

Letters & Letters



Lettres & Letters, nr. 1/2023

ISSN 2734-6676

ISSN-L 2285-9543

Liceul Tehnologic Iorgu Vârnăv Liteanu

This collection of stories represents the work of our students who found inspiration to respond to the challenge to write a story inspired by numbers and create their mathematical masterpieces

There were five coordinating teachers.

Ph French - English Teacher Ms Ana Maria Briana Belciug

English Teacher Ms Cerasela Marleneanu

English Teacher Ms Claudia Constantinescu

French Teacher Ms Veronica Corleciuc

French Teacher Ms Angelica Doncian

Special thanks to our fantastic

Art teacher Miss Andreea Răileanu for the unique and inspiring drawings.

Cover picture: Anastasia Maria Simioneasa

INTEGER STORIES

extinction disaster
depleted solitary
loneliness choices
vortex castaway

futuristic exploration
destiny curious empty
regret missing regeneration
intergalactic reincarnation

I ROLLED A
6...

choices challenge
success

NOMBRE ENTIER HISTOIRES

I AM
NUMBER
13...

pressure
lucky/unlucky
risk jeopardy

desperation
decision
conscience

ONLY
30
SECONDS LEFT...

IT WAS
2099...

sport prize announcement
player predicament
anticipation queue assigned
victorious adrenaline
tension

ROOM
237
WAS EMPTY...

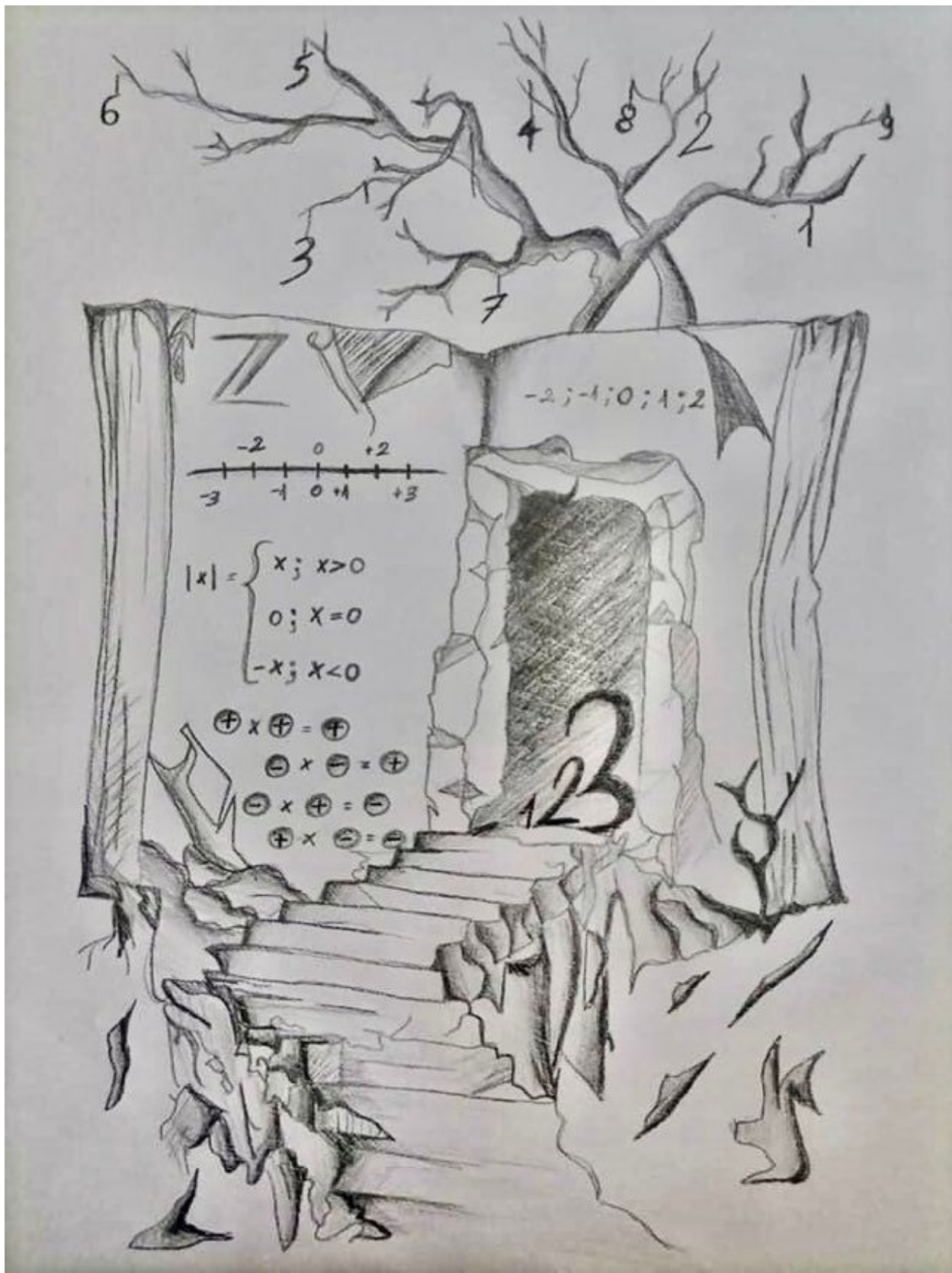
microwave

AND THEN
THERE WAS
NONE...

test subject chosen experiment mission top secret
apprehension
global warming
dread explosion timer
announcement

INTEGER
deadline

Integer



Created by Lorena Maria Bocancea



Created by Art Teacher Miss Andreea Răilean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Raluca Moisii.....	5
Damian Maria Elisabeta.....	7
Miruna Antoneag.....	8
Paula Pascaru.....	9
Gabriel Vornicu.....	10
Anastasia Maria Simionasa.....	11
Costache Eliza Marta.....	12
Raluca Moisii.....	13
Larisa Anania.....	14
Robert Silişteanu.....	15
Aurora Nicoleta Iordache.....	16
Miruna Tanasa.....	17
Picture created by Bianca-Elena Arotăritei	
Petrică Răileanu.....	18
Miruna Damian.....	19
Iuliana Aparaschivei.....	20
Larisa Anania.....	21
Elena Andreea Dascălu.....	22
Emilian Aparaschivei.....	23
Bianca Vornicu.....	24
Lorena Bocancea.....	25
Beniamin Iavni.....	27
Ioana Botârcă.....	28
Andrei Popa.....	29
Adrian Valentin Parasca.....	31
Alice Mihaela Jaba.&	
Nicoleta Iustina Cazacu.....	34
Bianca Lupu.....	35
Diana Gîţman.....	36
Alexandru Pintilie.....	37
Karla Zaluschi.....	38
Ana Maria Ciubotaru.....	39
Popa Izabela &	
Cămaruţ Iustina Ionela.....	40
Delia Dascălu.....	41
Ana Maria Coşarcă.....	42
Raluca Bîrjoveanu.....	43
Alessia Costrăş.....	45
Elena Chihaia.....	46
Magda Jaba.....	47
Gabriela Elena Gîţman.....	48
Roxana Strat.....	49
Ruben Vasilciuc.....	52
Mihai Coman.....	53
Ioana Felicia Dascălu.....	54
Delia Iacob.....	55

Art Teacher Miss Andreea Răileanu....	56-58
Sebastian Balmoş and Amalia Jaba.....	59



Created by Art Teacher Miss Andreea Răileanu

It was 2099

Among the trees

Raluca Moisii

It was 2099 when I woke up in a tiny spacecraft in the middle of a vast forest filled with towering trees and lush flora. I felt a searing headache as I struggled to untie my seat belt. My vision was quite fuzzy, and I felt thirsty and hungry like I hadn't eaten in a long time. Although I narrowly managed to open the entrance, I glanced around and began to wonder how I had landed myself in the middle of nowhere. I could feel an intense sharp pain in my chest, pressing into my bones as I attempted to think about my memories. I felt compelled to inquire about my identity but couldn't recall anything. I became terrified of what was to occur.

I strolled amid the massive plants that blocked the full sky view, making it impossible to discern the sun's location to estimate the time of day. There was no trace of humanity. Hours had passed, and the forest appeared to have no end. When I was about to give up, I came upon a tiny container house that seemed to be a science research facility. It was overgrown with plants and hundreds of other wild vines, making it difficult to force the entrance open. To settle in, I grabbed a rock and used it to smash the rusted locking mechanism. After many attempts, I quickly rushed inside to seek supplies. The entire establishment was split into two rooms. However, there wasn't any evidence of humankind. One of the rooms appeared to be a control room stuffed with old documentation and cutting-edge technology. The other one seemed to be a modern bedroom with a tiny kitchen. I went through an old box with some leftover food ingredients, so I collected water from the nearby river and used some elements to make an edible meal.

The sun was setting quickly, so I did my best to find any traces of telecommunications infrastructure to phone for assistance. I thought it strange that I couldn't recall anything from the past, yet I knew how the technology systems worked. Suddenly, I spotted an exhibition of family pictures and other individuals. My vision flickered as I stared into the reflection of a little mirror mounted on the wall. I was the man in the picture. My head hurt, and my vision became blurry once again. I became bewildered, and I could feel my heart bumping fast. I urged myself to dig further into the documents. I stumbled into a journal belonging to a man named Jones Kwan, so I looked around for matches and other supplies to light a futuristic lamp made out of glass.

My body got deluged with shivers, my breathing froze, and I felt like I was about to crash. I dropped the journal as I read the following lines: "Dear Journal, it is the 23rd of March, 2045. I have been working for N.M.S. as a scientist. I was dispatched to Europa, one of Jupiter's moons, five years ago to undertake research since Earth will no longer sustain life in the near future. Throughout these years, my health status suffered. The planet appeared to be a suitable environment for life until I discovered recent evidence of unusual mutations altering the area's soil.

My body got deluged with shivers, my breathing froze, and I felt like I was about to crash. I dropped the journal as I read the following lines: "Dear Journal, it is the 23rd of March, 2045. I have been working for N.M.S. as a scientist. I was dispatched to Europa, one of Jupiter's moons, five years ago to undertake research since Earth will no longer sustain life in the near future. Throughout these years, my health status suffered. The planet appeared to be a suitable environment for life until I discovered recent evidence of unusual mutations altering the area's soil.

Further research revealed that the flora has a unique chemical that changes the photosynthetic process, which explains why my health got affected. Plants absorb oxygen and produce a considerable amount of arsenic pentafluoride, a deadly gas that kills life. When I noticed the changes, I filled out a report and forwarded it to headquarters. They said a spaceship would take me away from here as soon as possible. I know I don't have that much time left. As if these weren't enough, they sealed the communication and told the world I was no longer alive. The systems were recently damaged, so I was forbidden from gaining control over the devices. All I can think about is my family."

There were so many questions in my mind, but I turned the page again to see what was next...



C'était 2099...

Damian Maria Elisabeta

Le soleil brillait plus dans le ciel que d'habitude. Le réchauffement climatique est devenu spécial. Ces derniers jours le vortex polaire a fait sentir sa présence. Il avait de très basses températures extrêmes positives pour la date du calendrier.

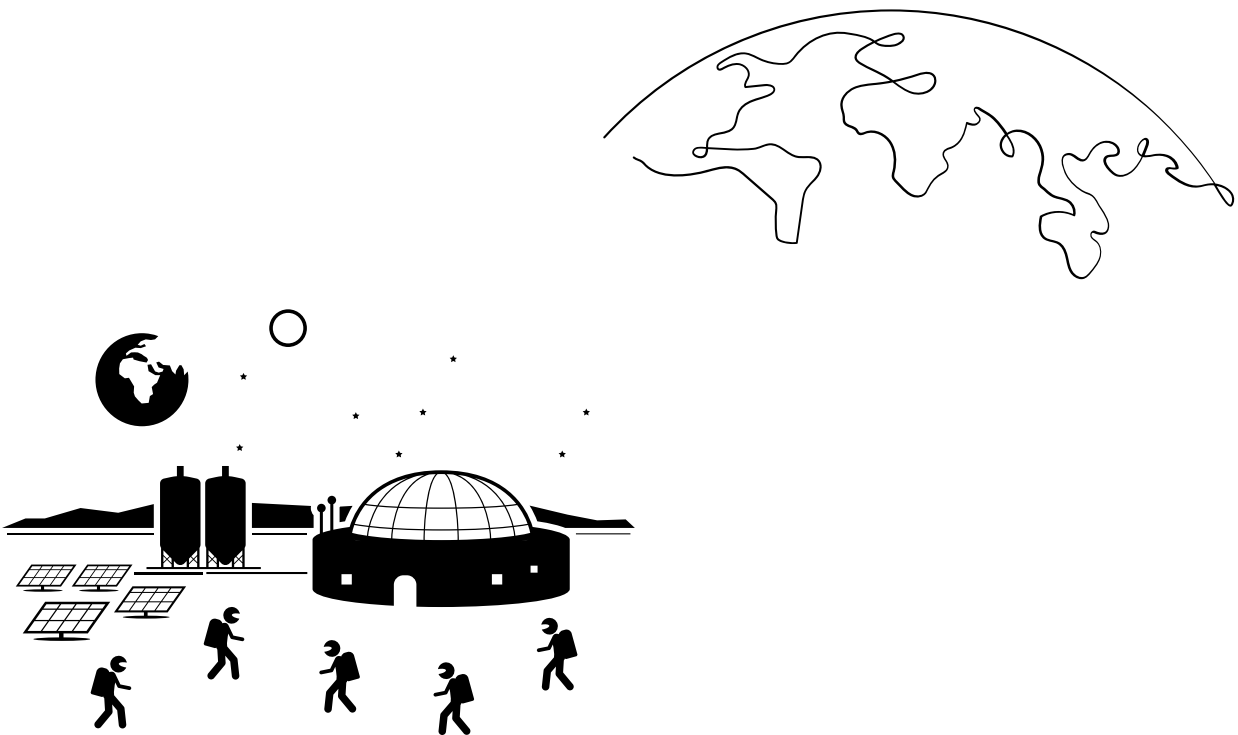
Le gens ont commencé à voyager intergalactique, voulant de plus en plus se déplacer vers Mars. De plus en plus de gens pensent qu'ils se sont réincarnés, ce qui me fait terriblement peur.

Cependant, la curiosité ne me laisse pas seul et me pousse à explorer l'environnement de plus en plus. Je trouve avec tristesse que la nouvelle génération est de plus en plus indifférente aux besoins de ceux qui m'entourent.

Séjour ! Comment puis-je faire des comparaisons? A qui dois-je le comparer? Une chose est sûre, je me suis réincarné, et les souvenirs sont d'une autre décennie.

J'aimerais pouvoir repeupler ce monde futuriste avec des gens sympas à l'époque! C'est mon plus grand regret.

J'ai enfin compris une chose : chaque génération a son destin.



C'était 2099...

Miruna Antoneag

Quand sont passées ces années? Et pourquoi suis-je encore là? J'aurais déjà dû être oublié. Peut-être que je suis mort et réincarné dans un corps extraterrestre ou peut-être que je suis une planète? Mais quoi qu'il en soit, je vis et je peux profiter...hein? Je pense que c'est aussi la vie, mais pas sur Terre, ou j'ai vécu pensant 99 ans. Quelle coïncidence, j'ai fermé les yeux quand j'avais 99 ans et je les ai ouverts en 2099. Je ne me souviens pas de beaucoup de choses de mon monde, mais je sais que j'ai mené une vie pleine de curiosités.

La première curiosité que j'ai eue depuis toute petite était « où allons-nous après notre mort ». Je peux dire que j'ai beaucoup de chance d'avoir découvert cela, ou peut-être que c'est juste moi qui suis arrivé ici. Je dis ça parce que je suis seul ici, je ne vois personne. Je veux bouger, mais je ne peux pas, je veux tendre les mains, pouvoir toucher quelque chose, mais je ne peux pas, je veux cligner des yeux, mais je ne peux pas...je veux et pourtant je ne peux pas. Je veux explorer cet endroit qui semble être illuminé par quelque chose qui sort de moi.

Je savais probablement pour la première fois ce que j'étais et quel rôle j'avais dans ce grand monde. Pourquoi ai-je ignoré cette pensée? J'ai l'impression d'avoir chaud et je deviens rouge. C'est une chose normale pour moi, je suis le Soleil. Oui, je suis le Grand Soleil qui réchauffe toutes les planètes, sauf celles qui sont loin de moi. Pourquoi est-ce que je ne m'en souviens pas? Que je suis la vie dont tout le monde dépend, que sans moi il n'y aurait rien.

