



photo © Shimazaki

Eiko Kadono

2018 H.C. Andersen Award Nominee from Japan

photo © Shimazaki



CONTENTS

Biographical information	3
Statement.....	4
Appreciative essay	8
Awards and other distinctions	10
Five important titles	13
Translated editions	68
Complete bibliography.....	82
Full translation of <i>Kki's Delivery Service</i>	98

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Eiko Kadono

Born in Tokyo in 1935. Eiko Kadono lost her mother when she was five. Before long the Pacific War started, so she had to be evacuated to the northern side of Japan at 10 years old. The experience of war as a child is at the root of Kadono's deep commitment to peace and happiness.

She studied American literature at Waseda University, after graduation she worked at a publisher. After marriage she accompanied her husband to Brazil and lived in San Paulo for two years. On the long voyage to and from Brazil, she was able to broaden her knowledge about the varied countries. These experiences brought up her curious and multicultural attitude toward creative activity. Her first book was published in 1970, since then she published about 250 books, and these were translated into 10 languages.

Kadono says "to start reading a book is like opening a door to a different world. It doesn't close at the end of the story, another door is always waiting there to be opened. People will start to look at the world in a different way after reading a story, and it's the beginning in a sense. And I think that is the true pleasure of reading. I do hope everyone will start building their own new story from here and now".



STATEMENT

Recommendation of Eiko Kadono for the Hans Christian Andersen Award

Akira Nogami, editor/ critic

Eiko Kadono is one of Japan's most active writers in many different areas of the world of children's literature today. Extensive experience overseas inspires the rich imagination and creativity of her works. Her career-long involvement with children's books is based on her belief that they have the power to bring people together and unite the world. She has not only published nearly 200 original works—picture books, books for preschoolers, fantasies, stories for young adults, and essay anthologies—but also translated into Japanese more than 100 works by overseas picture-book authors like Raymond Briggs and Dick Bruna. The very quantity of her publications testifies to her broad and vigorous activities in the world of children's books. Among Japan's leading children's book authors, she is one who is familiar and popular among a remarkably broad spectrum of readers from young children to teenagers and across a variety of genres. Her *Majo no takkyubin* (*Kiki's Delivery Service*) was produced as an animation film by Studio Ghibli under the direction of Hayao Miyazaki in 1989 and translations of the original work have been published and favorably reviewed overseas. As with the live Japanese film made of that series in 2014, featuring Kadono herself as the voice of the narrator, her contributions to the world of children's literature are dynamic and diverse.

Eiko Kadono was born in Tokyo in 1935. Her mother died when she was five, and Kadono later crystalized her memories of that time in her autobiographical fantasy *Rasuto ran* (*Last Run*), published in 2011. The Pacific War started in December 1941 and Kadono's father went off to war. In the autumn of 1944, as attacks on the Japanese mainland intensified, Eiko was in the fourth grade of elementary school when she was evacuated to the deep-snow country of

Yamagata prefecture. Later, as the air raids on Tokyo grew fiercer, she joined her mother, younger sister and two younger brothers who moved to Chiba prefecture, where they remained until the war ended. Her 2015 work, *Tonneru no mori 1945* (*The Tunnel Through the Woods, 1945*) is based on memories of that time. The searing experiences of wartime in her childhood not only led to her strong desire for peace but also went far in shaping the distinctive humor and ways she describes happiness that can be observed in all her works.

After graduating from high school, Kadono entered the English literature department at Waseda University where she studied American literature under Tatsunokuchi Naotaro (1903–1979), who was also a well-known translator of works by Mark Twain, Truman Capote, and Ernest Hemingway. After graduation she worked at a publisher for a time, and after marriage she accompanied her husband to Brazil in 1959, and lived in San Paulo until 1961. There she engaged in work relating to radio broadcasting for the Japanese



San Paulo, Brazil, 1960

Ruijinnyo shonen:
Burajiru o tazunete



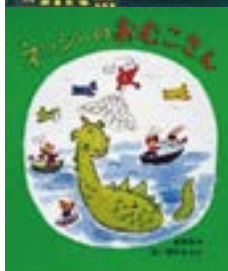
community in Brazil. After leaving Brazil, Kadono traveled in the United States, Canada, and Europe for four months before returning to Japan, and in 1970 she made her debut as a writer with the non-fiction *Ruijinnyo shonen: Burajiru o tazunete* (Brazil and My Friend Luizinho), the protagonist of which is based on a boy who lived in her apartment building in San Paulo.

Biru ni kieta kitsune



From around the time she published *Biru ni kieta kitsune* (The Fox Displaced by a Building; 1977), Kadono began to produce works in a virtually constant stream, each new title receiving the popular support of child readers. In *Nesshi no omukosan* (A Husband for Nessie; 1979), Zabu, a monster of Japan's northern seas sets off to try to get the elusive Nessie of Loch Ness to marry him; he manages to get to Loch Ness, barely escaping capture by

Nesshi no omukosan



humans. Starting with *Supagetti ga tabetai yo* (I Really Want to Eat Spaghetti; 1979) about an always-hungry

Supagetti ga tabetai yo



ghost who lives in the attic of a restaurant, Kadono launched the "Little Ghost" series featuring the exploits of quirky specters Atchi, Kotchi, and Sochi, and further volumes in the series have continued to come out even today; they are all best-sellers. The lively characters spun out of the author's untrammelled imagination seem to be timelessly irresistible to readers.

Watashi no Mama wa Shizuka-san (Shizuka is My Mother; 1980) is a humorous portrayal of the daily life of a mother who is easily flustered and a bit of a dreamer and even more childlike than the teenager who is the protagonist of the story. Like Kadono's other books, the lilting style of the dialogue between the characters is part of the work's special charm. It and another work were later awarded the *Robo-no-Ishi Literary Award*.

Zubon sencho-san no hanashi (The Tales of Captain Zubon; 1981), which unfolds when a sickly boy who suffers from asthma goes to live at a seaside town for the summer and makes the acquaintance of a ship's captain who shares with him the most fantastic recollections, won the Obunsha Children's Literature Prize. Like *Odorobo Burabura-shi* (Master Thief Mr. Burabura) published the same year, which was awarded the Sankei Children's Publishing Award Grand Prize, works showcasing the powerful and freewheeling scale of Kadono's imagination and her talent for using it to make readers laugh began winning one literary prize after another. Then in 1985, Kadono published *Majo no takkyubin* (Kiki's Delivery Service), which received



Watashi no mama wa Shizuka san



Zubon sencho san no hanas



Odorobo Burabura-shi



Majo no takkyubin

Japan's oldest literary prize, the Shogakukan Literary Award, as well as the most prestigious Noma Children's Literary Prize. It was also included on the IBBY Honor List.

Kiki's Delivery Service (published in English in 2003 by Annick Press) tells the story of the daughter of a witch, who according to tradition, must leave home on a night of the full moon after she turns thirteen to make an independent life of her own. Though Kiki hasn't managed to acquire any other of the magic arts passed down by her mother, she has mastered the art of flying on a broom. And so, on one night of the full moon at the age of thirteen, she sets off with a transistor radio slung on her broom and her black cat Jiji as her companion. She soon settles in a town by the seaside and, using her skill at flying, sets up a delivery service. The stories in this volume chronicle Kiki's growth through the various situations she encounters and people she meets. Set against the backdrop of a skillfully constructed and original fantasy, Kadono's accurate portrayal of the process of a girl growing up to independence is instructive and insightful. This first volume is followed by five others, the titles of which are "Kiki and Her New Magic," "Kiki and the Other Witch," "Kiki in Love," "The Magic Perch," and "Departures," in six volumes telling how Kiki and Tombo fall in love, marry, and are blessed with two children. In the final volume their children grow up and come to their own days of departure from home, so the six volumes represent a saga of the 30 years from Kiki's adolescence to the time her own children reach their time to



Ringo chan



Tora beddo

become independent. This story of growing up has become virtually a monument in Japanese children's literature today.

The majority of Kadono's works are aimed at young children. Her *Ringo-chan* (Apple Andie), about a small child who faces difficult demands of a handmade doll sent with a box of apples by her grandmother in the countryside, vividly portraying the psychology of a small child. The story was continued in a series that went on to be widely read by young children. *Tora beddo* (Hiro and the Tiger Bed) tells of a girl whose parents seem completely preoccupied with her newborn baby sister. In a fit of anger, she draws a picture of a scary tiger on the end of the baby's bed. In the middle of the night, the tiger comes to life and declares it will eat up her sister. At her wits end to dissuade the beast, she remembers the lullaby her mother sings to the baby and manages to put the tiger to sleep. The next morning, the baby, still too young to talk, murmurs her big sister's name. It is a story that symbolically brings to the surface the wildness within a child's psyche and then, with what could be called the wisdom of the anthropologist, gently and skillfully soothes it. That wisdom arises from Kadono's own fieldwork done in various parts of Europe for non-fiction works such as *Kurisumasu*, *Kurisumasu* (Christmas, Christmas), and *Majo ni atta* (I Met a Witch) and from



Kyrisumasu kurisumasu



Majo ni atta



Tonneru no mori 1945

the interest in ethnology passed down in her family from the time of her grandfather.

On the seventieth anniversary of the end of World War II, Kadono published the above-mentioned *Tonneru no mori 1945* based on her experience of evacuation from her home in Tokyo during the final stages of World War II. Evacuated from her home in the city to the countryside of Chiba prefecture, the protagonist is a girl named Iko, a fifth grader, who passes through a tunnel-like forest on her way to school and back. Because of the rumor that a runaway soldier is hiding in the woods, Iko struggles with her fears and races through the woods, murmuring the words "Iko is passing by!" like a magic spell she hopes will protect her. Then one day she meets a soldier playing a harmonica. It is a somewhat scary and mysterious story, but the reader cannot but be moved by the way a young girl, living in the unfamiliar countryside and without a father figure in the home, struggles with her

fears and insecurities. Kadono's works and way of life were greatly influenced by her experiences in the war, but this is the only book that specifically documents what she went through at the time. *Tonneru no mori 1945* does not introduce adult perspectives or later interpretations of the war, but is profoundly charged with the horror of war as seen through the eyes of a young girl and with the author's plea that war should never be repeated. This work was recognized with the Sankei Children's Literature Publishing Culture Prize and has been highly praised by critics and scholars. The words of the little girl in the midst of war speaks directly and surely to the generation that has not experienced war.

The cosmopolitan sensibilities Kadono acquired in the course of her transoceanic travel by ship and sojourn living in Brazil and world travels in her twenties imbue her works with an international feel. The worlds depicted in her stories open up scenes sometimes grand in scale and vividly fleshed out from the author's bountiful imagination and experience. The appeal of Kadono's literature, populated with unique characters endowed with the virtues and foibles of human beings everywhere, and captivating for her mellifluous style touched with whimsy and humor, is of a kind that can surely be shared by children not only in Japan but around the world. Quite a few of Kadono's works have been translated into other Asian languages (Chinese, Indonesian, Korean, Thai); in addition to *Kiki's Delivery Service*, some of her picture books and books for young children have been translated and published in North America and Europe (English, Italian, and Swedish).

As a leading Japanese author of children's literature whose works have great potential for an even broader readership overseas, we highly recommend Eiko Kadono for the International Hans Christian Andersen Award.

January 2017

APPRECIATIVE ESSAY

About Kadono's *Majo no takkyubin*

Mitsuko Matsuzaka, researcher

Excerpt from Mitsuko Matsuzaka. *Kadono Eiko Majo no takkyubin seiritsu katei no kenkyu: Zasshi-ban to tankobon-ban no hikaku kōsatsu o toshite* (A Study of the Process of the Creation of "Majo no Takkyubin" by Eiko Kadono: A Comparison between the Magazine and Book Versions), *Baika Journal of Children's Literature* 16 (June 2008), pp. 90-106.



The women depicted in Eiko Kadono's *Majo no takkyubin* (Kiki's Delivery Service) are all very appealing characters with important meaning for Kiki's personal growth. Osono, who lends a room to Kiki, is her mother figure in her new home. She accepts Kiki with pure-hearted kindness and is portrayed as a woman of great generosity and warm disposition. Since Kiki is 13, there probably needed be someone like her in the story who plays the role of her guardian in the adult world.

When Kiki is tired and feeling cross, she encounters Sumire, the "make-do" professional, a person with a delightfully ingenious approach to life. She explains to Kiki how she runs a business doing all sorts of jobs for people—not the usual way, but by "making do" with what is at hand. Other women include the young woman seamstress, the girl artist in the woods, and the old woman knitter of bellybands. Each is someone who is skilled at making something by her own hand. Like Kiki, whose forte is flying on her broom, they each have their own special skill, giving them a kind of witch-like presence.

Kiki acquires much wisdom and lore of life through her acquaintance with these women. Without them her success in making her way on her own would not

have been possible. We can thus argue that Kadono created strong links between Kiki and these women and deliberately worked them into her story of Kiki's growth.

Feminist studies specialist Kayoko Fujimori comments on the story as follows:

This story can be considered to have been constructed to portray the way women work and the way women meet and connect through their work. . . In the sense that the women who appear in the original story are women who possess an identity—traditionally supposed to be held by men—they might to some extent be considered "witches."

The presence of these women in the story also emphasizes the theme of the work, which is that relationships among people boil down to a process of "give and take." Indeed, we come across the phrase (in Japanese *mochitsu-motaretsu*) over and over as a kind of key word in the story. Soon after Kiki arrives in the town of Koriko, she reflects:

The people in the town where Kiki had grown up had been happy to have a witch living in their midst. . . Almost every day people had come visiting, bringing some delicious treat or part of a gift they had received. In return, Kokiri would give them sneeze medicine. . .

They had lived in harmony, give-and-take, with the people of their town. (emphasis added; Kiki's Delivery Service, p. 37-38)

According to Kiki's mission as a witch, she never takes money for her delivery service work. She must make her way through life by building "give-and-take" relationships, receiving something given to her out of people's kindness in return for what she can do for them.

Children's literature author Yumiko Matsubara observes "The fact that Kiki is a witch is not of particularly great significance but should be seen as a metaphor for a girl who wants to become independent in the world making use of her own special gifts," but I also think that Kadono attaches great meaning to witches as the symbol of the "good old days." When Kiki is explaining to Osono why she doesn't want to receive money for her service, she says:

"All I'd really like is to make some kind of trade." . . . it's part of the way we witches get along these days. If we can do something for someone else, all we ask for in return is something they have an extra supply of, or a favor—you know, "give a little, take a little!" . . .

"Oh, I remember. That was the way it once was . . ." (emphasis added; *Kiki's Delivery Service*, pp. 46-47.

This scene depicts Osono's favorable memories of older times and symbolizes how the give-and-take relationships of the past have been forgotten. The witch is portrayed here as involved in interchange among people not based on the money economy.

The women in the story, meanwhile, do not rely on machines; they are engaged in what might be called cottage industry, doing work using their own hands. In this way, Kadono portrays the non-commercial interchange among people that is gradually being forgotten in modern society, and by making witches whose occupation is a kind of handcraft industry the center of the story, she treats the theme of "return to the good, old days." The 1980s, when *Majo no takkyubin* (first volume) was published, was the era of dynamic advance for women in society. Because of this timing, it is likely that this give-and-take creed is a reflection of the author's attempt to center her story on working women.

The "witch" in *Majo no takkyubin*, therefore, is a symbolic expression of women of ability and of the idea of women working outside the home. It portrays the kind of human relations we must not neglect or forget and the joy that derives from making things with one's own hands. It sends a warning about the information society that interrupts or blocks genuine interchange among people and about the mass-production and mass-consumption society that relies on mechanization. Through the anecdotes told through these women, the story makes an appeal for the kind of humanity that is in the process of being lost in today's society.

AWARDS and OTHER DISTINCTIONS

1981 Ohbunsha Award for Children's Literature for *Zubon sencho-san no hanashi* (Tales of an Old Sea Captain, Tokyo Fukuinkan Shoten, 1981) - Japan

1982 Sankei Award for Children 's Books & Publications for *Oodorobo Burabura-shi* (Master Thief Mr Burabura, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1981) - Japan



1984 Robo no Ishi Literature Award for *Watashi no mama wa shizuka san* (Shizuka is My Mother, Tokyo: Kaiseisha, 1980) and *Zubon sencho-san no hanashi* (Tales of an Old Sea Captain, Tokyo Fukuinkan Shoten, 1981) - Japan

Sankei Award for Children 's Books & Publications for *Ohainnasai erimaki ni* (Come IN My Mafflar, Tokyo: Kinnohoshisha, 1984) - Japan



1985 Noma Prize for Juvenile Literature and Shogakukan Literature Prize for *Majo no takkyubin* (Kiki's Delivery Service, Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten, 1984) - Japan



1986 IBBY Honour List 1986 for *Majo no takkyubin* (Kiki's Delivery Service)

1989 Her *Majo no takkyubin* was produced as an animated film by Studio Ghibli under the direction of Hayao Miyazaki

1993 *Majo no takkyubin* was adapted a musical by Yukio Ninagawa - 1996

1996 Participated the project for supporting to the IBBY Congress in Groningen in 1996. published *Fingers of the Back of the Neck* with 11 autors from different countries including Susan Cooper, Margaret Mahy, Uri Orlev et al.



1999 Exhibition "Kadono Eiko and 24 Illustrators" at Shimonoseki City Art Museum - Yamaguchi, Japan



2000 Medal with Purple Ribbon for whole accomplishments in children's literature - Japan

2002 Her *Osanpo poi poi* (Stroll, Roll, Roll...) was selected a set piece of music for the 69th National Students Chorus Competition - Japan

2006 Exhibition "Kadono Eiko's World" at Kamakura Literature Museum - Kanagawa, Japan

2008 Exhibition "Kadono Eiko's World" at Shigaken Culture and Industry Center - Shiga, Japan

2009 *Her Akachan ga yatte kita* (Baby is Coming, ill by Koshiro Hata, big text edition produced by Fukinoto Bunko) was selected the IBBY Outstanding Book for Young People with Disabilities 2009



2010 Exhibition Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the Opening of the International Library of Children's Literature and National Year of Reading "Children's Books Going Overseas from Japan" - featured Kadono's works



2010 - 2011 Exhibition tour "Kadono Eiko's World" throughout Japan; Aichi, Miyagi, Fukuoka, Hyogo, Tokushima, and other venues - Japan
Iwaya Sazanami Award for whole accomplishments in children's literature - Japan



2011 Her *Zubon sencho-san no hanashi* (Tales of an Old Sea Captain) was produced as a musical by Rkx International under the direction of Koki Kishimoto titled *Fifi and the Seven Seas* - Osaka, Hyogo, Tokyo: Japan

Tonen-General Award for Children's Culture for whole accomplishments in children's literature

2013 The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette for whole accomplishments in children's literature - Japan

2014 Hans Christian Andersen author Award Nominee

Majo no takkyubin was produced as a live action movie under the direction of Takashi Shimizu

2016 Sankei Award for Children's Books & Publications for *Tonneru no mori 1945* (The Tunnel Through the Woods 1945, Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2015)

2016 *Majo no takkyubin* was adapted the stage by - 2017 Jessica Sian at the Southwark Play House in London - UK



Musical *Fifi and teh Seven Seas*
(from Kadono's *Zubon sencho san no hanashi*) - Japan

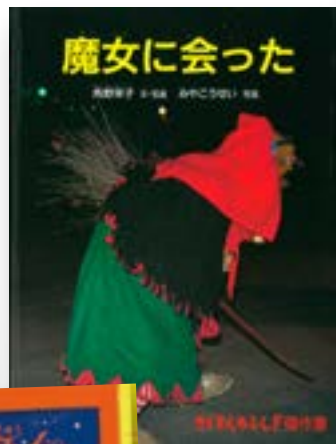


Play *Kiki's Delivery Service*
in London - UK
More than seven thousands people visited the theater for 38 performances (filled to capacity).

Five Important Titles



【3】



【2】



【4】



【1】



【5】

【1】 魔女の宅急便 | *Majo no takkyubin* (Kiki's Delivery Service) Ill. Akiko Hayashi | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1985 | ISBN 4-8340-0119-9 |

【2】 魔女に会った | *Majo ni atta* (I Met a Witch) | Photo: Kousei Miya and Eiko Kadono | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1993 | ISBN 978-4-8340-1521-8 |

【3】 チキチキチキチキ いそいでいそいで | *Chiki chiki chiki chiki isoide isoide* (Tick Tick Tick Tick, Hurry Hurry) | Ill. Ryoji Arai | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1996 | ISBN 978-4251030368 |

【4】 トラベッド | *Torabeddo* (Hiro and the Tiger Bed) | Ill. Koji Suzuki | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1994 | ISBN 4-8340-0202-0 |

【5】 トンネルの森 1945 | *Tonneru no mori 1945* | (The Tunnel Through the Woods, 1945) | Tokyo: Kadokawa | 2015 | ISBN 978-4040677132 |

まじよ たっきゅう びん
魔女の宅急便



角野栄子 作 林明子 画

魔女の宅急便
Majo no takkyubin (Kiki's Delivery Service)
Ill. Akiko Hayashi | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1985 |
ISBN 4-8340-0119-9 |

● Complete translation in English included at the end of this dossier

魔女の宅急便

Majo no takkyubin(Kiki's Delivery Service)

Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | Ill. Akiko Hayashi | 1985 | ISBN 4-8340-0119-9

II) キキと新しい魔法

Kiki to atarashii maho (Kiki and Her New Magic) |

Ill. Takako Hirono | 1985

III) キキともうひとりの魔女

Kiki to mou hitori no majo (Kiki and The Other

Witch) | Ill. Miho Satake | 1993

IV) キキの恋

Kiki no koi (Kiki in Love) | Ill. Takako Hirono | 2004

V) 魔法のとまり木

Maho no tomarigi (The Magic Perch) | Ill. Takako

Hirono | 2007

VI) それぞれの旅立ち

Sorezore no tabidachi (Departures) | Ill. Takako

Hirono | 2009



● Author's Preface

A girl of twelve or thirteen is at a delicate age. Still within the safe haven of the family nest, she yearns to test herself, to verify her existence as an independent person. For a mother, too, the time when her daughter comes of age holds special meaning. Part of watching over a daughter's passage to adulthood is the process of moving beyond the role of mother.

The Witch's Express tells stories of a girl named Kiki who is going through this time of life. Her father is an ordinary human and her mother is a witch. Being different from her peers is part of Kiki's life from the beginning. The setting of the story is not Japan, nor is it Europe. It could be any town, anywhere, and this is deliberate, for I wished to avoid the preconceptions of what a witch is in any particular culture, presenting a character that stands on its own and with whom readers can readily identify.

The protagonist of this story is a girl witch who possesses only one secret of witchcraft, the power to fly. Her mother and her grandmother had once practiced many other kinds of witchcraft, but the powers known to witches have gradually diminished in the modern age, when lights of urban civilization are always shining and true darkness remains hardly anywhere at all. But Kiki sets out to carry on the tradition passed down among witches from antiquity, setting off on a maiden journey in search of a town of her own, where no witch already lives, to establish a life for herself away from her family and friends.

Kiki's journey takes her to Koriko, a big city, where she puts her flying skills to use by establishing a package delivery business which she calls the "witch's express." The parcels and items she delivers all carry the thoughts and wishes of the people who send them.

She discovers that her job is as much to carry those feelings and hopes to the receiver as it is the packages themselves.

At first Kiki is discouraged to find that the people of the big city distrust and reject her, but gradually she finds her own place there and people who understand her. She meets a boy who is not only interested in her broom but seems to care for her as a friend as well. Showing the townspeople, who had thought witches were a thing of the past, that a certain kind of "magic" can still happen, Kiki comes to know the people of Koriko better. As she finds ways her work can help other people, she also gains confidence in herself.

The townspeople, too, begin to recognize the richness to be found in the invisible warmth and forthright spirit Kiki brings to the jobs she performs.

This is the story of how Kiki comes to an understanding of the magic her mother has passed on to her and how important and useful she finally realizes it is in carving out a life of her own. In that process, Kiki comes to a recognition of herself and her abilities and

begins to draw on the strength that derives from that awareness. Indeed, everyone of us possesses at least one kind of "magic," and it is this magic that gives a person his or her special character and vitality. Discovering that special magic is the secret to coming of age. Kiki's departure from home and launching of her delivery business using her mother's stout broom, the accident in which the broom is broken, and the process by which Kiki makes and breaks in a new broom, are all metaphors for her steady progress away from dependence on her mother family and toward establishing a life she determines and builds for herself.

Kiki's story can touch a chord in any child born between cultures, traditions, ways of thinking; in any child who watches grown-ups and tries to chart a course between dreams and realities, old familiarities and new challenges, that is, between what has shaped them and to what they aspire.

● SYNOPSIS

Kiki is born between a human father and a witch. Therefore, she is half-human and half-witch. She has only one charm she can use, that is, flying with her broom. One day she has to leave home to live by herself since she reaches that age according to the witch's code. To make her own living, she thinks of a wonderful job that can be done with her power... A heartwarming fantasy.

II
Our sweet little delivery witch is back again! In this sequel, Kiki is her second year of doing her delivery service, and is doing well, too. She meets many more warm people, making them and of course herself happy. However one day, she realizes that there could be times when she could be making people unhappy by the things she delivers without knowing. Kiki steadily grows up in this book.

III
The fourth spring was approaching since Kiki the witch arrived at the town of Koriko. She had turned sixteen and had a wonderful life there with her delivery service and the new business with her herbs. But one day Keke, a free-spirited sassy mannered girl comes to town and starts changing Kiki's life! The two of them repel each other until one day they realize that there is something more important to life.

IV
Kiki turned 17 years old. Tombow, her long friend and now goes to school in far-off town, should return on the summer vacation. Kiki is waiting eagerly for his return, and gets a letter from him. Lo and behold! It says that he will spend the summer in the mountain by himself...

V

Kiki was born with a small secret. Her Dad was a mortal but her Mom was a witch. Being half a witch, the only witch-craft Kiki could manage was to fly on a broom. So she began a delivery service. The fifth story of Kiki's Delivery Service starts at Kiki, aged nineteen. Gigi, the black cat is still around. She meets new people while old friends pop in, too. Will her romance with Tombo develop?

VI

Fifteen years have passed by since the last episode, and Kiki is now in her mid-thirties. She has become a Mom of twins, Nini, a girl and Toto, a boy both thirteen now. Although they are twins, Nini and Toto are totally opposite in character. Nini is quite active but not much interested in becoming a witch whereas Toto, the shy one and therefore not really cut out to be one is, curious about wizards. This book completes the series of this title adored by many over these years.



Paperback edition for YA (Tokyo: Fukuinkan, 2002-2013)



Pocket edition (Tokyo: Kadokawa, 2013)

● FUN LETTER from Overseas Reader

... I've read it twice through in about a week (I find I get as much out of a second and third reading of stories that I enjoy - all the more so if the author comes from a linguistic and cultural background different from my own). I suspect I'll read the story a couple of more times to glean out what I missed beforehand. Each chapter stands almost on its own and the illustrations by Akiko Hayashi are wonderful! I quickly came to admire Kiki's spirit, resourcefulness, and energy. Her struggles to successfully complete her chosen path resonated with me in a very human way. I have two teenage sons who, while not having to tackle quite as daunting a rite of passage as Kiki's, are nonetheless striking out into the world in their own way in much the same fashion. I find myself, like Kokiri and Okino, having hopefully taught my boys as much as I can (and knowing it will never have been enough), but also having to know when to stand back and let them learn for themselves. Kiki's story is a re-affirmation of the human spirit to see through a commitment and to find out about oneself along the way.

When my sons were much younger, my wife & I read stories to them that were of similar nature as Kiki's and they enjoyed them very much. I wish that I had known of Kiki's Delivery Service then, so as to delight them in the way that this story is delightful to the young. I will keep Kiki's Delivery Service handy for use when I come into contact with younger children, such as at our church school program, when there are opportunities to do some chapter story reading.

(C. S. , Falls Church, Virginia, USA)

● The novel *Kiki's Delivery Service* was first published in 1985 by Fukuinkan Shoten, and won numerous awards in Japan, and also selected the IBBY honour list 1986. In 1989, Studio Ghibli adapted the novel to an animated film directed by Hayao Miyazaki, and in 1993, it was also adapted to a musical directed by Yukio Ninagawa who is one of the most prominent theater director in Japan. The story came to attention worldwide, and the series was completed in 2009 after 24 years.

The story of Kiki had been brought to many children in many forms other than the original book, and it still gains the favor of many people of different ages. In 2014, the novel was once again adapted to a live action film directed by Takashi Shimizu.

In 2016 Christmas season, this story was adapted to the stage by Jessica Sian as the Special present for kids and families at the Southwark Play House in London, UK.

● Animated film (DVD / Blu-ray) | Produced by Hayao Miyazaki, Studio Ghibli | 1989



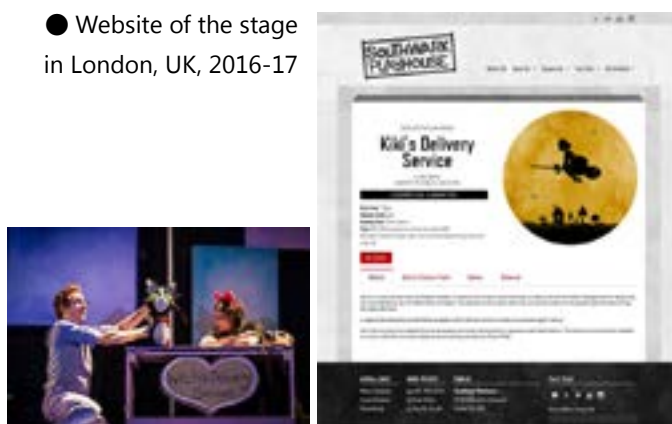
● Booklet of the musical, 1993



● Posters for the live-action movie, 2014



● Website of the stage in London, UK, 2016-17



魔女に会った

角野栄子 文・写真 みやこうせい 写真

たくさんのふしぎ傑作集

魔女に会った

Majo ni atta (I Met a Witch)

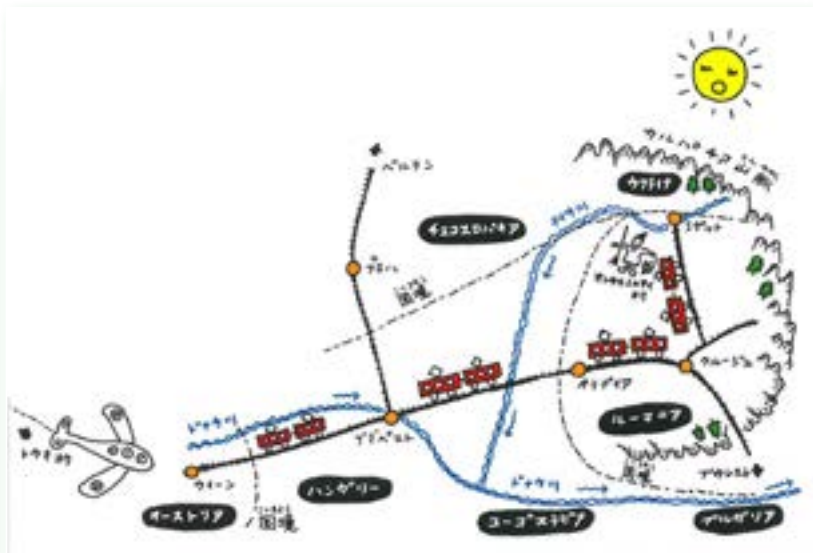
Photo: Kousei Miya and Eiko Kadono | Tokyo: Fuku-
inkan Shoten | 1993 | ISBN 978-4-8340-1521-8 |

魔女に会った

Majo ni atta (I met The Witches)

Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten

Photo: Kousei Miya and Eiko Kadono | 1993 | ISBN 978-4-8340-1521-8



Maps of Kadono's trip for researching on Witches illustrated by Kadono

(P. 2)

Long ago, when I was just a little girl, I tripped and fell on a gravel path, and started crying. My mother put medicine on my skinned knees and wrapped them up in bandages. But my knees still hurt and I couldn't stop the tears. My mother put her hands over the cuts and scrapes and said,

"Magic words, a magic spell, chi chin pui pui, chi chin pui pui!"

All of a sudden, my knees felt all warm and the pain disappeared.

"It's gone!" I said, "How did you do it?"

"It's magic," my mother said. "I might as well tell you—I'm a witch!"

"No, you're not...," my eyes got big, "Are you?"

"It's true. It's really really true! Ha ha ha, ho ho ho." Even her laugh sounded mysterious. My heart skipped a beat.



P. 28

Nitza's house was inside an old gate made of fir trees. All of the homes in the district had fir-tree gates with two doors in them. The small doors were for people. The large doors were for sheep, cows and horse-pulled carriages. I walked through the gate and saw a woman as thin as a candle standing in front of the house. It was Nitza, an 82-year-old witch. There was

a small field and a well, an apple tree that provided shade, and a broken-down shed. A cat strolled across the yard. The old woman had pale white skin, a pointy nose, and bony fingers. She looked just like a witch in a storybook.



Photo by Kadono



ニツツァが贈った花が美しい、
鼻息を付けていると鼻はさかすかに匂う。

「ほら。」

アヌツァはニツツァに草のたばをさししました。そのとたんです。鼻
い鼻息にかかっているように割々しく見えたおばあさんが、かん高い声で
ケケケケと笑いだし、草を高くさしあげて、「私の女王さま」というと
こんどは草に顔をうずめ、くるったようにキスをはじめたのです。それか
らにさやかな笑い声をあげながら、アヌツァと向きあい、
おどろだしたのです。おどろながら、ルーマニアのあんず
のお酒、ツイカを草にばっばとふりかけます。あたりは強
いにおいでいっばいになりました。



私はとつぜん、ちがう世界に入りこんでしまったような気がしました。



ニツツァが右側からひらた
いパンと、トマト、生のねぎ、
羊のチーズ、ツイカをもっ
てきて、テーブルの上にはんと
らんぼうにおきました。

それからパンをちぎって、
「さ、お食べ」と私にいいま
した。

いつふいたのかわからないほどテーブルの上は黒いよれがこびり
ついています。私はごえんりょうしあげたい気持でした。
でも魔女と同じかまのめしを食べるなんてちょっとすてきでは
ありませんか、私は目をつぶってパンのひとかけらを口に放り
こみました。



ほーっ。そのおいしいこと、今まで食べたどんなパンよりもおいしいの
です。かめばかむほど味わいが深くなっていきました。

ふと、とを見ると、煙で真っ黒になった壁に木の枝が何本の
はっぱのようなものがさしてあります。



「あれをね、嵐のときかまどにくべると、

嵐がおさまるんだよ。」アヌツァがおしえてくれました。

「すごくおいしい。このパン、どうやってつくるの？」

「粉と玉子と水と塩。ニツツァがふっさらぼうりにいいました。

「それだけ？」

「あーあ、まぜて、かまどでやくんだよ。」

私はもうひとかけらパンをとって、じっと見つめました。これはあやしい
ほどおいしい。

さては、さては——魔女の魔法が入っているのかも——。

“Here!” Anutza held out the bouquet of flowers, roots and leaves—mandragora—she had brought for Nitza. Then it happened. The old woman, who had looked so weak and frail, began to cackle in a high, screechy voice. She held the gift up high, and said, “My queen!” Then she buried her face in the bouquet and started kissing the flowers like crazy. She began to cackle again, gave Anutza a big hug and started dancing. As she danced, she sprinkled apricot wine, tuică, on the flowers. It gave off a strong smell. I felt like I had suddenly entered another world.

Nitza went into the kitchen and came back out with a loaf of flatbread, a tomato, a raw onion, some goat’s cheese and some more apricot wine. She plopped them all down on the table.

Next she pulled the bread into pieces and said to me, “Eat up!” The table was black and dirty. I wondered when it had last been wiped clean. I wanted to turn down the food, but how could I say no to the honor of sharing a meal with a real live witch? I closed my eyes and shoved a piece of bread in my mouth.

It was good. So good. It was the best bread I had ever eaten. The more I chewed, the more delicious it tasted.

As I ate, I looked up at the ceiling. The beams were

pitch black from smoke, and there were leaves on what looked like a twig stuck into them.

“If you put those in the oven during a storm, the storm goes away,” Anutza told me.

“This bread is wonderful,” I said, “How do you make it?”

“It’s just flour and egg and water and salt,” Nitza muttered.

“That’s all?”

“Yes. Mix it and put it in the oven.”

I picked up another piece of bread and looked at it carefully. It was suspiciously good.

Did it have... could it have... the magic of a witch in it?



“Where do you get that mandragora you brought Nitza?” I asked Anutza.
 “On the mountain. Do you want to see where?”
 “Of course, I do!”
 “We aren’t supposed to let anyone know where we go. We pick mandragora right at dawn, before the rooster crows. But I’ll take you because you’re a foreigner. A special exception. You can go with me. Mandragora is in season right now.”
 “When can we go?”
 “Anytime. Except Friday. That’s my day off.”
 “How about tomorrow?”
 “Fine,” Anutza nodded. “Bring tomatoes, bread, meatballs, raw onion, slănină (smoked pork fat), salami and wine, and some coins.”

The next day, there wasn’t a cloud in the sky. By 9:00, it was already hot, almost 40°C. The Iza River flowed close to the village, and on the other side was the Ukraine. This was in the northern part of Europe, so why was it so hot? I looked up at the blazing sun. Was it... could it be... the magic of a witch?
 The mountain was covered in tall, majestic trees, all separated from each other at an even distance. Cows grazed on the mountain, and the ground was cov-

ered in cow manure. I felt my shoes squishing in it with every step. Anutza walked quickly. I had to run to keep up with her. Before long, I was gasping for breath. Anutza must have heard me, because she turned around and said,
 “I’ll call you when I find some mandragora. Wait in the shade.”
 What a relief! I sat down under a big tree. The air around me was thick and heavy. It didn’t stir. I felt like I was sitting in a hot bath. It wasn’t long before mosquitoes and horseflies landed on my neck and arms to drink my blood.
 I thought about my life back in Tokyo. When I was there, I longed to be out in nature. But when it was hot, I switched on the air conditioner and killed annoying insects with bug spray. Now I realized those insects were a part of nature. How could we humans be so cruel to them?



"I found it!" Anutza yelled out. I walked toward her voice, down into a valley, and there was the special plant growing in a clump. Anutza grabbed some at the roots and yanked it out of the ground. I rushed over to her, put my ear up to the mandragora and listened hard. Anutza had told me you could hear it cry in pain when it was pulled out. All I heard, though, was the soft sound of the roots breaking. It was a little disappointing.

Well, maybe I was wrong for thinking that plants screamed out loud when they cried. They probably had their own way of doing things and made different sounds.

I looked at the roots. I'd been told the roots looked like a woman's body. I had to admit that they did, sort of. The plant looked like it had two legs.

Anutza put one coin into each of the two holes where she had pulled out the mandragora.

"Why do you do that?" I asked. Anutza was looking very happy. She shook her body in a crazy way. She poured wine on the herbs, drank some herself and began to dance. She looked so happy that I began dancing too.

After a while, I asked her again, "What are the coins for?"

"It's how I say 'thank you.'"

It made sense, but I wondered if the gods of the soil really wanted money. Anutza continued, "Oh, and I'll dig it up later, and mix it with wine and eggshells to cast a spell."

"What kind of spell?"

"To turn a bad boy into a good one. Things like that."

"But why do the coins work?"

"I don't know why. What kind of question is that? We've been making spells like that for a long, long time," Anutza said confidently.

"Does everyone believe in your spells?"

"Of course they do. I'm a witch, after all."

"Does everyone know you're a witch?"

"I don't know if everyone does. I mean you can't talk about it in public. My husband and son know I'm a witch. I haven't told my daughter-in-law yet...."

Anutza looked at me like she found my questions suspicious.



I gathered my courage to ask another one.
 “What is mandragora good for?”
 “Open up your wallet,” she commanded. I quickly reached for my bag and pulled out my wallet. Anutza tore up some mandragora leaves and tossed them in. “You’re going to make a lot of money,” she said and laughed.
 “Does it only work for money?” I asked.
 “It cures illness too. And boils. You can find things you’ve lost and make people you don’t like cry. It cures unrequited love. It can fix everything that is bad.”
 This mandragora was wonderful stuff. I secretly tore up another leaf and put it in my wallet.
 After that we put out all the food we had brought as a way to thank the god of the mountain, and began our own party. Anutza and I had more fun than the gods, I think.
 With a bundle of mandragora in our arms, we finally headed back down the mountain. On the way, Anutza stopped in a potato field. She looked around it for a while before a smile broke out on her face.
 “The potatoes look good! It’s because I planted some mandragora at the edge of the field.”
 In this modern age, science has brought us so many new and different kinds of medicine. But I wondered if they only worked because we wanted them to.

Anutza was so happy that the crop of potatoes was growing well. When we humans have a strong desire for something to happen, it might be very close to magic.

* * *

Long, long ago, people were much more familiar with death. They didn’t necessarily die because they were old. Mothers were especially worried. They never knew when death would come to claim one of their precious children. Mothers wanted to make sure children grew as strong and healthy as the trees they saw in the forest each day. They must have prayed to the trees to lend their vitality and help their children. Mothers also looked out for grasses or roots that could cure disease. This led to herbal medicines. I believe that witches have in their hearts the strong hopes and dreams of mothers from long ago. That’s what I felt when I saw Nitzta and Anutza holding the mandragora and dancing for joy.
 Some people say that Diana, the Greek earth goddess, was the first witch. The gods of the earth, the earth goddesses, and witches. They all seemed similar. I remembered back to that day when my mother said, “I’m a witch!” I’m sure that the warmth of her hand held the magic of witches passed down from long, long ago.



