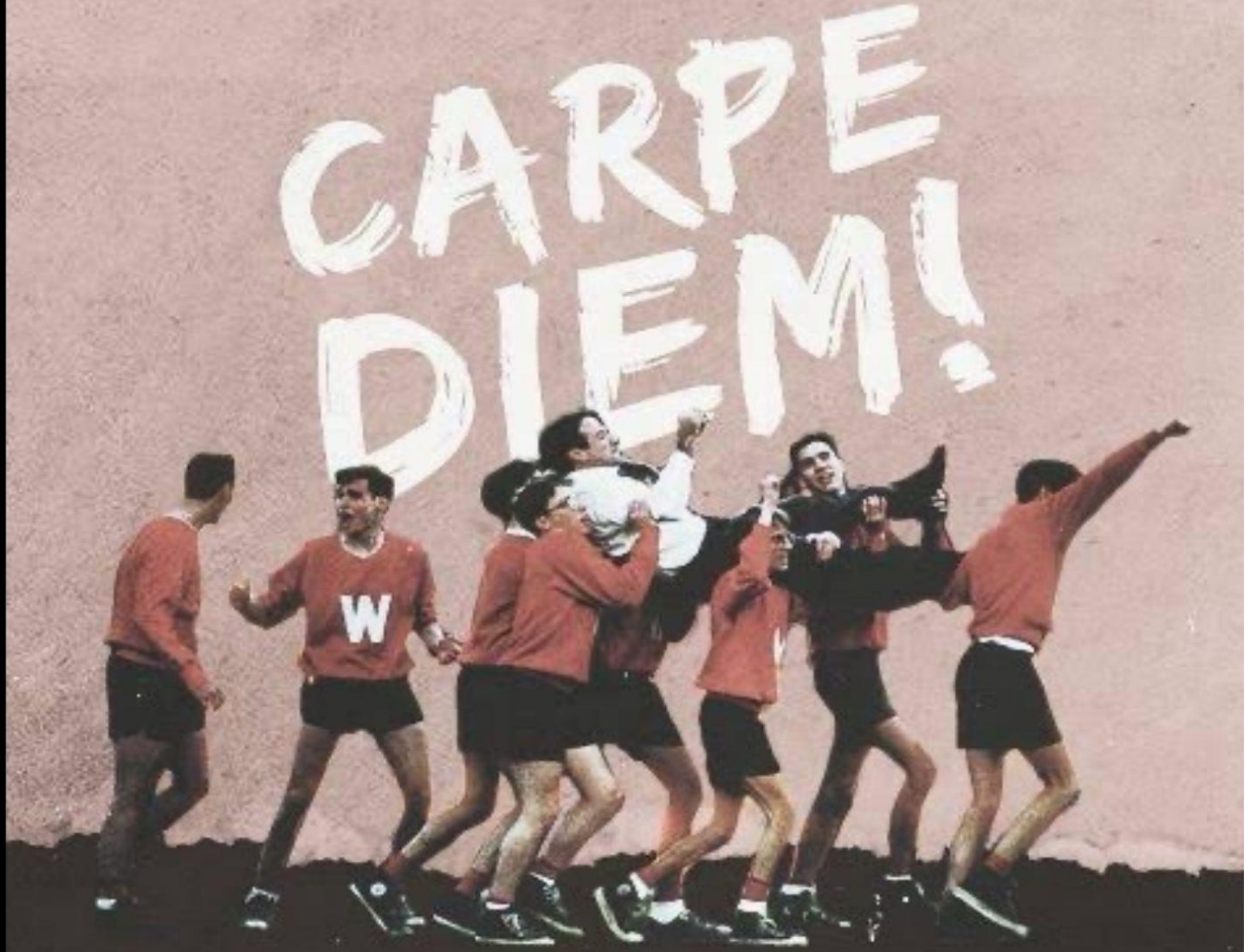


# Volume 6

SHORT STORY WRITING CLUB



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome reader, to volume 6 of Short Story Creative Writing Club's short story collection. I congratulate all the writers whose work is contained in this magazine. You started this journey by creating your characters, your worlds and the plots told within these pages and here is the result of those weeks of hard work. I hope whoever reads these stories can see all the hard work you have put into them.

I would like to thank everyone who has supported my students, whether that be family, friends or teachers. When you read this, please read these stories appreciating the effort and passion the writers put into them, but most of all, thank you for reading.

A special thanks to Bilal Buğra Kandemir and Armağan Namal for the front cover design.

*Editor*

*Cameron Beale*

# BEFORE REACHING MARS

Alper Yılmaz

When I woke up in the morning to a knock on my door, we were about to reach Mars. We started this journey in the autumn of 2134, and it is currently the summer of 2135 on our earth. There was news in the world that there was a killer on our spaceship, but the 300 people on our ship were carefully selected and we knew each other. There was no chance of a murderer among us. During our adventure on Pluto, the bonds between us had become stronger, and we were sure that there was no murderer among us. The incident yesterday morning actually made us a little uneasy. The blood stain we found in the kitchen and the fact that one of the hostesses could not be reached for 3 days made us think that the news in the world was true. Suspensions were directed directly at his ex-girlfriend. Since space travel is a bit tense, such events are normal in relationships. However, since we had no other suspects, we locked him in a room and tied his hands. Maybe he killed her after a violent breakup. While Marsat was thinking about the adventures we would have, such an event spoiled all of our moods. We are people who are curious about space and can afford this journey financially. Even though the event spoiled our mood, we were all still very excited.

Yesterday morning, while I was drinking my coffee, Kevin suddenly came to me screaming.

“What happened, Kevin?”

“Didn't you see the blood stains in the kitchen?”

"No, is there a blood stain in the kitchen?" I said with surprise.

"Yes," he said calmly.

“This was impossible. I was there half an hour ago to get my coffee.”

“Damn Kevin, are you sure?”

“Yes Mark, I'm sure I'm not dreaming, let's see each together.”

While I was going to the kitchen, news of the murderer between us was circulating in my mind. I think it was true. How can this be? All of these people get along well with each other and are very well-educated.

When we reached the kitchen, Kevin calmly showed me the blood stain on the floor.

“See, I'm not dreaming.”

“But how can this be? Besides, maybe someone accidentally cut something while cutting something.”

“Look around, Mark.”

“I don't see anything.”

“Yes, I don't see it either. He might cut his hand while chopping something. There's nothing around to cut.”

Kevin was right, there was nothing around to cut. But what really made me suspicious was how calm Kevin was.

"It was definitely done by the boyfriend of the stewardess who disappeared and the stewardess's blood was on the floor," said Kevin.

"But the stewardess disappeared 2 days ago. Why would there be blood here now?"

"I think you are right. But what could this be?"

"I don't know. We have to let people know"

"I think we can figure it out ourselves," said Kevin.

"Don't be ridiculous, are we detectives?"

"We can try."

"Call that security."

"Okay, Kevin, calm down, I'm calling."

Kevin was acting very suspicious.

When security arrived, they caught the boyfriend of the missing stewardess, but all the man said was that he did not commit murder. Besides, they had broken up, why would he do something like that?

When I told Kevin about this suspicion, I received an answer exactly as I expected.

"He definitely killed his girlfriend because she left him."

The man was saying that "you have no evidence, and you will be held accountable for this when we return to the world."

I guess this guy wasn't the murderer or whatever we were looking for.

When I wanted to go to Kevin's room to clear up my doubts, Kevin said my room was not available. Still, I entered his room secretly.

The sight before me horrified me. The missing stewardess was cut into pieces and the knife was lying on the table. Even though she was my friend, I couldn't let this happen. I had to report Kevin.

