



# GE(R)MS

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## Editorial

The sixth edition of Ge(r)ms is finally here, much later than planned. It was not an easy year for any of us, yet we managed to collect some good essays, inspiring stories, most of which are from the students' participation at the Literary Competition *Bodi Pisatelj*, some poems and even a description of Špela's travel to London, which today, when it is not so easy to travel any more, is even more precious.

Helena Doberšek

# STUDENTS' OPINIONS

## LIFE IS SHORT, ENJOY THE COFFEE

**Life.** What does that even mean? /laɪf/:noun; the condition that distinguishes animals and plants from inorganic matter, including the capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity, and continual change preceding death. And now not to sound too formal, life is a journey full of ups and downs, obstacles, bad and good things happening to you. But most importantly, life is an experience of every living creature. And yes, you do not have a total control over what happens to you, but you have a total control of how you react to it and how you look at the inconvenience and how you solve and move forward from the obstacle and all of your problems.

Life really is short and that is why it is so important to cherish your life, your health, family and friends. For these are the things that money can't buy and they also truly define your wealth. We take too many things for granted, things to be self-evident, natural, as it 'should' be, when they really aren't. For example, fresh water. There are millions of people that do not have a sip of it. We take health and walking on our own feet for granted, when there are people with major health issues, suffering and having no ability to walk.

These are just some examples of how we do not value and appreciate things until we lose them. It is really sad how you only start to value something when it is too late. How is that? Why are we like this? Not to sound too dramatic but every second of your existence could be your last, your last second in this world, your last second with the people you truly love and care about. And sure you don't want to leave things 'unfinished', with regrets or to leave someone on the wrong foot ... and most importantly, you don't want to leave this wonderful world without really tasting it, without experiencing it and doing everything this world has to offer and you have always wanted to make

a green check mark on your bucket list. When one second or moment passes, you never get it back, so make things count, make every moment count, make every friendly look and smile to a stranger count, make every coffee COUNT. If you are not enjoying the smallest things, you sure will not be enjoying bigger things.

Enjoy your life to the fullest, live your every day like it is your last. LIVE TODAY! *Life is short. Kiss slowly, laugh insanely, love truly and forgive quickly.* - Paulo Coelho

Roza Holozan, 3. Za



## EVERY GOOD FRIEND ONCE WAS A STRANGER

Who would we call a stranger? Probably someone who is unfamiliar to us. Someone who we've never met before and we don't know what they are like. And who would we say is a friend? A friend is someone who we spend most of our time with, we tell them our fears, worries and even our deepest secrets. We enjoy the daily life together and make memories.

But just remember, every good friend of yours in fact once was a stranger. That is why it is important not to have prejudice. You never know when you will meet someone great. Usually, the most unexpected friendships are the best. If I'm honest, I too was judgemental sometimes, even towards the people I share the best laughs with now.

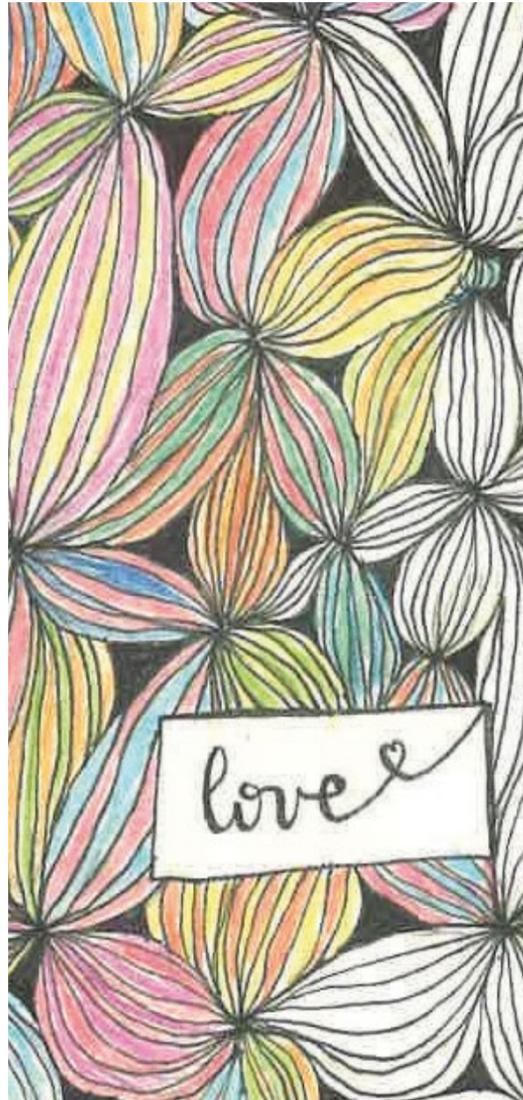
I am so glad my friends and I got the chance to meet and gave each other a chance. When I think about my friendships and how important they are to me, I cannot imagine not knowing these people. Every single person we meet in life leaves a mark and most importantly, memories. Some good, some bad. But I believe that everything happens for a reason, therefore every person in your life is there for a reason. They help you through your ups and downs, through good and bad times.

It is important to cherish friendships, people who stand by your side. If you aren't full of prejudice and let people in your life, you never know what life can bring. It might be someone who you won't click with, or maybe it will be a lifetime of laughter and joy.

Just think about how many good things can happen, if you give people a chance.

Rina Kovačič, 2. Zb





in the morning you don't have to wake up as early so you use that time for a morning run or a walk that you wouldn't have time for if you had to wake up and get ready to go to school.

Secondly, you are less stressed just because you manage your own time. For instance, if you know you have three assignments due next week, you are going to do them according to your schedule, which is a lot more free and organised because you don't have to spend half a day at school.

Furthermore, it saves you a lot of time not having to commute to school and back every day especially if you live further away. It also saves you some money that you would normally spend on gas or a bus ticket. Now instead of sitting on a bus and commuting back home, you can either finish your work earlier and have some free time, or even take advantage of that time and go do a workout.

On the other hand, there are also negative sides to online learning. The first problem lies with teachers having too much work to do. If they work in school, they work for how many hours they have that day and then go home. But if they are working from home, that means that they are constantly getting emails from students and are correcting assignments that they would usually do at work. That also affects their private life, especially if they have a family, who they suddenly don't have time for anymore.

The second problem with online learning is that some people get lazy. Because they don't have to go anywhere and can just lie in bed the whole day, they start to believe they are on vacation. You really have to discipline yourself and prepare a schedule when you are going to do all of your work.

What is more, social life is very affected when it comes to learning from home. You don't see your classmates every day, you don't go for a coffee after school, you don't meet new people, so I think people that do online school tend to get lonelier and are in need of some social life.

To sum up, there are positive and negative sides to online learning, but I still prefer to do school from home. I feel more organised throughout the day, I get more schoolwork done, because I am also not as tired as I am if I come home from being at school half a day, and I also have more free time to do some activities I enjoy. I hope online school becomes a new way of learning in the future.

Špela Ovčak, 4.Za

## LEARNING FROM HOME IS BETTER THAN CLASSROOM LEARNING

Because of the coronavirus outbreak students all over the world were forced to stay at home and do online school. As this has been a new experience for most, it initiated many discussions, especially about whether learning over the net has proven more effective than in-person learning. I myself have also experienced it and found myself in two minds about it.

I believe that if a person had to be examined and needed to understand the material well, they were put into a difficult position. While we were working hard and the teachers tried their hardest to explain the class material, it was not the same as if we had done it in person where the teacher could have explained it more efficiently. What is more, sometimes the Internet connection was bad, or maybe the students did not have the same motivation as they would have in the classroom.

This leads us to my next argument as to why learning in person is better. I personally, as well as most of my classmates, were not able to pay much attention, and most lost motivation to continue learning. It was hard being closed in a house for months and trying to keep being motivated. Also, due to occasional bad Internet connection it was hard to understand the teacher's explanation, as well as keep attention when we were staring at the screen rather than the actual person. Besides all that, the living room or our bedroom are not the proper environment for effective learning.

However, online learning had its good sides too. Being someone who spends a long time commuting to and from school, studying from home saved me a lot of time, which I would have otherwise spent on the ride. That made it easier for me to get more quality sleep and have more time to focus on my schoolwork and organize my time better.

To sum up, it was easier to organize and I had more time for schoolwork as well as for myself. However, if possible I would prefer not to repeat it as it was difficult to learn things thoroughly and have a good understanding of the material. I believe that the advantages of classroom learning still outweigh the advantages of online learning.

Urška Roblek, 4. Kb

## WE ARE GETTING OBSESSED WITH SELFIES

A selfie is a picture that we take of ourselves with a smartphone, typically with a front camera. It usually presents our emotions at the moment that we want to share with others and it is usually posted on our social media account. It is completely normal that we take a selfie or two, but when do we know that we are getting obsessed with them?

Firstly, I believe that taking a picture of yourself is healthy for your self-esteem. People with low self-esteem or people who are insecure about a particular part of their body, can boost their confidence by taking a selfie every now and then. For example, if we don't like our nose, we should take many pictures of our face, posing and trying to decide which pose makes us look the best. The next time we feel insecure about our nose again, we can look at the picture and feel better.

Furthermore, taking selfies and posting them on our social media account can lead us to meeting new friends and even lovers. Let's face it, we live in the time when social media represents a huge part of our lives, and posting appropriate selfies is completely normal. For instance, when we are getting ready for some big event and we feel confident with the way we look, we take some selfies. I am convinced that it is tolerable to post some of them on social media. Doing that we can also meet new people who are attracted to us and so new friendships can be made.

On the other hand, we can easily get addicted to taking selfies. If we are overconfident or we like the way we look a little too much, we can find ourselves taking selfies on a daily basis. This kind of behavior can have a bad impact on our way of expressing emotions. For example, teenagers nowadays can believe that taking a selfie is the only way to show their emotions to others. They take a selfie when they are happy, in love, terrified, or even when they are sad and crying. As a result, I have noticed that more and more people don't know how to express their emotions with words anymore.

To sum up, I believe that taking selfies can be an excellent way to enhance our self-esteem or meet the people we like on social media. But we should be careful to notice when we are getting addicted to selfies, when too many are taken and most importantly, when they start to have too big of an impact on our lives.

Lara Narobe, 4. Kb

## LEARNING FROM HOME IS BETTER THAN CLASSROOM LEARNING

Nowadays online learning is getting more and more popular. It's getting a lot of attention especially now that we are living with the pandemic among us. Every year there are more online courses and new schools available where you can even get a degree and you don't even have to step out of your front door. It sounds very convenient, which in some cases is, but some people have a different opinion of it.

Firstly, let's look at online learning from the positive point of view. If you are learning from home, you most definitely have more free time, because you basically design your own schedule and you arrange it to your own liking. For example,

