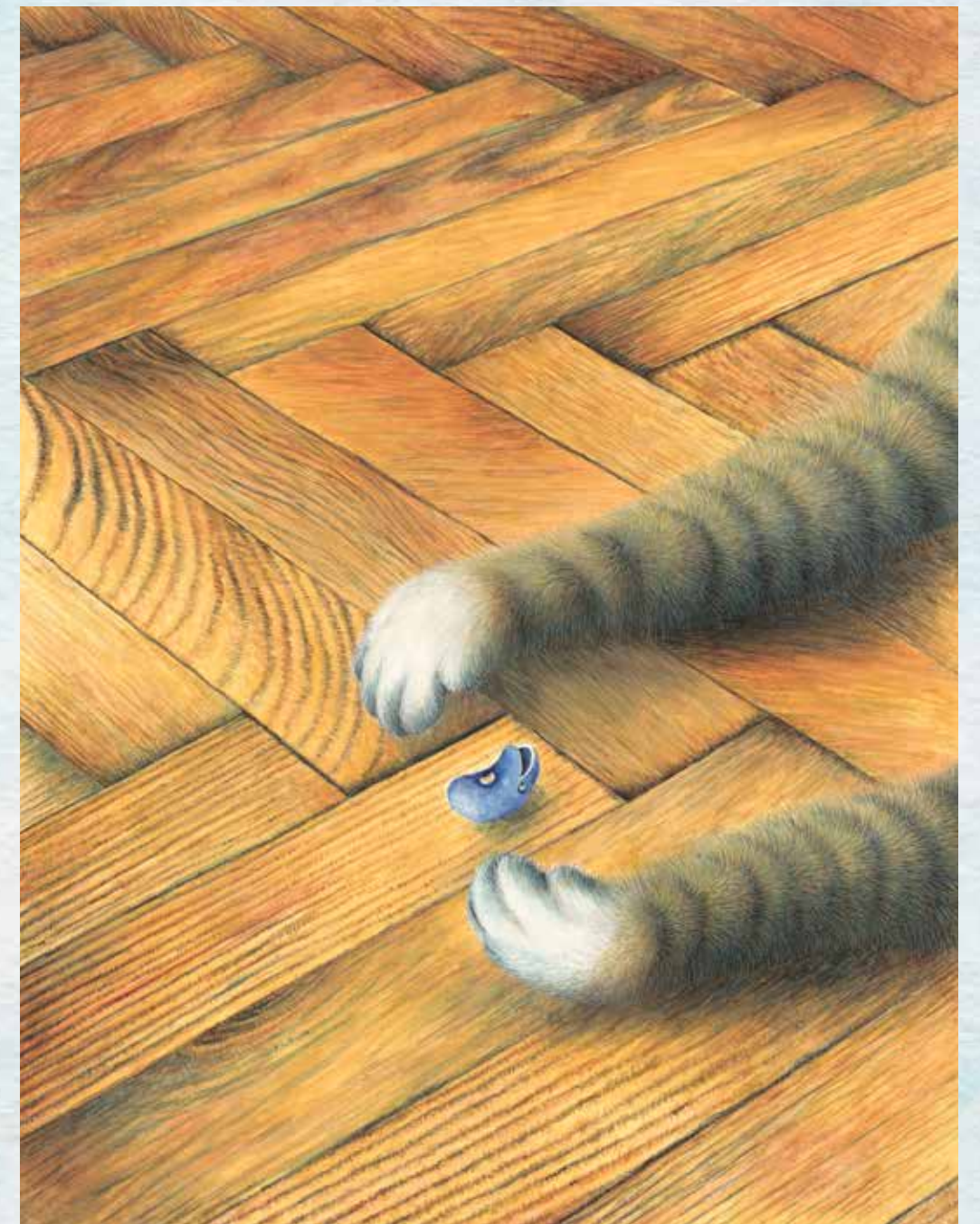
"WHO'S BEANING ME ABOUT?"

"WE'RE THE CAT'S PAWS AND WE LOVE BEANING YOU ABOUT."

"HEY, FLUFFY TOES, LEAVE ME ALONE! WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME HOW TO RUN AWAY FROM BEAN SOUP INSTEAD?"

"YOU CLIMB ON TOP OF A CUPBOARD, MEOW."

"I CAN'T DO THAT. I NEVER ROLL UPWARDS. I ONLY ROLL DOWNWARDS."



