

Jan Novák

Jaromír 99

ZÁTOPEK

*"When you can't
keep going,
go faster!"*





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*"When you can't
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*Ladies and gentlemen!
Now we come to the 3,000-metre
race. Representing our club are
Dr. Haluza and a Bařaman by the
name of Emil Zátapek!*





Only two laps to go, ladies and gentlemen, and Haluza is shifting gears! Can anyone keep up with him?



The final lap, my friends! Dr. Haluza has just lapped Brno's Štědroň! Hooray!



AC Zlín is murdering the competition today, folks!

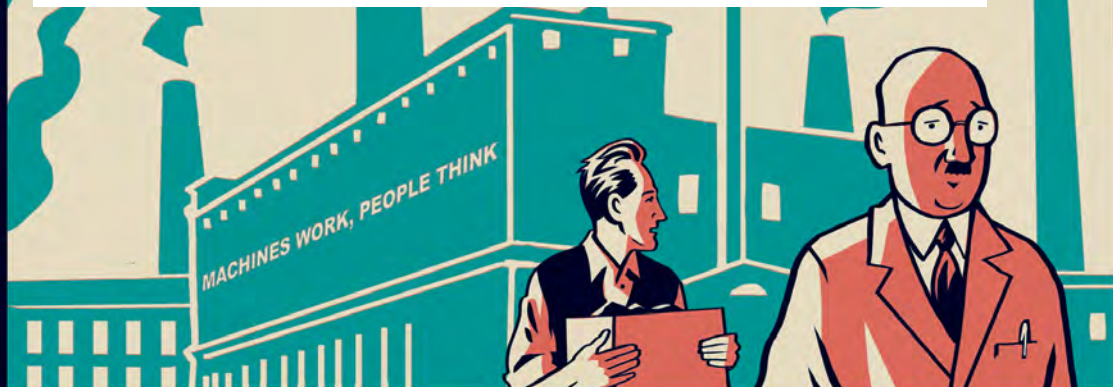


Oh, no, no...
Congratulations!

Get track shoes...
For God's sake...
you work... at Bata!



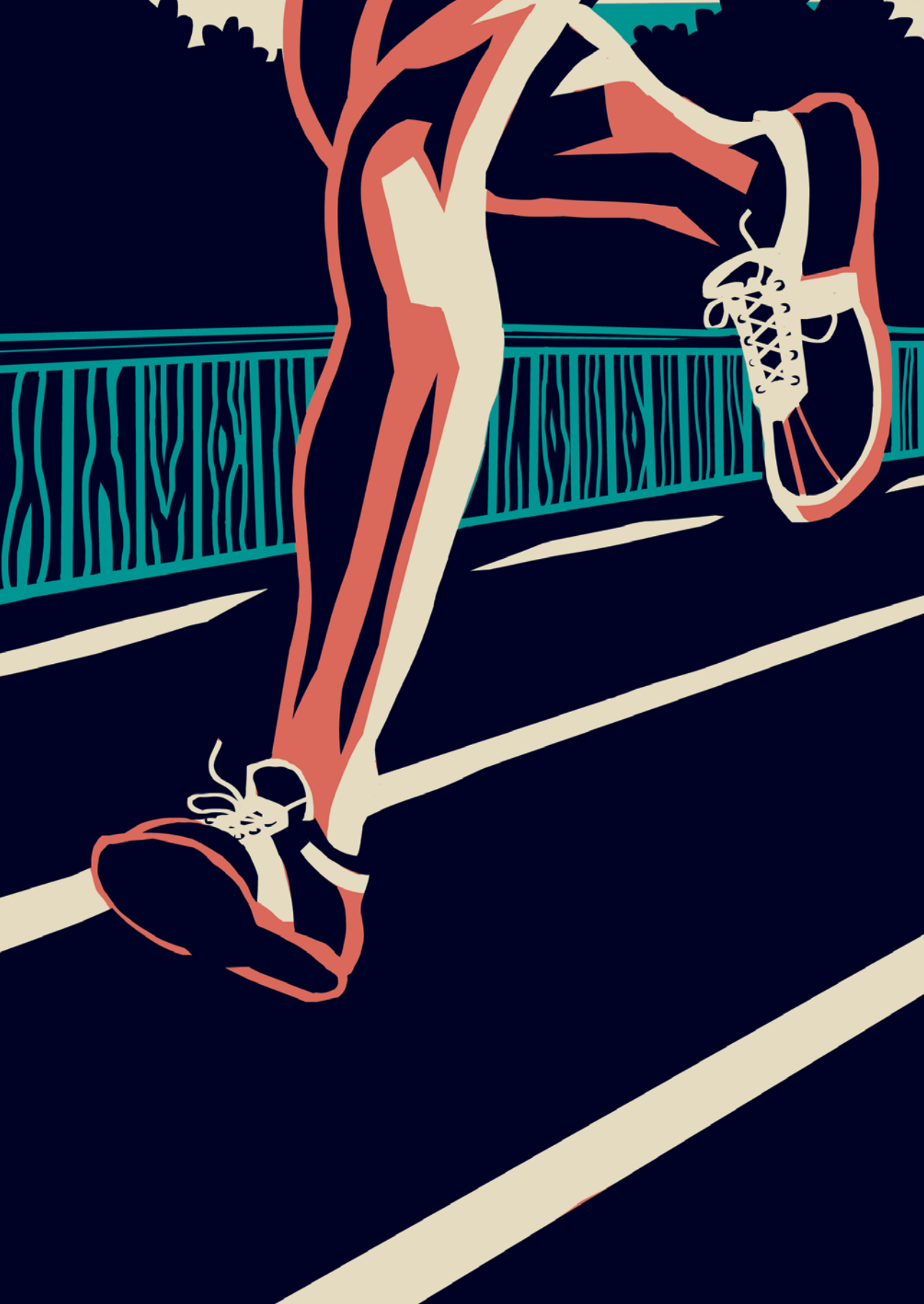
ZÁTOPEK STUDIED HARD. AND WHEN HE PROGRESSED TO ADVANCED COURSES, HE ONLY HAD TO WORK IN THE FACTORY FOR FIVE HOURS IN THE MORNING. AFTER LUNCH, THERE WERE FIVE HOURS OF CLASSES IN THE AFTERNOON. AS A PROMISING CHEMIST, HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.



