

SAMPLE
TRANSLATION

JANJA VIDMAR
KEBARIE

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TRANSLATED BY: KSENIJA ŠOSTER OLMER

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Janja Vidmar: Kebarie

Monday/Pondiljak

Kedi's real name was Kebarie. That's what her classmates and her teacher Erika called her. At home they called her Kedi. *Kedi* in Roma language means to read. Kebarie doesn't mean anything. Kedi read well. But her hand writing was terrible. The letters in the notebook she used for her dictation exercises didn't stand up straight. They were bent in all directions. Sometimes even into the second line. Kedi found the letters boring. She liked to draw little tails and wings on them. Her letters hugged each other like good friends.

"Letters don't have friends," said her teacher Erika.

"Every letter has a whole alphabet of friends," objected Kedi.

"That's what we call writing, Kebarie," insisted Miss Erika.

Kedi had to write her name one hundred times in her notebook. One hundred times is a lot. It hurts your wrist. Reading was fun. Except when you had to read your own name one hundred times.

Kedi found Miss Erika cold hearted. Her *dade*, daddy, said, cold hearted people were unhappy. Nothing touches their heart.

"Their heart, *vodži*, is encased like a sausage," he complained. Then his face lit up with, "A gypsy heart is an open book. Just imagine it falling into the hands of someone who can't read."

Kedi didn't understand. "Everyone can read. They learn to read in school."

Dade picked up a dry branch and broke it in two. He gave the other half to Kedi. He wrote the letter K in the sand. Then he paused. They were sitting on the bench in front of the house. The sun was glimmering in the window panes.

"*Kedi*," he encouraged her, "*kedi* ..."

"You want me to read?" she asked.

"*Kedi* ..." repeated *dade*.

That is how Kebarie became *Kedi*, the reader.

She discovered that her teacher, Miss Erika, was not an open book. Her eyes did not shine with joy while she was celebrating with her students. The lively children's pictures left her cold. What she liked best was asking her class to arrange the numbers on the blackboard by size from the biggest to the smallest.

"Twenty four, twenty two, twenty two, no, twenty three ..." Elvis tried hard. He was red in his face like the stripes on Kedi's sweater.

"Kebarie, why don't you try," said Miss Erika.

Kebarie arranged the numbers correctly, "*Štaridvajset, trinidvajset, dujidvajset, jekidvajset, dvajset*." She was excited. Perhaps just a tiny bit scared, because she did better than Elvis.

Miss Erika dusted off the remains of the chalk from her fingers and said,
"Excellent, now let's try in Slovene."

"Why?" asked Kedi. Her *phuri dei*, grandma, said you can learn a language but not the street smarts.

"Kebarie, you have to learn Slovene. It will be easier for you to follow in class," explained Miss Erika. "Let's give it a try!"

But Miss Erika did not have to give it a try. She already knew everything. That left Kebarie all alone, stumbling over Slovene words.

And those stupid capital letters, too! In her dictation notebook Miss Erika corrected the words Blackbird and Canary to blackbird and canary.

Kedi rebelled, "A child is a child and a bird is a bird."

"Correct," said the teacher.

"The child is called Kedi and the bird is called Blackbird."

"That's incorrect," objected the teacher.

"But we do write names with capital letters, don't we?" inquired Kedi.

"Correct," agreed the teacher.

"And the bird is named Blackbird." Kedi was glad to have solved the dilemma.

"Blackbird is a kind of a bird," explained the teacher. "There are too many blackbirds for all to be named Blackbird."

"Is Urška a kind of a girl?"

"Teacher," objected Urška, offended.

"Urška," retorted Miss Erika.

"Teacher?" Kedi was waiting for an answer.

"Kebarie, please sit down," said Miss Erika.

Miss Erika started to draw the multitudes on the blackboard.

"I don't understand," despaired Kedi.

Learning was tiresome and boring.

She couldn't wait to run home after school.

"Is *dade* back?" she asked at the door.

No one answered.

Tuesday/Torek

It happened during the math class. Her teacher, Miss Erika, was standing with her back to the class. She wrote a mathematical equation across the whole blackboard. She was so deep in the numbers that she didn't hear the snickering and the moving of a chair.

Kedi was dancing *čoček* on her chair. That's a Roma dance. Babies learn it in their cribs.

