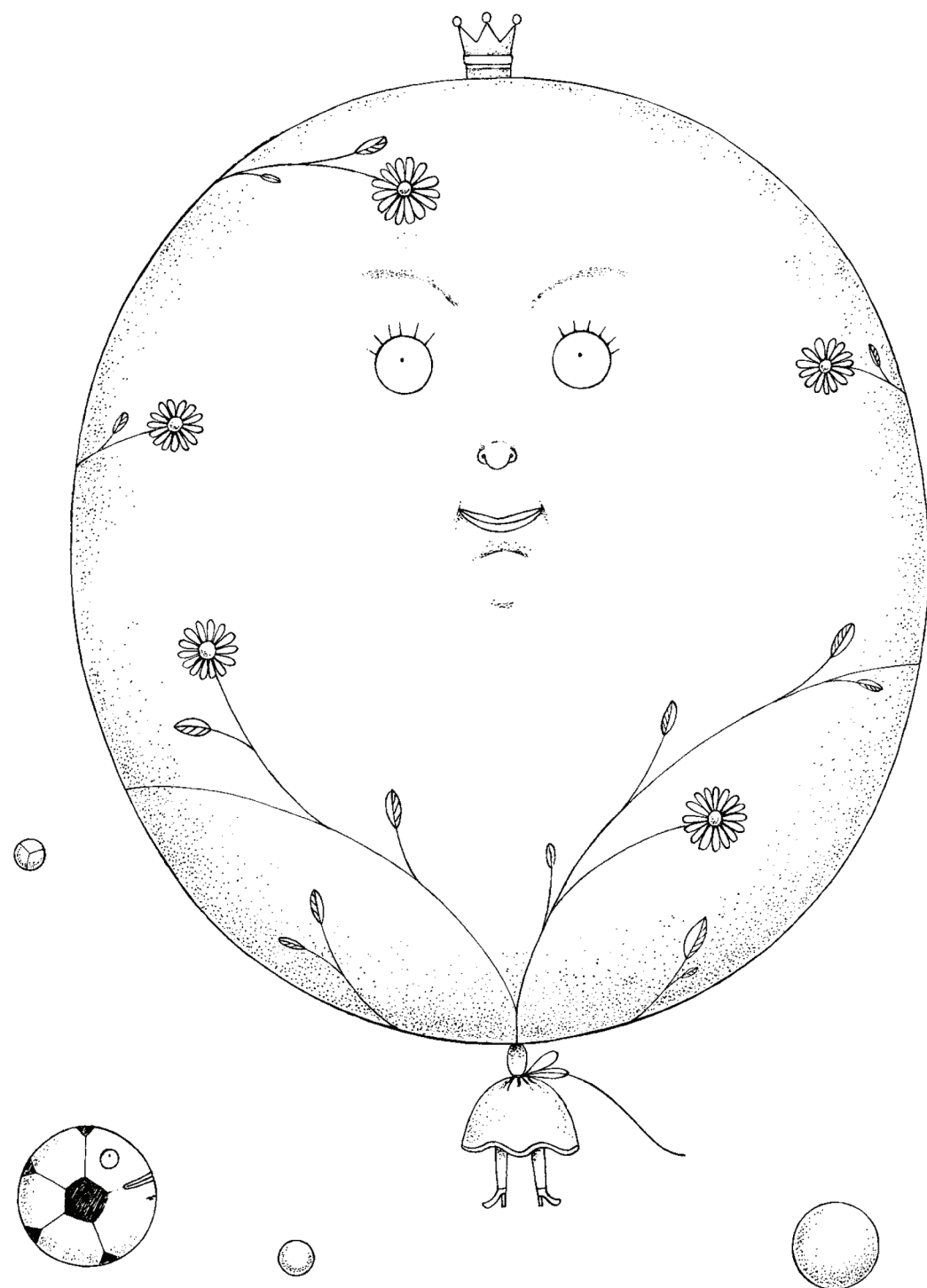


Piret RAUD

Hans Christian Andersen Award
2020 for an Illustrator
Candidate for the Estonian Section of IBBY





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Piret Raud about Herself

“I was born in the month of July in 1971 to a family of children’s literature authors in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. I have spent my entire life in Tallinn. As a child, I played with friends on the narrow streets of Old Town and in the courtyards of its romantic old buildings. I loitered on crumbling stone walls and skulked around dark attics. Later, during my studies at the Estonian Academy of Arts, I went around town with a drawing pad under my arm. I studied printmaking at the Academy. My master’s thesis was done in an old-style copper engraving technique rarely used today. I’ve always been fascinated by the world of black-and-white graphics, by small format and fine details. The connection between graphics and book illustration is so dense that it is no wonder I ultimately became an illustrator. I illustrated other authors’ books for ten years, until one moment, I decided to try my own hand at writing. I took part in a children’s manuscript competition and won. The manuscript became a book, which unexpectedly received very good reception. The path towards writing was opened. As of today, I have illustrated somewhere near 50 children’s books and written close to twenty. I truly enjoy my work. Room for goodness, for humor, and happy endings can be found in children’s books. It is immensely revitalizing and pleasant to spend a little bit of time every day in a friendly world of my own creation.”

Statement on the Candidate's Contribution to Literature for Young People

Part 1

It seems that Piret Raud was born to enrich the world of Estonian children's literature. She grew up in a family where both mother and father – Aino Pervik and Eno Raud – were a couple of the most renowned Estonian children's writers. We encounter Piret as a character and, quite obviously, as a creative inspiration in her father Eno Raud's collection of short stories titled *Suvejutte veski alt* (Summer Stories From Under the Windmill).

Piret Raud was born in Tallinn in 1971. She graduated from Tallinn Secondary School No. 7 in 1989 and from the Estonian Academy of Arts in 1995, and acquired her master's degree in graphic design in 1998. She has worked primarily as a freelance artist and writer, as well as for some time as the chief editor of children's magazine *Täheke*. It is extremely difficult to separate Piret's contributions as an artist and as a writer, since she has quite often been "two in one". As of today, Piret Raud is one of Estonia's most successful authors and illustrators of children's books. She has illustrated over forty works and published thirteen children's books of her own.

Piret Raud was first featured in an exhibition in 1992, and her works have since been displayed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the UK, Italy, Spain, Slovakia, Russia, Iran, Japan, Argentina, and the US. Her works are also represented in the collections of the Art Museum of Estonia and the National Library of Estonia. In addition to book illustrations, she has practiced printmaking.

Piret Raud set off on her children's literature path in 1994, when she illustrated her mother Aino Pervik's book *Keeruline lugu* (A Complicated Story). In 1995, she illustrated and wrote the book *Kataleena isemoodi juuksed* (Kathleen's One-of-a-Kind Hair). In 1997, Piret drew the pictures for her father Eno Raud's poetry collection *Kala kõnnib jala* (The Fish Goes By Foot).

While Piret has been a member of the Estonian Artists' Association and the Estonian Association of Printmakers since 1998, she has been a member of the Estonian Writers' Union since 2006.

It is worth noting that Piret Raud did not embark on her writer's path in the glow of her famous parents or with the support of their popularity, but instead sought the chance to remain anonymous at first. In 2004, the Estonian Children's Literature Centre and publisher Tänapäev began organising the "My First Book" competition for manuscripts written for a readership aged 5–9. Among the entries submitted that first year, which were known to jury members only by anonymous keyword, was a story about a boy named Ernesto's bunnies, the author of which turned out to be Piret Raud.

Her next book, *Sanna ja salakütid* (Sanna and the Poachers), won the 2005 Cultural Endowment of Estonia prize for children's literature, and with this, it became clear to all that a new talented children's writer had appeared on the scene. Piret's three earlier more voluminous children's books are all adventure tales featuring very bold fantastic turns – *Ernesto küülikud* (Ernesto's Bunnies), *Sanna ja salakütid*, and *Printsess Lulu ja härra Kere* (Princess Lulu and Mr Bones; 2008 Cultural Endowment of Estonia award).

Since the very beginning, critics have highlighted Piret Raud's seamless style and ability to keep sentence, chapter, and book as a whole in good rhythm. All of her works with their daring, high-flying plots engage real-life modern-day circumstances – social problems that children have become aware of one way or another, such as unemployment, homelessness, corruption, and other crimes. It should be noted that in this, Piret Raud perennially gives her characters the chance to come out on top. Her books are filled with strong humanist messages founded in tolerance and hope.

Two trends can be seen in her more recent works – single shorter stories that the author publishes as colourful picture books (*Härra Linnu lugu* [Mr. Bird's Story], *Kolm soovi* [Three Wishes], *Roosi tahab lennata* [Rosie Wants to Fly]), and collections that contain an abundance of short nonsense-fairy-tales and no-frills black-and-white drawings (*Natuke napakad lood* [Slightly Silly Stories], *Teistmoodi printsessi lood* [Princesses With a Twist], and *Mina, emme ja meie igasugused sõbrad* [Me, Mum, and Our Friends of All Sorts]).

Holding a very special place among Piret Raud's works is the tiny-format picture book *Emma roosad asjad* (Mommy's Pink Things), which publisher Winged Chariot also released as the first substantial Estonian children's book in digital format (2010).

Her book *Tobias ja teine B* (Tobias and Class 2B) has also become much-loved among Estonian children, and is distinguishable from her fairy-tale books by way of its real-life characters and plot.

Piret Raud's books are highly popular among Estonian children, have been published in several print runs, and have even been staged in the theatre (*Printsess Lulu ja härra Kere*). The translation of Piret's works has been just as active – specifically, translations have been published in English, Italian, German, French, Japanese, Spanish, Russian, Hungarian, Albanian, Latvian, and Lithuanian.

Piret Raud was also on the 2012 IBBY Honour List as an author and 2018 IBBY Honour List as an illustrator.

Mare Müürsepp

Part 2

The individuality of a good artist is the basis of their allure, their exceptionalism, and their importance to and impact on people. Even when, for some reason, we don't like the uniqueness, or it irritates, it still affects our emotions, it is memorable, and accompanies us through life such that many years down the road it evokes completely different emotions. Individuality can attract immediately, or it might take getting used to or practice understanding it. But it does not leave one cold.

Piret Raud is this kind of unique creator. No one in the world is like her. Seeing just a small glimpse of the artist's work, you immediately know who you are dealing with. Liking or not liking are not categories one can use to assess the works of these kinds of artists. She is a great and distinct creator whose unique style may take some getting used to, but for sure demands attention, asks questions, and makes one analyze themselves. And in children's books it is not only important to be entertaining and instructive for children, but also to teach them to understand art and feel that adulthood will be rich, interesting, and happy.

Additionally, one can't forget that children are a sensitive audience and are easily accepting of good and, unfortunately, bad as well. Poor and mediocre illustrations in children's books do a disservice to a child's taste and development in their ability to understand and appreciate beauty and originality. Art in children's books can sometimes frighten parents, but definitely not children.

The bizarre creatures in Piret Raud's pictures are still undeniably recognizable. No matter how peculiar the form an elephant may take, no one has any doubts that it is an elephant. The artist's archetypes are on the one hand laconic, but on the other hand detailed and layered. One can explore them for a long time and wonder why they were drawn that exact way and find different layers to contemplate. Even the strangest creatures are never evil or malicious, even when they are not quite good. Every creature emits some tenderness and kindness. These are pictures full of warmth and despite their slight weirdness, do not cause fear, but rather curiosity. And Piret Raud's illustrations certainly put children's imaginations to work, encourage them to create their own characters and

worlds, develop their creativity, and shows the world is full of possibilities beyond what the eye can see.

The laconic and modest color palette emphasizes and supports the fantasy land to which the artist is inviting us. And there is one more enormous plus when we talk about Piret Raud's work. Namely, she is a creator who is at home in both the literary and artistic worlds. Often, books written by artists are mediocre literature and books illustrated by writers are hapless experiments in the art world; it is rare to find a creator who is equally professional in both the writing of a book as well as the illustration. Piret Raud is one of the few whose stories have great importance in literature and at the same time makes valuable art which she shares with us in her books. Perhaps this is the reason that her books are, in every respect, complete. And in the end, her books are highly aesthetic; they are very beautiful books.

Viive Noor

Translated by Chris Reintal

Interviews

A conversation with Piret Raud and her translator, Jean-Pascal Ollivry

Livres du mois Jeunesse / Children's Books of the Month

What's the state of children's literature in Estonia?

Very healthy! In Estonia, no hierarchy separates adult and children's literature. The latter is very varied but still primarily national; few foreign authors are translated into Estonian. It does respond to the educational need to preserve the language - a very sensitive issue in a small country. That's why such importance is attached to texts, a sort of duty in the face of the dominance of the image.

What makes a good children's novel?

I always start off with a theme to develop, with some content I want to give my story. In this case, in the background there's Estonia's past under the Soviet Union's sway - which the children don't know about - with its scourges: dictatorship, secrecy and lies. The character of the king comes from there, but also from traditional folk tales, and he's treated in the style of a parody. The princess and the skeleton, at the heart of the story, present two possible types to identify with, again anchored in the imaginary and each representing a positive figure of resistance. Be that as it may, when it comes to children's stories, you have to be able to laugh at all that! Humour guarantees a kind of lightness: I do love this halfway house between the realistic and the absurd, this sliding from one into the other, which often arises from spontaneous word or image associations.

How to translate this?

It's a head-ache for the translator - or the delight of meeting a challenge. In fact, it turns out that the storyline turns on an everyday expression which, taken literally, generates a comical or absurd situation. How to translate this? In French, there's not a "skeleton in the cupboard" - it's a corpse. No matter - the effect is the same. The Estonian policeman,

Inspector Pencil (*Monsieur Crayon* in French), no doubt more of a penpusher than a clever sleuth, becomes a richer character as Inspector Pen thanks to the several meanings of the French word (*Plume*). When translating a name, a play on words can be very handy: Pille-Piia Mull (*Mull* in Estonian means Bubble) becomes Mari-Mira Bulle (*Bulle* in French means Bubble). In *The Fishes' Tea-Party*,* translated earlier, certain stories had to be omitted as it was not possible to adapt them. The humour is embedded in the language.

As told to Claudine Bergeron at the Montreuil Salon

About the writer

Piret Raud was born in Tallinn in 1971. After studying engraving at the Estonian Academy of Art, she chose to illustrate and write novels for children, following a family tradition. She has written some 40 books, three of which have been translated into French by Jean-Pascal Ollivry for the publishers Rouergue. Before *Princess Lulu and Mister Bones*, in 2013 she published *Princesses with a Twist* and *Slightly Silly Stories*. A new novel will appear in February 2015: *Emily and All Sorts of Things*,** and also in 2015 an album is planned with Olivier Douzou.

Bibliographical Notes - January-February 2015

* Translator's note: Le thé aux poissons, the French version of Natuke Napad Lood (apparently published in English as *Slightly Silly Stories*).

** Translator's note: I haven't found the official title in English for this book which seems to be published only in French

(as *Emily et tout un tas de choses*).

A Children's Author with Heart and Pride

Heili Sibrits

Postimees, Februaray 10, 2015

<http://kultuur.postimees.ee/3087055/uhkuse-ja-sudamega-lastekirjanik>

Starting today, 11 February, Piret Raud's children's book *Emily et tout un tas de choses* will be available from French publisher Éditions du Rouergue Jeunesse. This is a rare event for Estonian literature, as Raud penned the book specifically by request of the French publisher.

At the same time, one cannot say this is an unprecedented instance in Raud's writing career. Three years ago, she wrote and illustrated the book *Three Wishes* for Japanese publisher Fukuinkan. Raud is certainly Estonia's most world-renowned children's writer at the moment: her books are treasured by children in Estonia as well as in Japan, Hungary, Lithuania, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and Latvia.

The book being published today in France tells a very simple but important tale: in a grey sea, there lives a fish, who wakes up at 6 o'clock every morning and goes for a walk. It is not just any old walk, though, but one to collect things that are tossed into the sea. Emily finds objects of all sorts – some are pretty, some tasty, some little, some big, some bad for your health, and some dangerous. Emily gathers all of the things together so that now, they are no longer lost things, but rather *Emily's* things.

Emily has an incredible amount of items at home, and she adores them. But one day, Emily finds a letter in a bottle that reads: "Dear Emily, The author of this letter is the most important thing in the world. I am lost, please be good and find me."

Naturally, Emily wants to have the most important thing in the world for her collection. She finds a television, which she did not have before, and reckons that it must be the most important thing. She asks the TV whether it wrote her the letter, but the TV is

silent. The same situation repeats with a car and a house. At one point, Emily realizes that *she* wrote the letter to herself, because she is the only one around who knows how to write.

