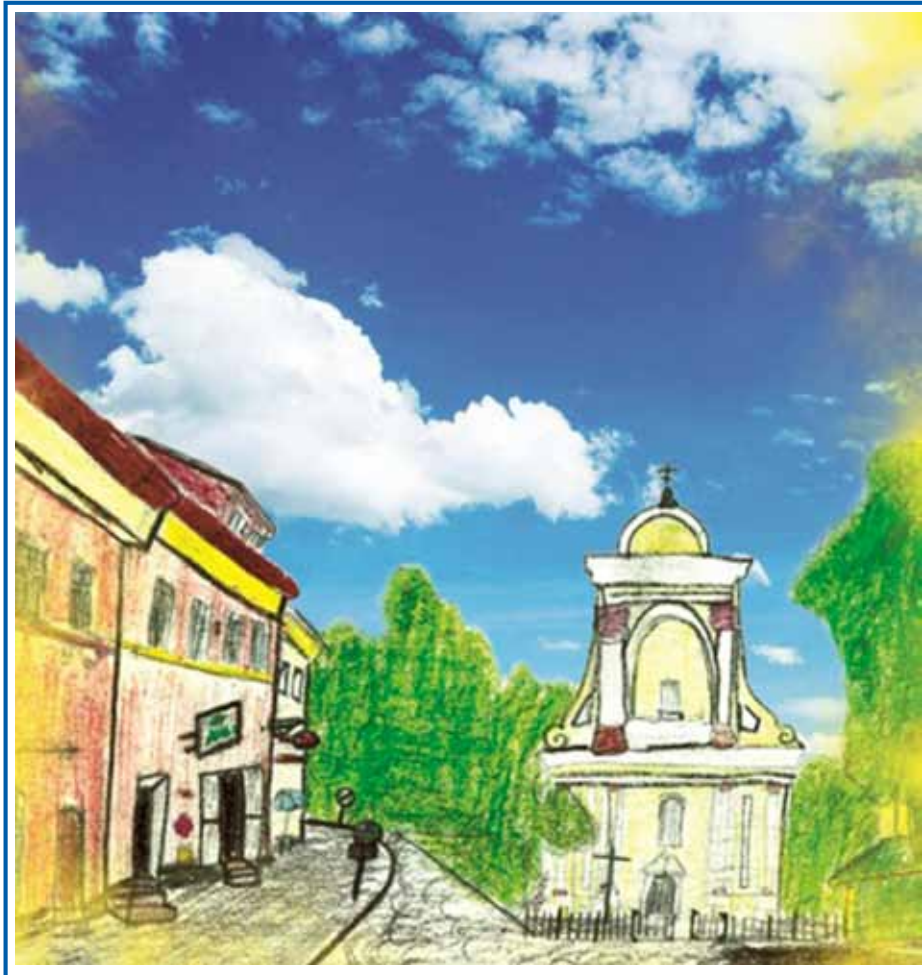


# IN the NAME of FRIENDSHIP



Opera a cura di Annunziata Marciano

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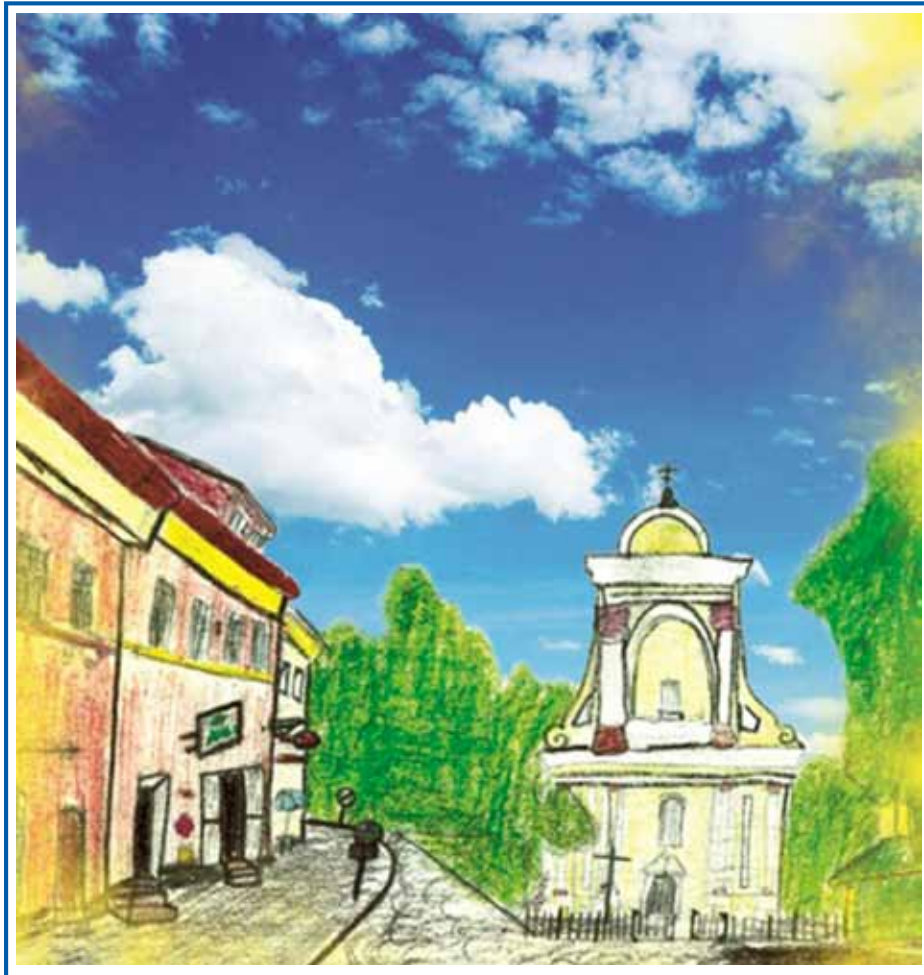
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# IN the NAME of FRIENDSHIP



## IN the NAME of FRIENDSHIP

This story takes place in Poland, in a small town in the Warmia region. The characters are two teenagers, Majka and Karolina. They are both great lovers of horses. Apart from sharing the passion to these beautiful, rare animals, the girls are also close friends. They go to a secondary school, but most of their free time they spend in a nearby, small stud farm. Their horse riding adventure started in their primary school. Karolina's father, a dedicated horse rider and a horse riding instructor at that stud farm, strongly supported the girls' passion. He taught the girls not only how to stay firm in a saddle but also how to jump over the obstacles safely. Most importantly, the instructor taught them to be conscientious and take responsibility for the animals under their care, horses in this case. After the horse riding lessons the girls brushed, fed and gave water to the horses, they also cleaned the horses' boxes, finally they talked to the horses. All because the girls wanted to win the horses' trust to be able to lead them with ease. After a few years there came the right time to take part in a horse riding competition. The girls and their mares: Barcelona and



Amelina were willing to do that. The medals or cups were not that important. The pure joy of a competition was awarding. And if sometimes they managed to win the top positions on the national level of the contest, they felt even more satisfied.

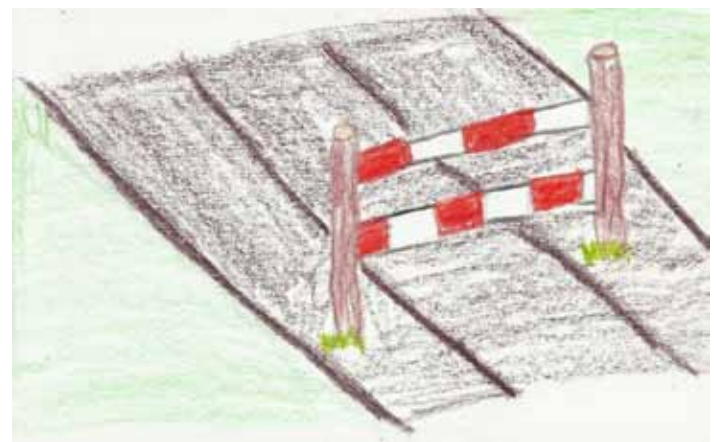
One day the instructor brought wonderful news. The best horse riders were invited to take part in an international horse show jumping contest, which was going to take place in Mersin, Turkey. The young contestants from different countries were to take part in that event, e.g. from Italy, Spain and other European Union countries. The idea of this contest seemed to be incredibly tempting. The preparations started. But it turned out not to be so easy. The journey was very expensive, especially when it came to transporting the horses. The girls' parents weren't rich, and any financial support from the stud farm was not possible. Let's face it- small towns aren't wealthy. The trip became uncertain. If it depended on the parents, they would surely forget about everything, and it would be the end of a dream. But Majka and Karolina didn't give up. Many times they took part in the charities of different kinds. Every year in January the girls and their friends were the volunteers in "the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity". Karo-

lina was also a volunteer in a local hospice and Majka worked in a nearby kennel as often as she could. One year ago she won a national competition “ It pays to be good”. The reward for the unselfish help was a fantastic bike, founded by the headmaster of the school, on which she started her holidays. All these taught them a lesson that you should never give up. They believed that as they help people so much, there must be at least one person willing to help them. And so it happened. Students from the local schools, parents, workers of the biggest local company, end even the Mayor of the town started raising money. Eventually, everyone wanted the girls to represent the small community abroad.

Surprisingly quickly the needed sum of money was raised, and the girls together with the instructor, and with Barcelona and Amelina set off a long trip to Turkey. They were excited about the expected adventure - it would be the first time they travelled so far away. They worried about the mares and the possible discomforts of the journey. They happily reached their destination. There were a few days left for a contest to begin. The girls decided to spend their days on getting used to a new place and new conditions. Amelina coped with the difficult conditions during the journey quite well. But strange behaviour of Barcelona seriously worried the girls and the instructor. She was very nervous, she neighed and kicked. There was something wrong with her. The instructor thought that she might not possibly take part in the contest. Majka and Karolina cried secretly, they were so sorry to resign from the contest, but they understood perfectly well that the health of an animal is more important than a contest itself. A vet was called, who stated that the mare was healthy but anxious because of the change of the climate and the place. As a matter of fact, soon Barcelona seemed to calm down,

so the final decision of her taking part in the contest was taken.

