

FRIENDSHIPS: JASMINE'S STORY



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SEPTEMBER – 1st week – Monday

Dear diary, it has been so long since I last turn your pages. It was five years ago when I last told you of me!! Now I'm almost 11 and we're going to move again, this time to Formia. I'll have to start all over again. Surely, many things are changed, I don't remember my friends anymore: I was young, and now I will attend another school, where I will meet new friends. Formia is beautiful for the sun, the sea, the old towers, the living shops. My parents are happy to come back, and my sister is very happy too. I'm anxious. Who I will meet? Will I find any friends? The words of my mom are not enough; I need to stay with my friends. Birds change place too, but they fly together.



Wednesday

Dear diary, school started two days ago. I don't know anybody yet someone gave me such a look and others didn't even look at me. Only a girl sometimes smiles at me. I wish fervently to become her friend. Who knows why, when you arrive in a new environment, the others observe you like an extraneous? And why sometimes who already lives in a place can become a "stranger"? Between extraneous and foreigner there can be an understanding, I can feel united, I begin to meet a smile between many suspects and uncertain classmates. The-



re is always a "ugly duckling"! "The ugly duckling" is a tale which comes back in our life, but not always the ugly ducklings become wonderful swans.

Between the tales of my infancy, I remember even the sad story of "The Little Match Girl": she hasn't become a princess like Cinderella or Snow-white! She is died, reaching her beloved grandmother, when the last match burned out in that cold Christmas night. No one helped her, she had no friends. We should never be alone. Each one can help another person to feel better, and so each one can make sure that there is not any ugly duckling. We need friendship or not?

I try to understand this behaviour of my new classmates, but I am afraid that it can be difficult to make friends soon. Professors are nice, but I know that I'll have to commit very much; my school books are interesting too; and however, you know that I love to read and that I am very curious, and I have the wish to study just when I open it!

SEPTEMBER – 2nd week – Friday

Dear diary, after two weeks nothing changed, it's always the same story.

They laugh at me but I don't know why but I feel so sad for this. Luckily there is my little sister who is living the same experience. She says that things will get better with time. I'd like to know better all my classmates.



What can I do? It's true, maybe my Italian pronunciation can make laugh, but I can improve it! It is not easy to learn to communicate immediately like the others. But I see that not everybody talk like our professors would. I think that each of us has his own problems. Each of us is a bit child and a bit "Pinocchio".

My sister, maybe, doesn't understand well my problems: she thinks only to play, but you know, we are very different! We often talk about our new classmates, about their behaviour, and she smiles: in this period, even if we often discuss, she is the one who listen to me. Our parents have many problems to solve and things to think: the new house, the new work, the moving. They are not very careful to my problems, rather sometimes they tell me that it's my fault if my classmates have strange reactions, and that I have to adapt. But this is only a period and I hope that it will pass soon! During the life, there are always good and bad moments. It's important to face each difficulty with optimism and smile.

SEPTEMBER – 3rd week – Monday

Dear diary, my language professor has told about the pluralism and the diversity, and he has taken the occasion to favour my welcome. It has been an important day: each of my classmates has done a question to me,

about my tastes, my experiences, my life in Tunisia. I think that my professor is my best ally. It has been like if a veil had been opened. My classmates were transformed. I've thought to the school as a place in which all the children are obliged to stay because their parents want. I understand now that there are important relationships between children and between children and professors, and with parents too. In growing and living in different places, I understand that it's very important to be able to express myself. Our professors helps us in this, but it depends to us too. Now I need to have some point of reference in my professors, who can understand my situation of diversity, in comparison to the "normal" school and class. How can my professors help a "foreigner"?



Sunday

Hurray! In a week it will be my birthday. I'm going to be 11! Wow! I can't wait! I'm so excited!... I'd like to organize a party invite all my classmates. I have had a super idea! The party could be by a Tunisian theme! It's a beautiful idea, isn't it? Nadhira likes very much my idea, because But may help to make friends! I have thought to embellish my house with carpets, curtains and candles. A bit of Arabic atmosphere will not be bad! My parents have accepted my idea and my sister is very happy, because finally we can have our classmates with us! But will they

be happy? Will they come? I'd like that they know me for my sensitivity. Will they understand that my customs are beautiful and that we can have fun all together, by knowing the beloved traditions of each of us?

OCTOBER – 2nd week - Wednesday

Dear diary, I've just come back from a party of one of my classmates, it has just finished! I've thought again to my party... At the beginning I was a little worried because I thought that nobody would come, but when I heard the doorbell ring...

There were all my classmate at the door!! That was great, hurray! We had a lot of fun!

We danced, sang karaoke and we ate the molsouka, couscous and chakcauka. With my great surprise, each of my friends has brought a particular product: Francesca brought pizza; Luca Gaeta's tiella; Anna mozzarella; Marco parmigiano; Maria, who loves Spain, brought the paella; Lucia Italian cold cuts; Simone Formiana's spaghetti; Francesco, whom mother is Polish, brought bigos and pierogi. Between all this typical food, there was also kebab, prepared by my father, who has been in Turkey the last year. My mother, finally, prepared a big cake! We prepared small portions for each one with all the products, and everybody appreciated. Can the products of local tradition bond the peoples?

Francesca spent the night with me because her parents

couldn't come to pick her home...We have a lot of things in common: dance and music. That's great!! She also invited me to do homework a day. It's the first time someone has invited me home. I can't wait! And I thought that none wanted to be my friend.

When I think again to my party, I feel too happy. I continue to talk to my sister, who says that I'm becoming fool, but for me has been too important. I know, it will not be always a party, but for me it's an important step to think that my classmates are becoming my friends. About my sister, things are going better for her too. We don't discuss so often as before, and we have fun together. My parents are more calm too.

OCTOBER – 3rd week – Tuesday

Dear diary, I've received many gifts for my birthday, for example some books, some t-shirts and some music CD, but the most beautiful gift has been the big greeting card with all the names of my friends and with the sentence: "I've thought that your birthday is everything: living together, cheerfulness, joy, friendship. And every day you are more similar to this... For your birthday: happiness and forever our friendship".

One of the most beautiful songs in my new CDs is "Per dirti ciao" of Tiziano Ferro; since I'm curious, I searched the music video on internet: there are images of boys and girls of all the world who greet in the various lan-



guages. There are images in which the various flags and symbols join; there is the globe, where the word "ciao" joins all the peoples of the world. Instead, between the films, there is "Quasi amici", a story of friendship that has touched the heart of whoever has seen it: it is about a friendship between a young black man and a quadriplegic man, who, through their friendship, overcome the difficulties and hardships of their life in a dignified way and by having fun too.

OCTOBER – 4th week - Friday

Dear diary, today during the P.E lesson a very special thing happened...While I was going down the stairs, I tripped and...Do you guess who helped me? Gianluca!! He is a bit older than me but he is the most beautiful boy of the school! Like a stupid, I blushed to the root of my hair. And I wasn't able to say word. I think he noticed it! What a shame!! I ask to myself if he has done it only for education or because he wanted to be kind with me. I am happy because I've felt considered. My friends confide to me their sympathies for boys. I'd like to do it too, but I still can't. I think it is beautiful to have a friend to which confide and share my thoughts. Francesca is very close to me, but I can't still confide my sensations about Gianluca, maybe she can tease me or maybe she can feel neglected; or maybe she can be jealous. Sometimes I think that Francesca is more important. Gianluca has helped me to understand that I can have the attentions of boys. So, I can consider to have new friends between my classmates too. Even my professors take care of me. I am happy because I think that I'm beginning to take part of the group, and I hope that everything will go better.

NOVEMBER – 1st week – Thursday

Dear diary, you don't know how happy I am! Saber, my dear brother is back from Tunisia where he lived and finished his studies. It was a big surprise! I was in my room when Nadhira came to me screaming: "come downstairs". Once there I could see my dear big brother !! He wanted to know everything about my friends, my



professors, my school, my studies; I've seen him changed, or am I changing? We have talked for a long time, he has given to me many suggestions and he has told me to give time to my new classmates to know me, and then everything will go better. Then, he has talked with my parents, and me and my sister were there, listening to them. It's so beautiful to be again all together, in a new country.

Even if my dad has to travel very often, it's impossible to take the habitude to leave friends and to begin again everything each time. However, my brother has told that he will stay with us for a bit of time, and this has given a world of joy to me!! I will present him to my friends! I am so happy of my family!! Who knows if all the boys and girls are happy of their own family? Sometimes my parents are intrusive. They want that I obey, but I don't agree always with them. So, I hide something; I prefer to talk to Francesca. My father is more severe; it seems like all the worst things of the world had to happen to his sons! It's easier to talk with my mother. Surely, for me, they are everything. With them, I feel safe. My parents want that I make always a good impression, in all the occasions, but first of all with my professors. I do my best. If I want to respect my parents, should I always say "yes"?

Saturday

Dear diary, as I've already said I adore dancing and I know that for Francesca is the same thing. I desire to go to in the same-gym!! But it is a problem because mom doesn't want me to leave home alone!! I hope she will change her mind. I think to be enough adult to be able to work alone in this new town; instead, I think that my mom is still very worried. Francesca has some good habitudes and a good character. So, we easily understand each other, we face, we do homework together. She has told me that she wants to learn some words and proverbs of my original language. I hope to convince my mother to leave me go to the gym; she doesn't understand that it's very important for me. Besides, I can't delude Francesca! But I have good hopes... my mom is very kind with me...

