

Biography: Jānis Joņevs (1980) graduated from the Latvian Academy of Culture. Since 2002 he has been working as a copywriter, reviewer, and translator from French. His first novel, *Jelgava '94*, was published in 2013. The novel garnered acclaim from critics and readers alike, and received numerous awards: the Annual Latvian Literature Award for Best Debut; the 2014 European Union Prize for Literature; and the 2014 Kilogram of Culture Award presented by Latvian Television. It was also named among the 100 favorite Latvian books of all time on the television show *Great Reading*, and the Children's Jury (a project involving young readers from all over Latvia) chose the book as their favorite book in the 15+ age group. In 2020 Joņevs published his first collection of stories *Tīģeris* [Tiger].

Synopsis: It's the birthday of the big wardrobe closet. He celebrates his birthday at night when the guests bring him gifts and they have a wild party. So the parents shouldn't be upset if the room is in a mess in the morning – it's not the children's fault! Jānis Joņevs and Reinis Pētersons' work is marked by cheerful irony and a sense for the grotesque. The celebrations of the furniture mirror the daily rituals of adults as imagined and acted out by children.

Excerpt

1

Tuesday was the day that was the birthday of the big wardrobe closet. The whole day passed without anyone wishing him many happy returns. But the wardrobe did not feel sad at all. Dad's long-lost computer mouse was already secretly making the rounds and delivering invites.

2

As soon as night fell, the floor switched off the squeaking device. Now the birthday guests started to arrive. First came the chair, regally rattling. He brought a tapestry as a present; a fine work, he let it be known, that he had hand-woven on his free nights. It did look a bit like an ordinary towel that someone had left hanging on a chair-back, but no-one mentioned it.

3

The coat hanger from the hall brought a friend who was feeling too worn-out to come on his own (eventually, he did recover enough to do a spirited jig and lose all of his buttons).

4

The pillow brought a lost tooth he had hidden from the Tooth Fairy. It could be exchanged for one euro at any moment.

5

The pot waddled in from the kitchen, generously spilling his birthday gift – yesterday's borscht – all over the place. He poured the present straight into the open belly of the wardrobe.