

great characters of

MeMo



Great Characters of MeMo

Dear reader and friend,

I'm writing to you in my pajamas. I know! I know. I'm not very presentable but I just got up. It's not my fault! I was still in bed when the publisher asked me a favor. This morning she told me she couldn't get a spark of inspiration and now, here I am, writing on MeMo characters while having breakfast.

I bet our gastropod is going to play modest despite having so many fans. Some kids even think that all snails are named Raymond. Can you believe it?

Émilie Vast's rabbits, are you still there? One of them is so afraid of everything that he might confuse me with a wolf. Fortunately, I know his friend will take care of him. There's also another rabbit. Actually you'll find many rabbits and many dogs in MeMo books. Many bears too. For example, Malika Doray's rabbit lists all the times when you need a hug. I love that. Now, here are the gibbons. Those guys are the best, always ready to help somebody out. Not matter if you are a baby crocodile or a baby bird. They have a such big hearts.

What did you say, Duck? You wanted to share the games the other ducks were playing with in the pond? Fortunately they realized that it's more fun that way. Jumper and his friends are here with their recycling train. You see, the thing with Jumper is that he left his master. But don't worry, his friends will cheer him up. I can't really tell what is going to happen next.

But, hold on... Yes, it's what I thought. Here comes Nin's family! Those guys are so tiny! Nin had lost her doll when her baby sister was born but they found out how to get it back. And now, my favourites, the three little animals who went to town all dressed up like humans. You should definitely see them roast marshmallows in the fireplace. Do you really think that I prefer those three cute bears over the others? Well, maybe...

And what about Micha? Is he a bear, a cat or a monkey? A monkey cat, perhaps? Anyway, he's a very special boy. Very gifted. A perfect fit for a circus act. Always running around. Okay, now I've got a headache. Nevermind. Let's look for a real cat on a tree! For example, the one in Sandol Stoddard and Remy Charlip's story. Look at him explaining to his little master how he feels about being his very own special, particular, private and personal cat.

I'm warning you I have nothing to do with Ursin and Ursulin. You don't want to be friends with those two mischievous bears. They always play tricks on people. I still remember the day they disguised themselves as pandas just get free food. Better talk about real heroes like P'titgars-P'titdoigt Lil' bud-Lil' thumb. Like me, he isn't what you would call «good-looking». Despite his small size he faces up to robbers, tricks a wolf and makes his parents rich.

Here's me doing sport! This is my favourite page. Am I a hero? Not at all! But with my dog friend, we know how to be happy. Oops, I totally forgot who's next? Oh! Right! Tomek and Mirko, Chnourka's friends. I must admit that it's a bit difficult to look at them in the snow on white paper. They also know how everything is more pleasant and easier with friends. There's someone else who knows supportive friends are the best when you want to become who you are and go far. It's the little soldier. He's not an easygoing one and he is often gets angry. But together they grow by helping each other.

Look, Dog and Cat are coming with two little humans. Their funny stories are written by Mr. Čapek, with their assistance, of course. At least that's what they told me.

I gaught a gold now. I thing dat it's begause of da Nose from Olibier Nouzou's sdory. He is looking for a big dish... atishoo. Or maybe a big tissue? Anyway, let's move on.

My eyes! All those hippos with their colours really hurt my eyes. Hey guys, is it too much to ask to choose just one colour once and for all? Actually it's the aim of the book... to find Popov at the end of the book. Phew, almost done! Attention, please! The famous actress Rosie is here now. Her friends are actors with no talent so she asked me to play their parts instead. Unfortunately none of the costumes fit me. Did you just call me «fat»? Look, it's just my fur playing tricks on your eyes. My fur and my size are two different things...

Let me conclude with a group of square animals. Actually, I'm a bit lost when I look at them. However I think they are the best to finish off this list of animals and humans people I was asked to introduce to you. They are all great characters of MeMo books. I like the carlican, the square pelican, although I love the carous best!