The day of the contest came. Both mares, brushed and shiny, were very presentable. It could be observed that the level of emotions among the people and among the animals was very high. The girls were watching other contestants’ performances, waiting patiently for their turn. They knew it wasn’t going to be easy, but they didn’t give up the hope. There came the Polish representatives’ turn. Majka riding Amelina started. Karolina kept her fingers crossed for her friend and was full of admiration for Majka’s skills. The audience liked Amelina’s skills too. Each acrobatics was cheered with applause. Next to compete was Karolina on Barcelona. At first things went smoothly. Black, beautiful Barce-



lona reacted to all her trainer’s commands, did all the acrobatics, the audience couldn’t help the impression that Barcelona was thinking ahead of the jockey. When suddenly... Everything was so quick. The mare neighed fearfully, lost the balance in her long legs and fell down, crushing the girl sitting on her back.

The audience froze in fear. There was a short moment of silence, then a real hell started. The sound of the ambulance, scream of the people, cry of scared Majka,

painful neighing of Barcelona, which stood up as fast as she fell down. At first nobody paid attention to the mare, everybody was interested in the girl. The accident looked dangerously. The contestants, as well as the audience, thought that it was not possible to get away of it in good health. In the best case, the girl would have broken bones, in the worst... It was better not to say



it. The ambulance took Karolina and her father to the hospital. Barcelona was taken to her box. For some time there was a complete mess, and later a decision to continue the contest was taken.

All in tears, Majka, couldn't find the right place for herself. She worried so much about her friend. She went to the horses, their presence was always calming her down. And so it happened this time. The girl nestled her face, all in tears, into Barcelona's warm, soft neck, She could feel the Barcelona was trembling. She was snorting and nervously moving her head from a side to a side. "What happened, my dear?"-the girl asked softly. "Did anything scare you?" The mare neighed quietly as if she wanted to answer the question. When Majka calmed down enough, she took a closer look at Barcelona. She gently touched Barcelona's legs. She noticed that

the foreleg didn't touch the ground. Barcelona kept it slightly lifted. Majka leaned over it and examined it carefully. With no doubt it was swollen. "So that's the cause of the misfortune..."The girl was stroking the mare's neck, wondering what to do next.

The instructor and his daughter were in a hospital. She didn't know anybody in this new place. Unexpectedly in a stud farm a group of local teenagers, who were watching the contest and witnessed the accident, appeared. When the emotions were over, they decided to check how was the other girl and the horses. Majka was really grateful. After a short chat in English, a vet was called, the same who examined Barcelona a few days ago. He examined the mare again, shook his head, expressing his discontent, which made Majka worried. She knew that the injury had to be serious. The vet made an injection, put any mixture and the bandage on the swollen leg and said that nothing more could be done. "You will never run again"- he said when leaving. Barcelona hung her head down, she looked sad. Majka got the impression that Barcelona understood that everything she loved: galloping and jumps - were not for her any more. The girl was very sorry. She couldn't help crying. And the fear for Karolina. Luckily it turned out the girl got out of the bad situation quite well.

A few bruises and wounds- that was all. That good news was brought from the hospital by the father. Majka was happy for Karolina, but she unwillingly informed about Barcelona's injury. The instructor examined the mare, slapped her in a friendly way on her neck and said not to worry. Since Karolina was safe and sound, the mare would be the same.

After returning to the country, it turned out that the dreams don't always come true – a diagnosis confirmed



by a few vets wasn't good, unfortunately. The mare's leg was seriously injured, damaged tendons didn't give the chances for full recovery. The animal probably got injured during the journey to Turkey, and taking part in the contest only made it worse. Karolina was in despair. She knew what normally happened to the horses from the stud farm. They aren't profitable, so the stud farm owner gets rid of them. With her heart bleeding she thought about Barcelona's future. She discussed



it with Majka and a few friends from the horse-riders' club. Everyone was scared of the decision that was soon to be taken. One day Karolina's father came back home depressed, but he tried to pretend that it was all OK. He said with a smile on his face that the decision concerning Barcelona was made. They agreed with the stud farm owner that Barcelona would be given away to a farm owner. That man was the girls' parents friend and he couldn't refuse taking the ill animal, but he admitted that he had never been thinking about buying a horse as a tourist attraction for the guests on his farm.

He kept dogs, cats, goats, so he thought that he didn't need a horse, especially that there was a lot of extra work connected with keeping a horse. It needs good conditions of living, special food, the food must be gathered ahead for a long winter time. The girls promised to visit Barcelona often and to take care of her as before. For some time Barcelona's affairs were brought to the background. The mare got used to living in a new place, she nibbled grass, and was living quite a lazy and carefree life in the village.

Karolina visited her as often as she could, so that the mare couldn't miss her. Unfortunately that peaceful time was over soon. In the autumn the present owner of Barcelona visited Karolina's father and informed him that he was going to sell the mare to the slaughterhouse. It was because the guests visiting the farm didn't like Barcelona.

When seeing a horse, they wanted to go horse-riding, to gallop on the boundless Warmian meadows, go shopping to a nearby town by a chaise. At first the farm keeper thought that the mare would be profitable and earn some money. But it wasn't like that. The injured leg was still painful. The mare didn't want neither to gallop nor to pull a chaise. The farm owner treated her like a



useless thing, an old piece of furniture, which with no regret can be thrown away, like a thing that doesn't have feelings, doesn't suffer, isn't trembling of fear... It seemed that there was no hope for Barcelona. The girls' despair didn't last long. They decided to fight for a beloved horse. So many times they managed to solve problems, so why not also this time they wouldn't be successful? They asked their school mates to help them. At Karolina's house they made a plan. The point was to raise money in a short time to buy Barcelona back. The time was running short. At first the matter was publicized at school. The students and the teachers helped willingly, but the money they raised was only a drop in the ocean of needs. The price for which the owner sold Barcelona was much higher than the money the children collected. But the girls didn't give up. Next step was organizing at their school a school festival where the motto was: "SOS for Barcelona!". The festivals and charity events had a long tradition at the school. Last year the students raised a big sum of money to help the children in Congo. Another time financial help

for an operation of a seriously ill boy was organized. For this year festival, many important local people were invited.

On the town notice boards there appeared some adverts inviting the local community to participate. All the school staff with great enthusiasm prepared many attractions to raise as much money as possible to save the mare. The students and their parents made special dishes, including some local specialties, which were sold at the festival to raise money. There were: pea soup, which was simple to prepare but delicious. It was clear that many people would buy it with pleasure. Hundreds of dumplings with different fillings were made, bread, even better than the bread from the local bakery, was baked. For sweets lovers some cakes were offered. One of the girls' friends organized a photography exhibition presenting the local views, the town, surprisingly beautiful photos of the animals. Each photo was definitely worth its price. Apart from that during the festival students' drawings were sold, and since Christmas was coming soon, the Christmas toys and decorations were made and sold. Everyone knew that the hand-made decorations supervised by the Art teacher were more





beautiful than those which can be bought at the shops. But these were not all the surprises. During the festival a concert of the local band was going to take place. All the money from selling the tickets would be spent on saving Barcelona. Apart from that the school drama club members wanted to help. Young actors decided to have the premiere performance of their "Christmas Carol", which they had been working on for a few months, a little bit earlier. The money earned on selling the tickets also was spent on commonly known goal. Both girls, their parents, but also friends from their school took an active part in organizing the festival. Finally, the day came. The headmaster officially opened the festival and he welcomed the guests. Later Majka and Karolina made a speech in which they informed about the goal of this charity one more time. Actually, it wasn't necessary, as the inhabitants of the town had known the dramatic story of Karolina and Barcelona for a long time. And the news, both bad and good, spreads very quickly in such a small town. Fortunately, some people of good will and great hearts appeared at school on that day too. It was a great success. Crowds of people, who spend a lot of money on different attractions, visited the school. Next day, when the money was summed up, Karolina knew that the dark clouds over Barcelona might be gone soon.

The girls went to the farm owner, where the mare was waiting to be transported to the slaughter-house, to inform him that they had enough money to pay for the horse. The man showed his surprise and admitted that he felt relieved that the mare was so lucky. He said that actually he was against the idea of sending the horses to the slaughter-house, but the reality was that he couldn't afford to keep the horse. He agreed to keep the mare for some time on his farm until a new place, a safe

shelter for her would be found. Actually, it was in that exact moment, that Karolina realized that it wasn't the end of Barcelona's bad luck. Love and respect for Barcelona determined the girl to fight for the mare's life, but what next? She had to find somebody who would take care for Barcelona and love the horse that was not able to gallop, to work, to take part in a contest, not able to pull a chaise. Actually the mare was living her life only to be coddled, brushed gently, to be treated with goodies. The mare squinted her eyes in delight and neighed mildly, when the young people stroked her neck saying: "Good pony, so clever! We won't let you be hurt". Barcelona had always been calm and even-tempered, but now when everyone was so good for her she became as gentle as a lamb. The idea what to do with Barcelona came suddenly and unexpectedly. On the school



festival a local journalist was present. Whatever is going on in a small, provincial town, this is always a good subject to write about. The journalist was impressed by what he heard at the school festival, he wrote an article

about Karolina, a charismatic girl, who was desperately fighting to save the mare. Below the article there was a bank account number, where the readers might pay even small amounts of money and in this way help Karolina. Many times the newspaper supported different kinds of events, and the money raised helped those in need. This time the readers helped as well. Because the money raised during the school festival was enough to buy Barcelona back, the money collected on the bank account was spent on buying back the other horses that were meant to be sold to the slaughter-house, just like Barcelona. The most important thing in this story is that to the publisher of the newspaper there came the owner of a rehabilitation centre for children with cerebral palsy and other serious illnesses. He was looking for a horse for a therapy for children, but none of the horses already seen by him, was mild, patient and friendly enough. After reading the article he thought that Barcelona might be an excellent healer of the little patients' bodies and souls. It's not hard to guess that the end of this story is optimistic. Barcelona was taken to the rehabilitation centre, where she felt like at home. Work wasn't hard, and the quantity of gentle treatment she received from her patients made up for the separation from Karolina, who because of the long distance couldn't visit Barcelona more often than once a month.

