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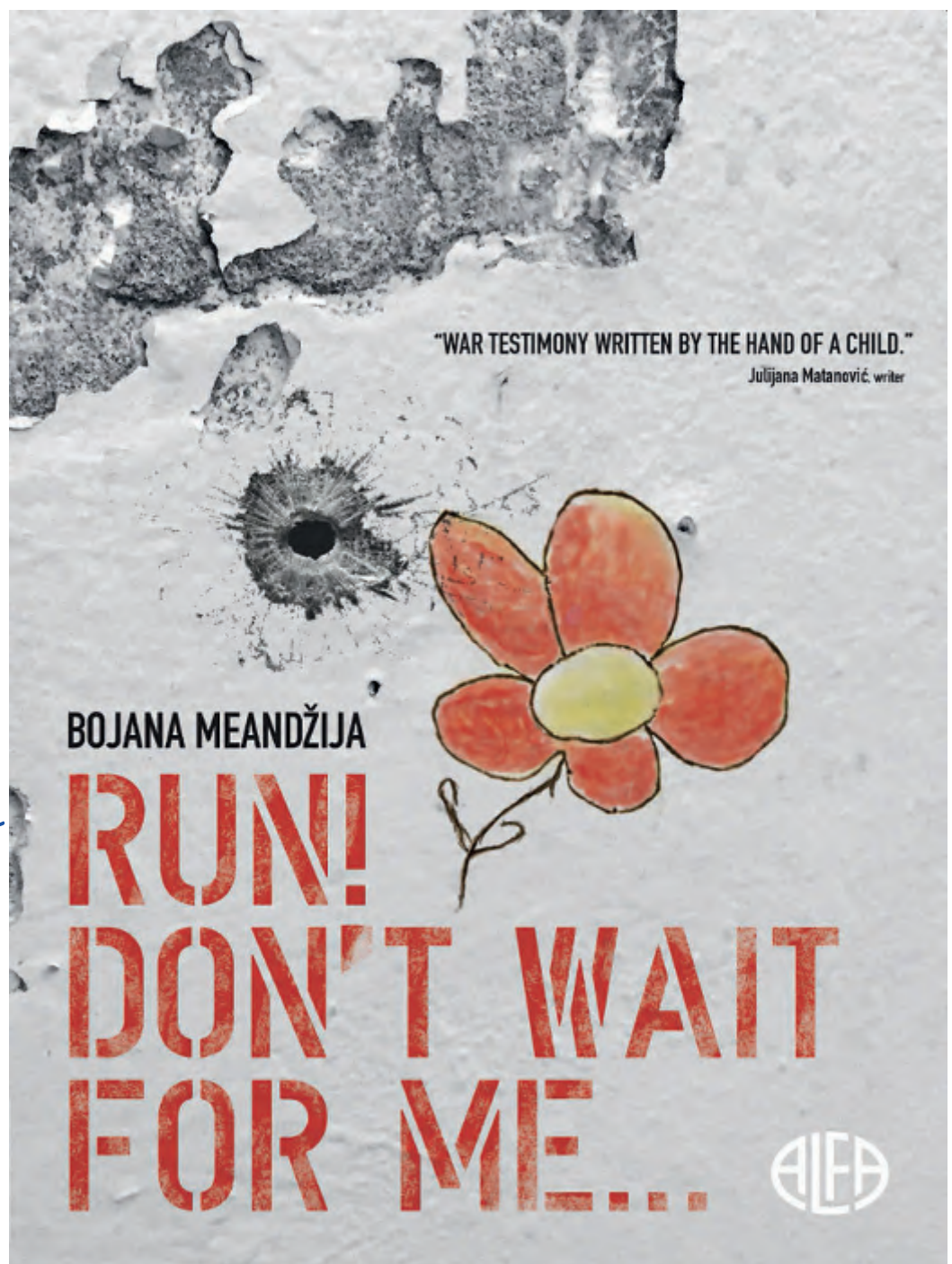
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Grundschule Cetingrad/Kroatien



Bojana Meandžija mit Mutter und Schwester

VORWORT



Im Rahmen der XXXI Jahresversammlung der Kroatischen Kulturgemeinschaft Wiesbaden und anlässlich des *Internationalen Tages der Muttersprache* fand am 21. Februar 2021 ein literarisches Forum mit der Autorin **Bojana Meandžija** statt, die ihren Roman *Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich...* vorgestellt hat. Der autobiografische Roman *Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich...* ist ein emotionales und kraftvolles Buch für junge Menschen, die den Krieg der 90er Jahre des 20. Jahrhunderts erlebt haben. Die Kriegseignisse in Karlovac/Kroatien werden beschrieben aus der Perspektive eines Kindes, das nicht versteht, um was es um es herum geht. Jedes Kind hat eine andere Kindheit, aber Kinder, die Krieg erleben müssen, haben das Selbe – *es ist eine Kindheit, in der sie aufwachsen müssen, in der sie aufhören müssen zu spielen, in der sie in nur einem Mo-*

ment erwachsen werden müssen, nur weil einige böse Menschen ihnen das Recht zu spielen nehmen.

Bojana ist ein Mädchen, das in Karlovac aufwächst und an seinem 13. Geburtstag einen schrecklichen Bombenanschlag in seiner Heimatstadt erleidet, und anstatt seine Teenagerjahre so zu verbringen, wie es die Altersgenossen überall tun, werden die Kriegseignisse Bojana zwingen, viele Jahre im Schutzkeller zu verbringen und dort aufzuwachsen.

Dennoch gibt es in ihrer Erinnerung keinen Hass, kein Denunzieren, keine *anderen* Nationen und keine Feinde – nur eine Frage: Warum Krieg?

Regisseur **Branko Lustig**, ein Holocaust-Überlebender, verglich dieses Werk mit dem *Tagebuch der Anne Frank* und dem Film *Leben ist schön* (italienisch: *La vita è bella*). Der Roman *Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich...* ist einer der wenigen Romane, in denen von Kriegseignissen die Rede ist, die aus der Perspektive eines Kindes von einem Kind geschrieben wurde.

Während des Heimatkrieges in Kroatien schrieb Bojana Meandžija als 13-Jährige ihren Roman in den feuchten Räumen eines Schutzkellers. Der erste Satz des Romans wurde auf eine Holzlatte in diesem Keller geschrieben, um eine Spur für den Fall zu hinterlassen, dass, wenn sie von einem Kriegswirbel mitgerissen würde und nicht überleben sollte, es sie und ihre Schwester Marija einmal gegeben hatte...