Blue Bird Thoughts

Original title: *Modre ptičje misli*

Bajalka, Maribor, 2018

About the picture book:

The picture book *Blue Bird Thoughts* brings together nine witty bird stories. Some of the little blue-feathered characters are learning to read, others are doing homework or cleaning, still others dream of tie-shaped toys, their mother's kisses, or carefree holidays.

Are you waiting for your vacation with the Blue Heron and the Blackcap? Do you want to know how the Little Blue Jay is learning to read? Do you know yet how the Little Magpie is learning bluebird wisdom by heart for her homework? And how the Little Blue Tit cleans itself? Do you know the Shoebill's beak and the wisdom of the Blue Rock Thrush? Do you think the Blue-Winged Goose prefers to walk or fly? Do you want to get a kiss just like the Little Bluethroat gets from its mother? Can you guess what the Little Blue-Grey Tanager can do with a tie? Do you have any idea why the Little Asian Fairy Bluebird goes to school? All of these secrets and many other tricks will be revealed in *Blue Bird Thoughts*.

Excerpt:

A KISS, NOW!

"I want a kiss!" chirps the Little Bluethroat.

Mama Bluethroat kisses her: "Peck!" and flies out of the nest.

"I want a kiss!" says the Little Bluethroat again, opening her beak wide.

Mama Bluethroat returns to the nest: "But Robbie, you just got a kiss."

"I want another one!"

Mama Bluethroat gives her another kiss: "Peck!"

"I want a kiss!" chirps the Little Bluethroat again.

"You already got two kisses."

"That is not enough. I want more."

Mama Bluethroat gives her little bird three kisses in a row: "Peck, peck, peck!"



"I want another kiss!"

"You got many kisses!" says Mama Bluethroat.

"All of those kisses are gone. There aren't any left. I want a kiss now!" chirps the Little Bluethroat.

"You spoiled child," says Mama Bluethroat and gives her little Robbie yet another kiss.

"I want a kiss now!" screams the little one from the nest again. "A kiss given is a kiss gone. I want a kiss now!"

Mama Bluethroat gives her daughter another kiss and says: "That's enough now."

"I want a kiss that will stay on my beak forever!" screams the Little Bluethroat again.

Mama Bluethroat gives her Little Bluethroat a hug. They hold each other for a long time, beak to beak. Robbie chirps with joy: "Now that is a kiss!" She snuggles even closer to her mother.

Translated by Špela Bibič





What's Your Name?

Original title: *Kako ti je ime?*

Bajalka, Maribor, 2018

About the picture book:

What's Your Name? is a picture book about a small snail that has just crawled into this world and doesn't have a name yet. It tries to choose its name by talking to the animals that it meets on its path, learning about them and their names on the way. "Some of us are named after fruit or colours, others after saints, our grandmothers, or even famous artists," says the Nut Weevil. What kind of a name should a small snail choose when it doesn't even know its gender? It doesn't feel like a snail girl or a snail boy. The tiny snail creature wants a name that would suit both a girly snailboy or a boyish snailgirl. The concept of a name turns out to be a very important gender topic. A name is usually given only after the gender can be clearly identified.

The picture book is a special kind of ABCs for children in the pre-reading and early-reading period. It can be used as an early reading material. In addition to names of less common animals, the children learn about the letters of the alphabet. The letters do not follow the usual order, but are playfully arranged, following the stories of the animals appearing in the picture book.

Excerpts:

A LITTLE SNAIL CLIMBED OUT OF ITS EGG CARRYING ITS HOUSE ALONG. IT WINKED AT THE WORLD WITH ITS LITTLE HORNS. "PLOP!" A BUCKWHEAT SEED CAME FLYING OUT OF THE AIR. SOME ANTS WERE PLAYING HANDBALL WITH IT. THE LITTLE SNAIL WAS SO FRIGHTENED THAT IT QUICKLY HID IN ITS HOUSE, BUT THE ANTS HAD ALREADY NOTICED IT. "LOOK," THEY SAID. "WHAT A LITTLE SNAIL! WHY, YOU'RE STILL JUST A BABY! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?"

"I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T HAVE ONE YET. I ONLY JUST CLIMBED OUT INTO THE WORLD."

"WHERE ARE YOUR PARENTS?"

"I DON'T KNOW. I NEVER MET THEM."

"WELL, YOU STILL NEED A NAME. MAYBE WE CAN GIVE YOU ONE," THE ANTS SUGGESTED.

"THAT WOULD BE VERY NICE. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A NAME."

...

"DO YOU WANT A GIRL'S NAME OR A BOY'S NAME?"

"HOW SHOULD I KNOW?"

