

# WINTER WONDERLAND

ediția a XII-a



*High School*

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*Gh. Asachi* IAȘI

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# *Winter Wonderland*

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**MAVROIAN SABINA MARIA**

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## *Our Christmas*


A land blessed by the angels, Beangelis, the most beautiful out of all the nations. And blessed it was, as angels themselves dedicated their time to aiding humans. They all lived in harmony and peace, worshipping their beloved Archon. But forbidden was one thing, the love between a human and an angel.

Alis was a young angel with fiery red hair and amber eyes, who came to serve in the cathedral as several others of his kind, wanting to help those he swore to always protect. It was a perfect winter, with big snowflakes falling elegantly from the deep blue sky and the main square decorated with colorful ornaments. Too busy trying to catch snowflakes with his tongue, he accidentally slipped on the icy pavement. He ruffled his wings in annoyance. He then heard hastily muffled giggles, and when he turned his head, he saw her. A young woman, the most beautiful he'd seen, her hair black as ebony and eyes like jade he could forever stare into. She offered a small hand, helping him off the ground. "A little clumsy, aren't you?". He blushed and mumbled a quick "thank you". If you'd ever ask him, that was undoubtedly the moment he had fallen head over heels for her. "I'm Alis. What's your name?" he shyly asked. "Juliette." She smiled at him and he was so lost into her eyes that he didn't even notice when she grabbed his hand and pulled him through the streets, twirling and laughing and singing. As they were strolling the streets, he wished he could live in this moment until his last breath.

"A human with me? I wonder could it be?". But fate is forever relentless, as their love would never be accepted by the Archon. When he finally gathered up his courage and kissed her on the Christmas day, she abruptly pushed him away and covered her mouth with her hands, her cheeks flaming. "Alis, we can't, you know that!" He quickly hid behind a corner, a white feather slowly touching the ground. He pressed his back into the wall and let his tears fall as Juliette gingerly picked up the soft feather, wet with her own tears of grief.

That night, he cried his pain away hidden in the woods, snowflakes falling like an embrace around him. "I'll find a way, Juliette, even if I have to give up everything for you." A cold breeze ruffled his hair gently, like loving fingers carding through his ginger strands. "Everything?" a crystalin voice whispered. Alarmed, he jumped to his feet and frantically started looking for the





source of the voice. The soft snow was twirled around by the breeze, taking the shape of a woman. "Who are you?" he asked fearfully. "Fear not, my child, for I am the spirit of Christmas. Your tears on this beautiful night wound me as they wound you." His eyes widened. "Oh, my child, I can feel true love severed by the cruel law of the Archons. What you wish for cannot be granted with a mere price.", "Please! No price is too expensive for her!". She smiled at him. "What's an angel without his wings?". He froze in place, understanding the meaning behind her words. "Take them. As long as I can love her somehow, I'll give up my wings with no regret".

Juliette was sitting on the edge of a fountain, listening to children singing carols while twirling a soft feather between her fingers. As she lifted her gaze, she saw a boy with fiery red hair and amber eyes. She gasped and ran up to him, asking "What have you done?". His wings were gone. He hugged her tightly. "We can finally be together Juliette. Oh Archons, I love you so much!". Her tears started falling, she couldn't believe this. "You sacrificed your wings for me?". He looked at her with so much love that no words were needed. She cupped his face and kissed him with fervor. "Marry me, Alis." He laughed and whispered "Yes" against her lips. Christmas would forever be a special day for them, as their forever started that faithful night.

Reference:

\* Alis=word from latin meaning "wings";

\* Beangelis=word obtained from "beati ab angelis", meaning "blessed by the angels";

## COȘERIU DĂNUȚ

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## Winter Wonderland

It was the day before Christmas. In the town of Gerinsberg, people were very busy. The shops were very busy preparing for Christmas day, people were setting up their winter decorations, and doing some last minute shopping. Among all of these people, there were the Miles. The Miles were one of the poorer families in town, but they had a very smart child. His name was Robert, who was a brilliant kid that always got straight A's at school. He was, however, sad that on most Christmas days he found the small tree, which was decorated with improvised balls was almost always empty.

That Christmas was however way worse for them. Robert's mother, Emily, had fallen ill with a serious disease, and his father, Jack, was always working in order to pay the medical bills. Robert was very sad to see his father always tired and his mother connected to all sorts of strange machines that made noises and showed numbers that made no sense to him. So, before going to bed that night, Robert got on his knees in front of the Christmas tree, crossed his hands and said to himself:

"Santa, I know that our house is very small and our street is not very well lit, and maybe



that is why you almost never came to visit us, but I would really appreciate if you didn't visit our home this year, and actually visit the hospital where my mom is. She is very sick and all that I want this year is for her to wake up, get well and smile to me."

He then got up, wiped his eyes with his hands, and went to sleep.

When he woke up, he was in a room, but not his room. This room was big and made of polished wood, and smelled like perfume, not like his small and moldy room at home. He immediately jumped out of the bed he was sleeping in, and rushed out the room. Then, he found himself in a big hallway, which he ran down until he came across an enormous kitchen, where there were all sorts of good foods. He was feeling famished, so he ate quickly, without worrying if this was someone else's food or not. Suddenly, after a bit of time, he felt someone watching him, someone big. He turned around and saw a big man, wearing a red robe padded with white fur, thick black gloves, and a pair of red pants. He was old, had an wrinkled face, and a long white beard, but his eyes were young and sparkling blue, seen through the lenses of old black rimmed glasses.

"Don't worry little one, I am not mad, you must have been very hungry since you ran through the entire house straight to the kitchen."

"Santa? Santa Claus?" asked Robert in shock.

"HoHoHooo, who else could it be in this house?"

"How did I end up here?"

"I heard what you said, Robert, and I will turn your life around starting from this very moment..."

Suddenly, Robert's vision became very colorful, he saw all kinds of strange things, all in various shapes and forms. He also felt like he was falling very fast, as the wind was blowing heavily against his face until everything stopped.

He woke up in his bed, at home, and immediately noticed something: the smell of mold had disappeared. He slowly got up from his bed, which also didn't creak like it used to. He got out into the hallway, which was larger than before, and went into the kitchen. There he saw her.

"Mum?" he asked as his eyes were starting to flood with tears, his voice breaking as well.

"Oh, Robert!" she made a dash for him and embraced him in the tightest hug that he had ever felt.

"Mum, I didn't think you would ever wake up, I asked Santa to make you feel better and also tell you that I love you..." he said through his tears.

"Oh I love you too, Robert, and it seems like Santa was very generous this year. That is the only way that I could explain to myself why the house looked different when your dad picked me up from the hospital and brought me here."

"Where is dad?"

"Well, he said that he had a very important business meeting and said that if it went well they could double his salary!"

"That is amazing, mum!"

"I know, now let's go and see what Santa left for you!"

In the living room, the small tree was now big and the cardboard star which he made was now replaced with a beautiful one made of gold, with a ruby in the middle. Underneath it though, there was only a picture of Santa, on the back of which it was written:

MERRY CHRISTMAS, FROM SANTA!



## *The Cold-hearted Town*

Christmas time, the most beautiful and wonderful holidays of all. When the pure white snow glows and embraces all of the people with its coldness and its beauty. It brings people together, families back in their households after a year full of work and troubles. The lights are shining on every street. The carols warm our hearts with their amazing rhythms. That is what Christmas should be like, a time of happiness and joy for everybody, but that is definitely not the case for a little town situated in the middle of nowhere called Mistletoe.

All the cold-hearted people decided to take residence here. You might ask yourselves, how could you not like Christmas at all? Well, it hadn't always been the case. In the past they loved Christmas so much that they wouldn't take their decorations off all year long, they sang carols from November. But one year something changed, Santa Claus didn't visit them, it is like he had forgotten they totally existed. Nobody knew what had happened, but since then, the Christmas spirit had been stripped away in that little town. And this year it was needed more than anything.

There was this "peculiar" child, as they were calling her, she was the only one who still believed in this holiday. But this year, she suddenly went into a coma, nobody knew why. She had been like this for over three months and only a Christmas miracle could have saved her anymore. Her family was devastated, her mother was crying all the time and her father stopped even trying to save her, he just pushed everybody away.

It was the 24th of December, no movement in the town, it was quiet, sad and depressed, just like always. The very strange thing was that everybody gathered at the girl's house to say goodbye to her for one more time after she was gone forever.

