



# The Dual Diploma Times

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# Twelfth Edition

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“Lost” by Irene Aldabaldetrecu

*It was when I first held you in my arms that I knew we were one and the same. Never had I seen someone look at me with such frightened, innocent eyes, except for when I had to face my own self in the mirror. Never had I grown to care so much for a person, even if the reason behind this was mere pity. Never had I loathed someone yet loved them at the same time. Hated them, hated her, hated you, for what the world had done to you that had already done to me. And that is how I knew you were going to end up here with me.*

November 13, 1973. Jamie had spent the entirety of the trip looking at her reflection in the window. From her hoop earrings to the tiny black heart tattooed just above her collarbone, both of which had inspired numerous letters of complaint from her peers’ parents, she realized how much her appearance echoed the life she was about to leave behind. A dreadful feeling of nostalgia sunk in as she reminisced about what seemed like an entire lifetime. However, she knew better than to lament herself. She would not give her parents, whose quiet presence made the atmosphere even tenser, the pleasure of seeing her cry. She didn’t shed a tear when she was permanently expelled from school, nor when her parents announced her that she would no longer live with them in the city—and she was not about to do so then. Immersed in her own thoughts, she turned towards the driver’s seat when the car suddenly stopped.

“We are here.”

She clenched her teeth as her mother left the door at her side open, for what she knew what was about to come. With a resigned sigh, she finally stepped out of the vehicle, only to be taken aback by the verdant hills that unfolded before her. “Where are we?” she asked. “The countryside”—her father took a deep breath—“at grandma’s.”

At grandma’s. Jamie stumbled to her feet as the realization of her parent’s true intentions dawned on her face. “No. It can’t be. Grandma’s dead,” she said, her words hitting her mother like a ton of bricks. Tears welled up in her ocean-blue eyes as she desperately tried to wipe them. “Your grandmother is all fine and well, honey. She will take good care of you,” her father said, his tone turning dry despite the attempted sweetness in his remark. It wasn’t until their brief conversation—if it could even be considered one—came to an end that they realized a fourth shadow had emerged from out of nowhere.

“I see none of you has changed at all.”

*Blood oozed slowly from your knees, your face covered in bruises and mud. Even so, you strode towards me so confidently, so much so I couldn’t help but laugh. It didn’t matter if the others had turned against you: your pride, or what little was left of it, came first. I never knew whether this was a sign of our helpless innocence or just plain stubbornness—either way, we would always face the same outcome. “The boys hit me. Said I should go away,” you told me. They were right, my dear.*

Jamie saw the car depart from where it had been parked mere seconds ago. She watched it leave until it was nothing more than a minuscule dot, a queer speck in an otherwise impeccably blue sky. She turned around, the sight of a cavernous hall welcoming her to what was supposed to be her new home—a home she had never asked for in the first place. Her grandmother sat in a maroon armchair, her gaze wandering across the room. Jamie shifted uncomfortably, not knowing what to do.

The elderly woman’s voice startled the young girl, who had almost forgot about her presence. “Do you think me a fool, girl? Do you think I have not been through all that you have been through? I have seen and done things you wouldn’t even consider possible, and yet you think yourself a rebel? I know your mother has pampered you all these years, but in my house, you’ll obey my rules. Understood?”

Fixing her defiant glare on her grandmother for a moment, Jamie dropped her shoulders and then hurried upstairs. “Your bedroom’s on the right!” her grandmother shouted. The sound of a slamming door was the only answer she got.

That night, Jamie could not keep her eyes shut long enough to fall asleep. She shivered under the covers, the cool breeze of the countryside sweeping through the open window. It took a couple of minutes before she finally got up and closed it. In doing so, she found herself gazing into the wilderness: a thick forest stretched far enough for her not to see it coming to an end, the dark shades of the faraway trees creating an eerie atmosphere that sent a chill down her spine. The world outside was nothing like what she was used to back in the city: it was cold and dim, a beautiful, pristine land shrouded in gloom.

At no time had she ever felt such sheer hatred before, even in spite of the breathtaking scenery. It flared up inside her, it consumed her every thought. She felt a sudden urge to leave the window open and scream until her lungs gave out. But then, out of the blue, something caught her eye.

A human-like silhouette arose amidst the darkness as it trudged through a murky path. It vanished into thin air almost as soon as it had emerged, and was nowhere to be found from there on out. Jamie stood dumbfounded, staring in disbelief at the spot in which she had seen the figure. “Am I going insane?” she thought, throwing herself onto the bed. But sleep would not make her forget what she had just witnessed.

That night, she dreamed of ghosts and lonely meadows.

The early morning light crept into Jamie’s room, blinding her as she awoke. The chirp of birds accompanied her slow descent down the stairs as her eyes adjusted to the sunlight shining in through the windows. Her grandmother greeted her from the same maroon armchair she was sitting in the previous day. “I hope you had a good night sleep,” she said, her face as impassive as always. “Yeah, sure,” Jamie answered, refusing to make eye contact. To the girl’s surprise, the woman cracked a faint grin. “You wouldn’t think I asked you that for the sake of it, would you?”—she got up and grabbed a paintbrush that was lying on the kitchen table—“You probably noticed that the porch needs a little redo. Here you are,” she said, handing over the brush. “It’s time to get some work done.”

A bucket of red paint stood at her side, its pungent smell a constant reminder of the arduous task ahead of her. Even so, Jamie’s eyes were glued to the wooden surface, not so much a blank canvas as a mistake waiting to be fixed. Summoning what little willpower she had, she dipped the brush into the bucket and began spreading the paint as fast as she could. “What are you doing?” she heard her grandmother groan. “Can’t you even trace a straight line?”

And yet, her pleas were plain noise to her granddaughter’s ears. All of a sudden, Jamie was not standing on the porch anymore. She was back in sixth grade, listening to her art teacher explain that day’s assignment.

“So, today I want to spice things up a little.”

The students’ eyes lit up as soon as they heard her talk. She had an innate gift no other teacher had been able to emulate at the time. Every word she spoke hooked you in immediately; it was as if she had cast a spell on you, a spell no child could break.

“I want you to break loose. To let it all out. I know there’s something inside of you all, something that keeps nagging you nonstop, and yet you are not quite sure what it is. Today, I want you to find what that something means to you.”

Jamie didn’t know what that something meant to her. But she did feel that rage building up inside her, waiting to erupt. No sooner did she get hold of a brush than she let her hand wander freely, an array of careless strokes tinting the white canvas in front of her. She had never felt so proud before.

“How did I do, miss?”

It was the first time she had found the courage to speak aloud in class. Her classmates, of course, took note of this. Curiosity got the best of them as they gathered to see what she had done.

Initially, she heard nothing more than a little snort that soon faded into the background. However, it wasn't long until the whole room burst into laughter. Jamie felt the heat rising up her cheeks, her eyes roaming aimlessly in search of her teacher. There she was, standing right behind her. Until she turned around and left. Not one word escaped her mouth.

*You were never meant to get along with the other kids. The girls would run away, the boys would make fun of you. And yet you tried. You tried oh so hard. Maybe that is what doomed you after all.*

The following days were as eventful as one might expect. Although reluctant at first, Jamie gradually got used to the day-to-day chores. Whether she was told to do the laundry or mop the floor, she learned to approach these tasks with poise and patience. As a result, her initial clumsiness dwindled with the passage of time, giving way to diligence.

Her relationship with her grandmother became less a camaraderie than a means to end. So long as Jamie did as asked, she would leave her to her own devices. Her grandmother was a lone wolf, one that thrived in solitude. Peace and quiet became the norm. Maybe it had always been.

The months flew by so quickly she soon lost track of time. When the sun set, she would lie in bed by herself, wondering about the people she had left behind. A sharp pang of guilt shot through her when she realized she didn't miss them. She should have. She knew anyone else would have. But she didn't, and it couldn't be helped. Jamie felt an aching void inside her—a void she thought she had filled up.

As the days went by, she began to seek solace in the somber, wintry nights. Slowly, her initial disdain withered away. The gentle breeze comforted her, bringing her closer to the nature outside. For a brief minute, it felt like the forest was at hand's reach: it called for her, like a dark spirit luring its victim. But when she opened her eyes, that feeling was all gone. She proceeded to close them, this time, in the hopes that she would fall asleep, wishing that it would make time go by faster so that she could relive it all over again.

One of those days, however, sleep felt like a fruitless effort. She walked endlessly across the room, thinking it would tire her. She dug her head under the pillow, hoping that could somehow help. But nothing seemed to work.

At last, an idea popped into her head. Jamie was aware of the consequences, as it wasn't something she hadn't considered before. She knew what could happen if she got caught. “I shouldn't,” she thought.

The door creaked open, her bare feet leading her towards the stairs.

The front door was closed, as usual. But, having stayed there for over two months, Jamie knew her grandmother didn't care enough to shut the windows. Climbing on a nearby table, she was able to fling the window open. In doing so, her right foot stepped on a book that had been hidden in the dark. Barely managing to keep her balance, Jamie grabbed the item and took a closer look at it. The book was left flipped open, the page she had accidentally crumpled glinting in the moonlight as she held it.

It was no ordinary script, however: the text was entirely handwritten. Intrigued by the cursive handwriting that unfurled before her, she read the first line.

*At some point, you started to change your ways, it began.*

It was at that moment when Jamie realized she was holding a diary.

*People would just assume you were coming to terms with being a teenager. A child being thrown into the adult world, just like that. Many of your peers had gone through that—watching them grow was like reading the same story over and over again, each told through different characters. But I knew there was something hiding beneath your cool exterior. Your inner demons, no one else had. Except me.*

Her face turned pale. Could it be what she thought it was?

