

The White Stone

Kirste Paltto

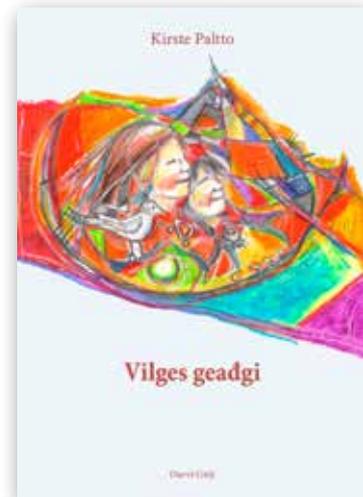
The White Stone is a children's fantasy story about five year old Elle. From her granny, Elle hears stories about Duottarháldi, a mountain spirit that lives on Ptarmigan Mountain.

Elle makes friends with Sáija, an underworld person who comes from Ptarmigan Mountain. To start with Sáija often comes to Elle to play and have fun. Then one day Sáija invites Elle to come with her to Ptarmigan Mountain. They travel on the wings of the wind. Many strange things happen there. A white wagtail gives Elle a magic white stone, as a present for rescuing a wagtail from a cat. This stone will be of great help. Returning home, Elle has a lot to think about, especially about her granny's wooden chest.

This work of speculative fiction is written for young readers with soothing illustrations by Ulrika Tapio Blind. This text could be considered by Western readers to be folklore, legend, or fairy tale. The literature of the Sámi people is often interwoven with their oral traditions and ties to nature, and it is an excellent representation of how stories are told in the Sámi tradition. The White Stone tells the story of Elle, a young girl, and the things that she learns about being a Sámi person while on a journey to meet the Mountain Spirit. Elle meets Sáija, a *gufihtar* (underworld) girl from under Ptarmigan Mountain, and together they help herd reindeer and play with other children on Elle's spirit journey.

The White Stone is focused on teaching cultural values and traditions related to kinship ties and ways of being. Nature and the spirit of nature fills this text and informs the characters with the message that being able to communicate in Sámi is how their identity will be maintained. At one point – Gollenieida – the wise mother of Sáija, cautions Elle about losing her mother tongue;

«They will try to trick us into forgetting our language, our ways of thinking and our way of life. But I hope you'll never do that, even if someone tried».



Vilges geađgi

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Kirste Paltto (1947) grew up in the Tana valley in northern Finland and now lives in Rovaniemi. She became the first Sámi female author to be published with the release of her collection of short stories, *Soaghu* (The Betrothal) in 1971. She is a well-known Sámi author who writes for children and adults. She has numerous publications in Sámi, which have been translated into Finnish, German, Norwegian, and English. Her topics deal with everyday life and what it means to be an Indigenous person in a colonized place. She has won numerous awards, including the Sámi Parliament's Culture Prize (1997) and the Sámi Councils Literature Prize (2001). It is important to note that Sámi Literature is very young in its lifetime of publications; the language itself did not have a uniform way of being written until 1978. The first edition was published in 1980, and today this book is considered a classic.