

# Children's Books by Bulgarian Writers and Artists

2023



ТОЗИ ПРОЕКТ Е РЕАЛИЗИРАН  
С ФИНАНСОВАТА ПОДКРЕПА  
НА МИНИСТЕРСТВОТО НА КУЛТУРАТА

# Children's Books by Bulgarian Writers and Artists

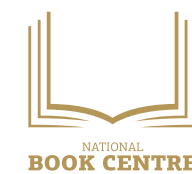
# 2023

## Children's Books by Bulgarian Writers and Artists

- © National Palace of Culture – Congress Centre Sofia 2023,  
National Book Centre
- © Translation by Angela Rodel and Desislava Toncheva

Svetlozar Zhelev, editor  
Angela Rodel, proofreading and editing

- © Damyan Damyanov, cover and book design



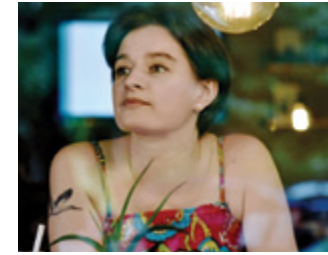
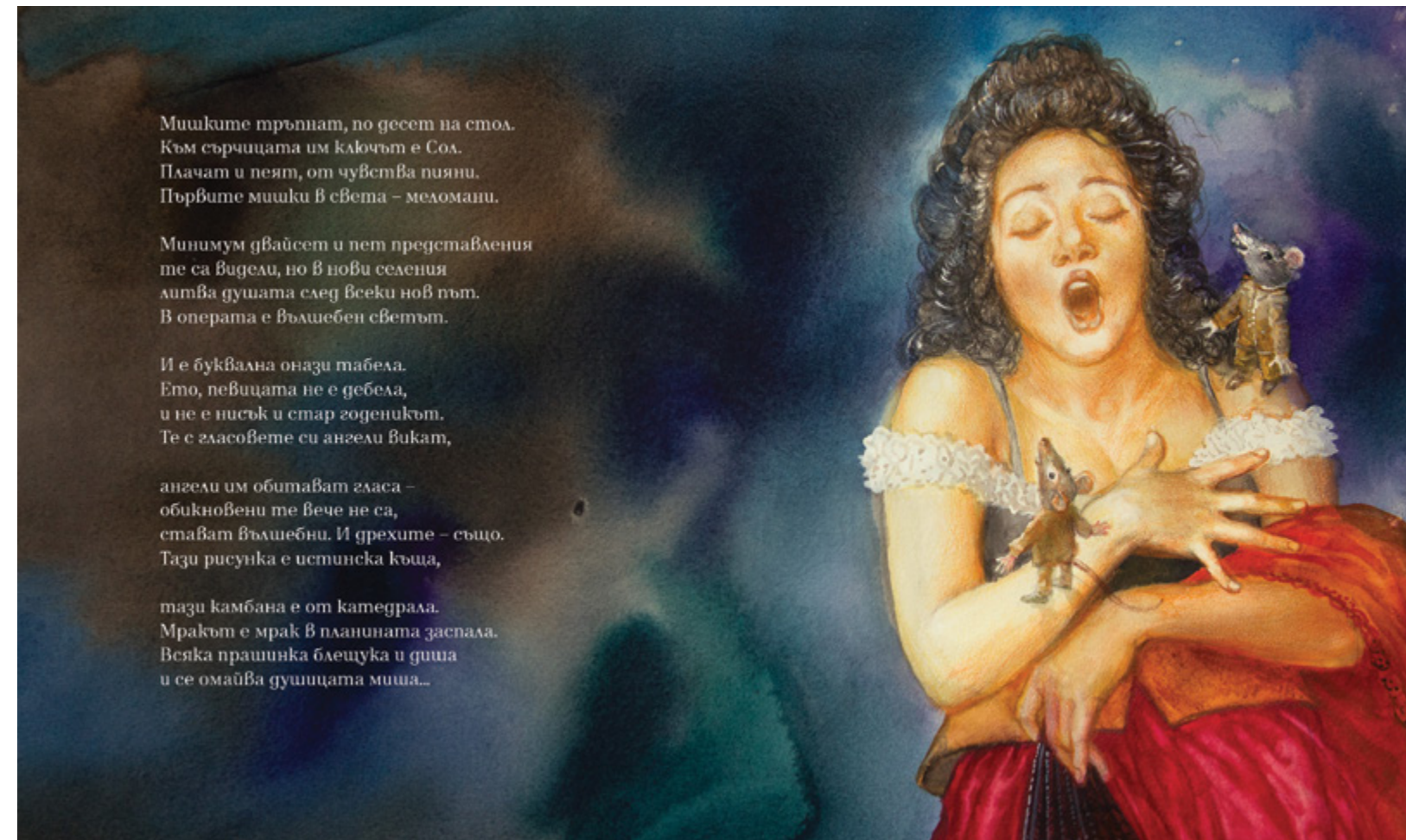


