

MALA  
ZVONA

# EMA

IS ALONE



written by Vanja Marković • illustrated by Vibor Juhas



**Vanja Marković: EMA JE SAMA**

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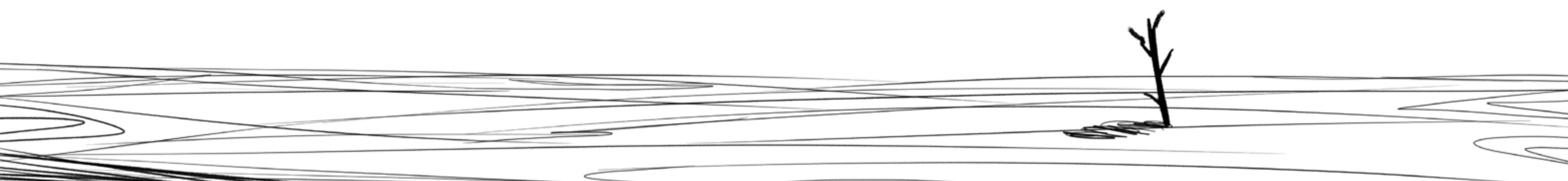
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Ema is alone.



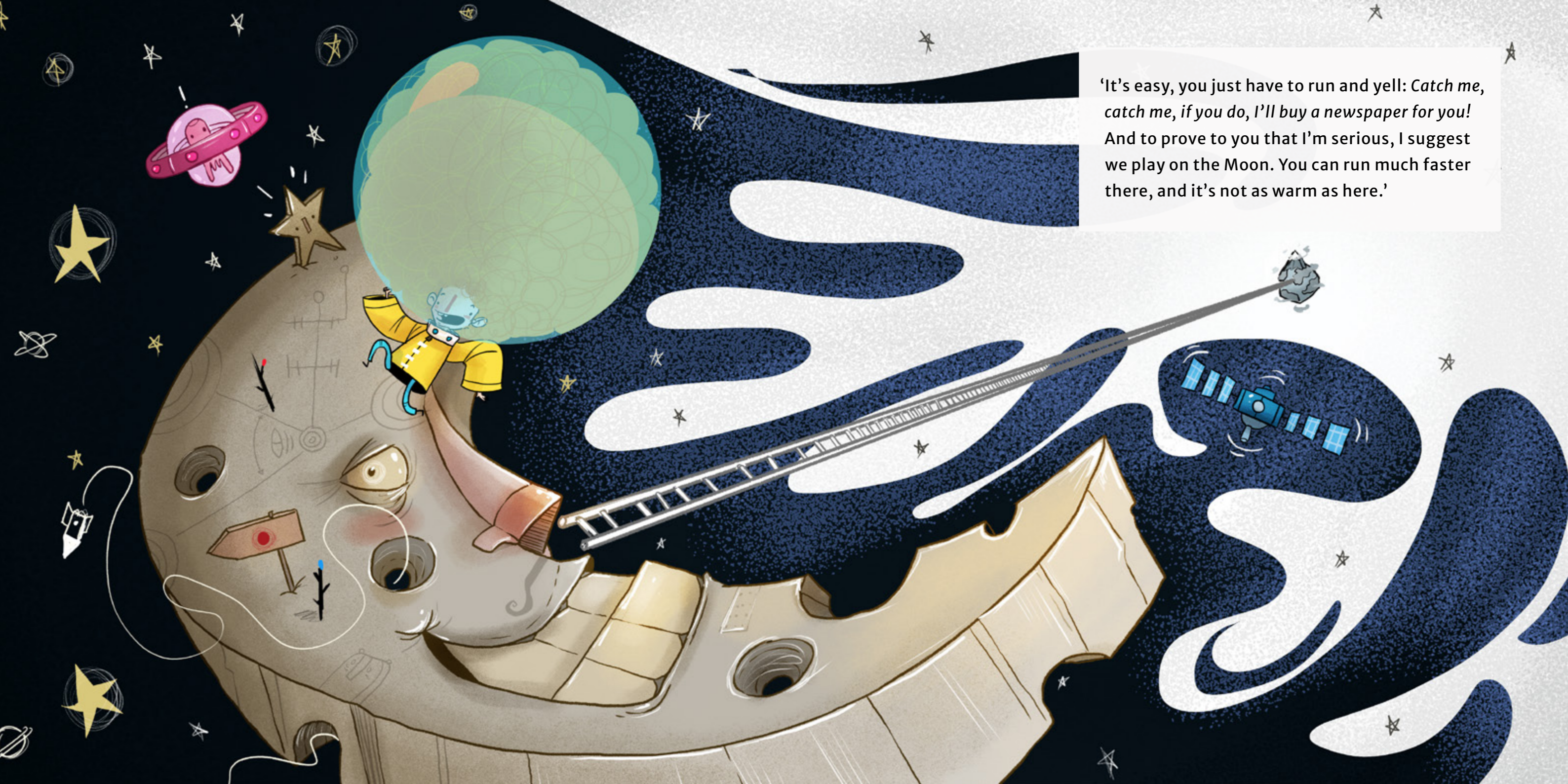


The day is perfect for flying kites.  
The day is perfect for a walk, an ice cream  
and birdwatching.

Or cloudwatching.



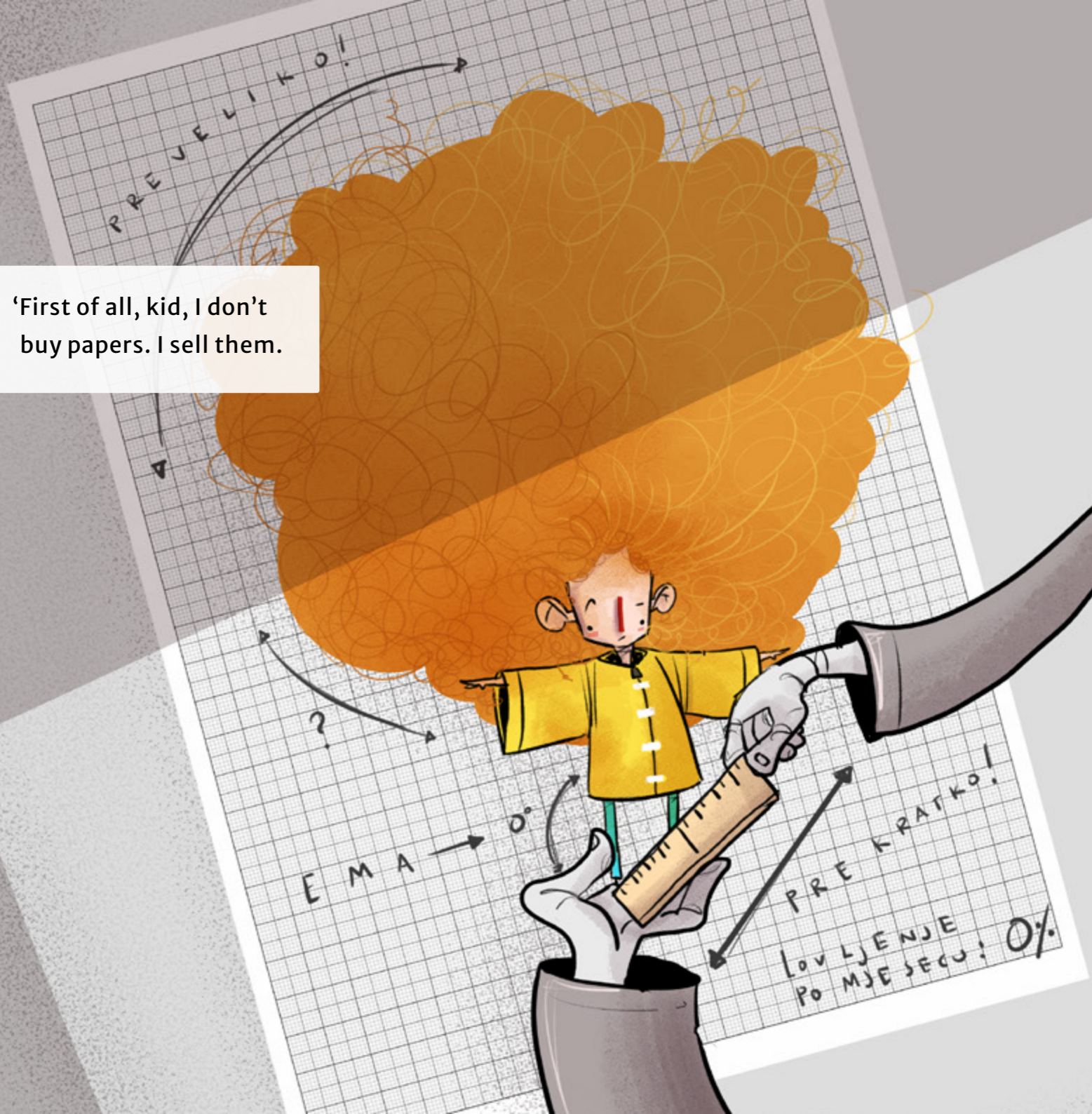
'Play with me', I said to the boy who sells newspapers on the street.



