



written by **Justyna Bednarek**



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Eco-stories from Parsleyville

**You Too
Can Save
the
World**

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from Parsleyville**

2024



Fundacja ING Dzieciom





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chapter 1

DOWN
SM

WITH
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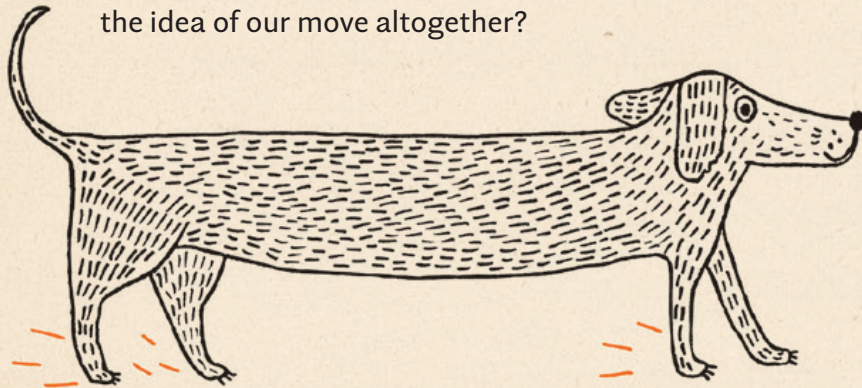
Matilda's diary

7 February: No, no and once again, no! Things like this shouldn't be done to children. They unashamedly lied to us. They said we'd have a royal life once we move to Parsleyville... And we let ourselves be tricked by them...

"You'll see, twins, it's going to be brilliant!" Dad kept saying. But he never told us we'd end up living in this hole of a place! There's nothing around here. No swimming pool, no cinema, no nothing. There are fields as far as the eye can see. Woods. Houses that look like the wind could blow them over at any time. Of course, mum was overjoyed: "We'll have tomatoes straight from the plant! We'll grow carrots! We'll finally get a dachshund!"

She's gone completely loopy about that dachshund. We hadn't even left Warsaw properly and she showed up with this ginger fluffball with a bit of its ear missing. Apparently, no one wanted to adopt him from the dog shelter. Well, I'm not surprised. Anyway, Marcel decided the dog was cool and before long they were tumbling around on the carpet. Traitor. He should have sulked like me. But he was happy that we wouldn't be going to our old school anymore. "Listen to me, Matilda, they give you less homework in these countryside schools," he announced. Maybe if he supported me instead, our parents would have yielded and abandoned the idea of our move altogether?

dachshund



8 February: The dachshund gnawed on my pen and writing things with a crayon is terribly uncomfortable. But I can't really leave this one thing out: on our wall calendar it says that today sunrise is at five past seven. It's quarter past eight now, but outside it's so dark that it seems like the sun went on holiday! Or maybe it's the end of the world?!

9 February: Sadly, the world keeps on going, which is why Marcel and I are on our way to school for the first time. We've got our torches with us because it's always so totally dark around here. And now I know why. It's because of the smog! It's as thick as grey fog! I'm not even sure if we can find our way to school...



A story about smog and the nasty director called Mr Vile

Things around Parsleyville looked just the way they should: the houses were in their place, the shops opened every morning and closed every evening, the school was painted green (and as we know green is the best colour), there was a queue for books at the library, and the owner of the kayak rental organised kayaking trips for local kids. And, I nearly forgot, there was one more thing in this town: a rubber duck factory. Whenever it got mentioned, Parsleyville residents just shrugged their shoulders, as if they wanted to say: "Oh well, we're not super happy about it, but these ducks need to be made somewhere, and people have to have someplace to work."

The owner of the factory, Mr Bertrand Vile ("DIRECTOR Vile" – he liked to stress lifting his finger up into the air) was a plump man and at first glance he seemed nice. At second glance he seemed nice too. But if you looked at him carefully the third time... Well, things quite different then. We'll return to his niceness later. But for now, let's focus on something more important. Director Vile was a man of ambition greater than the vilest creature on earth. He simply wanted to become the king of the world, or at least the most important person in Parsleyville, namely the town mayor. And the local elections were just around the corner. Which is why Mr Vile was extremely busy. When a new bicycle rack was installed, he cut the ribbon. When the fire in the barn was extinguished and the

firefighters, happy they made it, were wiping sweat off their foreheads and drinking raspberry juice, Vile was giving an interview to the local newspaper as if he'd been running with a hose and spraying everything with foam. And when money was raised for a prosthetic leg for the school principal, Vile was there boasting about his generosity even though he'd only chipped in a few pennies. The list of his vile behaviour could go on, but I simply don't have time for it. Though these are just details. Because one day Vile did something much worse.

That morning Charlie came to Vile's office. Charlie had been working in the factory for twenty years. He painted the ducks' beaks orange and their eyes blue.

"Director, sir," he said shyly on hearing the pleasant "Enter!" from the inside. "We have a problem."

"What kind of a problem do we have then, Charlie?" Vile lifted his left eyebrow.

"We have no place to store the damaged ducks. Ever since the factory opened, we've been keeping all the faulty ducks in the cellar."

"And?" The Director didn't look particularly bothered.

"And we've just run out of space."

The director thought for a while, scratched his head, and then asked, slightly less sure of himself:

"Is there no way to dispose of them?"

"Dis... what?" Good old Charlie stammered.

"You know, do something with them. I don't know. Maybe let them out into the river? Let those wild birds swim!"

"But Director, sir. That would be polluting the water. We'd be certain to be fined for it!"



"How would they know it was us?" Director Vile asked slyly.

"Well, we're the only rubber duck producers in the area!" Charlie put his hands on his hips.

The Director winced, but had to agree with Charlie.

"All right, then," he said. "We'll have to get rid of them some other way."

"But how?" Charlie was curious.

"My dear Charlie, you will simply burn them."

"But I don't like that idea, Director Vile!"

"Tough," Vile shrugged. "You'll either do as I say or..."

He didn't need to finish. Charlie understood him very clearly. If he didn't listen to Vile, he'd lose his job. And where would he go instead?

A week later, on a particularly frosty day – at the end of the winter school break – black smoke covered all of Parsleyville. Of course it didn't all come from the rubber ducks. Some of it came from burning coal and wood in home burners, some from car exhaust pipes, and some blew over from a great big powerplant that was only a few miles out of town. But the duck smoke stank the worst and was the thickest. It clouded the entire sky and didn't let any sun through. And people started to get lost in the smoke. The first one to get lost was Charlie. It was no surprise: most of the smoke came from around his house. So instead of taking the path that went a bit to the right, he turned a bit to the left. And although the two paths ran next to each other, they didn't lead to the same place.

And so, thinking he was walking into the rubber duck factory, Charlie walked into Alexandra's fruit and veg shop. Unfortunately, it was pitch black there too – Alexandra couldn't find the light switch. But the smell was slightly more pleasant than outside.



It smells a little nicer here," Charlie was surprised.

"Sure it does. After all we only stock nice smelling things here," said the shopkeeper, still in complete darkness.

"Oh, I'm not so sure about that," said Charlie thinking he was chatting to his colleague. "These yellow monsters really reek."

"You must be joking!" Alexandra was upset. She thought Charlie was talking about her yellow golden delicious apples and felt personally hurt. "See for yourself: I sell no yellow monsters! Open your mouth. Wide. Aaaaa!"

Charlie was utterly confused.

"But why?" he asked shyly.

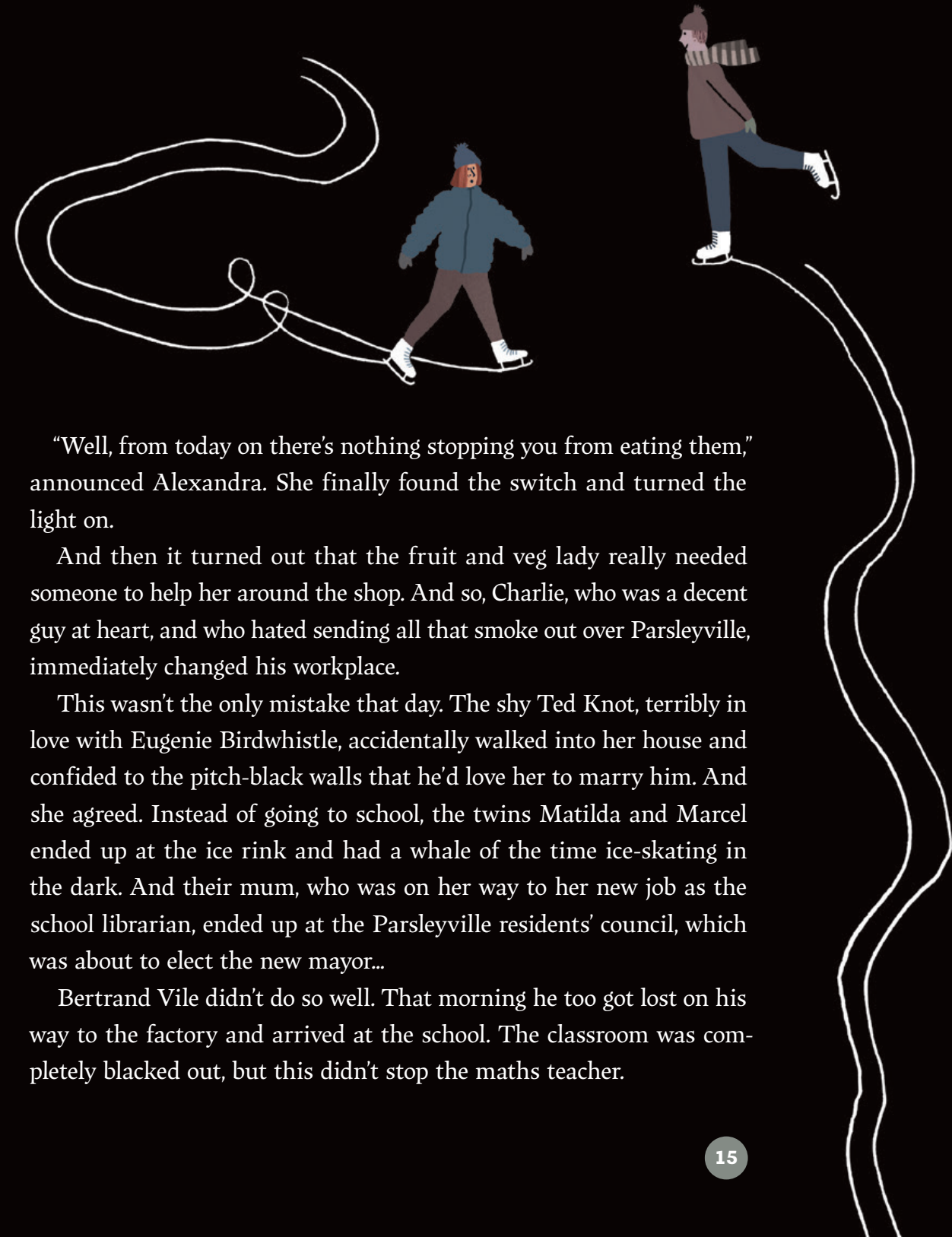
"I will prove it to you that only delicious things grow in my orchard. Come on now, quickly, aaaaa!"

"Ducks grow in your orchard?"

"What ducks? Stop fussing and open your mouth!"

And Charlie opened his mouth. And then again... and again...

"If I'd known they were so tasty, I wouldn't burn them at all. I'd eat them all up," he confessed and licked his lips.



"Well, from today on there's nothing stopping you from eating them," announced Alexandra. She finally found the switch and turned the light on.

And then it turned out that the fruit and veg lady really needed someone to help her around the shop. And so, Charlie, who was a decent guy at heart, and who hated sending all that smoke out over Parsleyville, immediately changed his workplace.

This wasn't the only mistake that day. The shy Ted Knot, terribly in love with Eugenie Birdwhistle, accidentally walked into her house and confided to the pitch-black walls that he'd love her to marry him. And she agreed. Instead of going to school, the twins Matilda and Marcel ended up at the ice rink and had a whale of the time ice-skating in the dark. And their mum, who was on her way to her new job as the school librarian, ended up at the Parsleyville residents' council, which was about to elect the new mayor...

Bertrand Vile didn't do so well. That morning he too got lost on his way to the factory and arrived at the school. The classroom was completely blacked out, but this didn't stop the maths teacher.

"Now let's count," he said sternly. "If we subtract seventeen thousand one hundred and twenty-four rubber ducks from twenty thousand one hundred and forty-five rubber ducks and then we divide what's left by three and then multiply it by three quarters, how many do we have left?"

"None, I hope, my friend. I told you to burn them all," said Vile feeling very pleased with himself. He thought he was talking to Charlie.

"Wrong. That's a fail. And it's two fails for burning rubber ducks!" said the teacher. Then very slowly he walked up to the desk where Vile had made himself comfortable, thinking it was his own desk.

"Haven't we met before?" the teacher hissed. "Bertrand, is that you?"

"I can't remember being on first-name terms with you!"

Vile was in a sulk, about to reprimand his employee, but then suddenly someone's hand landed on his shoulder and pulled him out of the chair.

"Bertrand Vile! I knew it was you," yelled the angry teacher. "How could I forget the voice of my worst student! You never studied hard enough, and this is what we get! You burn rubber ducks instead of doing something useful! You produce smog instead of doing good! I feel ashamed for you!"

And this is how the truth came out. Vile wasn't the only person to walk into that classroom by mistake. Constable Martin was also there that morning. There was no need to call the police.

Oh, the shame! Oh, the defeat! Bertrand Vile, the richest resident of Parsleyville, mayoral candidate and famous producer of rubber ducks was cuffed and taken out of the classroom. This was the end of his dazzling career.

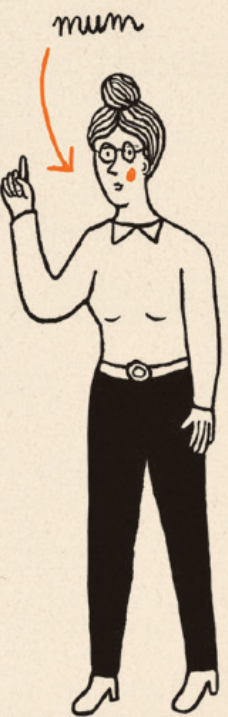
The burning of the ducks was over and after a few hours the darkness was gone too. But there were more things needed to get rid of the smog...

Marcel's diary

7 February: We only moved to Parsleyville a few days ago and it's been such a whirlwind! First of all, we have a dachshund. He's delightful and very clever. I called him Thorn, because a bit of his ear has been torn off. He can dig holes in the snow and steal food from anywhere. One day dad was on the phone and frying American pancakes at the same time. He turned away for a split second and Thorn snatched them all straight from the hot pan! He pretended it wasn't him, but greasy pawprints on his bed gave him away. And second of all... I'll write about it another time. I need to dash and take Thorn out for a walk.

6 March: After the whole burning ducks business Mum turned out to be quite the smog expert. Back in February she accidentally showed up at the residents' council meeting and told the people there everything she knew about the topic. That it would be best to replace old coal and wood burners with modern heating systems, for example gas burners. But it would be absolutely best if everyone had solar panels on their roofs that would turn sun rays into electricity. Of course, not everyone can afford solar panels straight away... but everyone can try to use cars less often (and ride a bike, hurray! Or a scooter!). Everyone should also plant a few trees. Because trees are mighty – they improve air quality. She said all this at the meeting she ended up at and you know what? Soon afterwards she was elected the mayor of Parsleyville! She agreed, on one condition – that she'd be able to bring her dog to work.

10 March: Mum went to the mayor's office for the first time. Thorn really liked the place – he peed on the carpet straight away.



