

# Close To Here

Ida Mlakar Črnič \* Peter Škerl  
Translated by David Limon



Ida Mlakar Črnič  
Close to here  
Illustrated by Peter Škerl  
Translated by David Limon

Original title: Tu blizu živi deklica  
Text © Ida Mlakar Črnič, 2019  
Illustrations © Peter Škerl, 2019  
First published in Slovene language by KUD Sodobnost International,  
Ljubljana, 2019.  
© KUD Sodobnost International, 2019

English edition published by KUD Sodobnost International, Ljubljana, 2020.  
© KUD Sodobnost International, 2020  
www.sodobnost.com  
sodobnost@guest.arnes.si  
All rights reserved.

Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

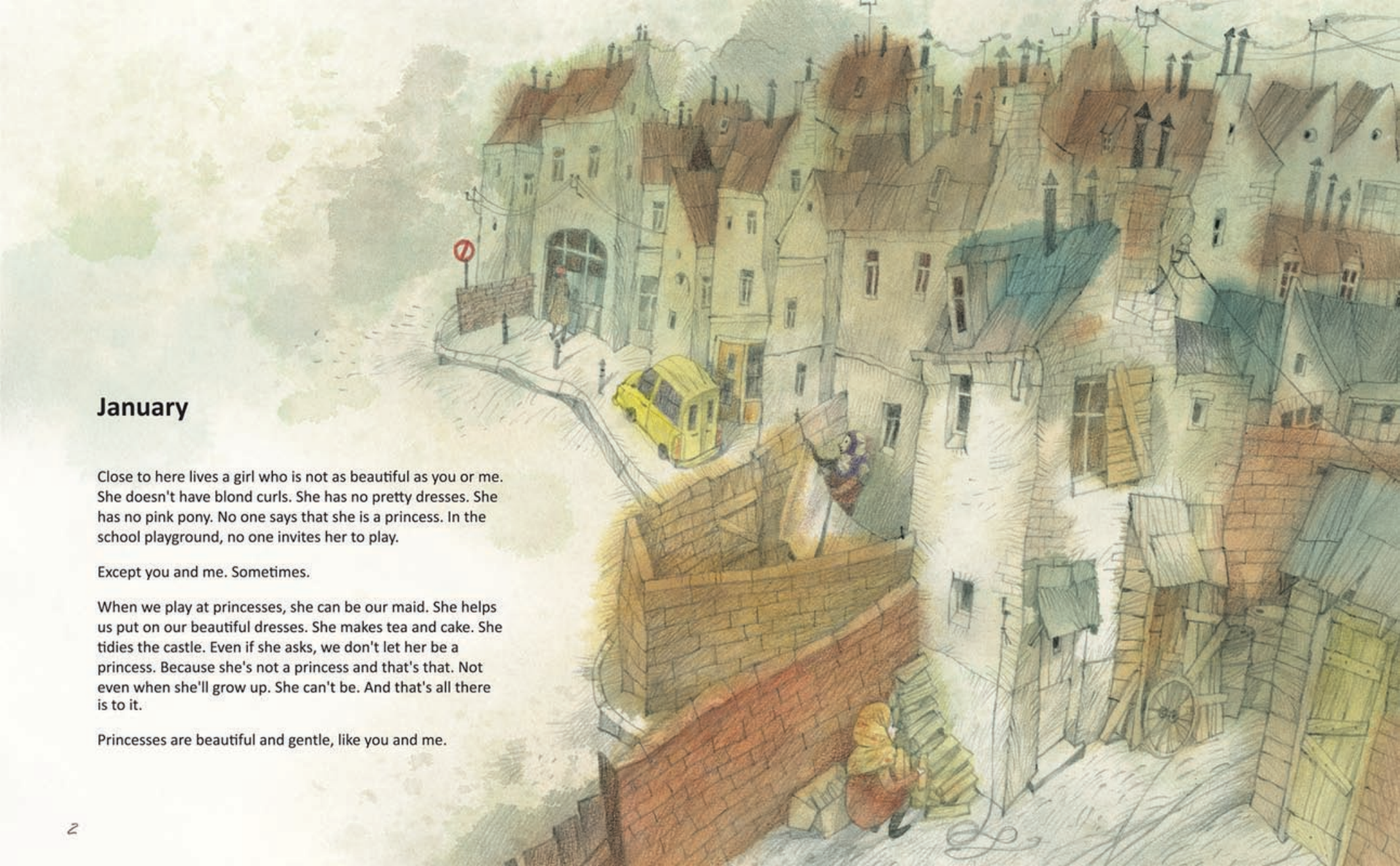
Ida Mlakar Črnič \* Peter Škerl

# Close To Here



S





## January

Close to here lives a girl who is not as beautiful as you or me. She doesn't have blond curls. She has no pretty dresses. She has no pink pony. No one says that she is a princess. In the school playground, no one invites her to play.

Except you and me. Sometimes.

When we play at princesses, she can be our maid. She helps us put on our beautiful dresses. She makes tea and cake. She tidies the castle. Even if she asks, we don't let her be a princess. Because she's not a princess and that's that. Not even when she'll grow up. She can't be. And that's all there is to it.

Princesses are beautiful and gentle, like you and me.



