



## FOREWORD

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WEB TRAP – GREECE

MAKEDONKA FOR MACEDONIA - MACEDONIA

ADDICTION CONQUERORS – POLAND

EUROPE, LAND OF NO BOUNDARIES – PORTUGAL

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STELA – ROMANIA

EYES CAN'T SEE THE TRUTH – TURKEY





**Title of the modern tale:** WEB TRAP

**Country:** GREECE

**Authors of the text:**

MICHAELA KOSTOPOULOU,  
PANAGIOTIS BIRBAS, NIKITAS KAPATSORIS,  
NEFELI TSIAFAKI,  
ARGYRIS RETSIS,  
KATERINA DIMAKOPOULOU,  
SOTIRIA PEPPA,  
SOFIA GEORGOPOULOU,  
NATALIA SOTIROPOULOU

**Graphic illustrations (authors):**

POLYCHRONOPOULOS DIONYSIOS

**Linguistic correction:**

EVGENIA DRAKOPOULOU,  
AMALIA KATOCHIANOU

**Coordinator of the task:** EVGENIA DRAKOPOULOU





## WEB TRAP

Aggelos- Mum, can I have a glass of water?

Ismini- I am so much surprised you still need water! How long has it been since you last had something to eat son? This thing will be the death of you. Here you are....

Aggelos- Thanks mum but please stop nagging. I am perfectly ok. Close the door behind you.

Aggelos is a 20 year old computer programming student. He was one of the best students at school and managed to pass the national exams to

enter the university with flying colours. His mother, a middle-aged housewife adores and admires him for his wit and ideas. But throughout the last year Aggelos has developed a strong addiction. Using his knowledge on computers as an excuse, he started spending long hours on discovering new aspects and developing strategies. And after all the excitement of work, he needed something to relax. So he started playing computer games. He liked the fact that he could communicate with people of his age from all over the world. At first it was fun and after a while he would feel sleepy and would stop. But after some time, gaming became so exciting that he could not even think of working. He simply felt that he had the right to entertainment, and everything else was unimportant. His mother, Ismini, started complaining that he did not spend enough time with her and then things became worse. In a matter of months Aggelos stopped going out and meeting old friend as he preferred his new Cyber friends. He became so absorbed that he lost interest in anything>family, friends, food, sleep... He rarely went out of his room, let alone the house.

Ismini- Shall I get you something to eat? A salad maybe, an apple, an orange? You need vitamins you know, and you need to get out in the sun, in the fresh air! It is not healthy to sit down on a chair in a dark room all day, and night. You don't even let me open the window to get some air. Have you even noticed that it is spring already and the weather is perfect? You look so skinny and pale, I worry about you.

Aggelos- Stop it mum, I am fine, everything is fine. Do not worry so much....

Ismini- Can you stop for five minutes and come talk with me please...

Aggelos- Ok, Ok I am coming but if you start complaining again I am off.

Ismini- There is something I have wanted to tell you for some days now but I did not have the chance.

Aggelos- What is it? Are you sick?

Ismini- No, I am fine. It s just that I want you to meet someone. A very nice family moved in the apartment on the second floor, just a month ago. Have you heard anything? No the earphones do the job, I know.... So they have a daughter, Marina, a beautiful girl, just around your age. Whenever I meet her she offers her help. She is so polite.... I thought it would be nice to meet her, she is so open minded and thoughtful..... You know you should be going out and flirting and since you do not, I have to step in..... So when is a good time for me to invite her over for a cup of coffee?

Aggelos- Are you out of your mind? Absolutely not. I am perfectly capable of flirting and doing things my way. Do not dare to do something like that. If I want to find a girlfriend, I can do it myself. Stop interfering in my life, stop telling me what to do. I mean it! This conversation is over and the matter is settled! Understand? I do not want to ever hear a word about it again...

And off he went to his room again to resume his game.

The next day Ismini decides to go to the super market at two, the time she knows Marina comes back from acting school. She wants to be an actor and she studies at a private acting school. Ismini hopes to meet Marina and ask for her help. And she gets what she asks for, as she meets Marina at the entrance of their block of flats. She feels awkward in the

beginning, but Marina;s amiable personality gives her the courage to open her heart and explain the scheme she has come up with.

Standing by the main entrance door, she explains her plan

Ismini- I would like you to help me with my son. You know he has a problem but he does not want to face it. He stays indoors all day long, playing computer games and refusing to live life as it should be. I am afraid that if I do not do something my son will be destroyed. I do not want to wait until it is too late.

Marina- I am sorry but I do not understand. I would like to help you but I do not know how

Ismini-Well, I have thought of a plan. You can sign in and play one of his favourite games, LOL, and try to become his friend. The name he uses for the game is Agg10. After you have won his trust I want you to convince him to meet in person. That way he will realize that people like to live real life as well, and hopefully he will grow to like real life more that virtual. I know what I am asking is too much but I am desperate..... And you can see it as a new role, I know you like acting.....My son is a very good young man, you will have no problems....please Marina, there is no one else I can turn to, you are my last hope...

Marina- Ok, I will think about it but no promises.

Ismini goes to the supermarket thinking that this is the last chance. It has to be successful.

When she goes back home carrying fruit and vegetables for her son she peaks at his bedroom. He is playing LOL. A faint smile is evident on her face.

Days go by and Ismini has stopped complaining. She is just being patient....

But after a month she starts being impatient. She does not know if Marina has made a move and she is nervous.

A week later she sees her son coming out of his room whistling. He is happy.

Aggelos- Mum, how about some coffee and a hug?

Ismini can not believe her ears. Is this her son?

Ismini- Of course my son. Here you are, sit down, let us have a chat.

Aggelos- ok, but I do not have much time. I think I will go out for a walk.

Ismini- I am so happy for you!!!! Of course you should go. Do you need me to bring you clean clothes?

Aggelos- Relax mum, I am only going for a walk, not to get married.

They both laugh and have an easy relaxed conversation for a while. Then Aggelos leaves, and Ismini can not help but wonder if this is Marina s doing. But she is too happy to spend more time thinking about it.

Days go by and Aggelos spends less and less time playing computer games and more time outdoors. Ismini has not seen Marina since the day they had that conversation, and life could not be happier.

One day Aggelos informs his mum that he is going to bring his friends over to watch a film.

Ismini- What do you mean friends? Not A friend?

Aggelos- No mum, friends, three people. We will order a pizza and have fun.

Ismini is very confused. What is going on? If Ismini has not interfered, then who? But she does not want to waste time thinking about it. It is the best thing that has happened to her life for the last few years.

Going to the supermarket, she meets Marina.

Ismini- Goodmorning my child, how are you? I have not seen you for a while!

Marina- Goodmorning, I am so happy to see you! Well I have been away for a while, you see my grandpa was sick and I had to go to my hometown to see him and I ended up staying there for two months. I am sorry that I have not been able to help you...

Ismini- Dear child don t be sorry. My problem has been solved. I do not know why, I do not know who, but my son is happy and active again. He spends most of his time at school with friends. He even invited friends over tonight. I am so content....

Traps are in our minds, most of the times we set them for ourselves. Strong characters overcome difficult situations with time and with the love of their family.

THE END



**Title of the modern tale:** MAKEDONKA FOR MACEDONIA

**Country:** North Macedonia

**Authors of the text:**

Stefan Markoski

Daniel Mishkovski

Filip Nastovski

Martin Gjorgjevski

**Graphic illustrations (authors):**

Mila and Matea Bojarovski using [www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)

**Linguistic correction:**

Dushko Perinski

**Coordinator of the task:**

Dushko Perinski

## Makedonka for Macedonia

There is a country in the heart of the Balkan Peninsula where centuries wrote and left very colorful and wealthy history in every field. And, during centuries there were different countries on the same land, but today that's Macedonia. A small country with people with great soul. Always ready to help someone.



In time of globalization and social media, when information is spreading with speed of light, one girl from that ancient Macedonia named Makedonka has her own YouTube channel. There she has thousands of subscribers following her publishing developments from her high school everyday life and her trips.

Her popularity increases day by day, her charisma and pleasant voice become recognizable to many YouTube users. With that for Makedonka the worries began, such as how to control the popularity, or how at the same time to be a friend and a high school student as she was before.



After a lecture of her favorite professor she gets a new inspiration. She changes the content of her posts and begins to report from endangered places, making vlogs from the places that need more care to conserve the nature. Thus, Makedonka, from a well-known trendsetter began to report from illegal rubbish dumps and places that are endangered by human carelessness.





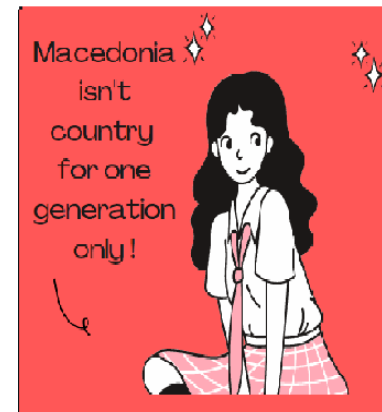
From those places she calls for awakening and preserving the natural eco-system and also for protest. Usually, such activity does not only mean popularity, but also problems. Current political elites dislike her activity and often she is a target of ridicule and pressure, and comments like she has to be playing with her peers and writing homework instead.



She does not succumb to the pressures, but she is even more motivated. Her motto is:

Macedonia is not a country for one generation only!

Her publications have also been sponsored by well-known businessmen and companies, and she has used the funds to travel around the country and find more and more places like that.



She uses her European law on freedom of speech and calls on the masses. So, she became a symbol of protests for conservation of the planet. An eco-activist in the focus of the media. Her movement called "Makedonka for Macedonia" is supported by many eco-organizations, activists and youth. And, at the same time in most cities the largest mass protests ever took place.



Thanks to these activities, the Government has undertaken some major environmental projects, such as reducing the pollution in the cities, clearing some illegal rubbish dumps and protecting and conserving natural lakes.



Makedonka remains in everyone's memory, as an example of how a problem-solving initiative can be instigated.

THE END



**Title of the modern tale:** ADDICTION CONQUERORS

**Country:** POLAND

**Authors of the text:**

Karolina Hoszwa, Julia Kubiak, Przemek Nałęcz,  
Mikołaj Hołozubiec, Oskar Mueller, Dominika Czerech,  
Ida Lipińska, Piotr Sawicki, Natalia Kosek, Szymon Grodzki, Karol  
Skłodowski, Patryk Kupidłowski, Hanna Sworcuk

**Graphic illustrations:**

Matylda Fabisiewicz, Lena Baranowska, Mikołaj Groblewski, Zofia  
Stec, Piotr Sawicki, Oskar Mueller, Patryk Kupidłowski, Michał  
Leszczyński, Wiktoria Konecka, Aleksandra Łysak, Mikołaj  
Jakubiec, Milena Grzelak, Natalia Kępka, Misiorska Nikola

**Online elaboration:**

Nikola Misiorska, Milena Grzelak, Zosia Stec,  
Matylda Fabisiewicz, Aleksandra Łysak, Natalia Kępka, Szymon  
Zdunek, Aleksandra Łysak, Piotr Sawicki, Mikołaj Jakubiec,  
Michał Leszczyński, Lena Baranowska, Wiktoria Konecka

**Linguistic correction:** Małgorzata Kurzątkowska

**Coordinator:** Małgorzata Sobczyk

## Addiction Conquerors

In Warsaw, a city of about two million inhabitants, there was Henry Dzbaniarz with his sister Barbara and parents. They lived a peaceful life until the arrival of the Mysterious Being. He was the king of the Evil Spirits of various addictions. He was sent to earth to take over people's minds through addictions. The inhabitants of the city started to be interested in the drugs offered by the Evil Spirit. After a few months, computer game enthusiasts stopped going outside. The air in the city was getting more and more polluted by cigarette smoke and did not allow the inhabitants to sleep well.