## Mice Go to the Opera Мишките отиват на опера

Author: Maria Doneva  
Illustrator: Kiril Zlatkov

Picture book in verse, 32 pages  
ISBN: 9786191867929  
Janet-45 Publishing House, 2022

**M**ice Go to the Opera is a richly illustrated book that includes etiquette for attending the opera as well as a poem about the experiences of a group of music-loving mice who go to see *Carmen*. The joy of stepping out onto the stage fills them with dreams because “opera is an art for everyone.” The book is intended for readers of all ages.



MARIA DONEVA writes poems for children and adults, as well as plays and song lyrics. She translates children's books in verse from English. She is a playwright at the Geo Milev Drama Theatre in the city of Stara Zagora. She writes a column on books for *Sega* newspaper and hosts a literature podcast on Radio Stara Zagora. She participates in various literary-musical projects related to classical music and jazz. Maria Doneva was named a “Knight of the Book”; she has won the Stara Zagora, Veselin Hanchev, and Rashko Sougarev awards. She has also been nominated for the Hristo G. Danov, Quill, and Konstantin Konstantinov awards. She frequently travels to meet readers, especially children, and enthusiastically engages in initiatives to promote reading.



KIRIL ZLATKOV graduated in graphics from the Bulgarian National Academy of Art in 1996. He has worked in various fields of visual arts, such as graphics, painting, poster and graphic design, illustration, calligraphy and font; he has also had several solo exhibitions and participated in various general exhibitions, biennials and triennials in Bulgaria and around the world. Zlatkov worked in the field of advertising as an art director and creative director at various agencies from 1999 to 2013. He curated an exhibition, “New Bulgarian Typography”, within One Design Week 2013, as well as “New Bulgarian Typography 2” in 2019. He was also one of the instigators and authors of the “For Bulgarian Cyrillic” manifesto.

Kiril Zlatkov has received a number of awards, including: Grand Prize in the 2012 Chopin 200 competition; Bulgarian artist prize in the 2010 Triennial of the Stage Poster; 2014 Golden Lion Award for *Daniel Harms. Selected Works* (Fakel Express Publishing); 2015 Hristo G. Danov Award for the book *When I Want to Be Silent* by Zornitsa Hristova and Kiril Zlatkov; 2017 Golden Brush Award; Hristo G. Danov Award for book layout for *Poetry by Pierre de Ronsard* (Colibri Publishing, 2020); Konstantin Konstantinov National Award for illustration at the 2023 National Children's Book Festival in Sliven for *Mice Go to the Opera* by Maria Doneva.





## Deep into the Penetrable Darkness

Вдън прогледния мрак

Author: Victor Samuilov

Illustrator: Nevena Angelova

Children's book, 48 pages  
 ISBN: 9786191867325  
 Janet-45 Publishing House, 2022

This time Victor Samuilov offers former children (today's mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts...) and their children an even more fabulous adventure to read aloud or in private. Not only for a good night, but also for good morning.

