The background of the cover features a vibrant aurora borealis in shades of green, blue, and purple, set against a dark night sky filled with stars. In the foreground, the silhouettes of five people are visible against a dark landscape with rolling hills and a body of water. One person on the right has their arms raised in a gesture of awe or joy.

SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE

Once Upon A Time...

Lycée Français Anna de Noailles

FIRST ISSUE,
DECEMBER 2020



Portrait of Austen (c. 1810) by her sister Cassandra.

"I am the happiest creature in the world. Perhaps other people have said so before, but not one with such justice.

Her pleasure in the walk must arise from the exercise and the day, from the view of the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges, and from repeating to herself some few of the thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn--that season of peculiar and inexhaustible influence on the mind of taste and tenderness--that season which has drawn from every poet worthy of being read some attempt at description, or some lines of feeling.

I am happier even than Jane: she only smiles, I laugh."

Jane Austen, "Persuasion"



Anna de Noailles High School in Winter Time



Photos: Personal archive



(Photos: Personal archive)

“Once Upon a Time...” seeks to publish work in the categories of speculative fiction as well as poetry, prose poetry, creative non-fiction, short stories, flash fiction and art along with essays, literary criticism, book reviews, biographical profiles of authors, interviews, and letters. All forms and styles are considered. Please note that editors prefer works containing unique and interesting subject matter in English, French, Spanish, German or Romanian. For further information, see our submission guidelines.

Submission / Subscription Information

Format: Print

Genres: Fiction, non-fiction, poetry, cross-genre, interviews, art

Online Submissions: See website/email

Contest: Yes (see website/email)

Response Time: 2-3 weeks

Founded: 2020

Issues per Year: 4 (December-March-May-June)

Distributor: Lycée français Anna de Noailles

Average Pages: 45

Date of Publication: Last week of the previous month

Contact Information

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Department of Creative Writing

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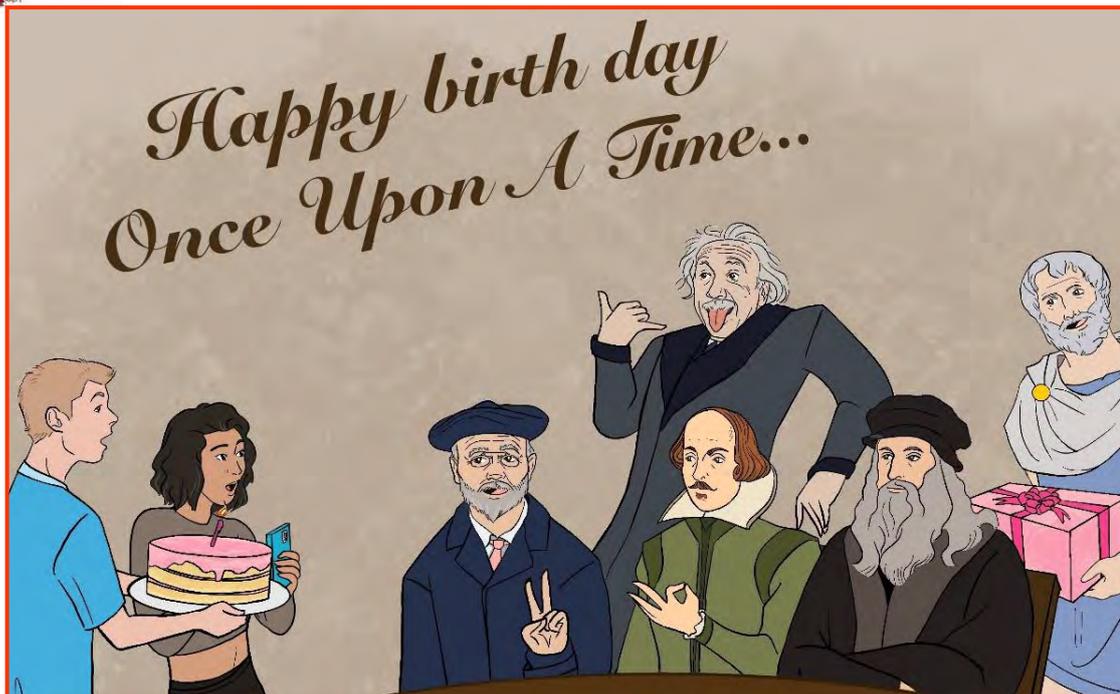
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Drawing by Sofia Sinica

Once upon a time...

...the sound of childhood. Travel between realms, enchanting forests or sombre castles, princes, princesses, dragon slayers and witches...Is this what defines a tale? Probably. But more than that, this is what has shaped us, made us who we are now. They have been our guide to life, a key to happiness and an escape from reality. They gave us words to live by. They were the brush that coloured our life and that showed us the grey between black and white.

We have grown up with them: Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, Lucy Maud Montgomery, Charles Perrault, Oscar Wilde, Andrew Lang, O. Henry and many others. No matter the age, we all need these stories. I am persuaded that time cannot change the magic of reading. It never gets out of fashion.

For the last couple of months, we have been really striving to find a complementary way to revive literature in the hearts of the young. And here we are! The next pages have this unparalleled flavour that only fascinating books and stories do. In this magazine, which I have the incredible chance to introduce in the Editor's Note, we do hope you will find exciting stories, as well as puzzles and comments on interesting facts and events, all imagined, written or recommended to you by our team of young, aspiring writers wishing to make you spend a pleasurable moment reading.

So don't wait anymore... and turn the next pages!

Ana-Maria Popa, *Columnist and Marketing Responsible*

When she was a child, she was always carrying an inspiring book in her hand, the way other girls carried their handkerchief. She loved learning new paths. Her feet were swift wings carrying her towards unaccustomed worlds. And her little head was her compass.

Ileana-Maria Stanescu, *Editor-in-Chief*

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Writing Contest for Emerging Authors

Hello, everybody!

We take great pleasure in welcoming all those who appreciate writing, students and teachers alike, to give rise to our school literary magazine. We are equally honoured to publish your work if you consider sharing it.

We also have a special section for a writing contest in each issue of our magazine. If you like writing about funny circumstances or simply reflect upon a certain event, this is for you. Choose one of the subjects below, grab your pen or your keyboard and start writing! You should submit it to onceupon.a.time@outlook.com, *The Creative Writing Department* or send it by mail, to ana-maria.popa@eleve.lyceefrançais.ro. You can choose to sign it, use a pseudonym, or send it anonymously.

NB: All your works will be read and the best will be published in the next issue of our magazine, after thorough assessment.

Without further ado, here are the first contest subjects.

Since we are celebrating the birth of this magazine, there will be three subjects to choose from, and the best work for each of them will be published in our next issue.

- Finish this sentence: „Once upon a time...”.

What would you write? You can imagine anything from a poem to a fairytale or a newspaper article. If you feel like it and you are talented, you can also make a suggestive drawing. The winner will have their work published on the back cover of the next issue of the magazine.



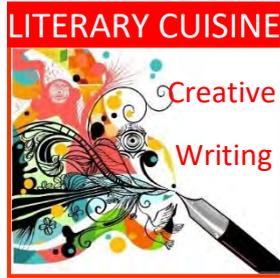
- Do you recognize the characters? Who is illustrated in the picture in the Editor’s Note on page 5?



- Write a chronicle.

For a few days, observe your friends and the people in your class attentively, and write a chronicle each day about the events that happen – a joke a teacher made, a test that made you particularly nervous, someone who brought chocolate, or a sudden hiccup epidemic. Do this for several days (in a row or randomly), and then put everything together. You can draw a comic to illustrate it. Don’t forget to give your work a title and mention your class.

Created by Ana-Maria Popa



Sushi



Drawing by Petru Popa, former student

The shiny pan was taken out of the old cupboard in which it patiently sat with other pots and pans of different sizes and predictable uses, randomly displayed by the house lady. It was a rather new pan, not even a month old, but in spite of its age, it was quite big. Its outer shell was black, and its inside, where various ingredients were normally laid to cook, was impractically white. *What is the use of my having a white inside when I invariably get dirty, and maybe burn stains will stay here for ever? Gosh, people do act strange...* But all of that didn't matter at that precise moment, for the pan was being taken out as something was waiting impatiently to be cooked in it. Sushi!

Sushi! The deadliest sin any young girl and any young boy can commit is to get acquainted with sushi, for it is a hypoallergenic meal, which has an unparalleled quality of being malleable and sliceable into different *kawaii* shapes, which, besides tasting absolutely delicious, provide you with a few extra seconds of delight and provoke a disarming addiction which you cannot get rid of 'till the end of life, and even then I am not sure you can escape it, for I have not yet died, nor do I know anyone who is dead and can speak to me on the subject.

But how did the pan know what it was to be soon filled up with? It had overheard a dialogue between the young girl and her father as they entered the apartment. The dialogue went like this:

„Daddy, will you cook something divine for me, please?”

„Anything you would like, honey. And that would be...?”

„Do I really need to tell you? *Devine!*”

„*Je comprends*, sushi ! God, you nagged me the whole car ride about how much you longed for sushi! I sometimes brood you love Japanese food more than you love me!”

LITERARY CUISINE

„Well, you're not exactly wrong here...“

And the father, falsely overoffended, gasped significantly and feigned ironical shock, and they both laughed. The girl consented to help her father with the ingredients, and this is when he took out the pan.



The pan was taken out and put on the stove where a fire was delicately lit under it. It was so much better there, feeling the heat and warmth spreading all over, than in that unwelcoming, dark cupboard where everything was crammed in like cold sardines.

Then, the rice was put in. While the rice was being cooked and stirred, the pan peeked at all the ingredients the girl was carefully displaying on a cheerful nearby table: a special Japanese brand of vinegar, a pinch of salt and one of sugar, *nori* sheets, and different kinds of fish. She then gave her father the vinegar, the salt and some sprinkles of sugar that he slowly added to the rice which was starting to smell divinely from the place where the pan was standing. The rice was soon done, and while it was put in a wooden bowl and left to cool off on the windowsill by the gentle breeze coming from outside, the pan was washed in the sparkling sink, properly cleaned, and put back in the dark, messy, bloody cupboard where it was doomed to spend its endless gloomy days.