Every day the number of empty alcohol bottles in the city streets was increasing. There were also more and more drunk drivers. People freely bought drugs that took over their minds. All addicts were commanded by the king of Evil Spirits, known as the Lord of Evil. His aim was to conquer Warsaw and enslave the inhabitants. Fortunately, not everyone was affected by the power of evil.

Terrified Henry quickly noticed that something was wrong with the whole society. With his younger sister Barbara, he found a box of magical dumplings in the basement. They ate them and, as one of the few inhabitants of the city, they were not enslaved.



Together they decided to defeat the Lord of Evil. The next day, at sunrise, the children set off in search of Pierogiarz, the famous shaman. They found him after several hours of wandering. It turned out that the shaman can make dumplings with magical stuffing, which have the power to break the spell from the people enslaved by the Evil Spirit. He also told them how to defeat the Lord of Evil. One could beat him with a strong will. Siblings decided to accept the challenge.

## Chapter I: In the shadow of the smoke

In the northern part of Warsaw, near the forest, there was extraordinary house with a family Dzbaniarz. On the first floor there were the rooms for Barbara and Henryk, who spent a lot of time not only studying, but also playing in the garden in front of the house. This time it was a heavy rain and that is why Young Henry stayed in his room. Suddenly, a lightning struck, some light appeared, the boy saw the screen in front of him and realized that he was in his computer, and more precisely in the game "PLEAGUE-LEAGUE", which he was just playing. After a longtime, he heard footsteps heading towards him. It was Barbara, his sister. The girl heard Henryk's voice from the speakers:

-Henryk: I'm in the computer!

She walked over to the computer and looked at the message: "If you want your brother back, win the game!" The confused girl clicked the "PLAY" button. Suddenly the world spun, Barbara was standing next to Henryk in the yard. People were smoking cigarettes and there was smoke everywhere. Then they heard screams:

-The crowd: To our King Marlboro Ghost!

-Barbara: Who is Marlboro Ghost?

-Henryk: I don't know, but we can try to find Pierogarz. In this game, he has always helped the lost players.



After a long while they were in front of his house. For the first time since playing this game, they didn't smell cigarettes. When they knocked on the door, Pierogarz opened them and immediately explained what was going on here:

-Piergarz: Since the arrival of the Marlboro Ghost, all people have become addicted to cigarettes, and this creature has become their king. -Henryk: Do you know how to beat him? - Pierogarz: I don't know that, but the information that he is hiding in the cigarettes factory may help.

As they were about to leave, Pierogarz stopped Barbara and whispered into her ear:



-Pierogarz: "There are many ways to deal with stress."



It was weird, but she didn't care too much. They arrived at the factory door. When they made sure no one was there, they climbed up the windings stairs. They stopped in a chamber in front of a terrible creature, it was the Marlboro Ghost. Henry's legs felt like puddings. He passed out. Stressed Barbara didn't know what to do. Suddenly she heard voices:

-Marlboro Ghost: "smoke smoke...".



She was already reached the nearest cigarette when she remembered Pierogarz's words, which he had whispered goodbye to her. The girl began to look around the room, and her attention was caught by a red button on the Marlboro Ghost's forehead with the words "game over". As soon as possible, she ran to the monster and pressed the button. Suddenly, all the cigarettes disappeared, fresh air appeared, and the two young heroes, following the light, found themselves in their safe house.

## Chapter II: Unusual jelly beans

In the school yard, Grażynka and Janusz, sitting on a school bench, ate their lunch. Suddenly, they noticed 5 zlotys on the grass, picked up a coin and ran to the school's shop. They bought 4 teddy



bear-shaped sour jellybeans with lemon, strawberry and watermelon flavors. After a few minutes, they both started to act weird. Suddenly the janitor came up to them and told them to follow him.

Walking slowly after the janitor, they entered a dark office, in which a hole suddenly appeared under their feet. They fell into some strange space. At this point, known to Grażyna and Janusz, Mr. Woźny turned into a DrugKiller !!!!!

-PW: Dear children, please, follow me! I will show you something amazing. You will surely like it!

-J: Grażyna, let's follow him!

-G: Good idea, let's follow him!



Travelling quite a long way, Janusz and Grażyna saw a huge castle in front of them with the inscription "In Killerowo". In front of the

castle gate stood a tall teenager with short, fair hair, black glasses and a large checkered hat. It was Henryk Dzbaniarz, who for the last few years had tried to defeat the Drug Killer, who was also Mr. Janitor.

-DK (PW): About Henryk, you finally called to me !!!

-G: How did you get back?

-HD: Leave them, they are still children!

-DK (PW): Don't listen to him, he's talking nonsense. Come with me, I will show you the secret of my castle!

-HD: Run!

Grażynka ran up to Henryk Dźbaniarz and they shouted loudly:

-G + HD: Janusz !!!!

At the same time, Janusz felt the unusual smell of sour jellybeans from the shop. They made him hurry after the Drug Killer. The excited boy felt deep inside that he was going to the King's castle. Suddenly, a large gate full of drug jellies opened, and behind them Janusz noticed other children who were locked in cages.



Then he realized very quickly that he was in danger. The strong smell of jelly drugs and their consumption along the way made the boy quickly lose consciousness. At the same time, Grażynka and Henryk, sitting on a school bench, began to devise a rescue plan for Janusz.

-HD: Grażynka, do you know how scary this castle is?

We have to help Janusz as soon as possible, otherwise he will never come back to us and he will become a Zombie. Frightened Grażynka, after a short reflection, said:

-G: Do you have any plan? Do you know how to get there?

-HD: There are two ways .... through the front door or through the underground sewers of the castle.

-G: How will it be safer?

-HD: Channels!

-G: Where can our Janusz be?

-HD: Could be in several places in the castle, most likely heavily drugged. Maybe he is not himself anymore, It may happen that he does not even recognize us ...

-G: We have to find some antidote ....

-HD: I know a certain person !!! This is my old friend from kindergarten - Pierogarz !!!



In the evening, a detailed plan was established with the good Pierogarz. Pierogarz gave Grażyna and Henryk wonderful dumplings with special stuffing, which were a remedy for drug addiction.

In the early morning, Grażyna and Henryk Dzbaniarz reached Drug Killer Castle through the sewers. Their hurried steps woke Janusz from his sleep and he did not even know where he was.

-G: Janusz, come here quickly, we have to run away!

-J: I can't, this door is locked.

-HD: Oh no! Only Drug Killer can have the key! We have to sneak up on him. Let's go!

After a few minutes, Grażynka and Henryk Dzbaniarz safely reached the banquet hall where the Drug Killer was located. They managed to reach their destination safely, because on the way they treated all the old men with unusual dumplings. The Drug Killer was gradually losing its strength. He realized that his people were no longer dependent and saw the key to the cages where his prisoners were locked.

-DK: What's going on here? What are you doing? You're supposed to eat drug jellies !!!!

-G: You won't be ordering anyone anymore!

-HD: Neither give any drugs! We have your key! End with you!



Henry managed to intercept the Drug Killer key, free in gall prisoners and defeating the Drug Killer forever. Never again in school were children treated to drug jellies.

### Chapter III: Soplica Karlica

Was a beautiful spring day peculiarity, the lindens, chestnuts and cherry trees, the smell of the first spring flowers floated in the air, many tourists were walking along the streets of Gdansk along the Motlawa river on Granary Island. There was a sister of the Dzbaniarz – Barbara, together with her friend Zygmunt.

-B: Wow! What beautiful flowers.

-Z : But I'm thirsty!

-B: Me too... See, there's the Dominican Tavern. Let's go!

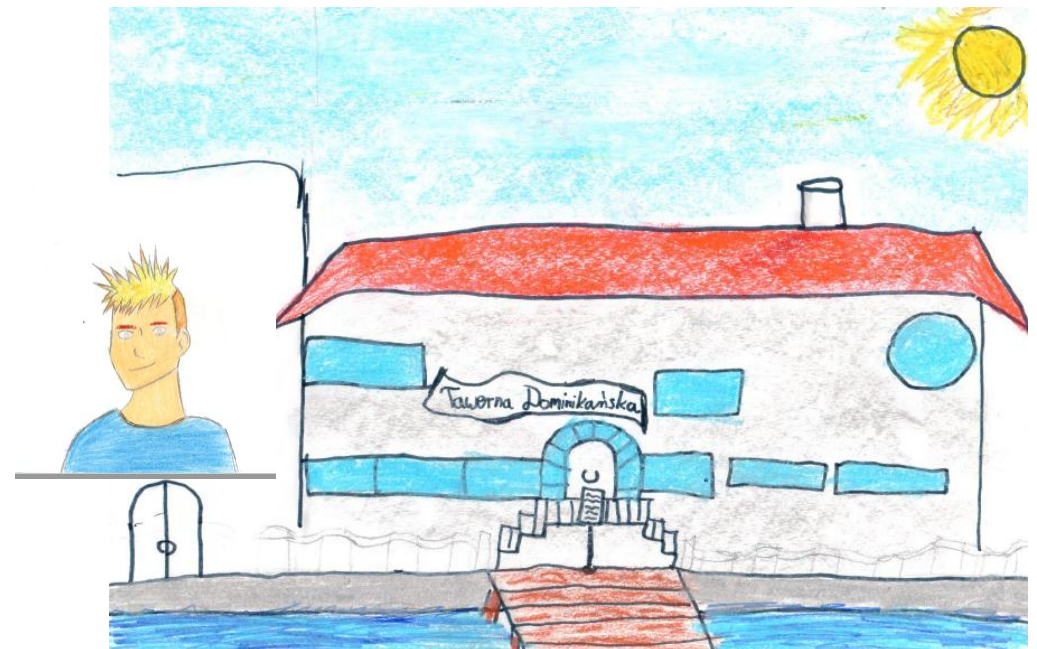
Young friends have entered the restaurant. The squeaky door closed behind them quickly and bottles of Soplica vodka appeared in their hands. Sigismund hurriedly opened the liquor, drank a few sips and immediately felt a strong dizziness and then fainted.

-B: Zygmunt, what happened to you? Why did you open that bottle?

-Z: Some voice told me to drink...

-B: Why did you do that? After all, alcohol is harmful!

Zygmunt fell on the floor, contact with him became impossible. The restaurant guests were indifferent to the event, some took pictures, others sang songs loudly. There was a smell of alcohol in the air.



You could see bottles of it on almost every table. The tavern became a perfect place of hospitality for the evil spirit of Soplica, whose situation provoked the appearance of Zygmunt:

-Z: Who are you? -Who are you?

-DAS: I'm your friend!