チキチキチキチキ いそいでいそいで

Chiki chiki chiki chiki isoide isoide

(Tick Tick Tick Tick, Hurry Hurry)

Ill. Ryoji Arai | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1996 |

ISBN 978-4251030368 |

チキチキチキチキ いそいでいそいで

Chiki chiki chiki chiki isoide isoide
(Tick Tick Tick Tick Hurry Hurry)

Tokyo: Akane Shobo

Ill. Ryoji Arai | 1996 | ISBN 978-4251030368 |



Ko found an old watch in a closet.
Wind wind wind, wind.
He wound it up and put it on.



とけいは、コッチリ ポッチリ コッチリ ポッチリと うごきはじめました。
 いっしょに、コウくんのおねも ねりだしました。
 コッチリ ポッチリ コッチリ ポッチリ



コウくんは、コッチリ ポッチリと 歩きました。
 コッチリ ポッチリと ごはんを たべました。
 コッチリ ポッチリと パジャマを ききました。
 コッチリ ポッチリと ねりました。

TICKETY, TOCKETY

The watch began to move. Tickety tockety, tickety tockety.

Ko could feel it in his chest.

Tickety tockety, tickety tockety.

Ko walked in a tickety tockety way.

He ate in a tickety tockety way.

He put on his pajamas in a tickety tockety way.

He went to sleep, tickety tockety.



つばの あさ、コウくんは、うでどけいをみてびっくりしました。
 チキチキチキチキ
 きのうとちがって、はやいおとをたてて、うごいています。
 コウくんの おなこ、チキチキチキチキと なりだしました。



「たいへんだ！ チキチキチキチキ、いそいでいそいで。
 がっこうに いかなくっちゃ」
 「コウくん、 どうして そんなに あわててるの？」
 おかあさんが いいました。

When Ko woke up the next morning, he looked at his watch and got a big surprise!

Tick tick tick tick

It was moving much faster than the day before.

Ko could feel it in his chest.

Tick tick tick tick

"I'm late! Tick tick tick tick. I've got to hurry to school!"

"Ko, what's the rush all of a sudden?" his mother asked.



「あて、あて、このどけい」
 コウくんは、どけいを みせました。
 すると とうさんに、おちあおんの 石が、チキチキチキチキと
 なりました。
 「コウくん、いそいで、パンに まわって、いすを たべなさい、
 おとうさん、はやく おきて だきいん、おいしいに おくれなすあーう」
 おちあおんが せうけました。



すると とうさんに、おとうさんの 石が、チキチキチキチキと
 なりました。
 おとうさんは とびあおると、パジャマの うえから 足さくを しめました。
 チキチキチキチキ、いそいで いそいで、

“Here, look at this watch!”
 Ko showed it to his mother.
 As soon as she saw it, his mother could feel it in
 her chest. Tick tick tick tick
 “Hurry up, Ko! Sit on this piece of bread and eat
 your chair! Papa, get up! You’ll be late for work,”
 shouted his mother.
 Then and there, Ko’s father could feel it in his
 chest. Tick tick tick tick
 His father leaped out of bed and put his tie on
 over his pajamas.
 Tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!



“See you later!”
 Ko ran out of the house.
 When Toto the dog saw him, he could feel it in his chest. Tick tick tick tick
 “Bow wow, bow wow,” Toto barked.

When Chie next door heard the barking, she could feel it in her chest, too. Tick tick tick tick
 “Wait! Ko, don't leave without me!” Chie put on her backpack upside down and ran out of her house.
 “Morning, Ko!” “Morning, Chie!”
 They grabbed each other's hands and ran.
 Tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!

The lady across the street saw the two of them from her window, and she felt it in her chest.
 Tick tick tick tick
 “I'm behind time!”
 She dashed out of her house, still wearing her apron, and headed for the factory where she worked.
 Tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!



The other people in the neighborhood saw the lady rushing down the street, and then they could feel it in their chests too. Tick tick tick tick They started cleaning house, putting out the laundry, and going shopping. Tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!

Then it happened to the florist on the main street and the man who made lunches. They could feel it in their chests. Tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!

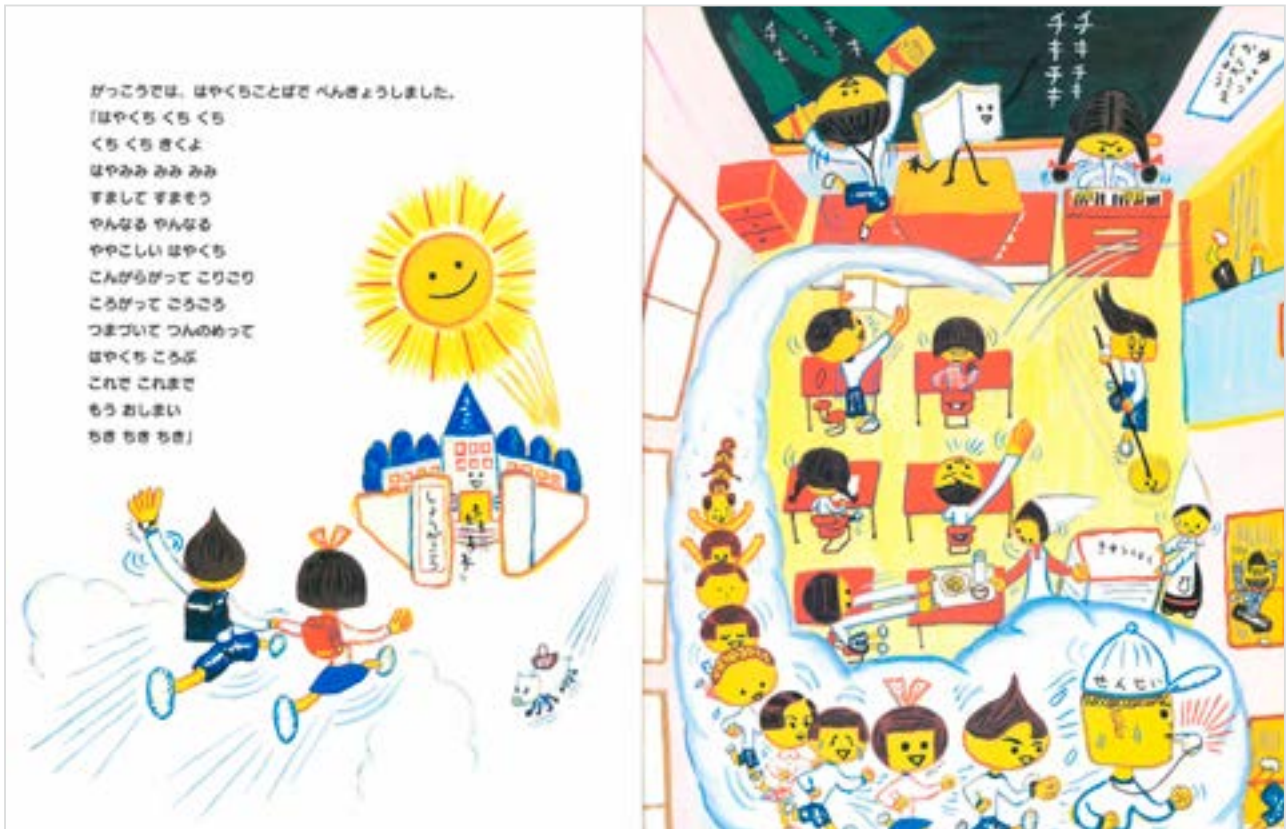


"Hurry, hurry
1, 2, 3
stretch, stretch
1, 2, 3.

Hurry, hurry!
All done!"

The children at the nursery school were finished
with their morning exercises in a flash.

DONE!



がっこうでは、はやくちことばで べんきょうしました。
 『はやくち くら くら
 くら くら きくよ
 はやみみ みみ みみ
 すまして すまそう
 やんなる やんなる
 ややこしい はやくち
 こんがらがって こりこり
 こらがって こらこら
 つまづいて つんのめって
 はやくち ころぼ
 これで これまで
 もう おしまい
 ちき ちき ちき』

At school, everyone studied fast.

“Talk talk talk

Talk fast!

Listen listen listen

Listen fast!

Hate it, hate it!

We’re all mixed up,

mix mix mix.

All the words just tumble out,

tumble, tumble, tumble.

Trip over the fast talk, fast talk.

That’s it for today.

Now we’re done!

Tick tick tick tick.”

Tick tick tick tick



おいしゃさんは、ちょうしんきを 測りながら、おつを はかり、
かんじゃさんの くちを のぞきました。
かんじゃさんは、
「チキチキ、いそいで、しなないように」っていいました。



じてんしゃに のった ひとは、じてんしゃを かついで はしりだしました。
チキチキチキチキ、いそいで いそいで。

The doctor listened to the patient's heartbeat,
and took his temperature.
The nurse looked in the patient's throat.
The patient said, "Tick tick, hurry up, don't let
me die!"

A bicycle rider picked up his bicycle and ran.
Tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!



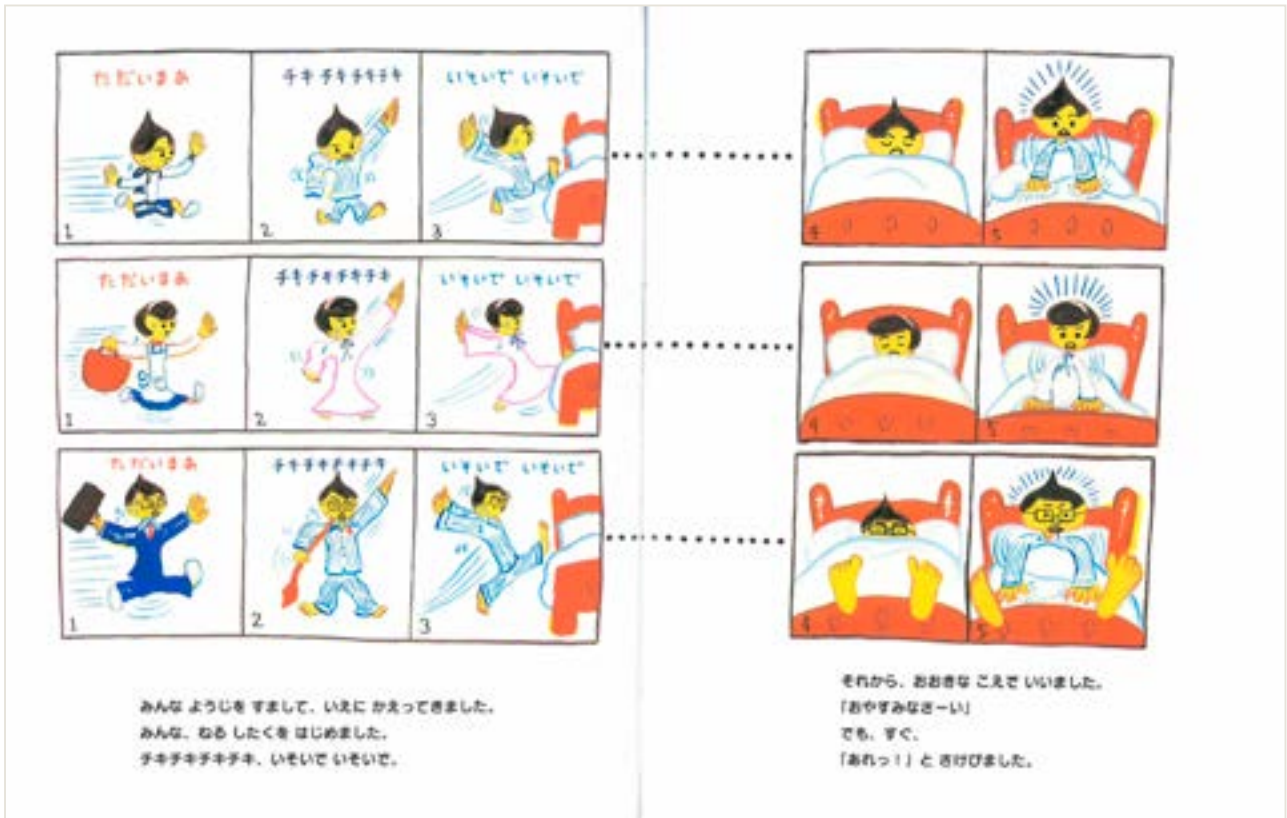
でんしゃにのったおきやくさんは、
でんしゃのなかでほしりだしました。
ふねのおきやくさんは、およいでふねをおしました。
ひこうきのおきやくさんは、とりのまねして、
ひこうきがとぶのをたすけました。

だれもかれも、チキチキチキチキ、いそいでいそいで。
どこもかしこも、チキチキチキチキ、いそいでいそいで。

Train passengers started running through the train.
People on a cruise jumped into the ocean to push the boat.
Airplane passengers started flapping their arms like birds to help the airplane fly.

They were all tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!
Everyone, everywhere was tick tick tick tick,
hurry, hurry!





I'm home
 tick tick tick tick
 Hurry, hurry!

Everyone finished their business and went home.
 They all got ready for bed.
 Tick tick tick tick, hurry, hurry!

Then they all called out, "Good night!"
 But then they shouted,
 "Wait a minute!"



まだ、よるではありません。
まだ、おひさまは、ちゃんとそらのうえです。
ぴかぴか ひかって げんきです。

It wasn't night yet.
The sun was still high in the sky,
and shining brightly

English text © Sako Ikegami, 2017



“Hey, we’ve got the whole day left!”
Everyone screamed.
“With all this leftover time, we can go out and
play!”
Everyone ran outside.

And they played and played until it was night.

English text © Sako Ikegami, 2017



トラベッド

かどのえいこ
角野栄子 さく

スズキコージ え



トラベッド

Torabeddo (Hiro and the Tiger Bed)

Ill. Koji Suzuki | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1994 |

ISBN 4-8340-0202-0 |

トラベッド

Torabeddo (Hiro and the Tiger Bed)

Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten

Ill. Koji Suzuki | 1994 | ISBN 978-4-8340-0202-0 |



● SYNOPSIS

Hiro's little sister Ai is just one year old. Mommy and Daddy are always picking her up and holding her in their arms, while Hiro has to be satisfied with less attention than she used to get. Jealous and frustrated, she draws a picture of a ferocious tiger at the foot of Ai's bed. That night, with a sudden roar, the bed comes to life as a great big tiger. The tiger notices Ai sleeping on its back and says, "I'll slather her with strawberry jam and gobble her up!" Hiro says, "I'll give you something even more delicious, so please don't eat my sister." But even when she tries to tempt the "tigerbed" with a triple-layer cake with frosting and cherries and even some fried prawns, it still answers no. Then, finally, Hiro remembers a good luck charm her mother taught her to say, and as soon she says it, the tiger lumbers away and disappears, leaving Ai sleeping peacefully in her bed.

Hiro vents her frustration at no longer being able to monopolize her parents' attention by drawing the tiger, only to discover that this solves nothing. But in the process of saving Ai from the tiger she's unleashed, she gains a new appreciation for her baby sister. Through the medium of fantasy, the story depicts the awakening of sibling love as a step in the child's emotional growth. (Sachiyo Hosoe)

● REVIEW

There are many stories and picture books on the theme of the child who starts making trouble or suddenly becomes ill when a new sibling is born and the parents' affections seem to have been stolen by the new baby. The protagonist of this story too, grows angry when her parents seem so absorbed with the new baby that they don't pay attention to her. Finally she can't help finding an expression for her emotions and draws a scary picture of a huge tiger on the end of the baby's bed. Then, in the middle of the night, the bed suddenly turns into a big tiger and growls that it will spread strawberry jam on the baby and eat her up. Frightened, the girl bargains with the tiger, determined one way or another to rescue her baby sister from the tiger's jaws. Tracing the ins and outs of the psychology of children in a similar situation, the author's distinctively keen imagination transforms the girl's dilemma into a fantastical adventure story and a suspenseful and entertaining tale. The fantasy, moreover, is firmly based on the contour of the protagonist's personal growth, leading to a fine ending that parallels the growth of the baby. This story, in which a negative emotion turns out to have a positive flip side, is an outstanding example of the celebration of humanity and of life that undergirds all of Kadono's storytelling.

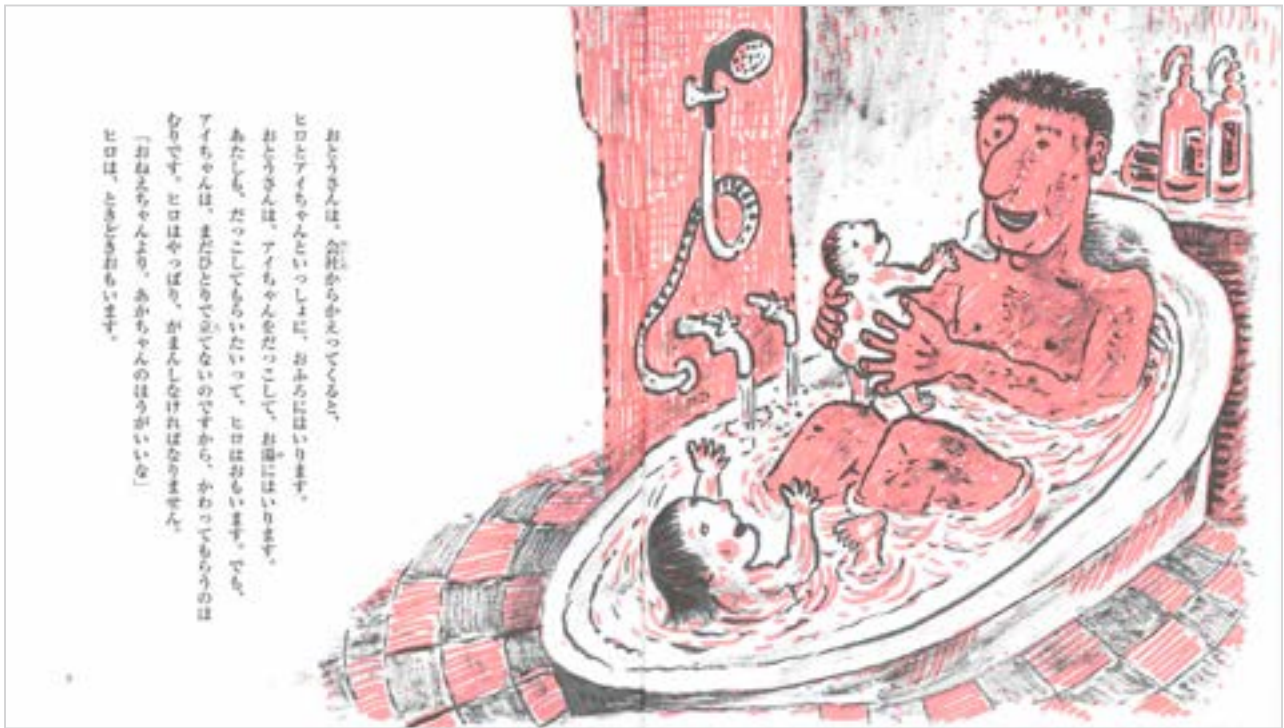




Hiro's baby sister Ai turned one year old recently. Ai can crawl but can't walk, yet. Yesterday she came near Hiro and said "ououoooo". Mammy says "She is calling your name, Hiro" Hiro says "I didn't hear my name".



Mammy always carry Ai and whisper to her "Ai, you are a good girl" and rocks her gently. Hiro feels like saying "I want mammy to carry me like that" but she keeps it to herself because she is the big sister. Hiro clings to mammy's skirt and tries to be patient.



When daddy comes home after work he bathes Hiro and Ai. Daddy cuddles Ai in the bath. Hiro feels like saying "I want daddy to cuddle me like that" but again she keeps silence because she knows Ai can't stand alone. Hiro thinks to herself "baby is better than big sister".



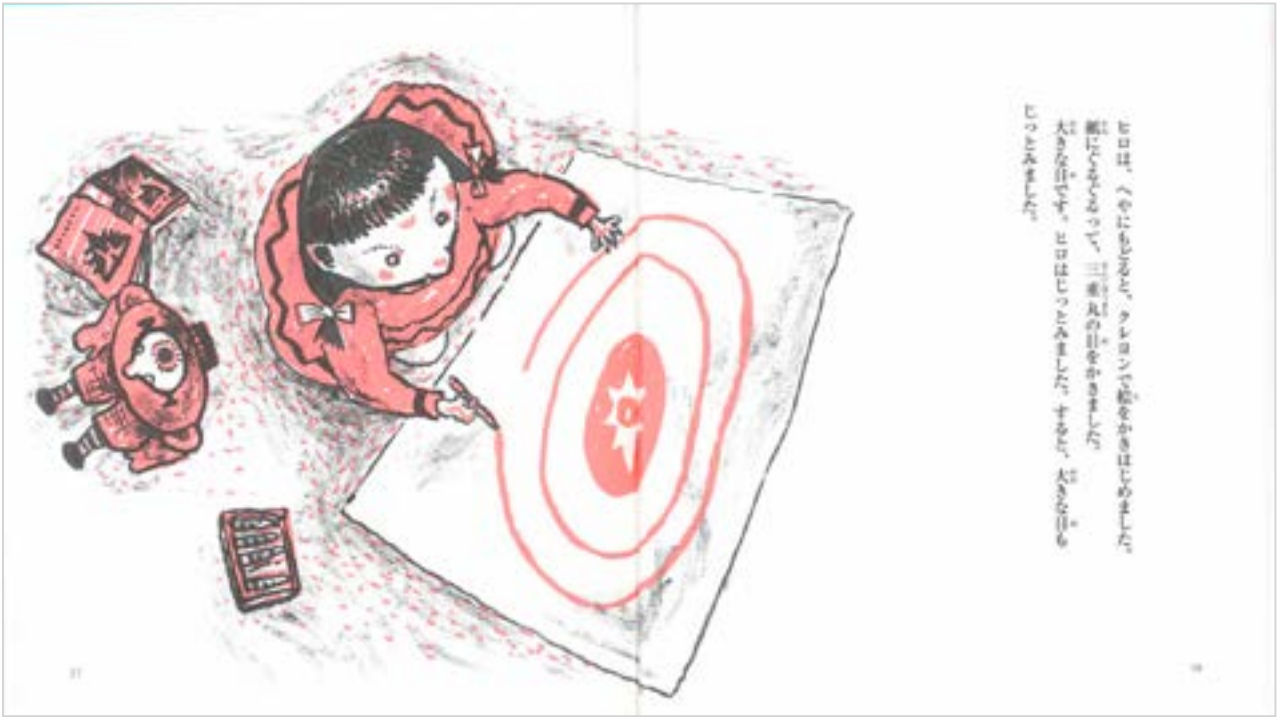
Today, Hiro had a fight with Kei in the play-yard. Kei made fun of Hiro by putting a paper bag over Hiro's head and called her "hey, featureless monster". Hiro said "Stop it!" but he said "Shut up, featureless monster!" Even Hiro's friends Tsuna and Rico laughed and said "It's funny! You became a featureless monster!" Hiro felt hurt and was very angry, so she went home.



The moment she opened the door and started to say "Mammy, Kei was..." Hiro wanted to be heard, but mammy said "wait a minute" and started to feed Ai. Ai looked happy closing her eyes and drinking from mammy's breast. Mammy was singing quietly and smiling at Ai.



Hiro went out to the veranda. Pink the cat was there and came to snuggle up with Hiro's legs. "Leave me alone!" Hiro shouted and frightened Pink ran away.



ヒロは、へやにもどると、クレヨンで絵をかきはじめました。
 顔ごととどろとどろって、三重丸の目をかきました。
 大きな目です。ヒロはじっとみました。すると、大きな目も
 じっとみました。

Hiro returned inside and started to draw with a crayon. She drew an eye surrounded by double circles. It is a big eye. Hiro stared at the eye and the eye stared at Hiro.



ヒロは、紙をぐちゃぐちゃにたたきまわして、ぼーっとはうらみかけました。
 くちやぐちやになつた目は、へやのすみから、また目をみえています。
 にらんでいるみたいです。ヒロはえはにいつて、まいつて、まいつて紙を
 みみつけました。

Hiro crumpled the paper and threw it away. The squashed eye was still looking at Hiro from the corner of the room. Hiro went up to it and trampled on the paper.



“It is all because of Ai!” Hiro puffed out her cheeks. Suddenly, she felt like doing something really bad. She started drawing on Ai’s bed. “Scary tiger with long long whiskers and very very bad, eat up Ai!” She drew a face of a tiger opening its mouth.



After supper, mammy said “Daddy is away on business tonight. It’s only Hiro and Ai and mammy, a special night. I am delighted!” like singing and moved her body like dancing. “Happy, happy!” Hiro moved her body like dancing too. After taking bath, mammy moved two beds and made them into one big bed. “Three of us sleep together” said mammy. Hiro picked her pillow from her own bed. “Let’s sleep like a sandwich, Hiro is bread on that side, Ai is ham in the middle, mammy is the bread on this side.” And mammy laid herself between the sheets holding Ai. Hiro followed quickly.



「さあ、くっつけ、くっつけ、くっつけねんねださう。べたーんとくっついて、おいしいサンドイッチになあれっ」
 おかあさんは、ぐんぐんおきました。
 ヒロも、ぐんぐんおきました。
 アイちゃんは、「おうおうおー」って、いいました。
 「わあっ、おいしいサンドイッチができた、できた、さあねんねしよう。おやすみなさい」
 おかあさんは、ほんぶん目をつぶって、大きなあくびをしました。

“Let’s stick together and sleep tight. We have to stick hard to make a delicious sandwich!” mammy pushed and pushed. Hiro pushed too. Ai said “ououooo”. “Wow, sandwich became delicious, and now we go to sleep” mammy yawned with her eyes half closed.



「まあ、おねえちゃんのおはなし。そりゃたいへんだ。アイちゃんには、むこうでねてもらいましょうね」
 おかあさんは、アイちゃんをだいて、となりのへやにいきました。
 おかあさんのこもりうたが、きこえてきました。
 「アイちゃん、ねんね
 ねむねむ、ねんね」
 ヒロは、じっとでんじょうをみながら、まっています。

ヒロの目が、ぴかぴか光ってききました。
 もうねんねなの？ とくへつを張っていったのに、もうおわりなの？
 あたし、はじっこパンをたいていやだ。アイちゃんみたいに、まんなかのハムになりたいたい。
 ヒロはとつぜん、大きなあくびをしました。
 「おかあさん、アイちゃんは、むこうのベッドでねてもらってよさう」
 おかあさんはびっくりして、目をあげました。
 「だって、あたし、おかあさんにおはなしがあるんだもの。おねえちゃんのおはなしなんだもの。あかちゃんには、わかんないおはなしなんだもの」



Hiro’s lips pouted quickly. Do I have to sleep so soon? Mammy you said this is a special night. Is it over now? I don’t like to be bread, I like to be ham in the middle like Ai. Hiro started to talk in a loud voice. “Mammy, can Ai sleep in her bed?” Mammy was surprised and opened her eyes. “I have to talk to mammy. Big sister’s talk. Babies don’t understand” “Oh, big sister’s talk, really? OK, Ai can sleep in her bed” and brought her to the next room. Hiro heard her singing “Sleep well Ai” Hiro waited looking at the ceiling.



「おかあさん、おでて」
 ヒロはおふとんの中で、おかあさんの子をにぎりました。
 「おねえちゃんのおはなして、なあに？」
 おかあさんがききました。
 「あー、あのね、ミミちゃんのうちには、ひみつのごとほがあるんだって」
 「へー、おもしろそう」
 「新聞のごと、しんぶん、かんぶん、ねこのくちよって、いうんだって、くちよって、うんちのごとよ、きたないでしょ。だから、アイちゃんには、ないしょ、ないしょね」
 「わかった、あかちゃんには、ないしょ、ないしょね」
 「おもしろいしょ」
 「ええ、おもしろいわ」
 おかあさんはうなずきました。でも目はつぶっています。ほんぶんねているみたいです。

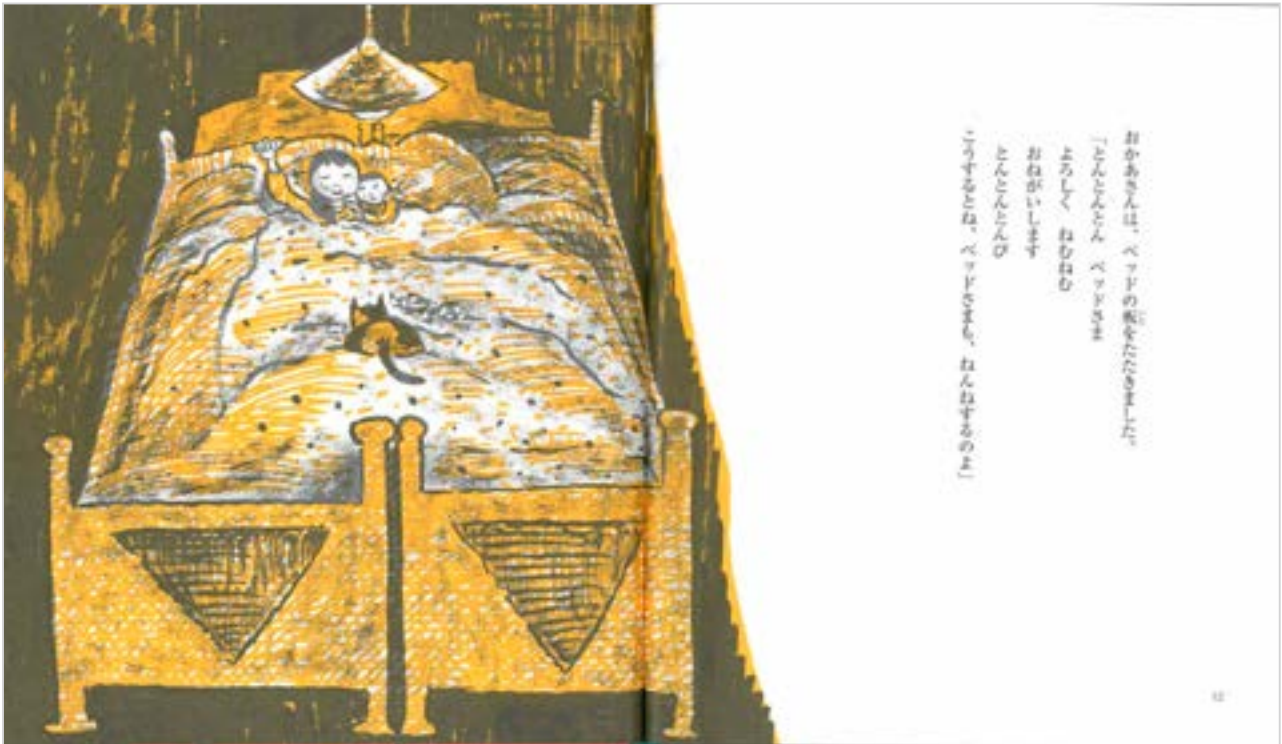
「おねえちゃん」
 おかあさんがおふとんから顔をのぞかした。ベッドにはおねえちゃん、ミミちゃん、おふとんからくちよって、おかあさんのおはなして、ねるのつぽ、うっばり、うっばりするみたいです。

"I'm back" said mammy, and nestled to Hiro in bed. It's so wonderful to be in bed with mammy, Hiro thought. "Mammy give me your hand" Hiro held mammy's hand. "What's big sister's talk?" mammy asked. "Well, Mimi told me that they have a secret word in their family" "That's interesting." "They call newspaper, chinpun-kanpun-neko-no-kucho. Kucho is poop, it's bad. That's why I didn't want Ai to hear this. Please don't tell her, Ok?" "Ok, I won't tell a baby" "You like that?" "Yes, I like that". Mammy nodded, but her eyes were closed. It looked like she is half asleep.



「おかあさん、ねちやだめっ」
 「はいはい、ねていませんとよ、じゃあーうちでも、おもしろいことほつくろるか」
 「うん、つくろ、つくろ」
 「なににしようか」
 「ヒロとおかあさんだけの、おまじないのごとほがいい」
 「ふーん、おまじないねえ、ふふあーん」
 おかあさんは、小さなあくびをしました。
 「そうだね、おかあさんが、いいおまじないあつけたわ」
 「ほんとう？ おしえて」
 ヒロはおかあさんに、もつと、くつつきました。

"Mammy don't sleep, yet" "I'm not sleeping, ok, let's make a fun word for ourselves." "Yes, let's do that." "Ok, what do you think is good?" "Magic word only between mammy and Hiro, I think". Mammy yawned quietly. "I know a good magic word" "Oh, do you? Tell me mammy" Hiro pushed herself to mammy.



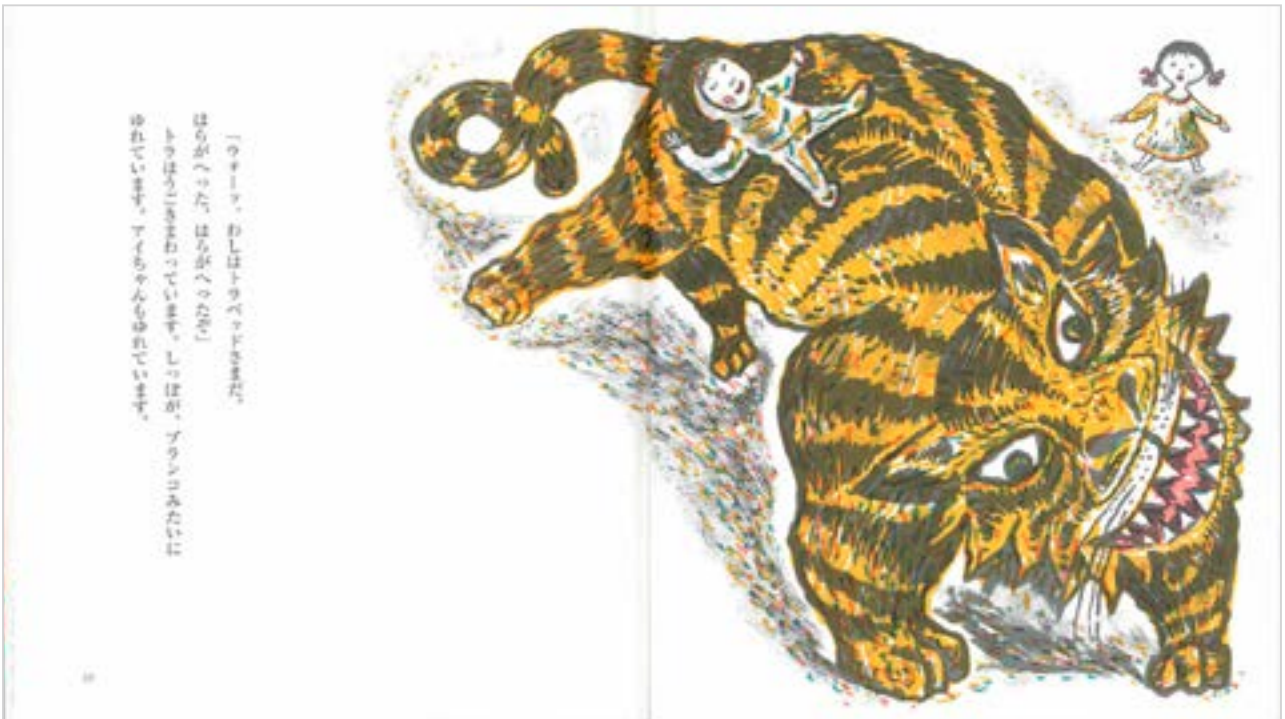
Mammy knocked the headboard "Knock, knock my dear bed. Please, please, sleep, sleep, sleep. See, the bed sleeps too"



Then patted Hiro's back and said "Knock, knock Hiro you are a very good girl, please, please, sleep, sleep, sleep. Hiro go to sleep please, well well the magic word has worked on me" Mammy gave a big yawn and closed her eyes. Again, Hiro's lips started to pout. "No, I'm not sleepy, I don't go to sleep now" Hiro stared at the ceiling. Suddenly, Hiro heard a big roar "Grrrrrrr!", Hiro jumped up. And again "Grrrrr!" the sound came from the room Ai is sleeping.



Hiro hurried to the room and looked in, and there was a big tiger marching in the room and Ai is on its back. "Oh no!" Hiro screamed because the face of the tiger was just like the tiger Hiro drew on Ai's bed with crayons.



"Grrrrr, I am tiger-bed, and I'm so hungry!" Tiger keeps moving, and the tail is swinging, Ai is swinging too.



“Hahaha, I am very lucky because I have a chubby baby on my back. Well, well I am going to put strawberry jam on the baby and eat! Hahaha” Hiro was terrified and shouted “No, don’t eat Ai!” The tiger-bed was surprised and turned his head.



Hiro said loudly “I’ll give you something better than that. Don’t eat Ai.” “Hahaha, what can you give me?” “I’ll give you a cake with strawberry jam and orange jam and apple jam. Doesn’t it sound great?”



The tiger-bed shook his head. "No no no, a baby with a lot of strawberry jam is better." "Then, how about a pudding? A big one...with ice cream on the top. I'll put marshmallow and chocolate and rice cracker, too."



"No no no no, a baby with strawberry jam is far better than that." Tiger-bed shook his head harder, and Ai was about to fall because the tiger's moved his back too. "Ok, ok, I now something better, three story cake, with a lot of cream and one hundred cherries, and, and, ...fried shrimps on the top!" "Fried shrimps?" The tiger-bed stopped and thought for a while.



But soon, it roared "No, no, no, baby with strawberry jam is better!" and jumped and jumped. Ai hopped and hopped on his back too. Ai is going to fall any minute now, and if she falls the tiger is going to put strawberry jam on her! Hiro's heart is beating so fast and started to ache.



And then she remembered mammy's magic word! Hiro began to pat the bottom of tiger-bed. "knock, knock, knock, please, please, please, sleep, sleep, sleep, tiger-bed"

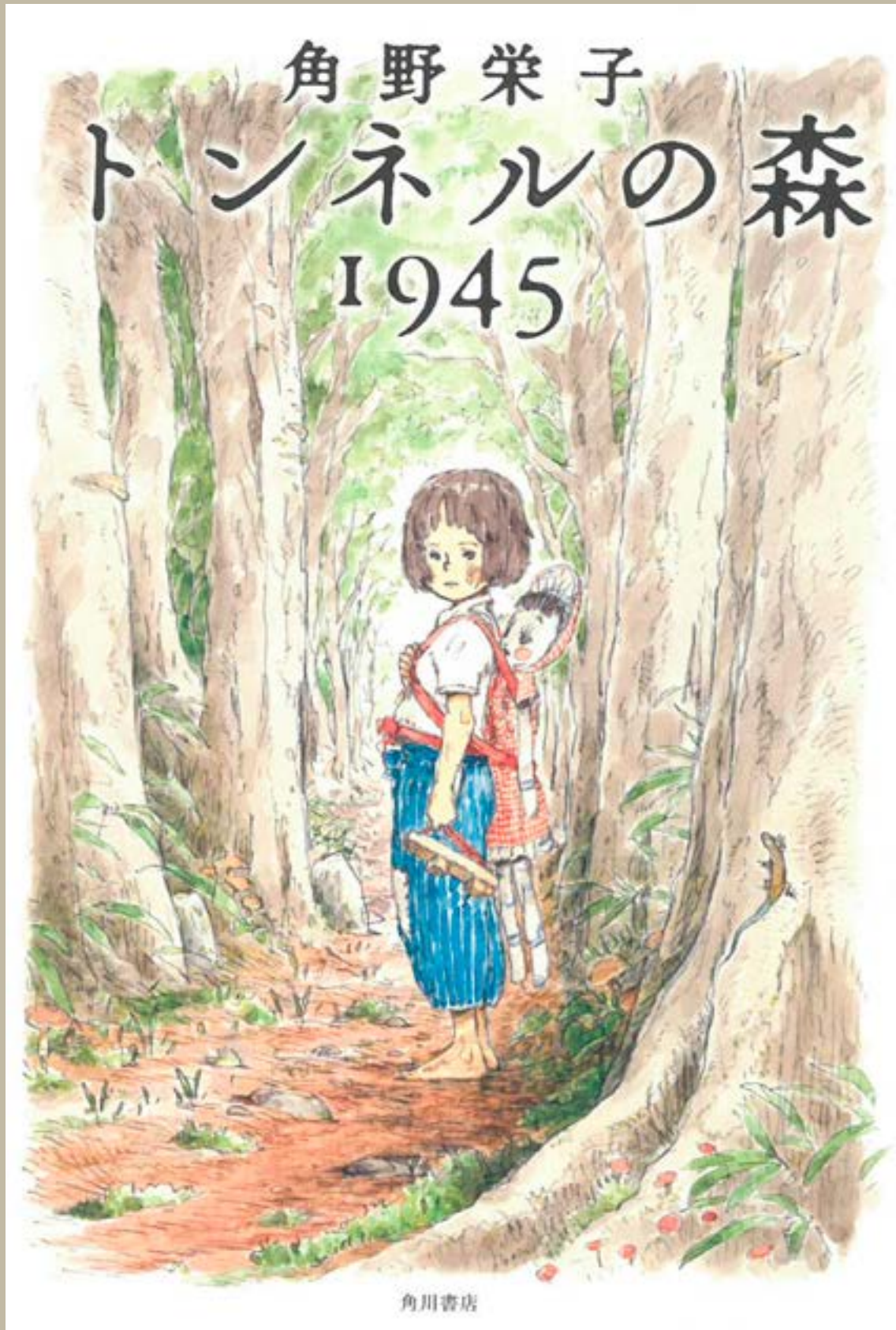


On that instant, tiger-bed's cheek dropped and he started to sing in a sleepy voice, "Funi funi funya, I am going to walk, slowly and slowly, I am going to walk to the land of sleep, walk in a circle to the right three times, walk in a circle , funi, funi funya"



His legs were not jumping anymore. Hiro followed tiger-bed, and walked in a circle to the right three times. Tiger-bed said "I am going to eat a baby with strawberry jam." and came to stop.