The young girl took out a wooden chopping board and set out the different kinds of fish, just waiting to jump in: hamachi, salmon, tuna, mackerel, salmon, snapper, salmon, hamachi, salmon... She started slicing them while her father was laying a few *nori* sheets on a large, rectangular plate. As soon as enough fish was properly cut, as it seemed fair enough to her, she started assembling the different pieces of the newly-born sushi.

With a spoon, she spread the vinegar-seasoned, cooled-off rice, in perfect harmony with the matching rectangular shapes over the *nori*, and then sometimes the rice would go overboard, and she'd eat some bits of it - how could one restrain themselves?

After that, she took one or two thick pieces of fish and placed them delicately in the middle, and then rolled the whole thing into a black-coated mini tower, acting with maximum care and grace, and thinking of how delicious this simple dish was going to taste in a mere few moments, when she would eat it with just a sprinkle of soy sauce on top.

She meticulously repeated the process, and when she'd made about twenty sushis and almost all of the ingredients were finished, she proceeded on with their decoration. She gently poured a little bit of soy sauce over each piece, just enough for them to soak in and significantly improve their taste, even more than sunshine, lollipops, rainbows and every wonderful thing you can find in this world (except unicorns, of course, because they are too almighty to ever be eaten or tasted by anyone who would foolishly dare). She acted with unlimited measure so as not a single drop to be spilled on the plate, and then she displayed small circles of Wasabi made on purpose to look like extra-nano-green-Belgian-chocolate truffles on top of the whole thing because she didn't want to burn her mouth with spicy flavours, but wished to taunt her taste buds with a tiny preview of the exotic substance which she had once mistaken for green jelly (needless to say, she'd eaten so much she couldn't taste anything else for the rest of the day, and her whole mouth stayed numb due to her inflated lips, to her younger brother's unexpectedly pleasant surprise).

She became instantly aware of the way she had always had this peculiar talent for decorating sushi and making it poetically pretty, even though she was no master chef who could make it look like a panda or the shell of a snail or any other imaginable shape. When she was about three or four, and not exactly what one may call happy at the perspective of moving to Japan within days, her father introduced her to sushi. He'd made the rolls alright and went out to fetch a few glasses of ginger juice, and when she noticed the soy sauce and the Wasabi next to the tiny rolls, she thought they were a mixture of liquid pepper and green jelly, so she put them over the sushi, just as she was doing now, only a little bit clumsier and less precise, since she was only a little child. Then, she thought she should also try that awkwardly-looking green jelly and indulged herself with big dollops since she'd always had a sweet tooth and never enough patience to wait until dessert.

LITERARY CUISINE

It was then when her scream scared her father to death and brought him back into the kitchen within seconds, time that would have made any olympic sprinter, Usain Bolt included, envious. At the sight of her red face and speechless mouth, he started laughing and gave her a glass of ginger juice to wash away the taste, and as he unravelled the secret of avoiding eating Wasabi in big gulps, he put a scoop of mint icecream – her favourite – into a tiny glass bowl to completely put an end to her ordeal. A few minutes later, she was introduced to the worst addiction, deadliest sin and most delightful, timeless pleasure she was ever to be exposed to.

That, my friends, was the birth of sushi, for though it had been eaten thousands of times before and cooked by millions of people, it was the first time she had a taste of it, the first time she experienced such bizarre, yet glorious food, which she ate weekly from that day on, for the rest of the time she lived in Japan. The pan which gave birth to sushi that day, gave birth to sushi a hundred and one times afterwards and in the end, when it was used and used again, a new pan was bought. And that new pan was a rather big, shiny pan, not even a month old, with a black outer shell and an impractically white inside face where many things were mercilessly thrown to be cooked.



It was on that very day, with a pan and too much exotic green jelly, and a scream, and a father, and then some icecream, that history marked the painful birth of *sushi*, along with which came her passion for it, a devouring passion which was somewhere between obsession and sin, a passion which accompanied her, and shaped her, and nestled in her heart an uncontrollable excitement which she couldn't get rid of, mainly because she didn't want to, but also because it was too well settled to go away. And each and every time it was forgotten and close to die like her burning passion, it took fire again and consumed her even more, until it exhausted itself down, to rise again from its ashes with reborn intensity and to become even shinier than it had ever been before, for every ardor worn with zeal was a Phoenix of emotions, and this particular Phoenix was a devastating rapture.



After the rice had been nicely cooked and carefully seasoned in the pan on the stove, the fish had been sliced, the *nori*, and the rice, and the fish put together, the rolls rolled and assembled with the greatest care, the rice and salmon soaked in just enough soy sauce, neither too little, nor too much, the whole decorated with a tiny Wasabi drop which was, in fact, the green, extra-nano reproduction of a Belgian chocolate truffle, and clockwork-team struggle, and laughter, and memories, and recollections, and all of the twenty in-such-way-obtained sushis put on a plate, the Chinese stick dance began, and the young girl with the name of a rose which smelled so sweet, after love, finally felt once again the taste of the wondrous food in her mouth, and at that moment, even though millions of people were breathing, and living, and cooking, or eating sushi, she was the happiest living soul in the whole wide world.

Story by Maria Calomfirescu after a recipe imagined by Ana-Barina Senchea and Edelweiss Gilman (former students)



The Iceberg Theory

Hemingway. We've all come across his name at least once in our lifetime, even though we may or may not be well acquainted with his works or his writing style - we know he existed and that he was a great American author. If you have never heard of Hemingway, you may have missed one of the most promising opportunities to start reading for pleasure, for it is as if the people studying the intricate iceberg theory were indulging themselves with the greatest rainbow-flavoured ice-cream cake with a pink cherry on top, while the others were just "blindly" watching the scenery by only looking at the top, yet ignoring what could be hidden under the water.

Hemingway wrote simple, everyday life-set stories which apparently lead nowhere, unlike other authors of fiction, poetry or drama in search for moral truths whose ironic tone through free indirect speech reveals effusive sentimentalism, not being concerned with far-fetched elements that mortals know naught of, nor with fantasy or tales one may expect epic prose to deal with, no! Hemingway writes about life in a direct, naturally-flowing manner, without excessively adorning it. He depicts relationships as we may feel them and shows reality as it is, avoiding decorative details and using the most powerful instruments ever invented to do that: simple words!

If, for example, on a quiet morning, a father and his son are on a boat down a river, and none of them particularly feels like talking while looking at the scenery deep in thoughts, Hemingway does not assign importance to the small-talk dialogue, yet he succeeds to make us perceive what lies in the mind of the characters, and he does that with the subtle interventions of the omniscient fictional narrator, all-knowing and all-seeing, by mere reality depiction. I can hear you say, "But the feelings of the characters are real, and so are their thoughts." And I, like the patient teacher explaining *the iceberg theory*, will kindly tell you, "Yes, but you cannot feel them. Hemingway describes reality in the way a spectator would watch a play, simply by using his basic senses in order to see, smell, hear, feel and taste. It is then just a matter of style to make you grasp reality and touch it at last."

To start understanding the web of icy snowflakes that Hemingway threw in the water to build an iceberg out of them, let us use it as our *corps de base*. As long as these are the bricks which paved my road to understanding dear Ernest, I shall lend them to you to help you build your own path: as all roads lead to Rome, all ice-paved paths will take you to Hemingway's economical and much too understated-by-some writing style.

Enough with my blabbering! Let us tackle something more constructive instead: the scenery. What could possibly be so interesting about it? Whether it is a lake in a forest like so many others in the world, a bridge over a nameless river, or a square in a non-mentioned town, what, dear author, can make you speak about it so wonderfully? Why do you assign it such a great importance?

Were the author here, he would most probably not answer these questions; he would smile cryptically instead, making you begin to grasp the meaning of his technique like a small child beginning to distinguish letters, and then words, before starting to read. Like each of us when we finally see the point in and the logic of a new mathematical theory we have just been introduced to, starting with the basics: $1+1= 11$, pardon me, 2. Like stray poetry which speaks to you and goes straight to your heart the moment you can identify it in a beautiful sunset on a random day and which makes you smile even though you cannot quite decipher it for the simple reason that you have just found the essential, and for the moment, that is all that matters, as it is the birth of what, later on, will turn into deeper understanding.

LITERARY CRITICISM

But what matters now is not my delusory comparison, it is analysing the scenery. What about the scenery? It's like the child who knows not much of where he is going and observes the surroundings absent-mindedly simply because he has nothing else to do, yet with the patience of someone who completely ignores an ominous upcoming event. The father, deep in thought, also watches the unfolding landscape, without quite looking so much *at* it as *through* it, for he is a grown-up and it isn't the proper time or place for such childish whimsies. Or like the man in the story, rowing his boat under a pitch-black sky, who remains focused on the paddles and the direction, to eventually become fully aware of the harsh reality.

Now let's give it a second thought! The scenery is the reality that all the characters are facing, that cannot be omitted or ignored, and yet it is not perceived by all in the same way; it is something that one can experience with their senses, and that is impersonally described so that the reader may perceive it in his own way, while taking an insight glimpse into each character's mind and soul. These elements are not explicitly mentioned in the story because they are not tangible, they cannot be tasted, seen or heard but, above all, because of the bewitchment that they are supposed to provoke once everything reveals itself to the reader just by magic, once he acquires more intellectual and interpretation skills through reading.

This is, in fact, what the iceberg theory is about, a writing style by omission, skilfully used by Ernest Hemingway during a



lifetime of prolific writing. Hemingway's writing style has been coined "The Iceberg Style" by critics because it was first deemed as such by no one else but himself! He first explained it in a 1932 travel guide he had written on the bull fights in Spain called (poetically enough) *Death in the Afternoon*, in which he wrote not only about bull fights, but also about life and death, and fear, and everything that really matters in life, and concluded that "anything capable of arousing passion in its favour will surely raise as much passion against it".