Victor Samuilov is that rare breed of writer who manages to engage both kids and parents in his game. And that's probably because he himself still plays with a child's wonder—with words, viewpoints and important subjects. He turns them upside down, shakes out the stale meanings, and fills them with extraordinary things. He plays with such mastery that he somehow manages to submerge us in deep thought while we are still laughing out loud. And vice versa.



VICTOR SAMOUILOV was born in Sofia in 1946. He graduated from Sofia University with a master's degree in Bulgarian philology and has worked for youth, literary and satirical publications. He was a scriptwriter and editor at the Cartoon Studios of Sofia Cinema Center and compiled numerous anthologies, textbooks and training aids. He has written 19 books, most of which are for children. The winner of three national awards, Victor Samuilov also won first prize from the South Eastern European Literature Center for his contribution to literature for children and teenagers.



NEVENA ANGELOVA (b. 1974) graduated from the National Academy of Arts, Sofia, specializing in Book and Print Graphics. Over the last ten years she has worked as a lecturer at the same academy. Besides at numerous exhibitions in Bulgaria, Angelova's works have been shown in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and other countries. She has illustrated and designed various editions for children and adults.





## Colorful Soap Bubbles Шарени сапунени балони

Author: Ivanka Mogilska  
Illustrator: Elena Vasileva

Children's picture book, 48 pages  
ISBN: 9786191867363  
Janet-45 Publishing House, 2022



Sixteen tales about everyday miracles that fill children with awe, but which adults often don't notice. The characters in these tales are people, objects, real and fantastical creatures, as if the whole world has gathered around the young reader, talking to them, making them laugh and protecting them.

In this book, children will get answers to important questions, such as: Can you be everyone's friend?; Why are trolls always angry?; Why does donkey not eat Christmas cake?; Is the naughtiest girl in the neighborhood actually a good monster?

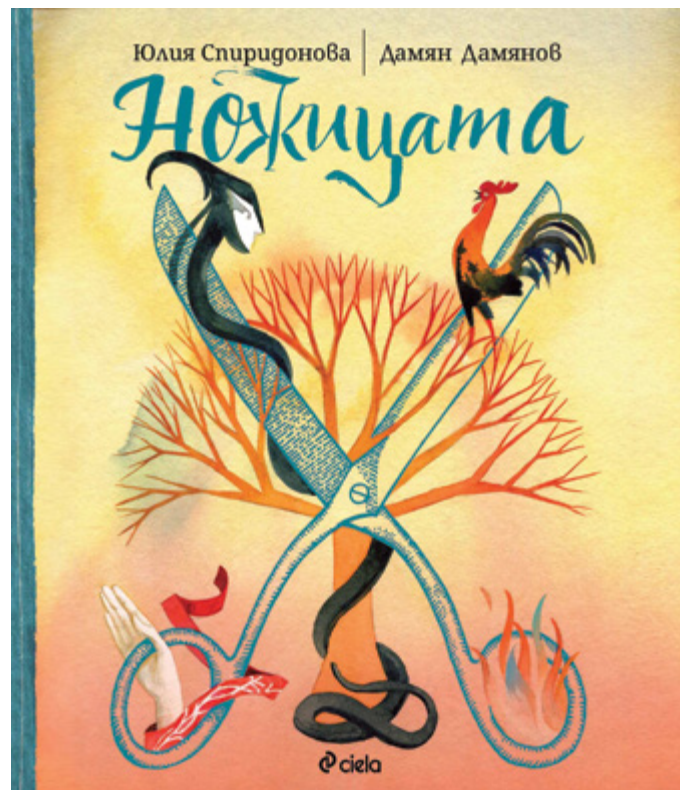
These tales are cozy and colorful like a child's bedroom. Here, children can play, sulk, and make believe, as well as learn how to deal with their worries. Tales that are extraordinary, lovable, kind and short—like childhood itself.