When I turned around, Kevin was watching me. Suddenly, my hands started shaking. He pushed me inside and closed the door. I could feel the coldness of the knife when he took the knife and put it to my throat.

"Kevin, why did you do this?"

"The stewardess disrespected me, Kevin, I couldn't forgive that."

"What did he do to you? Why did you come then? Why was there a blood stain in the kitchen two days later?"

"I was keeping him in my room to apologize to me, but he persistently did not apologize to me. When he ran out of the room today, I caught him in the kitchen and had to kill him. I wanted to say it first so no one would suspect it, but you caught me."

"Calm down, I won't tell anyone anything, and if you kill me, they will catch you."

"Go back to your room, Mark, and don't meet me again."

On the way to my room, I thought I was afraid of getting caught and went to my room calmly. I guess he wasn't going to kill me, but I would never know why and how someone I was so close to did this. Anyway, I can't fix anything right now. At least I will focus on our trip to Mars and take care of it when we return to Earth. I don't want to die here because of something like this.

When I woke up to a knock on my door in the morning, we were about to reach Mars and I was excited, but a fear filled me. I wonderd if it was Kevin at the door. I got up and opened the door and, yes, he was right in front of me.

“I told you, I won’t tell anyone. Why are you here again?”

“I can't be sure about that, Mark, I'm sorry.”

# THE SECRET OF THE ICEBURG

Armağan Namal

It was a windy and beautiful summer evening. Emre, a tall, brave, and adventurous 20-year-old, felt the thrill of embarking on a new adventure as he hopped on his bike towards the café in the city center, where he constantly stirred up the neighborhood. Meanwhile, Emre's closest friend, Sıla, had already arrived at the café, waiting eagerly and thoughtfully for Emre. What could be so important? Emre arrived at the café and greeted Sıla, sitting next to her just as he had described on the phone. Sıla asked urgently why he needed to meet and why he specifically requested this table. Before answering Sıla's question, Emre called the waiter over, ordered the special summer cocktail prepared by the café, and began to tell Sıla about what had happened to him. Last week, when he went to the café again, every table was full, so he had to sit at the table they were sitting at now without knowing what would happen. Although Emre often went to the café, he had never noticed that table before. It was an old wooden table, scratched on all sides, unlike the others. While sipping his classic cocktail, Emre examined the table. Amid the scratches on the table, something caught his eye. It said "Uras Keskin was here" on the table. Emre recognized this name from somewhere but couldn't remember where, so he immediately started researching who it was. First, he asked the waiter who brought his cocktail, but the waiter didn't know who it was. Then he started searching the internet but couldn't find anything about this name. Emre was surprised because nowadays he could find anything he searched for on the internet. The next day, Emre decided to go to the library. Not knowing what to do because he had never been to the library before, Emre immediately went to the librarian and explained the situation to him. After checking the system, the librarian said they had a book about that person and directed Emre to the second hand book section. After a long search, Emre found the book the librarian had mentioned. The book was called "The Secret of the Iceberg." Excitedly interrupting, Sıla asked if he had gotten the book and what the secret was. Emre took the opportunity to ask the waiter for a refill of his cocktail and continued to tell the story.

Emre started reading the book and remembered where he knew the name from. When he first read it, he thought it was just an ordinary book and put it on one of the dusty shelves of his bookshelf. When he went to school the next day, he saw his friends discussing something heatedly and curiously approached them to ask what was happening. His friends told Emre about the news of two friends who went missing while searching for treasure in Sarıkamış, a story everyone in Turkey was talking about. Emre listened to his friends in astonishment. The whole school continued to talk about this incident for the rest of the day. That evening, Emre went to visit his grandparents. While chatting casually, Emre started telling his grandfather about the news he had heard at school about the missing treasure hunters. His grandfather asked Emre what he thought about treasure hunters. His grandfather said he believed there was a treasure left from World War I there because of the locals' belief and the rumors that there was a book called "The Secret of the Iceberg" by an adventurer named Uras Keskin, who described the treasure's location. Still, even if these rumors were true, no one knew where the book was. Emre was shocked by what he heard. The book his grandfather mentioned was none other than the one collecting dust on a shelf in his library, the one he borrowed. Emre said goodbye to his grandparents and immediately headed home. As soon as he got home, he started rereading the book with great excitement, but like the first time, he couldn't find any secret or treasure map as rumored. Emre was both very disappointed and very surprised. It didn't make sense for such a skilled adventurer to choose a title for his book that had nothing to do with its contents. Emre put the book back on the dusty shelf as he did when he first got it and started thinking about what he had missed. Two days before meeting Sıla, while doing ordinary things at school, Emre suddenly remembered a quote from the book. The quote said, "The closer you look, the less you

see." Emre finally understood that this was a code and started deciphering it when he got home. When he marked seemingly unrelated places described by Uras Keskin in the book on the map, Emre saw a colossal iceberg marked with the treasure's location in front of him, just like in the news about treasure hunters and what his grandfather said. It pointed to the Sarıkamış mountain. Excitedly, Emre read the book a few more times that day, made the necessary preparations, bought two tickets for the Eastern Express, and immediately called Sıla to tell her about today's meeting.

Sıla was shocked by what she heard from Emre and immediately asked for the book and his notes to examine them. Meanwhile, Emre asked the waiter for one last refill of his cocktail and eagerly waited for Sıla to finish her examination. After examining the map, the book, and the notes, Sıla asked Emre if he would go looking for the treasure.

Emre said, "I bought two tickets for the Eastern Express. Get ready tonight, and I'll pick you up tomorrow, and let's find this treasure together."

Although Sıla initially refused, saying it was too dangerous, she realized she couldn't convince Emre, so she reluctantly accepted his offer.

That night, Emre and Sıla made their final preparations and eagerly awaited their journey. The following day, Emre got on his bike early and headed to Sıla's house. When Emre arrived, Sıla had already sat down in the gazebo in their garden, waiting for Emre to come. Seeing Emre, Sıla quickly packed her things, ran to Emre and they headed to the train station. After completing the check-in process at the train station, Emre and Sıla went to the waiting room and waited for the departure time of the train. Finally, the departure time of the train arrived. At this time of year, the East of Turkey was wonderful, attracting visitors who wanted to see its beauty and people who came for various reasons wishing to return to their homeland. Emre and Sıla arrived at Kars train station after a long and tiring but enjoyable journey. After such a long journey, Emre and Sıla took different paths to explore the city's streets, both wanting to enjoy a bit of rest and learn new information about the treasure and Uras Keskin. Sıla went to the most extensive library in Kars and added information she thought would be helpful from both nationwide and local publications to Emre's notes. Meanwhile, Emre visited the local craftsmen, prominent figures in the city, and the neighborhood cafes, asking questions about the town and Uras Keskin. When Emre finished his research, he saw it was quite late and started going to the café in the square where he would meet Sıla. When Emre arrived at the café, he saw that Sıla had already arrived and was reviewing her notes in a corner. Hurrying over to Sıla, Emre asked, "Did I keep you waiting too long?"

Although Sıla had indeed waited for a long time, "No, I just arrived." she said.

After this brief exchange, Sıla and Emre ordered their warm saips and began to share the results of their research with each other once they finished their drinks. When they finished their saips and stories, and with them the exhaustion of the journey, they made their way to the hotel to rest and prepare for the busy and challenging week ahead. In the remaining days of that week, Sıla and Emre continued to do almost the same things, and now the big day had come for them. Although it seemed like an ordinary Saturday morning for the locals, for Sıla and Emre, who wanted to shake off the fatigue of the journey and prepare for the intense and challenging week ahead, they got up early, completed all their preparations, and set off for the mountain. After about an hour's journey, Emre and Sıla arrived at the point where they would begin their ascent and started walking towards the cable car they would use to reach the summit. At that moment, Sıla asked Emre,

"This is very dangerous. Are you really sure you want to do this?"

