

Hans de Beer

Serena Romanelli

# BRUNO

Short Stories for Long Nights

From the creator of  
*Little Polar Bear*

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**North**  
**South**



**Serena Romanelli** was born in Florence, Italy. She attended specialist courses in illustration at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, Holland. She enjoys drawing for children most of all, as her children's books are a world in which the imagination plays a vital role, and anything and everything is possible.

**Hans de Beer** was born in Muiden, near Amsterdam, Holland. After briefly studying history, he finished his studies at the Rietveld Art Academy in Amsterdam. *Little Polar Bear*, Hans's art school graduation project, brought him worldwide success and countless awards, and has been translated into thirty languages so far. Today Hans lives and works as a freelance illustrator with his wife, the Italian illustrator Serena Romanelli, in Amsterdam and near Florence, Italy.



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First published in Switzerland under the title *Bruno*.  
English translation copyright © 2022 by NorthSouth Books, Inc., New York 10016.  
Translated by David Henry Wilson.  
Lithography: Frische Graphik, Hamburg, Germany  
Cover design: Fabienne Heeb

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First published in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand in 2022 by NorthSouth Books, Inc., an imprint of NordSüd Verlag AG, CH-8050 Zürich, Switzerland.

Distributed in the United States by NorthSouth Books, Inc., New York 10016.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available.

ISBN: 978-0-7358-4477-3

1 3 5 7 9 • 10 8 6 4 2

Printed in Livonia Print, Riga, Latvia 2022

www.northsouth.com



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**North**  
**South**

The first snowflakes were falling in the forest,  
and all the trees had lost their leaves.  
But Bruno, the little brown bear, always found  
something enjoyable to do.





Today his mother called out to him and said, "Bruno darling, you'll have to stop playing now. It's time for us bears to go to sleep. We'll sleep all through the winter, and you're sure to like that. Because to help you go to sleep, I'm going to read you lots and lots of lovely stories."

With a hop and a skip, Bruno jumped into the bear cave, cuddled up in his little bed, and happily waited for . . . the first story.

## GEORGIE, THE LITTLE ELEPHANT

Georgie, the little elephant child,  
Was down by the lake one day.  
"The lake is much too small for me now.  
The sea's where I want to play."

"If you want to go and play in the sea,  
Dear Georgie," said his mum,  
"You'll need a pair of swimming trunks  
To cover your elephant bum."

Georgie searched all over the jungle,  
But nowhere could he find  
A pair of swimming trunks large enough  
To cover his big behind.



Then Georgie had another idea.  
He thought of the beautiful sea,  
And then he started to laugh out loud.  
"The trunks are not for me!

"The sea is huge, and I can play,  
And nobody will care.  
As well as being an elephant,  
I'll be a little bare!"



## ANTONIO, THE LITTLE TAPIR

Antonio's a little tapir,  
And his nose is very fine.  
It's nice and long, and wiggly too—  
Not at all like yours and mine.

And when he's feeling bored or lonely,  
He'll spend a happy minute—  
As sometimes naughty children do—  
Sticking his finger in it.

His mother says, "You can't do that. It's very impolite."  
And now he's gone and hurt himself. The blood's a nasty sight.



"Mommy, come, my nose is bleeding,  
And it's hurting too."  
"I'll put a little bandage on it,  
And something else I'll do."

She makes him wear a funny collar.  
All round his neck it goes.  
So his finger feels the collar,  
But it cannot reach his nose.

"Oh how ugly, oh how stupid, oh what a fool I feel!  
I'll never leave this house again until my nose-wounds heal!"

His normally serious sister laughs  
As loud as one could wish.  
"My little brother, Antonio, looks  
Just like a satellite dish!"

The wounds have healed, the collar's off,  
The nose no longer red.  
The finger stays away. He puts it  
In his mouth instead!



## FIFO, THE FRIGHTENED RABBIT



Fifo's a frightened little rabbit  
Who's scared of many things.  
He trembles when the crow says "Caw!"  
And when the songbird sings.

Poor little frightened Fifo. Boo!  
Even a bowl of soup scares you!

But Auntie Rabbit has an idea.  
"There's an herb," she whispers in his ear.  
"Not a four-leaf clover, but what you crave:  
A magic herb to make you brave."



So eat the herb, and your carrots, too!  
And lions will be scared of YOU!

