



CHILDREN'S
BOOKS
FROM ESTONIA
2026

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.

Apply here:
<https://www.kulka.ee/programmes/traducta>
traducta@kulka.ee



Contact us:

Estonian Children's Literature Centre
Pikk 73
10133 Tallinn
Estonia

Ulla Saar
Director of Foreign Relations
E-mail: ulla.saar@elk.ee
Phone: +372 617 7238
www.elk.ee

Published by the Estonian Children's Literature Centre
Texts: ELK team
English translation: Adam Cullen
English language editor: Chris Springer
Photos: Pii Ruber, Dmitri Kotjuh, Krõõt Tarkmeel, Ilkka Vuorinen, private collections

Graphic design: Katrin Kaev
Cover illustration: Tiiu Kitsik

Printed in Estonia by Tallinna Raamatutrükikoda
© Estonian Children's Literature Centre, Tallinn 2026
ISSN 1736-812X

3+

Kertu Sillaste. *The Soup Book*. Illustrated by the author 4

4+

Kristi Kangilaski. *Table*. Illustrated by the author 5
Tiiu Kitsik. *Getting Dressed*. Illustrated by the author 6
Piret Raud. *The Imposing Figure*. Illustrated by the author 7

5+

Tiiu Kitsik. *Brothers*. Illustrated by the author 8
Margit Saluste. *The Bench*. Illustrated by the author 9
Tiina Tammer. *The Mushrooms Measure Up*. Illustrated by Catherine Zarip 10

6+

Katrin Tõnisson. *Snarlle*. Illustrated by Ulla Saar 11
Liis Sein. *Why Jaan?* Illustrated by Pamela Samel 12
Liis Sein. *Brave Grandad*. Illustrated by Elina Sildre 13

7+

Kätlin Vainola. *The Tree of Hope*. Illustrated by Meria Palin 14

8+

Tuul Sepp, Jeffrey Carbillet. *Seagull Island. A Story of a Seabird*. Illustrated by Mark Antonius Puhkan 15
Jaan Aru. *Brilliant Brain*. Illustrated by Martin Veisman 16
Liina Roht. *The Summer of Important Things*. Illustrated by Marja-Liisa Plats 18
Tiiu Kitsik. *Running Noses and Other Winter Tales*. Illustrated by the author 20
Liis Sein. *Mona Starts a Rebellion*. Illustrated by Ulla Saar 22

9+

Grethe Rõõm. *The Last*. 24

10+

Merilin Mandel. *What's Up with These Bodies?* Illustrated by Krõõt Kukkur 26
Anti Saar. *Seagulls*. Illustrated by Anna Ring 28

12+

Ester Urbala. *School Rebels*. Illustrated by Ulla Saar 30

YA

Kristi Piiper. *You've Got 24 Hours*. 32
Hugo Vaher. *Offline*. 34



The Soup Book

Written and illustrated by Kertu Sillaste

Petrone Print, 2025

200x200 mm, hardcover, 32 pp

ISBN: 9789916822418

This simple story shows just how fun and easy soup-making can be! Playful onomatopoeic words add an extra touch of joy to the journey. Cheerful, positive illustrations support children on their reading journey.



Kertu Sillaste (1973) graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in textile design in 1996, and from Tallinn University with a master of arts in education in 2017. Sillaste has illustrated books and textbooks; written and illustrated 12 picture books and three silent books; designed books, posters, and more; and has collaborated with children's magazines. She teaches art at the Estonian Children's Literature Centre. Sillaste is a member of the Estonian Graphic Designers' Association and the Estonian Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).



Table

Written and illustrated by Kristi Kangilaski

Hea Lugu, 2025

235x173 mm, hardcover, 32 pp

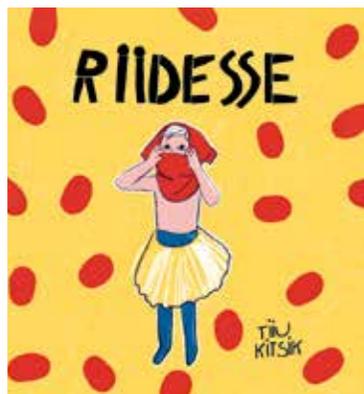
ISBN: 9789916765531

In the living room is a blue table. Tom and his brother are running around wildly, and he ends up painfully stubbing his toe on it. Oh, how furious he is! It's your fault, he tells his brother. You're a stupid table, he says, shoving it. Tom punches the table so hard it hurts his hand, but the anger still won't go away. He pushes the table onto its side and then flips it upside-down. Now, it doesn't look like a table, but something completely different. It's a car zooming along winding roads; it's a boat for going shark-watching; it's a house that provides shelter.



Kristi Kangilaski (1982) is an illustrator, book designer, graphic designer, and author of children's books. She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in graphic design but loves writing as much as she loves drawing. She also illustrates various magazines, designs posters, and teaches art at the Viljandi Art School. Her books have been translated into several languages, and she has received numerous awards for the works she has written and/or illustrated. Kangilaski's book *Tiu and the Dove* was included in the 2015 White Ravens Catalogue. Her illustrations are inquisitive and experiment with a wide range of techniques. Kangilaski is a member of the Estonian Graphic Designers' Association.





Getting Dressed

Written and illustrated by Tiiu Kitsik

Koolibri, 2025

150x152 mm, hardcover, 32 pp

ISBN: 9789985055779

Rights sold: Dutch

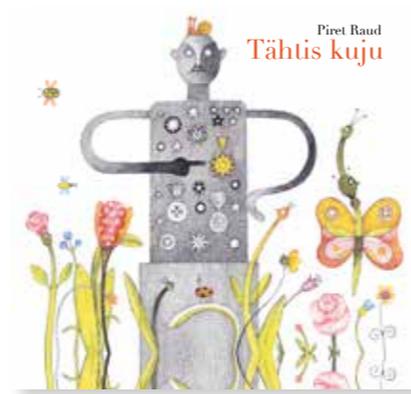
Getting dressed can be quite an ordeal for a little person. Clothes are so peculiar, with funny holes that never seem to line up where they should, and tights that are so very, very long – surely made for a stork. The story ends with a delightful twist.

This is a cheerful book that every independence-seeking toddler will recognize themselves in. With its short sentences that describe the illustrations, it also makes a great companion for early reading practice.

Award: 2025 Good Children's Book



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 worked for several years. She has written 14 children's books and contributed to the children's magazines *Hea Laps*, *Täheke*, and *Mesimumm*. Her book *We're Moving Away* was listed in the 2025 White Ravens catalogue. She lives and works as a freelance artist in Berlin.



The Imposing Figure

Written and illustrated by Piret Raud

Tänapäev, 2025

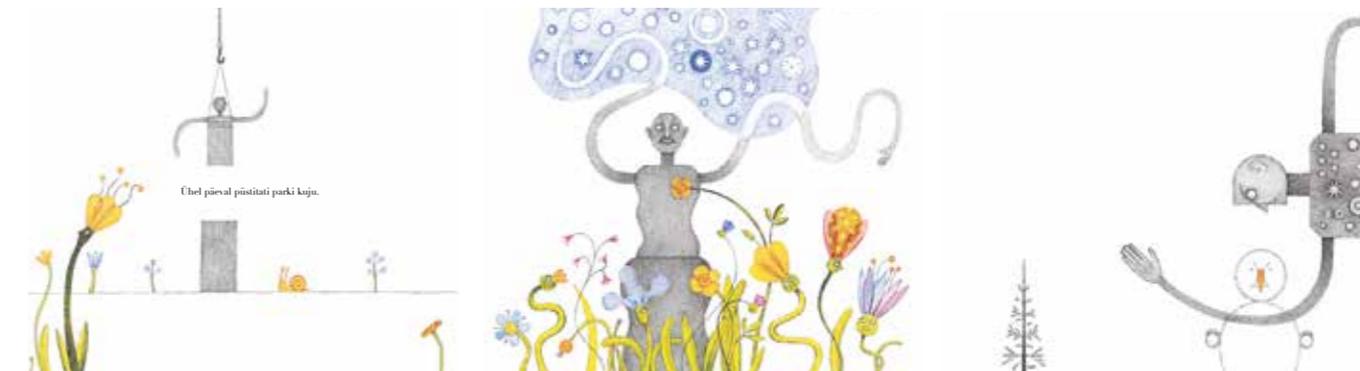
162x196 mm, hardcover, 42 pp

ISBN: 9789916177938

One morning, an imposing figure appears in the park. Who is he, and why is he so full of self-importance? Does believing oneself to be more important than all the other inhabitants of the park mean that everyone must show respect and bow down? Or is respect earned in some other way?

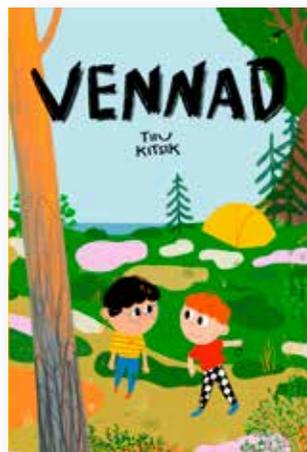
A picture book about authority, and how one friend's opinion can change your entire life.

Award: 2025 Nominee of the Annual Children's Literature Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia



Piret Raud (1971) is an Estonian illustrator and writer for children and adults. 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 renowned and widely-translated 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 20 different languages, and has illustrated more than 50 titles. Her writing has received spectacular recognition both at home and abroad. She was included on the 2012 IBBY Honour List as a writer and in 2018 as an illustrator. She is the laureate of the Edgar Valter Illustration Prize in 2023 (Illustrator of the Year award).





