Bulgarian education

**Cast:**

Martin – a present-day boy

Gencho – a boy from the Bulgarian National Revival Time

Martin’s Mother

**Stage costumes:**

Martin – Denim jeans, colourful T-shirt, trainers

Gencho – white shirt, dark trousers, shoes with laces (old fashioned)

Mother – home clothes

**Props:**

Modern time: a school backpack, a thick school book (in Biology), a colourful notebook, a ball-point pen, a tablet and a pair of headphones.

Bulgarian National Revival Time: a pencil, an old book bound with wrapping paper which hides the book cover.

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*/An autumn evening. A modern kids’ room with a desk, a computer, some books and notebooks. Martin is sitting at his desk, doing his homework while looking at the computer screen. After a while, he starts rubbing his hands in delight and exclaims:/*

MARTIN: Wow, Internet is great! Just turn on the computer, make a click…and done! Everything is easily found! Now I’ve done with my homework and I’m ready for my test tomorrow!

/He looks happy and putting his headphones on he starts dancing/

MARTIN’S MOTHER: (coming in) Have you got lots to do for school, my dear?

*(Martin can’t hear her because he’s got his headphones on).*

*MOTHER*? Are you dancing because you’ve finished yet?

MARTIN: *(taking his headphones and rubbing his hands in delight)*. Yes, mum! Thanks to technologies and Google’s help, everything is easy now!

MOTHER: Good! Go on studying for a little while and I’ll call you in half an hour time when dinner is ready.

MARTIN: OK, Mum!

*(Martin sits at his desk and writes down a few more words then he puts his tablet, his Biology book, a notebook and a ball point pen into his backpack. He sits back on his chair, yawns and rests his head on his arms. Suddenly he falls asleep. He has a wonderful dream. He is now back in time. He is walking along the streets of a small town from the Bulgarian Revival Period. He stops in front of an old house).*

MARTIN: Wow! What sort of house is that?

*(Gencho comes on the stage and gets near to Martin).*

GENCHO: Hello! Who are you? What strange clothes you’re wearing! You’ll be in trouble! Don’t you know how strict our ‘daskal’ is?

MARTIN: What does ‘daskal’ mean?

GENCHO: ‘Daskal’ is a teacher. He and the priest are the most important people in our town. They know everything and they teach us, the children.

MARTIN: I’m Martin and I come from Sofia. Can you tell me where I am now?

GENCHO: You are in my birth town Kotel.

MARTIN: I know about Kotel! It’s the birth place of D-r Peter Beron, a famous encyclopedist, a doctor and a writer. He is the patron of our school.

GENCHO: A patron? What does it mean?

MARTIN: The ‘patron’ is a famous person whose name is used by schools to show consideration. Tell me about the house in front of us? What is it like?

GENCHO: Ah, this is my school.

MARTIN: *(surprised)* A school? What a strange school! Can you show me around?

*(The boys cross an imaginary house threshold and step into a classroom).*

GENCHO: My school is in a single-room house with an earthen floor, small windows and a fireplace at the corner. We used to sit on mats on the floor but now we have desks. The first desk, which is covered with sand, is where the first-graders sit. They learn to write letters on the sand with a stick. The older children sit at the other desks and they write with slate pencils on lined and squared slates. In winter children bring firewood from home to keep us warm. Also we clean the classroom ourselves.

MARTIN: Oh yes! I’ve read about this in my History lessons!

GENCHO: And do you know that every day the teacher selects his assistants among the best performing pupils? They help the newcomers and those who are lagging behind with the lessons. This mutual teaching method is called the Monitorial System.

MARTIN: And where are your textbooks?

GENCHO: We haven’t got any textbooks? Our teacher reads to us from the church books to make us religiously aware people.

MARTIN: That’s interesting! And do you want me now to tell you about my school? It’s in a bright and large three-storey building which is kept warm with the central heating. There are many classes and there is a separate room for each class. Each school subject is taught by a different teacher. Most of the teachers are women who are as nice and kind as mum. There are white boards in our classrooms where the teachers write and we put everything down in our notebooks using our pens. *(Martin shows Gencho how his ball point pen works)*. Also, there is a computer and multimedia in each classroom.

GENCHO: What do ‘computer’ and ‘multimedia’ mean?

MARTIN: It’s difficult to explain to you but it’s technology which is an indispensable part of our world today. It makes our life easier and more interesting.

GENCHO: What is there in that bag on your back?

*(Martin opens up his backpack and takes out his student’s book. Gencho gets it in his hands and carefully leaves it through, looking at the colourful illustrations and photographs. He shyly feels the notebook and clicks the ball- point pen to try the ink on his finger).*

GENCHO: *(pointing at the tablet)* And what is the glass slate used for?

MARTIN: Oh, that’s a tablet.

*(Martin switches the tablet on and it lights up. Gencho covers his eyes with his hand, unable to look at it)*

GENCHO: The light is brighter than the iron candlestick at home!

MARTIN: Don’t be afraid! It’s a magic window which helps all children around the world learn quickly new things, listen to songs, and the book characters can move and talk. You just need to touch it with your finger tip and make the world alive. *(Martin is showing Gencho how the tablet works).*

*(Gencho daren’t touch that strange object and keeps his arms behind his back).*

GENCHO: How interesting is that! Is there a way to come with you in your town? I love studying and I’ll be an excellent student in your school. We can be best friends.

MARTIN: Good. I can help you with the lessons when you need it.

GENCHO: But how are we going to do this?

MARTIN: I’ve got an idea! Let’s join hands and close our eyes! We’ll say together: ’Secondary School number 25’! And we’ll get home where Mum is preparing dinner right now and is waiting for me.

*(The boys join hands and say the magic words.Suddenly Martin wakes up and looks around. Gencho is leaving the scene).*

MARTIN: Hey, friend, where are you? Have I only dreamed? It was all so strange… *(Martin is rubbing his eyes, looking around)*

MARTIN’s MOTHER: *(entering the room)*: Come on! Dinner is served!

*( They both leave the stage)*