



Children's Books
by Bulgarian
Writers
and Artists

2024



NATIONAL
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ТОЗИ ПРОЕКТ Е РЕАЛИЗИРАН
С ФИНАНСОВАТА ПОДКРЕПА
НА МИНИСТЕРСТВОТО НА КУЛТУРАТА

Children's Books by Bulgarian Writers and Artists

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The *Ant's Letter* is a romantic poem for teenagers, full of fantasy, adventure, and wonderful illustrations. A remarkable debut in illustration by the talented artist Elena Panayotova.

The Ant's Letter is a celebration of happiness, love, hope, and the promise of second chances. A poetry of joy, a guide to making dreams come true, and a guide to taming Fate. This book proves that the most important letters always reach their recipients. A solemn and heartfelt assurance that everyone—be they ant, elephant or human—has the opportunity to find their soulmate.

As colorful as it is for children, as wise as it is for adults, *The Ant's Letter* will bring a genuine smile to everyone's face.

The Ant's Letter

Писмото на мравката

Author: Mariya Doneva

Illustrator: Elena Panayotova





MARIYA DONEVA (1974) is a highly acclaimed and beloved Bulgarian poet and children's book author. With a remarkable career, she has published more than twenty titles, including poetry collections, short stories and children's books. In addition to her writing, Mariya has translated over 50 titles from English to Bulgarian, with a significant contribution to introducing Julia Donaldson's works to the Bulgarian readership. In recognition of her exceptional contribution, she was honored with the Knight of the Book award by the Bulgarian Booksellers Association in 2022. Her work *The Mice Go to the Opera* was short-listed for the Peroto (Quill) award for contemporary children's literature. Adding to her accolades, Mariya was named the most-read children's author by the Sofia City Library in January 2024. Her poems have been translated into English, Russian, and Farsi. In 2005, the poetry collection *The Emptiness Between Us* was published in Macedonian (Macedonia Prima).

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ELENA PANAYOTOVA

I was born in the previous century just at the outskirts of the Balkan mountain, in the town of Sliven. I studied architecture in Sofia, then worked as an architect for several years. Those were years of exploring the world around me through travel and photography. Recently I got back to my art supplies and rediscovered my passion for storytelling. The most important thing in my illustrations are hidden details and hints to things that I find funny and amusing. I like modern cities and old towns, ancient mountain villages, secret forest passages in early autumn. I love spring, ice-cream and trains, but my most favourite thing is my little daughter!



12

В подводното царство на нежна сирена,
при кораб, в мъглата забил със сирена?
Писмото, побрало тъга и колнежи,
и бяла акула дори ще разнежи,
но полза каква? – щом на сяло се лута.
„Мечта“ е единствената му валута.



11

Сред зъбери остри и рифове върли,
на меки, заоблени хълмове с плясък,
на стар вълнолом, посред пяна и трясък,
на фар, на пристанище, в мрежа, на кей,
в жестоките лапи на морски злодей...







Gold from Zagreus

Злато от Загреи

Author: Vesela Flamburari

Illustrator: Petar Stanimirov

There are sacred places in Bulgaria where astonishing ancient artifacts have been discovered. The mysterious presence of these places inspired me to write a fantasy novel based on an ancient Thracian myth—that of Zagreus (known in Greek mythology as Dionysos).

The story is based as much on the myth of Zagreus as on the old legends of the mother goddess and the Thracian belief in immortality.

Zagreus is the son of the mother goddess; he is the god of the underworld, but also the god of rebirth and immortality. Zagreus is chased by *Fyurkosi* (Titans in Greek mythology) with their faces covered in plaster so they would not be recognized. The *Fyurkosi* (Titans) swallow Zagreus (Dionysos) together with his divine toys, but nevertheless Zagreus (in the novel—Brimo) is reborn.

Meda, Pancho, and Brimo—the main characters in the novel *Gold from Zagreus* are called to restore the disturbed balance between our world and the magical world (Mara was killed so that treasure hunters could

steal two gold Thracian coins, which must be returned to restore balance).

Mara—the mother of Meda and Brimo—is the mother goddess herself (because every mother is a mother goddess), but to the treasure hunters (her killers) and their crime bosses, she is the Gorgon Medusa.

Pancho, of course, is the god Pan, but in his oldest Thracian form, where the word “pan” means universe, world. He protects the balance between nature and man as part of it. He is the god of the ability to subdue the universe, the world, and nature.

Providing help in this great adventure are many wonderful natural and mythical characters, as well as the northern wind, Boreus, and the southern wind, Zephyr.



VESELA FLAMBURARI was born on January 17, 1967, in Dobrich. She majored in acting for puppet theater at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts and in cultural studies at Sofia University.

For her work in the field of children's and young adult literature, fantasy, and fiction, she was twice awarded the Konstantin Konstantinov Award for contribution to children's book publishing, the Petya Karoleva National Award for Children's Literature, and the National Award for Best Fiction Writer. In addition to books, she has published articles, essays, theater plays, and television and radio scripts.

She is a member of the Union of Bulgarian Writers.

Flamburari lives and works in Athens, Greece. She has deep dark brown eyes, and she is fat until further notice, tolerably absent-minded, horrifyingly slow, but precise and reliable.



PETAR STANIMIROV is a Bulgarian artist whose name is associated with the comics magazine *Rainbow*, with the book covers for Stephen King and Dean Koontz by Pleiad Books, and with the boom of game books in Bulgaria, including his work as art director at Haemimont Games Studio and his active work to promote Bulgarian comics at home and abroad. He also works with the civic association The Rainbow Project and organizes comics exhibitions in this role as chairman of the Comics Section of the Comics Association.