It got dark outside, the clock had almost struck midnight. It was almost Christmas, so it was time for the people to head home, to their old and unhappy houses. When, all of a sudden, a mysterious bell rang, a carol could be heard from above the town, a gorgeous and gigantic red sleigh could be seen from the ground, with its nine magnificent reindeer. As the people were passing the family's door step, they fixed their eyes on the night's dark blue sky. IT WAS SANTA CLAUS. Nobody could believe their eyes. He made a gentle sign with his finger and waved them goodbye.

The whole town started to become what it once was, a stain of color in a dark land. In the locals' houses Christmas decorations, trees and presents appeared. The carols were listened to once again. And from her little bed, in her tiny house, the girl opened her eyes and embraced her mother and father warmly and said "I told you so!" and they all laughed together. And that was only the beginning of a new era in Mistletoe.

It may seem like all the boring old stories that we have all read before, with the magical Christmas miracle. But maybe we should look underneath the simple storyline, and read between the lines. What if it was all just a dream, just a dream to show us how important Christmas is. How it warms our heart with its coldness and how it helps us get through all of our issues from the past year. How we should, no matter what, transform into a kid once again when

it comes to this holiday, to spend quality time with our families and don't mind all the cruelty that the world offers us on a daily bases. Maybe it's just a test, to see who believes more. Because in everything we do, no matter how significant it is, we have to take a leap of faith, to have hope. But most important of all, to BELIEVE, to believe that everything will turn out well in the end, that all will go according to plan, just like magic.

**HUMĂ IOANA TEODORA**

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## *Holiday Melody*

It was a calm Monday and Christmas was right around the corner. You could see the synchronized dance of the snowflakes outside the window, slowly falling and decorating the remaining flowers with beautiful frozen crowns. You could hear the divine Christmas melodies sung by children, embellishing this holiday with a sweet rhythm. It would've been great if everyone had been outside now, playing and enjoying winter. However, the Christmas spirit can be felt from anywhere, even from your classroom. Every school was preparing for this lovely holiday by singing, decorating and drawing everything related to winter. Aveline's school was no exception, every student was doing their best to make their classroom look the most winter-like.

Most of these activities were brought up by teachers and organized by no other than the class leaders, Aveline being one of them. She had long, black hair swinging slowly whenever the wind was blowing, you could always see little snowflakes falling in her hair like elegant swans relaxing on a dark beautiful lake. Her bright blue eyes were like a magical frozen pond, shining whenever the moon light would hit it. She would always be the first to arrive in class, making sure she had enough time for her Christmas activities. Aveline's ideas were always so unique, she decided to bring a medium-sized fir tree for the students to fill with colorful globes, but each globe needed a meaning, something to represent the student who brought it. She also decided they could make a snowman with used papers. These were only some activities that Aveline came up with, many other classmates of hers had interesting ideas as well.

Those fun ideas were bringing joy to every classmate, except Elaina. Elaina was a blind girl. However, her amazing knowledge and great grades proved that she was smart enough to enter such demanding school. She had short, curly brown hair which was sometimes covered in pink bows to make her uniform look special. Her eyes were a curtain of mist covering the iris, making her green eyes look odd. Elaina was always excluded from such activities because she was always messing things up, either by breaking the globes, tripping over decorations and ruining them or accidentally drawing over someone's paper. Aveline tried to include her as much as possible, but she kept being pushed away, ending up sitting quietly in the back of the class. Aveline tried talking with the teachers about it, but they sadly agreed with the other classmates





and concluded that Elaina shouldn't help with the decorations. Aveline did care a lot about Elaina since she always seemed so lonely, but she had other worries in mind, the biggest one being the Christmas concert she had to perform that day. Other than being an amazing class president, she was also a known violinist who had won a lot of prizes for her beautiful performances. Whenever all the classes were over, she would always stay in the empty library to practice.

All the decorations were done, the class looked like a magical winter world. Aveline was proud of how the class ended up looking, but she didn't have time to praise her ideas, so she ran quickly to the library to continue practising. She quietly entered the library but her gaze stopped at a familiar face. It was Elaina! But she was crying. Aveline approached her slowly and started talking with a worried look:

"What are you doing here? And why are you crying?"

"I never got the chance to know what Christmas feels like", Elaina answered, with tears in her eyes.

That's when Aveline realized something, Christmas was supposed to be fun to everyone. How could she possibly perform at the concert, knowing that she was supposed to make everyone happy this winter, but failed? Aveline decided to no longer go to the concert and stay there with Elaina.

"I'll show you what Christmas feels like..."

Aveline took her violin out and started performing every Christmas song she was supposed to perform at the concert. Elaina slowly wiped her tears away, and listened to Aveline's sweet melodies with a smile.

If Christmas meant happiness, then Aveline decided to share her happiness with Elaina. Winter will always be beautiful, beautiful when you're not alone.

**PETRACHE MARIA**


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## *Saxophone, Pages and Snow Balls*

' I remember it was around Christmas and I was about your age, when my grandfather invited me to sit next to him, near the fireplace. I recall it was pitch dark outside, and a dreadful snow storm was breaking the silence of our house with a long, echoing hiss.

"Sasha," he mumbled with his hoarse voice, "it is such unusual weather outside. I'd never thought I would live long enough to see and hear another snow storm, just like they once were, when I was young, and the world felt younger..." His eyes lightened as he was gazing through the frozen window at the utter white snowflakes knitted by the wind. "There is something so pure and genuine contained in those tiny crystals, but, when you try to reach it, to steal some just for yourself, it all melts in your palms, and all you are left to do is watch as it drains through your



fingers. When I was just a little boy, I would always imagine that the snowflakes are falling stars, cold and taintless, which simply descend in our world to die. I was never able to accept that we only get the crumbs, and not even those last." Then, after a moment of quiet and reflection, grandpa added: "But, are we worth more?"

Grandpa's deep thoughts were interrupted by my father, who had been sitting in an armchair for hours, reading the news on his phone. He requested some silence, because he couldn't focus on what he was seeing. He was immediately approved by my mother, who had been typing e-mails on her laptop, and by my older sister, Sara, who had been listening to music with her headphones on and messaging to her friends. But I wanted to talk. I wanted to express something, anything, just to cover that grave-like quietness, which was louder than the whooshing of the freezing blast of the wind. I had so many words and ideas that I wanted to share with my family, but who would have listened to me but my grandpa, who liked talking more to himself?

That night I had trouble sleeping, because I could feel that something was wrong. The atmosphere seemed to be very suffocating and the air - thinner. It was like all that snow that had been piling onto the roof of our house and onto the ground had suddenly become so heavy that the world was pushed lower and lower and we were all flattened by the pressure. When I finally fell asleep, it felt more like a faint than rest.


The next day, I woke up and took a deep breath, filling my lungs with refreshing air. That horrible compressing sensation had disappeared, but something even stranger had happened: there seemed to be more space, the world appeared to be larger, stronger, cleaner than ever. It was like there were no limitations, no weaknesses; the entire world had taken a deep cold breath of air, and was now pure again.

"Good morning!" my grandpa welcomed me in the living room. He was sitting on his rocking chair near the fireplace, puffing thoughtfully at his pipe. His eyes were squinted at the couch, and his face was distorted by a heavy frown. "Good morning!" I replied. "Where are mom and dad?" "They are here, in this room, and are quieter than ever," he answered, pointing to the empty sofa. My eyes followed the direction indicated by his finger and then, puzzled, I came closer to the couch: there were only two objects on it - a pink laptop and a white phone - that I had never seen. Before saying what a bad joke that had been, my grandpa continued, just as pensive: "When they left their bedroom early in the morning, it had already begun - both were changed, but seemed strangely calm. They were not people anymore, but ghosts moving around in empty bodies, like dummies. They said nothing, sat on the couch and turned on the TV, while I was looking at them from the corner. Then, extremely naturally, they simply became what you see: objects. A pink laptop - your mother, and a white phone - your father." And, after a moment of silence, continued: "But, Sasha, just go outside and listen! It is so quiet that I think the world has stopped!"

I was too stunned to speak. At that age, I would believe everything and question nothing - that was the beauty of it. But, to confirm what my grandpa had said, a high pitched scream belonging to my sister came from her room. I ran to her to see what was wrong and I instantly froze when I encountered her: Sara had transformed as well, but only partially. Instead of a head, she now had a large pair of green headphones, and her arms were a multitude of cables shuffled together. She was sitting in front of her mirror, shaking in horror, as, surprisingly, she could see her reflection.

"What has happened to me?!" she shouted, staring at her image in the mirror. "Sasha, help me!" "I...I don't know..." I replied confused and scared.