-Z: How did I take it? -I'm not. We don't know each other.

-DAS: I've been with you ever since you opened the liquor bottles. It's because you drink, sometimes we meet! Don't you remember? And your eighteenth birthday? And your school trip? And the guys in the yard? Drink to our friendship! Our health!

Without much thought, Zygmunt drank the vodka offered to him by Soplica. His health deteriorated from minute to minute until he finally lost consciousness and fell on the wooden floor. Scared Barbara did not know what to do, so she decided to call her brother.

-B: Hello, hello Henry?

-HDż: Hey, Barbara, can you hear me? How good of you to call, I was worried about you.

-B: Henry, you have to help us. Come here quickly.

-HDż: Hey, what happened, Barbara? -Say everything. Just take it easy.

-B: We're in the Tavern. Zygmunt got drunk and fainted. What should I do?

-HDż : How did he get drunk? It's not allowed for minors to drink alcohol!

-B: He said he heard some voices... it was strange...

-HDż: help! I can get to you in 20 minutes.

-B: But... but they're all in the same condition here! This is a nightmare!

-HDż: I think I know, who can help you.

Henryk Dzbaniarz very quickly realized that the source of problems is once again an evil spirit, this time an alcoholic one.

-HDż: I have a friend who's gonna help us and find a cure for this ailment.

-B: Where is he?

-B: Where is he? -Hey, it's Pierogarz. I'll ask him to help us.



After a brief consultation, Pierogarz understood what was going on. He made unusual dumplings with special stuffing. He gave them to Henry, assuring him that anyone who eats a piece of this magical food will be freed from his bondage and will never want to drink poisonous alcohol again. As soon as he could, Henry found a tavern harassed by the forces of evil by the Spirit of Soplica.

-HDż: What's going on here? I brought you some dumplings!

Delicious dumplings! Who want to eat them?

-Guys: I want / I want / And for me /

-HDż: Everybody...

Dumplings were going around like warm buns. Everyone was enjoying them, and worried Henry was looking in the crowd for his beloved sister Barbara with Zygmund. Suddenly a great figure of the Spirit of Soplica appeared before him.

-DS: You won't find your sister here. I trapped her in my castle, which only drunken people have access to. And you don't look like that!

-HDż: I don't believe you! She doesn't drink alcohol!

-DS: You don't know my abilities yet. I can convince anyone to drink!

-Z: Oh, Henry, finally you are! Grazyna's disappeared somewhere.

– HDż: To get to Grazyna, we need to drink something with a percentage. Just remember, Zygmund, when we enter the castle, we must eat magic dumplings right away! They will protect us from the effects of drinking alcohol.

The young heroes drank vodka Soplica on the way to cross the walls of the Dark Castle.

- Z: Henry, I think the Spirit of Soplica has evaporated! He's not behind us.

- HDż: He's probably already in his fortress.

Drinking alcohol allowed Henryk and Zygmunt to cross the walls of Soplica Castle. The boys remembered the dumplings they immediately consumed. They managed to find Grażyna and free her from the influence of Soplica.

-G: Finally you are! I know how to defeat a ghost, we have to stuff a vodka machine with dumplings!

-Z: And where's the machine? Enough dumplings?

-HDż: There should be enough dumplings, but there aren't too many. Let's eat them sparingly. Let's look for the machine! Quickly, follow me!

Friends ran every step of the way to the Soplica vodka production machine. Along the way, the growing smell of alcohol has emptied each one of them. So they decided that only Henryk Dzbaniarz will be clogging the machine with dumplings and only he will be consuming them as a protection against the influence of lethal alcohol from now on. While Henry was destroying the vodka machine, he heard the words:



-DS: What are you doing with my machine? Leave it alone!

-HDż: -You're never gonna get anybody drunk again! No more drunkenness!

While the alcohol machine was filled with dumplings with magic stuffing, the Spirit of Soplica was becoming weaker, clearer and slowly disappearing forever in front of Henry, Barbara and Zygmunt. From then on, order and order reigned. Friends returned calm and happy to their homes.

## Chapter IV: In the brutal world of GTA

It was Friday afternoon, the sun was shining outside the window. Jadwiga had already finished her lessons and was saddened by one Maths teacher. She was worried whether her parents would let her go to her grandmother's in Mazury. Unfortunately, it turned out that he had to stay home and learn Maths. When her parents left, Jadwiga tried to focus on her lessons, but the computer kept distracting her. She decided that a short break would not hurt her and sat down for 15 minutes to the computer. However, she quickly lost track of time, suddenly noticing that it was already 22:00. She promised her parents that she would do all the work before they returned.



- GTA: Just a moment longer, it won't hurt .... You will manage to do your homework, play again! -J: I have to study, it was supposed to be only 15 minutes ...

- GTA: If you don't want to come alone, I'll make you stay here.

- J: How will you do it?

-J: Scream Suddenly, the computer began to drag Jadwiga inside.

Her head was getting dizzy more and more. The girl saw a flash, and then the online world, distorted by bad words. There were fast and modern cars on the streets. Some of them took part in the chases, fighting for survival. There were attacks on shops, banks and poor people walking the streets of the city.

- J: Where am I? Help! Lonely Jadwiga, enslaved by the GTA Computer Game Ghost, heard his voice:

- GTA: Welcome Jadwiga to the online world of GTA games! What do you want to receive?

- J: Telephone.

- GTA: Look what's in your pocket.

- J: Oh man, I have a sharp knife!

- GTA: Now you just need to answer someone's phone.

- J: Me? Why should I teach this? You can't steal! -GTA: In this world, everything is allowed! - J: I can't, I can't do it.

- GTA: This time I can do it for you.

The spirit of GTA quickly approached the first passerby he met on the street and he picked up his phone. Then he gave his loot to the offended Jadwiga who, despite everything, accepted the gift.

-GTA: You know how this world works, have fun, I have to go to the others.

Scared Jadwiga rushed to turn the phone on and saw a big sign on its desktop saying: "IF YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO THE NORMAL WORLD, CALL ME". Walking through the dark streets of the city, after a long time of thinking, the girl chose the right number.

-B: Good morning! I waited a few hours for your call! You finally made the call!

-J: How did you wait? How do you know who I am?

-B: Every new person goes through this mission at first. People walking the streets of that city have received special calls from us, you have one of them in your hand.

-J: You wrote that you could get out of here. How do you do that?

-B: We have a plan to get you out of here, you need to find a magic portal. It will only be available for two hours. Let's meet as soon as possible at the Chiliad Mountain Railroad



Jadwiga started her journey, on the way she saw many robberies and chases. The world around me was terrifying. All she wanted was to get out of there as soon as possible. After climbing Chiliad Mountain, the girl immediately recognized Barbara, who

was the only one in this universe to have a beautiful and sincere smile on her face.

- B: Hedwig! -Hey!

- J: Hello, Barbara! What's the plan?

- B: The plan is not difficult, but you have to lure the GTA Spirit into an invisible portal, which you will both get into the real world, then the evil GTA Spirit will immediately go to prison, and all the people trapped in the GTA world will be released. Let's go home. I'll explain everything to you there. After a few minutes, the girls reached a safe place, which turned out to be a house on a hill. There was also Henryk Dzbaniarz, who presented a detailed plan of action. Jadwiga and Henryk arrived in front of the GTA Spirit House, while Barbara was waiting for them in front of the portal.

- J: What do you think Henryk? Is he going to smell the scent of our dumplings in his gold??

- HDż: I think so; we must hurry up!

The GTA Spirit walked out to his balcony and he became nervous, because he smelled his gold.

The gold bars should be in his safe. However, he did not know that this unusual scent comes from the magic dumplings prepared by

Pierogarz at the request of Henryk Dzbaniarz. Suddenly he noticed uninvited guests and started his crazy run towards them. HDż, Jadwiga, let's run to the portal, GTA's coming!

- GTA: Give me back my gold!

- J: We don't have your gold!

- GTA: I don't believe you! The ghost of GTA was already catching up with Jadwiga, who was running towards Barbara, standing at the entrance to the portal.

When he was about to catch her, the girl suddenly disappeared, and he just left her. The world of GTA has been annihilated. All the enslaved people have returned to their homes.



Henryk Dzbaniarz and Barbara enjoyed meeting their loved ones. Jadwiga found herself in her room, she managed to do all the work before her parents arrived. The ghost of GTA went to prison for a few years, where he learned to do well. After a few years, he was released. He's been working as a computer science teacher ever since. There was peace in the world, because there were no more addictions, everyone lived long and happy lives.

THE END



**Title of the modern tale:** Europe, Land of no Boundaries

**Country:** PORTUGAL

**Authors of the text:**

Ana Sacramento, Ana Silva, Catarina Bernardo, Filipe Silva, Gonalo Chagas, Leonor Casimiro, Lucas Serra, Sofia Lu s, Tom s Pires, Vanessa Ferreira.

**Graphic illustrations (authors):**

Fig. 1 - Afonso Vieira, Fig. 2 - Lucas Serra, Fig. 3 - Afonso Vieira, Fig. 4 - Gonalo Henriques, Fig. 5 - Afonso Vieira, Fig. 6 - Gonalo Henriques, Fig. 7- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/11/1078592> Fig. 8 - Carolina Correia Fig. 9 - Carolina Correia

**Linguistic correction:**

Ana Estremoz,  
Carmo Martins,  
Cristina Rocha,  
Valter Abade

**Coordinators of the task:**

Ana Estremoz,  
Carmo Martins,  
Cristina Rocha



## EUROPE, LAND OF NO BOUNDARIES

A Portuguese modern tale

What once was considered an ordinary happy family from Vaguizol, seemed today, gathered round the dining table, indifferent to the meal in front of them. All you could hear was a loud silence. Usually, they would be talking about their day, how it went, what had happened, what had changed... but today something catastrophic had happened in Vaguizol. FAO's boat, Zeus, that carried food and other first necessity goods for Vaguizols had unfortunately sunk.



Figure 1

This was shocking news to all the families because their survival depended on FAO's support.

Despite the hunger, Zuleika played with her food, paying no attention, and avoiding her parents' gaze. The peas slowly and patiently fell from her fork but without the joy of a girl that used to build mashed potato castles. Her mother cooked that dish three times a week and for the rest of the days, a broth that used to have meat was served. No one knew the right thing to say. It was clear the situation had worsened.

Then Zuleika decided to eat quickly. After that, she locked herself in her room crying because of recent events.

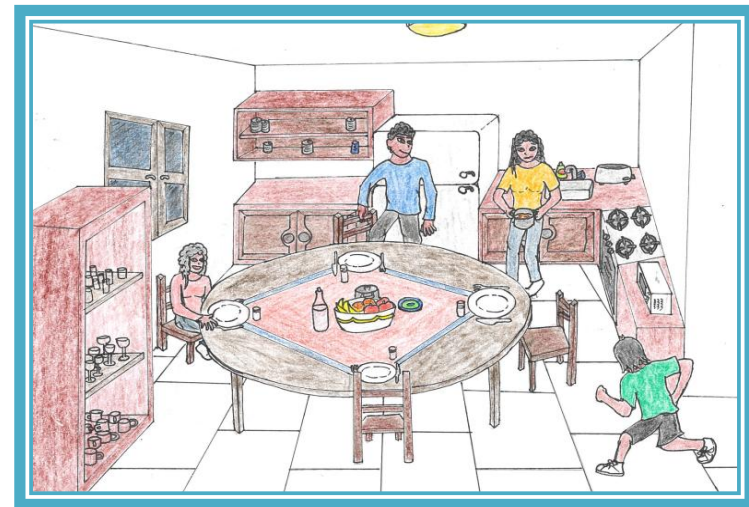


Figure 2

Her parents Abdul and Saphira remained in the kitchen, both staring at the longtime empty shelves:

- Saphira, I am tired of trying to make ends meet. I can't provide for us for more than a week. I've sold the camels and hid the money. We must get from here as soon as possible. One of the camel traders that I do business with has privileged information. He told me they are preparing a coup d'état.

