





## GE(R)MS INSIDE

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## Editorial

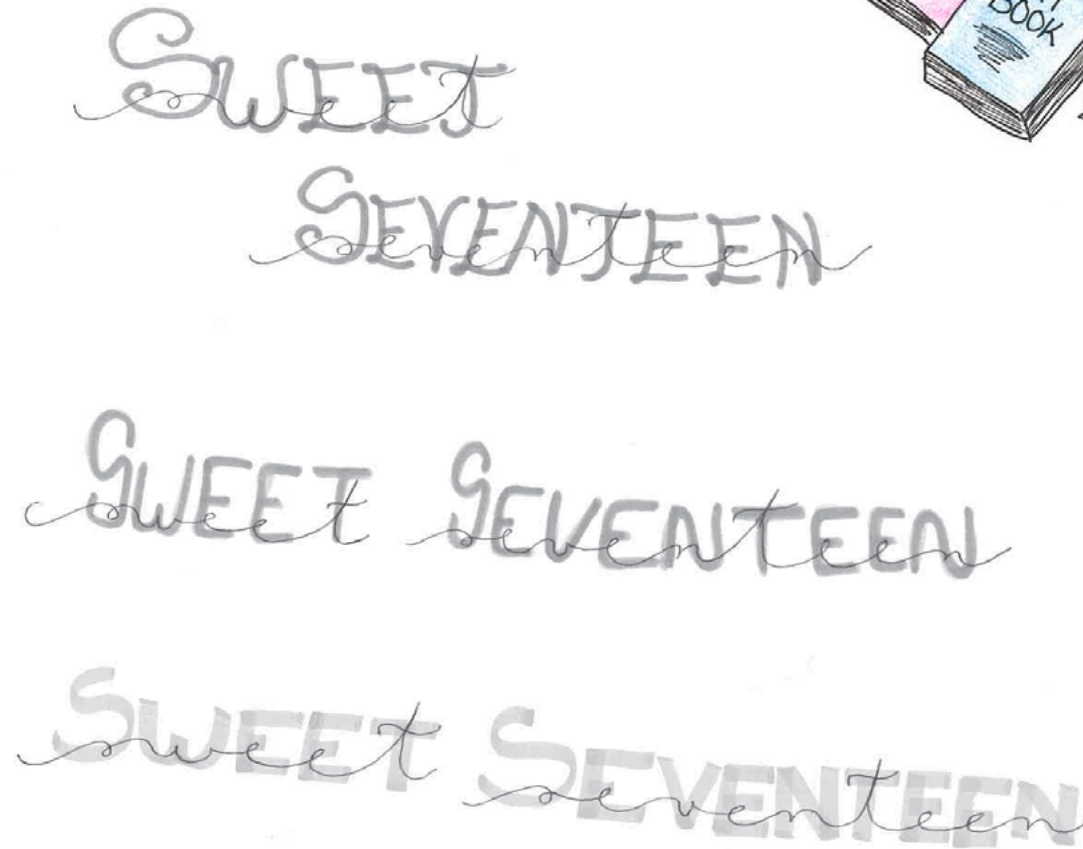
With our seventh edition of Ge(r)ms we are back to the pre-Covid format of our magazine. In the seven sections many interesting articles can be found: you can read about various views on how enjoyable being 17 is; students write about what they do in their spare time – from singing, writing poetry and reading to taking care of exotic pets and doing sport; you might (dis)agree if the places where young people live are exciting enough (or would you rather become a globetrotter?); four short-story writers participated at the literary competition *Bodi pisatelj* and two of the short stories were made into beautiful comics; two religious holidays are described; German students also added some of their ideas. The illustrations, which undoubtedly contribute to the message of the words, were mostly made by the gifted first-year students.

Helena Doberšek



## STUDENTS' OPINIONS

### THE BEST AND THE WORST THINGS ABOUT BEING 17



The teenage year 17 is interesting. It is the best year of your life, but at times it can be quite difficult. You are doing and handling a lot of things at once. From school, classmates and friends to parents and friends and also teenage love. So, you will fight with everyone and there will be some drama but it will be okay at the end of the day.

Some of the best things about being 17 is going out with friends, hanging out, doing stupid things and enjoying life. You can also fall in love. It can be serious and can teach you a lot of things and you can grow as a person, or it can be nothing serious, just a bit of fun. When you are 17, you don't have a lot of responsibilities but you have some.

On the other hand, there are some things that aren't going to be as fun and nice. You will fight

a lot; with people you love or hate. Not because you want to, but probably because of a hormonal imbalance. You will also go through a lot of physical change. You will get body hair, gain or loss weight, get stretch marks, cellulite ... So you will probably hate your body, but it is okay, everybody has that and goes through that.

It will also be very stressful at school because everybody will expect you to do great and go to a great college or get a good job.

In conclusion, it will be rough and you will go through a lot but you will make your best memories at 17. So don't stress out because everyone experiences that age differently.

Nika Dolinar, 3. Kb

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I mostly don't like being a teenager. I think the bad things about it outweigh the good and it can sometimes be a big burden. There is so much expected of us but somehow we're still kids in our parents' eyes.

We have a lot of chores, studying and we have to be responsible and smart. Besides all that, we also have to stay positive and happy because young apparently equals happy to some people. We also have to be strong through everything to not seem weak and powerless. But everything isn't horrible. There are some good things, like we don't have to pay the bills yet, or have a job.

I think the biggest problem is the world we live in where some old people still have their own beliefs which they force on us, and our generation has their own beliefs. We should start working together to make this world a better place rather than just argue all the time. People shouldn't assume that if you're young you're immature and stupid, and that only old people are wise and intelligent. People should also mind their own business more rather than sticking their nose into other peoples' affairs.

Alja Murn, 3. Kb

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Adolescence is a time of huge change, physically, emotionally and socially. In these years you discover who you are and what you like. Sometimes this is very strange because your emotions fluctuate every day. Sometimes you can't control your emotions; I see this in myself.

There are some things I like being 17 and some I really hate. You are stuck between a child and an adult. You're old enough to be trusted and you don't have a lot of responsibilities yet. When you're 18, a lot more is expected of you. And that is the one thing I really like about being 17. You have a lot of freedom and you meet a lot of people and make friendships.

I really don't like that I can't drive a car without parents and that I depend on my parents' 'transportation' if I have to go anywhere. I don't like that I can't travel alone outside the European Union.

To sum up, teenage years are pretty nice, although they sometimes seem exhausting. 17 is a really important age. At this point you may be thinking about going to university or what jobs you'd like to have in the future. You're making decisions now that could shape the rest of your life.

Nina Oblak, 3. Kb

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Coming to the end of being 17 and leaving my adolescence phase ... This last year that I spent being 17 is slowly coming to an end and I can say I don't regret it.

Being adolescent for me wasn't bad at all. At the age of 17, I already had permission to go out and stay out if I explained the situation. The same year I got my first real summer job and worked really hard for it. My parents also realized that I was slowly becoming an adult and trying to be independent. But as a 17-year-old I can only do so much. I still live at home and do not plan on moving. Sometimes my parents still spoil me and I still don't have a steady money flow. But that's okay because I don't have responsibilities like paying taxes, paying for my phone bill, paying for food, etc. I think that for me being 17 wasn't bad at all. The only thing that I don't like about it would be that I'm not old enough for a driving licence or that legally I'm not allowed to travel long distances (other countries, continents) without a legal guardian.

But that aside, I'm sometimes scared of becoming an adult, the thought of that scares me for some reason. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because I'll have more responsibilities, or because I'll slowly have to get a real job, but still I think that if I stay strong, it's not going to be scary.

To sum up, being 17 was one of the best years of my life. I made many new friendships (some also broke off), made new memories, slowly started growing up and finding my way. I hope that I make many new memories in the future and to have fun like I have had till now, if not even more.

Karmen Šenk, 3. Kb

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They say that adolescence is the most confusing time of our lives. I can completely agree with that. Teenagers are becoming young adults, there is understandably a lot of pressure, they are going through huge physical changes.

The thing I like about teenage years is that I'm not fully responsible for my actions, but it's a bit confusing too because I would like to be responsible for what I do and don't do.

I like that I will soon have my driver's license and a car so that I won't depend on someone else all the time. And that I can decide about my priorities, hobbies ... and that I am almost carefree.

But what I don't like about teenage years is that we (teenagers) are influenced by other people on social media. We overthink too much and compare ourselves with others, which is unnecessary, but still important because with that we are developing our identity and we grow as a person.

And the one thing that I absolutely hate about being a teenager is that people expect us to behave like adults but at the same time they still treat us like children.

To sum up, adolescence really is a time full of pain and pleasure, and for now I'm fine with it.

Maja Škulj, 3. Kb

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Adolescence can be hard for some, but for others it can be the best years of their life.

In that time you experience a huge physical change and you develop your identity, which you often doubt and seek. Discovering who you are is usually a hard task, cycling through a number of identities to find one that suits you best. Finding interests is also important. We often find ourselves in hobbies which we have. That's my first pro for teenage years.

When you are young and living with your parents, it's a good thing that you have time for doing the things you love. I developed my identity through dance and gymnastics. I felt carefree. But it also has bad sides. I felt pressured to be the best and perfect at everything.

Another good thing about being 17 is a lot of parties where I can have fun and hang out with my friends. The most difficult thing about being 17 for me would be being more mature and doing a lot of things myself. Figuring out how to do things myself is sometimes hard, but doing things that normal teenagers usually don't do is also an advantage because I like being independent. My mom, who works a lot in England, helps from time to time, but I prefer to ask my older brother for advice.

In conclusion, I think teenage years for me are quite good and I like being 17.

Manca Tratnik, 3. Kb

## TEENAGE YEARS

Teenage years are called adolescence. This is a time for growth and puberty changes. Some people think these are the most wonderful years of their life.

The main advantage about being a teenager is that you can explore yourself and the world without major serious consequences. You can find out who you are. At 17 you are not a child and not an adult either. I get treated maturely but do not have very many responsibilities yet. A huge pro is that my parents are paying for my necessities (food, house, etc.).

There are also many cons about adolescence. I think a major pressure is having to decide about a career path. The difficult part is trying to understand your own feelings and who you are as a person. At the same time you have to deal with the pressure of work, school, family, and friends. All this sometimes results in mental health issues such as depression and anxiety.



## SOCIAL MEDIA AND TEENAGERS

I am a 17-year old teenage girl, and I think that being a teenager has definitely got its pros and cons. I would say for myself that I'm very easily influenced by other people and social media, and I think that this doesn't affect me well. Social media often makes us insecure about ourselves and mostly it makes us insecure about our physical appearance, and that can affect our mental health and it changes the way we look on ourselves.

As I said, being a teenager has got its pros and cons. In my opinion pros of being 17 are that we have access to social media, we are getting to know ourselves and we are figuring out who or what we are going to be or do in life. Another pro about being 17 is that we can get to know new people and make new friends. And to me that's quite amazing, mostly because I am often more extroverted than introverted. But there are also cons about being a teenager, and I think that the biggest con is social media. Social media can be good for the young population, but it depends on the content that they are watching, because it can be helpful but also harmful. I would say that social media is a double-edged sword. We are

In conclusion, there are many advantages and disadvantages to being a teenager. I am just trying to enjoy this part of my life before I become an adult.

Katja Oražem, 3. Kb



very easily influenced by social media, which is most of the time a bad thing because we rely on it too much, and that can cause a lot of stress and pressure. Another con is that we are still changing physically and mentally, and we must keep that in mind because we often compare ourselves to other people, mostly the people on the Internet or social media. The biggest problem about that is that social media influencers edit and photoshop their pictures and videos, so that they appear better on the Internet. That can cause a lot of problems with self-image to the younger audience because they compare themselves to a picture of a person who doesn't even look like that in real life. And by posting highly edited pictures this so-called influencers are setting, if I may say, unrealistic beauty standards. A big con is also that we can be peer pressured into doing things that we wouldn't usually do, such as drinking or taking illegal substances.

In conclusion, I think that being a teenager is a good time in life because you can experience new things and meet new people, but there are also some downs. And I think that we shouldn't be too hard on ourselves because we are developing and we must keep in mind that the people on social media platforms don't usually look like this. We should focus on ourselves and the people that surround us and support us.

Neža Jurjevec, 3. Kb

### PINK AND BLUE SHOULD NOT DEFINE US

Are girls really more mature or are they just expected to be? Ever since being young children, we are expected to be a certain way. Boys are expected to be rough and aggressive, while girls should play nicely with dolls. It all starts in the womb. When parents find out what gender their baby is, they buy or receive everything a certain colour. Pink for girls, blue for boys. But why does a colour represent a whole gender? How is pink a feminine colour and why are the boys that wear it considered feminine?

In today's society we are anticipated to look a certain way. Girls should have long hair, always look put together, wear makeup, but not too much of course. Have painted nails, but a certain colour. Wear skirts and dresses, yet not too short, but not too long. Do not colour your hair, or

if you do, then definitely a natural colour. With boys there is the same story, but in a different font. They have to have short hair, since having long would make them look too feminine. They should not paint their nails or wear jewellery. They do have a little easier job in school since they can wear pretty much whatever they want. They can come in sweatpants and no one would say anything to them, but for a girl yet again she is expected to look put together. While growing up and especially in our adolescent years girls are expected to be mature, sweet, diligent, while with boys we are more understanding that they still need to grow up and are allowed to make way more mistakes.

Gender stereotypes should not exist. Why do we care if we are pink or blue? We should judge people by their actions and not our gender. I do believe that the Gen-Z generation is being way more considerate, that we do not have to dress or look a certain way to be good people. I hope that in the future we will be even more open-minded. Hopefully, we will be able to live life the way it makes us happy.

Ema Movrin, 3. Za

### A DREAM DOESN'T BECOME REALITY THROUGH MAGIC; IT TAKES SWEAT, DETERMINATION AND HARD WORK

Each and every one of us has been dreaming since we were little kids. We only differ in whether we have dreamt big enough to make it a reality. Our set goals are achieved with hard work and determination and our success depends mostly on us.

To make something out of your life takes ambition. As children, we tend to have enormous dreams, not knowing how the world works. Hopefully, by the time we get the chance to make our dreams come true, we don't run out of enthusiasm. The basis for our future starts in the first grade when we enter the years of education. Education is a key to knowing how to make dreams a reality. That is what school is all about.

After you get proper education, you start building on your plans. On the way here, you have also gotten a lot of ideas and met people with shared

ambitions. Now starts the hard part where you enter a rocky road of ups and downs. With any luck your sleepless nights, hard work and tears pay off and you succeed. After all, nobody has won the lottery without buying a lottery ticket.

In conclusion, dreams take a lot of work to become reality. Nothing happens when you lie in bed and do nothing, but everything can happen if you get up and take on the world. Keep your head up high and follow your dreams.

Julija Meglič, 3. Ka

### STUDYING AT UNIVERSITY IS A WASTE OF TIME

Nowadays more people decide to go to university after finishing high school. But is it true that they just throw away their time by studying and not finding a job? Well, to figure if the titling statement is true, we must look at the pros and cons of going to university.

Firstly, let me look at the statistics. In the last few years, more high-schoolers decided to go to university than in 2000s or before. Why? Well, by studying at university (and finishing it) you gain a higher level of education, which opens a great field of job opportunities. For instance, after high school, I will be a cosmetic technician and I can find a job in a salon, but if I go to a college for cosmetology, I will be able to find a job in a cosmetics factory and I can be responsible for checking their quality. By finishing college, I can also find a better-paid employment. By working in a salon I can earn about a minimum pay, which is €900, but if I finish college, I can work in a factory (as a cosmetologist) and earn up to €1,500 or more. Furthermore, there are more possible employments, like working in a pharmaceutical company or even owning your own, than if you don't go to university. There are already too many salons and gaining customers is literally a war, so there is a great possibility that we remain jobless, but having higher education and working in a factory can be a lifetime employment, because the possibility of the factory going bankrupt is less likely.

