

Pitchbook — — Mart BOOK OF PROJECTS

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MATCHING EXCELLENCE
MERCATO INTERNAZIONALE AUDIOVISIVO
FILM | DRAMA SERIES | DOC

At the sidelines of the fifth edition of MIA and Italian Film Boutique for Young Audience, the project Pitchbook Mart offers to the audiovisual industry a considerable range of quality editorial contents “to be serialized”, addressing a young audience. The invited publishing houses will be given the opportunity to present their editorial projects in a qualified context such as MIA’s one, in order to relate to the protagonists of the audiovisual sector and to explore the strategies and the opportunities for an international development. Today, the novel, or more generally young adult fiction, as well as comics, in the form of graphic novel, are experiencing a time of great creative exuberance and unusual cultural attention from the audiovisual sector. During the last century, the directions of comics and books have repeatedly been crossing with cinema: book stories and cinematographic novels have often swapped characters and narrative starting points. This is the beginning, Alice nella Città and APA, with the support of SIAE (Italian Society of Authors and Publishers) and in collaboration with the Global Grant Movie Up 2020 by Ass.For.Seo, CNA Audiovisivo and Bilbolbul International Comics Festival conceived the idea of an accelerator which, in a qualified context such as MIA’s one, connected some quality editorial contents addressing young people with the audiovisual field; the whole thing in order to explore strategies and opportunities to serialize characters and scripts from young adult books and graphic novel.

The books selected for the first edition of MIA’s Pitchbook are:

1. ALIEN by Aisha Franz – Canicola, 2012
2. CHEESE by ZUZU – Coconino Press, 2019
3. IO SONO ZERO by Luigi Ballerini – Il Castoro, 2015
4. LA BATTAGLIA DELLE BAMBINE by Simona Dolce – Mondadori, 2019
5. LA FAVORITA by Matthias Lehmann – 001 Edizioni, 2017
6. LE BELVE by Manlio Castagna and Guido Sgardoli – Edizioni Piemme, 2019
7. LUNA DEL MATTINO by Francesco Cattani – Coconino Press, 2017
8. MELVINA by Rachele Aragno – Bao Publishing, 2019
9. ROSSA by Chiara Rapaccini – Nave di Teseo, 2019
10. VOI by Davide Morosinotto – Rizzoli, 2019

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The girls' war

Author Simona Dolce

Synopsis

Palermo, Summer 1991.

As entrepreneur Libero Grassi gets killed, the mafia becomes an even more suffocating presence. Five girls join forces to fight the hardest battle in life: growing up.

The little heroines, portrayed by photographer Letizia Battaglia, are witnesses to an event that will mark them for life. Agnese, Aurora, Marialuce, Elda and Marina: unforgettable characters. In the alleys of Palermo, amidst cockroaches and mice, they create their own games. Aurora's father is a mob boss. Elsa and Marina's parents are small entrepreneurs. Agnese's mother is a worker at Grassi's factory. Marialuce's father collects scrapers and creates fantastic worlds with them.

The girls' gang is being targeted by a group of bullies. But soon it will no longer be a game. The two gangs join together. The little women and their new allies will fight the most demanding battle of all: the one against the mafia, against violence, for freedom.



Biography

Simona Dolce was born in Palermo on June 1, 1984. She has been living and working in Rome for years. She wrote the novel "Madonne Nere" (Nutrimenti, 2008) and the children's novels "La mia vita all'ombra del mare" (Raffaello, 2016) and "La battaglia delle bambine" (Mondadori, 2019). In 2017 he won the Elsa Morante Award. She is a member of the editorial staff of the literary magazine "Nuovi Argomenti".

Critical comment

The characters of The Battle of the Girls come to life from Letizia Battaglia's famous photographs. These images generate the stories of five unforgettable, unique protagonists, with eyes full of dreams and an uncertain future to conquer.

The 1990's Palermo comes back to life with its wet alleys, markets and neighborhood festivals, in the games with mice and cockroaches, where the girls' and their families' fate collides. The imaginative story of these little women portrayed by Battaglia and narrated by Simona Dolce is a collective tale where childhood and its revolutionary power can reverse the rules of the adult world and fight the oppressive presence of the mafia in town.

The assassination of Libero Grassi, the businessman murdered because he was unwilling to pay protection money, shows that the mafia can also target decent people. And the battle of the girls against the bullies suddenly turns into a joint battle against a much more serious enemy: the fearsome "Scarface", who symbolizes the mafia and violence in the neighborhood.

Narrative arc

Summer 1991. The world of childhood gives way to adulthood. Agnese, Marialuce, Aurora, Elda, Marina will discover that what they believed was just a game is turning into a real danger. They fight against a gang of kids but soon they find themselves fighting to save themselves from the "Scarface". The assassination of Libero Grassi, at the beginning of the novel, shows them that the mafia has entered their own house.

Strong Points

The original characters move in a story of high moral value. Historical events which are part of the collective memory are shown in a new way. The mafia is narrated in a polyphony of voices and through the gaze of childhood. This is a contemporary fairy tale for an audience of all ages. In the alleys of Palermo, 5 special girls are forced to choose between good and evil as they claim their own identity beyond family conventions and violence.

Info

Author:	Simona Dolce
Publishing House:	Mondadori
Year:	2019, Milan
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Book Nationality:	Italy
Adaptations:	—
Publishing House:	—
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Red

Author Chiara Rapaccini

Synopsis

In a near future, that looks very much like the present, nature has been defeated and humanity is at a crossroads. Living in conditions of extreme poverty and hunger, mankind is restricted to living off freeze-dried foods and all human activities are now performed by robots, hired by the Olduns. This faction has taken control and is aiming to exterminate all children and adolescents. They are sadistic, evil and greedy, and theirs is a fight against life itself. But the brave Littleuns, hell-bent on saving humanity, are preparing to fight back. RED is among them. She's fourteen years old and her parents tried to put her down in order to have something more to eat themselves. This is the story of her adventures. Its disturbing, bleak and provocative: a dystopic vision that feels like a distorted and modern take on a Grimm fairy-tale, describing a momentous clash between past and future, featuring rebellion, violence and ultimately, freedom.



Biography

Chiara Rapaccini, aka RAP, was born in Florence. She currently lives in Rome where she is head of the child illustration faculty at the European Design Institute. A designer, painter, illustrator, sculptor, she also writes and illustrates children and adult books. Her vignettes appeared regularly on many magazines. Personal shows of her work have been premiered in Rome, Milan, Naples, Genoa and Venice, Turin, Buenos Aires, Cuba, Osaka, Tokyo, Bruxelles, Paris and New York. Chiara Rapaccini writes the satirical leaflet "Amori Sfigati" (Hapless love) that has been very successful on Facebook. In 2016 she received the "Andrea Pazienza" Award as the best Web author. Her latest novel "ROSSA" was published in 2019 by La Nave di Teseo Editore.

