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On Love

by Rodica-Elza Mureşan, Editor-in-chief

When my editorial team suggested that the topic of the 2nd issue of *Şincai's Digital Ink* should be Love, I welcomed their idea as a multifaceted, nuanced, and bountiful one.

It is in love that we show both our true selves and our potential: are we generous, honest, aware, can we show up openly and vulnerably with another human being? Love reveals both emptiness and overflow. It is the most accurate measure of our shameful smallness and potential greatness at the same time.



There are many kinds of love: from the innocent, wholehearted love of a small child, to the needy, apprehensive love of someone past their prime through the problematic, self-seeking teenage love, the protective parental love, the friendly affection, the devotional love, the love for one's country and people, and the often-misunderstood self-love. Love has also been classified as romantic (often unrequited) or platonic but its range transcends classifications, including intimate realms as well as entire universes.

Marguerite Porete lived in 13th century Low Countries (modern-day Belgium and France). She was a Beguine (a member of a lay religious sisterhood) and a mystic who wrote a book entitled *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. Her ideas were incredibly radical for the time which led to her being tried for heresy which, in the eyes of the public back then, was basically witchcraft. In her book, she argued that when a soul is in a state of perfect Love, it becomes 'annihilated' and unites with God. Essentially, she taught that Love is God and that a soul filled with this love no longer needs the intermediate help of the Church, its rituals, or its laws. This was a massive threat to the authority of the Church. If Love is God and can be accessed directly, the Church

feared that people would stop following moral laws or attending Mass. After a long trial, she was condemned as a 'relapsed heretic'. She refused to stop circulating her book or to recant her views. In 1310, she was burned at the stake in Paris but her book and her idea survived - having resonated with something people could not express themselves but could feel and understand as true for centuries.

Devotional love bows in reverence and surrender - whether toward the divine, an ideal, or a calling, whereas a mother's love teaches us to love with gentleness and fidelity, navigating the grey areas of compromise. The innocent, wholehearted love of a small child gives itself freely, without calculation or manipulation, implying the existence of a safe space. While teenage love burns with urgency and self-discovery, often confusing desire with destiny and projection with truth, mature affection gradually learns that love is not performance and drama, but responsibility. It often evolves into protective parental love which stands guard with vigilance and sacrifice, ready to absorb pain on behalf of the child. Genuine friendly affection rests more lightly, sustained by loyalty, shared laughter, and the quiet comfort of being understood. Love for one's country and people rises in solidarity, binding individuals through shared history, language, and collective memory while self-love asks 'what must I honor within myself so that I do not betray my own dignity?' Each form reveals a different stage of human consciousness. Some loves grasp, some protect, some kneel, some celebrate. None are entirely pure, none are entirely flawed, and the amazing thing is that we can hold them all at the same time: one does not take space from another. Love is never depleted; it only expands in its abundance.

'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.'

(Corinthians)

Love pervades every aspect of our lives, having an audacious disregard for age, race, faith, social class, and any other safety seeking pigeonhole that humans have assiduously devised over the centuries. It is the feeling we most often crave and the

one we often hide. Romantic love is often experienced in an ego-centred way, with jealousy and pride. It does not have to be smart or reasonable: we even seem to be granted a societal free pass, a leave of absence, when we are romantically in love. It is a socially acceptable temporary insanity. When love supports us, we learn, we grow, we flourish. When it breaks us, we are forced to evolve through pain. Either way, change is inevitable; for better, for worse.

I have asked ChatGPT to estimate the percentual frequency of love as main theme in music and world literature, assuming that it should be considerable. The findings did not disappoint: ‘popular music catalogues (especially Western pop from the 1950s onward) consistently show that **love is the dominant theme in popular music**. In mainstream genres (pop, R&B, soul, country, Latin pop), approximately **60 - 70% of commercially successful songs** centre primarily on romantic love. If we include songs where love is present but not central, the number rises to roughly **75–85%.**’ Also, ‘In Western literary history - from *Romeo and Juliet* to *Pride and Prejudice* or *Anna Karenina* - romantic love has been central to major works. In many other great works love is not the main theme, yet it plays a crucial structural role.’ My ChatGPT has also taken the liberty of sharing its opinion: ‘Love persists because it is psychologically universal and dramatically powerful. Conflict around love creates immediate emotional stakes. Art gravitates toward what moves us most - and few forces move humans more deeply than attachment and desire.’ - something I find difficult to disagree with.

I cannot conclude this issue’s editorial without mentioning George. He was one of my 12th grade students in my 2nd year of teaching - the only guy in a class of girls. He was brilliant at English, popular, outgoing, full of energy and positivity. There was always a girl on his lap during the breaks and a bunch of them huddled up at his desk checking out his latest jewellery and outfits. George never graduated. We were all shocked to find out one morning that he had passed away the previous evening. I don't know what pronouns he would have chosen had he lived today, but I want to believe he would have found this world more tolerant and understanding than the one in which he grew up. I also want to believe that he did not choose to leave it because of rejection or a forbidden love. Because love is, indeed, just love.

The reader of this issue will find words that transcribe feelings in poetic form in the works of Dalia Mihali, Sofia Incze, Cozma Claudia Andrea, Mihellis Anna Maria, and Rus-Bucur Ariana, articles about untranslatable emotions and women who have made history, essays on the meaning and role of love in our lives, a review of Emerald Fennell's controversial „Wuthering Heights” launched this February, and a review of Dante's *Inferno* which proves that the classics are still alive and well in the hands and minds of our teenagers. You can read revealing interviews with our deputy schoolmistress, Mrs. Simona Toma, our school psychologist, Ms. Rita Maria Moga, the winners and organisers of our annual Freshmen's Ball and two Şincai graduates whose words, recorded by Sofia Incze, we are proud to publish in this issue of *Şincai's Digital Ink*: cardiologist Ioana-Diana Mihuş and psychologist Andreea Stoica. Ariana's article on red flags will surely start debates and Dalia's writing on *Vampires and the Romance of Eternal Devotion* is one you should definitely not miss! There's also a beautiful story about a mermaid – quite different from the one you know but I will not give any spoilers here and let you truly enjoy Alessia Sabou's writing. *Fate's Punishment* and *A Snowy Love Story* are imaginative and well written stories that deserve your attention. The careful reader will find gems that explore love as a force capable of pulling the human soul into darkness such as Dalia Mihali's work. Our magazine proves that music is everywhere and it can also be present in a written magazine: you can read an excellent review of *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge* by My Chemical Romance and you can also be part of *Sincai's Digital Ink* not only by listening to music chosen by our editors, but by choosing and adding your own favourite love songs in our collection on Spotify, an idea that our Ana Dan has pioneered in the first issue.

To conclude this issue's editorial, I would like to share with our readers one of the most beautiful love songs I know: U2's *Miracle Drug* which, you may find, is not about romantic love (although it can also be read as such):

'I want a trip inside your head

I want to hear you when you call

Spend the day there:

Do you feel anything at all?

To hear the things you haven't said,

I want to see your thoughts take shape

And see what you might see.

And walk right out.
Freedom has a scent
Like the top of a new born baby's head
The songs are in your eyes
I see them when you smile
I've seen enough I'm not giving up
On a miracle drug.
Of science and the human heart
There is no limit.
There is no failure here sweetheart
Just when you quit.
I am you and you are mine
Love makes nonsense of space
And time will disappear
Love and logic keep us clear
Reason is on our side, love
The songs are in your eyes
I see them when you smile
I've had enough of romantic love
I'd give it up, yeah, I'd give it up
For a miracle, a miracle drug
A miracle drug.
God, I need your help tonight.
Beneath the noise

Below the din
I hear your voice
It's whispering
In science and in medicine
'I was a stranger
You took me in'
The songs are in your eyes
I see them when you smile
I've had enough of romantic love
Yeah, I'd give it up, yeah, I'd give it up
For a miracle, miracle drug
Miracle, miracle drug.'

Teaching with Heart: A Conversation with Vice Principal Toma Simona



by Elena Gherman,
XI A

For the second edition of our digital magazine, dedicated to the theme of love, we chose to explore the kind of love that often goes unnoticed but shapes lives every day — the love teachers have for their students. In our school, many students immediately think of our vice principal, Mrs. Toma Simona, when they speak about kindness, support, and understanding. Through her dedication, empathy, and constant encouragement, Mrs. Toma has become an important figure in the lives of many students. She believes not only in academic success, but also in the emotional well-being and personal growth of every student who walks through the doors of our school.

In this interview, we invited her to share her story — what inspired her to pursue a career in education, how her experiences shaped the educator she is today, and what advice she has for students who dream of making a difference in the world. Her reflections remind us that education is not only about knowledge, but also about care, trust, and the belief that every student has the potential to succeed.

1) Many students describe you as one of the and most supportive people in our school. Where does this dedication to helping students come from?

Mrs. Toma: My dedication to helping students comes from personal, professional, and emotional sources—from a combination of experiences and values. I was inspired by my own teachers. I like to treat students, and people in general, the way I would like to be

treated myself. I love what I do and it gives me great pleasure to interact with students. I understand the emotions and difficulties they go through, and I enjoy helping them. I constantly learn from my students—I learn about new generations, different perspectives, and adaptation.

2) When did you realize you wanted to pursue a career in education and leadership? How did your own high school experience influence your professional path?

Mrs. Toma: I chose the teaching career because I truly believe in the power of education to change destinies. Since my school years, I have felt how much it matters to have a teacher who encourages you and believes in you. I wanted, in my turn, to be that support for students—not just a transmitter of information, but a person who inspires, motivates, and creates a safe environment where every child feels valued. For me, being a teacher means responsibility, empathy, and a sincere desire to contribute to forming balanced, confident, and kind people.

3) From your perspective, how important are emotional well-being and a positive school environment for the students' academic success? Can strong emotions — whether positive or negative — truly impact performance and motivation?

Mrs. Toma: Emotional well-being is the foundation on which students' academic success is built. Without safety, belonging, and trust, performance becomes fragile and unstable.

4) Is there a particular moment with students that deeply touched you and reminded you why you chose this career?

Mrs. Toma: Every time I meet my former students, I feel deeply moved just by seeing the light in their eyes. I am touched when I receive a message or a visit from a former student who tells me that I helped them find their path in life. I am moved whenever a generation graduates, and I cry every time.

5) What advice would you give to students who aspire to pursue a career in education or leadership? And what would be your final message to our readers – both for their academic journey and their personal development?

Mrs. Toma: My main advice for students who choose to become teachers is this: if you choose this career, do it with passion, because the satisfaction of seeing students grow and succeed is one of the most beautiful rewards. Dear students, believe in yourselves and in your power to learn and to become better every day. Do not give up when things seem difficult. Be curious and fulfill your dreams.

Mrs. Toma's words remind us that education is not only about lessons, grades, and exams, but also about compassion, encouragement, and believing in the potential of every student. Through her dedication and genuine care for the school community, she continues to inspire both students and teachers alike. Her message encourages us to trust ourselves, remain curious, and never stop striving to become better – not only as students, but also as people.

LOVE - A fragrance of memory

by Balaj Daria

I strongly believe that love exists in many beautiful forms, but it's important how you perceive and choose them, because when you truly understand the meaning of your life and actions, you will surely tend to focus on what gives you positivity, energy, pleasure and charm.

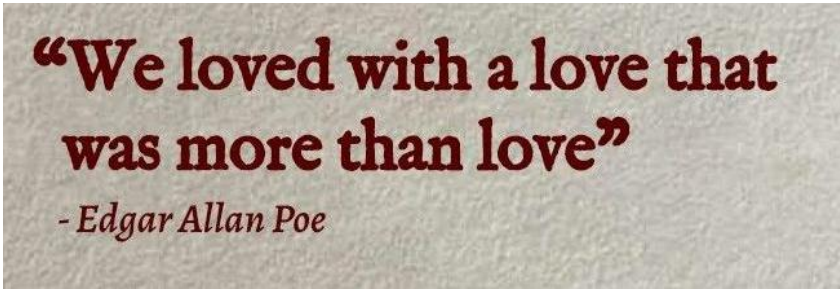
My favourite feeling of love is when I'm dying of laughter with someone and realizing half way through how much I enjoy them and their existence, when some friends feel like home, because they never ask me to be anything other than myself, when my parents and my sister are always there, during which time nobody else is, when I receive little appreciation and support messages from people who had a great impact on my life. This feeling is always with myself, this excitement of hearing my favourite song, reading a book for the first time, watching series, spending time with my loved ones, helping friends with advice and sheer presence when they need it most, Christmas mornings, birthday wishes at midnight and planning family trips.

Love isn't just about grand gestures - it is in the small, sincere moments that make you feel softer, brighter, and more confident. It's the moment when you feel seen, heard, appreciated and also when people valued you and cherish your presence in their lives. Whether it's romantic love, the stable love of family, the connection between friends, or the quiet love we're learning to give ourselves, we should be surrounded by warmth and great moments during our journey through life.

Also, love is a way of understanding the world and a means of indirect communication. We can talk all we want, if the other person doesn't truly hear us, it's just noise and this makes a difference when it comes to finding and trusting the friends or people around us. Love stands in the understanding, lives in conversation, emotional intelligence and in the way the other one makes you feel acknowledged.

Love is not always perceived as a feeling for everyone, it can represent a special bond between two people, a gesture, a simple detail of everyday life or maybe a person. When you fall in love, fall in love with someone who wants to know your favorite colour, who knows the way you drink your coffee in the morning, who thinks that you are her/his half and wants to share the beauty of life with you, the one who understands your feelings, speaks and acts gently with your soul. Love gives you chances to experience, develop, reason and learn, because this emotion embraces not only positive parts, but also the hard and unpleasant ones, to really make you understand the power and the real meaning of it.

From my perspective, true love teaches us patience, courage, kindness and hope, because it gives us the chance to discover beyond appearances, to focus on what makes us feel soft, radiant, and somehow the one who feels like home. For me, love is about respect, support, a deep connection that cannot be described, only shared. I choose to look for love in the details, understanding, growth and evolution.



**“We loved with a love that
was more than love”**

- Edgar Allan Poe

Love Letters

by Daria Hodor

Dear reader,

I have heard that I must introduce you to this unknown term – love. What a simple word, yet so many meanings. I have never let my mind wander around this word before; is it a feeling or an illusion?

For me, love has always been a mystery, because I have never let anybody love me before. I have never let anyone get too close to me. It felt strange to let somebody care so much, it felt like a play. But as I grew older, I realized that love comes in different shapes — love is everywhere around us! Why couldn't I see this before? As a teenager and a dreamer, I have always thought that love was in Mr. Darcy's eyes as he looked at Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, or in Heathcliff's heart as he looked at Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*. But love is far more deep than that: it is in their trust, in their peace with one another, the comfort. Love can be found anywhere: in a family member, a friend, a partner.

Love was always far more than just a feeling. I was always so desperate for love, didn't look past beauty, but later I learned that love can be found anywhere. Feeling deeply is not a curse, it's a blessing! But make sure you share that love with the right people. I love you dearly, my gentle reader, and be patient, because your love will come when you least expect it!

With care,
Daria

Dear reader,

If I could discuss this subject forever, I would, but I am afraid that once I start, I won't be able to stop. I would talk about love until my last breath, because talking, writing, and reading about it has always seemed so right to me. However, when everyone starts saying how I should find love myself and quit waiting and dreaming, it makes me scared and worried... It has always felt so simple, turning the pages and thinking about butterflies and hearts made of roses. It felt easy to dream with my eyes open, to imagine how I would feel loved and cherished. But every time I stepped into reality, it always felt wrong to fall in love; it always felt wrong to love. For me, love always felt like poetry or like the lyrics of a song - so simple, so easy the first time I read it aloud, and later, as I grew older, I realized it had more meanings that I had not understood before. Love comes in so many shapes: love towards God, love for a family member, for a dear friend, for a lover or a partner—even self-love is a kind of love to share! Love for animals, love for things you enjoy, things that make you happy.

