

Author Maya Dalgacheva

Nomination for H.C. Andersen 2024

From Bulgaria





Biographical information

Maya Dalgacheva was born on 05.05.1967 in Stara Zagora. She graduated in *Pedagogy* at Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski and later in *Montessori Pedagogy and Therapy* at the Internationale Akademie für Entwicklungs-Rehabilitation und pädiatrische Fortbildung in Munich. Her interests are in the field of alternative educational methods and methods to promote children's language development. She specialized in *Literature and Media Education* in Germany. She is the author of several poetry collections, but the main part of her work is directed towards children. The genres are diverse - fairy tales, poems, song lyrics, librettos, plays. In addition to her original projects, she is involved in the field of applied literature in several publications with an educational focus.

Editor and author of the fiction articles in the series of publications for preschool age *The First Seven*, co-founder and editor (until 2006) of the column *Children's Corner* in LiterNet, which won the special prize of the Stoyan Drinov National Literary Competition (2004). Author of puppet shows and musicals performed with success in Bulgaria and abroad. Many of her works for children are included in textbooks and teaching materials for preschool and primary school. Her works have been translated into Russian, French, English, German and Serbian. Winner of the Golden Century Award (2006) of the Ministry of Culture in the Young Author category, the Konstantin Konstantinov National Award in the Author category (2009), the The Union of the Bulgarian Writers Award for Children's Literature (2009), the Petya Karakoleva National Award (2013). In 2019 and 2020 she is nominated consecutively for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.



Contribution statement



Speech by Peter Anastasov (Bulgarian poet and playwright)
at the awarding of the Petya Karakoleva National Prize for Children's Literature

I have always doubted the maxim that one should write for children as one does for adults—only better. I argue that this pretentious sophistic nonsense is, in fact, a poorly disguised attempt to impose norms on writing in general—both for adults and for children. It is somewhat reminiscent of socialist realism, which we once believed gave us a significant advantage over our colleagues in the West, who, poor souls, were unfamiliar with the alchemy of this exotic realism.

The exquisite poetry of Maya Dalgacheva stands as one of the most talented and unconventional phenomena in contemporary Bulgarian literary artistry. The same can be said of her fairy tales, which seemed to have sprouted unexpectedly in the exhausted soil of our national literature, only to flourish in *Tales from That Forest* as a cultural phenomenon of European significance. Today, we realize that we are witnessing a true enchantment come to life—a symbiosis of reality and fairy tale.

Maya Dalgacheva's creative world has proven to be a blessed realm for the triumph of children's civilization. For are not children a mysterious, autonomous civilization, possessing an astral existence beyond our comprehension and a unique cultural mission—to solve the insurmountable challenges of integrating into the status of adulthood?

The great Bulgarian poetess and guardian of her fairy tales, Maya Dalgacheva, does not treat children as sweet but uninformed darlings; she sees them as creators of their own knowledge, as masters of their own time. To overcome the egocentrism of normative superiority and to grasp that, in the world of children, you are not the one who excels, but the one who is surpassed—this requires talent, wisdom, and kindness. *Tales from That Forest* is a projection of dreams in which we can seek refuge—an escape from the darkness and dullness, an emigration into the visa-free spaces of that same mysterious children's civilization. Maya Dalgacheva's book serves as a kind of therapy for one of the most terrifying afflictions of modern humanity—disillusionment and despair. The pursuit of new, devastating weapons achieves a perverse perfection in the murky currents of billion-dollar investments, far surpassing in scale the humanitarian ideas that wait in line at the doors of miserly foundations. I would not presume to predict how many centuries it will take for humanity to reverse this ratio in favor of humanitarianism. If, in the beginning, there was the Word, then why, on a global scale, are investments in the Word treated more as alms than as genuine care? In my view, what the great creators of literature do—what Maya Dalgacheva achieves through her poetry and fairy tales—should be placed on a pedestal akin to sanctity.

I am tempted to compare *Tales from That Forest* to a heavy honeycomb, where each cell is sweet, harmonious, and abundant.

I read it in the same state of rapture with which, decades ago, I first read *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Despite their differences in thematic scope and social context, the two works are kindred in their poetics, in the plasticity of their language, and in the humanistic essence of their messages, for they were both conceived from the miracle of the same celestial spark.

Interviews

MAYA DALGACHEVA: I have a lot to tell and show when I return to Bulgaria



I met her for the first time before she left for Sofia in 2005. The meeting was at the "Rodina" community centre in Stara Zagora, where Maya Dulgacheva was leading a workshop on creative writing. I had read her poems and liked her stories for children. When the conversation began, I decided to abandon the questions I had planned. Maya, who was born in the spring month of May, made the meeting casual, made me glad to have the opportunity to talk with her so that things would go off without the "script" beforehand. What stayed off the recorder was her smile and manner of communication. Until 2011, I read her interviews with interesting people, including Evgeny Yevtushenko, Kalina Stefanova, Miroslava Kortenska... Then I learned that she had gone to Germany. There she completed her studies in Montessori pedagogy and therapy at the Internationale Akademie für Entwicklungs-

Rehabilitation und pädiatrische Fortbildung (International Academy for Developmental Rehabilitation and Paediatric Training). Although she is abroad, Maya Dulgacheva's name often appears at home as the author of fairy tales, poems, riddles, songs based on music by Margarita Shoselova, Janina Yankulova and Haygashod Agasyan, librettos of musicals, plays and educational projects. Many of her works for children are included in textbooks and manuals for preschool and primary school. Her works have been translated into Russian, French, English, German and Serbian. She has won several National Literary Awards for Children's Literature, as well as two nominations for the Astrid Lindgren World Memorial Award. A certified Montessori teacher and therapist, she currently lives and works in Munich.

- Mrs. Dulgacheva, words carry both ecstasy and despair. Would you say that the closer a poet is to themselves, the closer they are to others?

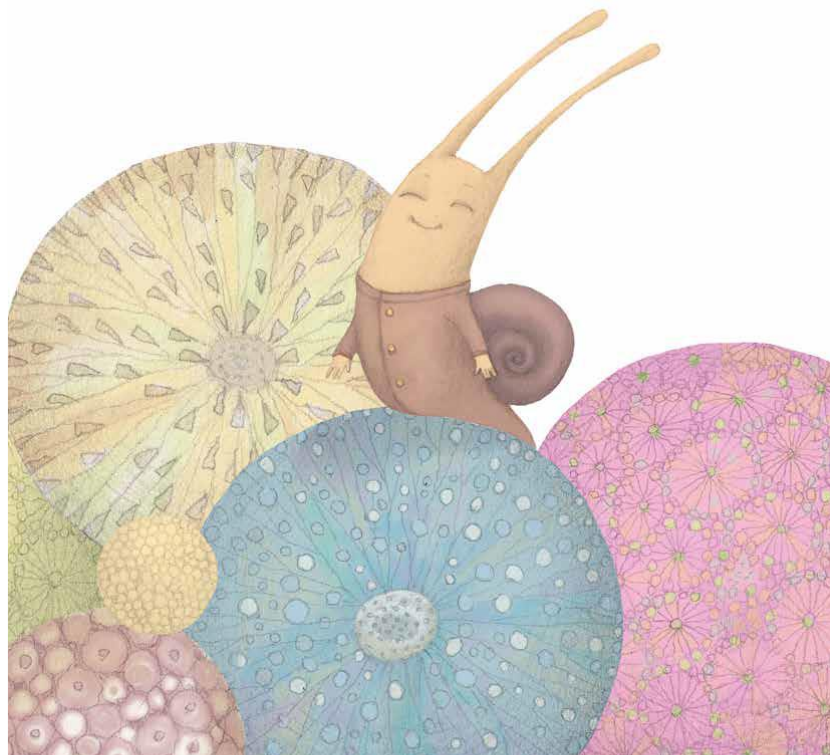
Honestly, I have no idea what exactly makes someone a poet. It's certainly not published poetry collections, nor popularity, awards, or even the number of devoted readers. Not even the ability to wield words skillfully. There's something else—something tangible yet unnameable—that brings one

closer to others without necessarily making them "close." Perhaps it's an accidental touch upon the melody of a shared, pure soul—I don't know...

- With *Fairy Tales from That Forest*, you became the ninth laureate of the Petya Karakoleva Children's Literature Award. You created *Wee Warm Willie*, "which drifts through every story and symbolizes hope." How does a book reach children? Do you think a "safety net" is needed beneath the literary tightrope?

I've never really thought about *how* to reach children through a book—I write the way I feel. Often, after finishing a book, I'm struck by fear—will it be understood, will it be accepted? And sometimes, those fears turn out to be justified. *Fairy Tales from That Forest*, for instance, was Bulgaria's first All-Age book and sparked both enthusiasm and criticism. Until then, I had only written traditional rhyming fairy tales—fun, lighthearted, and well-loved. Suddenly, I started reading reviews like: "She has no idea how to write fairy tales!" and "Well, that's what happens when you try to sit on two chairs—you fall!" At the time, I didn't even know that "All-Age books" were already an established genre worldwide. I just wanted to sink into the ground. Thankfully, there were also deep, thoughtful readings and beautiful responses—for which I am grateful. Over time, perceptions shifted, and more books like it emerged in Bulgaria. Today, *Fairy Tales from That Forest* is one of my most sought-after works, with multiple print runs and a place on recommended reading lists.

A similar thing happened with *The Warm Little Being*—one of the first books here to touch on difficult themes like death, parental separation, jealousy over a new sibling, and more. It received equally extreme reactions: from "Bravo! This is an impossible book—you've done the impossible!" to "I couldn't read it—it's too heavy. I cried on every page and didn't want to upset my child..." If I said that public opinion doesn't affect me, it would be a lie. I feel my books like my own children, and it hurts when they are misunderstood or rejected. Yet, I still close my eyes and leap—without a safety net. There's a saying: "Sometimes, you jump off the bridge first and only then find out if you have wings."



- At the Christmas Book Fair, your book *Rali's Friends* will be available at the stand of David Publishing. When does hope become "as big as a walnut"?

