

LELA TSUTSKIRIDZE

Atusa and Matusa



The First Story

The day began as usual – Grandpa woke up and grumbled so much that he woke Gran as well. What could she do? She got up, went to the kitchen and put the kettle on.

That’s when Atusa rushed into the bedroom and jumped on Gran’s bed. She was immediately followed by Matusa.

‘Where’s Atusa, Grandpa?’ she asked and without waiting for his reply, jumped on Gran’s bed too.

First the bed rocked dangerously and then a real storm began.

‘Ano, Ano! Stop the kids or they’ll kill each other!’ Grandpa called out to Gran.

‘Can’t you stop them?’ Gran sounded surprised as she came out of the bathroom.

‘Me?’ Grandpa was utterly stunned at the thought. ‘How can I?’

‘I can’t either,’ Gran walked calmly back to the kitchen.

‘So if they hurt themselves, it’ll be my fault, right?’ Grandpa muttered, rose to his feet and went over to Gran’s bed. ‘Enough! Are you going to fool around for long?’

A bushy head appeared from under the blanket, then the other.

‘Be our ship’s captain, Grandpa, will you?’ Atusa grinned.

‘Or a pirate, please,’ Matusa grinned.

‘I don’t feel like it.’

Though he sounded strict, it was clear that he was pleased with the grandchildren’s suggestion. He glanced towards the kitchen, checking if Gran was watching, and then climbed on the bed, rose to his full height, shaded his eyes with his hand and called out like a true captain:

‘Attention, my loyal sailors! The ship of the most evil pirates has just appeared on the horizon! Steer left!’

‘Grandpa, can we please be the pirates?’ Atusa pleaded. She grabbed a pillow, turned it as if it was a helm and bel-lowed, ‘Uuuuu!’

‘Yes, the most evil pirates! Uuuuu!’ Matusa followed suit.

Grandpa didn’t take long to turn into a vicious pirate ship captain and roared:

‘All the treasure on that ship will belong to us! Sailor Atusa, change the direction, sailor Matusa, raise the Jolly Roger to terrify everyone who sees it! Right ahead!’

‘What’s going on here?’ Gran asked as she walked into the bedroom, but she wasn’t in the least frightened by the T-shirt with a skull on it.

‘Sailors, fire from all cannons, the ship’s nearing!’ Grandpa shouted at seeing Gran.

‘Yes, Captain, fire!’ Atusa and Matusa exclaimed, grabbed the pillow and tossed it at Gran as if it was a cannon ball.

‘Are you out of your minds?’ Gran ditched the pillow, just in time.

Instead of an answer, another pillow came flying from the bed, accompanied by celebratory yells.

‘I’ll show you what a real cannon ball is like,’ Gran snatched the pillow from the floor, went to the bed and pulled it down Grandpa’s head.

Though Grandpa was the pirates’ captain, he tripped and rolled over the bed.

‘Every man for himself or we’ll be taken prisoners!’ Atusa shouted and followed Grandpa.

‘We won’t surrender!’ Matusa cried and rolled over on the floor.

Now the storm raged on the carpet but it soon subsided because Gran ushered her prisoners to the kitchen. I doubt anyone would refuse such an imprisonment because freshly baked cheese bread and cherry juice was waiting for them.

I should have said it earlier but had no time: Atusa and Matusa are sisters, in fact identical twins. It doesn’t matter if you see one or the other because you won’t be able to differentiate them anyway. As for their age, they aren’t so





little as to go to a kindergarten, but not old enough to go to school unaccompanied.

Their brother, Kokoto, is really little, still struggling to walk and talk properly. He even eats in a funny way, pushing the spoon with his soup or porridge to his ear or nose instead of his mouth. But it would be wrong to say he is bothered by it. Only Gran is bothered – just fancy cleaning the food-stained boy and washing his even more stained clothes four or more times a day!

‘Can we wash him, please?’ Atusa often asked Gran.

‘We promise not to tear his ear or nose,’ Matusa would promise.

But who would trust the twins with Kokoto? It happened only once and everyone regretted it deeply.

Why? I’ll tell you why.

Once Mum and Gran were busy, so they trusted the twins with taking Kokoto for a walk, and warned them not to go out of the courtyard.

‘Let’s go to the park,’ Atusa thought the courtyard wasn’t enough for a walk.

‘But what will Mum and Gran say?’ Matusa asked, but without waiting for the reply, pushed the pram toward the park.

The park was full of children, with an extremely long queue for attractions.

‘Shall we slide?’ Atusa suggested to her sister and vanished.

‘Where is she? Has anything happened to her?’ Matusa thought and turned to Kokoto:

‘You’re a big boy, aren’t you?’

Kokoto nodded like a big boy.

‘And you’re a smart boy too, right?’

Kokoto nodded like a smart boy.

‘Then I’ll go, find Atusa and come back. You wait here, but don’t get out of your pram, don’t even think about it, all right?’

With these words Matusa disappeared just like her twin sister.

Kokoto waited for his sisters for quite some time, at least so he thought, but then he got down from his pram, crawled around it, rolled in the red sand of the path, even put some sunflower seeds he found on the ground into his mouth and drank water from a low fountain, tried to get near an attraction, but there were a lot of people around it, so he changed his mind. He rolled a bit more in the red sand but what else could a little boy do? So he headed home.

On the way he saw his favourite shop that sold yummy things, so is it a surprise he walked in?

When the shop assistant saw a boy covered in red sand, she could hardly recognize him. Then she looked towards the door, hoping adults would follow him, but there was no one.

‘Kokoto, where is your mum?’ she asked in astonishment.

‘Home,’ he pointed a red finger in an unknown direction.

‘And our granny?’

‘Home.’

‘The twins?’

‘Park.’

‘Are you alone?’ the shop assistant was clearly puzzled.

Kokoto proudly nodded and then remembered the reason he went to the shop.

‘I want a Kinder.’

The shop assistant called Kokoto’s mum who came running to the shop. She also had a problem recognizing her son covered in red sand.

‘Can you believe it? I trusted the twins to look after him. Please, can I leave him with you for a minute? I’ll find the kids and come back,’ she asked the shop assistant and ran out to find her naughty girls.

In the meanwhile, Atusa and Matusa were looking for Kokoto. When they failed to find him in the park, they ran to the pet corner, confident that their brother would surely be there. Actually, they wanted to see puppies, hoping that Dad would buy them one if they asked again.

Mum found Kokoto’s upturned pram in the park and phoned Dad in fright. Soon everyone was looking for the

twins. They were about to phone the police when Atusa and Matusa appeared.

I won't tell you what hubbub followed because you know very well what happens when you leave your little sister or brother alone in the street or a park.