- We don't have money to invest and keep growing a plantation. Also, the soil is dry and nothing will grow out of it. - Saphira whispered. - We totally depend on what the ships bring.

Global warming, the ongoing droughts and the lack of food had completely affected their lives.

They were startled by the sound of another shocking news. Vaguizols were starting to protest in the streets, against the president. Some speculated that the head of state was involved in corruption scams, selling goods delivered by the FAO. The president had already explained that it was only a conspiracy theory made by the opposition. However, where there is smoke there is a fire.

At Nuperia city port, boats from different places docked. Abdul knew the dockers' chief since childhood and that he could trust him with the plan he had just devised.

That evening, Abdul told Saphira about his plan of hiding in the ship basement of one of the boats, Poseidon. He told her that the dockers' chief would help them. He had been paid using part of the money from the camels' sale. They wouldn't tell their children any of the details. This was the best option for the sake of everyone's safety.

The following night, when they were ready to execute their plan, something unexpected happened: The government had forbidden all Nuperians to leave their homes. Martial law was declared.

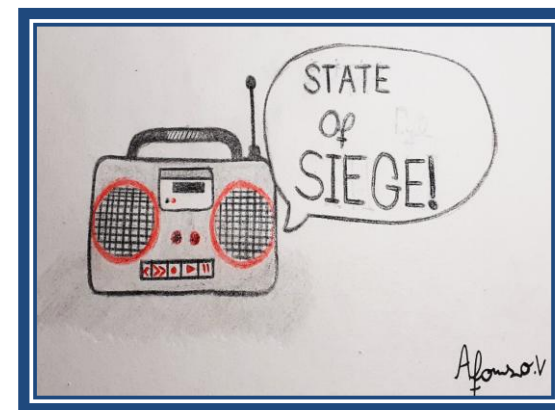


Figure 3

On the third day of curfew, Saphira woke up around two in the morning with a bad omen. In her chest was the feeling of fear and the notion that, at any time, armed soldiers would barge in and take her husband. Abdul woke up startled, and after listening to his wife he set the plan in motion. He knew of his wife's gift of premonition. He knew she had the ability to foresee dangerous situations.

They woke their children that looked back at them with a mix of fright and confusion in their eyes.

While they were walking along the narrow and tortuous streets on their way to the port, they could hear their old friends screaming, doors banging, windows being shattered, and the sound of police sirens, as well as deep loud frightening voices. Suddenly, all hell broke loose. Abdul felt a tightness in his heart, looking at his terrified children. They couldn't understand what was happening nor the danger they were in. Saphira just stifled her cry. When they got to the port, Abdul noticed that the dockers were inland, busy with the supplies. Taking advantage of the situation, they sneaked into the boat.

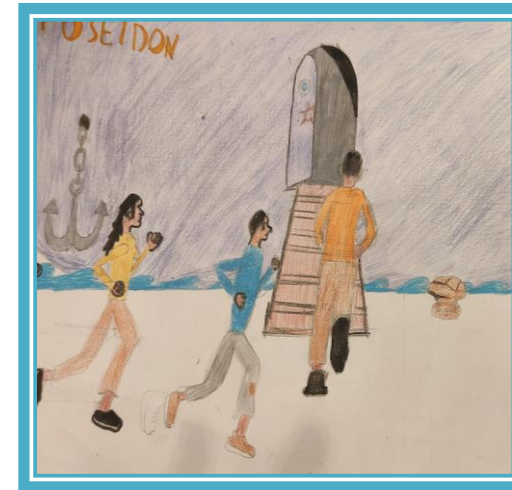


Figure 4

They noticed a small door and guessed it led to the ship's basement. Saphira grabbed the children and took them inside, hiding in a corner. Abdul put his arms around his family and all you could hear were the young ones' muffled cries.

Meanwhile, the Poseidon's commander Nikita was talking to Stefan about vegetables:

- Come on Stefan, I've told you this a thousand times. Tomatoes are vegetables! - Nikita sighed.

- And for the last time, Nikita, tomato is a fruit! - Stefan repeated, with absolute conviction.

At that moment, a docker got to the bow and alerted them saying the boat was ready to set off. Nikita went to

the control bridge and Stefan went back to his medical post. The Ship's commander began to steer it to the Suez Canal and then to the Mediterranean Sea. The journey had begun.

Jamil was feeling bored and had no idea what was happening, the only thing he wanted was to play. As the ship crossed the Suez Canal, Abdul felt sicker and sicker due to dehydration and lack of food.

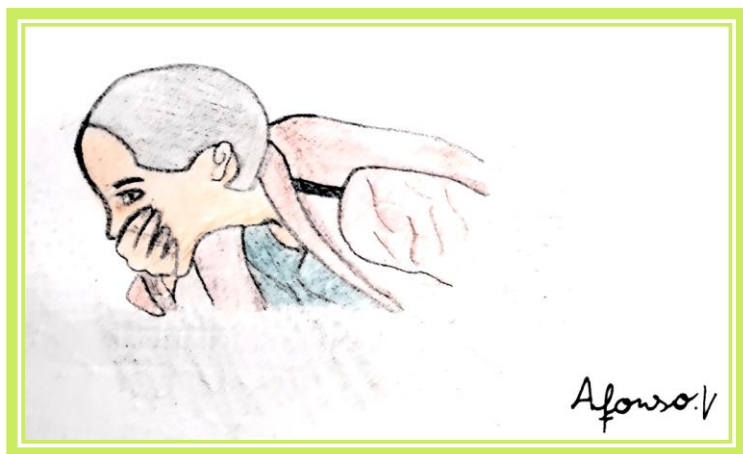


Figure 5

Saphira watched her family very closely. She could feel danger was nearby but she didn't know what to do. It seemed as if all the solutions for their problems were

rapidly erased and forgotten when she looked at her sad family. Her emotions took a hold of her.

A few moments later, they were startled by the ship's rocking movement. Jamil tucked closer to his mother, wanting to feel the love and comfort he so desperately needed.

- Mom...dad... I'm scared! - Zuleika whispered, terrified.

- Don't be afraid, honey. Everything is going to be just fine. – But Abdul didn't know if he believed his own words.

Once again, silence settled over the family, but it was quickly interrupted by a raging cough from dad. Everyone looked and wondered what could be wrong with him as the ship began to shake again.

- Well, this commander doesn't know what he's doing...- whispered Saphira, trying to clear the air.

The days went by slower and slower. Saphira woke up and saw her pale husband, covered in sweat and breathing fast. She placed her hand on his forehead and realized he had an unusual temperature. Without thinking,

she opened the basement door and jumped towards the stairs in search of help. She tripped on someone lying on the floor, who seemed to be looking at the stars.



Figure 6

His name was Yan, a war journalist that had escaped Vaguizol and its government's claws. They both stared at each other in shock. Yan decided to break the silence:

- What's your name? Are you Nikita's friend?

- Nnn..no. I need your help right now! My family and I have escaped from Vaguizol and my husband is getting sicker! I need your help! – Said Saphira in a panic.

Yan was surprised. How could an entire family escape from Vaguizol? He had been able to get out, but that was only possible because he was acquainted with and helped by Nikita and Stefan. Suddenly he felt the strange, cold woman's hand pulling him into the ship's basement.

The sight of the whole family on the floor was heartbreaking for Yan. He had worked in similar stories, but this one had touched his heart.

- I know exactly who can help you! What an odd coincidence! - the journalist said.

- Who? Tell me, please, we're desperate! Who?- Saphira insisted.

- Ozan, Savora, the two of you, come here! - Yan shouted.



You could hear both men's heavy steps on the ship. Two blue helmets came into the ship's hold. When they realized what was going on, they immediately went into action. Many years of experience with this kind of cases prompted a swift intervention. They began to treat the weak and tired family, first Abdul and then everyone else.

Meanwhile, Yan contacted his longtime Portuguese friend, who worked in the Foreign Office and could facilitate the family to go through the BCS (Border Control Service). Portugal was known for making foreigners, refugees in particular, feel extremely welcome. So, with the blue helmets' help, the family was convinced that this was their best destination.

The family's arrival in Portugal wasn't an easy process. They weren't really successful at fitting in. And it wasn't just the fact that they couldn't speak Portuguese; their ways and habits were also very different. It was difficult but they had already gotten so far, they couldn't give up now. Slowly, they began to fit in. Both parents



found new jobs. Abdul used his skills as a salesman and opened a small shop.

Saphira did a lot of research and came up with a solution to the problem of droughts in Portugal.

Her idea was quite simple; however, it needed much work. She designed a machine that could alter the chemical components in

water, turning non-drinking water into potable water. This idea was well received by the Portuguese, as their country was facing serious long-term and devastating drought consequences, and this would be a big help, not just for the Portuguese people but also for the people of Vaguizol..



Figure 8

Saphira was still worried. Although she had a job, her kids, especially Zuleika, wasn't fitting in well at school.

She pretended to be happy, but her mother could see the sadness in her face and knew Zuleika missed her

country very much, and this was breaking her mother's heart.

At school, she set herself apart from her peers and she was filled with grief. Saphira was called by the principal several times because her daughter's behavior worried her teachers. In Zuleika's mind, her life was in Vaguizol. She used to watch her peers and thought about how nice it would be if she could have her friends with her.

One day, when she least expected, she was invited to a school talent show. Encouraged by her mother and reminded that she had an amazing voice, she not only went but she also enrolled in the singing competition. She went up on stage, closed her eyes and started to sing a Vaguizolan nursing rhyme.



Figure 9

pleased crowd. They had discovered a talented girl with a wonderful voice. Zuleika smiled and tears of happiness rolled down her cheeks. She had found her way.

THE END

Silence took over the room and, in the end, it almost came down with the applause and the whistling of a



**Title of the modern tale:** *Twinkle, twinkle, little Stela!*

**Country:** ROMANIA

**Authors of the text:**

Elena-Cristina POPESCU,  
Georgeta-Gabriela UDREA,  
Cristina Blaga,  
Cătălina TARAN,  
Cătălina NENIȚĂ,  
Ludmila TOMAȘEVSCI

**Graphic illustrations (authors):**

Valeria GANIBANI,  
Alissia UDREA

**Linguistic correction:**

Georgeta-Gabriela UDREA,  
Elena-Cristina POPESCU

**Coordinator of the task:**

Elena-Cristina POPESCU,  
Georgeta-Gabriela UDREA



***TWINKLE, TWINKLE,  
LITTLE STELA***

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star  
Bravely wander near and far...*

Once upon a time, in a faraway country named Liberta, there ruled a rather oppressive emperor, who made his people live only by his rules. Keeping his kingdom closed and disconnected from the other realms, he did not allow that his subjects might have different opinions,

expectations or behaviours. Not to pay with their life, people had no other choice but to live within the limits imposed by their ruler.





