

Hudoyberdi Tukhtabaev

# *Riding a Yellow Genie*



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### **Аннотация**

Once upon a time, there lived a boy named Khoshim, who did not want to study, help his mother with the housework. But one day this lazy boy finds a fabulous magic cap that could fulfil any desire of the owner. Full of confidence that with the help of a wonderful cap he will make a lot of heroic deeds and become famous all over the world, Khoshimjon goes to wander around the world. And what kind of tests, what adventures-dangerous and noble, funny and touching – did not happen to him until he finally realized that without difficulty, without knowledge, a person will not achieve anything. Illustration by: Matkarimov M.

# **“RIDING A YELLOW GENIE” by famous Uzbek writer, Hudoyberdi Tuhtabaev**

A Magic Cap

Chapter 1

Kicked out of the house

Hello! My name is Khoshim, politely – Khoshimjon. Surname – Ruziev, the son of the tractor driver, Rozivoy. Let me introduce my family: over the past couple of years my father has been driving a bulldozer in the field. My mother said it would be a cotton field soon. He used to come home every month, sometimes once every two months. Every time he came he brought us presents. And the best surely was mine. As for my mother, she is a milkmaid at a farm near our house. Last year she was even awarded a medal for a record yield. I wore it twice hiding it from my mom. Once I wore it and went to the market and brought some vegetables. Next time I wore it to school, but our school principal punished me for this.

My elder sister is a fourth form pupil. Sweeping the yard, washing the dishes – all these tasks are on her shoulders. Mom calls her: “My dear Snow White, my helpmate”. Each time she hugs her, I tickle her and call her “My piglet”.

My little sister is Donokhon. She is in the first form. My mother thinks someday she will be a doctor. But I have different opinion on that. Because every time she sees a nurse she runs away thinking they will give her a job . Yesterday she saw a

milkmaid in white and jumped out the window and ran away.

Frankly speaking, I'm not so bad – sharp minded, with good behavior, one of the best pupils in sixth form. I don't like playing all day long like other boys. Rather than playing stupid games, for me it is better to play football.

Mom sometimes call me: Khoshim!

– Yes, mom?

– Bring some firewood.

I always say: OK dear mom! – I look around and call Oysha.

– Yes dear brother?

– Bring some firewood!

– With great pleasure brother! – Oysha says. If she doesn't say so she surely gets a smack from me. In a word, everything that mom says will be done. In my opinion, there is no need to do it yourself. The head of our farm, Sirojiddin aka<sup>1</sup>, also always does the same. When he receives a task from others, he gives it to others. I don't know, but I like the way Sirojiddin aka is doing his job. If only others would do the jobs you should do, you would have time to play.

– Orif! – I shout sometimes. By the way, I have forgotten to tell you. Orif is my friend. Even though he looks a little odd, he is very clever. He can finish any task in a couple of seconds, then I copy it out in my notebook even faster. Sometimes I leave a few mistakes so there is no chance for our teacher to notice I copied. So:

– Orif! – I shout.

- What do you want? – says Orif.
- Come on, let's do the homework.
- No, better you come to me.

Over and over I ask him to repeat what he said, for my mom allow me to go out. Finally, I take my bag and disappear. A minute is enough to copy out the homework. As I said before, I prefer using my spare time with something important, so I go to play football.

Today I had the same plan. When I had just put on my shoes, suddenly my mom called me.

- Yes, dear mom?
- Why didn't you feed the chickens?

She told me to feed them in the morning, but I have forgotten. I don't know what to do...

- What did you say, mom?
- I said, why haven't you fed the chickens?!
- Those freeloaders have to start thinking of finding food for themselves mom, – I said trying to change the subject.
- Boy, seems like you haven't even given them water!
- Mom, I don't know why, but they are not drinking water anymore.
- Really?!
- Yes...

It seems that I said something wrong and my mom started to look for a stick to hit me. I don't know how, but I found a way

to run away.

I thought that it's over. The day before I had a similar situation. Every day when I return home from school mom asks:

- What mark did you get son?
- Five (excellent mark) as always!
- Oh you are my dear, - she says. Then she gives me some sweets and allows me to play.

Yesterday she said nothing, but asked me to show my mark book. It was the end for me.

- Our teacher has taken our mark book mom.
- I said, open your bag!

I had no choice...

- What is this? - mom asked.
- Two.
- What about this?
- Three.
- Are you kidding? Why did you say you always get five?!
- I am not a liar mom. Two plus three is five, mom!
- Really?
- Yes...

