

Sanja Pilić



Hans Christian Andersen Award 2024
Croatian Nominee - Writer

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1. Biography

Sanja Pilić once described how two professions alternated in her family: writers and photographers. Her mother, grandmother, and herself chose the former. She was born in Split in 1954. She graduated from a very interesting high school in Zagreb called the School of Applied Arts and Design, and her focus there was – you guessed it – photography. So, for a while, she worked as a photographer, a special effects cinematographer, and a scene painter for animated films – all very creative jobs. She worked with the Autonomous Women's House from Zagreb and helped abused children overcome all the hardships they had to endure. She has published more than seventy books, including picture books, books for children and young adults, and books for adults. She has received many awards and recognitions for her work.

The most notable are listed here: the Grigor Vitez Award for the book *All the Best About Mums* in 1990, for *Totally Teen* in 2006, and *Text Me!* in 2016, the Ivana Brlić Mažuranić Award for *Crumbs From the Living Room* in 1995 and *Jokes, Gags, Laughs and Banter* in 2001, the Mato Lovrak Award for *What's Happening to me?* in 2007, the Kiklop Award for the novel *I want to be Special!* in 2010 and for the picture book *Maša and her Guests* in 2011. Her novel *Am I in Love?* was included in the Honour List of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) in 2008.

Her collection of short stories, *Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!* was included in the White Ravens Catalogue in 2012. In 2011, she received the Order of Danica Hrvatska with the face of Antun Radić for merits in education and culture. Her novels *Totally Teen* and *Crumbs From the Living Room* were staged for the theatre in Zagreb at the Žar Ptica Theatre in 2009 and 2012.

She wrote the following about herself: *I live and work in Zagreb. I have two children and four grandchildren; I love to travel, take pictures, drink coffee, and watch people.*

With her first novel, *All the Best About Mums*, she introduced a new way of writing. Although in this novel, the mother is in the foreground (instead of a teenager), Pilić has won the hearts of many teenagers with this book. This is because it tells a story of a completely unusual family in which the mother and the father do not have typical roles, and both are a bit "wacky". The way children would want it. The author can identify with such parents because she has been an independent artist for many years, and she was a single mother for a long time.

Sanja Pilić is especially sensitive about the troubles of girls and boys in puberty. So, she's tireless in writing precisely for that population. Her stories and novels begin without lengthy introductions and are dominated by informal, humorous dialogues. She creates a bridge of understanding between adults and children, respecting both. Her vocabulary is conversational, and her sentences are short and filled with serenity. Feelings are openly expressed, and an internal monologue is frequent. She likes sudden and impressive points. We can call her a modern author in the complete sense of the word. Sanja Pilić has developed her unique style, which is so recognisable and sometimes imitated by contemporaries that the term "Pilić style" was coined among literary critics and historians.

***Diana Zalar, PhD, Full Professor
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2. A portrait photograph

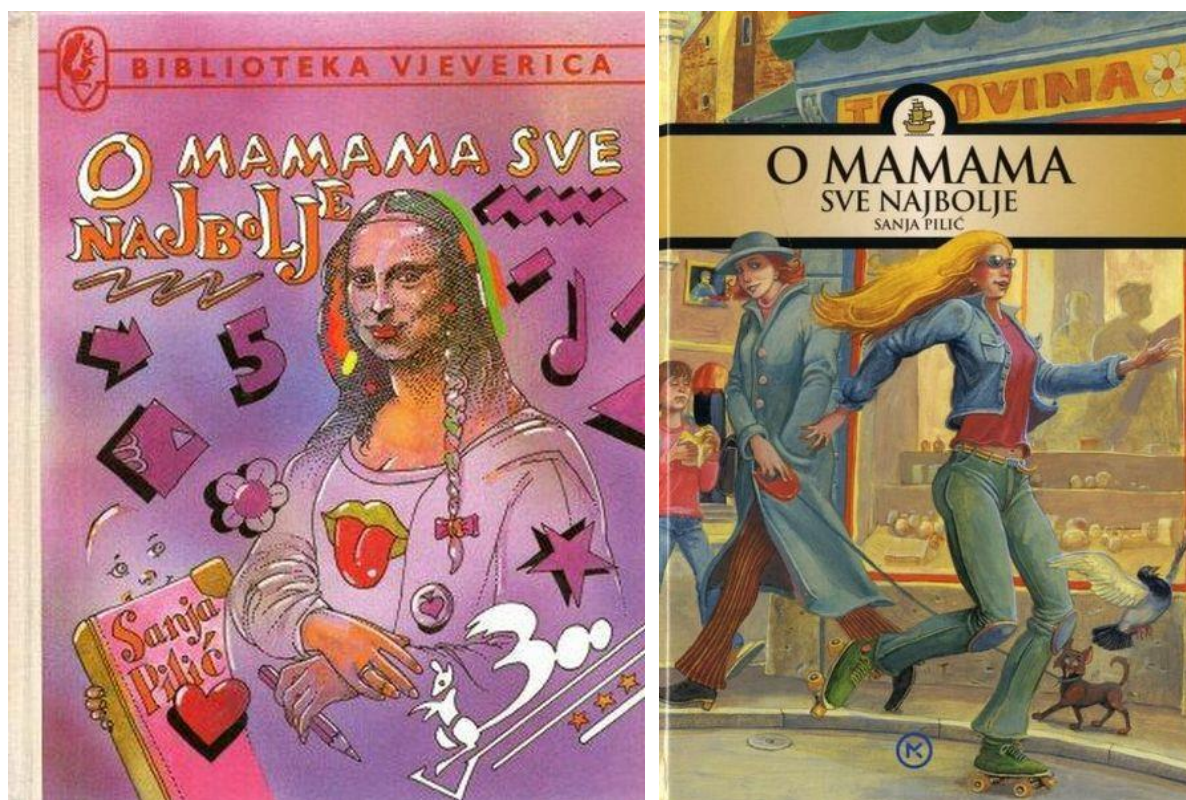


3. Sanja Pilić's contribution to literature

Sanja Pilić is one of Croatia's most awarded authors for children and young adults. She has been awarded all the prestigious Croatian and regional literary awards several times. Her works are included in the IBBY Honour List and the White Ravens List. Her works have also been on the obligatory reading lists in schools for years, but, perhaps more importantly, they are among the most borrowed and the most read books in Croatia. This is perhaps the best indicator of an author's success, as literary critics highly appreciate Pilić's books, and children and young people love to read them – and have been reading them for decades.

The reason for such a good perception of this author's work lies in several key features of her opus, which we refer to by the name of this author in modern literary criticism, and which young readers already intuitively recognise. The term "Pilić-like" implies several recognisable aesthetic and literary qualities. At the linguistic and stylistic level, these include an unfettered, casual expression, a multitude of witty quips and references, and dynamic and lively dialogues that young readers recognise as an unpretentious representation of the language of the youth. At the thematic level, it includes a faithful reflection of contemporary generations' social and cultural life, as well as a specific, *Pilić-like*, uncompromising honesty and positivity.

These features of the author's style have been prominent ever since her first novel published in 1990, *All the Best About Mums*. This is a novel that appeared on the literary scene just before the war in Croatia, in an age in which playfulness and positivity were the best comforts for the younger generations.



Immediately after the publication of the novel, it was clear – both to the audience and to the critics – that she was the author who would become the central voice of depedagogisation and depoliticisation of Croatian children's literature.

Her first novel is metafictional and experimental, in which the author has fun with the idea of what a classic novel for children and young adults is. In the work itself, certain established features that signal that a work is a novel are omitted: there is no solid plot or a consistent solid storyline. In addition, there is no omniscient narrator because the boundaries between the writer, the character, and the novel itself are intertwined. The main character in the novel is a mother, because, as the author herself writes in the foreword, mothers have never been assigned this important role: "Please, if you can, name the novels in which a mum is the most important character. You'll have a hard time

remembering. If they are included in a chapter or two, they are usually cooking". In addition to the character of the mother who is preparing to write a novel, the novel also features a personified character of the novel itself, with the remark *who is writing whom* – is the novel writing the mum, or is the mum writing a novel? Such a playfulness, a ludic stratification of the narrative to which we are accustomed was a real refreshment on the Croatian literature for children and young adults scene and suggests that literature about children and for children can (and should) be written in a new and fresh way, and Pilić lays the foundations of her style of innovation and a completely specific *Pilić-like* intellectual playfulness.

Since the very beginning, the author has recognised that young readers enjoy the playful aspect of language and the linguistic shaping of their reality, so she is particularly fond of using the ludic-intellectual model when writing shorter forms. Whether they are fantastic stories about quite unusual, imaginative characters such as Time that decided to hurry, or Boredom that became bored with itself (from her *I Don't Have Time* collection), realistic stories about children growing up (*Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!*), or innovative literary "sketch stories" – short prose for children and young people (*Oh, I'm Not Sorry*), the goal is always the same – to stimulate children's curiosity for the world around them and to re-imagine the world around us with language.

Sanja Pilić is an exceptionally prolific author who has created a large number of works of various forms for all ages of children. In addition to numerous works for older children and young adults, she is an author of a very popular series of books for younger children about a little girl called Maša. The main character, Maša, is an exceptionally positive, open, and curious little girl. She was named after the author's granddaughter, and the topics of the books are based on the

relations and events stemming from a real, natural children's environment. Therefore, each book follows Maša's adventures in exploring the spaces, creatures, and events around her (the seasons of the year, creating a healthy relationship with animals), exploring the arts and cultural institutions (museums, theatres, films, fairy tales), or relationships with a variety of people (making friends, accepting differences, etc.).