## SOCIAL DISTANCING FOR TEENS SHOULDN'T MEAN GIVING UP YOUR SOCIAL LIFE

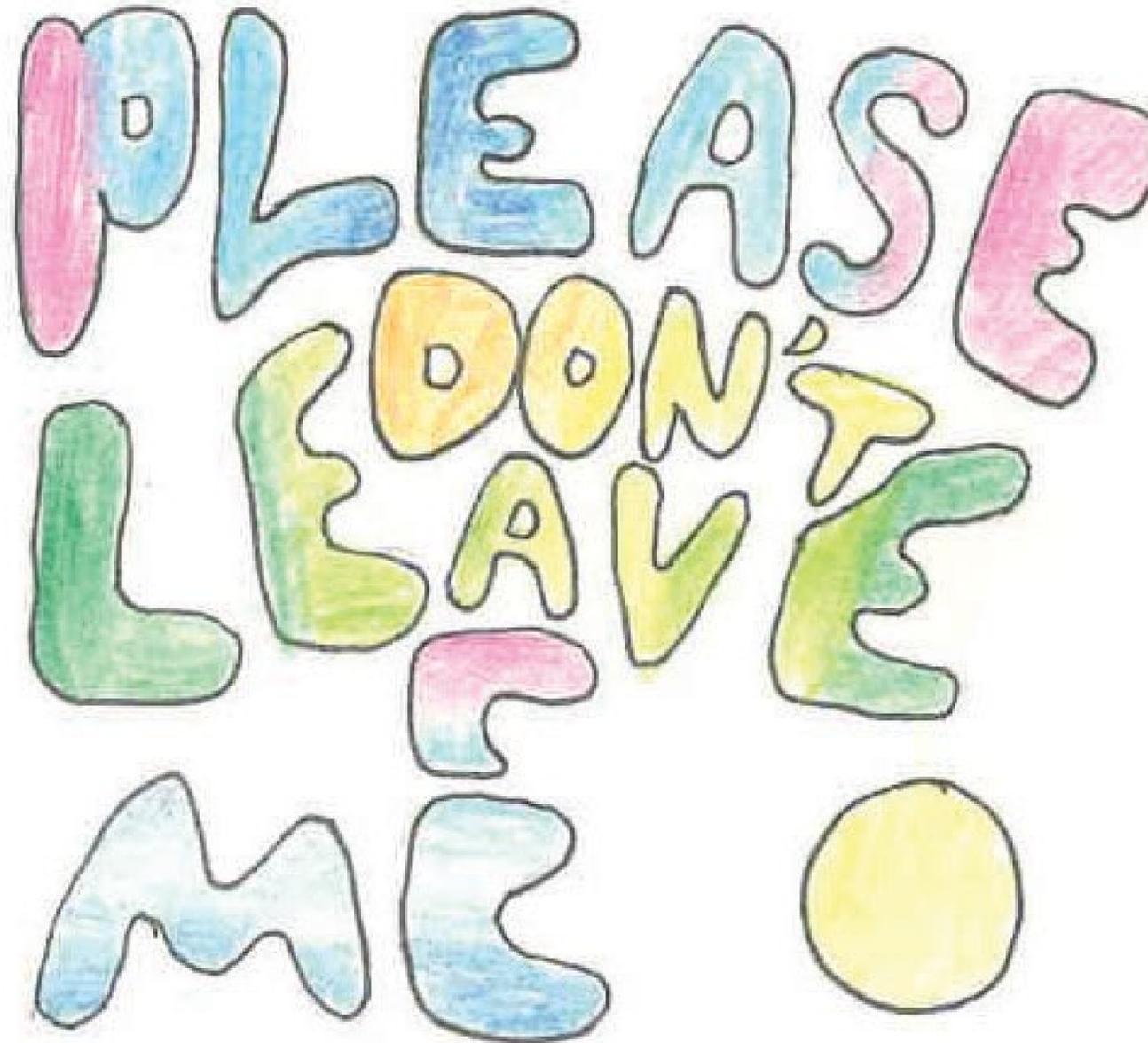
Teenagers are in a period of life that will heavily affect their future. If they don't socialize in their teenage years, they could be affected negatively in later stages of their lives. Socialization is a process that can't be paused and resumed at any moment in time.

Today's teenagers are living in a very different world, therefore the problems they are facing are much more different than the usual. Depression is a huge concern, because teens that follow the guidelines strictly, don't go out much and that makes people lonely. Loneliness is a serious issue that doesn't get the recognition that it deserves. A normal person should interact with other people many times a day, but we are talking about teenagers that are evolving, hence the issues are much larger. A teenager that doesn't develop social skills at the right time will be unable to develop them for the rest of his life. He can minimize the damage but he can't change the past.

Loneliness also affects other parts of your life, like your motivation to learn, exercise, eat healthy food and work. We can't let teens grow up to be lonely. We should motivate them to hang out. Even if it is just a walk in the woods, a car ride to the seaside or a game of basketball. Social interactions will help young people to develop and grow emotionally. It is important to stay healthy and having a social life is the way to go.

On the other hand, parents should not let their kids wander around all day and give up on school. They should still be strict and look after their children. In the end, children only get one chance in life and it's also their parents' responsibility to guide them in the right direction.

Luka Ponikvar 3. Fa



## YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD LEAVE THEIR NEST WHEN THEY COME OF AGE

At our age we all comfortably live in the house that we grew up in, our mothers cook for us, they do our laundry and our parents cover all of our living expenses. We live a luxurious life that unfortunately doesn't last forever. At some point we have to leave home and start living on our own. But when should we leave home? Some people strongly believe that their children should leave home when they become adults, but some don't really mind having their offspring around for a little longer. I personally believe there is no rush in children leaving home when they come of age.

Firstly, I would like to touch on different circumstances that families go through. Some families, or more exactly their children, maybe aren't financially stable enough to go live on their own. For example, if a child is still in high school when they come of age, and they focus on school and don't really have time to have a job in order to earn some money to go live on their own, it's practically impossible for them to leave home. Especially if their parents also cannot help them financially, they don't have a choice but to keep living with their parents, and that's okay.

Secondly, some teenagers, when they come of age, simply are just not ready to leave home. Some were raised differently than others, and when it comes to living by themselves, it really shows. For example, if you grew up not doing any household chores, and your parents did everything for you, you basically didn't have to lift a finger, I don't see how you could live on your own and do your own laundry, prepare yourself a meal, clean, pay bills ... It probably wouldn't work.

Lastly, I think that living on your own isn't just about cooking for yourself and tidying up your own apartment. It also means paying bills and taxes, which, at such a young age, we just don't have enough experience about yet to do on our own.

To sum up, it isn't necessary to leave home when you become an adult. You should leave home when you feel ready in every aspect - mentally, financially and emotionally. You shouldn't feel pressured to leave home only because society thinks it's appropriate. You can leave when you come of age, when you finish school, when you turn thirty, it really doesn't matter as long as you feel prepared to spread your wings and fly the nest.

Špela Ovčak, 4. Za

**WHEN PEOPLE SUCCEED, IT IS BECAUSE OF HARD WORK. LUCK HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SUCCESS.**

Nowadays a lot of people like to play games of fortune like poker, jackpot etc. And some actually get lucky by guessing the numbers or cards. But it is not always just about guessing. There are special equations that can help you cheat at the game, especially poker, or even computer hacks that mess with the jackpot data and make you a winner. The same is in the business world. You can think logically and work hard to make your company successful, or you can just guess what to invest in and there is at least 30% possibility you'll get lucky. It is also possible to mess with the opponents by cheating, like taking credit for their ideas/inventions or hacking into their database.

From what we know, we can say that yes, hard work pays off and can get you very high in this world. You have to be honest, courageous, inventive and especially a very logical thinker. You have to know how to handle your success and not to waste it the second you have a chance. Sometimes you will have to ask for help. An example for this is Henry Ford, who never gave up on his dream even though he had got rejected and beaten down quite often. In the end, he started his car company, which is still very successful today.

However, there are also people who get lucky and earn money because of it. Like for example the Kardashians. A very famous family, who got well known by starting their own show. But it was by luck that E! decided to take up their offer to film a series on their everyday life and drama. They did not work hard, they just filmed the drama.

Well, we'd better not be so centered on the white and black picture. Some lucky people can become very hardworking and build up their success. Like Kylie Jenner, one of the Kardashian family members, who started her own business and is now one of the youngest and richest women in the makeup industry. Or even her sister Kim. And there are also industrious people who get lucky by investing in stocks that bring high yields, or taking a leap of faith like the founders of La popsi, who were very hard working and got lucky when they won in the Start-up Slovenia contest.

In conclusion, I would like to say that not everybody can get successful either by only working hard or because of pure luck. The most successful ones are those who combine hard work and luck so the answer to the title statement is yes and no.

Maša Bohinc Penček, 3. Ka

**WHEN PEOPLE SUCCEED, IT IS BECAUSE OF HARD WORK. LUCK HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SUCCESS.**

The definition of success differs between people. Some measure their success by the money they make, some really value their education, others see themselves as successful because they have created a family. Success comes in all shapes and forms so there are different ways to reach it. But do we achieve success because of hard work or does luck help too?

If we look at successful, professional track athletes, we can see that they put in a lot of hard work, but even the best sometimes lose because of misfortune. But sometimes luck can also be on their side and they beat their opponent just by a millisecond. We can also experience that in school. Sometimes we work very hard, but we still do not get the grade we wished for, or we just simply run out of time and out of luck. Or, for instance, we are lucky, and we know all the answers to the teachers' questions.

That is why I do not agree with the quotation. In my opinion, you do have to put in a lot of work to achieve your goals and to be successful, but sometimes just a small thing can go wrong and it is all gone. We also have to be mindful when setting goals and remember that sometimes we will not reach all of them. And sometimes we should just take a break and be happy for everything we have already achieved and hope that luck is on our side for the challenges that await us.

Filip Gungl, 3. Zb



## WHEN PEOPLE SUCCEED, IT IS BECAUSE OF HARD WORK. LUCK HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SUCCESS.

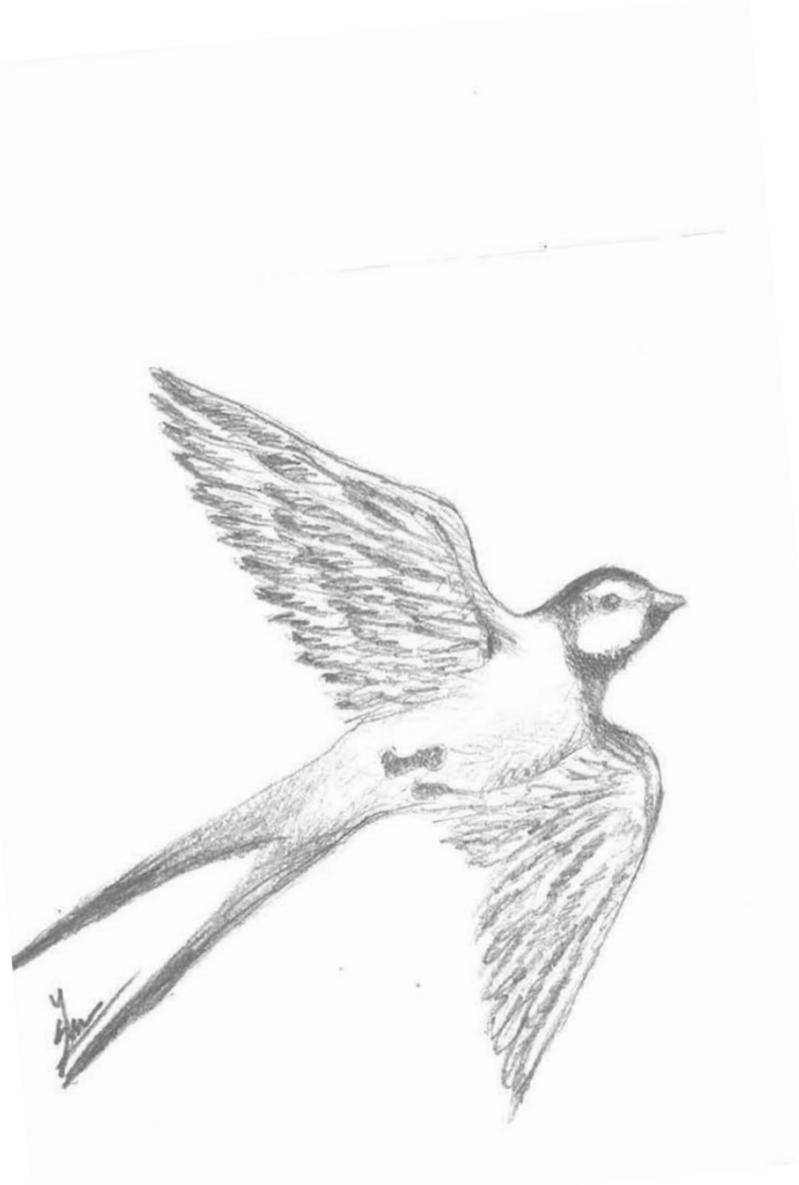
We all know that there are people who are very rich. Some say they have cheated the system, others say they have just been incredibly lucky. But does anybody ever think how hard they have worked?

I have a few friends that are very successful in their businesses. They work in different fields and they are very intelligent. Once I asked one of my friends how he had become so rich at the age of thirty. He laughed and said, "Hard work, hard work". I was confused but now I see that what he said is actually true. According to their biographies, most of the people that are filthy rich come from very poor families. They might not be the most intelligent human beings, but their character is something that amazes me. Everybody thinks that you get rich only by stealing or getting money from your parents. I agree, some of them stole their way to the top or inherited the money. But most people only worked and worked. They worked on their business ideas. They chased their dreams and by that they did not try to find luck. Paradoxically, luck chased them.

People that are rich work for over twelve hours per day for the whole week. They even sleep in their offices, like Elon Musk for example. They do not sleep eight hours per day like we ordinary people do. They sleep for six hours, then they go to work and they work as hard as they can. They chase their dreams and they never stop. I heard one rich guy say once, "There is nothing better than dying when chasing your dreams."

People only see that some people drive expensive and luxurious cars, but they never see what all these people have sacrificed to get to the point where they are. There is only hard work and more hard work, as my friend said. Luck chases the people that work hard and make the best of themselves.

Ervin Mustafić, 3. L



## PEOPLE WHO TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THEIR OWN COUNTRY ARE MORE TOLERANT AND UNDERSTANDING OF OTHERS

A lot of people like to travel and experience different cultures. They like to meet new people and experience new things. But does this make people more tolerant and understanding? Or does travelling have no effect on their view of others?

