

Lucky Wednesday
and Thursday Morning
Peter Svetina
Illustrated by Kristina Krhin

Professor Peter Hill stood by the open window and watched how the increasing drops beneath the overhanging roof were changing into thin threads of rain. Today he had presented his research, but his colleagues had not been convinced. He had made a mistake in the calculations. The thin threads were becoming thicker, but the rain did not cool the air. It was a warm summer day.

There was a knock at the door. Because he did not respond there came another knock. Then the door opened and two women entered. The tall one was straightening her hair band and the three rings on her left hand. The small one, who was licking her lips, had a large plastic bag in one hand and a guitar case in the other.

“Excuse me,” said the tall one, “could you lend us the money for a hotel?”

Professor Hill looked at them as if he didn't see them.

“Excuse me,” said the tall one again. “Could you?”

“Eh?” the professor eventually responded

“Could you lend us some money,” she repeated.

The small one gave her lips a good lick and nodded.

“Aha,” replied professor Hill. And then nothing.

“Well, could you?” the tall one asked again.

“But if it's below zero there, of course it could snow.”

“Sorry?”

“Oh, nothing, sorry... what were we talking about?”

“If you can lend us money for a hotel.”

The professor silently removed some banknotes from his wallet.

“To the concert, please,” the tall one said in the evening, when they got in the taxi. “We must return the guitar.” The small one had the plastic bag in her lap and laid the guitar case across it. She could hardly see over the top. She gave her lips a good lick.

“Hm,” said the taxi driver. “Where is the concert?”

“In the concert hall, of course” replied the tall one.

“Hm,” said the taxi driver again and drove off.

“Excuse me,” said the tall one, straightening the rings on her left hand. And then her hair band. “Would you be so kind as to let us in?”

She was trying to convince a security man who did not want to let them into the concert hall through the stage door.

The small one gave her lips a good lick, took hold of the plastic bag and guitar case, and walked past the security man towards the stage: “Oh come on, let's go.”

The man looked after her with a stunned expression, while the tall one also walked past him and headed towards the stage.

At first there was confusion. The drummer signalled to the keyboard player and singer with his eyes that two women had come onto the stage, and the bass guitarist waved to a security man to do something. They carried on playing. But the singer fell silent because he didn't know what to do.

The small woman went up to him and shouted over the loud music: “We brought your guitar! You left it in our town after the concert!”

The singer looked surprised. A couple of days before he had forgotten his guitar next to the stage in the city park in Graz. It could not be found. And this really was his guitar.

The band played on, the audience singing instead of him, but some of them whistling.

They danced all that night. They danced through the empty streets, across empty junctions, they rose into the air. And danced.

Granddad used to say that whenever eccentrics are dancing in the air, grown-ups never look at the sky. And it's true, no one saw them dancing through the air. Except for a taxi driver. But he never told anyone because they were sure to say he was drunk and take his licence from him. That was on Wednesday night.

On Thursday morning it snowed.

“Fifty-four, fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-seven,” said the tall one, straightening her hair band. In her right hand she held a dustbin lid and was counting the snowflakes that fell on it.

“Thirty-eight,” said the small one, licking her lips. “You win.”

“You know what, we must pay the money back,” said the tall one, taking from her pocket some of the banknotes that the singer had forced on them for returning his guitar.

“He's not there,” said the small one, licking her lips.

Professor Peter Hill was not in his office.

“There you go,” said the tall one, tucking the banknotes between the door and the doorframe.

In the meantime, the professor was standing at home by the window. It was snowing. Really snowing. In the middle of the summer. His calculations were not wrong after all.

“Strange,” he thought, “although I was wrong, the calculations were right... strange.”

The tall one straightened her hair band and the rings on her left hand. The small one gave her lips a good lick and picked up the plastic bag from the bench.

“Do you want a croissant?” asked the tall one.

“Do you want two?” asked the small one.

“Yes, two,” said the tall one. “Two each.”

Towards midday it stopped snowing.

Lucky Wednesday and Thursday Morning is a story about Professor Peter Hill, whose calculations prove that it can snow in the summer, and two women who return a lost guitar, but who have no money to pay for a hotel. And about the tiny miracles that accompany us through life.

Once more, Peter Svetina charms us with his witty eccentricity and the warm simplicity of his story. The images threaded through the story are wonderfully captured and the humour enriched by illustrator Kristina Krhin.