



# The Offspring

## ... the English spring

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*"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."*

**Benjamin Franklin**



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## A word from the editors

### Keep learning. And not only English

*Călin Albu, 9 G*

Thirst. Thirst for learning something new. Thirst for expansion. Thirst for being better.

It has always been on my list of “to do” things: keep learning and never stop. Being in touch with the most recent study subjects has also been on my mind. So, of course, as English is a school subject that has appeared not long ago in our country, I’ve been studying it thoroughly and with great passion.

Since I started learning this language, I knew that speaking it well would help me find many opportunities of work later in my life and ease up my burden of working abroad, away from my home country.

But, it isn’t hard if you like it: I found myself enjoying finding out about new words, expressions and artistic/ poetic ways of talking, and soon enough I started wanting to know even more of this language and its literature as well. And so I did! I was little when I first started taking advanced English classes and not long after I also took some exams in order to prove my level of experience and they were a success.

Curiously enough, learning from all the teachers was not sufficient for me, so I resorted to learning on my own and studying the homeland of this language, England, especially its literature and history. The results of me doing this were more than good, and so I kept going until this day.

I’m still having problems with the learning process, as I am a guy who likes having everything perfect and I haven’t figured out how to learn English at the highest level, but I guess the secret is to keep going further with this passion of mine – who knows, maybe one day it’ll help me out big time!



## **A Word from the Editors - In place of Pathway through Literature or Teacher talking textbook**

*Dorina Enciu*

Once upon a long time ago, when after changing schools by the year I had finally managed to land a teaching job in Bucharest, I stumbled upon this textbook with a puzzling title: English My Love. Was that a joke? Nobody of my age would ever say these words aloud more than once in a lifetime, if ever, let alone put them on the cover of a textbook. Yet, there it was. The authors were Romanian but the content was nothing like “The pupils are on the farm plot planting carrots” of my middle school student days. The first lesson took you to England by boat, train or automobile. My mind instantly embarked on the P&O ferry on the deck of which, once out from between the huge coaches and lorries, I took my first glimpse of the white cliffs of Dover, standing aloof as we slowly approached the shore. Oh, but no, it wasn't that. I was completely mistaken. The lesson actually started in a busy airport, with the check-in and the passport control. OMG! It was true! To get into the country you needed a visa! We were non-European citizens at the time! Weird, isn't it?

Years passed. I left teaching. There was the game of the words in translation. There was the exclusivist glint of the universe where money does seem to make the world go round. Don't let yourselves be fooled. It doesn't. It's the laws of Physics that do. When the time came to settle down I reverted to school as my first and best choice. School. The place where words start to glow and spread the light. Literature. The realm of today, yesterday and tomorrow, the kingdom of millions of faces, eyes and smiles, a land which I could give my students a run through or just let them stare at.

A student might say: But why study literature? Isn't it hard and boring? Why do such a useless thing? Well, for once because now it is the time to. At university or ever after, nobody will bother to ask you what you think about “roving late into the night” and why you think the poet or just anybody else for that matter would want to evermore go a-roving. Anyways, if wandering doesn't strike a chord with you, remember that nothing, be it hard or boring, is in fact useless. It's good use or bad use only. No third option.

What I am trying to say is that the point where teaching literature started for me was the set of books “Pathway to English” of which “English My Love” was the first. A team of dedicated Romanian teachers, led by Mrs Miruna Carianopol, wrote them for our high school children. I am very grateful to them for their precious gift to all of us. And indeed, pathways to English may be through Dover, Heathrow or Stansted, but the most enchanting ones are those through literature.

## BULLYING

*Ana Frăguța Neacșu, 10 F*

What does this word make us feel when we hear it? A ‘bully’ by a perfect definition means ‘a tyrannical coward who makes himself terror to the weak’, yet a bull is an animal, right? So maybe the behavior behind this word dates back to our origins, to our primary instincts, to us wanting to take things from one another in order to get wealth and power. By doing so, we ruin other people’s self-confidence, self-respect and self-love. But why do humans have to act like that? Is it to feed one’s ego, or is it maybe because this happened to one in the past and now they want to prove strength by doing it to others? We have two sides here: the aggressors and the victims. Let’s start with the latter.

This harassment comes in all shapes and forms, making its presence felt no matter the social status, on all social platforms, as early as childhood, when we start coming into contact with more and more people besides our family. Most of us had to deal with bullying at some point, so there is no secret and no science about how it works and what it does. Teenagers though, experience it the most, and due to lack of life knowledge they allow it to get to them the most easily. But what are this kind of abusers doing in fact? They simply use our flaws as weapons. The best thing to do is to stop focusing on the bully and focus on ourselves instead. We are the ones who pretend not to see those imperfections or forever postpone dealing with them. And it is not only about acceptance, but also about trying to fix them. Unless we do that, we won’t be able to bear our flaws for long. I tried to analyze and see why bullying affects people. I have reached the conclusion that it is because they care too much about what others believe about them. I do not think that you should mind what everybody says. The opinions of those close to you, of those who have proven worthy of your trust and time should be the ones to take into consideration. Only when one is close to you they can see your true nature and be in touch with what goes on in your life and know your story. Not all have access to that, so not everybody has the right to claim to know you.

As regards the bullies, in my opinion they are themselves hurt inside, and they are trying to hide it. If you are a well-balanced person, psychologically truly fine and happy with who you are, you cannot purposefully do harm to other people. Still, no matter the reason, bullies have no right to do this to anyone. And even though there is no such written rule that states we shall not bully someone else, it should be part of common sense not to hurt others or to blame them for who they are. I found an amazing legacy to live by: “You can do whatever you desire, whenever you want as long as you do not make another suffer for your actions”. It is not always easy to do that, but I believe it is worth trying. You see, bullies take the easy way to increase their self-esteem, by ‘stealing’ it from people who surround them. We all can presume it true that “The right way is not necessarily the easy one”.