IVANKA MOGILSKA (1981) is an author of fairy tales, short stories, novels and poems. Her collection of poems *DNA* won a Southern Spring Debut Award. Her second collection of poems, *In Other Words*, received the Vladimir Bashev National Award for Literature. Her novel *Sudden Streets* was translated and published in Hungarian as part of the European Prose series by L'Harmattan Publishing House. Mogilska is a playwright and has participated in several performances presented in Bulgaria, Germany and the Czech Republic. Her poetry and prose have been translated into English, French, German, Hungarian, Serbian, Farsi and Bangla.



ELENA VASILEVA (1978) discovered the wonder of watercolors and the weaving of wall tapestries in the High School of Applied Arts. At the Bulgarian National Academy of Art, she continued to explore textiles and watercolor drawings. She graduated with a master's degree in preschool pedagogy from Sofia University. Vasileva runs art workshops for children and works as a kindergarten teacher.



## Scissors Ножуцата

Author: Julia Spiridonova  
Illustrator: Damyan Damyanov

Children's book, 104 pages  
ISBN: 9789542840923  
Ciela Norma Publishing, 2022

The history of Bulgaria, with its arbitrary ebbs and flows, is outlined not only by the eloquent words of Julia Spiridonova, but through the virtuoso illustrations of Damyan Damyanov. Written with a deep understanding of human nature, suitable for children and adults alike, *Scissors* cuts through time to recall the history of an entire nation.

Some objects handed down from generation to generation serve as a physical link to the past and remind us that our own history began centuries before we were born. This is the message of the exceptional book *Scissors*, created by the beloved writer Julia Spiridonova and talented artist Damyan Damyanov, which is already out and which aims to take us on an exciting journey through the depths of Bulgarian memory.

Interwoven with the history of Julia Spiridonova's family, the book outlines a path inspired by a simple family relic, steel scissors, which became a witness and guardian of events that determined the fate of Bulgaria. The book's special edition includes more than 50 watercolor illustrations that take the reader down the hidden alleys of ancestral memory.

Opening a door to a whirlwind journey through the ages, from Ancient Egypt and Rome, through the Renaissance and the Bulgarian Revival to the present day, Julia Spiridonova presents a different look at Bulgarian and world history and reminds us without unnecessary pathos and convoluted statements that the path to the future is also reflected in a clear view of the past.



JULIA SPIRIDONOVA was born in Sofia into a family of artists. She works as a scriptwriter and freelance writer. Her books have been translated into French, German, Hungarian, Romanian, Macedonian, Czech and Farsi. She has won numerous prizes and awards, including the Konstantin Konstantinov Prize (2010), the P. P. Slaveykov Award (2010), the 2015 Quill Award for Children's Literature and the 2016 Magic Pearl Award for the book *Be My Friend*; the 2016 Most-Read Children's Writer at Sofia City Library; and the 2016 Writer of the Year Award. Her published books are: *Dreamland*, a middle-grade fantasy trilogy; a young adult series that includes *Tina and a Half* (2009), *Countess Bathory* (2010), *Max* (2012), and *Chronos* (2016); the standalone YA novel *The Cricket's Shadow* (2022); the trilogy *Be My Friend* (2015); *What Magic Lies in the Snow* (2015); *Where Are You, Sunshine?* (2017); and *Bobby and Santa's Secret Agents* (2018).



DAMYAN DAMYANOV was born on April 5, 1982. He works in the field of book design (with more than 3,000 covers to his credit), posters, illustrations, postage stamps, and calligraphy. He also writes articles on poster art and graphic design. Damyanov authored a number of philatelic publications between 2004 and 2023. He published a number of articles on poster and graphic design issues in *Prographica* magazine. He has held many solo exhibitions, as well participated in One Design Week in Plovdiv, and in the Gabrovo Biennial of Humour and Satire in Arts.

In 2017, Damyanov received the Konstantin Konstantinov National Award for illustration. In 2021, he won the Hristo G. Danov Award in the category "Artist or Book Design and Layout" for *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka and *Stories Written on a Typewriter* by Gianni Rodari. In 2023, he won Zlatna Chetka (Golden Brush) Award for book design and illustration.





