

THE WANDERING MASK

Explore Samobor through a Story



Hello! Do you know me? I am the talk of the town – the whole continent actually. All the palates know me. I leave a white mustache of powdered sugar above your mouth. I am delicious and delightful and I taste the best right here in Samobor! I am the Samobor custard cake (*kremsnita*)! I am hidden on every page of this book – go ahead and find me. Although I'm a special delicacy, you should reward yourself with a treat typical for the masquerade – doughnut. They are filled with marmalade and so yummy! I hope you can fit many of them in your tummy!



"Oh, woe is me!" sobbed the Mask sitting on the shelf. Her tears kept pouring out of her eye holes like a thousand little bunnies jumping from their burrows. Soon there were two waterfalls running down the shelf, creating puddles on the floor.

The lonely Mask was very sad because one of the most famous, most magnificent and most joyful Masquerades in the world, the Samobor Masquerade, was about to start. And nobody had chosen her. The shelves around her were getting emptier – the Indian masks were gone, the princesses and the cartoon heroes as well. And the Batman masks were sold out on the same day that the saleslady put them on display. The faces of lions, mice, cats, and even vegetables were cheerfully peeking out of the shopping bags of their new owners.

"What about me?! Why has nobody noticed me? All the other masks will be having the time of their lives at the best masquerade of them all! You might say: 'There are so many other masquerades. Why are you crying for the one in Samobor?' But I would trade both Venice and Rio for the Samooo – boohoo – booor – boo hoo Masquerade. Boohoo!"

The Mask was left alone and crying. And she cried for a very very long time. She cried for just as long as it takes for a child to eat a plate of kale. Suddenly, she stood up straight, like a general, wiped her tears away and announced proudly: "I will find my face on my own. As Prince Fasnik is my witness, I will take part in the Samobor Masquerade!"



The bold Mask jumped out of the shop and onto the street, bouncing like a rubber ball. The trout from the Gradna stream peered from the water, wondering where this mask without a face was headed to. A family of ducks seemed particularly curious.

"Quack, quack. A mask without a face! Quack, quack! Hey, where are you going? What's the rush?" yelled the ducklings.

But the Mask paid no heed to them. A peculiar installation drew her attention.

"What is this thing with a huge funny yellow smile and a hanging stick?", the Mask wondered. "Maybe an orchestra conductor lost his baton and a giant his smile?"

"It's a sundial!" shouted the ducklings from the stream.

"What is that?" asked the confused Mask.

"It's an ancient astronomical instrument which follows the movement of the sun to tell you what time it is," said a duckling.

"And how do you know all this?" Mother duck was puzzled.

"I've heard the tourist guides tell stories to the tourists," the duckling answered proudly.

"Very interesting. I wish the sundial would tell me where I could find a face," quietly murmured the Mask to herself.

"What are you looking for?" asked the ducklings.

"A face! A face that would wear me at the Samobor Masquerade."

"Listen, sweetheart. You should go to King Tomislav Square – it's teeming with people. I'm sure you'll find someone there!" advised mother duck caringly.

"And there are some kids playing hide and seek around the church of St. Anastasia. I heard them talk about it," quacked a duckling that was merrily swimming in circles around her family.

"Thank you! I'll be on my way at once!" replied the Mask.

"Good luck, quack, quack!"



King Tomislav Square was busy as usual. The Mask scanned the mass of people, not knowing where to look because everyone was moving. The faces were laughing and the swarm of voices sounded like a busy beehive. She began to feel dizzy like she was on a rollercoaster – she could barely stand upright. Then she noticed a well and ran towards it to freshen up.

"Whew, I instantly feel better. I need to continue looking for my fa..." her thoughts were interrupted by a couple talking loudly.

"The old legend says that 'the person who once drinks from the well, forever returns to Samobor' and I say that he who takes one look at your face, forever has to look at it!" A young man dressed in traditional clothes recited with affection to a girl wearing a traditional dress.

The Mask didn't understand what was going on but she heard one lady whisper to another: „It's starting now! I love watching them. Every year they play Romeo and Juliet of Samobor."

"Romeo and Juliet of Samobor? Never heard..." replied the other lady with confusion.