トンネルの森 1945

Tonneru no mori 1945

(The Tunnel Through the Woods, 1945)

Tokyo: Kadokawa | 2015 | ISBN 978-4040677132 |

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● LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

On Eiko Kadono's

The Tunnel Through the Woods, 1945

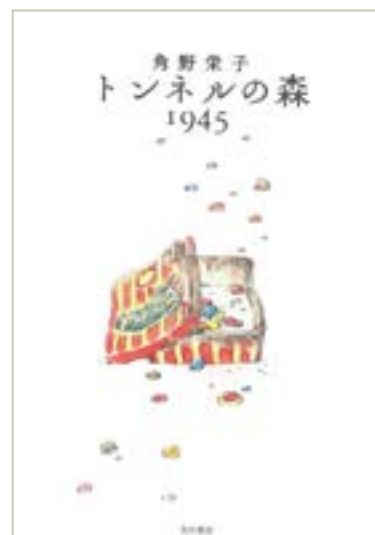
by David Jacobson, author and editor

In *The Tunnel Through the Woods, 1945*, prolific Japanese children's author Eiko Kadono revisits her childhood experiences growing up during World War II. Like Kadono herself, the main character, Iko, loses her mother at age five, before the story begins. She is separated from her father, too, for much of the action of the story, because he is called to serve in the army, and then even after being discharged for medical reasons, has to remain in Tokyo to work after the family is evacuated to the countryside.

The bulk of the novel, therefore, focuses on Iko's struggle to cope with life without father or mother, with a new stepmother whom she still feels distant from, amidst an approaching war that gradually destroys all the trappings of a normal childhood.

Even after her parents are gone, Iko continues to lose the things dearest to her in life. She forms a warm bond with her grandmother, but when the time comes to escape Tokyo, Iko has to separate from her, too, never to see her again. At her new school in the country, Iko befriends Kazuko, another girl, who like her, has been evacuated from Tokyo. Kazuko's father died in the war, and she lives with her severely ill mother, whose attentive care of her daughter represents to Iko what a good mother should be. However, the mother dies, and Kazuko moves away.

Unlike her previous title *Last Run*, in which Kadono confronted her war-time memories from the perspective of a septuagenarian, *The Tunnel Through*



the Woods, 1945 is anchored to the point-of-view of 10-year-old Iko. Accordingly, the physical privations during the war years take center stage. Iko recounts the growing lack of food, the prevalence of ticks and lice, the necessity of keeping shoes until they fall apart. So in a particularly poignant scene, Iko's eyes are drawn to the startling whiteness of four rice balls being offered to four victims of a firebombing. She hasn't seen or eaten pure white rice in years and covets a rice ball, though she knows the bomb victims are far more deserving than she is.

Across from Iko's house in the country is a dark, gloomy forest that is rumored to harbor a shadowy war deserter. It comes to symbolize all her fears: of the approaching war, and of her abandonment by everyone and everything she loves. To get to school, Iko must pass through this forest, which is so dense the path through it is like a tunnel, nearly devoid of light. At first she is afraid to go through, but her father counsels her that if she can get to know what she fears it will stop being so scary. So each time she enters she greets the forest and yells out, "Iko is passing through!" Over time, she grows less and less fearful. She even thinks she spies the deserter through the trees and hears him playing a harmonica, so she begins addressing him directly and thanking him for protecting her. We never meet the deserter or even know whether he really exists. But in Iko's mind, the deserter becomes a potent reminder of the support of those who love her, enabling her to overcome her fears.

As Iko grows in confidence and strength, she learns to love and accept her stepmother. There is a priceless moment near the end of the book when the stepmother shows Iko a beautiful pink kimono embroidered with cherry blossoms. This kimono was given to the stepmother by her mother before she got married, and the stepmother had wanted to give it to Iko too. But now, without Iko's father to provide for them, she needs to sell the kimono for food. But before she does, she takes a few minutes to dress Iko in the kimono, still way too big for her. They share a brief

moment of joy together, cemented by their knowledge that they are both sacrificing for each other.

In *The Tunnel Through the Woods, 1945*, Eiko Kadono has written a poignant coming-of-age story. Though grounded by the author's own experiences in World War II, the story ultimately transcends its particulars, and reads as a timeless tale of a girl triumphing over darkness.

● ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Excerpt 1

"To get to school, Iko, you go down that path that looks like a tunnel in the forest. You can go through our backyard. Isn't that handy?" said my father, Seizo.

The next morning, Seizo took me by the hand and walked me through the thick grasses in our yard. "I'll cut the grass tomorrow before I leave to make it easier to walk through."

On the other side of the grass, I could see tall trees, and in front of those trees was the entrance into the tunnel. Humid air wafted towards me from inside the tunnel.

"My school is on the other side?"

I bent forward to peer into the darkness. It looked slimy and spooky.

"That's right. You do have a ways to walk after going down that path..."

One step into the "tunnel" and I thought someone had put their hands over my eyes. Suddenly, it was completely dark. And cool. I nearly stumbled and, looking down, found the ground was bumpy with tree roots full of knots and knobs.

"I'm scared, Father." I grabbed the hem of his jacket.

"Walk slowly. No need to rush. You'll get used to it in no time. I know you'll be okay, Iko."

Seizo took my hand and gave it a shake. "I know you'll be okay, Iko," That's what he always said. But

I wasn't okay. I'd never told anyone, but ever since Mother died, I'd been especially afraid of dark places. When we buried Mother's ashes, the grave was so very dark inside. When you die, you're put into those dark places. Every time I had to go to the bathroom alone at night, the dark hallway looked exactly like that dark hole of the grave. So I held it in as long as I possibly could. If I had told someone, I knew they would have said, "But you're a big girl in grade school!" I didn't want people to think I was a weakling, so I always rubbed my legs together and tried to wait for morning to break.

"Aren't there any other roads?" I asked.

"This is the best shortcut to school. There is another path, but it would be very round about and take you two hours. If you use this path, it's only about an hour to school."

"Is it really that far away?!"

"This is the countryside. That's how it is here. You'll have to accept things as they are."

"Father, no. I'm scared of this place."

I was nearly in tears and hung on to Seizo desperately. The tunnel path was completely surrounded by trees. The trees seemed to form a wall that went on forever. Some trees had thick trunks and others had narrow ones. Some were straight and others were entangled. Some had huge branches curving down that looked like wild hair flying around. In the far distance, I could see the light winking as it moved, and then

disappeared.

Grandma Taka had managed to buy me the sneakers I now wore, but they were still much too big for me. I had to step carefully to make sure I didn't trip and fall. They made weird squeaking sounds as I walked.

A rectangular black stone stood deeper within the woods, a little ways from the path. It almost looked like a person.

"Oh!"

I hid behind Seizo.

"Don't worry. That's a *doso-shin*, a traveler's guardian deity."

"What's a traveler's guardian deity?"

"It's the god that watches over this path. It makes sure that those who use it are safe. He'll be watching over you tomorrow and every day that you walk here."

Seizo approached the moss-covered stone and wiped it off with his hands.

I could see twirled twisted writing engraved in the stone. It looked like a magic incantation. Seizo went around to the back of the stone to examine it more carefully.

"This may actually be an old gravestone."

"Ugh! A grave?!"

"It's very old, that much is for sure. The ancient dead will have changed into kindly spirits after so many years. Every day, when you pass this stone, be sure to put your hands together and ask it to watch over you. Once you become friends, this road won't seem nearly as frightening. It'll get so you won't mind this place at all. That's the kind of spirit you'll have to adopt from now on. Just become friends with it."

No. Never. A grave. I can't become friends with a grave. That's impossible. I can't believe Father's going to leave me here. Tomorrow, Seizo would be going back to Fukagawa in Tokyo. There would be no one left here to watch over me. Please, don't leave me here all alone.

"Father, I want to go back to Tokyo. I don't care if we get bombed. I don't care if I die. I want to live at our house in Fukagawa even if you're away at the factory all day. I can stay home by myself. Please. I don't want to live here."

I buried my face in Seizo's back and began sobbing.

"Your life is more important than anything, Iko.

Tokyo is far too dangerous. This place, it'll take care of you."

Seizo patted my back gently and put his arm firmly around my shoulders as we walked on.

Suddenly, it was light.

"See, we're at the end now. Stop crying. No tunnel goes on forever. There's always an opening at the end. EE—koh!! Open your eyes!"

Seizo was trying to make me smile. Slowly, I opened my eyes. It was so bright. The sky, a shining blue.

The path from the tunnel gradually led downhill. At the bottom was a running brook, with two big logs laid across it. After that, the path gradually wound upward towards a hill.

"Look! It's a pond!"

Seizo pointed towards the right.

I could see a round pond where the water shimmered in the light of the sun.

"It's small, isn't it?"

The pond reflected the blue sky. It looked like an eye sitting in the middle of a field.

"But I've heard it's pretty deep. So be careful, Iko, okay?"

The water from the pond became a brook, passed under the log bridge and probably flowed all the way to far-off rice paddies.

Fearfully, I turned to look back. The tunnel path opened its terrible pitch-black mouth at me. It was still there. Even under this shiny bright sun, the horrible tunnel was still there. I could hardly believe it.

"What is that pond called?"

I was feeling a little better now.

"Hmm... I wonder...? I know. Let's name it ourselves!"

Suddenly, I became excited.

"Let's see... I think we should call it "ISE Pond." The I is for Iko, and the SE is for Seizo."

Seizo wrapped his big hands around my face and made it wobble. He laughed out loud. I laughed, too.



Excerpt 2

Every day, I had to go through the tunnel twice, on my ways to and from school. Even if I ran without ever taking a breath, even though it was the same path every day, I was still terrified each time. The sound of the trees rustling sounded different each time and sometimes I'd hear a high-pitched crack or the sound of water dripping. And I always felt as if someone was staring at me from deep within the woods. The trees began leaning inward, little by little, and it seemed as if the tunnel was gradually shrinking all around me. I would imagine that the exit had suddenly disappeared and I was trapped inside the pitch-black darkness. What could I do? No one would understand my fears. "It's just a tunnel of trees," they'd say and laugh. I couldn't understand why I was so afraid. It was nothing. Yes. Just trees. No matter how many times I chanted those words to myself, the tunnel would take a big deep breath and try to trap me inside the darkness. At least, that was how I always felt.

Seizo had said, "No tunnel goes on forever. There's always an opening at the end." But maybe the opening might disappear. Terrible, frightening things always happened to me. Everyone else had a mother, but I didn't. The war had started and I was separated from my beloved grandmother. I couldn't even see her anymore. If Seizo got better, he might be sent back to war again. And maybe one day, I'd lose my way and never be able to get out of this tunnel again, ever.

Excerpt 3

The *geta* clogs that my stepmother Mitsuko lent me had a golden thread running through its green velvet thong. They were very light and made from the fragrant wood of the elegant empress tree with a beautiful grain. These must be a precious pair she had saved for special occasions.

The next day, I held her *geta* firmly to my chest as I called out, "It's me, Iko. Iko is going to pass through. Iko is passing through!" as I ran through the tunnel. I carefully wiped my feet in the grass growing near the exit of the tunnel and then put on the *geta*. On my way home, I did the same. "Iko is passing through!" I called as I ran. But then, I noticed the *geta* I had lost



in the pond yesterday, lying in front of the *doso-shin*, the traveler's guardian deity. It had floated away from me, to the deepest center of the pond and then sunk, leaving a trail of bubbles. Why was my *geta* lying here now? Had someone fished it out for me? But it wasn't wet. And the thong wasn't twisted. I looked around in panic. Just then, I thought I saw something move beyond the thicket of trees. I jerked up in surprise and stared as a thin gray shadow slipped behind the trees and disappeared.

Someone was there!

"Ahh... excuse me..." "H... hello?"

I shouted. But the moment I spoke, I grew frightened and my legs started shaking.

"Thaa... aa... ank Y... y... you."

The words came naturally, but I was trembling so badly that I couldn't form them properly.

Excerpt 4

Until now, we had depended on the money Seizo earned at the factory and the kimonos in the wardrobe that could be transformed into rice for us to eat. But now, we had no more of either. Mitsuko, my stepmother, had always walked around visiting all of the farmers she had become acquainted with, trying to get them to sell her food as cheaply as possible, and we had somehow made it through. But now, even that would be very difficult. I could tell just from watching Mitsuko's face. The only thing a child like me could do, was worry.

"Iko-chan,"

Mitsuko called after she'd gotten Hiroshi to sleep. As I watched, she opened the wardrobe and pulled out a carefully wrapped kimono from the very bottom

of the drawer.

She put it down on the floor and, after untying the knots, spread open the paper.

"Oh!"

I couldn't help exclaiming.

A magnificent cherry-blossom-pink kimono with a white obi belt! Mitsuko spread the kimono out before me. White blossoms, and slightly darker pink petals were scattered over the entire kimono, on the shoulders, twirling down and gathering into tiny piles of *sakura* petals at the hem. Here and there, gold and silver embroidery added depth.

"It's beautiful! What is it? Where did you get it?"

I was sure we had already sold all of the kimonos. Any kimonos that a young woman might wear had long been changed into rice.

"When it was decided that I would marry Seizo and I met you for the first time, I knew I wanted you to wear this kimono for your coming-of-age celebration when you became 20. This kimono with the long sleeves is called a *furisode*, a waving-sleeves kimono. It's only worn by young, unmarried girls. My mother wore this one. And I wore it when I turned twenty, too. I was never going to give it up until you were twenty and **had** had a chance to wear it. But...

Mitsuko couldn't continue.

"It's okay. You have to sell it, right?" I said quickly.

"I guess I shouldn't have said anything. It sounds so patronizing, doesn't it?" Mitsuko laughed weakly.

"I wonder... Would it be okay to try it on, just for a little while?" I added quickly, trying to drown out Mitsuko's words.

"Oh!" She raised her face in surprise.

"Of course. Wearing it now wouldn't be a case of "extravagance is the enemy" would it?"

Mitsuko stood up and took out the different belts and supports from the little drawer of the wardrobe.

"Let's put it on properly then."

She made me stand up and, after stripping me down to my underpants, began wrapping the various parts of the kimono around me, starting with the under-kimono. The obi belt was too long and my waist so small that she had to wrap it around me many many times, until we were both giggling.

"I can't breathe!"

I stuck out my tongue, panting.

"Old kimonos use lots of gold and silver, so they're very heavy."

"These sleeves are amazing."

I was only ten, and nowhere near the height of a twenty-year-old. The bottom of the long sleeves touched the floor and then some. I used both hands to pick up the sleeves and then spun in place like a little doll. I tilted my head, and tried to take a pose, looking as cute as I could.

"*Chin Ton Shan.*"

Mitsuko made the sounds of a shamisen stringed-instrument.

"I'm so glad," she said, with emotion, "but I wish Seizo was home so we could show him."

"That's okay. **I'z** gonna tell him myself when he comes home. I can tell it to him good. He'll be happy to hear."

"Oh my! **'I'z gonna** tell him?" Such language while wearing an elegant *furisode*!?"

Mitsuko burst out laughing.

I sat down on the mat quite properly, my legs neatly folded under me, spread the long sleeves out on both sides, and bowed deeply with both hands on the floor in the formal fashion, just like an ancient princess.

Excerpt 5

How could things have come to this? All around me, no matter how hard I searched, there wasn't a single happy person, anywhere. Someone precious to them had died. Or was missing. Someone had been injured. And everyone was hungry. When the war had started, people had been full of hope. Now, everyone wondered what would become of the world, full of anxiety and worry.

I was reminded of the fish that **Kazu-chan** had drawn. She'd used a pencil to draw thin lines, one after the other. Her hand had moved carefully, meticulously. Even though she was going through a terribly stressful time, Kazu-chan was always drawing.

"When I'm drawing, I feel calm. I feel safe," she used to say

I wondered, was Kazu-chan still drawing away her fears? Was she feeling a little safer now?

I decided to try her trick. I needed to feel safe.

I sat on the *engawa* porch and began drawing the tunnel in the forest. The black forest became darker and darker as I filled it in with my pencil. The tunnel

in the forest was dark and humid and you felt as if you were being swallowed whole as you were lured deep into the woods. I ran barefoot. Tree roots struck the back of my feet. I was so very frightened that I could barely stand it.

"Become friends with it. Then it won't be nearly as frightening," Seizo had said. I'd announced myself so that the forest would get to know this scaredy-cat Iko that was its neighbor. I'd sing a song, and then say a little chant every day as I dashed through the tunnel. Then, I'd see the end of the tunnel. It was in these woods that I met the soldier who only showed me his shadow. I couldn't tell what he looked like, but I added a picture of the man blowing on his harmonica. In the dark forest, an even darker shadow. I pressed down hard on my pencil as I moved it to and fro across the paper. I was mesmerized. And I just couldn't stop.

She was right. The terrors. The fear. I could feel them beginning to fade away.

I wanted to show Kazu-chan. Even though she might laugh at me.

I spread out my drawing in front of Seizo. His eyes were laughing. Then he began to sit up on his own and slowly put his hand on my head.

I grabbed my notebook and ran into the tunnel. I wanted to show the soldier.

"Mr. Soldier!"

I called in a soft voice. I had always been able to spot the soldier immediately, standing somewhere in the distance. He appeared like an ink spill. But now, no matter which direction I looked, he simply wasn't there. I peered into the woods, far into the distance but I couldn't find him. I realized I was spinning around and around looking and peering as I walked into the forest by myself.

As always, it was dark. I stood still, opened my sketchbook and held it out in front of me.

"Mr. Soldier! See, can you see?"

It was silent and not a tree shivered.

The soldier didn't appear.

I held the notebook open as I continued to walk further into the forest.

"It's me, Iko. I'm passing through!" I said again and again. I tried standing still. But the soldier still did not appear. Deep in the dark forest, the trees overlapped and became darker and darker as they approached.

"I want to see you!" I yelled.

The soldier didn't appear.

I turned my head right and left, searching between the trees as I walked, and the branches slapped me in the face.

"Hey, Mr. Soldier!"

I called again and again.

The soldier was nowhere to be found.

I couldn't hear his harmonica.

And then, in the far, far distance I saw a small light. Inside the light, stood a thin shadow.

"It's the soldier. Hello! It's Iko. Look at my drawing! Look!"

I began running.

As I grew closer, the thin figure in the light grew clearer and clearer.

"Oh!" I ran faster. And there, standing with his back lit by an immense light... stood Seizo, on crutches!

"Father!" I ran.

Just then, he shouted,

"Iko, the war is over."

End



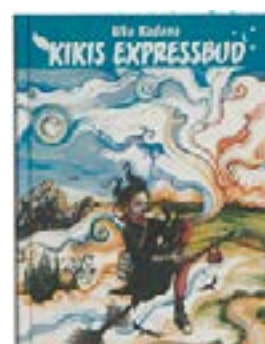
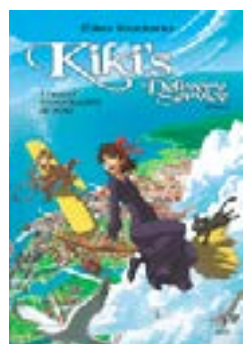
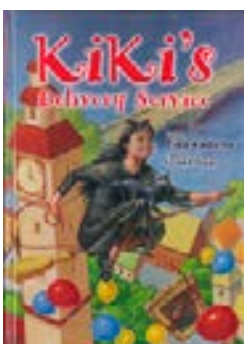
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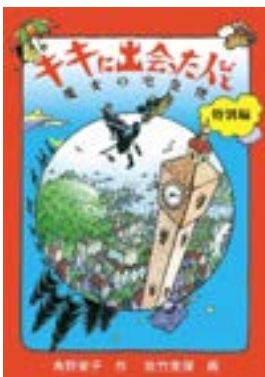
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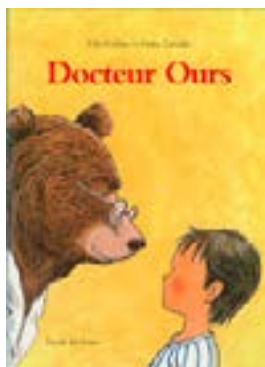
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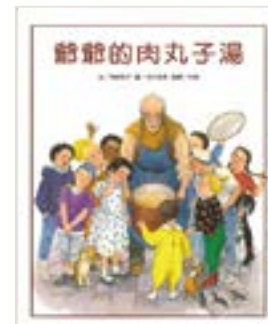
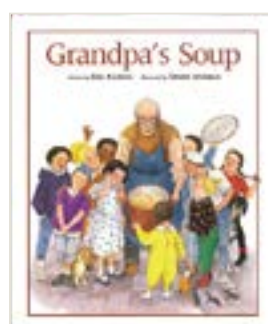
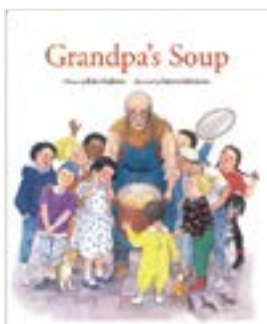
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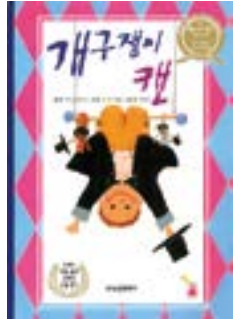
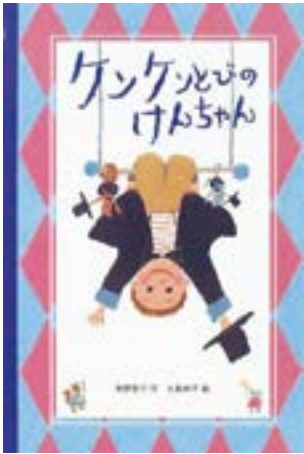


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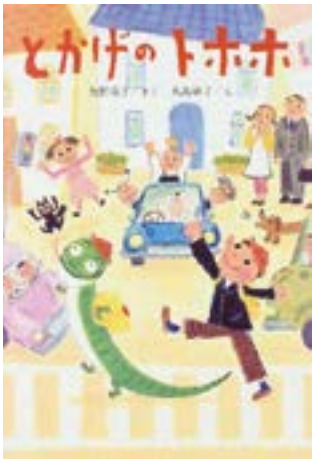
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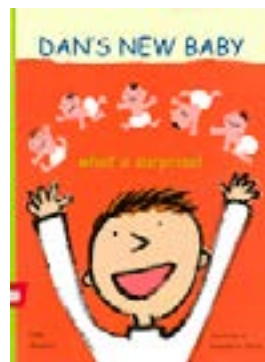
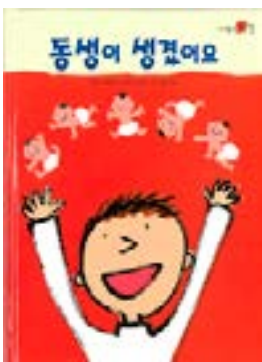
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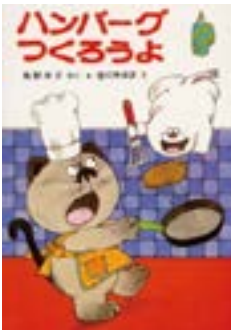
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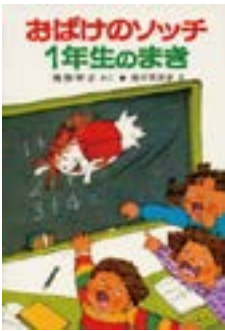
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Ebifurai o oikakero (Chase Fried Shrimps!) Ill. Yoko
Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1982

おばけのコッチ あかちゃんのまき
Obake no Kocchi: akachan no maki (Kochi the Little
Ghost: The Baby) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar |
1982

ポシェットさげたのらねこさん
Poshetto sageta noraneko-san (The Cat with a
Pochette) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Aki shobo | 1982

わすれんぼうをなおすには
Wasurenbo o naosu niwa (How to Repair My Bad
Memory) Ill. Osamu Nishimura | Tokyo: Obunsha |
1982

はいこちらはがき新聞社
Hai kochira hagaki shimbunsha (Post Card Newspaper
Company) Ill. Akemi Watabe | Osaka: Bunken shup-
pan | 1982

ひょうのぼんやりおやすみをとる
Hyo no Bonyari oyasumi o toru (A Panther Bonyari's Holiday) Ill. Hideko Ise | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1982/1990

フルーツポンチはいできあがり
Furutsuponchi hai dekiagari (Fruit Punch is Ready) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1983

カレーパンでやっつけよう
Kare pan de yattsukeyo (Nock Out with Curry Bread) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1983

おばあちゃんのおみやげ
Obachan no omiyage (Grandma's Present) Ill. Junko Hashimoto | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 1983

おばあちゃんはおばけとなかよし
Obachan wa obake to nakayoshi (Grandma's Ghost Friend) Ill. Akemi Watanabe | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 1983

おばけのソッチ 1年生のまき
Obake no Socchi ichinensei no maki (Socchi the Little Ghost: The First Grader) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1983

かえってきたネッシーのおむこさん
Kaette kita Nesshi no omukosan (Nessie's Bridegroom Returned) Ill. Osamu Nishikawa | Tokyo: Kinnohoshi-sha | 1984

なぞなぞのおうち
Nazonazo no ouchi (The Riddle House) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1984

ねんねがだいすき
Nenne ga daisuki (I Love Sleep) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1984

おばけのアッチ：スーパーマーケットのまき
Obake no Acchi: Supa maketto no maki (Acchi the Little Ghost: Supermarket) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1984

おはいんなさいえりまきに
Ohainnasai erimaki ni (Come Into My Muffler) Ill. Suzuko Makino | Tokyo: Kinnohoshi-sha | 1984

おかしなうそつきやさん
Okashina usotsukiyasan (Funny Little Fib Shop) Ill. Setsu Kunii | Tokyo: Poplar | 1984

らくがきはけさないで
Rakugaki wa kesanaide (Don't Erase a Graffiti) Ill. Tomoko Narasaka | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1984

わるくちしまいます
Warukuchi shimaimasu (Put Away Bad-Mouth) Ill. Mayuko Seki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1984

ハンバーガーぷかぷかどん
Hanbaga pukapukadon (A Hamburger, Pukapuka don) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1985

くまくんのあくび
Kuma-kun no akubi (Little Bear's Yawn) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1985

魔女の宅急便
Majo no takkyubin (Kiki's Delivery Service) Ill. Akiko Hayashi | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1985/2002

ナイナイナイナイ
Nainai nainai (Nothing!) Ill. Saburo Watanabe | Hamamatsu: Hikumano shuppan | 1985

ねこのパジャマだっこはいや
Neko no pajama dakko wa iya (Kitten's Pajamas: I Hate Being Held) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1985

おばけのアッチ こどもプールのまき
Obake no Acchi kodomo puru no maki (Acchi the Little Ghost: The Kids Pool) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1985

おばけのソッチ ラーメンをどうぞ
Obake no Socchi ramen o dozo (Socchi the Little Ghost: Please Noodles) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1985

おしりをチクんとささないで
Oshiri o chikun to sasanaide (Don't Stab My Buttocks) Ill. Hiroshi Nagahama | Tokyo: PHP Institute | 1985

シッポ船長はいやとはいいません
Shippu sencho wa iya towa iimasen (Captain Ship Never Says NO) Ill. Yoko Hamada | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1985

たんけんイエイエ
Tanken ieie (Expedition Ye-Ye) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1985

アッチのオムレツぽぽぽぽ～ん
Acchi no omuretsu popopopo poon (Acchi and Omelette, Pon!) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1986

かばのイヤイヤくん
Kaba no iyaiya-kun (Little Hippo Iyaiya) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 1986

もぐらさんのいびき
Mogura-san no ibiki (Mole's Snore) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1986

ねこちゃんのしゃっくり
Neko-chan no shakuri (Kitten's Hiccups) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1986

おばけのソッチ およめさんのまき
Obake no Socchi oyomesan no maki (Socchi the Little Ghost: The Bride) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1986

ぞうさんのうんち
Zo-san no unchi (Elephant's Poo) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1986

アッチとボンのいないいないグラタン
Acchi to Bon no inaiinai guratan (Acchi and Bon: The Mysterious Gratin) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1987

ハナさんのおきやくさま
Hana-san no okyakusama (Hana's Visitors) Ill. Osamu Nishikawa | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1987

くまくんのくしゃみ
Kuma-kun no kushami (Little Bear's Sneeze) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1987

にゃあにゃあクリスマス
Nyaa nyaa kurisumasu (Cats and Christmas) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1987

おこさまランチがにげだした
Okosama ranchi ga nigedashita (Happy Meal Run Away!) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1987

ぼくしごとに行くんだ
Boku shigoto ni ikunda (I'm Going to Work) Ill. Mako Taruishi | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1987

ぼくのたからものどこですか
Boku no takaramono doko desuka (Where is My Treasure?) Ill. Mako Taruishi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 1988

ぼく社長だよ、エヘン！
Boku shacho dayo, ehen! (I am a Boss!) Ill. Mako Taruishi | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1988

ごちそうびっくり箱
Gochiso bikkuribako (Jack-In-The-Box and Big Meal) Ill. So Nishimura | Tokyo: Chikuma shobo | 1988

イソップどうわ
Isoppu dowa (Aesop) Ill. Yoko Imoto | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1988

魔女の宅急便（点字版）
Majo no takkyubin (Braille Book: Kiki's Delivery Service) Tokyo: Nippon Light House | 1988

もぐらちゃんのおねしょ
Mogura-chan no onesho (Little Mole's Bed-Wetting) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1988

現代児童文学作家対談 3
Gendai jidobungaku sakka taidan 3: Eiko Kadono, Erika Tachihara and Rieko Nakagawa (A Dialogue Among Modern Authors of Children's Books 3) Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1988

アイとサムの街
Ai to Samu no machi (Ai and Sam's Town) Ill. Suzuko Makino | Tokyo: Poplar | 1989

ぼくびょうきじゃないよ
Boku byoki ja naiyo (Thank You, Dr. Bear) Ill. Mako Taruishi | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1994

アラジンとまほうのランプ ほか
Arajin to maho no ranpu hoka (Aladdin's Lamp, et al) Ill. Osamu Nishikawa, Maki Sasaki | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1989

このゆびとまれ1ねんせい きゅうしょくブルブル
Kono yubi tomare, ichinensei kyushoku buruburu (The First Graders Come Together!) Ill. Mako Taruishi | Tokyo: Poplar | 1989

なぞなぞあそびうた 1

Nazonazo asobiuta 1 (Riddle Song Game, vol.1) Ill.
Koji Suzuki | Tokyo: Nora Shoten | 1989

なぞなぞあそびうた 2

Nazonazo asobiuta 2 (Riddle Song Game, vol.2) Ill.
Koji Suzuki | Tokyo: Nora Shoten | 1989

ネッシーのおむこさん / かえってきたネッシーのおむ
こさん (点字版)

Nessi no omukosan / Kaette kita Nessi no omukosan
(Braille Book: Nessie's Bridegroom) Tokyo: Nippon
Light House | 1989

りすちゃんのなみだ

Risu-chan no namida (Squirrel' Teardrop) Ill. Yoko
Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1989

ぶたぶたさんのおなら

Butabuta-san no onara (Pig's Farts) Ill. Yoko Sasaki |
Tokyo: Poplar | 1990

ちびねこチョコビ

Chibi neko Chobi (Kitten Chobi) Ill. Mako Taruishi |
Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1990

おばけのアッチのゲームのえほん

Obake no Acchi no gemu no ehon (Acchi's Game Book)
Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1990

あかちゃんアッチ はいはいしてる

Akachan Acchi haihai shiteru (Baby Acchi: Crawling)
Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1991

あかちゃんアッチ はんぶんこ

Akachan Acchi hanbunko (Baby Acchi: Share) Ill. Yoko
Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1991

あかちゃんアッチ み～んなあくび

Akachan Acchi minna akubi (Baby Acchi: Yawning) Ill.
Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1991

おばけのソッチ ねこちゃんのまき

Obake no Socchi neko-chan no maki (Socchi the Little
Ghost: A Kitten) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1991

しあわせの王子 / ようせいのスカーフ

Shiawase no oji / Yosei no sukafu (The Happy Prince/
The Pixies' Scarf) Ill. Yoko Imoto | Tokyo: Kodansha |
1991

ぼくはおにいちゃん

Boku wa oniichan (I am a Big Brother) Co-author:
Hiroshi Ito | Tokyo: Doshinsha | 1992

ぼくのおとうと

Boku no otouto (My Little Brother) Co-author: Hiroshi
Ito | Tokyo: Doshinsha | 1992

こちょこちょ

Kocho kocho (Tickling) Ill. Naomi Tsuda | Tokyo: Libro
Port | 1992

ころんだころんだ

Koronda koronda (Tumbling) Ill. Naomi Tsuda | Tokyo:
Libro Port | 1992

クリスマス・クリスマス

Kurisumasu, kurisumasu (Christmas, Christmas) To-
kyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1992

おみせやさん

Omiseyasan (A Store) Ill. Seiichi Tabata | Tokyo:
Doshinsha | 1992

おすましおすまし

Osumashi osumashi (Prim and Proper) Ill. Naomi
Tsuda | Tokyo: Libro Port | 1992

さよならママ ただいまママ

Sayonara mama tadaima mama (Good Bye Mom, Hel-
lo Mom.) Ill. Mari Takabayashi | Tokyo: Asunaro shobo
| 1992

ちびねこコビとおともだち

Chibi neko Kobi to otomodachi (Kitten Kobi and
Friends) Ill. Mako Taruishi | Tokyo: Akane Shobo |
1993/ 2006

魔女の宅急便 その2: キキと新しい魔法

Majo no takkyubin sono 2: Kiki to atarashii maho (Kiki's
Delivery Service vol.2: Kiki and Her New Magic) Ill.
Takako Hirono | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1993/ 2003

モコモコちゃん家出する

Moko moko-chan iede suru (Mokomoko Run Away
From Home) Ill. Osamu Nishikawa | Tokyo: Crayon
House | 1993/ 2006

もりはなんでもやさん

Mori wa nandemoyasan (Woods Provides Everything)
Ill. Ken Kuroi, Kazuaki Kozutsumi | Tokyo: Poplar | 1993

クーちゃんのはじめてのおしゃべり
Ku-chan no hajimete no oshaberi (Ku-chan Talks For the First Time) Ill. Ken Kuroi, Kazuaki Kozutsumi | Tokyo: Poplar | 1994

くまくんのおさんぽ
Kuma-kun no shippo (Little Bear's Tail) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1994

もぐらちゃんのおてておっぱい
Mogura-chan no otete oppai (Mole's Hands and Breast) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1994

ナナさんはあみものやさんです
Nana-san wa aminomoyasan desu (Nana is a Knitt Maker) Ill. Mari Takabayashi | Tokyo: Libro Port | 1994

トラベッド
Tora beddo (Hiro and the Tiger Bed) Ill. Koji Suzuki | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1994

ケンケンとびのけんちゃん
Kenkentobi no Ken-chan (Ken the Skipping Boy) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1995

くまくんのおへそ
Kuma-kun no oheso (Little Bear's Belly Button) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1995

みんなでおみせやさん
Minna de omiseyasen (Let's Play Shopkeepers) Ill. Ken Kuroi, Kazuaki Kozutsumi | Tokyo: Poplar | 1995

もりのおばけのぷーらりさん
Mori no obake no Purari-san (The Forest Monster Purari) Ill. Suguru Fukuda | Tokyo: Poplar | 1995

おさんぽぽいぽい
Osanpo poipoi (Stroll, Roll, Roll...) Ill. Yosuke Inoue | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1995

ライオンくんをごしょうたい
Raion-kun o goshotai (Inviting a Lion) Ill. Natsuyo Matsui | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1995

チキチキチキチキ いそいでいそいで
Chiki chiki chiki chiki isoide isoide (Chiki Chiki Chiki Chiki, Hurry up, Hurry up) Ill. Ryoji Arai | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1996

だれかたすけて
Dareka tasukete (Help Me) Ill. Akira Uno | Tokyo: Kokudo-sha | 1996

くまくんのおさんぽ
Kuma-kun no osanpo (Little Bear's Walk) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1996

おばけのアッチのあるかないかわからないごちそう
Obake no Acchi no aruka naika wakaranai gichiso (Acchi and Mysterious Feast) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1996

おばけのアッチのおばけカレー
Obake no Acchi no obeke kare (Acchi and Ghost Curry) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1996

おひさまアコちゃん まいにちまいにち
Ohisama Ako-chan: Mainichi mainichi (Ako's Every Day) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 1996

ぷーらりさんとどろんこぶた
Purari-san to doronko kobuta (Purari and Muddy Piglet) Ill. Suguru Fukuda | Tokyo: Poplar | 1996

ぷーらりさんと1ねんせい
Purari-san to ichinensei (Purari and First Graders) Ill. Suguru Fukuda | Tokyo: Poplar | 1996

あそびましょ
Asobimasho (Let's Play) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1997

一年生になるんだもん
Ichinensei ni narundamon (Ready to go to School) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Bunka Publishing Bureau | 1997

いいものみつけた
Iimono mitsuketa (Found Good Things) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1997

魔女からの手紙
Majo kara no tegami (Letter from a Witch) Ill. Ryoji Arai and others | Tokyo: Poplar | 1997

魔女のひきだし
Majo no hikidashi (Witch's Chest) Tokyo: Hakusensha | 1997

ネネコさんの動物写真館
Neneko-san no dobutsu shashinkan (Neneko's Animal Photo Studio) Ill. Mari Takabayashi | Tokyo: Rironsha | 1997/ 2013

おだんごスープ
Odango supu (Grandpa's Soup) Ill. Satomi Ichikawa | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1997

とかげのトホホ
Tokage no Tohoho (Lizard Tohoho) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Poplar | 1997

とかいじゅうシーシー
Tokaiju Shishi (City Monster Shishi) Ill. Saint mamas & papas | Tokyo: Rironsha | 1997

だれのおうち？
Dare no ouchi? (Whose House?) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1998

魔女に会った
Majo ni atta (I Met Witches) Ill. Kosei Miya | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1998

ないしょのゆきだるま
Naisho no yukidaruma (Secret Snowman) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1998

おばけがいっぱい
Obake ga ippai (A Lot of Monsters) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1998

月ようびのどうわ
Getsuyobi no dowa (Monday's Stories) Tokyo: Koku-do-sha | 1998

ブレーメンのおんがくたい
Buremen no ongakutai (Music of Bremen) Ill. Brian Wildsmith | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1999

鏡：ゴースト・ストーリーズ
Kagami: Gosuto sutorizu (Fingers on the Back of the Neck and Other Ghost Stories with Susan Cooper and others) Ill. Yura Komine | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1999

かいじゅうトゲトゲ
Kaiju Togetoge (Monster Togetoge) Ill. Kayako Nishimaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 1999

おひさまアコちゃん あそびましょ
Ohisama Ako-chan: asobimasho (Let's Play, Ako) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 1999

オオくとゆかいなかぞく
Oo-kun to yukai na kaizoku (Great Pirates and O-kun) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Poplar | 1999

シンデレラ
Shinderera (Cinderella) Ill. Yura Komine | Tokyo: Kodansha | 1999

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Majo no takkyubin 3: Kiki to mo hitori no majo (Kiki's Delivery Service, vol.3: Kiki and The Other Witch) Ill. Miho Satake | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2000/ 2006

オオくんのかぞく日記
Oo-kun no kazoku nikki (O-kun's Diary) Ill. Taeko Oshima | Tokyo: Poplar | 2000

みんなであそぼ
Minna de asobo (Let's Get Together) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2000

こんにちはおばけちゃん
Konnichiwa Obake-chan (Hello Ghost!) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2000

おそらにいこう
Osora ni iko (Go to Sky) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2000

新魔女図鑑
Shin majo zukan (New Witch Reference Book) Ill. Satomi Shimoda | Tokyo: Bronz publishing | 2000

ちいさなおひめさま
Chiisana ohemesama (Little Princess) Ill. Kayako Nishimaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2001

かいじゅうトゲトゲとミルクちゃん
Kaiju Togetoge to Miruku-chan (Monster Togetoge and Milk) Ill. Kayako Nishimaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2001

なかよしはらっぱ
Nakayoshi harappa (Friends in the Meadow) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2002

うみだいすき
Umi daisuki (Fun at the Beach) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki |
Tokyo: Poplar | 2002

ナナさんのいい糸いろいろ
Nana-san no ii ito iroiro (Nana's Colorful Yarn) Ill.
Mari Takabayashi | Tokyo: Rironsha | 2002

とかいじゅうシーシーウタブタコブタ事件
Tokaiju Shishi utabutakobuta jiken (City Monster Shishi
and the Case of Utabutakobuta) Ill. Saint mamas &
papas | Tokyo: Rironsha | 2002

びっくりさんちのみつごちゃん
Bikkuri-san chi no mitsugo-chan (The Triplets at the
Surprise Family) Ill. Kana Nishimaki | Tokyo: Doshin-
sha | 2003

ネネンとミシンのふしぎなたび
Nenen to Mishin no fushigi na tabi (Nenen and Mish-
in's Miracle Adventure) Ill. Yutaka Hara | Tokyo: Fuku-
inkan Shoten | 2003