Another thing is, if you affirm that bullying is not present in your daily environment,

it doesn't mean it isn't there. It is just not there for you, or you have not noticed it yet. There is a simple analogy to this: most of us believe in God, yet we haven't seen or observed him, and we cannot physically prove his existence or nonexistence. Harassers are everywhere, we have to admit it, and I won't say they are unstoppable, because everything is stoppable and everything is possible, but only if we have the strength of will and the power to put an end to it. It is not about putting faith in an impossible ideal like "a world without bullies", or anything of that sort. We must do something to earn that world, and not wait with our arms crossed for something to happen, to wait for a miracle. We need to start having this fight within ourselves, not with the bullies, with our inner being...**THE FIGHT IS ABOUT ACCEPTING, FIXING AND IMPROVING OURSELVES, TO HELP US EVOLVE TOWARDS OUR BEST VERSION.**

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind", as Gandhi once said. Therefore, I am not sure that all bullies deserve punishment, but help. Moreover, we should stop acting like broken pieces and work together in unity. Let us stop acting against each other, let's work with each other. If we aspire to a better world, that implicitly requires us to be better. We are together in this short life, why make it a hell? We could help one another instead of bullying, or at least give people the freedom to flourish on their own. **LET US RISE FROM THE DIRT HOLDING HANDS AND CHANGE THE WORLD WE LIVE IN!**



## A thought on your better self

*Bianca Gheorghe, 9 G*

Some time ago, I realized life is very random. Literally anything can happen. Also, life is unquestionably short, so it's important to be satisfied with your achievements up to every moment, since it could be the last. Oh well, this got really dark.

I'm very aware of how I spend my time. I hate wasting it doing something that's in vain. Actually, my goal at the moment is to stop doing things that won't improve myself, make me grow as an individual in some way. If you haven't realized it yet, this article is about personal development. I love talking about personal development. I think it's one of the most important things one should be tracking – forget about the calories, steps you've made today or the days until the national exam – you should be focusing on how your actions take you closer and closer to your better self. Does it seem boring? Well, at least you haven't stopped reading, so bear with me.

As I already said, our time here is limited and everything is mostly a hit-or-miss. Friends come and go. Chances come and go. So do luck, success and fame. The only vague phenomena that will stay with you forever (will they?) are yourself, your knowledge and your skills. That's why you should aim to enhance these as well as you can and strive to be in touch with their development. A funny Indian guy once told me it doesn't matter what you choose to do as long as that path helps you become a better person. This guy was my trainer during a project called "Grow", where your goals were personal development and increasing your cultural knowledge. For me, it was also a chance to exercise my English and I also learnt a new recipe for pancakes. Ah, pancakes...

Actually, I don't really know how, but it kind of made me a more outspoken, extroverted person too, and I'm really welcoming the change with open arms. We had sessions on communication, leadership and stuff like that, but also talked about food and music, told horror stories or played games any time we could. I love talking about this experience because it's a nice way of promoting self development from my own contact with it, and it was a nice environment to work in: surrounded by strangers who at the end of the project, you realize, are new friends.

I'm not saying you should try it, because this isn't an ad, I'm just saying I tried it and I like the way it changed me for the better. Also, if you're interested in the pancake recipe, keep an eye out for my next articles, it's worth it.

Remember to be aware of yourself!



## Leadership — the capacity of translating vision into reality

*Raluca Hondor, 9 G*

Our society is a precious jewel chiselled with the finest of the tools: leadership. We have come a long way from pursuing primordial instincts to what we nowadays call “civilisation”. If prehistory taught us one thing, this is it: guidance is compulsory. After all, what is a nation without an example?

Imagine this scenario. You are in the 21st century, but... nobody has ever dared to pose questions, to initiate a creative approach, to delve into the mysteries veiling our existence. Nobody has ever said “Hey, maybe we could use this red, hot thing coming from the sky somehow!”, or “Hey, maybe we could build a big, round thing to help us carry other things around!”. No. Everybody has succumbed to the disease of ignorance.

Well, wouldn't that be a disaster? Fortunately, it wasn't the case! Someone did decide that it was time to surmount this barrier, that the fire should be exploited and the wheel designed. Creativity intervened. The power of example intervened, lifting the burden of stagnation. Someone took the responsibility of creation upon themselves. This appetite for innovation prevails only within true leaders, they impede the initiative from withering away. Taking a step further when others give in to fear, that is the meaning of leadership.

The yearning of the few influences the many, this is a given fact. The leader must fuel the followers' desire for novelty through the power of example, facing troublesome decisions along the way. For instance, he should know how to handle potential. There is a fine line that must not be crossed between directing it and confining it. Would you look up to a self-righteous individual who rejects any views that don't correspond to his own? Would you look up to somebody who doesn't promote ingenuity, and thinks of themselves as a... shepherd? Do you identify with an irrelevant sheep in the flock?



Therefore, a leader is so much more than a mere piece in the puzzle, he is the contour, the element that yields definition. He is the one that people cherish, the symbol of a coalition based on encouragement and honesty. Giving up is a foreign concept to him, and he finds communication to be the key to all conflicts. He is a visionary, a role model.

You should wonder, “Could it be me?”

## **Career. Next stop: University**

### **Today: Architecture**

*Alexandra Enescu  
Undergraduate, "Ion Mincu"  
University of Architecture and Urbanism*

As you may have heard before, Architecture School is an unending journey that takes away all of your free time, most of your sleep hours and the overall joy of living. Indeed, this is mostly true, but there are many moments that compensate tenfold. Here is some of my personal experience and advice after two years of studying at "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism.