Love makes us happy! We could describe it as a little flower that grows and grows inside of us, that blooms at every act of kindness, every word, every feeling or touch... It is so powerful, so strong and intense, that it melts you from the inside—but at the wrong act and the wrong words, that flower could wither, and wither, and wither until there is nothing left to build again.

So fragile, yet so beautiful and precious, love is not something we should play with. I would need all the words in the world to describe this feeling; but I feel as if my soul is freezing and my hope is fading as time passes by... I may not find truer love than the one in the books I've read. Maybe I feel too deeply to understand, or maybe I am just designed differently from others. Or I might be impatient and immature, childish and selfish, and too dreamy to understand how the world works. I am still a teenager, after all... *what do I know about love?*

With care, again,
Daria

Languages Beyond Communication: Untranslatable Emotions

by Sofia Incze, XII G

For hundreds of thousands of years, societies have developed different forms of expressing needs, desires, information, emotions, and feelings. One of these forms of expression is verbal communication, manifested through the use of a common language whose purpose is to efficiently exchange information, ideas, thoughts, and emotions between individuals or groups using spoken or written words. Due to various social factors throughout history, languages have evolved in diverse ways, adapting to geographical, cultural, and social environments. As a result, today there are over 7,000 officially spoken languages worldwide.

Moreover, this linguistic diversity has created a complex system of expressions, meanings, and symbols, making translation necessary in order to facilitate understanding among speakers of different languages. However, the complexity of cultures and the authenticity of certain languages have led to the emergence of words and expressions that cannot be accurately translated or that lose their true meaning in the process of translation. Personally, I refer to these as “untranslatable expressions” — phrases whose profound meanings can be truly understood only by those who have experienced the described feeling or who use these expressions in their original, authentic context.

For instance, in Japan, one essential concept in Zen Buddhism is „*mono no aware*”, a term coined by the eighteenth-century scholar Motoori Norinaga to describe a deep sensitivity to the impermanence of life. This feeling combines gentle sadness with quiet appreciation, arising from the awareness that all things are fleeting. Impermanence is a central belief in Buddhism, which teaches that suffering results from our attachment to what cannot last. Rather than merely accepting transience, „*mono no aware*” encourages us to value the beauty that exists precisely because it is temporary. In Japanese culture, cherry blossoms symbolize this idea in Zen, as their brief bloom

makes their beauty even more precious.

In Croatian culture, particularly along the Dalmatian coast, the word „**fjaka**” describes a distinctive state of deep relaxation and peaceful detachment. More than simple idleness, it reflects a mindful surrender to the present moment, often inspired by the intense summer heat or the warm southern wind known as jugo. The term, derived from the Italian word „*fiacca*” (meaning fatigue or languor), has evolved into a cultural concept that expresses the art of slowing down and embracing stillness. „*Fjaka*” suggests a harmonious balance between body and mind, in which everyday worries dissolve and one quietly enjoys existence itself — perhaps while gazing at the sea or lingering over coffee. As an essential part of Dalmatian identity, it represents an aesthetic of calm and contentment. In other languages, a similar and more easily recognizable expression might be the Italian concept of „*il dolce far niente*”, which likewise celebrates the sweetness of doing nothing.

The word „**iktsuarpok**” originates from the Inuit language Inuktitut (ᐃᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦᑦ) and describes the restless anticipation that makes you keep checking the door, waiting for someone who has not yet arrived. It refers to the repeated impulse to step outside or look out the window to see whether an expected guest is finally coming. Often cited as an „untranslatable” word, „*iktsuarpok*” captures a subtle emotional mixture of hope, impatience, and excitement shaped by human connection and expectation. In Inuit culture, where community bonds and hospitality are deeply valued, the term reflects the importance of social relationships in everyday life. Beyond its linguistic meaning, „*iktsuarpok*” has also inspired artistic works, including a percussion solo by Casey Cangelosi, demonstrating how a culturally specific emotion can resonate far beyond its original context.

The German noun „**sonder**” describes the profound and often sudden realization that every passerby is living a life as vivid, complex, and chaotic as one’s own. It captures the awareness that each individual is the central character of their own story, shaped by personal routines, ambitions, relationships, and struggles, while we appear only briefly — if at all — in their narrative. This insight, sometimes called the “passerby

realization”, encourages empathy by reminding us that every stranger carries unseen memories and future plans. The term was coined by John Koenig in his project „*The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*” and, although not officially recognized by major dictionaries, it has gained popularity for naming this humbling emotional experience. „*Sonder*” often arises in crowded urban settings, producing either a sense of loneliness within anonymity or, paradoxically, a deep feeling of shared humanity.

Although it can be translated, the Romanian word „**dor**” remains uniquely expressive, encompassing a profound shade of longing and nostalgia that English equivalents such as „to miss” or „to long for” fail to capture fully. While these translations convey absence or desire, they lose the emotional depth and cultural resonance embedded in the original

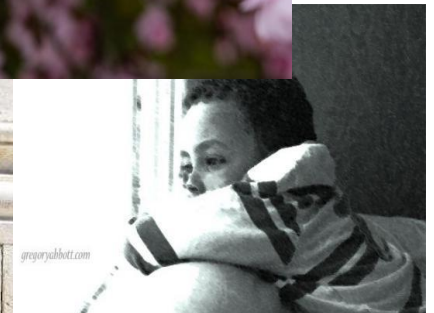
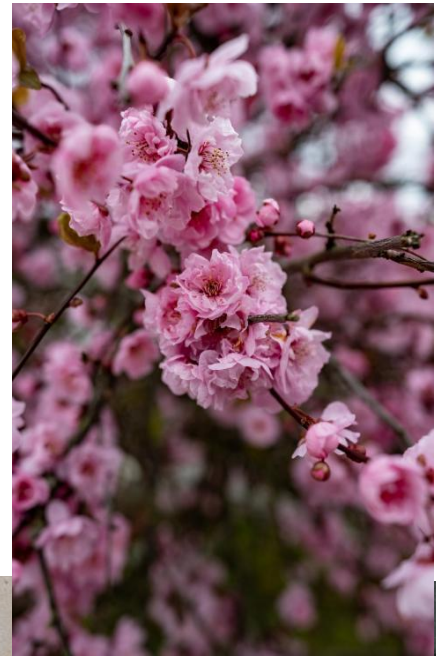


term. „*Dor*” signifies more than simply missing someone or something; it is a complex blend of love, melancholy, yearning, and a bittersweet pain that is both sorrowful and tender. The word is etymologically related to the French terms „*douleur*” (pain) and „*deuil*” (mourning), yet in Romanian it transcends these meanings, becoming pure emotion rather than a definable state. Thus, even when rendered into another language, „*dor*” inevitably sacrifices part of its essence in the process of translation.

The Romanian word „**nădejde**” is an old yet still beautiful term that expresses more than simple hope; it conveys a confident trust that someone or something will not disappoint you. When we say “*om de nădejde*,” we refer to a reliable person — a secure source of support. Although it may be translated as „hope,” this equivalent does not fully preserve its nuance, as „*nădejde*” blends hope with certainty, faith, and emotional reassurance. The word has Slavic origins, appearing as „*nadežda*”, meaning „hope” and „trust.” In Russian, Nadezhda (Надежда) is a common feminine

name derived directly from this meaning, symbolizing optimism and faith. From it also comes the name Nadia, widely used across Eastern Europe. Traditionally, Nadezhda forms part of the symbolic trio of names — Vera (Faith), Nadezhda (Hope), and Lyubov (Love) — in which abstract virtues become living identities.

Across cultures, certain words capture emotional nuances that resist precise translation, revealing how language shapes experience. The Czech term „*litost*” describes a sudden, piercing awareness of one’s own misery, a moment of inner torment triggered by self-



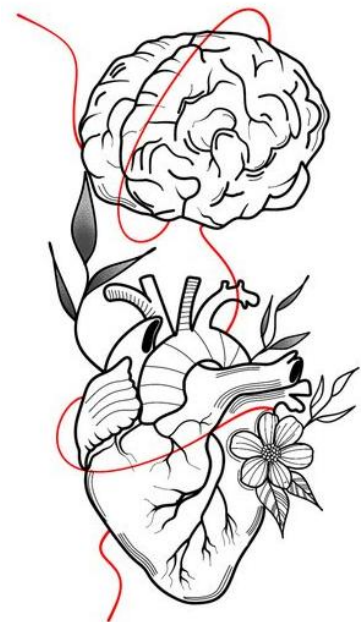
realization. In Mexican Spanish, „*pena ajena*” names the embarrassment felt when witnessing another person’s humiliation, while the German „*schadenfreude*” refers to the unsettling pleasure derived from someone else’s misfortune — which has a meaning very similar to the Hungarian „*káröröm*”. The Portuguese „*saudade*” expresses a melancholic longing for something — or someone — that may never return, whereas the Italian phrase „*ti voglio bene*” conveys a warm,



non-romantic affection for family, friends, or even pets. Welsh „***hiraeth***” evokes homesickness for a home lost or perhaps never truly possessed, and Dutch „***gezelligheid***” celebrates the deep comfort of togetherness in a cosy, intimate setting. The French expression „***l’esprit de l’escalier***” captures the frustration of thinking of the perfect reply too late, while the Filipino word „***gigil***” names the irresistible urge to squeeze something unbearably cute. Danish contributes both „***hygge***”, the simple pleasure of sharing warmth, food, and company, and „***lykke***”, a profound sense of lasting happiness and fulfillment. Estonian „***ei viitsi***” reflects a mild, almost playful reluctance to make an effort, German „***Waldeinsamkeit***” conveys the solitary serenity of being alone in the forest, and the Scottish Gaelic „***sgriob***” even identifies the peculiar itch felt on the upper lip just before sipping whisky — each term illustrating how languages crystallize subtle human sensations into singular words.

In today’s globalized world, however, linguistic richness faces a serious challenge: many languages are disappearing, and with them entire ways of understanding reality. When a language fades, it is not only vocabulary that is lost, but also cultural memory, identity, and unique emotional perspectives embedded in words that cannot be perfectly translated.

Unique, difficult to translate words remind us that human experience is far richer than any single language can capture. Each term — from *dor* to *sonder*, from *fjaka* to *hiraeth* — is a window into the unique ways cultures perceive, name, and honor emotion. They teach us that feelings are universal yet profoundly personal, and that by exploring the words of others, we deepen not only our understanding of language but also our empathy for the inner lives of those around us. Language, in this sense, becomes more than communication; it is a bridge connecting hearts across time, space, and culture.



Shaping History: Eight Romanian Women Who Have Made a Difference

by Iulia Bodea, XII G

The 8th of March is celebrated as the day of honoring women for their valuable contributions throughout history: in the fields of medicine, legislation, politics, or simply through their loving presence in our lives. Over time, countless women have defied societal expectations that labeled them as “inferior” to men, leaving an important mark on history through their courage, intelligence, and determination. Romania and even Maramureș and the city of Baia Mare, in particular, has been shaped by extraordinary women whose achievements have elevated our nation’s profile on the global stage, inspiring future generations to challenge barriers and pursue excellence.

It is difficult to choose from all the remarkable women who have shaped the course of Romanian history. Since the 2nd issue of our digital magazine is due on the 8th of March, we thought it would be a good idea to choose to celebrate eight extraordinary Romanian women whose achievements and legacies continue to inspire the young generation and leave a lasting mark on our nation:

1. Queen Marie of Romania (1875 – 1938)

Queen Marie was one of the most influential figures in Romanian history, admired for her intelligence, charisma, and unwavering dedication to her adopted country. Born a British princess, she embraced Romania as her home and used her position to stand up for social reforms, public health, and the wellbeing of her people. Her ability to navigate the complex political landscape of early 20th-century Europe made her a respected diplomat and a unifying symbol for the Romanian nation.



During World War I, Queen Marie became a beloved figure for her tireless efforts to support soldiers and civilians. She organized hospitals, visited the frontlines, and

provided personal care and encouragement to those affected by the conflict. Her work not only reduce suffering but also build up the morale of the nation during one of its most challenging periods in the history.

Beyond her public service, Queen Marie was passionate of the arts, literature, and architecture. She promoted Romanian culture internationally and encouraged the preservation of the country's heritage.

2. Ecaterina Teodoroiu (1894 – 1917)



Ecaterina Teodoroiu is remembered as one of Romania's most heroic

figures, celebrated for her courage, patriotism, and determination. She defied social expectations of women at the time by choosing to serve on the battlefield during World War I. Initially trained as a nurse, she quickly proved her bravery and leadership, earning the respect of her fellow soldiers and superiors.

During the war, Teodoroiu proved herself in several important battles, demonstrating extraordinary courage under fire. After the death of her brother on the frontlines, she voluntarily took his place as a soldier, rising to the rank of second lieutenant. Her actions on the battlefield inspired both soldiers and civilians, symbolizing the vital role women could play in defending their country during times of national crisis.

Beyond her military achievements, Ecaterina Teodoroiu became a symbol of resilience and sacrifice for Romania. She remains an enduring example of how one individual's determination can leave an important mark on history.

3. Ana Aslan (1897 – 1988)

Ana Aslan was a visionary Romanian scientist and physician, known internationally for her innovative work in geriatrics and anti-aging medicine. She dedicated her career

to improving the health and quality of life of the elderly, a field that was largely neglected at the time.

Through her research, she challenged existing medical norms and introduced innovative therapies that transformed the understanding of aging.



Aslan is best known for developing Gerovital H3, a treatment that became famous worldwide for its potential to slow the effects of aging. Her work not only advanced medical science but also positioned Romania as a leader in geriatric research. She collaborated with scientists across Europe and promoted interdisciplinary approaches, bridging clinical practice, research, and public health support.

Beyond her scientific achievements, Ana Aslan was a mentor and supporter for women in medicine and research. She inspired countless students and professionals to pursue careers in science, highlighting the importance of perseverance, innovation, and responsibility.

4. Sofia Ionescu-Ogrezeanu (1920 – 2008)

Sofia Ionescu-Ogrezeanu holds an important place in medical history as Romania's first female neurosurgeon and one of the pioneering women in this demanding field. She pursued a career in medicine at a time when surgical specialties were male-dominated. Her determination, skills, and resilience allowed her to break barriers and establish herself as a respected figure in neurosurgery.

Throughout her career, Ionescu-Ogrezeanu performed thousands of complex brain surgeries, contributing significantly to the development of modern neurosurgical techniques. She combined scientific knowledge with extraordinary precision, earning recognition both nationally and



internationally. Her work saved countless lives and helped advance the understanding of neurological disorders.

Beyond her professional achievements, Sofia Ionescu-Ogrezeanu served as an inspiration for women in medicine, demonstrating that dedication, courage, and expertise can overcome social limitations.

5. Sarmiza Bilcescu (1867 – 1935)

Sarmiza Bilcescu was a strong figure in Romanian and European history, recognized as the first woman in Romania—and one of the first in Europe—to obtain a law degree and practice law professionally. She pursued higher education at a time when women’s access to universities was extremely limited, challenging social norms and creating the way for future generations of female professionals.

Bilcescu’s legal career was marked by perseverance and dedication. She demonstrated that women could excel in fields traditionally dominated by men, advocating for justice and equality in both her studies and professional business. Her achievements not only advanced the role of women in law but also contributed to discussions about women’s rights and social progress in Romania and Europe.

