



★ On A Magical Do-Nothing Day ★

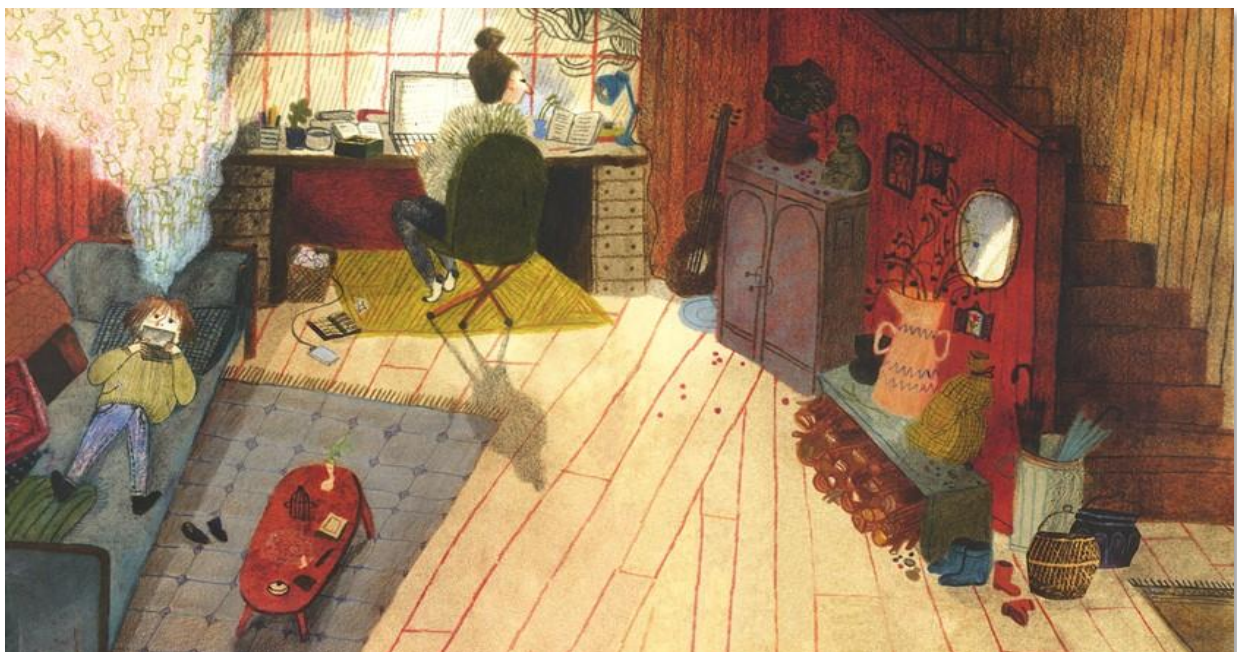
Here we were again.

Me and Mum in the same cabin.

The same forest.

The same rain. Dad back in the city.

Mum sat at her desk, quietly writing, while I destroyed Martians.



Actually, I was just pressing the same button over and over. I wished Dad were here.

‘What about a break from your game?’ Mum growled.

‘Is this going to be another day of doing nothing?’

She was right. There was nothing I wanted to do. Except destroy Martians.

She took the game out of my hands and hid it, as usual.

I found it, as usual, and went outside...



...where it felt like everything in our garden was hiding from the rain.

I held my game tightly.

Maybe it would protect me from this boring, wet place.



I walked down the hill.

At the bottom of our path, I saw some flat rocks in the pond.

The rocks were round - like the heads of the Martians.

I decided to jump on them and crush them.

Oh no! What did I do?

My game fell in the pond!

This **COULD NOT** be happening to me!

I stuck my hand into the water to grab it. It was so icy-cold, I screamed.

Without my game, I had nothing to do.





The rain was so hard it felt like rocks hitting me.

I was a small tree caught in a hurricane.

Just then, there were four lights, and four huge snails appeared.

'Is there anything to do around here?' I asked them.

'Yes, indeed,' they told me. I reached out and touched their antennae - they were as soft as jelly. It made me smile.

I followed them down the path and soon I found dozens of mushrooms. The air was so damp. I knew the smell from when I was small - my grandparents' basement. My cave of treasures.



I knew that there was something special close by. That I was surrounded.

I bent down and dug my fingers into the mud, where a thousand seeds and pellets, kernels, grains, roots and berries touched my fingers and hands. An underground world full of treasures that I could feel!



I looked up at the sky. Sunbeams fell down through a giant sieve and blinded me.

I thought I heard the beat of drums from far away, but it was just my heart!

I felt filled with energy and began running fast.

So fast, I fell down the hill.

And there at the bottom, everything was turned upside down. The whole world seemed brand new as if it had just been created right in front of me.