First of all, if you travel a lot, you meet a lot of people from different walks of life. I think that that is a good thing. You interact with local people, you eat their traditional food, and you can learn a lot about their culture. For example, if you live in Europe, you're used to big supermarkets, large cities and you have access to the latest technology. But if you travel to a village in Africa, you will be exposed to a lot of different things. You won't be able to find big stores or new technology, but people there are more tightly connected and more likely to help each other when they need it. Also, in Africa, and all over the world, you will be exposed to people of different races, nationalities and religions and not to what you are typically used to.

On the other hand, if you're intolerant, it's hard to change and no amount of travel is going to fix that. I think that if you're racist or xenophobic and you see people celebrating their own race and culture, that might make you even more upset and angry. For example, you may view their traditions as harmful or unnecessary and when you come back home, you might make these customs seem scarier and weirder than they actually are.

In conclusion, I believe that if you travel the world, you can absolutely be more understanding and tolerant towards others. But I'm also fairly certain that if you're intolerant or discriminating against people that are different than you, travel isn't going to help you change for the better.

Sara Feher, 4. Kb

## A MOTHER'S PLACE IS AT HOME

Despite living in the world we see as modern and progressive in terms of gender equality, the reality is often quite the opposite. While discrimination based on gender is forbidden in our country, a lot of people's actions indicate that women are still not equal to men. In many cases, the society still scorns women, just like it did in the past.

I don't agree with the statement that a mother's place is at home at all. The place where a mother should be, isn't and should never be defined by society, but by an individual herself. Just because a woman is a mother doesn't mean she must only stay at home and do the housework. I believe that a person can be a good mother and a role model to her children, while still having a successful career. For example, if a mother has a job that she likes and that inspires her, it is okay for her not to feel guilty. In fact, mothers very often feel bad about sending their children to kindergarten, so they can go to work regularly. I believe a woman should never be judged for wanting to fulfil her dreams, besides being a mother.

Furthermore, it should be normal for a mother to take some time for herself. That doesn't mean she packs her bags and leaves for a year, but for example, if she wants to go to the gym for an hour a couple of times a week, she is allowed to and no one should stop her from doing beneficial things for her mental and physical health. In addition, that gives children the opportunity to bond more with other family members, like with their father or grandparents. And not being watched over every second of the day gives children some space and plays a huge part in them becoming independent.

To sum up, I would like to say that being a mother to someone is not a profession, it is a desire to share love and continue the legacy. It is acceptable not to be satisfied with just being a mother and it is normal to wish for more. No mother should be dictated by society what to do, where to stay or how to raise her children.

Veronika Rihter, 4. Za

# LEISURE AND PLEASURE

## THE SPORT I LOVE – SWIMMING

Let me begin with how I got into swimming. For as long as I can remember, I have always loved being in water. When I was younger, I tried several different sports, but eventually decided to focus on a triathlon. I found it interesting and different from other sports. I went to a couple of competitions and did a pretty good job. Because I liked swimming out of the three sports that a triathlon contains the most I decided to start training swimming.

When I was about eleven years old, I started with recreational swimming in Koper Swimming Club. Soon my coach invited me to join the competition group and so I started with competitive swimming. We had two-hour swimming sessions every day, and at weekends we usually took part in swimming meets all over the country, sometimes even abroad. During the holidays, we had two training sessions twice a day, which was a bit exhausting, but I got used to it fast. When I look back at all the training now, I can't say it wasn't hard, but I enjoyed almost every second of it. Maybe that's because of the team mates, with whom we had a blast during the training sessions, and especially during the meets. The way we encouraged each other made the bond between us even stronger. I am beyond grateful for all the friendships I made because of swimming. That's another great part of what swimming gave me.

My best discipline became butterfly, which is probably the hardest one of all. Over the past few years, I achieved many good results and I regularly won medals at the meets. I had been training hard and swimming my heart out every meet or race and the results showed that. As it's common among swimmers, I had problems with pains in my shoulders, but none of them stopped me, I just came back stronger.

The best and most important result of my swimming career is third place in the 50m butterfly in the junior category (at the time those were female swimmers born in 2001 and 2002)

at the Slovenian National Competition, which took place in Koper in the summer of 2018. At the same competition, the mixed relay, which I was a part of, placed fourth in the open category. It was an amazing feeling swimming in my hometown in front of the crowd and surprisingly finishing third at the nationals. None of us saw that coming. The results proved to me that hard work really does pay off. The feeling afterwards was simply wonderful and gave me the strength to keep on swimming.

Veronika Rihter, 4. Za



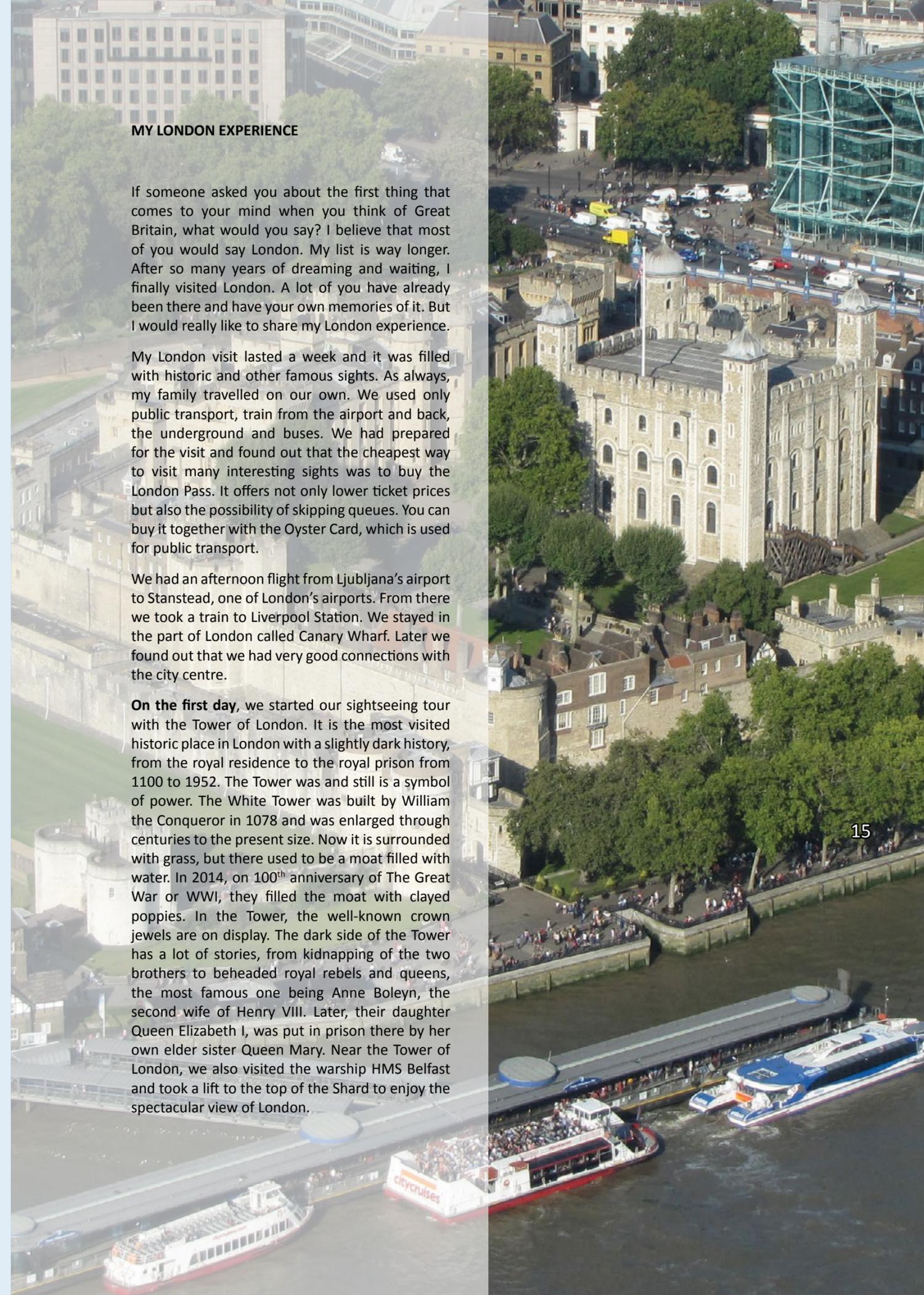
## MY LONDON EXPERIENCE

If someone asked you about the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of Great Britain, what would you say? I believe that most of you would say London. My list is way longer. After so many years of dreaming and waiting, I finally visited London. A lot of you have already been there and have your own memories of it. But I would really like to share my London experience.

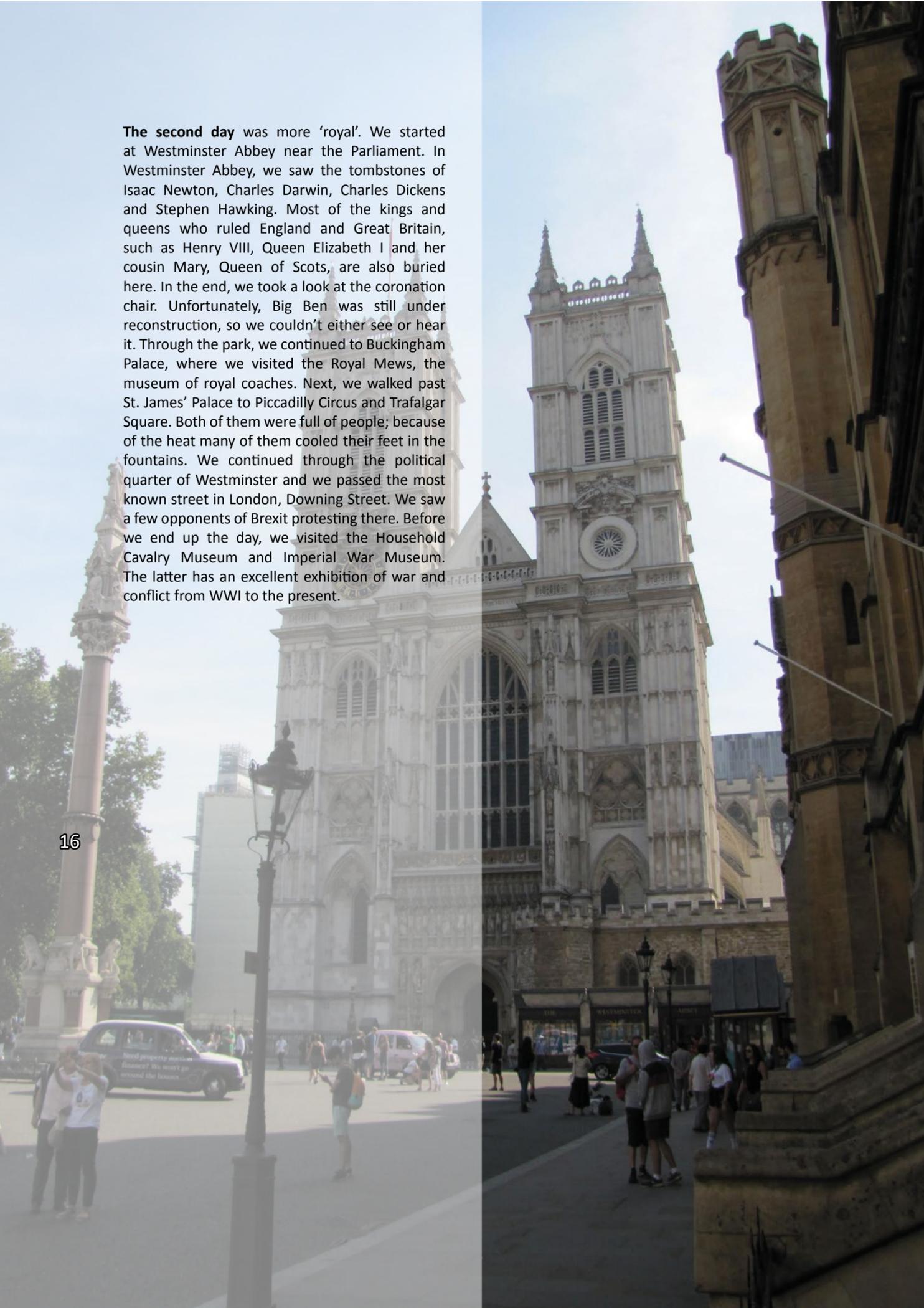
My London visit lasted a week and it was filled with historic and other famous sights. As always, my family travelled on our own. We used only public transport, train from the airport and back, the underground and buses. We had prepared for the visit and found out that the cheapest way to visit many interesting sights was to buy the London Pass. It offers not only lower ticket prices but also the possibility of skipping queues. You can buy it together with the Oyster Card, which is used for public transport.