With shaking hands, she continued.

- What is this?
- Two, mom.
- And this?
- This Is what I got from physics.
- Ok, and what about this?

– I can't say anything, but in total, they all will be five, mom.

– Really?

– Yes...

Thanks god I was good in physical training. With a single jump I found myself in the middle of our yard. I was sure she was ready to beat me.

So, yesterday was not the best day for me. I told my sister to bring my bag from the house and went to see Orif. But he was not at home. I told his mom that I had brought his bag.

– But he has taken his bag, – said Orif's mom.

– So, your son has lied to me! – I said.

I didn't know what to do. I had lots of homework to finish. I don't know why, but at that moment I would have been happy to throw some punches at Orif. If I only could find him...

Me, and some other guys from school were going to write a demand letter to our principal. I decided to write it myself and went to school.

*“To a school principal named after Pushkin, Mr. O. Azizov”*

*Demand letter*

*Mr. O. Azizov, it is becoming hard for pupils to study here, since we are always given lots of homework. That's why we kindly ask you to exclude some subjects from the schedule: mathematics, geometry, native language. They give us nothing other than muddling our brains. They could be replaced with subjects about football instead. If you do so, we promise to do our best to study well. On behalf of other pupils:*

*Khoshimjon Ruziev.*

Even though I finished the letter, I found no strength to give it to our principal. With eyes closed I finally went directly to Otajon Azizov's room.

– What do you want son? – The principal asked.

– Hello dear teacher! – I said.

– Hello.

Without saying any word, I handed over the letter. Unfortunately, the situation later on was awful. An hour had passed, but there was no way the principal was going to stop explaining to me how all my proposed for exclusion subjects were important. According to him, without knowing these subjects it is impossible to become neither agronomist, nor an engineer, nor a zootechnician. But my inner voice at that moment was saying: “Rather than studying math, better to take a spanking from mom.

– Am I right? – The principal asked.

– No way! – I said. – Look at our agronomist Anorvoy. He has no education!

– He had no choice, he was forced to go to war to protect our lives!

The bad day was only beginning for me. The first subject was my “lovely” math.

– Ruziev, tell me, what was the previous lesson about? – our teacher asked suddenly.

Slowly standing up I tried to push Orif, who was sitting by me.

He turned his face away, like he didn't understand me. I pushed him harder, and he started to mumble something.

– Imple equations, – I stated.

I don't know why, but the whole class started laughing. I joined them with great pleasure. I found out later that instead of “simple” I said “imple”.

– Ok, tell me the definition of simple equation? – The teacher continued.

– I know it, but don't know why, it is hard to pronounce it teacher!

– Answer!

– Just a second, teacher, it is on the tip of my tongue!

– Sit down!

I try not to remember that day. Sometimes, I think: I wish I had never been born. Thank god I have Orif. He allowed me to let my anger out on him. When we went to the street, I said:

– Look, why did you hit my dog?

– I have never hit your dog!

– You hit it last year!

– Are you kidding?

– Let me show you how you did it! Eat this! – I said and threw my fist on his head. We had

a great fistfight. With clothes torn apart, our faces were bleeding. Despite this, I was happy. He always gets excellent marks and nothing happens if he helps me sometimes!

So the mood was perfect. Thinking of plov<sup>2</sup> being cooked by

mom, I headed home. When I got home I realized that the door was locked from inside. I knocked on it. When I looked through the peephole I saw mom coming with a stick! Her first question was: Whom have you fought against this time?

– No one mom...

– I have heard that you fought against Orif!

– No way! He started first!

– You are a liar! You never do your lessons, don't help with chores, play all day long!

I'll punish you!

At that moment I realized that if I would not slip away immediately, I could get a smack. I didn't know where to go and I was very hungry...

## Chapter 2

### How I pricked God's arm with a needle

Frankly speaking, mom did a good job by forbidding me to enter the house. Because at that time I was busy seeking a magic cap, searching for it in abandoned houses and yards. Everything started a month ago, when my grandma came to us and told me a story about a magic cap. Anyone who gets this cap can become a superhero, she said. But, it is impossible to find it.

– Dear grandma, what is the color of that cap? – I asked.

– It is made from a white wool.

– Where can I find it?

– The last owner has hidden it at one of the yards nearby.

– Do you think, can I find it?

– Why not? If you seek it, you'll surely find it son.

I have been searching for the cap all day long and have lost my mind already. I have visited each place in the village. But there is only one place left. It is located in the ancient part of the village. Nobody knows whose yard it was before.