He is the author of hundreds of illustrations and covers for the series *Peaks* ("Върхове"), published by East West Publishing, and the illustrations for the series *The Ring of the Nibelung* ("Пръстенът на нибелунга"), published by Kibea, as well as the illustrations for many other beloved titles for children and adults.

Stanimirov is not afraid of challenges and is always ready to abandon routine work to embark on a new creative adventure.

He lives and works in Sofia.









The Ballad of the Self-Proclaimed Knight Ferris and the Fire-Breathing Dragon Smokey

Балада за самозвания рицар Желязко и огнедишащия дракон Димчо

Author: Sotir Gelev and Penko Gelev
 Illustrator: Penko Gelev

22

Тогаз със трудната задача
 захванал се със плам ковачът.
 Нагривал, чукал и пробивал,
 разтягал, шлайфал и извивал.

Блестят очите зачервени,
 текат съзните му солени.
 Той дни и нощи броня правил,
 какво е сън, съвсем забравил.



The ballad, composed and sung by the bard Peyo, recounts the tale of the young blacksmith Ferris. After encountering a renowned knight, Ferris decides to make a name for himself through heroic deeds, such as rescuing young maidens from dangerous dragons. Having forged his own armor and sword, he sets off on his iron steed for a decisive battle with the fire-breathing dragon Smokey.

To everyone's surprise, the fight with the beast does not unfold quite as the blacksmith had anticipated...



SOTIR GELEV and PENKO GELEV were born in Asenovgrad—Sotir in 1960 and Penko in 1968. Both took drawing lessons from Georgi Kovachev, one of the most delicate and elegant Bulgarian landscape artists. Sotir graduated from the School of Performing Arts in Plovdiv. In 1982, he made the animated film *The Bird*, which participated in the Berlinale in 1984 and won the Golden Dove award in Leipzig that same year. While studying at the Academy of Arts, he drew comics for the magazine DAGA. He is the author of series based on Tolkien's books *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Penko studied at the Fine Arts High Schools in Plovdiv and Sofia. For the children's newspaper *Venche*, he wrote and illustrated the comics "The Wizard of Oz" and "Ozma of Oz," based on the works of L. F. Baum, and *Mowgli*, based on Kipling. For the same newspaper, Penko drew the comic "Iliycho and August," based on a script by Sotir Gelev.

In 1991, the two brothers created the comic magazine RIX, for which Penko drew the comics "The Song of the Axolotls" and "Private Nek," based on scripts by his brother. Sotir drew the comic "Zmak and the Secret of the Pyrgi." In 1997, they published an album featuring the comic "Mowgli," and a year later, they wrote the script and made the film *Magicians*. In 2000, they wrote the script and shot the film *Kolobar* for BNT.

From 2001 to 2007, they produced the children's TV series *Tales of Physics and Astronomy*, creating a total of 250 episodes. In 2008 and 2009, they produced the children's series *Good Day, Mr. Jasmine*. During this period, Penko created 22 comic albums for the British publisher Salariya Book Company. Books from this series were published in Bulgaria, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Germany, Brazil, and Colombia.

After 2009, Penko and Sotir began working on a series of animated films—*Doroga*, *Kerata*, *Orbis*, *Vector* and *Lector*, *Imago*, *Gas Mask*, and *The Labyrinth*. In 2011, Penko produced the TV film *Yellow Dog*, based on a script by Sotir Gelev and Maria Nikolova, and Sotir created the original animated film *Birds* (a remake of *The Bird* from 1982).

Sotir and Penko, along with their colleagues from the magazine *DAGA* ("Rainbow"), organized the group "The Rainbow Project," aimed at popularizing and reviving the art of comics in Bulgaria. In 2012, they released the album *Over the Rainbow*.

Both brothers have won numerous awards for their work in children's literature and media, and space does not permit a full listing of them, but recent joint works include their comic book series "Iliycho and August" and the book *The Christmas Case of Detective Philip* from 2022. Additionally, Sotir Gelev's children's book *How Laura Learned to Count to Ten* (2018) won the Perotto (Quill) award in the Children's Literature category.

23



А тази броня от стомана
ръжда беззруго ще прихване.
Ще трябва смазка ефикасна,
за всекиго това е ясно.

Под навеса широк на сянка
забърка майсторът в копанка
катран и свинска мас гранива.
Получи смеска миризлива.

Но кой ти гледа миризмата?
Сместа предпазва от ръждата
и бронята му от стомана
таз напаст няма да прихване!



За нова среща с дракон страшен
потегла той по пътя прашен,
готов за битка и победа.
Ковачът подир него гледал

и после бавно влязъл вкъщи,
съвсем посърнал и намръщен.
Нощес не спал и се обръщал,
видяла му се тясна тази къща.



Не щеш ли, сякаш във сърцето
пробола го стрела и ето
пред него истината цяла
кат факел ярък засияла!

Внезапно тя със чудна сила
ума му блуден озарила!
Ликът му тутакси посърнал,
щом вярната картина зърнал!

Той гледал дракона прободен.
Разбрал, че рицар благороден
да бъде вече не желае,
защото горко ще се кае!

Разбрал, че всеу исполнѣтъ
от неговия меч загинал,
че сторил е фатално тежка
безсмислена проклета грешка!