As far as I'm concerned, there's no better way to introduce you to Ernest Hemingway than by using an excerpt from *Death in the Afternoon*. „If a writer of prose knows enough of what he is writing about, he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.”

Cleverly put, isn't it? And definitely more comprehensible now. After having led you through the tangled *science of icebergs* the best I could, the way I saw it, there is nothing more I can do except let Hemingway speak about it for himself. Well, this man of genius happened to be also a heavy drinker. One night, when he was out drinking with his friends in a bar, a significant event occurred which resumes not only the essence of his whole being, but also of his writings. After a few drinks, they were discussing an unimportant matter when, on the spot, Hemingway's friends challenged him to write a six-word story. And so, Hemingway, a little bit more jovial and hazy than usual, gesturing more amply and laughing and speaking more loudly than he would have dared to do in the presence of his wife – I do not remember the exact count of wives he'd acquired at the moment when this story took place, but he was married to his fourth when he died – quickly worked out a six-word story, the greatest ever written, mainly because it is the only one of its kind and size as far as common knowledge can testify. Just as Hemingway would do, I will let the words speak for themselves.

„Baby shoes for sale. Never worn.”

Essay by Maria Calomfirescu (former student)



Writing in the style of Hemingway

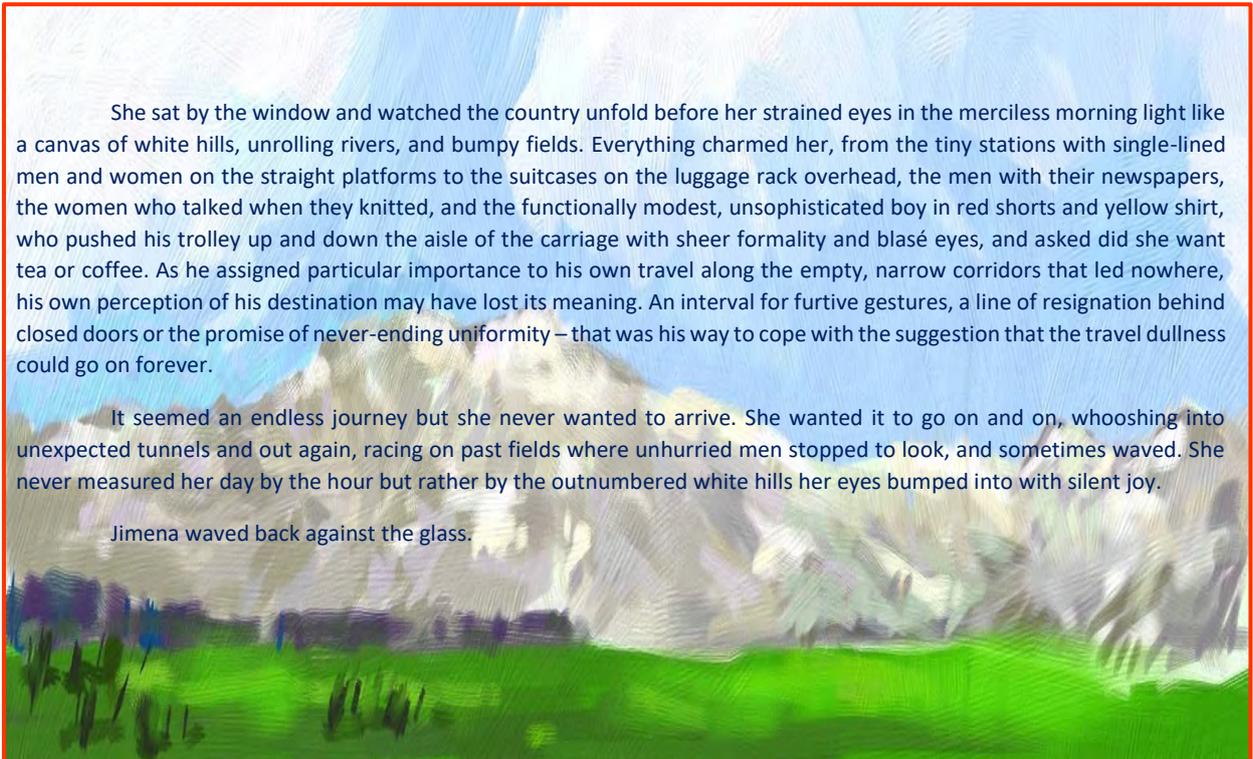
White Hills



She sat by the window and watched the country unfold before her strained eyes in the merciless morning light like a canvas of white hills, unrolling rivers, and bumpy fields. Everything charmed her, from the tiny stations with single-lined men and women on the straight platforms to the suitcases on the luggage rack overhead, the men with their newspapers, the women who talked when they knitted, and the functionally modest, unsophisticated boy in red shorts and yellow shirt, who pushed his trolley up and down the aisle of the carriage with sheer formality and blasé eyes, and asked did she want tea or coffee. As he assigned particular importance to his own travel along the empty, narrow corridors that led nowhere, his own perception of his destination may have lost its meaning. An interval for furtive gestures, a line of resignation behind closed doors or the promise of never-ending uniformity – that was his way to cope with the suggestion that the travel dullness could go on forever.

It seemed an endless journey but she never wanted to arrive. She wanted it to go on and on, whooshing into unexpected tunnels and out again, racing on past fields where unhurried men stopped to look, and sometimes waved. She never measured her day by the hour but rather by the outnumbered white hills her eyes bumped into with silent joy.

Jimena waved back against the glass.



Story by Ileana-Maria Stanescu



The Stranger

Writing in the style of O. Henry



A few years after I was born, my father met a stranger who had just arrived to town. From the very beginning, Dad was fascinated by this newcomer and soon invited him to live with us. The Stranger was quickly accepted and was even given the best room in the house. I didn't know it at that time, but he was to be around for some time.

As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. My parents were also my mentors. Mom taught me to distinguish the good from the evil and Dad taught me to conform. I had to grow accustomed to the Stranger – it was expected.

The Stranger soon proved himself to be a good story teller. He would draw our attention for hours with his adventures, mysteries and detailed life-based accounts.

Sometimes, he would make us keep silent with his incredible stories like the one about a young child being raised by monkeys in the Colombian jungle.

At other times, he'd make all of us laugh at funny drawings of a cat chasing a mouse.

If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past and what was going on, and even seemed to know how to predict the future. He made me laugh and he made me cry as well.

The Stranger would never stop talking but Dad did not seem to mind. Sometimes, Mom would get up quietly and go to the kitchen for some peace and silence while the rest of us kept listening in duly fascination to whatever the Stranger had to say.

Our Stranger would sometimes act in a weird way. For example, one day there was a power cut. The Stranger refused talking and went to sleep. He'd eventually wake up but didn't seem to be willing to talk. Was he waiting for a sign from us? Maybe so.

Dad ruled our household with strong moral convictions, but the Stranger never felt obliged to honor them. Swearing or shouting, for example, was not allowed in our house, neither from us, nor from guests and friends. Our long-term guest, however, got away with ungracious words that made my Dad angry and my mother blush.

My Dad didn't allow the use of alcohol either. But the Stranger kept encouraging us to try it on a regular basis. He was definitely not the best example to be followed, and he talked way too freely about taboo subjects. And yet, despite all the embarrassment caused, my parents seldom rebuked him, and NEVER asked him to leave.



More than fifty years have passed since the Stranger moved in with us. Meanwhile, he has perfectly blended in, but nothing is now as fascinating as it was then. If you walked into my parents' home today, you would still find him sitting over the fireplace, longing for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his funny pictures.

His name? Oh...we just call him "the box" or, in short, "TV". He has now a younger, slimmer brother whom we call "LG" and a sister, our beloved computer, or "PC", as our friends commonly put it.

Story by Alexandru Bratosin (former student)



Writing in the style of H.C. Andersen

A December 24th Story

The morning madness of the city is a funny thing to think about. Coffee scent resting in the air, people hurrying to get to work and far too stressed to notice the young girl making her way through the crowd to buy a long-awaited ticket. At that time, Abigail was only 18 and what she was about to experience was as unexpected as unpredictable her short-lived life had been that far. She had been sent away, for safety reasons, to the small and peaceful island of Samoa in Oceania, to live with her aunt. Her parents stayed in England to raise her younger brothers. With time, the boys would join the British army.

