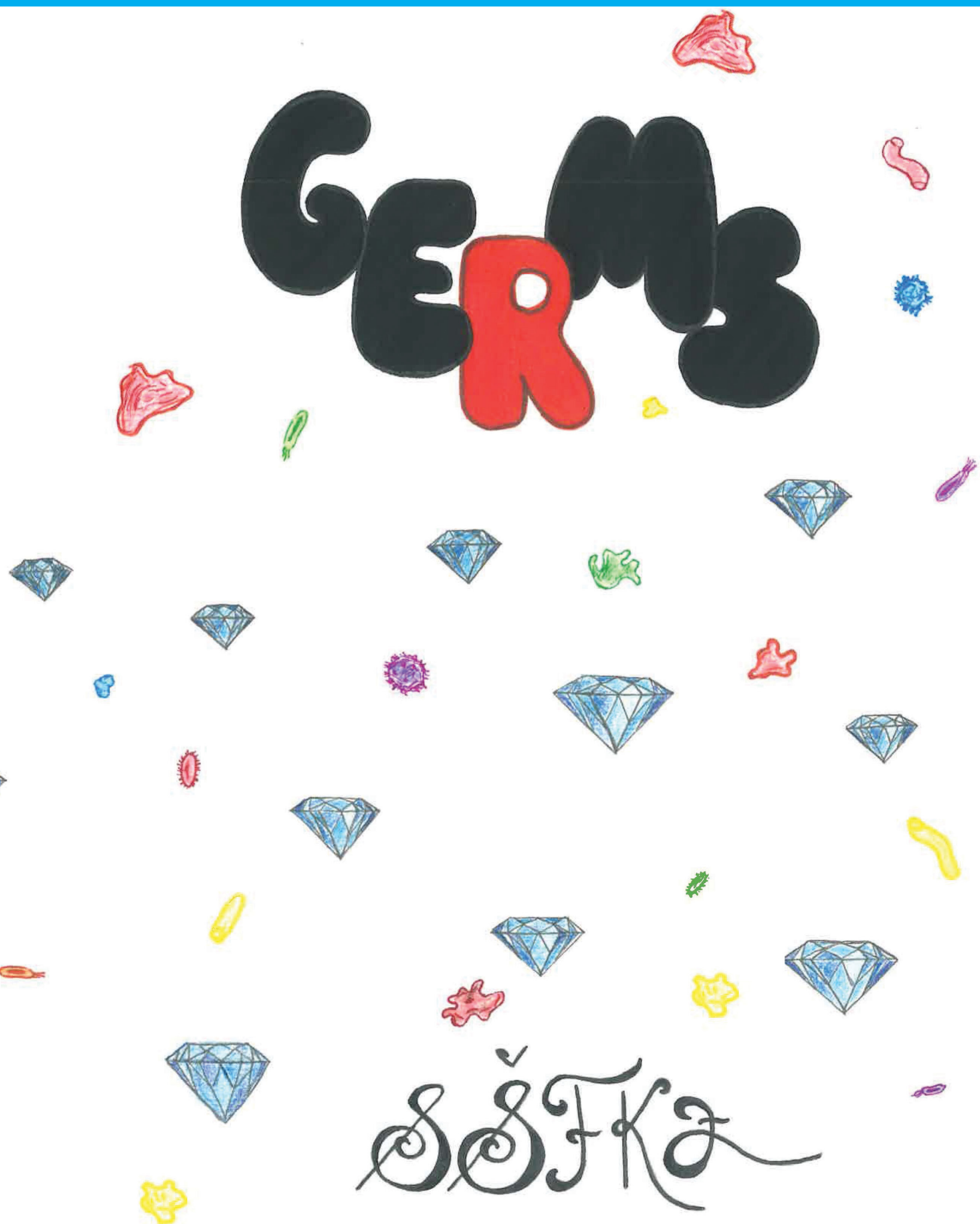


# GERMS



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## Editorial

### Editorial

It is always a pleasure to read and edit the essays, poems, descriptions of travel and stories students write to be published in Ge(r)ms. I must admit it: some are dearer to me than others. Among my favourites this year is *My story* – a shocking narrative of how easily trust and openness can be misused and life becomes a nightmare. I am extremely glad we can publish two of Miša's stories *Tulips* and *Love, me*, both of which won Special Jury Mention at the Literary Competition *Bodi pisatelj* in 2018 and 2019 respectively. You can also read where, how and why some of our students learn foreign languages, what experience they have gained abroad and what they think about different issues. There are some poems too.

I would like to thank every one of you who was ready to share part of your inner world with us, be it in writing or drawing.

Helena Doberšek



## STUDENTS' OPINIONS

### EXPERIENCE IS A BETTER TEACHER THAN SCHOOL

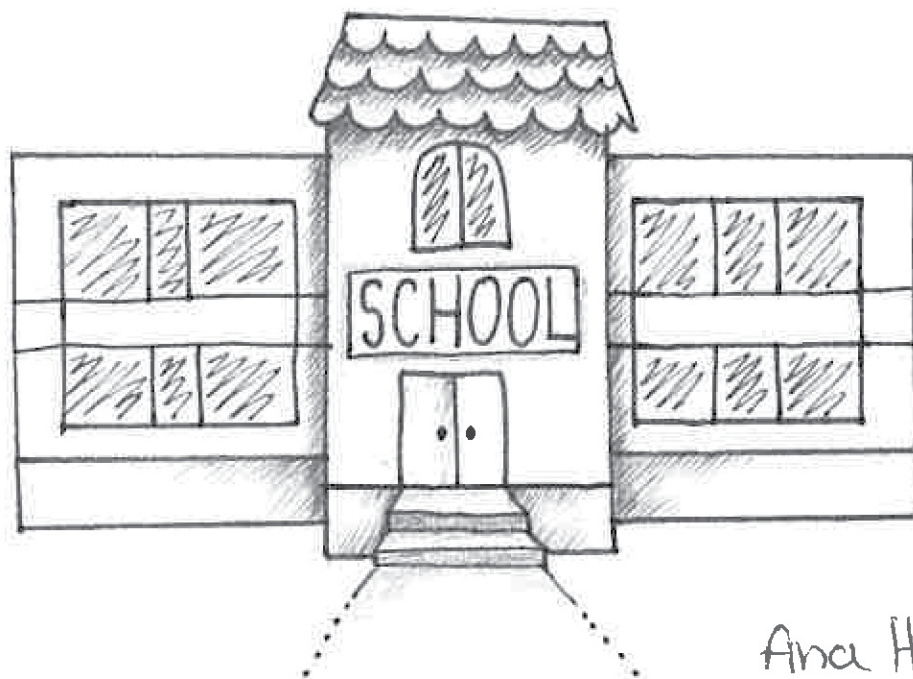
For as long as I can remember I have been listening to my schoolmates complaining about having to go to school and how schools are made to shape us in their desired form and prevent us from using our own heads. I do not think I would be wrong to say that most of them think school is unnecessary and that life itself is a better teacher. But is that true?

Firstly, I think school is a very necessary part of our lives. Yes, there are faults in the system but no major ones, and also nobody and nothing is perfect. School teaches us the basics; from the basic form of manners to basic ways of thinking and concluding. We learn how to become a functioning member of society. I do not think experience alone would suffice because if one were to encounter a more complex problem in their life, they would not be able to solve it as fast and efficiently as someone who has been taught how to solve minor problems and then progress to solving more complex ones.

Secondly, if you take my profession for example, being a dental technician means being able to adapt the rules without changing the core of the rule. That, of course, takes years and years of experience. But how would we know how to bend the rules if we did not know why we are bending them in the first place, or what bending them would result in? We need to first learn all the reasons and all the different ways of doing things, because only then will we be able to recognise the problem for what it is and solve it with the help of theoretical knowledge.

In conclusion, I do realise that experience is a very part of growing as human beings, but experience alone cannot fill the gaps in our theoretical knowledge. I think schools are very important and I am grateful to have access to free education.

Jana Colja, 4. Zb



Anca Hrovatin

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SHOULD BE OPTIONAL

In my fairly long time of being a high-school student, I have noticed that a few of my schoolmates have been absent from different classes several times a week, but have somehow still managed to advance to the next grade. If the general school rules - one of them being optional attendance - were to change, I am sure those once crowded halls would then be empty. But is that something that would benefit the society?

I do not agree with the statement that school attendance should be optional. Firstly, it does not seem fair that somebody who goes to school every day, actually puts in the work, is present and takes time for their education would be rewarded with the same grades as somebody who skips classes; reasons concerning health problems not included, of course. It has always mildly annoyed me because I could not wrap my mind around how someone could miss school for practically half a school year and still complete the programme with almost the same average grade as myself, being present almost every day. If you compare it with work, it does not make sense, much less is it fair, that a person who is in the office every day and does the work that needs to be done in accordance with a given deadline receives the same salary as another person who, for example, does not come to work for two days without any legitimate reasons and only does half the work.

I realise that we are all different, and that some people are capable of learning subject matter in a very short period of time without the help of teachers, and that sitting in school all day seems like a waste of time to them, but the way I see it, this kind of behaviour does not encourage work ethic and responsibility, and hardly prepares them for real life. Nowadays, more and more people are acting like they are entitled to anything they wish for. They think that they have the right to everything, and that if something is not happening according to their plans, then everybody must drop what they are doing and find a solution that will work best for that particular individual. The sad truth is that in today's fast-changing society we are all but numbers and we live in a capitalist world that does not tolerate indiscipline, better yet, it does not have the time or the need for it. I think it is quite a common phenomenon that fresh out-of-college students who are thrown into work environments are surprised when they get laid off because they have wanted to take a day off whenever they have felt like it, or because they have had different understanding of the term

'working hours' than their bosses. At which point it is made clear to them that they are not special and that their wishes, and, sadly, sometimes even their needs, do not come first. Unfortunately, we are all easily replaceable and will be replaced without hesitation if we do not fit into our employers' moulds.

The conclusion is that irregular school attendance does not prepare us for the fact that if we want to live a stable life, we cannot make up rules and excuses to satisfy our needs and wants. What is more, as harsh as it might sound, skipping school makes people less intelligent or at least suppresses their intelligence and creativeness. Not attending school on a regular basis allows people to get lazy and lets them aim for 'sufficient' instead of striving for 'better'. Of course this is not the case with everybody, but I have noticed that a lot of students just want to pass their exams with the sole intention of progressing to the next grade without putting as much effort into assignments as they could and without using their maximum thinking capacity. If not to prove oneself to everybody else, one should at least try to prove oneself to themselves. Such an attitude could indicate that one does not care a lot about one's education or work, which could also result in being laid off.

To summarize, I think schools and the education that they provide are very important and offer us many different options. But it is our responsibility to try out those options and make the most of the school programme. I know the school system is not perfect, but we should take advantage of what we have, because a lot of people around the world do not have the luxury of going to school, much less for free. I think it is important that every once in a while we take a step back and look at our lives to see that even though everything may not be perfect, it is more than we could have asked for.

Jana Colja, 4. Zb



## **FRIENDS HAVE MORE INFLUENCE THAN FAMILY ON TEENAGERS**

In the time we live in, both of the worlds can have a strong influence on a growing mind such as the one of a teenager. In the following essay I will try to argue for both sides, as I think it is very dependent on a particular situation.

I agree with the statement in a sense that while the family will try to guide you, it will be your friends that define who you will become. Your friends have the power to become your second family, when your real one is falling apart. When your parents get a divorce, you can always find a safe haven in good friends. Also, your self esteem, social skills, confidence, image and just general likeability are strongly dependent on the friends you have. Your mother will always tell you that you are the most of everything possible, but it will be your friends that help you believe that, to radiate it.

While I have given some strong arguments as to why I agree with the stated, I must also stress my opposing arguments. Family, on the other hand, will be there when nobody else will be, especially your mother. There will be moments when you will feel betrayed by your friends or loved ones, and the only people you can turn to are your family. I also can't stress enough that the people who you will be seeing for quite some time every day, every morning will be your family and that can either affect you well or badly, but nonetheless they will affect you. For instance, if your parents regularly argue, that will leave a mark on you in a way.

To sum up, it all really depends on the circumstances and both can leave their print on you. It can be either bad or good. It depends on the people and also the teenager.

Domen Čibej, 4. Fb

## **FRIENDS HAVE MORE INFLUENCE THAN FAMILY ON TEENAGERS**

Nowadays, teenagers care more about their reputation than family relationships. Most teenagers are changing their habits, their way of dressing, their actions, what they like and dislike in order to be part of a group with similar interests. They just want other people's approval and they want to fit in.

It is hard to deny that teenagers change their way of thinking because they want their classmates or peers to like them. They may feel more loved if they are part of a group that is popular. For example, if I were to like rock music, I would want to be surrounded with people that share my love for this music genre. We would have something to talk about, maybe go to different concerts together or maybe just listen to this type of music during our lunch break. If teenagers share interests, it's more likely that they will stay friends longer and enjoy their time together more.

On the other hand, family is the most important thing in this world. Parents will always be there for you to support you, help you and guide you through life. They don't care what music you like or what you like to wear as long as you are healthy and alive. They never judge you and always support your decisions. When you spend time with your family, you can truly be yourself because you know for sure they will accept you for who you are. Sometimes being yourself can present a problem in society. People are not always going to like you, but that shouldn't stand in your way of being true to yourself.

To sum up, teenagers care about what other people think of them more than what the opinion of their parents, siblings and grandparents is. They will always strive to impress their friends.

Leja Pivk, 4. Fa

## **FRIENDS HAVE MORE INFLUENCE THAN FAMILY ON TEENAGERS**

A lot of people would say that friends have more influence than family on teenagers. Yet others believe that family is the most important. Different people have different opinions.

Teenagers are surely influenced by their family a lot, since they know them their whole life. But teenagers usually do not listen to their parents, they would rather listen to their friends as they spend a lot of time with them (at least 5 days a week in school). Also, teenagers want to have friends and feel good around each other, that's why they listen to one another. But that can result in negative influence, such as smoking, drugs, alcohol or missing school. Usually, if teenagers have parents that don't have time or simply do not care about them, they are more likely to end up being influenced by their friends, especially in a sad way.

On the other hand, friends can have a very positive influence, for example they can motivate you to do better in school, exercise or try new hobbies.

I believe family still has a lot of influence on a teenager - parents can set boundaries, tell you what not to do, what or who to avoid and so on.

I think it depends on everyone's personality if they want to be influenced more by their family or friends. As I said, I do not let my friends have an impact on me, at least not a bad one. For instance, most of my friends drink and I don't, so when we go out, they drink alcohol and I stick to Red Bull.

With that being said, it all depends on you and it is a matter of personal choices.

...

## **RICH PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS HAPPY**

Some people think that money can buy you happiness. Rich people can buy anything they want, so people automatically think that they are happy. But these days, we see and hear otherwise.

As I see it, especially with celebrities, many of them are not happy. Some suffer from depression or get

involved with drugs, and sometimes the situation gets so bad that it ends with a suicide. We read and hear stories of unhappy celebrities almost every day. The pressure of the public is just too much for them, and their mental state goes downhill. When a famous person opens up about their problems on the Internet or somewhere else, they usually say that they are thankful for their friends and family to have them by their sides. They say that they are the ones that help them get through sadness. But they never thank money, because money is not the source of their happiness, it is love and friendship. They could just go and buy a new purse or a new car, but sooner or later they would see that that is only a temporary solution to make them happy.

Furthermore, rich businessmen are also miserable sometimes. They are very busy and have to work constantly. Celebrities are very busy too, but businessmen have a company to run. Whether they have a small or a big company, they always have to be ready if something goes wrong. Usually they spend the whole day in the company, they work long hours or they work overtime. Because they work so much, they don't have time for themselves, they don't sleep enough or they might not eat enough. Their lifestyle could lead them to become ill, mentally and physically. Many of them don't know how to separate work from their personal lives, so this could cause troubles with their family or friends. Maybe they don't even have enough time to start a family or go out and meet with people, so they feel lonely and sad. They don't necessarily feel happy with the state they are in, but maybe they can't change it because they are workaholics.

To sum up, rich people can be very happy, but the cause of it is not necessarily money, but probably love and friendship. On the other hand, there are people with a lot of money, who sooner or later find out that money can't buy happiness.

Lea Košir, 4. Zb

## LIFE IS MUCH EASIER NOW THAN IT WAS IN THE PAST

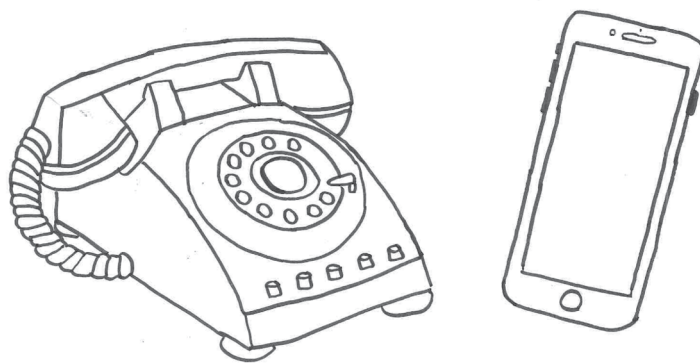
We live in the world full of technology, social media, plenty of useful platforms to follow and we live a pretty fast life. But things were different many years ago, when our grandparents were teens. Was their life harder compared to our life right now? That is the question we need to answer.