The emperor, whose wife had died a long time ago, was left with nothing but one daughter, the beautiful princess Stela. As he loved her very much, he kept her within the surroundings of the palace. Stela could never leave; as a matter of fact she never felt the urge to leave, as she completely trusted her father who repeatedly said their kingdom was the whole world and nothing ever existed beyond it. So, the sweet and innocent princess, in spite of growing up in such a limited space, kept her happy, joyful and compassionate nature. As a little girl, she would spend her time inventing and playing funny games with her servants or reading from her very few tale books.



Yet, her adolescence got somehow gloomy, as she kept having the same dream every night: it seemed that a gorgeous fairy, dressed in colourful dresses, completely different from the grey ones worn by the women of her country, appeared in her face from nowhere and whispered a strange song to her ear. It sounded like that (Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper, *Shallow*):

*Tell me something, girl,*

*Are you happy in this prison world?*

*Or do you need more?*

*Is there something else you're searching for?*

*Don't stay here!*

*There are so many places that you need to see!*

*Go, be free!*

*Embrace this big world and love its diversity!*



At the beginning, she would wake up in fear right after that,  
remaining completely bewildered, without understanding  
anything from the message of the song, but as time went  
by, especially after she had accidentally heard the servants  
speaking about the immensity of the real world, she would  
hear herself singing back to the beautiful fay:

*Tell me something, fay,  
Is it dangerous to go this way?  
My father believes that  
The big world's just a place of greed and theft,  
Where I'd be  
Mistreated, hurt and placed down on my knee  
Cause you see  
It's never a good thing to set yourself free!*

This part confused her even more because her father  
had always told her that there lied nothing beyond their  
land, there existed no other king nor other princess in this  
world but them. So, how could the world be bigger than  
that? How could people mistreat and hurt their only  
princess? There had to be a mistake... Yet, the fay would  
go on singing:

*Oh, you poor soul,  
You have lived so far in a deep hole...  
Step out of this jail!  
You'd be surprised to know you're not that frail!  
Freedom's your right  
Your right to live, to love, to follow your own heart...*

*Be brave and smart*

*As long as you choose wisely you will be alright!*

Mystified by the obsessive dream, one day Stela asked her father about it. At that moment, she was surprised to find out that the dream was telling the truth, while her father had kept her in a lie for such a long time: the world was so much more than Liberta but it was populated by evil creatures who would take advantage of her kindness and innocence; they would either corrupt or break her down; she could only be safe and saved within the thick walls of Liberta. Though for the first time widely awake, Stela fought back in the singing voice of her dream (Pink Floyd, *Brick in the Wall*):

*I don't need no limitation*

*I don't need no strict control*

*No prison brick walls in my life now*

*Father, let me free my soul!*

*Hey, tyrant, let me free my soul!*

*I will strive to be more than a brick in your wall.*





So far it has remained unknown what weighed more: either the strength of her voice or the determination of her mind, alongside the unstoppable outburst of so many oppressed subjects. The fact is that the tyrant king was defeated: he opened the iron gates of his kingdom and watched helplessly his people leave. He only had the power to tell his daughter, the first to leave Liberta, a few sorrowed words:

“My dear, freedom is both a blessing and a curse! It tempts you with the sweetness of choice, but it empowers you with the weight of responsibility! I thought it was my duty to protect you from it! It is clear enough I have failed. Be careful when you embrace it not to let yourself



controlled by it! Freedom is the most difficult lesson one can learn!``

But Stela was already too far in the voyage of her life to hear her father's feeble words. With her eyes wide opened, Stela was embracing everything that the big world had to offer: beautiful, unknown colours, diverse, magical sounds, different landscapes and mysterious people...

For the first time in her life, her curiosity was pleased and her craving for new things was nourished. And she kept on going for endless days, smiling like a child when he sees for the first time the mother's face, until, one night, she stopped to rest in a green valley. After a peaceful sleep, she found herself lying next to a little, blonde girl, who,

curiously, was not looking at her at all. On the contrary, she seemed to admire her own strangely yellow appearance in a rather big mirror for her to carry outside the house. To Stela's surprise, the girl, who kept ignoring her, started talking:

``Hello, Stela from Liberta! Do you like what you have seen so far from this big world you want to discover?``



Without waiting for any answer, which could not come promptly anyway, as Stela was mutely confused, she continued in a rather bossy voice: ``Come with me! I'll show you more!`` and friendly grabbed her hand.

Though she found herself walking without realising, Stela dazzled and asked:

``Wait? Who are you? How come you know my name and where I come from?!``

Looking for the first time into our princess's eyes, the little girl answered:

``You'll be surprised to find out how many things I know about you... Yet, you needn't worry; this is all to your benefit, not to your harm! Come along!``

Soon they arrived in a small, strange village. It seemed strange because it had houses in all possible shapes and colours. Some of them were round, others were triangular or square. Some even looked like pyramids. As for the colours, it was overwhelming for Stela, who had been living in a constantly grey world, to see such a chromatic diversity: red, yellow, pale blue, dark blue, pink, purple, orange... these inhabitants had no limits in painting their homes. The little girl guessed her confusion:

“Do you like our village? Its name is Empatia (= empatie, in Macedonian). I know it looks curious to you, but we are very proud of its diversity. As a matter of fact, this is what defines us. We find happiness in variety.”



Stela could not take her eyes off the stunning surroundings. Apart from the polychromatic buildings, she couldn't help noticing that the colour distinctions applied to humans also: her recent companion had blonde hair and yellow complexion, but as soon as she arrived in the village, red, blue, green, white or black people started to appear. And I don't mean only their clothes, or their hair; their whole being, from head to toe, was colourful. Moreover, they all had different sizes: for the first time in her life, she saw extremely tall people walking next to curiously short ones. Except for herself, no one seemed surprised of these constant variations; on the contrary, the inhabitants, who all appeared to know one another,

behaved in a very civilized way. Stela couldn't help staring:

``I reckon you are shocked to see so many other colours exist besides grey. Aren't they beautiful?``

``Yes, they are amazing... but tell me, isn't it difficult for you to live together since you are all so different? My father used to say that, in order to get along and coexist peacefully, people should be the same. Differences always lead to conflicts.``

``This would only be true if we didn't make any effort to understand one another's uniqueness. Happily, this is not our case! See, our village is blessed. We are not rich, nor famous, but we have a very special gift!``, said the little

girl pointing to her mirror. In fact, Stela instantly realised that those completely different people she saw had something identical: they all carried mirrors, either in their hands or in their pockets. Then she looked in the mirror that her friend had offered her.

Well, if you expect, as she also expected, to see her own beautiful princess face in the mirror, you are all wrong: although she projected the bizarre object toward her face, Stela saw the little girl's reflection in the mirror. And, to make it even more weird, she felt, at the same time, a wave of understanding illuminating her inside: it became clear, out of nowhere, what was in the little girl's head and mind. It felt like Stela was not Stela anymore; her

body was filled with her friend's being and she could experience her most intimate thoughts and feelings. She knew now that Camo (pr. Samo=unica, in Macedonian) was a nice twelve year old, whose main wish for that day was to satisfy Stela's need to see the big world. Camo completed:





“This mirror helps us know each other. And knowing means understanding and accepting the other, no matter how different he is from you. See, Stela, you, with your gloomy appearance, your pale clothes and your staring eyes, might have seemed quite strange to me, unless I had not looked at you through my mirror. The minute I glanced your reflection I realised your longing for knowledge, for discovering the world is nothing else but the normal consequence of your former imprisoned life. Knowing that, I wanted to help you. You can see now why our differences don’t alienate us; It’s quite the opposite: it’s fascinating to be able to embrace so many perspectives on life. It’s also self-fulfilling to make the others’ wishes come true.”

Stela was ecstatic: she spent a lot of time wandering in Empatia, trying to know and please as many people as possible. She gladly built a space ship for a little purple boy, she drew pink giraffes for his burgundy sister, she told the story of Adam and Eve to an old lady who worshipped mankind and she wove a nice, warm sweater for a grandfather who, being too white, was always cold and could not play outside with his ten grandchildren.

I don't remember exactly when, while looking at Stela through her mirror, Camo reminded that her big wish was still seeing the whole world and, after having offered her a magic mirror, said good-bye to our princess. Stela went on, sad to leave a good friend and a magical place, but eager to embrace whatever life kept in store for her.



She walked for many days and nights, she slept under the blue sky, she faced heavy rain and burning sun, she bathed in free waters and she ate what she could find along the way. Yet, tired of walking and of being on her own, Stela stopped at the first settlement that she came across. This one seemed to be bigger than Empatia and, definitely, much bigger than her Liberta. She entered cautiously, not knowing what kind of people she might find, still fearing that her father could be right about the mean big world. At the same time, her curious eyes didn't leave anything unnoticed; there were different kinds of houses: tall, fancy ones, or modest but neat ones. However, she could not, by far, observe the same overwhelming diversity that had stunned her in Empatia.

People also seemed nice; so nice that one middle-aged woman, holding a toddler, who appeared to be heading somewhere in a hurry, stopped and abandoned her own doings to look after Stela:

``Hello, dear! Are you alright? You seem tired and quite downcast. Come with me to my house! I'll raise your spirit a little bit.``

``Thank you, but you needn't worry about me. Anyway, you look like you're going somewhere...``

``Yes, I am, but my business can wait. I can't say the same thing about you... Come along!``

Soon, our princess, who – by the way – didn't look like a princess anymore, as tired and shabby as she was, arrived in front of a nice house, neither too big, nor too small, but

very inviting at sight. Her unexpected host opened the door and asked her to come inside.



But Stela couldn't take any step forward; she froze as she saw the marvellous carpet, woven in golden thread, lying on the floor in front of her.

“I cannot come in. I am dusty and unworthy to step on such a wonderful golden carpet. I cannot possibly dirty it. Could you, please, remove it?”, said Stela politely.

“Do not worry about the carpet. It lies there especially for you. Do come inside and I'll tell its story.!”

Stela had no other choice, so she entered. Still, she tried to touch as seldom as possible the magnificent carpet with her dirty feet. Once inside, the nice lady invited her to sit and rest while she was laying the table. Once again, the shy princess felt sorry for her father's misbeliefs. If only he could see how beautiful and friendly this big world



was!... If only he had the courage to discover and embrace it!... Her flowing thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the women who had just finished preparing the meal.



