

CHILDREN'S
BOOKS
FROM
ESTONIA
2024



THE ESTONIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE CENTRE

The Estonian Children's Literature Centre is a specialised competency organisation that promotes the country's most outstanding children's works abroad. This includes representing Estonian children's authors at the world's largest book fairs, organising their appearances abroad, maintaining a database of Estonian children's literature, and producing publications on the topic. The Centre collaborates on a large scale with publishers, researchers, translators, teachers, and other specialists.

How can we help? We ...

- provide information on Estonian children's writers, illustrators and translators from Estonian.
- publish topical information in print and at www.elk.ee.
- send newsletters to publishers and translators.
- help interested parties contact Estonian authors.
- assist in the selection of suitable translators for Estonian children's literature.
- inform publishers and translators about opportunities for financial support.

The TRADUCTA grant programme

Traducta offers grants to translators and foreign publishers to promote the translation and publishing of Estonian literature abroad.

Norsk Pengepung supports the translation of Estonian literary works into Norwegian, Icelandic, Swedish, and Danish, and their publication in Norway, Iceland, Sweden, and Denmark.

Application deadlines are 20 February, 20 May, 20 August, and 20 November of each year.

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Pookie-Boo

Written and illustrated by Margit Saluste

Koolibri, 2023

292×250 mm, hardcover, 32 pp

ISBN: 9789985050293

Pookie-Boo is the smallest in her family, so she tells everyone apart by their legs. Dad's legs are the longest, and his big toe is like a mouse that has chewed its way out of the slipper. Her brothers' legs are awfully long as well. Mum's legs are her favourite, though, because she can hide behind them if there's something scary or if there's something nice. Other than that, Pookie-Boo loves going to the playground, going through her brothers' things, catching dust bunnies, and playing with her Granny. You see, Granny comes to play with Pookie-Boo because Granny doesn't have any toys of her own at home.

Awards: 2023 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Certificate of Merit
2023 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Special Prize of the Estonian Children's Literature Centre



Margit Saluste (1964) is a children's writer and illustrator.

She graduated from the Tallinn Light Garment Technology School in clothing design and modelling, studied at the Estonian Academy of Arts' Open Academy, and worked as a nursery art teacher. Saluste has written 15 books for toddlers, illustrated works by herself and others, and has regularly contributed to the children's magazine

Mesimumm. She expertly expands children's worldviews by explaining things in an easy-to-understand way – be it by introducing professions, describing climate phenomena, or detailing the wide range of human emotions.



Leo and the Tooth-Worm

Written by Johanna-lisebel Järvelill

Illustrated by Kristina Tort

Varrak, 2023

210×241 mm, hardcover, 25 pp

ISBN: 9789985357354

Leo loves hard candies more than anything else. But after he pops his third straight strawberry-flavoured candy into his mouth, Saara shouts: "Leo, don't eat so much candy! You could get tooth-worms!" Leo studies his mouth in the mirror and wonders what tooth-worms might look like. Are they big and snakish like the boas and cobras in a book at their preschool? Or little and cute like caterpillars? And what if tooth-worms are as slimy as earthworms?



Johanna-lisebel Järvelill (1987) was born in Võru and

holds an MA in geocology from Tallinn University and a PhD in ecology. Järvelill began writing children's stories while working on her doctoral dissertation, crafting stories from ideas that were already spinning around in her head and had been told to her own children long before. Her first book was *Leo and the Bogey Man*.

Kristina Tort (1985) grew up on the island of Hiiumaa and

received a degree in graphic design from the Estonian Academy of Arts. She has illustrated and designed children's books and collaborated with magazines, including *Täheke*, *Hea Laps*, *Pere & Kodu*, and *Mesimumm*. Tort designs posters, postcards, educational materials, brochures, large-scale illustrations, and more. She has taught illustration at the Estonian Academy of Arts since 2019, and works as a freelance illustrator.





Legs

Written and illustrated by Tiiu Kitsik

Koolibri, 2023

169x206 mm, hardcover, 26 pp

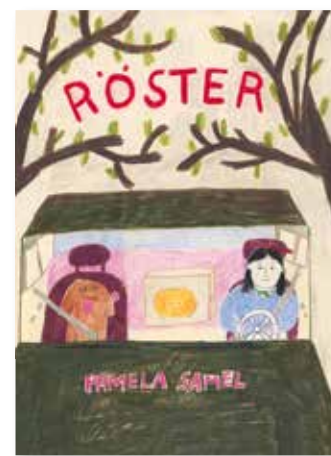
ISBN: 9789985052501

Bibi and Franka are friends who enjoy discussing and investigating all kinds of things. One day, their minds turn to legs. Why is it that humans have two legs, but a dog, who is smaller, has four? And why do beetles, which are smaller than dogs, have a total of six, and even tinier spiders have eight? Could it really be true that the smaller you are, the more legs you have? In the end, the girls realise that although it might be neat to have several legs, it's also nice just to have two – like when it comes time to tie your shoes!

Award: 2023 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Special Prize of the Jury



Tiiu Kitsik (1981) is a visual artist, illustrator, and children's author. She graduated from Tallinn University in advertising and media and has worked in advertising. Kitsik co-founded the Estonian crowdfunding platform Hooandja, where she has worked for several years. She has written seven children's books and contributed to the children's magazines *Hea Laps*, *Täheke*, and *Mesimumm*. She lives and works as a freelance artist in Berlin.



The Toaster

Written and illustrated by Pamela Samel

Puänt, 2023

200x260 mm, hardcover, 34 pp

ISBN: 9789916992814

The yellow toaster is in high spirits: a young couple just picked him out and took him home with them. Together with the stove, oven, pots, and pans, he always does his very best to keep the little family satisfied. The bigger the family grows, the more work the toaster has to do, but he doesn't complain – everybody likes crunchy bread, and that makes the toaster happy, too. Alas, everything that works so hard gets worn down over time: one day, the family packs the toaster back up and sets out.



Pamela Samel (1985) graduated in art education from Tallinn University in 2007 and acquired a second bachelor's degree in textile design from the Estonian Academy of Arts in 2014. She has illustrated newspapers, magazines, and internet publications. Samel received third place in the Knee-High Book Contest, encouraging her to dabble more in the field. Her illustrations for the book *Tubes* were selected for the Bologna Book Fair illustrators' exhibition in 2023 and the dPictus 100 Outstanding Picture Books.





The Lake's Letter

Written and illustrated by Piret Raud

Tänapäev, 2023
195×161 mm, hardcover, 46 pp
ISBN: 9789916173459

What happens when you long for something? When you long for something so much that you overflow with feelings? You write a letter, of course. You put all your feelings on paper, roll the paper up, put it in an empty bottle and let it go, hoping that it will reach the address. And when it does, it's the best feeling in the world.

A book about longing, overcoming obstacles and a love for the sea. A book where the text and the pictures flow like a river itself. There is a bit of river in all of us as we all long for something. The question is, do we dare go for it?

Award: 2023 Nominee of the Annual Children's Literature Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia



Piret Raud (1971) is the most successful contemporary Estonian children's writer and illustrator. She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in graphic arts and initially set off on the same path. After trying her hand at writing, Raud has since become the most widely translated and renowned children's author in Estonia. She has written 22 titles (eight of which were commissioned by Japanese, French, and British publishers), has been translated into 18 different languages, and has illustrated more than 50 titles. Her writing has received spectacular recognition at home and abroad. She was included on the 2012 IBBY Honour List as writer, in 2018 as illustrator, and in the 2010 and 2013 White Ravens catalogue. She also became a laureate of the Edgar Valter Illustration Prize in 2023.



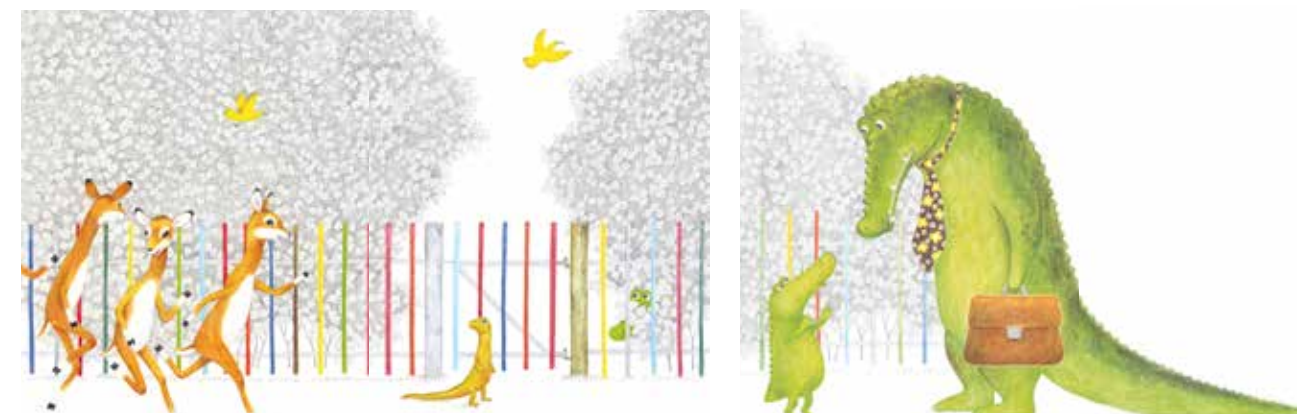
Extraordinary Raimond

Written by Kadri Lepp
Illustrated by Kadri Ilves

Tänapäev, 2023
174×246 mm, hardcover, 47 pp
ISBN: 9789916174623

Raimond is a crocodile. His father is a crocodile, and his mother is a crocodile. Raimond's father has a mighty tail, and Raimond's mother also has a mighty tail, although it's a bit smaller than his father's. Raimond's tail, however, is completely different. He used to be a happy little crocodile and did not even notice or think about his tail until, one night, he heard his parents discuss his tail in a less than cheerful tone. Now Raimond feels that no one sees him for who he is, that they only see his tail or, what's more, the lack of it. Raimond decides that he won't go to the playground anymore. In fact, he won't ever leave his yard.

A storybook about being different and coming to terms with that.



Kadri Lepp (1979) is an actress and children's writer. She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre's Drama School and has worked as an actress at the Ugala Theatre since 2002. Lepp has published six children's books. Her picture book, *The Mouse Who Had No Sled*, has been translated into Korean, Russian, Slovenian, and Croatian.

