



CZECHIA MURIEL AWARD 2022

★ **Best Children's Comic Book of the Year**



The Magic Pot

Kateřina Čupová (script and art)



What's the use of a pot of magical compote in today's world?

One day, Gaspard crosses paths with an old, somewhat bewildered magician. The old man gifts him a very special pot – a pot of magical compote! This worn-out saucepan, turned into a weapon as bizarre as it is formidable, gives the little boy a wild idea: to become a superhero and save humanity!

With his group of friends, all dressed up in makeshift superhero costumes, Gaspard is ready for action. But soon, reality hits – there's not a single crime to fight in their tiny village of just 328 inhabitants.

But suddenly, the ground begins to shake... Is it an earthquake? The reopening of the local mine? Or something far more monstrous lurking beneath the earth?

Gaspard and his friends stumble upon a long-buried secret – one that stretches beyond their wildest imagination and is somehow tied to the mysterious old man. But has this man always been sad? What's his story? And how did Gaspard end up with this extraordinary pot in the first place?

“The author of *R.U.R.* now presents an offbeat adaptation of a popular traditional Czech tale (*Hrnečku, vař!* by Karel Jaromír Erben). Her modernized version is quirky and packed with humor. Kateřina Čupová has blended elements of the illustrated tale into the comic format, and the two work together remarkably well.”

— ActuaBD

Kateřina Čupová is a Czech animator and comic book artist and a graduate from the renowned Department of Animation at the Tomáš Bafa University in Zlín. Many of her works have been published in magazines and comic anthologies. Her webcomic, *The Author's Apprentice*, was published as a graphic novel following a successful Kickstarter campaign. In 2022, she won the Muriel Award for Best Children's Comic for her adaptation of *Hrnečku vař!* and for Best Short Comic for *The Horse-shoe Meets Haha-Bimbi*. Previously, she was also nominated for her comic book adaptation of Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.*



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Rights sold to: France (Glénat), Egypt (Al-turjman), Spain (Malpaso), Germany (Carica Stories)

argo.cz/foreign-rights
veronika.chaloupkova@argo.cz

THE INTERNATIONAL PITCH

The Magic Pot

Script and art by Kateřina Čupová

Three homemade superheroes.
One village with a very hungry secret.

A lonely magician gives a boy an extraordinary saucepan. With an endless supply of magical food and two friends in homemade costumes, Gaspard is ready to save humanity. The trouble is that his quiet village has almost no crime to fight. Then the ground begins to shake, and the children discover that something much older, stranger and hungrier than any comic-book villain has been waiting beneath their feet.

A FAIRY TALE WITH SUPERHERO AMBITIONS

Čupová turns a familiar Czech tale into a playful graphic novel about friendship, imagination and the difference between wanting to be heroic and helping somebody. Colourful, inventive pages carry the children's exuberant schemes, while the old magician's story brings a tender thread of grief and remembered happiness.

WHY THIS BOOK TRAVELS

Everyday village life meets folklore and absurd superhero comedy. The young protagonists create an adventure from ordinary objects, then learn to solve problems together. Its visual humour, imaginative action and emotional warmth offer a reading experience for children, with another layer for the adults reading beside them.

INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION

Original Czech edition: Argo, June 2022; 208 pages. French edition: Gaspard et la Marmite magique, Glénat, 21 February 2024; translated by Benoît Meunier. Winner of the 2022 Muriel Award for Best Children's Comic. Rights sold: France, Egypt, Spain and Germany.

[View the French edition](#)

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READING MATERIAL

Five French reviews in English translation, a complete English synopsis and all ten supplied illustrated sample pages in Czech, including front matter.

French critical response

Published in France as Gaspard et la Marmite magique (Glénat, 2024).

“A poetic, offbeat and colourful tale, a tribute to childhood that gives pride of place to humour and imagination.”

Christian Grange, ActuaBD

29 April 2024 / actuabd.com / [Read the original review](#)

“The adventures and the characters’ poetic tenderness will touch young readers of all ages.”

Cassandra Buigues, Lecture Jeunesse

lecturejeunesse.org / [Read the original review](#)

“An adventure with rural superheroes unlike any you have ever seen.”

Nicolas Vadeau, La Ribambulle

25 March 2024 / la-ribambulle.com / [Read the original review](#)

“An adaptation full of twists, with a taste for the absurd and plenty of humour.”

