



PUSA ROTH
THE ADVENTURES
OF ONE



PUŞA ROTH

THE ADVENTURES OF ONE

ENGLISH VERSION BY DIANA GABRIELA RADU

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To my precious grandson, Albert Frederick.

With love, grandma Puşa!



Albert Frederick Roth, 7 years old, Palma de Mallorca, Spain

THE ADVENTURES OF



*The numbers' journey began when people
realized they needed to bring order into their lives!*

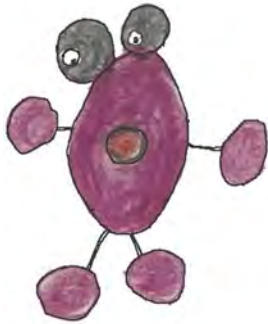
ONE, just like his name dictates, is one of a kind, and he most certainly knows it; that's why he walks around with a steady stride, his eyes wide opened, his lips arched into a bright smile. What a handsome boy he is too, with his blonde hair and keen eyes! And whenever anyone stares him up and down, he tells them, half joking, half serious, that he is ONE, the number without whom, nobody can move forward.

Whenever they see him, the children greet him and ask:

"Hello, dear ONE, how are you? How come you're always on your own?"

ONE, who already enjoyed every single thing around him, did not feel the need for other numbers in his life – what is more, he didn't even know they existed –, especially since he, the ONE, believed he was truly one of a kind.





One day, in the park, he spotted a little bubble watching him play from its corner. ONE headed its way, but the little bubble hid for fear he might be hurt, as it happened to him before, because of some other children in the park.

"Hey! Don't go, dear little bubble, or circle, or whatever you are, I only want us to play together!" ONE called out to him.

Upon hearing the cheerful voice, the little bubble mustered up his courage, stepped out into the light and told ONE:

"I know you, you are most important number in the whole world, but I dared not approach you, for fear you might send me away."

"Why would I do that, little fellow? After all, you are some sort of symbol yourself, aren't you?"

"Indeed, a symbol, but I too am important to the people. My name is ZERO, in case you didn't know!"

"ZERO? But I believe zero is zero, basically nothing. What could you possibly do, fellow ZERO?"

ZERO grew a little bolder and retorted to ONE, risking the proud ONE getting upset to have somebody clinging onto him like a little tail.



"Listen, brother ONE, I've heard it from the people that if we were to stick together, we'd make up something big, important."

"Well, ZERO, you and I are not much alike. I am slender and tall, and you look quite round. I bet you eat quite a lot too, don't you?"

"Actually no, ONE, that's just how I was made. I am indeed round, but that's just part of... my charm, laughed the playful little bubble. My name may be ZERO, but I am certainly important to the people."

"What do you mean by that, ZERO?"

"I mean, these people, they have many fingers..."

"Yes, but they're all different, each of them one of a kind, I might say", said ONE.

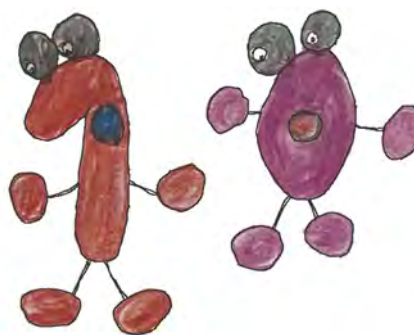
"O, ONE, if you and me were to stand side by side, we'd know precisely how many fingers the people have, even though they don't all look the same."

"Well that's true, brother ZERO. It's good that we bring order to the world, even though we both live in childhood."

"But, ONE, did you know that I'm basically a king?"

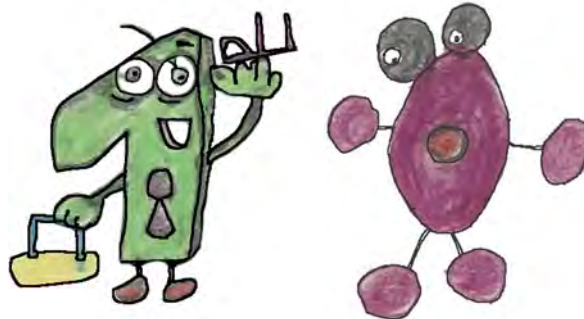
"Don't make me laugh, brother ZERO, you're talking to the first number in the world."