Brothers

Written and illustrated by Tiiu Kitsik

Varrak, 2025

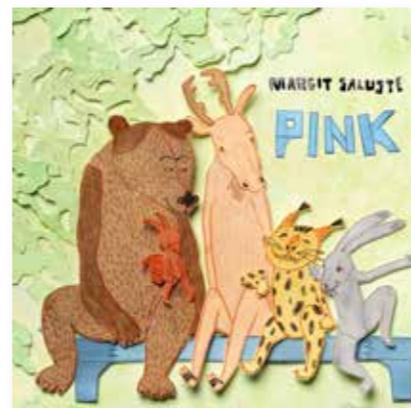
200x284 mm, hardcover, 36 pp

ISBN: 9789985363157

At long last, the day has arrived – we are going camping by the sea. Dad packs the tent, the mattresses and the sleeping bags; Mum packs the food and the clothes. I pack a comic book, my cuddly toy, and my sandpit things. Juhan is packing something too. I've been looking forward to this trip for a very, very long time, but now it feels as though Juhan is going to ruin everything. I want to play a car game, but Juhan doesn't. I'd love to throw stones – I'm really good at it – but Juhan would rather study them. Sometimes, though, Juhan can be quite nice. That's when we count storks and the cyclists together, or put up the tent, or gather sticks for the campfire. Maybe it's not the worst thing in the world to have a brother after all?



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 worked for several years. She has written 14 children's books and contributed to the children's magazines *Hea Laps*, *Täheke*, and *Mesimumm*. Her book *We're Moving Away* was listed in the 2025 White Ravens catalogue. She lives and works as a freelance artist in Berlin.



The Bench

Written and illustrated by Margit Saluste

Koolibri, 2025

226x226 mm, hardcover, 24 pp

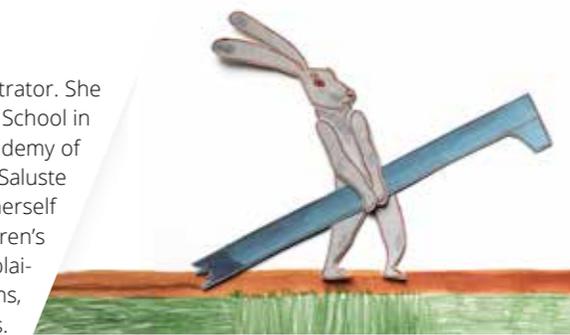
ISBN: 9789985055168

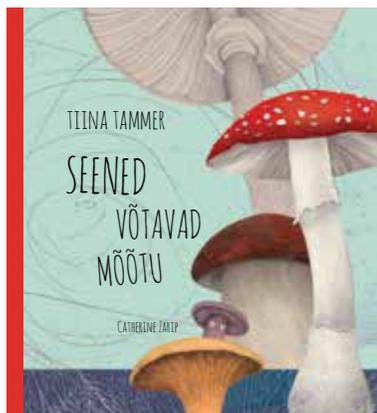
The young rabbit couple is content – their new and beautiful backyard is finally complete. Now, if only they could get rid of that old bench – it just doesn't match the new garden furniture any more, and no one sits on it anyway. Mr. Rabbit hoists the bench onto his back and sets off towards the river to toss the useless bench into a bonfire pit. On his way there, a lynx offers to help. Since the bench is quite heavy to carry, the friends decide to take a break and share some stories. Before long, a squirrel, a moose, and a bear offer their help in carrying the bench as well. Isn't it wonderful to have such a bench to rest tired legs, to snack, and to tell stories?

Award: 2025 Good Children's Book



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's Open Academy, and worked as a nursery art teacher. Saluste has written 18 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.



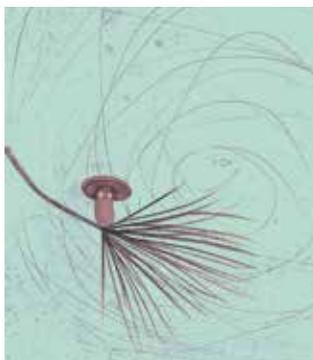


The Mushrooms Measure Up

Written by **Tiina Tammer**
Illustrated by **Catherine Zarip**

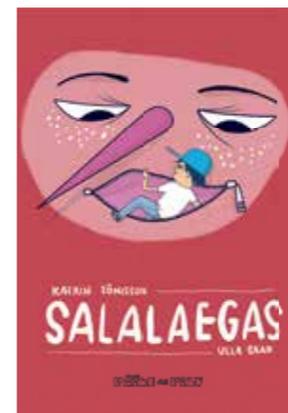
Tammerraamat, 2025
218x247 mm, hardcover, 32 pp
ISBN: 9789916774250

Autumn has come to the forest. The rain draws a host of mushrooms from beneath the mossy carpet. Here is the chanterelle with its orange crest, the good-humoured grey-stemmed bolete, the jolly dark-brown milkcap, the small tender-hearted butter bolete, and the tall parasol mushroom with its splendid collar. All are happy to see one another. But then a loud voice rings out: "Come on, can you not see the most beautiful mushroom of all?" There stands the proud fly agaric, its cap bright red and sprinkled with white spots. It has something nasty to say about each of them – the parasol, it claims, is colourless; the bolete, far too stout. The others disagree with the fly agaric's sharp remarks and decide, to compete in order to discover who truly is the most beautiful mushroom in the forest.



Tiina Tammer (1960) is a publisher. She graduated from the University of Tartu in journalism and has worked as a reporter for several outlets. Over the years, she has published books for both children and adults and collaborated with many Estonian children's authors and illustrators. Her long-term friendship with internationally acclaimed illustrator Ilon Wikland has instilled in her the belief that a good children's book should be both fun and a little melancholy, and that good will always triumph.

Catherine Zarip (1966) is an illustrator and graphic designer. She graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in ceramics, after which she worked at the publisher Avita as a book designer and art director. Zarip has illustrated dozens of textbooks, over 40 children's books, and has designed about 200 works in all. She has won two awards at the Tallinn Illustrations Triennial and 14 awards in the Five Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books competition. She is also a laureate of the 2025 Edgar Valter Illustration Award.



Snarlie

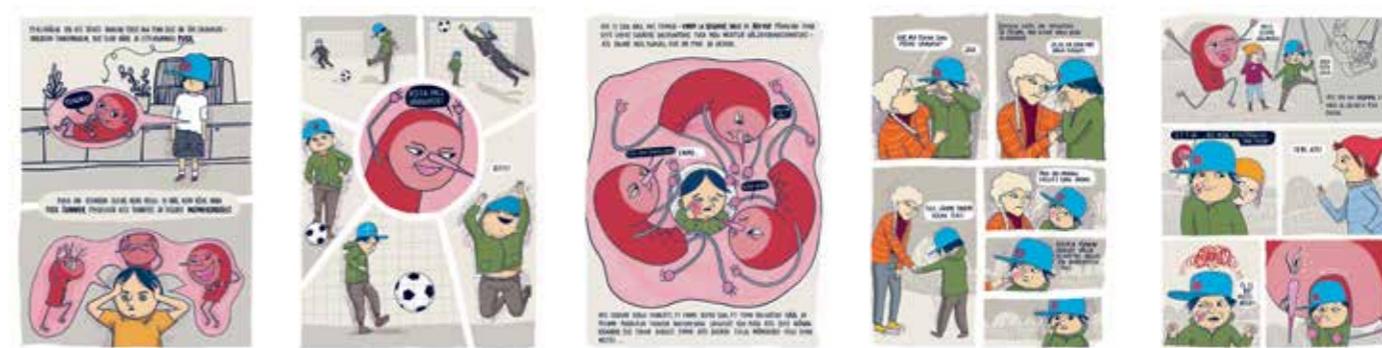
Written by **Katrin Tõnisson**
Illustrated by **Ulla Saar**

Päike ja Pilv, 2025
177x245 mm, soft cover, 44 pp
ISBN: 9789916630754

Snarlie is a strange creature who lives inside a box that only pops open when trouble is near. The twist? That box is tucked away inside Ats – and Ats finds himself in trouble rather often. Snarlie loves to whisper and nag in Ats's ear, urging him to do things he wouldn't usually dare. Ats has a heart as soft as a marshmallow. But showing it? That's trickier. Safe routines and cosy clothes keep him calm, while new situations make his palms sweat and his thoughts spin. Yet, even with Snarlie's mischief, Ats begins to learn that feelings, though messy, can also be marvellous.

This comic opens the door to the world of a sensitive boy, where emotions tangle, courage comes in surprising shapes, and being brave doesn't always look the way you might think.

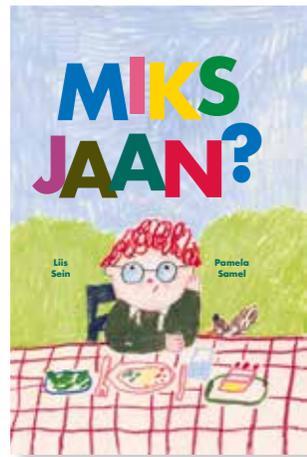
Award: 2025 Raisin of the Year award for the most remarkable children's book of the year



Katrin Tõnisson (1981) graduated in acting from the Viljandi Culture Academy. She worked as a museum educator at the Estonian Theatre for Young Audiences and a program director at the Estonian Children's Literature Centre beginning in 2014. Currently, she directs the Centre's program department. Her first children's book was *Piglet's Great Big Wish*, a heartfelt story about a sensitive young child that received a shared second /third place in the Knee-High Book Competition.

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. She has been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) three times.