My normal reaction would have been to run to mom and dad and ask for their help, but



that wasn't an option now. I was the one who had to deal with the issue now, because my sister was panicking and my grandpa was completely lost in his thoughts. I was terrified and I didn't know what to do. So, I asked Sara to come with me to get some help.

The whole street was covered by tall snowdrifts, through which we had to advance with great difficulty. I was amazed by the amount of snow around us: there was everywhere and it was so clean and pure and magical! I had never seen piled snow before; only snowflakes that would always melt in the air. But that wasn't the most shocking thing we saw on that street: the sidewalks were full of phones, computers, televisions, wallets, speakers, files, organizers, packs of gum, watches, pens, pillows, jewelry and many more. There was no person on that street, only objects.

We kept going until we reached the central square. Here, there was the same view: countless things all over the pavement, like garbage that had been thrown away by some hurried passers-by. But, we could see something more unusual in the centre of the square: surrounded by a group of stone statues, there was a strange man playing the saxophone. What was odd about him was that the saxophone was part of his body, because he had no head and neck. He was spinning gracefully and passionately on every note, and then bowing to the deaf and cold audience around him. Next to him, sitting on a bench, there was a quiet lady, who had a book instead of her chest and written pages as hands. She was almost totally still, reading the pages of her own palms.

We came closer to them and greeted them anxiously. They didn't seem surprised to see us. "What have I told you, Rose? You see? The children are fine. They are as pure as this long-awaited snow and they were not affected!" the man said, facing the lady on the bench. "And you see the girl, the teenager? She's more like them!" he added, pointing at the objects on the ground. "Fine, William, I guess you were right!" the lady replied, with a voice that sounded more like a rustle.

"Can you help us? Our parents have turned into things and we don't know what to do!" I spoke with fear. "I believe we can, but we will need your help as well. I want you to go get all your friends and bring them here. The children are way too scared to come out, but, if they see us playing in the snow down here, they might." the saxophone-man replied.

I had no better idea, so I ran to my friends' apartments, knocked on their doors and asked them to come with me, because we had a plan to save our parents. They were all indeed terrified, but eventually agreed to join me. We were about two dozen children in that square by noon, and we all started playing with snow balls and build snowmen. To gain the attention of the other children living nearby, the saxophone-man began playing his instrument as loud as he possibly could, while the book-lady was reading poems that appeared on her hands. Seeing the pleasant atmosphere in the square, more and more children of all ages and even some teenagers joined our game. I think there must have been hundreds of children, all playing and singing, and running to bring some more friends back with them.

I don't understand how we helped our parents, but I remember it was getting darker when the first object in that square turned into the person it had once been. Others and others followed, and you could see how their legs were growing back, then their chests, arms and, eventually, their heads. My sister and your aunt got her head back as well, and we both ran as fast as we could to check on our parents. Mom and dad were fine, but they didn't seem to be able to remember anything that had happened. In fact, they were more than fine: they were smiling, laughing and talking to us again, they were hugging us. And my grandpa was sitting on his rocking chair, thinking and smiling. '



## ROTUNDU DENISA ȘTEFANA

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### *Pair Skating*

It was her last skating opportunity. All of her dreams shattered like glass after each move she made on the solid ice. Double axel, Biellmann spin, triple toe loop jump, ending with an elegant air and a surpassing beauty, but all of this was to be gone forever.

The sound made by her ice skates was symphony for her ears, the dress she was wearing was fluttering in the wind and her phoenix eyes closed, feeling the music. Skating was a part of her, so quitting was never an option for the stubborn figure skater, but after the accident that made her lose her vision for half a year, the right choice was to be made.

A pair of hands clapping were heard in the distance. Her piercing turquoise eyes slowly opened to see a familiar silhouette standing between the rows of the empty chairs that were once filled with many people waiting patiently to watch her skate. She didn't have time to open her mouth when the shadow started:

"I heard rumours about you quitting ice-skating because of the injury you suffered. It's a waste of talent. You already got the first medal in the National Competition," the clear masculine voice

spoke, as he walked closely.

"I presume you would understand why I made this harsh decision, given that you were in the same position three months ago."

"I do and I am going to be straight with it. Pair skate with me. With a figure skater such as yourself it will be no sweat to get to the Olympics in not even three years."


"As tempting as that sounds, I never pair skated, and as you heard from the rumours, I am quitting today," she said coldly as her eyebrows furrowed, inspecting the boy that began to smile radiantly.

"Are you sure you want to give up your future career for an injury that you recovered from? I didn't see you as a mourning person."

"There are low chances of succeeding. I was a solo skater all of my life and to become a pair skater would mean to learn how to walk all over again."

"Isn't it better than to become a waitress, mourning over the chances of becoming an unforgettable persona?"





Even though she knew the boy was right, she couldn't say it to his face. Her pride was bigger than her dreams. The plan was to quit at the age of 16, but come back at the age of 21 and become a coach for future rising stars.

Although her heart ached with grief, the feeling of failing came back like a cold wave, endlessly hitting her with indifference. She couldn't do it. The accident scarred her, big wounds that weren't visible remained unhealed and terrifying memories of the past were unfolding in her mind second by second.

"What about your injury?" her words were rolling out of her tongue with a feeling of uncertainty.

"It healed rapidly. Three months ago, my doctor said I may have no chance at competing anymore, but here I am," he came closer, his hand stretching out for the girl that was petrified on the ice rink. "Let's show people that we can't quit that easily, even if the challenges that we faced were deathly. We do it for us, not for them."

Surprisingly, her phoenix eyes sparkled, a gleaming light just as a beacon flashing in her pupils. The boy opened his mouth to utter more encouraging words to persuade the obstinate teenager, but to his delight, he saw the approval in her eyes, and closed his lips tight into a beaming smile. She took his hand and they began their journey together as a team, winning every competition with two hearts beating fast, dreams and with a new mutual feeling: Love.

"The story was beautiful mother!" the young girl looked in amusement at her parents. "I want to be a renowned pair skater just like my parents when I grow up!" The three people laughed whole-heartedly in the room filled with Christmas decorations, standing by the fire and looking at the window where snowflakes began to fall onto the uncovered paths.

**DOCA INGRID MIHAELA**


cls. a X-a, Colegiul Național „Vasile Alecsandri”, Iași



## *A Christmas Become Real*

Christmas... a period full of happiness, magic and love. The whole family gathering around the Christmas table, eating various goodies, and in the evening exchanging gifts and singing carols. For most people, Christmas was this way. But Kevin could only dream of something like this. Being an orphan from an early age, the boy had always to fend for himself and he could never allow himself to dream of more than was the harsh reality. The holidays were nothing more but dark days for Kevin because he saw around him only joy and goodness that he could not afford.

Numb from the cold, the boy was thinking of taking a walk around the town, hoping to find a warm place to spend the frosty night. On his way, he passed by an electronics store, and the vivid images and colours on the screen caught his attention. The TV was on the weather



broadcast, and at the bottom there was written "Christmas Eve will be the coldest evening this winter!" This news terrified Kevin, so he decided to continue his journey in a hurry, because Christmas Eve was just the next evening. He decided to try his luck in the nearby neighbourhood. He walked and walked, until he saw the door of a block of flats wide open. Without thinking, he ran towards the entrance. This was his chance. He was so happy that he had found a shelter. He snuggled into a corner, trying to warm himself. Suddenly, he felt the pleasant smell of the goodies that were being prepared by the housewives. "This is how Christmas smells like," he said to himself and went to sleep, knowing that he would never taste such delicacies and hoping that he wouldn't feel hungry anymore when he woke up. Exhausted and starved, he fell asleep in just a blink of an eye.

Kevin suddenly woke up and looked around. He couldn't believe what he saw around him. He was lying on a cozy sofa, wrapped in a fluffy quilt, and in front of him there was a large and very beautifully decorated tree under which many gifts were scattered. He rubbed his hand over his eyes a couple of times to make sure he was not dreaming. Finally, he got off the couch, approached the tree and again felt the smell of tasty food. He followed the smell and ended up in front of a table full with different traditional dishes and various cakes. He started to taste each of them, until he couldn't swallow anymore. Looking around, his eyes stopped again on the gifts that were beautifully wrapped. Curiosity led him to open some of them. In the boxes he found toys, thick clothes with various wintery patterns, books and supplies. Suddenly, the box next to him moved. The boy got scared and took a few steps away from the tree; the box cover fell over, leaving a small white fluffy puppy. Seeing this, Kevin's heart filled with joy and he immediately hugged the little soul because he had always wanted a true friend who would always be by his side.

Out of the blue, he felt a warm touch on his cheek, and when he opened his eyes, he saw an old woman with tears in her eyes standing in front of him. She immediately picked him up from the cold floor and took him into her comfy house. The woman offered him a warm meal, clean clothes and a bed to sleep in.

