

TINA AND AMIR

& ELLA



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Ella**

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Tina and Amir

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Episode 1: The Playground (told by Tina) 10

Today we talked about children's rights. Our teacher told us why children should learn about their rights.

Then she gave each of us one children's right card. On each card was a picture and it showed a situation with children. Below was a line with one article of the rights of children. 15

We read the text together aloud, for example there was one card that said: "You have the right to privacy." Other cards said: "You have the right to food, clothing, and a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met." Or "You have the right to play." 20

There were many cards. Each of us had to read one card out aloud. Then we had to decide which article we wanted to talk about first.

Our teacher said: "Please decide and then write down your reasons for choosing it." 25

Most children wanted to speak about the right to play, and so the teacher asked us to talk about our experiences.

Suddenly Vanessa got up and said: "Something that happened yesterday just came into my mind! We went to the playground that belongs to our neighbourhood. My friends and I 30

were playing there for quite a while when suddenly a girl came along. She went to our slide and wanted to play, as if she lived here. No one knew her. So we told her that it is our playground. It belongs to our neighbourhood and no other children are allowed to play here. We all told her, but she didn't care and she just went on playing. Our boys ran after her, took some small sticks and slapped her legs. We, the girls, also went up to her and pulled her long black hair. It was not right that she just came and disturbed us playing in our playground."."

5
10 Vanessa's face went red; she had never spoken so much in class before.

We had all been listening to Vanessa. Then the teacher asked us what we thought about it. We sat in a circle so everyone could say something. Most of the children in class agreed with Vanessa that it was not right for the girl to have come into our playground.

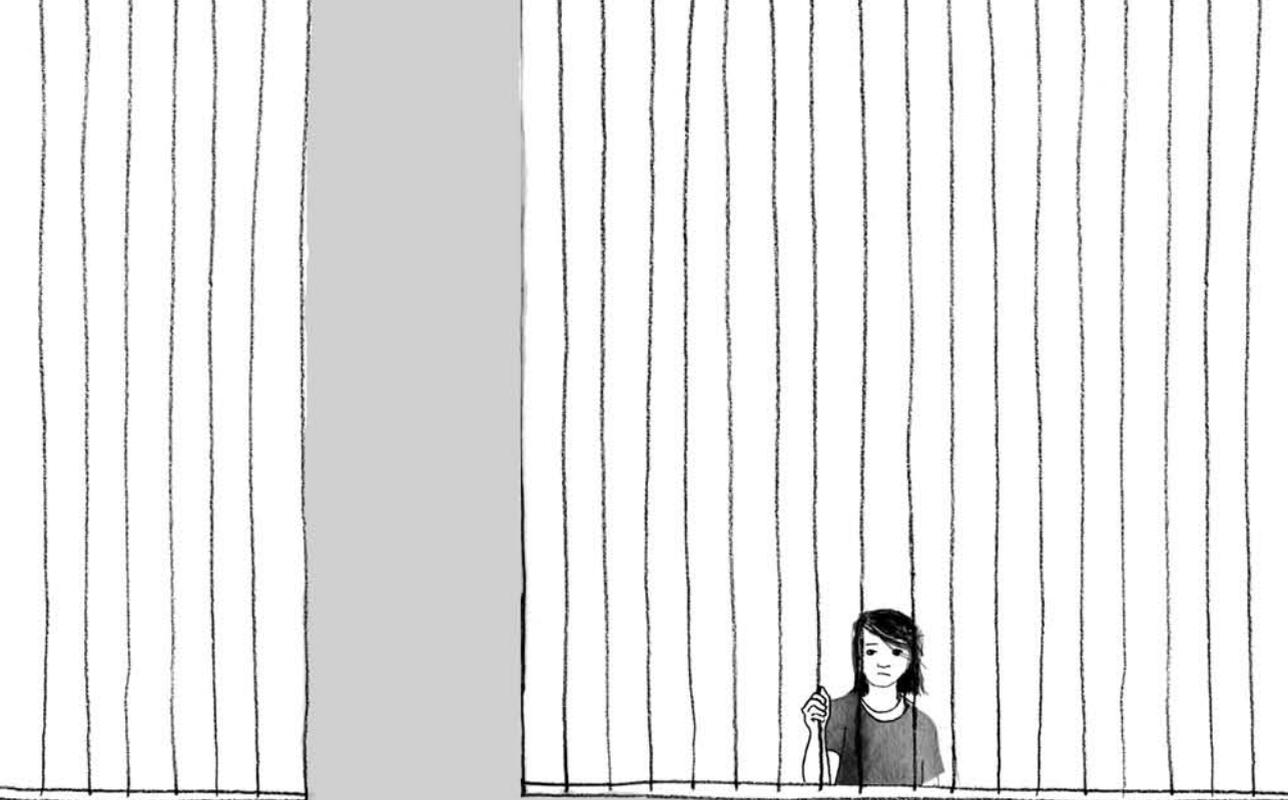
15 Then the teacher asked us: "What would you do in a situation like that?"

Leon got up and said: "I would ask for the girl's name."

No-one said anything.

20 Then our teacher suggested role-playing the whole situation. I was given the role of the girl who came to the playground. When I left the classroom so that I could re-enter, as if I was coming to a real playground, it was a really strange feeling. I imagined that the boys would come to hit me and the girls would pull my hair and suddenly I was frightened.

25 When I came into the classroom the children were standing around – I played the role of the girl coming to the playground, when Vanessa came up to me and suddenly asked: "What is your name?" It was a weird situation. No one had come up to hit me and no one was pulling my hair.



Then our teacher said: "Now we can start to talk and have a dialogue about one of the articles of children's rights –what do you think "All children have a right to play" means?"

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Episode 2: Secret (told by Tina)

10 A group of girls formed a little circle. I stood next to them. I clearly heard them whispering my name as they giggled. I could not understand what was going on.

I went to sit on a bench waiting for the bus. Manar, who saw the tears on my face, came to sit next to me.

15 "Don't be sad, I think I know why you are crying - the girls are cruel." she said.

Manar played the flute and I knew her from music class. Her parents came from Egypt, but she, together with her sisters and brothers, were born here. She had dark skin and dark brown eyes.

20 Manar went on to tell me that she'd heard the girls say that I was the only girl who was not allowed to join the adventure school sports week.

"They said that you are not allowed to join because you are Muslim and your parents would never let you go." she said.

25 I stared at Manar. "It is not only my parent's decision; I also don't want to go to the school sports week, not with all those idiots", I said. I could not stop my tears. If I had the choice I would really have loved to go with them, but I didn't tell anyone.