Critical comment

Fear and hope, blind cruelty and the miracle of forgiveness, unfettered nature that no technology can every match, life that against all odds defeats death: "RED" is a small gem, in which every ingredient is perfectly measured. With an excellent writing style, a sharp wit and a poetic vision, the artist creates a dark fairy-tale for adults which may be disturbing, but is also essential if we are to speak about our present: a dystopic vision that thrills, intrigues and scares its readers and may perhaps make them feel a little ashamed because the book brings one face to face with what we might become, a sad world that only benefits the elderly. The flowing and enticing language, 49 sleek chapters and enthralling narrative also manages to describe true feelings and the beauty of nature with bold and vivid strokes. Rapaccini wins her readers over by arousing their indignation, urging them to turn the pages while also making them think. As Red's tale unfolds, the author reminds us of who we are and where we came from, and how much we owe to the fragile beauty of our human existence.

Narrative arc

The heroine, Red, is the focus of the narrative, and other characters revolve around her. Aquilante, the magic dog, Hood (her friend and mentor), the Littleuns, her young companions who help her fight the enemy, the OLDUNS. Red leaves home like Gretel in Grimm's tale and is involved in adventures and extraordinary meetings in a forest which is a symbolic representation of life. These events make her stronger, she has to fight to survive and in the meantime she becomes a woman and learns to forgive those who have abandoned her. The plot provides opportunities for a prequel (Red's life in the dystopic city before she was abandoned) and a sequel (Red's battle against the Olduns to free the planet and make humanity work for it rather than against it, by handing it over to the young, who treasure the future).

Strong Points

Powerful and disruptive, RED keeps its readers on tenterhooks, leading them through post-apocalyptic settings, forest burrows and thrilling battles at a breakneck pace. Written before the advent of Greta, before the "Friday for Future" movement, "RED" is suited for both young and adult audiences. A mixture of Grimm brothers and technology, a modern fairy-tale for adults on the contradictions that beset our society.

Info

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The You

Author Davide Morosinotto

Synopsis

The story of how Blu met Luka and what happened next.

Blu lives in a town on the shores of an Alpine lake. Nothing special ever happens there... until, one day, strange events start to occur.

A fisherman dies hit by a rock. A widow is hospitalised for saying she can hear her dead husband's voice. Blu hears what sounds like her cousin's voice, but it can't be... he lives miles away and Blu's phone is off.... That's how Blu meets Luka, one of the You: a population of creatures akin to humans, except they use telepathy and are... invisible. Apart from their shadows. Luka can't remember how he got there, but he's scared, alone and doesn't know how to find his Family again.

Blu and Luka become friends; he is, after all, a teenager like her.

Thus begins a great adventure and a battle that will change the town and its inhabitants forever.



Biography

Davide is not only a sci-fi and children's author, but also a journalist and scriptwriter. He has written over forty titles translated into more than twenty languages.

In 2018, Red Stars, one of his internationally successful books, won In Other Words - Booktrust's Book in Translation Award in London. In 2017, he won the Italian Andersen Award with The Pocket Watch Gang, the adventure he dreams of having lived as a child. Then, in 2018, he was a finalist at Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis in Germany. In 2019, he won the Prix des Bouquineurs en Seine in France and the Vlag and Wimpel in the Netherlands.

Critical comment

A captivating, contemporary, character-driven story that combines fantasy and coming-of-age elements with echoes of big screen masterpieces such as The Shape of Water, Stranger Things, E.T., Stand by Me and Dark. There's Blu, Luka and their friends: all outsiders in their own ways.

There are the adults and the You, the others, the ones who no one knows about.

There's friendship that can grow out of nowhere, becoming stronger than steel, or be interrupted by an unexpected betrayal.

There's the courage to discover, adventure, and a continuous change of pace, sometimes poetic and funny, sometimes frightening and mysterious.

Each character has a distinct personality, motivation, values and view of the world: this creates conflicts, alliances, tit for tat, secrets and lies.

A high-octane escalation of events, a plot full of surprise, suspense, cliff-hangers and twists that will grip the viewer from the first scene.

Narrative arc

In a village among the mountains, strange events begin to happen. Blu and her friends investigate.

Blu meets Luka and introduces him to her group of friends. They decide to help him find his lost Family.

The other You have been imprisoned on top of a mountain. The group of friends manage to free them, but the plan goes to pot. The You and townspeople confront... and they could start a war.

Strong Points

SCI-FI with different elements that permit multiple story developments (adventure – friendship – love – mystery). There are multifaceted characters with different motivations that are interesting and relatable for every viewer. It can easily become a compelling series. Moreover, it has echoes of big screen masterpieces - all the elements for becoming an international success.

Info

Author:	Davide Morosinotto
Publishing House:	Rizzoli
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Book Nationality:	Italy
Adaptations:	no
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Code.Name.Zero

Author Luigi Ballerini

Synopsis

Zero is about to turn 14 and is working out on his treadmill when a blackout occurs. The gym is pitch dark. He gropes for the exit, door after door he finally finds it. He is now outside: outside the gym, of course. But actually he is in the outside world, a world that he had no idea could even exist. Zero has been trained hard to become a war drone pilot, being born and grown in a high-tech "World" that has nothing to do with the reality. No friends, no school, no family: a metallic voice named MADAR that cradles him to sleep since he was a child, a secret and separate life no one should know about. Zero doesn't have a name, he is just a code number. In the outside world, he has no hope to survive. Cold and shocked, Zero eventually faints: a young couple of doctors finds and rescues him on the roadside: they still don't know, though, what kind of troubles they are getting themselves into...



Biography

Physician and psychoanalyst, Luigi Ballerini is an expert on children, teenagers and YA. Editorialist for *Avvenire* (one of the main Italian daily news) on children, school and education issues, renowned author of YA fiction, he works for the major Italian Publishers; he uses to say that his closeness to children and teenagers makes the stories come straight to him and that he never has to search for them. The stories he writes are of the most present-day importance, and he gained national and international recognitions for them, among which "White Ravens" (2010), "Premio Andersen" (2014), "Premio Fenice Europa" (2016) and "Premio Bancarellino 2016" for best YA fiction with *Code.Name.Zero*. His books have been translated in French, Spanish, Greek, Dutch, Chinese, Polish, Slovenian, Flemish, Maltese. He has also co-created the characters of "Meteoheroes" animated TV Series currently in production.