We had an afternoon flight from Ljubljana's airport to Stanstead, one of London's airports. From there we took a train to Liverpool Station. We stayed in the part of London called Canary Wharf. Later we found out that we had very good connections with the city centre.

**On the first day**, we started our sightseeing tour with the Tower of London. It is the most visited historic place in London with a slightly dark history, from the royal residence to the royal prison from 1100 to 1952. The Tower was and still is a symbol of power. The White Tower was built by William the Conqueror in 1078 and was enlarged through centuries to the present size. Now it is surrounded with grass, but there used to be a moat filled with water. In 2014, on 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Great War or WWI, they filled the moat with clayed poppies. In the Tower, the well-known crown jewels are on display. The dark side of the Tower has a lot of stories, from kidnapping of the two brothers to beheaded royal rebels and queens, the most famous one being Anne Boleyn, the second wife of Henry VIII. Later, their daughter Queen Elizabeth I, was put in prison there by her own elder sister Queen Mary. Near the Tower of London, we also visited the warship HMS Belfast and took a lift to the top of the Shard to enjoy the spectacular view of London.



The second day was more 'royal'. We started at Westminster Abbey near the Parliament. In Westminster Abbey, we saw the tombstones of Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Charles Dickens and Stephen Hawking. Most of the kings and queens who ruled England and Great Britain, such as Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth I and her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, are also buried here. In the end, we took a look at the coronation chair. Unfortunately, Big Ben was still under reconstruction, so we couldn't either see or hear it. Through the park, we continued to Buckingham Palace, where we visited the Royal Mews, the museum of royal coaches. Next, we walked past St. James' Palace to Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square. Both of them were full of people; because of the heat many of them cooled their feet in the fountains. We continued through the political quarter of Westminster and we passed the most known street in London, Downing Street. We saw a few opponents of Brexit protesting there. Before we end up the day, we visited the Household Cavalry Museum and Imperial War Museum. The latter has an excellent exhibition of war and conflict from WWI to the present.



We started the third day visiting the Globe Theatre. The original Globe Theatre, built on the south side of the river Thames, burnt down. The American actor Sam Wanamaker, father of Zoë Wanamaker, known as professor Hooch in Harry Potter films, raised some money himself and built the replica of the Globe Theatre. If you are a Shakespeare's fan, you can buy tickets and watch two plays a day there. The next destination was Tower Bridge. We climbed to the top and had a spectacular view of the river Thames from above through a glass floor, which can be rather scary if you are afraid of heights. We continued to the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden, where we enjoyed a great exhibition of the history of public transport in London. Afterwards we spent some time walking around Covent Garden. In the end, we visited the Royal Air Force Museum (RAF) in the northern part of London. Here we saw Spitfire, the famous British war airplane from WWII.

On the fourth day, we visited London Zoo. A lot of you would say that if you saw one ZOO, you saw all ZOOs. I say that every ZOO is different. The most surprising thing in the ZOO was the terrarium, where Harry Potter released the snake, in the film of course. We had a very close meeting with little monkeys and watched penguins on the famous penguin beach. In the afternoon, we had a reservation for the Madame Tussauds, where we took pictures with celebrity wax figures and took a ride through a brief history of London.





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I will always remember the **fifth day** as being the hottest and with the longest ride on the underground. We visited Wembley Stadium, which is used for sports and music events. At this stadium, Adele set a new record in the largest number of visitors to her concert. By placing the stage in the middle of the football field, all the audience could see her from all sides. Once they have even organized a ski jumping competition on a snow base here. The Stadium has the largest number of toilets and the longest arch in the roof structure. After the tour of the Stadium, we took a ride to Kensington Palace.

Kensington Palace is the birthplace of Queen Victoria, the place where Princess Diana lived and the current home of Prince William, Kate and their children. We visited the rooms where Queen Victoria grew up, saw Victoria's favourite jewellery, some of which was designed by her husband Prince Albert, her clothing, such as her wedding dress and her mourning dress, and her children's clothing. She was actually a very small person. We also took a look at some of the dresses worn by Princess Diana. From Kensington Palace, we went on an open-top bus sightseeing tour to the London Eye with its breathtaking view of London. We finished the day at Leicester Square and M&M's World.



We started **the sixth day** as Harry Potter fans at the King's Cross Station and took a look at the Platform 9 ¾ and tried to push the trolley through the wall. We continued to St. Paul Cathedral. Here we saw the tombstones of Florence Nightingale, Admiral Nelson and the Duke of Wellington. The last two defeated Napoleon, Admiral Nelson in the Battle at Trafalgar, the Duke of Wellington in the Battle of Waterloo. During air raids in WWII, St. Paul's Cathedral was damaged, but after the war it was rebuilt. Since we were thirsty, we finally found time to visit a pub. It was by luck that we found a pub named Sherlock Holmes. The very last thing we did on that day was a boat trip on the Thames from Westminster to Greenwich.

Hours before leaving London were dedicated to visiting shops. Actually the offer was quite similar to the one in Slovenian shops with little differences in prices, some lower, some higher.

Even though we stayed in London for a week and saw a lot of the city, we all agreed that we would like to come back again and see the rest of it. We ended up every day with sore feet but it was worth it. London left a great impression on me from the historical, political, cultural, architectural and cosmopolitan point of view. Compared to Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Milan and other cities I had visited before, I found it much bigger, full of people of different cultures and still somehow more organised. I had a feeling that people were rushing much more compared to us.

Špela Moharić, 4. Zb

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# POEMS



## DAYS GO ON

Days go on  
And I haven't eaten  
Peace is gone  
For days I've been beaten  
I've fought wars before  
But none like this  
'Tis for my country, therefore  
For its glory I'll gladly go to an abyss

In war there's no love  
A friend is now a foe  
No god above  
Just a soldier waiting for a fatal blow  
The sound of men taking their last breath  
The sound of iron clashing together  
Leaves the horror imprinted, and death  
It hugs us like warm leather.

## WHAT I SEE

It's hills that I see  
The water clear as sky  
Vivid flowers that I see  
I wish I could just fly

Fly as high as all the birds  
See the mountain goats in herds  
Fly as far into the south  
Above the oceans and the drought

But since I'm not a bird  
I see the world from another perspective  
The beauty of which we heard  
Is nonobjective

As long as we shall live  
Mother nature will be here  
To fix the wrongs, applaud the rights and give  
Give a piece of home to our hearts for which  
love will never disappear.

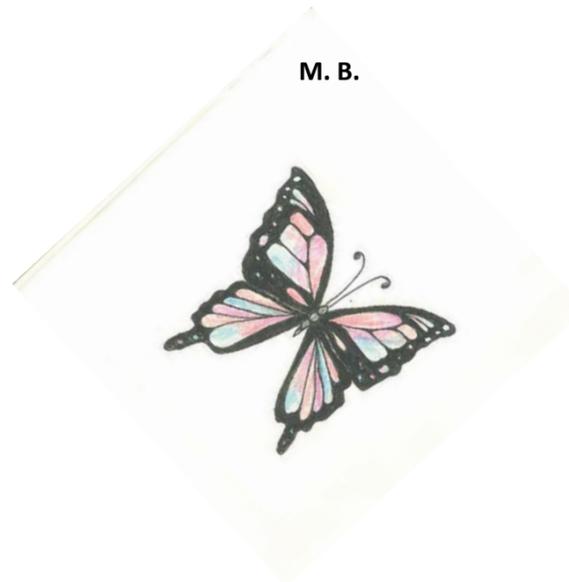
## AFTER

You hurt me with your lying  
To save us I was trying  
Spent longest nights crying  
Other girls you were eyeing.

It's been a year since I've moved on  
I haven't set my eyes upon  
I've healed and gotten strong  
I realised you were wrong.

I thought I loved you ... It was just a phase  
I've cleared my eyes from your wrongful haze  
I thought I'll get stuck in your maze  
But I burned it down with a blaze.

## M. B.



**POEM 1**

Hugs and kisses  
And touches and glances  
All the things that make my days brighter  
All the things that make my heart lighter

I love being with you  
I don't have a clue  
Why you're so important  
I stick to you like glue

I know what they say  
It won't be delayed  
Cuz baby it's true  
I only love you

Maybe I am  
Falling in love  
Too afraid to say  
I don't act the same

**POEM 2**

Here's for the day  
When you feel sad  
All I want to say  
Just don't be mad

Whatever I said  
To make you upset  
I'm so sorry  
I did not mean that

All I ever want  
Is for us to be okay  
We already have this bond  
In my arms please just lie

Everything will be alright  
I just want to hold you tight  
The whisper in my ear  
From you I want to hear

**POEM 3**

I like it when we talk  
And when you call me yours  
You always make me so soft  
All the love, in waterfalls it pours

Maybe there was a spark  
The talking was just the result  
It used to be so dark  
Now our love is bold

We didn't see this coming  
It was really random  
Then it started blooming  
I just think you're really handsome

Let's not forget about your voice  
It really takes me over  
Couldn't hear you because of the noise  
Till now I have always been sober

I don't drink alcohol, or do drugs  
I only do this thing called love  
I want your endless hugs

**POEM 4**

Sadness  
Not something to preserve  
Forgiveness  
It's not something they deserve

You were once a big part of my life  
I guess nothing stays the same  
Then we had a strife  
I'm just trying to keep me sane

Sometimes when I reminisce  
It's hard for me to keep a smile on  
I didn't want it to be like this  
With you I felt reborn

I'm sorry to have to keep this distance  
I think it's the best for both of us  
Still feel your essence  
Maybe it wasn't a complete loss

We both learned a few things  
That's what is important  
Grew a set of wings  
But I didn't want to be your orbit

I am not your sun  
Even further, not your star  
I admit, it was fun  
But also exhausting, sorry if it seems harsh

I'm sorry for the way it went  
This was not how I meant  
I know you only meant well  
But that was not enough, we're now on paths  
which are parallel

Never meeting,  
Never crossing,  
The heart is beating  
We are lost in ...  
Regret?  
Sadness?  
Betrayal?  
Or mist?

Pia Ferbežar, 4. Kb

# STORIES AND MORE

## LIFE IS SHORT, ENJOY THE COFFEE

A lot of people wake up and drink a cup of their favourite coffee. It's their coping mechanism.

Back in the days, when coffee was still expensive, people only drank it on rare occasions, and it was also bitter due to not adding any sugar. Because of that, not many people liked coffee, and this farmer was no different.

Once there lived a farmer and his wife. His wife was amazed by the thing that people called coffee, but her husband despised it. They also couldn't afford it, so the wife found a way to get her coffee every day. In the nearby city she had a really good friend, who was able to afford coffee, so they drank it together every day.

Her husband didn't know that she visited her friend every day. He was the type of man who didn't approve of anyone lending them money or lending them any type of food. One day the wife was preparing dinner and they ran out of salt. She went to the neighbours' and asked for some salt. The neighbours were happy to help, but in the near future she had to bring them some food in return for the salt. When the husband found out about the bargain, he was not happy at all.