On the other hand, studying at university can be pointless. Firstly, people might not offer you a job because they are scared that they might lose

their position. For instance, a CEO of a company might get scared of your academic achievements which may be greater than theirs, which means you can overthrow them in the future, making them unemployed. Secondly, most universities are tough and most people don't finish them, resulting in a waste of the time (and money) they spent there. Moreover, going to university for five years for example means you will be working for five more years until you can retire. Yes, some countries do count the practical work you did while studying at university as your 'working time' while others don't.

In conclusion, there are lots of positive and negative aspects to going to university but in my opinion the positives outweigh the bad. Studying at university is NOT a waste of time if you are persistent and do complete it, and also if you have a goal in life which you are determined to achieve. But if you are lazy or just enjoy working rather than studying and are also happy with your job, then yes, studying at university is a waste of time for you.

Maša Bohinc Penček, 4. Ka



## ROMANTIC LOVE IS A POOR BASIS FOR MARRIAGE

People are commonly marrying because of love, but that isn't always the case. Although the special bond between two people is caused by love, marriage isn't necessarily based on love.

Arranged marriages are proof that love isn't needed to start a life together. There are different paths leading to this arrangement, but it isn't promised to work. It depends on characters of said married people and their compatibility. Maybe the two in love get along very well, but one is unfaithful and it all falls apart.

Secondly, the statistics show that there is about fifty percent chance of a long-lasting marriage. So if I assume that people are marrying for love, no one can tell if it will work out or not. The truth is, there is no rule on how to make a marriage last a lifetime. Of course, there are some guidelines on how to improve the quality of a shared life, but no one can guarantee them working. Some people can be together for over ten years and decide to seal the deal. They divorce after three years, even though everybody thought they had a firm and stable relationship. Meanwhile, another couple can be blindly in love and get married after three months and the will stay together forever. No one knows why.

In conclusion, choosing your partner is a lottery. Marrying for love may sometimes not work out, but at least you gave it a shot. The second one isn't promised to work out either. Maybe third time's a charm.

Julija Meglič, 3. Ka

## WATCHING TELEVISION IS A WASTE OF TIME

It is often said, that watching television is a waste of time. But is it really? In this essay, I will take a look at both, positive and negative sides of watching television.

Firstly, let us look upon some of the plus sides of sitting or lying down and watching television. This can be a very calming and de-stressing activity, because after a long day, your body needs some rest. The shows on television are also made to take your mind off things so you can really calm yourself. The fact worth mentioning is that there are a lot of good, educational programmes. So, another pro is that you can learn something while having fun.

On the other hand, there are quite a few cons of television watching. Firstly, it can get you really distracted. The consequence of that is forgetting your responsibilities or work you might need to do. A lot of people would also say that it could make you lazier or unfocused. Because of that you could live a more unhealthy and unproductive life.

In conclusion, there can be pluses and minuses of watching television so, in my opinion, it is not a complete waste of time.

Živa Udovč Šink, 4. Zb

## WE ARE BUYING TOO MUCH TOO CHEAPLY

Let's face it, everybody has at some point bought some unnecessary things and paid as little as a few pennies for them. At first, we think it's a bargain, but if we dug deeper, we could discover some hurtful truth.

I completely agree with the title, although I might be doing just that. Nowadays, we want everything to be delivered to us very fast and cheaply. We check the price and then opt for a cheaper option. But that is not necessarily good. The quality of these kind of goods is many times questionable, as they are usually made in China or other countries which produce massively and are not orientated to the quality of the product itself. If the products are cheap that means the

components or ingredients they are made of were probably cheap too. For example, companies try to get the highest possible output, so they will not spend more to make a product than what they get for it. These products are made fast with as little energy as possible. The companies are more focused on quantity than quality. Basically, we end up getting a bad product.

Secondly, due to such low-quality products we buy more of those things. At first, we think we have done something good for our budget, but we end up spending way more money than we would if we bought high-quality products, made of good materials. For example, we buy a cheap item of clothing for a few pounds. After a few washes the fabric tears and gets fuzzy. And then we think to ourselves maybe if we had bought something a bit more expensive, it would last longer, maybe even a few generations. But if we keep buying things like that, we spend way more money than we should.

In conclusion, I think it's better to buy fewer more expensive things which will last longer. Buying low quality products frequently, we end up spending way more, which means that we are causing more harm than good.

Jerneja Malovrh, 3. Ka





## ANIMAL TESTING SHOULD BE BANNED

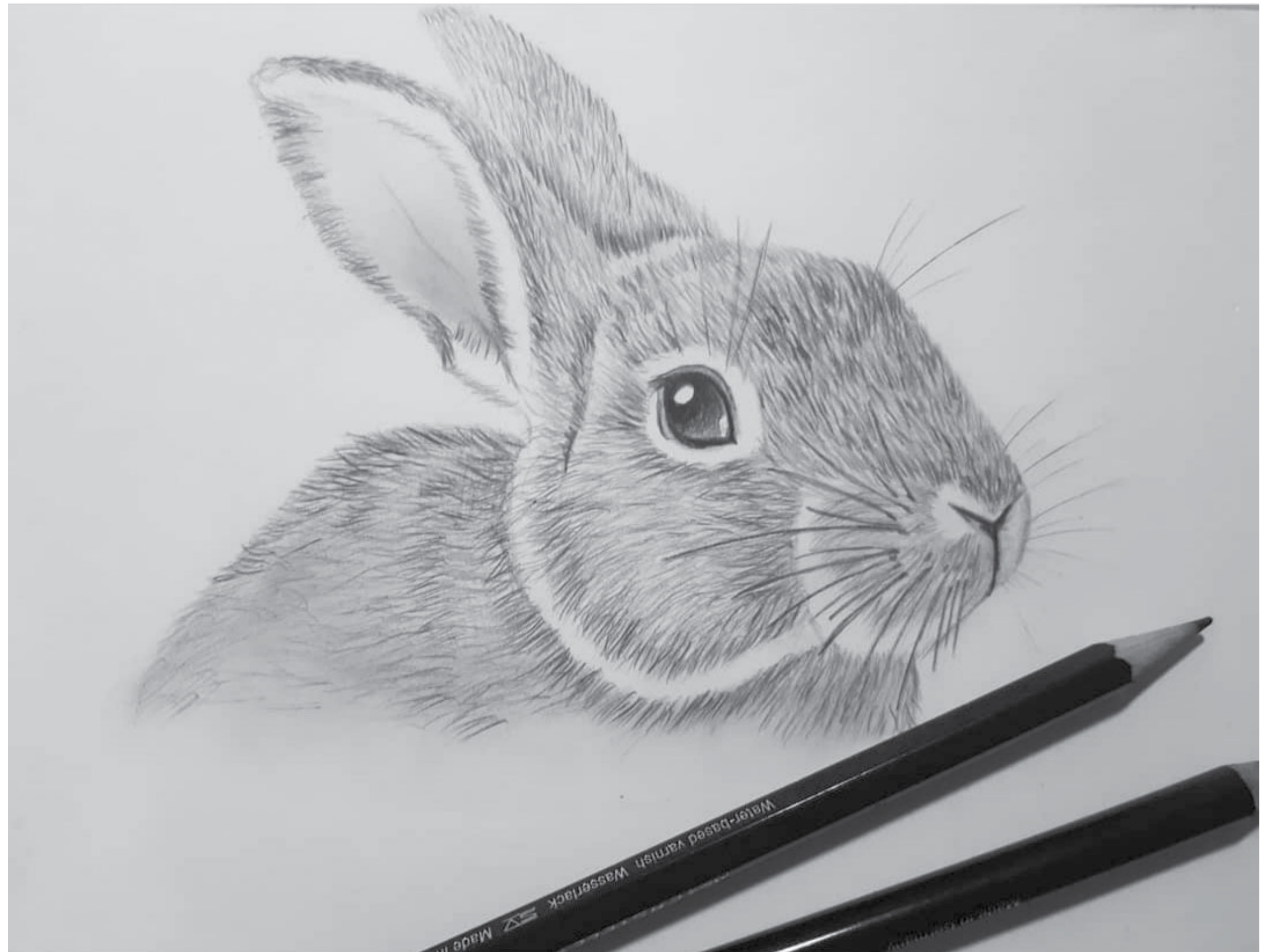
Animal testing is the use of animals in different experiments for disease researches, for testing new medical and cosmetic products, household cleaners, food additives, and many more. The most commonly used animals are rats, mice, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, monkeys, but other species are used around the world. Some people don't know that this is happening or they just don't really care, some support it and others think that animal testing should be banned.

On one hand, there are reasons why animal testing is useful. First of all, with animal testing we can make life-saving medications and vaccines. For example, insulin was discovered as a result of research on dogs. Furthermore, animals have a very similar DNA to humans, for instance, chimpanzees and humans share 99% of their DNA. This means that the product tested on animals will probably have a very similar effect on humans.

On the other hand, there are also reasons and arguments why animal testing should be banned. Firstly, animal testing and experimentation is very inhumane and cruel. For instance, animals are forced to inhale harmful gases, they are force-fed, injected with different substances, burned with acids and fire, etc. Secondly, there are cheaper alternatives to animal testing such as using human cells and tissues or human volunteers.

In conclusion, there are many reasons for and against animal testing, but as science is evolving and there are alternatives to animal testing, there really is no good reason why animal testing is still acceptable everywhere in the world. Personally, I think animal testing should definitely be banned, because I don't see a reason for it being good and animals are suffering for no reason.

Tajda Todorov, 2. Fc



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

The way of living nowadays is very different than it was in the past. It differs in several things, but I do not think it is necessarily easier in every view.

Firstly, people in the past did not have electronic devices like we do. For example mobile phones. I think that life is much easier with them, because you can reach out to other people whenever you feel like.

Secondly, farmers can do a lot more and a lot faster on their farm with the machines they have. Most of those did not exist in the past, or they were not so modern. I know that because I live on a farm and my great-grandmother has told me how they used to work very hard to do certain things by hand, but now a machine does exactly the same amount of work much faster.

One of the positive sides of today's time is also cars and public transport. We can get to work, school, shop, etc. a lot faster than people in the past did. And they had to go on foot most of the time, which was very exhausting.

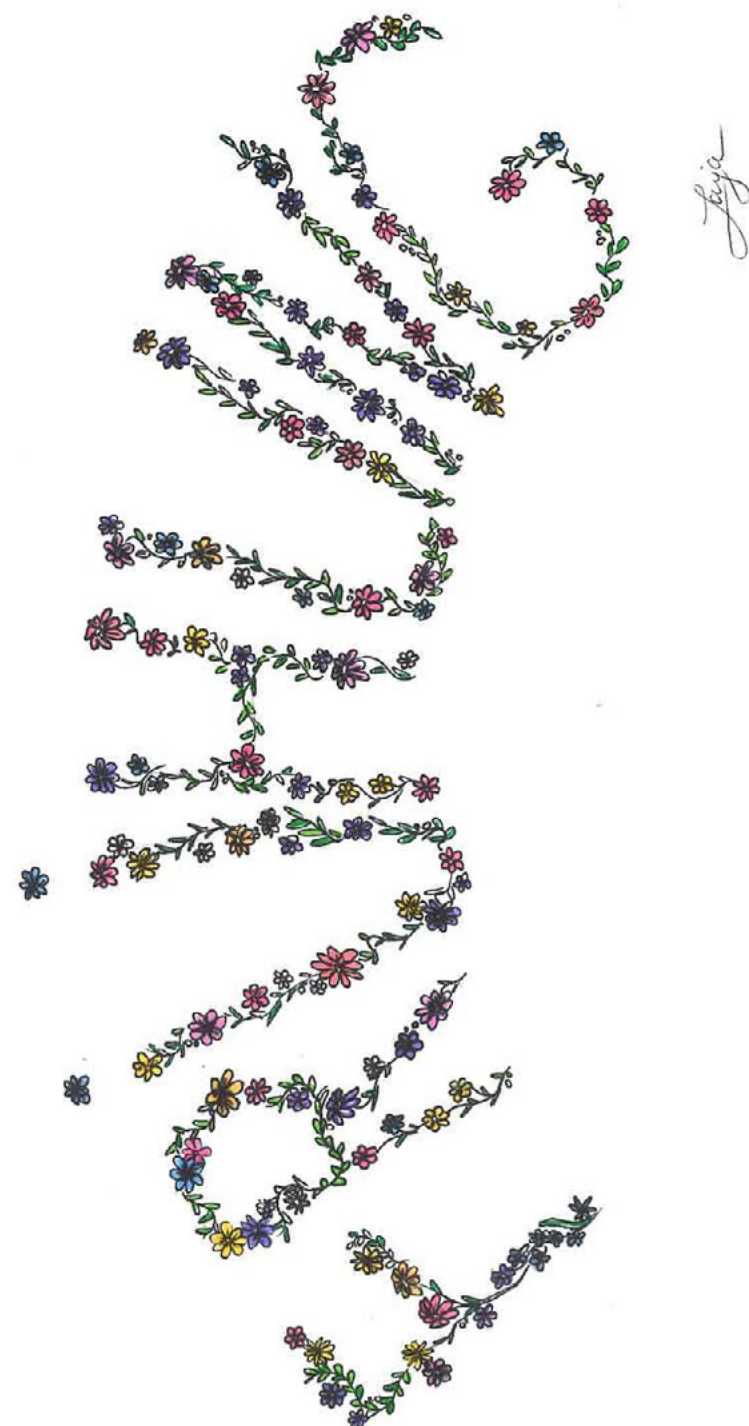
But those advantages also come with some downfalls. Let's look at things from the environmental point of view. All those cars and other polluting means of transport are basically ruining the air that we breathe. In the past, they did not even have to worry about that.

Furthermore, the people and their attitude have changed a lot since then. They are not so scared to tell their own opinion about anything and to anyone, which causes protests and spats between people. In the past, not many people were brave enough to tell whatever was on their mind, so it did not come to that so often.

To sum up, I think generally life is easier now than it was in the past, but in some ways it is not. If I could choose to live now or in the past, I would definitely choose to live now, because I can't even imagine living without cars or electronic devices.

Ana Stanonik, 4. Ka

## DEUTSCHE SEITEN



## FRÜHLING KOMMT

Für mich ist der Frühling, wenn die Natur grün wird und wenn ich die Vögel singen höre. Unsere Natur erwacht. Das Frühjahr ist auch die Zeit, in der die Winterreifen gewechselt werden müssen. Der erste Frühlingstag ist der 21. März.

Katarina Trebušak, 2. Ka

Der Winter ist vorbei, der Frühling ist wieder da. Die Vögel singen schon, die Glocken lugen aus dem Boden. Die Primeln blühen schon und verkünden Liebe und Frieden. Alles blüht wunderschön und der Himmel ist blau. Schmetterlinge und Bienen fliegen herum.

Ja! Es ist schön, wenn der Frühling erwacht.

Lara Casar, 2. Za

Der Frühling ist die Zeit nach dem Winter. Er beginnt am 21. März. Ich mag den Frühling, denn ich mag Pflanzen, wenn sie blühen. Da habe ich mehr Energie. Ich mag sonnige Morgen. Im Frühling ist es wärmer. Der Sommer naht.

Sabrina Sever, 2. Za

Der Frühling ist die Zeit, in der alles aufwacht. Die Vögel singen und die Blumen blühen. Und wir freuen uns darauf, unsere Jacken auszuziehen. Der Schnee ist weg und die Tiere wachen auf. Die Tage werden wärmer und länger.

Nina Brandl, 2. Za

Wann ist der Frühling endlich da? Draußen sieht es kalt aus und grau. Der Winter will in diesem Land einfach andauern. Die niedrigen Temperaturen und das lausige Wetter ziehen sich bis zum April hin. Die Winter sehen so gefühllos aus. Deshalb freue ich mich umso mehr auf den Frühling. Der Frühling ist ein neuer Anfang. Die Natur wacht auf und beschmückt die Bäume mit grünen Blättern und die Blumen mit wunderschönen Farben. Die Vögel fliegen aus den fernen warmen Orten

zurück. So ist der Frühling der volle Gegensatz zu dem grauen Winter.

