

I was seven or eight years old when the first compilation of Mafalda strips was published in book form. My parents would read the strip and tell me that I wouldn't understand it. What an offense. What a challenge. I ran to buy it and still remember coming up the Melo hill while reading it, bursting into laughter and admitting that, indeed, there were strips I didn't understand. Mafalda and her friends not only made me laugh a lot but sometimes sent me to the dictionary. And every new word I learned came with the reward of a new laugh.

Soon, I was just another member of Mafalda's gang. I can quote many jokes from memory, but as I face this huge challenge today, I won't start with spoilers.

CUT TO decades later, in full production of "Metegol". The master, Quino, came to visit our production office. There were almost 200 artists from different generations, and for all of us, God had entered. I remember that it was that day that Quino tried, for the first time, to draw with a digital pencil. A giant like him, who had inspired generations of cartoonists with his stroke, and many more humorists with his sense of irony and sharp commentary, was giving shape to a line, but like never before, without ink or paper. His enthusiasm was that of a child with a new toy, asking dozens of questions. The enthusiasm and curiosity of someone who never believed he knew everything.

Since that visit, questions have been arising for us. How can we reconnect new generations that didn't grow up with Mafalda with this great work? How can we bring her wit, her sharpness, to kids growing up on digital platforms today? How can we, finally, translate one of the greatest works in the history of Graphic Humor into the audiovisual language?

Today, a dozen years after that unforgettable visit, we face this challenge. No more, no less than turning Mafalda into a classic of animation. It is our duty to preserve the humor, the timing, the irony, and the observations of Quino. We know we can't elevate Mafalda because she can't get any higher. But we dream that those of us who have been devoted to her from the start can share her with our children, and although there may be things reserved only for adults, we can all burst out laughing as a family, and why not, go to the dictionary from time to time.

Without a doubt, by far, the biggest challenge of my life.

**Juan José Campanella**

Julio, 2024