Kadri Ilves (1977) is an illustrator. She graduated from the University of Tartu with a degree in painting in 2002 and has worked as a freelance artist ever since. Ilves has illustrated more than 40 books and textbooks, including over 20 for the Swedish publisher Bonnier Carlsen. She regularly contributes to the Estonian children's magazines *Täheke* and *Mesimumm* and has been awarded for her works in the 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books competition.





Punk Santa and Other Christmas Stories

Written by Helena Koch

Illustrated by Stella Salumaa

Koolibri, 2023

170×226 mm, hardcover, 45 pp

ISBN: 9789985052341

Lots of special and surprising things can happen around Christmas! One kid finds weird glowing pictures in an Advent calendar instead of chocolates. A carrot is woken up from its winter hibernation and forced to work as a snowman's nose. A new neighbour moves onto the bakery counter next to the cinnamon roll, cheese pastry, and raisin bun. Meanwhile, Juss the Elf's mission to rescue abandoned slippers fails. And they say Christmas is a peaceful holiday!



Helena Koch (1989) was born in Põlva and has a BA in literature and theatre studies from the University of Tartu and an MA from Berlin Humboldt University in European literature studies. She has completed additional training at the Free University of Berlin at the University of Konstanz and attended Drakadeemia playwriting courses. Helena Koch has written four children's books.

Stella Salumaa (1985) is an illustrator and animator who graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts with a master's in animation. She has lived in the UK (London and Edinburgh) for the last decade and worked at several animation studios, focusing mainly on children's series. Punk Santa is her second illustrated children's book.



Newcomers at the Bakery

The cinnamon roll, cheese pastry, and raisin bun were neighbours at the bakery. They'd become good friends while lounging side-by-side on the counter, chatting, and teasing each other as they waited for customers.

"Have you seen the cheese pastry today?" the raisin bun asked her neighbour one morning, fresh out of the oven.

"Yeah, just a second ago," the cinnamon roll giggled. "I wonder who'd ever buy her, looking like that!"

The cheese pastry, who'd been overbaked slightly, heard her friends joking.

"What're you snickering about over there? Leave me alone!"

"Okay, okay," the raisin bun said. "Hop up onto the counter. Santa just walked in, and it'll be time to go in a jiffy."

Santa Claus was a regular at the bakery. He came in every day to buy one cheese pastry, one cinnamon roll, and one raisin bun.

"Ho-ho-ho! Hello there! Oh, are you selling sausage rolls now, too?" he called out, seeing a sign on the counter.

"Yes, we thought we'd try something new," answered Leili, the baker. "A batch just came out of the oven. Would you like some?"

"Of course, I would! I'll take three."

"Sounds good. Would you also like a cheese pastry, a raisin bun, and a cinnamon roll?" Leili asked as she bagged Santa's order.

"No, three will be enough. These sausage rolls look so tantalisingly fresh!"

Smiling, Leili handed him the bag.

"My dear Santa, you know everything we sell here is *always* fresh!"

"Isn't that the truth! I'll see you tomorrow!" Santa said jollily, placing his money on the counter and leaving the store.

Her eyes bulging, the raisin bun watched the door swing shut behind him. The cheese pastry trembled next to her. Both were startled by the cinnamon roll's piercing cry: "Aaaaaahhhh!"

Leilie pushed the cinnamon roll away from the cheese pastry who, moments later, found herself staring into the eyes of a plump sausage roll in place of her dear old friend.

"Hi!" said the sausage roll. "I'm a sausage..."

"We know who you are!" the raisin bun shouted. "You're a full-of-himself sausage roll! The very same whose relatives Santa just bought instead of us! Do you have any idea what that means?!" the pastry asked, glaring at the newcomer.

"That... we're tasty?"

"Tasty..." the cheese pastry growled.

"Oh, so you're tasty?" the raisin bun jeered. "Or does it mean that for the first time in the history of our whole family, Santa just came in and bought SAUSAGE ROLLS instead of a cheese pastry, a raisin bun, and a cinnamon roll!"

"But that only goes to show that we're tas-..." the sausage roll tried to defend himself.

"You show up here and scare us to crumbs. You not only ruin Santa Claus's Christmas diet but even have the gall to elbow in between me and my friends!" cried the raisin bun angrily.

"Oh, no—we're not neighbours anymore!" the cheese pastry realised, buttery tears rolling down her flaky crust.

The day continued. The cheese pastry, cinnamon roll, and raisin bun all lay glumly on the counter, waiting for a customer who just wouldn't seem to come. That day, everyone who entered the bakery only wanted to try the new sausage rolls. But then, a little before five o'clock, the door opened, and a frazzled Santa Claus burst in again.

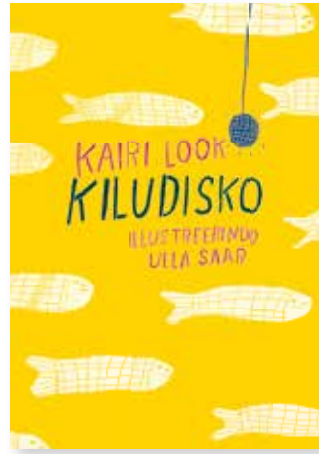
"Oh, thank heavens I made it here before you closed!" he boomed.

"There's still plenty of time!" Leili reassured him.

"Fantastic! Please give me a cinnamon roll, a cheese pastry, and a raisin bun. All day long, I felt like something important was missing."

The three friends on the counter woke from their daze and leapt happily into the paper bag Leila took from beneath the counter.

Translated by Adam Cullen



Herring Disco
Written by Kairi Look
Illustrated by Ulla Saar

Puänt, 2023
 170x236 mm, hardcover, 112 pp
 ISBN: 9789916968291

No doubt, at some point, you've considered how to invite a squirrel and a seal to your birthday party or wondered how to coax spring into arriving ten times faster than normal. Maybe you're still working out what firefighters and Pop Rocks have in common. You may have even wracked your brain over why Grandpa's trips to the grocery store take longer than anyone else's and when the next herring disco is set to happen. Readers will find an array of familiarities and mundane miracles in Look's stories, as well as the intention to make our ordinary world a cosier, more sensible, and more liveable environment.

Awards: 2023 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Certificate of Merit



Kairi Look (1983) is a children's writer and a translator from the Dutch language. She graduated from the University of Tartu in physiotherapy, and from the University of Amsterdam in children's rehabilitative therapy. She has penned nine books to date, many of which have been awarded and translated into several languages, including Finnish, French, German, and Lithuanian. In addition to this, she writes plays and short stories for the children's magazines *Gecko*, *Täheke*, and *Hea Laps*.

Ulla Saar (1975) is an illustrator and graphic artist. She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in product design. Her first illustrated book, *Lift*, achieved immediate widespread recognition and was listed in the 2014 White Ravens catalogue. Since then, she has illustrated over 30 titles, many of which have attracted international attention. Saar practices a contemporary, design-like approach to book illustration; her spirited and playful art is often more a part of the work's overall design than free-standing pictures.



Herring disco

The 24th of February is Estonian Independence Day and an occasion for parties. For Americans, Thanksgiving means turkey, and for Estonians, Independence Day means herring sandwiches!

The 24th of February was always the herrings' party day. Everyone attended. The Tallinn herrings were the first to arrive. They climbed out of their tin, combed their heads, and entered the party room. They arrived with tomato sauce on their tails and walked on tiptoe so as not to make a mess. A boat ferried the herrings from the island of Saaremaa to the port; they were all there, every last one of them. As were the Baltic herrings – it was a family party when all's said and done! The old school sprats sat at their own table, pipes in their mouths and sticks in their hands. All the younger, fresher herrings came straight from the sea. They had broken a hole in the ice and climbed right out. They wore sweatshirts bearing the words BALTIC SEA.

When the hall was full, the head herring, who wore a bow tie, tapped his glass, and rose to his full height.

"Fellow herring!" he announced. "Another year has come to an end, and we are another year older. Or, if you will allow, another year wiser and another year stronger! Not so long ago, our forefathers rose up and fought for their dignity."

The head herring paused. There was thunderous applause.

"And that is our reason for having a party," the head herring went on. "We have our own place here on the globe. We are needed. We are recognised. We are respected. Without us, there's no real party. We are few in number, but we are unique. We are the herring!"

"We are the herring!" the words filled the hall. The sound of banging came from where the Saaremaa shoal was sitting and a burly herring jumped onto the table. "Yes! Being a herring is a good and noble thing!"

"Good and noble!" echoed the hall.

"Excellent," said the head herring. "The speech is over. Let's party!"

There was no need to say it twice. The herring dashed onto the dance floor and started busting some moves. The young Baltic Sea herring jumped up and down, and their sparkling scales made the older sprats dizzy. The Island herring danced on the table, jingling the plates. And the Tallinn herring had learned a new dance that the others didn't know.

"Everyone come and join in the Jenka!" they shouted. "Our Finnish friends taught us. Come on over, and we'll show you!"

"What's this Jenka you're on about," grumbled the oldest herring. "We've got our own Estonian dances. The *Kaera Jaan*, and the *Tuljak* and the *Labajala Waltz*!" He seized the fins of a grey-haired sprat at the table and began twirling her round, singing at the top of his voice, "Oh, Kaera Jaan, oh, Kaera Jaan, jump up and see!"

So they jumped, every one of them! The Tallinn herring and the Baltic herring and the Saaremaa herring and the Baltic Sea herring, even the sprats – they all jumped up for the *Kaera Jaan*. Even the head herring in a bow tie twirled until his back was damp and it hurt to sing. In between, they ate cake and stuffed eggs, and then they danced again. The herring party was in full swing.

It was the early hours before the herring had tired themselves out and set off home. The captain of the Saaremaa herring was steering the boat full of flaked-out, sleeping herring out of the port when suddenly he frowned and put his fin over his eyes. "Oh, what a donkey I am! The main thing! I forgot the main thing!"

"What's thing?" asked a herring who had woken up.

"The shad!" wailed the captain. "I promised to take him to the party. Bother, blast, and banana bubble-gum! I even forgot to pick him up a slice of cake. What can I do?"

The water lapped against the side of the boat, and the head of a shad emerged from the sea. "Don't worry," said the shad. "I like being in the sea more, already been on dry land. And forget about the cake, I'm more of a savoury chap myself." He clapped the herring on the shoulder and disappeared into the waves.

Translated by Susan Wilson



Daddy!

