

PAN SAMOCHODZIK

MR AUTOMOBILE / MONSIEUR LA BAGNOLETTE / EL SEÑOR COCHECITO

DESCRIPTION:

In three first books of the series Tomasz N.N. (who is not yet known as Pan Samochodzik) works as a journalist, who is interested in history and archeology. The title Pan Samochodzik is an art historian and is an employed at the Monuments' Protection Department at Ministry of Culture and Art. He is a person for "special tasks" whose task is to solve different cases of theft, smuggling or falsifying pieces of art. In fact, he is a detective and he shows great knowledge of history, archeology, history of art, sailing, ecology or even fishing and folk poetry. That is why Pan Samochodzik is sometimes compared to Robert Langdon or Indiana Jones. The phenomenon of Mr Automobile is based on the fact that contrary to many heroes - from James Bond to Superman - he hasn't got any superhuman powers, financial or technical resources (apart from the vehicle). He is a common citizen, whose only weapon is knowledge.

Here is his characteristics based on various books:

APPEARANCES:

Blonde, blue eyes, he is wearing glasses. He is a bit hunched from reading books all the time.

CHARACTER, ADDICTIONS AND HABITS :

- he is an idealist and incurable romantic, on numerous occasions he rejected work offers from abroad, even for big sums of money
- smoking cigarettes (our protagonist is a smoker since he was 18. In general, he smokes cigarettes , but from time to time he smokes pipe)
- he shaves with a razor
- he is a great coffee-lover
- even though he hasn't got a wife and women are a mystery to him, he likes giving advice to other men how on to treat women
- he is a terrible workaholic (he spends most of his holidays at work. This may be the reason why he hasn't got a wife)

EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS:

- he has finished history of art (he is a valued expert in the world of art historians)
- he has a wide historical knowledge from various fields
- he speaks fluently German, French, English and Czech. He speaks Russian only in the very first book. He also knows a bit of Latin.
- he has a sea helmsman's licence
- he knows the Morse alphabet
- he dances very well

WEAKNESSES:

- women's beauty (there are always fascinating beautiful girls and women around him, but he doesn't want to have a long-term relationship and he doesn't take(or he can't take) numerous opportunities)
- physical fitness (he is certainly NOT the sports demon:) In first two books of the series he is described as a terrible loser but he gets fitter in next books)
- being single (because of the character of his work and of his clumsiness, this is his greatest weakness. In one of the books it is said that he has his "old-bachelorhood written on the face")

THE VEHICLE

Pan Samochodzik and his car are one. It is thanks to his unusual vehicle that Tomasz got his nickname.

THE CAR'S HISTORY:

Tomasz's uncle, a brilliant engineer and an inventor Stefan Gromiło, bought a wrecked Ferrari 410 Super-America, whose Italian owner had crashed in southern Poland. Only the magnificent engine survived the crash but uncle Gromiło made a new body for the car and supplied it in his own inventions and improvements. The result was an awful but unbelievably equipped car. It could cross the limit of 200km/h (which for that time was amazing) and it could swim!!! Tomasz inherited the car from his uncle together with the garage and he kept it because he couldn't afford any other one. When he had discovered all advantages of this vehicle, he wouldn't change it even for the most beautiful Lincoln!

DESCRIPTION:

The car looked like a greenish-yellow canoe on four wheels, with brown and dark blue damp patches. Only two rear wheels had hubcaps, the two front ones didn't have them. Above this canoe was something like a tent with small celluloid windows. Uncle Gromiło's car was scary, it looked like a larva of a terrible insect, with its huge reflector eyes popping out of its head. And its engine? Under the awful surface was hidden an engine of such great power, that it could achieve the speed of over 200km/h. From the outside, there was nothing left of the highest class, individually made Ferrari 410. But the car drove as it used to do in the past and it was probably the fastest car on Polish roads.

EMOTIONS CONNECTED WITH THE VEHICLE:

In the majority of "Pan Samochodzik books" the scheme concerning the vehicle is the same:

1. the story of the car is introduced
2. people laugh at the car
3. Tomasz is consciously hiding the vehicle's advantages
4. culmination point, at which Tomasz reveals the car's advantages and dominates his enemies
5. people start admiring and adoring the vehicle and Tomasz is very proud of it

The number of epithets and comparisons, which people give to the vehicle is really impressive: apart from "traditional" ones like crap or old wreck, there are also ones like: canoe, beetle, bone shaker, monster, hearse, flying saucer or larva.

QUOTE:

"Suddenly, Miss Basia saw the awful vehicle and me behind the wheel. There was a look of terrible disgust on her face.

- What is this? - she stammered out when I went out and opened the door to let her in.

- Are you asking about the car? - I answered politely. I was used to hearing that my vehicle was ridiculous.

- This is not a car. This can't be called a car. Oh, there are cars parked - she pointed to Waturburgs and Opels - and what you drive is a kind of an awful hearse.

Nobody has ever given such epithet to my car. I confess that I felt insulted. Of course, I realized that the car is ugly, it looks like a "flying saucer" mixed with a "time machine" and, to be specific, a canoe on four wheels, covered with a tent. People called it a "monster", told me that it is out-of-date. They advised me to show my car in a circus or in a museum of antiquity. But to dare to call it a "hearse"...?

- It is a very good car - I answered, calming down my anger. - Please take your seat because we have to leave now.

- Oh, my God, won't it fall apart on the way? - Miss Basia was worried. [...]

I haven't spoken to her from that moment, feeling insulted. "What a dumb-bell" - I thought."

TECHNICAL PARAMETERS:

- 5litre engine with 12 cylinders
- 340 or 350 horsepower
- average fuel consumption 20 l / 100 km!!!
- 5 or 6 gear, manual gearbox