



Andrijana Grgičević/Melvin
Dear Past Me (You will pay for this)

144 p.

Hardcover, 2 colour
illustration

Age: 10+

Genre: Middle grade

Publication date: January
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Full English translation available.

Synopsis:

Dear Past Me is an epistolary middle grade novel which begins when the main character, the unnamed 11-year-old, starts writing letters to his past self. Eventually, he thinks, the time machine will be invented, and when it is, these letters will be delivered to his past self, who will be able to fix his present-self's problems. Bad grades? Past self should study more. Bicycle accident? Past self shouldn't take the bike to school that day.

Through humorous episodes which at first seem childish and innocent, we find out what's standing behind the boy's problems – his lack of friends, his bad grades, his deteriorating relationship with his mother – his father was sent to jail for destroying a beautiful natural beach (one of the few left) in their small coastal town. However, our protagonist is convinced that it couldn't have been his father, and eventually he teams up with his elderly neighbour to discover the truth. Once his father is proven innocent and returns home, his life starts falling back into place.

By the end of the novel, we see the main character start to take accountability for his actions, and working towards his goals instead of expecting his past self to fix everything. What starts off as a humorous letter writing that can be attributed to childlike naivete, turns through each letter into a processing tool for a child going through a traumatic experience and having no one to turn to, or at least feeling like he has no one to turn to. The author masterfully coincides the two opposing themes – the humour in the writing with the tragedy of events – to create a novel of rare sensibility that can be read and enjoyed by both children and adults.

Selling points:

- Page-turning mystery of the protagonist's history
- Funny situations which readers can relate to
- Easy to read story dealing with serious topics in an age appropriate manner
- Fun illustrations bring the characters to life

About the author and illustrator

Andrijana Grgičević is a Croatian writer born in Brela, a small town on the seaside near Split. She started writing as a child, and she continued to develop through her studies, graduating in Croatian language and literature from the University of Zadar. Her work has been recognised by the public and the critics from the beginnings, as she won the **“Little Marulić” award** for her first screenplay *Stonoga Goga* (‘Paddy the Centipede’), which was put on stage the following year at the Puppetry Theatre of Split. Her initial success is followed by the **“Tena” award** for her second screenplay, after which she started publishing picture books and novels for children. Her first picture book published by Ibis grafika was ***What I Learned Before School (All by Myself)***, for which she was awarded the **“Grigor Vitez” award** for the best literary text for children in 2020.

Melvin (Wout Schildermans) is a Belgian illustrator, painter and graphic designer. He is most notable as the most prominent illustrator of Stefan Boonen's children's books, which often make use of comic strip-like illustrated sequences. In addition to illustration, he also teaches, and along with Stefan Boonen he is one of the organisers of the Kabaal literary festival in Antwerp.