"ARE YOU A GIRL SNAIL OR A BOY SNAIL?"

"I DON'T KNOW THAT EITHER. HOW DO YOU TELL IF YOU'RE A BOY OR A GIRL?"

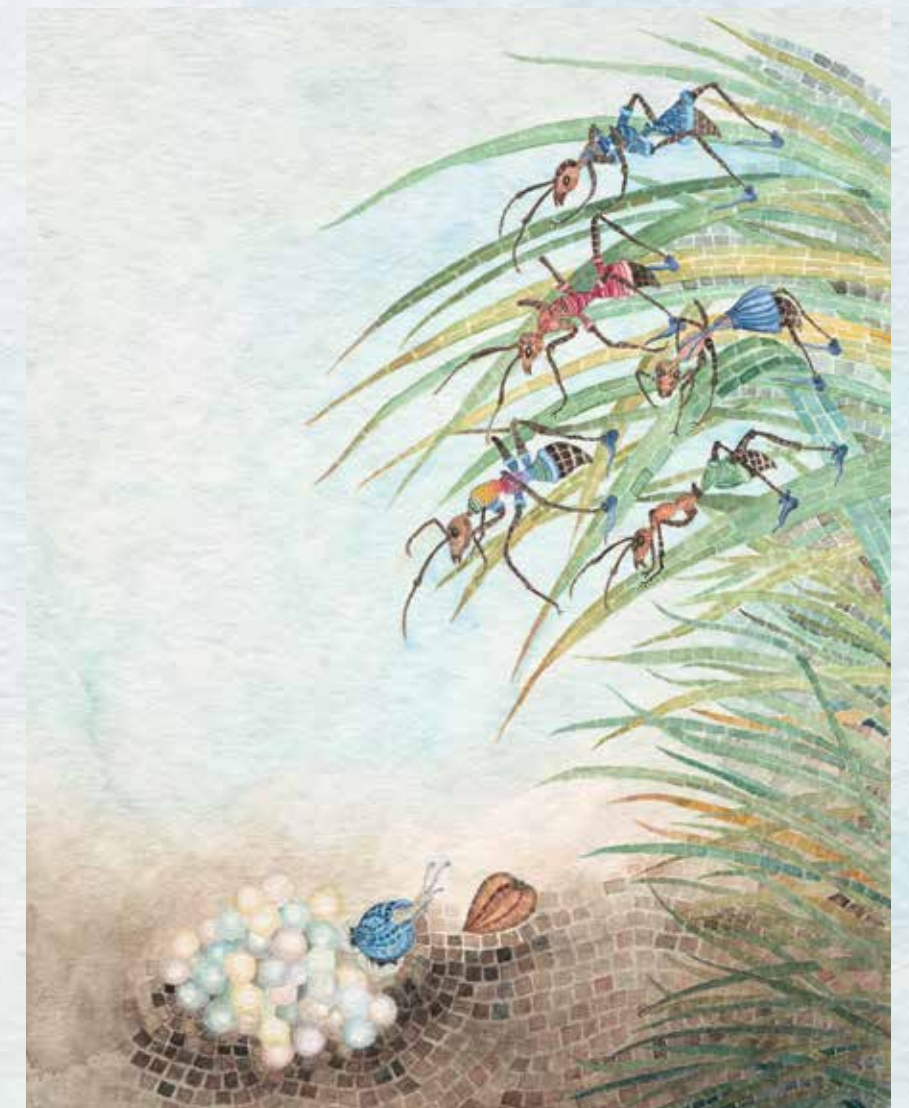
"WITH ANTS, WE GIRLS ARE WORKERS. WE'RE RED WITH BLACK BEHINDS. AND WE DON'T HAVE WINGS. BOY ANTS HAVE WINGS, AND THEY'RE COMPLETELY BLACK."

THE SNAIL THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT AND SAID, "I'M NOT BLACK OR RED. AND I DON'T HAVE WINGS. I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M A GIRL OR A BOY. CAN YOU STILL CHOOSE A NAME FOR ME?"

"WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING. WALK AROUND A BIT, AND YOU THINK IT OVER TOO."

THE SNAIL AGREED AND SAID GOODBYE TO THE ANTS, WHO WENT BACK TO PLAYING HANDBALL.