## Detective Phillip's Christmas Case

Коледният случай  
на детектива Филип

Author: Sotir Gelev  
Illustrator: Penko Gelev

Children's book, 72 pages.  
ISBN: 9786191644995  
Enthusiast Publishing House, 2022



In this wonderful Christmas story, you will meet Houli, the cat of the famous actress Dolly Blue, who went missing (the cat, not the actress).

Hundreds more cats have gone missing in the city, which is a real mystery. Detective Philip and his sidekick, Darwin the dog, are hired to figure it out. The case turns out to be much more complicated than expected, and the three participants (you will soon find out who the third is) begin an investigation that will involve them in a dangerous adventure.

Will they be able to save themselves, Christmas, and the whole world?



SOTIR GELEV (author and illustrator) and PENKO GELEV (illustrator) were born in Ase-novgrad, Sotir in 1960, and Penko in 1968. Both of them took drawing lessons with Georgi Kovachev, one of the most refined and elegant Bulgarian landscape painters.

Sotir graduated from the School of Performing Arts in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. In 1982 he made the animated film *The Chicken*, which was professionally produced the following year in the State Studio for Animated Films. *The Chicken* participated in the Berlinale in 1984 and also won the Golden Dove in Leipzig. While studying at the Academy of Arts, Sotir drew comics for *Rainbow* magazine. His series based on Tolkien's books *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* contributed to the popularization of fantasy literature in Bulgaria. Since 1991, Sotir has been working in the field of graphic design, television advertising, and special effects. In 1997 he published the poetry collection *Afternoon Meatball*.

Penko studied at the High Schools for Fine Arts in Plovdiv and Sofia. Since 1991 he has worked as an art editor for various newspapers and magazines. He wrote and drew the comics *The Wizard of Oz* and *Ozma of Oz* based on the work of L. F. Baum and *Mowgli* based on the work of Rudyard Kipling for the children's newspaper *Venche*. Penko also illustrated the comics *Elijah and August*, written by Sotir Gelev, for the same publication.

In 1991, the Gelev brothers created the comics magazine *Ricks*. For the magazine, Penko drew the comics *Song of the Axols* and *Corporal Nek* based on scripts by his brother. Sotir, on the other hand, illustrated the comic book *Zhmak and the Secret of the Pirgs*. In 1995, Sotir and Penko founded their own graphic design company. In the course of several years they created many posters, logos, book layouts and magazines. In 1997, they released Penko's *Mowgli* comic book album. Both brothers are producers and screenwriters of dozens of series, films and animations. Together with their colleagues from *Rainbow* magazine, they lead the Rainbow Project, whose goal is to promote and revive the art of comics in Bulgaria. Sotir and Penko are the authors of a series of comics and books about Elijah and August, which includes *Elijah and August*; *Elijah, August and the Seven Dwarfs*; and *Elijah, August and Gergin*.





## Stories about Feet Истории с крачета

Author: Tzveta Brestnichka  
Illustrator: Steliana Doneva

Children's picture book, 32 pages  
ISBN: 9786191998647  
Fyut Publishing House, 2022

For the Feet, each day is different from every other. Quite different... Which of them can better kick a ball, Left or Right? And will the Feet find Mom if they run to the flower shop? Which Foot will help Grandma make pancakes? Can two Feet save Santa? And will the Feet find friends in kindergarten?

Five stories filled with lots of laughter and adventure, about the extraordinary days of the naughty Feet. For them, every day is different. Quite, quite different...



TZVETA BRESTNICHKA is among the most popular and beloved contemporary Bulgarian children's writers. Generations of children have grown up with her rhyming tales from the *Enchanted Woods* series, while her stories from *Fairytales A to Z* inspired young readers to discover the beauty of their native language. She knows how to tell stories with passion and love, both stories that happened and ones that did not, inspired by her experiences with her four children, her growing grandchildren, and backpacking around the world. Tzveta is actively involved with improving the situation of children in Bulgaria. For more than 15 years she has been actively working in the Parents Association. For two consecutive years, she was the program director of the Sofia International Literary Festival for Children and Youth, the initiator of the initiative "A Child Wants Magic. Become a Wizard—Give Them a Book," which for three years in a row has enabled thousands of donors to send books to underprivileged children across the country.