The class was laughing out loud.

Miss Erika turned around. Her eyes were blinking furiously behind her glasses.

"Get down right now," she yelled.

Kedi was dancing on her chair, arms in mid air.

Miss Erika pulled her by the edge of her sweater.

"Kebarie, I am warning you," she shouted. The anger in her voice was replaced with concern.

Kedi stomped on the chair. She twirled on her tip-toes.

"The child will fall and break her neck," wailed Miss Erika.

"The child is written with lower case letter," cried Kedi.

Miss Erika tried to catch her.

She twisted away.

"Enough!" Miss Erika lost her nerve.

They started to jostle. The teacher's glasses were slipping down her nose in irritation. She pulled Kedi down towards herself as if she was bored with being a teacher and decided to become a rescuer. Kedi ended up on the floor.

"You can not dance on the chair," said Miss Erika angrily. "You could fall down and get hurt!"

"Why not? We dance on tables! Only mothers dance on the floor. Girls dance on tables or on chairs." She watched the teacher with shiny, bright eyes.

"I can even dance in a circle. Shall I show you how?"

"No, we don't dance during class. We listen and cooperate," said Miss Erika. Kedi's smile was contagious. Miss Erika did not like fooling around. But Kedi felt she didn't like chastising either.

"Just wait till recess, OK?"

Kedi sat at her desk. She rummaged in her pencil box. She gave a big belly to the letter D. She stared at the math columns on the board.

$$10 + \underline{\quad} = 22$$

$$17 + \underline{\quad} = 32$$

$$11 + \underline{\quad} = 29$$

$$4 + \underline{\quad} = 27$$

$$9 + \underline{\quad} = 23$$

She started to get sleepy. She blinked with her long eyelashes. Sometimes her mom painted them with her mascara. Her eyes were closing.

She was dreaming that the wind was blowing her out the window. Suddenly she was high up. From above she could see her house at the edge of the settlement. Her sister Samanta was chasing the chickens around the yard. Her brother Arhim was racing his bike in the field behind their house. *Phuri dei*, her grandma, was sitting on the bench. She was turning over her fortune-telling cards. Some women did not venture a step without consulting her cards. They came running to *phuri dei* for every little thing.

"Mix 'em up," she ordered. The women nervously shuffled the cards. After them *phuri dei* did them one last time. Then she divided them in three piles. She read stories from her cards just as Kedi did from her reading-book. Sometimes she pulled the card with Death holding a scythe out from the pile. The women screamed in horror.

"Why are they screaming? Will they die?" asked Kedi curiously.

"Of course not. Death means a new beginning," explained *phuri dei*.

"And where is the end, *fertik*?"

Phuri dei caressed her hair. Kedi closed her eyes from pleasure. She wasn't sure where *phuri dei* ended and where Kedi began. There is no end. The women probably just enjoy screaming.

The wind was silent.

She thought of *dade*. He was climbing up a bricklayer's scaffolding at the town offices. He won't be home anytime soon. She hasn't seen him in a couple of days.

Maybe he was in Italy looking for her suitors. She was too young for marriage. But *dade* will chose her the best husband in the whole wide world. He will be searching high and low just like the prince in *The Princess And the Pea*.

"My daddy is a doctor," was Urška full of herself during the recess.

"My *dade* is a *čarovnjak*," said Kedi.

"It is magician," Aljaž corrected her. "Magicians don't exist."

"My daddy saves lives," said Urška.

"My *dade* saves our family!" yelled Kedi.

Her classmate Frelih kicked the chair so it bumped into the desk.

"Mine beats up all the drunks, thieves and gypsies because he is a policeman!"

Elvis pushed the desk into the wall. The chair clanged onto the floor.

"My dad drives the best Audi!"

"Mine can jump over three parked Audies on his motorcycle!" cried Kedi.

"We are rich!" chimed in Špela.

"We are, too," said Kedi. "The other day *dade* made magic for a golden bracelet to appear in my mom's pocket."

A pleasant melody announced the end of recess.

"But I have a horse named Cesar in the stables," said Špela.

"My *dade* astrides a horse without a saddle," came back Kedi.

"It is 'rides'," Aljaž corrected her.

Her classmate Frelih was kicking the backpack on the floor.

"And he drives stolen cars without a licence!"