Ecologist's essentials

Trees – the best weapon against smog

That's right! Trees help us combat smog because plants neutralise air pollution. They absorb carbon dioxide, which is a source of food for them, as well as other substances that form when we burn fuel in household burners. Parks densely covered in trees make the air in their vicinity almost completely clear of any harmful particles. In the winter conifers help us combat smog – their needles are covered in natural wax that attracts particulates. This is why cutting down trees is a very bad idea! We should plant them instead.



Purifying your air... at home

You can, of course, buy a modern purifier with a filter. But pot plants can also help. Some such plants specialise in absorbing various types of pollutants. Here are some of them: the tropical snakeplant (1), also called *Sansevieria*, an ordinary fern (2) or the bamboo plant (3), which looks very nice too. So, do plants really work? Yes, but researchers say that you need at least ten pots per square metre to noticeably increase the quality of air in your flat!

Another good idea is to use a humidifier with an ioniser. Thanks to the negative ions it emits,



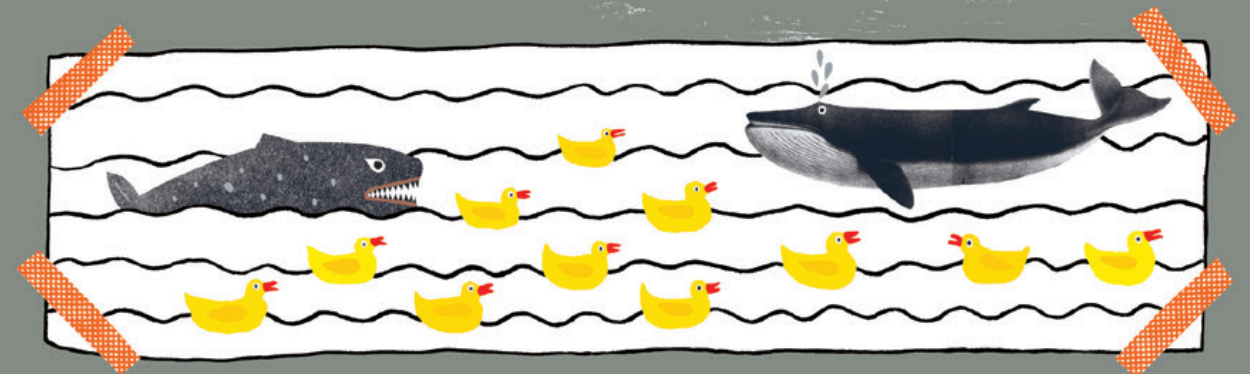
dust and pollution particles fall onto furniture and the floor. True, there's going to be more cleaning involved, but at least you won't be breathing in the dust you wipe up. You can also humidify the air in your room without any complicated equipment: just pop a damp towel or a ceramic vessel filled with water on your radiator.

Ducks' great escape

In January 1992, during a storm on the Pacific, a wave washed a few hundred thousand rubber toys off the deck of a ship. These rubber toys – or, more precisely, plastic toys – included yellow ducks that were meant to arrive in shops all over the world. Two thirds of them went south and ended up in Indonesia, Australia and South America. The remaining third travelled north, towards Alaska. The movement of ducks across the Pacific allowed oceanographers to examine the sea currents thoroughly. Can you imagine all these duckies floating around sharks and whales? It must have looked funny. Still, such an amount of plastic in the ocean isn't a laughing matter, so the manufacturer offered financial rewards to anyone who found and returned the lost toys.



ceramic humidifier



chapter 2

PLAYS
IS NOT
FANTASTIC

TIC
TIC

Matilda's diary

15 March: We spent all day making a Marzanna* effigy. Soon we'll drown it in the River Rudka that flows through Parsleyville. This is how people celebrate the first day of spring round here. Our class teacher, Miss Chives, told us to bring different kinds of plastic, rope and other materials – we put them all together to make a human-sized doll for drowning. Her head was an empty paint bucket. Her body was made with bin bags we stuffed with lots of smaller plastic bags. We dressed her in an old flowery overcoat and stuffed wellies on her legs. She looked quite scary, so I was rather pleased thinking she would end up in the river.

20 March: Today I had a day of nostalgia. I kept thinking about my old school. I remembered how much fun we had last year.

On the first day of spring, we all dressed up. One of my classmates put a black stocking on his head. He'd sewn on green threads from an old woolly jumper and cut little slits for the eyes in the stocking, and nobody recognised him. Another one put old CDs all over himself and pretended to be a robot. Marcel dressed up as me, and I dressed up as Marcel. People

* Marzanna is a pagan Slavic goddess associated with winter's death. In Poland, a Marzanna doll or effigy would be drowned or burned on the first day of spring to chase winter away.

were cracking up when the teachers spoke to me like I was a boy and to my twin brother as if he were a girl. It paid off for Marcel, because Mr Curd, who taught us maths, called him up to the blackboard and asked him to do an equation. And then he gave him an A star. "You see, my dear chap, you can do it if you try a little!" he said, and I tried really hard to keep a straight face. When we left the classroom, Mr Curd whispered in Marcel's ear: "Thank your sister! And remember the first day of spring only happens once a year!"

I don't think things would've been quite as easy with Miss Chives...

21 March: Today was the day for drowning the Marzanna. We were supposed to, at least. We went to the river with Miss Chives, stood on the little bridge and were about to throw the doll into the water when this wretched dog Thorn showed up out of the blue. He did not like our doll at all! He started barking at her and then suddenly he jumped up, sank his sharp little teeth in her and tore her side open. Immediately, the plastic bags we stuffed the doll with came pouring out of her. At exactly the same moment the wind blew, lifted the pieces of plastic up and whisked them straight into the river.

"Now we're going to have the River Rubbish, not the River Rudka." Miss Chives was sad. And then she added: "I don't think it was a good idea at all."

So the drowning came to nothing. We glumly went back to the school and read our textbooks for the rest of the class.

RIVER
RUDKA

Thorn

A tale of travellers from the planet Plastica

Have you ever seen a plastic bag carried by the wind? It looks a bit like there are invisible air-creatures playing basketball. The bag is thrown one way and then it's blown back over. The flying bag dances against the sky, gets caught up in the branches, and wraps itself around high voltage cables... We watch this happen, sometimes someone will even find it a pretty picture – a greyish cloud floating about in the air.

Poor us! We have absolutely no idea that there are thousands of bags like this flying around in the air! Or tens of thousands! And no, they absolutely do not dissolve like real clouds, but they travel higher and higher until they fly out of our galaxy and reach quite a large planet, which doesn't have a name yet, but we can call it Plastica – for the purposes of this story.

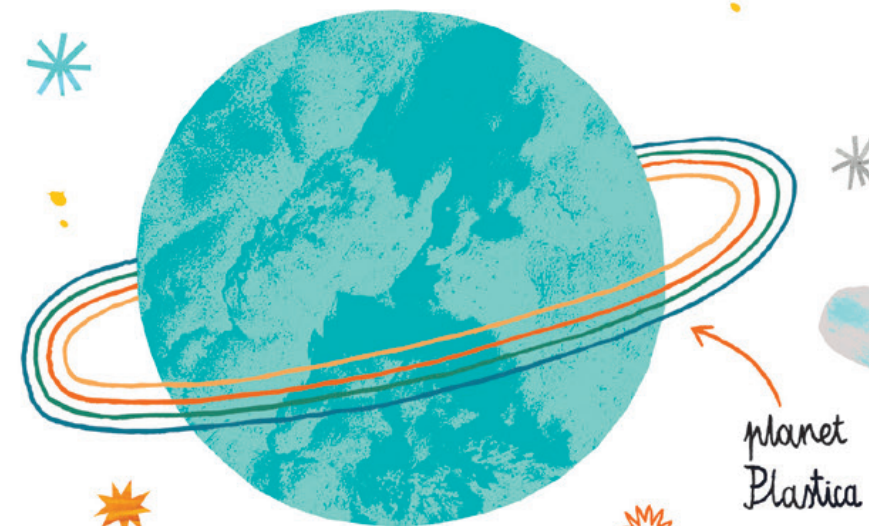
Plastica's special property is that it grows very quickly. This is no surprise – after all, it's made up of bundled up plastic bags, just like the one the wind blew out of a rubbish bin. Can a flimsy piece of plastic build an entire planet? Sure it can! Every year people release up to a trillion individual plastic bags into the world and the majority of them fly into outer space. Do you know how much a trillion is? It's one million million – a one and twelve zeros. Quite a lot, don't you think?

We've been making plastic bags for fifty years – of course we didn't make so many at the beginning. And none of these bags have disappeared

from Earth just like that. They couldn't have – you can make a plastic bag in a second, but it takes five hundred years for it to decompose. And this means that all the plastic bags we have ever made still exist. They're lying around in landfills, or at the bottom of seas and oceans – from there they end up in the stomachs of fish and birds. Some of them are captured by the wind and fly towards the planet known as Plastica.

At first Plastica was very small – it looked like a plastic ball floating about in space. With time and with more plastic bags around, it started to grow. First it was as big as a hot air balloon. Then as big as ten hot air balloons. Then it became as big as the Moon (which, as you may not know, has a diameter only four times smaller than the Earth).

When Plastica was so big that it would take us three years to walk around it if we walked 10 kilometres every day, the first living being appeared on its surface. And then thousands more. Don't ask how it happened. We're not even sure exactly how or why we appeared on Earth, so there's no way we could know more about Plastica. But one way or another, Plastica began to teem with life.





Its residents built villages, towns and cities, roads big and small, houses and palaces. And because their numbers kept growing and growing, they decided to conquer a new planet. The king of Plastica (yes, the planet was ruled by a king in a pretty plastic crown) chose two daredevils out of a crowd of volunteers. They had lovely names: Pet and PeeVeeCee. The king gave them a spaceship and a cannon that shot out colourful balls. Plastic, of course. Pet and PeeVeeCee travelled across space and when they reached a cozy corner known as the Solar System they felt like they were getting close to their destination. They took a special liking to a blue planet called Earth. Sounds familiar? Yes, yes, you're right! The two space travellers from Plastica chose our planet as their target.

"This place will feel like home!" Pet announced excitedly. PeeVeeCee completely agreed.

But when the Plastica spaceship was about to land in the middle of a great square in the largest city on Earth, it became clear that the travellers weren't welcome. Suddenly, fully armed soldiers appeared everywhere and aimed machine guns at our dear aliens. And what were Pet and PeeVeeCee to do? They responded in kind and brought their cannon out. Before long, all the countries, cities, towns and villages filled with colourful plastic balls and the poor Earthlings hid away in their homes. "What's going to happen to us now? How are we going to cope with this flood of plastic?!" they lamented.

It would have surely ended quite badly had it not been for Lavinia Lavender, a very ingenious little person. Lavinia looked out the window and saw the scene of colourful dread.

"I know what should be done!" Lavinia called out to the terrified pedestrians who were wading about in the plastic balls. "We must turn on our largest and strongest vacuum cleaners! We'll suck up the balls,

then throw them into a shredder and turn them into tiny little balls. And we'll pour these balls into pillows or make fillings for puffer jackets with them. Or we can use them to insulate our houses..."

And this is exactly what happened. People got the vacuums out and started transforming the plastic balls into useful tiny little balls. Accidentally, they also transformed Pet and PeeVeeCee's spacecraft. Poor aliens! They were now trapped on Earth. Luckily, they made friends with Lavinia Lavender who let them stay in the gardener's hut right behind her house. They helped her weed the garden and grow carrots, which, as it later turned out, they loved.

And what happened next? Lavinia had more and more fantastic ideas. She also transformed single-use bags, bottles and bottle caps into many useful things – to stop Plastica from growing even more.

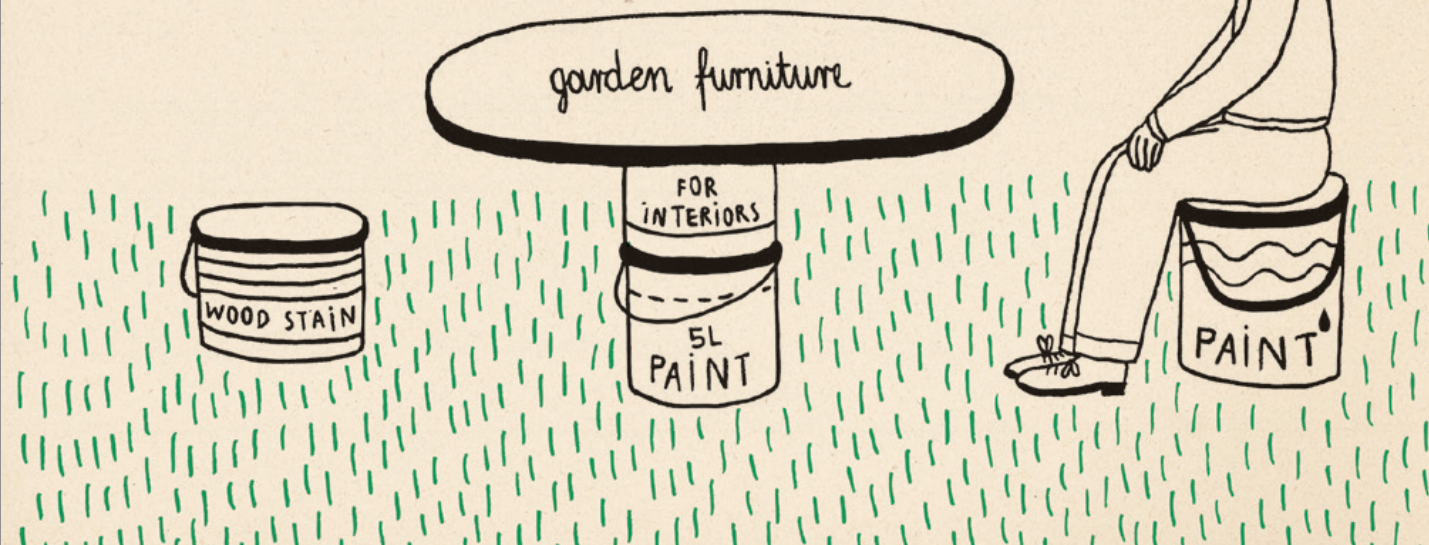


Marcel's diary

25 March: For a few days we had shorter classes at school: we used the time to go to the river and fish out the plastic bags from our effigy. Miss Chives said herself that making a doll out of plastic rubbish would have been fine had we not put it in the water. We decided to make a more eco-friendly Marzanna next year: we'll use straw.

28 March: The mayor of Parsleyville, our mum, said that fishing rubbish out of the river is much more fun than drowning a Marzanna effigy. And then she announced a competition for best use of repurposed plastic. The prize made it really worthwhile: twenty jars of cherry preserve made by our dad (he's the best cook under the sun) and colourful shopping bags sewn by mum. This was to prevent any more plastic bags from being used. The jury consisted of Miss Chives and our PE teacher, Mr Maximilian Longbottom.

