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# ***INSPIRE*** *&* ***AMAZE***



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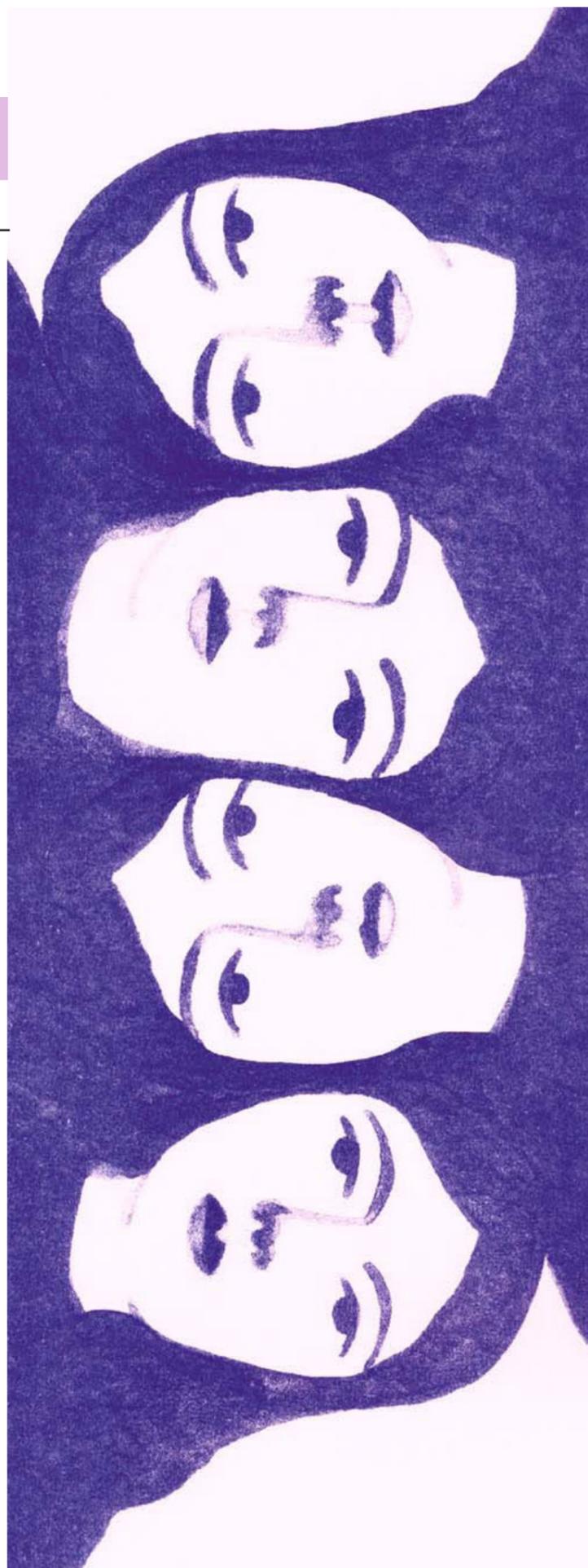
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Julia GR, Sisterhood (2020)

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# STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

*It is not a secret that students are under constant stress and pressure. Not only is it related to the university homework and deadlines, but personal or family matters have an impact on students' mental health as well.*

*Therefore, it is paramount to address the topic of our mental wellbeing and see what can be done to relieve unavoidable stress and anxiety that are present in our life every day.*

Firstly, it is important to know that we are not alone. There are always people who are here for us. These can be our friends or relatives, the ones who are ready to listen to us, support us and give us some advice.

It is beneficial to talk to somebody who we trust, as only by describing our feelings and worries out loud we can help ourselves alleviate our distress. In addition, a loving or caring person will provide us with supportive words and valuable advice that we need at this moment.

Nevertheless, it should work both ways. If a person comes to us to talk with us and share their experience, we should be patient and attentive to this person, as we do not know what they are going through and, of course, we do not want to neglect or even hurt their feelings.

To summarize, we live during the uneasy times and face various challenges or obstacles, so love, tenderness and kindness should prevail in our relationships. Since we all are human and want to be happy and loved.



Secondly, I would suggest doing some exercises. It is well known that sport has a substantial number of benefits for our physical and mental health.

In the first place, it boosts our immune system by becoming stronger and more resistant to various diseases spreading around us.

Then, when we exercise, we build new habits by doing some challenging physical activity and motivating ourselves to do better and, this way, we improve our mental focus. Although the training may be demanding or even test our physical or men-

tal abilities, we get the rush of endorphins (happy hormones) and the decrease of the cortisol (stress hormone) at the end of the workout.

However, not everybody can do such intense exercises. In this case, a person can do yoga, stretching or just walking in nature to relax and feel calmer. In either way, movement has proven to have positive effects on our body and brain and, therefore, can help us recharge our batteries after a stressful day.



Thirdly, doing some creative activities is known to be an effective way of dealing with everyday stress. A lot of research has been conducted on this topic and all researchers agree on the fact that painting, designing, photographing or just cooking help us relieve anxiety and make us feel more cheerful.

Of course, there are so many other imaginative pastimes. Not only do they calm us down, but they also let us express our feelings. I think every person can find something to do for themselves. It does not have

to be something sophisticated, but it can be doing something diverse in our daily routine.

Some examples of such originality may include having different hairstyles every day, experimenting with various clothes styles or making a creative plan for the weekend. All of these help us stay focused and let all fears or doubts that cause us to feel anxious go.

*In conclusion, here are provided some suggestions on how to cope with everyday stress that we, as students, constantly face.*

- seeking support and advice from relatives or friends
- doing sport and finding some creative activities in our ordinary routine

It is also important to remember that everything is temporary, and we are never alone.

Text: Anastasiia Cherniavska  
Photos: unsplash

The University of Prešov now offers counseling and therapy. If you are struggling, please try and contact this source:



# A WALK IN ATHENS

*As introduced in our previous issue, The Institute of English and American studies offers a pathway to work, study, and experience the culture abroad. All this can be achieved thanks to the Erasmus+ Mobility, which offers a vast variety of options for students. This time, we've interviewed Michaela, a third year AJAK student, who has returned from her 4-month long study exchange in Greece.*

*Kind-hearted and always eager to share her thoughts, she began by letting us know where Erasmus led her and what was expected of her during her stay.*

In my first year, I applied for an Erasmus+ semester abroad and my destination was Athens. I've never been to Greece before, and Athens fascinated me as a place where the greatest thinkers of the human race came from. The cradle of civilization as they say.

I spent 4 months in Athens during which I attended six classes while one of them was a Greek language course. I was required to

work on my own and complete handouts, write assignments, read books, and prepare for my classes but also make sure I socialized with other students both local and Erasmus ones and explored the city. That is the beauty of Erasmus+, it makes you live outside of what your default setting is.

*What are some differences you've noticed about education in Greece? Is the style of teaching any different?*

I would say that I did notice some differences. Athens is historically a center of education, and you can still see it today. There are many universities, and it can be said

that it is a student city.

In terms of my own experience, I would point out that my classes at National and Kapodistrian University were a fusion of our lecture and seminar scheme. They were held in the form of lectures, but the lecturers encouraged discussion throughout the three-hour-long classes. There was also a very strong emphasis on critical evaluation of everything that was said.

The Greek also often use their right to protest, and, in those cases, Athens' traffic could easily get paralyzed. In those cases, students were excused if they





*It is priceless to make friends while you're away on Erasmus... they will make for good company when you want to explore, learn, and have fun.*

didn't make it to class or the classes themselves would be cancelled so that the students could also participate in the protests.

The class dynamic was easy to adapt to, mainly because the classes were held in English and the professors were very welcoming and accommodating to the Erasmus students.

*And what about the culture you've been surrounded by? What sort of traditions or customs that had made an impression on you?*

The Greek are proud of being Greek and they show it during their "Independence Day" which is celebrated on the 25th of March. A huge military parade, marching soldiers, planes and fighter jets in the sky, and Greek music around every corner.

They love good food, and you can see it by the number of people who visit the food

markets every day. They just love cooking with the freshest ingredients and that's the beauty of it.

I also observed that strong Greek Orthodox background of this country means the people take both Easter and Lent very seriously. The Lent practically means that the country goes vegan for 40 days before Easter. Then they take two weeks off work and school for Easter mostly to travel home and be with family, or to the islands for a vacation before the wild summer season begins.

*Moving on, Miška shares one of her happy memories about life in Athens.*

I remember one funny incident. When my roommate Paula and I used to go to a fresh fruits and vegetable market in our neighbourhood the vendors would often give us an extra lemon or carrot for free. I guess you can say that we charmed them.

*She smiles and continues.*

But when we eventually went to the same market with our boyfriends instead of each other we found out that that's not a rule.

I think they only give free veggies to single girls.

*If you were to go to Erasmus again, would you choose the same country or programme? Would you try to manage your time differently?*

I don't have to answer this question hypothetically, I am planning to attend another Erasmus program. I am going back to Greece, but I'll be attending an internship this time.

And regarding my time management, yes, I will try to plan my everyday activities more mindfully than I did last time. I will need to keep up with the internship's workload as well as my activism and all the traveling I want to do while I'm in Greece.

*Is there any advice you could give to someone who is hoping to apply for Erasmus? What should they keep in mind during the application process?*

I would advise anyone who's applying to look for accommodation well ahead of time. I rented a room in a shared apartment 8 months ahead of time and it gave me a great sense of peace as my departure time was approaching.

You are more likely to get a good deal on your rental and find a really nice room or apartment. Might seem too much but trust me, it isn't.

And another thing piece of advice from an Erasmus alumnus is... Don't stress.

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΠΟΔΙΣΤΡΙΑΚΟ  
ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ



If you truly want to attend a semester abroad, then you will. You don't have to worry about our university not letting you go or the host university not accepting you. So, believe it, ask questions, and go for it in big style!

*Lastly, Miška opens about the importance of networking and meeting new people in a foreign country. How, sometimes, meeting someone new helps us learn new things about ourselves.*

It is priceless to make friends while you're away on an Erasmus program, both Erasmus students and locals. They will make for good company

when you want to explore, learn, and have fun.

I am still in touch with my entire girl gang, and we are planning a reunion in Athens this May. I also found myself a sweet Greek friend, Dora who is always there to answer my questions about the Greek language.

And I found myself a boyfriend while in Athens which made my Erasmus extra special.

I would say that my Erasmus friends taught me all sorts of things. My German roommate Paula taught me that you should be informed first and then you can unapologetically stand behind your truth.

My French roommate Léonie taught me that you don't necessarily have to listen to your parents if you are sure about the direction you're going and about what you want.

And my boyfriend Nikos taught me the insane beauty of the Greek language by dissecting Greek words for me and explaining them piece by piece.

To conclude, I would just like to add that Erasmus will certainly be a time of your life if you let it.