Emily comes to understand that *she herself* is the most important thing. She had disappeared into the amalgam of all those things, and she needed to find herself.

After that, Emily returns home, digs a big hole, and buries all of the things in it, leaving out only paper and a pencil, since she would not have found herself without literacy.

The next morning, Emily oversleeps because her alarm does not go off – she threw it away. She cannot brush her teeth, either, because she threw away her toothbrush as well. But when Emily goes for her walk, she sees the beauty of the seabed for the first time, since for the first time, she is not searching for anything.

It took Raud about 1,600 words to retell Emily's story, although she has also gotten by with far, far less. For as the illustrator of tens of children's books and the author of twelve, she believes that a picture should not illustrate the text word-for-word in a children's book, and especially not in a picture book.

"You don't have to write that Emily finds a ball, ice cream, or a button. You can say all of that with some other word. For example, when the character finds a button, then you can see it in the picture anyway; but if you write that it is small, it gives the child more room for thought," Raud explains.

In picture books, both the text and the images must speak to the reader – they must have an effect together, and not only for the smallest reader there is, but for adults, too. At least that is what Raud believes.

When children ask the writer where stories come from, Raud replies that her ideas come from the faucet. "Because often, ideas come when I'm washing the dishes or taking a shower," Raud acknowledges, adding that although she would like to meet with her readers more often, she frequently has to disappoint her admirers and turn down the offers due to a lack of time.



How much do you have to work with a text for the lesson to be hidden in the book, but not standing out?

Not all that much. Quite often, a shopper who is buying a child a book will check to make sure it is an educational one. Books that teach the letters of the alphabet or correct lifestyles, such as that children should brush their teeth and make their bed in the morning, are very big hits.

But not every children's book is children's literature. A number of educational books meant for children, which are undoubtedly very *necessary* books, do not qualify as literature. Although, there can be an educational moment in literature as well, but at the same time, it does not necessarily have to be there.

I think that the most important thing is to develop a child as a person; to teach him or her a sense of empathy or make the child ponder things so that they are not raised to be nice alone in the sense that they brush their teeth every morning and therefore have everything in line with hygiene, but rather that they see a person within another person.

Do you regard yourself more as a writer or an artist?

As an artist, actually, since I received my education at the [Estonian] Academy of Arts. Although, I think that I'm known more as a writer in Estonia. Can't help it.

At times, appearances are more important than content in the case of children's books.

You usually author both the text and the content: from which do you begin?

The story still comes first. When I'm writing a story, I'm always holding a pencil and automatically doodling next to it. The characters come first of all, and they truly come together with the visual.

Right now, for example, I'm working on a picture book, but I know that I want to do a longer story book next. So, I have a whole bunch of characters waiting for me and the plot is in place, too; but there isn't an exact storyline yet. I'm trying not to think about that story, too, because I have to finish off one project first. I'm holding myself back.

How would you regard someone else illustrating your book?

Hillar Mets actually did the illustrations for one of my more popular books, *Tobias and Class B2*. I simply didn't have time to do them myself because I was halfway through a very large project for a Japanese publisher, and I felt that I couldn't manage to do them, but at the same time, I wanted the story to reach readers quickly. So, I'm prepared to collaborate.

When the French publisher asked that you make a book specifically for them, then what did that kind of a proposal actually mean? How free were you able to be as an author?

It varies by publisher. The French publisher was not my first collaboration with a foreign publisher; I've collaborated before, too. For example, the Japanese publisher checked every detail, and we discussed every point very thoroughly.

How did things go with the French this time?

I've already had three books come out with that publisher, sales are going well, and to tell the truth, they gave me completely free hands. They just said – make a picture book. Because of my Japanese experience I still sent them sketches to coordinate before drawing the final version, but they didn't really change anything.

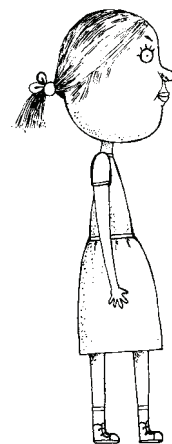
If you look around Estonian bookstores and check out bookstores' sales charts, you find a lot of children's books that cannot really be called 'books'.

Yes, there are all kinds of coloring and educational books. I can't blame people for buying them. They're often cheaper, too.

Quite frequently, a good children's book reaches the child via school. Teachers are oftentimes doing good work across Estonia. Pink ponies and Barbies – I would have liked them as a kid, too.

Really?

I don't know, but maybe. I can't criticize a person for choosing something like that.

**The princesses that you draw don't look like princesses at all. Your drawings are simple and laconic.**

Not *everyone* likes them, of course, and I can't blame them for it either. I know that many have criticized me, asking why I draw ugly princesses. I can actually draw pretty ones, too! But I consciously made idiosyncratic characters, because drawing the Miss Universe winner wasn't up my alley. It's not my thing.

But what if a book's publishing depended on you drawing pretty princesses?

It wouldn't work. That's because I've managed to break through with those ugly ones, too; I've managed to stay myself and not disappoint those, who like my style in particular.

I really like it, thanks! Although I'll admit that as a child, I might like pink princesses more. I think that both should be offered to children.

I think so, too. I liked black-and-white, so-called "weird" illustrations during my childhood. Now, I know that they were of high artistic quality – such as those in *Viplalood* or *Academy of Mr. Kleks*.

Your childhood home was special (Piret Raud is the daughter of children's authors Eno Raud and Aino Pervik; writer and intellectual Rein Raud and musician and television personality Mihkel Raud are her brothers). What was your attitude towards books at that time? How much did your parents direct you toward them?

Our home had probably all of the children's books that were published; back then, they were cheap and widely available. The atmosphere at home supported it, but I think that I liked those books with strange pictures due to the fact that I actually became an artist later.

When my parents were enthused over some specific books, I might have sensed it as a child. Those same exact books that have been read to us all were read to me as well – Lindgren, *Winnie the Pooh*, and *Mary Poppins*. A ton of classics.

I remember that my brother Rein, who is ten years older than me, told me not to copy pictures out of children's books. I liked to draw copies just as all children do, but Rein said that my pictures are always better; he told me not to copy from anywhere. He looked

down on mimicking.

I don't frown on my own children doing it, because copying is one form of learning for an artist, and so it is for children, too. But you cannot get lost in it. To me, it is very important for my visual language to be unique; for it to not resemble anyone else.

What is your formula for success?

I think that it's uniqueness. Others don't draw like I do. The French, or actually just about everyone is seeking a new and different kind of approach. For example, even we [Estonians] have a whole lot of paintings done purely in watercolors; however, there's been so much of it and it doesn't provoke interest anymore.

How important to you is the fact that you've made it out of Estonia?

It definitely is. For example, I wouldn't have dared to make my minimalist *Emily* book for the Estonian market, because it wouldn't have had any kind of sales success here. But the book will certainly still make its way back around to Estonia.

How big is the print run in France?

I can't talk about the conditions of the contract. I can say, for example, that a new print run is being done of *Princess Lulu and Mr. Boney*, which was published in the fall.

Creative freedom is one thing, but is a foreign commission or a translation also monetarily important for you?

Being translated enables me to get by as a freelancer. I imagine that it certainly would be difficult to combine a job and writing. The people who do it are very brave in my eyes.

You have two sons and you grew up among brothers. It is certainly possible to ascertain the gender of your characters by name in your books, but at the same time, those characters are not locked into gender roles.

I completely agree; that's an interesting observation. When I speak with people, then I am speaking with *people*, not with men or women. My friends are people.

As I have two brothers and I have sons, I get along quite well with males because of it.

I don't criticize men at all, nor do I criticize women. In my opinion, an Estonian man is completely okay; I don't frown on him at all, and I have two Estonian males growing up at my own home, too.

Have you ever thought about writing a book for teenagers?

I haven't. Luckily enough, when my first child turned ten, I had my second right after, and I was able to start writing for him. Because I like writing for children between the ages of six and ten.

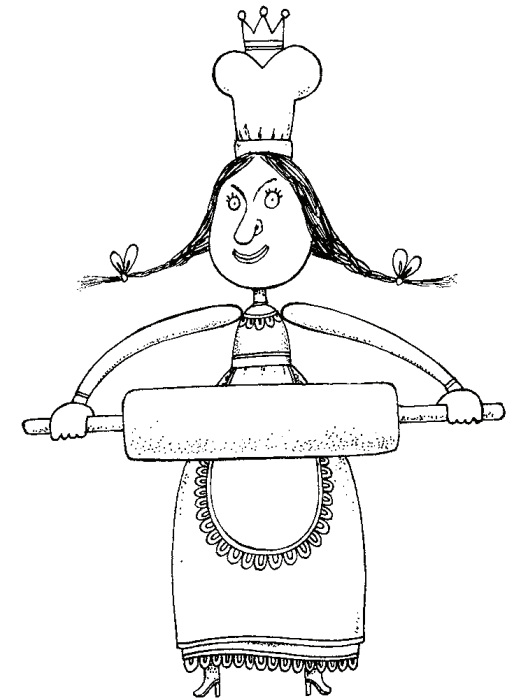
Overall, I have the feeling that there is no such thing as young-adult literature; it's a sort of artificially-created need or genre. I know that many people don't agree with me, but that's what I think. Young people or teenagers could already be reading adult literature then; the classics, for example. There is sufficient talk about young people's problems in adult literature as well.

To me, it seems that the fame of a children's writer in Estonia is not as great as that of a writer who writes for adults.

I can sense that, but to be completely frank, it has no bearing on me. For my whole life, what has been more important is how things actually are; not how they appear. I personally know that children's literature can be a serious thing, and it's possible to make art in the illustration of a children's book.

Piret Raud's

10 Most Notable Books

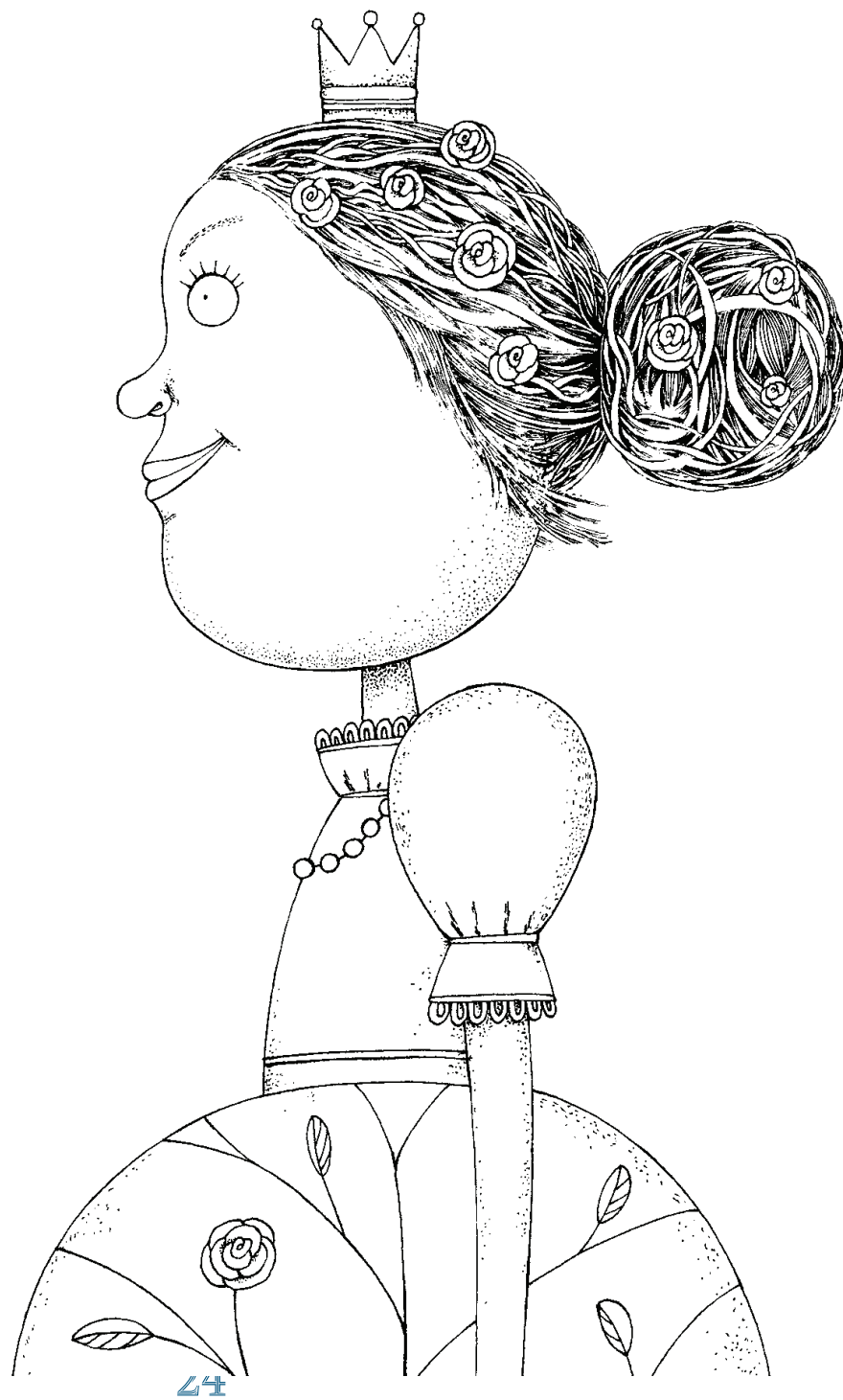


Picturebooks

1. *Mr Bird's Story*
2. *Emma Loves Pink*
3. *Trööömmmpffff, or Eli's Voice*
4. *The Story of the Little House Who Wanted to Be a Home*
5. *The Ear*

Fiction

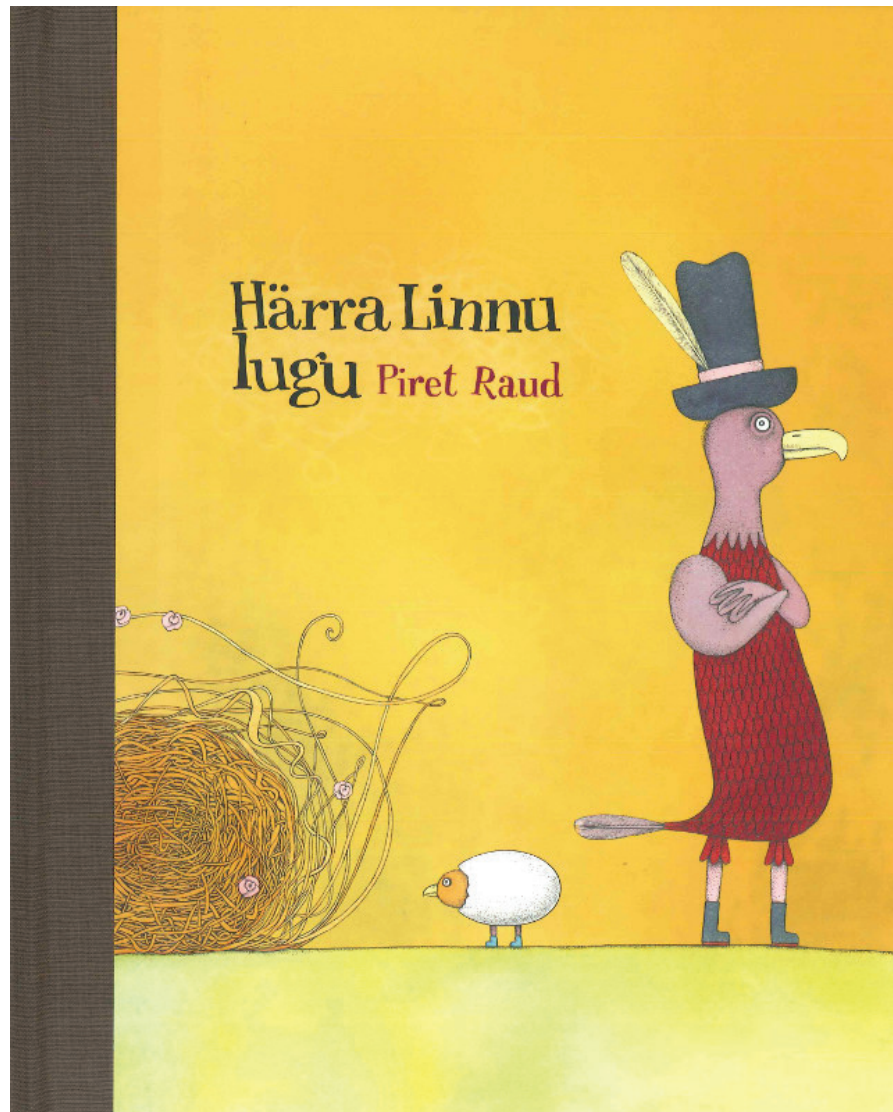
1. *Princess Lulu and Mr Bones*
2. *Slightly Silly Stories*
3. *Princesses with a Twist*
4. *The Story of Sander, Muri, Eensy Mom and the Invisible Aksel*
5. *All My Relatives*