Vita Janžič, 2. Za

Der Frühling ist bald da. Die Blumen blühen und die Sonne scheint. Der Winter ist vorbei und danach kommt der Sommer. Der Frühling ist meine Lieblingsjahreszeit. Das Wetter ist sonnig. Im Frühling mache ich gerne lange Spaziergänge und beobachte die Natur. Der Frühlingsanfang bedeutet für mich, dass die Schule bald vorbei ist. Diese Jahreszeit erinnert mich an meine Kindheit. Der Frühling ist die schönste Zeit des Jahres. Alles blüht und duftet.

Elmedina Čizmić, 2. Fa

## BEI MIR ZU HAUSE

Ich wohne in einem zweistöckigen Haus.

Im ersten Stock gibt es zuerst einen Flur. Wir empfangen dort unsere Gäste. Im Flur gibt es einen Schuhschrank, einen Spiegel, einen Teppich und einen Schrank für Jacken.

Im Gemeinschaftsraum gibt es ein Wohnzimmer, ein Esszimmer und eine Küche.

Wir verbringen die meiste Zeit im Wohnzimmer. Da unterhalten wir uns und sehen fern. Im Wohnzimmer gibt es ein Sofa, ein Regal, einen Fernseher, einen Teppich, eine Lampe und einen Couchtisch. Da sind Blumen auf den Fensterbänken.

Im Esszimmer gibt es eine Lampe, einen Esstisch und Stühle. Dort essen wir und empfangen Gäste. Neben dem Esszimmer befindet sich die Küche, in der meine Mutti und ich kochen. In der Küche gibt es eine Mikrowelle, Schränke, eine Theke, einen Geschirrspüler, eine Bar, einen Kühlschrank, einen Backofen, ein Induktionskochfeld und eine Kaffeemaschine.

Wir haben ein Zimmer, das wir Waschküche nennen. Dort waschen wir unsere Wäsche, deshalb gibt es da eine Waschmaschine und einen Trockner.

Der letzte Raum im Erdgeschoss ist das



Badezimmer. Im Badezimmer gibt es eine Dusche, eine Toilette, ein Waschbecken, einen Spiegel und einen Schrank.

Die Treppe führt uns in den zweiten Stock.

Zuerst gehen wir den Flur runter zum Gästezimmer. Da gibt es ein Sofa, einen Tischfußball und Schränke. Nebenan ist das Büro und Ankleidezimmer meines Vaters.

Auf dieser Etage befindet sich ein weiteres großes Badezimmer. Es hat eine Badewanne, eine Dusche, einen Kleiderschrank, zwei Waschbecken und eine Toilette.

Das Schlafzimmer meiner Eltern hat einen großen Kleiderschrank, ein Wasserbett, zwei Teppiche und zwei Nachttische.

Am Ende ist mein Zimmer, wo ich die meiste Zeit verbringe. Drin habe ich einen Schreibtisch, am dem ich Hausaufgaben mache. Dort gibt es auch einen Schrank, einen großen Spiegel, einen Fernseher, ein Bett, ein Bücherregal, eine Leseecke und einen Balkon. In meinem Zimmer höre ich Musik und treffe mich mit meinen Freundinnen.

Nina Brandl, 2. Za

## ICH BIN SCHÜLER

Ich heiße Svit und ich bin Schüler in der Fachschule SŠFKZ. Diese Schule befindet sich im Zentrum von Ljubljana, unter dem Schloss. Ich meine, dass das ein sehr schöner Teil von Ljubljana ist.

Ich bin jetzt im dritten Jahrgang und mache viel Praktikum im Labor. Ich bin froh, dass ich diese Schule gewählt habe, denn mir gefällt ja sehr, was wir hier lernen. Meine Klasse habe ich sehr lieb. Ich bin nicht der Klassensprecher, aber der Klassensprecherin helfe ich oft. Unsere Klassenlehrerin unterrichtet uns auch Mathe, und mit ihr können wir immer alle Probleme lösen und besprechen, die in der Klasse erscheinen. Ich persönlich bemühe mich auch sehr, dass ich immer gute Noten in meinem Zeugnis habe, denn die sind ja sehr wichtig, wenn man sich später an einer Universität bewirbt.

Später will ich Mikrobiologie studieren, aber darüber bin ich noch nicht ganz sicher. Für viele junge Leute in Schulen ist alles schwerer

geworden, als der Online-Unterricht begann. Diese Pandemie dauert jetzt fast schon zwei Jahre, und es wurde immer wieder gezeigt, dass Online-Unterricht den Schülern nicht so viel Kenntnis wie Präsenz-Unterricht gibt. Ich hoffe doch, dass wir jetzt bis zum Jahresende in der Schule bleiben.

Svit Jeram, 3. L

## INSTAGRAM-PROFILE SOLL MAN KRISTISCH BETRACHTEN

Wenn du ein junger Mensch bist, der im Jahr 2022 lebt, dann kannst du nicht ohne ein Instagram-Profil durchkommen. Instagram ist nämlich ein Platz geworden, wo Leute miteinander quatschen, ihre Bilder teilen usw.

Aber Instagram und andere soziale Netzwerke können sehr gefährlich sein. Oft bekommen besonders jüngere Mädchen ein negatives Vorbild, wie ihre Körper aussehen sollten. Ich kenne zum Beispiel viele Mädchen, deren Essstörungen wegen Instagram oder Tik Tok schlimmer geworden sind.

Auf Instagram gibt es jetzt eine neue Option »Shopping Tab«. Das finde ich überhaupt nicht gut, weil wir heutzutage schon überall mit Shopping bombardiert werden. Meiner Meinung nach soll man alle Influencer entfolgen. Das Ziel der Influencer ist nämlich nur, irgendwie das Geld zu verdienen. Fast alles, was sie sagen und veröffentlichen, ist gelogen.

Je glücklicher du sein willst, desto weniger Zeit sollst du auf Instagram verbringen. Instagram stellt letztendlich keine echte Welt dar, sondern nur eine Scheinwelt.

Svit Jeram, 3. L



## UMWELTSCHUTZ

Heute im 21. Jahrhundert wird mehr und mehr über die Umweltverschmutzung gesprochen. Das ist echt ein großes Problem geworden, denn wir sehen täglich die Konsequenzen der Verschmutzung. Wir wissen genau, dass für uns ein schönes Leben ohne zu viele Sorgen über den Tod wegen der Naturkatastrophen noch immer möglich ist. Aber was passiert, wenn unsere Kinder in 50 Jahren ertrinken werden, weil die Meeresoberfläche zu hoch gestiegen ist und alle Städte überflutet hat? Wenn nichts Ernstes dagegen getan wird, gibt es dann vielleicht keine Zukunft.

Es scheint eine Lösung dieses Problems zu sein, wenn wir alle etwas Kleines für die Umwelt täten. Und wir sollten doch so tun. Es ist gut, wenn man den Müll trennt oder statt mit dem Auto mit dem Fahrrad fährt, aber das ist nicht genug.

Die Art, wie wir darüber denken, hat viel zu tun mit dem System, in dem wir leben- Kapitalismus. Man soll sich eigentlich fragen: Warum war etwas nicht getan worden, als in den Achtzigern herausgefunden wurde, dass der Klimawandel eine Drohung für die Zukunft ist? Die Antwort

befindet sich in der Sache, die dem modernen Menschen das wichtigste ist- das Geld. Für große Unternehmen war es nicht profitabel, die Erdölindustrie zu halten oder strengere Mülltrennregeln sofort durchzusetzen. Wäre etwas früher getan, hätten wir jetzt keine solchen Umweltprobleme.

Eine Tatsache, wegen der man sich alles besser vorstellen kann, ist diese: Die 20 größten Firmen der Welt produzieren mehr als ein Drittel aller CO2-Emissionen. Warum übernehmen diese Firmen keine Verantwortungen? Warum entscheiden sich die Kapitalisten nicht, die Umwelt zu retten? In diesem System ist Profit immer eine Priorität über alles.

Also, was kann man tun? Eine langdauernde Lösung ist dieser individualisierte Ansatz bestimmt nicht. Das ist nur eine Ablenkung von dem wahren Problem. Die Welt stirbt jeden Tag ein bisschen mehr. Die einzige Weise, mit der etwas verändert werden kann, ist wenn wir alle zusammen das System angreifen, das diese Umweltkatastrophe verursacht hat.

Svit Jeram, 3. L



## LEISURE AND PLEASURE

### IF YOU WORK ON IT, THE RESULTS SHOW UP

My name is Iza, and music has been part of my life since the day I was born. Because the members of my family are also musically talented, my talent is pretty much genetic. But not everything is just genes. You have to practice a lot to achieve the results you want.

In the beginning, I was scared, because I didn't know if anybody would like me. But I had people who supported me along the way, so I gained confidence in my voice. I auditioned for various TV shows, and I first appeared on TV when I was only five years old. I really liked the feeling of being on the stage, so it soon became my second home. I was in the school choir, but I liked singing solo more, so I decided to start solo singing lessons. I had many performances and they made me feel powerful and I found myself there. I started practicing a lot, I started to hear my own mistakes and wanted to fix them. I became pretty strict with myself because being good was just not good enough for me, I wanted to be perfect. Even though singing is my passion, it is also the reason for many of my tears. I started to compare myself to others and think that I was never going to be as good as them. But I realized that I didn't have to be someone else for people to like me. So I stopped singing exclusively songs that already existed and started writing my own songs. I think that was a very good decision because I figured out what I was capable of and gained even more confidence.

People started to notice my talent and they asked me to sing at various events in the church, school, at birthday parties ... I think that made me realize that I was doing the right thing. I know there's always space for improvement and my singing isn't perfect. But practice makes perfect so if I just keep on practicing and believing in myself, I'm sure great results will come to me.

Iza Lavrič, 1. Ka



## MY TAEKWONDO STORY

Taekwondo is a combat sport and it has existed since 1955. Taekwondo is from South Korea, but at first it was called tae-soo-do. Tae-kwon-do means an arm, a leg, a life. A lot of people don't know that taekwondo is the safest combat sport.

Now we can start with my story. At first only my older brother trained taekwondo because I was too young. I would watch every single training session of his and wait to be old enough to start training it. When I was five years old, I was standing on the taekwondo floor mat for the first time and the feeling was amazing. I would train three times a week, and over the years I became much better. At the age of six, I took part in my first competition, but it was not a fight, because I was still too young. It was just a competition for little kids. We had to kick in a target and the one who kicked most times in one minute was the winner. At the age of eight, I could finally have a real fight. I remember that I was very excited and I could not wait for my turn. That day I had two fights and I won them both. I was so happy because I won a gold medal at my very first competition.



My first bigger competition was a national competition, I think it was in 2016. That day is unforgettable because so many things happened. Let's start from the beginning. Me and my club came in the hall at 8 a.m. We were all hungry, but we couldn't eat until 9 a.m., when it was checked if we weighed enough or too much for our category. After that we came back to our place in the grandstand and ate our sandwiches.

I can't really explain that euphoria when we were all sitting on the seats waiting for our fights, but I can definitely say that it was the most beautiful feeling in the world. We all supported each other in every fight. Finally, it was my turn. I took my uniform, pads and the helmet and went downstairs to meet up with my coach. I won my first fight (23:5), but there were still three fights left so I wasn't very happy just yet. Then I won two more fights, but in the last one I got hurt in my right leg. My coach asked me if I wanted to stop and let my opponent win. I didn't want to hear anything about it. I was so close to a gold medal and I wouldn't let it go without a fight. I went into the ring. I wasn't scared, but full of hope and with a strong belief that I could do that. In the second round, my opponent kicked me in my head with a fist (until the age of thirteen, kicking in the head is not allowed, but with a hand it is allowed for every age category). I started crying. My coach asked me again if I wanted to stop, but I was so angry because she had punched me in the head that I went into the ring again and the fight continued. After about five seconds, she kicked me in the head again, but this time it was with a leg. I started crying even harder than before, but my choice was the same, I still wanted to go on till the end. I put my head up and went into the ring again and in the end I won. My eyes were still red from crying but I was very happy. I ran to my coach and said to him, "I've told you I can do it." He laughed and we went to meet up with the others. At 7 p.m., they called me to come and take the gold medal and the cup.

I am still training taekwondo and I can't imagine my life without it.



Elma Palamar, 1. Zb



## MY BALLET JOURNEY



Ballet is an artistic form created by the movement of the human body. However, besides being beautiful and artistic, it is also a highly technical and hard sport, where you use every single muscle in your body.

Being a ballerina. The feeling of being one is actually very difficult to describe. It means being able to express yourself emotionally and maybe discover other sides of yourself that you may not normally be able to explore in everyday life.

I started dancing when I was seven years old. I remember my first time walking into the practise hall one year later than everyone else. There were around twenty little girls my age already doing the exercises. I got scared because I was a year behind them and I didn't know anything about ballet. Because of that, I should have been sent to the lower class, but after the teacher saw me and my abilities, she said that I had a lot of predispositions and potential to become a ballet

dancer. So I stayed in that class and soon made new friends.

At the beginning, we didn't focus so much on the ballet technique but more on our movement with music and learning about ballet positions and moves. Almost every month we had a short performance for our parents where we could show them our fun choreographies. Gradually, the practices and ballet got harder. A lot of my dance classmates quit because the ballet wasn't fun and playful anymore. We started seeing the real, hard and technical side of ballet so there were only three of us left in the class. I think a lot of people don't realize how physically demanding ballet can be because we have to go out on stage and make it look like it's easy. To get to that point, there are many hours of rehearsal. We used to have our four annual performances. The first one was always in October, when all of our local schools came and watched us dance, which was fun because our classmates could see us not only in a small school classroom but also on the big stage doing what we loved. The next performance was right before Christmas in our theatre, where our parents, friends and families came to watch us, and the theme of the show was always winter related. After that, we always had a performance at the end of the school year, and every year we had a different theme of the show, for example The Little Prince, Countries around the World, Five Elements of Life, Seasons, and many more. The last one was in the summer and if it was a nice sunny day without rain, we had this performance outside. It was the same show as the one at the end of the school year, just outside of our ballet school. We were always looking forward to performing on stage, learning new choreographies, but the best part was picking out and trying on the costumes.

In 2015, I reached the appropriate age to enter my first national competition in Lendava. Around six months before the competition, I started learning the new choreography and training harder with my former teacher. Because it was my first ever competition I didn't know what to expect, so I was just focusing on me and my performance. As soon as we arrived in Lendava, I saw the reality of this national competition, which was that unless you had been from a well-known ballet school (which I definitely wasn't), you wouldn't have made it far in the competition. There are two rounds and if you don't gather enough points in the first round, you go home. And that's what happened, I didn't even make it into the second round. I was very disappointed because I knew I had been training really hard and all that work didn't pay off. Then luckily, the next year, in 2016, a brand new national competition called Tutu was held.



The difference between the two competitions was that with Tutu it didn't matter where you were from, the evaluators didn't even know your name, all of us dancers competing had just a number. This year I decided to train ever harder, I wanted a higher title than the last time. I used to skip school for rehearsals, trained almost every weekend and all of my focus that year was on ballet and this competition.

Again we travelled to Lendava and after a day of competing, I made it into the second round, so I knew that the next day I had to give my best on the stage to make my score as high as possible. In the end, I got second place, and seeing my family and my teacher proud of me was the best feeling. After that I went back to rehearsing and performing in my home town. A year later, I had another Tutu national competition coming up. Again I trained hard and prepared for it as much as I could. I made it into the second round, and as I was walking onto the stage for the last performance, I was very nervous. I don't remember anything but the part where I was doing a pirouette and fell. That didn't stop me, though. I quickly got up, put the biggest smile on my face and danced to the end. As soon as I got off the stage, I cried the whole makeup off my face, hugged in my teacher's arms. The results were announced. I was expecting the lowest score and the last place, but my score wasn't as bad as I had thought. I had the same amount of points as in the first round leading me to sixth place. Although I had fallen, I was proud I had got up and performed till the end. That was also my last competition.