Beyond her pioneering work in law, Sarmiza Bilcescu became a symbol of intellectual courage and determination. She remains an evidence to the transformative impact of one individual’s vision and courage on history.



6. Elena Pop-Hossu-Longin (1862 – 1940)



Elena Pop-Hossu-Longin was a notable Romanian writer, journalist, and women’s rights activist who played a crucial role in advancing gender equality in Transylvania during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She grew up in a politically engaged family that valued education and national identity. Inspired by these values, she became actively involved in the fight

for women's emancipation at a time when social expectations severely limited women's opportunities in public life.

Throughout her life, Pop-Hossu-Longin worked tirelessly to promote educational and professional opportunities for women. She was a co-founder of the *Reuniunea Femeilor Române Sălăjene (The Union of Romanian Women of Sălaj)* in 1880 and later helped establish the *Reuniunea Femeilor Române Hunedorene (The Union of Romanian Women of Hunedoara)* in 1886, which she led from 1895 until 1918. Under her leadership, these organizations provided women with access to practical training in areas such as sewing, weaving, and craftwork, while also serving as platforms for advocating broader social and cultural rights.

Beyond her organizational efforts, Pop-Hossu-Longin used her voice and writing to inspire others and contribute to the national awakening of Romanians in Transylvania, particularly surrounding the historic events leading to the Great Union of 1918. Despite health challenges later in life, she continued to write and speak about the importance of equality, education, and national unity.

7. Marta Iepure

Marta Iepure was a remarkable Romanian educator and social activist whose work greatly contributed to the cultural and civic life of her community in the early 20th century. As a passionate advocate for women's involvement in society, she played a leading role in organizing and directing local women's associations that were looking to address pressing social and cultural needs in Baia Mare and its surroundings following World War I. Her efforts reflected the broader movement for women's participation in public life during a period of national transformation.



In the years after the Great Union of 1918, she became president of the *Reuniunea Femeilor Române "Regina Maria" (The Union of The Romanian Women „Queen Mary”)* in Baia Mare, an organization dedicated to raise the

community through cultural activities, education, and social support. Under her leadership, the association developed programs that included public lectures, theatrical performances, and musical events aimed at strengthening national identity and promoting civic engagement. She also promoted concrete measures to assist widows, orphans, and needy families, organizing collections of clothing, books, and food for distribution during important celebrations.

Beyond her organizational awareness, Marta Iepure believed in the transformative power of education and cultural participation. She personally led Romanian language courses to help citizens maintain and deepen their linguistic and cultural heritage, and she encouraged educational initiatives that fostered pride in national history and traditions.

8. Lidia Agricola (1914 – 1994)

Lidia Agricola was a distinguished Romanian painter born in Baia Mare, a city with a rich artistic tradition. She studied at the *Free School of Painting* in Baia Mare under the guidance of respected teachers such as János Kriszán and András Mikola, and later continued her artistic development with the influential painter Sándor Ziffer. Her work is closely connected to the vibrant *Baia Mare Art Colony*, an important center of Romanian painting, where she developed a vibrant and expressive style characterized by bright colours and a deep sensitivity to landscape and human subjects.



Throughout her career, she actively exhibited her work both in Romania and internationally, participating in exhibitions in cities such as Budapest, Moscow, Sofia, Warsaw, and Berlin. In addition, her paintings were included in the Romanian pavilion in 1954. In recognition of her artistic achievements, she was awarded the *State Prize for Painting* in 1952. Her work varied subject matter, from expressive landscapes of Maramureş to scenes reflecting everyday life.

Beyond her accomplishments as an artist, Lidia Agricola made significant contributions to art education. Between 1950 and 1954 she served as head of the *Baia Mare Secondary School of Art*, where she mentored younger generations of artists and helped shape the artistic education of postwar Romania. Her life and work remain deeply rooted in the cultural history of Baia Mare, reflecting both the artistic legacy of the region and the resilience of a woman who pursued her creative vision through changing historical circumstances.

These remarkable women are just a few examples of those who have shaped history through their courage, talent, and determination. While the 8th of March is a day dedicated to celebrating their achievements, their contributions deserve recognition and appreciation throughout the year. Learning about their lives reminds us of the strength, resilience, and creativity that women bring to every aspect of society. Moreover, it encourages us to honor and value the women in our own lives - not only on special occasions, but every day - for the countless ways they inspire, support, and improve our world.

When an Excuse Became the Ghost of Us

by Ariana Rus-Bucur, IX D

You were aware it was a red flag. But you still stayed.

Maybe it was because your friends didn't like them. Maybe it was the way you couldn't fully open up. The way they disappeared and came back as if nothing had happened. Maybe it was just a gut feeling. But you always knew.

Red flags never come screaming at you. They don't bother with being seen. They are tied with excuses, wrapped in red ribbon and leave the rest to the imagination.

Red flags and how we acknowledge them

They are often seen as bad habits. They don't seem harmful at first, but over time they turn into something unhealthy where someone ends up hurting. Most red flags are easy to excuse, such as how they take too long to reply - they are just busy. They don't mean it, it's just their sense of humor, maybe they've been through a lot, none of these seem serious at first, but healthy relationships don't require constant convincing. Some red flags can be fixed, others are patterns that shouldn't be ignored.

Many TV shows normalize toxic traits, such as the unhealthy obsession Joe had over the girls he dated in the famous show *You*, or Elena choosing someone who constantly hurt her in *The Vampire Diaries*. Or in the series *Gossip Girl* where friends and lovers betray each other on a daily basis. Why is it that in real life we would run away from these habits, but if they are on screen, we romanticize them? Obsession and jealousy in films are presented as chemistry. Television taught us that love should be intense, even painful, that constant



fighting is just passion, that jealousy means they care, when in reality chaos and instability don't come from love and shouldn't be seen as romantic.

Why are they ignored?

People often ignore red flags because of the fear of being alone. We always think we can fix people, that we can change them, but we lose ourselves in the process. We think we can deal with them and that it isn't worth losing someone over such "small things". We romanticize getting attention, we settle for what they give and being chosen defines our worth. Then it is not love anymore, it's just excuses. And after a while, we don't ignore red flags anymore, we just get better at justifying them.

Red flags are often followed by hope and that's what makes them hard to walk away from. A good moment, a promise, a glimpse of them that feels like proof that you were wrong. Those moments keep you waiting, convincing yourself that it is worth staying, that things will change. But that only makes it harder to let go. Time doesn't change red flags, it only makes them easier to see. Sometimes, you need to know when to walk away and not ignore what hurts you.

And after all, red flags are signs that you're maybe not on the right path. But even then, love isn't about finding a perfect person, everyone has red flags and it's part of being human. It's just that some are tolerable, when others shouldn't be ignored. Love is about finding someone who you can be yourself around, someone who doesn't make you feel inferior, or leaves you questioning yourself everyday. Someone who loves you for who you are and shows it without being asked. It's about finding someone who is your



safe space. That's how you know it is real, "when home isn't a place, but a person", as Poppy said in *People we meet on vacation*.



Crimson Forever: Vampires and the Romance of Eternal Devotion

by Dalia Mihali, XII C



Valentine's Day is traditionally devoted to fleeting gestures: bouquets that wilt, chocolates that melt, and promises made in the fragile language of a single evening. Yet, hidden beneath the soft glow of hearts and candlelight, another story of love quietly endures in the collective imagination — darker, older, and far more persistent. It is the story of the vampire, a creature born not only from fear of death, but from humanity's aching refusal to let love end.

The origins of the vampire reach deep into Eastern and Central European folklore, particularly in the regions of the Balkans and Transylvania, where tales of the *strigoi*, *vrykolakas* and *Nosferatu* first haunted village memory. These early vampires were not elegant immortals wrapped in velvet and sorrow. They were disturbing, bloated

revenants blamed for illness, misfortune and sudden death. Their existence reflected a desperate need to explain decay, epidemics and the unsettling transformation of the human body after burial. In its earliest form, vampirism was a language of fear — a myth constructed to give shape to the unknown.

And yet, even in these crude beginnings, the vampire carried a strangely intimate symbolism. The act of feeding itself was not distant or mechanical. It required closer contact than almost any other form of violence. Lips brushed skin. Breath hovered against a pulse. Blood — the ancient emblem of life — was exchanged between bodies. Unintentionally, the vampire became linked not only to death, but to the most private boundaries of the human self.

As European literature evolved and Romanticism reshaped the cultural imagination of the nineteenth century, the vampire transformed with it. Writers such as John Polidori and later Bram Stoker refined the monster into a figure capable of longing, memory and tragic desire. Count Dracula, perhaps the most enduring symbol of vampirism, is not driven solely by hunger. He is defined by loss, displacement and an obsessive pull toward a love that seems to echo across time and reincarnation. Horror slowly fused with romance, and the vampire ceased to be merely a corpse that walks. It became a lover who cannot die.

This shift mirrors a deeper human fantasy — not of immortality itself, but of emotional permanence. Death ends stories. Vampires defy that ending.

In modern media, the connection between vampirism and eternal devotion becomes explicit. From *Interview with the Vampire* to *The Vampire Diaries* and *Twilight*, the immortal body functions as a promise: love, once chosen, does not have to erode with age, illness or time. Vampires remember everything. They carry centuries of regret and tenderness with equal clarity. To love a vampire — or to be one — is to love without the excuse of forgetting.

More importantly, vampire romance redefines what commitment means. Mortality allows people to love knowing that endings are inevitable. Immortality, however, demands a far more terrifying choice: to remain devoted when boredom, suffering and change stretch not across decades, but across lifetimes. In this sense, the vampire is not a symbol of easy passion. It is a symbol of endurance. The promise is not simply ‘I will love you forever’, but ‘I will still recognise you when the world becomes unrecognizable’.

The famous act of turning — of offering eternal life through blood — is also rarely framed as neutral survival. In romantic narratives, it becomes an intimate covenant. To be transformed by a vampire is to be permanently altered by love itself. Identity, morality and even the meaning of time are reshaped through the bond. The beloved is no longer merely someone who shares life, but someone who defines the conditions of existence.

This is precisely why Valentine’s Day, despite its sweetness, aligns so naturally with vampire mythology. At its emotional core, the celebration does not truly honour romance as lightness or pleasure. It honours the hope that affection can resist disappearance. Vampires embody that hope in its most exaggerated form. They remove the ultimate obstacle to devotion — death — and expose a far more unsettling question instead: what remains of love when nothing forces it to end?

Modern audiences are drawn to vampires not because they kill, but because they stay.

They stay when cities collapse, when languages change, when the world forgets the names of its own gods. They stay when lovers grow unrecognisable to themselves. In a culture shaped by speed, replacement and constant reinvention, the vampire offers a radical fantasy — not eternal youth, but eternal attachment.

Ironically, the creature once invented to explain decay has become one of fiction’s most powerful symbols of emotional preservation.

On a day devoted to temporary beauty and scripted romance, the vampire stands quietly at the edge of candlelight, holding a much darker promise. Love does not fade. Love does not loosen its grip. Love, once chosen, can become immortal — not because it is safe, but because someone is willing to carry it through centuries of loneliness, loss and blood-stained memory.

Perhaps this is why vampire love stories feel so hauntingly tender. They are not about perfect relationships. They are about the courage to remain, even when eternity offers countless opportunities to walk away.

And in the soft, red glow of Valentine's Day, that may be the most romantic myth of all.

adoration

by Dalia Mihali, XII C

beneath the hush of candle flame, where silence learns to kneel,
two shadows meet like prayer and sin, unsure of what they feel.
their hands, unholy relics, trace the edges of a vow—
to love not for forever's sake, but for the trembling now.

the room forgets its purpose; even time averts its eyes,
for love like this remakes the world, and everything that dies.
their breath entwines—a secret hymn no scripture dared to keep,
a whisper soft as mercy's edge, where heaven learns to weep.

adoration is not tender—no, it devours slow,
a holy hunger clothed in grace, pretending not to know.
each heartbeat burns in reverence, each pulse a kind of prayer,
for beauty born of fleetingness demands that one must stare.

to love is not possession, but the art of being still,
to watch the other bloom, then fade, and worship them until
the bones remember radiance long after flesh is gone—
a symphony of loss that plays when dawn forgets its song.

and somewhere past the curtain fall, beyond the world's last breath,
adoration hums—a quiet thing that even outlives death.
for what is worship, if not this—the ache to touch and fail,
to drown beneath another's soul, to kiss, and then curtail?

the stars bear witness silently; they've seen it all before—
how mortals trade eternity for what they can adore.
no heaven's gate, no holy creed could ever hold so true
as love that knows it cannot last, and burns because it knew.

so let the curtain close once more upon our fleeting stage,
and let the audience forget our names, our tender cage.
for adoration lingers still—between each breath, each scar—
the echo left by us, who proved how infinite we are.

longing

by Dalia Mihali, XII C

i love like rain that never lands,
like hands still open, always bare;
i give in ways no one commands,
and call it hope instead of prayer.

i pour myself past sense or end,
into a depth that has no floor;
the echo never calls me friend,
the tide returns to me no more.

i learn the shapes of other souls,
their quiet wants, their hidden seams;
i keep them safe, i make them whole,
and starve beside my offered dreams.

yet when my hands begin to shake,
when silence settles, cold and wide,
no one anticipates my ache,
no one's waiting by my side.

the moon observes my silent theft,
of warmth and care that goes unkept.
and though my heart bends, burns, and stirs,
i am not mirrored back in hers.

they say love shifts from heart to heart,
that no two languages align—
but if that's truth, then here's my art:
to love like this, and not have mine.

lust.

by Dalia Mihali, XII C

in the hush between heartbeats, i found a hymn of smoke and silver—
a pulse that mirrored mine in every ghost-lit shiver.
He came not as dawn, but as dusk incarnate, slow and low,
with eyes like lanterns drowned in the undertow.

the night leaned closer when He spoke, as if to hear
the warmth that dressed each word in velvet fear.
He was ruin wrapped in mercy, sin laced with grace,
the kind of quiet storm that saints refuse to face.

He does not shine; He smolders—black flame in bone,
a crown of shadows carved upon His throne.
i, foolish moth, drawn to that darkened bloom,
would gladly burn to perfume His tomb.

His touch—alchemy on a dying vein,
turning grief to pleasure, ache to chain.
if death had lips, they'd move like His—
a vow disguised as a fatal kiss.

i do not crave forever; i crave the fall,
to love Him in the moment the stars stall.
let the heavens keep their lying fable—
i'll lay with Him, my love, my angel.

for in His arms, i've met both god and grave,
the cradle and the crypt i ever crave.
and if the world forgets my name's refrain,
i shall remain a raven, haunting His domain.

(excerpt from *lyrics of an undead valentine*, by Dalia Mihali)

Heaven

by Sofia Incze, XII G

Are there flowers in Heaven?

Or should I be more grateful for the ones I can admire here?

What about the laughter of children?

The sunsets and sunrises I love so deeply—are they there too?

Is there music in Heaven? Is there a cold wind, white snow, or anything that could imitate the joyful feeling of a summer night?

Are there dresses in Heaven, events where I can dance freely and laugh loudly at a table surrounded by lovely people?

Are there colours over there—new ones, different ones—or should I lose myself more often in someone's eyes so I won't forget what love looked like to me?

Is there coffee in Heaven? Or dishes like the ones my mom made to comfort me when I was struggling?

Can I feel other's touch in Heaven, or will I forever miss the hugs and fingerprints of the people who made my life worth living?

Is there life in Heaven? Or am I dreaming of something that could never be better than the best moments I'm living now?