"Indeed, but right next to me, there are the fussy numbers, the ones written with



a minus sign in front of them. That's what my dad told me."

"My parents only told me that I am the most important of all and that I should never forget that. Now that I've met you, brother ZERO, I am finally discovering more things. For example that me and you together make one and zero..."



"And the people have given us a beautiful name, that's TEN."

"And does this mean that you and I will be glued to one another forever?" asked ONE.

"Well, at least when the people need us both like this, that's what we shall do. I can draw it for you if you want."

ZERO twirled and spun and, as if by magic, the two symbols appeared on the damp soil of the park path: ONE and ZERO.

"Look how nice we look next to each other like that."

"Yes, I think we're important in the people's lives, you have convinced me. Now, brother ZERO, if you'll excuse me, I must return home, so I can ask mommy ONE and daddy ONE what is with this world of numbers you have told me about. They are the centre of my own world."

What the two numbers, ONE and ZERO, did not know, was that, right there in the park, sitting on a bench, under a tiny tree, there was a little boy, who was listening carefully to their discussion.

The boy took a piece of paper and a pencil out of his bag and started to draw them both, thinking that he might need them at school someday. This child was fascinated by the fact that the two numbers could speak. He didn't know this, he had just found out, but everything is possible in a story and, as he was unknowingly the main character of this one, the numbers had come to life for him only. His mother, father and older brother could not enter the world of this story, because it wasn't meant to them, but to the little boy, who had just started to discover the miracles of the world.

And so, ONE headed home and told his parents all about his encounter with ZERO. His parents told him it was time for him to discover the world around him and, especially, the whole family of numbers, without whom the world could not exist.

The next day, he met with ZERO again, who promised to introduce him to another fellow number. The proud ONE let himself carried away by his curiosity so he and ZERO stopped together by a gorgeous flower, and next to the flower there was a number playing with two snails.

"Hey, brother, quit playing!" ZERO called out to the young playful number.

"Brother ZERO, come closer! Come, both of you! Ah, I'm so glad you convinced ONE to meet his relatives! My dear ONE, I'm TWO, and by the order of numbers, I am, of course, the second."

"What do you mean you are the second?" the slender ONE asked in surprise.

"Why are you so surprised? It's high time you met us, because you're not all alone in this world."

"But how come I've never known anything about this? I have so many relatives and I had no clue?"

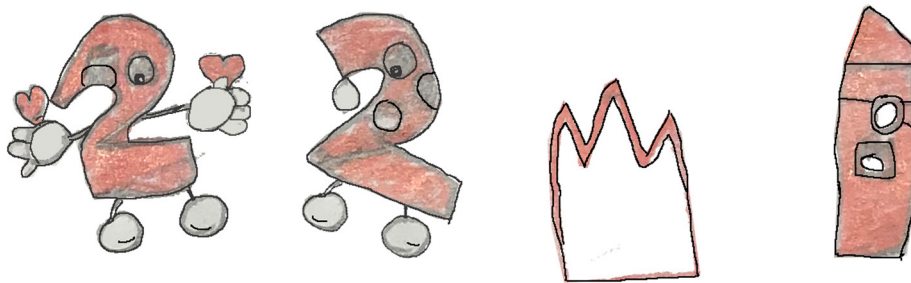
"Now it's time for you to find out! ZERO was kind to you and you shall discover a lot of new things, if you are willing to."

"But, TWO, what are you doing here with these snails?" ZERO wandered in surprise.

"If you look a little closer, we do look quite alike and these two friends are teaching me how to climb up the flower's stem so I can get a better look around me. It's so good to have friends! ZERO, brother ONE must meet all of our friends!"

"My dear TWO, let the snails play and come with us to find THREE." ZERO went on cheerfully.





”Who’s THREE?” asked ONE with curiosity.

”You’re about to see, my friend, that THREE is rather sprightly. Just before you came, he was swinging in the trees. Ah, there he is, up there in the willow-tree”, added our playful TWO.

Of course, this story would not be complete without the little boy, who convinced his brother to go to the park together. He was on a secret mission, he had to uncover the whole story, sketch it, and let these pictures bear witness of his discoveries. He would have asked a lot of questions, but he didn’t want to interrupt the story, because what if the numbers disappeared, out of fear or simply because the spell of their world would have been broken? So he sat there, quiet as a mouse, and watched, and listened – as he was the only one who could hear this dialogue – and, of course, he drew. But let’s get back to the numbers’ world and carry on with our story!