Around that time in the summer, I went to a few international seminars in Piran, where I lost my love for ballet. One difficulty in ballet is also the mental aspect. As a ballerina, you face a lot of criticism from peers and mostly teachers. At one of those seminars, I was told I was too petite and had too small a figure to be a professional ballerina, which literally killed my confidence and I almost quit ballet.





But after a long talk with my teacher at home, she made me realise that ballet played a significant role in my life and I couldn't imagine my life without it. In 2018, when it was time to enrol in a high school, I was encouraged by everyone to go to the Ljubljana Music and Ballet Conservatory. I had preparations for the entrance exam and everyone thought I was going to become a professional ballerina. However, when the enrolment dates came, I decided that I wanted to do other things in life, not only ballet, so I signed up for Cosmetics School and said that I would still dance in my free time. And I had until the Covid crisis started. The usual flow in our ballet school was rehearsals three times a week and four annual performances. But they cancelled all of our rehearsals and performances, and for almost a year we didn't see the rehearsal hall or ballet. When things calmed down a bit, we started having rehearsals but only once or sometimes twice a week. Two years later, we still haven't had any performance.

Looking back on my ballet journey, I wouldn't have changed anything and I don't regret not going to Ballet College because I have realised that dancing unprofessionally in my free time for my soul and mind will suffice.

Andreja Markelj Ažman, 4. Ka

## MY EXOTIC ANIMALS

For as long as I remember, I have been fascinated by exotic animals. It all started when my sister dragged my mom and me to an exotic animals show. Bioexo is an organization which puts on exotic animals shows where people from all around Slovenia bring their animals twice a year so other people can see and get to know them. We always go to their show. We have also become their members so we can bring our own pets and educate people on exotic animals ourselves.

The first snake we got is my sister's ball python Oberon. Ball pythons are one of the smaller species of pythons. We have a male so he will grow to about 120cm. Their life span in captivity is around 30 years. They need a smaller place when they hatch and you need to upgrade it as they grow. They need a lot of hides and plants so their terrarium should be cluttered in order to make them feel safe. We feed them with frozen mice when small and with rats when larger. Oberon is



*Oberon*

a Mojave pied and he is one of the nicest snakes I know.

The second snake is Cosmos and he is a male Pastel Lesser GHI Ball Python. Ball pythons are one of my favorite snakes because they are medium sized, they can be very calm while being handled and there are so many morphs to choose from.



*Cosmos*

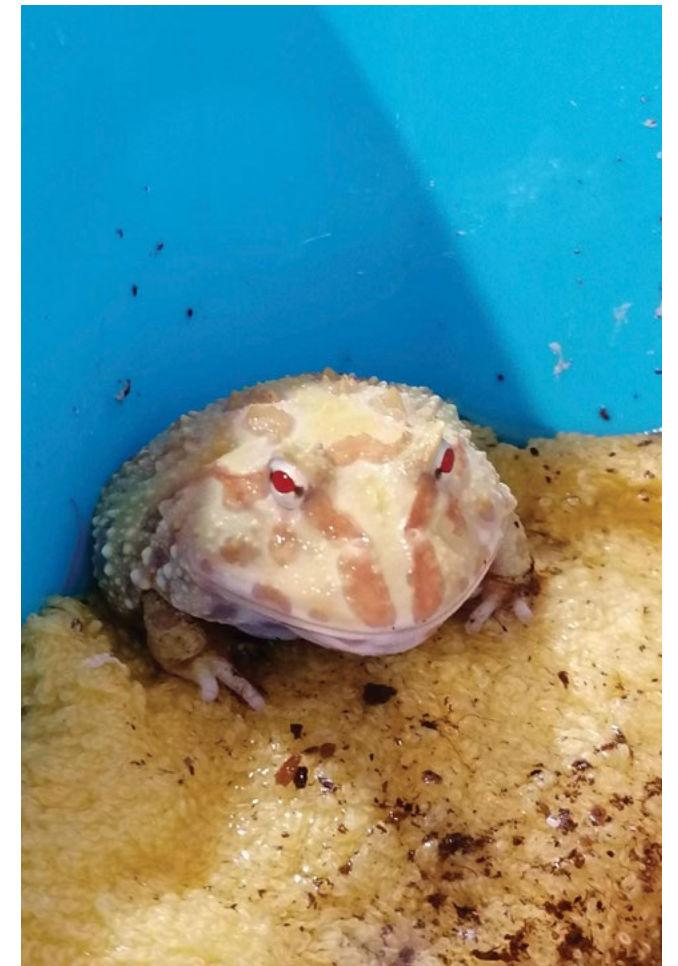
Morphs are selectively bred for a specific color or pattern appearance. They are bred by specialized snake breeders who try to isolate mutations found naturally in the wild and in captivity. They use selective breeding to produce different color variations.

Our third and my first snake is Benimaru. He is a male Albino Het Axanthic Western Hognose snake. They belong to the smaller species of snakes so when adult, Benimaru will be about 60cm long. They are rear-fanged venomous, which means their fangs are located at the back of their jaw instead of up front. Even though they are technically venomous, they can still be handled. They are not recommended as beginner pet snakes. But I love them so much because they are full of personality, they hiss, bluff strike and even play dead. In nature, they eat toads but in captivity, they usually eat frozen mice. Mine is still very young so he eats one baby mouse every three days. They can sometimes be picky eaters but mine is doing great and never misses a feeding. As he grows up, I will increase the size of his prey and reduce the frequency of feeding.



*Benimaru*

I also have one amphibian, an Albino Cranwelli Pacman frog. His name is Sebastjan. They can be 8–13cm long and can weigh up to 0.5 kg. They need to have a humid environment with a moist substrate because they like to burrow. They should be fed on a diet of night crawlers, dubia roaches, silk worms and horned worms. I feed Sebastjan every second day all he can eat in 15 minutes. I also need to dust his food with calcium and vitamin powder.



*Sebastjan*

As much as I love exotic pets, I believe they are not for everyone, and before getting them, you need to do a lot of research and preparation because every one of them has specific needs. They are very different from other animals and we, the owners, must do everything so they can have the best life possible. They need their space and they don't like being handled too often. So for example, if I don't see my snake for a couple of days that's okay. But they are truly amazing and fascinating pets to just observe and take care of.

Mina Brajer, 2. Fc



# AT HOME AND ABROAD

## THE PLACE WHERE I LIVE

My dad, sister and I live in the village Matenja vas. We live at the end of our street so the traffic noise isn't a problem. However, the railway is near us so the train can sometimes be annoying, but if you live there you get used to it. The neighbours are very nice, we get on well and help each other out, with like babysitting or dogsitting. There are also village parties everybody joins, like for Halloween or New Year's Eve. My friends are also near so my dad doesn't have to drive me to their homes like my mom does in the city, I usually just walk to them. Our property is also much bigger than the one my mom has in the city, since there I live in an apartment. There's a lot of nature, which is what you don't get in cities. The view we have is beautiful, and there are a lot of hiking trails around.

But I hate that there's no store near us, the closest one is 15 minutes by car, or about 1 hour on foot. And even that one is small and usually poorly stocked. The same goes for restaurants and ordering food. There's only one restaurant that is usually full of people and not really that good, and no food delivery is done from the city to Matenja vas because it is too far. The primary school that's there is very small, so you know everyone that attends it, which leads to drama. It's hard to blend in and get unnoticed, so a lot of people get bullied.

Barbara Vatovec, 1, Ka



Church of St. John the Baptist, Matenja vas  
Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Matenja\\_Vas\\_Slovenia\\_-\\_church\\_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Matenja_Vas_Slovenia_-_church_2.jpg)

I live in small town named Gradac, in Bela krajina. It has around 450 inhabitants and the people there are very friendly and kind, but not as much as in the past. The town has changed a lot in my opinion. It used to have many shops, small businesses and cafés, but now there are no shops, bakeries or a post office. We only have a few cafés, a train station and a few businesses. We have a Cultural House but it's not used much anymore. In the past, there was a party or a carnival at least four times a year and I hope it will get back to how it used to be. The area is clean and quiet most of the time. But there are a few farms and the people there are a little bit untidy because they work in the fields, and there are always uncomfortable smells and the air is full of trash. But the nature there is beautiful. We have the Lahinja River and nearby there is an old castle. In the castle, there was a school a long time ago with just four classes. The town has been modernized lately. We've got a new street, sidewalks and a cycle lane, a new street lighting and some new benches close to the river, which is really good for social life, to hang out with your friends or family.



The Lahinja River  
Source: [https://kraj.eu/slovenija/grad\\_gradac/slo](https://kraj.eu/slovenija/grad_gradac/slo)

I don't like living here because it's boring and you have nowhere to go, and when you need something, you have to drive 10 to 15 minutes to go and buy just milk sometimes. But I can't imagine living anywhere else because then I would never have met my friends. So in that respect it's good. Now I'm living in Ljubljana in the hall of residence and I prefer it there. But sometimes it is very noisy and the rush hours are the worst.

Janja Renko, 1, Zb

I live in Ribnica, which is a small town in southern Slovenia. It is not a big town, it is more like the countryside, but still there are a lot of things that a city has. For example, we actually have a really good public transport. There are buses every day and we also have a train station. In the town centre, there are some historic buildings and museums. You can go eat in different types of restaurants, like local, traditional and even Chinese. There are also a lot of cafés where people like to hang out. We only have one primary school, one library and a park, but we do not have an emergency room or maternity hospital. But on the bright side, there is a lot of nature, people are friendly and helpful. There are a lot of farms where pets and livestock can be outdoors, the only bad thing about this is the occasional bad smell. Some people have their own garden where they grow vegetables and fruits. The air is cleaner and the water is drinkable, it is also very safe and there are no such rush hours as in cities. I think Ribnica is a really nice place to live in and I am happy it is my hometown.

Ula Petek, 1, Fb



Ribnica Castle  
Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/RJw5T1DzZpaNdc26>



Ribnica  
Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/aEdRHxjq9j3vJwJC9>

## BOSANSKA OTOKA

I am going to write about Bosanska Otoka, where I used to live. That is a small place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it is really beautiful. It is located in the north of Bosnia and Herzegovina, near the border with Croatia.

One of the cleanest rivers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Una, flows through this place. This river is also known for having many bathing areas such as the Mlinčići bathing area in Bosanska Otoka. Mlinčići is like a small island where we also camp on summer days. On that island, there are also a restaurant, a football pitch, a basketball and a volleyball court. The Una is a very cold river and thus a real refreshment in the summer. It is really suitable for rafting, because it is a fast river, which is sometimes not the best. If you are not a good swimmer, it is not good to go into the river alone, because you can die in there. But not all parts of the river are that fast, some of them are calm and safe.

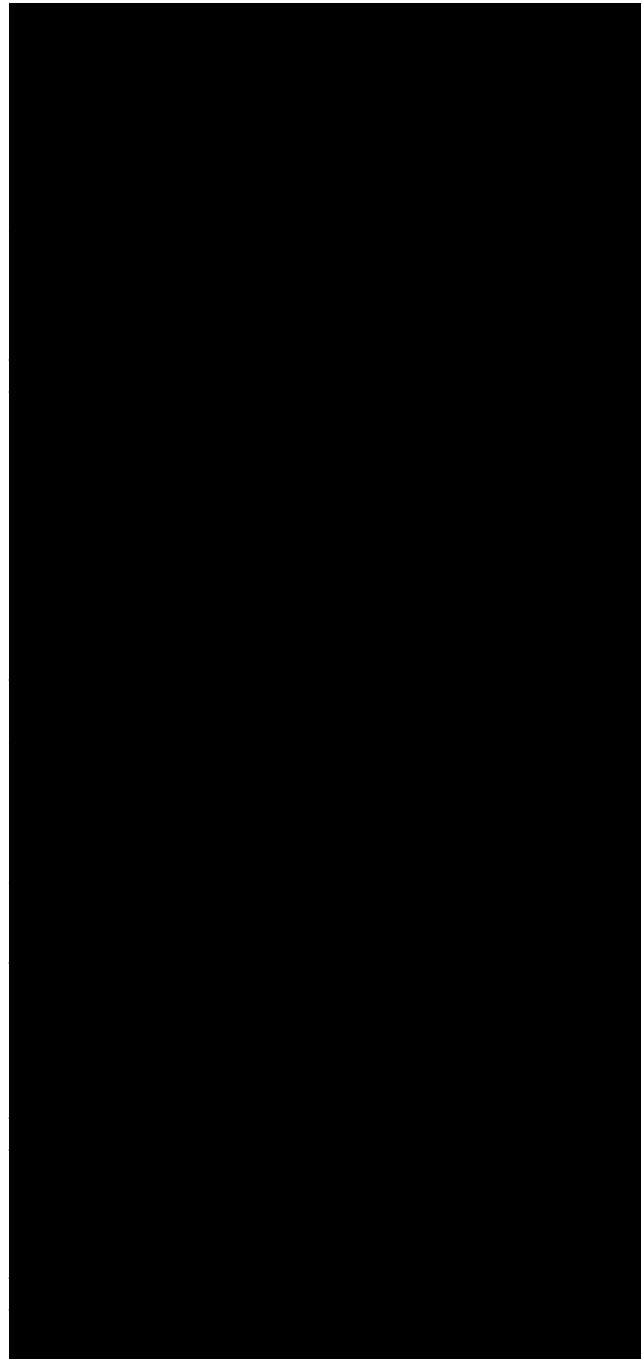
In the middle of Bosanska Otoka, there is a bridge that connects the two parts that the Una separates. Traditionally every summer there are jumps from the bridge, which are judged by the oldest people there and the best jumpers are awarded.

Besides that tradition, there are many others. We have festivals every summer that last for about three or four days. At these festivals, there are usually football matches, concerts or folk dances, and they are mostly held at the only stadium in Bosanska Otoka. People who participate at these festivals come from many countries such as Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and many others to present their folk dances and enjoy the festival.

Another tradition is that every year, in one of the restaurants in Bosanska Otoka, there are concerts and something like a lottery evening. Also, every summer, on July 4th, a hike on a hill where we pay tribute to the people who fought in the war and defended Bosanska Otoka is organized. To me these traditions are very interesting and fun.

People there are very kind and understanding, everyone knows everything about each other and we help each other when we have some problems, as one big family. There were many more people before, however, mostly due to poor politics in





Mlinčiči

Source: [https://avanturistic.com/images/bosanska\\_otoka\\_ada\\_mlincici.jpg](https://avanturistic.com/images/bosanska_otoka_ada_mlincici.jpg)



The Una River

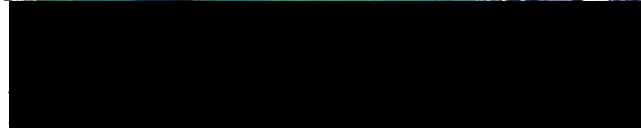
Source: [https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/40735903893\\_cb4b7cd57c\\_b.jpg](https://live.staticflickr.com/65535/40735903893_cb4b7cd57c_b.jpg)



The Čaršija

Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ae/Bos.Otoka2004.jpg>

Lejla Islamović, 1. Fb



## POLAND

My name is Marko Jan Vukajlović and I am a first grade student. My dad is from Bosnia and Herzegovina, my mum is from Poland. We live in Slovenia, but I love Poland as well, so I would like to tell you some interesting facts about it.

Poland is a country situated in the northeast of Europe. It is much larger than Slovenia with a population of about 38 million. The capital is Warsaw and a lot of people live in big cities, like Krakow, Łódź, Katowice, Wrocław. Most cities were destroyed during World War II and later rebuilt with rows of huge blocks of flats which do not look very pretty. The Polish language comes from the same Slavic family as Slovenian, but it is much different, with a few different letters and sounds. You can study Polish at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana.