All of us agree that mobile phones are the invention of the modern era. When my grandmother was my age, she did not have her own cell phone. In fact, they only had one old phone in the village they lived in. All the neighbours used it and it was quite pricey to talk for more than a minute at a time. Nowadays, we can talk for hours and for free. We use different apps to talk to others, such as Viber, CacaoTalk, WhatsApp and many more. It does not take long to reach our relatives even if they live on the other side of the world.

But because we have so much technology and people invent new things every day, it is hard to cope and keep up with everything. Compare children now and thirty years ago. They are totally different. Children back then may have had to work hard with their parents to earn money to support their families and they had fewer children's rights than we have now. From that aspect, yes, their life was more difficult. But they had more contact with other people, namely they played together, helped each other, and made life for one another easier. We, on the other hand, are robbed of this kind of relations - we would much rather play Fortnite than hang out with our friends.

In conclusion, life in the past was definitely harder. The lack of money, the society and few other things had a huge impact on people, but they stuck together, which is why nothing was too difficult. From the aspect of technology, human rights, education system and life in general it is much easier for us. However, we are losing a very important connection among us and we are slowly turning into robots with no feelings, which is not alright at all. We should try and change that.

Ana Ćiković, 4. Fa



## LIFE IS MUCH EASIER NOW THAN IT WAS IN THE PAST

Nowadays, we get everything pretty much handed on a plate, but back in our grandparents' days, they had to work for everything. There was the economic crisis going on and people could not afford to buy a lot of food, let alone clothes. But, is it really easier now than it was before?

On the one hand, life as we know it today is easier because we can afford luxurious clothes, cars, food, whereas they did not even have proper jobs in the past. You can be anything you set your mind to be due to our evolution over time. In the past, there were popular only common jobs such as farmers and dressmakers, but nowadays, there are jobs such as being a YouTuber or even a social media influencer, which in some cases brings a lot of money to the table.

Let's take my grandparents for example. My grandfather was a farmer and my grandmother was a qualified dressmaker, who left her job to help at her husband's farm. They earned enough for food (plus the produce they harvested) and some clothes for the children. It was sometimes really hard, and my mother says even she had to help with work on the farm, for example going to the fields and picking up potatoes or separating them from dirt. She used to go onto the fields to help straight from school.



Nowadays, we have the Internet, mobile phones and other more affordable things that people in the past did not have. Some might think we get everything pretty easily, especially rich people.

But on the other hand, it is getting harder and harder to find a proper job and some families do struggle to buy their daily necessities. Our jobs might disappear or not be needed any longer or might even get replaced by robots in the future. We have a lot of competition on the market (especially make-up artists and YouTubers) and might be losing our customers and followers, which can eventually lead to bankruptcy. In the past, they had guaranteed jobs, and I'm not so sure we have them now because so many people are unemployed or live on the streets. Personally, I'm afraid I might lose my job in 15 to 20 years' time due to robots replacing our kind.

To sum up, people struggled in the past and they do now, although people in the past had it way harder than we do. Nowadays, people are just lazy sometimes, and back in the past, they were hard-working because if they hadn't been, their livestock or chickens would have died of starvation or a disease.

Amadeja Stanojević, 4. Zb







## LIFE IS MUCH EASIER NOW THAN IT WAS IN THE PAST

Nowadays we live completely differently than people used to. We live a fast paced life and we are surrounded with various goods. We are usually so busy with all things that we forget to live. Because of all the technology we can do so many things on our own in contrast with what people could do in the past. That is why we often say that life now is easier than it used to be. But is that true?

On the one hand, life is much easier due to our smart phones and fast Internet browsers that find what you want in less than a second. More and more of our jobs are taken by robots because they are cheaper labour force. So we actually have what we want on a plate and no one would really like to put a lot of effort in anything. And in the future, scientists are predicting even more technology, basically on our every step, and even disappearance of some jobs, such as teachers and even dental technicians.

On the other hand, it is true that in the past they had to work harder in a physical way. But because they were not surrounded with all the technology we have today, they took more time for their families and friends. They were not concerned about what they were going to post on Instagram or Facebook. They lived simply and for the moment. They cared about what really matters, like that we all are people and we have to help each other. Nowadays, however, what counts most in our society is how many friends you have on social media or how many likes your recent post got.

To sum up, I think that we cannot really compare how different life now is from life decades ago because it is up to us to choose what kind of life to live. Technology of course has improved a lot and is still improving. And it does make our lives much easier, but that can cause some other social problems. So we should not look back; instead we should focus on now and somehow find a healthy balance.

Eva Turk, 4. Zb

## LIFE IS MUCH EASIER NOW THAN IT WAS IN THE PAST

Many people complain about how tough life nowadays is. But do they actually realise that living in this day and age is easier than it has ever been? I personally don't agree with the assumption that life is difficult in today's society, and in the following sentences I'll explain why.

We can take a look at communication for example. It has never been easier to communicate with family members who live on the other side of the world. We can use different social media apps, such as Facebook, Skype or Instagram to communicate with each other on a daily basis, whereas in the past people had to travel long distances to keep in contact with their relatives.

Secondly, we have everything within our reach. We don't have to worry about running out of food, because we have shops on every corner. Back in the day, our ancestors had to starve for many days if they didn't find a food source, such as wild animals or edible plants, but nowadays we don't have to worry about that. We can just walk into the kitchen and pour ourselves a glass of clean and drinkable water. Of course, there are still a lot of people who don't have such a privilege as, for instance, I do, but in the past the problem used to be much more worrying. Getting a drink of fresh water has never been easier and the same goes for many other things, such as clothes, hygiene products, medicine ...

Another thing that makes our life much easier is technology. I can get any information on the Internet with the help of my mobile phone at any time of the day. Years ago, they had to go to the library and search for the right book. Car technology has also developed enormously. Now engineers have developed cars which can drive on their own. That makes getting a car licence much easier, since you don't have to learn so many driving maneuvers because the car will do it for you.

In summary, I think that living in today's world is a dream compared to how our ancestors used to live even a hundred years ago. I'm frankly quite satisfied with the way I live, and the fact that the quality of life might only improve in the future only makes me more excited.

Anja Zakrajšek, 4. Fa

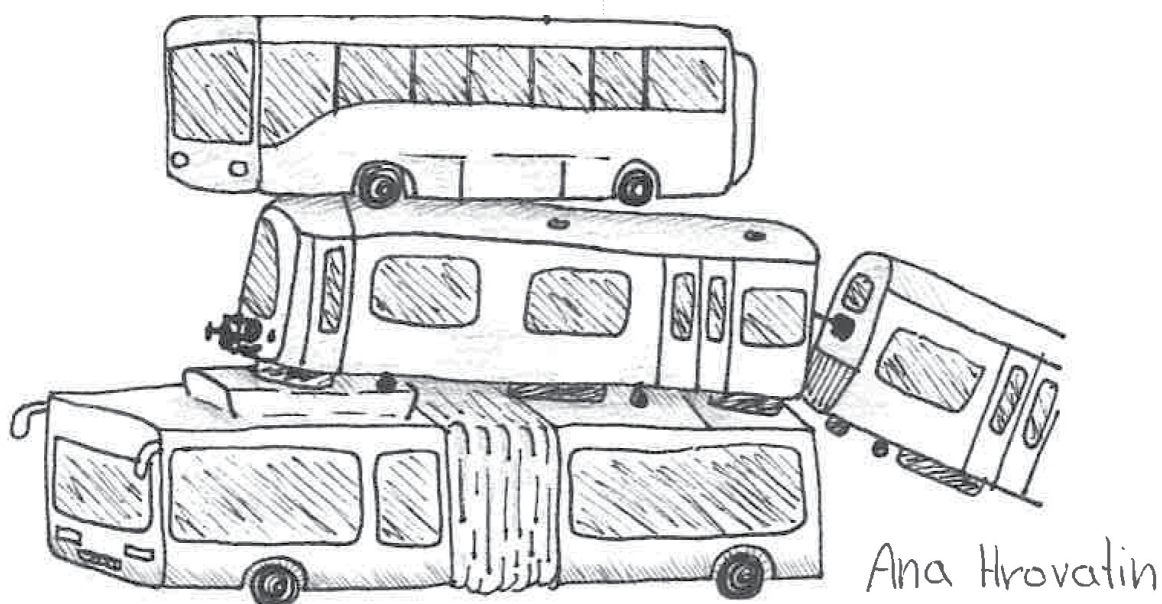
## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Nowadays, we rarely go anywhere on foot. We prefer to (always) drive, even though we are aware of the pollution that cars cause. People in general are becoming lazier and lazier. However, we are not the only ones to blame. The way of life has changed so much that we just have to use transport more.

Despite the fact that almost everyone owns a car, there are more and more people using public transport. The reasons for that are different. Although it is almost unbelievable, there are still some people who don't own a vehicle, so they use public transport to go to work if it is far away from their home. Some people use it simply because of its advantages.

There are good and bad sides to almost everything, including public transport. It is considered more nature friendly, because more people using one vehicle, for example a bus, leaves way less polluting than every individual using their own car. Trains are also known for being less harmful to the environment. Furthermore, using public transport can be less stressful due to the fact that you're not the one driving. It is also cheaper than owning a car and you can get to your destination faster if you are, for example, taking a train.

On the other hand, not being the one driving can also give you some troubles, as you do not decide on where you are going, you are, in fact, relying on a total stranger. Some public transport also doesn't or can't take you to some destinations. Therefore, it is better to own a car.



In the future, I think more people will start using public transport. I may be wrong, but it would definitely be better for the environment. It would also be a great idea to expand public transport and enable access to it in as many places as possible.

To sum up, I think using public transport is great due to the fact that our world is getting more and more polluted. That is why every little thing that can help prevent pollution should be used and appreciated.

Klara Lapornik, 3. Ka



## DEUTSCHE SEITEN

### DIESES FEST MAG ICH

Jedes Jahr hat 365 oder 366 Tage, unter denen es auch viele Feiertage und Feste gibt. Jeder feiert Feste auf seine Art und Weise, manche feiern sie nicht, weil sie das unnötig finden und manche veranstalten große Feste und Partys. Die wichtigsten Feste bei uns sind Weihnachten, Silvester, Neujahr, Fasching und so weiter. Mir persönlich hat schon immer das Weihnachtsfest am besten gefallen, das man am 25. Dezember feiert.

An Weihnachten ist bei uns fast immer die ganze Familie zusammen. Da das sonst sehr selten vorkommt, ist das einfach das Beste an diesem Tag für mich. Am Heiligabend schmücken wir den Weihnachtsbaum und dann sitzen wir alle zusammen im Wohnzimmer und sehen uns einen Film an. Die Weihnachtslichter am Weihnachtsbaum sind an und wir genießen die Zeit zusammen. Am nächsten Morgen frühstücken wir zuerst und dann öffnen wir unsere Geschenke. Meistens kochen meine Mutter und ich das Weihnachtessen. Es besteht aus einer Suppe, einem Hauptgericht und einer Nachspeise. Oft backen wir zusammen auch Plätzchen in allen Formen und Geschmücken. Manchmal gehen wir auch zum Gottesdienst in unsere Kirche.

In verschiedenen Ländern werden Feste anders gefeiert. Manche sind gleich oder ähnlich und andere ganz anders. Weihnachten wird zum Beispiel in Amerika sehr groß und laut gefeiert. Es wird gesungen, die Häuser sind geschmückt, die Familien treffen sich und es gibt teure Geschenke. In Deutschland dagegen wird Karneval viel größer als Weihnachten gefeiert, es fängt schon im November an und endet erst im März. Die Bräuche an Feiertagen sind also von Land zu Land verschieden und ich finde, es ist gut so, denn es wird nie langweilig, egal wo man an diesem Tag ist.

Vanessa Nemet, 4. Fa

### MEINE KINDHEIT

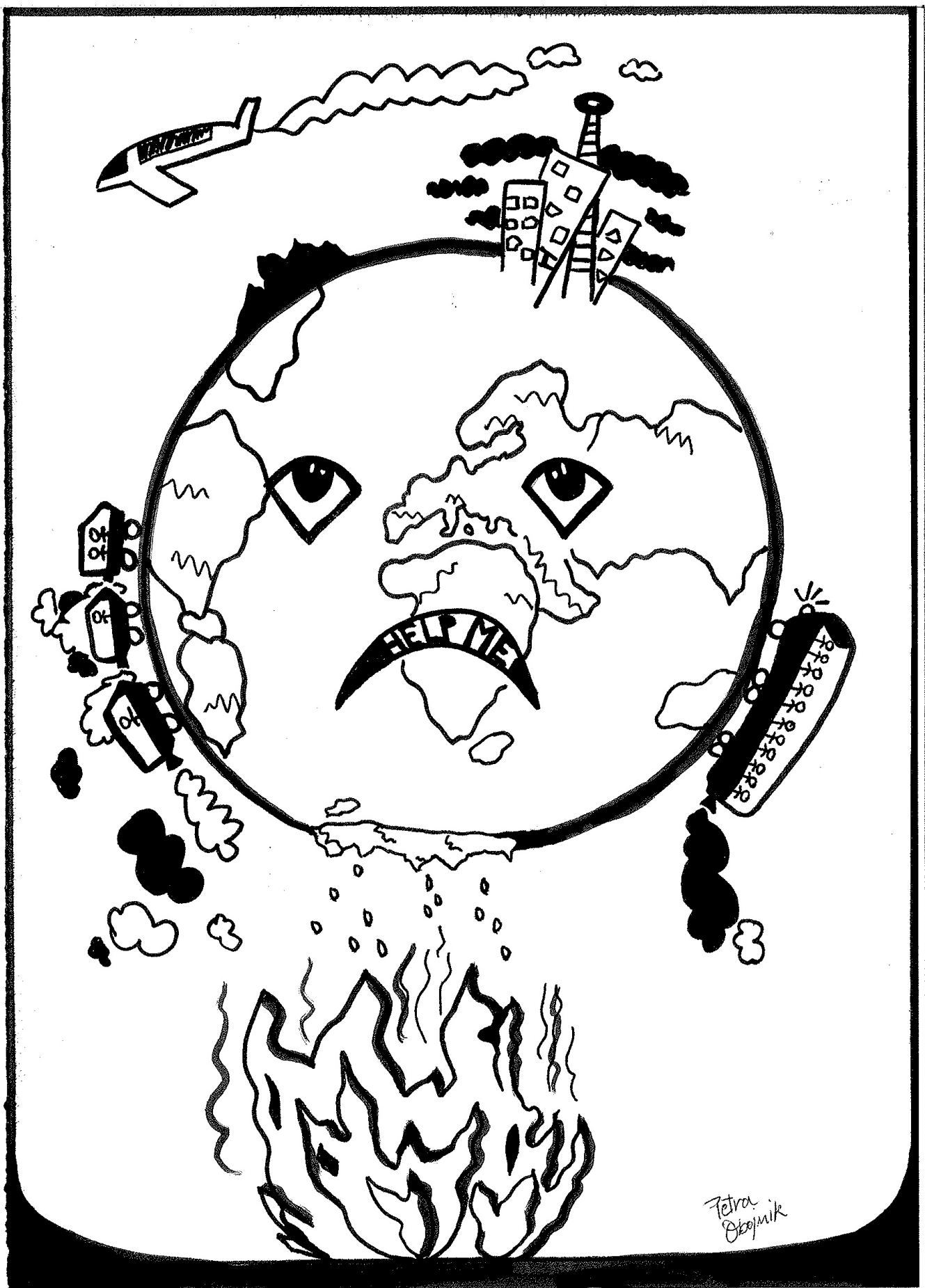
Man sagt oft, dass Kindheit die schönste Zeit im Leben ist. In der Kindheit lernt man sehr viel und dadurch hat man auch viele Erinnerungen, die schön oder auch nicht so schön sein können. Ich hatte eine sehr schöne Kindheit und ich glaube, dass sie auch leichter war als die meiner Eltern.

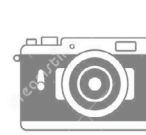
Am 27. 6. 2000 begann meine Reise durchs Leben. Ich wuchs in einem kleinen Ort auf dem Land auf. Wir lebten und leben noch immer zusammen mit meinen Eltern, meinem kleinen Bruder und meinen Großeltern in einem Haus mit einem Garten. Als Kind spielte ich sehr viel draußen, wir hatten auch einen kleinen Bauernhof, deswegen war es nie langweilig. Ich erinnere mich noch sehr gut an viele Momente, z. B. als ich auf eine Kuh aufpassen musste oder als ich mit meiner besten Freundin ein kleines Kätzchen fand. Ich erinnere mich auch an nicht so schöne Dinge, z. B. als ich mit meinem Fahrrad fiel und daran erinnern mich jetzt ein paar Narben.

Kindheit kann auch schlimm sein, in manchen Ländern gibt es Krieg und die Kinder wachsen als Flüchtlinge auf, in Angst und Schrecken. Bei uns können die Kinder in Ruhe leben, es gibt aber leider auch Eltern, die an ihren Kindern Gewalt ausüben und ihnen die Kindheit nehmen.

Die Kindheit heute ist trotzdem meistens leichter als vor einigen Jahren. Damals mussten die Kinder zu Fuß zur Schule gehen, auch wenn sie weit weg war, und nach der Schule mussten sie zu Hause arbeiten und sich das Abendessen verdienen. Heutzutage gibt es Busse, die die Kinder zur Schule fahren und zu Hause wird auch nicht mehr so hart gearbeitet.

