# SUMMARY

As part of my thesis, I invented and illustrated a fictional character based on my dog Knopka. In order to create the character, I studied the concept of fiction, the history of imaginary characters and sought out different sources of inspiration. Even though while imagining the character, my mind automatically went to the term "fictional character", I had to research and explain this expression in order to write my thesis based on a concept I have specifically defined for myself.

A fictional character is an imaginary figure who exists within a fictional or invented story, thus, it is a character whose nature and actions are not factual. However, the basis for the story are real life events and the story cannot exist separately from them. Ever since the dawn of humanity, people have had the desire to playfully imitate life.

Storytellers have held an important role: educate people, entertain them and share their own experiences. Even though every story has a defining idea and message, it is much more interesting for the public to hear a story in which the characters and events are colourful and dramatised. Thus, the storyteller benefitted from adding fictional elements to their tales. Evidently, people reflected in their stories the way they would like to be themselves, as well as ironic, comical, and educational tales about life.

Nowadays, the emotional attachment people have towards fictional characters, is expressed in both the street scene and also people's stories. The first takeaway from fictional stories isn't learning from the hero's noble deeds, it is empathising with them. One can even fall in love with a fictional character or start wishing to imitate them and use souvenirs that resemble them. So far, every story has a central idea, be it banal or breakthrough. To convey a point, the fictional character goes through some sequence of events.

A fictional story's character could be a person who exists in real life, their environment could be the real world where we live. What separates fact from fiction is that the fictional story or its character have invented aspects and it does not serve as a documentation of real life events. The opposite of a fiction film or story are, for example, a biography, a documentary, a diary, etc.

A person's fascination with a fictional character is enhanced by how the character is written. The traits of a good and memorable character reflect human nature and the colourful aspects of life; it is easy to empathise with the character and cheer for them. The character should be easy to describe and therefore recognisable by design based on minimal features.

The fictional story and its characters are complemented by illustration. Illustrating by definition is decorating and specifying an instruction or story. Every author tells their story from a certain point of view, otherwise the story could not be told. An artist's role in illustrating is to choose a point of view through which to depict the characters and events visually. This adds value and excitement to the story.

Since the illustrator also depicts the story from a certain point of view, the illustrations themselves can tell a story. The pictures express the actions and emotions occurring in the story. Thus, text may not be needed to complement the story told in pictures. The conclusion of the tale, the events and activities that occurred there, and the emotions that accompanied them are expressed in illustration in such a way that additional text may not be needed.

I created my character Knopka, as well as the side characters Paulina and Pigor, according to the developed principles in the history of fictional characters. I came up with a story with a message: a dog wants to participate in human activities to help its owner. The story is simple, but I aimed to convey the events in each illustration. I also tried to depict the characters' emotions as well as the situation's surrounding atmosphere in the illustrations. Getting to know the sources of inspiration and the work of other artists was of great benefit when creating my drawings. My big inspirations were illustrator Nathalie Parain and Soyuzmultfilm's animated films.

In the process of making my thesis, I also got to know myself – thanks to researching scientific sources, I began to understand why I am captivated by fictional characters as well as their creation and design. Thanks to my tutor's tips, I improved my text composition, updated my knowledge of referencing and advanced myself in the field of illustration: I gained new knowledge of composition, colour and stylistics.