There were many entries. For example, Ms Eugenie Birdwhistle made a hanging garden, which was a basil plantation in pots made from repurposed orangeade bottles. Charlie built a whole set of garden furniture out of empty paint buckets. But most of all the jury liked a necklace made with plastic flowers cut out from mineral water bottles. And as they were

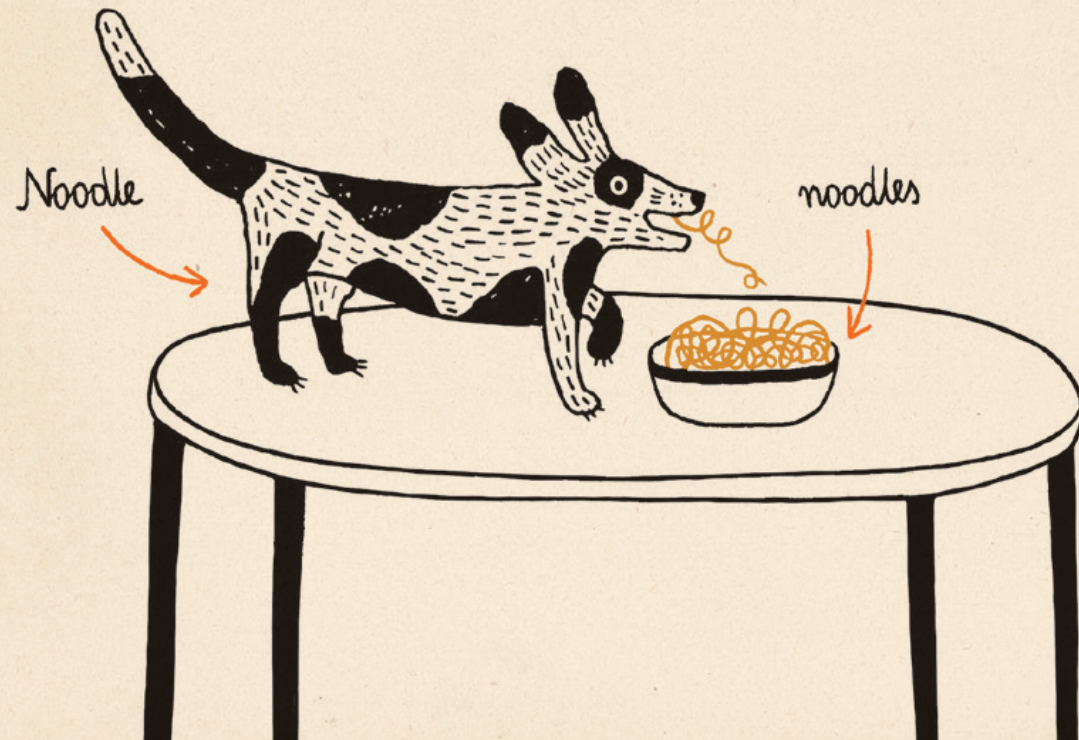


necklace

about to give out the winning prize, it turned out that... our mum had made the necklace.

"I beg you, I can't possibly win my husband's own preserve!" sighed mum, and so eventually the prize went to Mr Charlie. This made him very happy, because he loves cherry preserve. And he then gave the bags to Eugenie, who has her birthday in March.

30 March: Even though things didn't quite work out with our Marzanna doll, spring arrived in Parsleyville anyway. Ms Chives said that we'll do a weekly clean-up of one part of the world from now on. Today we went to a forest, and gosh, there was so much rubbish there! We schlepped a few bags back and then we sorted everything nicely. But that's not all. In the forest, we also found a dog with a broken paw. I brought her home. My parents tried to say no, but eventually they gave in and now we have a second dog. We called her Noodle – despite the bad leg, she managed to jump up on the table and eat a bowlful of noodles.



Ecologist's essentials

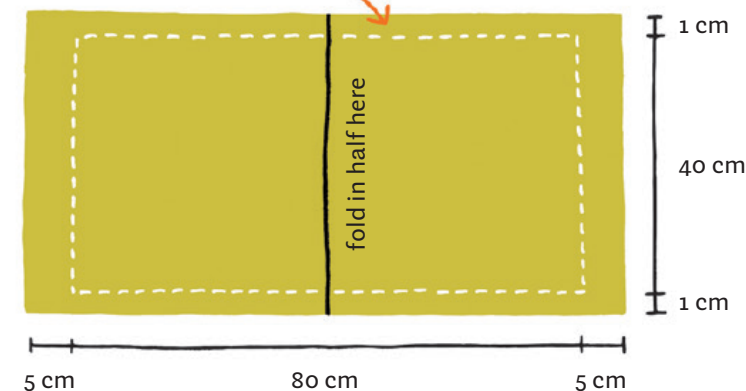
Avoid plastic bags

What's the biggest source of rubbish in the world? Plastic! Most of it comes from the seemingly innocent bags we use for our shopping. Each year we throw away a few hundred thousand tons of plastic bags in Poland alone. Ten million tons of plastic ends up in the seas and oceans each year and threatens the life of birds, fish and mammals. This is why it's better for the environment to choose reusable bags made of fabric. And if you forget to take a bag with you, ask your shopkeeper for a paper bag.



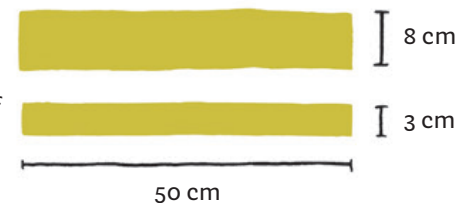
Make your own cotton bag:

margin for the fold



fabric for the handle

handle folded in half
and sewn together



It takes all sorts... of plastic

Every container made from synthetic materials (commonly known as plastic) must have a label that tells you what raw material it is made of. Some plastics are more harmful than others. We should limit the use of plastic that cannot be recycled and is dangerous for our health.

1 PET/PETE

This type of plastic is used to make bottles, disposable cutlery and fleece clothing. PET packaging mustn't be reused, but it usually recycles quite well.



3 PVC

This type of plastic is very harmful, so it's only used for products that have no contact with food, for example pipes or flooring.



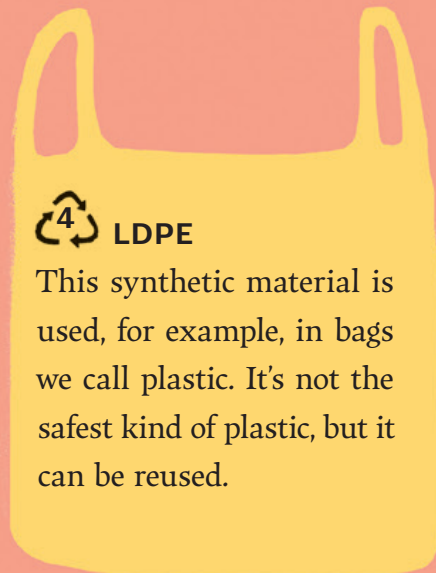
2 HDPE

This plastic is safe for our health and can be used to store food. It's also recyclable.



4 LDPE

This synthetic material is used, for example, in bags we call plastic. It's not the safest kind of plastic, but it can be reused.



5 PP

This is one of the safest types of plastic and is used for yoghurt and quark pots. It's very sturdy and resistant to heat.

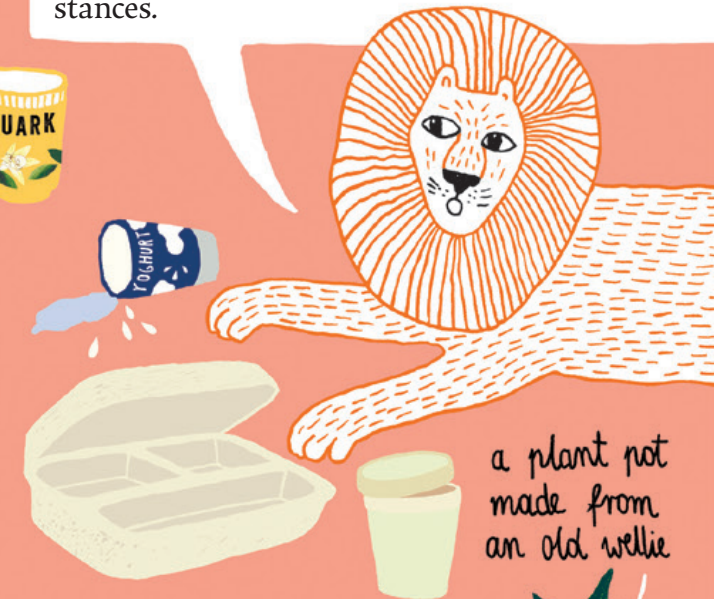


6 PS

This plastic secretes toxins, especially when exposed to heat. It is used in take-away food containers, among many other things, and we see it most often in the form of polystyrene.

7 OTHER

This type of plastic usually has a very adverse effect on our health. Packaging made of this plastic should not be reused under any circumstances.



Don't throw it away, reuse it!

Some plastics, and other unnecessary raw materials can be repurposed and reused. This is becoming an increasingly popular trend.

For example, recycled plastic from PET bottles is used to make upholstery in some cars, or to make fleece. Plastic bags can be turned into padding in winter jackets and threads from used jumpers may be used to soundproof speakers. We can also give used plastic objects a new lease of life.



chapter 3

WATCH
YOUR
MOUTH

WHAT
BUT

Matilda's diary



7 April: What definitely bothers me about life in Parsleyville is that it doesn't have any shopping malls. I used to like doing big shopping trips with mum – I was always able to talk her into buying me new stuff. Mum says she doesn't miss it at all, because visiting a shopping mall always ends badly. I know what she means... I clearly remember how we went to a mall to get some slippers, and left with a new winter jacket (because it was reduced), a backpack (because the old one had some tiny stains on it) and two pairs of wellies. Before visiting the mall, we had no idea we needed all these things...



9 April: But I really wanted a denim jacket, so mum said we could go to Budgetciaga, which is a second-hand clothes shop run by the sister of our favourite neighbour, Henny. Helly (the sister) always puts aside the nice stuff for mum, and mum claims she's never had so many luxury items of clothing. This is why she decided to find something for me in Budgetciaga too.

12 April: And it worked! I have a jacket! And what a jacket it is! With an embroidered red snake on the back! The snake was put there by Helly, who has magic fingers. Helly also reworked a dress that mum had bought at Budgetciaga, and told me this incredible story...



The incredible story of Samiya and Jamiya

Samiya and Jamiya, two sisters who lived in a small Asian country, really liked to play football. Their dad taught them to play and since then it was the most enjoyable game in the world for them. But, of course, their life wasn't just fun and games. They both helped their mum to cook delicious pilaf – their dad's favourite dish of rice with carrots, peas, onion and butter. They also went to school a few times a week, but you won't believe what school was like for them. They crouched on the floor of a classroom that only had a blackboard in it. But that didn't bother them – they loved it when they learned maths or repeated English words. *I... am, you... are...* Sometimes they didn't make it to school because they had to help their parents to pick rice or take vegetables to the market. But this didn't happen all that often. Yes, they had a really happy, good life. Until a certain point. Because one day a tragedy happened. It was dusk, and their parents were on their way home from the market. As they were turning, their rickety old car skidded...

Samiya and Jamiya were now alone in the world. At first they somehow managed – there were some supplies left in the house. But after a few weeks they got hungry. And then this man showed up in their neighbourhood. He was looking for new workers for his clothing factory.

"You'll have your own money and will be given lunch," he encouraged them.



The girls decided it was a good idea and came to the factory the next day.

“We don’t want you lazing about! We don’t want any lazybones around here,” said the man who gave them the job.

Samiya and Jamiya promised they would try their best. And they did. They tried as hard as they could, but they still couldn’t keep up with the work. The girls’ task was to rivet buttons on denim jackets. They were lovely jackets sold for the kind of money Samiya and Jamiya wouldn’t be able to earn even in a year. That is if they earned anything at all, because the factory owner eagerly deducted every minute of rest and every bowl of rice from their pay... the workers were overseen by guards, who shouted if anyone tried to pause for a moment and rest. Sometimes – and I know, this is really horrible, but I need to tell you about this – the guard wouldn’t let the workers go for a wee. And when a boy named Mamum – because it wasn’t just girls who worked at the factory – decided to stand up for himself and said he wasn’t going to rivet the buttons anymore, and that he’d rather starve to death, one of the guards hit him so hard that it left a bruise on his cheek.

One day the children decided to run away. But it wasn’t all that simple. The children hadn’t left the factory since they started their jobs, and had slept in the big hall on thin straw mats. Each night, the guards would round up the kids in the hall and then lock the doors with a big lock. But Mamum was cunning and had nimble little fingers! He managed to steal the key from one of the guards when he wasn’t looking! The man thought the key must have just come off his belt. In the evening, he used a spare key and had no idea that the original was in Mamun’s pocket. When night fell and everyone had gone to sleep, and the guards had gone home to rest, Samiya, Jamiya, Mamun and other kids sneaked out of the factory.



They ran for about an hour, maybe two, until they realised they were in the middle of a dark forest and had no idea where to go. And then they saw a light glimmering in the thickets. Calling “Help, help!” at the top of their voices, they paced towards a small house. Jamiya knocked on the door, which soon opened and... what a terrible coincidence! It turned out that the guard Mamun stole the key from lived in that house.

It’s easy to imagine what happened later. The children returned to the factory. Their portions of rice were halved and they were given twice as much work...

“It looks like we’re going to die here of hunger and exhaustion,” Samiya whimpered, and Mamun sobbed quietly as he riveted more and more buttons.

And then Jamiya had this brilliant idea.

“I know what we’ll do,” she whispered. “We’ll call the entire world for help!”

“What? But how?” snorted Samiya.

“We’ll write a letter and hide it in a jacket. Or a few letters. We’ll describe how badly they treat us here, that they have imprisoned us, that they don’t give us food and make us work harder than we can. These jackets are sold in Europe and America. Surely someone will want to help us!”

“You’re crazy! They’ll find the letter during the first check, and we’ll be punished again.”

“They won’t if we hide it well.”

“But where do you want to hide it?” Mamun wanted to know.

“What’s the thing that nobody checks?” Jamiya smiled slyly.

“Well... I have no idea,” the boy wasn’t sure. And neither was Samiya.

“No one ever reads the labels! We’ll write a letter on a label...”

And this is just what they did. The jackets were packed, loaded on a ship, and then sailed to Europe and America. The jackets were lovely and expensive. They were sold in shopping malls and small, elegant boutiques where they cost twice as much as they did in the big shops.

And then one of the jackets was bought from a boutique by Bella Primavera, a famous American singer. And because she liked originality, she decided to wear a crop top under the jacket. But the label was really itchy, so Bella decided to cut it off. But after she’d cut it off, she noticed the tiny little writing: “They force us to work and treat us badly. We can’t take it. Save us!”. It was signed: “Samiya, Jamiya and Mamun”.

If somebody else had found the message, they wouldn’t have been able to so easily determine where the jacket and letter had come from. But Bella Primavera had a whole army of very talented secretaries, and they got down to work straight away. Soon, the singer boarded her private jet and flew to a small country far away in Asia only a few days later. She announced that she wanted to visit the factory, and the owner, who had of course heard about the famous singer, didn’t dare to decline. Then Bella said she wanted to see where her favourite clothes were made, so, reluctantly, the director took her



to the sewing room. Bella stood in the middle and asked, pointing to her jacket:

"Who wrote a letter to me? Are Samiya, Jamiya and Mamun here?"

Everything that happened afterwards was like a beautiful fairy tale. Bella Primavera decided to make sure that Samiya, Jamiya and Mamun returned to school. She set up a special scholarship for them. As you remember, many other children also worked at the factory. Bella Primavera couldn't help them all, but she told the world about what she had seen.

"You buy clothes that you pay a lot of money for. But do you know where they come from? And, more importantly, who sews them? Small kids work incredibly hard for your whims!" Bella Primavera said all this in a TV show watched by several million people. And some of those viewers started to think about where the clothes they bought came from. They decided to look for garments that are made ethically.

And do you know what's best about this story? That thanks to Bella's scholarship, Samiya and Jamiya both completed law degrees and started to fight for children's rights.