Critical comment

Beyond the *touch screens*, there's a whole world of feelings. *Name.Code.Zero* is a YA powerful, dystopic, yet utterly modern novel: how far can a human mind be shaped? What's better: safety of your birthplace or the unknown of the world outside? Which is the difference between watching something and experiencing it?. Through an adventurous storyline, Zero's two lives intertwine with political fiction murky intrigues: misguided secret service, despotic organizations, virtual soldiers, weapons of mass destruction, everything controlled by a criminal "Big Brother". The author guides us inside the risks of advanced technologies and their completely absorbing power, in the blurred boundaries between real and virtual and machine-driven dehumanization. Topical, real, urgent hot topics, everybody – especially Young Adults - must be aware of. Last but not least: this book touches some thorny topics of coming-of-age: growing up means dealing with the past, no matter which past. No experience, even the most devastating, can make somebody irredeemable. You can't save yourself alone.

Narrative arc

The novel's structure and narration provide several adaptation possibilities. The story features many topics and stories-inside-the-story that deserve a further exploitation. What Zero doesn't know and see of his "World", is Zero the only one who escaped from it? Moreover, the plot offers great chances for prequel and sequel development. Zero's life before blackout, his life in the real world.

Strong Points

Strong main character: a coming-of-age story of a cold soldier who becomes human the more he trusts people and real world around him. Zero is engaging, compelling, fascinating. Hyperconnection, tecno-ager, action, suspense, real vs virtual, villains, struggling to find one's place in the world: YA and Generation Connectivity fully empathize with these topics and the unique appeal of the plot.

Info

Author:	Luigi Ballerini
Publishing House:	Editrice Il Castoro
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The Beasts

Author Guido Sgardoli - Manlio Castagna

Synopsis

Three penniless robbers, with animal nicknames and masked with rough cotton sacks, take a class of Ferrara high school students hostage in the former sanatorium of Tresigallo (a village suspended in the fog of the Po valley) where they've taken refuge after a robbery gone wrong.

In the Boeri Hospital, an abandoned jewel of rationalist architecture nestled in a spooky park, the kidnapping will soon get rather bloody: within the cracked walls, supernatural forces, restless shadows and gruesome visions reawaken. Lynx, the heinous head of the bandits, seems the one who is most affected and Giulia, a young student with a sort of extrasensory ability, is the only one who gets what's happening. Following escape attempts, violent conflicts between the characters and hallucinatory visions lurking in the dark, the survivors' journey in the bowels of the Boeri turns into an increasingly black nightmare where the destination seems to be a past filled with vicious secrets.



Biography

Manlio Castagna has a long career in children's film festivals, as deputy director of Giffoni, and his debut saga for Mondadori (the fantasy trilogy: Petrademone) is a bestseller whose cinematographic rights have been acquired by Ivan Cotroneo and Indigo to develop a TV series. He has worked for Cristal Sky, a Hollywood-based production company and as creative consultant for Doha Film Institute, the most important cinematographic producer in the Middle East.

Guido Sgardoli is one of the most famous Italian children's book writers. He writes for newspapers, cinema and television. Author of over one hundred books, his stories have been translated into many languages and have won all the major literary prizes dedicated to writing for children, such as the Italian Andersen in 2009, 2015 and 2018, and the Strega Children's Prize in 2019. This is the first collaboration between Guido and Manlio, but there are more to come!

Critical comment

The Beasts is a young adult novel that is quite different and absolutely original on the Italian scene, so much so that the Mondadori group immediately understood its potential by offering the authors a very strong contract to release it in March 2020 with publisher Piemme.

The strength of the project lies in the *double register between realistic history (like Beslan) and fantastic horror (but also fairy-tale: the story of the three sisters echoes Cenerentola's one), managed with great balance. The characters, atmospheres, rhythm, and literary and cinematographic references (Dog Day Afternoon, for example) give a powerful uniqueness to the story.*

The novel is conceived and developed with an audio-visual slant, respecting rhythmic scans and structure of filmic storytelling. The intention is precisely to create a mixture of genres, using the classic canons of hostage crime ("Casa de Papel"), the haunted house (example: Hill House) and survival horror videogames like Silent Hill.

Narrative arc

The story, after a scary teaser, starts immediately with a dynamic thriller in which the hostages have to face the kidnapping and the robbers have to manage a situation they hadn't taken into account. Slowly, through Lynx's visions and Giulia's premonitions, they sink into terror. The characters find themselves facing fears and sides of themselves that they didn't know existed.

Strong Points

Originality: after a first overtly crime act, the story takes an unexpected and surprising turn.

The authors' recognisability: among the most important names in Italian children's literature.

The Italian setting, but with an international appeal.

The structure, which is already designed for a translation into a film or TV series.

The strong iconic potential: the animal nicknames, the villains' coarse cloth hoods like vintage Halloween costumes.

Info

Author:	Guido Sgardoli – Manlio Castagna
Publishing House:	Piemme
Year:	2020, Milan
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Book Nationality:	Italy
Adaptations:	no
Publishing House:	Book on a Tree
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Alien

Author Aisha Franz

Synopsis

Alien is a 200 feminine pages long story. It tells about a little girl, her teenage sister and their mother: three lives and three important moments of transition which all together depict a daily life picture capable to exite the reader from the very beginning of the story. Their desperate mother looks back to the past struggling for her self-affirmation in between loneliness routine and the hope of a second chance; the teenager seems to feel indifferently her heartbreak with a friend, she can't choose a pathway aiming to the adultlife, because of those impulsive and anguishing feelings from the teenage world; the little girls meet an alien in a cornfield and hides it in her bedroom, so she could feel less lonely and, in fact, face secret fears and desires. In this touching scene men are missing, wether they are fathers, boyfriends or pleasure objects, they are nothing but mere appearances. Only the alien, who shares a secret and trustful friendship with the little girl, can be considered as a true respectable character.



Biography

Aisha Franz was born in Fürth in 1984. She studied the art of illustration and comics with Hendrik Dorgathen in the Kunsthochschule from Kassel. Her drowings and comics stories have been pulishing by differents magazines, like Orang, Kuti Kuti, Strapazin e Kuš. In 2011 her graphic novel *Alien* (Reprodukt) was published, it was also translated in France. Her second book *Brigitte und der Perlenhort* (Reprodukt, 2012) brings together all her previous self-produced series' four parts. With the collaboration of other berliner cartoonists, she founds "The Treasure-Fleet", a group which produces mini-comics. Aisha Franz lives and works in Berlin.

Critical comment

Since her first notorius graphic novel, Franz is best known for her astonishing and wise storytelling and for her ability in going through the characters' moods and psyches in a direct and at the same time soft way, creating a tale that expains emotions with pure irony. The turmoil, the discovery of self being and sexuality, the waiting and the frenesy from childhood and adolescence, including the conflict between mother and daughter are the main focus of the book. The pencil mark and the simply lively drawings, work perfectly together in the narrative orchestration heating the story itself. *Alien* is a novel which fascinated readers from Germany and France for its enjoyable reading and a light tale despite its deep and painful contents about life. Aisha Franz belongs to a new generation of german authors considered as the greatest in their comtemporany international scene, both for the graphical freshness and for the narrative sensitivity.