Written by Indrek Koff

Illustrated by Elina Sildre

Härri Tee & proua Kohvi, 2023

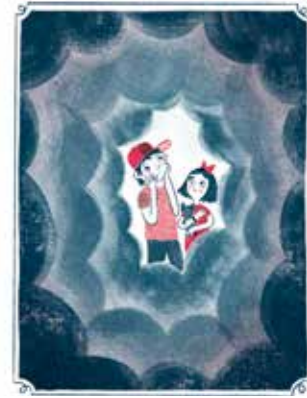
147×214 mm, hardcover, 88 pp

ISBN: 9789916964958

Isn't it always true that we only truly miss something once it's gone? That's certainly the case when a family consisting of a mom named Sille, a son named Pelle, and a daughter named Pille discover one night that their dad Kalle has gone missing. As Sille is exhausted from work and needs a little time to herself, she leaves the task of tracking him down to the kids. Pelle, who has a lively imagination, immediately imagines that his dad has met a mammoth, lost track of time while fishing, or gotten caught between two doors. But before his mind gets the best of him, the kids need to act – it's time to head out and rescue their father!

Awards: 2023 25 Best-Designed Estonian Books, Certificate of Merit

2023 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Certificate of Merit



Indrek Koff (1975) is a writer, translator, and publisher who graduated from the University of Tartu in French language and literature. He writes for both children and adults, translates French and Portuguese literature into Estonian, and runs a publishing house.

Koff has written fourteen children's books and several plays (in collaboration with Eva Koff). The author's works are characterised by compact writing in broad strokes, occasional inner monologues, and alternating viewpoints.

Elina Sildre (1980) is an illustrator and comic artist who graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in graphic design. She has illustrated over 40 children's books and contributed to the children's magazines *Täheke* and *Mesimumm*. Sildre has also created illustrations and comics for anthologies, textbooks, and activity books.

The artist has been awarded in the 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books and the Knee-High Book competitions.



SCENE I

Something seems to be missing
 PAPER, INK AND FEATHER:
 We're sorry if you're looking for
 Bad guys fighting with the law
 Bloodhounds barking, guns a-blazing
 So many murders it's amazing
 A story full of fear and death
 Victims breathing their last breath
 Because unfortunately dear
 You won't find any of that here
 But what you will find deep within
 Are many other wondrous things
 Dogs and cats can both enthrall
 And human beings most of all
 You can't predict what they might do

They're perfect in this tale for you
 But every detail must unfold
 In its own time, so we are told
 Let's stop the chat for we must start
 To get right to the very heart
 A little boy there, do you see?
 He seems quite clever but maybe

Not quite as clever as he looks
 For boys don't read that many books
 And there's his sister, by the way
 Very full of tricks and play
 Also mum is somewhere there
 Busy with her thoughts and care
 A situation that's quite routine
 An innocent and boring scene
 All warm and cozy in their flat
 There's not much interest in that
 But wait, there's something that's not here
 An absent father now, I fear
 It's incomplete this family
 The Daddy's missing – where is he?

PELLE:
 Mommy, mommy!

PAPER, INK AND FEATHER:
 Shouts the lad

PELLE:
 Put down your paper – where is Dad?
 We have to call him double quick
 I need some nails and a stick
 For a craft lesson at school tomorrow
 If I don't take them there'll be sorrow
 Only he knows where they are
 Please can you get hold of Pa?

PAPER, INK AND FEATHER:
 The boy continues, on and on

SILLE:
 I don't know where your father's gone
 Perhaps preparing for bad weather
 Or at a manly get-together

PAPER, INK AND FEATHER:
 A little smile is in her eyes

PELLE:
 We must find Daddy!

PAPER, INK AND FEATHER:
 The boy cries
 Though he is trying to be tough
 Inside his fear is strong enough

PELLE:
 Where oh where can Daddy be?
 I wish he would come home to me
 PAPER, INK AND FEATHER:
 His voice could be heard on the moon
 But mother seems to be immune

PELLE:
 Please, please, mom - why don't you hear?
 Our father may be LOST I fear

SILLE:
 Now what is all this fuss about?
 There is no need to yell and shout
 I need some time for me, you know,
 To read my paper – cheerio!

PAPER, INK AND FEATHER:
 The matter is brought to a close
 Despite the poor boy's sniffling nose
 But don't think Mom is being mean
 She's not the villain in this scene
 She works so hard and does her best
 She's just worn out, so let her rest

Translated by Nikky Smedley



Ingmar and the Sea

Written by Mari Teede

Illustrated by Marja-Liisa Plats

Tänapäev, 2023

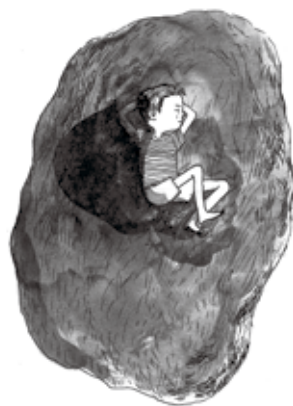
173×236 mm, hardcover, 128 pp

ISBN: 9789916173954

Rights sold: Latvian

How can your whole life already be decided for you, leaving you with no option but to come to terms with it? When your parents get divorced, then they're the ones who decide that you're going to live with your mom, not your dad. They decide you're going to move from your wonderful apartment to a beat-up old house by the sea where your grandpa used to live. They decide that you're going to go to a totally new school where you don't know anyone. Ingmar finds consolation on the shore, where the softly lapping waves, sea birds, polished bits of glass lying in the sand, and paths winding through the reeds look different every day. Alas, he thinks, it's all still not enough to feel safe and happy once again.

Awards: 2023 Nominee of the Annual Children's Literature Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia



Mari Teede (1965) graduated from the Tallinn Pedagogical University (now Tallinn University) in information sciences, and has worked at the Estonian National Library and other libraries. To date, she has written two children's books.

Ingmar and the Sea received third place in a children's-story competition sponsored by the Estonian Children's Literature Centre, the children's magazine *Täheke*, and the publishing house Tänapäev.

Marja-Liisa Plats (1984) is an illustrator, graphic designer, photographer, and singer. She graduated from Tartu Art College as a photographer. Plats has illustrated more than 40 children's books and collaborates with the children's magazine *Täheke*. Her works are characterised by perpetual searching and experimentation with a wide range of visual techniques. Plats is a member of the Young Authors' Association in Tartu and the Tartu Artists' Union.



Grandpa's House

Ingmar sat on the steps and stared grouchy ahead. How on Earth, how on God's green Earth, could his parents decide to get a divorce?! His mom and dad had simply informed him one day that they'd no longer be living together. That they'd grown apart, in their own words. Ingmar's parents decided that he'd live with his mom and that the two of them would move to his late grandpa's house on the Kopli Peninsula. Nobody asked him whether he wanted to live with his mom or his dad. He did want to live with her, of course, but they still could've asked! Ingmar grumbled every time he thought about it.

"Ingmar, please come and help me!" his mom called from downstairs.

Let her keep yelling. Why does she think I should jump up and run the moment she calls me? the boy thought, irritated.

The old stairs creaked with every step when he finally went downstairs. Everything in his grandpa's house was so dumb and old-fashioned. The doors squealed on their hinges, the windows were hard to open, and all the wallpaper was ugly. Not to mention that the weird old-person smell refused to go away, no matter how much they aired the place out.

The first floor was a total mess. His mom's flushed face popped out from between stacks of boxes and big black trash bags.

"Be a darling and help me push this cupboard over by the wall," she asked. They strained for a long while before finally getting it into place.

"Thanks, now I can start filling it up. You can go outside for a bit until it gets dark."

Ingmar pulled on his sneakers, went outside, and stood in the middle of the yard. He'd been there many a time before, back when his grandpa was still alive, but now, everything felt different. The faded woodsheds and pitiful dump of a house with peeling yellow paint just didn't fit with him and his mom. And the yard! That was a real joke. Every picket of the fence was painted a different colour, all beiges and yellows. Some were shorter, others longer, and in their midst was a single sun-bleached plank of driftwood that looked especially silly. Dad should've been the one to move here and leave them their nice apartment back in Mustamäe, he thought.

Ingmar looked around glumly and then went out the gate. Their new home was the last in a row of other little yellow houses on a street that dead-ended at the sea. He took a couple of steps and then felt as if the wind had been knocked out of him. Straight ahead was a vast expanse of water that glittered, shifted, and tumbled. It was as if he could hold the whole bay in the palm of his hand. On his right was a faded pink lighthouse followed by an identical one a short distance away. Towering behind them both were cranes in the harbour. To his left stretched the long, sandy Stroomi Beach, the far end of which was out of sight.

Ingmar heard footsteps approach from behind him and felt his mom wrap her arms around his shoulders a second later.

"Beautiful, isn't it? I think we're going to like it here," she said softly. "You see those buildings across the bay? A little to the right of them is a big fancy school. That's where you're going to start going."

"What!?"

"Oh, don't look so dismayed. It's one of the best schools in the city. Dad already enrolled you and paid the tuition, too."

"But what about my friends!? I don't want to!" Ingmar protested.

"You'll still have all your friends, don't worry. You know there's no point arguing with Dad."

Translated by Adam Cullen



Mum Gets a Cat

Written by **Eva Roos**

Illustrated by **Elo Annion**

Varrak, 2023

175 x 217mm, hardcover, 184 pp

ISBN: 9789985358740

Ekke, Lee, and Joosep have forever been asking for their parents to adopt a cat. Mum has always answered with “we’ll see” or “I’ll think about it” but the kids have started to suspect that those are just excuses to disguise a definite “NO!”. Yet, one morning mum surprises everyone by bringing home a tabby named Prooton. Life with a cat is not at all what the children expect. Since Prooton is their first pet, the absurdity of everyday life with a cat catches them off guard. Besides humour, there are also plenty of facts and figures about being a cat owner but they’re disguised so cunningly that it doesn’t feel like the author is trying to educate the reader. Even though she is, in a purrfect way.



Eva Roos (1984) is a doctor of theoretical chemistry. She has done over ten years of research at the University of Tartu, coordinated research development, organised higher-level instruction, and been involved in nutritional counselling, digital marketing, website creation, and book reviewing. To date, Roos has written five children’s books. She says inventing words and fitting them together is her superpower.

Elo Annion (1969) is a freelance illustrator. She studied to be a dental nurse in her youth and later worked in the field, but drawing has always been an active part of her life. Annion studied for two years at the Estonian Academy of Arts and has been a freelance artist for over fifteen years, illustrating textbooks, kindergarten workbooks, children’s books, and drawing caricatures for magazines. Her style has been described as positive, vibrant, and humorous.



“Can we have that grey one?” Lee asked, pointing to a kitten that was climbing over its mother.

“That one’s still too little to take away from its mother,” the lady who ran the animal shelter said. “If you really want it, then you’ll have to come back in a couple of weeks.”