Marcel's diary



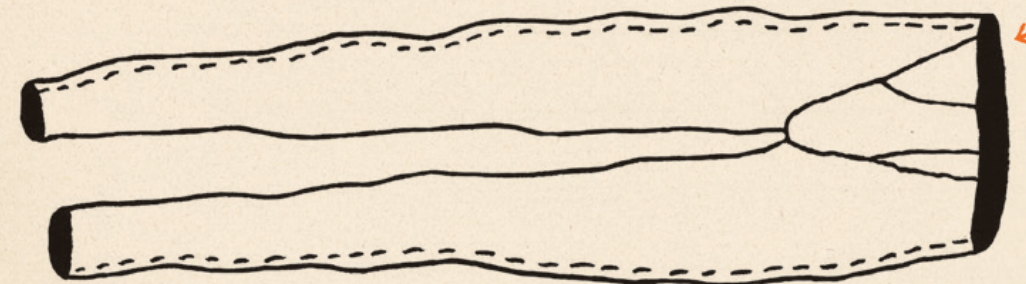
17 April: April really does mix summer with winter. And yesterday it decided it was the latter season. Dad had to wear his long johns to work. And today it was summer all over again and no one gave long johns a second thought. Not even dad, who, as he was getting dressed for work early in the morning, forgot they were still inside his trousers. And so, the long johns that were sticking out of his trouser legs trailed along behind him all day. Everyone saw, but no one dared to tell dad. Only mum mentioned it after he'd come home in the evening.

18 April: The long john story really took off. After a whole day of being dragged around, they'd turned black and got a bit torn. Mum wanted to throw them away, but dad said he didn't want to waste anything this year. And then the mayor, that is our mum, announced a new competition for Parsleyville residents: the best new use for a pair of old long johns. This time the award was two cinema tickets. All sorts of ideas came through: turn torn long johns into shorts, turn them into dusting cloths, use them as insulation in a kennel... But the competition was won by Helly, who suggested cutting the fabric into strips and stuffing them into a rabbit made from an old, felted jumper. This was a wonderful idea, because around the same time dad put my woolly jumper into the washing machine.

1st place



dad's long johns

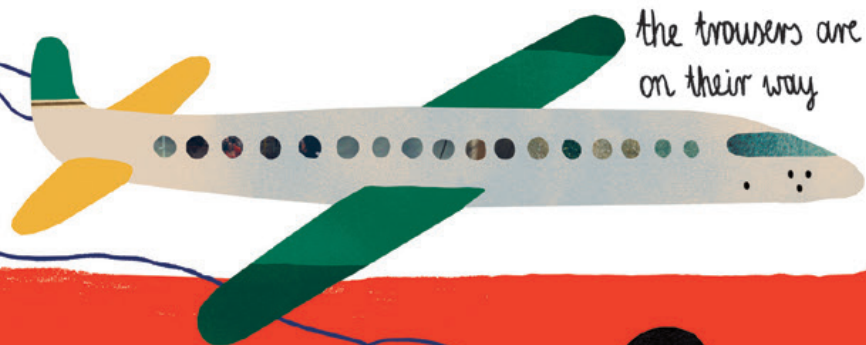


Ecologist's essentials

Globetrotting trousers

A single piece of clothing isn't made in one country from the beginning to the end. For example, a pair of Swiss jeans can be made from cotton picked in Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, or India. Then the cotton is shipped to China, where cotton "wool" is woven into threads. The threads are then dyed in the Philippines with dyes sent from Germany or Switzerland. Then the navy-blue threads are flown, for example, to Poland where they're woven into denim. The ready denim flies back to the Philippines, along with buttons from Italy and labels from France. Everything is then carefully sewn together in the Philippines and then the jeans are flown to Swiss shops. But what happens to worn jeans? Different things. Some (unfortunately still few) manufacturers make sure their old garments are turned into other products, such as cloths for cleaning. And that's a great solution!

But why is a single pair of trousers made in so many different places around the world? It's simple! The manufacturer chooses the country where a particular type of labour is the cheapest. But the low price often means bad working conditions and low pay for workers. As consumers, we should be interested in the type of conditions our clothing is made in. And we should choose the brands that look after their employees.



Checking your clothes are made ethically

Many garments have special symbols on their labels – they're certificates that assure the buyer the clothing was made with respect for the environment and workers' rights. Here are some examples:

Fair Wear Foundation

This certificate is used by companies that have pledged to treat their employees well and pay them fairly.

Fairtrade

The manufacturers who use this symbol care for their workers and provide them with healthcare. As well as this, they also don't use chemicals that are harmful to the environment.

EU Ecolabel

This certificate tells us that the substances that are toxic for humans and the environment are limited as much as possible in a particular product (not just clothing), and that the entire production process is environmentally friendly.

Global Organic Textile Standard

This label guarantees that garments were made with raw materials that are not harmful to the environment, and that workers' rights were not violated during the production process.



chapter 4

THE HISTORY OF

LONG FISH

Marcel's diary

1 May: The first day of the May Long Weekend is over... And what a nightmare it's been! Dad decided to make use of those few days off and renovate the attic. All would have been fine had he not asked me to help him... and I had no right to refuse! All day long I carried all sorts of old bric-a-brac down the stairs. The previous owners' bottles, pots and pans, and clothes... It all turned into a sizeable mountain of stuff. So it looks like we're going to have to hire a skip.

2 May: Yesterday evening I thought up a way to discourage dad from carrying on with the renovation – all thanks to a clip I watched online where a comedian dressed his dog up as a spider. He attached extra black paws to it and let it out into the streets. People shrieked with horror! I decided to repeat the idea. In the attic, I found a bag full of old tights (I have no idea why the previous owners held on to them). And so, I stuffed the tights with rags and cotton wool until they looked like fairly neat paws. I stuck them to Thorn and Noodle and all I had to do then was to call out to my parents... I was hoping that if they got scared of the giant spiders, they'd give up on the idea of the renovation. Sadly, things didn't go quite as smoothly as I had hoped. I let my spiders out of the attic, and they charged straight into our front room. But instead of encountering my parents, they ran straight at Henny who was just standing there, holding a platter full of dumplings. When she saw Noodle and Thorn, she got so scared that she dropped the platter to the floor. It crashed into pieces, and the dogs immediately

devoured all the food. Then mum said that dressing a dog up as a spider might not necessarily be to the dog's liking. And she wanted to know if the dog from the internet, or Noodle and Thorn, were asked their opinion...

3 May: I apologised to Noodle and Thorn and first cleaned the attic all day, then helped Henny – I wanted to make up for the broken platter. She was very upset because it was her family heirloom. But I patched things up with her a bit when I promised to make a lamp out of her favourite bottle, which is even older than the broken platter. I learned how to do it at school. All you have to do is put a lightbulb socket with a cable attached to it into the bottle's neck. And in return Henny told me a story...



The story of the bottle

If you think about it hard enough, you might realise that in each thing there are slivers of hundreds if not thousands of other things. There's a bit of everything in everything. Let's just take the bottle, which Henny's neighbour Marcel helped turn into a lamp... And this is how the story goes.

The bottle was made at a factory some seventy or maybe even eighty years ago. But this wasn't where its journey began, no way!

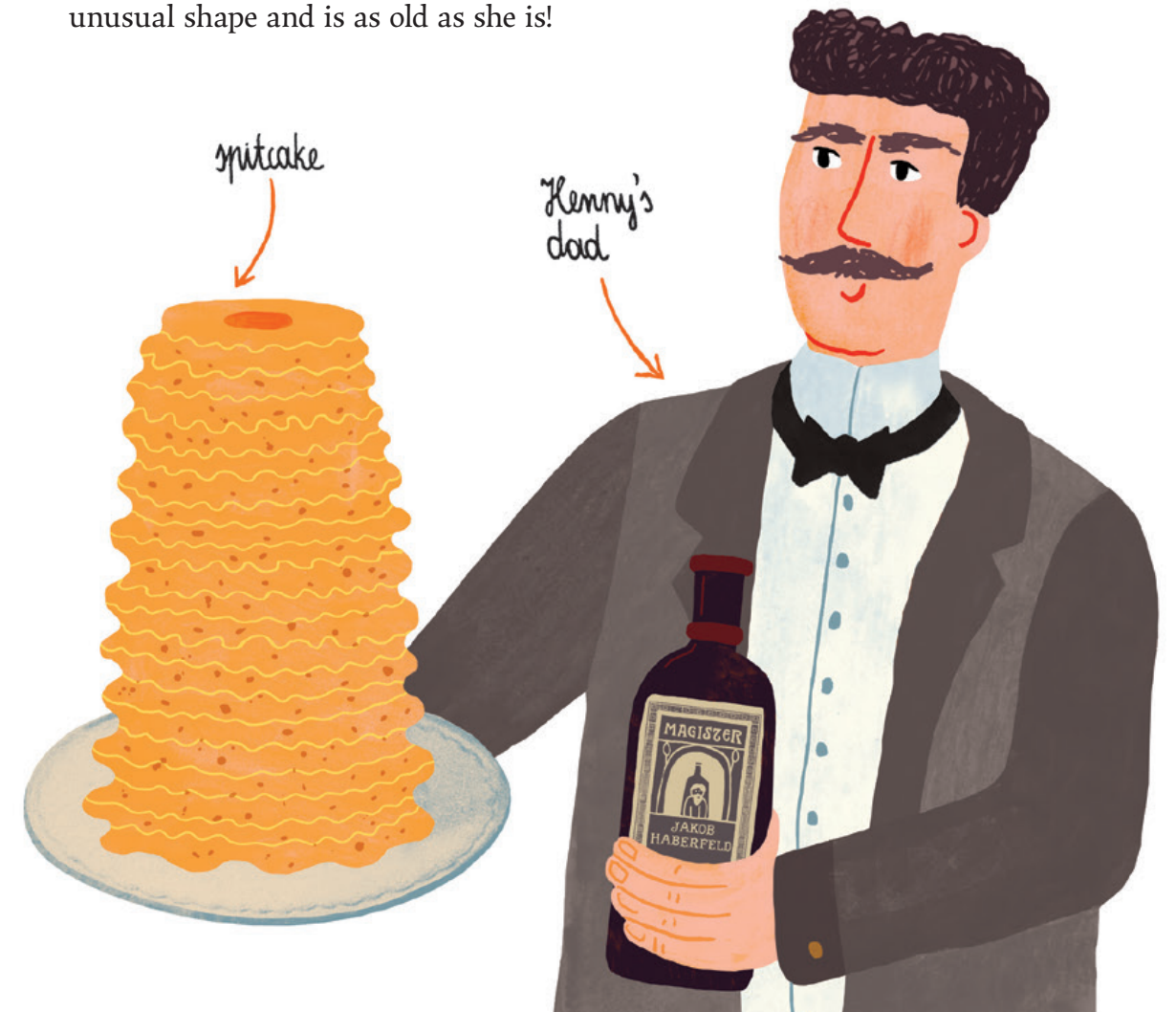
Have you ever wondered what a bottle like this is made from? I can already hear you snigger: "What do you mean? It's made of glass, obviously!"

You're quite right. But what is glass made of? Well, it's made of sand. And what is sand made of? You're right again, it's not made from anything. The sand is just there. But where did it come from? To explain this, we need to go back to the times when the Earth was in the process of forming. At the very beginning, four and a half billion years ago, our planet was a sizzling hot sphere. It needed hundreds of millions of years to cool down and harden! When it hardened completely, it was covered with a thick shell, which cracked and turned into rocky crumbs over the next few million years. At first the crumbs were quite big, but with time they became smaller and smaller until they became grains of sand. When heated to a very high temperature, sand melts and becomes glass. For example, the kind of glass Henny's bottle is made from.

Of course, glass wasn't invented straight away – it appeared over three thousand years Before Christ or Before the Common Era (whichever term you prefer). Some people say it's even older than that! At first bottles were

made like this: people would pour sand into a canvas bag and then dip the bag in hot liquid glass. The glass stuck to the bag and when it cooled down, the sand would be tipped out and the remains of the fabric would be cleaned off. This somewhat unshapely bottle was used as a vessel for water, wine, or milk – whatever it was needed for. And it was very precious. Then people learned how to blow glass and give it the desired shape with special pincers – the process looked a bit like blowing soap bubbles. It wasn't until the 19th century that bottles started to be made by blowing hot glass into moulds – and this is how bottles are made to this day.

A glass bottle can be used very many times – actually, infinitely, or at least until it breaks. Henny has this lovely brown bottle. It has an unusual shape and is as old as she is!



The bottle still boasts the original label that reads “Magister” and “Jakob Haberfeld”. This is what the drink and its producer were called. The bottle (and its contents!) were given to Henny’s dad by his brother-in-law on the birth of his daughter (that’s Henny of course!). It’s hard to believe that she was once a pink, chubby baby. No wonder her dad decided to invite his mates over and treat them to a drop of “Magister” served with potato pancakes and spitzcake. The birth of a child is probably the best reason to celebrate with a bunch of your friends, everybody will tell you that. Henny’s dad didn’t throw the empty bottle away, but kept different drinks in it: raspberry syrup for the winter, black elderberry syrup for the summer. When little Henny went to school, her mum would use the bottle for Henny’s milk – so that she had something to wash down her elevenuses with.

“Just be careful not to break it,” she would say. “I don’t want you getting cut!”

Henny was very careful indeed. Just once, as she was crossing an ice-covered bridge, she fell and the bottle chipped a bit. From then on, Henny didn’t take it to school anymore.

“The sharp edge could cut your lip,” her mum contended. She was a very caring lady and didn’t want anything bad happening to her little girl.

After that the bottle became a vase for catkins in the spring, peonies when the summer got closer, or dahlias at the end of August.

“My entire life in a single bottle,” Henny smiled to her reflection in the window, and to her memories. She ran her finger across the faded label, then again twice more.

And then something really odd happened. A little cloud flew out of the bottle. It was small at first, but got bigger and bigger by the second until it filled half of Henny’s kitchen.





“What’s this?” Henny was surprised.

“Not what, but who!” the cloud replied – it now took on a shape resembling a tall man.

“All right. Who’s this?” Henny corrected herself.

“I’m the genie of this bottle,” the genie introduced himself. “You woke me up from a deep sleep. You can make my three wishes come true as a reward!”

“Me?! But shouldn’t it be so that if I let a genie out of the bottle, it’s he who makes my wishes come true?”

“I don’t know how other stories go,” the genie replied with a smile (or at least Henny saw him smile). “But things in this story go the other way round.”

“All right. So, what would you like, my dear genie?”

“My first wish is for you to finally wash the bottle out properly. My second wish is for you to stop sticking plant stems inside. They’re prickly.”

Henny turned sad. She liked using the bottle as a flower vase, but she obediently did what the genie asked her to do.

“Good work!” the genie was pleased. “Now it’s time for my third wish. I want you to turn the bottle into a lamp! I’m sick and tired of sitting in the dark the whole time. I need some light!”

And this is why Henny turned this old bottle into a lamp. Not on her own though. She asked her neighbour Marcel for help.



Matilda's diary

3 June: Thanks to dad and Marcel we now have a fantastic empty attic. It's so huge you could go rollerblading in it! That's of course just theoretical – my parents want to set up guest rooms here. Now the question is what we do with the mountain of things from the attic...

10 June: Mum's made lovely planters from old pots and wooden buckets. Henny also explained to her what the bags of clothes and fabric were doing in the attic. The previous owner of the house wove rugs from unwanted pieces of fabric. You know, those long, happy, stripy rugs. Thanks to this, nothing was wasted.

26 June: Today my mates from my old school came to visit. All day Henny taught us how to make rugs from rags. Every girl took her own rug home. And they promised they'd come back to Parsleyville in the summer, to spend some of their holidays here. I'm so happy because they told me they've never had so much fun!



my rug



Ecologist's essentials

Saving Mother Earth

If we don't want our planet to drown under a layer of garbage, we must stop producing it. We also need a more sensible approach to objects that we surround ourselves with. Small household recycling, or giving used things a new lease of life, can be a lot of fun!



What can you do with an old glass bottle?