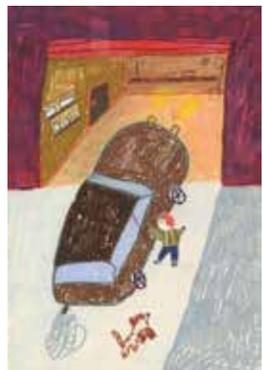




Why Jaan?
 Written by Liis Sein
 Illustrated by Pamela Samel
 Päike ja Pilv, 2025
 205x294 mm, hardcover, 36 pp
 ISBN: 9789916630730

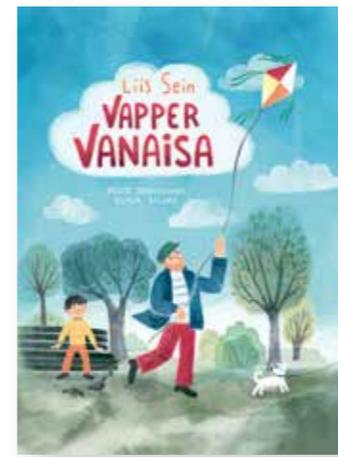
Jaan is curious about his name. "Why am I called Jaan?" he asks his father. "You just are," his father replies. "But why?" the boy asks his mother. "Because your father is called Jaan, and so is his father, and his father's father," his mother tries to explain. "But why is everyone called Jaan? Aren't there any other names?" The boy is even more confused now. Luckily, the family reunion is about to happen. Papa will be there too – as the oldest in the family, he's sure to know the answer. Jaan is certain of that.

Award: 2025 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Certificate of Merit



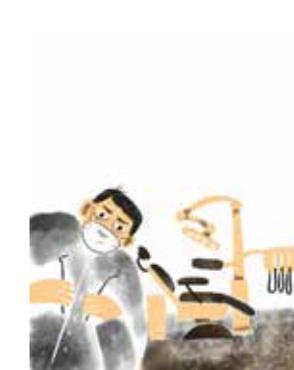
Liis Sein (1983) is a playwright and children's author. She graduated from Tallinn University in adult education and has trained in playwriting and creative writing. She has written 16 children's books and won the Knee-High Book Competition in 2019. Her book *Mona's Dad Has Some Ideas* was listed in the 2023 White Ravens catalogue. Sein conveys the world through children's eyes in such a way that adults also see it as a bigger, brighter, and more lucid place.

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 won 3rd place in the Knee-High Book Competition. Her illustrations for the book *Tube* were selected for the Bologna Book Fair illustrators' exhibition in 2023 and the dPictus 100 Outstanding Picture Books.



Brave Grandad
 Written by Liis Sein
 Illustrated by Elina Sildre
 Tammerraamat, 2025
 170x217 mm, hardcover, 58 pp
 ISBN: 9789916774038

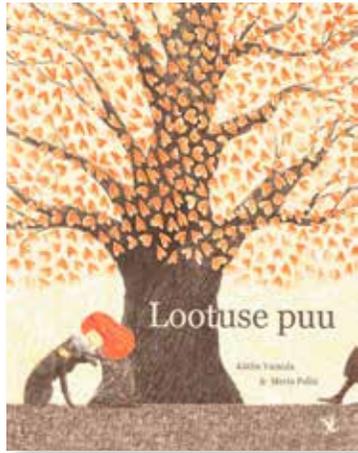
Ever since he was born, Kristjan and his grandad have been inseparable. Grandad takes the boy to the playground and kindergarten, teaches him the constellations, bandages his skinned knees, and encourages, and inspires him. Still, helping isn't just a one-way street. After Grandma dies, only Kristjan can get Grandad up and active again. Together, they tidy up the house, bravely endure the kind neighbour - lady's baking enthusiasm, take a trip to the dentist, and even find a little job fit for Grandad to do. It's all thanks to the boy that Grandad rediscovers his joy and enthusiasm. But what'll happen when Kristjan grows up and his life is taken over by school, friends, and hobbies? Will he still find time for his grandad?



Liis Sein (1983) is a playwright and children's author. She graduated from Tallinn University in adult education and has trained in playwriting and creative writing. Sein currently works as an administrative assistant at the Estonian Children's Literature Centre. She has written 16 children's books and won the Knee-High Book Competition in 2019. Her book *Mona's Dad Has Some Ideas* was listed in the 2023 White Ravens catalogue. Sein conveys the world through children's eyes in such a way that adults also see it as a bigger, brighter, and more lucid place.

Elina Sildre (1980) is an illustrator and comic artist who graduated from the Estonian Academy of Arts in graphic design. She has illustrated over 50 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 Five Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books and the Knee-High Book competitions.





The Tree of Hope

Written by **Kätlin Vainola**

Illustrated by **Meria Palin**

Draakon & Kuu, 2025

205x247 mm, hardcover, 48 pp

ISBN: 9789949574827

Rights sold: Finnish

What does it feel like to have a friend who has been by your side since the day you were born? And what does it feel like when, all at once, they are no longer there? How can one bear the ache of loss and the weight of emptiness? Perhaps by writing letters to the friend who is gone. Or by treasuring the many qualities that made them dear. Or perhaps, in time, by finding a new friend.



Kätlin Vainola (1978) is a children's writer and poet. She graduated from Tallinn University in Estonian philology and has worked as a teacher, project manager, and editor. Vainola is currently editor-in-chief of the children's magazine *Hea Laps*. She has written 23 children's books of various genres including realism, fantasy, and popular science. Her most widely-loved works are picture books for young children, many of which have been translated and received numerous awards.

Meria Palin (1972) is a children's picture book illustrator in Finland. She graduated from Anglia Ruskin University's MA course in Children's book illustration in 2019. She enjoys collaborating with different authors. Alongside her book projects, she also teaches children's book illustration. Her book *Soapbubblewhispers* was listed in the 2025 Bratislava Illustration Biennale catalogue.



Seagull Island. A Story of a Seabird

Written by **Tuul Sepp** and **Jeffrey Carbillet**

Illustrated by **Mark Antonius Puhkan**

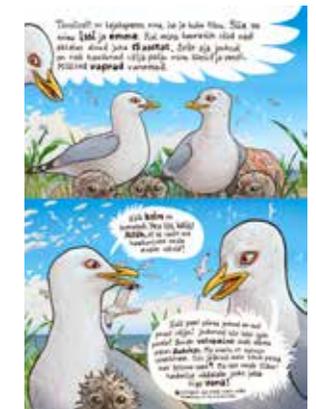
University of Tartu Press, 2025

215x304 mm, hardcover, 48 pp

ISBN: 9789916278413

Seagulls are often thought of as rather bothersome birds – loud, cheeky, and forever underfoot in our towns and cities. But perhaps the trouble is that we simply do not know them, or the way they live, very well. *Seagull Island* offers a delightful peek into the family and community life of the herring gull. Readers will discover what it is like to grow up under constant threat, why ringing gulls is important, and – of course – what their favourite food is. You will also learn why so many young gulls give up the long, risky journey of migration and instead settle down quite happily in our cities. The herring gull, it turns out, is a fascinating neighbour well worth getting to know!

Award: 2025 Good Children's Book



Tuul Sepp (1984) is a biologist and a writer. She works as a professor of animal ecology at the University of Tartu. Sepp has written nonfiction scientific books for both adults and children and two fantasy books for children. **Jeffrey Carbillet** (1991) is a French biologist. He works as a researcher at the Chair of Animal Ecology at the University of Tartu. Alongside his research and fieldwork with seabirds, squirrels, bats, and other animals, he is an enthusiastic science communicator who seeks to make scientific knowledge accessible to everyone through comic books, board games, and live events.



Mark Antonius Puhkan (1994) is an artist, illustrator, and instructor. He received a bachelor's degree in graphic art and a master's in contemporary art from the Estonian Academy of Arts. Puhkan has illustrated books for children and adults, media publications, nonfiction works, and textbooks. Additionally, he designs computer and video games and shows his works in exhibitions. Comics is his preferred medium.

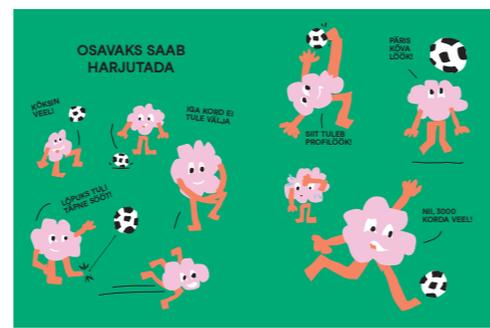
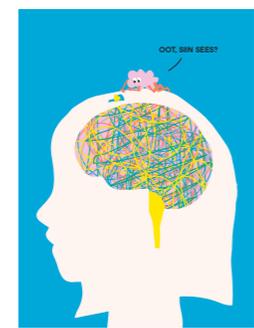


Brilliant Brain
 Written by Jaan Aru
 Illustrated by Martin Veisman
 Ajujutud, 2025
 96x257 mm, hardcover, 136 pp
 ISBN: 9789916430309

Humans aren't the strongest creatures in the world. A gorilla or a lion could easily beat even the best boxer. We're not the fastest either – a cheetah or a tiger would catch us in no time. And when it comes to agility, we're not the best at that, either. Monkeys swing from tree to tree, and cats sneak around quietly and (almost always) land on their feet.

But we do have one amazing advantage – our brain.
 That's why children shouldn't worry about who has the fanciest smartphone or coolest new gadget. What really matters is having a clever, well-trained brain. Gadgets can break or go out of fashion –, but your brain stays with you for life.
 This book will help you learn how to train your brain to be its very best.
 Ready, steady – go!

