

ISTVÁN BÓC

**SEVEN B
GO SLEUTHING**

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With
illustrations by
TIBOR KAJÁN

TYPOTEX



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If you're flicking through this publication (and if you're reading these lines, you probably are), you might be wondering what kind of book this is.

Is it collection of maths exercises?

Of short stories?

Of riddles?

Or is a crime novel?

Well, the truth is, I myself haven't decided yet. And maybe there's no need. The idea is that it should be entertaining and get you thinking. Oh, and also sell reasonably well...

I've had two books published so far and both of them ended up being an amalgam of various genres. In *How to Get Lucky** I mixed the mathematical bases of games of fortune with a description of the tactics necessary for doing well in them, as well as suggesting some ploys or small tricks which were theoretically possible. According to the method I outlined, it would be possible with the help of a computer-generated estimate to predict where the roulette ball will land. A couple of years later, a handful of adventurers successfully used this method in London to win a sum equivalent to half a billion forints. My reward, meanwhile, was to see copies of my book, which

* *A szerencse titkai*, Typotex, Budapest, 2004. The first edition (Typotex, Budapest, 2000) carried the title *I Think, Therefore I Win* (*Gondolkodom, tehát nyerek* in Hungarian).

had been gathering dust in warehouses, selling like hot cakes along with the speedily produced new edition.

In *5 + 1-Minute Crime Stories*, everyday events and petty crimes are mixed up with mathematical problems and others drawn from logic and chemistry. Whenever I take this book out and look at it, and I do sometimes, I feel pleased with it. Of course, that's about as meaningful as a politician rating the work of her own party. But several thousand copies of the book were printed, and they flew off the shelves pretty quickly (maybe just because I have lots of friends...).

Emboldened by this success (if you can call it that), and with a younger set of readers (and their parents) in mind, I got stuck into putting together the shorter stories about the students of Class 7B that make up this volume. These stories are really short. This is so that they'll be over by the time the reader starts to get bored. I hope my placing a simple task at the end of each chapter won't be considered a crime against young people. If they don't take your fancy, feel free to skip over them, but thinking is not forbidden either. I'm all for the latter...

"Dad, we've got a new boy in our class, and he keeps on calling me Cruella de Vil. I need to do something about him before the others pick up on it, but I don't know what."

When thirteen-year-old Juli had a problem she couldn't solve, she often turned to her parents for help. And they usually came up with something. Now, however, she wasn't so lucky.

Her father was at the computer, deep in some work, so all he said was, "I don't know why he's calling you that, love, but if you don't give me some peace and quiet, you won't be getting that Dalmatian fur coat for Christmas!"

"Very funny, Dad!" retorted Juli crossly. "But really, any idea what I should do?"

"You could try talking to him. If he doesn't live too far away, you could even go over to see him. And if the kid isn't too strong, you could easily bring him down with one of the moves you've learned at karate class..." was all the busy head of the family could squeeze out of himself by way of a suggestion. A few minutes later, he heard his daughter talking eagerly to someone on the phone, then a slam of the door told him the young lady was going to see what she could do about the situation.

*

The new boy had moved to the housing estate with his family two weeks earlier. As they'd arrived there from outside the city, it was clear Gábor would have to change

schools. At first, 7B had had a few reservations about their new classmate, but within a few days he was feeling quite at home among them. That was when, hoping to earn a few brownie points among her enemies, he had started to call Juli Cruella de Vil.

Juli arrived at the address her friend had given her shortly after half past four. At the entrance to the building, she found a muscle-bound colossus studying the names on the entryphone. The 120-kilo young man was running his finger all along the buttons – it was clear he could only read them if he followed the letters with his finger – then he stopped at one of the names. Juli was surprised to see that he didn't ring the bell. Instead, he hurried off towards the bus stop. She saw him get into an Audi with tinted windows that was parked there, but she had her own business to take care of and thought no more of it. After a quick search, she pressed the bell for the flat where Gábor's family lived.

Interesting, that muscle-brain was also looking for the Molnárs, she remarked to herself.

Gábor appeared at the entrance. He would rather come down to the street, it seemed, than let an enemy into their flat.

"What are you doing here, Ellabella?" he said.

It wasn't a particularly friendly way to start a conversation.

Juli's face went red.

"Listen here, you stuck-up jerk. If you don't stop picking on me..."

But she didn't get to finish her sentence.

With a squeal of brakes, the Audi pulled up behind the children. The colossus, moving surprisingly nimbly for someone of his weight, leapt out and shoved Gábor into the back seat, before himself jumping into the car as it accelerated away, and in a couple of seconds they had disappeared round the corner.

Juli immediately began pressing the bell on the entry phone with all her might.

“Quick, someone! Come down! Gábor’s been kidnapped!” she shrieked into the device.

Mr. Molnár and two others came running out of the door, but by that time the car was long gone. From the few words she could catch, Juli realised that the men with Mr. Molnár were police officers there to protect him. The one in jeans, who was about twenty-five and seemed to be in charge, turned straight to Juli.

“Detective Inspector Kálmán Jakab. Listen, can you tell us what the car looked like? The one the attackers were in?”

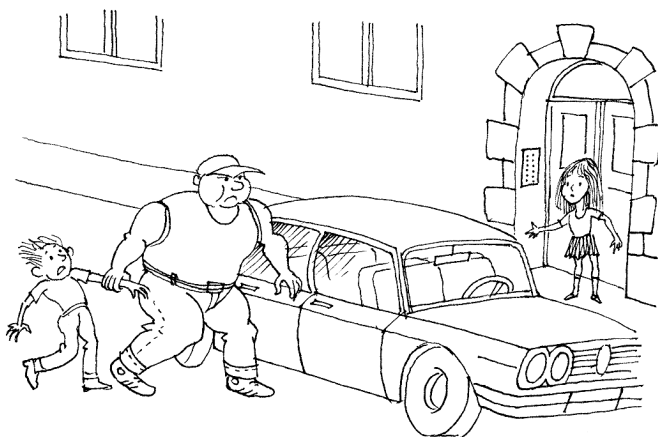
Juli was in her element.

“It was an Audi A4, metallic green, number plate AXA-145,” she replied, anticipating his next few questions.

The detective inspector immediately began to make phone calls, but judging by his grimace, too late to seal off the housing estate.

“We need a clue as to where they might have been heading,” said the young detective, turning to his partner.

“I think I might have an idea...” put in Juli. “Gábor’s always showing off with his mobile in class. He keeps



it turned on because he likes it ringing in lessons and annoying the teachers. I think he'll have it in his pocket now. Can you maybe find him through his phone?"

The detectives perked up and eagerly started talking into their phones. Within a quarter of an hour, they had located the device, and twenty minutes after that they caught up with the car as it sped down the motorway. Gábor came out of the adventure without a scratch on him, while his kidnappers were sent to the cooler.

It turned out that Gábor's dad was a key witness in an upcoming mafia trial. That was why they had moved to a new city, and why he was under constant police protection. Gábor, however, was not being guarded, and by kidnapping him, the criminals had been hoping they could force his father to withdraw his statement. They hadn't reckoned on Juli, however.

“Juli darling, fancy catching a film this afternoon?” asked Gábor Molnár a couple of days later. The more he saw of his cool-headed classmate, the more he liked her.

“You know what, Mobile Mikhail? Why don’t we just stick to Cruella?”

Juli and Gábor went to the cinema. Much to Gábor’s annoyance, several friends went along with them. How much did one ticket cost, if the price of five tickets was less than 5,000 forints, but they weren’t able to buy six tickets with 5,900? The price of the ticket ended in a 0, of course.