Text & Photos: Karolína Oravcová  
Michaela Markovičová

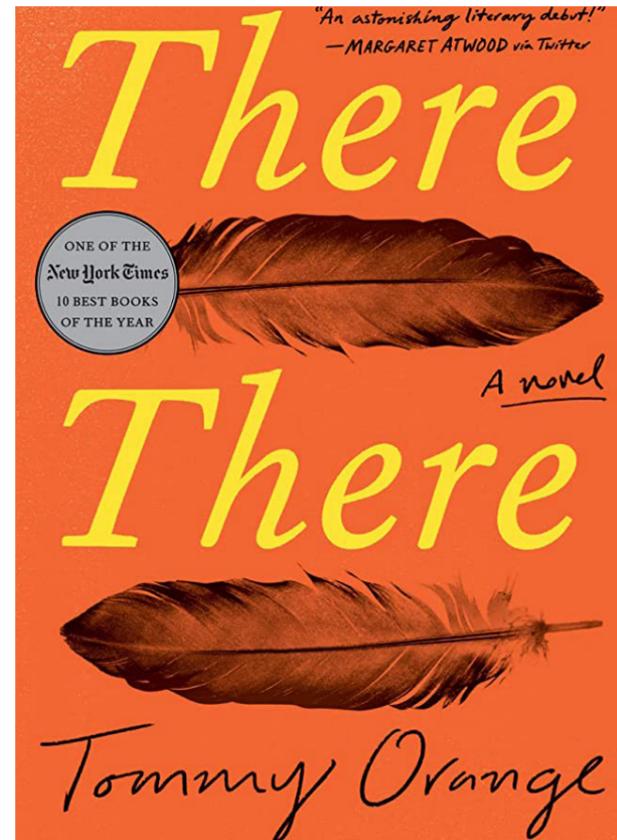
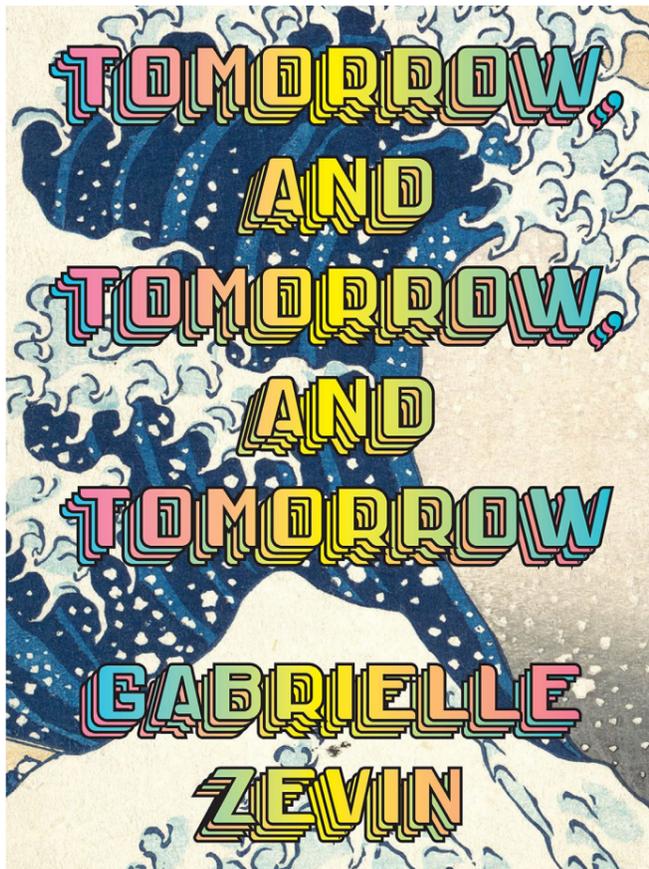


# 11 CONTEMPORARY ANGLOPHONE NOVELS THAT YOU SHOULD READ

## THE UNITED STATES

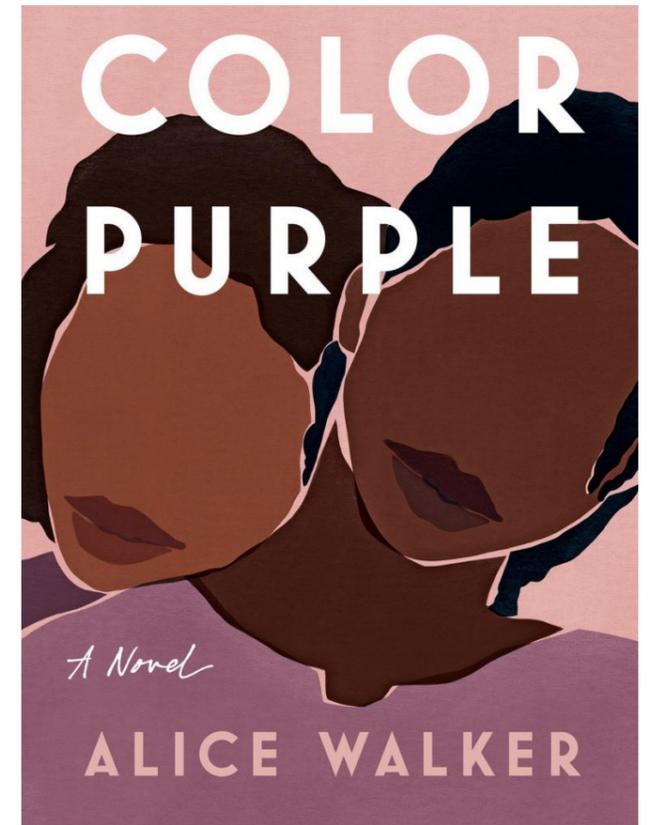
Two friends, Sam and Sadie, team up as creative partners in the realm of video game design in this thrilling novel. Their success brings them recognition, joy, sorrow, and, in the end, a kind of immortality.

Stunning and brilliantly constructed work that explores the complexity of identity, disability, failure, the potential for redemption, and most importantly, our need for connection: to be loved and to love. Undoubtedly, it is a love story, but it is not one you have read before.



Twelve protagonists from Native communities are featured in this magnificent and jarring award-winning book. At the Great Oakland Powwow, they come together and meet on a tragic day, and together, this chorus of voices tells the story of the hardship of the urban Native American, who must cope with a difficult past, an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, community, sacrifice, and heroism.

This ferocious and humorous novel explodes onto the page with poetry, passion and suspense that makes it impossible to put down.



The Color Purple is a Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winner that portrays the lives of African American women in early twentieth-century rural Georgia.

The book broke the taboo surrounding domestic and sexual abuse by recounting the tales of women's lives through their hardship and suffering, friendship and growth, resiliency and bravery. Alice Walker's novel will take you on a spirit-affirming journey towards redemption and love. It is profoundly sympathetic and exquisitely imagined.

# GREAT BRITAIN

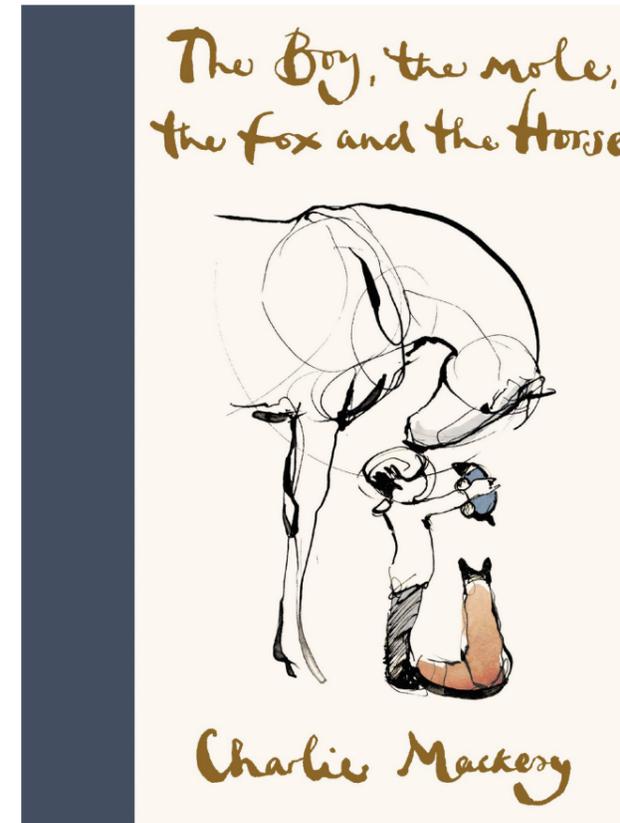
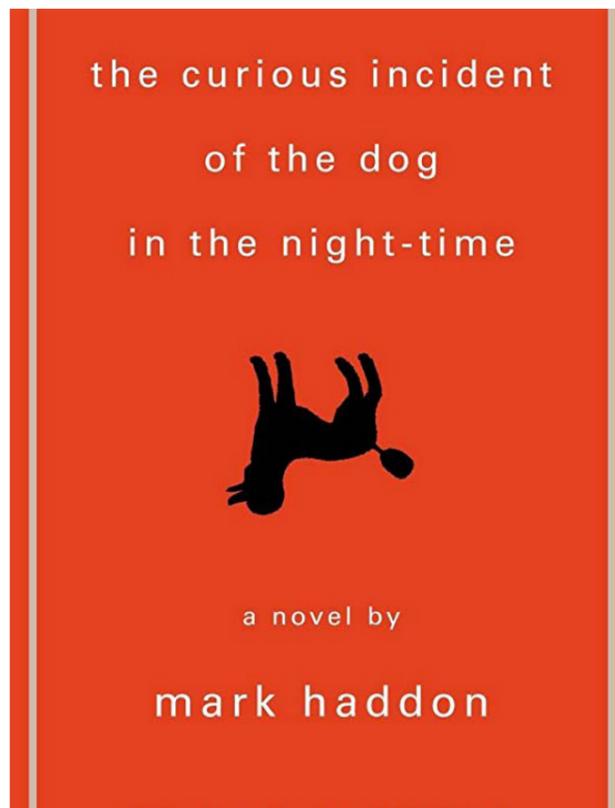


Kazuo Ishiguro, a Nobel laureate, creates complex allegories on history, nationalism, and the individual's position in a world that is always beyond our comprehension.

Never Let Me Go is a love triangle involving human clones in an alternate 1990s England that explores mortality, loss, and what it means to be a human with marvelous subtlety.

It's difficult to find another murder mystery book like *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Christopher Boone, who is fifteen years old and has autism spectrum disorder, serves as both the detective and the book's narrator.

He has a very deep understanding of mathematics but very little understanding of people. He loves lists, patterns, and truth. Perhaps one of the most engrossing, unique, and widely praised books in recent years is this incredible tale of Christopher's journey to investigate the odd death of a neighbourhood dog.



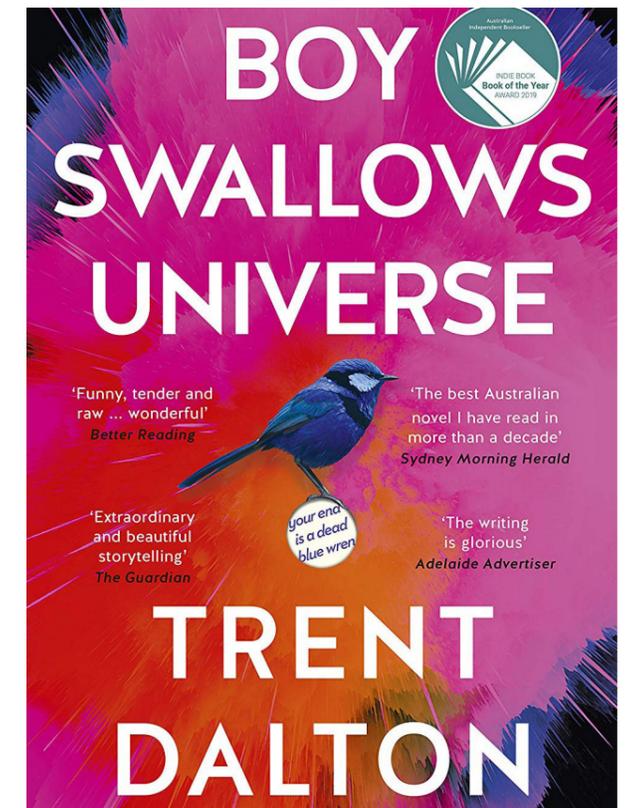
Adapted into the BAFTA and Oscar-winning short animated film. "A novel for all times, a book for all ages."