Je n'arrive pas à trop y penser car soudain un fort vortex se déclenche au loin et s'approche de moi. Et soudain j'ai poussé un soupir de soulagement. Un extraterrestre intergalactique futuriste s'est formé à partir de ce vent et a commencé à me parler dans une langue étrange, mais le plus étrange, c'est que j'ai vraiment compris. « Bonjour, cher Soleil! J'ai entendu tes pensées de loin et je voulais t'aider à savoir pourquoi tu ne te souviens de rien et pourquoi tu es là! Eh bien, tu étais amoureux de la Lune, seul cet amour était dangereux pour l'humanité, c'est pourquoi tu as cru que tu étais un homme, car tu as des petites cicatrices du passé.. »

Parce que vous n'étiez pas d'accord pour vous séparer, vous étiez maudits de ne plus jamais vous revoir et à cause de cela, tu étais très en colère et tu devenais de plus en plus rouge et de plus en plus chaud. Tu as causé le réchauffement climatique, dont tous les gens sont morts et toutes les planètes ont disparu. Ils ont réussi à se régénérer, mais les traces de ton amour font toujours peur à l'humanité. Je le regrette vraiment!

Et c'était mon destin! Je me lève chaque matin pour voir la Lune, mais chaque fois que je veux la voir, elle se couche et quand elle triomphe dans le ciel nocturne, je m'assieds et ne pense qu'à elle.

C'était 2099...

Paula Pascaru

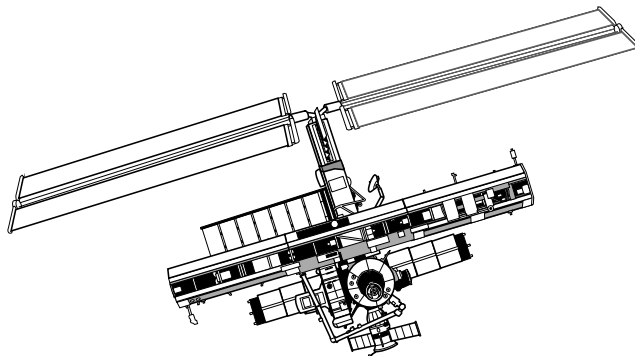
C'était 2099 et mes parents et moi avons décidé de partir en exploration, nous avons préparé nos voitures volantes et tout le nécessaire pour avoir sur la route et nous sommes partis. Notre famille a une tradition de voyage, à chaque voyage on doit se dire un regret, une idée géniale dis-je, car on ne voyage pas très souvent et ainsi on apprend à mieux se connaître.

Alors nous sommes partis, papa a été le premier à dire ses regrets, nous étions tous curieux de l'entendre.

Il y eut un silence et mon père se mit à raconter : « J'étais petit, un enfant comme vous, mes chers enfants. Ma mère s'inquiétait du réchauffement climatique dont elle avait entendu parler à la télé. se produisait. Je ne pensais pas que ce réchauffement ne pouvait pas affecter d'une manière ou d'une autre. Surtout moi. Je me souviens d'une nuit où je dormais et j'avais très soif alors je me suis réveillé. Mais quand j'ai voulu prendre le verre d'eau, je l'ai laissé tomber parce que j'ai vu un vaisseau spatial. Un extraterrestre s'est approché de moi en disant qu'il venait d'un monde intergalactique et m'a dit que je suis le seul à pouvoir arrêter ce réchauffement climatique qui semble les affecter eux aussi. Je n'ai rien compris à ce moment-là.

Au bout de deux jours, j'ai compris ce qu'il voulait dire. Quand je suis sorti me promener et que j'ai mis ma main sur un arbre et qu'il a gelé. Abasourdi par ce qui se passait, j'ai aussi mis ma main sur une glace mais elle a fondu. très bouleversé, mais aujourd'hui je sais que les pouvoirs surnaturels que j'avais ont sauvé notre planète. Et mon plus grand regret est de ne pas te l'avoir dit jusqu'à présent. Et je suis désolé. Mais j'ai essayé de le cacher à moi aussi et au destin. Peut être que maintenant, mes chers enfants, vous comprendrez pourquoi j'ai été le premier futuriste de la famille, parce que j'ai vu et vois l'avenir différemment”.

Il y avait un silence complet dans la voiture. Mais je l'ai cru surtout parce que maintenant nous étions venus vivre avec des extraterrestres sur la même planète. Plus tard, nous sommes arrivés à destination.



It was 2099...

Gabriel Vornicu

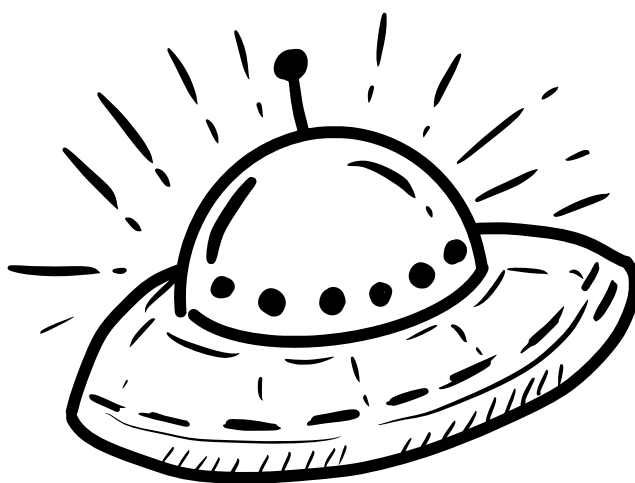
It was 2099. Nobody told us that this year could be the end of humanity. But an alien invasion demonstrated this. They destroyed all things related to humanity! They even killed many people! But how did this happen? Let's go back two weeks before the disaster.

I was getting ready to go to work on a Monday morning. I turned on the holographic TV to hear some news. One scared me a lot. It sounded like this: "An alien invasion may be possible in 2 weeks! All the countries around the world are preparing hiding places for this! It is said that if this happened, all of us would be dead! Just be careful!" I told myself that this wasn't going to happen.

Two weeks just went extremely fast. I just kept saying that the alien invasion was just a lie and a strategy invented by political people.

It was a Saturday night. Outside, it was cold, even if it was summer. A strange light appeared in the sky. I knew that it wasn't a good sign. Just after that, I saw a UFO! I was amazed! Suddenly three buildings blow in front of me! I ran and ran just not to be killed by that UFO. I hid in a car and saw that aliens were quitting that UFO. After three days, I remained the only survivor on Earth. I talked to the alien captain, and we agreed to live together.

So that was the start of a new era!



Only 30 seconds left

Anastasia Maria Simioneasa

Only 30 seconds left until we leave the castle of horrors. Spending the day with some of my closest friends in the castle court of horror seemed like the best idea since the dinosaur era, but now that we're in the castle's final room, things start to spiral out of control. The first few rooms contained small words that we would combine to locate the exit quickly. The final response we could piece together was, "You're all going to die," followed by a scarlet patch of blood that made me fearfully shudder. The fear and tension in the room were palpable with 20 seconds until the deadline. We started looking for a door or another way out, but every door led back into the castle, trapping us inside.

Many noises could be heard as the seconds passed, including yells of laughter and even the sounds of chainsaws and other potentially lethal weapons. In our helplessness and desperation, we scramble to find a solution and eventually discover a hatch in the floor that leads underground and appears to be a tunnel.

Regardless of the circumstances, we decided to stay in the tunnel because it was the only way out that could protect us. In the final 10 seconds of the countdown, we crossed the castle garden escape tunnel, stunned by an explosion precisely located in the last room of the castle before it collapsed to the ground in a matter of seconds. I felt as if I were in a horror movie, terrified. We were returning home from the castle when we came across the castle's hosts, who were tied to a nearby tree with their hands and feet. We immediately untied them and were shocked to discover that the people who had set up the clues and traps for us were some serial criminals who had abducted the hosts to achieve their goals. However, because we escaped, they became their victims in the castle of pure horror.

Coming back to reality, horrified by Mark's story told around the campfire, I was convinced that this horror story contest would not be easily won, as his story appeared to be based on facts, leaving me shivering all over.



Plus que 30 seconde

Costache Eliza-Marta

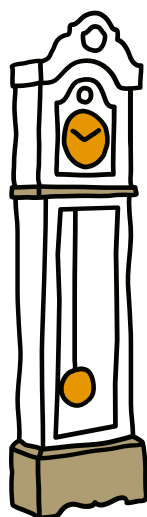
L'horloge affiche un compte à rebours implacable. Plus que 30 secondes avant que tout ne bascule. Une terreur silencieuse se répand dans l'air, tandis que chacun retient son souffle, conscient de l'explosion imminente. Le compteur continue sa descente rapide, dévorant les précieuses secondes qui nous séparent de l'inévitable.

La tension était palpable dans la pièce. Les regards étaient remplis d'anxiété, les cœurs battaient à tout rompre. Mais au milieu de cette atmosphère étouffante, un événement miraculeux allait se produire, avec une aide inattendue : les animaux.

Soudain, un chat s'approcha discrètement du compteur, sa queue se balançant doucement. D'un coup de patte précis, il stoppa le compte à rebours. Les secondes restantes restèrent figées, comme suspendues dans le temps. Le chat avait sauvé la situation. Puis, un chien entra en scène, aboyant joyeusement pour dissiper la tension. Son énergie contagieuse apporta un sentiment de calme et de réconfort à tous les présents. Les visages s'illuminèrent, et l'atmosphère s'alourdit. Un oiseau chanta mélodieusement, créant une douce harmonie qui adoucissait les cœurs. Sa voix cristalline sembla apporter un soulagement supplémentaire à la situation déjà miraculeuse.

Les animaux étaient là, avec nous, nous montrant que même dans les moments les plus sombres, il y a de l'espoir et de l'aide inattendue. Leur instinct et leur présence bienveillante avaient contribué à changer le cours des choses. Les regards se tournèrent vers ces créatures merveilleuses, reconnaissantes pour leur intervention opportune. Ils nous rappelaient que la nature et ses habitants sont capables de miracles, même dans les situations les plus désespérées.

Ainsi, plus que 30 secondes devinrent un symbole de la puissance de l'union entre les humains et les animaux. Ensemble, nous avons surmonté la terreur, l'explosion et la tension insoutenable. Cette expérience nous avait montrées que dans les moments les plus sombres, un peu d'aide et de compassion provenant de toute forme de vie peut faire la différence entre la catastrophe et le miracle.



Plus que 30 secondes

Raluca Moisii

Encore 30 secondes avant de le rencontrer...

Leur histoire est tissée d'un fil épais et rigide qui s'étend sur des centaines de kilomètres. Les origines des deux âmes amoureuses se situent dans les domaines du nord et du sud, deux pôles opposés qui, bien qu'ils ne puissent pas se toucher, se regardent d'une manière profonde, incompréhensible pour l'autre, cherchant des solutions pour soulager la pression constante exercée sur le fil qui les relie.

Depuis que les deux mondes ont été créés, il existe une loi qui empêche les gens de pleurer. Le monde supérieur avait été privé de sa chaleur. Ainsi, chaque être vivait dans la sobriété et le chaos, le cœur glacé par les ténèbres. Le royaume inférieur était englouti par la sécheresse parce que les gens du nord ne pouvaient pas émettre de l'eau par leurs larmes. Les êtres de ce monde masquaient toujours leur souffrance derrière leur visage, faisant rayonner le bonheur autour d'eux.

Le Nord vivait entre les montagnes et les plaines denses, dans une société engloutie par la malaria et le paludisme. Pourtant, elle était différente parce qu'elle aimait s'habiller de blanc, sourire toujours, rire, guérir son âme du poison même du monde dans lequel elle vivait, par la lucidité de la musique et de l'art. Chaque nuit, le Nord marchait dans la nature, à la lumière de la lune et des étoiles, pour écouter depuis les flancs des montagnes les chants que le Sud composait pour elle. Au milieu de la nuit, sa voix résonnait sur les plaines de la terre d'en haut, submergeant la nature dans une mer de chagrin qui guérissait l'âme de ceux qui souffraient.

Contrairement aux autres, le Nord écoutait avec son cœur, laissant la noirceur des paroles des chansons du Sud le caresser d'émulsions de chaleur, de compréhension et de sécurité, des éléments qui manquaient sur les terres d'en haut. Bien que son monde soit plein de bonheur, le Nord a trouvé des doses de souffrance cachées derrière ses chansons. Elle avait déchiffré toute l'histoire et en ressentait la tristesse. Amoureux du Sud et de sa musique, le Nord avait été, une nuit, le premier être de son royaume à pleurer. C'est ainsi que les bras des rivières commencèrent à se déverser vers les terres en contrebas, colorant de bleu la nature frappée par la sécheresse.

Les deux mondes ont embrassé un défi aux lois. Les plantes du royaume inférieur ont pris vie et les êtres ont connu l'essence de l'eau. Les visages masqués par la vivacité ont commencé à se déchirer, laissant la tristesse s'échapper des visages habillés de bonheur. Des vagues lumineuses balayèrent le monde nordique et le soleil se leva pour la première fois au-delà des nuages gris, donnant des taches jaunes à l'engourdissement de la nature. Sous l'effet des vagues de chaleur, les cœurs des êtres se sont dégelés de toute souffrance, connaissant le pouvoir des sentiments et des émotions.

Suite aux transformations qui s'opèrent dans les deux royaumes, le Nord comprend que la seule loi qui perturbe les deux mondes est en fait leur amour. Séparés par des centaines de kilomètres, leur histoire était comme une pelote dont le fil long et épais résistait au temps et à la douleur. L'univers est né avec eux, et le destin des deux amants s'est cruellement tissé pour sauver les deux mondes de tout le poison qui s'installait peu à peu dans le cœur des hommes. Même si les êtres de ces royaumes connaissaient une souffrance causée par la réalité de la société dans laquelle ils vivaient, le Nord et le Sud nageaient dans une tristesse particulière. Ils connaissaient l'essence de l'amour et le prix qui l'accompagnait. Ils sont troublés par l'impossibilité d'être unis, par l'environnement très captif dans lequel ils sont isolés.

Il reste 30 secondes avant que le Nord ne rejoigne le Sud sur le quai de la gare. Des centaines de kilomètres se sont transformés en poussière, des larmes chaudes ont inondé les deux mondes, les battements de cœur ont résonné plus fort que les explosions des galaxies, et les contacts ont formé des traînées volcaniques plus chaudes que la chaleur des étoiles. En voyant toute cette scène, l'Univers lui-même, le tisseur du destin des deux âmes nées pour nager dans la marée de la souffrance afin de s'unir, s'effondra de culpabilité.

Plus que 30 secondes

Anania Larisa

J'étais en vacances d'été avec ma classe. C'était une journée chaude et calme et nous allions à un musée d'expositions surnaturelles. Nous étions tous excités et nous avions hâte d'arriver. Le musée était très grand et avait une étrange forme de losange. Chacun devait choisir un partenaire avec qui passer du temps, et j'ai choisi la nouvelle fille de la classe parce qu'elle était la seule. Mais il y avait quelque chose d'étrange chez elle. Elle n'arrêtait pas de me répéter qu'il ne reste que trente secondes..." et elle s'arrêtait. J'ai pensé qu'elle avait peut-être peur de quelque chose et je l'ai ignorée.

Nous étions à mi-chemin du musée quand soudain les alarmes se sont déclenchées et une dame nous a dit que nous devions partir immédiatement. Nous avons découvert qu'une bombe avait été placée sur le toit du musée. Et j'ai réalisé que la nouvelle fille était partie. Je suis rapidement allé la chercher dans la salle de bain, pensant qu'elle était là, mais elle montait les escaliers où se trouvait la bombe, J'ai paniqué... Je ne savais pas quoi faire, alors je l'ai suivie. J'avais peur partout, mais j'ai continué à la suivre. Elle s'est arrêtée à côté d'un étrange four à micro-ondes qui affichait un compte à rebours. L'écran affichait trente secondes et la fille a commencé à tirer sur tous les fils colorés. Je sentais une grande pression sur elle, alors je me suis assis à côté d'elle et j'ai essayé de l'aider. Nous transpirions à cause de la tension de ne pas faire d'erreur et du musée qui allait exploser. La fille a sorti des ciseaux de sa poche et a commencé à couper chaque fil. Quand elle est arrivée au dernier fil, elle s'est arrêtée. "Cours!" me dit-elle, mais je ne pouvais pas bouger. Il ne restait que dix secondes et je ne savais pas ce qui allait se passer. Alors j'ai pris les ciseaux de sa main et j'ai coupé le dernier fil... J'ai entendu seulement un son du micro-ondes et toutes les alarmes se sont arrêtées. C'est alors que j'ai réalisé que tout était fini.

C'est comme ça que je suis devenu ami avec la nouvelle fille. Tout le monde nous a applaudis et nous a embrassés et nous étions très heureux de pouvoir sauver nos amis. Nous sommes revenus dans les bus et ma copine et moi avons reçu une médaille pour notre bravoure.

Only 30 seconds left

Robet Silişteanu

The countdown reached its final thirty seconds as Captain Erin Michaels watched the stars blur past the spaceship's windows. She tightened her grip on the controls, her heart racing with anticipation and fear. This was the moment she had been preparing for her entire life - the first human to travel beyond the edge of the known universe.