STELIANA DONEVA was born and lives in Sofia. She graduated from the High School of Applied Arts in Sofia, majoring in Children's Toys, and then in Graphics from Veliko Tarnovo University. She started her career as an animator, but her great love has always been children's books and their incredible world of words and images. Doneva shared that her work as an illustrator is a way to touch and experience the subtle states of the human psyche, because the dreams and longings of children are unadulterated and pure. Children bring us back to lost feelings about life and faith in what is good. Doneva has illustrated multiple children's books published both in Bulgaria and abroad.







## The Adventures of Courage Forage, Grizni Halva and Pane Kashkavale in the Kingdom of Patladzhaniya

Приключенията на Кураж Фураж, Гризни Халва и Панае Кашкавале в царството Патладжания

Author: Ivan Radenkov  
Illustrator: Antonia Mechkueva

Children's book, 184 pages  
ISBN: 9786191645275  
Enthusiast Publishing House, 2023

This story is written with a huge smile and with love for the work *The Adventures of the Little Onion* by Gianni Rodari. This story is not just about the battle between good and evil. Also, it's not just about the best musical group, Barabas, nor is it just about love and whether it's worth fighting for. It's actually about all of this, as well as many other cool things.



IVAN RADENKOV has been a children's author since he became a father in 2012. His two sons inspired him to write; they cause him to live out his second childhood every day, while together they make mischief and create stories. Each of their adventures is an inspiration for new stories with pictures and sometimes music. Since Ivan is also a musician, we often find lyrics in his other books; in the enclosed CDs there is music with guitars and drums, which the children like. Ivan Radenkov's wholesome, sincere and funny stories are already being studied by Bulgarian children in third grade.

ANTONIA MECHKUEVA is an artist with many years of experience in graphic design. She works mainly in the field of illustration and the artistic design of books and educational publications, some of which have won awards.





## Vanilla the Magnificent and Omnipotent

Ванилия Величественова  
Всемогъщова

Author: Katya Antonova  
Illustrator: Mila Lozanova

Children's book, 120 pages  
ISBN: 9786197131796  
Ribka Publishing, 2022

This is the fifth novel about the fairy Vanilla, a favorite character for Bulgarian children. This book deals with the themes of friendship, values, and the choices we make. With her typical frankness, the main character draws the reader's attention to attitudes and tendencies that require a more careful approach. All this is presented in an understandable and clear way, with a lot of humor.

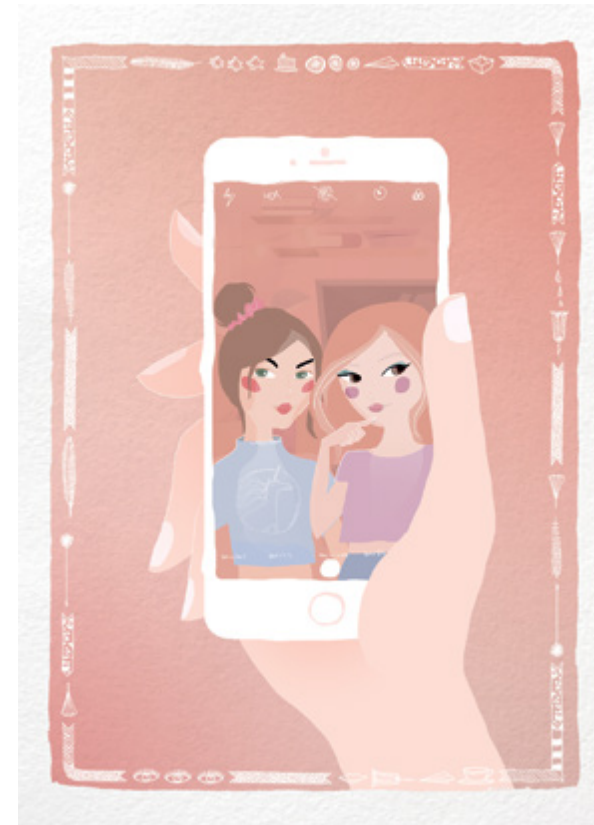
Can a fairy enter the human world? Can it have equal rights to humans, and be accepted as part of society? And can a fairy become an influencer? *Vanilla the Magnificent and Omnipotent* gives the funniest and most candid answers to these questions.



