

Author/Illustrator: **Einar Turkowski**
Title: **DIE MONDBLUME**
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About title:

In an old house on an island there lives a man. Every day, he goes to see his secret garden with its winding paths, steep steps and hidden nooks. One day, he happens to notice a barren little spot. So the man digs a hole, to plant something later.

But the next morning, he discovers a strange thing.

Overnight, a plant has grown from the hole. And he cannot find it in any of his books. So the man looks after the little plant and tends it carefully. But only when the moon is full again, does the plant grow a huge bud. Day after day goes by without the bud opening. The man tries to encourage the plant (by performing a stage play, among other things). But the bud just won't open - until the next, magical, full moon...

Einar Turkowski's art in pencil looks like filigree work, precise down to the tiniest detail, and it seems to radiate colour - although it's all in black and white.

A lyrical world, a fantastically intricate universe.

An excerpt from the book (pages 26-29):

Another month had passed when, on another wonderfully mild night, an almost-full moon silently poured its mysterious light upon the windowsill and the wooden floor boards of the old house's bedroom. Some indefatigable insects buzzed up and down in the open window, as if they could not hold still out of sheer excitement, and even outside, some restless birds still seemed to flutter in the treetops.

The night was wonderfully mild; Mr Ribblestone lay awake in his bed, brooding tiredly about how he might persuade his plant to bloom after all. But having tried such a lot of things already, he was running out of new ideas, and so, these nocturnal ruminations exhausted him a great deal and made him even more tired than he had been.

Quietly, almost imperceptibly, something strange started to happen while he was lying there. A tiny light, as small as a speck of dust, suddenly came whirling around the casement and into the room. A second one followed, and a third one floated by the supporting beam of

the window. Driven by a breath of wind, it was carried into the middle of the room, like its predecessors.

The lights were so minute that one could have thought them dust motes, swirled up by the buzz of the insects and glittering in the moonlight now.

For a short while, they were hanging weightlessly in the air, as if they wanted to catch a quick glimpse of Mr Ribblestone, before they slowly sank to the floor while going out.

Mr Ribblestone did not notice any of this, he was already asleep.

When he was sitting over his breakfast in the garden the next morning, nibbling on his toast with quince jelly (he had run out of blackberry jam) without much enthusiasm, he realized, unhappily, that he really could not think of anything that would make his plant blossom.

Evening came, and Mr Ribblestone started to resign himself to the notion that, after all, this plant had grown a bud that had never been meant to open.

The stars began firing up their twinkle, and between the gnarled branches of a plane tree, Mr Ribblestone saw a wonderfully round moon rise, large and clear and shining. So Mr Ribblestone went back inside, because he intended to round off this particularly fine evening with a cup of tea and some biscuits.

When he shuffled out again fifteen minutes later (shuffling, probably, because he was carrying such a lot of things), he was thunderstruck... In his favourite place, there was the plant, and its bud had blossomed into a flower that was a hundred times as beautiful as Mr Ribblestone could have imagined in his wildest dreams.

Editor's Thoughts

A garden of miraculous flowers wherever you look, of fanciful landscapes, nooks and fabulous bouquets. In a word, the garden of an eccentric gentleman.

We are watching him at his labour of love, we accompany the storyteller down the countless, narrow garden paths, marveling at a profusion of life, all things bright and beautiful. The text is detailed, like the pictures, and like their fantasy worlds it is assembled from realistic detail. A world where everything becomes an ornament and every ornament becomes a cipher. They are an integral part of the story. And although the story accurately describes Mr Ribblestone marveling at the plant (that grows exactly where he has prepared the soil), the moon flower will never be less than an enigmatic miracle.

While animals appear here and there in the text, and while they later witness the sensation of the unique plant's blossoming, perhaps we are given a hint by the presence of a number of moths that seem particularly attracted to the plant. They may be responsible for its sudden appearance. But we cannot be sure. And therein lies Einar Turkowski's

genius: He paints and writes, he shows and trelles, but he always seems to look in from the outside, as well. He keeps asking if it really was like that - or was it totally different?

It is no wonder he does not show us the miracle of the plant. We can see its miraculous radiance behind a garden wall and reflected as a light on the trees nearby, but the flower itself is so wonderful that the artist stimulates our imagination, but does not stifle it.

Einar Turkowski

Einar Turkowski was born in Kiel, Germany, in 1972. He always seemed a bit of a prodigy, and he did a traineeship as a stage designer after graduating from high school. He studied illustration at the Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften in Hamburg, and, in 2005, he amazed a startled board of examiners with the quality of his dissertation.

He was awarded several prizes for his first picture book, the Grand Prix of the BIB (Biennale of Illustration, Bratislava) 2007, the Troisdorfer Bilderbuchpreis (Second Prize) and the Visual Prize for Best Illustrator, Madrid, among them.

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