Even in her works for the youngest readers, Sanja Pilić skilfully embeds messages of basic human values in her playful narratives. She writes about topics that are close to children but also gives them room for thinking about what is important, in a manner that is familiar to them. For instance, *Maša and Christmas* is not just a holiday story, but a story about the warmth of human character and empathy, as Maša organizes a holiday celebration with her friends for all those who are lonely. *Maša and the Clown* is not a story about common clowns; it is a story dedicated to brave children struggling with illness and the Red Noses who help children in hospital wards.

The Maša books are *real children's books* – they are printed in large, legible letters, they deal with topics that are interesting and important to younger children, and the curious, warm, playful character of Maša motivates the young readers to be curious and playful themselves. This book series illustrates the *Pilić-like positivity* the best, and young readers certainly recognise this, as the Maša series is the most-sold children's book series in Croatia.

Along with writing many literary works for children and young adults, Pilić has extensive experience in other fields of art, such as photography and animation, which has certainly left a mark on her sensibility for imagery, poeticisation, and playfulness. At the same time, she has been genuinely interested in the wishes

and needs of her young readers ever since the very beginning of her literary career. Her experience of working with the Autonomous Women's House in



Zagreb and working with child victims of abuse, as well as the decades of her regular, direct socialising with schoolchildren throughout Croatia, have all had a strong impact on her sensitivity to the topics that children and young adults want and need to read about.

Those who have participated in such literary meetings can confirm that those are places of socialising and sincere conversations between writers and young readers. Such direct, first-hand reading experiences have influenced her choice of topics and the way she approaches them, which we now also refer to as *truly Pilić-like*.

More specifically, Pilić has dealt with an extremely large range of topics related to the life and growing up of modern generations of children and young adults in many of her books, which inevitably affects the appearance of problem topics. However, the author herself has repeatedly stressed in her interviews that problem topics are all the topics that young people are facing and trying to cope with, that it is extremely important not to underestimate this, and that all children have access to "literature" in which they recognise themselves. In addition to problematic, "difficult" topics such as divorce (*Totally Teen*) or the death of one's parents (*Text Me!*), young people demand authors write about topics that are relevant to them – such as falling in love, the loss of self-confidence (*Am I in Love?*), exploring their identity (*No Problem*), especially in the virtual environment (*See You on Facebook*), and a whole range of other topics that adults consider "common" or universal, but which children and young adults, who are immersed in the process of growing up, absolutely view as challenging.

Therefore, Pilić's protagonists are often children and young adults who are "just like any other", those who are preoccupied with events and relationships arising from everyday life, and her novels are always focused on the emotions of the characters and their gradual psychological deconstruction of the

problems. Sanja Pilić, therefore, opens a literary space for quite ordinary children in their individual process of growing up.

"If I'm good, am I interesting?" asks Petar, one of the protagonists of the novel *No Problem*, named after his most common catchphrase. At a certain point of growing up, the ever-helpful and benevolent Petar, just like so many other kind, patient, and clever boys in this world, questions kindness as his social currency. Thirteen-year-old Ana also questions her identity in the novel *See You on Facebook*. She sees no value in the amount of received "likes" and a world that fails to appreciate sincere relationships and traditional values. Another thirteen-year-old, Sophie, has a similar problem in the novel *Text Me!*, as well as the fifteen-year-old Luka from the novel *Totally Teen*.

They both feel they do not belong in the world of their peers and try to balance between whom they know they are and whom they are expected to be. At the same time, Pilić does not glorify her characters and insists on showing them in all their weaknesses – in states of envy, superficiality, youthful rebellion, or insolence. She skilfully enters their most vulnerable states of pain, fear, hurt, and sadness, but, *Pilić-like*, she unravels their stories, forcing her characters to think about all situations. The rich use of monologues, first-person narration, diary forms and the like, are writing strategies for approaching the emotional turmoils of young people and their growth – through thinking about themselves and their relationships. Immersion in the perspective of vivid characters allows the reader to better understand the described experiences, thoughts, and impressions. Such a process creates a feeling of stronger empathy for the characters at all stages of their growth, and all their highs and lows.

These are just several examples of the author's very specific and original approach to problem topics, more precisely, her innovative, democratic, and

inclusive expansion of the idea of what problem literature for today's young readers is.



The quality of Pilić's work, as well as her sensitivity to the issues of children and young adults, were recognised by readers of all ages. Her books are exceptionally popular, and four of them have also been adapted for the theatre as successful stage adaptations (*Totally Teen*, *Crumbs from the Living Room*, *Maša and Christmas*, *Maša and the Clown*).

Furthermore, several of her stories were adapted for radio and television, and it is worth mentioning that it would be hard to find a Croatian language textbook in Croatia that did not include at least one of her stories.

Pilić always creates novels that are temporally and thematically placed in the contemporary present. Her novels mirror the social and cultural events in the

environment of the youth, thus contributing to the authenticity of the portrayal of their lives. Nevertheless, her texts also very skilfully implement intertextual and intermediary connections with other forms of art (books, music, film, theatre), which is – although subtle – a very clear message to young readers about the importance of art in enriching their lives. Young readers will recognise the authenticity of this procedure, and with time, once *today* becomes *tomorrow*, they will return with nostalgia to the hermetic space of her literary works, which, like a treasure chest, preserve both their youth and certain universal human values.

Sanja Pilić is the most-read and awarded author in Croatia. Moreover, she has managed to keep this reputation for more than thirty years, which implies that numerous generations of children and young adults in Croatia grew up with her novels.

A renowned Croatian critic once praised Pilić for her sincerity. And this is probably the most accurate interpretation and summarisation of Pilić's work, and precisely what her readers have recognised for generations.

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4. An interview

When I write for children, I turn into a child



Your beginnings in children’s literature were more than successful. The book *All the Best About Mums* has remained your most complex novel for children. Since its release, it has been praised and awarded, and today it is on the list of primary school required reading. You probably didn’t expect that when you wrote it. How do you look at it today, after all these years? Do you remember what you were thinking and anticipating when looking for a publisher?

I wrote *All the Best About Mums* primarily to myself. I was having fun writing and inventing a crazy world I would love to live in. I included real characters in

the novel – my children, my ex-husband, my friend Marijana Budak, and my friend Rene Bakalović. We were very close then. I described Caramela as a mum trying to be a good mother and an artist, but it's hard to do. She's friendly and absent-minded.

I put a lot of happy events in the novel and brought the hero from Caramela's story to life. I've always dreamed that I could imagine something and that it is then created in reality. Caramela's fantasy character came to life. Wonderful! In this novel, the novel itself is also alive and thinking about its future. I was happy to write it. It's very surreal, even though it has a head and a tail. However, I was hesitant when I had to take it to my editor, Vera Barić. I was scared. Anyway, one sunny day after I found out that my horoscope was good, and the coin I'd flipped fell to the side that said I had to hand over the manuscript to the publisher, I went to the editor. I breathed deeply again in front of her door and was reluctant to knock on it... Vera Barić was extremely kind, she took the manuscript, and after a month, precisely on my birthday, she told me that she liked the text very much and that she would publish it in Mladost. I was happy. However, the following year, I divorced my husband.

In writing children's literature, you were a writer of the city; you did not engage in fairy tales or fantastic literature, except a little in *All the Best About Mums*. How come your interest ended up in this kind of children's fiction?

I don't really have a feel for fantasy or fairy tales. I like fairy tales; fantasy bores me out of my wits, even in the movies. I tried to love it, but it didn't work out. I only like urban fantasy, like in Czech films, for example. No unicorns, witches, Quidditch, power rings, or anything similar. I start yawning. *Beauty and The Beast*, that sort of thing is OK; that's a kind of fairy tale I love. Or *Doctor Dolittle*. I remember that I didn't even like *Alice In Wonderland*. I loved *The Wizard of*

Oz. I found writers like William Saroyan, Erich Kästner, and Christine Nöstlinger, those who wrote realistic prose, sometimes with a touch of fantasy, more interesting. I love real flesh-and-blood heroes with skinned knees and a sense of justice.

Your short stories are very popular among children because of their wit, ludic elements, and topics that concern children. And, of course, the point in the last sentence. How long did it take you to hone your seemingly simple style? I know it's not easy to write a story like that. Are you already fit when it comes to this, or do you still have to wait for inspiration?

I'm in pretty good shape when writing such short stories. I usually have to be in a good mood and write about the first thing that comes to mind. I've written many of them and sometimes wonder how I did it. Even when the motives repeat themselves, the stories are still different. I like them to be funny and fresh, like scattered, colourful candy.

For years you have been one of Croatia's most read and borrowed children's authors, and although many children's writers deal with similar topics, your books are always read and bought more. So far, others have always commented on it, and now I'm asking you – how do you comment on it? At your literary meetings, the little readers are delighted. Can we say that you are a real literary star?

Yes, children like to read my books. I guess it's because I am immediate, and they can identify with my characters. I don't write dryly, and I don't try to be young, but I am young when I write for them. I turn into a girl or a boy in the first person. The sentences are lively. I often describe different characters through dialogue. The heroes are adorable. I fool around with words. I make a

nice point. I joke. I have my style. When I'm cranky, I write cranky, funny stories; when I'm romantic, I throw myself into something sweet, pleasant, and cheerful. Sassy. I think they like it.