Darüber, was das Wichtigste im Leben ist, meinte die Autorin während der Buchvorstellung: *Eine Familie ist die wärmste Decke, die jemand haben kann, wenn es draussen kalt ist. Die Familie ist die größte Umarmung, die jemand bekommen kann, wenn er traurig ist. Die Familie ist die größte Unterstützung in Zeiten, in denen Unterstützung und Hilfe am dringendsten benötigt wird.*

Das ursprünglich in kroatischer Sprache verfasste Buch erschien in 6 Ausgaben mit über 16.000 verkauften Exemplaren. Eine englische Ausgabe ist bereits erschienen und eine Übersetzung ins Deutsche ist in Vorbereitung.

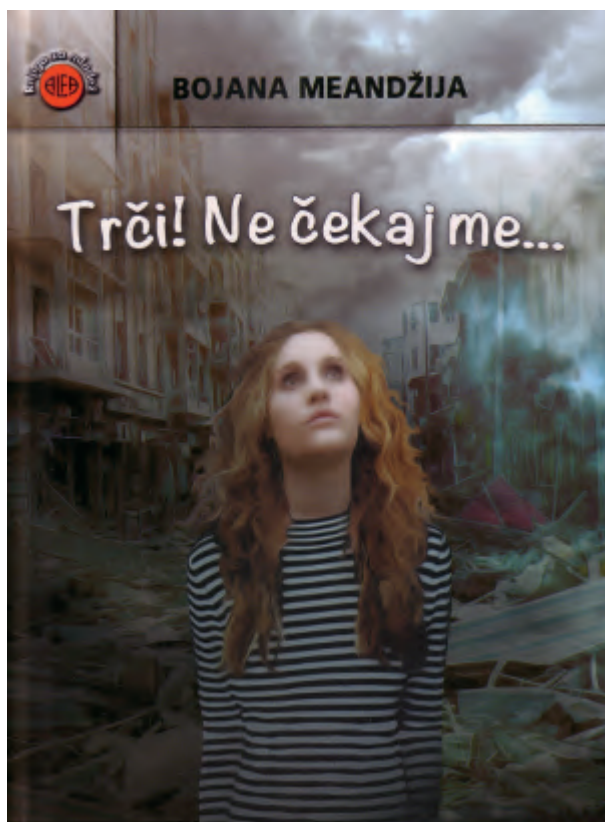
Das Buch ist als Lektüre sowohl für Schüler der höheren Klassen als auch für Erwachsene geeignet.



Nina Pavić Colić, Redaktionsleitung

Jedes Kind hat eine andere Kindheit, aber Kinder, die Krieg erleben, haben eine gemeinsame Kindheitserfahrung – es ist eine Kindheit, in der sie aufwachsen müssen, in der sie aufhören müssen zu spielen, in der sie in nur einem Moment erwachsen werden müssen, weil einige ungezogene Menschen ihnen das Recht nehmen zu spielen.

LAUF! WARTE NICHT AUF MICH...



Bojana Meandžija,
Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich...

Ein Kinderroman, der die Geschichte eines jeden Krieges in der Welt erzählt, über verlorene Jahre, über ungelebte Jugend, über Familie, Liebe, Opfer.
Alfa, Zagreb, 2015.

Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich... ist eine romantische Geschichte der Kindheit in dem Schutzkeller ihres Gebäudes, die eine realistische und dokumentarische Darstellung des Aufwachsens in Kriegszeiten darstellt, mit echten lebenden Menschen die Fehler machen, die Angst haben, die sich wundern, die keine Antworten haben. Im Buch wird über Kriege, über den Zerfall einer Gesellschaft und die Auflösung einer Staatenunion berichtet. Es scheint alles schon geschrieben zu sein. National und ideologisch gefärbte Geschichten, in denen, je nachdem wer sie schreibt, die Rollen notwendigerweise auf *uns* und *sie*, beziehungsweise auf die *Guten* und die *Schlechten* verteilt sind, füllen Bibliotheksregale. Nicht alle von ihnen sind gleich oder gleich gut, es versuchen nicht wenige Autoren, eine tiefere Bedeutung von etwas zu erklären, das tatsächlich per se bedeutungslos und unerklärlich ist. Dieses Buch ist anders, und vor allem, wenn es um Literatur für Kinder geht, sollte ein solcher Titel auf jeden Fall beachtet werden. Der Roman **Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich...** stellt einen Paradigmenwechsel dar, den Ivana Brli -Mažurani vor hundert Jahren inmitten eines schrecklichen Krieges gesetzt hat. Die Autorin Brli -Mažurani versucht, Geschichten aus Urzeiten zu erzählen und erklärt den Kindern im Geiste ihrer Zeit, dass es einen notwendigen Kampf von Gut und Böse gibt, in dem das Gute unweigerlich gewinnt. Bojana Meandžija spricht über dasselbe Dilemma, aber aus der Perspektive eines Kindes, das nicht versteht, was um es herum vor sich geht. Es ist ein autobiografischer Roman eines kleinen Mädchens – eines damals dreizehnjährigen Kindes aus Karlovic, das in den ersten Kriegstagen in einem feuchten Keller auf die Holzlatten eines Holzschuppens Tagebuch geschrieben hat, wo dies heute noch zu sehen ist. Die Besonderheit ihrer Geschichte liegt darin, dass die Autorin, obwohl die Geschichte auf der Erinnerung eines jungen Menschen beruht, zu keinem Zeitpunkt in die Falle tappt, eine der Seiten zu beurteilen, an keiner Stelle über *uns* und *sie* spricht, sondern ausschließlich – über die Sehnsucht, ihr junges Leben zu leben, Spaß zu haben, Musik zu hören, sich zu treffen, sich zu verlieben und sogar zur Schule zu gehen, so wie es ihre Altersgenossen auf der ganzen Welt tun. Der Roman beginnt im Sommer 1991, als Bojana und ihre jüngere Schwester Marija zu ihrer Großmutter in den Karlovac-Vororten gehen, wo sie jedes Jahr ihre

Sommerferien verbringen. Sie hat keine Ahnung, dass dies die letzte Episode einer glücklichen Kindheit ist. In wenigen Wochen wird Turanj die Grenze zwischen den beiden Welten werden und ein Ort sein, der die schwerste Zerstörung des Krieges erleiden wird. Wenn der Sommer langsam vergeht, scheint alles anders zu sein als in den Vorjahren, die Schulferien statt Ruhe, Zeitvertreib und Heiterkeit bringen Unruhe und Angst mit. Und wenn eines Tages das erste Schießen zu hören ist, Panzer auf den Straßen erscheinen und kurz darauf das Geräusch einer Sirene wegen der allgemeinen Gefahr ertönt, wird sich das Leben von Bojana, ihrer Familie und anderen Bürgern für immer ändern. Ganz am Ende, wenn sie nach vier Jahren an den Ort kommt, wo sie so viele unbeschwerte Sommer im Spiel und in der Gesellschaft ihrer geliebten Großeltern verbrachte, gibt es aber abgesehen von der überwucherten Ruine nichts, was die Leere kompensiert.