KATYA ANTONOVA was born in 1982 in Sofia. In the last ten years she has written mainly children's books. Antonova is the author of over 20 books, including the bestsellers *The Sugar Bowl Fairy*, and *The Two Kingdoms!* She writes about the adventures of Vanilla (*The Sugar Bowl Fairy*) in five consecutive novels, which currently have a record total circulation of over 100,000 copies. In 2023, one of the most respected theaters in Bulgaria created a production based on these novels, which filled seats throughout the season. Antonova won an award for being the most-read author of children's literature for 2022 from the Sofia City Library. She is the recipient of the 2023 Magic Pearl National Children's Choice Award. Katya Antonova founded Ribka Publishing House and is the mother of four wonderful children.



MILA LOZANOVA works in the field of illustration and poster design, and her goal has always been to push the boundaries of creativity and have a larger impact with her work. She works at one of the top ad agencies in Bulgaria. "Being an artist is my favorite role. A lot of people know me as a mother of a teenager, an amateur botanist, and a surfer," she said. Lozanova studied advertising design at the National Academy of Arts in Sofia, and has a PhD in Art History and Applied Arts. She collaborates with talented people from various creative collectives and non-profit organizations on a variety of projects. Additionally, Lozanova works as an illustrator and graphic designer with various publishing houses. Her illustrations from the book *The Sugar Bowl Fairy* were presented internationally in foreign markets. Another professional field she delves in is poster design. She has won two awards at the International Triennial of the Stage Poster. Mila also takes part in projects related to scenography and puppet making as a set designer. In the autumn of 2021, she boldly took her art to a much larger scale by painting a mural on a wall in the center of Sofia.





## The *Most* BIGGEST Adventure of the Little Gremlin

Най-най-голямото приключение на малкото таласъмче

Author: Nikola Raykov

Gamebook, 94 pages  
ISBN: 9786197269086  
Gametale Publishing House, 2023

Нas the time come for the little gremlin to grow, and what is the recipe for this? Are you ready to venture beyond the boundaries of the universe? Will you visit the Planet of Cooks or the Planet of Doctors in search of that recipe? Will you land on the ice-bound world of massive robots, or will you discover dinosaurs? Will you reach the Planet of Gremlins or the Planet Without Gremlins?

The impressive conclusion to Nikola Raykov's iconic trilogy will once again transport you to worlds of boundless childhood imagination, searching for the true answer to the question: "What does it mean to grow up?" And is there a single answer to that with 18 different possible endings?



Once upon a time, maybe five hours ago, or three minutes from now, there lived a man. He and his family dwelled in a small house in a very small village, in a very small country, but he had BIG ideas. And so one night he began to write a book for his little son. The book was unlike any other. Yes, it was funny and full of kindness and adventure, but most important of all, the book was magical! It was so magical that it even had twenty different endings!

And the book became famous. Everybody felt the magic and wanted to read it: children, parents and teachers. Everybody wanted to give it a prize or award. And so the man was no longer just "a man," but a "children's book author." And as such an author, he had to write more books, which were BIGGER and BETTER, and he even received the BIGGEST award in his small country. So the "children's book author" became a "famous children's book author," which was now way too long to spell or pronounce.

And that's how his books grew up to be TOO BIG for the small country and decided to go on a BIG adventure! So how does the story end? Well, this is a magical story and the ending is up to you!