Vanessa Nemet, 4. Fa





## UMWELTSCHUTZ

In letzten Jahren wurde Umweltverschmutzung ein großes Problem. Man produziert sehr viel Müll. Wiederverwertet wird nur ein Teil davon. Die meisten Kunststoffe und Kunststoffprodukte werden weggeworfen. Das schadet der Umwelt und den Tieren. Aber unser Müll z.B. Papier, Glas, Plastik, Kunststoff und Blech sollte man getrennt sammeln und in die richtigen Container abwerfen. Auf diese Weise können diese Abfälle recycelt werden. Besonders problematisch sind Batterien, Dosen mit Lack und Farben, Medikamente, Pflanzengift und Putzmittel. Diesen gefährlichen Müll müsste man zu einer Sammelstelle für Problem Müll bringen. Küchenabfälle kann man kompostieren und daraus gute Pflanzenerde machen.

Aber die Menge des Mülls ist nicht das einzige Problem.

Viel Schaden verursachen CO<sub>2</sub>-Emissionen. Autos, Fabriken und Haushalte produzieren viel Kohlendioxid. Vor 200 Jahren gab es halb so viel CO<sub>2</sub> als heute. Dieser Anstieg bewirkt eine Verstärkung des Treibhauseffekts, die wiederum die Ursache für die aktuelle globale Erwärmung ist.

Aber das ist nicht alles. Bekannt sind auch Licht-, Lärm-, Wasserverschmutzung und radioaktive Verschmutzung. Leider gibt es nur wenige Lösungen. Wenn wir so weiter machen, zerstören wir unsere Erde. Die Umweltverschmutzung führt zum Klimawandel, dessen Folgen man schon wahrnehmen kann. So sind z. B. unsere Sommer wärmer und Winter milder und ohne Schnee. Häufig gibt es Naturkatastrophen, die landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse und Fläche zerstören.

Es ist sehr wichtig, dass jeder von uns versucht, besser zu handeln.

Man soll den Müll sortieren, öfter mit dem Bus fahren oder zu Fuß gehen, Pfandflaschen benutzen, Energie sparen usw. Das sind wirklich einfache Dinge, mit denen wir die Umwelt schonen können und alle müssten mitmachen.

## MÜLL MACHT PROBLEME

Die Leute werfen in Deutschland pro Jahr 30 Millionen Tonnen Abfälle weg. Die Mülldeponien sind voll; die Müllverbrennungsanlagen arbeiten 24 Stunden pro Tag. Es gibt hundert Beispiele, wo die Leute völlig sinnlos Müll produzieren.

Eine Lösung für dieses Problem ist das Recycling. Aus Müll können wieder neue Produkte aus Glas, Papier und Blech hergestellt werden, wenn man sie getrennt sammelt. Eine Lösung ist auch Kompostierung. Durch Kompostierung kann man aus Küchenabfälle gute Pflanzenerde machen. In jeder Stadt muss man verschiedene Container für Glas, Papier, Plastik und biologische Abfälle haben. Den gefährlichen Müll, z. B. Medikamente, Batterien, Farben, Lacke usw. muss man zu einer Sammelstelle für Problem Müll bringen.

Weniger Müll produzieren! Wie kann man das machen? Ganz einfach. Wenn man einkaufen geht, soll man immer eine Einkaufstasche mitnehmen und nicht immer wieder eine neue kaufen. Obst und Gemüse soll man nicht in Dosen, sondern frisch kaufen. Milch und Saft soll man nicht in Tüten oder Plastikflaschen kaufen, besser sind Pfandflaschen. Wenn man ein Picknick macht, soll man kein Plastikgeschirr benutzen. Man kann Spielzeug aus Holz kaufen und wenn man Schnupfen hat, soll man Taschentücher aus Stoff benutzen.

Bei uns zu Hause wird Müll getrennt gesammelt. Und wir versuchen auch weniger Müll zu produzieren, in unserem Garten gibt es einen Komposthaufen. Jeder könnte und sollte umweltbewusst handeln.

Oleksandra Ivanenko in Leon Lazić, 3. Za

Džejlana Nahić, 4. Fa





## LEISURE AND PLEASURE

### CLIMBING AND ME



I'm a climber and almost everyone knows that. Once a doctor that didn't know me asked me if I trained climbing and I was shocked how in the world she would know. I asked her if it was written anywhere and she started laughing. She told me that I had a figure of an athlete and muscles that a climber should have. I like it how people notice that I put energy and all of me into something I truly love and adore.

Climbing for me isn't just a sport. It's my passion. It's something that makes me special, something that makes my life more challenging and purposeful.

When I started climbing, it was just for fun. I had no clue what it was going to mean to me and that it would have such an important role in my life.

I started climbing when my mum and dad signed my brother up for a climbing club. He was a child with loads of energy and he was just starting to walk when he started to climb trees, poles, street lightning, actually everything that he could climb. My parents decided to search for a climbing club for him. He was just the right age for the youngest group. He was 5 years old and still in kindergarten. I was also interested in something to fill my free time so I decided to go too. I was 9 back then and I was in third grade.

When I first got there, I was a bit scared, but everyone was so nice and it felt like home. I got the best coach possible. He made me the climber that I am now and I can't thank him enough for that. I immediately fell in love with climbing and now I just can't live without it. Because I was getting better and better with every training session, my coach decided to take me to the "group plus" to get even better. I really did, so when I was in fifth grade, he took me to a climbing competition. I was bad at first, but when I was quite good, something happened that changed my climbing forever.

At one training session I was working very hard and suddenly I couldn't climb anymore. There seemed to be a lot more lactic acid in my hands than there should be, so my arm muscles didn't work the way they should. This made my life miserable. For a long time I couldn't even hold anything, and for two weeks I didn't climb at all. When it got back to normal condition, I could climb again, but it was never like it had been before. I couldn't climb for long periods of time or on very hard parts. I was very sad because everyone was telling me that it would never be the same again.

From then on I lost my form, my interest, my motivation and I was getting worse and worse. Everyone around me seemed like they didn't understand what I was going through and I was in a bad mood all the time. I had lost something that made me happy. No one noticed that I started skipping training sessions with bad excuses, because I just didn't find the strength to go. I didn't see the point in climbing anymore. And when they made me go, I wasn't doing anything. Not because I couldn't, but I didn't even try to. When my coach noticed that, he was mad of course. His words hurt a lot and they made me feel I should quit even more. Climbing didn't make any sense anymore.



Then one day, I was sitting in our front yard feeling worthless. With the corner of my eye I was watching my climbing wall. Suddenly a power inside me made me go and find my shoes. At one point I was about to quit, but my subconscious was telling me that I was doing the right thing. And I was. On the wall, I could feel this special feeling again. I think that this was the moment that made me think that there was still hope for me and made me not quit. After that I started working as hard as I could and everything was back in place. I still couldn't climb my best because of the injury, but I learned to live with it. I couldn't compete anymore, and I still can't ... but in reality? I have never liked competitions anyway.

Now I am sitting here and wondering how I made it. I am really happy that I did, because with climbing I am the person that I want to be. I still have problems with lactic acid, and now everyone is trying to find out how and why it is there. From the beginning till now things with it got even worse.

So let me explain what this really is. We all have lactic acid, also called milk acid, in our bodies and it's completely normal until the concentration doesn't exceed the rate of the concentration in our blood, for example during the intense exertion. But my body has much more of it and its level rises very fast. So if the average person does 30 minutes of certain exercise, I can only do half or less. And to my misfortune, none of the doctors I have been to have ever seen anything like this before, but they all say that this is how it is and I can't fix it because I was born with it, which I just didn't know until that certain point.

In conclusion, my injury is now part of my life and I've learned to control it to some point. I really hate it sometimes and all I want to do is to get rid of it, but then I think of what this really is ... This injury has actually taught me that I never want to stop climbing and I want it to be part of me forever and I know that it will be, because I just can't live without climbing.

Ina Pavlič Juriša, 2. Za





## MON FORMIDABLE VACONS

*Bonjour, Je m'appelle Ana, est Je parle français.* I always thought French was such an exquisite and beautiful language. Don't you think so? Listen to some French music and you'll change your mind for sure, at least that's how I fell in love with it.

I started learning French in primary school. I am not going to lie, but I didn't really like it because the teacher wasn't the best. As I got older, I realized the importance and advantages of speaking a foreign language. The number one thing on my bucket list is definitely to travel and experience different cultures as much as possible. I think that spending time in a country surrounded by fluent speakers is the best way to learn a language. Fortunately, I have an amazing family that supports my opinion mentally and financially, that's why every year, during a summer break, they send me to an international school where I learn a preferred language for two weeks or more.

French is a bit more complicated than English, and it also requires better pronunciation to be understood. That's why I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to France for my first time, so instead I went to Britain to learn English with a group of Slovenians and a guide. I had so much fun and it was a really amazing experience. I met many different people of different nationalities.

Now that I was more comfortable with my travel and more independent, I was ready to step it up a notch. I told my mom I wanted to go to France the next year. She was delighted, as I know deep down she has always loved the idea of me speaking French because she didn't have that opportunity in her schooling years. So we looked for a school in all parts of France, from Paris, where it was too expensive, to the north, where they have sea but it's too cold to swim. Eventually, we found a perfect school for my age and my level of French: a school in a medium-sized city in the South of France called Montpellier. Because French is not the most popular language in Slovenia it meant I would have to travel completely by myself. If you have ever been to the largest airport in Europe, Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, you know how enormous it is. You have to take a train between some gates because they're so far apart. I was a little terrified when I heard I would have to be changing planes in Paris. All I remember was my mum asking me all the time if I was sure I wanted to go and telling me what to do if I got lost. It was getting annoying, but

hey, who can blame her? I was sixteen and it was my first time going on a plane by myself. Because I wasn't of age, I couldn't stay in a dorm room or an apartment by myself but with a host family.

Months of school were flying by and the summer break was there. Soon it was time for my brief adventure. I was so anxious but also beyond excitement. My parents drove me to the airport in Zagreb, where they gave me the last intense pep talk about my travels and how I had to make the most of this experience until I was finally left alone waiting for the first plane to Paris. I arrived at Charles de Gaulle Airport, changed planes and flew to Montpellier Airport where my host family was waiting for me. As I went to take my luggage, I got a bit frightened, but it was soon okay when I saw Marielle (my host mom) standing in the arrivals hall. As we wanted to greet, I went for the basic European handshake, but she just went for three kisses on the cheek. I thought that was unusual as we had never met each other before. Apparently, it's normal for the South of France and Spain to kiss on the cheek three times for men and women, children and the elderly. Marielle then drove us home and I remember the most beautiful sunset as we were driving down the highway listening to my favorite French song *Elle, Elle l'a* by Alizee.

My host family's house was a bit outside the city so I had to take the tramway to school, but the house was amazing, or as the French would say *magnifique*. Marielle and Fabrice had two daughters, Anna and Luisa (13 and 9 years old). They also had two cats, Stitch and Lilo, a turtle, and a goldfish Sushi. I had my own room and a bathroom. The family greeted me very warmly.



*The house of my host family*

The French have a weird habit of eating a lot of melon for breakfast, lunch and dinner, but not only that, they like to wrap prosciutto around it, which I didn't find very appealing at first. They also don't eat dessert as we know it. Every day after dinner, they brought plain cheeses about the size of a small bread loaf. I was not a big fan of cheese slices with no bread. They don't eat soup and their biggest meal is definitely dinner and they eat a lot, which takes some time to get used to. Their working week is also shorter than ours (35 hours per week).

I had classes from 9 am to 12 am every weekday. The classes were sorted according to the French skill level, from beginners to advanced. My class was full of different nationalities - Australian, Korean, Chinese, Mexican, English, and Russian - a total of 9 people plus a teacher. In class, we mostly talked about everyday things, but in French, which made things more complicated and hard at first. I got used to non-stop French pretty easily. Sometimes I used English if I couldn't form a sentence. After school I met up with friends and we usually went to find a place to eat. Every day we tried a different restaurant to see the most of the stunning city. Sometimes we didn't find a restaurant or we were short of money, so we just went to McDonald's and ate in the park.



*My class*

On weekends, we went to the beach, which was about 20 minutes by tramway. Or we went sightseeing. Montpellier is a stunning city with a beautiful center, a lot of parks and Roman architecture. It is also known as a city of students because there are a lot of schools and more students than tourists. And because of that, there are a lot of night festivals, clubs, and bars so the city is deafening during the night, which can be a problem for some people, but I didn't mind it.

After two weeks, it was time for me to leave and say goodbye to some of my friends who stayed there for more weeks and some who came from further away and stayed until Christmas. I had so much fun on this vacation and I'm jealous of the friends who stayed there longer. During these two weeks, I ate some of the best food, drank some of the finest rose wines, learnt more French than in any school in Slovenia, and met some of the best people and friends that will stay in my life even though they live on the other side of the globe.



*My Mexican friends*

I am going to continue to develop my French speaking and writing skills until I can write a report like this one in French.

Ana Hrovatin, 2. Kb

# 왜 한국어를 배우기 시작 했습니까?

## (WHY I STARTED LEARNING KOREAN?)

In October 2017, first time ever in my life, I started attending a language course. By reading the title you already know which language that is. Korean is an East Asian language that is spoken by more than 75 million people, mostly by native Koreans. Korean is one of the most difficult languages in the world; in some charts it even takes the first place. But that fact probably makes you question even more why I started learning this language. So why did I?

Ever since I was in primary school I have wanted to learn a foreign language. But if you had asked me when I was fourteen years old which language I wanted to learn, my answer would have been Spanish, not Korean. Honestly, a few years ago, I barely knew about Korea. Unfortunately, in my primary school the only language that you could learn, besides English, which was obligatory, was German. Let's just say that German is not among my favourite languages. Then I went to secondary school, and again, just English. They did offer a short Spanish course as an optional subject, but that just wasn't enough for me.

Then in April 2017, my friend introduced me to K-Pop (Korean pop), but at first I didn't pay much attention to it. Two months later I was browsing through YouTube and came across a video called Teens React to K-Pop. I clicked on it, and one of the songs by a boy group Bts was really ear-catching. The video was amazing too - aesthetically pleasing, people dancing, beautiful voices ... By the end of the video I was really interested in K-Pop, especially in Bts. So I watched some more videos about K-Pop in general and Bts, and soon I discovered other groups like Seventeen, Got7, then girl groups like Twice, Blackpink and many more. There is a small chance that you have heard of these groups, but I am pretty sure you have listened and danced to Gangnam style by Psy. Pretty crazy, but don't think that all K-pop artists are like that, not at all.

Soon I was deep in K-Pop, but the thing that bothered me was that I had no idea what they were saying. Sometimes an English word caught my ear, but I still didn't know what the songs were all about. My frustration led me to reading about South Korea, its culture and language. I knew that they have an alphabetic writing system, but what I didn't know was that it is called Hangul. My friend was actually already learning to read Hangul and she even bought some books about learning Korean. She was doing great, said that learning to

read Hangul was not hard, and that I should give it a try. So I did, but I was terrible and I soon gave up, which wasn't very persistent of me. But I kept on listening to K-Pop, getting to know what they were saying, using English translation later on. It was in August when my failed attempt to learn to read Hangul happened. At that time I even started watching Korean dramas, from which I surprisingly picked up a word or two.

Then came September and my friend told me that she had found a language course for Korean at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana and she asked me if I wanted to go with her. Honestly, I was sceptical, not just because I thought that it would be too much of a challenge for me, but I was mostly worried about what other people might think. I was especially worried about my parents' reaction. The enrolment deadline was at the end of the month. Days went by, but I was still hesitant. But the more I thought about it, the more reasons came to my mind why I should start learning Korean. I would check 'Start learning a language' off my bucket list and step by step I would start to understand what K-Pop songs are about. While watching interviews, I would understand what idols are saying, without waiting for the subtitles. I could watch Korean dramas without subtitles. My employability prospects would be higher, at least for certain jobs. I could work as an interpreter, I could get employed in tourism, or maybe I could even work as a dental technician in Korea. It is also known that learning a language improves your memory, increases your attention span ... And let me tell you that after I started learning Korean, my school performance did get better. Last but not least, I like the Korean language, I like Korea in general. After I was completely sure about what I wanted, the next step was telling my mom. Luckily, in a short while, me and my mom started talking about learning languages, so I took a chance and told her about my wish. She was surprised at first, asked me why. So I told her my reasons and I mentioned the language course that was starting soon. Then, to my surprise, she offered to pay for the course and said that she supported my wish. I immediately went on the computer and applied for the course.

In October, the course started, and very, very soon I figured out that Korean was hard. And by soon I mean in the first five minutes or so. Hangul was just so confusing to me, but after I learnt that, things got a little easier. But just a little bit, because Korean is simply very different from English or Slovenian. Now, do not get me wrong. Though learning Korean was hard for me, I liked it more and more each lesson. Now it is December



2018 and I am still learning Korean, I am attending the advanced course. Still hard, but I still love it, even more than I did. Up to this date I do not yet completely understand Korean songs, but I can get what they are about. When I watch dramas, I understand quite a lot, not everything, but still. I read Hangul almost fluently now. Almost, because almost each lesson I find out about an exception when it comes to reading Hangul. But in general, my Korean has improved a lot.

While writing this, I figured out that starting to learn Korean was one of the best decisions I have ever made, and my message to everyone reading this would be that if you really want to do something, don't worry about what other people might think, no matter how unusual your wish might be. Follow Nike's slogan 'Just do it'. It's that simple.

Lea Košir, 4. Zb



Source:

Left picture:

<https://findingaster.com/blog/8-wash-face-faults/>

Right picture:

<https://findingaster.com/blog/8-wash-face-faults/>

왜 한국어를 배우기 시작했습니까?