30 "Nothing is wrong", said Manar. "I've also never been to the school sports week, but for a different reason."

“Why?” – I really wondered.

Manar whispered sadly: “Please, don’t tell anyone. My parents didn’t have enough money. And they don’t want anybody to know - It is like a secret and until now I haven’t talked to anyone about it. – I can understand why you are so sad.” 5

I don’t know why, but Manar made me feel better. We didn’t talk anymore. We just sat on the bench quietly.

When the bus arrived the driver had to press the horn twice before I got onto the bus. I thought about school, the girls giggling, and about my new friend Manar. Then suddenly I saw Amir, he got out at the next bus stop, the same as I did. 10

Episode 3: Tina and Amir (told by Amir) 15

Tina and I walked along the road – I looked around very anxiously, but I did not want to tell her what had happened. I’ve been bullied since I came to this school because of my language, my appearance... Relentless teasing, pushing, punching... I was afraid to tell anyone, afraid that it would get worse. I knew adults saw some of what was happening, but they refused to acknowledge that the kids were doing what they were to me. I was terrified to go to school, terrified of walking home...it was awful. Although Tina is one of my best friends, I do not tell her everything. 20 25

“You don’t look very happy.” Tina said.

I did not want to talk to Tina about it, but then I said: “I’m alright. But maybe I can borrow 10 € from you?”

“What for? You can tell me what it’s for, and then I’ll give it to you, but first I need to know.” she said thoughtfully. 30

"I can't tell you. I'm not allowed to tell anyone." I said quietly. "You don't know what happened!"

Tina looked at me with her clear blue eyes. She was wearing a blue dress with lace trimming on her neckline and her dark hair hung past her shoulders.

"But I am your friend." she said.

I did not know what to do or what to say, but then I started: "Well, when I walked across the footbridge over the river yesterday."

"Go on - what happened?" Tina looked at him.

I started to explain: "I was coming from my German lesson, and suddenly Andy and Fabio stopped me on my way home. They took away some of my books and threw them into the bushes, can you imagine?"

"Why did they do it?" Tina asked.

"I don't know." I said, "Well, they told me I had to give them 10 €. They will wait for me every day and if I do not give them the money they will punch me and throw my things in the river."

"Did you tell your parents?" Tina asked.

"No, I can't talk to my father. I know exactly what my father would tell me. He would say "Fight them!" I answered.

"And if you tell your mother?" Tina asked.

"My mother would tell me "Go to your headmaster!" I said.

"Well," Tina said, "today we are walking together, ok? We'll see what happens."

I felt terrible. Now it would become worse. Why did I talk to Tina? Why did I tell her? I did not want her walking with me – walking home with a girl!

Then all of a sudden Andy and Fabio turned up and said: "Come over here!" I said bravely: "What do you want? Just leave me alone."

Andy turned to Tina and said: "Go away, you...!"

"I'm not going anywhere. And I want you to leave Amir alone or we'll tell your teacher!" Tina answered.

Andy just laughed at Tina and Fabio pushed her away. Tina shouted: "Just go away!" First I was standing there as if I was paralysed, but then I suddenly grabbed Tina's hand and pulled her away calling out loudly: "You will never do this again!" 5

When Tina and I walked on she said: "Now you have to tell your parents and I will tell mine. Think about it, if we do not tell, Andy and Fabio will go on bullying." 10

So Tina and I went first to my mother and told her about. She immediately called Tina's mother. But was this the best solution? There must have been some other way, I thought to myself.

The next day our teacher came in and told me to go to the principal's office. I went there. Tina, Andy and Fabio were in his office already. The principal looked at me and Tina and said "I have heard what happened. It was very important to tell your parents." 15

Now Tina and I had to report the bullying case and the principal made us write a report about it. I thought that would be the end of it, but it turned out that Andy and Fabio had to write a report too. Suddenly Andy and Fabio said: "We are very sorry." But later that day I heard them talking about me like I wasn't there, calling me names. 25

The next few days we talked about rules in school and about things that we can do about bullying. Then we even talked about cyber-bullying and where we can call for help. Our teacher was quite cool. She announced that we will have an anti-bullying workshop together with some other kids. 30

Episode 4: A bird in a cage (told by Amir)

Today was a boring day. I was sitting around not really knowing what to do – it was just a lousy day. My mother was in the kitchen singing sad songs about nostalgia and love.

5 “I want to go and play outside.” I said to my mother. My mother just went on singing and shook her head to say no.

“Why am I not allowed to go outside? I won’t go far.” I told her and gave her an angry look.

10 “It’s not possible.” she said. “It is too dangerous to be outside just by yourself.”

Since my mother had talked to our principal about the bullying she was afraid to let me go outside just by myself. It was terrible. I felt like a bird in a cage. But I wanted to be free – free to go outside and play.

I went to my room. I looked for the box, where I hid my treasuries. There were very special things that my grandmother had given to me. I took out my little wooden elephant and he seemed to listen.

20 “It is not dangerous at all.” I whispered to him.

Suddenly I heard voices in front of my window. I was startled. Was my mother right? Did someone observe our house?

25 “Hi, Amir!” it was a boy’s voice. I looked out of the window and saw Nadim and Tina. He wore a brown jacket and a cap. Tina laughed and said something that I could not understand. So I opened the window.

30 “You know it is terrible – gymnastics. It is really hard.” Nadim said. Now I could see that he walked with crutches. He hobbled up and down in front of my window.



"How did it happen?" I asked. Nadim explained: "It was a car accident. Nothing particular, but my leg was broken. Now I have a plate and screws in my right leg. Are you coming outside?"

"No, I'm not allowed." I told them.

5 Now my mother shouted: "Whom are you talking to?" I told her that Nadim and Tina were standing in front of our house. I heard my mother open the door. I rushed out of my room.

Nadim and Tina were already in our apartment.

10 "Why is Amir not allowed to go outside?" they asked. My mother smiled, but did not answer the question. I was embarrassed that my mother did not let me go outside.

"You are welcome – come in." I heard my mother say.

We went to my little room.

15 "You know", Nadim said, "My mother is anxious too, so I just have to call her and ask her if I can stay."

"That's ok, but my mother is just unfair – can you imagine suddenly she thinks it is too dangerous for me to go outside – I do not want to be treated like that – I am not free in this house anymore." I said.

20 "Adults often do things that they think are best." Tina murmured.

"I'm only free when my parents are not at home, then no one tells me what to do." Nadim said thoughtfully.

25 "My brother always tells me what to do – he wants me to follow his rules, but I am only free when I follow my own rules." Tina said.

"I know your brother. Last time he just wanted to prevent you from getting hurt." Nadim said.

