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**In and Out the Park
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In and out the park

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Episode 1: The Not-So-Politically-Correct Teacher

10

When she returned from the bathroom, Mariella found the class immersed in a strange silence. Everyone was looking at Jensika, and Mariella noticed that Jensika's dark skin seemed to have changed to a tone close to that of fuchsia.

15

"Strange," Mariella thought. "I have never seen Jensika blush." The maths teacher was snickering. "What happened?" Mariella asked her classmate.

"Minguzzi," the teacher burst out, calling her by her last name. "Think about writing your next assignment instead of annoying your classmates." Nice, no?

20

At the sound of the bell, Jensika ran away, followed by Rahma. Mariella was held back by Giulia, who wanted to know at all costs where she bought these magniiiiificent legwarmers that she was wearing on her fantaaaastic leggings. Mariella snuck off and met up with her friends at the park in front of the school.

25

"Well," Mariella said, putting her backpack on the ledge, "can I know what happened? The nice one made one of his jokes again?"

Jensika was sitting on the ledge, sulking, and Rahma responded in her place. "This scum bag..." she began.

30

"I will never understand how you speak Neapolitan better than me," Mimmo said while approaching his school friends together with Gaetano.

"That has nothing to do with it. That's only because I was born in Tunisia... do you know how many years I have been here?" Rahma responded in a haughty way.

35

"Ok, ok, who cares?" Mariella interrupted. "Will you let me hear the story?"

5 "Well," Rahma continued, "the maths teacher asked Jensika a question, and she gave the wrong answer, and then the jerk said 'you're obviously always wrong because in underdeveloped places maths never gets through, and moreover, everyone knows that women are not good at maths anyway...'"

10 "Ah, and what do the underdev... underdevelop..." Gaetano tried to say. "Underdeveloped places," Mariella finished. "That is, the teacher was intending that Jensika is limited in her understanding of maths because she is from Sri Lanka, which according to him is a third-world country."

15 "And also because I am a woman..." Jensika added. "And what about Hypatia? Yesterday my sister and I saw the movie on TV... We couldn't say now that Egypt was an underdeveloped place at the time..."

"Ah... I saw that too!" Mariella exclaimed. "Of course Hypatia didn't have a good ending... She was killed by monks because she was pagan and a mathematician..."

20 "Ah, yes," Jensika whispered, "there must be a lot to discuss here..."

Gaetano, perplexed, was looking at his friends. "Well," he said, "I don't know who Hypatia was, but I would like to understand what Jensika has to do with the fact that Sri Lanka is a third-world country and with mathematics?"

25 "Gaetà, wake up. According to the teacher, Sri Lanka is a third-world country," Mimmo explained to him, "because its technology is not developed like in other places of the world, so he thinks that all the people who were born there have difficulty learning maths."

30 "And so," Mariella added, "because, according to him, women generally don't have talent in maths, he thinks Jensika can't understand anything in maths."

35 Gaetano understood. He became all red, and with the smoke that was coming out of his nose, yelled, "Tomorrow morning I am coming to your class to give him my take on this. I will tell him that he must learn to respect people!"

"Don't you go anywhere," Jensika urged. "The teacher would make a mess of things and would suspend you, and I don't want you to get in trouble for my sake."

Everybody was silent for a while, until Mariella said to Jensika, "But in your opinion, is this really what the teacher thinks?" 5

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I mean that maybe he is joking, and you just don't realize it."

"That can't be it..." Rahma started to say, but was immediately interrupted by Mariella. "No, no Mimmo, this is not the first time that this teacher has made racist jokes or jokes against women." 10

"Eh, he always picks women and foreigners, the other time he did it with me, remember?" said Rahma, who didn't seem to give a lot of importance to the teacher's opinions.

"Yes, it's true," Jensika lamented, "and in that case I became angry for you. And then I was afraid when you responded to him in person that he would give you a bad grade." 15

"That could happen," Rahma said. "When do I ever get a good grade in math?"

"And that must be because you are a woman and come from an underdeveloped country, right?" Mariella said laughing. 20

"Yea, that's just it," Rahma confirmed, joking. "But the idiot hasn't thought about how much women in my country have fought for emancipation. It is true, tradition would subjugate us, and also my father has his ideas... like I don't have to put make-up on, or that he can choose my friends, or that if he could, he would have sent me to an all-girls school. But, let's consider my mom, for example. She was a great activist when she was still living in Tunisia and is still fighting now that she lives in Italy because she is convinced that women are not free even here, despite how things may appear. And, go figure, she did exceptionally well in maths in school!" 25 30

Everybody laughed at Rahma's comment, but Jensika, who didn't smile at all because she was upset, started to speak again, "Well, I know I was wrong. I was wrong in my answer and I was wrong also for not having completed the homework yesterday. I don't like maths, and so I don't always study it like I should. I know 35



that this isn't right, but it's also not right that my teacher has offended me and the country where I was born."

"And also women..." Mimmo added.

"It's true, teachers should be here to teach us what is right and what is wrong," Mariella said.

5

"Why do you say that," Mimmo asked her. "I was thinking that teachers should teach us only subjects, like math, science, and history."

"But no," Rahma intervened, "Mariella is right. Teachers should be like parents, helping us grow up and giving us examples with their behaviour. And, their behaviour should be right. Otherwise why would they reprimand us every time we do something wrong, like when Gaetano started running around school with the attendance sheet in hand, threatening to throw it out the window?"

10

"I wasn't doing anything wrong in that case," Gaetano objected. "The teacher gave me a demerit I didn't deserve. You see? Also, in this case the teacher wasn't acting in the right way. And how did this end? She gave me two demerits!"

15

"Well, I don't know if you or the teacher was right in that case," Mimmo said, "but in my opinion, we shouldn't think that teachers or parents are infallible and therefore always teach us what is right."

20

"What do you mean?" Jensika asked, and Mimmo responded, "Just that I don't agree with Mariella and Rahma. Teachers are people, and people make mistakes. Just because you are old doesn't automatically mean you know what is right and wrong. We don't have to look to adults in this sense."

25

"But no Mimmo," Jensika said, "I think that because of their type of work, teachers should always do the right thing."

"Yea," Gaetano interjected sceptically. "They only think about ordering us around. They don't care about education at all, or about what is right or wrong. If they wanted, they could send you to the principal, give you a demerit, or give you a low grade, without any other consequence. They have all the authority to do that."

30

"Not all teachers are like that," Jensika said.

"But the maths teacher is," Rahma insisted.

35

"But nobody in your class has ever said anything to him?" Mimmo asked while he was sitting on the ledge.

