



Stories from the forest

VANDRING book, textiles and soft toys

This April, IKEA invites children of all ages to take a little hike through the Swedish forest to be inspired by and learn about nature with the new VANDRING book, textiles and soft toys. Hedgehogs, foxes, owls, mice, ants, frogs, salmon, rabbits, moose, bears, berries, mushrooms, pine cones, trees and more – they're what you'll encounter as you wander through the VANDRING collection, which in Swedish means 'migration' or 'hike.'

Telling the major tale of the collection is the VANDRING book titled 'The Hedgehog Leaves Home,' written by Ulf Stark and illustrated by Ann-Cathrine Sigrid Ståhlberg, who also designed the textiles and soft toys. In fact, Ann-Cathrine designed the textiles and soft toys first, with the book's inspiration drawn from the collection. In the beginning, Ann-Cathrine didn't know she would illustrate a children's book

(something she'd never done before), but she did know she would create patterns about nature, the forest and animals interacting.



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VANDRING book inspires children to learn about nature, animals and the environment.

"For the collection, I was asked to think about what the forest looks like, what happens in the forest, under stones and behind trees," Ann-Cathrine says. "I live on the outskirts of the city of Gothenburg, but our house is close to a wildlife reserve, and we have a small natural forest on our property with all sorts of trees and plants that inspired my drawings like pines, rowan trees, oaks and ferns. I went out walking in the woods for inspiration, collecting things to draw from. We have lots

of animals here like deer, badgers and squirrels."

The first animal Ann-Cathrine thought of for the collection was the hedge-





Ulf's favourite character is the forest mouse because it is a good guide in the forest world. "Every Dante should have a Virgil who shows the right way," he says.

hog, which then landed the lead role in the book. And though she doesn't have any hedgehogs in her garden, she encountered quite a few as a child. "I really like hedgehogs," she says. "He was very easy to start with – hedgehogs are so friendly, I think."

One animal Ann-Cathrine couldn't seem to get a glimpse of was a fox – until she encountered one late at night in the early summer. "I had picked up my teenage daughter at about 1 a.m. and we were home, but stayed in the car talking," she says. "Suddenly we saw a fox just sitting about one metre from the car, looking at us. It was such a strange feeling – like a message from the fox that it was OK for

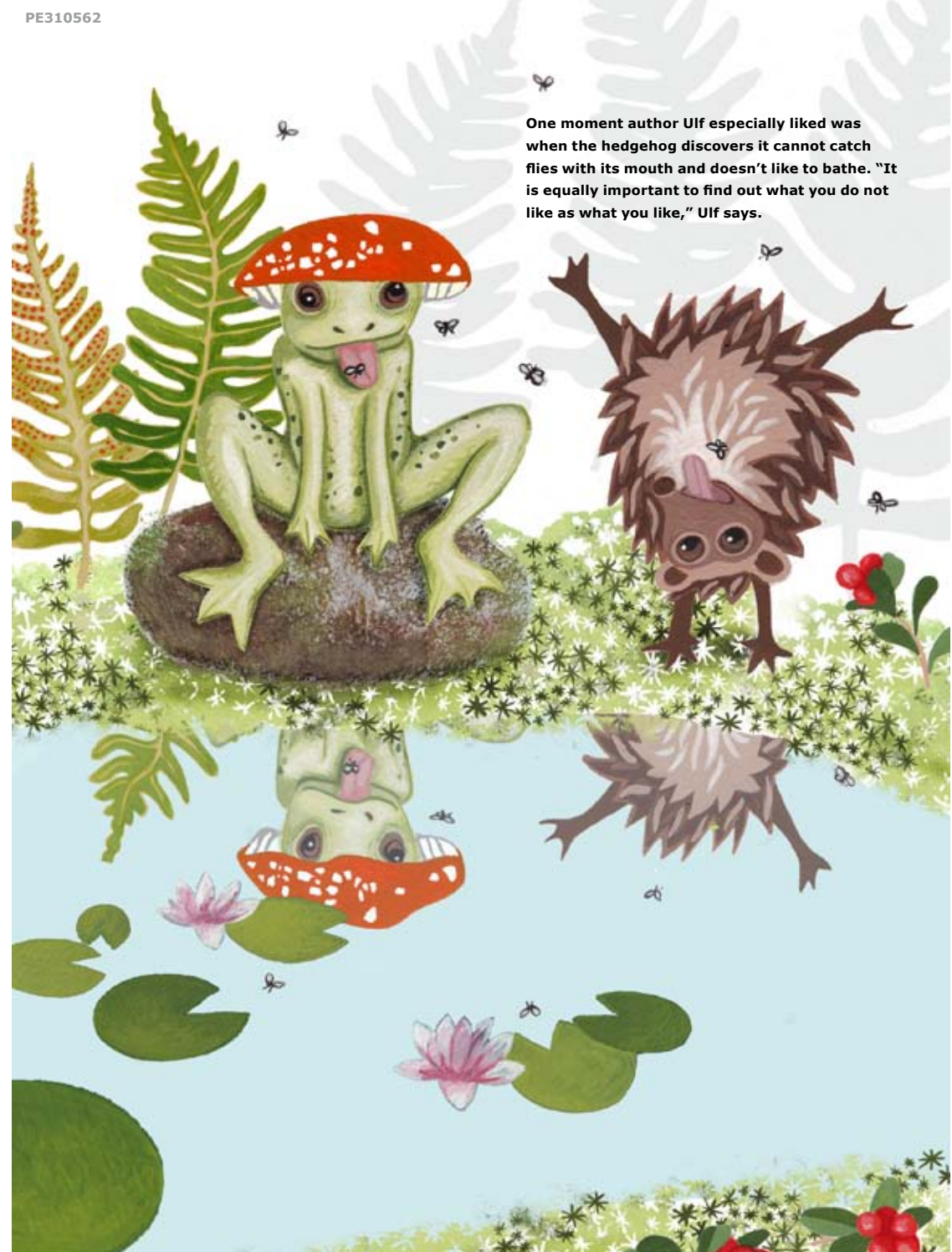
me to draw it."