30 "But it is not his business to take care of me. He should not tell me what to do." Tina replied furiously.

“I agree with Tina.” I said – “No one should tell us what to do. At least no one should stop children from going outside to play.”

I was happy that they both were here. Still, I was angry at my mother. I thought it was really unfair that I wasn’t allowed to go outside. She treated me as if I was a baby. It was just unfair. 5

Suddenly Nadim asked: “So are we free if no one stops us from doing something?” Now we started again to discuss, but finally we played cards and then tried juggling three balls, then five. The day ended with having fun. 10

Episode 5: Who am I? (told by Tina)

I still didn’t understand. So when I came home I told my parents what we talked about in school, because maybe they can help me. In school we read a story about a girl that gave herself many names. When she was playing with her friend, sitting on a tree in the garden, they were “Apple” and “Pear.” When she was in the woods near her house looking for beautiful stones, feathers and other beautiful things she called herself “Miriam.” And when she played in the park near the little lake, she imagined being near the seaside – then she was “Julia”. But one day, when she came home, she wondered who she really was. 15 20 25

I liked the story. We talked about the girl and the story and then Emina suddenly said: “I also don’t know who I am.” Our teacher wondered: “What do you mean, Emina?”

“Well, I was Bosnian and since a week ago I am now Austrian. I do not understand. I still feel the same and I love Bosnia. 30

I am the same person, but I don't exactly know what it means." Emina answered. She was somehow desperate – we all saw tears in her eyes, when she said: "And I do not want to leave – my parents want to leave to Switzerland. My father got a job there and now we have to move."

We did not know what to say. Our teacher was somehow irritated, but then she said: "It is just your citizenship that has changed. Aren't you still the same person, Emina?"

Now we all looked around. "What does that mean?" asked Robert. "Yes, what does citizenship mean?" continued Lara.

Now our teacher started to talk again very slowly: "It is really very difficult, but I will try to tell you. There are many different countries and the rules and laws are different in each country."

"Well, what is she talking about?" I thought to myself. But then I listened because it seemed to be important.

"Well," our teacher continued, "even if you live in one country for a long time, that doesn't mean you have citizenship in that country. But you need it if you want to get a passport from that country. You might all know you have to have a passport, or some papers of identity, to travel from one country to another."

"Yes, I know just last week I had to have a photograph taken – because my parents told me we will be going to Greece for the summer holidays." Lara said.

"Well, in some countries it is like this: If a child is born there, the child has the right to get that country's citizenship, but the parents have to ask for it. There is a special office, where they have to go. But in some countries, like in Austria, it is different. Even if a child is born in this country the child has not got the



right to get Austrian citizenship and the parents cannot just go to an office and ask for it. The parents can only go there if they have Austrian citizenship themselves. In America it is different, if a child is born there, s/he has the right to get American citizenship – there is a birthright citizenship in the United States of America.” our teacher tried to explain.

Now we were all confused – she talked about countries, rules and laws, about American and Austrian passports. It was weird. I could not listen anymore.

Some of the children looked out of the window. Patrick made faces and some other children giggled.

Martin was hiding his mobile phone trying to send an SMS. Suzan was drawing and Zhen looked at his comics under the table.

Now our teacher stopped and said: “Do you understand now, Emina? What does everyone else think about it?”

Emina did not know what to say. She looked at her. Then the bell rang.

We were all glad. – I think even our teacher was glad, because, when she went out of the classroom, she said to herself: “Well, they did not understand. How...”

Episode 6: What makes you you? (told by Tina)

This morning we had a game at school. We played volleyball. “I don’t want you on the team,” Caroline said.

I was angry. I wanted to shout and say: “You stupid idiot.” But I just said: “That’s ok. I will play on Suzan’s team then.”

I am not angry or sad very often. But then I want to be alone. When I am home I go into my room and read or listen to music. Sometimes I write in my diary.

I got my diary for my birthday. I just write whatever I want. I write about funny things that have happened to me. I also like drawing. So I draw pictures of hearts, the sun, figures and more. Sometimes I write down my most private thoughts. I never let anybody read or see my diary. I always keep it in a private place in my room so that not even my mum can find it. 5

The game in school went well. But then something happened. Harris, a boy in my class, was very proud to have a new cap. It was a basketball cap and he got it from his uncle from Serbia. 10

“Wow, a new cap! Super!” Robert and Fabio said.

“I don’t want to take my cap off. I want to wear it in class,” Harris said to us. 15

But when the teacher walked into the classroom he said, “Harris, remove your cap. It is rude to wear a cap indoors. You know that there is no cap wearing allowed in our school.”

Harris took it off and put it in his rucksack.

After school Harris wanted to put his basketball cap on again. But he couldn’t find it. 20

“Do you know where my new cap is?” he asked Robert and Fabio. They just smiled.

“You know where it is! Tell me!” Harris said.

“Why don’t you look for it?” they said running away and laughing. 25

He did not look for his cap. He just went home sadly.

The next day each of us had to bring one of our baby photographs to school. Our teacher had asked us to look at the picture and think about a question or a thought. 30

I was not sure and I did not know what to ask. Robert looked at his photograph and said: "I changed a lot." "I look different now, but it is still me." Harris said.

5 "I think I did not change much, I still have the same laugh that's in the baby picture!" Suzan said.

When we had our photographs in front of us, we thought about what had changed and what had stayed the same.

10 First of all, we talked about what we know already - what we have learned and are able to do now, and what we were not able to do as a baby - for example riding a bike, playing the flute, climbing a tree, speaking a language....

Caroline said: "Each of us is different."

Fabio: "Do you really think so? ...but we all speak the same language."

15 Suzan said: "But each of us is very special. I am very good at volleyball."

Amir asked: "I just wonder what makes me so special and unique?"

20 We had built a circle and each of us talked about something s/he was good at, could do or knew better than two years ago. We also talked about our different characteristics – each of us contributed in a different way.

25 Then our teacher said: "Do you think the photograph can help you to find out what might have changed and what might have stayed the same?"

I knew that cells are replaced, so somehow we have a kind of new body every seven years so I said: "My body is changing. I am growing and all the cells are changing."

30 "What is with our memory?" Amir asked. "It changes over time too." he added.

"I often think about my grandmother in Serbia and my memories are changing." Amir said.

"What is with our emotions? They change too." Sonia said.

"The 'I' doesn't change – it always stays the same." Caroline said.

"Even if you were in the wheelchair the 'I' would stay the same?" Fabio asked. 5

"Yes, why not? It is just the body that changed, the 'I' stays the same." Caroline said.