The kids wouldn’t agree to that. They knew all too well that what was happening was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. If they left without an animal now, then their parents could end up thinking about it for another hundred years and they might never get a pet.

“I understand you picked out a kitten online?” the lady asked.

“That’s right,” Mom said. She looked up from the black kittens and scanned the other cats.

“Which one’s ours?” Joosep asked.

“I think we’re going to take the striped female kitten named Reti,” Mom replied.

“Oh, yes. Reti. She’s right over here,” the lady said, pointing to a striped kitten with bright blue eyes.

The little creature was petrified to suddenly find five pairs of eyes staring at her. And the littlest of them was still squealing “Hey, kitty!” over and over.

The kitten retreated to the furthest corner of her cage—so far that she had to climb a little up the wall with her hind legs to get even farther away from them. In the process, the kitten knocked over her food dish. It flipped on top of her, frightening her even more.

“It doesn’t look like this cat is brave enough to come with us,” Mom reckoned. She was also a little surprised to see it so terrified.

“I don’t think the others will be any braver,” Ekke said.

“Maybe you’ll have to come back next week then, anyway,” the lady said. “We’ve been receiving new animals almost every day lately.”

Mom felt a little twinge. She had no problem with the kids learning a little lesson and maybe acting quieter and more politely in public next time. Right then, she was starting to feel as



if their family had been crossed off some list as being unfit for having pets. Crossed off by the cats themselves, which seemed insulting in a whole new way.

“And what kind of mischief are you getting into here, crazy?!” the lady suddenly exclaimed. She batted a white-tipped striped paw out of her hair. It had been stuck out of a cage on the top row, where a striped kitten was bouncing around. It was probably the only creature in the entire building that didn’t appear to be afraid of anything. All the others pressed themselves against the back walls of their cages or crouched low to the ground when the kids cried “kitty-kitty!”, and even the momma-cats in the bottom cages seemed anxious.

The kitten headbutted its little litter box until it flipped over.

“I’ve got my eye on you! Is that what you want, huh? Goofball! This is the third time he’s done that today,” the lady said to Mom, smiling apologetically. The kitten perched proudly on top of its accomplishment for a moment, then started scaling the walls of the cage and poking its paw through the mesh again.

“We’ll take that one,” Mom said abruptly.

“Are you sure?” the lady asked. “You wanted a female and this one’s male. And he might be rather... um... rather... interesting for a first cat.”

Mom nodded.

“He looks like the only cat here who isn’t afraid of us and wants to come with us.”

Translated by Adam Cullen



Armando Referees

Written by Mika Keränen

Keropää, 2023

140×191 mm, hardcover, 76 pp

ISBN: 9789916977378

Armando knows that football is an intense game and it's sometimes hard to contain your feelings. But when he and his team can't wrap their heads around the referee's ruling in the middle of a match, bad words find it all too easy to cross their lips. Their coach, Timo, tries to get the boys and their parents alike to cool their nerves, but Armando and his teammate Chick are soon forced to leave the field with a red card. They're still angry at the referee after the match ends, so Timo decides to have Armando try out refereeing himself. Quickly, Armando realises that taming opposing teams and their fans isn't as simple as he thought it was.

„Halloo,
kohtunik!

„Pall on
ümmargune.”

„Kull või kiri?”

„20 meetri
pealt!”



Mika Arto Juhani Keränen (1973) was born in Helsinki.

He studied horticulture in Finland, and Estonian language and literature in Estonia. Keränen has worked as a translator, an organizer of cultural events, and a teacher of Estonian and Finnish. In 2011, he founded Keropää, which publishes

his own children's books. In addition to publishing, Keränen assists with FC Santos Tartu. As a children's author, Keränen is primarily known for his Astrid-Lindgren-style crime novels that portray children growing up in a small town and having all kind of adventures.

Sometimes a game can get out of hand. When a game starts, the joy can be just incredible, but at some point, it can get lost along the way.

This specific game, FC Nõmme Pines versus FC Kernu Junipers, was just like that for Armando. In the beginning of first half, he scored a missile but after that everything started to go downhill. The boy felt that the offensives were jabbing him with no reason and, suddenly, he himself was pulling them by their shirts. The young referee gave both sides a verbal caution but kept the cards in his pocket for the time being.

Armando felt that the offensives should have already received a few cards. A few minutes later, a Juniper tackled him with such force that Armando flew over the ball and landed face flat on the field. Armando banged his fists on the ground and yelled out of frustration. How on earth did the referee not see that?!

At the break, all Coach Timo saw around him were disappointed faces. Goalie Chick felt just as dissatisfied as Armando. He threw his gloves on the ground in a fit of anger and shook his head as if he had water in his ear.

“The referee is siding with them!” he huffed.

Armando agreed.

“He is constantly whistling for their benefit.”

Such excuses did not sit well with Timo. He looked both boys in the eyes and said: “You two concentrate on playing. You'll see. Everything will be ok.”

But it wasn't. Nõmme Pines just didn't manage to land their attacks. The Kernu team, on the other hand, managed to create quite a few good-quality counterattacks but, despite that, didn't manage to score either.

When the ball crossed over the end line and Chick ran to fetch it to give it a goal kick, the referee whistled for a corner kick instead.

That was the second time during the game that Armando started to argue with the referee. He didn't choose his words carefully and ended up getting a yellow card.

The goalie Chick rushed up to have his say and ended up getting a yellow himself, too, as he was assisting Armando in his insults.

Among the spectators were Armando's Argentinian dad, Pedro, and Chick's grandfather Toivo. Neither of them shied away from showing their resentment.

“Oi, referee, was that really a corner!?” Toivo bawled.

Pedro seconded that by yelling “Get yourself a pair of pecks!” He meant specks but although his Estonian was pretty good by now, he sometimes still made silly mistakes like these.

Toivo whispered into Pedro's ear that in Estonian, one says “specks,” so Pedro yelled again, “Referee, buy yourself some specks!” Toivo held up his hand for Pedro and they high-fived.

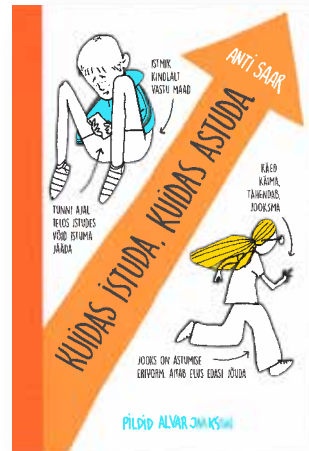
It was no use though. FC Pines tried all they could but the offensive team pushed even stronger. Soon Armando's team couldn't even make it to the offensive half. The equaliser was close but, luckily, time was running out. The score was still 1:0 for FC Pines.

Chick managed to catch a very dangerous cross and yelled for the whole team to run up. He himself was strolling very slowly in the penalty area and held the ball above his head with one hand like a waiter holding a tray in a fancy restaurant. Being a cunning player, he was stalling deliberately because the longer he managed to keep the ball out of the game, the better. Every second ticks closer to the win.

Pedro demanded for the referee to finish the game. He shouted: “Time is out! The game is over!”

But every player knows that the game is only over when the referee has whistled three times. And it is for the referee to decide when those three whistles are blown, no one else.

Translated by Ulla Saar



How to Sit, How to Stand

Written by Anti Saar

Illustrated by Alvar Jaakson

Kolm Elu, 2023

150×206 mm, hardcover, 112 pp

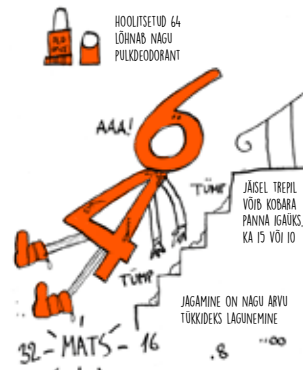
ISBN: 9789916983218

Have you ever felt awkward because you don't know how to sit or stand? Maybe you'd like to know the best way to tell a joke or tie your shoes? Do you long to discover how to survive without a phone or successfully raise your parents? Do you want to know how to be happy? Anti Saar's strictly scientific short stories, which are based on real-life experiences and yet extremely funny, provide instructions for every imaginable situation that can come up in life, and perhaps even some that may never happen.

Awards: 2023 Nominee of the Annual Children's Literature Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia



Joonis 36. Kogu õpetaja tähelepanu



Anti Saar (1980) is a writer and translator who graduated from the University of Tartu in semiotics. He enjoyed immediate acclaim with his first book *The Way Things Are with Us*, which was selected for the 2014 White Ravens Catalogue in addition to receiving several awards in Estonia. Saar immerses himself in the world of children and is capable of glimpsing what is special in ordinary everyday life. His stories, which tend to ricochet from reality, are fluid, witty, and sensitively worded.

Alvar Jaakson (1968) graduated from Tallinn University in advertising and media. He is the creative director of the advertising bureau Utopia and teaches in the same field at his alma mater. Jaakson has also worked as an animator, animation director, and infographic designer for newspapers. His illustrated children's books have won the 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Book Award and have been listed in the White Ravens catalogue.



How to tell the difference between bees and wasps

If you're happy to guess correctly about half the time then feel free to leave it all to chance, but you know, you really shouldn't be. [Happy about it, that is.] You need to be able to tell things apart (*drawing 7*). Just think what would happen if you couldn't tell the difference between your head teacher, your Mum, and a rocking horse? Or a death cap mushroom and mashed potatoes? Or... well I don't know, I'm sure you can come up with something even crazier yourself!

People can usually identify things by sight. They don't mix Elsa up with Anna; they don't pick nettles when they're out to pick anemones. You might well presume that people need to know, more or less, what it is that makes one thing different from another. But that's not actually true! Of course, someone knows what an actual carrot looks like, but unless they can recognise carrot seedlings they might end up with an allotment full of beetroot by mistake. That's how it goes.

And sometimes a thing's outward appearance is no use at all: how do you know what's inside a chocolate if it's not in its packaging and you've never had one like it before? Fruit crème perhaps? Or that sludgy stuff they call praline? How do people know who's on the phone when they haven't heard the caller's voice? Yup – the name comes up on the phone screen. But what if it's an unknown number?

We can say then that things have their own features – outward appearance, taste, smell, sound, and so on, and when you know which thing has which features you'll succeed in the world. And often, by the way, you needn't worry whether

something's different. If all the chocolates in a box have been fruit crèmes so far, you can be fairly certain the next one – the one that makes you feel sick – will be a fruit crème too. Or if you've been running around in shorts for a month, you can be pretty confident that your mum won't all of a sudden be telling you to put your winter coat on. We call this process “deductive reasoning”.

