



The Multilingual Library for Children in Europe

Czech Modern Story
English language version



Co-funded by the
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“Fairy tales are more than true:
not because they tell us that dragons exist,
but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.”

Neil Gaiman



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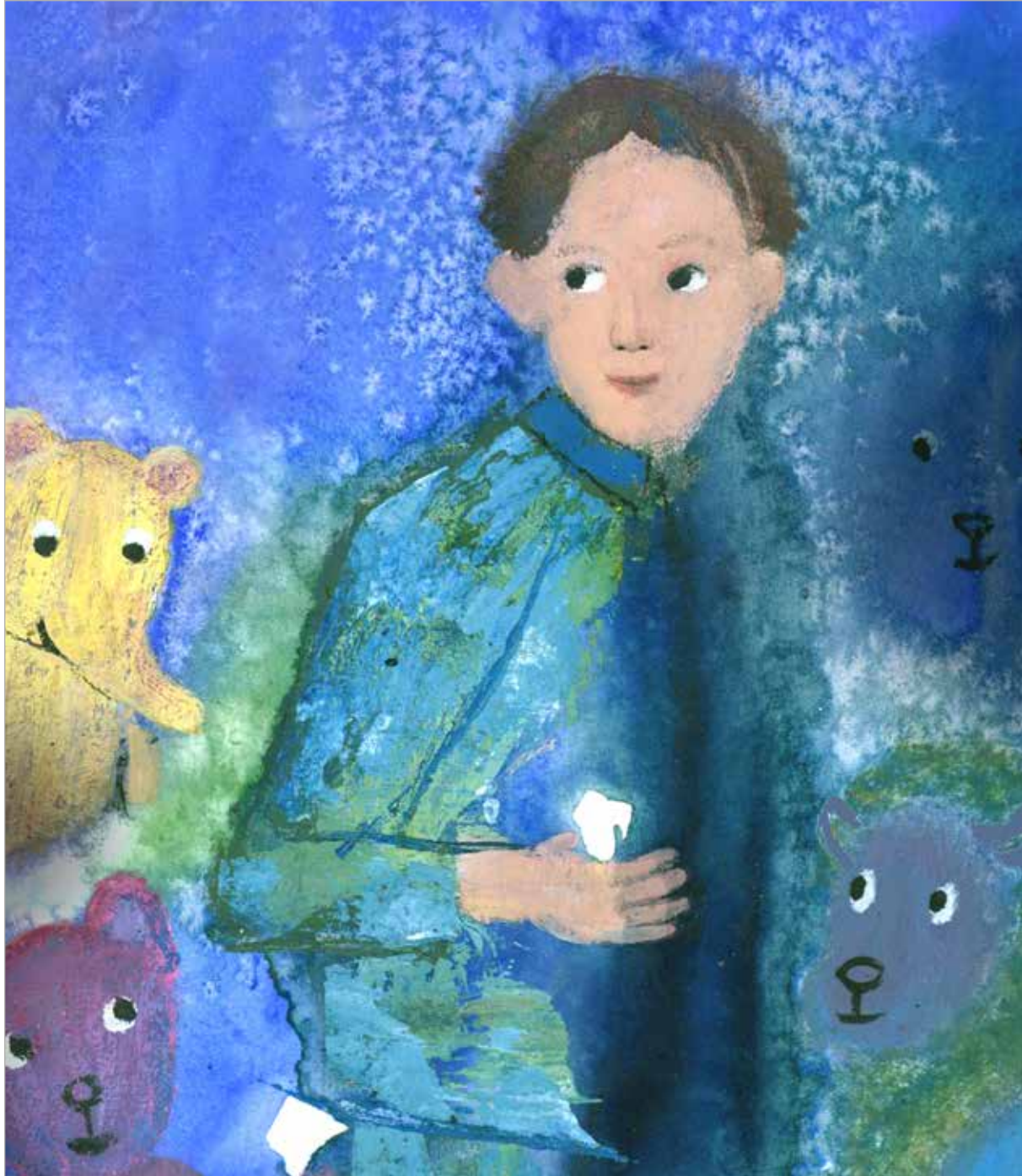
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What happens while I'm sleeping

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Author: Tereza Sokoliček

Illustrator: Kateřina Kroupová

Every evening when it started getting dark, I used to rapidly search for the on switch of my table lamp. I begged my mum to put lit candles into candelabras that looked like little houses and let them shine all night long. When I was lying in bed I used look up to the moon behind the skylight, my glowing saviour.

One night, when I was trying to fall asleep - with all the lights turned on as always, I cuddled my favourite toy and spoke to it in my mind: “You live in a toy box almost every day and it’s dark in there. Yet you don’t seem scared at all. Teach me how not to be afraid of dark...” After few minutes, my eyes began to close and soon I sailed off into the world of dreams.



I found myself in the same room I go to sleep every evening, standing in a circle with my favourite toys. It was night, not a single light was shining in the room! Suddenly, I felt a paw touch my shoulder. It was Mr Coati, my favourite plush animal. He looked a little funny with his long nose used sometimes to poke the other toys. “I’ll show you why it’s important even for the Day to go to sleep. Only then everything is how it’s supposed to be.”



The door opened and we went out into the hallway. I heard a gentle tapping of little feet somewhere below me but I couldn't see who they belonged to in all that darkness. Mr Coati pulled a match from his pocket and lit it up. A shimmering flame appeared which allowed us to look at the little creatures scurrying on the ground.

“Look closely, Paulie. The ‘glowies’ are little bugs that take care of all light bulbs in a house. They go around in every room and can also climb walls. As soon as they see a broken light bulb, they make a tiny hole and get inside to mend or replace the damaged wires. And once they’re finished, on their way out, they fill up the tiny hole they made with glass glue.”



Then the match went out and I could only hear the glowies. It was amazing! I always believed that there had to be some gnomes or fairies living in our house! Even if my mum said that it would not be possible. I just couldn't understand why it gets scary dark every night. "Why can't the glowies just hide from other people?" I asked curiously.

Mr Coati continued: "Well the thing is that the glowies have very sensitive eyes. They can see in the dark and only then can they work fast. If there would be daylight and they had to work every day, their eyes would get very tired and their work would get worse. And can you imagine how grown-ups would behave? Some might even try to step on them!"



I knew then that I'm not helping the glowies at all, because I keep the light on in my room all night long! I didn't want grown-ups to know about them, to step on them! I asked Mr Coati to give me one of his matches and lit it up one last time. The shimmering flame appeared yet again. I kneeled on the floor and looked closely at all the little creatures running back and forth. I think I saw one carrying a toolbox on his back...



I woke up to a beautiful sunny morning. I looked around to see if my room was the same as before. I got up, feeling a little sad because it all was just a dream, put on my slippers and went out of the room. A big surprise was waiting for me just outside the door: Mr Coati was sitting on the carpet in the hallway. I bet that his smile that morning was a lot bigger than the day before.

Since then, whenever I go to sleep, I switch off all lights and just listen very carefully to hear the gentle taps of little feet.





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