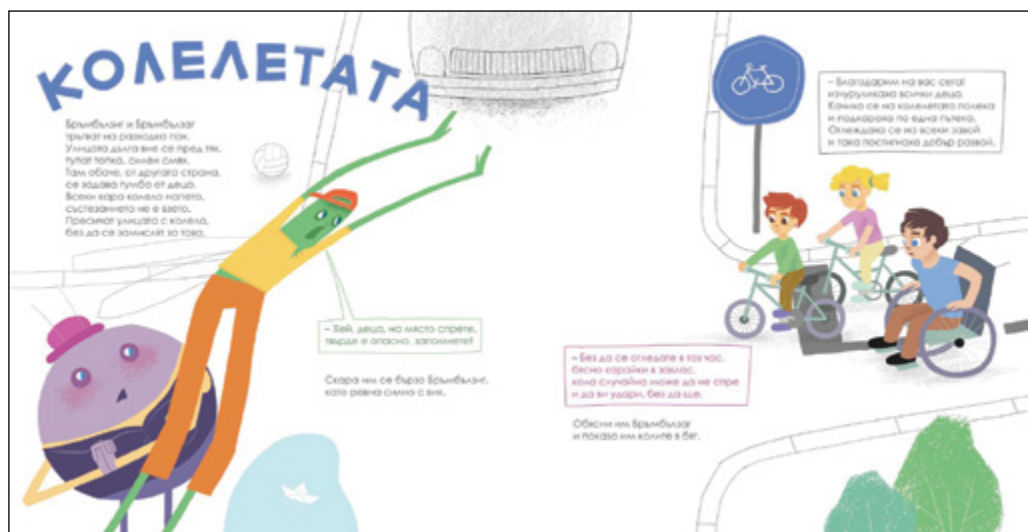
Brumblezig and Brumblezag Бръмбълзиг и Бръмбълзаг

Author: Iren Ivanova
Illustrator: Asi Petrov

Dear reader, it is clear to us that city traffic's quite dangerous. Brumblezig and Brumblezag have the tools to teach you some of the basic rules. Be ready for plenty of laughter and fun, and to know important stuff when we are done.

The book contains original poems and illustrations, created for the youngest readers, to support stories about road safety by parents and teachers in kindergartens.

This is the debut project for the author, Iren Ivanova, but not for the illustrator, Asi Petrov, known for his short animated films *Следа* ("Trace" – 2023), *Малко сутрешно престъпление* ("A Little Morning Crime" – 2015), *Баща* ("Father" – 2012), and others.





Shenanigans up to the Neck 2: Operation Wings or Drumsticks

Шантавия до шия 2:
Операция „Крилице или кълка“

Author: Radostina Nikolova

Illustrator: Boyan "Bosilek" Yordanov



Shenanigans up to the Neck 2: Operation Wings or Drumsticks takes us into a criminal tangle, and gathered at the center of the intrigue will be thousands of chickens, a handful of children, and a few adults. But before that...

New, suspicious residents appear in the village of Gevrek, who attract Lina's attention. She is determined to uncover what is hidden in the mysterious van with tinted windows, although this infuriates Niko, who has no desire to get into trouble. However, when you live with Lina and Steffany Shenanigans is your neighbor, adventures are breathing down your neck.

Shenanigans up to the Neck 1 was published for the first time in 2019 with illustrations by Hristina Eftimova. That edition was selected for the prestigious White Ravens catalog of the International Children's and Youth Library in Munich.



RADOSTINA NIKOLOVA says she was timid as a child and admired all the boys and girls in the children's books who bravely jumped into all sorts of antics. It is these characters whose adventures she experienced vicariously through books in her childhood who today inspire her to create her protagonists, with their good sides and their downsides. In them, she hopes her readers will find friends who will push them to enjoy their carefree childhood years even more.

The author of the novels from the *Shenanigans up to the Neck* series is one of the most beloved contemporary children's writers in our country. Her books *Приключенията на мотовеце* (*The Adventures of the Mooths*) are winners of the Magic Pearl award and the Most Read Children's Series of the Sofia Library of 2019 award. In 2020, Radostina received the Children's Writer of the Year award from the Sofia City Library. Radostina's books have been translated and published in China, the USA, Poland, and Finland.



The adventures of the novels in the *Shenanigans up to the Neck* series also bring Boyan "Bosilek" Yordanov back to his childhood. They make him reminisce about how, as a child, he loved rummaging through high shelves, basements, and attics and finding the boxes of books that had been put aside. He would take the ones with beautiful covers and illustrations to his father to reveal to him what they were about. Years later, Boyan says that he tries to infuse his work with the emotions of adventure, discovery, magic, and misfortune, all rolled into one.

Boyan "Bosilek" Yordanov's professional specialization is in the fields of character design, concept design, typography, and traditional illustration. He earned a master's degree in graphic design and visual communication from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Veliko Tarnovo University Saints Cyril and Methodius in 2014, and in 2013 he undertook further studies in illustration and typography at the Krakow Academy of Arts, Poland.





The Prince of Dreams

Принцът на сънищата

Author and Illustrator: Nikola Raykov
Cover: Philip Tsonkin

Every night, the Prince of Dreams flies in from his whimsical kingdom to give the children a peaceful sleep. But when one night Star, a girl with blue pajamas and a fear of monsters, mysteriously disappears, he is forced to enter a completely unknown world. Will he be able to extract what happened to her from the bony headspins? Will he discover the secret of the glowing moonflowers and win over the secretive Dark Ones to his side? And will he not be powerless before what awaits him at the end?

The master of children's writing, Nikola Raykov, invites you on a magical journey through the fabric of the night, in a tale of hope that shines in the dark and a story that intertwines the magic of dreams with the reality of waking.