Bojana Meandžija ruft nicht einmal in diesem Moment, in dem sie einen Teil ihres eigenen Lebens verliert, zu Rache oder Hass auf, sondern sie beschließt, zu ihrer Jugend zurückzukehren und zu dem, was nicht aufgegeben werden darf, egal wie sehr andere sie dazu zwingen wollen. Sie freut sich auf einen neuen Tag und überwindet schließlich ihre Trauer. Das Leben geht weiter, ohne dass die Magie des Lichts und der Gerechtigkeit über das Dunkle des Schuldigen am Ende siegen. Diese Geschichte soll nicht in die Welt der Märchen (die Erzählungen aus Urväterzeiten) entfliehen. Es ist kein allegorischer Kampf von Gut und Böse mit dem moralischen Zeigefinger und mit der Hoffnung, dass immer der gewinnt, der ein wenig besser oder moralischer zu sein erscheint. Nein, die Ereignisse in Bojana Meandžija Roman finden in der realen Welt statt. Die Autorin macht sich nicht die Mühe, irgendetwas in ihren Beschreibungen zu verschönern, ihre Familienmitglieder sind nicht perfekt, aber zweifellos gut, und deren Handlungen bleiben fragwürdig, inkonsequent und verfehlt. Das ist das Hauptmerkmal von Meandžijas Roman. Es ist keine romantisierende Geschichte aus traumatischen Zeiten, sondern vor allem eine realistische und dokumentarische Darstellung des Aufwachsens in Kriegszeiten, mit wirklich lebenden Menschen, die Fehler machen, die Angst haben, die sich wundern, die keine Antworten haben...^{1,2}

Übersetzung: Ivica Košak

Literaturveranstaltung der Kroatischen Kulturgemeinschaft e.V. Wiesbaden

Im Rahmen der Jahresversammlung - XXXI Sabor der Kroatischen Kulturgemeinschaft e.V. Wiesbaden und anlässlich des *Internationalen Tages der Muttersprache* am 21. Februar 2021 findet ein literarisches Forum mit der Autorin **Bojana Meandžija** statt. Die Veranstaltung beginnt um 17:00 Uhr als Videokonferenz.

Bojana Meandžija hat auf dem Vereinstreffen am 15. Januar 2021 per Videoschalt ein Programm mit Performances und Präsentationen des Buches ***Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich...*** vorgestellt.

Das Buch ist als Lektüre für höhere Klassen genauso gut wie für Erwachsene geeignet. Es ist ein Werk, das in den Kriegsjahren entstanden ist. ***Lauf! Warte nicht auf mich...*** ist ein autobiografischer Roman, in dem die Schriftstellerin beschreibt, wie sie in der vom Krieg betroffenen Stadt Karlovic aufwuchs. Der Regisseur **Branko Lustig**, ein den Holocaust Überlebender verglich dieses Werk mit dem Tagebuch der Anne Frank und dem Filmwerk *Das Leben ist schön* (italienisch: *La vita é bella*). *La vita é bella* ist ein italienisches Drama von Robert Benigni aus dem Jahr 1997. Der Film wurde vom Buch *Ich habe Hitler besiegt*³ von Rubino Romeo Salmoni inspiriert.

Während des Heimatkrieges in Kroatien schrieb Bojana Meandžija ihren Roman in den feuchten Räumen des Schutzkellers. Einfach erzählt, kindliche, dramatische Lektüre, flüssig und ohne Hass, aus dem Erleben eines dreizehnjährigen Mädchens, das sich an seinem Geburtstag zu Recht wundert - dass ihm das Recht auf Glück genommen wurde, und das für vier Jahre... - *Sie ist nicht zu klein dafür die Kindheit zu verlieren und spricht von einer unsäglichen Stärke im Menschen, die zum Überleben hilft und es möglich macht, sich auf einen neuen Tag zu freuen, hilft...* Sagte Bojana Meandžija.

Die literarische Tribüne findet traditionell anlässlich des Weltmuttersprachentages statt.

Siehe: <http://www.hkz-wi.de/naslovna/me%C4%91unarodni-dan-materinskoga-jezika.html>

Das Buch ist bereits in englische Sprache erschienen⁴, eine deutsche Übersetzung ist in Arbeit.

Die Lesung und Buchvorstellung dauert 45 Minuten.

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¹ Der Text wurde in der Zeitschrift Rije Nr. 50, HKZ-Wi, Wiesbaden 2016. veröffentlicht. Die Bilder sind dem Buch *Bojana Meandžija, Trči! Ne čekaj me..., Alfa*, Zagreb, 2015. entnommen. Das Buch, dass mittlerweile in Kroatien zur Schulliteratur gehörte, wurde bereits in 6 Ausgaben mit über 16.000 verkauften Exemplaren veröffentlicht.

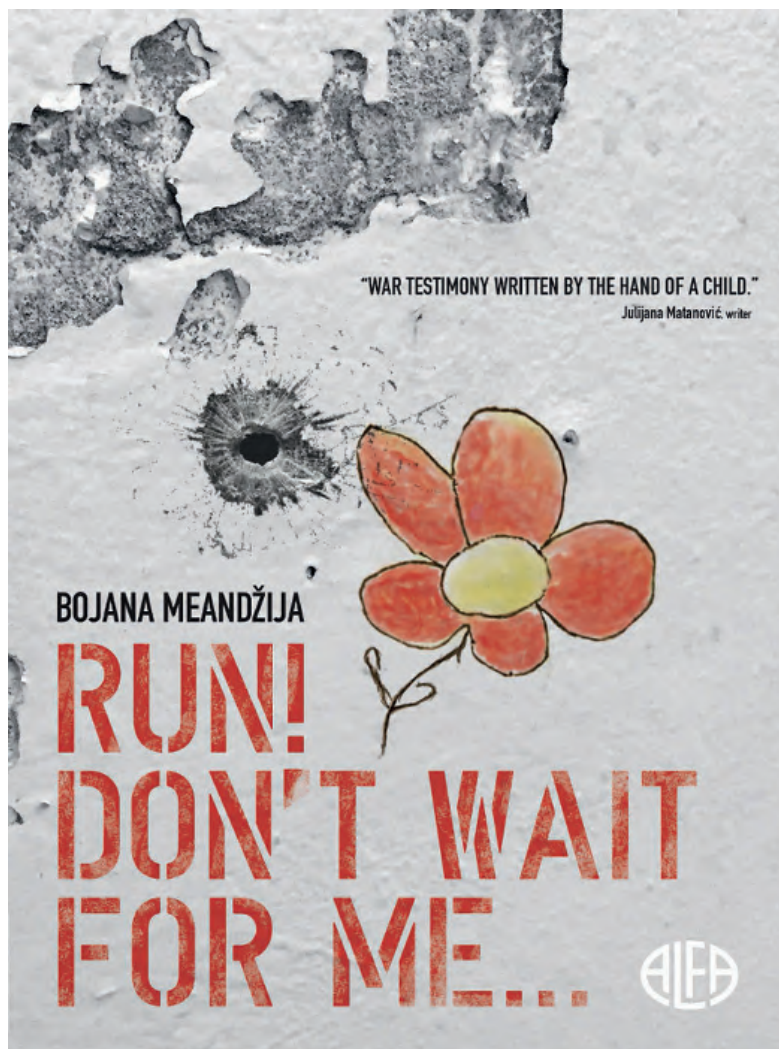
² Der kroatische Text ist auf der Internetseite <http://www.hkz-wi.de/trjec/pismohrana/rijec-50-inhaltkazalo/trci-ne-cekaj-me.html> zu finden, gesehen am 15.01.2021.