Many young people think that in order to pursue a career in architecture, they must be particularly talented at drawing, but this is not necessarily true. Of course, it helps, because drawing is the language of architecture, but it is not a condition. During college, you will learn that architecture is not so much about drawing, but is a complex of attributes out of which only one is drawing. Also, I believe choosing this profession solely for the reason that you like drawing is a mistake. If you don't love architecture as an entity, as a process, as creation of space and form, college years will be a burden and a waste of time, not a pleasure.

What makes Architecture School enjoyable is, in my opinion, that you have to work with theories and concepts from other fields, and eventually get to know something about everything. If you are interested in a particular field that at first sight may seem not to have anything to do with Architecture, you will learn that you can actually integrate that in your projects. Architecture is actually about everything. And what you choose to take from that "everything" is up to you and your personality. You have the freedom to express your own individuality.

Moreover, you get to unleash your creativity, and what can be more enjoyable than that? One of my preparation teachers told me that he goes to his office to have fun and he's getting paid for it. There are a lot of projects in which you can basically do whatever you want (with some limits, of course). You get to play, to experiment, yield surprising results in your work and with yourself. Another thing that I particularly enjoy about this college is its dynamicity. You learn from your own experience and mistakes and need to improvise a lot. Making architectural models and the various exercises on Study of Form help you practice dexterity, patience and attention to detail and are also a tangible result of your effort, and this sometimes can be very satisfying. You end up submerging yourself into work and perceive it as a beautiful and fulfilling experience.

However, at the same time, you have to assimilate an overwhelming amount of information, so from the beginning you should practice prioritizing and time management. You won't be able to learn everything, and you will end up not with what they tried to teach you, but with what you have learned yourself. And you will mostly have to learn by yourself. No one will ever tell you what to do, but what not to do.

Also, being good at what you do takes time, determination, patience and talent. There's a lot of exhausting, pointless, sometimes frustrating work with the only reason of chiseling your personality and strength. But if you like what you do, you can overcome every obstacle and make college years fun and meaningful.



## “School with a difference”

*Cristina Iuga, 9 G*

At the end of our first semester, our geography teacher told us about a trip that she wanted to organise in the special week of “School with a difference”. We would spend it in the old town of Krakow, the former capital of Poland, and we were to visit the famous concentration camp of Auschwitz. I signed up in a rush. I would like to tell you about that trip.

It is difficult to find words to describe Auschwitz and its atmosphere. Once we walked into that place, I sensed that my feet were getting heavier and heavier with each step taken and when we entered a cell block, the simple thought that so many people had been slaughtered there made me feel dizzy with an indefinable sickness and the strange sensation of losing consciousness. Every moment spent in there felt like ages. It was extremely difficult to cope with the images which were shown to us. You needed to run away, to cover your eyes, to stop your ears. You went on. There was one room in which the suitcases of the prisoners were stored, and on the suitcases their names were written, as they had thought, on leaving their homes, that they were going on a vacation, to start a new life. Another room was a long but narrow hallway where the pictures of prisoners were spread all across the walls. A third contained hair, locks of hair taken from prisoners. From people with long beautiful hair like yours or mine, from children, and the grey short hair of elderly people.

As I am at home now, safe and well protected within the walls of my house and the arms of my mother, I still cannot understand how that much cruelty was possible and why it was possible.

On returning home though, I found a place which will always be among my favourites, pouring blessing over the aching wounds of my memory. That was the Old Town Centre of Bratislava. It was the people, the calm, gentle and warm Slovaks, but also the architecture. Everybody was very kind and helpful in showing us the way to different tourist points, while the architecture merged together beautifully the modern and the vintage.

This trip, which was quite short, taught me a lesson. Be kind, forgive and treasure your life. Others lost theirs in such a tragic and meaningless way. Don't ever try to crush a human being. Not even in your thought.



## Extracurricular:

### Women's empowerment

Wednesday, 15 March, 2 p.m. American Corner

*Salia Matinca, 10 E*

The activity took place at the American Corner of Bucharest, an Information centre within the National Library of Romania. The building was very big and beautiful, with a labyrinth of halls and rooms full of officials, willing to present different projects. There were a lot of adverts on the walls about different activities organised by the Romanian Cultural Institute - the Public Diplomacy Office. It was an interesting introduction to large-scale projects.

The focus of the workshop was the role of women in society and the improvements brought by them along the years in politics, science and the business environment. There was a speech followed by discussions, questions and answers on this topic. I consider that participating at this event named "Women's empowerment: successful women in politics, business, science, and humanities" was an opportunity for me to discover the way in which women are perceived by the society and how important is the role they play in various areas.

After waiting a while, in a small room in which were just chairs, whose walls were covered with images of children from Africa, suddenly, an unexpected presence came through the door. The young and beautiful Lindsey Whitehead, the Vice Counselor of the Embassy of USA delivered us a speech about the ability for women to enjoy their rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and wellbeing. While often interchangeably used, the more comprehensive concept of gender empowerment refers to people of any gender, stressing the distinction between biological sex and gender as a role.



She also spoke about the land rights offering a key way to economically empower women, giving them the confidence they need to tackle gender inequalities. Often, women in developing nations are legally restricted from their land on the sole basis of gender. Having a right to their land gives women a type of bargaining power that they wouldn't normally have; in turn, they gain the ability to assert themselves in various aspects of their life, both in and outside of the home. Another way to provide women empowerment is to allocate responsibilities to them that normally belong to men. When women have economic empowerment, it is a way for others to see them as equal members of society. Through this, they achieve more self-respect and confidence by their contributions to their communities.

At about 3:30, after the discussion and the speech, we all went to our homes, still talking about the women's place in the society we live in. If America is still working on it, here at home surely is plenty to do.

## May all the stars

*Arina Ciocan , 9 G*

You're in the sand, the grass, the sky;  
You are the ground I walk on, the reason why I cry  
And why I laugh tremulously at the sun;  
You are the bullet in my gun,  
The poison in my veins, the stitches in my heart.  
I am a canvas, you're the art,  
You are the end and I'm the start.

