

WINTER WONDERLAND



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Secondary School



Winter Wonderland

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Memories

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As the winter storm raged outside, a group of friends found themselves snowed in at their remote cabin. The howling winds and heavy snowfall had quickly blocked the road, trapping the friends together for the weekend. Within the cozy walls of the cabin, however, the mood was cheerful. Laughter and lively conversation echoed throughout the rooms as the friends made the most of their unexpected situation. Some played board games by the fire while others prepared a hearty meal in the kitchen. As night fell and the blizzard showed no signs of slowing, the friends gathered in the living room with mugs of hot cocoa. Smiles and memories would help tide them over until the weather cleared and their journey home could resume.

The frigid solitude of their setting had come to fully envelope them as the snowbound pathways rendered transit impossible, isolating the friends from all beyond. Amid this unforeseen turn, one among their number suffered a misstep and tumble, wounding themselves in the fall. The others swiftly moved to offer aid, recognizing the critical nature of the circumstance and the requirement for care. As they awaited relief, the injured and a companion conversed at length in hushed tones, words wandering to sacred spaces seldom trod amid adversity's visit. Their souls bared more fully to one another in empathy's glow, finding solace in fellowship where alone none was to be found.

As the friends navigated through the winter wonderland, a little girl's joyous ice skating came to an abrupt end when she lost her balance and slipped hard on the icy ground. With a yelp, she fell and immediately began to cry. Luckily, an elderly lady nearby observed the accident and quickly rushed to the girl's aid. Kneeling down with care, the kind lady soothed the child with gentle words of comfort while examining her for injuries. Finding no wounds but continued tears, the old woman smiled and said „The ice can be tricky but don't lose your spirit of fun! Now, let me help you stand and maybe we can skate together more carefully.” Pleased by the proposal, the girl's sobs began to slow. Meanwhile, the group of friends found their conversations drifting to more meaningful topics they wouldn't normally discuss as each pondered the unexpected lessons





of the day.

In the aftermath of their winter wonderland experience, the friends felt a newfound appreciation for nature and its ability to bring people together in unexpected ways. They realized that being immersed in nature's beauty and challenges had allowed them to let go of their worries and connect on a deeper level.

They recognized the power of the winter landscape to ignite introspection and open themselves up emotionally. They understood that the winter wonderland had served as a catalyst for personal growth and transformation, allowing them to confront their fears, insecurities, and relationships in a way that would have been difficult in their everyday lives. As they reflected on their time in the winter wonderland, they realized that it had restored their sense of wonder and awe, reminding them of the intrinsic and spiritual value of nature.

„The Special Elf Team”

David Alexandru Rădeanu

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For Santa Claus to deliver all Christmas gifts on time, a special team of elves is required. This group is renewed every year and is only composed of the best of the best elves. Before even having the opportunity to work in the Gift Factory, young elves go to Christmas Lovers' Augmented Useful Simulations, or CLAUS, where they're placed in different scenarios and must solve urgent issues regarding North Pole production. Afterwards, they join Great Informative Fast Training, GIFT, and are trained to be efficient and aware when creating gifts. Not many elves have the patience and determination to finish both programs, but the few who succeed become part of the special team for the next Christmas.

Josh was a young and adventurous elf born in the Snowy Village near the North Pole capital. He had always dreamed of working with Santa and exploring the mysterious factory. His parents, on the other hand, were rather vintage and would choose a calm lifestyle over the stressful, modern factories.

One normal day, when Josh was, once again, trying to convince his parents to let him attend CLAUS sessions, he snapped. He quietly packed his clothes and some food and just left. His parents could not bring him back to reality. Maybe he had a chance to be happy and proud of his job one day.

After the long trip to the capital, Josh signed up for both programs. The first test was CLAUS, in which he had to rebuild a broken sleigh. He placed most components accordingly, but bluffed when it came to the navigation system of the sleigh. It was very advanced technology that he'd never encountered before. Still, luck was on his side, as when the results were shown, he got





second place. The second test was GIFT. He had to craft fifteen unique gifts within the span of minutes. He misplaced some fingers on a doll, broke a glass window from a small car, and made minor mistakes along the way, yet he once again passed in second place.

For the next few days, he kept thinking of who the person in first place, with a perfect score, might be. This brainstorming didn't last long, though, as he was called to visit the factory. Josh was not yet hired, but he could see his future working space, and he happily accepted the invitation. He arrived a few minutes late, apologized to the tour guide, and asked to see the fellow guest who got first place in the test, as they should've been invited. Apparently, although the elf received the message, they did not give a definitive answer regarding the tour, and so the guide just assumed they were busy.

Josh knew something wasn't right. This mysterious elf with a perfect rating would not show himself to him. He moved on from his speculations, as the tour was now about to start, and his excitement overshadowed this disturbing thought.

The Gift Factory was a massive building connected to Santa's office by a large hallway. It had a glass roof covered in snow and high wooden walls without any windows. The first room was the lobby, where new members would complete some forms. It was bright and cozy, with a welcoming atmosphere. Next up was the library, which contained billions of letters from children from all around the world. They were placed in small cupboards with tags on them. The room was very tall and looked stunning. The walls that weren't part of the letter storage had childish drawings of all sizes, with a date and name written in the corner. The exit from the library led to two different rooms: the material storage, a messy huge space filled with logs, stones, and blocks of different textures and colors, and the production space, a long room filled with blueprints, old toys, coloured wool and planks, open letters everywhere, and a few elves working.

Josh was fascinated by the Factory and soon joined the working elves too, but the mystery of the first-place elf remained unsolved for years and was much more surprising than Josh had ever considered it to be...

Winter Wonderland

Nechifor Daria Ioana

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„Have you ever heard about the story of the ice ballerina?”

They used to call her Lacrimosa, a beautiful ballerina who used to dance on Christmas eve, with an outstanding passion, her dance moves and elegance making everyone's hearts melt. Unfortunately, one day, when she was about to finish her dance, something horrible happened, a speaker fell on her and crushed her to death. A statue of ice was made in her memory and some





people say she comes to life on Christmas eve, waiting for a gentle and warm heart to finish her dance with. Every time she fails people say that they can hear the music she used to dance on and that her tears turn into ice cubes. I've also heard that her statue bleeds from time to time, how strange, right? „Will there ever be anyone to set her soul free?“

„That's such a heart-breaking story!“ Alexander said.

Alexander was a handsome tanned young man with white long hair who loved dancing. After hearing the ballerina's story, he knew he had to see that statue, but there was only one week left until Christmas eve, when he also had a dance to perform. Alexander had a high social status, friends, people who admired him, a loving family, he almost had everything but... he couldn't feel love. His biggest wish was to see how love feels. Filled with curiosity he decided to ask around to see where he could find the ballerina's ice statue.

„Oh, kid that's an old story! I'm surprised you even heard about it! If you want to know where is the statue, you could ask the ballerina's grandpa because he is the only one who really knows, since he made it. He lives not far from here.“ a man told Alexander.

He didn't even think much about it and started searching and asking where the grandpa's house was."

He was finally there! He knocked and the door opened.

„How can I help you, young man?“ an old gentle voice asked.

„Sir, I need your help. I've heard your granddaughter is the ballerina that died some years ago. Do you know where is her statue right now, sir?“

The old man looked sad for a bit but then his face brightened.

„You... you... you're the one! I'll show you my granddaughter's statue. She's been pretty lonely lately. Would you mind speaking to her for me?“ the old man happily said, as he handed him a piece of paper.

„Sure thing, sir! I have to go now!“

Alexander headed off to the location the old man gave him. As he arrived there, he saw her. A beautiful ice statue of the ballerina from the unfortunate accident. She was even more beautiful than described.

„Hey! Can you hear me?“ he said.

„Alexander, Alexander will you dance with me on Christmas eve? Oh, please! Please. free my lonely soul! Will you? Will you? Oh, please! Oh, please... “ the ballerina whispered sadly.

„Of course, I will dance with you, I promise.“

Alexander smiled kindly and sat for a while next to the ballerina, telling her about his life.

The old man saw the two of them, and smiled, he couldn't be happier.

„She will love if you visit her again on Christmas eve.“ said the old man giving him a picture of the ballerina.

Alexander smiled and left. All he could think about was the ballerina and how beautiful she was.

