

WHERE ARE YOU, ELLE?

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ABC-Company E-skuvla AS

Now the drum course begins. In five minutes. Mihkku and Lemet-Áilu are probably already underway.

As we had been looking forward to it, Lemet-Áilu, Mihkku and I!



When we saw the drum course ad, we hit the walls, the bikes, the doors and the rocks, as if everything were drums we could play on.

Lemet-Áilu's mother registered him on the

course the same day, and Mihkku's mother the next day. While I had to wait until late Friday, when my mother came home from Kautokeino.

Mother looked at the ad and sighed: – Thursday at six, no chance.

– Mom and her damn shit project!

Arrrrgh!



I light a candle, and climb up into the attic, to my hiding place.

There is a lot of junk I can drum on, first easier, then harder and finally like a drum star in a wild concert, and I follow up with a loud voice. Things rattle and rattle until I suddenly hit something that gives off a very nice sound. Bojojojoinggggg.

What was that? I get the candle from the window. Under an old sewing machine there is a dark shelf, and there I see an old drum!

I take it into my hands, and tap it with my fingertips. It sounds so beautiful that I have to draw my breathe.

Grandma, whose drum is it in the attic of the old house?

-What drum? There is no drum in the old house. In the past, it was a serious sin to have a drum, and joking was also a sin.

How come Grandma doesn't know about the drum? She has lived in the old house herself!



The next day I go back to the dark old house. I detach the drum from the sewing machine. What a convenient hiding place! Really it is not so strange that Grandma does not know about the drum!

With trembling hands, I begin to drum lightly with my fingertips. The sound gives a reverberation that fills the entire room. My fingers are dancing over the drum at the same rate as the heart.

Then, to my amazement, I hear a voice that begins to follow the sound of the drum. A girl's voice! It joins in rhythm with the drum. I stiffen and stop drum-

ming, and then the voice decreases as well.

Is this happening in reality? I'm alone in the old house! There aren't even other youngsters in this area!



I let my fingers down on the drum again and they start dancing again. The skin makes a deep sound, I drum and it feels like I'm being led by the wind.

Then, through the drumming, I hear the same voice again. A light voice joins my drumming, it is the same short joik again. Now I'm really scared and can't move. Only my eyes are looking here and there without really seeing anything.

Almost in panic, I put the drum in place under the sewing machine, run downstairs and slam the door behind me.



Granma sits and knits when I come in. What should I say?

- Grandma?

- Yes, my dear?

- We joked at school today, in the music lesson. We learned this joik...

I joik to grandma, the same joik I heard earlier in the old attic. At first very careful, next time bolder, and finally I joik it as nice as it really was.

- Our Jovvna is so good to joke! Imagine if we had also been allowed to joik at school ... Grandma begins to explain

about the ancient times.

- But do you know whose joke it is?
Have you ever heard it?

Grandma shakes her head.

- You could visit great-grandmother in the home for elderly, she suggests.
- As a young girl she knew lots of joiks. And now that she is that old, she does not remember that she considered joking a sin.

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The next day at school everybody rushes to the football field on the lunch break.

I try to make myself small, almost invisible, and sneak my way along the fence towards the rest home.

There I find my great-grandmother, lying in her bed with her nose towards the ceiling.

I can hear her weak voice:

- Oh God, have mercy ...

- Great-grandma, I have a joik for you today, I say and joik the beautiful joik, hoping to awaken her memory.

For a while there is no sound to be heard. Then I see that her eyes are filled with tears, and she says in a very low voice:

- Dear Elle. Oh, my dear Elle.

Then she starts crying, she sniffles and holds on to her cheeks.

I look at her with my mouth open. Who is Elle? Why is great-grandmother crying?



At home, grandma stirs in the dinner pot.

- I visited great-grandmother during the lunch break. She was very sad today. Cried for one or another Elle, I easily explain, as if I had no fault with her cry.

In a few seconds, Grandma's face darkens, and she looks like a thundercloud.

- Have you talked to great-grandmother about Elle?, grandma says angry.

- Haven't I said a thousand times that Elle should not be talked about! Oh, well, now grandma's going to be sad and crying for weeks and will probably

not want to eat anything. An old person can even die of it!

Grandma slams with the door and disappears to her room.

Now I really don't understand anything. I haven't even heard of this Elle. How can I talk about something I know nothing about?

Fortunately, Mom comes home from Kautokeino today.

