



# King Matt the First

*Janusz Korczak , Richard Lourie (Translator)*

Download now

Read Online →

# King Matt the First

*Janusz Korczak , Richard Lourie (Translator)*

## **King Matt the First** Janusz Korczak , Richard Lourie (Translator)

Janusz Korczak was a Polish physician and educator who wrote over twenty books--his fiction was in his time as well known as *Peter Pan*, and his nonfiction works bore passionate messages of child advocacy. During World War II, the Jewish orphanage he directed was relocated to the Warsaw ghetto. Although Korczak's celebrity afforded him many chances to escape, he refused to abandon the children. He was killed at Treblinka along with the children.

*King Matt the First*, one of Korczak's most beloved tales, is the story of a boy who becomes king and sets out to reform his kingdom. He decrees that all children are to be given a piece of chocolate at the end of each day. He visits faraway lands and befriends cannibal kings. Whenever his ministers tell him something's impossible, he puts them in jail. He disguises himself as a soldier and becomes a hero. But, as in real life, fantasy is tempered by reality: Matt's fellow kings become jealous of his success--and in the end, Matt falls, although it's clear that he was the greatest king there ever was.

Now this rediscovered classic is available again, and with a vibrant new cover by award-winning artist Brian Selznick. This timeless tale shows that only through the honesty and spontaneity of children can grown-ups begin to imagine and to create a better world.

## **King Matt the First Details**

Date : Published October 15th 2004 by Algonquin Books (first published 1923)

ISBN : 9781565124424

Author : Janusz Korczak , Richard Lourie (Translator)

Format : Paperback 344 pages

Genre : European Literature, Polish Literature, Fiction, Childrens, Classics

 [Download King Matt the First ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online King Matt the First ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online King Matt the First Janusz Korczak , Richard Lourie (Translator)**

---

# From Reader Review King Matt the First for online ebook

## Kathleen Dixon says

I find it quite interesting that there seems to be more made of the author of this book than of the book itself. The description of the book here in GoodReads begins with a paragraph about the author, and while it can be interesting to know the author's background, and it can explain a little as to why s/he should write about a particular topic, I believe that any blurb about a book should first and foremost be about the book.

Then, the introduction to the book (written by a person I personally have never heard of before) tells me this 'children's book [is] one of the greatest of all time.' Fascinating propoganda! I'm happy to accept that there are many adults who loved this book as a child, and as I wasn't alive in the 1920s when this book was first published (in Polish) I couldn't possibly comment on its popularity then. Wikipedia tells me it 'has been described as popular in Poland as *Peter Pan* was in the English-speaking world.' I think the English-speaking world was somewhat larger in population than Poland, so I can't accept any sales pitch about this book being one of the greatest of all time.

*King Matt* was published in an English translation in 1986, and I applaud any cross-cultural sharing of literature, but it's not a book that I would have got for my children (born in 1982 and 1988) if I had heard of it back then. While the child's view is well done and the comment throughout on politics is cynically humorous, it's too much a product of its time to be appealing. And, unlike Roald Dahl's books, the key character isn't that likeable, nor are the others enough over-the-top to make me laugh.

The "Boy's Own" style of adventure never did much for me even when I was a child and read my uncle's old *Boy's Own Annuals*, so sadly, even though as an example of historical children's fiction this book is no doubt a good one, I have to say that I didn't enjoy it at all.

---

## Dasha says

I wish they had the Russian edition on here, which is what I read [and am too lazy to update right now.] This book was one of my favorites when I was little, although I remember it being really sad. I was very affected by melancholy when I was small.

Anyway, often think about this book and am about to re-read it for inspiration for something - that's got to be worth something, no?

I'll update the review once I am done with the book.

---

## Ivana M. says

Gorka i tužna knjiga. Siroti Ma?uš, taman što je, sticajem okolnosti, dospeo u svet u kome je sve dozvoljeno, surova stvarnost ga u?i pravoj istini, a to je da je de?ji san o apsolutnoj slobodi lišenoj autoriteta laž, da ne možeš idealima protiv sistema, protiv ljudske prirode... Još jedna potvrda da su me?uratni pisci za decu

apsolutni kraljevi mra?njaštva i subverzije.

---

## **Sarah Sammis says**

*King Matt the First* by Janusz Korczak is one of those gems picked at random from the library. The title caught my eye and although the cover art and blurb made it sound hokey, I decided to give it a try. I'm glad I did even though it brought me to tears in a couple places.

Although my library puts the book in the children's section, I'd call it an adult book that happens to have a child protagonist. The book was first published in 1923 and was one of twenty novels by child advocate Henryk Goldszmit writing under the pen name Janusz Korczak. To learn more about his life and his mission, read the Boylan Blog post.