Karolina was upset as she was now without the horse. She felt disappointed when she was far away from Barcelona. It was as if someone from the family was away. She really wanted to have the facility to see her more. But, her family could never persuade her to do that. In fact, her facilities were limited. That is, her family did not have the chance to send her to Warsaw to see Barcelona. She looked for the alternative ways for that.



Karolina was very absent-minded at school. During the lessons, she was consistently thinking of the horse and was watching outside. What was Barcelona doing at the moment? Did the horse also miss her? Were the horse keepers caring for him? Were they combing and cleaning him regularly? While she was thinking those, her teacher Kasia noticed her. She asked her why she had been very thoughtful lately. Karolina was a very successful student. She was not accustomed to these behaviours. Of course, she was aware of the news but she did not want to see her upset. Karolina did not want to say anything. She was always thinking the matter but she never wanted to talk. She knew that nobody could solve her problem from now on. Kasia did not touch the event more. She thought that it would be best to speak her alone. After a few days, Kasia called Karolina at school. Karolina understood that there was no way out and she got bored while walking to her room. She was planning to rush with a little or no speech. She knocked the pink door and Kasia answered:

"Come in."

The red cheeked girl went inside:

"I think you called me teacher," she said.

"Welcome, Karolina. Please take your seat near me."

Karolina sat in an embarrassed way. Her relationship with the teachers were rather good. But, she did not have the habit of visiting them at their rooms or they



even never had called her.

Kasia: "I know the unpleasant event that you experienced. I am aware how this has upset you. I understand you. I also like the animals very much and had a horse. My family gave me as a gift for my 16th birthday party. I was occupied with her all necessities and I was tied to her heart. I liked to ride him very much and she was even aware of this. We spent enjoyable time with him. But, one day he got very ill and I was very frustrated and the evil end happened. I tried to counsel myself. My life was also very important and I did not dare to sacrifice it. The great time that we spent together always remained as wonderful moments in my life. The most important things that I have learnt from him was 'friendship-love and devotion.' I decided to be contented with that."

"But, my horse did not still die." complained Karolina.

"Now, you are very lucky from this aspect." said Kasia.

"My Barcelona was far away and I cannot see him." said

Karolina.

"I can help you." said Kasia.

"Nobody could help me as the economic conditions of my family were not very good to reach him and in fact they did not want me to do that. What can you do?" asked Karolina.

"Let me think! I think that you want to go to a good high school and you are hardworking if we do not evaluate you with your these moments. If you want one thing more, then you can. If you need to go to Warsaw to survive this friendship, then you can.

Karolina was surprised and asked excitedly:

"How?"

"Of course, by winning a high school from Warsaw. If you do not give up and study your lessons very hard, you can check in a good high school and I do not think that your family will disagree with the idea. In fact, you can win the scholarship when you are successful. There are schools with the dormitory inside. You can stay not far from Barcelona and your friendship goes on.

She never thought this idea. While she was entering the room, she felt bored but now relaxed and excited.

"Can I win this?" she asked.

"You are successful in your lessons, of course you can do this." supported Kasia.

"Can you help me?" Karolina asked.

"You can be sure of that." Kasia said.

"We should also persuade my family." Karolina said.

"Tomorrow, let's invite them to school to talk about the issue" Kasia said.

They said goodbye to each other and when Karolina got out of the room, she was very happy. Now, they found some way out. She could both continue her education and see Barcelona.

She returned home happily. Her mother got surprised

when she saw her mood. Karolina went through her room immediately as she wanted to talk the matter also with her father. When her mother called her to dinner, she was studying. She came through the dinner table. There were her father, her mother, her brother at the table. Her mother cooked baked chicken, rice and salad for dinner. Karolina started to discuss the topic as soon as she sat. She told them about what she had talked with her teacher Kasia. Her parents looked at each other for a moment. They had never thought about the education outside their city for their daughter. Her brother dreamed of moving his room to his sister's for a moment. Karolina advised her parents to talk with her teacher Kasia before they could give any decision. Their parents agreed upon the idea. But, her father warned her not to expect much. For the first time that night, she slept very well. She woke up very early in the morning. She prepared and had breakfast. She went through the school. She had great desire to learn the lessons as she had purpose now. At school, she saw Kasia. She told her teacher that her parents would visit the school and she went to her lesson.

During the second lesson, they called Karolina. At Kasia's room, there stood her family. Her teacher explained to her parents that this was a very effective way.

"Look! Karolina is very dedicated, hardworking student. She had responsibility to receive education in a high school with a dormitory outside the city. Her devotion to her horse is also known by everybody. You should give her an opportunity and trust her. She really deserves this" said Kasia.

"But another city and it is very far. The feeling of being very distant to her makes me afraid" said her mother.

"You would like your daughter to win a very good high school for her future, wouldn't you?" said Kasia.

For a moment, her father was optimistic and they were close to allow.

"Please, mum and dad, I promise not to neglect my lessons and I will call you everyday" said Karolina.

Father and mother looked at each other for a while.

"Okay" said the father.

"Okay" said the mother.

"Thank you, dear mum and dad. I will try not to disappoint you. I love you very much." said Karolina.

"Thank you, teacher" said Karolina.

"I believe in you. Are you ready for a real competition, Karolina? You should study very hard from now on for a good high school" said Kasia.

"I know, teacher" said Karolina.

They went out of Kasia's room. Karolina said goodbye to her parents and returned to her class. A very hard study program was awaiting for her but, she was very happy. Kasia called Majka to her room and she also spoke with her. Majka was pleased with her life because she could spend more time with Amelina. But, there are some problems with her lessons; not only neglecting her lessons but also Karolina. Kasia talked about those two matters with Majka. She said that friendship was also very important.

"You have built strong friendship ties with Karolina which you will never forget. You should continue this. You share the same likes and dislikes. You love each other and I advise you not to lose your sincere friend. Majka; don't even neglect your lessons. Your interest in your horse is very nice. But, you should try to be a cultivated and cultured rider. Otherwise, you can never overcome the difficulties" said Kasia.

"You are right, teacher. I will behave more carefully." said Majka.

When she went out of the room, she noticed how she



neglected Karolina. She was not aware of how lonely she left her. At the first lesson, she decided to solve this problem.

During the break, she touched Karolina in a cool, sweet way and ordered her some biscuits. They talked for a while. Majka expressed her sadness and Karolina immediately forgave her. Karolina asked Majka about her horse Amelina and Majka told how she passed her time with Amelina enjoyably. She expressed how she loved her and how she looked after her. Karolina got depressed again. She was jealous of her best friend inside. But, she did not reveal it. Afterwards, they walked to the classroom together.

During the time, Majka worked for Amelina. They rode a horse together and she had close relationship with the horse. She cleaned and looked for her. They prepared local competitions and she was very successful in all. She efforted much not to experience the same negative events as Karolina. When either the horse or she herself was wounded, this would be a disaster for them. She closely observed how her best friend sulked with the life. Starting from the childhood, they were

neighbours, classmates and devoted, sincere friends. They had witnessed all the things in their life. Even their mother got used to drinking coffee each morning. They were even making special cake with carrots when they were together. The smell of this cake spread through



the room while the mothers were drinking coffee. They walked to the kitchen to watch their girls and when they found them having prepared the plates with the orange juice, they were bringing these ready plates to the garden under the trees. The trees pushing down their leaves during winter were still in Karolina's garden. In summer, the trees had beautiful shadows. They ate the cakes and drank the juice under these trees. They chatted with each other. They played with their toys and they dreamed together. Their dreams were always big. They dreamed of living in the capital city and travelling to other countries. They had visited Mersin the previous year. They had brought Turkish coffee to their parents. The parents liked this new taste very much. The first moments with this experience were always unsuccessful as they had difficulty in adjusting the foam of

the coffee but then, they got accustomed to the coffee. The speciality was not to prepare it like the instant coffee. Finally, they had learnt that. They had at last learnt to make this delicious coffee. They had big dreams of



nearly impossible to achieve. But, nothing was impossible.

Majka was thinking of the nice memories and times she had spent with her friends. While she was combing the horse, a tall man with curly black hair and small eyes approached her. He wore clothes similar to horse riders.

The man:

“Hello, Majka. I am Daniel”.

She was surprised to hear her name from somebody else. She got anxious.

“Do not be afraid! I am acquainted with you by means of your successes in the competitions. The way of your riding the horse is very interesting and successful. I came here to propose an offer for you” said Daniel.

“I am pleased to meet you but I do not know you” said

Majka.

“Can we talk while drinking something at the cafeteria?” asked Daniel.

“Okay” said Majka.

They went to the cafeteria together. Daniel got a cup of coffee and Majka got orange juice. Daniel started to talk at first.

“I am an educator of the horse. I live in Warsaw. I have a horse farm there. I have horses and jockeys. We prepare them for the races. I have found you very successful and I want you to work with me”.

Majka got surprised to hear this offer. She did not know how to answer. She got excited and afraid but for a moment. She thought that it was impossible.

“It is impossible” said Majka. “My family never let me to do that. You are expressing about going to Warsaw. How can it happen?” continued Majka.

“I have also thought of that. I know that you are still receiving your education at school. But, I do not need an uneducated and uncultivated rider. I need devoted, down to earth, ambitious and academically successful



rider. For this reason, I want to provide your scholarship in a high school in Warsaw. But, at the same time, you can go on your performances in the farm. What do you think?" said Daniel.

"What you have offered is very exciting, but, as I have explained my family, do not let me realise that. I am sorry. I reject your offer" said Majka.

"I advise you not to reply back immediately, first you should talk to your family and you can tell them here tomorrow. I will try to talk to them, please listen to my suggestion".

"Okay, then" said Majka.

They said goodbye to each other. They agreed upon bringing the family the next day at the same time. Majka was very happy. There was not a drop of expectation from her family as she really knew them. This would be impossible offer for them. This deserved to try. As soon as she returned home, she mentioned this to her mother. Her mother explained this to the father after he came from work. The family, for the sake of their daughter's happiness, accepted the offer.

"But, never expect much". They said also. The idea of accepting to meet was also very good.