So what do you research here?

Nothing! We just grind up quartz.

RESEARCH DEPARTMENT





So what's your punishment for today?



How about three clicks?



That'll take too long, I've got a date with Miluna.

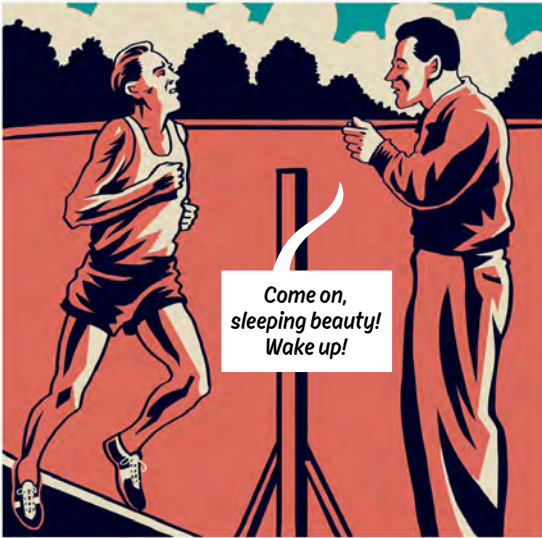
Fine, two kilometres.



All right.



So get ready and go!



Come on, sleeping beauty! Wake up!



Get a move on, you sloth! Come on, you turtle, before someone steals Miluna from me!



Man, you've broken the national record!

Are you sure?



By two seconds!



Don't say a word to anyone about this yet. Let me check the record book first.

So how does it feel to be breaking your country's records, Emil?


We've just announced that you'll try to break the national 3,000-metre record on Saturday. Better get a good night's sleep on Friday!