パンパさんとコンパさんはとってもなかよし
Panpa-san to Konpa-san wa totemo nakayoshi (Panpa
and Konpa) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo: Kodansha |
2003

リンゴちゃん
Ringo-chan (Ringo-chan) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo:
Poplar | 2003

絵のない絵本
E no nai ehon (Picture Book Without Pictures by
HCAndersen) Ill. Maki Sasaki | Tokyo: Shogakukan |
2004

ファンタジーが生まれるとき：『魔女の宅急便』とわ
たし
Fantaji ga umareru toki: Majo no takkyubin to watashi
(The Moment a Fantasy Turns Into Existence: Kiki's
Story and I) Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten | 2004

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Majo no takkyubin 4: Kiki no koi (Kiki's Delivery Service,
vol.4: Kiki in Love) Ill. Miho Satake | Tokyo: Fukuinkan
Shoten | 2004

えんどうまめの上のおひめさま
Endomame no ue no ohimesama (The Princess and the
Pea by HCAndersen) Ill. Kayako Nishimaki | Tokyo:
Shogakukan | 2004

はだかの王さま
Hadaka no osama (The Emperor's New Clothes by
HCAndersen) Ill. Yura Komine | Tokyo: Shogakukan |
2004

火うちばこ
Hiuchibako (The Tinderbox by HCAndersen) Ill. Erik
Blegvad | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

イーダちゃんの花
Ida-chan no hana (Little Ida's Flowers by HCAndersen)
Ill. Satomi Ichikawa | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

マッチ売りの女の子
Macchi uri no onnanoko (The Little Match Girl by
HCAndersen) Ill. Ken Kuroi | Tokyo: Shogakukan |
2004

みにくいあひるの子
Minikui ahiru no ko (The Ugly Duckling by HCAnders-
en) Ill. Robert Ingpen | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

ナイチンゲール
Naichingeru (A Nightingale by HCAndersen) Ill. Dai-
hachi Ota | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

人魚ひめ
Ningyo hime (The Little Mermaid by HCAndersen) Ill.
Lisbeth Zwerger | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

野の白鳥
No no hakucho (The Wild Swan by HCAndersen) Ill.
Watts Bernadette | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

おやゆびひめ
Oyayubi hime (Thumbelina by HCAndersen) Ill. Pia
Kryge Lakha | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

空とぶトランク
Sora tobu toranku (The Flying Trunk by HCAndersen)
Ill. Koji Suzuki | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

すずのへいたいさん
Suzu no hetaisan (The Steadfast Tin Soldier by HCA-
ndersen) Ill. Yuki Sasameya | Tokyo: Shogakukan | 2004

かいじゅうになりたいミルクちゃん
Kaiju ni naritai Miruku-chan (Milk Wants to be a Monster) Ill. Kayako Nishimaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2004

リンゴちゃんのおはな
Ringo-chan no ohana (Ringo-chan's flower) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2004

シッポ船長といるかこのイトちゃん
Shippu sencho to iruka no Itto-chan (Captain Ship and Dolphin) Ill. Tomoko Omura | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2004

もりのオンステージ
Mori no onsuteji (Theater in the Woods) Ill. Kyoko Hida | Tokyo: Bunkeido | 2005

おうちをつくろう
Ouchi o tsukuro (Let's Build a house) Ill. Emi Ozaki | Tokyo: Gakken | 2005/ 2016

ラブちゃんとボタンタン
Rabu-chan to Botantan (Rabu and Botantan) Ill. Nami Horikawa | Tokyo: Kodansha | 2005

リンゴちゃんとのろいさん
Ringo-chan to Noroi-san (Ringo and Slow) Ill. Kuniko Nagasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2005

シッポ船長とゆきだるまのユキちゃん
Shippu sencho to yukidaruma no Yuki-chan (Captain Ship and Snowman) Ill. Tomoko Omura | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2005

へんてこりんなおるすばん
Hentekorin na orusuban (A Strange House-Sitting) Ill. Takako Kawakami | Tokyo: Kyoiku gageki | 2006

わがままなおにわ
Wagamama na oniwa (A Wild Garden) Ill. Megu Hosoki | Tokyo: Bunkeido | 2006

魔法の宅急便 その5：魔法のとまり木
Majo no takkyubin 5: Maho no tomarigi (Kiki's Delivery Service, vol.5: The Magic Perch) Ill. Miho Satake | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2007/ 2013

ブタベイカリー
Buta beikari (Pig's Bakery) Ill. 100% orange | Tokyo: Bunkeido | 2007

イエコさん
Ieko-san (An Old House Ieko) Ill. Julia Vuori | Tokyo: Bronz publishing | 2007

角野栄子のちいさなどうわたち 1 - 6
Kadono Eiko no chiisana dowa tachi 1-6 (Small Stories Colleccion by Eiko Kadono 6 vols.) Ill. Yoko Sasaki | Tokyo: Poplar | 2007

シッポ船長とうみぼうず
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ねむれないの、ほんとだよ

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どうぶつのおともだち はらっぱのおともだち

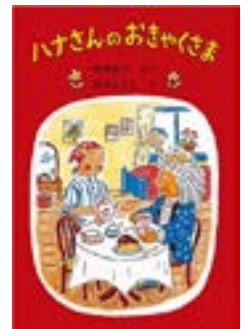
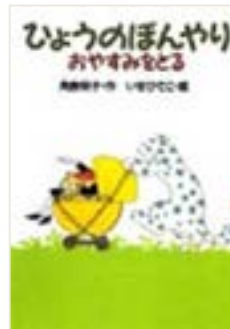
Dobutsu no otomodachi, harappa no otomodachi (Les Animaux de la Savane, Animals in Savanna by Camille Jourdy) Tokyo: Poplar | 2013

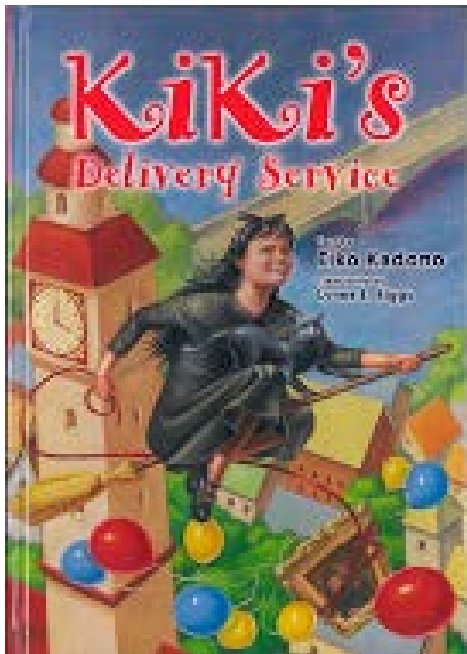
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● English translation

Kiki's Delivery Service

Translated by Lynne E. Riggs

CONTENTS

- 1 **Bells in the Treetops**
- 2 **A New Witch's Broom**
- 3 **Kiki in the Big City**
- 4 **Kiki Opens for Business**
- 5 **The Broom Thief**
- 6 **Kiki in the Doldrums**
- 7 **Kiki Shares a Secret**
- 8 **Kiki to the Captain's Rescue**
- 9 **Kiki Rings in the New Year**
- 10 **Kiki Carries the Sounds of Spring**
- 11 **Kiki Goes Home**

1. Bells in the Treetops

Between the deep forest and the gentle, green hills was a town with roofs the color of toasted bread. There was a train station, a town hall, police station, fire station, and a school. It could have been a little town anywhere, and yet, when you looked very carefully, you could see something that wasn't ordinary at all.

It was the silver bells that hung from the tops of the tallest trees in the town. Once in a while these bells rang merrily even though there was not the slightest wind. When that happened, the townsfolk would glance at each other and laugh, "There she goes again! Little Kiki is flying too low!"

How could a "little" person ring the bell atop a tall tree? This "Kiki," you see, was not quite ordinary. The house where Kiki lived was over on the eastern edge of the town. On the gatepost facing the street was a wooden sign that read, "Sneeze medicine available here." The green gate stood wide open. There was a large garden, and behind it on the left a one-story house. The garden was planted with neat rows of rare herbs and medicinal plants, and through its foliage drifted the pungent smell of brewing herbs. The smell grew stronger near the house. It came from the kitchen, where a great copper pot was simmering on the stove. On the wall of the living room beyond the kitchen, where in most houses you might see paintings or pictures, hung two brooms, one large and one small, the whisks made of bundled twigs.

From the living room came the sound of lively chatter and the clinking of china. The family was gathered for afternoon tea.

"Kiki, have you decided when you're going? I think it's about time you told us. You can't just keep putting it off, you know. You're grown up now," came a worried woman's voice.

"There you go again... I wish you'd just leave it up to me, Mother," answered a girl's voice, a bit annoyed, "After all, I'm your daughter, and a good witch girl. I've got it all worked out, so don't worry."

Then, calmly, came a man's voice, "Now, now, Kokiri, you really should leave things up to Kiki. When she decides to go, she'll go. It does no good to nag, you know."

"Oh, I suppose you're right. I just can't relax. I feel responsible, you see," the tone of the mother's voice rose a little.

Kokiri was full-blooded, bona fide witch, the descendant of a long line of witches. Her husband, Okino, was an ordinary human. He was a specialist in legends and folktales about witches and fairies. Their only child, thirteen-year-old Kiki, had reached the age when she would leave home and start life on her own.

When a human being and a witch married and had a daughter, it was usual for the girl to be brought up as a witch. It had been the custom for witches to have their daughters decide whether to pursue the witches craft around the time they turned ten. If a girl made up her mind to become a witch, her mother would begin to teach her the arts that had been passed down.

At thirteen, a witch had to leave home and begin life on her own. Picking a night when the full moon shone brightly, she would embark on a maiden journey to look for a town or village not already inhabited by a witch. There she would find a home and a way of putting her witchcraft to good use. Of course, this was quite a big adventure for a young girl. But witches' powers had dwindled and their numbers had drastically decreased, so it was necessary in order to prevent the extinction of their traditions. It was also a good way to people to know that witches still existed and that they could be friendly and helpful.

Kiki decided to become a witch when she was ten, so her mother had started to teach her magic. First, there was the growing of medicinal herbs and the making of sneeze medicine. Second, there was how to fly on a broom.

Kiki had mastered the techniques of flying very quickly. The problem was, she sometimes got to daydreaming and forgot to concentrate. All kinds of things distracted her, like a pimple on the side of her nose. Or, she would become absorbed in thought about something, like what to wear to a friend's birth-

day party.

When that happened, the broom would suddenly begin to plunge downward. Once, she was so self-conscious about her new lace underwear that she didn't notice the broom start to descend, and crashed into a telephone pole. The broom was broken into pieces and Kiki got bumped and bruised all over.

So Kiki's mother had picked the tallest trees in the town and tied bells to their tips. If Kiki's thoughts strayed from her flying and she got too low, her feet would strike one of these bells, and startle her out of her daydreams. Recently, however, Kiki's flying had become quite expert, so the bells rang must less often.

Making medicine, on the other hand, didn't really suit Kiki. You have to be patient to grow herbs, grind or dice the leaves and roots into fine pieces, and wait while they slowly simmer in the pot. Kiki never did get very good at such things.

"There goes another witches' craft - lost forever!" Kikori would wail.

Witches had once practiced many different kinds of magic, but over the centuries, one kind of witchcraft after another had been forgotten. It got to the point where even a genuine witch like Kokiri knew only two magical arts. No wonder it grieved her to see that Kiki took such a dislike to making herbal medicines.

Kiki didn't understand what her mother was so upset about.

"It's lots more fun to fly around than to stand in the kitchen stirring and old pot! "

Then Okino would comfort his wife,

"Now, now. It can't be helped. Maybe some of the forgotten magic will be rediscovered one of these days. And, besides, there's always the black cats, aren't there? "

From long ago, witches and black cats had been inseparable, and in a way, these felines were a form of magic.

Kiki had a little black cat of her own, named Jiji, just as her mother, Kokiri, had had old Meimei. When a witch gave birth to a girl, she searched for a black kitten born at just about the same time, and brought the kitten up with her daughter. Growing up close, the girl and the cat would learn to talk to each other. When the young witch left home to start her own life, her cat would accompany her, her best friend and closest

confidant. When the girl grew up and found a partner - in other words, got married - the cat, too, would go off and find a mate.

2. A New Witch's Broom

When teatime was over, Kokiri and Okino went out. Kiki and Jiji sat at the edge of the garden, lazing in the sunshine.

"I guess we'd better get going pretty soon..." murmured Kiki as if talking to herself.

"That's for sure!" Jiji raised his head and examined Kiki, "You wouldn't decide not to become a witch after all this, would you?"

"Don't be silly." Kiki retorted, "I made up my mind, didn't I?" She remembered how proud she had been the first time she had flown on a broom.

Until the age of ten, Kiki had grown up like any ordinary little girl. She knew her mother was a witch, and that when she turned ten, she would have to decide whether she wanted to follow in her mother's footsteps or not. But she really didn't think much about it.

Then, a while after her tenth birthday, Kiki heard one of her friends say, "I'm going to be a hairdresser like my mother," and it got her to thinking. Should she follow her mother's profession or not? Kiki dimly knew that Mother wanted her to carry on the witch traditions, but she did not think it was right to become a witch just because of her mother. She thought to herself that she would be what she wanted to be. She'd decide for herself.

Then one day, Kokiri had suggested, "Would you like to try to fly?" She brought out a little broom she had made for Kiki.

"Me? Fly?" Kiki had looked dubious.

"Well, you're a witch's daughter. There shouldn't be any problem."

It bothered Kiki that her mother seemed to be luring her along, but the idea of flying was certainly something new and novel. So, after Mother taught her the rudiments of take-off and landing, Kiki got astride her small broom and somewhat fearfully imitated her Mother. She stamped the ground with both feet - and, lo and behold! - rose lightly into the air.

"I'm flying!" Kiki had shouted. She had risen just over the rooftop, and the view made her shiver with

delight. The air was slightly blue. She wanted to go higher and still higher. And the higher she went the more she could see. The marvelous, mysterious sensations of flight made her body and her spirits soar.

Kiki very quickly fell in love with flying, and that made her decide to become a witch.

Kokiri was delighted, "I knew you would. It's in your blood!"

But Kiki insisted to herself that it wasn't just that; she had chosen to be a witch of her own free will.

"Jiji, let's go take a look now, while Mother's out," Kiki stopped daydreaming and jumped to her feet pointing in the direction of the tool shed in the corner of the garden.

"Why are you keeping it such a secret?" said Jiji, a little annoyed.

"Well, you know how Mother is about my going. She makes such a big fuss. And she always wants to take over everything - and then... things get so complicated!"

"Well, I know what you mean. But you've got to make sure it gets plenty of sun to dry it out, you know." Jiji was insistent.

"We'll only take a quick look."

"Oh, yes? Are you sure you're not going to take it to bed like before? It'll mildew again."

"Okay! I know! I can't manage without you, Jiji. But from now on, it's just you and me, so don't be mean."

Kiki slipped through the waist-high rows of herbs toward the tool shed. She peered into the narrow space between the tool shed and the garden wall, and let out a squeal,

"Look, Jiji!"

Under the eaves of the tool shed hung a long, slender broom. Drenched in the rays of the evening sun, it was shining brightly.

"It's turned out beautifully. Don't you think it's ready?" Kiki's voice was hoarse with excitement.

"Looks like it turned out fine this time." Peering up from Kiki's feet, Jiji, too, gazed admiringly at the broom. Kiki had tried before to make a broom for flying, every time hadn't been able to wait until it dried long enough in the sunshine.

"Hey, Kiki. Why don't we give it a test flight? Weather's fine, too. What do you say?"

"Oh, no!" Kiki shook her head. "I don't want to use

it until the day I leave. And that'll be soon. I want to start out with everything spanking new. New clothes, new shoes, and this new broom. Fresh and new as a newborn baby. Mother always says: 'You come from a long line of witches. You've got to take pride in old things.' But me, I'm different. I'm going to be a new kind of witch."

"Oh, yes? So how am I supposed to come out 'new'? " said Jiji, twitching his whiskers skeptically.

"You're fine as you are. I'll comb your fur until you fairly shine. I'll make you look all fresh and crisp! "

"Un-huh! " Jiji humphed. "I wish you wouldn't talk about 'fresh, crisp' cat like some sort of dish served up at the table. You're not the only one who's setting off to make a new life."

"You're right! Sorry about that! " Kiki smothered a smile and peered fondly at Jiji.

"I wonder how I'm going to feel when we leave," said Kiki pensively.

"You'll probably start balling, you know."

"Oh, no! You won't catch me crying! "

"So, tell me, Kiki," said Jiji, looking up at her again, "When do you propose to go, anyway? "

"I think I'm ready to leave anytime. Hey, why don't we just go ahead and say we'll go the night of the next full moon? "

"The next full moon? That soon? "

"Sure, that's five days away. Don't you think it's exciting to do something just as soon as it's decided? "

"Oh, I can see there's going to be a big fuss again..." Jiji rolled his eyes.

"I'll tell Father and Mother tonight." Kiki gazed far up into the sky and asked, acting rather grown-up, "Jiji, what sort of town shall we look for? "

"Oh, dear! I wonder what is going to happen? You make up your mind so suddenly... it really makes me worry."

"Goodness! What's got into you? I'm not the least worried. We can worry when something happens to worry about. Right now, I just feel excited. Aren't you? Like when you're about to open up a present? "

Kiki's voice sang out, and she reached out and playfully poked the broom on the wall. The broom swung slightly as if agreeing with her.

That night after supper, Kiki and Jiji went to stand in front of her mother and father and said solemnly,

"You don't have to worry any more. I've decided

when I'm going to leave."

"What! You decided! " Kokiri jumped to her feet in surprise. "So... when? "

"I've made it the night of the next full moon."

Kokiri hastily ran her eyes over the calendar on the wall. "Gracious! That's only five days away. That's ridiculous! Now wait a minute, Kiki. You'd better put it off until the following full moon."

Kiki rolled her eyes in exasperation. "Just as I thought! Why do you have to make such a big thing of it, Mother? You get angry when I can't make up my mind, and when I finally do, you find fault with what I decided."

"You know, she's right, Mother. Now take it easy," Okino defended Kiki.

"That's easy for you to say, but she's got to make certain preparations. It's her mother who'll have trouble getting ready in time." Flushing, Kokiri looked upset and confused.

Kiki planted herself in front of Kokiri and stared up at her mother's face, Hands on her hips she proclaimed in a very grown-up tone, "You should trust your own daughter more! Trust me! I'm already ready to go. Isn't that right, Jiji? " she said, calling out to the cat.

Jiji switched his tail emphatically in confirmation.

"Goodness! " Kokiri's mouth dropped open in surprise, but then her expression changed, and making an effort to compose herself, asked, "So, what kind of preparations have you made? "

"My broom. I made a new one. Jiji helped me. Didn't you, Jiji? Wait a minute, I'll bring it in."

Kiki opened the door and rushed out to the tool shed. She was back in a flash.

"Here it is, " Kiki held out the broom.

"Wow! You really did make one, didn't you! " Okino was grinning.

"I soaked willow branches in the stream, and then dried them carefully in the sun. Don't you think it came out well? Mother, don't you think so? " said Kiki eagerly, swimming the broom through the air.

But Kokiri slowly shook her head, "You've done a beautiful job. But, " she said firmly, "You can't take that broom."

"Why? " demanded Kiki, "I'm not going to ride that little kid's broom I've been using all this time. The only witchcraft I know is riding a broom. So I want to have a brand new one I really like."

But Kokiri slowly shook her head again.

"What broom you use is all the more important precisely because that's all you can do. What are you going to do if you make a mistake flying on a broom you're not used to? It's how you start out that's the most important. Going out on your own is not that easy and simple, young lady. You'll have a small amount of money, but it will be barely enough to feed yourself for a year, so you'll have to pinch and save. You'll have to support yourself otherwise by using the witchcraft that you know. During this year, you've got to find your own way in life, just like I've been helping the people of this town with my herbal medicines. Now, you take Mother's broom. My broom has been well broken in and it knows very well how to fly."

"No! I don't want your sooty oldblack broom! I'll look like a chimney sweep! And the handle is so fat and clunky. It's so old and grungy. Don't you agree, Jiji? "

Kiki looked down at the cat at her feet for support. Almost halfway turned around, Jiji purred in agreement.

"There! Jiji thinks so too! He says a black cat riding on the old broom would be mistaken for a black rain cloud. Riding on the new willow broom will look like a prince riding in a glass carriage."

"Gracious! What a pair! " Kokiri burst out laughing.

"Listen, you're still just a child. Remember, a witch's broom is not a toy. Eventually mother's broom will get too old to use, and then you can use whatever broom you like. I'm sure that by that time, you really will have grown up." Kokiri closed her eyes thoughtfully.

Kiki pouted, tapping the handle of her new broom on the floor.

"After I went to all that trouble to make this... what am I going to do with it? "

"I'll use in your place. It won't go to waste."

Kiki gazed at her broom for a while and then looked up at her mother, "All right. If you'll use it, I guess it's all right. But for clothes, you've got to let me wear what I want to wear. There's a good dress in the window of the shop on main street. It's bright pink, like cosmos flowers. If I wear that, people'll think there's a flower flying through the air."

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, dear, but you can't do that either. " Kikori was looking firm again.

"Witches these days don't wear pointed hats or long black capes anymore, but witch's attire has to be the blackest of blacks. This is something you can't change,

Kiki. "

Kiki was puckering with anger.

"That's so old fashioned! Really! I'll be a black witch with a black cat - nothing but black! "

"That's the way it has to be. It may seem old fashioned, but being a witch is an old, old tradition, and you'll have to live with that. Besides, you can look quite smart in a black dress, you know. Now you leave that up to Mother. I'll make you a dress as fast as I can."

Mumbling "there she goes again taking about 'old traditions' again," Kiki steamed and glowered, but Kokiri said was unperturbed,

"Now, Kiki, you mustn't get carried away by appearances. It's what's inside that counts."

"Mother, I know what you mean. You can count on me as far as the "insides" go. Too bad I can't show you! "

Resigned but undaunted, Kiki slipped around to stand beside Okino.

"Father, I can take a radio with me, can't I? I want to fly through the air with music playing. And I would really it to be like a red radio."

"Hm! All right! I'll get you the radio you want! " Okino's eyes sparkled as he agreed to her request. And this time Kokiri kept on smiling. But suddenly she turned the other way, saying, "All right, Kiki, that's enough for tonight. Now you go up to bed." Gathering up the corners of her apron, she seemed to be wiping her eyes.

3. Kiki in the Big City

The moon grew plumper each night, until it was full. It was the night Kiki had decided to leave on her journey. As the sun began to slant into the west, Kiki and Jiji were clowning around in front of the mirror. Kiki had on the new black dress her mother had made for her, and was turning this way and that, posing and primping. They got on Mother's broom and posed sideways to see what they would look like.

"All right, you know, that's enough of the fashion show," Kokiri called out to them as she bustled about, "Look! The sun is already going down."

"Mother, I wish you'd hem up my dress just a little higher," pleaded Kiki as she stood on her tip-toes, holding up her skirts.

"But why? It looks perfect on you now? "

"It looks so dowdy this long! "

"That's not dowdy, it's elegant! And you really ought to be as modest as you can. There are plenty of people who'll be critical enough, just because you're a witch.

"Now," Kokiri went on, patting Kiki comfortingly on the shoulder and placing a small bundle next to her, "here are your provisions. I put in plenty of herbs so they'll keep. This is all you can take with you, so make it last. My grandmother used to tell me how her grandmother was genius at making provisions for maiden journeys. She had a special spell she cast over the herbs she put in that kept the bread from spoiling or even getting stale for a long time. It's really a shame that magic hasn't come down me! "

"You'd think that sort of thing could be passed down quite easily," said Okino, emerging from his study, "Why would magic like that vanish? I suppose that's part of the mystery! "

"It is strange. Even a witch like me doesn't know why. Some say it's because the nights are no longer really dark and no longer really still. There's always light coming from somewhere, and some kind of sound, even though faint, and that makes it hard to perform really sophisticated witchcraft..., well, that 's just what they say."

"It certainly is much brighter at night than it used to be," said Okino, " There's always a light on somewhere."

"Yes, the world has really changed," nodded Kokiri, but Kiki, turning away from the mirror, was defiant,

"I don't think it's the world's fault at all," she declared, "Witches just didn't try hard enough. Mother's always saying we have to be 'modest' and 'tolerant.' Me, I don't want to have to worry about what other people are thinking all the time. I want to do what I want to do! "

"Well, I guess our Kiki doesn't lack for spirit," chuckled Okino.

"Now, Kiki, you listen to me," interjected Kokiri, "it used to be that there were all kinds of people with strange and mysterious powers, but ordinary people always associated such powers with evil. They believed that magic and witchcraft would bring bad luck."

"That's certainly true," mused in Okino, lapsing into

thought.

"Absolutely," continued Kokiri, "it's like... you know, they once said that witches made mold grow in fresh milk. Then it turned out that those witches knew a recipe for making a certain kind of cheese. That's what they call blue cheese today, and that's just one example." And then, turning to Kiki with a worried look, she continued.

"Witches have managed to survive in a hostile world because they changed their attitudes and decided to live together with ordinary folk, give-and-take. Sometimes it's important to be quiet and stay in the background. Other times, we can come forward and help out. I do think this has been the best way. And things have gotten better; now we even have people like your father, who study and make an effort to understand witches and fairies."

"I guess that was a compliment. Thank you very much," Okino grinned and bowed comically.

"Oh, goodness, it's gotten completely dark. The moon'll be up soon. That's enough serious talk. We've got to have dinner early," clapping her hands, Kokiri jumped up, going back to her preparations.

But Okino's expression took on a scholarly look, "I suppose the night of the full moon is convenient for starting out on a journey because it's so bright, but my data on the the weather when witches' maiden journeys take place says it's about fifty-fifty on rainy and clear nights."

"Everything depends on luck, after all," said Kokiri, bustling about again.

"But tonight is going to be fine. The sky is clear. Now, Kiki, are you sure you have everything you need? "

"I hope you find a nice place," Okino was gazing fondly at his daughter. "But Kiki, you mustn't just pick any place that comes along," said Kokiri tensely, her nerves on edge.

"I know, Mother. Now, stop worrying! " Kiki was shrill too.

"It's not as if she's going to another planet or something. Just another town. And after one year, remember, she'll be back to visit." Okino said, trying to calm their farewell jitters.

But Kokiri stood sternly in front of Kiki once more, "I know I'm repeating myself, but I hope you'll be very careful about what town you pick, Kiki. You can't decide on first impressions. You should think twice about big cities even though they look busy and ex-

citing. In big cities, people are too busy to care much about other people. Another thing: When you first arrive, you mustn't appear nervous. Smile. The first thing you have to do is let people know you're not a threat."

"I understand, Mother. Now I'm going to be all right. Don't worry," nodding vigorously, Kiki tried to put her mother's mind at rest. Then she turned to look up at her father,

"You know when I was small you used to toss me up in the air?" she asked shyly, "Could you do that again?"

"Sure!" his voice came out unnaturally loud. Putting his hands under her arms, he tried to lift her up.

"Whoa! When did you get to be this heavy? O.K., here goes, one more time!"

Steadying himself, Okino put out his hands once more and staggering a bit, managed to raise Kiki up in the air.

"Whee! You did it! But... ha, ha! ... it tickles!" Kiki wriggled, giggling in her father's arms.

Exactly on schedule, the full moon rose in the east and shone down brightly over the grassy hills.

"Well, I guess I'll be off." Kiki intended to take her farewell properly and formally, but these were the only words she managed to get out. Slinging her duffel bag slung over her shoulder, Kiki reached for her broom, standing nearby. With her other hand she picked up the red transistor radio Okino had bought for her, and then to Jiji, who had been waiting quietly at her feet,

"Well, let's say good-bye!"

Jiji stood up straight and looked up at Okino and Kokiri.

"We're counting on you, Jiji," Jiji switched his tail as usual in answer.

"Good-bye, Mother. I'll write soon."

"Yes, you let us know how you're doing."

"If things don't go well, you can always come back," said Okino, from the background.

"It will never happen!" Kiki wouldn't think of it.

"Now don't you go soft on her now," Kokiri frowned at Okino.

Then, as Okino opened the front door, a chorus of "We've come to say goodbye!" arose from outside. About ten people from the town had gathered and

were standing in a cluster at the gate.

Kiki didn't know what to say.

"Did you know about Kiki's going?" Kokiri asked them, her voice hoarse with surprise.

"Yes, we heard our little Kiki is going away for a while."

"This is a very special day for Kiki, isn't it?"

"Now you come back sometimes, and give those bells in the treetops a jingle."

"We'll be here, waiting to hear your stories!"

Kiki could hear the voices of her friends in the chorus of farewells.

"Oh! You're so nice! Thank you!" was about all Kiki could manage to say. On the verge of tears, Kiki picked up Jiji to hide her face.

"Good thing for this fine weather," mumbled Okino, hiding his own damp eyes by gazing up at the sky.

After many goodbyes, Kiki hung the radio on the broom handle in front of her by its strap, put Jiji behind her, and rose off the ground. As the broom floated up, she turned to her mother,

"Mother! Take care!" If she had said it standing too close, both she and Kokiri would have burst into tears.

The broom dipped, and Kokiri cried out in alarm, "Watch out! Keep your eyes on course, for heaven's sake!"

As Kokiri's anxious call echoed behind her, she could hear the assembled well-wishers burst in laughter.

Kiki was relieved. At moments like these, she thought, it was reassuring to have Mother acting her usual self.

"Good-bye!" Kiki shouted loudly one more time, then gripped the broom handle and pointed it sharply upward into the night sky. As she rose swiftly into the air, the fluttering hands of her family and friends gradually faded from sight. The light of the town began to blink and twinkle below her like stars in an inverted bowl of sky. The full moon hung brightly above, anxiously watching over Kiki's progress.

Gradually the lights of the town grew distant until all she could see below were the hunched ridges of the mountains, rushing below her in the darkness.

"You'd better decide quickly where we're going," said Jiji, poking her from behind.

"Hmm..." Kiki looked hastily in the four directions.

"South. I want to go south. If we go south, we're sure to come out at the ocean. I really want to see what the ocean's like, just once in my life. Is that all

tight with you, Jiji? "

"Well, what would you do if I said 'No'? " teased Jiji.

"Oh! Come on! Don't say no! " cried Kiki, shaking the broom to which Jiji clung.

"Why do girls ask such stupid questions? But remember: What we're looking for is a town. All right? Not the ocean."

"Yes sir! Correct sir! Now, here we go! To the south! Er... which way is south? "

Feeling a little silly, Kiki began to glance around the sky, and then, with a breath of relief, said,

"I've got it. That way. As long as we've got the moon on our left, we can make no mistake."

Then, with a sharp whistle of excitement, Kiki gripped her broom and it shot forward, rapidly picking up speed. The wind grew strong in her face and streamed through the twigs of the broom whip, making a sound like rushing water.

Lights glimmered here and there in the black mountains below. Sometimes stretches of field, glowing gray in the moonlight, would loom into sight, but mostly the land she passed over was mountains.

Kiki kept on flying south. To the east, the sky began to grow light, and the glowing band of white morning light gradually broadened as she watched, chasing away the departing darkness. And then, what had been a world of gray and dark green, began to come alive in many colors. The low hills were covered with the soft, pale green of early spring, the green buds making a layer that seemed to float lightly in the air. The rugged rocks of the mountains began to glisten as if wet with rain, and Kiki's heart began to pound with excitement as she watched the rays of early morning light bring the grayish landscape alive.

In a steep valley, a small village came into sight, with smoke starting to rise, first from one chimney, then another. A small stream winding through the valley glistened like a silver thread in the morning sunshine, and it grew broader until it became a wide belt curving this way and that.

"Let's follow that river," said Kiki, "They say all rivers lead to the sea."

She flipped the switch of the transistor radio and began to whistle along with the music. The broom glided steadily, propelled by a strong tailwind.

"Mother said the big city isn't a good idea, but I really don't like the idea of a small town," said Kiki

suddenly, talking to herself.

"So just what kind of place do you think you're going to find? " demanded Jiji, raising his voice to keep it from being drowned out by the wind and the radio's blare.

"Well, bigger than Mother's town, anyway. I'd want there to be some tall buildings, a zoo... and a train station. And an amusement park. What do you think, Jiji?"

"You certainly are greedy. All I care about is a nice sunny rooftop... a nice sunny windowsill... a nice sunny verandah..."

"Jiji, are you cold?" asked Kiki with concern.

"A little," came a shivering voice.

"Well then, come up here in front. You'd better learn to speak up when something's wrong, you know. We've got to take care of each other from now on. Jiji scrambled up her back, and Kiki pulled him over her shoulder and into the warmth of her lap.

"Kiki, how about that town?"

They had been flying along quietly for some time when Jiji suddenly stretched his neck to look down at a town passing directly beneath them.

Encircled by beautiful low, green hills, it was perfectly round, with clusters of orange and green roofs, making it look like a bowl of soup with peas and carrots floating in it.

"It's pretty, isn't it," said Kiki.

"That's the kind of town you should pick." Said Jiji in a tone of authority,

"It's perfect. The kind of town to really settle down in, you know."

"But... it's really a bit too small," said Kiki, and then her eye caught something. "What's that, down there!" She was pointing toward a small black speck far below. As they watched, the speck drew near until they could see that it was a witch, flying on a broom with a black cat perched on her shoulder. The witch's broom, however, was jerking and wobbling along like a bucking bronco.

"Shall we go down and say hello?" said Kiki, and pointed her body on the broom downwards in the direction of the witch.

"Well! Hello there!" The witch gazed in surprise as Kiki flew alongside, her broom bucking and lurching

without pause. She seemed to be just a little older than Kiki.

"Goodness, I never thought I'd meet another witch in these parts. Where are you from? Oh, I bet you're a novice witch, and this is your special day. Am I right?" The older witch quickly looked Kiki over from head to foot.

"Yes, that's right. I just set out last night. Could you tell?"

"Of course! You can tell in a minute! You're all dressed up. And you look a little scared. I was that way myself, so I know."

"Oh, so I do look scared... I was trying to look so cool," said Kiki, giggling. "When did you leave home?"

"Just about a year ago."

"How do you like this town?"

"I've only just gotten used to it."

"So, it was pretty hard?" Kiki began to worry about herself again, knitting her brow.

"Well, I managed pretty well, I guess," the older witch pursed her lips proudly. Then her round face broadened into a gentle smile that left two deep dimples on both her cheeks.

This is the face, Kiki suddenly realized, that her mother had been talking about when she said a witch ought to keep a smile on her face.

"So, what do you do make a living?" she asked.

"I tell fortunes. With my cat, Pupu, here. I can figure out how other people feel, you see, so I have a pretty good reputation for my fortune telling. It may just be flattery, but the people in the town are really nice."

"That's wonderful! And pretty soon you'll be able to go home for a visit, right?"

"Yes. And I can go home with my head high. So I'm satisfied enough.

But let me tell you, there were times when the going got pretty tough."

"I can imagine... looks like your broom's got problems..."

"What, this?" the cheerful witch laughed, "it's not the broom. It's me, I'm really not much good at flying, but if you don't fly once in a while, you sort of forget you're a witch - don't you agree? And today, there's a cow at the farm on the other side of the mountain that's acting up and I've been asked to take a look. That's what's got me out so early in the morning. I guess you can't call this fortune-telling, but..."

"What? A cow?"

"One of the tricks of getting along as a witch is not to refuse any request, no matter how odd it might seem," said the girl. "cows are sort of eccentric, you know - rather like human beings. This cow, mind you, said she didn't like the sound of the bell hanging around her neck. She was just being ornery!"

"What a thing for a cow to complain about!" Kiki burst out laughing.

"Maybe she just has a sensitive ear. I changed her bell and sang to her for a while, and she was soon back in good humor. Anyway, the farmer's wife gave me some delicious cheese for helping out. It has a wonderful smell, and if you toast it over the stove, it melts and makes lovely strings.

"How nice!" said Kiki enviously, "Gee, you've got it all figured out."

"You'll be fine, too." Said the witch, "You're cute, like I am. And you look at least as smart as I am. I've got to hurry now."

The older witch waved her hand in farewell, and bucking up and down, proceeded along her way.

"Goodness, that witch was certainly a show off." Jiji said in a low voice.

"But she said nice things about me."

"Oh, year? And that cat! So stuck up! Didn't even say 'hello' and acted like an experienced know-it-all!" sniffed Jiji.

"Jiji, did you want to talk to that cat? Then you should have spoken up, for heaven's sake! You should be the one to break the ice, you know."

Jiji had his pride, too, "I didn't specially...?" he started to say, snorting.

"Now, I've got to think about what I'm going to do."

Kiki pulled the broom around to the right and, picking up speed, headed back onto their previous course.

Kiki flew on without stopping. A number of likely looking towns appeared, and even though Jiji complained every time they passed that they ought to make up their minds as soon as possible, Kiki insisted that she would not stop until they reached the ocean, and kept telling Jiji over and over again, "it's just a little further, a little further."

After a while, they left the hills behind them and were flying over fields, small villages and towns. Now the river was much bigger. It flowed along in a shimmer-

ing ribbon, curving in wide swaths through the valley. The shadow of Kiki and Jiji flying along on their broom was reflected on the surface of the river like a small fish darting along its ripples.

"Hey! Look! Isn't that the ocean?" shouted Jiji.

Kiki had been so absorbed with the landscape right below them, she hadn't been looking ahead. Now, she saw far off in the distance a shining line stretching across the horizon, dividing blue sky from bluer sea.

"Yes! It's the sea. You were quick to find it!"

"You mean that's the ocean!? Gee, it just looks like a big puddle!" Jiji sounded disappointed.

"What do you mean? Just look! Isn't it wonderful!" said Kiki excitedly, taking in the breathtaking sight from one side to the other. And then she noticed the houses and buildings that stretched out from the place where the river poured into the sea.

"Look! See that town? And there's a big bridge," Kiki shouted.

"And there's a train," Jiji was craning his neck, eyes wide with wonder.

"Well, let's get going and have a look." The broom picked up speed, and off they went.

It was a much bigger town than Kiki had imagined, with many tall buildings. Gazing around, Kiki announced, her voice quivering with delight,

"Jiji, this is the place I'm going to choose!"

"Isn't it too big? Don't you remember what your mother said about a big and bustling city?" Jiji was getting anxious.

"But, just look? Isn't it lovely? And look at that tower?" Kiki was pointing to a tall clock tower in the heart of the town.

"Doesn't it remind you of a spindle? What fun it would be to take hold of that tower and use it to spin around the whole town like a top!" Kiki's eyes were sparkling as she drank in the sight below her. "Look, it makes that long shadow! The whole town is just like a sundial!"

"What an imagination!" muttered Jiji, and then he added, almost hopefully, "But there may already be a witch here, like there was in that town back in the mountains.

"We've got to go down and ask before we'll know," said Kiki, and she aimed the broomstick downward, moving slowly toward the streets of the town. As Kiki's feet alighted on the cobblestones, the street was full of afternoon shoppers. Everyone stopped in surprise

and amazement. Some were frightened and tried to hide behind others, and in no time a crowd of spectators had formed a circle around her. Kiki hastily got off her broom, put Jiji on her shoulder and a bright smile on her face.

"My name... is Kiki, and I'm... a witch," she blurted out.

"A witch? Well, for goodness sake! Pretty unusual sight in this day and age!" said an old woman, adjusting her spectacles to get a better look at Kiki.

"Oh! Does that mean that you don't have a witch in this town?" asked Kiki, and then, curtsying formally, she looked around her announced, "I'm very glad to hear that. Let me introduce myself. I'm a witch, and my name is Kiki, and this is my cat, Jiji. I hope you don't mind me coming into your town."

"You mean you're going to come and live in this town, live in Kiriko?" said a boy.

"Who decided such a thing? That new mayor, I suppose," came a woman's voice. And then the people in the crowd began to look at each other and chatter among themselves:

"Is there something good about having a witch town?"

"Don't you think it's strange in this day and age - a witch who flies?"

"They did say from way back that there's usually at least one witch in every town. But we never had one before. Never was any problem."

"Mommy, don't witches use magic? Wow! That's neat!"

"Have a witch in town - it should never be allowed! You know they're frightening!"

"Goodness, you don't suppose she's got some evil plot or something?"

Listening to all that talk, not much of it kind or sympathetic, Kiki felt a tense knot forming in her throat. But I've got to keep smiling, she kept reminding herself, and decided she ought to say something.

"I'd really like to live in this town. It's so pretty and the clock tower is so splendid!"

"Well, we're glad you like our town, but..."

"But we don't want any trouble, you know..."

"Well, you do as you please."

And when they'd all had their say, they scattered, disappearing without seeming to care a bit about Kiki into the surrounding streets.

Bursting with energy when she first arrived, Kiki

suddenly felt like a deflated balloon. When she heard there wasn't a witch in the town, she had been convinced that everyone would welcome her like something new and novel. But now, the fatigue of flying all night and since morning without eating anything suddenly descended in her. She felt so tired it seemed as if her body might sink completely into the ground.

The people in the town where Kiki had grown up had been happy to have a witch living in their midst. They used to say "a witch is like the oil in a watch. Just having her around makes the town tick happily," and so she and her mother had been treated very kindly. Almost every day people had come visiting, bringing some delicious treat or part of a gift they had received. In return, Kokiri would give them sneeze medicine, or teach them the names of medicinal herbs used from olden times, or play cat's cradle with old folks living alone, or help out by flying on her broom to bring people things they had forgotten for some important occasion. They had lived in harmony, give-and-take, with the people of their town.