I'm deeply grateful to Evgenia Voinova of David Publishing—herself a wonderful children's author. She invited me to collaborate on this book: I wrote the text, and she created the illustrations. Both of us initially had doubts about whether we could do it justice. But we were driven by a truly meaningful cause—the fight for the life of Rali and other children with Leigh syndrome. I'm immensely thankful to the hundreds of people who, in less than three months, ordered three (quite large) print runs of the book—an extraordinary achievement for Bulgaria! Every single lev from sales goes toward international teams researching a cure for this rare disease.

I tear up whenever I see photos of teachers holding this book with their entire kindergarten groups or entire classes. Every picture shared, every person encouraging others to help—it moves me to my core. The sheer kindness and solidarity of our exhausted yet deeply humane nation bring me to tears. For me, this is hope—huge, yet small as a walnut. Some might say, "What's the big deal? I just bought a book—it's just a drop in the ocean." But that drop lifts hearts, moves mountains, and creates miracles. In the book, it's told a bit differently—whoever wishes, let them read it and find out.

- What is the teacher of the future like? Is their adaptability to each student the key to an education that yields real results?

More of a guide and companion than an authority figure or controlling force. I wouldn't call it "adaptability" in the conventional sense—it's simply a teacher's ability to work with students based on their unique pace, needs, and talents. Right now, public education largely operates with two rigid roles: the teacher on a pedestal and the student as a faceless mass, judged by uniform standards and assessments—often scolded, too. It's clear this system has never been truly effective, nor can it be fixed with cosmetic tweaks. It needs a fundamental transformation. And yes, one essential step is for teachers to step down from their pedestals and walk alongside their students. Fortunately, in recent years, I've seen more and more educators choosing this path.

- What is your philosophy of teaching?

I am an absolute admirer of Maria Montessori—a certified Montessori teacher and therapist, in fact. My philosophy is rooted in Montessori education (which, incidentally, has influenced all other alternative pedagogical approaches). This means individual work with each child, as I've already mentioned; more observation, less interference; applying principles like "From grasping to understanding" and "Help me do it myself"; allowing children to self-correct their mistakes instead of being judged by an adult; and many other elements that I can't summarize in just a few words. I highly recommend reading Montessori's *The Absorbent Mind*—it explains how a child's brain functions, how learning happens, why the "first seven years" are so crucial, and why it's impossible for twenty children to effectively study math at the same time under a rigid school curriculum.

- There's been recent debate about schools without digitalization. In Sweden, studies suggest that digital education is making children less intelligent. Do you think introducing tablets in preschools is harming students' core skills?

Absolutely. And it's not just my opinion—it's been scientifically proven. There are now psychologists whose entire practice revolves around treating children with online addiction. Sadly, I've seen this firsthand—not just in my work with students, but also with a close friend's child, who is now seeing a psychiatrist and going through withdrawal symptoms comparable to drug addiction. Excessive screen use negatively impacts both physical and mental (cognitive, emotional, and social) development.

Of course, tablets make things easier. Of course, they keep children quiet and occupied. But the damage isn't immediately visible—it creeps in over time. And what follows is truly alarming. In Bavaria, where I live, tablets and televisions are banned in kindergartens and elementary schools—I haven't even seen interactive whiteboards. So, I was shocked when friends in Sofia told me that, in third grade, owning an iPhone is considered a status symbol...

I'll share something a German journalist once told me at a private school where I used to work. He and his wife (a politician) spent a long time searching for the right school for their sons. Their logic was that, since technology is unavoidable, their children would have to engage with it eventually. Interestingly, the most expensive private schools they visited offered extracurricular activities that were deliberately non-digital—horseback riding, pottery, bread-making, swimming, watercolor painting, gardening, knitting, theater, choir, ballet, tennis... Draw your own conclusions.

- What do you hope for in 2025?

For a long time, I've felt an urgent need for a fresh start. I've postponed this step for years—because of pandemics, wars, instability—but the "perfect" time never seems to come. I want to be healthy, regain the energy I've lost here due to overburdening myself, return to Bulgaria, and share what I've learned. I have so much to tell and show...

Interview by Dimka KABAIVANOVA

Source: Dolap, 16.12.2024, https://dolap.bg/2024/12/16/мая-дългъчева-имам-много-за-разказван/?fbclid=IwY2xjawIG_QNleHRuA2FlbQlxMQABHYdLQFIdhvpL8Ms02k8dxGN2AmREmALhPHmzSfWGsTzykFE0W-Nrp3cjeQ_aem_0oRhdbQDHJoONdDjWzhk8Q

MAYA DALGACHEVA: The children's world is more pure and joyful for me

Maya Dalgacheva was born on May 5, 1967, in Stara Zagora. Her interests lie in alternative pedagogical methods and approaches that encourage children's language development. She is the author of several poetry collections, but the majority of her work is dedicated to children. In addition to her own creative projects, she contributes to numerous publications focused on pedagogy. She has received several national awards for children's literature and has twice been nominated for the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. In 2022, she won the Hristo G. Danov Award for her book *What It Means to Be a Mother* (Janet 45 Publishing House).

- You have written poetry collections, books for both children and adults, but your primary focus is children's literature. Was it your background in pedagogy that led you to write for children, or was it your love for children and their world that shaped your creative path?

I wouldn't say that my education was the reason I started writing for children. Nor did writing lead me to choose my field of study. My first children's stories came much later—they were a kind of fairy-tale letters to my own children. Then my journey introduced me to other creators and new ideas—an educational series *The First Seven*, children's songs, puppet plays, musicals... Somehow, the path called me. But I also discovered that the children's world was more pure and joyful for me. Writing for children is my inner vacation. And my education simply reassures me that I am in my element.

- Would you have continued writing for children if you didn't have daily contact with them?

For a long time, I worked in entirely different fields—public relations, editorial roles at various publications... Yet I never stopped writing for children. Direct contact is valuable, of course, but it's not essential. What truly matters is your connection with your inner child—the ability to explore, marvel, and imagine, and, to some extent, preserve a sense of innocence, which is really just a deep trust in people and goodness. Through my books, I let my inner child play with other children.

- Your book *Tales from That Forest* is not just for children but also for the child within adults. How did the idea for it come about? And is *That Forest* an escape from reality for you?

No, it is not an escape—it is my reality, just in a more metaphorical form. The way I arrived at the book is quite amusing. The ideas lingered in my mind, restless for a long time. I felt it was important to talk to children about these topics—rejection, jealousy, the power of words, love, responsibility, and so on. At the time (I am talking about 2007–2008), I had not come across anything quite like it, but I deeply wished it existed.

However, I was mostly writing in rhyme back then, using traditional fairy-tale structures—with events, messages, and resolutions. I was not interested in prose, yet rhyme did not suit *That Forest*—

its rhythm was different. I even shared my ideas with another writer and asked her to write the book because I felt I could not. But since she did not, and no one else did, and the creatures from *That Forest* would not leave me alone, one day, I simply sat down and prayed.

I said: "If *That Forest* is needed by someone, let the words and the right form come to me. If not, let it leave my head forever!" At that time, I was substituting at a small neighborhood school. A week after my rather funny prayer, a flu outbreak was announced, and schools were closed. I stayed home—and the words started pouring in, just as the first large snowflakes fell outside. I was capturing the scenes the way a child catches snowflakes on their tongue—everything came at once, and I rushed to write it down before it melted away.

It was the most extraordinary experience I've ever had—I felt euphoric, feverish, celebratory!

The cold shower came later when the book was published. I read comments like, "This woman has no idea how to write fairy tales!" or "I like Maya, but you can't sit on two chairs at once..." The reactions ranged from "*This is not a children's book!*" to "*My child won't fall asleep without it.*"

Back then, the *All-age* genre was less recognized—perhaps there were not enough books like that for people to categorize them properly. Readers wanted a label—was it for ages 3–6 or 6–12? I hadn't even heard of the term *All-age* and didn't realize I had written such a story. Thankfully, *That Forest* found its people, and now it's beloved by readers from ages 3 to 73. Personally, I believe this book isn't about age—it's about a way of perceiving the world.

- The book was illustrated in 2022 by the renowned Russian artist Igor Oleynikov. What was it like working with him?

Working with Igor Oleynikov was easy and incredibly pleasant. Our collaboration began about ten years ago, even before he won the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award. I found him online and simply wrote to him, saying how much I admired his work and dreamed of having one of my books illustrated by him. He replied that I could send him the manuscript, but I should be aware that he only illustrated texts he genuinely liked.

I was trembling while waiting for his response—but he accepted! Unfortunately, the project fell through at the time due to the publisher's decision. I had lost hope, but in the end, ten years later, *That Forest* was finally published with his illustrations, and I couldn't be happier. We worked on it for a little over a month. He would ask me if he was unsure about the meaning of a word, made a few corrections I requested, and was always responsive and thoughtful—both to the text and to me. He also has a wonderful sense of humor.

- One of your stories features a big bear who trains every day to master *That Power*—the power of not using force. Is that the secret to raising small humans?

The secret to parenting is actually found in the last line of that story: *"Because fathers in That Forest know that pajamas see and hear everything."*

Children don't do what their parents tell them—they do what their parents show them. And for the things parents think they've successfully hidden—well, they should remember that pajamas, even when asleep, see and hear everything.

- One of your recent books is titled *What It Means to Be a Mother*. Did becoming a mother change the way you write for children?

I think mothers, like their children, grow up alongside them—and perhaps this growth influences my stories in some way. *What It Means to Be a Mother* sheds light on some stages of this secret growing-up process.

- As a child, I loved immersing myself in my favorite books, imagining myself among the characters and interfering in the story. If you could settle into any children's book for a while, which one would it be?

Anne of Green Gables. To this day, a friend and I laugh about our favorite exclamation from that book: *"What a lovely pearl-gray day!"*

In the story, Anne says this about a gloomy, overcast, muddy day. This perspective on the world is precious to me—I'm still learning from it.

Interview by LIDIA VLASOVA

Source: Literature Newspaper (Literaturen Vestnik), 15.03.2023

<https://litvestnik.com/2023/03/15 /мая-дългъчева-в-детския-свят-ми-е-по-ч/>



Awards

2006

Awarded the *Golden Age Award* by the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture.

