

IRENA MARUŠIČ

# HAPPY VALLEY

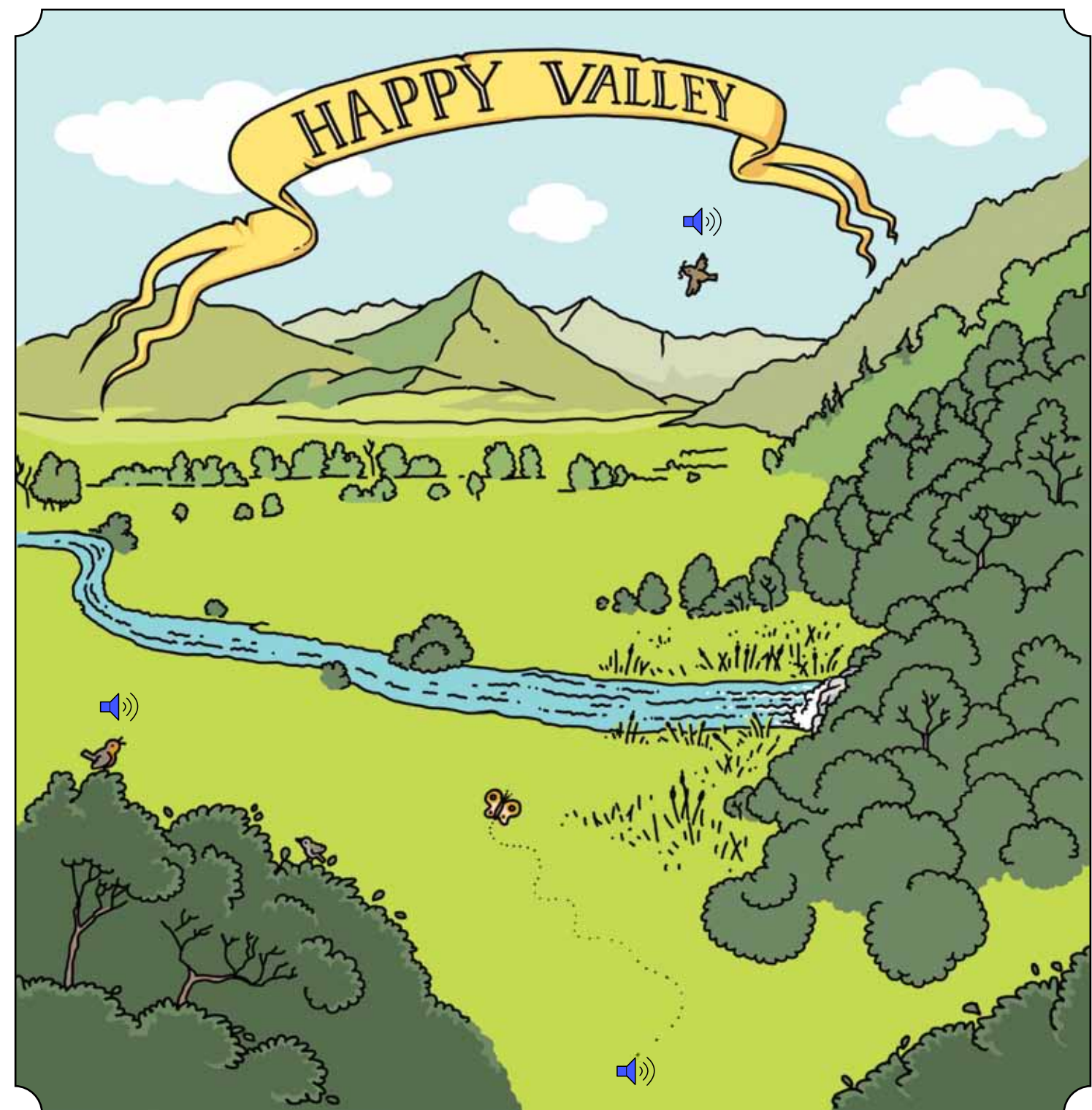
A HISTORICAL TALE  
IN PICTURE, WORD AND SOUND

Illustrations MATJAŽ DEKLEVA



TECHNICAL  
MUSEUM  
OF SLOVENIA





Let's embark on an exciting historical journey in picture, word and sound. We'll discover the vibrant, unusual and sometimes mysterious past of what was originally a monastery and later a castle. Today, it's the home of the Technical Museum of Slovenia.