- 1 Paint it with special glass paints and give it to your mum on Mother's Day, along with a red rose!
- 2 Paint it with silver spray and put a candle inside it – it'll make a lovely candleholder.
- 3 Use it as an unusual picture frame: roll up a photo and slide it inside the bottle. It will unroll itself inside the bottle. You can also pour some beads and small shells into the bottle.
- 4 Make your own musical instrument. Collect eight identical bottles. Fill them all with water so that there's the smallest amount of water in the first bottle, and the largest amount of water in the last bottle. Then tie them with some rope to a wooden frame so that they hang. And then gently hit the bottles with a stick. Each bottle will make a different sound!
- 5 If you really don't know how to give your bottle a new life, put it in a glass bin or take it to a recycling centre. By sorting your rubbish properly, you make sure it doesn't end up in a landfill (or, even worse, in the oceans!), but is recycled into new items.



Sorting your rubbish properly

You can recover many precious resources by sorting rubbish properly. You just need to know what goes in what bin – make sure you check local recycling rules as they might be different in different countries.

This goes in the **paper** bin:

- newspapers, magazines, notepads, books, school and office stationery
- paper packaging, for example cardboard
- paper bags
- sheets of paper that have been written or printed on
- leaflets, catalogues

This DOES NOT go in the **paper** bin:

- milk, juice or other drinks cartons
- kitchen roll and used tissues
- greasy or very dirty paper
- coated paper
- dirty and greasy disposable paper containers and disposable crockery
- wallpaper
- paper sacks used as packaging for fertilisers, cement and other building materials
- personal hygiene products, such as disposable nappies

This goes in the **metal and plastic** bin:

- aluminium cans used for drinks and juice
- bottle caps (unless you're collecting them for charity)
- food cans
- empty plastic food packaging
- aluminium foil
- bottle and jar tops
- coloured metal
- plastic drinks bottles – crushed and without caps
- packaging for cleaning products and cosmetics
- plastic shopping bags and disposable shopping bags
- juice and milk cartons

This DOES NOT go into the **metal and plastic** bin:

- car oil packaging
- car parts
- old electronic and household appliances
- old batteries
- bottles and containers with their contents

inside them

- paint and varnish tins and containers
- medication packaging, medical products

This should go in the **glass** bin:

- bottles and jars for drinks, food, alcohol, and oil
- glass containers for cosmetics (except for the kind of packaging that's made out of two different kinds of materials that cannot be separated)

This DOES NOT go in the **glass** bin:

- ceramics, plant pots, porcelain, china, crystals
- eyeglasses
- heat-proof glass
- glass candles with the wax still in them
- headlamps
- lightbulbs and fluorescent tubes
- thermometers and syringes
- mirrors
- window and safety glass
- screens and TV bulbs
- containers used for medication, solvents or engine oils

We can only put plant-derived (as opposed to animal-derived) waste in **organic waste bins**. Use **general waste** bins for anything that cannot be recycled (except hazardous waste that needs to be taken to a special waste disposal centre).



chapter 5

WHAT

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WE

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Matilda's diary



14 July: We're going on vacation! It's already been decided. And even though life in Parsleyville feels like being on holiday every day, it's the "every day" that is a problem. It's good to change things every now and then. If you live in the mountains, you want to go the sea. If you live on the seaside, you feel like you want to go to the mountains. And so on. Mum and dad are a little bit worried now because they don't have enough money to pay for any kind of hotel or guesthouse.

15 July: Problem solved! Mum had a phone call from her school friend, a lady called Melania. It turns out she has the same problem as we do: she'd like to go on holiday, but has no money for it. So mum had this brilliant idea: why don't we swap houses with Melania's family? We give them our house in Parsleyville for two weeks, and they'll give us their hut in the Beskid Mountains.

17 July: We're leaving tomorrow. We'll pass the key to Melania through Henny. She doesn't like to go anywhere, which is just as well because she can tell Melania how to feed our dogs. Melania's daughter will be staying in our room – I've left her a bunch of mints under the pillow – to make her feel at home when she arrives. But I think she will anyway – our house is very friendly and likes guests. I believe that some houses and objects have a personality, just like people. And they can show kindness. If only they could talk, I'm more than certain they'd have a lot to tell.



The tale of the yellow tent

It all began when Cyril Cuckoo's parents decided to buy him a tent for his hiking camp. They spent hours looking at different models, searching for the best price until they found a tent that suited them one hundred percent.

And that tent was me.

First, they spread me out in their garden. Or let's just pretend they did. Cyril's dad decided to stretch out my floor by crawling inside me, but what he hadn't noticed was that he'd accidentally turned me inside out.

"What are you doing, man?" I tried to warn him, but of course he didn't hear anything. It was like talking to someone deaf...

Once he'd crawled fully inside, he started to twist and tumble until he got completely tangled up.

"Hello!" He called out quite desperately. "Hello, anybody there?!"

Unfortunately, I was the only one there, which means, from Cyril's dad's point of view, there was no one there at all: Cyril and his mum went home to have some strawberries.

It took some time before dad detangled himself from all my ropes and then spread me out properly. Then mum snuck inside, and then Cyril. All three of them lay there under my roof telling each other scary stories. It was quite a nice thing actually.

The following day Cyril went off to his camp, taking me with him, obviously! He shared me with Marcel, who didn't have his own tent. I must say they were fairly nice tenants, except for maybe their socks, which didn't smell all that nice.

One day I simply had enough of this lack of hygiene. I sneezed discreetly and simply chucked the socks out.

What I disliked the most about the whole camp was the white night. Cyril and Marcel's mates dabbed toothpaste all over the two lads, and on me as well, just by the way. I don't know about you people, but I hate getting dabbed. Anyway, the green tent next door got it real bad. Its tenants, Matilda and her bestie Anna, spilled orange juice all over the floor, which attracted some ants. I don't know about you people, but tents really do hate it when ants get inside.

As soon as we got back from the camp, I was sent on a camping trip abroad, because Cyril's parents lent me to their friends from Grudziadz. And so, I spent three days getting all crumpled up in the boot before eventually arriving on the Mediterranean Sea. But it was well worth it, this much I can tell you.

I ended up on a campsite close to the beach. Every evening I was able to look at the moon reflecting in the navy-blue water. And listen to Mr and Mrs Beady, my new tenants, as they enjoyed each other's company, and the world.

"What a wonderful place you have chosen, my dear," Mrs Beady would say.

"It's because I seek out only the best things for you," Mr Beady would reply.

I was waiting to hear something about myself, for example something like: "I've never slept in such a comfortable tent before". Sadly, they never said anything like it. Oh well, nobody's perfect.

When I get back to Poland, I was given to a certain little girl, who couldn't go on holiday, so she pitched the tent up in the garden behind her house and read books all day.

"It's lunchtime, Monnie!" her mum would call out, but Monnie pretended she couldn't hear.

"Who cares about lunchtime," she mumbled, "when Harry Potter is fighting Lord Voldemort?"

I wanted her to read things out loud a bit, after all a tent likes a good story too, but Monnie never got what I meant. Only once did she stop her reading to say:

"Why are you rustling so, little tent?"

But then she quickly got back to reading about young wizards.





When Monnie returned the tent to Cyril, he lent it to his uncle. The uncle's girlfriend had recently dumped him, and he decided to go on a solitary hiking trip around the Bieszczady Mountains in south-eastern Poland.

"To walk the sadness away," he said.

He walked on and on, and I walked with him. He pitched me up in the evening and I shielded him from the rain – it poured almost every night. It seems like we were made to shield people from wind and rain, but let me be honest, we prefer it when it doesn't rain. As I said before, we set off just the two of us, but we got back as a four. Cyril's uncle met Eliza on the trail and decided to walk with her almost straight away. And then they both found a lame dog, which they decided to take to the vet. The vet put a dressing on the dog's paw and told them to come back in a week's time for a check-up. And so the dog would sleep in the tent while Eliza and Cyril's uncle sat by the fire all night. They talked, sang songs and it looks to me like they were very happy, because they didn't care if it was raining or not.

I spent the end of the summer in Warmia, which is in the north-eastern part of Poland. It was Cyril's cousin's school trip. He had a funny name, that cousin: Santiago, but everybody called him Santy. He finally treated me the way tents should be treated. Firstly, he read his book out loud. Secondly it was a book about travelling, which is my favourite kind of book. As well as all this, Santy praised me, saying I was very comfortable and that the best tent he'd ever slept in. I'd wanted to hear that all summer! At the end of his trip, he cleaned me up properly and got rid of all the sand from the inside. He also shooed away the last ant that got tangled in all the ropes.

Now I'm sitting quietly in Cyril's attic waiting for another trip. It looks like I might be lent out to someone before winter arrives.

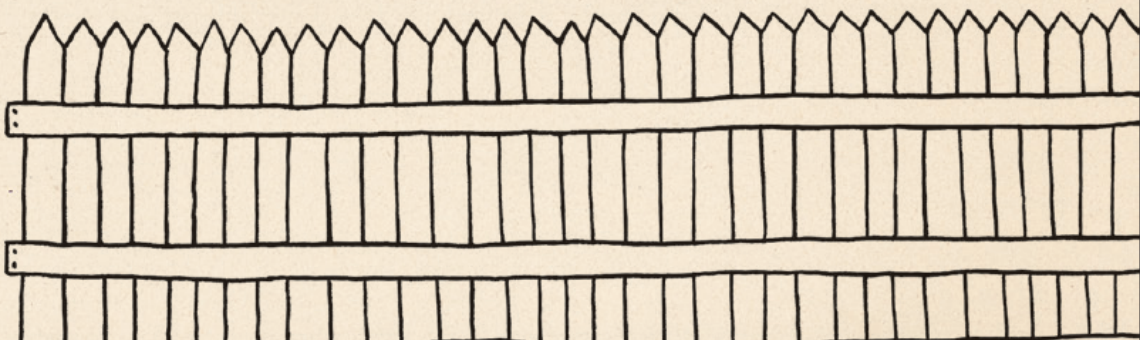
I feel just fabulous. After so many trips I'm the kind of tent who's rich on the inside!

Marcel's diary

2 August: We got back from the mountains yesterday. We'd gone to stay in mum's friend Melania's house. The weather wasn't brilliant, but we played board games and it was really cool. Apart from this, we went on a few amazing trips. And we conquered two tall summits. Just before we left, Dad baked some biscuits and left them on the table as a thank you for letting us stay in the house. It's funny because when we got back to our house, we also found biscuits on the table, except they were a little bit different.

4 August: I had this idea that I could swap some toys with my friends, so each of us would kind of have more toys. I immediately implemented the idea. I lent my scooter to Chris, who lives opposite. And he lent me his stilts. And what did I find out? That stilts are the best toy I've ever had. It turned out that Henny can walk on stilts very well, even though she's an older lady. You'd have to see her darting over to the shop on her stilts. All of us kids admired her.

6 August: Dad decided to make two pairs of stilts and leave them out by the fence outside our house for everyone in Parselyville to use!



Ecologist's essentials

We don't need to own everything

Day after day, adverts tell us what *more* we can buy. Modern-day people have so much more than their grandparents, or even parents. Often, these are objects that we need to care for, buy spare parts for and clean. All of this costs money and takes time. Which is why, when we *have* bought something, we should lend it to others, or maybe swap it for something else when we decide we don't need it anymore. We can swap toys, clothes, books, nearly everything.

Sometimes a group of people decide that they will own something together. A car, a drill or a camper trailer. You can also rent out a space where one person will run their coffee shop and another person will have their repairs workshop. This means people who come to the place to have a cup of coffee can get their broken alarm clock fixed at the same time.

Good sharing practises

- Foodsharing points are places where you can leave unwanted food when you have too much of it.
- You've probably heard of libraries for books, but did you know there are clothing libraries? You can borrow cool clothes from them, wear them for a bit, wash and iron them, and then return them!
- You borrow a Christmas tree in a plant pot from a Christmas tree rental service. After Christmas you simply bring the tree back and it can keep growing.
- A city bike and scooter rental system lets everyone use these vehicles.



chapter 6

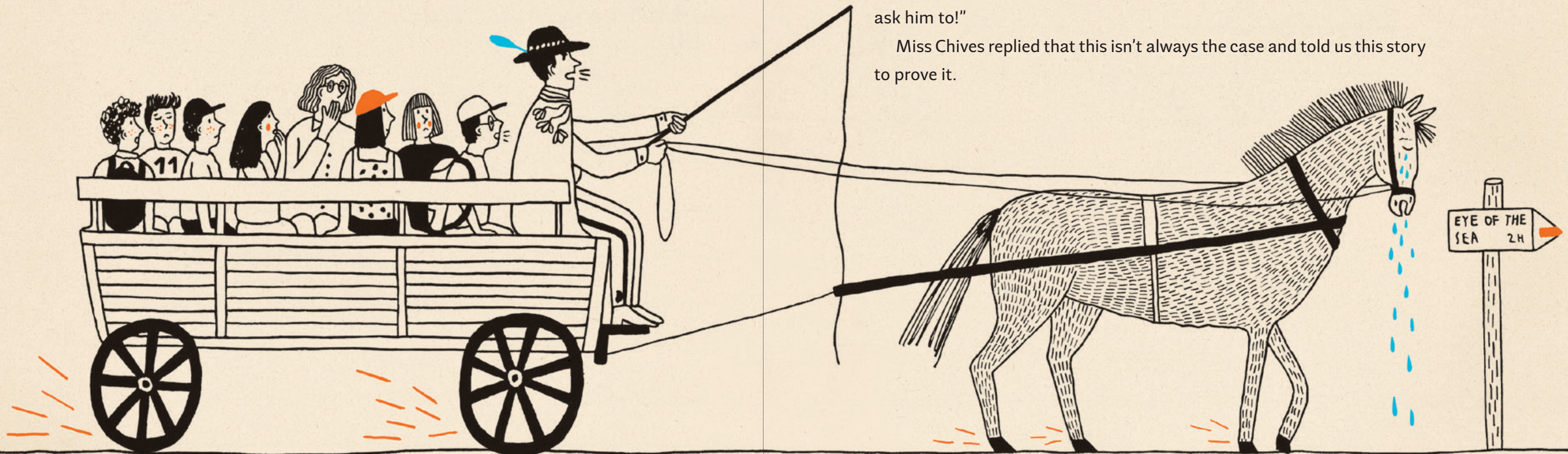
YOU
CAN
ORAN
OR A

TO
SAVE
GUTAN.
HORSE.



15 September: We're on a school trip in Zakopane in the Tatra mountains. Today we went to the mountain lake called the Eye of the Sea. We were going to have a ride in a horse-drawn cart, but the whole thing turned out to be rather sad because the horse that was pulling our buggy to the chalet at the lake really didn't have the strength to do it. The driver he got quite angry at the poor horse for plodding along and stopping so often. At some point he grabbed hold of the whip and would have used it if it weren't for Miss Chives getting very upset. She snatched the whip from the driver, told him to stop and told us to get out of the buggy.

"I will not let an animal suffer for our pleasure!" She said. "Our legs are perfectly fine and we can walk to the lake ourselves."



16 September: This whole horse business got us really upset. We wondered what we could do.

"Maybe we buy him out?" Chris suggested and told us how his dad bought a dog from an owner who kept him tied to a chain.

But what do we do with a horse? We can't take him on a train to Parsleyville!


17 September: We're going home tomorrow. We all feel very, very sad. Today we saw our horse again as he was pulling a cart full of tourists. We wondered whether we should report to the police how the horse was maltreated.

"Perhaps we should tell the owner to treat him better? He could take half as many people in one go and it would be much easier for the horse," said Miss Chives. "Or perhaps we could write a letter about it to the mayor?"

"This isn't going to help," Marcel mumbled. "If this bloke doesn't care about the horse's suffering, he won't feel any empathy for him when we ask him to!"

Miss Chives replied that this isn't always the case and told us this story to prove it.

The Story of the Ape Wizard



She was woken up by a high-pitched noise. Something flew right past her ear so that she felt the fast movement of the air. She lifted herself up in the nest high up in the tree and looked around with sleepy eyes. “Mum...”, whispered Little Pongo. “Mum, are you asleep?”