"Well, let me tell you. Romeo and Juliet of Samobor were Stanko Vraz and Ljubica Cantilly. He was a poet and she the daughter of a wealthy Samobor merchant. And he would not allow his daughter to marry a poor poet. But they were so in love... Vraz dedicated his poems called Djulabije to her. Oh, what a love story that was..."

"Djulabije? What kind of a name is that? It doesn't sound romantic at all."

"Well, it is in fact very romantic. The word means 'red apples'. In the past people in love would gift each other red apples as a token of affection."

"How romantic," thought the Mask while observing the couple and listening to their conversation. "Gosh, it's time for me to go! What did the ducklings say... they mentioned a church. Ah, there it is."





The Mask arrived in front of the church of St. Anastasia. There was a boy leaning against a tree, his eyes covered by his hands. He was counting aloud: "17, 18, 19, 20, here I come! Come out, come out wherever you are!" Just as he was about to set off on the search for his friends, a sly grin on his face, the Mask spoke to him.

"Hey, wait! I want to ask you something."

"Hello", answered the boy, "ask me quick, I'm in a hurry. This is going to be the fastest uncovering in the history of hide and seek around the church," excitedly explained the boy.

"I don't have a face for the Masquerade", lamented the Mask, "and now I am looking for a boy or a girl who would wear me."

"I have an idea: you will help me find my friends and then we will ask them if they already have masks for the Masquerade," the boy suggested.

"Deal!" the Mask was already hopeful that her face was hiding among this group of children.

The boy and the Mask were quickly revealing the hiding spots – behind the tree, behind the wall, on the tree... soon all the kids were herded together. The boy informed others of the Mask's woes. Unfortunately, though, everyone already had their masks.

"We are so sorry that we couldn't help you," a little girl said.

"It doesn't matter. Thank you anyway," the Mask was not disheartened. Quite the opposite, after meeting these lovely kids from Samobor, she felt even more inspired to continue her quest. She said her goodbyes and set off for the Samobor Museum. The promenade next to it was teeming with parents and children.



"The Samobor Museum is located in the castle that used to belong to Ferdo Livadic. He was a composer, commissioner and judge. He was also the mayor of Samobor, who did many good things for the city."

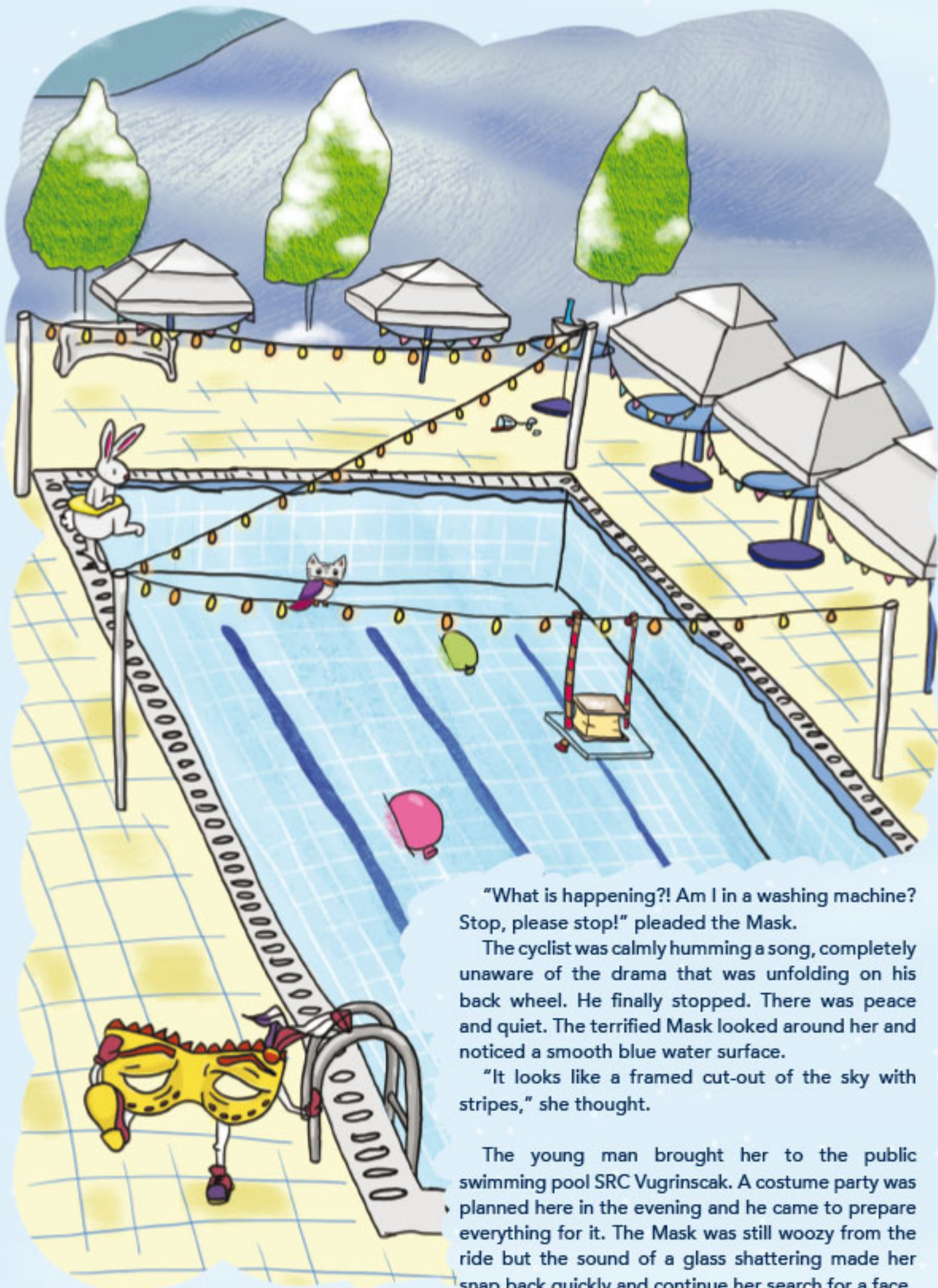
All of this was going through Mask's head. One time, a student who was repeating her school work aloud came to the shop, which is how the Mask learned who Ferdo Livadic was... She learned many different things in the shop because she was curious and soaked up all the facts like a little sponge. She remembered that in the Museum you could see the fossil treasure of the Samobor Hills, items from a distant past, dating as far back as the stone age or bronze age! There was so much to be seen in the Museum and she would especially love to see the piano that Ferdo Livadic used to play.