## GLOBETROTTING

### WORK PLACEMENT IN FINLAND (MARCH 2018)



*In front of Helsinki Cathedral*

This year I had the privilege of doing work placement in Finland. It was an invaluable experience to me for which I will always be grateful. Not only did I gain new skills, essential for my line of work, but I also became more independent and responsible.

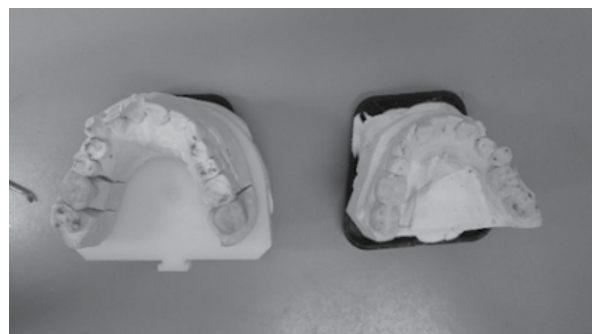
Our group of 7 girls stayed in Antti Korpin Hall of Residence, which was about a thirty-minute bus ride away from my workplace.

I worked in a dental laboratory, called DentalPoint, which fulfilled all my expectations. The staff were very kind and relaxed, which contributed to a positive atmosphere. They immediately entrusted me with work for actual patients and showed me all the necessary procedures to reach the final construction. Although they had shown me as many different techniques and final products as they could, I mostly worked with ceramics, since that was the type of dental prosthetics my mentor was making. I really enjoyed getting to know and handling the new type of material, which at first was a little difficult to shape into a desired shape, but once I got the hang of it, I could focus more on imitating a certain tooth colour. It really shocked me when I saw the number of different colours and shades of the ceramic powder, and I thought

to myself, "If there are so many shades of yellow, white ... that are so similar to one another, surely it wouldn't make a difference if I painted a tooth one shade darker than I was supposed to." But once I tried it for myself, I saw with my own eyes that it actually does make a difference, however small the distinction between the two shades is. It is really amazing to go through a certain procedure from point A to point Z by yourself, and see how even the littlest mistake or success can majorly affect the outcome.

Besides working with ceramics I also observed the making of a night guard, which prevents people from grinding their teeth while sleeping. Normally dental technicians make these appliances from special acrylates, but with the new CAD/CAM technology on the rise, more and more dental technicians mill them.

On the weekends, we, the girls, took the opportunity to do some sightseeing in the capital of Finland. We visited the National Library of Finland, Helsinki Cathedral, the famous red Orthodox church - Uspenski Cathedral, Rock Church, the island of Suomenlinna, the National Museum of Finland, the Sibelius Monument and took a ride on the SkyWheel Helsinki. Being a bookworm, I was most enthusiastic about the National Library, which is the oldest and largest university library in Finland. It holds Finnish printed national heritage and unique collections.



*Practical work*



*SkyWheel Helsinki*

What amazed me was the amount of décor in Uspenski Cathedral, most of which was so detailed, it was practically impossible to get a good look at. Judging by the looks, Uspenski Cathedral was a match for Helsinki Cathedral, which was not as abundantly decorated as the red church but just as glorious.

Next we stopped by the Sibelius monument, which is dedicated to the Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. It is said to represent the essence of Sibelius's music.

On the last day before our departure we decided to visit the National Museum, which shows Finnish history from as early as the prehistoric age to the present. The most interesting exhibition to me was the one about Finnish tradition of saunas, which we tried ourselves in our dormitory.

All in all, this trip to Finland was an amazing experience which I will always cherish. Such participations are something I would recommend to everyone, because they really help one to grow personally.

Jana Colja, 4. Zb

## THE PROJECT WEEK IN HELSINKI

I was the happiest person in the world the day my English teacher told me to see her after class. That's when she told me about the Erasmus+ project. It is a two-year project in which four schools from Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, and Slovenia participate. I was to take part in the project week in Finland. Later I had some meetings with three other students and the teacher who was joining us on the trip. We talked about what clothes we should take, how much our suitcases should weigh, about the whole project generally, the grant that we got for food and the things we needed.

November 25th was the departure date. My dad drove me to the main bus station in Ljubljana, which was the meeting point. I hugged him and got into the car that drove us to the airport in Zagreb. When we arrived, we checked in. We had to put our suitcases on the conveyor belt and we got our boarding passes. Then it was time to go through the security check. We had to take off our shoes, remove our belts and jackets, empty the bags, and show the phones. Basically we had to remove everything that was metal, or had some metal on, and of course, things that we weren't allowed to carry in our hands at that moment. We had no problems there, so we all just took our things, put everything back on and went to the gate for our first plane from Zagreb to Frankfurt. We flew for a little more than an hour before landing in Frankfurt. Frankfurt airport was huge. We only had one hour to find the gate for our next flight, so we were in a hurry. Luckily, we didn't have to carry our heavy suitcases with us because we had left them in Zagreb and they were transported directly to Finland. The security check was 10 times stricter than in Zagreb, and after a short while, we boarded the second plane. This flight was longer and we got served with brunch and a drink. The views during the flight were magnificent and indescribable. The Finnish airport wasn't small. We got off the plane and the cold hit us. We got dressed and walked to the terminal. We were worried whether our luggage had arrived. Fortunately, it had. Our next step was to buy the tickets for the train to the final destination. It is called Käpylä in Finnish. The signs and names in Helsinki are bilingual and the second language is Swedish. Hence Käpylä is also named Kottby. Soon we got to our place. From there we had to walk to our dorm where we met the students from the Netherlands. We got separated. The boys were downstairs and the girls were upstairs. To simplify things, I'm going to name our Slovene students. The boys are Rok and Urban and





*All the participants*

the girl who was with me is Cirila. Cirila and I went upstairs and the Dutch girls showed us around. The apartment was quite big. We had one bathroom, a kitchen with a dining room, two bedrooms - one for the Dutch girls and the other for me, Cirila and a Spanish girl that we were still waiting for.

Sunday was dedicated to travel. We were hungry, so our teacher suggested we go to the center of Helsinki, take a look around and get some food. The day is shorter in Finland and the sun set at about four o'clock. It was already dark when we went to buy the tickets for the tram at the kiosk. We got onto the tram to the center. We wanted to see a typical Finnish cathedral and we were impressed by it. We all got hungry and stopped at McDonald's. After our meal we returned to our apartments. The Spanish students had already arrived. Sunday was definitely an exhausting day.

And now there goes Monday, the first day of activities. We were served with breakfast only on Monday, while lunch was served every day. In the morning we woke up and went downstairs where the breakfast was waiting for us. When we finished with the meal, the Finnish teacher gave us further instructions for the day. We followed him to the gym, where we had our first meeting, which was all about getting to know each other through different games, like dodgeball, Pantone, and there was also a game where we were divided into groups and had to put the balloon between us

and run to the traffic cone, then run back as fast as we could. In another game, we had to stick a pen tied on a string on our back and run to the empty water bottle. The pen was supposed to go into the bottle without any help of our hands. After the games, we had to form groups in which we stayed for the whole week. We wrote our names on a piece of paper, folded it and wrote the first letter of the country we were from on it. A Finnish girl separated all the papers according to countries. The groups had to have one student from each country and two from Finland. As soon as the groups were formed, we gathered in front of the Finnish flag to have a group photo taken. The teachers gave us the instructions for the racing around Helsinki. In my group there were me, the Spanish boy Daniel, the Dutch girl Dineke and two Finnish students Isabell and Tatu. Before we got ready for racing around, we had lunch. After the meal, we had to download an app which led us through the game. The game was about finding different spots in Helsinki, then taking a picture or making a video at the place you thought the app described. Let's say we played some kind of treasure hunting, without finding a treasure at the end. We took the train to the centre of Helsinki. Then every group went to the place they thought the app described. If you got to the right place and did what was ordered you got points. The team with the most points won. We had a limited time, so we couldn't get to all the places. Points were taken off if you were late, so the later you were, the fewer points you had. Our team won, but we were



rather tired. Later we had an evening activity that Finnish teachers organized. On the menu, there was Winter World. The guides in Winter World gave us a short introduction about it and told us the temperature was similar to the one outside. Inside they had ice tables, benches, igloos, ski slopes, an ice labyrinth, and a slide. At the entrance, we got juice in ice-cups and then had a look around. You could also buy some souvenirs. Our day ended here.

Now there goes Tuesday. The teachers led us to the classroom where we worked for the whole week. They described and explained a little about the project and we began to work. Because I only know about the finished project ideas of every group, I'm going to talk about how things went in our group. First, we were just talking about our lives a little, so we could get to know each other even more. Then we started thinking about our idea for the project. It was time for a lunch break and for some rest. Right after that our group discussion continued. At the end of every project day, we sat in the circle and told our opinion about the day and how we felt. No evening activity was organized for Tuesday, so we had a free evening.



*My group*

Wednesday was also a working day. We went to the same classroom and developed our ideas. Our group finally came out with some ideas. We wanted to make an app that would be available for all students and would offer them help. They would be able to choose between talking to peers, social workers at school or the organizations that are intended to help people with these issues. They would have the phone numbers and links of the organizations so they would just click or

call. A very important feature would be using an app anonymously or with a username. There was also a computer classroom we could use. Every group could make the model of our ideas and a PowerPoint presentation that were used on the last day. Wednesday was also a busy day which ended with a fun evening activity. The teachers decided to take us to a trampoline park called Rush. When we got there, we had to sign the papers and read the instructions about things you weren't allowed to do. We had to wear socks with a special bottom part so they wouldn't be slippery. We had an amazing one-hour jumping time. Afterwards we returned to our dorm.

And here it was Thursday already. Thursday was the day of finishing our projects. We worked longer than on any other day because we had to finish everything for the next day's presentation. We all had wonderful ideas that we wanted to present as best we could. We had a short lunch break and we could rest, but then we went back to work. Like every other day, in the end, we talked about how the day had gone and what we had made. We had a chance to go to Helsinki City Museum but being tired from work, we decided to go on Friday instead. In the evening, we all went to bed.



*The Slovenian group*

Friday was a sad and nervous day. None of us likes speaking in public not even in our mother tongue, but here we had to do it in English. The teachers gave us some time to finish our ideas before having the presentations. Our group was the first. We did a great job. Everybody liked our idea. Of course, there were a few questions if something wasn't clear enough, but they liked it. Soon all the groups had their turn. The second group made a website where people could find



*Winter World*

beauty competitions dates and quotes or sayings that would improve their self-esteem. Another group made a website about sleeping, including tips about how to sleep better and they added some descriptions of different sleeping disorders. The last group of students developed an idea for a lock app, so we could concentrate on studying more easily and better because we would lock the phone for a specific amount of time. There was also the teacher's group. The teachers did an Internet research on a better and healthier way to live. After the presentations we could eat cake and drink some coffee or tea. It was time to talk about the week and to say goodbye to the Finnish teachers and students because almost all of them went home. Only a few Finnish students decided to go to Helsinki City Museum. Before we went to the museum, we wanted to buy some souvenirs and took some pictures together. The museum was really nice and fun. When we got to our apartments, we decided to have a little farewell party. We also started to clear up the place, so we wouldn't have so much work to do the next day.

Saturday was the last day of seeing each other. We packed our things, tidied up the apartment and said goodbye to everyone once again. We left fast so we could catch our train to the airport. We had to get the boarding passes and give our suitcases away. When we were done with that, we had to go through the security check and then we waited. Soon it was time to get on the plane to Frankfurt. During the flight we got brunch and drinks. We landed in Frankfurt, where we had to wait for four

hours for our next flight back to Zagreb. It was finally time to get on the plane. We flew at night. When we landed in Zagreb, I had to call my dad because he was the one giving us a ride home. I think this was the experience of a lifetime, and I would do anything to go back and experience it all over again. I just want to thank my English teacher for giving me this big and wonderful chance. I am especially grateful that I have met such amazing people. I miss them all and I hope one day we will meet again. I really had a marvellous time with all the students and the teachers. The teachers' leading through the project was great and clear. I have learned so much about different cultures and languages, from Spanish, Finnish to Dutch. It was my first time being so far away from home and I couldn't have enjoyed it more.



*Helsinki by the sea*

Kaja Hotujec, 2.ZB





*Sagrada Familia*

## MY FIRST TIME IN SPAIN

In October 2015, I and my family decided to go on a short vacation to Spain. I had never been so far away by plane, so I was very excited to travel somewhere new.

I have always loved the idea of Spain, the culture, the country itself and the language, even though I had no idea how to speak it, I was just amazed by it.

We flew from an airport in Italy, so we had to drive there for about four hours, which wasn't too bad. Our flight was at night, but when we arrived at the airport the sun was just setting. We took our luggage out of the car and went into the terminal. We had to wait a little bit to board the plane, so we just sat on the chairs for an hour. Finally, it was our time to board, so we went through security and found our seats on the plane. The flight wasn't bad - there was some turbulence but it was okay. I was looking out of the window and admiring the city lights. We had been flying for about an hour when we landed at the airport in Barcelona, Spain. It was past midnight, so we were pretty tired. We got in

a taxi that drove us to our hotel. When we arrived at the hotel, we checked in, went to our room and went straight to bed.

The next morning we planned to just go look around the city centre. We went to La Boqueria, which is a very famous market in Barcelona. They have all kinds of fruit there, sea food, candy, ice cream, you name it. I and my brother were especially excited about the candy. We bought lots of it and it was delicious.



*La Boqueria, the famous market*

It was a beautiful, warm and sunny day, so we decided to go towards the seaside. We were walking on La Rambla, which is the most famous street in Barcelona. There were lots of different stands with postcards, key chains, jewellery, plants, and lots of other exciting things. There were people that had covered their bodies in paint and costumes and you could take a picture with them, which we did, and I thought that was very cool. We also went past Christopher Columbus Statue, which was much bigger than I had imagined. Finally, we reached the seaside and we sat on a little bench right by the water and just relaxed.

Over the next couple of days in Barcelona we also went to Park Guell. We had to walk to the top of a hill along a very steep street to get to the park. The thing I found very interesting and funny at the same time was the cars. They were parked on a steep hill - one car after another and every single car was damaged. It was impossible to find a car without a scratch. You don't see that in Slovenia very often. When we arrived at the park, it was like coming to a whole other world. There were plants, flowers, palm trees and fairytale houses everywhere. It was beautiful. We just walked around and admired the beauty.

The next day was a very exciting day. In the morning we went to see Sagrada Familia, which is probably the most visited tourist attraction in Barcelona. It's a church that has been built for over a hundred years and it is still being built. Its architecture is amazing. We decided not to go inside; instead went for a walk around the lake that is close to the church. We also noticed there was a parade going on nearby, so we went to take a look. There were people dancing and it was great fun.

Afterwards we went to our hotel to take a rest. Towards the evening, my brother and my dad decided to go watch a football match at the famous Camp Nou Stadium, while my mom and I decided to go shopping in a huge shopping centre, which was an enjoyable experience.

The next morning we went to Aquarium Barcelona. It was breathtaking. I had never seen a shark in my life before so that was quite an experience. We also saw a lot of fishes, dolphins, penguins, turtles and much more.

After the aquarium, we went to have lunch and then we decided it would be nice to go lie on the beach. We went to La Barceloneta, a beautiful beach in Barcelona. It was nice and warm but not enough to take a swim. We spent the rest of our evening there.

On our last day, we went to Camp Nou Stadium. This was more exciting for my brother, but it was still interesting to see how big it actually is. Because our flight back home was in the evening, we had some time left so we went to see the Olympic Stadium. That was also very cool for me, because at the time I trained athletics so I found that very interesting.



*Camp Nou Stadium*



*Park Güell*



*People wearing costumes on the famous street La Rambla*

It was time to pack our suitcases and head to the airport. Our flight was at around 10 o'clock in the evening, at least that's what we thought. We had looked at the wrong tickets. When we saw the board where all the flights were listed, we almost freaked out when we saw that our flight back to Italy was boarding right then. We rushed to the counter to ask if we had enough time to make it to the plane, but unfortunately the plane was already taking off. We immediately bought the tickets for the next flight in the morning. We had to spend the night at the airport, which wasn't very comfortable, but we met two other Slovenians that were taking the same flight as us. In the morning we finally flew back home.

I will for sure go back one day.

Špela Ovčak, 2. Za



## ZAKYNTHOS, GREECE

Zakynthos or Zante is a Greek island in the Ionian Sea. I had loved this island for a long time and my dreams came true when we decided to book our plane and the hotel on it.

It started on 6th August 2018, when we boarded the plane. There were no complications, so we took off. When we landed, the weather was beautiful and the sun was shining. After picking up the luggage, our agency representative gave us the papers and information where the bus was waiting. The bus was small and as we were riding it, it became hotter and hotter. I thought that we were going to be the only Slovenians in that hotel, but no, there were 10 more. The apartment where we were staying had the most wonderful view. I could see the sea and the sunsets, which were stunning.

On the first day, we stayed on the hotel beach. It had deckchairs and parasols made of palm leaves. In my opinion Greek islands have the most perfect sandy beaches. Besides, they are great for children because some of them have really shallow water. After searching for beaches, we picked out the Banana Beach. As we were walking to the sandy beach, we saw the sign 'ONLY BAR FOOD AND DRINK ALLOWED', so we ordered some drinks and sandwiches and just relaxed.