See the world of Charlie's four unusual companions as they go on adventures in the Wild and discover their most important life lessons, thoughts and feelings that connect us all.

# AUSTRALIA

From one of Australia's most promising authors- *Boy Swallows Universe* is a coming-of-age novel about maturing, love, crime and magic set in the rough working class suburbs of Brisbane.

This book will be the most heart-breaking, joyful and exciting tale about brotherhood, true love and the most unexpected friendships that you will read in a long time.

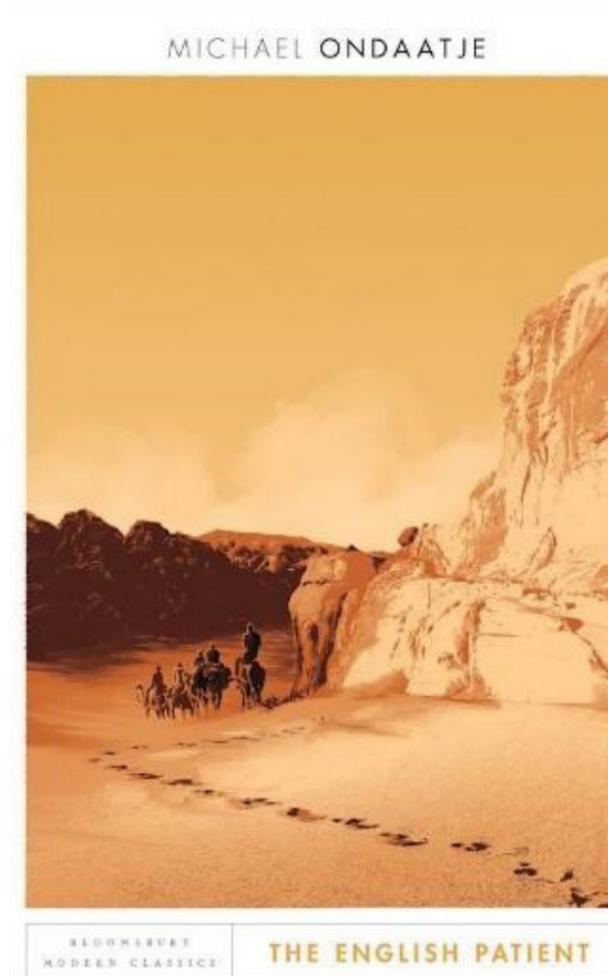


# CANADA

## *The English Patient* Michael Ondaatje

The Booker Prize-winning novel by Michael Ondaatje explores, with stunning beauty and frightening intelligence, the collision of four broken lives in an Italian villa at the end of the Second World War.

Each is plagued by the riddle of the English patient, a burned man who has no name and is lying in an upstairs room. His memories of love, treachery, and salvation shine through this book like a searing lightning.



# NEW ZEALAND

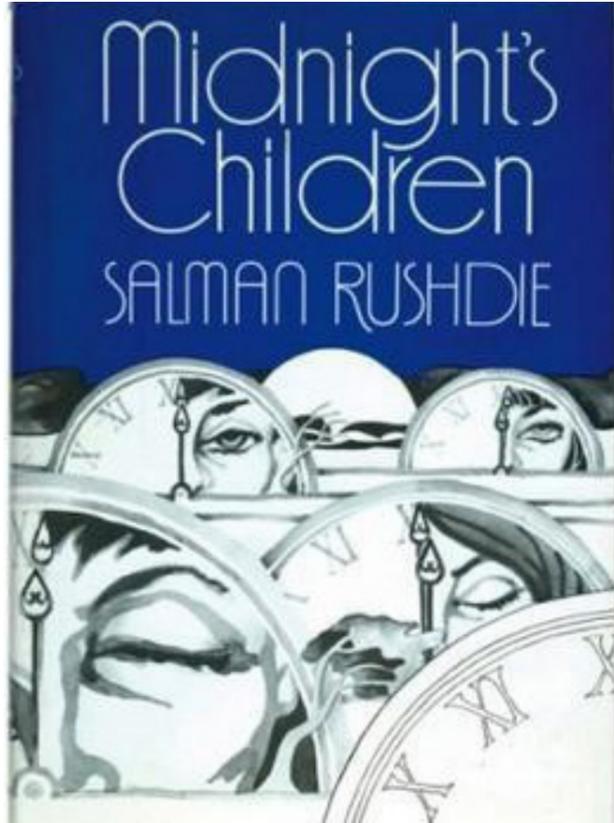
## *The Luminaries* Eleanor Catton

Set in New Zealand in 1866, the tale follows Walter Moody, a prospector who travels to make his fortune on the goldfields. Instead, he accidentally walks into a tense meeting of twelve local men and becomes entangled in a complicated case involving numerous unsolved crimes.

The complex premise of the novel is based on the system of Western astrology, where the twelve men represent the twelve signs of the zodiac and another set of characters represents planets of the solar system. The 2013 Booker Prize is just one of the numerous acclaims and prizes the book has received.



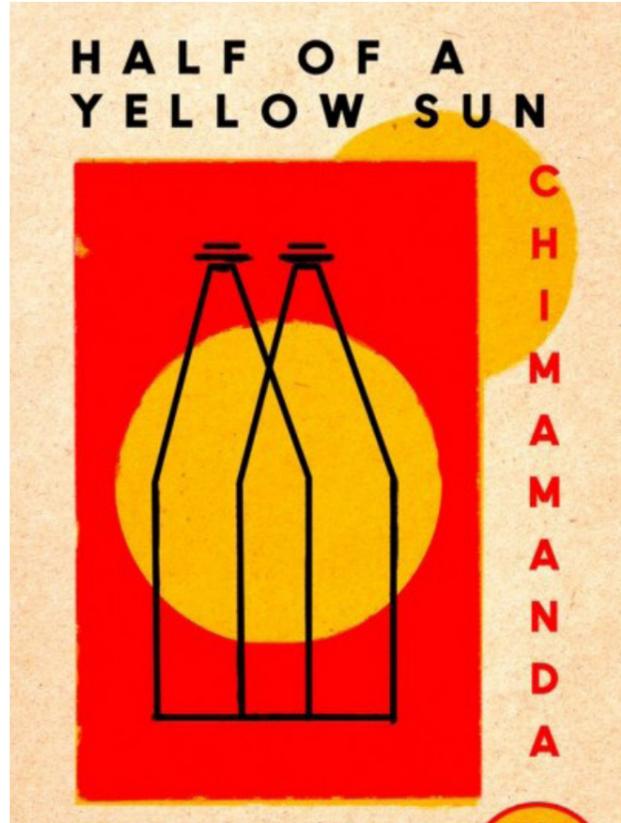
# POST-COLONIAL BOOKS



## INDIA

Saleem Sinai, the main character, tells a postcolonial, postmodern, and magical realist tale that is set in the historical setting of India's transition from British colonial control to independence and division. With fictional narratives, history is preserved in a self-reflexive manner.

This book is a masterful expression of the universal human comedy and at the same time a fascinating family saga and astounding portrayal of a large land and its people.



## NIGERIA

An artfully written, heart-breaking literary masterpiece. The major protagonists are forced together and pulled apart in ways they never anticipated as the horrifying Biafran War engulfs them.

The Orange Prize for Fiction winner Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's masterwork is a book about Africa in a broader sense, including the end of colonialism, ethnic allegiances, class, and race, as well as the ways in which love may complicate all of these things.



*You can find more Anglophone and Commonwealth literature in an interesting project called Big Jubilee Read*

The Big Jubilee Read is a 2022 campaign to promote reading for pleasure and to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Elizabeth II. A list of 70 books by Commonwealth authors, 10 from each decade of Elizabeth II's reign, was selected by a panel of experts and announced by the BBC and The Reading Agency on 18 April 2022.

Text: Kristína Macejová  
Photo: Google, Unsplash



# ISSUES IN FOOTBALL

*For someone who doesn't follow football or is just a normal football fan, this game might just be 90 minutes where 22 players try to catch a ball and score a goal at the end. But for someone like me who follows the behind-the-scenes of this game and is in the center of the action most of the time in our local Sunday league, football means more than just the game and that also means seeing more than just the 90 minutes on the pitch.*

That includes following the transfers of players, controversies surrounding footballers, or racism and corruption.

And I feel like these issues, especially racism and corruption need to be brought up to daylight and made people aware of them.

In recent years racism has been one of the most talked about issues in football but at the same time one of the most overlooked ones when it came to resolving the situation and the problems surrounding it.

In the last decade, there have been many cases in the United Kingdom where racial abuse towards football players played a major role.

Petra's Archive



One of the biggest racial abuses that I have witnessed as a football fan came after the *European Championship in 2021* where England was battling Italy in the final match.

Italy went on to win the tournament and England was in tears after this huge disappointment in the first major final since winning the *World Cup in 1966*.

But the thing that interested these "fans" was not the loss in this major final, but the fact that all three players who took the last penalties were dark-skinned.

*Marcus Rashford* (Manchester United), *Jadon Sancho* (then Borussia Dortmund), and *Bukayo Saka* (Arsenal) received backlash and racial abuse.

Being disappointed after a loss in the final is acceptable, but what is not acceptable is racial abuse of any kind towards anyone.

Marcus, Jadon, and Bukayo disappeared from social media for some time after the tournament to at least outrun the majority of the hate thrown at them.

On the bright side, they received many encouraging letters and messages, especially from children in the United Kingdom who wanted to support their idols and sent them love and appreciation. But this still does not justify the racial abuse and hate.



*Another disgusting case of racial abuse directed at a particular player comes from Spain. Vinicius Junior is a Brazilian player who has been playing for Real Madrid since 2018 and in recent months has been facing hatred everywhere he goes.*

When Real Madrid was playing in Mallorca in February, Vinicius was racially abused by the Mallorca fans during a game. In an article on the website of *The Guardian*, it is mentioned that ‘Supporters could be heard calling the 22-year-old forward a monkey’ which is absolutely unacceptable.

The website also claims that there have been at least three other occasions when Vinicius Jr. was targeted in some way in 2021 and 2022. But the biggest case in recent months was when supporters of a city

rival *Atletico Madrid* hung a mannequin underneath a bridge with Vinicius’ shirt on, next to a banner that said ‘*Madrid hates Real*’.

This inhuman act of so-called ‘*Frente Altetico Ultras*’ crossed the line at least a million times and even the representatives of *Atletico Madrid* released a statement that said:

*“These are disgusting and unacceptable acts that shame society.”*

Even the Spanish LaLiga where both of these clubs play released a statement reported via the *Madrid-Zone*:

*“LaLiga strongly condemns the acts of hate and intimidation against Vinicius. The investigation of the facts will be urged in the search for the conviction of those responsible and we request the most severe criminal sanctions.”*

And these hateful acts are just one percent of everything that has been happening.