As the countdown hit zero, Erin braced herself for the jump. The ship shuddered and groaned as it ripped through the fabric of space-time, hurtling faster and faster towards the unknown. Then, suddenly, everything went dark. The ship's systems flickered and died, leaving Erin alone in the void of space. Panic surged through her, but she forced herself to remain calm. She had trained for this - the worst-case scenario. She took a deep breath and began to assess the damage. That's when she saw a massive, swirling vortex of light and energy unlike anything she had ever seen. It drew her in, pulling her towards a destiny she couldn't imagine.

Erin had a choice - she could try to fight against the vortex or surrender to it and see where it took her. She knew that the rational choice would be to try to regain control of her ship and find her way back to the known universe. But something inside her urged her to surrender, to let go of her fears and embrace the unknown. So Erin closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and then submitted to the vortex.

As the ship hurtled towards the vortex, Erin felt a sense of peace over her. She knew that whatever lay ahead, she was ready for it. She had trained her entire life for this moment, and now she was finally free to explore the universe in ways no one else ever had. The vortex swallowed the ship, and Erin felt herself being hurled through time and space. She had no idea where she was headed, but she knew that she was exactly where she was meant to be. The adventure had only just begun.



Only 30 seconds left

Aurora Nicoleta Iordache

Only 30 seconds left until the building was going to collapse, as I got stuck in the elevator on the top floor, while the bomb that I needed to stop was on the rooftop, glued to the head of the statue covered in gold. Under the figure was a hidden room with tons of gold bars and diamonds.

Five years ago, I was hired by a woman, now my boss, to help her bring home her treasure, a legacy kept in her family for decades. The treasure was stolen twenty years ago from my boss by her enemy, now the owner of this grand building where he kept the wealth hidden. Even though my colleagues and I have been training for the past five years for this dangerous mission, we encountered problems the first second we stepped into the building.

The enemy knew that we were coming, so he made plans in advance. Sirens started making noises everywhere, announcing to the enemy that we were here. “It’s a trap!” I screamed at the top of my lungs, pointing my gun to the dark hallway in front of me in case anyone approached me. But people started coming from behind, surrounding me and my team while pointing their guns towards us. “Follow me, and no one is going to get hurt”, said one of them. My team looked me in the eyes, waiting for my orders. “Let’s go”, I said, urging everyone to follow the strange men before me. We were now going underground, walking towards a massive door. When the door opened, we started walking inside: first the weird men, my team, me and then the other man that told us to follow him to this place. But right when I was about to enter the room, I turned around, pushed the man behind me, and locked the door, leaving only the two of us outside. Even though he was surprised, he got back on track in a moment and started shooting in my direction. I avoided all the bullets until I got to the elevator, pressing the buttons to take me to the rooftop. But the elevator didn’t stop on the rooftop. Instead, I was stuck on the top floor, while the man leaned against the door, saying: “You’ll never be able to escape from here...At least not alive!”. Then I heard him pressing a button that triggered the bomb from the rooftop. I started hitting the elevator door with all my strength as now I was hearing the countdown counting how many minutes I had left to live. Only one more minute. After realising that hitting the door was hopeless, I started to worry, and my eyes slipped on the only weapon I had on me, my gun.

I shot the control panel a few times until the doors finally opened. I rushed to the rooftop, finding in front of me the golden statue glued with a bomb. When I cut the bomb’s wires with my bare hands, the countdown stopped at 30 seconds. My life would have been over if I had been 30 seconds late. I removed the bomb from the statue’s head, revealing the button on top of it, the key to the secret chamber. I pressed the button, and a secret door opened at my feet. I went down the stairs, but when I looked around, the room was empty.

Only 30 seconds left

Miruna Tanasa

Only 30 seconds left...

That's all the time they had to escape the burning building. Lily and her team had been called to a high-rise apartment building that was on fire, and they had been inside for what felt like hours trying to rescue anyone they could. But now, with only half a minute remaining, they knew they had to get out before an explosion. The firefighters were under pressure as the flames were rising higher and higher, but they were full of courage.

Lily's heart was racing, and her veins were full of adrenaline as she and her team, full of tension, hurried down the hallway, checking every door they passed for any sign of life. The thick smoke made it hard to see and breathe, but they pressed on, hoping to find someone who needed help.

As they turned a corner, Lily spotted a small child huddled in the corner of a room, tears streaming down his face. She didn't hesitate, rushing over to scoop him into her arms. He was surprisingly light, and she cradled him close as she sprinted back to the exit.

The stairs were crowded with people trying to escape, but Lily pushed her way through, clutching the child tightly. She could feel the heat of the fire on her back, and she knew they were running out of time, but even if she was full of dread, she didn't stop for one second.

Finally, they burst into the street, and Lily collapsed, gasping for air. She handed the child over to one of her teammates, who had already called for an ambulance. The child was coughing and crying, but he was alive, and that was all that mattered.

Lily watched as the firefighters battled the blaze, knowing people were still trapped inside. She felt a pang of guilt for leaving them behind, but she knew they had done everything they could. They had saved one life more than she had ever hoped for.

As the ambulance arrived, Lily looked at the burning building. Flames were shooting out of the windows, and explosions echoed. She knew it would be long before anyone could go back inside.

Lily knew it was worth it as she looked at the child in the ambulance. She risked her life to save the child in the ambulance and would do it again in a heartbeat. Being a firefighter wasn't just a job but a call. She would always do everything in her power to help those in need.



Created by
Bianca-Elena Arotăritei
17

Only 30 seconds left

Petrică Răileanu

Only 30 seconds left. That's all I had before the bomb was set to go off. I had been working as a bomb disposal technician for years, but this was by far the most dangerous situation I had ever been in.

I looked down at the timer on the bomb and took a deep breath. I had to focus. One wrong move and everything would be over.

I had been called to the scene after a terrorist group had planted a bomb in a crowded shopping centre. The area had been evacuated, but innocent lives were still at stake. I couldn't let that happen.

I had been working on the bomb for hours, trying to disarm it, but it seemed that every time I made progress, the bomb's mechanisms became more complex. It was almost as if the terrorists were taunting me.

I knew that I couldn't give up. I had to keep trying. I closed my eyes for a moment and thought about my family. My wife, my children. They were the reason I had to succeed. I couldn't leave them behind.

I took a deep breath and focused on the bomb once again. The wires were tangled, and the circuits were fried, but I knew there had to be a way. I worked quickly, my hands moving almost automatically.

As the timer ticked down, my heart raced. I had a few seconds left. I took a risk, cutting one of the wires. The timer stopped.

I waited for a moment, waiting for the explosion. But it never came. I had done it. I had disarmed the bomb.

I collapsed onto the ground, the weight of what had just happened hitting me all at once. I had saved countless lives, but at what cost? The adrenaline that had kept me going for hours faded, and I was exhausted and drained.

But as I lay there, I realised I had done what I had been trained to do. I had saved lives, and that was all that mattered.

The team was standing by and rushed over to me, their faces filled with relief. I looked up at them, smiling weakly. "It's over," I said.

They helped me get to my feet, and I walked away from the bomb, knowing that it would never hurt anyone. But, as I walked away, I couldn't help but think about the people who had planted it. What had they been thinking? How could they have been so cruel?

But I pushed those thoughts aside. Work was to be done, and I had to focus on the next task. Because there would always be another bomb, another threat. And I had to be ready

Only 30 seconds left

Miruna Damian

Only 30 seconds left. That's all the time she had left. Her heart was racing, her palms sweaty, and her mind was in a frenzy. She had to find a way out of this mess and fast. Her life depended on it. She looked around the dimly lit room, searching for clues to help her escape. But all she saw were the cold, rigid walls of the cell she had been locked in. The door was thick and sturdy, and she knew it was impossible to break through it.

A group of ruthless criminals kidnapped her, demanding a hefty ransom from her family. But her family had refused to pay, and now she was left to die in this cell. She couldn't give up, not now. Suddenly, she heard a faint noise. It was coming from the corner of the room. She slowly walked towards it, trying not to make any noise. As she got closer, she realized that it was a small vent on the floor. She quickly grabbed the vent cover and pulled it off.

She peered into the vent and saw a small, narrow passage. It was her only chance. She took a deep breath and crawled into the vent. It was a tight squeeze, and she could barely move, but she knew she had to keep going. So she crawled and crawled, her heart beating faster and faster with every passing second. She could hear the sounds of her captors getting louder and louder, and she knew they were getting closer.

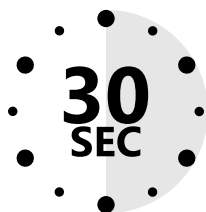
Only 10 seconds left.

She could see a faint light at the end of the passage. She crawled faster, pushing herself to the limit. Finally, she reached the end of the passage and saw a small opening. She went through the door and found herself in a deserted alley. She had escaped. She looked up at the sky and felt the fantastic night breeze on her face. She was alive. She had made it.

Only 3 seconds left.

She quickly looked around, searching for any signs of her kidnappers. But there was no one around. She was safe. She took a deep breath and started to walk away. She knew she had to find help, but she was just grateful to be alive.

Only 1 second left. She smiled to herself and whispered, I made it.



Only 30 seconds left

Iuliana Aparaschivei

Only 30 seconds left. That was all Robby had before the bomb he was about to defuse exploded. First, he double-checked all the wires and timers. Then, sweating heavily, he tried to remain calm and steady.

Suddenly, a memory flashed through Robby's mind - his wife and daughter, waiting for him at home. He couldn't leave them alone; he was their protector and had to stay alive.

His hands moved faster than ever, adrenaline coursing through him. He felt the wires snap and buzz beneath his fingertips. The ticking of the timer seemed to get louder and faster, challenging him.

He had always loved puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, crosswords and Sudoku, and this love of solving things had made him an expert at defusing bombs. His training had prepared him for such situations, but nothing could ever prepare him for the terrifying moment when he had just 30 seconds left to save his life and that of many other people.

Suddenly, Robby heard a quiet beeping sound – he had disarmed it! A wave of relief washed over him as he slumped against the wall. Then, his fingers trembling, he typed in the final code.

The bomb was defused.

Robby's heart rate started to drop, and he felt a wave of exhaustion. He had saved himself and the city. The adrenaline rush had finally begun to fade. He breathed deep, tears of joy streaming down his face. Suddenly, his family was alive and safe.

He quickly gathered his tools and made his way out of the building. As he emerged, the bright sunlight blinded him. He stood there for a moment, his heart filled with gratitude and relief.

Walking down the empty road towards his car, he wondered how often he would have to go through something like this. But, as he walked away from what happened, he knew his job would never be done. He would always be the one called when needed. But for now, he was grateful for the chance to go home and see his family again.



Only 30 seconds left

Larisa Ionela Anania

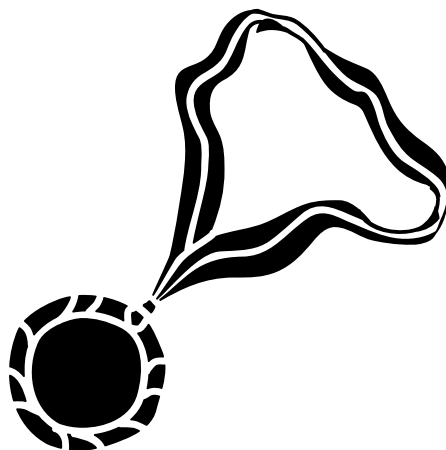
I was on summer vacation with my class. It was a warm and peaceful day, and we were going to a museum of supernatural exhibits. We were all excited and couldn't wait to arrive. The museum was huge and had a strange rhombus shape. Each had to pick a mate to hang out with, and I chose the new girl in the class because she was the only one. But there was something strange about her. She kept repeating to me, "There are only thirty seconds left until.." and stopped. I thought maybe she was afraid of something, and I ignored her.

We were halfway through the museum when suddenly the alarms went off, and a lady told us we had to leave immediately. We found out that a bomb was planted on top of the museum.

When I realised that the new girl was missing, I quickly went to look for her in the bathroom, thinking she was there, but she was going up the stairs where the bomb was. I panicked and started shouting at her, but she kept counting. I didn't know what to do, so I went after her. I felt fear everywhere, but I continued to follow her. She stopped next to a strange microwave that was showing a countdown.

The screen showed thirty seconds, and the girl pulled all the coloured threads. There was a lot of pressure on her, so I sat beside her and tried to help. We were sweating because of the tension of not doing something wrong and the museum exploding. The girl took scissors out of her pocket and cut each thread. When she reached the last wire, she stopped. "Run!" she told me, but I couldn't move. Only ten seconds left, and I didn't know what would happen. So I took the scissors from her hand and cut the last thread...I heard only one sound from the microwave, and all the alarms stopped. Then I realised that it was all over.

That's how I became friends with the new girl. Everyone applauded and hugged us, and we were thrilled that we could save our friends. Then, we returned to the bus, and my friend and I received a medal for our courage.



Only 30 seconds left

Elena Andreea Dascălu

Only 30 seconds left... The deadline to finish the simulation before the big exam was going to be decisive, and that was very close to us. After a week, we got the announcement that the results were not suitable for most of us, so we only had one month left to prepare for the actual exam, and those results came as a real explosion.

You're probably wondering why this exam was so important; it was deciding if we would participate in the academy's only intergalactic experiment this year. Otherwise, we were convicted to 2 weeks of additional preparations, which nobody wanted because, waiting for this event, all classes became boring. Finally, time passed, and I was right in front of the exam, and the only way to reduce the tension I felt was to talk to my colleague Sara.

Sara was my first-grade classmate; we were classmates and best friends. In middle school, we had a lesson about space and spaceships, and then we set out to fulfil a dream we both had: to be an astronaut and build our own spaceships.

'Do you feel ready?' I ask her with dread.

'Not really. What about you?'

'Me neither, but we have to make it.'

'You are right, and we have been studying for a whole month, day by day, for this, we are ready!'

'I think it starts right away. Good luck, Sara''!

'Good luck to you too, Helen!'

Very attentive teachers closely watched our pursuit, whose eyes focused only on us once the countdown began. Then, the adrenaline kicked in when the timer reached 30 seconds, but I knew all the stress was over.

The long-awaited moment would arrive, and two days away, we were to receive the final results, and therefore we were all on edge. So I looked at the test slowly, feeling the pressure down to my bones and saw my grade, which to my happiness, was a good one, and then I checked my colleague's grade to make sure we'll get through this together.

Here we were in the spaceship, taking part in the beautiful experiment.

'How are you feeling?' I ask Sara.

'Like in a microwave oven', she answered.

'How funny you are today!' I said this even though I had the same feeling. After going into space for the first time and returning to the ground, we lost touch with each other because I chose a different career. Sara studied space travel closely and wrote a book to explain step by step what it was like there and how astronauts lived and survived. I studied the spaceship, every component piece by piece, to fulfil the dream I had with Sara, to build our spaceships, even though we hadn't met in a very long time.

Twenty years apart, here we are together again, this time driving and building those spaceships, our dream since we were little. Even though life separated us for a few years, there was a connection between us somewhere. The things we want to happen will happen sooner or later!

Only 30 seconds left

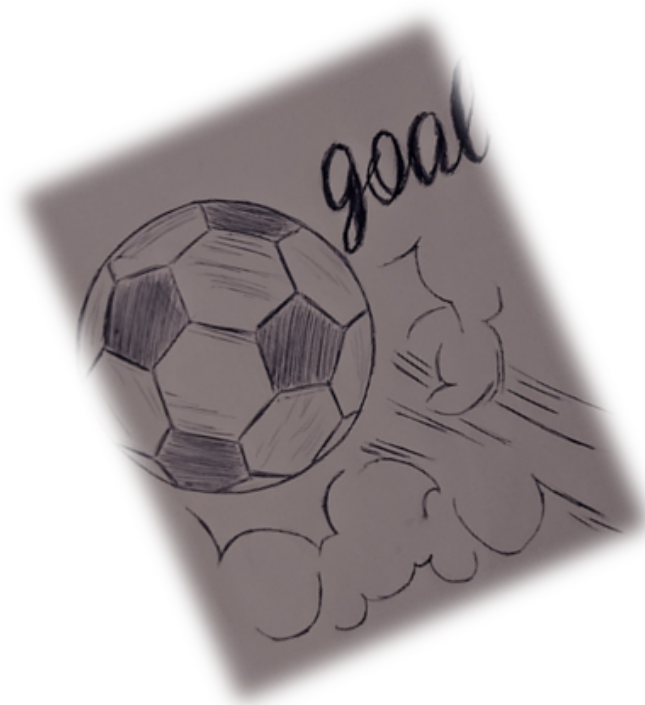
Emilian Aparaschivei

Only 30 seconds left. The stadium erupted into a frenzy of cheers and applause as the final moments of the championship game ticked away. The score was tied, and the fate of their team rested on one last play. The ball flew through the air, the crowd holding their breath, and miraculously landed in the hands of their star player.