5 "No," Mariella responded. "They are all afraid. The teacher gives out bad grades easily, and we don't understand how he always knows if you studied or not, and bam, he catches you just in the moment when you didn't study."

"I wouldn't care about that," Gaetano said. "Even at the risk of getting a bad grade and holding me back, I would defend Jensika by telling him in person that he's racist..."

10 "Eh, what exaggeration," Rahma said, throwing her hand in the air.

"But Gaetano is right," Mariella intervened. "Someone has to make him understand that he can't speak this way."

"But why don't you go to the principal and tell her everything?" Mimmo asked.

15 "But how would we do that?" Mariella said. "She would never believe us! He is a teacher that is respected by everyone at school, he's powerful, and we are not very good students. It would be our word against his! And his is certainly worth more!"

"This is why we have to deal with him in person," Gaetano said.

20 "This is not the right way to solve things," Jensica intervened. "We need to trust those who have authority, and in our case, that's either our teachers or our principal. We must take a risk by going to speak with the principal."

25 Gaetano threw his hands up, "Come on, what? I don't trust anyone who has authority, I only trust myself."

"... and your convincing methods" Rahma said, winking at Jensica.

30 Mariella seemed disappointed by Gaetano's comment. How could it be possible that he didn't trust anyone? What about his friends? Didn't he trust them? She thought they were friends.

35 "This has nothing to do with it." Gaetano replied. "You're something else- you belong to my world! Your problems are mine... your happiness is mine. If one of you were in danger, I would always protect you unless you did me wrong. In that case, things would be different..."

While he was talking, Mariella was looking at him half surprised and half moved. Actually, behind his strong and rough appearance, the way he dressed, his boastful attitude, and menacing gaze, Gaetano was a sincere and sensitive boy. Mariella knew he was always able to take to heart his friends' problems; he often knew how to advise them as to what was right and wrong when they talked about their own difficulties. While she was thinking about this, Mimmo, who hadn't stopped drumming his fingers on the ledge where they were seated, jumped off and started to speak in a serious tone: 5

"So, let's analyse the situation, let's see what would be the consequences of the various things that we could do. Mariella says that if you speak to the principal, the teacher might play a dirty trick on you and deny everything. It would be the teacher's word against yours. On the other hand, if I vaguely understood Gaetano's plan, and we decide to confront him in person, we risk getting in trouble with the principal, and also, if we got away with it, it is Jensika who could suffer retaliation from the teacher. So..." 10 15

Everyone looked at him with bated breath waiting for the solution.

"...I really don't know what to do!" he concluded. They told him to go to hell. 20

"For heaven's sake," Rahma exclaimed, "why can't we just live in peace? Aren't our family problems at home enough? Even problems at school now?"

"Well," Jensika whispered, "it would be great if there were no complications in our life! I wish we could always live in peace and know what is right and what is not..." 25

"Uuuh, what a pain! Nothing to question, no rivalry, no mistakes, and above all, no fights at school... what a life that would be!"

"Gaetà," Rahma said, "are you not able to think about other stuff? Why don't we ask the teachers to give us an hour to have an assembly in class? Everybody could try to talk together to find a solution." 30

"And do you think that your classmates will help you?" Mimmo asked. 35

"I don't know guys." Jensika jumped off the ledge and put her backpack on her back. "I have to think about it. Now, though, I have to leave, I'm very late." She headed home, leaving her friends to reflect about what needed to be done.

5

Episode 2: The Raid

10 It was night and it was pretty cold. The school seemed even gloomier in the darkness. They were seated on the floor, and Stretch held on his knees a map that he was showing to the others.

"Here there's a video camera, but we can bypass it if we turn here. Here, here, and here there are three video cameras that we can't
15 avoid. Did you bring the tights?"

"Yes," they replied.

"Good, the hoodie will cover the rest. To enter we have to climb the gate. It shouldn't be difficult if we first jump over the outer wall. Once inside, we should pass along here and right away we'll be
20 opposite the entrance to the secretary's office. At that point we just need to open the lock. Shrimp knows how to do it, and then we'll be inside. There are no alarms and the drawer in question doesn't have any padlocks. Inside we should find the money. Is everything clear?"

Pudgy raised his hand, "Who gave you the map?"

25 "Giggino Rough."

"Does Giggino Rough go to this school?"

"Giggino Rough doesn't go to school."

"Actually," Moron said, "it's improbable that a person with this name goes to school. Ouch!" Shrimp slapped him in the back of his
30 neck.

"But can we trust him?" Shrimp added. "And if we go in and don't find anything?"

"Giggino will earn 10% for giving us this information."

"Isn't that too little?" Moron asked. "I mean, 10%... he could sell
35 this piece of information for more."

"No," Stretch reassured him, "he's honest. This is the market price. He doesn't run the same risks as we do. Also, he doesn't give out wrong information. Otherwise his reputation would be at stake. Now are you ready?"

"Yes, we are!"

5

"Let's put the tights on our heads," Stretch urged.

They put on the tights. Pudgy felt everyone's eyes on him. "What's up?"

"Where did you get them?" Shrimp asked.

"From my mother's drawer. Why?" While Pudgy was speaking, his fat hung out from the lace in the tights, jiggling up and down. 10

"I had said a pair of tights, not fishnet stockings!" Stretch exclaimed. "Ok, put my scarf on your mouth. You're so unsightly! And now shut up. Let's move silently. Clear?"

They nodded. They started to walk, but at a certain point they heard a... "wheeeze." They stopped. Silence. They started to move again. "Wheeeze... wheeeze." It was rhythmic and near them, too near. They turned around. 15

"What's up?" Moron asked.

"Use your damned inhaler," Shrimp shouted at him (but in a low voice). The operation required some time (taking off the hood, taking off the tights, spraying the medicine, twice, putting on the tights, putting back on the hood), but then they began to walk again. 20

Everything went according to plan: jumping on the wall, climbing over the gate, reaching the door, forcing the lock, opening the drawer and finding the money. They grabbed everything and slipped away in the cold, desolate night. But when they reached the gate they realized that the wall wasn't there anymore and the gate was too high to climb over. 25 30

"OH MY GOD!!" Pudgy cried. "WE'VE FALLEN INTO THE TRAP!"

"Shhh," they said altogether. Pudgy lowered his voice, "Dad will kill me! All our dads will kill us! We'll all die!!"

"Wheeeze, wheeeze," Moron wheezed.

35

"Idiot! Look!"

While Stretch was pointing at the gate, they realized that the chain didn't have the padlock. They ran away and disappeared into the darkness.

