

The blood donor giant

Albert Torra Cabella

with illustrations by Ermengol



Federació
Catalana de
Donants
de Sang

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*The blood
donor giant*

with illustrations by *Ermengol*



**Associació de
Donants de Sang
de l'Urgell**

Amb la col·laboració de:



Diputació de Lleida



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Dedicated to all the people who,
with their selfless devotion,
contribute to saving lives.

Introduction

Giants are part of the Catalan fantasy. They are said to have arisen from the need to attribute the things that happened, which could never have been done by humans, to some fantastic being or other.

And yet, there are times in our lives when we too can do things we would never have thought of as extraordinary. Once these actions have been done, they teach us through the great experience of loving, helping and sharing with those who are most in need.



Many years ago, when there were still no computers or televisions, a bright little girl with blond hair was born. She was strong and always glowing with health. And she was never without a smile on her face.



At home her family worked on the land, where the seeds from the trees gave wonderful fruits that were full of life, with colours as varied as the very essence of our farmland, which we can still love and enjoy today.



As time went by, the kind cheerful girl grew into a formal lady, who friends and neighbours from the Urgell region called Angeleta, on account of her calling to help others in every way she could, sharing her work and efforts to forge ahead, beside those who needed it the most.



Her friends would always tell her that she was a heroine, an extraordinary woman.

Besides being loving and caring towards her family, she also helped out with those who were sick, visiting people who had been convicted and imprisoned for whatever reason, showing solidarity with the poor and looking for cooperation wherever she went, to provide the needy with food on their plates and make them feel what, in the end, we all are: human.



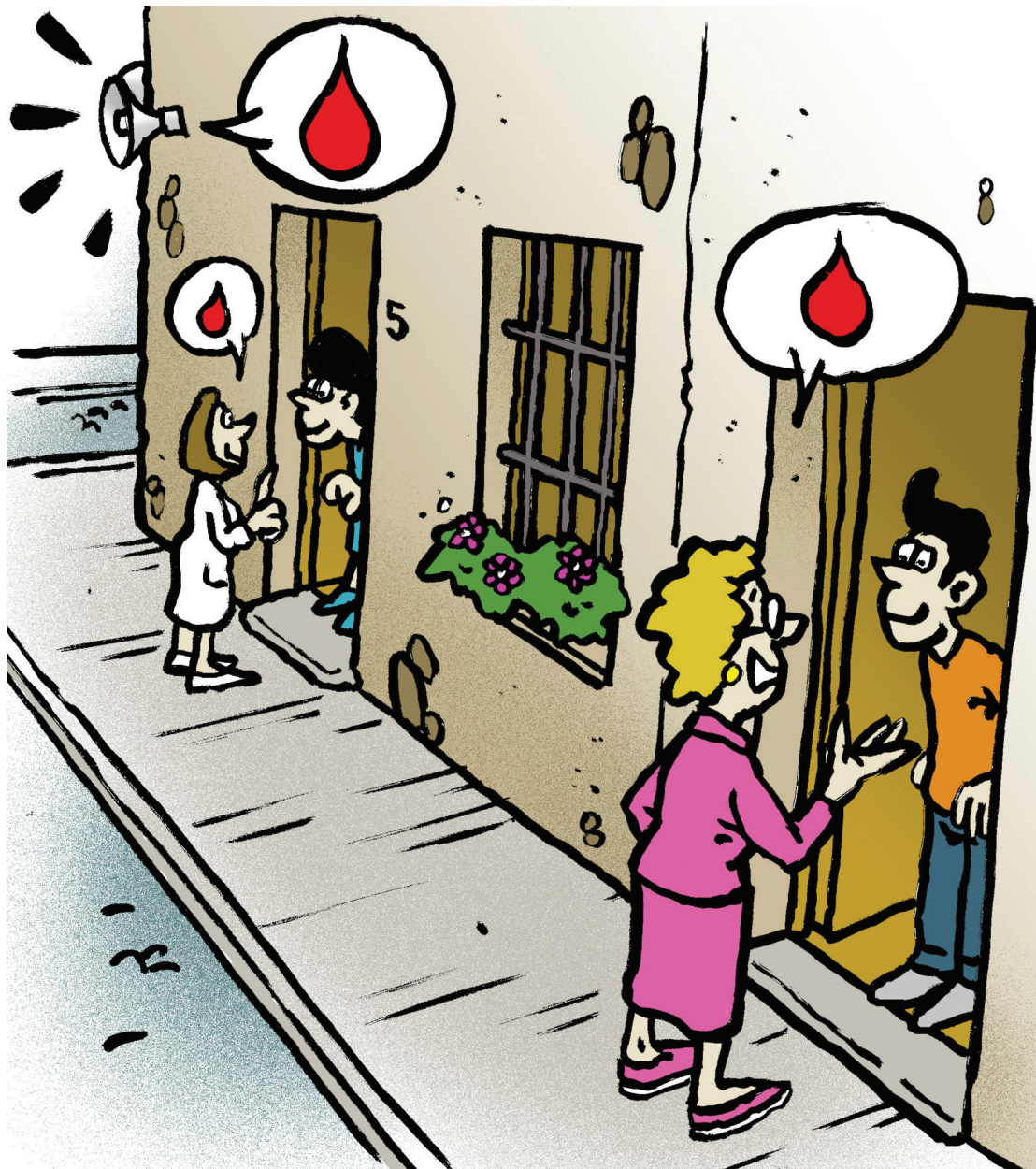
On one particular day, out of the blue, some nurses, who had gone to her village asking for help, happened to meet her.