"I think the 'I' would change, because my feelings, my appearance, my whole life would change – so the 'I' would change too." Amir said. 10

"I don't agree with you. You are still the same person, even if your feelings and situation are different." Caroline yelled.

"And what would happen if everyone in the world thought you were someone else – would your 'I' still be the same?" Sonia asked. 15

"And I wonder why I am me and not another person?" I asked.

During the break we went outside to the schoolyard. Suddenly I saw Robert and Fabio. Robert had Harris's basketball cap in his hand. "Sorry Harris," they said. They gave Harris the cap and ran off. 20

After school I walked home and still thought about my baby photograph. 25

ELLA

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Episode 1

10

Today I was excited to go to school. Do you know why? Because yesterday our teacher Mrs. Huber announced that we would have a new classmate. She said: "When you have a new classmate be friendly and offer your help. The best thing to do is to welcome him or her!"

15

It was a hot summer's day and Mrs. Huber walked into our classroom followed by a boy.

She said: "Good morning!" and we answered "Good morning!" Then she showed him a seat next to Isabell. I thought to myself: "Imagine if that were you Ella, new in class."

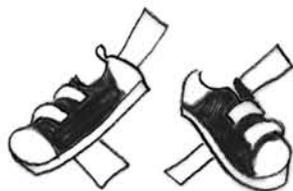
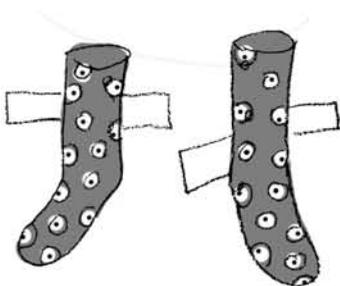
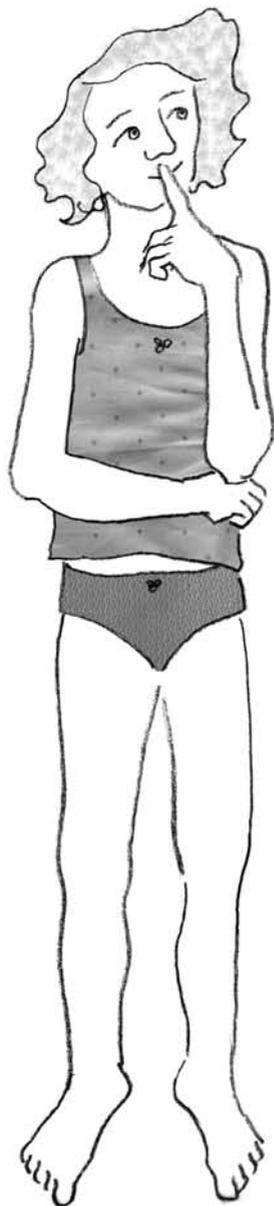
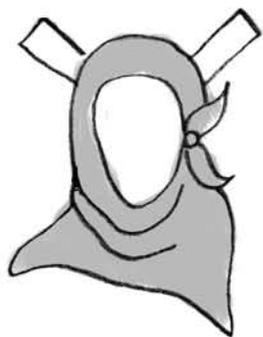
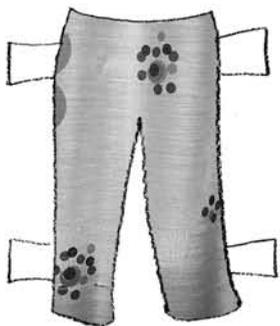
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The boy wanted to introduce himself. He stepped out in front of the class and said "Hallo! My name is Isaac and I come from South Africa, I have two sisters and soon I will have a little brother too. I am good in reading, writing and maths..." he bubbled – but then he suddenly stopped.

25

It seemed that he had practiced these sentences for a long time. But then he might have noticed that when he would go on, no one really was able to understand him. He looked somehow worried.

30



But suddenly Mrs. Huber, the teacher, stood beside him. She pointed at herself and said: "Huber". Some children laughed. Then she pointed at him and he said "Isaac". Suddenly he took a piece of chalk and started to write on the board – it seemed that he wrote everything he wanted to tell us, but in his language. When he turned around some of us said "Oh!" "Wow" and "Super!" 5

Now it seemed he did not feel so bad anymore and he went to his place next to Isabell. She looked at him and smiled – Isabell is a very nice girl with blond hair and a funny smile. We all like her. 10

Episode 2

15

After breakfast my parents hurried to work. I was free to walk to school with Dina slowly. I asked her: "Everything fine with you?"

"Yes," Dina said, "everything is ok, but I have to tell you some news. My relatives are here. They came here from Iran. You can imagine how excited we all are. You know, my dad, he comes from Iran." 20

I asked: "Do your relatives speak another language? Can you understand them?"

"Yes, I understand them pretty well, because my father tried to preserve his family's language and so he spoke Persian with us and now I can speak to my relatives and understand what they say." 25

Isabell, who just came round the corner, looked curious and listened while Dina talked about her relatives. So she went on telling us: "You know, my family from Iran is very 30

religious, when they are here in Austria the women don't go without a scarf (hijab), not even if it is as hot as today. And whenever a man is walking up the stairs in our house, my aunt and my cousin put the scarf around their head tightly. I don't care."

"I think they have to accept that they are in another country now and rules here are different than in Iran." Isabell said.

"Of course they obey the rules here, but..." Dina said.

"Headscarves will not hurt anybody, so why should people not be able to wear a hijab?" I asked.

"My mother said Muslim women have limits and rights that they believe in. It is part of their religion and you have no right to mess around with other people's religion. If you are a Christian would you like people to tell you to take off the cross? Isn't it the same thing?" Dina asked.

Sonia came along – she had heard what Dina was saying to us and said: "No, it isn't. Because, for example, some of the girls from my sister's school are singled out and ignored because of their scarf."

"My mother said it is a symbol of female oppression." Isabell said.

"I think the headscarf should be banned. I heard something on TV - I think in France they banned the hijab in schools!" Sonia stated.

"No, the hijab should not be banned. It is an act gest for human freedom." Dina said. "Equality is everyone's. Every person deserves equality. If people are allowed to wear crosses, why shouldn't other people be able to wear a hijab?"

"But what if girls are forced to wear it by their parents?" Isabell asked.

"I don't know – really, but I think I would not wear it." Sonia said.

"Dina, have you ever been to Iran?" I asked. She nodded. "Did you have to wear a scarf too?" asked Isabell wondering about it.