³ Urbino Romeo Salmoni A15810, *Ho sconfitto Hitler - Appunti, note e frammenti di memoria di un sopravvissuto ad Auschwitz - Birkenau*, Editio dalla Provincia di Roma, 2011.

⁴ Bojana Meandžija, *Run! Don't wait for me...*, Alfa d.d., Zagreb 2016.

CROATIAN HOMELAND WAR NOVEL

Through the Eyes of a 13-Year-Old



Is this a part of growing up?! wondered a 13-year-old Bojana, while she was writing down the first sentence of this autobiographical book on the wooden laths on the wall of an atomic shelter. She was holding a wet handkerchief on her mouth struggling with a smoke from the burning building above her head and the bombs kept falling like a rain on the city.

That night Bojana decided to leave a trace. A trace someone might find one day. In case she doesn't survive...

Bojana Meandžija from Karlovac in Croatia was 16-years-old when she wrote the autobiographical novel 'Run! Don't wait for me' in the damp rooms of an atomic shelter during the Homeland war in Croatia. Bojana wrote the first sentences of the book in the still of night on wooden laths in the woodshed, while the silence was being shattered by explosions of shells raining on her town. These jottings on wooden laths are, despite the passage of time, still to be found there.

The novel was published by Alfa publishing company in 2015, 25 years after she started writing and has just now been published in the English language. This is the first novel about the war written through the eyes of a 13-year-old child and not by adults.

Bojana, who has talked to thousands of school children at over 200 schools in Croatia about the book due to its popularity, has many authentic audio recordings of attacks and bombings which she recorded on her little radio during the war. She also recorded the last siren which signaled that the war was over.

It is not a book that follows everyday war developments, uproars, attacks.

This is a book which brings out feelings of a 13 year old child, who found itself, during very sensitive childhood years, in a middle of something grown-ups called WAR. This book is not about the exact number of fired grenades nor will you find statistic data because a child doesn't understand statistics, papers and chronology.

It was written in an honest childish way delivering the emotions that had been accumulated in all those days spent underground.

RUN! DONT WAIT FOR ME...

Chapter 1

Mom and Dad, a very special thanks to you... on behalf of both Sis and I. Thank you for all those words of encouragement, for all the love you showered us with, and for your fighting spirit as we were going through the roughest of times. We were, and still are, of one heart that shall always remain beating with the same strength, even when we are no more... The greyness is now gone, but life had been so *mean* to me that I am afraid that the inside of me might have gone grey as well. There are people who step into our lives... inconspicuously, within merely a second, but stay with us forever, changing us. Enriching us. "Come morning, you should wake up smiling and be grateful for the new day. That's the way you should live your life. Let this be your guiding light, each and every morning! Come on, kitten, put a smile on your face, a new day has begun!" – Doctor Spomenka used to say encouragingly while giving me an anaesthetic. ...to my Mom, Dad, Sis, Grandma and Doctor Spomenka! Do you also feel that heaviness? The terrible heaviness coming from the bottomless pit of your soul as you are waiting for that moment in which everything within you is bound to burst, allowing you to breathe, go wild, get rid of it for good? Do you also feel like you are filling you time meaninglessly with anything just to make it pass faster? My soul is screaming exactly now for the time lost...

June 20, 1991 Summer! Summer has come, school is out, and I'm as happy as happy can be. Wow, what a great feeling it is to dump my school bag behind my bed, and hear the dull thud of the books that are not to be touched, let alone opened, for two entire months! Come September, I will most probably find the bag in the exact same position it was dropped in June! So I look at it... so motionless and abandoned. Well, I guess it also deserves a holiday of its own. It may not be able to rid the burden within, but at least nobody will bother it. It'll have a rest, just like I will. I go out, and head for the bus station to take a ride to my Grandma's. Yet another school holidays have just begun. Indeed, on my mind, there is nothing but a carousel. I imagine carelessly gazing at who knows where, laughing, feeling at peace, seeing familiar roads and faces. Everything is pink as if I was wearing rose-tinted glasses. Mom and Dad are still at work. A small upward curve in the corner of my lips reveals how happy I am. I am sitting by the window, observing the roads, houses, and bridges over the Rivers Mrežnica and Korana that I know so well. On my right, I get a brief glimpse of the kindergarten I used to attend for three years. And ahead of me, just another road bend away, the games are about to begin. The bus pulls over at the station right in front of my Grandma's house. I rush out... Grandma doesn't even know I've arrived; she is probably in the field. I run up the stone stairs, skipping every other, and enter the house to change into my sneakers – the ones intended to be used for playing in! Rushing back out, I jump over the fence. Anel, a friend of mine, lives on the other side of it, and another fence away from Anel's, lives our friend, Zdravko. Anel is my age and Zdravko is a year younger. I cannot spot them anywhere outside. I stop running, take a look all around myself, and finally fix my eyes on the fence again. That jump I just made suddenly starts feeling somehow different from all the other jumps before. I notice an unusual colour of the nearby stream that also adds a different tinge to this picture. I can smell something strange in the air, too. As if everything around me at once assumed a grey tone. Even the neighbours I see walking down the street appear to be walking rather strangely. Everyone seems to be looking at their shoe toes. They're moving faster than usual. From what I can tell, they are scared! What's frightening them? What's the matter with them? Where are my friends? They're always outside around this time of the day. I don't get it but, then again, I don't think there's really any reason to analyse things in such a way! What's the matter with me? Why should I care if they're all like this? Still, even the road in front of the house looks greyer than it usually is. Perhaps it hasn't rained for a while, making the asphalt appear lighter, more grey-like. But why are the cars grey? Are they dirty? Everything around me is so strange. I don't like grey and sad days like this. Oh my, the holidays have begun; what's wrong with you all? There they are, the two of them, coming out from around the back of an old hay-barn, chatting away. But they also seem different, somehow. Maybe it's because I haven't seen them for a while. They look like they are hiding something; as if they were up to something, leaving me to go to the trouble of finding out what it was. The little buggers! Smiling, I shout hello, and head off to find my Grandma. I don't want to intrude on their precious little secrets. About a hundred meters away, I find Grandma in the field. Half bent over, she appears so small and sad to me. She's plunging the hoe into the soil, but her movements seem to be so laboured, so slow. I pause as I come closer. She too is grey and preoccupied. Perhaps she's just tired... I break into a run, and then stop... I get this urge to instil a bit of joy into everything, a sparkle or twinkle here and there, a bit of laughter and playfulness. Who knows, maybe in time I myself have turned grey, and no one notices me. I am just like everyone else. I do not differ, even by a single shade. Then, I remember my bike, faithfully waiting for me in the garage. But my very next thought is –

