

# Il labirinto della strega

## The Witch's Maze, English translation

### Chapter 1

Today is a beautiful day. It is autumn and there are lots of red, yellow, orange and brown leaves in the garden. I like the colors of autumn! It's afternoon and it's sunny, but it's not very hot. But today is not just any day. Today is a special day: it's Halloween!

Mom is in the house. She is the nicest, kindest, most beautiful and sweetest girl in the world. She is the best, yes, no doubt! She is my Mom! *Who knows what she's doing now?* I go look.

She is in the kitchen preparing sweets for the party tonight. She says they're very easy and quick to prepare. All you need is eggs, sugar, flour, butter, a pinch of salt, a teaspoon of vanilla extract, a little powdered sugar and dark chocolate. In the end they look like ghosts!

The Halloween party starts at eight o'clock and Mom has already decorated the house with pumpkins, cobwebs, spiders and bats. There are also many candles. A skeleton welcomes the guests at the entrance. It dances and says: *Welcome!* It's very funny!

Cody is in the living room sleeping under the table. On the table there is already a lot to drink and eat: Wine, beer, juices, a blood-red cocktail and many sweets, including biscuits, chocolate muffins and a pumpkin cake. There are also dog treats. *They are certainly delicious!* My mouth is watering.... When does the party start? I'm looking forward to it!

### Chapter 2

Mom still has a lot to do and I'm a little bored. So I go into the garden and enjoy the fresh autumn air. I like being in the garden. We live in a quiet street with only a few cars passing by. Some people are walking on the sidewalk. Maybe they go shopping in the supermarket, or they go to the nearby café to drink coffee.

Yaawn I'm so tired... I could take a nap...

«Ha ha ha! I can imagine their faces when they'll eat them!»

I wake up suddenly. It is dark. Who talked? Someone giggles. I approach the gate. There's a woman out there. Her face is pale and her long black hair covers her face. She has a bag in her hand from which comes a terrible stench. *What's in the bag, rotten eggs? Bleah!* When she sees me, the woman approaches the gate. Her big black eyes stare at me.

«Hello, doggy. Do you want a treat? Or do you prefer... a trick?» says the woman, then she pulls something out of her bag that looks like... a dead frog!

*Woof woof woof!* I bark scared. *How gross!*

The woman giggles amused, then she winks at me and walks away.

I stay there, motionless, frightened and disgusted.

«Kira, what happens?» Mom opened the front door. «Come, we have to get ready for the party!»

I immediately run into the house. Before I go in, I turn around and take another look at the street. I can still smell the smell of rotten eggs.

## Chapter 3

Around eight o'clock the guests arrive and Mom greets them cheerfully. She is dressed like a vampire: she wears a long black-and-red dress and black boots with high heels. She also bought vampire teeth and she put makeup in a peculiar way. She is a bit frightening!

Cody and I also wear costumes. I wear a red cape with hood and Cody wears a wolf costume. Yes, you guessed it right, we are Little Red Riding Hood and the evil wolf!

I look around. *So many friends! But where is Buddy? He will be late, as always...*

The friends of Mom are all dressed up: as zombie, as witch, as demon.... Some of them were inspired by horror movies: One wears a costume of Freddy Krueger from A Nightmare on Elm Street, one of Jason from Friday the 13th and one of Saw. There's also a guy dressed as Edwards Scissorhands, and a couple with children dressed as the Addams family. Fantastic!

Sometimes Mom and Buddy watch a horror movie. I don't like them at all, they are too scary! I always go away when they watch one...

Mom takes immediately many photos and I also pose together with Cody. We look great in our costumes and everyone compliments us!

*But when does Buddy arrive? Ah, there he is, he has finally arrived! He is really a latecomer...*

Everybody calls him Edo, but I call him Buddy because he's my big friend. He is my favorite human – of course after Mom. He is very nice and always plays with me and Cody. He comes to our house almost every day and often takes us for a walk. He is tall, thin, has black hair and green eyes. But tonight I can't see his black hair, because it's covered with.... *toilet paper?*

«Edo!» exclaims Mom when she sees him.

«Hey, hi! Wow, this vampire look really suits you», says Buddy admiring Mom from head to toe.

She smiles flattered. «Well, I can't say the same thing about you...» she answers laughing.