Without hesitation, she told them not to worry because she would help them with whatever they might need.



Once they had calmed down and been inspired by Angeleta's confidence, the nurses told her that they needed some blood urgently.

They needed volunteers like her, who were able to save lives by giving something which could only be obtained by extracting blood.



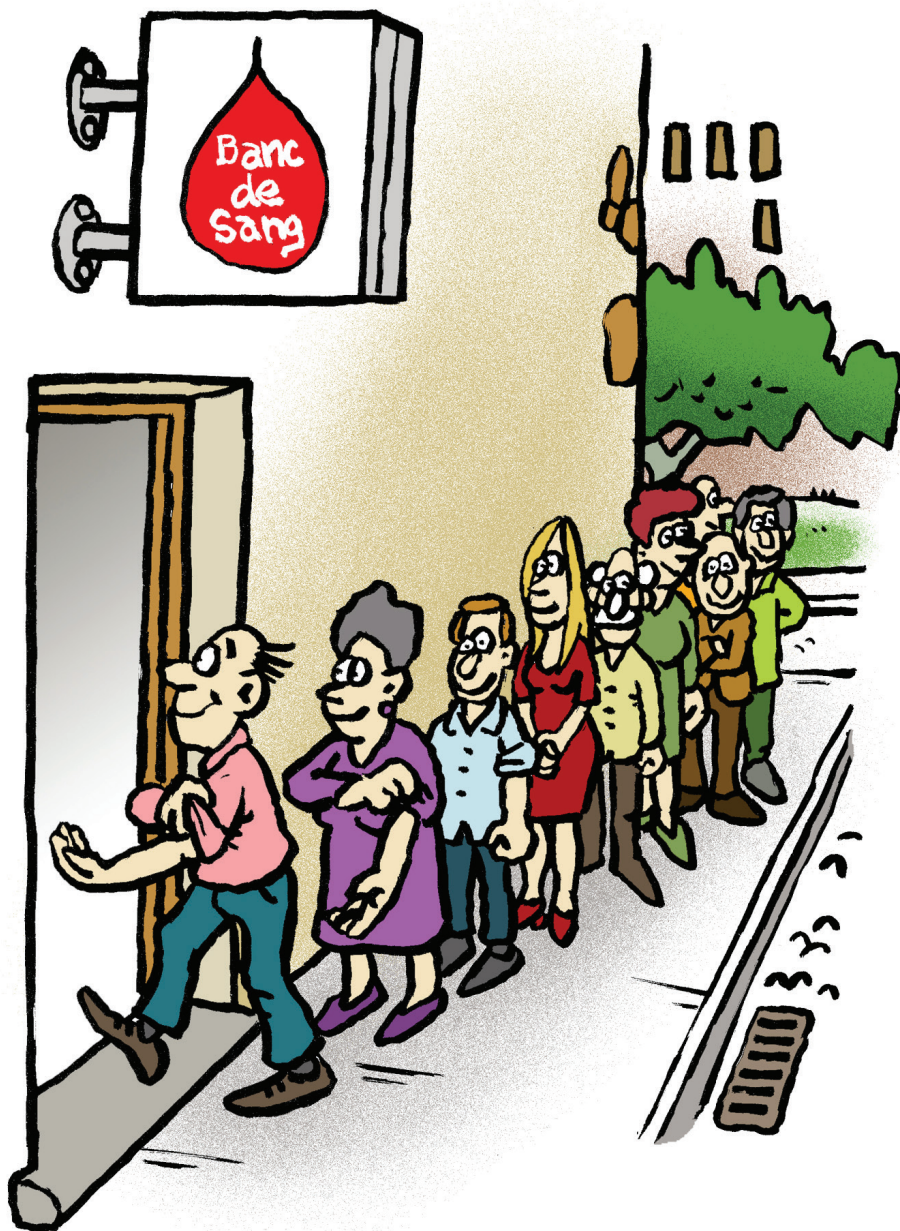
The two nurses worked in a local hospital, which Angeleta had even visited on occasions when going along there with lonely homeless people, in the hope of improving their health.



