

# INSPIRE & AMAZE

04/25  
Issue 7

Opinions on  
university  
reconstruction

UPCOMING  
TOWN EVENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

HANGOUT  
PLACES

STUDENT  
WRITINGS

ART CORNER

QUEER MUSIC:  
THEN & NOW



# EDITORIAL

Student's Journal of the Institute of British and American Studies

INSPIRE & AMAZE

04/2025 ISSUE 7

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# UPCOMING TOWN EVENTS

- **4. 4. - 5. 5. 2025**

Výstava - Dušan Š. Baláž

PRIZNAL SOM FARBU A VYLOŽIL KARTY  
/kresba - maľba/

Galéria Átrium, Floriánova č. 4, Prešov



- **17.4.2025 8:00 - 16:00**

Burza starožitností a kuriozít

Pre zberateľov starožitností, mincí, bankoviek, známok, pohľadníc, nálepiek, odznakov, medailí, vyznamenaní, kníh, obrazov, porcelánu, hodín, historických zbraní a iných zberateľských zaujímavostí. Príďte si nájsť svoj starožitný poklad!

Hlavná ulica pred MSÚ



- **20.4.2025 20:00**

\*RYTMUS \* ALAN MURÍN \* NaRaz \* DJ MAIREE

[presun udalosti Podujatie MESTO ŽIJE 2024 z 31.10.2024, vstupenky sú v platnosti]

20:00-21:00 - otvorené dvere

21:30-22:00 - NaRaz

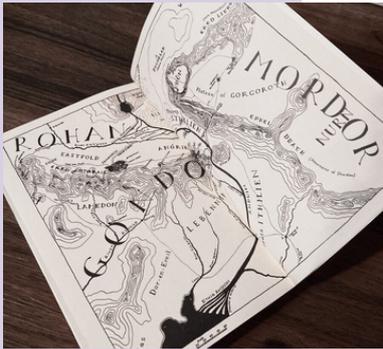
22:00-23:00 - ALAN MURÍN

23:00-23:55 - RYTMUS

00:00 03:00 - DJ MAIREE After Párty

Park kultúry a oddychu, Prešov





• **24.4.2025 17:00**

Tolkien reading day

Mesiac po výročí pádu Barad-dûr a zničenia Prsteňa prichádza večer strávený počúvaním a čítaním vybraných pasáží z diel J. R. R. Tolkiena.

Knižnica POH, Slovenská 18 (Náučné odd., prízemie)



• **25.4.2025 19:00**

Cicho, bo skajpujem s dzivku!

Legendarne predstaveňe divadla KLUD z roku 2018, co povihralo šicko, bavilo še vsadzi, ľem u Prešove išče ňigda. Taže to budže vlašňe prešovska premjera komediji o súčasnej rodziňe a novej modernej komunikaciji a starich večnych problémoch v ňej..

dľuška: 67 minut, vstup 11€

Divadlo VIOLA



• **25.4.2025 18:00**

KALI TOUR 2025

18:00 - 20:00 - DJ  
20:00 - 20:30 - Hypeman Ostó + DJ PETER PANN  
20:45 - 21:45 - Kali a Peter Pann  
22:00 - 01:00 - DJ

Park kultúry a oddychu - Čierny orol, Prešov



• **27.4.2025 15:00**

Charitatívny Narcisový beh 2025

15:00 - Registrácia, 15:55 - Tombola  
16:00 - Štart, 17:30 - Ukončenie podujatia

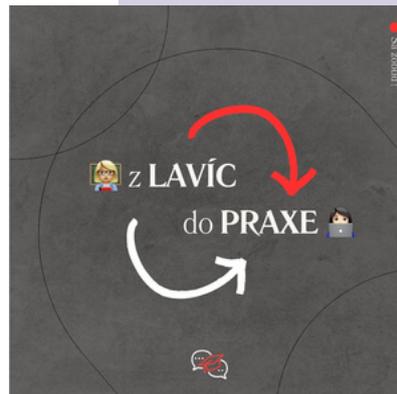
EPERIA SHOPPING MALL, Prešov

- **29.4.2025 17:00**

Z lavíc do praxe (OZ Sa zobud'!)

Študentská diskusia z praxe v oblasti prekladateľstva a tlmočníctva s hosťami, ktorí predstavia svoje osobné skúsenosti.

Knižnica POH, Slovenská 18 (Náučné odd., prízemie)



- **5.5.2025 19:00**

NESKORO VEČER s Petrom Marcinom (15+)

Môžete sa tešiť na výbornú LIVE atmosféru, pútavé rozhovory, zábavné príhody a scény, pesničky, či interakcie s divákmi! Čaká na vás skvelá zostava hostí - hudobný hosť Majself, herečka Lujza Garajová a Juraj Ďuriš. A možno príde aj „Malý Mirko“ ...

Kino Scala, Prešov



- **15.5.2025 19:00**

VEČER ČESKOSLOVENSKEHO INTERNET. BIZÁRU

Legends ako Tu kabel, Stanislav Řezáč, Mačkáš mi hada či Jiří Kára nás vezmú na jazdu plnú smiechu a hnusu made in SK a CZ. Zážitok vypumpujeme veľkým plátnom a originálnym nekvalitným zvukom vo svojej plnej kráse, ktorý tomu dodá ten správny undergroundový nádych. Večerom bude sprevádzať stand-up komik Martin Hatala.

Kino Scala, Prešov



# BOOK REVIEW

## THE DICTIONARY OF LOST WORDS - PIP WILLIAMS

By Tereza Kopčáková



This 2020 novel is truly an enchanting and deeply emotional read, focusing on loss and life as central themes. It explores the power of words in a remarkable way that will tug at your heartstrings. Regarding its genre, it delightfully bridges fiction and reality and is, therefore, perfect for fans of historical fiction. Moreover, it can even be perceived as coming of age story as it depicts the life of the protagonist named Esme, a motherless little girl forced to deal with loss from an early age. She finds solace in the Scriptorium, or as she calls it 'Scrippy', a garden shed filled with words on little slips. Her ultimate sanctuary was, in fact, being used as an office used to assemble the first Oxford English Dictionary by Dr James Murray's team, which includes her father. Esme naturally develops a strong relationship with language and lexicography and eventually works on compiling the dictionary herself when she grows up but often finds herself cast to the sidelines. She cannot ignore how distinctly men and women perceive and define words or how the fact that the dictionary was composed almost entirely by men affected the choice of words and their definitions.

