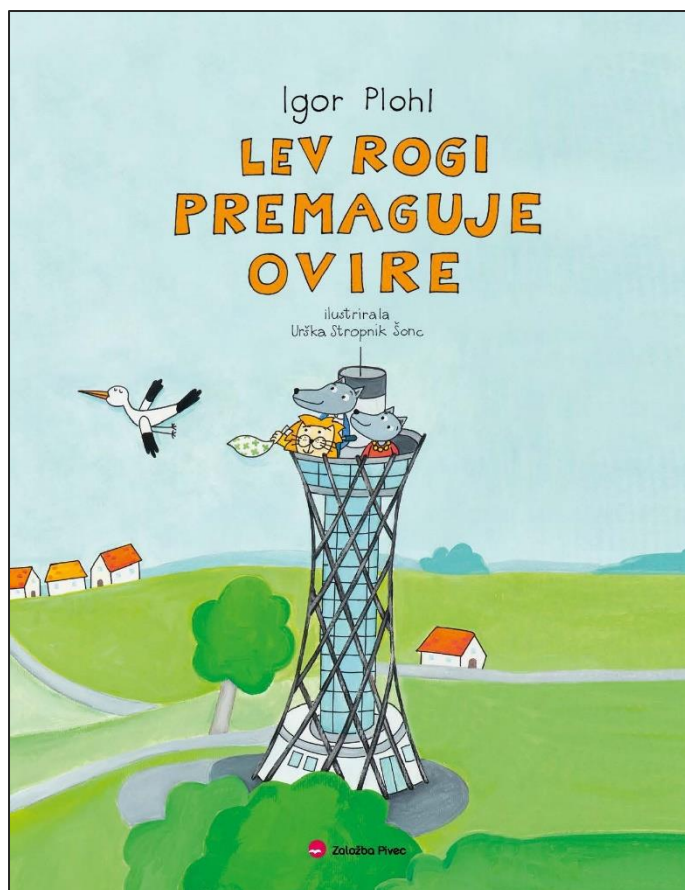


ROGGIE THE LION OVERCOMES OBSTACLES

Written by: **Igor Plohl**

Illustrated by: **Urška Stropnik Šonc**

Roggie, a slightly less ordinary lion, started his life after a serious accident. After learning to drive a hand-controlled car, his life became much the same as it was before the accident. He enjoys going on trips, preferably in the company of friends. The two wolves Peter and Paula are always up for a good adventure. Together with Roggie, they go on a trip to Lendava, where they try to touch the sky from the top of a tower. But unfortunate circumstances throw them a curveball. The lift in the tower doesn't work, someone has parked in front of the disabled parking space, and the restaurant they go to for lunch doesn't have a ramp at the entrance. But this kind of bad luck doesn't deter the brave Roggie from his original plan. With the help of good will and good friends, he overcomes even these obstacles.



The picture book highlights the problem of mobility for people with disabilities and raises awareness about how we as a community can tackle these problems. It is complemented by videos (accessible via QR codes) and a collection of photographs depicting Igor's real-life experiences with mobility.

Format: 23 × 29cm, colour print, hardcover, 36 pages



Igor Plohl is a teacher and an author of picture books in which he talks about being disabled. Roggie the Lion, his literary alter ego, came to life when Igor wanted to talk to his students about his painful experience when he had to deal with his new life in a wheelchair following a serious accident. He has also written about his experience dealing with his new situation in the autobiographic story *It Can Happen To You!*, which he wrote for adult readers.

ROGGIE THE LION OVERCOMES OBSTACLES (Literary Part)

Pages 6 - 7

Today is going to be a wonderful day, thought Roggie as he hurried to the garage. He had planned an unforgettable trip. To surprise his two wolf friends, he hadn't told them which beautiful part of Slovenia they would be visiting.

Before starting every car ride, he had to show great skill in getting from his wheelchair into the car. He used his left paw to grip the wheelchair and his right paw to hold on to the roof of the car.

He tensed his muscles and lifted his body into the air but then, suddenly, he slipped. Roggie landed hard on the edge of the car door with his full lion weight.

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He quickly pulled himself up again and, with great effort, got inside the car.

It's a good thing I didn't land on the ground, he thought with a shudder. *I could've got a big bump or got bruised like a ripe pear when it falls from a tree.* He carefully examined his body to make sure he had not broken any bones.

What luck! When the pain had subsided, he took apart his wheelchair and moved it piece by piece into the car. Only then was he ready to leave.

Pages 10 – 11

The gentle rays of the rising sun caressed the morning dew, which glistened like a field of pearls. After a short drive, Roggie arrived in a very old town by a big river. From afar he saw a magnificent castle on top a hill that resembled a mighty shield that protected a sea of red-roofed houses.

In one of these houses lived Peter and Paula.

Immediately after they exchanged greetings, Paula was overcome with curiosity: "What kind of surprise do you have in store for us?"

"It's a secret," said the lion, giving them a warm smile. "I can only hint that I'm going to take you high up to a place from where we'll be able to see four different countries all at once. Maybe you'll even get to reach the birds and touch the clouds."

Pages 12 – 13

Soon they left the town of Ptuj and turned onto the motorway. Along the way, they were chatting pleasantly when Roggie the lion thought of a riddle.