NOVEMBER - 2nd week - Wednesday

Dear diary, good news!! My mother has decided to let me go to the gym with my best friend Francesca! She recommended me to be careful, to be prudent and so on...uff...I'm fed up with her advice but I'm also glad. I'm looking forward to start. I've already bought my special shoes!!... You had to see how Francesca was happy! She told that she will present me to her friends and that it will be a new fantastic experience for me. She told me about her dance teacher too; she says that this teacher is very good and very sweet too. Why I am so emotional?? Francesca is my main point of reference. I think to be important for her too, she wants me in each occasion. She make me feel important.

Friday

Dear diary, I've just come from dance and I've spent go-odtime, but some girls derided me because I was the only girl to wear the gym-suit. However thanks to Francesca I didn't give attention to them!...We started to learn a beautiful Jennifer Lopez's ballet and Valentina (our dance teacher) told us that we are going to dance a typical ballet of my country...I was really happy!! Valentina is very good, she is careful for each move-

ments that we do, she is available for everybody in every moment. She told me that I have to improve some movements, to move with more harmony. She presented me to all the group and I've seen sweet and smiling faces. The passion for the dance unites all of us. Each of us tries to do his own better; all of us give courage each other. Let's hope things will go always in this way! My optimism will give me reason! The best solution is always to face new adventures with smile and courage. But now I have to go to sleep!!

NOVEMBER - 3rd week - Tuesday

Dear diary, today at school a fantastic thing has happened! During the recreation I've found in my school locker a ticket on which was written: "Would you like to go out with me?...Call me: 333425060". He was Gianluca!! Wow! He's a very handsome boy!! He asked me if I wanted to go out with him, obviously! I became red like a pepper!! I feel upset. Everything is normal, or not? In fact, my friends often go out together: to McDonald's, to the cinema, in the main street on Saturday and Sunday afternoon... effectively, what's wrong? The most beautiful thing is that my friends are more and more. But there is a big problem (How strange! I solve a problem and another bigger one arrives!): I asked it to my mum...but she said no!! What can I do for to convince her??? My sister says I should not worry because mom does always in the same way, before she mumbles, then she gets angry and says "no", and finally she accepts. My father doesn't want it absolutely: he has got too many problems. My brother kids me and laugh. I've told it to Francesca and she says to have a little patience: all the parents do it! But what can I say to Gianluca? I risk a poor figure... What can I do to convince her??? Effectively, she has my age too, and she can understand what I feel. I know that she is worried for me, but I'm growing and I feel responsible.

Friday

Dear diary, perhaps I have convinced mum. She said I can go out if Saber comes with us. What a shame! My

brother as a bodyguard!! I'm trying to persuade Saber to let me and Gianluca alone!! I have a big hope!! I'm going to inform you!! I don't know if it's better now, that there are people interested to me, or if it was better before, when I was "no one". My mother doesn't understand that it's important for me to have friends, people to study together, to walk, to talk, to exchange ideas, to exercise in the language. I need to enter in this new world, without cancelling the past. The past is important: it's important to remember our own roots and the history of own country. But this new "present" is more beautiful than what I thought. And I need to have the trust of my mother. I think to what I would do if I were in the shoes of my friends. Surely, I would do everything possible to ease the newcomer, and surely my parents would appreciate my commit and my generosity. Friendship is a serious thing, it can't rise in a few time, it is based on the trust; but how can you trust in someone who doesn't talk with you, who doesn't know you, who doesn't meet you except for in class, at the break or on the stairs, where they compete to push each other? Do you think that my mother will understand? I'll let you know!!

NOVEMBER – 4rd week - Wednesday

Dear diary, finally I went out with Gianluca who accepted Saber willingly and he introduced him some of his friends. Saber was very happy! We went shopping, he offered me an ice cream and he asked me if I want to go out again with him!!! And I answered Yes!! It's wonderful! I can't say how me and Saber were happy! You can imagine my happiness!!! I know that Saber need to get out of our new home and ... of his books! I must tell you that also mom and dad were happy; they continue to recommend me not to go from one mood to another excess; they often tell me to do not make illusions about friendship; but I notice that they are happy when they see that me, my sister and Saber have no problems here in Formia.

Effectively, I have to admit a problem: today I've discussed with Francesca. She is my best friend. I tell her my

problems and she does the same with me. We agree about everything and we help each other. But I can't tolerate that sometimes she says what I have to do. Today I had to buy a t-shirt. We've gone to the shop and I had chosen an orange t-shirt, but she doesn't agree, because she said that a t-shirt which could valorise more my face. I didn't like, but she insisted, and I was annoyed, because it seemed like if she wanted to choose for me. It's not the first time: other times, I've surrendered to her suggestions. Francesca hasn't talked to me for all the afternoon. Between friends, is it always necessary to have always the same opinions and tastes?

Saturday

Dear diary, Gianluca gets on with Saber and so he leaves me a bit of breathing. Also for Saber the change is difficult! Today at school we've done a wonderful work; about the school... I don't write never because everything is OK. The first colloquy with the my parents has been successful; teachers are satisfied about my commitment at school; they say that I'm educated and my behavior is good with everybody; I need to improve a bit the Italian language, especially in writing; I am very good at math. Now I come back to the work we did in school today ... it has been wonderful. When I arrived in Formia, everybody told me that in my school there are many projects, and between them the Comenius Project. I asked my friends what it is and they said that since last year we have many friends in Europe: Spain, Poland and Turkey. With them, we have cultural exchanges, that is, we are pen pals and chat and meet periodically by Skype.

DECEMBER – 1st week - Monday

Today a bad thing has happened. Not everybody thinks that a foreign girl is however a person. There are some boys and girl who have fun to tell me "wash yourself". I tried to give an answer, but the results are grimaces. They have been turned away by Francesca and my classmates. Is it necessary to turn them away? The colour of the skin can make us different, derided and divided?

Wednesday

With my language professor, we have told what is happened on Monday. He asked my same question to all my classmates. Everybody told immediately "no" and each of them has come to hug me. He has told me that their friendship is not enough, it was necessary that everybody said "no" and to reflect about the information and the exchange, in any place, not only in the classroom. It could be beautiful that even the other children could know really the beauty of the acceptance and of the friendship between diversities.

Saturday

All of us wait for Christmas. There will be a long period of holidays. At school, there is a great happiness! All the themes that we analyse are referred to peace, solidarity



and friendship. We have proposed to read in class some pages of the books "Cuore" and "The Little Prince". Our professors tell us that each class of our school will discuss and reflect on these themes. I am happy, and my friends too. It is like if we had won an important battle for everybody. At the exit of the school, I've gone with Francesca at her home, and we've been together for all the afternoon.

DECEMBER – 2nd week - Tuesday

Today has been dedicated to the tales of the book "Cuore".

Our professor divided us in 3 groups. Each group has read and commented a tale. At the end, each of us has done a reflection. The message is that solidarity, courage and friendship can favour the cohesion between persons and peoples, and that the heroes are just the weakest. We moved and felt more united. In the afternoon, I've talked to my parents about these feelings, and they agree. We have met to write letters to our pen pals in Poland: it is nice to have to communicate with far friends, we have never met them, but it's nice to create this kind of bonds. We have also prepared the work and the gifts that the Headmaster will send to our far friends from Turkey, Poland and Spain. For me, it is a new experience and it is very beautiful.

DECEMBER – 3rd week - Monday

Today is a sad day, because I have to greet my friends before Christmas' holidays. I will come back in my native country, but I stay in Formia with my heart. I agreed with Francesca and the other friends how to keep in touch every day through Internet, so we can continue our friendly relationship and tell each other. I will see again the other classmates who I left when I went in Formia. Will they see me different? Will I see them different? How many things I will have to tell, and how many things I will hear from them? Each of us has a story to tell, and for each one this can begin with "Once upon a time...".

DECEMBER – 4th week – Thursday

Dear diary, my return in my native country has been strange. The things that I thought to know had a new aspect. Can the same place have new meanings? And can people say new things? How much curiosity around me, how much questions! I felt important for all the things that I learned and for the friendship that I brought with me. I was the bridge between my Formia's friends and my old friends in my native country. My parents were happy and proud. My sister was a bit less happy, but my brother was very happy to have all of us again with him, and to not be alone for a bit of time.

Sunday

Dear diary, I've received and accepted some invitation to stay with the families of my parents and with my old friend. Everybody wanted to know how much I am changed. I ask to myself if they wished to have me with us or if they wanted that I bring to them a new way of knowing and understanding the other customs and habitudes. I've brought with me many things to give and to show. The curiosity has the power to open each door. So, I've told my diary. They have listened to my anxieties, my problems, but also my joy and my satisfactions, which have become their too.

Thanks to you, my dear diary, I've had the possibility to tell myself and to maintain the bond with the memories of the experiences that I've lived with my new Formia's friends.

JANUARY – 1st week – Monday

Dear diary, time has passed fast! We're come back in Formia.