But what is the solution to this problem, so that players can feel comfortable and confident to do what they love the most without being judged for what they look like?

The English Premier League has a long tradition of wearing the slogan “*No Room for Racism*” which is also

the name for a campaign in Britain that has been helping to solve the issue of racism on and also off the pitch. In recent days there has also been a ‘*historic moment*’ involving the fight against racial abuse. As CNN reported:

*“A football fan who racially abused Brentford FC star Ivan Toney on social media has been banned from every UK stadium for three years.”*

This one the first time something like this has happened and hopefully, it can be a good step forward in helping to solve the issue of racism not only in football but also outside of it.



*“Challenge it, report it, change it.”*

Other things that have shocked the world of football this year have been the cases of corruption in football that are being unveiled.

Many different cases from different clubs and countries have been coming to the surface and have completely destroyed the idea of 'fair-play football' which has been praised for so long, but some clubs and their representatives seem to have another perspective of fair play.

The first shock came when the Italian newspapers reported an alleged 'financial scandal' within the club Juventus. In January the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) released a statement that said:

*"The Bianconeri had been docked 15 points for 'financial irregularities' and 'false accounting' in relation to past transfer deals" according to GOAL.*

This decision cost them 3rd place in their league and sent them to 10th. ESPN website explains that Juventus were found guilty of essentially engineering transfers, usually swap deals, where little or no money changed hands, but the club drew an accounting benefit.

The investigation of this case is still ongoing so we do not know how big the damage will be, but what we now know for sure is that not everything is as it seems to be.

Shortly after this, England was in shock when another investigation including finances came to daylight, where Manchester City was playing the main role. In February this year, the club was charged by the *English Premier League* with numerous alleged breaches of financial rules.

*Sky Sports* reported that Manchester City allegedly did not fully disclose the financial remunerations that were made to one of their managers over a four-year period.

The suggestion is that there was a secret contract so one of the managers was getting paid much more than officially stated. This is a very serious case of breaching the financial rules allegedly over 100 times and also as the case before, this case is still not closed.

The investigation has been ongoing for the past four years so it may not be any time soon that we will find out the punishment for the club if found guilty, but again, fair play doesn't mean much here either.



And lastly, the biggest case in Spanish football that has been the main topic of many football websites in recent weeks is the case of continued corruption of FC Barcelona. As CNN reported:

*"FC Barcelona was charged on Friday by the Barcelona provincial prosecutor's office with continued corruption between individuals in the sports field in addition to other charges in relation to an alleged payment scandal."*

And as they later report, these charges were presented to the *No.1 magistrate's court in Barcelona*.

The possible punishments if found guilty are points deduction, sanctions to charged individuals, or even elimination from the Spanish first division league.

And these three cases have only come to the surface in the past three months. So, what do we know, how many cases like this are still perfectly hidden? Does this destroy the idea of fair play that everyone is praising?

I guess we decide when we will see the punishments that can happen if these clubs are found guilty.

But what we can say now is that so many things could have been different and so many titles could have had a different owner if everyone would have played by the same rules.

Text: Petra Rychnavská

# ATTRACTIVE UKRAINE

*Since there are many students in the University of Prešov who are from Ukraine, including myself, the purpose of this article is to let people learn something new and interesting about Ukraine. Specifically, it includes national history, geography, cuisine and traditions. So let us dive into exploring this attractive country!*

## *Crucial historical events*

Firstly, it is essential to be acquainted with some events that played a significant role in the development of Ukraine as an independent and sovereign state. In the year 988, *Kievan Rus'* (a well-known state that was made of mostly Ukrainian territories) was baptized and officially turned into the Christianity by the ruler Volodymyr the Great.

This important turn in the history is seen as fundamental for Ukrainian future politics since they were directed more towards the West and based on the first principles of democracy. Next, in the 16th century, the foundation of the *Zaporizhian Sich* was happening.

It was the union of local people, mostly men, who felt the need to create a group of the locals to protect their land from the raids of nomads. These people were known as the *Cossacks*.

They were famous for their courage, bravery, loyalty and compassion. The Cossacks were the ones who were fighting for Ukrainian freedom and the rights to exist as an independent country with its own governing body.

Another crucial moment in the history of Ukraine was on the *24th of August 1991*, when Ukraine finally gained its own *independence* from being under the Russian influence in the Soviet Union.

This meant Ukraine could directly control its own national and international affairs with its government and the chosen members of the parliament. However, later, in 2004, the *Orange Revolution* has brought together many unsatisfied citizens who were against corruption and fraud in the 2004 presidential elections.

They wished the country to be more pro-European with the Western views. Neverthe-

less, the fight is still going on. In 2013-2014, *the Revolution of Dignity in Kyiv* and other Ukrainian cities broke out. Anti-government civilians were protesting against the rule of Yanukovich and his pro-Russian political party.

More than a hundred innocent people died in the riots. Nowadays, they are known as "the heroes of the heavenly hundred". In all of these events, Russia was only exacerbating

the conflict by supporting Yanukovich and his associates. This was only the beginning, since the Russian involvement in the Ukrainian fight for freedom become obvious when Russia invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula in February 2014.

Therefore, this date can be considered to be the beginning of the ongoing war for the long-awaited independence and sovereignty of Ukraine.



Alexander Bubov, Cossacks

## Ukrainian geography

Another topic worth knowing is some basic information of Ukrainian geography.

Firstly, Ukraine consists of 27 regions (24 oblasts, two cities with a special status and one autonomous republic). In fact, it is the biggest country in Europe.

It shares its borders with seven countries:

- Russia
- Belarus
- Poland
- Slovakia
- Hungary
- Romania
- Moldova

The state also has access to two seas: the *Black and the Azov*.

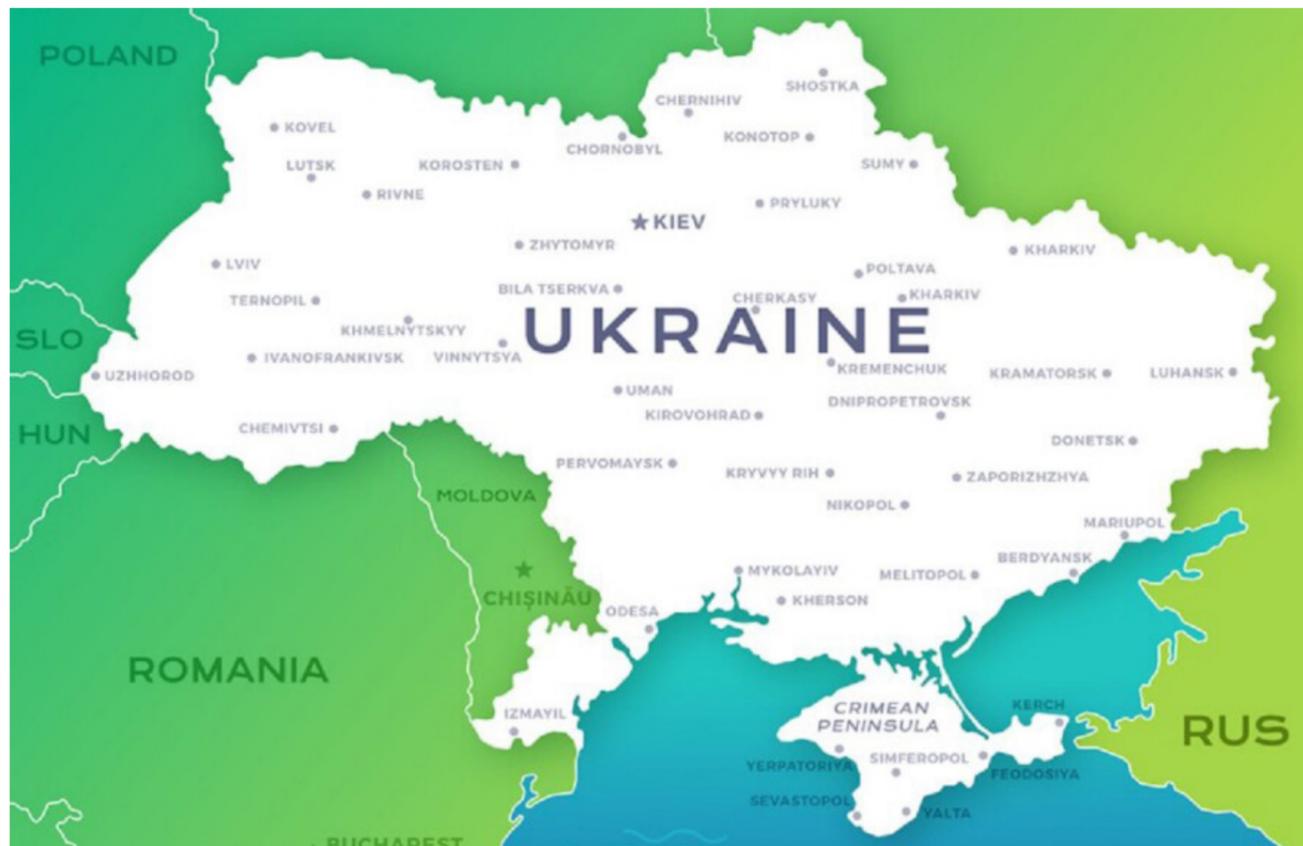
Before the Russian invasion, Ukraine's population was about *36 million* people. Talking about its geography, the territory is mainly plain with the exception of the *Carpathian Mountains* on the West of the country. This is why, with so many fertile fields and meadows, the country has sustainable agriculture producing a plenty of crops for home and export use.

Ukraine has a mostly temperate climate, meaning it has a wider range of temperatures throughout the year with four seasons.

In conclusion, Ukrainians are well aware of a country's convenient location and appreciate what the mother Earth gave to them by taking care of their rich land.



*Delicious traditional food*



It is also quite appealing to describe some Ukrainian traditional food. In the first place, there is borscht. Who hasn't heard of it?

It is a classic soup made of beetroots or tomatoes that give it specific color and unforgettable taste. It also combines potatoes, cabbage, spices and meat. It is common to eat it with homemade bread – *pampushky*. Some people like to dip it into a dressing such as oil with garlic or sour cream with pepper. In any case, it is delicious.

In the same way, another well-known dish is *varenyky*. These are dumplings filled with any type of food, either salty or sweet (potatoes with mushrooms, cheese with herbs or fruits with sugar). These are typically served with butter, jam or sour cream. For many Ukrainians, it is a family tradition to make varenyky at home in the close circle.

Equally important is another distinguished Ukrainian dish – *holubtsi*. These are cooked pieces of, normally, cabbage or pepper stuffed with minced meat with some sauce and spices.

Last but not least, there is famous *salo*. These are cured slabs of fatback with or without skin. They are usually seasoned with salt and pepper. It is very representative of Ukrainian typical food and every person travelling to Ukraine must taste it.

To summarize this tempting paragraph, all of this food is eaten on a regular basis, not only on special occasions, which is truly remarkable and makes Ukrainian cuisine rich and attractive.