Sébastien, La Bande du 9

labandedu9.fr / [Read the original review](#)

“Humour, lovely artwork, and a book that can also be read aloud to younger children.”

Ligne Claire

16 March 2024 / ligneclaire.info / [Read the original review](#)

Short excerpts translated from French for this promotional material. The full original reviews are linked above.

A superhero in a quiet village

Gaspard is called Vířa in the Czech edition. This synopsis uses the French-edition names.

In a sleepy village, a lonely old magician has almost forgotten what happiness feels like. The song of a bird reminds him of a flute he lost long ago, and he decides to find it. He packs a saucepan and a hoe, then ties a knot in his handkerchief so that he will remember his purpose. But his magic has a mind of its own: the handkerchief becomes a pigeon and flies away, taking his reminder with it.

On the road he meets Gaspard, a boy who has just seen a newt turn into a cat. Gaspard listens to the old man's troubles and suggests that, like any pigeon, the missing bird will eventually return home. Grateful for this small kindness, the magician gives him the saucepan and tells him to use it for good. Gaspard takes the gift to his friends Jana and Mila, with whom he likes to play superheroes.

The children discover that the pot cooks an endless supply of food when commanded. Suddenly their games seem capable of becoming real. They make costumes, invent a heroic identity for Gaspard and set out to save the world. Unfortunately, their tiny village is rather short of villains. Instead of epic battles, they find ordinary problems, and their attempts to help produce a succession of comic mishaps.

They intervene in a quarrel between older boys, carry a neighbour's shopping and use the pot to delay a bus so that a friend can catch it. Before the bus can leave, however, its passengers must eat their way through the magical food. Later, when roadworks send traffic through the village, the aspiring heroes try to tackle the resulting pollution. The drivers respond with anger rather than gratitude. Being useful proves less straightforward than being a superhero.

Meanwhile, unexplained tremors disturb the village. The children practise their powers and imagine the enormous enemy that might be approaching. The magician's wandering handkerchief reaches Jana's house, passes through the laundry and flies away again. As the children's adventures and the old man's forgotten quest begin to converge, they discover that he had planned to lure a monster with the pot: the creature swallowed his flute. When the pigeon finally returns, his purpose comes back to him, and he sets out once more.

The hungry secret

The source of the tremors turns out to be disturbingly close. The tree under which the children meet is not an ordinary tree at all: it is Otesánek, a ravenous creature from Czech folklore, capable of eating everything in its path. Their imagined adventure has become a real threat. They command the pot to cook more and more, hoping to keep the monster occupied, but the food cannot satisfy its appetite. The children flee, and the old magician comes to their aid with his hoe.

The encounter reveals that the magician has faced Otesánek before. He once travelled the world bringing happiness to others, yet was swallowed by the creature while searching for happiness of his own. Now he is caught up in the same danger again. The children have to find a way to defeat the monster themselves. This time, costumes and grand declarations are of little use; they need an idea that works.

Jana suggests covering a large boulder with food from the magic pot. Otesánek takes the bait and swallows it. The children repeat the trick with more stones until his appetite finally becomes his weakness. Using the magician's hoe, they cut open his stomach and venture inside to find him. A newt helps them on their way. Finding the old man, however, leaves them with another problem: none of them knows how to get out.

The magician struggles to remember how he escaped the first time. Gradually, the memory returns. A girl helped him then, and he later married her. They were happy together, but she died a hundred years ago. His strange absent-mindedness and gloomy house now acquire a different meaning: behind the comic figure is someone who has been living with grief for a very long time. The children's adventure has led them into an older, quieter story of love and loss.

Eventually they find their way out. Instead of ending with a triumphant pose over a defeated enemy, the friends look at the damage the battle has caused and decide to put things right. With the magician's help, they restore order and plant the tree back in the ground. Their most convincing act of heroism is to care for the place where they live and to take responsibility for the mess they have made.

The old man sets off into the world again, while magic continues to escape the adults' attempts to contain it. His handkerchief flies into a drawer at Mila's house; soon other handkerchiefs and tea towels take flight as well. The children rush home for lunch. The tale closes with ordinary village life and the impossible still happily entangled, its mischievous comedy carrying an unexpected tenderness.