2007

Second Place in the International Fairytale Contest *Europe in a Fairy Tale*

2009

Received the Union of Bulgarian Writers' award for Children's Literature.

Honored with the Konstantin Konstantinov National Award for Children's Literature in the "Author" category.

2013

Won the "Petya Karakoleva" National Award for Children's Literature for her book *Tales from That Forest*.

2019

Nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

2020

Nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

2022

Awarded the "Hristo G. Danov" prize in the "Children's Edition" category.



Complete bibliography

1999

Слон и чадър

Elephant and Umbrella.

Damyana Yakov Publishing House, 1999, Sofia.

2003

Скубльо – надхитреният пират

Skublyo – the Outwitted Pirate. Hermes, 2003, Plovdiv.

Стрина Мецандра на маскен бал

Aunt Metzandra at the Masquerade Ball, Hermes, 2003, Plovdiv.

2004

Папийонка за великия Щуралди

Bowtie for the Great Shturaldi. Hermes, 2004, Plovdiv.

Подслон за Триточка

Shelter for Tritochka. Hermes, 2004, Plovdiv.

2007

Как гъсеничката се събуди или как се раждат пеперуди

How the Caterpillar Woke Up or How Butterflies Are Born, Bagri, 2007.

Как се лекува лъвски страх без пердах

How to Cure Lion Fear Without a Beating, Bagri, 2007.

Как едно петле се разболяло и без него слънцето изгряло

How One Rooster Fell Ill and the Sun Still Rose Without Him, Bagri, 2007.

2008

Как един ден белият свят бил оцветен

How One Day the White World Was Colored, Bagri, 2008.

Пъстри приказалки

Colorful Tales. Janet 45 Publishing House, 2008, Plovdiv

Коледните чудеса

Christmas Miracles. Janet 45 Publishing House, 2008, Plovdiv

2011

На какво ухае зимата

What Winter Smells Like. Damyan Yakov Publishing House, 1999, Sofia.

Уча буквите с гатанки

Learning the Letters with Riddles. PAN, 2011, Sofia

Лодка с патешка походка

Boat with a Duck Walk. PAN, 2011, Sofia

2012

Приказки от Оная гора

Tales from That Forest. Janet 45 Publishing House, 2012, Plovdiv

2015

Разкажи ми в рими

Tell Me in Rhymes. Bulvest, 2015, Sofia

2017

Топлото човече

The Wee Warm Willie - Janet 45 Publishing House, 2017, Plovdiv

2020

Как кученцето си намери дом

How the Puppy Found a Home - Janet 45 Publishing House, 2020, Plovdiv

2021

Какво е да си майка

What It Means to Be a Mother - Janet 45 Publishing House, 2021, Plovdiv

2022

Снегоград

Snow City - Janet 45 Publishing House, 2022, Plovdiv

2023

Приказалки

Little Rhymed Fairy Tales. Colibri Publishers, 2023, Sofia

Коледунка

Christmasina - Janet 45 Publishing House, 2023, Plovdiv

2024

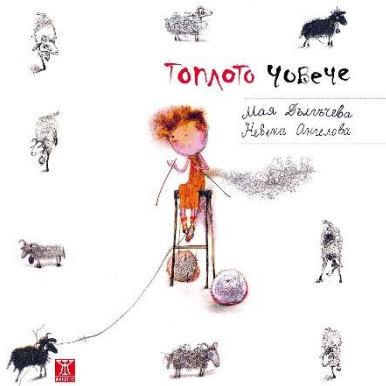
Приятелите на Рали

Rali's Friends - Foundation "Rali's Friends". 2024, Sofia

Du Lundi au Dimanche.

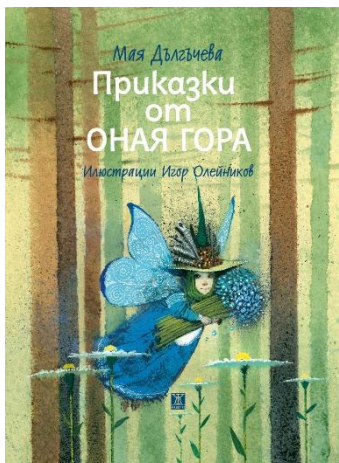
Editions Elitchka, 2024

10 important titles



Топлото човече/The Warm Wee Willy

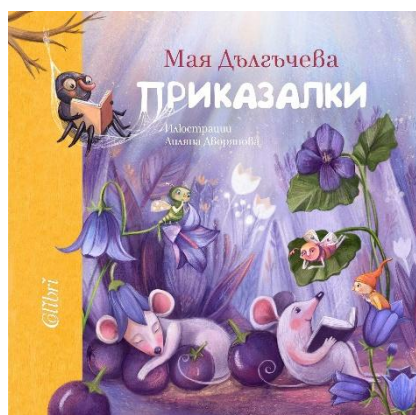
Illustrated by Nevena Angelova
Janet 45 Publishing House, 2017
Plovdiv, Bulgaria
ISBN 987-619-186-370-9



Приказки от Оная гора/Tales from That forest

Illustrated by Petar Stanimirov (2012), Igor Oleynikov (2022)

Publisher Janet 45 Publishing House
2012 (first edition), 2022 (third edition)
Plovdiv, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-619-186-721-9



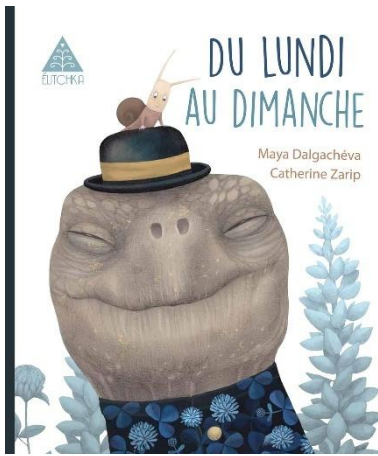
Приказалки/ Little Rhymed Fairy Tales

Illustrated by Lilyana Dvoryanova
Publisher Colibri, 2023, Sofia, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-619-02-1323-9



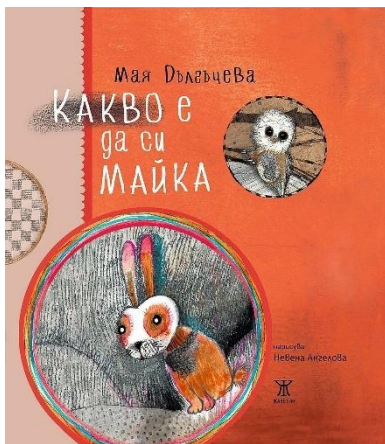
Приятелите на Рали/Friends of Rali

Illustrated by Evgenia Voinova
Friends of Rali Foundation, 2024, Sofia, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-619-04-0299-2



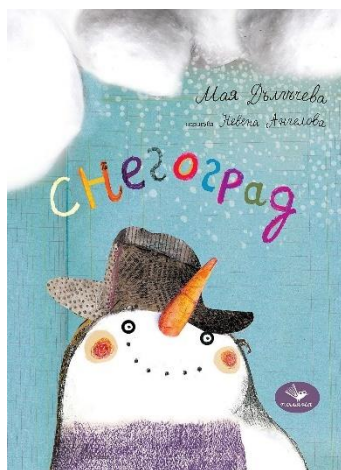
Du Lundi au Dimanche/From Monday to Sunday

Illustrated by Catherine Zarip
Editions Elitchka, 2024, France
ISBN 978-237-147-025-5



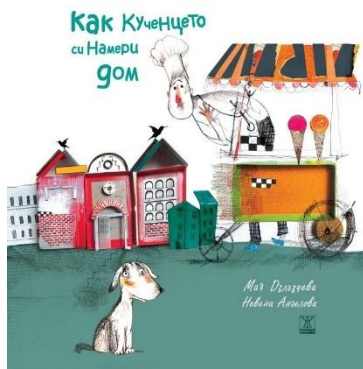
Какво е да си майка/What it means to be a mother

Illustrated by Nevena Angelova
Janet 45 Publishing House, 2021, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-619-186-629-8



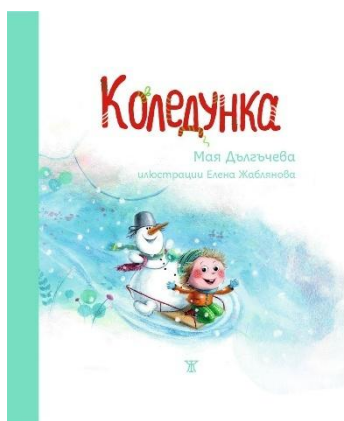
Снегов град/Snow City

Illustrated by Nevena Angelova
Janet 45 Publishing House, 2022, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-619-186-629-8



**Как кученцето си намери дом/How the puppy found
it's home**

Illustrated by Nevena Angelova
Janet 45 Publishing House, 2020, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-619-186-534-5



Колегунка/Christmasina

Illustrated by Elena Jablyanova
Janet 45 Publishing House, 2023, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-619-186-859-9



Коледните чудеса/The Christmas Miracles

Illustrated by Kapka Kaneva
Janet 45 Publishing House, 2008, Plovdiv, Bulgaria
ISBN 978-954-491-499-8

Translations

Снеговрпг/Snowville
Neigeville

Ill. Nevena Angelova

Translator Eli

Year of publication: 2022

ISBN : 978-2-37147-023-1

Как кученцето си намеру гом/How the puppy found his home
Petit Chien rêve d'une maison