Days passed by and Christmas eve was there. Alexander decided to visit the ballerina one more time before his show.

As he was getting closer a snow storm started.

„Huh? ... How strange? Come on, not right now?! I have to see her!“

Everything became a blur, Alexander couldn't see anything because of the storm but as he opened his eyes he found himself in an ice castle. He looked around for a second, the place was so empty and quiet. He started running around the castle, entering every room he found, running





towards a faint sound he could hear in the distance. Then he finally found it. The ballerina was dancing in the middle of a gorgeous ice room. His eyes lit up as he saw the ballerina again, she was even more beautiful than the last time.

„Oh, Alexander would you finish this dance with me?“ the ballerina said.

„It would be my pleasure!“ Alexander replied as he grabbed the ballerina's hand and they started dancing. The world around them became a Winter Wonderland filled with beautiful ice flowers, Christmas decorations and animals singing and dancing. Snow was slowly falling on the ground, everything was in harmony. You could hear the beautiful music around them.

Alexander looked at the ballerina, she was no longer ice but a flesh and bones gorgeous girl who was smiling at him. “What was that? What was that feeling in his chest? Was that love?“ He looked at ballerina with joy in his eyes and did the last move of the dance.

„Oh Alexander, beautiful boy, you will have my heart, but please don't dance tonight, oh please or you will end up like me.“ the ballerina said with tears in her eyes then vanished in the air. The ice castle disappeared along with the decorations and music. Alexander was so confused. „What did she mean? He had dreamed all his life for this moment. He just couldn't give up now!“

He ran to the opera where his show was about to begin and got ready, but he couldn't get the ballerina's words out of his head. He began dancing, everyone was watching, everything was going smoothly until he saw it, the huge speaker that looked like it was about to fall. There wasn't only the speaker but also a man up there. He immediately knew what the ballerina meant. He stopped dancing in an instant and started screaming for help, warning about the speaker. The man got caught and the ballerina appeared on stage, but this time everyone could see her. She began dancing, everyone was watching her in shock. Outside it was slowly snowing and the huge Christmas tree started glowing. Alexander's heart couldn't be happier, filled with joy and love as he started dancing alongside the ballerina.

The light was cast upon them as they were dancing.

„Thank you! Thank you so much for setting my soul free! I will never forget you, Alexander!“ the ballerina said as she vanished into the air.

Alexander shed a tear but he knew that this was supposed to happen and with peace at heart he continued dancing.





The Fungus

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I've always wanted to go in the north side of Europe. I have always been fascinated by Norse mythology and Aurora Borealis. One day I won a trip to Lapland.

After a while it was time for me to get on the plane to Lapland. Everything went quite smoothly. We were informed that there were a lot of activities planned for us, and, if we were lucky, we would admire the Aurora Borealis. I got a great room full of fur-skins and animal skins with traditional stitches.

On a certain day we got ready to go out to a more distant place where the city lights were not visible, hoping we'd get lucky. I carefully prepared my video camera, but I didn't know if its battery would resist the cold, harsh weather. We went through the frozen snow and we got to a clearing in the forest, a place from which we were supposed to be able to admire the long-awaited phenomenon. After an hour full of impatience, the event was taking place as the green and yellow ribbons of Aurora appeared. I got my hands on the photo camera and I couldn't stop. One more picture! And I'd like to film a little... but I was bothered by the voices of the others, so I decided to move away... and one more frame... The battery helped... everything was perfect... I was fascinated and I took a few more steps.

As the lights started to dissipate I told myself I'd filmed and photographed enough and I decided to go back to the group. But I kind of didn't know exactly which side I had to go to anymore. I told myself that I must seek the traces of my own steps, but, in my frenzied eagerness to photograph and film as much as possible, I've taken so many steps, in so many directions, that I didn't know where to go anymore and, scared, I started to go randomly calling out to my group, but I didn't get any answers. And I kept going... and I got tired. It was like I was going to sit down a little bit. I was kind of cold... I was getting colder and colder... Then, I started to feel warm and I felt better.

I heard some voices and I told myself the group companions found me because they must have noticed that I disappeared. But I didn't understand what those voices were saying. It was like another language. I felt someone was lifting me up. When I opened my eyes, I saw furs and skins of animals, but it didn't look like the ones in my room. An unknown face approached and the face spoke to me in an unknown language, so, I was among strangers. I had a wooden vessel, and I understood that I must drink. Maybe it was a cure and I'd feel better. I drank, but I didn't like the taste that I couldn't recognize. I was brought a kind of drum and a whistle to which I began to „play”. People around me started dancing, I danced with them, and I spun continuously. The place was starting to change its dimensions and I saw places and beings I didn't know existed, I heard voices speaking to me in another language, but now I could understand. I was told that I





was at the border between the world of people and the world beyond and I was asked to pass some messages on to the people who had saved me. I owed it to them to do that, so I HAD TO get back to them. I made this decision and I heard myself saying something to unfamiliar people in the same language, but which, now, I no longer understand. And then, I don't know anymore...

I just know I'm in a white room, like the hospital. Someone in a white coat tells me that in the analysis, they identified intoxication with a fungus of the Amanita species, but that's a small dose and soon I'll be able to go home if I promise to follow the advice given to me.

This is my adventure in Lapland, adventure in which I think I actually I rode the Aurora Borealis to the northern gods' lands.

The Farmer's Strange Disappearance

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Once upon a time there was a farm with lots of happy animals and a big cabin full of supplies. Life was good for the farmer and the farm, until something strange happened. The next day, the farmer disappeared into thin air. The police found out and decided to investigate the disappearance. The farmer left no clues. All hope seemed lost until a detective spotted a strange forest right next to the farm. Just as they were about to enter, they saw a sign warning them not to go in as it could be dangerous.

Standing at the edge of the mysterious forest, the detectives felt a little uneasy. The warning sign made them nervous, but curiosity pushed them forward. The farmer's disappearance had everyone on edge, and the detectives were determined to find out what had happened. With cautious steps, they entered the forest, unaware that this journey would lead them into a world of magic and unexpected challenges.

The forest was thick and very old, swallowing them as they went. Twisted trees with knotted branches stretched out like bony fingers, making sinister shadows that played with the moonlight. Strange sounds echoed through the trees, creating a spooky but fascinating atmosphere. As the detectives kept walking, the air seemed different, as if something magical was happening around them.

Among the overgrown trees, the detectives found a clear spot with a strange fountain in the middle. The water sparkled with a magical light, and there were animal statues that looked just like the ones on the farm. The detectives were amazed - they were in a place where reality mixed with magic.

As the detectives were checking out the magical skylight, a mythical figure appeared. Surrounded by a magical aura, the figure explained that the farmer had mistakenly entered this magi-





cal place, causing him to disappear. To find the farmer, the detectives had to set off on a journey through the mythical parts of the forest.

Guided by this mythical figure, the detectives traveled through magical landscapes, each more magical and risky than the last. They encountered mythical creatures and faced challenges that put them to the test. Along the way, they discovered how the world of farmers and the magical realm connect, uncovering secrets that unite them.

The forest, once considered dangerous, turned out to be a gateway to a world of wonders. The detectives learned important lessons about the balance between the ordinary and the magical, and how the two worlds live side by side in ways they never thought possible. As they approached the end of their journey, the detectives realized that the farmer's disappearance was because the balance between the two realms had been disturbed by an accidental break-in.

In the heart of the magical forest, the detectives found the missing farmer, caught in a moment somewhere between usual and unusual. Under the guidance of the mystical character, they brought him back to his world, closing the gate between the two realms. The magical spell on the farm lifted, and life returned to normal.

The once mysterious forest became a symbol of the amazing things that can happen in ordinary life. The detectives returned to the farm, having learned some important lessons and with a new appreciation for the magical side of life. The story of the magical forest has become a legend, a story passed down from generation to generation, reminding everyone that sometimes the most amazing adventures begin with a simple step into the unknown.





Do Wizards Get Presents Too?

Ciomaga Andrei

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On a frosty December evening, while the wind was blowing away a few patches of snow, in Hogwarts Castle, Harry Potter was in the Hall of Lost Steps with his friends, Ron and Hermione. Although the weather was ugly, around them, colored lights and candles were flickering, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. All the students were anxiously waiting to go home for the Christmas break.