The next morning the boy also met the old woman's husband. After learning about Kevin's past, the old couple decided to offer him a home, saying "You can stay with us, dear child, as long as you want, and we will consider you part of the family and we will treat you as such!" Hearing these words, Kevin burst into tears and accepted the old man's proposal without thinking. After all, maybe he would finally find out what Christmas was like and who knows, maybe one day he would get a white fluffy puppy...





## BĂLAN IUSTIN

cls. a IX-a, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu” Iași



You surely know how a common house is decorated for Christmas: a lot of tinsel hanging on walls, mistletoe on the top of the doors and the indispensable Christmas trees. Who doesn't love them? When we refer to Howard, these things were really exorbitant. Howard, a plump person, the head of National Chocolate Company, is that type of man who is fond of being wealthy, who has an imposing look, not just because he would have valuable clothes or hundreds of jewels, but due to his Bohemian air and long speeches that he usually gives. He seemed to be really happy with his life, even if he stayed far of his native places. As every winter night till then, it used to be foggy, blizzards and then only some lights could be noticed, somewhere above the street. You could see from miles the silly attitude of people in a hurry focusing only on their quick steps and who rarely nodded each other, as if words did no longer exist. Could next day mean something for them?

If I had been Howard, I think I would have been more than ecstatic on Christmas Eve. However, that night at his house the lights were turned off and it seemed nobody was there. Maybe he went on a trip for skiing or somewhere else in the hot countries. Nevertheless, he was in his candy shop, not far away from his house. And what could he do at that time, on that day, in such a place? He remained alone, because the other employees had already left, hardly working to make an enormous chocolate bar for Christmas. He changed some aprons, he burnt himself a few times, but he couldn't stop. Until somebody knocked on the door loudly. All he could think was: "Who could it be now?". At first he had a look on sight. He decided to open the door even if he realised that he was walking on thin ice. If it had been a bad guy, he couldn't have faced him properly. He took matters into his own hands and opened the massive wooden door and surprisingly, it was only a tiny envelope on the frozen ground. He ensured that nobody was there, took it and entered his workshop quickly. Howard wanted to look inside to see what was hiding there. He tore it and found a small piece of paper which was written in beautiful calligraphy: "Christmas has to be with us!". He thought that it was from some noisy children wanted to play a joke on him, nothing more.

In the morning, he finished making the chocolate bar which, in fact, he wasn't too happy about, and then he went home. The road wasn't too busy and the distance wasn't long, but being exhausted that would have been the last thing that he would have wanted, snow: swimming through the enormous piles of snow just to arrive at home, in that place where you should feel comfortable. He was surprised neither by the magnificent carols, nor by the few people who wished each other "Merry Christmas!". It looked like the Christmas spirit had just been taken away, even at that moment when it had to be felt at utmost intensity. Sorrowfully, Howard went to his bedroom through dozens of gifts that he had packed himself, only to bring him happiness. Actually, those things were not of any importance to him.

He heard the same knock and he remembered the day before. "Not another stupid letter again, I hope!", he said. Howard reflected for a second, whether to go or not and being very tired he went to find who it was. When he opened the door he noticed a small girl, wearing some tiny

red boots and having a huge Santa hat. Suddenly some people came and when Howard saw them, he burst into tears, he was speechless. His whole family was there. He forgot about the unsuccessful chocolate bar, suddenly all the atmosphere becoming magical as it'd never been.

You can't imagine a bigger joy than meeting the people that love you the most, because truly, Christmas is not only about decorations and presents, it's firstly about spending time with your dearest ones because they can make you happier than some material things would. Christmas is about being together with family and friend!

### NECHIFOR SABINA

cls. a X-a, Colegiul Național „Vasile Alecsandri”, Iași



## *Queen of ice*

When I look at her I freeze,  
When I touch her I bleed,  
She's made of ice,  
she's made of pain  
and no one knows why.  
I met her in the depth of winter  
When in my soul was still a burning summer  
But all summers are the same  
We're the ones who change.  
So the love I felt for her  
Was like wind  
You can't see it but you can feel  
And that's how  
The sweet, sweet burn of the sun  
Turned into ice.  
The butterflies I felt  
Looked like snowflakes falling from sky.  
But the her heart was not like mine  
She didn't love me  
I don't know why.  
Sunshine cannot bleach the snow  
So inside me starts a storm  
Love slowly  
Became a delusional way.  
Starting craving sunshine

I was only wondering  
If I could take back  
Every word I said to you,  
Every thought I had about you.  
But I didn't miss the summer  
Because nothing Burns  
Like the cold, cold of winter  
A shaken flower on the ground  
Told me to go away  
"You will die" she said  
But I already felt dead.  
I was looking for hope  
But hope lies in dreams  
And I wasn't a dreamer  
But I am a realist.  
However sometimes  
I still feel a gap,  
A missing puzzle piece  
About her and me.  
"You make me crazy!" I scream  
Unfortunately,  
The only one who could hear  
Was simply you and me.  
Tears finally appeared  
Sadness, anger and grief



Made my heart disappear.  
She left me surrounded by ice  
So I became a snowman  
And the only smile I have  
Is made from coal  
And My Body From Snow.  
But I don't feel any pain  
Because in my soul there's a blue flame  
That is melting me away  
Then I'm recreated.  
Now I see myself like a mirror of her  
My skin is blue  
My heart is black  
Where are you?  
I'm begging you, come back.  
But I don't want to feel like this  
I don't want to beg  
For something I will never have.  
She is The Queen Of Ice  
In her eyes hides a longing gleam  
Cruel bite of frost  
And a heart that will never beat.  
Somehow the gray clouds are back

And I can't help myself  
Not to think how she feels  
If she's happy with herself  
If she's happy without me  
Did she find someone else?  
With my shaking body  
Walking through the thick snow  
To her glorious castle  
I go to see if she found a new one.  
But the winter is not playing  
And it feels like it's talking to me  
The forest moans and groans and creaks  
Makes me understand  
That I should leave.  
It seems that she had forgotten  
That I was a snowflake in her arms  
Because like snowflakes  
The human pattern is never cast twice  
And even that I never cared to ask  
For anything I want  
I dare to ask  
Will you give me back the sun?

### RĂDUCANU GEORGIANA

cls. a XII, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu” Iași




## *It happened last Christmas*

"Then I knew that I would always be happy" that's how my favorite book ends, the book that I read nearly every Christmas, it makes me feel that Christmas is really coming. The same Christmas...the same house, the same fireplace, the same loneliness.

I'm getting ready to go, I have to do some shopping tonight. Outside the landscape leaves you with a big smile, the sparkling snow, the smoke from the chimneys, children playing everywhere, old people looking out the window.

I arrive, I park the car near the entrance of the mall. I want to enter, but someone blocks my way, hurrying towards the entrance. I hear a quick "sorry", which disappears in the crowd of the mall. Shopping doesn't take that long, but I work until late tonight. I hear the same voice that



apologized a little while ago and I am surrounded by a ton of products scattered on the floor, including mine.

“Oh, sorry, I'm crazy! I hope you are well...”

“I'm fine, just leave...”

It seems incredible to me that after I didn't even squeeze all the products well, the guy dropped them again on the floor. He put my bag in the car and took his, leaving me a business card telling me very briefly about this Christmas project about which I didn't understand very much.

When I got home I made a hot tea. Unreal. That gentleman tangled the bags. I look for the business card, I call him and we agree on the meeting place for the exchange, I want my purchases back!

9:00 p.m. The street is quite clear, it is snowing lightly, I see a shadow in the distance.

“I told you, I'm crazy, I'm very sorry, I think I wasted a lot of your time...”

A dog appears behind him. The sweetest eyes I could ever see. The little one (in reality he was taller than me) was in the mood to play.

“Bunny, stop, don't disturb the lady!”

“Disturb me? It's adorable!”

For Bunny's sake, I agree with the gentleman to go to a nearby cafe so he can tell me more about his Christmas project. His story left me in tears. The gentleman suffers from a serious illness and the doctors have informed him that this will probably be his last Christmas, and he wants it to be unforgettable. His project is related to animals, as he told me “some people forget that animals have souls like us humans” and his idea seems brilliant to me, he wants to find a home for all the animals in the shelter by getting in touch with people who want an animal, but they don't want to spend money, or take on such a responsibility, of course I declare myself very willing to help.

In less than two weeks, we managed to find a welcoming home for over 450 pets, puppies, cats, birds or hamsters.