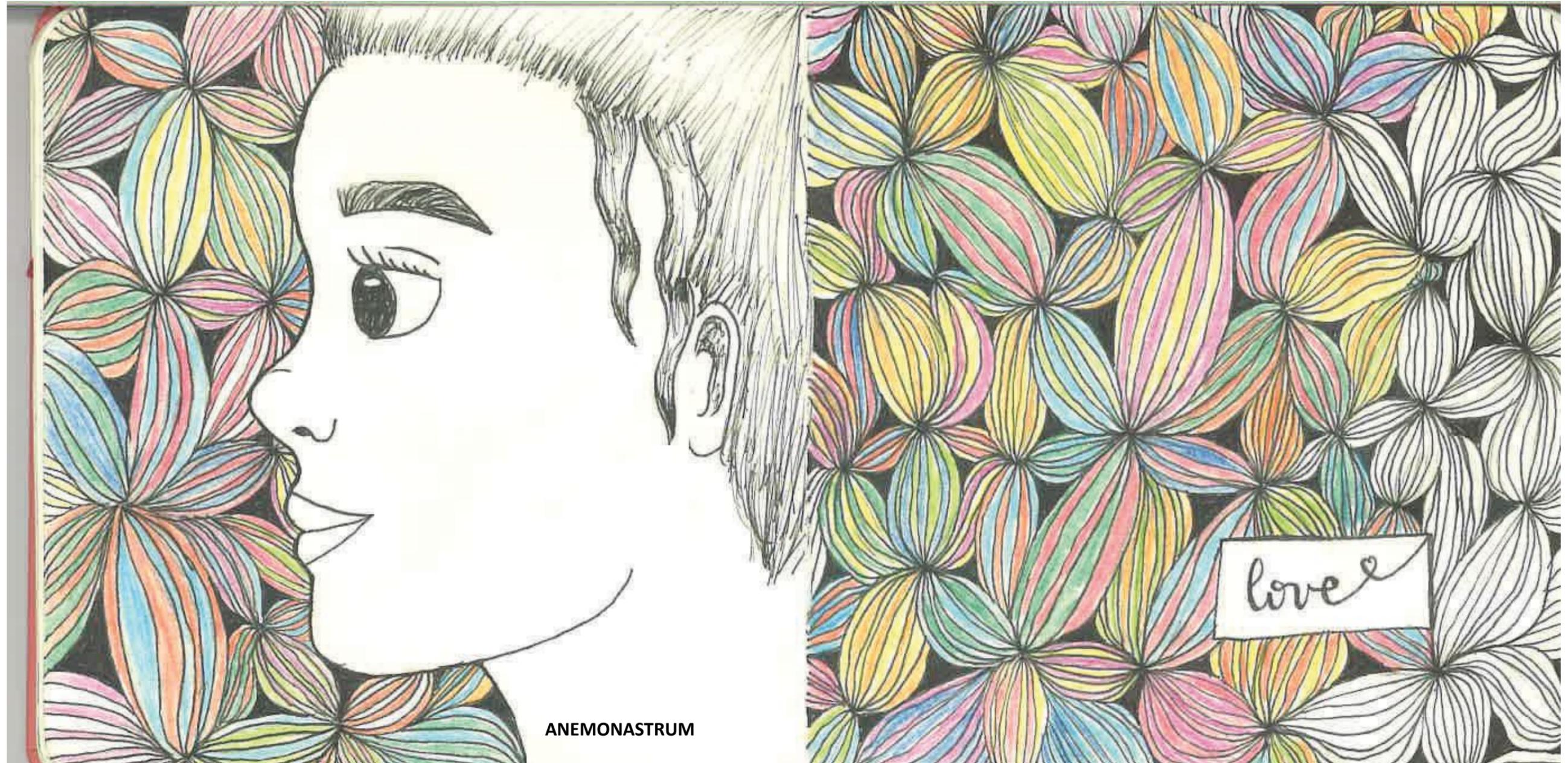
One day the wife was walking to the city when it started to rain heavily. A carriage was driving behind her. The driver didn't notice her and she didn't notice the carriage. At that moment she lost her life. The husband found out about his wife's death and he was devastated. When he got over her death, he started to think about what had really happened. She never told him that she had been visiting a friend, so he thought that she had been seeing another man. He went to the city and started asking people if they knew anything about his wife. He was lucky to meet her friend's husband, who invited him over.

His wife's friend made him coffee. He really liked it this time. He felt like it was his fault that she had passed away and what he had done was wrong. He cried his eyes out. He went to the market and bought a full bag of the best quality coffee there was.

Every day he prepared two cups of coffee and brought them to his late wife's grave. He took his time to drink the coffee and he thought about his wife while looking at the other cup of coffee that he'd brought with him.

Laura Prašnikar, 1. Fb





**ANEMONASTRUM**

Anemonastrum is a genus of flowering plants in the buttercup family Ranunculaceae. But I will simplify it for you. It started at the beginning of a sunny season. More specifically, in the middle of an identity crisis. She just dyed her hair pink. Ironic. If you google up her name, the first picture is a rosy plant.

“Mom, what in the world made you name me Anemone? I am only complaining, because I searched all the stands with name tags and couldn’t find one with my name on. So I bought Mary,” she said covered in hair color over the face time.

Mom looked at the ground and giggled.

Through all of her freckles I could see that she glowed from within. “You didn’t get your name for three days after you were born. I wanted to name you Mary,” she laughed. “But Dad always knew you will be special. So he remembered that when we had met, he had picked me the first flower he had seen and won me over. We never knew what it was called. So he searched for three whole days. I guess it symbolizes something new and unknown.”

They have it framed above the dining table.

Her mom gives off an otherworldly vibe. I believe she was a witch in her previous life,

in this life too. She communicates with her glassy eyes. So blue that they are almost iridescent. She met Anemone’s dad when she was traveling around Europe. Heard this story every year on their anniversary. He had this almost too perfect energy, black soul eyes, leggy-figure type of spirit to him, except not really. In reality, he was a blonde green-eyed preppy guy on his first spontaneous trip. Summer romance. “I hope you played *Our Last Summer* by Abba in the background.” It was their wedding song. They are all still growing old together.

I became part of the family. I have a perfectly normal family. Not perfect but normal. I am

only telling you this so you will know why I have always been around. They have made me feel special and my own person.

Anemone and I had a rule when we were allowed to speak to each other. It is foolish. She is an air sign and I am a water sign. So we only spoke on days when our astrological calendars and planetary positions were acceptable. Neither of us really knew how that worked so we checked it every day on Cosmopolitans website. It often happened that we didn’t speak because of it and just nodded every time we looked at each other. It lasted for 2 weeks, so we wrote in a journal. Silly little unimportant things. So on our talking days we talked our tongues off.

One evening we went stargazing and she whispered in my ear: *"I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that's one reason I don't mind working as a cleaning woman. It's just like reading a book. Simple."* I was confused. She doesn't like dull people with bathrooms themed 'at the seaside' and serious family pictures hanging on the walls. She needs to be personal and every piece in the house has to have a meaning.

Each and every summer we took care of our neighbors' house while they were on vacation. You can imagine what type of house it was. Anemone's favorite activity is doing makeovers. The time she spends on Pinterest is quite disturbing. So we talked about renovating ours.

Sunday-kind-of-love themed.

A huge garden with a coffee table and two iron chairs in the middle. She volunteered to pick garden flowers. But only those kind that you could make a bouquet out of. So when we visited our parents we could give them fresh ones. Because on Sundays stores were closed. In the dining room there was a massive wooden table, but not for us. Only for when people came over. We would eat on the kitchen island in the sage green kitchen. We ironically picked the seaside themed bathroom.

She was always good at describing things. All of her stories were so vivid. But she seemed a little bit off at the end of the vacations. She was distant. Even on our talking days she only nodded. She didn't renovate her room for three days. One time she painted her room twice in one day. So I confronted her.

"You seem a little distant. Today was your parents' anniversary and you didn't even come to the dinner with us. I had to listen about 'Europe in the summer of love' all by myself. What's up?"

"I don't know." She giggled.

"What do you mean?"

"I try to be this person. I try to be like my parents, like you. But I just can't get the hang of it. You are all so peaceful within yourself. I am chaos. I just think all the time. I can't relax. I try to be more fun. I even colored my hair."

"What are you talking about? I only laugh like that when I am with you. Like you have this superpower that allows other people to be themselves. And with or without pink hair you are weird. How come you can't put that spell on yourself?"

"All we do and how we present ourselves tell us something about us."

"Is this about the house?"

"Yeah."

I asked her: "Soo ... what does our house tell us about us?"

"Nothing and all."

I knew she found peace with herself for the first time in her life. And it was new to her. She realized she became a dull person with at-the-seaside bathroom.

A dull girl with a special name.

Ema Križmanič, 2. Kb

DEAR DIARY

FEBRUARY 23, 2020

Dear Diary,

It's been a long and stressful week and I can't wait to sleep tomorrow off. But even though I am overworked for my age, I still love my job. *I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that's one reason I don't mind working as a cleaning woman. It's just like reading a book.* Except these books are full of mysteries and drama. Just this day I was cleaning Mrs. Boomer's personal quarters and I found a male sock hidden under her bed. I know she hasn't been intimate with her husband, well since the day they got married, so it must belong to her study buddy, or however she calls the man who comes three times a week to 'study' with her. She is one of the women who always think they can get away with everything but are never too careful about the little things like their male 'friends' leaving socks behind and strange spots of 'spilled milk' on their sheets. But who am I to judge? I am not a 25-year-old model, married to a 75-year-old businessman, who openly flirts with anything that walks. Poor man is too naïve and almost blind, that's why his young wife can do anything she wants. I am just a cleaning woman and a single mother to the most kind and beautiful little boy in this world. Thankfully, he is nothing like his father, and if God is on my side, he will never know about that monster. Anyways, I should go to bed. It is late.

MARCH 1, 2020

Dear Diary,

Since last week, things have gotten worse in the drama department. Mr. Boomer caught his wife and the handyman together and they

already started planning the divorce. Sadly, the poor man signed a prenup before marrying that weasel and it stated that she should get a few millions dollars and some shares of his company. He must have been on morphine at the time because his usual sober self would never have signed that. Also, the head cook has just got deported back to Mexico. None of us knew she had not been registered, so when the police stormed in and dragged her out, we were all speechless. As always, the Boomers did not even notice.

Anyways, the number of cases of this so-called 'coronavirus' is rising quite quickly and I'm getting worried. They say it's fatal and I don't know if I'd survive it if I got infected. Well, enough of worries for today. I also wanted to add that Jacob is the best in his class. Since I started working here, I have been able to afford to pay for his tuition, and as long as I can provide that, he will be getting the best kind of education our situation can pay for.

MARCH 8, 2020

Dear Diary,

What a week! Full of surprises. The Boomers got divorced, but the old bag of bones got married THE NEXT DAY! Can you believe it? Because I sure can't. I thought this divorce will teach him some kind of a lesson but he must be too old to make smart decisions for himself. The new Mrs. Boomer is actually really nice and quite a bit older than the previous one. She has already reached the milestone of 50 years and still looks not a day older than 35. Jennifer Lopez could hide behind this woman. She also doesn't come from a rich background, but we can all see that no matter what, she won't last. None of them did. I also got a promotion to a personal helper, so all I have to do through the day is follow Angie (the new Mrs. Boomer) and do everything she says. Better than just cleaning all day; I still do some cleaning but only superficially. Sadly, Jacob got sick on Thursday so he is staying at home with our neighbour to watch over him ...

I truly hope it's not the virus.

MARCH 29, 2020

Dear Diary,

Sorry for being absent for so long. Everything I have feared is coming true. Mr. Boomer passed away last week and Angie found out what serious debts he was in. Looks like he owes a few millions to his shareholders and even more millions to the Swiss banks. Poor Angie has already sold his company and a few of his estates, but the money won't cover even half of it. She also fired most of the staff. It is only me and three other workers left.

Jacob and his illness got worse a few days ago so I had to take him to hospital. We found out his lungs are failing so he is on a ventilator. The doctor said it must be coronavirus and that I had brought him in just in time. The hospital bills are now piling and soon I will not be able to cover all of them. I started searching for new jobs but nobody is hiring. And there are also riots happening throughout the USA because a George Floyd was brutally murdered or something. These are just the rumours I've heard since I do not own a television or a phone. I hope Angie is going to keep me as long as possible, at least until I find another job.

APRIL 5, 2020

Dear Diary,

Jacob won't be getting out of the hospital. I just know, I feel it in my heart that my baby is dying. He doesn't breathe on his own anymore, and without the machines, he would already be dead. I've also lost my job. I still have two thousand dollars of credit I borrowed from the bank to keep paying for Jacob's hospital bills. I am facing the hardest decision I have ever had to make: to plug out the machines and let him die peacefully and without any pain or to keep

on fighting, even though our possibilities are below 60% ... I can't let him die, I just can't.

APRIL 7, 2020

Dear Diary,

I am unemployed, my son is holding on to the last threads of life and I have just lost our home. I don't have any relatives I can stay with and all my friends from my youth can barely take care of themselves, I would only be a burden to them. I think I'll try to stay in the hospital's waiting room at least until I find a job and can afford a motel.

APRIL 23, 2020

Dear Diary,

I had to do it. Seeing him in so much pain for the last few weeks has been so hard. I could not bare thinking that my selfishness was causing him more pain and suffering. If I had realised earlier that I had been harming him with my love, I would have done it sooner. I would have stopped his suffering sooner. Today at 8.24, the doctor came into his room. I could see it in his eyes, the unspoken words. His eyes were begging me to save my son's soul and let him go. He asked me to step outside to talk. And we did. We talked about his condition and how there was nothing more they could do for him. It was then that I decided to let him go and to keep all the good memories in my heart. I didn't cry. I was happy, for him, for me and for God, who will get to meet him soon. I didn't have any money at all so I had to leave him in the hospital. I also did not have a place to stay, so I just took a few blankets and my duffel bag with a spare change of clothes to the most quiet street corner and sat on the ground. This is my home now.



APRIL 30, 2020

Dear Diary,

I have lived through a week on the streets. It's been hard but other homeless people have helped me out as much as they could. We share our food and blankets now. We also hide together when the rioters come around. A few of my newfound friends have been killed either by the police or a drunk rioter. What has this country come to ... As I am writing this, I am hiding behind a large trashcan on Maple Street, as far away from where the rioters are right now as possible.