5

Episode 3: What's mine is mine, what's yours is mine, what's theirs is mine too... Or not?

10

At school the next day, people had talked about the raid all the time. The burglary in the secretary's office was everyone's favourite topic. Yet the principal and the teachers kept their mouths shut. There seemed to be the recordings from the video cameras, but the intruders were unrecognizable.

15

After school, Jensika went to the park to meet Mario, one of her old middle school classmates. Mario belonged to the Roma community, which lived in a shantytown near her school, so Mario was used to going to the park.

20

Mario and Jensika sat down on a bench at the entrance to the park, and while they were chatting, they saw a very long car approaching from which a very tall boy their age came out.

"Look at that guy," Mario told Jensika. "He's got a chauffeur-driven car!"

25

They followed him with their eyes and saw him come up to that guy. What was his name? Jensika wondered. Ah, yes, she remembered, it was Giggino Rough. The very tall guy pulled out something from his pocket and gave it to Giggino, who immediately put it in his jacket and gave him five. While they were watching the scene, they realized that Totore Crooked Legs was coming up to them.

30

"Hey brother," he said to Mario, "listen bro,' you know you can't stay here!"

"Why?" Mario asked.

35

"Because this place is mine and my friends'."

"How should we know that? Is there a sign? A bill of sale that demonstrates that you bought it?" asked Jensika, who wanted to become a lawyer.

"Ha ha ha, but here everyone knows that this place is ours. It's something we decided ages ago, and no one has ever said anything since the time we took it," said Totore, pointing at an area that was much larger than the area where his friends were standing.

Jensika was imagining what types of convincing arguments those guys had used to take possession of the area, and while she was trying to explain to Totore that, according to her, he had no right to occupy forever a place in a public park, Totore pushed Mario. In that moment, Gaetano was passing by. He saw everything and suddenly remembered what he was talking about the day before with the others: "You are my world," he had said. "I'll look after you, always!"

A terrible scream re-echoed in the park. Gaetano hurled at Totore, and two of his friends intervened to stir up the fight.

"Enough, enough," Jensika cried. "You beasts!" But at a certain point, she decided to join the fight when she saw Mario being punched on his chin.

Luckily, before someone could be seriously injured, the garden keeper arrived and started to swear, "Those damned guys... I'm calling the police!"

"Guys, the police!" someone cried out in the middle of the confusion.

It took a few seconds; everybody ran away in every direction leaving behind a cloud of dust.

Later, when things calmed down, it was Mimmo's turn to speak to Totore and his friends. Mariella and Rahma waited for him from a bit far away to check that nothing dangerous had happened. Totore respected Mimmo since they had shared a story sometime earlier, so they said hello in a friendly way and started to talk seriously about what had happened. Mariella and Rahma saw them discuss, get angry, laugh, hug, and finally say good-bye, patting each other on their backs.

"And so?" Rahma asked.

"Nothing," Mimmo replied, "we discussed things and then we made a pact."

5 "Are you crazy?" Mariella exclaimed. "Making a pact with him!"

"She's right," Rahma said, "how can you make an agreement to decide who must occupy a place in a park that is public?"

"Exactly." Mimmo said. "It's public that is it belongs to everybody and to nobody."

10 "For this reason," Mariella insisted, "how can you decide that something that should belong to everybody is mine?"

"What do you mean when you say that it belongs to everybody? If there is someone who arrives first and takes possession of that thing, that means that it belongs to him or her." Mimmo affirmed.

15 "Instead doesn't it mean that that person was stealing something?" Mariella questioned.

"And if I arrive at the same time to get the same thing?" Rahma followed up.

"I imagine that it should be divided equally," Mariella replied.

20 "And if you encounter a guy like Totore or his friends?" Mimmo looked at his friends who were thinking about what he had just said, and then he added, "Anyway, the pact we made is that we won't take possession of their space and they'll take possession of a smaller space, like from here to there."

25 For Mariella, it seemed reasonable to leave them that part of the park, considering that Totore's friends were more numerous and noisier than the other groups who frequently spent their free time in the park; however, Rahma wasn't yet convinced that this was the best choice.

30 "It doesn't seem logical to me that if they aren't present, I'm not allowed to stay here and chat with Mariella. It could happen, for example, that my mood is different, and I need to watch the entrance from a different perspective and sit down somewhere else."

35 "Don't say nonsense," Mariella said. "Since we've met here you have never moved from our wall."



"Ah," Mimmo pointed at her, "see, you call that wall ours! And so how can you say that they are not right to call the place where they usually meet theirs?"

5 "Ok, ok," Rahma intervened, "but if I see other people sitting on the wall, I won't make anyone leave, I'll just wait for them to go away."

"Nobody has ever taken our place since we've been coming here. I believe it's a matter of principle for you now only because you can't forgive them for the fact that they assaulted Mario." Mariella knew
10 that Rahma loved Mario as much as all of them did.

"Even if that were true," Rahma replied. "It wouldn't be an absurd reason; it doesn't seem to me that they were behaving right when they assaulted him while he was speaking."

15 "It wouldn't be a bad reason if you defended the fact that Mario was attacked when he was trying only to talk, but it would be a bad reason if you are defending this thing only because it happened to Mario and not to everybody, don't you think so?" Mariella asked.

20 "Anyway, I can't assure you that I will accept this pact," Rahma added.

"And so what are you going to do? Mimmo asked. "You are going to quarrel with Totore and his friends every time? Or worse, are you going to fight him every day?"

25 It seemed that Rahma was imagining the future: going to school, arguing with the teachers, then going back home, arguing with her dad, then going out to meet her friends and also arguing with Totore. No, it was too much! Too tiring!

30 "Actually," she said, "it would be too stressful. What can I say? Let's try this path and let's see if it works." She looked at her watch and realized that it was late. "Ok, I must go now. If I don't hurry up, my dad will call the entire Islamic community to look for me."

35 Mariella also had to finish her homework. So the two girls recommended that Mimmo inform Gaetano and Mario of their decision, and they said goodbye. While Mimmo was leaving, he wondered how long the pact with Totore Crooked Legs would last.

Episode 4: The Loot

Stretch, Pudgy, Shrimp and Moron were seated around the table in the room. The lamp projected their shadows, which were longer than Stretch himself.

5

Shrimp was playing with the money. They all smoked, like those actors starring in the gangster movies of the 40s. Moron also smoked in order to be like the others, and each puff of smoke cost him one too many wheezes.

