



# *The Magic Pen*

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Magic

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On a Sunday before the first day of school, Zara decided to gather around in the woods and to pick-up wild flowers for her favourite teacher.

– Mom, I am going out to pick up flowers for Ms. Shahinian.

– Well, do not stay out long, as I am cooking your favourite stuffed red peppers – replied Zara’s mom.

Zara licked her lips with pleasure, smiled at her mum and rushed towards the door, and slammed the door in her hurry. She ran down the stairs with her usual humming and met granny Bella on the second floor. Granny gave Zara a chocolate bar. Zara thanked and hugged the old woman.

– Where are you off to, gorgeous girl? – Asked the frail old woman with a trembling voice

– Going to the woods on the hill at the end of our village to pick-up wildflowers for the first day of school.

– This grove – began the old woman – is my favourite place of my childhood. And I like you often went with friends, collecting flowers and impatiently waited for the appearance of a tortoise. I saw wild animals and of course was afraid of snakes.

Zara’s eyes were filled with tenderness and affection; she embraced the old woman, and then hurried out of the building and walked down to “Garibaldi” street, where were her favourite stores. Zara looked at the shop windows and coquettishly smiled at her reflection: mischievous thoughts went through her head: “Oh, tomorrow my classmates will be surprised how the tiniest girl in the class has become the tallest and perhaps, the slenderest!”

Zara felt someone’s gaze, turned back and exclaimed with joy at the appearance of her most beautiful friend –

Shushan; both girls hugged each other and couldn't stop talking. They walked together kicking the yellow autumn leaves fallen from the trees, as the warm wind caressed the girls' excited faces.

Shushan stopped beside a tree and unlocked the padlock on her new bike. Zara's eyes lit up. Shushan offered Zara a ride. Zara sat on the crossbar. Initially, Shushan pedalled with uncertainty but gradually accelerated. Very soon they reached the hill to the forest. Zara jumped nimbly from the bike and called Shushan to follow her into the woods...

Shushan preferred wild roses and tulips and Zara looked for large flowers.

– Shushan – cheerfully shouted Zara – do you know our neighbour, granny Bella? She also came to this forest as a child and like us, picked flowers, saw tortoise, snakes and other wild animals.

– As if this forest is the only eternal place here in our village – said Shushan, and happily hopped from foot to foot. – My parents also love this grove: I know that their first date was here.

Shushan gathered wild roses, and Zara struggled with a high flower that resembled a sunflower. Zara pulled several times, but could not tear away the tall flower. Shushan went to her rescue. The two girls pulled violently, groaning as drops of light sweat ran down their foreheads. Suddenly they heard a voice.

The sunflower petals opened, and a little bee popped out and with her thin legs was shifting from petal to petal, as if she was trying to keep the sunflower open.

– Hello, my dear, I'm "Gigi the bee," and I carry with me the secrets of the past, secrets from centuries.

– But how is this possible? – Zara and Shushan were talking over each other.

– How can a bee speak? – continued the excited girls.

– I do not know any other way of life; I know I'm different from my forest friends. I live here in this huge flower that never fades, nor dries out and keeps me warm in winter – buzzed the bee.

– Gigi, Gigi, it's incredible what secrets this grove hides? – said Zara.

– Follow me; I will take you to the magic pen- the shrill voice of the bee travelled into the air of the big and silent forest.

The sun was setting, and Zara's charcoaled eyes seemed to grow darker, and in contrast, Shushan's green eyes sparkled like emeralds. The beauty of the girls excited Gigi more, and she eagerly alighted landing from flower to flower, flying and falling again until she came to an old stump and prayed:

– Now beauties, put your hands behind the stump, and you will find the magic pen.

Zara hurried, around the old stump, reached in the hole behind it and felt something cool, pulled her little hand out holding a pen.

Shushan grabbed Zara's hand, and the two began to quarrel and chase each other.

– Not you, but I found it; the pen is mine – insisted Zara – give me back my pen!

Gigi buzzed around them and perched on Zara's arm, then on Shushan's, and kept repeating:

– Stop, stop, do not argue, because the pen will not write if you keep quarrel!

With flushed faces, the little friends continued to argue and were not intending to retreat.

Highly irritated, Gigi rushed first to Zara, and nipped her hand, and then did the same to Shushan's arm. Both girls cried out in pain and Shushan dropped the pen, which fell on the forest's leaves on the ground.

In the silence, the girls heard a rustle. The pen rose slightly and began to float towards a small, young oak, which is where it stopped. There was a faint scratching and like a feather dancing. On the soft part of the oak an expression was written:

“To be...”

The two girls looked at the writing and did not believe their eyes. Zara jumped up and said:

– But this is the beginning of a phrase from Shakespeare's “Hamlet” – proudly stood and recited with pathos: “to be or not to be!”

– What is this pen? – Asked the curly blonde Shushan excitedly.

Then Gigi turned around towards Shushan, settled on her nose, and Shushan shuddered, Zara laughed. Gigi's pitch voice came out again:

– I know that only exceptional children like you had a similar experience. Gigi then flew over Zara's little nose and continued – the pen writes once in a hundred years!

– Then we're lucky – said Zara and waved Gigi out of her nose.

– Somebody after us, after another 100 years will be happy again – exclaimed Shushan.

The eyes of the girls followed the magic pen and saw how the pen continued writing:

“The truth has a calm heart.”

“You’re not supposed to get old until you’re wise.”

Gigi was buzzing around and insisted:

– Tell me; tell me, girls, what has the magic pen written again? Tell, tell...

Zara slowly lifted the pen, sat down on the forest’s leaves and tried to write on the oak, but nothing came out.

– The magic pen needs to be free; it writes only when it is free – the tiny bee’s squeaky voice continued. – Read it, read to me the last text of the magic pen.

Then Shushan read:

– “The truth has a calm heart.”

– “You’re not supposed to get old until you’re wise.”

The words floated like a song in the air, and Gigi said:

– How beautiful, how wise! It’s lovely, even for me, a little bee.

Excited the girls held hands and cried aloud: Shakespeare, from the Shakespeare’ plays – said Zara. – We have to ask Ms. Shahinian to confirm.

The magic pen has moved over a large yellow tree leaf and began again to write on the leaf:

“When my maestro died, I was still in his hand and magically inherited his thoughts. I could not find peace from grief, and so I moved to this beautiful forest in the World of Fairy Tales. My Maestro was the unrivalled poet, eternal poet of all times; everyone called him “the Bard” ... Then the pen stopped writing.

Light tears rolled down on Zara’s face, and Shushan took her hand, squeezed her tight and said:

– Do not cry, the magic pen of Shakespeare is alive, it is eternal, and we will tell all our friends about the magic pen of the Bard.

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