Emre replied to Sıla, "I've never been more sure before," and boarded the cable car after paying the fare. Despite her fear, Sıla couldn't leave Emre alone because her love for him prevailed, so she sat beside him and waited for the cable car to ascend to the summit. After a relatively quiet and tense five-minute journey, the friends finally reached the top and began searching for the treasure. The challenging weather conditions and their solitude made the task much more difficult for the friends, but Emre and Sıla managed to reach the area where they would dig for the treasure before the first night was over. Emre told Sıla,

"Let's build an igloo to protect us from the cold and store our materials for the excavation. We'll start digging tomorrow," and immediately began implementing what they had learned from their previous camps. Having spent the first day climbing and building an igloo, Emre and Sıla began digging the next day alternately. Excitedly, Sıla asked Emre,



"Do you think we'll really be able to find the treasure?"

Emre replied to Sila, "You'll see, we'll find it, and I'll write a story starring both of us, just like Uras Keskin."

Days passed, and a week later, just before sunset, Emre and Sila arrived at the marked point on the map mentioned in Uras Keskin's book. Despite the challenging weather conditions, Emre and Sila, who had managed to complete this task in a week as planned, joyfully delivered their final blows to the excavation, only to realize they had hit something hard. Yes, the treasure chest mentioned in Uras Keskin's book was indeed there. Emre embraced the chest with great happiness and took it to the igloo they had built. After a long adventure, finally finding the treasure they had been searching for, the adventurers enjoyed their last night on the mountain. Waking up with the first light of dawn the next day, the adventurers immediately began gathering their belongings and preparing for the return journey. The great moment of opening the chest had finally arrived. When Emre and Sila opened the chest, they saw an unexpected sight. Inside the chest were an old pocket watch, a red scarf, and a thin, worn-out book. Shocked by what they saw, Emre and Sila experienced great disappointment. Was all the effort and hard work over the months for this? The friends began their return journey after putting what they found in the chest into their bags. As they made their way down, a large chunk of snow broke off from the summit and started rolling towards Emre and Sila. Not knowing what to do, our adventurers immediately began looking for a place to take cover, and just in time, they threw themselves into a cave and narrowly escaped a disaster. After recovering from the shock of the incident, Sila turned to Emre and asked,

"Are you okay?"

Emre replied to Sila, "I'm okay, but we have a problem; I think we're trapped here."

Knowing that the weather conditions would worsen in the coming days, Emre immediately began searching for an exit from the cave but unfortunately couldn't find one. With enough provisions to last them two days inside the cave, Emre and Sila began digging again to create their way out. As they spent a fearful night in the cave, Sila told Emre,

"I told you this was dangerous, that we shouldn't come."

The next day, the friends continued to dig, but no matter what they did, they couldn't seem to find an exit. As hope dwindled at the end of the night, Emre said to Sila,

"Sila, if we can't get out of here, there's something I want you to know." Tired and hopeless.

Sila asked, "What is it?"

Emre said, "There was actually a special reason for wanting you to be with me on this journey. I couldn't say it until now, but I love you."

Shocked by what she heard, Sila didn't reply and told Emre to continue digging. With no hope left of escaping the cave, Emre, feeling helpless, took out the book from his bag and began reading. The book told the memoirs of a soldier who fought in Sarıkamış during World War I. The pocket watch belonged to the soldier, and the red scarf belonged to his beloved, and they were counting the days until they could be reunited. The soldier had buried these items on the mountain as a souvenir before going to his beloved, but unfortunately, he couldn't withstand the harsh weather conditions of the mountain and passed away before reaching her. Emre, deeply moved and emotional by what he read, turned to Sila and said,

"Now I realize that the real treasure is being together with loved ones."

and before sleeping, he joined Sila in digging. When the friends woke up the next day, they were met with a miracle; the snow at the cave entrance had melted, merging with the place Emre and Sila had dug, creating an exit. Starting to escape from the cave, Emre and Sila, without saying a word along the way, turned their backs on the mountain for the last time and headed down the slope. Upon reaching the bottom and returning to their hotel, Emre thanked Sila for everything and apologized for the treasure not being what they had expected. Upon hearing Emre's apology, Sila said,

"You still don't understand, do you? The real treasure was being with you all along. I love you too; that's why I was by your side throughout the journey," and hugged Emre.

At that moment, Emre felt something he had never felt before. After enjoying a warm shower and getting rid of the exhaustion of the journey, the friends immediately fell asleep.

The next day, Emre, as usual, rode his bicycle to the café feeling like he was embarking on a new adventure. Upon arriving at the café, he parked his bicycle and took out his pocket watch, saying it was time. But when Emre turned to look at the corner table, he saw a beautiful girl with a red scarf already seated, waiting for her cocktail. Our lovers have learned that the most precious treasure is collecting beautiful memories with your loved ones and that there is no challenge that cannot be overcome when your loved ones are by your side. They placed the book recounting their story in the library next to Uras Keskin's book in the city center. What happens next is unknown, but for now, it can be said that our lovers look very happy.

"The most valuable treasure is the love poured from the heart."

# RUN AFTER YOUR DREAMS

Defne Naz San

April was sitting at her desk, her eyes focused on the acceptance letter in front of her. Yale University is the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and pursuing your dreams. The letter glowed with hope, a beacon of hope in the dimly lit room. Her boyfriend Alex was standing in the doorway, a proud smile on his face. She had been his biggest supporter throughout the difficult journey. They had gone through every hardship together, and now their efforts had finally paid off. But there were some negativities waiting for April.

As April basqued in the enthusiasm of her admission, a sharp knock echoed through the room. She looked up in surprise to see Emily standing in the doorway, her expression unreadable.

"Emily, what are you doing here?" April asked, surprise in her voice.

"I heard the news," Emily replied, trying to smile.

"I wanted to come and congratulate you."

April hesitated, uncertainty in her eyes. Emily had been her friend since childhood, but there was something about her that seemed strange, out of place. Alex took a step forward, her protective instincts kicking in.

"Thank you, Emily," he said, his tone polite but careful.

"We are grateful."

As Emily played around in the doorway, April couldn't shake the uneasy feeling that settled in her stomach. Something wasn't right, but she couldn't quite figure out what it was. Days passed and April began preparations for her upcoming trip to Yale. But even as she packed her bags and said goodbye, a sense of hunch remained and a shadow fell over her excitement. Then, just as she was about to begin the next chapter of her life, disaster struck.

April's heart pounded with anticipation as she approached the security checkpoint at the airport. However, her eyebrows knitted together with concern as he handed his passport to the agent.

"I'm sorry, little lady," she said, sounding apologetic. "But there seems to be a problem with your documents. You'll have to come with me."

Panic increased throughout April as he was led into a small, windowless room, her mind filled with fear and confusion. How can this happen? What had gone wrong?

As April anxiously waited for answers, the hours stretched into eternity as her dreams became increasingly unattainable. Finally, a stern-faced official entered the room with a file in his hand.

"There seems to have been a misunderstanding," she said, her tone cold and unforgiving.

"You are banned from traveling abroad due to a crime committed several years ago."