Narrative arc

A kind and scared alien share its state of diversity with a teenage girl. A deeply regretful mother confront herself with her daughter's increasing freedom and first sexual approaches. A fragile, yet cruel, story about time and life chances. An utterly female tale.

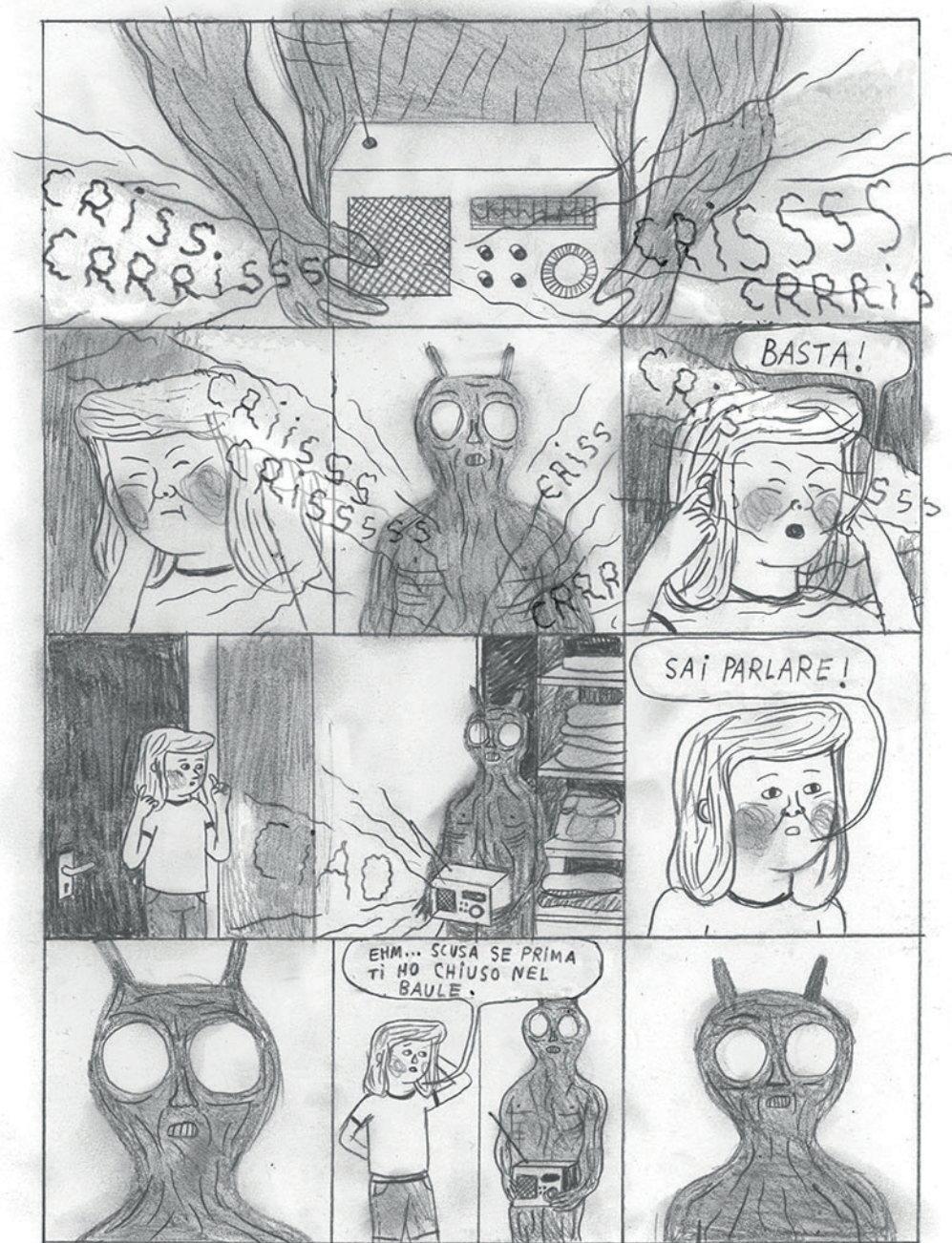
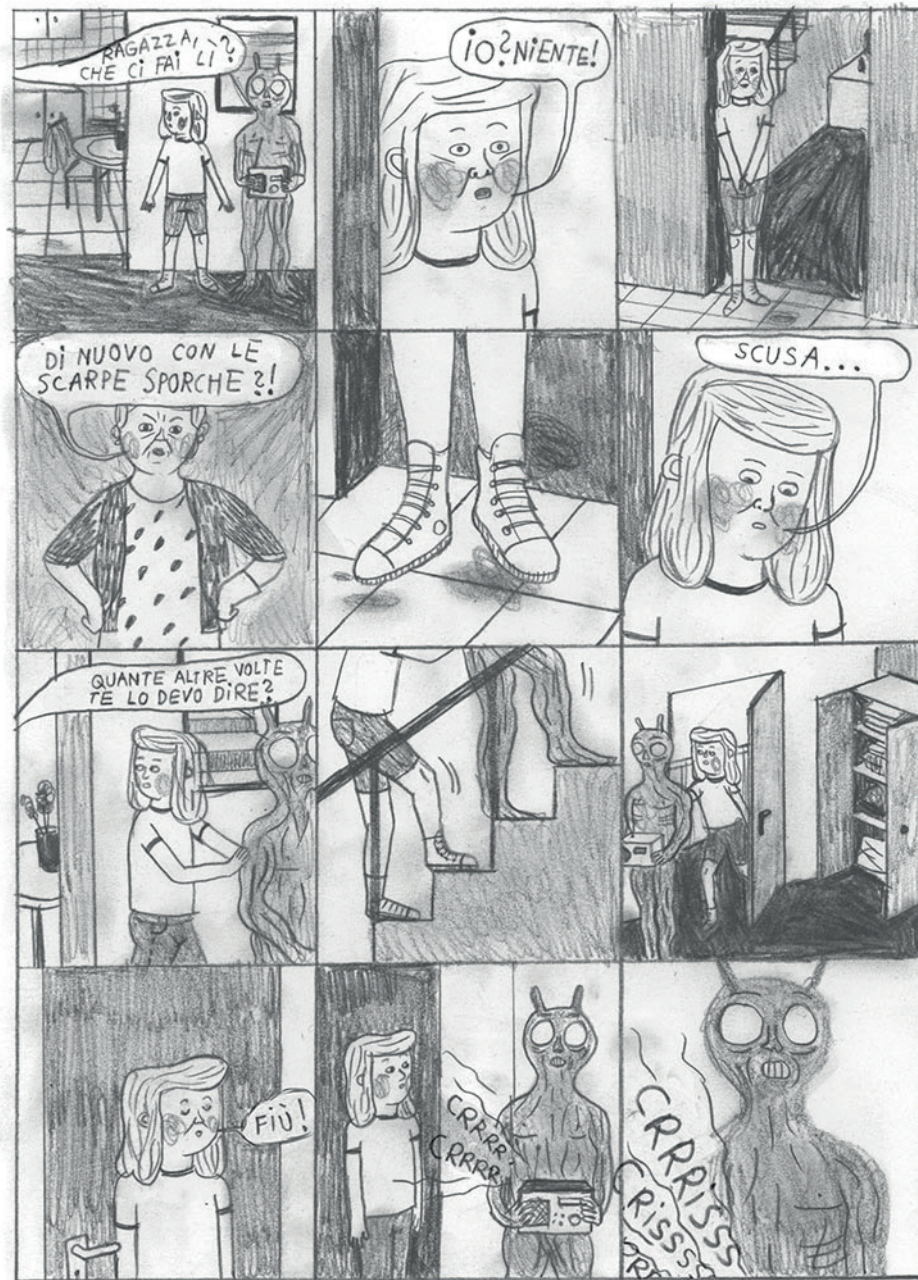
Strong Points