"Well, when we were on holidays we went to Iran to meet our relatives. My mother and I were allowed to take the scarf off when we were at our relative's home, even when "namahram" were present. Just so you know "namahram" is the name men are called, whom you would theoretically be able to marry. That means all men except your father, grandfather, uncle or brother. Of course on the street we had to wear the scarf "hijab", even when it was 40 degrees in the shade. But I thought it was ok to be subjected to the dress code for a few weeks. I was happy because I was allowed to travel in such a beautiful and interesting country with such a different culture."

"When I went to see my relatives in Bosnia, I did not have to wear anything on my head, although most of them are very religious as well. I am sure I would have protested." Sonia said.

I looked at her: "But it's just cloth. I would not mind wearing a scarf if I was able to go to Iran or Bosnia or another beautiful country. I wouldn't want people to feel hurt, just because I didn't show respect for their way of life."

"Now I can tell you", Sonia interrupted Isabell and looked at Dina, "Last weekend I saw you, Dina, when you played badminton with a girl who really looked very funny."

"Yes, I played badminton with my cousin. Of course it must have looked funny. I wore my short pants and a T- Shirt and she was dressed as if it were winter. She wore a long skirt and had her matching hijab around her head." Dina said.

“I really wondered how she could move – but she was very good and nearly won the game.” Sonia said.

“What else has happened?” Isabell wanted to know.

5 Dina continued: “Late in the afternoon, my mum had a friend visit her. They were drinking coffee and talked about different cultures – about languages and Iran. I got curious and sat down next to them. At that moment I could hear my mother’s friend say: “I do not understand, when they are in our country, why don’t they leave their head cloths at home?
10 We also must adjust, when we go there.”

“You know how I felt”, Dina asked, “I really got angry – but I did not say a word. Then I heard my mother’s friend mumble: ‘Then I will also go to Iran and I will not wear a scarf around my head.’ I thought to myself, ‘but you would
15 not go far’. In Iran it would be as if you, as a woman, walked down the street naked. Suddenly my anger was gone. I had to laugh because I imagined my mother’s friend walking down a street in our town without clothes. Wouldn’t it be funny?”

20 Isabell, Sonia, Dina and I laughed.

As we neared the school building we saw Isaac coming along. Isaac was our new classmate. He did not know how to read or write in German. But he tried to speak in German. Of course he stumbled a lot, got the tenses mixed up and his
25 words often came out in the wrong order.

I really thought about how learning to speak, write and read in another language was so difficult. How was it possible that some of my classmates could speak, write and read in two or even in three languages? When I thought about them I really
30 felt stupid.

Episode 3

Saif was from Chechenia and was also in our class. He tried to look cool and important like his older brother. He was good at playing basketball and he was always very hungry. He told us that his coach had told him he was growing so fast, that's why he needed a lot of food. 5

I knew that he did not want to take out his lunch box, because the children in class made remarks about him: "Saif, always has such strange food in his lunch box." "Yuck." "How it smells." 10

Saif looked as if he would have loved to share with others or sometimes swap his lunch. But he never dared to say anything. Not even to Valentin, who seemed to be his best friend.

Some of the kids in my class shared their lunch every day, some of them had cereal bars, chips, a flatbread or pizza. Some had ham sandwiches. 15

One day Saif told me that he could not even look at a ham sandwich – and when I asked him he told me, because he could remember why. 20

"Once, one of my friends, Abdu, whose family originally came from Turkey, had forgotten his lunch. So the teacher offered him bread with some meat in it. He was so hungry and bit into the bread impatiently. But suddenly the children laughed at him and shouted – 'You eat pork – that's ham. Now you are unclean.' - I can remember Abdu crying, running away - through the woods hiding himself and rolling in the leaves to get clean again. 25

I can also see the picture of my own grandmother in front of me, who told me to respect the beliefs and to stay clean never eating any of the unclean beasts. 30

All of a sudden Saif noticed that we were in the classroom. Valentin looked at us and asked: "Do you think the teacher really gave him some bread with pork?"

"I do not know." Saif said.

5 "Maybe s/he didn't care?" Tina said.

"Maybe the children only wanted to make fun of him?" Sonia said.

"So what?" Markus said. "They did not do anything to him, they were just laughing."

10 "If you laugh you are doing something," I replied angrily.

"Our teacher also offered us ham and crackers in the classroom, and gave us a bag of jelly sweets which contain a kind of gelatin that is not allowed under halal rules." Jelena said.

15 "I have never heard about halal rules! What does it mean?" Markus said.

"There is food that is not appropriate to eat." Valentin said.

"Why?" Markus asked.

20 "It means that all food is allowed, except for those kinds that are considered harmful, like pork, alcohol, gelatin made from pork..." Saif explained.

"Can you imagine my parents even wanted me to wear 'halal only' signs around my neck, when that had happened in school!" Sonia said.

25 "How embarrassing!" Dina said.

"And my father had written to the school and complained that the teacher should be given a halal awareness training to ensure it did not happen again." Jelena said.

30 Suddenly Valentin shouted very loudly "Where on earth is my bagel?"

He looked at all the other children around us as if someone would have taken his lunch away.

“Do you think that any of us would have taken your bagel? No one is interested in it.” Sonia said.

“But I have put it on my desk and someone must have taken it.” Valentin mumbled. Then he looked at Saif. 5

At that moment Saif said to me in a quiet voice: “He is really, really mean and I will never ever speak to Valentin again.”

Suddenly Sonia shouted. “What do you think? None of us would take something, but maybe it was your wonderful friend, who you always stick together with.” She pointed at Saif. 10

“You all are just jealous because I have a real friend, who would never take anything, that didn’t belong to him. And I trust him more than anybody else.” When Saif heard Valentin’s angry voice and his answer, he looked at me and I could see that he felt sorry 15

– He was ashamed for what he was assuming.

At that moment the teacher came into the classroom. It seemed that no one had heard the school bell ring. We all were still standing around the kids. 20

Episode 4 25

I woke up in the middle of the night. I had dreamed that I could float over the roofs on a very soft cloud. I had floated across to the children on the other side of the street who played on the roof-deck nearly every day. It was a flat roof-deck and I could 30

see sun chairs, a table and a parasol. I longed to be there playing with the kids.