While the north of Poland has access to the sea, the south of Poland is dominated by the mountains. The Tatra Mountains are perfect for winter sports and hiking, so they attract a lot of tourists and climbers from all over Europe. The Baltic Sea, on the other hand, is known for its healthy climate, sandy beaches and popular holiday resorts.

The Poles are a large nation and there are many stereotypes linked to them. They are supposed to be economical, because in the past they had to survive many hard times, like World War II, and it is true that they have stayed very careful with money until this day.

Sport is an important part of Polish tradition. They are very keen on football, so their footballers are very popular. One of the biggest stars is Lewandowski, who plays with the top world footballers, like Messi and Ronaldo. Another sport where the Polish are favourites is ski jumping. There are world cup competitions in Zakopane every winter.

Another stereotype is that the Poles are very religious. The fact is that 93% of people are Catholics and they go to church every Sunday. Consequently, one of the most respected and popular symbols is Pope John Paul II, who came from Poland.



Palace of Culture and Science

Source: <https://s9.dziennik.pl/pliki/5655000/5655286-900-598.jpg>

As Poland is a country with a rich history, it attracts tourists from all over the world. One of the most popular destinations is Warsaw, where you can get a great view of the city from the Palace of Culture and Science or take an underground train to the national football stadium. Poland is also the birthplace of many prominent people, Mikołaj Kopernik, Fryderyk Chopin, Adam Mickiewicz, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, Karol Wojtyła, Ryszard Kapuściński, Andrzej Wajda and Adam Małysz.

Poland belongs to the European Union and has a great economic potential. There are many universities and academies which offer the highest level of education. Polish culture and art have a long history and are distinguished abroad. Although Poland is highly developed and influenced by contemporary trends, it also retains its own unique tradition.



The Tatra Mountains

Source: <https://cdn.tookapic.com/photos/2020/258/H/c/Hclvy4ixwi60xXixTurPvNawlaCznGSWlcUcBoX>

Marko Jan Vukajlović, 1. Zb



## SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is one of the most beautiful countries in Europe, known for its mountains. Tourists from all over the world visit the country. It has many ski resorts, lakes, famous chocolate and cheese. They also make the best watches. The country has a low crime rate, a high standard of living, a good education system and healthcare. Switzerland has a population of 8.6 million. The capital city is Bern. The Swiss speak four languages: German, Italian, French and Romansh. The country is multicultural and multinational. It has many immigrants who came there for a better living. My aunt also immigrated to Switzerland fifty years ago and settled down there. She lives at the foot of the mountains in the village Lauterbrunnen.

I have always wanted to visit Switzerland and last year I finally did. I and my family decided to visit our relatives there. We went there in August 2021.

### Day 1

We started our journey early in the morning. We went by car, driving many hours through Northern Italy. We went across the Simplon Pass, where there are wonderful views and we stopped there to have a lunch break. We continued our journey on a motorail train. After nine hours, we finally greeted our relatives in the village Lauterbrunnen. After lunch we went for a walk around the village. Lauterbrunnen is the main village in the valley with 72 waterfalls.

### Day 2

The next day we went to the biggest waterfall Staubbach, which is 297 meters high. We climbed the stairs, which took us to the viewpoint above the village. Then we had lunch in the restaurant in the Jungfrau campsite. After lunch, I and my uncle went to see the Trummelbach Falls, which are a UNESCO World Heritage site. It was really a big adventure.

### Day 3

In the morning, we set off to the hill above the village by cable car. First, we went hiking to Winteregg and then continued to Murren. We had a plan to see the highest cable car station Schilthorn at the altitude of 2,970 meters. Unfortunately, because of the bad weather we couldn't make it, so we had to return to the village. This evening there was a beautiful sunset.

### Day 4

I woke up in a beautiful morning and we went to see another village called Grindelwald. We walked through the village, visited souvenir shops and admired old houses and the mountains. We spent the afternoon in the biggest town in the region called Interlaken. This is a town between two lakes. We went for a coffee in a café with a nice view of the town. There we watched paragliders flying very close. Afterwards we visited my cousin who lives in this town.

### Day 5

The next morning we took a train to the Europe's highest rail station Jungfraujoch. It is at the altitude of 3,460 meters between three best-known Swiss mountains Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau. On Jungfraujoch, the weather changed from sunny and cloudy to rainy and snowy. The view was spectacular - we could see snow in the summer. We visited the Alpine Sensation Round-Tour Subway, the Ice Palace and Lindt Chocolate Museum. On the way back, we stopped at the Kleine Scheideg, a mountain pass, and continued our trip to Wengen, the famous downhill course and a very popular ski resort, and finally hiked back to Lauterbrunnen.

### Day 6

On that day we had a short trip to Wengen. We enjoyed a wonderful view of Lauterbrunnen and other mountains around. We ended the day with a family dinner and prepared for our journey back home the next day.

I liked Switzerland because of its clean, beautiful and green nature with a lot of mountains, rivers, lakes, waterfalls, and hills. I think Swiss people are quite reserved and cold. I will always have fond memories of the week spent in Switzerland and I hope I will visit this country again.

Neža Klopčič, 3. Fc



Lauterbrunner



Jungfraujoch



Lauterbrunner



Simplon



Lauterbrunner



## MY HOLIDAYS BEFORE COVID-19

I and my family went on a seven-day trip during school holidays in October 2018. We went to Tenerife, an island in the Atlantic Ocean. We flew there from Bologna, Italy. The flight wasn't long and when we landed it was already night. We rented a car and went to our hotel.

We were hungry but all the shops had already been closed because it was past 10 p.m. and it was Sunday. We drove all over the island and while we were driving we finally found McDonald's, where we ate our first meal on the island.

A funny thing happened the next day. In the morning we saw our family friends. We had no idea that they were there too. We spent some time together in the following days. We went sightseeing, visited museums, churches and some towns on the island. My highlights of the holidays were definitely the visit to Loro Parque, the trip to volcano Teide, swimming in the Atlantic and watching dolphins.

I really liked it when we went to Loro Parque because not only did we see many different animals, but we also watched special shows with animals performing. In some of these shows, visitors could also participate. They were picked randomly from the audience. I was the lucky one. I was picked to participate in the sea lion show (see page 31). I threw them balls, fed them and in the end I hugged them. I had a great time, I mean, you can't play with sea lions every day, can you? It was fun because in the end I was all wet because they had splashed me with water. Of all the shows, dolphin and orca shows are the most enjoyable. When you visit these two shows, you need to know where to sit because animals in the shows jump out of water and splash around. Because of that, you can easily get wet. It was also funny watching the penguins.

The next day we went on a road trip. We drove to the volcano Teide, which is the third highest volcano in the world. We didn't go to the top because it was too high and you need a permission. For this permission, you have to book tickets almost a year in advance. On the way to the top, there was a shop where we bought some black stone sugar, which was actually good. We took some pictures and we also found hardened lava. The view was really beautiful.

My family do not only like traveling but we also like trying new things. We tried some traditional Spanish food. We tried risotto Paella, specially prepared potatoes Papas arrugadas, Gofio Canario, which is a corn dish you eat for breakfast. On the island, they have good conditions to grow different types of vegetables and fruit. This is why they have a lot of special food.

On the last day before we flew back to Slovenia we went sailing around the island. The temperatures in October were still very high. Our ship took us to a special part of the sea, where we went swimming. Around us there were dolphins. They were not dangerously close, but close enough to see them. On our way back we met a Slovenian family who have a daughter my age. We are still in touch.

I had a great time in Tenerife. We took some pictures and made a lot of new memories. I like new adventures and that is why I hope all the problems which happened because of Covid-19 will be gone soon. I cannot wait to start traveling again and discovering all beautiful places and cultures all over the world with my family and friends.

Martina Lampret, 3. Fc

*Dolphins in the Atlantic Ocean*

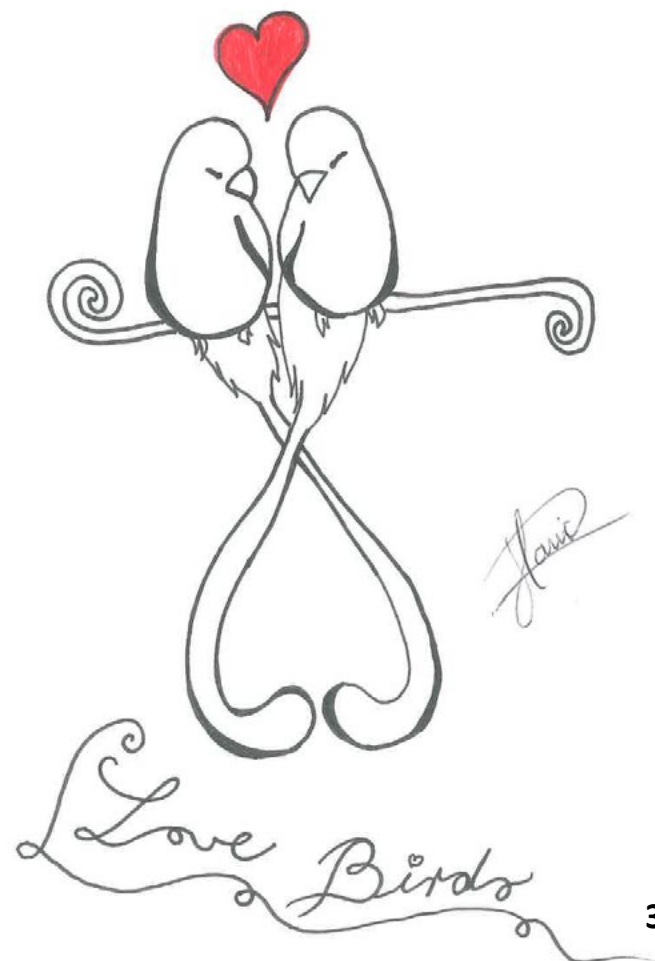




## POEMS

### MY BLUE

Before I knew you, I thought you were like a wind that passes by,  
until I realised you were more like the sky.  
Everything you do, reminds me of the color blue.  
You're like a blue ocean,  
sometimes you look so peaceful and  
sometimes you rage like the waves when there's a hurricane.  
But you are misunderstood.  
Just like the depth of the ocean that we so fear,  
you fear your own depth.  
But in those times, I will be the sun to your ocean.  
I'll push the rays of light until I reach your dark blue depths.  
I'll push through, cuz I wanna know your every blue.  
You are my freedom, my peace, my rage and my depth.  
Oh, you are so blue, and for that I love you.



Adea Seferaj, 3. Fc

### SMILE

I love seeing you smile,  
Cause it's perfect and just fine.  
Even though the start was bad,  
I know with you there's a happier end.  
I feel free, brave and just great,  
Cause I know that my best friend is okay.

Iza Lavrič, 1. Ka

### BLIND LOVE

I loved you once,  
but you didn't see it.  
I was there for you in your darkest time,  
but you didn't see it.

So why should I be here now,  
when you lost her in the sky?  
You once yelled at me how bad influence I was,  
and now you want me back, cause you know that  
I'm the best you can get.

But I'm not stupid anymore,  
I'm not a kid I used to be  
I won't let you play with my heart,  
Like you usually did.



### REALITY

Staying up late thinking about my problems,  
Making me feel like I'm lost in the jungle.  
Before you say I'm selfish and I should care about  
you more,  
Remember that I carried all of your problems  
with me too.  
I forgot about myself and always put you first,  
Guess that wasn't enough for you, I hope you  
know it hurts.  
You were always number one to me,  
Now I really hope you can see it.

I hoped you'd see me in a different light,  
But you just stabbed me in the back one more  
time,  
I can't wait to see you in another life,  
Cause then I'll tell you everything you've done.  
When the lights went out, your dark side  
showed,  
You disappeared and never called.  
All alone I have fought my deepest thoughts,  
I am really near to kill myself.

Iza Lavrič, 1. Ka

STORIES AND MORE

AN EMAIL FROM THE YEAR 2105

Dear Great-Grandpa,

This is me, your great-granddaughter writing to you. From the future. I am in no doubt that you will believe this is really me. I know you have always been skeptical of what tomorrow might bring, but for that skepticism to be confirmed, there needs to be proof. As a proof, I shall be attaching the pictures of us from the year 2080, 15 years before your death. I know you will recognize yourself, you have to. I am also adding a copy of your death certificate.

When I was little and we played outside, you’d always tell me about how much you despised this world. How you, as a young man, wanted to change it. You’d tell me how you wanted to end this brutal system of oppression that humans had created. How you wanted a society that thrived, a society where everyone would contribute to the common good and nobody would be exploited. “From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs,” you loved to say.

Well, let me tell you what this society looks like today. Nothing has changed, even worse, it has been stripped down only to its necessary parts, everything else that once made us humans has long since died off. You always said how the state was the monopoly of oppression. Well, there are no more states and no more laws. In some utopian anarchist fantasy that’d be a dream come true, but it isn’t. Today, there are only two classes of people: the ones who control and own everything that exists, and the ones who make everything existing function. I belong to the latter. We, the slaves, are the majority, but there is nothing we can do to overthrow them, the small elite. Why is that? It’s because a fraction of the lower class protects the upper class. They betray their own people and enjoy a greater comfort in return.

I belong to this policing fraction and I hate it with every piece of my heart. After your death, I figured that the only way to overthrow the elite would be from the inside, by the ones who protected them. Every time there is an uprising, we brutally suppress it. But there is a secret movement within the security force, and we are planning on overthrowing the elite with the help of working people. I shall carry your legacy and destroy this world as we know it, only to build a new better one.

By the time you are reading this, you’ll have been very young, probably around 17. And don’t worry, time travel has been well studied in the future. This won’t create a paradox or an alternative reality. The way that this all is programmed is that once I come into existence in the year 2077, all of this will have withered away from your memoruz.

By merely writing this and using the tool of time travel that is reserved for the elite, I could be executed. That’s why I got to hurry and erase any trace of myself before they get me.

With love,  
Your great-granddaughter

Svit Jeram, 3. L

RED FRIDAY

It was a late Friday night when the accident happened. My dad was worried because I hadn’t come home by curfew and I wasn’t answering my phone. He decided to look for me and drive his car on the route that I would’ve taken to get home. He found my car crashed in a ditch on the side of the road and he rushed me to the hospital. When I woke up, my dad was beside me.

“I was so worried about you! How are you feeling?” Dad asked me.

“I’ll be okay, I just feel lightheaded. What happened?”

“You got in a car accident. Don’t you remember?”

“No, I don’t remember anything.”

They kept me in the hospital for a couple of days. *When I could have visitors, my pal Lizzie came around with a book and a magazine I had requested and asked, “What in the hell are you doing here?”* I told her about the accident and how I couldn’t remember anything. I felt ashamed and irresponsible, but Lizzie comforted me and reassured me that everything would be okay.

“We were both at a party yesterday. I left before you. I wish I knew what happened while I was gone,” Lizzie said.

She tried to fill me in as much as possible in hopes of restoring my memory, but unfortunately, nothing helped. I could only hope that time would heal my memory gap.

After a few days in the hospital, I was sent home. My memory from that day never returned. We all assumed that the cause had been drunk driving. My body was intoxicated with an unknown substance when I arrived at the hospital, which was strange because I never did any type of drugs. I didn’t know what I had been thinking that day.

I wasn’t allowed to watch TV because of my head injury, but my boredom got the best of me. I turned on the news and I was shocked to see that Tessa Cruise was announced a missing person. She was a girl that went to my school. I didn’t

know her personally, but I’d seen her a couple of times passing through the halls.

“What are you doing!” Dad yelled as he slammed the door open. “You know what the doctors said! Turn the TV off!”

Later I went to bed. I just couldn’t sleep peacefully. Something was keeping me up. Every time I closed my eyes, I could see a figure standing beside my bed, mumbling something, and when I woke up, it was gone. I shouldn’t have watched TV.