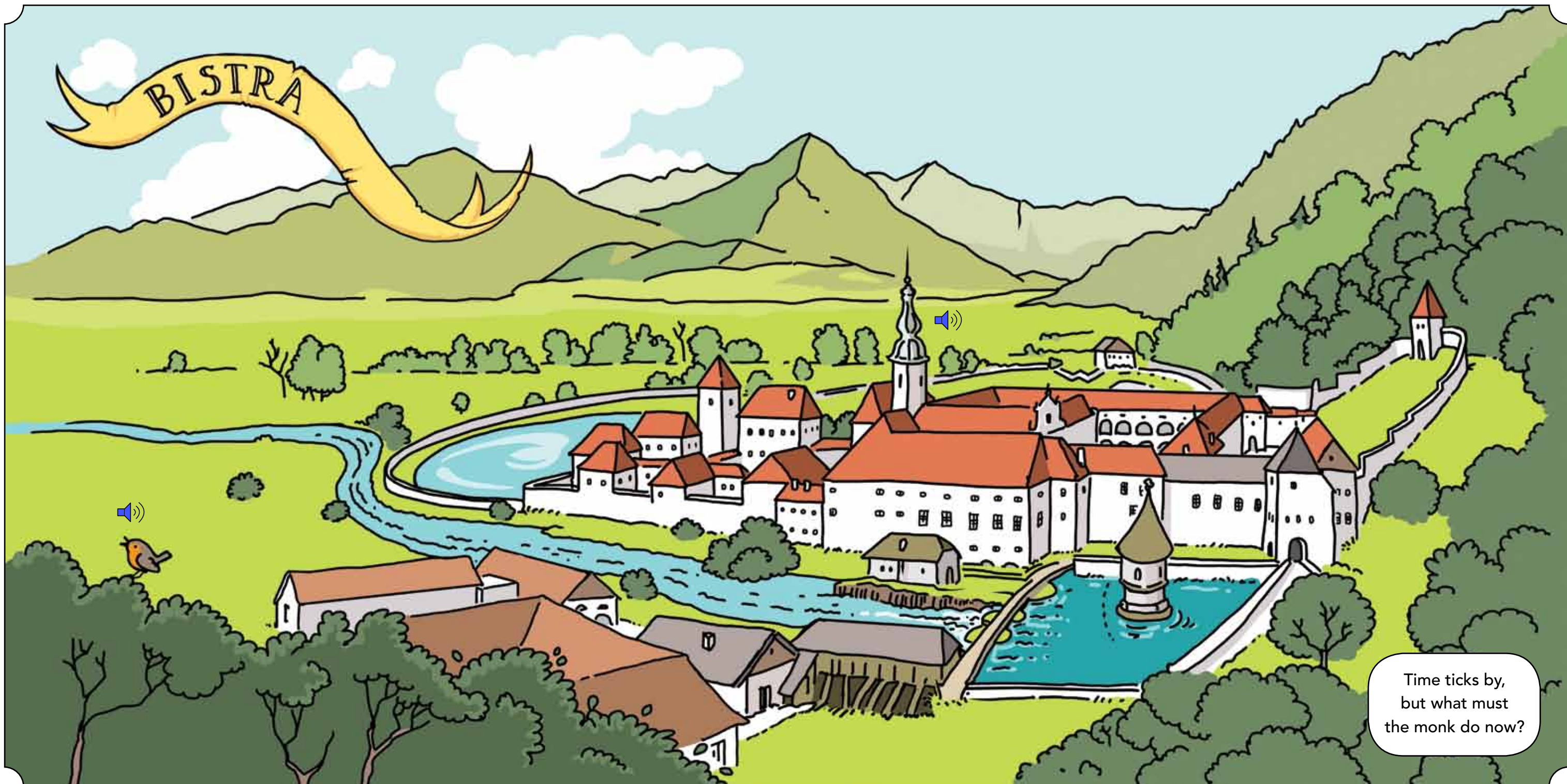


Once upon a time some monks from France walked to a faraway country in search of a new home. After a long and tiring journey they arrived at a place called Happy Valley.

They liked it and decided to build a monastery there. The monks were of the Carthusian Order, so the monastery was known as a Charterhouse.