Like every year, they prepared songs, skits and a raffle. While enjoying the festive atmosphere, the large doors of the hall opened with a squeak. A gust of snow entered the room, and on the threshold there appeared the familiar figure of Albus Dumbledore, the principal of the school.

„Good evening, dear students! I know you're all excited to go home on vacation, but before that, I have a little surprise for you,” the principal said with a mysterious smile. Suddenly there was silence, and at his urging, an old man with a white beard and red clothes entered the hall, carrying a large bag on his back. Everyone's eyes turned to him, and Harry Potter realized that this old man was none other than Santa Claus himself. Santa Claus, with his snow-white beard, shimmering red coat, and gentle eyes, greeted everyone with a cheerful ~ho, ho, ho!~ and then walked over to Harry saying:

„Hello, Harry Potter! I thought I'd come to Hogwarts in person to bring you a special gift,” Santa said with a warm smile.

Harry, astonished and overjoyed, replied, „Hi, Santa! It's an honor to meet you. What gift do you have for me?”

Santa Claus pulled a paper-wrapped package with gold glitters from his magic bag and handed it to Harry. „Open it and you'll find out.”

Harry eagerly unfolded the paper and discovered a cloak with magic embroidery and a note that read: „For Harry, for your future adventures. With love, Santa Claus.”

„Wow! It's amazing!” exclaimed Harry, gazing in admiration at his new cloak.

While Harry was enjoying his gift, Ron and Hermione also received packages from Santa





Claus. The children's discussions and laughter were amplified in the Hall of Lost Steps, filling it with an atmosphere of joy and friendship.

After all the students received their gifts, Santa Claus addressed those in the room again: „Now, dear children, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a holiday full of magic. Take care of each other and don't forget to relax and enjoy with your families. See you next year, dear ones!”

With a magical movement of his fingers, Santa Claus made himself invisible from the packed hall who was speechless with amazement. Harry and his friends looked at each other wide-eyed, still surprised by their encounter with the legendary old man with the white beard and red cloak.

„I don't know how he did that, but it was incredible!” said Hermione, and Ron added, „Do you think Snape, the teacher, got any gifts?”

They all burst into laughter, leaving behind worries about homework, exams, tests, to enjoy the magic of Christmas. With thoughts full of gifts received and those they will receive, Santa Claus and his stories, carols, Harry Potter and his friends went home to spend the holidays with their families, with hearts full of joy and magical, unforgettable memories.

The psychological effect winter has on us

Besmeciuc Antonia

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prof. coordonator Boțoiu Anda



I always saw the winter as a season about love, family and friends, about thankfulness, about spending time in the house and doing nice activities with our loved ones. I always saw spring as a season about life, about the beginning of everything, about being born, about the new start and the second chances that we get. I always saw summer as a season about having fun, about holidays and luxury vacations, about staying up all night, about doing everything you love. I always saw autumn as a season about being cozy, about going sightseeing and watching the leaves fall, about being concentrated in the new grade you are in, about relaxing and feeling calm.

But what about looking from another point of view, from a different perspective? I now think about winter in such a new and profound way, with a more mature and deep connection with my inner self. Some years ago, winter meant skiing, ice skating, snowboarding, even sledding. It was all about the snow and the snowmen or the snowflakes, it was all about the hot chocolates, the warm mint teas, the gingerbread cookies that I used to decorate with icing and sprinkles. Well, nowadays, it seems like everything has changed, even though I'm still the little girl my parents raised. Now, winter is all about reflecting and thinking about my actions, my goals, my strategies to become the best person I can. It's about understanding God's choices, about remembering myself that I am someone I should never doubt of, about realizing that if the Universe





wanted, it would have made those things. Winter is now about change, about discovering myself, it's a moment of retrospection, self-love and compassion.

And there are so many other ways we can see this amazing season. I also think that it is about the brittleness of life, about how small and fragile humans and their souls are, about feelings and understanding them. The snow, the snowflakes, they all explain us how hard and how long it takes for things to settle, to be usual and comfortable, and how easy it is to just destroy something or someone's pure happiness. It's just like crushing a little snowflake, it's a feeling that you get, an unexplainable one, when you get both excited and angry.

Winter is also about balance. The balance between the cold weather outside and the cozy fireplace in our houses. The balance between the sunshine outside and the darkness, which is now so much more important and visible. The balance between the awkward family meetings and the loneliness we feel sometimes. The balance between feeling like a stupid little child and a very mature and important teenager, going into adulthood. The balance between sadness and the joy of Christmas, between feeling loved and having your heart crushed. This season is all about ying and yang, about the tree of life, about how staying inside has an effect on our wellbeing and thoughts, on our mind and how we connect more deeply with ourselves.

I absolutely love winter, its landscapes and how calming they can be, its great way of relaxing us, its sharpness that has such an abstract effect on us, the way it hypnotizes us and it makes us have a very different mindset. It is a distinctive season that, without hesitation, chances us. And with a peculiar approach, it makes us see through the pure, white snow, right into the heart of the earth, into our roots, our minds, bodies and souls. And may I say, I love everything about it.

A Christmas family reunion

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prof. coordonator Andreea Jijie



It was Christmas Eve when Stephanie was in the kitchen, baking a delicious cookie recipe. While she was placing the cookie tray in the oven, a strange sound came from the patio. She got her boots on and rushed outside because she thought something happened to her dogs. When she opened the door, a purple light took over her sight. After a while, she began to see a big circle that looked like a portal and a strange silhouette walking fast in it, like it was about to close. Of course, nobody would go into something like that, but Stephanie took her chances and jumped fast in it, without knowing what was inside.

At first, it looked like a slide, but then something white began to fill the portal. „OH NO, IT IS SNOW” said Stephanie, afraid of what was about to happen. She slowly realized that she was





falling to a city, without anything that could protect her. Suddenly someone shouted: „Hey, over here” from a sleigh dragged by eight reindeers. Someone grabbed her and put her into the sleigh. She couldn't see the man's face, but even when she asked him a few questions, he wouldn't look at her, not even bothering answering them. She saw something like a glittery dust going to her and then, she fell asleep.

When she woke up, she saw a beautiful chandelier, some paintings and lots of strangers all around her. Stephanie jumped out of bed and started asking those people who they were, how she got there and what they wanted from her. They told her not to worry, because they actually saved her and then explained that they were Mr. Claus, Mrs. Claus, Ruby and Chris the main elves. She calmed down a little bit, but then a disturbing sound came from Santa's village.

All of them were wondering what could have made that sound, until they saw a group of wolves walking to the Christmas star. Mrs. Claus started yelling at the wolves, Mr. Claus walked towards the tree and all of the elves were preparing for an attack, only Stephanie didn't know what was all that about. Ruby dragged her to a hiding spot and explained her that those wolves were once people that were helping Santa Claus with some projects around the village, while he still had a family in Chicago, but they betrayed him and told everyone who he really was. He had to transform them into wolves so they could see what it is like to be betrayed and tricked his whole family that he is dead. Stephanie understood what was about the wolves but didn't know why Ruby had to hide her: she was only a little girl that nobody knew that existed. But was it really like that?

When she wanted to ask the elf what the fight has to do with her, Ruby left her alone in the room and locked the door. She heard some screaming and noises that seemed like explosions and then nothing... like a silent night in the mountains. Stephanie tried to open the door and then shouted „I WISH I WOULD BE NEXT TO SANTA”. Suddenly, she appeared into the sleigh right in the middle of a chase. Mr. Claus saw her and seemed surprised but he didn't say anything. After they flew over the mountains, they lost the wolves, so they began their journey back home.

When they arrived, they went in the living room and Santa explained her that she is actually his granddaughter and the wolves wanted to take her. Stephanie began to cry and went outside, took her grandpa's sleigh and began to look for the wolves. She actually realized that she could use her powers, so she said „BRING ME TO THOSE AWFUL WOLVES”. After she appeared where she wanted, she frizzed them and retrieved the Christmas star that they stole.

After bringing back the star, her grandpa secured the wolves and took her back home, with the promise of not telling her mom. They hugged each other and Santa Claus went back to the North Pole. But was Stephanie actually safe from the wolves?





