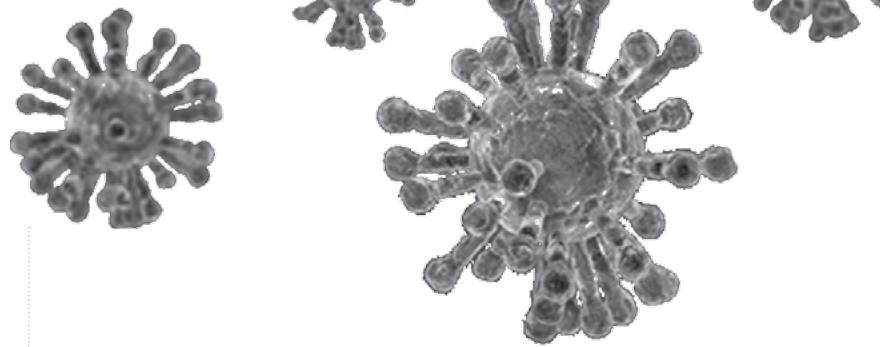


GERMS

SŠFKL

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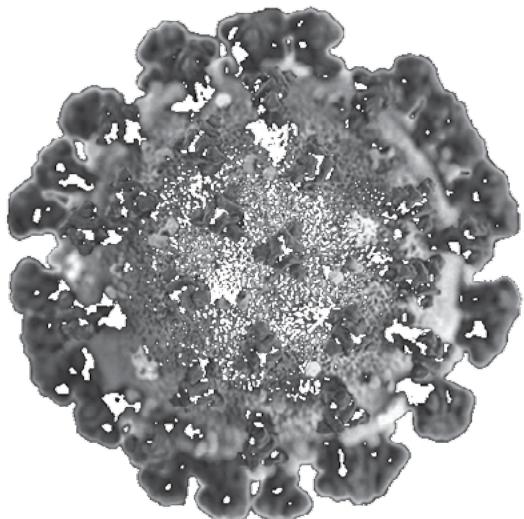
Editorial

Teaching from home, learning from home, staying at home, social distancing, coronavirus lockdown ... These are the latest in-words. Our daily lives have changed dramatically, yet we managed to publish our fifth edition of Ge(r)ms the old way, with some delay, but still. Some say nothing will be the same again. Our magazine, however, follows the usual format, and the topics, the stories, the poems, the illustrations ... are all pre-coronavirus. A lot is written about our students' participation in the international

Erasmus+ project Mission Possible; there are stories which our students wrote for the Literary Competition *Bodi pisatelj*, and one of which, Maša's story *Beautiful Life*, won Special Jury Mention this year; the poems deserve special attention; the German section is here again; and there is much more worth reading.

I hope you will enjoy browsing through the magazine as much as we enjoyed creating it.

Helena Doberšek



STUDENTS' OPINIONS

CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION

With the rate technology today is growing there are more and more cameras recording us on every step we take. These cameras (CCTV) are safety cameras, which means the footage isn't being broadcast publicly.

CCTV cameras are a controversial topic and it is hard to only pick one side of the arguments. CCTV can help us prevent bigger crimes or disasters where a lot of people could be in danger, like terrorist attacks and mass shootings. With the help of CCTV, thefts could be spotted in financially more sensitive businesses, like private shops and self made companies.

In big cities, such as London, CCTV cameras are way more common than here, which makes them a bigger problem. Personally, I haven't had bad experiences with CCTV, but I think being surrounded by it would make me uncomfortable at times. Being watched every step I take isn't

the reason I would feel uneasy, especially if I'm not doing anything illegal, it's the fact that the government and the authorities are gaining more and more control over society. This path to a government controlled state with a society full of non self-aware and naive people could potentially be very dangerous to our subconscious free will. With the rise of CCTV there is also a great danger of footage abuse and cyber wars.

In conclusion, average people nowadays don't have much control over big government decisions like CCTV, but we can always stay grounded and critical of the things the government says and does.

Urška Rojc, 3. Fa

LIFE WAS BETTER WHEN TECHNOLOGY WAS SIMPLER

It goes without saying that technology has a big impact on our lives. These days, when it is even more advanced and ahead of time, we can say that it almost controls us in ways we don't even notice. But everything seems so normal to us, as this kind of technology has been around for most of our lives. We find it hard to believe that there were times when people didn't use any technology whatsoever. The question is whether or not those times were simpler and if we would be better off without technology.

Let me start off by saying that everything has its advantages and disadvantages. Technology has brought us many good as well as bad things. But I think this is a very common topic to talk about. I would rather discuss the impact this technology has on our mind and the way we think. As we can see, people who lived without technology that we have now had and still have a very different mindset than we do. And I believe that advanced technology plays a big part in this. The internet gives us so much information in such a short period of time that it subconsciously plants this information inside our brain. We don't notice it immediately,

but in time it affects the way we think and say certain things. To support that opinion, people whose lives were mostly without technology had a mindset which, I believe, was more free. In other words, they could think for themselves due to the fact that no irrelevant information was set in their minds. That is why I think they lived a simpler life. Because we see so many things on the internet, hear about problems around the world and are constantly exposed to definitions of ‘perfect’, we worry so much and stress about unimportant things, while people back then didn’t even think about all that.

On the other hand, technology has given us the ability to do things we never could. And even if people before that didn’t really lack anything, many things now are really useful. But then again, because of that a lot of people don’t know how to do certain things by themselves anymore.

In conclusion, technology will always be part of our lives now, whether we like it or not, and we have to deal with it. People back then might have had it easier in some parts, but people nowadays, with this developed technology, have it better in other parts. We all live our life the way we can, so whether with advanced technology or without it, it is up to us to make the best of it and make it as simple as we can.

Klara Lapornik, 4. Ka

NOWADAYS APPEARANCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN PERSONALITY

Nowadays we talk or hear a lot about appearance in comparison with personality.

If we look about that on the internet, we can find a lot of inspirational videos on YouTube in which people are supporting others, saying that personality is more important than our looks, and that we should focus on that. But let’s be honest for a minute; no matter how many times we hear it’s on the inside what matters, that beauty is only skin deep, women know deep down, it’s on the outside that the whole world judges them. Like

it or not, only looks matter. But not just how our outfit looks, it is so important how our body looks. It’s like beauty doesn’t even exist unless you can cross everything on the checklist: a skinny waist, a small nose, pretty hair, long and skinny legs ...

We are always under the microscope and nothing is ever good enough. If we all could just accept ourselves and others, and get it clear that nobody is perfect, everything would be different. Each and everyone of us is beautiful in our own way. We must remember that beauty comes from the inside, that personality matters. For example, when we are choosing ‘real’ friends or partners in our life, it doesn’t matter how they look and how they are dressed.

In my opinion, it’s the personality that is the most important. I am not focusing on or criticizing clothes or looks when I am looking for a friend for example, because I wouldn’t like to be criticized because of that. I think if all of us tried to think that way and stop judging others (the way we wouldn’t like to be judged), significant progress would be made.

Patricija Krhin, 3. Fa

TODAY WE LIVE IN A LOOKS-OBSESSED SOCIETY

“How do I look? Do I look like Billie Eilish? Does this shirt make me look fat? ...” are the questions that most of the people, especially girls, ask every day. We walk into a store, turn on the TV, or everywhere we look, we get ‘attacked’ by photos and quotes about how we should look.

I think that the problem begins in our childhood. Our parents say things like: “You look like a clown, go change your pants, so they match your shirt.” And so a small part of child’s creativity gets killed, and the idea that it is important how he gets dressed is born. The child’s friends have the same influence as their parents, and later it is the shops and advertisements that force them to follow the latest (fast!) fashion. But clothes are not the only thing about looks.

Back then when people didn’t have mirrors to see

if their hair was on point, they were much happier. Today we barely go out without checking ourselves in the mirror. The fact that we see ourselves as good-looking gives us much more confidence, positive thinking and other. But on the other hand, it gets frustrating to constantly being worried if we look okay.

Furthermore, there are also people who do not have their own style, but they follow their idols. That is mostly true for girls. It can be good to have someone who inspires you and gives you confidence, but sometimes someone takes it too far. It comes to the point when they want the same size of mouth as their favourite singer or even the same skin tan.

To sum up, I agree that today it is all about looks and that it is our fault that we don't change our thinking. I think we should not worry too much about how we look, or listen to other people's opinions. We are all different and we all have different taste in things. We should also keep in mind that if you don't like it, somebody else might. Body positivity should be something like workout. Also, beauty is just relative and temporary - it comes and goes.

Veronika Černetič, 3. Zb



TODAY WE LIVE IN A LOOKS-OBSESSED SOCIETY

In the past, people liked each other because of their personalities. Looks were just a bonus. Because there was no social media, people did not have the idea of ‘perfect’. But nowadays, with all the social media, looks are becoming more and more important, even an obsession.

Firstly, I would like to address first impressions when meeting a person. I think that most of us form an opinion about a person based on our first impression. For example, if there were two people standing in front of you, one with nice, shiny hair, expensive clothes, a thinner body and a smile on their face, and another one with different clothes (not the kind that everybody wears and likes), a piercing in their lip and a serious face, I think that with no hesitation 80% of people would want to get to know the first person. Why? Because they look like most people do, they look ‘normal’. They look like people on social media do, and most people want to be like that. They blend in with the crowd. And because they look put together and pleasing to look at, you probably think that they are nicer too. But what we don’t know is that the second person might be nicer. They may not be the most outgoing and it’s hard for them to start a conversation or meet people. But if you started talking to them, you would realise that they were nice and friendly. Maybe you would even prefer being friends with them over the first person. You should never judge a book by its cover, because you never know what is hiding in the book.

Furthermore, the influence of social media is increasingly powerful in today’s society. Everybody has a phone, a computer or a television. That means that every day you look at all beautiful people on screens and wish you were them. This refers especially to young girls that look up to social media models and hope they would be like them. But what they don’t know is that these models on screens may not be as perfect as they show themselves on social media. They probably Photoshop their photos to put the best image of themselves out into the world because they don’t feel confident enough in their natural body. And young girls want to look like the perfection they see on screens, which in real life doesn’t even exist.

We have a vision of what is beautiful in our heads mainly because of social media, and everything that doesn’t add to those measures is automatically not beautiful, or, as we like to say, ugly.

To sum up, not everything you see on the screen is real and therefore you shouldn’t compare yourself to what you see. You are beautiful in your own, unique way and that makes you, you. What would the world look like if we all looked the same? Pretty dull, if you ask me. That’s why we need to accept *different*. Different is beautiful.

Špela Ovčak, 3. Za

BEING ALL NATURAL IS BETTER

Nowadays, some people love to have plastic surgery. They believe that what God gave them isn’t beautiful enough, so they change it surgically. Most of the time the reason for this is low self-esteem or/and being influenced by celebrities. Everybody looks perfect online although they have probably had cosmetic surgery done on them or have used Photoshop. Some teenagers might not be aware of this, which is why they beat themselves up for being too ‘ugly’. Some might know about all this, yet they still compare themselves to the perfect image of celebrities online.

I strongly believe that everybody should love themselves the way they are even though it’s sometimes hard. They might not be perfect, but everyone is unique in their own way. Everybody has different taste. Our looks could not be liked by everyone. We might get rejected by someone we have a crush on. But we shouldn’t give up, because there is a special someone for everyone.

As I’ve said before, God gave us natural beauty. We are meant to be the way we are. Following the trends, for example of having a big behind, will pass, and you might not like it anymore. If you have your body shaped surgically, you can’t change it back unless you have another surgery.

That means more money, more risk of getting infection and putting your body under stress, as if everyday stress wasn't enough.

If you don't like yourself, then just use makeup. There are many ways to do it. You can go to a beauty salon and a cosmetician can do it for you professionally, but that's usually a case for special occasions. Plus, you will waste so much money and time going to a beauty salon every day. That's why another option is to buy all the makeup supplies and do your makeup at home. It might be hard at first, but the beauty community has developed so much all across social media platforms that it really isn't a problem finding a YouTube video or two on how to do your makeup. But please, don't change your face so much that you won't be recognisable anymore. You should still look like you, so just emphasize the things you like on your face. For example, if you have beautiful eyes, you can put on some mascara and they will be more noticeable.

In conclusion, I think that we should all stay the way we are. We should accept ourselves and not put our body at risk just because of today's trends and social media influencers, who might not be trustworthy. We should feel confident in our body.

Pia Ferbežar, 3. Kb



Pia STAMFEL 4.Ka

THE USE OF REGULAR SKINCARE PRODUCTS IN BEAUTY SALONS

With the cosmetic industry on the rise in the past decade many women (and men) have started taking care of their skin and using skincare products, which is why facials and facial treatments are getting increasingly popular. Consequently, many new beauty salons have been opened to offer various cosmetic treatments. But with the popularity of the said treatments, the products are getting more expensive by the minute, so many salons try to save some money by buying regular skincare products from the store. It can be argued that by performing a facial correctly even cheaper products will give better results, but is it truly what is best for the customer?

For the most part, every cosmetician knows that skincare products used in salons have large amounts of active ingredients, which are typically too aggressive for everyday use, but perfect for once every few weeks. And yet many salon owners argue that regular products can do just as much good for the skin. It is true that a properly done massage improves blood circulation and thus stimulates the skin barrier so that more active ingredients can make it into the skin. It is also clear that professional cosmetic products are far more expensive than regular ones. Unnecessary money is spent on a lot of products. For example, famous brands tend to overcharge for their products so that they seem better than they actually are.

On the other hand, when a customer requests a facial treatment, it is the cosmetician's duty to deliver the wanted results. If the customer is already taking care of their skin, regular store bought products just might not cut it, because their skin is already regularly hydrated and taken care of. After all, it is logical to assume that a customer wants the best and quickest results, and sometimes only professional products can truly guarantee that. This is especially true if the said customer has some sort of skin problem. For example, if they have acne or sensitive, dry skin, they most likely are already insecure about it, and it would be the cosmetician's job to at least minimise, if not cure, the problem. But when it comes to specific skin problems, the products we

use play a crucial role, for cheaper products with cheaper ingredients can make the condition way worse than it originally was.

In conclusion, I would say that using professional products is far more beneficial for customers and the business itself. Because when customers are happy and satisfied with the results, the word will get around, inviting in new customers.

Patricija Zalar, 3. Kb

THE BENEFITS OF WORK PLACEMENT ABROAD

In this short composition, I am going to describe my experience and views of practical training and living abroad.

In the beginning, I expected something unexpected, very advanced, and completely unknown. But then you see that the main things are similar, or the same as in our school. It just depends on the procedures and methods used. In many cases you see that some manual tasks are replaced by an automatic analyser, which does not mean that it is not necessary to know the method, for example the basics of some reactions or predicting results.

I can confirm that this training abroad was just another plus to our practical classes. It improved and consolidated our pre-knowledge and helped us gain new skills and learn different methods used for a particular analysis.

In my opinion, practical training is a great pro in our profession, because at school, where the number of lessons is limited, you just get to know a method, but you do not really have time to fully understand it. You do not have time to do it once again, to repeat it, and to learn it in detail. That is why students may get confused because they haven't mastered the basics. But with the experience like this you get the point immediately from different perspectives. You also get aware of the actual work, how patients' lives will depend on your work, precision and knowledge.

In the laboratory where I worked, they first

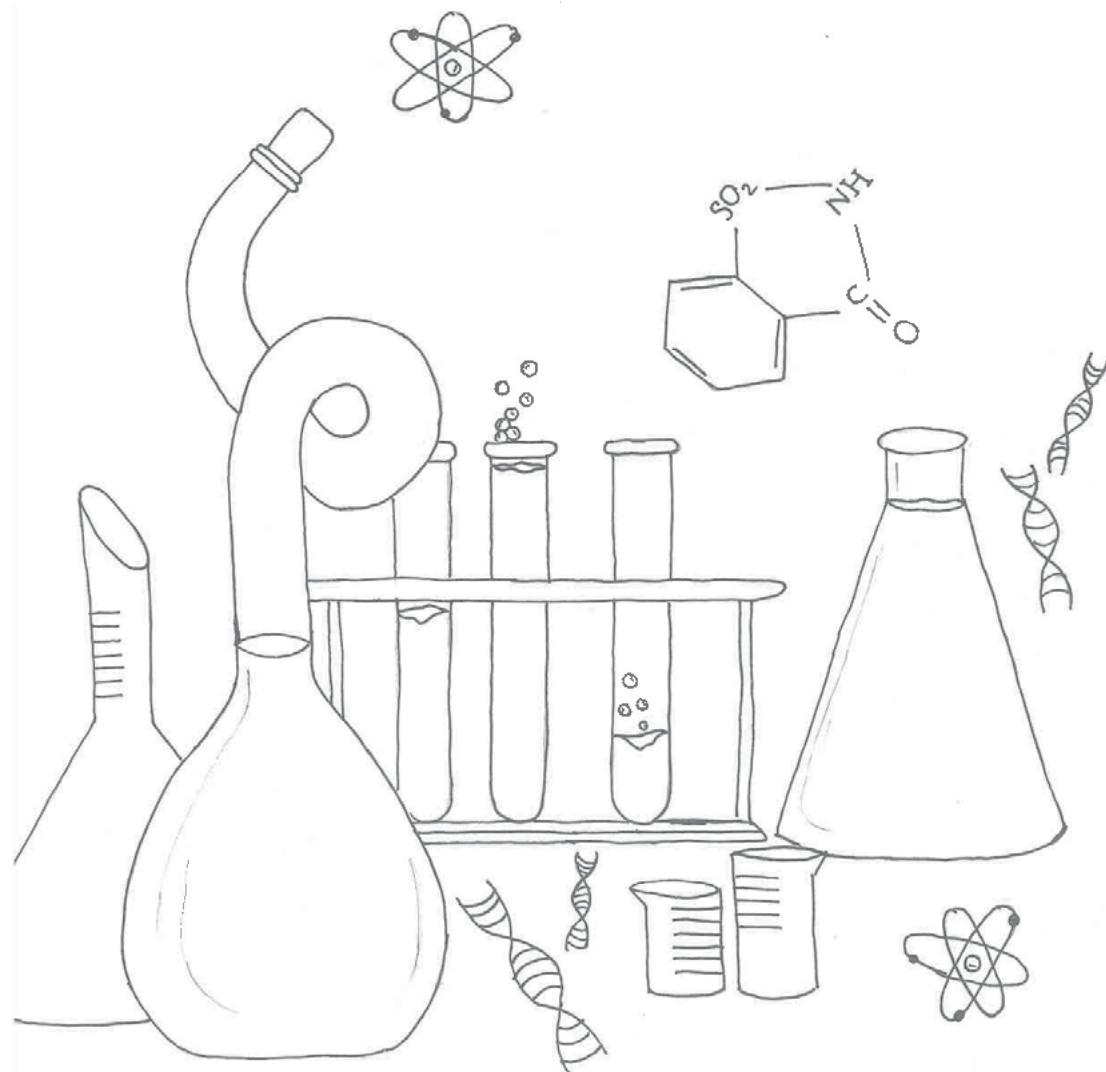
scared us, because they prepared the so-called 'management game', where you had to discuss inputs and outputs. At first I thought this was useless, but as weeks passed by, I started to realise why this game was so important. It is because many mistakes and incorrect diagnoses happen in the pre-analytical phase. We have mentioned it at school a few times, but when you see it in practice, when you are working with real human samples, you really understand it. I think that people who introduce you to the topics like this have the biggest influence on your way of thinking, working and awareness.