I feel calm; it is like if I'd never left this town. I am proud to can have more than one point of reference. I know to have friends and beloved people in two different places.



I know that I can tell to all of my friends that they can be friends too. While I'm waiting for a bit of time the start of my lessons, my parents are already at work. I have to

stay a bit more with my sister: she has to finished her homework, while I've already done everything. She has a great fantasy, she likes to play, draw and sing, to tell fables to the dolls and listen stories from me and my parents. As me, she has problems with the language, but she is overcoming her difficulties, because she loves reading. Nadhira meet her friends too, particularly with a friend named Simone, a very curious child with round blue glasses! But I think with sadness to Saber, who has remained in Tunisia to complete his studies; he'd like to come in Europe to study Medicine and to enrich his experience.

Saturday

Together with Francesca and our families, we have decided to extend our knowledge, by visiting cultural and artistic place of our Country. We will go to Roma and to the Vatican; we will visit Vatican Museum and the City Centre. We'll go to Sperlonga too, to visit the archaeological museum; we'll go to Cassino, to visit Montecassino Abbey and the War Cemeteries of the Second World War. We'll go to Pompeii and we will see the archaeological excavation of the old town buried from the Vesuvio's eruption at the time of Romans. We will visit Napoli to see the wonderful gulf and the fascinating lane of Christmas Crib.

JANUARY – 2nd week – Friday

Dear diary, the scholastic activities have started again. The commit is harder. My professors pretend more and more attention and best results. In Italian language, Francesca helps me particularly. I continue with the dance group, which help me in physical exercise and to be with my friends. I feel the responsibility to give more with my abilities. The right to the diversity is based on the participation and the productive work.

Saturday

Dear diary, the school continues. The cold weather favour the meetings and the activities in the warmth of the houses, where I meet in group with my classmates. Formia's climate has warmer days too. I walk in the

street with Francesca too, looking for the shops and on the beach. The literature professor has proposed the reading of "The Little Prince" and we're gone to buy the book.

JANUARY – 3rd week – Monday

Dear diary, today we've read the most beautiful pages of "The Little Prince"... what a silence! We were everybody involved by the reading of the book. We've told our comments on the words: "Could you ever live a friendship so deep?". The friendship is an important feeling, and we find it in each book and experience...



The end of FEBRUARY

It's getting a little bit warmer finally. I miss spring and summertime. In my dreams I go back to Tunisia... But I must admit that winter can be attractive too. Today I participated in the Comenius Project meeting. Before I'd heard about this Project from my friends, so I knew that in that Project we meet new friends from Spain, Poland and Turkey. We learn about our cultures, write letters and have Skype video meetings. Today I also took part in this kind of a meeting for the first time. It was a video meeting with friends from Poland. They showed us winter. Although I miss a sunny seaside, I was watching a winter landscape in northern Europe



in great delight. Trees, roads-all covered with snow. Our friends from Poland told us a humorous thing that they not always manage to get to school because the roads are sometimes not possible to be used. We were watching slides showing a break time in the Polish school. The students were throwing snowballs at each other and the teachers and school cleaning staff were watching with disapproval. This game may not be the smart, but personally I would move to Poland to take part in such a snow battle with pleasure. When the video meeting was over, we started talking about the Project and many of us admitted that we would love to visit any of the Project Partner Countries. Our teacher said that maybe it would be possible to organize such a visit soon, for example to Poland. We welcomed his promise with great enthusiasm! Is the visit really possible? After a short chat it turned out that none of us has ever been to Poland. Some friends from the Project visited Spain during the holidays, two boys often visit Turkey because their parents come from there, but nobody knows Poland. We were so excited about our teacher's idea that during the break we asked Francesca, whose mum is Polish, to tell us something about the country. Although I consider Francesca to be my best friend, only now I learnt that every year she spends part of her summer holidays at her grandparents' in Poland. She

said that she likes the country and she goes there with pleasure. She also promised to ask her mum to prepare for us a map of the most important places in Poland worth visiting. The teacher, who was listening to our conversation, started damping down our enthusiasm. He said that it was only an idea, nothing really certain, that we had to think about the costs. Firstly we needed to plan and calculate the costs of the visit and only after that start dreaming... We know that the teacher wants us not to get disappointed in case the visit wouldn't be possible, but it is him, who teaches us that if you truly dream of something-you make it happen. I came back home in a very good mood and in the evening I told my parents about our plans. They were listening with great interest, but judging on my father's face expression, it won't be easy to convince him to let his little daughter to go alone so far away, without the parents, with the friends only. And the teacher, of course. But can the teachers be trusted enough to take responsibility for such one and only like me? Poor dad! I will have to convince him somehow because I can't imagine my friends going without me. I know what my argument in favor is going to be: I will tell him that this way of spending time together brings people closer, and my parents truly want me to feel good in my new, but for me not so new, group. I have to think it over really well.

The beginning of MARCH

I have to study more and more. I've decided to do my best to get better marks not only in Math, which I like more and more, but also in other school subjects. Maybe if my parents see that I am a good student they will let me go to Poland, which I'm dreaming about. I'm getting better and better in the Italian language, my friends have also noticed that and they are paying me compliments. I asked Francesca to teach me one Polish word a day, every day. She agreed but she said that she isn't a good Polish speaker because at home they speak Italian, and when her mum goes back home in the evening-she is too tired to teach Francesca the native language of her grandparents. I think it's not good. I

wouldn't like to forget my native language. I am happy to have more than one reference point in my life. I have my friends and beloved people in two places. I have to take care of it. Meeting new people, cultures and traditions is important, but you can't forget about your roots, places you come from. This is what I think. I shared my thoughts with my parents. They agreed with me, but also criticized that I judge my friend so easily. They helped me realize that she was born in Italy and Italy is her Mother Land. In my case it was easier because I came to Italy as an eleven-year-old girl, I had time to get to know my grandparents' home country, Tunis. They are right. I agree with my parents, which probably proves that the understanding between the generations is possible.

The end of MARCH

I have less and less time. I study a lot. At our school we talk about the visit to Poland more often. Our dreams become real. Recently there was a teachers-parents meeting, where the visit was also discussed. Although I insist, my parents don't want to tell me the details of that meeting. I can see that they are quietly talking about something and glimpsing at me. I have a feeling that mum is trying to convince dad to let me go. I'm pretending that I don't notice anything, but deep in my heart I'm so happy! I asked Francesca what her parents said but she doesn't seem to be as excited as I am. She knows that she will go for sure. Besides, it's not going to be her first visit. I think that Francesca and me differ a lot. I've noticed that a long time ago. But I don't really care, I like her a lot and I know she likes me too. I was wondering if the feeling between us is just acquaintance or friendship? What is friendship? I'm sure this question is nothing special. Many people in the past asked and they are still asking about that. There are many possible answers, but to me friendship is a special bond between two people. I think true friendship is about honesty, kindness, loyalty and trust. Not necessarily in that order, but for sure they are all based on experience, observance, common issues, problems solving. I re-

member when we were reading "The Little Price" in the classroom, I paid special attention to the words of the Fox. He said that you have to tame your friend and that it is a long process. Have I already tamed Francesca? Has she tamed me? One I know for sure: I truly care about her. Maybe if I get brave enough I should talk about it with her? But when? At school there are a lot of things going on, all the time somebody approaches us and goes away, and that Gianluca... I need to write about him one day, but for now I feel a bit ashamed. Can we be friends with a girl only, or with a boy too? But do I really want to make friends with Gianluca? What am I feeling for that boy?

Still MARCH

I've decided to talk to Francesca on our way back from the dance classes. I like those evening dance classes more and more. I'm in a better physical condition and in better mood, despite of being so tired! When I am looking in the mirror I can see quite a pretty girl, and the boys glancing at me prove that I am right. Yesterday I asked Nadhira if I am pretty? She looked at me and said that I am silly. She is still a child and doesn't understand that for a girl the way she looks is very important.. I've noticed that for a long time nobody was impolite to me because of my skin color, and those glances of the boys... Yesterday I got a short letter, but I have no idea who wrote it. I was looking around at school hoping that I will be able to spot the author, but I still have no idea who was it from. I showed the letter to Francesca, but she ignored it. She said these are silly things. Maybe I am wrong, but I could feel that Francesca was displeased with something. Why? Was she jealous?

APRIL

Today I had a small misunderstanding with Francesca. We were going back with our dance classes with a group of friends and talking about our weekend activities. I said that I was shopping with my sister, and that today I am wearing a skirt that I bought last weekend. The girls welcomed my taste for clothes with enthusias-



sm, they said that next time we should go shopping together. We were laughing and joking, and I didn't even notice that Francesca lost her mood. When only we were left alone, she started telling me off. She reminded me that we were talking on Skype on Friday, she suggested going shopping on Saturday, but I told her that I had no time because I had to study. My parents say that I spend too much time on pleasures and not enough on studying. I explained to my friend that this is true, that my parents worry about me a lot, that every time I go out they call me and ask me where I am, what I am doing, and what time I am going to be back home. I also explained that I went shopping unexpectedly, and thanks to my sister. Our mum promised Nadhira to get her something cool for her birthday which she's going to celebrate next week. In the last moment it turned out that mum couldn't go, Nadhira started crying, suddenly it became very unpleasant, and mum suggested that I should go with Nadhira. Francesca was listening to my explanation still looking angry. She said that I could have invited her, but apparently I didn't want to, because now when I finally managed to settle down in a new place, when I have new friends, I have forgotten that she was the very first person who wanted to make friends with me in the times when I was a shy stranger. I could feel that I was getting angry with Francesca. She is important to me but do we have to do everything

together? On Saturday I went out with my sister and I didn't think of calling Francesca. Is that bad? Do I have to share every single moment with my friend?