On a meadow near the museum, the Mask saw a group of children playing throw and catch. She hastily stepped towards them but soon got pulled away! She found herself tangled into some wires, spinning in circles very fast.

"Aaaaah!", the Mask screamed. "What is going on?! Heeeelp!"

The Mask got caught in the wheel of a passing bicycle and was now being pulled by it. This was a very unpleasant situation for the Mask, even more so because she had no clue where she was going...





"What is happening?! Am I in a washing machine? Stop, please stop!" pleaded the Mask.

The cyclist was calmly humming a song, completely unaware of the drama that was unfolding on his back wheel. He finally stopped. There was peace and quiet. The terrified Mask looked around her and noticed a smooth blue water surface.

"It looks like a framed cut-out of the sky with stripes," she thought.

The young man brought her to the public swimming pool SRC Vugrinscak. A costume party was planned here in the evening and he came to prepare everything for it. The Mask was still woozy from the ride but the sound of a glass shattering made her snap back quickly and continue her search for a face.

She was strolling down Samobor streets. There was no face for her in sight. They were all either taken or grumpy or just not the right size. Exhausted from walking, the Mask stumbled upon a locomotive with two carriages. She sat in one of them to take a break.

"You look tired," she heard someone say.

"Who is this?" asked the Mask.

"I am the Samoborcek train."

"Oh, hello. Yes, I am very tired. I am looking for my masquerade face, someone to wear me at the Samobor Masquerade, to laugh, dance and have fun with me... I've been dreaming of it for so long! And what are you doing here?"

"I serve as a reminder of the days when the citizens of Samobor used to take a train to Zagreb."

"Really? I didn't know there used to be a train here! This is news to me," the Mask was always excited to learn something new.

"Yes, there were tracks between Samobor and Zagreb. The train wasn't that fast, some 20 km/h, but it starred in a movie, you know," boasted the train.

