



MAGDA HASSAN

WAS ZÄHLT, BIST DU

RAFFAELA SCHÖBITZ

EDITION **5** HAUS

Foreword

Are you sometimes frightened?

Usually it's things we don't know very well that scare us. Listen to the tale about the unknown; look at it, go towards it. That way you'll get to know it better, and you might see yourself in it. The unknown will change before your very eyes: It will become familiar, friendly, a part of yourself.

So whenever you're frightened, count and take a good look at things that aren't familiar to you.

They're counting on you.

What counts is you Was zählt, bist du

I could almost feel him on my legs. Every word that she said took me closer to the big animal. She spoke of his gentle movements, his size, his shiny coat, describing every one of the spots. So vividly that I could almost feel the cheetah on my legs. When she talked about his sharp eyes and wet nose I felt as if I was kneeling beside him.

“Surely,” I said, “he would want to eat me.” She turned her gaze on me, a gaze that had taken on a faraway look while she was speaking. Then she smiled. “Don’t be scared,” she said softly. “When he comes, all you need to do is count the spots. That soothes him. If he has an odd number of spots he won’t eat you.”

When he finally stood behind me, and then even came next to me, I leaped onto the rocky ledge beside me, although it would be harder to count up here. I was on my own with him. I crouched, not making a sound, while his wet nose snuffled around the spot I had just been standing on. My scent seemed to hold his attention and lead him finally to me. His snout came to rest at my feet and I – I began to count.

I started with the ear nearest me. I counted, trying to appear as natural as I could. I did it so casually and calmly that I had soon forgotten what it was I was counting. Presently I sat down on the rock, and when the animal lay down beneath me I sank down to him. I explored his spots with my fingertips, feeling through his short fur to find the deep black and counting as if in a dream. Until, at some point, I fell asleep.

I was awoken by something falling on me like rain. The cheetah had got to his feet and was now shaking himself with vigorous movements. As he did so, his black spots tumbled down onto the ground and onto me. I dared not move. When the spots stopped falling, the animal cleaned himself, licking the rest of the black out of his coat. In a nearby puddle I inspected my face, the black spots and my tongue, which was now black too.

Then I began to count.

251 - 250 - 249 ...



Press reviews

“A story that gives confidence – fantastically illustrated.” – *Kirstin Breitenfellner, Falter*

“A book both mysterious and wise, touching many levels on only a few pages, colourful, sparkling, with a cut-out cheetah mask.” – *Jan Drees, Deutschlandfunk*

“Via an encounter with a magnificent cheetah the book carefully approaches the unknown and reveals that in all that seems strange and alien there is something of ourselves and that differences can be a positive thing.
A sensitive and beautifully illustrated tale.” – *ORF Topos*

“The backdrop for a discovery of oneself and the other.” – *Heidi Lexe, Die Furche*

“Light-footed as a cheetah, which stands for the unknown, the pictures and text of this tale show with wonderful circumspection how fears are overcome. With an approach both metaphorical and physical, the strangeness of the unfamiliar is lessened in the company of the nameless narrator and, by shifting perspective, recognised as belonging to some extent to ourselves. A parable of the fear-inducing unknown, which is zoomed in on through the telling – with a subtle tone and winning illustrations that make it possible to grasp and experience the unknown as part of ourselves.”

Alexandra Hofer, STUBE – Studien- und Beratungsstelle für Kinder- und Jugendliteratur

About the authors



Magda Hassan is an author specialising in children's books. As Mia Kirsch she is part of the ASAGAN artists' collective. Her book *ASAGAN – Bäckermaus & Donaustrudel* was included in the collection of works for the Austrian children's and young people's book awards in 2022. For her, creativity means removing boundaries so that every book can be experienced as a work of art, irrespective of the reader's age.



Raffaella Schöbitz is a freelance illustrator and author from Vienna. Her work is marked by inventiveness and playful experimentation with different techniques. With her pictures she tells stories. Her love of detail opens up several narrative levels and invites readers to discover their own stories. Raffaella Schöbitz has won several awards.

Book details

What counts is you

Written by Magda Hassan
Illustrated by Raffaela Schöbitz
What counts is you

Artistically illustrated throughout
28.7 cm x 17.7 cm
32 pages, 4 yrs +

The book will be published under the original title
Was zählt, bist du by Edition 5Haus, Vienna.
Publication date: Autumn 2022
Retail price: EUR 18.00 (incl. VAT)

The picture-book *Was zählt, bist du* (*What counts is you*) artfully transports readers to a different world and invites them to adopt a new perspective. This playful approach to the unknown takes readers on a delightful path of discovery and self-reflection. Because in the end it is always only ourselves who are different. In the end it is we that count.

Themes:

Approaching things that are unfamiliar
Confronting fears
Identifying with nature and its treasures
Making a stand