Kedi got mad.

"Says who?"

"My daddy!" spit back Frelih.

Dade told her driver's licences were only for bumbling people.

"Licences are only for cowards!"

Now it was Frelih's turn to get mad.

"Says who?"

"My daddy!" retorted Kedi.

In the afternoon she waited for *dade* in the courtyard. The neighbour's *čhavoro*, baby Burim, played in the mud. He was naked and dirty. Next to him lay a golden chain. She took it to the neighbour. Then she went to wait for *dade* on the road. In the evening she sat by the door, just in case.

But *dade* didn't show up.

Wednesday/Srida

"Kebarie!" Miss Erika called on Kedi unexpectedly during class.

Kedi blinked in confusion. She was thinking about *dade*. Perhaps he was sick. Or someone shot him. Just like in a movie.

"Did you fall asleep? Show me your homework."

Kedi recollected the pages from the math book:

CAREFULLY OBSERVE THE NUMBERS. IN EACH LINE DRAW THE EXACT NUMBER OF OBJECTS DENOTED BY THE NUMBER:

4/ picture of telephone

7/ picture of glasses

10/ picture of letter

She carefully copied the exercises into her notebook.

"*Zvesko pobistendža khere*," she mumbled. She didn't want others to understand.

"Slovene, please," demanded the teacher.

"I left the notebook at home."

In fact she had a feeling that her dog ate the math notebook. She searched the whole house from top to bottom. She even moved the manhole cover in the courtyard. She peeked in the sewer. The notebook vanished mysteriously. Every *čharovo romane*, Roma child, knows that the world is inundated with magic in the night. Sometimes somebody gets enchanted by magic. Then they send for *phuri dei* to heal him. They forgot to put money in late uncle Kamal's coffin.

So he came back to haunt them. Maybe he took her math notebook. She was afraid of the dead. It would have been better if the notebook had been indeed eaten by the dog.

Luckily Miss Erika got tired of berating her. They moved on to reading comprehension. Miss Erika read aloud the story of the Magic Mill that ended up broken on the garbage heap.

Nevertheless it goes on to grind all the garbage into dust. The teacher posed the questions about the story.

Most of the questions were directed to Kedi.

"What kind of a mill do we find in the story?"

Kedi understood the story perfectly well. It was quite simple. But her thoughts were still with *dade* so she answered,

"Sick."

"What do you mean?" Miss Erika was upset. "You wanted to say magical, right?"

"First it is magical, then it gets sick."

"The mill gets broken," tried Miss Erika.

"If it was magical, it should have fixed itself," she answered absentmindedly.

Miss Erika tugged on her ear. Perhaps she thought she was dreaming.

"Why does it end on the garbage heap?" she asked in desperation.

"Because it was shot by a bandit."

"But the Magic Mill continues to mill," concluded Miss Erika too loudly.

"Only in stories," said Kedi.

Suddenly Miss Erika was tired of reading. Kedi wasn't quite sure why.

Dade would have been proud of her. He would have answered exactly the same. He knew the answer to every question.

"*Dade*, why is there a sky?"

"So that the Earth is not cold."

"Why are the clouds so soft?"

"So that the sky doesn't get blisters."

"Why doesn't a ship drown?"

"Because it can swim."

"*Dadeeee*, you're pulling my leg!"

"If all the ship sank, the *morji* would rise up and flood the world."

"Everyone would die."

"Everyone."

"But death means a new beginning."

"Just in cards, *čaj mro*, my daughter."

He had a thin moustache, like a shoelace, under his nose. He rubbed it with his thumb and pointer, laughing. When she knew a poem by heart, he joyfully threw his hat up in the air.

She daydreamed about her *dade* till the end of school. When the bell rang, she waited in the hall for Diva and Pužo. They walked home together. Pužo was really called Džekson. They called him Pužo, snail, because he was too slow to keep up with the rest. He was repeating the class.

In the afternoon she pulled her sister Samanta around in a wooden cart. Her brother Arhim was guarding the road. She kept an eye on the field. And on the woods, just in case. There was dust rising behind a tractor on the field. She was twisting and turning the cart until Samanta tumbled out. *Phuri dei* was clapping her knees, laughing. Even mom smiled.

She forgot to do her homework again.

By the evening *dade* still wasn't home.