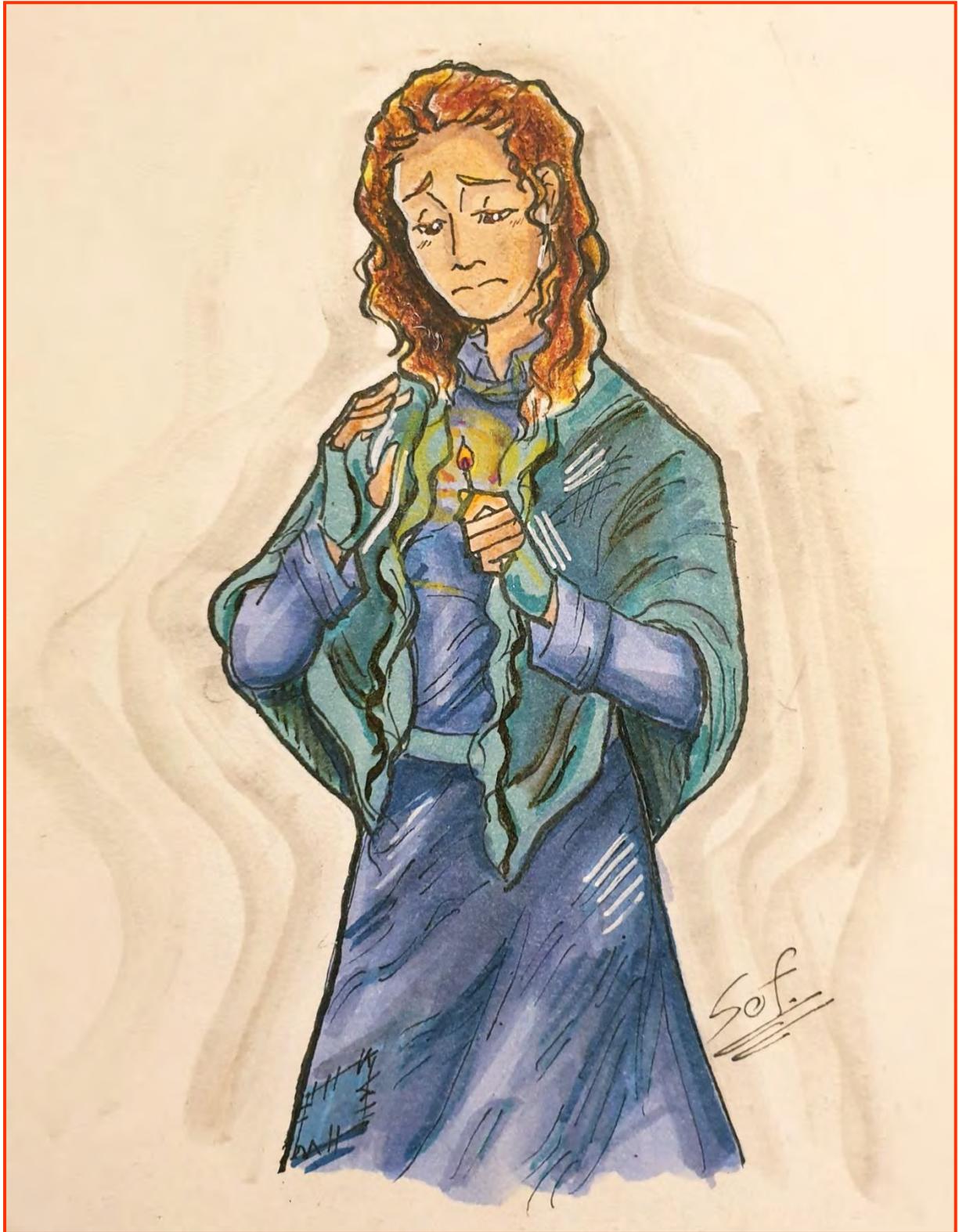
Abigail lifted her enormous bag and headed confidently towards dock number 7. She was used to steep shores and open seacoasts, and the winter cold and leafless trees brought back childhood memories. She had that kind of feeling that the time for festive moments had finally arrived when a tall, grumpy man in a blue uniform blared his whistle aggressively. Waking up from her dream, she asked, 'Does this ship go to California, Sir?' The captain of the ship answered, 'Most certainly, milady. But it is full, you will have to take the next one. It departs after Christmas.' 'Sir, please, take me with you! I have the ticket here, paid! You will not even notice me here! I have to get on this ship, cap'n', Abigail insisted. But the captain was already gone. 'It's the only time of the year when I can see my loved ones...' she whispered and left the dock in full disappointment. She was about to give up when she spotted a cargo ship which said in big, bold letters: "*CALIFORNIA MERCHANDISE TRANSPORT*". 'It's now or never', she said to herself while hopping on the ship, hoping to find a hidden place through the big boxes. It smelled heavenly there. All kinds of spices, cinnamon, orange, and ginger were spreading the spirit of Christmas all over the place. She thought, 'These must be Christmas presents being shipped around the world. It is December 22nd after all...'

It was broad daylight when she reached California. A mesmerizing smell of eggnog and cinnamon pie welcomed her. Then there came to her a fragrance of thyme followed by the smell of roast chestnuts fluttering in the cold breeze. How she wished for a warm cookie... nothing feels like eating some delicious scones after such a long travel. 'Fifty cents', announced the baker while handing her the freshly-taken-out-of-the-oven scones. Abigail opened her luggage. She didn't have much money left but soon she will be home. They were not rich, but her mother always made sure to put something on the table. A sudden shiver overwhelmed her. She froze for a second, but this time not because of the chilly winter. She checked again with fumbling hands, but...nothing. She must have left all her money, little as it was, on the cargo ship. The girl ran like the wind to the pier but all she could see was the faint silhouette of the ship slowly disappearing at the horizon. As she was helplessly watching a trail of puffy steam melting away, a mighty storm of feelings submerged her. How could she take the train from California to Boston? It seemed impossible. There she was, motionless, lost, disappointed with herself. Christmas is supposed to make you feel welcome, warm, and loved. Abigail was far, too far away from it. She fell on her knees and lay down in the glittering snow. Street goers occasionally looked at her and moved away hurriedly. They were all strangers. Strangers and snow blown away by the wind. Her eyes closed and the puffy clouds turned into familiar shapes. She saw her mother's warm smile touching her face and her brothers playing like in the old times calling her to join them. Strangely enough, with each icy gust of wind she now felt wings of warmth invading her little body. She felt warmer and warmer...

It occurred that, from that big crowd running all over the town like hamsters in a wheel, carrying boxes with enormous red bows on top of them, a young man stopped in front of her. He looked at her with piercing eyes and held out his hand. 'Get up', he said firmly. Abigail hesitated. What were his intentions? There was only one way to find out. He was dressed almost as poorly as she was - ripped brown pants, a patched coat and muddy boots. 'Name's Jess. Yours?' Abigail got up with dissimulated easiness. 'Abigail. Do I know you?' Jess sighed and took a train ticket out of his pocket. Abigail glanced at him with disbelief, yet full of hope. 'Are you some kind of sorcerer or have you been following me? How'd you know?' she asked. 'The second option's more likely but I'd say none of these. I used to be like you once. Appearances can be deceiving', he answered. Hesitantly, Abigail took the ticket. 'Why'd you do this, George Peabody?' she said mockingly. 'Christmas is all about miracles', he replied and walked away as mysteriously as he came.

Abigail watched him as he vanished in the crowd. Suddenly, she remembered she had a train to catch and get to England! 'Train to Boston, ferry to London and it will soon be over', she said to herself with renewed hope. She knew she couldn't make it on time for Christmas but the too long-missed feeling of togetherness was stronger than any regret.

Her eyes were foggy with tears when she saw Big Ben majestically sparkling in the night. It was then that the whole world seemed to have stopped turning. Her eyes grew big as she saw written in bold letters, December 24th. She didn't know whether she should cry or laugh at it, but she had completely ignored the time zone! She pinched herself to make sure this was not a dream. There was she, at the very foot of the Big Ben, on time for Christmas, on December 24th.





Christmas Movies – A Magic Formula

If you expect me to discuss the latest innovations in cinematography or mention the movies nominated for the Oscar, you have most probably been misguided by the title. In fact, I will shun away creativity, eccentricity, and good taste to bring out what is unmistakably the most basic and boring formula ever created by the humankind in the world of entertainment: Christmas movies, especially the romantic kind.

Now, dear and honourable reader, I can already hear you say, „But there are good and creatively smart Christmas movies that break that formula and that are fun to watch like „A Christmas Carol”, „Elf”, „Klaus”, „A Nightmare Before Christmas” or even „Home Alone”.“ And you are right! There can be Christmas movies that are enjoyable and delightful to watch, but there are so few, and even fewer if we count their good sequels, that end up drowning at the bottom of the commercial mess of a Christmas movie pit.

These poor victims, along with the good movies that join their ranks, are suffocated by the stereotypically bad content that is hard to avoid for two whole months each year to the point where people watch the good movies so frequently that they end up getting tired of them.

With that in mind, let us, enlightened beings, judge these parasitic forms of distraction from the harsh cold of the winter.

What makes these movies so bad? Well, after rigorous research and study of ancient texts, we may conclude that it's the same story in spite of bearing a different name.

In kids' movies, they always have to prove that Santa is real! Either the kid is a fanatic cultist that worships the Gift Bringer and they have to prove to their either rich family that is too busy to care or to their poor family that is too hungry to care that Santa is real and that the Christmas spirit is the source of all happiness.

Or else the kid is the most pessimistic-realistic person on the planet and the family has to force down on him the fact that he won't receive a gift if he doesn't believe in Santa. Obviously, the family has to be the jolly counterpart of the protagonist in this progressively annoying story arc.

In both cases the MAN himself, your best buddy Santa Claus, shows up at some point to prove the point of the innocent and optimistic main character who does believe in Santa, or else to terrify the living daylight out of the pessimistic character that dared think otherwise.

The main character NEEDS to have one or more siblings that are either pro Christmas (in this case they are the younger siblings of the pessimistic character) or against Christmas (the angsty teenager that cruelly mocks up the optimistic character in the beginning to later become a TRUE BELIEVER after meeting Santa).

Some subgenres make the main character help Santa save Christmas and in the end, the kids either receive the gift they wanted, don't need a gift anymore because they are solely satisfied by the presence of THE LEGEND, or else they ask for a stupid symbolic gift that isn't useful at all and is only there to teach the young viewers an important lesson about love, friendship or sacrifice. I'm looking at you „Polar Express”. Choose a BELL that non-believers can't even hear and you get one wish from Santa! ANYTHING: END WORLD HUNGER, ESTABLISH WORLD PEACE, CURE CANCER. Why can't the point that you're trying to make at least be backed up by concrete evidence?

Those are movies for kids, people make them simple because they think that children can't handle more complex, quality stories and that's fine because we, „older folk”, normally get frustrated at them because WE KNOW BETTER. The problem is that it doesn't stop here. Hallmark is an American TV Channel famous for cranking out romance Christmas movies every year that target closed-minded, often single women or unhappy, married ones.

MOVIE REVIEWS AND RATINGS



The plot is the same. There's this independent businesswoman that either owns a shop or works in a big company, so she's too busy for Christmas. Additionally, family members died or something bad happened at Christmas time and that's why she hates it.

To get the story going she has a big project to make what somehow gets tied to her very American rustic hometown, so she goes there or she gets fired from her job because she's too good at it so she has to go home because she can't afford to live in the Big City any longer.