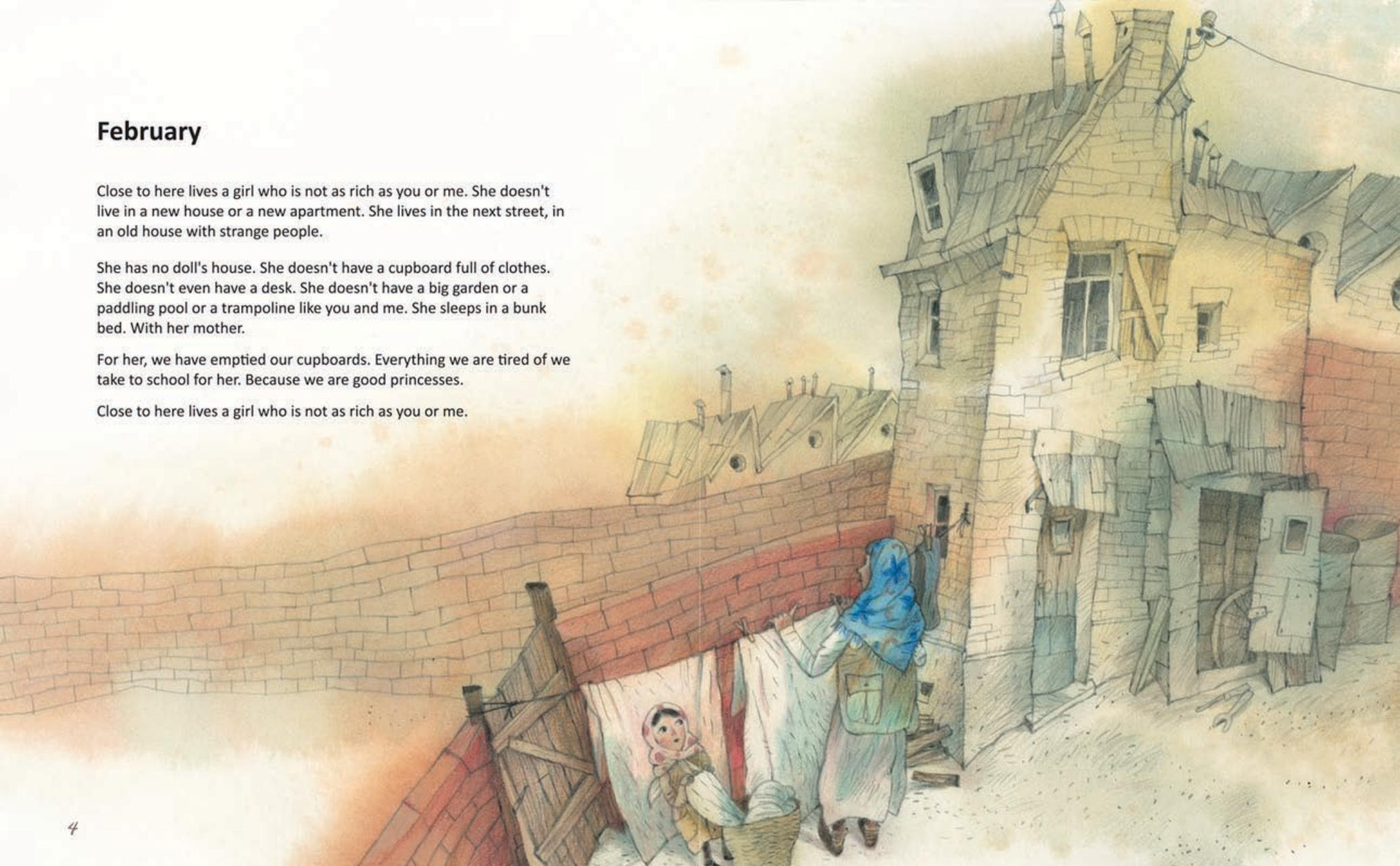
## February

Close to here lives a girl who is not as rich as you or me. She doesn't live in a new house or a new apartment. She lives in the next street, in an old house with strange people.

She has no doll's house. She doesn't have a cupboard full of clothes. She doesn't even have a desk. She doesn't have a big garden or a paddling pool or a trampoline like you and me. She sleeps in a bunk bed. With her mother.

For her, we have emptied our cupboards. Everything we are tired of we take to school for her. Because we are good princesses.

Close to here lives a girl who is not as rich as you or me.





## March

Close to here lives a girl who doesn't have her own room, like you and I do. And so she doesn't invite anyone round. Not for her birthday, not during the holidays. We've never slept at her place. We don't want to. It's cramped and dirty.

When we have to write about our room in class, she chews her pencil and frowns. She can't just make it up, can she? It's not a story we're writing. Maybe her brother told her to make something up. But she doesn't. She hands in a blank sheet of paper and gets a bad grade.

Close to here lives a girl who doesn't have her own room.







## April

Close to here lives a girl who doesn't have any friends. Because she's not as friendly as you and me. She never comes to school by car. She always walks. With her brother. During the break she sits on a chair and waits for him to come and see her. When he does, she looks up and smiles at him. Then she puts her head down again. She looks small. She holds a pencil and scribbles something in a notebook. Silly scribbles.

Close to here lives a girl who doesn't have any friends.



## May

Close to here lives a girl without a name. Well, do you remember her name? You see. You don't. Is it Naida or Esma? It doesn't matter. It's not a proper name. It's a name, but not a pretty one. Not like mine and yours. Kylie or Donna. So sometimes I simply can't remember. Or I don't want to. That's right, I don't want to remember. I don't want to call her by her name. It sounds strange.

As if you were calling someone who doesn't exist.

Close to here lives a girl without a name.







## July

Close to here lives an invisible girl. Well, not as noticeable as you and me. As if she was wearing an invisibility hat. Or an invisibility cloak.

During the holidays we look at school photographs. She's not in any of them. I don't see her. In every photo she's behind someone. Or perhaps she was absent when the photographs were taken. Yes. Of course she was absent. Maybe she was ill. We never asked her.

Close to here lives an invisible girl.





Close to here lives a girl who no one knows. No one invites her round. She has no friends. Nor even her own room. She would like to feel close to others, as you do. She goes to the same school. Sits at the next desk. Do you want to get to know her? She conceals inside her a mysterious treasure... Her rainbow.

The story by Ida Mlakar Črnič is short but powerful. It goes deep, demolishing walls of prejudice and hatred.



19,90 €