Winter Wonderland

Hurdugan Alin Ștefan

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I think everyone has heard about the Winter Queen but no one actually met her except of one person, a little girl called Amelia. She was always passionate about this subject. Winter was her favourite season and she always believed in the Winter Queen. Of course, her parents never believed in and were sure that at a point in Amelia`s life they would have to tell her that the Winter Queen does not exist.

One day, when it started snowing heavily, Amelia went to visit her grandma. Her grandma`s house was near a forest and since Amelia still believed in the Winter Queen she thought maybe she would meet her there! But her hopes were ruined because her grandmother made it clear that she couldn`t go there no matter what. Amelia did not argue with her grandmother and did not say anything, she even promised that she wouldn`t go there. But little did her grandma knew about the adventures little Amelia was about to take part in!

The night came and Amelia had a master plan on her getaway from grandma`s house to the forest. Amelia was sleeping in the bedroom and her grandma in the living room, but it didn`t have to be a problem as her grandma used to have a long and deep sleep. And so Amelia bit the bullet and took the risk. She dressed up with a big jacket with fur and a big hat, a scarf and went outside her room. She saw that her grandma was sleeping, so she shot her shot and slowly tip-toed to the door and left the house.

Her breath was hanging in the crisp winter air as she stepped into the enchanting snow-covered forest. The trees, adorned with glistening icicles, were whispering secrets of a winter wonderland. The soft snow blanket was crunching beneath her boots, leading her to a hidden glade where a magical scene unfolded. Snowflakes were dancing gracefully, painting a delicate tapestry around a frozen pond. In the centre, a lone snowman stood tall, adorned with a carrot nose and a scarf that was fluttering in the icy breeze. Next to the snowman there was a tall woman who strolled out from the snowy woods, rocking a majestic ice-blue dress that sparkled like it was made of a gazillion of tiny diamonds. Her fur cape looked like it got a frosty makeover. She had a shiny waterfall of silver hair with sparkling crystals in it. She was the myth, the legend, the one and only, the Winter Queen! Amelia was in absolute shock, yes she believed in the winter queen but never in her life had she thought not only that she would meet her but also that she would have the chance to see such a fabulous place.

The Winter Queen looked with her crystal blue eyes to Amelia and said: “Come my child! I have lived in this forest for millions of years but no one has ever found me, it`s time for me to show you the depths of this magic forest!”

Amelia being overwhelmed with emotions of happiness and excitement followed the queen





in the forest. They walked a bit and Amelia saw a stunning glacier lake. It's water was crystal clear, probably the freshest water ever to be seen in a lake. Next to the lake there was one of the most beautiful Christmas trees that Amelia had ever seen in her life! It was huge and breathtaking, decorated with white and red globes, wreath and beautiful Christmas lights. But Amelia noticed a globe which looked different, a bit off, and she couldn't help staring at it. She had a strange feeling that she couldn't explain. She forgot about it and went back to the winter queen who served her with some delicious ginger bread cookies. In a moment, Amelia got sleepy and the winter queen told her to lie down on a bed of ice next to the Christmas tree. While she was trying to sleep she kept looking at that odd globe and as if she was staring into its the soul.

All of a sudden the globe changed its colour from red to gold and Amelia noticed she wasn't anymore next to the glacier lake in the forest, She slightly turned her head and looked outside the window and there she saw the majestic Winter Queen smiling and waving to her as she vanished into the sky and went to another forest to never be found again. Amelia was bewildered and it took her a while to realize that she was back at her grandma, next to the Christmas tree where she had fallen asleep!

THE END

Christmas deja vu

Ifrim Vlad

clasa a VIII-a, Școala Gimnazială
„Titu Maiorescu” Iași,
prof. coordonator Anca Georgiana Voicu



I knew from the moment that I opened my eyes it was going to be a strange day. At first everything seemed normal. I thought to myself it's just another boring Christmas Eve, so I went to my computer to play some video games. As I started the game everything seemed normal until I finished it and started a new one, I could have sworn I just played the same game earlier. I somehow knew everything that was going to happen and everything that I had to do to win it. I thought it was just a deja vu so I started another one, but it was exactly the same as before. „Maybe it's just a glitch” I thought to myself and powered off my computer and went outside for a walk hoping it would be solved soon.

As I was walking, I passed by some things that I could clearly remember. A man was running from the store, probably after he stole something, a kid fell in the park while riding his bicycle because of a man that crossed right in front of him, and last but not least as I was returning home from my walk there was a homeless man asking for some food at the corner of the street. That day I didn't mind any of them so I went home and everything went as normal to the end of the day.

When I woke up the next morning, I felt the exact same strange feeling and again didn't





give it too much thought. Tried the game again, but the same problem, so I didn't think much of it again. As my parents were out of the city for vacation, I expected not to find anything under the tree, but I knew they were going to come back tomorrow with gifts for me, so I went again for a walk.

It was strange to see the same man running away from the same store, but it was way stranger seeing the same kid falling while riding a bike because of the same man. I just told him to be more patient as I helped him get up and went on my way back home walking past the same homeless man.

When I really knew something was wrong was when I called my parents the next day after not finding any gifts under the tree and they said they weren't supposed to come home for the next two days and it wasn't even Christmas. I freaked out really badly and went out on the same walk, walking past the same people and seeing the same things. I didn't know what to do so I just went to sleep hoping that it was just a dream.

Unfortunately, days went by the same way, I was alone and I was trying to think about how to escape this maze. I knew for sure something had to do with the robber and the kid so with the first chance I got I stopped the kid to compliment his bike, making sure the man would go past so he wouldn't fall and the kid went on his way. The robber was a bit more difficult. I had to run to the store as soon as I woke up and announce the security about the robber. They were pretty surprised that I knew there was going to be a robbery, but I didn't have time to stay. I still had to save the kid once again, because it took me some time to think about how to stop the robbery, so I didn't have time to do them both in the same day.

As I went home, I was finally relieved that it was over, but I wasn't so happy when I found out the next morning that it wasn't. I stopped the robbery, saved the kid on the bike again, but didn't know what just wasn't working. And then it hit me. It was the homeless man. I had to find a way to save him. I didn't know what to do so I just called the police, hoping they would take him to a safer place. He thanked me for it and I just went home, hoping everything would come back to normal.

Fortunately, the next day it was finally the first day of Christmas and everything was back to normal, but most important was that I learned a valuable lesson: be kind to people and don't worry just about yourself.





Misha's Winter Holiday

Simionescu Raisa

clasa a VII-a, Școala Gimnazială
„B.P. Hașdeu” Iași,
prof. coordonator Nona Agape



The scent of orange slices and cinnamon sticks makes the home smell heavenly! The saloon is guarded by a Christmas Tree, which stands proudly as a knight. Instead of a powerful sword, he has a sparkling star. His wide branches are lit up with a thousand colorful lights, making him look magical!

The house is decorated with beautiful glass angels, gnomes and snowy garlands.

After sneaking through the door, Andrew checks if the glass of milk and gingerbread cookies are still on the plate. The cookies were decorated by him specifically for Santa Claus.

The snowman he made yesterday with his father appears to be smiling back to him from the garden. Losing his nose makes him laugh. „Perhaps the carrot was eaten by a rabbit” said Andrew to himself.

Sitting on his father's armchair, there was one thing bothering him... He hadn't received the letter from his friend, Misha. After fleeing Ukraine with his family, Misha was attending school in another country. He wanted to ensure that he received the greeting card he sent him.

He glanced at the gingerbread cookies. He was tempted to have a bite. „No, they are patiently waiting for Santa!” said Andrew. The enchanting scents from home were making his eyes to close:

„Wake-up! I am here to fulfill one of your wishes”.

„Gingerbread! Is this truly you? I dressed you up for Christmas. Red short trousers with white lines and green shirt with white buttons. The red hat is too big for your head. Looks like a giant lollipop! My apologies, sweet Gingerbread!”

„Dear Andrew, tell me your biggest wish!” said Gingerbread. „I want to see the world on Christmas and...”

„Say no more! You gave life to me on Christmas Eve. I will show my appreciation towards you. Jump on my Lollipop Hat and let's fly with the speed of the North Pole wind!”

„Lollipop Hat, take us to Japan!” said Andrew.





On the streets of Japan he could see the statues of Colonel Sanders, in natural size, dressed in Santa Claus. Everybody had fortune cookies and sweet rice cakes on the table.