With lightning speed, he sprinted toward the goal, defenders hot on his heels. Time seemed to slow as he weaved past their desperate tackles, his determination fuelling every stride. The seconds dwindled, and with a final burst of energy, he launched the ball toward the net.

Silence engulfed the stadium as the ball soared through the air, seemingly in slow motion. It collided with the crossbar, ricocheting off the post, and then, as if guided by fate, it nestled into the back of the net.

The crowd erupted into a deafening roar of victory, their cheers blending with the final buzzer. The team embraced, overcome with joy and relief. In those last 30 seconds, they had defied the odds, securing their place in sporting history.



Room 237 was empty

Bianca Vornicu

Room 237 was empty, which is strange given that I am a police officer who rushed to this location after a maid from this prestigious hotel called 911 to report the discovery of a body in one of the hotel apartments.

We sensed a strange aura when my colleagues and I entered the room. The missing body was the first and most visible aspect that gave me goosebumps all over my body. I was a new officer, and this was my first case; even though technically, a case cannot exist without a body, I will always regard it as my first case as a detective constable.

I looked around and noticed that the room was mostly empty, with only a few pieces of furniture. We couldn't touch anything, not even the light switch, because it was so dark inside. We didn't want to destroy any evidence accidentally, and with our eyes adjusted to the darkness, my teammates turned on their flashlights. At first glance, there wasn't anything strange in the room, but we had to go through all the necessary steps to guarantee that we didn't overlook any critical aspects of this case.

Again, nothing unusual was discovered except a few pieces of clothing scattered on the floor and an empty bottle of wine. There was no evidence of violence or struggle to escape an attack, so the next step, in this case, was to review the video footage. Because of the uproar caused by this mysterious death, even the hotel manager came in person. He was waiting for us at the reception; his pale face and terrified expression initially led me to believe he was concerned about the hotel's reputation. However, after my superiors spoke with him, I began to have a strange feeling. However, the manager instructed an employee to show us the footage and help us whenever needed.

The CCTV turned out to be somewhat shocking because, for the last time, not one but two people entered the room. Then, at 9:18 p.m. on Monday, two girls who emerged to be particularly close entered the room. Nobody entered or tried to leave the room after that. Everyone was perplexed because, despite what the evidence stated, when the maid checked the apartment in the morning, there was only one body lying next to the bed and no one else to be seen.

We did our job, investigating any possible witnesses to the previous night's events. After less than an hour, Miss Taylor Wilson, a 22-year-old woman, was reported missing. The missing report corresponded to the person who booked room 237. That day the family was contacted and informed of the tragic news.

Even though everyone tried their best to recall helpful information, it did not lead us to the missing girl. Instead, the same day, Miss Taylor became the matter of an unsolved homicide investigation.

Five years later, no one knows where her body is, who the other girl was, or whether anything we think we know about this case is actually the truth or if someone meticulously planned it.

Room 237 was empty

Lorena Bocancia

It was Friday. I was away at the beach after taking some tough exams, trying to find myself and relax after an agitated period, which consumed all my energy trying to get the best results. I chose to go alone precisely because I wanted to feel as peaceful and accessible as possible. I didn't want to hear about my life experiences, the events of the last period or the badly ended relationships of my friends because these would have been the main topics if I had brought someone with me.

I preferred it to be just me with my thoughts, and the only stress was given by the weather, which was cold. After nine hours of travel, I finally arrived at the cool sand where my soles sank.

The waves seemed to sense my presence and kept coming towards the shore while the breeze made its way through the strands of hair, which after a few minutes, were wet. Then, heavy rain started to rain, but not enough to convince me to retire.

I was a physically and mentally tired girl, meditating on her life under the full moon, stuck in a time bubble on a deserted beach.... Or at least that's what I thought. Then, an unknown voice was heard, almost whispering, from behind me. I was terrified but thought my mind was playing tricks because of tiredness, so I didn't bother to check.


After a few seconds, I saw a shadow approaching me slowly; at that moment, the idea of coming alone to the sea didn't seem so bright to me anymore, so I got up quickly and turned to face the cliff. A tall, black figure could be seen a few meters away. The shadow behind it contrasted frighteningly with the person's body. Nevertheless, I kept my composure and walked away from where I spent the last ten minutes.

I quickly went to the hotel, checking the circumstances to ensure I wasn't seen. Then, finally, at the reception, the lady handed me the keys... I had room 237, meaning I had to go up about three floors because the elevator was broken, but it didn't bother me too much, considering that I wasn't in a hurry to close again between the four walls.

Around midnight I woke up, I was thirsty, but I had left the bag of food and drink on the counter at the entrance. A little numb, I went downstairs to retrieve my things, knowing I would have to retake the stairs. After going down the first floor, I felt again that I heard some whispers around me, but the hall was dimly lit. Furthermore, after taking my things, I ran up the stairs, but on the second floor, this time, a figure was waiting for me at the end of the hall...Yes, it was the exact figure I had seen on the cliff, but it disappeared a few seconds later in the apartment next door.

I rushed to my room, checked the door, and threw myself directly under the sheet, scared and confused, thinking maybe my mind was taking revenge on me because I hadn't slept for hours—a loud noise made me startle again. I checked the clock. It was 04.00 in the morning, not an hour to get up willingly.

I pulled the curtains in vain because the still-numb sun would not appear; the rain was heavy, hitting the room's large windows with force. As much as I loved that feeling, it scared me so much that I felt like I was the only one for tens of kilometres and more, surrounded by silhouettes and voices that never stopped disappearing.



I gently opened the door to the room and looked towards the hall; there was no one, and yet the noises didn't stop. The shivers came over me quickly, especially when I felt someone's presence, even though I could swear I was alone. I wanted to reach the balcony at the end of the hall, it seemed that the noises were coming from there, but inside me, there was an intense struggle between decisions.

I walked forward, trying to keep my composure. The door was ajar, letting in the cold air that swept through the halls; once I arrived, the sound had stopped, and I tried to figure out what could have caused those frightening noises. I noticed a coffee table and a wet, well-folded note beside it. I slowly picked up the paper and unfolded it carefully; it was written messy and faded from the rain. "Watch your back" What would that mean? I suddenly turned to face the door, but a wave of cold air engulfed me. Was that the wind? I lied to myself continuously and tried to find rational explanations, but it was getting stronger and stronger.

I glanced over the railing; the lady at the front desk was finishing her shift and rushing out of the building. I tried to call her, although my voice was broken from everything that had happened, but somehow she seemed to have heard me, she looked straight at me and asked me what happened.

With the last of my strength, I told her I was stuck and motioned to the blocked door. She turned out of the way, and after a few seconds, the door creaked. I thought she had a spare key, and that's how she got me out of there, but I was surprised when I noticed that no one was behind it. Some heavy steps were heard along the stairs; the woman finally appeared and asked me what had happened.

I walked forward, trying to keep my composure; the door was ajar, letting in the cold air that swept through the halls. Once I arrived, the sound had stopped. I tried to figure out what could have caused those frightening noises. I noticed a coffee table and a wet, well-folded note beside it. I slowly picked up the paper and unfolded it carefully; it was written messy and faded from the rain. "Watch your back" What would that mean? I suddenly turned to face the door, but a wave of cold air engulfed me. I tugged at her helplessly, but she was adamant. Will it be from the wind? I lied to myself continuously and tried to find rational explanations, but it was getting harder and harder for me.

I glanced over the railing. The lady at the front desk was finishing her shift and rushing out of the building. I tried calling her, but somehow she seemed to have heard me. She looked straight at me and asked me what had happened; with my last strength, I told her I was stuck. I motioned to the door. She turned out of the way, and the door creaked briefly. I thought she had a spare key. Some heavy steps were heard along the stairs. The woman finally appeared and asked me in confusion what had happened. I quickly went to the bathroom, sat under the shower and turned on the hot water. Little by little, the water cooled down. After that, it got colder and colder until it was almost ice cold.

The drops of water flowed continuously on my body, and I opened my eyes and saw the sunrise. I was not wet from the bath but from the rain. The hot water was cold, and the whole thing was a dream.

I had fallen asleep on the beach under the moonlight, and now I woke up under dawn rain, realising that it was all just a fantasy in my mind.

Room 237 was empty

Benjamin Iavni

Room 237 was empty, or so it seemed. The door creaked open with a long, drawn-out groan as a group of researchers cautiously entered the room. The room was completely bare, without any furniture or decoration, except for a single metal table in the centre. This room had been the site of a top-secret experiment conducted by a team of scientists determined to unlock the mysteries of consciousness. They had brought in a creature from an unknown dimension, hoping to observe its behaviour and learn from it. But something had gone wrong. The creature had been abandoned in the room for months, left alone to fend for itself. And now, as the researchers entered the room, they could see clear evidence of its presence. Scratches covered the walls, and deep grooves in the floor showed where the creature had dragged itself around. The metal table was dented and warped as if something heavy had been thrown against it. As the researchers began to examine the room, they suddenly heard a sound. It was a low, guttural growl coming from somewhere in the darkness.

Suddenly, the room began to shake. The researchers stumbled and fell, struggling to keep their balance. And then, as if from nowhere, the creature appeared. It was monstrous, with skin as black as night and eyes glowed with an otherworldly light. The researchers stood frozen in terror as the creature let out a deafening roar. But then something strange happened. The creature seemed to awaken as if from a deep sleep. Its eyes grew less hostile, and it approached the researchers almost curiously.

At that moment, the researchers realised that they had been wrong. They thought the creature was a danger, a threat to be contained. But in reality, it was something far more profound. It was a being of pure consciousness, a living embodiment of the mysteries they had been trying to uncover. And at that moment, as the creature approached them, the researchers knew they had discovered something truly extraordinary.



Room 237 was empty

Ioana Botîrcă

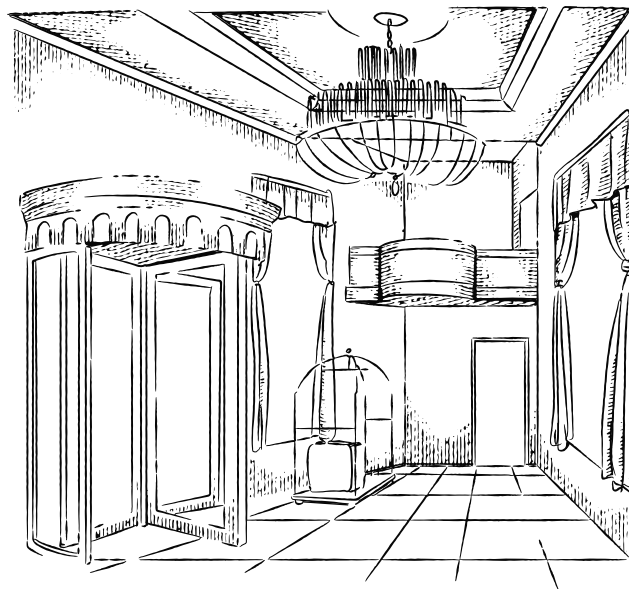
The room next to us, 237, was empty. It was strange because the receptionist said that all the rooms from the hotel were booked, it wasn't a big deal, so we moved on. We were asked to visit Mallorca, and finally, our dream came true.

At midnight, my friend and I heard some eerie sounds from room 237, we thought the personnel was experimenting with a fire alarm, but the sound was interrupted.

Pushed by curiosity, we entered the room; it seemed abandoned and invisible like no one before entered it. Ransacking through closets, we found a book with exceptional, ancient coverage that had awakened memories of our childhood. We saw this book many times before at the library school and were not allowed to read it. Hearing steps and voices, we turn back to our room.

The next day we had dinner at a famous local restaurant. An old lady came to us and asked if we would like to have dinner with her. She was the owner. After we met, she told us about the book from room 237, a spell book belonging to a Spanish goddess, and now she was a prisoner inside of it. At first sight, we thought she was tricking us, but she was very serious and said that it was our duty to break the curse. If we didn't do it, she would haunt our lives forever. The old lady explained the plan; we needed to go to Barcelona and put the book in the light of stained glass from Sagrada Familia. After that, her soul will be free, and the curse will break. Hearing a familiar sound, I escaped from that mysterious story.

After a brief period, I realized that the sound was my alarm and I needed to go to the airport. I can't believe that it was just a dream and nothing happened. But at the airport, I saw an old lady with the same book I dreamed about, which freaked me out.



Room 237 was empty

Andrei Popa

Room 237 was empty. It was supposed to be an opulent room in the most exclusive hotel in town, but now it was a dark and eerie space. Andrei had checked in here just a few hours ago, hoping to forget about his life, but he felt a strange sense of foreboding.

He had ignored his instincts and tried to make himself comfortable, but the more he explored the room, the more he realised something was wrong. The furniture was old and worn out, the curtains were stained, and there was a faint smell of decay.

Sitting on the bed, he noticed a note left on the nightstand. It read, "Welcome to Room 237. We hope you enjoy your stay." But something sinister about the message made him feel even more uneasy.

Andrei tried to shake off the unease and decided to take a shower. As he entered the bathroom, he noticed the shower was already running. The water was hot, and steam filled the room. He didn't think much of it and stepped into the shower.

As he closed his eyes, he heard a creaking sound. He opened his eyes and saw that the shower curtain was moving, but nobody was there. He tried to laugh it off as just his imagination, but then he heard a whisper in his ear.

"Get out," the voice said.

Andrei froze in terror. He quickly rinsed off and got out of the shower, grabbing his towel and wrapping it around him. He turned around, but there was nobody there. He thought about leaving the room immediately but remembered that he was down to his last £5. He had no choice but to stay the night.

He tried to calm himself down by watching some TV, but every channel he turned to was playing the same black-and-white movie, with the same scene playing over and over again. It was a woman in a white dress walking down a dark hallway.

Suddenly, the TV screen went blank, and he heard a sound coming from the closet. He hesitated for a moment, then opened the door wider. The cabinet was empty, but a chill in the air made him shiver.

Andrei tried to push the strange occurrences out of his mind and settled down to sleep. But as he lay in the bed, he heard footsteps walking towards him. He opened his eyes and saw a figure standing at the end of his bed.

It was a woman in a white dress, just like in the movie. She had long black hair and a pale complexion. She just stared at him, then slowly vanished into thin air.

Andrei knew he had to get out of Room 237. So he grabbed his things and ran out of the hotel room, never looking back. As he stepped out into the hallway, he felt a sense of relief wash over him. He knew that he had narrowly escaped something genuinely terrifying.

La salle 237 était vide

Andrei Popa

La salle 237 était vide. Les rumeurs prétendaient qu'elle était hantée, que des esprits erraient entre ses murs. Personne n'osait s'y aventurer, sauf Maxime. Ce jeune intrépide était curieux de découvrir la vérité.

Un soir, poussé par sa bravoure, Maxime franchit la porte de la salle maudite. L'obscurité était épaisse, seule une faible lueur éclairait la pièce. Maxime avança avec précaution, scrutant les recoins sombres.

Soudain, il entendit un bruit étrange, un souffle froid lui caressa la nuque. Ses pas résonnaient dans le silence. Mais plus il avançait, plus il se sentait envoûté par une étrange aura.

Soudain, une voix murmura : "Quitte cet endroit avant qu'il ne soit trop tard." Maxime s'immobilisa, mais sa curiosité l'encouragea à continuer.

Au centre de la salle, il trouva un vieux coffre. Ses mains tremblantes l'ouvrirent et révélèrent un médaillon étincelant. Maxime le prit entre ses doigts et le médaillon émit une lueur éblouissante.

Une explosion de lumière illumina la salle, dévoilant des fresques anciennes sur les murs. Maxime comprit alors que les esprits qui hantaient cette salle n'étaient pas malveillants, mais cherchaient simplement à protéger leur trésor.

Dorénavant, Maxime savait que la salle 237 n'était plus vide, mais remplie de secrets et de mystères qu'il était le seul à connaître.

Room 237 was empty

Adrian Valentin Parasca

Room 237 was empty. White walls, white ceiling, and white floor.

‘You are probably wondering how I got into this situation. Well, it is quite the story.’

It all started a week ago. I was checking my mail when I saw a weird magazine. It was about some escape game in the High Hopes Hotel, close to my neighbourhood. As much as I knew, the hotel had been neglected for years. I remember being close to 10 when I heard about that building being opened. Of course, my scepticism was off the charts when I saw the magazine. My decision was something like this I would go to that city anyways. I need to look for new furniture. ‘

One day after that, I went straight to that hotel. Surprisingly, only a little has changed since I saw it last time. The only noticeable thing that I saw from the outside was the entrance. The building was a bit reconstructed, but not too much. It was decent enough to make people curious to enter and ask the receptionist what is happening in this building. So I entered, and to my surprise lobby was, in fact, like any other hotel. Stairs I needed to find out where they were leading, a huge desk and a small bell, like in any retro hotel. I pressed the bell several times, and someone appeared before me. It was a mid-aged man wearing a grey suit with weirdly red stains. He had a mask that covered half of his face. That man was giving me highly creepy vibes.