Thanks to the presence of three leading characters from different generations, the potencial involvement of public from different ages. A story waving between real life and science fiction. The careful exporation of relations and feelings through a costant touch of irony. The sweet E.T. reference as the great cult movie every kind of public loves.

Info

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Publishing House:	Canicola
Year:	2012
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Book Nationality:	German
Adaptations:	no
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Melvina

Author Rachele Aragno

Synopsis

Melvina is a young girl whose neighbor, Otto, an aging gentleman, claims to actually be a child whose youth was pawned off to Malcape, the evil ruler of a world not too far from ours, who grants wishes in return for pieces of one's soul. Embarking on a journey to help Otto get his youth back, Melvina will encounter the denizens of a Carrolesque land that embodies everything we can sacrifice, and shouldn't. Aided by her grandparents, who she had believed to be dead, but were actually being held hostage in that world in exchange for the protection of a very important secret, Melvina will thwart the evil mastermind's plans, and learn the valuable lesson of how important it is not to wish to become adults too soon.

A colorful tale, the first of a trilogy, with symbolism appealing both to children and adults, and a masterful stroytelling style that makes it truly unique.



Biography

Rachele Aragno was born and lives in Tuscany, near Grosseto, in 1982; she has begun drawing very early, with the aim of becoming a comics creator. After attending the Scuola Internazionale di Comics in Rome, with a major in international comics, she has collaborated with indie publishers. At the same time she has drawn illustrations for a WHO campaign on depression and she's taken part in the collective exhibit "Rudy Valentino a Matera". In 2017 she has illustrated the constellation of the bird of paradise for the charity project "Costellarium" of Reverie Studio and she's published the short story "Melvina" in the indie anthology "Ave" from Attaccapanni Press. The same year she has started her collaboration with BAO Publishing, to develop and flesh out the character of Melvina, that was to star in its own graphic novel. In 2018 a fan art for the Image Comics series Rumble also appears, in the fourth collection of the comic, "Soul without pity". She is currently working on the next two chapters of the Melvina franchise.

Critical comment

Having created her when she was herself a teenager, Rachele Aragno's Melvina is a very heartfelt character, with a profoundly likable and well rounded personality, that inhabits the story in a natural, almost casual way. Curiosity, and the desire to prove herself are the driving forces in her quest, which unfolds as much in its plot twists as in the evolution of the characters. The cast itself grows along the way, and it's easy for readers to empathize with different members of the cast, as they are never mere tools of the plot, and are perfectly contextualized and described. The straightforward structure of the progression of the story, coupled with its subtext implications, and the solid ending, that leaves a door ajar for future stories, make this story appealing to a wide range of demographics. Further adventures will follow Melvina in her teen years and on the threshold of adulthood, further developing the bond between character and readers, who will be able to literally see her grow before their very eyes.

Narrative arc

From today's "normal" world, to a fantasy dimension where the precious, deep secrets of humankind are hoarded by an evil creature who obtains them in return for wishes granted, Melvina's trip takes her through enchanted settings that are symbolic for her quest, and then back home again. The story is self-contained, but the world building that unfolds before the eyes of the reader is so rich that further adventures are in the works.

Strong Points

Strong, likable, diverse characters. A quest-like plot that draws from the fairy tale tradition but dares take chances with exciting plot twists. A charming visual style that lends itself to different kinds of adaptation. A unique narrative voice that resonates deeply with the readers.

Info

Author:	Rachele Aragno
Publishing House:	BAO Publishing
Year:	2019, Milan
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Book Nationality:	Italy
Adaptations:	—
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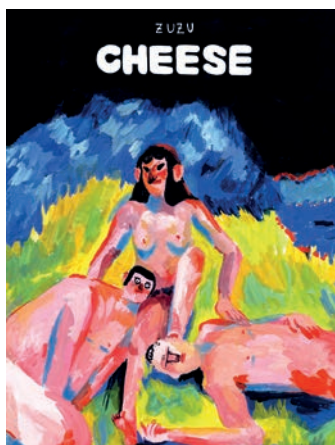


Cheese

Author Zuzu

Synopsis

A girl, Zuzu, and her two friends Dario and Riccardo. In the boredom of the days of a provincial city of Southern Italy, each one seeks in their own way the courage to risk, to throw himself, to try to realize their dreams. Zuzu's life flows between crazy falling in love, unmotivated enthusiasm, the desire to tear the world apart, the difficult relationship with one's body and anorexia, laughter and the first real tears. Then the time comes to experience an adventure and embark on the journey to Brentonico, a little town in Trentino, to participate at the traditional cheese rolling competition on the mountain slope. Zuzu and his friends will face the challenge with the gravity and commitment of the most solemn acts. Perfectly equipped with helmets, knee pads and funny blouses, they prepare to roll towards their destiny. What will they see at the bottom of the hill?



Biography

Zuzu (Giulia Spagnolo) was born in 1996. Then she started to disappear suddenly because she absolutely had to go and draw the little monsters that came to mind. Until he stopped doing it, because he had to give the first kiss, survive adolescence and other things like that. One day of the fifth year of classical high school he discovered that comics exist and then went to IED to study illustration. From her graduation thesis was born *Cheese*, her first graphic novel, published for Coconino Press in 2019 under the guidance of Ratigher and under the supervision of Gipi: a success with audiences and critics that earned her, among other things, the Political Satire Award of Forte dei Marmi for the Romance with Comics category. The author collaborates with the *Robinson* insert of *La Repubblica*, publishing an unpublished table each week in the *Affai di Zuzu's* column. Today he is 23 and has several outstanding stories to tell.

Critical comment

On the one hand there is the slow flow of provincial daily life, the small adventures of three friends on the threshold of adulthood; on the other, or inside, there is the anguish held back barely by the protagonist, who takes the symbolic form of a proliferation of monstrous bowels and words poetically scattered on the page. At her first work, the very young Zuzu approaches autofiction by subverting rules and customs: no commonplace in the story of friendship with three, no concession to self-indulgence in dealing with the issue of eating disorder, a dramaturgy that lets the evolution of the characters making it converge towards an absolutely believable happy ending, necessary. *Cheese* shows in depth the phases of a hard, compelling inner struggle, covering it with the sharp but never cynical humor of the scenes, in themselves completed, which follow one another. The surprisingly anti-realistic sign, supported by the perfect control of the composition, invents its own beauty through the expressionist deformation of the characters, all figures that presuppose an earlier life and that one would like to follow even after the end of the book.

Narrative arc

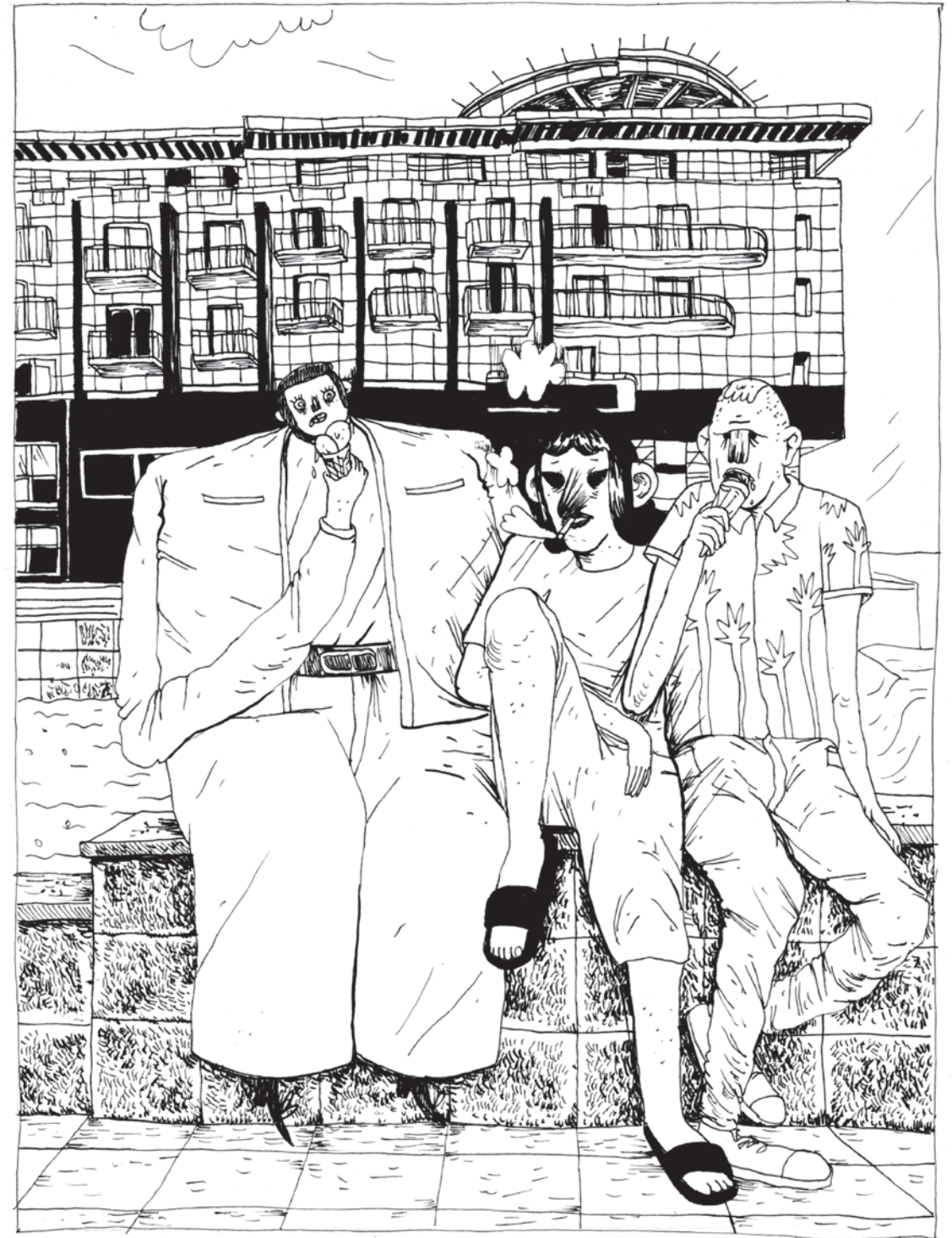
The story of "Cheese" is that of three friends at the end of the teenage season. A solid friendship between them, which resists and survives all difficulties: a closed ecosystem, told on the threshold of the moment in which we must throw ourselves into the infinite sea of possibilities and dangers of adulthood.

Strong Points

As Gipi said, a cartoonist and director who supervised this debut, "Cheese" wins for its freshness of language and for the "damned, intolerable, innocent youthful fury" that animates the story. The theme of eating disorders of the protagonist (bulimia, anorexia) and the autobiographical theme of the problems of adolescence are not treated in terms of self-pity, but open to a positive message (having the courage to take risks) and to a "sunny" ending and optimistic.

Info

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Publishing House:	Cononino Press - Fandango
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Book Nationality:	Italy
Adaptations:	France
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Luna del mattino

Author Francesco Cattani

Synopsis

Tommi, a teenage boy, grew up in an urban suburb: an industrial area of landfills and roundabouts, concrete-besieged gardens and bars run by Chinese, factories and mega-warehouses where the few workers not yet replaced by robots hurry on the forklifts. It's the warmest winter in the last hundred years, it's a special day and everyone is stressed: Tommi, the schoolmate he likes, his older brother, Terri who is a teacher in a kindergarten ... all looking for if themselves, in the throes of alienation and a nameless hardship in a suffocating society, in which no one is really adult. The destinies of Tommi and his friends are intertwined and everything accelerates: in the course of a day and a breathtaking night Tommi will enter adulthood, through a path made of anger, fear, pain and dreamlike moments of stupefied poetry.