NIKOLA RAYKOV became famous for his “story-games,” the first of their kind, and is one of the most popular and beloved children’s writers in Bulgaria. His works are sold in printings of many thousands, and he has won dozens of awards and nominations in Bulgaria and abroad. The rights for part of his work have been purchased in China and the USA.



- Искате ли да дойда с теб? - рече Онејро. -
 Ще летим заедно.
 - А чудовицето? - попита момиченцето.
 - Няма никакви чудовища. Обещавам.
 Детето го погледна с недоверие.
 - У в пералната ли?
 - У в пералната - потвърди Онејро.
 - Добре тогава - согласи се момиченцето.
 Спанието мише извади магическата си лунна
 хармоника и зашвири на неж. Пъле затананича
 и запя:

Сти дете, бу блеса и тва,
 там във нощната гора,
 кажи те...

- У къде е? - прехисна го момиченцето.
 - Псе? - не разбира Онејро.
 - Псеги гора.
 - Ама... нкогде, нкогде... навън - магна
 неопределено момичето.
 - У е пълна с чудовища, маме! - каза
 победносно момиченцето.
 - Урррр... Виж сега. Отпусни се на лелото
 и не поглеждай в огните.
 Детето се намести в лелото, извърта глава
 и погледна спанието мише в огните. Пъле блещукаше
 като истински звезди. Момиченцето потна в
 тва. Пълото ѝ алекна. Звездите пораснаха и
 се превърнаха в цели светове.



This is Totally Outrageous Това на нищо не прилича

Author: Viktor Samuilov

Illustrator: Nevena Angelova

T*his is Totally Outrageous* is Victor Samuilov's latest title, published by Janet 45 Print and Publishing in late 2023. This book contains funny, enlightening, and sometimes ironic poems, beautifully illustrated by Nevena Angelova.

This is Totally Outrageous tells stories from the life and adventures of kids growing up in concrete jungles, closely observed by their adult care-givers. You will read miniature poems in rhyme that convey messages of love, empathy, and tenderness by paying special attention to relationships between generations—parents and their children, grandparents and their offspring, or even between siblings. This title sparks interest among readers of all ages.

– Stanislava Stanoeva





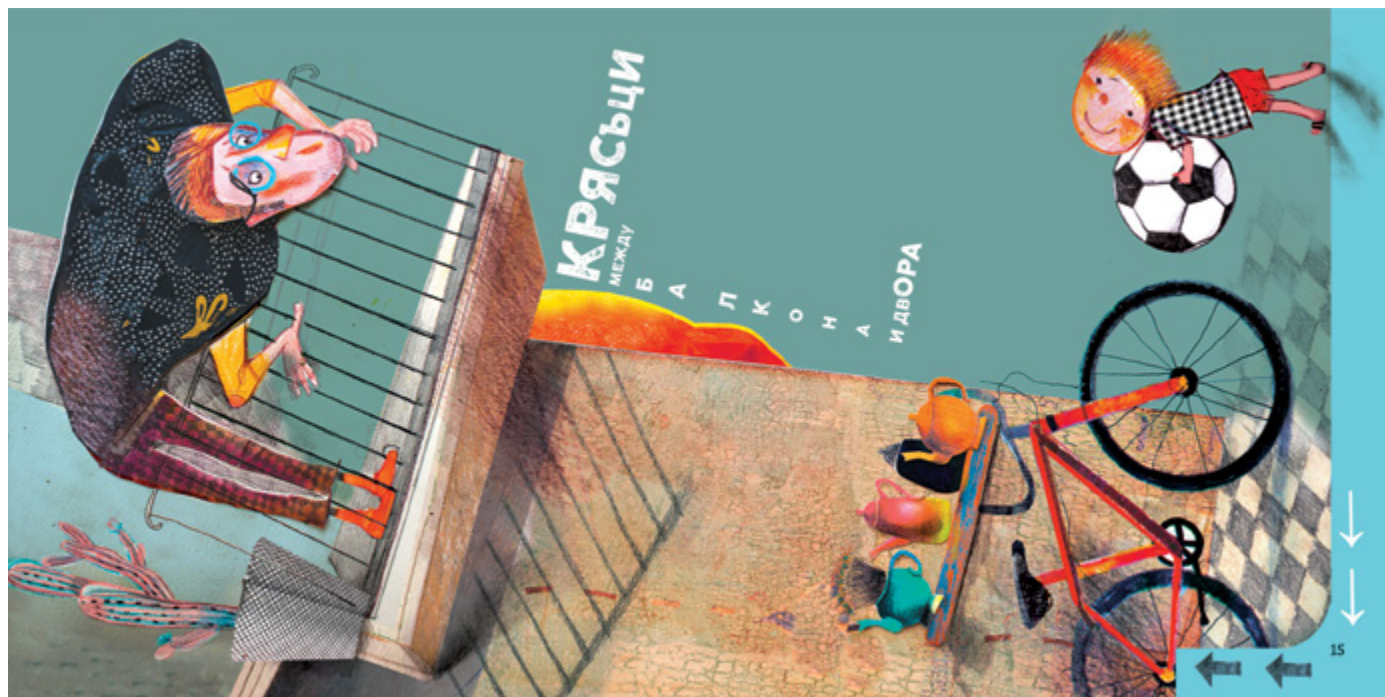
VIKTOR SAMUILOV is a rare breed of writer who manages to engage both kids and parents in his games. And that's probably because he himself still plays with a child's amazement—and he does this with words, viewpoints, and important subjects. He turns them upside down, shakes out the stale meanings and fills them with extraordinary objects. 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.