Her experience of being a witness to the marginalization of women closely relates to a prominent aspect of the novel - an exploration of women's suffrage that was at its height at the time of this epic story. While Esme does not actively participate in the movement, she becomes acquainted

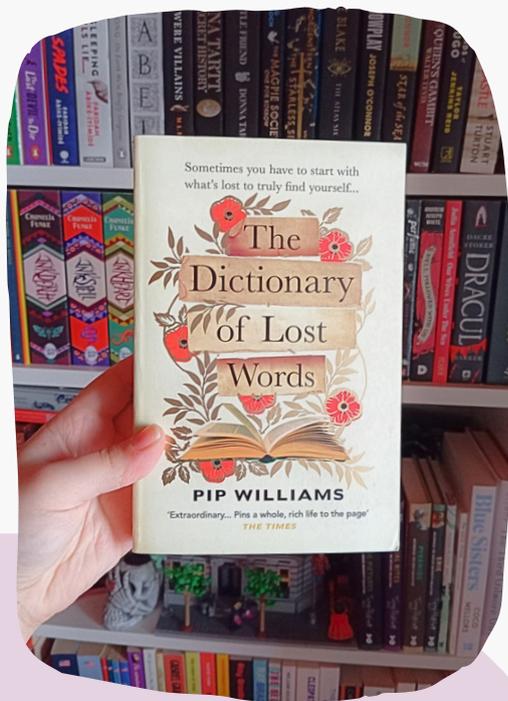


PIP WILLIAMS

with its political advocate, who inspires her and exposes her to the movement and its issues. This prompts Esme to challenge the fact that female identity was being made invisible by language and that certain words relating to the female sex were being left out entirely. She starts collecting these 'lost words' that were deemed unworthy and asks women from various social classes and positions for their stories and records their unique words. All these aspects make it quite a feminist read that should be explored and appreciated by all sexes.



Another aspect worth noting is the plot's historical accuracy. The Australian author Pip Williams dove into extensive research of the long and painstaking process that was the compilation of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The several years she spent studying the history of OED, as well as getting in touch with Dr Murray's volunteers to listen to their accounts, helped her breathe a new life into those forgotten and untold memories. Her dedication and ability to recreate a realistic backdrop for her fictional story is certainly admirable.



I found this fascinating and thought-provoking tale impossible to put down and relished every second spent unravelling its complexity. Its profound exploration of the language's significance in shaping our understanding of the world will often knock your breath out, and its quotes echo in your mind long after you finish reading. I highly recommend this book to everyone regardless of their gender, social standing and reading preferences, as I truly believe everyone can benefit from it and appreciate the wonderful means of communication we share.



# BOOK REVIEW

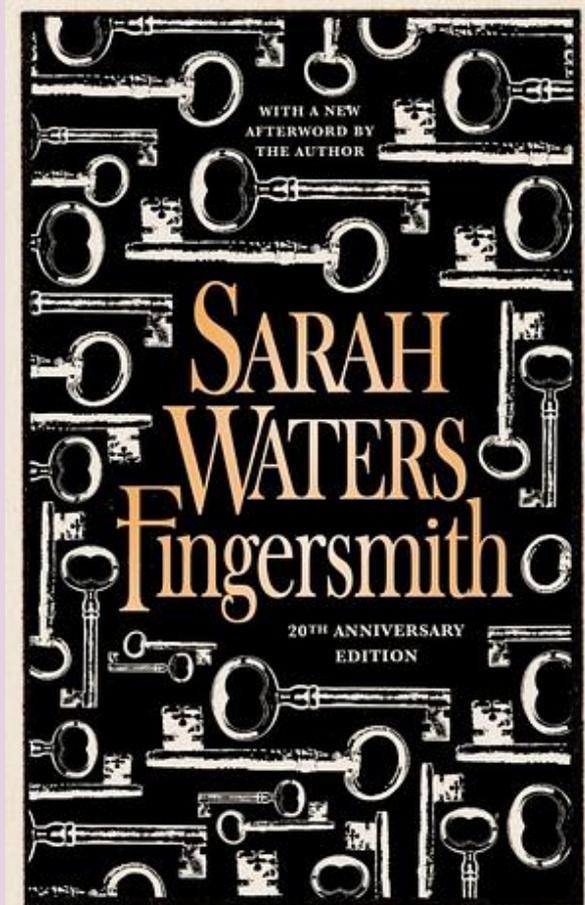
## FINGERSMITH - SARAH WATERS

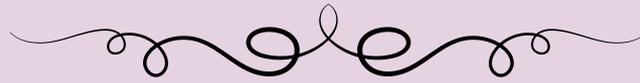
By Natália Szarková



Fingersmith is the 3<sup>rd</sup> novel of Welsh author Sarah Waters, originally published February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2002, in the UK. A medium-paced historical crime novel with a lesbian romance, its story presented in a multi-layered narrative of 550 pages, divided into 3 parts, each narrated by one of the two female main characters, Sue and Maud. The novel delves into the themes of identity, inequality, social class, love, confinement, feminism, and lesbianism, all set against the backdrop of mid-Victorian London.

Fingersmith tells the story of two young women; Sue Trinder, an orphan raised in a house of petty thieves and criminals, and Maud Lilly, a wealthy heiress living in seclusion from society. Their lives become inevitably intertwined, as Sue becomes the central figure of a conniving plot - to rid Maud of her inheritance. However, as the two women come to gradually care for each other, it quickly becomes apparent that nothing's as it seems at first glance.





