**THE CUP TOWER**

**A Story for an 8 year old girl with separated parents**

**Written by Petra Kapovic Vidmar, Croatia, 2016 *(and published here with the author's permission)***

*Note from Petra:* *I wrote this story after attending Susan Perrow's Therapeutic Story Seminar in Opatija this year. In my class there are twenty-four pupils. Thirteen of them live with separated parents. I wanted to write a story for all of them, but the cases were so different. One of my pupils' mothers talked to me recently about getting a divorce. This gave me an idea for the story, and I wrote one for her daughter hoping it would help her and maybe some other pupils facing separation.*

*I told it as a “motivation story” before art class.  After hearing the story all the children made an artwork, drawing and designing cups.  I especially hoped that the story would help prepare this one particular girl, who is very tidy and likes things to be in order, for the new changes in her life. This pupil knows about her parents getting separated. She is an only child and for the past eight years has lived with her parents in a small house, but the father is now moving to his own apartment.*

*I also met with the mother and gave her a copy of the story to read to her daughter during the summer break. I suggested that after reading the story to buy with her daughter some cups for the father’s new kitchen and/or to give her artwork to her father as a gift. I explained to her how this story could help. I am sure in one thing - it helped the mother (maybe father too) and sometimes that is a good start!*

In the middle of the bay there is a little colourful house. It is a perfect house with a red roof, white walls, green windows with yellow curtains and a small balcony full of colourful flowers. All the rooms are small but nicely decorated and very neat.

The kitchen is tiny and full of sunlight. The kitchen cupboards, table and chairs are white but details like dishcloths and vases with flowers are full of bright colours which bring joy to the room.

Six brightly coloured cups live in that kitchen. They are neatly stacked in one of the kitchen cupboards. You can see them through the glass doors of the cupboard. And they can see you. They look like they are watching what is going on in the kitchen. Six of them don′t fit in the small cupboard separately each on its saucer, so they are nested on each other. In that way they form a group together – a small cup tower.

From these cups, family members drink hot tea every morning, coffee with milk in the afternoons and milk every evening. So, each cup goes on a journey every day.

The journey begins in the morning when they are placed on the dining table to serve tea. They feel hot because of the hot water with a teabag inside that colours the water red, yellow or orange. When they serve tea, their cheeks get rosy and hot. Family members drink their tea very carefully. When cups are emptied and cold, they are moved into the kitchen sink where they enjoy their bubble bath. After they are washed up and dried, they soon get back to their kitchen cupboard to rest until afternoon coffee time.

While serving coffee the cups listen to the neighbours' stories and also some compliments on their brightly coloured look. Coffee gets the cups very dirty, so they enjoy their bubble bath in the sink a little bit longer. Now the cups are shiny and clean, ready for their evening milky look.

Tired but pleased after a long hardworking day the cups are happy. They are all together in their kitchen cupboard, forming a small cup tower.

One day, instead of their usual morning journey, the cups are shut into a big box. Terrified and surprised inside the darkness of the box, they await their destiny. A few days pass until the box opens. They are blinded by the daylight but happy to get out of the box. Soon they notice that their kitchen cupboard isn't where it used to be, or anywhere else in the kitchen. Instead, there are completely different cupboards and shelves. Three cups are placed on a saucer in one kitchen cupboard and the other three in another kitchen cupboard, new and bigger than the old one.

This is the first time ever that the cups are separated in this way. It is a very strange place for each cup although there is a lot more space for them now. Also, they miss their glass doors. Now they can't see what goes on in the kitchen anymore.

Three cups in one cupboard wonder what the other three cups do in the other cupboard. They miss each other very much.

However, during the next few days they realise that they leave their cupboard as before and meet with the separated cups on the kitchen table or in the sink. Oh, how happy they are again! Separation isn't so bad because nothing has changed except their place in the cupboard. And that isn't so bad because they all have more space sitting each on its saucer and still close to the others.

The separated cups meet the other ones almost every day on their journey. Just before their favourite bubble baths they make a cup tower just like before.

New things are so exciting!

This is one of the pieces of art work:

