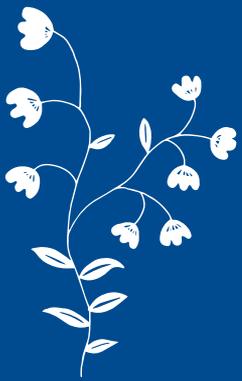


APOLLINE'S BLUE WORKSHOP



ROMANA KOŠUTKOVÁ
VERONIKA VLKOVÁ AND JAN ŠRÁMEK



"I WILL MAKE YOU BREAKFAST," SAID THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN. "WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE, MY DEAR?" "I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A SLICE OF STRAWBERRY PIE AND COFFEE WITH PLENTY OF MILK, JUST LIKE GRANDPA," REPLIED THE GIRL.

FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, THE HOUSE WAS FULL OF NEW LIFE. THE LITTLE OLD MAN MADE A BED AND SOME TOYS. THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN COOKED THICK SOUPS, PORRIDGES WITH APPLES AND HONEY, AND ROASTED FISH. THE GIRL GREW LIKE A BEANSPROUT.

THEY NAMED HER APOLLINE. IT MEANS A "GIRL OF LIGHT". THE LITTLE OLD MAN AND THE LITTLE OLD WOMAN HAD NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY.



THE LITTLE OLD MAN COULD NOT WAIT TO SHOW APOLLINE HIS WORKSHOP. "THIS IS MY BLUEPRINT KINGDOM! LOOK, ON THIS TABLE I DO ALL THE PRINTING AND AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM I DYE THE CANVASES WITH THE INDIGO DYE."

APOLLINE SAW SO MANY INTERESTING THINGS. THERE WERE MANY WHITE AND DARK BLUE CANVASES HANGING IN THE ROOM, EACH ONE MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE LAST. "LOOK WHAT WE HAVE HERE: HERE ARE SOME LINEN CANVASES, HERE SOME HEMP CANVASES, AND HERE ARE SOME COTTON ONES. FIRST, I LET THE FABRIC WHITEN ON THE GRASS, AND THEN I BOIL IT AND STIFFEN IT WITH STARCH." APOLLINE LIKED THE CRAFT SO MUCH SHE WANTED TO START HELPING IMMEDIATELY.

“BE CAREFUL, APOLLINE! DON’T FALL INTO THE VAT FULL OF PAINT. THAT IS THE PAINT SUBSTANCE WITH INDIGO IN IT.” WHEN APOLLINE LOOKED AT THE DARK BLUE COLOR, AS DEEP AS THE UNIVERSE, SHE HAD A VERY STRANGE FEELING. AND IT WAS IN THAT MOMENT THAT SHE REMEMBERED HER HOME, THE PLACE WHERE SHE CAME FROM. IN HER HEART, SHE SAW THAT THE UNIVERSE HAD SENT HER HERE SO THAT THE BLUE DYEING TECHNOLOGY WOULD NOT DISAPPEAR FROM THE WORLD. HOWEVER, SHE DECIDED NOT TO TELL GRANDMA AND GRANDPA ABOUT IT.

THE LITTLE OLD MAN, APOLLINE, AND THE CAT JOSIE CHECKED THE PAINT IN THE VAT EVERY MORNING. “IS THERE ENOUGH OF THE INDIGO DYE? AND WHAT ABOUT THE SMELL? STIR IT WELL, MY LITTLE GIRL, OR THERE MIGHT BE BLOTCHES ON THE FABRIC.”

INDIGO IS A NATURAL DYE. IT CAME BY POST FROM VERY FAR AWAY, FROM ASIA. IT WAS LIKE A CELEBRATION WHEN APOLLINE COULD UNWRAP THE PACKET. “IT LOOKS LIKE BLUE COAL OR A BAR OF SOAP,” SHE SAID. THEY MADE IT INTO POWDER AND ADDED FIXATIVE AND WATER TO IT. IT WAS A VERY OLD AND SECRET RECIPE.



ONCE IN A WHILE THEY HAD TO TAKE A COPPER POT AND PREPARE A DYE RESIST PASTE - A THICK MASH WHICH THE LITTLE OLD MAN CALLED "POP" OR SOMETIMES "PAP". IT WAS A MIXTURE OF WATER, CLAY, ACACIA GUM, AND OTHER INGREDIENTS. APOLLINE'S TASK WAS TO STIR IT. THE LITTLE OLD MAN WOULD LIGHTLY DIP A WOODEN BLOCK INTO THIS VIRIDESCENT BLEND AND PRESS IT ON THE FABRIC.

"GRANDPA, THE PAP SMELLS SO BAD! WHEN GRANDMA AND I WERE MAKING THE APRICOT JAM, I WAS ALSO ALLOWED TO STIR IT, AND THE WHOLE HOUSE SMELLED SO GOOD!" "IT DOES NOT SMELL GOOD, YOU ARE RIGHT. YET, THERE IS AN ADVANTAGE TO IT. YOU ARE NOT GOING TO TASTE IT. AND THAT IS VERY LUCKY BECAUSE IT CONTAINS LEAD, WHICH IS TOXIC."



“APOLLINE, THESE HAND-CRAFTED WOODEN BLOCKS ARE OUR TREASURE. SOME OF THEM ARE VERY, VERY OLD. SUCH FORMS CAN BE USED FOR MORE THAN HUNDRED YEARS, EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE USED EVERY DAY AND GET WET MANY TIMES.” THE LITTLE OLD MAN WASHED THE BLOCKS VERY CAREFULLY AFTER HE USED THEM AND PUT THEM AWAY ON THE SHELVES IN THE WORKSHOP.

A BLUEPRINT WOODEN BLOCK IS SOMETHING LIKE A BIG STAMP. PATTERNS OF FLOWERS OR BIRDS ARE CARVED INTO IT BY A BLOCK MAKER USING A CHISEL. TO MAKE VERY SUBTLE PATTERNS, HE HAMMERS IN HUNDREDS OF BRASS PIECES OR WIRES. THEN HE FIXES LITTLE NAILS INTO EACH CORNER OF THE BLOCK THAT LEAVE TINY DOTS ON THE CLOTH DURING THE PRINTING PROCESS. THESE DOTS HELP THE PRINTER TO PLACE THE PATTERNS PRECISELY NEXT TO EACH OTHER. ON THE TOP PART OF THE WOODEN BLOCK, THE BLOCK MAKER CARVES AN OPENING INTO THE WOOD SO THAT THE PRINTER CAN HOLD THE BLOCK IN ONE HAND.