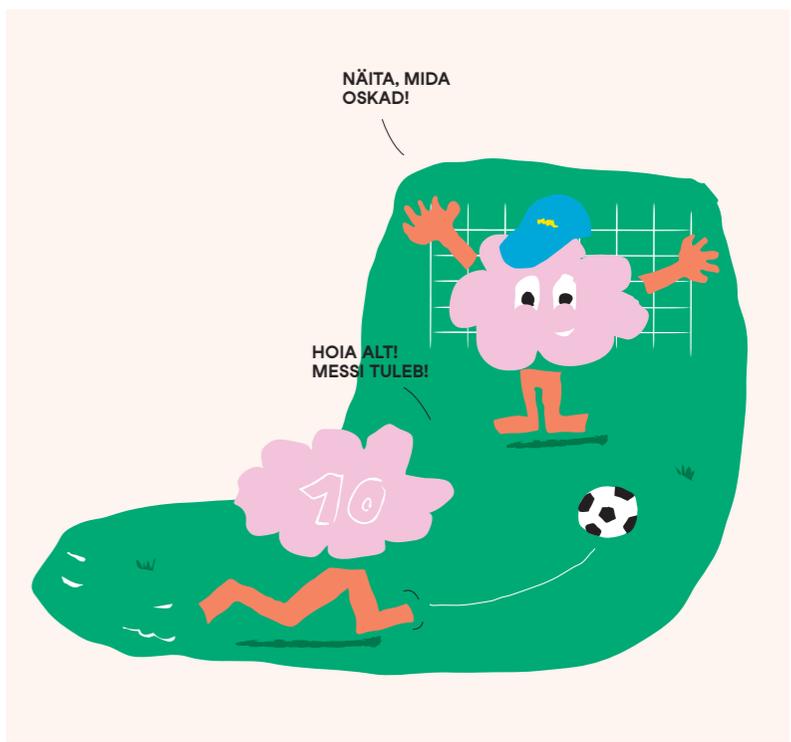
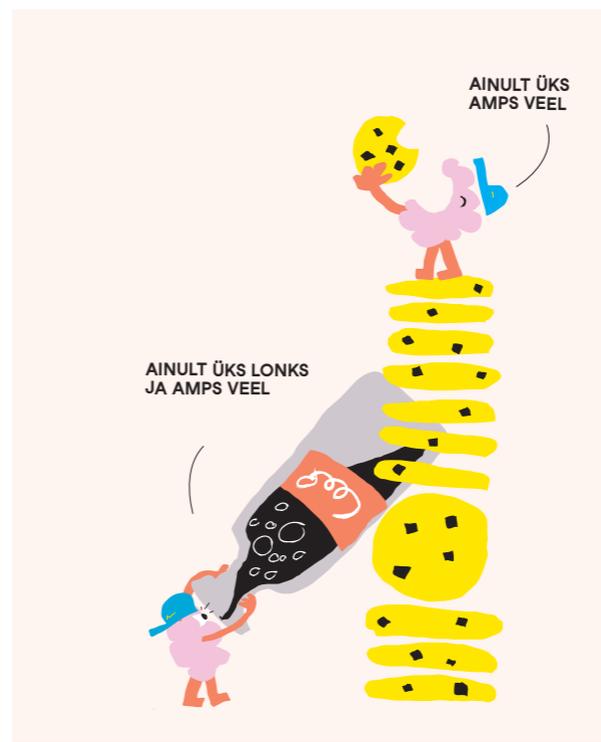
Award: 2025 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Certificate of Merit



Jaan Aru (1984) is a scientist who studies the impact of technology on the human mind. He has published five books in Estonian, three of which have been bestsellers. For his efforts in popularizing science, he has received the national science communication prize three times. In 2019, he received the Young Scientist Prize from the president of Estonia, and in 2024, he won the National Science Award.



Martin Veisman (1985) is a graphic designer who focuses on creating visual identities. He frequently uses illustrations and vivid colours in his work and has done graphics projects for exhibitions, film festivals, and corporate clients. Together with Valter Jakovski, he won the Estonian Designer of the Year award in 2020. The duo co-run the Ruum 414 design agency and illustration-centric brand Luste. Veisman is curious by nature and enjoys undertaking new challenges.





The Summer of Important Things

Written by Liina Roht

Illustrated by Marja-Liisa Plats

Tänapäev, 2025

174x237 mm, hardcover, 111 pp

ISBN: 9789916177693

Karmen, Kaarel, Martin, and Kaspar are siblings living in a small town, eagerly awaiting the arrival of summer. At last, the school term ends and their parents begin their holiday, marking the start of endless adventures. The book cherishes the beauty of small moments – playing together, sharing funny moments, or making pancakes for the whole family to enjoy. These simple joys capture the very essence of a happy childhood. A true good-mood book!



Liina Roht (1986) is a newcomer to the children's literature scene. She has a degree in early childhood education, and a master's degree in cultural management, and has trained in theatre instruction. Currently, she works as coordinator at the TEMUFI Theatre and as programme developer at the Viljandi Museum. *The Summer of Important Things* is her debut children's book, inspired by her own family's life in their hometown of Viljandi.

Marja-Liisa Plats (1984) is an illustrator, graphic designer, photographer, and singer. She graduated from Tartu Art College as a photographer. Plats has illustrated over 50 children's books and collaborates with the children's magazine *Täheke*. Her works are characterized 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. In 2025 she received the Edgar Valter Illustration Award.



Bedtime

"Uh, Martin, are you still drawing?" Mommy asked in surprise when she walked into the kitchen.

"Yes," the tot answered, wide-eyed. "I wanted to draw so bad that my sleepy thoughts went away."

Mom sighed and scrolled through the mental list of all the things she still needed to do. It had been an exhausting day. Dad took Karmen and Kaarel to go camping overnight in the woods. The sun was blazing all day long, which made the house so warm that the boys' naps were both failures. Now, she'd finally tucked a tuckered-out Kaspar into his crib for the night and came downstairs hoping to find Martin looking at picture books on the couch in his dinosaur pyjamas, just as they'd agreed.

"Look, I drew a picture of our family: here's you and these are us," Martin said proudly, holding up the last drawing he'd made of four kids standing in a row and Mom at the very end.

Mommy picked him up and studied the picture. "But where's Daddy?"

"I messed up a little with Daddy, so I made him into a sleeping bag instead," Martin explained.

"Well, it's a very nice sleeping bag, just like our blue one," Mom said, chuckling and carrying him into the bathroom to brush his teeth.

Martin grabbed a book as soon as he crawled into bed.

"Read me three stories tonight," he demanded.

"Let's see how far we get," Mommy replied, trying to wiggle out of it. "I've still got things to do in the kitchen."

Mommy started reading, but Martin just couldn't seem to get comfortable and kept wriggling under the covers. He sat up in bed the moment she finished the first story. "Mommy, I'm done and I can go play now."

"What do you mean, 'play'?" It's bedtime, Martin. Everyone has to go to sleep for the night right now," Mom said, turning serious.

"I'm hungry."

"Oh, should I bring you a something to drink?"

"Yeah. Coffee, please!"

Mommy spluttered with laughter. Not even the most exhausted mommy can keep a straight face to an answer like that.

"Hey there, silly. How about right now, you stay here looking at the book while I go and finish up a few things."

"How about instead, we play 'Eeny, meeny, miny, moe' and whoever is 'it' goes downstairs to finish up," ?" Martin proposed.

Now, there was a big grin on Mommy's face, too. "Oh, you! When did you get so smart? Well, okay." She sighed, realizing that bedtime was going to take a little longer that night. "I'll go downstairs, turn off the lights, brush my teeth, and then come right back up here to you, okay?"

"That's fine."

She gave Martin a kiss and slipped out of the room. By the time she got back, he was looking rather sleepy.

"Stay here and sleep next to me tonight," he whispered.

"I can't. My back gets stiff in your bed – I'll turn into a pretzel."

Martin sat up suddenly and moaned, "I don't want you to turn into a pretzel!"

"Oh, no, don't worry...." Mommy reassured him, pulling him back down to snuggle. "I won't turn into a pretzel for real. I just mean my back will ache very badly if I sleep here. My spine gets twisted and stiff like a pretzel. But I can lie here with you for a little while. Now, close your eyes."

Mommy felt Martin's breathing deepen, but he still tossed and turned.

Translated by Adam Cullen





Running Noses and Other Winter Tales

Written and illustrated by Tiiu Kitsik

Tänapäev, 2025
175x218 mm, hardcover, 176 pp
ISBN: 9789916177754

Christmas is a time of miracles, so do not be surprised if your sofa suddenly starts to sprout feathers or your dog reveals itself to be an aspiring young artist. At this time of year, you may also spot the occasional runny nose here and there! The city, too, is full of curious happenings: icicles decide to make themselves useful, ice cream takes over snow's job, and one man turns the entire city's snow ploughing into an adventure. The greatest effort of all, however, is made by the planets, which join forces to create the largest snowman in the world.

The book contains 31 delightful winter tales, sure to raise a smile on the faces of children and parents alike.



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 worked for several years. She has written 14 children's books and contributed

to the children's magazines *Hea Laps*, *Täheke*, and *Mesimumm*.

Her book *We're Moving Away* was listed in the 2025 White Ravens catalogue. She lives and works as a freelance artist in Berlin.

The Friendly Mitten

Alfred was what you might call, well, a bully. He tended to pick fights with others, and wherever he went, trouble always started right away. He pushed over snowmen when he walked past and packed snowballs that were too hard to throw at kids too hard, leaving the target with a painful sting where it hit.

Many found this kind of behaviour inappropriate, but it was unacceptable most of all to Alfred's own mittens. The mittens were very polite, well-mannered, exceptionally well-raised, and as friendly as could be. That made them all the more displeased with Alfred's bullying. His mittens didn't want to pack icy snowballs or hurl them at other kids. Nor did they have any desire to ruin snowmen or pick on kids in any other way.