In fact, Mom is right.... Buddy is completely covered with toilet paper! Okay, it's not toilet paper, it's white cloth. But it looks like toilet paper to me. Indeed, Buddy is dressed like a mummy.

*Woof woof! I bark. Aren't you greeting me?*

«Hi Kira», he says and strokes me, «You are also very pretty dressed as Little Red Riding Hood.

But watch out for the bad wolf!» he jokes.

Then, suddenly, someone screams.

«AAAAAAHHHHH!!!!»

Good heavens, what's happening?

## Chapter 4

In the living room a girl dropped a cookie on the floor. With trembling fingers she is pointing to something black moving on the floor.

«This... this spider just came... came out of the cookie» she says terrified.

I am not afraid of spiders. They are quite funny animals! I run to catch it, but I don't make it in time. The spider disappears under the couch and I don't see it anymore.

At that moment other people start screaming. Someone took a piece of the pumpkin cake that Mom prepared with so much love. But from the middle of the cake, like a black waterfall, dozens, no, hundreds of black spiders come out. Other spiders come out from the biscuits and the chocolate muffins. All the sweets are flooded by spiders that run very fast on the ground and begin to climb on the legs of the guests.

«What...?»

«Out from here, quick!»

The guests flee. *What the hell is going on here?*

Too late I realize that the spiders are climbing on me, too. Now they are not so funny anymore...

*Help! Cody! Mom!* I bark terrified. I fall on the ground. *Ouch, that hurts!* The spiders are weaving a web around my body. *Oh no! They want to eat me!*

Mom and Buddy come running. She has a knife in her hand and tries to free me while he tries to keep the spiders away with a broom. Some spiders walk on my muzzle. These spiders really smell bad...

Mom finally manages to free me and we all run out of the house together.

On the street people scream and run scared. There are many white figures on the floor.

This time it's neither toilet paper nor fabric. They are people wrapped in spider webs, ready to be eaten.

## Chapter 5

We cross the garden, go to the tool shed and quickly close the door. The place is small and full of tools, but fortunately there are no spiders. Except for one, that is walking on Cody's head.

«Holy shit!» says Buddy. «What's going on here? Where did all these spiders come from?»

«I don't know, but have you seen how many spiders are out there? They didn't just come out of our sweets. Maybe they came out of everyone's sweets!»

«How is that possible?»

This situation is really crazy.

«We have to call someone. The police, our parents... But I left my cell phone in the house! Do you have yours?»

«Sadly no, this costume has no pockets» says Buddy.

«Then we have to go back into the house...»

«All right, but wait, maybe we can find something useful...» says Buddy and looks around.

In the meanwhile I think.

«Cody, do you think the spiders are weird, too?» I ask him and look at the spider on his head.

«Yes» he says. «They smell weird. They stink like... ..like...»

«Rotten eggs?»

«Exactly.»

The spider falls down. Cody sniffs at it and then... he eats it. «That's weird. Doesn't taste like a spider. It's gummy, like candies.»

«Cody, there's something I need to tell you. This afternoon...» And I tell him about this weird woman.

«Maybe I know who she is.»

«What? Really?»

«I heard some dogs talking about a mysterious woman who lives in a big villa near the cemetery. A woman who lives with many cats. There are also some kids there. They are all very strange: the woman, the cats, the kids. The dogs do not like to walk around there.»

«Okay, then we have to go there. I think she has something to do with all this.»

## Chapter 6

«Perfect!» exclaims Buddy satisfied: in his hand he holds a lighter, in the other the broom. «Let's go!»

We leave the tool shed and Buddy sets fire to the broom to create a torch. Cody and I run towards the open gate.

«Cody, Kira, stop! Where are you going?» shout Mom surprised.

But we don't listen to her. We have to find that woman. We leave the gate and Mom and Buddy follow us worried. The streets are full of spiders. Many people are in the house and look scared out of the window. Thanks to Buddy's torch, the spiders do not come closer: they are afraid of fire.

We pass in front of the supermarket, turn left, cross a park and then continue straight on the main road to the cemetery. There are no spiders here. After a few minutes we arrive at a high iron gate. *We arrived.* Strangely, the gate is open.

«Why did you bring us here? You don't want to go inside, do you?!» Come on, let's go back, I don't like this place," says Mom.

Then we hear a scream coming from the garden. *And now what happens? Spiders again?*

«Maybe someone's in danger, we have to help him!» says Buddy and runs inside, followed immediately by Cody.