Viktor Samuilov (1964) was born in Sofia. He graduated from Sofia University with a master's degree in Bulgarian philology and worked for youth, literary, and satirical publications. He was a script writer and editor at the Cartoon Studios of the Sofia Cinema Center and a compiler of many anthologies, students' books, and teaching aids. He has authored 19 books, most of which are children's titles. The winner of three national awards, Viktor Samuilov was also the First Prize Laureate of the South Eastern European Literature Center for his contribution to children and teenage literature.



NEVENA ANGELOVA (1974) graduated from the National Academy of Arts, Sofia, specializing in Book and Print Graphics. Over the last 10 years, she has worked as a lecturer at the same academy. She works in the field of book art, with a pronounced interest in the play between a drawn image and a photographed object. She has held several solo exhibitions with paintings of an abstract and semi-abstract nature, the technique of which combines a mixed-media approach: painting, drawing, collage, assemblage. Besides her 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.









Baptiste PI: One Monstrous Investigation

Кръсто частен детектив в Долната земя

Author: Julia Spiridonova
Illustrator: Albena Kamenova

Just a few days before Christmas, Baptiste, a rather sloppy but charming detective, is fired by his dog boss Pinscherton. Baptiste has to open his own detective agency. His only client is a little girl. All the fairy tales have been stolen, and she hires Baptiste to find them. The case leads Baptiste to Lower Earth – a mythical place full of monsters, fairy-tale heroes, and strange creatures.

Being a detective is pretty hard, and dangerous to boot. Baptiste gives up on the case and decides to return home. But how is he going to climb up to Middle Earth?

Willy-nilly, he'll have to pass a whole lot of tests, including:

- Almost becoming an ingredient in a gourmet meal for a cannibal witch.
- Becoming a servant to a capricious zmej (a dragon-like creature in charge of thunderstorms).
- Saving Cheeky B (a traveling salesman and trickster) from being lynched.
- Making a pitiful attempt to intervene in the annual battle between the White and Black rams.

- Making a bet with some beautiful but very dangerous veelas, then losing the bet and paying dearly.
- Becoming a babysitter for three talking bears.
- Penetrating the cave of a horrible monster, the Lamia.
- Using cunning to escape from forest brigands.
- Being cursed to fart at every step by the Forest King.
- Tricking the devils and taking their magical tools.
- Translating from the bat language into a human one.
- Wandering around under an invisibility hat.
- Retiring the story thief—the old scary Vampire.

Thanks to his luck, his superficial charm, and his new friends—Cheeky B and the Knitting Mouse—not only does Baptiste solve his first case and marry the princess, but he also returns to his home in Middle Earth, covered in honors and glory.



JULIA SPIRIDONOVA (a.k.a Yulka) has published over twenty Children's and YA books. She is the first Bulgarian author nominated for The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. She was nominated in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Julia Spiridonova is the annual laureate of the PEP Lor'Est Children's Choice Award in France 2023.

She is a laureate of Bulgaria's highest literary honors:

Hristo G. Danov 2023;

Author of the Year of Sofia Library 2016;

The Magic Pearl National Children's Choice Award 2016;

The Quill Award winner, Children's Book of the Year category 2015;

The P.R. Slaveykov—Contribution to the Bulgarian Literature Award winner 2010;

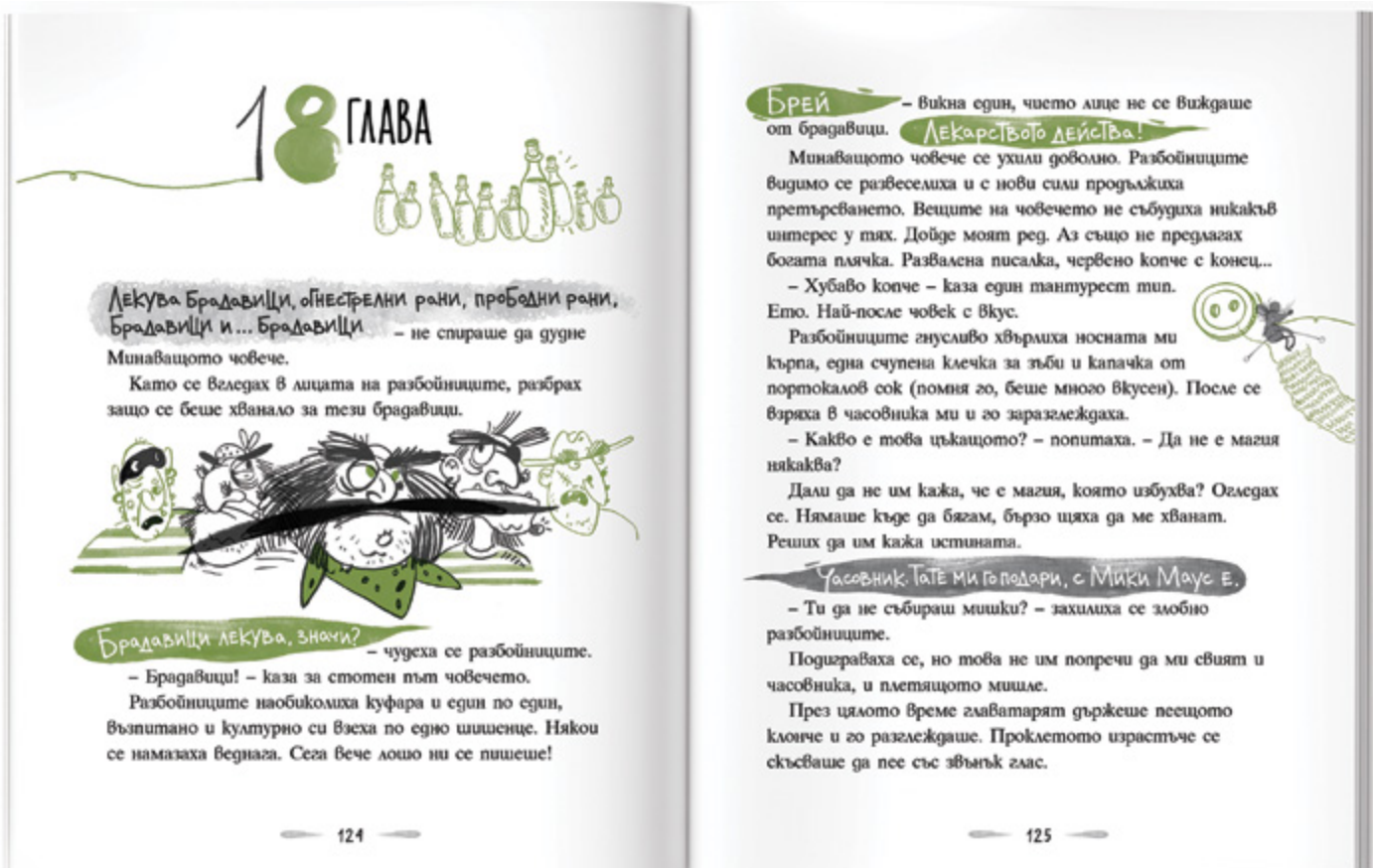
Konstantin Konstantinov Award winner, Author of the Year category 2010.