When I reached the destination, I discovered how ugly the place was. Wherever I looked, I saw a ghost or something evil staring at me. I even saw a wolf. Then I realized that it was a cat. Searching every corner didn't give any results.

I was very tired and thirsty and started to fall asleep. No way! I should not sleep, I told to myself. Then I entered deeper. There was a rag on the floor. I took it into my hand. Can you believe that I finally found it! It was exactly the cap I was looking for! Made of white wool and so beautiful!

– Hello my dear cap! – I cried out.

– Hello Khoshimjon! – the cap replied.

– I have been looking for you for a long time!

– I have been waiting for you all the time...

I put the cap on my head and flew back home like a bird. Because I had to test it. When I entered the house my mom was sewing a dress for Dono. I approached her and with a low voice called “Moooom”. She looked around but saw nothing.

– Oysha, did you see your brother?

– I don't know mom, – said Oysha.

– Oh my poor boy, where are you?...

– This is all your fault mom, you always punish him...

Standing near the fridge I took my cap off. Both Oysha and mom were surprised and asked:

– Where have you been?! How?!

– I was inside the fridge...

Mother started crying and kissing and hugging me.

– Oh dear boy, you must have caught cold...

With a hot tea they prepared a blanket for me. After each sip I coughed and did my best to look like I have got sick.

Visiting Sorahon, the soothsayer<sup>3</sup> was the first thing on my agenda the next day, as our teacher always says that Sorahon is a cheater. If she is a cheater, I wonder, why so many people visit her. You can't even find so many people in the hospital. Moreover, all of them bring something, someone could bring a sheep, someone could bring somsa (Uzbek food), and most of them surely bring money. Her son Mirobiddinhuja is my classmate and has two bicycles! People believe that Sorahon can talk directly with God. Mirobiddinhuja always boasts that they hear God's voice every day.

When I entered her yard I saw seven women, five old men and three kids. All of them seemed sick. With the help of my cap I entered the house. A woman with a kid was sitting in front of Sorahon, the madam soothsayer.

– A yellow genie must have attacked your son, – said the soothsayer.

Then I heard strange voices sounding like a drum playing coming either from the wall or from the roof. Thank god I was

not alone. Otherwise who knows what would happen. Once those voices ended, I heard someone saying “Amen”.

Sorahon continued:

– You have to bring a yellow goat as a sacrifice, then wrap your boy in its skin.

– Amen! – another voice came from nowhere. The woman with a child looked very frightened.

Sorahon said, “God will help, listen to those voices!”.

I found some strength and with the help of my cap I decided to see this genie. I headed towards the place that the voice was coming from. There was a ladder leading down to the cellar and a huge pot. Then I recognized another man entering the room. Sorahon told him “Oh dear, a black jinee must have cursed you!”. I was petrified when I found that the voice was coming from inside the pot.

I tried to calm down and wanted to look at the jinee. Guess who was sitting there? It was our Mirobiddinhuja! “The almighty himself is Mirobiddinhuja! Maybe you are also a yellow jineeee?”, – I thought to myself. I was so angry and pricked his arm with a needle.

Oh Gooooood! – Mirobiddinhuja cried. “Dear, your situation is awful, listen, the jinees are crying” said Sorahon.

I was crazy with anger because of those cheaters, so I pricked Mirobiddinhuja again and again.

- Moooooom! – crying, Mirobbinhuja called his mom.
- Shut up you! – I said.
- What?! Who are you??
- I am Azrael.
- Azrael?!
- Yes, I came to take your soul...
- Mom! I don't want to die!!
- Shut up! Do you know a boy called Khoshim?
- Yes, dear Azrael yes, I know him!
- If you know him, why didn't you give him your bicycle to ride?
- I gave it to him!
- But then you and your brother beat him!
- Please forgive me!
- Anyway, your soul is now mine! – I put my hands on his neck like I was trying to choke him.
- Oh dear Azrael, please don't take my soul! Forgive me!
- Why are you cheating?
- My mother told me to do so...
- What did she say?
- She told me to say “Amin”, and play those drums.
- You are a liar. You even told everyone at school that you hear the voices of God.
- My mother told me to do so...
- So everything is a lie?
- Yes, Azrael...

– You will go to school and tell everyone that you are a liar, otherwise...!

– I will, I will do this today!

– OK. We shall see... Do your homework, and if Khoshimjon ever asks for anything, never refuse, understand?