*On the way to the Banana Beach*

One of the things that I love about Greece is their yogurt, which is creamy but firm - it goes well with honey. You can't compare this yogurt to the one bought in a store, because it is million times better. If you go to Greece and don't try it, you will regret it ... I am not kidding. In one restaurant I tried gyros, which is bread with meat, salad, onion and tomato inside, and to top it all, they add fried potato. It is really delicious.

Our agency organized a trip to the famous Navagio or Shipwreck Beach. You can see this beach on the posters all over the island while driving around and admiring the scenery. We sailed away on a large ship. On the open sea the island of Kefalonia could be seen. The Blue Caves were beautiful, but you could not go inside them without a small boat. Right after passing one cliff, we turned left and the spectacular beach was revealed. The water was clear blue because of the white rocks covering the bottom of the sea. Let me tell you a little bit of the ship's history. The ship was suspected of smuggling alcohol and cigarettes to Zakynthos. After running away from the Greeks, the ship ran aground, and after some time the beach was made. On the photos there are always too many people and even this time was not an exception. We took a photo in front of the ship, but we did not go into the water because it was a little bit too cold for me. Since we were on the open sea, I expected the access was possible only by boat, but on the top of the cliff there is a vantage point with a view of the beach and the sea that you can access by car.



*The Blue Caves*

Our last trip was Caretta caretta turtle watching. The largest turtle weighs around 140 kg. For a long time there was no turtle to be seen. All of a sudden someone told us, "Look! There is one!" It was so big and not scared of us at all. The next stop was the Turtle Beach. Turtles hatch and drop their eggs on the beach and people put sticks around them so they are not stepped on. The sand was burning our feet as we were walking



*Gyros*



*The hotel beach*



*The perfect sunset*

On the last days of our holidays we rented a car and saw the rest of the island. At the end of each day I instantly fell asleep.

On our last day we just chilled on the hotel beach. After checking out of the hotel, we went to the airport, boarded the plane and took off. I was sad to leave, but I was also happy to go home. It is true when they say, 'Home, sweet home'.

Soraya Bakaršič, 2. Za

## EGYPT

On 6th September, me and my friends went to Egypt, alone. Four young girls traveling alone in a (supposedly) dangerous country such as Egypt was what everyone had been worried about. But what I and my friends experienced was different and made us fall in love with Egypt.

Our flight was in the morning; we flew from Brnik Airport to Hurghada, the place where we were staying. The flight was fine. We got off the plane, bought our visas, waited for our luggage, made some new friends and took the bus to the Grand Resort Hotel. We just couldn't believe how beautiful it was. We wanted to take our luggage to the room, but one of the porters ran to us like we were committing some sort of crime and told us that we should not do that. He took the four suitcases and carried them all the way up to our room. We gave him a tip as we later did to every single employee at the hotel. We got into our room, relaxed for a little bit and unpacked. In the Resort there were a lot of restaurants and bars where we could eat and drink (mostly) for free because it was all inclusive. We went to dinner and then a nice man came to us and invited us to a foam party. We went, of course, and I have to say



that it was one of the best moments in my life.

We organized our week very well. We had one day just to relax and have fun, and for other days we planned getting to know more about the country and its culture so we went on some tours.

On Sunday, we went to Luxor and visited three temples. We also visited the Valley of the Kings. We had a great tour guide, we were joking around all the time. (Surprisingly on the 1st October, he came to Slovenia to study the Slovenian language and we are planning to meet soon and make a tour of Ljubljana for him). The trip was very exhausting because we left the hotel at 4 am and came back at 11 pm. We were very tired from both the long ride and the heat.



*The Valley of the Kings*

The next day, on Monday, we went to the Sahara. Outside the hotel, there was a Jeep waiting for us. The Jeep ride was really wild because we drove very fast on desert hills and through valleys, so getting up early in the morning had not been a problem. We continued our day with an hour long quad bike ride. It was such an amazing experience which we will remember forever. We continued our Jeep ride and stopped to see Fata Morgana. We also visited a Bedouin village. We saw life that was so different from ours that it made us think. Then we went to ride camels, which, to be honest, I had expected more from,

but still it was an interesting experience. Next, still in the Bedouin village, we had dinner - roast chicken and vegetables with a very special taste.



*The Grand Resort Hotel*

Then we drove to the desert, where we waited for the sunset, which was an absolutely breathtaking experience.

On Tuesday (probably my favourite day) we went snorkelling. We went on a yacht and after one hour we stopped and went snorkelling. Although it was really fun and wonderful, I have to say that at the end I got really tired because it was quite exhausting. We got back on the yacht and visited Orange Bay, a place with the most magnificent beaches and water I have ever seen in my life.

Tuesday was our last day of tours. And Wednesday was our last day so we took full advantage of it. We thought that we would have a bit of a rest but the activity leaders in the hotel just wouldn't let us. We joined the entertainment program - we sang karaoke, danced Zumba ... So we were not bored at all. There is so much more to write about, but I'm running out of space, so I guess I will





have to stop here.

*The quad bike ride*

I can't say much about Egyptian cuisine because in the Resort we had a buffet, where we had many options for every meal. There was some Egyptian food but it didn't look very appealing so we rather opted for European food. We were quite careful with food because it's easy to get sick. One of the Slovenian tour guides told us that almost everyone got sick and it was a bit strange if you didn't (It's because our body system isn't used to that type of bacteria). My friends got sick in the first few days - nothing serious only upset stomachs. Just when I thought that I had got away with it, I got sick too. We all took our medicines and we felt better soon. We also drank an electrolyte drink as prevention. Water in Egypt isn't drinkable so every day we got four bottles of water in our room (maybe six if we had tipped generously the day before). We also got some of them on tours. But of course that wasn't enough for the whole day so we were constantly refilling the bottles that we never threw away (at the end we counted as many as 45 bottles in total) at the buffet, because on the tours we needed a lot of water since we were there for 19 hours at a time.

Overall, people in Egypt are really nice, but also quite annoying while you walk down the street forcing you to buy something, following you for a while if you don't, and sometimes hurling sexual

insults.

But for the most part they are very welcoming and kind, and they really enjoy talking to you.

No words can describe what great time I had. I'm so grateful for that experience with my friends. I had been a bit scared before I went to Egypt because of everything I had heard. But all I experienced there was totally opposite - people are so nice and grateful. I learned so much in that week and I now have a different perspective on some things in life. That week and all the people we met will always have a special place in my heart.

Urška Štibernik, 3. Ka



*With the two best tour guides*

## POEMS

### No. 1

One touch  
Can make your head spin  
It isn't too much  
But you feel like you could win.

Only one kiss  
Can change your life  
Make you miss  
The time that goes by.

But those things don't last forever  
They happen and they go  
But us together  
We'll love as long as we know.

### No. 2

It's hard to let go  
Of your soul - just let it flow  
Don't be afraid  
Someone else will fill the void.

Time flies  
Leaving you behind  
But please, don't cry  
Don't let your heart be blind.

It'll take you anywhere  
To find what you need  
To someone  
With whom love will succeed.

That will be the one  
Who you won't let go  
The one who'll know  
About the treasure he has  
And won't let you go past.

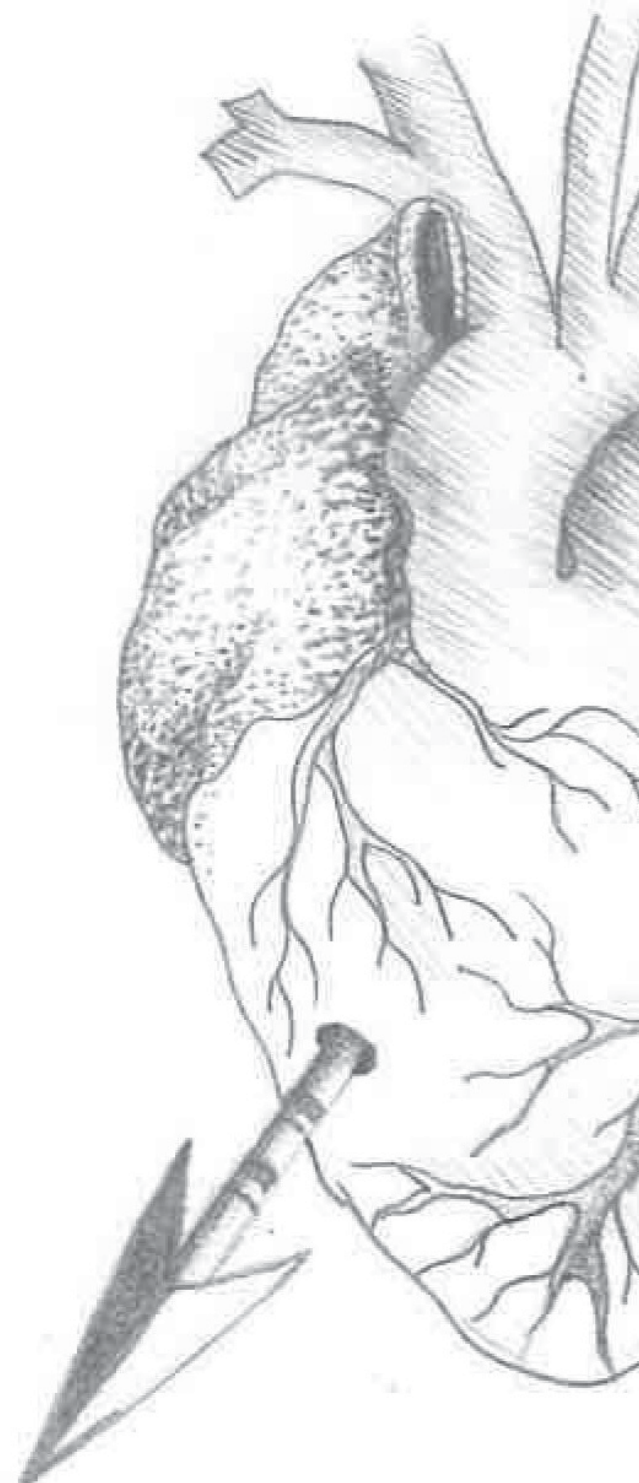
### No. 3

I'll never fall in love again  
You took my heart away  
Ruined a chance for another man  
With a promise you'll forever stay.

Wandering in the dark  
I'm all alone  
With a fading spark  
And a bleeding heart.

I'm lost, not to be found  
When you're not around  
I lie here depressed  
Missing the feeling of your chest.

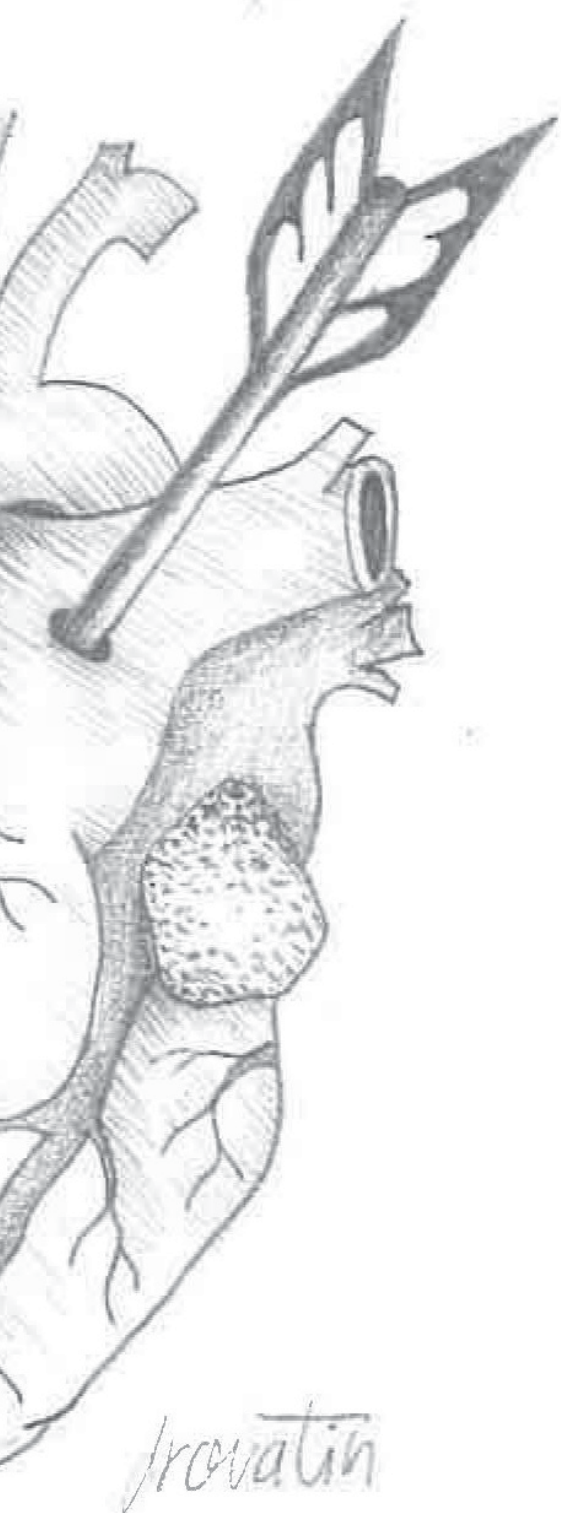
Hand in hand walking by the sea  
The memory hurts like hell  
We were so carefree  
Now I miss you more than I can tell.



#### No. 4

If our love is made of glass  
It might break  
If our love is a mess  
It might be fake.

But if destiny sees us together  
Maybe it's true  
We'll make each other better  
No matter what stupid things we do.



#### No. 5

Baby, you're a heartbreaker  
You took my soul away  
Always a taker, a faker  
You crushed my dreams.

I was a silly girl  
To give you my heart  
You took it and played with it  
No way for a clean start.

You made me scream  
You made me cry  
In my tears I can't swim  
Now I'm telling the world goodbye.

#### No. 6

When I look at you  
The world stands still,

When I look at you  
My love for you is real.

But you look at her  
You don't notice me,

You look at her  
The woman I'll never be.

#### No. 7

If only you could be  
The sole problem of my life

If only I could be free  
Like any other teenager

But I have problems of my own  
Like being all alone

Being thrown off the throne  
Just by a text from a phone

My life crumbling, pushing me  
Why, oh, why can't I be free?

Maša Bohinc Penček, 1. Ka



## STORIES AND MORE

### AN INTERESTING EXPERIENCE

One day last summer, my family and I decided to take my recently married cousin and her husband to a restaurant in Strumitsa, Macedonia. The restaurant had an amazing view. There was a lake with beautiful swans.

We decided to sit outside by the lake. We ordered the food and chatted as we waited for it to be ready. When the food arrived, I saw a swan swimming towards us. I looked at it mesmerised and thought about giving it a piece of my bread.

As I was feeding the swan, my cousin took out her phone, so she could film it. But she came too close to it. The swan must have mistaken her phone for the food and tried to take it. She loosened her grip and the phone fell in the water.

I looked at my cousin, and as I saw her disappointed face, I burst out laughing and so did my family and her husband. Her phone was broken but her husband promised he would buy her a new one.

It was an interesting experience.

Sanela Popovska, 3. Za

### A SHOCKING DAY AT THE BEACH

One day a few summers ago, me and my family decided to go on vacation. We went to Peroj, which is a small town in Croatia. We went early in the morning so we could avoid the traffic. We stayed there for a week.

One day when we went to the beach, we found a good place for us to put our things. We decided to go for a swim. When we got back to the beach, there was a crowd surrounding something or somebody, we didn't know. People were whispering and shouting and it wouldn't surprise me if they were filming and taking pictures, but I don't remember that. Finally, the curiosity got the best of me and I went to check out what people were so amused about. But what I didn't know was that what I was going to see was going to be horrific and definitely not amusing.

The scene was thankfully hidden behind a wall of towels that were held up by some people. But the wind was blowing and the towels couldn't be held together that tightly. When the wind blew and the towels moved, I saw an old man lying on the ground unconscious, or so I thought. The man's heart had stopped after a heart attack and paramedics were performing CPR. I was shocked. I was too young to fully understand what was happening. I only understood that something was wrong with that man on the ground. There were two doctors that were performing CPR and they were taking turns so they wouldn't get too tired. Suddenly, they stopped performing CPR, and I was confused as to why they had stopped. Now I know why they stopped. Then they got up and started gathering their things.

The paramedics left the beach and the family was left with the body and their grief. A few hours later the family left as well. Everybody steered clear of the body. In the evening, the mortuary transport came and took the body to the morgue for the autopsy. I was still shocked the next day, but I slowly forgot it since I didn't like to think about it. Now whenever I think about it, it still scares me a bit how life can be taken away so quickly.

Tea Arnež, 3. Ka

### MY STORY

Since I can remember I have always had some kind of a bully going after me. I have literally no idea why, but I guess it has always been meant to be because it has always left some kind of lesson that I have learned a lot from. But there was this one bully that left his mark on me, a tear in the eye and a horrible memory.

It all began in the 8th grade at art class. I sat next to a boy that I will name Mark. Mark was my school mate and I had known him for about 2 years. He was shorter than me, which might sound impossible, because I'm only 1.58m, but yes, he was even shorter. He never seemed like a problem or a threat for me, at least he never looked like one. Actually we were a dancing pair at the after-school activity - folk dancing, which our class teacher was responsible for and encouraged us to do. He told jokes all the time and we laughed until we cried almost every lesson. The teacher often yelled at us, because we weren't dancing right, but we had a fun time and we got along quite well. As I already

said, we sat together at art class and he always talked to me. He didn't really like to draw, so he often asked me to draw for him. He appreciated it and I was proud because I helped him. Soon people started spreading rumors about us, for example that we were dating and similar things. I didn't really care because I knew it wasn't true. I tried to ignore people intruding, but then one day my friend asked me if I was really willing to go out with Mark. I was shocked that everyone believed every single thing they had heard. But Mark was proud of it and he kept telling people that we had a thing, which we never did. We just talked from time to time and that was all, but unfortunately he saw something completely different.