We also learned some new methods and new tests/analyses, which we had not had in our school.

I am thankful that I participated in this exchange programme, not just because of practice, but also because it was such a valuable life experience. You get to know many things. You are convinced how your country is terrible and that nothing is right. However, as you get a chance to live abroad, you really start to appreciate your culture and its system in general.

I learned how to live on my own, manage money, adapt to various situations and handle unwanted inconveniences. For me this was the call of awakening, because I had always been dreaming of living in another country, and I just loved it. It helped me to build independence, confidence and faith. It made me realise how important the knowledge of foreign languages was. And I was really lucky to challenge myself in the Russian language. This experience motivated me to work harder, not to give up on my hobbies and interests, and to follow my dreams. It gave me new motivation for this school year, to study harder. It broadened my mind, helped me become stronger, and made me look at school from a completely different perspective.

Neli Truden, 4. L



OUR FRIENDS HAVE A BIG INFLUENCE ON US

I think that friends do indeed influence us, especially someone we call our best friend. But their influence might not always be beneficial.

When we meet a person, we decide if we want to let them into our world, maybe even into our very private one. If we hang out with this person a lot and believe this person is good for us, then we subconsciously start mirroring their actions. The same goes for them, of course. We start to talk in a similar way, pick up some of their words and phrases, take up their hobbies, imitate their body movements, etc. The longer you spend time with the person, the more you and your friend become like one person. I see that happening to me, with my best friend. We started using the same words in conversations, thinking alike, we sometimes even complete each other's sentences or say the same sentence at the same time. We get along so well that we spend all the time together in school and we sometimes meet even outside of school.

However, sometimes your friends' influence can be negative. The bad kind of influence would be people who do drugs, drink alcohol, smoke ... If you are not the kind to put all those substances in your body and if you join a group of people who do that, then you should be careful and stick to your own opinion. If you manage that, that's great, but if not, then we got another smoker and/or drinker. These addictions are hard to get rid of. Even if you resist the temptation of cigarettes for example, yet still hang out with friends who smoke, it will affect your health. They say that it's worse to be the one who inhales the smoke than to be a smoker.

Furthermore, some people might take advantage of you. If you are shy or insecure, people could manipulate you easily. You have to know your place and stick to it, don't trust too fast. Not all people are as nice as you might be. They can play with your feelings, be nice to you, but talk (trash) behind your back and betray you by telling around your secrets or something. You have to follow your instincts and be more confident, even though that's sometimes hard to do.

In conclusion, you should believe in yourself, listen to your instincts and choose the right people to hang out with. Friends do influence us a lot and we might not even realise it. It's your decision if you let them and how you let them. Will they be your good or bad influence?

Pia Ferbežar, 3. Kb

DEUTSCHE SEITEN

MEINE FERIENARBEIT

Ich habe in den Sommerferien als Kellnerin gearbeitet. Mein Sommerjob hat 2 Wochen gedauert. Meine Aufgaben waren nicht sehr schwierig. Ich habe um 7 Uhr morgens mit der Arbeit begonnen. Ich bin etwas früher angekommen, dass ich die Tische vorbereitet und die Kaffeemaschine ausgespült habe. Tagsüber war meine Arbeit nichts Besonderes. Ich habe Kaffee gekocht und Getränke serviert, die von den Gästen bestellt wurden. Es hat mir gefallen, dass ich viel mit Gästen reden konnte. Die älteren Gäste haben mir oft ihre Geschichten erzählt. So ist mein Alltag verlaufen. Am Ende des Arbeitstags habe ich das Geschirr gespült, die Tische aufgeräumt und den Boden gewaschen. Natürlich durfte ich die Kaffeemaschine nicht vergessen.

Die Arbeit hat mir gefallen, weil ich mit Leuten arbeiten konnte. Aber der lange Arbeitstag war nicht so gut. Es war interessant, weil es immer etwas los war und die Arbeit war vielfältig. Ich denke, Kellner müssen kommunikativ sein und immer gute Laune haben. Und vor allem müssen sie sich wünschen, mit Menschen zu arbeiten. Ich glaube, ich habe diese Fähigkeiten.

Ich würde diese Arbeit allen empfehlen, die mit Menschen arbeiten wollen und einen abwechslungsreichen Job haben möchten.

Doroteja Hozjan, 4. L

MEINE BERUFSERFAHRUNGEN

Im März habe ich in einem Labor das Praktikum gemacht. Normalerweise habe ich um 8 Uhr morgens mit der Arbeit angefangen. Dort habe ich Prothesen modelliert und poliert. In meiner Freizeit habe ich das Zahnmodellieren geübt. Um 10 Uhr hatten wir einen Snack. Die Mitarbeiter waren so freundlich und nett. Das hat mir sehr gefallen. Sie haben mir viele neue Dinge gezeigt.

Ich habe meine Arbeit um 14 Uhr beendet. Die Arbeit war nicht anspruchsvoll, da ich bereits viele Dinge kannte.

Als Zahntechinker muss man ausdauernd, präzise und einfallsreich sein. Ich glaube, das ich diese Eigenschaften habe. Trotzdem frage ich mich oft, ob ich den richtigen Beruf ausgewählt habe? Ich bin nicht ganz überzeugt, aber ich denke, das ist ein sehr interessanter Beruf!

Oleksandra Ivanenko, 4. Za

MEIN PRAKTIKUM

Ich habe Erfahrungen als kosmetische Technikerin im Salon gesammelt. Als Kosmetikerin erledigt man viele interessante Aufgaben, aber im Praktikum konnte ich meistens nur beobachten und sauber machen. Ich habe mich sehr gut gefühlt, weil meine Mitarbeiter sehr freundlich waren und wir hatten viel Spass. Aber ich habe es mir gewünscht, dass ich mehr mit den Kunden arbeiten könnte. Ich würde das Praktikum im Salon den anderen empfehlen, weil man so neue Leute kennenlernen und auch Erfahrungen sammeln kann.

Mein Tag hat immer früh am Morgen mit den ersten Kunden angefangen. Meistens habe ich Maniküren und Pediküren gemacht. Danach habe ich die Instrumente sterilisiert. Die Sauberkeit und Hygiene sind in meinem Beruf sehr wichtig. Da man die Kunden auch verwöhnen will, habe ich den Kunden den Tee angeboten.

Als Kosmetikerin muss man sehr freundlich und kommunikativ sein und den Sinn für Ästhetik haben.

Da die Trends in Kosmetik sehr schnell ändern, muss man bereit sein, immer was Neues zu lernen und den Neuheiten zu folgen.

Doroteja Fras, 4. Ka

STRESS IN DER SCHULE

Ich muss zur Schule gehen,
und in der Pause in der Menge stehen.
Aber ich kann noch viel kriegen,
deshalb wünsche ich mir, ich kann fliegen.

Die Schule abzuschließen, ist ein Prozess,
das bringt mir viel Stress.
Das Abitur ist ein Herzenschuss,
aber da machst du mit der Schule Schluss.

Nach ein Paar Monaten werden wir leiden,
und am Ende traurig scheiden.
Zusammen haben wir es schön gehabt,
Darüber haben wir leider nicht nachgedacht.

Zusammensein?

Ich, du?

Du und ich!

Wir für immer zusammen.

Bist du aus Wolken gefallen?

Wir sind nicht zusammen.

Ich und du?

Leider nicht
zusammen.

Doroteja Hozjan 4. L

Doroteja Fras, 4. Ka

Liebe usw.
Liebe?
Jugendliche Schwärmerei!
Was ist das?
Ich weiß es nicht.
Liebe auf den ersten Blick?
Ich zwinkere unaufhörlich.
Aber am Ende
werde ich
allein.

Ich
liebe dich!
Tagelang und nächtelang
denke ich an dich!
Du machst mich so glücklich
und jeder weiß das.
Zusammen haben wir
immer viel
Spass.

Oleksandra Ivanenko in Leon Lazić, 4. Za

Doroteja Fras, 4. Ka

AT HOME AND ABROAD

MY SUMMER IN TURKEY

On the 31st July, me and my parents flew to the city Antalya, in Turkey. We travelled with an agency because it was only our second time travelling to this country.

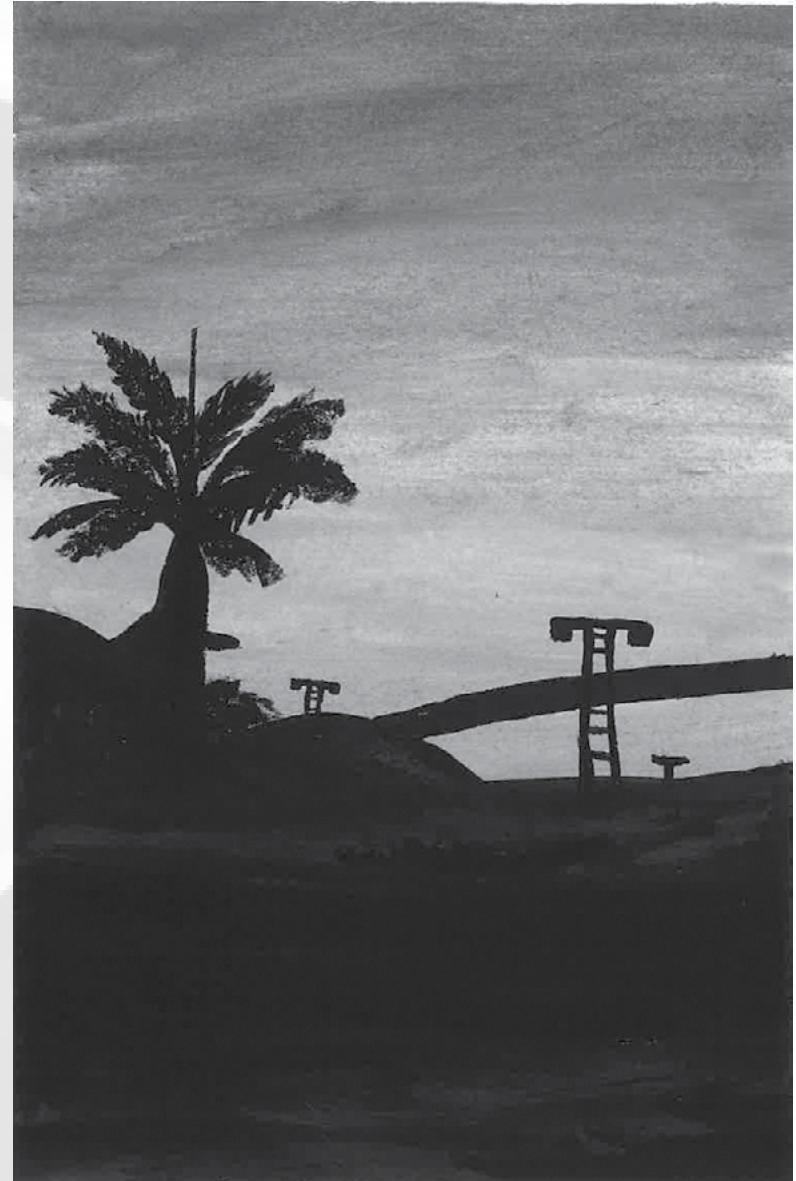
The agency organised a bunch of buses waiting to drive us to our hotels. We stayed in a city called Side, in a fancy hotel. We arrived at around 10 p.m., ate dinner and took a quick look around. The hotel was so big that we nearly got lost in it, since we aren't really used to big fancy hotels. We were pretty tired, so we went to bed at around midnight and chose to explore more in daylight.

The next day, when we went to the pool, I hoped I would meet some young people even though I am quite a shy person. I saw some teenagers playing water polo, so I joined them. In my opinion, pool games are the easiest way to make friends. That day I met some guys from Algeria who I hung out with throughout the whole week. We played a lot of water polo, swam in the pool and sea, had meals together, hung out at the evening activities and so on. It was so cool, we got to know each other well and got quite close. They taught me some Algerian words, mostly curse words, which was funny, so I taught them some Slovene words in return. Since they didn't speak very good English, I had to help them complete their sentences and correct their words. I think I had a good impact on them.

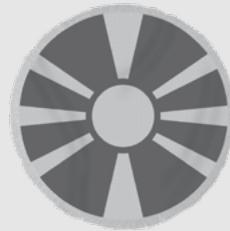
One time we went jumping into the sea off a pier. It was a bit scary because I'm scared of heights even though it wasn't that high. The second time I jumped, I did it while holding hands with one of the guys, which helped me not be so scared. I am a little afraid of the wild life in the sea, so they mocked me: "Oh, look! There's a shark coming!"

When the last day arrived, we took a group picture, had our last meal together and said our goodbyes. It wasn't that hard because I didn't realise at that time that I might not see them any time soon, or, well, ever again. That's kind of sad, but we did say we would try to meet again next year. It has been 10 months since then and I really miss them. This trip was great fun and I'd definitely do it again if I could.

Pia Ferbežar, 3. Kb



My summer in Turkey



MACEDONIA, YOUR NEXT DESTINATION



Skopje

Macedonia is a beautiful country with amazing history and a lot of majestic destinations.

Ohrid is a beautiful city in the south western part of Macedonia. Here you can do many activities, like scuba diving, canoeing, swimming, paragliding and many others. The main attraction is the church of St. Naum Ohridski, where you can go on a boat ride to Biljana Springs. There is a special room where you can hear the heart of St. Naum. In the yard of St. Naum, you can see peacocks and the lake, there are also a lot of souvenir shops and cafes. Lake Ohrid is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In summer, Ohrid is the biggest tourist attraction in Macedonia, there are concerts and parties on yachts or discos with special effects. Many DJ's and celebrity

singers have had a show in Ohrid. Ohrid is also known for different fish dishes and pearls. There are many kinds of fishes, but the best known are *Ohridska Pastramka* (Ohrid trout) and *Ohridska Jagula* (Ohrid eel). You can go on a boat ride and see the beauties of Lake Ohrid. You can also visit Samuel's Fortress. As I said, Ohrid is a beautiful city that you can't describe with words, but must be seen.

Near Ohrid there is a village called Vevcani. It is best known for its carnival. People usually dress up as monsters and other scary creatures and say nasty words to keep the evil away. Two men dress up as a bride and groom to fool the devil. Many people have left this village for economic reasons. They live all over the world, even in the USA, Canada, Brazil, Argentina and

other countries.

Your next destination can be Skopje. It is the capital city of Macedonia and is best known for its sculptures. Skopje is the main centre of Macedonia with numerous skyscrapers, tall buildings, parks, squares and other things to visit. In Macedonia Square, you can see big fountains and also lights if you go there at night. There are also the Stone Bridge and the River Vardar, which is the longest river in Macedonia. Its source is at Vrutok in the mountains in the Shar planina. We have a holiday called Epiphany, which is a Christian holiday celebrated on the day when St. John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ in the Jordan River. It is celebrated on January 19th at churches using the Julian calendar. In winter, people jump in the river



Kaneo Ohrid



Kuklica



Ohrid



Ohrid

to catch the Christian Cross. The person who catches it is believed to have a lucky year and will receive many gifts. Many people do this ritual all over our country, whether they jump in a river, a lake, or even in something smaller. People of different nationalities live in Skopje.

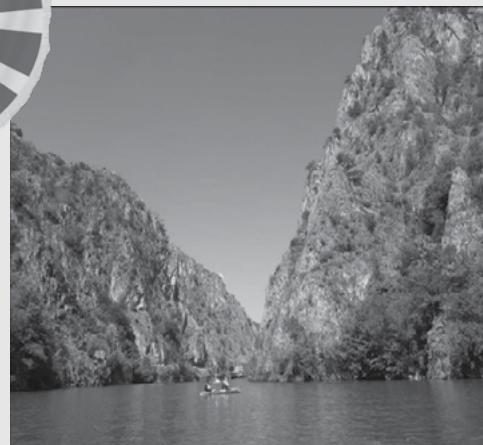
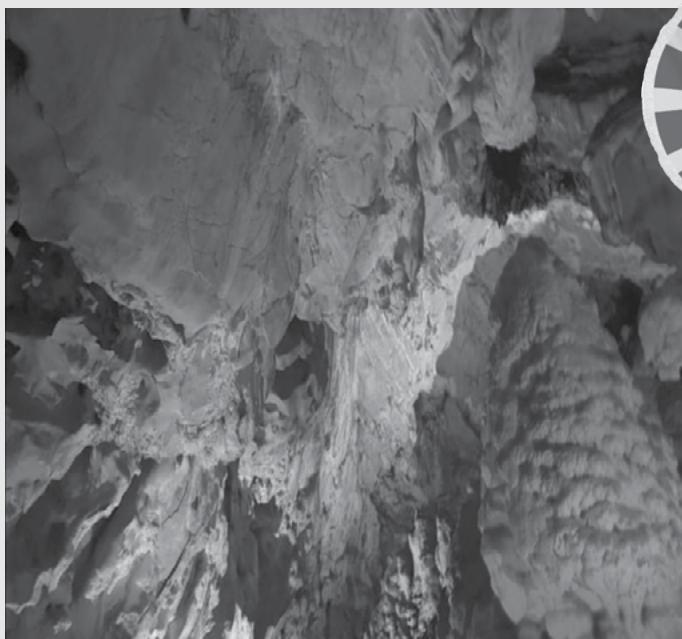
Near Skopje, there is Canyon Matka. Here you can see the rare cave and you can also go canoeing. Vrelo Cave is one of the deepest underwater caves in the world! Even today, people still don't know how deep it is. In 2016, a polish diver Krzysztof Starnavski went 230 meters deep and said that he could see that the cave was even deeper. It is located on the right side of the River Treska in Canyon Matka. Inside the cave, there are two lakes, a smaller and a bigger one. On the cave's ceiling, you can see stalactites, which have been

formed by dripping water during many years. Every year they get taller by two millimeters.