Now and then, on any quiet afternoon,  
Or busy Monday morning, or once in a blue moon,  
I breathe in the air and it reminds me of the night you left,  
The night of coal and of bereft,  
Back when I still owned all my lights,  
That was the most fortuitous of nights.

I can no longer write without the sun,  
I wait for warmer days to come,  
To shine over my heart which used to spark,  
Now I can't find it in the dark.

As the cold wind is stealing away my summers and my springs,  
All I can hope is that it gives you wings  
And gives you, yet another chance you don't deserve.  
I wish I could hate you for having the nerve  
To disappear like you did.  
I think I love you too much, kid.

But may the moon smile at you even if all I get is a frown  
May you bathe freely in the sun,  
Even if I might just drown,  
May all the stars watch over you from their throne...  
I miss somebody I have never known.

# Unfastidious

*Badea Ana, 10 H*

Slender trees and nubilous skies and  
Flaccid waves wash away all concern of my mind.  
Etiolated plants, they're frail to the eye  
And an unremitting beauty of the ferocious tide  
I look down to the pale golden sand  
Then close my eyes in sign of disparate regret.  
A minute passed by, now another one  
Flashing memories bathe in demureness  
The shore is quiescent, standing up to the wildness of the effervescent  
Nature is ephemeral and so are feelings  
It's not just a stage, this world is evanescent  
Our bodies are effete and too weak to survive  
But souls are perdurable and they will remain alive.

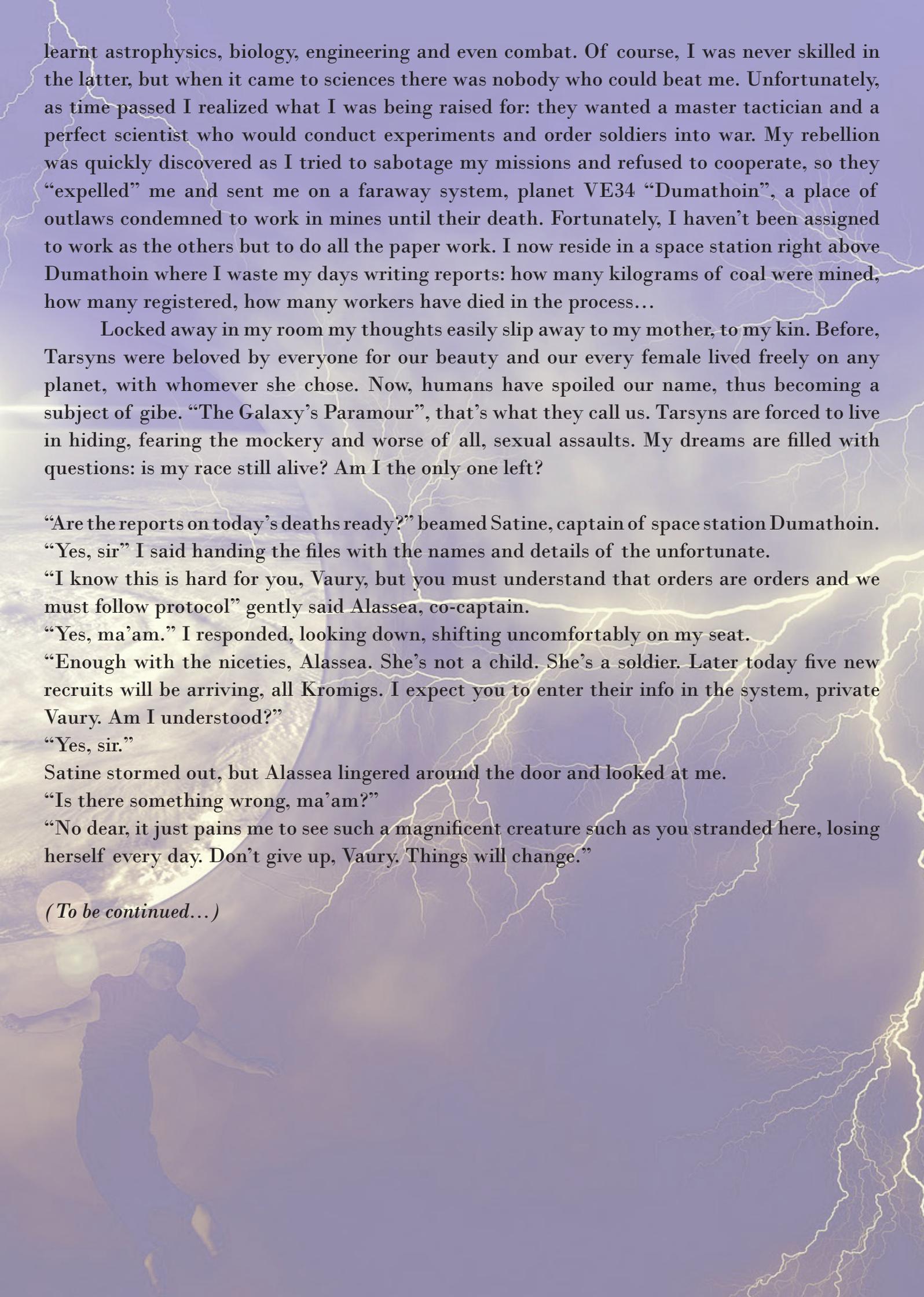


## Twisted Fates

*Andrada Dumitru, IID*

The universe has never been the same since they came to power. Before, each planet lived its own life, had its insignificant quarrels and lived per total in peace under the rule of the Intergalactic Government. But many things have changed since they came to power: the Government was quickly disassembled, its representatives killed or jailed, and the inhabitants of any planet were enslaved, forced to work for the glory of the “homo sapiens”. I too have suffered from the touch of human kind.