Wait a minute, the publisher is trying to tell me something... She's saying she has finally found inspiration! Well, Dear Publisher, it's too late now... but you know what, just keep doing your best to help us find our way onto kids' bookshelves!

Yours Sincerely, Bear
(illustrated by Junko Nakamura)



Raymond by Anne Crausaz

Of course, I knew that MeMo would ask me to be the first to introduce myself. So, here I am! I'm Raymond the snail. I'm kind of a dreamer, always hoping for a better life. I like to pretend I'm many things, like a slug, or a rattlesnake, or a super busy centipede or a prickly porcupine until my final change... But wait a minute! I'm not going to tell you the end of my story! But, I can tell that children love it and that it is my first book as the lead character (though I've made cameos here and there, a bit like Hitchcock but with a shell on his back). Some kids even think that all snails are named Raymond. Can you believe it?

With *Raymond is Dreaming*, her first book, Anne Crausaz immediately gained the attention of readers and book professionals. She has been creating stories on nature where she explores seasons and life cycles, relationships between people and nature. She observes fauna and flora in Switzerland, fills out lots of sketchbooks and imagines stories. Many stories actually. When she is in front of her computer, she uses her mouse the same way she handles a paintbrush and creates strikingly stunning pictures.

What can I say? I'm just a lucky snail that nature has helped in many ways. I love to think that everybody can and should dream of something big and special. But we should still be able to find beauty in daily life, no matter how small or big you are.

Read my adventures in *Raymond is Dreaming*, *Wake up Raymond!*, *Raymond's Technicolor Dreams*, *Raymond is Dressing Up*, *Raymond is Playing*. By the way, if you're good at paying attention to details, you may find me in other Anne Crausaz' books!

The Two Bunnies by Émilie Vast

Do you want to know a little secret? We, the two bunnies, tell each other our fears and dreams. We have fun too. You know, not too long ago, I was still scared of the wolf. I happened to have the wrong idea about him. I also discovered that I have a superpower of my own, like all animals. I mean, it's not just mine, it's a bunny superpower. When we open our eyes wide, we can observe and understand the world.

Like her bunnies, Émilie Vast is a great observer. She uses vector graphics to represent plants with accuracy. Black and white flora are enhanced by solid-color backgrounds. They are the living theatre of her animal stories. She shows fauna and flora growing in harmony through the full circle of life. For her, fiction is a way to display the complexity of nature. She deconstructs our received ideas about animals like wolves, bees and spiders. She encourages readers to wonder and look at plants with fresh eyes.

*We can't wait for our new adventures.
I hope I'll find lots of carrots in these picture books!*

Let's meet again in *I'm Scared of the Wolf!* and *All I Want Is A Superpower*.





The Little Bunny by Malika Doray

Hello, I'm a little bunny. Malika's little bunny. She loves my species a lot. I really mean a lot! She has been drawing pictures of me in many situations, like when I feel cuddly, grumpy, funny, curious. Even when I get angry but, don't worry, I don't stay angry very long! I've been living wonderful stories and I also grow up over the course of all the stories.

In *A Sweet Hug*, she lists all the times when you need a hug, like when you say goodbye, when you meet people again or when you feel sad. Any moment is a good time to say how much you love someone.

Malika Doray talks about issues that young readers feel concerned with, like relationships with others and with adults, what it feels like when you think you're left alone, how to believe in oneself and when the need for love is strong. Her small animals carry these emotions. Her writing style has the same musical tone as nursery rhymes. This musical quality makes her texts more enjoyable when read out loud! Small children love the way she uses clear and strong colours.

The book on hugs, A Sweet Hug has garnered a large audience. Plus, it's my favourite! Two departments of France (Savoie and Lot) chose it as a gift for all the newborns of the year it was published... Meaning lots and lots of hugs to come!

See more of my adventures in *A Sweet Hug* and *To Keep You Warm* and you can also meet other bunnies — cousins and friends of mine — in all Malika Doray's works.

The Three Gibbons by Kenji Abe

We are the three gibbons. Our names are Ibbon, Nibbon and Sabbon. We love having a walk and making new friends. We also enjoy exploring the world and pushing our limits. However, we're happy to go back home and enjoy calm after new experiences and lots of bananas!