April's heart sank as the truth came out. An incident that had been buried in his past for a long time would resurface at the most inappropriate moment and haunt her. It was a mistake, a moment of mistake of youth that she tried desperately to forget. But now she was in danger of destroying everything she had worked so hard to achieve. Desperate and alone, April reached out to Alex, her voice trembling with fear.

"I don't know what to do," she whispered, tears streaming down her cheeks. "I can't let this stop me from going to Yale."

Alex's response was immediate and constant, "We'll figure this out together," he said, his voice filled with determination. "I won't let anything stand in the way of your dreams."

And so they struggled on a journey full of obstacles and uncertainties; They were determined to overcome whatever challenges lay ahead. With Alex by her side, April hired an lawyer and explored every avenue to find a solution. But as she fought tirelessly to clear her name, a new threat emerged from the shadows. One evening, April returned home from a meeting with her lawyer to find Emily waiting for her in the dimly lit hallway, her eyes shining with anger.

"You think you can leave me behind and go to Yale?" Emily was very angry.

"I won't let you forget where you came from."

"What are you talking about?"

"I don't think you deserve this university. You are inadequate for it and I will not let you reach it!"

"Are you jealous of my success?" April shouted.

"You can't be jealous of what I do without doing anything, are you the one who will decide whether I am enough or not!"

April was very angry, and at the same time, she was very sad to see this reaction from her best friend.

"I will do my best to prevent you from reaching this, April, this is very annoying, but I will prevent you at all costs!" Emily shouted and left without looking back.

April was shocked when Emily's true intentions were revealed. This was a betrayal of the deepest kind, a betrayal that went to the core of their friendship. But even in the face of Emily's betrayal, April refused to back down. With Alex's unwavering support, April confronted Emily and cut ties with her completely. It was a painful decision, but necessary to protect her dreams from those who wanted to shatter them. But just as one obstacle was overcome, another appeared on the horizon. Apparently, the president of Yale University had his own doubts about April's suitability for the prestigious institution. Despite her efforts to clear her name, the president of Yale stood firm in her opposition and threatened to derail her dreams completely. But April refused to be deterred.

Armed with determination and determination, he launched a grassroots campaign that garnered the support of students, faculty, and alumni. With Alex by her side, she fought tirelessly to prove her worth and didn't let anyone tell her anything.

And finally, after weeks of uncertainty and doubt, April's efforts paid off. The acceptance letter she had been waiting for for weeks arrived.

"Are you excited?" Alex said.

"My heart feels like it's going to explode, I know I was accepted, but what if I got a rejection?" April said, hugging Alex.

"I know all your efforts are not in vain." "Alex replied. This reassured April, but she had to open the envelope to be sure. Finally he gathered all his courage and opened the envelope. Yes, it was accepted, all these difficulties ended with a good result. She immediately hugged Alex.

"I knew it, you did it!" said Alex.

It was a triumph of resilience, determination and the unwavering spirit of a young woman who let nothing stand in the way of her dreams. As April stood on the threshold of her future, her heart filled with gratitude for those who stood by her side. With Alex's hand in hers, she stepped into the unknown, ready to face the challenges ahead.

Because April knew that no matter the obstacles she faced, it was up to her to hold on to her dreams, protect them, and make them come true. And with constant determination, she would do whatever it took to see them through to the end.

# THE INVISIBLE WOMAN AND HER FRIENDS

Elif Ece Erdoğan

It was a June morning and the weather was sunny, birds were chirping in the zoo, animals were greeting the sun unhappily, Kate and her friends were the maintenance team of this zoo and they started work early, but they woke up with sadness every morning because they saw the animals in such a closed state and they were in bad conditions, that is, poor quality feed, narrow living spaces and disturbing animals. It affected them a lot to see them being subjected to this kind of behavior. Kate and her friends really cared about them, they attended many marches for them and defended their rights, that's exactly why they were in this job, to save them from this oppression and to give them a free living space, but there was a manager here, his name was Benson. Benson he was a cruel, money-hungry man, he would deceive people and cruelize animals for money, he used cheap feed for animals and did not provide regular maintenance to their living spaces, he was very stingy and he sensed some differences in Kate and her friends, so he always had his eyes on this team.

Kate and her friends had special features that no one knew about, these were special powers. Thanks to these features, they were able to bond more with animals. They achieved this by talking to animals or by being invisible most of the time and providing better care to the animals, hidden from the manager. It was very difficult when their eyes were on them and they decided to make a collective plan and named this plan operation rescue. Now they had to solve this problem carefully. I am 1 am 1 am

1In the heart of the city, where the active streets met the edge of the park, stood a zoo. It was once a place of wonder and joy, where families would come to miracle at the exotic animals from around the world. But over time, the zoo had fallen into need for care, and its once spectacular inhabitants were now confined to small, dirty cages, their spirits broken by years of neglect and mistreatment. Kate, Thomas, and Merry had been friends for as long as they could remember. They shared a deep love for animals and a severe determination to protect them. Each of them possessed a special gift that set them apart from others. Kate could turn invisible with a thought, Thomas could communicate with animals, and Merry could hear the thoughts of those around her.

One day, as they wandered through the zoo, their hearts heavy with sadness at the sight of the suffering animals, they stumbled upon a group of workers mistreating a lion. Benson, the

zoo's manager, stood nearby, a cruel smile on his face as he watched the scene unfold. Enraged, Kate, Thomas, and Merry knew they had to act.

Gathering in a secluded corner of the zoo, they huddled together, their minds racing with ideas. They knew they had to free the animals and expose Benson's cruelty, but they also knew it would not be easy. Benson was a strong man, with influence that extended far beyond the walls of the zoo.

"We need a plan," Kate said, her voice determined.

"We need to think this through carefully if we're going to succeed."

Thomas shook his head, his eyes scanning the area for any signs of danger.

"I can talk to the animals," he said. "Maybe they can help us."

Merry closed her eyes, focusing her mind on the thoughts of the people around her.

"And I can read Benson's thoughts," she said.

"We'll know what he's planning before he even does."

Putting their plans into action, the three friends set out to save the animals. Kate used her powers to sneak past the guards and save the animals from their cages one by one. She had to be very careful because she was invisible, because people could not understand what was happening because they could not see her opening the door, and they could understand that something was wrong in the zoo, so they had to combine their powers well. Thomas talked to them, the animals cooperated well because they wanted to get out of here so badly, he trusted them and guided them to safety. Merry stood guard to warn them of any approaching danger. Since Merry could read people's thoughts, she would be able to guide her friends better.. As they worked, Benson grew more and more desperate. He knew that if the truth about the zoo's mistreatment of the animals was exposed, his reputation would be ruined. He ordered his workers to stop at nothing to capture the three friends and put an end to their interfering. But Kate, Thomas, and Merry were one step ahead. They had the animals on their side, and together, they outsmarted Benson No matter what he tried, they always seemed to be one step ahead.

Finally, the day came when all the animals were free, and Benson's dominance of terror was over. The city rallied behind Kate, Thomas and Merry, celebrating them as heroes and demanding justice for the animals. People began to sue Benson. Later, Thomas, who obtained detailed information from the animals thanks to his special powers, showed a lot of evidence to arrest Benson. The zoo was completely closed. Kate, Thomas and Merry, who stood in front of the zoo gate and dreamed of the animals wandering around for the first time in years, knew that they had made a difference. The animals were now in their natural habitat, people visited them with special vehicles and took photos without disturbing them, and the happiness of the animals was obvious in every way. They saved animals, exposed the truth, and in doing so inspired others to stand up for what was right.

And as they walked away, hand in hand, they knew that no matter what challenges lay ahead, as long as they stood together, they could overcome anything.