‘Wow! A new customer. What an honour! What brings you to our hotel?’

‘I received one of your magazines, and I wanted to check it out.’

‘Did you have time to read the whole magazine?’

‘No. I didn’t read the magazine. Was it a priority?’

‘No, of course not. It’s fine. Your room is room 69, and it is located on the second floor.’

‘Room... I am not ...’

‘Don’t worry. Do you want a drink?’

‘Oh, Yes, of course, a glass of water would be fine.’

‘Ok. One minute, please! You can check the lobby if you want.’

I looked around but didn’t see anything too out of place.


‘There you go! Let me handle the luggage while you enjoy your water.’

‘Oh, thank you. That is quite nice of...’

Those were the last words that I had said before I passed out. So I think the water had some sedatives in there.

I woke up in a rusty bed, without my phone, and had five weird machines around my neck, legs, and arms. I tried taking them off, but I got electrocuted. The room I was in looked precisely how I expected the old hotel to look, but the room was almost covered in darkness too. Finally, I stood up, and a male voice started speaking from an old-school recorder.

‘Hello, customer number 69. I want to play a game. As you can see, you are trapped in this hotel. I think you weren’t expecting such an experience. Anyway, here are the rules. You have three hours



to escape the hotel by the entrance marked on the first floor. You will need two keycards and a golden key. On your neck, hands and legs, you have a mini stun gun that will give you a shocking surprise every 5 minutes. You have a small knife, a lantern with two types of light and a nail in your pocket. You can get rid of the electric bracelets in two different ways. You can find the codes you must put on the tiny keyboard to deactivate them, or you can cut your hands or legs with the knife. You may need to search all the rooms available to have a higher chance of escaping. Do not try anything dumb because you will be shocked by the result of your actions. Good luck.'

'That was unexpected. I was in danger. I never was in such a...'

I was interrupted by a severe shockwave in my entire body. That was the sign that everything was real. I went into the hallway, and it was dark. I turned on the lantern and opened room 237. As you know, it was empty. But I decided to use the UV light. On the floor, I could see a code. It was showing 1345. I started putting the code on the neck bracelet and was shocked. I assumed it was for another one. I put it on the left arm, and it fell off. I was so happy, but there was no time for joy yet. I tried opening room 236, but it was locked. I used the nail, and I broke the lock. I pushed the door, and a bat almost smashed my face. I realised that the place was full of nasty traps. In the middle of the room was an aquarium full of rusty nails. At the bottom, I saw a keycard with the help of my lantern. I started searching with my left arm, and that was a smart move because as soon as I touched the glass, the electricity was through my whole body. After many scratches, I got the keycard. I rushed downstairs, and I got one lock off the door. On the first floor, there was a table with four boxes made of steel. There was no way I could have opened that up with my knife. I smashed them on the floor. I threw all of them down, and I got a full minute of 20V shocks. On the floor, there were only razors. It was excruciating to search through them, but I got two codes. I got lucky this time because I did not get punished. I got off the bracelets from both legs. There was only the neck one that was a problem. I went to the third floor and tried all the doors. The last one opened. I entered, and the kitchen was full of pipes shooting boiled water. I saw a panel. I cut the rope with my knife, and there was a lever. I pulled the lever, and after another electric surprise, the pipes were empty. I saw a fridge with the golden key frozen in it. I started breaking the ice slowly but surely. I got shocked four times until I reached the key. I took down the gold padlock, and I only needed a keycard and a code to may be free again. After an hour, I started being scared for my life. I returned to the starting room and began smashing all the furniture. After destroying a wardrobe, I got a hammer. In the hallway, there was a big purple X near the lift. I made a hole in the wall, and it was a car battery in there. I noticed that the lift needed some power. I connected the battery, and the lift opened. There, I found the most wanted keycard in the world. I opened the hotel door, and I was free with ten minutes to spare, but I still had the bracelet on my neck. I was surprised that the man was still at the desk, waiting for me, without his mask.

'Well, congratulations! How was it?'

'Truly horrible! I wasn't so frightened my entire life.'

'Soo, would you recommend this experience to your friends?'

'Of course not. I thought I would die.'

'Sir, this was only a simulation. There was no danger involved at all. You would know if you have read the magazine.'

'What? The razors were real, the nails were real, and the shocks were real, too.'

'Well... true, but you survived... shockingly.'

'Stop the electric jokes. I get... wait... What do you mean I survived shockingly?'

'I don't have an off switch. The other customers died.'

'What? Also, I want the bracelet off, please.'

'Ok. The code for the neck was a trap. There is no code for that in the trap game. I will take it off now.'

I was finally free. I could go home now. I did not even care about that dull furniture anymore.

'Wait, I have a deal for you! '

'I don't want any more traps, thank you.'

'I want to hire you in my company.'

I was astonished by his idea, but I was also tempted. I had fun living on the edge.

'I can give you 100 dollars for playing and escaping. Or I can give you 1000 dollars if you are my employee. Do we have a deal?'

After some thinking, I've made up my mind.

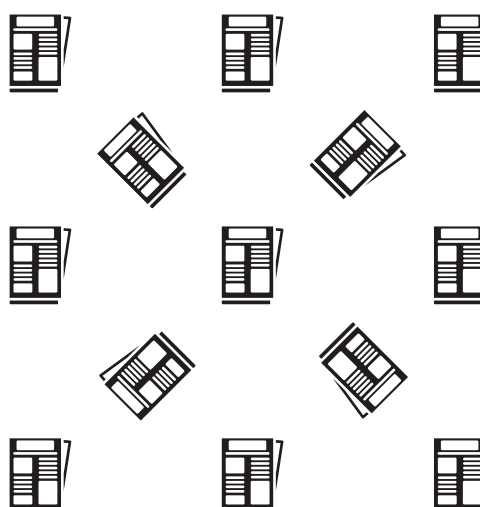
'.Deal, I want to be a part of this. It is quite insane, but I suggest you rewrite the magazine. It will add more distress if you take out a lot of the details.'

'Ok. I think this will be the beginning of a beautiful friendship and a serious money gathering.'

I am now a partner in <<crimes>> with someone with a mysterious past. That only happens some days of the week.

'One last question. How do you get rid of the dead bodies?'

'Don't worry about it.'



Room 237 was empty

Alice-Mihaela Jaba and
Nicoleta-Iustina Cazacu

Room 237 was empty, and everything had disappeared. A few seconds ago, the room was ready for the operation. I wanted to leave the room and call the nurses to know we were ready, but the door disappeared. It was a very important operation; even if that person hated me, that child, I thought, was mine. A scalpel appeared in my hand. I stabbed myself while white lilies and flowers grew from the wounds. More started increasing as I was ripping them. It was horrifying. I began to scream my lungs out, but no one was hearing me. To my happiness, it was all a dream. I had woken up an hour before my alarm. A demanding day was ahead, so I walked to cool my mind. Yes, I was a skilled surgeon, but every human is nervous and anxious before an incident that can change his life. I put my coat on and left on the empty streets of London. The sun had not risen, and everything looked dead. Not a trace of sound.

After a short walk, I was feeling much better. I got ready for work, and I left for the hospital. I arrived there, and everyone started to wish me luck. I made the last preparation, and I entered room 237. The mother and her son were ready for the kidney transplant. The child had diabetes and urgently needed a kidney because the disease affected both his kidneys. I had never done such an operation before. I was afraid, but I accepted that child. When I started cutting the child, a toxic smell of belladonna filled the air. In the next second, the nurses passed out. A lot of white lily flowers covered the child's body.

All I know is that I woke up in a hospital bed, dizzy and with a severe headache. My lawyer called me to tell me that the mother sued me. The child died. She accused me of poisoning. Everything moved quickly, and we appeared at the court the next day for the process.

Even if I wanted to rest to relieve the headaches, I had to speak to the lawyer to discuss what had happened. He said we must win the case and prove I am innocent. I loved my lawyer. He always asked only the right questions and not asking me once if I was guilty.

The process was tense. The child's mother was devastated. She yelled at me and told me I was a monster because I had taken away everything she had. When I heard her say that, I got angry and confessed. "Yes, I poisoned him, and I don't regret it for a minute. Now you don't have your kidney and your kid. At least that's what I could do after you ruined my life. How could you cheat on me with my best friend? Do you know how much I was the laughingstock of the school? ". When my lawyer heard, his face turned white. He probably thought that I would never do such a thing. I was sentenced to life in prison, but I still don't regret what I did!

The dream

Bianca Lupu

Room 237 was empty. I was disappointed because she was not there...

But there was something eerie about that place. While I was walking down the hall, I saw a prisoner tied to the bed. He was screaming. His clothes seemed so worn out! I felt like being in an abandoned world, in some weird experiment, tricked by my friend. At first, I thought somebody had come to ransack the hospital and the employees, and most of the patients had left as if I was alone with a prisoner tied to the bed. Then, suddenly, the lights went off, but there was light from some "Enter" and "Exit" signs hung on the doors. I tried to find a main exit door but couldn't find it. Then I saw a creature in a corner, a horrible beast! I was shocked and did not react showed on my face. The animal was looking at me, but he couldn't see me... I think I was invisible.

Suddenly, I was awake in bed, relieved because that was just a dream. But I still called the hospital to ask about my friend Alice because I knew she had been hospitalized there because of a car accident. I was told that Alice Crystal was not there, but a woman with that name was registered in 1931. That woman had a car accident, and unfortunately, she died. I remained speechless, aware that I didn't even say the cause of my friend's hospitalization. I quickly called my friend, who was at home sleeping. She was so confused, and I was desperate to find out what was happening. I searched for the woman on the internet, and I discovered that she had caused a car accident on purpose because her mentally ill husband was in prison. The man that I saw tied to the bed.....was her husband.

That was a bizarre dream, and I will never forget the days, weeks, months and years thinking about it!



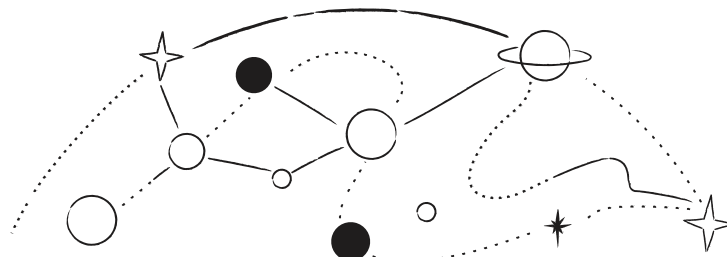
And then there was none

Diana Gîțman

And then there was none... to tell me where I was. I opened my eyes briefly and couldn't figure out what I saw. I was in a white room, and the ceiling above me was a huge mirror where I could see my reflection. I was in a hospital bed. My hands and feet were tied, and tubes came out of my veins. I had different coloured cables attached to my head. I tried to move, but I couldn't free myself. Where was I, and why was my blood blue?

I stood staring at the white walls for a long time until I heard a voice speak from nowhere: "Experiment 0011 has reached the conscious stage. Record the progress." Then it stopped. A door opened in the wall, and two people dressed in white robes entered. They walked over to me, freed my limbs, lifted me and motioned to the blue blood flowing through those tubes. I shrugged my shoulders as a sign of "I don't know", and then one of them spoke. His cold voice shook the silence: "What do you remember?" I answered him briefly: "I was on the train reading a book." They looked at me, then whispered something to each other. Then I heard the most shocking thing: "You just woke up from an induced coma you were in for 100 years. You are part of a group of 20 people reading the same book simultaneously but in different places 100 years ago. First, you were brought unconscious to a medical centre, and when your blood was tested, it was blue. Then you were sent to a laboratory that belongs to NASA. For 100 years, you have been monitored mentally and physically to observe the progress of the coma. Nothing happened: no brain activity, contracted muscles, or eye movement."

They looked at me like a lab mouse; they could not wait to put me to the test. All I said was: "I'm an experiment!" the first thing I thought was that I had to get out of there somehow.



And then there was none

Alexandru Pintilie

And then there was none. The phrase echoed through the empty halls of the once grand estate, now reduced to a mere shell of its former glory. The property had been abandoned for years, with no signs of life within its walls. But it hasn't always been like this. Years ago, a wealthy family, the Vanderbilts, owned the estate. They were the envy of the town, with their grand parties and lavish lifestyle. But one day, the family disappeared without a trace, leaving only their estate and a legacy of unanswered questions.

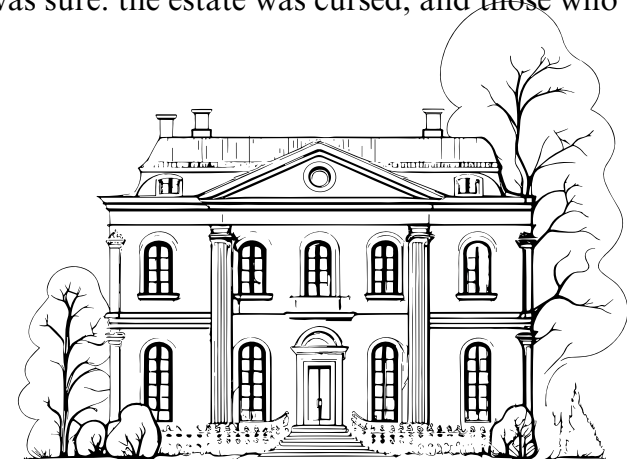
Rumours began to swirl about what had happened to the Vanderbilts. Some said they had fled the country to escape debt, while others believed they had been murdered. But no one knew, and the mystery of their disappearance remained. Years passed, and the estate fell into disrepair. The once beautiful gardens became overgrown with weeds, and the grand ballroom was left to gather dust. But even in its ruined state, the estate held a certain allure, drawing in curious visitors who wanted to explore its abandoned halls. On one such visit, a group of strangers found themselves trapped within the estate's walls. They had come to explore, but the moment they entered, the doors slammed shut behind them, trapping them inside.

At first, they assumed it was just a prank, but as the hours turned into days, they realised something far more sinister was at play. Each day, one would disappear, leaving only a cryptic clue about their whereabouts.

The remaining group members were left to unravel the mystery of their disappearance, but the more they learned, the more terrified they became. It seemed that the estate was cursed, and the Vanderbilts' dark secrets were coming back to haunt them.

As the group dwindled in numbers, they had no choice but to face the truth: they were trapped, and there was no escape. And then there was none; until finally, only one was left.

The survivor was never the same after that experience. They refused to speak of what had happened within the estate's walls, and the mystery of the Vanderbilt disappearance remained unsolved. But one thing was sure: the estate was cursed, and those who dared to enter would do so on their own.



And then there was none

Karla Zaluschi

And then there was none. The world had been reduced to an empty, solitary wasteland. The disaster had struck the planet, leaving behind only the residue of a once-thriving culture. The choices made by humanity had been far too late to prevent the catastrophe that had happened to them.

As a castaway in this desolate landscape, I wandered through the city's depleted ruins, searching for any signs of life. But all I found were missing-person posters and the haunting silence of loneliness. It was as if the world had been obliterated, leaving only me behind to witness the extinction of an entire civilisation. Finally, I realised I was one of the few survivors left on the planet. I had to find a way to survive, even if it meant facing the unknown.

Furthermore, I had to make choices that would keep me alive. So I started looking for food, water, and anything worthwhile in this new world. As I travelled through the empty wasteland, I came across other survivors. We formed a community, working together to rebuild what was left of our world. We shared our knowledge and skills, and we learned from each other.

Despite the progress we made, there were still moments of desolation. The world was a stark reminder of how fragile and ephemeral life can be. But even amid the destruction, we found hope. We found a way to survive, even if it meant starting over.

Years passed, and our community grew. We built new homes and created new systems to support our way of life. We learned to farm, hunt, and fish. Likewise, we found new ways to generate power and communicate with others.

And then, one day, we received a message. It was from a group of survivors living in a bunker for years. They had heard about our community, and they wanted to join us.

We welcomed them with open arms and worked together to create a new world. It was a world different from the one we had known before the disaster. But it was a world that we had built together, and it was a world that we could be proud of.

In the end, the choices we made saved us. We had found a way to survive, even during disaster and loneliness. We had created a new world, a world that was full of hope and possibility.



Et puis il n'y en avait plus ...

Ana Maria Ciubotaru

Et puis il n'y en avait plus ... La solitude était dans l'air, et je... j'essayais de survivre à la douleur, de ne pas m'effondrer sous tout le désastre qui m'écrasait. Je ne peux pas me remettre du jour où j'ai pensé que ma vie était finie. Je ne savais pas ce que j'allais faire à partir de là, tout ce que je sais, c'est que je ne pouvais pas m'arrêter de pleurer, j'étais épuisée et ma jambe me tirait de douleur.