Piret Raud`s

5 Most Notable Books Presented to the Jury

Mr Bird's Story



Härra linnu lugu

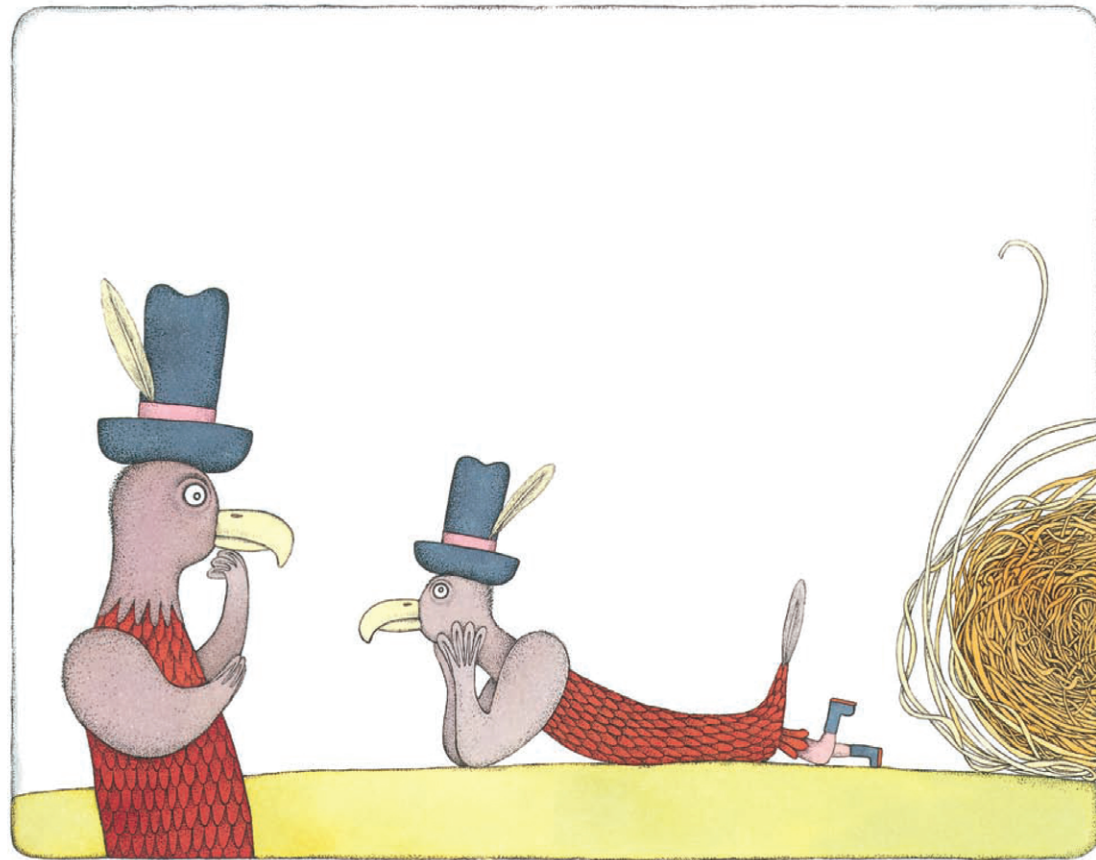
Text and illustrations: Piret Raud

Tammeraamat Publishing, 2009

ISBN 9789949449378

Mister Bird lives in a large forest along with his hardworking friends, who are happy and content with him building nests and singing in the choir. However, Mister Bird finds this kind of life too boring and ordinary, and leaves the forest in order to experience something different.

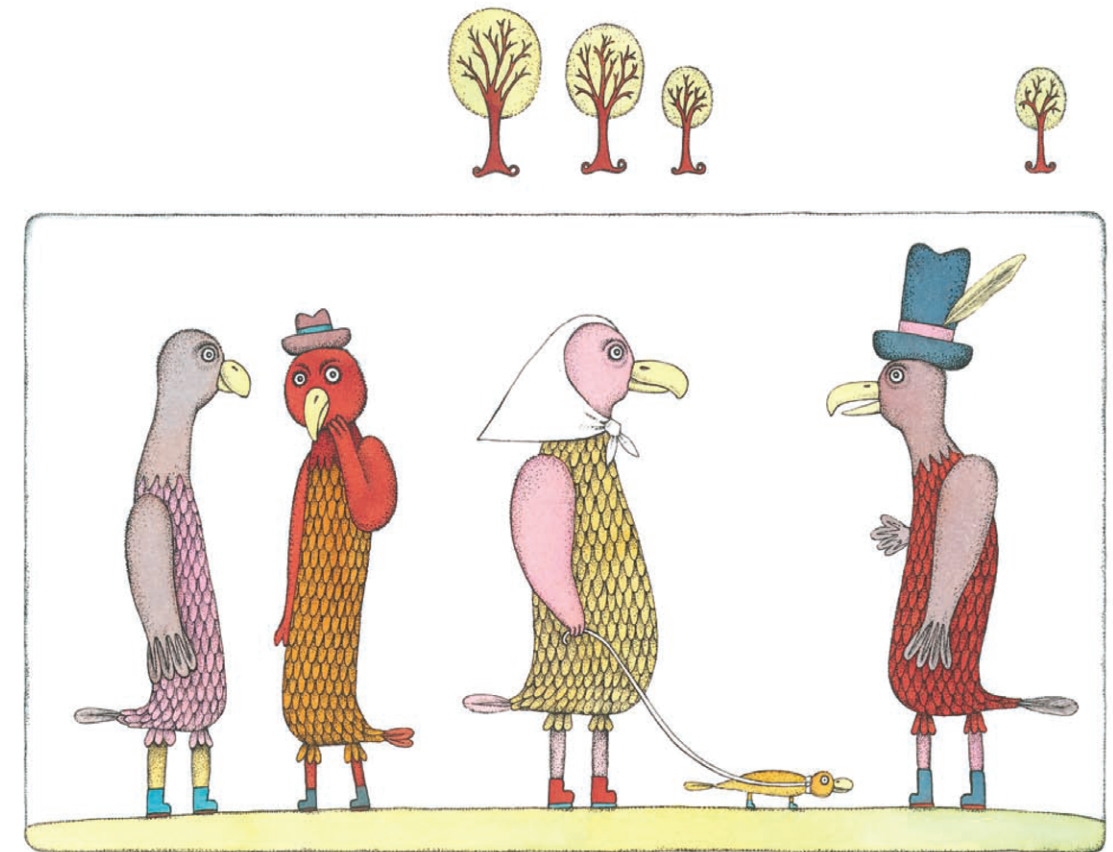
Excerpt



But Mister Bird didn't care about nest building, and he didn't care about singing, and he didn't even like song festivals.

It was all so boring and ordinary.

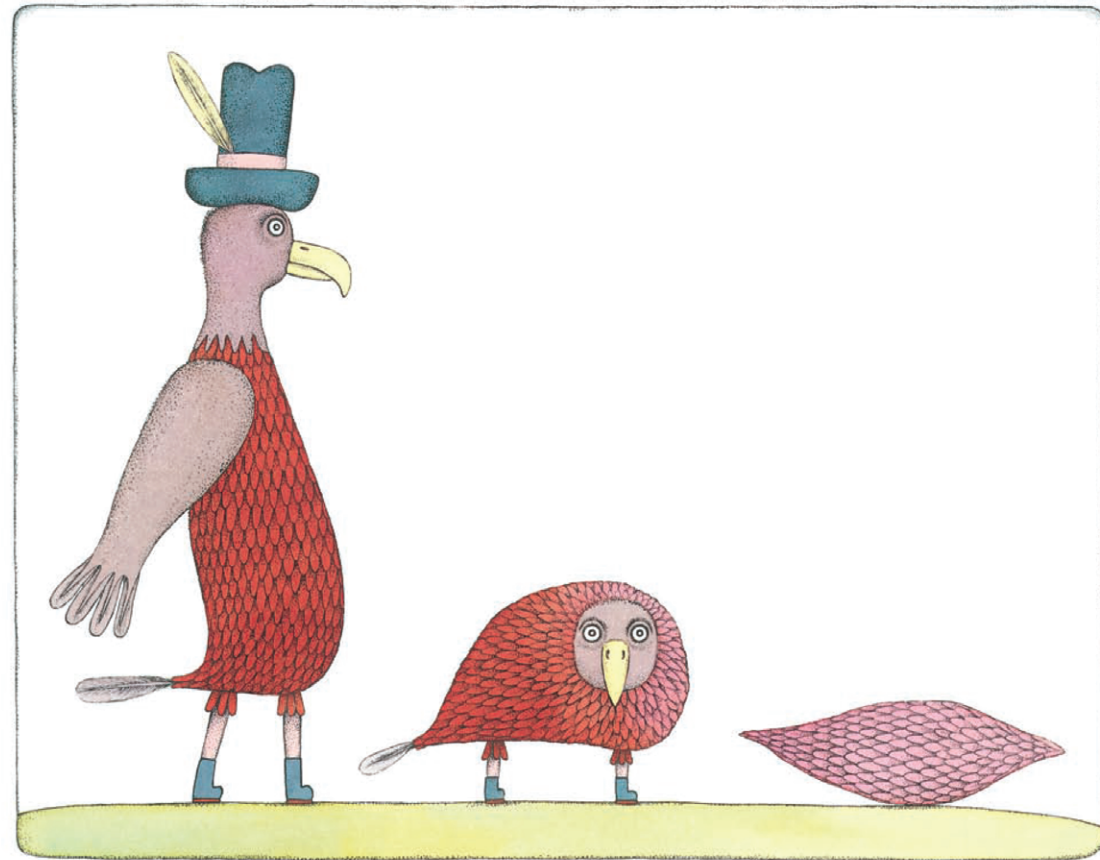
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"I wish things were somehow different," he told his friends. "I want to see the world and experience life. If I want to know what it feels like to be something else, such as a tiny pink pillow, I should be able to try it."

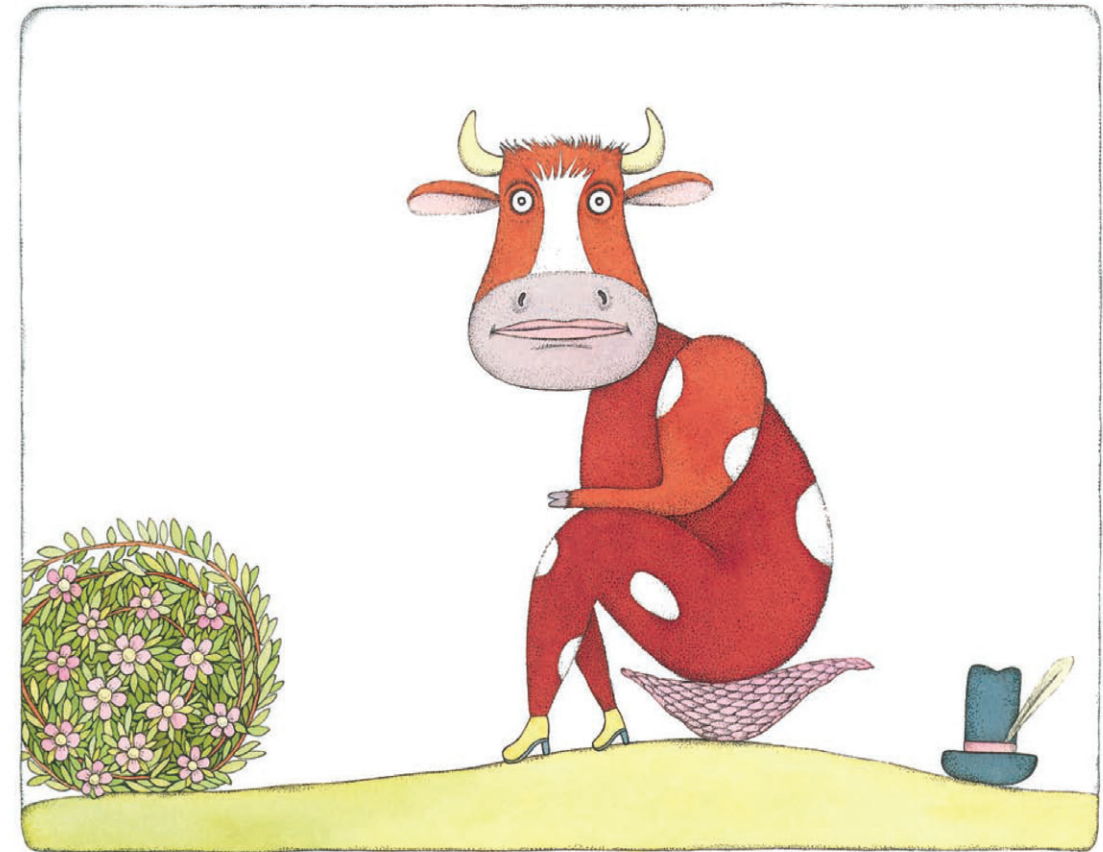
Mister Bird's friends laughed at his idea, and between themselves, they thought that Mister Bird was a bit crazy.

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Mister Bird, however, took no heed of his friends' laughter. He walked into the field and lay down just like a pillow.

It felt comfortable being a pillow. Pillows don't need to be busy or build nests; they can live a lazy peaceful life.



But then Cow came and sat on him.



Reviews

A Great Picture Book with a Little Story

Urmas Nemvalts

Postimees, November 28, 2009

“I want that bone-Lulu story,” demanded my four-year-old son when I had finished reading him *Mr Bird's Story* at bedtime. Doubtless the book *Princess Lulu and Mr Bones*, which we got through last winter, was still fresh in his mind.

Actually, I should probably mention that Piret Raud's unique, almost Old Egyptian two-dimensional signature with its pleasant quiriness was immediately familiar to my little story-listener. His memory of the same author's last book probably also led to the fact that after I had begun, it took fewer than ten minutes until we heard the slap of the back cover closing, signifying the end of the story. Although I hear “Aw, there was so little story” almost every night, I had to agree with my sons' criticism this time. Nevertheless, I did not go looking for the “bone-Lulu” story on this occasion.

Instead, we cracked open *Mr Bird's Story* once again and began inspecting the illustrations more closely. The word “inspect” actually sounds rather dry here, as every now and then, our pre-bedtime children's room was filled with quite lively laughter, and the joy lasted for significantly longer than it had taken to read the text.

The illustrations, which at first glance appear laconic, offer surprising finds for the reader. One of our favourites – the three males poring over that book – was the depiction of a baby bird as an egg with legs; doubtless sometime in puberty, a beaked head would start to stick out, too.

Just as satisfying in the book's bird community are a strolling motherly figure walking a pint-sized dachshund on a leash, or Mr Carrot and his lame leg. Look at Mr Carrot's face and tell me who can manage to stay serious! Perhaps just a snowman? For snowmen are

extremely calm and let nothing bother them, as the characters in Mr Bird's book discuss.

