



TUNDRA BOOKS



Ludmila Zeman

Ludmila Zeman Spaleny was born in Gottwadlov, Czechoslovakia on April 23, 1947 into a filmmaker's family. Her father was world renowned film director Karel Zeman. Every summer her father's studio, which was located close to their house, became her second home. Here she lived in a world of puppets and soon she began to make her own. She was enchanted by her father's creations and helped to build puppets for his award-winning *Baron Munchausen* while not

yet in her teens. She not only did puppetry, but painted background scenes as well. Later her greatest talent would be revealed to be her drawing ability.

In 1958 Karel Zeman's masterpiece, *An Invention for Destruction*, was released to world acclaim. It was awarded the Grand Prix of the Brussels World Film Festival in 1958 and the Grand Prix International of the French Film Academy in 1959. Not only did Ludmila do painting for this film but she was the still photographer of the project. These photographs were in many exhibitions including "From Melliese to Karel Zeman" in Paris and in Czechoslovakia.

At this point Ludmila decided to go to art school. During her four years of study there, she continued to work with her father at every opportunity, including the making of the feature film *BARON MUNCHAUSEN*. In the last year of art school she designed costumes for the film, *A JESTER'S TALE*, a combination of live action and special effects. By the end of this film Ludmila had worked in various aspects of film gaining expertise in designing puppets, costumes, and sets as well as in taking and developing still photographs.

On completion of her studies at art school, she began to work on two films for which she prepared her own scripts and storyboards. On these films she perfected her knowledge of puppet animation and also the technique of combining it with cell animation. For some time these films were very popular on Czech TV, but with the coming of colour, black and white films such as these were no longer of much interest on European television.

In 1967, Ludmila accompanied Karel Zeman to Italy to make *THE STOLEN AIRSHIP* in collaboration with Carlo Ponti. For this production she created designs and acted as assistant director. In 1969, Ludmila enrolled at the Palacky University to continue her studies in art and design. She spent three years there specializing in film and puppet design. Her studies complete she returned to work in her father's studio. In the 1974 Karel Zeman production, *THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS*, an animated feature, she served as director of the designing studio and the leading designer. Then followed the animated features, *KRABAT* (1975) which won the Grand Prix at Teheran International Animated Film Festival For Children (1977), awards in Lausanne (1979) and Chicago (1984) and many other festivals,



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and JOHN AND MARY (1980) which won First Prize at the International Animation Festival in Varna, Bulgaria (1980).

At this time Ludmila was approached by the largest publishing house in Czechoslovakia to illustrate a children's book. As this had always been one of her dreams she accepted the offer even though she was already working on a children's film with her husband, Eugene Spaleny, the chief animator in the Zeman studio. The book and the film were finished at the same time. The film, LITTLE DEVIL FIDIBUS (1979), won prizes at the Gottwadlov Film Festival for Children and Young Adults and at the Zagreb International Animation Film Festival. The book, *Linda, the Gardener's Cat*, published by Albatross, was a bestseller in Czechoslovakia. Ludmila brings to her illustrations her experience as a filmmaker and animator of puppets. The results are lively, aesthetically pleasing, and attractive to children. From 1981 to 1984 Ludmila and her husband Eugene wrote and made a series of eleven 7-minute films under the title, FAIRY TALES, for Czech TV.

The Spalenys' unique film techniques and Ludmila's designs have become famous worldwide. An offer to teach in the film course at Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver brought hopes of a trip to Canada. But it was not to be for they were not allowed to go by their government. In 1984, however, they emigrated to Canada with their two children. In 1985, they did indeed teach at Emily Carr College.

Before they left Czechoslovakia Ludmila illustrated another children's book. *Short While With Half Mile Snake* was published after they left.