What I've enjoyed the most during my reading experience was the author's writing, as Waters manages to make it feel authentic in style while being simultaneously vivid in its imagery and descriptions of sights and objects, as well as in the outward emotion and states of the characters. I found myself quite taken by the character of Maud, as I began to gradually sympathise with her and her circumstances.

Unfortunately, while the prose was undeniably immersive, it also felt personally long-winded, as its more than 500 page-count could've been, in my opinion, shortened to about 400. Additionally, I believe that readers of this novel must have a healthy suspension of disbelief, as the twists, while dramatic and thoroughly entertaining, were honestly quite preposterous.



SARAH WATERS

Overall, Fingersmith is a compelling gothic tale that's worth reading. Recommended for readers who've enjoyed the works of Michel Faber and A.S. Byatt, the film "The Handmaiden" by Park Chan-wook, and LGBT readers who enjoy slow novels with a plethora of twists and turns.



# Hangout places for students

Editors' recommendations

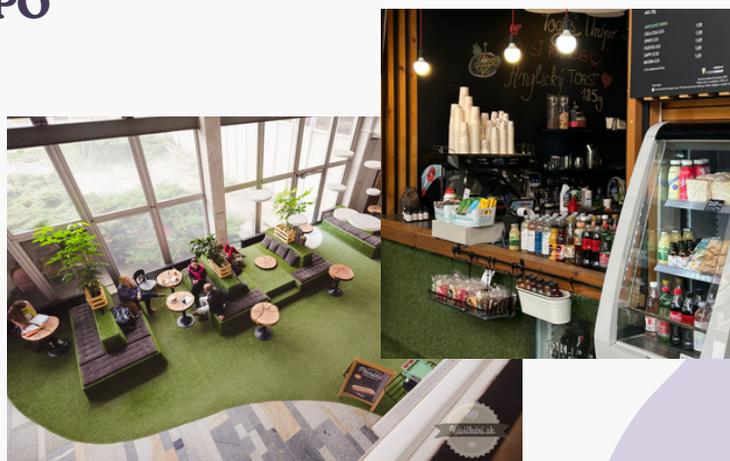
As students we are always looking for ways to refuel throughout the day and places to wait out the time in between classes. Whether you are looking for a quick caffeine fix or you prefer tea, lemonades or sugary treats, these cozy coffee shops got you covered.

## YOGI'S COFFEE STATION UNIPO

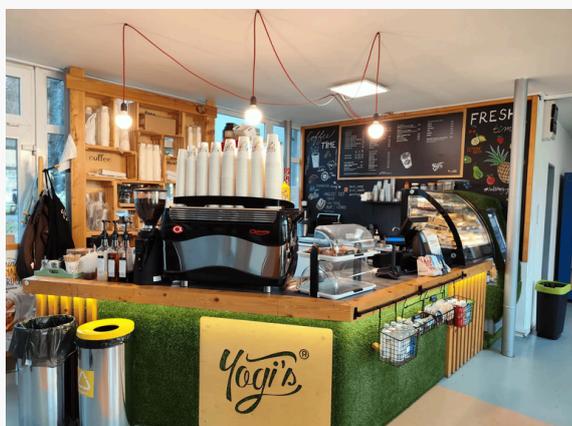
- + directly in the building of FA & FHNS\*
- + charging ports for electronics available
- often busy and loud
- proximity to open backdoor in winter

 MON-THU: 7AM - 4PM  
FRI: 7AM - 2PM  
SAT: 7AM - 3PM  
SUN: CLOSED

 17. novembra 6600/1



\*Faculty of Arts & Faculty of Humanities and Natural Sciences



\*Faculty of Education

## YOGI'S REKTORÁT

- + directly in the building of FE\*
- + variety of choices, both of beverages & food
- often busy and loud

 MON-THU: 7AM - 4PM  
FRI-SAT: 7AM - 3PM  
SUN: CLOSED

 17. novembra 3724

## TRIO INDUSTRY CAFFÉ (former DELTA)

- + free 📶
- + board games, books available
- + good coffee, fairly low prices
- often busy with few/no vacant seats

🕒 MON-FRI: 7AM - 6PM  
SAT-SUN: CLOSED

📍 17. novembra 7563/130



## NICO CAFFÉ

- + close proximity to school & dorms for FA students
- + variety of choices, both of beverages & food
- possibly high prices for some students

🕒 MON-FRI: 7AM - 10PM  
SAT-SUN: 9AM - 10PM

📍 17. novembra 8288/106

## FOXFORD /KNÍHKAVIAREŇ MARTINUS/

- + free 📶
- + wide menu choices, great service
- farther away than previous ones
- often busy with few/no vacant seats

🕒 MON-SUN: 9AM - 9PM

📍 OC Novum, Námestie legionárov 1



# STORY EXCERPT

## ARLENIA

By Kristína Mošková

### PROLOGUE

Athoris, the capital city of Arlenia, was in flames. The castle of Athoris was once a beacon of elegance and power, now stood as a smoldering ruin against the midnight sky. Its towering spires, once crowned with intricate carvings that caught the light of the sun, were now jagged and blackened, crumbling as flames devoured their once-pristine stone. The grand marble walls, engraved with centuries of royal history, were cracked and stained with soot, the fires licking hungrily at their foundations.

The golden domes of the central hall, which once gleamed brightly even under the faintest moonlight, had caved in, their remains glowing red-hot amidst the inferno. Ash and embers swirled in the air like fiery snow, carried by the oppressive wind that howled through shattered windows and gaping doorways. The scent of burning wood and molten metal mixed with the acrid stench of death, creating a suffocating miasma that clung to the ruins.

The gardens, once a lush oasis filled with vibrant flowers and cascading fountains, were now scorched and lifeless, the skeletal remains of trees standing as grim sentinels amidst the destruction.