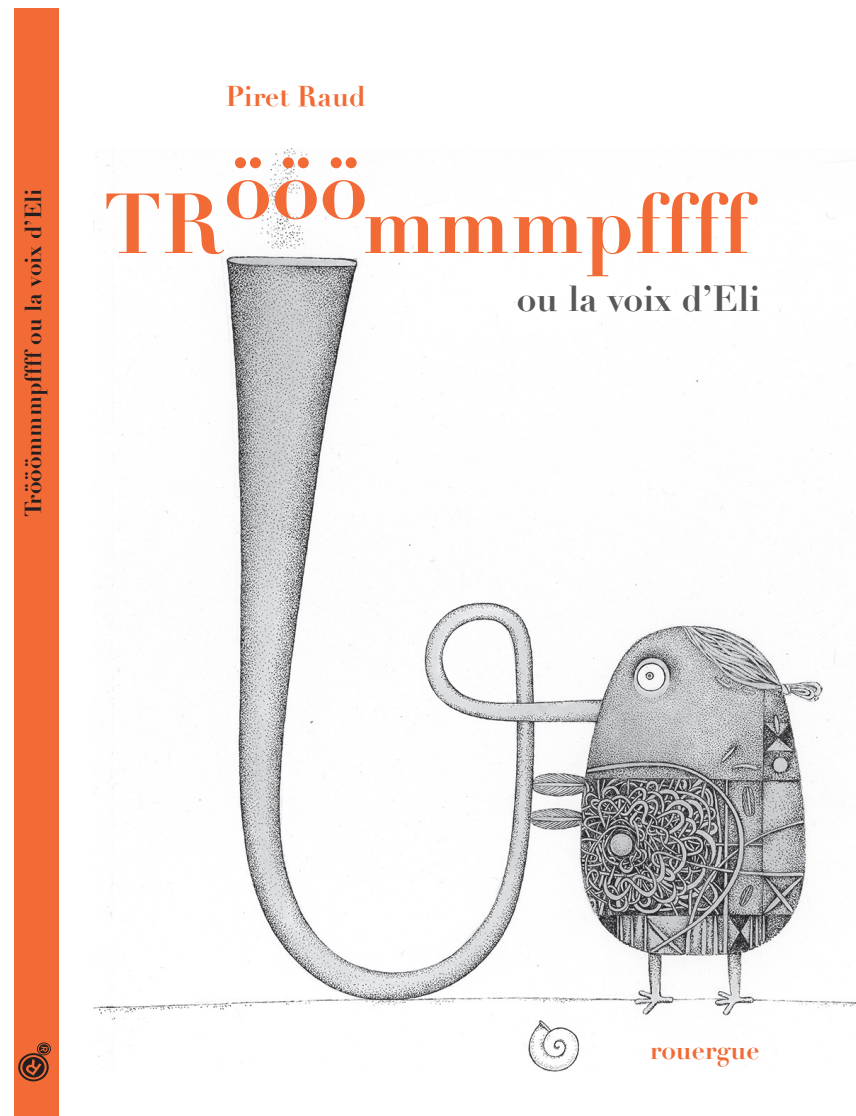
In and of itself, the surreal story about Mr Bird – who is struggling in an identity crisis – could be a quite ordinary take on role play, widespread in children's literature.

Still, a reader cannot get away from Raud so easily – she always turns things up a notch. This the author does with such convincing ease that while reading the text, you do not even think to doubt a bird's ability to embody a pillow, a hedgehog, or a carrot.

Unlike the generally-accepted theories of evolution, in which even the smallest changes in the animal kingdom have taken thousands of years to develop, Mr Bird turns from a carrot into a fox in a single moment – one thought, and it is done. True, in both the first form and the second, Mr Lind retains a sufficient amount of both bird and gentleman. As such, it is not all that surprising that in the end, the lost son returns back to his roots. Here, the main character undergoes one last light transformation, rising to the honourable status of choir director.

In the end, Mr Bird marries a charming Mrs Bird, and the author promises in both word and picture that they will never get bored. Neither did that four-year-old boy seem bored, asking for the bird book the next morning and spending quite a few quiet minutes in its company.

TRööömmmpffff, or Eli's Voice



Trööömmmpffff ou la voix d'Eli

Text and illustrations: Piret Raud

Rouergue, 2016, 37p

ISBN 9782812610547.

A little bird named Eli lives on the sandy shore of a big sea. Eli has no voice. When she hears the rustling of tree leaves, the crashing of sea waves, and the pattering of rain, Eli is so sad that she wants to cry. One morning, Eli finds a horn on the beach. When she blows into one end of it, it makes a fantastic loud noise that goes: "Trööömmmpffff!"

Excerpt

On the sandy shore of a big sea lived a bird, who had no voice. That bird's name was Eli.

"Everything else has a voice," Eli thought sadly. "The trees can rustle. The sea can crash. Even the rain sings when it falls."

"I'm the only one who's mute."

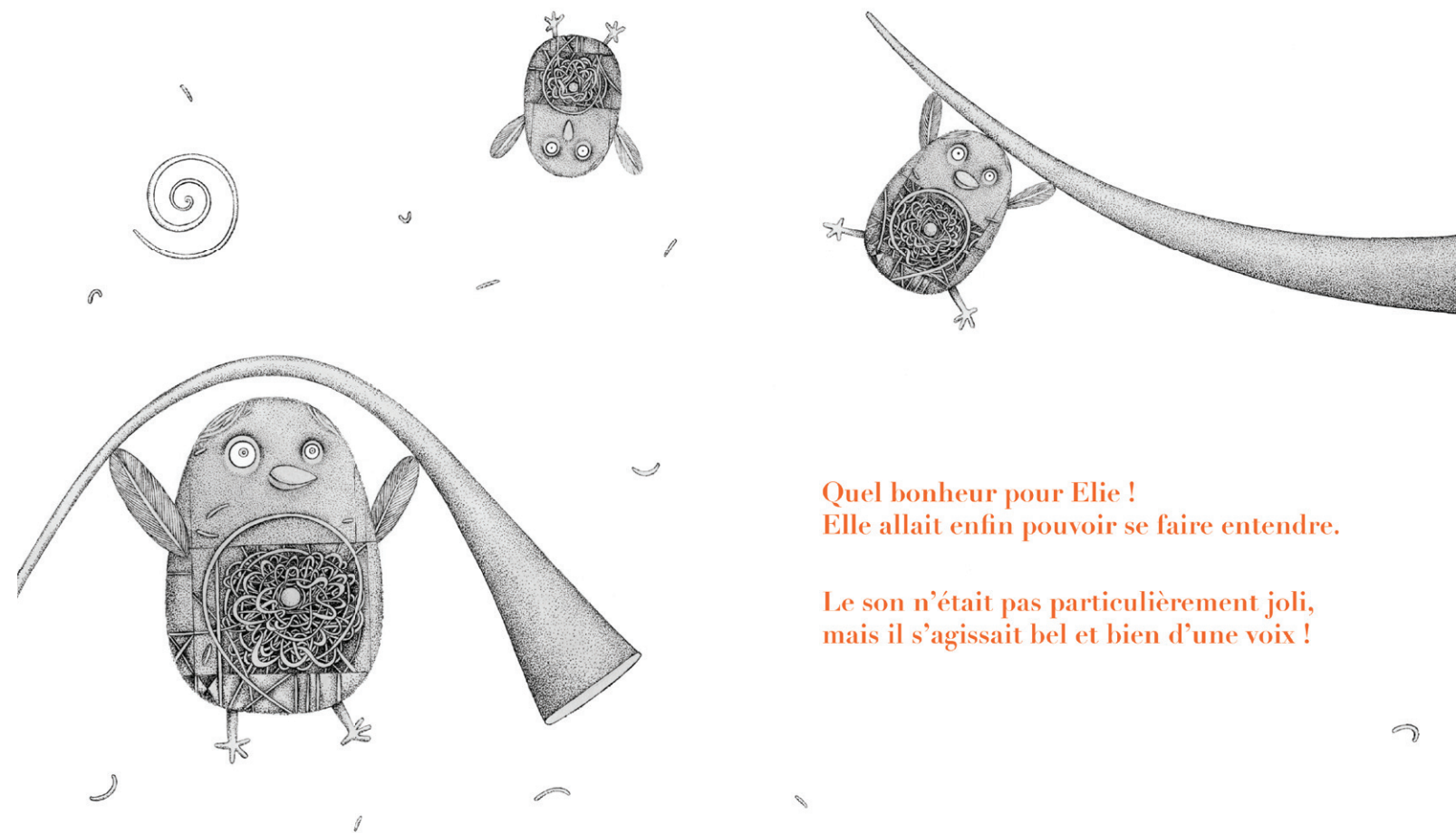
Eli could feel tears welling up in her eyes—that's how bad it felt to be voiceless.

One morning, Eli found a strange object that the waves had washed up onto the beach.

It was a horn!

When Eli blew into one end of it, it made no sound at all—just like Eli.

But when she blew into the other end, it rang out Trööömmmpfff!



Eli was as happy as a clam.

All of a sudden, she was able to make a sound! The voice wasn't exactly a very pretty one, but it was a voice all the same!

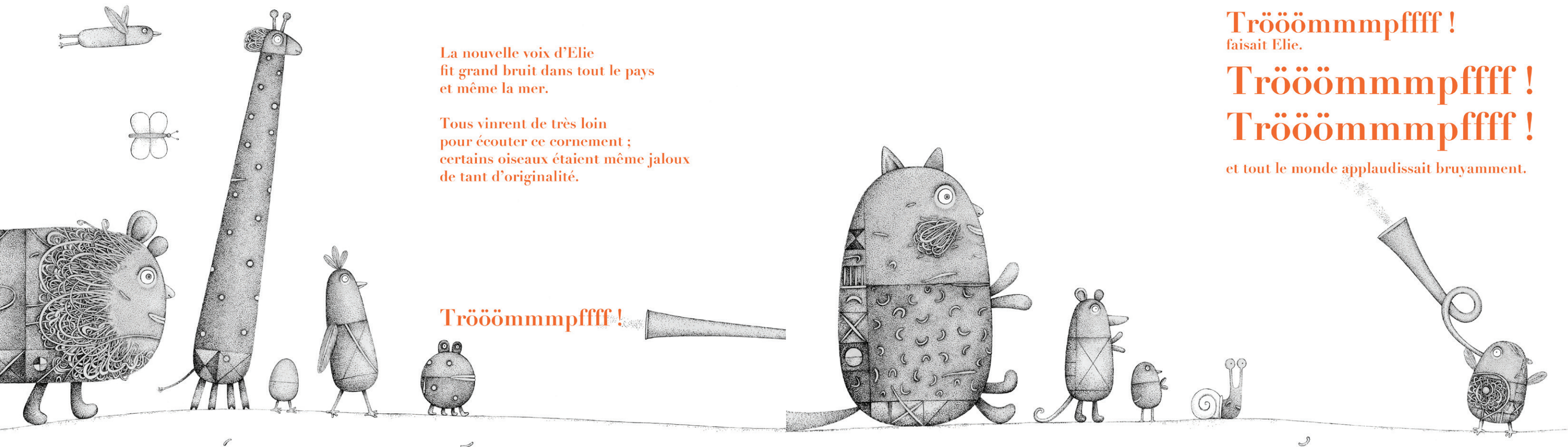
**Quel bonheur pour Elie !
Elle allait enfin pouvoir se faire entendre.**

**Le son n'était pas particulièrement joli,
mais il s'agissait bel et bien d'une voix !**

News of Eli's voice quickly spread across land and sea.

Creatures came from all around to hear Eli toot, and the other birds were even a little jealous that her voice had such an interesting ring to it.

Trööömmmpffff!



La nouvelle voix d'Elie
fit grand bruit dans tout le pays
et même la mer.

Tous vinrent de très loin
pour écouter ce cornement ;
certains oiseaux étaient même jaloux
de tant d'originalité.

Trööömmmpffff!

Trööömmmpffff !
faisait Elie.

Trööömmmpffff !
Trööömmmpffff !

et tout le monde applaudissait bruyamment.

“Trööömmmpffff!” Eli blew.

“Trööömmmpffff! Trööömmmpffff!”

And everyone surrounding her clapped wildly.

Only Albert the fish spluttered angrily:

“That’s not your horn at all!

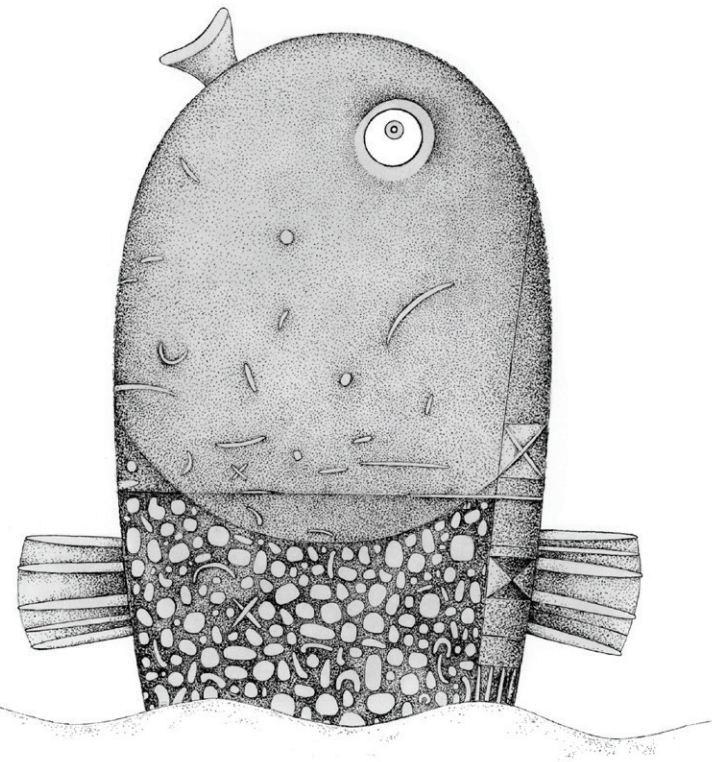
That’s Duke Junior’s horn, and I might add that he is very sad he’s lost his horn.

Duke Junior just isn’t himself anymore without it! He’s completely incomplete!”



**Seul un poisson nommé Albert
affirma avec irritation :**

**« Ce n’est pas ton instrument.
C’est la trompette de Duke Junior.
Et Duke Junior est très peiné
de l’avoir égarée ; sans elle, il n’est plus
le même, il est totalement désemparé. »**



Eli felt her heart sink to her feet. Just think—Trööömmmpffff! wasn’t her voice at all, but was someone else’s!

She picked the horn up in her beak and went looking for Duke Junior.

Eli looked high in the sky and deep in the sea.

She searched for several days and several nights.

Finally, she found him on a lone island in the middle of the ocean.

Duke Junior truly did look down in the dumps and incomplete.

Yet, his face lit up as soon as he saw the horn.

He cautiously took the instrument from Eli’s beak...

Translated by Adam Cullen

The Story of the Little House Who Wanted to Be a Home



L'histoire de la petite maison qui recherchait des habitants

Text and illustrations: Piret Raud

Rouergue, 2017. – [32] p

ISBN 9782812614422.

Deep in the countryside lives an empty little house. She is lonely and sad, and would dearly like to be someone's home. One day, she decides to find someone who would like to live in her. Who could it be? A dog? Or a fish? Or a bird? Or maybe even the homeless man Jim? Or will it be someone entirely different?

Excerpt

The little house continued on her way.

Soon, the day was coming to an end. It was time for everyone to head back to their homes. The sun was rolling to the west, a cloud was sailing to the east, and the breeze was settling down in its treetop.

No one paid the little house any attention.

La petite maison cherchait toujours.

Le jour tirait à sa fin.
Pour tout le monde,
il était temps de rentrer chez soi.

Le soleil roulait vers l'ouest,
les nuages filaient vers l'est,
le vent, comme il se doit,
se réfugiait à la cime des arbres.

Aucun ne fit attention à elle.



Dusk arrived.

All the homes were filled with someone; only the little house was still empty and alone.
Nobody wanted her.

She felt so miserable that she started to cry.

Suddenly, she heard someone whisper: "Look at how homey you are!"

The house looked around, but couldn't see anybody.

Il faisait de plus en plus sombre.

Alors que toutes les maisons retrouvaient
leurs occupants, notre petite maison
était toujours seule et vide.
Personne ne voulait d'elle.

Elle se sentait tellement dépourvue
qu'elle se mit à pleurer.

Soudain, elle entendit quelqu'un chuchoter.
– Comme tu as l'air accueillante !

La petite maison regarda autour d'elle
et ne vit personne.



“Who are you?” she asked.

“I’m a lonely ghost,” the voice replied.

“Please let me move in!”

“But that’s impossible,” the little house wailed. “There’s no such thing as ghosts!”

“You’re right,” the ghost agreed. “There’s not. And that’s exactly why I feel so lonely.”

Now, the ghost started to cry, too, and so, they cried there side by side.

Oh, how many tears they shed!

Actually, being lonely together like that felt wonderful.