I climbed a tree and looked out as far as my eyes could see.

I breathed in air until my lungs were bursting.

I drank the raindrops like an animal would.

I noticed bugs I'd never seen before.





I talked to a bird.

I noticed bugs I'd never seen before.

I collected smooth stones as clear as glass
and watched the world shining through them.

Why hadn't I done these things before?



Soaked to the bone, I ran inside the house, took off my coat, and looked in the mirror.

Ohhhh... Ohhh! I thought I saw my dad smiling at me.

My mother was there, still writing, but now she looked different - like one of the creatures outside.

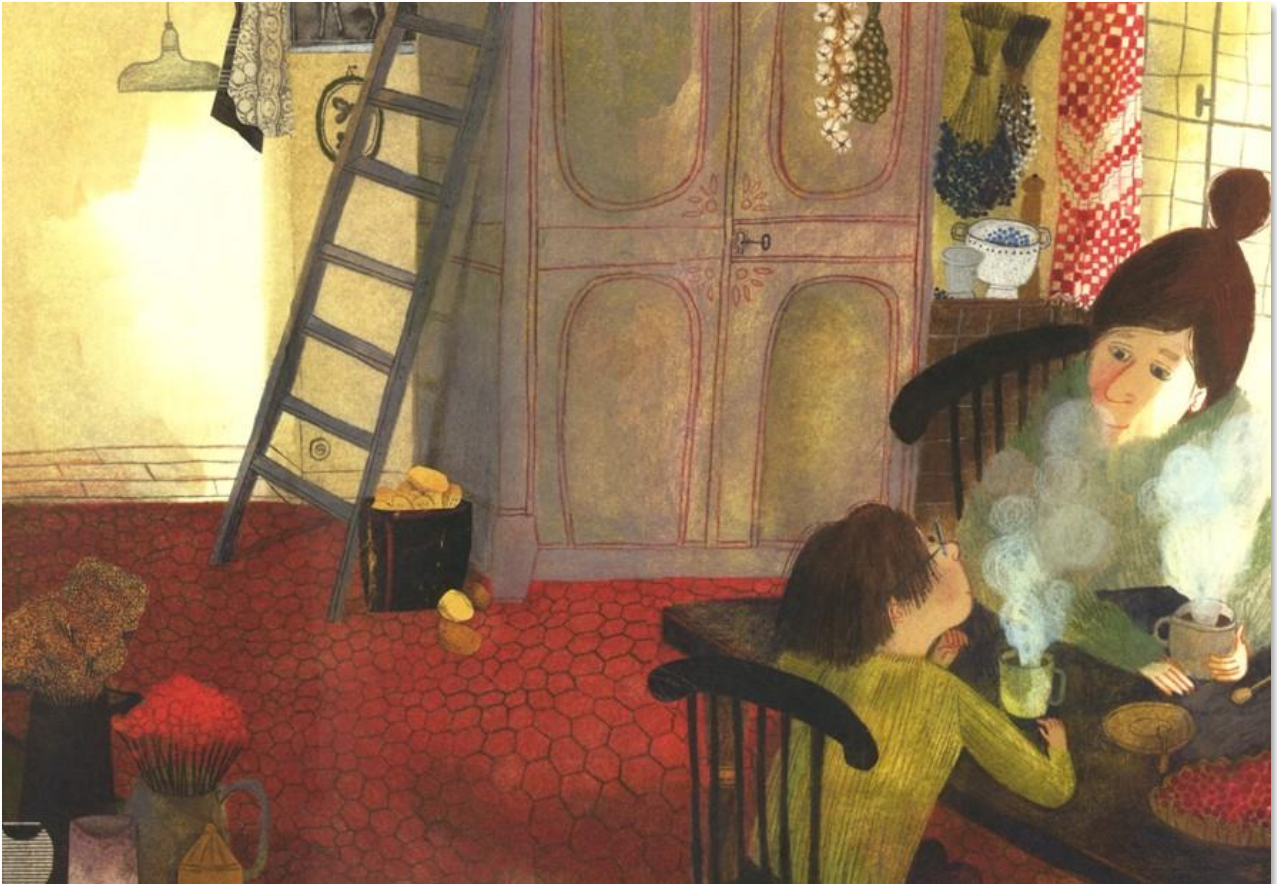
'Oh! You're soaked through. Let me dry you.'

She took a towel and we went to the kitchen.

I felt like giving her a big hug. I wanted to tell her what I had seen, felt and tasted outside in the world.

But I didn't. We just sat in the kitchen, looked at each other, and breathed in the delicious smell of our hot chocolate.

That's it. That's all we did.



On this magical do-nothing day.



Beatrice Alemagna
On A Magical Do-Nothing Day
London, Thames and Hudson, 2017