With his minimalist style, Kenji Abe creates simple but deep books for the youngest. His three super energetic characters help him to tackle issues he values like mutual aid, accepting others despite their differences, migration and sharing knowledge. He uses them in daily life situations and is careful not to lecture his readers. His lovely and funny monkeys are very popular among young readers. They feel comfortable with these characters who remain positive and calm in any situation.

Look, a slope! Shall we roll down together to the bottom?



Come find us in our three adventures: *The Three Gibbons*, *The Three Gibbons and the Little Crocodile* and *The Three Gibbons and The Hummingbird's Song*.



The Black Duck by Claire Garralon

What a lovely booklet! Can I be part of it, please? Because I want to introduce my author, Claire. She loves ducks. She also loves hens, cats, bears... she loves all sorts of animals. It doesn't bother me. I'm not the jealous type. Actually, I love sharing with others! I think it's better than being all by myself.

Like her black duck, Claire Garralon loves to share her talents with children. In her arts workshops she observes how they enjoy themselves and listens to the way they talk. Back home, she brings new ideas and writes simple stories with vivid colours and dynamic shapes. Here, she creates a bear who hides himself to teach colors or, there, she tells the story of two dogs who are victims of daily harassment. In another story, two arctic animals worry about climate change. She makes children laugh but also encourages them to ask their parents questions.

That's it! Let's turn the page!

Read my story in *This is My Pond*.

Jumper and Cupcake by Claire Lebourg

Cupcake and I are very close friends! Cupcake is also very close to her phone, if you see what I mean. We live with other dogs in an old train and it's like paradise! There, we talk about our home-made recipe, leak pie with its special trash sauce. Plus, you'll always find some friendly dog to dry your fur or to comfort you. You see, we are like family to each other. We even like cats!

In Jumper, Claire Lebourg tells how dogs are often abandoned when vacations start. Her delicate words and pictures show how to get over a terrible situation and how friendship is important in bad times. Her characters behave like real people. Some dogs are really dramatic but they all do their best to turn their weakness into strength. Claire always sees the bright side in any situation.

Oops, Cupcake just got a new message. Hurray! Bruce has just discovered another school! School time is nearly over, let's get our backs scratched!

Meet me again in Jumper.





Nin by Ghislaine Herbéra

My name is Nin and I know exactly how to get bored. Yes, I mean it because, believe me, it's a real gift when you have six siblings, not to mention my parents.

If you're looking for a lovely family, here you are! Ghislaine Herbéra created those round, cosy and tiny characters based on *Aesculus parviflora* and American Indian totems. They grow up over the course of the series and experiment life as a group. They share fear and sorrow and, in the end, they always find a solution together and get over it. Ghislaine Herbéra uses different materials — wood, paint and bicolour pencils — and paints daily life scenes based on her experience as a stage set designer. Small kids love her distinctive style. Nin, Nomi, Noé and the others are like friends they can rely on.

Now Nomi is calling me for tea and Nelson has just prepared his very unique berry salad! I bet we'll play cards just after. I hope I win!

Meet me in *The Peanut Doll*, *The Blue Hour*, *The Grimacing Toad* and *Into The Woods*.



The Three Little Animals by Margaret Wise Brown and Garth Williams

There's nothing we love more than our daily life as small and furry animals. What I love the most is when I feel the wind on my fur! And I love the way the sun feels on my fur, especially after a nice swim! For me, there is nothing better than to snuggle up to your fur!

First published in 1956, this book written by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by Garth Williams is still fresh as new! It's about living and being and, most of all, it's an ode to freedom. The text is very charming and the pictures are so cosy and funny. These small animals (their names are never told) find ways to invent and reinvent themselves without relying on others' judgements. How nice to be who you are, to feel that you belong and that you're loved by the ones you care about! The blissful times of this book are just what we need today.

Come and play with us and let's have a race!

Let's meet again in *Trois Petits Animaux*.