Bonogo was lying on her back, and she wasn’t moving at all. Her little daughter leaned over her, and suddenly froze. She was terribly worried that something had happened to her mum. Perhaps it would have been better not to know. Scared, she rolled over and shut her eyes tight, trying to fall asleep again. And then she heard quiet moaning, her mum must’ve been waking up. Pongo jumped up happily and cuddled up to her mum.

“Hey, baby girl... they hurt my arm,” the big orangutan mum moaned.

Oh yes, now Pongo could see clearly. There was a bloody trail on her mother’s arm. And next to her, a small pool of blood.

“Don’t worry, Mummy. I’ll run and fetch Great Boo,” whispered Pongo. She then ran down the tree and jumped down into some thickets.

Great Boo, who was a doctor and a wizard, could usually be found on a tree nearby. The little ape confidently ran ahead. After all, she knew the forest like the back of her hand. First, she ran to the place where the wild berries grew. And then right to the kingdom of golden flies. And then a few more jumps.

But what was this? Pongo suddenly stopped. Something wasn’t right. Someone had taken all the trees away. They had disappeared all that was left were miserable stumps. Not a trace of berries. Not a trace of golden flies. What’s worse, there was no trace of Great Boo round here either.

“What is going on here?” She cried out, feeling scared.

“This is all people’s doing,” Pongo heard a quiet voice behind her.

She turned around. An old orangutan female was sitting on one of the stumps, rocking from side to side.

“They’re chopping down trees. We orangutans have nowhere to live. We have nothing to eat because all our food is in the forest. We will slowly starve to death. Unless we’re shot dead first, then we’ll die quickly.”

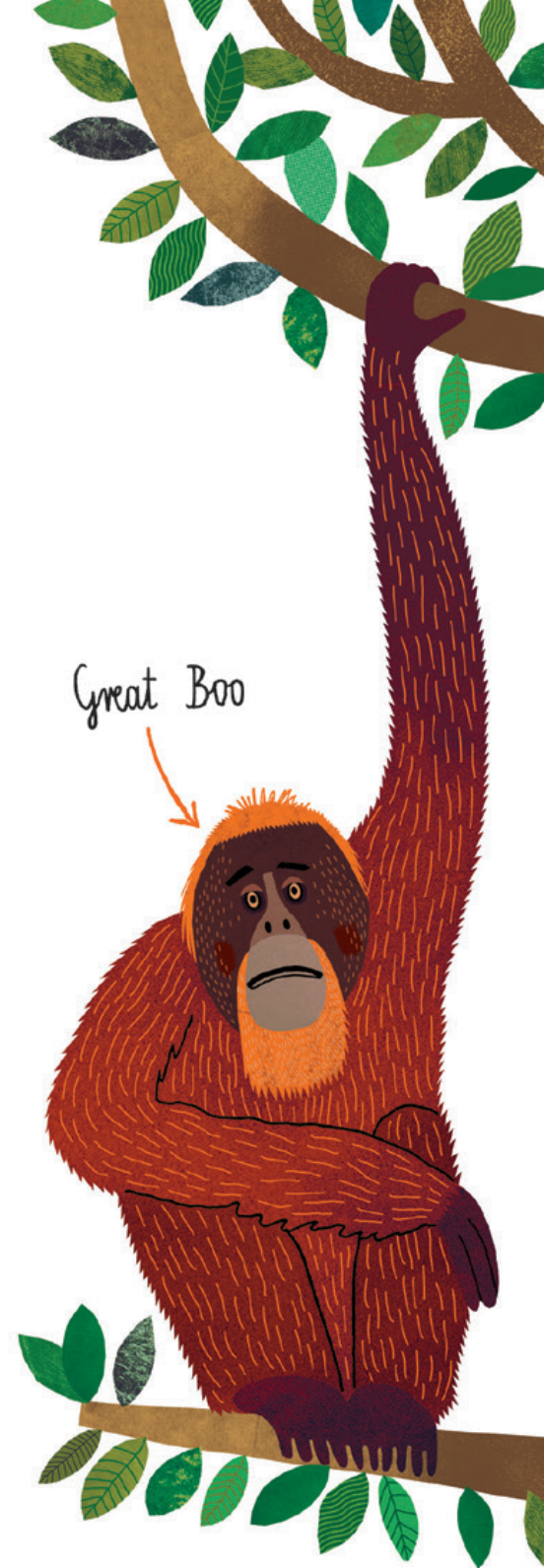
“My mum got wounded,” Pongo cried out.

“There, you see? Bad things are happening already, and things will get even worse.”

“I need to find Great Boo.” The little ape held on to her head. “He’ll know how to cure my mum.”

“Try looking for him there.” The old orangutan pointed a small wood.

Pongo was lucky. Great Boo, a huge and very strong orangutan, was sitting on a branch, looking anxiously out into the horizon.





“Boo,” Pongo called out to him. “My mum got hurt.”

“They shot at her, right?” He clarified with a frown.

“I think so. I didn’t see it. I could only hear the whistle of the bullet and then saw that my mum’s arm really hurt.”

“But she’s alive?” Boo asked.

“Yes, she is. Mummy can’t die.”

“My little Pongo... Terrible times have begun. People are cutting down trees and shooting at animals. They’re doing it to set up a plantation for oil palms in our forest.”

“What do they need so many palms for?” The little ape was surprised.

“They make oil out of them and then they make thousands of different things from the oil. Sweets, cosmetics. Even fuel. They are greedy. They want to earn a lot. This is why they need to make a lot of oil. But there aren’t enough palms in the world to satisfy their human greed. So people cut down forests where we live and they plant oil palms. And us... we face starvation. Or being shot. We die just like the other animals. Tigers, birds, insects...”

“How can they do this? They’re making us suffer...” whimpered Pongo.

“Humans have hearts of stone. They don’t care about the suffering of others. All they care about is money. Now let’s sort your mum out.”

So together they ran towards the tree where Bonogo’s nest was. The presence of Great Boo gave Pongo courage. After all, the older orangutan wasn’t just a fantastic ape doctor, but also a bit of a wizard, so nothing bad could happen.

When they got to their destination Pongo’s little heart skipped a beat. There was no trace of her mum anywhere.

“What happened? Where has she gone?”

Great Boo inhaled the air sharply and then looked around the ground by the tree. He could see little droplets of blood here and there.

"Someone must have scared her out... I can sense the smell of fear in the air. And if I sense fear, it means humans are involved."

The wise ape doctor was right. They walked a few paces and then they saw her.

Bonogo was curled up on the ground, exhausted and frightened. She was looking right at a man who was pointing at a rifle at her.

Before Great Boo managed to stop her Pongo ran towards her mother.

"No!" she started to scream. "Don't hurt her! I love her!"

Of course, the man didn't understand the words uttered by an orangutan child. Everything would have ended badly had it not been for Great Boo. After all, he was the wisest ape wizard. Without thinking for too long he pulled a dry leaf of grass and blew the air through it towards the hunter. The mysterious spell flew straight to the man's ear. And from his ear to his mind and his heart. And suddenly the man started to see things differently. In Pongo's eyes he saw the eyes of his own little daughter. The frightened Bonogo reminded him of his own mum, who was once very scared – for him, because he fell off a wall as a little boy and smashed his head. His mum winced in fear, just like this orangutan female. Suddenly the man brought his rifle down. He felt terribly embarrassed.

"How could I have hurt these innocent, feeling beings..."

The man looked down, turned around and went back to where he came from. Great Boo was finally able to look after Bonogo's wound. The threat was gone for now.

But this wasn't the end of this story.

The spell of the great ape wizard was still working in the man's heart, and he decided to spend the rest of his life saving both forests and animals. He started by asking himself whether he really needed all the sweets and cosmetics that cause orangutans to die.

No, he didn't manage to save them all, but maybe you can?

Marcel's diary

22 September: We eventually called the police before leaving Zakopane. The police officers promised to deal with the matter, but I can't stop thinking about the horse. When I grow up, I'll try to change the law so animals are better protected.

The summer was nearly at an end, which meant that mine and Matilda's birthday was coming up. Mum and Dad let us have a party upstairs in the attic. We're going to make a Lucky Fishing Rod. It's a kind of game with prizes for our guests. My parents promised they would buy some sweets. And we are going to attach a little wire hook to each sweet or chocolate bar. The guests will be able to fish for their own treats. Me and Matilda decided not to buy any sweets that contain palm oil. Because it's the palm oil that causes orangutans and tigers to die. It's no fun if someone on the other side of the world is suffering for our pleasure.

24 September: Yesterday, Matilda and I had a party. It went splendidly and everybody said we did a great job. But I was a bit sad because dad had to leave suddenly. He told me he'd be back with a surprise, but somehow it didn't cheer me up...

25 September: This morning, dad came back with a surprise. A great surprise. A great, great big surprise. It turns out he went to Zakopane to get the horse. The horse will be looked after by a special refuge for farm animals which opened recently not far from Parsleyville. And we can visit the horse and contribute towards his upkeep. I'm so happy!



Ecologist's essentials

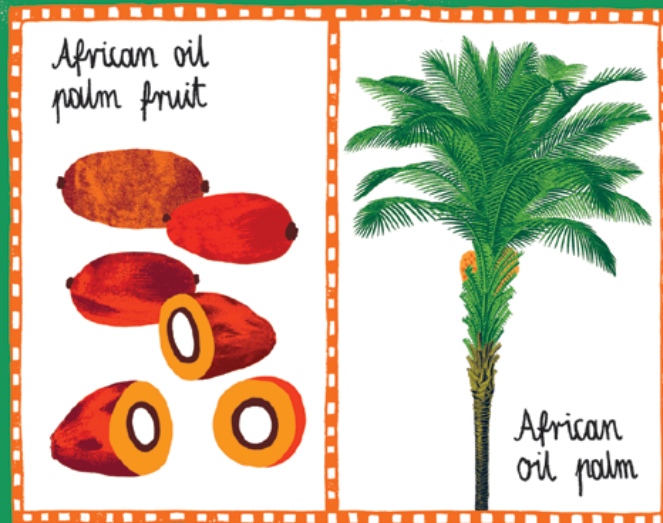
How to save endangered orangutans...

... as well as other animals who suffer due to forests being cut down to make room for African oil palm plantations? It's a good question. First of all, read the ingredients lists of sweets and cosmetics. If you find palm oil on the list, either give up on the product or check on the packaging if the oil comes from sustainable production. Sustainable production means that the natural environment, animals and plants (other than just oil palms) are respected.

If the manufacturer of your favourite biscuits uses palm oil without a suitable certificate, convince your parents to write to them and express your concern for animal welfare. One letter isn't probably going to make a difference, but if there's a lot of letters, they might give up on using palm oil. If not, you can give up on the biscuits.



a certificate
of sustainable
farming



Organisations that help animals

If you'd like to find out how to help animals in need, visit the website of one of the foundations that help them. Here is a list of organisations and centres that save cats, dogs, horses, farm animals, wildlife... our list only includes some of them – there are plenty more out there!

- <https://www.worldwildlife.org/> • **WWF**
- <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/> • **Greenpeace International**
- <https://www.peta.org/> • **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals**
- <https://www.hsi.org/> • **The Humane Society International – Europe**
- <https://www.oipa.org/international/> • **International Organisation for Animal Protection**
- <https://www.eurogroupforanimals.org/> • **Eurogroup for Animals**
- <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/> • **The Wildlife Trusts**
- <https://viva.org.uk/> • **Animal Rights Group Viva!**
- <https://en.aap.eu/> • **AAP (Animal Advocacy and Protection)**
- <https://www.ciwf.org/> • **Compassion in World Farming**
- <https://www.four-paws.org/> • **Four Paws International**
- <https://www.birdlife.org/> • **Bird Life International**
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/> • **The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**
- <https://www.dogandcatwelfare.eu/> • **EU Dog & Cat Alliance**
- <https://eu.worldhorsewelfare.org/> • **World Horse Welfare**
- <https://rabbitwelfare.co.uk/> • **Rabbit Welfare Association**



chapter 7



Marcel's diary



1 October: Today I overheard mum say to dad that she'd like something very special for her birthday. I don't know what dad replied, but later I saw him looking at his bank statements on his computer and sighing loudly. I'm not a kid anymore, so I know full well what this kind of sighing means: dad has no money. I'm not surprised – we renovated the attic, and we chip in to pay for the horse... So I had a quick look in my money box. It wasn't too bad. I had eighty zloty (which is the currency here in Poland). It's quite a lot! I went to dad and told him he could count on me. He was pleased.

3 October: Matilda decided to join us. We had quite a handsome sum with her fifty zloty. The three of us together managed to collect up three hundred zloty. Dad thinks this isn't quite enough and that we need to save up a bit more, because he has this gut feeling that mum is dreaming of

50
88
+ 222

360 PLN



a SPA weekend and it's bound to cost a fortune. We thought about what we can save on. This is why we decided to keep track of all of our expenses. Me and Matilda get pocket money, but let's face it, it's hardly a lot of dosh. How can we save up? Sometimes one simply must buy oneself a juice or chocolate bar... Dad said I could give up on chocolate bars. Oh well. I'll try.

5 October: We're saving money like crazy. Even before, dad wasn't a big spender, but now he's got this idea that he can save around a hundred zloty on fuel if he cycles to work. And it's even good for his health too! He also started to take tea with him in a thermos so that he didn't have to spend money on vending machines. But he still has coffee in Lucy's place, which is a café opposite the bookshop he works in. He's always loved going there, especially since she told him this amazing story...



Lucy's amazing story, or how you can change somebody's world by saving two zloty a day

All of this happened a few years ago in a small town – bigger than Parsleyville, but not quite as big as Warsaw. And in that town was a primary school. And that's where Anastasia worked.

Anastasia was a cook. She cooked meals to order for children. If someone loved hash browns, she made sure there were hash browns for lunch at least once a month. But cooking for two hundred kids... you'll admit it sounds like hard work. Anastasia must have been a kitchen wizard because she always managed.

One time this poor boy arrived at the school. Anthony was his name. He was raised only by his mum, who was often ill and didn't always manage to do the shopping or make breakfast. So, Anthony sometimes arrived at school hungry. No one had any idea because he never admitted he had any problems. The only person who knew was Anastasia. And every day she would find a way to sneak him a bread roll or an extra pork chop... It's no surprise that children simply loved Anastasia, and she loved them back. When she retired the school immediately became somehow sadder. The new cook was nice, but she wasn't Anastasia.

And then one day the news broke that there had been a fire in Anastasia's flat! Everything burned down – her furniture, her TV set. Her dishes cracked from the heat. It was simply horrendous! Luckily Anastasia was visiting a cousin that day and wasn't at home, so nothing happened to her. But she lost all her belongings.

Teachers, students, and neighbours collected a list of essentials for Anastasia. But her flat needed to be renovated... how was she supposed to pay for all this from a modest pension that was barely enough to pay for food and medicine?

No one quite knows who had the idea, but Lucy thought it was Anthony. Anyway, it's very likely that it was one of the pupils. The kids decided to save their pocket money and pay for the renovation. But can children really save up so much money? Well, if there's a lot of them...

They decided that each day they'd give up on one small thing, something that cost two zloty. And they'd put the money in a collection box in the school corridor. There were around two hundred kids in the school. And sure, some of them couldn't or didn't want to take part. But at least half of them did. A hundred children put on average two zloty in the collection box each every day for ten months. That meant six thousand zloty a month. After ten months the schoolkids collected sixty thousand zloty for Anastasia. She was able to renovate her flat over the summer holiday. There was even enough money for her to go to spend some time at a sanatorium.

And do you know the best thing about this story? That it really happened!



Matilda's diary

1 November: Today we went to visit my great-grandparents' grave – we visit it each year. And we always buy a lot of candles. This year we decided to try and save on them, so we made our own. We used empty dog food tins and jars, and we melted down leftover candles in an old cauldron. Dad put a thin wire around the rope wick so that it was easy to put it straight into melted stearin. This way we saved another thirty zloty and reused tins and jars! And we have another two weeks left until mum's birthday.