## Centuries-old folk traditions and celebrations

To start with the first one, it is the Old New Year (Stary Novy Rik) celebrated on the 14th of January. This holiday is remnant from the old pre-Christian Ukrainian customs.

However, based on the Christian traditions, it is the day of Vasil the Great. This man is known as the patron saint of agriculture. This is why boys and men go from house to house spreading and “sowing” the seeds wishing the hosts to have an abundant harvest the following year.

Closely connected with this celebration, there is another important day for Ukrainians – the *Generous Evening* (Stedry Vecher). It is the previous day, the 13th of January. This evening, young boys and girls visit their neighbors, signing songs and citing poems that are full of greatest wishes for all family members. By the same to-

ken, the hosts give thanks to the youth for coming and reward them with some goods such as sweets or money.

Next holiday is the Water Baptism (Vodochreshcha). It is the last holiday belonging to the Christmas festivities. This day is well-known as it is thought that Jesus the Christ was baptized in the Jordan river and the God appeared in trinity: as a Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Therefore, it is believed that all water is getting filled with healing properties and people can come to any reservoir and dive into the freezing water three times and become protected for the whole year.

Last holiday that is worth mentioning is Kupala Night or Ivana Kupala. It became special in the Ukrainian traditions after the birth of the saint John the Baptist.

Based on the new calendar, it is celebrated on the 7th of July. A lot of people gather together somewhere in the nature, close to the river. The fire is put up and people start dancing and jumping around the bonfire.

Young women and girls wear woven wreaths with various flowers on their heads and at the end of the celebration let them flow in the stream of the river.

This way, Ukrainians believe that a man or a boy on the other side of the river will find one special wreath that belongs to his potential girlfriend.

At the end, these are only some instances of a rich variety of holidays that we have in Ukraine. Ukrainian culture is full of abundant celebrations and traditions that let people spend quality time together and have fun.

In conclusion, Ukraine is a very attractive country that has a fascinating history of fighting for its independence. Next, its geography and location allow the country to have close economic ties with other neighboring states and, at the same time, have sufficient resources for its own food sustainability. Ukraine is also well-known for its fine cuisine that has a variety of traditional dishes served on regular and festive

occasions. Finally, its culture is full of exciting holidays that have been celebrated for hundreds of years. So, if you are thinking about visiting this beautiful country, I will certainly recommend you to see historical attractions and try delicious food. Welcome to Ukraine!

Text: Anastasiia Cherniavska  
Photos: unsplash



# WHO IS A BUDDY?

*In our previous Issue, Anastasiia talked about her year-long experience in Spain thanks to the Erasmus+ Mobility. During her interview, she mentioned how the local students, who were part of the Erasmus Student Network, have helped her and guided her with any questions and issues she's encountered during her stay. A project based on ESN has recently launched here, in the University of Prešov, under the name BUDDY – „Experience Erasmus in Prešov“. We've decided to contact Ema Fričková, who is one of the minds behind the BUDDY system. Let's take a look at who or what a BUDDY might be!*

*Could you please briefly introduce who or what BUDDY is and how was this project conceived?*

The Buddy System is one of the main components of the Erasmus Student Network (ESN), which is an international student organisation that has been operating in around 40 countries in Europe (and beyond) for more than 30 years. At the University of Prešov, ESN Prešov was founded in 2011, and we are one of 10 ESN sections in Slovakia. With the buddy system working in most universities, we decided to re-launch it here at UP with the subtitle 'Experience Erasmus in Prešov'.

The motto of ESN is 'Students helping students', which describes the main focus of our work. We try to help students who come here for a study exchange or internship (most often through Erasmus+, but also through other grant and scholarship schemes such as the National Scholarship Programme or Fulbright), to make their stay in Slovakia more enjoyable and to contribute to cultural understanding.

We organise various trips for them in the surroundings but also within Slovakia or abroad, we show them cultural monuments, we prepare activities such as national dinners, PubQuizzes. This also includes a buddy system; it's closely linked.

The main idea is that our students from the university are buddies for an assigned foreign student. Buddies are usually the first contact for them apart from the International relations office of the university.

They help them from their arrival (sometimes even before it) until their departure. Very often, buddies also gradually become members of ESN and organise various activities for them. But this is not a rule, it depends on the motivation of the student who wants to become a buddy.





*What is your role in managing the Buddy system?*

I've been an ESN member for a long time, since my second year of undergraduate studies. I also started as a buddy and gradually moved into ESN and I have been there in various positions from organising different events related to inclusion, recruiting new members to being our deputy "president".

After my studies, I'm in ESN now mainly to do knowledge transfer and share best practices. The pandemic stopped everything, even the foreign mobility, and that is why, like other sections in Slovakia and Europe, we are trying to revive this great project, to find new members and buddies.

ESN has brought us a lot of useful experiences, friends not only from abroad but also from Slovakia, contacts for the future and many memories. At the moment, together with other senior members, we are also in the position of "coordinators" and help new members when they need it, for example when they themselves are not sure how to communicate with the university or dorms, etc.

In addition, we also coordinate the activities we organise for our international students.

*Have you been planning to implement this for some time?*

As I have said said before, the Buddy system has more or less already existed here and has been functioning since ESN started in Prešov, it just wasn't officially named like that. We definitely intend to continue this, and we are always looking for new members for ESN and also as buddies.

We plan to make a call for new buddies every semester as soon as we know how many new exchange students will be joining us for that semester. We also plan to continue working with the buddies from last year.

*When we "pair" our buddies with international students, we also try to find out something about them with a short questionnaire.*

*What is expected of students who want to contribute as a buddy?*

For example, the Buddy can advise the exchange student on how to arrive in Slovakia safely, as quickly as possible, perhaps even cheapest, to how to order lunch in our dining hall or where to activate their ISIC. So really such very practical things. If an international student is interested to have a buddy, communication starts before the international students get here, with emails.

Often, once the students know when they're coming, they'll arrange with the buddy the arrival and eventually pick them up at the station etc.. They will help them with how to get to the dormitory, communicate the registration for accommodation, then during the first days they will show them the uni-

versity, the city, where to go to eat well, where to go for a beer etc.. This is the kind of basics we expect from Buddies. What else they decide to do depends on how they know each other and how they get on. We, who are more experienced, help them with all this, so they are not on their own. We also have a document - a guide for the buddy where they can find important pieces of information written down.

*What happens if the couple is not happy? (For example, if their personalities or interests don't match) Is it possible to be paired with someone else?*

Of course, this happens too. People don't always click. There are various reasons for this - sometimes they have different personalities, have different expectations, or simply want someone else, from a different faculty, year or gender.

When we "pair" our buddies with international students, we also try to find out something about them with a short questionnaire.

We ask where they are from, where they live, what they are studying, whether they live on dormitory (if so which one), what languages they speak, whether they have any international experience or if they are interested in organising something (a trip) for international students - because this is very important for us.

Our goal is to make sure that each party has some "advantage" - our students (buddy) who can improve their communication skills in a foreign language, get to know new people from abroad or from the university, and also the international students, who will find their study stay easier and feel more at home as they will have someone to turn to.

*We were surprised by the initial interest in getting involved and although it has of course decreased over time, which we expected, but we have met our goal of every international student having a buddy.*

*Is Buddy only available during study hours? Could you tell us more about what happens during leisure time?*

Buddies are available for their international students as they set it up, but it's not just during study hours. It can also be in their free time, e.g. during weekends if they become friends.

It's very common that they go on a trip or for a coffee together. It depends on how much the two of them "click" and also on the international student's personality. Some-one needs help more often, someone less.

However, we always tell both parties that it should be in a friendly spirit and the help should not be misused for something that the international students can also arrange themselves.

*Buddy has been happening for a couple of months now. Is it going as expected?*

It was a very good step. I think it has been a success so far. We were surprised by the initial interest in getting involved and although it has of course decreased over time, which we expected, but we have met our goal of every international student having a buddy.

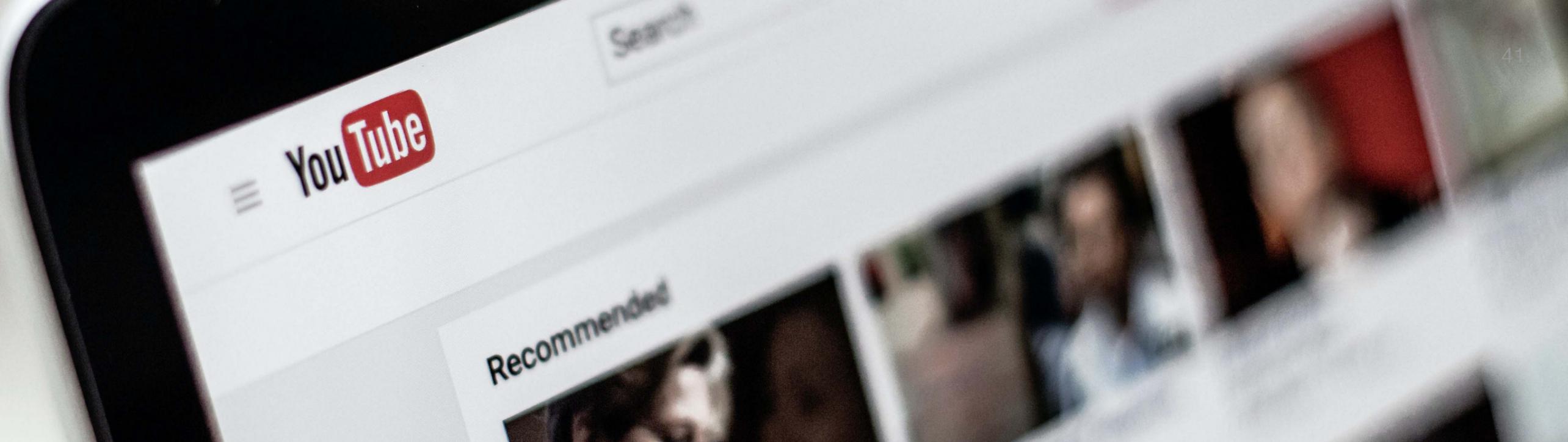
Several students even have two buddies, which is a bonus for our students who have the opportunity to meet new peo-

ple from their own university. In addition, we have also found several students among the buddies who are interested in co-organizing various events and trips for international students.

Although we don't yet have consistent feedback from international students on how satisfied they are with the buddy system, from our conversations with them so far we see it as positive on both sides.

Text: Ema Fričková  
Kristína Macejová  
Karolína Oravcová  
Photos: Ema Fričková





# IMPROVING ENGLISH WITH YOUTUBE

It is true that social media platforms have taken over our lives in recent years and we find ourselves scrolling through Instagram or TikTok much more than before.

When we fall into the black hole of Instagram posts, YouTube videos, or Twitter we may lose so much time that could have been spent differently and then we feel

guilty. But spending so much time on social media may not be that big of a problem when you spend your time learning something new.

YouTube especially has been a good tool for learning many things from people who make educational videos.

These videos may have to do something with languages, technology, history, or even geography.

But, focusing on the English language, there are many different YouTubers who can help you with improving your language skills, and here are a few of them.

## RACHEL'S ENGLISH

Instagram: @rachelsenglish  
YouTube: Rachel's English

This channel can help you with learning the right English pronunciation. Rachel's videos are full of lessons on phonetics, pronunciation, grammar, idioms, sentence usage, and basically everything that you need to become a perfect English speaker.