The next day, her parents went to the farm with their lovely daughter. Daniel was waiting for them at the cafeteria. This time, Karolina's father was also with him. Majka got surprised when she saw Karolina's father. They bowed each other and handed. Daniel introduced himself. Majka's family also introduced themselves. They had already known Karolina's father. They asked to each other how they were. Daniel started to explain. He was very busy and had short of time. And he needed to return to Warsaw a few days later.

"I have got a stud farm. I have got a lot of horses and jockeys. Everyone who is interested in horses knows

me and respect me. I've come with someone who you know well because I want you to trust me. He is the father of Karolina who is Majka's friend. You can ask him questions about me. My offer is this: I think Majka is very talented and she rides a horse very well. It will be injustice if she only shows her ability at local competitions or in this town. I'll offer something to her. I want her to come with me to Warsaw. I want to work with her and improve her ability. Surely, I thought her school and education. I want her to study at a boarding high school. I'll provide her a scholarship for her education. She'll both go on her education and improve her ability. It is a great chance both for you and for her future. She can be a good rider in this town, but only this. She can't improve herself. What do you think?"

Karolina's father started to speak: "You know what happened to my daughter and her horse. I wish this event didn't happen. I've known Daniel for a long time. He is reliable and honest. He always keeps his words. It is a big chance for your daughter. His financial condition is very good. He gave a scholarship to many children. I am convinced that if my daughter pass the exam, I will let her study at a high school in Warsaw. You are more lucky than us. Because Daniel will help you and this is a big chance for her future".

Majka learned Karolina's situation by his father's speech. She got happy. Their fates are similar. She hoped that Karolina would pass the exam and they would be together in Warsaw.

Majka's parents noticed that they didn't have so much time to think. A person can't do so many things in this town, can't improve himself. Surely, they wished their daughter to have a great future. But they thought that how she would stay alone and they couldn't see her whenever they wanted. This thought made them

sad. On the other hand, this was a great offer and they couldn't refuse it.

"I accept this offer" said Majka's mother.

"I also accept it" said her father.

Majka couldn't believe it. She got very happy.

"Thanks mom and dad. I won't make you ashamed. I also thank you, Daniel. Thank you to all of you" said Majka.

They drank their coffee and Daniel said that they would wait till the last term of this year. When her school finished, she would attend a boarding high school. Majka and her father would go to Warsaw in June.

They wanted to search the high school and visit Daniel's stud farm. During this time, Majka went on her studies both at school and farm. Because if she wanted to attend a good school, she had to study hard. They also agreed that Amelina would go to Warsaw with her. Majka couldn't leave her horse. She didn't want a new horse. Daniel also thought this. Because he knew the importance of the close relationship of a rider and her horse. He thought if there wasn't a close relationship between them, they couldn't be successful. He had also started to be a rider because of his horse. He loved it very much. He thought he had been very lucky. So he had been successful.

They said goodbye and left. One of the terms finished. During this term, Karolina studied hard. She waited the exam date. Majka also studied hard, but she spent most of her time with Amelina.

June was very important both for Karolina and Majka. Karolina had an exam for high school. Majka would go to Warsaw and choose a high school. Karolina studied very hard because she wanted to pass this exam and be with her friend, Barcelona. At the night before the exam day, she couldn't sleep. She tried to sleep, but she was

very excited. When she closed her eyes, she saw and thought a lot of things. Being late for the exam, Barcelona, Warsaw, Majka and Amelina, a new school... So, she didn't want to close her eyes. But if she didn't sleep, she got a headache and this would be bad for her during the exam. She would be very unhappy in this condition. While thinking these, she slept after the midnight. She dreamed that she was late for the exam and woke up suddenly. Her mother was near her and touched her hair. Her mother came to wake up her. She knew her daughter was under stress for a long time. One day she said: "Karolina, if you want you can give up. I am worried about you. You'll get sick. You know you are more important than everything. Don't go to Warsaw if you don't want".

Karolina was determined. When she woke up, she asked the time. There was time for the exam. She kissed her mother and said: "I love you." She washed her face and hands. She got dressed. She took her identity card and pencils and put them in her bag. She combed her hair and went to the kitchen. Her brother, mother and father were waiting her. She was deeply affected suddenly. Because they were only together with at the dinners and Sunday breakfasts. Today everything was special for her. She ate something without appetite. After the breakfast she kissed her mother and brother. She and his father got on their red car. Her mother and brother waved at them. They wished her lucky.

There were so many students at the school. All of them hugged their parents and went to their classes. Karolina also hugged and kissed her father. She found her class and sat down. The supervisor teacher gave the exam papers to the students. The exam started. When Karolina saw the questions, she got relax and started to answer the questions easily. When she finished the



exam she looked at her watch. There was thirty minutes to finish the exam, but she didn't want to wait and gave her papers to the teacher. She went near her father. He was waiting for her. They hugged each other and got on the car. Her father drove to a cafe to eat ice cream. They ate chocolate ice cream. Her father especially didn't ask her any questions about the exam. Karolina also didn't want to talk about it.

When the exam results would be announced, she was very excited. She turned on her computer. When she saw her mark, she screamed. She was very happy. She got the full marks. She got 100. Her family was also very happy. They were very proud of her. It was time to choose a good school. She chose five schools and applied to them. She was sure that she would be accepted. When she learned her mark, she called her teacher Kasia. Because she helped her every time while studying for the exam. She gave her books. She wanted her teacher friends to help Karolina for Maths and Science. She also helped her while choosing the schools. Because she knew the good schools of Warsaw.

After a while, she learned the school. She won her first



choice. When she learned that, she was in Kasia's room. Kasia got very happy and was proud of her. Because she helped her during this period. Karolina was a very successful student. She was ambitious. And her motivation factor was very strong. At the end, she reached her aim. Kasia wanted to call Karolina whenever she had time. She called all of her friends who could help Karolina in Warsaw. She told Karolina's condition to them. They promised her to help Karolina. Kasia was very happy, so she thanked to Karolina. They were like friends, not a teacher or a student.

Majka and Karolina were also very close friends. They promised themselves to be friends during their lives. Kasia also knew their friendship. It was a great emotion to give some help to their friendship, animal-love, success for a teacher. In June Karolina and her father would go to Warsaw. Kasia called her friend, Marcin. She wanted him to help Karolina and her father in Warsaw. Marcin said that he would host them in his house for two or three days and helped them for the school. Karolina thanked to Kasia and went to the home.

Majka and his father went to Warsaw in June. They went to Daniel's stud farm. Majka admired to Warsaw. She thought that it was very big. A lot of buildings, cars, crowded people, shopping malls... Their town was too small. So everyone knew each others. Majka thought it was exciting to live in Warsaw.

Majka's father had come to Warsaw three times. He was anxious about leaving his daughter alone in this big city. When he looked at her, he saw that she was very happy.

When they arrived at the stud farm, it was noon. The farm was very big. There were a lot of horses. Some of them were running and some of them had been cleaning. They walked to Daniel's room. It was a large and

clean room. Daniel ordered pizza for them. They had lunch together. Majka looked at the garden after they finished their lunch. She liked there very much. Majka's father felt relax when he saw the stud farm. Daniel had so many workers. They decided to take Amelina in September because Majka's school would start in September. They would come at the same time.

Karolina and her father went to Warsaw at the end of June. Kasia's friend who was a dentist, met them. They introduced themselves. Marcin took them to his car and they got on. Karolina's father sat in the front of car. Karolina sat at the back and they found themselves in the middle of the traffic. First they would go to the high school which Karolina succeed, they would learn what they needed. On the other hand, they were curious about the school. In fact Karolina would like to go to Barcelona first. But anyhow, they would come together again. She couldn't object the idea of going to school. It was a great opportunity to have such a luck. Her heart would come out because of the excitement. The rood was flowing in front of them while Karolina was watching people around. At the end they arrived. It would be better if they ate something because they were really hungry. But Marcin parked the car outside the school, they walked through the school. The outdoor of the school wasn't magnificence, but when they went in, it was great. The garden was full of trees. There were a lot of tables. As it was a boarding school, there was a pension in other garden. The idea of having education in such a school was wonderful.

"I wish Majka saw here, and we would be together. But Majka would go to the school which was closer to Daniel's farm" she thought.

For Majka and Karolina the distance wasn't important. They were close friends. Telephone speeches, the let-



ters and the weekend meetings would bring them together. They entered, found the director's office, knocked the door and went in. The director was a short, fat, middle aged man with moustache. They met and the director wanted them to go to his helper for registration. So, the registration process completed. He registered Karolina both the school and dormitory. In September she would stay in this dormitory. He mentioned about the rules of the school and the dormitory. He said what she needs. After that they thanked to him and went out. Karolina went up stairs to see where she would stay. His father and Marcin waited for her in the garden. Karolina's room would be on the 3rd floor with 312 no. The room was for four people. There were two wardrobes and four beds. The wardrobes were very small but windows were looking at the school garden, it could be said comfortable. There was a table and two chairs. The toilet and the bathroom, not too many people. She went out the corridor. There was a big studying room at the end of the corridor. There were huge bookcases

and each one was full of lesson books and novel books. There were 10 computers. Karolina was happy to see this scene. Later she went down the stairs. There was a cafeteria, a refectory and an internet cafe at the downstairs. Being happy what she saw, she went out to his father. They left the school. Marcin took them to the Restaurant. They parked in the Restaurant car-park. They ordered pizza and hamburgers. After eating, Marcin left them to his house. He left them in front of an apartment then he went to his work. Karolina and her father were so tired that they even couldn't talk. Meanwhile Marcin called the restaurant for the dinner. He told them to send the dinner meal to his home for his guests. When Karolina woke up, it was 04.00 pm. She felt relaxed. She sat on the sofa for a while with her father. They couldn't look around because of their exhaustion. The entrance of the home was opening to the living room and the kitchen. There were colourful sofas, a modern coffee table, a TV in the American stylish kitchen. It wasn't a big room but it was enough for a single man. Her father went to kitchen for some coffee. He came back with a cup of coffee for himself and a cold drink for Karolina. Karolina didn't know how to raise the issue but she couldn't resist anymore.

Karolina: "Could we visit Barcelona before we turned back" said she.

Her father: "I was wondering when you were going to tell" he smiled and "Ok! We'll go", he replied.

