

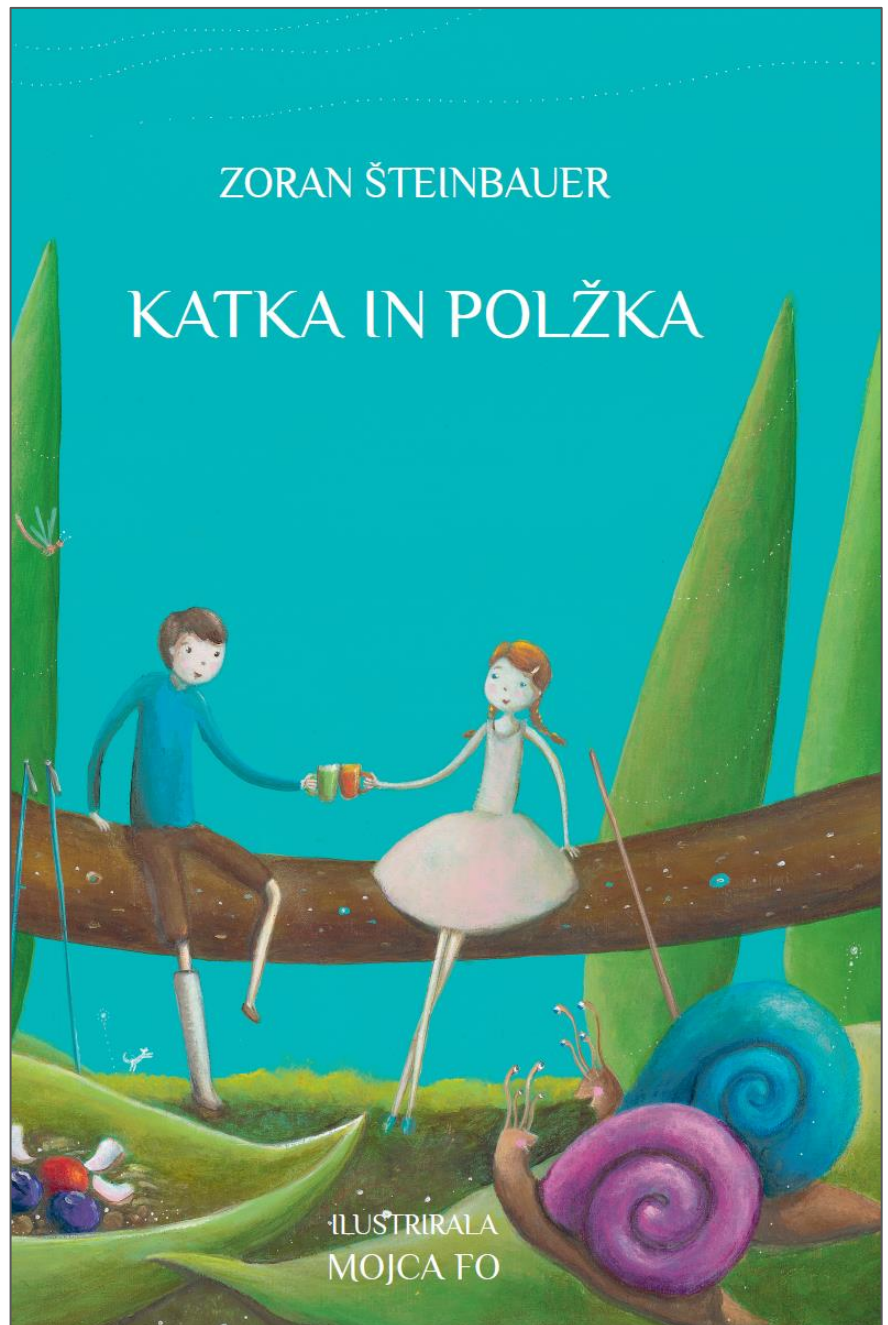
## KATE AND THE SNAILS

Written by: **Zoran Šteinbauer**

Illustrations by: **Mojca Fo**

A fairy tale about kindness, friendship, understanding, cooperation and the beauty of nature. Everything is ready in Sunny Dale for fun and exciting summer escapades and the children are eager to go on adventures. Only Kate, who has one leg shorter than the other, and Andy, who hurt himself, can't run about and play with the other children. So summer gives Kate a gift – the powers of observation and compassion. This means that she can sense other's troubles and see the beautiful things in the world that others easily miss.

**Format: 21 x 29,7cm, colour print, hardcover, 24 pages**



## Reading Sample

### Page 4

The lively voices of children ring out in Sunny Dale every morning. They don't have any aunts living by the sea or uncles living in the mountains to go and spend the summer with, but they do have toys, imaginations and a stream where they go to swim.

The only way to reach the stream is on foot. Behind the houses and the golden-yellow fields of sunflowers there is a field full of daisies that spread out like a long white curtain. Then behind that field lies a woodland world of beech trees, oak trees and pine trees. In the woods it is quieter than a school on Sunday. Where it comes to an end at the very last pine tree there is a fenced pasture with sheep and goats. Only a stone's throw away, a stream winds its way along the valley like a blue scarf on a green pullover.

### Page 5

Leaping over the fence, the children race to the stream as fast as they can, throwing off their clothes as they go. "Hooray, the summer is here! Today will be the best day ever!" they all cry out with joy, jumping into the crystal clear water.