While in Vancouver the Spalenys made a short film for Sesame Street called THE CEDAR TREE OF LIFE. Their research for this film introduced them to the culture of the west coast Indians. When the National Film Board of Canada offered them an opportunity to make a film they were thrilled. They decided to create a story based on legends from the Pacific Northwest. They called it LORD OF THE SKY. Beautiful Canadian nature and the extraordinary Native stories inspired Ludmila in both the writing of the script and the original designs for the film.

In 1988, the Spalenys became Canadian citizens. Since then, Ludmila has created beautiful picture books for all ages. She has retold and illustrated the ancient *Gilgamesh* myth, created an original myth for her adopted country, and is now working on retelling the stories from the *Arabian Nights*. Her books have been acclaimed both in Canada and abroad, and are available in several languages including French, Arabic, Portuguese, and Icelandic. Ludmila is currently working on a film based on the *Gilgamesh* trilogy and the third installment of the *Sindbad* series of picture books. Ludmila Zeman lives in Montreal.



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Selected Bibliography

<i>Sindbad's Secret</i> (Tundra)	2003
<i>Sindbad in the Land of Giants</i> (Tundra)	2001
<i>Sindbad: From the Tales of the Thousand and One Nights</i> (Tundra)	1999
<i>The First Red Maple Leaf</i> (Tundra)	1997
<i>The Last Quest of Gilgamesh</i> (Tundra)	1995
<i>The Revenge of Ishtar</i> (Tundra)	1993
<i>Gilgamesh the King</i> (Tundra)	1992

Awards and Honors

<i>Sindbad's Secret</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award for Illustration• Selected for inclusion in the Cleveland Public Library's <i>Celebrate with Books 2003</i> list
<i>Sindbad in the Land of Giants</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected as IBBY Canada's nomination for the IBBY Honour List in the category of illustration, 2002• Honorable Mention in the 6th International Children and Youth's Book Prize (Mexico City), 2001• Shortlisted, Amelia Francis Howard-Gibbon Award, 2001-02
<i>Sindbad</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortlisted, Governor General's Literary Award – Children's Illustration, 1999• Winner (one of three) of the 4th International Illustrated Children and Youth's Book Prize, 1999• Tied for 2nd place as Best Non-Fiction Picture Book of 1999 by Quill and Quire• Our Choice, Canadian Children's Book Centre (Starred Selection), 1999• Shortlisted, Mr. Christie's Book Award, Category 8 years to 11 years, 2000
<i>The First Red Maple Leaf</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate of Merit, Premier Print Award (Juvenile Books), 1997• Our Choice, Canadian Children's Book Centre, 1997-98• Shortlisted, Governor General's Literary Award – Children's Illustration, 1997



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Gilgamesh Trilogy

- “Highly Recommended” Brazilian Section of IBBY (in the category of translation into the Portuguese language for children)
- Monteiro Lobato for “Best Translation for Children in 1996”

The Last Quest of Gilgamesh

- Selected for the Fiction Section of the 1996 Bologna Illustrators Exhibition
- Winner, Governor General’s Literary Award – Children’s Illustration, 1995
- Shortlisted, The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award, 1996
- Our Choice, Canadian Children’s Book Centre, 1996-97
- Resource Links, The Year’s Best Picture Books, 1996
- Shortlisted, Red Cedar Book Award (For Non-Fiction, 1995)

The Revenge of Ishtar

- Shortlisted, The Ruth Schwartz Children’s Book Awards, 1994
- Accepted into Bologna Illustrators Exhibit toured Itabashi Art Museum, Tokyo
- Our Choice, Canadian Children’s Book Centre, 1994
- Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava, BIB 1993

Gilgamesh the King

- Pick of the List, American Bookseller, 1992
- Art Directors Club, New York, Certificate of Merit, 1992
- Alcuin Society, Vancouver, Tied for Second Place, Juvenile, 1992
- Our Choice, Canadian Children’s Book Centre, 1993
- Bologna Children’s Book, Illustrators exhibition, 1994
- Maryland Black-eyed Susan Picture Book selection., 1995/96