*In my eyes, you were still the same fearful little girl. I guess you decided you didn't want to be seen as such anymore.*

The sound of rustling leaves drew her attention away from the book. There was someone outside.

A silhouette. The same one she saw that first night. This time, however, their proximity let Jamie discern its face amidst the darkness.

“Grandma?”

Without a second thought, she dropped the diary and jumped out of the window. The landing was rather abrupt, the coarse grass cutting into the flesh at her knees. “Nevermind the wounds,” thought Jamie as she rushed through the field, desperate to follow a shadow that seemed to have faded away. “I am going insane after all,” she mumbled. But her feet did not slow down.

In a matter of seconds, the mighty forest trees she had spent countless nights observing trapped the young girl.

Jamie rooted around in the greenery, hoping to find the way back. Yet the farther she walked, the more desperate she became. Her pace quickened, her breath came in short gasps. Anxiety clouded her mind.

“Where am I?”

The world became a never-ending maze, a blur of dark shades and glints of light. It spun around in a dizzying speed, and it couldn't be stopped.

Just like that day.

*Suddenly, you wore confidence like a coat. Suddenly, your voice spoke loud enough for it to be heard. Suddenly, you didn't want to be my little girl. Did you realize then how many times I had seen you cry?*

An eleven-year-old girl sitting on the damp grass. Her face was covered in mud; her shirt, a torn piece of cloth, hung loosely on her shoulders. A single tear rolled down her cheek as she hugged her knees. The oaks that watched over her grew tall while she shrank, growing smaller as the minutes ticked by.

The wind whispered in her ear, carrying the laughter of children.

*One day, it hit me. I realized you had not changed at all. Because, deep down, you were still trying to find your way. Because, deep down, you were still lost.*

Jamie did not know how long she had been lying there. Her whole body had gone numb. It wasn't trembling anymore. She muttered a little cry for help, well aware that it was of no use. Except it may have been.

A pair of yellow eyes gleamed at her from the bushes. She stared back at them in silence as they approached her, becoming bigger and bigger the closer they got. Two pointed, upright triangles came into view, followed by a long bushy tail. Jamie felt the humid touch of an animal's snout on her skin, its quick breath a gentle breeze that caressed her weakening body. As her vision cleared, she made out the slender figure of a fiery red fox.

It all happened too fast for her to recall. The small creature helped the girl get back up, giving her the strength her wobbly legs lacked. And then, it started to walk. No sounds were made. No word came out of the young girl's mouth. The fox moved forward, its pace slow but steady. Not once did it look back at her. Yet somehow, a voice within her told her to follow the animal. So she did.

At some point, the trees that surrounded them faded away. Her grandmother's house sprung before Jamie's eyes, as if it had been waiting for her to come back. As if it had been looking after her all along.

Jamie opened the front door. She turned around, hoping to see the fox beside her. But it wasn't. The animal had disappeared, just like the shadows that clouded the forest.

*I have also been lost. I wonder if I still am, after all these years.*

August 13, 1974. Jamie's grandmother passed away a day before her parents were supposed to pick her up. The news came as a surprise to everyone, as she had never suffered from any illness nor was she too elderly. "That's just how life is. Nothing can be taken for granted," she would have said. Rumour has it she was sitting on her maroon armchair when her eyes closed down, never to be opened again.

Jamie walked out of the house for the last time. Her parents were considering putting it up for auction, although the idea of someone being willing to live in such a desolate area seemed rather unlikely. She took one last look at the inside. She didn't know whether she had truly grown to love the place. It had definitely been a life-changing experience for her; that anger no longer burned up inside her. Then again, it had brought her more questions than answers.

Who was she? Who did she want to be? How did she want to live?

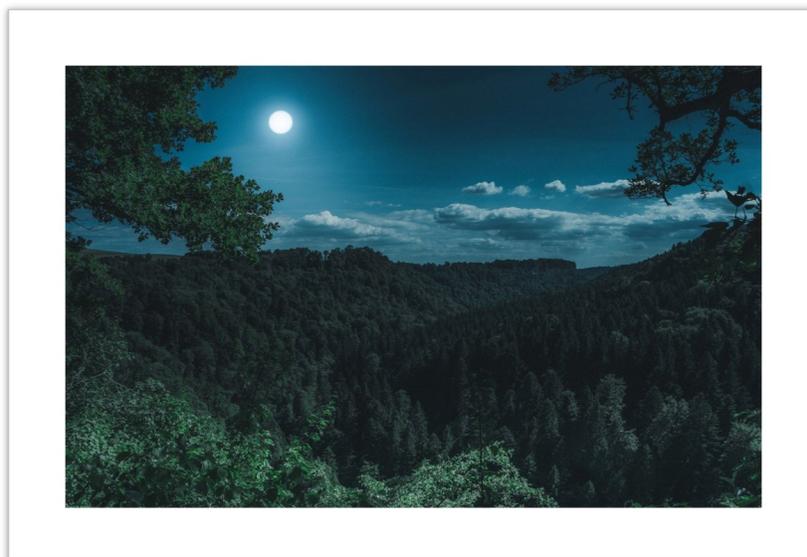
The three of them stepped into the car, ready to brave another tiring journey. But she had something else to look at this time.

Jamie opened the diary. She had one page left to finish reading it.

*It took your parents sixteen years to realize there was something wrong with you. Of course, they didn't know what it was. They didn't know what made you act the way you did. So, just like so many others had done before, they left you. At last, you came to me. But by then, I was a mere stranger to you.*

The text ended with a blot of ink. Jamie flipped the book over and opened it on the very first page.

*January 10, 1913*



**“Bernardo de Gálvez: not the hero we deserved, but the hero we needed”** by Luis León

What do Spain, Florida and George Washington have all in common? They owe it all to one bullheaded Spaniard: Bernardo de Gálvez. Got your attention? Great! But allow me to elaborate:



Bernardo Vicente Apolinar de Gálvez y Madrid was born in Ma-charaviaya, a small town a few kilometers off where I live in the year 1746 of our Lord. He was born the first son of Matías de Gálvez y Gallardo. Little Bernardo was off to a great start, but the best was yet to come. His deeds would eclipse that of his father, who was appointed the Viceroy of New Spain, the most powerful position in the world at the time. But who was this guy? Am I supposed to believe this man was a total game changer of some sort? Well, yes. He was. But we will get to that in a minute.

Bernardo has always known since he was a little boy what he wanted to do with his life. It isn't like there was much of a choice back then. Even if you were born into a noble lineage, the way up was the way of arms. So as soon as he was of age, Bernardo enrolled in the army and quickly joined the fray: the Seven Years War was taking place, and Spain was nowhere near winning it. The war didn't go well for my countrymen, and we inevitably lost it.

After the war ended, Bernardo kept going where they told him to, like a good soldier: first to the New World to fight the Apache tribesmen who wreaked havoc on the colonists... back to Spain to be on guard duty... to Africa in the failed invasion of Algiers organized by Alejandro O' Reilly... All while acquiring experience and rising above the rank and file to become lieutenant-colonel by 1776. Precisely this year, a golden opportunity was being presented to Spain: they'd heard some colonists over at the New World were rebelling against their most hated rival, the perfidious Albion, England herself. The backhand blow would soon come, and the stage was set.

You see, even before the American peoples famously declared their independence in 1776, Bernardo was already helping the rebels by shipping them indispensable equipment such as muskets, gunpowder, food and blankets. The diplomatic retaliation of Britain did little to stop Bernardo's actions, who still kept supplying the rebels.

On June 21st 1779, Spain officially declared a state of war against Great Britain, and mobilized against their fellow colonial colossus, encouraged by their recent loss in the Seven Years War. Gálvez was commissioned to operate from the South of the Thirteen Colonies, where Spain had a great hold of said land, and even greater ambitions for it. The main objectives were drawn up since before the war had started: they would quickly seize Mobile, Panzacola (former name for Pensacola) and the coast of the Bahama canal in Florida. These were all fortified positions, but the English had not stationed an important amount of soldiers there, so acting quickly was of paramount importance. But first he had to deal with the British supply lines in order to help the American revolutionaries, who were struggling to keep up with the British push. To this end, he pushed into the Mississippi river and captured Panmure fort in an heroic victory that completely disrupted British supply lines. In my opinion, this was a huge contribution to the war effort, since the British could no longer rely on abundant supplies to march against the American militias.

With the supply trains secured, he now turned to what was most important: if he managed to capture Mobile and Panzacola, he would deal a massive blow to the British and dominate the south. However, Bernardo couldn't manage to get the support of the governor of La Habana,



who controlled all the maritime affairs in the New World and was the station where most reinforcements waited to reach the front lines. Without his support, Bernardo couldn't get anywhere, so he spent day after day thinking about how to outwit him and get what he so desperately wanted. Finally, at long last, he came up with an idea: he would request troops to garrison the Louisiana area, by spreading the rumor that the British planned an attack to recover their lost possessions. When he finally received those troops, he instead marched against Mobile and Panzacola, conquering them with ease. In recognition for his contribution to the war, Bernardo was awarded the title of Conde de Gálvez (Count of Gálvez) and was named lieutenant general, becoming the youngest official to ever bear this status.

Overall, one could say Spain played a pivotal role in the War of Independence, and that it was Bernardo who embodied this contribution. It was he who blockaded the ports of New Orleans to prevent the enemy from obtaining new supplies. It was he who facilitated the transportation of all sorts of equipment to support the rebels, and it was he who, in person, negotiated with American representatives of the likes of Thomas Jefferson to find mutual grounds in which to stand together, or fall together.