Sunday

There is some tension between me and Francesca since then. I don't know what to do. I'm analyzing that situation and I have no idea what to think about it. Sometimes it seems to me that Francesca is right saying that I'm selfish and insensitive, sometimes I think she's wrong. I need somebody's advice. But whose? My sister is too young to understand. Mum? I'm not a kid any longer to inform my parents about all my problems. Maybe I should just apologize to Francesca. But if I say: I'm sorry it would mean that say that it was my fault, and I don't feel that I did something bad. If I pretend that nothing happened, Francesca may think that I ignore her. I really care about her but I just don't know how to talk to her. Maybe it's not me, maybe she is selfish and insensitive. She wants me to think about her all the time, about her needs. I have to think it over.

Monday

I would like to talk to Francesca but I think she is avoiding me. She disappears somewhere during the breaks,



so there are no chances to talk. After the lessons she was going back home with other girls. By the time I pa-

cked my bag, she was already gone. When I was leaving school, I saw a notice. On Friday there will be Comenius Project group meeting to discuss the visit to Poland! I felt as if I was flying!

Tuesday

I was talking to my parents for a long time. About the visit to Poland, of course. I can't believe but they finally agreed! I had to promise to listen to the teacher. I will have to call home every day. And that I won't do anything silly. Of course I promised, I was listening to them, I showed that I understand. Later I thought that adults are strange. My parents are bringing me up to be a responsible person, why don't they trust me? I'm going with my friends and teachers to see a new country, to meet new people. Do all the parents overreact or only mine?

Friday

After the meeting! Finally decided! Soon we are going. But not all of us. I was surprised. Till today I thought that only my parents are too protective, and it turned out that my friends didn't get their parents acceptance, and I got it quite easily. I shared my thoughts with Francesca. She said she had no problems with her parents. I



plucked up the courage and told her all my dilemmas. I confessed that I want us to be friends and that I do

remember that she was the first person who supported me when I came to school. There was a moment of silence and then Francesca started crying. I didn't know how to react. Why was she crying? I felt so stupid. Unexpectedly she kissed me on my cheek and ran away. I didn't even have the chance to call her name. I have no idea what it means. Is everything going to be all right now? It reminded me of a sentence from "The Little Prince": "It is such a mysterious place, the land of tears". This is what I'm experiencing right now. Maybe the time we will spend with my friend in Poland will bring the answers to my questions and throw my doubts away?

Monday

Today there was a Skype video meeting with Poland. Our Polish friends presented us the plan of the stay and there was a slide show of the places worth seeing. I liked it a lot. I have never heard about those places, but I will visit them with pleasure. We asked Francesca if she knows the places, but she answered that they grandparents live in a small town in the Warmia province, which is situated in the north of Poland, and Francesca has never got the chance to see Warsaw. Our visit is going to be her first visit to the capital city too. Our teacher gave us a task to get prepared. Each of us has to get the information about the country and the cities we are going to see. I invited Francesca to my home to search for the information on the Internet together. I'm so happy!

MAY - visit to Poland, day one

Since yesterday I'm in Poland! The journey was exceptionally quick. I wasn't tired at all, and something unexpected happened. While travelling we were talking, singing songs and joking. At one moment a boy from our group, whom I have actually never talked to, joined me. We only said: "hello" to each other on the Comenius group meeting. I didn't even know his name. He asked if I remembered him. I showed my surprise and said that: yes, of course I did, we participated in the same meeting. I got the impression that he was embarrassed. There was a short moment of silence and then he said



that we had met before. "When?"-I asked. He tried to get away with his eyes. I was feeling embarrassed. "What is he trying to tell me?"-I thought and I felt it wasn't going to be anything nice. I was right. He was quiet for a longer moment and then he confessed that he was one of those boys who were laughing at me, shouting: "Wash yourself". I didn't say a word. "Why is he saying that?" He kept quiet too. Then he spoke. I think his voice was trembling. "Jasmine, I want you to know that I'm very sorry for that. I was just stupid. I don't know why I did that. I'm very sorry. Will you forgive me?" I was silent. I couldn't answer. After that unpleasant event for a long time I felt bad and I was sad. And now this boy and his confession... "I was thinking a lot about you and about me". "Today I wouldn't say things like that. I regret those words. I've changed. I've become wiser... I'm sorry". That was strange. I can't explain why, but I wasn't angry with him. I believed he was honest. But somehow I couldn't say a word. I gave him my hand, which he shook. A little bit too hard. "Thank you. I will prove that I know how to be a good friend. You'll see". He came back on his seat. Then I noticed that Francesca was watching us. "He likes you"-she said. "Did you hear what we were talking about?" "No, but I guess I know". "I don't think so..."-I sighed. Francesca shrugged her shoulders. I will retell her our conversation when there is a good moment. She

will be surprised. I think that it was an act of bravery of that boy to confess all those things. He judged himself, and he didn't have to do that. I didn't remember him, so he could have pretended that he had never met me before. I think it wasn't an easy decision. I was impressed. But I can't get overexcited about him. So far these are just the words, and you should judge people by what they do, not by what they say. This is what I think.

Visit to Poland, day two

Yesterday we met our Polish friends whom we'd met on Skype video meetings. It was very nice. Everybody said something about himself. I noticed that my presentation was impressive. My new friends were interested in my home country, they asked me questions about Tunisia-it turned out that some of them spend holidays there. I told them about the traditions and culture of my country. Everyone was interested in. The atmosphere was very pleasant. I felt cool, I was in the center of attention, but I wasn't stressed. What the other people were saying was also welcomed with enthusiasm. Francesca said about her Polish roots, which was cheered. Later we were talking about our interests. I've noticed that we are all very similar. It turned out that the Polish friends know "Pinocchio" perfectly well. When somebody isn't telling the truth, they have even a saying: "You are lying. I can judge that on your nose". I was pleased to learn that "The Little Prince" is a few persons' favorite reading. I read this story this year only, and I have fallen in love with it. On my mind I still go back to it. Apart from sharing literary interests, we share music too-we listen to the same songs. And finally dance, my favorite! Some of my new friends like dancing too, some girls belong to a school dance club, they perform on different school occasions. We decided to have a disco one day! I think that's a great idea! Before coming here I worried a bit if the language or culture barrier won't be too big, and if I will be able to make new friends. And now I'm thinking: "What barrier?" We differ only on the surface, and there are more things which unite us than differ us.

Everyone is open-hearted. Maybe it's because we are guests, but maybe not because of that. All in all, there are no reasons to show dislike. In my free time I called my parents to say that I'm OK. I'm grateful that despite their doubts, they let me go so far away. My parents are happy and I am glad.

In the afternoon we visited Warsaw. I think it's a beautiful city. I learned that the capital city of Poland is called "an old new city" because during the World War II it was totally destroyed, and after the War it was rebuilt. In the reconstruction the paintings of Belotto Canatello, the 18th century Italian artist, were helpful. He was a great admirer of Warsaw and he painted many streets, residences, churches, etc. It seems strange to me. We were walking down the Old Town and somehow I couldn't imagine that these houses and churches are not several hundred, but just several dozen years old. Tomorrow we are going to visit the museum, where we are going to watch the film: "The City of Ruins" showing the capital city of Poland soon after the War ended, where the site of fire was all that was left. To be honest, I don't know what to think about it. So far I have never been interested in history. My favorite subject is Math. This year during the summer holidays we are going with my parents and Francesca to Rome and other important places for the history of Italy. It appears strange to me, that my journey throughout the history begins with the history of the country which I hadn't heard of before. I'm wondering if I'm gonna like it.

Visit to Poland, day three

It was an incredible day. I'm very tired, but also glad. We visited the Warsaw Rising Museum. When we were on our way to the museum I was irritated. I was thinking that I didn't want to spend such a beautiful day in the boring museum, watching things from the history of the country, which I knew nothing about. Now when the day is over I think that it's good that these days in Poland won't be spent only on fun, playing games and entertainment. I can feel that I left the museum as a



more mature, wiser person. Now I know that the world means not only the present time, but it also includes the past, which sometimes unites and sometimes separates. The guide in the museum was a young girl, only a few years older than we, and her words were so passionate as if she experienced the events herself! At the beginning we watched a short, lasting a few minutes only, film... I was shocked! My friends too. It seems impossible that the ruins we saw on the film is the city we are visiting right now. But still... The guide told us the story of the city, what happened to it, and about the people who spontaneously decided to fight for it, to defend it. I was watching the photos on the walls of the museum and I was surprised to see that most of them were young boys and girls. I also listened to moving, unbelievable stories about people who in the name of friendship risked their own lives, and often they died. Die for your friend-that's something I can't comprehend! Can friendship be so important that you value your friend's life more than yours? On the other hand I think that without it-there is no friendship. I am wondering if in our contemporary world things like that are still happening? What would I do in such a si-

uation? I prefer not to think about it. I don't want to experience such friendship. I don't want any war, any death. But this seemingly safe world of mine, only seems safe. All the time around the world wars start. Why? I think that the people should seek for things they have in common only, not things which differ them. That's unbelievable that people can still show hostility and kill each other. I thought that if all the people learnt history, there wouldn't be any wars.