“I'm glad to have such a project partner”, Dealen tells me at the end of the evening after we met with a lovely family from New Orleans who has just adopted a prairie dog.

“I'm glad I could help, I felt this Christmas like I haven't felt one in a long time.”

Bunny was upset looking out the window, as if crying.

“Is he fine?” I'm asking.

“He feels it, my time is coming...”

The puppy comes closer and puts his head in his lap...

“It's the last Christmas, but at least we spend it together, buddy.”

\*After one year\*

I have realized that charity is a reason for me to live, and love means much more than what we understand from a confession. I read my book, Christmas is in six days.

“Bunny, I'll be back soon, be quiet!”

I arrive at the mall, I have to finish all the tasks by tomorrow. I run into someone in a hurry.

“Excuse me, I'm a fool!”

Unconsciously I remember Dealen. Such a small man with such a big soul! I give myself fifteen seconds to look at the sky.

Wonderful land of winter!

Then I knew that I would always be happy.



**MIHALACHE IONUȚ CRISTIAN**

cls.a XI-a, Liceul Teoretic de Informatică „Grigore Moisil” Iași



## *Lions Led by Monkeys*


In the blood frozen trenches, the nights were calmer than the usual, the constant sound of the guns nor the fire-lit sky were present, so quiet that you could hear your heart pumping from the anticipation that the Boches were going to jump over the parapet and kill you. I didn't have any rum left and all my cigarettes were wet, so the night wasn't going away too fast. In those alone moments where most of the soldiers next to you are sleeping and the night is only accompanied by howling wind and the occasional sounds of the gunfire from the night attacks, all you could do was lay there on frozen ground and think of what your parents, your wife, your kid was doing, hoping and praying that you might see them again or at least survive the next days so you could write them a letter for Xmas. And as I was thinking of better days from my childhood where fields like these, fields where we kill each other every day were fields where we used to play football and have fun, I went deeper in my trench fever fantasy and fell asleep.

I woke up alerted, robbed from my dreams by the shouts of the Germans, or what I thought were shouts. I turned to a fellow soldier and asked what is happening, he responded to me that they were singing and as he told me that, our men started singing one by one as well, they were singing Auld Lang Syne, it sounded so beautiful, it was like a part of heaven was trapped in the cages of mud from below.

The Germans were shouting in a thick English; "Cease fire, let's meet halfway!".

And there they were, on the No Man's Land, waving their hands above their heads, with no weapons, and then, slowly, people from our side went over the parapet and walked to them. It was wonderful, seeing people who only hours ago were trying to kill each other, who viewed each other as targets, now were talking to each other like brothers, trading cigars, cigarettes and rum, talking about the little news they had on football, and I even saw a German giving haircuts for cigarettes; it was a break from the constant hell. I talked with many of the Germans soldiers and there was not an atom of hate on any sides. I heard so many stories that day, stories about lives, friends, families that were like ours. As we were chatting with each other, hearing stories in broken English and cracking jokes with each other, a German soldier looks at us, points at something I can't see and yells "Ball!",

Never have I seen a game of football set up so fast, someone drew some lines in the frozen



dirt as a goal and the match started, there were like a hundred of us playing, just passing and hitting the ball as we could, there was such a warm joy on all our tired faces as we kicked the ball running around, falling and running again, we were just like kids again and it was like my fantasy came through. For a moment heaven was suspended in hell, there was no sound of gunfire and angels could sing.

And tomorrow hell resumed.

## PATRAȘ ANISIA

cls. a X-a, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu” Iași



# *Into the Snowstorm*

Once upon a far wintertime, when the winds blew cold and the snow swallowed everything in its way, there was a girl. A brave little girl...

Deep into the woods, amongst the never-ending white of snow-covered pine trees, lay a patch of warmth and colour: the forrester's chalet. Viewed from afar, it might have appeared stranded, silent - but if a traveller's inquisitive spirit would have led him far enough onto the path, he would have noticed how full of life the home truly was. Myra, the rosy-cheeked forrester's daughter, was up on her feet from dawn to dusk, eager to help with anything that her little but firm hands could carry. You'd spot her place firewood under the porch, patch the split-rail fence or fill the deer feedbanks with fresh mast.

At dark, Myra would patiently wait for her father to return from the woods. His return meant the most exciting moment of the day - it was when they would finally shut the cedar gates, light up the fireplace and share dinner and stories with Tip, the shepherd dog, curled at their feet.


One night, a sudden snowsquall stirred over the forest. The winds were howling wildly and there was yet no sign of the forrester's return. After a while, driven by unease, Myra decided to put on her winter coat, light up a lantern and set forth in search of him, closely followed by Tip. With determination, she courageously advanced through the snow piles, following her father's usual trail. But as time passed and the storm grew wilder, the girl's pace got slower and slower...

Above, from a hollowed pine tree, came the gasp of a squirrel kit: "Mom, look, a human!" The mother squirrel sat silent.

A young owl, hunting with its mother, spotted the girl in its flight and echoed: "Human!" The mother owl continued its flight quietly.

Under all those pairs of eyes, the girl still remained helpless into the unforgiving power of nature. The Ancient Law of the Forest had kept animals far away from humans since the very beginnings, and no creature was wilful to break it yet - except the pointy eared wanderer whose eyes were more curious than ever at the sight of the human - a young, adventurous fox. Approaching the girl and her tired companion, it recalled a faint, familiar scent. After some





pondering, it finally remembered... The forester! The kind man that freed it from a poacher trap when it was only a cub! Its whiskers flicked with alertness. "This is his daughter", the fox thought. "And she's searching for him." The fox did not hesitate and rushed to follow what was left of the fading forester's scent.

The oldest, wisest owl in the forest that was looked up to by every creature, had been watching everything go down that night. She had kept away from humans until that very day, when she decided to make one exception. The owl rose in high flight and headed towards where she had last seen the forester disappear. Shortly after, the sharp sighted nocturnal bird spotted the man: he was lying in the snow, stuck under a fallen tree log.

The scent tracking was becoming more and more difficult, when suddenly, a hoot echoed overhead: "Fox, follow me! I've found the forester!" And so, startled but shortly after relieved, it followed the bird.

The animals, noticing that the wisest owl herself gave in, now felt that it was right to help. Therefore, the leader of the deer enjoined all does to go and warm up the shivering girl with their bodies in gratitude for always being offered food, while the squirrels shared from their nut supply. Meanwhile, the great stag freed her father by lifting up the heavy log with his antlers.

"Myra!", called out her father while the fox had finally led him to her. He dashed towards his daughter and embraced her in the tightest, warmest hug, hot tears of joy warming their cheeks. Tip joined and the three of them sat quietly for a while, deeply shaken by the events. When the animals realised that their mission ended there, they slowly started vanishing back into the shadows, one by one...

**ȘTEFANACHE DENIS LUCA**

cls. a IX-a, Seminarul Teologic Ortodox  
„Sf. Vasile cel Mare”, Iași



## *A Christmas Wonder*


It was a foggy Christmas Eve and everything was quiet out there. In the frosty air you could sense a smell, but not the smell of traditional Christmas dishes, instead, it was the smell of dead bodies.

William Wellington was only 19 years old and he already missed home. For the first time in his life, he was spending the holiday season in the trenches along with other soldiers that were as unfortunate as he was. Out of nowhere, they heard a song, a familiar one, but the voices singing it sounded as if they belonged to some German people.

"I gotta go check"

"Willy, wait! It could be a trick", Lieutenant Murphy warned him.

"I don't think so, sir. Just look! None of their men are in position", William replied



convinced by his words.

As he approached the enemy's base, he was surprised to see that the Germans were in fact celebrating Christmas in their own way: telling stories, dancing, lighting up candles and sharing objects they had found. Even though they were supposed to fight against the British and the French soldiers, for the first time since the war started, they looked more determined to make peace instead of war.

Suddenly, one of the Germans saw William. William was now sure that this was going to be his end, but the German actually invited him to celebrate with them: "Am I dreaming?" were the only things he was able to ask himself.

After sharing his experiences and impressions with them, he offered each one a small gift: buttons from his uniform, candies, cigars, and other objects. In return, he got a box full of bottles of beer with the words "Frohe Weihnachten!" written on it, which means "Merry Christmas!".

The following day, back at his base, William told his comrades about the warm welcome he got from the Germans. No one believed him at first, some were even amazed he was still alive, but a group of French allies left the trenches to see for themselves. Those who were once enemies soon became friends and started socializing. Reviving the Christmas spirit was more important than fighting. And so, the British soldiers, the French, and the Germans celebrated the day by playing football, offering gifts, sharing impressions, eating together, and getting involved in many other activities. After all, most of them didn't even want to take part in this war, peace, and joy were all that they wished for.