Am I arguing with myself? Am I losing my dreams, or creating something even more fascinating?

Do I need to know anything about my afterlife, or should I simply live the Heaven I already have here?

At least, what's love?

by Cozma Claudia Andrea, X G

For me, love is not weakness,
Not fear, not a step behind,
It is the fire that burns within me,
The strength that lifts me when I'm confined.

Love is power —
An unseen arm that keeps me strong,
The voice that softly whispers "You can,"
When the whole wide world goes wrong.

For me, love is hope,
A sunrise after a raging night,
It's life that pulses through my veins,
The heart that beats for something bright.

Love is everything.
It's the sky, the earth, the endless sea,
It's all that moves around my soul,
The path, the dream, the call to be.

Through love I grow, I breathe, I live,
Through it I am my truest light,
Not weakness — love's a shining flame,
My universe, forever bright.

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by Mihellis Anna Maria, XC

the familiar silence of thoughts begins to stir,
a chaos that doesn't make any noise,
every chord is heavy,
another weight added to my body,
without warning,
my chest tightens in a vice.

you say my eyes are brown,
but you only see the shadows I show you,
while the sun reveals the green.

I've always been drawn to the pupil—
that honest centre where the light explains everything.

when the sun is too loud,
I'm looking for that room,
the one that doesn't require me to remember names,
where I don't have to feel it all at once.

I just want to hear the piano,
naming the parts of me that don't have sounds,
to feel my veins clenching my wrist,
in a rhythmic melody, hidden deep in my soul,
that happens only when the heart recognizes its own skin.

Passing by.

by Rus-Bucur Ariana, IX D

They say goodbyes aren't forever,
But as the sun sets down,
As the clouds all gather,
A voice keeps wandering in town
That I can't seem to remember.

Time dances freely to the sky,
It doesn't wait for what it's due.
The memory of a goodbye
Makes the sound of missing you
Echo through what I deny.

The warmth of a desired shade,
A lie I tried to memorise,
The view that cuts me like a blade,
All there is, it's compromise.
All moments pass, all seconds fade.

But when the night is all around,
The pain keeps leaving me undone,
The sour taste of every wound,
Still circles back to only one.
Your love, nowhere to be found.

They say nothing's forever,
When it's done we always know,
You don't have to be clever,
To tell when to let go.
Sometimes it ends with never,
Others, with hello.

Alluring Love

by Alessia Sabou, XI A

Not so long ago, on an island surrounded by seas, there was a small town. It wasn't as isolated as some people may say, because the island always gave you a false sense of remoteness, making villagers forget the real world. However, the real world didn't forget them. In consequence, when The Great War came, men of all ages were recruited. But that's not the direction in which the story goes.

In the waters surrounding the island, there lived a beautiful mermaid. Her hair was ginger and curly, also thanks to the saltiness of the water, reaching below where her human waist turned into a blue fish tail. Her scales shone in the sunlight, making it seem as if silver was painted on them. The tails' ends were slowly fading towards transparency, decorated with a sapphire positioned on the place of their parting. Her pale face had sun kissed freckles, and some scales found their way up her palid neck and onto her cheeks. On her forehead, between rebellious hair strands, rested a crown made with pearls, seashells and, in the centre, a star-shaped gem. She would swim around the island, looking for shipmen to lure into the depths with her song:

'Shipman, Shipman
Come to me,
Into the depths
Of the seas!
I'll love and cherish you
Take you to my home;
But be careful
You won't come back to shore!'

Sometimes, some men would recall seeing a blueish, long figure waiting on the rocky shore, other women would say they heard a beautiful song coming from the waters near the harbour. But more often than not, the mermaid spent her time under a dock,

near a park, waiting for someone to approach her, just so she could devour them under the Sea's protection.

One day, a tall man, wearing a simple reddish-brown shirt and some black pants came near the dock. His lengthy hair was tied up in a ponytail and, around his waist, there was a utility belt with two compartments, matching his tall boots. He didn't seem to have realised what danger awaited for him under water. He looked rather... concerned. Seeing this, the mermaid didn't hesitate. She came up, only her head visible and started singing:

'Shipman, Shipman
Come to me
Into the...'

She stopped, as the man didn't seem to be affected by the spell. He didn't step forward, but he was making some weird hand gestures. The mermaid looked at him confused, subconsciously tilting her head.

'Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you knew sign language. Are you okay? Why are you in the water?'

This...didn't answer any questions she had.

'Sailor, why aren't you in the water? And what were you doing with your hands?'

'Oh, uh, well' the man smiled.' I was trying to get my message to you by using, well, my hands. I was signing. You know, sign language?'

'What foolishness are you speaking about, human?'

'Excuse yourself? I'm not the one drowning. I was just trying to see whether you needed help.'

'Why do you do it?' the mermaid cut him off.

'...what?'

'That language. Signing. Why?'

The man could've easily ignored her. But there was something so innocent, so curious which could be read in her eyes, making him stay.

'Well, I've lost my hearing in the war. Since then, I was ruled 'unfit to fight' anymore and I was sent home. Here, I had to learn how to read people's lips to

understand what they're saying. Also, I learnt sign language because, if other people come to me and tell me something using their hands, there are far less chances of messing the meaning up.'

'Wow, really?' A smile appeared on mermaids face. 'Then teach me.'

'Whoa, whoa, whoa! wait one second, lady. Why are you in the water? You still haven't answered my question.'

'Sailor, I thought you were smarter than that.'

She placed her arms on the dock and, using their support, raised herself up, revealing her blue fish scales.

'Come on, I was literally alluring you in the water. And I have scales on my neck, gills and my ears are more like fins than human ears. I thought you were deaf, not blind.'

'Ouch. Oh well I must get going.'

'Wait please! I want to learn to communicate with you on your language. Come on!' The mermaid pleaded.

'Please stop covering your mouth while you speak. I cant read your lips. Also, why should I do so, siren?'

'Firstly, I'm a mermaid. Secondly, I will lure you into the depths, drown and eat you if you don't cooperate.'

'Really? With that song which I can't hear?'

Well, he was smart after all.

'Okay okay, human. How aboouut... I tell you about my world while you teach me about yours? Eh? Sounds like a sweet deal, doesn't it?' She said, smiling.

'Hmmm. Fine. You got yourself a deal...uh...' he paused for a brief second. 'You never told me your name.'

'You first, sailor. I don't trust you with my name unless you go first.'

'Is this some kind of tradition?' The man grinned. 'Better than just telling you my name, let me teach you how to sign it.'

His fist held up, his thumb held out.

'This is 'A'. Now you do it.'

She held out her hand, trying to mimic him.

'Now 'T'.' He held out his index finger, and the mermaid did the same.

'Now this one is tricky. 'H' requires some wrist movement.'

'Like this?' She asked.

'Kind of. Don't worry, you'll get it eventually. Now 'A' again. Do you remember how it was?'

'Yes!' The mermaid did the first gesture, excitedly.

'Good good. Now, the last one, 'N'. 'He held out two fingers and then rested them on his thumb. 'Athán. My name is Athán.'

'Wow, what a beautiful name.' The mermaid said in awe. 'My name is Itsaso.'

'Itsaso...' Athán seemed to be in a dream like state. 'I'll see you tomorrow, Itsaso. I have to go.'

'Farewell, Athán!'

Itsaso could see this was the beginning of something beautiful, for she hasn't felt that sweet tingling in her stomach in a good while.

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'Athán, finally!' Itsaso greeted him. The sun has started to slowly slip towards the horizon, yet it still had enough energy to shine brightly over the world.

'Sorry, sorry. I had some business to take care of.' the man responded, a gentle smile on his lips. 'To make it up to you, here:'

He held his fist up to his chest and started rotating it.

'That's sorry, in sign language. Hope you can forgive me, milady.'

The mermaid was amazed. She tried for herself the hand gesture and, to show her gratitude, asked:

'What questions do you have for me, sailor?'

Athán blinked, as if her words took him aback. After a moment of silence, he said:

'Yesterday you said that you aren't a siren. Aren't mermaids and sirens the same?'

'Haha, silly human!' Itsaso laughed. 'No, not at all. Sirens are half human, half feathered creatures, such as birds. We, mermaids, are half fish half human. Ancient Greeks, for example, knew this fact, but I think this bit of knowledge was lost to time.'

Athan looked as if something clicked in his brain, making his world a little bit clear.

‘Okay...so, that's the difference?’

‘Mostly. We both eat men, so...’

‘So you really eat men?’

‘Yes!’ Itsaso answered, some annoyance being sensed in her tone. ‘I don’t understand why some of you think that we eat algae. We are half human, half fish, both omnivores in these waters. Why the heck would we turn out to be vegetarians?’

‘That doesn't give you the right to kill people.’ Athan riposted.

‘Athan, you were a soldier. We, at least, do it for food, unlike what senseless destruction you have been bringing to our shores.’

The man was silent for a moment. He didn't look defeated, or, at least, not in the way Itsaso wanted. In the end, he held out his fist and made a rotation with it on his chest.

Itsaso smiled, and then started giggling, until she bursted into full laughter.

‘Humans, such affectionate creatures.’

‘Haha, yeah. I guess I never saw it that way. I think love only comes to us if it’s casual, no strings attached.’

‘However, from what I see, you humans seek long lasting relationships and commitment. Is it casual even then?’

‘No. That's the purest form of love for some of us.’

After some thinking, the mermaid said:

‘Show me how to sign I love you.’

Athan's cheeks turned red, turning his eyes away.

‘There are more ways to say I love you, depending on how you mean it. The easiest one is a combination from the letters I, L and Y, like this.’ He held out his pinky, index finger and thumb, raised them to his head's level and turned them towards his ear. Itsaso did the same, until she understood how the move went.

‘Thank you for teaching me this, Athan. It means a lot to me, believe it or not.’ Itsaso smiled, more like only for herself. ‘As a way to thank you, I shall give you this.’

She rose herself up and, at the same time, dragged Athan down so that her lips could meet his cheek.

'I know this is from your culture. I actually learnt it at the harbour, when I watched all those people part ways. I soon realised that this sign of love is also one of gratitude and promise.' She said, a spark visible when her eyes met Athan's.

'I, uh, I' the man stuttered, too flustered to hold even one thought. 'Thank you, milady. I shall see you tomorrow.' He finally muttered, his palm raised to his kissed cheek.

'I'll be waiting.' said the mermaid, at the same time, making the last learnt gesture.

-

Their daily meetings became more and more pleasant as time went on. She would tell him the secrets of her underwater world, while he would teach her about the human world. They completed each other just as the Sun and the Moon would, learning how to surpass differences and how to grow for the other. Their meetings would often end with a kiss on the cheek, let it be initiated by the mermaid or the man. However, something didn't fit quite right with Athan lately. Although he never stopped coming, his body seemed to weaken, making him cough more often. During one visit, he asked Itsaso:

'How long do mermaids live?'

She was surprised by the question, but she didn't refuse to answer.

'Well, we just age until our body reaches its maturity and, to preserve perfectly that form, we stop there. Then, we only die if we get injured or if we lose too much blood. I know you humans never stop aging, but aside from that it is the same as you, humans.'

'The same...' Athan murmured for himself. He was quiet for a moment, as if thinking about his next move while playing chess. Then, he added 'Yeah, just like us.'

'What's wrong, Athan? I can see that something troubles you. Also, speak up, I can't hear you properly.'

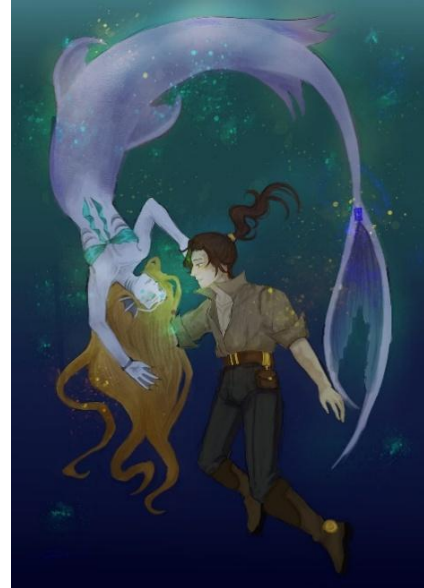
She held out her hands, thumbs inside, and crossed them three times in front of her head, signing 'trouble'.

Athan smiled, feeling proud of her. 'You're right, milady. I am bothered by the fact that...' he coughed two times before finishing his sentence. 'I will have to leave.'

'As in a trip?' Itsaso jumped in.

'Yeah, something like that. I tried bargaining to stay a little longer in this place. Unfortunately, I don't have a date set for my parture yet, but I know that...' Athan reached for Itsaso's hands, holding them tight, but gentle. 'I want to spend my remaining moments with you.'

Itsaso felt a tingling in her stomach, but, at the same time, she felt awfully calm next to Athan. Their faces grew closer to eachother's, Athan's rough hand rose to hold her face, and he used the other to stabilise her by holding her waist.



'I know you saw this in harbour, you must've seen people doing this.' Athan whispered, his breath warm. 'It's a gesture between lovers mostly to show eachother how much the other person means to them. With your permission, Itsaso...'

The mermaid nodded her head and, when Athan pressed their lips together, she got lost into the magical moment. How could something be so simple, yet so complex in the same time? Seconds passed which felt like hours, each charming in its own special way while all having something special in common.

When they parted, Athan smiled at Itsaso, murmuring:

'I hope to see you again, Itsaso.'

'Farewell, Athan. I'll be waiting.'

However, that was not the last thing Athan said. Maybe with his mouth, but his hands made a gesture. His fists were crossed over his chest, then pointing at Itsaso. He didn't stop to explain what that meant but, deep down, something inside Itsaso always knew the significance.

She waited at that dock until summer turned into autumn and winter into spring. She watched everything around her change, while she remained in solitude, keeping her

promise. After a while, Itsaso decided that he must've set off while she wasn't watching, so, with hope in her mind and love in her heart, the mermaid went to look for him. She knew he was somewhere, unable to reach her, alas she adventured through all the waters she can find. In order to feel less alone in her travels, she did the only thing she has always known: sing. However, her song has changed, for now she wasn't singing to lure, she was singing for herself, for her beliefs and, although he was deaf, she was willing to take the chance that Athan might hear her.

'Sailor, Sailor

Where are you?

Over the lands

Of your dry land

We'll grow and love

Take me to your new home

And I promise

We won't ever be alone'

Itsaso isn't sure of anything. She doesn't know how much her trip will last or whether she'll ever find him. But the only thing she is certain of is that Athan is happy, wherever he is.

(drawing by Marchis Mara Teodora, XI A)

Fate's punishment

by Fay Evergreen

As she held her beloved the second time over, lying in the rubble, slowly taking his last breaths, she breathed a sigh of relief, knowing, this time, that he would not stay dead, that the Fates would not allow that. He knew, as he looked up at her, he knew from what she told him and she saw his knowing, calm gaze aimed at her. She heard him whisper: 'I want... to feel your kiss, if one last time...'

Even with all their friends gathered around watching, they were in a world of their own: him, longingly looking at her lips, her, with the engagement ring sneakily slid on her finger, in a web of secrets and pains lost in time only they knew about. Crying, she leaned down, and in their embrace, him lost in the sweetness of her lips, growing numb of the pain he was feeling, her crying, having to relive the moment she lost her first beloved, he drew his last breath.

She remained still for some time, conflicted: She had a husband, and daughter and a son, yet the fates brought her back to the past, reignited feelings she struggled for so long to put out, opened up yet again wounds that took so long to numb. When she finally looked up, her friends were still there, looking at them.

'He's gone,' she whispered loud enough for them to hear.