Alfred's grandma hadn't knit him the mittens so that he could use them to get into mischief. She'd woven in love and goodness, of course! His well-behaved mittens would've much rather built snowmen, pulled sleds, waved, hugged, and held someone's hand. Alas, Alfred never offered them opportunities like those.

One day when the weather was a little warmer and Alfred's mittens were in his pocket, he happened to be on a playground refusing to let anyone else use the slide. He simply sat there blocking the way and grinning while the other kids waited and grew more and more upset.

"Out of the way! We want to slide!" they demanded.

"Na-na-na-na-na! No!" Alfred taunted, refusing to budge.

That was the very last straw for one of Alfred's mittens, and it jumped out of his pocket. Alfred didn't notice, and after getting bored of bullying the other kids, he went home without it.

The mitten that leapt from Alfred's pocket lay in the snow and watched the clouds drift by high up in the sky. It looked up and waved to the birds flying across the heavens. The mitten thought it saw the birds wave back, too. Lying here like this is very nice, the mitten thought, and it stayed there for several delightful days.

But then, something unexpected happened: a mother walking across the playground picked the mitten up. "Someone's lost such a beautiful mitten!" she exclaimed and hung it on a bush at the edge of the playground.

The mitten's new spot on the branch was absolutely amazing, as there was now much more to see besides clouds and passing birds. There between the sidewalk and the playground were plenty of things to watch and wave at. So many people walking by, so many dogs trotting at the ends of leashes, and so many candy wrappers dancing in the breeze!

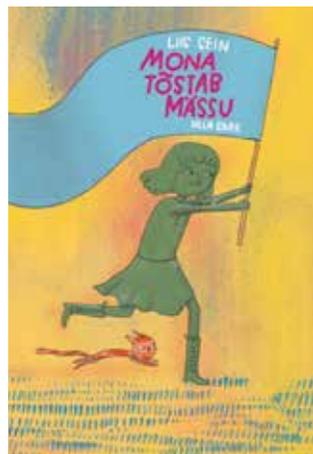
Every time a stronger gust came along and blew the bush's branches back and forth, it helped the mitten wave at passers-by. And the passersby waved back, too. One boy even gave it a high five!

The mitten could not have been happier with its new home and life. People strolling past would sometimes pity it, saying, "Look at that – a poor, lost, lonely mitten!" But the mitten didn't feel lonely. It wasn't lost or alone but rather finding itself!

And Alfred's other mitten wasn't any worse off, either. Now that its partner had vanished, Alfred no longer took the lone mitten along anywhere. The boy's hands were frigid for the rest of that winter, and he kept them stuffed meekly in his pockets. That made everyone glad!

Translated by Adam Cullen





Mona Starts a Rebellion

Written by Liis Sein

Illustrated by Ulla Saar

Pegasus, 2025

171x237 mm, hardcover, 88 pp

ISBN: 9789908551258

One perfectly ordinary Wednesday, Mona realized that things simply could not go on as they had. Ever since that infamous Monday, when her father discovered his new hobbies, and the momentous Tuesday, when her mother bought herself a calendar of special occasions, nothing had been the same. Father no longer had time for anything but his hobbies, and Mother's head was filled with nothing but holidays and different ways of celebrating them. Sure, this gave Mona a great deal more freedom – yet she would have traded it all in an instant for some family time. But how could she win back her parents' attention? Did she need to bring home a bad report from school, invent devices to help them notice her, or perhaps declare a strike? One way or another, – Mona would find the very best way to set things in motion and achieve the result she was after.



Liis Sein (1983) is a playwright and children's author.

She graduated from Tallinn University in adult education and has trained in playwriting and creative writing. She has written 16 children's books and won the Knee-High Book Competition in 2019.

Her book *Mona's Dad Has Some Ideas* was listed in the 2023 White Ravens catalogue. Sein conveys the world through children's eyes in such a way that adults also see it as a bigger, brighter, and more lucid place.

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. She has been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) three times.

She has been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) three times.



Hello?!

One completely ordinary Wednesday, Mona realized that life as she knew it needed to change. Nothing had been the same since the infamous Monday when her dad discovered new hobbies and the all-too-familiar Tuesday when her mom acquired a calendar of important days. On the one hand, there were now things to await, celebrate, and enjoy, but on the other, that all left very little time for simply spending together. Instead, there were excuses, grandparents, and endlessly long waits.

“Mom, could we go to the store today? You promised to buy me a sweater with cats on it,” Mona reminded her, but received only a vague nod that meant absolutely nothing. No matter how often Mona repeated the question, there wasn't even a discussion about buying her new sweater during that busy time.

“Dad, could you come to the library with me?” Mona asked. “I don't like paying the late fee by myself. It's kind of embarrassing,” she admitted. But in reply, she received only a long, thoughtful pause. No matter how often Mona made the request, a trip to the library never fit into any day's schedule.

“Hello?! I'm here, too!” Mona reminded her parents a few more times while Mom was zipping around the house decorating for special days and Dad was considering new hobbies.

Mom paused for a moment to hug Mona, and Dad stroked her head. Mom gave her permission to visit friends, and Dad handed her money for ice cream. Mom tucked Mona in at night, and Dad said goodnight, but that wasn't enough. Mona bravely endured the situation for a week and then an entire month, but still felt a terrible longing to do something exciting with her parents – to go on a trip, go out to eat, or simply spend a whole afternoon playing board games together. They hadn't had time for those things in ages.

“I know! I know!” Mona yelled so loud that it echoed and stomped into the living room. But apart from their cat, Roosi, there was no one with whom she could share much joy. On the coffee table was a note confirming that her parents had run off somewhere again.

Dear Mona!

I went out to take care of some things. Dad has been standing in a long line at the post office since this morning.

I don't know when we'll be home. Heat up some leftover macaroni from the fridge.

Mom

“Enough of all these holidays and hobbies! As far as I'm concerned, we could cancel my birthday party this year or not celebrate Christmas at all or cross marathons off the list or take all the artwork that Dad bought to a museum,” Mona said to Roosi with a worried sigh. The cat couldn't quite understand what the girl was complaining about or what was troubling her.

“Meow!” Roosi finally said and asked to be taken on a little walk.

Walking to the park and back, Mona came up with some plans for what to do if it was indeed impossible to get her parents' attention in the usual ways. They ranged from bringing home a bad grade from school (a D, perhaps) to going on strike. That would certainly get the ball rolling and get her the results she wanted!

Translated by Adam Cullen





The Last

Written by Grethe Rõõm

Mugul OÜ, 2025

132x190 mm, soft cover, 398 pp

ISBN: 9789916938201

Twelve-year-old Jumi and her best friend, Kippen, have always dreamed of finding a fire dragon – one of the last magical creatures said to grant heartfelt wishes. But when they finally set out on their adventure, things go terribly wrong. Cynocephali (dog-headed beings) attack, and though Kippen saves Jumi, he ends up falling into a deep chasm afterward and vanishes. Everyone else believes he's gone forever, but Jumi is convinced he's still alive. So she steals a boat and sails off to find him, travelling through a world full of mysterious creatures – cynocephali, will-o'-the-wisps, and maybe even dragons.

Award: 2025 Good Young Adult Book

Summers Earlier

A threatening growl came from the forest nearby. It seemed to be creeping closer and closer. The men and women watering a field in the blazing sunlight didn't notice. The snarls were only heard by a tiny baby lying in a woven birchbark cradle in the shade of a tree on the field's edge. As the growling drew closer, the little girl's babbling grew softer, then fell completely silent when a werewolf's hairy body rose above the cradle and its single eye stared at her



Grethe Rõõm (1976) is a children's and youth author and a teacher. The primary inspiration for her creations comes from the meeting point between today's youth, fantasy, and Nordic cultural heritage. Her stories are filled with adventures and magic. She has written five children's books and one YA novel, *The Raven Tree*. She has master's degrees in Estonian and Finno-Ugric languages and in educational sciences.

intently. Only after the gigantic beast grabbed the infant's leg in its teeth and began running back towards the forest did she start to screech. That startled the cynocephalus with the head of a wolf and the legs of a human. For a second, it jerked to a stop.

The girl's father, who had been carrying water to the field with the others, took advantage of that second. He sprinted at the predator and jumped onto its back. The cynocephalus was twice the man's size. Saliva dripped from its huge fangs. The tiny baby dangled from its mouth like a rag doll. Grunting and shaking itself, the beast tried to get rid of its attacker. Then, it straightened up in sudden astonishment. It took a couple steps, swayed, and opened its jaws. The infant tumbled softly onto the moss as children always do, not getting hurt in the fall. At the same time, her father pulled the knife he always carried on his belt out of the beast's body.

The girl's mother arrived at the scene, too. She and the father crouched over the infant who lay bloody on the ground. He set his knife down and started to pick her up.

That was the last time the baby saw her parents. Moments later, the wounded but still outlandishly strong cynocephalus seized her parents in its paws and dashed off into the woods.

Later, after the baby was wiped clean of blood, it turned out that the cynocephalus had nearly bit off her right leg entirely. The leg fused together over time but was left slightly shorter than the other. A deep scar snaked down it.

Departure

The sun's first rays fell upon the towering fortress on the hilltop, forcing night's darkness to retreat. In the shallow valley next to it, the village slept on. Thus, no one noticed when slender Jumi crept out through the fortress gates. She darted into the shadows of the bushes across the road to stay invisible to the guards on the fortress wall. Even so, she was spotted by a pair of sharp, beady eyes watching from the crown of a nearby tree.

The scar that wound down Jumi's right calf made that leg shorter and forced her to walk and run with a limp. Beaver-skin leggings that the girl wore in summer and winter alike protected her legs from both sun and cold but couldn't heal the hobble.