Let's go back to our first question: bee or wasp, can you tell one from the other?

I'm certain you wouldn't muddle either of them up with a hippo. Between either of them and a hippo, there's a yawning chasm, as they say. However, bees and wasps do have some things in common. They're both small and can fly. They both make a buzzing noise (not with their mouths, but their wings). A busy buzzy bee doesn't say, “Buzz buzz, here I come to pester you”; that's a load of rubbish).

You can swipe at them if they disturb you (which makes learning about them very complicated). So, how do you tell the difference? Really, how? One of them makes honey? But which one? Is this the one that you'll have to get out of the room after a while, or is it the other one? Is one good, and the other naughty? No sniggering, please! Bees are only “good” because people know how to exploit them. Wasps haven't done anything to deserve their picture-book image as baddies. Both species are simply trying to live their own lives (*drawing 8*).

But how do you tell the difference? I'll tell you: wasps have stripes. It's that easy. And if in future you mix them up with zebras or Sipsik¹, don't worry, you'll never mistake them for bees.

Translated by Susan Wilson



¹ Translator's note: Sipsik is a favourite Estonian children's character who dresses in stripy clothes.



June and August. How to Lose Money?

Written by Reeli Reinaus

Illustrated by Reda Tomingas

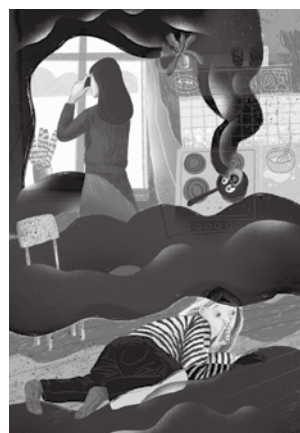
Ronk Ronk, 2023

147×221 mm, hardcover, 125 pp

ISBN: 9789916980552

Rights sold: Latvian

One not-so-nice day, June and August get scared that they might one day become like their parents. But who'd ever want to be an archaeologist digging up old things or an unemployed ornithologist sitting around at home with a pair of binoculars all day long? So, the kids decide it's their last chance to make their own fortune and turn their parents into people they themselves would like to become someday. As their parents' jobs are their greatest shortcomings, the kids decide to start there. But to motivate their parents into looking for more ordinary jobs, the family's scant savings must be spent as quickly as possible. How hard could that be?



Reeli Reinaus (1977) is a folklorist and writer for children and youth. She graduated from the Tartu Academy of Theology, and received a master's degree in Estonian- and comparative folklore from the University of Tartu. Reinaus has worked at the University of Tartu and at the Estonian Literary Museum. She has written more than 30 books for children and youth, and has won numerous awards in the My First Book children's story competition, as well as in the Youth Novel Competition.

Reda Tomingas (1979) is an illustrator, author, and animated film director. She graduated from Vilnius Academy of Arts in animation. Tomingas has illustrated more than 30 children's books and novel covers in Lithuania and Estonia. She has collaborated with children's magazines like *Hea laps* and *Täheke*, and with different museums and advertising agencies. On 2023 she was among one of the winners of the Art of Book competition in Lithuania. Tomingas' illustrations are colourful and detailed, and mostly feature animals, plants, and portraits.



Genetics and environment

“What do you think will become of us?” June asked August one evening.

She had just tried to make hot cocoa, but the milk had burned to the bottom of the pot, so the cocoa tasted a bit burnt. Of course, that spoiled her mood and was the reason that all sorts of dark thoughts came into her head. The darkest of which was a thought about the future.

“Just, like, in general?” asked August, distracted, since he was trying to solve a Rubik's cube at the same time.

June shook her head.

“Like, in the future. I mean, will we turn into mother and father?”

August shook his head. “That cannot happen!”

“I know. We have to do something,” agreed June. “I have heard that the environment affects children's development just as much as their genetics. And think, we have both – genetics as well as environment!”

August put the cube down. He was convinced that June was doing this on purpose. First, his sister had ruined her cocoa and now she was determined to ruin August's evening as well. Which was just typical. For some reason, June couldn't bear to be the only one who was sad or grumpy or angry. She always had to bring out those same emotions in August. And usually, his sister's plan worked. August clearly recalled one time, for example, when June was sad because she had just found out that foxes weren't as big as wolves but were much smaller. And, as not to be sad alone, June had, with seemingly pure ill intent, revealed to August the truth about unicorns, mainly the fact that they did not exist. So, in the end, they were both sad together: June because of foxes and August because of unicorns. August had only recently realised that June did these sorts of things on purpose.

Just as she was now.

Though, to be fair, their future outlook was quite bleak. June and August's parents weren't exactly the type of people whom they could feel pride in at a parent-teacher conference. Fortunately, they never made it there of course. Father was usually at

work and mother would forget about the meeting. Or did not consider it particularly important because, to be honest, June and August did well in school, and, besides, the teachers always put the rest of the information online.

“Why are you talking about it today all of a sudden?” the boy asked grumpily.

“Why not?” the girl wondered. “I am worried! We must do something!”

“Right now?”

“Yes, now! The sooner the better.”

“That's too bad. I was hoping to enjoy a happy childhood for a few more years,” sighed August.

“Happy childhoods are for the weak,” asserted June. “We make our own fortune.”

“Maybe you're right,” mumbled August. “Where do we start?” June pondered. “We'll start with the household.”

“Your room or mine?” asked August. “I am actually quite satisfied with mine. It's not quite as clean as yours, but it suits me.”

“No, in general. It's an expression. If someone is well behaved or otherwise a good and polite person, then they say, that they came from a good household.”

“What does a good household look like?” asked August. “I'd like to see some pictures. Should we google it?”

“A good household means a good upbringing,” explained June. “We have to start with our parents.”

Our parents? June's cocoa must be really disgusting, August thought, because now her mood was even worse than before...

“Let's not start with mother,” August said, hoping that June would show some mercy. “That's too hard.”

“Mother is exactly who we have to start with,” June said with certainty. “Father will go along with it on his own.”

“Which part of mother should we start with?” an unconfident August asked

“Everything. But first we have to find her a job,” said June.

“What job?”

“I don't know. We have to figure out what she is best at.”

Translated by Chris Reintal



The Story of the Lost Book

Written by Ketlin Priilinn

Illustrated by Elina Sildre

Tänapäev, 2023

147×221 mm, hardcover, 136 pp

ISBN: 9789916173817

Hugo couldn't believe it had happened to him. He, who was always so careful and took such good care of the library books he borrowed! So why did the precious book about computer games have to vanish from his desk during recess? Hugo knew he should have left it at home and not tried to impress his classmates.

When Lilianna, Amanda-Riin, and Robert hear about Hugo's problem, they decide to help him get the lost book back, no matter what it takes.



Ketlin Priilinn (1982) received a master's degree in literature from Tallinn University in 2023 and became a member of the Estonian Writers' Union that same year. She has loved to read and write since childhood, and always dreamed of becoming a writer.

Since 2005, she has written nearly 40 books for readers of every age, over half which are works for children and young adults. Priilinn enjoys creating realistic scenes and characters with whom readers can easily identify.

Elina Sildre (1980) is an illustrator and comic artist who graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in graphic design. She has illustrated over 40 children's books and contributed to the children's magazines *Täheke* and *Mesimumm*.

Sildre has also created illustrations and comics for anthologies, textbooks, and activity books. The artist has been awarded in the 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books and the Knee-High Book competitions.



Hugo

He had no idea what to do. It was a terrible feeling—as if he, sloppy and stupid, really was the one to blame. The fact was that Hugo really did take great care of every book he had, especially ones borrowed from the library, and always wrapped them up in a plastic bag before sticking them into his backpack. You never know how they might end up getting smudged or dirty! But now he, Hugo, had lost a library book, and in the nastiest way possible—someone stole it from him at school. To be fair, bringing the book to school in the first place had been a big mistake and he only had himself to blame. But he'd wanted so badly to just... well, not show it off, exactly, but show it to the other kids. Okay, not to every other kid, but certainly to Sebastian, Remo, Torm, and Albert. They were the wildest and craziest guys in class who almost every teacher was forced to scold constantly. They couldn't stand Hugo and made fun of him every day for always reading and knowing all the answers in every single lesson. Hugo had secretly hoped that if he brought the cool book on computer games to school, then they'd develop a friendly interest in him and quit their teasing. Hugo's desk mate in class was Ron: a scrawny, freckled boy who was so quiet he almost never uttered a word. But Hugo knew that Ron liked computer games. And the gang of bullies liked them, too—Hugo overheard the boys discussing them often. He himself wasn't a big gamer, only playing a little Minecraft every now and then. It was fun, but hadn't he also heard other kids call it kind of babyish? There were other, supposedly cooler games, too, but Hugo didn't know anything about them and wasn't really interested, either. Honestly, he enjoyed read-

ing a lot more than games. But when he spotted a book titled *Exciting Computer Games* at the library, he decided to check it out immediately! The idea being to educate himself and use the knowledge to maybe even slide into the other boys' conversation and impress them.

"But how did somebody manage to steal it from you?" asked the blond-haired girl to whom Hugo had, to his own surprise, unexpectedly opened up. "Was it taken from your backpack, or did you leave it on a desk somewhere...?"

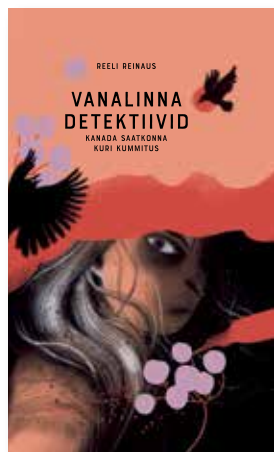
Hugo noticed that the kids reading in the corner, a boy and a girl who were both dark-haired, wearing red shirts, and looked like identical twins in every other respect, were now also attentively listening in on their conversation. He enjoyed the attention. At school, other kids usually just rolled their eyes or snickered whenever he said something or gave their teacher a longer answer. It made him feel discouraged and like it'd be better to say nothing at all. But these three kids seemed genuinely interested in what he was saying.

"Yeah, I left the book on my desk in the classroom," he admitted, a little embarrassed to realise that he really shouldn't have left something valuable lying around like that. "It never even crossed my mind that somebody might want to steal it! We had two math lessons in a row, and I used the time between to go to the bathroom... When I came back, it was gone! At first, I thought that maybe I'd just slid it into my backpack and forgotten... but it wasn't there, either. The room was completely empty when I came back, too, so there wasn't anybody to ask right away, either."

"But did you ask your classmates about it later?" asked the boy sitting with his sister.