'It's easy, you just have to run and yell: *Catch me, catch me, if you do, I'll buy a newspaper for you!* And to prove to you that I'm serious, I suggest we play on the Moon. You can run much faster there, and it's not as warm as here.'

'First of all, kid, I don't buy papers. I sell them.'

And besides, take a look at yourself. Your legs are so tiny. Your step is too short. You'd never catch me.'






'My step is fine', I thought and moved on. There were two women standing on the corner, having a conversation about some big issue.



'Play with me.  
We can collect clouds together.  
Some of them look like elephants,  
some like cellos and some like old teapots.

*How does one collect clouds, you ask me?*





I'll tell you right away:  
When you see a cloud, you  
spit towards it quickly and say:  
*I've collected the teapot-cloud!*  
*It's mine now!*

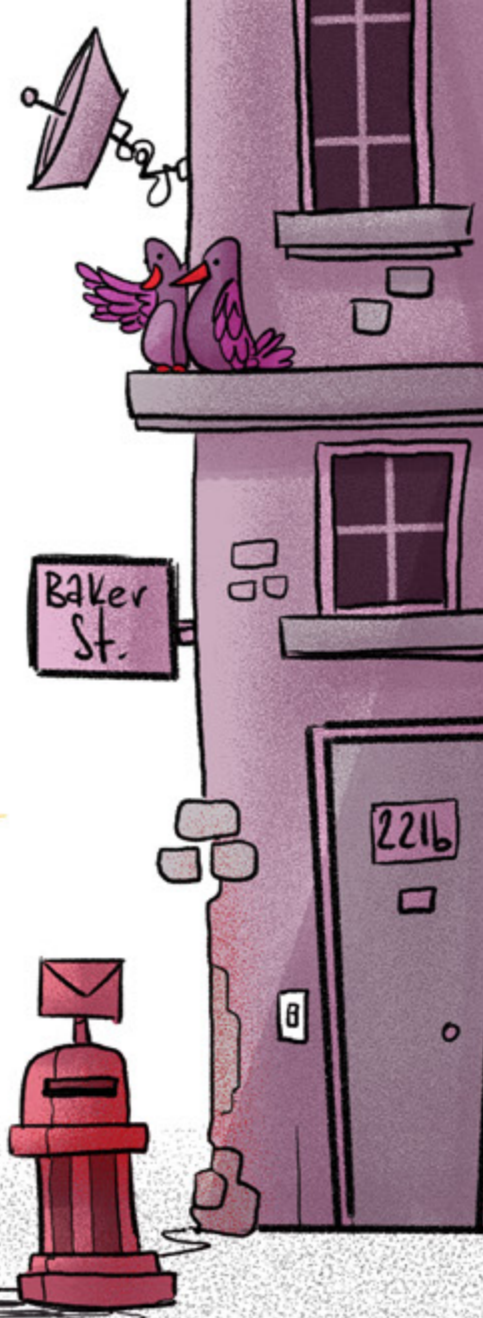
The person who collects the most is the winner.  
Special points are given for very weird clouds, like  
for example the sock-drawer-cloud I see now.'