Micha by Isaure Fouquet

My name is Micha. Some people say that I'm good at everything... But let me tell you a secret. It's because I'm not afraid to experience new things like trampolines, the trapeze or monocycles. Sometimes it feels natural, sometimes it doesn't, but I don't mind trying!

Micha is the kind of character that immediately catches the eye: funny mouth, shaggy hair and agile movements. Isaure Fouquet tells his funny adventure with a simple black-and-white setting, outlined in red, and she also plays with patterns and traps. Her energetic style is based on indigenous art and Keith Haring's characters. Here the circus world encourages children to explore their motor skills and physical balance. After all, who hasn't dreamt of jumping into a ring of fire?

Are you ready to follow me? Meet me at the circus, right in the middle of the ring. The show is going to start!

Let's meet again in Micha at the Circus.





The Cat by Sandol Stoddard and Remy Charlip

Mmmh. I'm cat's cat's cat. I walk, i catwalk, i walk as a cat. And you, yes you, try to remember that.

Some books speak for themselves and this is the case with this picture book. Brilliantly translated by Françoise Morvan, this fantastic book is based on a simple story. A child wants to possess a cat. Remy Charlip (author, dancer, choreographer and graphic designer) created minimalist pictures with three colours. Sandol Stoddard's text is merry, poetic and smart. It's such a pleasure to read it out loud. What more could a reader ask for? It's the kind of picture book you'll never get tired of reading. It raises questions about relationships, individual freedom and how to be patient.

What about you? Who are you again?

Meet me again in *Mon chat personnel et privé, spécialement réservé à mon usage particulier.*

Ursin and Ursulin by Zbyněk Černík & Alžbeta Skálová

Finally! We almost thought that you were going to forget about us. Such a pity! And why isn't this booklet not just all about us? Mind you, we are exceptional ambassadors of our species: the ursidea. We have nothing in common with the other characters. By the way, don't pay any attention to our picture as pandas. It was a disguise, a funny trick to deceive people. We are definitely more handsome as brown bears!

Two bears living together is an unusual situation. It's more unusual when you know that the two characters were created by Zbyněk Černík. They are funny, smart, selfish and they don't hesitate to enjoy any situation. The translation by Xavier Galmiche is as delightful as a tasty piece of bread with honey and Alžbeta Skálová's pictures are both charming and funny. Through the course of the two friends' adventures, our behaviours are called into question but not in a judgemental way. The novel belongs to the tradition of famous Czech authors of children's literature.

What? You haven't started reading our amazing adventures yet?

Meet us again in *Ursin and Ursulin*.



Pandus Magnus Pandus Minus

Lil'bud-Lil'thumb by Alexandre Afanassiev, Françoise Morvan and Étienne Beck

Hey, look at me! Yes, that's right. I'm just a small part of a finger. My name is Lil' bud-Lil' thumb. I'm very smart and also very helpful... I'm not the kind of person who doesn't move an inch when a situation turns bad.

Based on a series of tales by Afanassiev, Étienne Beck and Françoise Morvan adapt and create an energetic version of the Russian Tom Thumb. Beck's use of oil pastels calls to mind the style of slavic patterns, Russian popular paintings and Fauvism. François Morvan and André Markowick offer a tremendous translation to read out loud. With its gritty atmosphere, it feels like an old folk tale. There are all the ingredients to rediscover an oral tradition with a bit of fear, a pinch of irony, robbers and bravery.

Have you seen my coat? It's a part of Grey-Hair's fur from the day he ate me. See, there is definitely a bit of truth when people say that you don't want to mess with me!

Read my story in the book *Lil'bud-Lil'thumb*.





The Bear by Junko Nakamura

This morning I feel in great shape. I had lunch with Yupi. We had bread and honey, my favorite!

Junko Nakamura just needs a few words to capture the magic of everyday life. Her books are invitations to observe and wonder at the world around us. She constantly reinvents her graphic style and here she uses shade and light like few artists can. Her illustrations on the double page spreads look like paintings. The way she uses white, empty space and solid colours looks like Russian avant- garde art. Her minimalist style, both in text and pictures, helps the reader to focus on the essential, things that need no words.