Jumi's mismatched legs didn't cause her any pain. The same couldn't be said for kids' jeers. They called her "Limpy." Other times, it was "Soothead." Or another stupid insult. For in addition to having different-sized legs, she wasn't blonde and rosy-cheeked like all the other kids in the village. Jumi's hair was as dark as a winter's night, and her cheeks were as pale as snow. The villagers glared disapprovingly. She wore a boxy green sweater that her mother left behind and a long linen shirt beneath it. The shirt had belonged to her father. Jumi had cut some fabric from the bottom and used it to sew herself a pair of trousers. They turned out so wide that she had to wrap the leggings around and tie them with leather straps.

Everyone in the village knew that luck steered well clear of the girl. "It could be infectious," parents whispered to their kids and advised them to avoid her, too.

Jumi kept her distance from others, anyway. The older she got, the greater that distance grew. She learned how to hide in plain sight.

That was easy with grown-ups. They usually paid no attention to the squirt as they hurried about their daily chores. Whenever they did happen to notice Jumi, they whispered a few protective charm words, snapped their fingers to ward off bad luck, and then ignored her completely.

Yes, things were easy with grown-ups. Kids, however, never allowed the girl to forget that she wasn't like them.

"It smells weird here," the blondest and rosiest-cheeked of them, Viu, sometimes said with a sniff when Jumi happened to be nearby.

"Like misfortune," another always added before they ran away, laughing. Jumi reckoned she smelled exactly like any other kid in the village: just a teensy bit unwashed, though this was overpowered by the scent of fresh air and bonfire smoke. But that didn't change a thing. They mocked her all the same.

The kids teased her a little less about the raven that followed her wherever she went. Before Jumi could even walk, the black-backed bird hopped right up to her where she'd been laid on a sunny patch of grass in the fortress ward. Its head cocked to one side, the bird studied the girl while she played. Ever since that day, the raven hadn't let Jumi out of its sight whenever she was outside. The bird didn't allow itself to be touched and wouldn't accept any morsels when offered, but was always wherever Jumi happened to be, watching solemnly from a few meters away. Jumi nicknamed it "Dipper" because of the ladle-shaped tuft of feathers projecting from its nape.

Once, Jumi forgot that other kids were in earshot and called out to Dipper. She quickly came to regret it.

"Birdy-girl, limpy-girl, dipper-dipper-aa," Viu mocked in singsong the next time Jumi passed by.

Translated by Adam Cullen



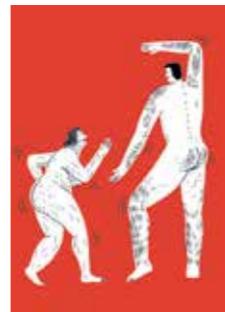
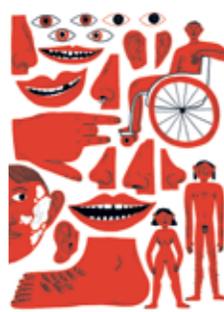
What's Up with These Bodies?

Written by Merilin Mandel
Illustrated by Krõõt Kukkur

Puänt, 2025
216x289 mm, hardcover, 104 pp
ISBN: 9789916934623

A child and a cat love to chat with each other constantly. And they get along like a house on fire. The child is curious and clever, so they know how to ask all sorts of questions. The cat, however, has lived with humans for a long time and has hidden a lot of human wisdom between its ears over the years. This is why the cat is able to answer any question the child asks. Even the questions about bodies, sex, love, safety, and becoming yourself. For example, the cat knows very well what puberty is and how it changes the body. It also knows how to take care of the body and how to stand up for oneself when necessary.

Awards: 2025 5 Best Designed Estonian Children's Books, special prize of the Estonian Graphic Designer's Union
2025 25 Best-Designed Estonian Books, Certificate of Merit



Merilin Mandel (1990) is a psychologist and mental-health expert and coach. She graduated from Tallinn University with a bachelor's degree in Italian language and culture and from the University of Bristol with master of science degree in developmental psychology. She has worked as a preschool teacher, translator, and wedding photographer. To date, Mandel has published four award-winning books on being comfortable in one's own skin.

Krõõt Kukkur (1991) is a Tallinn-based artist and illustrator who practices various styles and techniques. Over the last 15 years, she has developed her personal Krõõt Kukkur Illustrations brand, collaborated with dozens of organizations, and led a wide range of workshops. Her art can be encountered on the walls of dining establishments, in addition to numerous group- and solo exhibitions. Kukkur has illustrated four books, the latest of which – Merilin Mandel's *What's Up with These Bodies?* – won the Rahva Raamat bookstore chain's 2025 Public Favourite Award.



Different Bodies

“It's totally weird that people's bodies are so different. We're all human, but you answer every one of my questions by saying that this thing or that thing can vary depending on the person. Can that really be true?”

“Well, here – let's look out the window together. Do you see how different people's noses are? Some are pointy, some are flat, some are a little crooked, some have tips that point up, some are curved. And just like noses, everyone's other body parts are also unique. Can you even pick out two identical bodies down there on the sidewalk? There are bodies with two arms, bodies with one leg, bodies with fingers that come right out of the elbow, bodies that are tall or short and have light or dark skin, fat bodies, thin bodies, bodies with green or grey eyes, some with straight teeth and others with teeth that are a little crooked. Even cinnamon rolls that are made by the same person and come out of the same oven can be completely different. So, it's only logical that people who grow from different parents' cells and are born from different bodies are just as different as any cinnamon roll!”

“Or flower!”

“Right, or flower. Or snowflake.”

The Kid giggles. “Only you gobble cinnamon rolls up when they're finished, but you don't eat people.”

The cat stretches luxuriously before speaking.

“You're absolutely right, but at least a cinnamon roll stays the same till the very end. You humans, on the other hand, change

over your lifetime just like all the rest of nature!”

“You're the one who changes!”

“And you do, too! Compare the bark on young and old trees, for example: it's smooth at first but it turns rough and more gnarled over the tree's lifetime, just like a human body. And if you consider the kings of the wild (cats, obviously!), well, their fur gets greyer and greyer as they age, just like your hair. Even your favourite stuffed animal, though it isn't alive, has become saggy and stretched over time because it's gone along on so many adventures and you've hugged it so much and with such great care. Bodies that are alive develop features of wear and tear over their lifetime, too. Before you know it, there'll be longer and thicker hairs growing on your face and in your ears and around your genitals and on your legs and your belly and your toes and.... At some point, the hairs will change colour, getting whiter and greyer, and some will even fall off like leaves before winter. Your skin will gradually become drier and more spotted, you'll get stretch marks from when your body gets bigger, you'll have cellulite where fatty tissue rearranges itself under your skin, and wrinkles will form on your body and face when your skin begins stretching less and less. No 15-year-old's body is the same as it was when they were five, nor any 50-year-old's body the same as when they were 25. The only sad thing is that lots of people are afraid of ageing because they think that only youth is beautiful. It's actually an absolute delight to live with your body your entire life. And you know, it's not a person's body that makes them beautiful, but the things they think, say, and do!”

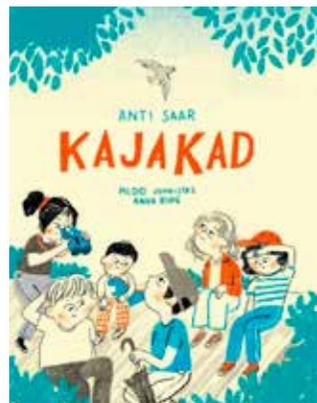
The Kid picks their nose for a bit and then announces:

“We went to the sauna when we were visiting somebody a couple days ago and I saw so many different naked bodies sitting together on a single bench! Hairy ones, smooth ones, wrinkled ones, chubby ones, slender ones, short ones, tall ones.... But I wasn't naked myself.”

“What, you mean you wore your jumpsuit to the sauna?”

“Aw, don't be silly! I wore my bathing suit.”

Translated by Adam Cullen



Seagulls

Written by Anti Saar

Illustrated by Anna Ring

Kolm Elu, 2025

146x200 mm, soft cover, 192 pp

ISBN: 9789916983256

In a quiet little town, down a narrow back street, live a busy bunch of children and hard-working grown-ups, cats and dogs, and no doubt a few smaller creatures as well.

On the roof of the red house nest the seagulls. In that same house lives Professor Manivald Mõtus, a professor emeritus of art history, whose wall hangings are said to be worth as much as the house itself. Hardly anyone knows about these tapestries, – except the professor, his grandson, Raivo, and their housekeeper, Piret.

One day, when the tapestries mysteriously disappear, the whole street is thrown into a frenzy. The courtyard children rally to help their friend Raivo and his grandfather.

“We’ll catch those thieves, don’t you worry, Grandpa,” Raivo assures him. An adventure begins.

Awards: 2025 Nominee of the Annual Children’s Literature Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia

2025 Good Children’s Book



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 has a talent for glimpsing what is special in ordinary everyday life. His stories, which tend to ricochet from reality, are fluid, witty, and sensitively worded.

Anna Ring (1992) is an illustrator and graphic designer. She graduated in media design from the Pallas University of Applied Sciences in Tartu and the master’s program in children’s book illustration at the Cambridge School of Art (Anglia Ruskin University). Ring has illustrated many children’s books

(over 25) and textbooks and regularly contributes to the Estonian children’s magazines *Täheke* and *Mesimumm*. Her illustrations are always vivid, full of movement, and skillfully composed.



Calmly Tell Me What Happened

“Calmly tell me what happened,” the police detective says after sitting down across from Piret. The request seems strange. First, she’s already totally calm, in her opinion. And second, she hasn’t the slightest clue what happened.