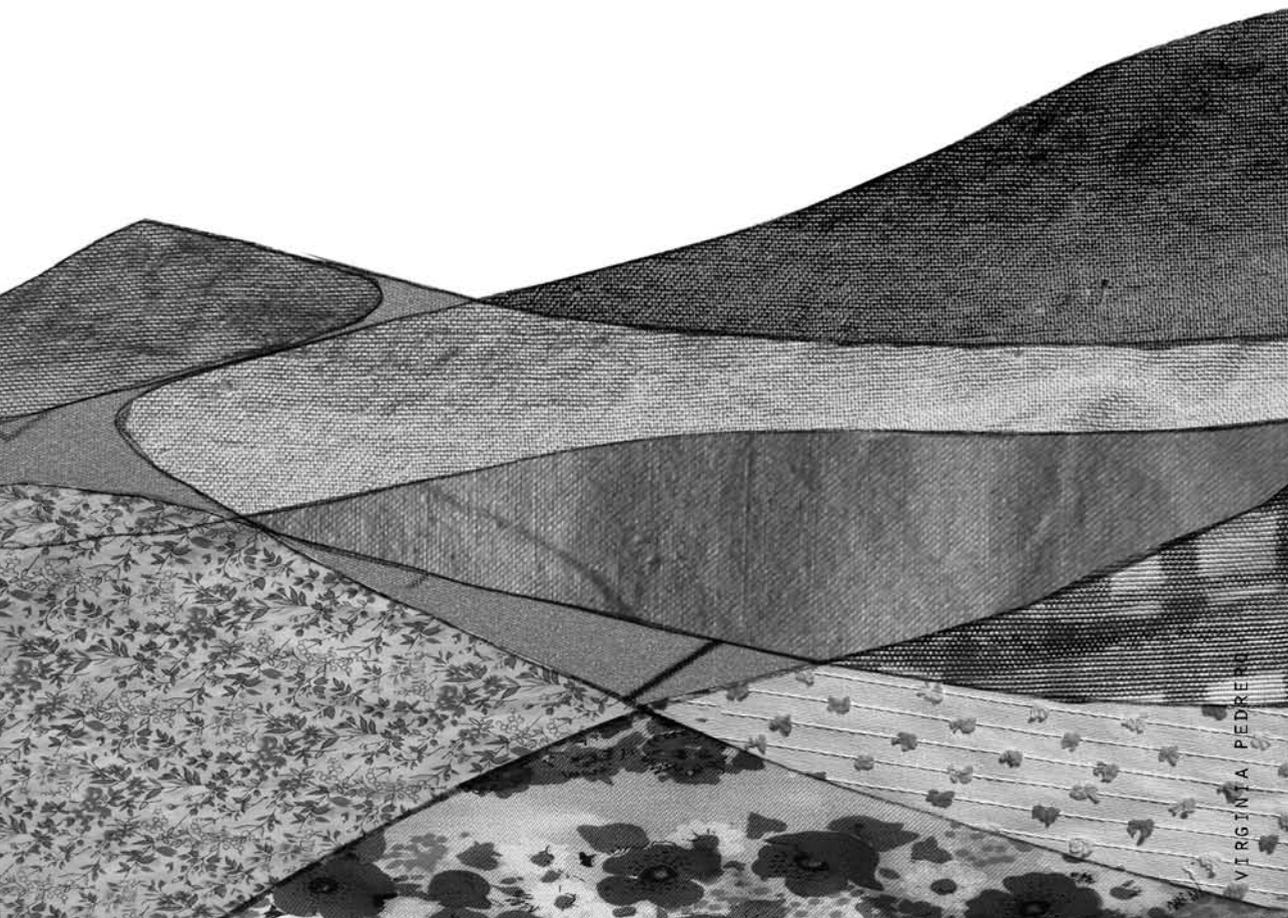
I tiptoed to the window and looked into their house. Of course, the children were sleeping. I went back to my bed and stayed awake for a long time. I imagined flying to different countries looking down at small little towns. But still it was a different feeling than I had in my dream.

Next morning I told David, my older brother, what I had dreamed. David is 17 years old. Suddenly he gave me a kiss and said: "Oh my little sister!"

"Why do we dream?" I asked him. My brother mumbled: "Maybe because we think about some things very deeply or we have ideas, wishes or problems. Then when you go to bed your thoughts wonder off, and then you dream." "Did you have a dream last night?" I asked. "No, I didn't. But now I have to rush, otherwise I'll be late for school." David answered. I looked at my watch. It was ten to seven and I also had to leave the house in a few minutes. My dream occupied my thoughts so much that I nearly forgot to go to school. When I walked out the door, I looked up to the windows of the neighbor's house where the children seemed to live.

School was like every day, but the time went very slowly. I was daydreaming and didn't listen to what was going on in the classroom.

On my way back home I stopped and sat on a bench that was in front of my school. I wanted to wait until the children from the neighbors' house came along. I knew that they went to the same school. I thought about the two girls. They looked different. They had black hair and also their skin was darker. Some children in my class had made fun of them. But when-



ever they walked by, no one said a word, maybe because they were older.

5 I waited. Nearly all of the children had left school. But I didn't meet the two girls. I was very sad. But I had to be patient; maybe I would meet them the next day. If I got up earlier maybe we could go to school together.

10 When I arrived home, my mother was already worried and she asked me what had happened. But I said: "Nothing." I knew that my mother didn't want to speak about the people living in the house on the other side of the street. I was not sure if my mother would accept that I wanted to play with the two girls.

In the afternoon I looked up thoughtfully longing to meet the children. I took a piece of paper and started to draw the two girls.

15 The next day, I jumped out of my bed, skipped my breakfast, just drank my hot chocolate and ran out the door. I walked up and down impatiently.

20 Suddenly the two children came out of the house. I crossed the street, and walked shyly behind the two girls. I hesitated but then I said: "I live in the same street and we go to the same school. Can we walk together?" One of the girls answered: "Yes, of course." "My name is Ella", I said. "My name is Fathme and this is my sister Jelena."

25 We couldn't stop talking. I was so happy that I had two new friends.

30 When I entered my class, I was still very excited. Marco, Emanuel and Mario stood in a corner and laughed. When they saw me, they stopped. Suddenly Mario said: "Why do you stick around with them? They can't even speak our language and are so different from us."

"Look at their clothes and how skinny they are!" Isabell said.

"I am not against foreigners, but I do not like to hear Turkish and Arabic – all those alien languages in our school all the time." Marco said. "It is as if we are excluded." 5

I looked at them and did not understand what was going on. "What do you mean? Fathme and Jelena live in my street." I said.

"But they are different." Marco said.

Valentin called out: "Watch yourself!" 10

Emanuel shouted out: "They are from another country. They shouldn't be here and my father said he had lost his job because so many foreigners are here."

"But we are foreigners too, whenever we go to another country." Valentin said. 15

With big eyes I looked at them: "I do not understand. Fathme and Jelena go to our school like we do. What do you have against them?"

Now Marco said to me: "You don't understand anything!"