The throne room, the heart of the palace, had been reduced to a blazing tomb. Its ornate chandeliers had fallen, their crystals shattered and glinting like broken stars amidst the rubble. The throne itself, carved from the strongest blackwood and adorned with precious stones, was engulfed in flames, its grandeur reduced to glowing embers. All around, the sounds of chaos filled the air: the roaring of the fire, the distant screams of survivors, and the relentless clash of swords. The palace, once a place of unity and celebration, now bore the scars of war. The castle, the heart of the kingdom, groaned under the weight of Valar's growing power.

Amelia raced through the crumbling corridors of the palace, her chest tight with fear and grief. She darted past bodies of soldiers and servants, the smoke stinging her eyes. Her long brown hair, streaked with soot, clung to her face as she ran. She stumbled into the great hall, her chest heaving as she caught her breath. The room was a shadow of its former glory. The once-pristine marble floors were cracked and scorched, fragments of the ceiling had collapsed, and flames danced along the edges of broken pillars. She didn't have time to mourn the destruction around her — she had a mission. Princess Ellion needed her.

But as she stepped forward, her stomach turned cold.

Valar Vornath, her own husband, stood at the center of the room, his dark armor gleaming in the flickering firelight. His sword hung loosely in his hand, but the real danger came from the flames, completely black coiling in his other palm, twisting and writhing like a living thing. His face, illuminated by the inferno, was a mask of unshaken confidence, marred only by the faintest trace of a sneer.

Valar tilted his head, his expression bemused. “She? Ah, the princess.” He shrugged nonchalantly, the fire in his hand flickering brighter and the same time darker. “I’ve no idea where the little brat is. My soldiers are scouring the palace as we speak. It’s only a matter of time before she’s found.”

“Amelia,” he said, his voice smooth, almost welcoming, as if they were old friends meeting for a drink rather than adversaries in a ruined palace. “I knew you’d come. You always were predictable.”

She froze in place, every nerve on edge. “Where is she?”

Amelia’s fingers tightened around the hilt of her sword. Her heart raced, but she forced herself to stay calm. “You’re not going to find her.”

He chuckled darkly, taking a step closer. “Do you think you can stop me, Amelia? Look around you. Your precious king and queen are dead. Your fellow Maors — gone. You’re all that’s left. Do you really think you stand a chance against me?”

Her jaw clenched, her voice cold and steady. “You betrayed everything we stood for, Valar. Everything we fought to protect. You turned on your friends, your comrades... for what? Power?”

“For freedom,” Valar snapped, his eyes narrowing. “Arlenian has been shackled by weak rulers and their outdated traditions for too long. Ronan and the others clung to a dying order, blind to the possibilities of what we could become. I’m giving this kingdom a future.”

“A future soaked in blood and ash?” Amelia spat, her voice rising. “You call this freedom? You’ve killed innocents. Destroyed the lives of people who trusted you. People who loved you!”

Valar’s gaze hardened, and for a brief moment, something flickered in his eyes — regret, perhaps, or hesitation. But it was gone in an instant. “Sacrifices must be made. This is war, Amelia. If you can’t accept that, you’re as blind as the rest of them.”

“Blind?” she hissed, taking a step forward. “I see you for what you are now. A coward hiding behind fire and lies.”

His expression twisted with anger. “Careful, Amelia. I might start thinking you don’t appreciate everything I’ve done.”

“I don’t,” she said coldly. “And I never will.”

The moment the words left her mouth, Valar struck. A column of dark as darkness fire erupted from his hand, roaring toward her with lethal speed. Amelia dove to the side, rolling across the debris-strewn floor and coming up with her sword drawn. She swung her arm in a wide arc, and water surged from her fingertips, crashing against the black fire and extinguishing it in a hiss of steam.

Valar snarled, his fire intensifying as he advanced. “You always were stubborn,” he said, striking again.

Amelia ducked and countered, slashing her sword in a tight, controlled motion. A blade of water shot forward, sharp as steel, but Valar deflected it with a shield of onyx flame. The two powers clashed violently, sending shockwaves rippling through the room.

“You can’t win this, Amelia,” he taunted, circling her. “You’re exhausted. Alone. It’s only a matter of time before you fall, like the rest.”

“Maybe,” she said, her voice low and steady. “But if I do, I’ll make damn sure I take you with me.”

With a roar, she surged forward, her sword glowing with blue light as she swung at him. Valar parried with his blade, sparks flying as steel met steel. The clash reverberated through the hall, the sound almost drowning out the roar of the flames. Their movements were fluid, precise — a deadly dance honed by years of training together as Maors. Amelia knew his fighting style intimately, but that familiarity was a double-edged sword. He knew hers just as well.

“You always were a good fighter,” Valar admitted, his voice grudgingly respectful as he dodged a strike and countered with a fiery slash. “But this is different. You’re fighting for a lost cause.”

“And you’re fighting for madness,” Amelia shot back, blocking his blow and pivoting to strike at his side.

The fight raged on, the room growing hotter and more suffocating with every passing moment. Amelia could feel her strength waning, her muscles screaming in protest. Valar, for all his arrogance, was relentless.

His strikes came faster, his fire burning hotter, and every time she thought she had an opening, he closed it with ruthless efficiency. Finally, he caught her off guard. A feint with his sword forced her to block high, and in the same instant, he unleashed a blast of fire at her feet. The explosion sent her flying backward, her sword clattering out of her hand as she crashed into a broken column.

She gasped for breath, pain lancing through her body as she struggled to rise. Valar approached slowly, his sword gleaming in one hand, the other still wreathed in flames.

“It’s over, Amelia,” he said, his voice almost gentle. “You gave it your best, but you’re only delaying the inevitable.”

Amelia gritted her teeth, forcing herself to her feet. Her hand twitched toward her sword, but Valar’s boot came down on it, pinning it to the ground.

“You’ve lost,” he said, his tone laced with finality.

“No,” she rasped, her eyes blazing with defiance. “Not yet.”

