

# Sofie's Pen

by Kristin Case

Sofie sat in her room, scribbling furiously into her old notepad. Ahh, her favorite time of the day, two uninterrupted hours to write before mom and dad arrive home from work. It always went by so fast. This particular piece was a poem. She was working on the second stanza, trying different words and experimenting with line breaks. Before she knew it, she heard the front door open. She hadn't even heard her father's car pull in. She rushed out of her room and met him in the front hall.

"Hi Dad," she said, "How was work today?"

"Oh, you know," he replied, giving her a kiss on the forehead, "same old, same old. What have you been doing since 3 o'clock? I hope not sitting in your room with nothing but your thoughts again. You know we have Netflix."

"I know Dad." Sofie replied, not surprised by his annoyance about what she had been doing. "Dad, can you take me to the store? I need a new pen."

"A new pen? Why? We have a whole drawer full." He proceeded to the kitchen and scrounged two handfuls of pens out of the junk drawer.

"No, I mean a special pen. I saw just the right kind last time we were there."

"Sofie, you're not wasting money on a pen when we already have all these. I'll buy you something else. Let's go."

"Nevermind dad," Sofie said, "That's ok."

Later that evening, Sofie approached her mom in the kitchen. "Mom," Sofie said, "Will you take me to the store tomorrow?"

"Sure honey," her mom replied, "What do you need?"

"Well, I really want a new pen, and maybe a new writing notebook."

"You're kidding me, right?" her mom retorted, then sighed. "Hon, why don't we go look at that new clothing store in the mall? They have fabulous purses and shoes. My friend Connie from work was just showing me ..." she continued talking but Sofie lost interest and wandered back to her room.

She went back to working on her poem for a while, then decided to read. It was a nightly ritual. She'd climb into bed, tuck herself in real tight on both sides, then carefully reach over to her bedside table to retrieve the book she was currently reading. She often lost herself in books, especially those by her favorite authors. She loved the styles of Alice Hoffman, Sharon Creech, and Suzanne Collins. She read until she couldn't keep her eyes open, then drifted off to sleep.

The next morning she was awakened by her mom's voice. "Sweetie, are you up? We're going on a family trip today. Your dad and I thought we'd spend the day at the zoo. How does that sound?"

"Great mom," Sofie yawned. It actually sounded fun. She hadn't been to the city zoo since her 2nd grade class went on a field trip there. She quickly dressed and used the bathroom, then grabbed her small notepad and pen and headed out for breakfast.

After breakfast the family was ready to go. When they were almost there, Sofie's mom realized that she had forgotten her lipstick. A quick stop at the drugstore she said, then they'd

be on their way.

Sofie went inside with her mother. As they rushed through the store, Sofie spotted the pen, the same one she'd been looking at in the corner store near her house. She quickly grabbed it and met her mom at the front register.

"Please mom?" Sofie begged.

"Oh, fine," her mom said, and paid for both the lipstick and the pen.

Once at the zoo they quickly began having a great time. Sofie's dad bought a big bucket of popcorn and she and her mom laughed at him while he threw up kernel after kernel in attempt to catch them in his mouth.

Her parents, however, walked from exhibit to exhibit a little too quickly for Sofie's taste. She liked to walk slowly, taking everything in, observing carefully. She noticed the chimps being fed by their trainer and giggled as she watched them play catch with a banana. They must not have been hungry! She watched a koala eating some eucalyptus and smiled when he glanced her way with lazy eyes. He seemed to be saying, "It's been a long day. I'm going back to bed." She noticed a kangaroo that looked a little on the fat side. This one sure did have a pouch, and a whole lot in it - a joey!

This gave her an idea for a story. She pulled out her small notepad and began jotting down a few of her observations when she heard her dad shout, "Sofie, come on, you're walking way too slow honey!" She caught up with her parents and they continued to tour the zoo for the rest of the day, but she wished she could've spent more time at each exhibit.

When they got home they were all exhausted and went straight to bed. Sofie got to her room and remembered about her new pen. She pulled it out and felt so excited that she couldn't wait to use it. There was nothing like a fast writing pen, one that would flow across the paper as quickly as her thoughts came. She started writing her story, the one that she had been thinking about at the zoo, and continued writing until she grew so tired she couldn't even read a chapter of her book before her head hit the pillow.

In the morning, Sofie was the first to wake up. She couldn't get the story out of her head and just had to keep writing. She tiptoed out to the living room and lounged comfortably on the couch with her lap desk, notebook, and brand new pen.

A while later, her mom came out. "You're up early Sofie," she said.

"Yeah," Sofie replied, "I'm writing a story, mom. I got the idea while we were at the zoo!"

"Ok hon. Well, if you're not doing anything I want you to go clean your room. There is stuff everywhere. And you need to think about getting rid of some of those books. Sometimes I think you sleep in a library."

Sofie quickly got up and went to her room. The thought of her mom making her get rid of even one of her books made her nervous. She spent the good part of 2 hours straightening up, organizing, and trying to make her room look less libraryish, for her mom's sake.

She sat on her bed, satisfied with her work, and decided to get back to her story. She looked around and wrinkled her brow, trying to remember where she put her pen and notebook. "Oh," she realized, "that's right. I left them in the living room."

She headed out to retrieve them but stopped cold when she saw her dad. Her heart seemed to stop. She couldn't speak. Her dad was using her new pen to pry open a jar of jam.

"Dad!" she yelled, just as the lid popped off and the pen twirled through the air.

As Sofie ran toward the pen, her mom rushed in and yelled, "What on earth happened?"  
"I don't know," said Sofie's dad, as they both gazed down at their daughter cradling the damaged pen in her hands, tears streaming down her face, "I don't know."