A few weeks later I brought a poem that I had written to show it to my friend. We were at art class and as I pulled it out of my bag, Mark took the paper and started reading it. I tried to take it back, because I didn't want him to read it and laugh at me, but then he said that it was really good and he asked me if I could write a poem about him. I was a little surprised and I said, "I can only write a poem for someone who means a lot to me. I don't think I can write a poem about you." The second I said the last word I regretted it because it sounded really mean. After that he didn't say another word to me that day.

At the time I was chatting with a boy that I had known for a really long time and Mark knew that. He was constantly asking me about our conversations. I agreed to dance with this boy at the school dance, which Mark didn't like at all. But soon I got in a fight with this boy because he had asked another girl to dance with him and she already had a partner to dance with. Of course she said she couldn't do that because of her dance partner and because of me. I was really angry, and I got even angrier when I found that out from one of my school mates, not from him. I found him at school and told him that what he had done was silly. He had the courage to tell me that he hadn't even been planning to tell me about it and I lost control. I started yelling at him in the middle of the hall and left him speechless. (Now looking back, I think I overreacted a bit). Almost immediately the whole school heard about my outburst. Of course Mark heard it too. He took advantage of it and came to me saying how that boy could do that to me and that it was really horrible, et cetera. I was so disappointed and desperate that I fell right in his trap. Then we started texting a lot and I told him pretty much everything. He asked me about every little detail of every story and every secret and I didn't realize what a red flag that was.

Soon one of his closest friends asked me about one secret that I had only told Mark. At first I thought that he had maybe accidentally said something and I made excuses for his 'accidental mistakes'. I don't know why, but all I wanted was a friend that I could trust. He went from being my 'friend' to being the biggest fear of my entire life within one week. He threatened me that he would tell everyone about my secrets if I told anyone about what was happening. His friends started throwing things at me, slapping me with their slippers every time I went by, they tripped me up, and they even pushed me into the walls. When they sat behind me in class, they poked me with pencils in the back and arms ... Mark sat with me at physics class and he took my things and hit me in the ribs with his elbow. I don't know why no one ever saw this, but every lesson I went out of class to the toilet because I couldn't stand it.

It was getting worse and worse every week and I planned not to go to school anymore. One weekend I looked around for a place where I could hide during classes. First I planned to go to the woods but I was too scared to be there alone. Then I found a little wood house in a tree near my neighborhood. The next day in the morning I made sure that no one saw me or followed me and I went there. I just sat there for 5, 6 or 7 hours a day. I wrote letters to school about my absence and then I made sure that none of my parents could go to school to meet my class teacher. I had been doing this for about a month and I missed a lot of hours at school so I didn't know what they were learning. I didn't get grades and everything just went straight downhill. Then I caught a cold because that was happening in March and April and it was a really cold spring and the wind was blowing the whole time and I got really sick. At least I was at home in a warm place.

But of course I had to go to school at one point and every single teacher wanted a grade so I was examined every single possible subject in one week. I got a lot of fails and my teacher called me to talk to me. She asked me what was going on, but I knew that I couldn't say a word or the bullying would get worse. She didn't find out anything so she called my dad and told him about it. He asked me the same things but I kept quiet.

Mark was smarter than I thought he was. He was messaging me via Viber, where he could delete the message after I had read it and couldn't screenshot it. He called me names and assaulted me as badly as he wanted and then deleted it, so I was left with no evidence. When he saw that the teacher talked

to me, he thought that I had told her everything. I told him that he shouldn't worry because I kept my mouth shut.

Once this girl that I didn't know messaged me on Facebook and she claimed that she was a friend of one of my school mates. She asked me about my opinions and how I felt about my school mates, especially Mark, and I told her everything. I don't know why I was so stupid ... Then I was asked to go to France on a school trip and I agreed knowing that Mark would go too, but I didn't want to miss a chance. When we were on the way, this girl messaged me again and said that she was on that same bus to France too. Then it hit me and it hit me hard. I burst into tears when I realized I had messed it up again. I immediately blocked 'her' on Facebook and the second I did it, half of the bus started pointing at me and laughing. I have never felt as betrayed as I did at that moment. I decided I couldn't sleep the entire 14-hour way to France because I was worried something could happen to me.

We were in France for 5 days and that was absolutely the worst time of my entire life. I was miserable and I couldn't wait to go home. When we were driving back to Slovenia, I wrote a poem about Mark and named it *Betrayal* because I was so mad and miserable. He never saw the poem and he never will, but he got what he wanted, I guess.

After coming back my class teacher told my dad that I didn't dance anymore at the folk dancing group. On the same day my dad started asking me questions and I told him everything. Every single detail of the last year and he was sad and disappointed that I hadn't told him. Then he went to school and told my class teacher about it. He also told her that she shouldn't tell anyone who had told her that a few boys in her class were molesting this girl. Then the teacher talked to Mark, and he and his friends stopped. But that was the end of the 8th grade and I had to be around them for another year until I could leave them behind forever.

I learned a lot from this experience. I know now that I shouldn't trust just anyone until I know them very well. I wouldn't have got over this if I didn't have two friends, who really supported me at my every single step and I can't thank them enough for that. Without them I don't know if I would survive the pressure of those boys. I know now that I should have trusted my parents or at least my teacher. I recommend everyone in a similar

situation to end this as soon as possible, because it won't go away by itself. I never thought about a suicide back then, but I wanted to run away and just hide or forget about it. This was a few years ago, but I still think about it quite often. I am still scared of meeting Mark. And it is still hard for me to talk about it, but it's easier in English. I am not sure why, it seems like it didn't really happen or it happened to someone else. In Slovene it's just so sad and it brings back so many memories. I don't know if I could ever get over this fear completely or forget about this because Mark will forever stay in my memory as a 'good' lesson. I guess everything bad is good for something.

This is a true story and I think everyone could learn something from it.

...

## TULIPS

*In the future wars will be raging all over the world and my story combines the lives of three different generations helping each other to make this world a better place. It's a story of love in all forms and the meaning of friendship and family. It connects happy and miserable moments and represents the plan for the future, in which we don't exist just while we exist, but we help new generations live better lives after we leave.*

*I believe we all have a Fred (friend) in our heads. A person or a voice of our own reason leading us through life day by day. It is always right, but it is up to us to listen to it ...*

He's so peaceful. So calm. He has no idea what the world is like. I want to have his mind. Clear, clean, dreamy.

"But you have not slept yet, old man," he said aloud. "It is half a day and a night and another day and you have not slept. You must devise a way so that you sleep a little if he is quiet and steady. If you do not sleep, you might become unclear in the head."

"Shut up!" I said angrily. "Go away and leave me alone, Fred. I can't sleep and you know why. So



just stop!" I looked at him. An old, wrinkled man with a beard, grey as the abandoned city. Fred reminded me of home. Don't get me wrong, I hated my home. And I hated everybody in it. "Why are you still here? Complaining is not an option, and I assure you that I do not need you to tell me what to do. Because if you wake up the child, you'd better have some warm milk ready. And a drop of your special drink won't do any harm. Believe me, I tried it myself." He grinned; I never believed it really worked.

He turned around and exited through the narrow door that lead up to the deck. Sometimes he really got on my nerves. I took a deep breath. *He just wants to help, that's all. He's my best friend after all and he has helped me with this mess. Sweet little boy, you have no idea.*

At that moment the tiny eyelids lifted and a thin voice came from the little toothless mouth. A tiny voice?! More like a storm. I took him out of a poorly made crib and held him like Rose had taught me. Gently and with love. A swing to the left, a swing to the right. Slow and steady. "That's right, you are safe now. And one day you will save the world."

I miss Rose. She was everything to me. The love we had could never bear children, but the young family next door had two. The parents both worked in the navy; she was a lieutenant and he was a Navy SEAL, so when the war broke out they asked for replacements as long as they could and later they were switching places with each other, so one of them was always at home with the boys.

We could all feel it coming. It was just a matter of time. A dark cloud of fear and silence was spreading over our city and everyone could feel it. They started evacuating taller buildings and kept telling us there was no reason to worry.

I had served in war many years ago. War is not fun. It is not something not to worry about. It's the end of the human race. I was young, but I remember amazing people, young boys with fresh ideas who could really have made it in the world. They lost their lives because of a stupid conflict. Of course, violence sometimes is the answer, but this time it went too far. I met Fred there. We served together and he was always getting on my nerves, so we became best buddies. He never left my side and is still here for me when I need him. He's also here when I don't.

I met Rose while serving. We were evacuating some cities and I found her crying over her brother's body. I know it's inappropriate but she never looked more beautiful. Guess it was love at first sight, in which I didn't believe at the time. We kept in touch and later ran away together, bought a house in the countryside and enjoyed our love. I felt guilty for not giving her a child, but we had a great life full of fun and special moments. We had everything we desired and we grew old together. Nothing was ever missing.

A young couple moved in the house next door and they reminded us of our young days. They soon had a son and then another one much later. Rose often visited them helping with the boys and stuff around the house. I figured I didn't have a special touch for kids so I stayed in the kitchen chatting with Dan. He had to leave every weekend, sometimes he was gone for weeks, and I understood. He needed someone to talk to and relieve the burden he had from war. We became close friends with the family and spent our free time at their house.

Their older son Robert went into service as soon as he turned eighteen despite his parents' disapproval. And it wasn't a year before a flag returned instead of him. There was nothing we could do to make Dan and Jane feel better, and a few weeks later Rose got extremely sick. My feelings went from sad to angry; I smashed every plate in the house, probably drank all the alcohol we had and I kept visiting our favourite spot - the beautifully carved bench in the middle of a tulip field. It was cold, tulips were long gone and that was how I felt too.

Little Jake was the sunshine no one asked for. His laugh kept the house alive and us three to get our minds off anything else. An innocent little boy, full of joy and happiness.

We buried Rose in the beautiful field. No cross, for we weren't religious, just a black rose to sit on the pile of dirt. "Well, Jackie, this is where your grandma Rosie is. She is sleeping under the warm soil and guarding us from the sky."

I hated the house, I hated myself; I was actually looking for my way out. Dan was gone again so I had nobody to talk to. Jane and I only cried when we saw each other. I loved her, she was a daughter to me, you know. The one I could never have. The situations got worse, we could hear bombs and see the battlefield and all we could do was wait.

In the early summer, Jane got an urgent call for a secret mission. When she came to the door, I saw it in her eyes before she told me. She left the house key and little Jack asleep in the car seat and left with teary eyes. I believe she never stopped crying. She had lost so much in her hard life. She had no other family. And now Jackie and I were left alone.

That's when I knew he was the solution. These wars had lasted for too long and were getting worse and worse. When I found a letter from Rose I was certain. It didn't matter what it said, I knew what to do and I knew I would save this child. He will be taught love and compassion and how to stop the horrors on our land. How to be gentle, kind and fair.

I grabbed what was left of our money and belongings and moved to their house. I sold mine to a group of people who were fleeing from the cities - it didn't mean anything to me anymore. I waited and waited for Jane or Dan, but neither of them came back. A month, two, three ... Not even a letter. I never got to know what had happened to them.

I wasn't good with babies but I had watched Rose do it thousand times. Jake wasn't a difficult child. Little food, little sleep, a bit of playing silly games. I probably laughed for the first time in a year when his little fingers grabbed mine.

After another year I bought a sailing boat and executed my plan. There was enough space for ten people on that boat, but I rearranged it into an apartment. We had enough supplies to spend all our life on that boat. But that wasn't the plan.

"You're dreaming about her again. It's not going to help, you know. Going through everything over and over again. Forget the past, but not enough to forget the future. Remember the good and the bad and use them to fix this world." He looked at me and then the child in my arms. "I know."



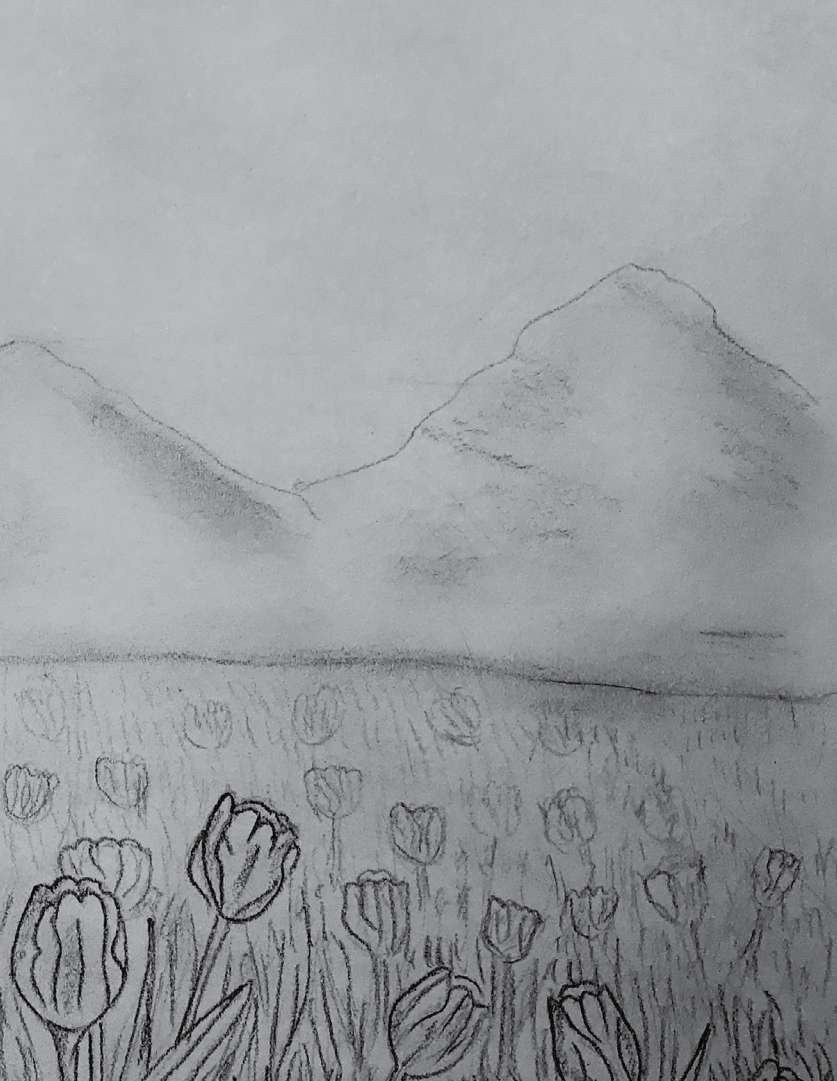
"What?" I said impatiently.

"You are not going to leave him. You're not going to leave him like you never left me. We put all the strength we had in that fight. You couldn't save me either. But you tried and you survived. And look at you now, in your hands there is the future. Love him like you loved Rose, talk to him like you talked to Dan, trust him like you trusted Jane and be his friend like you were a friend to me. And let go. Of me, of the past, forget the lost and forget the horrors. And live what is left of your amazing life. Help that boy become you, for you are the best person the world has right now. Stop the madness. Stop the suffering. Show them what love is."

A tear made its way down my cheek and fell on the blue blanket. He turned around and I followed him on the deck. I looked around and he was gone, but I knew he would be by my side when needed. Stars were showing the way and far, far away a field full of beautiful tulips grew.

Miša Šala, 4. Zb





## LOVE, ME

*I believe that everybody is looking for a place in this busy world. Everything is happening too fast so we don't get the time to appreciate the things that matter the most. First of all, ourselves – we get lost in expectations and take no time for ourselves. Secondly, our closest friends and family – that stays with us no matter what and how we see it. And in the end, our surroundings – our street, our school and our beautiful planet, which define us as a whole. And these are the things worth living for. So Love, me means giving love, but also loving yourself, which should be the meaning in life.*

My name is not really important. Everything you should know about me is that everything I say is a lie.

“Yes, Dad, of course I did the dishes.”

“Oh no, I completely forgot, I am so sorry.”

“I love you, Mom.”

I live in a big house just outside the city with my normal average family. A lot of things have happened in our house, but nothing really

shocking. But a few years ago I started having nightmares. During these nights, as all around me was silent – most of the neighbourhood went to bed at ten-thirty – I entered another world, the world where everything was perfect.

And that world was terrifying. We were a perfect family with a lot of money and a lot of love for each other. Nobody was stressed or worried, the world wasn't dying, there was water and food for everyone. Schools were beautiful large buildings with everything you wished for. Everyone was your friend and there was not a single person who wouldn't smile.

What a nightmare indeed.

Usually I woke up completely drenched in sweat and mostly angry at the fact that the only time I could get some sleep, my mind made up the most ridiculous things. I usually took a long freezing shower to wake up that stupid brain of mine and took a stroll down the block. There wasn't much to see in our neighbourhood - a lot of houses with happy families and dogs on the front lawn, saying sweet kissing goodbyes every morning. But at the end of this perfect block there was a path that led across the fields which were covered with corn in summer to a remote dark forest that was my favourite place on Earth.

When I arrived, I sat in a hammock that I had brought one day and opened up a beer I had hidden under the roots. Nobody ever came here but just in case and out of habit I hid things around. *And no, I am not old enough to drink, at least legally. And no, I don't really like beer.* There it was, my first truth today. My little spot was the only place where I could speak the truth. And I hated it.

