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The world of Andrea Rádai's Frederick the Fox offers a colorful backdrop for a captivating tale. Both the images and the stories themselves usher us into a land which is part real, part fantasy as we learn about the adventures of this friendly fox. Rádai and illustrator Fanni Sipos have created a visual and textual world that offers ample testimony to the ultimate message of the book: the power of unity. This book of tales, in which stories of honor intertwine with stories of adventure, takes us on a journey through some of the landmark sites of the city of Budapest or any European city where one would find river and island, harbor and shore. The mischievous characters of the tales resemble our own, sometimes clownish friends from school. Frederick the Fox, our welcoming host, sometimes disguises himself as a dog, and Stanley the Stork from time to time pretends to be a sculpture on the bow of a ship. The dialogues introduce us to our heroes, who are sometimes a bit naïve, sometime sly and slick, but always eager for adventure. Frederick hunts

around in the refuse people have left on the island at the close of day, and he and his friends discover all kinds of treasures, captured in the lively illustrations by Fanni Sipos. Frederick makes the acquaintance of two young gentleladies, Julie and Sarah, and the three of them set off on an adventure in one of the little pedal cars that tourists so often use to explore Margaret Island, the famous island in the center of Budapest. They find a letter from Stanley, and we learn of a time when they helped Stanley make his way Africa. Now, they manage to get back Julie's stuffed giraffe and to save the butterflies. They get help from Alex Crow, a bird enthusiast who is little too in love with his smartphone, and Lilli the Lizard, a microscopic dragon. We even learn of the presence of the underhanded Neggie the Crone. The island is transformed through the stories and the illustrations into a fantastic world full of mystery and adventure. The illustrations are remarkably varied. Sipos uses an engaging blend of documentary meticulousness and artistic creativity. The colors create a warm harmony, while the treatment of line and shape craft a certain abstract poetry. We find a half-finished letter that has been torn by a crocodile's teeth, a soggy

note glued into the book, the labyrinthine world of the foxhole, and events from the past presented in a monochrome mix of shades of brown. Like the stories themselves, the illustrations merge magic with the familiar elements of the life of an average child. Mystery, witchcraft, and adventure intermingle with the everyday. The adventures continue in the 2024 book *Frederick the Fox and the Unusual Tuesday*.

"The adventures of a city fox"

Andrea Rádai

FREDERICK the FOX on Margaret Island



Illustrations by Fanni Sipos



chapter one

in which we get to know Frederick the fox
and the island that is his home, and we find
out what bologna stuffed with cheese
means to him

He was a city fox to the core. He lived on an island in the heart of the city, in the hollow of a huge pine tree. Underground, however, his dwelling stretched into a veritable cave empire, enclosed by the roots of the tree. He had a bedroom, a living room with an spacious kitchen, a pantry, a ballroom, of course, and a guest room where his relatives visiting from London, Singapore, and the city of Zrenjanin often stayed. He also had a huge storage room, where he kept the things that he had found on the shores of the island, the things people left at the end of the day and never came back for.