As an editor of children's literature, I led the idea of publishing the so-called urban prose. I have often suggested that other authors read your books if they wanted to offer us a new manuscript; I was interested in something like what you wrote. Many listened to me and wrote great novels, often award-winning, but those sales were nowhere near your titles. How do you interpret that?

I don't know how to explain it. The language is youthful. The rhythm is fast. If I'm philosophising, I'm doing it invisibly. There are not many descriptions, and yet, it seems I manage to evoke the atmosphere in which something is happening. I follow what children are interested in, social networks, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc., but my heroes always live the fullness of a non-virtual life. They celebrate birthdays, visit exhibitions, attend acting auditions, field trips, and concerts, and are independent and compassionate, too. They fall in love. I guess that works. They don't gossip, and they don't hate each other. They are usually on good terms with their parents. They're kind, actually. Maybe that's the point...

How much influence has foreign and domestic children's literature had on you?

Fifty-fifty, I think. I loved Kästner, Wilde. *Winnie The Pooh* by E. Milne was a revelation to me. I adored Christine Nöstlinger's *Konrad or the Child out of the Tin*. I loved reading my mother's stories, especially the ones about *Dandelion and Crumb*. Then Balog, the poems of Luko Paljetak, and *Love or Death* by Ivan Kušan was a really cool book for me. I loved Karl May, too. As a child, I would

also read the classics. A children's book made me feel just as happy as a book for grown-ups. They all had a bit of an impact on me. But also movies, children's series, fairy tales, music, painting... I experienced every kind of art very intensely.

One crucial element in your children's book is culture as such. In narrative texts, you often mention other writers, books, theatres, bookstores, and cultural institutions in general. Do you do it intentionally and with purpose? What's your lead on that?

Today's children are not very interested in culture, so I introduce it through the back door unobtrusively and acceptably in my books. So, I often set them up with a composer, a painter, or a writer they've never heard of, who might be attractive to them. After all, my heroes, no matter what puberty stage they are, have a variety of leisure activities. Through that, I promote sports, acting, photography, journalism, etc., because I think their age is excellent for learning and acquiring new skills. Whenever I'm invited to speak at schools, I also explain to the kids how important it is to be curious, have a hobby, travel and the like.

The children's characters in your books are not passive bystanders, but, like Maša, in your famous series, they become the corrective factor of adult behaviour. With these stories, which enjoy great popularity, you are telling children that a lot is up to them: the initiative, the desire to improve, making demands and bringing out ideas. Many children do not get it through upbringing, but when they see that the character in the story does it, the child itself begins to change. Do you think that's the role of a children's writer?

I don't know if this is the role of a children's writer, but the fact is that I consciously chose this role. As a mother of grown children and a grandmother

of four grandchildren, no matter how silly my fantasies are and how much I would like to live in a different world, as far as upbringing is concerned, I am pretty old-fashioned. In this sense, I like independent and curious children, lively but decent, who respect the elderly and are initiators of new ideas and actions, even by constantly encouraging parents to new challenges. Maša is such a girl. And many kids love her. I just got back from signing some Maša picture books. One girl named Laura has all twenty of them. But I didn't have to sign all of them, fortunately...

*Interview with Sanja Pilić by **Zoran Maljković**
in *Republika* 78/9-10(2022), p. 3-20
(part of the interview)*

5. List of awards and other distinctions

(1981) Second prize of the Večernji list Award for a short story *Ah, ludnica* (*Ah, the Madhouse*)

(1990) Winner of the Grigor Vitez Award for best literary text for young adults for the novel *O mamama sve najbolje* (*All the Best About Mums*)

Second prize of the Radio Student Award and the magazine Literatura (Slovenia) for radio drama *O kome se to radi?* (*Who is it About?*)



(1996) Winner of the Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić Award for the novel *Mrvica iz dnevnog boravka* (*Crumbs from the Living Room*)

(2000) Winner of the Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić Award for the book *Zafrkancije, zezancije, smijancije i ludancije* (*Jokes, Gags, Laughs and Banter*)

- (2002) Winner of the Grigor Vitez Award for best literary text for young adults for the novel *Sasvim sam popubertetio (Totally Teen)*
- (2005) Third prize of the Večernji list Award for a short story *Muškarci mog života (The men of my life)*
- (2008) Winner of the Mato Lovrak Award for the book *Što mi se to događa? (What's Happening to Me?)*
- (2008) IBBY Honour list diploma for the novel *Jesam li se zaljubila? (Am I in Love?)*
- (2010) Kiklop Award for book of year for children and young adults for the novel *Hoću biti posebnaaaaa! (I Want to be Special!)*
- (2011) Kiklop Award for picture book of the year for the book *Maša i gosti (Maša and Guests)*
- The White Ravens catalogue with the book *Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati! (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)*
- Received the medal of the Order of Croatian Danica with the image of Antun Radić for merits in education
- (2016) Winner of the Grigor Vitez Award for best literary text for young adults for the novel *Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)*
- (2017) First prize of the Večernji list Award for a short story *Delete*
- Winner of the international The Little Prince Award for the novel *Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)*
- (2017) In National quiz for reading promotion with the novel *Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)*
- (2018) Krešimir Šego Award for the most successful author - writer for young people
- (2022) Crikvenica's Sun Award for an encompassing writer's work

6. Complete bibliography of the books for children and young people

2023.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i rođendan (Maša and the Birthday)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i zima (Maša and Winter)*. Illus. Niko Barun, 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2022.

Pilić, Sanja. *E, baš mi nije žao (And I Don't Care!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću biti posebnaaaaa! (I Want to be Special!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 12th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću biti velik! (I Want to be Big)*. Illus. Željka Mezić. Zagreb: V.B.Z.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i Božić (Maša and Christmas)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i gosti (Maša and Guests)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i ljeto (Maša and Summer)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i nova prijateljica (Maša and the New Friend)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Moj mačak Glupko (My Cat Glupko)*. Illus. Željka Mezić. Zagreb: V.B.Z.

Pilić, Sanja. *O mamama sve najbolje (All the Best About Mums)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Volim, volim! (I Love, I Love!)*. Illus. Željka Mezić. Zagreb: V.B.Z.

2021.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati! (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 5th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Jesam li se zaljubila? (Am I in Love?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Luka voli izmišljati (Luka Loves Making Stuff Up)*. Illus. Ana Despot. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

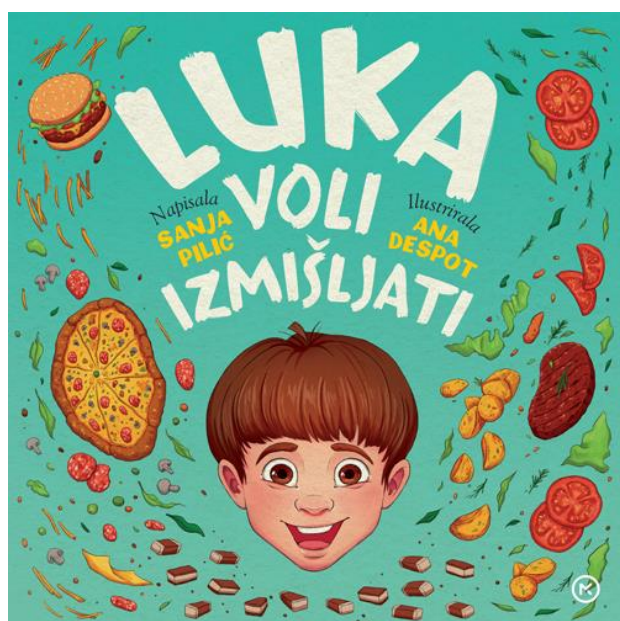
Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i bajke (Maša and the Fairy Tales)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i izlet (Maša and Excursion)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i nova učenica (Maša and the New Pupil)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i putovanje (Maša and a Travel)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i sport (Maša and Sport)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.



Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i učiteljica (Maša and the Teacher)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i zima (Maša and Winter)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i životinje (Maša and the Animals)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Mrvice iz dnevnog boravka (Crumbs from the Living Room)*. Illus. Dario Kukić. 10th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

Pilić, Sanja. *Nema problema (No Problem)*. Illus. Dario Kukić. Zagreb: Alfa.

Pilić, Sanja. *Nemam vremena (I Don't Have Time)*. Illus. Robert Graffius. 7th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

Pilić, Sanja. *Priče smijalice (Laughing Stories)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Što cure govore? Što dečki govore? (What Girls Say? What Boys Say?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Što mi se to događa? (What's Happening to Me?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

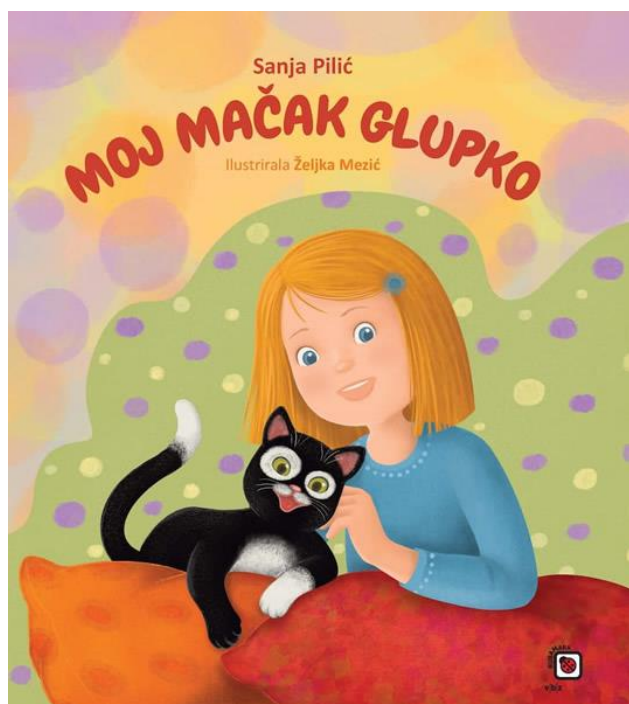
Pilić, Sanja. *Zar baš moram u školu? (Do I Really Have to go to School?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2020.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću biti posebnaaaaa! (I Want to be Special!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću i ja! (Me, too!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 9th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Zafrkancije, zezancije, smijancije i ludancije (Jokes, Gags, Laughs and Banter)*. Illus. Branka Hollingsworth Nara. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.