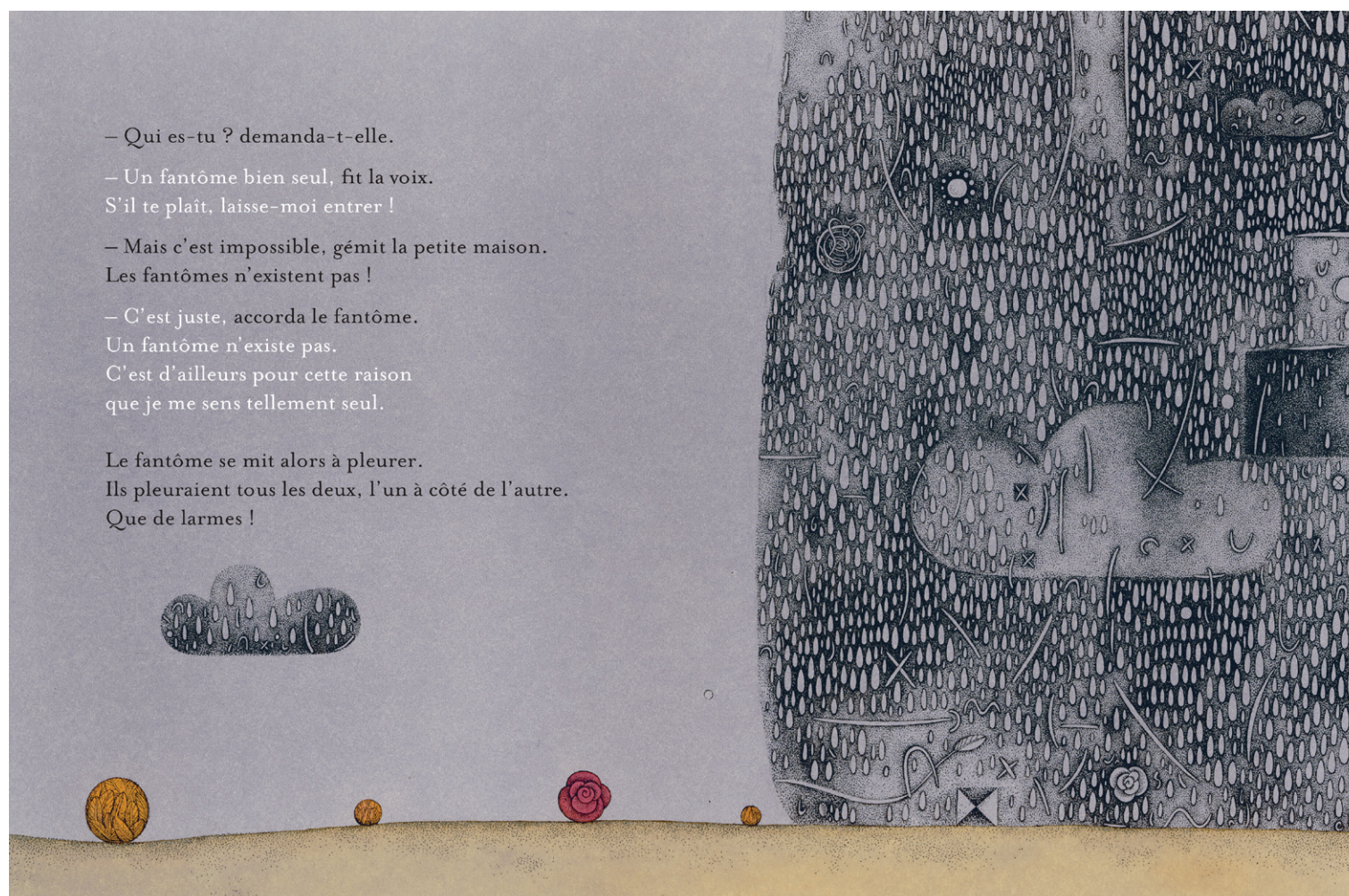
The little house wiped away her tears and smiled.

“It doesn’t matter that there’s no such thing as you,” she said,

“On the contrary: this way,

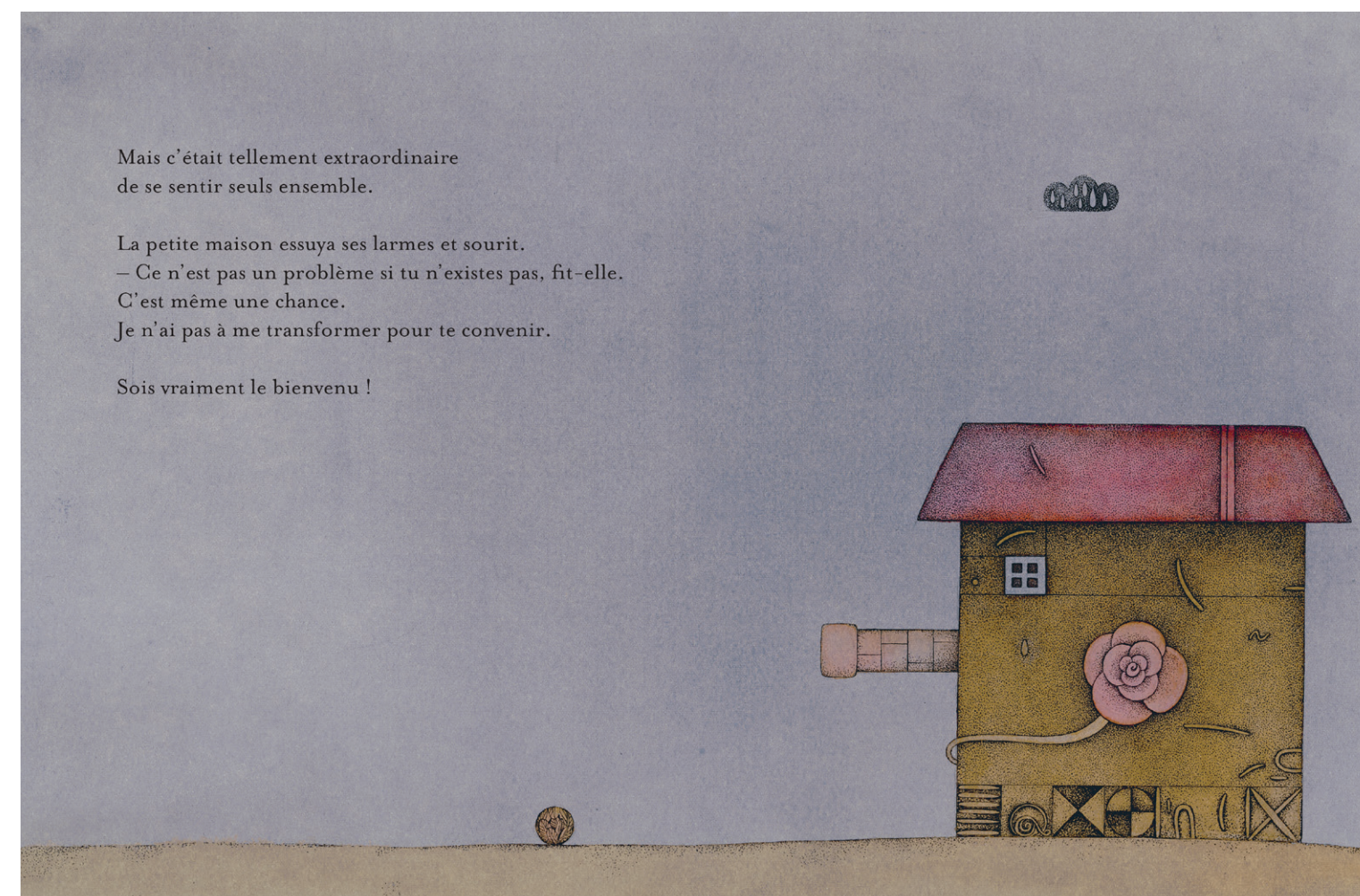
I don’t have to go and change myself for anyone.

You are most welcome to live here!”



– Qui es-tu ? demanda-t-elle.
– Un fantôme bien seul, fit la voix.
S’il te plaît, laisse-moi entrer !
– Mais c’est impossible, gémit la petite maison.
Les fantômes n’existent pas !
– C’est juste, accorda le fantôme.
Un fantôme n’existe pas.
C’est d’ailleurs pour cette raison
que je me sens tellement seul.

Le fantôme se mit alors à pleurer.
Ils pleuraient tous les deux, l’un à côté de l’autre.
Que de larmes !



Mais c’était tellement extraordinaire
de se sentir seuls ensemble.

La petite maison essuya ses larmes et sourit.
– Ce n’est pas un problème si tu n’existes pas, fit-elle.
C’est même une chance.
Je n’ai pas à me transformer pour te convenir.

Sois vraiment le bienvenu !

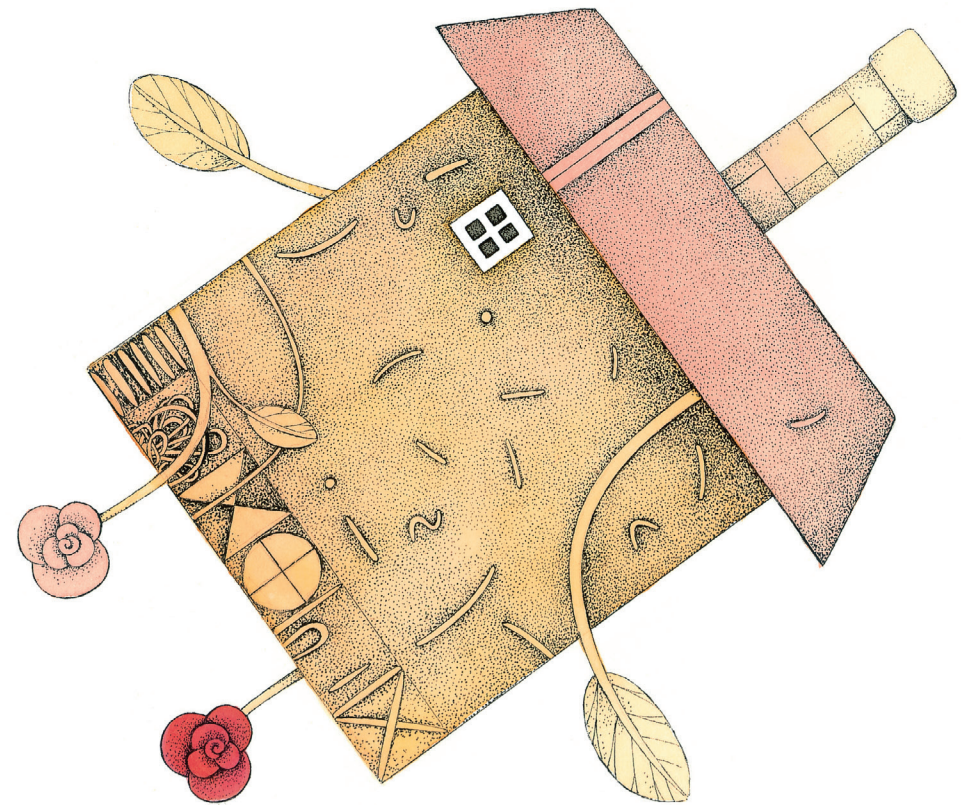
The ghost smiled, too, and moved in at once.
It's true that he didn't exist, but that didn't matter.
He was the little HOME's very own ghost,
and was very dear to her.

Translated by Adam Cullen

Le fantôme sourit à son tour et s'installa.

Il n'existait pas, c'est vrai,
mais cela n'était pas un problème.

Il était le fantôme de cette petite maison
et cette petite maison l'adorait.



Reviews

There is a Home and It's Looking for Us

Frédérique Roussel — 22th september 2017

https://next.liberation.fr/livres/2017/09/22/il-etait-un-toit-qui-nous-cherche_1598089

It does indeed look charming, overgrown with roses, with its chimney and pastel red roof. And yet the diminutive house does not feel at ease in its role, for it is no one's shelter. Can one imagine a sadder destiny for a house? After the mother who shrinks under the weight of worries or the bird who takes up music, Piret Raud, in her most recent picturebook – the eighth to be published by Éditions du Rouergue – focuses on an inanimate everyday item. She follows the flowery house's desperate quest for anybody to shelter under its roof. "On a nice morning, the little house decided to take its destiny into its own hands and went in search of an inhabitant."

Naturally, like every good quest, this one is bound to meet its share of failures.

The unoccupied house invites a dog, a fish, and a bird, but to no avail. Dogs live in kennels and the canine the house meets enjoys the comfort of its shed in Aunt Anne's garden very much. As for the fish or the bird, one does not need to think very hard to understand that the prospect of being stuck inside four walls, even walls that are beautifully overgrown with rambling roses, is not very enticing. Each dialogue features solid arguments.

One feels sad for the small house and its difficult task. It is as if the house were trying to make friends, only to find everybody closing their door in its face. Quite the paradox! Yet more paradoxical is the refusal the house gets from the only human being it meets, although one would think they were the perfect fit. The ending of the story comes as a surprise. It is already astonishing to find a house talking to a fish or a bird, but the lonely inhabitant the house finally finds is nothing that the reader could have imagined.

The Story of the Little House which Looked for Occupants allows us to take a different look at our surroundings and to overturn the usual order of things. Piret Raud, a virtuoso Estonian illustrator, draws delicate, fastidious pictures. Her geometric or undulating patterns enliven the characters in a nice way, especially with the dog and the cat. And with her night is more beautiful than day.

L'histoire de la petite maison qui cherchait des habitants by Piret Raud, translated from Estonian by Olek Sekki, Le Rouergue, 32 pp., 13,90 €. From 4 years.

Translated by Jean Pascal Ollivry

Radio

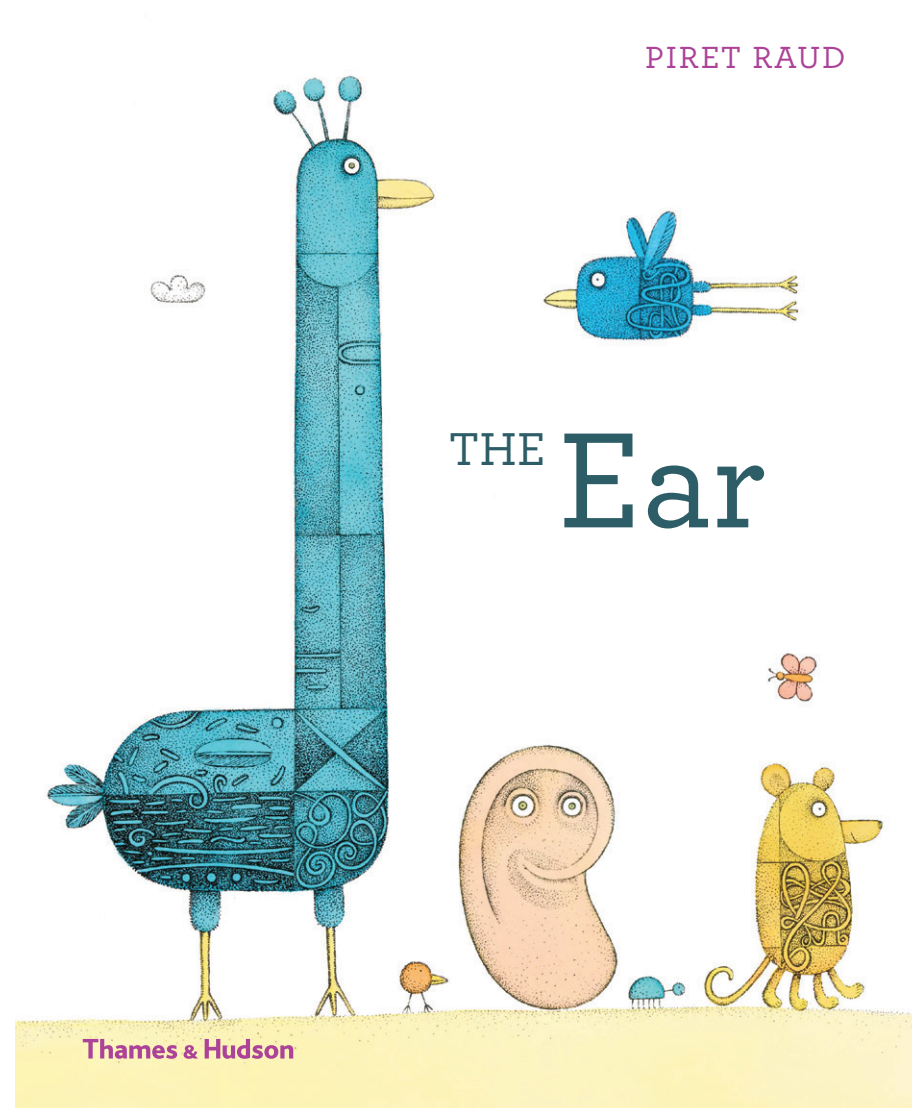
<https://www.france.tv/france-3/un-livre-un-jour/781583-l-histoire-de-la-petite-maison-qui-recherchait-des-habitants-de-piret-raud-rouergue.html?fbclid=IwAR24pZO21gfTHF7LfTN9myWAqMRZGATyQDhAUClz-bwyWkWgHVuepJal61Q>

A small empty house is looking for an occupant, because being lonely is so sad. But everyone has a home already which they love. What can the small house do? For instance, it can meet a lonely ghost which, even if it does not exist, might feel comfortable behind these walls.