In the evening, a French priest talked about the poverty in which Christ was born, about how the world forgot to love, forgot what peace was, and what happiness was. He told them how anger and evilness ripped off their souls and started to dominate the world. He told them loudly how their superiors' criminal acts dragged them down into the fires of hell too, but that they could still find the Kingdom of Heaven if they were willing to repent. In the end, the priest told them how glad he had been when he saw that the gun fires had stopped and they became friends, even for only one day, but that counted, too. When he finished his lines, everyone was crying, so they came to an agreement to make the peace last until the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.

William Wellington, who witnessed this historic moment, kept everything in his memory, but most importantly in his heart, until the final days of his life.





## *Eternal Winter*

It's been snowing for fifty years. Not even one sunny day in all this time, just coldness. I only know how the sun looks from my grandma's tales. She's always telling me how the surroundings used to look even though the elders agreed to never speak about what happened in the past again. How the grass had the brightest shades of green and how the trees always wore their crowns proudly. Now everywhere you're looking, everything is covered in snow.

And all of this started from the strong wish of a ten year old girl.

"The only human being from our village who loved the frosty season...", as my grandmother described her in one of her stories.

"She was different from the rest of us. We knew that, because in winter, one of the villagers who went hunting spotted her creating a snowman."

I found that weird. "What's wrong in building snowmen?"

"Dear, you weren't paying enough attention to what I said. I said she was creating them, not building them. That hunter saw the little girl using magical powers. She gave them life using magic..."

"But witches aren't real!" I interrupted her. My grandma frowned.

"She wasn't technically a witch. Our ancestors would have called her a summoner."

"What is a summoner?"


"A summoner is called a spirit who lives in the forest that surrounds us. Some spirits had fire powers, others could summon rain. Although they were of many kinds, the most powerful of them were the ones who could control the air because they could summon lightning. I think I already said too much about the magical creatures and I forgot about our story. Where were we?"

"But I want to hear more about these beings!"

"This is a story for another time. You know more than you should anyway. Now, we were talking about this little girl's powers...She used to be so happy when winter came because it was the only time she could use her magic. The rest of the people were focused more on surviving this season than having fun."

"Why did she love winter so much?? There is nothing to love. It's just snow everywhere and cold weather."

"Perhaps this is just your opinion... The thing is, this girl didn't really have any friends. She did not get along with the rest of the children her age, so most of the time, she was walking alone in the woods. Therefore, one year, she discovered that she had a strange connection with the snow-covered nature. At first, there were a few snowflakes. Nothing appealing. But with the passing time and hard work, practicing every winter, she evolved. It didn't last long until she discovered she could somehow animate the snowmen she was building. Since then she had been unstoppable. The girl started talking to the villagers about how a possible eternal winter could change their lives. People considered that it would only have been for the worse. They believed



she went crazy, her parents started worrying but the girl continued supporting her idea. Even though people knew she was one of a kind, they didn't care..."

"But if they knew about her plan, why didn't they stop her?"

"Because the villagers were foolish enough to think a simple girl could not have the power to do the impossible. Until the day it happened."

"How was it?"

"The sky turned dark, the wind started blowing stronger than ever. Long story short, people's nightmares began. Since that day nobody has seen the green of the forest again for years."

"Grandma, how did you get to be a witness?"

"Witness? Dear I was the one who created this eternal winter." And I kept arguing with her, not believing anything she was telling me, until a snowflake appeared in her palm.

"It's impossible. And what about this endless winter... Don't you regret what you did?"

"I do, actually. I tried to fix this too many times already, but I can only summon the snow. I can't make it disappear...And you have no idea how guilty I feel! Perhaps, our only solution to getting rid of this nightmare is to wait for another spirit to appear!"

**MUNTEANU ELIZA**

cls. a XI-a, Colegiul Național „Vasile Alecsandri” Iași




## *From a sad Christmas to a happy one*

A long time ago, in a village in the Frozen Kingdom, there was a family. The Gingerbread family was a modest family, they lived in a small gingerbread-shaped house, but it was enough for them. Amy was the older sister. A little girl with flaming hair, very smart who looked like her mother, Lucy. She had a younger brother, Josh, a boy as smart as his sister, who liked to play all day.

The winter holidays were approaching, there were only two weeks left. The whole village was in ecstasy and they were preparing for the big holiday, Christmas. The streets were decorated with all kinds of lights, with Christmas trees. Everyone was jolly, but for the Gingerbread family it was going to be the worst Christmas ever. Lucy was very ill, she had been in bed for a week and no one knew what had happened to her. Two renowned doctors came from the city to consult her, but even they could not figure out what disease had taken the poor woman. In a desperate attempt to save her, the children's father called a witch, hoping that the woman would realize what relentless disease had taken the woman. The woman realized and told the man that she had never seen anything like this before for a very long time and that there is only one cure, a flower that grows in a cave in Brown Mountain. Lucy did not agree that her father or anyone else should go to get the flower, because it is said that the road to that cave was





very difficult and full of all kinds of dangerous creatures.

It started to snow outside, all the children in the village were enjoying the snow, but for Amy and Josh this was impossible. Lucy felt worse and worse. The children were afraid that they would spend Christmas without their mother, but they still hoped that they will be able to help her. Amy knew the way to the cave from her grandfather, because he always told her when he had the opportunity, how he managed to reach the cave and what obstacles he encountered on the way. Once the darkness left, the children began to make a plan to help their mother. The next morning the children were going to go on an adventure. They put a few pieces of gingerbread, a flashlight and a rope in a backpack without their parents seeing them and went to sleep to be rested and ready for departure.

As soon as the sun rose, the children left without their father seeing them. They took the path behind the house until they reached the forest at the foot of the mountain. From there the road would become more dangerous. It was already noon, the children were still walking in the forest, when suddenly something came out of the bushes. Josh was very scared and hid behind his sister. There was a little elf, Emi, who was very friendly. He offered to help them get to the cave. It was very cold, it was starting to snow harder and harder. They had very little until the cave, but Josh was very tired, so Amy decided to continue the journey alone, and she left Josh with the elf Emi. Amy tried to hurry and, once she arrived in front of the cave, fear began to overwhelm her. She lit her lantern and stepped into the cave. She moved forward with small steps. At one point she saw a light in the darkness. It was the flower. She was very happy that she finally reached the flower. She was hurrying to tear the flower when suddenly she heard a man's voice behind her. She turned around and it was a very old man with gray hair. It was Santa Claus! Amy was shocked when she saw him. She thought it didn't exist. Santa Claus knew exactly why Amy walked such a long way to the cave, so he decided to take her and her brother home in the sleigh. This was going to be their Christmas present. The children were so very happy that they will save their mother.

Amy and Santa got into the sleigh and started rushing towards Josh. After taking the boy, they hurried home. All this time, the parents were very worried. As soon as they got home, the children's father prepared the flower and gave it to his wife. She miraculously cured the moment she took it. Everyone was relieved that Lucy was finally cured and they also started preparing for Christmas just like all the other villagers.





## MATOSTAT GEORGIANA

cls. a XI-a, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu” Iași



# *Thank you, Universe!*


Who would have thought that we receive gifts only from people? From our parents, brothers, sisters or even from that uncle who we have not seen in years or from that auntie... who pretends to even like us. And, when do we receive so many presents? When the Christmas tree is up and decorated and it smells like cinnamon: at Peace Day! A little humor is needed especially at Christmas when we become profound with our feelings and we are more grateful, helping those in need.

We give and receive presents, but is really all about people? How are we thankful to the Universe, how do we show gratitude for sharing cristal sprinkles and making us happy with their dance? How do we say thank you because it makes winter nights with bright sky and this way we can admire the Universe through the windows while listening to Christmas carols?

Or even for the fact that the day before Christmas we manage to find the last bag of cookies for our guests? Or that we are so lucky to find the last set of Christmas light in the tiny corner shop on one of the selves. All these, so everything is how we wished for. Why does it work every year?

I believe the Universe feels the magic just as strong as we do. The Sun has itself a Christmas tree which gets decorated with thousands of lights. Most probably on Christmas Eve the Sun prepares cookies and milk on the table underneath the Christmas tree for Santa to eat them whilst his reindeers take a nap on the living room sofa. At the same time, the Sun is waiting for his neighbours: Mars and Saturn to sing him some Christmas carols - they have an entire repertoire, and after they leave the Sun, they go to the Mercus family. The wife, Venus and the husband, Mercury, get emotional to their tears every year when they listen to the Christmas carols. After they finish singing and Santa shares presents only to those who have been good, the next day on Christmas day, a real opening presents race starts.