She specifies on American English pronunciation, and she has a special playlist on her channel called "How-To playlist" that can help you with the right mouth positioning for each sound.

## ACCENT'S WAY ENGLISH WITH HADAR

Instagram: @hadar.accentway  
YouTube: Accent's Way English with Hadar

Hadar is a non-native English speaker and on her YouTube channel she specifically says that:

*"I'm here to help international speakers of English find freedom, confidence, and power when you speak."*

She makes weekly videos where she gives out tips on pronunciation, fluency, learning strategies, mindset, and a lot more so you can enjoy speaking English with confidence.

## YSIS LORENNNA

Instagram: @ysis  
Youtube: Ysis Loreнна

Something a bit different from the previous two is the channel of Ysis Loreнна. We have recently become familiar with her channel during one of our seminars, where we learned about Welsh English.

Ysis is a Brazilian/British YouTuber and a mother who currently lives in Wales, and on her YouTube channel besides lifestyle videos is teaching people about her life and experience of living in the United Kingdom. You can follow her journey on her YouTube channel, where she has a playlist called:

*"LIVING ABROAD DIARIES"*

where she speaks about the language, customs, her native language, and many more.



## ENGLISH WITH JENNIFER

Instagram: @englishwithjenniferlebedev  
YouTube: English with Jennifer

A YouTube channel that has many videos divided into a playlist that can help you improve your English, or even learn it if you are a beginner. These videos consist of tips for improving your writing in English, grammar explanations and much more.

Jennifer is a native American English speaker and is here to help you speak English more effectively and confidently.

## BUSINESS ENGLISH – LEARN WITH BUSINESS ENGLISH POD

Instagram: @businessenglishpodcast  
YouTube: Business English – Learn with Business English Pod

This YouTube channel may be for English speakers who are confident enough to learn a different type of English than they are used to.

On this channel you can find videos that can teach you the language that is used in telephoning, job interviews, presentations in English, business conversation and much more.

So, if you are thinking about finding a job and need help with this level of English, then this channel is exactly for you.

And after these educational videos, here are some tips on English speaking lifestyle YouTubers from different parts of the world that can help you familiarize with different dialects of English.

## ZOE SUGG – ZOELLA

Instagram: @zoesugg  
Youtube: Zoe Sugg  
Located in: The United Kingdom

Zoe Sugg or more commonly known as Zoella is a lifestyle YouTuber from England and recently became a mom. She has been on YouTube for many years now and is a well-known media personality in the United Kingdom.

She documents her everyday life, motherhood and puts it into almost 30–40-minute videos. Her videos are a perfect time to enjoy your coffee or meal during the day and relax.

Instagram: @Taykbell  
Youtube: Taylor Bell  
Located in: The United States

Taylor Bell is an American YouTuber born in California who currently lives in New York and documents her journey on YouTube. She makes vlog style videos about what it is like living in New York and often also documents her journeys abroad.

She works as a Management Consultant in her everyday life and there are also a couple of videos explaining and helping people with the same passion.



## TAYLOR BELL

## SUNDAYS WITH JAMIE

Instagram: @sundayswithjamie  
Youtube: Sundays with Jamie  
Located in: Australia

Jamie is an Australian based YouTuber who makes vlog videos documenting her life in Melbourne, Australia. She is also known for her travel diaries which she often posts on her channel after a trip.

The most recent ones include Singapore, Canada, and a Cross country road trip with her husband. She also posts videos about travel tips, so if you are traveling then her channel might be a good inspiration for you.

## KGOMOTSO RAMANO

Instagram: @\_miss\_kayy  
Youtube: Kgomotso Ramano  
Located in: South Africa

TKgomotso is a South African YouTuber and a new mom because she recently gave birth to her first baby. She mostly makes vlogs about her life and about home improvement tips.

She has a series on her channel called "House to Home" where she documented her and her husband's new house and the whole process of furnishing and rebuilding.

Text: Petra Rychnavská  
Photos: unsplash

# BEING A WOMAN IN THE FILM INDUSTRY

*“We’re not trying to compete with men or replace them, we just want there to be a seat at the table for women because their stories, our stories, are equally as important.”*

In 2016, with no prior experience in the film business other than acting, Erika Edwards and Ray established Honey Head Films, Wilmington’s (North Carolina) first female film production company.

Upon seeing that the film industry was dominated by males and did not provide women with the chance to work in production roles in the background, they founded their own business with the goal of making female stories equally prevalent as those of men.

Is the film industry truly a place where dreams come true, as some may claim? Despite years of advancement, women continue to be excluded from production work and deprived of fair recognition, opportunities and pay.

So, let’s look some examples of what it’s like being a woman in the current movie production.

When it comes to chances on-screen, the bias against women might not be as obvious. However, the lack would be more apparent if you were to look at the staff personnel for most television and film productions.

The majority of the composers, writers, directors, and cinematographers behind the scenes of the movies made in 2022 were men, and the representation of women in these positions has just barely changed over the last 25 years.

According to Celluloid Ceiling report, which for the past 25 years has monitored women’s employment on the 250 highest-grossing movies annually, only around 24% of the directors and about 7% cinematogra-

phers were women, which is only 3% increase from 1998 when Lauzen, executive director of the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University, started collecting data.

Increasing from 20% in 1998 to 21% in 2022, the proportion of female editors has not changed much either and only 19% of writers, 25% of executive producers, and 31% of producers in 2022 were women.

The small number of women behind the camera is not due to a lack of interest, as Maria Giese, one of the female directors, wrote in her report to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Women made up half of the class when

she enrolled in the graduate directing program at UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) in 1995.

Clearly, the interest is there. Talent also can’t be taken into account to explain the gender gap as illustrated by the fact that films with female directors receive the same level of critical praise as those with male directors.

Based on an investigation by the EEOC, big Hollywood Studios “systematically discriminated” against female directors. According to reports, due to the alleged sexist hiring practices, all six major companies (Disney, Paramount, Sony, Universal, and Warner Bros., as well as 20th Century Fox) engaged in settlement negotiations with the EEOC.



According to Lauzen, the fact that women are underrepresented in positions that are traditionally associated with men is not a coincidence.

*“When we think about what a director or cinematographer looks like, when we see those pictures inside our heads, typically they are of a white male. We can’t discount the impact these subconscious images have on hiring decisions. People tend to hire others who look like they do.”*

The movement to change the status quo is being led by well-known female performers. Nicole Kidman, Jenni-

fer Lopez, Tessa Thompson, and other celebrities publicly committed to working with female directors as part of the Time Up initiative, which was introduced in 2017.

Lauzen issues a warning, however, saying that this year’s Celluloid Ceilings findings demonstrate that it is important to avoid getting distracted by high-profile female-led films and directors and believing the fight for gender equality is already won.

The unequal representation is not the only by-product of sexism in movie production.

Unfortunately, some women have to deal with ‘refusal to be directed by a woman’, pervasive male bias, questioning or doubts about their skills and other forms of misogynistic behaviour.

This, of course, does not happen to every woman but it is so prevalent that it absolutely needs to be talked about.

So, take a look at some stories and experiences shared by women working in film.



*Lexi Alexander, director (Green Street, Lifted)*

“I would say 99% of women working in the film and television industries have experienced sexism. I can list endless examples, from the driver who refused to take me because he was told to wait for the director (which was me) to the executives who insist they need a male director for a film about boxing and fighting, then hire a guy who never had a fight in his life, while I spent the better part of my youth being an international competitive fighting champion.

Once someone said to me: *‘We really wanted you to direct this movie, but ‘anonymous male action star’ refuses to be directed by a woman.’*

The director is considered the general, and just like in the military, they still can’t picture anyone not born with the Y chromosome with that title. The industry still insists on telling most stories from a male point of view and even if women write male-driven fare, they’re assumed to be less competent at it.”



*Ellen Kuras, cinematographer  
(Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Blow)*

"I've been fortunate not to have experienced sexism personally, but I see bias all around, which includes race and age bias as well as gender.

Even today, many people are simply not used to seeing a woman lead a mostly male crew and handling highly technical camera and lighting gear. I've been asked by journalists:

*'How does it feel to have a man's job? I tell them, 'It's not a man's job, it's my job.'*

I try to resist the impulse to react defensively – it's much more effective to use humour or irony. When guys make inappropriate comments, I see these as a sign of their ignorance or insecurity.

I do think some women are afraid of hiring other women because they're nervous that if the woman fails, it will reflect negatively on them. That said, many women in the industry do look out for each other."



*Tess Morris, screenwriter, (Man Up)*

"Sexism is more in the portrayal of women on screen. When I'm told that a female character is too messy, too rude or crude, I think, why can't a woman be like that? When you're pitching, you still often get the question:

*'Can we make the female character a bit younger?' Or the dreaded 'more likable'.*

As a woman, you can be dismissed as a rom-com writer. Woody Allen isn't dismissed. The standards by which women are judged creatively are very different."



*Top 10 highest paid female actors in 2018 earned 30 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts.*

Finally, it is impossible not to mention a very serious ongoing issue. The wage gap between genders does not affect only the staff personnel as according to Forbes, the top 10 highest paid female actors in 2018 earned 30 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterparts.

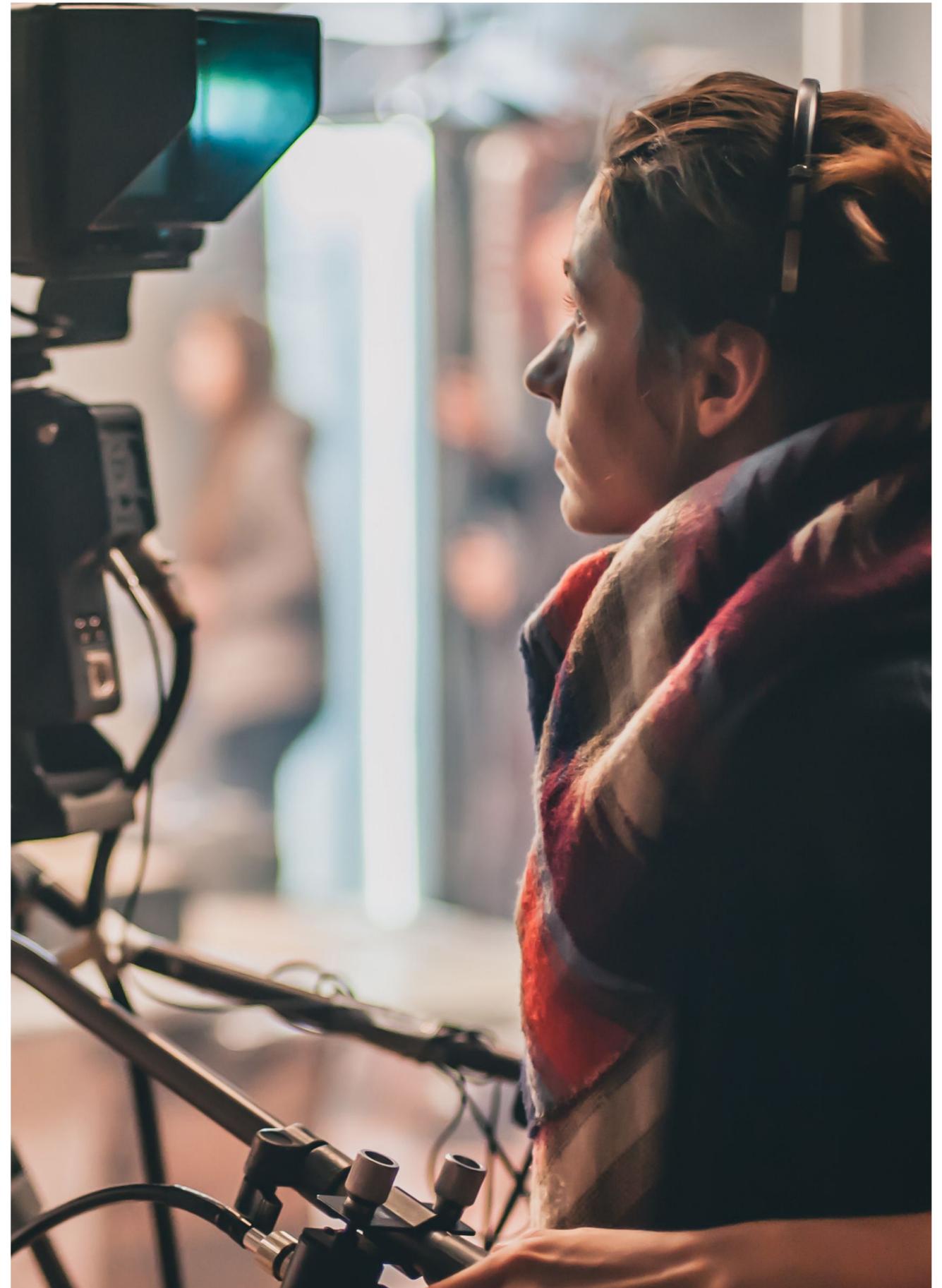
This translated to a combined \$186 million for the highest paid actresses and \$748.5 million for the highest paid actors. The earnings for the 2017 film *All the Money in the World* provided a particularly shameful illustration of this gender pay difference.