Piret Raud's drawings are always very light, very delicate. I find them extremely poetic, and one gets a sense of it in this book. This small house is very touching: it meets a bird, it meets a dog, a tramp, suggesting that they could live in it, but this doesn't work, although the house is ready to undergo transformations, to brave water for the fish. In the end (and I guess this sums up Piret Raud's talent) through her quite childlike and delicate drawing, she asks serious questions – here, the question of what is good for oneself. And in the ending of this quest, the house will find the right person. Piret Raud's special talent lies in telling serious things with help from humour, absurdity, and poetry.

Translated by Jean Pascal Ollivry

The Ear



The Ear

Text and illustrations: Piret Raud

Thames & Hudson, 2019, 32 p.

ISBN 9780500651636.

One morning, the Ear wakes up. Something is completely out of the ordinary: she's all alone. Where is the head on whom she's lived her entire life? How should she carry on? The world is so big and I'm so alone, she mourns, confused and utterly headless! What good is an ear without a head? she sobs. Without a head, I'm no one! But then, the Ear hears a croak. Is it someone who might need her?

Piret Raud's picture book *The Ear* is inspired by the life of Vincent van Gogh.

Excerpt

The Ear felt much better.

From that day on she never thought of the head again.
She was very happy among her new friends.

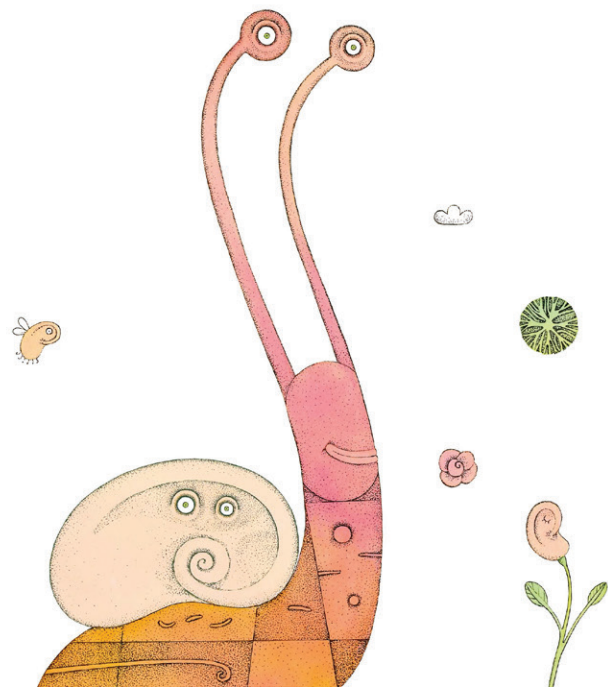


The Ear was confused.
She didn't know who she was anymore.

The head always knew what to do,
because the head was the brains.
But without a head, I am no one,' sobbed the Ear.



Suddenly, she heard someone say 'Croak!'



It was a frog.

'Dear Ear,' asked the frog,
'Could you perhaps listen to me sing?
My heart is heavy and when I sing I feel lighter.
My voice is terribly croaky, but I still long
to sing for someone.'



The next day an elephant came to see the Ear.

'They say you are a good listener,' said the elephant.
'I feel terribly sad. If you could listen to my worries,
my heart might feel lighter.'

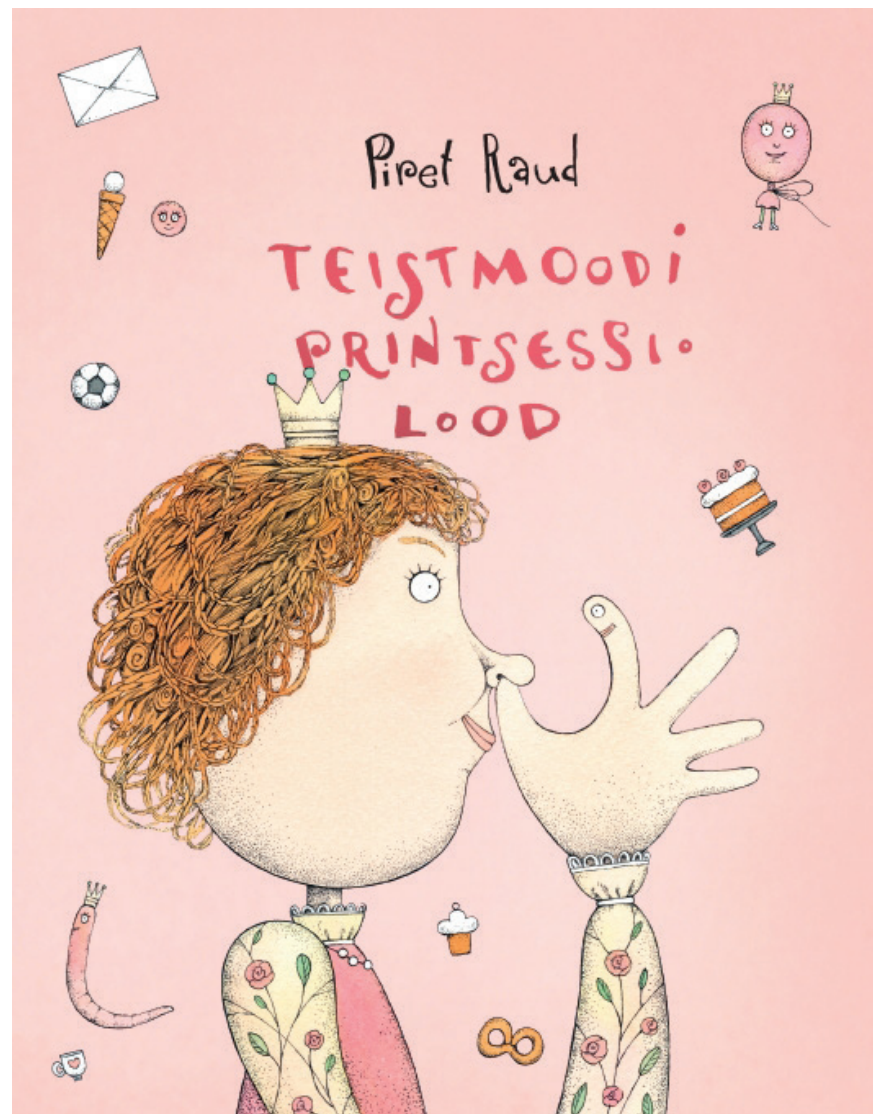
The Ear gladly agreed. The elephant told a story
about how a twist of fate had brought him across
the sea and far from home.

'My home is in a faraway land. I miss my grandmother.
I miss the stars in the southern sky, the baobabs
and the blue daisies.'

The Ear was sorry for the elephant,
but the elephant felt brighter.



Princesses with a Twist



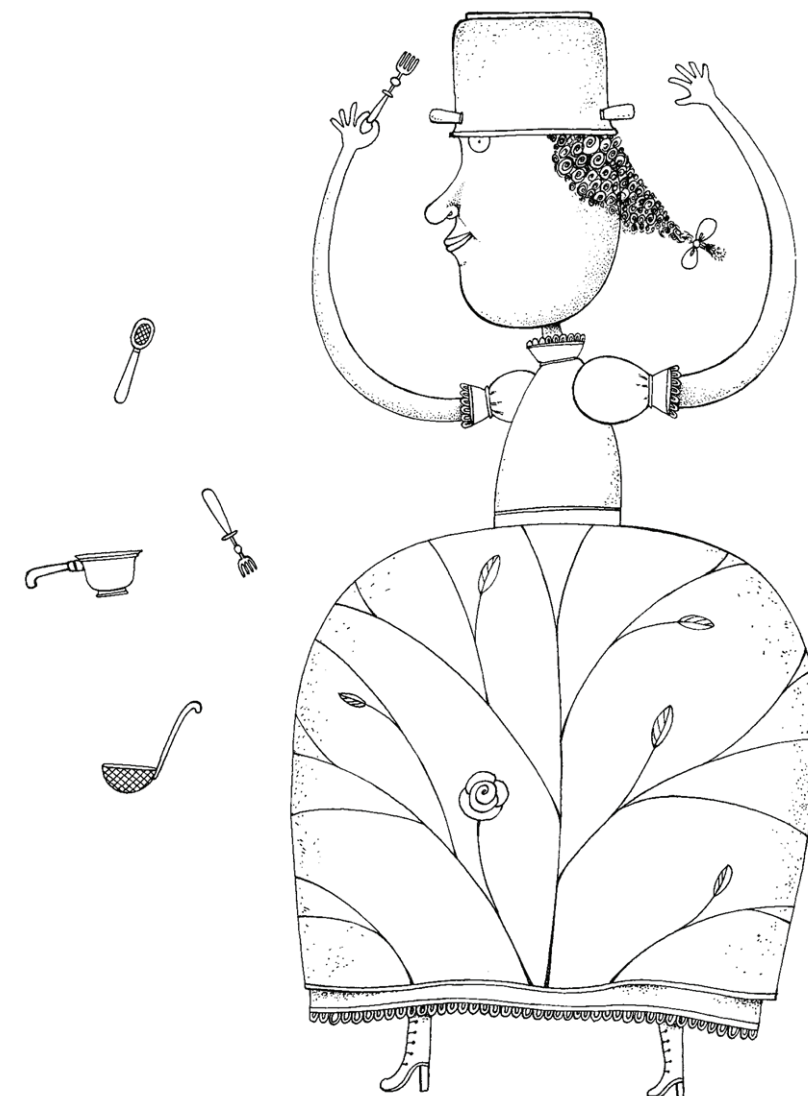
Teistmoodi printsessilood

Text and illustrations: Piret Raud

Tammerraamat 2012, 528 p

ISBN 978-9949-482-53-5

In this book of short stories, Piret Raud has taken on every little girl's dream – princesses. However, these are no ordinary princesses that live in ordinary castles. For example – one finds a backwards-princess who does everything the wrong way around, and a barking princess, who gets bitten by a flea...



Excerpt

The Princess who Barked

There once lived a princess who was very bad-mannered and would bark constantly at grown-ups.

When a teacher said, "Time to start studying!" the Princess would reply, "No, I won't! Woof-woof!"

When the dinner lady said, "Do start!" the Princess would reply, "No, I won't! Woof-woof!"

And when the Princess's Mum, the friendly, courteous Queen said, "Off you go for a bath!" the Princess would reply, "No, I won't! Woof-woof!"

And so on, every day.

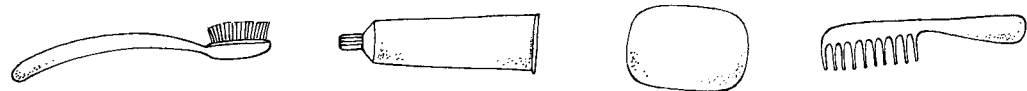
As time went on the Princess became thinner and stupider and dirtier. And ruder. In the end she would not even take the trouble to say "No!" she merely barked: "Woof-woof-woof-woof!"

And what was even crazier was that she would bite!

She bit the teacher, she bit the dinner lady and she bit her Mum, the friendly, courteous Queen. The whole court was most worried about the Princess.

"She won't eat and she won't study and she won't wash. What will become of the Princess if she carries on like this?" the teacher, the dinner lady and the Queen asked each other as they tried to bring the Princess into line.

But the Princess didn't care about anything.



"Woof-woof!" she barked and raced to the park.

At the park the Princess saw a flea, who thought to itself:

"Now *that* filthy, barking animal definitely looks a tasty tidbit."

It jumped onto the Princess's leg and thrust its jaws into her shin.

"Ow!" shouted the Princess and it was the first time in a long while she'd said something other than "Woof!"

She wanted to bite the flea, but the flea was so teeny that she bit round it and into herself instead.

"Ow! Ow!" she yelled now and the flea bit her again. And again. And then again.

The Princess began to cry and went back to the castle. Once there, she complained to her Mum that she was being pestered by a stupid flea.

"The only thing that will help with fleas is a bath!" the Queen told her, and in the end the Princess actually agreed to go and have a bath. She carefully washed herself clean.

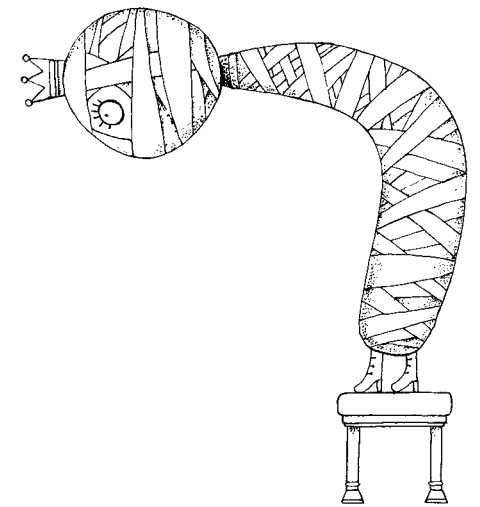
When the Princess came out of the bath, the whole court rejoiced. Although the Princess was dreadfully thin and not at all educated, she was at least clean.

From that very day the Princess stopped barking and biting. She became a world-famous model. The flea disappeared without a trace and nothing was ever heard of it again.

The Princess Mummy

In a great pyramid in distant Egypt there lived Princess Mummy. Princess Mummy was very old – three thousand years at least! – and very ugly but otherwise very friendly and, most importantly, immensely brave.

Princess Mummy was not afraid of the dark, or of scary dogs or even of robbers. There



were hordes of treasures of all kinds in the Princess's home and it was not an uncommon occurrence for tramps to break into the pyramid to rob her of her gold and jewels. When she saw this, courageous Mummy never crept away to hide, instead she would bravely start to talk to the thieves, upon which the thieves would always become very afraid and run away. The thieves probably thought that Princess Mummy was some sort of hideous ghost. Well, they weren't to know that she was friendly underneath.

One day, however, it so happened that a small grey mouse appeared in the pyramid instead of a robber. When the princess saw the mouse, she began to scream and jumped on a chair.

"Help! Help me!" shouted Mummy. She was, after all, a Princess, and princesses are definitely afraid of mice. Well, perhaps not all princesses are, but Princess Mummy certainly was. Mice aside, she was very brave.

"Get away, hideous creature!" she screamed, but the little mouse had no plans to go anywhere and instead scuttled around the princess's chair legs saying "eek-eek!" Princess Mummy trembled from head to toe and it was clear that she was on the verge of fainting, so scared was she of the little grey mouse.

Help came from where the Princess least expected it. A cat mummy suddenly leapt out from who-knows-where and said:

"Nrrraow!"

The little mouse was startled and raced off at top speed and Princess Mummy felt brave enough to climb down from the chair. She stroked the cat mummy and said thank you and asked him where he had appeared from.

It turned out that the cat mummy lived in the same pyramid as the princess but in another part of it.

"That's great news," said Princess Mummy. "Until now I thought I'd been living in this pyramid all by myself."

"Oh no, Princess! In fact there are three of us living here!" said the cat mummy, and called to the crocodile mummy.

The Princess was extremely pleased to meet the cat mummy and the crocodile mummy.

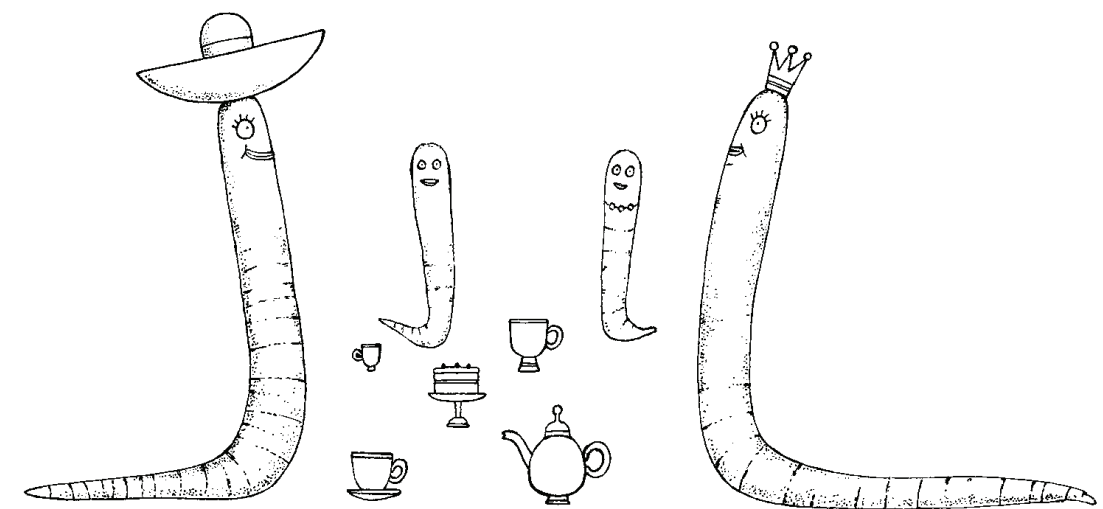
She made everyone some delicious tea and poured it into cups. To her own cup the Princess added several spoonfuls of sugar.