Ill. Nevena Angelova

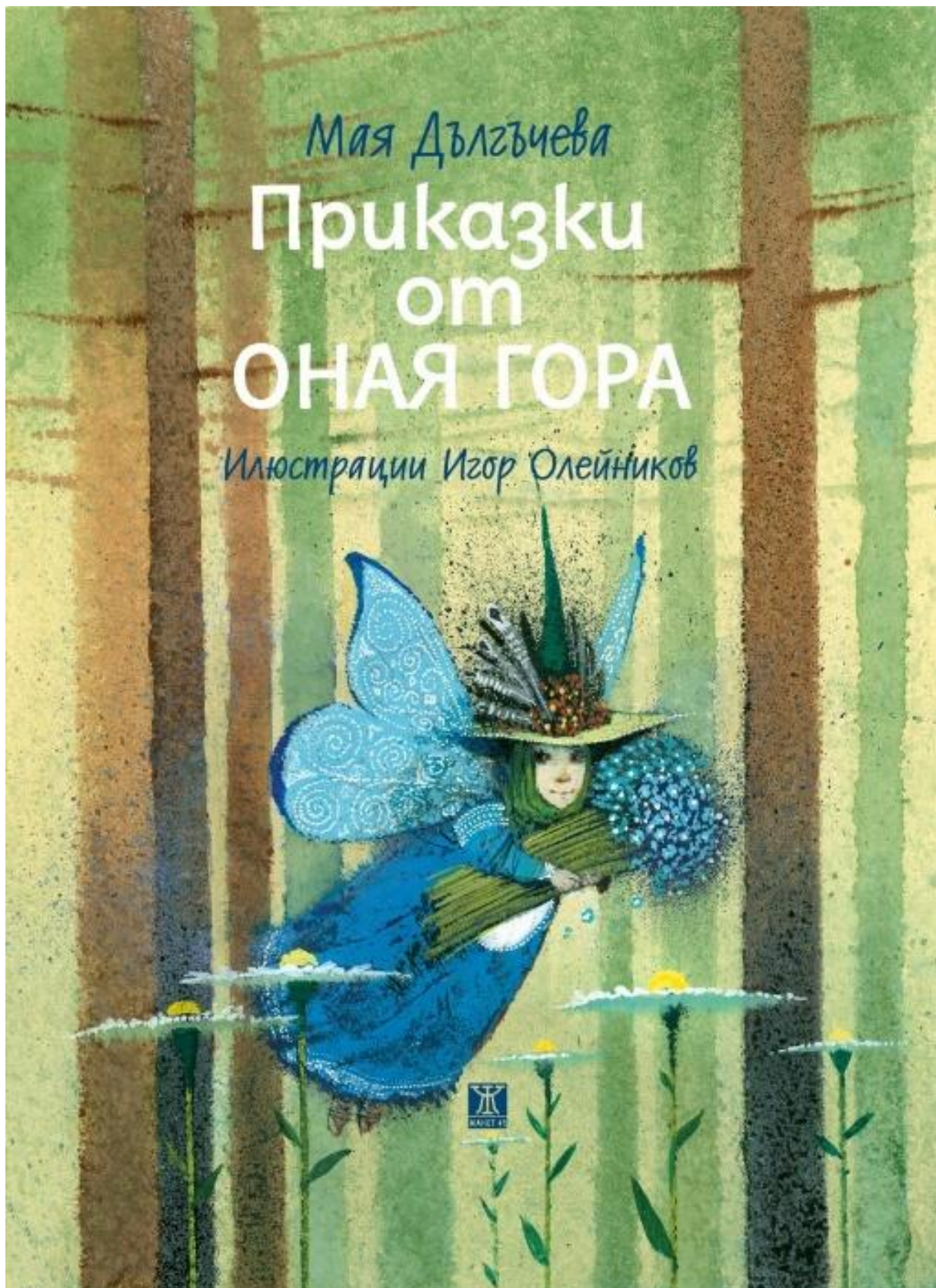
Translator Eli

Year of publication: 2021

ISBN : 978-2-37147-017-0



Books sent to the jurors



Tales from That Forest

"*Tales from That Forest*" is a collection of short stories without a storyline—parables about the sage within the child and the child within the adult.

Maya Dalgacheva tells each tale in a simple and accessible language, yet each one stands as a complete metaphor in itself.

A walk through That Forest is a spiritual journey, an inward voyage—into illusions and pain, rejection and acceptance, freedom, love, death, and transformation...

In That Forest, you will meet the Daisy and the Little Snail, the Brook and the Purple Drizzle, the Bear Cub and its plush teddy, the Elfida with pink eyes, the Little Wind—all those seemingly ordinary yet extraordinary beings that dwell within you and within the forest itself. Because, as even the tiniest gnomes know—That Forest is alive!

1) Review of the book:

"**Tales from That Forest**" is a collection of short stories without a story—parables about the sage within the child and the child within the adult. Each tale is told in a simple and accessible language, yet each stands as a complete metaphor in itself. A walk through That Forest is a spiritual journey, a wandering inward—towards illusions and pains, rejection and acceptance, freedom, love, death, and transformation...

In That Forest, you will meet the Daisy and the Little Snail, the Stream and the Purple Drizzle, the Little Bear and its plush teddy, the Elf with pink eyes, the Breeze—all those most ordinary extraordinary beings that live within you and within it. Because even the tiniest dwarves know—That Forest is alive!

Even if you already own *Tales from That Forest*, you might find yourself buying it again. The illustrations by the artist Igor Oleynikov are truly remarkable and transform the book into an entirely new experience, even for those who have memorized it by heart. With his undeniable talent, the world-renowned illustrator enhances and deepens all the emotions, allusions, and tremors awakened by the magical texts of Maya Dalgacheva.

And if you're reading the book for the first time... you're in for a treat! You are about to discover a true treasure trove of stories that catch the adult reader off guard. Because these are not the familiar, often predictable, tradition-following, trope-repeating fairy tales that may have lulled you to sleep even before your children drifted off... These are unexpected fragments of life from That Forest, speaking as much to the mind as to the heart. Incredibly poetic, subtly philosophical, childishly gentle and beautiful—awakening curiosity and wonder in children, yet evoking bittersweet smiles in

grown-up children, who suddenly start looking for their reflection in dewdrops, taking a closer look at daisies, and nodding in greeting to the owl.

A book unlike many others, *Tales from That Forest* is an unforgettable read that touches deeply and profoundly. Seemingly a children's book, yet its lessons, as it turns out, are meant primarily for adults—who will pause in thought before slowly turning the page, moving on to the next story with a wistful, bittersweet smile.

Source: <https://knijnikrile.wordpress.com/2023/07/21/приказки-от-оная-гора-от-мая-дългъч/>

2) Translated fairy tales:

Quaf-Quaf!

In That Forest lived a Duckling and a Puppy. They both really wanted to play together, but they spoke different languages.

“Woof-woof!” said the Puppy, which meant, “Let’s play tag!”.

“Quack-Quack-Quack?” the Duckling asked with a sad look in its eyes. It which meant “Are you chasing me again?”.

And the Puppy tucked its tail in, feeling lonely, and the Duckling rushed off to hide its tears in the stream.

One day, the Duckling tried learning puppy language, and the Puppy tried learning duckling language.

“Quaf-Quaf-Quaf!” said one.

“Wook! Wook!” said the other.

They both burst out laughing, and even more confused, they continued to babble.

Just then some relatives came running. And they all started shouting:

“Don’t you see, it wants to bite you!” some quacked.

“Don’t you see, it wants to drown you!” others barked.

Even in That Forest sometimes relatives quacked and barked...

Thankfully, the Owl came to bring order. The Owl was unable to sleep, and that is why he had read more books than anyone in That Forest.

“Let me tell you about the oldest language.” he said to the Duckling and the Puppy. “It’s so old that some have now completely forgotten it. Some think it’s secret. Others – silly. Still, others think it is useless. And the few who know it keep silent. Because in this language, you can only stay silent and just know. And if it is absolutely necessary, you can draw this...

And the Owl picked up a stick and drew a heart in the dust.

“To make it perfectly clear that you are saying: “I too want to play with you!”. Do you understand now?

The Duckling and the Puppy remained silent. They were smiling.

And the relatives remained silent. They too were smiling.

And the Owl smiled silently, flying away.

P.s. So, apart from all your dictionaries, always keep a stick in your pocket – just in case.

The Piglet also purrs

In That Forest everybody has had enough of the Piglet.

“He’s always covered in mud! Always rooting about in the gardens!... He’s stuffing himself with all he can find! And how rudely he grunts!”

Wherever the Piglet went, he left a trail like a tornado – mud, trampled flowerbeds and empty pots!

They kept on wondering what to do with him. The Little Fox suggested that they set a trap for the Piglet! The Puppy said that they should put him on a leash. And the Giantess flat-out threatened to make minced meat of him! Which made the Piglet so angry that he ate the leash, broke the trap and ploughed through the Giantess’ garden with his snout until he dug up the last potato there.

“What a pig!” everyone’s individual angers merged together into one great fury.

And the Piglet responded by wrecking even more havoc!

Because the bigger the anger, the worse the havoc it causes.

One day, when they were all completely fed-up with that swinish behaviour, the Duckling had an idea.

“Would you like me to show you how to swim?” the Duckling asked.

And the Piglet, to everyone’s surprise, trotted into the river. Who wouldn’t want to learn how to swim?

“Why, who knew you were so likeable!” the Puppy yapped, as soon as it saw the Piglet come out of the water washed. “Would you like me to show you how to guard?”

And the Piglet, to everyone’s surprise, agreed. Because, being a guard is...., well it is somehow important!

Then the Giantess took the Piglet to her garden. She confided that, at night, some wild boars rummaged through the garden for acorns, turning everything upside down! So, if the Piglet wanted to

And the Piglet, to everyone’s surprise, agreed. Why, those wild boars were a real menace!

Ever since then, anyone passing through That Forest could see a little Piglet, walking around the old oak tree in Giantess's yard – without a leash! They could see the Piglet rooting around the stalk, to loosen the ground. And every morning he received a full basket of acorns! And his grunting sounded like purring!

For the more praise one gives, the more purring one receives.

If someone, who's grunting rudely, makes you angry, take this fairy-tale half an hour before bedtime.

A Real Pink Bird

In That Forest lived an Elfmaid with tearful pink eyes.

She saw the hail as pink. She thought that candies were falling from the sky. And she always cried when they bruised her.

She saw all the frogs as pink. She thought that the mud was cream. And she always cried when she got covered in mud.

She saw the Fir Tree as pink. She thought that the needles were feathers. And she always cried when they pricked her fingers.