no, why bother? What would I do with it? Where would I ride it?! Having already caught sight of me, Grandma smiles at me gently and sets the hoe aside. However, I notice her smile is imperfect, as if she had a toothache, and couldn't put on that wide smile that she would actually like to. "Sweetheart, when did you get here?" "Half an hour ago... by bus." "Let me just finish with this row here, and then we'll go and have a lunch, all right?" "All right, I'm going back to the yard then... to play on the swing!" I guess it's better for me to leave than to keep trying to work out what's bothering her. Maybe she's actually in some kind of pain. The old walnut tree in the middle of the yard has been faithfully keeping my swing safe all this time. I walk towards it across the stone slabs, most of which have turned wobbly due to hundreds of times I ran them over. My Grandad had laid them down alongside the hay-barn so we wouldn't have to wade through the mud when it rained. The first and the second slab in the row were still firm, while the third, fifth, and sixth were all wobbly. Knowing this, I would usually adjust my strides as to only land on the solid ones. However, if I had to make a dash for the house when Grandma called me inside, I would land on every second one, regardless of whether it was wobbly or not. The swing is gently swaying in the breeze. Grandad had fixed it to the sturdiest branch of our old walnut tree when I was just two years old. And it's still here, waiting for me... after all this time. I stop just before the swing and look up towards the branch. Although it used to be the thickest one in the tree crown, it now seems too grey and too dry, and too unsafe for me to take a swing. It might break! At the top, I see sparrows frolicking around. The swing keeps swaying. The piece of foam rubber that I would normally sit on is covered with twigs that have fallen from the tree. But the four coloured wooden balls, attached to the ropes at each corner of the seat, restore my faith that colours do still exist... Garo, my Grandma's dog, is lying in front of his kennel, observing the road, every now and then sneaking a peak of me with his right eye. His left eye is fixed on his water bowl. He's gone grey too! I'm no longer in the mood for anything. I notice Grandma's notebook lying on the stone table beneath the walnut tree. There are all kinds of writings in that notebook, from telephone numbers and addresses to cake recipes. I rip out a page to make a little boat. I'm going to let it sail down the stream that flows alongside Anel's fence. Actually, that fence might even be called my fence. Why should it be his fence? It runs between both our yards! I feel ever so jittery. My paper boat refuses to sail. Instead, it turns over sideways and sinks. The grass growing at the bottom of the stream has stopped it from moving forward. It wasn't able to stay on the surface... I pick it up and crumple it into a ball. So what now? What am I going to do now? Here comes Grandma, with the hoe slung over her shoulder. Well, at least Grandma is here, and we're sure to think of something together. "Let's go and set the table. Your Mom and Dad are coming here straight from work, and Marija needs to eat something, too," Grandma says, climbing up the stairs into the house. My sister is five years old. Today she went on an excursion with her kindergarten group. That's why I didn't wait for her to join me on the way to Grandma's. Instead, Mom and Dad are bringing her. "What's for lunch?" I ask, following Grandma into the kitchen. "Soup, meat, and roasted potatoes. Go and get me some potatoes from the cellar, please." "How many?" "Two for each of us." The cellar is located right behind the front door. It is full of potatoes. It would probably take us ten years to finish them all off. I come back, pick up my little knife with a yellow plastic handle, and start peeling. That's my only task, to peel the potatoes. Grandma is to cut them into pieces. Mom, Dad and Sis arrive around three o'clock. We have lunch together, and the two of them head back to the town. Luckily, my Sis is here with me now. The two of us have always managed to come up with something to do. At this point, she is the only one that doesn't look grey to me. The rest of the day passes by in the same atmosphere, with me not being able to understand what is wrong with everything and everyone. Luckily, the day passes quickly, and the night brings sleeping in Grandma's bed. Morning! I open my eyes to a beautifully coloured, green room. Actually, the room is green because the roller blinds are pulled down, and the sun is shining through them, colouring the entire room. For a few moments, I just take it all in, enjoying it immensely. No grey colour for a change! Grandma has already prepared breakfast and went out. As usual, on the table there is a cup of warm milk, in the biggest and deepest cup of them all, waiting for me. Despite the fact that she knew the contents of the cup were going to end up in the sink and not in my stomach as soon as she turned her back, she has never stopped heating up and serving me milk. And I honestly believe that, if she could have found a bigger and deeper cup, it would be waiting here for me. And just as persistently as she kept heating up and serving me milk, so too did I persistently keep pouring it down the sink. Having finished a jam-filled doughnut, I go out and walk over to see Zdravko and Anel. I will need to jump over the first fence and then, if necessary, the second, to Zdravko's. I find them playing cards in front of Anel's garage, sitting on a blanket Grandma gave us to play on. I jump over the fence like a true hurdler and proudly strut over to them. I'm fully aware I have no right to sit down on the blanket with them, let alone to join the game. They keep slapping cards down, one after the other, as if they were trying to make it clear to me: "Look here, this is a man's game, and we are best at it. Since you are a girl, you don't understand it... and you don't need to, actually." They keep muttering something to each other, totally ignoring me. I notice Zdravko sneaking a glance at me from time to time, trying to let me know he is uncomfortable for not talking to me – because he's not allowed. Actually, Anel has always been the