In both cases, she finds herself in a small town in the countryside and it turns out that one of her classmates that continued to live there after she left, has become or has always been very cool! To insert a drop of extra drama you can always add the default fiancé that is caught in a snowstorm. Let's forget about him because he's always useless since she dumps him the moment she finds a bigger and manlier hunk of a man. The musical montages are pain-inducing corny monsters that will make you beg for a quick death because the good music is copyrighted so whoever makes these, settles for royalty-free music.

Sometimes magic is involved and Santa can appear but that's very rare. Either way, the main plot is that a very down to earth Christmas celebration and a cool new boyfriend are the most important things in life.

A subgenre for these is the princess Christmas movie. An atrocity that involves a random woman meeting a prince from a non-existing country like „Aldovia“, „Maldovia“, „Belgravia“, „Landora“, „Cordinia“ or „Calpurnia“ that has for some reason a British accent and they fall in love and that's it.

You can now see how shallow these plot points can become. You can spice them up by making two identical women, an ordinary one and a princess, to switch places and eventually fall in love with the designated prince when talking about the commoner and the commoner's side kick (a very cool guy that for some reason the commoner didn't marry yet) when talking about the princess.

All these movies sound the same:

A Christmas Love Story - 2019

Christmas Everlasting - 2018

The Christmas Train - 2017

A Heavenly Christmas - 2016

Just in Time for Christmas - 2015

One Christmas Eve - 2014

Christmas in Conway - 2013

Christmas with Holly - 2012

November Christmas- 2010

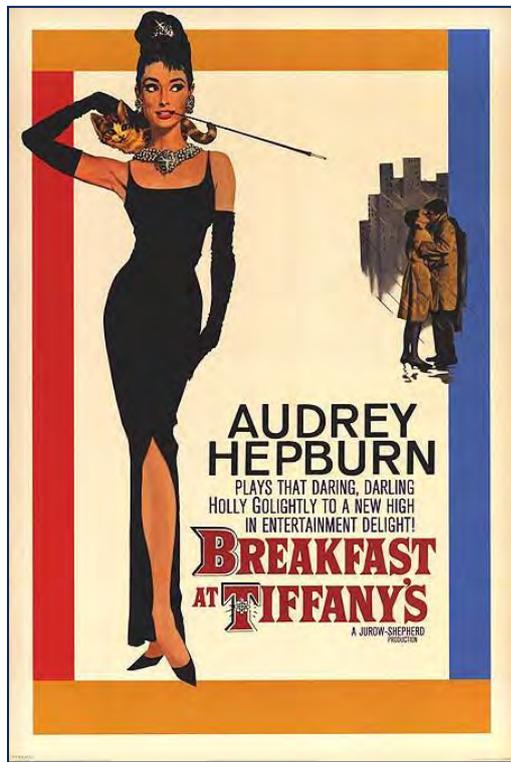
A Dog Named Christmas – 2009



The terrifying and confusing realm of Christmas movies opened my eyes. I do believe now that stupidity is a science. A lifetime full of knowledge isn't enough to understand what these movies truly represent. I openly criticize the people who keep this formula instead of trying something new because they seek profit. We are better than this.

Essay by Sofia Sinica

MOVIE REVIEWS AND RATINGS



Initial release: **October 5, 1961 (USA)**

Director: **Blake Edwards**

Based on the novella: **Breakfast at Tiffany's (1958)**

Story by: **Truman Capote (1924-1984)**

Distributed by: **Paramount Pictures**

Music composed by: **Henry Mancini**

Budget: **\$2.5 million**

Box office: **\$14 million**

Academy Awards - Won: **Best Score of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture (Henry Mancini) and Best Original Song: "Moon River" (Henry Mancini and Johnny Mercer)**

Academy Awards - Nominated: **Best Actress in a Leading Role (Audrey Hepburn), Best Art Direction-Set Decoration, Color (Hal Pereira, Roland Anderson, Sam Comer, Ray Moyer) and Best Adapted Screenplay (George Axelrod)**

In an idealized New York City during the early '60s, Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn) is a charming young woman who lives alone in a nearly bare apartment. She has such a flippant lifestyle that she won't even give her cat a name as that would be too much of a commitment to a relationship. Maintaining a childlike innocence while wearing the most expensive designer clothes and accessories from Givenchy, she spends her time on dates and extravagant, high-class parties.

Holly's carefree independence takes a turn when she meets her neighbour, aspiring writer Paul (George Peppard), who is suffering from writer's block while being kept by a wealthy woman (Patricia Neal). Just when Holly and Paul are developing their sweet romance, Doc (Buddy Ebsen) pops out and complicates matters, revealing the truth about Holly's past.



A culturally and aesthetically significant movie which starts with a nonchalant look and finishes with a kiss.

Memorable scenes such as eating pastry while window-shopping, becoming forever synonymous with one of the most endowed actresses ever, Audrey Hepburn, who turned even common gestures into elegant rites.

The famous little black dress designed by Givenchy especially for Audrey Hepburn, who is still considered an icon of elegance.

Tiffany's, the jewelry shop, enjoying free publicity due to the huge success of the movie, which still stands the test of time.

An artistic act which embodies Blake Edward's style and Audrey Hepburn's elegance, all wrapped in Mancini's music - a movie not to be missed!



Written by **Adela Bottcher (former student)**



Often Misspelled Words

The word “misspelled” might often be misspelled as “mispelled” or “misspeled”. It is derived from the verb “to spell” and the prefix “mis” that means ill or wrong, which has a negative connotation. When combining the two, you don’t get rid of one of the letters “s”. And spelling “to spell” as “to spel” is simply wrong too.



Often Mispronounced Words That Can Be As Well Misspelled

- 1) Remember the first “r” in “February” that everybody forgets about and jumps right to the /ju:/ sound? Yes, that’s wrong, you have to pronounce the “r” which might come off as weird at first or hard to pronounce. This mispronunciation might come from the fact that January ends in “-uary” but doesn’t have an “r” in front of it, so the next month just rolls off the tongue more easily if pronounced in a similar way.
- 2) Have you noticed the number of times I’ve used the word “pronounce”? Four times, to be exact. But what about pronunciation? Well, this is the first time I’ve used it. Notice how there is one “o” in “pronunciation” but there are two in “pronounce”. This might be a problem for people who don’t know it and will end up writing and pronouncing the word in a different way than the correct one.
- 3) Due to the numerous English words that end in “-ious”, some people have the tendency to pronounce “mischievous” as if it were written “mischievous” which obviously, written, looks wrong, but phonetically, for some people, it sounds right. The correct pronunciations are mis-*chuh-vuh*-s or ‘mɪs tʃə vəs.



Words with Funny Meanings

- English: **Anatidaephobia** is the fear that somewhere in the world there is a duck watching you.
- German: **Backpfeifengesicht** means a face which is badly in need of a fist.
- Hawaiian: **Pana Po’o** means to scratch your head in order to help you remember something you’ve forgotten.
- Sami Languages: In Northern Scandinavia, **poronkusema** is an obsolete unit of measurement (approximately 7.5 km) which represents the distance a reindeer takes to urinate.
- Indonesian: **Jayus** is a joke so poorly told and so unfunny that one cannot help but laugh.
- Portuguese: **Pesamenteiro** is an old Portuguese word which designates a person who comes to a funeral just for the food.
- English: A **cell phone** is a device that makes you look less alone in public places.

Researched and written by the team

Sitography: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obsolete_Finnish_units_of_measurement#Miscellaneous

TIME FOR REFLECTION



WORDS OF WISDOM

Quotes on Birth

“Shadow owes its birth to light.” – *John Gay, English poet and dramatist*

“He allowed himself to be swayed by his conviction that human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but that life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves.”
– *Gabriel García Márquez, Columbian novelist, «Love in the Time of Cholera»*

“I must confess, I was born at a very early age.” – *Groucho Marx, American writer and comedian*

“I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead; I lift my eyes and all is born again.” – *Sylvia Plath, American poet and novelist, «Mad Girl’s Love Song»*

Quotes on Leadership

“High sentiments always win in the end. The leaders who offer blood, toil, tears, and sweat always get more out of their followers than those who offer safety and a good time. When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic.” – *George Orwell, English novelist and journalist, «The Art of Donald McGill»*

“You can’t depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus.” – *Mark Twain, American author*

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet and essayist*

“The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The leader adjusts the sails.” – *John Maxwell, American author*



“The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for greatness is there already.” – *John Buchan, Scottish novelist*

“Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” – *Steve Jobs, Apple co-founder*

“I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion.” – *Alexander the Great, ruler of the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedonia*

Researched by the team



“Shadow owes its birth to light.”

- John Gay (1685-1732)

Shadow and light. Two natural opposite terms. As some of us may think, their juxtaposition gives them much more depth than their semantic origin may suggest. Put together in this quote, they create a diametric contrast. Surprisingly enough, these terms are related to each other as cause and effect, following the fact that shadow owes its existence to the presence of light. Shadow is not the absence of light but the result of its interference with a body, which creates a dark area called “shadow”. The term which is ultimately the opposite of light is not shadow, but darkness. Therefore, an in-depth analysis would rather juxtapose than oppose them.

Scientifically speaking, this sentence stipulates a simple truth: in our universe, if there is no source of light, there is no shadow either. In deep space, far away from any celestial object, only darkness finds its place, undisturbed. But this quote finds its whole richness of meaning in domains such as philosophy, ethics, and psychology. We will briefly glance at some interpretations of shadow and light as far as these fields are concerned.

The most famous shadow in the world of philosophy is Plato’s. In his work, “The Republic”, where the Allegory of the Cave completes an impressive mural of society, politics and knowledge, the best-known philosopher of all times describes a cave where people have been imprisoned since childhood and can only see shadows of reality.



Even in this myth, shadow owes its birth to light just as the fire symbolizing the world of ideas or reality gives birth to the self-proclaimed knowledge of the prisoners.

In this case, shadow represents not only the illusion of the real world and knowledge, but also human ignorance. Thus, shadow has negative connotations.

Plato would like to take everybody out of the cave to expose them to real light and thus dissipate all the shadows they took for reality. Light is here synonymous with truth.