“Please, eat and while you do so I will tell the story of the golden carpet, which is in fact our national story. Our kingdom is called Sevasmos and my name is Filoxenia. We live in peace and harmony, we love and respect one another and we are blessed with a very wise and kind king. But, as far as I heard from the elders, it wasn’t always like this. There were times when people wouldn’t value respect and dignity, deceiving and mistreating one another. This happened before our king inherited his father’s crown. But it all changed in the day of his coronation; on that very day, after the imperial crown had been placed on his head, he announced his first law: every citizen in Sevasmos would receive a marvellous, golden thread woven carpet,

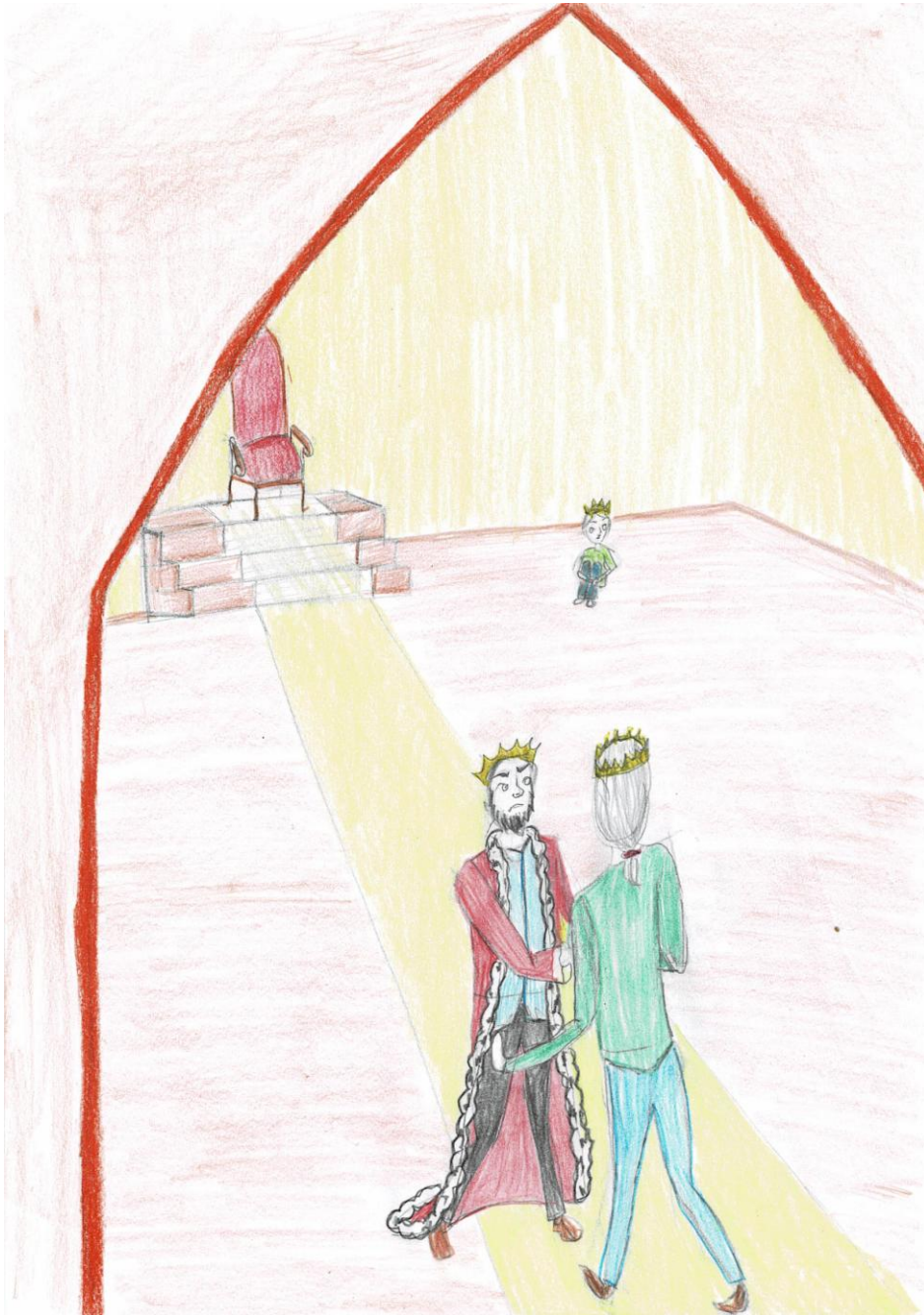


which had to be put under the feet of any guest crossing the threshold of one's house.

From that day on all people had to be treated with respect, hospitality and dignity. Lie, deception and theft were also forbidden. These are the rules by which we have been living ever since.

He also explained us why we should live like this telling us a true story from his childhood: one day, when he was playing in the throne hall, he heard a strong knock on the palace's door. Faster than most of the servants, he reached the door first and merrily opened it, inviting his grandfather, for he had been the one knocking, inside. But, innocent and careless, he did not realise that the floor was embellished with his father's most precious golden carpet,

who had just received the visit of a very famous neighbour king. His father took great care of that carpet and would let no one but important statesmen step on it. Suddenly appearing from another room, he got really angry both with his son, with the servants and with his own father who had already taken his first steps on the precious carpet.



The old man was ordered to draw back and the servants were commended to replace the golden carpet with a normal, less valuable one. At the same time, the good child started crying, as he saw the sorrow in his grandfather's eyes. The latter could not help remembering that the golden carpet had been his generous gift for his son, offered together with the crown and the hope of placing a worthy successor on the throne. Yet, hurt by the son, the former king was honoured and proud of his grandson, who uttered through tears:

“Father, when I grow up old enough to wear the crown I don't want you to give me the golden carpet. I want this ugly one!”

The king couldn't believe his ears:

“What stupid things are you saying, child? What great king will you be if you want to inherit a worthless carpet instead of a golden one?”

“Father, I think I will be great enough to make my own golden carpets. Instead, I want this cheap carpet to have something worthy of you when you come to visit me!”





Our king didn't mention how the story ended. Neither did he keep his word: whenever his retired father came to visit, he was greeted with a golden carpet. And so were all the other guests that happened to arrive to Sevasmos since that day...''

At the end of the story, Stela was full and filled with joy; she felt she had received food for both body and soul. She could expect nothing more. She only had to go on in this beautiful world, which was revealing with unbelievable generosity all its wonders and values. Naturally, she carried along the way a golden precious carpet to always remember the lesson of respect and hospitality.



After who knows how many days of walking through complete wilderness, she finally got to a human settlement. She stopped as that was her fate: discovering the world and its different people. But hardly had she calmed her curious eyes searching around, when a local man, with a white scarf around his neck, took her by the hand and said in a peaceful voice:

“They also sent a girl... The other two have just arrived. You are not too late. I reckon they didn’t get to deliver the whole message to our king. Come, I’ll take you to them!”

Stela tried to protest, but she realised she would waste an unbelievable opportunity. How else could she meet the king?... In no more than ten minutes, they got to the

palace. It was not astonishing by size! As a matter of fact, even her palace from Liberta might be larger.



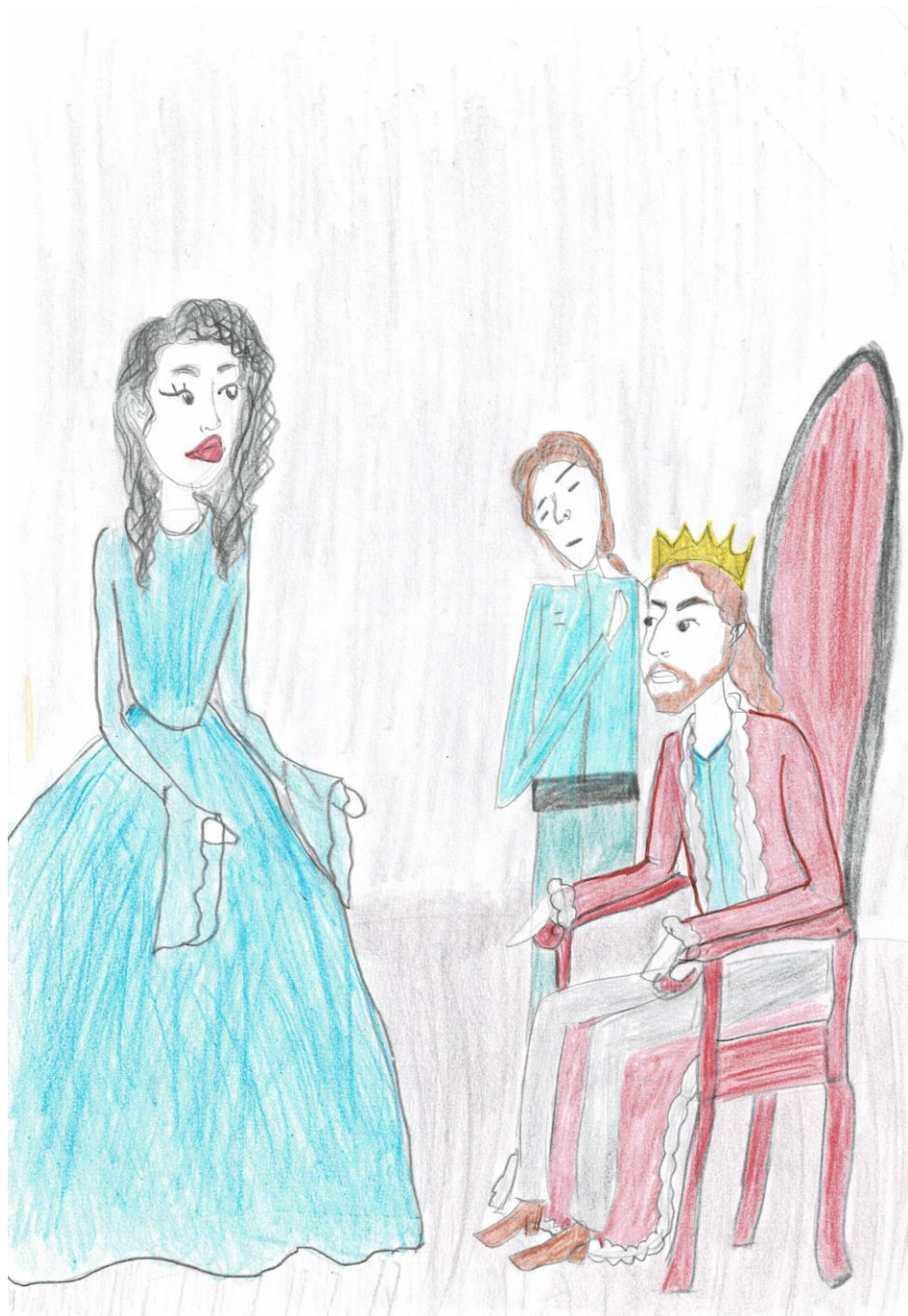


However, it looked peaceful and curiously opened; no high fences, no iron gates, just a normal, inoffensive door at the entrance. Without being stopped or questioned by any guard, they got to the throne room, where two people, who didn't seem to be local, were standing in front of the king. On the sides, lots of other people, all with white scarves, were watching.

“Beloved King, I found another courier. As she is a girl, she couldn't keep up with them.”

Stela realised it was high time to spell out the truth:

“I don't know who these men are. I am Stela from Liberta and I want to discover the big world. I mean no harm! Just let me assist! I want to understand the rules and values that you live by so that I can learn from you!”



“Very well!”, said the king and addressed to the other two men: “Proceed!”

The taller one started talking:

“Your brother is dead and the whole Guerralia is left without a ruler. We want you to take over our kingdom. Our great wish is to become citizens of Paz.”