"Ok," Stretch said at a certain point, "this is the loot. I've already given 10% to Giggino Rough. Now we have to divide the rest. About that, since I found the right contact, planned everything, and pulled you out from the place, I propose that I get 35% of the total and then you can divide the rest among yourselves: 33%, 33% and 33%"

10

15

Moron was still counting on his fingers, wondering how much 33% of 65% was- if it was 65% of the total or if he had to divide instead of multiply- when Shrimp, with the cigarette in his mouth, showed his complete disapproval by slamming his fist into the table. He looked like a gangster.

20

"But he might be right," Pudgy admitted. "It could be fairer to give him a higher percentage since he also worked very hard before the raid..."

"No!" Shrimp said in a peremptory tone. "In this way, we're considering him like our boss, and I don't want a boss here! We all ran the same risk and we must divide the money equally. Or rather, I forced the lock. Who else would have been able to do it?"

25

"I have an idea," Moron intervened. "Let's put it to a vote."

"What?" Pudgy said. "Put it to a vote? And let the majority decide? I'm fed up with this story! At school during the assembly everything must be put to a vote. And if we want to go and see a film, the choice must be put to a vote. At home even deciding what to eat for dinner must be put to a vote. So, I'm really fed up with this tyranny of the majority."

30

35

"Oh, oh, oh what a claptrap! The tyranny of the majority!" Stretch exclaimed, mocking him. "Don't you think you're exaggerating a little? Don't you think it's a bit of a contradiction to compare a democratic method such as voting to tyranny?"

5 "Not at all! Every time the minority doesn't succeed in having a proposal accepted, do you know what they feel like? Defeated, burdened, marginalized..." Pudgy stood up and shook his hands to give more emphasis to his words.

"Oh! What an exaggeration!"

10 "Ok, ok," Shrimp intervened. "Indeed voting would make sense if there were many of us, but since there are only a few of us, we can only discuss it, analyse the pros and cons, and find a solution."

"You mean if there were many people to decide, then we wouldn't have to discuss the problem, analyse the pros and cons, and find a solution, but we could simply vote? That is, voting doesn't need thinking?" Stretch asked.

"That's not what I mean. You don't understand. What I mean is that because there are few of us, it's easier to discuss things and reach an agreement," Shrimp explained.

20 "And if nobody wants to compromise, what will happen? We'll spend the night here?" asked Moron, who was already imagining his father's reaction if he had spent the night out without permission. His dad had already started to become suspicious ever since he had found a pair of his wife's fishnet stockings in Moron's bedroom...
25 Having these thoughts made him look for the inhaler.

So Stretch cut short, "Let's put it this way," he said, "It wouldn't be strange if you considered me your boss since I thought out and planned the action. What's more, I'm the most intelligent in the group, so..."

30 "On the contrary, let's put it another way," Shrimp interrupted him. "I'll pretend to be naive and blackmailed psychologically by a group of bullies, that's you of course, and I'll confess everything to your parents. What do you think?"

The argument was extremely persuasive: they divided the loot
35 in equal parts.

Episode 5: Tolerant? Who?

That afternoon while they were going to meet the others in the park, Jensika and Rahma had decided to take the short cut that went by the Roma shantytown. At a certain point, Rahma noticed that Jensika was walking too fast. 5

“Why are you running?” she asked.

“Running? Me? Ok, well, passing by here makes me a bit nervous.”

“Jensika, what are you saying? Now you’re going to tell me that gypsies steal children and Communists eat them! Jensi, I’d like to remind you that your best friend is Mario- someone who lives exactly in the place where you’re escaping from!” 10

“What does that have to do with anything?”

“You have prejudices towards these people. How would you feel if I behaved like that when I pass by the area where your community lives? You’re behaving exactly like those dumb people who started a rumour that the raid at the secretary’s office was organized by Roma people!” 15

“Really? I didn’t know that. And why do they say that? Have they found any evidence?” 20

“No, not at all. On the contrary, it seems that the principal has decided to lodge a complaint against unknown persons since based on the recordings from the video cameras it isn’t even possible to tell if they are female or male. I think the cameras weren’t working and the school doesn’t want to reveal it; otherwise, other people could come to rob the school. Anyway, the people who started this rumour are the same people who avoid us because we are friends of Mario.” 25

“This makes me angry.”

“Right.” 30

“I don’t behave like those people. I feel nervous when I pass by here only because I’ve never gone inside, I don’t know the place, and I don’t know the people who live here. I know Mario, though. We are friends and trust each other a lot. Don’t you believe that things and people you don’t know always make you a little scared?” 35



"But the people that you don't know and just meet where you live don't have the same effect on you. Don't you believe that the rumours about that place and those people have influenced you a bit?" Jensika smiled.

Everybody was in the park, including Mario. Jensika wanted to hug him tightly and make him understand that, as long as they were together, he didn't have to fear anything, not even the charge of robbery, but she restrained herself and just said hello and that she was sorry about the rumours.

"Who cares?" Mario said. "If I listened to all the stupid things they usually say I'd be consumed with rage. I don't give a damn."

"Indeed," Mariella said, "those people don't know what tolerance means."

"Tolerance?" Mario laughed. "I don't want to be tolerated."

"Mario, what do you mean?" Mimmo didn't understand. "Tolerance is the basis of civil life. For example, it is tolerance towards different religions or cultures that makes us live in peace and allows us to study in the same school with Rahma and Jensika. It makes us know cultures different from ours."

"Yes, but this is not the point. First of all, we aren't living in peace today, and it doesn't seem to me that the Islamic religion is tolerated..."

"That's right," Rahma interrupted him. "Yesterday in class we read the newspaper article on that boy who died in Syria. He was Italian but had decided to convert to Islam and, for this reason, was investigated by the Italian political police. Why should the police be interested in a person only because he converted to Islam?"

"Because of the whole September 11th incident," Mimmo affirmed.

"Ok, but if you convert to Islam, it doesn't necessarily mean that you are a terrorist! I'm Islamic, ok, even if I've decided not to wear the veil and all the rest, but that is my religion, so am I a terrorist too?"

"This is the same mentality that affirms that all Roma people are thieves," Mariella said.

"For this reason, I insist that we all should learn to be tolerant," Mimmo claimed.

"Still with this story," Mario snorted. "You're speaking from the other side of the fence. Go to a foreign country and then you'll see what it means to be tolerated. Sometimes, I assure it's really humiliating. You feel as if you were a disabled person and people pity you. I want to be known, loved, and appreciated for what matters."

Jensika whispered to Rahma, "You see, this is exactly what I was trying to tell you before."

"With some *slight* nuances," she replied ironically.