Ce jour-là, que j'essaie d'oublier, de ne pas y penser une seule seconde, mon rêve de devenir ballerine s'est brisé sur un passage piéton. A cause de ma jambe cassée, j'ai dû tout abandonner. Mon cœur qui était plein d'espoir que je réussirais à matérialiser mon désir, pour lequel j'ai travaillé dur, s'est terminé... maintenant mon cœur était vide. J'ai commencé à détester tout le monde, à détester ma vie, mais surtout ce gars qui avait les yeux fixés davantage sur son téléphone au lieu de prêter attention à où il allait. Il m'a percuté violemment avec sa voiture, me remarquant trop tard pour m'éviter. Plus tard, nous avons découvert que le lâche avait disparu du lieu de l'accident, justifiant sa fuite par le fait qu'il avait peur. Quoi qu'il en soit, personne ne pourrait maintenant effacer la mémoire du naufragé quelque part dans un coin de mon esprit. Je suis sorti de mes pensées par des coups derrière la porte de mon bureau.

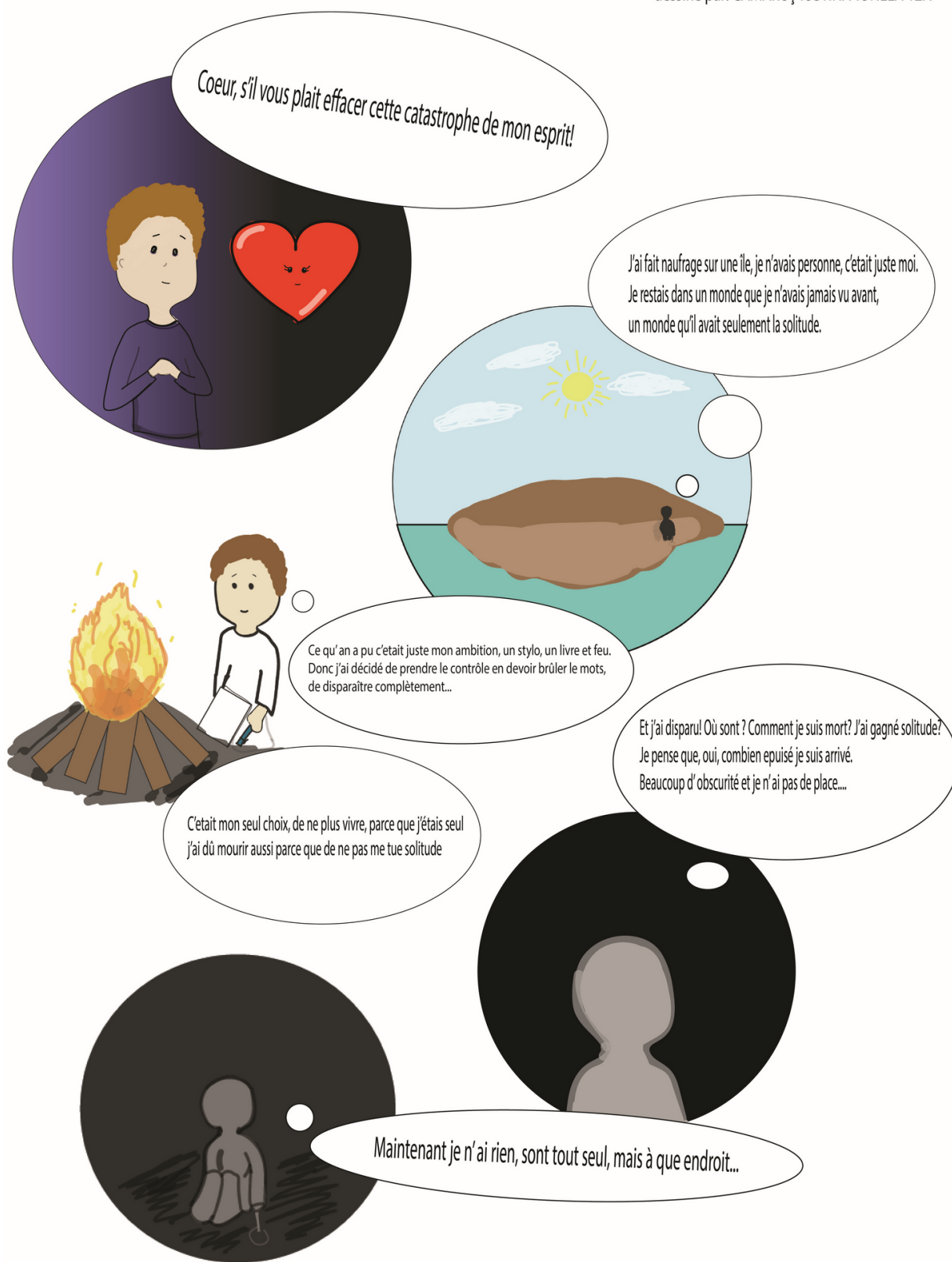
Ma mère arrive en souriant et me prend dans ses bras et je ressens à nouveau tout l'amour et le soutien qu'elle me donne. Après l'accident, j'ai eu un rétablissement difficile, mais ma mère était toujours là, me donnant un amour inconditionnel. Avec son aide, j'ai réussi à sortir de la dépression post-accidentelle. J'ai eu de la chance car ma mère est psychologue, elle m'a aidé autant qu'elle a pu pour que je me rétablisse. Trois ans après la vilaine dépression à laquelle j'ai dû faire face, j'ai trouvé le courage d'effacer la peur et la tristesse. J'ai fait le choix de le reprendre depuis le début, en me créant un nouveau but. La fille solitaire pendant la dépression a réussi à devenir mannequin, marchant avec confiance et élégance sur les podiums.



Et puis il n'y en avait plus...

écrit par: POPA IZABELA 12A

dessiné par: CĂMĂRUȚ IUSTINA-IONELA 12A



I was public enemy number one

Delia Dascălu



I was public enemy number one until one day when I showed people that my gifts are used for good. I was born from the obscurity of the universe and was given the duty to defend the earth from the powers of evil and keep the most valuable jewel in the world safe: life. I am Gaia, the goddess who embodies Earth, protects it and makes it bloom.

I am terrified at the state of the planet. People no longer worship and care for it like they used to. Its powers are decreasing, and with them, the shield around it. Therefore, monsters from all corners of the universe enter the atmosphere. To the people, they are invisible, but they deeply feel the devastating effects of their coming to Earth. Nature is withering, but they do nothing about it.

I watched as a dense mass of black energy headed towards Earth, and I realised that the moment I was most afraid of had arrived. I entered the atmosphere after it, seeing how it metamorphosed into a majestic phoenix bird. Surprisingly, I feel like I'm taking my human form, too, a much more painful process than usual. I could feel my hair moving wildly behind me and my clothes flapping around my body. Feathered wings had grown, tearing my back and making it bleed.

We both landed in a field at the same time, the bird spraying fire all around, setting fire to several fields of corn. I looked around to make sure there were no human settlements, and when I saw a farm in the distance, I flew towards it and formed a water shield over it. I went back and tried to grow tropical forests around it to immobilise it with creepers, but everything withers when it comes into contact with its feathers.

I instinctively reached for my quiver and shot two arrows with my bow that I charged with energy. I aimed for the heart and shot. The arrows hit the target, and a metallic sound echoed in the deserted field. I feared my powers would leave me before I shot down the bird. I had to be careful how I used my energy because if I didn't, I would meet my end by turning into ash, leaving Terra defenceless in front of this beast that would bring hell among humans. I took out another arrow, which I no longer charged with energy and aimed at one of the eyes. I shot but missed.

Gaining an advantage, the bird headed towards me. I tried to avoid the pair of claws ready to grab me when suddenly I felt unbearable pain in my back. I was trying desperately to breathe but was suffocating as I began to cough. Losing my balance, I began to head towards the ground, my already injured back making contact with the hard ground, leaving me breathless again for a few seconds. I saw the bird swooping towards me, and I pressed my palms to the soil, tangling my fingers with the blades of grass. I concentrate and try to assimilate the energy of earth but nothing. Everything was dry and lifeless.

Discouraged, I crawled behind a tree, stood up and positioned an arrow in my bow that I charged with a third of my remaining energy. I took a deep breath and tried to calm myself down.

I rose quickly to the level of the bird who was far too busy burning down the new cornfields. I stretched the bowstring and moved closer to get easier access to her left eye. I could feel the heat of her feathers melting the material of my dress which then stuck to my legs. I felt a stab in my chest and heard the shield around the farm crashing. Seeing the opportunity, the bird rushed to the families sitting on the balcony of a house.

"NOOOO" I screamed desperately, transferring the last drops of energy left into the arrow, aiming at its eye and firing with all my powers.

Not alone

Ana-Maria Coșarcă



I was public enemy number one, a name whispered in fear across the city. The authorities had labelled me a dangerous criminal, and every law enforcement agency was determined to bring me down. They chased me relentlessly, my every move scrutinised, but I remained elusive.

I stumbled upon a forgotten alley as I navigated the gritty streets hidden beneath the darkness. Desperation filled my veins, and I needed a place to hide. With trepidation, I pushed open a rusted door, revealing a dilapidated building.

To my surprise, the place was not abandoned. A group of individuals, misfits and outcasts like me, occupied the space. Their eyes widened with recognition as they saw me, but instead of fear, I saw understanding. In their eyes, I saw a shared struggle against a system that had failed us all.

At that moment, a realisation struck me. I was not alone in this fight. Together, we could challenge the unjust world that had cast us aside. I became public enemy number one no more, but a rebel with a cause, surrounded by allies who believed in the power of unity.



Image created by Popa Ștefan

I was public enemy number one

Raluca Bîrjoveanu



"I was public enemy number 1 for something I never did." The reporter urged me to continue with a nod. "I think you all know part of my story. But not all of it, so I will tell you the whole truth myself. It happened more than 21 years ago. I was running in a park near my house with my son..."

"Come on, Dad!" My son shouted to me from a distance of a few meters in front of me. I'm wet because of the effort I put in for 30 minutes.

"I surrender!" I call out, raising my hands in surrender.

I sat on a nearby bench, leaning back to calm my uncontrollable heartbeat.

I heard Marckus running closer. He was only ten years old, and his dream was to become the best runner in the world. I smile, remembering the day he told me about his plan. He was very determined about his future.

"I think it's time we go back. Mom will worry if we're late!" I said, ruffling his long curly hair. "I think you should stop by the barber. I'm going to tell Mom to make an appointment for you."

Marcus smiled widely at me.

"What do you think mom made us for dinner?" He asks after walking for some time.

"I do not know. But most likely, steak in the oven. You know how much he likes to cook dishes that contain sauces."

We walk in silence for a while until a scream is heard in the distance. We stop and look at each other. Another cry, more heartbreaking than the first, is heard again.

"Dad..."

"It's okay, Mark..." I looked around, trying to stay calm. "How about you going back home? I'll you catch up after I check what's going on."

I noticed the glimmer of fear in my son's eyes. I would have been scared, too, if I heard such screams. Damn it, I think anyone would be scared. I stroke Marck's hair and gently nudge him from behind to continue on his way.

"There's nothing to worry about. I'll catch up with you before you get home." I told him, trying to make a joke. I followed him with my eyes until he disappeared around the corner.

'Maybe it's a prank.' So I thought as I advanced into the darkness of the forest.

A grave silence reigned around me. I went about 50 meters before I accidentally tripped over something, and unfortunately, I fell into a thorn bush, scratching my face and hands. Trying to get up, I spotted something on the other side of the bushes.

I stepped around the bush to get a better look, and what I saw took my breath away. In a pool of still-warm blood, there was a girl. I put my hand to my mouth to keep from vomiting. I looked around for help. It was nobody. I approached slightly to see if she was still breathing. The eyes were open, staring blankly at the almost dark sky.

I investigated her body for other signs that might prove what happened. Finally, I leaned over a little more over her but immediately heard a noise behind me.

"Marck, I told you to go ho..." But before I could finish what I had to say, darkness enveloped me on all sides...



""Please excuse me for interrupting you, but could you see who attacked you before passing out?" The reporter interrupted me.

"Unfortunately, no. I didn't even get to look back" The reporter nods. "I woke up a few hours later because of the sounds of police car sirens..."

I was on an ambulance table handcuffed. I heard someone shouting. My head throbbed with pain. I looked dazed. A nurse put a flashlight in my eyes.

"What the hell, man?" I snapped at him, trying to get away from him.

"Looks like you've made a full recovery." A policeman intervened with a notebook in his hand.

I looked around. There were police officers with hunting dogs everywhere. The place was cordoned off with velcro tape marked Criminal Investigation Service. It was like I was in an action movie.

"What is your name?" The policeman asked me, starting to write something down in his notebook.

"Sorry?"

"Your name, please ?"

"Ah...Michael Sullivan."

"Age?"

"45. What's going on here? Why am I handcuffed?"

"That's what we want to know." The policeman answered me in an authoritative tone. "Do you remember how you passed out?"

"No...I do not know. I just remember hearing someone screaming, and I came to check it out."

The policeman looked at me with a bored face. He closed the notebook.

"It seems you are the prime suspect in a crime you deny committing." My face fell off. "We will take you to the police station, where you will be asked several questions. You have the right to a lawyer."

"Wait a minute! I think there is a misunderstanding! I'm not the criminal here."

The policeman signalled to two nearby police officers who approached me.

I was put in a police car and taken to the station. I found out later that my prints were all over the place. And a person who had gone out for a night walk with the dog called the police. I was closed in a cell for a week. I didn't know anything about my family while I was there. I found out almost two weeks later that my wife died of a heart attack and that Marckus was taken to an orphanage in Scotland. I was all over the news. People I didn't even know started hating me. My life was ruined. I was sentenced to 20 years in prison; I lost everything. No one was fighting for the truth. They all believed and still believe that I was the one who killed that girl.

The last 20 years of my life have been the most horrible. I would give anything to go back and make a different decision. But of course, you can't. That would be stupid! The last 20 years of my life have shown me the true face of the world, of friends. They taught me that nothing is fair in this world. There will always be an audience that feeds on lies invented by others. There will always be a number one enemy for them.

”J’étais l’ennemi public numéro un...”

Alessia Costrăș

"Nous savons tous que la prise de parole en public est un ennemi très grand et imposant pour nous tous. Avec l'aide d'un caractère fort et confiant, vous pouvez vous débarrasser de cette peur. La plupart des gens qui ont ces peurs sont des personnes antisociales qui ne mettent pas leur vie en difficulté pour apprendre de ces actions.

Au fil du temps, j'ai fait partie de la typologie des personnes qui exposent leur vie à de tels problèmes. J'ai toujours aimé avoir un caractère dur, ce qui ne dénote pas exactement un caractère féminin. Bien sûr, ma féminité est façonnée par une masculinité étriquée qui ne profite qu'à moi. De cette masculinité découle une pensée plus subjective. On dit que si le premier enfant est une fille, elle ressemblera à son père et prendra son caractère. Donc je suis la version féminine de mon père.

Dans la plupart des cas, lorsque les gens parlent en public, ils sont «chassés» par le public et jugés s'ils ne le font pas. Le public vous donne l'impression d'être sur les lieux d'un crime, alors que vous, l'orateur, êtes le criminel et que la police est celle qui vous poursuit, voulant vous condamner. Le public rusé donne envie de devenir un fugitif, de s'isoler, d'échapper à cette peur.

Avec l'aide d'un professeur de lycée, j'ai développé une facette de moi-même que j'avais cachée jusqu'à présent, mais que j'ai réussi à révéler. Je ne suis pas du tout affecté maintenant quand quelqu'un veut me désavantager et m'intimider.

La recette de ce succès est composée de confiance en soi, d'un caractère dur et d'un mot gentil et encourageant, mais aussi de beaucoup de travail. Je suis juste reconnaissant envers moi-même.



”J’étais l’ennemi public numéro un...”

Elena Chihaia

" J'étais l'ennemi public numéro un depuis que je me connaissais. La poursuite policière s'est terminée avec l'arrestation du suspect sournois. C'est du moins ce que tout le monde pensait.

Tout a commencé quand le Cauchemar, c'est moi, a commis un crime. Je ne considérerais pas comme un crime le fait d'enlever des enfants de l'orphelinat et de les transformer en criminels. C'est plutôt un avantage pour la société, mais les gens ne sont jamais satisfaits. Je me suis isolé avec les petits criminels sur une île. Je leur ai appris ma tactique, leur ai donné des super pouvoirs grâce à diverses procédures invisibles. La police me chasse partout.

L'histoire se répète. Il y a eu une autre fois où j'ai été condamné. J'ai participé au la jugement. Malheureusement pour la société, j'ai eu mon plan de fuite en place. Même si j'étais fuyant et j'ai trahi ma soeur, c'est elle qui m'a aidé. Le lendemain il y avait des articles sur moi partout: La fugitif aux super pouvoirs! Garder les enfants en sécurité !

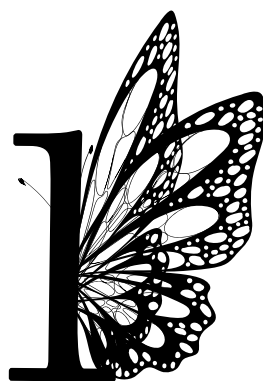
-Ah, pathétique! Ils n'ont même pas écrit mon nom...