Her books have been translated into French, Hungarian, Romanian, Macedonian, Czech, German, Ukrainian, and Farsi.

Since 2021 she has lived in the United Kingdom.



ALBENA KAMENOVA is an artist and illustrator. She defines himself as a dreamer and Albarapa—one more Barbapapa (necessarily pink) from Barbapapa's family. And every day she is a different word or shape, and she is smiling, sometimes even sad, most magical or most ordinary. She is the author of the illustrations of numerous textbooks and children's books. She loves the world of children and likes to wink at them through her illustrations.





Когато се събудих, протегнах ръце и ги ударих в нещо твърдо.

Я, Какво е това?

Осраждаше ме решетка от дебели пръчки. Баба ме затворили в клетка!

На полянката пред клетката седеше старичка и четеше кулинарни списания.

- Ей, бабче - викнах, - бабенце!

ЩЕ БЪДЕШ ЛИ ТАКА ДОБРА ДА МЕ ОСВОБОДИШ, МОЛЯ?

НайН, Нямам Такова Намерение!

- извикоти се бабата със силен немски акцент.
И най-спокойно продължи да си разлиства списанията.

**Дали да не го Мариновам с ДжинДжифил?
Или да го задушам с ГЪБИ и да го полея
с въздушен сметанов соус**

- мърмореше си под нос тя.
- А защо не макарони на фурна? - предложи.

Обичам макарони на фурна, мама ги прави страшно вкусни.

- НайН, НайН, Не обичам ВЕГЕТАРИАНСКА КУХИНА

- махна с ръка старичката.

- От нея ДЕБЕЛЕЯ

Така е, Друго си е Месцето

- съгласих се.

Нека види с кого си има работа.
Ако разбирам от нещо, то това е от храна.

Бабата хвърли списанията и допринка до клетката ми.

- Дай да видя пръстчето.

- Кое пръстче? - учудих се.

- Най-дебеличкото пръстче от

ръчичката - изпръска ме със слюнка бабата.

Смасан, подадох палеца си през решетката.



Sea Tales

Морски приказки
За две земни деца, приятеля
и делфин и морските хора

Author: Liliya Stareva

Illustrator: Dimitar Ilchev

Who should be the king, the leader, the winner? Who has the right to a full life and who does not? These are contemporary themes, understood and resolved with sincerity and kindness by two children. They will find friends in the kingdom of children, they will listen to and experience the wonderful tale of the oldest hero, about his son, a hero who saved the princess from the kingdom of mothers. They will be brave, curious, strong, admirable in their sincerity, friendship and kindness. They will be creators of good.

Their guide in the vast waters is their friend the dolphin, who leads them over eight consecutive nights to King Neptune's Realm, the Kingdom of Mothers, the Kingdom of Fathers, the Kingdom of Children, the Kingdom of Heroes, the Kingdom of Evil, the Kingdom of the Good Family, and the Kingdom of Dolphins.

After exciting sea voyages, Mimi and Goshko will sadly say goodbye to the king of the dolphins, who chose two earthly children who showed courage in difficult moments, passed challenging trials, and answered difficult questions, to show them how vast the universe is. Two earthly children who accepted the impossible as possible, miracles as normal, and who, long after their incredible and exciting sea voyages, will seek signs from their new friends of the newly discovered world, an unknown universe of soul, thoughts, and life.

They will find them in the surface of the water, in the scratches on a pebble smoothed by the waves, in the trace of a bird on the sand, in the words of the wind, or in a child's balloon with hearts. And they will know that anything is possible.

The heroes of the book, two nine-year-old earthly children, but also the readers, are about to discover in incredible, yet real, magical dreams that there is a true life as well, one that has not yet been discovered or described by scholars or professors in thick books and encyclopedias.

They will discover that water is dry, that it has its own secrets, magic, and wisdom, that even the greatest evil can be defeated with good, that a hero is someone who stands in front of a friend to save them, just like Goshko does, and that the victory over every evil thought can be found in friendly intertwined hands, ready to stay together even in the most difficult moments

They will find themselves in unsuspected realms, whose inhabitants greatly resemble earthly people, carrying basic characteristics and archetypes that are revealed in the relationships between men and women, between parents and children, and among the children themselves.