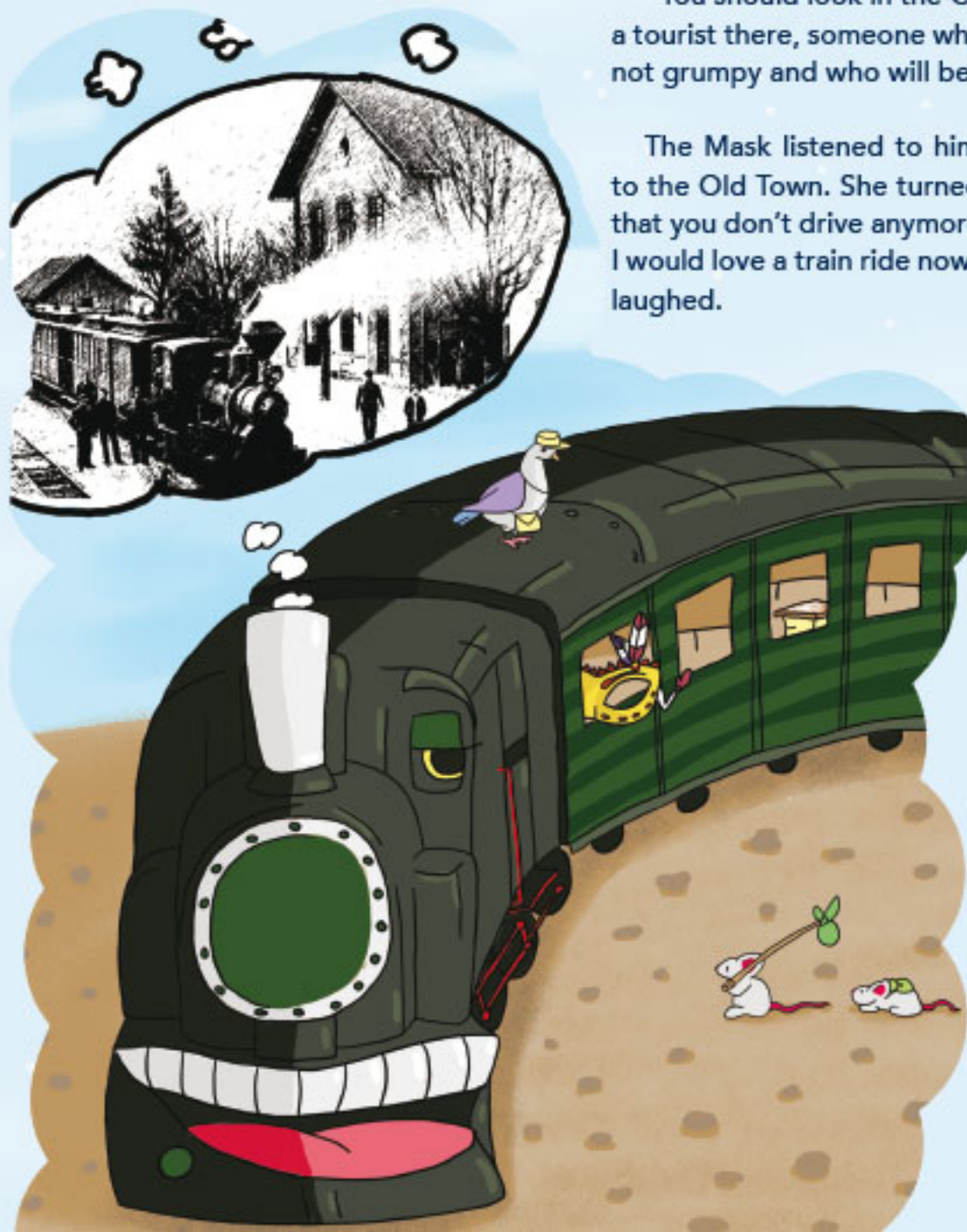
"Ooh, really? So, the Samoborcek train is a star?"

"Well, it was a long time ago but you must have heard of the movie *One Song a Day Takes Mischief Away*."

"I haven't actually, but now I will make sure to watch it! I just need to find my face first," sighed the Mask and told the train her whole adventure.

"You should look in the Old Town. I'm sure you will find a tourist there, someone who doesn't have a mask, who is not grumpy and who will be a perfect fit for you!"

The Mask listened to him and was swiftly on her way to the Old Town. She turned around and said: "It's a pity that you don't drive anymore and that there are no tracks. I would love a train ride now, even at 20 km/h." They both laughed.



