

"Are you alone?"

"I am alone," answered Stephanos, "have you brought my children?"

"I have brought your children."

"God reward you."

"Stay where you are" said the voice.

Then Stephanos heard the creaking sound of panniers being lifted off the horse and placed upon the ground.

"When I'm beyond the bend in the road, you can come forth and take your children, not before," said the man, and he galloped away.

Stephanos thought he would never see the dust disappear round the bend in the road, but the welcome signal came at last. Then he rushed forward. A huge pair of panniers were standing by the road side. In one of them, fast asleep, was little Sevasti, the girl of three, safe and well.

In the other, ah me! were the remains of Demitri the boy of four, hacked into exactly one hundred pieces.

Pinned to the pannier was a paper, on which these words were scrawled in what looked like red ink "You ransomed only one child, I return the other. *Niko has not forgotten.*"