These various things included, for example,

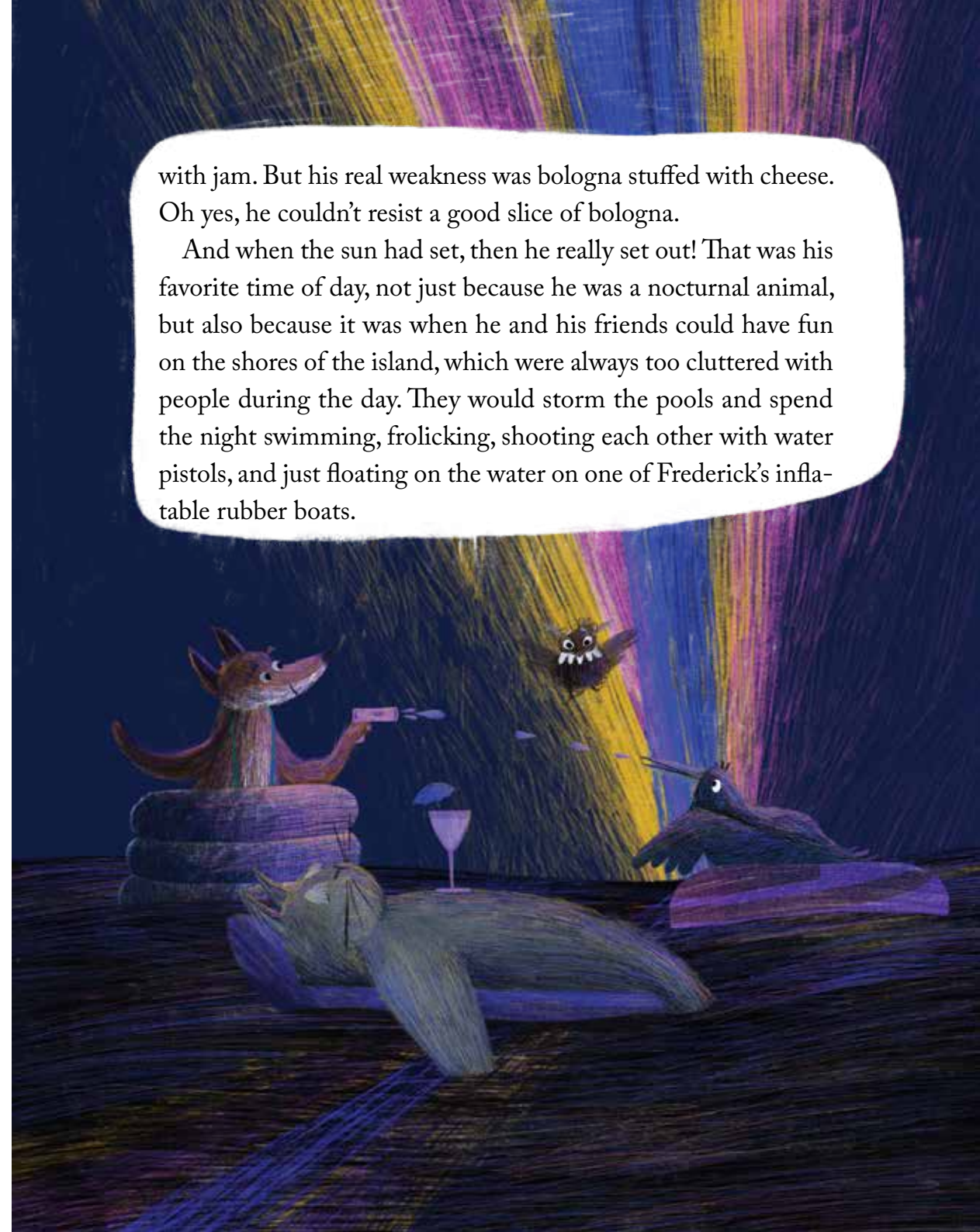
- 354 towels
- 124 half-completed puzzle books
- 44 arm floaties
- 54 water pistols
- 19 cooler bags (one was missing the top)

And lots of other strange and unusual objects. For example, he had a purple wig, a collection of pressed flowers, a porcelain reclining sheepdog, a toilet plunger, and a packet of Spiderman napkins. He treasured a shoehorn of grinning piglets, given to him by his world-traveled uncle, and wouldn't have parted with his grandmother's prize-winning quince jelly for the world. But everything else he generously shared with his pals. When the animals on the island needed something, they just went to Frederick's place and looked around. His dwelling was a bit like a supermarket, but you didn't have to pay.

Frederick was very busy in the summer. In the evenings, when the many people who strolled down the paths on the island or took a plunge in one of the many swimming pools had left, he would pick up the various things that had been left on the beach and, in return, he would get something to eat from the Seagull snack bar: some sausage, maybe a frankfurter, fried meat, crepes

with jam. But his real weakness was bologna stuffed with cheese. Oh yes, he couldn't resist a good slice of bologna.

And when the sun had set, then he really set out! That was his favorite time of day, not just because he was a nocturnal animal, but also because it was when he and his friends could have fun on the shores of the island, which were always too cluttered with people during the day. They would storm the pools and spend the night swimming, frolicking, shooting each other with water pistols, and just floating on the water on one of Frederick's inflatable rubber boats.





Andrea Rádai was born in 1979 in Budapest. She graduated with a degree in Hungarian Language and Literature, English Language and Literature, and German Literature from ELTE University. She served for a time as the editor of szinhaz.net, the online portal of Színház folyóirat. She translates children's and young adult literature from Dutch and English and has also published her own fairy tales, *Fairies in the Taiga* and *Frederick the Fox* on Margaret Island.



Illustrator Fanni Sipos graduated from the Budapest Metropolitan University with a bachelor's degree in graphic design and later a master's degree. Within her work in graphic design she turned to illustration. She used an array of different techniques and tools in her work. She particularly enjoys experimenting with craft techniques. Her silent book for teenagers, *Puparium*, won the Sixth ArtHungry Award in the illustration category.

Röökkezsolt,
jössz?