Before he could react, she summoned every ounce of her remaining strength, sending a torrent of water surging upward from the floor. It struck him square in the chest, throwing him off balance and giving her the precious seconds she needed to grab her sword and bolt for the doorway.

“Coward!” he roared, but she didn’t look back.

Her heart pounded as she sprinted through the crumbling palace, the sound of his furious footsteps echoing behind her. She didn’t have long, but she had one goal now: find Ellion and get her out. No matter the cost.

Amelia burst into the throne room, her breath catching as she took in the scene. King Ronan lay on the ground, his sword still clutched in his hand, blood pooling beneath him. Queen Alianna, her dearest friend, was slumped beside him, her lifeless body curled protectively as though shielding something that was no longer there.

“Ronan,” Amelia whispered, falling to her knees beside him.

And to Amelia’s surprise his eyes fluttered open for a brief moment, dull with pain. “Amelia...” he rasped.

“I’m here,” she said, choking on her tears.

“Ellion...” His voice was faint, barely audible. “You must... save her.”

“I will,” Amelia promised, gripping his hand tightly.

A weak smile flickered across his lips before his hand fell limp and his eyes closed for the final time. Amelia rose, swallowing the lump in her throat. There was no time to mourn. She had to find Ellion.

Amelia ran through the collapsing palace, her heart pounding in her chest as she navigated the labyrinth of destruction. The walls were crumbling, flames clawed at the rafters, and the acrid stench of smoke stung her lungs. Her body screamed in protest with every step, aching from her fight with Valar, but she pushed the pain aside. Nothing mattered except finding Ellion.

She tried to think like the little girl. The nursery had been empty when Amelia passed it – she had expected as much. Where would she go?

Ellion loved stories. She was always sneaking away to the royal library, often hiding among the towering shelves with a book clutched to her chest, her bright eyes wide with wonder as she read.

Amelia's heart clenched. The library. She has to be there.

The path to the library was treacherous. The hallway leading to it was nearly unrecognizable, the intricate tapestries lining the walls scorched beyond recognition, and the floor littered with rubble. A wooden beam had fallen across the corridor, flames licking at its edges.

Amelia gritted her teeth and leapt over the obstacle, landing hard but managing to keep her balance. She could hear the distant sound of soldiers shouting, their heavy boots pounding against the stone floors. They were closing in.

Her pace quickened as she reached the library doors. They were ajar, one of them hanging crookedly on its hinges, and thick smoke billowed out from within.

She pushed her way inside, coughing as the thick smoky air filled her lungs. The once-grand library was a ruin. The polished wooden shelves were charred, many of them toppled over, their contents scattered and burning. Books lay in piles of ash, their pages curling in the heat.

"Ellion!" Amelia called, her voice hoarse and desperate. "It's me, Amelia!"

For a moment, there was no answer. The only sounds were the crackling of flames and the distant rumble of the palace crumbling around them.

Amelia's heart sank, but she refused to give up. She moved deeper into the library, scanning every shadow, every possible hiding place.

Then she heard it—a faint rustling sound, like fabric brushing against wood. She froze, holding her breath, and listened. The sound came again, from behind one of the few remaining intact bookshelves near the back of the room.

"Ellion?" she called softly, stepping toward the sound.

As she rounded the corner of the shelf, she saw a small figure crouched behind a pile of fallen books. There she was.

Ellion was huddled in the narrow space, her arms wrapped tightly around her knees, her face streaked with ash and tears. She clutched a small book to her chest, its cover barely recognizable, but she held it as if it were a lifeline. Her chestnut brown curly hair was tangled and dirty, but her wide, frightened emerald green eyes locked onto Amelia's cerulean blue ones.

"Sweet Pea," Amelia whispered, relief flooding her voice.

Ellion's lip quivered, and she let out a soft sob as she reached for Amelia with trembling hands. Without hesitation, Amelia dropped to her knees and pulled the child into her arms, holding her tightly.

"I've got you," she murmured, pressing a kiss to the top of Ellion's head. "You're safe now."

Ellion buried her face in Amelia's shoulder, her tiny body shaking with quiet sobs. Amelia held her for a moment longer, letting the child's presence ground her. But the sounds of approaching soldiers snapped her back to reality.

"We have to go," she said softly, pulling back to look into Ellion's tear-streaked face. "Do you remember the story of the brave princess who crossed the forest to find her way to safety?"

Ellion sniffled and nodded.

"Good," Amelia said with a small smile. "That's what we're going to do now. I'm going to get you to safety, just like in the story. But you have to be brave, okay?"

Ellion nodded again, her little fingers clutching Amelia's tunic.

"Stay close to me," Amelia said, standing and shifting Ellion onto her hip. The child wrapped her arms tightly around Amelia's neck, clinging to her like a lifeline.

Amelia turned back toward the library's entrance, her eyes narrowing as she heard the unmistakable sound of boots closing in. She tightened her grip on Ellion and began to run, her path now clear.

She carried Ellion through the palace and started running towards the woods.

Amelia darted through the ruins of the forest, Ellion's small body pressed tightly to her chest. Every step felt heavier as exhaustion clawed at her, but she couldn't stop. Not yet. The princess's soft sobs were muffled against her cloak, but Amelia's heart ached with every sound.

"Just a little further," she murmured, though the words were as much for herself as for the frightened child.

She broke through a thicket of trees into a small clearing. Moonlight streamed down, highlighting a huddled group of figures in the shadows. Amelia's breath caught when she recognized them.

"Kalanta!"

The elder woman turned, her face etched with both relief and worry. Kalanta was a former Maor, her silver hair pulled back into a loose braid, and her eyes — once sharp with wisdom and strength — were weary from the night's horrors.

"Amelia," Kalanta said, stepping forward. Her grandson Rivan clung to her hand, his wide eyes darting nervously. Beside her stood Araya, Venetia's eight-year-old daughter, her face pale but resolute. And there — Amelia's breath hitched — was her son Tarian.