I hear shouts nearby and hide into the deepest corner. I close my eyes and squeeze into a tight ball with my knees under my chin. I hear footsteps on my right, a person is whistling a melody. It gives me chills as the sound of the footsteps is getting closer. I open my eyes that have been closed shut only to come face to face with a man dressed in all black with a ski mask on. His icy stare penetrates through me as he lifts his right hand, which is holding a gun with a muffler.

BANG!

Maša Bohinc Penček, 3. Ka

## EXTINCTION

*Humans. They think of themselves as these intelligent beings, but are they really? They have destroyed everything; the whole planet is dying because of them so we cannot let them try to explore more of our universe and possibly let them destroy other planets or parts of space. We need a solution that would fix this problem. This leads us to introducing our newest creation: creature QR33L, which is arriving on Earth.*

Nothing had stopped 17-year old Jessie from breaking rules before, and nothing was going to stop her now.

*People are getting sick, some are even dying. A new unknown illness is spreading across the globe. There are very strict rules everyone must follow in order to keep the situation under control, the news stated. The most important ones are:*

- Do not leave your home unless it is an emergency.
- Always wear protective gear outside.
- Do not meet up with anyone.
- Do not go into the Red Zone.

want to find out what is happening and most importantly, find Mike.”

“I don’t think Google can answer that question so fantasize all you want.”

“I really thought that my own sister knew me better. Guess not. Obviously I’m not going to stay inside.”

“Didn’t you just hear the news? Now is not the time to be rebellious, Jess, you could get yourself killed! What are you even planning to do outside? There’s nothing, you have no lead.”

“Actually, I do have a lead. Remember the Red Zone they mentioned. They didn’t specify anything about it, they just told us not to go there, as if they were hiding something.”

“So, you are planning to go to the one place you are not allowed to go to?”

“Mike could be there. So, are you coming with me?”

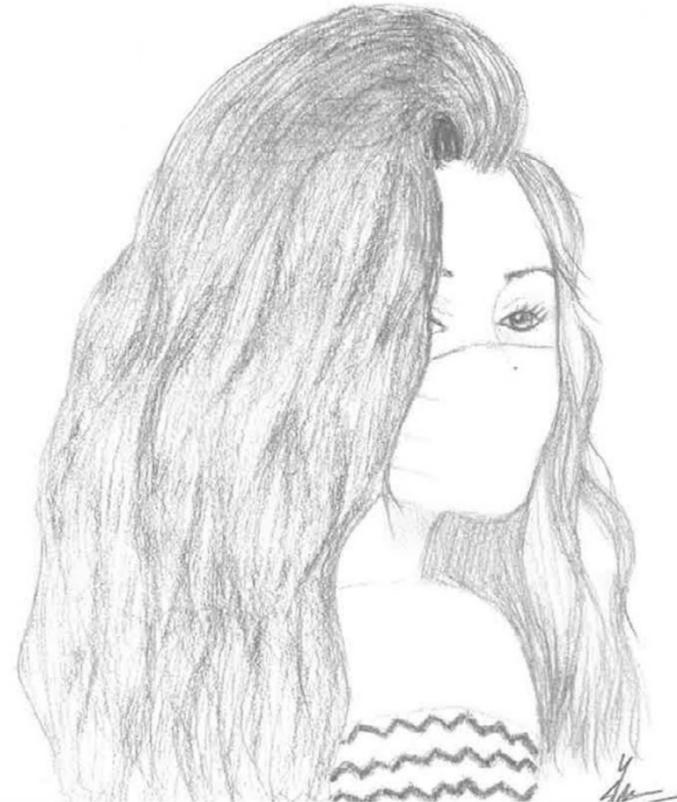
“You expect me to come with you?! This is very dangerous, Jess. I don’t know if you are trying to be brave or stupid. You know I love Mike, but this is not our job.”

“Okay, guess I will see you when I get back.”

“I am begging you, stay. I can’t lose you too.”

“You think Mike is dead? I am going to go out there and find him.”

Jess packed her backpack with all the essentials she thought she needed. The only way she could leave the house without her parents noticing was going while they were



asleep in the middle of the night. So that was what she did.

She didn’t know anything about the Red Zone, not even its location, which she desperately needed. She knew that she couldn’t find it alone, so she decided to ask the drug dealers that were usually under the bridge. She thought that because they were already doing illegal activities, they would know something about the place you weren’t allowed to visit.

“Hello, guys! Do you by any chance know anything about the Red Zone?” she asked.

“What are you doing here, little girl?” They ignored her question.

“I don’t have time to explain, just tell me.”

“Do you want me to tell you a bedtime story?”

They continued messing with her.

“Answer me now!” she yelled as she took a \$100 bill out of her pocket.

“Whatever, girl. Here are the coordinates,” they said before taking the money.

Even though she didn’t know if the guys had given her the correct location, it was the only lead she had, so she started following the directions on her phone. She was walking for four hours looking for a hut. She was doubtful, thinking that the guys had scammed her. Eventually, she got to the hut. As she wanted to take a closer look, she found a trapdoor just a few meters away from it. She opened it and went down. She was in a long dark underground tunnel. It looked like a scene from a horror movie.

“Are those guys trying to kidnap me?” she thought while taking her knife out of her backpack.

There was only one choice in her mind, to walk down the tunnel. As she was walking down the strange tunnel, she heard a faint voice. It sounded like a cry for help. She began to sprint down the tunnel and the voice was getting louder and louder. Suddenly it stopped. Jess freaked out. Now she was walking slowly when someone grabbed her ankle.

“AHHHH!” she screamed.

“Thank God!” someone said. “I thought I was going to die here.”

“Who are you and what are you doing here?” asked Jess as she bent down to see a woman behind the bars.

“My name is Linda. A few days ago, a group of people took my daughter Alya because she

“I cannot even believe this!” said Jess.

“Me neither!” her sister answered. “I can’t believe that our little brother is going through this.”

“I hope he is doing okay, but where did they even take him? I am concerned. I still think that it’s a little strange for an infection to appear spontaneously.”

“Does it matter?”

“Yes. I don’t think this could just pop out. I

had the symptoms. I was secretly following them but they saw me and locked me in here.”

“I am looking for my brother. I believe the same people have taken him.”

Jess successfully broke the lock with a rock she found nearby. Jess and Linda were now both walking down the tunnel, chatting.

“I am a cleaning woman,” Linda said.

“Oh, are you?”

*“I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that’s one reason I don’t mind working as a cleaning woman. It’s just like reading a book,”* Linda explained.

“I love your way of thinking.”

They continued chatting the whole way until they found a metal door. It wasn’t locked.

“Can you hear that?” asked Linda.

“Yes, whatever is behind that door, we should be ready to face it,” Jess responded.

The strange noises sounded like some kind of machine. They slowly opened the door to find people, asleep. They were all attached to machines.

“I can’t believe it. Are they keeping the infected here?” asked Linda in disbelief.

“I don’t know, but they could.”

“Who’s there?” someone yelled.

“Hide,” Jess whispered as they got behind

one of the machines.

The guy was a security guard. He was walking around, trying to find the imposters. When Jess had a chance, she took her knife and stabbed his leg, so he wouldn’t follow them.

“Run!” she yelled.

“I need immediate backup,” said the wounded guard.

“You go find my baby, Jess. I must stay here to make sure nobody follows you,” said Linda as she handed Jess a photo.

“I will get her back, I promise,” said Jess as she ran past all the immobile people.

One girl looked familiar, so she quickly looked at the photo that Linda had given her. It was her daughter. As she was unplugging all the wires and tubes from her body, she heard gunshots. She knew that she had to find her brother, so she picked up Alya and they quickly walked on.

“There you are!” she joyfully said as she found Mike nearby.

She started taking off everything that was plugged to him when a security guard came. He grabbed her, put her against the wall and was trying to handcuff her. She quickly took his helmet off. This made him exposed to the disease, so he freaked out and he instantly tried to put his helmet back on, which gave Jess time to grab the kids and make a run for it.

She got to another hall where she found rows of doors. This gave her the perfect chance to hide. She went inside one room.

“What is that?” she thought while looking at

a dozen monitors. There were pictures and paragraphs about ‘them’, the creatures from another planet. After reading everything, she realised that the disease was a creature from another planet, wanting to wipe out the human race. She didn’t know what to do with this information. Sitting there gave her enough time to hope that the security guards had left the main room. She hoped that Linda was there, hiding and waiting for her. Quietly, she picked up the kids and went towards the exit. They were awake but could barely see anything. Their vision was blurry.

“Linda?” she screamed as she found her on the floor, bleeding. She was shot. Alya was crying.

“Alya? I am glad you found her. Listen, Jess, I won’t make it. I trust you, take care of my baby,” were her last words.

“No!” Jess cried, but she still knew what had to be done.

She got out and struggled to take the kids home. In the strange room she had been in, she had read that honey was the only proven thing to work as treatment for the infected, which was unusual but perfect. When she brought them home, she put the kids in the basement so they didn’t infect her family. Her family greeted her with joy. She was happy she had made it back, but she didn’t tell anyone about her discovery. She didn’t trust anyone, not even her family. Her only choice now was to take care of the kids and hope that things would get better.

Venera Dimitrova, 2. Fc

## FALSE REALITY

Time goes by and every day just feels the same, like a never-ending loop. It makes me feel like nothing matters, no one will remember me, so it really does not matter if I try or not. But I do try, I try to be the best, I want my family to be proud of me. I do things for other people and their approval; I do not do things for me. I help others and do things for them, even if it means that I will spend hours on it, and it takes them five minutes to copy. I want to be liked, and it is sad that I do so much for people and they act as if I do not exist when they do not need me. They all act friendly and nice when they need you, but as soon as you are not helpful to them, they forget about you. I mean, who would not take advantage of someone that is so broken, someone that tries to be loved by everyone?

But at the end of the day, who cares about me and my boring life? Anyways, people have way better and more interesting lives than me. The types of lives that everyone wants and is jealous of. Sometimes I wish I had a more interesting life, where I would not have to worry about anything, and everyone would love me. But it is not like that. I do the same things every day, I wake up, get ready, go to school, learn new things that will not matter in a few years, go home, eat, do more schoolwork and go to bed.

Every day I wake up, some days are harder than others, but I try. I go get ready and eat the same food every day. I get on the bus and listen to music. I always feel so overwhelmed, and I don’t know why. I walk to school and I like the fact that it is so early in the morning, so I do not have to walk past big groups of people. When I get there, I just take my uniform and go to my class and wait for others to come. I usually do not like being in school because of grades, the fact that teachers call on you to answer a question and the people around me. I got used to being alone, so I am very uncomfortable when there are a lot of people

interesting, well at least not in this reality.

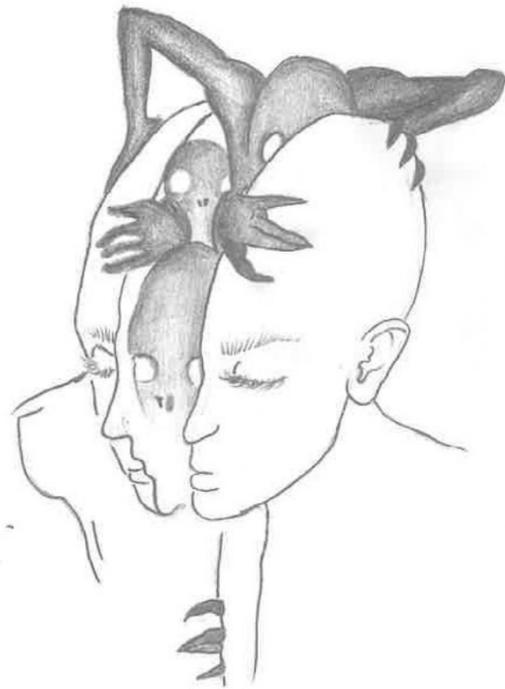
When my classes are over, I do not hang out with my classmates, I just go straight home. It is always hard to walk home because there are so many people there. I always walk as fast as I can to avoid everyone. I get on the bus and listen to music. I have learnt it is better to act as if you don't know or see people you know. They just always act like they are better than you. I hate that they make me feel like I am worthless. I do like it when I see a cute stranger that I will never see again, it lightens up my mood.

And then the worst part - walking to my house. I hate it - everyone is looking out their windows to know everything about everyone. They are so desperate to know everything. I rather stare at my phone and listen to music. But there is always that one neighbour who is super nosey. I hate him, he always asks me questions and I usually just brush it off and go away. He says that I am full of myself, but in reality, I just hate talking to him.

around me. I hate the fact that everyone is always on their phone. I want to talk to people, but I feel like I am annoying, so I rather sit and draw.