## A Tale about Malcho and His Pocket-Sized Mother

Приказка за Малчо и майка му, която се побираше в джобчето му

Author and Illustrator:  
Liliana Dvoryanova

Children's picture book, 56 pages  
ISBN: 9786191998678  
Fyut Publishing House, 2022

Lea and Theo are astronauts. Theo pilots the spacecraft, while Lea photographs and describes everything important. The two of them were about to set off to a distant planet—a planet so small that the two astronauts had to be shrunk in size.

A few days before the journey was to begin, however, Lea and Theo found out that they were going to become a mom and dad... Dad Theo still had to go, and so he wouldn't miss them too terribly, Mom Lea promised to photograph and describe everything important while the baby grew up and became a little boy... A beautiful story about children and parents, in which the little ones are big and the big ones are small, but one thing remains unchanged—the love between them.



Малчо плачеше в далечината, защото някакви хора го отнасяха на друга планета. И в съня си майката разбра, че трябва много да побърза, за да го спаси. Тя започна да скача от планета на планета и при

46

всеки подскок ставаше по-висока: по-висока от чаена лъжичка, по-висока от чаша, по-висока от буркан. И ето тъкмо навреме, тя стигна до Малчо и вече беше майка – великан.

47



LILIANA DVORYANOVA is an artist and illustrator who works in the field of visual art, including painting, graphics, photography, conceptual forms, illustration and graphic design. She holds master's degrees in Philosophy and Graphic Design, as well as a doctorate in Fine Art Pedagogy.

Dvoryanova has participated in more than 20 group exhibitions of contemporary Bulgarian art in the country and abroad. She also creates illustrations for children's story books and textbooks and is the author of fine art textbooks for students between first and fourth grade. She also designs book covers. *A Tale about Malcho and His Pocket-Sized Mother* is the second children's book by Liliana Dvoryanova. She is also the author of the adult picture book *Islands*, inspired by the paintings from one of her exhibitions.

Dvoryanova was the initiator and author of the project *Tales from Pictures*, which presents works by famous artists told as tales. Thus, children are drawn to look at, experience, make sense of, and understand the works of art and engage their imagination and creative abilities.



# Translators

ANGELA RODEL is a literary translator who holds degrees from Yale and UCLA. Her translations have appeared in *McSweeney's*, *Two Lines*, *Ploughshares*, *Words Without Borders*, etc. She has received NEA and PEN translation grants; nine novels in her translation have been published in the US and UK. Her translation of Georgi Gospodinov's *Physics of Sorrow* won the 2016 AATSEEL Prize for Literary Translation, and was shortlisted for the 2016 PEN Translation Prize and ALTA's 2016 Translation Award. Her translation of Georgi Gospodinov's novel *Time Shelter* won the 2023 International Booker Prize.

DESI SLAVA TONCHEVA works as a translator and senior editor in the English Service Department of the Bulgarian News Agency (BTA). She is also a clinical psychologist with her own psychotherapy practice on the side. In fact, she discovered her passion for translation when she was studying to be a therapist and helped out with translating lectures by foreign trainers, which inspired her to get her MA in Translation and Editing. She still often translates psychology-related events. Toncheva feels that both of her career paths complement each other perfectly, as in essence both are about the support of understanding and communication.

## Children's Books by Bulgarian Writers and Artists

Catalogue edited by Svetlozar Zhelev

Translation by Angela Rodel and Desislava Toncheva

Proofreading and editing by Angela Rodel

Cover and book design by Damyan Damyanov

Printed in Bulgaria

Published by the **National Book Centre**,

National Palace of Culture – Congress Centre Sofia 2023

[www.ndk.bg](http://www.ndk.bg) [www.nbc.bg](http://www.nbc.bg)

1 Bulgaria Square, Sofia 1000, Bulgaria

[www.ndk.bg](http://www.ndk.bg) [nbc@ndk.bg](mailto:nbc@ndk.bg)

phone: +359 2 9166411