She also saw rocks as pink. And every time she tripped over them, she cried again...

In the end she had shed so many tears that the very last drop of pink washed away from her eyelids.

And she started to truly see!

And she realized that hail could hurt, that mud could stain, that the Fir Tree could prick, and that rocks could trip. But none of them meant to hurt her – it was just their nature.

And all her tears were because of her pink eyes.

After that, the Elfmaid's eyes were always smiling and real. And she was always flying over the rocks, never landing on fir trees and she hid in a tree hollow whenever a hailstorm raged. And she always wore a raincoat and rubber boots, when visiting the frogs.

Then one day she met the Pink Pelican and couldn't help but dance with joy! Because she saw that in That Forest there lived a real pink bird!

P.S. It may so happen that you cry your eyes out on your path... But then again, how else would you ever recognize a real pink bird?

The Little River

The Little River had been living in That Forest for a veeery long time.

That is why she remembered every word ever spoken. She remembered the words of the trees, they whispered to each other in the evening. And the words of the dwarves, the bees, the sparrows and the little hedgehog...

It heard some clear words. They made the Little River's water clear.

It also heard some muddy words. They made the Little River's water muddy.

When they found out about that, everyone became very careful with their words.

The Little Dwarf, for example, knew that when he whispered "I love you!" over the water, the Little River remained clear through the entire forest until it reached the other end. And when the Giantess took a sip from it, her eyes became clearer. And then she hummed happily all day long!

The Little Rabbit, for example, didn't know that when he shouted "You're stupid!" over the waves, the water became all muddy. And then when the Little Fox took a sip, her eyes became all muddy. And she set the sparrows flying in every direction!

But let me just tell you what happened one Wednesday, when the Little Bear bellowed "Thank you!".

The river swallowed the word and became truly brilliant! It took that word to every hidden corner of That Forest. And the birds started singing as if spring was in full bloom! And the daisies' blossoms became even sunnier! And the Little Rabbit – it listened with a surprised look: "Who said "thank you"? And then he peeked into the water and waived at the little River Rabbit inside, and beamed with a smile. And then he yelled "You fluffy thing!"

And that was just what the Little River was waiting for – it took up his words and it babbled on to the thistle that had torn the Elfmaid's dress.

The Ghost Fountain

A Road and a Path lived in That Forest.

The Road was rough. It had no turns, no thorny bushes to get entangled in your hair. And it was famous for being a perfectly straight road.

The Path loved to twist and turn – now going under a shadow, now dancing under a blubbery bush... And sometimes it even got lost, wondering among the flowers.

All newcomers wondered: Should they take the Road or the Path to reach the Ghost Fountain sooner?

The First Ones started on the Road. At dusk their feet were sore, their lips – parched and cracked. To be honest, they no longer cared where they were going – they preferred a flowery meadow.

Others took the Path. At dusk their eyes were full of wonderful sights, their lips – sticky from the blueberry juice, and behind them trailed an invisible scarf—woven from the scent of thyme and lavender... And to be honest, they no longer cared where they were going – they were dizzy with the pleasures of the Path.

In the end the First Ones bumped into the Others – right at the ghost fountain!

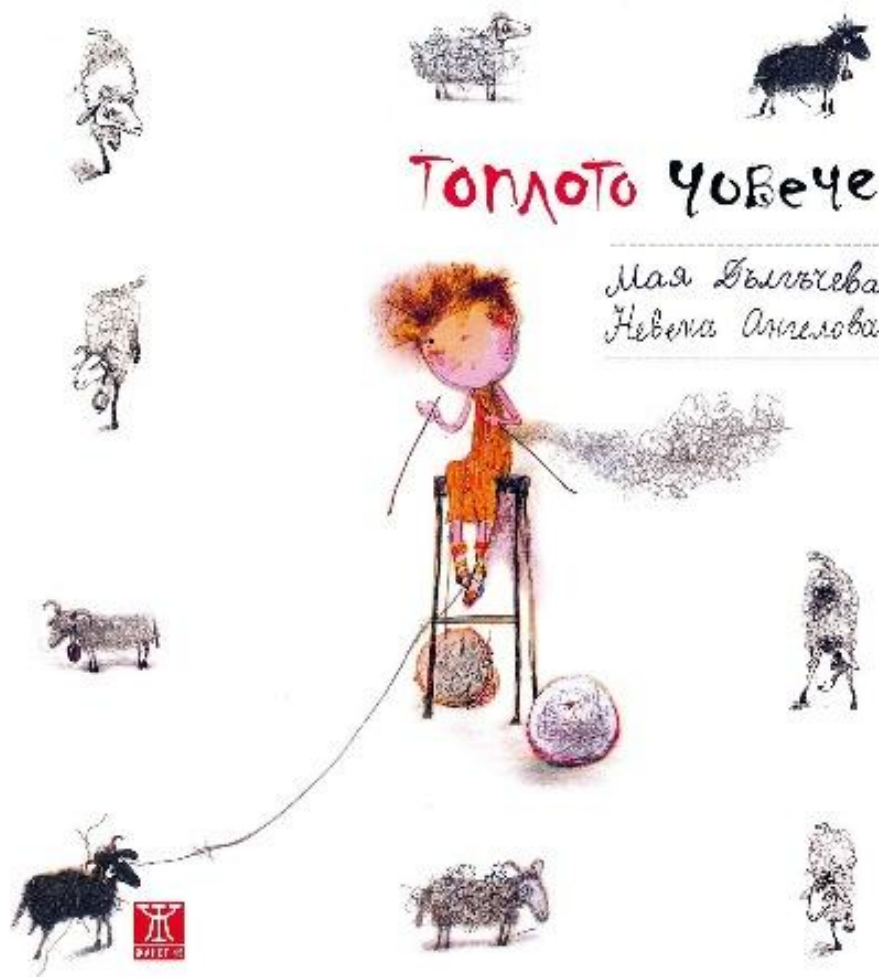
For, as everyone in That Forest knew, the Road and the Path were family. And for a hundred years they had been coming back home together to the straw hut beside the old pond.

At night, when the moon dipped inside, the pond began to glow with shiny reflections – a true ghost fountain.

Legends spread all sorts of rumours: Of the silver mane, sunken to the bottom. Even of a whole necklace – what if it proves to be a real treasure!

That's what Legends do – they roam around and gossip, and then they make bets. No, no – not on who would arrive first.

But on how many travellers would choose the path with all the blueberries.



The Wee Warm Willy

1) Review of the book

The Wee Warm Willy Knits Cozy Socks for Sad Hearts

If you have ever held a book by Maya Dalgacheva in your hands, then you already know—she belongs in the category of *Magical Storytellers*. Her books are as warm as an embrace, as cozy as childhood itself. Her words flow in rhymed prose or provoke philosophical reflections in readers of all ages. The author's gentle writing style caresses the senses, yet does not mislead you into thinking the world is all rosy—it is as colorful as a painter's palette, and it is up to us whether we learn to love all its shades.

The Warm Little Being (published by Janet 45) is unlike any other book I have ever read. In fact, it does not even resemble any other book by Maya Dalgacheva. It could be compared to a warm blanket for sorrowful hearts, a remedy for heartaches, or a warm pastry offered at just the right moment by a loved one. With delicate mastery, the author touches upon themes we are not used to discussing with our children, though they struggle with them. Her words arrive like a lifeline, a bridge between broken hearts and clumsy comforters.

No one knows whether the Warm Little Being lives in a chimney or an old stork's nest. According to children, it smells like vanilla or baby powder. One thing is certain—it can fly and works at the Ministry of Warmth and Heartfelt Care. The Warm Little Being has the ability to find sad, angry, and troubled children and adults. As it glides over the village, it looks for pink stamps on the windows (*pressed little noses, that is*) and heals them with drawn hearts and feathery dreams.

Some cases, however, are more difficult, and in those, hearts and fluffy tufts alone are not enough. That is why the Warm Little Being's arsenal of remedies includes *stories with a period at the beginning*. One such story is heard by Lucy, who has lost her baby kitten. The Invisible Doctor draws a kitten on the ceiling so that the girl knows her pet is living out its other lives—though exactly where remains unknown.

The same happens with Tommy. He cannot fall asleep because of his grandmother's button, which stubbornly refuses to reveal where grandmothers go when they leave this world. Only the Warm Little Being can transform grandmothers into stories—stories you carry in your heart and later tell to your own grandchildren.

The Warm Little Being knows how to find the frost-covered windows that hide sorrowful eyes. Like those of Merle, who suffers from Beno's teasing. You should know that little hearts are incredibly helpful in such situations! They straighten out misinterpreted actions and words when you look through them. Teasing suddenly becomes a confession, nudges—a clumsy attempt to gain attention, and outstretched arms—a wish to fly to the beloved, not an attempt to call them a *goose!*

The Warm Little Being can also knit. It shears the sheep that a restless mind counts at night and knits sweaters scented like a father who has left home, or socks for snowmen—sometimes capable of bringing back missing fathers (*and their newspapers*).

Among the most challenging tasks in the Warm Little Being's work are *whitening black sheep* and *shearing penguins*. Black sheep are hard to see, and they bleat like newborn babies who have taken over a mother's love, just as Greta's little sibling has. Even a specialist in heartfelt care needs a *Handbook for Exceptions*, where the secret recipe for whitening black sheep with baby powder can be found. It smells nice, and it also helps knit fluffy little babies.

Now, *shearing penguins*—that is not even mentioned in the handbook. The penguins have been summoned by the mother of Xava, who carries a scar on his chest from the illness of *loving too much*. Xava is called Pingo, and the boy loves everyone, even though Beno and Nico are only his friends

inside the kindergarten room. Outside, no one wants to run in a team with a penguin. André, who is older and *wiser*, splits Xava's lip—and that is why his mother counts penguins at night.

To handle the mother's penguins, the Warm Little Being stumbles upon a magic mirror. It tells the story of *the greatest treasure*. What is it? Every child will discover it at the end of the book!