Karolina was happy. Her father said: "You will come here in September, live here. I trust you. I know that you won't neglect your classes". He asked her not to neglect her lessons by showing interest to Barcelona. "Because your future depends on your lessons. I know you love your mare, You will be more successful with her. You are as ambitious as Majka, you will meet with Majka. The

only thing I wish is, be careful! Take care of yourself. I love you very much, my dear, daughter".

Karolina replied to his father. "You know that; the only thing I want is to study in such a great school and to be close to Barcelona. Thank you for your trust in me, dad. I love you too daddy".

When it was 6.00 pm, Marcin arrived to the house and the meal he ordered arrived home after 10 minutes when the man came. They had dinner together, talked a lot. The man was sincere. It was his kindness to entertain Karolina and her father in his house. He tried to comfort his guests. Karolina helped him while he was clearing away the table. She put the dishes in the dishwasher. After finishing, Karolina surfed on the net while her father was talking to Marcin. At night, Karolina and her



father slept in the living room. In the morning they got up together, had breakfast, got dressed and went out. The man left them in the farm where Barcelona was living to help the children. They thanked the man for his helps. Because they would go to the airport to go back their own town. Karolina learnt the place where Barce-

lona stayed. They followed Rehabilitation officer to see Barcelona. Karolina's heart was beating to see her more, she was very impatient. When they arrived and saw the mare, Karolina was full of excitement and happiness. She ran and wrapped Barcelona. Barcelona's eyes were shining with happiness. She stroked Barcelona's hair and kissed. She talked everything to Barcelona as if the mare understood her. From now on she would visit Barcelona frequently and spend time with the mare.

Karolina's father was a horse trainer. He could understand his daughter's loyalty of the mare. He was happy to see his daughter by bringing her to Barcelona. But it was time to leave, they had to go. He called his Karolina. They couldn't be late for the flight. It was difficult for Karolina to say good bye to Barcelona. She said they would meet again in September when she came for her school. She hugged Barcelona and kissed her. Karolina thought Barcelona was sad, too. They called a taxi to go to the airport. They ate something before the flew.

Majka, her father and Daniel went to high school which

was close to the farm. It was a big school with a huge garden. The dormitory was at the back of the garden. They entered the building and found the director's room. Director had already known Daniel. They greeted and the director ordered coffee. Later Daniel talked about the issue. He said " I would like a scholarship for Majka in this school and request you to accept Majka for her education." Majka was a successful student and she was good at riding a horse.

Director kept his silence for a while and replied. "It makes me happy to have such a hardworking student and rider in our school. Of course, we will enrol her."

So Majka was the student of this school from now on. In fact Majka wished to go to school with Karolina. They had always been together since childhood. They were also even in summer holidays. Majka couldn't courage to tell Daniel that she wished to be with Karolina in the same school. This would sound like sauce. Fortunately they would be in the same city. They would come together at the weekends. Majka would share everything with her best friend. Majka thought that everything was ok. After that Majka, her father and Daniel went to hotel. They thanked Daniel for his helps. They told him that they would have turned back to town the day after. In September like Karolina, Majka would come here for her education. After Daniel left, Majka and her father went upstairs to their room, they had rest for a while. Later they came downstairs again. Because they were hungry. They ordered something to eat. They ate hungrily. After this, they walked in the Warsaw's streets. It was an alive and colourful city. It was spectacular. In their town, at the dinner time, everything stops, everybody goes to their houses and it was impossible to see someone in the streets. But in Warsaw the life goes on even in the evenings at the dinner time. It seemed the life starts in





the evening. They came back to the Hotel. They were so tired that they fell asleep as soon as they reached their rooms. The next day they woke up, got dressed, had breakfast and left the hotel. They got in the taxi and arrived airport to fly their town.

In summer Majka rode a horse generously. Karolina was at home and she read books. Everyday Majka and Karolina came together while their mothers were drinking coffee. They were dreaming. They were telling to each other about their new schools, dormitories. It almost took their seven days to talk about their new lives. They were entertaining while talking. Karolina was always talking about Barcelona. They were planning how to come together in Warsaw. They promised; they would never leave each other and would be together every time. Majka promised Karolina to talk Daniel about Barcelona. Karolina was also a good rider. Daniel would want her readily. But Majka couldn't promise Karolina before she talked to Daniel.

Meanwhile the mothers of girls were unhappy to leave their daughters. It was difficult for them. They were always in this town. Therefore the idea of leaving their

daughters was quite difficult. But they had to think about their daughter's future life. Karolina and Majka wouldn't be a housewife like their mothers. They talked it many times. Both Majka's mother and Karolina's mother was aware of their life styles being boring and common. But they had no other choice. Their lives were only about this town. Their daughters would teach them a new world. They were proud of their daughters. They also liked their friendship. At the first time, they were against their mares. But now everything was different. The summer ended and it was only a week for the beginning of their school.

At the time of the departure, the teacher Kasia decided to organize an unforgettable party for Karolina and Majka, with all their classmates and the teachers of the school. The girls did not know it. They decorated the



school with flowers and coloured ribbons of colourful satin.

The girls, surprisingly, were accompanied by their partner in the school with a pretext. When they arrived there, they were pleasantly surprised and amazed; their school had a new appearance, never expected to have so much sympathy, never they could think to see something so sweet by their friends. Karolina and Majka



were so excited, happy and amazed! They spent a wonderful evening, which would remain impressed in their minds and in their hearts forever. Before the end of the evening, Kasia approached her, with tears in his eyes and his lips trembling for the emotion. She called her away in a corner of the room and made a speech about how it was special for both, their dreams and their passions.

She also said that their friendship was important: their friendship was born a long time before. Together, they had overcome many difficulties. Karolina and Majka had fought for their mares, Amelina and Barcelona, which for them were important landmarks. They had shown courage and willpower. But above all, they had always been able to trust in each other, together all obstacles could be overcome.

Kasia hugged her, held her close and whispered to her a long time to them: "Remember that I'll always be there for you". After a moment of great emotion, the smiles returned. The evening was a success; dances and songs amused the two friends who, late in the evening, tired but happy, returned home.

The next morning, the sun peeped into the room of Majka. She, tired because of the previous evening, had trouble getting out of bed. Then she went into the kitchen, where there was a table laden with cookies, milk and bread with butter and jam which her mom had prepared for her. The rolls were still hot; who knows if she had eaten so good in Warsaw, she thought. The day of departure had come. She went to his room where, close to the bed, there was her red suitcase. She looked at it, in it she had put her own future, all hopes, all life. Her heart was full of joy, finally a chance to become a good jockey was given to her and, who knows, maybe she could become the most popular jockey in the world, with his wonderful Amelina. Even the trip frightened her, and she would travel with her inseparable best friend with which shared a dream. The time passed quickly; it was time to go, and she gave one last look at a photo on the bedside table in her room. In the picture there were Karolina and her, dressed as headstock near their Amelina and Barcelona. The photograph was taken in the last race in which they were involved together, when they had gone up together on the podium. She thought deeply about that moment, took a deep breath and closed the door behind her.



Karolina, instead woke up early. She had spent a restless night, and despite the late hour of the night before, she had a hard time getting to sleep. During the night, in fact, she had thought that the trip that she would have to face the next day, the new life to be taken in the new school. All her habits would be changed, she would live new experiences, she would spend happy moments and would meet new friends, but in her heart she knew that no one could ever take the place of her Majka. They met at the station, in which had been accompanied by their parents. The train was in regular time, strangely; before boarding they hugged Mom and Dad, and they did not spare the recommendations. Then, the whistle of the train stopped greetings.

The train began to move slowly and left the station. Majka and Karolina had imagined a thousand times that trip, who had finally arrived. Their eyes were glued to the window and watched with great attention to the landscape that gradually saw. They began to tell about their childhood and they remembered their first meeting, when they were only five years. In fact, they met during a horse race in a small village in the region of Warnia, to which Karolina's father participated; before becoming an instructor, he was a very good jockey. Majka instead was there together with her parents, just fans of the sport. She was sitting on the steps next to a blonde girl with braids, blue eyes and chubby cheeks, who the whole race had done nothing but encouraging her dad. This was their first meeting. Now, after many years, pleasantly reminded that moment that marked the beginning of a great friendship.

During the train journey to Warsaw, the two girls looked into his eyes trying to predict what would be their future. They ran back to their dreams. Suddenly, without knowing it, their laughter echoing in the railway wagon

arousing the curiosity of all passengers.

In the evening, the train arrived at the station in Warsaw, where Daniel and Marcin were waiting for them. The emotion was so great. The girls got off the train and headed for the two men who were already close to the track. "Hello, girls" said Daniel, "welcome to Warsaw".

Daniel was a man about forty years old. The face was thin; he had sharp cheekbones, dark and wrinkled skin, but each fold told definitely a victory for his past as a jockey. His ears were large and somewhat detached from the head. Almost at the same time, while whispering softly, the girls said: "Have you seen my ears? Surely when put the hat will come out". This thought made them laugh merrily. Daniel replied to the spontaneity of the girls with a smile, showing his white teeth. "It's nice and has a beautiful smile" said Karolina; Majka was in full agreement. Whenever Karolina and Majka discovered, surprised, to think the same thing; they were more and more convinced that their friendship would last forever, and that over time they would have been even closer. After the presentations, Daniel said: "Well! Now we begin our tour". They led them through the crowded station and arrived in front of an old car; Marcin said to them: "Please ladies, sorry if the car is not just fashionable, but you will find elsewhere bred horses". Everybody laughed heartily and overcame the initial embarrassment.

Marcin was a tall and sturdy boy. The flushed cheeks brought to light two bright blue eyes, the colour of the sky. He was a young dentist and an old schoolmate of Kasia. Since children. they had attended the same class and they loved each other as brothers. Life had separated them when the parents of Marcin had moved to Warsaw because of their work. Despite the distance, Kasia and Marcin continued to be friends. The phone,

Skype and the memories kept alive the affection they felt for each other. So Marcin was so happy to fulfil the desire of his friend to assist Karolina. Now he could not wait to introduce her to the school where she would study. That same evening, the two friends parted. Each of them was accompanied in her boarding school: Karolina in the east of Warsaw and Majka in the south of the city, next to the stable where Amelina was trained. The next morning, the two girls would route different roads and different destinies.