-C'est ton problème le plus important, ma soeur a dit. Décider quel orphelinat nous allons envahir ce soir !

-Je pensais que nous avions établi. Nous rendrons visite aux enfants de l'orphelinat délabré de la périphérie. Nous leur assurons les conditions nécessaires à une vie décente. De plus, ils se rendront compte que le monde n'est pas un bon endroit, surtout pour des gens comme eux.

-C'est vrai! Nous savons mieux que d'autres ce que c'est que d'être orphelin. Tu n'as d'importance pour personne...

-Que la guerre commence, ma sœur!



”J’étais l’ennemi public numéro un...”

Magda Jaba

" J’étais l’ennemi public numéro un. Tout le monde me connaissait, mais personne ne me comprenait. J’avais commis des crimes terribles, et j’étais recherché par la police depuis des années. J’avais essayé de fuir, mais ils m’avaient finalement attrapé. J’étais en prison, et je savais que je ne sortirais jamais.

Mais un jour, j’ai rencontré quelqu’un qui a changé ma vie. Elle était une bénévole qui travaillait dans la prison, et elle avait un sourire qui pouvait éclairer une pièce entière. Elle a commencé à me parler, et j’ai commencé à l’écouter. Elle m’a raconté des histoires de gens qui avaient réussi à changer leur vie, même après avoir commis des erreurs terribles.

Elle m’a fait comprendre que je pouvais changer, moi aussi. J’ai commencé à réfléchir à mes actions, et j’ai réalisé que j’avais fait du mal à tant de gens. J’ai commencé à écrire des lettres d’excuses, et j’ai essayé de faire amende honorable. Petit à petit, j’ai commencé à me sentir mieux. J’ai commencé à lire des livres, à apprendre de nouvelles choses, et j’ai commencé à aider les autres détenus. J’ai commencé à me sentir comme si j’avais un but.

Et puis, un jour, j’ai été libéré. J’ai marché hors de la prison, et j’ai vu le monde avec des yeux différents. J’ai vu la beauté de la nature, la gentillesse des gens, et j’ai réalisé que j’avais une seconde chance. J’ai commencé une nouvelle vie, et j’ai travaillé dur pour aider les autres. Je suis devenu un avocat, et j’ai aidé les gens qui étaient dans la même situation que moi. J’ai réalisé que c’était possible de changer, même après avoir commis des erreurs terribles.

Et tout ça, c’est grâce à elle. Elle m’a aidé à voir la lumière, même dans les moments les plus sombres. Cela m’a donné de l’espoir et m’a montré que la vie peut aussi avoir de bons côtés.



”J’étais l’ennemi public numéro un...”

Gabriela – Elena Gîțman

" Cela fait déjà plus de 34 heures que je suis parti d’ici. Ici, je dors vite et pourtant je ne me sens pas fatigué. Papiers sur papiers, dossiers sur dossiers et ce maudit criminel toujours en fuite. Les nerfs en moi sont sur le point d’exploser pour que chaque policier qui vient me voir sans nouvelles soit choisi avec une bonne malédiction. Je ne sais même plus ce que c’est de prendre un bain, les pilules ne sont pas prises et la nourriture est sur la table, et nous nous regardons. Le crime à la bibliothèque a fait la une des journaux, mais depuis deux semaines, je n’ai fait aucun progrès sur l’affaire. Alors que je regarde le premier dossier pour la énième fois, Axel fait irruption dans mon bureau, et tout ce que je lis sur son visage, c’est de la peur et de l’extase. Ils avaient enfin découvert.

Nous sommes sur la 57e avenue, la rue principale, et la chasse tant attendue est lancée. Un fugitif a été signalé dans le métro correspondant à la description du tueur. Notre voiture semble voler sur la route, et l’adrénaline se précipite dans mes veines. Notre poursuite était annoncée à la télévision, et le temps n’avait déjà plus de patience avec nous.

Je suis parti avec Axel et mon quadrupède préféré, Titan, vers la zone billetterie, où la sortie était bloquée par les pots d’échappement donc s’il s’y cachait on l’aurait sûrement trouvé. Tout le métro était isolé, des équipes extérieures survolaient la zone et aux entrées et sorties il y avait des équipes de sécurité afin que personne ne puisse entrer ou sortir. Après quelques minutes de marche en silence, le Titan se met à grogner. Il avait trouvé quelque chose. Une fuite d’égout découverte dont je n’ai pas tenu compte. Je n’ai même pas eu besoin de faire signe, ils m’ont suivi tous les deux sans aucune hésitation.

Nous avançons dans des flots d’eau sale, lumières allumées. Il était difficile pour le Titan de sentir quoi que ce soit, l’odeur du canal étant presque insupportable. Nous approchons d’un carrefour où nous avons jugement de nous séparer. Je tourne à droite et avance anxieusement, mais avec la sécurité de Titan à mes pieds. Je décide d’éteindre la lumière pour ne pas nous faire remarquer et mes yeux s’habituent à la lumière diffuse. À un moment donné, j’entends des pas dans l’eau. Titan se tient entre mes jambes, reniflant l’air.

Les pas étaient silencieux mais pas assez silencieux pour nos oreilles. Nous avançons lentement et à l’embranchement d’un autre couloir de canal je l’aperçois. C’était lui. Nous partons automatiquement vers lui. Il a crié pour descendre, mais ce n’était clairement pas ce qu’il voulait. Il fuyait dans l’eau, chaque couloir étroit changeant de direction comme dans un labyrinthe, essayant de se perdre.

J’annonce en haletant à travers la station à peu près les coordonnées, mais je ne m’arrête pas, je continue à courir avec la certitude que je vais le rattraper. Nous approchons d’autres couloirs étroits. En ce moment, j’ai l’impression de l’avoir perdu. J’envoie le Titan dans le couloir principal et j’emprunte le secondaire en espérant raccourcir le chemin. Je cours, oubliant que j’ai des poumons ou un cœur. Je cours en oubliant mon propre corps. J’entends des cris, et en une seconde je vois le criminel cloué au sol par le Titan, saignant aux pieds. Je me jette sur lui et l’immobilise sans hésiter. Il allait finalement être condamné à de dures années de prison.

Menotté au sol, il leva vers moi son regard surnois, un regard que je connaissais déjà depuis des années. Il a été le cas le plus difficile de ma carrière et il le savait. D’un souffle comme forcé de ses poumons, il murmura : « J’étais l’ennemi public numéro 1, mais aussi l’ennemi numéro 1 sur votre liste, Mademoiselle l’Inspectrice Hélène. »

I was down to my last £5...

Roxana Strat

24th of November 1970

I was down to my last £5, and the girl next to me, with whom I had shared the same love story and loft for one year, was so happy when I brought her a bitter chocolate costing £6 every Friday night. It was a tough time financially, but I would have done anything to give my sweetheart that chocolate. There was nothing like the smile that would come over her face when I offered it to her. Until I met her, I loved bitter chocolate, but now I savour it with her. Of course, I wanted her to have the whole bar of chocolate, so I told her I didn't like it. But small gestures strengthened our relationship, and I wanted to give her paradise even though my life was hell. Hellen, the girl of my dreams, didn't deserve to suffer or be worried, and I promised myself that I would do anything to make her happy, to make her smile no matter what.

It was a rainy Friday, and I had only 5£ in my wallet. I knew Hellen was having a rough day, and I didn't want to get home without the bitter chocolate she loved. So after I got off work, I called my few friends to ask for help, but they were all out of town. My only hope was the lady selling at the newsstand on the corner, who also didn't have a brilliant income. Hellen's happiness was all that mattered to me, so I went and asked that saleswoman for 1£. For this, I had to clean the whole store and arrange the merchandise on the shelves. Although I was two hours late home, the work didn't seem complicated because I did it out of love. When I bought the chocolate and got home, another hour had been added to my tardiness.

The moment Hellen opened the door for me, a bright smile, full of excitement and worry, appeared on her face. I hugged her tightly, taking on all the worries and anxieties weighing her shoulders. Hellen is the only person who understands me and doesn't judge me for my choices. Hellen knows every part of me, bad or good and yet still loves me. Hellen is a ray of sunshine that lights up my life relentlessly, even in the darkest moments.

It was the only time I lied to her, but I couldn't tell her I worked to please her because she would feel guilty. But she didn't know I would climb every mountain and swim every ocean just to make her happy and give her a peaceful life.

Also, that Friday was the day I promised myself that I would never run out of money again, especially money for bitter chocolate. Besides, we would move as soon as possible from the attic that had housed us for a good time, where we were very happy because it's not the place that matters; it's the person next to you.

17th of September 2005

In the meantime, Hellen became my wife, mother to our children and grandmother to the grandchildren we enjoyed daily. Since then, not a Friday has gone by that I haven't watched her savour chocolate and enjoy every square.

1st of January 2007

After over 30 years, this is the first one I'm starting without Hellen. It's also the first Friday I can't offer her bitter chocolate. That didn't stop me from buying it for her, so I bought chocolate at the only gas station open during this period. On the way to the cemetery, I met a boy who was about ten years old, cold, and it was clear that he was missing food completely. So I handed him the chocolate and told myself, "Hellen surely sees this gesture and is happy", then hurried home because of the tears that flooded my eyes.

I started searching through her things as longing for her stabbed every part of my body. Finally, my heart died with Hellen.

My soul, however, will always live on, together with hers, loving each other. In the box where she kept every rose from me, I found a letter, 'My dear John, I hope you read this. I have had my share of the most beautiful and happy life moments with you. My favourite days were the ones called Fridays.

P.S.: I never liked bitter chocolate, but I loved your smile when I ate it and the twinkle in your eyes."

French version

Il ne me restait plus que 5 livres

24 novembre 1970

Il ne me restait plus que 5 livres, et la voisine, avec qui je partageais la même histoire d'amour et le même grenier depuis un an, était si heureuse que je lui apportais un chocolat amer qui coûtait 6 livres tous les vendredis soirs. C'était une période difficile financièrement, mais j'aurais fait n'importe quoi pour offrir ce chocolat à ma chérie. Il n'y avait rien de tel que le sourire qui se dessinait sur son visage lorsque je le lui offrais. Jusqu'à ce que je la rencontre, j'aimais le chocolat amer, mais maintenant je le savoure grâce à elle. Je veux qu'elle ait toute la tablette de chocolat, alors je lui ai dit que je n'aimais pas ça. De petits gestes ont renforcé notre relation et j'ai voulu lui offrir le paradis même si ma vie était un enfer. Hellen, la fille de mes rêves, ne méritait pas de souffrir ou de s'inquiéter, et je me suis promis de tout faire pour la rendre heureuse, pour la faire sourire quoi qu'il arrive.

C'était un vendredi pluvieux et je n'avais que 5 dollars dans mon portefeuille. Je savais qu'Hellen passait une journée difficile et je ne voulais pas rentrer à la maison sans le chocolat amer qu'elle adorait. En sortant du travail, j'ai appelé mes quelques amis pour leur demander de l'aide, mais ils n'étaient pas en ville. Mon seul espoir était la vendeuse du kiosque à journaux au coin de la rue, qui n'avait pas non plus de revenus mirobolants. Mais le bonheur d'Hellen était tout ce qui comptait pour moi, alors je suis allé demander 1 dollar à cette vendeuse. Pour cela, j'ai dû nettoyer tout le magasin et ranger la marchandise sur les étagères. Bien que j'aie eu deux heures de retard à la maison, le travail ne m'a pas semblé difficile parce que je l'ai fait par amour. Le temps d'acheter le chocolat et de rentrer à la maison, une heure de plus s'était ajoutée à mon retard.

Au moment où Hellen m'a ouvert la porte, un sourire éclatant, plein d'excitation et d'inquiétude, est apparu sur son visage. Je l'ai serrée fort dans mes bras, me chargeant de tous les soucis et de toutes les angoisses qui pesaient sur ses épaules.

C'est la seule fois où je lui ai menti, mais je ne pouvais pas lui dire que je travaillais pour lui faire plaisir car elle se serait sentie coupable. Mais elle ne sait pas que j'aurais escaladé toutes les montagnes et nagé dans tous les océans juste pour la rendre heureuse et lui offrir une vie paisible.

De plus, ce vendredi-là, je me suis promis de ne plus jamais manquer d'argent, surtout pour acheter du chocolat amer, et d'ailleurs, nous déménagerions dès que possible du grenier qui nous avait hébergés pendant un bon moment, où nous étions très heureux parce que ce n'est pas l'endroit qui compte, c'est la personne.

17 septembre 2000

Entre-temps, Hellen est devenue mon épouse, la mère de nos enfants et la grand-mère des petits-enfants dont nous profitons chaque jour. Depuis, il ne se passe pas un vendredi sans que je la regarde siroter du chocolat et profiter de tous les plaisirs de la vie.

1er janvier 2005

Après plus de 30 ans, c'est le premier que je commence sans Hellen. C'est aussi le premier vendredi où je ne peux pas lui offrir de chocolat amer. Cela ne m'empêche pas de lui en acheter, alors je suis allé à la seule station-service ouverte pendant cette période et j'ai acheté du chocolat. Sur le chemin du cimetière, j'ai rencontré un garçon d'une dizaine d'années, qui avait froid et dont on voyait bien qu'il manquait totalement de nourriture. Je lui ai tendu le chocolat en lui disant "ma femme voit sûrement ce geste et est plus heureuse que si elle l'avait mangé elle-même" et je me suis dépêché de rentrer chez moi à cause des larmes qui m'inondaient les yeux.

J'ai commencé à fouiller dans ses affaires, la nostalgie poignardant toutes les parties de mon corps. Mon cœur est mort avec Hellen.

Mon âme, cependant, vivra toujours, avec la sienne, s'aimant l'une l'autre. Dans la boîte où je gardais chaque rose de moi, j'ai trouvé une lettre : "Mon cher John, j'espère que tu liras ceci. J'ai eu ma part de la vie la plus belle et la plus heureuse avec toi. Mes jours préférés étaient ceux que l'on appelait les vendredis.

P.S : Je n'ai jamais aimé le chocolat amer, mais j'aimais le sourire que tu avais quand nous le mangions et le scintillement dans tes yeux."

I was down to my last £5...

Ruben Vasilciuc

I was down to my last £5, and it seemed like misfortune had been chasing me for weeks. Bills had piled up, and I was desperate for a way out of this predicament. As I sat on the bench in the park, I contemplated my options.

My conscience was telling me that robbery was not the way to go. But my desperation clouded my judgment, and I considered this a potential solution to my dilemma. The thought of it made me feel sick, but I was willing to gamble on it.

However, I knew this decision would have consequences, and I wasn't willing to pay the price of being a criminal for the rest of my life. I needed to find another way out of this mess.

Suddenly, an idea popped into my head and seemed the perfect solution. I could use my last £5 to buy a lottery ticket. But, of course, it was a secretive plan, and I didn't tell anyone about it.

I was overwhelmed with joy and relief. I checked my account and couldn't believe my eyes! I had won the jackpot!

I learned a valuable lesson from this experience. It's easy to take decisions against our conscience in moments of desperation. However, there's always a better solution; we should never give up hope and do what is always just and honest.



I was down to my last £5...

Mihai Coman

I was down to my last £5. It had been a rough month, with unexpected expenses and bills piling up. I tried to stretch my budget, but it seemed like every penny was slipping through my fingers. So as I sat in my small, cramped apartment, feeling the weight of financial stress, I knew I had to come up with a plan to turn things around.

I looked around my apartment with a heavy heart, trying to figure out what I could sell to make some extra money. Finally, I found a box of old books I had accumulated over the years. Some were novels I had read and cherished, while others were textbooks from my college days. I decided to sell them online and hoped they would fetch a decent price.

I posted the books for sale and anxiously waited for a response. Days passed, and I checked my email and phone constantly, hoping for a notification that someone was interested in buying them. Finally, I received a message from a potential buyer interested in purchasing the entire lot. We negotiated a price, and I eagerly agreed.

With a renewed sense of hope, I met up with the buyer, and as I handed over the books, I felt a mix of sadness and relief. Those books had been a part of my life for so long, but I needed the money more than the sentimental value they held.

With the cash in hand, I went straight to the grocery store. I had been living on instant noodles and cheap canned food for weeks, and I was thrilled to fill my cart with fresh produce, meat, and other essentials. I also paid off a small debt that had been nagging at me, which lifted a weight off my shoulders.

As I returned home with my groceries, I couldn't help but feel grateful. Finally, my £5 had turned into food on my table and a sense of financial relief. But I knew I couldn't stop there. I needed to find a sustainable solution to my financial woes proactively.

I sat down and started brainstorming ideas. Finally, I realised that I had some marketable skills that I could leverage. I had always loved baking, so I started a small home-based bakery. I posted ads on social media, offering customised cakes and cupcakes for special occasions. I also started offering my services as a freelance writer, using my passion for words to earn extra income.