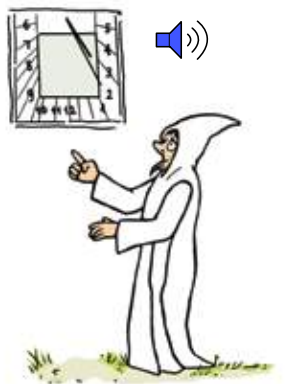




Time ticks by,  
but what must  
the monk do now?

Over the centuries the magnificent Charterhouse grew – unequalled, far and wide. It went through good and bad times and its appearance altered. But that wasn't all that changed, it also gained a new name. Because of the crystal clear waters running close by, Happy Valley became Bistra.

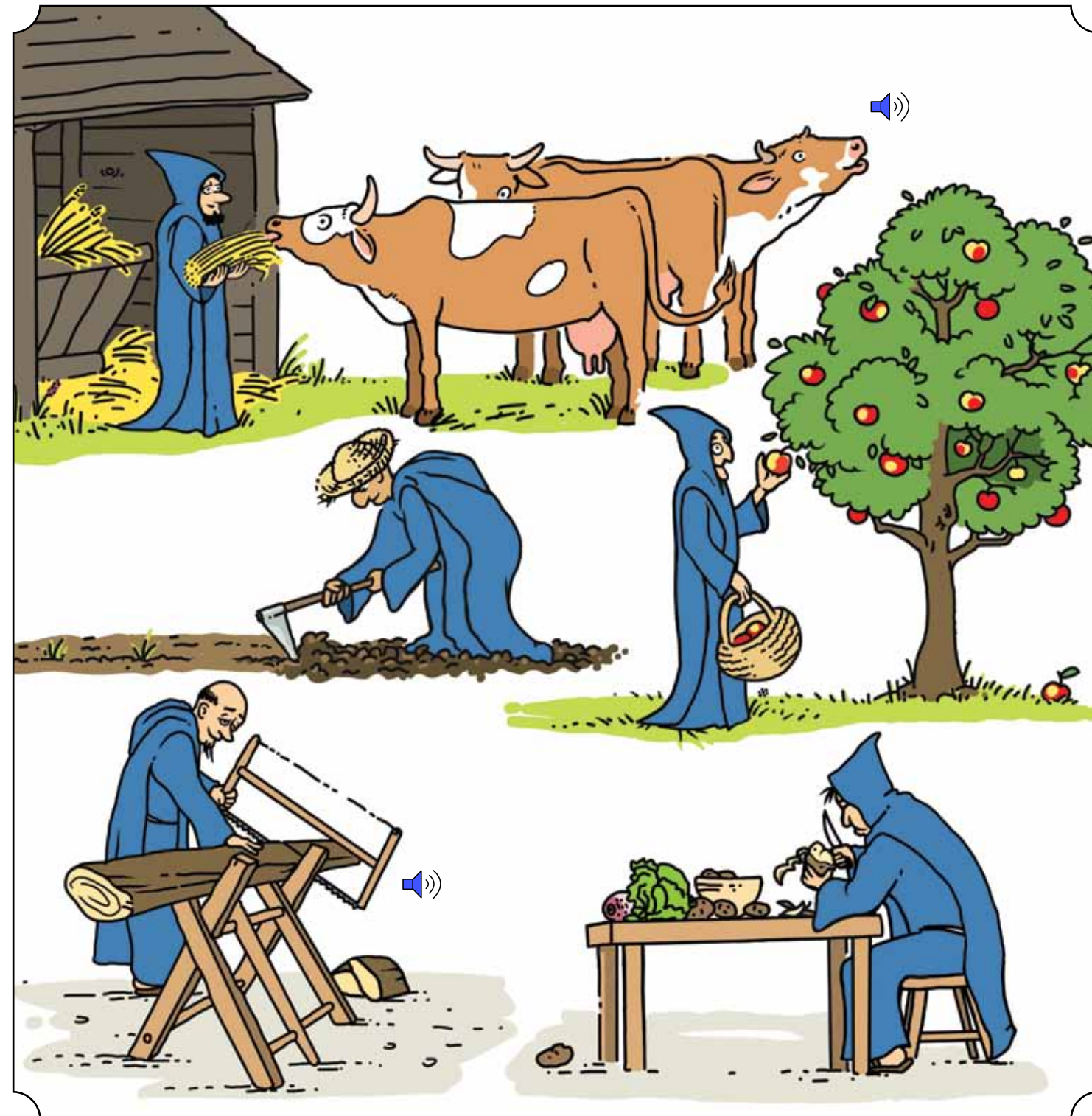
Life of monks behind the massive walls wasn't easy, as there were strict rules about behaviour, work and food. They were rarely allowed to speak. But they weren't bored, because their schedule was thoroughly planned.