Afterwards I decided to check the medicine Sorahon was giving to her “clients”. They were simple drugs available in drugstores. My revenge hadn’t finished. I took some money from the pocket of Sorahon, went to the drugstore and bought some laxative medicine. Then I replaced the medicine in the pockets of clients with the laxatives. Ten days have passed and the whole reputation of Sorahon was badly damaged.

With the help of my cap, things have gone better since then. Everything was great. Even all my marks at school were excellent. I had no need to copy out homework. My glory has gone so high, that even teachers were smiling each time they saw me.

Unfortunately, one day I made a big mistake. I lost all my good reputation after this.. I took the record book and put some excellent marks for me and my best friend Kosim, even though the school year was not finished. All teachers knew this wasn’t right and they called me and my friend Kosim to the room of our principal. There were seven teachers in the room.

– Khoshim, dear, come here. Look at this, do you know who could have put these marks in the record book? – Our principal,

Otajon Azizovich asked.

– I don't know...

– Is it your work, Kosim?

– What are you talking about? – Kosim replied surprised.

– You both have done this! – said one of the teachers.

– No, Khoshim wouldn't have done this, It must be Kosim who did it, – said another teacher.

It seemed like everyone was satisfied with the last comment. The situation was getting worse and tears appeared on Kosim's face. I had to do something...

– I did it!

– Why??! – All of them asked.

– I did it! Kosim didn't even know about it.

This was the end of my good reputation. They said that such a boy like me can never become an agronomist<sup>4</sup>, an engineer or even a zootechnician<sup>5</sup>.

– No! – I said, without wanting to retreat.

– Never! Without knowledge you can't even become a cattleman<sup>6</sup>!

– I will!

– Don't talk too much you! – shouted the principal.

I shut the door and left them. At that time, I really believed that with the help of my cap I could become anything I wanted.

That was my last day in the village. I decided to begin my journey and prove to everyone that even without knowledge from

studying, a person can achieve everything.

Good bye my dear village! Good bye dear trees, dear lakes! From now, no one will damage your branches, since I'm leaving you! Dear mom, please forgive me for all I did! Dear sisters, please also forgive your brother, and if you ever miss him just look at his photos! Do not cry! Some day he will surely return! He will come back as a hero! He will come back with dozens of medals! Dear homework which I had to do, good bye to you as well!

I was leaving the village at midnight and even though I had tears, my soul was full of joy...

### Chapter 3

What is it like to be the happiest boy in the world?

I didn't know where to go or what to do. But I was happy. Because from that moment, everything, starting from food and ending with transport would be free! At times when I felt bored, I held interesting debates with my cap.

– Dear cap, where are we? – I asked.

– Frankly speaking I don't know either, – the cap replied.

– Tell me the truth, have I got any chance to become an agronomist?

– I am sure this will happen someday!

– But I don't have a diploma...

– Do you think not? Look at your pocket.

When I put my hands into my pocket I found a paper with the necessary stamps and signatures on it saying “Elementary school

diploma”.

– Dear cap, but I am too small!

– Don't worry, someday I will give you some height as well.

A few days have passed and I reached a place that looks like a desert. No human can be seen around here. Several times I saw a flock of birds, and even snakes chewing each other's tail. With my cap on my head I headed further. Suddenly I reached a huge field with thousands of trees. A 100-hectare field was divided into several plots, with kids of my age working there.

– Whats`up fellas, – I greeted one of the boys.

– Don't waste my time, – he said.

– Hello, I said!

– I said I have no time to talk, – he said and raised his head.

He saw me and blushed. – I'm

sorry. I thought that you are our specialist Shavkat.

– No problem my friend. Which country is this?

– This isn't a country, this is a desert.

– What are you doing here?

– Mowing the grass.

– Whose cotton is this?

– Ours. Me and five of my friends planted ten hectares. As soon as the cotton

grows we shall pick them up by ourselves.

– Don't you need an agronomist?

– No. We ourselves will become agronomists soon.

Then I tried to test my luck on the next section. There were

some guys digging the field for melon seeds.

– What are you doing?

– Cultivating the land. – They were working very hard and fast.

– Don't you need an agronomist?

– No.

– Why not? Maybe you need one?

– Because we are agronomists.

Then I went through other fields trying to get any information. The fields were amazing and beautiful. All types of fruits could be seen. I counted some twenty types of grape. I found a girl feeding chickens.

– Dear, don't you need a zootechnician?

– What makes you think that we need a zootechnician?

– He could teach you.

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