I started writing in my little diary.

*Dear Diary, today I have learned what I really want. I want to travel. Not to see the world but to get as far away from this life as I can. OK, maybe I would also love to see Japan. And Portugal. And Egypt. OK, I want to see every bit of this amazing world before we destroy it. And there is a huge plus in being all alone. Also, the nightmares haven't stopped, so I guess I will see you tomorrow.*

I hesitated a little bit, but wrote anyway.

*Love, me.*



I hid the empty can and the diary and headed back home. I opened the door slowly and went upstairs. There was the shadow of my mom by the bedroom door, but I pretended I didn't see it. I went straight to bed still fully clothed and woke up the next morning with the sound of my mom banging on my door.

"Honey, get up, you are going to be late again."

Sometimes I felt the whole world was converging on this little room. And as I became more intoxicated and frustrated, I'd throw open the bedroom window as the dawn came up and look across the gardens, lawns, greenhouses, sheds and curtained windows. I wanted my life to begin now, at this instant, just when I was ready for it. Then it was time for my paper-round, followed by school. And school was another thing I'd had enough of.

School for me was a torture device, made only to put children somewhere when their parents were working. We didn't actually learn anything useful, they didn't take us anywhere, they made us run, put us under a lot of stress, and I believe human beings are just not made for that. We are wild animals challenging puberty, isn't that enough?

I slept through most of my classes, but when I was awake I didn't do anything. Teachers had given up on me a long time ago so they left me alone.

"Have you done your homework?"

"Of course, I have."

A lie.

"What's is the capital of France?"

"I don't know."

Also a lie. *Of course I know the capital of France.*

And so on and so on. Everyone just thought I was stupid. Every day. Again and again. I didn't even have friends because, well, I lied. Days just went by without any special surprising twist. While I was walking home, I saw the neighbours hugging their children coming from school, dogs jumping for joy, moms carrying groceries and cooking lunch. I entered the house and went straight to my room

and threw myself on the bed with my earphones still on. I had enough of my boring life.

"Lunch is ready!" I heard from downstairs.

I wasn't hungry but headed for the kitchen anyway. Spaghetti and meatballs were neatly put on the plate at the place where I always sat. We were just sitting and eating in silence. Dad was reading the newspaper, Mom didn't even take a seat, because she was constantly doing something by the stove, my brother didn't even look up from the plate.

"Do you like it? Is it good?"

"Yes, Mom, it's delicious."

A lie. I hated her cooking.

"Are you okay, honey? You look a little pale."

"I'm okay, I am just tired from school. Speaking of which, I have a ton of work to do."

A lie.

While dragging myself up to bed, I was thinking about what this night's nightmare would bring. Then I remembered I needed more beer.

Another night, another dream, another world. But this time, much, much worse. I practically ran all the way to the forest. I could barely breathe for ten minutes, only then I realised I was still in my pyjamas. I should have learned by now to sleep fully dressed.

The dream was horrifying. We were living in a crowded flat, my school was an old warehouse, you could only get food at the shelter, but the worst thing of all was when I came home from school to find an empty apartment. The only thing left of my family was a closed envelope from the city council which stated my family was gone. Didn't matter how or when or why, just gone.

And that was the moment I woke up completely soaked in sweat, thinking only to run and get to the safe place as fast as possible. I had thought that having the world with love and passion was the most horrible thing that my mind could make up, but this squishy organ in my head had made

it a lot worse. After a few minutes of listening to nothing else but my breathing, trying to hold back the panic attack and keeping telling myself it was not real, I finally calmed down. I was sitting on the ground still breathing heavily and thinking why I was so shocked. I didn't like my world and the nightmares before had been the exact opposite of this one. So this should be my fairytale, right?

I wrote a short note in the diary and left my secret place. When I was walking past the houses in our little street, I saw the front facades fall down like cardboard scenes used in school plays. Behind them was a rather different scene. Parents fighting and shouting, loud cries of small children, drunk husbands returning home in the middle of the night, people sleeping on the couch. One house had a dog howling and the owner was yelling to shut him up from the upstairs window. My boring average world turned out not to be so perfect at all. There was no sight of heart warming welcomes from school, good smelling dinners and kissing goodbyes. One after another the masks had fallen and I was standing in front of my house. I was waiting for it to reveal the truth, but the front remained still.

That was when I realised the mask that had to fall was mine.

I entered and burst in tears. I walked up the stairs and went straight to my mom's shadow and hugged her as tightly as I could without ever wanting to let her go. I was crying like a little child and I soon felt a pair of strong hands joining the hug. We were just standing there crying, I didn't even know for how long. The next time I opened my eyes, my whole family was standing in the hallway hugging their son and brother, and I had never felt better.

After that night, my nightmares stopped. I have picked up my school work and am about to come top of the class. I tell my parents I love them every day, my brother and I have bonded like never before.

*That's why, dear Diary, choosing to never lie again was the best decision I have ever made. I'm travelling around the world soon, but I'm sure many of my friends will come and visit our new hangout spot in the forest.*

*Love, me.*

Miša Šala, 4. Zb

## MAGICAL POWERS

*This story is about a girl, Charlotte, who has magical powers, but doesn't know about them yet. She discovers her unusual ability when her magical birth mark starts to burn. Sarai, her guardian angel, explains everything to her. Charlotte is somewhat the exception in the paranormal world, because her mark is glowing. Sarai takes her to the Queen (and the leader) of the Paranormal, because her mark starts to hurt unbearably. Hecate, the Queen of the Witch World, surprises Charlotte at the end of the story with her unusual proposal.*

"It's not my fault. So you can't blame me. I didn't do it and have no idea how it had happened." It didn't take more than an hour after they pulled her out from between my legs to realize something was wrong. Really wrong.

I woke up all sweaty and thought about my dreams. They had been recurring for the last couple of months and my mother was involved. Actually, she was the one saying these words. And I was afraid they were about me.

I quickly got up, washed my face, brushed my teeth and, of course, got dressed for school. I ran down the stairs and took my breakfast with me. I was pretty late and it was the first day of a new school year. I gave my mom a quick goodbye kiss and ran to the bus stop a few meters away from my house.

I luckily came right when the bus stopped to pick up other kids. When I stepped into the bus, I sat down in my usual spot. I didn't have any friends, just because I had this huge and weird mark on my left arm.

I had put my earphones on and started listening to Rihanna's songs. The ride to school wasn't long, so I could only listen to 3 or 4 of her songs. When I was getting off the bus, my mark started burning. I thought it was nothing, but it turned out to be SOMETHING. I was trying to hold the pain inside, but I only got through half of my classes. I was at the edge of crying. But we were in the middle of science and I practically couldn't do anything.

"Hey, are you okay? You look kind of pale," Jack asked.

"Not really. Will you let me borrow your notes? I have to go," I answered and he just nodded.

I excused myself and went to the nurse's office. I gently knocked on her doors and went in. She said she had been waiting for me and I just stared at her really confused by her statement. She explained everything to me, from my own mother wiping my memory when I was younger to her being my guardian angel and my magical powers. I was so confused and didn't know how to react or what to do, so I was just staring blankly at her. "And that's the whole story," she finished.

I slowly nodded and rolled my sweatshirt sleeve up. She took some weird gel and rubbed it onto my mark. It kind of soothed the ache, but not completely. I smiled and thanked her. She said it was no problem and handed me a smaller container with this gel inside. We said our goodbyes and I left for home.

When I stepped out into the cool air, I saw my mom's car. I headed towards her and she smiled. I asked her what she was doing there. She said she had come to pick me up and she would explain everything at home. She started the engine and I closed my door.

I asked her about my dreams after I had told her the story behind them. She explained the whole thing. When I was born, my mark was glowing lightly. The doctors wanted to do researches on me, but she and my dad wouldn't allow them. She also said they had backed up, but told my parents I would die if I wasn't treated. They said they would take care of me, but my mom was sceptical and still said no. Those doctors thought I must have been dead by now, but my mom had a feeling they would find me soon.

We talked about a lot of things on our way home and I didn't know we'd go through everything before pulling on our driveway. I took my bag and said I would go to sleep. I really hoped my pain in the mark would go away by the time I woke up, but it, unfortunately, didn't. It only hurt more.

I whined about it to my mom and she said it would probably be the best to call Sarai. I called her and she came right away. She rushed in, hugged me tightly and asked me a ton of questions.

After what seemed an hour-long talk with her, she decided to take me to the Queen of the Paranormal. We were driving for about three hours and still had to walk two miles to 'the cave'. Once we reached

it, we had to stop.

"Where's the door?" I asked her. "It is secret. Help me find it by pushing at those rocks. The entrance is firstly made of rocks, and only the ones with pure intentions can open it. Then there will be another door behind those rocks. And that door is made of snakes, and only magical creatures can come in, even if any human can open the rock door," she explained.

I searched and pushed at all the rocks Sarai had told me to look at, but none of them budged.

"Oh look. This rock seems a bit odd. Let me try pushing it," I said after noticing a weirdly shaped rock. The door opened and the floor shook underneath us. I grabbed a hold of the rock wall and quickly entered. After about two meters from the rock door, there was the snake door, just like Sarai had told me. I tried to touch it, but it moved to the side and I looked at Sarai questioningly. She shrugged her shoulders and stepped forwards. I kind of smiled to the snakes and followed Sarai.

"Who dares interrupt me?" a deep voice boomed and the walls shook.

"I'm Charlotte and I'm here with my guardian angel Sarai," I stuttered.

"Oh, come on in, girls," a woman's voice suddenly spoke kindly.

I furrowed my eyebrows but shrugged my shoulders and let Sarai show me the way. We entered a humongous room and saw a big throne at the end of it. There was the most beautiful woman I had ever seen sitting on that throne.

"Hello, Charlotte. Sarai," she said in a melodic voice.

"Your Highness," Sarai said and bowed, so I copied her.

The Queen demanded me to show her my birthmark, which I did. "I've never seen anything like this," she said, shock evident in her eyes.

I started crying and sat down on the cold hard floor beneath me. "I'm going to die, aren't I?" I asked between sobs.



"No sweetie, I just haven't seen anything like this before. That's all," the Queen answered.

She then proceeded to tell me everything I did as a kid and why the only human who knew about my powers was Mom. She also told me that I was the first human who was born with magical powers. I shook my head, trying to wake up from this nightmare, but realized it was, unfortunately, the cruel reality I had to deal with.

We both thanked the Queen and left. After another three long hours of driving home, we finally arrived. I was really tired because it was late and I said my goodbye to Sarai.

Once I entered my house, I greeted Mom and Dad, and headed right for the shower. I finished quickly because I wanted to sleep. As I entered my room, my phone started ringing like crazy. The number was unfamiliar, but I answered it anyway. It was Jack Dawson. He was really worried about me and why I hadn't picked up any of his calls or answered his messages. I excused myself and told him I had been with Sarai and found another excuse when he asked what I had been doing with our school nurse. "Thanks for calling, but I'm really tired. See you tomorrow," I finished and he said his goodbye.

I smiled to myself because of how much he cared for me. *We haven't really been hanging out, but I'll reconsider it. But now, I'll just sleep.*

A few months later, Jack and I were going out on dates. I really liked how much care he showed for me and we had a lot of things in common. But I had fallen for him through texts and calls we had exchanged every day.

We were already on our tenth date, but he still didn't have a clue about my powers. He knew there was something special about me and my mark, but hadn't figured it out yet.

One afternoon, after Jack had just left, my world turned upside down. Hecate, the Queen of Witches, decided to visit me, and she invited me to join the witch world and become a full witch. I turned her down politely, but Hecate got really angry and cast a spell on me ...

Amadeja Stanojević, 4. Zb

## TIMELESS

### Prologue

Emily Thompson always had everything. A perfect family, home, status, friends ... Or that's what she had thought until one fatal night and one handsome boy who turned her life upside down.

...

It was Friday after the football game and I was supposed to show up at the after-party with my cheer squad and my boyfriend Danny, the quarterback. But I was not feeling well, so I went home with my best friend Casey. She lived in an old mansion that belonged to one of the eldest families in our town. Her family was rich and they ran a good business of real estate. The house was beautiful and it kept me awake for long after Casey had fallen asleep. I was curious, so I went to the library to look for history books about the mansion.

The maid's son was sleeping on the couch peacefully as an angel and I didn't want to wake him. However, keeping quiet was impossible because after my three steps in the library the wooden floor squeaked under my feet and his eyes flew open.

"Hey, sorry I woke you. I just wanted to go to the library."

After I turned to him, I was amazed. He was the spitting image of Greek gods. His eyes were piercing green that felt like they were looking into my soul. Dear god! I didn't wait for his answer. I quickly slipped through the open door of the library and took a deep breath.

"You have a boyfriend who's a quarterback, you're the captain of a cheer squad, you shouldn't be attracted to a maid's son," I quietly chanted to myself.

"Glad to hear I attract you," said a deep raspy voice behind my ear. *OMG, he heard that. Oh! Em, you stupid, stupid, stupid!* I rubbed my forehead and sighed.

"I'm ... I'm so sorry. You shouldn't have heard that,"

I said shyly, blushing.

"What? The part where you're madly attracted to me or the part where you're ashamed that you're attracted to a maid's son?"

I felt so bad that he had heard that, but *madly* attracted? That I wasn't.

"I'm sorry I offended you but I sure am not *madly* attracted to you. I have only just met you!" I said making huge air quotes around the word madly.

"Feisty, aren't we?" He was seriously getting on my nerves now. I turned and walked to the first book shelf I saw to avoid him. But he just came right behind me. He stayed quiet and just watched me. I didn't mind so I kept looking through the books. I found some kind of a keyring there and turned to ask the stalker behind me. "What is this?"

His eyes got darker and he looked mad. "Where did you get this?"

"It was lying here between the books. Don't act like I've stolen it!"

"Give it to me, it's mine! It was a gift from the girl I once knew."

The second our hands touched, a tingling feeling went through me and a little spark appeared. *What on earth?!*

He looked straight into my eyes and whispered:

"Emily?"

*Wait, how did he know my name?* I was starting to get the creeps and just wanted to get as far away from him as possible.

"No! Wait! Em, I can explain, listen to me ... Please?" I couldn't say no to his big green puppy eyes, so I nodded. He seemed to relax. "Okay, so first things first. Can you show me your right ankle? I know it sounds strange but I need to see it."





This was getting stranger and stranger. "Don't be afraid. I'm not going to hurt you."

I slowly bent and uncovered my ankle. It had a small moon like birthmark. As he saw it, he just picked me up and hugged me. "I missed you so much. Em. I thought I'd never see you again!"

Finally gathering the courage I asked: "Do I even know you?"

"Yes. No. I mean you don't remember, but you do know me. And what I'm going to tell you right now is going to change your life, but you have to believe me." I stayed silent but I nodded. "You are not who you think you are."

"Then who am I?" I asked in disbelief.

"It's hard to explain, but you're not human. We come from a planet named Tempus. It's about 600million light years away from Earth. We came here with our parents because our planet was dying. You were only a child and humans killed your parents because they were scared of them. They left the children alive, so they could experiment on them, but they didn't know that without proper learning they wouldn't show their abilities. They only knew we never got sick and that we were very smart like with the knowledge of a grown-up human when we were 4 years old. You are one of the few children that got away from all the danger ..."

I started cracking up. Was this some kind of a sick joke? I just couldn't stop laughing. The mysterious maid's son, whose name I still didn't know, grabbed my upper arm and I felt like I was flying. Then I got really sick to my stomach so I closed my eyes. When I opened them, we weren't at the library anymore. We were in New York in Times Square. At first I couldn't believe my eyes, but then the information that he had shared with me started to sink in.

"No, no, no, no! This is not happening. It's just a dream, it's just a dream!" I pinched myself, but I was still there and the pinch hurt. *This was actually happening?* It was then that I started to get scared. Was my life in danger?

I looked at the boy and suddenly all the memories flooded back. The sight of a beautiful woman with



black hair just like mine and a happy smile on her lips. A man beside her with blue eyes that were the same color as mine. And instantly I knew they were my parents. Then the picture of a small boy with blonde hair and green eyes flew through my mind. I knew his name. Tobias ...

The flashbacks stopped and I took a glance at the boy who was now beside me. The same green eyes were looking back at me.

"Tobias?" I choked out.

"Yes, em, it's me. You're safe now. I promised I'd come back to you and I did."

With tears in my eyes I hugged him tightly and started crying. I remembered everything. From when he had helped me escape from the humans, to when he had made us forget about who we were. And I remembered that years ago I had loved this boy, he had been the center of my being.

After a few moments I stepped back and looked him in his eyes. We were at the mansion again. "I knew you'd find me. But I can't leave now, it's my senior year. I'm living the life of a dream and I don't want it to stop. I don't want wars, killings and I don't want to lose you again."

"I've been looking for you since the moment I escaped from captivity. I was lost and all alone and the mere thought of you kept me alive. But then I met a woman who helped me develop my powers to try and find you someday. She presents herself as my mom and cleans Casey's house. It used to be the home of people with our abilities. It has a protective shield around it and it hides us from the devices the government uses to trace us. Every day we live here in fear that our cover will be blown if we go outside."

I felt bad for him and wished that he'd have a life like me. He'd be a great quarterback because of his strength and probably the most popular boy at school because, to be honest, he looked like a model.