Mercury receives from his wife, Venus, a furry pair of socks (I mean, he can always get legs) and Venus receives the latest version of a mobile phone (only in this way Mars can get jealous) and Mars receives a red paint like she does every year - how would she maintain that red colour otherwise? Saturn is verry happy that he got new rings! All of them will have a big party on the Moon after New Year, dancing until next year: like people do!



I believe the winter season is about what is mentioned above: everyone and everything would come to live when they hear the Christmas carols, would share presents whilst enjoying the multitude of lights around them! I truly believe that if we manage to put our imagination to work, we can give ourselves a present every day.

From ourselves to ourselves! From us... to the Universe!

## BACIU ANA MARIA

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## *December's shivering coat*

It won't be long until Christmas comes around, and the old cottage has never looked so empty before, even in the claustrophobically small space the single room has to offer. The cold December wind has never blown so frantic through the gaps between the horizontal logs constructing the walls of the small cabin. And I don't think I've ever been so cold before, though the crackling of the fireplace deafens me.

As I'm well aware of the fact that my memory is far from being one of my strengths, I re-evaluate what I have planned for the day. First and foremost, I needn't waste anymore time lounging in my armchair, where I found myself awoken after falling asleep while reading last night, there's things to do and places to be, and the clock is only ticking down. It is a quarter past 6 am, if I start getting ready now, dressing up and having a quick breakfast, I might just be able to leave the house by 7 o'clock. Now, the weather doesn't do me much good; the blizzard has been restless these past few days, building up this thick layer of snow that'll only complicate the already difficult way from the hilltop cabin down into the town, especially for this tired old man. Let's optimistically assume that it'll be a quick, hour long stroll down the hill, and once I get in the town I'll take a 30 minutes cab ride to the train station, getting there at 8:30 am, just in time to wait for them there until their train arrives at 9.

All said and done, I get my old, stiff bones out of the armchair and on to getting ready. The door opens in a high pitched creaking and my wrinkled cheeks are met by a harsh, ice cold wind sending shivers down my hunched spine. Sure, the scenery laid in front of me is astonishing, the dark, slender trees reaching with their sharp branches towards the cloudy, glowing white sky, blurred over by a heavy morning fog, the fresh snow is almost glistening in its very delicate crystals, building up to your knees, but I'm not here to admire it I'm afraid. I curse the pristine blanket of snow that covered completely the path from my door down into the town, leaving me without the only landmark I had in this indistinguishable amalgamation of white hues, but 64 years worth of going up and down this hill should serve me right in recalling the way.

And on we go. Age really does put some weight on these bony shoulders of mine, I feel like my body has never been so heavy before, even though I've been losing weight like never before



in this past year; most of the nights in the log cabin get so lonely and cold, that the last thing you want is to force your weak self out of bed and cook a full course meal. God, this humid winter air doesn't help much either, it almost feels like it weights my very lungs down. My face is rushing with blood and I've never been so hot in a snowstorm before. It almost feels like I feel so much at once that I don't really feel anything. My hearing falls under the pressure of the gale, coming to an end with a last split second in which I can almost hear their young, lively voices in the distance. I call out their names with no vibration of my attempt to vocalise being able to manifest into reality. Oh, my grandkids deserve better than this... forgive me.

The young boy's curls of bright red hair flow from underneath his woollen hat, sticking to his freckled, rosy cheeks and forehead. He puts them out of his face with a hand movement and squints his eyes at the sight of a patch so out of place in the pure white snow, his younger siblings stop behind him, not yet understanding the nature of the obstacle that blocked their path. He digs his feet in and out of the snow, making his way to what seemed to be a coat of some sort; the coat shivers ever so slightly.

'Don't touch that! It looks like a dead dog, better just leave it alone... grandpa's house is just up the hill, he's waiting for us.'

'Jamie, this isn't no dog... aye... grandpa? Hello?! Pops can you hear me?! Help me get him up, don't just stare at me!' ...And the coat shivered one last time.

**IFTIMIE VLADIMIR NICOLAE**

cls a IX-a, Liceul cu Program Sportiv Iași



## *It will snow tomorrow*


It's not snowing today either. All those crows that seem like small dots on an exam sheet that I see through my window herald a winter, that seems to never come.

I'm not even sixteen years old yet, maybe I m not able to talk about snows of another time.

I have no inspiration, just as the grey sad clouds that seem to never want to deliver snow down below, and just keep to themselves. They don't let it out, and such, they remain at my window, mocking me.

If you sit and listen to my father's stories, that inevitably start with "back in my days", I can almost mistake him for a grandpa, forgotten by time, you would think winter was a frosty wonderland. According to him, by today, the snow would have been the size of fences, he used to go to a hill near his school and use his bag as a sled, which, of course ruined it, or that it was so cold in the house that one time the water in the bathtub froze. He even had to walk the family dog in the morning, daily, the cold was so bad and the snow was taller then the dog itself. He was always freezing, but the dog, he didn't care, his thick layer of brown fur kept him protected from the frigid weather. One time the dog ran of into the dense snow and my dad nearly lost him in the





waves of flufy dantruf. He managed to get him, after a hour of running.

So, my dad's winters were so great but my winters weren't that exciting; anyway, we still had snow, not like in the past two years...

One time I went sleeding with my grandpa near a river bank, I only got to go twice thouth, since on my second turn I fallen right in the cold river water, my grandpa started to panic and we just went home.

Another time, me and some friends decided we wanted a giant snow fort, so we all meet up with garbage cans, so we could make snow cubes, and worked hard all day to build our dream citadel, we even made a rampart for it that was about two meters high. Sadly we found it destroyed the following day, I never built snowcastels.

There aren't any more winters like then, none that would excite me the way Christmas gifts did, or hot coco in the afternoon. Maybe I'm no longer like then either.

I'm almost sixteen and I'm already starting, little by little, to talk like my dad with "back in my days"...My little world is turning into a vast galaxy, and I don't know how to feel about it...I miss my joyful winters, with lots of snow and lots of fun, that seem to be so far away now! And I'm asking myself if winter was indeed a special land or everything was in my head.

Hope, tomorrow it will snow!

## DONEA MĂDĂLINA

cls a IX-a, Colegiul Național „Vasile Alecsandri” Iași




## *Saving Christmas*

It was a beautiful winter morning with lots of snow. Small silver flakes where dancing the gorgeous winter waltz through the cold air. The children were happily playing outside with each other, taking advantage of this wonderful season. The streets, the trees, the buildings, everything was dressed in silver and glittering holiday clothes made by Snow White. The sky was full of clouds as white as milk foam and as fluffy as cotton candy that your parents used to buy you when you were little.

The atmosphere was one of celebration and fairytale.

Lisa had just arrived at the post office with her letter in hand for Santa. She had stayed quite long the night before to draw all Santa's reindeer on the paper to make him happy. Just as she was getting ready to put the envelope in the mailbox, the world around her began to spin and in front of the girl appeared a gigantic ice slide that she slid down without wanting to. When she got up from the floor in a daze she realized she was in another world. In front of her could be seen a large house decorated with multicoloured garlands. It was very cold outside, so Lisa decided to go inside the house to warm up. When she opened the door, the smell of vanilla and cinnamon made her follow it into a spacious room with walls painted green and red. In one



corner was a gigantic Christmas tree filled with all kinds of globes, garlands and decorations, and a shining golden star at the top. In the middle of the room she found Santa Claus crying, so she asked him scared:

"Santa, what's wrong with you being so sad? Christmas is only two weeks away, shouldn't you be happy?"

"Rudolph, one of my reindeer got hit hard while running outside, and without him the sleigh can't be pulled by the others because it's too heavy. Christmas will be ruined!" responded him.

Hearing these terrible things, Lisa offered to try to heal Rudolph, and Santa accepted with tears in his eyes. The little girl started coming daily to take care the reindeer's wound, put antibiotics on it and bandage it. She had received a certain book with which she could reach that world. She would have to open it to a certain page, to say a specific sentence given to her by a Santa and she would wake up in his house. After almost two weeks, Rudolph was already feeling much better, he could run briskly through the beautiful snow, and on Christmas Eve, Santa Claus was ready to deliver presents to all the children thanks to Lisa. He offered to grant the girl a wish as a reward for what she did, but the child told him that there was no need because she likes to help those around her, because that's what she thinks everyone should do when someone needs help.