That was the way it had always been since the time Kiki was born, and so it was quite perplexing to be told "Do as you please" without the least offer of help or advice. It left her feeling quite bewildered.

Escaping from the busy street, Kiki began to amble, dragging the broom and feeling depressed.

"Well, it's just like Mother Kokiri said," mourned Jiji in her ear from his perch on her shoulder, "a big city isn't good idea."

Nodding slowly, lest the tears brimming in her eyes spill down her cheeks, Kiki stroked Jiji's tail,

"Hmm... I wonder what I should do."

"Well, something'll work out!" exclaimed Jiji, switching his tail mightily.

Evening was coming on. There would be plenty to eat, since she hadn't yet touched the provisions Kokiri had packed last night. But what to do about a place to sleep? Even if she had the money to stay in a hotel, she wondered if the people in this town would give lodging to a witch. Kiki wandered along, feeling low and helpless.

"Hey! Is this what witches have come to!" said Jiji in an especially loud voice aimed to startle Kiki out of her doldrums, "In the old days, a town that treated a witch like that wouldn't get away with it so easy. They'd have their town pulled up by that clock tower and

parked on the top of some mountain or something!"

Kiki just shrugged her shoulders weakly.

Kiki had no idea where she was, but after walking up and down for quite a while, she had come to a place where the streets were narrow, and in place of tall building, there were rows of small houses nestled together along winding streets. The sun had gone down, and the shops along both sides of the street were beginning to close up for the night. People must have been eating their dinner, for the sound of clinking china and laughter drifted through the windows.

Then suddenly, from a half-closed bakery right in front of Kiki, came a startled cry, "Good heavens! What a thing for that dear woman to leave behind! Listen, you simply must take it over to her?" Kiki, thinking she herself was being addressed, stopped walking. But then came a man's voice,

"What's all the fuss about? It's nothing but the baby's pacifier. It's not as if she forget her baby! I have a neighborhood meeting to go to now, but in the morning, I'll run it over to her."

But I tell you, it can't wait! She's such a sweet person, and a regular customer, you know. She comes quite a distance, with wither baby, to buy our butter rolls. And you say it's nothing but the baby's pacifier, but for that baby it's indispensable - same as that pipe is to you! Poor thing, I bet that child won't ever get to sleep tonight. All right, you do as you please. I'm going to take it back to her."

The woman, who was obviously the baker's wife, emerged from beneath the half-lowered shutter, and the man's voice followed her.

"Hey! You come back here! How do you expect to get to the other side of the Big River and back in your condition?!"

Indeed, the woman was quite pregnant, and looking as if the baby could be born at any time. In her hand she held a rubber pacifier. She turned back and said, "Well, will you take it to her?"

"If it's tomorrow I will."

"Huh!" she shot back into the shop indignantly, "Always thinking only of yourself. And to think, you're going to become a father any day now!" Steadying her large belly with both arms, she started down the street, puffing heavily.

"Excuse me..." almost without thinking, Kiki began to run after her, "If you like, I'll take it for you."

The baker's wife turned around and then took two or

three steps backward. She looked Kiki up and down swiftly, and then said,

"Dear me! Such a young girl, all dressed in black and carrying a broom - are you a chimney sweep?"

"Well, no... actually... I've just arrived in this town. I'm a witch," ended Kiki rather fearfully.

The baker's wife looked again very quickly at Kiki.

"A witch, well, for goodness sake! Well, a witch!" she repeated in amazement, "I have heard about witches, but you're the first one I've ever met." She took a deep breath,

"Are you sure you're not just acting?"

Kiki fervently shook her head, "Oh, no. It's true. So if you want me to take that baby's toy to your customer, I can do it quite easily. I would be happy to be of help."

"A genuine witch? Really? But it's rather far, I'm afraid. Is that all right?"

"Certainly. I don't mind, no matter how far it is. If it's not too far north, not the North Pole. I hope. I'm not dressed warmly and don't have a cloak, you see."

"The baker's wife burst out laughing.

"Oh! goodness! You're delightful! All right, would you really take it for me?"

"Of course!"

Kiki smiled brightly, nodding, and then suddenly became anxious,

"Mrs..."

"Now you call me Osono. The 'baker's wife Osono' is what they call me." she said.

"Thank you. Well, Osono, but I'm going to fly it over. You don't mind, do you?"

"There you go again! It's not so far you have to go by plane!"

"No, I don't mean that. I mean I'm going to fly on my broom."

"What!" Osono looked incredulous and opened her mouth to speak a couple of times, then finally closed it, murmuring to herself, "What a strange day this has been!" She shook her head vigorously and then said, "Well, I guess I don't care if you're a witch or a scarecrow, or whether you fly or swim. I really don't like it when things get complicated. I just want to make sure this pacifier gets back to that baby."

"That makes me feel much better," smiled Kiki, looking relieved, and Jiji, from his place on her shoulder, swished his tail in a friendly fashion.

"All right, it's decided. So you'd better go quickly."

Searching in her apron pocket, Osono continued, "I'll draw a map, all right? And it's not that I don't trust you, but when you've delivered it, please have the baby's mother sign here and bring it back to me. And then I'd like to thank you in some way."

Without thinking, Kiki exclaimed, "Wow! I did it!" forgetting for a moment that she wasn't talking to her old friends back home. Then, she took the map and the pacifier, got astride her broom, and with a quick stamp on the ground, rose lightly into the air.

"Oh! My! You're really... the real thing?" Osono's amazed voice followed after her.

Kiki managed to deliver the pacifier, and the baby's mother had thanked her over and over. "You're lifesaver!" she'd said. The baby had been howling loudly, and when she gave the baby the pacifier, it stopped crying immediately.

As Kiki flew back toward the baker's shop, she had begun to feel very good. When the baby's mother had said "You're a lifesaver," the chill that had fallen over kiki's heart had begun to melt, restoring her spirits. To Jiji, who was clinging to her waist as they flew along, she said, "I'm going to be all right. I think you can take it easy, Jiji.

"Oh, yeah!" Jiji was a little unbelieving. "You know, suddenly, I'm very hungry!"

"Me too." Kiki reached one arm behind her and patted Jiji on the back.

"When we finish this errand, let's find a nice big tree to sit under and have dinner from Mother's lunchbox. Let's just have a little, though. We have to make it last, you know. It really helps to have the moon so big and bright, doesn't it!"

Osono, the baker's wife, was standing just where they had left her, gazing off into the sky, her mouth agape just as before. When Kiki landed gently nearby, she rushed over and said excitedly, "How wonderfully convenient to be able to fly. You really must teach me how."

"I'm sorry, but I can't. People without witch's blood in their veins can't fly."

"Oh, is that so?" Osono looked disappointed, but said "You never know, I might have witch's blood. What do you think?" Loosening her arms from her belly, Osono began to flap her arms like a bird.

Kiki looked down and tried to suppress a laugh.

"No, I don't think you look like a witch."

"Really? How do you know, anyway?"

"I just know."

"Oh, dear, how frustrating! But of course - it's impossible. I never did hear from my grandmother or even her grandmother any stories about their being witches. Now, what about the baby? What happened?"

Kiki handed the map, which the baby's mother had signed, to Osono.

"The baby was crying, but stopped immediately when it got the pacifier back. It made me feel happy too."

"That's good!" said Osono, "So now, little witch, let me give you some reward."

"Please call me Kiki. And I really don't need any reward. I'm just happy to have met such nice people. That's enough, really. I should be... you see, I've only just arrived in this town."

"How unselfish of you. But here. I'm sorry it's only today's leftovers," said Osono, bringing Kiki five butter rolls from inside the shop.

"Oh, how beautiful! I would love to have them." said Kiki happily. And curtsying politely, she turned to leave.

"Wait, little witch... oh, you said your name was Kiki, didn't you,"

called Osono, "You said you'd just arrived in town.

Where are you going to stay tonight? "

Kiki's couldn't answer. She turned back, still holding Jiji in her arms, and looked forlornly at the ground.

"Could it be you don't have any place to stay?" pursued Osono.

Again, Kiki didn't answer.

"Gracious sakes! Why didn't you tell me?! We have a room - it's upstairs over the flour storehouse. It's small, but there's a bed, and even a sink."

"Really! Do you really mean it! "

Kiki almost crushed Jiji in relief.

"If you don't like it, you can look for something better tomorrow."

"Oh, no! I wouldn't think of it. Oh, I'm very grateful. I... actually, I didn't know what to do. Are, are you sure it's all right? You know, I'm a witch. And I don't think the people in this town like witches very much," Kiki began to feel the misery creep up on her again.

"I told you, you're delightful! I like you. Now you just relax. Actually, I bet there's something special about having a witch stay in one's house."

Osono put her hand under Kiki's drooping chin, and making her look up, winked at her with a warm smile.

The second floor of the flour storehouse next door to the bakery was covered with flour everywhere. After Kiki and Jiji had eaten their supper, they crawled into the bed.

"You know, I'm probably going to wake up a white cat tomorrow," said Jiji gazing at his fur and making a small sneeze.

"But look, Jiji! There's a nice windowsill where the warm sun'll shine, just like you were hoping for."

Kiki was happy and relieved. It had been a long trip, but the first day of her maiden journey was about to end.

"Kiki, are you going to look for another town?" asked Jiji.

"No. I think I'm going to stay here for a while. The people didn't welcome me like I thought they would, but the baker's wife said she likes me. Maybe we can find one or two more people who will like us. Don't think so? "

"Well, maybe. There ought to be at least two or three," murmured Jiji, and he was soon deep asleep.

4. Kiki Open for Business

Kiki the little witch and her black cat Jiji had been in the town of Koriko for three days now, and Osono, the baker's wife, had said they could stay as long as they wanted. Kiki had spent the whole time in the attic of the flour storehouse. Very frugally and a little at a time, she ate the provisions Mother Kokiri had packed for her and the butter rolls Osono had given her. But she didn't have much of an appetite. She just sat on the edge of the bed, feeling dazed and confused. Jiji seemed to share Kiki's mood. He kept close to her, making no attempt to venture out.

It was about time to go and buy food, but Kiki didn't feel like going anywhere. The constant noise of the city and the bustling sound of the people hurrying along the streets that came through the window was thoroughly daunting. Everything in the city seemed faceless and impersonal. When she delivered the pacifier to the woman with the baby a few nights ago, Kiki had started to think she would be able to manage all right here, but the next day, her confidence had vanished.

From morning today, too, she had been repeating to herself all kinds of lame excuses but none of them made sense,

"But I just can't... I'm not ..."

She could live in this town pretending that she wasn't a witch. If she couldn't stand it, there was no reason she couldn't go back home, even though it would be pretty embarrassing. But then, she might end up like the bagworm, which spends its whole life in its cocoon, venturing to stick its head out into the world only a tiny bit. No offense to the bagworm, she thought, but I don't want to be like that. Feeling desolate and lost, she gazed idly at her mother's broom, standing in the corner of the room.

I can't just sit here like this, she thought finally, I've got to find something I can do. After all, I delivered the pacifier. Maybe I could do something like that. I'm pretty good at flying. Like Mother said, people in the city are always busy. And here I am, in the big city. Maybe there are people, busy people, who need help with little things. Maybe I could help them. Turning over the idea in her mind, Kiki's spirits slowly began to rise.

Osono came to find out how she was doing, so Kiki asked her what she thought.

"Delivering things... you mean a sort of parcel delivery service?"

Osono didn't seem to get the idea right away.

"That's right. Expect I could carry anything, even little things you can't really call parcels. You know, people could ask me to carry something for them as easily as they might ask the girl next door to do them a favor."

"I see. Now that sounds like a good idea. Yes, come to think of it, that kind of thing would be a big help even to a person like me. After the baby's born, it won't be easy to go out whenever I need something. As she realized what Kiki was planning, Osono began to grow excited. "Yes! I think you've got a great idea! Yes, indeed!"

"So what will you charge? It won't be easy to figure out if you're going to carry small things like that. How are you going to manage that?"

"Well, all I'd really like is to make some kind of trade."

"What do you mean by that? "

"Well, it's part of the way we witches get along these days. If we can do something for someone else, all we ask in return is something they have an extra supply of, a favor in return, - you know, 'give a little, take a

little.'" Kiki didn't realize it, but she was starting to talk exactly like her mother.

"Oh, I see. That was an old custom, yes, but you can't get along on that sort of thing alone."

"But, Jiji and I, we don't need much of anything, you know. I have all the clothes I need, as you can see, and we don't eat much. And I'm going to do without things as much as possible."

"I see. That's how you're going to manage," Osono nodded with a look of admiration. And then her mind was working again.

"But if you're going to start up a delivery service, you'll need an office, won't you? "

"Well, maybe just a little one, with a sign that says "Delivery service" or some such thing."

"Say, how about right here? The flour storehouse. We can pile all these things over in one corner to make space."

"Really? Are you sure it's all right? "

"Sure! Well, it's probably too small, but in any business it's a good idea to start out small. That makes the process of making it grow bigger all the more fun." Osono's voice was full of excitement as if she herself was the one setting up shop.

"All right. Now that it's decided, the sooner you open up the better," said Osono, "but you know, just calling yourself a "delivery service" seems rather dull. You need something a little more eye-catching. You know the thing these days is speedy service right to your doorstep. You should make the most of yourself, you know, you're a genuine witch after all. How about "The Witch's Express Delivery"?"

"Are you sure it's a good idea to use the word 'witch'?"

"Now come on! Don't be so shy. A business should have a name that's unique. Look at the name of our bakery - Buy, Bye Bakery. People remember the name right away. That's the secret of good business.

Osono gave Kiki a look of firm confidence and nodded vigorously.

It was the next day that Osono had her baby. Kiki found herself suddenly very busy, helping the baker and taking care of Osono. So setting up her business was put off for a while, but about ten days later, she finally opened for business.

The flour-dusty façade of the storehouse had been carefully cleaned and a sign hung on the wall.

The Witch's Express Delivery

From your doorstep to their doorstep.

Will carry anything, faster than any other service.

Telephone 123-8181

With Osono's help, she'd gotten an easy-to-remember number. If you read 8181 with an accent, it came out "aight on[ce], aight on[ce]." Kiki and Jiji went out front over and over to gaze at their sign.

"Well, we've taken the plunge. There's no turning back now," said Kiki worriedly to herself each time they had another look.

"That's right. Hey! What's happened to you? You used to get so excited at starting something new!" said Jiji, too, was determined to encourage Kiki.

The "office" itself had all the proper equipment, thanks to the baker. The bags of flour that had been scattered all over the place were tidily piled in one corner, and near the door there was a desk made of a board placed on two stacks of bricks. On the desk was Kiki's brand new telephone and on the wall over it a huge map of the town of Koriko. And on the pillar directly opposite the entrance, where anyone who came in would immediately see it, hung her mother's stout and venerable broom, carefully cleaned and shining. As she sat contemplating the broom, Kiki thought to herself, "It's a good thing I didn't bring that skinny, new one I made. I have enough to think about without having to worry about my broom."

While they fidgeted and hoped, despaired and sighed, a whole week passed without a single customer.

When Kiki went to see the baby, Osono said apologetically,

"Maybe it was a mistake to use the word "witch" after all. Dear me, it's all my fault. I hear people are saying their parcels and packages might have magic spells cast on them and disappear into thin air! What foolishness! "

"If they'd just give it a try, they'd be hooked! If I could only get around better I'd find a way to help you out," she said mournfully.

"It's going to be all right. They'll start coming any day now."

Kiki made herself smile cheerfully. But after she went back to the office, she slumped into a chair, feeling discouraged and even forgot to eat lunch.

"It makes me so sad. Why do people have to assume

that witches only bring trouble?"

"They just don't know any better. There's nothing you can do about it," said Jiji, acting like the wise grown-up.

"That's right. They just don't know. Witches never did do bad things... well, may be they did things that were unconventional or different. When people see things they don't understand they simply decide they must be bad. I thought that sort of thing had ended a long time ago."

"So you really ought to show them you're not going to do anything bad. Shouldn't you advertise or something."

"Advertise? How should I do that?"

"Send a litter to various places."

"What kind of litter?"

"Tell them you're a sweet, harmless little girl witch, and you can do this and this, and so on."

"Hmm. That sounds like a good idea, you know," finally the bounce started to return to Kiki's voice.

"So, shall we write a litter..."

Kiki stood up and opened the window, and the wind blew in suddenly as if it had been waiting right outside to be let in. But it wasn't a strong or chill wind, but a gentle spring breeze. As she turned her face into the breeze, Kiki felt the hard, tense feeling that had gripped her heart for so many days finally fall away. Blinking like a mole sticking his head out of the earth, she looked carefully around the neighborhood.

The windows of all the houses on the other side of the street were wide open. The curtains were pulled back to let the sunshine flood in to their rooms. Kiki could hear the sound of music from a radio carried by the wind and voices calling out to one another.

Then Kiki realized that a young woman in the window of an apartment house a little ways down the street was waving her hand, apparently trying to catch Kiki's attention.

She seemed to be impatiently beckoning Kiki to come her way. Kiki pointer her finger at herself as if to ask, "Do you mean me?" And the woman gestured, "Yes." And nodding vigorously, beckoned again. Kiki looked at the building quickly, and calculated that the woman was on the third floor, in the fourth apartment from the left.

Kiki picked up her broom, and, opening the door, called to Jiji,

"I'm going out for a minute. It looks like there's

a woman calling me. Jiji, would you like to come along?"

In answer, Jiji leaped up on Kiki's shoulder.

Kiki found the apartment house and went up the stairs. On the third floor she found the door of the young woman's apartment standing open. Inside, the woman stood in front of the mirror, putting on a red hat, a sky blue suitcase in her hand. Seeing Kiki's figure in the mirror, she put down the suitcase and hastily invited Kiki in,

"Oh! Come in, come in. I heard from the baker's wife that you'll carry packages?"

"Yes, that's right."

"She says you fly... though the air?"

"Yes," Kiki suddenly felt embarrassed, and dropped her eye, dreading what kind of comment the woman would make next.

"And she says you'll do it for just a small reward?"

Kiki nodded silently.

"But aren't you a pretty thing! When I heard you were a witch, I envisioned a creature with canine teeth and horns on her head!" Contrary to her words, the woman actually seemed disappointed.

Kiki was about to shout an angry protest at such a stereotype, but quickly stopped herself, pressing her lips together.

"Oh, I'm sorry! But you see, there never was a witch in this town before. I've never seen one before. Well, you know, they're described as such scary creatures in all the stories," and without stopping, she went on, "Now, tell me, just how much is "a small trade"? For air service, I suppose it's expensive."

"No, I'd be happy with anything." Kiki let her eyes fall again, feeling embarrassed by the need to discuss such business matters.

"Anything? How about a favor in return? " I'm a seamstress; I sew people's cloths all the time..."

Swinging around, she faced Kiki for the first time, and wrinkling her nose, took in Kiki from head to toe. Then she began to shake her head, clicking her tongue disapprovingly.

"That dress... well, it's very nice, but isn't it rather long? The fashion nowadays no know is to have your hem at the middle of your knees. Say, how about this? I'll be back in three days and then I'll hem up your skirt for you. How will that do for a trade? There, it's a deal!"

Kiki thought it was rather presumptuous of the young woman to decide on the form of payment without even showing her what she wanted carried or where. But she just stood there, her lips set irritably.

The young woman turned back to the mirror, and when she had finally fixed her hat at the angle she wanted, she began to chatter again, this time even faster.

"I've been called by a client who lives far away and I suddenly have to leave. This client is a most impatient sort: once she takes it into her head to have a dress, she has to try in on the same day, and so..."

Pointing to a birdcage draped with a white lace covering sitting on the table, she tumbled on,

"This is a present for my nephew, whose fifth birthday is today. I want you to take it to him for me. He told me expressly he wanted two presents: a new birdcage and a stuffed animal. And he made me promise not to forget. He said I had to bring them to his house by 4:00 today, and if I was late, he'd make me stand on my head 94 times. Now just imagine if you tried to do such a thing? You wouldn't be able to figure out which was your head and which was your feet! So, for heaven's sake, don't be late! There's only one hour left. It's very important. What? The address? 10 Apricot Lane. You go up the river and you'll see their street behind a big florist shop on the edge of town. What? Name? Just ask for the "Little Brat." They'll know immediately. All right, I'm counting on you. Okay?" Babbling on, barely stopping to listen to Kiki's queries, the young woman gathered up her luggage, handed the birdcage to Kiki, and left the apartment.

Kiki parted the lace curtains of the birdcage and peered inside.

"Oh, look, Jiji. It's just like you! How cute!" Inside was a stuffed black cat with a big peppermint-green ribbon tied around its neck sitting primly on a silver cushion. It looked as if the young woman had stitched it herself.

Kiki passed the broom's handle through the birdcage ring, hung the radio above it, and telling him to keep a careful eye on their cargo, set Jiji on the wisp of the broom. Straddling the handle in front, she hurriedly took off from the shadow of the apartment building.

"Wow! It's been a while since we were up. Feels lovely!" The sun had already begun to move into the western sky, and shone brightly in their faces. Jiji was

watching from the rear. When the wind blew open the lace curtains of the birdcage, he glared suspiciously at his likeness within.

"Humph! All dolled up with a ribbon!" he scoffed under his breath. And then, a few minutes later, "Look at that silly cushion!" Kiki thought he sounded envious.

"Jiji, would you like to have a cushion like that?" she turned back to him, smiling, "Cushions like that are for stuffed animals, you know."

Jiji acted as if he hadn't heard her. Slowly he was inching closer to the cage. Then, with a flash of his front paw, he snagged the cage and yanked it closer. The broom swerved dangerously.

"What are you doing!" shouted Kiki from in front, "Sit still!" Jiji's ears went up tensely and he withdrew his paw and put it to his mouth.

"Goodness, Jiji, You don't want to get in the cage, do you? I can't imagine why..."

"Well, it's a real pretty cage."

"Jiji, you surprise me! And, to think, we're the same age!" said Kiki, smiling wryly.

The broom's flight evened out again, but as if waiting for that moment, Jiji reached out again, this time prying open the cage and lunging forward in the attempt to get inside. The broom lurched wildly. Kiki let out a cry, but it was too late. The stuffed black cat fell over, dropped out of the open door, and tumbled through the sky. She screamed and stretched out her hands, struggling to turn the broom downwards to catch it, but it to no avail. The toy drifted in a black spiral down, down through the sky.

Kiki chanced course, speeding down after it. The forest rushed up toward them and Kiki pointed her broom straight through the treetops. The tree branches struck at her face and body as they descended, and they found themselves in a small clearing, where Kiki's feet touched down. She immediately set about searching for the toy cat, using the broom to look under branches and in the underbrush.

But the toy cat was nowhere to be seen. The forest was very deep and the foliage of the trees was extremely dense. If the toy had caught in some branches in the shadows of the leaves, they would never be able to find it. It was just a little stuffed animal, after all, and who knows where it might have been carried if a gust of wind had come along.

Kiki suddenly wanted to cry. Although they had

never met before, that young woman had entrusted Kiki with an important errand. It was the first fob for the Witch's Express Delivery, and now it looked like it might be a total fiasco.

The 4:00 delivery hour was only minutes away. Kiki glared at Jiji, crouching apologetically nearby.

"You sure cause enough trouble..."

Kiki stopped, and then exclaimed, "I've got a good idea! Jiji, you get in the cage in place of the toy cat."

Jiji's head jerked up with a start, and shaking his head vigorously, he began backing away.

"You wanted to get inside, didn't you? Well, now's your chance," said Kiki sweetly, and then firmly, "Now, get on in. There's no time to waste."

Kiki raised her voice and pointed to the cage, her eyes glinting with resolve. Jiji scuttled quickly into the cage, but he did not forget to sit down on the silver cushion, which had fortunately not fallen out. Kiki closed the door of the cage, and then she said, more gently,

"This is just for a little while, mind you. As soon as I find the toy, I'll come and get you."

From inside the cage, Jiji looked up reproachfully at Kiki,

"So that means I have to become a stuffed animal?"

"That's right."

"I can't even make a sound?"

"No. Hey! You can just go to sleep. It'll be as easy as pie."

"Do I have to stop breathing?"

"Well, as much as possible."

"But... but, oh, no! Remember, he's a 'brat'. That's what she called him. He told her she'd have to stand on her head 94 times! That kid!"

"Oh, you'll be all right! And I'll come and get you as soon as I can."

Jiji sighed resignedly and, looking very crestfallen, crouched down in the cage, but turned deliberately to face the other way. This time, Kiki hung the cage on the broomstick in front of her where she could see it, and sped off into the sky.

Following the river upstream, Kiki checked the names of the streets posted at the intersections as they flew along. She quickly found No. 10 Apricot Lane, on the street behind the florist shop. When she rang the doorbell, there was a clatter of running feet, and the door was flung open with a cry, "She's here!"

There stood a little boy. He had a bandage on one cheek, one on the top of his nose, two on his forehead, and three on his knees.

"I'm sorry. Your aunt couldn't come, but I have come in her place. Here is the gift she promised you. Happy Birthday!"

Taking the birdcage from Kiki, the little boy looked inside, and then grasping it in his arms, began to bounce around happily in circles. Through the slit in the curtains, Kiki could see Jiji grimacing as he endured the jouncing.

"Say!" she said hastily, "You take good care of that little black kitten, okay?"

"Okay. I'll take good care of it. I'll be careful. I'll fold it up neatly and put it in my pocket!" And he stuck out his tongue impertinently at Kiki.

From inside the cage came a faint, but pitiful sound.

"Then I'll be off. See you again!" She waved at the little boy.

"What, are you going to come back and bring me something else?"

"Very likely," and Kiki started off at a run.

Returning to the place they'd dropped the toy, she realized that the forest was part of the park. She began to search carefully and methodically where the stuffed cat ought to have fallen, but with no success.

If I don't find it, she thought to herself, poor Jiji will have to stay at that kid's house forever. He'll never be able to come back to me... he was all I had to rely on, and now... She began to feel as if all was lost.

Dusk began to fall in the forest, and Kiki leaned against a tree, tired from her searching. Then she looked down and grasped the hem of her black skirt. I'll just have to cut off the hem of this dress, she made up her mind, and sew a new stuffed cat to replace Jiji. They say short skirts are in fashion, ... so, I guess I'll give it a try...

Then from somewhere behind her, Kiki heard the faint sound of someone talking, "Which shall I choose? Smoke black is ugly. What I really want is a black-cat black, the black of witch's cat. Ah! Where will I ever find...witch's black...?"

Looking around in surprise, Kiki could see through the trees that there was a small house. What she had thought was a dense thicket of trees was the untrimmed hedge surrounding a cottage. Through the open window, Kiki could see a girl with long hair tied snugly behind her neck standing with her back to the

window painting a picture.

That girl may have seen the toy kitten, thought Kiki, I'll go and ask her.

Kiki squeezed through a small opening in the hedge, and crossed the garden filled with blossoming flowers toward the house.

When she stretched up on her tiptoes to call through the window to the girl, she noticed that the painting was of a cat. And then, looking beyond the easel, she gasped with surprise. The stuffed black cat toy she had lost was sitting there in the room.

The girl turned around at the sound.

"Oh! That... over there ..." stammered Kiki.

"Ah! What... yes... that ..." stumbled the girl.

And then the two girls looked at each other and shouted at the same time,

"Oh! How wonderful!"

"Oh! How delightful!"

They both took a breath at the same time and then,

"I'm so glad I found it!"

"I'm so glad I found you!"

And then their words came out at the same time again.

"What?"

"What?"

They asked each other simultaneously.

"I'm glad I found the stuffed black cat." declared Kiki.

"Well, I'm glad I found you, a little girl wearing a splendid black dress," said the girl.

But since they both spoke at once, their words overlapped, making it come out sounding like,

"I'm glad the black cat found the stuffed little girl wearing a splendid black dress."

When finally Kiki was able to catch her breath, she asked the girl again,

"Did that black stuffed cat by any chance fall out of the sky?"

The girl gazed at Kiki, looking completely mystified.

"I don't know whether it dropped out of the sky or popped out of the earth, but I found it in the woods a little while ago. I'd been looking for a really good black to do a painting for the exhibition for a long time. You know, the real black of all blacks. Ideally the black that witches use. This black cat seems about as close as I'll get."

Then the girl stopped talking and began to examine Kiki, standing there in her black dress, holding a stout broom.

"Goodness! Could it be...? Are you by any chance a ...?"

"Well, I'm a witch," said Kiki, a little reluctantly.

At that the girl leaped toward the window and leaned way over the sill, reaching out to grasp Kiki's hand.

"Oh! This is wonderful! Listen, you can have this toy cat. I'll give it to you. But, come, come inside quickly. And just sit there in that chair, would you please? You know," she said breathlessly, "I've often thought of moving somewhere else, because this town never had a witch living here. And now ... isn't this great! The witch had come to visit me! Do sit down. Please sit down."

Nearly overwhelmed by the girl artist's energy, Kiki had to resist her eager hospitality.

"I don't mind, but you see, I can't now. If I could just have that stuffed animal, I'll be happy to come back later with a real black cat, a real witch's black cat. And then you can paint a picture of the two of us."

"Really?"

"Absolutely. I promise," said Kiki, loudly and clearly. And taking the precious toy in her hands, she began to run without back.

"It's a promise!" the girl's voice followed after her.

By the time Kiki reached Apricot Lane again, it was completely dark.

Creeping quietly around the house, Kiki peered in at each of the lighted windows. Finally she found Jiji. The little boy was fast asleep in bed, Jiji pinned tightly in his arms. Instead of being "neatly folded," Jiji seemed to have been neatly flattened, his head twisted backward under the pressure of the boy's hand, his body squeezed under an armpit. There was a bandage on Jiji's nose to match the boy's.

Kiki crept silently through the window, stood up and pulled gently on Jiji's tail. Jiji didn't move. Could he have gotten a little too carried away with playing the part of stuffed animal, she wondered. A horrible thought started to enter her mind. Jiji was her precious, irreplaceable friend; she'd only now realized just how dear Jiji was to her.

"Jiji, Jiji!"

Kiki whispered softly. When she saw Jiji slowly open one eye, she placed the stuffed black cat in the crook of the sleeping boy's arm, and said,

"Come on! Hurry up!"

Jiji extricated himself from of the boy's embrace and

bounced joyfully into Kiki's arms like a rubber ball.

From deep down in his throat came a loud purring that was like both laughing and crying all at once. As he leaped out of the window alongside Kiki, Jiji cried,

"Wow! What a relief to be able to breath deeply again! And move!"

"I know how you feel, but..." Not looking directly at Jiji, Kiki went on apologetically, "I'm sorry, but I need your help once more. Well, this time you don't have to pretend you're stuffed. You can laugh or cry as you please."

"Then, whatever it is, it'll be a breeze," said Jiji, looking ready to agree to anything.

But when they got back to the cottage in the woods, the girl made them sit together to pose for her painting, saying,

"Now sit straight. I want the witch's cat to curl his tail this way. And don't make such a face. Yes, like that. And don't breathe! Just stay still, don't move."

Jiji grew so angry his fur stood on end.

But that made the girl all the happier, "Oh! That's perfect! That's exactly what a witch's cat should be like! Don't move! Don't move! "

Sitting primly there with Jiji, Kiki began to feel very happy. Finally she realized, she had found one more person who liked her.

That night, Kiki wrote her first letter to her father and mother.

I've decided to live in Koriko. It's a big city near the ocean.

At first I thought it was too big a city, but I think the business I wanted to start is just right for this town. I call it 'The Witch'S Express Delivery'...

She wrote about all the things that happened, leaving out the part about being sad and depressed, and ended her letter as follows,

*Instead of having the seamstress shorten my dress,
I've decided to have her make a silver cushion for Jiji.
Then I'll send you a formal picture of Jiji on his "throne."
I'm doing fine here, so don't worry,
dear Mother and Father.*

*Take care,
Yours, Kiki*

5. The Broom Thief

When Kiki opened the door one morning, a flood of sunshine poured in, topping her in her tracks. She put up her hand against the blinding glare.

The breeze was warm and balmy.

When Kiki had first come to Koriko, it had been spring, and the sun shone down lazily, as if it were gamboling through the skies on the way down to earth. It was sunshine not much different from that of the small town nestled in the hills and woods where she had grown up. But now, with the onset of summer, the sun's rays beat down mercilessly, as if pounding their way to earth.

Summer on the seacoast is hot, thought Kiki. It was heat that almost took your breath away. She undid the top button of her blouse to let in the air and then stretched on tip-toes, peering far away over the distant hills. Oops! She caught herself, I should know better than to think that if I stand on tip-toes, I could see that far. It's all Mother's fault.

Back home, there was a grassy knoll to the east from her house that she could see from the front porch if she stood on her tip-toes. In a letter from home a couple of days ago, her mother had written, Yesterday, on my way back from an errand, I flew over to the grassy knoll to the east. I remembered that whatever you went out on an errand, you used to stop there, and often ended up coming back very late. Well, the grass was high, almost up to my knees. I sat there for a while, gazing up into the sky. And then what do you think I did? I went to sleep! The grass smelled so sweet and felt so soft, and a cool breeze was blowing. I don't know how long I slept, but when I woke up, I suddenly realized what I'd done and hurried back home. Your father took one look at me and burst out laughing. He said I looked just like Kiki, covered with chaff from lying in the grass. It made me laugh too!

Squinting into the blazing sunshine, Kiki saw in her mind's eye scenes from the filly pastures and the narrow streets of the little town where she had once played, and felt wave of homesickness. Then, yanking herself back to the present, she told herself,

"Well, I'd better get to work."

Taking her precious broom, the tool to her trade, off the wall, she began to polish it with energy. This was a task she had performed faithfully from the first day

she began the Witch's Express Delivery.

"Well! You're hard at work! Are you working today, too? Coming out of the bakery next door with the baby in her arms, Osono called out to Kiki.

"You may be getting all ready for nothing today, you know," she said through the window, "In this heat I doubt you'll have any customers at all. The town is practically empty, except for one industrious young fellow sweeping the street over the way there."

Kiki looked up and glanced along the street. Osono was right. Hardly a movement stirred in the sweltering sunlight or even in the shadows among the buildings.

"Today's Sunday and it's the height of summer. Everyone's gone to the seashore."

"To the seashore? What are they doing there?" asked Kiki.

"They've gone to swim, of course! Why don't you shut up shop and go yourself?"

"Go to the shore, when it's this hot?" The whole idea was unfamiliar to Kiki.

"Well, of course! You go exactly because it's so hot! Oh, it feels wonderful! Living here, if you don't go to the ocean, you'll find the summers pretty hard to bear."

"But I've never been swimming?"

"All the more reason you should go, then. I'll find you a swimming suit to wear. When I was younger I wore a black one. After all, it wouldn't do for a witch to go to the beach in any other color, would it? Now, if you wait a bit, I'll go and find it."

"Would you go with me, Osono?" asked Kiki.

"Not with the baby this little. No way! I'd better stay home this year. Getting there will be a breeze for you. On your broom, you'll be there in no time!"

"Oh, let's go together! I'll watch the baby for you," pleaded Kiki, gently brushing the soft cheek of the baby sleeping peacefully in Osono's ample embrace.

"I think I'd rather stay home. But you, Kiki, you haven't given yourself a break since you came here and you've had a steady stream of work lately. You ought to go and have some fun for a change. Just lying on the beach feels really good, you know. Now, wait a bit; I'll bring the swimsuit. If you put it on here under your dress, all you have to do is take your dress off when you get there." Osono hurried back into the house.

"The ocean..." murmured Kiki, turning the idea over in her mind.

"What do you say, Jiji?" she called to the witch's cat,

"Want to come with me to the beach? "

Stretched out in a shady, cool spot, looking like a pool of black tar melting along the step, Jiji sounded lethargic and annoyed,

"How can you ask me to go anywhere? Do you know what it's like to be wearing fur coat in this heat? "

"What's the matter with you? We'll be flying into the cool wind off the ocean, you know. It ought to be more comfortable than just sitting around melting at home. Besides, we've got to take this broom out just for fun now and then."

"As if we weren't always..." Jiji chided her through his drowsiness, by he drew himself up reluctantly and began to swish his long tail against his sides. This was Jiji's customary ritual before going out. Kiki smiled fondly and happily at her cat and began to shut the windows of the shop.

Kiki tried on the swimming suit Osono brought. When she pulled the straps up over her shoulders, the elastic suit clasped her body like a tight rubber band.

"Is this right? " asked Kiki, shrinking with embarrassment by the unaccustomed exposure of the swimming suit.

"Yes! It fits you fine. Just think, I use to be as skinny as you are. I really envy you, being thin enough to wear that suit."

"But I'm sticking out all over! I don't like it! " cried Kiki, who had always worn long dresses, and had never gone out with so little on before.

"That's the way you're supposed to look. Now, when you get down to the seashore, you'll see that everyone else is dressed like that. You won't feel embarrassed anymore."

Pulling up skirt up above her knees, Osono stuck out her own bare leg to show what it would be like.

"Now, off with you, my dear, and have fun! "

Kiki put her dress on over the swimming suit, picked up the broom, hung the radio on the handle, and went outside with Jiji. She hand a sigh on the door that said "Closed for the day,"

Kiki and Jiji flew through the bright blue sky. The radio was playing a rollicking melody and Kiki let herself sway from side to side with its rhythm.

"Wow! It feels good! " Kiki steered the broom in broad curves to right and lift, gliding skillfully on the wind currents.

"It's really wonderful to be able to fly, isn't it! No wonder Osono wants to learn."

Kiki looked down at the city of Koriko stretching below them. The two sides of the city, spread out like the wings of a butterfly on both sides of the river flowing down the center, seemed to be moving in time with the music.

"Kiki, " Jiji tapped her from behind, "Listen. There's some kind of report coming over the radio."

"Kiki realized that the music had been interrupted and heard the weather reporter say, We repeat a special weather warning: Strong storm winds, popularly known "sea-monster squalls," will buffet the coast of Koriko today. Appearing at the height of summer in this region, the squalls are thus named because they come in suddenly, with strong, gusting winds.

We ask all swimmers and visitors at the seashore to exercise the utmost caution.

"Listen! It says the weather is going to turn bad," said Jiji.

"How could that be? Just look how clear and beautiful it is! " Kiki paid no attention to the report or to Jiji's worried tone.

"Look! There's the ocean. And just look how many people there are! The weather report has got to be a mistake. Jiji, you have a habit of thinking the worst just as people are trying to have fun. That's bad habit, you know."

"Well! It's a 'bad habit' to get carried away with things, too," retorted jiji, turning away from her and ruffling his fur indignantly.

Kiki pointed the broom's handle downward and started their descent.

She landed gently at a distant corner of the beach. Who had ever heard of a witch going to the beach? Certainly Kiki never had. So she decided to make herself as unobtrusive as possible.

Watching sideways, Kiki could see that everyone on the beach was absorbed in having fun. Some were playing on the beach, throwing balls of wet sand at each other, burying themselves up to their necks, or stretched out on towels sunbathing. Others were chasing the waves at the water's edge, or swimming with large strokes through the waves further out. She had never known there were so many ways of having fun at the seashore.

The sounds of laughter and delight and the sight of happy, joyful faces echoed up and down the beach.

The wind began to pick up and the canvas of the

beach parasols flapped noisily. The waves had also grown higher, and the shouts of surfers grew louder and more excited.

"Well, I guess we should go join them." Said Kiki. Taking off her dress and shoes, Kiki tried to look small as she began to walk across the sand. But she had never walked barefoot on the sand before. It was not yet noon, but the sand was scorching hot. Instead of walking quietly, she found herself prancing in jerks, trying to keep off the burning sand. They must have made quite a sight. A girl in a black swimming suit carrying a broom with a black cat at her heels.

Trying desperately to keep within Kiki's shadow, Jiji, too, hopped along, mumbling grumpily the whole way.

"Boy! Do you look funny. Like a sesame seed popping in a frying pan. I wish your mother could see you!"

Finally reaching the place where the beachgoers were gathered, Kiki saw how people had dug a shallow hole in the sand to lie in. She found a spot and lay down on her stomach like the others. The sand was as warm as a hot bath and felt wonderful. Feet of all kinds traipsed by her as she lay there, but all of the people were intent on their own fun, and Kiki was relieved to see that they didn't seem to notice much of what was going on around them. Best of all, they didn't seem to notice her.

Kiki put her chin on her elbows, and gazed at the ocean. The waves swelled up and gell back along the beach, roiling and insistent, like a living creature. The swimmers leaping into the water looked like they were climbing onto the creature's back.

"Do you think I can go in too?" Kiki realized that her mother had never taught her anything about the ocean. Well, that was probably to be expected. Kokiri herself had probably never seen the ocean.

Jiji looked up at Kiki with a worried expression. "Kiki, I wish you wouldn't do it. How do we know? It's possible that witches dissolve when they touch seawater."

That's ridiculous! And just look how much fun everybody's having. It couldn't be that only witches can't go in the ocean. But I'll just see how it feels to get my feet wet."

Kiki sat up and looked off at the horizon. She noticed a cluster of black clouds that hadn't been there a moment ago. In the sand next to her, the breeze stirred up a small whirlwind.

"Look at that! Do you suppose that weather report was right?"

But seeing the sun shining as brightly as ever, she again turned her attention to the people in the ocean, watching with envy.

Suddenly a voice nearby seemed to be addressed to her, "Hello there!"

Turning to the side, she found the woman lying on her stomach next to her smiling. The woman slowly sat up and pointed to the broom lying beside Kiki.