5 November: We're getting into the groove! We're getting better and better at saving! We note down all our expenses and try to replace the most expensive things we buy with cheaper versions. We discovered that we spend quite a lot of money on washing powder, which is why we decided to make our own. We found a recipe online – you'll need to mix equal parts of borax, sodium carbonate and sodium percarbonate. It sounds complicated, but these are the basic ingredients of the washing powder you can buy in shops. They're very cheap! You just need to mix them together in equal proportions and you're good to go!

13 November: Tomorrow is mum's birthday. And it looks like all our effort have gone to waste. I mean, not completely, because we managed to save 500 zloty. But we've just found out that mum doesn't want to go to a SPA! Dad was very disappointed when she told him about it today. After all, she did mention a super special present. So what was it supposed to be? And then it all became clear: it was her dream to go to a dog shelter and take some poor dogs for a walk!



jar
or



tin



leftover
candles



rope



wire



“Our two foundlings have such a great life,” mum said. “I feel ever so sorry when I think about all those poor things sitting in their cages.”

Do you know what? I need to write it down. I have the coolest mum in the world!

15 November: We eventually decided to take the dogs for a walk and buy them some dog food. We had some money left over, so we went to the cinema. And mum said it was her best birthday yet.



Ecologist's essentials

How to start saving

Oh, how nice it would be to walk into a shop and immediately buy the thing you want. Or to be able to realise a plan on the spot, like helping someone in need. Unfortunately, few people can afford to fulfil all their wishes at once. And that's when saving comes in handy.

If you want to learn how to save, you don't need to set up a bank account at all. A moneybox is just as good a way to save a few zloty. Or perhaps a number of moneyboxes... if you have more than just one wish.

You can use one moneybox for smaller dreams, for example a new game or book. And another one for something bigger, like a new bike, scooter or computer. If you save money regularly, your parents or grandparents will surely chip in every now and then. It's also a good idea to have a third moneybox for presents or helping those in need – both people and animals. Life is more beautiful and fuller if we sometimes lend someone a helping hand. Sharing gives as much pleasure as getting presents!

And there's one more important thing


Have you noticed how things we need to wait for, or put in a bit of effort for, give us more pleasure?

Our brains work this way. People who learn to be patient are simply happier. And that's another good reason to learn how to save!


chapter 8

THE
CHRIS
WITH NO

BEST
TIMES
MONKEY



Matilda's diary



11 December: We made Christmas decorations today – some made out of crepe paper and straws, as well as a coloured paper chain. Our mum decided this was the best way to limit the use of plastic – after all, most of the Christmas decorations that you can buy are made from plastic.

13 December: I think yesterday we made ten metres of chain. It was wonderful! Well... it... was wonderful. Yesterday a fox crept into Henny's chicken coop. Our dogs sensed it at once. They started to bark and demand to be let out. I thought they wanted a wee, so I opened the door, and they just sprinted off. My very clever brother managed to clip the chain to Noodle's collar. Later he said that "he was the world's only happy dog on a chain". Of course, Noodle tore our amazing piece of work to pieces, so we need to start again!

15 December: There's a problem. I don't know what I'd like for Christmas. Marcel, of course, wants a super smartphone, the one that Johnny, our classmate, has. Dad told him straight away not to count on any new phones. "Did you know how long it takes for a phone like that to decompose in landfill?!" – mum tried to speak to my brother's eco-conscience, but to no avail. It wasn't until Henny came to help us glue a new chain together that Marcel was convinced... after she told us this blood-curdling story...



Johnny, his mother and the smartphone

Once upon a time, a widow lived with her only son, Johnny. They weren't rich, but they had each other, Percy the cat and Goofy the dog. They also had the sun in the sky and the river behind their house, and some woods that were perfect for running in with a dog.

Every day, just before dawn, the mother would leave for her job, where she worked herself to the bone so her only son didn't want for anything.

And sure enough, Johnny had everything a child could dream of: Lego bricks, console games, and of course a computer. The mother looked on happily as her beloved son played beautifully with his friends.

"Good," she thought. "We might be poorer than others, but you wouldn't be able to tell just by looking at my Johnny. He's got the most expensive shoes and trousers, and T-shirts... and look at those toys! Any child would envy him!"

And it really was this way. Thanks to his mum working from sunrise till sunset and not wanting anything at all for herself, Johnny had the most expensive toys. As soon as something new arrived in the shops, or when his friends got something Johnny didn't already have in his collection, he would go to his mother straight away and say:

"You know, mummy, there's this dream I have..."

And mummy quietly rolled her sleeves up and got to work so that she could buy her only son the gadget he was dreaming of. Sadly, time ticked

on relentlessly. The mother wasn't getting any younger. On the contrary! With each passing year, she had more grey hairs and less strength. All of this was observed by two wise crows sitting on the branch of a tree not far from Johnny's house.

"Do you see what I see, Brunhilde?" asked the crow with the tail that was grey with age.

"I do see it, Nana Gertrude," replied the crow with the black tail..



"I think it's time we taught these silly people a lesson..." said Gertrude, and she flew off towards the woods.

She returned after several hours, sitting on the arm of a very handsome and smartly dressed lady who was carrying a briefcase. The lady nodded at Gertrude and when the crow flew back to her branch, she knocked on the door of Johnny's house.

"Hello there," she said with a smile as the door opened.

"Ah, hello, hello, what brings you here?" the widow asked.

"I represent the ABC company, and you are our most valued clients. This is why I have a fantastic offer for you."

"Oh yeah?" Johnny was very keen to hear more. "What kind of offer?"

"I bring you the latest XYZ smartphone with unlimited internet access. Fast as lightning! No one has this kind of phone in your area. On this smartphone you can watch films, read emails, chat to your friends, make bank transfers... Everything, simply everything gets faster and easier. Put simply, having this smartphone in your pocket makes you much happier."

"Yes, oh yes! Mum, my dearest mummy, won't you buy me this smartphone?"

The poor mother was taken aback. She was right in thinking that such a unique piece of equipment must come at a uniquely high price. When the elegant lady finally gave it to her, having made all possible discounts for best customers, the poor widow was hardly able to hold back her tears.

"I love you so much, my dear mummy! Please buy me this smartphone!"

In her head, the widow quickly calculated how many extra nights she would have to work to pay for it. It turned out she wouldn't be able to sleep until the end of the year, but she would do anything to make her only son happy.

And Johnny got his dream smartphone.

From that day on many things changed. The mother worked and the son sat hunched over the tiny little screen.

"Hey, Johnny, come out and play football with us," said his friends, but he only shook his head.

"Johnny, did you write your essay?" asked his teacher, but all he did was look at his screen, even when the teacher gave him the third fail in a row.

"Johnny, why don't you cook us some lunch? I'm so tired..." whispered the mother, but the son just snorted angrily:

"Can't you see I'm playing a game on my smartphone?"

And so the days passed, then months passed, and then years...

One day, as he was surfing the internet, Johnny discovered to his horror that a new smartphone had been released. It was much better than his.

"Mum!" he called out. "Mum, I need a new phone!"

For the first time he looked at his mother more carefully. Oh dear! What had happened? She'd grown so old! She'd kind of shrunk, she'd got so tiny... Yet he pushed away the sad thoughts. He so wanted to have this latest, best phone.

And mum, as mums do, just tried a bit harder and bought him his next dream gadget.

The new phone let him surf the internet even faster, it had better colours and sound... The boy simply forgot about the world around him.

He didn't notice when another year passed, and then another. His mum kept buying him phone after phone. They even stopped talking to each other, not to mention going on walks together or playing board games. His friends paid no attention to him because he didn't join in with their conversations, he was forever hunched over his screen...

Then one day something incredible happened. Johnny went to the bathroom, with his phone, as always, but something pulled his attention away from his screen. It was a fly, a great big green fly that flew



in through the bathroom window and sat on the mirror. Unwittingly, he looked at the mirror – he hadn't done so for years. He saw a not-so-pleasant looking strange man with bloodshot eyes. The man had grey temples and a strange moustache...

And our Johnny cried out in horror. Who was this strange, oldish person? He lifted his hand to his face – his reflection did the same thing. Yes, there was no doubt it. It was him!

"Mum!" he called out scared as he ran out of the bathroom. "Mum, someone stole a huge chunk of my life away from me! I didn't notice that I'd become an adult, I didn't even notice growing old!"

"What did you say, dear?"

The mother lifted herself up from her armchair. And then he noticed she was completely old. Grey, trembly, wrinkled.

"What happened to you, mum?!" Johnny couldn't believe his own eyes.

"What can I do, my sweet?" The old lady smiled sadly. "I need to work from morning till night, and sometimes through the night, to give you everything you need. It really makes me grow older."



Johnny stepped back, horrified. All of this was horrible, horrendous!

"No!" he said firmly. "I don't want this! I want to get back all the time that escaped me! I don't want you, do you hear!" he cried out at his phone, lifting it to his eyes. "You made me forget I need to live!"

And he threw his phone against the wooden walls of his house.

The two wise crows watched all this from a nearby branch.

"Brunhilde, I think they've had enough," said the first crow.

"I agree, Nana Gertrude," the other cawed back. "We need to call in our forest lady."

Soon afterwards, the elegant lady with the briefcase arrived at the door.

"Hello there," she said as she came inside without knocking.

"How dare you come here?!" Johnny shouted resentfully. "It's all because of you! My mum spent all her health and strength, and I... I lost my old life. I don't want this phone anymore! I don't want anything. I want to live, go on walks with my mum, have friends and play football with them!"

"Wonderful," the elegant lady smiled kindly. "Looks like you've come to your senses. How about you, ma'am? Have you got any wiser?"

Johnny's mum looked at her sadly.

"I wanted to give my child the best. But I didn't give him the best things, just the most expensive ones!"

"Indeed! I see you have both learned something. I can let you off this one last time!"

And then she flung her briefcase from side to side and the whole house whirled against the movement of the clock's hands. Soon enough John with a moustache was once again little Johnny, and his mum was... well, maybe not very young, but certainly much, much younger than before.

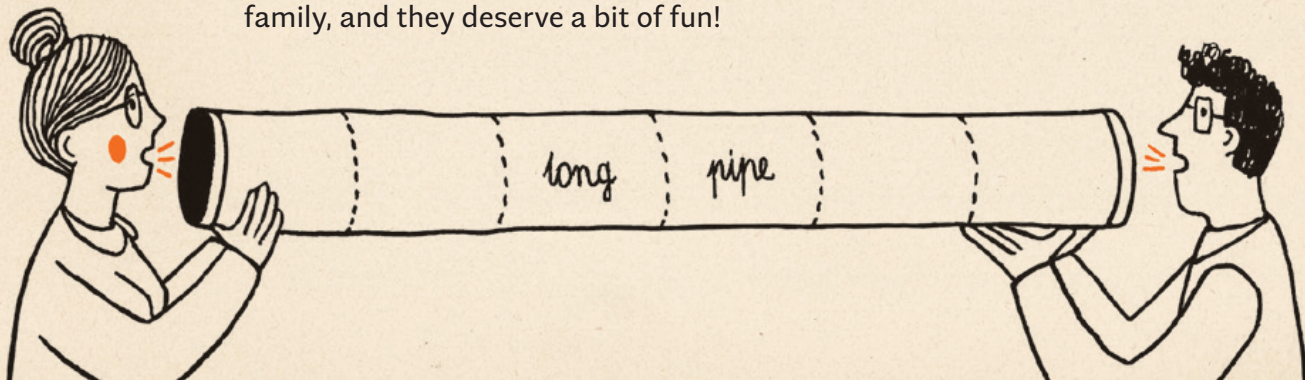
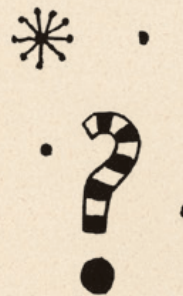
They were both so happy, they fell into each other's arms and then they took their dog out for a walk.

Marcel's diary

22 December: This year we will have Christmas trees in pots. The whole class along with Miss Chives brought trees in pots from a plant nursery. The plan is to plant these trees after Christmas, in the spring, so that us kids from Parsleyville have our own wood. Parsleyville's mayor, that is mum, earmarked a bit of an empty field for our wood. This is a much better idea than cutting down trees.

23 December: I so wanted to get a smartphone, a quad and my own TV set. I know I'm not getting them, but dad said he's prepared something very similar to those things for us! I really want to know what it's going to be.

27 December: This was a total surprise. This year we had the most amazing Christmas and the most amazing Christmas presents! Instead of a smartphone, me and Matilda got a long pipe that dad had dragged from the attic to the front room. Then we spoke to each other through the pipe and could hear each other's voices really well. We had amazing fun. It looks like mum had the most fun of all of us – she told dad jokes through the pipe. We didn't find a TV set under the tree either. Instead, our parents put on a shadow theatre show. They must've put a lot of work into it. And the best thing of all was the trailer for dogs – the kind you attach to your bike. Seeing as there was no snow this year, we all went on a bike trip. Thorn and Noodle came with us in the trailer. After all, they are members of our family, and they deserve a bit of fun!



Ecologist's essentials

What to buy instead of a smartphone or some lipstick, or ideas for gifts for the entire family that don't cost you any money

- 1 A voucher for a service, for example, some storytelling, a foot massage, baking biscuits, or anything else you like doing.
- 2 A poem you write yourself.
- 3 Breakfast in bed (mums especially like this).
- 4 A small creature for cuddling made from a sock.
- 5 Scratching behind the ear (an ideal gift for a dog).
- 6 A trip to the other side of the city (or village) – the giver prepares for the trip by researching everything about the area so that they can step into the shoes of a tour guide. They can talk about the trees that grow in the area, the buildings you pass along the way, interesting people who lived nearby, and so on.
- 7 A cloud identification course. You'll first need to learn about the clouds yourself, for example on the internet, but it's not hard.
- 8 A handmade sugar scrub (you need to mix sugar with coconut oil – this is more of a present for your mum or sister).
- 9 A photo shoot made with a mobile phone.
- 10 A plant that you grew yourself, from a seed or a seedling. A money plant would be best!



sugar scrub



chapter 9

T H I S

W I N D

S N O

A T

K I N D

F

T E

W I N T E R

A L L

Matilda's diary

4 January: Me and Marcel had a wonderful New Year's Eve. We invited some friends from our class and spent the entire night up in the attic. First, we played board games, then we told each other scary stories, and finally we played dare. It's almost like a normal card game, except the one who loses must grant the wish of the person who wins. Marcel played against Tom – and he won, of course. My brother is so lucky with cards! And his wish was for Tom to take his dog out for a walk more often. Tom has this massive, grey, fluffy dog which spends whole days locked away in a big cage. I wonder how things will turn out...



7 January: I've had enough of this winter. There isn't any snow whatsoever. My parents cancelled our skiing trip to the mountains. What's the point in going if the slopes are all green? We were quite upset, but not as upset as the lady whose place we were going to be staying at. Sure, no snow, no tourists.

Mum said this is all because of climate change. It's caused by human activity: cutting down rainforests, industrial livestock farming and using fossil fuels. The biggest culprit is one of the greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, which people relentlessly keep sending into the atmosphere. This gas causes global warming.

10 January: There won't be a snowman this year due to carbon dioxide and climate warming. But this is the least of our problems. Dad is worried because the buds on our apple trees in our small orchard look like they're about to start producing shoots. But it's much too early! If the trees bloom too quickly and we get some frost, we can forget about apples this year. But what do we even need apples for? Because of climate change the ice in the Antarctic is melting, and the entire continent is shrinking, which means many animals are losing their habitats. Today I watched this incredible film about a polar bear on TV...