The little nightmare kept repeating every night. With every passing night, the words got clearer until I could finally understand, “Behind the barn.” There was a barn about 1km deep in the forest behind my house. I had no idea why I kept dreaming about it, but I thought it was a sign to go and check it out.

I wasn’t allowed to go outside because of my injury, but I only lived with my dad and he’d always be sleeping at that hour, so I thought sneaking out wouldn’t be a problem. I grabbed a flashlight and headed off.

Wandering in the forest at 3 a.m. was a terrifying experience. “What am I even thinking? It was just a stupid dream, why am I doing this?” These thoughts kept running through my head, but my body continued moving. When I was close to the abandoned barn, I could hear someone. I peeked behind a tree and saw my dad.

“Dad?” I asked. “What are you doing here?” Then I noticed it! I noticed Tessa’s dead body behind him.

Before I could run away, my dad had grabbed my arm and yelled: “Stop! You’ve done this! The night I found you, she was in your back seat stabbed to death with the knife in your purse! Help me clean up your mess.”

I was horrified. I felt like I couldn’t breathe. How was that possible? There must have been some kind of explanation.



# RED FRIDAY



It was a late Friday night and as I was driving home from a party, I crashed in a ditch on the side of the road.

When they found me, they rushed me to the hospital.



When I woke up my dad was beside me.



They kept me in a hospital for a couple of days.

My pal Lizzie often visited me and told me about what happened, but my memory never returned.



After a few days in hospital, I was released home.

I wasn't allowed to watch TV but my boredom got the best of me.



Later I went to bed. I couldn't sleep at night because I could see a black figure beside me.

It kept mumbling something and the words got clearer each night.



I decided to go and check out the barn.



I turned the news on and I was shocked.



Tessa Cruise, a girl from my school was missing.



Near the barn, I saw my dad.

Behind him was Tessa's dead body.



I tried to run away, but he grabbed my hand.



She had to come in through the window, because I still wasn't allowed to have guests.



The next day I just lay in my bed, thinking.

I couldn't remember anything from that Friday...

I decided to invite Lizzie.



I explained the situation to her. She was shocked. She told me she would gladly help.



Together we tried to figure out if Tessa had any enemies or crazy ex-boyfriends.

We hadn't even been friends with the girl, so finding details about her was impossible.

We decided to continue solving the case the next day.



I went to bed. The thought that I was a murderer was keeping me awake.



WEE WOO!

I woke up to the sound of sirens.

I rushed downstairs and saw policeman handcuffing my dad.



Your dad is being arrested for murdering Tessa Cruise.

Stop! What's going on here?



I had to talk to Lizzie.

I went to her house unannounced.



Huh?

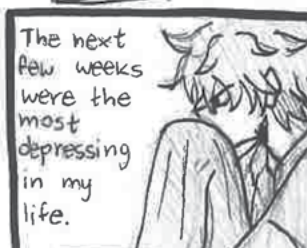


Just why, why did you tell the police? You know my dad is innocent!

I shouted at her but she still explained everything calmly to me.



I took a deep breath and tried to process what was happening. It was very hard to accept that.



The next few weeks were the most depressing in my life.



A few months after the incident, I moved on and tried to live a normal life. Me and Lizzie decided to have a sleepover.

When she went to the bathroom, her phone started beeping.



I didn't know the guy who was texting her so I peaked at their messages.



As I kept reading, it got worse and worse. That person had given her detailed instructions on how to kill Tessa Cruise and make me look like the killer.



That Friday, Lizzie put a strong sedative in Tessa's drink and later stabbed her and put her body in my car so it looked like I was the murderer.



MY FRIEND WAS A KILLER...



The next day I just layd in bed, thinking. How did I forget everything that had happened that Friday, but I remembered everything that had happened the day before? Had I ever been conscious that day? Lizzie told me that we had been at a party. She was the only person that I knew had been with me that day. She had been my best friend for the past 12 years, so I decided that I could confide in her and we could solve that mystery together.

I invited her over and instructed her to come in through my window since I still wasn't allowed to have any guests. When she came over, I tried to calmly explain the situation. She was shocked and that was expected. Despite everything, she told me that she would gladly help. Unfortunately, I didn't get much info out of her. She told me that she had got drunk as soon as she had got there. I did find out that Tessa had also been there though. We tried to figure out if Tessa had had any enemies or crazy ex-boyfriends but ended up with nothing. We hadn't even been friends with the girl, so finding details about her life was impossible. All evidence pointed towards me so we couldn't inform the police. We decided that it was enough for that day and to continue solving the case the next day.

I went to bed. Finally, the weird dream stopped, but I still couldn't sleep peacefully. The thought that I was a murderer was keeping me up even though I kept telling myself that I would never kill anyone.

I woke up to the sound of sirens. I rushed downstairs and saw the policemen handcuffing my dad.

"Stop! What's going on here?" I shouted.

"Your dad is being arrested for murdering Tessa Cruise," answered one of the policemen.

I was stunned. My dad gave me a disappointed look as he was being taken away. Had Lizzie betrayed me? I had to talk to her.

I immediately went to her house unannounced. She was surprised to see me that early in the morning.

"Just why, why did you tell the police? You know my dad is innocent!" I shouted.

"I'm sorry, but it had to be done. I was worried about you. Your dad is guilty and is trying to mess with your mind. Nothing makes sense, you would

never do such a thing and you know it, especially not to a girl you don't even know. You have been living with your dad for only a year, you don't know what kind of a person he is so you can't trust him," Lizzie calmly explained.

I was furious, but on the other hand, her statement made sense. My parents were divorced. I used to live with my mom. A year ago, my mom was diagnosed with stage 3 cancer and died. Since then, I had been living with my dad. I never thought that he was a bad person although he was always at work and never had time for me. I guess I didn't know him after all.

I took a deep breath and tried to process what was happening. It was very hard to accept that. I felt so lucky to have a friend like Lizzie, she saw the things that I couldn't see.

The next few weeks were the most depressing in my life. I hadn't felt like that since my mother's death. It took a while, but I finally accepted the fact that my dad was the killer and tried to blame me for it.

It was a few months after the incident. I moved on and tried to live a normal and healthy life. Lizzie often came over, so I didn't feel lonely. I enjoyed her company and our sleepovers were just as fun as they used to be when we were kids.

We were having another sleepover as usual. Lizzie went to the bathroom. I was sitting on my bed, when I heard her phone beep. My curiosity got the best of me. I glanced over and saw that a guy was texting her. I didn't recognize his name, which was strange. We'd tell each other everything, so I felt surprised that she was texting some guy and didn't tell me about it. I knew peeking at other people's messages was wrong, but I couldn't control myself. I grabbed her phone and started scrolling through the old messages she had with that person. I was startled. As I kept reading, it got worse and worse. That person had given her detailed instructions on how to kill Tessa Cruise and make me look like the killer. Lizzie was the assassin!

That Friday, she drugged me so I wouldn't be conscious of the things happening around me that day. After that, she put a strong sedative in Tessa's drink. At the end of the party when everyone was drunk or high, she stabbed Tessa

in the bathroom and brought her body outside through the window. Then she left her in the back seat of my car after stabbing her a few more times to make sure she was dead. Then she put me in my car, instructing me to go home. Because my head was fogged up, she knew that I would get in an accident.

My jaw dropped. Chills went down my spine. I felt paralyzed. My best friend was a killer ...

Venera Dimitrova, 3. Fc

## FALLING

It is a rainy day. I can't even open my eyes, let alone go to work. Come on, this alarm! I have hit it three times, is there another round? OK! OK!

My eyes are open and I see my neat apartment, I cleaned it yesterday. Every time I see the picture of my family, I get this heavy feeling. It doesn't leave me alone. Because there is a dark shadow around all that.

I hope a shot of espresso helps! This is the best feeling! The rush of caffeine that gets you all hyped and focused. Now I can go put myself together. My secret of being so me is, one, espresso, two, loud music, three, a shower. For real!

I love picking up the clothes. My closet is big and light and full of crazy clothes. I love it! Fresh out of the shower. The skin is ready to put on an armor, the reflection of me. Today that is ... It's a green suit with green trousers. For decoration, there are gold buttons. Ohhh, it reminds me of me! It always makes me smile!

Now, the elevator, the taxi, the city rush. I am here. I open the door of the taxi and put my shoes out on the street, the clean shoes on the dirty ground. I step out all green, all tip-top, and follow the sound of my heels.

You know what is the best? I will tell you, those are the stares of people. I swear some look at me as if I had fallen straight from Mars. Omg. It gives me the adrenaline rush. The same feeling as if you have a big coffee stain on a white shirt. Everyone likes it so much that they can't help but look at it. One way of explaining it. It's funny!

Now I arrive at the lobby, say some hellos, go in the elevator and wait. The people in elevators are the best. They always have something to say. It's never quiet. I only want the silence. The elevators bring the worst out of me. I just don't like them.

Now here we are in the office. Here comes annoying Micky. He acts as though he can't think when the boss orders him something. He is hypnotized! But he is polite. "Hey Margot, I have some instructions for you!" Oh nice, or not. "Hey Micky, I am listening". He is so happy when he tries to act like the boss Robert, he just wants



to be Robert! “Ok, here is the thing, Margot, first go to Blake’s property, there is the opening event where the most interested buyers are! You go there, be the bombshell you are and get the highest offer. Call me if you can’t handle it!” Omg, he forgot his Spiderman suit. He is such a genius. “OK, Micky.” I give the smile that tells him I got it. He turns and walks away as if he were on a runway. Wow. Now is the best time.

*When I could have visitors, my pal Lizzie came around with a book and a magazine I had requested and asked, “What in the hell are you doing here?” She is the best! She knows everything. A real genius.*

Today she couldn’t come to the office but we are going to be together at the opening event of Blake’s property. Can’t wait to see her.

Now I go out of the office, into the annoying elevator, take a taxi and nervously show up at the event. Oooh, there is Lizzie! I am so happy to see her. “Heeey Lizzie! Where have you been?” There she is, all dolled up, and with a big smile.”Heeey Margot! I am right here, I made it, you see.” We just laugh. We have attended these kind of events for years. But today, this location gives me a sour taste. The place brings a dark, heavy cloud to my soul.

We enter the big house with the elevator and royal looking interior. I see the lights shake, I hear the doors making sharp noises, I feel the cold wind through my bones. And boom! The big door opens. The men in black break in and ... I’m breathing heavily, I’m sweating, I look as if I am expecting the end.

Lizzie looks at me and at the men that brought in the material for the property opening. She looks at me feeling pity for me and follows the men in black.

There I am speechless and alone looking like a deer in the headlights. Looking and looking but seeing nothing. From nowhere there comes the well-known heart-breaking feeling. The feeling my grandfather woke up in me.

He always said that there was no sense, there was nothing worth anything, he hated everyone and everything. I was little when I faced his hate and sourness. Out of nowhere, the light swung again.

The glass rang. And there it was! Fifteen years ago when he came home. His clothes smelled like gasoline, he was dead drunk, he was a mess. He yelled over the whole house, “This home means nothing! All these dumb expectations! Everything is nonsense! You, Margot, and your brother are always crying! I don’t have peace in this life! It’s not worth it. I am leaving.”

He threw the vase with beautiful pink flowers on the floor and kicked it over the whole room. There was so much anger in him. Brother, Grandma, Dad, Mom and I didn’t have a single word in this rush of his madness. He cursed everything loudly, slammed the poor door and drove away. He was gone.

I see the light swinging. Lizzie enters the room. She is standing under the huge swinging light. I shout at the top of my voice, “NOOOO!” And there it is! My eyes are watering, my heart racing, all my muscles are tense. And I’m standing there powerless, panicking, yelling. But the swinging light keeps and keeps falling. “NOOOO!” I lose consciousness. I start falling. I keep falling. No beginning, no end. A timeless struggle. No exit. Alone again. Nobody and nothing around me.

I open my eyes and Mom shouts, “Get up, you will miss school!” Omg.

Tina Bergant, 3. Fc

## AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

Life is full of surprises, exciting moments, laughter, tears, happy and sad moments, disappointments, and most importantly, love ... but everything comes to an end, for some people sooner and for some people later. That end is called death. Everyone experiences it in their life at least once, usually from an outsider’s point of view. But when it is you experiencing it first-hand ...

There I am, lying in bed, all helpless. It’s been so long since I last went outside, since I last talked to my friends ...

My life in these last few months has consisted of constant medical check-ups. My body feels even weaker from all those tests done on me. Well, you see, I was diagnosed with stage 3 sarcoma and my life has changed drastically.

There is a chance of survival, but I’m quite convinced I’ll die soon. Day after day, I wake up and spend my days all alone. The only people that talk to me are the doctors and the nurses. I told my family and friends I was going on a long vacation, and surprisingly they believed me. I’m selfish, I know, but if they were to visit me every day it would just hurt more.

I’m only nineteen. I shouldn’t be making all these decisions on my own, I’m aware of that, and yet I want to protect myself and everyone close to me by dying all on my own. It’s wrong, and if they knew they wouldn’t forgive me in a million years.

You might be wondering who is supporting me financially if no one knows about my condition. The answer is no one but myself. I was lucky to become a well-known influencer before they diagnosed me with cancer, so I made quite a living back then, which is why everyone believed I was going on a long vacation. Everyone online must be wondering where I went but I did make a video about going away just so my close ones wouldn’t be suspicious.

I looked around and saw my favorite magazine on the desk besides multiple stacked books on the table and I reached for my favorite one, Turtles All the Way Down by John Green. I’ve always loved reading ever since I was a kid. I spent most of my childhood in the school library just reading books I thought were interesting, and yet Turtles All the

Way Down stuck with me the most ... It’s a story about a girl with obsessive-compulsive disorder who struggles also with anxiety. Her disorder is the side story while the main story is a detective one.

I could never empathize with her since I could never understand how living with an illness like that could be, but now I understand her and her problems much better. My illness might not be the same as hers, but I can understand now. It’s scary. Suddenly everything is so unknown and it all happens unexpectedly.

I’ve read that book multiple times by now and each time it captivates me more and more. The world of literature ... Those words, each of which has a unique meaning based on what book you are reading. It’s mesmerizing how no matter what book you read, the scenes you read about get animated in your head and it’s like you enter a whole new world. No movie compares to a good book.

Just as I had drifted into my thoughts, my peace and quiet got interrupted by someone entering my room. It turned out to be my doctor that came to get me so they could do some more tests on me. I really hate all the examinations, but I have no choice. I have to comply and let them find out more about my cancer so they can hopefully cure it.

“Hello there, Miss, I have come to get you because we need to do some further tests,” said the doctor. I just smiled at him kindly and let him help me onto my wheelchair.

I sat there as he pushed me through a long hallway with a lot of people walking by and the doctor greeting some of them. The hallway always seemed very dark and ominous to me. The whole hospital just reminded me of death, loss, and sadness.

At the end of the hallway, there was an elevator. The doctor pressed a button on the wall and the door opened. We entered the elevator and I let my mind wander again back to that day I had met my best friend, Lizzie.

Me and Lizzie met at the library as I per usual went there after school to read. Lizzie was my classmate, and I didn’t think much of her until that one day. She saw me reading a book that she



had read before, so she chatted me up. I was very awkward back then, so I gave short and awkward answers to her questions, yet Lizzie didn't mind. I remember that warm smile she gave me to show me it was okay and that I could take my time with my answers and that she didn't think of me any less because of that.

Ever since then, me and Lizzie have been inseparable, we have always stuck together no matter what, that's why she is the last person I want to tell about my illness. I know it will break her, but I also know that for my sake she will never dare show her sadness to me thinking I've already got enough on my plate.

I felt a tear sliding from my eye down on my cheeks, but I wiped it away before the doctor noticed. In a flash the elevator came to a stop, and we exited it. He pushed my wheelchair towards the room I knew very well and hated the most, yet the only thing I could think of was Lizzie.

I don't remember what happened after we entered the room mostly because I don't want to remember, but soon I was back in my room, my body tired and weak and my mind all fuzzy.