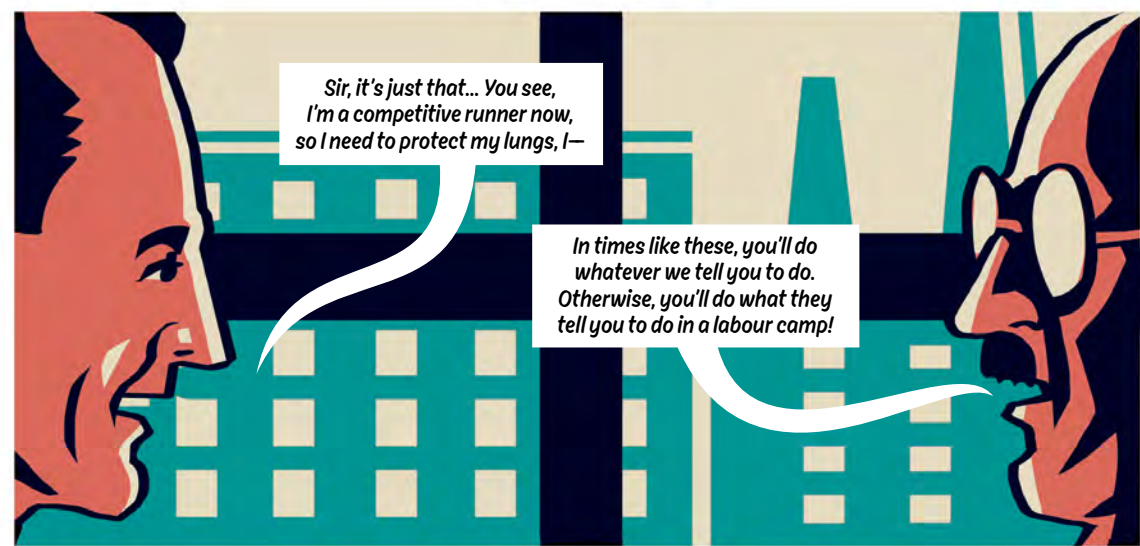


If I'd known I'd get treats like this for every record, I'd have been smashing them all year.





*Where do you get the nerve
to refuse to grind minerals?
Who do you think you are?*



*Sir, it's just that... You see,
I'm a competitive runner now,
so I need to protect my lungs, I—*

*In times like these, you'll do
whatever we tell you to do.
Otherwise, you'll do what they
tell you to do in a labour camp!*



It says here you're running races and even breaking records, Emil. Is this true?



Well, if it says so in the paper...



Look here, Mother and I are really worried about your health! That's why we've decided that you'll put a stop to all this.



But Father! Please...





Well, in winter there aren't any races to run anyway, are there?

I never promised my folks that I'd stop training, did I?

Aren't you the crafty one!



Say, Maria, have you ever kissed a record-holder?



I don't give kisses to anyone.



I see. So has a record-holder ever stolen a kiss from you?



Aren't you the craf-



So they haven't! Come here, you're gorgeous, did anyone ever tell you that?





Jan Novák is a leading Czech writer and documentary maker. In the years 1970–2008, he lived in Chicago, where he attended the University of Chicago and where his books *The Willys Dream Kit* (1985) and *Commies, Crooks, Gypsies, Spooks & Poets* (1995) won the Carl Sandburg Prize for Chicago's book of the year. He also co-authored *The Turnaround* (1994), Miloš Forman's autobiography. Novák is now resident once more in the Czech Republic. His novel *So Far, So Good* was the Magnesia Litera Awards Book of the Year 2005, and in 2020 he published a controversial literary biography, entitled *Kundera, His Czech Life and Times*. *Zátopek* is his debut work in the field of graphic novels.



Jaromír 99, whose real name is Jaromír Švejdlík, divides his time between the worlds of music and comics. He is well-known as a member of the groups Priessnitz and Umakart, and as the artist behind the *Alois Nebel* (2003) trilogy. He also worked as a co-screenwriter and artist on its film adaptation (2011), which was awarded Best Animated Film by the European Film Academy. He won a Muriel Award for his comic strip *Bomber* (2007) and he adapted Kafka's *The Castle* (2013) as a graphic novel for *SelfMadeHero*, which was nominated for the prestigious Eisner Award. Jaromír 99 lives and works in Prague.

Perhaps the greatest Olympic champion of all time, Emil Zátopek became a national hero for his prowess at running. Known as the "Czech Locomotive", the outspoken Zátopek was equally impressive as a public figure, successfully pressuring Czechoslovakia's Communist regime to allow his colleague Stanislav Jungwirth, a political outcast, to compete. But as the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games approached, Zátopek's fate hung in the balance: would he be crushed by the government he had challenged, or go on to claim international glory? The outcome would be decided by three spectacular races: the 5,000 metres, the 10,000 metres and the marathon.

A powerful biographical portrait set against the backdrop of the Cold War, Zátopek sees Czech creators Jan Novák and Jaromír 99 explore the extraordinary career of a peerless distance runner, from his first meeting with his wife, fellow Olympian Dana Ingrová, to the record-breaking victories that would ensure his lasting legacy.



www.selfmadehero.com

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