But his heroic deeds stop here, for despite his importance in the world scene, he is barely known in Spain and in the United States, having served both countries by giving them his all. However, those who remember him as the man he was have done the impossible to spread the message: statues have been built of him in Pensacola and Washington D.C, an association was created in 2008 in Macharaviaya to preserve the historical legacy of this extraordinary person, and most importantly, he was awarded Honorary U.S. Citizenship posthumously by President Barack Obama in 2014 so that others may know that the Independence War was not won only by Lafayette and Washington. So every time someone brings up American Independence, be sure to thank good ol' Bernardo.

## “Is there a perfect society?” by Sofia Calvino

In this article, I am going to explain the most common political and economic systems that have existed through history, and try to find out if there is a one that is more superior or fair than the others.

First of all, most developed countries have established democracies. The word ‘democracy’ comes from ancient Greek, and literally means ‘the people’s government’. According to the Oxford Dictionary, democracy is ‘a system of government by the whole population, usually through elected representatives’. Briefly, in a democratic system, a country’s inhabitants are in charge of voting in order to elect a president and the government, who make decisions about public money and laws, among other issues. England’s Bill of Rights could be considered the precursor of democracy. At the time, Europeans were living under the power of the king, who controlled everything. Since then, most countries have become democratic nations, especially in Europe and the Americas.

Democracy gives the government the power to interfere in the economy. In fact, most countries tend to have an economic system in which capitalism (a system in which the production and distribution of goods depend on private capital and in which the main goal is profit making) gives people the right to invest and to develop themselves economically, but the state redistributes wealth through taxes, in order to minimize the economic differences. This provides a benefit for the countries, because everyone can access public education and/or public healthcare. When this happens, all the inhabitants have the right to live properly.

On the other hand, there are still some countries that live under a dictatorial regime. A dictatorship is ‘a state ruled by a dictator, who has unrestricted authority’. This system of government was more prevalent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, than it is today. Dictatorships led to World War II, and may be divided in two groups, according to their proposals.

On one side, there are fascist dictatorships. Fascism is a way of government in which the dictator



usually supports extreme right-wing, and spreads nationalist theories which lead to racism. Fascist leaders usually want to go back to when their countries were great empires. For example, Benito Mussolini (Italy) wanted to expand Italy’s frontiers in order to recreate the Roman Empire. Moreover, the most well-known fascist dictator is, with no doubt, Adolf Hitler (Germany). The German leader killed nearly 17 million people, mostly Jews and Gypsies.

On the contrary, the most sanguinary dictatorships have been communist ones. Communism is an economic theory in which

the state owns every property and each person works and is paid according to her/his needs and abilities. This theory was developed by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Fred Engels (1820-1895), after having seen how capitalism was forcing workers to live under inhumane conditions. The most powerful communist dictatorships in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were the Soviet Union and China. The USSR’s leader, Stalin, assassinated 23 million people, and Mao Zedong (China) did assassinate 80 million people. Nowadays, China is still living under a dictatorship, but its economic system is no longer communist.

Another political theory is anarchism. It hasn't been put into practice, but has influenced revolutions and was developed by some important Russian leaders, such as Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Knopotkin. Anarchism is 'the doctrine that every government should be abolished'. This system promotes self-sufficiency, and its economic point of view is anti-capitalist and anti-private property. However, its critics hold that this system has no practical application, because abrogating all kinds of government creates a kind of dictatorship by default. While, anarchism has not had widespread support, there are small regions that live under anarchist regimes, which are found within a state, and therefore, cannot be fully considered anarchy.

Finally, the last form of government is the one known as theocracy (from Greek, 'religion government'), in which the political leader is also the religious leader. Theocracies have been popular all along history. For example, Egyptian pharaohs were considered sons of the gods, and Henry VIII established a theocracy when he split up with the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, in the 21st century there are only seven theocracies, namely, the Catholic Vatican City, and the Muslim nations of Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Iran, Mauritania and Afghanistan.



However, this kind of government is limits human rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

In conclusion, there have been plenty of governments through history that have caused death, institutionalised discrimination or limited freedom of thought. In my opinion, the best way to avoid these is through democracy, which has the highest potential for promoting equality, ensuring safety and providing healthcare for it's citizens who can vote for their leaders and express their opinions freely.

## “The origins of the opera” by Helena Durbán

Who could have imagined, 400 years ago that an afternoon coffee with musicians, poets, actors and painters would end up giving birth to one of the most famous genres of art: Opera. In Florence, a group of artists trying to innovate, decided to mix melody with lyrics, dancing with the songs, a story to tell, costumes and drawings to create an atmosphere. It is said that the first artist to ever compose an opera was Jacopo Peri, who composed *Dafne* in 1597. *Since then, millions of operas have been composed and have travelled through the world, showing one of the most virtuous shows in the history of art.*



From that moment on, opera started spreading out, first in Italy, until it arrived in Spain, France, England, and soon, spread through Europe. With time, the genre spread to the whole world. From the beginning, operas were divided in two: *Opera seria* and *Opera Buffa*. *Opera seria* was thought as an entertainment for the kings, queens and nobles. Just the opposite to *Opera buffa* which was more silly, and thought to make the public laugh. This type of opera was represented in public theaters, and anyone could attend a representation. One of the major composers of opera is Amadeus Mozart, even though his career as a musician was full of controversy.



Mozart was born on Salsburg the 27th of January, 1756. From his early youth he showed that he was a prodigy of music. He worked for the Salzburg aristocracy but was fired and moved to Vienna. In this city he gained fame, especially for representing topics that were not allowed in Austria. He wanted to show that opera was more than just music. However, he also reckoned that it had to entertain audiences. For these reasons, he tried to introduce love and jokes into his operas. Most of them were not represented by the aristocracy because they were considered inappropriate. Nevertheless, Mozart continued composing. It got to a moment when he

was poor and had to pay lots of debts. His students, who wanted to learn how to play the piano, started looking for other teachers, as Mozart was moody and very difficult to deal with. In 1791, knowing he was very sick and going to die, he composed one of his best pieces of music, The Requiem. Nowadays they still play it in many concerts and funerals.

Mozart wrote about 22 operas that continue to be represented nowadays, in the most famous theaters of the world. Many people still enjoy his art. It seems that opera does not normally attract young people. However, I can assure you that it is a genre worth appreciating for its quality and perfection as an art.

**“Guides”** by Lara Veramendi

***“Sometimes we don’t just have to be alone, sometimes we just have to find that right place for us, near the people we love and who love us.”***



**Lara Veramendi Marban.**

As some of you might know in 1907, Robert Baden-Powell created something extraordinary. He created the worldwide-known scout movement. However, that was not the only movement he created. Next to his sister, Agnes in 1909, they created the girl guide movement which would change the lives of millions of young girls at the time, and everybody in future generations. This movement has made people grow, has educated people around the world in values, games, and faith. Why not give it a try?

Unique, Friendship, Cool. Those are some of the words that people use to describe guides, the girl guide movement, which has been changing the world. However, are those people true? I can tell you from my experience that they are. Having prejudices is common...so let's erase them with some more accurate information. I have the words of **Ruben Carrasco**, a new 15-year-old boy who came to my group this year:

***“I liked that it is something else in my life.”***

Many people have tried guides the first time and didn't like it. In my case I was forced by my parents to go. Besides me, many people have referred to this group of people as freaks or alternatives. We might be different, but that is okay. We wear our kerchief, hats and t-shirts with pride. If you are thinking that there is a lot of merch included here, you are correct. Are you judging a book by it's cover? If you get to know us I can tell you that you aren't going to want to leave.

What do we do exactly? The prejudice says that we go to the mountain and camp, learn how to survive, ect. That is true, but only the tip of the iceberg. We play games, plan trips, do projects, service, volunteer, recycle, provide social inclusion to people with incapacities, educate in values... We are far from boring. But apart from all of those activities, we grow as people to become the best version of ourselves. If you believe in the words of Mohandas Gandhi to a child in one of his speeches: "You have to be the change you want to see in the world." this is the right place for you.

Now that you are a little bit convinced and informed, at least I hope so, are you afraid of starting something new? Have you thought about doing something like this but don't find the encouragement? Well, many people, as I said before, have found those difficulties. It is easy to let fear in. Nevertheless, is it worth the risk? Some fears can confuse us in many different ways. Some of them can be: "Are they going to accept me? Would I fit in? Is going to be the solution to that problem that is always rounding us and seems to never go away? I can't promise you that all those fears are going to disappear, not being accepted is a real fear in every moment in our lives. We have to learn how to deal with it, in different ways, and guides provide you all those ways. I can prove it myself, I had no friends, no chance of finding them anywhere close till I got there. Now I have a group of friends that are never going to leave me and are always going to accept me. They changed my life. If someone wanted to join us...

***“Well, I would tell him to prove it that he loses nothing and has a lot to gain. It is a form of education that is being lost and it is always good to surround yourself with valuable people like the ones in guides.”***

**Miguel Caballero 18-year-old near to-be monitor.**

This might change your life? Yes, this is going to change your life. There is no doubt that you are going to change if you join this movement. You might leave an extrovert, knowledgeable, happy, higher, older... Because when you grow, your friends and partners grow with you. This means,

that you won't just encounter one adventure, you will experience millions. Guides can help you in many different ways.