one to dictate our relationship. He has always been the leader. He also takes a quick peek at me at one instance, unaware that I am observing him as well, even though my gaze is lowered. What is all of this supposed to mean? Truth be told, the game they are playing seems stupid. I have always considered playing cards pointless. Basically, it's nothing but a boring, *grey* game. With me I have brought my mini fire truck toy set, hoping it would grant me entry into their game, although fully aware that not I, but the trucks will be the *ticket* to the play. "Zdravko's got a new BMX bike, you know!" Anel says without looking at me. I take a look at Zdravko, and he just smiles at me. He had gotten the bike a few days before I arrived at my Grandma's, and since Anel was the boss of our yard, he took more pride in that bicycle than Zdravko did. "Anel, get in the house! Right away!" the piercing voice of Anel's mother suddenly breaks the silence. "Coming..." he hurriedly gets up from the blanket. As Anel instantly drops the cards from his hands at her call, Zdravko begins to gather them up speechlessly. He remains seated while I keep standing in place, watching him. "Look, I'll be back soon. Wait for me here and... don't let her ride your bike!" says Anel while leaving. Zdravko bows his head. This is not what he was really like but, because he wanted to stay friends with Anel, he had to obey his egotistical commands. However, whenever Anel would leave, the *real* Zdravko would appear. "I'm just going to run down to my garage quickly and get the bike. You wait for me on the path!" he says. So, he's going to show it to me nonetheless! I feel both impatient and excited, and I am not sure if it's because of the bike or the fear of being caught by Anel. The bicycle is beautiful: it's blue with big red tires! "Can I try it out?" I ask. "Of course you can! Just be careful. And don't go too far!" he says, looking towards the entrance of Anel's house. We decide to wait for Anel in my yard, throwing darts into the garage door. Across the road is Ljubica's house. She's my age, and she lives with her parents and grandmother. Her grandma comes over for a coffee every morning. Ljubica and I don't hang around because she's always so bossy, she bad-mouths people as soon as they are out of earshot, and she's a show-off. Her hair is always braided, and it takes her Grandma half an hour every morning to do it. She thinks her braids are something special and, for this, she struts around like she owns the place. She even dresses strangely, as some fancy lady who is always mindful of how things look on her. I don't like this. I prefer hanging out with boys because these sorts of things never happen with them. While I am lying in bed with the bedroom door half open, Grandma is sitting at the kitchen table talking to Ljubica's grandmother. The glass insert in the door is thick and opaque, and I can only see Grandma's silhouette moving every now and then. But, I can hear her voice, and it's not as clear as it usually is. She's talking softly, probably because she doesn't want to wake me up. It's nine o'clock. I can hear the news on the radio and the clinking of coffee cups. Their voices are still strange. Monotonous. Somewhat unhappy. From time to time, my Grandma says: "Come on, it's not going to be like that, you'll see." I can't make out what they're talking about. The sun isn't shining outside. I know this because the blinds are now dark green, and the room is kind of darkish. I turn around and try to get a few more winks of sleep, but I fail. The bathroom is to the left of my room. I don't like going to the bathroom while there are people in the kitchen because, with the kitchen door open, they can see me. This wouldn't be a problem if I were wearing pyjamas, but I never liked them. I sleep in a t-shirt and shorts – that's all. So, I decide it's time to get up, and I put on a tracksuit. Sis is already outside. "Good morning, did you sleep well?" Grandma asks. "Good morning," I mumble sleepily, glancing at Ljubica's grandma. The kitchen goes quiet. There is even no more whispering. And there, on the table, is my breakfast: a doughnut and, of course, the largest cup of warm milk possible. With a cream having formed on top of it... yuck! The fate of the cup's contents would have been decided in seconds if Grandma wasn't sitting at the table, her chin propped up by her hands. I pull out a chair to the end of the table, pick up the doughnut, and start glaring at the warm milk. What now? I'm not doing too well with the doughnut either. Neither of them says a word. I can feel them watching me, and I don't know what to do, or where to look. I stare at the tiny flowers on the plastic tablecloth. How on earth am I going to get rid of this milk!? The look in their eyes is really grey, yet their lips are somehow purplish. So, in this rather uncertain and awkward situation, with nobody showing any intention of moving a muscle, I'm left with no choice but to try out a new, and thus far, never-tested approach. "Grandma, I can't drink this milk!" I utter this magical sentence and look her in the eyes, fearing her reaction. "Leave it, I'll drink it..." I am caught off guard. Something is well and truly wrong. She might have said this now, but she will surely never say it again. Oh, well, I guess I better get out of here with my doughnut before she changes her mind. The two women remain seated at the table. My great grandmother Marija, who my sister was probably named after, lives upstairs, above Grandma. Since she is always up for a game of Ludo, I hop up to her place. I find my Sis is already there. However, this time she doesn't seem to be in the mood to play. I can feel something heavy, something laden in everyone's thoughts and movements, in their stories, conversations, and voices. Something has changed. Something is going on, and I am still unable to figure out what it is.

Bojana Meandžija

Trči! Ne čekaj me...

Naša gošća – književnica Bojana Meandžija

Može li rat, ma kako bio nešto strašno, biti tema tople, poticajne i pozitivne dje je knjige?

Da, može. To nam je pokazao susret s književnicom **Bojanom Meandžijom**, tek djevojicom u vrijeme *Domovinskog rata*.

Književnici koje poznajemo odrasle su osobe. Iako su i poželjeli pisati u odrasloj dobi. Rijetko koji je pisao kao dijete, pogotovo mu djelo iz te dobi nije objavljeno. Našoj gošći dogodilo se baš to. Svoj je prvi objavljeni roman pokušao stvarati od niza crtica, bilješki ispisanih na zidu i drvenim letvicama skloništa u kojem su ona i njezina obitelj našli spas i sigurnost od rata. Na njezin rođendan 1991. ratne su strahote svom silinom oružja i straha pogodile njezin grad, zgradu, obitelj. Svoja se anja je svega tri godine kasnije pretvorila u roman ***Trči! Ne čekaj me...*** Opis rata gledanog kroz dječje oči, tjeskobu i skukenost podruma, jednoličnu hranu, želju za običnim djetinjstvom i odrastanjem – sve nam je to autorica dočitala jednostavnim, a opet biranim riječima. Pokazala nam je da se i teški trenuci mogu izdržati uz nešto što ti daje snagu i nadu. Autorici je to bila obitelj, ali i vjera u sutra.

„A nije malo izgubiti djetinjstvo! Kada s trinaest godina moraš odjednom upoznati i naučiti pojmove koje život može donijeti na tvoj prag!“

„Ekom novi dan! Savladala sam tugu i tek sada znam da sam JA vječna; život je vječan!“

Run! Don't wait for me ...

Our guest - a novelist Bojana Meandžija

Can the war, however terrible, be the topic of a warm, stimulating and positive children's book?

Yes, it can. This has been shown to us through a meeting with a novelist Bojana Meandžija, who was just a girl during the Homeland War.