Their monastery was divided in two parts. The choir monks, hermits, lived in the upper house. They were also called silent monks, because they spent most of their time praying and working in solitude and silence. They wrote and transcribed manuscripts, and cultivated a little garden in front of their cell.



The lay brothers, unordained monks, lived in the lower house. They managed the supplies and animals, practised different crafts and grew food. They did all the hard graft so the monks weren't hungry.



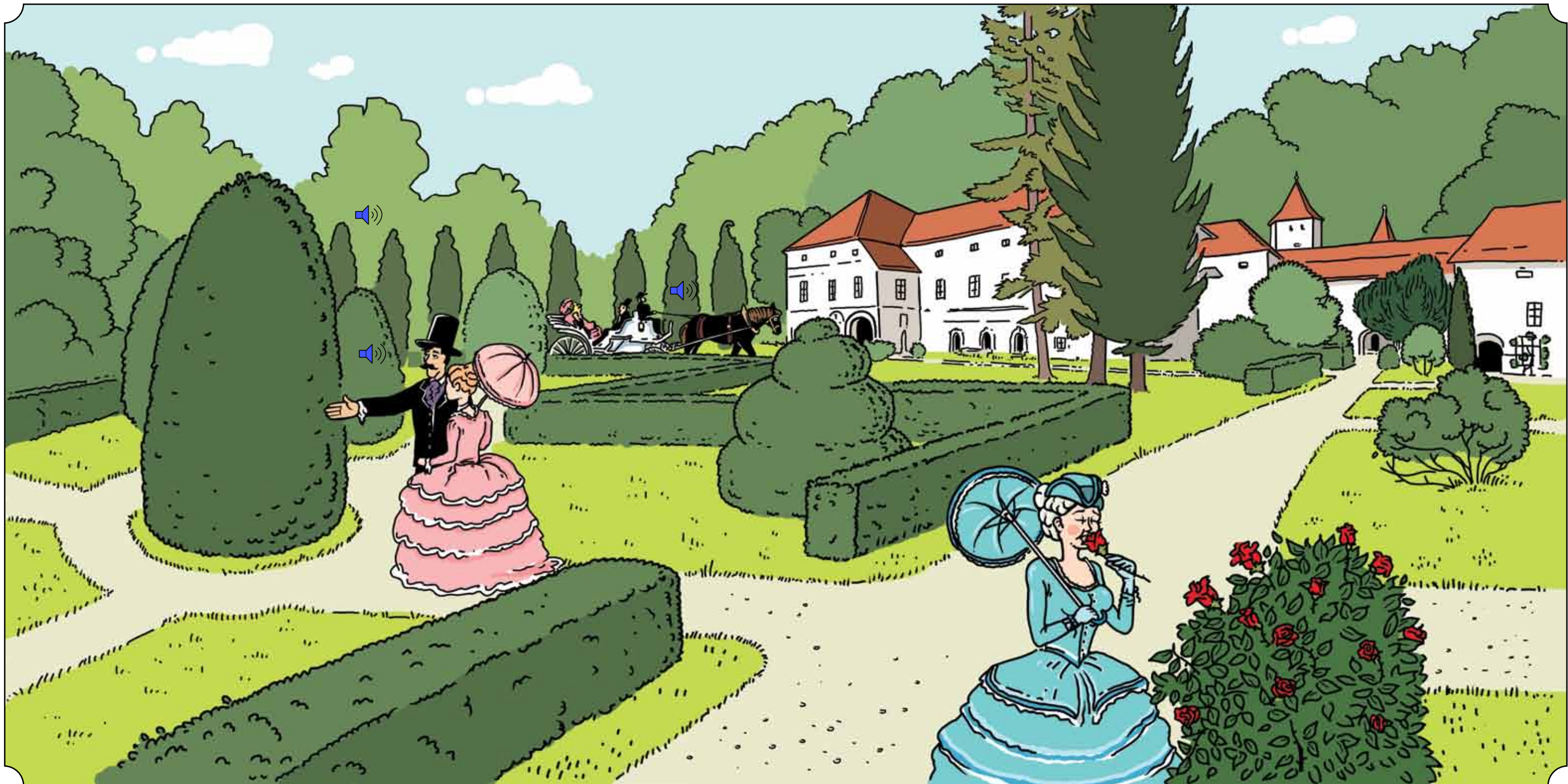




What did the monks eat? That is an intriguing question. Despite, or perhaps because of, the strict rules about food, they showed great ingenuity and imagination. Sometimes they were allowed to improve their monotonous diet with the flesh of aquatic animals.