***"My way of being has changed, I was timid and now I feel more open. I have learned that there are people who are worthwhile and have valued everything around me."***

***Nuria Gil Coronado. Pioneers Coordinator. 16-year-old.***

Otherwise, we have another and very important fear, time and studies. Lives are far from easy. On the one hand, we don't have all the time in the world to do homework, go to school, play the piano, play football, dance etc. Guides spend time, it is inevitable, believe me, I have tried. We live in a world where people don't have time for anything. There are more important things than guides and friends, they will understand it. The point is that they will be there to support you and understand you always when you need it. As ***Carla Bach Yanes, a dual diploma student, as well as staff writer and layout editor of our Newspaper who is 16-year-old has told me about her experience: "I started to trust myself, I made many friends, I started to stand up for myself before others, and I stopped allowing them to step on me. The people you will find here will be people you won't forget. "***



Furthermore, you grow and there is a moment when your life changes, other things become more important, you are more focused on what you are going to do when you are older, what to study ect. Time plays a very important role here too. Does this come to an end? Some things end inevitably, I strongly believe that if you want them to, your education and activities for the guides can co-exist in peace and harmony. I know people that might tell you that

if you can survive senior year you can resist anything. I know that all these decisions look very scary, but another fact for guides is that even if you leave the school and get into the college you will still have them to spend time with and have fun doing what you love.

In conclusion, this might be very scary to commit to. It might be difficult to overcome all the obstacles by yourself. You can do lots of fun activities and collaborate to create a better world. You might find friends for life. You might not be by yourself anymore. I have the evidence. Guides has changed the lives of teenagers worldwide. Support, Values, fun, friends and many words that you have left to discover. If you have read this, we are no longer unknown and you have the opportunity to change the world just in your hands, fight for those who can't, create global movements with actions and words all around the world...what are you waiting for?

If you want to know more you can always search information about the worldwide movement and find the nearest group for you to join us in: [www.wagggqs.org](http://www.wagggqs.org) for the girl guides and [www.scout.org](http://www.scout.org) for boy scouts.

**“The words in front of a mirror”** by Carla Bach

Words, something so simple yet so strong. A series of letters that can hurt you for life or relieve you for a moment. I have been on both ends, but they have all ended up forming who I am today. Especially the words in the books, those that excite you, sadden you, annoy you ... all of them.



Ever since I learned to speak and read, my life has been revolving around them. Maybe because of the experiences I had to live, or maybe because of the way the world revolved around me. Who knows, there is always the remote possibility that we were pre-determined to meet. But let's not focus on how it happened, the fact is that it happened and now I don't know how to get away from them.

They appear in my dreams, my books, my songs, my stories...

They are the only ones who have never forgotten me, despite the problems I've had. Like any good friendship, the words have hurt me, made me happy, driven me crazy... They even made me cry and laugh at the same time.

Although everyone prefers to look in the mirror to see their appearance, I prefer to listen and try to figure out what words people use to describe me. You may be wondering why. Well, because a person can be precious on the outside but keep a monster hidden on the inside. I know that is a very typical phrase, however, after everything that I've been through, I can say with great conviction that in my case it's completely true.

People usually use words in vain. Maybe because they find it amusing, or because they feel the other person deserves it, it doesn't matter if they're good or bad. Nevertheless, people always use them as weapons and shields to hide behind. I have seen words fly toward people who should have never received them and others who got lost with the wind, such as those of deceit and promise.

But, even though I have also been one of the attacked people, they have never ceased to amaze me. Even when I was harshly approached, I would take refuge in my dear best friends, books. I'm sure you believe that it's pathetic to consider that objects as inert as books are friends. A set of papers arranged in a way that they tell the author's experiences or worlds and imaginary stories. And, of course, full of words.

There are many types of readers, young and old, but not all have the same passion for words. Some people read nothing, others have a shallow reading, and others just read the latest gossip or the match result of the previous day.



However, I have always been curious about all kinds of books. Old, new, scary, mysterious, romantic, comic ... I've even spent time reading encyclopedias. I consider myself a lover of reading, and I am fortunate enough to meet people who are just as passionate as me to share with the library.

Reading makes me travel. I travel to unexplored worlds, invented countries, fantastic cities, and haunted castles, among others. It allows me to teleport to a life that I would rather live instead of mine, to a better place where I can feel like myself.

Happiness, beauty, joy, hope, peace, love, wisdom, friendship, family, solidarity, generosity, illusion, freedom, justice, gratitude, admiration, empathy, harmony, humility, tolerance, motivation, satisfaction, optimism, security, enthusiasm, respect, commitment, euphoria, confidence ... These are the words that I see when I look at myself in the mirror, my mirror.

## “World Mental Health Day” by Mariona Riquez



Nowadays, we all know, more or less about mental health illnesses. They are emotional, cognitive (knowledge based on experience) alterations or of the behavior, in which basic psychological processes are affected, such as emotion, motivation, consciousness, perception, learning, language... These types of illnesses make it difficult to adapt to cultural and social environments.

But, have you ever heard about World Mental Health day?

World Mental Health Day is celebrated every 10th of October and with it we try to raise awareness about many aspects related to mental health.

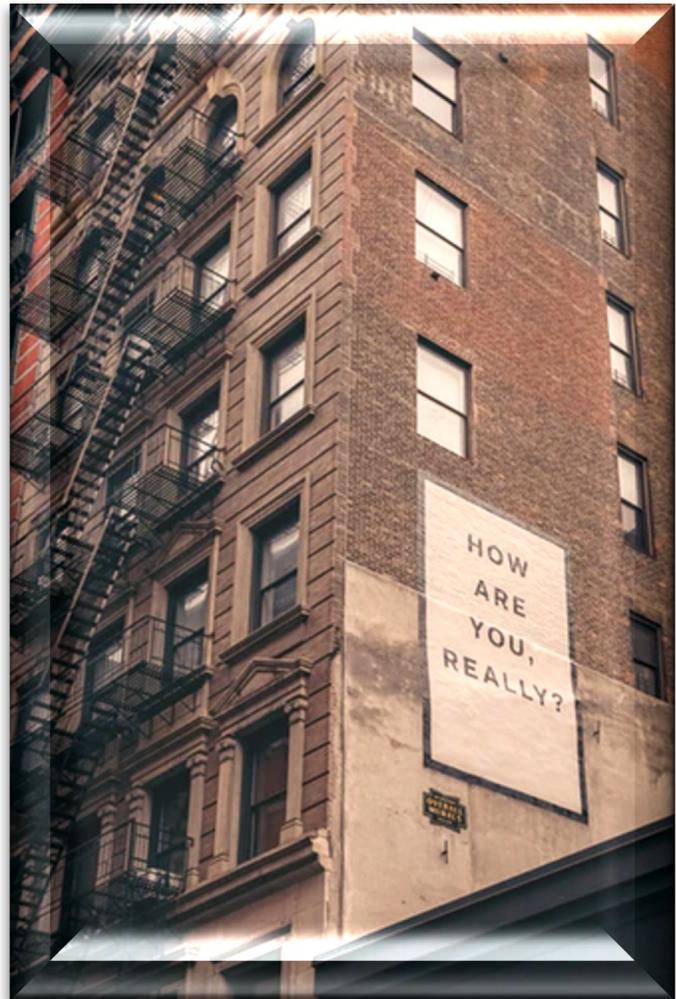
The first one took place in 1992. It was an initiative of the World Federation for Mental Health.

During their first years, World Mental Health Day didn't have a specific theme. There were talks on issues related to the rights of the people affected with mental illnesses and how to educate people about mental health.

Since 1996, the World Mental Health Day has had a specific theme, some examples are:

- In 2012, the theme was depression as a global problem
- In 2014, the theme was living with Schizophrenia.
- In 2019, the theme was the prevention of suicide, and how listening saves lives

This day was made to make people aware about this reality and to get people involved with this cause by doing activities related to it.



## “You, yourself and I” by Karel Bergia

Sometimes, it all gets a little too much. And when it does, the mind is the first one impacted. Ironically, it also is the one which relates to our emotions, physical appearance and spirituality. No need to point out how important it is to have a stable mental health... However, for various reasons, keeping a positive mind set is often a hard task, which can slowly start getting easier or harder with time, and this very notion is defined as Mental Strength. As a personality trait, Mental Strength can be manipulated and reinforced, or, on the contrary, weakened. These variables depend on the person, and on their ability to cope with specific situations. Nonetheless, different doesn't mean unequal: a person A, with a personality X could deal with a certain confrontation just as well as a person B with a personality Y, and the outcome could be the exact same, despite the mental journey to get there.

These basic notions, which helped us understand that each person is different, and react mentally to life differently as well, can therefore lead us to a new question: what are the obstacles to having complete control over our mindset?



We all have our ups and downs, and things happen in life which can lead us to a less happy state of mind, for different time periods. It could last a few days, a few weeks, maybe even a few months. It's most likely triggered by something, but in some cases, the trigger can be less obvious and harder to identify. And today, these cases are what we're going to be talking about. Because often, the trigger is the lack of self-value, and even more amongst teenagers.

Self-Love and Self Worth are two themes which seem to reach a lot of teenagers nowadays. Self Confidence is closely related, but let me explain. Self-Love is the relationship between one person and their consideration of their own self. Self-Worth is, consequently, the worth one grants to themselves, proportionally to how much they love themselves. Finally, Self Confidence comes at the very end, and it concerns both the importance one gives to other's opinions about them, and the correlation between self-love and self-worth.

A lot of people complain about how much they lack self confidence in their everyday lives, but as the equation continues, self-love and self-worth are the real objects to study. And this is how we relate once more to Mental Strength.

If we ever come to study the fictional existence of a constantly mentally strong person, it will be easy to observe that Self Confidence, Self-Love and Self Worth are all checked on the list. Mental Strength is built over Self Confidence: the more a person believes in herself, the stronger mentally she will be, and consequently, the more self-confident she will become. In this infinite loop, the essential thing to understand, is how to take it clockwise, and not anti-clockwise, because the loop works all fine the negative way around... In fewer words, someone who lacks confidence in themselves will have a hard time building mental strength, and therefore lead to even less self-confidence, love and worth.