Thursday/Četrto

Žiga was sick. He didn't come to school. Her classmate Frelj didn't have a partner at his desk. So Miss Erika invited the class to a game of 'The seat on my right is empty'. This is how it went: The student invited a classmate to take the empty chair next to him. He switched. His chair was now empty. The pupil next to it invited another. And so on. With this game the teacher checked who was the least popular in class. Which was stupid. Even without the chair game it was obvious who was the least popular.

Kedi got a stomach ache. 'The seat on my right is empty' was a mean game. She wished it would be over soon.

The classroom was loud like a construction site. Miss Erika was giving out instructions. "Push the desks apart so you will have more room to switch chairs. Pair the chairs in two!"

Then,

"Don't be wild! Don't rattle the chairs!"

The students went wild rattling the chairs.

"Don't jostle!"

They jostled wildly. Elvis lost his balance and fell. He got up quickly and pushed Kedi over. That's how he covered up the tears, streaming down his cheeks.

Kedi got hurt bumping into the table.

"Elvis, apologise at once," demanded Miss Erika.

Kedi couldn't push anyone. No one was close enough. That's why everyone noticed her tears. She preferred berating to the chair game. Or even extra homework. Her teacher, Miss Erika, just made it worse with her game. So Kedi chose Miss Erika as the least popular in class. She decided to be *učiteljica*, a teacher, when she grew up. In her class there would be no unpopular students.

"Let's start!" said Miss Erika, clapping her hands.

Her classmate Frelj had an empty seat to his right.

"The seat on my right is empty!" he cried.

"I want ... Aljaž to seat on it!"

Aljaž changed seats triumphantly. He was popular like a president of state. Every week he found a new invitation to a birthday party on his desk. Presidents like other presidents. That's why he always walked with Frelih at the head of the line when the class went for a walk. Kedi didn't remember Frelih's first name on purpose. He didn't remember hers, either. He called her Kozlarie on purpose. Sometimes even Kozarie. But Kedi knew a secret about him. One day she was late for her early-morning care. She was changing into her school slippers. Frelih was sitting in the corner. He was learning the dictation from his notebook by heart, so that in class it would seem he could read fluently. He was a lousy reader. Worse than a first grader. He never forgave her for finding him out.

Her classmate Urška said vainly,

"The seat on my right is empty. I want ... Ula to sit on it!"

Kedi thought the name Ula was stupid. Ula-Bula. There were a lot of silly rhymes to be made out of it. But nobody made fun of the name Ula. She was popular like a head of state. Or a gold medal winner. She tossed her long hair over her shoulder. She sat next to Urška as if on a throne.

"The seat on my right is empty. I want ... Luka to sit on it!"

"The seat on my right is empty. I want ... Špela to sit on it!"

"The seat on my right is empty. I want ... Elvis to sit on it!"

Kedi's head was spinning from all the getting up, yelling, and switching. Špela stepped on her foot. Probably intentionally. Nobody chose her. She hated her teacher, Miss Erika.

She took the long way home. Across a wooden footbridge. Underneath ran a thin spurt of water. Like from a water pipe. Long time ago there were ducks swimming in the stream. *Dade* told her that the stream had dried up. The nearby construction work had interrupted the flow of the river bed. *Dade* knew everything! He read like a radio announcer. Even better! When she read a *vištorja* all by herself for the first time, the story of the Princess and the Pea, she found out that when *dade* read her the good-night story, he changed the princess into a gypsy princess.

"The gypsy princess knocked on the door of the gypsy king in the middle of the Russian steppes," he read. "Her black hair was wild. The king decided to test her with sword and fire. Because only a true gypsy princess knows how to use a sword and walk on the hot coals without singeing her feet ..."

Kedi listened entranced. The gypsy princess makes it through all the tests like a true queen. The king sat her on an untamed colt. They rode off together into the starry night.

"How does the night smell?" he always asked her at the end of the story.

"Of horses and hay!" they answered in unison.

"But where is the pea?"

"*Du piri*, in the pot, of course!" He was laughing and started to tickle her.

The princess with the pea underneath the mattresses reminded her of Ula. *Dade's* gypsy princess was better. She missed him. She was his gypsy princess. Romni princess!

She ran to the courtyard. *Dade's* bike was leaning against the wall. He was back!