Emanuel, Mario and Marco went away. I felt weird and was confused. 20

A few minutes ago I was so happy and now...? What did I do wrong? Why shouldn't I talk to Fathme and Jelena? I thought they were very nice and by the way it was not Emanuel's, Markus' and Mario's job to decide with whom I talk. It was my right to choose with whom I talk to. 25

One moment I thought of Valentin. It was something about the way he presented himself. His curly brown hair and blue eyes – first he looked as if he couldn't make up his mind about what he was going to do. But then he somehow supported me. 30

School seemed to be very long today. At least, I had this feeling. After school I waited for my new friends. Fathme and Jelena were glad to see me again. We walked home together and wanted to meet in the afternoon.

5 I was singing when I came home. "Mama, Mama, I have to tell you something!" I shouted. "Tell me what makes you so happy. I haven't seen you like this for a long time", my mother answered.

I hopped into my mother's lap and told her about my dream, about Fathme and Jelena and said: "Mama, I know that
10 you don't want to speak about the people living in the house on the other side of the street because you don't like them. But Jelena and Fathme are my friends and no one can do anything to change that." My mother looked stunned. "Ella, how can you think that I would do anything to change that? I am happy for
15 you. Why do you think I don't want to speak about the people living in this house? And how can you assume that I don't like them? It was just once that I got angry with one man who lives in that house and not with "the people" living in it. It has nothing to do with your girlfriends and their family."

20 "Well, but the children in school make fun of them and they even said they should go back to their home country, and they don't even know them." I said.

"Don't worry, Ella. Do you want to ask your new friends to come to our house in the afternoon? Maybe another time you
25 could invite the two girls and also the other children from your class? Then you will all get to know each other. What do you think?" my mother suggested.

I gave my mother a big hug, went to the telephone and invited Jelena and Fathme. But I thought to myself, how could we
30 solve these problems in school?

Episode 5

Today Mrs. Huber gave the class time to discuss language. As our new schoolmate Isaac came from South-Africa we were not able to understand everything he said. So we talked about different languages, words and how we communicate with each other and finally we played some games. I do not exactly know how it started but I think Sonia asked: "Why are there so many different languages in the world?" and Valentin shouted out: "What is the origin of language?"

Our teacher looked a little confused. She did not really know an answer, but she pointed out that maybe several millions of years ago the whole world might have had one language. One common speech for all people, can you imagine?

But then Isabell suddenly said: "What would happen if all human beings spoke the same language?"

I looked thoughtfully and said: "It would be great if all people would speak the same language, because then everybody could understand everybody and all people could become friends."

"Do you really think so? In our school many kids speak the same language and we are not all friends!" Mario mumbled.

Our teacher looked at us and smiled: "Do you think it could be possible to be friends with someone who doesn't know your language?"

"Yes, why not? It does not always depend on language. When we went to Greece last Summer I met a girl, I did not understand what said, but we became friends and played together." Sonia said.



"Yes, I agree with Sonia. I met a boy speaking only Italian and we played on the beach all day in Grado." Valentin said.

"I want to say something to Mario! We really do not have to become friends, but if we speak the same language we might be able to avoid fights and misunderstandings." I said. 5

Mrs. Huber was wearing a blue dress and black shoes. She waited. Then she said:

"So, boys and girls, what do you think about it?"

Emanuel got up. He always wants to be the hero of our class and thinks he is something special. "I think I could never be friend with someone who does not speak my language, because, how could I talk to him? How could we really play together?" 10

"Yes, I think so too. And even if we can speak the same language like Ella said, how could we avoid fights and misunderstandings?" Marco said. 15

"There is no chance. To fight is also human. The stronger one is always on the winning side." Mario said.

Suddenly Isabell got up and said: "Sometimes we just smile at each other. We do not need to talk. So we also can become friends."

I am sure that Isabell looked to Isaac. I know she likes him. Now Mrs. Huber asked: "So do you mean we can communicate without speaking the same language, Isabell?" 20

"Yes, sometimes we cannot understand the language and we do not always know the words. But we know exactly what they mean." 25

"Yes, my parents and I went shopping in Italy and could not speak Italian, but the salesman knew exactly what my father wanted." Mario shouted out.

"So how can you communicate without words?" our teacher asked. Everyone in the class wanted to talk. That was the time 30

when our teacher suggested playing some language games. We had great fun and I wished every lesson would be like this.

5 On my way home I could not stop thinking. “Why do we call a table ‘table’? Why do we not call a table ‘bed’? Could we make up a new language? Maybe a new language could be a real secret between me and my friends and all the others would like to find out what our secret would be.

10 But what is language? And what would it be like not to understand the language that everybody speaks? I thought about Isaac. It must be difficult for him.

My brother was sitting at the table when I asked him, what he was doing. He just said: “Please let me think, I cannot concentrate at all when you are interrupting all the time.”

15 My mother came and told me not to disturb David, because he had to learn vocabulary for his French test. I asked myself: “What on earth is he doing with French? Most people speak English and not French. So why should he learn French?” When I talked to my father about it, he said: “You know my grandfather knew many languages. He lived with his parents in Thessaloniki. First the city was Turkish at that time, so he spoke Turkish, and then the city became a part of Greece, so he spoke Greek and since our family is Jewish he spoke Sephardic – old Spanish.” Suddenly my father stopped. “Please tell me more about my great-grandfather and all the languages he spoke and about the time in Greece and what he did later on”, I begged.

25 My father said quietly: “Sometimes he did not speak, because he didn’t speak of things which might cause him pain. Then I saw deep sadness in his eyes. So even if he knew many languages sometimes he stopped talking.” I could not under-

30

stand at all, how someone could stop talking. I talk all the time. I figured I would tell my mother that we had been talking about my great-grandfather and languages. Suddenly our dog jumped at me to reach my face and tried to get attention. I looked at him and thought: "Do dogs have language?"

5

Episode 6

10

On Sunday and we went hiking on a mountain. We saw the blue sky, the clouds and the beautiful colored trees. I was happy that David and his friend Laura came with us. We walked for quite a while then David and Laura wanted to eat something because they were hungry. My mother did not know that Laura was vegetarian. So she was very worried that she would have enough for her to eat, so she asked her: "Do you really only want to eat some salad and vegetables?" "Yes, thank you," said Laura, "salad and vegetables keep my body healthy."

15

"You should also eat more vegetables, David," Laura said.

20

"Don't start telling me what to do," replied David. "It is none of your business." Sometimes David was like that, he was tired of Laura always thinking she knew what was best for other people. "I am only telling you for your own good and you should also do more exercise." "Laura sounds just like a grown-up," I thought to myself. "Grownups are always telling children what they must do. When I am older I will not allow anyone to tell me what to do." Now I understood why David reacted like that, it is really too much when friends start doing the same things as parents. I really wondered how people knew what was good for you.