"Sure, I did! I even told our math teacher, even though I heard some of the kids call me a snitch for doing so. But it's such a serious thing. No one knew anything; they all claimed to have been away from the classroom the whole time. The door was open during that time, too, so one boy suggested that maybe somebody from another class walked in and took it."

Translated by Adam Cullen



Old Town Detectives: The Mystery of the Canadian Embassy

Written by Reeli Reinaus
Illustrated by Sirly Oder

Ronk Ronk, 2023
149×221 mm, hardcover, 156 pp
ISBN 9789916980576

Gregor, Rebeka, and Lota make up the “Seers’ Guild” – a club that has already solved several strange mysteries in Tallinn’s Old Town. Just as they decide to accept two new members – Markus and Kaspar, who helped them on their last case – the group receives a letter asking them to help rid the Canadian Embassy of a ghost. A quick Google search shows it’d be hard to find a more chilling ghost-woman than the one in that building on Toom-Kooli Street. Luckily, the detectives are lent a hand by Gregor’s aunt Marju, who knows how people used to expel poltergeists and what to do when modern-day suspicions arise.



Reeli Reinaus (1977) is a folklorist and writer for children and youth. She graduated from the Tartu Academy of Theology, and received a master’s degree in Estonian- and comparative folklore from the University of Tartu. She has written more than 30 books for children and youth, and has won numerous awards in the My First Book children’s story competition, as well as in the Youth Novel Competition. The author has a flair for penning stories about children’s everyday lives and problems, crime novels, and fantasy works.

Sirly Oder (1983) is an illustrator, content creator for social media and visual merchandiser for a bookstore. She graduated in scenography from the Estonian Academy of Arts, and currently works for the Rahva Raamat bookstore. She has illustrated several children’s books and has been awarded in the 25 Best-Designed Estonian Books competition. Her style features the personalisation of modern design combined with cuteness, darkness and humour.



The Lady in Gray and the Lady in Black

The evening air was surprisingly chilly, even though the day had been nice and sunny. Laboratooriumi Street, which curved along the old city wall, was deserted as usual. Deserted, except for four kids: two girls and two boys who appeared to be waiting for something.

Gregor was the last to arrive, though no one paid him any attention at first. Rebeka was busy texting someone while Lota lectured the boys about executioners.

“My grandpa told me that most of Tallinn’s executioners were Germans who came from Germany’s famous executioner families. Just think: whole family trees filled with executioners!” Lota exclaimed.

Markus and Kaspar hung on her every word, nearly enchanted, occasionally murmuring a “wow” or a “cool”.

“Executioners were both scorned and feared, so you can understand why the job was passed down from father to son. There was simply no other option because nobody else wanted anything to do with them. Grandpa told me that for a while, there was even a law in Tallinn saying that an executioner’s kids weren’t allowed to go to school with other children. Their lessons had to be either before class or after the other students went home.”

Gregor coughed, but no one even glanced in his direction. He shrugged and pulled a key from his pocket, then unlocked the cupboard door. Rebeka didn’t even lift an eyebrow when the boy pulled out a brown padded envelope and tore it open. Only Lota stopped talking while Kaspar and Markus leaned in a little closer.

A single folded sheet of paper fell from the envelope.

“Read it!” Rebeka commanded, putting her telephone away.

Still, Gregor could sense a hint of anxiety in her voice. He unfolded the paper and stared at it in surprise for a moment. There were only two sentences: “Find out what the ghost in the Canadian Embassy at 13 Toom-Kooli Street wants. Call this number to get in.”

“That’s it?” Rebeka asked.

Gregor peered into the envelope and inserted his hand just to be sure, but it was empty.

“I guess this phone number is enough to get us in,” he reckoned. “Seems like a pretty simple task.”

“Though you don’t know what the ghost wants yet,” Lota reminded him.

“Is the embassy really haunted?” Markus asked.

“Seems so,” mumbled Gregor, who had taken out his phone to start seeing what he could find about the ghost of the Canadian Embassy online.

The internet offered countless articles about ghosts in Tallinn’s Old Town. Identical legends often repeated in story after story that didn’t offer much new or, as he now knew, reliable information. Even so, they helped to paint a picture for starters.

“It says here that it’s hard to find a more gruesome ghost story than the one about the woman haunting the embassy.”

Gregor glanced up at Rebeka, but her face remained expressionless.

“Keep reading,” she said. “I’ve still got to go stop by Luisa’s place.”

“Seems like it’s the ghost of a young upper-class woman who decided to marry a man from the lower class,” he continued. “But things didn’t go well: he was executed and she was walled in alive. Wait, no! She wasn’t! They actually walled in somebody else who had been gotten drunk and dressed up in fine clothing. The ghost that haunts there has long hair and nails and is said to be very angry.”

“No wonder,” Lota murmured.

“And we’re supposed to ask what she wants?” Rebeka asked, frowning. “As if the wishes of somebody who was unjustly bricked in behind a wall and left to die might be simple and straightforward?”

“Wait—there’s another story!” Gregor exclaimed.

Translated by Adam Cullen



The Door

Written by Ilmar Tomusk
Illustrated by Priit Rea

Tammerraamat, 2023
171×216 mm, hardcover, 110 pp
ISBN 9789916681602

Mäks has no problem with going to school. Learning doesn't pose a challenge because he instantly memorises everything he reads. If only it weren't for the terrible seventh graders Mairoid and Baldy, who use every chance they get to make the boy's life unbearable. They hide his things, push and shove, and taunt him as much as they can. One day, when Mäks is fleeing his tormenters, he dives into a thicket where he comes across a strange house he's never seen before, even though he walks that path home from school every day. The door is standing wide open and appears to beckon him, so Mäks gives into curiosity and enters.



Ilmar Tomusk (1964) is a civil servant and children's writer. He graduated from the Tallinn Pedagogical Institute as a teacher of Estonian language and literature, and currently works as Chief Director of the Estonian Language Inspectorate. Tomusk has written more than 40 children's books. His humorous stories, which alternate between elements of realism and fantasy, tell of clever, busy children's everyday activities and adventures. A testament to his popularity among Estonian children is the fact that he has received two Nukits Awards, in addition to several other readers'-choice awards.

Priit Rea (1956) is an illustrator and graphic designer. He graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in design and has illustrated over 30 children's books, collaborated with the Estonian children's magazine *Täheke*, and has designed posters and logos. He is a member of the Estonian Artists' Union and the Estonian Graphic Designers' Union. Rea has participated in many exhibitions both in Estonia and abroad.



Dad had a weekend off work for the first time in a long while. He slept in on Saturday morning, getting up at ten forty-five. As Mom had another splitting headache, she stayed in bed a little longer.

"What'll we have for breakfast?" Dad asked Mäks.

"Dunno," he replied. "Let's make something Mom would like, too."

"I'll go and ask."

Dad soon returned and opened the fridge.

"We have any eggs?"

"Should be," Mäks replied. "I think I left five or six in there. Are we making pancakes?"

"No. Mom said she'd like a hard-boiled egg and exactly the kind that only you know how to make—with the yolk still runny."

Mäks fetched his phone from his bedroom and started cooking. The phone was needed for its stopwatch. He dropped five eggs into a pot of cold water—two for himself, two for Dad, and one for Mom. Boil for one minute, keep in hot water for three, and then cool."

"All done," he finally announced. "You can tell Mom that breakfast's ready."

Mom climbed out of bed. She looked totally exhausted and plainly felt terrible. Still, she wanted to enjoy the meal with her family—she knew there weren't many chances left.

"This egg is fantastic. Cooked just the way I like it," she praised Mäks. "I bet the Queen of England had her eggs boiled just the way you do it, and that's why she lived to the ripe old age of ninety-six."

"I hope my hard-boiled eggs have the same effect on you," Mäks said.

Mom smiled. She would've wanted to live just as long as the Queen, too, but doctors told her she unfortunately wouldn't be around to see her fortieth birthday. She'd already started getting used to the idea.

After they finished, Mäks offered to wash the dishes. Dad was happy to let him, as sloshing around in dirty dishwasher wasn't

something he enjoyed in the very least. And Mom simply wanted to rest. Mäks's parents sat at the kitchen table and watched him busy himself at the sink.

"We really do have a great son," Mom said.

"Couldn't be any other way—he's our kid," Dad agreed.

Mäks wasn't the biggest fan of taking compliments. He forgave his parents for it, though, because he knew his mom's situation was grim.

You can compliment me all you want, Mom, he thought to himself.

After the dishes were all washed, Mäks leaned against the counter.

"I've got a friend coming over today."

"A friend?" Mom echoed in surprise, knowing her son usually preferred to be on his own. "Is it that boy Roland again? We've got nothing to offer him to eat; not even dumplings or sour cream."

Mäks laughed.

"No, a different friend," he said. "And it's a good thing we don't have dumplings or sour cream, because this friend of mine eats just about anything other than that."

"Wait, so you really have a friend?" Mom asked. "Is he in your class?"

Mäks nodded.

"What's his name? Do we know him?" Dad questioned.

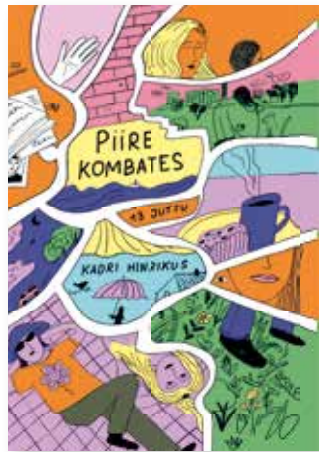
"You don't; they just started going to our school."

"But a name, give us a name," Mom prodded. She wanted to know who the new boy was.

"Sirli," Mäks replied. "She and her mom just moved here from Rõuge, down south."

Mäks's parents pretended as if it was the most normal thing in the world for their son, who hadn't had a single friend at school in the last six years, to suddenly form a friendship. And for it to be with a girl, not a boy.

Translated by Adam Cullen



Testing Limits

Written by Kadri Hinrikus
Illustrated by Liisa Kruusmägi

Tammerraamat, 2023
169×236 mm, hardcover, 104 pp
ISBN 9789916681541

In life, especially in your teenage years, situation after situation forces you to examine yourself in a new light. Was it really me who came up with a game that got out of hand so quickly? Or who preferred taking a late-night midsummer hike with a taciturn total stranger over spending time with friends at a girlfriend's cabin? Did I really have the courage and the nerve to stand up to a classmate's bullying? When will I ever find the words that I lost when I lost my brother?