«But...just a moment! This is a private property!» exclaims Mom, but Buddy and Cody are no longer to see. Mom shakes her head and enters, I follow her. We walk along a narrow path, with very high hedges at the sides. Then we arrive at a fork. And then to another fork. Which way did Cody and Buddy go?

«Cody! Edo!» shout Mom.

*Where are you?* I bark.

Silence.

«But what kind of garden is this?»

I have a bad feeling. This is not a garden. This is a *labyrinth*.

## Chapter 7

We take the road on the left side. We walk silently. After a while we notice a strange figure in the middle of the path. It is a pumpkin! The pumpkin is big, orange and has an evil smile.

«Good evening, friends» says the pumpkin.

«Good evening» replies Mom.

«If you want to pass, you must solve my riddle.»

«And what is your riddle?»

*I used to be small and round,  
now I am liquid and in a bottle.  
Sometimes I am a sweet guy  
and I dress in white or red,  
Now tell me, what am I?*

Mom thinks for a moment and then says: «The wine!»

«Congratulations, you have solved the riddle. Now you can go on.»

«Hurray!»

*Very good, Mom!*

After a few minutes we come to another fork... *And where do we go now?* This time we turn right. After a while we notice a strange figure in the middle of the path. It is a zombie! The zombie is big, has broken clothes and is full of blood!

«If you want to pass by, you have to solve my riddle.»

«And what is your riddle?»

*I am one word, but also three.  
And you're always happy when you're with me!  
The first word shines in the night sky.  
The second word is very small, it has only two letters!  
The third word is very sweet and the bears love it.  
Now tell me, what am I?*

Mom thinks for a moment and then says: «The honeymoon!»

«Congratulations, you have solved the riddle. Now you can go on.»

«Wonderful!»

*Mom, you are a genius!*

After a few minutes we come to another fork... *Where do we go now?* This time we're going left. After a while we notice a strange figure in the middle of the path. It is a werewolf! He has black hair, yellow eyes and very long fangs!

«If you want to pass by, you must solve my riddle.»

«And what's your riddle?»

*I come with the autumn colors,  
you will find me in the woods, among the colored leaves.  
But beware! My house is dangerous.  
I am small, brown and delicious.  
And now tell me, what am I?*

Mom thinks for a moment and then says: «The chestnut!»

«Congratulations, you have solved the riddle. Now you can go on.»

«Oh, extraordinary!»

*You're the best!*

After a while we notice two figures in the middle of the path. This time it's not a strange creature, it's Cody and Buddy. *We finally found them!*

## Chapter 8

«There you are at last!» says Mom happy. I am also very happy to see Cody and Buddy.

«We have to get out of here» she says after hugging them.

And so we get back on the road. But after a few minutes we arrive at a fork in the road...

We take the road on the left. After a while we notice a strange figure in the middle of the path. It's a ghost! It is white and floats a few inches off the ground.

«If you want to pass by, you must solve my riddle.»

«And what is your riddle?»

*I have wings and can fly, but I am not a bird.  
I'll accompany you on vacation or on your business trip.  
I'm fast, no, very fast!*

*But often my journey takes one, two, three, twelve hours!  
And now tell me, what am I?*

Buddy thinks for a moment and then says: «The plane!»

«Congratulations, you solved the riddle. Now you can move on.»

«Excellent!»

*Great, Buddy!*

After a few minutes we come to another fork... *And where do we go now?* This time we're going right. After a while, we notice a strange figure in the middle of the path. It is a bat! It is small and flies around.

«If you want to pass, you'll have to solve my riddle.»

«And what is your riddle?»

*We are many brothers,  
we are all white and small!  
We like to eat, laugh and also chat.  
We wash ourselves two or three times a day.  
Now tell me, what are we?*

Buddy thinks for a moment and then says: «The teeth!»

«Congratulations, you solved the riddle. Now you can move on.»

«Excellent!»

*Very good, Buddy!*

«My goodness, what a maze» says Mom. «How many more puzzles do we have to solve?»

«And who knows what will happen if we give the wrong answer...» says Buddy thoughtfully.

*I don't want to think about it... these monsters don't look friendly!*

Then we see a light at the end of the path. Happy, we walk towards the light and come to a large square clearing surrounded by tall hedges. There are four lanterns at the corners. In the middle there is a table, and on the table are many sweets.