We left the museum satisfied, but quiet. Our Polish friends decided that we need to cheer up, so we went for a dinner. Everyone chose what he wanted. We found out that bigos isn't a favourite, traditional Polish dish at all! Young people prefer a pizza more. Our good moods were back. We decided to visit the city in small groups. Ewa, Bartek and Tomek were my and Francesca's guides. They are a few years older than we, they are last year lower secondary school students, but I can't feel the age difference. Maybe it's even better that our guides are older, so that our teachers had no objections to let us go with them. At the beginning of our Old Town walk it was hard to talk and laugh because every few steps we took, there were labels and boards commemorating tragic events of World War II. Francesca and me were curious if that difficult past makes the relations between Poland and Germany hard. But according to what Ewa and Tomek said, the past belongs to the past. Our friends told us that since a few years they are participating in Polish-German exchange of students. The thing is that during the summer holidays a group of students from Ewa, Tomek and Bartek's school visits a partner school in Germany. They stay at German families', they learn about the culture and tradition of the German people, visit the neighbourhood, participate in sports competitions, workshops, etc. And next year they change-a group of German students comes to Poland. I liked that idea a lot! I think that if people thought similarly, there wouldn't be wars in the world. We have to remember of the good things in the nations, and forget what was bad in the past.

Later in the evening

This tiring but a very nice day finished with an argument between Francesca and me. Actually I have no idea how it happened. After we came back to our room, Francesca started crying. I thought that maybe she was



ill, but she didn't want to talk to me, she shouted at me that I didn't understand anything and that I was bad. I don't know what's going on. What's my fault? What have I done? I am analysing the whole day. Yes, I remember that something must have happened because during our dinner and later during our walk Francesca was quiet. It was me who was talking to the boys and Ewa, although Francesca speaks better English than me, and she speaks Polish a bit. I was trying to do my best: I was using the dictionary, miming, which caused funny situations all the time. We were all laughing, and Francesca was keeping away from us. Now she is pretending that she is sleeping. But I can hear that she is still crying. What to do? I'm very sorry. And again the sentence from "The Little Prince": "It is such a mysterious place, the land of tears" crossed my mind.

Visit to Poland, day four

Today we were in the Royal Park. It's a beautiful park.



It could have been nice, but it wasn't. Francesca didn't say a word to me. In the evening there is going to be a disco, so maybe then she'll tell me what's going on.

In the evening

After the disco. I love dancing so I went there with great pleasure. At first I couldn't chill out, because Francesca's miserable face expression was a kind of a remorse, but music always works. It was great fun, I could see that the boys paid attention to me. It wasn't like that before. I must admit that being in the centre of attention



feels fantastic. I'm grateful that Valentina taught me how to move on the dance floor. When I'm dancing I feel free. Suddenly something unexpected happened. When I was dancing with Tomek, Francesca ran to us and pushed me. I would have fallen if my partner hadn't held me. Francesca ran out of the room. For a short moment I was confused, but I decided to follow her to explain the thing clearly. What I heard from her left me speechless. Francesca said, actually shouted, that since I came to Formia she liked me and she wanted to make friends with me. I looked shy and lost in a new place, that's why she decided to take care of me. That's the word she used: take care. She said that she treated me like her sister, and her family like a family member. Everyone liked me. Later Francesca said that I've changed a lot lately, and that now she was surprised that she hadn't noticed how difficult I am before. I was listening in silence because I didn't know what to say. She called me an egoistic and selfish person. I had no idea that this is what my best friend thinks of me. Actually, we have never discussed our feelings. I was sure that from the two of us, it's rather me who has reasons to complain, as it was Francesca who often acted selfishly and made me fulfil her needs. Now I heard that I was her friend when other people were teasing me, when I didn't have many friends. And now when I'm not a stranger any more, when I realized that I'm pretty and attract the boys' attention-I forgot about Francesca. She said that yesterday during the walk I didn't talk to her, but I was having a nice time laughing with the boys instead. And that I wouldn't even notice if she disappeared. I was shocked with her words. I told her that this is not true, but she didn't want to listen and shouted that I didn't really care about her feelings. It all ended up in both of us crying. Francesca stated that she didn't want to be my friend any longer, I said that I don't agree. I realized that we differ more than I expected, but because of that we should take care of what we have in common more. If we were the same, our friendship would be boring. I told her that she was difficult many times too, but I

was patient with her. My words worked. She was surprised and asked when she was selfish to me. I recalled that misunderstanding with the skirt and shopping. And then I realized that I'm saying silly things. We argue about unimportant things. I apologized to Francesca. She apologized to me too and we started crying again. I hope our friendship will continue and it will be getting more and more beautiful. We made a promise to support and help each other. I would like to depend on Francesca in every situation. We also promised loyalty, and deep in my heart I wanted to become a better person from that moment on. And I promised to always remember the quote from my favourite story: "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly. What is essential is invisible to the eye".



Last day in Poland

It is the moment to say goodbye to our Polish friends and mates. This morning was the last visit in their school with all of them. All the students have made a big party for us, and in this moment we have had the opportunity to exchange e-mails, address and telephone numbers, and at the same time we have promised to be in touch frequently.

At the end of the morning, they have sung song to say goodbye, and we have gone to the airport. In fact, we



my friend has said goodbye and see you tomorrow, nothing more.

My parents were anxious with my arrival, they only wanted that I told them all that I have seen and how I spent those days in Poland, my little sister only wanted to hug me and know if I had brought a present for her. Now I understand how important I am for my family, we have only spent five days separated and they have been always remembering me.

I am so tired that I only want to have a shower and go

have spent some wonderful days there.

Once in the plane, Francesca, my travel partner, my best friend, only looked at me sadly, but she didn't tell me anything during the flight. I think that she is angry with me and I don't know what to do. Three hours later, we have arrived in Rome,

to bed in order to rest; tomorrow I will tell them some more details.

Goodnight dear diary.

First day at our school after the travel

Today we have returned to our school after our great travel in Poland. In fact it has been a strange day, all of our teachers and the rest of our classmates have welcomed us and they have asked about our experience in Poland. They were anxious for our arrival. At last we have forgotten our normal classes, and we have spent all the morning telling about our travel and showing all our photos. I can not think in a different thing different from those wonderful days, although my main thought is my friend, my best friend Francesca. What can I do to solve the problem? I want to be her friend forever



This afternoon, I have decided to go for a walk by the seaside. I want to be alone, in this way I can think in my problem with my great friend Francesca. I have been thinking and thinking without reaching any solution. I have sat on the beach and I have remembered a sentence from my favourite book "The little Prince", it was: "you know? ...when someone is sad, the sunset is pleasant". I have had the opportunity of thinking in my friend, but for a moment in anything.

Middle of MAY

This morning, in the school, our teachers have said that we have to work hard, because we have only few days until the end of the school year. In this way they have proposed a last work for the Comenius Project. The following week we are going to have a video meeting with our Spanish partners, but this time we are going to work in a different way. In spite of show them our culture and traditions, we have to investigate different aspects of Spain, and they have to do the same with Italy. In this way we show them what we have learnt about them and their country.

Suddenly, I have an idea. If I do the investigation work with Francesca, I would have more opportunities to speak with her and I would spend more time with her. So Francesca will think that I truly want to stay with her. I am going to speak with her, I have to do it.

MAY the 16th.

Dear diary,

Today I have proposed to Francesca if she wants to do the Comenius work with me, she laughed at me, she hug me, and of course she have accepted. She said that she was so glad of working with me. I think that she is not angry, not with me. I know that she has some problem, but I am not her problem, because she is delighted of being together. It seems as if there wasn't any problem with us before. It seems as we were in those days when we met for the first time. I am so happy.

This afternoon we have been at Francesca's house in order to investigate about Spain. Today is Friday, so her

mother has proposed me to stay in their house to sleep tonight. So Francesca's mother has phoned my mother to tell her. My parents have agreed, although I thought that my parents don't want that I sleep out of my house. They are a bit conservative. Perhaps Francesca's mother wants we speak about something.

We have been searching for some information about Spain on the Internet, videos, photographs, texts, famous people... we have learnt that throughout history, Spain has been conquered by people from different cultures, so they have left a great cultural legatee, above all referring to monuments. Spain has a great Roman, Muslim, Christian... heritage.

Later, we have thought that our friends are from a little village in Cordoba, so we have centred in this area. In our investigation about Cordoba, we have found some videos which made us a tour around the city: The Mosque, The fortress, the narrow streets..... Those things made me remember me life in Tunisia.