TIME FOR REFLECTION - Quotes and comments

In ethics, shadow and light are connected to the notions of bad and good. If evil didn't exist, man wouldn't have any choice but to be good. Therefore, shadow and evil are intimately connected to the concept of freedom: the value of our actions is determined by the reality of our choice between shadow and light, or good and evil. Taking this into account, from an ethical point of view, shadow doesn't owe its birth to light, they simply coexist and oppose each other. Shadow is both a fact and a choice, and so is light.



The most interesting connection between light and shadow is offered by another field: the one of psychology. Light from a psychological point of view is our conscience. Not all experiences and feelings get to the realm of consciousness: some of them because they are unpleasant, others because they are not fully understood. However, they remain in our subconscious and form our shadow, the dark side of each human being, collecting everything we do not want to bring to light while facing ourselves and the others. Jung advises us to confront our shadow, to tame it and integrate it in our personality to avoid neuroses. In a way, psychology admits that the role of consciousness is a keeper's role. Censoring what comes into light, naturally gives birth to our shadow.

These three different approaches to John Gay's quote are but a small part of the surface of the iceberg, its less visible one bringing to light the depth of this quote. The notions of shadow and light are archetypes of the human culture and they have made a lot of ink flow, as they illustrate a significant part of our existence in this world.



Written by Gabriel Simon (former student)



Tattoos

History shows that humans have had themselves tattooed since reasons, such as magical protection, pain relief, vengeance or enemy. In the past, tattoos used to beautify, shock, or humiliate. belief, group solidarity, or personal independence. But their sight, have always been complex and intriguing. For instance, in said to curse faithless lovers and bring revenge. A famous tattoo- by the poetess Moiro of Byzantium. While tattoos are today they also had punitive functions, as well as magical and medical



antiquity and for various declaration of victory over an They proclaimed valor, religious messages, hidden or in plain Hellenistic myths, tattoos were curse is the one that was written primarily decorative, in antiquity ones.

In Greece, the use of penal tattoos was probably introduced from



all started when the Persian King Xerxes was so mad over the fact that the sea swept away his bridge that he ordered his soldiers to punish it. He had men toss iron fetter and apparently, he even commanded his tattooists to tattoo the water. In wartimes, tattooing captives was common practice. For example, the Athenians tattooed the foreheads of prisoners of war with an owl, Athens's emblem.

■ **The owl of Athena (circa 480–420 BC), Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon.**

In the Roman Empire, tattoos were considered an unthinkable indignity for honorable people. During the early Roman Empire, all slaves exported identification mark or as a considered to belong to an record their captivity, tattooed as public property, addition, Christians were work. As they were a form of The ink was poured into bleeding was common, tattooed as a punishment, the Romans, by using



to Asia were tattooed with the words "tax paid", either as an punishment. The practice was meant to dehumanize the ones inferior social class, by turning their bodies into texts that would servitude, or guilt forever. Apart from slaves, gladiators were also whereas empire soldiers were tattooed to discourage desertion. In punished with forehead tattoos that condemned them to mining harsh punishment, tattoos were not carefully or artistically applied. crude letters, carved into the flesh with iron needles. Excessive often leading to death. Although Christians were persecuted and some of them did it purposefully to obliterate the tattoos made by religious symbols. This may also be a proof of the fact that, despite their misgivings about the practice, the Greeks were fascinated by the idea of tattoos as exotic beauty.

■ **Scythian tattoo on the right arm of a mummy found in Siberia (over 2,500 years old).**



Finally, let's focus on the most famous bodies discovered near Siberia which hold the most technically and artistically brilliant tattoos from Antiquity.

The first body, discovered in 1948 by Sergei Rudenko, was a tattooed warrior from 400 B.C. The warrior was preserved in permafrost.

The second tattooed body was found in 1955. It is the mummy of a young horseman who wore his hair in braids and was buried with his horse around 500 B.C.

The third tattooed body was found at Pazyryk, in 1993, by Natalya Polosmak and was a tattooed woman, wrapped in fur and buried with six horses. The body dated back to approximatively 300 B.C.

Therefore, for many ancient peoples, tattoos had a punitive role but they also symbolized bravery, ensured magical protection, or was supposed to impress enemies. Although tattoos have lost their discriminative role, they have preserved their symbolic mark as exotic beauty. Today, they are no longer used as social stigma, but they are considered by many either a fashion statement or a means of identification used for standing out from the crowd.

Written by Edelweiss Gilman (former student) / English - Latin joint work



December, 2020



ARIES

Date range: March 21 - April 19

Element: Fire

Ruler: Mars

Color: Red

This is a very good month to start new projects or concretize initiatives, especially if they involve creativity, promotion, and sport or affect society in some way. Your ability to inspire and motivate is very strong and so are your leadership skills. This month recommendation is "*Gladiator*" - the perfect movie for a strong character. **Directed by Ridley Scott** and featuring Russel Crowe, this movie is set in thriving Ancient Rome, after General Maximus had led the Roman legions to victory in their final battle against the Germanic tribes.



TAURUS

Date range: April 20 - May 20

Element: Earth

Ruler: Venus

Colors: Blue, pink, green

A month when information seems mind-boggling, both intellectually and emotionally. Deciding what is important and what is not and how to prioritize can be excessively stressful in December, 2020. There is so much going on at work, at home, and in your social life that it can be exciting and overwhelming at the same time, therefore you will have to do a juggling act. As this is a month when you may be tempted to speak without thinking, be careful of what you say and ignore gossip which can affect your position. Our recommendation for this month is "*Raging Bull*", a biographical black-and-white movie on the life of Jack La Motta, one of the best boxers ever. Featuring Robert De Niro and **directed by Martin Scorsese**, this movie is not only an emotionally self-destructive journey through La Motta's life, but also the one which saved Scorsese's while he was struggling with clinical depression at the time.



GEMINI

Date range: May 21 - June 20

Element: Air

Ruler: Mercury

Colors: Green, yellow

Inside each of you is a pair of twins that long for reunion. This New Moon in Gemini offers you the chance to bring yourself into wholeness. That may entail getting rid of black and white thinking as such polarities keep you divided and struggling down to either one thing or another. Artistic activities like music will relax your mind and improve your state of being. A good alternative for *chill out music* or *film soundtracks* written by great composers of the kind such as **Elmer Bernstein, Hans Zimmer** or **Ennio Morricone**.

LITERARY HOROSCOPE



Date range: June 21 - July 22

Element: Water

Ruler: Moon

CANCER Colors: Orange, white

Cancer is the first water sign symbolizing the awakening of one's emotional nature and the desire to be loved and cared for by others. In December 2020 you will feel a boost of positive energy for love and friendship. Why not re-watching "*Avatar*" and plunge into a breathtaking journey through a biological neural network of groundbreaking visual effects?



Date range: July 23 - August 22

Element: Fire

Ruler: Sun

LEO Colors: Gold, orange, white, red

Oh, Leo! Ruled by the Sun itself. Enduring Fire. Creative. Courageous. Loving. Risk-oriented. Lover of fun. The Leo Horoscope for December 2020 indicates that this month you will witness many changes. How about reading **Danielle Steel's** novel called "*Changes*", a romance about dealing with life issues and crossing bridges over troubled waters?



Date range: July 23 - August 22

Element: Fire

Ruler: Sun

VIRGO Colors: Gold, orange, white, red

This month, you are trying very hard to fix things up, make improvements, re-arrange, schedule and organize. As an earth sign, you are practical, wanting to have a place for everything and everything in its place. Your deepest desire is to be of service, to do something useful and helpful for the others. If you are very young, you could read "*Stuck in the Mud*" by **Jane Clarke** and if you are older, we recommend you some of the greatest short stories on the topic written by **Oscar Wilde**. As Warren Buffett beautifully put it, "If you're in the luckiest one per cent of humanity, you owe it to the rest of humanity to think about the other 99 per cent."



Date range: September 23 - October 22

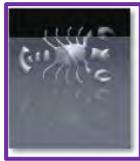
Element: Air

Ruler: Venus

LIBRA Colors: Blue, green

For a Libra, everything is better if it is done as a pair. While they are true team players at work, their favorite partnership is at home. After all the toil and trouble of last month, you are feeling rather relaxed and chilled in December 2020. You are in the mood for socializing or indulging in good spirits and good food. This is certainly a perfect time for reading, performing artistic hobbies or going away somewhere quiet by the sea or a lake. This month, we recommend you "*Charlotte's web*" by **E.B. White** and beautifully illustrated by Garth Williams, a classic of children's literature, enjoyable to children and adults alike.

LITERARY HOROSCOPE



SCORPIO

Date range: October 23 - November 21

Element: Water

Ruler: Pluto

Colors: Scarlet, red, rust

The curiosity of Scorpios is immeasurable, which may be why they are such adept investigators. These folks love to probe and know how to get to the bottom of things. The fact that they have a keen sense of intuition certainly helps. Pay close attention to your December dreams as they may hold clues about your future, your subconscious or what you should be paying attention to in your life. This month, we recommend you "***The Book of Dreams***", an enticing American story by **Jack Vance**, a real page turner for the ones who love suspense, intricate plots and anticipation work.



SAGITTARIUS

Date range: November 22 - December 21

Ruler: Jupiter

Element: Fire

Colors: Violet, purple, red, pink

The Sagittarian-born are keenly interested in philosophy and religion. At the end of the day, what Sagittarius wants most is to know the meaning of life, and to accomplish this while feeling free and easy. You can be rather indecisive in December 2020 and may change ideas and plans. It is actually not a good month to make important decisions. Why not try a book on management as an alternative to belletristic novels? Our recommendation for the month is "***The Decision Book***" by **Mikael Krogerus**, which offers you fifty models of strategic thinking.