"What are you doing with that broom?" she asked, "Did you bring it to play with on the beach? In place of a float or something?"

It was such an incongruous suggestion that Kiki involuntarily burst into a giggle. The woman giggled too, and then she said,

"Well, I heard that there was a witch in town, ... so I suppose you're one of the people trying to copy her. But you look great! Me, I'm so busy taking care of my son I don't have time to keep up with the fashions. I saw a boy with a broom too a little while ago."

"See him, over there?" The woman turned to point behind her. Beyond the people playing in the sand stood a boy holding a broom and a bundle. He was watching them.

"Oh! He's probably there to pick up trash," said Kiki.

"Oh, really? Is that so? So are you here to pick up trash, too? Somehow I thought..." The woman's voice trailed off as she began craning her neck, searching among the crowd. And then abruptly, she shouted in a loud, screechy voice.

"Jonny! You come back here! You don't go so far. Stay there where I can see you. That's right, that's right. You can splash in the water right there where it's shallow. Look, the waves will come right up to you!"

When the woman waved her hand, a little by sitting in a large, orange, platter-like float watching in their direction kicked his feet up and down.

The woman turned back to Kiki and sighed deeply.

"Children are darlings, but it's really exhausting. It's not easy being a mother!" And then suddenly her voice rose shrilly again.

"Jonny, don't go in deep! That's right, you just sit down right there! Now be a good boy."

The woman again looked at Kiki with a smile.

"It would be nice to be able to relax at least when one comes to the beach. Say, how about that kitty-cat of yours. I wonder if it wouldn't play with my Jon-

ny. That looks like a very smart cat. And then Jonny would be sure to stay close by.

The woman reached out to pet Jiji enticingly.

Poking him, Kiki said, "Well, Jiji, why don't you go down there and play with him."

Jiji stood up and stretched, with a grumbling purr that resounded in his belly,

"How can she call a grown up cat like me 'kitty-cat.' It's downright insulting."

Strolling slowly and swishing his tail back and forth, he stalked down to the water's edge.

"Wow! What a smart cat!" The woman watched carefully until Jiji reached the place where her little boy was playing, and then flopped down again on her stomach, humming a tune to herself.

Kiki, too, lay down again, stretching out on the sand. When she closed her eyes, it seemed as if the jumble of sound mingling around her could be heard all the more clearly. The smell of the beach - salty, the seawater with its faint smell of fish and kelp - was really very pleasant.

Then suddenly there was a resounding roar, and a violent gust of wind completely different from the breeze that had been blowing, struck the beach. It hit them as if it had dropped out of the sky. Screams and shouts arose all over.

Blinking the sand out of her eyes, Kiki saw straw hats and floats blowing around in the air like pinwheels. As she jumped to her feet, she could see the whole beach, a peaceful idyll of pleasure until a moment before, in utter turmoil. Parents clutching children in both arms were scrambling toward the pinewoods at the edge of the dunes. People chasing after belongings whisked beyond their reach by the wind.

"Jonny!" screamed the woman next to Kiki, over and over, and then suddenly she started running frantically toward the water. Watching her go, Kiki saw the little boy and Jiji riding on the orange float being pulled out to sea on high waves. The boy's mother plunged into the surf, but the float kept drifting farther out, caught up in the strong outgoing tide. The boy was screeching with fear. Kiki rushed down to the water's edge and called out to Jiji.

"Hand on tight now. I'll come out and get you."

Then she said to the woman standing helplessly in the waves. "Now don't worry. I can fly. And I'll go out there and rescue them."

Someone close by said,

"That's right. Isn't that the witch delivery girl who can fly on a broom?"

"Well, hurry up! Hurry!"

Then Kiki turned pale. Suddenly she noticed that the broom she held in her hand was different. It wasn't her mother's broom. It was just a cheap, poorly made likeness.

How could such a thing happen at a time like this? She screamed silently to herself. Who could have switched the brooms? It must have happened during all the commotion of the squall. Or did it happen while she had had her eyes closed sunbathing on the sand? Kiki's heart began to beat very fast. What am I going to do? She thought.

But there were no time. Quickly getting astride the impostor broom, she took off, and just as she thought she was on course, the tip of the handle dipped down into the water.

"Oh!" the assembled crowd gasped in disappointment. Kiki grasped the handle and pointed it upward, but then the tail of the broom sank into the water. The tail quickly became very wet and heavy, and tried to pull her back toward the beach. Though Kiki strove valiantly to gain control, the broom seemed to have a mind of its own, swerving, lunging and jerking crazily. And all the while the little boy and Jiji were drifting further out to sea.

Kiki gripped the broom handle and set her lips in determination. She got dunked in the waves and flipped in circles several times, but finally managed to reach the boy. Lying flat along the broom handle, she reached down, but he was crying and flailing about so wildly but that she couldn't get hold of his hand. Finally she grabbed his swim trunks and pulled him up on the broom. Then she caught Jiji by his tail and pulled him up too. At that very moment a huge wave crashed over the orange float and then pulled it, whirling in circles, at a dizzying speed far out into the dark blue ocean.

The people on the beach sent up a cheer.

Kiki managed to land on the sand. She handed over the limp little boy to his mother, and hugging the also-limp Jiji to her, hurriedly put her dress on over her wet body. Picking up her radio, she got astride the broom and rose into the air.

People in the crowd tried to stop her, "You must be exhausted, why don't you rest a bit." "The wind is too strong!"

But Kiki had something more important to worry about. She had to find her precious broom. And she had a pretty good idea where it had gone. It must be that boy she had seen through the crowd earlier. He had had a broom in his hand. He must have wanted to have a witch's broom and switched them when she wasn't looking. It made her seething mad. She decided she would never forgive him. Luckily she had been able to save the boy and Jiji, but thinking what would have happened if she had failed made her tremble with horror. She'd find that rascal and make him apologize a million times.

Kiki scanned the landscape below her carefully, lurching along on the bucking broom. Where would somebody go if he got hold of the witch's broom of his dreams? No doubt, he would try to find some high place, like a cliff, thinking he would try to fly.

Kiki flew over the small hills that stretched between the city and the beach.

Then Jiji pointed ahead, "Kiki, over there! "

Just as she had thought, there was a figure dressed in black clothing standing on the top of a high rise, preparing to "fly."

"Kiki, you've got to stop him!" shouted Jiji.

"Shush! Be quiet!" Kiki stopped the broom in mid-air.

"But he'll get hurt."

He wants to fly, so let him fly! If he gets hurt, he'll learn his lesson. Besides, it serves him right, stealing somebody else's broom! "Said Kiki coldly, keeping a firm hold on the bucking broom.

"He's really going to jump!" screeched Jiji.

The boy on the hilltop took off, but instead of flying, he dropped straight down, hitting bottom and tumbling down like a falling rock.

Kiki flew down after him and landed nearby. The broom thief was rubbing his sore behind and trembling with fright and shock. Kiki remarked in a deliberately stern and tone,

"So! It didn't work, did it? "

The startled face that looked up at her was, as she had expected, that of the boy about her own age she'd seen earlier.

His glasses were cracked and he was covered with bruises and scratches oozing blood.

Then Kiki burst out laughing. She couldn't help it. He had even got himself up in a dress apparently imitat-

ing the one Kiki was wearing.

"Well, it was a good try... witch's costume and all." She commented sarcastically.

The boy winced with pain and hastily pulled off the dress, blushing deeply. He stared at the ground.

"I had a terrible time because of what you did!" Kiki planted the handle of the substitute broom on the ground and stood over him, stamping with exaggerated anger. Actually, she couldn't get really angry. The sight of boy, just as old as she was, wearing a black dress and trying to fly like a witch, was almost unbearably funny.

"I want to apologize. At least a million times," she persevered.

The boy remained silent, and bowed his head. He backed up a step and bent his head again.

"Why did you steal my broom? Most people would have some kind of excuse at a time like this. You don't look like a born thief"

"I'm no thief... I was just doing some... research."

The boy began to pout defensively.

"What do you mean 'research'?" Kiki demanded.

"Don't shout! I'll tell you right now. Actually, me and my friends in the city, we have a Flying Club. It's made up of people trying to figure out ways to fly under our own power. Right now, we're divided into three teams, and we're competing to see who can make the most progress in research. One team is studying shoes for flying, the second is to investigate flying carpets, and the third is to analyze the broom used by witches."

"So, you're in the 'broom team', I suppose." Kiki stared curiously at him, and the boy nodded with embarrassment.

"Today I went to your neighborhood and hung around, and then I heard you and the baker's wife talking about going to the ocean... so I rushed down here too."

Kiki was incredulous, "... you thought you'd just fly on my broom, did you? Well, you can't do anything of the kind! You'll never be able to fly, no matter what broom you get hold of. I can fly," she informed him.

"because I'm a witch. The blood flowing in my veins is different from yours. So there! "

"You mean," he gazed at her with his eyes wide, "it's blood that flies? "

"Oh, come on! That's crazy!" Kiki burst out laughing, but then suddenly stopped and murmured seriously.

"Well, I myself don't really know why I can fly." She gazed up at the sky and then laughed lightly again.

"The broom does have something to do with it, I guess. If you were going to do research, I wish you'd just concentrated on the kinds of brooms that make it easier for witches to fly. What do you mean, leaving me with this impossible thing? It's hopeless."

"You mean it won't do? I made it myself. I tried to make it as much like yours as I could..."

"It gave me a terrible time! It bucks and lunges. It's given me a sore behind, like riding on a bronco. It was really embarrassing, having to fly like that in front of everybody at the beach. Now give me back my broom...give..."

For the first time she began to look around for her broom, and then screamed as she suddenly found it, "Oh, no!" There on the ground lay her mother's venerable broom, the handle broken in two.

"What am I going to do? What will I do?" she wailed, and bending down, picked up the two pieces carefully and hugged them to herself.

"I'm sorry," said the boy, bowing his head.

"It was my mother's... I got it when I left home... It was really easy to fly with..." mourned Kiki, tears pouring down her cheeks.

"I'm really sorry," he said again, in a low voice, and his shoulders drooped miserably.

Finally, Kiki gathered herself together, and realized that no matter how awful it was, what had happened couldn't be reversed.

"Well, I guess it can't be helped." She said in a hoarse voice, working hard to hold back the flood of tears,

"I'll just have to make myself a new one. I've done it before, so I'm pretty sure I can do it again. Of course, it won't be as good as this old one at the beginning, but I'll get it broken in eventually."

"I've done a lot of research on what makes things fly smoothly," said the boy, a bit hesitantly, "There might be something I can do to help."

"Thanks for the thought, but this is a job that has to be left up to a witch," she said, feeling pride at least in that fact.

"I see it's not so easy to fly," said the boy.

"That's right." And finally Kiki looked up and gave the boy a smile,

"But it's pity, too, not to be able to fly at all."

6. Kiki in the Doldrums

The day after the disaster at the seashore, Kiki went to the wood west of the city to cut a branch of horse chestnut and immediately began to make herself a new broom. This time it didn't even occur to her to try to make the broom smart and slender. She chose wood for a broomstick that would make it both flexible, so it could maneuver smoothly through stormy skies, and strong and sturdy. After much thought, she decided to keep the whisk of her mother's old broom and reattach it to the new broomstick.

"I'll have half of mother's broom anyway," she comforted herself. In a way, the accident had given her the perfect chance to make a completely new broom, but there was something about her mother's that had made her feel secure and safe, and she couldn't bring herself to just throw it away. At least she could use the good old reliable whisk.

"Now it's half mine, half Mother's," she told herself.

Sitting quietly nearby with his eyes closed, Jiji opened them slightly to narrow slits to check the progress of the new broom. Seeing what she had decided, he let out a little sigh of relief.

But the new broom was quite rambunctious. Every flight made her dizzy and exhausted. Maybe it was because there hadn't been enough time to let the broomstick dry out properly. Anyway, it would take time to break it in.

The problem was that the whisk from her mother's old broom tended to be more energetic than the brand new stick, so that the rear end picked up speed before the front got going, which would cause Kiki to trip and stumble before she could get aloft. Sometimes she ended up practically standing on her head. But she didn't give up.

Her misfortune had its good side too. Now, with her bucking broom and tumble-down take-offs, the people of the town seemed to care more about her than when she had flown the normal, graceful way.

"Goodness! Are you all right?"

"What's happened to you! Have you caught a cold or something?"

"Have you lost weight?"

"If you're going to fall down out of the sky, be careful how you fall!"

"We're all quite relieved, you know. Watching you fly before, like a black arrow shooting through the sky, we thought there had to be something bad about you."

It had never occurred to Kiki that such bumbling, undignified flying would actually endear her to the people of the town. Certainly her mother hadn't been able to predict such a thing.

One day about ten days after the broom incident, the Witch's Express Delivery telephone rang. On the other end of the line was the girl in the forest dotage who had painted Kiki and Jiji's picture the day of their first job.

"HI! How have you been doing? Are you all right? You know that painting you posed for? Well, I've finally finished it. It's going to appear in an art exhibition, in fact, and I have a favor to ask. Could I get you to carry it over to the gallery? I've heard that you do that kind of job. As you'll remember, it's kind of big, but I hope you'll figure out a way."

Kiki was about to say, "Oh! I'd be glad to!" but stopped herself. Maybe it wouldn't be so easy. She'd never tried to carry a large, flat, and heavy object like a painting, and it didn't sound easy. And what if there was a wind? The broom, too, was still not very reliable.

Kiki remembered once after she'd learned to fly, she'd gone to take an umbrella to her father, the wind had blown the umbrella open and then started spinning the umbrella and Kiki on her broom around in circles like a windmill. She'd never forget how frightened she had been.

Assuming that Kiki would accept the task, the girl went on, "Since it's a painting of you, after all, you should be the one to carry it. I'm counting on you, okay?"

"Well, I guess I can. I'll figure out a way," Kiki couldn't help but answer, but she was worried.

"Great! So will you come and get it tomorrow around noon? I'll be waiting for you. I'll show you the painting then." The girl sounded very happy and excited.

The next morning, the sky was clear and blue, without cloud in sight. But that worried Kiki all the more. When you could see so far up in the sky in the morning, there was sure to be a strong wind blowing up there. And towards noon, those wind currents often shifted downwards. She knew that from experience.

She began to wonder if she could manage all right. It would be awful if something happened to a painting

that meant so much to the girl. Then suddenly she remembered something the boy from the flying club has said, something about how he had done a lot of research on ways to fly smoothly.

Kiki went to borrow the telephone book from Osono and looked up the number of the flying club. When she rang the number, she hesitated at first, and then asked,

"Is there a boy there, studying flying on witches brooms... rather thin and tall?"

"Well, I don't know. Everybody's pretty thin and tall here."

"Oh dear! I don't know his name. Oh, I know. I'm looking for the one with a scrape on his forehead. If the scratches are still there..."

"Oh, yes, the scratches are still there, all right! His nickname is Tombo. It's Japanese for 'dragonfly.' You know, his glasses make him look like a dragonfly. Oh, there he is. Just a moment please."

"Hello. Tombo speaking," came a new voice over the line.

"I'm... this is the witch you met the other day. My name is Kiki."

"Oh, yes! How did you find me? Say, I'm really sorry about the other day. I haven't caused you any more trouble, have I?"

"No. That's all over. But today, I have a problem I need your help with," and Kiki explained about having to carry the painting and asked Tombo what she should do.

"Okay, in that case," said Tombo, grasping the situation immediately. "I think you should use the leash method."

"What do you mean?"

"Why don't you leave it up to me. I think I can help you."

"Oh, thank you! The artist's house is on the edge of the North Park woods, sort of buried in the trees. Do you know it? I'm going over there now."

"Yes, I know the place. Buried like a badger's burrow, right?"

"Yes! Yes, that's the one. So, please come... I'll see you there," Kiki began to giggle as she put down the receiver. Yes, "badger's burrow" was quite apt.

As Jiji and Kiki alighted at the edge of the park, they could see Tombo running toward them carrying a large paper bag.

The girl met them at the door of her cottage. Beaming with pride, she brought out the painting from the room in back.

Kiki let out a little cry of surprise. Jiji simultaneously began to purr loudly. The witch in a black dress and the cat in the painting seemed to be floating in a pitch-black sky.

The black was a shimmering, beautiful color that made Kiki involuntarily check the color of her own dress.

"The eyes are wrong." Tombo, who had been silent until then, was looking critically at the painting.

"What do you mean, 'wrong'?" said the artist with a start, noticing the boy for the first time.

"Well,... Kiki's eyes are rounder and prettier than that."

"Oh, maybe I made a mistake. But I wanted to bring out the feeling of the witch in her..." the artist made a face and peered curiously at him.

Kiki realized she hadn't introduced Tombo. "Oh! This is a friend of mine, Tombo. He's going to think of a way to make it easier to carry the painting."

Tombo didn't say anything more. Pressing his lips together in thought, he examined the painting again and then went to work. From his paper bag he produced a handful of different colored balloons.

"Balloons? Are you going to send off the painting with a balloon?" the girl began to look doubtful and placed her hand protectively on the painting.

"Oh, no! Not that way. We're going to put it on a leash," Tombo still wasn't smiling. From the bag he produced a small tank of helium gas and began to inflate the balloons. He tied a string to each one and bundled them together with a knot. He screwed a ring into the top edge of the picture frame and securely tied the balloons to the ring. Then he looped a rope over the bundle and through the ring screw. The balloons began to rise off the ground, pulling the painting gently into the air. It didn't rise up quickly or sink down again, but floated calmly in mid-air, like an obedient dog on a leash.

"The trick," said Tombo, looking satisfied with his handiwork, "is to get the amount of gas in the balloons and the number of balloons just right for the weight of the painting."

"Now, Kiki, you can hold onto this rope and pull the painting along with you like a dog on a leash," instructed Tombo, "If the wind starts to blow it away

from you, just pull on it firmly, and it will follow you."

"Like a... dog?" the girl gave Kiki a worried look.

Kiki was gazing at the balloons in admiration. Tombo had devised a simple, quick solution she had never thought of.

"It looks like it will work. This will make the painting a lot lighter and it can move freely no matter what direction the wind is coming from. It's a great idea!"

Hearing her praise, Tombo broke out in a smile for the first time.

The leash method proved to be a splendid way to carry the large, heavy painting. When Kiki took off from the ground, guiding the balloon-festooned paintings with the rope, they rose into the air with her. She proceeded slowly, letting the wind blow the painting around and around as they went. People walking below, watching out from their windows and sunning themselves on their rooftops, got a preview, before ever going to the art gallery, of the painting of Kiki and Jiji along with their models in the flesh.

"They're exactly alike! You can hardly tell which is more real!" people murmured.

"What an admirable job! Look at that beautiful black dress and black cat!" The painting became the talk of the town.

At the gallery, too, visitors were constantly gathered in front of "The World's Most Beautiful Black." The girl artist was delighted with her success. She painted a picture of Kiki and Jiji in front of their "office" to express her thanks. But Kiki's reward was actually much greater, because she and her business became known throughout the city of Koriko. It was "advertising" far beyond anything Jiji had imagined.

So Kiki's business became very, very busy. She delivered flowers for people's birthdays, things people had forgotten to bring with them and needed in a hurry, pots of soup for elderly grandmothers living alone, a stethoscope for a doctor on call who had left it in his office. People called on Kiki without the least hesitation. There did turn out to be some people who had the wrong idea. Kiki said she'd carry anything, so there were cases like the schoolboy who wanted her to carry his school bag for him on the way to school or the person who had asked her to deliver an insult. But these requests Kiki naturally turned down.

Finally the hot summer passed and autumn gradually began to change the landscape of the city. Kiki's re-

paired broom was now flying relatively smoothly and her life had settled into a regular routine.

But Kiki herself felt somehow irritable and grouchy. She didn't know why, but she certainly wasn't her usual cheerful self.

Kiki told herself that she had been tense and busy ever since she had come to Koriko; maybe she was just feeling tired. But something else was bothering her, although she couldn't quite put her finger on it.

After she had carried the painting on the leash to the art gallery, Tombo had started coming to visit her quite often. Something he had said on one of those visits kept coming back into her head.

"You're not like all the other girls. Maybe it's because you know how to fly. I can really relax when I talk to you. I don't have to worry about your being a girl; I can tell you anything."

At the time, she knew that Tombo had meant the comment as a compliment, but the more she thought about it, the more it bothered her that he didn't seem to think of her as a girl.

When he saw the painting, Tombo had said she had pretty eyes, but now, she fumed to herself, he says I'm not like the other girls. What makes me so different, she wondered. She couldn't find the answer and it made her cross and restless.

She was on edge today, too. When a slipper disappeared, she complained to Jiji,

"I don't mind your playing with them, but you've got to bring them back here when you're done. How many times have you done that?" she said peevishly, "There's not a single pair left!"

Jiji just pretended he hadn't heard her, yawning ostentatiously.

Then the telephone rang. Hopping on one slippered-foot, Kiki went across the room to answer it.

"Hello? Is this the witchery?" asked a cheerful voice on the other end of the line.

"Well,... I suppose...," Kiki hesitated at the unfamiliar question, but she was in too bad a mood to protest.

"I hear that you'll do anything. There's something I'd like you to deliver.

"All right." said Kiki listlessly.

"But you see, it's biscuits. My elder sister is Daisy. Now, my name is Violet. You know, a name like Violet just doesn't seem right for an old woman like me!" she tittered disconnectedly.

Feeling impatient, Kiki cleared her throat. What was

she trying to say?

"Now, I want you to come here first. My house is on Willow Lane. Do you know that street? It's way out at the end. Number 99. Have you got that, ninety-nine, nine nine?"

"Yes, I understand. I'll be right over," Kiki almost snapped into the phone, and without asking anything more, she hung up. The call had simply ticked her off all the more, and in a burst of energy she hurled the slipper she'd been scuffing along the floor smack into the opposite corner of the room.

Kiki found Number 99 Willow Lane very easily. When she pulled the rope hanging at the side of the door, there was a jangling sound, and then a voice from behind the house called, "Come in back here, please!"

Kiki went along gate standing open. In the garden beyond stood a robust woman with her sleeves rolled up, washing clothes.

There was a line of four large basins, one filled with white clothes, another with black, another with blue clothes and yet another with only red clothes. Soap suds from her scrubbing shone in the sunlight and frothed into the air as if they were somehow alive. The suds in the basin of whites glistened white, in the basin of blacks shone black, in the basin of blues sparkled blue, and in the basin of reds rose up red.

"Are you Violet, ma'am?" called out Kiki as she entered the gate.

The old woman, absorbed with her washing, nodded her head, the slightly graying locks of her short hair rollicking with the rhythm of her scrubbing. Round beads of sweat stood out over her forehead.

"I'm the Witch's Express Delivery."

Violet quickly wiped her hands on her apron and looked up at Kiki.

"I thought you were in the "witching" business?"

"Well, in a way... but now I just make deliveries."

"Oh, I see. I heard you were a witch, and I thought you did just about anything. And if you were going to handle every sort of thing like that, my own business would dry up! I'm glad to hear that... you just do deliveries."

"You know, I offer a rather unusual service, too," she chuckled with pride, "I'm what you would call a "make-doer." When people can't manage the ordinary way, I find a way to "make do" for them. Isn't that rather like what you're doing?"

Violet seemed quite amused with the name she'd

given her business and kept chuckling to herself.

"But it's a wonderful help you're giving, really," she went on, turning back to her laundry and starting to scrub the clothes again. "My sister, she's such a stubborn one. If I tell her I'm going to bring her something today, it absolutely has to be today. She won't let me change anything. Now, just wait a minute. I'm going to finish this wash. Scrub-a-dub, scrub-a-dub." Violet began to sing energetically as she rubbed soap on a white shirt and scrubbed it on the washboard standing in the washbasin.

"Instead of having to be constantly taking things over there, I'd just as soon move in with my sister. But she says she prefers the freedom of living alone. One more time!

Scrub-a-dub! Snap, flap, pang!" she kept time, then went on, "Besides, she can't even bake biscuits."

"Scrub-a-dub. Every week, I take her something and we sit down and chit-chat. You know, we have only each other left, we two sisters. Here we go!" she interrupted herself again, "Scrub-a-dub, a-dub. Snap, flap, pang. What's this dirt! Pretty stubborn spot there. One more time, scrub-a-dub."

Violet continued, "But today, I have all this work, and really, I just don't have time to go and see her..."

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting." Violet looked up at Kiki again, her stout arms moving incessantly. "You know, it's been raining these past few days, and the laundry work really piled up. My customers have started calling asking where their clean laundry is, and I've got to get it done as fast as I can. Scrub-a-dub, snap, flap, pang."

"Are you going to wash all that?" asked Kiki with amazement, gazing at the piles.

"Well, of course. What's wrong? Of course!"

"By hand?"

"That's right. I don't have a washing machine, you see. I'm a "make-doer," after all, so I make do with what I haven't got by using my hands!" she explained cheerfully.

And indeed, Violet's hands were working as efficiently as any washing machine as she chattered away. Kiki watched with fascination. Spreading a piece of wash on the washboard, she rubbed the bar of soap over it once firmly, scrubbed it vigorously on the board, then, holding it on two sides with both hands, she snapped it and flapped it out with a sharp panging sound to knock out the wrinkles, then held it up to see whether

it had gotten clean or not.

"A scrub-scrub-scrub and a' snap, flap, pang!"

"A scrub-scrub-scrub and a' snap, flap, pang!" Violet hummed under her breath, keeping time with the rhythm of her motions. Soap suds foamed up and bubbles floated off into the air.

Before her very eyes, Madame Make-doer went through the basin of whites, the basin of blacks, of blues, and reds. Then, stretching a hose to the basins, she began to repeat the process, rinsing and snapping out the clothes with the running water.

Kiki became totally absorbed in watching the industrious washerwoman.

She completely forgot that she had come here on business.

Finally, all the laundry was done, wrung out in twists that filled the clothes basket in a huge mountain. At the bottom of the pile were the whites, next the blacks, then the blue and reds. Violet stood up, put her hands on her hips, looked up at the sky and took a deep breath,

"All right. Let 's hang them up to dry."

Violet brought over a length of hemp rope and taking hold of the end, thought for a moment, then said to Kiki, who stood nearby holding Jiji and her broom.

"Sorry to bother you, but would you mind holding that end of the rope? I'll hang the laundry on it. With all this wash, it'll have to be a very long rope..."

Even before Kiki could answer, she was handed the rope and violet began to hang up the wash, beginning with a red ribbon from the top of the pile.

"Start with the small things, then bigger, and bigger," sang Violet with a rhythmic cadence, as she chose a pair of baby's socks, baby dress, a little girl's blouse, pinning them all neatly on the line. With each piece she added, Kiki moved a little further away. The line grew heavy and began to sag.

"Watch out, it's going to drag on the ground!" Kiki held the rope high over her head and jumped up in the air.

"Hold it up higher. Oh! What will we do! How about if you were to get on your broom?" suggested Violet, gesturing upward.

"Oh, yes. That's a good idea." Kiki nodded, got astride her broom, and floated up to the height of the eaves. Violet bent down again toward the basket and began to pull out the blue laundry.

"Start with the small things, then bigger, and bigger,"

she hung up a lady's handkerchief, a boy's hat, a man's underpants, a girl's swimming suit, a man's shirt, a blue curtain, a sky blue sheet, all lined up on the line, and then she started on the black things.

When the laundry seemed about to touch the ground again, Kiki rose up higher over the rooftop. Wiping the sweat from her brow, Violet hung up one piece of laundry after another: a man's pair of socks, boys trousers, a woman's skirt, and a lady's dress, all evenly lined up, and then the white things. Baby's gloves, bibs, underpants, shirts, and dresses, from little things to big, a woman's slip, a man's long-johns, and lastly five bed sheets.

"Finally! That's all!" said Violet, with relief, as she tied the lower end of the rope to the fence nearby.

"What shall I do with this?" shouted out Kiki, waving her end of the rope from far up over the roof.

"Oh, my goodness! What shall we do?"

Glancing upwards, Violet raised her arms in surprise.

"Well, maybe you can just find some place to tie it to up there."

"There's no place to tie it up here!" Kiki shouted back. How could she say such a thing? wondered Kiki incredulously. Did Violet believe in sky hooks or something? She guess that if there was going to be a sky hook, it would have to be Kiki herself. If she were to let go of the line, Violet would have to do all that wash all over again. So Kiki resigned herself to the job of anchoring the clothesline in the sky. Gathering her strength, she hauled on the line and secured it around her waist.

"Wow!" exclaimed Jiji, from the tail of the broom, watching the long string of laundry swaying below them like a string of banners, "We have a tremendous long tail!"

"Splendid!" exclaimed Violet from below, clapping her hands and jumping with glee, "Looks like the banners at a track meet! Ready, set, go! Faster, faster, go, go!" she cheered.

In the streets below, people gazed at the sight with startle faces.

Children started to gather, exclaiming, "Look! It's like chain!"

"Oh, come on!" thought Kiki, making a face. But the tense, sullen line of her lips was slowly curving in a smile, the kind of smile she made when she was really enjoying herself.

"Guess there's nothing to do but get these clothes

dry as quickly as possible."

Kiki began to fly slowly in a circle over the spot where Violet stood. Flying with the wind in her face, Kiki could feel the breeze blowing away the heavy, gloomy, feelings that had made her so peevish.

Kiki began to sing the tune she had just learned from Violet, "Scrub-a-dub-dub, snap, flap, pang!" And from the clothesline below her, she could hear the laundry accompanying her with a melody of its own: "Snap, snap, pang! Flap, flap, flang! Flutter, flutter!"

The warm sun quickly dried the laundry floating in the clear sky of early autumn. The heavy sound of damp flapping turned into the sharper sound of dry snapping.

"Thank you!" Violet's voice floated up from below as she began to draw in the clothesline. One by one she took down the wash, and as she went, Kiki spiraled gradually downward. First the whites came down, then the blacks, then the blues, then the reds, were piles up in the clothes basket in colorful layers, and at last Kiki's feet touched back down on the ground.

"Look how quickly it dried! This is wonderful! You're a lifesaver!"

"So that's how a 'make-do' professional manages! I get it now: To save time, you "make do" with me, in place of an ordinary clothesline," said Kiki, laughing.

Making a sheepish face, Violet admitted her strategy, "That's right. That's the way a 'make-doer' makes do! If it works it makes you glad. If it fails, it makes you sad." She rhymed in a sing-song voice. Picking up the huge basket of laundry, she carried it into the house.

Following after her, Kiki found the house full of unusual things. The front door was made up of an upper door and a lower door. You could show just your head, or just your feet.

"The door was broken, so I "made do" with two smaller doors, explained Violet.

Now, from inside, Kiki could see that the rope that hung by the front door was attached to a bundle of strings from which dangled an odd assortment of walnut shells, nails, and spoons.

"That's my substitute for a doorbell," commented Violet, "Remember what a nice sound it made when you pulled the rope?"

So that's what was jangling, thought Kiki. And there was a large black boot stuffed full of fluffy-headed miscanthus grass.

"And there you have a 'make-do' for a vase. Not bad,

wouldn't you say?" Fine crinkles burst out around Violet's eyes when she grinned.

"Oh, my goodness. I enjoyed that so much I completely forgot I was going to have you take the biscuits to my sister, wasn't I!?" Violet pursed her lips sheepishly, and brought two paper bags from the kitchen. So at last comes the job I came here to do, thought Kiki.

"My sister lives on Beech Tree Lane in the tenement house with the steepled roof. And, here, here's a bag of biscuits for you too, by way of payment. I call these 'Stardust Biscuits.' I made a mistake in baking and they came out all broken apart. I hope you won't mind if we 'make do' with a pretty name instead!" apologized Violet brightly.

Kiki was very happy to have the biscuits.

When Kiki arrived at the steepled apartment house on Beech Tree lane with the biscuits, Violet's sister Daisy sputtered crossly, "Good gracious! How extravagant, to have someone else do one's errands instead of coming yourself! I'll have to have a word with that girl!" but when she peered into the bag, Kiki could see that she was really glad to have the biscuits.

That night, Kiki's office echoed with the refrain of Violet's cheerful song.

That's the way a "make-doer" makes do!

If it works it makes you glad.

If it fails, it makes you sad.

Kiki and Jiji sang it as they gazed at all the stray slippers, but they couldn't think of any way to "make do" for lost slippers.

7. Kiki Share a Secret

"Knock, knock!"

Kiki was on the second floor when there came a knock at the door of the shop. As she hurried down the steps, she could see a girl in a pink sweater standing there. She had sweet-looking face framed by brown ringlets and wore shining white knee-high boots. It seemed to Kiki for a moment that she stood in a kind of aura.

"Oh! Hello... there... May, may... I help you?" for some reason, Kiki felt so flustered she tripped over her words. This was the first time she'd had a customer about her own age.

The sight of Kiki, too, seemed to stop the girl in her tracks, and she drew her breath and looked down at the floor.

"I'm... I want..." she stuttered like Kiki had.

"You have something you want delivered?" suggested Kiki, beginning to regain her composure.

"I heard that the delivery service would carry anything. Are... you, the one who does the deliveries?"

She didn't seem to believe that Kiki was the "witch's delivery service."

"Yes. It's me. I can take care of it."

"Really?"

The girl nodded, and then, flashing her black eyes, her attitude changed dramatically. She began to bat her eyelashes slowly, as if trying to impress kiki with her grown-up airs.

"What I want you to deliver," she said, pausing for effect, "actually it's... kind of secret."

"A secret?" Kiki frowned, puzzled.

"Oh! There's nothing bad about it," insisted the girl, glancing down her nose haughtily and then sideways at Kiki. She lifted one arm and leaned languidly against the door post. At the collar of her sweater, the light sparkled on a slender silver broach.

"I want you to take a present to my friend, Lamor. It's his birthday today. He turned 14. Isn't that something?" She boasted, as if she had invented the boy's birthday herself. Kiki wondered why the girl was making such a mystery of things. She started to feel very irritated and sharp words rose to the tip of her tongue, but the girl kept on talking,

"But I don't want you to tell him it's a present from me."

"Really! But why?"

Kiki couldn't help the teasing tone in her voice.

"It just has to be that way. You see, I've known Lamor since I was a little girl. But he doesn't think of me as anything but just another little girl. Even though I'm thirteen already..."

"Is that the reason you're keeping it a secret? Seems strange..."

The girl looked up at Kiki, and a proud smile flickered over her face.

"What? You don't understand? Don't you know what it's like to feel like this?"

Now Kiki began to feel really irritated, "I don't suppose you've got some weird present in mind - with a frog that jumps out when you open it or something - I

don't take jobs like that!"

"Ha! ha! What do you think I am?" said the girl in a low, grown-up voice, and then she smiled grandly again,

"I heard you were a witch, but you don't know anything, do you! Just because I'm about the same age as you... What makes you think I'd do anything so silly?"

"How should I..." Growing very angry, Kiki glared at the girl, but her customer was unruffled. She just flipped her curls and then put her hand into her skirt pocket.

"I save up my allowance and bought a matching set of fountain pens, one for me, one for Lamor. See!" and she held out a gleaming silver pen. Then she lifted on side of her collar, revealing its pair clipped underneath. What Kiki had thought to be a brooch was actually the clip of the fountain pen.

"Having matching pens like his means," she said proudly, squaring her shoulders, "that we're never apart. It's the fashion now, you know."

Kiki had intended to simply say, "Oh! I see." This girl was a customer, and all she had to do was deliver the present. But when she opened her mouth to speak, she heard herself saying,

"But how does that make it a pair? This fellow Lamor won't even know the pen is a present from you?"

"That's right. All that matters is that I know."

Kiki had sounded cruel and unsympathetic, but the girl didn't seem to have heard her at all. She just kept gazing off dreamily into space.

"It's a nice gift. Don't you think you should give it to him yourself? It won't be that hard," said Kiki, a bit too insistently.

"But I just can't. I'd be so embarrassed!"

The girl batted her eyelashes slowly and deliberately. To Kiki, it seemed as if she actually relished the embarrassment. They may have been the same age, but to Kiki, the girl seemed far more grown up, and the thought came to her as an unexpected blow, as if she had been shoed in the chest.

But still she remarked offhandedly, "Seems strange to me, to get all tense over such a thing."

"Hey! Don't you know how it feels?" Smiling slightly, the girl looked as if she felt sorry for Kiki.

Kiki didn't want to admit defeat yet, and retorted,

"You're really worried about how Lamor will react, aren't you? That he might reject you? Even I can im-

agine how that would be."

"Oh, I don't have to worry about that. I just don't want to be obvious. I want to keep it all a secret," she said, giggling shyly.

Kiki took another good look at the girl. She realized with surprise that there were some pretty complicated feelings swirling around under that pretty pink sweater. Is this what "ordinary girls" are mostly like? she began to wonder, remembering what Tombo had said to her. Do you suppose that's why I don't seem like a girl, she wondered. But the girl kept on talking.

"Don't you know? That's what boys are like. When they only know half of something, they can't wait until they find out the other half. So, I'm going to make Lamor look for me.

"Make him figure out who sent the present, you mean?"

"That's right!"

"What will you do if he doesn't try to find you?"

"But he will. You can count on it!" The girl was really getting at, so talking about it any more was a waster of time. Now, she just wanted to get on with her job.

"Yes, please. And, I want you to take this too..." the girl plunged her hand into her pocket and drew out a small golden envelope.

"A letter, right?"

"Yes, well, it's just a poem."

"Oh! a poem," said Kiki thoughtfully.

"Yes, I wrote it myself. When you give a boy a gift, you've got to write a poem to go with it. Didn't you know that?"

No wanting the girl to get the upper hand again, Kiki hastily asked,

"So, what is his address?"

"On Dogwood Street on the other side of the Big River, on the west side of the zoo, at Number 38. But in the afternoon, he's usually in the park nearby practicing tennis by himself.

"And what is your name?"

"My name is a secret. I live on Nutmeg Street, the next street over from Dogwood Street."

"If you're that close, it would be so easy to take it yourself..." Kiki found herself saying.

"But..."

"Okay, okay. I understand," Kiki hastily backed off.

"And if you should meet me somewhere in town, by the way, you mustn't let on that you know me," said the girl, and then, "Oh, and then, what about your

payment?"

Kiki wavered for a moment, and then said,

"Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to know how it all comes out in the end. Could you just let me know?"

As she spoke, Kiki thought to herself that it would be interesting if the boy turned not to be interested in searching for the girl.

"You want to know whether Lamor tries to find out who I am, don't you?" guessed the girl, "You're an inquisitive one, aren't you? Well, that's okay by me. I'll be happy to tell you." The girl seemed absolutely sure of herself.

"In that case, I don't need any payment," said Kiki.

"Really? That's all you want?"

"Well,..." Kiki was about to try to explain, but the girl cut in gleefully,

"I get it! This is what you call 'research' about boys! Right? I bet I'm right!"

Acting the part of the elder, more experienced sister, the girl nodded knowingly, Bested again, KIKI wrinkled her nose, muttering under her breath so the girl wouldn't hear her, "Who needs it!"

After the girl left, Kiki stood in front of the mirror. She ran her brush through her hair, arranged the collar of the dress in a fashionable curve, and began posing like an elegant lady, pretending to act all grown up like the girl in the pink sweater had.

"What would happen," she paused dramatically, "if this Lamor guy starts to think that I am the girl who gave him the present? What shall I do?" she sighed mockingly.

Sitting nearby, Jiji rolled over in exaggerated disbelief. It was highly unlikely.

"Girls! They're so simple minded!" he said dourly, yawning, "You're hopeless."

"Well, does that mean you're not coming with me?"

Kiki put the pen and the letter in her pocket and patted it closed. Jiji stretched and rose to join her.

Kiki and Jiji took off from in front of the shop. The wind, which had lately grown quite chilly, was strong in their faces. Looking down at the town below, they could see that autumn was well on its way. The ginkgo trees that filled the streets of the town shone in golden glory, and now and then, a stray leaf, swept by the wind, would swirl up to where Kiki flew and paste itself on her bosom.

"Hey! Kiki! Why are you going so slow today," called Jiji from the rear, "You're going around in circles, you know."

"Oh! Was I!" Kiki had been lost in thought. She shook herself and checked the landscape below. Ever since the girl left, Kiki hadn't been able to get the letter - and the poem it contained - out of her mind.

When Kiki was very little, she had once written a poem that went something like this:

Sneakers snicker

Chocolates chuckle

Little girls giggle

She had never had anything to do with poetry before or after that one verse.

She knew, of course, that the poem in the envelope she was carrying was nothing so childish. She was consumed with curiosity to know what kind of poem it was that a girl was supposed to write to a boy. She thought that since the girl had been very pretty and acted so grown-up, it must be a very impressive poem. The more she thought about it, the more giddy with imagining she became. As well as she knew that it was wrong to read other people's letters, the more she wished the letter would jump out of her pocket and blow up into gigantic size and spread itself out before her.

"Jiji, I'd like to take a rest," said Kiki, coming back to reality, "Let's go down to that riverbank there for a minute."

"Hey, we only just took off," protested Jiji.

"Well... it's such a beautiful fall." Murmuring a totally irrelevant answer, Kiki steered in a very large arc like a hawk banking in the sky, and began to descend.

Her feet touched down in the long park that stretched between the river and its steep embankment.

No one was around. The swings in a playground were swaying by themselves in the wind. At the edge of the park she could see the steely blue current of the Big River, whitecaps showing here and there as the wind whipped at its surface.

"Jiji, you can go off and play if you want, just for a little while."

Kiki stood the broom against a ginkgo tree shedding its leaves in a golden carpet and sat down at the leaf-strewn foot of the trunk.