2019.

Pilić, Sanja. *Ideš mi na živce! (You're Getting on My Nerves!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Mama, nemoj me gnjaviti! (Mom, don't bother me!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i film (Maša and a Film)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i zoološki vrt (Masha and the Zoo)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Miš Pero i mačka Liza (Mouse Pero and Cat Lisa)*. Illus. Andrea Petrlík Huseinović. Zagreb: Dječja knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Sasvim sam popubertetio (Totally Teen)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Zar baš moram u školu? (Do I Really Have to go to School?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2018.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i maškare (Maša and the Carnival)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i muzej (Maša and the Museum)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Mrvica iz dnevnog boravka (Crumbs from the Living Room)*. Illus. Dario Kukić. 9th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Vidimo se na fejsu! (See You on Facebook!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 6th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2017.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i bajke (Maša and the Fairy Tales)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Nemam vremena (I Don't Have Time)*. Illus. Robert Graffius. 6th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

Pilić, Sanja. *Sve je u redu! (Everything is OK!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.



2016.

Pilić, Sanja. *Čudesni izvori (The Miraculous Sources)*. Zagreb: Hrvatski muzej naivne umjetnosti.

Pilić, Sanja. *E, baš mi nije žao (And I Don't Care!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 8th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati! (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću biti posebnaaaaa! (I Want to be Special!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 9th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i sport (Maša and Sport)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Mrvica iz dnevnog boravka (Crumbs from the Living Room)*. Illus. Dario Kukić. 8th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

Pilić, Sanja. *Nemoderni Perica (The Old-Fashioned Pete)*. Zagreb: Kašmir promet.

Pilić, Sanja. *Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Sasvim sam popubertetio (Totally Teen)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 9th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Što cure govore? Što dečki govore? (What Girls Say? What Boys Say?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 8th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Što mi se to događa? (What's Happening to Me?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 8th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Vidimo se na fejsu! (See You on Facebook!)*. Zagreb: Zaklada Čujem, vjerujem, vidim. 1 CD: MP3

Pilić, Sanja. *Zar baš moram u školu? (Do I Really Have to go to School?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 9th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga

2015.

Pilić, Sanja. *Baš sam hepi! (I'm So Happy!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Djed Mraz darove nosi (Santa Claus Brings Presents)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Fora je biti faca, zar ne? (It's Cool to be Someone, isn't it?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 5th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Zar baš moram u školu? (Do I Really Have to go to School?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 8th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2014.

Pilić, Sanja. *E, baš mi nije žao (And I Don't Care!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 7th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati! (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću biti posebnaaaaa! (I Want to be Special!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 6th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Kiki i ostali (Kiki and Others)*. Illus. Darko Kreč. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i Božić (Maša and Christmas)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

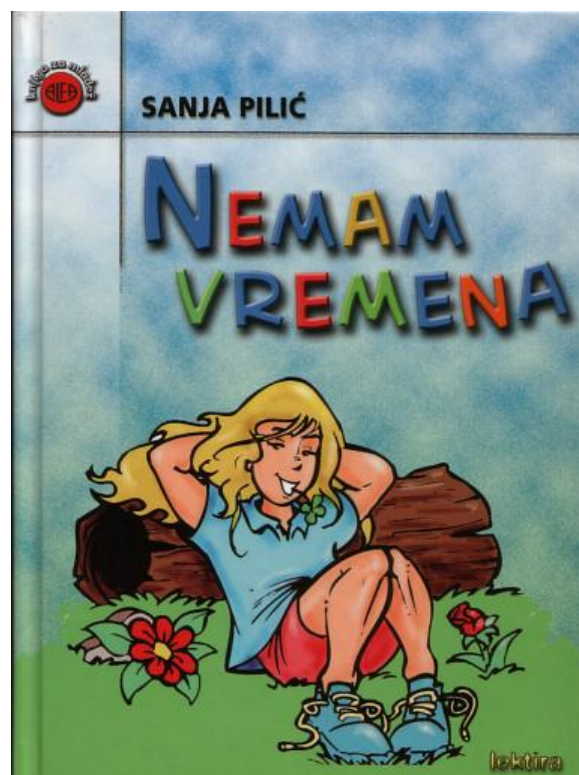
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Pilić, Sanja. *Stigao je brat (My New Brother is Here)*. Illus. Andrea Petrlik Huseinović. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Kašmir promet.

Pilić, Sanja. *Što mi se to događa? (What's Happening to Me?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 7th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Nemam vremena (I Don't Have Time)*. Illus. Robert Graffius. 5th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

2013.

Pilić, Sanja. *Baš sam hepi! (I'm So Happy!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Maša i gosti (Maša and Guests)*. Illus. Katarina Halužan. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Vidimo se na fejsu! (See You on Facebook!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2012.

Pilić, Sanja. *E, baš mi nije žao (And I Don't Care!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 6th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću biti posebnaaaa! (I Want to be Special!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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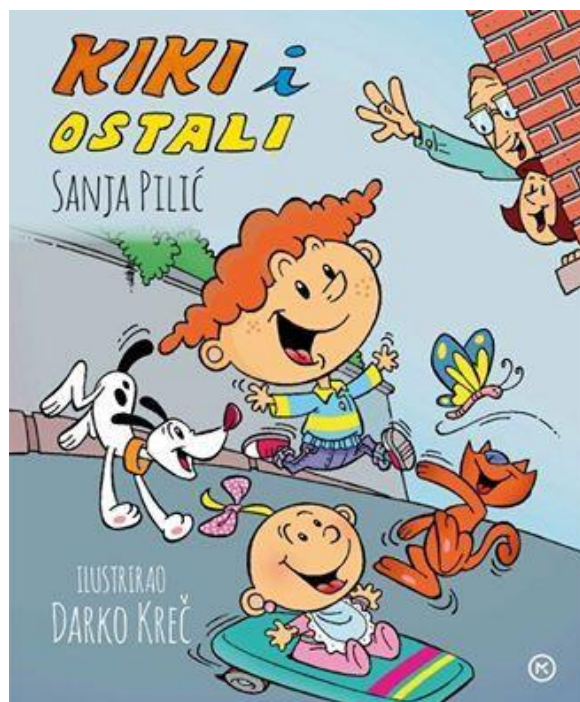
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2011.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Vidiš da se moram zabavljati (I Must Have Fun, don't You See?)*. Illus. Andrea Petrlik-Huseinović. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Kašmir promet.

Pilić, Sanja. *Zaljubljeni medo (A Bear in Love)*. Illus. Andrea Petrlik Huseinović. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Kašmir promet.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Znatiželjna koka (A Curious Chicken)*. Illus. Andrea Petrlik Huseinović. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Kašmir promet.

2010.

Pilić, Sanja. *E, baš mi nije žao (And I Don't Care!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 5th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Fora je biti faca, zar ne? (It's Cool to be Someone, isn't it?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Priča o vučiću Grgi (A Story about Grga the Little Wolf)*. Illus. Tomislav Zlatić. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Državni zavod za zaštitu prirode.

Pilić, Sanja. *Sasvim sam popubertetio (Totally Teen)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 5th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Vuk Grga i njegova obitelj (Grga the Little Wolf and His Family)*. Illus. Tomislav Zlatić. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Državni zavod za zaštitu prirode.

Pilić, Sanja. *Zar baš moram u školu? (Do I Really Have to go to School?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2009.

Pilić, Sanja. *E, baš mi nije žao (And I Don't Care!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Fora je biti faca, zar ne? (It's Cool to be Someone, isn't it?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Tople priče za hladne dane 1*. Zagreb: Arpeggio. 1 CD (Audio book)

Pilić, Sanja. *Vuk Grga i njegova obitelj (Grga the Little Wolf and His Family)*. Illus. Tomislav Zlatić. Zagreb: Državni zavod za zaštitu prirode.

Pilić, Sanja. *Zar baš moram u školu? (Do I Really Have to go to School?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2008.

Pilić, Sanja. *Hoću i ja! (Me, too!)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Jesam li se zaljubila? (Am I in Love?)*. Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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2007.