"For me, it's a question of numbers, Mariella said. "Think of our school. There are Chinese, African, Pakistani, and Indian students. Now, nobody cares if you're Indian or Moroccan. Some girls wear the veil and we don't ask them why anymore."

"But in this way you're saying it's just a question of habit," said Gaetano, who had been silent up to that moment. "Actually you no longer ask that girl the reason that she's wearing the veil because you already know."

"How can you know the reason that she's wearing the veil if you don't ask her?" Mimmo interrupted.

"Because you already dialogued with the person, and therefore you can tell whether she's nice and whether you can consider her to be a friend, not considering her origins. How can I put this? For example, Mario is not different from us and is not someone to pity as he was saying. Mario is one of us and we like to reason together, make jokes, play football, and argue when he does something stupid. For us, Mario is not a Roma, he's... he's a Mario."

Everybody laughed at the face Gaetano made when he finished his sentence.

"But if my father found out that I'm going out with him he would kick me out of the house," Jensika said, looking down.

"Because your father is a..."

"Shut up Mario! Don't say it," Jensika put her hands on her ears.

"So don't tell your dad you're going out with him," Rahma suggested, giving the impression she was an expert on lying to her parents.

"Oh, I would tell him, but I know I can't do it. For something like this he would make me stay home all day."

"Well, some things will never change," Mariella sighed.

"And what about us?" Mimmo asked. "We can try to change our parents and adults. It's up to us to change the world. It's our duty. Aren't we young?"

So Gaetano looked at them a bit worried.

"And what happens if we become old?" he asked. They rolled their eyes.

Epilogue

Some months later, Jensika's friends met up like always in the park. The girls were relieved that school was almost over for the year, and it would be a long time that they wouldn't hear from their maths teacher.

In fact, it was that very morning that Jensika tried to speak with him. She timidly approached him and, using a lot of courage, told him in one breath that she didn't support his offending her country of origin and women, as he tended to do. The teacher looked at her straight in the eyes and said, "Every time you lose pride to be who you are, or you forget to be who you are, you will be reminded of me... and this will give you the strength to move forward in your life. But, be careful, your life is only yours," and he left.

Jensika's jaw dropped, and it was like this that Rahma found her. Rahma grabbed her arm and accompanied her outside the school to meet up with the others.

"What was he trying to say?" Mariella asked.

"Of course adults are so strange," Mario said while shaking his head.

"You can see that the teacher wants to redeem himself pretending to give words of wisdom," Gaetano said at a certain point.

"But no, in my opinion it's only an umpteenth provocation," Jensika said. "He felt attacked and brought up something that made no sense."

"I don't think it didn't make sense," Mariella said. "It seems like he was trying to do something good for you. Like he wanted to help you claim your identity."

5 "And yea," Rahma said. "Now the teacher suddenly became all good."

While they were trying to interpret the cryptic comments of the teacher, Mimmo arrived out of breath. "You can't imagine what I know," he said, trying to catch his breath. "I met with Giggino Rough..."

10 "That Giggino Rough?" Mario interrupted him.

"Yes, that one," Mimmo responded to the question that was preoccupying Mario, and he continued, "But you must promise me not to tell anyone what he told me. He knows who stole the money from the secretary's office at school."

15 "Oh!" "Eh?" "Come on!" everyone exclaimed together, astonished and curious.

"It seems," Mimmo started to say, "that they were the guys that go to the school nearby. They are upper-class, that is, they have money."

20 "How is that possible?" Mario said pretending to be offended. "Weren't we the mean Roma people?" Everybody laughed.

"But the most absurd thing," Mimmo continued, "is that when Giggino told me the story, he laughed a lot. He told me that it was he who gave them all the details to break into the school, but he hadn't told them that the video cameras didn't work or that there was no lock on the gate at the school..."

25 "What a guy Giggino is," Mario said. "He really made fun of them..."

30 "So the principal and the teachers lied regarding the video cameras," Jensika was astonished.

"Yea," Mimmo followed, "and it seems that the amount of money they took was too low, around 200 Euro! All that risk for petty change!"

"And why would they do that?" Rahma asked.

35 "Maybe just to do what's prohibited..." Gaetano imagined.

"Maybe because they didn't have anything else to do," Mario hypothesized.

"Maybe because their parents denied them allowance and they were desperate," Mariella said laughing.

"Yes, but why lie about the fact that the video cameras weren't working?" Jensika wasn't able to make sense of this. "People always tell us we shouldn't lie and then they are the first ones to lie." 5

"Maybe the principal and the teachers had a good reason to lie," Mario said, but Mariella didn't agree with him.

"There are no good reasons to justify lying," Mariella affirmed. 10

"I don't know if you are right," Mario replied. "Think about if they had said that the video cameras didn't work, other people would have been able to enter school and still steal things."

"Ok," Jensika intervened, "but after this people started to chatter, blaming people in your community. Nothing good ever comes from lying." 15

"That's not true," Gaetano said. "You need to know when to lie and when not. The other day, for example, I said to my teacher that I hadn't studied because I was sick, but this wasn't true. This way, though, I avoided a bad grade. The next day, I studied and I did well. As you see, I didn't do anything wrong to anyone and I saved myself." 20

"Ok, but you were lucky," Mariella intervened. "If she had discovered this, you could have been suspended."

"But Gaetano is right," Mimmo said. "Sometimes you can lie for a good purpose, or to save your life..." 25

"And what about the lie that Giggino told the thieves of the secretary's office? What type of lie was that?" Rahma asked.

"What do you mean?" Mariella asked.

"I mean why did he lie about the gate and the video cameras?" Rahma clarified. 30

"But that wasn't a lie," a convinced Mario affirmed. "He just hid the truth."

"Isn't that also a lie?" Rahma asked, and Mariella seemed to agree with Mario when she said, "No, lying means saying one thing 35

rather than another. Not really saying something means you are hiding it."

"Well, lying or not, hiding or not," Gaetano said while rubbing his stomach, "I'm hungry! How about we go get a sandwich?"

5 Finally there was no more discussion, and everyone agreed. They counted how much money they had in their pockets and headed toward their favourite sandwich shop. Jensika was walking close to her friends, but couldn't stop thinking about her maths teacher or about what had happened that morning. Provoked by what had been
10 discussed to that moment, she wondered if the teacher was lying when he told the jokes about women and foreigners or if he had lied to her when she confronted him an hour earlier? And in both cases, why did he do it? "Who knows why life is so complicated!" she thought to herself, and she decided in that moment that the only
15 thing she wanted to think about was the sandwich waiting for her. She would think about the teacher tomorrow.