I checked the time, and it was 2.34 p.m. Visiting hours started 30 minutes ago although it was not something I got excited about since no one visited me anyways and visits for people with cancer were sometimes restricted so it was very rare for me to be allowed visitors.

After some time scrolling on my phone and replying to my friends who were asking me how my 'vacation' was going, I felt tired and sleepy, so I decided to get some sleep, yet just when I was about to close my eyes someone entered my room.

Today was the day *when I could have visitors, and my pal Lizzie came around with a book and a magazine I had requested and asked, "What the hell are you doing here?"*

She caught me by surprise since I hadn't been expecting anyone. I had ordered the new issue of my favorite magazine and a new book to read, which the nurse usually brought to me, but this time Lizzie was bringing them.

"Lizzie! What are *you* doing here?" I yelled out still very much surprised as Lizzie also stood there speechless.

Eventually she sat down on my bed, and she made me explain everything to her. She also told me she was doing voluntary work at the hospital and they asked her to bring the magazine and the book to me.

My story brought tears to her eyes, but she held them back for my sake and hugged me but not too tightly since she saw how weak my body looked.

We talked about whether we would tell everyone else or not and I begged her not to tell anyone and after some time she agreed.

We talked for at least an hour about everything that had happened before Lizzie had to go home. After she left, the doctor walked into my room. His stoic expression looked different and by the look on his face I knew he wasn't bringing any good news.

"Miss, based on your recent examinations we found out that your cancer has spread and there is nothing we can do about it anymore. We have predicted you only have a few days left to live." My face stayed expressionless, and it stayed that way as the doctor said, "I'm truly sorry, Miss," and left the room. Only then did I completely break down in tears.

The next few days are a blur. I woke up, ate, waited some time, ate again, then waited some more and ate again then I went to sleep.

A few days later I was repeating my daily routine as I suddenly felt a huge pain in my chest and I could no longer breathe. The last thing I did before I lost consciousness was press the button so the nurses would come.

I could see everything, yet I couldn't move, and my eyes were closed. It was like I was seeing everything in the third person's view. The nurses performed CPR, but it was too late - my body was cold and lifeless, there was no help for me anymore.

My funereal was soon after that, everyone came, my parents, friends, Lizzie. It was raining and everyone was standing there with black umbrellas in their hands. The atmosphere was tense and as they closed my coffin and as I somehow saw the last red rose fall onto it, I suddenly woke up.

People were standing next to me looking very concerned as I backed away into a corner curled up into a ball with my hair all messy.

After I calmed down, everyone told me I had suddenly fallen and started crying and having a panic attack, yet no one could make me come back to my senses. I had started yelling, "NO!" at some point and pulling my hair. I didn't remember any of that, all I could remember was my experience with cancer, my funereal and all that pain I had felt as I died.

It turned out I had deluded myself into thinking everything concerning the cancer was real. The story was getting created in my head for some time, but after it finally completed itself in my subconscious, I lived it out in my head very vividly. That's the actual mental illness of mine that I thought had gone underground but it was just waiting for the right moment ...

After all that, I decided to get proper medical care for my mental illness and thankfully it wasn't something that couldn't be treated.

And as of now ... I'm all better and I'm in a healthy relationship with myself and a stable relationship with my mindset. After all those years, I have also set up an organization that helps people with similar illnesses. My organization is there to show those people that they don't have to go through that alone, and I couldn't be happier about it.

Aleksandra Kitanovska, 2. Fc

## LEFT OR RIGHT

"Have you ever wondered how certain things affect your life, like how one simple split-second decision can completely change its course? For example, changing your coffee order can make your day better ... or worse. And deciding to turn right instead of left can save your life?"

"Yes ... No ... I have never actually paid attention ..."

"Well, let's say that I have never made the right decision. And this will be the story of how one small choice to turn right changed my life forever."

*It happened on 11th September 2001. I went to Starbucks before work. Going there had been my daily routine for the past four years. I ordered my latte macchiato with caramel and a chocolate chip cookie. That day, I was a little bit earlier than usual, which is why I decided to take the other route to my office in the Twin Towers and just enjoy the morning walking around the block.*

*As I was walking down the street, an uneasy feeling set in my stomach, like something bad was going to happen soon. When I was still at school, I always knew when the teacher would call me up to examine me, and right at that second, I started getting chills and cold sweat like back in the day. I stopped for a second to take a sip of my coffee and suddenly all hell broke loose. The ground shook beneath my feet, and an alarm went off. I fell to my knees, coffee in my hand. I was looking at the coffee stain on the black asphalt floor like it knew what had happened and why, why then, why there. I was frozen, unable to move. My heart was pumping in my head. I felt dizzy and almost lost consciousness. I had never been that petrified in my life, like a deer caught in the headlights. I was kneeling in the middle of the street, not fully knowing what to do. Should I just curl up in a ball and wait for it to be over, or just call my mom to say goodbye?*

*When my brain started to process what was happening, my survival instincts kicked in. I slowly looked up at the World Trade Center, which was only a few feet away from me. It had a huge hole on the upper floors, and there was lots of smoke. Fires were blazing and there were screams. The deafening screams of wounded, dying people, of children who did not know what had happened,*



# LEFT OR RIGHT

Have you ever wondered how certain things affect your life, like how one simple split-second decision can completely change its course? For example, changing your coffee order can make your day better...or worse. And deciding to turn right instead of left can save your life?



Yes...no...I have never actually paid attention...



Well, let's say that I have never made the right decision. And this will be the story of how one small choice to turn right changed my life forever.



It happened on 11th September 2001. I went to Starbucks before work.



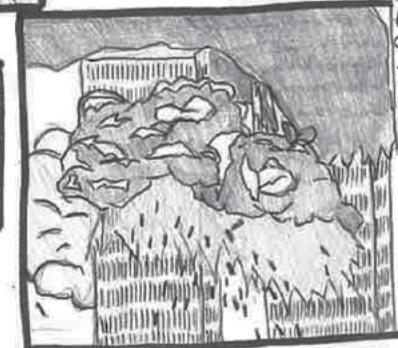
As I was walking down the street, an uneasy feeling set in my stomach, like something bad was about to happen soon.



The ground shook beneath my feet, and an alarm went off.



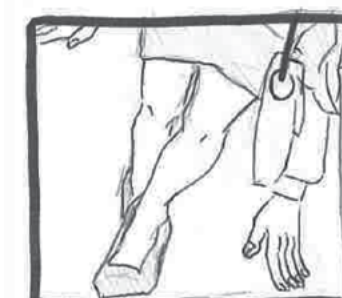
I slowly looked at the world trade center.



It had a hole in the upper floors, and there was lots of smoke. Fires were blazing and there were screams.



The deafening screams of wounded, dying people and of children who did not know what had happened...



I knew at that moment that if I did not move my feet, I would not see tomorrow. I started running in the opposite direction.



In my mind, I already saw flashbacks of my childhood memories.



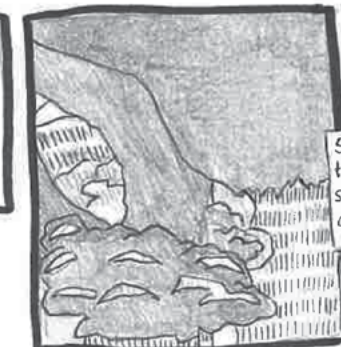
I ran like never before and I cried. I knew that even though I was not that close to the WTC, there was a possibility that I might not make it out alive.



Even though I was wearing my tight pencil skirt and heels, I ran faster than ever.



I turned the corner of the block to take a deep breath in, and that is when I heard another bang and the ground shook again.



Sadly it was then when Twins started to collapse.

For the first time in my life I realized how vulnerable and fragile these two strong buildings actually were.



The smoke, dust and debris caught me a block away from WTC. I could not breathe, I could not see and I lost my orientation.



That is when I felt a sharp pain in my left leg.



I landed on the floor and this time I did not have the power to get up.



Wait, you actually went through that?



Yes, but looking back, that was not even the worst thing. I do have PTSD and trauma from that, but the worst thing that comes after an event like that is the self-blame. Why have I survived, when nearly 3000 other people were not so lucky?



It must have been hard...but what happened next?



In my confused state, I did hear the sounds of people around me, but I could not comprehend what they were saying.



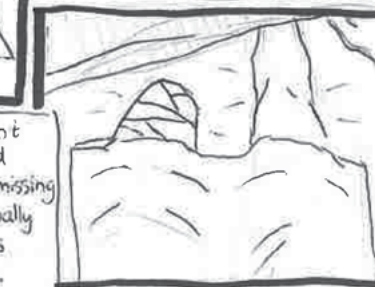
It felt like years had passed when I finally woke up.



When I had some strength, I ripped back the covers to see why my leg was hurting, but I was never prepared for what I saw...



Or to be exact, what I didn't see...



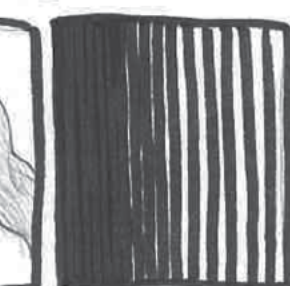
My leg was not there. I tried to wiggle my missing toes and I actually felt like I was moving them.



I opened my mouth to scream but nothing came out of my lips.



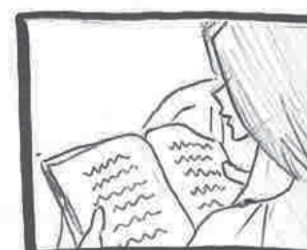
Tears were flowing from my eyes and that was when I realized what the price for staying alive was: losing my leg.



In the following days, the doctors were jumping around me, checking my vitals and making me comfortable. Since I was at high risk of getting an infection or pneumonia because my lungs had suffered severe damage from the smoke, I could not have visitors for quite a while.



I talked to my family on the phone all the time. Weeks went by and I still didn't see any of my loved ones.



Because I felt so lonely I started reading more.



When I could have visitors, my pal Lizzie came around.



We were best friends in kindergarten. I didn't know she had studied medicine and now she was my nurse.



I told her everything about the WTC and the planes.



She understood my situation. She made it her mission to help me and my family.



I got my prosthetics and after being wheelchair-bound for too long, I started walking again.



Wow you were so lucky to have Lizzie.

I still am. Now after what we all have been through, we are best friends again and I hope we never lose touch. I am also proud of myself because I have stayed strong after all of that. When I think about why the 9-11 attack actually happened, I cannot help being mad at today's society. How can it not live without violence?



It is a sad reality, but we will change it, because the young will write the future!

And now remember what I told you in the beginning? Deciding to go in a different direction might save your life. Well, if I had gone my normal route that day, I would not be standing here today. That split-second decision actually saved my life, and the whole point of this story today is to not take these small decisions for granted. Make them a part of your purpose in life, and one day they might also save it.





*why their parents were there one second and the next they were gone. I knew at that moment that if I did not move my feet, I would not see the next day.*

*I started running in the opposite direction. In my hazed mind, I already saw flashbacks of my childhood memories. I saw my mom smiling at me while she told me to blow out the candles on my birthday cake and make a wish. I remembered my dad pushing me on a swing and my little sister making me watch Spongebob with her. I ran like never before and I cried. I knew that even though I was not that close to the WTC, there was a possibility that I might not make it out alive. Even though I was wearing my tight pencil skirt and heels, I ran faster than ever. The adrenaline was pumping through my veins and I felt like I could run for miles.*

*I turned the corner of the block to take a deep breath in, and that was when I heard another bang and the ground shook again. This time I did not fall, I caught myself on a nearby tree. Sadly, it was then that the Twins started to collapse. For the first time in my life, I realized how vulnerable and fragile those two strong buildings actually were. Tons and tons of concrete, strong copper wires and bricks collapsed like a house of cards.*

*The smoke, dust and debris caught me a block away from the WTC. It engulfed me in a tight hug, I could not breathe, I could not see, and I lost my orientation. That was when I felt a sharp pain in my left leg. I landed on the ground and this time I did not have the power to get up. Adrenaline left my body as my eyes started to grow heavy, I felt tired and eventually just gave up. The last thing I remembered before darkness took over, were shouts and the deafening silence that followed.*

“Wait, you actually went through that?”

“Yes, but looking back, that was not even the worst thing. I do have PTSD and trauma from that, but the worst thing that comes after an event like that is the self-blame. Why have I survived, when nearly 3,000 other people were not so lucky?”

“It must have been hard ... but what happened next?”

*In my confused state, I did hear the sounds of people around me, but I could not comprehend what they were saying. My head felt heavy and I was so tired I did not have the strength to open*

*my eyes or even lift a finger. The soaring pain in my left leg kept haunting me, but I was not able to ask for help. I could only breathe and rest.*

*It felt like years had passed when I finally woke up. My throat was sore and everything hurt. Even thinking hurt my brain for a little while, but nothing hurt like my leg. When I finally had some strength, I ripped back the covers to see why my leg was hurting, but I wasn't prepared for what I saw. Or to be exact, what I didn't see ... My leg was not there! I had a big bulk of bloodied bandage covering my knee and it stopped there. I tried to wiggle my missing toes and I actually felt like I was moving them. I opened my mouth to scream, but no sound left my lips. Tears were flowing from my eyes and that was when I realized what the price for staying alive was: losing my leg. The sharp pain that I remembered from when the smoke had arisen was part of the building that had somehow flown that far and crushed my left leg from the knee down. They had to amputate it.*

*In the following days, the doctors were jumping around me, checking my vitals and making me comfortable. Since I was at high risk of getting an infection or pneumonia because my lungs had suffered severe damage from the smoke, I could not have visitors for quite a while. I talked to my family on the phone all the time. Weeks went by and I still didn't see any of my loved ones. They always called me, but I had never been prepared to feel so lonely with no physical contact. That was why I started reading more. I sometimes got books and magazines via the nurses.*

When I could have visitors, my pal Lizzie came around with a book and a magazine I had requested and asked, “What in the hell are you doing here?” *We were best friends in kindergarten and had been inseparable until she moved away in the third grade. I didn't know she had studied medicine and now she was my nurse. I told her everything about the WTC and the planes, how I had been running to make it out. She understood my situation because she was helping many other patients in similar situations.*

*Lizzy made it her mission to help me and my family. They all played a crucial part in my getting used to living as an amputee. I got my prosthetics and, after being wheelchair-bound for too long, I started walking again. None of that would have been possible if Lizzie hadn't been with me the whole journey. She was the one who got me the best physician and worked with me every day. It was very hard at the beginning. It hurt more than you could imagine, and the phantom pain did not*

*help either. I still get it sometimes and it is never easier, but I have come to terms with my disability.*

“Wow, you were so lucky to have Lizzie!”

“I still am. Now after what we all have been through, we are best friends again and I hope we never lose touch. I am also proud of myself because I have stayed strong after all of that. When I think about why the 9-11 attack actually happened, I cannot help being mad at today's society. How can it not live without violence?”

“It is a sad reality, but we will change it, because the young will write the future!”

“And now, remember what I told you in the beginning? Deciding to go in a different direction might save your life. Well, if I had gone my normal route that day, I would not be standing here today. That split-second decision actually saved my life, and the whole point of this story today is not to take these small decisions for granted. Make them a part of your purpose in life, and one day they might also save it.”

Maša Bohinc Penček, 4. Ka





## THIS AND THAT

### BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM, THE MOVIE

In my opinion, the movie was great! It managed to cover a lot of difficult topics, which I find fascinating. Even though the film was made quite a while ago, the topics are still relevant today, some of them even more.

The film shows us two very different girls. Each of them has their own family, culture ..., but they both share the same pressure from society, "Playing football as a girl is bad." There's nothing wrong about it, and everyone should do what makes them happy and not what they are expected to. However, it irritates me when sporty girls shame other girls for liking girly stuff.

The thing that angered me the most, is the immediate assumptions that a lot of people make in the film. Without any communication, they assume the worst, which leads to even more conflicts. The other thing I didn't like is the idea of an arranged marriage, which is common in Indian culture. I don't like the concept of it, and I think everyone should choose a life partner themselves.

