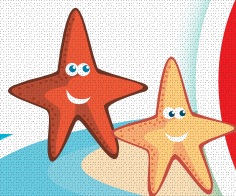


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When literature meets visual arts

WORD
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If you enjoy drawing and writing, have you ever thought about creating picture books? These books are a combination of words and art. Petr Horáček, the Czech (捷克) children's book writer who now lives in the UK, will tell us how he uses his artwork to tell stories.



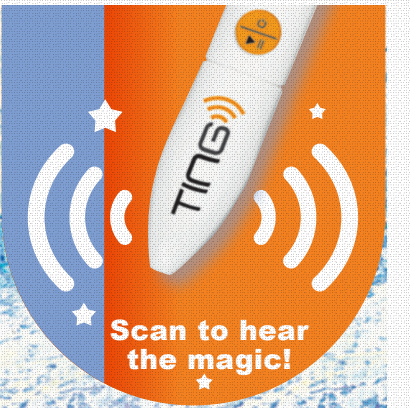
“What is the point of having knowledge without imagination and creativity?”

– Petr Horáček

Petr Horáček



Catherine



From artist to picture book creator

PETR Horáček has been in love with visual arts since he was a child. At the age of 15, he went to the High School of Art in Prague to study different art forms, and he studied for six years at the Academy of Fine Art afterwards.

In 1994, Horáček moved to the UK, where he first encountered the classic picture book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle; he said this book changed his life – he had never seen such a **stylish** children's book in his home country – and that the texts and images in the book had a great balance as it told a story. He thought he would like to make one himself.

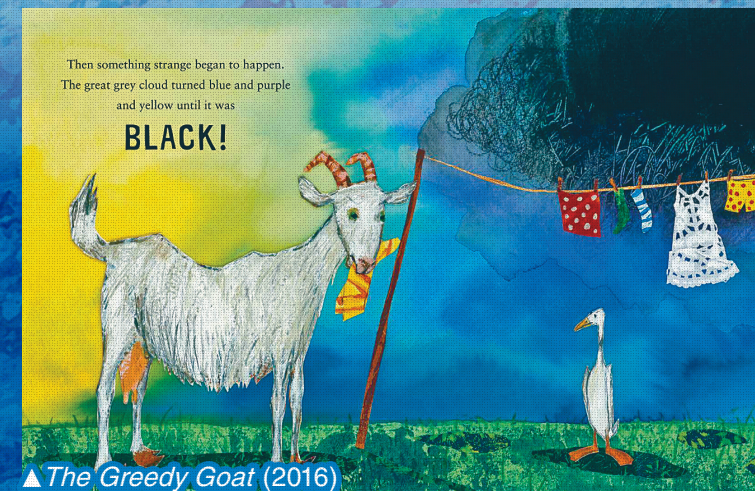
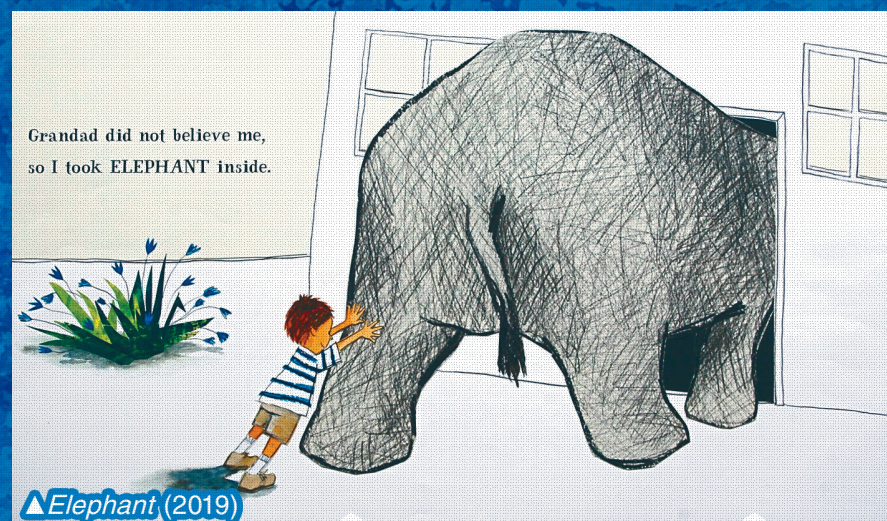
First forays

TO begin with, he made a picture book for his young daughter and also sent it to a publisher to try his luck. *Strawberries are Red*, his very first board book, was published in 2001. "This is the book that teaches children colours and fruit items and it encourages children to eat fruit and to like books," said Horáček.

Originally, Horáček had a very different approach for *Strawberries are Red*. He actually wanted to write about a fly's life, and fruit items were not the 'main dishes'; however, his idea did not convince the publisher – his story would only be published if he agreed to take away the fly. Horáček was certainly not happy, but he needed the chance to become a published writer, so he **compromised**.

Did he forget about the fly? Not really: 10 years later, the fly story returned after Horáček became well-known, with dozens of picture

► Petr Horáček

▲ *The Greedy Goat* (2016)▲ *The Fly* (2015)▲ *Blue Penguin* (2015)▲ *Puffin Peter* (2011)▲ *Elephant* (2019)

books **under his belt**. "I always bring this book (*The Fly*) to schools and tell the children to keep pushing and never give up. You will always get what you want," said Horáček.

How to make art

HORÁČEK said he always has a picture in his mind before a story. For example, a child drew a boy pushing an elephant and he thought it was interesting so he had that 'scene' in his book *Elephant*. This image was how his book *Elephant* was born.

Being with nature has also given him **inspiration**. Horáček admitted that he can never develop his stories by sitting at a desk. He said he would go for walks, and whenever he has ideas, he would quickly write them down. Therefore, he always has a **sketchbook** with him.

For this writer and illustrator, children's drawings are **fascinating**. He likes the way children express themselves; he recalled a picture he once encountered: of having a **dentist's** chair to the left, while a dentist with a very long arm was to the right. "This child came up with a solution to ease his **anxiety** about seeing a doctor. Children do it all the time. No text needs to be added but we can understand just by looking at the picture," said Horáček.

Podcast

Scan to listen to an interview with Petr Horáček.



stylish (adj)
時尚的

compromise (v)
妥協

under one's belt (idm)
作為本錢

inspiration (n)
靈感

Vocabulary
Challenge

sketchbook (n)
寫生簿

fascinating (adj)
迷人的

dentist (n)
牙醫

anxiety (n)
焦慮