Episode 1

The popped collar of her jacket and the hat pulled down over her sunglasses were making her sweat. It was actually rather hot for November, and people were staring at her suspiciously given that she was dressed like that. She couldn't afford to be recognized by anyone. She just had to know. She had to know why he went into that apartment building every day. For a week she had seen him enter there and then disappear. Once she had waited around, but he had not come out and she knew he did not live there. She wanted to know everything about him. Up to that moment, she had discovered only where he went to school and where he lived but she still didn't know his name. Yes, she and her girlfriends had done a lot of hypothesizing, but they never seemed to figure anything out. She began to remember the last time they met at her house.

They were seated on the floor in her room and the girls were making fun of her because she always had a dreamy expression on her face and couldn't do anything apart from talk about him. Tina and Armelinda were mocking her, and Armelinda could not understand why she didn't just ask him his bloody name.

"It's simple. You go and say, 'Hi, I'm Rosaria and you?'"

"What? No way!" she said blushing. "Look, I feel sick only imagining it."

There was no way she could do that. She had tried once, but as soon as she had come up to him, her throat went dry, she started to stammer, and the volume of the voice that came out of her must have

been 0.022 on any decibel scale. The result was that he had not even perceived her.

"And if he didn't even perceive me, it means that for him I don't exist," she said. "I am not part of reality."

5 "You are not part of *his* reality but you certainly exist," Armelinda said, "and we know it very well because we poor martyrs see you every day, hug you when you're sad, and hear your delirious sighs."

"They are not delirious," Rosaria sulked.

10 "But why do you want to know his name if you have no intention of approaching him? Be sincere, we are your friends."

Rosaria confessed. Actually, she wanted to know his name to search for him on Facebook. This way she could request him as a friend. On the internet it would be easier for her to speak to him given that the idea of actually approaching him made her legs go weak.

15 "It doesn't seem like a good idea," Armelinda said. "I'm sure that if you don't talk to him in person you would give a different impression of who you are. You are also shy, don't forget that. If he doesn't know this side of you, what will you do when you meet him?"

20 "Eh, I'll meet him *later*. First let me speak with him on the internet. Come on, please!" Rosaria begged.

"Ok," Tina intervened, "let's analyze the situation and make some hypotheses. So, Rosaria likes this guy. What do we know about him?"

25 "Wait! I need my notebook." Tina and Armelinda looked at Rosaria in a puzzled way. "It's where I wrote the information that we have."

30 "I don't know why but I thought you knew it all by heart," Tina affirmed sarcastically. "So, here it is. We know he lives in the Chiaia-San Ferdinando neighborhood, in the Spanish quarters to be precise. He goes to school in the building opposite ours. Mmm, I don't know what this fact can provide us. For the moment let's leave it aside. What else? Yes, none of our friends know him, and we have never met him at the cinema or in the other places where we usually go. Skin colour: black; height: 1.75m; athletic body."

35 Rosaria sighed.

"So," Tina continued, ignoring her, "we want to know the name of this good-looking guy. Which information could be useful for us?"

"Obviously his *amazing* physical qualities," Rosaria sighed again.

"The area where he lives, together with his somatic traits, will tell us which community he belongs to and from this we can deduce a possible name," Armelinda said. 5

"In what sense?" Tina and Rosaria asked almost in unison.

"Look at me, for example. If you knew only the place where I live and my physical traits, what would you think?" 10

"Well, I wouldn't know," Rosaria was uncertain. "You could also be Neapolitan in my opinion."

"No, Armelinda is right: even if many of us Neapolitans are dark skinned, she doesn't look very much like an Italian girl. I could think that you're South American." 15

"That's true, but I live in Montesanto, and excluding that I am of Italian origins and knowing that only two other communities live in Montesanto, the Sri Lankan one and the Cape Verde one, you should consider that I belong to one of these communities. Now, do you believe that my hair could be like that of a Sri Lankan girl?" 20

Rosaria looked at her curly hair. "No," she said. "Rather they have long and straight hair."

"And if you had gotten a perm?" Tina asked.

"Don't joke, try to ask Suthescika if she would ever want to have a perm." 25

"And so, we should think that you are from Cape Verde," Rosaria concluded.

"Right, and at this point you could go on the internet and see what the most commonly used female names are in the Cape Verde islands." 30

"Oh yeah, and how could we discover what your name really is?" Tina asked.

"It would be enough to find the ten most common names and then try to call her with one of them. If she turns around it's done," Rosaria said. 35

“No, girls, what nonsense. Apart from the small detail that Armelinda or I should approach him because Rosaria wouldn’t be able to utter a word if she approached him, and apart from the fact that we wouldn’t know how to judge what would be the most
5 common names of a reality that we don’t know at all, Facebook isn’t even the best search engine that could help us. Besides, to search for him on Facebook, we would at least need to know his last name or some other detail. He could have a nickname.

“Sorry,” Armelinda interrupted, “let’s go back to what we we’re
10 talking about earlier. In my opinion to find his profile on Facebook we need to know which community he belongs to. I’ll explain the reasoning that I did: we know that he lives in Chiaia and we know that he is of African origins. In Chiaia, there is a strong presence of Ukranian, Senegalese and Nigerian communities.”

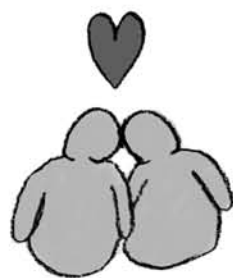
15 “I understand,” Rosaria said. “If he isn’t of Ukranian origins, he is either of Senegalese or Nigerian origins.”

“Exactly,” Tina observed. “But I still don’t understand where this can lead us.”

“I’ll explain it now,” Armelinda continued. “At this point,
20 there’s a 50% chance he’s of Senegalese origins and a 50% chance he’s of Nigerian origins. Now, for what we need let’s imagine he’s of Nigerian origins and proceed as if this were true because, this way, it could be useful for us for what I had in mind. In fact, my brother has many friends in the Nigerian community and is also in contact with
25 them on the social network. We can ask him to show us his contacts and his friendships to see if there is a profile that corresponds to his. Maybe we could discover that he’s *his best friend*.”

“Yea, maybe!” Rosaria exclaimed sarcastically, doubting that she could solve this problem with such ease. However, she was afraid
30 of the other 50% chance that they could have been wrong, and then what would they do?

“We’d take note of the mistake,” said Tina, who was convincing herself to follow that path, “and we’d start over again considering the other 50% chance. If nothing else, at least we’d be a little closer to the
35 truth. You’ll see, you’ll succeed in meeting the boy of your dreams!”