Fifo thinks, "If it's really so,  
Then in my mouth sharp fangs will grow.  
I'll have big claws that all can see,  
And lions AND snakes will be scared of me!"

Eat the herb, little Fifo. Chew!  
Then who will rule the forest? YOU!

Fifo eats it, and he's so proud!  
He has no fear. It's beyond belief!  
But when he's gone his aunt laughs loud.  
The magic herb was a lettuce leaf!



## PIA, THE BLACK PANTHER



Pia, the panther, sits in her tree,  
As graceful and sleek as a panther can be.  
She ought to be very happy. Instead  
There's a sad thought running through her head:  
"My fur is all I ever wear.  
In every sense it isn't fair!  
Fur from tail to ears and throat—  
It's time I had a different coat."

So Pia jumps down from the tree.  
"A flowered coat's the thing for me.  
It'll only take a couple of hours,  
'Cause I know where there's a field of flowers."



On velvet paws she makes her way  
To the field of flowers. Today's the day!  
She picks them—yellow, blue, and red—  
And sticks them on from tail to head.

"Though I say it myself, I must confess,  
My flowered coat's a great success!  
When I see the tigress, how I'll gloat!  
She's only got a stripy coat!"  
But the other animals find it strange:  
Is it something to do with climate change?  
They've never before—and this is true—  
Seen a flowering panther bush! Have you?



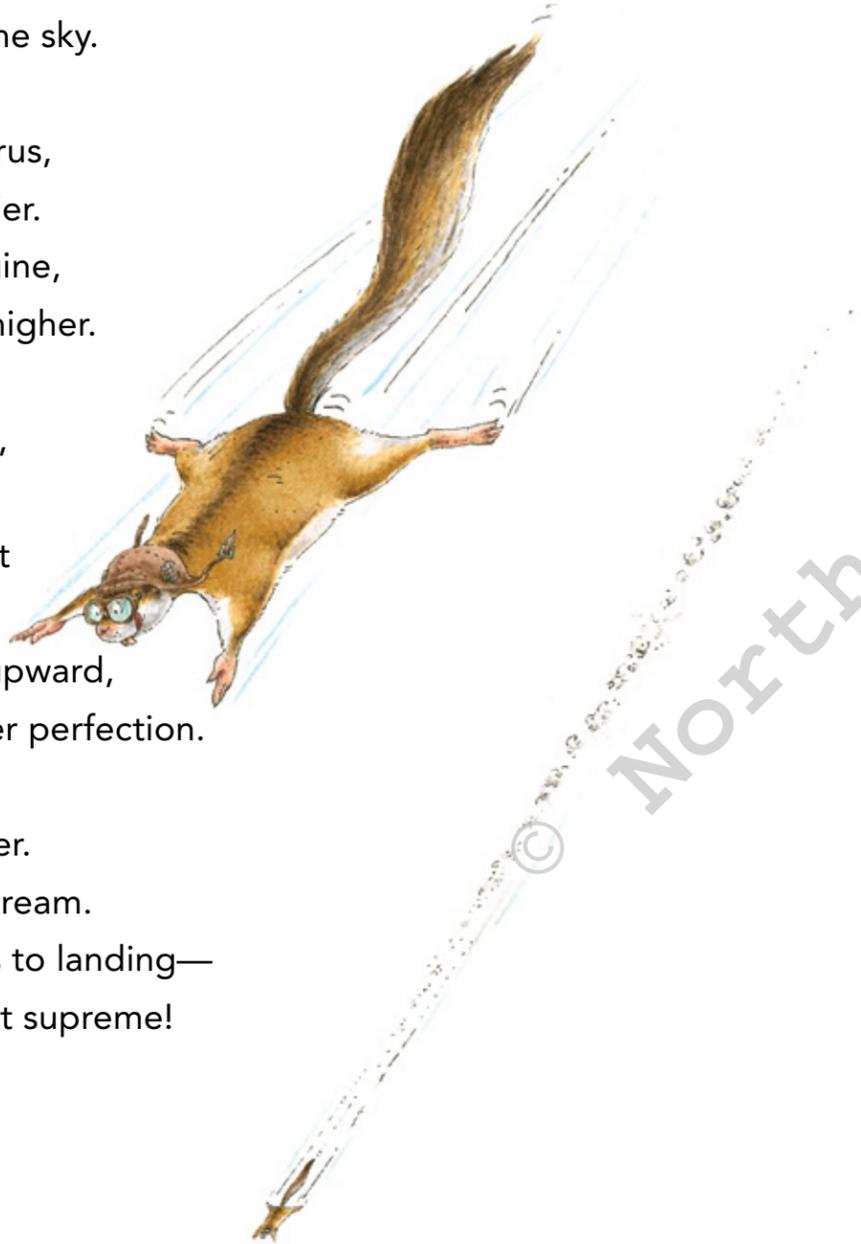
## ICARUS, THE FLYING SQUIRREL

I am not an airplane  
Or a bird, but I can fly.  
I'm a flying squirrel,  
And I'm happy in the sky.