No one said a word. Then, she started turning to dust, being brought back to the future. She landed in her room, but fate was not done with her. Right by the bed, in front of her eyes was her husband. A messenger of the Fates, was holding him by the throat, a blade piercing through her husband's chest, through his heart. As he gave his last breath, he took one last look at her, and muttered '*I love you*'. Just like that, he was gone.

‘We still have plans for you, dear,’ said the messenger before vanishing into thin air.

She kneeled, cursing the fates and whatever their plans would be. She remained like that, frozen in pain and grief, but not daring cry out in pain, or move; a sacred silence fell upon the apartment. After an hour, maybe two, she got up, and headed to the Avengers tower, desperately holding on to hope. *Find Cleo* she thought, *take the stone and just bring him back, like always*. Her mind was racing, and at this point the hope of bringing him back was what she desperately clung to keep her sane, to keep her moving. When she got there, she saw him: her first love, the one she lost so long ago. Seeing him there, alive, well, she broke, once more, and lost consciousness.

Now she knew: the fates had no other purpose but to break her, to spite her. If they had no control over her, they would hurt the ones they did have control over and she loved, one by one, until she was left alone.

When she regained consciousness, she found Dr. Banner tending to her. In the background, there he was again: Morgan, looking back at her expectantly. She got up and walked to him.

‘I know things are weird, and I have my memories back... I need your help. My wife... She- she was killed by this... thing!’ he started sobbing, ‘I just came home to see it holding her by the throat, with a blade run through her heart—’

She paused, stared into the nothing, realization hitting her like a truck: it wasn't a dream. It was no nightmare. It was all real: Morgan was gone, dead, still lying lifeless on their bedroom floor. She flinched: the Infinity Stones.

‘Where's Cleo? I need her— I need the stones, *right now!*’

‘She's away, on a mission, we don't know when she's coming back.’

Just then, behind her, a portal opened: Cleo stepped out gracefully, the stones latched onto her crown. Cynthia bolted towards her. Cleo reached out her arms, expecting a welcome hug, but Cynthia was only looking at one thing, the only thing that was keeping her in one piece and sane: Cleo's crown. She yanked it from her head and flew right off. Cleo was left speechless for a second, after which she went right after her mom, wondering why on earth is she acting so unnaturally.

Cynthia, through tears, having arrived home, was hunched over Morgen's dead body, holding the crown, now turned back to necklace, pressed against his chest, whispering spells, or maybe just begging the heavens to let him come back, like it always used to be, like she was allowed, no, forced to come back to him so many times before. But Morgen was still as lifeless as she had left him. The heavens turned a blind eye to this tragedy and turned their ear from her desperate plea. Even the Infinity stones were powerless in the face on the Messenger of The Fates.

Cleo found her mother still hunched over, still crying, still lost between whispers of love and pleas for help to the heavens, the gods above, her ancestors or anyone who would listen. As she approached her, the scene unveiled before her eyes: her father - dead, and her mother - helpless, powerless to bring him back. She understands what had gone down on the spot. She knelt besides her mother, Cynthia, with hands still covered in blood, turned and hugged Cleo. Cleo hugged her back, and they remained so, both crying helplessly, powerlessly, hugging each other tight, afraid that if one let go, the other would break forever.

A Snowy Love Story

by Popan Andrada



Ah, winter... the coldest, yet the most enjoyable season of all. Snowflakes are falling down from the sky, covering the earth with a milky white blanket. Children are playing outside, joining snowball fights, making snow angels or even going sledding. Despite all these amazing activities, there is one that children love the most: building snowmen.

It just so happens that in a town far, far away, Emma, a little girl, was building one by herself, in the backyard of her house. Her older sister, Emily, was watching her from inside the house, smiling. The little girl was just finishing up the snowman's head, by placing a pot on his head. She smiled, seeing her work and ran to the window to show it to her sister. She knocked on the window and Emily opened it.

"Emily, look! I finished the snowman!" said Emma, while pointing her finger at it.

Her sister smiled brightly at her and looked at it. "Good job, Emma! It looks amazing."

"What do you think I should name him?" asked Emma.

Emily put her finger on her chin and put a thoughtful expression on, thinking about a name. After a few seconds, she replied. "What about Peter? I'd say it fits him perfectly."

"Yes! That's perfect! Thanks, Emily!"

"Dinner will be ready soon, okay? Try to finish."

"Okay!" said Emma, as she ran back to the snowman.

She sat down, in front of him and smiled. “Hi, Peter, I’m Emma! Welcome to the world!” She looked at him and sighed. “My sister gave you the name, so I hope you like it...I love my sister. Her name is Emily. She is 20 years old already and I am only 9...She is studying at a university! Can you believe that? She came back home for the holidays though, so maybe you’ll get to meet her!” Emma looked at the snowman and sighed again and her expression shifted into a sad one. “It’s so annoying that she is always alone...She doesn’t have many friends and she hasn’t found true love yet and that makes me sad...I just wish she’ll be happy someday and have her own Prince Charming and start a family and-”

Emma didn’t get to finish her sentence, because she was cut off by her mother. “Emma, dinner is ready!”

She stood up and replied “Coming!”

She looked at the snowman and kissed him, getting snow on her face. She ran towards the house giggling and cleaning herself with her glove.

All of her family ate dinner together, watched a movie and eventually everyone went to sleep. The night was quiet. It was snowing outside and the moon’s light was reflecting on the white snow. Somewhere around midnight though, a strong wind started to blow, moving the snowflakes in the air rapidly. A little vortex of snowflakes was formed around the snowman in the backyard, circling him. Suddenly a few sparkles started to fall over him and a strong light appeared, creating an explosion of little stars. Luckily, no one woke up, but someone did awaken. Peter, the snowman, opened his little eyes that were made of charcoals and looked around confused. He looked above and saw the moon, enchanted. “Woah...” he said. He immediately covered his mouth with his stick hands, surprised. “I can talk...?” he asked himself. He started to move around a little bit, just to test his new abilities. He moved all around the backyard, dragging the snow behind him. He smiled with his stone mouth and decided to go back to his initial position and wait for the next day.

The morning finally came. The winter sun was up, making the snow sparkle. Emma was very excited to go outside and play with her brand new friend, Peter. However, the moment she walked out in the backyard, she noticed that Peter was gone. She tried to look for him everywhere. She was very confused, she looked around the backyard, but she found nothing. She started to cry, desperate. She couldn't have already lost her new friend.

While she tried to stop herself from crying, she noticed that there were some tracks in the snow. It looked like someone was dragging a very big sphere. Also, the back porch was open, so she guessed that it must have been Peter. Through her tears, she mumbled to herself "Someone must have taken him!" Determination suddenly struck her, and she decided to go and look for him.

Hearing her sob, Emily immediately ran outside to check what was going on, but right when she was about to ask her, she noticed that her sister ran out the porch, even though she knew she wasn't allowed to go outside alone.

"Emma, no!" she yelled, worried. She instantly started to run after her sister, concerned. Emma, however, continued to run, while following the tracks.

It seemed like the tracks were going towards a forest, the one they called The Charmers' Woods. It was known to be full of wild animals, such as wolves and bears, but also full of maniacs that kidnap people or even kill them. It was called The Charmers' Woods because it was said that some types of trees would emit a powerful mist that would attract people into going deeper into the forest, therefore the trees were called Charmers, resulting in the forest's name. It was just a legend, but nobody ever dared to set foot in it...until now.

Emma kept on following the tracks and eventually entered the forest. Her sister was right behind her, following her and yelling for her to stop. Emma kept on running along the tracks, until she found a mirror that was pinned to a tree. It appeared to be broken, but one of the pieces that were still stuck to it was glowing, intriguing Emma. She touched it

and suddenly vanished. Right when she was about to catch her, Emily stopped, because Emma was nowhere to be seen. Shocked, she looked around for a little bit, until she noticed the glowing piece and she touched it as well, vanishing in thin air.

After a few minutes that felt like a few months, she woke up on the ground and rubbed her head, since she felt like she had been hit by a truck. She sat up and looked around. “What the...” she said, astonished. It looked like she wasn’t on the same planet anymore. The landscape was constructed only from mountains, hills and valleys made of ice. The sky was purple and the clouds were pink and very close to land level. All of the houses were made from icicles and rests of glaciers. Some of them were even made from coloured ice. Emily looked around for a couple of seconds and then saw her sister talking to somebody. She instantly stood up and ran to her. She grabbed her arm and turned her so she would face her.

“Emma, are you crazy? You almost gave me a heart attack! Why did you run out of the backyard? You know you’re not allowed to go outside the house without mom, dad or me!” she yelled, stressed.

“I’m sorry! I was just following-” Emma tried to explain herself, but she was cut off by Emily, who yelped, frightened.

“Is that snowman moving?!” yelled Emily, again.

“And talking...” said the snowman and Emily jumped, even more frightened.

“I must be dreaming...or going crazy...or maybe both...” said Emily, pinching her nose bridge in disbelief.

Emma smiled and reassured her sister “It’s alright, Emily! I was just following Peter, my friend!” and she pointed her finger towards the snowman.

“Wait a minute, isn’t that the snowman that you built yesterday? The one I...named?”

“Yes! That’s right. He left the backyard this morning and I was scared that he was kidnapped, so I followed his tracks and eventually ended up here!” explained Emma. “This is the snowmen’s land, Emily! It’s called Hiverland!”

Emily looked around and noticed that it was true. Every single individual that was walking on the streets was a snowman. Emma began to reassure her and to explain to her that now they were stuck in Hiverland, since people are not allowed to come in it. Peter also explained that The Charmers’ Woods Legend was just a distraction for people, so they wouldn’t find the mirror that was actually a portal. Emily also found out that each and every snowman that children have built, are coming through this portal every winter after the weather becomes too warm, so that they won’t melt. She also found out that the only way that they can escape was to break the curse that the snowmen were put under.

“And how am I supposed to know what the curse is?” asked Emily, annoyed. “I just got here by accident...Can’t I just take my sister and go back home?”

“Sadly, no...We would send you back if we could, but we don’t know how...” Peter explained, while admiring Emily. He thought she was very beautiful and truly mesmerizing, but he decided to keep quiet about it, since he was just a poor little snowman and she was, well...a human.

After all, Emma and Emily remained in Hiverland, since they had no choice. While they were there, Peter showed them around. They visited “Aspen” Theatre, where “Snowmeo and Julice” was played and the mall, called “À la Glacier”. They visited a pastice shop, which was actually a bakery with pastries, but for snowmen. Unexpectedly, they had the time of their lives.

A few days passed and the unfortunate girls were still in Hiverland. Emma was very happy to spend time with Peter and both she and Emily grew closer to him. Peter was actually very funny and entertaining. He made a lot of funny and even flirty jokes that made Emily laugh every time. “Am I...falling in love with a snowman...? No, that’s absurd. Ugh, wake

up, Emily, you're a grown woman and he is a snowman." she thought to herself. However, she just couldn't take her mind away from him. Aside from that, Peter seemed to be more and more attracted by Emily, staring and admiring her every single time she wasn't watching him. He swore to himself that he would do anything to be with her one day.

During their stay, the girls have been trying to figure out what the curse could have been, by asking other snowmen and by walking and inspecting the land, however they weren't very fortunate.

One day though, as they were walking on the streets along with Peter, the purple sky shifted its colour to orange, the weather suddenly became warm and the temperature was drastically raised. Everything started to melt. Each snowman was screaming for help, panicked, as they were transforming into puddles. The ground was shaking, since it was made of ice as well and it was melting rapidly. Emily and Emma started to panic as well, frightened and worried that they might die along with the whole place. Emily embraced Emma quickly.

"Emma, don't worry, everything is going to be alright! Please, trust your sister!" said Emily, trying to reassure Emma. In reality, she was more scared than her, but, of course, Emma couldn't know that. Emma nodded and held her older sister tightly. Emily turned to check on Peter and she was shocked to see that he was almost evaporating completely, only his head remaining intact. She quickly rushed to him, in tears, picking up his head. Emma started to cry too.

"Peter, no! You can't disappear!" yelled Emily, while sobbing.

"I'm sorry, Emily..." said Peter with a raspy voice, signalling his final moments.

Emily, devastated, yelled again "You can't die! I love you!"

She grabbed his head and kissed him, closing her teary eyes. Suddenly, everything stopped. The land stopped shaking and the snowmen stopped melting. The sky turned

blue and the ice was starting to turn into dirt, forming land. The houses converted into wood ones and each and every snowman transformed into a human. When Emily opened her eyes, she noticed that she was holding a very handsome young man, with ginger locks and green eyes and she instantly figured that it was Peter. She felt like she fell in love all over again, so she decided to kiss him again.

They both stood up and Emily hugged Emma. All three of them were approached by a very happy woman. “Emily, you broke the curse! Snowmen shall not be forced to leave Earth anymore! From now on, they will live happily amongst the humans, as their own kind.”

Emily smiled and saw that they were now standing in a beautiful valley, full of fresh flowers and brightly coloured butterflies, instead of the forest that was there a few days ago. The Charmers’ Woods was officially gone. Emily looked at Peter and smiled.

“Seems like I broke the curse...” said Emily, with a smug smile.

Peter put his arm around her waist and replied “It seems like it...” after which he kissed her. Emma started to jump up and down, with a joyful smile.

“My wish became true! You found your own Prince Charming!” yelled Emma, excited. Emily picked her up and embraced her, with a surprised expression.

A few seconds later, she softened her expression and sighed, relieved “And it happened only because of you, Emma...Thank you...” Emily smiled, hugging her sister.

After all, it appears that building snowmen is more than just a silly winter activity...It can not only bring fun, but also love.

Made of Love & Made to Love

by Conț Raluca Daria, XI C

There is nothing more truly artistic than to love people. — Vincent van Gogh

We are meant to share the love within us. Love connects us, because it is part of who we are.



Love is everywhere. Even where it seems impossible, it finds a way to bloom you just have to notice it.



Love is Art

by Teodora Dobrican, XII C



Love can take on many forms.

I choose to think that love can be expressed through art,

whether it's a song, a picture, or a dance.

For example, I chose to portray my beloved character from MLP (my little pony), drawing her alongside an original creation.

With every detail, every stroke, the drawing becomes full of warmth.

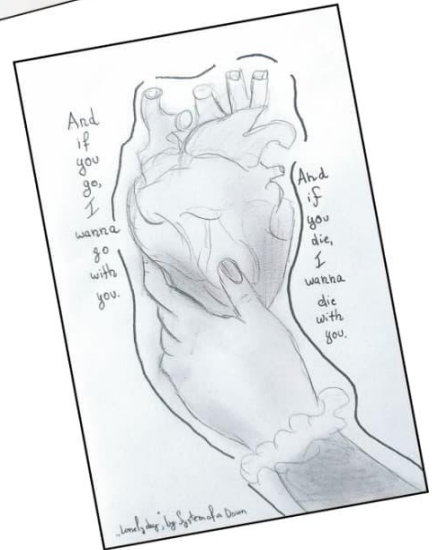
Lyrical Love

by Dalia Mihali, XII C

This collection of drawings was painted after my own heart, and the way it swayed to the dulcet tones of my favourite love songs. Each tiny sketch, which mixed charcoal, markers and ink, contains the best lyrics out of the most beloved songs of mine, all of which are held near and dear to my red heart, and who shaped who I am today, as both a person and a valentine. So, going clockwise:

- I. **Shades**, by Alexandra Savior: the central piece, a self-portrait of mine made with mixing charcoal, ink and a whole lot of passion; the song is haunting and gloomy, beautifully depicting both love and loss.
'Didn't mean to hold you so close, but you know how it goes.'
- II. **More**, by The Haunt: inspired by the correlation of devotion, greed and vampires, the piece is meant to evoke the passion of wanting more love that the song illustrates.
'Do you live for me, do you breathe for me, 'cause I always need more.'
- III. **Lonely day**, by System of a Down: the act of following your lover, even in death that the songs evokes leaves behind and image of offering their heart on a platter, for the mere hope of returned affection.
'Such a lonely day shouldn't exist, it's a day that I'll never miss.'
- IV. **Just like heaven**, by The Cure: the hauntingly beautiful song rings through not only your eardrums, but your heartstrings too, like a violin's strings being pricked.
'Why won't you ever know that I'm in love with you? That I'm in love with you?'