Matt becomes king at the tender age of five when his ailing father dies. He's just old enough to remember the good times when both his parents were alive. He's smart enough to know that his advisors plan to use him as a tool for their own agendas until he's of age. He also knows he has a lot to learn before he can be an effective monarch.

This 300 page novel chronicles the rise and fall of King Matt the First. His kingdom goes through war, through peace, the threat of another war and social justice reforms on the home front. Much of what King Matt tries to accomplish especially for his fellow children mirror the author's own causes.

---

## **Delanie says**

Honestly, I loved this book. It was so different from other stories, and so inspirational for kids. The only problem for me was the ending. I can't believe they would end the book that way. Seriously, Matt was about to die, and then they leave you on a COMPLETE cliffhanger.

On the positive side, I loved Klu klu, she was an amazing girl character. I was glad she was put in the story because so far, all of the strong main characters were boys. Klu Klu was my all time favorite character, and she was so strong and mighty, that I couldn't help wishing that she didn't have to go back to Africa.

I also quite enjoyed the part of the book where Matt goes to war. Felek and Tomek seemed to work so well together during that, and it made me get to know Felek a lot better. I was interested in the ways that they used Matt and Felek in the war, and it was a good idea to use Matt as a spy: I thought that was quite creative of the author even though I know that is commonly used in war, it really stood out to me.

I like Matt's wild ideas, like giving schools carousels and building a zoo and giving surprising Klu Klu by letting 100 African children visit. I also enjoyed when Matt wrote the constitution!

The entire reason I only give this book 3 stars was the ending, but then again, it had a fantastic message that children can do anything, and then ruins it by saying that killing Matt.

---

### Yi-Sheng says

Beautiful and sad; a portrait of a child monarch attempting to found a utopia on a world too politically similar to our own. An amazing and neglected work of fiction.

---

### Jenny says

Wow - this book is poignant and beautiful. It is much a coming of age story as Matt discovers the challenges of being a true leader and tries to navigate the precarious balances of doing it justly and compassionately. It is easy to sympathize with a character who is not a capable, evenhanded ruler, but a brave, honest child making many mistakes as he faces the great unknown.

The characters are rich and complex - there are few in this book that you can either place on a pedestal or wholeheartedly despise. Felek is a tough, loyal friend who is also brash and tempted by greed. Klu Klu is at once fiery and powerful and compassionate. The "sad king" is wise and reverent, but weak and afraid.

And you have to read Esme Raji Codel's introduction - it is beautifully written and knowing the backstory lends a bittersweet appreciation of this wonderful book.

---

### Ahmad Sharabiani says

Konig hanschen (Król Maciu? #1), Janusz Korczak

????? ?????? ?????: ??? ??? ?????? ??? 1978 ??????

?????: ??? ?????? ??? 2? ???: ?????? ?????????? ??????: ?????? ??????? ????: ?????? 1357? ?? ?? ??? ????? ? ?????? ?? 580 ?? ??? ??? 238 ?

??? ????????? ?? ????? ??????? ????????? ?? ?????? ??????????. ?? ?????????? ??? ??? ????? ? ????? ? ??????. ?? ?? ??? ?????????. ?????? ??????. ? ?? ??? ??? ?????? ? ?? ??? ????? ?????. ... ????????? ? ?? ????? ? ????????? ??????. ??? ????? ? ?????? ????????? ? ?????????? ?? ?????? ??????. ??? ????? ??? ?????? ?????????? ? ?????? ?????? ?? ?? ?? ?????? ?? ?? ?????? ??????. ??? ????????? ?????. ... ?. ????????

---

### Angie says

One of the most fascinating things about this book is that it was written by a Polish paediatric doctor and educator who introduced many orphanages into Poland. The sad and courageous thing is that during WWII, he refused to leave his orphans as they were being sent to their deaths in a gas chamber. The book has great aspects and interesting characters, but it ends in a very strange way for a children's book. I love the characters of the African Cannibal King Bum-Drum and his daughter Klu-Klu.

---

## **Pete says**

came to Janusz Korczak via something Graeme Wood tweeted and while Korczak's bio is awesome: this book has not aged well. There are some cool things here: the slow maturation of Matt from naive orphan king to increasingly tragic young adult, sort of like *The Little Prince* but actually about you know, about being a ruler. But the antique racism/stereotyping that keeps coming up makes this hard to appreciate. There is something here but I'm not going to do the work of excavating it and washing all the shit off it.

---

## **Lorenzo Berardi says**

As far as I know, *King Matt the First* is a novel for children like no one other around. I was particularly glad to get this book as a present from my girlfriend.

Being rather fond of Polish literature lately, I have to confess how I had never heard before about this book as well as its author.

This ignorance of mine made the surprise even greater.

And yet *King Matt* is apparently a milestone in children books in Poland, while Janusz Korczak himself was a famous pedagogue with an interesting personal story and brave ideas on how to educate the young generations.