The Wee Warm Willie is a book that evokes smiles but also tears—because of the memories it stirs in the reader. The beautiful tales told by Maya Dalgacheva are real-life stories, whether they have already happened to you or are yet to be experienced. They have the power to bring peace, to tenderly soften the heart, and to make you feel as light as the happiest of sighs. Light enough to soar high and meet your loved ones in dreams, embrace them, and weave them into the soft, feathery tales that will keep your heart and soul warm.

Maya Dalgacheva's stories are further enriched, colored, spun into yarn balls, and sprinkled with love by illustrator **Nevena Angelova**. The pencil and watercolor drawings, along with almost imperceptible collages, lend a special charm to the book—making it close to children yet not so childlike that adults (*who consider themselves grown-up*) would not enjoy it.

So do not hesitate—if you know a sad reader, introduce them to the Warm Little Being. They will be grateful to you for a lifetime!

Source: **23.11.2017** – Val Stoeva, <https://detskiknigi.com/topli-chorapi-sa-tajni-sarca-plete-toploto-choveche/>

2) **Translated tales:**

Wee Warm Willie

The village is full of houses. Each house has a roof. Somewhere there, among the chimneys and nests lives Wee Warm Willie.

Lucy says that it lived in a chimney, but according to Niko, it lives in the empty stork nest. Tommy explains that Wee Warm Willie smells of vanilla. Greta insists that it smelled of baby powder. They only agree on one thing: that it can fly! It is invisible, when needed. And you feel strange warmth, when he appears.

Wee Warm Willie works at the Ministry of Warmth and Heart Care.

He's the busiest during winter. It is then that people are freezing the most.

Some sigh with their elbows on the windowsills.

Others close their eyes tightly, counting sheep until dawn.

Still others – don't even count anymore – they only stare at a dot on the ceiling.

This is when Wee Warm Willie starts his home visits.

He draws hearts on windows, hazy from the sighs. A heart helps a lot! It turns a sad sigh into a happy one immediately. Wee Warm Willie recognizes the types of sighs.

It is so simple: a sad sigh is heavy – it falls down and seems to drag you with it.

While a happy sigh is light – it flies upwards and it is as if it pulls you up with it!

It is more difficult with those who count sheep: you have to shear the whole herd.

Then spin the wool.

And then –knit a fluffy white dream.

Sometimes, it may be a lot of hard work, if there are more than 100 sheep.

But the dream from a sheep’s wool is really helpful. It keeps you warm throughout the night and you wake up like new in the morning!

However, when someone stares at a dot on the ceiling—this is where a true master must work! Neither a heart on the glass, nor a fluffy dream will work for those, who stare at the ceiling.

It is where Wee Warm Willie must tell stories that start with a dot. You haven’t heard one? Well, these are like a little black seed, out of which Something grows.

Like this one:

A dot with Moustaches

Lucy is staring at that black dot on the ceiling, without blinking.

The dot is triangular and is Purring!

Lucy jumped out of bed – no, no one is purring, the neighbour upstairs is using the mixer.

The neighbour from upstairs brought here the kitten today. It was lying in a shoebox. She said that she had found it in the yard. She said that it was dead.

How could it have died? Didn’t Grandpa say cats have nine lives?!

It was still this kitten’s first one!

Lucy remembers how she found the kitten on the street – it was still a baby.

It followed her everywhere, fixing its green eyes on her – the eyes were bright as birch leaves in the spring. And it was mewling as if it was looking for a mother.

“Come here, kitty, I am a very good mother!”, Lucy said.

She gave it some of her own milk. She tied her ribbons on it. She even sent her favourite doll to sleep next to the clown in the basket, so that the kitten would have its own bed. It curled in the doll-bed in the evening and purred until Lucy fell asleep. And she was the happiest mother of a kitten in the whole world!

Once she asked her grandpa: “When the kitten grows up, it will have its own little kittens, right? If I am your granddaughter, they will be my grandchildren, won’t they?”

“And I would be their great grandfather!”, Grandpa started laughing. “I will bring them little mice instead of chocolate bars.”

And today, she and grandpa buried the kitten together. He pinned a little stick on top of the tiny grave in the garden, and Lucy tied one of her favourite kitten ribbons on it. She would never believe that she had so many tears in her eyes. They kept on falling and wouldn’t stop all day long. Even when she met Tommy on her way back and he told her about his kitten’s funeral, the tears kept on rolling on her cheeks. What consolation can it ever be that someone else has also lost their baby?

Now Lucy is lying in her bed and still staring at that dot on the ceiling. The triangular one that doesn’t purr.

Wee Warm Willie always has some pencils in his pocket – in case he has to repair black dots on ceilings.

He first drew three lines on the left and three – on the right – here, the dot has moustaches now!

Then he drew the eyes – bright as birch leaves in the spring.

Then, the head with the curious sharpened ears. Then the soft paws and the arched back, and the tail.

And then he started with the fur – slowly, one line after the other, one hair at a time. Wee Warm Willie kept drawing on the ceiling—quieter and louder, with shorter and longer lines.

The pencil kept on scratching, as if purring.

Lucy started to fall asleep, while she was looking at the kitten appearing on the ceiling and purring, just like that – purr-purrrr, purr-purrrr...

It was alive, she knew it! She wasn’t sure where exactly, but she knew it was alive somewhere—if it was purring like that! Somewhere, where kittens live their next lives, up until the ninth one!

Wee Warm Willie only flew out of her room, when he heard the familiar „Zzzz“, „Zzzz“ coming from her bed.

For “Zzzz” is the purring of human children—a sign everything is fine and he may leave.

And Lucy said nothing to anybody. She didn't even tell her grandpa. Although she could barely help saying: grandpas sure have nine lives as well! But how can you tell an adult that last night your kitten had appeared on the white ceiling and started purring – they would immediately take you to the doctor?

That's why Lucy just smiled secretly. And she smiled the most at the birch leaves in the spring – bright as a kitten's eyes.

The Pink Seal

I don't know whether you've noticed this – in winter, window glass steams up. Wee Warm Willie, however, always knows the windows, behind which there's someone standing with said eyes. How does he do it? It's very simple – these windows are marked with a pink seal. Who put these seals there? No one – it's just that a nose, pressed against the glass, from the outside, looks exactly like pink seal.

Today, the seal marked Merle's window. Merle is five and a half. Her hair is fluffy as a little blond cloud, around her face.

Her smile forms forming dimples on her cheeks. Today, however...

What is wrong with her today? Wee Warm Willie peeked over Merle's shoulder. Now, whose silhouette is that out there, fooling around and making faces? Beno!

It's Beno from her class! He had crossed his wrists and was waving his hands like a bird's wings. "If I could fly, I would come straight to you!" – this is what it meant. And she thought that it meant "Silly goose!".

She pressed her nose even harder against the glass. Why Beno had to be like that, why? Merle stood with her elbows on the windowsill, sighing heavily and thinking of the whole awful day, or even the whole awful week! Today – it was the green horse, yesterday - the jam, and on Wednesday – the apology!

Wait a minute! Wee Warm Willie drew a heart on the steamed glass.

Merle looked through the heart and saw...

As she was drawing a marvellous horse earlier today, Beno came and ruined it all!

He laughed right away:

"Why does this horse have a green belly?"

“Because it is full of grass.” Merle replied.

And she continued to draw angry green lines in the horse’s belly. She felt so bad, as if her own belly was full of prickly green grass!

Here’s a funny thing – now, when she looked at that through the heart drawn on the window, she suddenly realized! There was no mocking. Beno only asked her to hear her answer. Because Beno thought Merle is the wittiest girl in the whole world. So witty that she even knows why the horse’s belly is green!

What about yesterday – that whole story with the jam?

Yesterday a painter came at the playground. He was carrying a can and a brush. He dipped the brush into the can and started painting the wooden houses in the sandbox with something brown and thick.

“What’s that?” Merle asked.

“It’s jam!” Beno giggled.

Merle’s dimples disappeared from her cheeks. Did he think she was that stupid?

“Not, I think you are that sweet, little Merle! So sweet that I would build you a house made of jam!”

And Merle just realized that, looking through the heart drawn on the windows.

Beno was standing at the sidewalk and rubbing his hands together in the cold. Wee Warm Willie was standing behind her and was rubbing his hands together with pleasure.

But there is definitely no explanation about the apology on Wednesday, de-fi-ni-tely!

On Wednesday, Merle was sitting on the floor, looking at a book. Suddenly, Beno rushed past her, pretending to be an airplane, and hit her.

He hit her on purpose with one propeller, and not just by accident!

Miss Sara insisted that he apologized immediately and said that he didn’t do it on purpose, but Beno didn’t say word. He played mute as a stone! At least he did not lie. Yet, what happened later, when Niko came? Niko, who always wanted to walk beside Merle, when they were all lined up to go for a walk?

Because when you walk beside somebody in the line, you have to hold their hand all the way to the park and back! And so Niko came and asked Miss Sara: “Can’t I apologize to Merle instead of Beno?”.

Then Beno got all red, he shook her arm all the way to the elbow and shouted “I’m sorry!”. Then he kicked Niko and ran off to the washroom. How savage!

“I just wanted you to look at me, Merle... You just sat there all morning, lost in that book! I made three rounds around you, whoosh- whoooosh, but you didn’t even hear me. So I just had to flick you with

my propeller so that you would see me!“ Yes, that was the answer! And Merle suddenly realized that, gazing through the heart on the window glass. And the dimples returned to her cheeks.

She took her nose away from the window, crossed her wrists and waved her hands like a bird’s wings. And Beno smiled widely and started jumping around on one leg. And each of them knew what the other was thinking.

“A heart is very helpful in case of steamy windows!” Wee Warm Willie giggled.

And he flew off to look for other windows with pink seals around the neighborhood.

Pengo

One night Wee Warm Willie was struck dumb with surprise – a long line of penguins were wobbling along over the chimneys.

Penguins! But where did they come from!? Was there a tiny little Eskimo living over there, behind the windows with the blue curtains? No, it is Xava! Xava, with the spiky hair and narrow eyes, whom everyone in the neighbourhood knew! Xava, with the funny walk of a little penguin! Xava, whom everyone called Pengo!

Of all the girls, only Greta plays with him. Because Greta practices at home teaching human words and doesn’t mind when Pengo makes those strange sounds.