Fresh air and the sun is low on the horizon. It's going to be a nice day. I can't wait to explore the world with Yupi. Would like to come with us?

Let's meet again in *This Morning*.

Tomek and Mirko by Gaya Wisniewski

I always feel protected when Tomek is around. He is big and sweet. He also tells beautiful stories about nature.

Mirko! Look at our portrait! It's full of tenderness! It shows how deep our relationship is and how we make each other happy!

Tenderness is the perfect word to define Gaya Wisniewski's world. In her first picture book, *My Buffalo*, she expresses her delicate touch both in words and pictures. With *Chnourka* and her friends, she explores how relationships grow deeper and deeper among characters with different tempers. Their interactions, both demonstrative and implicit, guide the story line and make both characters and readers feel warm and secure. Whenever characters are in a forest or in a big city, their main goal is about sharing. Through daily routines and small adventures, Gaya Wisniewski celebrates difference and the bliss of daily life.

Tomek, do you smell that delicious smell? I bet it's cinnamon! Chnourka is baking cookies to go with the vanilla ice cream. I can't wait to have lunch near the lake!

Meet us again in *Chnourka*.





The Little Soldier by Mélanie Rutten

I am a soldier. A very angry soldier. A lonely soldier. A fearless soldier. A big soldier ready to explore the world, to face danger and cry out how angry I am!

In *Their Own Shadows*, a book with multiple voices, a little girl hides her face under the mask of a soldier. She meets a rabbit who feels not big enough, a sporty cat, a mute shadow and a melancholic deer. The little soldier is ready to fight. The last volume of the trilogy, *The Forest Between the Two*, focuses on how her inner quest ends and how her anger soothes with time. Mélanie Rutten mixes stories, compares points of view and explores feelings. She expresses how meeting people different from you is a key to learning about life.

My name is Léonie. I explore the world with friends and we face our fears together. Come with us and let's explore the unknown!

Meet me again in *Their Own Shadows*, *The Forest Between the Two* and *The Source of the Days*.



Cat and Dog by Josef Čapek

Hello, we're Cat and Dog! We sometimes have to give a hand to Mr. Čapek when he writes his stories. Otherwise he might turn into cottage cheese. For example, thanks to us (I mean, mostly me, Cat), he wrote the story on cat tails. I told him everything he needed to know. He expressed his gratitude by giving fish guts, sausage and a bit of cheese. Yummy!

The ten stories on Josef Čapek's Cat and Dog were brought together and published in 1929 by Čapek's daughter. They were translated into French in 2007. Cat and Dog live together like parents but they behave like children. When they chide each other, Čapek intervenes and scolds them. The interwar Czech writer interacts with the two animals as a character. The book gives Cat and Dog voices of their own as they try to cope with each other, not without funny and clumsy situations. We highly recommend reading the book out loud!

Now that you've just finished reading this text, that we largely wrote ourselves by the way, we'd really appreciate a few pieces of sugar and some wheat. Dog already promised to bake a super scrumptious cake. By the way, do you like bacon and cucumber?

Let's meet again in *Histoires de Chien et Chat*.