Rosaria, as usual, sighed. But before starting the search through the contacts of Armelinda's brother, she said she would want to make another lap in the area where he lived. She didn't know why, but instinct was telling her that there was something that didn't add up in these hypotheses that they had made up to now.

"Be careful not to get arrested for stalking," Armelinda told her while laughing.

And now, completely covered up, she waited in the hall of that building where she had seen him enter for days.

Rosaria had already figured out the apartment building where he lived. She had seen him enter it the first time she followed him. Later, though, she had noticed that after school, he went back home where he stayed for 15 minutes, or a half hour at most (the time for lunch, Rosaria imagined), then he went into the opposite apartment building and from there she didn't see him go out again. She was full of curiosity. She absolutely wanted to know what he did in that apartment building. She had made several hypotheses, even that he could be going there for an afterschool program, but that wouldn't be for more than one hour, like he usually did. So she rejected this hypothesis too. But today, today she was going to discover something. She had this feeling. So, she hid between the hallway and the stairs so that no one could see her, but so that she could keep an eye on both the stairs and the lift. She waited for a long time and in the end her sacrifice was rewarded. She saw him go out the lift, but he wasn't alone. The girl who was with him looked very familiar. Rosaria almost cried. She recognized her. It was Vanessa, that simpering girl who was in her class. She hated her. The two guys stopped a moment before going out. She heard him speak to Vanessa.

"Thanks for what you did for me earlier," he was saying to her.

"You don't need to thank me. You know how I feel about you," Vanessa replied. They hugged tightly for a time that seemed endless to Rosaria. She suppressed a shout that was angrier than before but couldn't hold back her tears. Her sunglasses were irreparably foggy, just as her stupid mind had been foggy until now. The truth was revealed in all its cruelty, and she felt as if she had been thrown on

the earth without any purpose in the world apart from waiting for death. He was already with a girl!!! And, to make things worse, this girl was the bimbo Vanessa!!! Hate was filling her head producing a dull pain in her temples, and it became more painful because she knew that Vanessa was not a bimbo at all. On the contrary, she was rather intelligent as well as beautiful, blond, and had green eyes... Rosaria had been so stupid to think that such a good-looking boy would ever notice someone like her. "He doesn't even perceive me," she thought while walking and crying. "For him I am not part of reality."

Episode 2

Tina took the tissues from the packet, Rosaria filled them with tears, and Armelinda collected them with a twig and threw them in the waste basket. It was already the second packet, and Rosaria hadn't stopped crying.

"Alright, come on, we were wrong because we didn't consider other possible variables in our hypotheses."

"I just wanted to chat with him," Rosaria sobbed.

"To chat, yes," Armelinda said while picking up yet another disgusting tissue off the ground.

In that moment, Vanessa passed by and, seeing that Rosaria was crying, asked Tina and Armelinda what was happening. Armelinda answered her.

"No, don't worry, nobody died. It's only that Rosaria has discovered that the boy she likes is in a relationship with a girl, and the funniest thing is that girl..." The words remained for a moment suspended in the air, but while she looked around and realized that Tina wanted to kill her and Rosaria wanted to disappear into an abyss, bringing down Armelinda with her, she couldn't finish the sentence, "That girl is really you... ooops," she added, putting her hand over her mouth.



“Waaah!” Rosaria cried more loudly.

“Eh? What boy?” Vanessa asked. “I’m not with any boy.”

“What?” Rosaria sobbed. “Aren’t you with that handsome African boy, the tall one with big black eyes...?”

“But who, Fela? He’s my brother!” 5

“Your brother?”

Vanessa explained that when Fela was very little, he had lost his parents while they were leaving Nigeria trying to reach Italy. In the accident, one of his uncles had also died, and he and his grandmother were the only survivors. Luckily in Naples his grandmother had met people from their country and they had given their help. They had settled in the house opposite that of Vanessa and since Fela often stayed home alone because his grandmother worked, Vanessa’s mother had offered to look after him. From there Vanessa’s parents had succeeded in becoming the foster parents of the boy, and years later they adopted him. Now, every day Fela visits his grandmother after school for a greeting. Sometimes he stays there for lunch. On Sundays they all gather at Vanessa’s house. Fela’s granny was hers too in a sense. 10

Rosaria was still crying. “Rosi,” Vanessa said, “don’t cry anymore, I’ll introduce you to my brother.” 15

“I’m not crying for this. I’m crying because you’ve told us a beautiful story. Waaah!”

Armelinda and Tina looked at each other with no hopes of recovering their cry-baby of a friend.

“But I still don’t understand how you believed Fela was my boyfriend.” 20

Rosaria blushed and, drying her tears, confessed with a certain reluctance that she had tailed her brother and had seen them while they were hugging in the hallway at their house. Witnessing the hug had given her the proof that they were together, and so she had believed that to be the truth. Vanessa frowned. She did not expect something like this from her. Following a person did not seem to her like the right thing to do. 25

“Forgive me, forgive me.” Rosaria said. “I promise I’ll let you copy my maths exercises whenever you want.” 30

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"Are you trying to bribe me?"

"No," Rosaria lowered her head. "It's only that I've realized that I made several mistakes."

5 "Well," Tina intervened, "it's not only her fault. We also encouraged her in what she was doing. It was a little like a game."

"It wasn't only a game," Armelinda disagreed. "It was to help her find out what she wanted to know, every means seemed permissible to us. Don't get mad Vanessa. Friends?"

10 Vanessa thought about it and then said, "Ok, friends."

Episode 3

15 While this moving scene was developing, they realized that Fela was running towards them followed by a friend. Rosaria gave Armelinda's hand a strong squeeze and said, "Please, please tell me you can't see that I've cried. How is my hair? Am I ok in these clothes?"

20 Armelinda, after verifying that she had not broken any bone in her hand, looked up to the sky and reassured her about the way she looked.

"Vanessa," Fela said. "Vanessa, I looked for you everywhere. You don't know what's happening. Sorry girls, I'm Fela, her brother, and this is my friend Rollo. Hey Rosaria, what happened? Were you crying?"

30 Rosaria was paralyzed, fighting different feelings. On the one side, she wanted to kill Armelinda who had lied about the way she looked, but on the other she was shocked at the fact that he had spoken a word to her. But above all: HOW THE HELL DID HE KNOW HER NAME?

All she was able to do though was murmur, stammering, "N-n-no, no nothing, I've got a little conjunctivitis..."

35 "Ah," he said, "I'm sorry, I hope you feel better soon. But now you must listen to what is happening."