- V. **Suck it and see**, by Arctic Monkey: perhaps my favourite out of the lot, the sheer beauty of both Alex Turner's lyricism and the beat itself is soothing, haunting and nostalgic, evoking the kind of fool in love we all are. This song was there for my starry-eyed fifteen-year-old self, holding my emotions in a vice even to this day.
'Be cruel to me, 'cause I'm a fool for you.'
'I poured my aching heart into a pop song, I couldn't get the hang of poetry.'
'Your kiss it could put creases in the rain.'
- VI. **Young and Beautiful**, by Lana del Rey: this one is quiet and painfully close to my heart — a soft sketch about loving someone while being terrified that, when the beauty and innocence is gone, they will fade away from you.
'Will you still love me when I'm no longer young and beautiful?'
- VII. **Good Looking**, by Suki Waterhouse: a playful, messy little drawing about catching feelings for someone you absolutely shouldn't — and doing it anyway, because it feels good and stupid and exciting.
'I thought I'd uncovered your secrets but, turns, out there's more.'
- VIII. **Iris**, by the Goo Goo Dolls: about wanting to be truly seen by someone, even if it means giving them every fragile part of you. *'And I'd give up forever to touch you, 'cause I know that you feel me somehow'*



Wuthering Heights, a Movie Review

by Anițaș Teodora and Gâz Paula, XII G

I. A general viewpoint on the film adaptation seen as a piece of fiction merely branching out from its source of inspiration

by Anițaș Teodora

‘Wuthering Heights’, published in 1847 by Emily Brontë, is a tale about emotions as old as time itself, a tale not for the faint-hearted, depicting the destruction of two souls as the aftermath of their all-consuming love story. It is about the way(s) in which exceeding the bounds of loving a person so greatly can lead someone to lose themselves, and it proves that love can become a dangerous weapon when one consciously wields it against oneself.

Heathcliff and Catherine, the two characters engrossed in such an intense relationship, are portrayed in the 1847 novel as intertwined in every aspect of each other’s lives, tethered by external forces that transcend the bounds of time, other relationships, and matters of miscommunication between the pair.

The 2026 movie adaptation, directed by Emerald Fennell, of the most-adored classic book succeeds in capturing the gothic atmosphere of the novel through its spectacular visuals and the doomed nature of Heathcliff and Catherine’s love story. Whilst it is not an accurate representation or a direct adaptation of the novel, suggested as such through the title itself being in quotation marks and reinforced by the ‘based on’ specification at the beginning of the film, the general audience’s perspective on the movie (as seen in online reviews and comments) is that it is a complete butchering of the complexity and overall compelling aspects of the original literary piece, reducing it to a flat and erotic film, devoid of the intricacies that has made it such a heavily adored and appreciated story. When watching the film, Brontë’s original tale seems like a fleeting memory to those who had previously read the novel but I believe that the film was not made with the intention of solely adapting the book with the utmost accuracy. I consider

that the filmmaker wanted to stray away just enough from the book so as to still capture the tumultuous love story between Catherine and Heathcliff in a different, visually appealing way.

Seeing as the book is a classic fan-favourite, any adaption of it is prone to be judged from a much more critical standpoint than if it were a simple movie, relieved from the pressure of living up to the expectations of those who had read the novel. Judging a film adaption solely based on the book or story it starts from, forces a disregard of the movie as an individual piece of fiction and all the aspects that could potentially make it valuable or worthwhile. “Wuthering Heights”, the movie, is no exception, granted that it received most of its negative feedback from people who have read and enjoyed the book and who were deterred by the discrepancies between the film and the novel.

Being someone who had read the book and found utterly fascinating its depiction of the two toxic lovers who become each other’s source of destruction, I was at the very least pleased with how the essence of the story was adapted, even if it was heavily eroticised and served as a marketing construct due to the reputations of the two leading actors, Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi.

II. A brief commentary on the characters, script and execution of the movie

by Gâz Paula

I find it to be incredibly difficult in general for an actor and especially for a filmmaker to adapt a book (particularly an English classic) into a film. Taking into consideration how eager people are to dissect every small detail that does not go “according to the book,” any perspective can be narrowed down to portraying what people want to believe. Is Margot Robbie fit to play Cathy when one is not older than eighteen and the other could not pass for a teenager? Is Jacob Elordi, a white man, what

we imagine when we think of Heathcliff, a "**gipsy brat**" whose character is directly affected by his origins?

When it comes down to movies, I do not consider myself to be a film critic, but as a reader, as someone who spends a lot of time being lost in the mere presence of a fantasy book and considers reading a fun way to pass the time, I think I was the right audience to comment on it. The book left a mark on me when we were given the time to read it in school for our English class. I loved it: the gothic aspects drew my attention and the complicated, toxic love story had me on the edge of my seat.

What I can appreciate regarding the movie is how beautifully it was shot visually. The landscapes contributed to the atmosphere and added new layers for the viewers. It was definitely not a one-on-one adaptation, and in certain fields it felt as if it was lacking substance. The chemistry between Cathy and Heathcliff was the most crucial element of the book and I did not find it particularly appealing in the film. This is in no way related to the acting, as I believe the actors cast are highly talented. I did not feel the sparks, the fire burning between them, as I did while reading the book. The tension was not tangible, and I could feel that the sexual scenes they showed us had the purpose of masking the lack of chemistry with the illusion of intimacy between the pair. 'Wuthering Heights' is a romance that works simply because the characters yearn and long for each other. They are willing to let the world burn so they can be together and ultimately their love burns with it.

I felt like the movie simply showed us a man who, by finally gaining it, abuses his power in order to get what he wants, and who he wants, which is Catherine Earnshaw. Heathcliff's character lacked personality and lacked a complete and clear arc that would point us in the direction of his desires. He was obsessed with Cathy, but he was not obsessed with destroying everything in his path so he could have her, like in the novel. Cathy also lacked character: she is not supposed to be likeable, and that is what attracted me to her when reading the book. She is so interesting simply because she is not a good person, because she is flawed and selfish and indecisive. She wants to be

financially stable by marriage, but also wants a relationship with Heathcliff. She loves him, and does not accept that she cannot have him. In the film, her whole story is centred around Heathcliff and being romantically involved with him. She did not have a personality except for the one that was given to her by being tied down to a man. She did not have aspirations, or a voice. She was just a vessel for him to fill with his feelings. Her mysterious presence was not felt, and she did not have a character arc that was only hers. I feel like Cathy's character was a mere self-insert, where she was written as if someone dreamt of living through her 'love story'.

The other characters are quite well portrayed, and despite the fact that there were certain side plots and scenes from the book missing in the film I believe that Nelly, for instance, is a character incredibly well acted and written. I loved her, and she was my favourite character. Her absence in certain scenes was felt, and her presence was mandatory. She made the audience gasp with each decision, and she affected the main characters' lives and decisions with her manipulative and conniving intelligence.

Another aspect I disliked in this year's 'Wuthering Heights' was the script: the phrases they used and the dialogue felt hollow in comparison to the novel. The awkward pauses and the direction the plot took averted the story from the novel, and made me believe it to be shallow.

All in all, if you want to see a movie that adapts the book perfectly and accurately, I do not recommend 'Wuthering Heights', directed by Emerald Fennell. But if you decide to watch a gothic romance, shot exceptionally and acted well, you might find this film to your liking!

"You said I killed you - haunt me then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers. I believe - I know that ghosts *have* wandered the earth. Be with me always - take any form - drive me mad! Only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh God! It is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!"

- Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*



The Pilgrimage of the Heart: A Review of The Divine Comedy

by Dalia Mihali, XII C

To read *The Divine Comedy* is to understand that Dante Alighieri was never merely a poet. He was a man attempting to chart the anatomy of the soul itself. His poem is not a relic preserved behind glass, but a living descent into the deepest regions of the human spirit—an exploration of what becomes of us when love, grief, faith, and longing burn too brightly to ignore.



Composed in the fourteenth century, the work unfolds as a vast spiritual journey in three movements: Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. Through these realms Dante follows the winding paths of the human heart, discovering that love—so often praised as our greatest virtue—can also be the force that leads us astray.

Act I: Inferno — Love as Ruin

The poem begins with a simple image: a dark wood. Yet the forest is more than a place; it is a state of being. Dante finds himself lost, his life's direction obscured, his path swallowed by shadow.

In Hell he encounters not merely sinners, but the tragic remains of human passions misdirected. Each punishment reveals a distorted form of love: desire twisted into obsession, ambition into pride, affection into possession.

Among the most haunting moments is the story of Paolo and Francesca, two lovers condemned to wander forever within a storm of restless winds. Francesca's words carry a melancholy beauty that has echoed across centuries:

*“Love, which absolves no beloved from loving,
seized me so strongly with his charm
that, as you see, it has not left me yet.”*

Their love is tender, but it is also destructive—a devotion so complete that it leaves no space for the world beyond itself. Dante is overcome by their sorrow; he faints at the end of their tale, struck by the tragic power of their bond. In this moment, love appears not as salvation, but as a force capable of pulling the human soul into darkness.

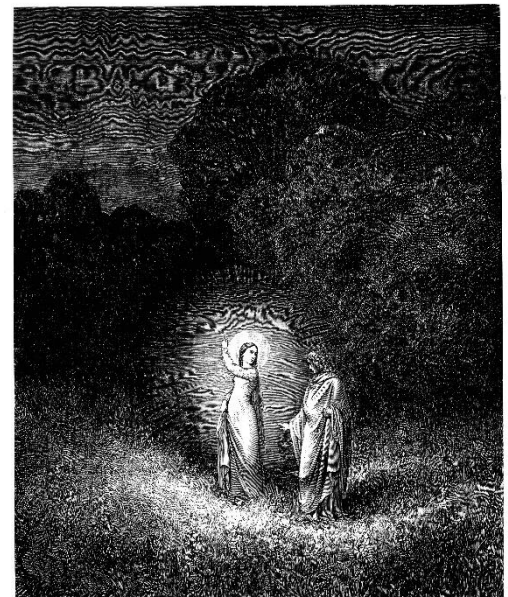
Act II: Purgatorio — Love as Transformation

If Hell reveals the ruin caused by misdirected love, Purgatory shows the long and painful labor required to restore it.

Here the souls of the dead climb a great mountain, each step an act of purification. They carry burdens, pass through fire, and endure trials not as punishment, but as preparation. Their suffering is guided by hope: the belief that the soul can be remade.

Along the way Dante encounters familiar figures, including his friend Casella. In a moment of longing he attempts to embrace him, only to find his arms closing around empty air. It is a quiet but profound reminder that earthly attachments, however dear, cannot be held forever.

Yet the most poignant farewell is reserved for Virgil, Dante’s guide through Hell and Purgatory. Virgil represents reason, wisdom, and human understanding—qualities that have protected Dante throughout his journey. But reason alone cannot enter Paradise.



At the summit of the mountain, Virgil vanishes without farewell, leaving Dante to face the final stage of his pilgrimage alone.

Overwhelmed, Dante whispers:

“I recognize the signs of the ancient flame.”

Even in grief, he understands that the path toward the divine demands the courage to leave behind what once sustained us.

Act III: Paradiso — Love as Light

With the arrival of Beatrice, the journey enters its final realm. She is not a figure to be rescued, nor merely the beloved of a poet’s memory. Instead, she stands as a radiant presence—both guide and mirror—reflecting Dante’s shortcomings and urging him toward spiritual clarity.

Paradise is perhaps the most challenging part of the poem for modern readers. Its landscapes are made not of rivers or mountains, but of light, music, and celestial order. Dante attempts to describe the indescribable: a reality where love exists without shadow.

Through images of radiant spheres and harmonious movement, he comes to understand that Beatrice herself is only a glimpse of something greater. Her beauty points beyond itself, toward the divine force that governs the universe—the love that moves every star and every living heart.

In the final moments of the poem, Dante struggles to comprehend the infinite. His human mind falters before the vastness of what he sees. Yet in a sudden flash of insight, everything aligns: his will, his desire, and the motion of the cosmos itself.

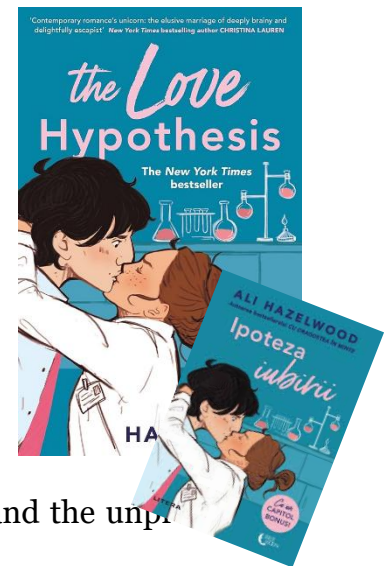
At last, he perceives the truth that has guided his entire journey—that the same love which stirs the human heart also moves the sun and the other stars.

Love Between the Pages: Must-Read Romance Books for Valentine's Day

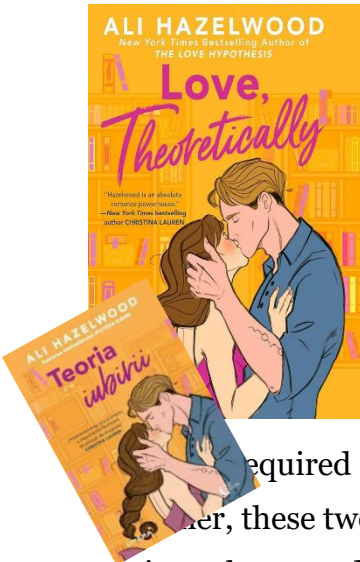
by Iulia Bodea, XII G

Valentine's Day is traditionally associated with flowers, heartfelt letters, and shared moments with loved ones. However, it can also be celebrated in a quieter yet equally meaningful way: by immersing oneself in a compelling love story. Literature has always offered readers the opportunity to experience romance from diverse perspectives, across different settings, and through complex characters. Although there are countless romance novels worthy of attention, this article focuses on a select few that appeal to a wide range of readers, from science enthusiasts to admirers of dance, culture, and even fantasy.

One notable recommendation is *The Love Hypothesis* by Ali Hazelwood. The novel follows Olive Smith, a doctoral candidate who finds herself in an unusual predicament: in order to convince her best friend that her dating life is thriving, she begins a fake relationship with Adam Carlsen, a respected—though intimidating—professor. What begins as a carefully constructed pretense gradually evolves into something far more genuine. As Olive and Adam attempt to persuade those around them of their supposed romance, they are confronted with an unexpected reality: their feelings may no longer be fabricated. Through humor, academic rivalry, and emotional vulnerability, the novel explores themes of self-doubt, ambition, and the unpredictable nature of love.