ZERO and TWO doubled over laughing, while ONE was merely confused.

"I can't see him, but what's he doing up in the tree anyway?" ONE wondered.

"Hold on a second and you'll find out", answered ZERO.

"Brother THREE, quit the swinging and come here. ONE has come to meet you!" TWO called out, amused.



THREE was hanging onto a branch, swaying softly in the soft spring breeze.

"Welcome, ONE! I'm glad you want to meet us. This way, you won't be so alone in the world, you know, so one of a kind, as you always say."

THREE, TWO and ZERO laughed at the face ONE made, who was utterly surprised, and behind his corner, the little boy, the one to whom this story is dedicated, watched the whole scene in awe, trying not to miss a single word from the mischievous numbers' conversation.

"Let me introduce myself: my name is THREE, I am the next in line after TWO, and together and only together not only are we very strong, but also... beautiful."

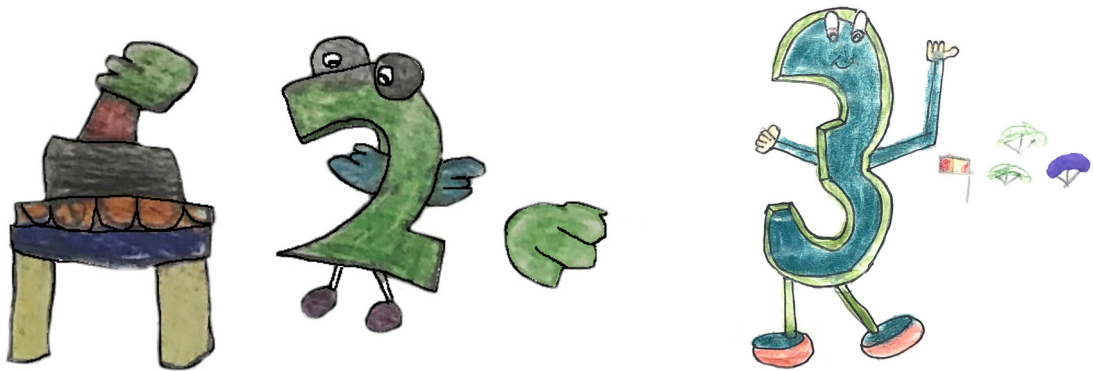
THREE swung happily on his branch and giggled at every move.

"But what are you doing up there in the trees?" asked ONE, confused.

"I was waiting for you and I didn't want to get bored so I grabbed a branch and hung onto it. I do, in fact, have the shape of a hook and swinging is a lot of fun for me. When the park is full of people, they use me like a coat hook, but I don't mind because I do want to be useful for them. Why don't you hang onto me for a minute, ONE, so I can give you a spin too? Just wait to see how beautiful the world is from up here."

ONE gave in to THREE's enthusiasm and saw that he indeed had a different view of the world. Both ZERO and TWO were glad that THREE convinced him, but they wanted to introduce all the other friends to ONE as well. It was time they were united.

"Hey, THREE, stop now, we must press on, we still have lot to do!" shouted ZERO.





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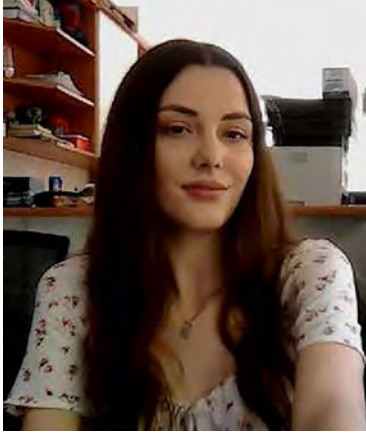
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Diana Gabriela Radu is a literary translator, short story writer, and language teacher (English and German). She completed her Master's degree in the Translation of Contemporary Literary Texts (MTTLC) at the University of Bucharest. Her academic research focused on the phenomenon of self-translation, exploring the artistic freedom of the bilingual creator and how a text's true meaning only unfolds when its linguistic versions complement each other. As an active editorial collaborator with Leviathan

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