What Angeleta didn't know at that time was that the shortage of blood which many hospitals in Catalonia were suffering from made it really hard for doctors to be able to treat casualties and chronically ill people.



Once she had grasped the situation, with her usual smile, she looked at the nurses and with a friendly, spontaneous gesture she opened her arms wide and announced: "You can start straight away! Don't you worry about anything! Tomorrow we'll launch an appeal all around the village and we'll help you to improve the blood reserves."



And this is how, donation after donation, doctors in all hospitals were able to operate on their patients, to help them when they needed blood and to improve their quality of life, in those cases that specially required some blood components such as red blood cells, plasma or platelets.

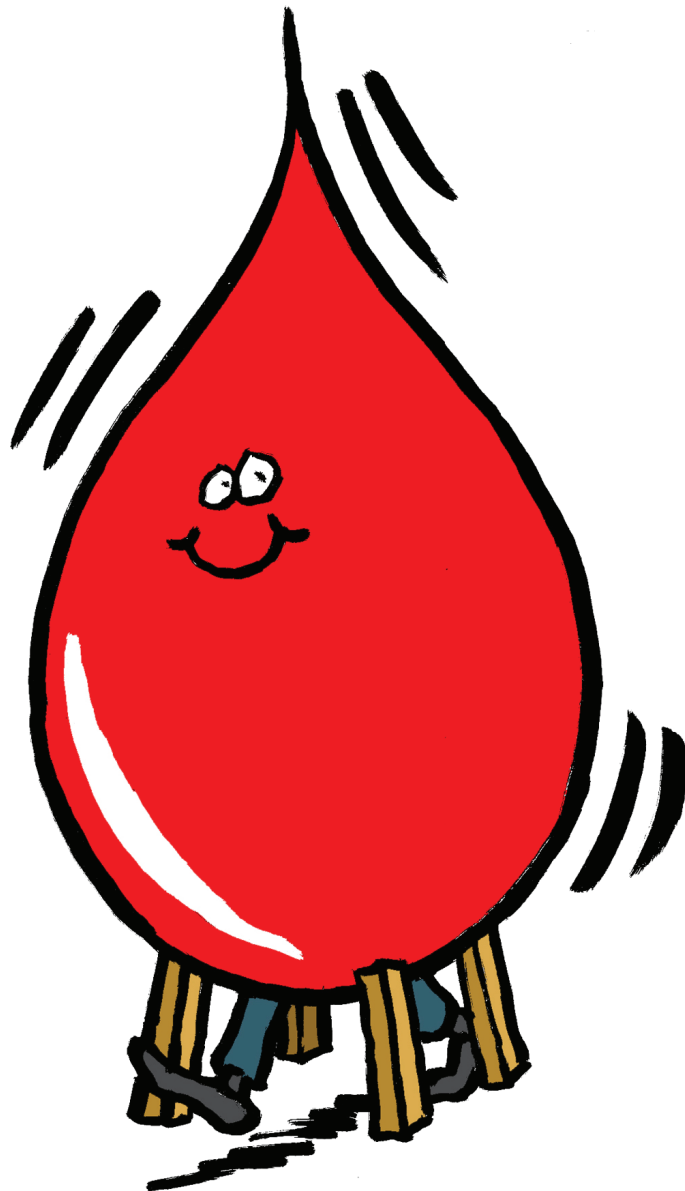


Throughout the years, Angeleta has continued collaborating, happy to have helped save many lives thanks to her own blood along with the blood of all those other donors who, without expecting anything in return, open their arms in a simple heroic gesture to improve the health of others and bring back to life people who will thank us for that ... forever.