# UNKNOWN ISLAND: THE SECRET BEHIND THE HOLIDAY

Faruk Yıldırım

Patrick woke up feeling restless as the light reflected from the glass onto his face. The first thing that came to his mind was to see his wife's face again, feeling uneasy about having been fighting with his wife for months. Amanda's voice was coming from inside. Patrick, go buy some ready-made bread for breakfast. Patrick got out of bed, cursing. This morning, he should have told her about the holiday he was thinking of buying, because this monotonous life had tired both of them, they needed a good holiday to refresh their relationship. He thought, "Yes, I should definitely tell her about this idea." When he arrived at Amanda's side, he saw her slicing the avocados.

Amanda called out, "Don't stand there, go buy bread." Patrick grabbed his jacket from the hanger and went out. When he came home the table was already ready. After placing the bread on the counter, he decided to tell Amanda about his offer. He was having difficulty telling her this offer because every time he opened his mouth, Amanda was blocking his words and not allowing him to speak. Taking a deep breath, she decided to explain the issue. He told Amanda, who had already started his breakfast, about taking an island vacation. He mentioned that this would be a good interim period for both of them. Amanda froze, her eyes clear. He agreed that this idea would be absolutely great. Patrick more or less expected that he would encounter such a reaction. He was aware that he had not devoted much time to her lately, and over time, he was aware that Amanda was becoming wilder day by day due to this indifference. This offer was a sign to him that you were still thinking about him. He started his breakfast by placing a kiss on Amanda's head.

After breakfast, they started looking for hotels on the internet to decide where to go together. They found a place that they both really liked, but no one had ever rated the place they found before. Even though they were a little suspicious at first, they decided to call the hotel management. When the phone was answered, a quiet voice with a low tone answered them.

"Good day, sir, I'm Dean from Phi Phi island," he called. This soft-toned voice removed the question mark in both of their minds for a moment. As if hypnotized, Patrick and Amanda had already made reservations for themselves.

The couple had traveled to Phi Phi island by plane. When they got off the plane, they briefly drowned due to the humidity. Amanda had been constantly investigating Patrick since they first set foot on the ground and was constantly giving him information about the area they



were in. They rented a boat to reach the island. A rosy-cheeked man who looked like a fisherman asked them: "Where are we going, sir?"

"We will visit the island of Phi Phi."

Hearing this, the blood on the fisherman's face suddenly receded and he reluctantly said, "Okay, sir, as you wish."

When they set off, they were both stunned by the beauty of the other islands around. They kept telling each other that they had made a great choice. Meanwhile, Patrick decided to spend more energy on keeping himself in the background so as not to spoil Amanda's happiness, anyway, he had already reached his goal. There was only one situation that made Patrick suspicious; the man who looked like a fisherman was quite nervous from the beginning of the journey and kept muttering incomprehensibly. When the island became visible, the fisherman said, "Please be very careful." Amanda jumped off the boat and started playing with the sand with her feet. Just as Patrick was getting off the boat, the man dressed as a fisherman said with a nervous expression on his face that he would come to pick them up in 1 night. Patrick said without excitement, "Deal."

After Patrick unloaded the suitcases, a barefoot man wearing a suit, a red tie, a thick mustache and bald hair was approaching them. This man, Patrick guessed, was Dean. After welcoming them again, Dean informed them that their rooms were ready. Dean told them that they could stay at the reception until their belongings were moved to the room. There were monkey statues right at the entrance of the reception. Amanda handed Patrick her camera and asked him to take a photo. After a few photos and silly poses, they entered the reception. They encountered a situation inside that was unlike the situation outside. Everywhere they came across posters about monkeys, tiny figures and even books giving information about them. Although this situation attracted Patrick's attention, Amanda did not pay any attention to it and continued to live in the moment.

Dean entered the reception and stated that everything was ready. Patrick and Amanda thanked him and started walking towards their rooms. Meanwhile, Patrick tried to talk to Amanda about the monkeys he saw everywhere and that there were no other guests on the island. Amanda, as usual, started to say that Patrick was unnecessarily tense and that he did not experience the moment with her and that this monotonous face was annoying her.

Amanda seemed oblivious to Patrick's discomfort as she excitedly explored her temporary home. The room was comfortable and had a rustic charm that matched the island feel. But Patrick couldn't shake the feeling of being watched, the tingling in the nape of his neck.

As they settled in, Patrick once again tried to address the strange atmosphere on the island. But Amanda ignored his concerns and scolded him for letting her down. Patrick was disappointed but didn't want to ruin their holiday by arguing, so he gave in and decided to keep his concerns private for now. Throughout the day, they enjoyed everything the island had to offer, exploring pristine beaches and lush forests. Amanda's infectious enthusiasm momentarily distracted Patrick, but the worries remained like a permanent shadow in his mind.

In the evening, they returned for dinner. After a day full of adventure, they were both very hungry. After Dean served the food, Patrick decided to tell Amanda about the monkey figures on the island and the feeling of being constantly watched. But while he was talking

about his anxiety, Amanda slapped Patrick in the face and started walking out of the restaurant into the pitch black forest.

Patrick was stunned, his cheeks burned by Amanda's slap. He watched her rush out of the restaurant and disappear into the darkness of the forest. For a moment, he was stunned. Then he came to his senses, stood up quickly, and chased after him.

"Wait, Amanda!" His voice echoed in the silent night. But got no reply. The forest was eerily quiet, the only sounds being the rustle of leaves underfoot and his own heavy breathing.

He took out his cell phone and turned on the flashlight to illuminate the road ahead. Light cut through the darkness, casting long, eerie shadows among the trees. He couldn't see any trace of Amanda.

"Amanda!" he called again, worry in his voice. He knew she wasn't safe out there alone, especially at night. The strange atmosphere on the island and the feeling of being watched made him uneasy.

As he walked deeper into the forest, he noticed something strange. The image of the monkey he mentioned to Amanda was everywhere. They were carved into the trees, and their eyes seemed to follow him as he passed.

Suddenly, he heard a rustling sound behind the dense bushes. He shined his flashlight at it, his heart pounding in his chest. "Amanda, is that you?" he asked, hoping to hear her voice. But instead of Amanda, it was a small monkey that emerged from the bushes, its eyes reflecting the light of Patrick's flashlight. It chattered at him, then disappeared into the darkness.

Patrick breathed a sigh of relief and continued looking for Amanda. He knew he wouldn't rest until he found her and made sure she was safe. Despite the strange events happening on the island, he's determined not to let his vacation be ruined. After all, they are there to create wonderful memories instead of being consumed by fear and anxiety. He just hoped Amanda felt the same way.

Meanwhile, as Amanda was walking through the deserted forest, she felt someone running quickly behind her. She turned to see Dean running towards her, but before she had time to react, Dean pushed her to the ground, knocking her out.

Dean was the King of the Monkeys and thanks to the other monkeys he was able to easily locate Amanda. The reason he knocked Amanda unconscious was to perform the ritual held every year on the island. The ritual involved burning a female human alive on wood. But there was a problem. Dean was obsessed with Amanda the whole time he was spying on her, and he did not want to perform this ritual to avoid harming Amanda. Dean quickly made a plan in his mind and started to kidnap Amanda.

The monkeys that had increased around Patrick started to attack him. In order to reach Amanda, Patrick saw nothing and beat down the monkeys that were flocking towards him, one by one. While fighting with the monkeys, he was injured quite a lot, blood was dripping from his arms to the ground. He didn't think he could stand it any longer. At that moment, he heard a strong shrill sound. The sound surrounded the entire island. After this sound, the monkeys around Patrick left as if they were getting ready for a very important situation.