All the writers we know are adults. They often started writing as adults. Rarely did any of them write as children, let alone their work being published at that age. Our guest experienced exactly that. She began to make her first published novel out of a series of dashes, notes written on the wall and wooden slats of a shelter where she and her family found salvation and security from the war. On her birthday in 1991, the atrocities of war affected her city, her building and her family with the sheer force of weapons and fear. Only three years later she turned her memory into the novel *Run! Don't wait for me...* The description of war seen through the eyes of a child, the anxiety and cramped basement, the monotonous food, the desire for an ordinary childhood and growing up - all this the author showed us in simple, but carefully chosen words. She has shown us that difficult moments can be overcome by something that gives you strength and hope. It was the author's family, but also her faith in tomorrow.

"And it's not a negligible thing to lose your childhood! When at the age of thirteen you suddenly need to be acquainted with and learn about the concepts that life can bring to your doorstep! "

"I am waiting for a new day! I have overcome the grief and now I know that I am eternal; life is eternal! "

Abelina Finek, prof. povijesti

LOOKING BACK ON MEETING ONE WITH AN EXCEPTIONAL PERSON **- a writer *Bojana Meandzija***

A meeting with the writer Bojana Meandzija was organized at the Primary School "San Nicolò" on May 23, 2017, during which she presented her autobiographical book "Run! Don't wait for me ... ". The meeting, which was supposed to be an interesting and instructive event, for all of us turned into much more. The interest of everyone present, children and school employees was as never before. The sense of connection that Bojana arouse with her story in everyone who listened to it was almost palpable.

Children who are otherwise very lively during class and in other activities, who are constantly warned about their behavior, were calm, fascinated by the writer and absorbing her every word. At the end of the meeting the school headmistress described her experience of the resulting atmosphere, "I had the feeling that it was only at the end of the meeting everyone present took a breath, as if they haven't even breathed before, for fear of ruining the magic".

It is also important to note that the inhabitants of our city during the Homeland War certainly did not feel the horrors of war on their skin. Fortunately, we did not experience the bombing, the tanks, the shooting and the detonation that Bojana was talking about.

No matter how much we try to explain to our children the history, sometimes we feel that it is hard for them to imagine that it really happened in our country. This is the first time many of us have had the opportunity to meet a person who was a direct participant in these events and to hear her testimony of all the fears she experienced. In relaying her experience of the devastation seen in the eyes of a twelve year old girl, at no point did we feel hatred or anger towards anyone. What fascinated us was the strength and optimism that the writer conveyed to us. The great wealth of this meeting, through impression of the school headmistress, is a lesson, "Yes, terrible things happened to me, but because of that I am even stronger... I want to learn something from it and appreciate life even more."

At one point, Bojana spoke to the children letting them know they should not resent their parents if they can not buy them, for example; the most expensive phone or sneakers in the latest fashion, because they could find themselves, through no fault of their own, in some life situations when it took so little to feel better. When all those little things that we take for granted in our lives we begin to appreciate. Some of us thought that we would like our daughters and sons to have the opportunity and honor to listen to such precious words of gold uttered from the depths of their souls, honestly and simply. To meet an extraordinary person, which surely the vast majority of us will never forget.

Talking to the writer after the meeting was overwhelming for all of us, a feeling that as if we had known each other forever.

When one speaks to the heart - the other heart recognizes it.

She showed us that we must never lose hope, that it is always worth the fight and at the end of the tunnel there is always, sometimes very far, light.

Towards the end of the book Bojana says, "After many years to come, oblivion is a word that exists only in the dictionary."

We will not forget Bojana... her words, emotions, optimism and strength will remain deep and long in all of us.

Bojana, THANK YOU!

AND I HOPE THAT THEY WILL ALWAYS HAVE SMILES

In life, it's not always the right moment to do, say or hear something. But for meeting Bojana the moment was exactly right. Several days after we met, our eight grade students were going to Vukovar to see the horrors of the 90's Civilian war in Croatia.

I was wondering how to explain to them that this trip was not just a usual chance to escape classes and hang out but far more important. Bojana managed to explain that to them in a simple, sincere and downright way. She didn't speak about Vukovar, she spoke about Karlovac, but is there any difference really? It felt like they spoke to one of their own, a co-student, a 13 years old girl... When I spoke to my students the next day about our trip to Vukovar, everything was much clearer. To many of them the iPhones and Air Maxes weren't as important anymore, the scrambled eggs she mentioned to them became more meaningful.

I can't repeat everything Bojana spoke about because, I'm not ashamed to admit, as a 38 y-o-woman I couldn't take it. I ran out of the school gym to hide my tears and entered the staff room. I've got the book and I hope that one day I'll find the strength to read it. To my boys. And I hope that they will always have smiles on their faces. Bojana wrote that in the inscription in my book.

E SPERO ANCHE CHE LORO AVRANNO SEMPRE IL SORRISO

Non sempre nella vita riusciamo a trovare il momento giusto per fare qualcosa, parlare o ascoltare. L'incontro con Bojana è arrivato però nel momento più giusto possibile. Alcuni giorni dopo, infatti, i nostri alunni dell'ottava sarebbero partiti per Vukovar, una gita che li avrebbe messi a contatto con i fatti terribili successi negli anni '90 durante la Guerra patriottica.

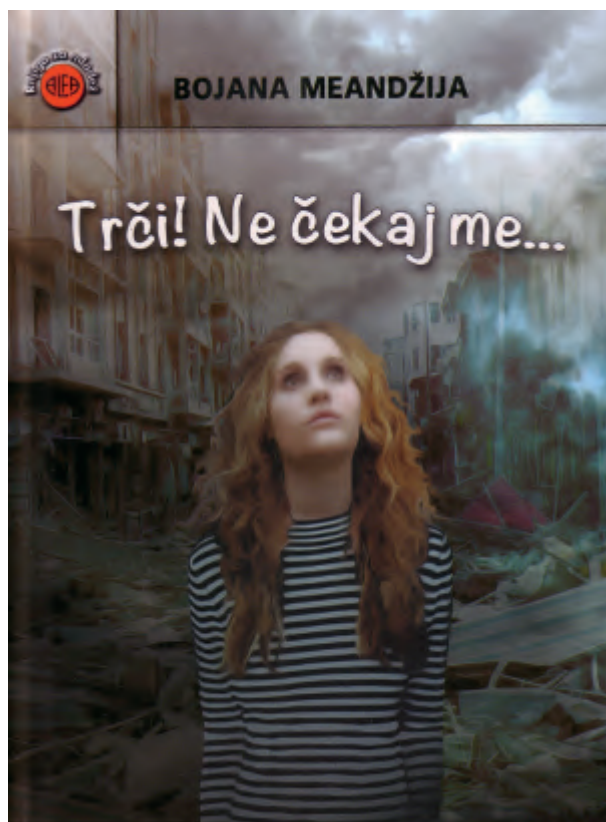
Come spiegare loro l'importanza di tale gita, dal momento che loro vedono in tutto solo un'occasione per perdere le lezioni e stare in compagnia? Bojana ci è riuscita, e lo ha fatto in modo semplice, sincero e totale. Non ha parlato di Vukovar ma di Karlovac (che differenza fa?), e loro hanno avuto la sensazione di parlare con qualcuno dei propri coetanei, ascoltavano le parole di una tredicenne, di una di loro...