The Dose by Olivier Douzou

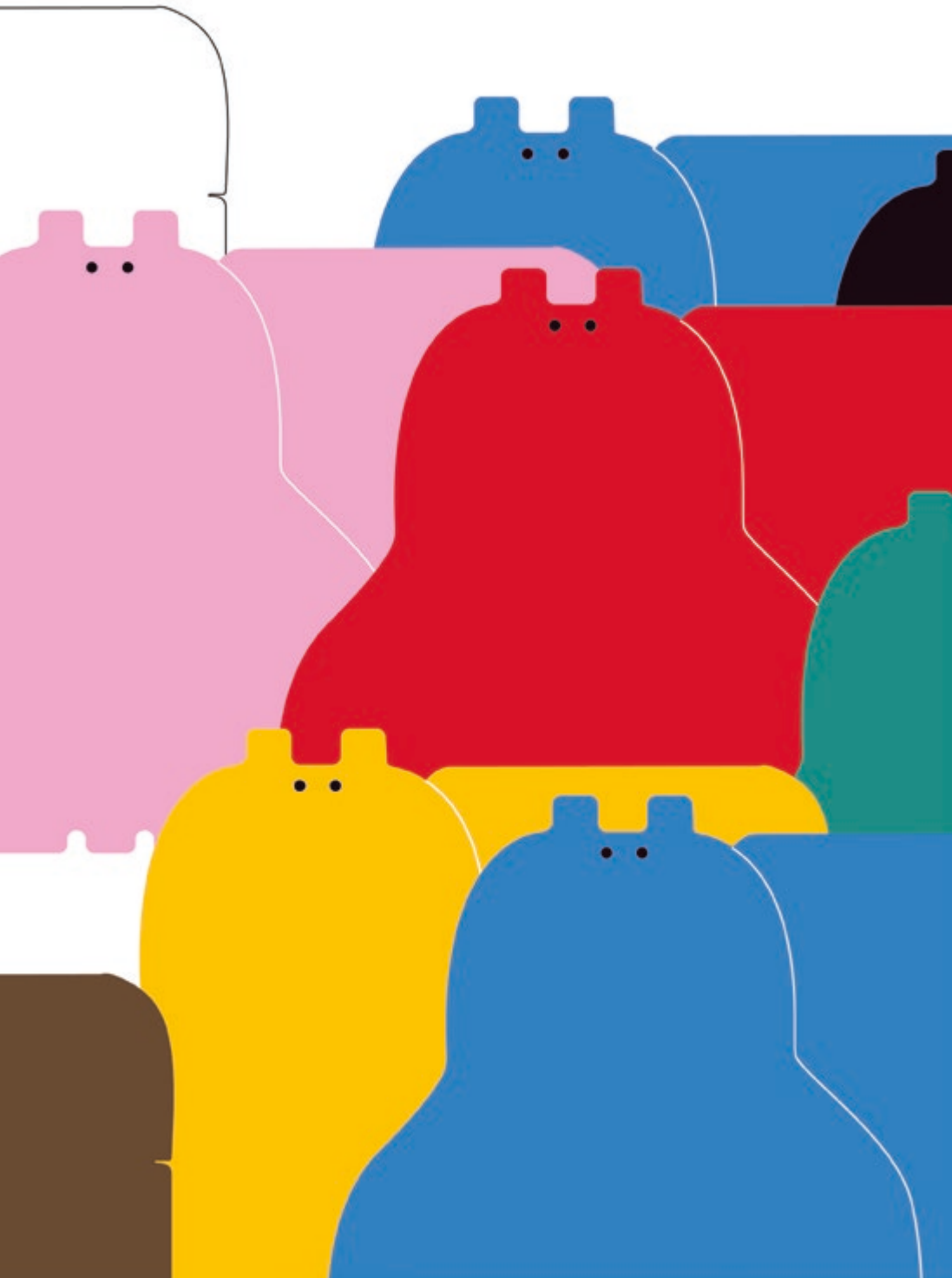
I'b a stuffed dose. I'b looging for the big dish... atishoo! You know the one that helb to drain doses. By author, Olibier Douzou, says dat I'm de sdolen dose of major Kovaliov. It beans I'b an impordand dose, a Russian dose. A dose dat will go down in Hisdory. No dime do waste, led'z hurry, let'z go!

Just imagine a nose with a pair of legs and a watermelon hat! Olivier Douzou created an epic and funny character based on Gogol's short story. Reading this story is a big challenge as you have to read pretending to have a stuffed nose. Apart from being a funny game, it also shows how poetry plays with boundaries and language. Words and narrative keep bouncing here and there, while the narrator follows his poetic stream and constantly renews his language creativity.

What's next? Berhabs the dext bage?



Read our story in *The Nose*.