But what are the concrete consequences to a lack of these three units? Well it depends on the person. It can lead to occasional sadness most of the time, but it can go way further, and grow into some sort of depression state. However, depression is a mental illness and cannot be taken lightly. Do not, under any circumstances auto diagnose, and keep in mind that lack of self-confidence is not the only factor that can lead to depression.

But we are not here to talk about these rare cases, because as far as I know, I don't own a doctor degree, so I will let actual specialists talk about the subject. Although I am not entitled to do that, what I can do is talk about exceptional sadness cases, and how it can be prevented, or at least dealt with.

Lack of self-esteem can be created by a lot of factors, to name a few of the most common ones would be looks and "beauty", relationship with parents, or even academic results. However, all these work on a common ground: it is about someone decreasing the value of their own person and personality. Most of the time, the blame is to put on standardized society, and what the popular opinion believes is the "right thing". I personally don't believe in this option because the number of opinions cannot be limited to only a few. The possibilities are infinite, and life does not depend on looks or grades, or anything else which concerns other people rather than yourself for that matter.

The meaning behind these last sentences is that a state of mind can change. As a matter of fact, a state of mind can change way more easily than who you are. In order to gain in Self confidence and most importantly self-love, and therefore mental strength, the most efficient way would be to accept yourself as you are and start giving less credit to what people think of you.

And remember what Eleanor Roosevelt once said; "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." And I would add -- not even yourself.

## “Catalan Rock” by Mireia Font

I always think that if there is something that can make you instantly happy, it's music. And Catalan rock is a very good example of a musical style that brings happiness and brightness to any venue. Nowadays, in Catalonia, this style is one of the most important ones, and it has a very popular reputation with local radio stations. I think that it deserves consideration around the world, because I feel that the Catalan rock bands that now are part of my daily life are amazing and they need to be known as well as I know them.

It all started at the end of the XX century, when the first Catalan rock bands appeared. They wanted to translate and sing American rock songs in Catalan, and when they first did that, they decided that it was better to write songs directly in the local language. At the beginning, the population wasn't sure about the music style, because apart from rock, it also includes trumpets and other metallic instruments that are not typical from it. But anyway, they decided to call it rock, and for me, rock it is. However, these days, there still people that say that it isn't rock, but a type of pop.

The firsts groups to write a Catalan rock song were "Lax'n'busto," "Sau," "Els Pets," "Sopa de Cabra"...These groups had a huge social and commercial impact, and a very warm welcome from the teenagers, increasing the use of Catalan language in their daily life. Teenagers loved it because it was a very close thing for them, I think that they felt they identified with the songs.

A lot of music festivals like "Canet rock" appeared just for Catalan rock, and brought a lot of new fans. In fact, this festival is still taking place at Canet (a village at the seaside near Barcelona), and it is one of the most liked music festivals in Catalonia. Some of the most popular bands that now are famous in this music style are: "Els Catarres," "Doctor Prats," "Txarango," "Oques Grasses," "Els Amics de les Arts" ...



I recommend you try to listen to some of the songs that these groups have recorded, because I am sure that it can open your mind to different cultures, in this case the Catalan one and I think that this music is amazing and you will not regret listening to it.

**“Stop. Don’t. Now, I know”** by Lara Veramendi



Where are you going?  
What do you seek?  
When did you leave?  
How could this happen?

Stop don't do it.  
This isn't a game.  
This isn't a good idea.  
I won't be able to turn back.

Don't make me seek your eyes in the night.  
Don't make me nervous while talking.  
Don't make me smile with no reason.  
Don't make me cry when you are not here.

Because once I am on,  
the only thing I can do  
the only thing I can't avoid  
is to fall more deeply in love with you.

Now, I know where my love went.  
Now, I know what my love seeks.  
Now, I know when my love leaves.  
Now I know how this happened.

And all the answers are you.



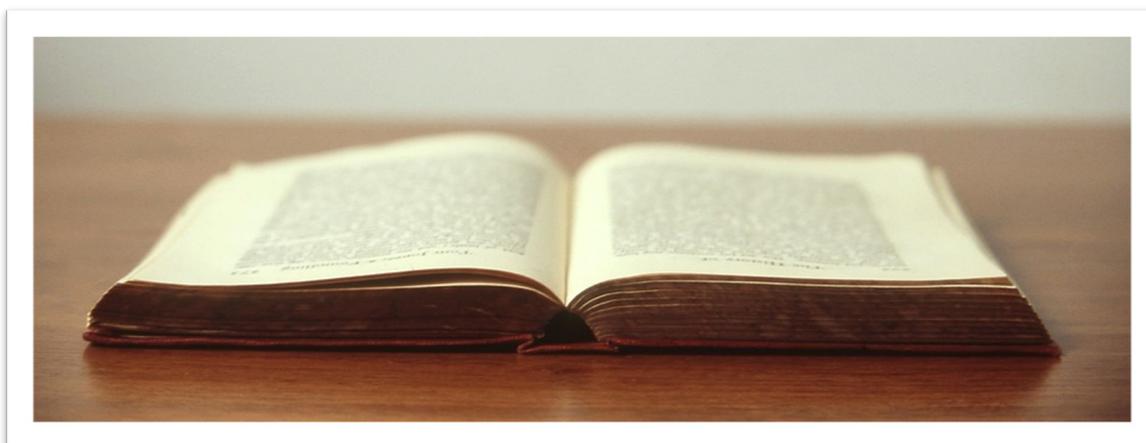
**“Want”** by Alba Castillo

I want to move with the clouds  
I want to fly with the birds  
I want to get on a plane  
I want to sit on the roof of a car  
I want to scream at the top of my lungs  
I want someone to see right through me  
I don't want to be just a shell of who I used to be  
I don't want to feel numb  
I don't want to cry no more  
I don't want to live with regrets  
I don't want to wake up and wonder where did I go wrong  
I don't want someone forgetting I've got feelings too  
Could someone (you) please help me?



### “Call Me By Your Name” by María Alcázar

Call me by your name is the first novel by the American-Italian-Egyptian André Aciman, who has since published *Eight White Nights* (2010), *Harvard Square* (2013) and *Enigma Variations: A Novel* (2017). The play takes us to a peaceful eighties summer in northern Italy, where a romance is forged between a perceptive seventeen-year-old boy (Elio), and his father's new assistant, an American man in his twenties (Oliver). But he does it from a future in which Elio remembers what he lived with a mixture of nostalgia and regret, which adds up to the entire narration's pure melancholy. The perfect use of the first person leads us to identify with the insightful protagonist from the beginning, dying with him at the game of mouse and cat who seems to play unconsciously with Oliver, enjoying with him the delights of first love and suffering with him when we face the harsh reality. Plagued with unforgettable reflections on vital self-discovery, the loyalty of loving passion and the weight of the passage of time, this book is moved and destroyed by the immense honesty it contains, which is especially striking when it comes to portraying the relationship between two men who, despite enjoying a very progressive environment, harbor internal fears.



Ten years after the novel's publication, British screenwriter James Ivory, creator of the iconic gay-themed film *Maurice* (1987) and the Italian director Luca Guadagnino has brought *Call me by your name* to the big screen just as all her readers would have dreamed of. Recently nominated for an Oscar for Best Picture, Adapted Screenplay, Actor and Song, *Call Me by Your Name* is a true gem where the elegant staging (from Sayombhu Mukdeeprom's warm and meaningful photography to the heartwarming songs of Sufjan Stevens, passing through the refined use of Italian locations to the rhythm of classical music) and the love story itself make up an indestructible tandem. At the center of it all is a graceful actor, Timothée Chalamet, who offers one of the most heartfelt, personal, and engaging performances in film history. Michael Stuhlbarg, Amira Casar, Esther Garrel and of course, Armie Hammer dress him wonderfully, even though, as happened with the novel, it is in the young man's feelings that the magic of the film resides. Sensual in her candor and heartbreaking in her subtlety, *Call Me by Your Name* is a magical exploration of the power of (dis) love. This makes the movie unique.

The film reaches the Spanish billboard today and it goes without saying that its viewing is mandatory. Yes, I advise you to read the novel, but the order in which you taste both works is of little importance since they dialogue with each other and complement each other perfectly. In any case, if you can approach the book in English, the better; If not, you will have it in Spanish on February 2 by Alfaguara (who already published *Harvard Square* in 2015). Read the book, see the movie. And again. You will not regret it.

**“Dr. Doolittle”** by Ana Martin

This film is simply great! The story is about a doctor that can talk to animals and knows how to cure them from any diseases. He and his wife, thanks to England's queen, get a big refuge for every animal that exists but unfortunately, during an investigation, his wife dies and because of this, Dr. Doolittle closes the refuge and isolates himself.

One day a little girl comes to visit him telling him that the queen is going to die and he is the only one who can save her. Although at first, he refuses, after some good reasons given from the animals he decides to go on a mission to save the queen.

During this adventure he faces every type of danger with the company of his animals and a boy that wants to learn from him.

This film is simply hilarious, how animals are characterized, how they talk, how they think is just how humans think so you can easily identify with them. I highly recommend this film to watch with family, friends, little children... if you want to have some fun and laugh for a while.



## “Gemini Man” by María Camps

Gemini Man is a very interesting film because of the story that it tells. It is about a guy that works for the American Government and suddenly has another worker working on him, who is this second guy? He is a younger version of the protagonist. He is 30 years younger. When they find this out they both feel confused, but, in the end, they work together against the government.