„Take us to China!”, said Gingerbread.

In China the houses were decorated with paper ornaments, lanterns and garlands made from dry oranges and lemons. He could see how the people were sharing gifts to each others.

„To India! Taj-Mahal! New-Delhi! Mumbai!” said Gingerbread.

In India, a banana or mango tree was used as a Christmas tree. It was decorated with ornaments. Houses were decorated with a long bamboo garland made of mango leaves and bamboo lanterns.

They flew over German, Austrian, Vienna and Italian cities and saw how beautiful the churches were with their Nativity scenes.. They could hear children singing magical carols. The sound of musical notes were going up in the sky, bringing glory to the heavens.

His family customs and traditions were similar to those of Poland, Hungary, Cyprus and Greece. Children were around the Christmas tree. Family members were sitting at the table.

But then they passed over Ukraine, over Israel, over Palestine and over Gaza. Everything was destroyed. Dust, ashes, piles of cement, tears, pain, despair, children without parents, parents without children, blood, death, fear, dehumanization. Humanitarian convoys were no longer coping with so much injustice and pain.

„Gingerbread, please take us back! My eyes cannot see anymore pain! I want to heal the world!”

He woke up from his dream. He went up to his room. He took clothes, toys and shoes, packed them in some bags and ran downstairs to his mom.

„Please, mum! Could you take me to the Humanitarian Center? I have to do this for Misha and for... other boys like him!” said Andrew.

This is the story of a little boy called Andrew. This is My story.

This can be Your story.

Christmas is all about loving, caring, sharing, and thinking about the people who need your help. No matter what age you are, you can make a difference in the world!

„Winter in Wonderland stands for all the magic and love in your heart!”, wrote Andrew on Misha's Greeting Christmas Card.

„Blessed holidays, to all the world!” from Andrew, Misha and Me.





Christmas in my heart

Tuță Luiza Ștefania

clasa a VII-a, Școala Gimnazială

„Vasile Conta” Iași,

prof. coordonator Mihaela-Andreea Vintea



Hello, my dear readers! This December, I come to you with a story that warmed my heart. It is a confession belonging to one of my friends, Jack, but I am going to tell it as if it was mine:

„I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! Those words just kept repeating in my head over and over again. They were meant for my parents. I hated them. I hated them so much. All I wanted was a Christmas away. Away from our cramped-up apartment. Away from the room that I had to share with my two older siblings. Away from all of it, just away, far away. But of course, they had to deny that, they had to deny that they had any money, like they always do. Both of them always strip me of my happiness. I mean it is Christmas! Who does not want to go on vacation on Christmas? And the worst part? My siblings took their side, arguing that they weren't lying, but I knew they were. I knew they never wanted me to feel even an ounce of happiness.

That night I went to bed angry, so angry, while the rest of my family was in the kitchen, probably talking about how ungrateful I am, but I knew I wasn't. I knew that my feelings were completely valid.

The next morning, I woke up in a different room than mine, amongst maybe twenty other boys. We were all sleeping on some joint mattresses that looked like they had been around longer than my great-grandparents. We were all dressed in the same old, white clothes that were paper thin and had stains all over them. Just then I noticed another boy who seemed to be awake on the other side of the room, and decided to walk to him so I can ask him more about this strange place. As I slowly got closer to the boy, I realized how weak and small he looked. When I asked him where we were, Kevin, as I later learnt his name was, said we were currently in the Auschwitz – Birkenau concentration camp. He told me that every week a group of around 100 children were moved around from orphanage to orphanage so during the day they could work for nearby factories. Just then an old and rigid looking lady walked in and rushed us out. That day not only did I discovered that Kevin was not kidding but also how hard it was to work in a factory. After we returned, we were given few pieces of molding bread and were told to just go to sleep in order to prepare for the same ordeal tomorrow. That night, before I finally fell asleep, my whole-body aching, the only thing I could think about was how much I missed my parents and how I wanted them to take me away from this place.

When I awoke, covered in sweat from top to bottom, I was met with the seething looks of my sibling, but I couldn't care less since I was finally home. Then I remembered... my parents. I rushed out of my room and saw them packing. Before they could get even a word out, I ran to them and gave them the tightest hug ever, crying and saying "I'm sorry" over and over again. As soon as I calmed down, I said that never again in my life will I be disrespectful to them, and to



that they just smiled and took me in their arms for one of the tightest hugs ever. Later that evening, when we were decorating the Christmas tree, my mom pulled me aside and asked me what made me act like that. I just gave her a sad smile and said that I had a dream which showed me the importance of my family."

I really do hope that this story will both inspire and help you, my readers, to realize there are more important things than gifts and money, like family and the precious time you spend with them, especially at Christmas. Keep Christmas in your hearts!

See you next time,
The Whisperer

Winter Wonderland

Someșan Ilinca-Delia

clasa a V-a A, Școala Gimnazială
„Elena Cuza” Iași,
prof. coordonator Atudosiei Elena



Once upon a time, there was a village, a village with fairies in it. There was this thing about season fairies. The correspondent season fairies appear. During the season we are in, fairies come and spread happiness around the world. In this village, fairies get the sprinklers and, when it's winter, they get to take snow around the world. We do not know how this happens, because the winter fairies want to keep it a secret. The fairies are doing everything for us. The queen of the fairies always enters the throne room to see if everything is alright. Not today, because the weather was unpleasant. So the queen yelled at the soldiers and told them that the kingdom is going to become an ice cube.

Queen Marina desperately started calling everyone, every single soul around. No one answered the call, only because of the danger they were supposed to face. And yet, a fairy stepped forth. The fairy agreed to come and help the winter kingdom, but she had one condition, the reward. The queen accepted and gave the girl directions. The queen explained to the fairy what she had to do: to bring tea bags from her mother's tea box, which contained fluorescent snow powder. The fairy began her journey to the land of wonders. She made food reserves for herself, but first she had to get a plant that helped you warm up. This plant was from her homeland, so the first stop was the volcano in the sleeping forest, which was hibernating because it was Christmas and the spirit of the forest had to make trip with the other spirits to the island of winter fantasies.

The girl could finally take a moment and admire the winter flowers, which were big and blue and so beautiful. Everything was covered by the cold, white snow. She couldn't fly because her wings would have frozen immediately, so she had to walk on foot, but it wasn't so difficult. The girl reached the volcano and, to her surprise, the place was frozen, but inside of it the flower





was alive and living in its natural environment. The girl stopped and looked around for a secret entrance that would help her enter without any danger. The fairy tried to take the flower with her magical powers, but she couldn't because magic was restricted in that area. She finally managed to take the flower after some struggles, and then went on her way. Her journey proved to be a rather long one, but she managed to reach the final destination. The fairy of the wonderland asked her mother to give her two tea bags to save the kingdom of winter. The girl's mother was happy and wanted to help the poor people in the neighbouring kingdom. The girl left with the tea bags for the kingdom.

The queen had seen the girl and greeted her. The navy told the soldiers to go and put the tea bag in the snow machine, where snow is poured into the sprinklers. The winter kingdom was saved and the reward was that she would be able to stay with the queen and have Christmas dinner with her family. After she ate, the fairy watched how the winter wonderland celebrated and how people greeted its beauty and wonders, while sipping some magical tea.

The unknown path

Bîncă Andreea Amalia

clasa a V-a A, Școala Gimnazială
„Elena Cuza” Iași,
prof coordonator Atudosiei Elena



Winter settled in the most beautiful way. It was snowing heavily upon the town of Alleyra. Everything was covered in a deep layer of snow and the lights were shining brightly when the night embraced the land. Once winter would come, there would be an annual event that not many people knew about. This event would take place on the 15th of December and it'd be named the Night of death. The night of death was a path to somewhere, but no one knew where it took you. And many people that wandered on that path were never seen again and were declared as missing. Everyone thought that only if you wanted to end your life you'd go there, but a girl ... Her name was Rose and she wasn't considered normal because people said she was very quiet, but she knew everything. It was amazing.