"No. I'd rather stay here. It's cold, so I hope you finish enjoying "the beautiful fall" as quickly as possible.

"Oh, Jiji. Come on!" How could she get him to leave her alone?

"Why don't you go for a walk," she urged again, "Look, your friends, the kitty-teaser grasses are all over the place there by the riverbank."

"Are you trying to tell me I'm in the way?" asked Jiji, narrowing his eyes.

"Well, actually, yes. You're in the way!" said Kiki making a funny face and combing her wind-tangled hair back from her forehead with her fingers.

"Ah! You're keeping a secret from me, aren't you?" accused Jiji.

"Yes. Oh, dear! Is it really so wrong?" Kiki sighed perplexedly. "Well, it's not like I'm going to break something, or lose it, get it dirty or something, right? I'd just take a peek, right? Just for a glimpse," she seemed to be trying to convince herself. "Oh well! I'll go ahead and read it!"

"Hey, Kiki! What have you been talking to yourself about, anyway?" said Jiji suspiciously.

"Jiji, now you mustn't get angry. I, well, I just have to read that girl's poem. I know it's wrong, but I really want to see it. And you could say it's something I have to know about as part as of my becoming a grown-up witch," she finished lamely, watching to see how Jiji would react.

"Do you really have to make all those excuses. If you want to read it, just read it! You mean the poem by that stuck-up girl in the boots, right?" Jiji encouraged her without a moment's hesitation. "But, listen, I have to learn the same things, so read it so I can hear it, too."

"Oh! Jiji!" laughed Kiki.

So she sat down and took the envelope out of her pocket. On the front of the golden envelope was an embossed picture of a bouquet of flowers.

"I hope it opens easily," said Kiki worriedly.

Holding the envelope at the edges, she bent them back gently, and much to her relief, the glue separated easily, leaving the envelope open. Inside was a piece of paper the same color as the envelope, folded in half. The poem was written in plump, round letters. Kiki began to read in a low voice:

Happy Birthday! Congratulations!
I want to tell you myself,

But, somehow, I feel shy.

Happy Birthday! Congratulations!

I want to look into your eyes when I say it,

But, somehow, I feel shy.

I want to give you this gift,

To put it into your hand myself,

But, somehow, I feel shy.

I'm full of glad wishes for you,

But, somehow, I feel shy.

"Well!" snorted jiji, "What's a all this "Feeling shy" business! Sounds like a scaredy-cat cat."

Kiki put the letter on her Knees drawn up under her skirt. Jiji poked his nose in again to get another look and said, "Do you really think that girl wrote that poem? Somehow it doesn't seem to fit that girl. She acted so sure of herself."

Kiki shook her head in agreement. "Well, better put this away and get it delivered."

Just as Kiki, holding the envelope in one hand, was about pick up the letter with the other, a gust of wind caught her skirt. The letter slipped out of her hand and whirled up into the air. It happened so suddenly, Kiki wasn't prepared. She began to run after the litter as it dipped and sailed through the air. Every time she reached up to catch it, it flitted out of reach again. Joining the swirl of golden ginkgo leaves in the wind, it seemed to be trying to play a game with her. Kiki ran, hand stretched out, faltered as she missed the letter, and kept on running.

"Kiki! Get the broom! The broom!" shouted Jiji.

Kiki ran back to get the broom, but on the way she tripped over a stubble of grass and fell down.

"Oh! no! it fell in the river." Just as Kiki finally got to her feet, she saw the golden letter fall into the water of the river and glimpsed it being swept along in the rapid current.

"Oh! oh! oh!" her voice trailed after the disappearing letter, but her feet wouldn't get going. By the time Kiki had started to run along the riverbank, the letter had been carried away on the current and was nowhere to be seen.

"Now what am I going to do?" Stunned, Kiki came to a standstill.

"This time, it's not my fault," said Jiji from behind her.

"That's what I get for reading somebody else's mail. I deserved it," sighed Kiki, slumping miserably.

"I guess I'll just have to go and apologize to her."

"Well, you could deliver the message verbally..." Jiji tried his best to sound cheerful.

"I don't think that would be a good idea. I think I know how that girl feels, and I wouldn't want another person to deliver that message verbally in my place."

"Okay, then why don't you write the poem on one of those ginkgo leaves? I remember the verses pretty well."

"Hmm. That's an idea. He won't know who the letter's from anyway."

"It'll be a cinch."

"Let's see, it started with " Happy Birthday! Congratulations!" All right.

... All right, we'll do it that way. Jiji, will you help me?" Kiki began to search around for the biggest ginkgo leaf she could find, and then sat down under the tree again. She took the fountain pen that was to be a present to the boy put of her pocket, removed the cap, and began to write.

"First come 'Happy Birthday!...'," Kiki wrote that down, "And then it went, 'I want to speak up myself:'"

"That's right, and then 'But someday I feel shy,'" declared Jiji.

"No! no! Not 'someday' - it's 'anyhow.' And next was... 'I want to look you in the eye' ... and then again, 'But, anyhow, I feel shy.'"

"That can't be what you call such a good poem," remarked Jiji, "Always going back to the same words like that."

"You think so? But, I thought it sounded pretty good when I first read it... Now, the next part was about the gift."

"About the fountain pen," put in Jiji.

Kiki gazed at the pen she was holding in her hand.

"It certainly is a good pen. It's really easy to write with. So, after that comes, "A gift of a matching silver fountain pen," Kiki was gazing up at the sky thinking hard.

Jiji looked at her, "Hey, I don't remember anything about 'silver' in it."

"But, I've already written it down. But it is silver, so that'll do. Now, next, it went 'To put into your hands myself,' - This part I liked, so I remember it really well. And then, 'But, anyhow, I feel shy' again."

"Goodness, do you think it was that again? Was it repeated that many times?"

"No, it was different. Oh, yes, it was 'But, anyhow, I still play hide and seek.'"

"Oh, yes, that's right. And then I remember quite well 'I'm full of glad wishes for you, but anyway I play hide and seek.' There! We've got the whole thing. I've got it all written down." Kiki sighed with relief. Pushing his nose in to get a better look at the verses written on the leaves, Jiji nodded approvingly, "Well done! Well done!"

The verses Kiki and Jiji produced went as follows:

Happy Birthday! Congratulations!

I want to speak up myself,

But, anyway, I feel shy.

Happy Birthday! Congratulations!

I want to look you in the eye when I say it,

But, anyhow, I feel shy.

A gift of a matching silver fountain pen,

To put into your hands myself,

But, anyhow, I play hide and seek.

I'm full of glad wished for you,

But anyhow, I play hide and seek.

Kiki and Jiji took off on the broom and continued on their way. Crossing the Big River, they circled wide around the high-rise buildings of the city.

When the crowds gathered at the zoo came into view, Kiki began a gentle descent.

Kiki could see the playing field halfway up Dogwood Street. On the dried-out lawn, a boy was practicing tennis volleys against a concrete wall.

"There he is," sed Kiki, pointing the handle of the broom downward.

They landed in a corner of the field, and Kiki walked up to him.

"Excuse me, I believe your name is Lamor. Congratulations on your birthday!" said Kiki.

"What? Are you talking about me? How do you know so much?" Caught by surprise, the boy's black eyes stared in amazement from his sun-tanned face.

"You've turned 14, right? But the one who really knows you well is a certain girl. I'm just a messenger," said Kiki tantalizingly.

"A girl? Who? Who are you talking about?"

"Yes. Who do you suppose it is? She lives in this neighborhood. There's a present from her."

Kiki drew the pen and the envelope out of her pocket and held them out to him.

"Wow! This is beautiful! It's shiny and bright like rocket." The boy held the pen up and flipped it

around, enjoying the silver gleam, and then he deftly slipped it into his shirt and clipped it to his collar.

"Oh! Exactly alike!" exclaimed Kiki impulsively, pointing to the boy's collar.

"I wonder if his name is written in this letter," said the boy, turning his attention to the envelope. Then suddenly Kiki remembered the ginkgo leaf.

"Wait! Well, if it's all right then, I'll be gone now," she said hastily, and flushing with embarrassment, she began to walk rapidly away.

"Hey! Just who is she, anyway? Hey! Tell me!" The boy's voice followed her. Not turning around, Kiki shook her head and shouted,

"I promised not to tell you."

He does seem to want to know who she is, after all, thought Kiki to herself, remembering the shining, expectant face of the girl in the pink sweater.

Three days later, the girl blew into Kiki's office like an autumn leaf driven by the wind. Kiki felt very bad about having lost the letter, so she just stood there, looking down, afraid of what might happen. But the girl's voice sang out,

"Here I am again!" she said, whirling around on one foot, her white boots sparkling in the sun.

"I wanted to tell you - Lamor did find me! He said, that present was from you, right?"

"Oh! I'm glad!" Kiki's voice sounded more cheerful than she felt.

"But it's odd, you know. Lamor said something strange. He said, 'That ginkgo leaf. Pretty original! What a neat idea.' Maybe when you were flying along, a leaf blowing in the wind got caught in the envelope. Whatever, it doesn't matter. He figured out it was me! Not from the leaf mind you, but because of the fountain pen. Because, like this, it was the same."

The girl pointed to her collar where the pen was clipped and smiled happily.

Now, seeing the girl looking so elated at the outcome of her scheme, Kiki's resistance to the whole idea vanished completely, and she found herself feeling just as delighted as the girl. And then Kiki decided that she would tell her what had really happened.

"You know, I have to tell you the truth..." she began.

But at the same time, the girl blurted out,

"Really, I have to confess you..."

"Oh!" they both said, looking at each other.

"Oh, you go first!" said the girl.

"I did something very bad," said Kiki, looking at the floor. And then she explained everything, about how she had read the poem, how the wind had blown the letter away, and how she had written the poem down from memory on the fallen leaves and delivered it to Lamor like that.

The girl let out a little cry of disappointment.

"I'm so sorry." Kiki hastened to say, "But I think I wrote down the poem almost exactly as you had it. When you came here first, I saw you were just about the same age as I, but you are so pretty and you seemed to know about everything, ... so I wondered what kind of things a girl like you would write about. ... I couldn't keep myself from... oh! I hope you'll forgive me!"

"Well, I thought the same thing about you," said the girl, "I really wasn't all that sure that Lamor would really look for me. If you'd told him my name, he might have just said, 'Oh. Her,' and never paid any attention. But when I came here, you seemed so very grown-up, even though we're the same age, that I didn't want to let you get ahead of me, and that made me act like a braggart. I'm sorry. You and I are probably a lot alike, you know. I bet we'd make good friends."

As she had done before, the girl batted her lovely eyelashes and smiled. Kiki smiled back and then she said in a serious tone,

"My name is Kiki, I hope you'll call me that."

"My name is Mimi. Now it's not a secret any more!" And they laughed together happily.

8. Kiki To the Captain's Rescue

The chill of late autumn set in, and cold winds blew day after day.

The leaves of the trees along the streets had long since dried up and blown away. The color of the town through the window of Kiki's office had turned from green, to gold and yellow, and was now a dry, pale beige.

When the wind blew, glancing off the corners of the buildings, it seemed to pierce like a knife. It would suddenly stop, the air becoming very still, and then abruptly start blowing again. The sudden gusts made the thin-walled flour storehouse where Kiki had her office moan and creak.

Listening to the sound of the wind, Kiki began to

think of home. It was colder in the hills, and there, winter came all at once. By now the first snow might already have fallen. One day the wind would grow cold and before you knew it, the northern mountains would be covered with what looked like a white lace handkerchief. The white lace would gradually extend down the hills until snow had completely enveloped the town. Back in the hills, the harbinger of winter was not the sound of the wind, but the whiteness of the first-fallen snows.

Kiki remembered the day of the first winter after she had learned to fly. Kokiri had taught her tricks of flying when the ground was covered with snow. The whole landscape turns white, she warned Kiki, and the dazzling light from the snow can be blinding. And then she had taught Kiki how to recognize the buildings of the town from above by their shapes: the bun-shaped lump was the roof of the fire look-out tower, the stair-step roof was the library, and the square shape was the gymnasium.

Sitting in her office, Kiki pulled her sleeves down over her hands, trying to keep warm.

"Witches are supposed to be tough against the cold," she shivered, "But this chill cuts right through you."

"That's what you get," said Jiji cheekily, "for just sitting here, doing nothing." He himself was snuggled tightly in a ball in Kiki's lap.

Maybe the cold made people want to keep to themselves. Or maybe they just didn't want any extra bother. Kiki's business had slowed to a trickle.

What I'd really like to do now, she was thinking, is wrap myself in a blanket and chit-chat with Kokiri over a nice cup of saffron tea. As she remembered the fragrance of thick, yellow tea, Kiki felt how much she missed her mother.

"I wonder when you plant saffron?" Kiki murmured, mostly to herself. She was beginning to regret that she had not gotten her mother to teach her more about the herbs and medicinal plants she planted and harvested each year. How was it that she made the red-pepper poultice? Did she boil the peppers or roast them? What was it she put in the vegetable soup she made whenever I got a stomachache? What was it?

Trying to remember the things she had always watched Kokiri doing, Kiki realized that she couldn't remember a single one very clearly. Why didn't I pay

any more attention to what Mother and Father were doing? Seems very strange, now that I think about it.

Grimacing ruefully, she closed her eyes for a moment.

Suddenly there was a gust of wind, and when Kiki looked around, she could see that the front door had been opened a crack. Two pair of eyes stared through the crack and there were the sound of voices.

"Look! They say a witch cat's eyes glow green like flashlights when it gets cold, but that's all wrong. See, they're just like an ordinary cat's."

"What? What? Let me see. Oh! You're right. Then, maybe it breathes fire. You know, the boy next door told me you can start a fire with a witch's cat. Let's get a better look!"

Jiji looked up at Kiki and then gazed at the door, glaring with big, round eyes, and then opened his mouth, showing his teeth, and let out a fearful hiss.

"Eek!" came the voices and the door slammed shut.

"Did you see that?" said a small voice.

"Yeah. But there weren't any sparks," said another voice.

"And its eyes didn't shine like flashlights."

"They didn't even glimmer."

"It's just a black cat, after all."

And then the patter of small children's feet faded down the street.

"Isn't that too bad, I'm just a plain black cat!" complained Jiji with exasperation, "I'm getting really tired of those neighbor kids peeking in on us like that." In a moment he was curled up again in Kiki's warm lap.

"It's a rough life being so popular, isn't ol' Jiji?" teased Kiki, batting her eyelashes at her cat saucily. "Maybe you should just take advantage of it. You know, go for the really 'far out' look. Dye your fur red. Wear sunglasses. You'd be a real hit."

Jiji gave Kiki one scathing look and then decided to ignore her.

The telephone rang.

"Well, you don't suppose it's work, do you?" said Kiki, picking up the telephone.

The voice on the other end of the line spoke very slowly, with pauses between words.

"Is this... the Witch's ... Express? Well, I... have ... a favor... to ask. I'm... the grandmother... of this... house. Oh! Just... wait... a minute... please. The receiver ... under my chin... is about to fall. You see... I'm very busy... knitting... Both hands... are full... I'm Granny..."

on Jellybean Tree Lane... at No.4... Please... come..."

"All right... I understand... I'll be right... over," Kiki found the old lady's jerky cadence infectious.

Kiki and Jiji flew over to what the old woman had called Number 4 on Jellybean Tree Lane, and found it was a house on the edge of a small branch of the Big River. It was a tiny house with a tiny sky-blue painted wharf on the water's edge. Inside, there was a tiny old woman, perched on a big wooden chair knitting at lightning speed.

"Could you... please... just wait... a minute... I'm... nearly... finished knitting... this belly band." the old woman said slowly, matching her words with the timing of her needle.

"I said... to my son... I was... almost... finished, ... he should wait... but he just left... anyway. Said he... didn't need... such a thing. Said... it was... silly. That child! ... He's still... rebelling... There... it's done!"

Cutting the thread with the scissors, the old woman twisted her head and shoulders this way and that, "Goodness! That was exhausting!" And then, catching Kiki's eye, she began to talk at normal speed.

"Now, Miss Express Delivery Girl, how is your tummy?"

"Oh, thank you, I just had something to eat, so I'm not hungry."

Kiki stood on her tiptoes and energetically stretched tall to show how good she felt.

"No, no! I don't mean that, I'm asking if your stomach doesn't hurt."

"Not at all. I'm feeling very fine. I can go as far as you need me to," said Kiki again, earnestly.

"It's exactly when you're feeling fine like that that you're really got to be careful," warned the Granny with concern, "You mustn't let your tummy take a chill. The only way to keep healthy is to keep it warm at all times. Nothing's more important than taking good care of your tummy. I'm telling you. The belly is the center of the universe, after all. A bellyband is the perfect thing. And a good bellyband is kit with many bright colors and plenty of thick stitches to make it soft and warm. Don't you agree?" Granny concluded with a look of great satisfaction, and then she turned to Jiji, who was sitting at Kiki's feet.

"Oh! How about you? How's your tummy?"

By way of answer, Jiji rumbled a loud purr from deep in his chest.

"Oh! Gracious! That sound is proof your tummy's

got a chill. Now, let me see. Somewhere there's got to be a belly band just right for a little black kitty."

Granny began to look about among the things around the house, and then Kiki noticed that everything was cozily snuggled in a stretchy, thick-pile, hand-knit belly band. The telephone, the coffee cups, the coffee pot, the medicine bottles, the tea kettle, the thermos bottle, the tea caddy, the boots in the entryway, the flower pots, and even the walking cane.

"There! That's just the one."

Getting up from her chair, Granny went over and took the belly band off the thermos bottle.

"Here," she said, taking it over and slipping it onto Jiji's furry torso, "The thermos bottle can take care of itself, and this belly band is not only warm, it's knit in my special "magic" pattern - polka dots on the outside and stripes on the inside - just right for a black witches cat!" Granny's face crinkled with delight at her choice.

Indeed, the belly band she had put on Jiji was lovely. It was made with a mixture of pink and lighter pink yarn. The outside was like a field of apricot blossoms and the inside was striped, like the dawn swept by the mists of spring.

"Oh! How pretty!" exclaimed Kiki. And then she told her cat, "It really looks nice on you, Jiji"

But Jiji was not pleased. His tail went straight up and he turned his head away, looking alarmed at the thing that clasped his belly, and tried to edge away, with comically stiff, ginger steps.

"And I'll knit one for you too, my dear. I know two belly bands isn't much by way of payment for your services, but I'd be grateful if you'd let that do..." said Granny, looking apologetic.

"Oh, that will be fine, of course." Kiki smiled happily at the offer, and that made Granny smile too. Then she began to chatter again.

"As long as you wear a belly band, you have nothing to worry about," she said firmly. There's no better or more economical a way of staying healthy. Why, just the other day, I recommended it to the mayor. He's got a naughty side to him, you know, so I told him it's the secret to keeping his mischievous imps under control. After all, he's the mayor, and he's got to project the right image. It's the secret, I told him, to popularity and success.

"Besides, did you know that there was an epidemic of tummy chills among the animals in the zoo last winter? I told them that all the animals in the zoo should

have belly bands, but that old zoo keeper, he's as obstinate as my son, he didn't pay any attention to me. ... This year, no matter what anybody says, I'm going to make all those animals belly bands and take them over there myself."

Beads of sweat broke out on Granny's small, determined face.

"Ah! Now I know what you want me to deliver!" exclaimed Kiki,

"That belly band you just finished, it's for the elephant at the zoo, I bet," she said, pointing to the voluminous folds Granny had just completed. It was a mixture of sky blue and white stripes like clouds scattered across a bright blue sky. Kiki had been wondering from the time she came in why Granny was knitting such a huge belly warmer.

"No. This is for my son. He's the captain of a tum-tum steamboat. He said he had very, very precious cargo today. It had to be taken over to the Morimo Point at the mouth of Koriko Bay, and he left at the crack of dawn. And what do you think was so precious? It was a load of some kind of high-class wine in big, bulbous bottles. He says they have to be carried gently, or the wine's taste could easily go bad. I never heard of such a thing."

Granny pursed her lips in perplexity, and went on.

"To get to Morimo Point, you know, you have to drive over two hills, so I guess they figured there'd be less bumping if the wine went by sea. But the waves on the ocean can be a lot bumpier than two hills, if you ask me. Do you suppose they'll be all right?"

Granny drew her breath, and without waiting for Kiki to reply, continued her story.

"So that's why I called you. My son's boat is a tum-tum steamboat called the Te-te, and that boat is getting on in age, just like me. She's quite a granny. And these days, she can't seem to keep up her tum-tum tume. It's more like a sort of "tum-ah-tum, tum-ah-tum" - the sure sign of fatigue. There's still smoke come out the chimney, of course, but I tell you, that engine's under the weather.... So anyway, what I want you to do is to take this belly warmer over to this ship, because the Te-te has a very important job to do. I've already told my son he ought to use it... if you just follow along the edge of the Big River,

I think you'll find the ship soon enough. It's such a bother, I know, and I'm sorry to put you out, but that boy, he just won't listen to me like he should!" Granny

signed and shrugged her shoulders.

Holding the bulky knitting in her arms, Kiki could not help wondering to herself: how could this tiny woman have a son that would need such a billowing belly band as this? But she did not have time to ask. Granny started talking again, "Now if my son makes a fuss, I want you to just put it on anyway. If it's too big, you can take a tuck here and there, and if it's too small, just stretch it out. It'll fit fine."

Kiki was still feeling very dubious, but she smiled brightly to reassure Granny,

"All right, I understand."

Draping the belly band around her shoulders like a cape, Kiki took flight,

"OK! That was a good idea. This is nice and warm." She remarked to herself.

Behind her, Jiji was grumbling.

"Wearing this wool thing on top of perfectly fine fur, I'll turn into a 'sleep cat,'... but you can't refuse when a sweet old lady like that gives you something..." but Kiki could see that Jiji was not altogether displeased with the band's lovely colors. When she told him "It really suits you well," Jiji said, "So, does this make me look 'far out' enough for you?"

At the spot where the Big River flowed into the ocean, there was a harbor. There were two large passenger boats tied up at the pier and another just being pulled in by a tugboat. All around them, flotillas of small boats were moving up and down. The sounds of steam whistles echoed back and forth across the water. Far off in the distance on the lefthand side was Morimo Point. From way up in the sky, everything below seemed to be moving very slowly and sluggishly.

Kiki paused midair several times to search the water below her for a vessel with the name Te-te written on its side. First she checked to be sure the boat was not in the port, and then she went on, scanning the ocean beyond. As she moved out of the harbor, the wind from below suddenly blew stronger. The number of vessels on the water grew fewer and were scattered far and wide. Then, far in the distance, Kiki caught sight of what looked like a tum-tum steamer. It was like a tiny white petal floating on the deep blue water. As they drew closer, Kiki could hear that the sound that came out of the smokestack along with the smoke sounded very tired and lackluster. Could that sound, as old Granny had said, be the sound of yawning? On the side of the boat, though the flaking, faded paint,

the name Te-te was barely visible.

Kiki called out from above,

"To the Captain of the Te-te: You have a delivery, sir!"

The ship hands, clutching protectively at a cluster of large jugs sitting on the deck, all gaped up at her in surprise.

"I'm the Witch's Express. May I come down?"

"Please do! Please do!"

The captain stuck his head out of the pilothouse and waved at her.

And then suddenly, lowering his voice, he said, "But please come down very gently, so as not to surprise our cargo."

"What, I heard you were carrying wine! Is it really some kind of animal?"

Kiki, too, kept her voice low as she alighted ever-so-gently on the deck.

The sailors gathered around, completely agog at the girl who had suddenly dropped out of the sky. But the most surprised was Kiki herself. She had imagined that only the captain would be very fat, but now she found that all the men of the crew had great round bellies like wealthy men who love to eat. They were just lucky, she thought to herself, that the ship didn't sink from the weight, but she stopped herself from smiling.

"Captain, this is from your mother. It's a nice, warm belly band."

"What!? Good heavens, Granny never gives up..." wailed the captain. He sounded very irked, and even the members of the ship's crew were murmuring to each other with knowing looks, and saying things like, "This is really going too far."

"But this looks far too big to fit your stomach, Captain." said Kiki, "she said we could tuck it in, but still..." she spread out the immense belly band, and the blue and white band looked even more lovely there on the deck of the ship riding on the waves.

"Hey, wait a minute!" exclaimed the captain, "This is not for me! It's for the ship's smokestack. You see," he began quickly to explain, "this is supposed to be a tum-tum steamer, but it's changed its tune these days. It sort of idles and yawns - sounds like it's sort on sleep or something. So Granny decided it was because the smokestack had 'got a chill' and she tells me, 'The best medicine for a chill is a belly band.' Ah, she can be pretty hard to get along with, I tell you!"

"Huh!? You say this belly band is for the smoke-

stack...?" For a moment Kiki was speechless. She gazed up at the large smokestack. Yes, the belly band she had carried certainly looked as if it would fit exactly.

"That old Granny," said the exasperated captain, "she won't be happy until everything in the whole world has a belly band. It's too much. Just look, will you. I'm doing my best to do as she says, but it's really going too far."

The captain, fumbling with his buttons, finally got his coat open, and showed Kiki layer upon layer of belly bands, snugly encircling his belly in colorful rings.

"Even us," came a chorus from the ship's crew, lifting up their shirts, "We can barely move all trussed up like this." The bellies of each and every one was clasped in colorful concentric layers of belly bands. What Kiki has mistaken for big-eaters' bellies was in fact belly-band bellies. Kiki learned over, quaking with laughter.

Then one of the crewmen said hesitantly,

"Captain, sir. Who is this person...?"

"This is the girl who runs the Witch's Express we hear so much about in town. Aren't you?" he addressed Kiki.

"Yes," nodded Kiki, trying to control her giggles.

"Say, Captain, why don't you ask her to do us a favor. They say she'll carry anything. If she'd pick up this whole ship and carry it through the air, we wouldn't have to worry about these rough waves."

"What?! Wait a minute!" Kiki caught her breath in surprise, "The whole ship! I couldn't possibly. But why?" she demanded.

"It's all because of the cargo, you see," said the captain.

"We've got a load of high-quality wine, and we're supposed to move it gently, without any jiggling... And, well, I thought since we weren't going all that great distance, we could just keep the bottles here on the deck. But that turned out to be a mistake; the bottles keep hitting each other. If we go on like this, the wine will be ruined. So I've got everybody out here, trying to keep the bottles from jiggling too much, but it's hard work."

Kiki could see how the bottles were simply set out on deck, and when the ship rolled and they knocked into each other, froth began to form on surface of the wine inside.

"Why don't you set all the bottles apart?"

"If we did that, they start falling over. Are you sure you can't just carry the ship through the air?"

Kiki was sure, but she was also in a pickle. She began to glance frantically around the ship, looking for a solution. The sign she had hung up when she opened for business did say that she would carry "anything." If that was what she had promised, she couldn't afford to break the promise. But a ship— even a tired-out tum-tum steamer - was a ship, not something little Kiki could just sling on her shoulder and fly off in the air with. Then she had an idea,

"Would it help if the bottles don't jiggle against each other?" she asked. She was looking back and forth, from the belly band-ballooning waists of the crewmen to the broad-bellied bottles of wine.

"Yes! That's what we have to do. It should be very simple, but it's very hard up here on the deck."

"If that's true," said Kiki, "I think there's a very simple solution. In fact, we can solve two problems at once."

"What do you mean? Tell us, tell us!" the captain and all the crew members were eager to hear her idea.

"How important is it that you mind what your mother says?"

Kiki asked the captain. "Do you think she would forgive you this once?"

The captain grinned and shrugged with a gesture that meant he'd bet she would.

"In that case..." said Kiki, "You should all take off your belly bands, and put them on the bottles. That will take the load off all your stomachs and make it easier to work and the bottles will all be well padded and the wine won't be spoiled.

"Wow! That's a great idea. That makes sense!" The captain quickly began to take off his belly bands, pushing them down to his legs and stepping out of them, one by one. In no time, he was down to his own, quite smart proportions. The crewmen, too, rapidly shed their belly bands, which piled up into a colorful mountain on the deck, revealing a line-up of slender, solid-bodied seamen.

Then they all set to putting the belly bands gently around the wine bottles. When they were finished, it was the bottles that looked like rich-man's paunches in their colorful bands, and they sat snugly together, with no sound of jiggling or jostling.

"It works!" The captain and the crew all smiled with relief and satisfaction.

"Well, then I think I'll be going," said Kiki to the

captain starting to get astride her broom with Jiji, and then she remembered,

"Oh! I almost forgot. This belly band for the smokestack. Don't you think it would be a good idea to mind Granny at least on this one?"

"Okay, I guess we should." The captain assented reluctantly, for he was obviously greatly relieved, and the crewmen too, nodded in agreement. Then they all worked together to put the great sky-blue and white belly band around the smokestack. Kiki saw the job done and then said,

"All right, now I really will be going." As they flew away, Kiki waved gaily at the crew of the Te-te. And then she pointed the broomstick back toward the city of Koriko. Behind her she could hear the sound of the ship's engine fading in the distance. It might have been her imagination, but it seemed to her that the sound had changed from the tired-out sound Granny had so worried about to a regular tum-tum, tum-tum of a healthy steamship.

The next day, Kiki was astounded to read in the newspaper the news that the crew of the Te-te had all been afflicted with stomach flu. And then down below that was a small article that said,

A liquor store on Morimo Point has started to sell bottles of wine wrapped in colorful knit bands. The flavor is fine, the shape is fine, the price is rather high, but it's an excellent buy for the money.

A week passed, and Jiji showed no sign of taking off the belly band Granny has slipped over him. Quite the contrary, he seemed to be taking care of it, dusting it off now and then with whisks of his tail. For Jiji himself had overheard a remark while he was out on a walk in the town that "See, the witch's cat is different; he's keeping his magic warm."

About another week later, a message came to Kiki from the belly band Granny that Kiki's own belly band was finished. When Kiki went to pick it up, she found it was a beautiful mixture of pastel colors, like a bottle of sugar candies, and Granny said, "There you are, dear. I know you have to wear black on the outside all the time, but at least you can enjoy the bright colors of your belly band underneath where it doesn't show." And Kiki could not help but ask her one more favor.

"Granny, would you please teach me how to knit. I want to learn how to do many things."

"Oh! I'd be happy to. And what are you going to knit, my girl," she asked, with a sly twinkle in her eye.

Kiki started to say, "For my mother and father..."

But Granny finished her sentence for her, without hesitation,

"Belly bands, of course."

9. Kiki Rings in the New Year

It was New Year's Eve in the city of Koriko. In only four hours, the old year would be over. In every house in the city, people had finished their preparations for the New Year. Windows were shining clean and the warm, orange glow of people's homes spilled out in to the streets.

Kiki was feeling lonely. Ever since she was born, she had enjoyed the happiness and pleasures of this season at home with her father and mother and her cat Jiji. This year there was only jiji to keep her company. A girl witch who had left home on her maiden journey could not go home for one whole year, not even at New Year's.

Well, Kiki was thinking to herself, I have only four months to go. I may as well enjoy the time as much as I can. I've got to make the best of it; I can't give up now.

Kiki decided to put lonely thoughts out of her mind and began to make meatballs. In the town where Kiki was born, it was the custom to eat meatballs stewed in tomato sauce on New Year's Eve.

Everyone would sit around eating meatballs and recalling the things that had happened during the past year. And when at last the clock would strike twelve, everyone would hug the person next to them and exclaim, "Hail the old year, hail the new year?"

Her meatballs were as big as apples. Trying her best to recall how her mother made them, she stewed them together with preserved tomatoes she had made during the summer. Sprinkling salt and pepper in the pot, Kiki said to Jiji,

"I guess it's just going to be you and me this year, Jiji, so let's have our meatballs, and when it gets to be twelve o'clock, let's do our salutations just like always, okay?"

Jiji put both paws out in front of him and stretched long and slow,

"Oh, sure, why not. If nothing happens between now and then, I guess we can call it a good year. In fact,

depending on how you look at it, we haven't had a bad year, all in all."

But there was something very strange about the town tonight, thought Kiki as she stirred the soup and checked the seasoning. Even though it was New Year's, when she thought that people would be celebrating together in their own separate homes, it seemed that they were gathering out in the streets instead.

And then came a call at the door, and the sound of Osono's voice,

"Hello there!" the baker's wife came in carrying her baby. The baby had grown quite big and was waving its legs. Osono came up to Kiki and said, in a formal tone quite unlike her usual greeting,

"Don't forget to listen!"

The way she said it made Kiki suspect again that there was something strange going on.

"But listen for what? For heaven's sake, and why?"

Then it was Osono's turn to look mystified, but she soon saw why Kiki was puzzled.

"Oh, that's right!" Osono exclaimed. "This is your first New Year's Eve in this town. I completely forgot. I should have told you about our New Year's Eve greetings. Now, come here and look."

Osono was pointing out the window to the clock tower, high up over the buildings of the town.

"See that clock? We don't know who built the big old clock tower over city hall. Even if you want to know the time, it's usually hidden in the clouds, and when it isn't, it's so high you get a crick in your neck trying to see the clock face. But once a year, that clock plays a very important role in this town. And that's on New Year's Eve. On New Year's Eve that clock tolls only the hour of twelve midnight. The bell rings twelve times, and the twelfth ring signals the start of a marathon. All the people of the town run in it. They start in front of the city hall and circle through the whole city. You know, it's like running into the New Year. This is a very important event in this town that has been celebrated without fail ever since that clock tower was built. And, so as we won't forget to listen for the tolling of the midnight bells, somehow this custom arose of greeting each other on New Year's Eve with the words, 'Don't forget to listen.'"

"So is that why there are so many people out in the town?"

"Yes. Of course. The eager beavers are out there

early, greeting everyone they meet and waiting for midnight when the marathon starts.”

“Oh, so that’s what’s going on. Can I run in the marathon too?” Kiki said eagerly.

“Of course you can! But,” said Osono, with a twinkle in her eye, “You can’t fly. That wouldn’t be fair.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t do that!” laughed Kiki.

“I’m going to run with my husband this year, and take the baby on my back, and you must come along too.” Said Osono, going back to the house.

Kiki picked up her long skirts and began to run in place to warm up for the race. Jii, too, began to shake out one leg at a time, the look of a serious runner on his face.

About two hours later, the young mayor of the city of Koriko was sitting in front of his desk in city hall. Finally, all the work he had to do before the end of the year was finished, and he stretched with a great sigh of relief. Everything he had done since he had been elected mayor at the beginning of the year had gone well. People seemed pleased with him, saying he was doing a good job for one so young. And tonight, at the end of such a successful year, the mayor was in the best of spirits and raring to go. He was determined to run at the head of the traditional New Year’s marathon to show the people of the town that, even more than ever, he was the man they could rely on to lead them.

The mayor stretched his arms and shook out his leg muscles, readying himself for the race. Then he opened the window of this office. Looking out over the town, he shouted out as loud as he could the New Year’s Eve greeting,

“Don’t forget to listen!”

And then he realized there was something wrong, and it so astounded him that the nearly lost his grip on the window frame. The mayor’s office was on the top floor of city hall, so when the window was open, he could always hear the ticking of the clock far, far overhead, even if it was shrouded in clouds and even if it was raining hard. But now, to his amazement and alarm, the sound that came from the clock was not its usual brisk ticking, but a dull and listless thumping.

The mayor stuck his head out of the window as far as he could and peered up at the clock. And as he did so, the clock emitted a few final faint strokes and then, as if relieved that the mayor had noticed its fateful state, it stopped. The time was 10:36. There was only

an hour and 24 minutes left before 12:00 o’clock, when the clock had its most important task in the entire year to perform.

The mayor leapt to the phone and called the clock maker who, as his forebears had been, was in charge of maintenance and repairs of the clock.

“The tower clock has stopped! Get over here as fast as you can. And don’t you dare tell a soul!”

After putting down the receiver, the mayor himself hurried to climb up the clock tower. The clock had not broken down once, ever since it had been installed, so the annual New Year’s marathon had always started punctually on the stroke of 12:00 midnight. The clock and its role at New Year’s were the boast of the town. Nothing could be more inopportune than for the clock to stop now, on this crucial night of his first year as mayor. How awful to think that such a happening might be inscribed in the annals of the town’s history! His reputation would be ruined. The young and energetic mayor was determined at all costs to avoid such a dishonor.

It wasn’t long until the clock maker came puffing up the 2,358 steps of the clock tower with his great tool bag. The clock maker had, like his father and grandfathers before his going back at least five generations, taken the best of care of the great town clock, and thanks to their endeavors, the clock had never once been out of order in all its long history. But now - and the clock maker’s heart began to pound as rapidly now as the clock had when it was at its fittest. Could it have been that just last week, when he came to set the clock for the last time in preparation for this very important event, he’d done something wrong?

Pale with apprehension, the clock maker went to work, checking to see what had gone wrong. Tapping with a small hammer, he checked the screws and the wheels of the clockworks. The largest wheel in the mechanism turned out to be broken. The clock maker was relieved. At least it wasn’t his fault.

“I found out what’s wrong,” he announced to the mayor, “It’s just the main wheel in the clockworks. It’s broken. It’s simple enough. We’ll just replace it. The job will be done in three minutes.”

“Are you sure?” The mayor unconsciously went back to his warming-up exercises, but then asked worriedly again, “Are you sure? And can you correct the time too?”

“Yes,” the clock maker reassured him, “As soon as we

have a new main wheel, it will ring twelve o'clock like it's suppose to?"

"Of course it will." The clock maker's fears had completely vanished; he sounded full of confidence. He even began to whistle a tune as he peered into his great tool bag. Then suddenly, his face went white as a sheet again, and his hands began to tremble.

"But, but," he stuttered, looking helplessly at the mayor, "I don't have a replacement wheel."

"What! Well, for haven's sake, go and get it... right away!" The mayor, too, turned pale again, his voice faltering.

"But, the fact is, there isn't one. Not even in my shop. We'll have to order it made."

"Well, hurry! Hurry!" screeched the mayor, desperately.

"But it would take fifty-three days!" said the clock maker.

The mayor reeled backwards as if he had been struck, and then he said, with a painful groan,

"Isn't there replacement anywhere?"

"Well, actually, there is another wheel just like this, but it's... it wouldn't be easy to get at."

"Come on, tell me!" demanded the mayor impatiently.

"Well, you know the town on the other side of the three mountains to the west, I've heard it has a clock just like this one. If we could... sort of... borrow its main wheel..."

"Borrow its wheel...?"

"Yes, you know, sort of without telling anybody..."

"You mean, steal it?"

"Yes, but ..."

"What do you mean, 'but'?"

"We're not thieves."

"I don't care. You go and get it yourself," demanded the mayor.

"Who? Me? Well, yes, I could. But... there's no time. Well, if I could use a police car with a siren, maybe I could get there and get back on time..."

"Don't be silly! Do you think you're going to use a police car to go and steal something! Isn't there some other way?"

"Well, gee... Oh, yes! There might be a way," the clock maker's face lighted up.

"You know, in this town there's a witch..."

The telephone in Kiki's office began to ring. Kiki

had just finished eating the meatballs, which had turned out to be quite delicious, and was warming up for the marathon. Picking up the receiver, she did a small curtsy and sang cheerfully into the phone the evening's greeting,

"Don't forget to listen!"

But the voice on the other end snapped back sharply, "Forget about 'not forgetting to listen.' I'm the mayor of this town. Now I hear that you are in the business of delivering things. Could we get you to go and get something?"

"Now there's no need to get irritated," said Kiki calmly and coolly, "My business is delivering things, and of course, I'll be happy to deliver it either from here to there or from there to here."

"Good! I'm glad to hear that. In that case, I'd like you to come over to the great clock tower right away. Please come as fast as you can," he added in a slightly more courteous tone.

With Jiji behind her, Kiki took off on her broom toward the clock tower. But she was feeling very put on. Tonight of all nights, she had not wanted to be flying off on other people's errands. She had wanted to be running the marathon down there on the ground, with everybody else. Looking down, she could see many people gathered in front of city hall, waiting for the clock to toll midnight.

When she arrived at the clock tower, the mayor got right down to business.

"Now here's what we'd like you to do. As it happens, the big main wheel of the works in this clock is broken. We'd like you to go over the three mountains to the west, to the town over there, and... pinch the..." the mayor swallowed his words, "... with super express speed. Now, you'll do it, right? You'll do it?"

"What do you mean, 'pinch'?" Kiki's eyes grew round with astonishment.

Now the mayor hunched secretively and repeated in a whisper,

"I mean we want to just 'borrow' the big main wheel from the clock in that town, just long enough to make this clock strike twelve. That's all."

"You mean steal the wheel?" demanded Kiki.

"Shh! Don't say it like that. A nice little girl like you shouldn't use a word like that. No, we're just going to 'borrow' it. And we're going to return it immediately."

"If that's all you have to do, why don't you just ring the bell by hand. The clock's so high up, people can't

see what time it says anyway.”

But the clock maker shook his head apologetically.

“Because of the way this clock is made, it won’t ring unless the hands move until the two come together at 12. I’m sorry to say... that’s the way it is.”

“Well, then, when it’s 12:00 midnight, Mr. Mayor, all you’d have to do is start the race yourself with a hand signal or something!” Kiki tried again.

“No, it’s no good.” The mayor shook his head vigorously, “A custom that has been practiced for such a long time isn’t something you just change that easily. Why, if we did something like that - you never know, people might sprain their ankles or break out in rashes, or goodness knows what...” He sounded desperate. “Now come on, won’t you just go and get that wheel? We just don’t have any more time left.”