What I enjoyed the most about the film was the story and the actors being part of it. The story is told above and the casting includes Will Smith as the protagonist playing Henry Brogen, Mary Elizabeth Winstead in the role of Banny, Benedict Wong as Baron, Lassiter played by Linda Ewond, Connor by Justin James Boyking, Alexandra Szucs playing Aniko, Bjorn Freiberg in the role of the training officer and much more!

Gemini man is a great film, but it is a bit too long for my taste.

My recommendation is to watch it with more people so you can talk about it watching it.

## “To All The Boys I’ve Loved Before: Books vs. Film” by Paula De Mercado

Lara Jean Song Covey is a soon to be junior that doesn’t have many friends, unless she counts her sister and her sister’s boyfriend as so. Covey has two sisters and lives with her dad because her mother died when she was little.

She loves to bake and talk about love. Speaking of love letters, she has five of them. But she didn’t receive them, she wrote them. She has this kind of ritual when she has a crush so intense on a boy that she wants it to end. Lara Jean takes pen and a paper and starts to write all the feelings she has for the guy. She writes his address and then she collects all the letters. One day, the letters are sent out.

This amazing book was written by Jenny Han, followed by another two. The author decided to get also involved in the film script so let’s see what differences there are!

1st difference: Car accident scene.

*Book:*

Before the beginning of her 11th grade, we can see Lara driving through the city when suddenly she has sort of an accident and Peter Kavinsky (former crush) appears and helps her. They talk for a while and Lara Jean feels more comfortable and continues driving.

*Film:*

This scene doesn’t appear in the same moment but we have a reference. Lara Jean picks her sister Kitty from school and when she is trying to exit the parking spot she bumps into Peter. Lara feels ashamed and Kitty bursts out laughing as Kavinsky approaches her and ironically asks her if she has looked backwards before moving the car.

2nd difference: The reason why Kitty sends the letters.

As we are reading the book, there is a moment when both sisters are talking about crushes and Lara Jean discovers that her little sister may have a small crush on Josh (the boy living next door, her older sister’s ex-boyfriend and Lara Jean’s former crush) so she makes fun of her. The youngest Covey decides to take revenge so when she finds the letters, she sends them to the boys. Whereas, in the film, Kitty sends them in order to help her sister with her love life.

3rd difference: Josh.

The boy next door seems to be more than just the boy next door to all the three sisters.

*Book:*

After breaking up with Margot (Lara Jean’s older sister) and receiving a love letter, the boy decides to confess his feelings to her and even kisses her! He also tells her that he wants to be with her (maybe because he was jealous of her relationship with Peter). This makes everything much more complicated to Covey because now she has to deal with the feelings of two boys. Also, the boy keeps on helping her family and talking with Kitty after Margot leaves to Europe.

*Film:*

As soon as Lara Jean starts to date Peter, she leaves Josh aside and focuses on Kavinsky so we don’t get to see that importance that Josh has develop with the Covey family.

4th difference: LJ and Peter’s first kiss.

Both of the scenes share the same idea, Peter and Josh.

In the book, we read that Lara Jean is talking with Josh about the letters and he asks her who is the guy she is dating so when she sees Peter walking down the corridor, she jumps over Kavinsky and starts kissing him and the whole school witnesses that encounter, including Josh. She does that in order to prove to Josh she doesn’t like him anymore.

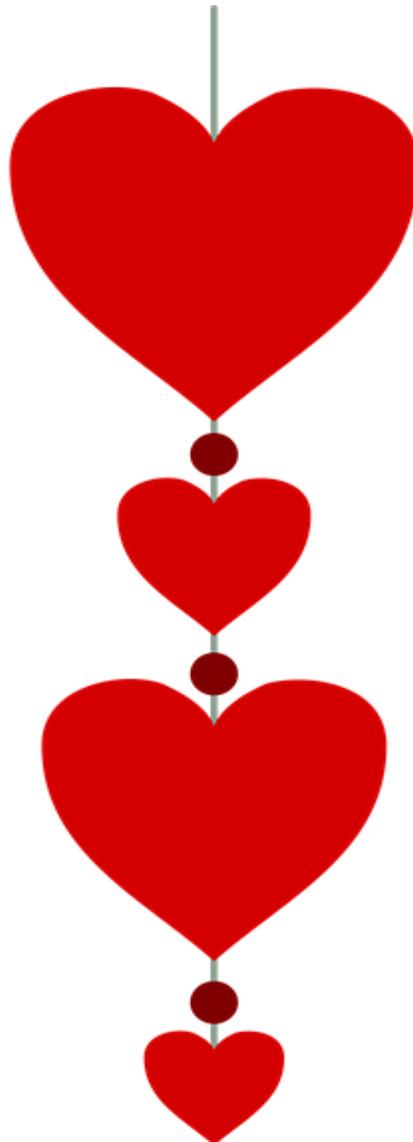
On the other side, we have the film where everything happens during PE class. Lara is running when Peter appears and he shows her the letter. She faints and when she recovers, she sees Josh coming with another letter so she starts kissing Kavinsky to avoid talking with Josh and telling him the truth.

5th difference: Halloween party.

This is a very cute scene that we get to read in the book but unfortunately, we don't see it in the film. Lara Jean dresses up as Cho Chang (from Harry Potter) and Peter goes as Peter Parker (Spiderman). But as you know, we need a little bit of drama in a romantic novel and it is that Josh dresses up as Harry Potter. This makes Peter jealous because it seems like they had paired up for the costume. They have a petty argument but they end up laughing and running through the corridor as they head to chemistry class.

Jenny Han said in an interview that she wanted that scene in the film and that they were actually filming it but they didn't have the right over Spiderman's suit so they couldn't keep on recording it.

As you may have noticed, the Book has more iconic scenes that couldn't fit on a 2-hour film so if you want more Peter and Lara Jean, choose the book over the film. But apart from removing scenes I love from the book, I can't say any other bad thing about the film. This is because it is a pretty loyal adaptation, probably because the author was involved in the script. It's common to read a book and then watch the film and think that they are completely different but in this case, when I watched the film, that didn't matter to me because this film has amazing actors and it is loyal to the novel. Lana Condor and Noah Centineo are the perfect Lara Jean and Peter Kavinsky, and they show a lot of chemistry during the whole film that makes us fall in love with Peter.



## “Feminism” by Abril Castillo, Irati Acha and Isabel Calvino

### What is feminism?

According to the Oxford dictionary, feminism is “the advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of sexes”.

It all started in ancient Greece. Plato stated that “women possess natural capacities” equal to men for governing and defending ancient Greece. However, all the ancient empires were commonly sexist. During the Middle Age, the situation didn’t improve for women, having fewer rights than their brothers. During the Enlightenment, feminism started to raise awareness among the society again. Mary Wollstonecraft, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, wanted greater equality for women.



Back in America, at the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, abolitionists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott demanded the right to vote. The suffragist movement did succeed after World War I, when women’s efforts helped win the war. The 19th Amendment of the Constitution ratified the women’s right to vote. In the seventies, along with the Civil Rights Movement, the “third wave of feminism” began, specifically demanding rights for African American Woman and other minorities.

### Why does feminism exist?

Some women have written their names in capital letters within the book of history: Cleopatra, Elisabeth I (queen of Spain, had a powerful empire, including colonies in America and Asia), Victoria I... However, there are few names compared to men, and that is not because there have existed more men along History.

During Prehistory, men were more able to go fishing and hunting to get food, and women were supposed to stay at home looking after the children. This tradition has been maintained during history; men started working on different careers, while women used to stay at home. Although women have entered the workplace, there are other challenges to face.

### Has feminism had representation in books or any cultural manifestation?

Yes, it has. It has been a popular topic in the recent years, but its origins are very old. One of the greatest pieces written by a feminist writer is *Little Women*, written by American author Louisa May Alcott (1832–1888).

Media representation of women is a part of the modern feminist fight. You could go to a film, switch on the TV, tune in to the radio, turn the pages of a magazine, or surf online. Regardless of your choice of media, you’d have a good chance of encountering stereotypes that perpetuate gender discrimination. Encouraging a perspective of gender equality, therefore, is a powerful tool to induce social changes.

In literature, Women's experiences differed from that of men. Women who wanted to write were considered mad. Too much thinking was seen as hurtful to the female mind. This started to change thanks to authors like the Bronte Sisters, Virginia Woolf or Louisa May Alcott, who we'll talk about more later. These authors suffered many hardships before seeing their works published. Their progressive morals and knowledge of male-oriented hobbies, garnered negative reactions. Many women also were advised to write under a pseudonym by their publishers, like the writer of Mary Poppins, Helen Lyndon, whose nom de plume was P. L. Travers.

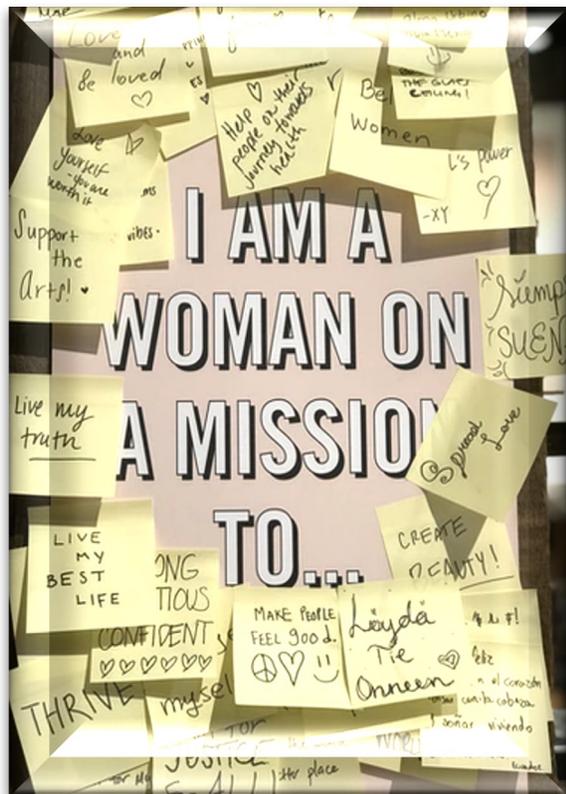
Women haven't had as much presence as men in the cinema industry either. Despite how much we've advanced in our world, it's still difficult to find women's presence working as directors or screenwriters. Movies seldom reflect a female point of view and therefore, female actors rarely play roles created by women. In all jobs behind the scenes, there's three times more men than women.