"Right," interrupted Rollo, who was out of breath because of all the running and excitement. "All the computers in the city don't work! There is no internet connection from anywhere, not on the cell phones, not on the computers at home or at work."

The girls took out their hi-tech cell phones and verified that they didn't have an internet connection. 5

"Come!" Fela incited them. "Come and see."

They left the schoolyard and went out into the street. The traffic was paralyzed. People left their offices and work places and were dazed about this unexpected vacation and the novelty in front of their eyes. The young people were talking to each other, everyone with a cell phone in hand to check the connection that wasn't there. A ton of people were in the street with a question mark imprinted on their face. Everyone was talking to each other wondering how this was possible. "It is an attack by the Taliban," some said. "No the anarchists did it," others said. "It's surely the operation of a hacker," the know-it-alls said. It was an apocalyptic scene. 10 15

They waited with all those people. They listened to the news that people reported from the TV. Nobody knew what to say had happened. The only certain thing was that there would be no internet connection in the coming hours. 20

"Imagine what a tragedy it would be if there were no longer internet. We would have to return to studying using books when they assign us research to do at home," Vanessa said, shuddering at the thought of so much effort in having to go to the library to search for the right books for the research that teachers in class assigned them almost once a week. 25

"Right," Fela said, "and we would no longer have our space to chat with our friends."

"Our space? In what sense?" Rollo asked. "Do you mean that when you are on a social network you feel as if you are in a physical space? What nonsense!" 30

"Yes, it's true." Vanessa was always fascinated by the analogies that her brother knew how to make. "I think that we all agree on the fact that we use social networks as places to meet people." 35

After this statement they started to talk all at once and nobody understood anything. So Rollo stopped them, "I want to hear what Tina is saying."

5 "I was saying that it's a place where you can communicate with people who live very far away, but those people remain far away."

"You're right," Armelinda said. "When I chat on WhatsApp with my cousins who live in Portugal, I know very well that they live far from me and that it would be different if they were close to me where I could see their facial expressions."

10 "But how many times has it happened to you that you couldn't go out and you searched for someone on the web with whom you could be in contact?" Fela asked. "It happens to me, and I feel as if I were on the street with my friends." Rollo imagined Fela cut in two halves, one with his legs in the street and other with his head at home.

15 "But what does that have to do with it?" Tina said. "You're warm at home but on the street you'd feel cold, for example, and it's that, together with the fact that you never have to take a bus to go back home, that makes you understand that your house is your real space."

20 "I think we're not analysing things from the right point of view," said Rosaria, who was so interested in this topic that she completely forgot her shyness. "I also believe that the internet is not like the space that we know. When I chat or surf the internet, I feel that I can move in all possible directions. I feel as if I could be up and down at the same time, as if there were no obstacles to go from one place to another."

"Wow, what a beautiful image!" Rosaria blushed at Fela's compliment.

30 "Yes, and I'll tell you more," Armelinda said. "I feel part of a whole. Think about it, when we connect with more people and exchange information, we are like so many brains that are talking to each other. It's no longer our body, but only our mind that travels."

35 "So are you admitting that there is a space where our brains travel?" Rollo asked.



"Yes, no, not exactly... maybe it's more like a place."

"Well, everything you are saying is great, but I have never signed up for any social network."

"Oooh!" everyone exclaimed, surprised by Rollo's statement.

5 "And if you want to know, I don't even use a cell phone. I'm convinced that these are potential means of control. Think of how much information is collected by cookies. Have you ever looked at the ads that appear every time you go to a website? They are studied based on the traces that remain in the cookies. So anyone with the right means can get a lot of information about you by seeing only what you click on."

10 Vanessa laughed, "Come on, it's not possible, you would just become paranoid. I like surfing the internet and I think we shouldn't oppose a tool like this. It's like an extension of me, it increases my limited skills and I don't want to believe that someone can study me to control how I think."

15 But there were doubts in their minds, and for this everyone was silent.

20 Maybe, they thought, the meaning of what had happened was really this. Maybe they were thinking that everyone could sneak onto their computers and change the course of things. Nobody had an answer and they didn't either. So they decided to eat a sandwich all together and to wait for the course of events to unfold. Together they felt stronger and they said this to each other. They were happy because these events had made them meet, and Rosaria, obviously, was the happiest. Indeed, in a burst of cockiness between bites of her sandwich, she even had the courage to ask Fela the origin of his name.

25 "My parents," he started to say, "and my grandmother were followers of Fela Anikulapo Kuti, a famous Nigerian musician and controversial revolutionary who, after studying in England, went back to his country and was sure to build a better world. He founded a commune but a few years later it was destroyed by the Nigerian government. My grandmother lived there, and there my mother was born. Fela Kuti died just before I was born. No one knows how he

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died. Some say it was of AIDS and others say that he was killed by the police. My parents decided to name me Fela not to forget him."

"And you'll have this story with you for the rest of your life."

"Yes, and all that it meant. Maybe one day I'll go to Nigeria, which is a country that I don't really know. Who knows!" and he got lost for a moment in his thoughts. 5

"It's back!" exclaimed Vanessa, who had her cell phone in hand. "The connection came back!"

Everyone was full of joy, except Rollo, who was starting to get used to this relaxing situation. They looked at the people who went back to their houses and offices to make up for the lost working time. Rollo had the impression that many of them were a bit sad. 10

They said goodbye.

"Let's exchange our Facebook account names so we can meet on the web," Armelinda said. 15

"Don't count on me," Rollo affirmed. "I prefer meeting you in person."

They laughed. That boy was a bit strange for them, but he was very nice.

Before leaving, Fela approached Rosaria and said to her, "If you want, you can come to my house sometime? I've got Fela Kuti CDs that I'd like you to hear, that is as soon as you feel better from your conjunctivitis." 20

"What conj...? Ah yes, right," Rosaria said with a surprised face. They said goodbye, and while she was walking home with her friends, she thought how stupid she had been to invent that she had conjunctivitis. Damned shyness! But above all, how was it possible that Fela knew her name? 25

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The emphasis of the PEACE project is on designing, testing and validating a new P4C curriculum focused on cosmopolitan engagement and intercultural dialogue.

PEACE aims to impact educational practices by giving educators specialized professional development and new teaching strategies and materials, and by improving the reasoning and relational skills of children. Through creating and disseminating the new pedagogical strategies, curriculum and educational resources, the PEACE project intends to promote a cosmopolitan awareness to the widest possible section of society, that is spreading the idea that it is possible to contribute to the development of a cosmopolitan orientation and engagement amongst future citizens through dedicated educational tools and practices.

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