

# Miloš Urban

*Dr. Alz*

## **summary**

Former publishing editor Gustav Molitor realizes that he has been forgetting things, memories are slipping away from him, or, perhaps, he's losing it. His doctor suspects Alzheimer's disease, but Gustav comically refutes this: Alzheimer's patients can't remember where they live or what they had for breakfast, yet they vividly recall childhood experiences. Gustav knows what he had for breakfast and that he lives in Letná, Prague. When the doctor tries to explain that senile dementia can manifest in various ways and thus he still fits the unfortunate diagnosis, Gustav stands firm in his disagreement. He decides to prove to himself that he can fight this looming threat.

During his daily walks in the Holešovice district, Gustav jots down all the memories that come to mind. When he types them into his computer in the evening, he is pleased to find he can still recall a high percentage of memories from both the distant and recent past. Yet he soon experiences something disturbing: through a shop window, he spies a special unit police officer about to strike a young woman with a baton. They disappear from view, leaving Gustav to doubt whether he'd imagined the scene. He becomes increasingly frightened as he encounters an astronaut in a spacesuit and the film god Thor. Suddenly, he feels scared and hides in the park, where he finds the police uniform in the bushes. Without fully understanding why, he puts it on, perhaps to feel safer. He later learns that a masquerade ball was taking place at a local hipster cinema.

Someone must have seen him in the uniform because a rumor spreads in Gustav's favorite pub that he was among the armed forces during the beating of students on Národní Street in 1989, on the eve of the Velvet Revolution: that he has blood on his hands. Gustav is outraged and frustrated by such an accusation. Unfortunately, he cannot remember what he was doing that fateful night. He seeks out his ex-wife to jog his memory, but she does not offer much relief.

Gustav feels he is losing his battle against dementia: he has pushed so many things out of his mind, and now they are coming back to him. What about that incident years ago when he fell from a ski lift? Was it really a fall, or more of a jump?

As he reviews everything he has written down so far, he realizes that before completely losing his sanity, he must reconcile with his estranged son.