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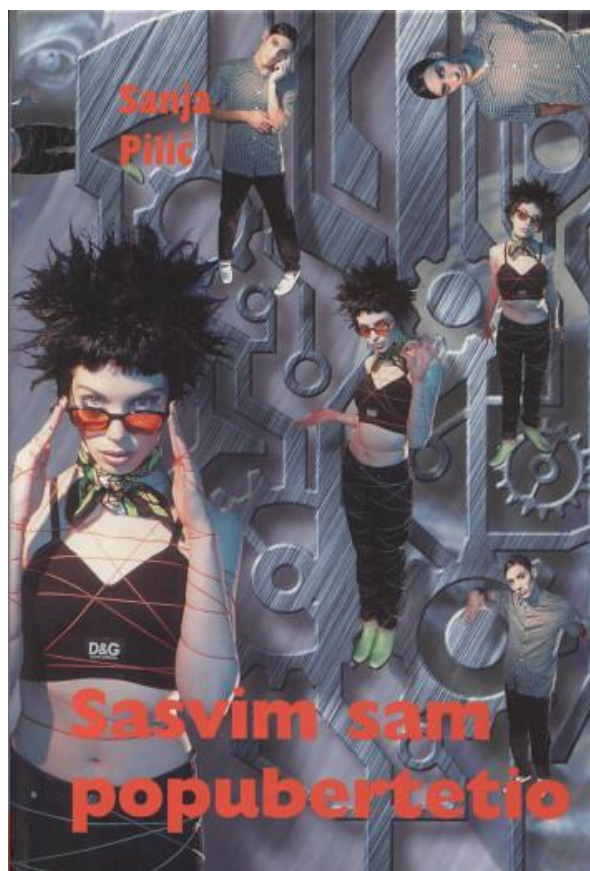
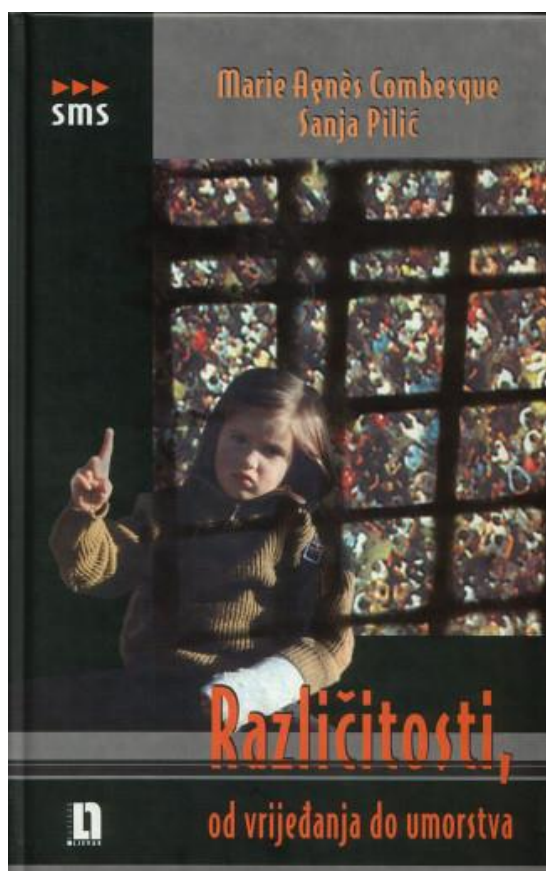
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Pilić, Sanja. *My New Brother is Here*. Illus. Andrea Petrlik Huseinović. Zagreb: Kašmir promet.

Pilić, Sanja. *Nemam vremena (I Don't Have Time)*. Illus. Robert Graffius. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

Pilić, Sanja. *Stigao je brat (My New brother is Here)*. Illus. Andrea Petrlik Huseinović. Zagreb: Kašmir promet.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Djed Mraz darove nosi (Santa Claus Brings Presents)*. Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Mrvice iz dnevnog boravka (Crumbs from the Living Room)*. Illus. Dario Kukić. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

Pilić, Sanja. *O mamama sve najbolje (All the Best About Mums)*. Illus. Tomislav Tomić. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

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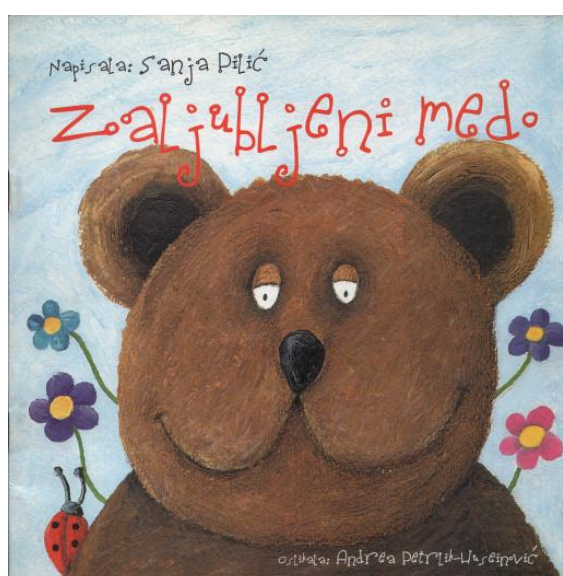
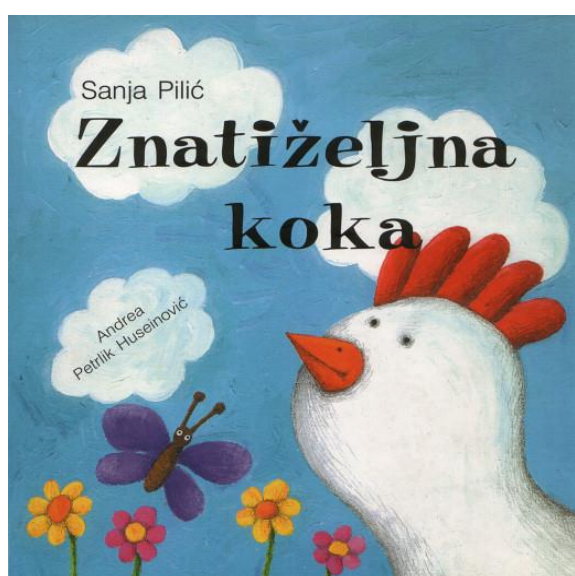
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Pilić, Sanja. *Čudesni lončić (A magical little pot)*. Illus. Manuela Vladić-Maštruko. Zagreb: Naklada Haid.

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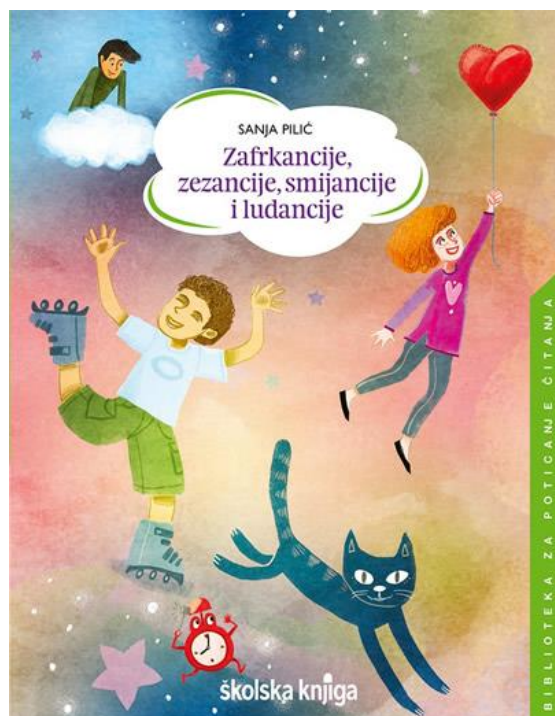
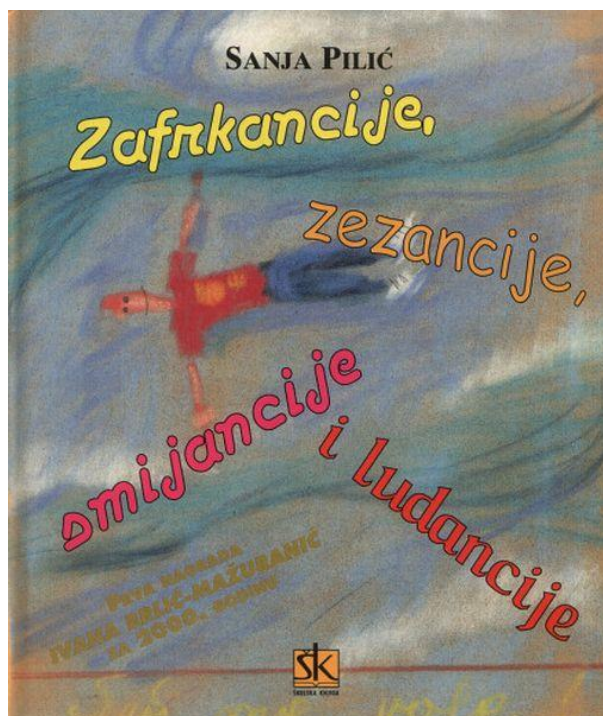
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Pilić, Sanja. *Bobi, pas čuvar (Bobby, the Guard Dog)*. Illus. by John Francis. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *E, baš mi nije žao (And I Don't Care!)*. Illus. Pika Vončina. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

Pilić, Sanja. *Flopi u zoološkom vrtu (Floppy in the Zoo)*. Illus. John Francis. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *Odveži, zaveži i igranj se (Untie, Tie and Play)*. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *Tko stanuje u šumi? (Who Lives in the Forest?)*. Illus. John Francis. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *Učimo vezati, igrajući se (We Learn to Tie, Playing)*. Illus. Maria Mantovani. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *Zimske radosti (Winter Joys)*. Illus. John Francis. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

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Pilić, Sanja. *I mi ćemo biti veliki (We Will be Big too)*. Illus. Jirina Lockerova. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *Uživajmo u proljeću (Let's Enjoy Spring)*. Illus. Jirina Lockerova. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

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Pilić, Sanja. *Nespretni pačić (A Clumsy Duckling)*. Illus. Debbie Richardson. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *Plašljivi zečić (Fearfull Bunny)*. Illus. Debbie Richardson. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

Pilić, Sanja. *Pospanko Tobi (Sleepy Tobi)*. Illus. Debbie Richardson. Zagreb: Naša djeca.