Popov by Janik Coat

Do you remember me? My name is Popov. I am a hippo and I am red like a cherry! I'm the kind of hippo who prefers a jacuzzi over a mud bath! Pretty unusual, huh?

Popov, the red hippo, is the main voice of Janik Coat's unique menagerie in her series of books called "Colours". Each book is about an animal who has a special name and is unique in some way. In *I'm Not Like The Others*, you can't distinguish an animal from another, even among the same species. And now you have Popov who prefers a jacuzzi over a mud bath! Janik Coat plays on shapes and contrasts to catch the eye of very young readers. She gently guides them to identify colours and differences.

And what about you? What makes you special?

Meet me again in *Popov and Samothrace, Red hippopotamus, I'm Not Like The Others* and *Happy Birthday Popov*.

Rosie by Maurice Sendak

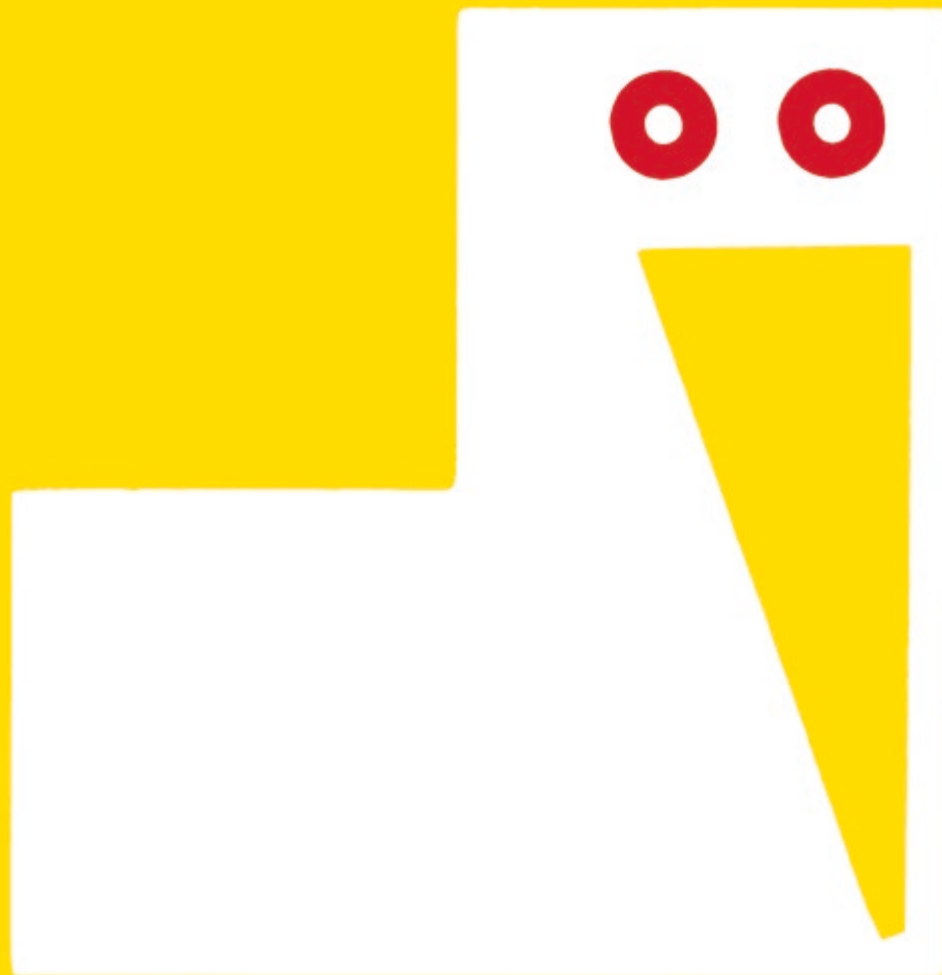
Hello! Did you just call me Rosie? Right now, I'm not Rosie anymore! I'm Alinda, the charming singer. Or maybe I'm Alinda, the lost girl. Would you like to be a small firework? You'll see, it's so much fun!