"Sugar calms the nerves," she told her new friends. "That mouse gave me a proper fright."

And she added a couple of extra spoonfuls of sugar just to be on the safe side.

The three of them sat together for a long time, drinking tea and talking. It was a very pleasant afternoon.

Princess Earthworm and the Frog-Prince



Princess Earthworm and a group of other fine young earthworm ladies were drinking tea and chattering about this and that. Among the chit-chat one of the earthworms, whose name was Delila, said, "Did you know that if you kiss a frog, the frog might very well turn into a prince?"

"Really?" replied the other earthworms in surprise. "If that's true, then Princess Earthworm should definitely try her luck!"

Princess Earthworm responded with, "Are you mad? It would be tantamount to earthworm suicide! If I went to kiss a frog, it'd just eat me up!"

“It wouldn’t eat you!” said Delila, and the other earthworms nodded in agreement. “A Prince would definitely recognise a Princess!”

At that very moment the group saw a handsome frog hopping round nearby.

“It must be fate that the frog has turned up here right now!” remarked Delila. “Go over and give him a kiss!”

Princess Earthworm was in a quandary. There was no way she wanted to kiss the frog! The frog terrified her! But looking scared in front of her friends terrified the Princess even more.

And so she plucked up courage and crept towards the frog, closed her eyes and gave the frog a rough kiss on the cheek. And lo and behold! The frog did not eat Earthworm, instead it actually turned into a Prince! Not a charming earthworm prince, admittedly: a human one, but that’s something at least.

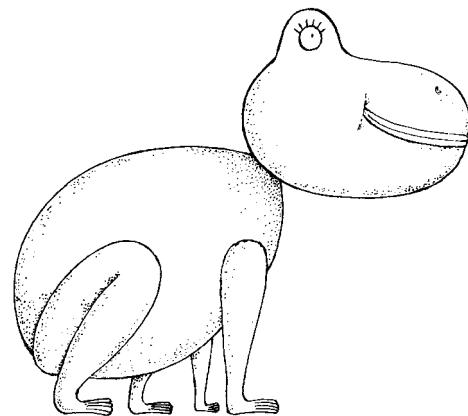
The Prince looked at the Princess before him and said, “Oooh! Just the kind of lovely earthworm I was looking for!” And he lifted the earthworm princess from the ground.

“What did I say?” said Delila happily. “There’ll be wedding bells soon!”

But the Prince had no plan for any kind of wedding, unfortunately.

He gathered up all the other earthworms, put them in a glass jar and went fishing.

It’s such a pity, but it just goes to show that it’s not always wise to do what your friends suggest at a tea-party.



The Sand-Castle Princess

On the sandy shore by the sea there stood a castle. A sand-castle. It was made completely of sand: the walls were sand and the floors were sand and the roof was sand and the doors and windows were sand. If you didn’t know it was a sand-castle you might have thought it wasn’t even a castle, just a heap of sand festooned by clams.

In the castle there lived an imaginary princess. No-one else could have lived there because, like all sandcastles, this one was full of sand from the inside out and it wasn’t possible to move about in there or breathe. This posed no problems for our princess, however: she was imaginary.

The imaginary princess lived here completely alone. She ate imaginary biscuits from the clamshells and drank imaginary tea from the coiled snail seashells. During the day she went swimming in the sea, but in the evenings she would sit on the stone terrace in front of the castle and watch the sunset.

One evening, however, the sunset could not be seen at all. Instead of the sun large storm clouds raced across the sky. The wind rose and it began to rain. The sea’s stormy waves destroyed the sandcastle completely and dragged the princess herself into the water.

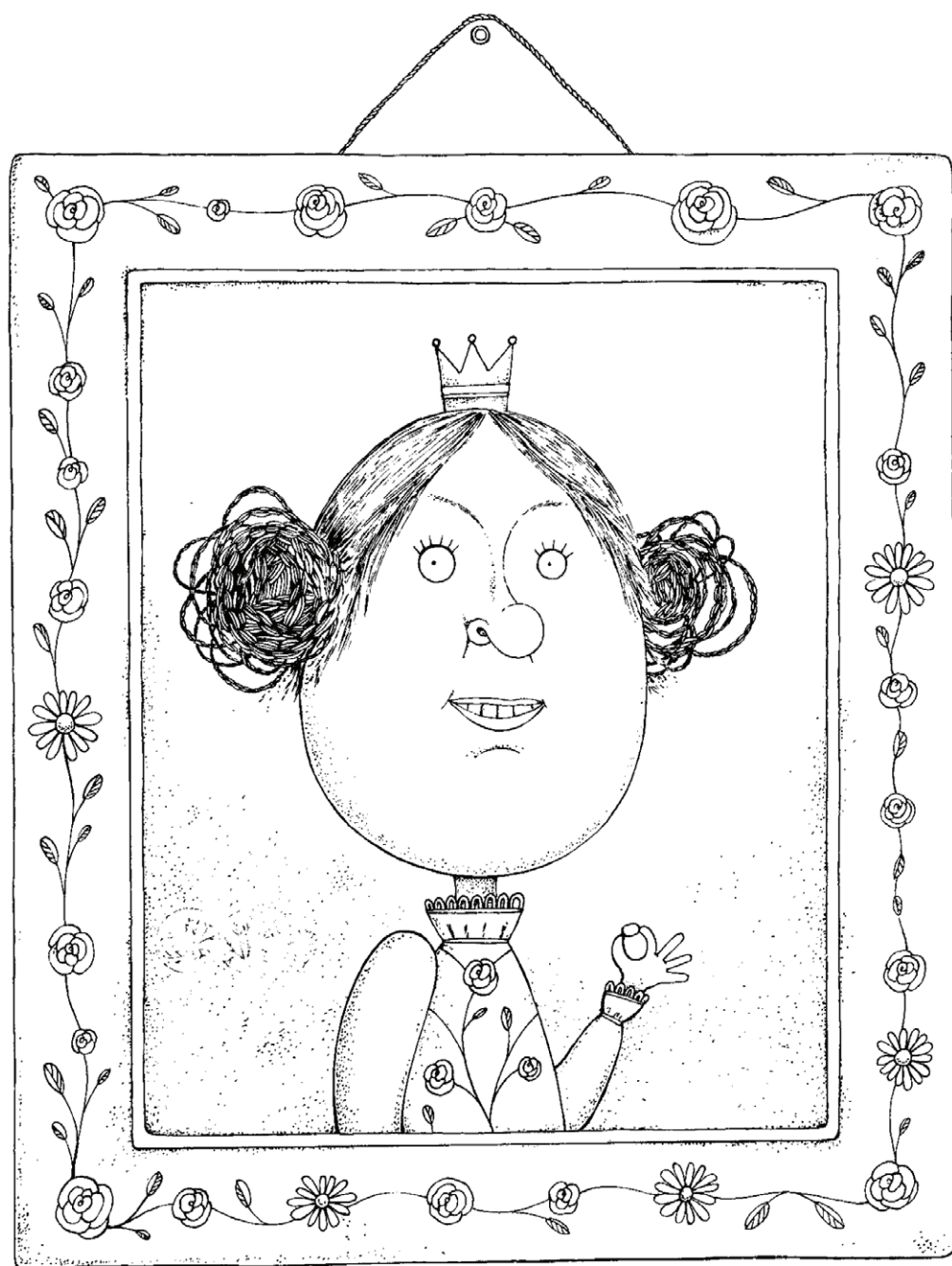
A large fish swam up to the princess in the sea. It sniffed the princess with interest and asked, “Want some bubble gum?”

The Princess did and so they chewed the bubble gum and the fish taught the princess how to blow bubbles. It was so much fun that the cold and the storm didn’t seem so scary any more. Besides, the storm finally came to an end too.

The princess swam back to the shore. The storm had wrecked the castle, but that didn’t matter because the imaginary princess didn’t need a real sand-castle. She could just as easily live in an imaginary one.

Everything would have ended there beautifully, but unfortunately the fish caught a dreadful cough from the cold wind and lost the knack of blowing bubbles with bubblegum. Just try blowing bubbles with bubblegum when you have a cough – it’s completely impossible!

The princess felt very sorry for the fish and wanted to help the poor thing. She made him a mugful of imaginary lime-blossom tea with honey. The fish drank it down but unfortunately it didn't make him feel any better. Really it didn't – what helps a real cold is real lime-blossom tea with real honey, not the imaginary stuff.



The Smiling Princess

The smiling princess lived in a great castle in a picture hanging on a wall. The castle was no ordinary castle, but an art museum, and there were other pictures there besides that of the princess: there were landscapes and flower meadows and drawings of all kinds of creatures from foreign lands. But the picture of the smiling princess was the most famous and most important picture in the museum. People came from far and near to see her. They crowded in front of the princess and jostled and elbowed each other to get a better view of her.

“It’s because you smile in such a friendly way all the time,” the basket of orchard fruit picture, which hung near the princess, told her. “I never smile and just the odd one or two look at me.”

The basket of orchard fruit picture was right. People were very interested in the princess’s smile. They all thought the princess’s smile was very distinctive and exceedingly enigmatic.

“Why is she smiling mysteriously like that?” they would ask each other, although no-one knew the answer.

In fact the only secret behind the princess’s smile was the fact that she happened to have a very sweet tooth and so had a lollipop in her mouth. And when you smile with a lollipop in your cheek, then your smile is slightly different from your ordinary lollipop-free smile.

Anyway, sucking on lollipops for such a long time is really bad for the teeth. One day a dreadful thing happened: the princess came down with toothache and she couldn’t smile any more. In fact, forget the smile, the princess had such bad toothache that she burst into tears.

The museum director was called over straight away. The director looked at the miserable princess and said, “No-one will want to look at a face with that glum expression. The picture will be taken to the restoration department for urgent work.”

The restoration department is the part of a museum where old, damaged paintings are taken for repair. Working there was Jüri, who immediately realised what the trouble was.

“Open wide and say ‘aaa!’” he told the princess, and the princess did as she was asked.

Now Jüri applied white paint to his brush and painted the princess's damaged teeth back to health and whiteness. The princess's toothache disappeared at a stroke.

"No more lollipops for you!" Jüri told her. "They damage your teeth. Much better to chew on an apple – fresh orchard fruit is very good for the teeth!" The picture was put back on the wall and the princess ate not a single lollipop more. Admittedly, her smile was slightly different from what it had been before, but no-one noticed. Just as no-one noticed that with each passing day the orchard fruit picture next to it on the wall had one apple fewer.

The Princess And The Dark

Once upon a time there lived a princess who was afraid of the dark. Or rather, not the dark itself, but of the goblins who crept around in the shadow of darkness, spiteful, horrid creatures. When it was dark, no-one could be certain whether a goblin was lurking nearby.

The princess was so terribly afraid that one day she decided to ban the dark. She banned it from everywhere. The dark was banned from rooms and cinemas, potato cellars, mushroom cupboards and the night's streets. It wasn't even allowed under the bed.

Things now were very difficult for the dark. It had nowhere to go. As a last resort it went into hiding in the princess's pocket and kept very quiet inside.

The princess was very content. Everywhere was light and bright. Not a single dark corner or opening anymore, and no terror of goblins.

But not everyone was pleased about the disappearance of the dark. The moon, for example. The moon just loved being in the dark, gleaming modestly. It couldn't do that in the light.

So the moon followed the dark into the pocket.

It was unspeakably pleasant and spacious in the princess's dark pocket, so the moon decided to invite his friends to visit. He found the princess's phone in the pocket and phoned up the stars to ask them over for a cup of tea. And then he rang the owl and the moth and the bat and invited them over too.

And after a little while they all arrived. The stars brought some crumbcake and the bats some biscuits. The telephone made the tea and the moon set the table and the party was ready to start.

When the princess felt something strange moving in her pocket she looked inside. She was most surprised when she saw the dark and the moon and the stars and the owl and the moth and the bat and the telephone drinking tea and eating cake.

"What's going on?" she asked, eyebrows raised.

"It's a cosy tea evening," answered the friends, and invited her to join them.

The princess climbed into her pocket too and suddenly realised that the dark was quite pleasant, especially being in the dusk with cool companions. They ate cake and talked until the wee small hours. The bat told a couple of goblin stories, but they didn't seem at all scary, instead they were quite funny. Finally it was time for the princess to go to bed. As she was leaving she said to the dark:

"You are no longer banned and you may come and go as you please. I won't be scared of goblins now I know that I've got so many friends in the darkness."

The dark smiled and replied:

"There's no such thing as goblins, princess, my sweet, believe me! Who could be surer of that than me, the Dark?"

He jumped out of the princess's pocket and spread over the land. And the moon and stars went back into the sky and the owl, the moth and the bat flew back to their homes.

Only the phone stayed in the princess's pocket, but it now had everyone's numbers in its memory. Just in case there might be a need to invite everyone back for another pleasant evening of tea-drinking.

The Princess with the Problem Feet

There was once a princess who had problem feet: they were spiteful and always spoiling for a fight. They kicked and hacked at everything in their path: stones and chestnuts and discarded plastic bottles and tin-cans, not forgetting dropped teddies, snowmen and lost

hedgehogs. Her feet also liked to stomp about in the mud and cover themselves in it, even though they had been clean when they set off. Even worse, sometimes her problem feet got under other people's feet.

Once, for example, the general's horse fell flat on its stomach because of the Princess's problem feet and the general, who was sitting on the horse at the time, received a large bump on the head. And another time, the castle cook went flying while carrying the soup pan and the lunchtime soup spilled all over the floor.

"Stop it!" the Princess scolded her feet. "That's no way for royal feet to behave! Royal feet walk daintily in white socks through castles or parks, they do not indulge in silliness of any kind!"

But the problem feet just laughed light-heartedly at the Princess's words and didn't even try to mend their ways. The Princess was greatly troubled by them.

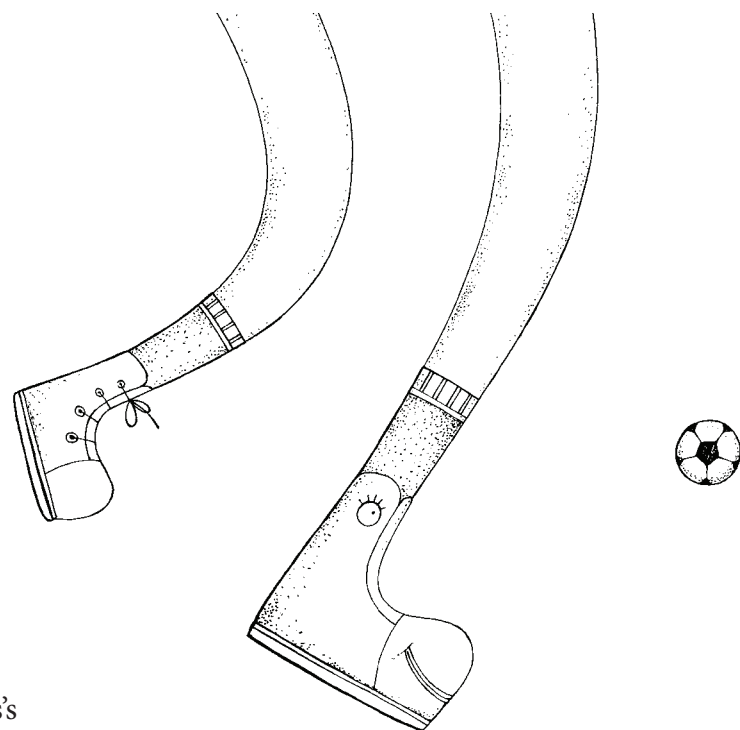
Fortunately one day something happened that changed the life of the Princess and her feet for ever. The Princess's feet noticed a large crowd of feet that they didn't know chasing a ball on a lawn. They hacked at the ball and moved it and kicked it, but no-one was telling them off; in fact they were yelling "Hurray!" and "Yeeesss!" and "Nice one!" for all they were worth.