"Dade, dade!" she cried excited.

Godfather Kerim, the chieftain of the settlement, stepped out of the house. He knew how to read and write. He had a cable TV in his house. He didn't wear a hat. Even if he did, he wouldn't throw it in the air. His face was serious and dark.

"Kebarie," he grumbled.

"Dade calls me Kedi!" she cried. "They all call me Kedi."

"You're still just a *čavoro romane*, a plain little gypsy girl," he cut her off. He took *dade's* bike.

In a fit she started to pull at his coat.

"Leave the bicycle alone. It is not yours! When *dade* comes back, he will miss it!"

"He won't."

"You can have the bike when *dade* doesn't need it any more. We can only keep things that nobody will miss."

"Your *dade* won't need it anymore," he said and pushed her away. She staggered.

Her school bag slipped off her shoulders. It opened and out on the gravel spilled her schoolbooks and notebooks. Without them she wasn't Kedi, the reader, anymore. She was only Kebarie, a plain little gypsy girl.

Godfather Kerim left on *dade's* bicycle.

Friday/petek

During the recess she cleaned off the dirt from her books and notebooks. Under her pen tip she heard the grinding of the sand. Her dictation notebook was covered with brown stains. Tiny pebbles were rolling amongst the colour pencils in her colouring box. Half of the colours were missing.

Last night she worked on her homework. She answered aloud the questions in her reading-book. She sharpened her colour pencils. She meticulously changed the ink cartridge in her pen.

Her mom watched her all the while.

"You'll never be *učiteljica*," she said suddenly.

"Yes I will!" Kedi jumped in the chair. "*Dade* said I will teach all Roma to read, write and count."

Mother's face darkened.

"Your *dade* doesn't ..." She didn't finish her sentence.

"I'll go to school for *učiteljica*!"

"There is no dinari for school," her mother responded dejectedly. "Kirivo, godfather Kerim has found a husband for you. He will bring money to the house."

Her eyelids trembled. Her eyes filled with tears.

"I don't want a husband! *Dade* will find me a true gypsy king!"

"After elementary school you will get married!" said mother angrily.

"I am *dade's* princess *romni*," she talked back to her mom.

"Your *dade* is *budal*, an idiot!" mom lost her temper. She got up and walked to the window, turning her back on her.

The tears wet her notebook. They blurred the letters and the drawing of the coffee mill, shot by the bandit.

"*Dade* will go to the Russian steppes for the king," she sobbed quietly. "I know he will."

"Do you even know where the Russian steppes are?" snarled mom, without looking back.

"Past the forest at the Russian village."

"Russian steppes are in Russia, you fool," her mother laughed out too loud. "Do you have any clue where Russia is? You *ideš* to school, not me."

Kedi stood up from the table. She scooped up her notebooks and books and marched out to the courtyard. She hurled them to the ground. She smeared soil and mud on the open notebooks. In the afternoon she became saddened by the school bag. By the evening she was enraged. She let the school supplies out in the yard.

She was tossing and turning all night. Surely *dade* left for Russia to see the Russian king. It was still too early for his return. Russia is far away. But he will return to her! He would never abandon her!

She changed her mind in the morning and picked up the notebooks. She dusted off the soil from the covers. She put everything into her school bag. Mom did not say a word. She had never left for school without her mom combing her hair.

She checked the damage at school. Her dictation notebook was ruined. Just as the new math notebook. The old one was probably eaten by the dog. The bag was filthy. She could only be a sloppy *učiteljnica*, and not a scientific *učiteljnica*.

Her teacher Erika was far from thrilled with the state of her school supplies.

"I want your mother to come to school."

"She won't," mumbled Kedi.

"Why not?" Miss Erika was aghast.

"Mom doesn't care about school."

"I am sure you are wrong, Kebarie," Miss Erika said doubtfully as if she didn't believe her own words.

"Mom doesn't care. We are gypsies."

Miss Erika started to feel uneasy.

"Even Roma need education," she said.

"Will you show me Russia on the map, teacher?" Kedi asked.

"Russia?" Miss Erika was confused. "Why do you want to know about Russia?"

"I need an education," she came up with a quick retort.

"Are you moving?" asked Miss Erika suspiciously.

"Just me and my *dade*. He is taking me to the real gypsy king."

"Why?" asked Miss Erika with a long face.