Kadri Hinrikus's short stories about teenage self-discovery invite young readers to consider what they would do and how they'd behave on life's hazy margins.



Kadri Hinrikus (1970) is a children's writer and journalist.

She graduated from Tallinn University in theatre direction, worked as an editor and news anchor on Estonian national television, and currently works as an editor of the children's magazine *Täheke*. Hinrikus has penned fairy tales and memoir-like books about her family. She is also a skilful teller of warm and humorous stories about kids' everyday lives. Her works were featured in the White Ravens catalogue in 2013 and 2016.

Liisa Kruusmägi (1988) graduated from the Estonian Academy

of Arts with a bachelor's degree in painting in 2010 and a master's degree in drawing in 2013. She has been a member of the Estonian Artists' Union since 2013. Kruusmägi is known more as a painter, though she has also worked extensively in illustration. She has collaborated with children's magazines *Täheke* and *Hea Laps*. Kruusmägi has also illustrated books and textbooks, designed posters, drawn comics, worked with museums, and much more.



The Bike

Triine locks her bike up in front of school. Hers is the only one in such weather.

"Holy moly, you biked here *today*!?" two classmates squeal at the entrance. Their hats are pulled down over their foreheads and scarves pulled up over their noses, leaving only their eyes visible. They'd been dropped off in a car.

"The weather's so gross!" they exclaim.

Triine nods, agreeing and unable to think of anything worth adding. She hurries inside, still needing to change into a dry shirt in the bathroom before class starts.

She's new at the school, having joined the seventh-grade class that autumn. Triine isn't really interested in hanging out with anyone after classes and isn't a big fan of opening up about herself, but more or less gets along fine with everyone. Most of the girls think she isn't entirely normal, though. So far, there hasn't been a single day she hasn't biked to school.

Kids call her 'bike-crazy'.

Even Triine's homeroom teacher has scolded her, saying it's dangerous to cycle around the city in very bad weather. She doesn't care.

The weather's even nastier the following morning. When she gets on her bike and looks back at the window of her house, she sees her dad waving, just like he always does. Her mom walks past another window.

The temperature dropped well below freezing overnight and a proper blizzard is underway, meaning the streets are particularly slippery and peppered with icy bumps. Even with her gloves on, Triine's hands are cold. Snow digs into her nostrils and pecks her cheeks.

"It's like crossing a mountain range," Triine murmurs after almost slipping and falling over at one turn. The strap of her backpack is digging painfully into her shoulder. Nevertheless, she makes it to school safe and sound that day, too.

When she looks out the window during the first passing period, Triine sees the blizzard has only grown more intense. It's like the whole world has disappeared in a cloud of white flour. But a

couple of hours later, the storm suddenly lets up and the snow stops falling, leaving behind gigantic drifts and mounds.

Triine's classmates, Rain and Gregor, run over to the store across the street from school to buy pop during the short break. When they return to the schoolyard, Rain notices something strange: all the bike racks are empty.

"Hey, check it out!" Rain says to Gregor. He points to one rack with a broken lock dangling from it. Triine's bike is nowhere in sight.

"Oh d-a-a-a-ng!" Gregor exclaims. "Somebody stole Triine's bike!"

"That's crazy! In this weather?! You've got to be a total jerk to do that!"

"Triine's going to be devastated," Gregor says worriedly. "She's crazy about her bike. We should call the police."

"We've got to tell Triine first! She probably knows its serial number and all kinds of details that can help them find a stolen bike."

The boys hurry inside, as there's no point playing detective with the world buried deep in snow.

Triine hears the news the moment their biology teacher enters the room. As the whole class is shocked and outraged by the awful crime, it's impossible to start the lesson as usual. They inform their teacher what happened and her face fills with sympathy, too. Everyone's talking all at once. Only Triine is silent. It's as if she doesn't understand what's going on!

Then, she walks over to the window, opens it, and peers outside. They're right—the bike is gone. There's no sign of it anywhere. Now, she's seen it with her own eyes. Triine closes the window.

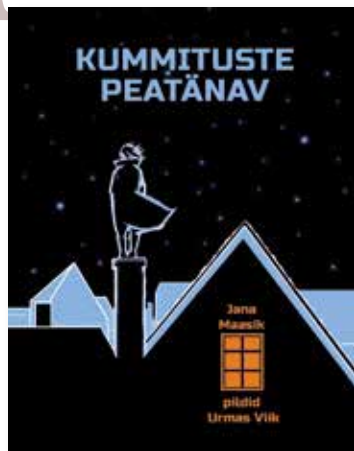
"Triine, honey, if you report it to the police..."

Her teacher trails off as she tries to sound consoling.

"We've got to believe that they'll find it quickly," she finishes, then is quiet again.

But Triine doesn't need consolation. She doesn't even break down into tears. On the contrary: she grins!

Translated by Adam Cullen

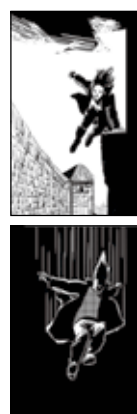
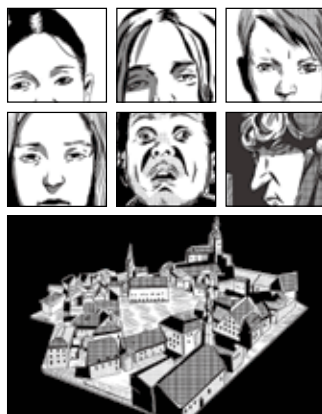


The Highway of Ghosts

Written by Jana Maasik
Illustrated by Urmas Viik

Varrak, 2023
195×245 mm, hardcover, 207 pp
ISBN 9789985358771

The lives of 12-year-old twins Hugo and Loona have been altered forever. And it's no wonder, because dealing with their beloved dad's unexpected death is no easy task. Hugo, who shared a love for making art with his dad, has lost interest in everything. Loona, who used to be a real busy bee, can't even get out of her pyjamas anymore. As if that weren't enough, their mom has an accident and ends up in the hospital, leaving the twins pretty much on their own. Searching for some kind of consolation, Hugo and Loona come across a mysterious old-fashioned key and a newspaper clipping in their dad's desk in the attic. After they show their neighbour Professor Kruubel what they found, the kids realise they themselves may be essential to solving the mystery. However, they haven't a clue that the key will also draw in a myriad of ghosts in Tallinn's Old Town.



Jana Maasik (1970) is the author of several books for children and young adults. She became a writer in 2012 when her debut novel won a competition. Maasik has received several awards since then, including the 2019 Tartu Children's Literature Award. Lately, she has focused on writing fantasy-rich thrillers for middle-school students. Maasik is inspired by her own characters, who are often witty and rely on their friends whenever they end up in tough situations.

Urmas Viik (1961) graduated with a degree in graphic design from the Estonian Academy of Arts in 1991. He became a member of the Estonian Artists' Union in 1990. Since 2003, Viik has illustrated and designed over 30 books, some of which are on the IBBY Honour List. He has received the Order of the White Star state award (2022). And was nominated for the Edgar Valter Illustration Award (2021) and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (2019). Viik has worked in graphic design, and has been part of international and group exhibitions in more than 30 countries.



6. The Department of Especially Secret Things

“So that means they found the key,” Barclay murmured pensively. “Are you completely certain?”

Aaria nodded.

“There’s no doubt. What’s more, it’s now clear that the boy is very sensitive. He can sense things that...”

“The boy’s name is Hugo, correct? What do you mean by ‘things’?” Barclay interrupted.

“Well,” Aaria began, then paused. “He saw me. Clear as day. And heard me just as clearly. I have a strong suspicion that he can see spirits who are caught in the human world... ghosts, poltergeists...” she blurted out loudly.

“You mean... he can see his father?”

“I reckon Karl Säde isn’t exactly caught, per se. He’s just unbelievably worried about his wife Anna. And their kids, too, of course.”

“Do you think his son has seen him?”

“No, I don’t. Karl Säde is careful. He spends most of his time by his wife’s hospital bed and only peeks at his children from a distance, like when they’re coming from or going to a café or the grocery store. And a couple times in their home at night. Though given how sensitive the boy is, it’s maybe a little too reckless.”

Aaria had told Barclay almost everything. But only *almost*. She hadn’t spoken a word about talking to the twins herself or helping to rescue their mother by doing so. She knew she’d done the right thing. And she knew full well that it was against the rules. She’d broken the first and most important law that had been set long, long ago: “Under no condition are guardians of the key permitted to speak to holders of the key.” Aaria had taken a risk, lied, and told Barclay only half-truths. In her report, she’d written what a guardian of the key usually does: the beginning of the journey, the end of the journey, and the activities in-between. The latter just involved keeping an eye on the key, Hugo, Loona, Anna, and Karl Säde.

“Speaking of sensitivity,” said Barclay, “you can, of course, go to the statistics department and ask for the lat-

est data, but as I recall, only one person in a thousand has that kind of ability. And that one might not even be aware of their ability if they never encounter us. Sometimes, it fades with age. But not always.”

Aaria stood up and paced back and forth beneath the towering, arched ceiling of Barclay’s office. It had an ideal echo. The delicate tapping of her shoes on the floor doubled in their reverberation and went silent when she stopped to inspect one or another particularly interesting antique object.

“How far do you think they’ve gotten in solving the key’s mystery?”

“Not very,” Aaria replied. “But they’re working on it. They also found a little clue along with the key—a newspaper clipping.”

“Yes, I read from your report that you visited their home. What do you plan on doing next?”

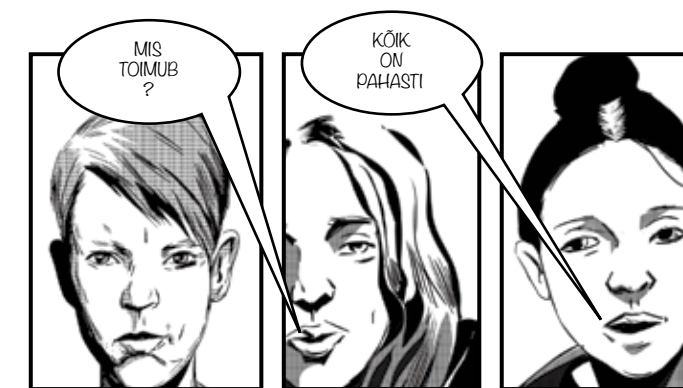
“The fact that the boy is so sensitive made me think I should maybe change my appearance. So as not to stand out. But that’s not possible, is it?”