The mayor was in such a tizzy, his face was going red with embarrassment and white with apprehension by turns. The deep furrow in his brow made his eyebrows slant steeply upwards. He looked as if he had been crying as he gazed pleadingly at Kiki.

Kiki realized that he wasn’t going to budge. She couldn’t just say no, but she definitely did not like to be asked to steal something, so she set her lips and took off without answering clearly one way or the other.

To the west of the city of Koriko were three mountains, lined up primly in a row, and beyond them were the lights of a town shining like a crystal necklace laid out along the valley.

“Hey, Kiki,” called Jiji, clutching Kiki’s back as she flew along, “Can you really do it without getting caught?”

“I won’t know until I get there and see. If we did, maybe we could explain the circumstances, and they might loan us the big wheel just for a little while,” said Kiki, mostly to reassure herself.

The town turned out to be very small and they quickly located the clock tower. Kiki made herself very small and unobtrusive as she landed at the top of the tower, but the sight below caught her by surprise. The square before the clock tower was filled with people, just as it was in Koriko, and now and then they would glance up at the clock, obviously as conscious of the time as the people in the city from which she had come. Kiki quietly moved down to the ground, keeping out of sight in the shadow of the rooftops. People were chatting animatedly, and Kiki noticed that as they talked, they were sticking out the little fingers of their

right hands, and moving them up and down, up and down, as if doing little-finger exercises.

Do you suppose that the New Year starts out in this town, not with a marathon, but with pinky finger calisthenics, thought Kiki to herself. Just then an old man sang out beside her, “Don’t forget twelve o’clock.”

That gave Kiki another start. The way he said it was exactly the way the people of Koriko said “Don’t forget to listen!”

So Kiki asked the man, “Excuse me, but could you tell me what this gathering is?”

“What! You mean you don’t know?” the old man said with amazement, “When twelve o’clock comes around, people greet each other with “Let’s be friends in the coming year too,” and they link their little fingers in promise with the people next to them. It’s been the custom since long, long ago in this town.

The old man smiled broadly and held out his own little finger toward Kiki.

“Look, it’s almost time!” he said cheerfully, “Are you ready. Gracious sakes! What are you doing holding a broom? Haven’t you finished your cleaning yet? Better hurry up!”

So saying, the old man prodded her to hurry. Caught off balance for a moment, Kiki found her way out of the crowd and hastily said to Jiji,

“Well, let’s get back!”

“But what are you going to do about the clock’s wheel?” said Jiji worriedly, looking up at Kiki.

“We’ll forget about it. Let’s get going,” said Kiki brusquely.

“But... but, you know, we were just going to ‘borrow’ it for a little while. You mean you’re not going to take it?”

“That’s right. I can’t do any such thing. Just look. If I were to ‘borrow’ the wheel even for a ‘little while’ that clock wouldn’t strike twelve. And then all the people of this town would miss the moment to renew their promises of friendship for the New Year. Why, that might mean that people wouldn’t get along in this town next year.”

“But what about Koriko? What are you going to do about its clock?”

“I’m thinking about it.” From the shadow of a building, Kiki took off hastily into the night sky.

When Kiki got back to the clock tower in Koriko, the mayor and the clock maker rushed up to her.

“Well, where’s the clock’s wheel?”

Kiki held out her empty hands, "I don't have it. But you don't have to worry. I'm going to take care of things. Now, both of you can go on down and wait in the square. Just leave it to me."

"But..." Looking distraught, neither looked about to move from the spot.

"It'll be all right. Remember, I'm a witch. I'll take care of it," said Kiki briskly, urging the two toward the stairs. Then, when they were gone, she spread her arms wide, and took a deep breath.

"All right, Jiji, now you've got to help me. I want you to hang on tight and push from behind with all your might."

Her face set with intense concentration, Kiki got astride her broom. Rocketing off from the tower, Kiki sped off over to the edge of city, deftly banked right, and picking up speed, headed straight back toward the clock tower. Then, just as she was about to collide with the clock, she grasped its long hand with both hands and, circling above the clock's face, rotated the hands one full turn and around again 24 minutes until the two hands came together at 12.

"Bong, bong, bong..."

From the square in front of the city hall below, a swelling cry arose, and the sound of running feet began to echo through the town as the marathon began.

Kiki, who had let go of the clock's long hand, was flung right out to the edge of the city again on the momentum of the broom's flight. When finally she was able to get the broom under control again, she made her way back to the clock tower and plunked down, exhausted. Her hair was disheveled and she felt as if the insides of her head had shifted to one side. Shaking her head to get things back in place, she peered down in the square. At the very head of all the runners, making himself conspicuous with great strides, was the mayor.

"Wow! That was really something!" said Jiji, lying so stretched out on the tower floor as flat as a pancake, "I thought my tail was going to be blown away."

"Me too, I thought I might have my whole face scraped off."

With a sigh of relief, Kiki took a look at her wrist-watch. But to her dismay, it was still five minutes before 12:00. Kiki began to giggle, and then to laugh out loud.

"I guess we sort of did it too fast!" she grimaced, "Well, maybe better early than late. Anyway, it's done,"

she made a face sticking out her tongue clownishly.

"There you go again, careless as ever..." remarked Jiji. And then suddenly he shouted,

"Oh, no! It's gone... My tummy warmer, it's gone!"

"Well, so it is. It must have been peeled off in out blast. But you don't really need it anyway, do you?"

"Yes I do! I really liked that tummy warmer, and besides, without it, you know, I'll just go back to being an ordinary black cat. Gee, we didn't even get a token of thanks, and I lost big this time."

Hoping to comfort Jiji, Kiki said,

"But just think, Jiji, it was you and me who rang in the New Year. Have you ever heard of such a delivery service in your life? The New Year's bell tolled because of what you and I did. Is that something just any old black cat can do? Now think about that, and let's go and run with everybody else. We'll go and catch up with them on the broom. It'll be fudging just a little bit, but then we can run with Osono and the baker. Let's look for Tombo and Mimi too, okay? Come, let's go!"

Snatching up Jiji, Kiki leapt upon her broom and off they went.

After that New Year's, even people she didn't know often greeted Kiki in the town, and Kiki thought happily to herself that the New Year had given people a new lease on life. But then one day Osono told her why everyone was suddenly so nice to her.

"The clock maker has been telling everyone about what you did. He told them how you fixed the broken clock wheel in time to make the clock ring 12:00, and he's saying a witch that can do magic like that is what every town needs. It makes me feel really good, you know. After all, that's what I thought from the beginning!"

10. Kiki Carries the Sounds of Spring

It was a long, cold winter. Jiji huddled on a chair, grumbling.

"When is it ever going to get warm again? If it keeps up like this, I may give up being a cat. I can't stand it any more."

"Oh? And what are you going to become instead?" asked Kiki, giving Jiji a sharp tap on the back, "What's wrong with that lovely fur coat you have? You keep complaining how cold it is, but the sound of the wind

had changed, you know. It's the sound of spring, I'm sure. Spring! When we can go back home to Mother! But I guess creatures like you are too busy complaining to hear such lovely sounds."

Jiji gave her a doleful look and curled up tighter, covering his face with his front paws. But his little black ears were twitching ever so slightly this way and that.

Ding a-ling, Ding a-ling.

The telephone rang, and an urgent voice leapt out at Kiki as she picked up the receiver.

"Hello... Please, please come and help us. As fast as you can! Could you please come to the train station? It's the Koriko Central Station. Please come quickly!" and then the receiver clicked on the other end of the line.

"Goodness!" said Kiki, as she scurried around getting ready to go, "Why is it that all the people who ask us for help these days are in such a hurry!"

As Kiki and Jiji flew over Central Station, they could see the station master on the platform waving to them, "Here we are. Over here. Please hurry!" Beside him stood a group of eight men, all as skinny as rails, and all wearing matching black suits. Even when Kiki came down out of the sky in front of on her broom, they showed not the slightest sign of surprise but continued to glare fearsomely at the station master.

The station master began to explain the situation to Kiki,

"These gentlemen are musical performers," but one of the men interrupted him sharply, "We are not 'musical performers.' We are musicians!"

"Oh, yes. That's right. Now these musicians are scheduled to present a concert at the Outdoor Concert Hall this afternoon..."

"What! When it's so cold!" said Kiki with surprise, "You mean a concert outside?"

The man speaking for the musicians cleared his throat haughtily and drew up his chest proudly,

"We are doing this concert precisely because it is cold. Our concert, in fact, will warm the cockles of your heart. We've even named the performance "Concert Heralding the Spring." Well, that's what we intend," he said with a sour look, "Whether rot not the people of this town will have an ear for such music... I'm beginning to have my doubts. Some of you seem quite hopeless."

"Unfortunately," sighed the station master, "Now,

Miss Delivery Service, what happened is that these musicians' instruments were not unloaded from the train they were traveling on. It's travesty. We don't know what to do."

The station master took off his cap and used it to wipe the sweat from his brow. A few steps away, Kiki could see two young porters standing off to the side, looking abashed and ashamed.

"Well!"

Kiki floated the broom off the ground a little, the better to get a look in the direction the train had gone.

"So, that's what happened. The train left with the instruments still on board," finished the station master.

"Then I guess you'd better quickly telephone the next station and tell them the problem. And then I'll go and pick up the instruments there."

"But you see... the train was an express train, and it doesn't stop anywhere until the very end of the line."

The station master was looking more and more uncomfortable.

"All right, then, what is it that you would like me to do?" inquired Kiki, nonplused.

"We are thinking... maybe, you could catch up with the train and get in through a window... oh, no, I suppose that wouldn't be possible... They're in the last car of the train, by the way."

"Oh! That's impossible. How could I do that?" Kiki's voice involuntarily rose in astonishment.

"But it has been done. There are people who've crawled in the train windows and stolen gold bars and such..."

"I've never heard of anything so...!" Kiki could hardly believe her ears. She had to think of a better solution. "Wouldn't it be better to just borrow some instruments from somewhere. Certainly you could find the appropriate instruments somewhere in this city."

"Well, we considered that, but..." said the station master, glancing worriedly at the black-suited men.

"Impossible!" said one, in a thunderous voice. "Unthinkable! We've not the kind of musicians who play just any old music on just any old instruments. Not us! How could we possibly play on plain old instruments that will sound at the least breath of air!"

And the other seven men standing in the row nodded emphatically, their eyebrows raised even higher than before.

Humph, mumbled Kiki under her breath, "How could these fellows, who look as cold and sharp as the

North Wind itself, ever perform a concert 'heralding the spring'? I have my doubts." Jiji, the only one who could hear her, whispered sympathetically in her ear, "Watch out - that's an insult to the North Wind!"

"All this trouble began because you didn't have our instruments unloaded," the man who had spoken first was repeating to the station master.

"We labeled them clearly as "Bound for Koriko," so there's no fault on our part. The entire responsibility is yours, Mr. Station Master!"

The station master looked desperately at Kiki for help. And the two porters, too, fixed her with pleading eyes. Kiki shrugged her shoulders, threw up her hands. When people asked her like that, she just couldn't refuse.

"Well, I don't know whether I can get them back, but at least I can try to catch up with the train and see."

"Well, Hurry!" ordered the man speaking for the musicians, in an authoritative manner. "And remember, there isn't much time left. We'll be waiting at the Outdoor Concert Hall, so be sure to bring them by 3:00. Have you got that?"

Kiki found his imperious manner so unbearable that she took off immediately, without even answering him.

Kiki flew straight up, high into the sky and then began to follow the train tracks through the landscape below. The tracks passed northward through the city, passed fields and forests, and entered the mountains, threading its way through one tunnel after another.

"Hey! Do you really think you can pull off such a trick?" asked Jiji anxiously from the rear.

"Sure, I can do it. But that fellow was so pompous, I couldn't help being a little mean."

"But how are we going to get onto a train that's moving?"

"You're with me, aren't you. It'll be all right."

"What do you mean?" screeched Jiji.

"There! Look! There it is!" Kiki raised herself up on the broom to get a better look. The last car of the train was just disappearing, like the tail of a lizard, into a tunnel. Gathering momentum with a loud cry, Kiki, flew steeply up over the mountain and circled around to the other end of the tunnel.

"They said it was in the very last car, so we'll land on the roof. Then, Jiji, I want you to get in one of the windows, and open the door at the back of the car. Okay?"

It wasn't long before the train appeared out of the tunnel, sounding its whistle. Kiki pointed her broomstick downward and made ready for their descent.

"How are you going to land on such a small place?"

Jiji looked terrified. And even Kiki was beginning to feel very scared of this attempt to land on a moving train's roof, as it sped along like a leaf. Kiki was thinking to herself that if only she knew a spell that would stop this train, it would be as easy as pie. How frustrating to be a witch with such limited powers!

"Well, I guess we don't have much choice. Here goes!"

Kiki put aside her fears and began the descent toward the train. The wind roared in her ears and through her hair and Jiji's fur stood on end, as if being pulled back by the wind.

"Watch out! We'll hit!" screamed Jiji. And Kiki slid the broom along her body and caught hold of the roof of the train. The train rolled on, obvious. Sliding along the rollicking roof, Kiki made her way to a window that was partly open and peered inside.

There they were. The pile with a sign saying "Bound for Koriko" had to be the instruments.

"All right, Jiji. In you go!" commanded Kiki.

"No! no! I can't! I'll fall."

Jiji kept backing up, refusing to let go of the broomstick.

"Come on. You'll be all right. Now, go!" Kiki took Jiji by the scruff of the neck and pushed him in through the window. Branches of the trees along the train tracks stuck out, whipping Kiki as the train passed. Every time she would crouch down along the roof to avoid one bunch of branches, the next bunch would rush toward

"Jiji! Hurry up! Open the door! Hurry, please?!"

Kiki hung out over the door halfway, banging on the train.

Then suddenly the train entered another tunnel. It was pitch black and with a tremendous roar, the wind swooshed over from one side. Kiki's body slid along the roof until she thought she was going to fall off. Frantically grasping her broom, Kiki managed to catch hold, but then her body fell halfway off the roof.

"Jiji, Jiji!" she screamed, kicking the side of the train with her feet. Then suddenly, the door of the car opened, and Kiki dropped down in to the car. At the same moment, the train came out of the tunnel. Bright light streamed in through the window. Jiji was

sitting looking stunned on his haunches on the floor, gazing at her blankly.

There was a huge pile of luggage, but she found the instruments quickly because they were all in odd-shaped cases. When she had identified them all, she realized what a tremendous load they made.

"How am I ever going to carry all these things?" she wailed, plunking herself down hopelessly.

"Look. All the cases have these grips and handles," suggested Jiji, whose spirits had finally revived, rubbing himself against Kiki's legs, "maybe you could string them on the broomstick."

"All eight of them? I wonder...?"

"Looks like it might be pretty difficult."

"Oh! Wait a minute." Said Kiki, "I bet they'd be a lot lighter if we take them out of their cases."

Kiki opened the case nearest to her. It was a gleaming brass horn. The shape reminded her of the spiral slide at the amusement park.

"Look," said Kiki, "Here's a trumpet. And there. And there's another. Here's a violin, ... and a cello." Kiki opened all the cases, one by one, and as one might expect from musicians who took such immense pride in their profession, every instrument had been polished to a dazzling shine.

"Jiji, you could manage to carry at least the violin? I'll hold the cello, and we'll tie together all these horns on a rope in order of size and carry them along that way. We'll just make use of some of the rope from the luggage here."

Chattering busily, Kiki deftly knotted the instruments one at a time along the rope and tied one end firmly to the broomstick.

"All right, Jiji. Let's get going! Get on behind."

She got on the broom gripping the cello with her left hand and steadying it with her knees and holding the bow in her right hand. Jiji clutched the violin, which was actually bigger than he was, with four paws and wrapped his tail around the broom whisk to steady himself.

"Here we go!" shouted Kiki, and they took off through the open door of the train, the instruments trailing behind them. As they rose into the air, the wind began to whistle through the trumpets and trombones, each blaring out a different tune. The passengers in the train began sticking their heads out of the windows, pointing and exclaiming with astonishment at the sight of the instruments flying through

the air.

Seeing their surprise, Kiki told them, "You never know what can happen in the skies," and then she exclaimed to herself, "Isn't this a beautiful cello?"

Entranced by the instrument she was holding, Kiki set the bow to the strings and began to play. Jiji plucked the strings of the violin with his claws. Neither of them had ever touched such instruments before, so at first the sounds that they made were squeaky and off-key - the kind of discordance that makes your teeth rattle and your hair stand on end. The trumpets and other brass instruments, too, sounded a capricious cacophony of wheezes, boops, bleeps, and snores.

But then a warm south wind swept up, and began to whistle through the instruments, making them resonate with soft and gentle tones. Delighted with the accidental music they were making, Kiki began to experiment, tying out the sounds she could produce by steering the broom in wide curves to the right and then the left, or by pointing the broom in steep ascent or descent. Little by little they approached the city of Koriko.

Meanwhile, back at the Outdoor Concert Hall in Koriko, the audience had gathered for the performance. It was already ten minutes past the appointed hour for the concert to begin. Over the center of the stage was a banner that read "Concert Heralding the

Coming of spring" and below it sat the eight sour-looking musicians, facing the audience. While they looked very cool and calm on the outside, inside they were in a torment of worry over whether Kiki would really return with their precious instruments. Standing backstage, in even more of a fret, were the station master and the young porters.

The audience began to grow impatient,

"Hey, it's cold. Let's get started!"

Then someone added sarcastically, "We're going to freeze to death out here. Weren't you going to bring the spring with you?" They began to whistle and jeer the musicians.

Finally one of the musicians got up and spoke,

"We'll begin quite soon. Now please, everyone, may I invite you to wait patiently.

Even beneath these cold skies, once we put our hands to our instruments, the sounds you will hear will bring forth the spring in your hearts. At this moment, we are engaged in preparatory prayers for this performance."

The musician cast his gaze slowly over the crowd, and cleared his throat commandingly.

The other musicians sitting in their row likewise hastily hid their anxiety and impatience, cleared their throats, and gazed at the ground as if absorbed in prayer. Chastened by the musician's words, the members of the audience, too, grew quiet and subdued.

And then, faintly at first, from somewhere, the air began to fill with an odd assortment of sounds,

Thwang, thwa-wa-an, thwang-ang-ang

Boogh, boo-oop-oop, bo-la-lang-lang

Iyan, iya-aa-an, iya-ang, lang.

The sounds seemed to flow from among the clouds, to reverberate from the hills, to lilt over the Big River and resonate off the ocean, murmuring and beguiling, like whispered secrets, as if the spring had indeed come in answer to all their prayers. The members of the audience and the musicians themselves began to raise their heads and gaze about, craning their necks to see where the sounds were coming from. Then they saw in the distance that there was something bobbing up and down in the sky, gleaming brightly in the reflected rays of the sun. It approached very slowly, swaying broadly to the right and then to the left.

Thwang, thwa-wa-an, thwang-ang-ang

Chi-li-li, chi-li-li

Boogh, boo-oop-oop, bo-la-lang-lang

Pu-ri-ri, pu-ri-ri

Iyan, iya-aa-an, iya-ang, lang.

People who had been huddling in their winter coats with the collars turned up, people who had been hunched over or who had pulled up their feet up under them to keep warm, all began to stretch themselves out and gaze upward. As the sounds came closer, they all began to think how much they wanted spring to come. But the most surprised of all were the musicians on the stage. They looked at each other and blinked with amazement, "Hey! Who's making those sounds?"

Gradually the glistening point of light began to take clearer shape, and of course, it was Kiki and Jiji riding on the broom. What looked like a necklace of gleaming lights was the string of brass horns. The eight musicians rushed backstage, the sooner to collect their instruments from Kiki and begin the concert. The station master and the young porters waved mightily, signaling Kiki to come down.

But Kiki acted as if she didn't even notice them. She

was thoroughly enjoying playing the strings of the cello in time with the sound of the brass instruments played by the wind.

"Shall we keep flying a little longer," said Kiki, turning back to Jiji.

"Why not? Yes, let's," agreed Jiji serenely, as he clutched the violin, "After all, the train door might not have opened at all, so they can wait just a little longer."

The people below were surprised and impressed,

"Yes, indeed, this is a wonderful concert."

"Who would ever have thought of having the music blow in from the sky..."

Some of them closed their eyes, drinking in the sounds. Others started waving.

Some were tapping their feet. It put everyone in a springtime mood,

"I've got to start getting ready for spring."

"Say, I think I'll put violets on my bonnet this year."

And then the audience began to clap, and their applause welled larger and larger, until Kiki said,

"All right, I'm going down now."

Kiki drew up the string of instruments into her lap so that they wouldn't be damaged by hitting the ground and landed gently backstage where the musicians and the station master were waiting.

As Kiki disappeared from sight behind the stage, the audience gave her one last wave of applause and then began to move out of their seats.

Backstage, the musicians rushed at her to get their instruments,

"How could you be so slow!" they complained, hurriedly detaching their instruments from the rope.

"It was the wind, you see..." Kiki said calmly, watching the musicians rush out onto the stage.

By the time they got there, however, the people in the audience had turned their backs and were streaming toward the exits.

"Wait, wait...!" called one of the performers after them, and one member of the audience turned back to say,

"It was a wonderful concert. What a wonderful idea, to have that pretty little witch bring in the music from the skies. We hope you'll do it again."

Hearing these words, the mouths of all eight musicians dropped open in dismay and they moaned in disappointment.

When Kiki and Jiji took off again to fly back home, Jiji

asked,

"Say, Kiki, did you get any reward?"

"What are you talking about, after all the fun we got out of doing that job? What more were you expecting?" said Kiki, glancing back at her cat with surprise.

"I suppose you're right," nodded Jiji, and his black ears perked up sharply. "I can still hear the sounds of spring, you know."

"That's because it really is spring. That's the true sound of spring," said Kiki happily, gazing down over the city of Koriko.

"Just think," she said, "It's almost a whole year since we came to live here."

11. Kiki Goes Home

Spring had come to the city of Koriko. Kiki pulled a chair over to the sunshine at the window and sat gazing out, her knees pulled up under her chin. The slightly overcast sky emitted a soft light like the glow of a baby's cheeks.

"Day after tomorrow it'll be just one year. I can go home!" Kiki had been saying the same thing over and over.

Actually, Kiki found she was a little confused as the day approached. She felt a strange mixture of both excitement and apprehension.

"That's right. You've only got two days to go, today and tomorrow. Don't you have to get ready?" asked Jiji.

"Well, there's nothing that says we have to go home at exactly one year."

Listening to her, Jiji began to circle the room impatiently, thumping the floor with his tail.

"What's the matter with you, Kiki? We've been looking forward to this day for so long, and now that it's practically here, you don't seem excited at all!"

Staring at her knees, Kiki held up her skirts and pulled her knees to the side where she could see her legs together.

"Say, Jiji, do you think I've changed at all? Do you suppose I've grown up a bit?"

"You've gotten taller, all right," said Jiji.

"Is that all?"

"Well, not all," Jiji fidgeted, wiggling his whiskers.

"Do you think I've succeeded - you know, in making a life of my own?" Kiki asked again.

"What are you worrying about? After all this," Jiji was

feeling quite impatient with all Kiki's doubting. Then he looked at her and cocking his head, said comfortably.

"Hey, you did fine. I'd say you score top marks."

"Thank you," said Kiki, but she did not feel really satisfied with Jiji's praise, and fell back into pensive mood.

Kiki had chosen to follow in her mother's footsteps, as any girl might have, and she had truly been on her own. She'd chosen the city of Koriko to settle down in by herself and she'd thought up the idea of a delivery business. Going back over all the things that had happened over the past year, there had been plenty of difficulties. And Kiki did think that she had done her best to cope with them.

Then why, she wondered, did she have such doubts? She had never thought she would be so uncertain. Back when she first left home, she probably would have been full of confidence, telling herself and everyone else, 'Look, I did it! I succeeded!' without the least hesitation. But now, even after being told by Jiji that he gave her "top marks," she still couldn't be sure. She wanted to know for certain, and she knew she'd had to ask someone else.

"You're not going to tell me we're postponing our trip home," said Jiji, looking sideways at her.

"Oh, of course not!" answered Kiki, and determined to clear the hesitation out of her brain, she jumped abruptly out of her chair and pulled herself up straight.

"So! We've got work," she said energetically, "Yes, I mean work. Going home, after all, is a delivery job. We've got to carry ourselves back to Mother. So let's get ready!"

"There you go!" Jiji seconded her energy with restored humor and did a reverse somersault. Kiki, too, at last began to feel excited and set busily about her preparations.

"...oh, yes, that reminds me, I have to tell Osono."

"Oh, goodness! You're leaving the day after tomorrow? Already? Somehow I thought it was still a long ways off... When you say you'll be away for a while, about how long will it be?"

Osono had heard that Kiki would be going home to visit eventually, so she wasn't much surprised.

"I'm thinking of about fifteen days. It's been a whole year, you know. So I'd like to rest up a bit and enjoy myself."

After she'd answered, Osono grinned and poked Kiki's cheek.

"Look at you. You're already looking homesick for your mother. Well, there's nothing wrong with that! But you know, if you want to know what I think, a good length for a visit home is about ten days. So make your "a while" short and sweet and come back to us as soon as you can."

Kiki was touched by Osono's words, and it made her clown to cover up her embarrassment. When Kiki called Tombo to tell him, he just seemed full of questions,

"Aren't you lucky. Is it a long trip?" and went on and on, asking about how fast she would fly, what altitude she would fly at, whether there'd be a tail wind, what the temperature was up in the sky, how it felt to fly through the clouds, what the clouds tested like, and so on. Kiki began to wonder if boys had nothing in their heads but questions. That was Tombo for you, always studying! After she hung up, Kiki glared at the phone for a while, feeling oddly dissatisfied.

After that, Kiki called some of her more frequent customers to tell them of her absence, as well as her friend Mimi. Then she made a sign on heavy paper that said, "Notice: On vacation until further notice. With apologies in advance for the inconvenience." And then in the bottom corner she wrote in small letters, "until further notice means about 10 days."

That night, Kiki said to Jiji,

"Tomorrow we'll clean the office and the next morning we leave early. Is that all right with you?"

Jiji was obviously delighted and started meowing with excitement. Trying to catch his tail in his mouth, he ended up running in circles. When he finally stopped, he said as if he'd suddenly remembered,

"What are you going to do about presents for Kokiri and Okino? It wouldn't be a good idea to go back empty handed, you know."

"Oh, but we've got lots and lots of presents - our stories, you know..."

"Is that all you're going to take? What happened to the tummy warmers you were going to knit? You were working on them, weren't you? There was one of blue weel..."

Kiki didn't say anything, looking as if Jiji had caught her on the spot.

"What! You didn't finish them? Wouldn't you know! It's just like it was with the herbal medicine. Are you

ever going to get any good at things that take time and patience?" Jiji humphed loudly, breathing on Kiki's leg.

"How can you be so mean!" said Kiki, pretending to be hurt, and then, bursting out in a smile, she took a fat paper bag out of the closet.

"Here, let me show you. I did indeed take 'time and patience,'" and when she drew her hand out of the bag and opened it, a small tummy warmer fell out onto the floor. It was bright blue with a pattern in silver thread.

"That's yours, Jiji! I made it so you could go home in style. After all you lost the one Granny made for you on New Year's Eve."

When Kiki put his new tummy warmer on, Jiji was speechless with happiness. He began to run in circles again.

"And look, I even made them for Mother and Father, too." There were two good-sized tummy warmers, one a bright orange and the other dark green.

"It was tough, doing all the knitting in secret, you know."

"Hey, that's cheating. Keeping secrets from me."

"But don't you think a good surprise is three times better than knowing ahead of time?"

"A good surprise? Well, I guess, so. Hey! That's a good idea."

"What do you mean, a 'good idea'?" asked Kiki, but Jiji avoided her and went happily back to running in circles.

The next day, as Kiki and Jiji were cleaning, Tombo came running in, panting for breath. Then, with a face flushed with what looked like anger, he thrust a paper package out at Kiki,

"Here."

Kiki opened the package, thinking to herself that she really didn't understand boys, and found it contained a small shoulder bag. It was pink with a picture of a black cat embroidered on it.

"Oh! It's lovely!" Like Jiji the day before, Kiki was speechless. She was so happy that was all she could say.

"Do you like it?"

Kiki could only nod, smiling.

"Good. I'm glad. You keep it," said Tombo, clumsily, and watched her shyly from behind his big dragonfly glasses as she put the bag on her shoulder.

"You're leaving tomorrow, huh. Well, have a good trip," he said gruffly. Then, giving Jiji a pat, he ran off as quickly as he had come.

"What's the matter with Tombo?" wondered Kiki with amazement as Tombo disappeared from sight.

"That was thoughtful of al' Tombo, to find something with a black-cat pattern on it," commented Jiji, hoping Kiki had noticed Tombo's distress.

"I guess you're right," said Kiki, beginning to understand. If Tombo went out and found this as a present for me, she began to think happily, maybe he does think I'm special, after all.

Kiki undid the red button of the bag's flap and found, to her surprise, a small piece of paper inside. It read "I'll wave to you from the bridge over the Big River. Tombo."

"What 's that?" asked Jiji.

"Oh! Nothing in particular. Just something," said Kiki hastily. Returning the note to the bag, she placed her hand over it protectively.

"Let's go!" Kiki called to Jiji the next morning, and as she picked up the broom and their bags and prepared to leave, she turned around to take another look at her shop. The red telephone, the desk on piles of bricks, the map of the city, the narrow stairway, the piles of flour in the corner, and all the little things she had acquired since she'd come to Koriko. Looking at them brought back memories of the past year flooding back. Tearing herself away, Kiki took a deep breath and said in a husky voice,

"Let's go."

As Kiki was pinning her notice on the door, Osono came over with a big bag of bread. The baker was with her, holding the baby.

"We've got a delivery job for you, Kiki" joked Osono in a booming voice, "It's to take this bread to your mother. And don't forget to tell her it's from the best bakery in the city of Koriko."

Noticing that Kiki was looking a little down, Osono laughed heartily as if to blow away the tearful moment.

"Now Kiki, you absolutely must come back here. You know, we're extremely satisfied with having a witch next door. Somebody told me the other day, you know, we begin to feel there's something wrong after three days if we don't see you flying around the skies of this town.

Kiki fought back the converging tears and rushed

into Osono's warm embrace.

"Of course, of course I'll come back!"

Kiki took off steeply into the morning sky, jiggling the packages and presents tied to the broom stick. The town was slightly hidden in the morning fog rising of the ocean. She flew in a great circle pivoting on the clock tower around the city and then moved down lower and headed for the bridge over the Big River.

There he was. It was Tombo, as he had promised. Astride his bicycle, he stood in the middle of the bridge waving both hands. Kiki waved back.

"Hey, look! It's Tombo," said Jiji in surprise from behind her.

"That's right!" said Kiki, feeling proud.

"Did you know he was going to be there, Kiki?"

Kiki didn't answer Jiji's question directly, but kept waving.

"Aren't you going to go down and talk to him? It's not enough just to wave, is it?"

"No, It's fine, just like this."

Then, waving broadly one last time, Kiki flew twice back and forth over the bridge and then, curving widely left and right, she set her course firmly to the north, picking up speed as they left the city behind them. Tombo grew smaller and smaller in the distance, until he was hidden in the shadow of the bridge.

"Now, our journey really begins," sighed Kiki, once the city was out of sight. Now they had only to make a beeline for home. The broom flew smoothly. It was just as good as the broom Kokiri had given her. Kiki realized that the boisterous, bucking broom she'd put together from a new stick and the whisk from her mother's broom last summer had settled down splendidly. It was flying beautifully.

Kiki also began to see that her presence in the city of Koriko had brought a certain happiness and sense of the unexpected to the people who lived there. Osono had told her to come back as soon as she could. She could feel the same message in the present Tombo had given her. And there were people who felt at a loss if they didn't see her flying through the sky. Slowly and steadily, the wind blew her worries and doubts away, leaving them far behind, as she sped along the path toward home.

Kiki's journey went much faster than it had a year before.

The sun rose and fell overhead, and the evening star

shone out its faint light. By the time the stars were all out in the dark sky, the nostalgic sight of her hometown loomed into view in a gap among the trees. Lights shone in all the houses lined up quietly along the streets. The air was heavy with the dew of the forest, so different from the air of the city near the ocean. And even more nostalgic was the sight of the bells, still tied to the tops of the tallest trees, gleaming dimly in the starlight.

Kiki headed straight for her home on the eastern edge of the town and stopped in the air over the rooftop.

"That smell! Kiki, it's bean soup."

"You're right. I thought she might make it. She knows it's our favorite."

Gustily inhaling the delicious and memorable smell, Kiki and Jiji alighted slowly in the garden. Waking quietly, Kiki very gently knocked on the door.

"Come on in," came her mother's voice, "Sorry, I can't put this down just this minute. I'll be right there."

Kiki and Jiji looked at each other and with a secret nod to each other, opened the door a crack and said in a deep voice like a man's,

"Excuse me, ma'am. You have a delivery!"

Kokiri whirled around from her place at the stove. At the same time Kiki opened the door wide.

"Oh! Kiki! If it isn't Kiki? I didn't think you'd get here until morning!"

Still holding the ladle dripping with soup, Kokiri held out her arms.

"But I was also thinking, too, 'I bet she comes back after exactly one year.'"

"And I did!" Dropping her baggage and the broom by the door, Kiki ran over to hug her mother.

"There, there, there," putting her arms around Kiki's shoulders Kokiri could only say it over and over, and every time she said it, Kiki nodded, "yes, yes, yes."

Okino, who had emerged from the next room, could only smile and watch while the two carried on. But after a while, he finally spoke up, a twinkle in his eye.

"I hope you won't forget me, while you're at it."

"Oh! Father! I'm back," exclaimed Kiki, rushing over to hug him around the neck.

After the first excitement of reunion was over, the stories began. Kokiri would talk and then Kiki would talk. Okino and Jiji could only watch with amusement from the sidelines. The wells of talk in the two seemed as if they would very dry up.

Then Kiki brought out the bread Osono had sent and the tummy warmers she had knit for her parents.

"Goodness, who ever would have thought our Kiki would learn to knit ..." marveled Kokiri, trying on her tummy warmer over her dress, and patting her stomach.

"You know, Mother. The Granny who taught me to knit seemed to have a mysterious power, and I got the feeling that when she knit, she was knitting that power into whatever she was making."

"There are quite a few older people who have that power," remarked Okino, closely examining the tummy warmer in his hands.

As if he had been waiting for his moment, Jiji stretched up to the tabletop and dropped a small lavender-colored shell out of his ear in front of Kokiri.

"Oh! Jiji! You brought me a present too!"

Kokiri was surprised and delighted.

"Well, Jiji! I see you had a surprise of your own in store!" exclaimed Kiki. Jiji turned to Kiki and said in a whisper, "I got it when we were at the seashore last summer. Like you said, 'good surprises are three times better,' right?"

And it was three times better. Kokiri gazed amazedly at the shell, holding it on the palm of her hand, turning it over and over, and examining it closely.

"This is a seashell, isn't it? Is the ocean this color?" she asked.

"Yes, in a way, it's like the color of the ocean just before dawn."

Kokiri looked at Kiki and Jiji and said with feeling, "You two certainly did go far away, didn't you? Just to think, it seems only yesterday that you were both babies! And you've now done such a splendid job and you're so grown-up!"

Hearing those words, Kiki began to feel a sense of confidence and pride slowly spread out inside her. She had wanted to ask someone whether she had achieved what she set out to do, and now she realized that she had wanted, above all, to ask Kokiri. Belatedly though it might be, Kiki saw that it was those words from Kokiri that she had needed most.

Then Kiki said, "You know, Mother. I've been thinking. I've been thinking that sometimes a witch shouldn't always ride around on a broom. Oh, when we have to make deliveries and such, we might have to fly, but sometimes it's better to walk. When you walk, you meet all kinds of people and sometimes you

end up talking to them, even if you don't want to. I wouldn't have met Osono if I hadn't been walking. If I'd been flying around to get over my sadness, I might never have found a home.

"From other people's point of view, too, when they see a witch up close, they see for themselves that we don't have hooked noses or hideous grins. And we can talk and get to understand each other better."

"You're right, you know. That's right." Kokiri was admiring her daughter's growth, and Okino was gazing with surprise as if he was seeing his own daughter for the first time.

From the next morning, Kiki spent the day just like she had as a child.

"How easy it is to go back to being a little girl! Well, I guess there's no reason why not. You've only been away for a year," said Kokiri, smiling.

Kiki drank tea from her favorite teacup and tried on her old fancy dresses in front of the mirror to her heart's content. At night she went to sleep in the embrace of the same old bedding she'd slept in since the time she was a baby and stayed in bed as long as she wanted in the morning.

When she had time, she strolled around the town, and people crowded around, asking her questions,

"Oh, Kiki. When did you get back?"

"Hello, Kiki. You're looking very pretty and grown up."

"Hi, Kiki. It's been a long time. Come over and chat sometime."

Everyone was so solicitous and nice, it made Kiki completely happy. It's the kind of warmth you can only find in the town where you grew up.

And yet, after five days had gone by like this, Kiki found her thoughts returning constantly to Koriko. Osono's sonorous laugh. The smell and taste of fresh-baked.

The people who would strike up conversations with through her apartment window. The tree-lined path along the Big River. The smell of the ocean. The tall, spindly clock tower. The smiling face of her friend Mimi. And Tombo. The image of Tombo waving as hard as he could from the bridge stayed firmly in her mind, and it seemed to be pulling her back to Koriko. Kiki began to think, there were so many things she wanted to tell Tombo when she saw him again.

And what about her business? Maybe there were lots of people calling, needing her services. The more

she thought about it, the more she began to feel that, despite the fact that she was back in her home town, she was only there for a visit. And she began to fidget. She had come to like the city of Koriko very much, even though she had only lived there for a year.

Finally, Kiki said to her parents,

"I think I'll go back to Koriko pretty soon, maybe tomorrow or the next day."

"What! We thought you'd stay at least ten days," said Okino with surprise. "Are you getting bored here?"

"Oh, no, it's not that. It's just that maybe I have customers waiting. The telephone may be ringing..."

"You can't let that bother you. While you're here, you should just let yourself be here, and not think about it."

"But..."

Kiki started to explain and then closed her mouth. Okino and Kokiri had waited a whole year for her to come back, after all. She realized that it had been rather thoughtless of her to start talking about leaving so quickly again.

And then Kokiri, who had been standing nearby, said, "... yes, you'll probably be waiting to get back. It wouldn't do if you didn't like the place where you are living. I remember when I went home after my first year in this town, I found that I just wanted to get back here as soon as I could. It was an odd feeling. Well, Kiki, after another year passes, you'll just have to come home again."

The next day, Kiki and Jiji flew over to the grassy hill to the east. Sitting on the slope over looking the town, they gazed at the beautiful panorama stretching out before them.

"Jiji, I've made up my mind to go back to Koriko tomorrow. That's all right with you, right?"

Jiji was teasing insects in the grass with a front paw.

"Sure. Though it seems like we just got here."

"If you're worried about presents, I've already decided what to take."

"Is it a secret this time, too?"

"No. I'm going to take some of Mother's medicine to Osono. The sneeze medicine will come in really handy for the baby. I'm not so sure what to do about Tombo... but, I was thinking... you know the bells that Mother tied in the treetops? How about taking him one of those? I could take down the biggest one and polish it up until it shines. It's kind of a memento of my

girlhood..."

"Hm. I think that's a very good idea. And a lot more thoughtful than a fountain pen," remarked Jiji, nodding.

"Oh! you tease, laughed Kiki.

"The bell makes a pretty sound, so I won't write a poem. I probably couldn't write one anyhow."

The fragrance of the grass rose from beneath their feet. On the breezes that blew over them now and then came the lowing of cows grazing in the pastures around them. Kiki lay down on the grass. When she closed her eyes facing the sunlight, the color of the grass would turn into spots swimming under her eyelids.

It's really wonderful, she thought, to have a place like this to come back to.

When Kiki got back home, Kokiri smiled at her,

"Have you been to the grassy hill?"

"You can tell?" asked Kiki.

"Oh, yes. You've got the imprint of the grass on your cheek."

That afternoon, Kiki and her mother went and detached the bells from the tops of the trees in the town.

"Whenever the wind would come up this past year, and make these bells ring," said Kokiri, "it reminded us of you." She looked both happy and sad, on the verge of both tears and laughter.

When Kiki said, "I suppose it's kind of sad, to think we won't need these bells anymore," Kokiri responded, "Oh, no, we'll just put them carefully away until the time comes that we need them again."

"Huh?" Kiki couldn't help asking why they would ever need them again. And then Kokiri winked at her and said,

"For the time when your daughter arrives. She's certain to be as much of a day-dreamer as you were."

Kiki kept the biggest bell and after polishing it carefully, put it in a box to take to Tombo.

So again Kiki found herself making her farewells to Kokiri and Okino, but this time she didn't feel as desperate and lonely as she had when she left on her maiden journey a year ago.

"Goodbye now!"

"Goodbye!"

Kiki smiled and waved fondly at her parents and then she and Jiji set off straight for Koriko. From inside the bag hanging from her broomstick the bell sounded

now and then. The sound made Kiki speed up even more.

Finally the sparkle of the ocean appeared in the distance and the buildings of Koriko, like a great pile of square and triangular building blocks, loomed into view.

"There's our town!" said Kiki, pointing.

The shadow of the clock tower stretched over half the city of Koriko in the slanting rays of the evening sun.

- The end -



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Japanese Board on Books for Young People
6 Fukuromachi, Shinjuku-ku, 162-0828 Tokyo Japan
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