Karolina woke up. It was her first day of school, she wore the uniform that they had made thoughtfully found on the bed in her room. She looked in the mirror from head to feet: she was perfect.

She entered the high school after the bell, and when all his classmates were already seated, she entered the classroom.

She was awarded a place on the second bench, next to the window, from which she could see a beautiful garden. She was sitting near Luca, a handsome boy of Italian origin, who was also at his first day of school. Luca was tall, athletic, with black curls which fell over his forehead, almost covering his dark eyes, and a straight



nose. The days flew by, Karolina became friend with all her classmates, she was helpful and generous with everyone and became a great friend of Luca, to whom she told her adventure. Every weekend she went at the rehab centre, where there was her beloved Barcelona. For her, it was always a joy to see it and every time she cuddled, brushed and caressed it. She was proud of his horse, of what was useful to anyone who he had been living in less fortunate than her.

At the beginning, everything was fine. Karolina followed the lessons with pleasure, she was very good at school. Then, something changed in spite of the positive relationship with his companions, she could not stay more concentrated, was increasingly distracted and his grades got worse.

Her mind raced back to her memories, her rides, her races, her Barcelona. She looked forward to the end of the day to return to the room, where she locked in herself to think about the moment when she revised and re-embraced her mare. This was the only thing which lifted her mood.

The liveliness of Karolina was dying every day, leaving room for a deeper sadness and melancholy. "No", said



Karolina, when her eyes swelled with tears at the thought of that day, now far away, the accident in Turkey, "It does not have to be this way! Why am I so sad?"

In reality, Karolina knew the reason of her sadness; her world was represented only by her horse and this was too little. Barcelona was her mother, her father, the best friend with whom to share dreams, hopes and bravery. Majka also had met with Barcelona. Their passion for horses which had taken them so close as to become indispensable for each other. But now, their journey had become different; they were in four matches and were now in three: two headstocks and one horse.

Majka, meanwhile, had started to go to school peacefully, her classmates were really nice and with many of them she shared the passion of riding. Because of its proximity to a so important team, many families chose this school for their children, for continuing the study and the training.

The month of September was ending and soon Amelina would come. The awaited day had now arrived. Majka, that morning, got up very early. Her alarm clock rang at six o'clock, but for her it was not a problem: she was already sprightly and perky for half an hour, even



though she was stayed in bed, imagining how nice it would be to meet again her Amelina. It was a crisp day in early autumn, but Majka did not matter if there was rain, wind or cold. It was Sunday, the school was closed, so she had at her disposal all the time. She dressed quickly and went down the stairs skipping steps two at a time. In her hurry, she had forgotten her red hat which hid his tail amberjack hair. Daniel was in front of her boarding school, with his car, he was waiting for accompanying her to the stable. Her heart was pounding, already twenty-four days had passed since she did not see her mare. Never the mare had been so far away. Finally, she came to the stable, she looked around; there were horses ready to trot and jockeys who trained down and at the bottom she saw her Amelina.

She approached to Amelina in a hurry, but she noticed something strange. At first, the mare did not notice Majka. It threw her head back and continued to neigh desperate kicking the wall of the box with his back leg. It was strangely agitated as it had never been before. She tried to kick, but ran into the door. The mare was as if he was trying to break free. Majka looked into the hallway to see if anyone had noticed that agitation, but there was none. Then approached her. "Hello my beautiful" said Majka, gently trying to get its attention. Amelina finally saw her and immediately stopped kicking. They looked deeply into her eyes and Majka began to cry with emotion. Amelina slowly approached her, lowered her nose to her hand and began to sniff. Amelina recognized her scent. Majka felt the hot breath on the skin. The mare slowly calmed down. She finally revised her wonderful mare. Maika's heart was bursting with joy and she wanted to tell everything to Karolina, but there was no chance. The distance, commitments, school, the distraction by her friends. Majka was living her dream

and when she thought about Karolina, sometimes felt guilty for being so happy and satisfied. Even the distance of parents and all this sadness did not seem as real. "How long will I spend riding?" Majka said to Daniel; he said to her: "As soon as you start the training schedule, but certainly at least three days a week. There will be traditional classes of training, but also games and competitions. There are so many fun activities that you can do outdoors with your beloved Amelina". Majka smiled. She could never imagine so much!

She was focused in her thoughts, when the voice of someone brought her back to the reality: "So, we want to stretch your legs to Amelina?". Majka mounted. At that moment, she thought to Karolina, but it was only a moment. The excitement and the desire to ride her horse were too strong. Once in the saddle she looked the other horses milling around in the stables, trying to go in the right direction, then she concentrated in balance



and gait. "Move back legs. Remember to tighten the hips with the heels, keep your head up and look straight ahead. So...you're really good!" Daniel told her.

Amelina was also excited and moved in fits and starts.

"She seems to be dancing



waltz", Majka said, "but in reality I know it. She just wants to show off and tell me to be happy!"

Karolina took a quick brushing to Barcelona, stroked to her tail and mane, then checked carefully legs and feet as he always did before riding to make sure that the mare did not have small scratches or bruises, made while she was in the team.

In the past, every morning she went down, cleaned up the box and removed the manure. She wanted her box was clean and in good order. Barcelona, meanwhile, only to see it already dreamed bags of carrots, oats and sugar cubes. Karolina mounted her horse and went to the track, where usually occurred rehabilitation of children who needed it.

The track was full of obstacles. The Centre was well organized in routes, spaces and natural resources of the park where she was. The steps were turned into gains: there were logs, hedges, ditches and small obstacles. But Karolina knew all along it would remain only in the memories of her gallops with Barcelona before her accident.

Suddenly she saw a figure in the distance. Karolina thought it was a mirage, but no! It was her beloved

friend Majka who had a meeting with Daniel. Her heart jumped in her chest with emotion, she could not believe her eyes. That was really a pleasant and unexpected surprise. Maika had felt the sadness and discouragement of her beloved friend Karolina and had done everything to make her a surprise. She was convinced that, being able to hug and talk about what was happening, as they usually did, the weight of melancholy would diminish. Immediately they hugged.

"How happy I am to see you!" said Karolina.

"Do you like the surprise?," said her friend.

When the horse saw Majka also began pawing with emotion. She went to her and filled her with kisses and caresses. Barcelona whinnied. She recognized the companion of many adventures.

The two girls, at that point, moved away from the track and Barcelona was reported in stable by Daniel. This fact was noticed by Majka and she found it very strange. At other times, the friend would never have given her horse to an almost unknown person.

This gave her even more to think that her friend was going through a difficult period.

"What do you think to eat together?" Majka proposed.

"Oh! I heard about a local restaurant, right nearby here, but I've never had the chance to go" said Karolina, "Here I have not friends, but I would love. So, go there?"

"Sure", Majka said, "but you have to put the most beautiful dress you have!". And so, with the complicit wink of an evening which was announced pleasant and enjoyable, the two friends went out of the gate of the stable and walked along the path through the fields to the boarding school. Along the way, they walked slowly talking about their horses.

"Sometimes we can ride together and maybe go out in the company".

Karolina said yes: "What a great idea! It would be extraordinary! It's been so long since we don't ride together!" Karolina wore a nice jeans with a plaid shirt with cowboy boots. It was really cute!

Along the way, there were many shops selling any item for horse riding. There were clothing, boots, raincoats, hats and helmets, whips, gloves, grooming kit, horse accessories such as belts and blankets. There were saddles, reins, bits and stirrups. Some shops sold food or miracle cures for the most common ailments of horses.

They went in and looked around. Their eyes rested on a soft blanket for winter for Barcelona.

Majka did not forget about Amelina, to which she bought a beautiful saddle sheepskin.

They were at Horse's House. Majka thought it should be a reserved room for jockeys and horse owners or at least for horse riding. Many people had gathered at the bar or around the tables in front of pitchers of beer, potatoes, cheese and sausages. On the walls there were cups, trophies and photographs. Majka looked around and exclaimed, satisfied: "It is our place!"

"An internet point!" Karolina said, "I could contact my old friends and we could hear more often than by phone!".

In a corner, a bit more secluded, there were monitors. She approached curiously and saw that on the screen there was a page from a site called Horse's Friends.

Majka looked Karolina in face, she saw that her eyes were happy again. Perhaps the friend had found a way to make her feel less alone and overcome the sadness. A new window was open for her! Or at least she believed this at the time. Maika took the opportunity to tell the strange things which were happening to her, without, however, fully expressing her joy; in fact, she



thought that something bad was happening in the life of her friend, but she did not ask anything and waited that Karolina spoke for first.

In the meantime, they ordered: tastes of pierogi, the famous raviolis with various fillings of cheese, fruit, mushrooms, cabbage, and many other types of filling; bigos, the most famous and old dish, a stew of meat, cabbage and sauerkraut, enriched with prunes and other spices; makowce of poppy seeds, honey and pier-niki and mazurki of pastry and nuts. The evening passed between memories and laughs; Karolina had not spent a night like this certainly since the departure... the melancholy seemed to be over. But Daniel came and said to Majka that it was time to return.

Karolina asked her friend to stay still for a moment and said: "You're my only friend, you were always important to me, but what now you've done, it seems to be a miracle. You have made me understand that I can always count on you, and even if our roads seem to lead to very different paths, surely nothing can change my love". That was the time when Majka decided to say: "I understood from your message that something was changing, I've never felt you so cold and distant.

Even for me it is difficult to adapt to this new life, but we must do it. Our parents are making sacrifices for us to be happy and they definitely feel our lack and will be much worried about us. We have chosen and they have respected our choices. You do not have to be sad. Barcelona is now one step away from you. The incident has unfortunately changed your life, but the strength of friendship allowed once again to be close".

The two friends hugged and committed themselves to keep in touch and see each other more often, especially Majka ordered her friend to call her whenever she felt the need. Daniel, meanwhile, listened to it in silence. They accompanied Karolina with the car and went back to boarding school.

The joy of Karolina did not last long, her days continued to pass in solitude. At school the things were not going too well. One day, she had to call Kasia too, but then she thought better to do not it. Also thinking about what Majka said, many times she tried to do her number, but every time she thought about why she would not grieve her friend, and especially she did not want to upset her parents, if they knew that things were not going fine.