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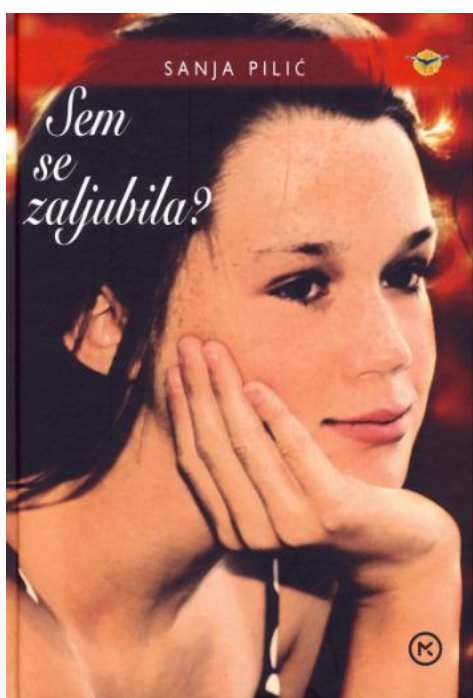
1990.

Pilić, Sanja. *O mamama sve najbolje (All the Best About Mums)*. Illus. Ninoslav Kunc. Zagreb: Mladost.



7. List of translated editions

- ***Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati! (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)***
Translation to Albanian: Hej, dëshiroj të të tregoj diçka! Pristina: Magjia e librit, 2019.
- ***O mamama sve najbolje (All the Best About Mums)***
Translation to Slovenian: O mamah vse najboljše. Ljubljana: Forma7, 2016.
- ***Jesam li se zaljubila? (Am I in Love?)***
Translation to Slovenian: Sem se zaljubila? Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2009.
- ***Stigao je brat (My New Brother Is Here)***
Translation to English: My New Brother is Here. Zagreb: Kašmir promet, 2006.
Translation to Slovenian: Dobil sem bratca. Ljubljana: Založba Karantanija, 2006.



8. Ten of the most important titles

1. *Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)*

- (2011) Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
- (2013) Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
- (2014) Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
- (2016) Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
- (2021) Illus. Niko Barun. 5th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2. *Ideš mi na živce! (You're Getting on My Nerves!)*

- (2011) Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2011.
- (2013) Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2013.
- (2016) Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2016.
- (2019) Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2019.

3. *Jesam li se zaljubila? (Am I in Love?)*

- (2006) Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2006.
- (2006) Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2006.
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- (2014) Illus. Niko Barun. 8th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2014.
- (2015) Illus. Niko Barun. 9th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2015.
- (2017) Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2017.
- (2021) Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga. 2021.

4. *Mrvice iz dnevnog boravka (Crumbs from the Living Room)*

- (1995) Illus. Ninoslav Kunc. Zagreb: Znanje.
- (2003) Illus. Dario Kukić. Zagreb: Alfa.
- (2005) Illus. Dario Kukić. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

- (2006) Illus. Dario Kukić. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2007) Illus. Dario Kukić. 4th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2009) Illus. Dario Kukić. 5th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2011) Illus. Dario Kukić. 6th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2014) Illus. Dario Kukić. 7th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2016) Illus. Dario Kukić. 8th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2018) Illus. Dario Kukić. 9th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2021) Illus. Dario Kukić. 10th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

5. *Nemam vremena (I Don't Have Time)*

- (1994) Illus. Ninoslav Kunc. Zagreb: Mladost.
 (2003) Illus. Robert Graffius. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2006) Illus. Robert Graffius. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
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 (2017) Illus. Robert Graffius. 6th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.
 (2021) Illus. Robert Graffius. 7th ed. Zagreb: Alfa.

6. *O mamama sve najbolje (All the Best About Mums)*

- (1990) Illus. Ninoslav Kunc. Zagreb: Mladost.
 (1992) Illus. Ninoslav Kunc. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mladost.
 (2005) Illus. Tomislav Tomić. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
 (2007) Illus. Tomislav Tomić. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
 (2009) Illus. Niko Barun. 5th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
 (2010) Illus. Niko Barun. 6th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
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 (2018) Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
 (2022) Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

7. *Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)*

- (2016) Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
 (2022) Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

8. *Sasvim sam popubertetio (Totally Teen)*

- (2002). Zagreb: Kašmir promet, 2002.
(2007) Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
(2008) Illus. Niko Barun. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
(2009) Illus. Niko Barun. 4th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
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(2014) Illus. Niko Barun. 8th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
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(2018) Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
(2019) Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

9. *Što mi se to događa? (What's Happening to Me?)*

- (2007) Illus. Niko Barun. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.
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10. *Zafrkancije, zezancije, smijancije i ludancije (Jokes, Gags, Laughs and Banter)*

- (2001) Illus. Zlatan Vrkljan. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
(2003) Illus. Zlatan Vrkljan. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.
(2020) Illus. Branka Hollingsworth Nara. 3rd ed. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.

9. Five books sent to the Jury

1. ***Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati! (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)***

(2021) Illus. Niko Barun. 5th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

2. ***Jesam li se zaljubila? (Am I in Love?)***

(2021) Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.2021.

3. ***O mamama sve najbolje (All the Best About Mums)***

(2022) Illus. Niko Barun. 11th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

4. ***Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)***

(2022) Illus. Niko Barun. 2nd ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

5. ***Sasvim sam popubertetio (Totally Teen)***

(2018) Illus. Niko Barun. 10th ed. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga.

10. Reviews of the books submitted to the Jury

1. *Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati!*

*(Hey, I Want to Tell You
Something!)*



*The White Ravens 2012: A Selection
of International Children's And Youth
Literature, p. 54*

School – Everyday life – Siblings –
Parents

Croatian children's literature would be poorer without Sanja Pilić's many works and good stories. More than twenty-five books for children and teenagers as well as numerous awards are among her achievements. In 2011, she once more received the Kiklop award in the picture book category and her children's book *Hej, želim ti nešto ispričati! (Hey, I Want to Tell You Something!)* was also nominated. This volume is a collection of pithy two-page short stories, which disclose partly amusing, partly touching events from children's everyday lives: school, annoying parents, even more annoying siblings, or a secret first love. Short, succinct phrases and catchy staccato-dialogues aptly mirror children's sometimes droll and distorted perception of the world, which makes reading them and particularly reading them aloud such great fun. (Age: 8+)

2. *Jesam li se zaljubila?* (*Am I in Love?*)



Gazibara, S. *Likovi dječaka i djevojčica u djelima Sanje Pilić. Život i škola. 21(1/2009), 57, 8-10*

Sanja Pilić's novel *Am I in Love?* (2006) is the winner of the 2008 IBBY Honour List.¹ The novel's main character is Zlatka, a thirteen-year-

old girl who is an excellent student and performs all her tasks on time, not allowing anything to prevent her from doing so. One could say she's a real "nerd". It should be added that Zlatka laughs at those who are in love and thinks that this cannot happen to her. But, of course, as there are no girls who have never fallen in love, Zlatka was also suddenly intercepted by it.² The novel deals with the issue of first love, teenage infatuation, the first kiss, and friendship.

Zlatka is in Year 7 and talks about her problems and feelings, her friendship with Štefica and Zdenka, and Zorko, Tomo, and Mario, the boys she likes. She doesn't understand boys and is very confused about them: "From what planet do young men fall into our lives? What do they teach them? How do they raise them to turn out

¹ http://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanja_Pilić%4%87

² <http://knjizara.ekupnja.com/Jesam-li-se-zaljubila-Sanja-Pilic-pr-18411.html>

like such irresistible mugs?”³ Zlatka experiences her first date with her boyfriend, her first kiss, and describes how she feels and how insecure and confused she is. Like all girls in puberty, Zlatka devotes much time to herself and her appearance, constantly grooming herself. She is not satisfied with her appearance; unfortunately, this is a typical case in teenagers. “Regardless, I was able to think about my appearance. While Štefica was gossiping about Ljiljica, I would look a little at the store windows and was not satisfied with what I saw.”⁴ Girls who were confident before puberty, like Zlatka, may begin to doubt their abilities and question themselves once in puberty. The images of beautiful women they see daily in the media show them what an attractive woman should look like and impose

attractiveness as a priority. Therefore, insecure girls can hardly be satisfied with their bodies. They prioritise teenage magazines and women’s magazines that tell them how to put on make-up and how to dress, and many girls read them. They are exposed to many pressures and may have difficulty developing their own identity, particularly if they do not correspond to the current ideal of beauty.⁵ That is why they need parental help and friends who understand them and go through the same thing. Of course, by this, we do not mean only the appearance problem but everything that bothers them, preoccupies them, and scares them in this transitional period. Zlatka's friends are Štefica and Zdenka. Zlatka tells them about their problems, and they help each other. Preuschoff states that belonging to a

³ Pilić, S. (2006). *Am I in Love?* Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 103.

⁴ Pilić, S. (2006). *Am I in Love?* Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 58.