The reason for this high-pitched sound was a signal given to other monkeys. When the monkeys saw Dean running away from the ritual with the girl, they made a very loud noise.

After they all came together, they started chasing Dean. Meanwhile, Dean collapsed to the ground with Amanda on his back after using the last oxygen in his lungs while escaping.

As Patrick was half-consciously making his way through the forest, he saw a group of monkeys placing Amanda and Dean on boards and preparing to burn them. But he had no more strength left and collapsed while trying to help them. When he opened his eyes, the fisherman in the blue beret was taking him away from the island with his boat.

He was about to tell the fisherman to return to the island immediately, but he couldn't believe his eyes. The huge island was on fire. With the death of Dean, the king of the monkeys, the other monkeys also set themselves on fire.

And thus, this terrible story ended. Patrick managed to escape from the island, but what he experienced would change his life forever. This was the story of Patrick's fight for survival and escape from the island.

# MYSTERIOUS TOWN

İrem Aykul

Once upon a time, there was a family who lived in a small town. They lived in harmony. This town was known with its mysterious. Once upon a time, this town was abnormal whereas this family was normal. This family consisted of one child and his parents. One day they had moved an old house in this mysterious town. Although the householder had warned them, they had chosen this house. However, they hadn't believed. When events had happened, it had already been one month.

On a Sunday evening while David was playing a computer game, his wardrobe was opened suddenly. David screamed when he heard noise of wardrobe. He started to seek owner of the voice but he couldn't find who it is. His father Michael came to the David's room.

"What happened?" he said.

David was confused and he couldn't understand anything. He looked around and bit his nails. As soon as he came to his senses, he explained what he heard. When Michael listened to him, he didn't care about the event that had happened owing to his own personality. He was a bad tempered person and he annoyed David because he thought that David made up a story. A few days later David came across Edward. Edward was a ghost which lived at their house. David lost his balance and he fainted. When he came to himself, he was in hospital. His mother Victoria was crying beside him. Victoria was an emotional woman. David explained the situation that he had lived and Victoria shocked. Both his father and mother didn't believe this event. They decided to take him to psychologist. Then, they started to talk to each other and the psychologist gave him medicine.

"If this situation repeats, you will bring him to me," she said.

One week later when David studied his lessons, Edward came behind and scared him. He was shocked and fainted. David's family went to psychologist immediately. The Psychologist started to suspect about this situation. She wanted to go on treatment but when she talked to him she noticed that David didn't have any mental issues. She talked to his family and they were surprised. Victoria started to feel concerned about him but Michael believed that David had a problem. One day later Victoria made a decision about observing him when he remained alone. When David played the computer games, Edward showed up. Edward's goal was keeping him company. Victoria noticed that David talked to himself. Victoria decided to take David to church.

"A ghost whose name is Edward disturbed your son," the priest said.

"He didn't want to hurt me, he only wanted to be with me."

Victoria started to cry "Don't annoy me!" Victoria said.

"We need to free you!" priest said.

Even though Michael didn't want to take priest's help, they came in order to protect David. The Priest started to think about solutions to recover from Edward. He wanted to track the situation which affected David negatively. One day while priest tracked them, Edward attacked to

David.Priest fought with him but he was very strong. Victoria and Micheal shocked and Micheal couldn't believe his eyes because he didn't believe this event when they told. A few minute later,priest could win the battle which became among them. Finally,Edward was sent another universe by him. Micheal could feel relieved eventually.Family was recovered from this bad situation. Priest talked to family .

“You had better move form here,” priest said.

“I can understand the problems . I will solve this problem in the earliest time,” Micheal said.

They said goodbye and thanked to priest and thought about what they are doing.

Three days later Micheal quitted their job and started to look for a job which is in another place. Victoria tidied up the house with Micheal. They could find a new house which ensured them a good future. Previous house where they had lived was put off sale and closed. While the family lived in peace and prosperity,Edward was cursed and punished forever.

# TURKS IN AMERICA

Mehmet Kağan Özer

The Turkish people, who had never faced any external threats in their lives, were shocked to see people they did not know where they came from arrive in their country in the early 1700s. These foreigners set foot on the mainland and started looting every village they came across. The Turkish king, who was angry at this situation, sent a troop of soldiers to communicate with the foreigners to find a solution to this situation, but since no one knew each other, there was a dispute and the Turkish soldiers killed these foreigners, but a young man escaped from their hands. The Turkish king was very happy when he got this news, but he knew that next time these foreigners would come back more and stronger. Selim, who had lost his whole family except himself and his brother because of the foreigners' village raids, had learned how these foreigners fought in the village raids and what characteristics they had and wanted to meet the Turkish king. Selim, who had lost his family, was about to start a new life with his brother, and although his brother said that the king would not want to meet with him, Selim was trying everything to reach the king.

One day he secretly boarded a cart full of fruit from the village to the kingdom and reached the kingdom, but he was confused about what to do because he was going to the kingdom for the first time, but he was determined in his decision and went to a square and started shouting at the people. In the palace, he told the king how these foreigners fought, their equipment and physical characteristics, but the king sarcastically dismissed him from the kingdom palace because he would not take advice from a peasant. Selim returned home very angry. Selim was thinking about what he could do to protect people. Just at the time foreigners attack to the next village.

Selim looked at his brother and said “I have to go and help them.”

They went to help helped other villagers and killed the foreigners. This brave act of theirs spread widely throughout the country and reached the king. The king called Selim to the palace to talk to him again. The next day Selim went to palace to talk with the king

“Selim, I congratulate you and your brother for this brave action and I assign you to the duty of protecting the villages.”

Selim was very excited when he told this big news to his brother on the way home but when he told this big news to his brother, his brother was not happy at all. When selim asked why he wasn't happy, his brother said, “From today, we will have a lot of responsibilities. I don't know if we can do this successfully.

Selim said, “I don't know if I can achieve this, but we will help people even a little.” After a while, the country was shaken by the news of the death of the king. This death was not a normal death, the king was assassinated. Selim was shocked when he learned this news, but at the same time he was happy because the dead king was not doing anything to expel foreigners from the country and he was very hopeful that this situation would change. Since the king had no children, the new king would be chosen from among the senior soldiers. The 1-

month-long king election process was very difficult, and the former king's most trusted commander won the election. The new king's ideas were completely opposite to the old king's ideas, and the new king wanted to do everything to prevent foreigners from posing a threat to his country. The first thing the new king did was to send soldiers to every village in the country to protect the village. Selim became the commander of the soldiers who came to his village. The soldiers in the village, who had successfully defeated the invading forces for a long time, one day encountered an army larger than they had ever seen in their lives. This army was plundering every village it came across. The king summoned the peasants and soldiers from all the villages to the kingdom. The king began to build an army that could defeat the enemy army, but the enemy army had already arrived in front of the kingdom. The enemy army sent an envoy who knew both languages to the kingdom to speak with the king. The ambassador said that the army facing the Turks was the colonial army from Portugal and that the occupation forces came to fight to exploit this country and that they were not open to bargaining in any way.

“As the king of this kingdom, I declare war on the country of Portugal.

He sent the envoy to inform the enemy commander of his decision. The king immediately ordered his commanders to lead his armies.

“We will expel these enemy armies from here so that they will never come to our country again.”