Translated by Rawley Grau





Original title: *Mavrična maškarada*

Škuc, Ljubljana, 2013

About the picture book:

The Rainbow Masquerade is considered to be the first Slovene picture book on LGBTQ themes. It is intended for children of all ages, as well as adults. Using the playful imagery of dressing up, the book encourages reflection on the question of gender identity. The experiences of the book's anthropomorphic animal characters can help children better understand their own experience regarding gender. This contemporary fairy tale is set in an olive grove, where the animals are getting ready for a masquerade party. They will dress as kings and queens of different genders. Some will dress up as the opposite gender; others will imitate their own gender, while yet others will wear costumes that depict several genders at once. One of the animals invited to the party, the turtle, does not what gender they are. Watching what happens to the squirrel, deer, snail, blackcap, hare, earthworm, and two ladybirds, the turtle contemplates the various genders and what it means to try on different costumes. On the dance floor in the carnival-like atmosphere of the olive grove clearing, the turtle suddenly realizes that it's best to approach gender with a sense of playfulness. And that's when happiness smiles on the turtle.

Excerpt:

The turtle crawled up to the roots of a tree and saw a snail in the mushrooms. "I see you're in the middle of your midday snack. Bon appétit!"

"Thank you, turtle."

"In what beautiful pink and purple shades your little house glistens! Are you a female or a male snail?"

"Whatever you wish. Some animals call me Herman, others Hermina. You can just call me Hermie, if you like."

"Ok, Hermie. Are you coming to the party tonight, too?"

"Of course I am. My little self is on my way there now," said the snail, its mouth full of Caesar's Mushroom. "But I have to have a bite to eat first. I have a long way to go and I don't want to be late."

"Really, you're going already?" said the turtle in surprise. "But you don't have a costume yet! Are you going to change from a female to a male snail or from a male to a female snail?"

"That is my secret. I am already both a male and a female snail. Being a hermaphrodite, I choose my gender according to the way I feel. I can instantly change into the gender I wish to be. That's the only thing I know how to do really quickly. And now I must be off, so I don't miss tonight's party."

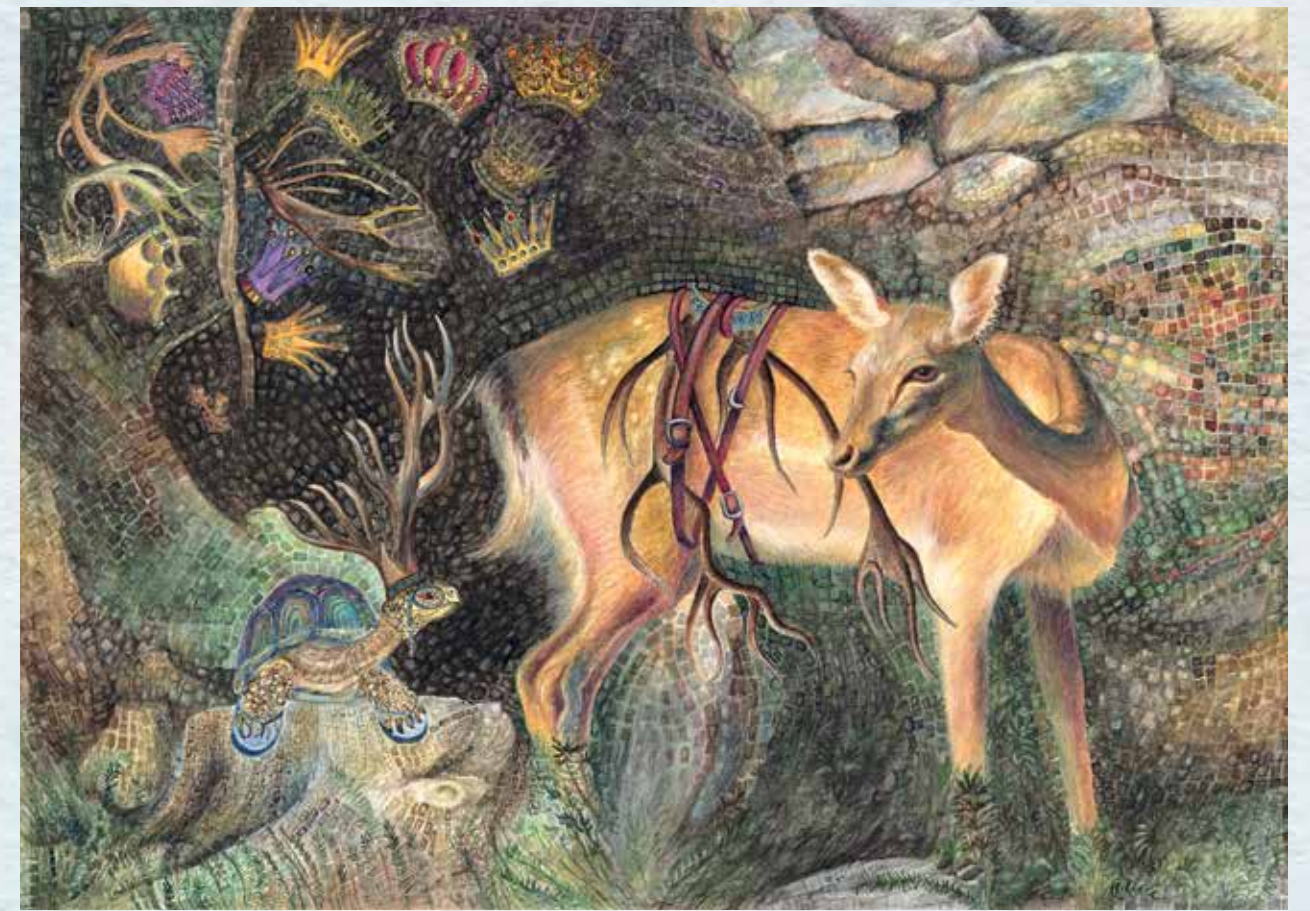
"Well, good luck with your mask anyway, Hermie!"