After exchanging the stories of our life we went back to the mansion and he hugged me. He held his head back and looked into my eyes as if he was searching for something. Not an inch of space was

between us. He cupped the back of my head and lowered his mouth towards mine. He kissed me gently on the lips and it was as gentle as a butterfly touch. But I wanted more and I didn't care that I had a boyfriend. All I cared about was that the boy I had loved and probably still did was back, and I stood on the tips of my toes bringing my mouth to his again. This kiss wasn't like the earlier one. It was more passionate and meaningful. Surprise shot across his face, but he quickly bent and kissed me back. After a few minutes he pulled back and placed his forehead on mine. Our breaths mingled in the dark living room lit only by the moonlight streaming through the floor-to-ceiling windows. I had kissed before, but never like this.

"When you decide your senior year life is too boring and want an adventure, you know where to find me," he whispered. I took a shaky breath. "Okay," I said. And just like that he was gone.

### *Epilogue*

The next morning my phone was buzzing. I looked at it and remembered last night when a text from Tobias arrived.

Tobias: *I'll be waiting for you.*

I thought about everything. I could tell my parents the truth and tell my friends that I was going on a long vacation. Not willing to wait another minute to spend my everyday with Tobias I texted back.

Emily: *Good thing that you won't have to wait so long.*

Tobias: *R U serious?*

Emily: *As I'll ever be.*

Tobias: *Then be prepared for an adventure of your lifetime.*

Emily: *I can't wait.*

Maša Bohinc Penček, 1. Ka

## MAI

A long, long time ago, in this universe, when the Earth hadn't existed yet, there were four guardians. People called them the four masters, because each of them had a special power. One had the power over earth, one over water, one over air and the last one over fire. They each lived on and ruled their own planet. The people on each planet were very happy and had a great life, full of magic and mystery. Every planet was based on the power of their guardian and so was the magic of the people.

One day an unknown dark force started to spread around the universe. It began taking over each planet one after another and hid them somewhere deep in the universe where nobody could find them. The guardians fought and battled, but it was all in vain. The force wanted more magic and got more powerful every time, so the guardians made a plan. Each of them gave up their powers and they created a planet based on all their four powers. The planet was beautiful, the mountains and the forests were spectacular, the rivers and the sea were as deep as the soul of the water guardian, the air was so clean that you could hear the air guardian's heart beating in the wind, there were many different flowers and animals and the colours were simply amazing.

When the guardians wanted to leave their bodies to become forces that would protect the planet, the dark force came and wanted to battle. The four of them were strong and wanted to fight it, but the darkness was too strong. It took the earth guardian and killed it. The remaining three were devastated and they decided to seek revenge. They named the newly created planet Mai in the earth guardian's honor, because she wanted to name her child that way. Then they decided that the residents of the planet would be the saved people from each planet. The guardians then created a special stone and hid it deep in their castle on Mai. The stone possessed all of the four guardians' powers and it had a special power. The dark force got stronger every time it got some new magic, so the guardians decided that there should be no magic on planet Mai. But just for safety's sake, before they gave up their magic, they enchanted the stone to keep Mai invisible from anyone who wanted to get close. The guardians also wanted to make sure that the stone was safe, so they decided that their powers would always be handed over to a new generation of guardians who would keep the stone safe.

People on Mai lived a great and happy life. They

lived in peace and harmony and nobody knew that any magic existed. Many centuries later, the dark force gained more and more power. Eventually, it took a human form and named itself Silician. Many generations of the guardians passed and they all kept the stone safe and hidden, until it was the four teens, whom the powers were handed over to.

Alex, Jenny, Mike and Christine were just four ordinary teens, who went to the same school. They didn't really know each other that well until they got a special letter from an old lady who invited them to an emergency meeting in her house. The four of them came despite being worried about their safety. The lady welcomed them to her dining room, where they all sat together. She told them the story about the four guardians and said that she was the last air guardian and her job was to hand over the four powers to them, so they could keep Mai and all the people safe. She also told them the secret that the past generations of the guardians had told her. She said that when the four guardians had created the stone, a tear of anger had fallen from the fire guardian's eye, which was why the stone also contained a small piece of evil which Silician was tracking down. The lady said that Silician was getting closer and closer to Mai, so their job was to fight and protect Mai.

Mike, Jenny, Alex and Christina first thought that the old lady was crazy, but then she took them to the stone and used some of her air magic to show them that it was not pure fiction. She said that they would eventually need to break the stone, so that they would get all the powers that the stone had to be able to beat the darkness that was terrorising the universe. Jenny was freaked out at first, but then she realised that they were all experiencing something unusual. Mike got control over the air, Christina could make waterfalls with her hands, Alex could make fire and Jenny could grow flowers. The four of them practiced their magic and got stronger every day.

A couple of years passed, and the four of them decided that it was time to battle Silician, so they went back to the stone. They held their hands and broke the stone. Now they got all the power from the stone, but they didn't know that they would also lose themselves. They left their bodies and became element forces. The shield around Mai was destroyed, but Mike, Jenny, Christina and Alex protected the people so they didn't know what was happening around them. The four guardians called Silician and he quickly emerged on Mai with a huge smile.

He thought that the guardians were old people, but he was wrong. The four guardians attacked with all their powers, but Silician was strong too, so he fought back. Silician started to become more powerful, because the guardians were angry, but then they called all past guardians' souls, and with all the power they had together they spread a huge light over the universe which cleared every dark soul. Silician was losing powers and every person that had been captured by him was now released and helped the guardians. With their joint powers, they finally defeated him.

The four teens got their human forms back as the four souls left their bodies and returned to their original planets where they needed to repair all the damage that had been done by the darkness. Mike, Jenny, Alex and Christina became the guardians of the universe, because the past souls were so proud of them that they gave them the power of the four elements. The four teens were honoured but they still wanted a normal life, so they kept this a secret from their families and the people on Mai.

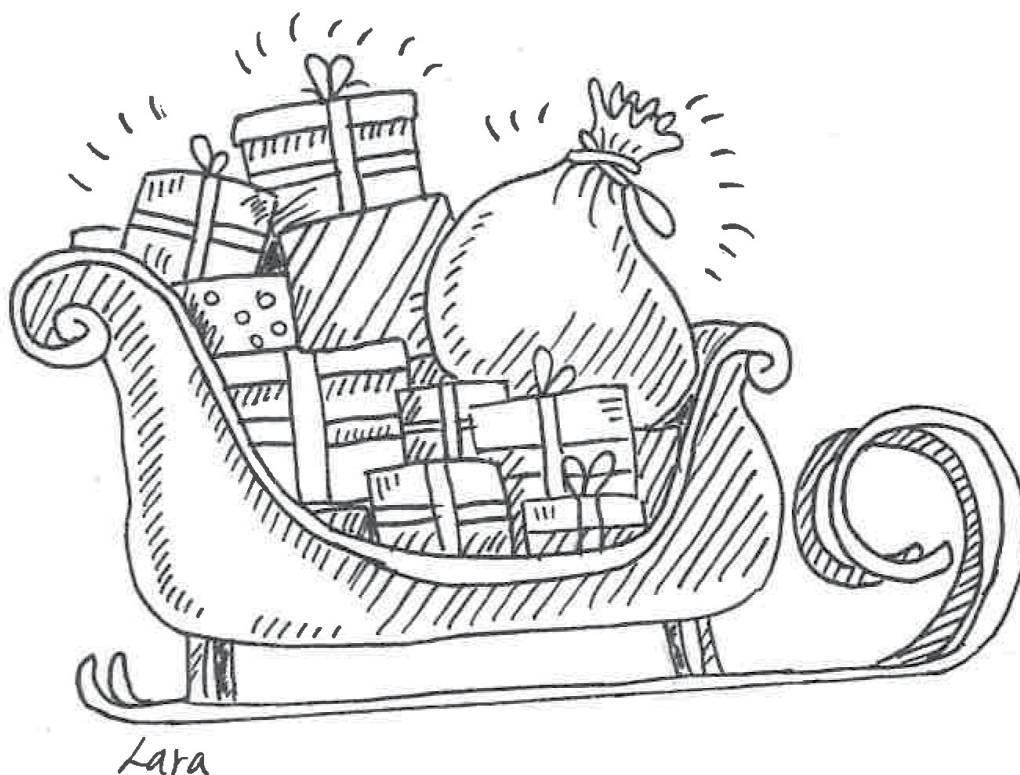
Jure Vuzem, 2. Zb





## THIS AND THAT

### CHRISTMAS



I think Christmas starts far too early because right after Halloween is over, on 1st November, shops already start selling Christmas decorations. On Netflix, the movie streaming site, there are already Christmas movies recommended. I actually love it because Christmas is a lovely time of the year. I have Christmas lights up in my room all year round and I already watched my first Christmas movie on 2nd November.

Pia Ferbežar, 2. Kb

I remember that one Christmas at the age of nine I wished for a game called Call of Duty, because I was a really big fan and I got it. I was really happy, because I had really wished for that game for a long time. I played it almost every day, but after a week I got bored of it. Recently when I was cleaning my room, I found my old console and I played it for three hours straight! It was fun jogging all the childhood memories I had playing that game. It also reminded me of that Christmas night, when the whole family was together. Good times!

Maj Mušič Suljič, 2. Zb

I think that Christmas is very different now, but still good fun. For our family Christmas is a holiday when we all gather, open our presents, which we often make ourselves, put on some Christmas music and eat cookies and other candy. We are not religious, so we don't go to church, but we still have a really good time together.

Last Christmas we went to the centre of Ljubljana, ate some pancakes there and walked around to look at the lights. In the evening, me and my father put the nativity scene, which we made out of wood, under the Christmas tree.

I believe that today Christmas is all about family gatherings and having a good time together. In the past and in some families still today, it was and still is a more religious holiday.

Lara Narobe, 2. Kb

## A DEVASTATING CHRISTMAS EVENING

It happened on 24 December 2018. It was morning and I had just woken up. I was so happy as I could not wait to open the presents that evening at midnight. After I woke up, I listened to some music and answered some messages.

Then I went downstairs to the living room to say good morning to my family. If only I had known the devastating news I was going to hear, I would have never gotten up. I would have stayed in my bed, listening to music in my bubble of imagination. But life is cruel and I had to leave my room only to be heartbroken.

When I got to the living room, I saw my sister and everything looked normal. That was until I saw my mother crying. Worried I went to her to hug her and asked her what had happened. But she was too emotional to talk. I walked to my sister for answers. But the answer I got was the one I could never have prepared for. My great grandmother had died that morning. I could not comprehend it. Tears just started falling from my eyes. Sadness overwhelmed me. I could only cry. I could not even eat. After a few minutes I went back to my room to listen to music as that was the only way I could process this.

Later that day my grandmother and grandfather came as they come every year for Christmas dinner. We laughed and cried, remembering our deceased member. We knew that life had to go on and we could not bring her back. We only hoped that she had not suffered.

I still cry sometimes when I remember her, but my wounds are slowly healing. I know I will always miss her, but hopefully I will always have a smile on my face when I think of her.

Tea Arnež, 3. Ka



## GIFTS

### What's the best gift you've ever given?

This year, for my best friend Maja's birthday, I bought her a phone case in her favourite color, a shirt with an anime character on it (she really likes cartoons and anime), a nail stamper and a poster of a group she likes. I surprised her in the morning on the day of her birthday. I came in front of her house with two balloons with a 1 and a 6 written on each (since it was her 16th birthday) and gave her those gifts.

### What's the worst gift you've ever given?

A few years ago when I was in 6th grade, me and my brother were in Supernova. We were picking a gift to buy for our sister. I saw a necklace and repeatedly said, 'Yes, she'll love it for sure.' When it was her birthday, we gave it to her and she didn't like it. To this day I'm still embarrassed and still have the necklace somewhere in my room. It has never been worn.

### What's the best gift you've ever received?

This year, for my 16th birthday, I received a present through mail. It was from my internet friend Delaine from the Netherlands. She sent me delicious waffles, a photo in a frame of our photoshopped picture and a necklace that says 'Always in my heart' in Dutch in the shape of a heart.

Pia Ferbežar, 2. Kb

### What's the best gift you've ever given?

I made a 365 jar of notes for my boyfriend. This is basically a big jar and there are 365 notes in it. I picked green, blue, red and yellow little pieces of paper. On the green paper I wrote love quotes, on the blue I wrote what I liked about him, on the red I wrote why I loved him and on the yellow I wrote cute quotes. I gave it to him on New Year's Eve.

### What's the worst gift you've ever given?

My friend invited me to her birthday party and of course I forgot the gift bag at home. I didn't realize that I hadn't brought anything with me until I wished her happy birthday. I apologized and promised her I'd bring it to school the next day, but

I kept forgetting to bring it for the entire month. It was so embarrassing!

### What's the best gift you've ever received?

I don't remember a particular gift that I was really happy about, but I get the most excited about gifts my friends made themselves. It makes me feel very special, because I know they put a lot of work into it.

### What's the worst gift you've ever received?

When I was younger, I used to be obsessed with this one toy that I now don't really remember what it actually was, but at that time I kept talking about it and I told everyone who had been invited to my birthday party that I wanted it. So you can see where this is going ... In the end, almost everyone brought this toy and then I had like 7 identical toys and I realized that I didn't really like it that much. So I took all of them back to the store and bought something completely different.

Ina Pavlič Juriša, 2. Za

## THE BEST GIFT I'VE EVER GIVEN

I remember it was about two years ago and it was a gift for my dearest friend. It was her fifteenth birthday and I wanted to give her something special. I had racked my brains all night until I came up with an idea. I went to a book store and bought a book, the second part of her favorite book. I bought it in English, because she often says how books in English are better. The second part of the gift was a black T-shirt. I bought a T-shirt and different colors that were waterproof. At home I then painted a cow at the bottom of the shirt. Why did I choose a cow? Because they have cows at home and we often make jokes about them, especially about the cow Jagoda. I wrote a note with a quote I had once found on the Internet. It was for a bracelet, but I changed it a little bit. It said, 'Put on your T-shirt and make a wish. When the T-shirt is worn through years, your wish will come true.' I wrapped everything in blue paper and added a simple string. I really hoped she would like my gift. And she did. She was so thrilled about it that she couldn't thank me enough. In my mind I patted myself on the shoulder, knowing I did a good job.

Veronika Černetič, 2. Zb



It was about two or three years ago when it was my best friend's birthday. Me and my good friend decided to make a present for her. We wrote about 15 to 20 letters 'Open when ... (you are sad/happy/hungry...)'. We spent about 5 hours writing them. We added some pictures and a chocolate. On the day of her birthday, we went to her house without her expecting us. We rang the doorbell and she came out. She was surprised and very happy to see us. She really loved the present.

Leyla Hassaballa A., 2. Zb

The best gift I've ever given was a book of trips that I made myself for my boyfriend's birthday. I borrowed some books about motorcycle trips and picked the best ones. I rewrote the instructions, added some pictures and the reasons why I'd like to go there. All of those destinations are in our country, which makes it even more interesting. I also bought him some items and parts for his motorcycle. This gift made him very happy. He said that it was the best gift I could ever give.

Lara Narobe, 2. Kb

The best gift I've ever given was a month ago, when I gave my sister a gold bracelet for her birthday. She used to have a gold bracelet she always wore, but she lost it and couldn't find it. She was very sad because of that, so I decided to buy her a new one. It was quite expensive, but it was worth it.

Urška Roblek, 2. Kb





## THE BEST GIFT I'VE EVER RECEIVED

It was an ordinary day and me and my sister were playing outside. All of a sudden my dad came and told us that we had to go for a long ride to buy something for our car. Me and my sister didn't want to go, but then our dad said we would be sorry if we didn't go. I started thinking where we were going and what we would do, so we both got excited and agreed to join him. We all sat in the car and went for a ride.

It was quite peaceful in the car because Mom and Dad were hiding a surprise, and me and my sister were thinking what it could be. When the ride was nearly over, I saw parachutes. My stomach was full of butterflies and I got scared. Finally, we got to our final destination, Ajdovščina.

When Dad parked the car, a cute big dog started jumping around the car. It was my mom's favourite breed, so I told her to look at it. We got out and I asked my dad where the parachutes were and he answered they were under the table. I looked there and saw a cute little puppy. I soon realized it was for us. I started crying and Mom and Dad were happy about it. I ran to it, took it on my lap and petted it. The owners told me he was a boy. We still couldn't take him home, because he was only 2 months old. I was sad, but I knew I was going to have him in my arms soon. When we drove back home, we started talking about his name. My mom suggested Bob, but none of us liked it.

Two months passed and we were all getting more and more excited. In this time we built him a kennel and put in a food bowl. We also decided we were going to name him Ty, short for Tyson.

Finally the day of bringing Ty home came. Again we drove to Ajdovščina and when we got there, I saw Ty and he was quite bigger. We spent some time talking to the owners and then we put Ty in the dog cage and drove home.

Since that day he has needed a little time to get used to all of us and the new home. Now Ty is 4 years old and I love him like my little brother.

Kaja Hotujec, 2. Zb

## HUMOUR IN THE CLASSROOM

Teacher: What is a nuclear family?

Student: It is an explosive one.

The expected answer: A family consisting of a couple and their children.

Teacher: What is the word for *pajkice* in English?

Student: Spiders.

The expected answer: Leggings.

Teacher: What is the word for *pismen* in English?

Student: A peaceman.

The expected answer: Literate.

Student: Ostracised means that you are enjoying the English test very, very much.

The expected answer: Avoided or prevented from taking part in group activities.



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**Teachers:** Karla Ferlic, Mojca Kočevar Korbar  
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**ILLUSTRATIONS**

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Leyla Hassaballa Abdou, 2. Zb

**Other illustrations**

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