The stone town of Kuklica is an area with more than 120 stone pillars. It is located in the village of Kuklica near Kratovo. The stones look like real people, like they are at a wedding, and everything is natural. There is a legend about Neymar Mason, who was a big master as well as a big liar. The village where he lived was divided into two parts, the upper and the lower part. When Neymar decided to get married, he arranged the wedding to two girls, one from the upper part and one from the lower part. The girl from the lower part was very rich but ugly, and the girl from the upper part was very poor but beautiful. The master chose the rich one. When the other girl heard the drums and bagpipes, she went to see where

the music was coming from. She went to the lower part and saw the couple getting married. She put a curse on them, and when the bride and the groom kissed, they turned into stones. All the sculptures have names and the best known are the Bride and the Groom. Archaeologists say that these 'statues' have existed for ten million years, since the times when people didn't live on this planet.

Berovo is a town in the east part of Macedonia. You can go to Lake Berovo and have fun there. Near Berovo, there are mountains, so you can go hiking. In autumn, you can also go to the forest to pick up herbs or mushrooms. In Berovo, nights are cold, but in the morning, you can enjoy drinking coffee or tea in the local cafes or restaurants. Every summer, there are different concerts in Berovo. Singers



Vrelo Cave, Canyon Matka

come from every country on the Balkans. The air is clean and cold and the people are happy. In the morning, people really like to drink *rakija* (a type of fruit brandy), which they usually drink hot in winter. You can also go horse riding, hiking, fishing, swimming and do many others activities. People that live in Berovo raise cows, goats, sheep and bees, and they make their own homemade products, like cheese, honey, cottage cheese, wool, milk and many others. And they also raise plants, such as potatoes, tobacco, bean, nuts, hazelnuts, peppers, tomatoes, corn, leek, cabbage, cucumbers, lettuce, carrots, peas and other.

Vinica is a town in the eastern part of Macedonia, very close to the Bulgarian border. Its name derives from the legend that along time ago there was no water during an extremely dry summer. People needed to build a house and so instead of using water they built their house with wine. In the Macedonian language wine is *vino*, so this is how the town got its name. In Vinica, we raise a lot of grapes and turn them into wine, we

also grow various vegetables and many people have farms. On the hill above Vinica, in Viničko Kale, terracotta icons can be found. They are made from clay and there is a picture that talks about the past on every one of them. In our town, there is also a five-star hotel, where celebrities often stay when they have a concert. Near Vinica, there is a ski center, where you can go skiing and have a fun time. We have many events, concerts, parties, clubs, casinos, parks and many other places. People are really friendly, nice and polite. In winter, the whole town smells of peppers, because people make *ajvar* and usually they help each other. In summer, everybody goes out at night, and even when you're far, you can hear the music that is coming from the clubs, but at the same time it is quiet and you can hear the sounds that are coming from the nature. It's really a safe place to live in because everyone is friendly and helpful.

Macedonians also have interesting culture. We have two types of national costumes, western and eastern. Western

costumes are a bit darker than eastern ones. People used to make them on their own. Today, many people from our country go to other countries and dance in our national costumes.

There are many stereotypes about Macedonia and people are scared to come and visit it because they think it won't be worth it. However, Macedonia is a country with fascinating culture and interesting history, which is easy and fun to learn through stories. In Macedonia, people are very friendly, and it is a safe country with numerous historic sights. If you come, you can visit many places, learn many things, hear many stories and leave with wonderful memories.

Sara Pecova, 1. Fc

WORK PLACEMENT IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC



Natural manicure

Our journey began on March 20th 2019. We went to a small city called Havírov by train. It took us 12 hours to get from Ljubljana to Havírov. In Vienna, we had 1.5 hours of free time, so we went to see the Belvedere Museum, which is a historic complex consisting of two baroque palaces, surrounded by gardens.

Havírov is a small old town, where people went to live to get jobs. Most of them used to work in the mines, but now the mines are closed and the city is full of older people. We lived in the apartments called U-balona.

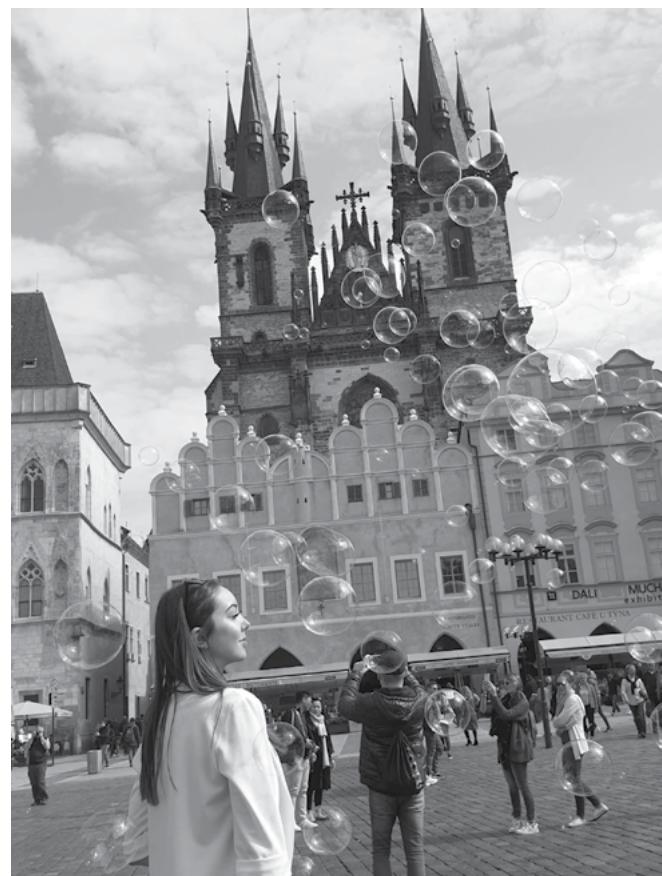
On the first day in Havírov, we visited their school. The school is large and there are fewer students, so there is no crowd during breaks. The school is highly adapted to students with special needs; they even have a special exercise room for students with disabilities. In addition, the school has a theater, a music classroom and a room for snowboard and ski storage. Skis and snowboards can also be borrowed. After lunch, we went to

see the beauty salon, which is separated from the school. The students have lessons three times a week and practical classes in the salon twice a week. The first- and second-year students learn and practice procedures on each other, while the third- and fourth-year students work on clients, and the teachers always check their work after completion of the procedure and, if necessary, correct.

It seems they have focused more on hairdressing, because they have four rooms intended for them and only two rooms for cosmetics, and the equipment for hairdressing is better too.

While we were there we did various cosmetic services, such as natural manicure, pedicure, depilation, facial care, masks, face massage ... We were also shown how to work with laser to cure scars, acne, wrinkles, etc.

At the first weekend, we went to Prague. It was a three-hour drive to get there. We arrived in Prague at 11 o'clock in the evening and we met other students from our school who did their work experience there. We had only two days to see Prague, so we tried to see as much as possible in this time.



Prague Castle

What I liked the most was the Amusement Park. Me and Aleša went on the rollercoaster, which went really high up and we were able to see the whole city from the sky. At that time, the sun was just about to set, so we had the opportunity to watch the sunset in Prague from the sky. It was an amazing experience.



Pedicure process - soaking the feet



Miss Reneta



In the school salon



MISSION POSSIBLE: THE PROJECT WEEK IN THE NETHERLANDS

On Sunday, 7th April 2019, our journey to the Netherlands began. We met at Ljubljana Airport at 7 o'clock in the morning. We said goodbye to our loved ones and went to check in our bags. We had our morning coffee and breakfast, chatted a little bit and took off at 9 o'clock. We had been in the air for one and a half hours when we started seeing the beautiful land of the Netherlands from the sky.

There were also other places we visited, namely Charles Bridge, which is 0.5km long and was the only way to cross the Vltava River and the only connection between the old town square and Prague Castle until 1841; Prague Castle, noted in the Guinness Book as the largest ancient castle in the world, with the church; the narrowest street in Prague, which has traffic lights for people; Love Lock Bridge; Prague Zoo; the Old Town; Astronomical Clock; the Church, which is the largest and most important church in the country; the John Lennon Wall with snippets of lyrics from the Beatles' songs; and Flora Shopping Center.

On Friday, April 5th, we attended Miss Reneta, a beauty pageant, where girls from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland competed. The girls gave a great performance, they danced and had to introduce themselves. The performance took about three hours, and then we had dinner at a restaurant.

The whole experience was amazing. I really enjoyed the three weeks I spent in the Czech Republic. I learned a lot of new things and met some great people.

Anja Repar, 4. Ka

We landed in Amsterdam and bought the tickets for the train that would take us to Leeuwarden, Friesland. We experienced a little shock when we found out how much the tickets cost and realised that this trip was not going to be very budget-friendly. Half an hour after we landed, we got on the train. We were surprised when we saw that we were going to ride a double-decker train. We had never seen a train like that. The ride to Leeuwarden was beautiful. We were driving through the gorgeous country, admiring its flat surface, windmills, canals and houses. We fell in love with this country on the first day. When we arrived in Leeuwarden, we were told that we had to take a bus to the village called Grou. So we went to the bus station but we didn't know where to buy the tickets because everything was closed. Later we found out that there were no buses to Grou on Sunday. So we went back to the train station and got the train tickets, which were luckily cheaper.



The double decker train



Participating students and teachers

The train ride from Leeuwarden to Grou was about ten minutes long. When we got off the train, we had no idea where to go, so we decided just to go with the flow and walk. Later we turned on Google maps so that we actually knew where we were going. We were walking towards our hostel, looking around the neighbourhood and realizing how beautiful Grou was. It was sunny and warm that day, so we were hot. We had been walking for twenty minutes when we finally arrived at our hostel. The receptionist/owner greeted us and gave us our room keys. We went to our rooms to unpack our luggage. A little bit later, we decided to go look around the village and see where the shops and restaurants were. That night we also met the Spanish people and we instantly got along with them.

The next morning we woke up and went down for breakfast.

We found out that the Dutch like to put sprinkles on bread for breakfast, so we tried it and it was really good. We enjoyed our breakfast even more because we had a view over the canal right from the restaurant. After breakfast, it was time to meet everybody. We met Anna, our host teacher, who was very nice, the Dutch and Finnish students and teachers. We introduced ourselves and also played some fun introduction games, one of which was trying to eat a biscuit hanging from a piece of string that was attached to the ceiling with your eyes closed. It was very challenging to do and funny to watch. Then we had lunch. We were surprised a bit because there wasn't a warm meal prepared for us like we are used to. Dutch people actually don't eat warm food for lunch, like potatoes, meat and so on, but they eat sandwiches. After lunch, we went for a little tour

around Grou, and that was the end of our second day in the Netherlands.

The third day was our first day in Leeuwarden. After breakfast we went to the train station. The train ride to Leeuwarden was about ten minutes long and there we were greeted by the Dutch students, who took us to their school. Their school is three times the size of ours, it's massive. When we got to school, we went straight to work. We analysed all of the questions and answers from the survey which had been done jointly by all the participants before our arrival in the Netherlands and brainstormed some ideas for our projects. We were working for a couple hours and then it was lunch time. There were sandwiches again for lunch, but I didn't mind it because they were actually really good. After lunch we were supposed to work some more, but instead we went for



Amsterdam

a tour around the school. They showed us the laboratory where they analyse and make food. I found it so interesting because when they had mentioned they attended catering school I had thought they were studying to become cooks, but they actually analyse the ingredients in food and do lab tests and such. After that, they showed us more classrooms, and then it was time to visit Leeuwarden. We walked through the center of Leeuwarden and came to the Boomsma Distillery Museum, which is famous for Berenburg liqueur. We watched a short movie of the story on how the liquor had been invented, and then we were offered Oranjekoek, which is the Dutch traditional cake, with some tea or coffee. Those who were older than 18 tried some liqueur too, but we unfortunately were not old enough to try, maybe next time. After the museum, we

went to the Oldehove Tower. The tower leans on the side a little, so when you walk up the stairs you can feel it and you lose balance a little bit. On the top of the tower, there is a wonderful view of Leeuwarden, so you can see the whole city and all the canals that run through it. After that, we were free, so we decided to explore Leeuwarden. It reminded us a lot of Amsterdam because of the canal that runs through the city. We had dinner and then took the train back to Grou. In the evening, we were sitting and chatting by the fire in the hostel with the Spanish students for a little while.

On Wednesday, we went to Amsterdam. We woke up early, got on our train to Leeuwarden, where we met up with the Dutch, and we all took a train to Amsterdam. Luckily, Anna had bought group tickets, so we didn't have to pay for the train,

which was very generous of the Dutch school. It was sunny on that day, so the train ride to Amsterdam was very beautiful. It was very windy though, so we were freezing. After a two-and-a-half-hour ride we finally arrived in Amsterdam. First, we went to the *Hash, Marihuana & Hemp Museum*, where we got to know a little bit about the history and production of cannabis and hemp. On the way to the museum, we went through the Red Light District. After the museum, we were free to go around Amsterdam. I was honestly surprised at how many bicycles there were. You really had to watch out for them because they rode really fast and they could easily hit you. We walked through the streets of Amsterdam, bought some souvenirs, went for lunch in a little restaurant where we were greeted by a lovely lady that ran the restaurant by herself. The



Grou



The Royal Palace, Amsterdam

lunch was delicious. Afterwards, we started walking towards Dam Square. Every couple of minutes we stopped because we saw a cute store that we wanted to go in. There are so many stores in Amsterdam and so many attractive foods that you just can't help yourself not going into them. Anyways, after a short walk, we finally arrived in Dam Square. There were lots of people and also a lot of pigeons that were flying around. We saw Madame Tussauds, the famous wax museum, and the Royal Palace, which was enormous and had beautiful architecture. Soon we decided to start going toward our next activity, which was the Heineken Experience Museum. This museum was a little boring for us, because, again, we were under age and couldn't try anything, but still it was fun finding out how Heineken was made and about its history. Now this is when things got a

little bit complicated. We were all supposed to be out of the museum at six o'clock because we had to catch the train back to Leeuwarden, but it didn't go as planned. It was six o'clock and we were waiting at the exit, but nobody showed up. They were all drinking at the museum bar, where they served Heineken. We ended up taking the subway because we thought it would be faster to get to the train station, but it took us quite some time to figure out how to buy the tickets and we missed our train. So we waited for another one. While we were on that train, we found out two of the students, Claudia and Damien, had missed it, so they had to take a later train. Now we had another problem. Our train from Leeuwarden to Grou was to leave only a couple minutes after our train from Amsterdam to Leeuwarden would arrive, so we wouldn't have time to check out, buy the

new tickets and catch the train to Grou. If we had missed it, we would have had to wait for another hour for the next one, so we just got on the train to Grou and hoped we wouldn't get caught, which we luckily didn't. After this crazy end of the day, we arrived in Grou and went straight to our beds because we were so tired.

The next day we went to Leeuwarden again. We checked in at the school in the morning and started working in our groups. We were very productive and did a lot of work because the next day we were already presenting our ideas. In the middle, we also had lunch and then went straight back to work. Later in the afternoon, we had an activity planned, which was bowling. We took a bus to the bowling alley, divided into several groups and started bowling. It was great fun and we all really enjoyed it.



Inside the Heineken Experience Museum, Amsterdam

After bowling for an hour, we were supposed to eat in an all-you-can-eat buffet, but it was very expensive, so we decided to just go eat somewhere in Leeuwarden. We took the bus back to the center and ended up in a Mexican restaurant. Later we walked around Leeuwarden some more and then took a train back to Grou.

Friday was our presentations day. We all met downstairs at the hostel in the morning and put some finishing touches on our projects. We all gathered and presented our projects. They were all interesting and full of good ideas. After the presentations, we had some Oranjekoek, which we were very thrilled about, and coffee. We said goodbye to the Dutch, who were leaving home, and also to the Finns because they were leaving very early the next morning.

The next day it was time to go home. We packed our suitcases, took two trains to Amsterdam and arrived at the airport. We had sat at the airport and chatted with the Spanish a little more before we had to say goodbye. Our plane to Venice was supposed to leave sooner than the plane to Spain, so it was our time to go. It was a little sad because we had got along with them the most and we had truly become good friends. After a couple of tears and a lot of hugs, we finally managed to say our farewells. We went to our baggage drop-off, where we waited for an hour, and after we went through security control, we met the Spanish again. After saying goodbye once more, we went to our respective gates. We were waiting at our gate, when it was announced that our plane had some technical difficulties so our flight was delayed. We were waiting there for almost

three hours and then we finally took off. Because our flight was delayed, our van in Venice had already left to Ljubljana, so we had to book another car. When we arrived in Venice, we had some time until our van arrived so we went for pizza that was way overpriced, but we bought it anyway because we were starving. After a long journey, we finally arrived in Ljubljana at around midnight.

This trip was fun, we met a lot of great new people, learned about some Dutch traditions and habits and learned how to make websites and apps. The Netherlands is a beautiful country and we will go back soon for sure.

Špela Ovčak, 3. Za

MISSION POSSIBLE: THE PROJECT WEEK IN

SLOVENIA

This was the third week of the Mission Possible Project, beginning on Monday, 23rd September, and ending on Friday, 27th September 2019. It took place at our school in Ljubljana. Not everything went as planned since Adria Airways had financial problems causing the Finnish group to delay their arrival. The first people who arrived were the students and teachers from the Netherlands and Spain.



In the Climbing Centre Ljubljana



Walking around Ljubljana

The first day was about forming groups, meeting everyone and getting to know each other through different games as well as for the foreign students to see the city. But first we had breakfast and showed some videos of Slovenia. Initially, we had planned to play games so we could get to know each other. Because of the delay of the Finnish group, we decided to go sightseeing first. After the walk, we started with introduction games. When the Finnish group arrived, we divided them among the previously formed groups.

On Tuesday, we began to develop the main idea of the project. The theme of the week was sports and exercise. The question was how to motivate our peers and others to exercise more. In the morning, we visited the climbing center. Some students and teachers didn't want to climb, but the rest of us enjoyed it a lot. After lunch, we began to work on our projects. Tuesday was the longest day for us. We stayed in school till 6 p.m. and our ideas were slowly getting a real form.