My name is Vaury Mescha, planet of birth EC7654 “Absolutio”, system LM028, Tarsyn race. I was taken away as an infant from my mother’s arms to be trained as a soldier, since I showed a higher IQ than my fellow Tarsyns. To explain why I was chosen I need to tell my race’s story first. Unlike other evolved species, Tarsyns are all female. Our survival depends highly on males from any race. We can mate with anyone and the result will always be a healthy female Tarsyn. But there’s a catch, no Tarsyn is alike. If a mother likes a physical or psychological feature from her partner she may choose if her child should have it too. For example, if a Tarsyn mates with a Sindari, a reptilian species, covered with rough scales, she can simply wish her child to have scales for the sake of improving the race, raising its chances of survival. So my race is in a continuous evolution, but we have never lost our blue-purple skin colour or our feminine body. It is, after all, essential for the Tarsyns to be attractive in order to live. When the humans discovered us, they were absolutely intrigued by our race due to our genetic capabilities: breaking down the code, selecting specific chromosomes mentally. That’s why they nicknamed us “Volo”, meaning wish in Latin, an extinct language. These creatures never cease to amaze me. Many Tarsyns were taken in labs to be tested and others were forced to mate with different creatures, the mothers then ordered to give birth to enhanced soldiers, but these infants were never what was expected. Even though they obtained claws, sharp teeth or tails these infants were still female with slender bodies incapable of fighting even after years of training. So why was I taken? My mother was one of the few to have mated with the now extinct Nordrassins, a highly intelligent species that dedicated their existence to enhancing their weak bodies, replacing it with robotic parts. The Nordrassin technology was renowned around the galaxy and its people even more for their deftness in diplomacy. Because they were so intelligent, the homo sapiens didn’t even try to befriend them. They simply blew their planet to bits right before stealing their valuable discoveries in biorobotics. I am the only one alive with Nordrassin blood and thanks to my mother, the only one with their brains. From the very moment of my birth I was a threat to the new Government ruled by these Earthlings. They feared me as much as my father and his kin because we were superior, but I wasn’t killed. For once, the humans tried to understand someone who wasn’t them and they tried to make me one of their own. I grew up in a school that raised soldiers. That’s where I



learnt astrophysics, biology, engineering and even combat. Of course, I was never skilled in the latter, but when it came to sciences there was nobody who could beat me. Unfortunately, as time passed I realized what I was being raised for: they wanted a master tactician and a perfect scientist who would conduct experiments and order soldiers into war. My rebellion was quickly discovered as I tried to sabotage my missions and refused to cooperate, so they “expelled” me and sent me on a faraway system, planet VE34 “Dumathoin”, a place of outlaws condemned to work in mines until their death. Fortunately, I haven’t been assigned to work as the others but to do all the paper work. I now reside in a space station right above Dumathoin where I waste my days writing reports: how many kilograms of coal were mined, how many registered, how many workers have died in the process...

Locked away in my room my thoughts easily slip away to my mother, to my kin. Before, Tarsyns were beloved by everyone for our beauty and our every female lived freely on any planet, with whomever she chose. Now, humans have spoiled our name, thus becoming a subject of gibe. “The Galaxy’s Paramour”, that’s what they call us. Tarsyns are forced to live in hiding, fearing the mockery and worse of all, sexual assaults. My dreams are filled with questions: is my race still alive? Am I the only one left?

“Are the reports on today’s deaths ready?” beamed Satine, captain of space station Dumathoin.

“Yes, sir” I said handing the files with the names and details of the unfortunate.

“I know this is hard for you, Vaury, but you must understand that orders are orders and we must follow protocol” gently said Alassea, co-captain.

“Yes, ma’am.” I responded, looking down, shifting uncomfortably on my seat.

“Enough with the niceties, Alassea. She’s not a child. She’s a soldier. Later today five new recruits will be arriving, all Kromigs. I expect you to enter their info in the system, private Vaury. Am I understood?”

“Yes, sir.”

Satine stormed out, but Alassea lingered around the door and looked at me.

“Is there something wrong, ma’am?”

“No dear, it just pains me to see such a magnificent creature such as you stranded here, losing herself every day. Don’t give up, Vaury. Things will change.”

*(To be continued...)*

## Horse riding My journey...in the saddle

*Alexandra Maria Dracopol, 9 G*

I am always asked if I do any sport. When I say that I practice horse riding most people seem surprised but at the same time their first thought is that this is not a sport... that you just sit in the saddle and the horse does all the work. That is completely wrong. Horse riding is an exceptional sport which is based on the bond between a human being and a horse. Through years of practice, your horse becomes your mirror. Every step, every pirouette, every stride is thought by two brains working as one. Here is my journey....

I have always loved animals, especially horses. When I was 4 years old, my parents decided to take me to a riding center as a surprise. There is where I met my first horse, Luna. She was a brown pony with a black mane and black tail.

I would say it was love at first sight and I could not wait for the next riding lesson on her.

Years passed and after I had got pretty serious about riding and switched many clubs since my trainer was moving a lot I met Fregel. She was the nicest mare and she helped me regain my trust after I had some issues with a previous horse. She made me more confident, stronger and taught me that nothing is worth stressing about.

Fregel was an old mare and she needed some rest so even though I loved her the most at that point I had to move to another center so that I could make some progress. There were a lot of children and I made a lot of friends to whom I have been talking ever since. That center was a lot different from the old ones. I used to take individual lessons and at "Steaua" I found myself in a group full of 7 children. It was fun and I learned a lot there. We were going to training camps, which was amazing. I even took part in my first show there.

As I was saying earlier, my first show was at "Steaua Riding Club", on my favorite pony, Linda. We did not get along at first, but as my trainer was really strict and wanted you to give your best in every circumstance I had to make a team with Linda. We ended up becoming inseparable and understanding each other so well.