Beno and Niko were his friends, but only in the classroom. Out in the meadow, they stopped being his friends. The meadow is where they all ran. And who wants to run in the same with a penguin?

Yet, Pengo loved everybody. And he loved them so, that his heart would burst out! And it might have burst once – this was where he got that patchy scar on his chest.

His mother told a friend that it was called “trisomy-twenty-one“. But Pengo knows better – translated that meant “you-love-too-much“. Such a strange diagnosis. Pengo didn’t want to love too much, but you just can’t help it – everyone is born with some defects.

“You are one of a kind in the whole wide world!” his mother said.

And she made him a ragdoll – a little boy with spiky hair and a patchy scar on his chest. Pengo usually went to sleep with it. This night, however, after Andre’s fist, his mother took him in her own bed.

Andre was a little bigger than Pengo and a lot smarter. He asked him what one plus one was and where penguins lived, but Pengo kept quiet and smiled.

Then Andre shouted “You are stupid!“, and Pengo kept quiet. After that Andre pushed him “Fight back, stupid!“, and Pengo kept smiling. And then Andre raised his fist and hit him on the mouth.

Now, a whole line of penguins were wobbling over Pengo's bed. And Wee Warm Willie had never – never! - sheared penguins!

What do you do in an emergency?

What, what, really?

Xava sobbed half-asleep. His mother kissed him and tears rolled down her cheeks. Penguins were gushing out from the dark corner on the ceiling and she just was trying to count them:

“369, 375... the whole of Antarctica!”

Wee Warm Willie looked here and there – wasn't there a magic wand anywhere, blasted be this!

No, there wasn't.

Not in the wardrobe, not in the laundry basket, nor among the scattered toys, and not even in the kitchen with the countless strange silvery utensils...

Not a single magic wand, when you need one!

However! However, on the bedside table there was that mirror. The mirror that mother sometimes used to make Xava laugh. “Do you know where the treasure is, huh?” she asked.

And after Xava had rummaged all around to find it —under the bed and behind the curtains—she would put it right in front of his nose and laugh: “Here it is!”

“Here it is, that's it!” Wee Warm Willie started. “Hip hip hooray!”

Then he grabbed the mirror from the bedside table and put it up in front of the line of penguins. The first one startled, looked around and melted down with pleasure! Then the second did the same.

Soon all the penguins had disappeared. “What a strange dream...!” Xava's mother smiled. Adults are always convinced that they are dreaming, if they see a flying mirror or other flying stuff.

The next day she sat among the children during the morning circle. Andre looked at her and his cheeks blushed just like ripe tomatoes.

”Do you know what is the most valuable and the most precious thing in the world?”, Xava's mother asked.

“Dad's computer!”

“Chocolate with hazelnuts!”

“No, it is gold!”

Xava's mother smiled and placed a beautiful box with an enormous ribbon in the centre of the circle.

“You will find the most precious and most precious thing inside!” she said. “It is worth more than gold.”

“It is sweeter than chocolate with hazelnuts. And there is only one of its kind – there is nothing like it in the whole wide world! I will let you peek in and see what it is. But each of you will have to come to me alone and then—shush—keep it secret!”

The children started coming up to her quietly. Mother opened the lid of the box for each of them, smiled at their illuminated faces and then closed the lid. Finally, she put the box in the centre of the circle, opened it and showed everyone what was inside.

The children were quiet, and the circle seemed to glow. Miss Sara was quiet, too, and beaming. Andre was clutching a softened candy in his pocket. The candy could heal a broken lip like a charm!

Wee Warm Willie beamed. And while Andre was handing the candy to Xava, he flew away unnoticed holding the box under his arm.

I don't know where he went. Maybe to a window with a pink seal. Or maybe to your room. Do you know what is the most valuable and precious thing in the world?

Look! (there's a mirror at the end of the book)



Little Rhymed Fairy Tales

Little Rhymed Fairy Tales by Maya Dalgacheva is a vibrant book of rhymed fairy tales, where each story is dedicated to a different color. Yellow, green, red, pink, and blue flow from the pages, blending into cozy, playful, and touching poems, suitable for both young children and those who have grown up but still cherish the magic of storytelling.

3) Review of the book

Little Rhymed Fairy Tales by Maya Dalgacheva, published by *Colibri*, is a true gem in the realm of native children's literature. This vibrant book of rhymed stories is dedicated to various colors, with each tale carrying its unique charm and motif. Yellow, green, red, pink, and blue emerge from the pages, blending into cozy, fun, and touching poems suitable for both young children and grown-ups who still love to immerse themselves in the colorful and poetic world of beautiful and valuable children's books.

What will win you over at first glance in *Little Rhymed Fairy Tales* are the magnificent illustrations by Liliyana Dvoryanova. She manages to breathe life into the verses with bright and picturesque images that captivate readers' imaginations. Each page is filled with colors and details, making reading a true visual delight—a genuine feast for the eyes! The artistic design of the book is also beautiful, creating a sense of an ethereal, gentle rainbow that envelops the reader and plunges them into the magical world of fairy tales.

The themes in *Little Rhymed Fairy Tales* are diverse, covering various interwoven topics presented inventively and playfully, emphasizing the colorful leitmotif of each story. Children can learn about different colors, their symbolism, and various associations while enjoying the rhymed tales. *Little Rhymed Fairy Tales* is perfect for family reading, offering moments of joy and shared emotions. If you are looking for a book that will bring color and poetry into your child's everyday life, *Little Rhymed Fairy Tales* is the right choice.

Source: <https://knijnikrile.wordpress.com/2024/10/31/приказалки-от-мая-дългъчева-с-илюстр/>

4) Translation:

A Blue little fairy tale

Deep in the ocean, so vast and wide,
A jellyfish stitches with shimmering pride,
Weaving a quilt with sea stars so bright,
Glowing like heavens of silvery light.

She pinches the cheeks of her little ones blue,
Rocking them softly with lullabies true,

Two seashells whispering tales from the deep,
Singing of wonders to send them to sleep.

Endless waves sway, so gentle and free,
Brushing the kelp with a rhythmic decree.
Dolphins play melodies, piping with cheer,
While fish bubble secrets that drift far and near.

The ocean, in secret, scoops up the hue,
Borrowing deep from the sky's endless blue,
Waking at dawn as a sapphire grand,
Bluer than ink spilled by magical hand!

This tale is hidden, tucked out of sight,
A memory sealed in a droplet of night.

A Green Little Fairy Tale

A little green bug sat deep in thought,
Then sighed and sadly spoke its lot:
**“Why must I be, by nature’s way,
As green as grass, so dull and plain?”**
My suit is stitched to fit just right,
Yet lost among the leaves in sight!
I seem invisible,” it cried,
Its tiny voice so hurt, denied.

**“Oh, how I wish for shining gold,
A cloak so bright, so rich, so bold!”**
And then—oh wonder! In a flash,

Its wings began to gleam and splash!
A million suns within them beamed,
A golden glow, just like a dream!

**“Oh, what delight! What endless glee—
For now, I shine so brilliantly!”**
But—just as often troubles brew,
A hungry magpie came in view.

**“Mmm, what a gem! A beetle bright,
A shiny snack—pure gold in sight!
I do adore a meal so fine,
Not boring bugs in gray design!”**

“Oh, mother dear!” the beetle cried,
“Why did I need this gleaming pride?”
It scurried fast, without delay,
And hid beneath a pear leaf’s shade.

Around it—grass so lush and green.
“How lovely! Just like me, it seems!”
It chuckled softly, snuggled tight,
And dreamed in green throughout the night.

A Gray Little Fairy Tale

The little spider spins away,
its silver thread begins to sway,
so fine and thin, just like a dream,
a silken hope in silver gleam.

A raindrop sways with heavy chest,
then five more slide along the rest.
The spider hurries, quick and neat,
its nimble work is light and fleet—
a necklace strung so bright and wide,
a gift for dove aunt’s graceful pride!

Yet the spider won’t delay,
it has a plan to weave today:
a silver ribbon, soft and grand,

to tie around a fine sunhat,
a scarf for the shy rose to wear,
so dawn won't catch her unaware.

For hedgehog's grandma—woven tight—
a sturdy net for shopping light.
A blanket spread with summer glow
to keep a sleepy bunny snug below.
A muzzle for the greedy bear,
whose cravings spin beyond compare,
spun from silk and set just right,
close beside the buzzing hive.

For great-grandpa—a soft hammock,
for the scarecrow—a fine mustache,
and lastly, from one shore to another,
a bridge is spun for any brother,
should a guest come wandering by,
a thread of welcome in the sky.

Secret pathways, hidden tracks,
tiny knots and unseen cracks,
delicate, unnoticed art—
woven quiet, from the heart.

Only at night, when the moon rolls high,
spreading silver across the sky,
the owl lowers its watchful gaze—
such shining threads in moonlit haze!

Over meadows, hills, and streams,
silver shimmers, softly gleams.
The owl blinks in pure delight—
the whole wide world is bathed in light,
in threads of lace and twinkling beads,
a web of magic as night proceeds.

And as the dark goes **tick-tock**, fast,
the little spider spins its past—
a silver thread so fine, so bright,
now tangled in my mother's hair...
But shhh—she must not know it's there!



Ralli's Friends

The story of Rali, who suffers from a rare genetic disorder, reminds us that there are "angels" in our lives who "sometimes look just like humans." And hope, "as huge as a tiny walnut." The text presents Rali's world with sensitivity and understanding, touching the hearts of all readers. The illustrations unfold and develop the story in a beautiful and expressive way, visually highlighting the emotions and magic of the world through Rali's eyes.

A book about the inner strength within each of us.

A book about the joy and comfort found in life's small things and the love of those closest to us.

A book about empathy.

A book with a mission.

A book of gratitude.

A book like a prayer.

2) Translation:

pp. 4-5

Ralli was a girl just like any other little girl in the world.

She had a mummy and daddy who loved her dearly. She had a warm bed and a cosy pyjama.

And a big Teddy bear.

And the most caring granny.

pp. 6-7

She had her very own tiny world. And every evening it was full of flowers.