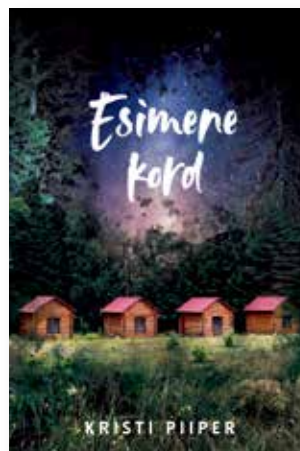
“Hmm.”

Barclay twirled the ends of his moustache, which formed two neat grey half-circles on either side of his nose.

“Changing the optical illusion? It’d be to your advantage, certainly.”

Translated by Adam Cullen





First Time

Written by Kristi Piiper

Tänapäev, 2023

143x215 mm, softcover, 197 pp

ISBN 9789916173510

Things aren't going too smoothly for 15-year-old Anna Elisabeth. Her dad is spending more and more time at work and is even distant when at home. Her mom is suffering from health problems that she avoids discussing with Anna. And when her best friend suddenly starts dating Anna's class crush, their friendship is put to the test. What's more, all of Anna's classmates think it's cool to tease her about every little thing. The bullying continues on their class camping trip, during which someone snaps a graphic and embarrassing photo of her and tries to use it for blackmail. However, that's the last straw: Anna decides to fight back and finally stand up to her tormenters.

6. PE

“Faster, girls, faster!”

Despite the early hour, the girls' PE teacher was screaming at the top of his lungs.

Damn it, Anna mentally cursed, wiping sweat off her forehead. The ongoing relay in the third-floor gym was boys against girls, just as always in their monthly co-ed class. Anna despised it with all her heart. PE with other girls was bad enough, and their co-ed classes were pure torture. She took the bench half the time because of a “headache” or her “period”, but that couldn't be every time. Anna always counted down the minutes till the end of class. Her watch showed twelve more.

“Quit dozing off, lesbo! Your turn's coming up! Don't stare at your watch, focus!” Luisa hissed, jabbing her between the ribs. Anna had no time to react before Karita sprinted up to her, arm outstretched, and nearly flung the baton at her chest. Anna ran as fast as she could. Regardless of all her anger and indignation, she could still prove to Luisa that the girls wouldn't lose because of her. Luisa's turn followed hers, and as Luisa ran track and field,

she could always make up a little time if necessary. But even with the girl's speedy last lap, they still lost.

“The stupid lesbo was so fucking slow again!” Anna overheard Luisa jeer.

Karita smirked.

“Totally. And Fränki, too. She just stands there and wheezes in place even though she's, like, super skinny. What a weakling!”

Anna jogged to the locker room even though class wasn't officially over yet. She wanted to shower and get dressed before the others. Fränki walked in the moment she'd gotten her jeans on and the bell rang.

“Hey, the teacher was pretty pissed that you left before the end of class. Said it'll take off points for behaviour.”

Anna couldn't care less right now.

“So what? He can do whatever he wants. Luisa's just so nasty and gets me so worked up! You have no idea what she said this time!” Anna snapped.

Fränki shook her head.

“Doesn't matter what she said. You only make things worse by running away. I told you—just ignore them!”

Anna grunted. Even Fränki was getting on her nerves with all this finger-wagging.

“Yeah, sure. Whatever. You always know best, don't you.”

Anna slung her backpack over her shoulder and marched out of the locker room. There were still several classes left, but she didn't want to be at school anymore. She just couldn't. Without a second's hesitation, she ran down to the coat room, grabbed her jacket, and left the building, only stopping to catch her breath once she was off the school grounds. She didn't want to go home. Mom might be there and would immediately ask what happened, and she didn't want to talk about it with anybody. Nobody understood her, anyway. They'd just tell her to get a hold of herself, ignore it, or say something back. Nobody understood that things weren't so simple. Anna headed towards the bus stop to ride into the city. Hurtful thoughts were spinning around her head, but even though she felt offended, she didn't want to lose Fränki. Fränki was the only one who helped her get through every school day.

9. The Bottle

Luisa lived in an old renovated house that had once, long ago, been the town's most important post office. “You knock,” Anna pleaded. Her own hands were shoved deep into her jacket pockets and lightly trembling. It was twenty minutes after eight and by the sound of it, the party had already started. The girls could hear music, the buzz of conversation, and table football. Fränki lifted her arm and knocked three times on the heavy wooden door. No one answered.

“Oh. There's a doorbell, too. Didn't see it,” Fränki said, pushing a yellowish button.

Not ten seconds went by before Joel opened the door.

“Oh, it's you. Come in.”

Anna could immediately tell that Joel wasn't particularly happy they'd arrived. Neither was he visibly unhappy, of course. Just indifferent, though still in his usual good mood. She and Fränki followed him down a long hallway. The music grew louder and louder. They went through a pair of double doors and entered big, dim living room. Their classmates were scattered among couches and armchairs. Alex was also there, chatting with Lisett by a window. Hmm, Lisett hadn't wasted any time, either. Anna would've wanted to act that boldly, too, but she still had a long way to go.

Having pinpointed Alex's location, the next thing Anna noticed was a total stranger sitting on a footstool by the fireplace. He was a little older and there was something weird about him. He was all on his own, silent, occasionally taking a big gulp from the glass in his slightly reddish hand.

The girls sat down on the edge of a big corner sofa.

Sprawled about a meter away was Joel, focused on texting someone.

Translated by Adam Cullen



Kristi Piiper (1983) is an author of children's and young adult literature. She earned an International Baccalaureate Diploma in Berlin and currently studies nursing at the Tartu Healthcare College. Piiper has published six children's books, a three-part YA series and two YA books. Her characters are highly active and independent young persons for whom no problem is insurmountable, especially when they decide to work together. Young people's mental health issues are also an occurring theme in her writing.



The Raven Tree

Written by Grethe Rõõm

Varrak, 2023

130×200 mm, softcover, 311 pp

ISBN 9789985357545

Guy has decided to spend winter break with his Great Aunt Iida in the little southern town of Rõuge. His mom is always away at work and never finds time for him, anyway. What's more, she has a new boyfriend who constantly pokes his nose into Guy's business – best to just get out of their way. And who knows, maybe he'll even have the chance to ask a thing or two about his dad: a topic his mom only ever dodges. When Guy arrives, strange events with no apparent cause begin to unfold. As the locals stay staunchly tight-lipped about the oddities, the boy decides to investigate. Although his neighbour, a girl named Lee, has her own secrets and is standoffish at first (he is a stranger!), she ultimately softens and, along with the hockey team, lends a hand to solve the mystery.

The Raven Tree is the first part of a young adult fantasy trilogy inspired by South Estonian folklore.



Grethe Rõõm (1976) is a children's and youth author and a teacher. The primary inspiration for her creations come from the meeting point between today's youth, fantasy, and Nordic cultural heritage. Her stories are filled with adventures and magic. Rõõm has written four children's books, and The Raven Tree is her first YA book. She has master's degrees in Estonian and Finno-Ugric Languages and in Educational Sciences.

Crap, I messed it all up again.
The thought pounded in my head like a hammer.
I always manage to ruin everything.

I wrapped my arms around my tiny sister, lifted her into the air, and twirled.

“I'm sorry—of course you're three and a half! That's way more than just three, isn't it,” I said with a smile.

A cautious mile.

I hadn't smiled in so long that I wasn't sure I even remembered how to do it.

The new guy watched us attentively. I took Anna's hand, and we continued walking down the freshly-shovelled street. I don't know what came over me, but I looked back at him.

If he could stare, then so could I.

I didn't want to admit to myself that I liked what I saw. He was tall. At least a head taller than me. If not more.

And he had a calm look in his eyes. Everything about him seemed calm.

Huh!

And he was handsome.

Not the kind of handsome guy who stands in front of the mirror all the time, preening and trying to show everybody how handsome he is with every move. Not that, but a calm kind of handsome.

I've obviously lost my mind.

Here I am staring at a boy I barely know and thinking he's handsome!

Crap!

And he's staring back at me!

Taking in the intent look in his eyes, like he was trying to figure something out, my throat turned dry and my stomach churned. As if my guts had suddenly gotten too tight. Or like I was about to get diarrhoea. It was a weird mix of tickling and fear and excitement. Something I'd never felt before in that situation.

The guys on our hockey team call me the Ice Queen. In secret. Nobody dares to say it to my face because of all the crap our family's had to go through. But they use the nickname behind my back. The Ice Queen. Because I've never reacted to their incessant attempts to hit on me. They're all great guys, but I just can't. They're like brothers to me.

Oh, and that idiot Kris! He's a prime example of how if you say something loudly and repeatedly, people start to believe it. Lots of kids thought I had a boyfriend. Not too long ago, Kris somehow convinced himself that we were going out. It was super annoying because he's doggedly persistent. As if I had no say in the matter.

I snorted as I remembered the time he insisted to walk me home after hockey practice and then tried to kiss me. It was like two slimy snails writhing over my lips.

Gross!

I shook my head and tore my eyes away from Guy's. It felt like he wanted to ask me something, because he still didn't look away.

Clearing my throat, I was ready to snap at him that his stupid neck would freeze up if he didn't quit staring, but not a single word would cross my lips. As usual.

“Are we there yet?” Anna asked for the hundredth time, skipping next to me. She puckered her lips and announced that her legs were tired.

“Piggy-back, please?”

I inhaled sharply.

If you make fun of her now, dude, then you can go straight back to where you came from! Kris had the hugest grin whenever Anna said anything to him. He can go to hell! Nobody teases or mocks my little sister!

But Guy looked down at Anna seriously.

“Would you like to climb on my back?” he asked, hunching down. Anna wrapped her arms around his neck and chattered giddily the whole rest of the hundred meters to Mirja's red-roofed café.

Even I got a happy feeling about the size of a pinhead. He hadn't laughed at my sister.

“Hey, Mirja! What's on today's menu? Pancakes? Roast beef? Normal parents?” I called out when we stepped inside.

Mirja is the only person with whom I can have a normal conversation. With whom I never feel like I run out of words. She doesn't judge or criticize. She simply lets me be. Mirja is my aunt. Almost 15 years younger than my mom and nearly identical. A blond fairy. Which means that we don't look alike. I got my greenish eyes and dark wavy hair from Dad.

I don't want to think about him.

And they say that girls who look like their dad are lucky!

Mirja pushed open the swinging kitchen door, walked into the restaurant area, and gave me a hug.

Sometimes, I feel like she's the only person in the world who understands me.

“Anything. You've just got to know how to ask,” she said, smirking and pulling my hat down over my eyes.

Translated by Adam Cullen



**Eesti
Lastekirjanduse
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