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# King Matt the First

*By Janusz Korczak*



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## King Matt the First By Janusz Korczak

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.



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## **King Matt the First** By Janusz Korczak Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Review

"Unforgettable to the last full stop. One of the great classics" -- Michael Morpurgo, Children's Laureate  
"Janusz Korczak is an important writer... His message is still relevant today, that children matter; indeed that they should be a priority in our culture, because it's only with a child's imagination that grown-ups can begin to conceive a better world" -- Yann Martel, author of 'Life of Pi' "Absolutely wonderful. A gripping and classic entertainment from start to shocking finish. Definitely a book for all ages" -- Matt Haig, author of 'The Last Family in England' "The spirit of Korczak, living on, could make a better world for all humans" Publisher's Weekly "Droll and melancholy, wry and touching, King Matt is a fable that offers a fierce, truthful picture of children struggling to make sense of grown-up nonsense... This small masterpiece is a rare tribute to the psychological depth and marvellous workings of a child's heart and mind" -- Maurice Sendak, author of 'Where the Wild Things Are'

### About the Author

Janusz Korczak wrote the classic children's book *King Matt the First* and many nonfiction works. To mark the centennial of Korczak's birth, the United Nations declared 1979 the International Year of the Child and dedicated it to him. Korczak perished in 1942 in Treblinka, along with the Jewish orphans he refused to abandon.

A nationally renowned advocate for literacy and literature-based instruction, Esmé Raji Codell is today "one of the nation's most sought-after voices for empowering teachers" (*People*) and a "Superstar of Education" (*Scholastic Instructor*). Esmé has been interviewed on *CBS This Morning*, CNN, C-SPAN's *Book Talk*, and NPR. The author of *How to Get Your Child to Love Reading* as well as award-winning books for children, Esmé lives with her husband and son in Chicago, where she spent many years as an educator in Chicago public schools and now runs the popular children's literature Web site PlanetEsme.com and the unique literary salon, the PlanetEsme Bookroom.

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