"To be his wife."

"Don't be silly," Miss Erika said adamantly. "You're just a child! You can't be anyone's wife!"

"I am a gypsy princess!"

"You are Slovene! And in our country only grown ups get married," Miss Erika started to raise her voice. "What's the meaning of all this?"

"I think so, too, that I am a child," agreed Kedi.

"You think so?" said Miss Erika with a high voice. "I demand that your mother come to school. Please, write a note to your parents. Otherwise I will be forced to take measures!"

"What about Russia?" insisted Kedi.

Wordlessly the teacher took her up to the second floor. There was a tube with a string under the ceiling of the geography classroom.

"Step aside," said Miss Erika. She tugged on the string. From beneath the ceiling a huge map unravelled like a sheet. It covered half the wall and blackboard.

"This is Russia." With her hand Miss Erika covered an area as big as Kedi's head. It was green and brown and intersected with blue lines.

"Those are rivers."

She stared into the network of lines, dots and stains. Her *dade* was wandering somewhere in all that confusion. He can stray and lose his way! Miss Erica was joined by another teacher. She noticed they whispered behind her back. They watched her, worried. As if she herself was lost.

She didn't feel like going home after school. She was loitering around the store. All the shopping carts were chained to the post. On occasion Pužo and her got some change for ice cream out of the abandoned carts. Sometimes the homeless chased them away. They wanted the coins for themselves.

"*Po ulici vaso mandre ...*" she sang. She kicked the ball that rolled under her feet. It was late. At the end she had to head home. She was too young to spend the night outside.

Arhim's old, rusty bike lay in the yard. She lunged through the door.

"I am Slovene. In our country children get married when they grow up!" she cried triumphantly from the doorstep.

Mom, *phuri dei*, and sister Samanta sat on the sofa. None paid any attention to her.

Dade, she felt a stab in her heart. Something happened to him. Perhaps he was crushed by the gypsy king in the middle of the Russian steppes.

"Arhim is gone!" exploded Samanta.

"Mom? *Phuri dei*?" she begged for an explanation, confused.

"*Kirivo Kerim* took him," said *phuri dei*, outwardly indifferent. "He will help *njegovem kolegi* in the warehouse."

"But why?" she screamed. Arhim was only eight. Too young for marriage, old enough for work?

"Because there is no *dinari*!" *phuri dei* cut her off.

"What about school?" She couldn't understand.

"Koja school?" mom yelled. "School doesn't give you *dinari*, money, school takes away *dinari*!"

Quietly she sat on the chair. Without *dade* the world was turning in the wrong direction.

Saturday/Sobota

In the morning she wandered around the town. She window shopped at the nicely decorated stores.

She watched people passing by.

"Will you come with me?" she begged Diva.

"I have to watch my little brother," replied Diva sullenly.

"Let's go get the coins out of the carts," she tried to persuade Pužo.

"I am helping mix the mortar for the new addition at home." Pužo was afraid his *dade* would beat him. He had to go to Germany often with his family visiting their relatives. At times he missed months of school. That's why he had a lot of trouble reading. Kedi wanted to practice reading with him. But his *dade* wouldn't hear about it.

"When he grows up, he will help me in the workshop. For polishing and forging he will need nimble fingers, not his ABC."

"Just so he doesn't chop one off, clumsy as he is," worried Kedi. His fingers were just as slow as his brain. Except when drawing. Pužo drew the most beautiful horses. The first lines on the blank paper were a jumble of doodles and shades. Then suddenly, like through a fog, a slender body with a proud neck and splendid mane broke out. *Gra*, a colt! Kedi watched him while he drew. She was his sole admirer. At times it seemed as if a real horse inhabited him during drawing. While he drew, he would snort through his nose like through twitching nostrils.

She passed the town bookshop. There was no sign of the beggar woman with her baby.

Last Friday she gave her a coin. She felt a sting in her chest thinking about it. She found the coin in the school yard. It was the first time ever she found money.

"You can keep anything you find as long as nobody will miss it," *dade* told her once. He was bringing home stuff from the dump with his wooden cart. He showed her all the things people discarded. At first glance some seemed perfectly new.

She held the coin tight in her hand. She closed her eyes. Slowly she counted to ten. Nobody missed it. It was all hers!