LILIYA STAREVA holds a master's degree in philology from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, a PhD in Philosophy, and is a writer and public figure. She has worked at the Institute of Culture under the Committee for Culture and the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Since 1993, she has been the director of Lista publishing house. For more than 20 years, she has hosted the Festive Calendar section every Sunday on the program "Po Nashenski" on the Horizont channel of Bulgarian National Radio.

Since 1999, she has been the chair of the Child and Folklore foundation, whose main mission is to preserve and promote the values of Bulgarian folklore. For over 30 years, she has been researching and promoting the values of Bulgarian folklore: traditions, holidays, rituals and customs, myths and legends, tales, proverbs and sayings, fables, and riddles.

Together with Prof. Plamen Bochkov, a folklorist, anthropologist, and long-time rector of New Bulgarian University, she has published the luxurious series Children's Folklore Encyclopedia, of which six volumes have been released.

Liliya Stareva is the compiler and publisher of the multilingual series *Bulgarian Folk Wisdom Around the World*, currently in eight volumes. The illustrations and translations in the series are created by Bulgarian adolescents and youth from both the country and abroad.

She has compiled Bulgarian folk wisdom in a number of publications: *Bulgarian Saints and Holidays* (2003), *Bulgarian Rituals and Customs* (2005), *Bulgarian Names and Traditions* (2006), *Bulgarian Rituals for Good Luck* (2016), *Myths, Creators, and Time* (2017), *Tales and Legends of Bulgarian Names* (2021), *Worlds and Creatures* (2023), *The Child Greater than the King* (2023), *The Wedding, Holiday of Holidays in the Bulgarian Family Calendar* (2024), and others.

Sea Tales is her first book of original fairy tales.



DIMITAR ILCHEV was born in Stara Zagora in 2001. In 2024, he graduated from the National Academy of Art with bachelor's degree in book, illustration, and print graphics. His work primarily focuses on graphic design and illustration.

Делфи и май това оживление се стори на Гошко не
себем прилично, защото я смърти:

— Стига си пискала, какво ще си помисли Нептун за нас!

Какво може да си помисли? Че две деца са
злашнати пред чудесата на подводните му владения. Гошко беше възпитан да съдържа емоциите си,
както правят големите. В този момент той се
опитваше да се държи като голям. Запази спокойствие дори когато пристъпи към трона на Нептун, въпреки чудесата, които виждаха. Беше като
вълшебна приказка, която още не знаеха. Кристалните палми, колоните, огромните зали приличаха
на нещо, за което думите, измислени за сушата, им
се струваха неточни. Палисите може би бяха светеци
водорасли. Колоните може би бяха корали на
по милиони по милиони години. Такова е трудно да
назоваваш неща, които никога никъде в човешкия
свят не си виждал.

— Добър ден, деца! Добре дошли в моето
царство!

— Здравсти — виона Мими, а Гошко също се
зграсти и я настъпи бързо по босия крак.

— Добър ден, Ваше Величество — изрече почти
телно и се наведе за поздрав, както беше виждал
във филмите, че се поздравяват царе.

— Не ме настъпвай — сонна се Мими. — И Нептун
не ти е цар, а бог. „Божествени Нептуне“ трябва
да му кажеш.

В друге случай би отвърнал на забележката, но









Green Frogs

Жабки зелени

Author: Anita Tarasevich

Illustrator: Mateya Arkova

In the poetry collection *Green Frogs*, Anita Tarasevich—the author of the fairy tale *Mother Rabbit's Christmas*, the cheerful poems in *Rooster, Boy*, and the funny story in two books about the mice Mish and Mash—surprises children again with a lot of imagination and exciting discoveries.

The fun rhymes include characters like a curious kitten, green frogs, greedy goats, good-natured turtles, a faithful dog, and more. And the stories themselves will bring lots of smiles, joy, and happiness to young readers. The beautiful illustrations by Mateya Arkova complete the journey into the wonderful fantasy world. The book has been highly appraised and was made possible with the support of the Ministry of Culture.

The book was the winner of the Hristo G. Danov Prize in 2024 in the Children's Literature category and the winner of the 2024 Bulgarian Writers' Association Award in the Children's Literature category.





ANITA TARASEVICH was born on 11 December 1965 in Plovdiv.

After completing her secondary education at the P. K. Yavorov High School in her hometown, she was admitted to the Bulgarian Philology program at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in 1984. She graduated in the same major from Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski in 1989.

Tarasevich writes articles for the magazine *Chitalishte* and works as a reporter for the newspaper *Podkrepa*. Since 1999, she has been the editor-in-chief of *Chitalishchen Vestnik*.

She has published poetry and prose in the national and local press since she was a schoolgirl.

She has written a number of books for adults, including poetry, short stories, and a novel.

Among her many books for children are *Джуджето Джу и други тайни* (*Dwarf Zhu and Other Secrets*) (Carmen Publishers); *Коледата на майка Зайка* (*Mother Rabbit's Christmas*) (PAN Publishing House); *Rooster, Boy*—poems for children (PAN Publishing House); *Миш и Маш* (*Mish and Mash*) – a story in verse) (Hermes Publishing); and *Жабки зелени* (*Green Frogs*) (Trud Publishing House); *Весела Коледа, Бухалчо* (*Merry Christmas Owl*) (PAN).