This is when their creative cooking was fully tested. Apart from fish and crabs, their feast menus included uncommon food such as frogs, otters and even beavers. A rather amazing and unusual selection from today's perspective, isn't it?





After the closure and dissolution, the monastery was bought by the merchant and industrialist Franc Galle who altered it into a castle. He had the monk cells demolished, transformed the rooms into grand chambers and built new outbuildings.

The former church and cemetery became a park where gentlemen and ladies loved to walk. The monastery's silence and tranquillity were replaced by vivacious castle life.







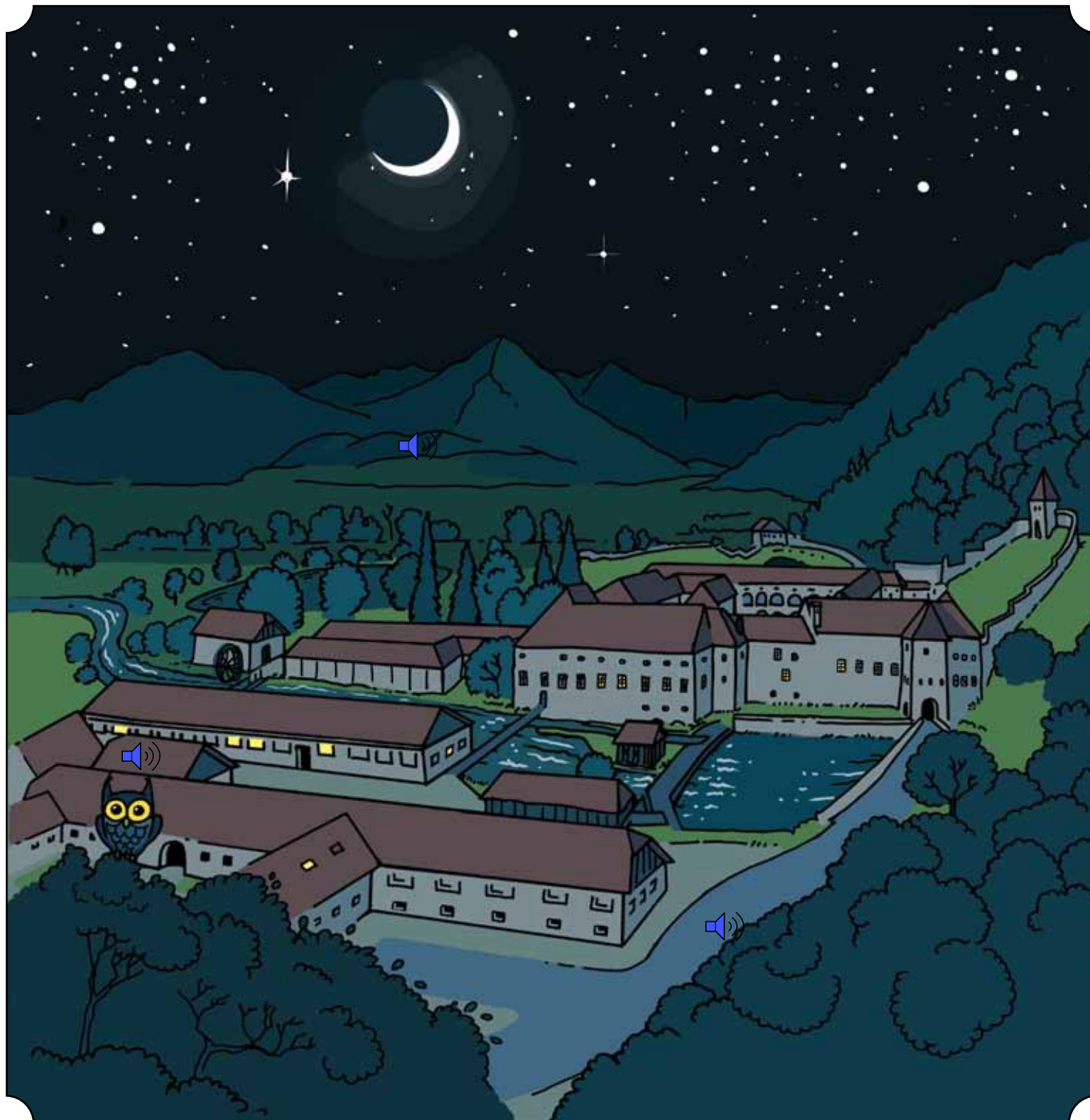
But the Galle family was forced to move out and the magnificent rooms became home to the Technical Museum of Slovenia, which in time became the largest Slovenian museum.