"Tarian!" she called out, her voice breaking.

"Mother!" he cried, running to her as Kalanta turned at the sound.

Amelia dropped to her knees as Tarian barreled into her, wrapping her free arm around him while still holding Ellion close. She kissed the top of his head, her hand trembling as she cradled him.

“You’re safe,” she whispered, her voice choked. “Oh, my sweet boy, you’re safe.” Tarian clung to her tightly but pulled back just enough to look into her face. His eyes were filled with tears and panic. “Mother, it’s Sethos — he’s not here.”

Amelia stiffened. “What do you mean? Where is he?”

Tarian wiped at his eyes, his voice trembling. “He went back into the palace! He said he was going to find Ellion. He wouldn’t listen to me. He said he had to make sure she was okay!”

Amelia’s stomach dropped, and her vision swam for a moment as her mind reeled. Seth went back into the palace? Alone?

“Amelia,” Kalanta said firmly, stepping closer. Her voice was calm, but her eyes were heavy with worry. “We need to move. The soldiers are coming. If we linger here, they’ll find us all.”

Amelia shook her head, struggling to steady her breathing. “I can’t leave him in there, Kalanta. He’s just a boy — he doesn’t know what he’s doing!”

Kalanta reached out and placed a hand on Amelia’s shoulder. “You don’t have a choice,” she said gently but firmly. “If you go back now, you’ll be walking to your death. And you have Ellion.” She glanced at the child clinging to Amelia’s neck, her expression softening. “Your duty is to her. To save her.”

Amelia’s jaw tightened, her heart breaking under the weight of the truth. She knew Kalanta was right, but the thought of leaving her son behind tore at her soul.

“Mother,” Tarian said, his small hand gripping her arm. His voice was quiet but steady. “Seth said to save Ellion. He said she’s his best friend. He wanted you to protect her. That’s what he wanted.”

Amelia stared into her son’s tear-filled eyes, her heart breaking. Tarian was only eight, but his words carried a maturity beyond his years.

“I don’t want to leave him,” she whispered, her voice cracking.

“I know,” Tarian replied, his lip trembling. “But he wouldn’t want you to die too.”

Amelia closed her eyes for a brief moment, her tears spilling over. She drew in a deep breath and opened them again, her resolve hardening.

“Kalanta,” she said, her voice firm despite the tears. “Take them. Take Tarian, Rivan, Araya — get them to safety. Keep them safe.”

Kalanta nodded, her face grim. “And you?”

“I’ll get Ellion to Carranam,” Amelia said, shifting the little girl in her arms. “It’s the only way to keep her alive.” She turned to Tarian, cupping his face with her free hand. “Stay with Kalanta, my love. Do everything she says. I’ll find you. I promise I’ll find you.” Tarian nodded, tears streaming down his cheeks. “Be safe, Mother. Please.”

Amelia pressed a kiss to his forehead, then stepped back, her heart shattering as she watched Kalanta lead the children toward the forest. Tarian glanced back once, his small face filled with worry, before disappearing into the shadows.

Clutching Ellion tightly, Amelia turned toward the distant glow of Carranam on the horizon. "Hold on, Sweet Pea," she whispered, her voice filled with determination. "We're almost there."

Amelia steeled herself, pushing aside her fear and grief. The border was close, and she wouldn't fail her king, her friends, or the future of Arlenia. But in her heart, she prayed this wasn't the last time she'd see her sons.

And so, with determination burning brighter than her exhaustion, Amelia ran into the shadows of the forest, the sounds of soldiers echoing closer with every step.

Amelia's breath came in ragged gasps as she carried Ellion through the dense forest. The air was thick with the acrid stench of smoke, and the sounds of approaching soldiers grew louder with each passing moment. Her legs burned from the effort, her arms cradling the child who represented Arlenia's last hope.

"Amelia," Ellion whimpered softly, clutching her stuffed bear tighter against her chest.

"I've got you, Sweet Pea," Amelia murmured, her voice steady despite the fear gnawing at her. "Just a little further now."

The magical border of Carranam was close, its protective light faintly visible through the trees. The ancient spell would allow only Ellion to pass, a safeguard against those who sought to destroy the last of Arlenia's royal bloodline. Amelia had only one mission: to see Ellion cross that border.

But fate wasn't going to make it easy. She heard the soldiers before she saw them, their shouts and the clatter of armor growing closer. Clutching Ellion tightly, she pushed herself to run faster, her legs burning with the effort.

A shout rang out behind her, and the sound of pounding boots drew even nearer. Amelia's heart tightened as she glanced over her shoulder. Soldiers, their black armor glinting faintly in the flickering light of the fires that consumed the palace, were closing in.

"Faster, Amelia," she whispered to herself, forcing her legs to move despite the weight of exhaustion and grief.

As they reached the edge of a clearing, she set Ellion down and crouched in front of her. "Sweet Pea, listen to me. See that light ahead?"

Ellion nodded, her wide eyes shimmering with tears.

"You need to run to it. It will protect you. Once you're through, you'll be safe, but you can't stop, and you can't look back. Do you understand?"

“But what about you?” Ellion’s small voice cracked.

Amelia smiled, though her heart ached. “I’ll be right behind you. But you have to go now.” She pressed a kiss to Ellion’s forehead.

“You’re brave, my Sweet Pea. You can do this.”

Ellion hesitated, then nodded. Clutching her bear, she turned and began to run toward the shimmering barrier. Amelia straightened, drawing her sword as the first soldier broke through the trees.

They came at her in a wave, their faces obscured by helmets, their swords glinting in the dim light.

“Stay away from her!” Amelia shouted, her voice cutting through the chaos. She raised her free hand, water surging from the earth around her and sweeping toward the soldiers in a torrent.

The first wave of attackers was caught off guard, the water knocking them back into the trees. But more came, their movements relentless and coordinated.