On Wednesday, we had to finish early because of the excursion. In the morning, a group of former

students should have come to present their product, but something went wrong so it was decided to have the presentation on the following day. We held a short meeting and discussed what we had done so far, did some work, had lunch and left for the excursion to Lake Bled. The first thing we did after we got off the bus was going for a walk around the lake. During the walk a Finnish student accidentally dropped his glasses into the lake. We asked a man on a boat to help us find them, but we didn't succeed. We continued our walk to a local patisserie to eat their famous cream cake. Time passed quickly and we were already on our way back to Ljubljana.

On Thursday, we concentrated on developing our ideas. In the morning, we had a short presentation of the urine sample collection cup Lulux by the group of our former students. Later that day the teachers visited our school labs and beauty salons. In the meantime, we were preparing for Friday's presentation. We slowly had to complete our product ideas and begin focusing on their presentation.



Working in groups



Looking for the glasses in Lake Bled

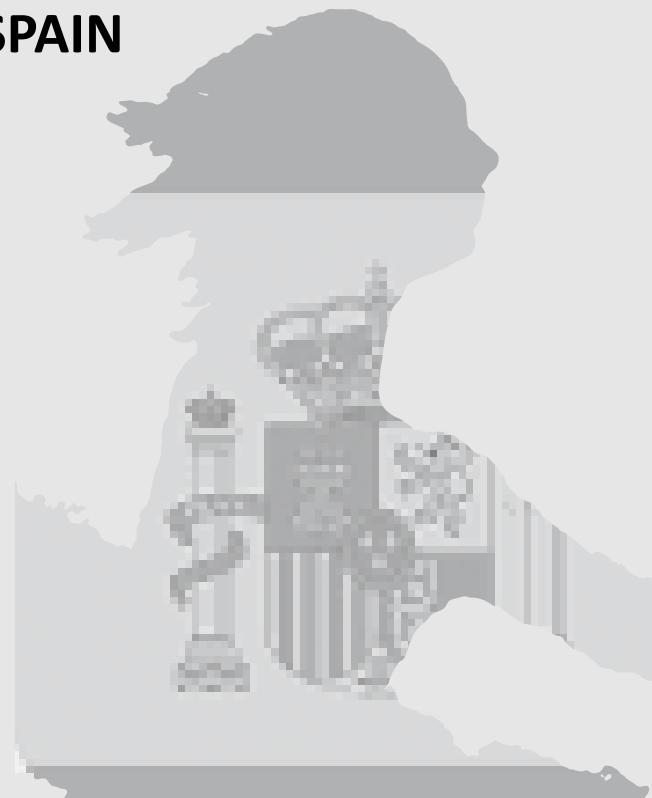
On Friday, the last day, we were all a little nervous about our presentations. The project ideas had to be finalized and we started to practise pitching. It was my group's turn to present our project. It was an app called Follow Pet, intended to motivate our peers and others to exercise more, simply letting them collect coins for their character presented as a ball as they reach their targets. Our game is a safer version of Pokemon Go. You can select your preferred outdoor sport, and begin collecting coins while working out. The greater the distance you achieve, the more coins you collect. The coins are meant to be used to buy different items for your ball. You can buy eyelashes, a house, shoes, etc. You can also connect with your friends and form your own family. The main goal of this app is to help people who would like to exercise to organize their workout. That is why we added a schedule to help our users organize their time. The second group also chose to make an app called Sport Support, which would let people have fun while doing sports. The third group made a website named Agilis, where people could learn more about their muscles and find different exercises for each muscle group that they would like to work on. The fourth

group decided to make an Instagram account where they would post before and after pictures of people losing weight, different motivational quotes, healthy food and would give advice about working out and losing weight. You can follow this Instagram profile under the name get.out.of.bed. The teachers were the last to present their idea. They did it differently and presented it through a funny and interesting play. In the end, we had a short evaluation and discussion, both of which marked the end of another project week. After saying goodbye, whoever was interested could visit the Odprta kuhna Food Market in the city centre.

Looking at this fun-filled and educational project, which gave us new knowledge and introduced us to new friends from abroad, I feel grateful that I participated in it and hope that maybe one day our ideas will turn into something real.

Kaja Hotujec, 3. Zb

MISSION POSSIBLE: THE PROJECT WEEK IN SPAIN



Participating students and teachers

On the 25th of November 2019, me, three other students and our teacher traveled to Gijon, Spain, to take part in the Mission Possible Project. We started our journey on Sunday morning at 2 a.m., when we took a bus to Venice. At 7 a.m. we had our first flight to Madrid. When we arrived in Madrid, we had about an hour at the airport before we had to catch our next flight. After about a 45-minute flight we arrived in Oviedo, Asturias, then we took a bus to Gijon. As we were making our way to the hotel, we realised that we were quite tired and hungry, so we went to eat at McDonald's, because it was the most familiar and still open on Sunday afternoon.

On the first day of the project week, we met in front of the hotel with the Spanish, Finish and Dutch students and teachers and went to eat breakfast at a nearby restaurant. There we tried various traditional Spanish omelettes, which were delicious. After that, we had a tour around Gijon, and we realised that even if it was a small town in the north of Spain, it still had a rich culture and history. Then we finally started working after we had made our way to the school, where we had



San Lorenzo Beach, Gijon



La madre del emigrante, Gijon



a presentation on our work and then formed our groups.

On Tuesday, we had a presentation on nutrition and later we started working in groups on our project. In the afternoon, we visited Gijon Aquarium, which was very fun and educational.

On Wednesday, we worked in groups for a couple of hours and after that went on a tour of the school, where we got to see how the students learn there and how they spend most of their days. For lunch we went to the nearby Culinary School, where we tried a lot of dishes that none of us had had before. Afterwards, we visited an Asturian cider factory. Cider is a traditional Asturian drink with a low alcohol content.

On Thursday morning, we visited the Town Hall, where we listened to a great speech about the Erasmus+ Project. Then we continued with our work until about 4.30 p.m., and late in the evening we had dinner together at a nearby restaurant.

And finally on Friday, we finished our project ideas and presented them in the school conference room. After lunch, we went to the nearby city Oviedo by train.



In Oviedo



Our group



Elogio del Horizonte, Gijon



The traditional Spanish omelette

The city was very beautiful and had a lot of beautiful architecture, so we were glad to have visited it.

Overall, it was one of the best weeks ever. We had a lot of fun and met a lot of amazing different people that I'm glad to stay in contact with. We tried a lot of new food and made so many great memories. In our free time, we usually walked around the town or along the San Lorenzo beach, which is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful beaches that I have ever seen. Sometimes we hung out with the students from other countries because they were a lot of fun to be around, and even if we, the Slovenians, were the youngest, we got along just fine. It's also weird how by Friday we really knew our way around the town and could walk around freely without getting lost. I am very grateful that I got to experience this week with such amazing and incredible people. If I could, I would go back any day and do it all over again.

Patricija Zalar, 3. Kb

LEISURE AND PLEASURE

ROCK'N'ROLL

I am Evelin Arh and this is my sports career. I found my passion for dancing at very young age. I was only three when I first stepped into a dance studio. I started with mixed children's dances and progressed very quickly.

When I saw my brother dancing Acrobatic Rock and Roll, I instantly knew that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Since I was too young and Rock and Roll is a physically challenging dance, I was not allowed to start practising it. At the age of six, I began my Rock and Roll journey with my first dancing partner. We trained for a year and only took part in one competition. Our goals were not equal, so I continued my dance career with a new dancing partner. Matej was already an experienced dancer, so he helped me progress even faster. We started in the junior category, and three years of hard work lead us to third place in the Slovenian Nationals. We didn't stop there because our goals were set much higher. We progressed to the next, higher category. In Juveniles, a couple has to perform four acrobatic elements within a minute and a half. Because I was smaller and five years younger than Matej, we managed to perform the acrobatic part with ease. Because of the World Rock and Roll Federation rules we were only allowed to compete in Slovenia, so we decided to make the best of it. We were Slovenian national champions two years in a row. After two successful years of competing in Slovenia, we were finally allowed to compete in the World Cup. At that moment we landed at the bottom of the world ranking list. We quickly realised that our path to the top had just started.

Our first World Cup was in 2015. We had to perfect our basic step technique, our acrobatics and overall performance. For a year, we trained six times a week, twice a day, only to outperform the Hungarian couple that had won every single competition. 2015's last competition, which took place in France, was the most important competition since it was the World Championship, and whoever wins the Championship is the overall winner and the World Champion. It was a very tough competition with very strong competitors. In the finals, we really did our best and by a fraction of a point, we won and became Champions in Acrobatic Rock and Roll for 2015. Our highest goal was finally reached. Unfortunately, that also fulfilled Matej's highest goal, so he decided to finish his career.



Rock'n'roll



After a break for a year from Acrobatic Rock and Roll, I finally found a new dancing partner. He was a perfect match. He is much taller and stronger – exactly what is needed for the category we started in together. Main Class Contact Style is the second highest and consequently the toughest category. In this category, couples have to compete in two different choreographies. One is called foot technique, which is based on very fast music. Judges look for the best basic step technique, performance and creative choreography. The second dance is focused on acrobatics. We have to perform six advanced acrobatics. These acrobatics are much more dangerous because boys also throw girls above their heads.

This season we managed to reach second place in Slovenia and we are constantly qualifying for semi-finals and finals in world competitions.

Right now, Blaž and I are reaching top ten in the world and we are slowly but patiently making our way to the top.

Competitions

Competitions are the most exciting part of dancing Acrobatic Rock and Roll, but it also takes a lot of preparation.

The preparation usually starts two weeks before a competition. We start to train more, instead of having five practice sessions a week, we now have seven to eight. We also spend more time working on our foot technique and performance. Sometimes we even have individual practice sessions with our coaches, which takes one to two hours of fixing our choreography. It is also very important that we get a massage, physiotherapy and counselling. Our muscles get sore during all that training, so we need to get a massage to get rid of any pain or tension in our muscles. If we have any injuries, we have to get physiotherapy, so that we can still compete. With competitions, there also comes stress, so it is normal to go to a psychologist just to talk about it and relax.

During the two weeks before the competition, the food is very important so that we don't get sick or lose energy. We try to eat as many vegetables and fruit as possible. For muscle recovery, we also drink protein right after a practice session. Food is also crucial on the day of the competition because we need to have a lot of energy and strength.

The day before the competition, we usually have our last practice session. After the practice session, we go home and start getting ready. It takes longer to get ready for girls than boys. I start working on my hair. I braid it so that the next morning I will have nice, big, voluminous curls. Because we also perform acrobatics, our hair can't be flying around. It has to be sleek back and out of the way so that it doesn't get stuck



Rock'n'roll_2

anywhere while performing.

Sleep is very important before the competition because our body has to be well rested.

On the day of the competition, we get up quite early and eat breakfast. Then we start getting ready. I start with the makeup and then move on to the hair. That takes me around three hours. The next step is packing all the things I need for the competition. I check my dancing dresses and shoes to make sure no part of the costume is missing.

We get to the place of the competition two hours before it starts. We check in and get warmed up. After warming up, we go through our choreography and get in our costumes.

In one competition, we perform multiple times. It depends on what kind of competition it is. In world competitions, we dance five to six times, and in Slovenian competitions, we dance two to three times because there are fewer couples competing.

After we perform, we wait for our results to see if we have advanced to the next round. If we get through to the final, we then have a big ceremony at the end where we get our trophy and diploma.

After the competition, it is also very important that we stretch and roll out our muscles so that we don't get too sore or get cramps in our muscles. Sometimes we even drink magnesium, because it prevents cramps and pain in muscles. By then we are already starving from the whole day of competing, so we go eat, but again, it is also very important what we eat so that our body recovers.

On the day after the competition, we don't have to practise, but if we do, it is not as intense. If we have a competition in a foreign country, it also takes the next day to travel home.

In the end, it is all worth it when you perform and people enjoy it.

Evelin Arh, 2. Ka

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IN BREMERHAVEN, GERMANY

It was around one in the morning. I was sitting on the bus, waving at my parents on the parking lot. Our dance group had been working hard and won third place in the Slovenian Dance Competition in June. Now in October, we were finally setting off to Germany for the World Championship. Everybody on the bus was full of excitement. Soon after our departure, the bus was overflowing with laughter and music. After three hours, we reached the German border, and not long after, the music got quieter and the talking toned down. An hour passed, and only a fraction of us were still awake. I was also slowly drifting off to sleep, but my friend had a lot to say, so she didn't let me. Luckily, our coach joined the conversation and I was able to fall asleep.

After an uncomfortable sleep and a fifteen-hour drive, we finally arrived at the hotel. We settled in our rooms and were left with a lot of time to spare. We spent it chatting, eating and resting. Two hours passed, and our co-dancers from Slovenske Konjice arrived. We gathered in the dance hall that the hotel provided us with and practiced for the last time before the competition. After the practice session, our coach told us to go to sleep so we would be rested for the next day. Which we did. After a couple of hours, of course ...



Our performance at the Slovenian Dance Competition, June 2019

The next day came. The competition day. As soon as we had finished breakfast, we packed our things and headed for Bremerhaven. When we arrived, we got our entry bracelets and got our bags checked. Then we entered. We were led to the backstage and passed many amazing dancers who were practicing their choreographies for the competition. When we entered the backstage, the music and cheers could be heard from another side of the curtains. We put our costumes and makeup on. While we were waiting, a couple of us went in front of the stage to look at the other performances. We came during formations (groups of around 20 people), which are usually the best ones. Some of the performances that day truly exceeded my expectations and took my breath away.

A couple of hours passed like that, and before we knew it, it was our time to shine. Before us, another group went up to perform, and meanwhile we warmed up. The most overwhelming time of the trip was definitely the last minutes before we went on stage. You could see people around you freaking out, while the others were full of excitement and energy. Most of us were just a mess of both, though. As soon we got announced, everyone ran to their positions and the music started. For me the performance itself sort of just passed by. I remember flashes and cheers, but everything else was forgotten the moment I left the stage. This year we won second place, which made everyone cry with joy. It was a big achievement and proof of our hard work and dedication.

After the competition had finished, we changed back into our casual clothes and headed for the centre of the city. We walked for a while, trying to find it. By the time we came to the city, it had already been late, so only a few shops were still open. We found McDonalds, and most people wanted to eat there. A couple of us wanted pizza, so the coach allowed us to look for it with two of our guardians escorting us. We looked for a while, but were unable to find a place that was still open. We encountered two passers-by and they directed us to the nearby mall. We went in and searched everywhere. Finally, we found a place, but as luck would have it, it was already closing. But we weren't going to give up. We moved forward until we ended up in a long tunnel. The tunnel trip



After winning second place in the World Championship in Germany, October 2018



er 2019



Our beautiful trophy

was something nobody had been planning, but when we stood there surrounded with stars and city lights, everyone was glad we hadn't settled for McDonalds. After a couple of pictures, we went a little forward, but there was nothing. So, we turned back and ended up eating in Burger King.

Later that evening we sat on the bus again and rode home. After hours of another long bus ride, we started seeing familiar buildings and roads. We were at home again.

Urška Roblek, 3. Kb

POEMS



BUBBLES

Jma Koenigsmann

Up in the blue sky there was a bubble,
Clear and clean, completely see through,
Until the storm came the feelings were thrillingly calm.

One little careless raindrop destroyed -
It destroyed the pure lightness and stained colorless
Silky bubble.

A heavy drop and big killing thunder
Synchronized and transitioned the pearly silk into smog.
Suffocating air spread around the globe by design;
took all the bubbles away.

Laughter was suppressed,
Joy dissolved into the past,
In this state of mind the present beyond is
hopeless.

Water helps with creating bubbles;
Rain is sometimes the right tool
We only have to find the right soap.

WE WOULD JUST HAVE TO WAIT, WOULDN'T WE?

I FOUND

I found me where I wasn't supposed to be,
When I was running from my sins,
You said our last goodbye.

You burnt your prints in deep thoughts
Of a hurt soul; craving for affection,
Unprovided generation of broken postures.

From the day we saw you,
You knew we are the same.
So you pushed a piece of yourself away;
So we found ourselves.

Pushing further and further,
Catastrophically slouching and combining
pressure
Is about to break the light of sin.

Ema Križmanič, 1. Kb

Human specimens are anything but loving souls.
They are somehow unreal, fake and not legit.
It seems like they are imaginary creatures,
Living in the world they don't fit.

Is it just a game,
Being alive in the dead world?
Where even an artist can't make you smile,
And anything we know is just a lie after a lie.

We are human specimens with beating stones,
And nothing can make them fall apart.
Even our natural fake love,
Or calling ourselves being an art.

We would do anything to be loved and accepted.
But nothing to make others feel the same way.
Actually, where is any sense of being a human,
If our fakeness is just on replay?

Beating stones are getting bigger and bigger,
And soon they will become rocks.
Nobody could change them to diamonds,
And we would wear a trigger warning.

Human specimens are anything but loving souls.
They are somehow unreal, fake and not legit.
What would human specimens actually need to
be?
We would just have to wait and see, wouldn't we?

IT'S TOO LATE

Am I good enough for you?
Or are you just playing with me?
I want to tell you I am not your toy,
But you never listen.
Oh, you can't listen,
We don't even talk,
But, you know what,
You are missed.

I miss you, but,
When I told you these words,
And looked deep into your eyes,
You just laughed,
Like there was nothing between us,
Like I am just a toy,
That anybody can destroy.

I want to write the most beautiful song for you,
But isn't that right you don't like poetry?
So, what do I need to do,
To change your mind?
Do I have to show you the right road,
Because you are blind?

I don't think so,
You don't believe in love,
Because why would you say,
That you will find the right one.
So that means you are just playing with me.
Am I right?

You want me to be your friend with benefits,
But you know what?
I am not playing this game
You can find another one,
To be your shame.

I just don't want to talk to you again,
Or look into your eyes,
I will miss your long hugs,
But I think I am doing right,
To say goodbye,
Before it's too late,
Before I get down again,
Just because of one boy,
Who didn't respect me,
Because he loved somebody else.
He loved himself.

I wanted to walk with you in the rain,
But, you know what?
It's too late.

GOODBYE

Špelara, 3. Fa

GOODBYE

Looking at you, I felt alive,
Now without your heat, I barely survive,
I think about what we could be,
If you hadn't left me.