Rosie is typical of Maurice Sendak's kids (MeMo translated many of his books). Her theatrical attitude is both funny to read but it's more than a game; it's about being inventive and fighting against potential boredom. His kids are always eager to invent things and let their imagination re-enchant daily life. Sendak captures how children interact with friends and adults. He also shows how they put all their energy into trying to be understood by others. In her make-believe world, the little girl gives her all, bending rules to feel more at home in reality. Rosie is a force of imagination!

Time to rest a bit! Because now I am a very tired cat.

Read my story in *Le Secret de Rosie*.





The Squarelican by Gay Wegerif

Hey there! Have you ever pictured yourself as a squareman? Now, think of it! You would play with us, the square-animals, and we could create a perfect square. It's not always easy but the squabbit and I are always around to help!

This special animal book is going to appeal to young readers. To the astonishment of a caribou, some animals start using geometry. In this book, Wegerif plays with words and shapes. In French, the first three letters of "caribou" sound like the beginning of "carré" (a square, in English). The caribou turns out to be a square-shaped caribou. This unique squarimal is very happy when he finds out that he has new friends with the same shape, all squarimals. Young readers will have fun searching for the animals hidden throughout the book and will love Gay Wegerif's expressive and minimalist shapes. The squarimals are printed in spot colours to preserve the bright colours the artist wanted for young children.

We look forward to seeing you for our next puzzle.

Let's meet again in *Squarimals*.

Books

Raymond rêve, Anne Crausaz, 2007. **Rights sold : Simplified Chinese, Korean, Polish**

Réveille-toi Raymond, Anne Crausaz, 2015.

Raymond rêve en couleurs, Anne Crausaz, 2015.

Raymond joue, Anne Crausaz, 2009.

Raymond s'habille, Anne Crausaz, 2013.

Moi, j'ai peur du loup, Émilie Vast, 2018. **Simplified Chinese, Korean**

Je veux un super-pouvoir, Émilie Vast, 2020.

Un câlin, Malika Doray, 2014. **Japanese**

Un pull pour te protéger, Malika Doray, 2020.

Les Trois Gibbons, Kenji Abe, 2016. **Japanese, Catalan, Spanish**

Les Trois Gibbons et le petit crocodile, Kenji Abe, 2017.

Les Trois Gibbons et la chanson du colibri, Kenji Abe, 2019.

C'est ma mare, Claire Garralon, 2016. **Italian, English, Dutch**

Pull, Claire Lebourg, 2019. **Polish, Russian**

La poupée cacahuète, Ghislaine Herbéra, 2011.

L'heure bleue, Ghislaine Herbéra, 2014.

La grenouille qui grimace, Ghislaine Herbéra, 2017.

Dans la forêt, Ghislaine Herbéra, 2020.

Trois petits animaux, de Margaret Wise Brown et Garth Williams, 1956. 2019.

Micha au cirque, Isaure Fouquet, 2017.

Mon chat personnel et privé, spécialement réservé à mon usage particulier, Sandol Stoddard et Remy Charlip, 1963. 2012.

Ursin et Ursulin, Zbyněk Černík et Alžbeta Skálová, 2013.

P'tigars-P'tidoigt, Alexandre Afanassiev, Françoise Morvan et Étienne Beck, 2007.

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Chnourka, Gaya Wisniewski, 2019. **Romanian, Italian**

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La forêt entre les deux, Mélanie Rutten, 2015. **Simplified Chinese, Turkish, Polish**

La source des jours, Mélanie Rutten, 2014. **Simplified Chinese, Polish**

Popov et Samothrace, Janik Coat, 2005.

Rouge hippopotame, Janik Coat, 2017.

Je ne suis pas comme les autres, Janik Coat, 2006. **Spanish**

Bon anniversaire Popov ! Janik Coat, 2015. **Simplified Chinese**

Le cadeau de Popov, Janik Coat, 2015.

Le secret de Rosie, Maurice Sendak, 1960. 2018.

Carimaux, Gay Wegerif, 2013.



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