A huge war had begun. The Turks were winning the war and had pushed the enemy army back to the border of the country. The enemy army had retreated almost to the coast and a large part of the enemy army was dead. Selim was fighting very well, but the army against him had killed his family and he didn't think he had his revenge yet. While the battle continued on the beach, Selim saw the enemy commander running towards the ship and followed him. The enemy commander had boarded the ship and just as the ship was getting ready to leave, Selim started to climb onto the ship and no enemy soldiers had seen Selim. Selim managed to board the ship and hid. He was going to wait for the enemy commander to move to a lonely place, and it happened as he expected, and Selim captured and killed the enemy commander in a lonely place. Hearing the voices, the soldiers killed Selim there, but Selim was very happy to have his revenge just before he died and he died with peace of mind. When the war ended, Selim's brother was looking for Selim but could not find him. After a while, News came to the king that Selim had killed the enemy commander. The king shouted with great excitement that Selim killed the enemy commander. The soldiers started shouting with great enthusiasm.

"So where is Selim now?" he asked.

The king said that Selim was killed after killing the enemy commander. Everyone's fun was cut short after this news. Selim's brother was devastated by this news, but he was proud of his brother's brave action. This war provided the Turks to live peacefully in their country and they lived without facing any threat for a long time.

# LOST TREASURE: CURSED ADVENTURE

Naz Erkoca

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who lived in a small town. Her name is Lily. Lily was the most cheerful and energetic girl in town. He would get up early every morning and run around town before the sun rose. All the flowers of the town seemed to salute Lily. One day, Lily found an old book next to her house. The cover of the book was dusty and the pages had turned yellow. Curious, she opened the book and discovered the wonderful stories in it. On that day, Lily's life changed completely. Now she was not only the hero of the town, but also of the books. As she began to read the books, Lily traveled to different worlds. She roamed kingdoms full of dragons, embarked on adventures in distant galaxies, and searched mysterious islands for lost treasures. Each new story impressed Lily and sparked her imagination. One day, a new library opened in town. Lily became the most frequent visitor to this library. Every evening, she would share what he had read with the other children and invite them to the magical world of books. Lily did this routine that evening. After reading their books, he took them with him and went to the park, which was their meeting place. Together they drank hot chocolate and talked about the stories they had read. Lily had now become one of the most beloved heroes, not only in the town, but in the whole world. Her stories showed people the limits of imagination and brought everyone closer together. In the quiet streets of the small town, Lily's eyes were always waiting to be discovered.

One morning, she discovered an old attic near her house. Wandering through the dusty shelves, she found an old chest in a corner. Inside the chest was a yellowed map and an ancient key. She excitedly studied the map and remembered similar stories he had seen in the old books in the library. The map pointed to a lost treasure, and she thought the key had opened a mysterious door. Lily's close friend Tom was the first to understand the map. He remembered the meaning of the symbols on the map from a story he had read earlier. Then he told his friends what he knew. After studying the map with their friends, they boldly embarked on this mysterious adventure. His first stop was an old forest. Here, they discovered an underground cave filled with mysterious creatures and ancient ruins. Then, they visited a forgotten city, which was the second stop on the map. This city had ancient architecture that time had forgotten, and a secret was hidden in every street.

Finally, they reached the final objective of the map, an ancient fortress. The castle was the site of the lost treasure, and inside was a labyrinth full of dangerous traps. When Lily and her friends reached the old castle, they faced many challenges to get through the labyrinth that came their way. As they made their way through the corridors full of traps, they tested their courage and trust in each other. As a pioneer, Lily encouraged her friends and guided them to keep moving forward. But as you progressed through the maze, the traps became even more



dangerous. They encountered floors that threw sharp spears when pressed on the ground, keys that created sudden floods of water, and mysterious mechanisms that opened secret passages. This labyrinth of traps not only tested their mettle, but also strengthened their bond with each other. Working together, they were able to overcome every challenge. At the end of the labyrinth, when they reached the room where the lost treasure was hidden, a wave of excitement rose through them. The room, which was filled with gold, jewels and valuables in chests, dazzled them. The greatest treasure, however, was their friendship and the adventures they had together. Lily and her friends experienced the happiness of sharing this treasure they gained by crossing the challenging maze together. However, after they reached the castle, there was another danger on the way back. Traps inside the labyrinth were trying to prevent their return. To overcome obstacles, they all individually showed their talents; Lily her courage, Tom his intelligence, Emily her composure, Jack his practicality. Thus, they came together and reached a solution.

On a difficult return journey, they made it back to their town safely. The townspeople greeted their achievements with joy and considered them heroes. Lily and her friends' friendship was strengthened by this adventure. It was a journey in which Lily and her friends not only searched for a treasure, but also increased their confidence, courage with each other. She was no longer just the cheerful girl of town, but also the leader of a brave and adventurous group of friends. So, in the quiet streets of the small town, the prying eyes of Lily and her friends were always waiting for the next adventure. But when they returned from the adventure, there was not only joy in the town, but also anxiety. The old castle where they went in search of lost treasure had long been known as cursed. According to a legend, those who entered the castle never returned and a curse awaited them. While the townspeople glad that Lily and her friends were back, they were also worried about the dangers they would face in the castle. Upon these concerns, Mrs. Marjorie, the old sage of the town, decided to warn Lily and her friends. He advised them not to set foot in the castle again so that the curse on the castle would not cause further damage. However, Lily and her friends ignored the woman's warnings. The only thing that mattered them was the thrill of the adventure and the treasure they had earned. Lily, along with her friends began to prepare for the next adventure, despite Mrs. Marjorie's warnings. However, mysterious forces were further strengthening the curse on the castle.

At night, strange noises began to be heard around the town. The sound of the wind, the whispers of the ghosts in the cursed castle could be heard. Lily and her friends noticed these strange occurrences but they did not pay much attention to them. The only thing that mattered to them was embarking on the next adventure. However the town's wise elder, Mrs. Marjorie, knew the mysteries from the town's dark past. She had foreseen the dangers that Lily and her friends would face. One night, Lily and her friends visited Miss Marjorie's house before embarking on their next adventure.

‘This is very dangerous, the damn can infect you too.’

They told her they wanted to know more about the curse of the castle.

Mrs. Marjorie looked at Lily and her friends anxiously. ‘There have been children who have disappeared there before because of the curse.’

Instead of heeding the old woman’s warnings Lily and her friends were determined implement their own decision. The next day, Lily and her friends began their journey to the

cursed castle. But there was one thing they didn't notice. This time, the curse in the castle was waiting for them, and there was no turning back. When Lily and her friends arrived at the castle, they had to face the dark forces they encountered. The cursed castle swallowed them up and put them to a terrible test. The castle confined them all to a separate room inside. The castle took Emily first because she was the one who was most afraid. As the fear grew in each of them, they knew they had no choice. However, this time, although they tried their best and even fought harder than before, they could not resist the curse and this was the end of them. In the end, Lily and her friends disappeared under the curse and do not return.

The townspeople were upset about their disappearance and realized that they would never see them again. The townspeople decided never to approach the cursed castle again. Mrs. Marjorie's warnings became more significant, and the townspeople acknowledged the power of the curse. The adventures of Lily and her friends would never be forgotten by the townspeople. Their courage and adventure will always remain in the memories of the townspeople and inspire them.

Therefore, in the quiet streets of the small town, a monument was erected in memory of Lily and her friends. This monument would forever honor their bravery, friendship, and adventure. Although Lily and her friends were not physically present at the cursed castle where they disappeared, their spirits roamed the town and constantly reminded them.

# FOREST LAWS

Simge Nur Marangoz

Once upon a time, there was a very big, magnificent forest in which many living things lived. The creatures living in this forest have been living their lives in a certain order for centuries. Until, with the decline of some living species, the creatures that eat those living things began to experience food shortages. The food chain was broken, maybe even reversed.