25

30

When we arrived home I went to my room to do my homework. Suddenly the conversation about “respect” came into my mind. In class someone had said: “You must treat older people with respect and that means treating them politely and doing what they say.” And Valentin interrupted and said: “So you mean criticizing and not doing what they say is not respectful?”

“Sometimes my parents ask us to make some critical comments” I said. “They try to take us seriously.”

“So, can we respect someone and still have different thoughts and ideas?” Isabell asked.

“But in school it is sometimes not a good idea to tell a teacher what you really think, they can hold it against you and think you do not respect her or him.” Sonia argued.

“I think we children also have the right to say and do something as long as we have good reasons for it and as long as we do not hurt anyone.” Valentin said.

“Yes, this must not be disrespectful, even if we are not always doing what people tell us to do, don’t you think so?” Dina asked.

How did this conversation come to my mind? Oh, now I know. It was the conversation between David and Laura that made me think of this. Did she respect him, telling him all the time what to do? Did he respect her, when he somehow replied to her loudly? In school I talked to Isabell. I can talk to Isabell about everything and she will not tell anybody else. We really like each other and even if she is different in some ways than I am and even if she likes to eat or do different things than I do - I like her. I would never tell her what to eat or what to do. I think that means something like respect.

When I went to bed this evening all of a sudden it came to my mind that my mother had suggested to invite Fathme and

Jelena and also some other children from my class. I was so excited – I started to imagine and to make things up and then I fell asleep suddenly.

5

Episode 7

Oh, what a great day it was! I was looking forward to it, because I had invited all the children in my class to come over, and also Fathme and Jelena. 10

But many of my classmates were not able to come. They had football or basketball training, some of them had music classes, they went shopping or some of the children just told me that it was impossible to attend. Fathme had to stay home because she was sick. I was disappointed and afraid that no one was going to come. That was making me feel like I didn't want to have my party anymore. I wondered if anyone would show up. Finally Jelena, Sonia, Isabell, Dina, Marco and Valentin came. 15 20

Mum and dad had arranged everything from the décor to the food and David and his friend Laura had prepared some exciting activities for us. We got three different messages written in secret codes and we had to find out the meaning.

They had prepared lollipops wrapped with slips of paper. This paper had the hidden message, which we had to work out. They told us that each letter used represented the previous letter in the alphabet. (Z comes before A). They demonstrated it to us. They gave us an example: TBZ ZPVS OBNF – Decoded it was: "Say your name." 25 30

I was the first one to figure it out. The secret code was easy for me. Sonia was very slow and when I asked her if she needed help, she was holding her paper upside down and I told her that she would never find it like this. She gave me an angry
5 look. "I don't want to play this silly game." she said and threw the paper away. Finally all the others managed to discover the meaning of these messages. One was PEACE, the other was
10 ACTIVITY and the last one was FRIENDSHIP.

Marco suddenly said: "You'll never guess who my best
10 friend is." Everybody looked at him.

"Why is it such a secret? It is nice to have friends, it doesn't matter who it is." said Isabell.

"Of course it matters", said Valentin, "It is not so easy - you cannot be friends with everybody."

15 "A friend is someone I can play with and someone I can tell all my secrets to." Dina said.

"But I can also be friends with someone whose language I can't even speak." said Isabell

"Like Isaac?" Sonia asked.

20 Isabell blushed. "He is ok. Sometimes he is really funny, I do not understand him so well, but he fools around all the time and we have fun."

"I do not know if you can call that friendship. You do not even know him and he comes from a different country and he
25 is black." Sonia said.

"How can it be possible that you call him a friend, if you do not know him and you cannot talk properly to him?" Marco said.

30 "I do not know exactly what you mean," I said, "But I know exactly what Isabell means. It is an understanding, even without language – you can just have fun and play." I looked

at Jelena and hoped that she would say something, but she did not say a word and just stared at Marco.

Then Marco said: "For example my best friend is my dog. I can tell him everything."

Sonia got up and said: "How can anyone be friends with an animal? You cannot go to the shopping center with your dog and share a soda." We had to laugh; although we did not want to hurt Marco. 5

Suddenly Jelena said: "I'd love to be friends with animals. I would like to have a dog, but we are not allowed to have one in our house. At my grandmother's house in Turkey we have many animals." 10

"How do you know who your friends are?" asked Dina thoughtfully. "When I played with my cousins from Iran some of my friends looked at me in a very strange way. I really felt embarrassed." 15

"I know why," said Marco. "Because your cousins wore scarfs around their head – it looked strange."

"But this is just clothes that you are talking about." said Isabell.

Suddenly Jelena stood up and said: "No, it is not only clothes. The clothes we wear are also an expression of our..." 20
Jelena stopped and looked at Marco.

We heard someone at the door – my father came in. "Oh, your friends are here today." he said. "We were just talking about friendship." Dina interrupted. "And how we know who our friends really are." said Valentin, whom I had known since kindergarten. 25

"We talked about us, our friends and about clothes. I just wanted to say that clothes are not only clothes, but they can also express who you are." Jelena said quietly.

Now my father sat down and said: "When I was your age there was a boy in my class who was so proud to wear 30

his grandfather's jacket. It was not very casual –the children, and even the teacher, made fun of him and his grandfather. The boy's name was Tabor. I can see him in front of me, crying and sobbing. Our teacher Mr. Gollob had treated him really badly and today I feel that the only reason he was so mean to him was because Tabor was a Roma. I'll always remember his face and his tears, when all the children laughed at him."

5

"So you think the boy, Tabor was so hurt, because the jacket was not only the jacket of his grandfather, but it belonged to him, as expression of his...?" Jelena asked.

10

"...his identity. Yes, Jelena." my father replied.

"Maybe the jacket gave him a sense of security and made him feel good?" Isabell asked.

15

"I do not understand what you mean," said Marco. "How can a jacket do that? It is just a covering on the body"

"Yes, I agree with Marco. It is just clothes. I would never cry if someone makes fun of my pullover or my jacket." Sonia said.

20

"But maybe if you wear some clothes you really like and feel comfortable with it gives you more self-confidence and power to present yourself as the person you want to be?" Isabell replied.

"And if then someone laughs at you, what....?" Dina asked.

25

Now my mother came in and said that all the food was waiting for us. She had also prepared vegan and vegetarian food. She had tried out several recipes from different countries. As there was so much to eat, we all thought it would be a good idea to bring these good things to school the next day. Then we could all have a little party in our classroom. But would that help to solve problems and create a positive atmosphere? I wonder what Mrs. Huber will say when we make a surprise party in her language class?

30

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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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