Moreover, in both these industries, the depiction of women is overly stereotyped. They tend to be sexualized, have less lines, fewer opinions and are less likely to play roles as leaders or working professionals. Traditionally, female leads had to fit in one of these two categories: the angel (pure, sweet, submissive) or the monster (rebellious, mad, non-feminine). Though this idea evolved, until not too long ago, and sometimes even now, female characters are incredibly one-dimensional. This means that they're superficial and don't have any kind of goal they want to achieve, or at least none that doesn't relate to their love life.

Thankfully, every day lots of people fight towards equality in these fields, and there's been a growth that we should continue striving for.

### Why should I read *Little Women*?

One of the biggest and most famous examples of feminist books is *Little Women*. It was written by Louisa May Alcott and published in 1868. It tells the story of four sisters: Meg, Jo, Amy and Beth and it's based on the author's experiences when she was a child and she was living in Concord (Massachusetts). After *Little Women*, she wrote its sequel, *Good Wives*, in which the four girls' adult life is explained.



I believe this book is wonderfully written and I recommend everybody to read it if you have the opportunity, but the thing that impressed me the most was the complexity of the characters. They aren't just girls who want to get married and have children, as it could be, according to the thinking in the XIX century. No, each of them have their dreams. They fight for what they believe and for what they think is fair.

Out of the four girls, my favorite one is Jo. Jo didn't want to get married, she didn't follow the "rules" established for girls, she spent all day long with her friend Laurie, she didn't care about what people thought about her, she wanted to write and she wrote, she sacrificed things for her family... She's a very interesting character, with a very revolutionary point of view according to the time in which the story takes place.

It surprised me to find such a feminist character in a book from a time where women were supposed to stay at home to take care of their children and the house.

*Little Women* is a chant for women's freedom.

## **“NGO Mans Mercedàries” by Abril Castillo**

**“When you give back, you receive more than ever.”**

NGO Mans Mercedàries was created to help people around the globe and teach people about generosity and solidarity. Here’s an interview with two of its creators Montse Torras (M) and Ton Tuset (T).

### **How did the NGO start?**

M: The NGO started because we went one summer, Ton and me and two more people, to Mozambique. But the story starts earlier, you know I’m alumni of “La Mercè de Martorell”, and since I was young, missionaries came to our school to give talks about the missions. And of course, we were always very excited about them and we said, “When we are older, we will go to Africa.” I ended up studying Philosophy and Arts, and working at my old school, and we started asking to go to Africa, with Ton. The Mother General of the Missionaries at the time denied our pleas to travel to Africa and told us it was too dangerous. Only missionaries could go.

But at the end, I think due to how annoying we were being, they gave us permission. They sent us to a leprosarium north of Mozambique, close to the jungle. When we saw the living conditions of the people of the village, it was horrible: death was so close to all the inhabitants, they didn’t have light, water or any luxury and everything was so poor and miserable. When we came back, we decided “Okay, we should start an NGO to help the Mercedarians. We can’t help the whole world, but at least we can do something for our missions. And that’s how everything started, the idea was that the Mother General of the Missionaries would tell us where we are needed each year, and we would do a project to go there.”

### **Which initiatives do you use to raise money for the projects?**

T: Well, the main one is that we have a group of members and patrons who have been signing up for a few years now. The members help with the yearly projects, for example, this year, their money is going to finishing our school in Kenya. Instead, the patrons help the kids individually. We have patrons for the orphanage in Angola, the girls in Mozambique and we also have, most recently, three patrons for our Scholarship Program, for college students. Then, we also have two City Councils that help us a lot. The most important one, Martorell’s, which has helped us since the beginning and is very generous. There’s also Sant Feliu’s, who’s been helping us for a few years now. We present the projects, and they give us a grant. Then there’s Abrera’s City Council, which helps us with a little project we have in Angola, a nursing home to tend to their elders. And the rest of the money comes from activities we do. The Solidary Money Boxes, we have approximately a hundred stores with them so customers can help. We organize concerts, theatre plays and other events, we participate in little markets selling the NGO’s T-shirts and sparkling white wine. Well, this is more or less everything.

### **Which are the main objectives of the NGO?**

M: The key main objective is helping the project, basically everything Ton just told you about, all the activities we do to raise money. The second main objective is spreading the word about the Mercedarians and the values of solidarity. This was a request of Maria Felisa, the Mercedarian we met in our first year at the leprosarium. She told us “Explain what you’ve seen when you come back home, let your eyes announce Africa’s injustice, especially to your students.” And that’s exactly what we decided to do, after our return we’ll gather all the photos to create videos so we’re able to explain everything to our students. Because after all, all of our students from the five schools (Martorell, Sant Feliu, Barcelona, Zaragoza and Santander) participate in some way, and they will have the satisfaction to see how all the actions they took helped us achieve that. We also help with the dissemination of the Mercedarians’ values around the world. So it’s not just raising money and fulfilling the project, but also educating people in generosity and solidarity. These are our objectives.

### **What are the different projects?**

M: The projects consist of whatever that specific mission needs, and they are very varied. It can be building a school, in villages where kids have to walk for hours to get to one. This, for example, happened in Angola. After the war, we built an orphanage. When it was finished, the kids from there, called Kudielelas, had to walk a lot to get to school. To help this situation, one of the Mercedarians told us we could use an abandoned warehouse to build the school, and we took the challenge. The first year we built three classes, alongside the NGO Mans Unides. It grew slowly, and nowadays there's 1600 students. This is a big school, then there's smaller ones like the one we're building in Kenya. In 2015 and 2016, we built a kindergarten in an extremely poor neighborhood. Schooling in Africa begins at six years old, and kids from two to five years old are alone in the streets. This is a giant problem, as they're often kidnapped for human and organs trafficking and prostitution. Now these kids have grown up, and we've been asked to build a primary school, which we're already building. So this is one kind of project: a school.

T: I wanted to tell you that we don't choose the projects. Due to our goal being helping Mercedarians, each year we have a meeting with the Mother General of the Missionaries, who's in contact with all the missions, so she can tell us where we are needed. There are also two different kinds of projects: the ones we make alongside other organizations, like Angola, and those we carry on alone, like Kenya. As the latter, we also have a school in northern Mozambique and an after-school community center for kids in the Philippines. We also managed the enlargement of a health clinic in Angola.

M: Another completely different project is building the orphanages. In Katembe, Mozambique, we built from the remains of an abandoned house an orphanage for girls who lost their parents to AIDS. They have their rooms, dining room, playground, garden... In front of the orphanage, we built the school. The projects are meant to fulfill the necessity of the community, for example, in Perú, Guatemala, Ecuador, we also did very diverse projects there. We built a rehab center for young people who got out of jail for drug problems, another project was building a center to help and educate girls from the streets who have been working in prostitution. Some end up pregnant. We help leave that life, help them with their kids and in finding a stable job. We also once built a multipurpose room that serves as a church, a school and to hold meetings of the families who live in the mountains.

T: And also in Ecuador, in 2016, a school we had there collapsed due to a devastating earthquake. We collaborated from here, alongside other NGO's, to reconstruct the school.

### **Would you be able to choose one of your projects as your favorite?**

M: I always say that everywhere we go we are so welcomed, that choosing is exceptionally hard, it would be unfair. As soon as we arrive somewhere, people don't know you, but they hug you and welcome you, you feel so loved, you receive more than you could ever give. Despite all this, I always choose Africa. From our projects in Africa, I wouldn't be able to choose, if we could, I would travel one year to each of them in a loop. In the three projects we have kids we've seen grow up; you want to go back to see how they're doing. One more than the other, I don't know, I can't choose. But I choose Africa.

T: Africa is amazing. And from the travels we've made, my favorite, excluding the first one to the Kondese village that was the most shocking one and the reason why we started everything, was our 2009 project. It was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NGO and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mercedarian presence in Africa, which started in Mozambique. They proposed us making a memoir of the missions that were in place in 2009 in Mozambique. It lasted a month and a half; we rented an off-road vehicle and visited all of them.

M: That travel was amazing! We left a sum of money in each mission; it was truly an outstanding experience.

T: That year was so interesting, we contacted a lot of people and it was an adventure. Really special for us.

### **Which is this year's project?**

M: This year's project, if everything works out, is going back to Kenya, to Ongata Rongai. In other words, between this summer and next year's, we should finish the primary school. You see, that neighborhood is extremely poor, with even poorer buildings. So when we built in 2015 and 2016 the kindergarten, we decorated all the walls with fairy tales. It was so shocking to see such a dull, gray, broken neighborhood suddenly having such a colorful and joyful building; the Nairobi's TV News came to film it. There's Nemo, the Little Mermaid, the Lion King, etc. every single wall is painted. That's exactly what we do when we go to the schools, there's time to play, teach and have fun with the kids and time to paint and decorate everything so it's as beautiful as it can be. It's incredible to see the contrast between the school and the neighborhood. We also bring clothes, toys, school supplies, laptops, so they can implement technology. And next year, our goal is just finishing the last level and inaugurating the full primary school.