And there, in front of the table, are two guys. They look at us in surprise, and one of them asks: «Who the hell are you?»

## Chapter 9

«So who are you? Are you new?» asks one of the boys again.

Both boys have black hair, are tall, thin and pale and wear a long black cape. Buddy and Mom introduce themselves, then he says: «We heard screams, so we came in and ended up in this maze. And who are you?»

«I'm Matteo» says one of them, then he puts his arm on the other one's shoulders. «And this is Mattia, my brother. He's the one who screamed. He's afraid of werewolves. He's a scaredy cat» he says with a grin.

Mattia doesn't answer, but he looks at the sweets on the table.

«We have reached the center of the labyrinth. This must be the price!»

But I have a bad feeling and start barking. *Stop! Don't touch them!*

Too late: Mattia touches a sweet and some spiders come out and climb on his hand. *Oh no! The spiders again!*

Mattia cries out scared, while Matteo grabs one of the spiders and watches them closely. «Not a prank joke, Sabrina has had a great idea.»

And then he eats it.

«Yuck!» shout Mom disgusted. Matteo seems to find our disgusted faces very funny and breaks out in laughter. «They are not real spiders.»

«Listen, can you explain what's going on? Where are we? And who is Sabrina?» asks Buddy.

«I'll explain it to you» says a voice behind us. I turn around and see a pale woman with long black hair. With her is a young girl with a long black braid. I recognize the woman immediately. This is the one I saw this afternoon.

The woman spreads her arms and solemnly says: «Welcome to our magic school!»

## Chapter 10

*Did I hear that correctly? Does she have magic school?*

«This is my magic school for young wizards and witches. I am Amelia, the principal of the school. This is my assistant Sabrina» she says pointing to the girl.

«This year we have set up a maze in the schoolyard for Halloween. And this is the prize for whoever gets to the center first» she says pointing to the table full of candy.

The two brothers seem happy. They were first in the middle, so they won.

Meanwhile, other boys arrive, all dressed in black. And with them come many black cats.

«What about the spiders?» asks Buddy.

«An idea of my assistant, a little last surprise. This afternoon, I got the last ingredients to make them» says the witch, then she looks at me and winks.

«So it's your fault that it's full of spiders out there» says Mom angry. «Your spiders have invaded the village and ruined my party!»

«What? Are you serious?» says the witch in amazement, then takes a small crystal ball out of her pocket, says a few words I don't understand, and then looks carefully into the ball.

«My goodness!» she says and then looks at her assistant. «What happened? Didn't you put the spell just on our sweets?»

The girl seems very worried. «Maybe... maybe I said the magic spell wrongly» she says and looks at her shoes.

The woman shakes her head. «You have to be careful when you cast a spell! Look at this mess!»

«In any case, don't worry» she says to us, «The spiders are not dangerous. They are very realistic, but actually they are just jelly beans. I'm going to fix this now. And you will forget everything that happened.»

«What? Wait!» says Mom, but the woman raises her arms in front of her and says something in an unknown language. The air around us is vibrating, full of energy. A light envelops me and I lose consciousness.

## Epilogue

*Ding dong.*

«Ah, the first guests have arrived!»

It is the voice of Mom. I open my eyes. *Where am I? Where is the witch?*

I am in my house, in my garden. Mom has opened the gate and is greeting her friends. She is happy and smiling in her Halloween costume. I get up a little confused. Everything seems fine. I enter the house and go into the living room. There is no one there. The sweets she prepared are on the table. I put my paws on the edge of the table, take a cookie and eat it. Nothing happens. *Was it all a bad dream? The spiders, the labyrinth, the school of magic, the witch...*

But now I notice a strange thing. On the table there are not only the sweets that Mom prepared, but many more. The table is full of delicacies!

In fact, even the decorations of the living room are different from those that Mom has put. They are much more beautiful and scary! Little bats hanging on the wall, pumpkins lit by candles, red and black balloons, spiders and cobwebs... I get close to a spider and smell it. It is made of plastic.

«The witch has arranged everything, as promised» says Cody sitting next to me. *If Cody also remembers, then it wasn't just a bad dream...*

Guests start coming into the living room. Everyone admires the decorations and enjoys the sweets. Mom talks to everyone and enjoys the party. She seems to have forgotten everything. Maybe it is better that way.

In the end comes also Buddy - late, of course - and the party can finally start.

This time, without any nasty surprises.