'Listen, kid', said the other one as she adjusted her pickle-shaped brooch, 'we'd love to collect clouds with you, but you see, your eyes are too big. I'm sure more clouds will fit into them than into ours.'

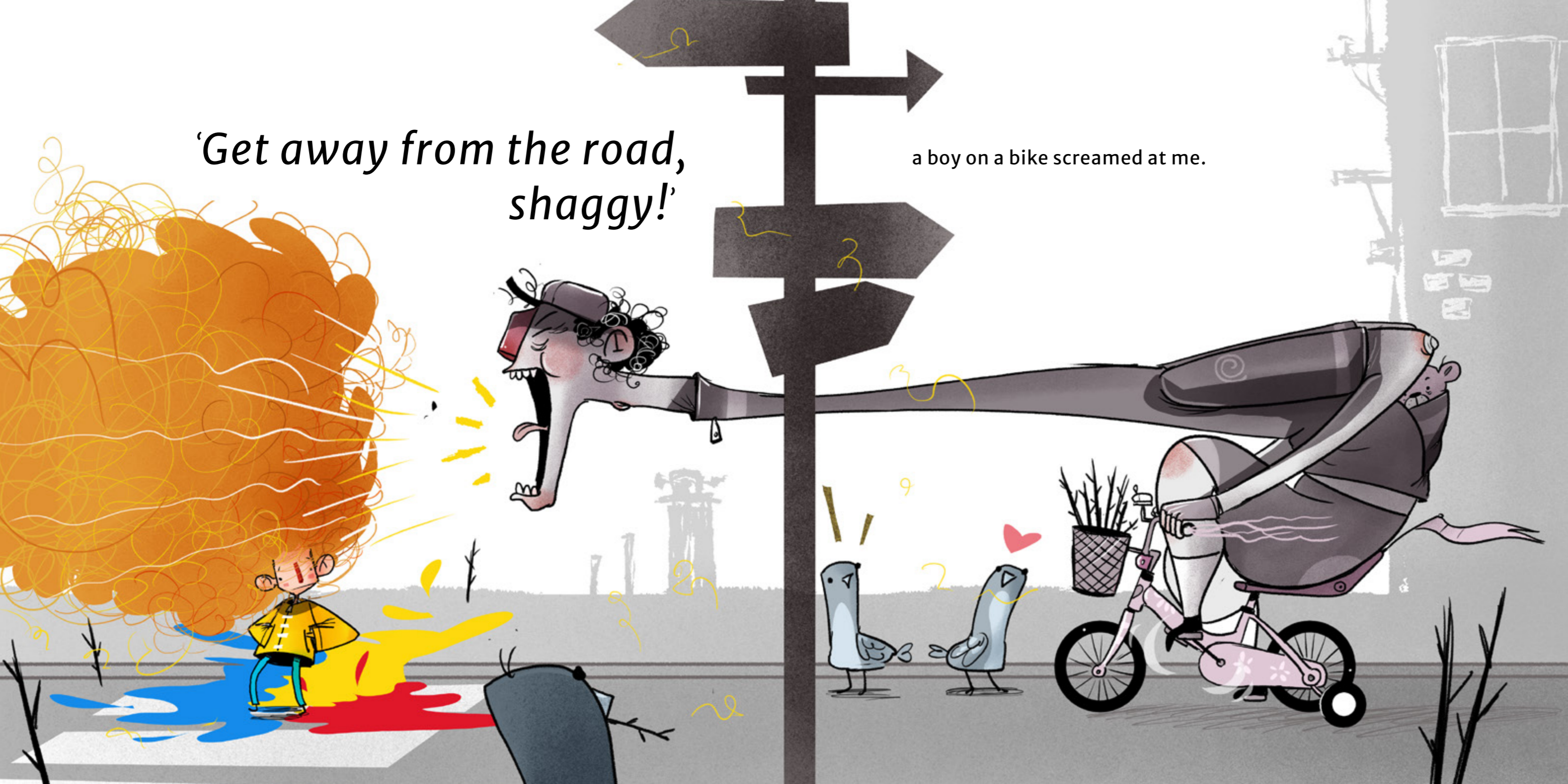
'I don't understand people who let children roam the streets alone, bothering decent folk', said one of the women snorting through her pointy nose.