We have finished our work, and we have gone to have dinner with her family. Francesca's mother made some delicious pizzas. Later, we have telling some stories about our travel, and we have laughing a lot. In fact, Francesca's family is great, it seems as they met me since I was born.

MAY 21st.

Dear diary,

Today we have had the video meeting with the Spanish people. It was an interesting experience. We have showed all what we learnt about their country, and they have showed us what they have learnt about Italy. They have introduced themselves and they have told us about their likes. They seem so nice. Truly this type of project is a good opportunity to meet people. I like meeting people, but can they be our friends?

At the end of our classes, Gianluca have come to speak with me. He told me that I am always with Francesca, and he wants to spend more time with me. I don't know what to do. Both of them are my friends, but I think that Francesca needs me.

Beginning of JUNE

Dear Diary,

Today has been a weird day. I had strange dreams during the night that woke me up several times. I was sweating and dizzying, feeling that something was wrong. But actually I can't tell what might be wrong, because everything in my life is getting better, lately.

Anyway I will keep you up to date with anything related to those nightmares. At school, it's been a plain day. I

feel more confident this term; I think I will get better marks if I keep working as hard as I have been working all this year.

In the afternoon I went to the dance school and I saw something terrible. One of my mates, Georgina, twisted her ankle when she was doing a very difficult step.

She started

crying very loud and all of us stopped dancing to see if she was all right. But she wasn't. The dance instructor called her parents and they were to pick her up and take her to the hospital. I really wonder how she is right now, but I don't even have her phone number. She is not in my class, not even my school. But I guess someone will be able to tell me how she is, tomorrow.

Besides, the thing between Francesca and me are quite calm. We have not talked too much, just as normally. But I don't know. I feel that something is colder than it should be. You know, we are best friends, but sometimes I don't know if we are as close as best friends nor-

mally are.

And finally, Gianluca. Well, I don't know what to say about him, right now. There is something I want to write. I want to get it off my chest, but I don't dare to do it. At least not today.

I'm going to bed, a little afraid of nightmares. I would not like to have a night as bad as I had last night.

Jasmine

JUNE the 5th.

Dear diary,

Today I am really tired because I had nightmares again. That's so bad. I have been exhausted in the morning, and I felt my eyes wanted to close and my head weighted a tone.

It's been two days in a row sleeping badly, with those terrible dreams. That's too hard for me. To make things worse, teachers just sent a bunch of exercises for today, so I couldn't have the smallest nap in the afternoon. And then the dance classes... I couldn't follow the steps today. The dance instructor noticed and asked me if I was fine. Well it was really embarrassing to confess my nightmares in front of the class, so I just said I was tired. By the way, I heard about Georgina and she is not as bad as she might be. She twisted her ankle but it is not too grave. She will be back to the dance class in a month, more or less. Anyway, it is a kind of warning for me. We must be careful when we practice sports and dances.

Jasmine

JUNE the 7th.

Dear diary,

If I told you the other day that something was not completely fine in my friendship with Francesca, today it has gone even farther. She came to school with a very bad face this morning. She looked as if she were ill or something like that. So as soon as I could I wrote a little message in a paper piece and I passed it to her.

"Are you ok?"

She totally ignored my message, which reminded over her table. It was really strange to me, we don't usually





write messages in pieces of paper, but sometimes we do, and they are supposed to be answered. I was sure she had seen the piece of paper, it was impossible that she did not see it in front of her. So what she did next was totally on purpose. The teacher, Ms Motta, saw the piece of paper and asked Francesca

about it. She just said: "Well, I can't control who writes pieces of paper and send it to me". Even Ms Motta showed surprised after that comment, and she took the piece of paper and threw it to the rubbish bin. Then she went on talking about the French Revolution as if never had happened. Later in the morning, during the break, I went to Francesca to ask her about what had happened in the history class. I was a little angry at her, because of her rough and cold comment. "Well, you know. I said



what I had to. None of us have been punished" She said, in a bitter mood. "The next time, be careful and don't write me in pieces of paper, can't you wait for the break?"

That has been the last straw. How dares she? We are supposed to be friends! Best friends. I mean, although the bad the she might have had, of how badly she was feeling (I am sure she is ill), you never say those ugly words to your best friend. So I stood up, I turned around and quickly walked away, looking for... I don't know. I was about to cry, but I didn't wanted.

She skipped class in Dance this afternoon, so I haven't seen her anymore today, and it is proof that she's ill or something.

Jasmine

JUNE 8th

Dear Diary,

Francesca has been ill for the rest of the week and she has not shown up at school. I have been calling her but she doesn't answer, and that makes me even angrier. She is not counting on me with whatever problem she has, and that's terrible. On the other hand, I am getting closer to Gianluca, lately. Not being with Francesca in the breaks has been an opportunity to talk to him more time. In the afternoon I have been having more time for myself, too. I went shopping with my sister and I have been talking to my friends from Poland by Skype. They are so cool.

Therefore, I kind of taste how my life would be without Francesca. And somehow it's not as bad as I could think. Maybe I am not cut out to have such close friendship. Perhaps we are not so good to each other. Well, that's just a thought I had. But we have been friends for so long. We are not going to spoilt all of this, just because of a silly fight. I hope she comes back soon to school and we can make up. So everything will be as ever again.

Jasmine

JUNE 10th.

Dear diary,

Today has been a bad day again. Lately I am not writing too good thinks here. I have been reading again some of the last accounts. But it has to happen that way...

Well, finally Francesca is back to school again, but we haven't exactly made up. When we saw her coming, everybody was very glad to see her, and they asked her what had happened. She answered that she had had a bad flu, but she was fine again. As right as rain.

Everyone in the class went back to their things but I couldn't stop thinking about her. I didn't want to make the same mistake and try to communicate by messages in pieces of paper during the class, so I waited until the break. But then, when the bell rang off, she moved fast to the toilet, or I don't know where, and I couldn't find her.

Later in class I was again shy to try to ask her. So I thought I would meet her in the dance class, but she didn't turn up. So here I am, wondering if I should try calling her again by phone. The distance between us is growing so fast... And that's sad.

Jasmine

JUNE 11th.

Dear diary,

Well, today I have been talking with Francesca, but I don't know. I couldn't get the information I want. I think there is something else. But to make you understand, I'll start from the beginning of the day.

I met Francesca in my way to the school, but we both were a little late, so we were walking too fast, I told her that I wanted to talk seriously to her today. In the break or whenever she could. So we arranged to talk in the break.

I asked her why she didn't answer my phone calls the last week. Why she had been so cold with me lately. If I had made something so bad that she were terribly angry at me or something.

She told me that everything was ok. She had not answered my phone calls because she had been feeling very bad, with high temperatures, so she had turned off the

volume of her phone. We though there was no problem if she waited until Monday to tell me about all of it, in person.

I asked why she disappeared on Monday during the break and if she wanted to tell me about it... but she quickly told me she had been sick in the toilet.

According to her, there is no problem at all between us. So... Am I crazy? Am I paranoid? I don't think so.

I think she is hiding something. But, I am not feeling anger. Neither curiosity. I feel... as if there was something I have to do. I don't know, but there is something inside me telling that I have to help her however I can.

She told she is not going to dance classes anymore. That's really weird, also. She has always been such a dance lover!! Who took my friend and put an alien instead?

Well, we had our issues before, but now I see she needs help, and I am decided to help her. No matter what.

Jasmine

JUNE 12th.

Dear diary,

Nothing special happened today at school. Well, if fact, we have been having some Comenius activities. The Spanish people called us by Skype to show us some of their traditions... But I must confess that I haven't been paying attention at all.

I was on something much more important to me at the moment. A plan!

I have been thinking a lot about Francesca, and how to find out her problem or what happens to her. And after a lot of thinking, I had an idea.

You will think that I am crazy, but I am going to follow her. I'll go tomorrow, instead of going to dance class. I'll skip class to go after her and see what she is doing. I may discover something. I have a feeling.

Jasmine

JUNE 13th.

My very dear diary,

What I saw today was terrible. I am devastated.



I didn't want to write, I just want to cry. But I think maybe someday I want to read this, and learn something about it. As the little Prince says, "All grown-ups were once children... but only few of them remember it."

I hope I'll be able to understand this letters, blurred by my tears.

I followed Francesca after school, silent as a spy. She didn't notice me. She went straight to the hospital and I get in after her. She went by some corridors, without any hesitation, as if she knew well the way.

At that point I was already crying. Was her mother ill? What was happening? I wanted to catch her but I couldn't utter a word. I just walked behind her.

In the end, we arrived at the dialysis room. There were



some seats for the waiting at the door. I found her there. She looked at me. I stared at her, crying. Out of the blue, she slapped my face. I reminded motionless. Then she started crying again, and hugged me.

No words were needed. In my arms, she shivered and fell apart. I knew she had forgiven me. She knew I was there for her.

I went along with her to the room, and they cleaned her blood. I hold her hand while the doctor was doing his job, both trying not to cry. Then we went to her house. She told me she had had a problem with her kidneys. Something like a renal colic, but worse. All of a sudden, a week before, she started having a big pain. So she went to hospital and they took some little stones away from her kidney. The problem is that, apparently, those stones will appear again... she has a genetic problem and it's going to be worse and worse. Eventually, she will need transplantation.