Te amaba
Pensé que duraríamos
Ahora pensando en
Todo está en el pasado.

I thought I was to blame,
I expected too much,
I put out our flame,
I lost your touch.

Peleé por nosotros
¿Pedí demasiado?
Solo quería un buen chico
Pero dijiste adiós.

I TRIED

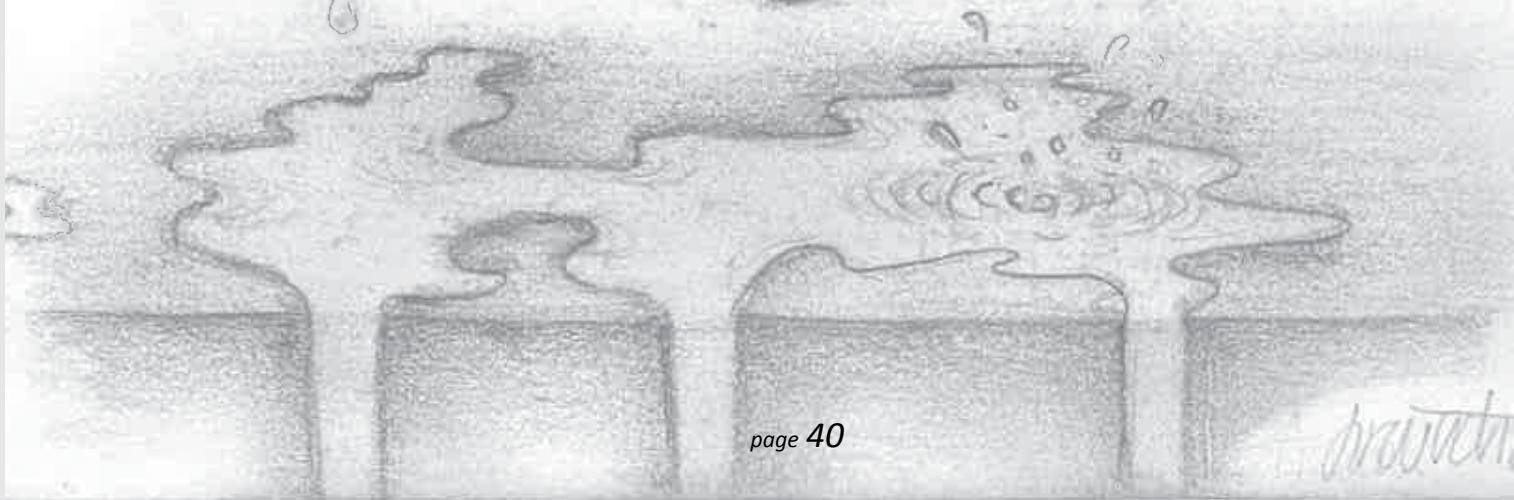
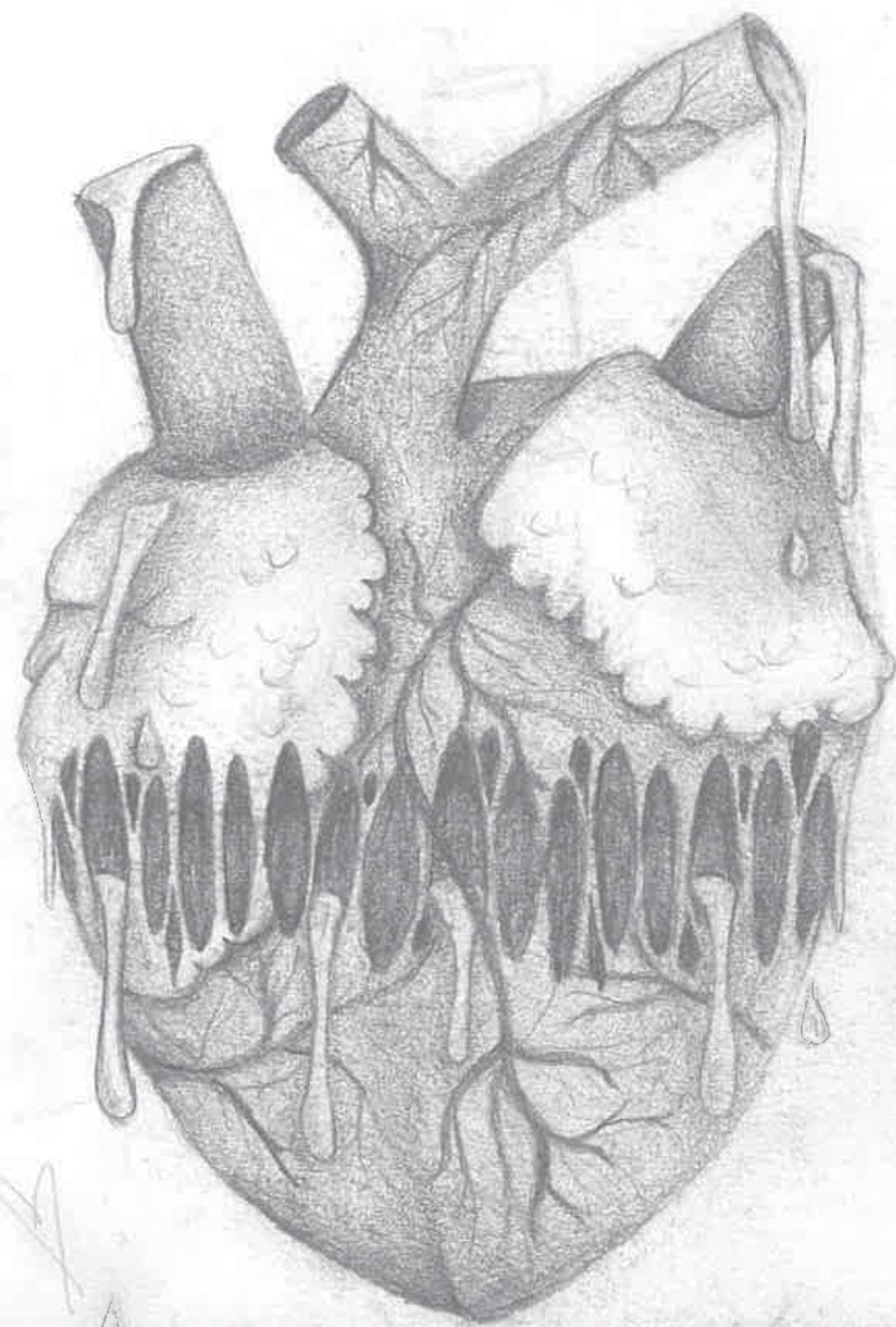
I've been hurt,
but I still hope you're okay,
I've cried all night,
because I wished you'd stayed.

But you left and I am broken,
I'm lonely and lost,
my feelings unspoken,
but for what cost?

I tried to make it alright,
fix it in sight,
but you didn't want that though,
that's why I had to let you go.

M. B.





ME

I am suffocating, no way out,
I am losing, there's no doubt,
I am scared, I am hopeless,
I crave any closeness.

My work, my life has turned into a mess,
I am living, breathing stress,
Failing everything I try to do,
What's sleep, I have no clue.

No way out
It's like a horror movie,
I can't even shout,
My head feels woozy.

I try to escape, the darkness is rising,
Sleep is so tantalizing,
But wait, I can't move,
The worry is hypnotizing,
My body, not mine, I watch it, it's paralyzing.

LOSING YOU

I can't decide, what's wrong, what's right,
Everything is so unclear,
My future fading, out of my sight
My wishes disappear.

All because of that talk,
All because I'm not that strong,
Now I stand alone, I don't walk,
I'm not perfect, is that so wrong?

You say I can't give you what you wish,
But have you thought of me, of my wishes?
Man, I am not your goldfish,
Do your own dirty dishes.

But that's just one flaw that I've got,
It hurt you so much that you left me all alone,
What about the love for which we fought?
Did your heart turn to stone?

M. B.

STORIES AND MORE

AN UNEXPECTED TURN OF EVENTS

It was a normal Friday morning. I woke up at ten past five like I always do, and little did I know that an unusual thing would happen to me that day. I brushed my teeth, did my makeup, got dressed and ate. Then I ran to the bus stop because I was late like I always am. Urška, my classmate, was saving me a seat on the bus. She looked very tired and she wanted to sleep, but I asked her if she could question me about English. I was supposed to write a test one hour before our normal class started. I was really hoping that there would be no traffic jam. The class started at 6.50 and because I don't have an earlier bus, I am always about 15 minutes late.

We were driving through the woods where the road was really narrow. Suddenly, we heard a loud bang and the bus quickly stopped. Me and Urška looked at each other and wondered what could have happened. Did we crash into a car, a tree, did the tire burst, did the bus break down, did we run out of gas? The worried bus driver ran out and he just stood there and watched. Minutes were passing by and we didn't know what was happening. A lot of cars were waiting behind the bus and we just stood there. Then the bus driver made a phone call. The bus was leaning to one side, so we guessed that a tire had burst. After standing in the middle of the road for a little over five minutes, the bus driver came back inside and started the engine. We were driving very slowly. We were very confused but happy that we were driving again. After about ten minutes the bus driver stopped at a near gas station and we were standing again! Urška and I called out parents to check if any of them was at home so they could take us to school because we didn't know how much longer we would be waiting there, but none of them were at home. After about 20-30 minutes a bus which was passing by stopped and picked us up. As we were walking from one bus to another, we saw a flat tire and an enormous dent on one side of the bus. We were really confused. It

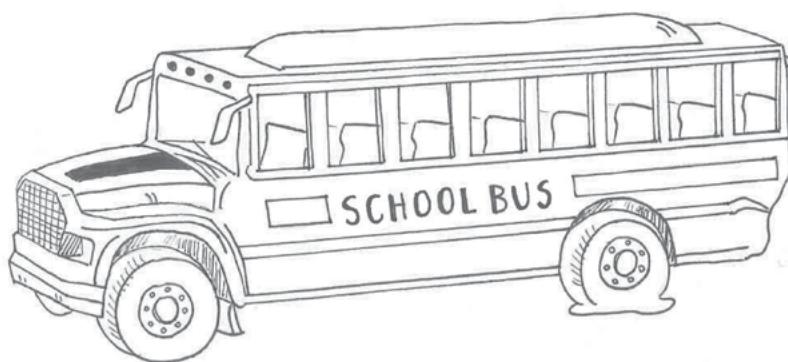
seemed the crash had happened because the road was so narrow that we had skidded on the road and hit a road sign. There were a lot of us, so some passengers had to stand on the bus.

I finally came to school, but I had missed the class period in which I was supposed to write the test. I spoke to the teacher about what had happened, and at first she didn't believe a single word I was saying, but afterwards she did because Urška confirmed what had happened. She said I would write the test during English class. I was shaking, I think I had never been so nervous in my life, and I don't even know why. I wrote the test and I couldn't really concentrate, but I managed to keep calm and, in the end, I got a B.

Later that day I was riding the bus back home and I looked out in the woods where I saw the speed sign that was bent and the railing which was also damaged.

I'm just happy that nothing worse happened and that I was still able to write the test later, but until this day me and Urška have no idea what actually happened.

Sara Žerovnik, 3. Kb



DEEP IN THE MOUNTAIN

It was a snowy day in Colorado. I just came back from school. I was with Cloe today and we were talking about our ski trip. We were both so excited. We both love skiing and we are pretty adventures. I started packing for tomorrow's trip.

The night finally rolled around. I couldn't sleep that night. It was probably because of my excitement. My alarm rang at 5 a.m. I was getting ready, but I didn't realise I was late. I quickly put on my shoes and started running towards the bus station. Luckily, I didn't miss the bus.

"Hey!" said Cloe.

"Hi!" I responded.

"I thought you were going to miss the bus or that you weren't coming at all. I am happy you are here. I don't know how I would survive without you. I literally don't know anyone on this bus."

"Yes, I know. I am also glad I am here. I just lost track of time, I guess."

"Did you bring everything you need?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Great."

We were resting for a bit, and before we knew it, we arrived. It was snowing heavily. The snow looked whiter than ever. It was a perfect day for a ski trip. We left our suitcases in the hotel and packed our ski bags with our essentials. We put our skies on and started skiing down the mountain. We were just skiing next to each other and gossiping. But we got bored quickly.

"Wait!" shouted Cloe.

"What's the matter?" I responded.

"Look! Do you see that trail? Looks untouched! We should totally go there and explore a bit! It's so boring on this basic trail."

"Yeah, but we don't know if it's safe. It hasn't been marked as a safe trail."

"It hasn't been marked because it's behind these trees. People probably haven't seen it."

"But what if we get lost?"

"We have a map, silly. We also have our phones."

It wasn't a good idea, but I accepted it anyway because I was really bored. We went behind the small gap between the trees.

"This is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen!" she said.

"Yes, it is," I agreed.

It really was like a winter wonderland. We were skiing down this place for over an hour. Then we ran into a big problem. The mountain didn't go down anymore. There was a flat ground and big hills all around. I started getting really scared, but I tried not to panic.

"Do you know where we should go now?" I asked nervously.

"Uhh ... I'm pretty sure we will find the way. Let me get the map," she replied. "Can you help me find where we currently are?"

"Cloe, this map only shows the trails! This isn't marked as a trail! It's not on the map!"

"Try to find the way using Google maps on your phone."

I got a little calmer, and I pulled out my phone when I realised: "I have no service!"

"I'm sure we'll find the way back."

We started skiing on the same path we had come from, or so we thought. After two hours of looking for our way back, we realised that we were lost.

"This feels like a dream. I'm not ready to die," she said anxiously.

"Don't give up! Let's keep looking for the way back."

By now it was getting dark. Our legs were sore. It was getting cold. We had limited supplies of food and water. Now we were looking for shelter.

"Look there!" she said.

There was a tiny cave on the edge of a hill.

"Let's go inside. We can spend the night here."

I agreed. We went inside. The cave had a big pile of

dried leaves. I lay on them and I was trying to get comfortable. We were very tired, so we fell asleep rather quickly. In the middle of the night, I woke up. I looked outside the cave. I could see a source of light on the top of a big hill.

"That will be our next destination," I thought.

The night was cold. In the morning, we ate our last bits of food.

"While you were sleeping, I woke up and there was a source of light on the top of that hill! We should go there right now!"

"There? That's too far. We're going to get exhausted and we'll die without food."

"We are going to die without food anyway, so we should at least try."

Cloe finally agreed. We started our long journey. One hour in, I shouted: "Should we leave our skies behind? It's so hard to climb up with them. We will climb more quickly without them."

"But what if we need them later?"

"I hope we don't."

We left our skies under a tree and we continued with our hike. We still had our ski sticks with us, so it was easier to climb up this huge hill. After six long hours, we finally arrived. We knew that we arrived because a little boy approached us. He started talking something.

"Sounds like he's talking gibberish," said Cloe.

"Yes, I know. I can't understand a word he's saying."

"Hey, kid. We are lost! We have no food or water. We need help! Can you understand me?"

He gave us a confused look and then he started running.

"Follow him!" I said.

With the little energy we had left in us, we started running after him. Suddenly Cloe collapsed.

"Please hold up a little more. This is our only chance."

She didn't move. I was also exhausted, so it was no surprise when I fell asleep too.



"Hey! Wake up!" Cloe shouted.

"Okay, I'm up."

It was night time.

"Look! Footprints! Let's follow them."

It was really dark and hard to see, and it had been snowing this whole time, so the footprints from the boy were barely visible.

"We must go now. By tomorrow they will have been covered up."

I agreed and we started following them. About thirty minutes later:

"Look! There are houses there!" I screamed excitedly.

"OMG yes! This could finally be over."

There was a small village. By now, it was around five in the morning, we were guessing. We went to the first house and knocked on the door. An old lady opened. She looked at us strangely.

"Good morning! We have been lost on this mountain for three days now. We are starving!" Cloe explained.

The woman couldn't understand us. So we both



tried to explain in sign language. We started showing our map, ski sticks, our empty backpacks ... Luckily, the old lady finally figured it out. She let us go inside. She gave us food and water. The meal she gave us was something I'd never seen before, but it was delicious. She said something that we couldn't understand and she left the house. At this point we didn't know what to do or how to feel, but we were exhausted, so we got comfortable on the sofas and fell asleep.

When we woke up, there was a group of people around us. I kinda felt a little scared for a second, but then one middle-aged man got closer to us: "Girls! What has happened to you? Where are you from?"

He was the only one that could speak English. We explained our situation about having got lost on this mountain.

"You are currently in a little village with its own language. Because it's so deep into the mountain, through history people created and learned their own language. They don't have a real identity, but they are living their best lives here. There is no internet or service. I have relatives here, and once in a while I come here to visit. There is a van that comes here every month, so when it comes, you can go to the nearest city and go back home from there."

"Really? And when does the van come? And how long is the trip to the city?"

"In about twenty days, I think. The trip lasts about eight hours. Now you can make yourselves comfortable here. This lady is my grandma's friend. She has a spare bedroom. You can stay here until you go home. Life might look a little unusual here. For example, there are no bathrooms. You have to go outside."

"Thank you so much for everything. If we survived on the mountain, we will here, no problem," I laughed.

After the kind people left, Cloe said: "I really hope I won't have problems with the bathroom thing because, you know, I'm really shy and uncomfortable around other people."

I chuckled. We went to bed and fell asleep. In the morning, we woke up. Cloe couldn't hold it, so she

went first. *Cloe slid the door back and leapt onto the grass, battling to stay upright as her foot slid off a grassy mound and into some mud. She flailed about, looking for a suitably dense bush that she could pee behind without being seen.*

"Damn it, why did it have to be winter and nothing have any leaves on?" she said.

I laughed.

But living there wasn't bad at all. We learned a lot of things. Eventually the time came to go home. The day we got in the van we were really excited. Our parents hadn't heard anything from us because there was no service here. They used walkie-talkies.

When we came into the small city, we bought a bus ticket, and after a long ride, we finally got home. The situation had really been scary, but at least we had learned something from it.

Venera Dimitrova, 1. Fc

A MIRACLE STARTS WITH THE BEAT OF A HEART

By reading the title you might have thought this story was going to be about miracles. You were right. I will tell you a story about a mother who finally got her miracle.