One day, she could not leave the house for a violent storm and remained a long time standing next to her window to watch the wind and the rain. She began to see her life and even those beautiful and sad moments, thought that she was between people who loved her very much and she had to react and to recover mainly in school, because, even though she had no more a future as a jockey, however, she could be a vet and help the horses and other animals.

She also decided to call Majka to talk her, and not just to say hello. And maybe she also could found a solution to the problem of Barcelona, before it was too old.

Majka was always busy; study and practice were not easy. In addition, she and her mare went very well and the time of the races was approaching. She could not risk a failure. Despite being tired, studies going very well and the workouts were giving her a new style. Amelina responded very well. At the behest of the jockey, she always responded with alacrity and agility. Certainly she did not want to look bad to her jockey.

Majka was also thinking about Karolina; she remembered the promise made on the evening of their last meeting. She imagined that things did not go well for her friend, but it was just time to come back to her and take the courage to ask her why ... damn weather! The day of the raging storm, Majka could not even go out and thought even more to her friend. In fact, the thoughts of the two girls were twisting and just when she was about to make the number of her cell phone, it rang: it was just Karolina! What fantastic coincidence! The friends talked at phone for a long time and finally Karolina could confide with Majka. She spoke about her loneliness, her decision to start studying seriously and especially the choice to study to become a vet. They also talked about their friendship and decided that they would have to find the time to meet, to hug and to be a bit together, just like old times. They decided the following Saturday to go along for a ride in the city. They had not yet seen anything of this new city and perhaps, also for this reason, Karolina had failed to know new friends.

They did not know where to start; curiosity brought them to the picturesque Market Square, the Artists' House, the Royal Castle, the Gothic Cathedral of St. John, the Church of Santa Croce which houses the urn with Chopin's heart, The Palace of Culture and Science, the Monument to the Unknown Soldier and dedicated

to Copernicus, the Museum Marie Curie and the Chopin Museum. In short, they had something for anything!

On Saturday Karolina and Majka met at three o'clock, punctually. They met Luca too. Karolina was surprised, she introduced him to Majka and asked him where he was going. Luca told them that he had not friends, and he was going through a difficult moment; then, he had decided to go around the city to distract, but he said he did not want annoy them. Karolina thought: "But I see you at school every day ...". The two girls looked at each other and Majka said: "We are pleased if you want to come with us. We do not have a program for the afternoon, we would want to see the most beautiful things there are in this city. Do you want us like Cicero?"

Luca immediately accepted. He spoke to his new friends about his life and said that, for reasons of work, his parents were forced to travel over the world. He met young Italian, Spanish, Turkish and Polish hours. Unfortunately, year after year, he had to say goodbye and hoped to be able to finally stop in the new city. But he had become to be scared to be attached to the new friends, because every time he suffered to leave them. He missed too much his friends, and then he preferred to be alone. The girls told their stories and especially Karolina told him that she was going through a very difficult time.

Then, they decided to not think of the sad things, at least for that afternoon. First, they stopped at a very nice bar, drank coffee and ate fruit jelly and cream, the Galaretka. Then they took a walk through the old town and were attracted by music. They stopped, delighted to hear a Chopin "Nocturne". Nearby, there was a store of classical music. They went in and spent a lot of time between shelves of books just to listen to the music of Chopin. After a bit, they left the shop and walked,



talking much about their studies and their dreams. In the late afternoon, they said goodbye and decided to meet again. While Luca walked away, Karolina and Majka hugged affectionately. In fact, they wanted to dedicate that afternoon only for two of them, but they agreed in recognizing that the presence of Luca did not disturb. True friendship creates strong bonds and gives so much joy to those who have a sincere friend; he is always present, even if not always near. This was the advantage of Karolina and Majka. They knew to be very lucky, and that perhaps they could also help Luca, because the time spent together nicely, the conversation, the story of their life experiences could already help him not to be afraid to look for new friends.

Certainly, true friend is the one you can trust blindly, he is the person who will never betray you, who helps you when you're in trouble without asking anything in return, and loves you enough, and it is not easy to find one.

Karolina went back to school on Monday, and she was much more serene and also happy to see Luca.

Majka returned in the rhythms of his life, still thinking about the beautiful day with her friend.

One day, they talked at the phone and decided to organize a surprise for Luca: he would have been certainly happy to see the friends he had known in the other European cities!

In the meantime, Karolina's parents told that probably they would go to see her with Majka's parents too, to spend a few days together. For Karolina, it seemed that the bad days spent few weeks before were only just a bad memory.

One morning Daniel stopped Majka to chat and asked also about Karolina.

Summer vacation was a few month apart and Daniel had an appealing offer to make the girls. The school had been making arrangements with a Spanish school so that they could start an exchange program with students from both boarding schools. The most appealing part of the exchange program was that, as part of their holiday, the Polish students going to Spain would get to spend time at a 'Cortijo' (a type of Spanish ranch) where Andalusian horses are trained to do their famous dance. So the girls would get to spend time with beautiful horses and learn about their training.

When Daniel talked to Majka about the program, she couldn't believe her luck. Of course, she chose Karolina as her partner, and had a further petition. – "There is one more person I would really like to come with us" said Majka. – "Who's that person? The program is meant for two exchange students, but I'm sure there won't be any problem if we decide to send one more" Daniel replied. – "It's this Italian boy, Luca. He's a bit lonely but very nice, and Karolina has become good friends with him. I'm sure she'll love coming with us!" – "All right, I'll

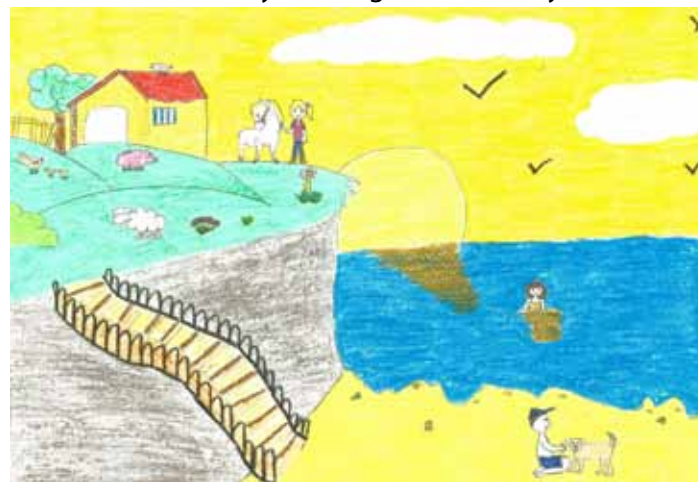
talk to the organizers and see if they're ok with that" said Daniel. "In the meantime, you should ask Karolina and your respective parents to come talk to me so I can explain the conditions". – "Oh, I'm sure they'll love the idea", said Majka.

One Wednesday, they had arranged a meeting with Daniel. Majka and Karolina were there with their parents. So was Luca, with his mother. His father was not able to make it because of work. The organizers in Spain had agreed to have Luca as a guest in addition to the two Polish exchange students. They were all very excited. None of them knew Spain but they heard it was a great place to go for vacation. In addition, they would get to see and spend time with those beautiful Andalusian horses and their dances!

Daniel explained that, in order to fully benefit from the experience, the girls and the boy would get to spend a whole month and a half in Southern Spain. They would get to spend time with the horses in the morning. They would attend horse-dancing practice and get to spend time with their trainers. They would have intensive Spanish classes in the afternoon.

The organizers thought that was probably the best way to spend the steaming-hot afternoon hours. And they would have the evening to themselves. At times they would do excursions to different Andalusian towns and to the beach, especially on the weekends. Because it was part of an exchange program and the Spanish students would also enjoy a cultural Polish program, the cost was minimal. They would stay and eat at the "cortijo" and the parents would only need to cover the cost of the weekend excursions. All parents thought this sounded like a very good opportunity for their kids so they happily gave their permission. They would all set out for Spain in a week and a half!

Luca was particularly excited. It was the first time somebody had thought of him to do something special at all. A trip like this on top of that sounded like a dream! Who knows, maybe he could even start feeling like a normal boy! The day of the trip was one of the best days of his life. And this was ironic. He had been travelling ever since he was a little boy, moving from one city to another,



from one country to another.

Moving away from friendship, from the friends that he was barely getting to know at the time of the move. This trip was great because it was exactly the opposite: he was about to spend an intense one and a half month with two new friends. It was his first time having real friends!

The day of the trip they all felt ecstatic! It was their first important trip without adults. They felt so grown up! They took a train to Wroclaw. Ryanair flights were cheap and direct to Malaga. It was a very good idea. In Malaga, somebody from the program would pick them up and take them to a ranch in Malaga.

It was the perfect combination for them: they would get to spend a whole week at the Malaga beaches and they would enjoy some horse-riding, which they loved.



Luca was so excited about that! He was a bit nervous about the horse-riding part. He had never got close to a horse in his life. He actually felt a bit scared of horses. His parents had always told him that he should be especially careful not to walk behind horses, as they could react by kicking him. He always tried to keep that in mind. But at the same time, he thought horse-riding was a cool thing to do. He would try to ignore his fear and horse-ride with his new friends.

Malaga was a dream. It was sunny and bright, but he particularly liked the fact that he could smell and feel the proximity of the sea. What a great place to be at! They stayed at Rancho La Paz in Fuengirola. The people at the ranch explained to them that this is normally a touristic resort where people can hire horses and do different routes in the area. This week they were making an exception and the three kids stayed at the ranch with the staff that took care of the horses.

Luca could see that the girls were having a blast about it, especially when they saw the beautiful horses. Luca also felt special. It was far more interesting to stay in a ranch and be around the nature than to stay at a hotel and just go to the beach. During this first week, Luca

had his first contact with the animals. It actually enjoyed riding very much.

Now, each teenager got to choose one horse. They would keep that horse for the duration of their stay, even when they travelled to other “cortijos”. Both Karolina and Majka chose young horses that they could easily domesticate. One of the reasons they were in Spain was to learn how to domesticate a horse and train it to do those beautiful dances Spanish horses are famous for. Of course, they wouldn’t have time to fully train a horse, but since they were experienced with horses, they preferred to have the chance to at least start training a young horse.