Amelia met them head-on. Her sword flashed in the firelight as she parried one blow and countered with a slash that sent her opponent crumpling to the ground. She pivoted, her elemental powers amplifying her movements. Water coiled around her like a living force, striking out at her enemies and pushing them back. But they kept coming.

A sword came at her from the left. She spun to block it, the clash of steel ringing out like a bell. She kicked the attacker back, only to find another lunging toward her from the right. She ducked under the swing and countered with a sweeping strike, her blade finding its mark.

Despite her strength and skill, the numbers were overwhelming. For every soldier she struck down, another two took their place. Sweat dripped down her face, mingling with blood and soot as her muscles screamed in protest.

She spared a glance toward the border. Ellion was almost there, her small figure illuminated by the shimmering light. Relief surged through Amelia, but it was short-lived.

A sharp pain seared through her shoulder as a blade nicked her, and she stumbled back. She gritted her teeth, pushing the pain aside as she fought on. Another soldier came at her, and she disarmed him with a quick twist of her wrist, sending his weapon flying. She knocked him unconscious with the hilt of her sword before turning to face the next threat.

Her movements were slowing, her breaths coming in shorter bursts. She knew she couldn’t hold out much longer. But she didn’t need to win. She just needed to give Ellion enough time.

The soldiers seemed to realize this. Their movements grew more desperate, more frenzied, as if they understood the weight of the moment.

And then it happened.

Amelia felt it before she saw it—a cold, piercing pain that radiated through her chest. She looked down to see the blade of a sword protruding from her torso, slick with blood. Her breath hitched, and her grip on her sword faltered. The world around her seemed to blur, the sounds of the forest fading into the background.

The soldier who had dealt the blow yanked the blade free, and Amelia collapsed to her knees. Her vision swam, but through the haze, she saw Ellion cross the shimmering barrier. The light flared, and the child disappeared into safety.

A faint smile tugged at Amelia's lips. She had done it. The soldiers surrounded her, their weapons raised, but she no longer cared. Her goal was completed.

Her thoughts drifted to her sons, Tarian and Seth, and to little Ellion. She hoped they would find each other one day, that they would carry on despite the pain of this moment.

With a final, shuddering breath, Amelia collapsed to the ground, her eyes closing as darkness of death claimed her.

And though Arlenia burned, the princess lived. Hope remains.

# POEM

By Samuel Tutko

Her eyes are the window to my soul,  
Moon and stars  
Are watching us.  
From above.

Our hearts are pounding together,  
Whenever we think of each other.  
Our minds are looking for connection,  
Without any objection.

Her eyes are deeper than the ocean,  
Her skin is softer than a flower,  
It isn't just an emotion,  
But a pure presence of power.

Just like moon has to rise,  
In order to shine from the sky.  
We two will go to stars,  
To touch them, with our arms.

To see the world, through her eyes,  
That's the only thing I desire,  
To feel her pain, to suffer,  
In order to ease her, from her trouble.

Just a mere thought of her,  
Brought smile on my face.  
Aligned together we were  
Her soul was the place.

The universe has chosen us,  
To be his brightest stars,  
Beautiful, yet so fragile.



# POEM

By Samuel Tutko

Guns gunning, soldiers dying  
Bullets flying, desperate cries.  
Cannons shelling, generals shouting  
young boys cheering, low on supplies.

Bodies lay low, under the fire  
Eyes drop down, orders they follow  
Flare burining out, C'mon, stand up!  
We want to see another morrow.

Another rifle to hold, another letter to send  
Another uniform to wear, another tear to shed.  
Another life lost in vain. Dogtags are all that remains.

A crying mother, hears the news  
In disbelief, she refuse.  
Pain and grief are the only prize  
War doesn't know a compromise.



# Opinions on University Reconstruction

By Natália Szarková

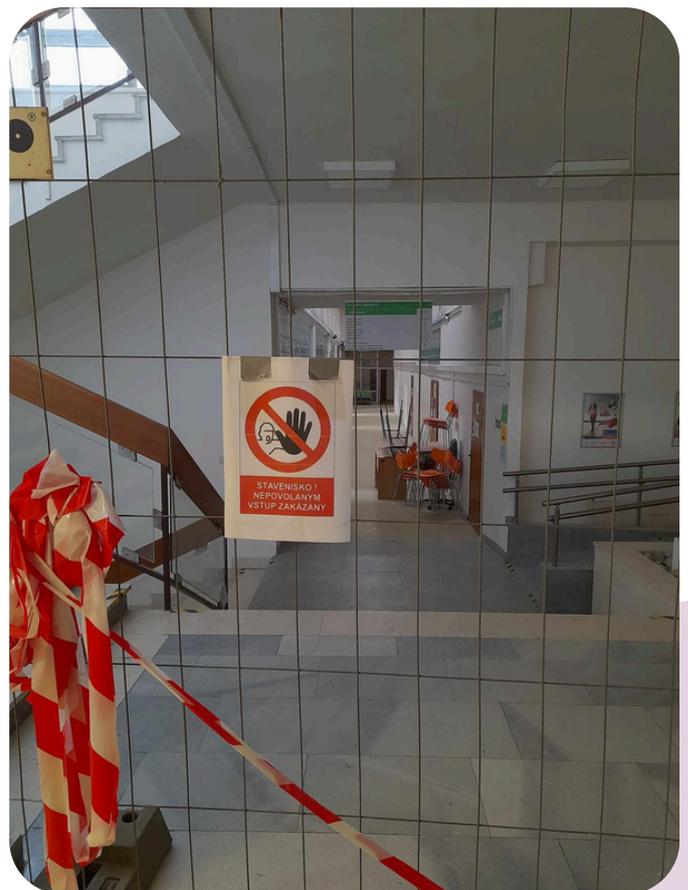
This article is composed of UNIPO students' answers, which was collected through a questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to give students the space to express their opinion on the school's current reconstruction, as well as for them to express their possible grievances with the situation at hand.