Rose was also an orphan and no one really wanted to adopt her, so she would just look outside at the families played together. She'd also sit by the window every night, looking at the forest that hid the path. She planned to discover what was hiding deep within that forest. But until then, she'd remain silent, reading books and developing other skills. When she turned 15, her desire to uncover the path's secrets grew. So, on the 15th of December, at night, she sneaked out barefoot, in a white dress. She was very cold, but nothing could stop her.

She only had a torch, a pen and a book. As she arrived at the path, she looked up at the trees. Rose felt that something was waiting for her with warmth. She held her lamp up, so she





could see, and the path seemed endless, but the girl continued until the path ended and there wasn't any route to follow. Rose could either go back or dive even deeper into the forest. She thought about it and the dangers she could face, but she continued. As she went forward, she heard noises. She looked around her, but she couldn't see anything. Suddenly, from the corner of her eye, she could see something. It seemed like a pair of eyes watching her every move. The eyes continued following her until she stepped on a branch and what seemed to follow her disappeared into the darkness. The wind was getting rougher and it got colder. And finally the girl arrived. It seemed like she was in the middle of the forest and in front of her was a beautiful white fox that waited for her.

„You're in the right spot darling”, said the wise fox.

„I am?” Rose stuttered, looking around.

„I've been waiting for you for centuries. I always knew you'd be the perfect fit.”

„What perfect fit?”

The beautiful fox turned into a woman. She had silky blonde hair, with a blue strand. Her eyes were as blue as the ocean and she was dressed in a white dress as well. The fox came down from the stone she was sitting on and patted Rose on the head and gave her a kiss on the forehead.

„My child. Your powers were never truly given to you. You've never known what you're capable of and I'll show it to you. Give me your hands, my love.”

Rose did as the beautiful woman said, she was terrified but she knew that the woman wouldn't harm her.

„I know exactly what you're thinking, but don't be afraid to ask.”

Rose looked her in the eye and right then a magical power of ice surrounded the both of them, moving them to another dimension. The woman introduced herself as Pandora. Rose's mother was actually Pandora's sister and she had died a long time ago. Pandora showed Rose all sorts of memories from her past and explained what she had to do. Rose seemed confused as Pandora said goodbye, and right then she got up and noticed she was still in the forest. And right then, Rose was turned into a statue, not knowing that the woman was just a witch in disguise, who wanted to harm people for fun. Not every story has a happy ending...





Christmas Magic

Corduneanu Mihai-Emilian

clasa a V-a A, Școala Gimnazială
„Elena Cuza” Iași,
prof. coordonator Atudosiei Elena



The scent of cinnamon and oranges enveloped the grandmother's cramped and poor house. Although she looked the way she looked, she was taken out of a fairy tale. Grandma, with rare steps, with trembling hands, fills our table with goodies: steaming buns, just taken out of the oven, waist-high pies and swirled with walnuts. With our mouths full, we did not forget to say gratefully: „I kiss the hand for the meal”.

Satisfied, with full bellies, together with my cousins, Tudor and Luca, but also with my brother Andrei, we go out carolling. With the star on our shoulders and with red noses, we set off through the streets of the village from house to house, singing:

„The star rises above, like a great mystery,
The star shines and lights announce that today, pure, too innocent,
The Virgin Mary gives birth to Messiah.”

Joyfully, with our hands frozen on the stick holding the star and the black hat made of lambskin, we announce the birth of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. It was getting dark. The sky was shining with stars brighter than ever before and they accompanied our weary steps towards grandma's house. The snow crunched under our feet and the woollen socks, knitted with love by the grandmother, were frozen to the bone. With the woollen bag, woven into the wooden warp made by grandfather, full of goodies offered as a reward for our carol (nuts, pretzels, apples and sweets) we walk lazily, without stopping.

We glimpse in the distance, the dim light of the gas-filled lamp at the window. We shake off the snow off our boots and enter the house. The heat envelops us and great joy awaits us. In the corner of grandma's room, a Christmas tree was waiting for us to decorate it, because Santa Claus was coming this holy evening. We hang globes made of walnuts and chestnuts on the branches of the tree. The silver and golden tinsel descended from top to bottom on the branches of the fir tree, giving it a majestic air. The grandfather lifted Andrei, the youngest of us, on his shoulders and put the star on the top of the tree. Everything was uplifting. Seated around the tree we begin to carol:

„It is a poor monastery, Give it to the Lord, Lord,
And cook for sanctification, Give it to the Lord, Lord!
On the thresholds all made of marble, Give it to the Lord,
Lord, And inside full of praps, Give it to the Lord, Lord!”

We didn't let ourselves go to sleep. The magic of the Christmas holidays engulfed us completely. Grandma had prepared a warm bed for us, sitting next to the stove that was roaring from the fire started by grandfather. She also sat down next to us and began, with her sweet and warm





voice, to tell us how Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem: in the poor manger and how the ox mercifully blew warmth over him. The light of the star that announced the birth of the Saviour accompanies me in the wonderful world of dreams! In the morning, the noise made by the grandfather chopping wood to light the fire in the stove, wakes us up. Run-run, we run to the little fir tree Wow...!!! Santa Claus had left us wonderful gifts.

We hugged happily, overwhelmed by the Magic of Christmas!





A prince's quest

Cojoc Rebecca Elena

clasa a VII-a, Școala Gimnazială

„Alexandru cel Bun” Iași,

prof. coordonator Maria Mirabela Cazacu



It was the most awaited Christmas Eve. Families all around the world were getting ready to celebrate the most wonderful holiday. The story doesn't start here, I'm afraid, but in the upper skies, somewhere in the Kingdom of snow clouds.

Have you ever thought that when building a snowman, you separate families of snowflakes? What if I told you they are real? And that they have their own logical thinking?

*

The story starts in a simple cloud. The King, the Queen, princess Amelie and prince Louis of Snowdom, the Kingdom of Snowflakes, were getting ready for the greatest event of the evening: it was the little prince's first Christmas and, as the tradition went, he had to be the first snowflake to fall when the clock stroke midnight.

He couldn't deny he was scared, it was a big responsibility for him and he wanted to make his family proud. He was sitting alone in his room, too afraid to go help his parents with the decorations. He was comparing the possibilities of failing and succeeding when he heard a knock on his door.


„Can I come in?” the voice whispered. He recognized his sister, but he wasn't in the mood for guests. Louis thought for a bit, and decided to open the door and see what she had to say.

„You can come in” he said. Amelie entered the room in a beautiful, glittery light blue gown. She sat down on the bed, next to her brother.

„You know it's not the right time to annoy me.” said Louis.

„I didn't come to annoy you. I wanted to advise you for tonight. But if you don't want to...” said Amelie heading towards the door.





„Stop! Please, I need you” Louis nearly shouted. But he kept his mouth shut. He thought he must be independent and do this all by himself, without anyone by his side.

**

Louis put on his costume, a dark blue one which complimented his eyes, with little drawings of clouds on it. He was nervous but couldn't let people notice it. He went straight in The Main Room, as elegant as a prince should be, and the ceremony started.

The priest read from The Sacre Book of Snow, and everyone listened carefully. The formalities kept on for the next hour, ending with the Anthem of Snowdom.

It was time for the big moment everybody had been waiting for. His family was smiling. He went, alongside with them, in the Garden of Wonders. It was time for Louis to prove to his parents that he could be a real prince, that he was worthy. Louis took a deep breath and dived straight in the pillow of the clouds below.

He couldn't remember anything he saw when jumping. He just knew he was on something cold but soft.

„Ho ho ho, who do we have here?” a harsh voice said. Wait, was this Santa? And he was on Santa's nose?!

„Santa... ? Is this you?” Louis whispered, confused.

„Yeah, that's me, your old man. So, are you the nervous prince who is afraid of being the first to fall?”

„Yes, that's me - but how did you know it?”

„Oh, my little friend, big ol' Santa knows it all. You shouldn't be so scared. Life comes with responsibilities. But not everything is hard and not everyone judges you for one fail. Sometimes, you've just got to take a break and look around you.” the man said.

Louis looked around. That's when the real snowfall started. It looked like millions of little fairies were dancing, and glitter was falling from their wings. It was pure magic! And when he thought this couldn't get better, he noticed his family heading towards him. „I see you found my old friend”, the King said.

„Hello, Santa, how's it going?” asked Amelie. „I'm so happy we get to spend our first Christmas together with Santa!” said the Queen, excited. But Louis couldn't hear them. He was watching the snowflakes falling, mesmerized by their magic.