Michelle Williams and Mark Wahlberg shared roughly the same amount of screen time, but Wahlberg allegedly received \$5 million while Williams reportedly received \$625,000. Following the re-shooting of 22 scenes as a result of the Kevin Spacey sexual assault scandal, Wahlberg again received an extra \$1.5 million, while Williams only received \$1000.

All things considered, it is true that the representation of women on and off-camera keeps getting better year by year. Perhaps the greatest issue is that, in general, it isn't growing fast enough.

With more awareness being raised about sexism in the film industry and the introduction of equality measures, hopefully change will soon be on the way for fair representation of women that deconstructs the toxic film industry.

Text: Kristína Macejová  
Photo: Google, Unsplash



# FROM HATAY TO PREŠOV

*Prešov University offers students from different countries to study a variety of programs with an Erasmus mobility. They come here and gain a valuable experience of academic and social life in Slovakia. One of the students was interviewed on the fourth of March about her mobility so far. A bright, warmhearted and optimistic Neslihan from Turkey agreed to share her ongoing experience of studying and living in Prešov.*

*Good afternoon, Neslihan! It is nice to see you again! (I am her Erasmus Buddy, so I met her before). How are you today?*

I am great, thank you. It is such nice weather today: the sun is shining, the birds are singing and it is getting warmer. Finally, it begins to feel like spring. Everything is peaceful and calm. I like it.

*Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and why you chose Slovakia for your studies?*

Sure, my name is Neslihan, and I am 23 years old. I am from the city Hatay, which is in the south of Turkey; but I study in Batman University, which is more to the east of my country.

I have English language and literature program, and this is my third year. However, it

is not my last one since in Turkey a Bachelor's degree lasts four years in contrast to the Slovak 3-year Bachelor. In the future, I want to work as a teacher of English.

Also, this is my first Erasmus and the first time I am in the European country – *she claims happily*. Why I chose Slovakia is a good question. At first, I was offered three options: Slovakia, Romania and Hungary. To be honest, Hungary did not attract me at all.

So basically, I had to choose between Slovakia and Romania. The problem with Romania is that it is not within the Schengen Area, so in order to study for me there I had to get both Schengen and Romanian visa. Therefore, Slovakia became the most convenient and interesting place for my Erasmus.



*Did Slovakia meet your expectations? What do you like about Prešov?*

To tell you the truth, I did not expect a lot from Slovakia since my friends had traveled to this country before, and they had not been completely satisfied with it. Unfortunately, they told me about their experience with racism here.

Nevertheless, I want to say that I disagree with their statements, as all the people I have met here so far were

nice to me and willing to help me with anything I needed.

I like your architecture; it seems to be quite historical. I have the feeling that each building has its story. Especially old castles, they grab my attention with their past mysteries. Also, you have very attractive cathedrals and churches. As for me, each one of your sanctuaries is a work of art.

Another part of Slovakia that I really enjoy is your cuisine. I have tasted your halushky

and I love them. I have heard of your long-established traditions, so I am really interested in exploring your national culture and food more – *she smiles*.



Another part of Slovakia that I really enjoy is your cuisine. I have tasted your halushky and I love them. I have heard of your long-established traditions, so I am really interested in exploring your national culture and food more – *she smiles.*

*Where are you living? Are you satisfied with your accommodation?*

I am living in the big dormitory, close to the Faculty of Arts. I would not say I am satisfied with my room.

Firstly, I am staying in the bedroom for two people on the second floor. In principal, it is intended for guests. That is to say, it is very small and there are no wardrobes for clothes, so my roommate and I use the clothes from our suitcases.

We are supposed to live here only for some time until we are moved to the 11th floor where there are rooms accommodated for Erasmus students. However, we are not sure when this will happen.

Secondly, I was surprised that I have to pay for using washing machines, as it is free of cost for students in Turkey. Despite all of these, I like the location of the dorm and the possibility to cook in the kitchen.

*Every time, when I enter the class, they wave at me and say hello. I really appreciate this. They are very kind.*

*Talking about your studies, are there any considerable differences between studying at your University in Turkey and here, in Prešov University?*

There are some slight differences. For example, in Prešov University there is only one exam for each subject at the end of the semester. While in Batman University, we usually have to write two exams: middle term and final ones.

Another distinction that I noticed is that in Slovakia students tend to be more attentive during the lessons and pay more attention to the professors than in Turkey. In my opinion, I have to study

more here. However, the rest is more or less the same, including the system of credits – *Neslihan explains.*

*How are you coping with everyday Slovak language encounter? What language do you use when you talk to people?*

I use English while talking to people here; but I know some basic Slovak words such as: *dobrý deň, ďakujem, dovidenia.*

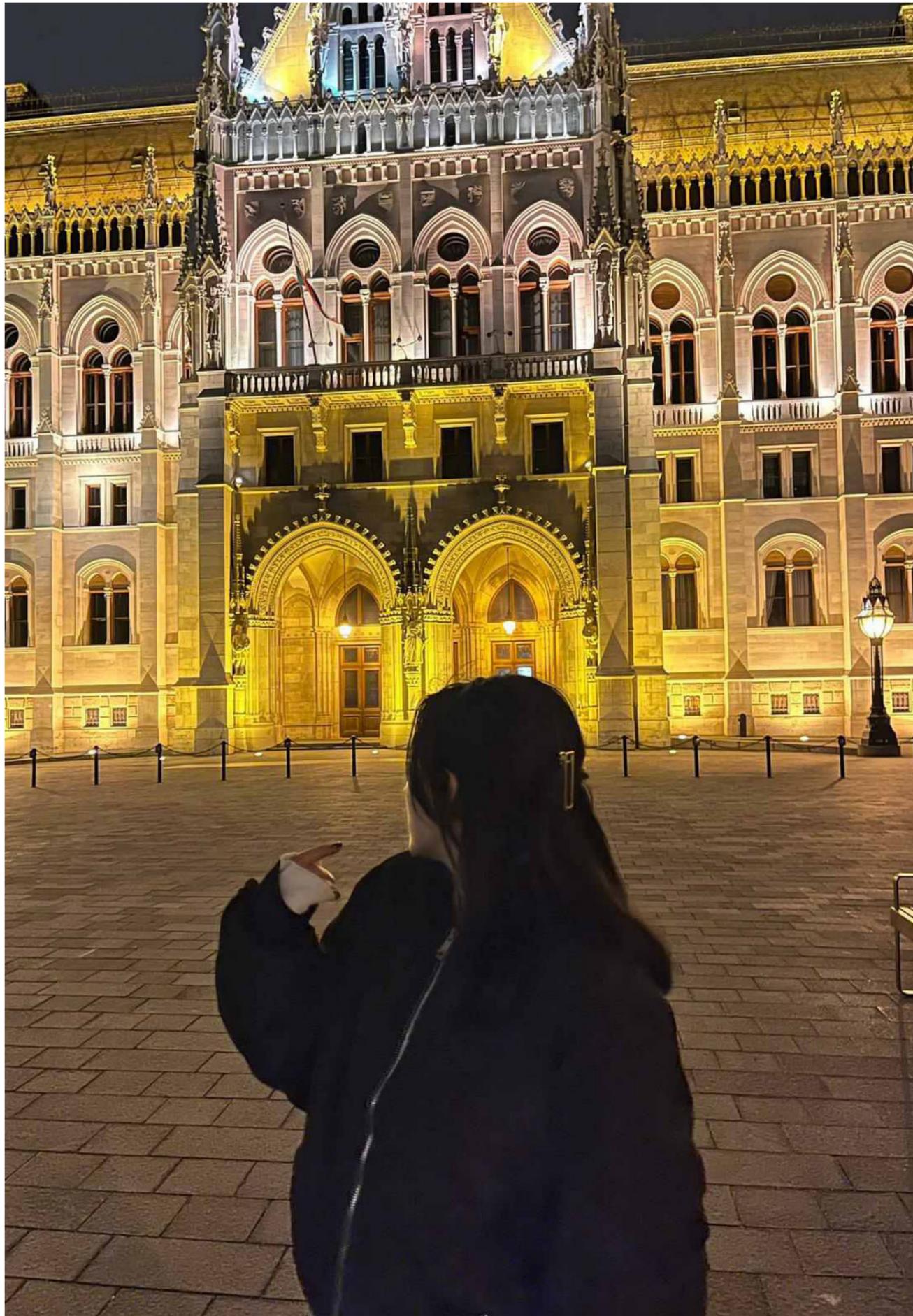
I am trying to learn some Slovak, but it is quite challenging for me, especially pronunciation which is fairly distinct from the Turkish.

Did you make some friends with the locals?

Yes! *She exclaims excitedly.* Mostly with my classmates. They are Slovak and Ukrainian students, and they are very friendly.

Every time, when I enter the class, they wave at me and say hello. Furthermore, the students help me with anything I need. I really appreciate this. They are very kind.





*Was it a cultural shock for you to come here? Is there anything distinct from the way you used to live in your home country?*

I would not call it a shock, but rather a surprise in relation to people and their everyday routine here. A lot of Slovaks seem more relaxed than Turks; I am quite calm too, but in general people in my country tend to be more emotional.

Another difference is that almost all supermarkets, coffee shops and restaurants are closed in Slovakia at night. While in Turkey, you can always find some place open 24/7. I think I have to get used to this schedule.