“I was sure that my brother would die in war. Ever since our father divided his kingdom and gave each of us one half, my brother wanted nothing else but to conquer other realms and enlarge his territory. In vain had I told him it was better to live in peace than to lead your subjects to death...”

“We are here to tell you the truth: your brother did not die in war. He died at home, killed by his own people.

As a matter of fact, he was killed exactly by his own people, as there were no more living sons of Guerralia. They all perished because of your brother's ambition, fighting his senseless wars. The country is now inhabited only by local women and war prisoners: foreigners deprived of their mothers and wives who hated your brother more than anything else in the world. It was predictable they would start a mutiny and they would kill the tyrant as soon as they got the chance. There was no one to defend and protect him...`

Stela could see the grief taking possession of the king's whole being. She understood that his kind, peaceful nature was deeply troubled by such cruel news...

``And what do you want from me, king slayers? We live our lives minding our own business, hurting no one and taking nothing from no one. We are peace and modesty lovers. That is why we all wear these white scarves, so that everyone knows what we value and cherish!``

``This is exactly the reason why we also want to be your loyal subjects. We want to reunite Guerralia with Paz under your fair, peaceful ruling. We want to live next to our mothers, wives and children, and not fight wars we don't understand. We don't need large territories and foreign riches as war prays. We need peace and modesty. We need a white scarf!``, concluded the shorter messenger. And they all got one, as Stela could happily witness. She also received a white scarf to wear around her neck and



she left to put an end to her own mission, leaving all people of Paz, the old ones and the new ones, to live peacefully ever after.



After so much wandering about, Stela got to another kingdom, where all people seem to hurry somewhere. Curious, as we all know she is, the princess followed the mob and soon got to a public square. In the middle of it, a throne; on the throne, an imposing man. Just to be sure, she asked the lady next to her:

“Is this your king?”

“Yes, this is the witty, righteous and wise king of Prawo (=justice, in Polish). As today is Friday, he conducts his judgement in the public square so that every citizen may benefit from his wisdom. The trial is beginning!”

Indeed, the king addressed the two people standing in front of him:

“Who is the defendant here?”

“He is, Your Highness!”, said one of the men, who seemed to be a boyar, by clothing and appearance. He was pointing toward a poor, skinny peasant who didn’t dare to look up to the noble gathering.

“What are accusing this man of?”

“He is a thief, Your Grace! He stole this hen from my courtyard and now he shamelessly pretends it is his!” added the boyar.

“How do you defend yourself, poor man? Is poverty an excuse for theft?” asked the king in an angry voice.

“No, Your Highness, of course it isn’t. But I haven’t stolen anything. This hen is truly mine.”



“He’s lying, Your Grace! Look at him: he’s a pauper! He can’t feed himself, much less this chubby hen! Think for yourself: how could he have found enough food for it?”

interrupted the accuser.

For the first time, Stela paid attention to the hen: indeed, it was a beautiful, yellowish, plump hen as she had never seen before.

“Let the man speak!” ordered the king.

“It is true! I am poor, I barely find something to quench my hunger. But this hen is all I have left: my children died and then my wife passed away, too. I don’t know whether it was poverty or broken heart. But at the end of her life, she found comfort in caring for this hen. Before dying, she made me swear I would take care of it. See, I am old and

misfortunate; I don’t have many more days to live. But I would happily die of hunger rather than mistreat this hen.”

“Your Highness, he is lying. You cannot possibly believe this mendicant instead of me. I am a noble man!”

“Indeed you are. I know for sure you are telling the truth, for nobility does not match with lies. So, here’s my judgement: the peasant will give the hen back and will apologize to you for the offense. He will receive no other punishment for he is overdone enough. Apart from this, I would like to take a closer look at this special hen, if I may!”

“Of course, Your Rightness!” said the boyar and immediately delivered the hen to the king. This one

studied it closely, turning it upside down, then called for his most loyal servant and whispered something to his ear. After he nodded, the king continued:



``It seems we have another legal problem. I had a mere suspicion that was confirmed by the chief of the royal poultry. Some time ago, a golden egg from the royal golden hen was stolen and could never be found. After a righteous research I realise that this beautiful, fat and yellowish chicken can only come from that stolen egg. As it has just been established, the hen is yours, which means you are the thief. You all know that stealing from the imperial assets is no ordinary theft; therefore the thief is sentenced to death. Dear boyar, I sentence you to death, certainly, not before the peasant apologises to you for his shameless offense! the king concluded to the boyar's horror.

``Almighty king, I confess: the hen is not mine; it belongs to the peasant. It's just that it didn't seem fair to me that a churl should possess such a beautiful hen. I know I am wrong and I'm ready to apologise to this boor, but he must die, because he is the real thief!``



“See, citizens of Prawo? Wealth is not necessarily honesty and the real nobility is not provided by birth, but by one’s deeds! This boyar, although he has much more than he needs in order to live, wanted to deprive this poor man of his only possession he still has in his troubled life. There is no golden hen; there are no golden eggs in Prawo. There are only decent people and greedy, evil people. And we want to get rid of the latter, don’t we?”

As the mob strongly approved, the king continued:

“I sentence to death you, miser, not because you stole an imaginary egg, but because you have no decency and humanity left in you! And, as I want you all to remember that we value golden hearts rather than real gold, my

poultry chief you offer to each of you a yellow egg: it's not made of gold; it's not even a real egg. But it's a symbol of our genuine values: fairness and compassion for the ones less fortunate than us!^^





Feeling more than fortunate to have been present at such a significant moment, Stela carefully put her yellow egg next to the other precious gifts she had collected during her journey and felt it was time to go back home. Her mission was over: she had discovered the big, fascinating world; she could prove her father wrong; she would share with her people all the knowledge she had gathered; she would bring them, as gifts, all the values she had adopted. To make the journey merrier, she thought she could sing to herself. She remembered a lullaby her mother used to sing to her when she had been a baby. She could remember some parts of it, anyway. So what? She could improvise... After all, she learned that life was so much better if you didn't know it by heart...

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star*

*Bravely wander near and far*

*Not above the world so high*

*Like a diamond in the sky*

*But down here, inside it*

*To feel its own heartbeat*

*Shine in many different places*

*And discover all world's faces*

*Be a traveller in the dark*

*Light the world with your bright spark*

*Gather knowledge and true values*

*Fill us all with real virtues*

Stela thought that, in order to get home, she would have to follow the same way, backwards. Yet, enthusiastic and light spirited as she was, she didn't realise she got lost. All of a sudden, she found herself staring at a very strange gate to a city, a city she hadn't visited before. In spite of her urge to get home, she gave in her curiosity. She could see it was not a proper gate, but some kind of a door, nearly two meter high, carved in the trunk of a huge tree, standing in the middle of the surrounding fence. Trying to peep inside to see what kind of city that one was, Stela noticed an interesting inscription, also carved in the tree bark:

*Through me is the way to the city of wow*  
*Through me is the way to the eternal bliss*  
*Through me is the way to a great people*  
*Abandon all equality prejudices*  
*Ye who enter here!*



She kept reading those lines, because she couldn't escape the feeling that she had read them, or something similar, before. She thought of the few story books she had as a child, but she couldn't remember any name or any character. As she was tormenting her memory, the strange door opened and a robust male silhouette appeared:

“Oh, you are so short! If we were fifty years ago, you couldn't step inside. Thank God we live by different rules now! Come in!”

“I don't have time to come in. I must get back home. Yet, you made very curious. How come I couldn't step inside? What am I too short for?”

“I guess I could spare some time to answer your questions. I am the door keeper and my job is to invite

everyone inside, to show them around and to make them feel welcome in Eşitlik. But we don't get that many visitors in this time of the year, so I'm not very busy. What's your name, short girl?``

``My name is Stela and I'm heading to Liberta, my native country, after I have seen beautiful parts of this big world and I have learnt many valuable lessons. Your city seems very interesting. Did you say its name was Eşitlik?``





“Yes. Come, let’s enjoy the shadow of our sacred tree and I’ll tell you all about it. The city behind this tree gate is indeed Eşitlik. But we haven’t been living here from the beginning of the world. Our forefather used to live in the other part of earth, in Arkadaşia, if you’ve heard of it. They all lived in peace and friendship, until the day of the great famine came. When the food supplies severely diminished, the ruler decided that all married men older than 30 years old should take their family, leave Arkadaşia and find another place to live. Otherwise they would all die of hunger. In vain did they protest. In vain did they claim they were all equal. The decision was final and half of the population of the country was banished. They walked for long days and nights until they arrived at this city, which

was, as incredible as it might seem, completely deserted. They never found out who had been living there before or why they had fled. The place looked almost like it does today: the big tree, the fences all around, the 1,80 meter door, carved in the trunk of the tree, they all existed back then. Only the inscription was a little bit different .”

“I’ve seen the inscription and it caught my eye. I think I had read something similar in my childhood, but I cannot remember exactly.”

“I don’t know about that. I only know that it was changed to this version after the Black Night, when our nation almost perished.”

“What Black Night, what other version? I don’t understand...”

“You will if you pay attention to what I’m going to say: as I told you, the exiled half of our people arrived in the front of this city. Thinking that God finally sheltered them, they wanted to come in. But the high priest read the inscription, which back then sounded like this:

*Through me is the way to the city of woe*

*Through me is the way to the eternal pain*

*Through me is the way to a lost people*

*Abandon all hope to enter here*

*Ye who don’t fit my demand!*

He was terrified and so were all the other compatriots who kept asking for a proper interpretation of the scripture. He studied it, he read it both in a loud and a mute voice, he sang it, he analysed the door, the tree and the fence and he concluded:

“My brothers, I think that God brought us here to be saved, but he wants to test our obedience and our honest love for one another. I think there is a great city waiting for us behind this gate and this fence.”

“But it speaks about woe and pain and the lost city” said one of voice from the crowd.