Il giorno dopo, quando ho iniziato a parlare a questi stessi ragazzi dell'ottava della gita a Vukovar, molte cose erano più chiare. Per parecchi di loro gli *iphone* e le scarpe *air max* avevano perso importanza, mentre la frittata di cui Bojana ci aveva parlato aveva acquistato un significato del tutto nuovo.

Non potrò mai raccontare tutto quello che ho sentito durante quell'incontro con Bojana, perché (e non mi vergogno a dirlo), anche se ho trentottanni, non ce l'ho fatta. Sono uscita dalla palestra scolastica nascondendo le lacrime. Almeno fino alla sala insegnanti. Il libro ce l'ho. Spero di trovare un giorno la forza per leggerlo. Ai miei figli. E spero anche che loro avranno sempre il sorriso sulle labbra. Queste parole sono scritte nella dedica di Bojana...

Trči! Ne čekaj me...

Dječji roman koji govori o bilo kojem ratu na svijetu, o izgubljenim godinama, o neproživljenoj mladosti, o obitelji, ljubavi, žrtvama



Naslov originala: Trči! Ne čekaj me...

Bojana Meandžija

(Alfa, 2015)

Čini se kako je o ratovima na ovim prostorima i burnim 90-im sve već napisano. Tu prvenstveno mislim na nacionalno obojane priče u kojima, ovisno o tome tko ih piše, se uloge nužno dijele na „nas“ i „njih“, na dobre i loše, ili se pak pokušava objasniti neki dublji smisao nečeg što je zapravo besmisleno i neobjašnjivo, samo po sebi. Stoga, kad se pojavi knjiga koja je drugačija od svega navedenog,

a posebno kad je u pitanju književnost za djecu, onda na takav naslov svakako treba obratiti pažnju.

Bojana Meandžija djevojčica je koja odrasta u Karlovcu, nacionalno šarolikoj sredini koja dijelom i zbog toga teško stradava za vrijeme oružanih sukoba 90-ih u Hrvatskoj. Teška situacija za sve stanovnike „grada na četiri rijeke“, a kamoli za djevojicu koja ulazi u ionako turbulentno tinejdžersko razdoblje.

Prije i počinje u ljeto 1991. kad Bojana zajedno sa mlađom sestrom Marijom odlazi baki, kao i svake godine za vrijeme ljetnih praznika, u karlovačko predgrađe Turanj, nesvjesna kako će se za nekoliko mjeseci to biti granica između dva svijeta i mjesto koje će pretrpjeti najteža ratna razaranja. I dok ljeto polako prolazi, čini se kako je sve drugačije nego ranijih godina, a školski praznici umjesto odmora i razbibrige donose slutnju, nemir i strah. A kad se jednog dana začuje prva pucnjava, na ulicama pojave tenkovi, a nedugo zatim začuje i zvuk sirene za opću opasnost, život Bojane, njene obitelji i sugrađana zauvijek će se promijeniti.

Roman opisuje sljedeće četiri ratne godine, godine u kojima će Bojana dobar dio vremena provesti u atomskom skloništu svoje zgrade koja se nalazi tik do vojarne – što neovisno o tome koja je vojska u njoj se pokazuje kao najgore moguće mjesto – razmišljaju i preispituju i zašto se događa cijeli taj kaos svuda unaokolo, traže i racionalne odgovore, a onda na kraju shvatiti kako je najvažnije samo preživjeti jer jednom i rat mora prestati.

Posebnost ovog romana leži u činjenici da, iako je nastao na osnovu sjećanja mlade osobe, autorica niti u jednom trenutku ne pada u zamku osuđivanja neke od strana, niti na jednom mjestu ne priča o Hrvatima i Srbima, već isključivo želi živjeti svoj mladi život, zabavljati se, slušati glazbu, družiti se, zaljubljuvati se, pa čak i ići u školu, baš kako to rade njihovi vršnjaci diljem svijeta.



Nažalost, posljedice koje je **ratna psihoza** ostavila na nju bolno su vidljive – primjerice, kad na nekoliko tjedana ode u posjetu tetku u Italiju, na zvuk aviona Bojana se baca na zemlju dok ju iznenađeni stanovnici Ravenne u šoku gledaju.

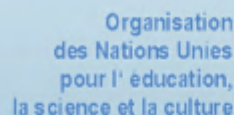
Također, autorica u svojim opisima se **ne trudi išta uljepšavati**, čak ni članovi njene obitelji nisu savršeni, pa se u pojedinim trenucima čitatelj može (s pravom) zapitati vezano uz **pojedine postupke i odluke likova** romana. No, čini se kako je upravo to ono što je glavna odlika Meandžijinog romana – njezin roman nije romantizirana priča o traumatičnog vremena, već nadasve realan i dokumentaristički prikaz odrastanja u ratno vrijeme, sa **stvarnim živim ljudima koji griješe**, koji se boje, koji se pitaju, koji nemaju odgovore...

U trenucima kad čeka da se oglasi posljednja sirena za prestanak opće opasnosti jer je rat gotov, junakinja Bojana **uključuje kasetofon kako bi snimila prestanak svih uzbuna**, prestanak svih strahova, suza, samoće, krvi i baruta, zvuk sirene koja svira poput iznemogle, ranjene zvijeri.

Na samom kraju, kad nakon četiri godine dolazi na mjesto gdje je provela tolika bezbrižna ljeta u igri i društvu voljene bake i djeda, a tamo je osim zarasle ruševine ne dočeka ništa, Bojana Meandžija niti u tom trenutku ne poziva na osvetu ili mržnju, već se odlučuje vratiti svojoj mladosti, onome što se ne smije napustiti ma koliko nas tjerali na to, ona se **veseli novom danu i konačno svladava tugu**.

Zbog toga je jasno kako „Trči! Ne čekaj me...” nije roman napisan iz razloga što je autorica željela ispričati ratnu priču, kako bismo s njom suosjećali ili nekog osuđivali; umjesto toga, ona nudi dječji roman koji govori o bilo kojem ratu na svijetu, o izgubljenim godinama, o neproživljenoj mladosti, o obitelji, ljubavi, žrtvama – roman koji je stvorila djevojčica koja je tijekom njegoa pisanja odrasla jer je to bio jedini način za preživljavanje.

A onda **obrisala suze** i odlučila biti sretna. [Trči! Ne čekaj me...](#)





Grundschule Cetingrad/Kroatien

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