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Our class is filled with all kinds of different people. We have some popular girls, some smarty-pants, annoying guys and girls, and some okay people. I do not feel like I fit in and not because I think that I am different, but because it is stupid. It is just everyone wants to look perfect and they post on social media all the time, so they look cool. They try so hard to be cool, like they have the best life, the best friends, but I know it is not like that. They are all so miserable and their friends talk behind their backs. I am not trying to sound like I am the main character. In this world, there are two kinds of people, the main characters and the side characters, and I know for a fact I am a side one, because my life is not that



Finally, I get home. I change my clothes and go eat lunch. After that, I go on my phone for thirty minutes and then I go do schoolwork. Everything just goes by really fast, and before I notice it's the evening. I go shower and get ready for bed. I say goodnight to everybody, even though I usually stay up till midnight. Then I finally go to bed.

This is the best part of my day. I can finally escape from this boring reality and go to a different one. I close my eyes and count to one hundred and when I open them, I am in a different reality. The reality I feel good and loved in, way better than this one.

I know I may sound crazy, but this is not a dream, this is a real world. I look the same, except for my clothes, but everything around me is different. I live in a small cottage with lots of animals and flowers around me. I can wear long pretty dresses without being judged and people are way nicer here. It is the world I like to escape to, it makes me feel loved and nice. I actually love it here. I have friends that I love and everything is perfect. It's a different time period, no one here wears jeans or crop tops. Men wear suits and women wear nice flowy dresses. We all get along and life is just way more interesting here. Everyone lives in little houses that they decorate themselves and no one judges them.

I do not have a job, I live my life here as a housewife.

*I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that's one reason I don't mind working as a cleaning woman. It's just like reading a book.*

And I love books, I think they are really cool, and the people that write them are very creative. I always carry them around, even when I go on adventures.

Now for the fun part. I cleaned my house and

had some fun and then I decided to go for a walk towards the little town. I like it, there is always something happening there. But this time it was different. I went into a little shop with decorations, when I felt a pair of eyes staring at me. I turned around to see a guy gazing at me, but that did not weird me out. The thing that did weird me out was the fact that I had never seen him before. I know it may sound silly because it is a big world, but it is my world, so I know everyone and everything here, so it was weird that I did not know who he was. As he saw me looking at him, he quickly walked away. I wanted to ignore it, but I could not. Why was he there? Why could I not recognize him? Why was he so off? Why did he look like he did not belong here? It did not make any sense. I went back to my friends to ask them if they knew who he was or why he was here, but they just looked at me like I was insane.

I went outside and walked through the town. I could feel eyes following me. It was him. I did not like any of this, so I decided to go back to my original reality. But the thing I did not know was that I made the worst mistake.

When I got back, I got ready for school and as I was doing that, I could not get him out of my head. The fact that he showed up out of nowhere and I did not even add him into my world.

As I sat down on the bus seat, I felt eyes on me. I looked up and there he was sitting. I could not believe it! Was I imagining it because I was thinking of it so much? But no, it was all real. He looked away when he saw me look at him. I did not understand how he got in my world. He was just a stranger on the bus that I saw for the first time, so how did he know me? I started breathing heavily in disbelief and passed out.

When I woke up, I was still in my bed and it all seemed like a weird fever dream. I went to my

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therapist and told her everything and she told me I should stay off my medication, because maybe it was too much for me, or maybe I was taking too much. But I did not remember taking any medication. Then everything started to make sense. Everything in my life had been miserable because it was real, and before I had gone to sleep, my mom had given me medication to keep me calm. Those drugs had helped me create a new world that I was now blocked from, and the guy that I kept seeing was my subconscious telling me none of it was real.

Lina Malovrh, 1.Zb

## HOUSES

It all began with this house on the top of the hill.

There was this rich guy that lived in a big house on the top of the hill. From this hill, you could see the whole town. It wouldn't be something special if it wasn't in this small town. He and his wife owned two BMW cars and a hot tub in their backyard.

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There was nothing special about them really, they were just like all other rich people: filthy rich, both were divorced and never had time for their children.

I saw their ad on social media. The pay was good, but they wanted a cleaning lady and a nanny at the same time so I knew I had to negotiate for extra cash. I signed up for the job knowing I really needed it or I would end up in that school cafeteria again. Don't get me wrong, it is the same level for other people, but I simply couldn't deal with loads and loads of dirty dishes again. They accepted me the next day. I was so excited. I was lucky that they had picked me, because it was my first time being a cleaning woman.

It was seven in the morning and I walked across the town to get there. When I came, they greeted me outside their house. It was even more luxurious than I had imagined. We talked about the pay, working hours, their kids. They negotiated around extra cash, but I needed to do a longer shift to watch over the kids. I was then left alone with the cleaning supplies and blank walls.

It was way better than my previous job. I had to wash even less than half of the dishes I had done at the cafeteria. They also owned a dishwasher so we could say it was a true win. The feeling of shiny clean floor and the smell of the house really got me. It was the first time I actually liked the job I had.

After hours of rubbing the floor and dusting, I had to pick up their kids from school. They lent me one of their spare cars. It was a mini van for their vacation. They had me thinking, 'A mini van owned by a rich family?' Well, it was a Mercedes! I know, right, who knew they also made mini vans? Anyway, I picked up the boys from school. They weren't that hard to deal with. They were way less trouble than your brother at that age. They were used to different staff because they moved a lot.

I cooked them lunch and washed the dishes. They were less than six years old and they already had PlayStations and smart phones. It was easier for me, but not so much for their little brain. I remember I left at half past six that night when their mother arrived home.

I did that every day, for a year straight. Thank God I didn't have you and your brother at the time, or I wouldn't be here where I am now. I earned quite a lot of cash that I saved up for my business. After a year I decided to start my own business. My cleaning business. I figured out that I really liked that job. You can make some good money, so why not make more profit, you know. I paid for my website to be created, and there I was starting my

own business. When I officially opened my cleaning business, it was more than success. I had many requests a day. I cleaned one house and was already on my way to another. Years passed and I expanded.

Now here I am telling you my story, I have my very own house and you guys.

"But, Mom, why do you like cleaning so much?"

*"It's not just the cleaning, I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that's one reason I don't mind working as a cleaning woman. It's just like reading a book".*

Žanin Pustovrh, 2. Kb

## I LOVE HOUSES

"Why do you keep working as a cleaning woman? Isn't that job really filthy? You could have a much better job."

Well, to be honest, I often look back and think of the good times. The times when my family was complete. When we were all happy.

I remember that specific day, my birthday.

"Wake up!" I heard my dad say that while tickling my feet. I started squirming and giggling while my mom watched us from the doorway shaking her head.

Quickly sitting up I yelled: "I'm up! I'm up!"

Dad chuckled and hugged me. "Happy

birthday, sweetie." I heard him whisper in the crook of my neck as Mom joined the hug. I smiled softly and hugged them both back. It was my eleventh birthday that day and they had been planning a surprise for my birthday for months. I was so excited to find out what it was. I remember Mom pulling out three tickets for Disneyland and me getting so excited while jumping back to hug them again.

"Thank you both so much!"

That was the happiest morning in my whole life. We were all so happy and full of life then. Unfortunately, all that soon changed.

The day after my birthday, Dad was driving to work in the morning when he had a terrible accident. I will never forget that day. I will never forget the look on Mom's face, or the moment when the brim of her eyes filled up with tears and she drove us to the hospital.

"Mommy, what's happened?"

I kept asking her that question, but I hadn't got the answer until we arrived at the hospital. We both ran into my father's room and that was the most frightening thing I had ever seen. I immediately broke down in tears and so did Mom. Dad was attached to many machines that kept him alive. He could barely move.

Dad looked at us with a lifeless look. He knew what was going to happen. He knew he was going to die.

I walked up to him and he grabbed my hand holding it in his. "Be strong for me," he said and looked at Mom giving her a faint smile.

The next thing we heard was a long loud beep and a bunch of doctors pushing me and Mom out. She was trying to fight them and stay in

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the room with Dad, but eventually she got pushed out.

He died that day, and things were never the same again.

I remember going to the funeral with Mom. Everyone was dressed in black including my 11-year-old self. A lot of people came. Our relatives, Dad's co-workers and all his friends. The priest came and said some words that I couldn't understand at that age. Mom broke down in tears during the priest's speech. Before they put the coffin in the ground, she hugged the coffin while sobbing and screaming.

"Why did you leave me?! I need you!"

Some of our relatives had to pull her away so they could lower the coffin into the grave.

That's probably one of the saddest moments in my life. It was hard dealing with it all. Especially for Mom. Her mental health worsened. She became abusive, verbally and physically. She started smoking and drinking. She lost her job because she had stopped going to work, and soon she spent all our money, and no one would hire her because of her mental and drinking problems. All that had a big effect on me. Since we had run out of money, Mom had no choice but to stop sending me to school.

Then she decided to start her own business of cleaning houses. Every day she would take me with her to different houses which we had to clean. Clean everything: the bathroom, the bedroom, the kitchen, the living room, the dining room. Basically the whole house.

One day we went to one specific house. I didn't know it at that time, but it was my schoolmate's house. Mom told me to go clean the bathroom. I looked around at

all the jewellery and expensive perfumes. I really wished that we had been living in that fancy house. I was jealous while cleaning the bathroom. The whole time I was just thinking about how unfair life was, how some people had so much, and others had nothing.

When I finished cleaning the bathroom, Mom called me downstairs to help her clean the living room. She told me I needed to scrub the floors while she dusted the shelves, but while doing that my schoolmate and his family came home.

I was really shocked when I saw my schoolmate standing in the doorway of the living room. I was on my hands and knees scrubbing the floor and I immediately stood up. I felt so embarrassed and humiliated. My eyes were fixed on the floor and I didn't dare to look up.

"Oh, look, honey, it's the cleaning woman. We are sorry. We didn't expect to come home so early but there was a change of plans. I hope you don't mind," my schoolmate's mom said to her husband and to my mom.

I couldn't take it anymore. I threw the cleaning supplies onto the floor and ran to Mom's van that was parked outside. I heard Mom yelling after me, but I was already in the van as my eyes started getting teary.

The only thing I could think about was how unfair this world was, how some people had to starve and work very hard to be able to make ends meet and how some could just take it easy. I couldn't understand it and it was making me very angry.

I started remembering all the good times we had had when Dad had been still alive. We had had money and we had been happy, but then Dad had died, and Mom had started acting weird. She had lost her job. I blamed everything on her.

Mom didn't come to the van to get me after the fuss I had made in the house until she finished cleaning. When she got into the van, we didn't say a word to each other. After a while she decided to start a conversation.

"What you did in there was highly inappropriate".

That's when everything started coming back to me and I lost my temper.

"This is all your fault! If you hadn't started drinking and smoking, you would still have your job and you wouldn't work as a pathetic cleaning woman!" I yelled at her.

She didn't say anything in return, but I could see a tear slowly rolling down her cheek. I immediately felt bad, but my pride didn't allow me to say sorry. I hurt her very badly that day.

From then on, we would barely speak to each other.

Mom died when I was 19 but I didn't let that break me. She knew she had made a mistake, and she was trying to fix it, but I yelled at her on that day. I will forever regret that. She was just mourning for Dad in her own way. I had no right to say what I had said to her and I never apologized, which I do regret.

Mom had a hard life and was at a very low point in her life, but just the fact that she was strong enough to start her own business, the fact that she was willing to take a step forward and leave everything that had happened in the past, made me realise that she had wanted to move on. Therefore, I decided to honour what she had left behind. I'm proud of my mother for being so strong and ashamed of my younger self for being so selfish, mean and full of pride.

When she was gone, I promised myself to continue doing this in her honour. I started having a new outlook on the cleaning business. Some houses were small with not much furniture, some were big and expensive, some had family pictures in them, and some didn't. That told me a lot about the people that lived there, and each new house was like a new adventure. I just loved it.

So, to answer your question as to why I'm still working as a cleaning woman when I could get a better job: *"I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that's one reason I don't mind working as a cleaning woman. It's just like reading a book.* Besides that, I made a promise to myself and I don't want to break it."

Aleksandra Kitanoska, 1. Fc

#### IN SEARCH FOR MORE

JAMES, a successful Afro American entrepreneur in mid-fifties

SHERA, a beautiful white woman

DOROTA, a young Afro-American woman, her current job is a cleaning woman

STACEY, a friend of Dorota

DOROTA *[surprised, arrives at the given address]:* Oh, that is one of a kind! I can't believe I'm actually working in the rich part of town. This part of Florida is a true fairy tale. This house makes me feel like I'm somewhere in the Mediterranean ... This house isn't a house, it's a mansion. *[Walks around the mansion and she can't believe her own eyes.]* So here we go and thank God I got this extraordinary job. *I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that's one reason I don't mind working as a cleaning woman. It's just like reading a book.*

[On the way to the gates she admires beautiful green trees with small waterfalls and other additions, she rings the bell.]