'I always play fair', I thought, 'I'd give each of them a three-cloud-head-start.'



*'Get away from the road,  
shaggy!'*

a boy on a bike screamed at me.





'Play with me', I said. 'We can feed the trolls under the bridge.'

'Yeah, right, shaggy. Your haircut would scare a dragon, let alone a troll. You don't want the trolls to die out of fear when they see you? Get out of my way!'

'No troll has ever died out because of my haircut. The only dangerous thing for trolls is the Sun – it turns them into stone. My hair is fine', I thought.



'I'll help you if you want to play with me',  
I told the ice cream lady at the park entrance.



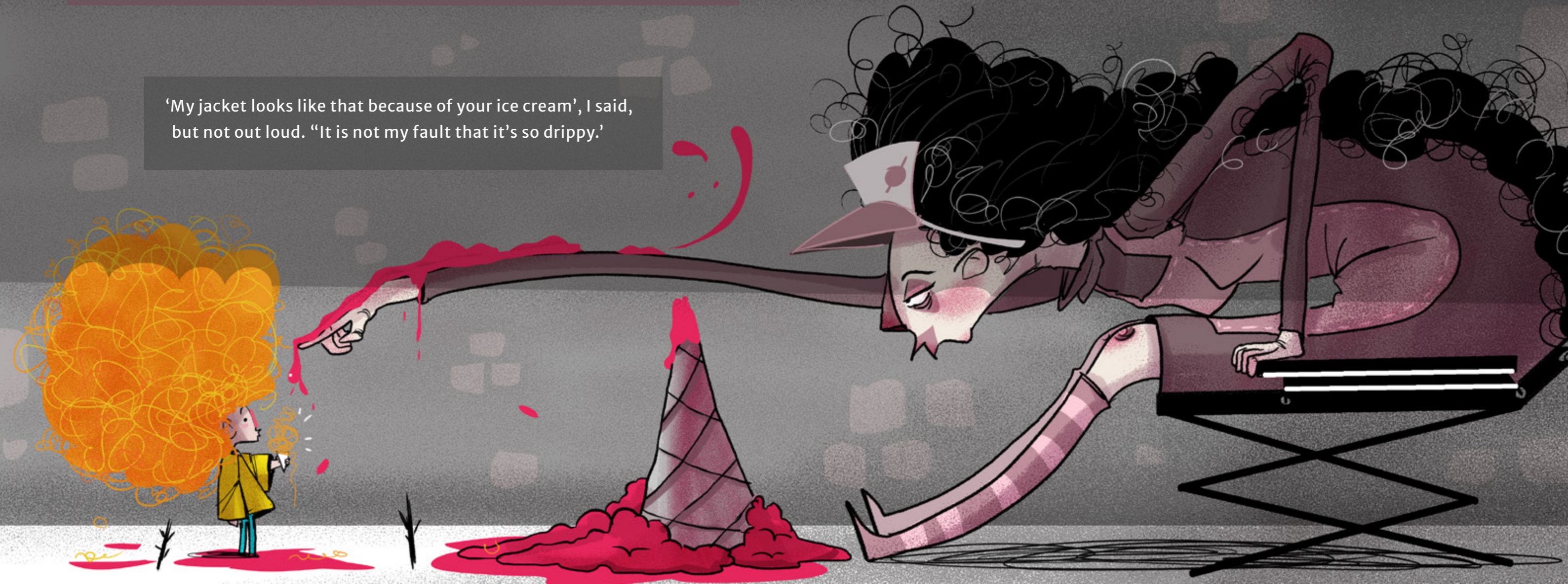


'We can mix the world's laargest ice cream together. Watermelon and popcorn flavoured. And then I'll buy it from you', I said a little more quietly after she frowned at me, as if she had to read very small letters.



'Look at your jacket. There are more stains on it than on an old onion sack. And there is a hole in your pocket, too. I doubt you have any ice cream money in it. Therefore, no ice cream, no watermelon and no popcorn for sure.'

'My jacket looks like that because of your ice cream', I said, but not out loud. "It is not my fault that it's so drippy.'



Three girls were  
standing by the slide.  
'Problem solved!'  
I thought.

'Play with me!  
We'll teach ants to dance  
the mazurka!' I said.



'Oh, honey, we'd love to, but you're so blonde. If only you were a redhead...'

'Why does that matter?'  
I asked the girls.  
'I can play as well as any other girl, redhead or not!'

'Yes, but you see, I'm blonde. Eva's hair is black, and Ela's is brown. So – you get it. We are looking for a redhead friend. We simply don't need another blonde.'



I sat on a tree stump and thought about how the world is weird.  
Everyone thinks so much about what's outside. No one cares about  
important things, such as running on the Moon, collecting clouds,  
hungry trolls, ants' ballet and the world's biggest ice cream.

On such a lovely day.





'You're tickling me', I said to the cat  
that was circling around my legs.

'I'd love to play with you.  
If only you weren't so yellowish.  
I wish you were black. I've heard  
that black cats are magical.'

Emma got up and went away,  
leaving the cat, ants, ice cream,  