*Do you participate in ESN (Erasmus Student Network) events? Was there a specific one that you liked the most?*

Until now, I have been only to the one meeting where we met together. I really enjoyed that evening while speaking with so many interesting people and learning new things about others.

Unfortunately, I did not have a chance to go to another Erasmus event, but I would love to do this and explore this country and its people more – *she states happily*.

Thank you so much for sharing this time with me today! I hope everything goes well with your studies in Prešov and at your university.

Before we may call it a day, is there anything you would like to share with me and the

readers that you feel could be added or summarized about your Erasmus mobility?

I would say that Erasmus provides me with a great opportunity to improve myself in different areas of my life. I can practice my English while studying and socializing here. My perspective and points of view are changing while living abroad as well.

I am also grateful for a chance to experience another way of living, especially in Europe where I always wanted to go. Last but not least, I can easily travel to other countries in the Schengen area, so I am happy to do that too – *she finishes*.

Text: Anastasiia Cherniavska  
Photos: Nesilhan's archive  
Google



# REGRETS

*I am judged like I have imagined, in a large room filled with shadows of the people I knew.*

Death comes to me like I have always imagined her. She is an ugly creature, grotesque, wrapped in a black cape with a black cowl, with black robes underneath so that when she comes to me in the middle of the night, she at first looks like a trick of the shadow in the corner of my room. Then she steps forward and I see her for what she is.

To you I will admit, I am scared.

She places a hand on me—a ghastly, skeletal thing that looks very much like the hand of a human woman, but so different I cannot reconcile the two in my mind—and I know what she wants of me.

I stand up. The periodic beeping of the heart monitor turns into a steady, flat sound that is jarring in my ears. The sound of my own death, I think. Funny. I have never thought I would hear my death.

We walk. Through the halls of the hospital, watch-

ing as identical, grotesque creatures lead others to the unknown. Some of those souls look heartbroken. Some fight to stay, clinging to the doorframes from which pained crying of wives, husbands, children or parents comes. And some look content, as if they are happy with the lives they had led, choices they had made.

To you I will admit, I am envious of them.

We walk. Joining us are still more of those creatures, still more dead souls. A man next to me prays in Arabic, praises Allah for granting him a long and happy life, thanks Allah for taking him into Jannah. Is that where we are going? To Allah, to ask for his mercy? What of the Christian God, the one I have always been told is the only god? I have always thought he was, I have lived my life with that in mind. Church, commandments, God. All other gods were false, all other gods were heresy and people who believed in them deserving of death.

To you I will admit, I don't think so anymore.

I have always thought the final judgement would look like...well, a court of law. There would be a judge, a large, imposing, manly figure, radiating authority and fear. I have never been quite clear on his features, for sometimes, when I imagined him, he looked strangely similar to my father, other times, he looked like my boss, or my father-in-law, or my son. But he would know of all my sins and he would be ruthless in his judgement. There would be an attorney, too, though I have always thought it would be more of a supplicant on my behalf. A woman, certainly, a short and thin one, dressed in a cloak with a shawl draped over her head like a hood, and she would try to explain to the jury and the judge the reasons for my sins, cry and beg for mercy.

Like with the judge, I have never known her face, but I believe she would look like my mother, or my wife perhaps, or even the Virgin Mary. The jury, that I have never been quite clear on. Just a flock of people, listening and observing, not truly understanding my life or my reasons or my thoughts, but there nonetheless. Them, I can see more clearly. My colleagues and classmates, my neighbours, extended family who I have only seen on weddings or my grandmother's seventieth birthday. They are the people who have the least right to judge me.

They should only judge my sins, that is what the preacher used to say when I was still young and went to church. Each soul is judged by only their sins and nothing else, for we are all born good and

it is the devil who makes us do bad things. I don't think that's how it works, though. I think we will all be judged not only by our sins and mistakes, but for the good deeds we didn't do as well, for the opportunities we had and let slip through our fingers. They will judge me, I think, for who I was in my life, and who I could have been.

To you, I will admit, I am terrified.

I am judged like I have imagined, in a large room filled with shadows of the people I knew. The judge is, like I have imagined, a large, imposing man. He towers over the large desk, his black habit so menacing it makes death at my side look friendly. He does not have a face, just empty flesh where it should be. He talks of my sins and his voice is booming, imposing, it worms itself into my chest and makes me regret each and every thing I have done wrong in my life. When he speaks of my childhood—of the one apple I stole from my neighbour's yard each morning before school, of the times I pulled on a girl's hair, of the times I thought my mother was annoying and stupid because she wanted me to help her with something—the judge sounds like my father.

And then, I think I can see my father's features etched into the judge's empty face. Then the judge talks of my adult life—the times I went out drinking and followed girls around hoping to wear them down, the times I cheated in exams, the times I cheated at work—he sounds just like my boss, or rather, all of my bosses combined. When the judge talks about my family—the times I cheated

on my wife, the child I had with another woman who I didn't admit to having, the times I went to the pub with the boys when my wife needed help, the times I spanked my son when he was naughty—he sounds like my son, like the child I used to love but found annoying, like the young man who often disappointed and dishonoured me, like the adult man who had a family, a child of his own.

The supplicant is here, too. And just like I have imagined, she is a tiny woman, made even tinier by the imposing aura of the judge. Every time the judge speaks a new sin, she tries to explain it away, tries to tell him what I felt, what I thought that made me sin this way or that. She cries and pleads and explains, and she sounds much like my mother used to when I was a child and my father wanted to punish me for doing something naughty. A high-pitched voice, kindly but annoying, easily overheard, easily ignored. At times, she sounds like my wife used to when I was angry, and I realise there is not much difference between the two of them. High-pitched, kindly, easy to forget.

The jury is, like I have imagined, a cluster of faceless shadows. I think here and there, I catch a glimpse of my cousin twice-removed who I met at my grandfather's funeral, the neighbour's daughter who I only talked to when my wife forced me to congratulate her and her wife on their wedding, my co-worker who always wanted to chat and I never had the patience for. People who had never known me, but will judge me for what they know of me. To you I will admit, I hate them.

The judge is done. My sins, numerous as they are, are laid bare before the jury for them to condemn me. The jury will now gather, discuss, and they will tell me my sentence.

Death steps forward like I have always imagined her. She is an ugly creature, grotesque, wrapped in a black cape with a black cowl, with black robes underneath so that when she moves, she looks like she is made of shadows that move around us. She lifts her head to the judge, her robes ruffle silently at her back, and she says she has more evidence. To you I will admit, I think she might save me.

She turns to me then, and in that moment, she is every woman I have ever hated, every man I have ever feared, every person I have ever loved.

"You," she says in a voice like shadow, "could have been a good man."

Like I imagined, I am judged for who I was, and for who I could have been. And when they give me my sentence for everything bad I have ever done and everything good I have never done, I think if only I had imagined it differently, if I had not imagined anything at all, maybe I would be free of hell.

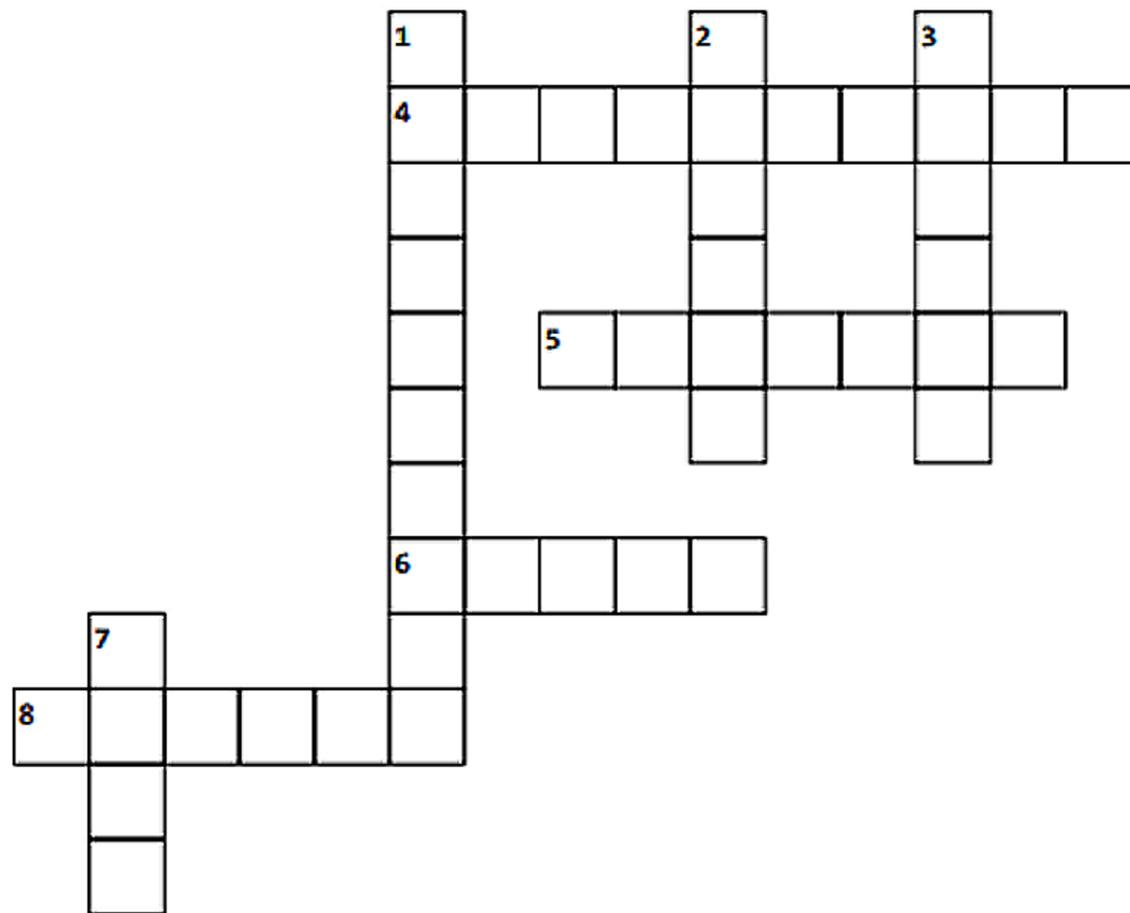
To you I will admit, I don't think I would deserve it.

TEXT: Juliána Pavlinská  
ARTWORK: Julia GR (2020)  
limon\_J



# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

# TRUE OR FALSE



## ACROSS

4. Optional elements in a clause structure which can be omitted without affecting the grammaticality of the clause
5. The name of an accent associated with East End of London
6. The last name of the author of the novel "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"
8. The british spelling of "color"

## DOWN

1. The home of a football club nicknamed "The Red Devils"
2. The second official language of Canada (English,.....)
3. The name of a tragedy written by William Shakespeare set at Elsinore Castle in Denmark
7. The word used to identify any class of people, places, or things

*Choose whether the next statements about The University of Prešov are true or false.*

*If you know the right answer, please correct the false statements.*

1. The University of Prešov was established in 1995. **TRUE / FALSE**
2. The Faculty of Arts provides 16 institutes and departments. **TRUE / FALSE**
3. The university provides study programs in all three degrees (Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral). **TRUE / FALSE**
4. Student practice or undergraduate practice can also be performed within the Erasmus+ program at foreign institutions. **TRUE / FALSE**
5. The Faculty of Arts is the youngest faculty of Prešov University. **TRUE / FALSE**



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