Biography

Francesco Cattani was born in Bologna in 1980. He was among the founders of the independent label *Ernest*. He has published comic drawings and stories for numerous anthologies and magazines including *Quartz*, *Internazionale*, *il Evil*, *Lo Straniero*, *La Lettura*, *Canicola*, *Hamelin*, *Animals*, *Rolling Stone*, *XL Repubblica*, on various anthologies and collaborated with international organizations such as *TEDx cambridge*, *World Economic Forum*, *Film Master Events* and *Balich Worldwide Shows*. In 2008 he received the Micheluzzi Award for Best Short Story and in 2010 the New Roads Award at the Napoli Comicon. His first comic novel, *Barcazza* (2010), was published in Italy by Canicola and was translated into France and Spain. In 2017 Coconino Press released the graphic novel *Luna del mattino*, published in France by Atrabile and awarded in 2018 with the Grand Prix Romics for Best Book, and with the Attilio Micheluzzi Award for Best Comic.

Critical comment

A low intensity dystopia, enough to cause a deviation in attention and then go straight to the heart of things. Or an accelerated training novel, packed for a day. *Luna del mattino* is perhaps the most important Italian graphic novel in years.

The reality of *Luna del Mattino* is based on the conflict and entirely constructed from the interweaving of the perceptions of the characters. This is perhaps the greatest result of virtuosity in organizing time - the different inner times - in the space of the page, but it is also the fruit of the desire to bring the reader closer to things to show them the unequivocal life. Thanks to this proximity, to this breath of life that pulsates in the imagination, Cattani manages to put the cynicism on stage with cruelty without wallowing in it. More than individual characters, he is attentive to their relationships. And if you keep away from any consolation, you just need to draw the gesture of lending a jacket - when, suddenly, winter arrives - to evoke, at least for a moment, the ghost of a family.

Narrative arc

The story of "Luna del Mattino" takes place in an urban suburbs "in the hottest winter of the last hundred years", in a hypothetical future very close to our present.

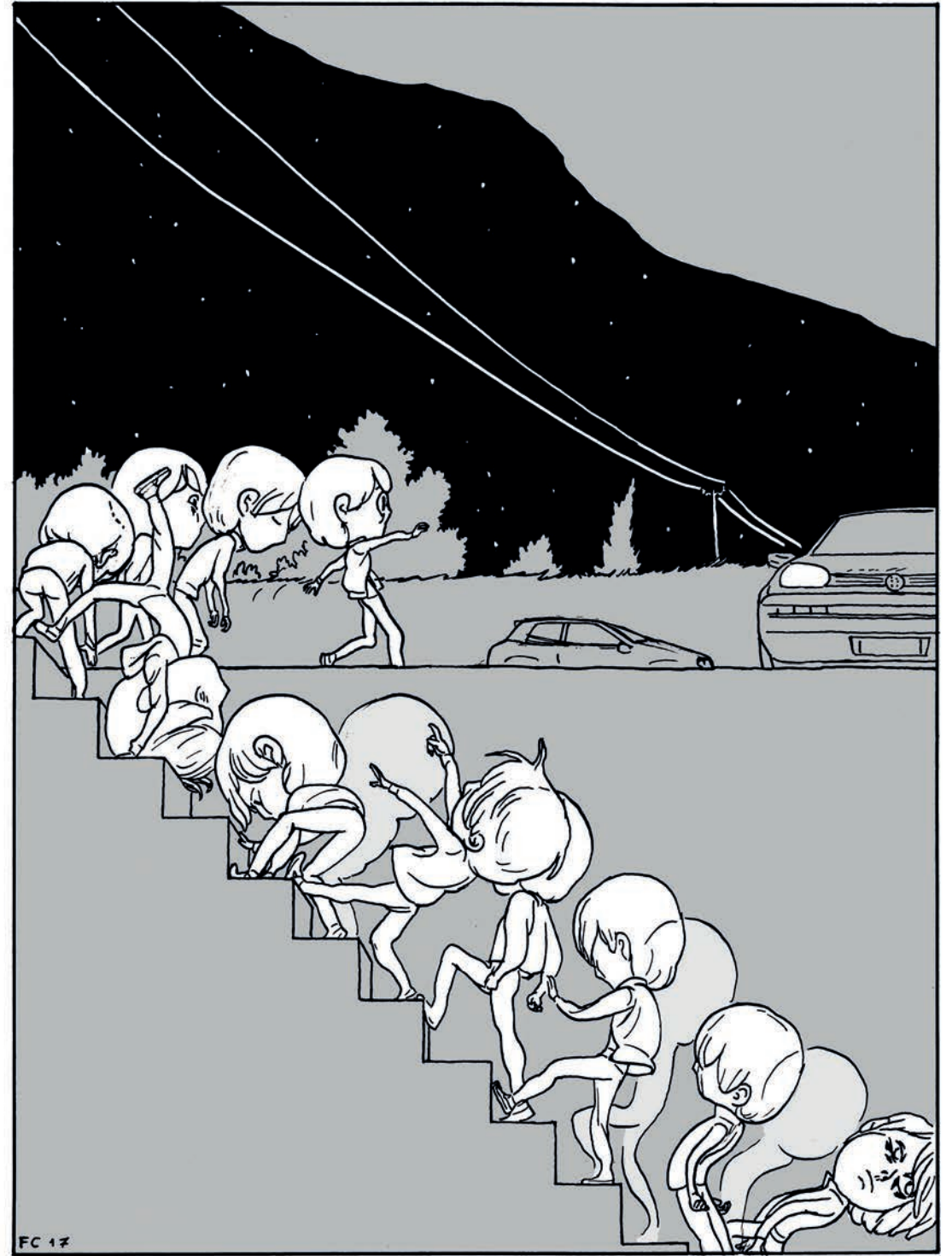
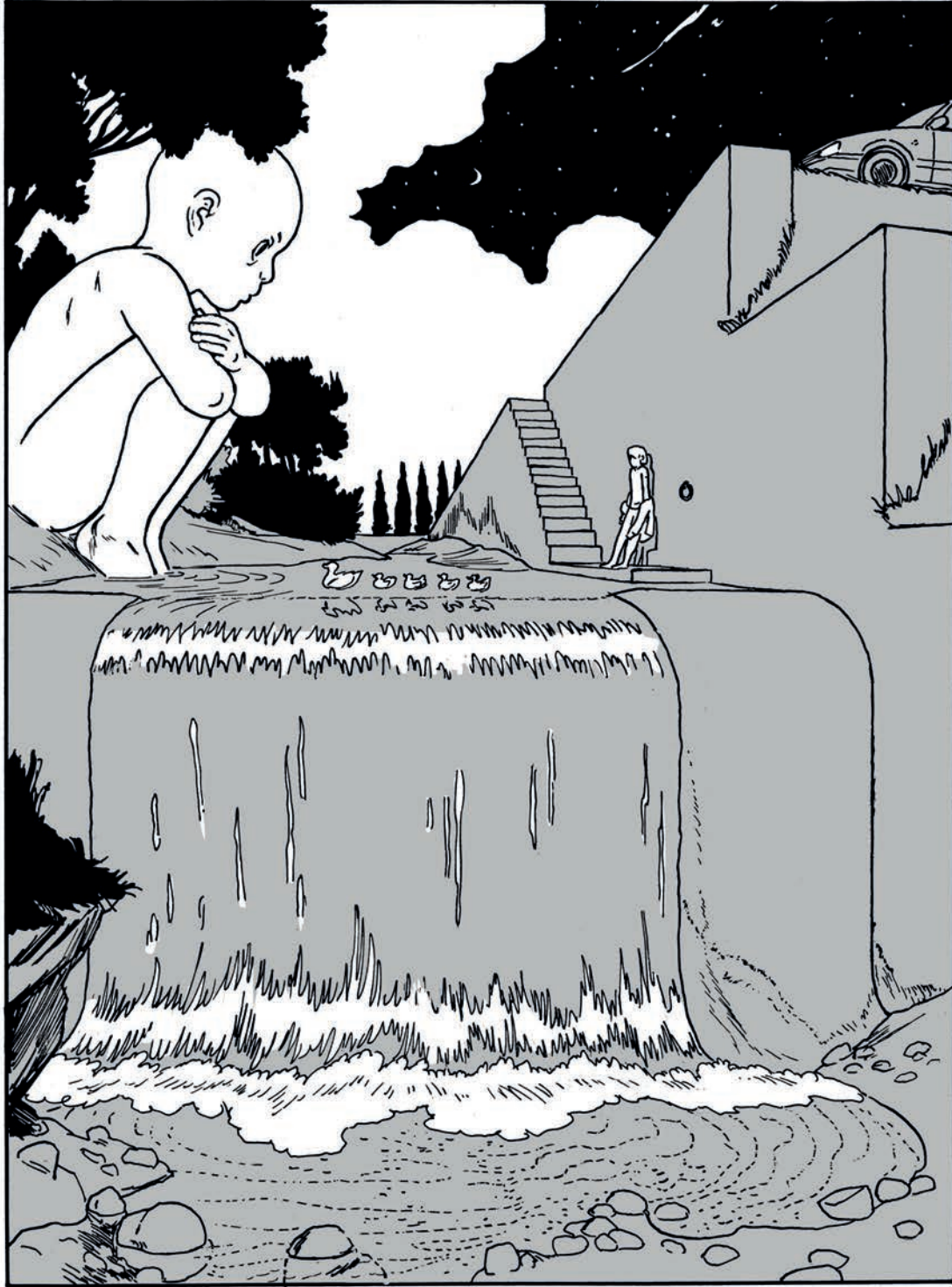
Everything happens within a day: in 24 hours we follow the life of the protagonist, the adolescent Tommi, and other characters, starting from the difficulties at school to a group night raid. With a sharp, adrenaline-fueled acceleration that leads to the poetic and moving final.