SHERA [in her beauty room putting on some perfume]: Wow, this perfume smells so good! It's the best one from my own collection. And it matches my white elegant dress and my cute edgy heels. Just lovely! [She hears the bell.] Oh, who has the permission to interrupt my most productive part of the day?! [She leaves the room a bit angry and walks to the door as if she was on the runway, she carefully opens the door.] Good morning!

DOROTA [amazed by the lady's look and scent]: Good morning, Ms. Shera! I am here for the offered job. We talked on the phone last week ...

SHERA [finally remembers, her excitement evaporates and speaks in a high-pitch voice]: I do remember. We shall look where and what you will be doing. I wish my partner James was here to help me a little bit. But unfortunately he is working as usual.

DOROTA [feeling unconfident around the lady, she finds her a bit intimidating]: Yes, Ms. Shera.

SHERA [proudly leads the way into the mansion]: For starters, remember that what happens in this house stays in this house unless I say so. The rooms which are used less often need to be cleaned once a week, the kitchen, the dining room, the bathrooms, the bedrooms and the garden Jacuzzi daily. For any further questions, you can turn to me. Your job starts at nine in the morning and ends at around five in the evening, depending on your efficiency.

DOROTA [listening carefully, watching her confidence and asking herself why the lady never looks her in the eyes]: Mhm.

SHERA [feels like everything is running smoothly and sees herself enjoying the future]: You can start today. Now we are going on a tour! [Smiles widely.] Follow me.

DOROTA [following the lady, the house looks unreal, she thinks she is almost in heaven]: I cannot believe my eyes!

SHERA [with excitement]: Well, you'll get used to it. [They walk for quite some time to get over all the places in the house, SHERA gives DOROTA some instructions.]: We have checked everything you need to know. Just to make things clear, everything is in its place so we will notice if it isn't.

DOROTA [a bit scared]: Mhm.

SHERA [finally looks at her and softly says]: Indeed. [Elegantly leaves the place and goes back to her beauty room.]

DOROTA [thinking]: This woman really knows how to scare people! She is so beautiful but so terrifying at times. A person even loses the gift of speech! Unbelievable. [Starts working.]

[One hour before the end of Dorota's job.]

DOROTA [sings lightly, excited because of the beautiful place she's in]: It's amazing where I am right now. I have never thought I'll be in paradise. If I want to be happy, I can be! Paradise is where you make your own paradise! [Laughs happily.]

JAMES [comes home a bit tired from work but feels proud of himself and his work]: Good evening, ladies!

SHERA [standing at the top of the royal staircase in her beautiful outfit, wanting to please James with her appearance]: Good evening, honey!

DOROTA [surprised while working, looks at that scene she has never seen and stares for a while, unconfidently says]: Good evening, sir. [Leaves the place as fast as she can.]

SHERA [unbothered with DOROTA's weird acting, asks in a caring voice]: How was your day, James?

JAMES [proudly]: Oh, honey, today was a successful day. I got the deals I earned.

SHERA [excited]: I am really amazed by yours skills, James.

JAMES [empowered by her words]: No doubt! [They both laugh softly.]

SHERA [whispers]: I have a reservation for a dinner at a fine restaurant tonight.

JAMES: What a surprise!

SHERA: I'll let you know when I'm ready! See you soon, James. [Leaves elegantly.]

[JAMES watches her leave, goes his way.]

DOROTA [thinking behind the door]: What a conversation! I cannot imagine me in Ms. Shera's place. It's unbelievable that some have so much luck. I wish I were in her place. My reality is way different ... I live alone in a small apartment, I am not as beautiful and as taken care of as Ms. Shera ... This certainly makes me think! I hope I'll also be that fortunate one day. Well, I hope not only in my dreams. [Keeps working.]

[After some time]

[SHERA walks down the stairs in a classy rosy outfit, her hair is styled perfectly and the perfume she used in the morning is even more intense.]

JAMES [pleasantly surprised]: Honey, you look amazing! Are you ready for our dinner?

SHERA [happy with his reaction]: Thank you, James. I sure am! [They walk out of the mansion and go to the restaurant in their stunning car.]

DOROTA [looks astonished]: Whaaat on earth has just happened?! I have a hard time believing this day is not a dream. I'll just remind myself I am a maid and my job is to take care of this beautiful mansion. I am paid very well and I will do my job well. That is my mission today. I don't know why, but I suddenly want to improve my looks. I've realized I am neglecting myself a little. I've finished everything for today. I'm going home.

DOROTA [gets on the bus and rides home, enters her apartment and looks at it for a while]: Now I see there's a lot of room for improvement. It was hard leaving my home and my parents, but I had no future there. My only chance is to do the work, to improve myself and to use motivation ... I can count on myself only at this moment. [Thinks deeply.]

DOROTA [puts on her nice clothes, makeup and also a wig]: Now I am ready to go out! And I feel great. [She goes out on the street for a walk, she watches the sunset and her phone starts ringing, she answers.] Hello, Stacey!

STACEY [nervously]: Hey, Dorota where are you?! I am waiting at the bar drinking a margarita.

DOROTA [surprised]: Oh, I'm sorry! I completely forgot. I am coming!

STACEY [with laughter]: You sure are. Bye!

DOROTA *[ends the phone call and thinks to herself.]:* Where is my head? I am seeing my dear wise friend. I need someone to get me back to reality. If that is reality. Hmm, is that reality? I'd better be going. *[She walks to the bar and she turns some eyes with her new appearance, they have never seen her so confident and put together.]*

DOROTA *[comes to the table where STACEY is]:* Hey, Stacey!

STACEY *[surprised]:* Hey, girl, what's happened to you?! Have you get a personal stylist? You don't usually put so much effort in your looks.

DOROTA *[a bit seriously]:* What do you mean? Oh, my looks! Yeah, today I've had a revolution in my brains. I have to tell you what happened. And Stacy, you look good too! *[Laughs.]*

STACEY *[thinks about herself, her looks, her acting and feels a bit weird, because she hasn't questioned that in a long time and smiles to DOROTA]:* You really need to tell me what on earth has happened to you at your 'fancy' job.

DOROTA *[excited but a bit confused]:* I came to that beautiful place. Honestly, it looked like a fancy castle. I came in, it was breathtaking! It has changed me ... . And the lady, Ms. Shera, she owns that place like a queen and she makes a perfect wife. I would like to live like that too ...

STACEY *[listens carefully]:* Wow, that is something I have never heard from you. *[Laughs.]* Now, I assume that this lady looks good too, right?

DOROTA *[still looks as if hypnotised]:* You're



right! Now I am afraid that I've just figured something out. Oh, I think ... I can't say it out loud!

STACEY *[listens carefully, a bit irritated]:* Oh, don't make me nervous. What do you mean?

DOROTA *[looks at Stacey, surprised by her own words]:* Stacey, I would do anything to live a life like Ms. Shera does! I've just said it! I want to hide under the table! *[Some people are looking at her, she said the part with the table very loudly.]* Oh no, can we please go?

STACEY *[looking at DOROTA surprised, she doesn't know how serious she is about her big goals]:* Sure we can! *[softly]* Hey, don't doubt yourself. If you really want to change your life, you can. But try to take things slowly, step by step. That's how you can climb any mountain, a big or a small one!

DOROTA *[calms down]:* Thank you.

STACEY *[a bit proudly]:* You know you can count on me. So, you don't want a margarita?

DOROTA *[smiles back at STACEY]:* I am good.

STACEY: I'll pay for the drink and we'll go. *[They go home.]*

DOROTA *[in her head]:* Ok, now it's time to plan a strategy. I cannot want something and do nothing to get it! What I need right now is some help with my strategy.

STACEY *[looks at DOROTA]:* You ok?

DOROTA: Yeah, I need a good strategy to get where I am going.

STACEY: Yes, that's right. I need to go home. Tomorrow I have work too.



DOROTA: See you!

STACEY: Bye, bye.

*[The next day]*

DOROTA *[the phone alarm goes off at 7 a.m., DOROTA saying in her head]*: Is it time to wake up already? Why? I'd love to keep sleeping and dreaming. I love dreaming. Everything goes so smoothly in dreams. Much more smoothly than in reality. *[Laughs shortly]* So, today is the second day of my 'fancy' job and today I will get myself in order too. It's the first day of my new resolution. YAAAAY!

DOROTA *[gets herself in her best look and full of energy goes to work, rings the doorbell, SHERA opens the door, DOROTA says, a bit excited]*: Good morning, Ms. Shera!

SHERA *[comes to the door in a nice but simple outfit and says in a tired voice]*: Morning. *[Her eyes aren't fully open and her walk isn't on point.]*

DOROTA *[confused about SHERA's acting, says carefully]*: Ms. Shera, is everything alright?

SHERA *[looks at her surprised and realizes she isn't usually like that, she changes her attitude quickly back to normal]*: Yes, no worries! Oh, and please I want breakfast in the bedroom soon, bring some orange juice and a bowl of fresh blackberries. *[Says quickly and goes back to the bedroom.]*

DOROTA *[in her head]*: I guess Ms. Shera doesn't have the best day today. I thought she was more aware of her acting. So, her life isn't so perfect after all. What am I thinking? Do I think too much? Oh, I'd like to feel more decisive. That's it. Ok, blackberries and orange juice are ready, now I'm going to take them in the beautiful bedroom. *[Slowly knocks and*

*opens the door.]* Here is your breakfast, Ms. Shera.

SHERA *[thinking]*: Why is she trying so hard with her looks today? Maybe I gave her some inspiration. Some people don't know what they want until someone gives them a good suggestion. But they don't know if it will make them happier. But this breakfast looks amazing.

SHERA *[says to DOROTA]*: Thank you.

DOROTA *[looks at the lavish interior of the room]*: Wow.

SHERA *[looks at DOROTA and has a feeling she has to tell her something]*: It's very nice. True. Remember one thing, nothing in your life is guaranteed to be there tomorrow. And you should focus on things you really care about. *[Looks her in the eyes.]*

DOROTA *[listens carefully]*: Mhm, thank you, Ms. Shera! *[Says gently and leaves.]*

SHERA *[thinking]*: She reminds me of myself when I felt lost in this world, and I needed someone to give me a hint back in the days.

DOROTA *[thinking]*: What did Ms. Shera exactly mean with her advice? To focus on things I really care about. And what are those? So, I really care about my future. So, that means I have to work on myself. Hmm ... I think this is a message. I have to work on being what I really, really want to be. So, my dreams need to become reality. That's not very easy ... Ok, first I need a strategy, not just any strategy but the best one I can think of. I'll listen to my wishes too.

SHERA *[forgot something in the kitchen, comes in elegantly]*: I'm taking my jacket.



[Gives DOROTA a short look and leaves.]

DOROTA [thinking]: So fancy. [Laughs.] Let's do the work now. [Keeps working.]

[In the evening]

DOROTA [finishes work, goes home, takes a rest, eats and thinks]: I have a plan! Finally! I've been waiting for so long to know what I want and to know how to get it. I need to visit Stacey! [Goes to visit STACEY.]

DOROTA [comes to the modest apartment, knocks on the door, the door opens]: Hey, Stacey! I have great news!

STACEY [surprised]: Yes, what is going on now?

DOROTA [excited]: I have the plan and it's done. Briefly. [Laughs.]

STACEY [not very excited]: Good to hear.

DOROTA [surprised]: Is everything alright?

STACEY [angrily]: Lately, you've been talking a lot about yourself, your new job, your big plans and you just forgot about the old times. I think you have changed. And honestly, I don't like the new you very much.

DOROTA [shocked]: Stacy, are you serious? I thought you want the best for me.

STACEY [irritated]: I do, but you want to change yourself completely!

DOROTA [desperately]: That is the point! I don't like who I am. I don't feel happy in my skin. I feel trapped!

STACEY [unconvinced and questioning her beliefs]: I don't understand you. It's like you are losing touch with real life. I don't believe we can still be friends. [Feels sad.]

DOROTA [heartbroken because they have been friends since childhood]: I cannot believe it! [Breaks into tears and leaves the apartment.]

DOROTA [in her head]: I can't believe it! She doesn't understand me. She wants me to stay where I was and doesn't care about me. It hurts to just imagine it ... And it's really happened. That is shocking! [In her head, there are flashbacks of the past and she feels they have just broken into pieces, she feels this way until she falls asleep.]

[The next day the hope of a better future gives her back the power and she keeps on going. One day she will feel proud of herself and will find the right people, she is certain about it. She will have the power to help people who are searching for fulfilment.]

Tina Bergant, 2. Fc





## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### Other illustrations

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**Editor:** Helena Doberšek

**Teachers:** Romana Forte, Mojca Kočevar Korbar, Karmen Ožbolt, Alenka Perger

**Designer:** Jasna Perinčič Manfreda

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