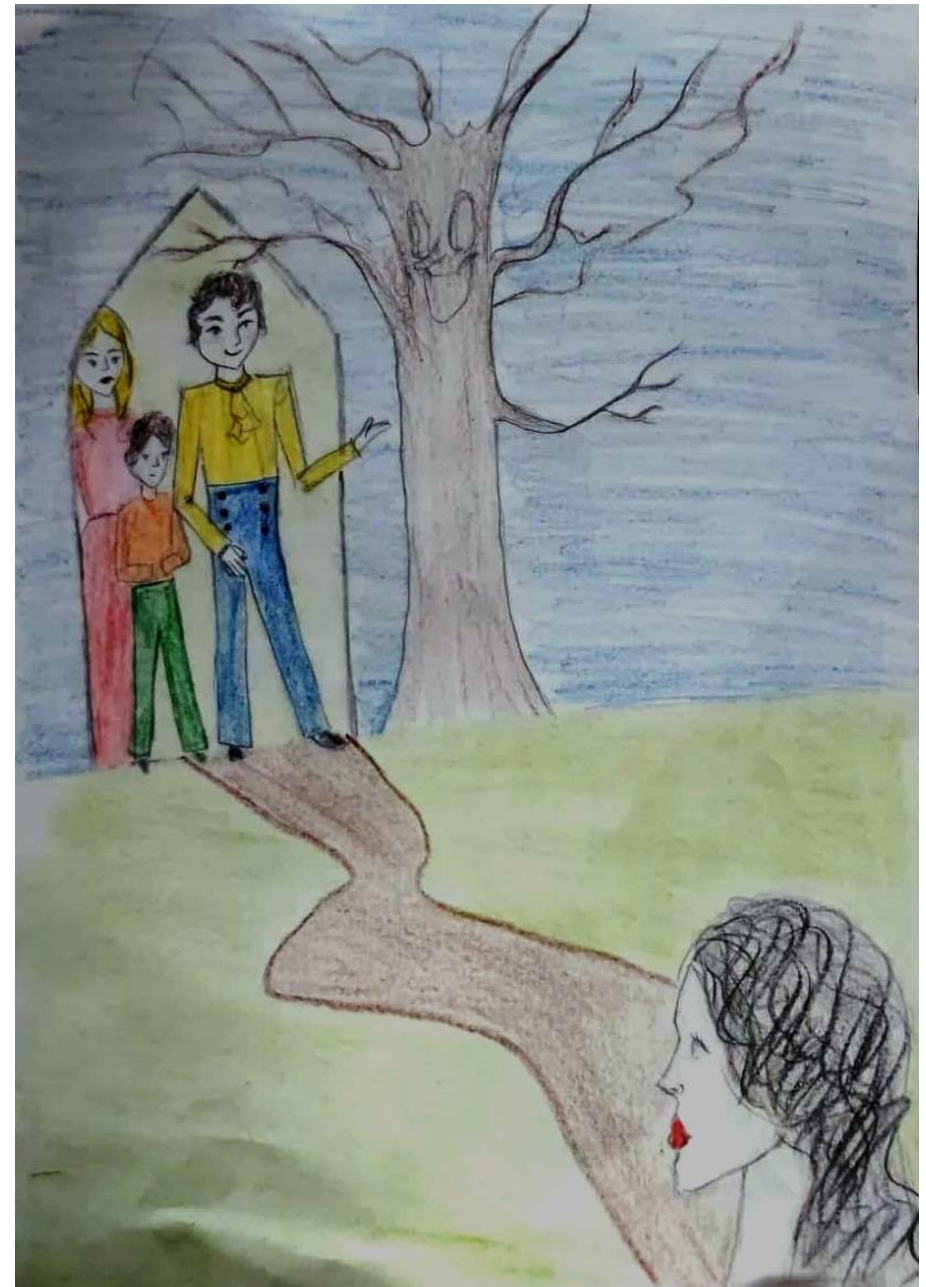
“Yes, it does, but only if the ones entering don’t fit the demand...”

``But what is the demand? Have you figured it out, high priest?``

``Yes, I have: it says *Abandon all hope to enter here/ Ye who don't fit my demand!*, doesn't it? It refers to the ones that don't fit the exact size of the gate.``

Stela was bewildered.

``I understand your confusion, but this is what really happened: they started measuring each person; the ones unequal to the gate, either shorter or taller, were not allowed to enter. No exception at all; not even for children and women who were unlikely to have the necessary height...``



“Oh, my God! Do you realise they committed the same wrong doing they had endured themselves in Arkadaşia?”

“Unfortunately, they didn’t learn anything from that tragedy. And you how history works: it keeps hitting you until you learn your lesson. Only very few people got to be equal to the gate and entered the paradise, as they thought it to be. The others, including many women and children, were left outside. But they couldn’t stay unsheltered, in the opened field, so they retreated for the night into a small forest nearby. As they were crying their misfortune, trying to set up a plan for the next day, they heard terrible screams coming from the city. It happened that, during that Black Night, as it has been referred to ever since, the few people worthy to cross the gate were attacked by a

savage warrior tribe. None of them would have survived, if it hadn’t been for their unfit but brave and forgiving compatriots who came to rescue.”

“Have they learnt something from the experience this time?” asked Stela.

“Yes, they have: the very next day, the high priest invited everyone inside, changed the words of the inscription into those you saw today and named the city Eşitlik, because he gained a completely different perspective on equality. Then, they started together to reconstruct the settlement until they turned it into the paradise it has remained till nowadays.”



And it looked indeed, like a real paradise, as Stela could see for herself after having agreed to a quick tour. Yet, Stela felt an irresistible desire to return to her home paradise, to her own people, to her father. That is why, the kind door keeper showed the shortest way to Liberta, not before offering her a a little twig from the sacred tree, to always remember that equality is much more than age or height.

Once upon a time, on the twisted roads of this big world, there was a beautiful princess bouncing and singing:

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star*

*Bravely wander near and far*

*Not above the world so high*

*Like a diamond in the sky*

*But down here, inside it*

*To feel its own heartbeat*

*Shine in many different places*

*And discover all world's faces*

*Be a traveller in the dark*

*Light the world with your bright spark*

*Gather knowledge and true values*

*Fill us all with real virtues.*

*Twinkle, twinkle, little Stela,*

*Lead your folk to a new era  
Light their way into the world  
Spread around them Europe's word...*

**THE END**





**Title of the modern tale:**

EYES CAN'T SEE THE TRUTH

**Country:**

TURKEY

**Authors of the text:**

Ümmü Nur Barçın

**Graphic illustrations:**

Erkan Balçın

**Linguistic correction:**

Gaye Saveren

**Coordinator of the task:**

Turkey



## EYES CAN'T SEE THE TRUTH

Last week, I got so excited about the e-mail which I received from my childhood friend, Ali. He was a very successful Biology Professor on his field in America. In his e-mail, he was inviting me to America. Then very spontaneously I bought a flight ticket to America and I found myself on the plane.



I took some books with me to read for this long flight. One of them was The Little Prince book, which I can always make different meanings no matter what age I read. I was holding a very old edition in my hand because

this book was our favourite book which we presented to each other. When I was turning over the pages, a well-thumbed black-and-white photo dropped on my lap. In the photo, 16 children lined up in front of tall trees were looking at the camera. I was the blonde haired kid smiling on the far left in the back. Ali, on the other hand, was the short, frail boy wearing glasses. White hair, eyelashes and eyebrows; He stood out even in the black and white photo with his blue-gray eyes. This photograph must have been taken during the class picnic trip which we went in primary school. That moment I realized how much that trip had changed my life because in this trip we had become real friends with Ali. Let me tell you the story from the beginning.





belonged to the boys that I didn't like, ridiculing on different children in my class...I was so excited for that day just because I could play hob with anything. Our teacher took out some wrapped papers from her bag when we arrived at the picnic area by busses. We were all trying to understand what these papers mean. She started to tell:

- "Children, it's time to explain you why we came here early. These are treasure maps which I am holding in

my hands, these maps will lead you to treasure." All children started to whisper to each other. What was that treasure? Teacher continued:

- "Of course you wonder what is that treasure but the only thing I can tell is to start as soon as possible. Then, let's start to make matching! " Our teacher was telling two names and giving them a treasure map.

I thought she matched me with my best friend Hakan when she said my name but instead of Hakan she matched me with short, weak, spectacled nerd who has white hair. When I was about to tell: "But teacher...":

- "I paired you this way so that you mingle with each other. Let's get started as soon as possible," she said. I walked towards Ali and said:

- "You know that I am not going to do anything with you. I got the map ; when I am looking for the treasure, you will follow me," I said and ran through the forest. I realized that Ali was trying to catch me when I reached the first clue but I kept going. I stopped when I reached the last clue, I didn't know the answer. Clue was saying:

" A green lives in the north, treasure lives under it."  
Ali caught me when I was thinking about answer. He took  
the clue from my hand:

- "I know the answer," he said.



- "How ?" I asked surprisedly.

- "The answer is clear but I have a condition."

- " Tell me what is that?"

- "I wonder just one thing. Why are you looking at me like I  
am an alien or I will transmit a disease to you? What have  
I done to you?"





- "Because, because, because...I didn't know the reason, either. You are different. You don't look like other normal people maybe that is the reason." Ali sat down and started to cry sobbingly:

- "What have I done to born like this, I mean, and what did I do to be born an albino? Like everyone else, I want to go out into the sun as much as I wish, without drawing attention to me and without being ridiculed. Do I want so many things?"

I was looking at Ali differently after these words. Then I said:

- "Please, don't act like this; actually I didn't mean to hurt you. Actually I didn't want to hurt anybody Ali"

- "Then, don't. Believe me this way it is much easier," answered Ali. He was right I couldn't find a word to say , but seeing him cry like that made me feel weird. It was a feeling my little heart had never tasted before: It was sadness. I gently shook him and said:

- "Sorry, It's the first time that I felt so sad in my life. Please stand up ! We can't find this treasure without your

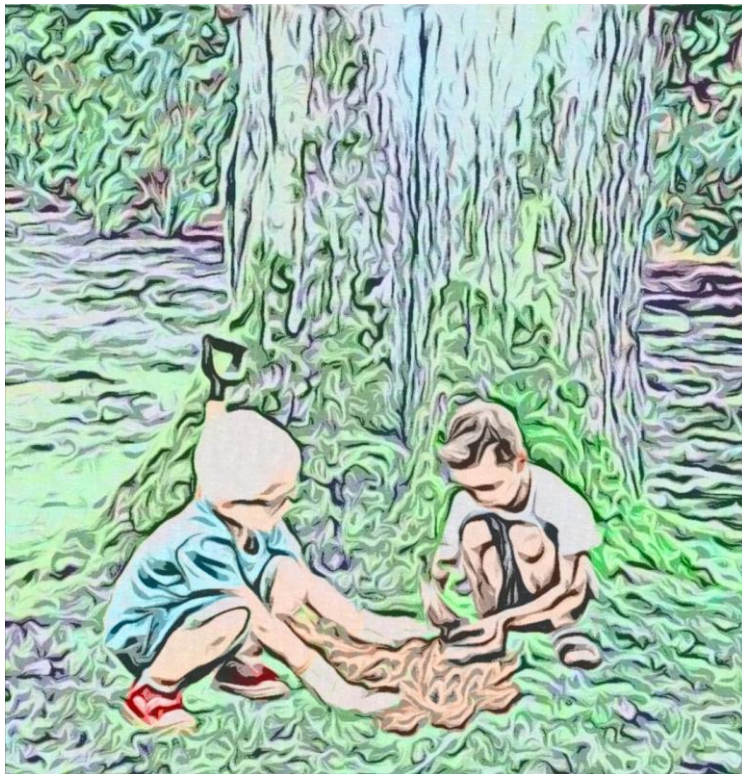
help. Come on..." I said. He stood up, wiped his tears with his arms and read the clue once again:

- "In the north lives a green, underneath is a treasure. Very simple, the north side of the trees holds moss. Look! Look at the back of this tree with moss. "He was indeed right, one side of the tree was covered in lush moss, and he continued:



He said, "Come there is a box under the mossy side of the tree," and called me. He opened the box slowly. Inside the box was a square chocolate bar and a small note. On the note:

" The most important thing is friendship and this chocolate is for you to share" wrote our teacher. We arrived at the picnic area and ate chocolate during the road."



Everything happened like that. Ali's interest to living things and Biology was certain even at that time. When I was thinking of them a stewardess came and:

-" What would you like to have? " asked she. I had tea and continued to read. In our book Little Prince was saying" But the eyes are blind. One must look with the heart." At that moment I realized how important these words are.

THE END