CAPRICORN

Date range: December 22 - January 19

Ruler: Saturn

Element: Earth

Colors: Brown, grey, black

Capricorns are practical, taking things one step at a time and being as realistic and pragmatic as possible. The Capricorn-born are extremely dedicated to their goals, almost to the point of stubbornness. Those victories sure smell sweet and that thought alone will keep Capricorns going. This is a far better month for decisive action and making strides towards goals. You can be very well organized and highly efficient racing through chores and jobs. This month, we recommend you to watch "***The Social Network***", a film about the founding of Facebook, released in 2010, and considered the movie of the year, or read **Ben Mezrich's** novel, "***The Accidental Billionaires***" which the movie is based on. Despite his narrative style, Mezrich claims that his book is not a work of fiction. It is up to you to find out!



AQUARIUS

Date range: January 20 - February 18

Element: Air

Ruler: Uranus

Colors: Blue, blue-green, grey, black

December 2020 is a month when things come together for friendship and fun – if you have been trying to get your friends all together for a good time out and everyone has been busy or occupied, this is the month when all your plans for fun, recreation, and entertainment come together. You may manage to nab those tickets for a hot concert or perhaps a sporting event which you have been itching to attend. As an Aquarius, you would definitely enjoy reading "***The Old Man and the Sea***" written by **Ernest Hemingway**. This story of the battle between man and nature, more precisely between an experienced fisherman and a large fish, has a more significant allegorical meaning as it takes into consideration the philosophy of Manhood.

LITERARY HOROSCOPE



PISCES

Date range: February 19 - March 20

Element: Water

Ruler: Neptune

Colors: Mauve, lilac, purple, violet, sea green

December 2020 is an ideal time to do a little audit of your goals for the year. You should make new plans and strategies based on how things are going to ensure you stay on track. Family matters are very important right now, and family events may bring you into contact with a family member you have not seen for years. Our recommendation for the month is “**View from a Blue Moon**”, a movie about a Hawaiian whose ultimate goal is to redefine the ocean elements throughout a wide range of own experiences and emotions while being one of the most gifted surfers ever, from the whimsical blue perfection of the Pacific Ocean to the murkiest uncharted African waters.



Written by Nikolas Palaiodimopoulos



OF THE MONTH

Recommended Upcoming Events



December is the last month of the year. It holds the Summer Solstice in the Southern Hemisphere and the Winter Solstice in the North which is the least amount of daylight in the year. As we all know, December is also one of the most celebrated months on account of its numerous holidays and events. Although this year was tough, we managed to overcome hardships and affliction. We adopted new ways to entertain ourselves and to learn new things, while keeping social distancing.



No matter how, Christmas always does its magic if we do not let traditions fade and spread joy and love instead.

So without further ado, here is a selection of some of the most awaited events of the month!

FILM EVENTS



The "Elvire Popesco Cinema Hall" at the French Institute of Bucharest has created an online program called "Elvire chez vous". Every week, numerous productions are available for one night on Event book, from 7.00 pm until midnight. Romanian productions are usually broadcast on Thursdays and Fridays, whereas French films are shown on Saturdays. Sundays are reserved for European productions.

The National Film archive is also displaying Romanian films as part of the Cinemateca online program, which started last spring. It streams Romanian movies released before 1997.

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS IN ROMANIA



On the night of December, 23rd people go from house to house to sing Christmas Carols, they are given bread, pretzels, oranges, biscuits, and nuts. These old traditions are practiced more in the villages now as they grew out of the big cities but many city dwellers still keep their Christmas traditions alive.

Children singing „Steaua sus rasare” in Bucharest, 1841.

EVENTS OF THE MONTH

CHRISTMAS EVENTS AND TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

We all know that December holds an amazing amount of events and holiday festivities. Christmas is definitely the most awaited of all. People around the world observe Christmas on December, 25th. It is the day when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Many events are held around the world for Christmas, such as Christmas festivals and fairs. But there are many more other traditions and holidays in December, like Hanukkah, Saint Nicholas, and Boxing Day.



Saint Nicholas is celebrated on December, 6th. At night, Saint Nicholas brings presents and sweets in your shoes or stockings.



Hanukkah begins on December, 10th and ends on December, 18th.

The main miracle of Hanukkah is the victory of the Maccabees against the most powerful army in the world.

Ahanukiah is a 9-branched candelabra. The holiday is celebrated with the lighting of the menorah, traditional food, games and gifts.



Christmas morning is by far one of the most awaited mornings. Kids rush out of bed to find their presents lying under the tree.



Boxing Day is observed in many countries, such as Australia, Great Britain, New Zealand, Canada, and other Commonwealth countries. It takes place in several parts of Europe too, such as Romania, Hungary, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Catalonia, and Scandinavia. It takes place on December, 26th, so it is like a second Christmas Day. Boxing Day, is a day of giving gifts to needier people.

EVENTS OF THE MONTH



VIENNA'S MARKET AT RATHAUSPARK

"THE CHRISTMAS DREAM" is the largest traditional Christmas market in Vienna, it's full of lights and surprises everywhere. It has around 150 stalls full of food, decorations, and surprises. Unfortunately, it shall not be opened this year because of the current situation, but it will definitely open its doors to visitors from around the worlds next year!



STRASBOURG CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Strasbourg Christmas Markets and Fairs are opened this year. They started on November, 28th and they will stay open until December, 24th.



PRAGUE'S OLD TOWN SQUARE and WENCESLAS SQUARE

The Christmas market in the middle of Prague's Old Town's Square stages musical events around a huge, lavishly decorated Christmas tree. Due to its medieval beauty, it makes you travel back in time to explore more of its glorious past.



BUDAPEST'S CHRISTMAS MARKET BY BASILICA

The market has a lot of nice hand-made products, fine food and wine, and a skating rink. Many concerts are held on the occasion.



QUEBEC CITY CHRISTMAS MARKET

The market opens on December, 3rd and closes on December, 31st. It offers a wide choice of food and decorations galore.



CHRISTMAS IS MAKING ITS WAY TO NEW YORK CITY!

New York City, also known as "The Big Apple" is famous for its Christmas markets and fairs. One of the most known places not to be missed is Rockefeller Center. With its big tree and ice-skating rink, shops and food, it is THE place to be at Christmas.

EVENTS OF THE MONTH

NEW YEAR AROUND THE WORLD



The New Year is observed on the last day of the year. People all around the world celebrate the upcoming year in their own way and tradition.



NEW YEAR IN SPAIN

The New Year is celebrated in a very special way in Spain. There are many different traditions, but there is one in particular that everybody knows about, called "lucky grapes". You must eat 12 grapes one by one at the stroke of midnight. Each grape represents one month of the year. According to tradition, you need to finish all the grapes before the bells stop chiming.



NEW YEAR TRADITIONS ROMANIA

The most awaited Romanian tradition for the young is held the morning after the New Year. This is when kids dress up in traditional costumes and hold in their hand something called "sorcova" and go from house to house to sing „The Jolly Sorcova” for their neighbours. When the song is finished, they are given money. The song allegedly brings health, strength, and youth to the person the kids sing to.



CHRISTMAS COMMERCIAL SYMBOLS



Coca-Cola is an incredibly large soda company founded in 1892 and very competitive when it comes to commercials. They were very clever when they decided to use bright red as their brand color as it can be easily spotted and associated with Christmas time. Coca-Cola uses Santa Claus for commercials due to its red color that makes him stand out from the crowd.



Coca-Cola takes its commercials very seriously. That is why, for the company, Christmas is important business. At first, people considered Coca Cola a refreshing drink in hot summers. With their 1992 campaign slogan „Thirst knows no season”, they reminded people that their Coke was a good choice any time of the year. In another campaign, they used Santa, a true winter icon, and the rest is history. People are encouraged to associate Santa with Coca-Cola and whenever they see the jolly old man, they feel like opening a new bottle of Coke.

Written by Alexia Nitulescu



Did you know...?

A sacred religious holiday for some, a joyful time for all, Christmas is a cultural and commercial festivity worldwide. People around the world have been observing it with secular traditions and practices. Popular customs include decorating Christmas trees, exchanging gifts, attending church, and sharing meals with family and friends.

Jingle Bells

The song „Jingle Bells” was made as a Thanksgiving song rather than a supposed to be performed by the Medford Unitarian Church choir in States of America. If you ask yourselves what has snow to do with an is the answer: it was inspired from the one-horse open sleigh races held often took part.



Christmas Carol. It was Oregon, the United autumn month, here in winter in which they

Coca Cola and Santa-Claus



As many people know, Coca Cola played a big role in shaping Santa’s jolly character in advertisements. A very common myth though, is that the company replaced his old green coat with a red one, but this is not true since Santa was wearing a red coat long before artist Haddon Sundblom drew Santa for the Company. In fact, Santa was depicted in many different ways, ranging from short to tall and from thin to fat. He even appeared as a spooky elf back in 1862, drawn by the Civil War cartoonist Thomas Nast. He was the one who actually changed the color of his coat into red as an interpretation of Saint Nicholas.



The Great Christmas Escape

During the Second World War, the prisoners of war were allowed to receive gifts during Christmas. This is how the American and British intelligence services teamed up with a card company called „Bicycle” to send escape plans and maps hidden in between the layers of the cards which helped the POWs to escape prison. As playing cards was a common pass-time activity in the army, the Nazi guards didn’t suspect anything.



Christmas in Japan



Historically and traditionally, the country doesn’t really celebrate Christmas. It was KFC in perhaps one of the greatest marketing move ever that decided to promote the company as a place for Japanese Festivities. It is estimated that around 3.6 million households will have KFC as their Christmas feast in Japan this year!

Did you know...?



The Origins of Rudolph

Rudolph, the Red-Nosed dear, was created in 1939 as an advertisement for a department store.

The Commercialization of Christmas



During Christmas, the holiday expenses account for 1/6 of all retail sales in the US, about 830 million dollars every year. The wrapping paper sales in the US are about 9.36 billion dollars. This figure is more than the combined GDP of Africa's nine poorest countries and would require 30 million trees to be cut down!

It's All Maths

Is it possible for Santa to deliver the gifts? Santa must travel 3,000 times the speed of 800 homes per second, and take in 150 and milk left at his disposal on the doorsteps!