"What are they doing?" asked the feet.

"Playing football," the Princess replied.

The feet watched the game with interest and became more wildly enthusiastic every second. They especially liked the skilled, muscular feet of the famous footballer that kicked the ball so hard on several occasions that it flew into the goal.

When the game finished, the Princess's feet told the Princess, "We want to play football too!"



When the Princess tried to tell them that football was not a game for princesses, her feet began to play up and scrape the ground.

The famous footballer noticed; he came up to the Princess and asked what the matter was.

The Princess told him about her problem feet. The footballer listened thoughtfully and then said, "Well *I* think footie is fantastic for Princesses!"

And the footballer's marvellous, muscular feet added:

"A good footballer's feet usually cause a few problems."

And so the Princess's feet began to attend football training every day and now they give her no problems at all any more. And it's not that they've got older and wiser – oh no! It's just that they are so worn out after training that all they want to do is have a bath and sleep.

The hard training made the Princess's feet very good players. The Princess and her feet were even selected for the Kingdom's national football team. Even better, the Princess's feet and the famous footballer's feet and the feet of all the other players selected won the World Championships.

Now everyone praised the Princess's feet and said that the Princess's feet were very good and not at all problematic. Even the general and his horse thought so, and the castle's cook, who baked a splendid cake in the shape of a foot in the Princess's honour.

The Princess's Nose

There once lived a princess who had a bad habit of picking her nose. The Princess's nose suffered terribly.

"It's bullying," complained the nose to the Princess. "You pull at me and pick on me non-stop. I'm all red and swollen! Couldn't you just stop?"

"There's nothing I can do," sighed the Princess sadly. "It's not me poking you about, it's my fingers. They just can't help it. But I'll tell them that you don't like it."

And she set about scolding her fingers.

Her fingers hunched into knobles of shame and the Princess' right thumb told her, "It's just that we really, really like your nose a lot. It's so beautiful and charming and blushes prettily when it's prodded a bit. We'd really love to be friends with it."

The Princess burst out laughing and ran to the rose bush in the castle garden.

"If you want to be friends with my nose then why don't you offer it these roses?" she suggested and the fingers picked armfuls of roses for her nose.



"Ohh!" exclaimed the Princess's nose when it was offered the roses. "What a wonderful smell! Thank you very much, fingers, my dear friends!"

It stooped towards the flowers and sniffed and sniffed and sniffed. And then sniffed some more. The fingers were overjoyed that the nose liked the flowers and even more delighted that nose had called them her friends. They never picked on her or at her again. Friends are nice to their friends; they don't bully them, don't you agree?

Princess Chimney's Worries

Princess Chimney lived on the roof of a lovely little house and smoked. A stork landed next to her.

"Smoking is very bad for your health," said the stork, who had made its nest on the manor kitchen side of the chimney which no longer smoked, and knew what she was talking about.

"I don't have a choice," complained Princess Chimney. "I'm terribly nervous and it makes me smoke!"

"Why are you nervous?" asked the stork with interest.

"Because I'm worried," replied the Princess. "I'm waiting for a Prince. I've been waiting for years and years now, but the Prince never comes. That kind of thing makes you nervous!"

The stork felt sorry for Chimney and decided to help her in her misfortune. The very next day she brought the Princess a frog in her bill.

"Here's an enchanted Prince for you," said the stork to Chimney. "All you have to do is kiss him and before your very eyes he'll turn into a handsome Prince who'll take you for his bride!"

Chimney bowed towards the frog to give it a kiss.

"Pooh!" shouted the frog. "This princess stinks like a chimney – all smoke ! I do NOT

want someone like her to kiss me! Much less do I want her as my bride!” And he hopped off the roof into the lilac bush.

“I’m very sorry!” said the stork, rising into the air to fly away. “It would appear that even frogs don’t like smoking.”

Princess Chimney remained unhappy and alone.

“My Prince will never come,” she thought, and she was right. The only thing that did come was a cat, who jumped over the roof ridge next to Chimney. The cat wasn’t bothered by the fact that the Princess smelled of smoke. Chimney was lovely and warm, and the cat liked that.

“Prrr!” said the cat, and the princess smiled.

The Pencil and Princess Dot

A pencil drew a teeny tiny dot on a piece of paper.

“Hello, dot!” said the pencil.

“I’m not any old dot, I’m Princess Dot,” announced the dot haughtily.

“Hello, Princess Dot,” said the pencil.

Instead of returning the pencil’s greeting politely, dot commanded:

“Draw a castle round me! Even you must realise that princesses must live in castles.”

“Certainly, at once!” agreed the pencil affably and drew a beautiful castle around the dot.

“I want a rose garden too!” demanded the dot. “A castle without a rose garden is fit for nothing.”

And the pencil drew a rose garden too.

“Now draw me servants to command,” still the dot was not content. “Draw a cook and a gardener and a cleaning lady!”

So the pencil drew a cook and it drew a gardener. And then it drew a cleaning lady by the name of Hilda. But the pencil shouldn’t have done that because no sooner had Hilda seen the dot than she said with a sour look:

“What kind of muck is that?”

And she scrubbed the dot away.

The pencil was not greatly upset by the fact that the cranky old dot had gone, although it was at a loss nevertheless. If Princess Dot was no more, then whose were the castle and the rose garden? The pencil thought for a bit and had a good idea. It began to draw children. Lots of children. It drew a whole castle full of children and a rose garden full of children too. And then it drew swings, a sandpit and climbing frames. At the very end it drew a bridge to the castle door and wrote on it “Kindergarten”.

The pencil was by now so short that it could draw no more. It threw itself, exhausted, into the pencil case, stretched out and fell asleep.

The children in kindergarten began a joyful life. They played all sorts of wonderful games from morning till evening and were kind to each other and happy all the time. Sometimes, but not often, they played princesses, but only sometimes. You couldn’t play princess games and dream of the life of a princess all the time. After a while, that would just be a terrible bore.

Translated by Susan Wilson



Reviews

Piret Raud. Princesses with a Twist

Estonian Children's Literature Centre. Book of the Month. March 2013.

<https://www.elk.ee/?p=6644>

Stores are overflowing with princess books for children. From the sappy stories to the pink and purple kitsch illustrations are completely interchangeable from content to appearance. Even though Piret Raud's new book also has a pink palette, the girl picking her nose on the cover shows that this is a completely different phenomenon. There are 30 short stories in this book, all of moderate length, tempo, and inventiveness that even young, impatient readers – boys or girls – won't get restless.

For the most part Princesses with a Twist is about human princesses, but by no means are the ordinary. On the surface, there might not seem to be anything out of the ordinary about a princess who loves to cook or clean, but the author does not resolve the tale in the traditional way, but rather goes over the top. So the culinary princess gets a bread-devouring pet dragon and the princess who loves cleanliness cleans the words out of books and starts diligently filling them up again with new stories. Piret Raud's princesses have a lot of character traits that are suitable for young children. For example, one princess loves doing everything backwards and another is afraid of the dark. Several stories are about the princesses' body parts who behave childishly or inappropriately for a princess: a nose, which the fingers want to pick at, bad feet which want to kick everything, or a constantly rumbling stomach.

In the book, you can find stories about a smiling princess in a painting and a postmark princess – there is no shortage of imaginary princesses. The author depicts princesses as weather phenomenon (cloud), plants (pea), animals (snail, earthworm), inanimate objects (chimney), and we also meet abstract characters (for example, a letter of the alphabet and a spot).

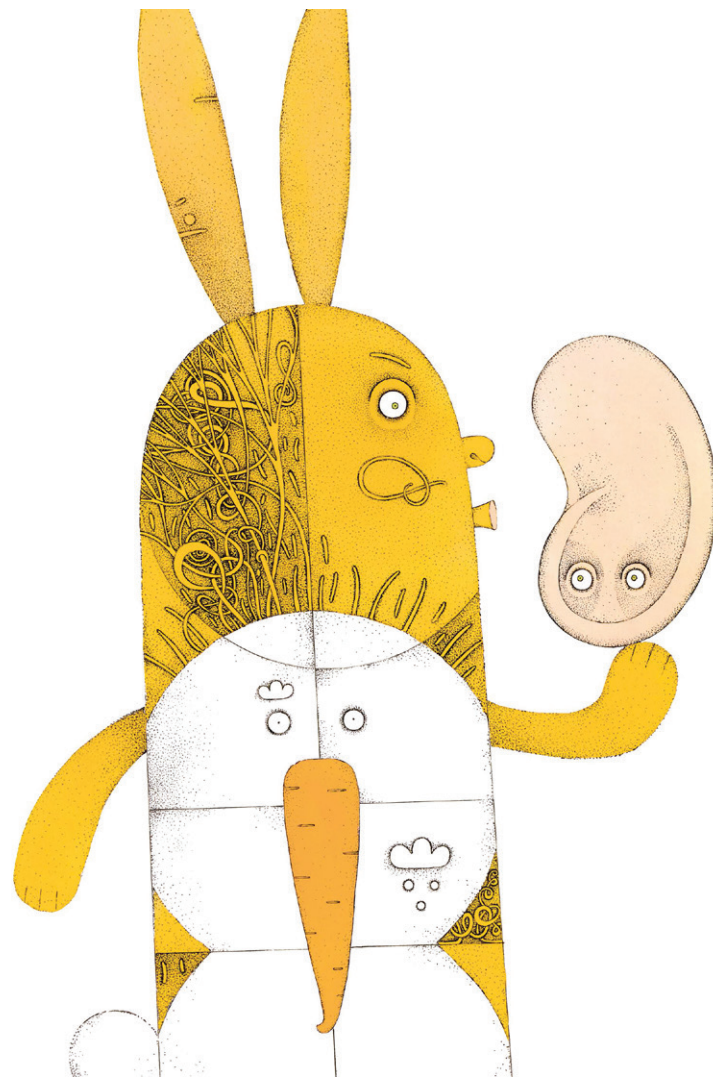
Compared to Piret Raud's earlier works, her princess tales are more instructive, pedagogical, and they have values to instill in young readers. In this soft, but hidden manner, the author warns young readers against vanity and judging other people based on appearance. Great importance is given to finding the courage to be yourself. Though we also meet more traditional princesses who are passive and waiting for their prince, they are balanced out with princesses who are actively leading their own lives. Additionally, the author stresses that are alternatives to princess games. "You can't always play princess games and dream of living the life of a princess. It would get boring in the long run," she finds (pg. 105)

Piret Raud's PEALKIRI breaks free of traditional approach to princesses. Raud seems to be emphasizing with her book that each girl can be a princess in her own way instead of trying to fit herself into stereotypes.

Jaanika Palm

Translated by Chris Reintal

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1997 Karl Eduard Sööt Children's Poetry Award, for illustrations (Kala kõnnib jala)

1999 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (Ühel viivul vikervalgel)
25 Best-Designed Estonian Books (Ühel viivul vikervalgel)

2000 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (Maailm Sulelise ja Karvasega)

2001 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (for series Paula Elu)

2002 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (Draakonid võõrsil)
25 Best-Designed Estonian Books (Draakonid võõrsil)

2003 Baltic Book Art Competition, Certificate of Merit (Draakonid võõrsil)

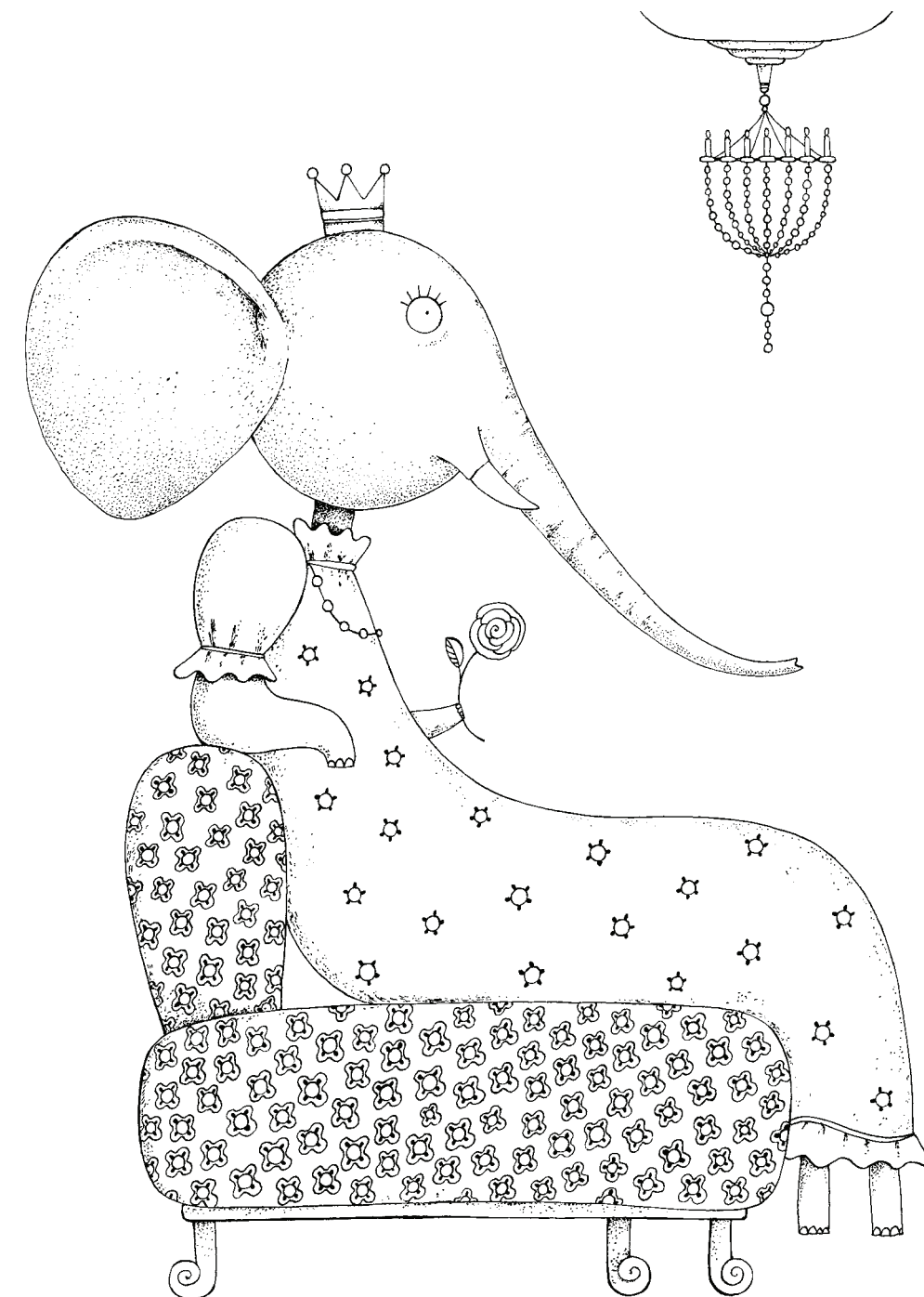
2004 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (Onu Volgi värsiaabits)

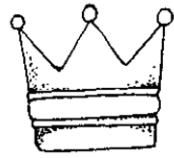
2005 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (Sanna ja salakütid)

2008 5 Best-Designed Children's Books (Presidendilood)

- 2009 Good Children's Book (Printsess Lulu ja härra Kere)
5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, Special Prize Golden Book (Härra Linnu lugu)
25 Best-Designed Estonian Books (Härra Linnu lugu)
Raisin of the Year Award, Estonian Children's Literature Centre (Härra Linnu lugu)
- 2010 The White Ravens (Härra Linnu lugu)
5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, special prize of the Estonian Children's Literature Centre (Emma roosad asjad)
- 2012 Good Children's Book (Natuke napakad lood)
5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (Kolm soovi)
- 2013 The White Ravens (Kolm soovi)
5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books (Teistmoodi printsessilood)
- 2015 Good Children's Book
(Lugu Sandrist, Murist, tillukesest emmest ja nähtamatust Akslit)
- 2016 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books
(Trööömmppfff ehk Eli hääl)
- 2017 IBBY Honour List, Illustrator (Trööömmppfff ehk Eli hääl)
Good Children's Book (Kõik minu sugulased)
- 2018 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books, special prize of the

Estonian Graphic Designers' Union (Lugu väikesest majast, kes tahtis olla kodu)





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