CO₂
carbon dioxide





The story of the white bear and the girl named Gana

When little Gana was born, her mum, who everyone called One Who Has a Black Braid, kissed her baby daughter on her upturned nose and said: “She’s as white as the snow, which is why I shall call her Gana, which means Falling Snow.”

On hearing the name, the baby started to wriggle around in her cradle and pull faces that were so funny. Her dad, whose name was One Who Has a Big Nose, giggled and decided the little girl must obviously like her name.

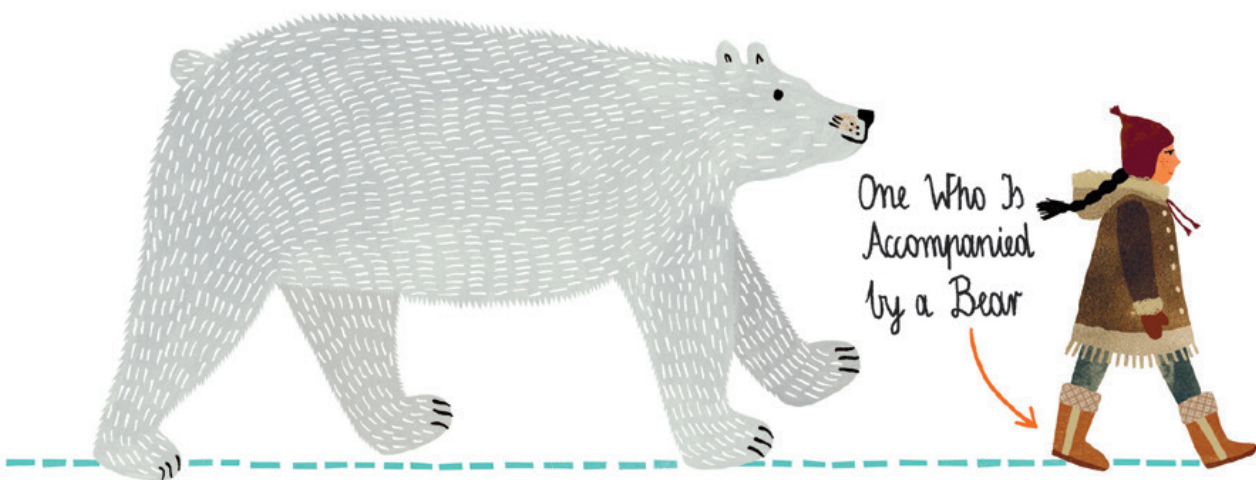
Gana grew healthy and strong. She quickly learned to walk and talk. Before they realised it, she was beating them at dice.

“That girl is very clever,” One Who Has a Big Nose would say. “I wouldn’t be surprised if she became a shaman woman or a fisherwoman. She’s going to make us proud!”

Whenever her husband said something like this, One Who Has a Black Braid would nod her head, beaming with pride.

One day something incredible happened. Gana and her father went fishing. They were sitting by the water, casting their rods. The dad was telling his daughter what the world was like when he was a little boy. And Gana listened to him excitedly.





At some point the man stood up and went to fetch the bag that he'd left a few metres away. In it, he had some smoked fish for lunch for himself and his daughter. And this is when it happened... a piece of ice on which Gana was sitting and carelessly swinging her legs, came off and fell into the water. The petrified father didn't get there in time to help her.

The girl began moving towards the open sea. Things weren't looking good. And when it seemed that all was lost, a white bear suddenly came up from the water.

People and polar bears usually stay out of each other's way. They're scared of each other. This is why One Who Has a Big Nose screamed in horror. But the bear just sunk its teeth into the piece of drift ice on which Gana was curled up and started to swim towards the shore.

When the ice drift came close enough to the shore, the man threw the end of his belt to his daughter and pulled her onto the shore.

"My little Gana," he cried with emotion.

"He saved me, daddy," said the girl as she looked out for the big white bear head in the water. But the bear had already disappeared.

He came back a few days later when Gana went to her neighbour to get some fat for the lamps. He appeared from inside a snowdrift and

followed Gana as if he was guarding her. The next time he turned up was during a blizzard when Gana and One Who Has a Black Braid were running home, surprised by the weather. He paved the way for them. After that he often helped Gana fish – he dived to fetch the fattest fish for her. Another time, when Gana got mugged, he came out of nowhere, stood on his hind legs, and roared so terrifyingly that the thugs ran off as fast and as far they could.

Gana wasn't called Gana anymore, but One Who Is Accompanied by a Bear.

"This happens once in a thousand years," an old shaman woman said. "This girl really is someone special."

Many years passed. Gana wasn't a child anymore, or even a young girl. She was a grown woman.

She was sitting on the shore with her daughter, and they were both cleaning the fish they'd caught.

"Mama, look!" shouted the girl, who was called One Who Has Sun in her Eyes.

Gana stood up and gasped. Straight away she recognised her bear. Her protector was standing on top of a small hillock, looking all scrawny and scared. Over the past few years vast sheets of ice had melted. Bears, whose basic food is seals, lost access to them. No ice sheet meant hunger for them. People didn't feed the white bears because it was dangerous.

But Gana didn't listen to the warnings. He was her bear, a dear friend who had saved her life so many times. This is why she fed him and managed to save him.

"What about the other bears?" One Who Has Sun in her Eyes asked her mother.

"People all around the world are going to have to help us save the other bears," Gana said and put her arm around her daughter.

Marcel's diary

15 January: I must protest at not having any more winter. What about skis? Sledges? Ice skates? Me and Matilda have decided not to give up. We already know we should lower carbon dioxide emissions. I dived a little deeper. And I discovered it's better to eat more vegetables and less meat. Farmed animals emit a lot of gas. That's right! They fart! It's also better to use a bike rather than a car. Bikes emit no gases, and cars do. Another thing is buying stuff. It costs the earth as much as a drive of two and a half thousand kilometres to produce a single computer. I don't even want to think about how bad flying is...

20 January: Things got me down a bit at first. Even if I never buy a car, don't eat meat, save electricity, it will still be very hard for me to prevent climate warming on my own. Or, say, with just my sister. I was sitting quietly in the corner, feeling miserable, when Matilda arrived and told me Tom had persuaded his parents to get rid of Cactus's cage. Cactus is their scary big grey dog. Cactus runs around freely now and, do you know what, he's actually not that scary.

And then I had this moment of clarity. I understood that if I improved the life of that dog, I could convince a few other people to look after our climate. Or more than just a few. Who know, maybe I have this power? And if we all try together, then maybe winter will return. Or at least the world as we know it is not going to disappear in the next thirty of forty years. Let's do this! You, my sister and me!

Cactus



Ecologist's essentials

Preventing climate warming

Read the guidelines below carefully. Agnieszka Wnuk, Gosia Świderek and Krzysztof Wychowalek prepared them for you from a WWF handbook on how to save energy at home and a brochure from the European Committee Representation in Poland.

You too can combat climate change! Think about what else could be done. Perhaps you could write your own list with your parents?

LIST

1
2
3



Save energy

- Ask your parents to replace lightbulbs with energy saving fluorescent lamps or LED lamps. Using energy-saving bulbs can reduce your energy consumption by as much as 80%.
- Turn off all lamps and other appliances when you're not using them.
- When you buy home appliances, make sure your parents choose the ones that are energy efficient (they will have A, A+, A++, A+++ symbols on them).
- Turn on the washing machine and dishwasher only when they're full (you'll save water and energy).
- Ask your parents to do the washing at the lowest temperature and to cook with the lid on pans. Cooking this way can help you save three times as much energy.
- Don't overheat your home. The average temperature in a room should be between 20 and 21°C. Decreasing the temperature by 1°C means lowering energy costs by 7%.
- Don't leave your appliances on stand-by and your chargers plugged in.



A+++

A++

A+

A

B

C

D



Save paper

- Print on both sides.
- Use recycled paper. Its production uses roughly 70% less energy than ordinary paper.
- Fill out your copybooks right to the end.
- Use recycled toilet and kitchen roll.
- Collect paper for recycling.

Save water

- Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth. Have a shower instead of a bath – this way you'll save water and energy needed to heat it up.
- Make sure your taps are turned off properly.
- Eat less meat. Producing a single hamburger uses as much water as you would need for a year's worth of showers.
- Buy fewer new items of clothing – a single pair of jeans needs dozens of litres of water for its production.
- Ask your parents to install a water metre (if possible).
- If you have a garden, water it late in the evening or early in the morning, when it's cooler. This will prevent water from evaporating as much and the plants will absorb more of it. Use rainwater for watering. You can collect rainwater in big vats placed under your gutters.

Use a bike, train and... your legs

- In the city, try to walk or ride a bike instead of driving. And don't forget public transport!
- Chose trains over planes. Planes emit large quantities of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.
- Tell your parents to take the roof box off the car. This will help them save fuel.

Buy wisely

- Choose local and seasonal products – thanks to this you'll limit the energy-intensive transport.
- Reduce animal-derived products in your diet. Animal farming, and especially factory farming, is linked to animal suffering as well as intensive carbon dioxide and methane emissions into the atmosphere.
- When possible, buy products in reusable packaging, or even better – in no packaging at all.
- Do not use plastic bags.
- Avoid disposable products. Choose durable and quality products so that you can use them for longer.

Produce little rubbish

- Only buy things you really need.
- Share: swap books, games or toys.
- If you have things in good condition that you no longer need, give them to others.
- Segregate your waste.
- If you can, compost organic waste with you parents.
- Take your lunch to school in a reusable box made with planet-friendly materials (like bamboo) or in a waxed wrapper, as opposed to a disposable bag or aluminium foil.

Save trees

- Trees absorb carbon dioxide – the main cause of global warming. This is why you should save and collect paper. Did you know that one ton of recycled paper helps save 17 trees?
- Look for FSC and PEFC labels on wooden products. These labels mean that the wood you're buying comes from well-managed forests.



→ **Justyna Bednarek** (b. 1970)

By education a Romance-languages specialist, by vocation a children's author, Justyna Bednarek has written over 50 books, including *The Incredible Adventures of Ten Socks (Four Right and Six Left)*, which is now on the Polish school reading list. She also wrote *Pięć sprytnych kun (Five Cunning Martens)*, *Babcocha*, *Pan Stanisław odlatuje (Mr Stan Flies Away)* and a series for pre-schoolers called *Dusia i Psinek-Świnek (Maddie and Piggypup)*. She is the recipient of many literary awards, including the City of Warsaw Literary Prize, an award at the Comma and Period Best Children's Book Competition, the Kornel Makuszyński Literary Award, and, more recently, an award at the IBBY Polish Section Book of the

Year competition for her book *Zielone piórko Zbigniewa. Skarpetki kontratakują! (Zbigniew's Green Feather. The Socks Strike Back!)*. Before she made her dream of writing stories come true, she worked as a journalist for many years. Her longest job as a journalist was for the *Kuchnia* culinary magazine. She lives in Warsaw, has three children, three dogs, a cat, two hens and two drakes, one of whom is called Katarzyna. Additionally, her children have two chinchillas (called Aubergine and Mrs Pumpnickel), as well as a cat and a dog who kiss when no one's watching.

photo: Julita
Delbar,
Klitka
Atelier

Lee



Katarzyna

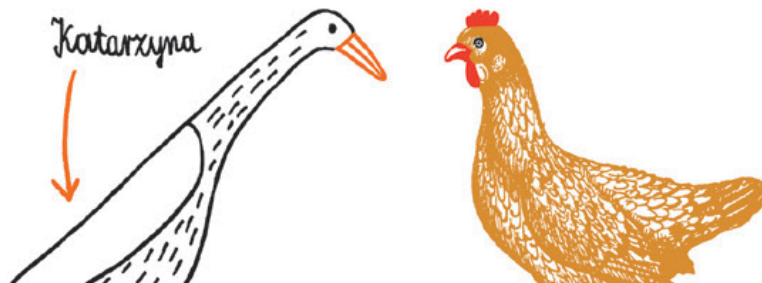
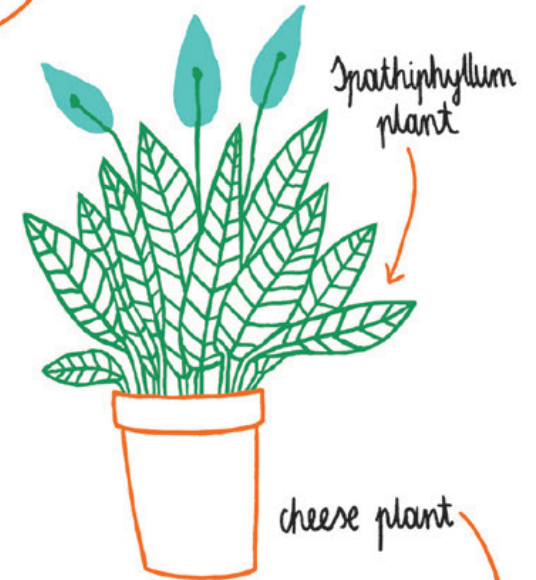


photo: Marta
Mikulińska



cheese plant

Joanna Czaplewska (b. 1993)

A graphic designer and illustrator who has worked for many cultural institutions, Joanna graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, where she now also works. She provided illustrations, along with Katja Widelska, to *Trzy, dwa, raz, Günter Grass (Three, Two, One, Günter Grass)* by Elżbieta Pałasz, which received a special mention at the IBBY Polish Section Book of the Year competition. She has also illustrated books including *Anthony The Cat Wanders Around Gdynia* by Dorota Abramowicz, *Dobra robota (Good Job)* by Elżbieta Pałasz and *Historia Kobiet (Women's History)* by Katarzyna Radziwiłł. She lives in Gdynia, five minutes away from the sea. Her most frequent view from her window is of shrieking seagulls flying past. Joanna is the mother to four *Spathiphyllum* plants and 35 other plants in pots. She is also a relentless book collector, and especially likes illustrated books. She likes to cycle.



A few words for the grown-ups

ING Bank Śląski and the ING for Children Foundation is made up by people who know that decisions made today will shape the reality of future generations. People are, and have always been, at the centre of our activities. And today this centre also includes the challenges related to climate crisis. Together we will be able to do a lot of good for the environment. But if we remain indifferent, nothing will stop the ongoing degradation of the Earth.

Each day we can change our habits, use natural resources in more responsibly, educate, perfect innovative technologies and, through all this, protect our planet. We have already started and we're happy to share the experiences we have gained*.

The youngest people are the future of our planet: we believe in their intuition, wisdom and sensitivity. The ING for Children Foundation has ceaselessly supported the development of children, especially those whose path into adulthood is difficult, be it for health or social reasons. But can children really change the fate of a planet? We are certain they can, especially with the help of all of us – parents, grandparents, teachers. To save the world we all live in, we need both great initiatives and micro-activities. ING Bank Śląski together with the ING for Children Foundation has so far published two children's books: *Alien*

* We describe the ING Bank Śląski's activities for the planet on www.ing.pl, as well as on Facebook, LinkedIn and in the *ING Integrated Annual Report*.

and *Lucjan the Lion: One of Its Kind* by Roksana Jędrzejewska-Wróbel. Both these books touched on important social topics, and this is also the case in our latest publication. It shows how important our everyday choices are and how closely we are linked by the invisible thread of interdependence. Matilda and Marcel, the two protagonists of Justyna Bednarek's eco-story, will help young readers discover and understand how everything is connected.

Children are brave, creative and uncompromising. We are committed to supporting their plans, resolutions and dreams – not just personal, but also those that together make up our common good: cleaner air, less plastic, fewer endangered plant and animal species, and fewer unnecessary objects around us. Let's read this book together. And together let's try to save the world.

ING Bank Śląski
ING for Children Foundation



You can find information about the activities of the ING for Children Foundation and our books at www.ingdzieciom.pl. We'd also like to invite you to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, and to share your thoughts about our eco-story. You can write to us on: fundacja@ingdzieciom.pl

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