My name is Mr. Icarus,  
And I was born a flier.  
If I only had an engine,  
I'd fly even faster, higher.

At present, though,  
it's downward.  
That's my only flight  
direction.  
If I could manage upward,  
That would be sheer perfection.

Already I'm a master.  
My diving's like a dream.  
And when it comes to landing—  
Wow! My skill is just supreme!



Let me introduce you  
To my best friend, Seagull Jim.  
Just for now I can only go  
Upward thanks to him.

He takes me on his shoulders,  
And we go higher and higher.  
If I only had an engine,  
I'd be the perfect flier!



## ROSALINA, THE HIPPO DANCER

Hippopotamus Rosalina  
Hopes to be a ballerina.  
She can't wait to twist and twirl,  
Prance and dance, swing and swirl.

First of all she tries a plié:  
Each leg must go a different way.  
It's not easy—this new technique!  
She bends her knees. Oh, how they creak!

Her feet hurt just as much as her knees;  
The pointed shoes are such a squeeze.  
If you have to wear a pointed shoe,  
Shouldn't your foot be pointed, too?



After a pirouette she stumbles,  
And her empty tummy rumbles.  
Her bottom hurts; there's pain in her toes—  
She'd feel better dancing on her nose!

"I think it's time to have a snack.  
Then afterward, I'll get back on track!"  
Let's give the tummy a proper treat.  
Sit down, relax, have something to eat.

She takes off her shoes. She starts to feel  
Much better now she's had a meal.  
Her tummy's full. She's free from pain.  
Tomorrow she can try again.



## ADRIAN, THE VEGETARIAN CROCODILE



Adrian lives in the River Nile.  
He's a vegetarian crocodile.  
That means his meals are never meat,  
So these are the things he doesn't eat:

Beef or bacon, pork or lamb,  
Fish or pheasant, chicken or ham.

Birds on his back feel safe and sound,  
As he likes to carry them around.  
But now you know he doesn't eat meat,  
You'll want to know, What DOES he eat?



Bananas and berries, nuts and beans,  
All sorts of fruit, all sorts of greens.

It's Adrian's birthday, and so for a treat  
His friends bring him presents and nice things to eat,  
Balloons to bounce and games to play,  
And a huge carrot cake to mark the day.

Some crocs think they're as mad as hatters,  
But Adrian's happy, and that's what matters.