trolls, clouds and the Moon  
behind her.



Ema is alone.

For now.





**VANJA MARKOVIĆ** was born in Pula. She lives and works in her hometown. Vanja works with atypical children, educating both them and everyone who works with them. Besides that, she explores different phenomena that arise in upbringing and education. What interests her the most is how the experience of going to school, spending time there and learning can be made more accessible for every child. So far, she has written three picture books.

**VIBOR JUHAS** actively works with illustration, animation, music and film. He finished his first short film 'No Way Out' in 2011. In 2012 he made the documentary 'Monteparadiso 20' in collaboration with the Monteparadiso collective. He has directed two short animated films 'Cijena ugljena' (2016) and 'Zarobljenici ugljena' (2017). He designed and animated the scenography for the show 'Vampiriska kronika – Jure Grando' (2016), winning an award for best scenography. He has illustrated several children's books. During his career he has authored music-videos, many posters, animated jingles for various manifestations and plays and the comic-album 'Mr. Joe', based on the script by Vjeron Juhas (2017).



In their spare time, Vanja and Vibor are brother and sister; this is the third picture book they have made together. The first one, *StrahosmjeH*, was published in microprint and was intended to be distributed only locally. The second one, called *Midnight in Park 52*, was published by the bookfair 'Sa(n)jam knjige in Istria', and both children's and adult critics received it very well; it was one of the finalists for 'The Sheep in a Box' Award in 2014. Because of its environmental subject, it is included in the project of reading green picture books, and Vanja and Vibor are especially happy that it will be staged as a puppet show.



Emma is alone.

Emma would love to play with someone.

She walks down the street and has a nice proposal for everyone she meets:

let's collect clouds, let's feed the trolls under the bridge!

But everyone only sees the outside – Emma's shaggy hair, her big eyes, her stained jacket.

Everyone nags her and no one wants to follow her imagination.

And when someone finally approaches her wanting to play, what will Emma see?

Will she make the same mistake as everyone else?

