

Mister Doctor

JANUSZ KORCZAK
& THE ORPHANS OF
THE WARSAW GHETTO

STORY BY Irène Cohen-Janca
ART BY Maurizio A.C. Quarello

Translated by Paula Ayer



annick press
toronto + new york + vancouver

“Doctor Korczak’s been arrested!
Doctor Korczak’s been arrested!”

“Doctor Korczak’s been arrested!”

“They drove him far away from Warsaw
—to a labor camp in Lublin—and he died!”

“He was tortured and killed!”

“They took him into the woods and shot him!”

The shocking news spreads like wildfire.

Everyone thinks they know what happened. They’re all telling different stories.

But we—we know none of it is true.

They couldn’t have killed Doctor Korczak. It’s impossible! He’s too famous. He’s a great doctor, a scholar, a writer. He has cared for the rich and powerful, he’s given conferences all around the world, he’s written books for grownups and children, and he even used to be on the radio. Everyone in Poland listened to the *Chats with the Old Doctor*.

But most important, Doctor Korczak—Mister Doctor, as we call him—is the one who protects us, the orphans and the poor children of Warsaw.





Goodbye Krochmalna Street





Yesterday, on the 29th of November, 1940, we had to leave the Orphans' Home, our big, beautiful white house at 92 Krochmalna Street in Warsaw.

We left behind our washerwoman and Peter Zalewski, the giant who took care of the orphanage. He always let us work with him in his carpentry shop in the basement. Sometimes, for fun, he would tweak our noses with his big hands, but we loved him.

The two of them watched us leave, their eyes red and Peter Zalewski's face swollen from the German soldiers' blows.

They wanted to follow us to our new home, but they weren't allowed to come to *the other side*.

When we left the Orphans' Home, I saw Mister Doctor look up one last time at the little attic on the top floor. That was his room, with the big oak desk, the narrow iron bed, and books covering every wall. That's where he slept, fed the passing sparrows, wrote books to teach adults how to love and respect children, and invented novels with heroes who are children, too, like King Matt the First and Kaytek the Wizard.

He didn't live alone up there:



a little mouse named Perspicacity lived under the wardrobe and paid him regular visits.