My mother has a friend named Betty. She is 37 years old and married. I met her three years ago, and I dare say that she is the most honest, generous and unselfish person I've ever known. She didn't have any children back then, even though she and her husband wanted one so badly and had been trying for years. She was faithful and never lost hope through the years, even though there were no results. We would see her, and even though she was thankful for every blessing in her life, we could tell that there was something missing. Every time she came over, she would give me advice about school, boys, fake friends and about life. She shared her stories with me and wanted me to learn from them. That's when I knew she would

be a great mother. About a year and a half ago she met a doctor who performed surgery on her, so she became pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl named Sara, who is now four months old.

With the first beat of Sara's heart, Betty's miracle started. This miracle filled her and her husband's world with happiness, joy, bliss and even more love. Sara was everything Betty and Zoran wanted. I was so happy for the family, and when I saw them with their long awaited baby, then I understood that, yes, a miracle starts with the beat of a heart!

Sanelia Popovska, 4. Za

BEAUTIFUL LIFE

Aren't stars beautiful?

Staring at them from my bed, they look so pure, untouched. I think about my mom and wonder ... Is she a star now? Tears of hurt threat to spill from my eyes, so I close them and think of the better times.

The times when my mom and I roamed the streets every day in search of any dime we could get, or of those moments when we lay on the grass in the park on a hot summer evening when the sun was setting. We were looking at the stars. Beautiful, graceful stars.

I open my eyes. I feel like I am being torn apart. Piece by piece. My heart is racing. I am pulling at the sheets so much that they might tear. But I do it willingly. For Momma. So I close my eyes again, now all red and swollen from tears.

Momma used to work in a huge building. She had a little shop, but then she had to close it down. She said that she had got a new job. I didn't doubt her, you know, I was just so little then and I couldn't understand. In reality, she was a few months late on payment, so the management evicted her. Then we lost the little studio apartment we had, but I was happy, I had my momma.

When I open my eyes, the pain is gone. There's warmth near me. I look down to figure out what it is and all I see is blood. Not too much, but it's still there. I'm alone in my room and because it's in the middle of the night I try to get some sleep. Tomorrow I have to go to work. I'm a waitress at Stepdad's pub. I hate it because everyone is always drunk. They yell and argue and they get touchy. For some time Stepdad forbade them to touch me, but then he realized that I got more tips if they could put their greedy hands on me. Luckily, I only work when I don't have school.

When I was with Momma, I never went to kindergarten. I didn't mind it until I came to school and I was the only one who didn't know how to read or calculate. But I was a quick learner and I got the hang of it. I even became a straight-A student and I got a scholarship for a few prestigious colleges, but Stepdad said he would hurt my mom if I went far away. That's why I stayed with him and went to a nearby school. I also took a few of my tips for myself. Usually, before closing time, I'd hide half of it before Stepdad took it for my 'living expenses'. A few months after I started school, Mom got seriously sick and she died. Then I was left with the monster and only faith knew what was to happen next.

After another day of a busy pub, grabbing and yelling, I come home and fall onto my little bed. I am almost asleep when the door silently opens and a large figure fills the doorway. My heart races like I'm running a marathon. I know what's to happen, and without any words I lie on my back and squeeze the sheets. I hear the belt unbuckle, the zipper pull down and tears start filling my eyes. Suddenly the bed sinks under the weight. I feel cold hands on my fair, warm skin. They roam over my shaking figure undressing me and pulling my knees apart. Then the pain comes again. The feeling of being torn mercilessly and my mind wanders back in time again.

Now I'm with Momma. We are on the beach looking at the waves crashing against the shore. The sky is as blue as her eyes and the sun is as warm as her smile. She's holding my hand and we're laughing out loud. She's telling me something about how she and Grandma used to go to the beach and talk about boys. She's telling me funny stories about



Gaja Robar, 3. SA

her relationships and we're having a good time.

The bubble of happiness is burst with another shock of pain and then something warm-like spills inside me. He's cursing, and in a few minutes I am left alone. I feel filthy, so I take a shower. When I look at myself, I don't even recognize myself. It's like I am an outsider in my own life. I watch myself smile, laugh, live, but I don't feel any of it. I am numb to the point that I can't even pity myself anymore. I go to sleep and dream about what a happy life would be like.

I have never told anyone about what's going on at night. I think that if I talked about it, I would feel it, it would be real. I want to pretend it didn't happen, that it is just my imagination, and if no one knows, it is easier to pretend.

A few weeks later my period is late. I fear the worst, and after the mornings of feeling sick all the time, I know what happened. I'm pregnant. At first, I only think about killing myself. I don't care if I go to hell. Anything is better than the hell I am going through and will go through. But later on, I realize that now I am not just taking care of myself. I am

also responsible for another human being that is slowly growing inside me. And my life is not the life I would wish a baby to live, so I plan to change it. I am going to escape and bring this baby into a beautiful world where no one will hurt him or her. For a few months nothing will show, so I'll work and live as usual and collect as much money as I can.

But I am wrong. Because of the morning sickness, I can't spend more than five minutes in class. My teacher has already called Stepdad a few times, but luckily we got to the conclusion that I have a 'stomach flu'. I never knew the beginnings of pregnancy would feel so terrible. I thought it was like the most beautiful time in a woman's life. Well, boy, was I wrong. The only good thing is that I'm able to skip school and work anywhere where they would take me. A few hours at the farmer's market, then some as a waitress, and so on. Luckily, Stepdad thinks I'm at a friend's house because I'm not feeling well, plus my friend's mom always covers for me. She thinks I'm just being a little rebellious, trying to earn some money for partying around.

During all this time I am thinking about how my mom pulled it off because she wasn't much older when she got pregnant with me. She never told me why she didn't have any contact with my grandparents or who my dad was. I just knew where I was born. I can still remember my birth town. Everyone there was very nice to me as a toddler. I faintly remember an elderly lady and a man. He was around a lot. He might have been my dad, or an uncle maybe. Will I ever know?

Now it's already been eight weeks since I found out I was pregnant and it could start showing soon, so I started to speed up the escape plan. I have a duffel bag packed up with necessities in the closet, with it there are also two thousand dollars that I have earned. It's enough to get me to Alabama and I can stay there in a motel for a month with this much. I can't wait to go because these last few nights he has come more often and I can almost not stand it anymore. All the while I am scared that the baby will get hurt. I have the urge to throw up and it hurts even more than before, but I put my big girl pants on and I get through it.

The day finally comes around. I put myself together for this day only. I do my makeup and hair, so nobody can suspect a thing. With all my belongings I walk to the bus station. I am excited for the sixteen-hour ride. I don't care how long it takes, just to get away from him.

In Alabama, I find my long lost family. My grandmother told me Mom had run away with me and the man she had loved, but shortly after that he had died in a car crash so it was just us. They take me in. I begin visiting therapy every week and the progress I make is soon noticeable. I also go to childbirth classes, and in a few short months I give birth to a beautiful baby boy. I name him Noah, after my grandfather.

I dream a lot about him, and I especially remember this one dream: *Noah slid the door back and leapt onto the grass, battling to stay upright as his foot slid off a grassy mound and into some mud. He flailed about, looking for a suitably dense bush that he could pee behind without being seen. "Damn it, why did it have to be winter and nothing have any leaves on?"* But when I wake up, I realize it is snowing outside and all the land is already covered in pure white snow. My little boy is sleeping next

to me and I am happy, because for the first time in a while, I feel safe again.

Maša Bohinc Penček, 2. Ka

A LITTLE STORY

There was once a girl called Rose, who was ashamed of being herself around others.

She showed people a mask she had made so people would like her. The mask was different from who she truly was. When she wore the mask, she seemed happy, filled with energy, just a little bubble of joy. But a mask only hides the inside. On the inside she was dying. She felt like everything she did was wrong. She thought that everybody hated her. Every night when she was alone in her room, she took her mask off and just cried. She finally let herself be vulnerable and showed all her flaws and imperfections to nobody but herself.

When her family argued, she felt like it was her fault. Not surprising when you find out that her family told her that they argued because of her and that she started most of the arguments in the family. Her family told her to be quiet, and then started to yell at her for not speaking enough. She could never please her family's wishes. Her family argued about everything. The dishes, cleaning, vacuuming, laundry, money, food, religion, music, personal beliefs, sexuality, alcohol, and so on.

When the girl was about 10 years old, she decided that if she had a chance, she would not drink alcohol. You probably wonder why she decided that. I mean, isn't alcohol supposed to be one of the best things in the world? Well, the girl had a different opinion. She wasn't very fond of alcohol since her father was a drunk, or an alcoholic, if you prefer that word. Her father came home most nights at eleven or midnight, totally drunk. He started to terrorize the house. And you might think that the word terrorize is a bit too harsh, but for her, it was an understatement. He would threaten his family that he would kill them, rip everything apart, take everything from them and destroy

everything, as he was the owner of the house and he had bought everything. But the truth was that he owned only half of the house and it was her mother who had bought everything in the house, not her father. Her father always lied when he was drunk, he lied so much that he believed it himself. He lied about where he had been, how much money he had, and pretty much anything he could think of.

But the girls' father wasn't the only problem.

Another problem was her mother. She always criticized her daughter, always told her that she wasn't doing enough. Her daughter was trying her hardest to please her mother, but her mother would always yell at her for not doing the dishes, not vacuuming the house, or not cleaning her room, but never considered what her daughter was doing at that time.

Her daughter was trying to study, but she had problems because she couldn't focus. I mean, who could study with constant interruptions, her mother calling her to help her cook, or to vacuum the house, or to clean something, or to explain why she hadn't done something yet, and the constant yelling that could be heard from the living room through the entire house. The yelling only intensified in the evening and at night.

Because the girl couldn't listen to screaming anymore, she usually wore headphones in her room or had music at a high volume. It was the only way for her to stay sane. But that had its own price like everything she did. Usually when she wore headphones, her family would call her to come to the living room, and of course, she wouldn't hear them. When she finally decided to go downstairs to the living room, her family would be upset with her and ignore her, or start to argue with her.

So you can imagine that she wasn't very happy with her life. But she wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. Despite everything, she loved her family, because even though they had bad moments, they also had wonderful moments together. Like when they travelled to some foreign countries, and when they watched television, or just talked about nothing and everything.

And a few more reasons for not wanting to trade her family for anything in the world were the lessons

she had learned in her life: when she had to be quiet, speak up, or just ignore the entire situation. She also learned how to hide her weaknesses from people, so they couldn't use them against her.

Now you know a bit of her story. There is so much that I could write forever and still wouldn't be able to write everything she lived through. And you wouldn't be interested in everything, right? So I'll tell you just a bit more about her.

She went to a high school of cosmetics. It wasn't that different from any other high school. There were a few differences, such as specific subjects, and so on. In her class, there were only girls. Now, if you like girls, this probably sounds like heaven to you. But in all honesty, being in a class of 28 girls is almost as bad as hell, sometimes hell even sounds like a better option.

You might wonder what's so bad about being in a class of only girls. Well, girls can be really cruel, and if you do anything embarrassing in front of them, they will never let you forget it. And the constant backstabbing, whispering, and rumors. You can quickly find out that you're all alone, and that the people who you thought were your friends, were just using you to get what they wanted, be it your notes, last year tests, sweets, or even money. So I think you've got the picture that being in a class of only girls isn't the prettiest thing. That fact only made her life more terrible than it already was.

Another fact about the girl was that she was in constant pain. I don't mean psychological pain, but physical pain. Nobody believed her of course, so she just hid her pain from everybody. She didn't want to seem weak in front of anybody. If you want to know why she felt a constant pain, she couldn't answer, because even she didn't know. It could have been from the multiple times she fell down the stairs, or the heavy school bag she carried, or the knee injury, or the time she got hit by a truck. Any of these events could have been the reason for her pain, or it could have been that all these events were the reason. Nobody will ever know.

Now that you know some of the bad parts of her life, let's talk about the good and happy parts. She didn't have many of them, but those were really precious.

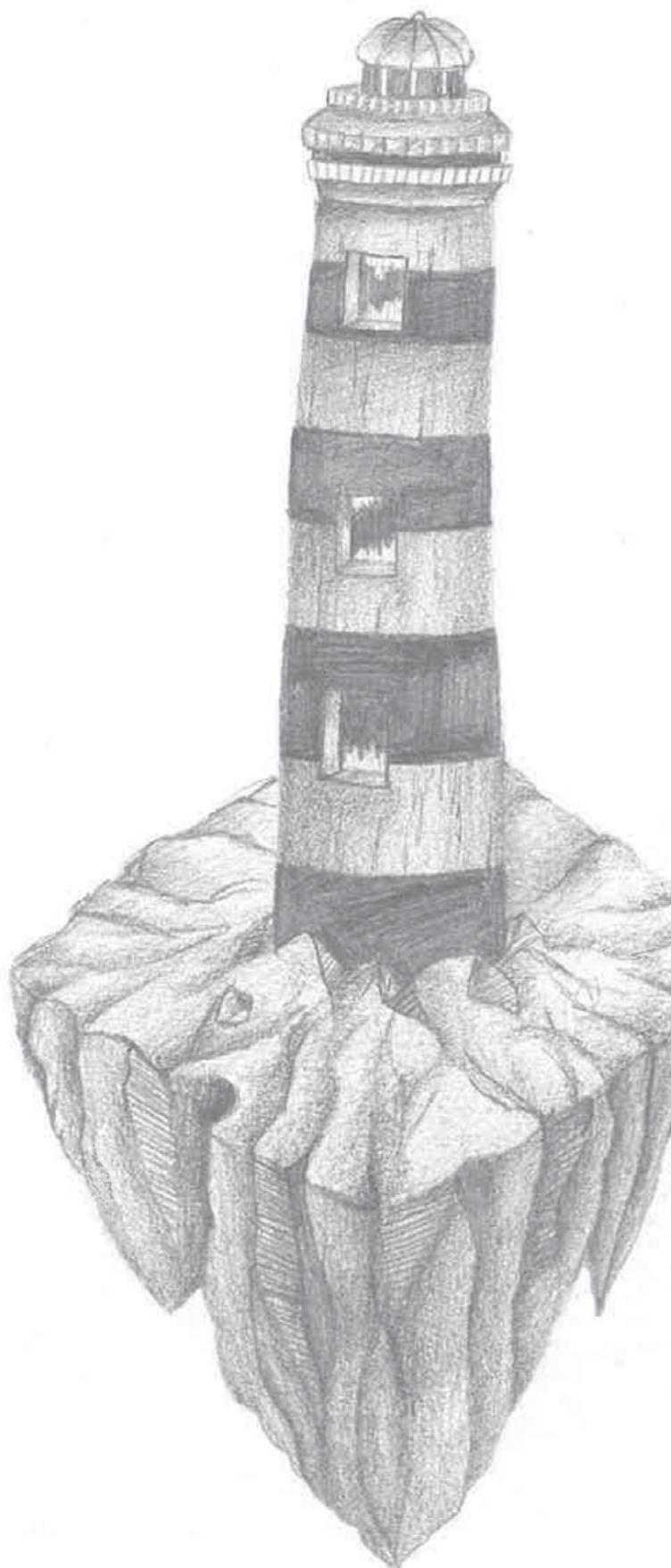
One good part of her life was her best and only

friend. Let's call her Tessa. Tessa helped her through some very tough times. The time when she didn't feel ok with her appearance and she talked with Tessa until she felt better. The times when she felt suicidal, or just had suicidal thoughts, Tessa unknowingly helped her just by being there for her. Rose also helped Tessa in some way. At least that was what Tessa had told her. She felt so happy at the thought of helping her best friend, the person she cared deeply for. Tessa was also one of her classmates. Tessa was the only classmate that didn't annoy her. Because they were classmates, they helped each other with schoolwork. They truly helped each other with anything they could. They were real friends.

Tessa was the only person in the world that truly knew Rose. She gave Rose the courage to show who she was and not to think about people judging her. Rose finally let someone see all the pain and beauty that was behind her mask. These two shared a friendship that couldn't be matched with anything else.

If you wonder what's the point of this story, let me tell you. The point is that even if you think that you fully know someone, there is a big chance that you don't. Everybody has a mask, and we rarely put the mask down and let people see what's behind it. So if somebody shows you who they truly are, don't judge them, but love every piece of them and cherish the fact that they feel like they can trust you enough to show you every part of themselves.

Tea Arnež, 4. Ka



LEARNING LIFE LESSONS

I want to tell you the story that happened to me recently and what I learned about my relationship.

One day at school, when I was walking down the hall, I saw a guy who was sitting on the bench and started looking at me. He was wearing glasses and I saw his beautiful brown eyes. He smiled at me and I smiled back. The next days I often saw him in the hallway with his friends. Sometimes I looked at him and he looked back and smiled. I asked my friend if she knew who he was and she told me his name. I added him on Snapchat and a few days later he texted me. It was on 5th October. We started talking. He was nice and he wanted to know everything about me. We talked about school, friends and even how much he loved my pajamas. He told me about his family, about his young brother David, who was very sweet, and that they looked the same. He is the same age as me and he always told me that he was 72 hours older.

The next day we started talking at school. This was the day when we first hugged. It was kind of special. From that moment on, we became closer to each other. When I told my friends about him, they said that I liked him, but I kept telling them that we were just friends and nothing more. He asked me if I wanted to go out with him and I was like, "Yes, why not?" I knew that we went out like friends.

So, on 20th October, we went out after school. It was Friday and it was warm. At first, we didn't know where to go, because we didn't want anybody to see us together. We decided to go to Ljubljana Castle. I need to say that my legs were burning while I was walking. But he grabbed my hand and dragged me to the bench where we sat down and started talking. He told me that I was pretty and that he liked to spend his time with me. Most of the time we were acting like six-year-old children because we were fighting, laughing, hiding and doing other things that children do when they are happy. There was one moment when we were quiet, looking at each other and he kissed me on the forehead. I was quite shocked because I hadn't

expected that, and I didn't know what to do, so

I hugged him. It was already late and I had to go home. We said goodbye and left.

When I was on the bus, I talked to my friend on the phone and told her what had happened. She was amazed and said: "Oh my God, you do like each other." But I told her that we were just friends and she didn't believe me. She kept telling me all the time that we had started a real relationship.

When I came home, I got a message from him. He wrote that he had had a great time with me and he wanted to go out again. At that moment I felt happy and we talked till midnight when I fell asleep. Other days I saw him in school and sometimes we went out during the school break.