One day, my friend Ioana was searching online and found the old center I was going to with a new owner and new horses. We decided to give it a try despite my going to "Steaua". There is where I met my first love I could say. Her name was Tracy. When I first saw her I could say that it was a strong chemistry that made me stay there for two years enjoying every second of our rides.

I remember that I was begging my parents to buy her for me. I started saving up money but I did not realize at that point that not buying a horse was the hardest part, but taking care of it and dedicating your whole time and having to put school on the second place, of which my parents were completely disapproving. Eventually she was sold after 2 years and with her missing I could not find my place there any more so I left.

Little did I know that I was about to find my absolutely one true love of a horse when I thought I could not move on from Tracy. My mother talked to a family friend who was and has been my trainer up to these days. She introduced me to Glorious. He was the same age as me, back then, 13 years old. At first we weren't getting on well at all. He had not been ridden properly for many years and I had a hard time getting to know him.

After a year and a half of training we went to our first show. It was amazing. He gave his absolute best and we got 5th place, being judged by international trainers.

That was when I realized what a great horse he was, not because we got a really good place, but because I felt that he knew how important that show was to me and gave his absolutely best.

In another great show of ours, we got 3rd place. Again I was really stressed, but it was like he was telling me to trust him because he was determined to win.

I cannot imagine my life right now without him. Glorious made me happy again, made me believe in myself.

He is such a calm, ambitious and loving horse. Every time I go to him and I feel sad he instantly makes me happy. He played a big part in in making me the person who I am today and still does.

Now, every time someone asks me why horse riding? I think of my bond with him and say "because it is unique".

## **Water polo - Strive for success!**

*Daniel Gabriel Coca, 9 G*

The passions we have define us as individuals: some may like music, dancing, reading or skiing, but my passion is different. It's water polo.

Since I was little I liked swimming, so when my father first took me to "Tolea Grintescu Olympic Natatorium" I was fascinated by the water and I wanted to start taking classes immediately, which my parents were very happy to hear. But how did it get to water polo?

During one of my swimming courses, I noticed a goalpost in the water, so I asked my coach what it was for. He told me it was for water polo, a water sport, which, until that very moment, I had never heard about. He explained that it is a tough and challenging sport, but at the same time, very interesting and unique. He suggested that I should hold position in the goalpost, and he would take five shots, which I happily accepted. I only conceded two goals, and the coach praised me, saying that I was very talented as a goalkeeper. I don't know how, but it happened that a coach from Steaua Bucharest, a very prestigious club was there, and he saw me save the shots. He went to my coach and told him and my mother: "This kid is very talented. He has a bright future".

Time passed and I had the mischance to lose my first coach. A person who believed in me, saw my potential and trained me like I was his own child. Of course, I was left broken-hearted and thought: "There will never be someone like him, someone to believe in me this much. For a period, I trained with another coach, whom I appreciated very much, but I ceased my water polo dream, believing that I would not succeed.

Time flew, years passed, and last summer I started thinking: "When I was young, people told me I have a bright future as a water polo goalkeeper. Why did I stop? I have to resume as soon as possible, to show them they were not wrong." When I got back home, I told my parents about my idea. They fully supported me, and the next day I went with my father to Dinamo Bucharest Sports Centre, a well-known club, not only for water polo. There, I met my new coach, who told me: "Indeed, you have potential, but if you want to achieve success, you have to work hard. Harder than ever".

His words, together with my ambition and desire to be the best, motivated me, and I started again. Now, almost a year after, I'm making significant progress, and I'm chasing my dreams. When I get hit by a ball in the face, experience pain, injuries or think that I can't keep going on in training, I remember a quote: "When you think about quitting, think about why you started."

In the end, I want to point out that it's never too late to start over, if you have ambition, and if you believe in yourself and in your dreams.

## Books

### “Pride and Prejudice”? Yes, again.

*Alexandra Boca, 9 G*

Well, hello, dear reader! I'm here to tell you about my favourite book and maybe persuade you to give it a try. If you want to listen - sorry, read - then by all means, keep on going. If you do not, well, keep on reading anyway. It won't take you more than a couple of minutes and you may be persuaded to just take a journey in time.

Alright, so, my favourite book is 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen and before you say anything just hear me out, okay? I promise you won't regret it.

I'm sure you are all familiar with the plot. No? Well, long story short, Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy meet, he's arrogant, conceited and proud; she's witty, stubborn and definitely doesn't like him. A lot of things happen: Mr. Darcy professes his ardent love for her and insults her while doing it (that's the way to a girl's heart, boys) but she refuses and spares him no pain in her turn. After he helps her family with some things, Lizzy realises she had misjudged Mr. Darcy and that she actually cares for him. In the end they affirm their undying, true love and marry and everybody's happy. Except perhaps Mrs. Bennet who still has two more daughters to marry.

Okay, maybe I made it sound less romantic than it actually is but I would just bore you with a good summary. And trust me, this book is very romantic and funny and it will leave you astonished at the intellect and quickness of the strong woman that Elizabeth is.

I would now like to list the reasons why this book is my favourite and also why you should read it. First of all, it is a doorway into the life of a very large family in the 18th century. The reader gets to see how they behaved, what their priorities were and how the people of that time period acted. What their rules were, how their mentality and beliefs shaped their personality and what was requested of them. Second of all, this book has an alluring story-line with diverse characters from smart, witty women to humble, bumbling men. It will keep you entertained with its ingenuity and captivating plot and you will not be able to put it down. Thirdly, it will make you swoon and sigh and wish you could have a Mr. Darcy or a Mr. Bingley to sweep you off your feet. Don't try to deny it because everyone wants one, even if they won't admit it.

Finally, I would very much like to encourage you to give this book a try because not only is it a classical novel that deserves to be read, it is also a heartwarming tale of how love conquers all.