Strong Points

"Morning Moon" is a brave, lucid and ruthless comic novel in designing the contemporary. Cattani narrates with honest closeness and adherence to reality, but intertwines Tommi's story of formation with unexpected and overwhelming dream sequences. A story that remains in the memory and leaves its mark, among Pasolini's suggestions, "Magnolia" by Paul Thomas Anderson and "Non essere cattivo" by Caligari.

Info

Author:	Francesco Cattani
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La Favorita

Author Matthias Lehmann

Synopsis

Constance is ten and she lives confined in a big country residence, with her crazy and abusive grandmother, her drunken grandfather and her cat Noirette. It is a small world closed in on itself, made of continuous punishments: her only way out is imagination. When a Portuguese family is hired to look after the garden, Constance starts wondering about her place in the world, deep secrets come to light and the precarious balance of this singular household starts wavering. Constance falls in love with Lydie, the daughter of the Portuguese couple, while Manolo, their son, is attracted by Constance. Only at one-third of the book, we will find out that Constance is not a girl, but a boy forced to play a girl. And further the grandmother's true nature and how her story and Constance's weave together will be revealed.



Biography

Matthias Lehmann was born in 1978 in the area of Paris and he is a comic book author, painter and illustrator. In particular, he debuts in engraving techniques and he collaborates in several fanzines. He published three graphic novels for Actes Sud: L'Étouffeur de la RN115 (2006), Les Larmes d'Ezéchiel (2009) and La Favorite (2015); these latter were translated in Italian by 001 Edizioni. Among his works, the collection of illustrations La Ruche et le mémorial (lon, 2015), the two comic books for l'Association - Isolacity and Personne ne sait que je vais mourir and Agora (6 Pieds Sous Terre). He co-works with «Libération», «Le Monde», «Siné Mensuel» and «Marianne» and other periodicals. La favorite has been included in the official selection of the Angoulême International Comics Festival. He also took part in the Salon du Dessin in Paris and in the Italian international comics festivals, the BilBolbul in Bologna and the RataTà in Macerata.

Critical comment

La favorite is the story of an imprisoned girl looking for the identity she has been taken away, even before looking for her freedom. Lehmann takes a news report, he adds some nearly gothic elements and he turns it into an unexpected and brave coming-of-age story. The book is rich and ironic and it builds around the protagonist a twisted and fascinating family epopee; it takes place in the 70s but it embraces all the story of the 20th century. As illustrator, Lehmann explores the interior; he is a day-dreamer realist who weaves together fairy-tale and underground, the folkloristic and the dreaming awes. As narrator, he guides the reader along an apparently uneven and rambling path, until the plot twist: this is unexpected yet planned with relentlessly accuracy, and it is not any trick of storytelling, but a revelation of the meaning of life. Through the technique of illustrated stories, he can link the deepness with the ordinary, something halfway between the aptitude for symbols and the cohesion to the past.

Narrative arc

The flashback tracking the backstory of the grandparents, which goes so far as to clarify the reasons for Costance's presence in the villa, is engaged on the supporting narrative structure – the arrival of the Portuguese family, Constance's falling in love with the child, the disclosure of her gender identity, her grandmother's last attack and her subsequent release. Open and willing to be expanded, as well as the fantasies of the leading character and the mentioned back-stories of the other characters.

Strong Points

This glimpse into childhood is accurate and original for a story about gender identity, which is totally unusual as regards narrative style, psychological analysis, accessibility. The author's talent in narrative, which is unique in managing rhythm and plot twists, offers a variety of round characters, prone to development. The protagonist, Constance, an unforgettable character for the readers' hearts, expresses an intense empathy.

Info

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Publishing House:	001 Edizioni
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