At one o’clock or shortly thereafter, she had, as usual, arrived at Professor Manivald’s apartment to be there when Rico came home from school, drink hot cocoa with him, spend a little time waiting for his grandpa, and cook dinner for them all. When she entered the living room from the kitchen, she felt as if something was off but couldn’t quite put her finger on it. Only a while later, after Rico was already home, did she realize with a start: the tapestries! Manivald’s old tapestries were gone! Three dark-coloured blotches of wallpaper yawned in place of the historical fabrics; over the years, the wall around them had been bleached in the sunlight. That was what happened, but how, Piret had no idea.

“Come look, Rico!” she called out to the boy, who hadn’t noticed anything different when he came in either.

Only then did Rico also realize what was no longer there; what had vanished from the living room wall.

“Jeez, our tapestries!” he gasped. “Does Gramps know?”

No, Grandpa didn’t know. Not unless he took them along when he left home for some reason. But that was also ruled out a few minutes later, when Manivald himself returned home from the library.

“Have we been robbed?” Rico asked Manivald, the wisest of the bunch, after he’d recovered from the shock.

“I... I’m afraid so,” Manivald acknowledged, because how can you hide something like that from a kid?

“Did they break the door down with an axe? Or come in through the chimney like Santa does?” Rico pressed him, but Manivald just shook his head sadly.

“No, Ricky. Certainly not like that.” He rested his head in his hands and slumped over on the couch. “Oh, what a tragedy!”

“The door was unlocked,” Piret reminded Rico softly. “Remember?”

“Oh, right. Of course,” he recalled, crushed. He couldn’t fathom there being thieves who could simply stroll through someone’s apartment and take something so dear to them without even having to bust down a door. It seemed absolutely heinous. And why had they left the door unlocked? Because Rico lost his apartment key a few weeks back. And he often got home before Piret arrived. Therefore, the two agreed to leave the apartment door unlocked until they had a new key made. The building door was always locked, but Rico knew the code to open it. He felt a little guilty thinking about it.

“But we’ll nab them, won’t we, Gramps?”

“Certainly, Ricky,” Grandpa assured him. “We’re sure to nab them. But first, we must call the police.”

And that’s everything that happened after Piret arrived. Those are the things she knows, and she’s happy to share that knowledge with the police. There are two officers: a female detective questioning the girl and a male detective measuring the dark spots on the wall where the tapestries used to be.

“That’s unnecessary,” Manivald says, interrupting the male detective. “The fragments’ measurements, motifs, and origin – that’s all been documented. I have photographs, too, of course.”

“At least that’s something,” the officer says, nodding and letting his measuring tape click shut. “At least we know what we’re looking for.”

The female officer continues her questioning.

“What time did you arrive at the apartment?”

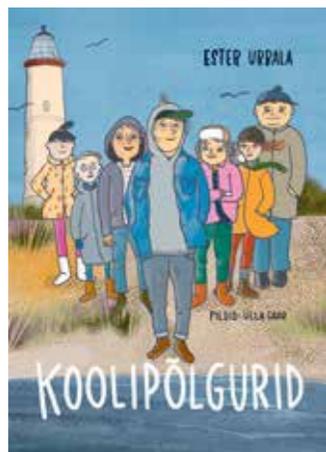
“Around one o’clock,” Piret replies.

“And what were you doing before that?”

“I... I was at class.”

The detective crosses her arms over her chest and eyes Piret with a degree of suspicion. At least that’s how it seems to Piret. She’s flabbergasted: could they really suspect her of the theft? She begins to stutter and can’t even remember what lecture she attended that morning. Knowing that stuttering will only heighten the detective’s suspicion, she gets flustered... which only makes the stuttering worse.

Translated by Adam Cullen



School Rebels

Written by Ester Urbala

Illustrated by Ulla Saar

Puänt, 2025

148x210 mm, soft cover, 192 pp

ISBN: 9789916934609

Rights sold: Italian

Erik reckons that kids should be put under protection on the first day of school, because anyone who is deprived of their freedom, youth, and summer and forced to go back to the city and sit at a desk all day needs some kind of protection. Starting in September, the days seem to drag on forever, and it gets harder and harder to bear his longing for summer and their cabin on a island. Then one sleety January morning, Erik's mom wakes him up with a piece of astonishing news. Seeing how unhappy he is at school, she has decided to organize an experimental project with his teachers' approval. Now, for half a year, he and six classmates will travel to a solitary island where they can live the pressure- and responsibility-free life they all relish. Of course, there's also a pair of 93-year-old lighthouse keepers there who have promised to keep an eye on the kids!

Award: 2025 Good Children's Book



Ester Urbala (1982) received a master's degree in andragogy and communication from Tallinn University. For many years, she has worked in communication, marketing, and production for Estonian Public Broadcasting. Urbala is a co-founder of the Estonian publisher Puänt and is still active in publishing today. Her short prose has appeared in Estonian literary magazines, and a collection of her short stories was published in 2020. *The School Rebels* is her children's literature debut, a sequel is forthcoming.

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. She has been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) three times.



When the car finally drifted into the yard, winter tyres squealing, it was already dark. "SCHOOL REBELS" read the sign that greeted the kids. An unsteady hand had written it on a board, nailed the warped end to a stick and prodded it into the ground. There weren't many suspects. One of them had happily operated the brakes and accelerator all the way along the twisting road. "Straighten out these curves!" she had squawked behind the wheel as she'd taken the sharp bends.

The kids felt sick. One by one, they climbed gingerly out of the back of the hearse and fell into the snow with a thud.

Erik was the first to stand up and go towards the summerhouse, which looked something like a two-storey tent. The windows were covered by broad wooden shutters that could be lifted to let light in. Erik's architect mum had designed the house in such a way that if the residents wished, it could look like a snowy ridge. But when the mood took them, it could just be a thing of sheer beauty.

"Hold on!" Erik shouted to the others who were lying, weak, in the yard, and groped for the switch in the dark. He was actually nervous about being in the light. This dusky greyness lit only by a few twinkling stars felt much safer.

The internet only reached as far as the icy-cold outside loo, and to keep the main building warm, you had to keep the stove burning. There was only ever enough washing water for a couple of minutes at a time. And to go to the toilet, you had to squat over a wooden box. Outside.

Erik hoped that his classmates knew all this.

After all, what would he do if they didn't like it here? What would happen if they wanted to go home?

"Right, here we go!" he told himself, plucking up courage and flipping the switch. Something crackled, something fizzed.

And the whole yard was filled with light.

So this is what you were up to, Erik thought, remembering his mum's secret trips when he saw all the fairy lights on the snowy summerhouse shining. They outlined the loo teetering under a layer of snow and the tiny sauna. The kids gasped. Erik breathed a sigh of relief because their first impression wasn't

negative. Frode and Astrid jumped up. Their actions were infectious, and everyone set to. It was time to move in.

"Ah! Warmth!" Astrid elbowed her way indoors and tossed her fur cap into a corner. Her fair hair burst out in every direction. She pulled a couple of stubborn strands out of her mouth, took a hairband out of her pocket and corralled her wild mane into a large bun.

"Yeah, wow!" came a jumble of delighted cries. Feet were cleared of snow and stepped into the spacious living room. The Jensens were ensconced in soft wicker chairs. Snoring gently. They were already asleep.

"So where do we ...?" asked Astrid, looking at the Jensens enviously. If only she could fall asleep as fast as them.

"Upstairs," whispered Erik, pointing to the first floor, reached by a narrow wooden staircase.

He stood by the tall bookcase and pressed his cheek against the books. As soon as their dusty fragrance tickled his nose, he knew he was home. The bookcase held comics and adventure stories, bird atlases and fairy tales, board games and bird feathers. Erik took down a couple of summer Polaroids and plonked himself, flat, onto the large, moss-coloured sofa. The others were tiptoeing closer to the sleeping old ladies.

"They really are twins," whispered Frode, removing his hat as a sign of respect.

This was clearly true. The Jensens looked incredibly alike. They both had bony noses that ended in sharp points and a pleasant tan, given that it was deep mid-winter. Yet even when the kids looked more closely, there wasn't a single birthmark on the twins' faces that could distinguish them. Still, the situation wasn't hopeless. One of them was smiling as she slept, flashing her false teeth. But one corner of her sister's mouth pulled stubbornly downwards.

"I've never seen anyone so old so close up before," murmured Rebeka, turning the binoculars to the women's deep wrinkles. She suspected that the Jensens were a very rare species. She would definitely have to start making some important observations on the island straight away.

Translated by Adam Cullen



You've Got 24 Hours

Written by Kristi Piiper

Tänapäev, 2025

143x215 mm, soft cover, 189 pp

ISBN: 9789916177129

Eva seems to live the perfect life. She has a loving family, a cosy detached home, and schoolwork that never overwhelms her, and she gets along well enough with her classmates. But when her mother is sent on an unexpected business trip, and her father spends less and less time at home while behaving ever more strangely, the girl begins to feel abandoned in the empty house. Eva hopes to find comfort in Loona, an exchange student arriving from Germany. At first, everything unfolds as expected, but soon the lively, boundaries-pushing Loona decides to join a challenge app that is making the rounds in their class. The rule of the game is simple: anyone who accepts a challenge must complete a nerve-racking task within 24 hours. Eva has no intention of joining in – until her own house appears as the next challenge location.

Awards: 2024 Young Adult Novel Competition, 1st place
2025 Good Young Adult Book

3. Forbidden Entry

After their trip to the store, Loona wanted to look around her temporary home's yard and garden. Eva's dad took the groceries inside, leaving the girls alone in front of the house. Wild grapevines hung from the two-story building's pale greyish plaster, partially concealing the windows.