### Page 6

Only Andy, whose leg is in a cast because of a fall, and Kate are missing.

Kate is a delicate little girl who wears her hair in two long and pretty braids. Her parents are away at work all day and she doesn't have any brothers or sisters, which is why, more than any child in the world, she longs for friends. She doesn't even look forward to the holidays as she knows she will be alone all day long.

"But this summer will be different, I won't be alone anymore," decided Kate and went together with her friends to the babbling stream. Since Kate has difficulties walking, having been born with her right leg shorter than her left, other children began to leave her behind one by one.

"Sorry Kate, but we have to run ahead. If we walk as slow as you, no one will make it to the stream in time to go swimming."

### Page 7

The next day, Kate set off on her journey once again. And again, before she even made it past the field of golden sunflowers, her friends had overtaken her. As they got further into

the distance, they got smaller and smaller, and soon they were no closer than the clouds in the sky.

“Kate, my dear, why not stay at home today!” suggested her mother one morning when she saw the sad look in her daughter’s eyes. “If you want, I’ll take the day off. We can draw fluffy clouds, sunflowers, daisies, the woods and the stream where your friends splash about in.”

“Mummy, I am getting faster every day. Yesterday I reached the first pine trees. I know I can make it, I’m sure. I can’t stay at home.”

### **Page 8**

So Kate left her house in the morning and made her way towards the stream with her friends. The children accompanied her to the field with the daises. The sun, dressed in its bright yellow swimming costume, was getting pretty hot by the time Kate reached the edge of the woods and came across two little snails in the dappled shade of a tall beech tree.

They were resting, sipping on a flower’s nectar and massaging their single flat foot.

“Hello little snails!” she greeted them, “Where are you going?”

“Out into the world,” replied the snails in unison. “We are travelling to the Land of Dragonflies where our sick cousin is waiting for us. We have medicine for him: eleven big drops of dew from rose petals collected before dawn.”

The snails went along with her up to the third tree and for the first time in her life Kate became aware that the speed she walked at was not actually slow in comparison with theirs.

### **Page 9**

August began but Kate still had not reached the stream. She could have given up, but as the two little snails taught her a couple of days earlier, if you start your journey early enough and don’t give up, you will surely reach your goal, so she left home on the second Sunday in August so early in the morning that it was still dark. The little boys and girls were all still sleeping. Even the sun was still in slumberland, and its yellow swimming costume was still hanging out to dry on a string running between the stars.

### **Page 10**

Kate went as fast as her legs could go. In the fields she encountered the wind which was clearing away sleepies from the sky, and, in the shade of the old oak tree, she bumped into

two tired, but very happy, snails. They were coming back from the Land of Dragonflies and carrying a basket of delicious blueberries. The big drops of rose petal dew had quickly helped their cousin get well again.

### Page 11

Kate was feeling tired from all her walking and decided to lay down on a pile of soft moss that she found in a woodland glade, falling into a deep sleep. She was woken by the voices of children playing.

“Kate, we really admire your perseverance,” said Peter kindly, “It isn’t much further to the stream, climb onto my back and I will carry you!”

“This is the happiest day of my life,” exclaimed Kate with joy as she finally dipped her toes into the warm water and splashed about.

But she wasn’t happy. She became sad when she thought of Andy. Only Andy had not come to the stream. He was even slower than she was now that he was wearing a cast on his leg. He just sits in his room and waits for rainclouds that will force the other children to stay inside and they might come to visit him. How could she have forgotten about him?

Kate hurriedly said goodbye to her friends so she could get to Andy before dark and apologise to him for leaving him behind. It’s not nice to be alone.

### Page 12

The snails had already began making their beds in the grass when she found them among the tireless dragonflies. All she wanted to do was lie down next to them, she was so tired.

### Page 13

“Little girl, why are you still alone?” the snails asked her. “Except for you, we have never seen a child running about on their own. See, we also keep each other company. If you want we can help you find a friend.”

“Dear little snails, I’m not alone any more. All children are friends deep down, sometimes we just don’t realise it. I’m on my way to visit Andy, the loneliest boy in Sunny Dale this summer. He will be overjoyed to see me!”

The next morning, when the sun started appearing from behind the clouds like a bud of the yellowest flower, Kate and Andy set off to visit the snails. And they had a present for them – delicious red strawberries from the garden. The children of Sunny Dale soon caught up with them. “Are you going to the stream?” they asked. “No, we have been invited to see the snails in their garden. You can join us, if you want, but you will have to walk slowly in order to see and hear them.”

“Thanks for the invitation, but we already have other plans for today,” replied the children, “We’re off to float little boats down the stream. See you tomorrow!”

The two snails were delighted to see Kate and Andy. Since friends call each other by their first names, they first introduced themselves. Andy – Kate – Slimy – Shelly. While happily chatting away and retelling both snail and human fairy tales, they sipped on the most delicious juice made from rhubarb, ate ripe red strawberries and rainbow honey, while the wind whipped up the most beautiful night-time dreams on the clouds above.

#### **Page 14**

This night, the children from Sunny Dale dreamt of lots of lovely things. They danced on giant balls, rode golden unicorns, played hide-and-seek with water fairies, sung in a forest of long-haired pixies, played in a paper plane factory and blew bubbles on the square of talking houses. And when the dreams finally faded away and the wind carried away all the sleepies, they awoke to a new day and realised that being friends with one another is what makes children happy and full of fun.