The turtle pulled its head in its shell, ruminating how a single snail shell could house both a male and a female snail at the same time.

Translated by Špela Bibič



The Rainbow Masquerade



Tenders and Public Calls

Slovenian Book Agency: funding opportunities for foreign publishers

Grants for the translation and publication of works by Slovenian authors

Yearly open call for translations from Slovenian and translations of works, written in other languages, when author is a part of Slovenian cultural environment, into foreign languages includes first translations of adult fiction, children's and young adult fiction, essayistic and critical works on culture and the humanities, plays, graphic novels and comics. Applicants must be legal persons (publishing houses, theatres) registered abroad. The subsidy covers up to 100% and maximum of 10.000 € of the translation costs.

Grants for printing costs

Yearly open call for printing costs for translations from Slovenian and translations of works, written in other languages, when author is a part of Slovenian cultural environment, into foreign languages includes first prints of adult fiction, children's and young adult fiction, essayistic and critical works on culture and the humanities, plays, graphic novels and comics. Applicants must be publishing houses registered abroad. The subsidy covers up to 70% and maximum of 3.000 € of the printing costs.

Slovenia – Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2023

Yearly open call for translations from Slovenian into German language includes first translations and reprints of adult fiction, children's and young adult fiction, essayistic and critical works on culture and the humanities, plays, graphic novels and comics. Applicants must be publishing houses registered in Austria, Germany or Switzerland. This subsidy covers up to 50% and up to 11.000 € of all types of costs connected with book publication (excluding license fees) and promotion for first translations or 50% and up to 3.000 € for reprints, eligible costs are printing, typesetting, cover design and corrections.

Travel Grants

Travel grants are also available for Slovene authors, translators, editors or rights agents, who have been invited to literary or industry events abroad. An invitation and the program for the event must be enclosed with the application.

Contact: Katja Urbanija / katja.urbanija@jakrs.si

Published by: BAJALKA, zavod za založništvo in umetnost pripovedovanja
(Bajalka, the Institute for Publishing and the Art of Storytelling)

Maribor, September 2023

Website: www.bajalka.si/en/

Edited by: Zdenka Gajser / Contact: info@bajalka.si

Translated by: Špela Bibič, Rawley Grau, Tadeja Spruk

Proofread by: Josh Rocchio

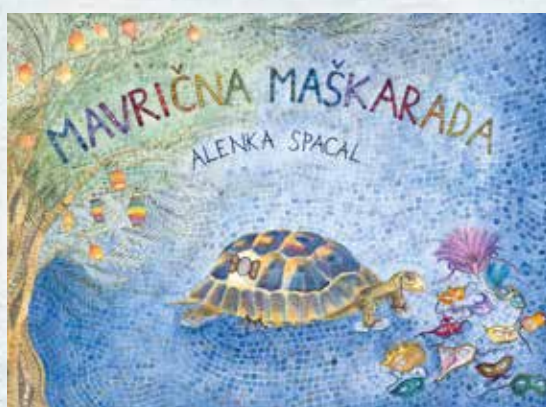
Designed by: Zvonka T Simčič and Alenka Spacal

Printed by: Demago Print

Print run: 500 copies

This publication is co-funded by the Republic of Slovenia and European Union – European Regional Development Fund and the Slovenian Book Agency.





www.bajalka.si/en/