Similarly, *Love, Theoretically*, also written by Ali Hazelwood, centers on Elsie Hannaway, a theoretical physicist struggling to balance multiple professional and personal roles. By day, Elsie works as an adjunct professor, grading laboratory reports and teaching thermodynamics while aspiring to secure a stable academic position. By night, she supplements her income by working as a fake girlfriend, adapting her personality to meet her clients' expectations. This dual existence highlights the pressures placed on young professionals, particularly in competitive academic environments. As Elsie's carefully separated worlds begin to intersect, the novel examines identity, authenticity, and the required to pursue both professional success and emotional fulfillment. Together, these two novels are especially suitable for readers passionate about science or curious about academic life, offering romance intertwined with intellectual ambition.



For readers drawn to cultural exploration and youthful aspirations, *Kisses and Croissants* by Anne-Sophie Jouhanneau presents an enchanting narrative. The story follows Mia Jenrow, a determined young ballerina who travels to Paris to attend a prestigious summer ballet program. Convinced that her destiny is intertwined with the city—partly due to a family legend connecting her ancestry to the Paris Opera—Mia embarks on a journey of artistic growth and self-discovery. Beyond the romantic elements, the novel vividly portrays the discipline and dedication required in the world of professional dance, while celebrating French culture and heritage.



In a similar vein, *French Kissing in New York*, also by Anne-Sophie Jouhanneau, tells the story of Margot, a young French woman who moves to New York to live with her father and pursue her culinary dreams. After sharing a magical evening in Paris with an American boy named Zach, Margot clings to the belief that fate will reunite them if their connection is truly meant to endure. The novel thoughtfully contrasts French and American cultures, exploring themes of independence, ambition, and the meaning of destiny in romantic relationships. Together, these two works complement each other by presenting cross-cultural experiences and heartfelt love stories that resonate particularly well with young readers.



A more emotionally intense recommendation is *Instructions for Dancing* by Nicola Yoon. The novel centers on Evie Thomas, who has grown skeptical of love after witnessing the fragility of relationships. Her perspective shifts dramatically when she begins experiencing vivid visions of couples' romantic journeys—both their beginnings and their inevitable endings—whenever she sees them kiss. This unusual ability leads her to a dance studio, where she meets a boy who challenges her cynical outlook. Blending elements of magical realism with contemporary romance, the novel explores vulnerability, grief, and the courage required to embrace love despite its impermanence. Although the story contains moments of sadness, it remains accessible and engaging, offering readers insight into both the art of dance and the complexity of human emotions.



Finally, *The Love That Split the World* by Emily Henry introduces a romantic narrative infused with fantasy and speculative elements. The novel follows Natalie Cleary during her final summer in her small Kentucky hometown. As she begins to perceive



unsettling alterations in her surroundings—shifting colors, disappearing buildings, and entire landscapes transforming—she realizes that her reality is not as stable as it seems. Amid these mysterious occurrences, Natalie develops a profound connection with a boy who appears to exist across different timelines. The story skillfully intertwines romance with themes of time travel and parallel universes, encouraging readers to reflect on identity, choice, and the possibility of multiple destinies. Its open ending invites speculation, allowing readers to imagine the characters' futures for themselves.

In conclusion, these selected novels demonstrate the remarkable diversity within the romance genre. From academic laboratories to Parisian ballet studios, from dance floors to alternate realities, each story offers a unique perspective on love and personal growth. Valentine's Day, therefore, need not be limited to traditional celebrations; it can also serve as an opportunity to explore the many dimensions of love through literature. By turning the page, readers may discover not only fictional relationships but also deeper insights into ambition, culture, resilience, and the transformative power of emotion.

The Blood-Stained Altar: A Review of My Chemical Romance's *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge*

by Dalia Mihali, XII C

Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge is a cathedral built of stained glass and shotgun shells. It is an album that doesn't just play; it bleeds. While many remember it for its frantic energy and gothic aesthetic, the true pulse of the record is a desperate, immortal love—



the kind of love that views death not as an end, but as a temporary inconvenience.

This devotion is anchored in the tragic saga of the **Demolition Lovers**. Picking up from the wreckage of their debut album, we find our protagonists fleeing in a hail of gunfire, only to be separated by the veil of death. The story follows the man into a hellish purgatory where he strikes a desperate bargain with the Devil: he can see his soulmate again, but only if he delivers the souls of a thousand "evil men" to the underworld. This narrative transforms the album into a high-stakes mission of ultra-violence fueled by pure, unadulterated romance.

From the opening notes, the theme of love as a survival tactic—and a weapon—perpetuates every track. We feel the weight of this loss in **Helena**, where love is mourned with a grand, operatic grief. When Gerard Way asks, *Can you hear me? Are you near me?* he isn't just singing a hook; he's a man reaching through the dirt of a fresh grave. This sense of longing transitions into the cinematic funeral march of **The Ghost of You**, which explores the



terrifying realization that even an eternal love can be eroded by the silence of the afterlife.

The album's lyrical heart beat fastest when the imagery is at its most violent, mirroring the protagonist's descent into his grim task. In **I'm Not Okay (I Promise)**, we see the messy, adolescent roots of this passion, but the stakes quickly turn cosmic. One of the most defining lyrics of the era, *Giv'em hell, kid*, serves as both a literal instruction for the protagonist's mission and a rallying cry for the listener to fight through their own personal hells.

Musically, the production is as sharp as a switchblade. The band trades raw post-hardcore for a polished "theatre of the absurd," where the guitars sound like sirens and the drums like a racing heart. Gerard Way's vocals act as our frantic narrator, shifting from a desperate, conspiratorial whisper to a defiant roar, capturing the exact moment a man decides that killing for a kiss is a fair trade.

Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge is a masterpiece of dark romanticism. It argues that love is the only thing worth the price of one's soul, and it does so with a flair for the dramatic that remains unmatched. It is a blood-soaked valentine to the outcasts and the ghosts we carry, proving that even in the mouth of hell, love is the only thing that keeps us screaming.

Interview on the psychology behind love and emotions

by Sofia Incze, XII G



In this interview, I spoke with Ms. Andreea Stoica, a psychologist and alumna of Colegiul Național Gheorghe Șincai and the Faculty of Psychology at Babeș-Bolyai University, where she completed both her Bachelor's and Master's studies. Our discussion focuses on the complex and often misunderstood subject of teenage love, examining how young people experience affection, attraction, and emotional connection during adolescence. Drawing on her academic training and professional insight, Ms. Stoica reflects on the psychological dimensions of

teenage love, highlighting how scientific understanding of the mind can illuminate the intense, formative experiences that shape the way young people learn to love and to relate to others.

1) Is it ok to love without people making fun of it? Like hitting on you and then say it's a joke?

Yes, it's absolutely okay to love and to have real feelings. If someone flirts with you and then says "it was just a joke," it can feel confusing or a little embarrassing. Sometimes people use jokes because they're nervous, afraid of being rejected, or they don't know how to be honest about what they feel yet. Still, your emotions deserve clarity. In a good connection, you should feel safe, not unsure where you stand. It's okay to want honesty and respect, even if everything is light and playful. If someone likes you, it's healthier when they can communicate it in a straightforward way, even a simple "I like you" or "I'm serious." And if they can't, it doesn't mean there's something wrong with you, it

might simply mean they're not ready to handle feelings yet. *Your feelings are real and worthy of respect.*

2) What happens in our brain when we fall in love as teenagers?

When teenagers start falling for someone, the brain often gets a little “switched on.” Chemicals linked to *reward and bonding* can increase, which is why many people feel more excited, energized, or unusually focused on that person. Some teens feel butterflies and intensity; others feel calm, safe, or just more curious and open. There isn't one “correct” way to feel, and not everyone experiences it the same way. Also, the teenage brain is still developing, especially the parts involved in judgment, impulse control, and long-term thinking, so emotions can feel extra strong and urgent sometimes. On top of that, your thoughts may become more centered on the person: you might idealize them a little, replay moments in your head, or imagine a future faster than you normally would. So, teen love can feel powerful because it's a mix of *brain biology, new experiences*, and *your personal emotional story* and it can look different for everyone.

3) Is teen love more about actual love or just the need to feel seen and accepted?

It can be both. In your teen years, one of the strongest emotional needs is to feel *seen, valued, and accepted*. So sometimes a crush or a relationship starts because someone makes you feel special, chosen, or finally understood and that can feel amazing. The tricky part is that, if deep down you start believing “I only matter if someone likes me,” it's easy to mix up *attention* with *love*. Wanting validation doesn't make your feelings fake it just means your emotions are also trying to meet real needs. A helpful way to tell the difference is this: love becomes healthier when it includes caring about the other person's wellbeing, not just needing them to make you feel good about yourself. Teen love often starts with attraction and validation, and it *can* grow into something deeper as you learn more about each other.

4) Can you actually fall in love as a teen or is it just hormones?

Yes, you can absolutely fall in love as a teen. Hormones do play a role: they can boost attraction and make emotions feel stronger and faster. But hormones alone don't explain everything. Love also shows up in the way you think, choose, and behave: how you treat someone, how you care about their feelings, and whether you can be respectful even when you're upset. Teenagers are capable of real attachment and deep connection. The difference is that you're still learning relationship skills, communication, and emotional balance. So, the feelings can be very real, even if the "how to handle it" part is still a work in progress (just like everything else during adolescence). Love isn't measured by age, it's measured by empathy, respect, and responsibility.

5) What if you don't experience teen love? Does it mean that something is wrong with you?

Not at all, nothing is wrong with you. People grow emotionally at different speeds, and not everyone feels ready for romantic love at the same time. Sometimes you're more focused on friendships, school, hobbies, sports, goals, or simply figuring yourself out and that's completely healthy. It can also *look* like "everyone is in love" because of social media, but that's not real life. And if you ever catch yourself thinking, "Everyone has this except me," remember: that's usually comparison talking, not truth. Not having a relationship in your teen years doesn't mean you're unlovable, it just means your timeline is different. Love isn't a race. And one of the best things you can build first is a solid relationship with yourself: confidence, boundaries, and knowing what you value.

6) Is teenage love different from adult love? If yes, how?

Yes, it can be different, mostly because you're in a different stage of life. Teenage love often feels more intense because emotions are strong and your sense of identity is still forming. A lot of it is "first-time" experiences, so everything can feel bigger, brighter, and sometimes more dramatic. Adults usually have more practice managing emotions

and communicating needs, so they may pause more before reacting and handle jealousy, fear, or insecurity with a bit more calm. That doesn't mean adults always do it perfectly, just that they've had more time to learn. Teen love is often about **discovery**: discovering what you like, what you need, what your boundaries are, and what feels safe. Adult love is more often about **building**: teamwork, stability, and long-term choices. Neither is "better." They're just different chapters and teen love can be a really important chapter for learning how to love in a healthier way.

7) Through this interview, what key message would you like to share, and what essential insight about teenage love do you think young people should be aware of?

The most important thing I would say is this: *your feelings are real, but they are also teachers*. Teenage love is not silly, and it's not "just hormones." It's part of learning who you are and what you need in relationships. Pay attention to the way you talk to yourself in your head, especially when fear or insecurity tries to decide your worth. Choose relationships where you feel safe, respected, and truly heard. Love should not shrink you; it should help you grow. It's okay to feel deeply. It's also okay to wait. The goal is not just to fall in love, it's to learn how to love in a healthy way. And that starts with respecting yourself first.

The interview aims to explore how psychology helps us understand these early romantic feelings not merely as impulsive reactions or hormonal changes, but as meaningful emotional experiences that contribute to personal growth, identity formation, and the search for acceptance and connection.

Additionally, for those interested in exploring the broad and beautiful field of psychology, the activity of the psychologist Andreea can also be followed on her personal Instagram page: [*@blooming.minds.lab*](#).

The human heart between science and emotions

Interview with Ioana-Diana Mihuș, resident doctor

by Sofia Incze, XlIG

In this interview, I spoke with **Ioana-Diana Mihuș**, a cardiology resident doctor, about the unique balance that defines cardiology as a medical specialty—one that stands at the intersection between scientific precision and human emotion. The discussion aims to explore how cardiology represents both a rational, evidence-based discipline and a profoundly human field, closely connected to emotions, vulnerability, and lived experience. Drawing on her academic training and clinical practice, this interview highlights how she embodies this harmony in her daily work, illustrating the way medical expertise and emotional awareness can coexist and complement one another in the care of the human heart.



Foreword: “I am Ioana-Diana Mihuș, a cardiology resident, a graduate of the “Iuliu Hațieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Cluj-Napoca and of the “Gheorghe Șincai” National College in Baia Mare. Currently, I carry out my professional activity and continue my training with interest, passion, and dedication at the “Niculae Stăncioiu” Heart Institute in Cluj, where I am in the third year of residency out of the six years included in the cardiology training curriculum.”

1) How does the theme of the second edition of our magazine — love — connect to your profession as a cardiologist, beyond the symbolic meaning of the heart?

The suggestive theme proposed for the second issue of Sincai’s digital Ink caught my attention not only because of the significance of love as a fundamental human experience, but also due to its natural connection with the profession I have chosen, both in a denotative and a connotative sense. To be a doctor, regardless of specialty, requires a great act of love: for people, for the medical act itself, as well as the ability to empathize and to stand by the patient and their family. I would even dare to say that, in cardiology, we walk „hand in hand” with love in a very particular way. Beyond the symbolism of the heart, cardiology is about rhythm, about restored life and continuity. The joy and satisfaction of treated and saved patients, especially in the context of the remarkable progress seen, for example, in interventional cardiology, cardiac device implantation, and even pharmacological therapies—have a profound impact not only biologically, but emotionally as well.

2) When did you realize that you wanted to pursue a career in medicine, and how did your high school years at “Gheorghe Șincai” contribute to shaping your professional path?

My dream to study medicine developed gradually and solidified over time. I made the final decision only in the 11th grade. For many years, I wished to pursue a teaching career, like my mother, but during high school I fell in love with biology and got to know teachers, true mentors, who helped me thoroughly and inspired me to choose the medical profession. For this journey, I am deeply grateful to my parents, to my teacher and mentor, **Professor Gheorghe Bârlea**, to teacher **Nicoleta Predoiu**, and to all the teachers I hold dear from the **“Gheorghe Șincai” National College**. For me, my high school years were formative, and the academic environment there played an essential role in my personal and professional development.

3) From a medical perspective, is there a real connection between intense emotional states — such as love or emotional distress — and heart health? Can a “broken heart” truly become dangerous?

Yes, there is indeed a real and well-documented medical link between intense emotional states and heart health. These states influence the autonomic nervous system and stress hormone levels, which can lead to cardiac rhythm disturbances or changes in blood pressure values. Moreover, the concept of a “broken heart” is not only a metaphor. There is a very real condition known as **Takotsubo cardiomyopathy**, or **“broken heart syndrome.”** This is a transient left ventricular dysfunction that occurs following severe physical or emotional stress and appears to be caused by a massive catecholamine surge, leading to coronary vasospasm and a clinical presentation that may resemble acute myocardial infarction. Therefore, the heart is influenced not only by biological factors, but also by emotional ones, and emotional balance is important even in cardiology. And perhaps, beyond metaphors, medicine reminds us of a simple truth: **to love carefully!**

4) How does the heart change as we grow older, and what practical steps can teenagers take to protect their cardiovascular health from an early age?

As we know, lifestyle and genetic background have a major impact on the cardiovascular system, leading over time to structural or functional changes. For this reason, cardiovascular health promotion should begin during adolescence. Among the essential measures, I would emphasize a balanced diet, with limited intake of saturated fats and ultra-processed foods, which are unfortunately very fashionable today. Equally important is avoiding smoking, alcohol consumption, and toxic substances. Why? These habits (high fat intake and smoking) are associated with an increased risk of acute myocardial infarction, even in young adults, while alcohol consumption may favor the occurrence of cardiac arrhythmias. Regular physical activity is also essential. Exercise

stabilizes the cardiovascular system and helps control body weight. I would also add, as mentioned earlier, stress management and ensuring adequate sleep, as equally important measures for long-term heart protection.