We've gathered a great variety of responses, from 1<sup>st</sup> year Bc. to 2<sup>nd</sup> year Mgr., with the majority of participants being already enrolled by the time the reconstruction began. The students were presented with 3 questions, each an inquire on the person's opinions and feelings on the matter.

**Did the school reconstruction impact your attendance, focus, schoolwork, etc.?**

When talking about the impact of the reconstruction on student's lives, a common issue brought up was the restriction of movement. As it would be expected of a big-scale reconstruction, various hallways, staircases, and elevators would be periodically blocked off for construction purposes, which, as reported, negatively affected student's

attendance. While this is a fact that most students met with general understanding, a rising grievance amongst the students was instead the accumulation of debris and construction noise, which many found increasingly overwhelming and disruptive of their studies.



**Did the relocation of your classes, whether to online spaces or temporary classrooms, impact your learning experience?**

On the question of classrooms and their correlation on the impact of one's learning experience, the general consensus of answers comes down to a positive "not really affected", as the majority of the students questioned reported on finding online spaces quite preferable and beneficial. However, there were several instances reported in which the physical inaccessibility of the classrooms impacted the students significantly. Such was the case of a student, whose answer was:



*"We have lessons of translation practice and since the room, where we should be and where there is all necessary equipment, is under renovation, we are to use different room with no equipment necessary for such tasks."*

Another, quite predictable, issue which arose with the relocation to temporary classrooms was with the room's capacity - or lack thereof. As one student put it:

*"None of my classes were moved to online space, but many were relocated to rooms that had capacity lower than our class size. It was extremely uncomfortable, as it was crowded and hot. Often, we did not have any personal space around us and had to write and do our work without desks on our knees."*

**Overall, what are your feelings in regard to the school's reconstruction?**

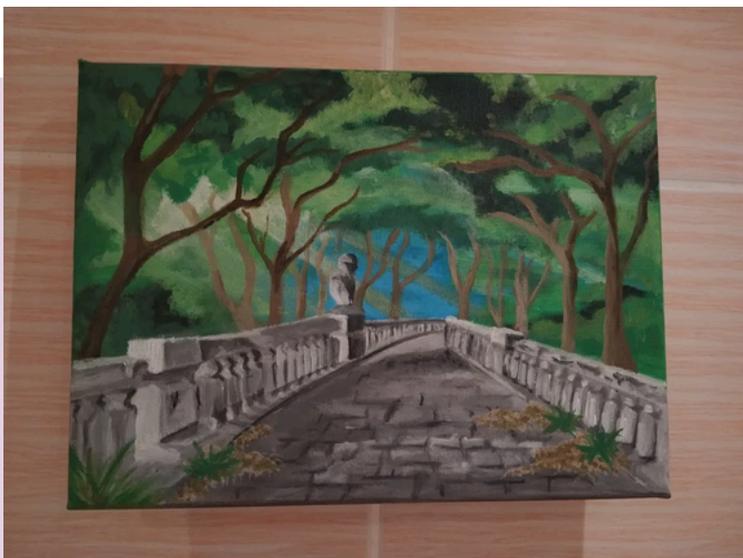
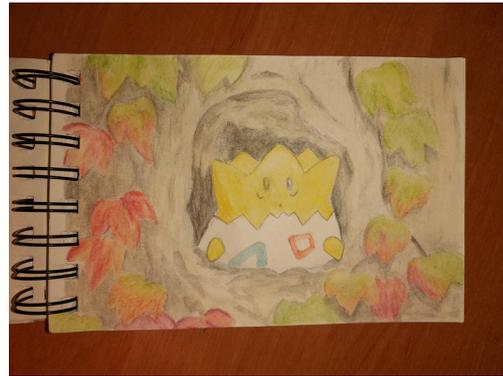
Generally, even the students who have expressed their various grievances and dissatisfactions with the current state of affairs have agreed that the school's reconstruction is an overall necessary and beneficial thing, especially when looking at the future. Although, to conclude, amongst the general feelings of hope and reluctant positivity, the school reconstruction also invokes a sense of unease in students, as they anxiously await whether there'll be an initiative on installing blinds on the windows or not. Because, as one student, quite eloquently, declared:

*"Please put in the blinds or the upcoming summers will be unbearable"*

# Art Corner

By Viktoria K. Mihoková

I took on the task to paint something in different styles to try and improve on my art. I decided to make two small water colours and two acrylic paintings. For reference I found some pictures online of a vase with flowers and some cartoon illustrations. I recreated those using water colours and a few markers for details. For the paintings I chose as reference two stills from two different Studio Ghibli movies to recreate on canvas. It was an interesting experience going out of my comfort zone and trying something new. I am definitely going to try and make more paintings in the future.



By: Viktoria K. Mihoková

We have received a submission from the very talented Karolina Oravcová. She has shared with us two of her recent works. Her style is very expressive and dynamic, the use of colours is incredibly vibrant and strikes the viewers. All of her works are unique and I highly recommend you go see them for yourself.



**By: Karolina Oravcová**



**By: Karolina Oravcová**

# Music Corner

*“From Elton John to Chapell Roan, queer music then and now.”*

By Viktoria K. Mihoková

I was compelled to put this playlist together after viewing the live performance of Chapell Roan accompanied by Elton John. It evoked so many emotions in me thinking about the queer community and how proud Elton must feel to see that his music helped so many fans and inspired even more queer musicians.

It made me take a look back onto the queer music by talented musicians and compare them to the new generation. To see how it evolved and shifted in some ways over the years. I had a lot of fun putting together the various songs from the amazing queer community. Some are just iconic songs beloved by the queer community. I hope you may find some new favourites among this bunch.



Scan me for the playlist!



# Editors Choice

We would like to share with you our favourite music, each of the editors has a different taste in music and we would all like to share some music with you. This way you can learn something about us, perhaps find some new artists to enjoy. We would like to sincerely thank you for reading our articles, participating in surveys and sharing your works with us. Each of us picked 10 of our favourite songs.



Scan me for the playlist!



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