Well, that's all. And that's too much. For me, for her, and for her family. So... why do I still feel I can help her? I'll be there for her, forever. Now she knows. That's friendship, no matter what happened before.

13th of JUNE

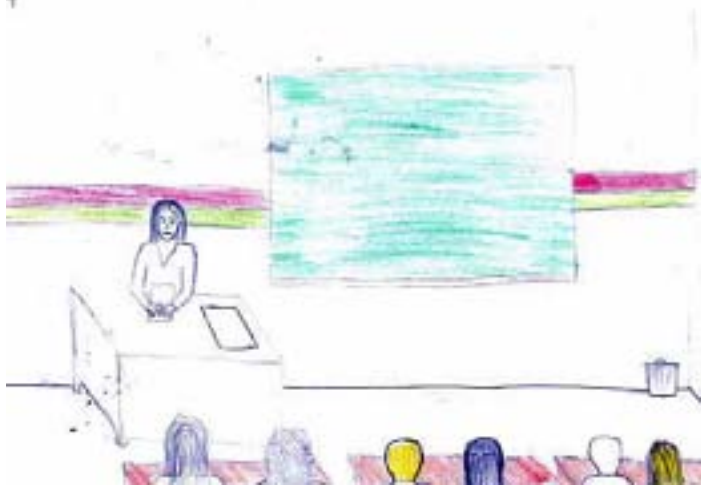
I was feeling really bad when I reached home. I was complaining how I could not understand the situation of my dear friend. All her moods and jealousy was not in vain. But, I wondered why she had not explained anything to me. I think that it was because my distance towards her for her behaviours. My dear friend... Who knows how deep feelings she had to cope up with. I know that this illness is really serious. I have heard many times that the ones having kidney calculi have serious stomach ache. And now another experience of dialysis, how terrible. What can I do for her? I started to think about that. She mentioned about kidney transplant, what about sacrificing my kidney for her? She is my closest friend and considering her life, it is inevitable.

Poff, it is nearly midnight but I cannot sleep. I had better

lie on my bed and rest for a while. Today was so exhausting for me.

14th of JUNE

Today was the last day of the school and Francesca also came. As soon as we saw each other, we tried not to look into eyes. We did not want to remember the day before. As for the last day, we did not go into the classroom but spent some time in the garden. We will not be able to see each other whole summer and sat under the trees. Everybody told about the plans of summer excluding



me and Francesca. Because I do not want to bother her as her plans are nearly certain for summer. For the three days in a week, she is going to go hospital for dialysis. I can now understand the dramatic decrease of her marks. I wish that she shared her illness with me.

We went into the classrooms to take our reports. Our teacher kissed each of us. He told all good wills about summer. My marks are very good but her report is not very good because of the last exams failure. We said goodbye to teachers and friends and started to walk under the trees with Francesca. Francesca was rather upset for her notes, she was very hardworking for the whole term. In order to console her, I said:

-Do not feel sad, you can make them better for the next term.

Francesca: My illness will continue next year and I will not be able to attend the classes for two days in a week. For the absence, I will not be able to be successful. I was also very upset and preferred to be silent. My motivation could be in vain if she did not get well soon. When I reached home, my mother was very pleased and happy with the report and my father hugged and kissed me in the evening.

-Whatever your marks are, you are our little dear daughter and we love you so much that you are more important than anything in the world.

These words made me happier than the report. I understand one more time that I am important for them. Thanks God that I have a family that supports me every time. I love them.

20th of JUNE

Till today, I have not found time to dictate the diary because I have been with my mother all the time. She could not visit the relatives due to my school and we started to visit one by one together every day. This was really enjoyable for me. I played games with the children and studied the holiday worksheets. Every day was full of tiramisu, cookies, orange juice and many kind of cakes, my stomach was full and satisfied.

Today was the cleaning day of my mum. Till she came to my room for cleaning, I need to stay here. I sent mail



to Francesca and asked about her. She told me that she was reading at home. We promised to meet for the next day. I would go to her room and my mum would be also outside to see the doctor. When mother entered the room, I went towards the garden and read my book under the tree.

Oh, laziness is such a wonderful thing... Of course not every time and if you have deserved this after the long tiring school days. For a time, I dozed and my mum woke me up. During the meal, I was really happy with my family and I cannot imagine life without them. I expressed the situation of Francesca to my family. They were really upset. I asked their opinion about what we could do as the need of kidney was urgent. My father said:

-It is really difficult to find it as it should be compatible with the functions of the body."

I offered them to give my own but they seriously rejected. My father:

-Baby, you are so little and we cannot allow this.

I insisted on the decision but they closed the topic. They were no longer very happy but a little anxious. My father was in front of the TV and my brother was in front of the computer after meal and mum was in the kitchen as usual, I directly went to my room.

21 st of JUNE

After breakfast, I and my mother went out. We got on our car. My mother warned me that her work would take about 2 hours and in that time I wouldn't go anywhere from Francesca's house. We stopped in front of Francesca's house. My mother kissed me and said "I love you." She said this to me all time. I was feeling well when she said it. I hugged my mom and went out of the car. I went through the door which was open to wide garden of Francesca's house. On the right there was a small pool and a camellia next to it.

They built the camellia with my father last summer. My father is good at building and repairing. So he helped them. On the left there were colourful flowers. I rang



the bell. Francesca opened the door. She was waiting for me. I hugged her tightly. She needed this, we went to her room. She told me about her illness. She said that the illness affected her physically and psychologically. It makes her aggressive. She needed kidney to get rid of dialysis and she went on;

"There are so many patient who needed kidney, we learnt this because of my illness. There are a lot of patient on the ranked and they are dying while waiting. The organ donation is very little in the world. So people in my situation have to live with dialysis. Do you know dialysis hurts me so much. But without dialysis, I can't live. I'm very sorry to have heavy medicines in my young age. Sometimes I can't stand. You remember my school days. I was always aggressive and having argue with everybody. All of these are because of my illness. I must admit that I was jealous of you because you were all healthy. I thought that "why it was me". How I try to get used to this. I'm waiting for the kidney, but I don't know when. My mother and my father wanted to give their kidneys but it doesn't suit. They are sad, too. Francesca started to cry. I cried, too. We were hand in hand. I was wondering what my feelings were expressing to her.

Francesca: It is very good to talk to you, to have a good friend like you. Your supports make me happy. I can't talk to anyone else. I try to be happy when I'm with my parents. I don't want them to get sorry. But you are dif-

ferent. Your friendship makes me feel better. You forgive everything I did bad to you. You understood me, you called me every day during holiday. I can cry with you. It's very important for me to cry. Thank you so much for everything.

Hearing about Francesca's thought got me relaxed. I wanted to do good for her. But I couldn't do more. Now I understand that to be with her is enough for her. Francesca's mother called us from downstairs and we went down. She cooked cake and tiramisu for us and of course orange juice. Francesca's mother gave special importance to Francesca's food and drinks. Because the patients like Francesca must be careful about their foods. After eating, we went out. We sat in the camellia. We played "SOS". We drew flowers and played hopscotch. We enjoyed a lot. My mother came back. She sent kisses to us and went into, near Francesca's mother. After half an hour, we said goodbye to Francesca and her mother and left them.

21st of JULY

It was getting hotter. It was very hot because of the Mediterranean climate. Even Tunisia is the same. There is also a desert in Tunisia. It was so hot that we went to the seaside for holiday.

We stayed there about a week. It was enjoyable but I was thinking of Francesca. We couldn't meet during



holiday but I was searching on the net about if anyone wanted to give kidney. But unfortunately I couldn't find anyone, only those who sold organ in an illegal way. I didn't tell anyone about this. I tried to call my friend even in holidays.

21st of AUGUST

The hot days were going on. We went to the sea every day. This was the best way to get colder. Once we went to the sea with Francesca's family. I wanted my family to call them.

21st of SEPTEMBER

The school has started.



I'm very happy, because of meeting with my friends. I may be a student during my life. It is great to learn something and spending time with my friends while learning. I try to spend my all day with fun and productively. Being a child is very good. Less responsibility, more fun and more games.

Francesca also comes to school. Everyone knows her condition anymore. Our friends, our teachers. However, nobody asks so much questions to her in order not to get bored her. She goes to the hospital for dialysis twice in week days and once at the weekend. She gets accustomed to this condition. She isn't aggressive or jealous anymore as she used to be.

Our friends behave kindly to her. I think this is friendship, like a family. They always understand and support you. I love my friends and my school very much.

27th of SEPTEMBER

I worked for the Comenius Project last week. Five teachers and ten students (including me) are going to go to Turkey for this project on 1st of October. Francesca also wants to go, but she can't because of her illness. She is very sad. I can't cheer her up. She always wants to visit Turkey. Turkey is a Mediterranean country. It is both in Europe and Asia. Francesca worked hard for this Project last year. It is a pity that she can't go to Turkey. I also want to travel with her.

The passport and visa procedures are okay. I need to go shopping before the travel. I may buy some presents. I should make a list. My parents are very exciting. They want me to see new places and cultures. They think I can broaden my horizons by this way. I must sleep now.