## History in the Backstage ~The Founding of Rome in a Nutshell~

*Raluca Hondor, 9 G*

I'm sure we've all heard about the Great, Amazing, Glorious, Magnificent Roman Empire. However, not many of us know the legend of Rome's foundation. No, I'm not talking about what's written in the books, I'm talking about the real deal. Buckle up, because you're going on a journey to unveil the deepest, darkest parts of history, that are never taught in school...

It all started with Aeneas, one of the very few sane people in Troy: he was spared by the Greeks for claiming that Helena had to be returned to Menelaus — the exact thing that could have stopped a war (but that's none of my business). Wanting to start anew, he sailed and sailed, until he found a little place, in today's Italy. There was a problem, though: his little place was inhabited. So what's the reasonable solution? Rob and destroy whatever stands in your way, of course!

Shockingly, these people weren't too happy. When the battle was about to begin, King Latinus asked Aeneas about his origins and intentions. I mean, it's a logical thing to do, it's 100% guaranteed that people are entirely honest when it comes to this. The latter could not refrain from flaunting his mother's name, Goddess Venera, causing the oh-so-impressionable ruler to back down. They made peace, and Latinus even offered his daughter's hand in marriage! What could possibly go wrong? Besides the fact that Aeneas creatively named their town "Lavinium", after his beloved wife's name, Lavinia...

Well, it wasn't long until a jealous Turnus (leader of the Rutuli) picked a fight with them — and died. Unfortunately, there was a downside (arguably): Latinus died as well. Our favourite strategic planner and name giver wasn't slow to get hold of his father-in-law's power, defeating the attacks that kept coming. Death seems to be in the air, because... Guess what happened to Aeneas meanwhile!

This tragedy occurred after a descendant was born, Ascanius, but the fact that Lavinia was his mother is fiction, or so they say... Regardless, she treated him as her own, and allowed him to pursue his dream: building another town. Although we haven't seen much originality yet, he named this one "Alba Longa".

Generations passed, and a feud surfaced: Amulius couldn't deal with his self-control issues, and stole the throne from his big brother, aka he was a sore loser. To frustrate Numitor even more, he invested his daughter with the "honour" of being a Vestal, aka a priestess bound to remain pure all of her life. It looks like it was difficult for her to do that, so she was punished, aka sent to prison to rot. She swore that the twins she gave birth to belonged to the God Mars (seems legit), but it was kind of useless, since they were thrown into the Tiber River anyway. You already know their names —if not, you've missed a lot of fun in your life—,

Romulus and Remus. Long story short, they were found by a shepherd, Faustulus, but not before they were taken care of by the famous wolf, “Lupa”.

Romulus and Remus were raised like every other kid out there, but their adoptive father was one of the few not-so-dumb characters in this legend. He saw that certain things didn't add up, and figured out that they were of royal descent. Numitor had the same epiphany when those two were brought to him by the guards because of doing some ordinary, illegal stuff (such as hunting on his territory). Their newfound grandpa was way too excited to have found them, that he skipped straight to plotting against Amulius. Sigh, Romulus and Remus never got to learn that trespassing is a criminal offence...

Their plan was a success, and they managed to free their legitimate mother, too. In spite of all this, it still wasn't enough: they wanted to build another town from scratch. Here, we can notice the colossal amount of creativity, almost as if nobody in their lineage had rebelled against staying in one place.

Romulus and Remus both wanted to be founders, and, for some reason, they couldn't choose different locations, they couldn't co-lead the town. No, they just had to turn this into a race of bird-watching. I swear, sibling competitions are THE worst. Basically, Romulus won because he saw 12 vultures after Remus had seen 6. They even got into a fight: people's opinions on who was entitled to the throne varied. However, the story had a happy ending for everybody: Romulus achieved his goal, the people had a good ruler... Oh, but wait, Remus sort of died. Something about crossing the walls his brother had traced, religious significance, an offended Romulus, blah-blah-blah...

So this is how Rome came to be. Well, the story had a happy ending for almost everybody!



## Rock Music – Metallica

*Dan Șteflea, 10 F*

### A bit of history

Loved by many and hated by others, Rock music has been around since the late 70s , reaching its peak during the 80s with many influential bands being founded during that time, and it still continues its legacy today with newer bands.

### Rise in popularity

Many consider the 80's the most important time period for rock music , and rightfully so. Influential bands like the Big 4 (a group consisting of Metallica, Slayer, Anthrax, and later on, Megadeth), Iron Maiden, and many more were founded during that time. Fans enjoyed the music a lot, and thus the bands grew in popularity, becoming some of the biggest names in rock music to date.

I'll talk about Metallica for the most part , since giving a full exposition of the other bands' achievements would take a long time, but that doesn't mean they're less significant.

Founded in 1981, Metallica was an important name in the music industry, given the fact that the songs composed by them have always been pushing the boundaries of both instrumental and lyrical writing.

Their 1986 album, Master Of Puppets, has, since its release, been considered the band's best album. Songs like "Battery " , with its complex instrumental introduction, or "Master of Puppets" have always been adored by fans and critics alike.

### Rough Years

Even though Metallica's start was one every aspiring musician would hope for, they surely have had rough times during their activity.

The two line-up changes for the bands with new bass players coming and going represented some months of inactivity for the band. Cliff Burton's death during the tour in Sweden in 1986 was an unfortunate event for the band, since Cliff was the most respected member of the band at the time, frontman James Hetfield even saying that he looked at Burton as if he was an older brother .

After Cliff, Jason Newsted came along to fulfill the role of a bass player for Metallica. Even though he was appreciated by everyone for his stage presence in concerts and his overall skill , Jason had a rough time after the release of "... And Justice for all" , the band's 4th studio album. Due to drummer Lars Ulrich's thoughts on how the album should sound , the bass was tuned down so low , it could barely be heard. The album was still a success , but the fans still criticised the volume at which the Bass was set.