Loona gazed at an open window on the first floor where Eva's room must be.

"Your house is kind of old and historical-like. It's interesting. And actually really pretty, too."

Eva tried seeing her home from another person's point of view.

"Yeah... I can't say for sure, but I think it's belonged to our family for some fifty years or so. It was built sometime in the



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 three 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 a recurring theme in her writing.



1930s, maybe. At first, it was actually used as a railway building or something like that for a while."

"And then you moved in here?"

"Well, we sure didn't," Eva snorted. "My family wasn't even born yet, but my dad's grandma and her parents did when she was little."

"Is your grandma still alive?"

Eva laughed. Her grandma was so youthful and energetic that the mere thought of her being deceased was downright comical.

"Sure is. She's even been the minister of education twice, the first time way long ago and the second just as of last year." Eva was embarrassed by the pride in her own voice. What a crazy thing to boast, she cursed. She felt like her grandmother herself, obsessed with social status and reputation.

"Really? Like, in the government?"

"Yeah. S'pose that's why Gramps can be really strict sometimes. He constantly tells us that everything we do reflects back on Grandma, so we need to be really, really well-behaved." Eva refrained from adding that she believed her dad did everything exactly the way Grandma told him.

"Ugh, how annoying!"

Eva couldn't agree more. It was something that came up almost every day.

"I get more or less good grades in school, luckily, so it's not too bad. And I haven't gotten in trouble for anything too outlandish, so Grandma can be pretty content. She's the reason we ended up getting you as an exchange student in the first place, by the way. She owed somebody a favor; an official who needed to find host families for incoming students."

"So, you didn't actually want me? Or, like, anybody?"

Eva quickly shook her head, leaving out the fact that her parents were very much against the idea at first.

"No, no—we did. I've always wanted this. It's just the timing... With Mom going away just recently and all the... That's why Dad said we were going to cancel all the same, but Grandma told him it was too late to cancel; that everything was

arranged and the family had no problem with the host family being a single-parent situation temporarily," Eva chattered with a sigh. "But I'm really glad you came. Otherwise I'd be so lonely here right now."

"That's good. I'm glad I came, too. We're totally going to have tons of fun together."

"I think so, too. Come on!"

The girls walked behind the house. Eva pointed at a bench beneath a pear tree, its paint chipped and flaking.

"Wanna sit a while?"

The wood was a little damp because the frequent rainfall over the last few weeks had kept it from drying. Eva and Loona stared at their home as if seeing it for the very first time. The view was completely different from this side of the slightly overgrown courtyard. Here, a much larger section of the wall wasn't covered by vines. There was water damage in several places, and the plaster was peeling off most everywhere.

Loona scratched the dirt with the toe of her sneaker.

"It's really such a strange house... And pretty big... The whole thing belongs to your family?"

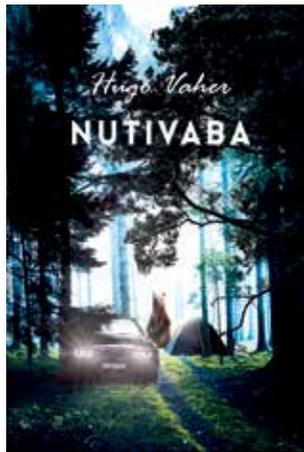
"Yeah..." The house had always seemed too big for her family, too. "And half of it is still completely unrenovated. Only our apartment has been fixed up. Dad's been talking about renovating the other half for a hundred years already, make another apartment and rent it out, but he's made zero progress so far."

"Okay, though maybe it is nicer not having any neighbors, right? You can't imagine what kind of crazies we have to share our building with in Berlin. I've got stories galore. Hey, look—what's down there? Where those little windows are boarded up from the inside?"

Eva turned her gaze to the basement level where the outlines of windows were just visible through the tall grass.

"That's the basement. Or, well, some basement-type rooms. I've never been down there myself."

Translated by Adam Cullen



Offline

Written by Hugo Vaher

Tänapäev, 2025

143x215 mm, soft cover, 179 pp

ISBN: 9789916177228

Bar the punk, BM the BMW enthusiast who spends most of his time in the garage, and Sparky, whose curiosity leans towards the furry world, form a vibrant trio of friends. They may not fit neatly in with everyone else, yet together they are inseparable – always ready to stand by one another.

Now they are preparing for a long journey to visit BM's girlfriend. Bar's father gives his blessing but sets a challenge for them: they can earn a hundred euros if they leave all their smart devices at home. The boys accept, and so begins a delightfully disorderly road trip filled with close shaves and unexpected turns – from dodging gunfire to meeting a bear, with a few low spirits along the way, but twice as much laughter to make up for it. And through it all they grapple with that age-old puzzle: why are girls so difficult to figure out?

Awards: 2024 Young Adult Novel Competition, 1st place
2025 Good Young Adult Book
2025 Nominee of the Annual Children's Literature Award
of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia

The roar of BM racing up to the bus stop could be heard long before he arrived. His car's RPM dial was in the red, the tires squealed and smoked, and the speedometer showed a number far above the limit. The bass thumped so loud that his license plate rattled on the rear hatch. The car itself, on the other

hand, was showy and well-kept. Sleek black, freshly washed, and waxed. BM no doubt cared just as much about appearances as Bar did.

BM and Bar were friends. Although it might seem strange, they'd been pals since they were kids and nothing could break their bond. Not even the fact that Bar's friend turned into a gearhead while he himself became a headbanger. At least that's what jokingly called themselves. BM's real name was Bert, but as BMWs evolved into an obsession and incurable disease, it didn't take long for him to gain a nickname closer to the automaker. BM was a car fanatic. He tinkered with his own day and night, only taking breaks to go to work because he was 18 and had to live a real life. That didn't always turn out perfectly, of course, though it didn't keep him from trying over and over again. Persistence was his virtue.



Hugo Vaher (1974) is an author, translator, and musician. He graduated with a degree in law from Tartu University. Vaher has written 10 books for children and young adults, and has been awarded in both the My First Book children's story competition and the Estonian Youth Novel Competition. In

his works, Vaher uses thrilling scenes to show that even the most ordinary child can be a hero, especially if they have a friend by their side and a safe home to which they can retreat.

The black German steed with lowered suspension stopped right in front of Bar at the bus stop.

"Get in!" BM yelled above the thumping bass.

He did.

"So, we're going to my girlfriend's place, k?" BM shouted.

One hand adjusted the medallion that hung from a thick silver chain around his neck while the other, closed in a fist at the end of a tanned arm, remained draped over the wheel. He wore a couple massive rings on his fingers. Given that it was summer, BM wasn't wearing his usual track suit but an ordinary white tank top, basketball shorts of a certain well-known brand, and flip-flops. That was enough. He probably had dark hair, as his eyebrows were dark. He also had an athletic build and a nice smile for dazzling the girls. Although Bar was the younger of the two, he was still a little taller than his friend.

"You mean the one who dumped you?" Bar asked.

"No, dickhead! She didn't dump me; we just need to talk. These long-distance relationships are total bullshit!"

"And you're hoping that if you suddenly show up way out there in the boondocks, she'll run up to meet you with open arms?"

"Yeah! Just got to use the right words. And strategy is everything! I already sent her a couple warm-up texts, so to say," BM explained.

"What'd she reply?" Bar asked.

"Told me to fuck off, but I guess she's still just pissed. Fuck!"

BM's relationship was rocky because outside of his job, he spent all his time (and money, unfortunately) on tuning his car. They'd met sometime earlier that summer. Or had they? Who could remember, exactly. Still, he was head-over-heels in love. BM had even cut back on smoking. He said he couldn't get below a pack a day but love still works miracles.

"Why does your car have foreign plates?" Bar asked.

"Why not? And for tax reasons, mainly," BM replied. "So, right now we're going to pay your parents a visit first and tell them what's up. I can't go without you, man! We'll have ourselves a nice little road trip," he added over the music.

"And Sparky, too!" Bar yelled.

"Fucking right Sparky comes with! How can we go without him!?"

BM put the car into gear.

"Now, check out the way this beauty rides. Stage one chip. Installed it myself. She'll rocket to the Moon!"

Bar had ridden in BM's car before; it got faster and more powerful with every year. Today, the laws of physics pressed the punk so deep into his seat as the BMW sped off that his mohawk was smushed against the headrest. He tried to shift into a better position, but the acceleration was so intense that he gave up on the second try. The squealing of tires and a cloud of smoke (was it from rubber or engine oil?) trailed them for a while before they came to an intersection and had to slow down. Contrary to Bar's hopes that the drive would resume at a speed suitable to his life-insurance provider, BM whipped the German iron horse so cockily on the turn that first one side of the car slid forward, then the other, then the first again, and the tire-squealing rally continued until the next intersection forced them to decelerate. That, of course, was only to give BM another chance to show off his driving skills and his car's capabilities. This continued until they arrived at a modern, nice-looking suburban apartment building surrounded by a low hedge.

The car braked sharply and Bar was now flung forward, held back only by his taut seatbelt. His sweaty back made a smacking sound as it unstuck from the leather upholstery.

"Fuckin' right, yeah?" BM crowed as he turned off the engine and shot Bar a triumphant grin.

"I think I pissed myself a little," the boy replied, well aware of his friend's extreme perfectionism when it came to cleanliness inside his car and the care of its leather seats.

"God damn it! Get out of here!" BM howled before he noticed Bar's teasing grin and the way he released his seatbelt calmly and unhurriedly.

Translated by Adam Cullen



**Eesti
Lastekirjanduse
Keskus**

Estonian Children's
Literature Centre