The Mask enjoyed the stroll through the forest. The leaves were covered in fresh snow and they made a light crunching sound when she was passing by the Chapel of St. Anna. The little Chapel, surrounded by trees as if wrapped in a cozy blanket, seemed mysterious to her. She soon reached the remnants of the Old Town. How beautiful the town must have looked when it was just built, hundreds of years ago. How hard it must have been to build it. Back then, there were no bulldozers, trucks or cranes. And yet people have managed to build these massive walls and tower. And they did so just because a bohemian king with a funny name – something like otter, otter, OttOKAR – wanted to have another castle hundreds of years ago.

"I wonder if there were fancy costume parties held in the castle in the baroque period," the Mask was daydreaming about a masquerade ball where court ladies in crinolines danced with gentlemen with lavish wigs. "This is a wonderful place but it's rather deserted. How am I supposed to find a face here? Maybe if a ghost of one of the court ladies who really wants to go to the Masquerade appears..."

Suddenly, she saw a small group of tourists walking around the city walls, drinking tea from their flasks. They were joking and laughing. The Mask approached them and said hello. Then she told them about her search. Each and every one of them was willing to help and go to the Masquerade with her but their bus was already waiting to bring them back to Split, so they couldn't stay in Samobor.

"Oh, that's a shame!" sighed the Mask and parted with the jolly bunch. She continued wandering around Samobor and had already started losing hope of ever finding her face. She was walking around the Samobor Hills, imagining the Masquerade that she would not see. She was so tired from the search that when she sat down on the grass, she yawned once and fell asleep!



"Please don't cry sweetheart," a father was trying to console his crying daughter. "I forgot to take it. We were leaving in such a rush that it just slipped my mind."

"But how am I supposed to go to the Masquerade now? I don't have a mask! Of all things, why did we have to forget the mask?" The girl was weeping and huffing in disappointment. "It was only important to you to tell me for half an hour that a nature park is a protected area invaluable for its natural beauty and all the different plant and animal species that inhabit it and everything I already know. We should never litter in a nature park – or anywhere else. That's why I picked up those plastic bottles lying next to the path."

"I can draw you a mustache and... a beard... and..." The mother was trying to save the situation.

"...dark circles!" added the father.

"Great idea! That would be so original! What do you say, Lili?"

"And what would I be then? A tired man with a beard and mustache?! That's just stupid." The girl protested. "We shouldn't have made a trip to the hills before the Masquerade!"

"But honey, this is the Nature Park Zumberak - Samobor Hills – fresh air, stunning nature, trees... Look at the beauty around you!" her mother replied. "It looks like a postcard or a painting!"

"Come on, Lili. Are we going to allow the fact that you don't have a mask to ruin this lovely day? We walked and talked and laughed... Let's go to the Masquerade and eat some custard cake. But with a smile on our faces. Give me your hand!" The father reached for her hand but Lili was unwilling to cooperate.

"No, no, no! You don't go to a masquerade without a mask!"

The Mask, who was sleeping in the snow by the path, didn't hear a word of this heated discussion. The Masquerade always takes place in winter, when the warm party, funny masks and laughter lure people out of their homes.

Lili was walking sullenly, staring at the ground.

Then she exclaimed joyously: "Mom, dad! Look, I've found a mask!" Lo and behold, Lili was really holding a pretty mask in her hands. She immediately put it on – it was a perfect fit.

"Just like Cinderella and her slipper – a perfect match," said her father.

"Oh, I'm so happy now!" Lili was as pleased as Punch.

The Mask continued sleeping for a little longer. When she woke up, she felt the warmth of Lili's skin. "Hmm, this feels unusually warm and soft... Whoa, is this real? I am on a face!" the Mask was overjoyed.

The girl who was wearing her was chattering away while merrily skipping and touching the Mask.

"As soon as we arrive at the Masquerade, we are going dancing! Well, right after eating some custard cake... I will wear the mask at all times and no one is allowed to frown."

"All right, all right", the parents could barely say anything, "calm down, we have enough time for everything," they managed to utter before Lili continued.

"I want to see everything at the Masquerade! I mean, the Mask and I want to see everything, don't we, Mask?"



After an adventurous quest, the Mask finally found her face, which proudly wore her to the Samobor Masquerade. There was a colorful hustle and bustle on the main square. People, sounds, movements – everything pulsed together, making the square seem like an ocean of jumping little dots.