### **We're coming to the end of the interview; would you like to leave a message for the readers?**

M: A message I would like to give, and I think everyone will understand due to our current situation, is that us developed countries should be more generous and offer more solidarity towards the less fortunate. Because every time a disaster occurs in places like Africa or India, we turn the page and move on due to our frenetic rhythm. Then something like Covid-19 happens and we become aware that we're as vulnerable as those poor countries. I believe that when everything ends, and we return to normalcy, the message is: Those of us who have everything, have the moral obligation to help those who have so little, and be more generous.

T: As I see it, the best way to be happy is collaborating in making others feel happy. When you give back, you receive more than ever. Therefore, I invite people to stop being selfish, and help others, because you will see how everything you have multiplies its value exponentially.

For more information please access the NGO's website: <http://mansmercedaries.org/>

Through there you can donate, learn more about all the projects, and check upcoming events.



## “COVID-19” by the Newspaper Club writers

The Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that affect our respiratory system causing different kinds of illness such as a common cold, severe acute respiratory syndrome known as SARS, or other breathing issues.

SARS can be recognized by its symptoms, which are the same that this new kind of coronavirus has: Cough (initially dry), fever, headache and difficulty to breath.

This new kind of Coronavirus, known as Covid-19, was first found in the city of Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019. At the beginning it was labeled as a cold but in January, the government ordered a lockdown in Wuhan.

Later, more cities were added to this lockdown like Hubei or Ezhou but it was late to keep this virus contained because this illness had already arrived to some other countries like Italy, Egipt, Singapour or Spain.

The countries where this virus has affected the most are United States, with more than 614.000 confirmed cases and with 26.000 deaths, Italy, with more than 162.000 positives and 21.000 deaths, Spain, with more than 174.000 positives and 18.255 deaths, and China with more than 82.000 positives and 3.341 deaths.

This situation has taken many lives, overloaded healthcare systems, and tried our threshold for stress. However with these experiences we become stronger.



Many of you might think: “How can we learn about something so terrible like covid-19?” and “How can we adapt ourselves to times like this?” Well we can, and here are some examples from the newspaper writers that tell you what they have learned and how they have been adapting so far...

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Personally, I have adapted pretty well because I have the advantage, only in this situation, of being a big introvert and quite antisocial. It has felt like any other week in summer holidays, where I sleep, play games with my family and watch a lot of films. Meanwhile, I try to continue a small writing project I haven't have the time to put on action and I have finally finished

all my physical books, which is quite bad for me because I'm not keen in digital books. I'm using the time to do some sports, practice my Latin and learn to cook.

I'm having a great time and I think this is a lesson to all humanity about how much we are overcharging our planet. It's time we all stopped for a moment and breath, at least that what our planet is doing right now.

**I have learned:**

How ignorant and irresponsible humanity is, in a global way.

**Anastasia Cuevas Dickens**

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I have planned from day one a little rutine (for study, work out...) , I love to cook so I decided to prepare every day the lunch and dinner... I made little changes to make everything more easy for me and my family.

**I have learned:**

That we are all we need to keep ourselves alive and distracted and that without going out you can do more things than we thought.

**Mireia Font Ginebra**

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Mainly, I have created a schedule to prevent stress and boredom, in which I mix keeping very often in touch with my friends and family through the internet, attending to online classes, doing my home-work and enjoying those hobbies which I can do at home (dancing, reading, writing, listening to music, drawing...). In addition, what I am trying a lot now is to be positive in order to help the best way possible those who are hit hard by such awful times with enthusiasm, motivation and positivism.

**I have learned:**

I have learned that we get used to living lives that we can fail to appreciate until parts of them are lost, because our existence ends up many times consisting in highly-fixed routines and what we started doing for pleasure, because we liked it, because we had an interest in it, becomes a monotony in the end, a dull monotony many times. This experience is helping me realize that each part of my assumed routine has a value and many times I am not giving it the value it actually deserves. So this is the time to revalue what while lost I miss so much, because this is the proof that it mattered, that it was important and I was taking it almost for granted.

This is also the time to think about those people who make your life and convert your world into better ones. And these are the people who make you wiser everyday, who listen to you when you both deserve and not deserve to be listened, who you know you can call at anytime because they'll be there for anything you need, who share their time with you, even the ones who keep you informed tirelessly and daily via the media (newspapers, tv programs, documentaries...), who entertain you when you look for entertainment and who serve you your daily coffee with a smile, among others. And most importantly, those doctors, nurses, ambulance drivers, cleaners, workers in the sanitary system, gravediggers and so on who are always there to help you overcome problems anytime you need and specially these days, being at the front line of battle, working diligently to flatten the curve.

**Mariona Blanch**

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I am having on-line classes and I am talking with my friends through videocalls

**I have learned:**

To think in other and after in me

**María Torrejón.**

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This situation is not something you can just adapt to, I for sure haven't. I keep wondering when will I be able to feel the sun again, hold my loved ones, be with actual people face-to-face... But we have to hold on to all those feelings and memories for now, and pray for all those people that's exposing themselves to save us. Our parents and grandparents would have done it for us, so now it's time to do it for them.

**I have learned:**

Everything can change in just a few seconds. One day you're fine, and the next one people around you start dying. The worst thing of it all is feeling powerless, because you can't do anything but stay home. That feeling can get even worse than it already is, when everyone tells you to stay away from your loved ones, for their protection and your own. And knowing that it doesn't matter how hard you'd like to hug your family and be with them before they die, you must stay away and let them die alone.

Carla Bach

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I have been in quarantine for almost a month now, and it's been quite the journey. At first, I didn't really understand it, I thought I was going to stay two weeks at home, and everything would be better. But I soon realized that wasn't the case. Being apart from people would be much harder than I had expected. It wasn't going to be just two weeks, but much more. And when numbers of cases and deaths stopped being statistics and started being friends, family, neighbors, that was hard.

By the second week I was much more aware of everything, and it was devastating, I was afraid and on edge. But then I found balance, and started following a routine and not stressing as much.

To cope with everything that's been happening, I've watched a lot of shows and movies, and read books, because they help me escape reality for a while. One of the other things I've used is getting to know people from other countries through social media, which has been one of the best things I've gotten out of this horrible situation. Being able to talk about our different perspectives and learning about other countries and their situation has helped me greatly. Also, it has brought amazing people into my life and given me an even greater desire to travel, when everything is over, so I can meet them.

**I have learned:**

This experience has made me mature and be more thoughtful. I've had to self-discipline to finish all my schoolwork my teachers were sending, and to organize myself so I could do everything I wanted to. I've learnt to be more productive with my time. Also, I've never been more thankful for a lot of things that I used to take for granted, like school, seeing my friends, being healthy, etc.

**Abril Castillo Camacho**

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There really isn't anything I could outright pinpoint as a method I've used to adapt to this situation; in fact, right at the very beginning, I decided that I would "go with the flow", as I've been wanting to focus more on my mental health rather than a set routine.

**I have learned:**

Sometimes it's the small things in life that make us happy. Before all of this went down, my lifestyle was so hectic I barely had any time to sit down and think about what I actually wanted to do. Now that I've basically been forced to do so, I've discovered some surprising facts about myself I had never realized before. All in all, I think this experience has been life-changing for everyone.

**Irene Aldabaldetrecu**

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Most of the day by doing all those things that you didn't have time to do, Dye T-Shirts, Plant something, Paint or end that Writing that you weren't able to do. Because life is full of those beautiful things that we don't usually have time to do. And even though we don't have our friends to do them with, you can always do them with your family. Even though families might seem boring and tiring, they are still your family and you love them. Also you have your friends one phone call away.

**I have learned:**

It is the time when you most see who cares about you and loves you by just sending a text.

**Lara Veramendi Marban**

**“Nature takes back its pace”** by Sara Borsari

“Mere goodness can achieve little against the power of nature.” (Hegel)

What the German philosopher wanted to express, is that humans feel powerful on earth, but they found themselves completely unarmed against the “power of nature.”

Today, we can see how the quote that Hegel stated almost two hundred years ago is still true, and I’ve noticed how his observation is coming alive.

On the 31st of January, Covid-19 started its spreading throughout Italy that put it on its knees and now on the 25th of March, the virus has yet to lose its grip.

Living in one of the main red zones (Emilia-Romagna), I’ve seen my life changing, not only for being forced to stay quarantined, but for many things. For example, the whole atmosphere outside is obviously tense, going food shopping takes much time.

Also, this situation is psychologically hard, because hearing everyday such high numbers of affected people and deaths is terrible.

But during this whole situation I wanted to “take a break” from panic and fear and rather observe what are the good effects that this national quarantine has brought.

First, the canals of Venice are getting clearer and clearer and fish, ducks and swan are swimming back into them.

Also, dolphins are swimming back near the southern coasts of Sardinia and Calabria. It’s normal to see them in the sea, but this time they were free to go wherever they wanted, even near the boats berthed in the ports.

In other cities of Italy, hares, horses, swan, deer, goats and wolves have been seen chilling around urban centers.

By seeing this, my mind went back to what Hegel said, and even though we’ve been in a harsh and terrible situation, seeing nature getting back its spaces feels like we’ve been the virus all along, not this temporal Covid-19.

This whole situation is cruel because we can now see what it costs to us humans, to take a step back and respect who was here before us: nature and animals.

## The Dual Diploma Times

Thank you for reading the twelfth edition of The Dual Diploma Times!

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