⁵ According to: Preuschoff, G. (2006). *Odgoj djevojčica: Zašto su djevojčice različite i kako im pomoći da budu sretno i jake kad odrastu*. Zagreb: Naklada Kosinj

group of girls who are approximately the same age is crucial during puberty. In such groups, a sense of unity is created. In their group, developing girls can safely experiment with hair, clothes, and make-up. Long phone calls and numerous hours together help them build their identity and practice social skills. Solid friendships are expected at this stage and have many benefits; they teach girls to cope with their weaknesses, to say no, to become compassionate interlocutors, and allow them to feel recognition and respect from their environment.⁶

As is the case with most teenagers, Zlatka's thoughts constantly wander, other people's moods greatly influence her, and her moods constantly shift as well. She also thinks about her education, goes

to a music school, and practices taekwondo. She also thinks about the future and what she will do: "I think about the future. Do I want to play the piano? Should I read *Pirates of Senj*, the book that was assigned at school that I don't really find interesting? Is it always good to tell the truth?"⁷

We find confirmation about the volatility of teenage love in the novel in Zlatka's words: "Mrs Bunić praised me and said that I was talented, and I looked at Mario and winked. While I was acting cool, I was thinking about Tomo. Then I turned to look at Zorko."⁸

Zlatka loves to go to school; thanks to it, she feels that she exists and that she matters. Like Luka, the main character of Sanja's novel *Totally Teen*, Zlatka also wants to be the beloved centre of attention and

⁶ According to: Preuschoff, G. (2006). *Odgov djevojčica: Zašto su djevojčice različite i kako im pomoći da budu sretno i jake kad odrastu*. Zagreb: Naklada Kosinj

⁷ Pilić, S. (2006). *Am I in Love?* Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 79.

⁸ Pilić, S. (2006). *Am I in Love?* Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 89.

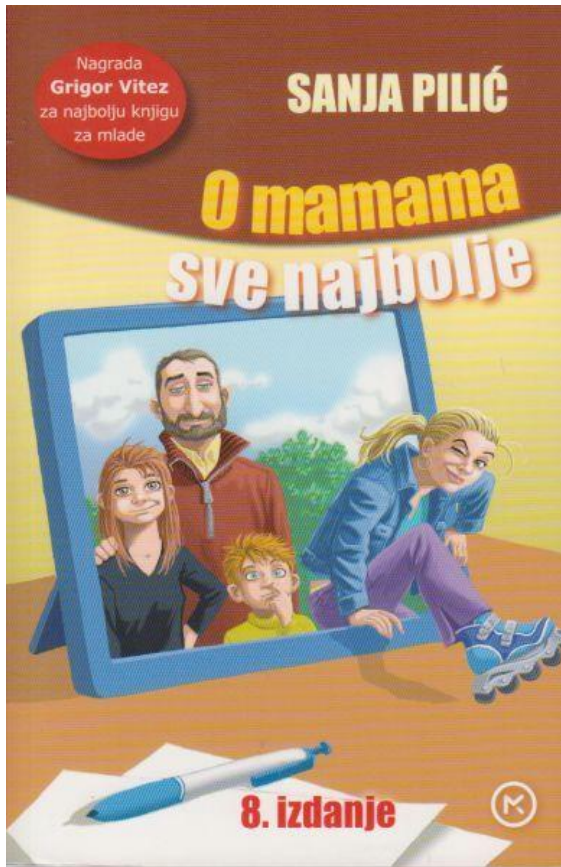
hear about her virtues: “Actually, I wanted to talk about me. About how fun and special I am, and even though we spend so much time in the same class, he’s still not bored with me. And he can’t be, because I’m so extraordinary.”⁹ She believes that growing up is not so fun because of love dilemmas, crushes, acting, etc. At the end of the novel, Zlatka

truly falls in love with Mario, the boy she was dating, and concludes that life is extraordinary: “I don’t know how many times that night I thought that life is strange, especially when you are thirteen years old and you are still a little girl turning into a young woman. Strange, very, very strange.”¹⁰

⁹ Pilić, S. (2006). *Am I in Love?* Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 98.

¹⁰ Pilić, S. (2006). *Am I in Love?* Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 137.

4. *O mamama sve najbolje* (*All the Best About Mums*)



Hranjec, S. (1998). *Hrvatski dječji roman*. Zagreb: Znanje, 297-299

"Oh, stop messing about!" - We could expect such a reaction from a young reader while reading Sanja Pilić's novel *All the Best About Mums* (1990). Of course, we have not included it in the ludic children's novels category because of this

expected reaction but rather because of all the specific features the author has used to construct this work. We are intentionally calling it a work, as it would be doubtful to call it a novel in the sense in which a children's novel exists: there is no plot, no consistent, "solid" story, there are no traditionally formed characters, no omniscient narrator, moreover, the narrator helplessly surrenders over a typewriter, encouraging the characters: *Go on, heroes, wake up. Hardships make heroes. All the heroes humbly stood.*

The work begins with an initial introductory sequence: the author, a mum, wishes to write a book about herself, as mothers are rarely written about, although she has no idea how the text will turn out. In her work, her name is Caramela Rudinsky; she is 35, is married to a film director named Valdemar, and has two children named Naranča and Lastan. She is a cook and a housewife. She

wishes to use writing to escape her everyday life:

But the real I in her was throwing itself around, making her restless. The more she sat around the house, the more her I travelled. It discovered a country called Imagination.

And in this country, "imagination land", Caramela wishes to realise various forms of existence: at one time, she is Dragica Dukić, then *a collected, methodical, solid, and sharp-witted Željka Koprivnjak*, then an adolescent on roller skates, who is *neither here nor there* (in her childhood), and in her imagination she also creates the character of Velimir, who is transposed to reality and even weds Caramela's friend Marijana. From this, she attempts to write a novel. She has no other inspiration, and the work is created by describing her creative inability. At the end of the work, Zlatko Hotko, an editor of the "Plava Biblioteka" publishing house, enters the pub

belonging to her friend and cousin, skims through the novel's manuscript, and decides to publish it. However, it appears that the key to the possible exploration of this work lies in the relationship between the author and the novel, which becomes a personified character. If the characters in Caramela's immediate surroundings, including herself – with all her fears, moods, and depression – are the usual elements of novel fiction, the building elements of a possible novel – the novel-as-a-character in the book is a clever invention. The novel writes the mum, the mum writes the novel, and it is exposed to various dangers to its survival, so it employs telepathy to be completed! This codependence, this inter-writing, certainly belongs to the most original parts:

Let them invent, let them speak whatever they want... The most important thing is that Caramela completes me. (...) The most

important thing is that I am progressing... I don't care how... The most important thing is that it moves. I have the opportunity to become avant-garde or fly into a dumpster straight through the window... But there is a chance... That's important... To have a choice in life... Since I have already managed to make this lazy Caramela to write me, I suppose that managing to work around an editor would be no different... You already know that frogs turn into princes... Therefore, there is hope for me, the novel thought.

On the opposite side, the author complains to the reader:

On the other hand, what do novels know about human joy? They would take everything from their authors if they could. As if they don't know that life is hard, to put it mildly. And that writing is an arduous business, however strange it may appear. To force

oneself to write, isn't that called self-torture? (...) The author could honestly tell their novel: I've given you the best years of my life. My free time. What more could you possibly want from me?

At the very least, we must credit Pilić for her honesty. At one point, Caramela mentions that she would like to write a *convoluted, sloppy, blotchy, mucky, and kooky* book, an "unhinged" one, as it were. As mentioned earlier, the entire work is an experiment – on the plot level, the introduction of the characters, the somewhat casual, unrestricted expression filled with genre geminations, interior monologues, typographically emphasised syntagms, proverbs... Hence, we have reason to ask ourselves whether children, including young adults, would even understand the work, i.e., which element, which level of it would attract them? Hrvojka Mihanović-Salopek rightfully determined that the element of

attraction can only be "the feeling of closeness and the possibility of identifying the child with the childlike"¹. Indeed, we can encounter such thoughts at several points in the work:

People always grow up only partially, no matter how serious they look; How children can be

grown up! And how grown-ups can be children!

This refusal to grow up and the relatable, honest, somewhat satirical portrayal of adult life are possible postulates for the extraordinary reception of this "novel" by Sanja Pilić.

¹ Hrvojka Mihanović-Salopek: *Jedan prototip nesigurne, djetinjasto-luckaste, simpatične majke*

(Prikaz knjige Sanje Pilić, *O mamama sve najbolje*), „Umjetnost i dijete“, Zagreb, 1, 1991, 66.

5. Pošalji mi poruku! (Text Me!)



Official justification for the Grigor Vitez Award 2016: For Best Literary Text for Young Adults: The expert committee decided to present the Award to the author Sanja Pilić for her book *Text Me!*.

<https://hidk.hr/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Obrazlo%C5%BEenje-NGV-za-2016..pdf>

In her new novel for young adults, *Text Me!* Sanja Pilić talked convincingly from the perspective of the thirteen-year-old girl, Sofija,

about the contemporary life of an urban Zagreb family, about relationships with her peers and her infatuation with her classmate.

In her spring diary entries, Sofija, a Year 7 pupil, expands the range of characters with whom she shares her everyday life. The peculiarity of this teenage novel is that many characters go beyond the framework of mediocrity and show the power of resisting life's stereotypes.

The first in a series of such characters is Nurse Matilda, who, with her serenity and exceptional understanding of young patients, especially helps Sofija during her illness and stay in the hospital. Sofija's grandmother Serena opposes the stereotype of a calm and slow-moving older woman by not thinking about her age and life fatigue but by celebrating life as it is. Grandma Serena runs daily, often travels, thinks freely, and talks about openness to life, beauty, and the skill of reaching a true quality of life.