Santa and the Royal Family flew away, delivering gifts to children all over the world, and spending an amazing Christmas together, united as a family.





Out of the woods

Titiniuc Alexandra

clasa a VII-a, Școala Gimnazială
„Alexandru cel Bun” Iași,
prof. coordonator Maria Mirabela Cazacu



Everything stopped, people stood like statues all around me, people with swords, people with daggers and people in armor. Thawed ice in my hands. Frozen in time, stiller than the trees around us.

—
Looking at it now, it all seems so simple.

—
„Look! Dad! They're fro... dad? Dad!”
Shocked looks pierced me. The battle froze in time.
But how much of that can a child's mind comprehend?
Immediately sturdy arms grabbed me, and tall figures blurred in my vision.

—
„Do you still regret it?”
„Re... oh.” The realization made my chest pound every time.
Let me explain.

Long ago, there were 4 nations living peacefully. Fire, Wind, Earth and Snow. That was, until the fire elementals decided to start an invasion on the snow elementals.

The first few years of the war were a mess. Crimson stained the pure, untouched snow in our nation, disaster brought in by the fire elementals. Once our brothers, now our enemies. They tore us apart, they melted our lands and turned our Winter Wonderland into a nightmare.


As the emperor's daughter, and next in line to take his spot, I had snuck into battle when I was 12 and watched as I lost control of my powers and froze the enemy's troops. A miracle turned into horror as I realized that my father had also been frozen.

„Your Majesty?”

Uncle Charles' call jerked me wide awake. *„The battle must begin.”*

„Are you sure the plan will work?” I asked, a bit skeptical, fiddling a small snowflake with my fingers. A harsh breeze hit my face, coming from the woods and mountains in front of us. The army behind me stood silent, awaiting my command. *My command.*

„It shouldn't have been like this.” I sighed, watching snow fall down in clusters. A good sign, despite the battle ahead of us.



„Katniss. Stop blaming yourself for that”, he reassured me with a pat on the back. “You were young. Clueless.”

„Yes, but I’m... I’m too young. Too young to do this.”

„Kat-”

A horn blew far, far away. Smoke raised in clouds.

I gulped, seeing an army hundreds of times bigger than mine.

—

It’s been hours. Days. I’m running, running and everything is a haze. The snowfall is heavy yet the thorns are still tearing my dress, mud splashes, wind blowing in my face. Trees all around, woods stretching forever.

I trip over a rock. The snow gets in my mouth. I spit it out.

Charles. Where’s Charles? I’ve lost everything. Everything, except family.

How long has it been?

Swords and daggers clash in the background. An arrow shoots above me. I jerk awake.

„Majesty!”

I blink, frozen to the bone. Wolves howl behind me, running to get me.

That is when I see him. The fire emperor, the one that ruined us, that ruined our wonderland. A whip is in his hand, flaming and chasing after his creatures.

I avoid a sword slashing right near my ear.

I’m running, running on and on and on, hearing their hungry howls behind me and their bites dangerously close to me.

Red runs down from my knees.

I’m breathing heavily, continuing to run over rocks and trees. Vines grow from along, weeping toward me. I duck. They keep howling and I don’t know how much I can run.

My only weapon was lost who knows where, my clothes all torn except for a flimsy blue dress.

I’m cold and shaky. How long does it go on for? My limbs are numb and the harsh wind threatens to pull me down.

Where are we?

Are we out of the woods yet?

—

Blank.

I rub my eyes.

Where am I?

All I know is that it’s warm, and cozy and a very familiar image starts to appear.

„Dad!”


Our living room. It’s Christmas. But what is this memory?

„It wasn’t your fault.”

A golden, warm light blinds me, his presence otherworldly. I’m too stunned to speak.

„I’m here to set you free.” He smiled. „Another chance. For us. For our nation.”





My vision blurred. I wiped my eyes.
A step forward. Two. But when I did, I hugged him tight.

—
„Your Majesty?” he repeats.
„Yes? Oh, uhm, right. About the plan...”
The monsters turned out to be just trees.
„I won't disappoint you this time.”

Magie winter

Barac Andrei

clasa a VI-a A, Școala Gimnazială
„Ion Creangă” Iași,
prof. coordonator Postolache Petronela




I woke up in the morning and everything around my house was dressed up in white. The trees could barely hold on the fluffy snow to their branches. There was complete silence around, the snow was shining under the sunlight, making the landscape more mysterious. I was staying motionless, admiring the landscape. As I was sitting on a chair by the window, without realizing it, I started dreaming. It was as if I was in my grandparents' house, sitting with my whole family around the Christmas table. There was a great joy and a tempting smell of delicious food was spreading in the whole room. The beautiful and expensive gifts were given to me and my sister. Suddenly, it seemed to have started snowing heavily, with large flakes like stars. I ran away without thinking it was a cold winter day and near a tree I saw a boy shivering from the cold.

It was Charles, the boy abandoned by his parents and who lived with his aunt and other ten brothers, on the outskirts of the village. My thoughts turned into gratitude that I had everything I wanted.

Then, something in my dream became like magic. An elf with a big nose and a big red hat arrived in front of me. He gently took my hand and it was as if we were flying over the village together. I entered in every house and he showed me people who were suffering, who only had some cheese and bread at the Christmas table, children who had nothing new to wear, but seemed happy and hopeful that one day their misery will end. Everything seemed to last forever, but it proved that only ten minutes had passed.

The elf brought me back to my family. Without giving a second thought, I took all the gifts and I gave them to Charles, who was very grateful, hasting to his aunt's house to share them with his siblings. The happy tears were trickling down





his face directly into the shining snow. Suddenly, I woke up from my dream, realising that winter actually created that land of goodness. My soul opened up under the warm light of this beautiful season and the magic began to work its power. I decided that for the holidays I would be better, more generous and from my little I had to give to others, too. Like Charles, there are many children who need help.

Wasn't that elf, Santa Claus himself?

The beautiful mysteries of winter

Manole Alexandru-Florin

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Winter was already taking over the Earth and laid her fluffy dress over it. The other three seasons fell into a deep sleep, for their time had already passed, and now winter was queen. She cast innumerable spells to make snow fall from the clear, cloudless sky, but from which it seemed that the clouds were actually breaking up, and the snow was just cloud dust.

One day, the Ice Queen, who was another character of the winter season, arrived in the Land of the Winter Queen. She asked:

'What are you doing here, Ice Queen? I thought you wouldn't come here again,' said winter in a somewhat disinterested tone.

'Well, I came out of curiosity. I knew you had started your Christmas spell series, so I came to give you a helping hand.' replied the Ice Queen, calm and patient.

They were both walking in a straight line on the Land occupied by the snow that Winter had carefully placed on the green ground in the forest. The Ice Queen was a special person, funny and who knew how to speak calmly with the people around her, but the Winter Queen did not have this gift given by the God of the Seasons. From the beginning, winter was not endowed with such qualities, and summer, spring and autumn were given the best: fruits, flowers, smiles, memories and many other qualities that Winter did not possess.

The god of the seasons, a corpulent and tall man, with a cape of many mixed colors and long hair, with blue eyes and green clothes was a god who, millions of years ago, gave the seasons life, qualities and flew. These, the fairies of our world, later decided how to share their god-given properties. One chose her generosity, another her smiles, one her amusement, another her industriousness, and the winters left her with only flaws and only one quality: kindness. In all her





essence, winter always gave proof of goodness, because she advised Santa Claus to bring gifts to the children, she created the fir trees and initially decorated them with silver and ice ornaments and she also brought the joy of the children, the snow.

However, we all did not know when and for what reason she became so indifferent and sad. The truth was that the Winter Queen offered everything she could to the world, but the world and her sisters, the other three queens did not offer her attention and trust. Whenever an idea came to her, the seasons were busy planning the growth of trees, flowers, or planning when to move around the world. They didn't have time to argue with winter, considering that all three had many things in common, such as heat, sun, and water (be it in the form of warm rain or a sea or an ocean).

One day, winter left. No one has ever found her and no one has been able to find out anything about her disappearance. Once she left, everything around melted away. The sky brightened, and the sun burned with a great heat that evoked it on the world.