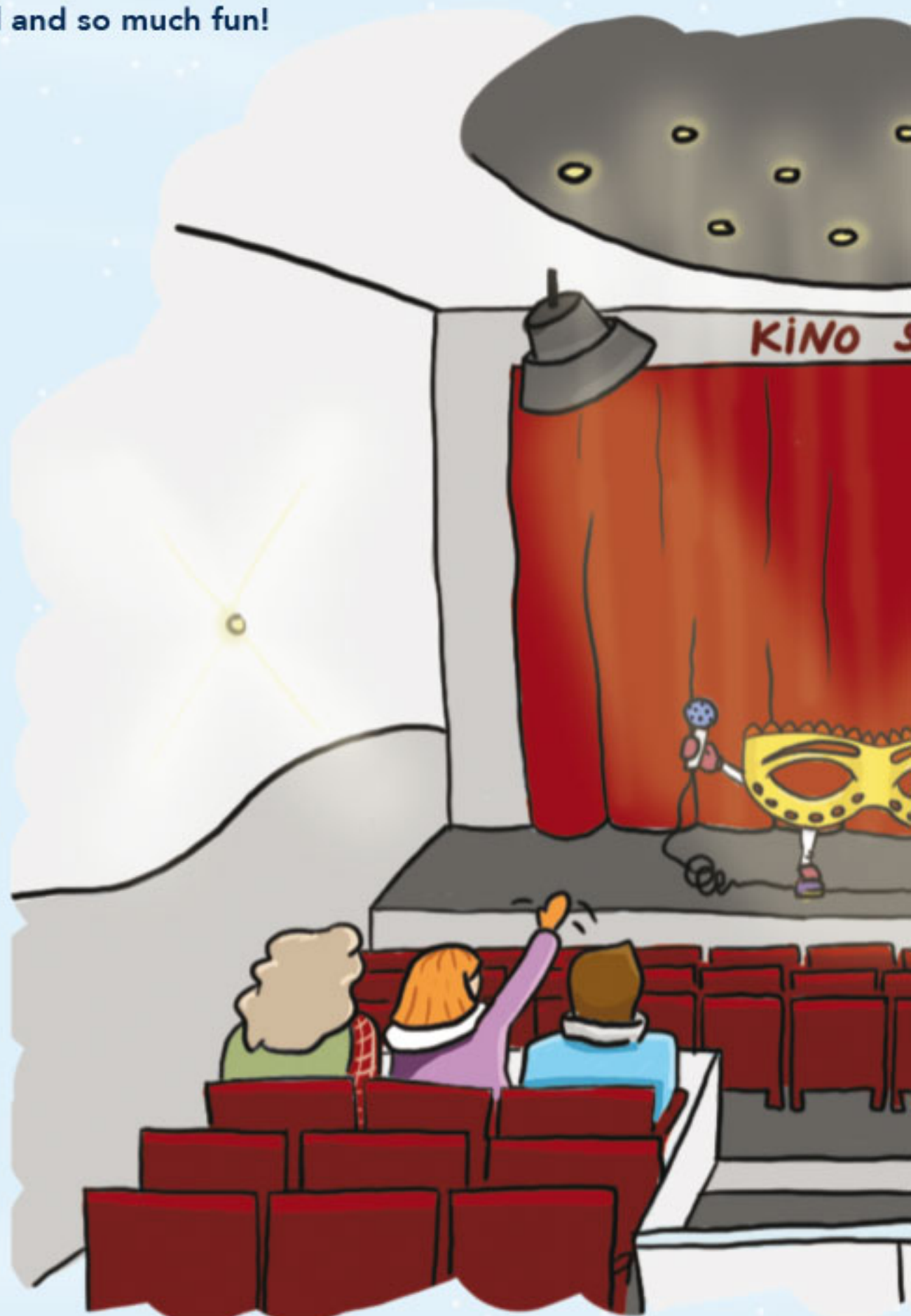
Prince Fasník was going to end up in a bonfire, just like every year. The rainbow of costumes, fuzzy wigs, masks and smiles was not going to disappear anytime soon because nobody wants to go home from the greatest party of them all – the Samobor Masquerade!