Keeping the naturalistic spirit and look of the animals while having them interact was a challenge, Ann-Cathrine says. "As soon as an animal starts doing things, it's kind of like doing human things – playing football, drinking from a bottle, driving a car – it becomes something else," she says. "I wanted them to be animals in the forest, but you also have to blend in some actions that are unnatural for animals otherwise it won't be funny at all."

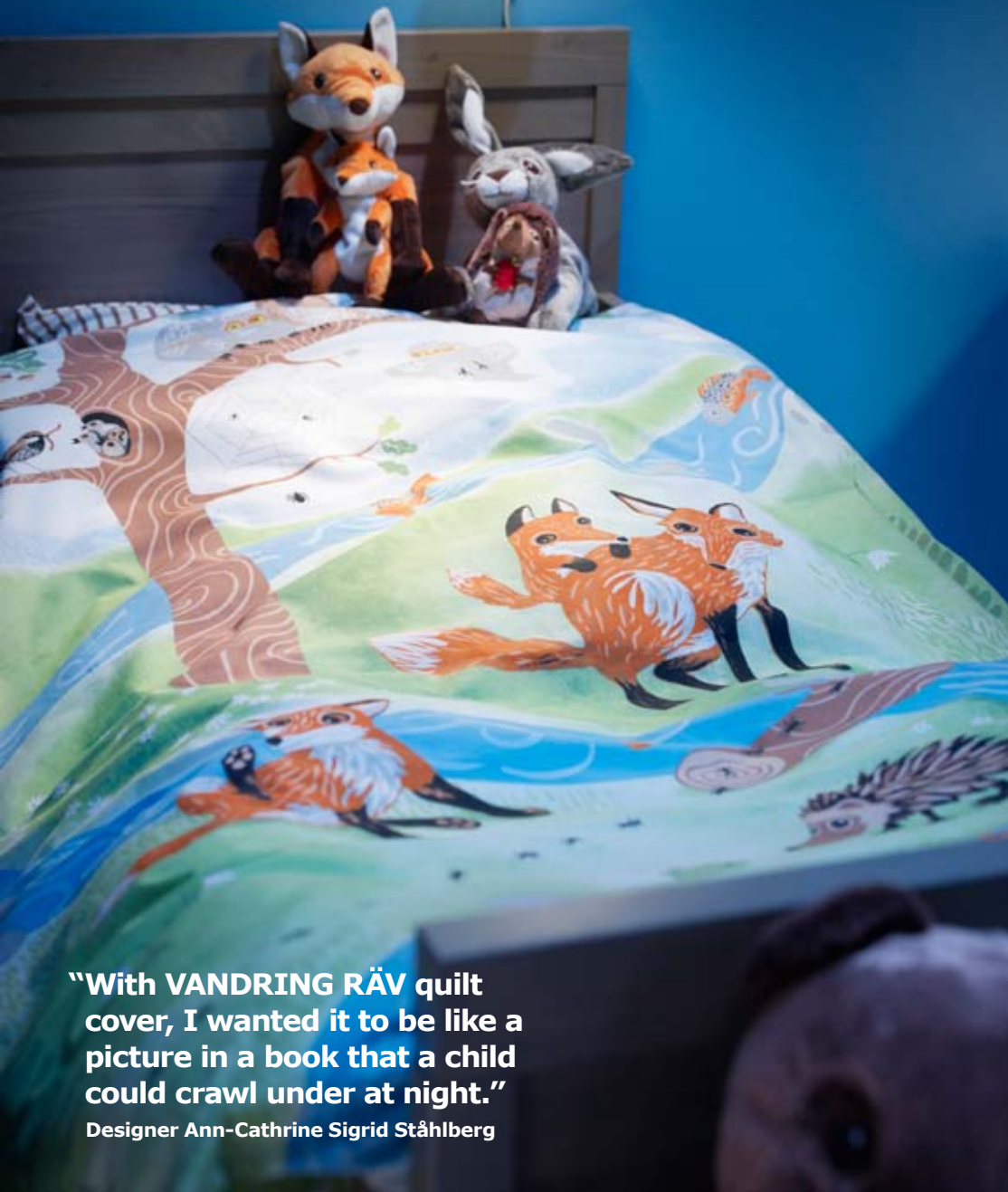
And even before there was a story in the form of a book, Ann-Cathrine wanted the textiles to tell stories, too. "I wanted the textile collection to get children to fantasise about animals and the environment," she says. "Like with VANDRING RÄV quilt cover, I wanted it to be like a picture in a book that a child could crawl under at night. And with VANDRING SPÅR rug, I wanted the tracks to be close to life size and to create different environments so children could have a playground of nature indoors."