After the dust settled from the issue with “...And Justice for all”, the band continued to release music at a steady pace . It wasn't until recent years , that they started to disappear from the Rock Music scene. In particular, the year they released their 7th album , “ St. Anger” , the band had a lot of negative criticism towards the album , many being disappointed by the state the band was in .

#### Years of inactivity

After the release of “St. Anger”, the band took a 5-year break, some of the members being demoralized after the backlash of “St. Anger” ‘s release. They came back in 2008, with “Death Magnetic “, a good album overall, but it still wasn't as good as their original albums, according to fans. It took some years for the fans to realize that the album was a good one, and it was a big improvement after “St. Anger”.

After that, the band took another long break from producing any new music, an 8-year break to be exact. Recently, the band came back to their roots with their newest album, “Hardwired ... to self-destruct”. The album was a big success for the band, receiving a lot of positive feedback from both the critics and the fans.

#### Back in business

After the release of “Hardwired ... to self-destruct”, the band was back in business. They had many concerts following the release of the album, concerts all over the world, but for the most part, in North America.

#### Other Influential bands

Besides Metallica , many other bands have been important for the evolution of rock music. Considering the achievement list is incredibly long , I'll list under their names some of the more important releases :

New Albums for the big names –

Iron Maiden – Book of souls

Slayer – Repentless

Megadeth – Dystopia

Anthrax – For All Kings

Tune in and enjoy!

## A letter from Merlin

**Task: Write a letter to your friend Arthur, starting from JK Rowling’s latest book ‘History of Magic in North America’ and showing your interest in the subject. Sign your letter as Merlin.**

*Ioan Scripcariu, 9 G*

Dear Arthur,

I hope this letter will find you in a good disposition. I am now in America, a place that has not even been discovered yet. The people living here have awesome magic skills and they are sharing their experience with me. Only you and me from all England know about this land of opportunities. For example, they have a revolutionary plant, named “corn”. If you put it next to a fire, the seeds explode and turn into a thing called “pop-corn”. Here I saw some extraordinary animals, like the bison, which look like huge bulls.

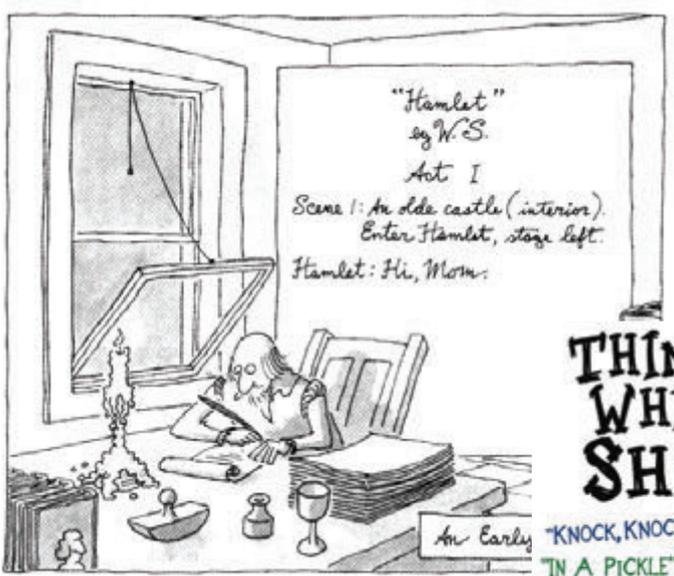
But let’s talk about more serious things. People here don’t have such preoccupations as wars and they don’t build towns because they live in tents. If the Spanish or the English people were to discover this place, they would destroy it. Please don’t tell anyone. Nothing has to be changed to this country. This is the way they live, and it is great. If the warriors cross the ocean, shouting that these people don’t deserve their piece of land, it will be a horrible mistake.

You know what? I’ll cast a spell on it and hide it from the eyes of all who roam the seas and oceans! Let this be our secret, for the lives of these great people.

Yours sincerely,  
Merlin



# Funny Shakespeare



WHY IS ENGLISH SO MUCH FUN?  
 "ALL THE FAITH HE HAD HAD HAD HAD NO EFFECT ON THE OUTCOME OF HIS LIFE."  
 BECAUSE THAT SENTENCE MAKES PERFECT SENSE.

## THINGS WE SAY TODAY WHICH WE OWE TO SHAKESPEARE:

"KNOCK, KNOCK! WHO'S THERE?" "HEART OF GOLD"  
 "IN A PICKLE" "SET YOUR TEETH ON EDGE"  
 "FAINT HEARTED" "SO-SO" "GOOD RIDDANCE"  
 "LIE LOW" "FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE" "BAITED BREATH" "SEND HIM PACKING"  
 "WEAR YOUR HEART ON YOUR SLEEVE" "COME WHAT MAY"  
 "THE GAME IS UP"  
 "NOT SLEPT ONE WINK" "FULL CIRCLE" "OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH"  
 "TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING"  
 "WHAT'S DONE IS DONE" "NAKED TRUTH" "BREAK THE ICE"  
 "WILD LAUGHING STOCK" "BREADED HIS LAST" "GOOSE CHASE"  
 "HEART OF HEARTS" "VANISH INTO THIN AIR"  
 "SEEN BETTER DAYS" "MAKES YOUR HAIR STAND ON END"  
 "DEAD AS A DOORNAIL" "FOR GOODNESS' SAKE" "LOVE IS BLIND"  
 "GREEN EYED MONSTER" "FAIR / FOUL PLAY / PLAY" "OFF WITH HIS HEAD"  
 "THE WORLD IS MY OYSTER" "BRAVE NEW WORLD" "A SORRY SIGHT"  
 "BE ALL / END ALL"



"You the bloke what has a kingdom to swop for a horse?"



"The following play contains scenes of treachery, fratricide and indecision, which some viewers may find upsetting..."



"Now in this next scene, Rosalind, you disguise yourself as a boy."



"With proper collateral, Mr Plunket, I think we can just forget Polonius's advice to his son."



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