5) What advice would you give to students who aspire to work in the medical field, and what would be your final message for our readers — both for their hearts and for their overall health?

Firstly, I advise young people to choose their profession with their heart. Then, if medicine is the chosen path, they should arm themselves with patience. They should know that the journey will be difficult at times, but the satisfaction offered by the medical profession is unparalleled. It is a noble profession, deeply meaningful, and truly a vocation. I would say that medicine represents a triad of **science, humanity, and sacrifice**.

„Thank you for this opportunity, and I encourage you to love with care, with passion, and with professionalism!”

This Year's Freshmen's Ball

by Roxana Ionuț and Giorgia Pădurean, XIIG

Every autumn, our school community begins preparing for one of the most anticipated events of the year: the Freshman Ball. This year's journey started in September with the preselections, followed by months of rehearsals, dedication, and teamwork. The long-awaited evening finally took place on January 30th under the enchanting theme "*A Night in the Disney Kingdom*." For one magical night, the stage transformed into a world of fairy tales, as each competing pair represented an iconic Disney couple. From the vision of the Ball President to the careful coordination of the organizing team, and the unforgettable performance of the winning couple, the event brought together students, teachers, and supporters in a celebration of talent and school spirit. In this article, we explore the behind-the-scenes efforts and personal experiences that made this year's Freshman Ball a memorable success.

We spoke with Florian Raisa, the president of the ball, and asked her about the experience, the challenges, and the lessons learned along the way.

1) Can you briefly describe your role as president and what your main responsibilities were?

Raisa: "My role as president was to create the theme of the Freshmen Ball and develop it so that it made sense from every perspective. Together with those who had participated in the Freshmen Ball in the same year as I did, I helped choose the people we could trust to support us in building something truly special. My main responsibilities were coordinating 50 people and making sure everyone fulfilled their tasks. At the same time, I was in charge of the parties, the artist, sponsorships, ensuring that everything was legal, handling promotion, organizing rehearsals, and much more."

2) What was the biggest challenge you faced while organizing the Freshmen Ball, and how did you overcome it?

Raisa: “The biggest challenge I faced while organizing this Freshmen Ball was balancing my personal life with my role as the main organizer. In the last month before the event, I barely had time for anything else, because my desire to create a beautiful and memorable ball was so strong that I even neglected studying for school.”

3) How did you keep the committee motivated during stressful moments?

Raisa: “At the beginning, it was easy to keep everyone motivated. However, the challenge was that you cannot keep 50 people constantly satisfied, so disagreements and harsh exchanges inevitably appeared. What helped us overcome these moments was our shared goal: to give our freshmen a beautiful ball and an experience they would never forget. We made sure to resolve our personal conflicts outside of the organizational process.”

4) Looking back, what achievement are you most proud of?

Raisa: “I am most proud of the fact that something I had dreamed about for an entire year finally came true, and that all the hard work I put in resulted in a beautiful event that was appreciated and congratulated by everyone at the end. The moment the ball started and I saw that everything turned out exactly as I had imagined, that was when I felt the proudest of myself.”

5) What advice would you give to next year’s Ball president?

Raisa: “The advice I would give to next year’s Ball president is to have patience, understanding, and a lot of self-confidence. If they truly believe in their idea and their story, they should bring it to life exactly the way they envision it.”

Perta Ileana also played an important role, being responsible for securing sponsorships and mentoring one of the competing pairs as their trainer. We asked her about balancing these responsibilities, the challenges she encountered, and the experience of supporting students from rehearsals to the final performance.

1) How did you manage to balance finding sponsors and training a freshmen pair at the same time?

Ileana: “To be honest, I wouldn’t call it managing, but rather just surviving. All jokes aside, we did find most of our sponsors in the summer, way before the actual freshmen preparations started, so it wasn’t that much of a hussle after all.”

2) What was the most difficult part of securing sponsorships, and how did you convince companies to support the event?

Ileana: “Most companies had already been sponsors for several years, they contributed a lot. We did also manage to score some more niche companies thanks to personal relations.”

3) As a trainer, what was your main goal for your freshmen pair, beyond just winning the title?

Ileana: “My main goal was really just to bond with them and create something special, however I cannot say I was able to make that happen entirely due to having many other duties and tasks. I would’ve liked to stay close friends with them for a long, long time, but unfortunately that is not the case.”

4) What was the biggest challenge your freshmen pair had to overcome during training?

Ileana: “Even though I do not like to admit it, the biggest challenge was my personal lack of time and inability to constantly be with them during their training. A lot of

our preparations were done quite last minute, but we did manage to score the third place after all!”

5) What did this experience teach you about teamwork and responsibility?

Ileana: “Frankly, it was a slap across the face. Coming from someone who believed they were quite organised and responsible, it was horrible to never know if you made the right choice or did enough. Thankfully, I wasn’t alone and because there was both me and Raisa knees deep in this whole shananigan we were able to take our frustrations out on eachother and not the rest of the team.”

“Would I do it again? Probably, and no, I am not some kind of masochist, but the life experience I gathered from organising this for the freshmen is unmatched.”

In the end, we couldn’t forget about the couple who captured both the jury’s attention as well as the audience’s hearts, Mateas Irina & Horincar Tudor. We spoke with them about their journey from the September preselections to the final moment when their names were announced and what this victory truly means to them.

1) How did you feel when you were announced as the winners of the Freshmen Ball?

Irina: “I felt incredibly happy and proud. It was an unforgettable moment for me. All the hard work finally paid off, and hearing my name announced as the winner was both emotional and exciting.”

Matei: “When we were announced as the winners of the Freshmen Ball, I honestly couldn’t believe it. I was super happy and proud, like all the stress and work just disappeared in that moment.”

2) What was the most challenging part of preparing for the competition?

Irina: “The most challenging part was managing my time and staying focused. I had to balance schoolwork with rehearsals, and sometimes it was exhausting. However, I stayed motivated and kept working hard.”

Matei: “Preparing for the competition wasn’t easy at all. Rehearsals were tiring and sometimes stressful, especially when we had to combine everything with school, but we pushed through.”

3) What do you think made your performance stand out from the others?

Irina: “I think my performance stood out because of my confidence, creativity, and the energy I brought on stage. I tried to be original and truly enjoy the moment.”

Matei: “I think what really made our performance stand out was the energy and the vibe we had on stage. I played Aladdin, I had so much fun, there was a lot of humor, and I think people could feel that we were enjoying every second.”

4) Who supported you the most during this journey, and how did they help?

Irina: “My friends, family, and my trainers supported me the most. They encouraged me, helped me rehearse, and motivated me whenever I felt stressed or tired.”



Matei: “I had three trainers who were extremely helpful and supported me a lot throughout the whole journey. My colleagues from the ball also helped me a lot. We were a team, even if not everyone was equally involved.”

5) What advice would you give to next year’s freshmen who want to participate?

Irina: “My advice would be to believe in yourself, work



hard, and enjoy the experience. Don’t be afraid to show your personality. The most important thing is to have fun and create unforgettable

memories.”

Matei: “Overall, it was an amazing experience, and my advice for next year’s freshmen is to work hard, listen to your trainers, believe in yourselves, and most importantly, have fun, because that’s what really makes you shine on stage.”



The Freshman Ball proved once again that our school is not only a place for academic growth, but also a space where creativity, confidence, and collaboration thrive. Through the insights shared by the people who made this event happen and the winning couple, it becomes clear that this ball was built on passion, responsibility, and a genuine desire to create lasting memories. As the lights dimmed and the music faded, what remained was a stronger sense of community and a reminder that some of the most meaningful lessons are learned outside the classroom.



About love, for teens

by Moga Rita, school counselor

Love in adolescence is an intense and important emotional experience for psychological development. It occurs during a period in which the young person goes through major biological, emotional and social changes, and romantic relationships become a way of exploring identity and intimacy. First love often leaves a very strong imprint on the psyche. For many people, even after decades, its memory remains very vivid. Psychology explains this through several mechanisms. The human brain reacts very strongly to experiences experienced for the first time. During adolescence, identity is in full construction, it is the stage in which young people try to answer the question: "Who am I?" First love occurs at this very moment and becomes part of the story of identity. The first romantic relationship can become an emotional model for subsequent relationships, but also an unconscious "map" of what love looks like. Adolescence is a period of great emotional and biological sensitivity. This means that: emotions are amplified, romantic experiences are experienced more intensely, emotional memory is fixed more strongly. That is why first love can seem more "electric" than subsequent relationships.

Characteristics of teenage love:

Among the main characteristics of teenage love, we can mention: - high emotional intensity - Tendency to idealize the partner - tendency towards emotional fusion, tending to center much of one's life around the relationship - love is seen as a discovery, not so much as a conscious choice - high vulnerability (sensitivity to rejection, more intense jealousy, breakups can trigger emotional crises) Even if many teenage relationships do not last, they are very important. Through them, adolescents learn how emotional closeness is built, how conflicts arise, how attraction and attachment work, and what they want in a relationship. Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby, shows that these experiences can influence how people will love later.

Recommendations for teenagers:

For these reasons, some advice about love during adolescence is welcome:

1) Take things slowly/Don't rush

- Emotions are intense, but don't rush into decisions.
- Real knowledge of the person comes gradually.
- Relationships need time to develop
- Patience helps avoid impulsive decisions

2) Maintain your identity and don't confuse love with addiction

- Continue to have friends and hobbies.
- Don't give up who you are just for the relationship.
- It's normal to want to spend a lot of time with the person you love, but it's important not to lose your own identity.
- It's important to understand that: healthy love does not mean losing freedom, each person must maintain their autonomy, emotional balance should not depend completely on the other.

3) Communicate openly and honestly

- Say what you feel and listen to what your partner feels.
- Problems are solved through dialogue, not through dramatic arguments.

4) Respect is essential

- No one should offend you or violate your boundaries.
- Mutual respect is more important than passion.
- A healthy relationship means: no pressure, clear boundaries, mutual care.
- If control, manipulation or lack of respect occurs, the relationship is not a healthy one.

5) Pay attention to emotions

- Jealousy, fear or insecurity are normal, but they should not dominate the relationship.

6) Mutual emotional support

- In a healthy relationship, partners encourage and support each other.
- The relationship should make you more confident and not constantly stress you out.

7) Recognize the signs of a toxic relationship

- Offenses, pressure, excessive control, extreme jealousy, lack of support.

8) Accept that relationships are learning experiences

- First love or relationships may not last.

- Relationships can help young people discover: what they want in a relationship, what their limits are, what kind of person suits them.

9) Be aware that healthy love balances passion with respect and security

- Passion is wonderful, but it should not eclipse respect, communication and personal freedom

- A healthy relationship in adolescence is one that helps you grow, feel safe and get to know yourself better. Intense emotions are normal, but they do not have to be painful or harmful.

- Listen to your instincts: if you feel fear, pressure or constant stress, it is an alarm signal.

- Remember that healthy love does not hurt, does not control or manipulate.

Common mistakes in adolescence:

There are some very common mistakes that teenagers make in romantic relationships. They arise mainly from lack of experience, the intensity of emotions and the strong desire for closeness. These mistakes are normal, but awareness of them can help young people have healthier relationships.

1. Excessive idealization of the partner

Many teenagers tend to see the person they love as perfect. It can happen that they: ignore behaviors that hurt them, justify their partner's mistakes, believe that "love solves everything". In reality, a healthy relationship involves seeing the other person's qualities and flaws.

2. Emotional dependence

A common mistake is when the relationship becomes the center of their entire life. Teenagers can end up: giving up on friends, neglecting their hobbies, completely depending on their partner's attention.

3. Excessive jealousy

Jealousy often appears in adolescence because insecurities are greater. It can lead to: constantly checking the phone, controlling your partner's friends, frequent conflicts. In many cases, jealousy is not a sign of love, but of emotional insecurity.

4. Pressure to do things they are not ready for

Sometimes teenagers feel pressure to do certain things just to not lose the relationship. This pressure can be related to: physical intimacy, changing behavior, giving up personal boundaries. A healthy relationship must respect the rhythm and boundaries of both partners.

Not only on March 8th

by representatives of Interact Club Baia Mare



Despite the progress made in recent decades, violence and discrimination against women remain serious issues in many societies. For this reason, the Interact Club of Baia Mare has chosen to bring attention to this topic in today's publication. While March 8 is widely celebrated as International Women's Day, it is important to remember that respect, safety, and equality for women should not be acknowledged only on this date, but every day.

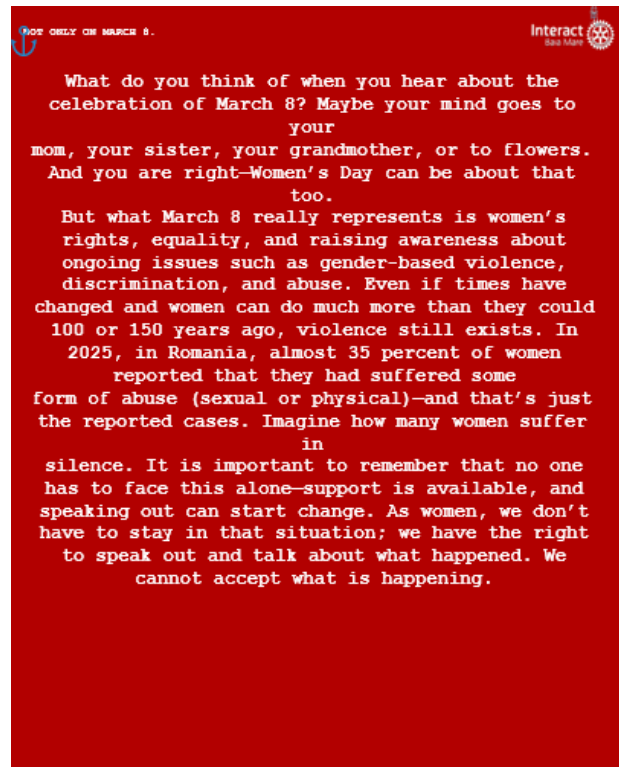
Unfortunately, many women continue to experience different forms of abuse. Abuse

can refer to severe and clearly identifiable acts such as physical violence, sexual assault, or coercion. However, it can also include less visible but equally harmful behaviors, such as emotional manipulation, constant humiliation, controlling a partner's decisions or finances, intimidation, harassment, or persistent threats. In some cases, these situations may appear uncertain or difficult to define, which is why many victims hesitate to speak about their experiences.

Silence, however, should never be the only option. Women facing abuse have the right to seek protection, support, and justice. There are several measures that can help them regain safety and control over their lives. These include speaking to trusted family members or friends, contacting social workers or counselors, reaching out to support organizations and shelters for victims of domestic violence, reporting incidents to the

police, or seeking legal advice and psychological assistance. Specialized hotlines and non-governmental organizations also offer confidential guidance and immediate help.

By raising awareness and encouraging open discussion, communities can play an essential role in supporting victims and preventing further abuse. Every voice matters, and every step toward understanding and action contributes to a society where women can live with dignity, safety, and respect.



Following the success of our previous playlist, we are excited to introduce a new edition dedicated to this issue's theme: love. The playlist includes songs about romance, relationships, and the many emotions that connect us.

We invite all students to listen and enjoy the selection. You are also encouraged to contribute by adding your own favorite songs, helping us build a diverse and collaborative collection of music for everyone to enjoy.





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