Hrnečku, vaň!

Kateřina Čupová

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Hrnečku, vař!

Odpovědný redaktor Richard Klíčník.

Redigovala Anežka Dudková.

Jazyková korektura Hana Gelnarová.

Technický redaktor Milan Dorazil.

Vydalo nakladatelství Argo,

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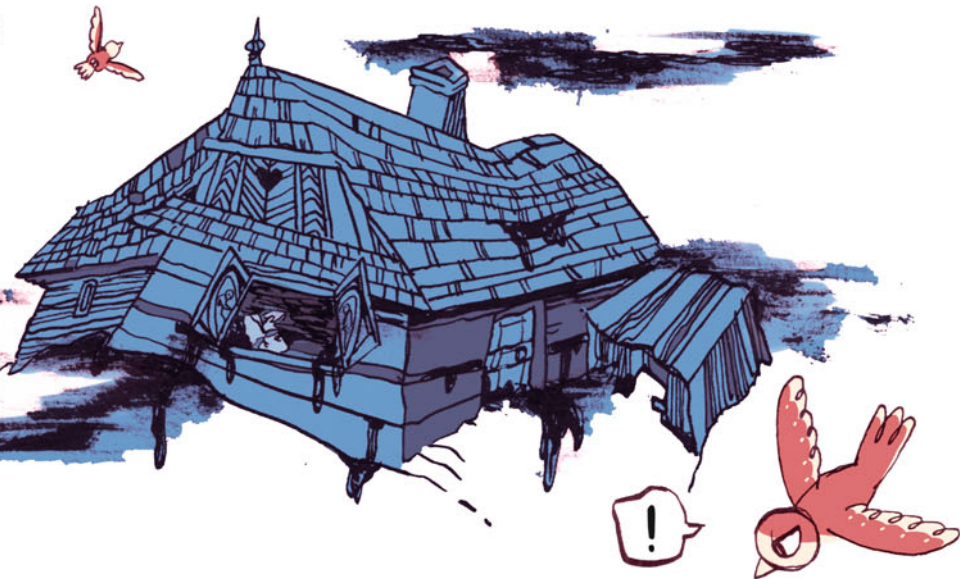




Hrnečku, vař!

KAPITOLA I.

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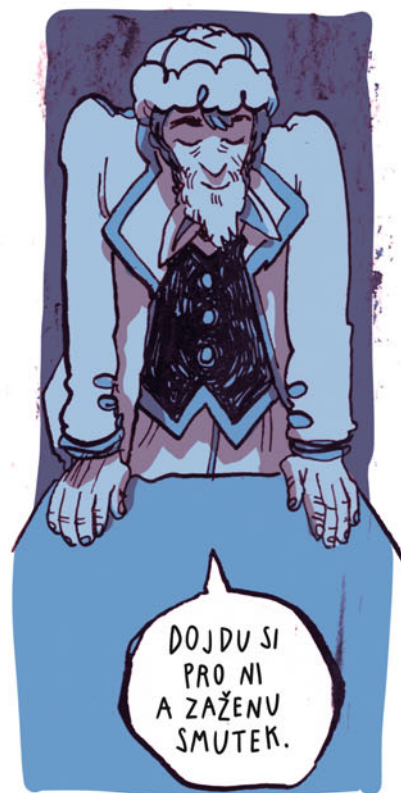


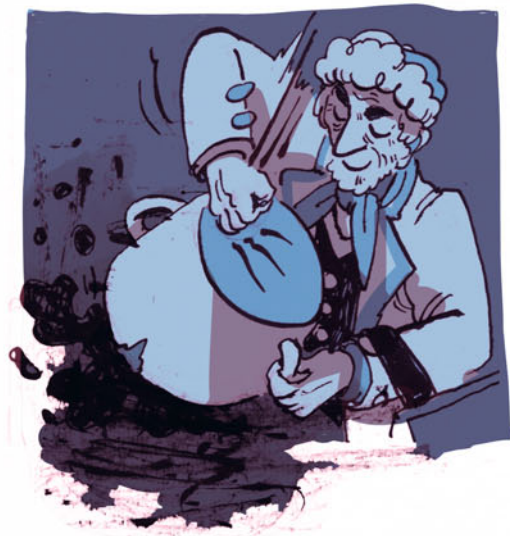
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