

## The Guitar

Written by Sevim Ak

The sound coming from Alper's room was absolutely awful...His mum opened the door.

"Son, I've got a headache. Can you **give it a rest**?"

"But I'm practicing the guitar."

"Practicing? Sometimes you hit the **strings** and sometimes you slap the guitar... And your mouth is open all the time. And you keep shouting. That's not singing! We send you to a guitar course but it's a **waste of time and money!**"

"Why?"

"Didn't they give you songs you're supposed to practice with? You should learn how to play **these** first until you get them right. "

"Oh, I do play those songs sometimes. **They**'re really boring though. Anyway, it hurts my fingers when I play the strings according to the rules they teach us at the course. I play with my heart. Not according to rules... It's a lot more fun that way"

"Well I hope your dad doesn't hear that after spending all this money. It's disturbing the neighbours. Last night, Mr Arif from upstairs was **making a fuss**. **He** said that your singing sounded as if you had fallen into a pot of boiling water!

It had all started with Alper's friend, Serkan. When Serkan's father had bought him a guitar, Alper wanted one as well...He began to dream of having a classical guitar. Alper **nagged** his father to buy him a guitar even though his father couldn't really **afford** it. In the end, Alper's father took out an advance on his **salary** to buy his son the guitar. Alper was delighted...**He** spent days and days writing **lyrics**...The light in the air... cats...birds...sweet breezes...Alper wrote about everything! But...Alper had no music for his words. He couldn't write music. He didn't know any **notes** at all.

His mum's words really depressed him. At first he thought that he only needed to touch the guitar and beautiful music would just come out on its own. But instead it was only practice, practice, practice. Not real music. How many more times would he have to take lessons just to play Baris Manco's 'Domates, Biber, Patlican'? He couldn't stand this...It was taking such a long time to learn how to play his own music!

He **picked up** his guitar and went outside. The park opposite their house was nearly empty at this time of day. A woman sitting on a bench was preparing beans for the evening meal. On the next **bench** a cleaning lady, going home from work, was having a rest...Alper sat on a free bench.

**Plucking** the strings of the guitar randomly, he started to **murmur** the song 'Gul Pembe'. A woman and a little kid sat next to him. **His** mum was trying to make him eat but the child wouldn't. Pointing at the birds and swings, his mum was trying to encourage him...But the

little boy was more interested in the guitar, watching Alper pluck the strings. The boy asked Alper, "Play 'Arkadaşım Eşek'". Alper wanted to play it to **please** the boy...but couldn't.

At that moment, a group of young people **streamed into** the park. **They** sat down on the benches. A couple of them stood in the middle of the park. The one with the green salwar had a clarinet in his hand and the one with an earring had a drum. The girl with long wavy blonde hair took out her violin from its case. Then they started to play...First the drum, next the clarinet, then the violin... Alper watched **open-mouthed**. They were all doing their own thing. The music didn't go together...The instruments didn't go together...But when put together it sounded fantastic. They were making **their** own kind of music!

The other people in the park **applauded**...Alper slowly walked towards the group of young people.

The park was getting more and more crowded with people attracted by the young group's music. Women...street vendors...children...everyone was rushing to the park. And they were all joining in the music with **pan lids**, claps, spoons...everything they could find!

Alper **mingled** with the crowd. Everyone was singing their own song. Everyone was making their own music. He began to murmur the song he had written himself. The one he didn't know how to compose. The words **fitted** the music now! He kept singing it under his breath...

"Today, it's cloudy

Friends have forgotten me..."

He left his guitar on the grass and now started to sing out loud. He also started clapping.

Alper was finally happy...Maybe this was all he had ever wanted...