On 5th November, he asked me if I wanted to meet him on the bench near the school because he wanted to talk to me. I said: "Yes, of course." I felt nervous because I didn't know what he was going to tell me. Maybe that he didn't like my company, or I had done something wrong, but I didn't know what. So, at 3 o'clock we met near the school, where we sat down and he started talking. He told me that I made him happy and he had never met any girl like me. I was looking him in the eyes while he was talking and his eyes were shining. He really seemed happy. I told him that I hadn't had a guy before and when I was with him I forgot about bad thoughts and who I was. And then he kissed me, like a real kiss. I need to admit that he is a good kisser. I felt butterflies in my stomach. We were kissing for like 3 minutes and then we stopped. He asked me if something was wrong, but I said that it was perfect but this was all new to me and I was surprised because I really hadn't expected that. Then I had to go home and I told him that I needed to clear my mind. He seemed quite sad, but I said that he hadn't done anything wrong and the moment we had was special. Then I left.

When I came home, I lay on my bed and started thinking if I was ready to have a boyfriend. I was scared that I would be hurt and he would find another girl and I wouldn't forget him. But I felt so perfect with him, so I decided to try. I texted him that I had made a decision and I wanted to be with him. So he asked me: "Do you want to be my girlfriend?" I never thought that I would have a boyfriend in my 15's, but I said yes. My heart was

beating so fast and I couldn't believe that I had a boyfriend.

I told my friend what had happened and she was very happy for me. We didn't want to tell anybody about us, that we were dating, only my and his friend knew that. The next days we were together in school all the time. We were acting like we were only friends and it was hard not to kiss him. One day I kissed him on the forehead, but fortunately, nobody saw it.

On 30th November, we went to the city center together. It was about six o'clock and I was hungry, so we went to McDonald's to get something to eat. Then we sat down and I started talking, but he wasn't listening to me. He was on the phone. Suddenly he saw a friend at the other table and went to talk to him. He left me alone for about 15 minutes. Then he came back and acted like nothing was wrong. I felt quite angry, but I tried to forget that. He took his phone again and acted like he was alone. When we were ready to leave, he saw another friend and he went to her. He hugged her and left me alone again. This time I was really angry with him because first, when I had been talking to him he hadn't been listening, and then he had left me alone for 25 minutes because of the friend and it seemed that he didn't care about me. I said goodbye to him and left. I called my friend and told her what he had done and she was angry too. I didn't know what to do, but I wanted to do something, so I decided to text him. I told him how terribly I had felt that day. We started arguing and he said a lot of bad things to me. I was hurt and I decided to break up with him.

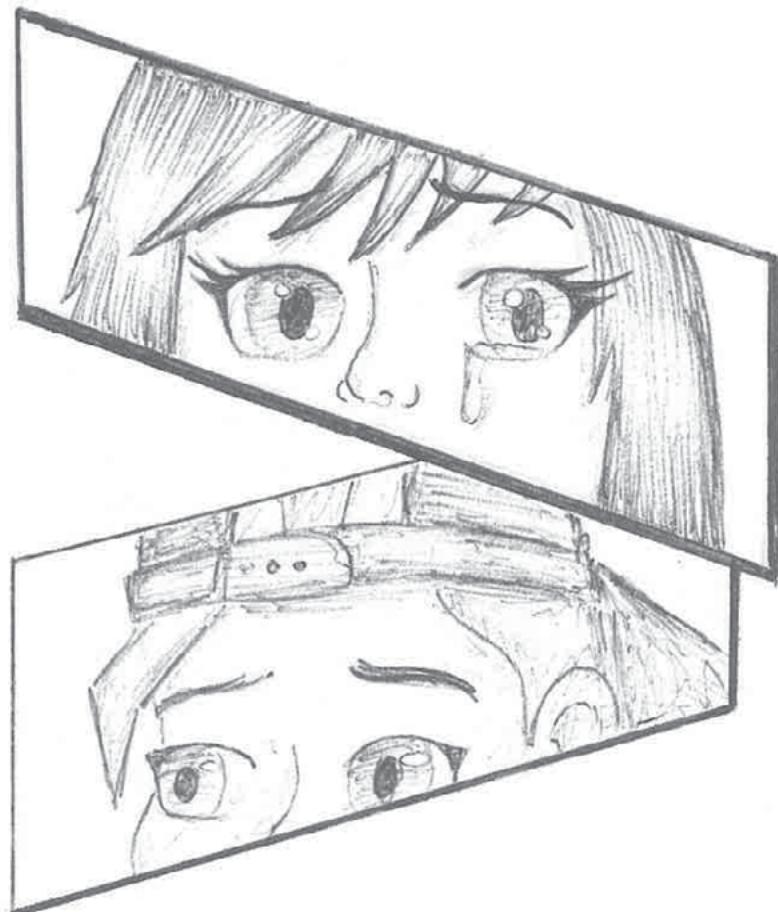
The next days we didn't see each other anymore. I even didn't say hey to him. But a few days later, he texted me that he had made a mistake and he wanted to be with me. He apologized and said that he would never do anything that would hurt me. I believed him because I loved him. So I gave him a second chance.

One day I went to the doctor's and he didn't go to school either because he was looking after his brother David, who was sick. He asked me if I wanted to come to him because he wanted to see me. I wanted to see him too, so after the doctor's appointment I went to visit him. I saw his little brother, who was very cute and he was

wearing glasses too. I introduced myself to him and he was quite shy. Then we went to his room while his brother was watching television in the living room. We were alone and he said that he had missed me. Then he kissed me. We were kissing for a while and I lay in his arms and said: "I missed you too." We also took a picture together in front of the mirror when he hugged me. I was having a really great time with him, but it was time for me to go because his parents would be at home soon. He escorted me to the door, where we kissed. That kiss felt different, but I didn't know why. I wasn't thinking about that. I was happy that we were together again and I really didn't want to lose him.

But our happiness didn't last long. He started acting weird. When I asked him something, he always answered with a short answer and acted like he didn't care. He only thought about himself and forgot about me. It was always me who had to start a conversation. We often argued and I usually cried because I really cared about us and I loved him. However, I couldn't handle it anymore. I was tired of continuous outbursts of anger and sadness. So this was the moment when I had to make my hardest decision. I could break up with him forever or give him another chance. I chose the right decision. To break up with him. I texted him that I was done with him and he agreed. He said that he was tired of arguing and that the break up was the best for us. I was secretly hoping that he would ask me for another chance and fight for me, but he didn't. It was very hard. I was so sad, I cried all night and I really wanted to stop thinking about him, but I couldn't. I didn't know what to do to make things better. I told my friend what I had done and she said that I would be okay, but I needed time to forget him.

And she was right. I really needed time. I thought that I would never get over him. The first month was very stressful because I saw him at school. We ignored each other. It was so hard not to hug him, even not to smile at him. How could I feel better if I saw him all the time, and when I looked at him, he smiled, and in his eyes I saw how happy he was when he saw me? Sometimes I looked in the gallery of my phone and saw our pictures and started crying. All the time I listened to sad songs, thinking about him, what it would be like if I gave



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him another chance. Maybe he would change but maybe not.

Time passed and I felt a little better. But there was time when all anger and sadness came out of my heart. It felt like half of my body was falling apart. When I saw him happy, I was grief-stricken because I was scared that he had found a new girl and had forgotten me. So one day I texted him that I wanted to be with him again and he said that he was not ready for a relationship. At that moment I really realized that he had forgotten me and didn't feel anything for me.

So it's been a couple of months since our break up. Today I can say that I have got over him. And honestly, I didn't know if I was going to say that someday. I realized that some people would never change. They like to be who they are even if they hurt somebody. They think only about themselves. I admit that it was hard to say goodbye to a person who made me happy. When I was with him, I returned to my childhood when we were so cheerful and carefree. We would act like children, laughed, and all the bad things went away when we were together. I will never forget the moment

when he said "I love you" for the first time, and when I was lying on him, and he said: "I feel your heartbeat." I always felt special when he told me that I reminded him of his younger brother. And his smell - I can't forget that. I am happy that I made the right decision because today he is not the person I fell in love with. But his smile has stayed the same. Now I know why that kiss felt so different - because it was our last. Today we are kind of friends. We have moments when we ignore each other or act like a couple. Sometimes I think about what would happen if we were together, but I will never get the answer. I am happy that he was my first guy because he was honest with me, made me laugh all the time, told all beautiful things, made me feel special. I don't regret any moment we were together.

With love, somebody.

I didn't mention the name of the boy because it's not important who that story is about, but what my life lesson was.

...

LIFE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

In Tusca, an eighteen-year-old boy Noah just woke up from a nap. It was Friday night. Every young man would go out with friends, but not Noah. He was something special. He would much rather spend the night staring at the stars and writing poems. That is exactly what he did. He took his poetry book and started writing poems about love, sitting next to the telescope watching the stars. He dreamt of true love, but little did he know his life was about to turn upside down.

The next day, he went to visit his friend George. They were watching a movie, when suddenly the bell rang. It was George's little sister Lyana. She was 16 years old. She came from Crota, where she was studying medicine. There were only two countries in the world because of World War 3. That was 200 years ago and since then the world was divided into two countries, Tusca and Crota. There was a lot of tension between the countries right now, which was why Lyana came back.

The second Noah laid eyes on Lyana, he felt something that he had never felt before. Something that all his love poems were missing, something indescribable. They hung out all day and then Noah went home. He couldn't sleep all night thinking of Lyana. *Is it wrong that I am thinking of my best friend's sister? Is she too young? ... All kind of questions went through his head.*

He decided to take one step further. He texted George, asking him if he would like to go to Diamond Lake. George said yes. Noah then wrote that he could take Lyana with him if she didn't have anything to do. George wrote OK. Now what was that supposed to mean? Was he mad at Noah or was Noah just overthinking?

The moon hid and the sun came up. Noah was very excited, but scared and nervous at the same time. He picked up George and Lyana with his car. George was sitting in the back of the car, so that he could have all three seats for himself. Noah was watching Lyana as he was driving. Her hair was golden, her eyes were so blue that when you looked at them you felt like you were drowning in the ocean. Her freckles and full lips, she was just perfect. But Noah wanted to see her soul too,

because the inside was much more important to him. Lyana fell asleep, so they couldn't really talk, but just admiring her beauty was enough for now.

They finally reached the destination after an hour and a half, and it was very cold, so they immediately started a fire. Noah had to go pee, so he walked into the woods where he saw a little old house. He wanted to go in and see what was in there, so he opened the door. There was a big dog in there probably guarding the house. *Noah slid the door back and leapt onto the grass, battling to stay upright as his foot slid off a grassy mound and into some mud. He flailed about, looking for a suitably dense bush that he could pee behind without being seen.*

"Damn it, why did it have to be winter and nothing have any leaves on?"

He went back to his company and Lyana helped him clean himself. George fell asleep. It was just Noah and Lyana now. Noah was very nervous and Lyana didn't look relaxed either. Noah decided to do the thing he knew best. He pulled the telescope from the car and started showing Lyana the stars and other planets. Lyana was very impressed. Noah had a little backpack and a little book fell out of it. Lyana opened it and started reading. She had no words. Noah was so embarrassed he literally hid behind the bush. Lyana called him to come out. She said the poems were amazing, which really boosted Noah's self-esteem.

They spent all night reading poems and looking at the stars. The stars had never shone brighter, the moon was like a big diamond, it was very cold outside, but it didn't bother them because they had really warm feelings. One thing led to another and under the big shining sky they kissed. Of course, George had to wake up right at that time. He was very disappointed and angry. He pulled Lyana away and they went home by bus.

Lyana and Noah then secretly dated for a year and a half. They had an enormous amount of love for each other and they wanted to make it official even though their families didn't agree. Little did they know that life was not happy.

A great war between the two countries started and all men older than 17 had to join the army. They took Noah away and Lyana was miserable. She had

enough knowledge of medicine, so she decided to go to work as a doctor at a military center to help Noah.

However, nothing was the way she had expected it to be. People were bleeding, screaming and dying; it was a living nightmare. There were bodies lying everywhere and any of them could be Noah. She sewed injuries and performed a lot of operations. She was one of the best doctors.

One day she needed to help a person that looked very familiar. It was George. He was in a horrible condition and no one believed he would survive. He didn't. Lyana's screaming could be heard to another galaxy. She saw her brother after two years, but not alive. She blamed herself for his death.

She was now determined to find Noah and somehow bring him home. She asked for permission to go to work in the battlefield. The commander let her. She went there and worked for half a year, but there was no sign of Noah.

Then one day she saw a beautiful face with a lot of scars. It was him. It was Noah.

She was sure. She ran as never before, tripped, fell, got all muddy, but didn't care. He saw her and helped her stand up. They went to a cabin and talked for hours. They hadn't had a proper goodbye when they had taken him. He told her how the only thing that had kept him alive was the thought of her. He was bleeding from his back. Lyana took a needle and did her job.

She noticed Noah was not the same. He was very different. She asked him if he wrote any poems. "Poems?" he asked laughing. "You know nothing about war, do you?" He stood up angrily and left the cabin.

Lyana realised she had made a mistake bringing up the past. After all, they were totally different people now. People change after some things happen to them. She followed him and apologized. "I love you," she said.

A tear travelled from Noah's eyes to his chin. He turned to Lyana and gave her the biggest hug ever. He said that he hadn't had the warm feeling he used to have with her for a long time and his heart had got frozen.

They spent the night together looking at the stars as in the old days, but they couldn't do it without thinking someone was going to throw a bomb any time.

Lyana came up with an idea. A crazy one. "Let me cut off your right thumb," she said.

Noah thought she was mad. Lyana then explained. "If I cut off your thumb, you won't be able to hold anything with your hands and you will be useless. They will send you back home and we can be together."

Noah said that her working in the war area had made her crazy. "I am not going to harm myself so that I can stay at home while my people are dying," he said. "Go home, Lyana."

Eventually Lyana gave up on her love and went home. Noah was disappointed. He thought she would stay to help her people, but she was just chasing teenage love. Noah went back to the war area.

One Saturday morning Lyana was reading a newspaper and there was a long list of names, thousands of names. The names of dead people. She read the names one by one and found something she hoped she wouldn't. Noah Jones, she read.

Why did the war take everything from her? Her sibling, her biggest love and the lives of thousands, not only her people but the 'enemies' too. She fell on the floor powerless.

"I hope the future holds something brighter," she said.

Adea Seferaj, 1. Fc

LUCIFER'S TALE

They say most things happen for a reason, that our faith is determined and that God is the only rightful judge. But I'm not one of those people. I've been on this Earth since the beginning and that is a very long time. I'm an angel and truthfully we aren't all that good. Some of us are, but the others ... are not. All the stories about God and the Devil are mostly made up. And I am going to tell you the story of my life. But if you want to understand it, I must tell you what happened at the beginning.

Before humans even existed, there were other planets with creatures similar to your kind. They were called Crisantics. They had magical powers. Some more than others, and I am one of those who had a lot of them.

My father was the King of Crisantics and I was not his legitimate son. I was the product of his fun with his mistress. Well, anyway, the King also had two legitimate sons, twins actually, and when our planet began to die, they were in charge of finding a new, similar one. And guess what, it was Earth.

The brothers loathed each other because they knew that one day only one of them would be the king. The older one, older by one minute, was Giordin (or God) and the younger was Deviliris (or Devil). So long story short, when we came to Earth, we found a bunch of ape like people, and Giordin wanted to make them as we were, give them powers and all, but Deviliris disagreed.

They caused the first war ever and all of our kind died in the battle. Only the brothers, the high society and all illegitimate children of the King survived. Some bowed to Giordin and others to Deviliris. Some chose neither, but secretly worked with both of them.

We then had children and they were very different from us. They didn't have powers, didn't have knowledge and were mortal. Throughout centuries, our children had their own. And that is the back story, now we can start with mine.

In the 17th century, I met a beautiful, talented and kind woman who took my heart. Then Deviliris kidnapped her because I hadn't wanted to join him. He killed her in front of my eyes, and from

that moment on, I went MIA. I hid myself and my broken heart from the world. I literally spent about 400 years drinking, and it wasn't that bad.

In 2001, I got a hint from my friend that Deviliris was planning to kill Giordin, so he could take over and rule the world. His followers, or now so-called Demons, were killing angels who didn't pick a side at the beginning. I wanted to kill Deviliris. I found out that only the descendant of Giordin and an angel could defeat Deviliris and that there was only one in the entire world.

At the time, the girl was 5 years old. I chose to protect her and sent my friend there to watch her over for another 17 years, so she would be ready for the big fight. Oh, I forgot to tell you that as angels we can change our appearance so my a million-or-so-year-old friend Thobias became a six-year-old protector. On the evening of her 21st birthday, I went to his dorm to talk to him. We were having a little fight about Stephanie's party and the alcohol, when she saw us fighting, both using our powers.

"Thobias wh... what is going on?" Her big hazelnut eyes were so scared I almost hugged her, almost. But that is not the point. She caught us and now my plan was one year shorter.

"Jesus, Steph ..." Thobias started walking towards her.

"No! Don't come near me!" I knew this was going to be hard to explain, so I appeared beside her and took her wrists.

"Do not scream. We have a lot to talk about and you don't have a choice but to listen, so calm down. Please." I saw the panic in her eyes, but I knew she wouldn't fight back. We told her about her real father and her destiny.

Suddenly I smelled burnt sulfur of Demons nearby and I knew their intentions weren't good. And not even a second after my thoughts had been formed, a window exploded. Thobias and I quickly made a decision and I took Stephanie to the safe house.

At first she was a little panicked, but she soon calmed down. We sat on the couch and talked when she took a piece of paper from my coffee table. It was a notice I totally forgot about. The people living in this area got it. *The notice informed them that it was a temporary matter: for five days*

their electricity would be cut off for one hour, beginning at 8 pm. The work would affect only the houses on the quiet tree-lined street, within a walking distance of a row of brick-faced stores and a trolley stop, where Shoba and Shukumar had lived for three years. One of those houses was mine, and the protection that I had around it was partly electrical, so things got serious. I thought Shoba and Shukumar were two of the Demons here and I didn't want Stephanie in danger.

"So you kidnap me and bring me God knows where. Can I at least know your name?" she asked way too innocently.

"It's Lucifer, but everyone calls me Luc. Now little missy, you are going to give me your phone and then I'll show you where you'll be staying."

"I am definitely not giving you my phone! First, you tell me a load of nonsense about 'my destiny', then you kidnap me, and now you want my phone. Who do you think you are? My mother?"

She was slowly eating up my patience with her sassy attitude. I stepped right into her personal space.