Christmas was as wonderful and magical as ever, the children were absolutely delighted, the festive atmosphere was felt all around, people were seeing each other again after a long time they hadn't been able to for various reasons, and happiness was floating around. Christmas had been saved and Lisa had made new friends. Maybe no one would have believed her when she told them what happened to her, but it didn't matter to her, as she preferred to keep it a secret for the safety of Santa Claus and his reindeer.

## CONDUR CODRIN FLORIN

cls a XI-a, Colegiul Național „Garabet Ibrăileanu” Iași



## *The happiness that Christmas brings*

Winter was coming to an end. I was playing outside with my friends, making snowmen, fighting with snowballs and riding sleighs down hills. It was all we could have asked for.

After a while we had to go home to eat and rest because we were exhausted. Everything we played with and everything we made had been left out in the cold. After staying inside, I wanted to go out, but my mother stopped me and told me that I couldn't go out anymore because of family and friends that came to visit and wanted to see me. Time passed until I got bored and started looking at the snowflakes outside the window. One of them was very special because was sparkling. After I stared at it for two minutes I wanted to predict where it might land. It landed

on one of the many snowmen. After spending more time checking if something happened I realized that was probably nothing special. Then, when I turned away, I glanced at the snowman and it was also glowing like the snowflake before. When I saw this, I came in a hurry to tell my mother that a snowman outside was shining, and I wanted to take a look. She didn't believe me at first, but she saw how excited I was and let me go admire it.

When I got there, I couldn't see the snowman anymore. I thought it was ruined by some random kid, but when I looked back, I saw the snowman looking at me and moving his face. At that moment, my heart sank, but he reached out and took my hand. Then I relaxed a little bit. We looked at each other and he told me that he came to life because of this magical snowflake. He also told me that he would eventually melt and reappear next winter. He felt sorry for me, so I tried to spend as much time as possible. I told my mom that a friend of mine asked me to stay outside with him so she wouldn't call me back. The first thing I did was call some friends to see the magical snowman. My friends arrived and couldn't believe their eyes. They admired him for a minute before getting to know each other.

The snowman explained his situation to them, and asked if they could stay and play with him. My friends were saddened to realize that this friendly snowman could melt anytime, but hopeful knowing he would be back the next winter. We spent the rest of the day playing outside and then coming back to the warmth of the house thinking about our new friend that was left outside. The night was cold and the snow didn't melt overnight. I was relieved when I saw our snowman waiting for me outside. He told me that his estimate of the outside temperature might have been wrong and that the cold prevented the snow from melting. We played for another week before the snow finally started to melt. It makes me happy to know the snowman had another great week of playing and having fun as this winter has been the coldest so far.

Ever since that day we have been waiting for the upcoming winters with hope and impatience.

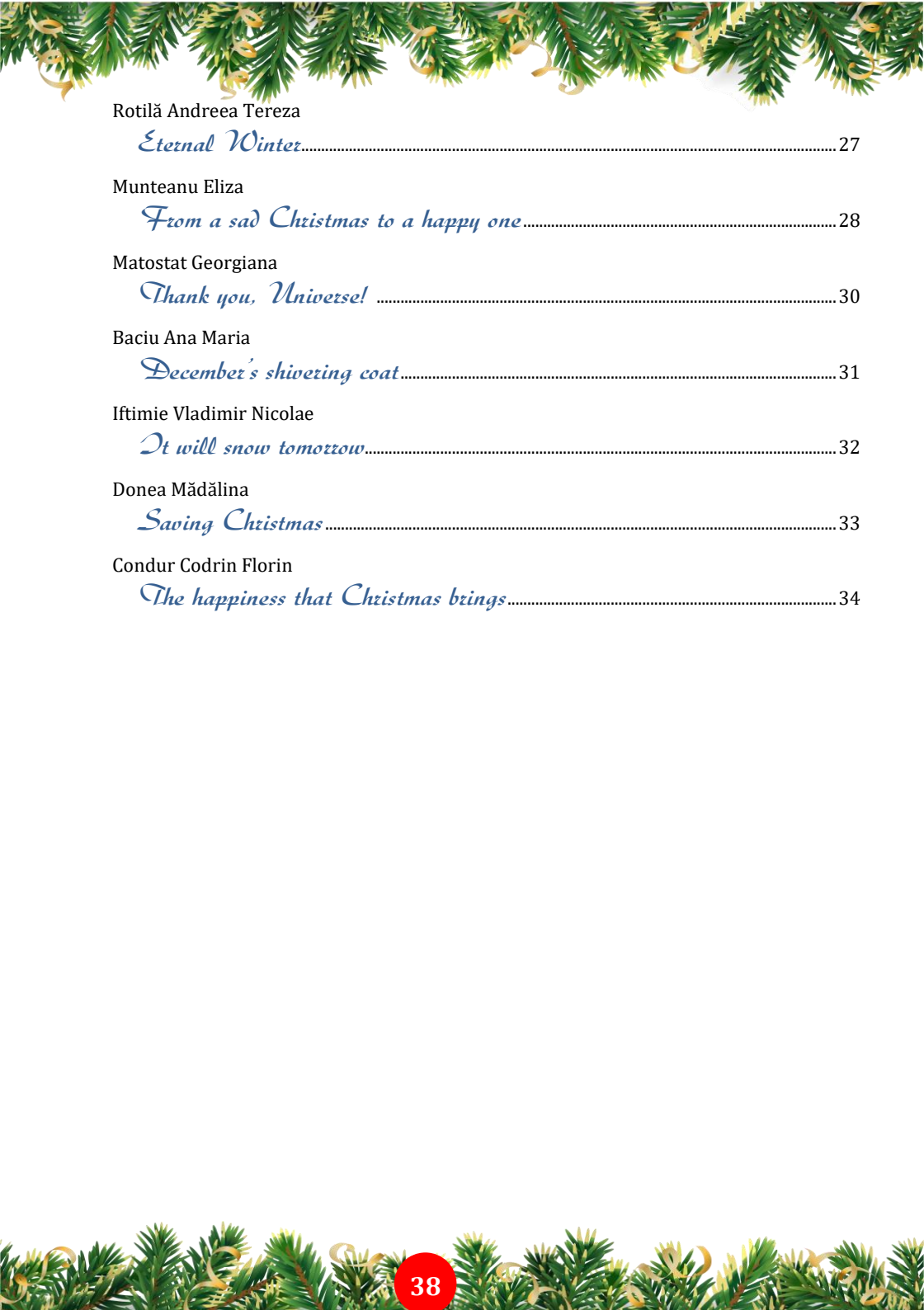






# Content

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Mavroian Sabina Maria                        |    |
| <i>Our Christmas</i> .....                   | 8  |
| Coşeriu Dănuţ                                |    |
| <i>Winter Wonderland</i> .....               | 9  |
| Iftode Ioana Denisa                          |    |
| <i>The Cold-hearted Town</i> .....           | 11 |
| Humă Ioana Teodora                           |    |
| <i>Holiday Melody</i> .....                  | 12 |
| Petrache Maria                               |    |
| <i>Saxophone, Pages and Snow Balls</i> ..... | 13 |
| Rotundu Denisa Ştefana                       |    |
| <i>Pair Skating</i> .....                    | 16 |
| Doca Ingrid Mihaela                          |    |
| <i>A Christmas Become Real</i> .....         | 17 |
| Bălan Iustin                                 |    |
| * * *  | 19 |
| Nechifor Sabina                              |    |
| <i>Queen of ice</i> .....                    | 20 |
| Răducanu Georgiana                           |    |
| <i>It happened last Christmas</i> .....      | 21 |
| Mihalache Ionuţ Cristian                     |    |
| <i>Lions Led by Monkeys</i> .....            | 23 |
| Patraş Anisia                                |    |
| <i>Into the Snowstorm</i> .....              | 24 |
| Ştefanache Denis Luca                        |    |
| <i>A Christmas Wonder</i> .....              | 25 |



|  |    |
|--|----|
| Rotilă Andreea Tereza                            |    |
| <i>Eternal Winter</i> .....                      | 27 |
| Munteanu Eliza                                   |    |
| <i>From a sad Christmas to a happy one</i> ..... | 28 |
| Matostat Georgiana                               |    |
| <i>Thank you, Universe!</i> .....                | 30 |
| Baciu Ana Maria                                  |    |
| <i>December's shivering coat</i> .....           | 31 |
| Iftimie Vladimir Nicolae                         |    |
| <i>It will snow tomorrow</i> .....               | 32 |
| Donea Mădălina                                   |    |
| <i>Saving Christmas</i> .....                    | 33 |
| Condur Codrin Florin                             |    |
| <i>The happiness that Christmas brings</i> ..... | 34 |







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