It holds a number of interesting collections that tell us about our technical and industrial heritage. Every year, it is visited by many curious visitors who learn how our ancestors lived, worked and played.









When the museum doors close behind the visitors and the sky sparkles with stars, something magical happens. Bistra rests in silence and you can only hear the distant sounds of night birds and the murmur of clear water. It is almost as quiet and mysterious as it was when the silent monks lived here...

## HAPPY VALLEY

### A historical tale in picture, word and sound

In the book *Happy Valley*, the story of the unusual and rich history of Bistra is full of different sounds. But did you ever ask yourself, what is sound? How do we hear? What is the mechanism of hearing – and what is silence? Probably not, because we can hear sound without putting in any effort. However, it is always good to know the basic facts. So here we go...

## SOUND

To put it simply, sound is everything that we hear. It is the result of a mechanical movement caused by natural elements or by the activities of humans. It is our lifetime companion and is present everywhere, although we may not be always aware of it.

*Close your eyes and prick up your ears. You will be surprised by all different sounds you perceive if you are focused just on listening.*

## HEARING

Hearing is a very sensitive sense that enables the perception of sound. It helps us communicate, discover the world around us and warns us of danger. We can hear what we can't see, and we hear even when totally unaware of doing so – in our sleep.

*Did you know that people do not perceive all the sounds that are in their environment. Some animals, like dolphins, dogs, cats and bats perform a lot better than humans in being able to hear far higher or lower tones.*

## EAR

The credit for being able to hear goes to an apparently simple, but in fact a rather complex organ – the ear. The outer ear, which is the only visible part of the auditory system, directs sound through a special canal to the middle and inner ear. All parts work together and send sounds to the brain, which interprets this and then tells us what we are hearing.



If you want to learn more about the ear and hearing, watch this short film: <https://dotsub.com/view/9c7ca58c-0b1a-49d5-bebc-3716e3c79ea0>

## NOISE

Sound is mostly pleasant but it can be very disturbing if too loud. Such sound is called noise. It can come from nature (thunder, the sound of a waterfall) but often it is produced by man (traffic, machinery and other such devices). Long and frequent exposure to noise should be avoided because it can damage hearing.

*When do you think Bistra was the noisiest? When it was inhabited by monks, when the nobility lived here or perhaps today, with so many visitors?*

## SOUND and NOISE

It is difficult to draw a line between sound and noise because it depends both on the listener and the circumstances. Sounds experienced by someone as noise could be totally pleasant to another (such as listening to loud music, the sound of a racing car or computer games). It is also known that the person who produces a sound finds it less disturbing than the person who only listens to it.

*From the sounds in the book, pick the one that you find most pleasant and the one you think is just noise.*

## NO SILENCE

The opposite of sound is silence – which cannot be experienced by a normal-hearing person in everyday life. A special insulated room called an anechoic chamber is as close as it gets. Although we all sometimes want to be 'left in silence', we actually feel rather uncomfortable in a room completely free of all sound.

Visit the Technical Museum of Slovenia where you will find a genuine anechoic chamber in the Almost Everything About Sound exhibition. See for yourself what it feels like in a room insulated from any exterior sound.

## SILENCE

There are people who live in absolute silence because of a hearing impairment. They communicate with a special sign language based on hand movements, the expressions of the face, mouth and lips and by body movement.

*However, despite having excellent hearing, we still don't hear certain things. You may be very familiar with the complaint: »I can't hear!« Well, the reason might be that we don't hear because we simply don't want to...*





TECHNICAL  
MUSEUM  
OF SLOVENIA

Irena Marušič

## HAPPY VALLEY

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