"Your destiny is very much true and dangerous, so if you want to die, you can keep your phone, although a pretty girl like you could have a bright future."

She looked a little bit scared, but she didn't blink while staring into my eyes.

"Why do all the hot guys always have to be such big idiots?"

I think she wasn't planning to say that out loud, judging by the look she gave me when she realized what she had said. It amused me, so I teased her.

"You think I'm hot, little missy?"

"No! You're a selfish idiot who only thinks about himself, and do not under any circumstance call me little missy again, and just so you know ..."

I was tired of her getting angry for nothing, and I am a jerk, so instead of asking her politely about closing her mouth, I kissed her. Not just a peck, but a long French kiss, which I knew she had never got before. I sensed she wanted to step back, but I grabbed her waist and pulled her closer. She just

melted. After a few seconds, I stepped back and looked into her eyes. Her pupils were dilated and her lips swollen from the kiss.

After that incident we were trapped in the house for weeks because of the snowstorm outside and because I wasn't able to use my powers. If I had, the Demons would have known and come after us. And the idiot that I am, I did use them eventually. At least it was for a good purpose. It was the third week since we had been trapped and I wanted to see if Thobias was all right, so I sent him a quick message via magic.

Shoba and Shukumar were the Demons just as I assumed and they trashed into the safe house. They wanted to kill Stephanie, so I had to stop them. Shoba was holding her down and I threw a dagger at her, but just seconds before it would hit her, she moved away. The dagger hit Stephanie. The Demons looked at me, smiled with their rotten teeth and disappeared. I ran to her side right before she fell to the ground. Tears were falling from my eyes and I couldn't stop them. Only then did I realize that I loved her. I loved that sassy, annoying, beautiful girl. I loved her more than I thought was possible. And just as I was about to give up on hope that my power could bring her back, she started glowing. Literally, like a light bulb. An unknown force lifted from my embrace and all the blood with the dagger just vanished. Her beautiful hazelnut eyes opened and she looked down at me with a smile.

"I heard you, your thoughts. They brought me back. I love you, Luc, I love you so much that it hurts, and this dagger did not mean my death, but my true birth of powers. Thank you."

After that I didn't let her out of my sight. We imprisoned Deviliris because Stephanie didn't have the heart to kill him. And I made this sweet little girl mine for all eternities.

So remember this. No matter how big your mistakes are, there is always a guiding light to goodness, and Stephanie was my light.

Maša Pohinc Penček, 2. Ka

THE MAGIC OF CONNECTION

Do you ever wonder whether people would like you more or less if they could see inside you? I mean, I've always felt like the Katherines dump me right when they start to see what I look like from the inside - well, except K-19.

I did wonder about this. And the answer is probably not only one. If you imagine how interesting it would be to read someone else's 'lifebook'. It would be like reading a book which is made of real things only. The book would get an extreme meaning if you had access to it. All plans and wishes would be on the table for you.

You would be able to see what is actually going on in the heads of your girlfriends. Maybe not the best option - sometimes it is better to overlook unpleasant reactions. But you could see what you are doing wrong and where you need to improve yourself. If you were doing anything wrong, of course. You could see what their goals, dreams, beliefs and values are. These things have a huge meaning in a relationship.

If I were you, I would try to find a person who has a similar way of thinking. Because a person as smart as you can't get along with everyone, because such a world view as yours is not very common. This means you will have to find a girl who is as 'rare' as you.

If one of the Katherines had been extremely interested in you, she wouldn't have dumped you. I think there should be an honest and genuine connection. But the connection and things in life almost never come by themselves, without our effort. There is always a reason why something happens. For this indispensable connection, a person must be compatible with the other one. They need a similar way of thinking and understanding to be harmonious. You should be very happy if you have this kind of connection. Some people are lucky, but some people, you, for example, need to try some or even a lot of relationships to find the one.

I'm not experienced enough to tell from my sources, but you could accept some valuable advice. Beside the fact that you are the smartest here. Usually the



ones who keep giving advice aren't experienced. But let's say we are talking about generalizations.

You are only on a different wavelength than average people. This is why you can't understand other persons. Or maybe your goals are unusual. Two persons with totally different views of the world can't really understand each other. Someone who lives in the countryside has a different way of thinking and seeing the world than someone who

lives in the city. They just do not understand each other's beliefs and thoughts.

I don't understand why your exes didn't accept you after knowing you better. I guess they weren't familiar with your way of thinking. As I said, you need a girl who will be able to understand you, with a similar way of seeing the world.

There is an exception - K-19. As I said, there are always persons who will understand you. Relax and do not worry about finding a soul mate. If someone has problems with it, don't worry because the only one who is losing time is them.

But I always wonder about that. If people could see me the way I see myself - if they could live in my memories - would anyone, anyone love me?

The question is actually: "Do I like living with my memories?" If the answer is yes, that is great because you will share them with people around you. And if you present your memories with love and respect, they will value them too. I truly believe it. But if the answer is opposite, the reaction will be opposite as well. If you love your memories, everyone else will love them too. Well, not *everyone*, but most of them.

No one is perfect. Including the best ones. My opinion is that if you want to be like someone, you can partly imitate their actions. I mean, if their way of life fits yours. I don't mean being their absolute mirror. You, of course, add your unique touch to it. It wouldn't have any sense if you were doing the same things. Because you and your role model have diverse backgrounds and close friends.

Our life consists of questions and decisions about what to do in the moments to come. It sounds kind of simple, but in reality it's not. There are sooo many decisions to make every moment. And every decision affects our path of life. We really need to decide consciously what to take in.

Whatever you are doing, it can be shared. It will become a part of you. People will create an image about you based on your actions.

So, if you want to love someone, truly love, you need to love yourself first. You decide who you are going to let in your everyday life.

We need to find people who are going to have

a 'role' in our life. We need to feel needed and accepted, because we are sociable creatures.

Love is a conscious choice. A conscious choice to take somebody as a part of yourself. So, if you want to know who will love you, truly love you, you will need to show yourself in genuine colors, which will make situations clear. You will need to show your real picture.

Colin vs Katherine-19

Katherine-19 is a young teenage girl. She wants to be happy and she doesn't like to be bored. She loves chatting with her friends about everything. Another chapter in her life is school. She likes going to school, but she has never enjoyed learning. Talking about people and current news are much more interesting.

Colin is completely opposite to Katherine. He prefers learning, especially about things that other people seem not to care much. Because of this, it is difficult for people to relate to Colin.

He is 17 years old and there is not much time left for him before going to college. He is only dating girls named Katherine. Up to now, he has dated 18 Katherines. Beside this, he is depressed, but he is very smart too.

One day on the bus, while Katherine was giving up on learning, Colin asked her if she needed help. She kindly accepted the offer. Colin was happy because he could show off his intelligence. Katherine was very impressed by Colin's words. She invited him for a drink in return.

In the beginning, they were both very interested in each other. They talked about experiences. But when they started to talk about everyday life, they noticed that their interests were slightly different. Over time the differences grew bigger and bigger. Katherine decided that this relationship didn't have a bright future, so she dumped him. One more Colin-Katherine partnership ended. Unfortunately, they weren't a good match.

Colin's best friend helped him to get over another heart-breaking try. Colin and his best friend

went on a trip. There Colin found a person who understood him. They discovered that Colin's way of uniqueness wasn't possible. This made him think. He had thought there was nothing to change about his thinking. But fortunately he discovered that he could actually improve himself. Colin went on a long journey, discovering his mind. He needed to refresh his way of seeing every detail. Because nothing was obvious. He adopted many new habits too. This made him another person – Colin, the genius.

I believe Colin will be much more successful now. Every move in the direction of being a better person, or making the world friendlier, is honorable. It is great to know that around you there are people with good intentions.

Tina Bergant, 1. Fc

OTHERS

"Do you ever wonder whether people would like you more or less if they could see inside you? I mean, I've always felt like the Katherines dump me right when they start to see what I look like from the inside - well, except K-19. But I always wonder about that. If people could see me the way I see myself - if they could live in my memories - would anyone, anyone love me?"

I wonder whether people would like me more or less if they could see inside me.

I sometimes think about how other people think about this.

So I imagined how other people of different ages might think about it:

A little girl must think that people would like her because she is nice and sweet, but maybe girls at school wouldn't like her because she is jealous of them – because they are rich and they have all the toys and they are mean to other girls about

that. She wishes her parents spent more time with her, but instead they are always stressed and angry because of their work. She would very much like to go to the park or playground with them sometimes, but they always say they are busy. She wishes that her brother or sister saw how much she loves them even when she is annoying ...

A teenage girl must think that her parents won't like her because sometimes, in her head, she is thinking the worst about them, that they are so annoying and that they don't give her enough space. Her friends would see how much she cares for them even if she is annoying sometimes. Other girls would see that she is jealous of them, or that she doesn't like their taste in fashion although she says that she likes their outfits. Teachers would see how unhappy she is with her school grades although she pretends to be okay with them ...

A college girl must think that her parents are annoying because she is away during the week studying in another city, so at weekends they want to talk to her about everything because they miss her sooo much. They have to call her on the phone even when she is out with friends, just to make sure she is safe; not to mention that she is 20 years old ... Her parents would see that she loves them

even if she is not with them and that she is trying to live her own life. Her siblings would see that she is willing to take some time and play with them, but not always, because she is grown up and now she has her own responsibilities ...

A wife with kids must think that her kids would see how much she loves them and takes care of them even if they don't feel the same. She only wants good for them, the best, even when they fight. She has worked very hard for that toy that was so expensive. She just wishes that her kids were more grateful and gave her some love back. She would like her parents to see how hard she is trying, and that she has to handle everything all by herself ...

A grandma must think that it would be nice if her husband saw that she loves him even after all these years and even if he is annoying sometimes and he doesn't listen to her or even if he can't hear her very well. She wishes that her daughter visited more often and took more time to talk to her, or to go on a shopping spree that she promised her a year ago, or that she brought her grandchildren more often because she doesn't know when she

won't wake up any more ...

What about me?

What would I want others to see, or rather, what would others see in me? It is easy to imagine ...

Maybe they would see how I judge people, especially their outfits and their makeup. If they have a great outfit, I sometimes want to run to them and ask them where they bought that sweater or some other piece of clothing. As you can see, I am a big fashion and cosmetics lover.

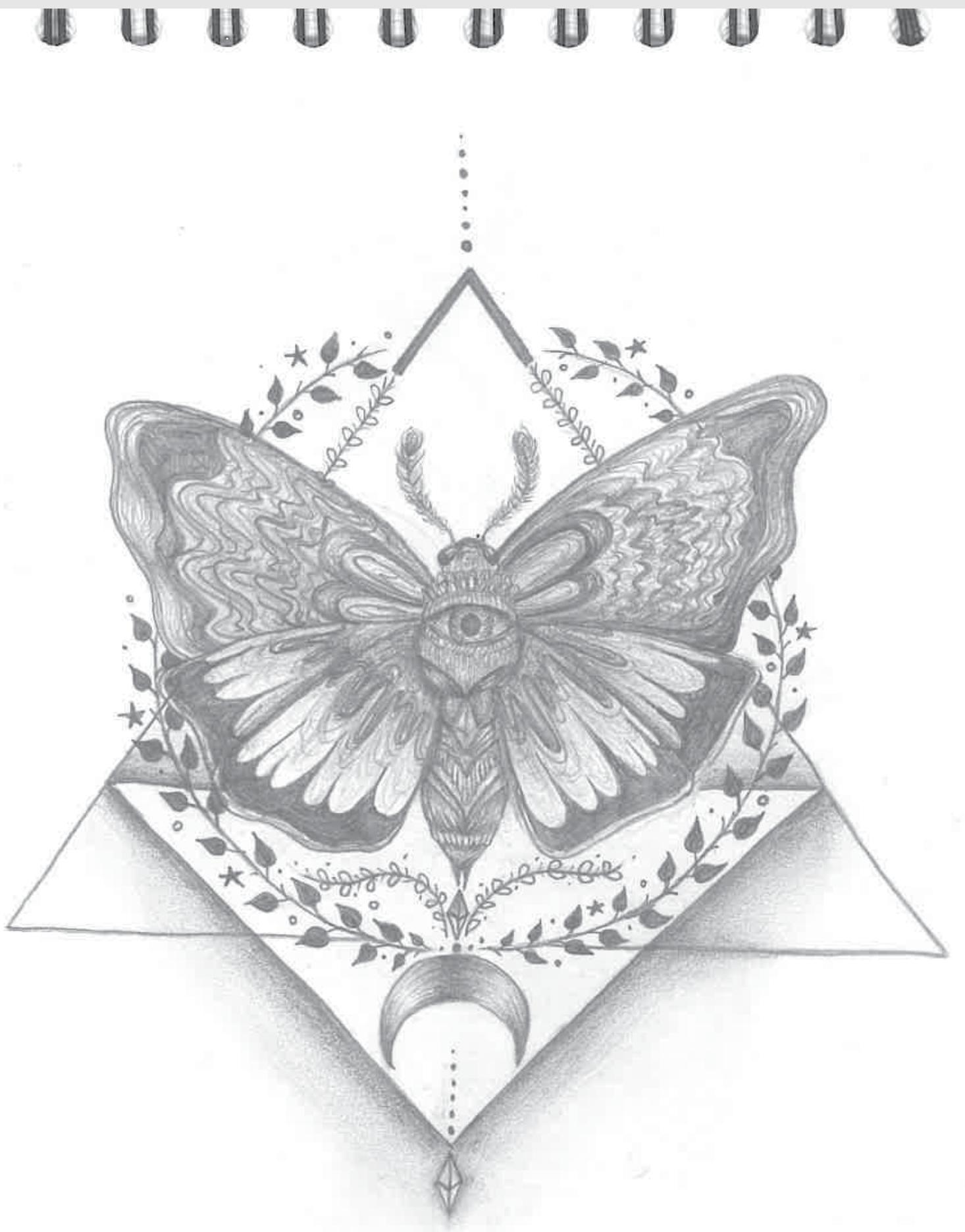
My friends could see that I think about school all the time. They would see that I care for them and that I would always want them to be happy. My new schoolmates would see that I like company even if I am quiet. I am just not that sociable and talkative in front of people that I don't know very well.

My parents would hear that I don't like doing household chores because I am stressing about school, but they still want me to do them. I think they would realize that I am grateful for everything they do for me even if I don't show it.

Other people would see that I envy rich people very much.

My dog would see how much I love him; he sees that, but just to make him more sure, I guess.

Žanin Pustovrh, 1. Kb



frustra

THIS AND THAT

GIFTS

The best gift I have ever received

When I was a child I got a present for Christmas. I was in the 3rd grade and I wanted to play the guitar. And that year I got it. During my 6 years in music school I was taught by a really friendly and funny male teacher. After 3 years of music school, I got a new professional guitar for my birthday present. I was very happy. I finished music school in the 9th grade. In the last year of music school, I played and sang with my twin sister, who plays the piano. At the end of the final year, we had a concert together and it was great fun. I loved going to music school every week. We also went to singing class. The teacher was my guitar teacher, so I really loved going there every week. Now I play and sing in church. I have many friends there and I love being in Stična.

Maruša Mlakar 2. Ka

The best gift I have ever received

I play the violin and the viola. I have been in music school since I was 9 years old, but I never had my own instrument. I always borrowed school instruments, because my parents thought that I would get bored of violin and lose interest in playing the instruments. But I didn't. I really wanted to get my own viola. So we went to a music shop, but they didn't have much to choose from, because there aren't many people who play viola in Slovenia. I became really sad. But when it was my birthday, my parents gave me a big box. I had no idea what it could be, but when I opened the box, there was the best thing I could ever imagine. It was a viola. I was so happy I can't even describe it in words. It was the best gift I have ever got. And from that day on, I have been playing at many weddings, and I really enjoy it.

Nastja Zavodnik, 2. Ka



The best gift I have ever given

In my family birthdays are the most important part of the year. For each and every person, we write special cards that are meant for them only. When I was little, I always drew a picture in it too, but nowadays I just release my inner artist and write quotes and wishes. The best gift me and my family have ever given to someone was for my grandmother. For her 60th birthday, we gave her a one-week trip to the coast because in her tough life she had never seen the sea before. She and her sister were so grateful, and they still talk about it to this day. But overall, I think the best gift anyone can give every day is a smile, a compliment, or a bit of help to a stranger to make their day better.

The worst gift I have ever given

When I was about 5 years old, I wanted to bake a cake for my mom, and I did everything the recipe said, but how would I know what exactly was salt and what sugar ... But that was not the only thing. When I put the 'thing' that was supposed to be the cake into the oven I forgot to remove the tray. So long story short, it melted and the plastic was everywhere.

The best gift I have ever received

I have given a lot of presents in my life and I have also received a bunch of them. And the best one was my dog, which me and my sister got two years ago after 13 years of begging and asking for it. And this four-legged fluffy makes our lives better and makes us happy day by day.

The worst gift I have ever received

I don't remember ever getting a gift that was 'bad'.

Maša Bohinc Penček, 2. Ka

MOVIE REVIEW: THE LION

The last movie I saw was The Lion. It is a drama film, based on a true story. The film stars are Dev Patel, Sunny Pawar, Nicole Kidmann, Rooney Mara, Priyanka Chopra and others. In this movie, we follow the life story of Saroo, a poor Indian boy, whose whole life changed because of a train ride.

Saroo used to live with his mother Kamla, brother Guddu and one sister. The young boy wanted to help his poor family, so he worked with his brother. One night he got really tired and fell asleep on a train, while his brother was working.

He woke up in an empty, moving train without Guddu. He tried to escape from the train, but he could not. He got off the train two days later. He was all alone in a dangerous city. Even though he was very young, he escaped many dangerous situations. One day a kind man took him to the police station, where they decided to put him in an orphanage. A few weeks later he was adopted by Sue and John, a couple from Tasmania.

They were happy together, and one year later he got a brother Manoosh. They were really close, but drifted apart as they got older. When he turned 25 years old, he realised that he had to find his family. He spent months searching for his hometown and he finally found it.

He travelled to India and found his mother and sister, but his older brother Guddu died shortly after Saroo got lost 25 years ago. The ending is happy, as the whole village is very happy to see him again.

I really liked the characters, because they are based on real people and it adds to the importance of the movie and the story. I really liked the movie, because it was a really touching story that I would recommend to anyone.

Filip Gungl, 1. Zb



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roses are red, violets are blue



my heart is dead
I'm such a fool

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