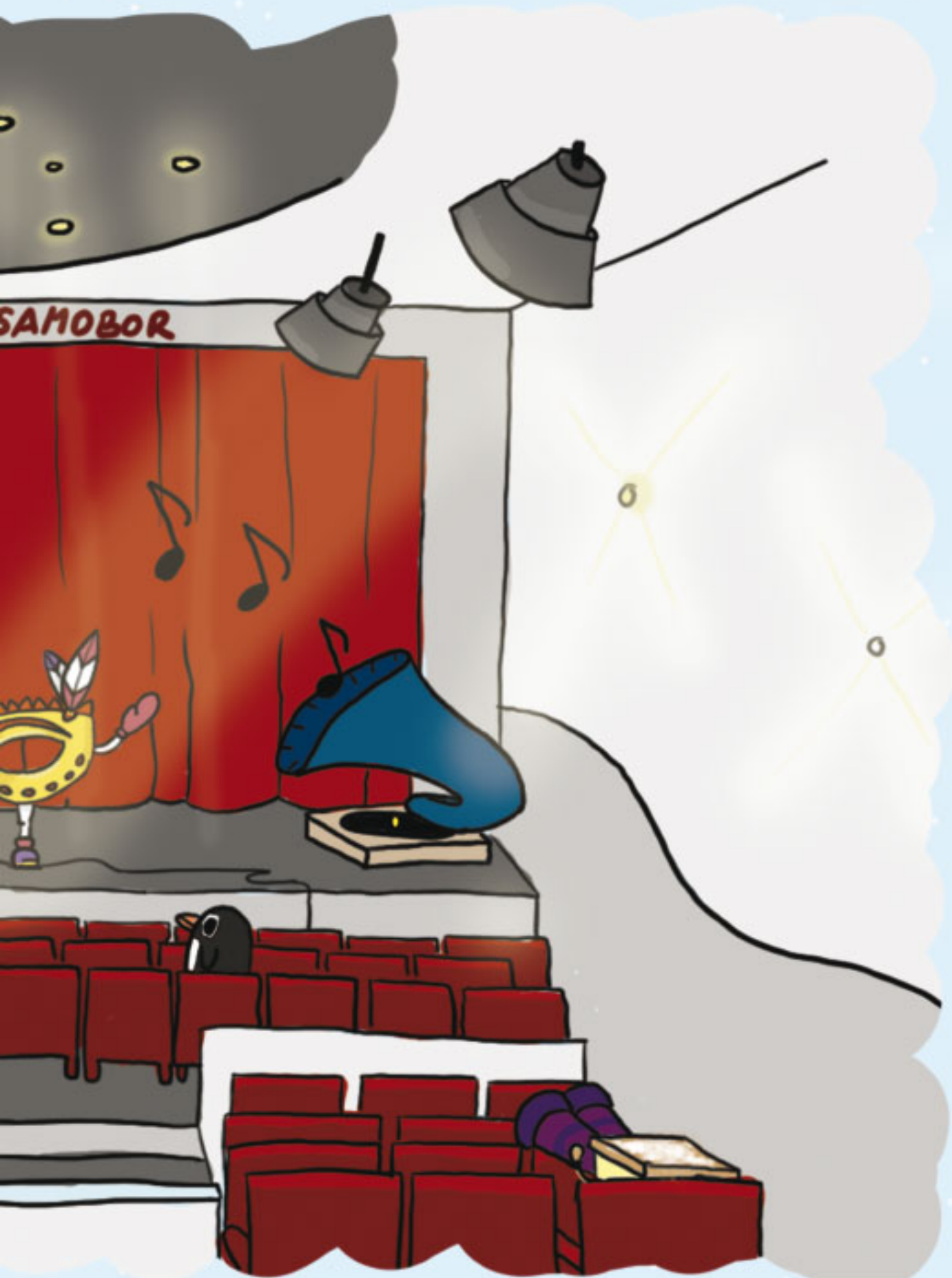
One custard cake or doughnut, please!





After the Masquerade, all the masks go to sleep at the Samobor Cinema. There, together with the kids, they enjoy children's theater plays on a stage that is magical, educational and so much fun!





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One mask is left alone on the shelf. All the other masks have found the faces who would wear them at the Samobor Masquerade. This mask, however, decides to take matters into her own hands and sets off on a search for the boy or girl who would take her to the Masquerade. Embark on this journey with her and visit the most beautiful and interesting places in Samobor. In the book you will discover what adventures lie in store and whether the mask finds the face she is looking for.



Love 
Samobor