And every morning her mummy would come to open the curtains... And suddenly her tiny world would become sooooo big - reaching as far as the garden's fence!

толкова голям – чак до оградата на градината!

Тогава Рали присядаше и гледаше с часове навън.

Then Ralli would sit and stare outside for hours.

pp. 8-9

The squirrel would climb up and down the tree over there. It should be fun to be able to climb?

To ruffle the tree and to create tiny leaffalls! And a boat for the beetle! And a tent for the anthill! And wings for the hedgehog!

pp. 10-11

One morning, when the world was still sleeping, she saw how the Dream Fairy was caressing the meadows with her veils and then tucked her skirt quietly. Ralli waived at her - she was sure that the fairies could see every girl, even the tiniest. Even a girl like her - invisible to the entire world.

- That's the morning mist - whispered her Granny.

- How can you take a fairy for 'a mist'? Granny, please put your glasses on...

pp. 12-13

The dreams were floating over the meadow... The fairy would take them away in the folds of her skirt and after a moment people would forget what their dreams. Children dreams were the most exciting!

Just before the Fairy faded away in the air, Ralli saw her own dream - it rolled into the grass as a soap bubble and started to glow!

What a miracle - she was able to dance!

pp. 14-15

Sometimes Ralli would look through the window and smile...

There lived another girl, just like her! She had the same hair and clothes.

pp. 16-17

One day it started raining and the reflection brought back a smile through tears.

Is it possible that the other girl sometimes feels sad too? Ralli reached to wipe her tears with her sleeve...

- That's rain! - her granny caressed her.

Then daddy came and he also started to wipe the tears, nevertheless they were dry.

- Sometimes the tears are dry - he smiled.

pp. 18-19

And this is when you are in the deepest need of a hug.

pp. 20-21

Some days the postman would ring several times a day. His bag was stuffed with letters!

Mummy would read her the names, thousands of unknown names. "Ralli's friends! They all want to help you!" - mummy was full of joy.

Ralli had never seen them. But it didn't matter - there are invisible helpers too! Some call them angels. "Sometimes angels look just like regular people!" - said Granny - "Some have freckles, some - glasses and knitted hats, others - wellies."

pp. 22-23

On other days the postoffice was closed. But somehow a letter would fly by itself and slip under door of her room. In the envelope there was always a pink paper heart.

And Ralli knew it meant "You are our most precious gift! Mummy and Daddy"

pp. 24-25

Some days mummy and daddy would open the computer window - and in this window a man would wave and give them thumbs up. He was living faaar cross the Ocean! "He is a scientist - daddy would say - he is looking for cure to help you".

When he would find the cure, Ralli didn't know. But she would raise her thumb too

„Ще се справиш!“.

In both their languages it meant - You will make it!

pp. 26-27

There were days when the window was frosty. The Fairy had disappeared somewhere. Ralli's friends were nowhere to be seen, neither was the scientist with the big smile.

In one such day the squirrel ran to her, brushed the frost with her tail and left a walnut on the windowsill.

pp. 28-29

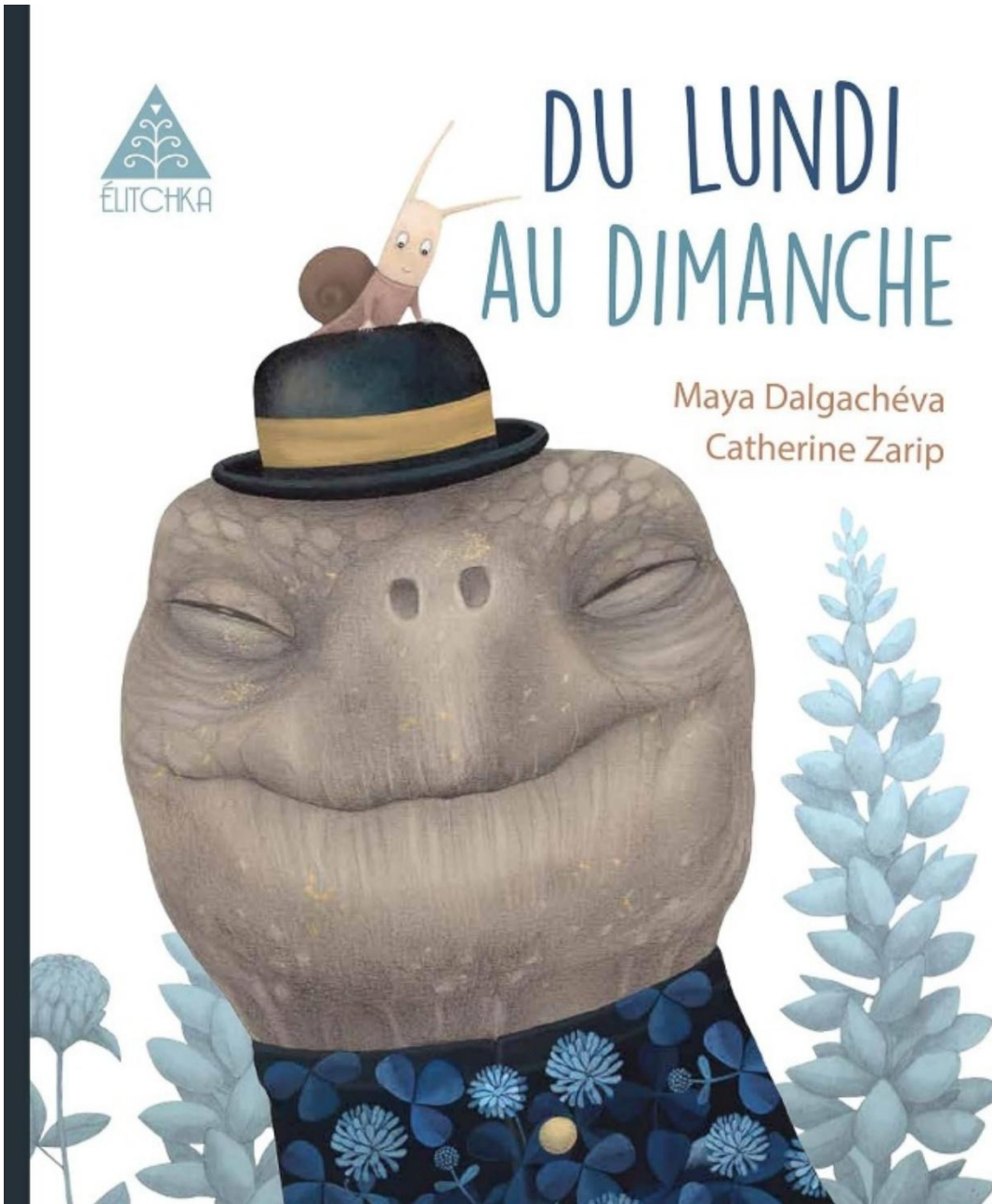
Ralli smiled to herself: she had a home and a loving family, a big Teddy bear, a twin through the window glass, a scientist, and angels with glasses, freckles and wellies.. She had a Dream fairy

And a hope as big as a walnut!



DU LUNDI AU DIMANCHE

Maya Dalgachéva
Catherine Zarip



Du Lundi au Dimanche

Dimanche. La pluie est si forte qu'elle emmène Petit Escargot loin de la Clairière-où-il-est-né. C'est ici que commence l'aventure. Chaque jour de la semaine, Escargot rencontre un nouvel animal et découvre une nouvelle définition des mots «mon pays». Mais alors, comment définir le pays d'Escargot, lui qui est toujours sur les chemins ? Le trouvera-t-il un jour ? "Mon pays" concerne-t-il uniquement un territoire?

A travers l'aventure de Petit Escargot, Maya Dalgachéva nous fait prendre conscience de nos racines et nous reconnecte à nous-mêmes. Un conte philosophique magnifique et réconfortant dont les mots résonnent en chacun de nous.

1) Review of the book:

Dans l'espace et le temps d'une semaine. Escargot voyage pour retrouver la trace argentée que laisse un escargot sur son passage. Voyage existentiel à la recherche de son pays et de lui-même, scandé par les jours de la semaine, il rencontre divers animaux, selon le principe du conte de randonnée. Lundi, il croise la grenouille dans son pays chaud et doux ; le mardi, ce sont 2 porcelets au milieu des « bonnes choses à manger » ; le mercredi, il rencontre 3 poulettes, là où naissent les poussins mais il s'éloigne plutôt rapidement pour ne pas être mangé ! Le jeudi, 4 abeilles, règnent dans le « pays où [on] produi[t] le meilleur miel ». Le vendredi, il rencontre 5 brebis, dans leur pays « où tout le monde est de ton espèce et parle ta langue », c'est ainsi que se définit la notion de 'troupeau' au comportement moutonnier bien connu. Samedi, personne ! C'est un jour « sans pays ». Enfin, le dimanche, la tortue centenaire lui révèle que « la Terre est notre pays à tous ».

Entre précision figurative et abstraction, couleurs pastel et importance du détail, on est ému devant les poules aux robes pimpantes et les poussins aux yeux éberlués. L'élégance des fleurs nous enchante ; les moutons noirs revêtus de pulls beiges tricotés main, bien ajustés, beaux comme des gravures de mode nous séduisent ; et le petit chapeau sur la tête de la tortue au visage super cabossé raconte sa longue vie et les épreuves traversées.

Dans une modestie souriante et second degré, Maya Dalgachéva et Catherine Zarip offrent au jeune lecteur un livre ambitieux où se mêlent le comptage, un semainier, et une déclinaison sur le concept de pays - « Mon pays » - dans sa complexité puisque chacun voit midi à sa porte et construit à partir de son expérience un pays intérieur, celui où se cumulent expériences, sensations, émotions et blessures.

Traduit du bulgare, avec le texte intégral en cyrillique, les [éditions Elitchka](#) expriment ainsi leur ligne éditoriale de promotion de la littérature bulgare.

L'album s'enrichit d'une pertinente proposition d'activité : réaliser un semainier des mots heureux bien adapté à la riche tonalité d'ensemble.

Source: [Du lundi au dimanche](#)