Fantasy, curiosity, learning, connection – these are the core hopes of the collection that includes quilt covers, pillow cases, blankets, sleeping bags, rugs, towels, curtains, soft toys, a glove puppet and even a little hedgehog squeaky toy. Once the textiles and soft toys were finished the book came next to tie everything together and bring the animals to life.

Chosen to write the VANDRING book



One moment author Ulf especially liked was when the hedgehog discovers it cannot catch flies with its mouth and doesn't like to bathe. "It is equally important to find out what you do not like as what you like," Ulf says.



“With VANDRING RÄV quilt cover, I wanted it to be like a picture in a book that a child could crawl under at night.”

Designer Ann-Cathrine Sigrid Ståhlberg

was popular and proficient Swedish author Ulf Stark, who has previously written three children’s books for IKEA. The story began with the hedgehog, he says, that Ann-Cathrine wanted to have as the main character. Since hedgehogs have to leave and survive on their own during their first autumn, it was a good starting point to be able to describe how someone learns something, Ulf says. “This is true for both animals and humans,” he says. “We learn what we need.” Starting with autumn also gave the story a natural end with hibernation.

Like Ann-Cathrine, Ulf also turned to the forest for inspiration. “When I was little, I lived near a small forest – just enough to go to when you’re maybe sad and wanted to be comforted by the little birds singing or if you wanted to study the ants’ lives or just enjoy the wind in the trees,” he says. “Now I go out with my dog every morning – a walk in the woods.”

Seeing the textile patterns and soft toys also helped give Ulf inspiration. “We had a meeting with Ann-Cathrine in her studio where I looked at her sketches,” Ulf says. “I fell directly for a frog with a toadstool hat on its head. My head immediately began to produce stories.” Ann-Cathrine feels the same about the story. “It was really, really fun to see the illustrations turn into characters,” she says. “It felt like

a hand in a glove the way Ulf’s story suited the drawings and textiles.”

Both Ulf and Ann-Cathrine also take the message of the collection to heart. “Above all with the book, we wanted to convey an intimacy and love for nature,” Ulf says. “It was a book project I wanted to be involved in since many children today live far from nature and cannot name (or are not familiar with) the most common plants or animals.” Ann-Cathrine agrees. “When I was a child, it was common to bring your kids out into the woods to pick berries and mushrooms,” she says. “Not that many parents do that anymore. I hope that the book will teach children a little bit about nature and animals, and most of all get them to be curious and not afraid of it. We need new generations to care about nature and animals.”