On the other side of the yard Ula went into panic, "My two euros! Someone stole my two euros!" Kedi opened her fist slightly. She peeked at the coin. She thought she held twenty cents in her hand. But she wasn't sure. *Phuri dei* collected change in a glass jar. At the end of the month they bought milk and bread with it at the store. Sometimes they were missing a few cents. Sometimes a euro or two. The difference was supplied by a kind saleswoman. She held tight to the coin in her sweaty palm. This time she will be the one contributing to the family till.

At that moment Urška grabbed her by the wrist.

"Kebarie is hiding something!" she cried.

"Show me!" demanded Ula.

"*Na, na!*" she tore herself away. She had counted to ten. The coin was hers.

"Teacher, teacher, Kebarie stole money from Ula!" Her classmate Frelih brought attention of the whole school yard to her. The children stopped playing. A few of the teachers came closer, Miss Erika among them. Ula loved the attention.

"Grandma always gives me two euros for taking out the garbage."

"Just for taking out the garbage?" Urška was surprised. "I have to do the dishes on top of it."

"My dad pays me for my A's," bragged Aljaž.

"How much?" Elvis wanted to know.

"It depends," said Aljaž. "The most expensive is an A in math. Ten euros."

But he is a straight A student, thought Kedi. He has nothing but A's.

Miss Erika looked from Ula to Kedi and back,

"Did you check the pockets?" she asked Ula.

"It's better you check her," Ula quickly suggested.

"I asked if you checked your own pockets," the teacher said angrily.

"Let her show what she's hiding in her hand," Frelih pointed to Kedi.

"You don't like her, you don't like her," snickered Špela.

"We usually don't like what we don't know," said Miss Erika. "And what we fear," she added. She sent him to get the gym keys. Even though she didn't need them at all.

She touched Kedi's shoulder gently.

"You don't have to do anything."

Kedi opened her hand. The coin seemed to bore through her hand. She let it go. It fell on the ground. It rolled towards Urška's feet. It came to a stop with a clank. Nobody said a word. Then Elvis blurted out, surprised,

"It's only twenty cents."

Her chest stung from the injustice of it. They all believed she stole from Ula. They sometimes talked in front of her, how their parents slandered the gypsies. They said mean things.

"Ula, apologise to Kebarie," said the teacher.

"I made a mistake, I am sorry," said Ula, with a shrug of her shoulders.

"Ula, you will write an essay, due tomorrow. You will describe how you have acted and how you should have acted," said Miss Erika. "Everyone else get to class!"

The children dispersed. Ula wanted to join them. But Miss Erika held her back.

"I want you to think about why you should not accuse someone of stealing money from you."

"I did," said Ula hurriedly. "Because it would be an injustice."

Kedi noticed that Ula didn't care one bit if she did her an injustice or not.

"Can I go now?" asked Ula.

Miss Erika sighed and let her go. She picked up the coin from the ground. She gave it to Kedi.

"You can keep it."

"No, I don't want to," declined Kedi.

"Why not? It's yours," she tried to convince her.

The coin stung in her hand. On the way home she gave it to the beggar with the baby. The beggar threw a glance at the coin full of contempt. She didn't understand that Kedi gave her all her savings. Her hand was stinging a long while after.

The town bookstore was decorated with the newest books. She read the titles. When she becomes *učiteljnica*, she will buy the book about the princess and the pea. She will write a *vištorja* about the gypsy princess and glue it into the book.

She turned towards home. She had to check if Pužo managed to make a cast of a horse from the mortar.

"*Gra, gra,*" she cried running. The man with the baby thought she was imitating a crow, *kra, kra!* She was neighing like a colt. The man showed her to flap her arms like a bird. Similar words can mean different things. That's another reason to be *učiteljnica* when she grows up. *Učiteljnica*-scientist.

"*Gra, gra, gra!*" With the flap of her arms she transformed herself into a winged horse. She raced to the home courtyard.

Phuri dei was foretelling a new baby to the neighbour in her cards when Kedi cried,

"*Phuri, watch ... gra!*"

"*Ajme, gra čiriklj!*" *phuri* burst into laughter. "Bird-horse!"

"Winged horse," Kedi corrected her.

She ran into the house.

"*Arhim, Arhim, watch ... gra!*"

She forgot her brother wasn't living at home anymore.