Majka chose a beautiful white filly called Preciosa. She was what they call a PRE foal, that is, she was a Spanish Purebred. Very beautiful and elegant. Very strong too. A bit untamed but Majka was a very experienced jockey. She knew how to ride her. Majka had always dreamed about riding a purebred, so having the opportunity to ride this horse was very special to her. She soon seemed to create a bond with the horse. She said it wasn’t the same as when she rides her horse back in Poland, but it was clear that she enjoyed spending time with Preciosa.





Karolina chose a brown colt called Serafín. It was a 4-year-old colt just about to leave the ranch to start being domesticated. It was the perfect timing for Karolina! She was so excited about that. After the bad luck she'd had with Barcelona, she was ready for a short adventure with a new horse.

Luca was advised to choose differently. Unlike his friends, he had no previous experience with horses. He would in no way participate in horse domestication.

The organization was determinate about this point. They didn't want any kind of accidents. He was actually very happy to just learn how to enjoy long rides on top of a beautiful horse. Being near a horse had made him feel very uneasy until just recently.

He was getting used to the idea of horse-riding with some difficulty, so he asked the organizers to please offer him the calmest horse they had available. They suggested a mixed bred mare called Dadiva.

When Luca saw her, it was love at first sight. The mare was very beautiful. White and strong-looking. Also he looked in her eyes, she looked like she would take good care of him. She would never let anything to happen to him. It was going to be a great summer. Luca not



only had two new human friends. He had a new special friend who would take him to see these beautiful lands. After meeting their new horses, they were informed about their first route. Very early in the morning, Luca would need to go to the stables. Somebody would give him instructions on how to ride Dadiva for the first time. He would have a couple hours to get used to the horse. In this first route, Luca would not be alone. The girls and one of the horse trainers accompany him. When they were ready, and after Luca had used to go horse riding, they went out by the way of the pine forest. It was very exciting go across the sand dunes through the pines. Looking away, from her horse, Majka said: "Look there, at west, following the pines, there is a very rare and beautiful animal".

The coach who was with them, and knew the area, said to Majka: "You're a good observer of nature. That animal watching us from a distance is a lynx, a type of large wild cat that lives in Andalusia and is protected by being in danger of extinction. It is very hard to find one for the field".

They could not believe their luck, and especially Luca was thrilled. After leaving the pine, they rode towards

the beach. It was an area that was not open to tourist's bath, so the beach was practically empty. They just looked in the distance a group of anglers and hunters shrimp (a kind of small prawn, very tasty).

When girls and Luca were found in the middle of the beach, next to the pine forest and on the other, the vast Mediterranean Sea; they looked each other, laughed for pure happiness and no words were needed: the three began a nice race with their horses on the sand of the beach to a large rock at the other end of the beach and back to the beginning, where the coach was waiting smiling and happy too.

What most amazing feeling to sense the wind in your face, the breeze, the salty smell of the air, the Andalusian sun in the body, the heat of the horse! A set of sensations that they never forget and, probably, would change their relationship with animals and nature.

Returning to coach, jubilant, happy and tired, they dismounted, and they stroked them and gave them the food. Suddenly, Luca said: "Does anyone fancy a swim?" The girls did not hesitate any moment. They dressed their suit and ran in frantic race to the sea. The water was cool and salty, but the feeling was intense and very nice. They were a while that they were asked very short bathing. And when the coach called them to return, they would not leave the water. "A little longer", they said, "Only 10 minutes and go", said the coach.

After drying in the sun, they returned to the farm full of happiness and so hungry that they ate all the food they were offered: a delicious salad, a glass of gazpacho, grilled fish from this area with great flavour. They ended up enjoying a sweet watermelon and went to rest and sleep an hour nap, as is usual in Andalusia.

Lying on his bed, Luca was smiling fully happy for the luck that he had there enjoying and learning Spanish.



Thinking about his first Spanish class next evening, he was sound asleep.

After a good rest, Luca awoke with a coffee time and prepare for their first day of Spanish classes. He met her classmates in the dining room of the farmhouse:

"How are you? Have you rested?", said Luca. "Yes! Following the adventures of this morning, this invention of the Spanish people, 'siesta', feels great", Majka said.

"And, so hot in the middle of the day, it is understandable retiring", said Karolina.

"The truth is that I feel prepared for class, but I'm a little nervous. Do you know our classmates in Academia", asked Luca.

"I've seen some girls and boys waiting for the start of classes. Let's go", Majka said, "Come on; do not waste time, maybe we can get to know someone before school".

Thus, the three friends went to the Spanish Academy had on site near the farmhouse where they lived. They were very excited, intrigued to know his new teammates, friends in the future perhaps, and interested in the Spanish education system.

The hall of the Academy, full of light, was a hotbed of

young people from different European countries, a buzz of laughter, reunions, memories of old friends last year. Our three young, Majka, Karolina and Luca, stood on the side watching lists which indicated the classroom they should go for classes.

Luca, very excited, began to review them, the third leaf was found. He had to go to the Class 3- C, but in his class were not his friends. "Hey", Majka told, "I did not find in my class, that's weird". "No, Luca, is not uncommon. It is normal in this centre. We split to make new relationships".

At first, this idea did not like Luca, but eventually he assume, perhaps it was better that way.

They went to their classes. For Luca, it was very exciting to be surrounded by young people like him from other countries. First the teacher, Ana, explains the performance of the class and then she allowed students talked about them each other. Some guys talk a lot, because they knew Spanish language. When it was his turn to Luca, he was very nervous and just said his name and he was Italian.

At half-time he met his friends and he was happy. They hurriedly told their experiences, like him. Then they continued with classes.

At the end of the day, between the experience of the morning and the afternoon, the three friends were tired, but excited. In the last time of the classes, they got a pleasant surprise: the next day would be a trip to the city of Cordoba, to perform one of the cultural visits under the program. So the next morning they would get up early to travel to the city of the Mosque. As Luca showered, dined and lay down on the bed he soundly slept, dreaming of new experiences. The trip to Cordoba was smooth and quiet in a great highway. The city of Cordoba surprised them by its unusual beauty. Gua-



dalquivir River passing by the Roman Bridge, and the mixture of Roman art, Muslim and Christian gave it a look amazing.

They crossed the bridge over the Guadalquivir River and saw the impressive cathedral in the background of the city, which originally was the Great Mosque of Cordoba. One of the most magical places that they remember is the Patio de los Naranjos, the prelude to the mosque with the fountain where ancient Muslims made their ablutions before entering to pray.

Once inside, the boys could not believe the magnificent forest of columns and arches that formed this great mosque, whose construction has lasted generations. And, of course, to be able to build a Catholic cathedral into a mosque and that none of the buildings has lost its essence, was, for the boys, something truly amazing.

They spent the afternoon visiting some of the known 'Patios de Cordoba', a mixture of coolness in the hot Andalusian summer, filled with flowers, water and magical places. The cameras did not stop to take pictures all time. Walking through the Jewish quarter, known as "Judería", the boys were able to share unforgettable moments with their new friends from the academy Ma-

laga. They bought many souvenirs to take their families and, with great sorrow, had to say goodbye to this amazing city.

"I'll be back, I promise", said Luca from the bus when they left behind Cordoba.

The days went by pleasantly, learning Spanish in the mornings, sharing lunch with friends and swimming on the beach in the evenings, or walking in the countryside. So, The time passed very quickly. She played Cello very well and one day she invited Luca to her room:

In Luca's class was a girl she had connected Luca pleasantly. They had similar hobbies, both fell well. Her name was Mary and she was from the Czech Republic.

"Luca", she told, "these days I've been rehearsing a musical cello by Saint-Saens. It's 'The Swan' from The Carnival of the Animals. I'd like to listen to me and you could give me your opinion".

"Of, of ... .. of course", Luca said excited, "it will be an honour for me".

"Well, that's that, this afternoon, after school stop by my room". "I'll be there", said Luca.

Luca could not sleep that afternoon nap he loved, how nervous he was. Mary wanted his opinion, he could not



believe it.

After classes, Luca knocked Maria's room. When she opened, that pure smile, her eyes sweeping, and her long brown hair all curly; made the heart of Luca start running as rampant as ever had ridden his horse. "But come in, do not stand there gawking".

"Oh yes, sorry", Luca reacted. Her room was very nice and smelled very well. Luca sat on the edge of the bed and saw Mary was preparing to play the cello. When he heard the first notes he was transported. It was a sad but beautiful melody. The hands of Mary played a wonderful sound. Luca kept looking face that was becoming important to him. He was moved as he went sounding music.

When Mary stopped playing, Luca did not react, he was open-mouthed, deep, and high, beside himself. "Well, what do you think? Do not tell me anything? ... That's what you did not like; I try again", said Mary.

Returning to real world, Luca said: "No, I say yes, yes, I liked. Like is not the word. I've fallen in love ... music, I mean..." he said getting all red.

"Yeah, sure, love of music. But what you're goofy", said Mary laughing yet delighted.



“You’re beautiful.... beautiful... the music is, I say”.

Trying to break the tense situation, Maria invited Luca that they were out for a walk along the beach. A walk Luca would never forget. They talked and talked, about many things, and finally, back, with the sunset, their hand brushed and Mary kissed Luca on the cheek. Definitely, Luca was in love for the first time.

After living the happiest days of his life, the day of the departure came. There were countless moments of separation distress. However, there was illusion on all faces because the project “in the name of friendship” had gotten young people from different European countries became friends, were known and initiate deeper ties to be maintained over time. Despite the separation everyone was happy.

Well, some young, like Luca was crying next to Maria and his friends were not as comforting. But the strength of Maria, who encouraged him to keep the union through New Technologies helped to Luca to carry better this temporary separation.

Over the years, many of these friendships were maintained and strengthened over time. And what happened to our friends Luca and Maria? For the following

year, when they met again in Spain, Maria told Luca great news: his father’s company was based in Italy and had planned to move there a time to change of scenery. They would not be in the same city but much closer and would often.

Luca could not believe in his luck and, ever since, he always appreciated the time he agreed to come to Spain that summer that changed his life, in the name of friendship.





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