Ann-Cathrine Sigrid Ståhlberg has created more than 80 textile patterns during her nearly 20-year career. A freelance designer with IKEA for four to five years, she has also created a number of seating covers, metre fabrics and other textiles. Highly acclaimed writer Ulf Stark has published more than 40 works, releasing his first collection of poems at 19. One of Sweden’s most read children’s book authors, Ulf’s works are global successes, too, having been translated to more than 30 languages.

ULFS SVAR PÅ FRÅGORNA

1. Lena, Anders och jag hade ett första möte om temat för VANDRING – alltså att göra en bilderbok om djuren i skogen. Med syftet att ge barnen kunskap om hur några vanliga djur i den svenska skogen ser ut och vad dom har för sig. Men framför allt förmedla en närhet och kärlek till naturen. Det var ett bokprojekt jag gärna ville vara med i – många barn idag lever långt från naturen och kan inte dom vanligaste växterna eller djuren.
2. Det är det vanliga tillvägagångssättet.
3. Vi hade också ett möte med Ann-Cathrine Sigrid Ståhlberg i hennes atelje där jag fick titta på hennes skisser – föll direkt för en groda med en flugsvampshatt på skallen, men blev också förtjust i hennes textila formspråk och hennes färger. Jo, huvudet började genast producera historier.
4. Kan vara både och. Men jag har gärna lite utgångsmaterial.
5. Historien började med igelkotten – som Ann-Cathrine ville ha som huvudgestalt. Dom måste ju ge sig av och klara sig på egen hand redan första hösten. Vill man beskriva hur någon lär sig något – roliga saker och viktiga saker – är det ju en bra utgångspunkt. Det gäller ju både djur och människor: vi lär oss det vi har behov av. Det gav också ett naturligt slut: igelkotten som hittat boet att gå i dvala på.
6. När jag var liten bodde jag i närheten av en liten skog. Lagom att gå ut i när man kanske var ledsen och ville bli tröstad av lite fågelsång. Eller ville studera myrornas liv. Eller bara njuta av vindens sus i träden. På somrarna bodde jag i skärgården, med dess speciella natur. Nu går jag ut med min hund varje morgon – en skogs promenad. Och på landet har vi alltid en eller ett par igelkottsfamiljer. Nej, inga igelkottar i badkaret! Dom är ju roligast att följa i naturen.
7. Först tänker jag. Historierna börjar i huvudet. Och sedan sätter jag mej ganska direkt vid datorn, utan mellanlandningar i anteckningsböcker. Det är också praktiskt att man kan gå in och googla om man söker något särskilt samtidigt som man skriver.
8. Jag kan nog sitta i princip var som helst. Men oftast sitter jag hemma i vår lägenhet i mitt arbetsrum. Med hunden på soffan i rummet bredvid.
9. Jag har ju också skrivit för film och TV och är nog som du säger rätt visuell. Jag arbetar för att varje stycke (uppslag) ska innehålla någonting nytt att illustrera – en ny händelse, ett nytt djur, en ny miljö.

10. Det kändes inte konstigt. Men spännande, så klart. Ann-Cathrine har ju inte gjort bilderböcker förut. Och så glädje när jag såg hur originellt och fint det ser ut! Jag gillar väldigt mycket hennes tillägg, små saker som myrorna har för sig t ex.
11. Jag tycker mycket om när igelkotten upptäcker att den inte kan fångaflugor med munnen och inte är någon badfreak – alltså kontakten med grodan. Det är ju lika viktigt att komma under fund med vad man inte tycker om, som vad man gillar.
12. Skogsmusen. En bra guid i skogsvärlden. Varje Dante bör ha en Virgilius som visar en till rätta. Jag uppskattar hans självständighet och att han lär ut utan att vara pekfingeraktig.
13. Glädje och nyfikenhet och se med nya ögon på nästa igelkott dom möter och tänka på hur mycket dom har fått lära sig.
14. Ja. Jag börjar känna mej som en ikeansk husförfattare. Roligt att nå många länder och många barn.
15. Det är en avvänning: Det är klart att djuren när man skriver blir en smula mänskliga. Men dom ska ändå bibehålla sin karaktär av djur. Annars är det ju ingen mening med det hela. Alltså får dom inga kläder. Men däremot tankar och språk. En skillnad är ju att jag som skriver är mänska. Även om jag drömde om att bli en doktor Dolittle när jag var liten och förstå djurens språk – så är det tyvärr så att jag inte pratar muska eller igelkottska. Men heller inte många mänskliga språk.