After her departure, winter never came to Earth again, and no one could even find out in which direction it went, or when, or how it went. Even now, children are waiting for her, but she doesn't even come with her and Christmas is gone. The fir trees withered, and the silver ornaments melted in the warm beating of the immense sun disk.

Winter Wonderland

Andrei Miruna

clasa a V-a, Școala Gimnazială
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It was the end of the rainy autumn and the frosty queen of the freezing weather and snow arrived.

All the windows were closed and people wore their thick and warm clothes. The bone-chilling snow and chilly wind was the main sign that Christmas was coming! The people's cars were like frosted cakes covered up in white snowflakes.

At school, a Christmas tree would be decorated and put up in the entrance hallway or the head master's office. Taking pictures with your class, sometimes the whole school depends. Don't forget about the special school meals specifically for Christmas! It was always a slice of turkey with gravy, cheese and crackers,





French fries, and a chocolate bar. It tasted awesome! Sometimes, they would give vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry ice cream. I had at my school a playground; my school used to call it „Jungle Gym”. Going out there with my friends was the BEST! It was so fun playing around there, swinging on the swings, and climbing around like little monkeys.

It was nice to go with your friends with your sleigh and slide down a tall hill. It was crazy when you went fast. It felt like you were on a roller coaster! Sometimes you would fall with your face in the fluffy snow but the adrenaline made you feel no pain whatsoever! Especially when making round, white snowmen! Giving them a pretty smile or a hilarious face with stones. Their arms would always be either with wet sticks. The nose was with an orange carrot.

Everyone would go after sparkly, shiny colorful baubles, tall vivid evergreen trees, and all types of eye-catching multicolor decorations to put up well... everywhere! In and on the house, on the trees outside, sometimes even on the roof of the house if possible! Don't forget the big turkey for the Christmas feast! Also, ingredients for cookies and milk for the well-known Santa of course! It was always so fun making cookies, knowing Santa would give you a present in return.

Every child has been waiting for this moment, mostly for the presents they were wishing for, but also for the snow! Making the “Christmas list” was one of the best parts, writing down the things you want, hoping you get them. Sometimes you would write it on lined, colored paper. Then you would give it to your parents. They would say that they would send it to Santa and specify to him that you were a very good kid.

And low and behold, Christmas Eve!! The night before it felt like life wasn't even real! It was so unbelievable when you sat at the table to eat, somehow the food was always good. Also, when it was time to put out the milk and scrumptious cookies for Santa to eat. I used to put out a carrot for his reindeer too. I remember reading Rudolf's story. I liked him so much that I got a pair of plush antlers and a red nose just to look like him! I even got a Santa plushie that had a long titanium white beard and a big pointy hat. It looked ridiculous but I liked it.

When it was time to go to bed, sleeping wasn't possible at all because of the excitement you had. In the morning, running to see the presents under the beautiful, decorated Tree was the number one priority! Then opening them was the second. Seeing the eaten cookies and milk was nice, but having your presents in your hands was a feeling no words could explain. It's like a satisfaction, having the thing you've wanted for a long time in your hands.

Winter is a harshly cold season but with warm and glorious memories.







Cuprins

<i>Memories</i>	7
Grădinaru Ștefana	
<i>„The Special Elf Team”</i>	8
David Alexandru Rădeanu	
<i>Winter Wonderland</i>	9
Nechifor Daria Ioana	
<i>The fungus</i>	12
Tudor Mihai	
<i>The Farmer’s Strange Disappearance</i>	13
Ștefan Vlăduț-Andrei	
<i>Do Wizards Get Presents Too?</i>	15
Ciomaga Andrei	
<i>The psychological effect winter has on us</i>	16
Besmečiuș Antonia	
<i>A Christmas family reunion</i>	17
Ilinca Andreea Zamfir	
<i>Winter Wonderland</i>	19
Hurdugan Alin Ștefan	
<i>Christmas deja vu</i>	20
Ifrim Vlad	
<i>Misha’s Winter Holiday</i>	22
Simionescu Raisa	



<i>Christmas in my heart</i>	24
Tuță Luiza Ștefania	
<i>Winter Wonderland</i>	25
Someșan Ilinca-Delia	
<i>The unknown path</i>	26
Bîncă Andreea Amalia	
<i>Christmas Magic</i>	28
Corduneanu Mihai-Emilian	
<i>A prince's quest</i>	30
Cojoc Rebecca Elena	
<i>Out of the woods</i>	32
Titiniuc Alexandra	
<i>Magic winter</i>	34
Barac Andrei	
<i>The beautiful mysteries of winter</i>	35
Manole Alexandru-Florin	
<i>Winter Wonderland</i>	36
Andrei Miruna	

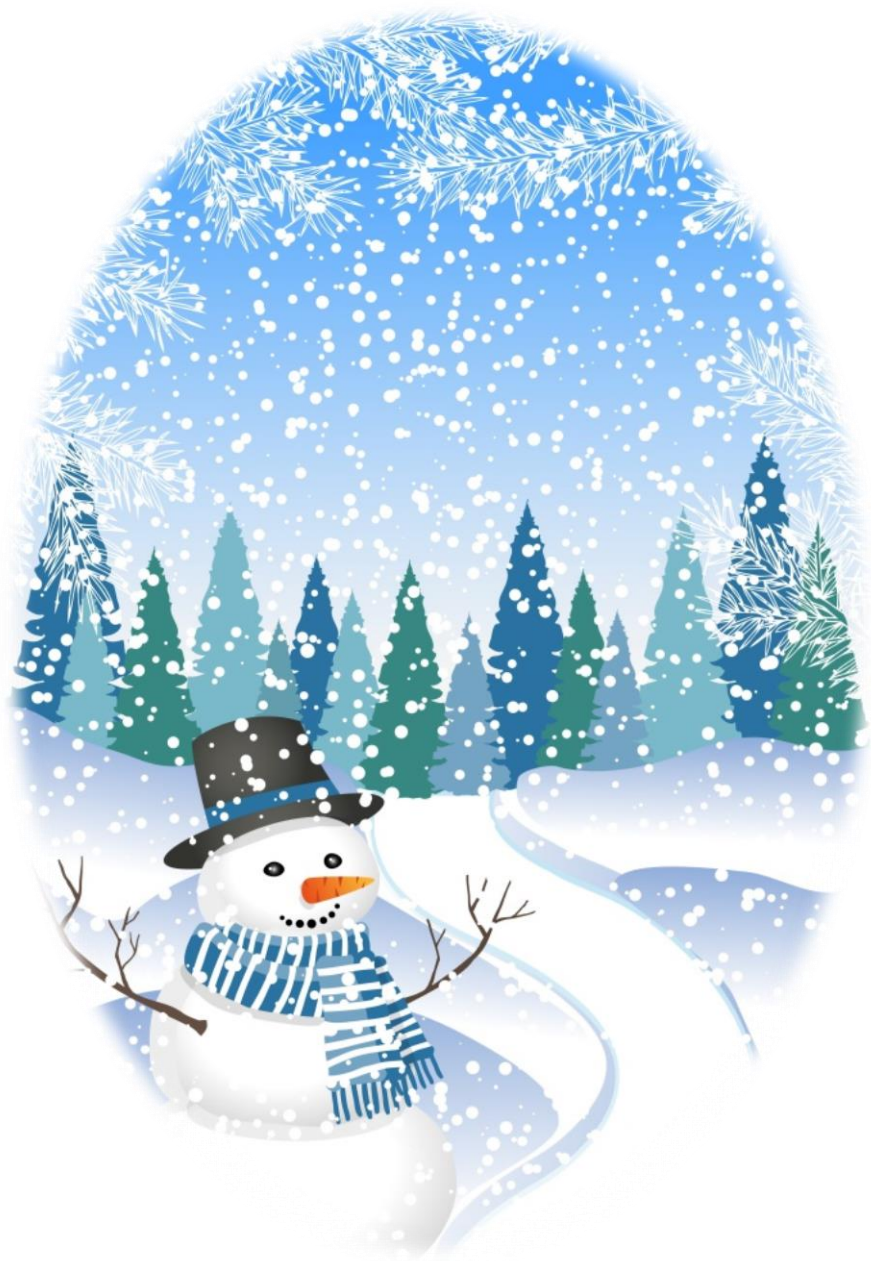


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