28th of SEPTEMBER

I and my mother went shopping. We chose the clothes which I would take to Turkey with me. I also bought some new clothes. It is not too cold there. I got tired because of the shopping. I had dinner and slept.

8th of OCTOBER

We came back from Turkey. It was very funny and instructive. I don't know how to tell. Firstly, we went to Adana Airport by plane. The headmaster of the school in Mersin and one of their English teacher were waiting for us. After that we went to Mersin with them. During the travel we saw factories, orange and lemon trees. We stayed in a hotel near the seaside. The hotel and its view was very nice. There were parks, palm trees and sea. It was hot, but it got cool at nights. We didn't need to use air conditioners. We had a rest on the first day. We visited some schools on the next day and they were very beautiful. The students had uniforms. We ate traditional foods with them. They were very delicious. I liked kebab very much. We watched some folk dance groups. Their costumes were very nice and interesting. We went to



Tarsus on the 3rd day. It was a small town where you can visit Saint Paul's well, Cleopatra Gate, waterfall, antique houses. We went to Silifke, a small village on the next day. It was near the seaside. Some of our friends swam. We visited Cennet Cehennem (Heaven and Hell Cave), Kanlıdivane cave and Kizkalesi (Maiden's castle). They were historical places. When I read the legend of the Maiden's castle, I got surprised.

"There were a king who wanted to have a child in Korykos. One day

he had a daughter. She became beautiful day by day. A fortune teller came to the palace and made a prediction:

-Your daughter will die a result of snake bite. You should be careful. The king had built a castle in the sea to protect his daughter. Time passed and the



girl grew in the castle. However, the legend was inevitable and a snake came out the fruit basket and bit the princess. She died. And this event caused the name of this castle to be the Maiden's Castle."

I think it is an interesting legend. The princess died, the king couldn't protect her. But my friend will live. I can do everything for her.

There was one more interesting legend. Legend of Sahmeran.

"A poor, young man went to the forest with his friends. They found honey in a well. They decided to sell this honey. While he was filling the honey in a bucket, his friends took it and left him there. He saw snakes and Sahmeran who was half a snake and half a very beautiful woman. He remained in this cave with them for days. One day he decided that he was missing the outside world and Sahmeran let him go. But she said him not to tell anything about her and the cave. And she said that if he went to a Turkish bath, his body would be covered with scales.

One day the daughter of the king became very ill. One of the king's assistants told the king that the only treatment that will help her is to eat a piece of meat from the body of Sahmeran. The assistant called all the men to a Turkish bath. The young man's body spotted with snake scales. The assistant took him to the king and forced him to tell the place of Sahmeran. They went to the cave Sahmeran said: -I knew that you would betray me. But I'll do you a favour. Cut me in three pieces. Whoever tears off a bit of flesh from my tail and eats it will find himself endowed with all the secrets of the world. But whoever takes a bit of flesh from my head and eats it will die at the moment. And for the princess, give a piece of flesh from my body.

He did what Sahmeran told and they came true. The snakes don't know that Sahmeran died. If they learn, they will destroy the town Tarsus."

The English teacher who had come to Italy, knew me and Francesca. She asked me why Francesca couldn't come. I told the story and said that they can find a suitable

donor for kidney transplant. After this conversation, she said that her husband is a doctor and she talked with him about Francesca. He said that they can also organize a campaign for her in Mersin.

The English teacher and her husband started to find a suitable donor for Francesca. She gave her phone number to us. I also gave my number to her. She would call if there is a good new. We were glad to be in Mersin. It was a beautiful and historical city.

27th of OCTOBER

I told our Turkey visit to Francesca. I said her that we had to send her blood to Turkey to find a suitable donor. We sent it after the procedures. But I said her that we shouldn't hope. I pray for her every day.

5th of NOVEMBER

We had good news from Turkey. They found the suitable donor. After the formal procedures, they will send the kidney to Italy and she will be operated in Italy. Francesca is very happy, so I am. She will be healthy, so we are very happy. Everyone in the school, teachers, students, her family are very happy like us. I hope there won't be a problem. Her family thanked to me. I'm very proud because I did it for my best friend. She knows that I give so much importance to her. I will always be with her in her bad days, not only in her good days.

10th of NOVEMBER

The arrival of kidney took 1 day, but it was as if 1 year for me. The kidney belonged to a 22 year-old girl who had an accident. Her family difficult to decide. But the girl had wanted to donate her organs if she died. Because her father had died because of heart failure. If heart transplant had been done, he wouldn't have died. I felt very unhappy for them. Francesca and I called them. Francesca's parents and our teachers also thanked to them in Italy. During this week, we talked about organ donation and its important.

11th of NOVEMBER

Francesca went to the hospital this morning.

She had an operation. Her family, our teachers and friends, my family and I waited for her at the door. It took too long. We sometimes drank tea, sometimes went to the garden of the hospital to pass the time.

The operation took three hours. The doctor said that it was a successful operation.

Francesca's mother started to cry. We hugged each other. Everyone was relieved. My best friend will be better and she doesn't have pain anymore. She is a very hardworking student. After that she will become more successful and I will always be with her.

14th of NOVEMBER

Francesca is still at the hospital. We can visit her. When she saw me, she smiled and started to cry. I touched her hand and said "You are very well." She said " Thanks to you".

1st of DECEMBER

Francesca isn't at the hospital now. While she was there, our all classmates visited her. They wished her well. They supported her. She was happy with this support. I think it is very important to be near our friends in their bad days. I became sure about it after this event. We are social, so we need each other -even the people in another countries. And we behave kindly and tolerantly to each other. All of us learned so many things during this period.

Francesca started to get well. I visited her every day. I



told her our homework and taught her what I learned. We did our homework together. I picked flowers for her. We got news from Italian embassy. They visited the Turkish family (a mother and her sons) who helped to Francesca to our country. They asked us if we can host the family in our house. We accepted it with pleasure.

5th of DECEMBER

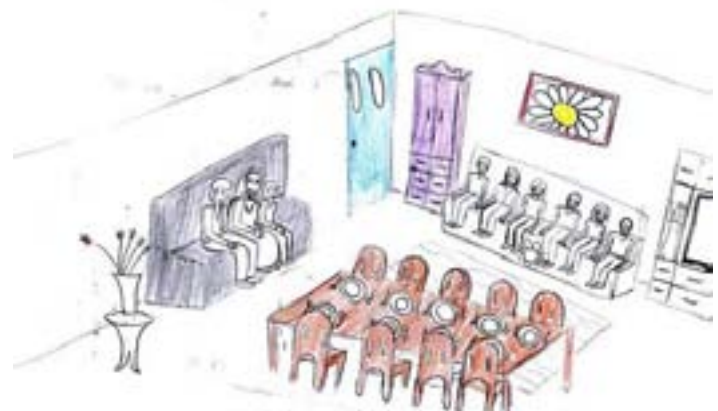
The Turkish family is going to come tomorrow. I'm very excited. They will come with the English teacher. I look forward to seeing them.

10th of DECEMBER

The Turkish family returned to their country yesterday. On the first day, we had a meeting with the families in Italian Embassy. Turkish family wanted to see Francesca and stayed in her house. The mother wanted to meet Francesca. We went to her house.

When they met, the mother started to cry. They hugged each other. Our mother tongue is different, but our

1



emotions are the same.

Our mothers also cried. They tried to cheer her up. The English teacher and I translated their words. I translated from Italian to English and she translated from English to Turkish.

They were very glad about our hospitality. When they visited our house, my mother cooked Italian food for

them. We visited the city. We had a farewell meeting at the Embassy. At the departure time, they thanked us. We also thanked and gave present to them. And they went to their country.

15th of DECEMBER

I got good news about Francesca and I went to her house to share it.

-I have great news. I think you will be happy when you hear it.

Francesca: ?

-There will be a Poland visit in April for Comenius Project. Guess, who will go?

Francesca: Me?

-Yes, you and me. The teacher chose us. I'm very happy. We couldn't go to Turkey together, but we will go to Poland together.

Francesca: Great! But there is a problem. I must talk with my doctor, you know.

-Ok! Let's go and talk, tomorrow.

Francesca: Ok! But don't get excited.

19th of DECEMBER

We talked with the doctor.

He said that she can go to the school and if she looks



after herself well, she can go to Poland. We are very happy.

20th of DECEMBER

I talked with my teacher and said that Francesca will also come to Poland. She said she will do the procedures.

17th of FEBRUARY

Francesca feels better now. She comes to school. She studies hard to complete her learning. We can play games and run to the home. She feels very good. We are very happy. We also work for the Comenius Project. Life is perfect. Friendship is perfect.

1st of APRIL

We completed our preparations. Our headmaster and English teacher organized a meeting. Francesca wanted to speak at the meeting.

Francesca: I want to thank you. You always support me. I understand the importance of friendship, love and respect. I'm not unhappy about my illness anymore. Because I made new friends by this way. We got closer with my friends. I also want to thank Jasmine. I love you, Jasmine.

I also wanted to express my feelings:

-If you weren't my friend, I would never learn what a friendship means. You are my best friend. I never think losing you. I completed my words with a sentence from my favourite book "The Little Prince."

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye."



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Comenius Project

Knowledge of the roots and the pluralism of European citizenship
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