

Jasminka Petrović

I want to go to school!

Illustrations by Ana Petrović

Odiseja, Belgrade, 2024.

Thank you to Nadja, (14), Vida (12), Danilo (10), Jera (9), Matija (8) and Vig (4) for the useful and valuable advice.

Content

Chapter One

I am off to look for a better school. Goodbye.

Chapter Two

Where am I? Where are my socks and sneakers? Where is my mobile phone?

Chapter Three

This is more difficult than cases!

Chapter Four

Fencing, embroidering a silk handkerchief, sack races...

Chapter Five

It does turn around indeed!

Chapter Six

Our schools of today will directly affect how we shall turn out tomorrow

Chapter Seven

Spare the rod and spoil the child

Chapter Eight

As far as I can see, you are already on holidays!

Chapter Nine

I want to go to school!

Chapter Ten

Have I fallen in love with Dunia?

Chapter One

I am off to look for a better school.
Good bye.

Nikola put a rag toy on the desk, then lowered his head onto it and closed his eyes. He would much rather prefer to sleep through the first class, maybe even the whole school year.

No wonder he is in such a bad mood and absent-minded, when the teacher keeps reprimanding him all the time:

"Nikola, are these numbers or potatoes?"

"You did not do your homework again."

"Nikola, the whole class is waiting just for you. Hurry up, boy!"

"That could be better still! Write it all up from scratch."

"I can understand that a pupil could forget a notebook, a pen, even a book, but to forget the whole school-bag, I really cannot comprehend that."

"Nikola, how come your Grandpa is the same one as Dunia's? What comes to mind is that you have copied Dunia's essay."

"Nikola, we said that domestic pets are not to be brought to school."

All right, but let's face it, the teacher is not having an easy time with Nikola, either!

Quite often he manages to get the class timetable mixed up: instead of bringing the art supplies on Monday, he brings equipment for the PE class, on Thursday, he thinks it's Tuesday and goes to choir practice, then doesn't attend school on Friday because he thinks it's Sunday.

When explaining the cardinal directions, Nikola says: "North is up in the loft, while South is down in the cellar".

In class, he asks the teacher: "Haven't you learnt the use of capital letters when you were little, rather than keep questioning us all the time?"

If the whole giraffe does not fit on the paper, he finishes the rest of the drawing on his desk.

On Sports Day, Nikola brings all of his sports equipment from home, even the rubber boat and the oars. Just in case he needs them.

When the teacher asks him what he would like to be when he grows up, he replies: "A bear, so that I can sleep to my heart's content."

If he is bored during class, he picks up his rag toy, Monster, and walks around the school with it.

As we all know, nobody is perfect, neither the children, nor the adults. However, Nikola thinks that everybody else makes mistakes, though he, himself, never does.

Is it really so?

In the morning, his Mum woke him up on time; however, he just turned the other way and continued to sleep.

His dad made him breakfast which Nikola did not eat because he was late for school. He had not done the homework for the music lesson, so he was worried what the teacher would say. He was late for his first lesson and angry that the school bell rang on time. Altogether, he was tired and sleepy, hungry, worried and angry.

„Nikola, the class has started. Take your books and notebooks out and put the toy in the backpack", the teacher warned him.

„This school is appalling! There are no adventures to be had here. It is far too serious and boring", protested Nikola.

„And you are such a baby, you are still playing with toys", yelled Johnny, seated at the third-row desk.

The pupils burst into laughter. All except for Dunia. She turned towards the third-row desk and snapped at him:

„So what! Cristopher has a bear, Winnie the Pooh, Calvin has Hobbes, the tiger, and Andy has Woody, the cowboy. Why, then, could Nikola not have his Monster?"

"Oh, haven't you fallen a little bit in love with Nikola?! You are always defending him," says Pedia to Dunia, which made the whole class laugh a bit louder.

Nikola stood up suddenly. He had had it. He frowned and said:

„You know what? I've had enough of both you and this classroom! I am off to look for a better school. Good bye!"

The classroom doors slammed shut. The pupils lifted their heads and the teacher raised her eyebrows. Then the doors opened again. Nikola walked to his desk, picked up Monster and...