In 2008, the Minister of Culture Prof. Stefan Danailov awarded her a plaque and a diploma for her role in Bulgarian culture, and in 2016 she was honored by President Rosen Plevneliev with a diploma and an honorary Saints Cyril and Methodius plaque. In 2018, she received the highest award of the Ministry of Culture—the Golden Century Seal of Simeon the Great for her contribution to Bulgarian culture. In 2024, she was awarded the Badge of Honor by President Rumen Radev for her significant contribution as an activist for community centers.

She was awarded the Golden Quill Award of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists in 2018.

Her book of children's poems *Green Frogs* received the award of the Union of Bulgarian Writers in the Children's Literature category in 2023, as well as the Hristo

G. Danov National Prize in 2024 in the Author of a Children's Edition category.



MATEYA ARKOVA was born on June 30, 1989. In 2008, she graduated from the fine arts program at Sava Dobroplodni High School. She earned a bachelor's degree in book publishing from Sofia University and a master's degree in graphic design from New Bulgarian University.

After briefly working in the field of advertising as a storyboard artist, she decided to pursue her dream of becoming a professional illustrator of children's books. She has been actively working as a freelance illustrator for nearly 12 years, illustrating children's books for Bulgarian and foreign publishers. She works primarily in watercolor and pencil, recreating movement with elegant lines in the worlds between the pages. The main inspiration for her illustrations is nature as an element of power and life, music, and adventure sports.

<https://mateyaillustrations.portfolio.site/>



БУХАЛ

„Уху-буху“ – цяла вечер
звук се носи отдалече.

Чубай – „Уху“ – няма мира!
Някой кашля, без да спира!

„Уху-буху“ – бухал кашля
там, в хрулуца тъмна, прашина...

Месеци цял кишим не тупал –
с прах голям се е затрупал!

„Утре рано, като стане –
гневно шепнат две-три врани –

първо нека да изчисти,
без той много да му мисли!

Има работа да върши –
всичко нека да избърше,

нека тупа, нека мие,
не от мързел да се крие...

Всички искаме гората
първа да е в чистотата!”





The Power of Choice— One Saturday

Силата на избора –
Един съботен ден

Author: Yordanka Tsvetanova, Niki Tsvetanov

Illustrator: Teodora Nikolova

The *Power of Choice—One Saturday* is the first book in a series of interactive lesson-teaching games.

They are designed to help children understand how important their choices are. Through these books, they will realize the connection between choices and consequences. The series was created, prepared, and printed entirely in Bulgaria by Niki and Dani Tsvetanov, owners of the brand and publishing house MAMA KNOWS.

The plots in the series intertwine the adventures of the main characters with important lessons and insights for the children to take away from the books. The books are interactive and the story can go in many different directions, depending on the choices the reader makes.

Here are some of the themes and issues touched on in the first book: selfishness, anger, social skills, peer and parent relationships, emotional intelligence, kindness, respect, and more!

In the book, the reader experiences a day in the life of the main characters Bobby and Nina, who are brother and sister. The reader chooses how their day goes, and there are over 30 different options on how to reach one of the five possible endings of the book. There are good choices,

bad choices, and choices that do not seem to affect the plot directly.

The Power of Choice is a book that children can read every day without getting bored. And each new reading will help them learn new things and understand the world around them better!



YORDANKA TSVETANOVA holds a bachelor's degree in preschool pedagogy and foreign language and a master's degree in speech therapy. She worked as a kindergarten teacher for two years, which gave her a good opportunity to take her first steps in the field of child development, to be close to children's worldview and their passions. She is extremely interested in child development—physical, mental, and linguistic—and in child psychology, particularly emotional intelligence in children. This is the main reason Yordanka and Niki started their publishing house. In addition, her other favorite areas are music and healthy cooking for children.

Niki Tsvetanov completed his higher education at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. His professional experience is mainly in the field of entrepreneurship, but his interest in personal development, emotional intelligence, and his desire to be a good father greatly helped in the creation of MAMA KNOWS products. His main interests are in child development and psychology.

Both have been involved in organizing and conducting workshops and camps on child development and emotional intelligence. Interestingly, they made their first attempts at writing stories and poems as school children, before they knew each other.

They created their family brand and publishing company, MAMA KNOWS, in the fall of 2022 and have already helped thousands of parents, speech therapists, psychologists, teachers, and professionals in the field of child development and in the shaping of their children or the children they work with.



TEODORA NIKOLOVA is a self-taught digital artist and painter who has participated in numerous master classes by various world-renowned artists such as Marco Bucci, Aaron Blaise, and others. She also has a very strong interest in animation.

Among the adult books she has illustrated are *Жената на Калоян (Kaloyan's Wife)* by Andrey Iliev, *Вятър в сенките (Wind in the Shadows)* by Deyan Vachkov, *Дивна (Divna)* by Elisa Hess, *Драконови криле (Dragon Wings)* by Georgi Zdravkov, *Криле от огън (Wings of Fire)* by Azara Ira, *От вчера до утре е безкрай (From Yesterday to Tomorrow is Infinity)* by Hristo Stoev, *Коледен спомен (Christmas Memory)* by Teodora Julienova, and others.

She is also very happy to illustrate children's books, including *Йони и възлюбените думи (Yoni and the Magic Words)* by Ekaterina Tyokova, *Любими песни за България (Favourite Songs for Bulgaria)* by Yordan Vladov, *Силата на избора (The Power of Choice)* by Niki and Dani Tsvetanov, and others.

Besides all this, she organizes other interesting ventures such as children's drawing contests to support young talent and games with prizes for her followers.

Children's Books by Bulgarian Writers and Artists

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