Through the character of Sofija's sister Eleonora, we learn about all the questions and torments plaguing strong and almost perfect people. We realise that perfection does not imply easy and carefree life. A newcomer to Sofija's class, the boy Mat, is the son of a wealthy family who returned to Zagreb from abroad. However, it is not the wealth of his parents that determines him, but his politeness, silence, and great sadness for his terminally ill mother. Mat carries this deep sadness and does not discuss it with his peers. With this silence, Pilić clads the story of the loss of a mother at the most vulnerable age of a teenager in a protective veil without presenting the readers with all the family's suffering due to the loss of the mother. Mat only truly (but very sparingly) confides in Sofija, recognising in her a good listener who tries to understand him. In addition to her diary entries, Sofija begins to record her events,

thoughts, and feelings with a video camera, making films from her surroundings. These videos serve as messages that she sends to herself and later to others. Sofija steps outside the frame of an ordinary teenager by depicting her life poetically – by creating a personal visual diary besides a textual one.

Our modernity is deeply marked by the strong influence of technology, especially regarding adolescents, and the impact of technology is often seen negatively. However, in this novel, technology is described very positively, which is also a unique feature.

Although burdened with sad themes, this novel wants and manages to be read easily and with an unobtrusive projection of genuine life values that are just noticed and truly felt without much philosophical manoeuvring. Yet, the novel's author does not shy away from little wisecracks. During the story, Sofija justifies her name by presenting several thoughts about

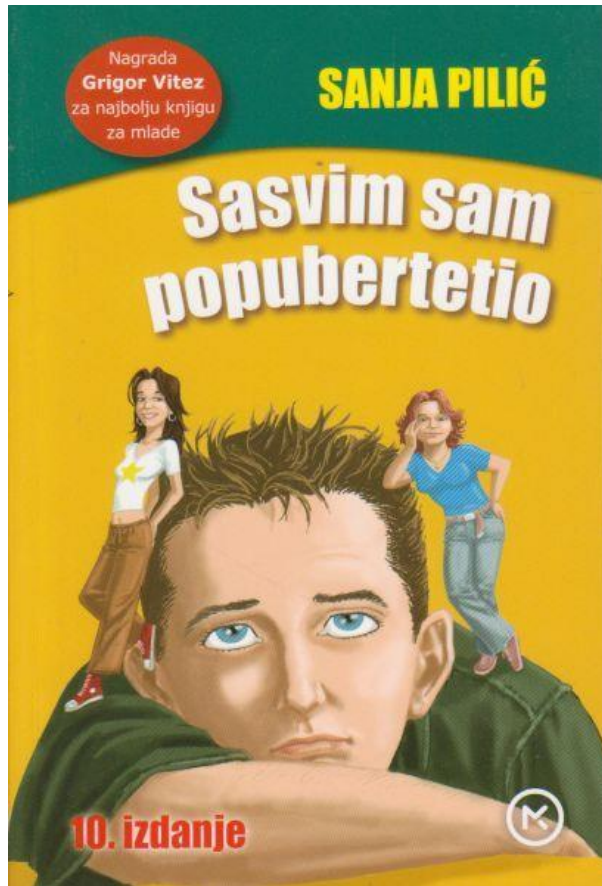
life. These deserve to be singled out in this justification and expressed as an addition to everything written above:

- *People don't like perfection. – People secretly don't like beautiful people, even though they flatter them.*
- *There's a black box in every human being that doesn't want to be found.*
- *People who complain all the time are not interesting.*
- *What you don't want to do is precisely what you should do.*
- *In life, a draw is not the solution.*

– *It's funny how other people's opinions, of all the people who don't know us at all, can make us feel lousy.*

- *Whatever isn't watered withers.*
- *Someone confiding in you is lovely. You feel like you're a better person because you were chosen to listen to something.*
- *Each of us lives in a story in which we are the creator, so different stories are possible.*
- *Life goes on. Whether we're happy, sad, stupid, or ugly, it goes on. It goes on. You can't stop it. It's like sand slipping through your fingers.*

5. *Sasvim sam popubertetio* (*Totally Teen*)



Gazibara, S. *Likovi dječaka i djevojčica u djelima Sanje Pilić. Život i škola. 21(1/2009), 57, 6-8*

The novel *Totally Teen* (2002) is an “age shift” in the works of Sanja Pilić, in which she talks about a

fifteen-year-old boy who lives with his mother and suffers from love woes.¹

The novel’s main character is Luka, a boy who is torn between school, love, and family problems. He is tormented by the end of primary school, the disintegration of his family caused by his father’s departure, growing up with women, and falling in love.² The value of this novel is also evidenced by the fact that the work will be staged by the Zagreb Žar Ptica theatre, directed by Aida Buković, and the premiere will be held in February 2009.³

In addition to Luka, the novel mentions his friends Bero and Marko, both fifteen-year-olds, and Luka’s nineteen-year-old sister Martina. Several girlfriends are also mentioned, who are, at the same time, his three “crushes”, Mihaela, Zvezdana, and Mirjana.

¹ Higgins S. (2014). *Pregled hrvatske dječje književnosti*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga

² <http://knjiga.hr/04asp?param=S&ID=10064>

³ <http://teatar.hr/5781/sezona-200809-zar-ptica/>

As he enters puberty, Luka experiments with alcohol and cigarettes because he wants to be “cool.” There is a misconception among teenagers that smoking is “cool” and that alcohol is very often consumed. Generations of television and film stars have contributed to this understanding.⁴ Just like Janko, the hero of the novel *Crumbs from the Living Room*, Luka thinks about life; he’s searching for himself like all teenagers, and he thinks about girls. He blames puberty for everything that happens to him: “It’s about puberty, isn’t it? It’s all puberty’s fault. It is the age of sexual maturation of men and women. I shall develop into a butterfly, shrimp, or frog from the larva. Sooner or later. My hormones will stop tossing me around, and my big mouth will get smaller.”⁵ In this novel, Sanja Pilić

gives a very gentle and close “definition” of puberty to teenagers: “That’s why maybe puberty is a transitional and tricky period – you are no longer a child, and you can’t be a child, and then you get angry. At whom? Your parents, because they are the closest. You are preparing for a new struggle, and you would rather enjoy the security of the image you have been building for years, which is breaking apart a little more every day of growing up...”⁶

Luka has a close relationship with his older sister and confides in her without fear of ridicule. Here we can notice how he differs from Janko and his sister, which can be attributed to the age difference. Luka often changes his mind and falls in and out of love: “Until half an hour ago, I was thinking of Zvezdana as an ideal person for me, and now

⁴ According to: Hůsch, T. (2000). *Tajne odrastanja: savjeti za dječake*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga

⁵ Pilić, S. (2007). *Sasvim sam popubertetio*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 27.

⁶ Pilić, S. (2007). *Sasvim sam popubertetio*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 104.

Mihaela is turning into a queen...”⁷ As Luka’s parents are divorced, he misses his father, the man in his life whom he could rely on and who would understand him and help him with the problems he is uncomfortable discussing with his mother or sister. He meets his father several times, and these encounters only upset him because his father does not understand him, he cannot rely on him, and he does not need him in this way. “That meeting shook me – I wanted to have a girlfriend again and belong to someone. (...) I liked to imagine my father as better and more determined than he was, and now he really reminded me of himself, and I knew that I didn’t have to regret not having him anymore.”⁸

The novel also raises the question of the sensitivity of boys and girls, including how girls show

their feelings more than boys, who hold them in for fear of ridicule. We see this in the example of Mirjana, a girl with weight problems, and Luka makes fun of her because of it, even though he knows it is not right. He insults her with his words, and she cries: “Mirjana began to cry. The tears first flowed and then poured down her face. Poured. Literally. Two wet stripes lined her face.”⁹

In adolescence, intense relationships with peers are essential for development. During puberty, friends become more important than family. Friends and “cliques” are small images of society in which teenagers must confirm themselves as adults.¹⁰ Boys often invent various adventures so that society will accept them as best as possible and so that they can be “cool” and admired by others. Luka also brags in

⁷ Pilić, S. (2007). *Sasvim sam popubertetio*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 39.

⁸ Pilić, S. (2007). *Sasvim sam popubertetio*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 46.

⁹ Pilić, S. (2007). *Sasvim sam popubertetio*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 25.

¹⁰ According to: Hůsch, T. (2000). *Tajne odrastanja: savjeti za dječake*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga

front of his friends: “As lonely as a ghost, I started to lose self-confidence, and I started to invent love adventures in front of the guys that happen when I’m with my mom at some boring friends from Marija Bistrica or Velika Gorica...”¹¹

As the school year draws to a close, Luka is increasingly scared, afraid of the future, enrolling in high school, the things he has not yet encountered, and the things that are forcing him to mature and grow up. Most teenagers worry about schooling, enrolling in high school, what they want to become and how they will achieve it. “It can be said that for most young people, school is something like the first occupation that can be quite stressful. Will I succeed in school? Why am I so disgusted by it? Will the exam be too difficult? What will my parents say

when they see my report card? And after school? The list of questions continues indefinitely because everyday school life can create crises and problems. The result can sometimes be panic.”¹²

The novel also mentions the differences between boys and girls, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Girls reach puberty earlier and mature earlier than boys, and this is what the main hero of this novel says: “Girls are truly different from boys. More grown up. I could feel myself sweating.”¹³

¹¹ Pilić, S. (2007). *Sasvim sam popubertetio*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 30.

¹² Hůsch, T. (2000). *Tajne odrastanja: savjeti za djećake*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga: 158.

¹³ Pilić, S. (2007). *Sasvim sam popubertetio*. Zagreb: Mozaik knjiga d. o. o.: 66.



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