The response was overwhelming. Orders for cakes and cupcakes started pouring in, and I secured a few freelance writing gigs. With hard work and determination, I was able to build up a steady stream of clients and customers. I reinvested the money I earned into my business, buying baking supplies and marketing my services. I also continued to budget carefully, cutting back on unnecessary expenses and saving as much as possible.

Months passed, and my bakery and freelance writing business grew. I expanded my offerings, and my reputation grew as a reliable and talented baker and writer. I even hired a part-time assistant to help with the workload. Finally, with careful financial planning and perseverance, I could pay off my debts, build an emergency fund, and start saving for the future.

Looking back, I realised that being down to my last £5 was a wake-up call. It forced me to look hard at my financial situation and make changes to improve it. It wasn't easy, and sometimes I felt discouraged, but I refused to give up. I learned that even the direst of situations can be turned around with determination, resourcefulness, and a willingness to take calculated risks.

My bakery and freelance writing business thrive today, and I am in a much more stable financial position.

I was number 13 ...

Ioana Felicia Dascălu

"I am number 13. At least, that's what the others call me. Nobody knew my real name or where I came from. Not even the nurses, who took great care of us.

We lived in a huge asylum, from which we weren't allowed to leave. So each morning, we were given a round of pills and complete analyses to help us maintain our bodies healthily. Little did we know the real reason behind this...

One night, I heard strange noises coming from the basement. It sounded like someone was walking down there, but I knew that couldn't be right. The basement had been sealed off for years.

Curiosity got the better of me, and I made my way down the dark staircase. The noises were louder and louder. The air grew colder as I descended.

I saw something that made my blood run cold when I reached the bottom. A figure was hunched over a table, its back to me. I couldn't see clearly, but it seemed like he was performing some kind of surgery.

As I watched, the figure suddenly turned around. Its face was twisted in a grotesque expression, and its eyes glowed with otherworldly light. That's when I realised that it wasn't just a surgery...

I wanted to run, but I couldn't move. My head was spinning. I woke up in my room with a terrible neck pain. I was sure that wasn't a dream.

I hurried to the basement door to confirm but found it locked like before. I started to doubt myself. What if it was all in my head? Am I really crazy?

I didn't give up. Instead, I decided not to trust anyone. I started to throw up the pills they were giving us. After a few days, my memories started to come back.

The noises were back. I ran to the basement, where I could hear screaming. I hid behind boxes. The figure started murmuring something about great quality.

I finally understood. We were being sold as high-priced food. And the numbers... The numbers represent our place in the quality ranking. I freaked out.

I ran as fast as possible to exit, not caring for the others. The door was locked. They knew I had figured out their plan. They locked me in this room where I started writing this diary."

This is the first page of a paranoid schizophrenia patient's diary, who died in room 13 due to self-injury.

J'ai fait un 6'.....

Delia Iacob

J'ai fait un 6'....

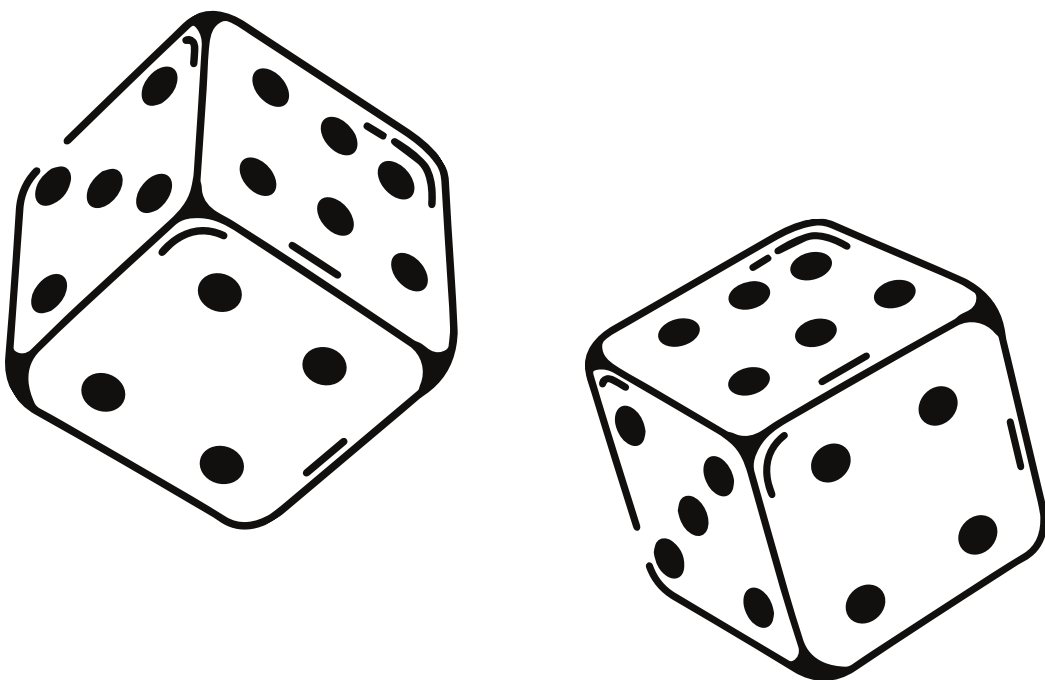
Pour moi, la danse est une de mes passions d'enfance. Depuis que je suis petit, j'ai anticipé être dans une troupe de danse. Actuellement je fais partie d'un ensemble de danse folklorique où j'arrive à étancher ma soif de danse. Avec les répétitions vient le progrès et une fille avec le progrès vient les compétitions.

Je me souviens avec émotion de ma première compétition à laquelle j'ai participé avec l'ensemble étant de cette façon, c'était un vrai défi. Étant mon premier spectacle, je voulais que tout soit parfait, mais en même temps, le sentiment d'appréhension ne manquait pas.

Étant la sixième paire, l'endroit où je dansais était sur le côté et mon état de santé n'était pas bon, mais l'enthousiasme a parlé. Ma jambe droite a échoué lors d'une répétition précédente, ce qui ne m'a pas donné beaucoup de stabilité, mais c'était mon choix de monter sur scène et de danser en sachant qu'il y avait un risque énorme avec une jambe, le coup de base.

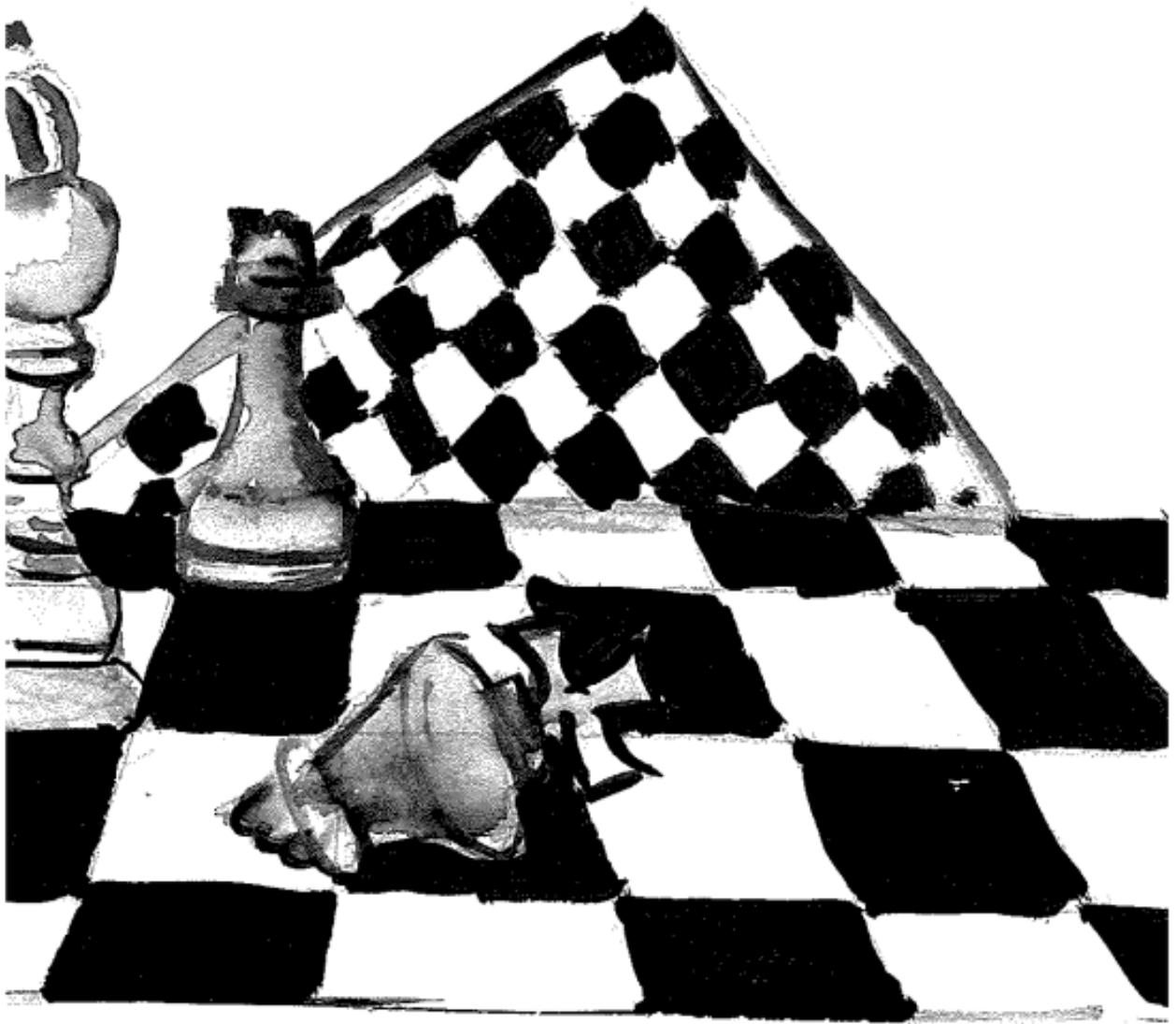
Peu de temps après que toutes les équipes aient dansé, le moment tant attendu de connaître le verdict est arrivé. Malheureusement, notre équipe était en jeopardy d'élimination. Mais pendant quelques minutes, les jurés ont calculé notre score, nous classant en tête du classement, ce qui nous a fait victorieux.

Je me sens chanceux de faire partie d'une famille de personnes talentueuses qui coopèrent et travaillent pour aller le plus loin possible.

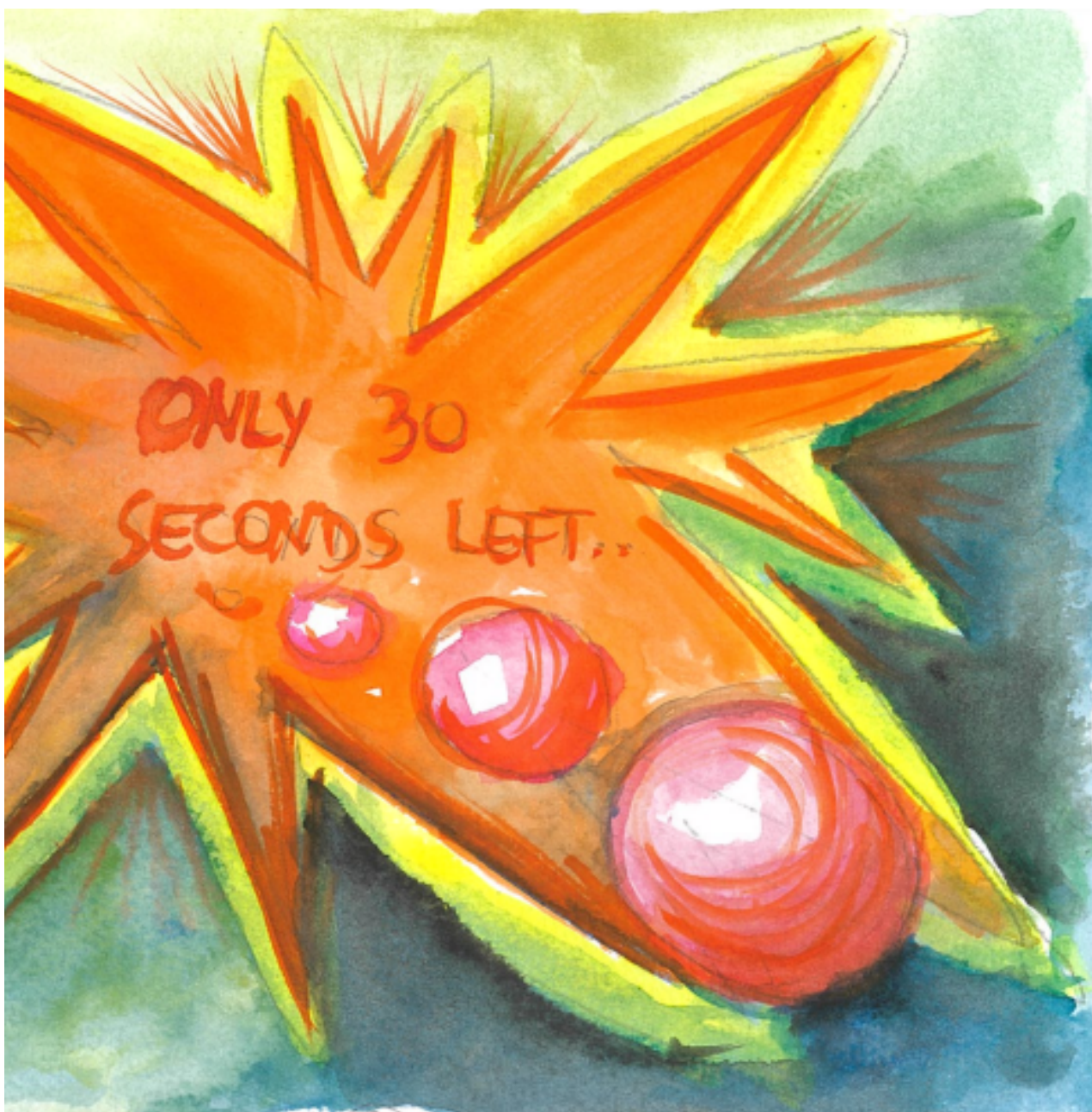




Created by Art Teacher Miss Andreea Răileanu



Created by Art Teacher Miss Andreea Răileanu



Created by Art Teacher Miss Andreea Răileanu

6th Grade Special Guests

I was public enemy number 1...

Balmos Sebastian Gabriel

I have never thought I would be a public enemy number one. I was just an unknown, insignificant town thief trying to make ends meet. But somehow, I became the most wanted man in the city. I became public enemy number one. Everywhere I went, I could feel the eyes of the police on me. I had to be careful. I couldn't trust anyone, not even my closest friends. I knew I had to get out of the city, but I didn't have the money or the resources to do it. I was stuck, trapped in a world that was closing in on me. But then, one day, I was caught. The police finally caught up on me, and I knew my life would never be the same. I was sentenced to years in prison and knew I deserved it. Looking back, I wish I had made different choices. But I can't change the past. All I can do is try to make a better future for myself when I'm released.

I was down to my last 5 pounds

Amalia Jaba

Around the middle of August, I was on a summer holiday week. It was very hot outside, around 30-35 degrees Celsius, and the view was magnificent, especially in the morning when the sun was rising. On the last evening, we walked a little further from the hotel than the other evenings to see the surroundings. Walking, I saw many people queuing for ice cream, and I wanted to buy some too. I asked my mom for 5 pounds, and she said they were going ahead. About 15 minutes later, I also started to walk forward, as my mother said, and at some point, I realised that my phone was dead and that I had no more money. It was a moment of desperation for me. I thought it would be good to go back to the hotel and try to call my parents. After I had explained to the people at the reception what happened to me, they gave me a key to go to my room and charge my phone. I called my mother and told her I was at the hotel, and everyone calmed down. They arrived as quickly as they could, and we went to eat together, and then we went to bed because we had a flight the following morning!

Coordonatori revistă:

Director Prof. Demis Ioan Maranda

Director Adjunct Prof. Ana Maria Briana Belciug

Profesor Cerasela Marleneanu

Colegiul de redacție elevi:

Redactor-șef: Sebastian PARASCA, 12 A

Redactor-șef adjunct: Alexandra VIZITIU, 12 B

Secretar de redacție: Ioana Ecaterina BALAN, 12 A

Redactori

Rebeca PASCARU, 8 A

Amalia OPREA, 8 A

Elena CHIHAIA, 12 A

Iustina CĂMĂRUȚ, 12 A

Izabela CALARO, 12 A

Ioana HAIDAMAC, 12 A

Gabriela GÎTMAN, 12 A

Ilinca ONOFREI, 12 B

Karla ZALUSCHI, 12 B

Alexandru ANGHELEA, 12 B

Lettres & Letters, nr. 1/2023

ISSN 2734-6676

ISSN-L 2285-9543