What I appreciated of this book is the way it treats its young readers. There is no need to hide unpleasant things of life like war, death or even bad-mouth speaking behind a marzipan made curtain. Korczak explains many things in a patient and peculiar way skilfully managing to don't be didactical or paternalist.

Of course there is a moral also behind "*King Matt the First*" but children are required to get it by themselves, page after page.

At the same time boys (this book may bore girls, I guess) grew up somehow with Matt who's not the successful young hero he could have been, but as a child makes mistakes and sometimes behaves irrationally and with impulsiveness.

Another thing I liked is Korczak's ability in being modern. He wrote this book in the 1920s and set up war descriptions based partly on WWI but also anticipating some aspects of WWII. There are automobiles, planes, strategic seaports to get and a key-role played by the mass media.

And I was almost falling off from my chair when I read about "red flags" punctuating a strike parade and being explained as "the flag of workers worldwide". Finding those lines in a children book without any socialist message hidden somewhere was a pleasant thrill.

As a reader of the English version, I had the impression of a very good and careful translation with just a few forgetfulnesses while leaving some things in original Polish and others not. I mean, I don't think many people out of Poland know that the "kielbasa" is a kind of sausage, while choosing to change the name of the protagonist from Maciuś to Matt, I don't get why other typical names such as Tomek, Felek, etc. were left the same.

But, hey! This is just pedantry of mine: on the whole I highly enjoyed this book. And if I had a 5-6 years old son/daughter I would probably try to read him/her the adventures of *King Matt the Reformer*. There would

surely be many questions to answer in order to explain how many grown-up things work, but whys are the salt of childhood.

---

### **DixieJo says**

I am about two-thirds finished with this book. I love it and would give it five stars - but need to warn my peers out there. There are a few swear words worth editing if reading aloud but it doesn't go on through the book (one chapter that I have read needed editing.)

As I read I imagine a kindly aging man reading this story aloud to the orphans as the Author is said to have done. I am touched at how well he weaved the trial of times into the story without actually talking about it. (the Holocaust.) The Un-acceptance of others because of differences, groups of adults/people/countries joining other groups for justified/unjustied reasons, as well as how it all may have/must have seemed to the children of the Holocaust - all written in a way children will understand.

Don't get me wrong, this story is not about the Holocaust, but written around that time. The Author was a powerful advocate for children, taught them that they too had power. This message is clear in the book as well. Janusz Korczak was offered freedom at least twice but refused to abandon the children and walked gleefully with them hand in hand to the train that took them to the camp where they were all gassed together. He was a Hero.

### **POST READING REVIEW**

I have to say I nearly lost interest in the end because I couldn't imagine where the story was going or the happy-ever-after would come together. But I forced myself to finish. Now that I am finished I have a new understanding... I didn't want it to be over. I knew how the story ended all along and I didn't want it and knew that I had no power to change it. That said, it is one of those books that you close and hold to your chest when you are finished as if you could hug the characters or author themselves with such an act.

---

### **Hazel Lee says**

I do not understand the love for this book.

King Matt the First is a story about a prince who becomes king at a young age. Obviously he has no idea what a king is supposed to do, so he starts off doing wacky things like making a huge doll for a random girl he meets, then runs off to war to play soldier. Later he creates a children's parliament, where children can govern themselves however they see fit, which of course leads to all sorts of trouble. Somewhere in the middle he befriends an African king named Bum Drum (I wish I were kidding) who wears bones in his hair and eats the flesh of men.

I understand the book is a product of its time, so even though the blatant racism was really distracting for me, I won't comment on it. I think what really bugged me about this book was that the characters all seemed flat

and stupid. Especially the children. They all acted as if they were seven or younger, which didn't make any sense since clearly older children were also supposed to be present. I teach children for a living, and the children in this book didn't seem believable to me at all.

The narrator's voice was also extremely annoying. It seemed wooden and condescending all at once, which is odd if you consider the fact that the story is told from a third-person omniscient POV.

Honestly, I felt more moved after reading the blurb about the author on the back cover than I did after reading the actual book.

---

### **Megan says**

This book is AMAZING!!!!!!!!!!!!!! This book is about a little boy Matt and his father is sick. His mother is dead and his father dies. Matt becomes king at a young age. He has to go to a lot of meeting with his ministers and he secretly goes to war with his friend Felek, and he wins the war. And later on two more wars. Everyone loves King Matt. He goes on lots of adventures but later on he comes to an unexpected surprise that no one would ever want to encounter.

---

### **Davit says**

???? ????? ???? ?????, ????? ????? ????????? ?????????? ?? ????????? ???? ?????????? ?? ?????????  
???????????? ????????? ????????? - ??? ??????????????. ????????? ????????? ??????????, ????????? ????????? ?? ?????????  
???????????? ???? ????????? ???.

---