Remember that the Blood Giantess, this tireless Catalan volunteer, who full of energy and human values as she is, shows us the most selfless and supportive side that we all have inside us.

"Bring it out of you too and ... give blood!"



Angeleta Orpella Grà (1932) has been a farmer since she was very young. Angeleta has always combined her work on the land with activities of solidarity in several associations and organizations, as well as taking part in other voluntary work.

Currently, she plays an active role in the Urgell region's Blood Donors Association, as the vice president of the organization. She lets everybody know that donating blood is something that saves lives!

Wherever she's invited, whether it be schools, or other social or educational centres, she tries to be there to spread the happiness and satisfaction which comes along with being involved in any worthy cause, aimed at improving the health of those in need of the support of those around them.

The workshop that brought the cardboard Giantess to life is VENTURA & HOSTA (Navata, Girona), which consists of Neus Hosta and David Ventura, both of whom have years of experience working with the popular imagination.

Neus Hosta, born in Barcelona (1960), is a ceramist who studied in the Escola Massana and the Escola de Ceràmica of La Bisbal de l'Empordà from 1975 to 1980. From 1980 to 1981 Neus studied ceramics at the School of Ceramics in Faenza, Italy. At the same time, she worked in her own ceramics workshop, combining the production of her own ceramic collection with a job as a teacher in the school of La Bisbal until 1984. It was then when she became acquainted with David Ventura. Together they created the workshop VENTURA & HOSTA, which is entirely devoted to making cardboard figures.

David Ventura, born in l'Hospitalet de Llobregat (1959), studied jewellery and metal arts in the Escola Massana from 1974 to 1979 while working in several jewellery workshops. From 1977 to 1980 he was a member of the puppet show company called the Col·lectiu d'Animació Barcelona. Since then, he has devoted his time to making cardboard figures.

Albert Torra Cabello (1980) has been working as an accountant and a clerk for more than twenty years, combining his job with his favourite hobbies.

In 2006 he became a member of the Urgell region's Blood Donors Association, first as a representative for the village of Bellpuig and currently as president.

At the age of 35 he was diagnosed with dysplasia of the hip and femoroacetabular impingement. This meant he had to permanently interrupt a career of over 20 years as a fitness trainer, something which he was passionate about and which formed an integral part of his daily life during the week.

As a result of this unexpected obstacle, he continues to be even a little more involved in promoting blood donation, this time from the position of vice president of the Catalan Federation of Blood Donors.

Armengol Tolsà Badia, **Ermengol** is a multidisciplinary artist who has developed his work in several artistic fields, such as graphic humour, caricatures, illustration, drawing, sculpture and visual poetry. He has also published some monographs and illustrated about twenty books. In addition, he was responsible for putting together the collection "The History of Graphic Humor in Latin America".

His latest publications, which stand out for their originality both in their concepts and topics, are "*Ermengolarium* (1999, Ed. Milenio), *RIP*", which is a bold book about black humour (2005, Ed. Milenio) and *LACTOgraphies* (2009, Ed. OB STARE).

He has also featured in thirty individual exhibitions and organized more than twenty exhibitions in Spain, Andorra, France, Portugal, Croatia, Cuba, Brazil and Costa Rica.

Following the wishes of the members of the Urgell Region's Blood Donors Association, the "Geganta de la Sang" (Blood Giantess) has been transferred to the city of Tàrraga and will be kept safe by La Fal·lera Gegantera de Tàrraga.

Through the lines above we hope to convey our gratitude to all the parties who have been involved in this project.

La *Geganta de la Sang* (The Blood Giantess) is a short story based on real experiences which the protagonist has been through, combined with a few imaginative touches.

The person who represents the Giantess, with her kind deeds and lively spirit, has been an inspiration to many people, who themselves, one day, decided to take part in social initiatives with the aim of helping society.

The Urgell Region's Blood Donor Association, along with the collaboration of the Diputació de Lleida (the provincial council) and of the Federació Catalana de Donants de Sang, aims to immortalize blood donating. This is personified in the figure of the Giantess Angeleta along with the creation of the first Giantess, as a symbol of permanent homage to all blood donors.

Uniting tradition and popular culture with the solidarity and altruism of donors is something that has to be continued thanks to new generations.