To deliver gifts for the entire planet, sound in one night, towards about million calories from all the cookies

Christmas Decorations

The practice of putting up special decorations at Christmas has a long history. In the 15th century, it was recorded that in London it was a Christmas custom for every house to be decorated with holm, ivy, and whatsoever stayed green in winter.

Who invented the image of Santa's sleigh?

The image of Santa's sleigh was created by Washington Irving.



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The Legend of Saint Nicholas



From ancient times, celebrations like the Yule of the Norse in Scandinavia, Saturnalia, the Roman holiday in honor to Saturn, the God of agriculture, and Juvenalia, a feast honoring the children of Rome, through the Middle Ages Christian festivals to the more or less commercial modern-day festivities, the winter solstice holidays have always been centered around children, gift making and helping the needy. These customs and beliefs are all connected to most probably the most illustrative figure of all, St. Nicholas, whose story can be traced back hundreds of years ago to a monk who lived in Patara, in modern-day Turkey. He allegedly gave away all his possessions to travel the country and help the most unfortunate people, the poor and the sick. With time, he also became the protector of children and sailors. Considered by many a lucky day and celebrated as Saint Nicholas Day, December, 6th actually commemorates his death and not his birth.

Source: Time Magazine

Written by David Nastase

It's joke time!

Black Humour

Josh, a Scotsman, goes to the local newspapers to post an ad: "Josh's wife dead, funeral at 9 pm."

The editor says, "I'm sorry for your loss, sir. You can have five more words for the same price."

The Scotsman replies, "OK. Then, "Josh's wife dead, funeral at 9 pm. Red Toyota car for sale."



A convicted murderer is about to get his death sentence. While he is resting on the electric chair, the priest asks him if he has any last requests. The murderer tells him, "Could you please hold my hand?"

Newspaper ad: "Parachute for sale: used once, never opened, small stain."

Riddles (Answers on page 40)

What is greater than God,
 more evil than the devil,
 the poor have it, the rich need it,
 and if you eat it, you'll die?

Who makes it, has no need of it.
 Who buys it, has no use for it.
 Who uses it, can neither see nor feel it.
 What is it?

What do you call a pirate with two eyes, two legs, and two arms?

What can travel around the world while staying in a corner?

What has an eye but can't see?

What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?

If you have me, you want to share me. If you share me, you haven't got me. What am I?

What gets broken without being held?

When I am filled, I can point the way, but when I am empty nothing moves me. I have two skins, one on the outside and one on the inside. What am I?

Sitography: <http://www.short-funny.com/new-jokes.php>; <http://www.short-funny.com/sarcasm-black-humor.php>

Section responsible: Sam Dalco

Christmas Movie Clues

How well do you know classic Christmas movies? Can you name some of the most famous Christmas movies from a single image?

In this picture created by "Magic Freebies UK" there are clues to 25 Christmas movies. Have a close look and see if you can find them all. Work them out and you will become our Christmas quiz champion!



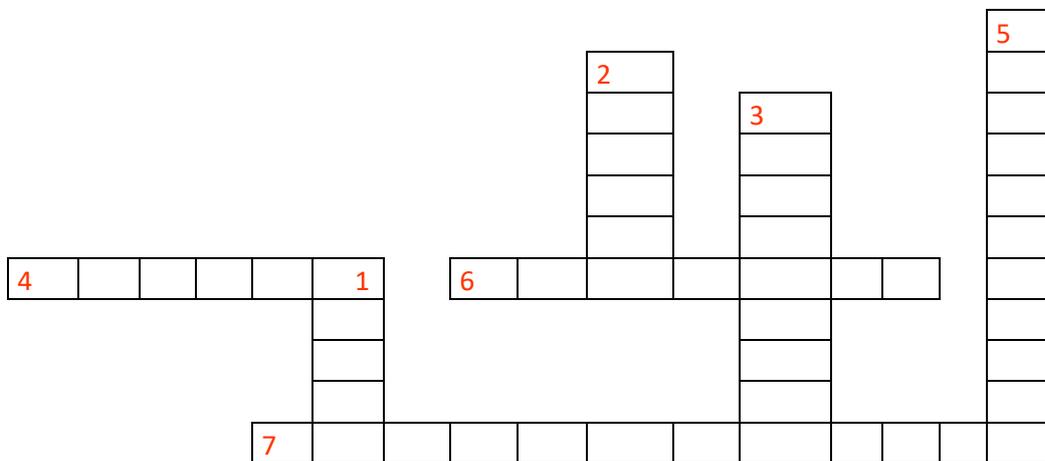
Answers on page 39.

Researched by the team

Crosswords (Solution on page 40)



This very first issue of our magazine is placed under the sign of emergence and creation. The crossword puzzle we came up with makes no exception. The key words are stressed.



Across

- 4. An organism in its **early stages of development** before it is born.
- 6. Mythical creature which kills itself when it feels that death is near so that it can be **reborn** from its ashes.
- 7. Eaten at **anniversaries**.

Down

- 1. It was **conceived** in the **recipe** included in **the first issue** of this literary magazine.
- 2. The very **first** stage in the development of an organism.
- 3. American **novelist** (1899 – 1961) whose writing style by omission brought him fame.
- 5. Period of **new** discoveries and inventions, European growth, the **emergence** of the middle-class and the **re-birth** of arts and literature.

Section responsible: Sam Dalco

Christmas Movies - Answers



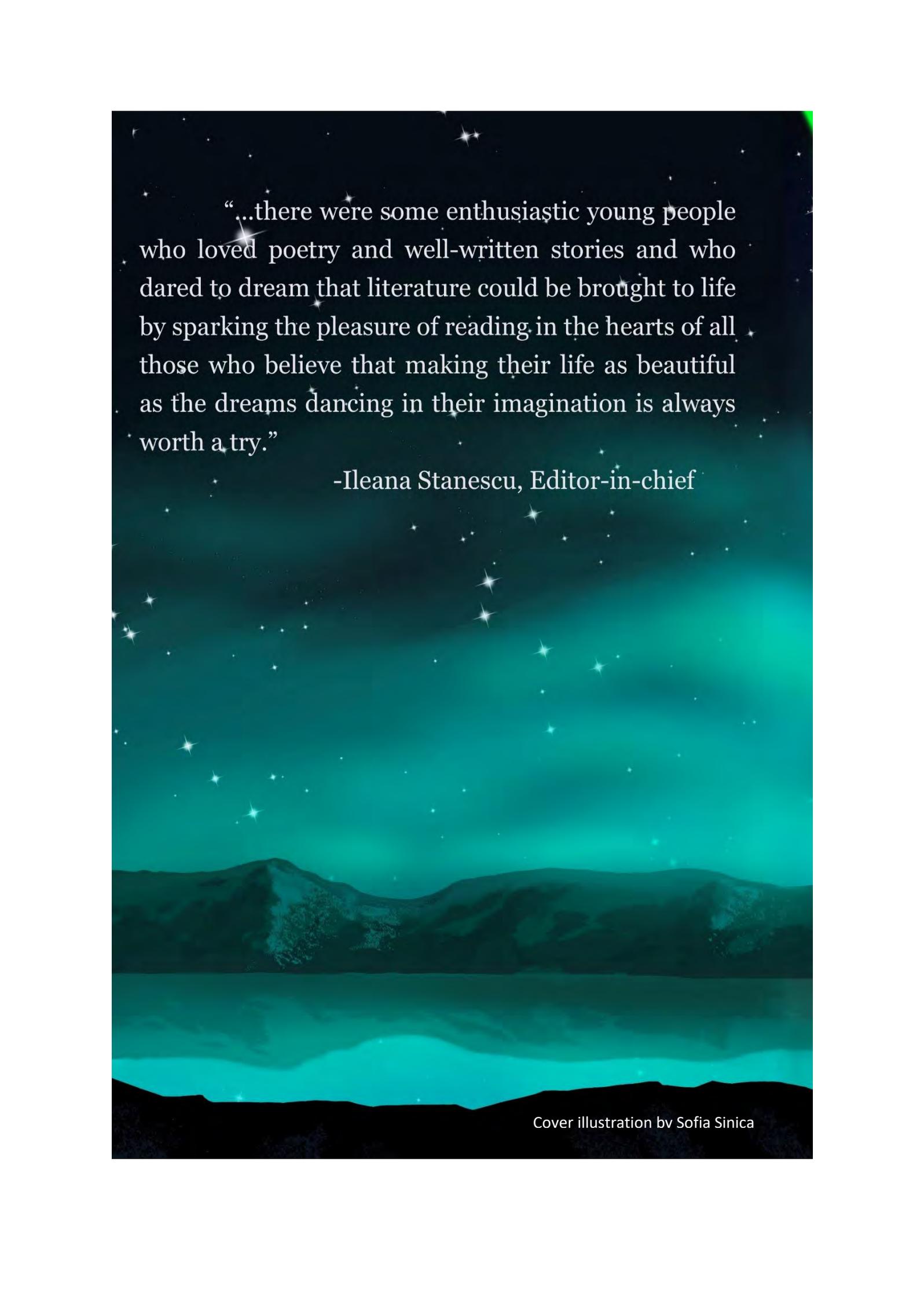
"I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading! - How much sooner one tires of anything than of a book! - - When I have a house of my own, - I shall be miserable if I have not an excellent library."

Jane Austen, "Pride and Prejudice"



Source: Pride and Prejudice, Chapter XIV (1813), Jane Austen



The background of the entire page is a teal-toned illustration. It depicts a landscape with rolling mountains in the middle ground and a dark, starry sky above. The stars are small, white, and scattered across the upper portion of the image. The overall color palette is a gradient of teal and dark green, with a black silhouette at the bottom.

“...there were some enthusiastic young people who loved poetry and well-written stories and who dared to dream that literature could be brought to life by sparking the pleasure of reading in the hearts of all those who believe that making their life as beautiful as the dreams dancing in their imagination is always worth a try.”

-Ileana Stanescu, Editor-in-chief

Cover illustration by Sofia Sinica