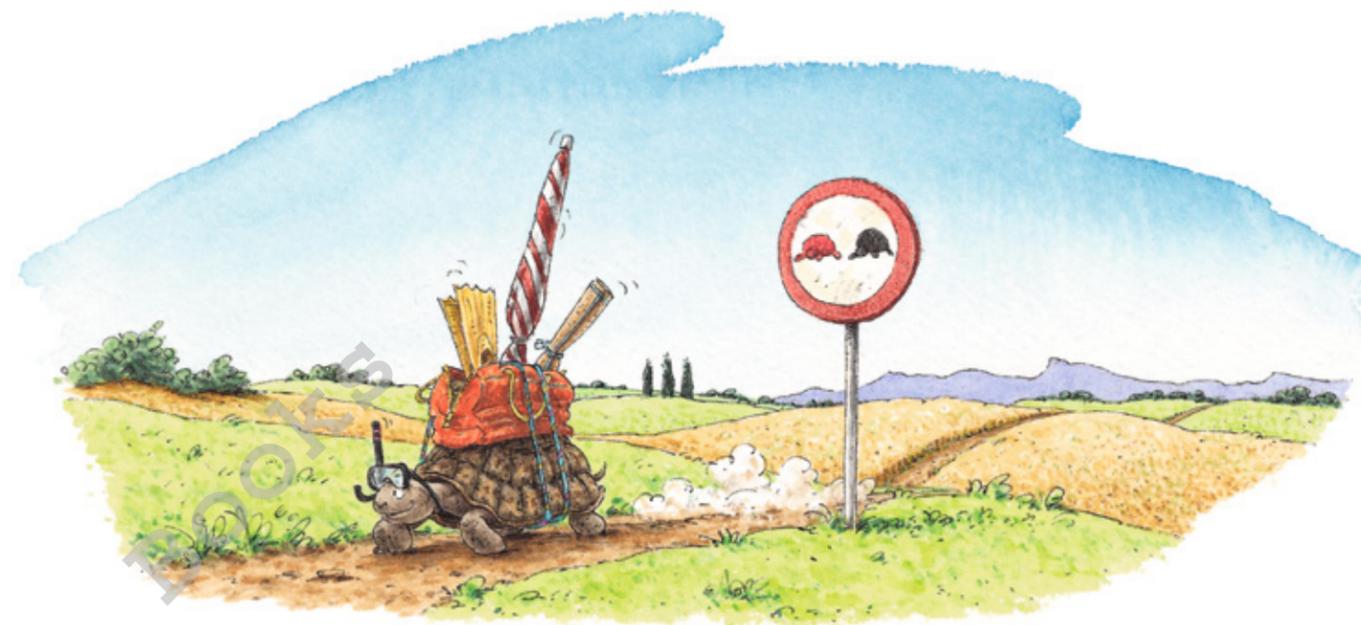
## HARRY, THE TORTOISE



In the shadows of the undergrowth my gentle way I wend.  
It may look like slow motion, but I get there in the end.  
Although my name is Harry, I'm never in a hurry.  
If someone says, "Please hurry, Harry," I tell them not to worry.

We tortoises know where to go, even though we're very slow.

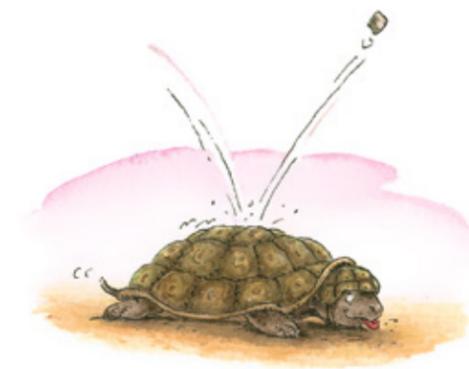
Everybody knows me by my great big heavy shell,  
And if you had to carry that, you'd be slow as well.  
But I've got an instant shelter if it should start to rain,  
And if an elephant treads on me, the elephant feels the pain.



Once we know where to go, nothing stops us though we're slow.

Today I've packed my travel bag with lots of useful things,  
Including a nice bright parasol and a pair of water wings.  
My Auntie Turtle lives by the sea. It's really very near.  
She's going to teach me how to swim. I'll be there within a year.

If you get where you want to go, it doesn't matter if you're slow.



## LITTLE LOUIS RHINO

I'm little Louis Rhino.

On my nose I've got a horn.

Although you'll think that's a funny place,

It's been there since I was born.

Other creatures are scared of me

Because they know I'm tough,

And if they do something I don't like,

I can get very rough.



My skin's a suit of armor,

And I'm strong as strong can be.

I knock things down and tear things up,

And nothing frightens me.

Everyone says I'm ugly;

But when the day is done,

My mommy says, with a good night kiss,

"Sleep well, my lovely son."





One morning Bruno was awakened in his little bed by a warm sunbeam.

"Good morning, little bear of mine," said his mother. Then she took him by the paw and together they went out of the cave. Outside, the air was mild, and there was grass growing everywhere.

"The forest is really beautiful now!" said Bruno. "But the stories you read to me, Mommy, were also beautiful. I'm going to tell them to all my friends. I'll go and look for them. And next winter you'll tell me more stories, won't you?"

"Yes, my child, lots more, I promise," she replied. Then she bent over him and gave him a motherly welcome-to-spring kiss.







It's time for Bruno, the little brown bear, to hibernate. It will be many nights before spring comes again, so Mother Bear must find something special to help him sleep. Will her captivating and funny stories do the trick?

This special book of bedtime stories told in playful rhyming text by Serena Romanelli with enchanting illustrations by Hans de Beer is sure to brighten your nights.

Praise for *Little Polar Bear*, by Hans de Beer

"An endearing picture book."—*Children's Literature Reviews*

US \$17.95 • CAN \$23.95

ISBN 978-0-7358-4477-3



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