What I like about the film, is that in the end, Jules' mother realizes that limiting and shaming her daughter for liking football is unacceptable and she learns to support and be proud of her daughter. Not only Jules' parents, but also Jess' parents realize that by controlling their daughter's life, they aren't protecting but ruining her, and that their own desires should never get in the way of Jess's happiness. I also liked the friendship between Jess and Tony, who wanted to sacrifice himself and his life (by marrying Jess), so that Jess could pursue her dream, even though he isn't in love with her and never can be.

Overall, the film was fun to watch and the romance in it spiced it up just to the right level.

Neja Krže, 1. Ka



Source: <https://metro.co.uk/2022/04/11/bend-it-like-beckham-cast-where-are-they-now-16445618/>



### GEORGE ORWELL: ANIMAL FARM

On April 15th 2022, we went to see a play, which was based on the book *Animal Farm*. *Animal Farm* is a satirical allegorical novella by George Orwell, first published in England on 17th August 1945. It is a story about a group of farm animals who rebel against their human farmer, hoping to create a society where the animals can be equal, free, and happy. But the rebellion is betrayed and soon the farm goes back to be as bad as it was before the rebellion. According to Orwell, the fable reflects the events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and then on into the Stalinist era of the Soviet Union. Orwell, a democratic socialist, was a critic of Joseph Stalin and hostile to Moscow-directed Stalinism, an attitude that was critically shaped by his experiences during the May Days conflicts between the POUM and Stalinist forces during the Spanish Civil War.

The story was played by four actors, who performed all the roles from the book. The play was awesome and it was easier to understand the book than just reading it. The actors knew how to imitate animal sounds, which was really wonderful, and thus made the play even more interesting. This way they brought the book to

life. They were also changing their accents a lot from British to Scottish and Irish and they were actually really good at it. As we have said, the play is very interesting and is worth seeing. It is not necessary for the students to read it beforehand. The actors are quite thorough in explaining the plot, so that even students who did not read the book can follow. We would definitely recommend seeing it.

Ivana Antić and Lina Malovrh, 2. Zb



American Drama Club Europe, *Animal Farm*

Source: <https://www.ksr.ch/news.html/1337/news/56582>



Source: <https://www.etsy.com/hk-en/listing/716691131/animal-farm-napoleon-print>

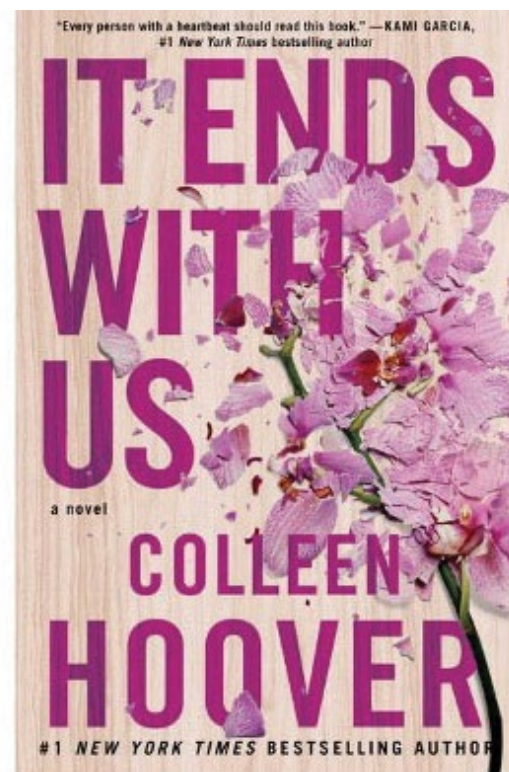


## IT ENDS WITH US

The story follows a 23-year-old Lily, who is in the midst of starting a new simple life in Boston, when she meets a neurosurgeon Ryele Kincaid. After a few encounters they eventually fall in love. However, the book is written in a way that while we're reading about Lily's current relationship, we learn about her first love with Atlas Corrigan as Lily reads her old diary.

I think it's important for people to read this book because it's a story about a woman's struggle to break the cycle of abuse. When people hear about a situation where a woman is in an abusive relationship, they often ask themselves, "Why do they stay in the relationship? Why don't they leave?" I'm a little embarrassed to admit that I was one of those people. But after reading this book, I finally understood. The book was so brilliantly written that it wasn't a surprise when I found out that the writer Colleen Hoover had an experience with an abusive relationship. *It Ends With Us* is an emotional read and I know how hard it must have been for Colleen to write it. But I'm very glad she did.

Lina Mujić, 2. Fc



Source: <https://www.walmart.com/ip/It-Ends-with-Us-Paperback-9781501110368/50552397>

## RAMADAN, EID AND KURBAN EID

In the world, there are various holidays because there are many different cultures and religions. And every culture or religion has its own holidays.

I am a Muslim and in our religion we have a holiday named *Eid*, but we call it *Bajram* in Bosnian. Actually we have two different *Eids*. Before the first *Eid* we fast for thirty days and this is called *Ramadan* (*Ramazan* in Bosnian). The fast is from 3 a.m. to 8 p.m. If you are fasting, you last eat at 3 a.m. and then you don't eat or drink anything until 8 p.m.



Turkish coffee drunk in the morning before men go to mosque

After 30 days of fasting, we have *Eid*. Before *Eid* we help people who are poor by giving them money or buying food for them. At *Eid* we visit our friends, neighbours and cousins. And we have some special food, the most popular are *baklava* (a dessert made of dough which is rolled very thin; there are around 10 layers of dough and between every layer of dough there is a layer of ground walnuts with sugar), *sarma* (pickled cabbage leaves in which there is a mixture of minced beef and rice), and many other desserts. At *Eid* older people give gifts or money to children, mostly to children who are poor. The first *Eid* lasts three

days. There are special greetings at *Eid*. In Bosnia, one person says *Bajram Serif Mubarek Olsun* and the second person answers *Allah razi olsun*, but in other parts of the world the most known words are *Eid Mubarak* and *Allah razi olsun*.



Baklavas and humašicas

After the first *Eid* the second *Eid* starts two months and ten days after *Ramadan* (*Ramazan* in Bosnian). It lasts four days and it's named *Kurban Eid* (*Kurban Bajram* in Bosnian). At *Kurban Eid* we kill a cow or a sheep, which is an offering and it is called *kurban*. We give *kurban* to our neighbours. And the greeting is the same as at the first *Eid*: *Eid Mubarek - Bajram Serif Mubarek Olsun*. But when we give *kurban* to another person, we say *Halal olsun* and the person who receives *kurban* says *Kabul olsun*. With *Halal olsun* we want to say to the person that we give them *kurban* from the heart and we don't want anything in return, and with *Kabul olsun* we want to tell the person that they have to divide it.

This is all about *Ramadan* and *Eids*. I wrote a little bit about them but hopefully enough to help you understand what these holidays are.

Aldijana Kovačević, 2. Fc

## SLAVA

*Slava* is a Serbian Orthodox Christian tradition of the ritual of glorification of one's family's patron saint. The family celebrates the *Slava* annually on the saint's feast day. Now let me tell you about my family's saint and the way we celebrate the *Slava*.

In our family, we celebrate the *Slava* on 19 December and our patron saint is Saint Nicholas of Myra. He was an early Christian bishop of Greek descent. Because of his many miracles and his way of life, he is also known as Nicholas the Wonderworker. Saint Nicholas is a patron saint of sailors, merchants, archers, repentant thieves, children, brewers, pawnbrokers, unmarried people, and students in various cities and countries around Europe. It is said that he liked children a lot and that's why he left them golden coins on the window sill on 19th December if they were well-behaved during the year. One of his most famous wonders was rescuing three girls from being forced into prostitution by dropping a sack of gold coins through the window of their house each night for three nights so their father could pay a dowry for each of them. Some other famous stories talk about how he calmed a storm at the sea and saved many other people in various ways. His legendary habit of secret gift-giving gave rise to the traditional model of Santa Claus.

In our family, we have a lot different customs that may differ from other people. Our people celebrate Saint Nicholas in a similar way, but every family has something special, which adds a special flavour to that holiday. In our family preparations for the *Slava* start a few days earlier. We start preparing the food for our guests that will come to our house on 19th and 20th December. In our family, the *Slava* is celebrated for three days, the first day is to welcome the *Slava*, the second, 19th December, is the main day, and the last the day is the farewell of the *Slava* and that day is reserved for people who couldn't make it the day before, on 20th December.

18th December is our busiest preparation day. The whole family wakes up early in the morning to have time to prepare all the food we need. My brother and father start cleaning fish and preparing it for cooking next day. My sisters, mother and I start the day by cleaning the whole house and after that we start making cakes. We usually make three to four different cakes which



are meant for fasting, because on the day of *Slava* our whole family fast. Our fasting is different to other religions' fasting because we can eat everything except meat (fish is allowed) or animal products, we also can't smoke or drink (except for wine because in our religion wine is considered to represent Christ's blood). After that, my father and brother start making fish goulash, while my sisters, mother and I prepare *sarma* (stuffed cabbage).

On the day of the *Slava*, we wake up early in the morning because we want to open the gifts that Saint Nicholas has left for us. After that, my mother starts to prepare different salads and everything else that we need for our guests. She also prepares *česnica*, which is basically holy bread with a cross or other different holy decorations on it. At around 9 a.m., our family goes to church for a prayer and we also leave our *koljivo* (cooked wheat) there for the priest to pour wine into it. Then we all go home and have a family breakfast where we try most of the food we have made so that we can see if it's good. Around noon, our grandparents arrive, they are always our first guests. Not long after their arrival, we all stand up, light a candle (which stays lit for the whole day) and say a prayer. After all of that, we wait for our other guests to arrive, and when they do, we give them *koljivo* and serve them food.

The *Slava* is undoubtedly one of my favorite holidays because on that day we see some people who we have not seen for a year. It is very time consuming to prepare all of the food, but I love it because we are all talking and laughing for the whole day.

Nikolina Pejić, 2. Fc



Česnica



Eating koljivo

Dear Alice,

I'm glad to hear you're so eager to meet my sister and I'm also very thankful that you're willing to show her around the city. She can't wait to meet you and I feel like she's a five-year-old child and not a mature nineteen-year-old. Her excitement gets so annoying, but don't worry, my sister is actually very nice, outgoing and extremely creative.

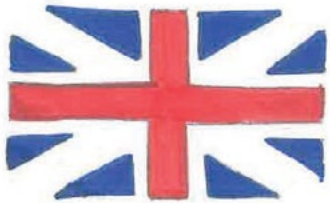
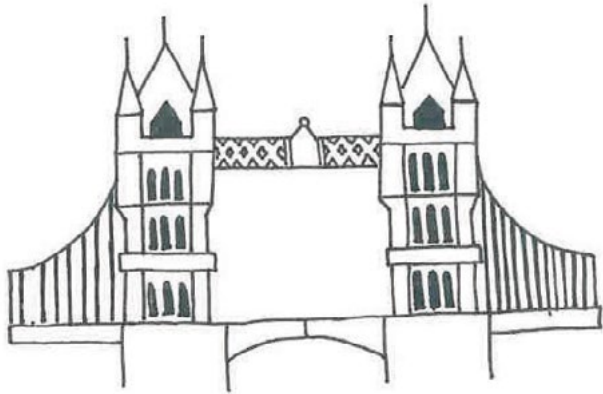
She's actually a fashion major, so her style changes all the time. She follows all the trends. Beside fashion, she loves sports, for example running, hiking, swimming ... She's also very into history, so you can take her to any kind of museum.

And don't worry, you'll be more than able to recognize her. Our face features are pretty similar and our hair is the same deep brown color, the only difference is its length. Hers is longer and she usually puts it in a braid. Maybe you won't even need to look out for her, she'll probably see you first and yell at you in excitement. Prepare for it, because she's also very talkative, so it's a good thing that you're a good listener.

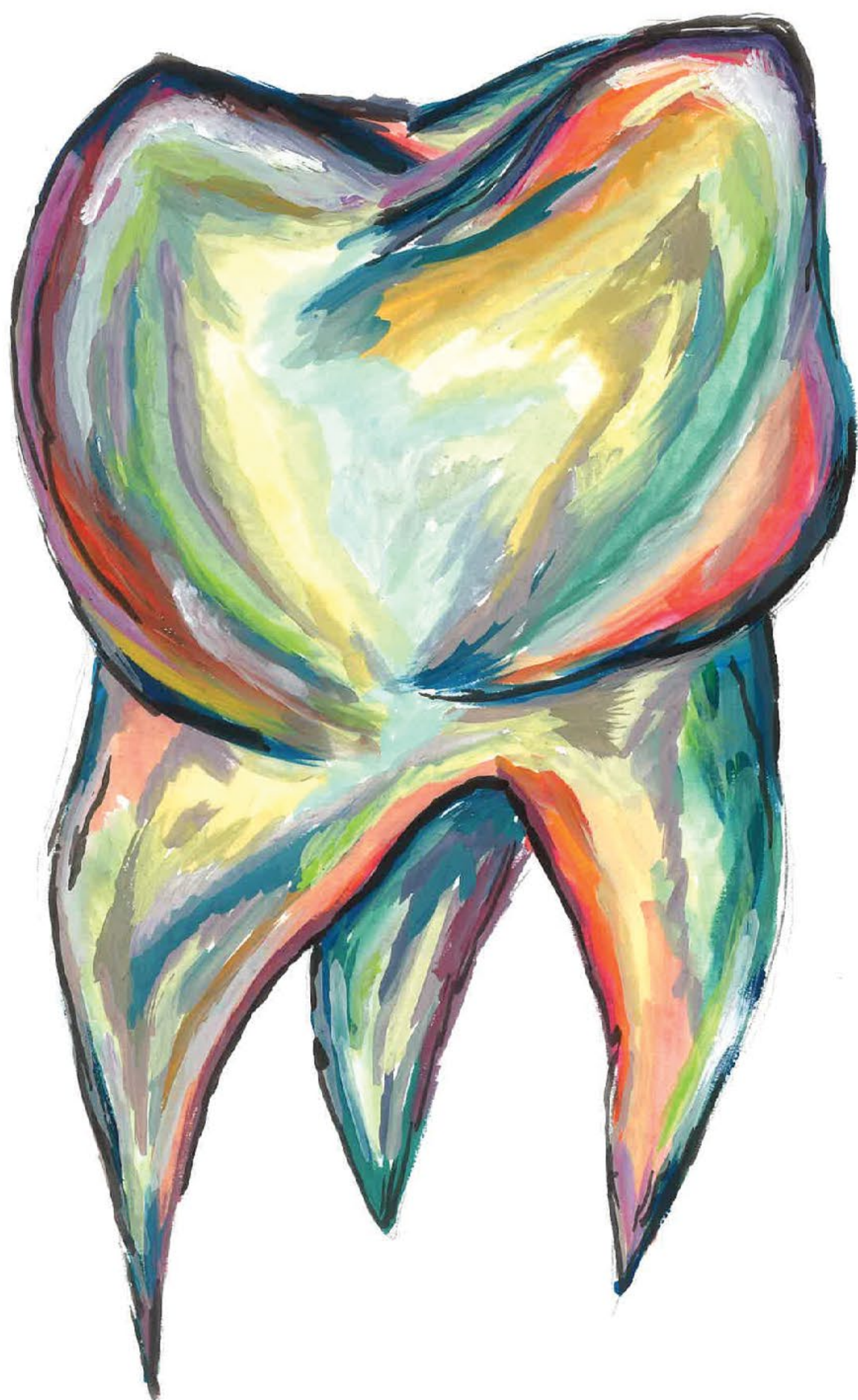
I really hope she won't be too much of a burden and that you'll have a great time. Thank you again for having her and I hope to write soon.

xoxo Neja

Neja Krže, 1. Ka







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Editor: Helena Doberšek

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

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