"We are headed to a land where the sun kisses a large plain every morning. On its outskirts lie hills that look like giants' bellies and are lined with roads that look like ribbons from above.

There, the horizon is so far away that it's hidden from view by clouds that touch the tops of the trees. Because all the residents can see far beyond their own doorsteps, this region is home to kindness and tolerance."

"I think we're going to Prekmurje," Peter was the first to correctly guess where they were going.

Pages 14 – 15

When they saw a group of small, beautifully rounded hills, Roggie's heart swelled with joy. "Look," he enthusiastically pointed towards the magnificent tower on top of the tallest hill, "that's where we'll touch the sky!"

"Amazing!" his two friends exclaimed excitedly.

"But how will you get to the top?" asked Peter.

"Don't worry, this splendid building is equipped with a lift!"

In no time at all, they arrived at the most beautiful viewpoint for miles around. The tower appeared before them in all its glory, reigning over its surroundings like a great, glittering royal sceptre. The group of friends eagerly hurried towards the entrance.

Inside, a hare embarrassedly explained that they had suffered a power outage.

Pages 16 – 17

"You two should head to the top by yourselves then," suggested Roggie.

"No way!" said Paula firmly.

"If you can't go, we won't go either."

They thought about it for a minute and decided to go have lunch in the small town at the foot of the hills and come back later. Roggie knew an excellent restaurant there that served mushroom soup in bread bowls and a local speciality called *dödoli*.

"I've never heard of such a thing," marvelled Paula.

"I'm sure you'll love it," grinned the lion.

Pages 18 – 19

They wanted to leave the car in the car park behind the restaurant, but the only disabled parking space was already taken. As there was no other suitable parking nearby, they had to return to the city centre. There, they finally found one.

As they walked back towards the restaurant, Peter occasionally had to help Roggie with his wheelchair because the pavements had no dips in the curb. "It's a pity a wheelchair can't bounce around like a kangaroo," joked the lion.

"Or fly over the hills like a crane," mused Peter.

Pages 20 – 21

"Oh no, how will you get up the stairs?" wondered Paula when she saw the entrance to the restaurant.

"A few stairs won't stop us," replied Roggie determinedly. "Please go inside and tell them I need help."

Soon two tall and strong waiters came outside. One took hold of the wheelchair at the front and the other at the back. Slowly and carefully, they pulled Roggie up the steps, one by one.

In cases like these, it's important to take things slowly like a snail would do. After all, a wheelchair – much like a snail's shell – is a delicate instrument that needs to be handled with care.

Pages 22 – 23

The sight of the homey antique furniture and decorations made everyone happy.

The group of friends indeed ordered the soup served in bread bowls. For the main course, they had potato mush with cracklings and sautéed onions, which is called *dödoli* in the Prekmurje dialect. Everything was delicious, even the bowls made of bread!

Pages 24 – 25

When they returned to the car, they were in for an unpleasant surprise. Someone had parked their car very close to Roggie's.

"The nerve!" exclaimed Paula angrily.

"This car doesn't even have a disabled parking permit."

"If the driver were a disabled person, he would understand the purpose of the yellow diagonal lines drawn on disabled parking spaces," said Roggie.

"What do we do now?" asked Peter.

"Well, we certainly won't let this spoil our trip. I suggest you move my car to a place where I will be able to get in."

Pages 26 – 27

Although Peter had never driven a car with hand controls before, he managed to move it following Roggie's instructions. Before long, they were back at the tall and elegant tower. Making their way up to the entrance, they heard a joyful voice from inside exclaim: "The lift is working again!"

Pages 28 – 29

At such great heights that almost made the wolves dizzy, they enjoyed the endless view.

In neighbouring Austria, the mountain peaks were still covered in snow. In Hungary, Lake Balaton glistened like fish scales in the distance, and a flock of black and white storks that flew from the direction of Croatia passed the tower.

Looking out to the west, the group of friends could admire the beauty of their homeland. The lazy River Mura was lined with thousands of trees, behind which stretched beautiful fields. The air was filled with the scent of fragrant flowers, the buzzing of hardworking bees and the calls of cuckoos.

Pages 30 – 31

"What a wonderful trip," said Paula with a smile on her face, and Peter added: "Thank you for letting us experience all this."

"Thank you for helping me overcome the obstacles along the way," Roggie said with a grateful heart.

As they were driving back home, Paula asked to make a stop at her friend's house. "What for?" wondered Roggie.

"It's a secret," she said, not missing her chance to act secretive like Roggie had earlier. "It'll be our present to you."

As Mr Crayfish the tailor lived in a tall house that, in addition to stairs, had a steep ramp leading up to the entrance, Peter helped Roggie navigate it.

Pages 32 – 33

"Now show him your paws and let him take your measurements," said Paula.

"Why?" Roggie still didn't understand.

"So that he can make you a custom pair of strong leather gloves. That way you'll never slip when you climb into the car again, and you'll also be able to push your wheelchair more easily."

Pages 34 – 35

"What a great idea!" exclaimed Roggie, delighted. "If only there was a master craftsman who could redesign the whole world to accommodate my wheels."

"Something like that is only possible in dreams," remarked Paula.

"Even dreams can come true sometimes!" replied Roggie wholeheartedly.