Chloe was a brown lizard with thick white stripes on top and lived with her flock deep in the forest. She had a strong character and was part of the broken chain. Lily was a gazelle who lived with her mother, father, and brother, and did not leave her flank. She had a confident and elegant structure. Another living creature belonging to the broken chain was Clark. A lion who lived alone and wanted to be the most magnificent of the forest, the strongest, and yet he was a powerless character in the chain.

The number of individuals of some living species living in the forest was decreasing, and other living things that fed on these creatures were starting to have difficulty finding food and were becoming more aggressive than they were. They attacked creatures that were too big and powerful for them to handle, and sometimes they prevailed. The rabbit began to eat the eagle, the crow ate the snake, the sparrow ate the fox. Thus, the food chain was disrupted.

In this chaos, Chloe, the lizard, found herself hunting larger prey, such as Lily, the elegant gazelle. In a twisted turn of events, it was now Chloe who chased Lily through the forest underbrush, her scales shimmering with an unnatural vigor.

Lily, graceful and swift, often eluded Chloe's pursuits, but the terror of being hunted was new and horrifying. She couldn't understand why her world had turned upside down, where once she could roam the forest without fear, and now had to hide and run for her life.

Meanwhile, Clark, the once mighty lion, found himself pursued by creatures he once would have considered prey or ignored altogether. It was a humbling experience, one that filled him with both fear and a desperate longing for things to return to how they once were.

The forest was in turmoil because with the decrease in nutrients, all living things went in search food and became aggressive. Now their eyes have become unable to see anything else, their only purpose was to feed their bellies. Every creature desperate, hunting, and being hunted, leading to an imbalance that affected everything from the smallest leaf on a tree to the stars in the sky. Then came John, known as the Forest King. He was a wise and old spirit. Because the balance of the forest not disturbed, its existence was unknown until this time, it was not visible to anyone. He had watched over the forest for generations, unseen and unknown, his existence a whisper on the wind.

John saw the chaos the broken food chain had wrought and knew he must act. He called upon the forest's magic, summoning Chloe, Lily, and Clark to a clearing bathed in moonlight. They came, weary and wary, each confused by their unnatural roles in this new world.

“Creatures of the forest,” John began, his voice echoing with the power of ancient trees, “the balance of our home has been upset, and you have all suffered. But the power to restore our world lies within each of you.”

Chloe, Lily, and Clark listened, the fear and exhaustion apparent in their eyes. John walked around them, his touch light upon the ground.

“To mend what has been broken, you must reconnect with the essence of who you were meant to be. Chloe, you are a creature of cunning and speed, not brute force. Lily, your grace and awareness are your strengths. Clark, your power is in your presence, not in your hunger.”

John then placed a hand on each of their heads, whispering words old as the forest. As his magic flowed through them, a transformation began. The unnatural aggression faded from Chloe’s eyes, replaced by her natural cautious curiosity. Lily felt her heart steady, her legs strong and ready to carry her with grace rather than fear. Clark’s mane shimmered under the moonlight, his stature regal and powerful once more.

“The forest needs each of you,” John continued, “not as hunters and hunted but as guardians of balance. Go now, find your kin, and spread the word that the natural order is restored.”

With a new understanding, Chloe, Lily, and Clark bowed to John, a silent acknowledgment of their duty. They departed the clearing, each returning to their part of the forest, their steps lighter, their hearts fuller.

The changes were not immediate, but with time, the forest began to heal. Rabbits no longer hunted eagles, crows returned to scavenging, and sparrows sang rather than hunted. Peace settled over the forest, a testament to the restored balance.

John, the Forest King, watched over them all, his form fading back into the shadows of the trees, a silent guardian ready to intervene should the balance shift again. The forest thrived, each creature once again a link in a chain that was unbroken, each life vital and respected.

Thus, the forest returned to a state of harmony, with the echo of John’s words lingering in the rustle of leaves: “Respect the balance, for we are all part of the circle of life.”

# TITO AND KIKO

Melissa Ulusoy

Once upon a time, there were two very naughty monkeys named Tito and Kiko. These two monkeys were always making a mess and disturbing other animals. One day, these two monkeys did something bigger than they had ever done before, and the other animals decided that these two monkeys should be driven out of the forest. Because these two monkeys were collecting all the bananas in the forest before anyone else and selling them to other animals for money, that is, they were smuggling bananas. These two monkeys were buying more banana tree seeds with the money they earned from banana smuggling and expanding their business. After a while, things really started to go as the monkeys planned, and a huge hierarchy of banana smuggling monkeys began to form in the forest.

Monkeys are no longer just selling bananas, they are also kidnapping other animals and taking ransom for them. The other animals were very afraid of these monkeys and wanted them to leave the forest. However, since they did not have the courage to throw the monkeys away, they decided to make a more strategic plan. They would no longer buy bananas from monkeys, and they would distribute bananas to other animals to whom they tried to sell bananas, thus protesting the sale of bananas by monkeys. When no one would buy their bananas, the monkeys would lose their reputation and their mob gangs would disappear. The animals did indeed do what they said and stopped consuming the bananas the monkeys sold. After a while, the monkeys realized this situation and got very angry, but they did not know what to do because they had too many bananas waiting to be eaten. Since the monkeys could not sell the bananas, they had to eat all the bananas in order not to lose money.

The monkeys, who ate tons of bananas in 2 days, gained so much weight that they could no longer walk. They both looked like giant pilates balls shaped like monkeys. The monkeys could not move on their own unless an external force acted on them. The animals took advantage of this opportunity and rolled the 2 monkeys at night and put them on a boat they made from bamboo trees in the forest. They released the monkeys, who continued to sleep in the boat, into the cold and wavy sea at midnight. The monkeys were now on their own. Very difficult times awaited the monkeys who were left alone in their small boat. The sea was darker and more wavy than ever, and the little boat with the monkeys was constantly being thrown from place to place, and the monkeys had to face the danger of sinking every time. This was nothing for the monkeys, who were already very sorry for what they had done. The monkeys, who had regained their composure after all that shaking, began to silently wait for where the boat would take them, but the sea had no intention of stopping, it was as if they were going to swim in the middle of nowhere forever.

“If your sleep wasn't so deep, maybe we could wake up and escape before the other animals threw us into this boat,” said Tito the monkey.

Kiko (monkey): No, if you hadn't made so much noise the night before, I would have slept well,” said Kiko.

The monkeys started to blame each other, but it was too late. At least the sea had calmed down a bit while they were arguing.

“Everything happened because of you Tito!

“What did i do? You stupid monkey!” Tito screamed

“You cheated on your ex girlfriend and others put us on this boat! Everything is your fault!”

“She forced me to do that.”

# FIGHT ON THE PITCH

## FIGHT FOR LIFE

Yaşar Mert Özçilingir

"To live, you have to fight!"

If you're born as the youngest child of an 8-child family in the remote desert of Africa like me, your life has been spent in a battle for survival. I'm Batista, a footballer who has won the title of the world's best player seven times. I hail from a village in Africa with only 20 households and no electricity.

Everyone has beautiful memories of their childhood. I DON'T. I was born as the youngest member of the Mendy family in 2000. The most striking memory of my childhood was when my mother diluted milk with water for two weeks to make it enough for all of us. Yes, milk is the drink you have plenty of in your refrigerators, mostly ending up in the trash before its expiration date. It was the most cherished beverage in my childhood dreams. Our family might have been poor, but what can I say? Our hearts were rich.

For us, it had a better atmosphere than the World grandest stadiums in the world. We watched our older brothers We had a small football field in the village square, so don't let the word 'small' deceive you. play on that field when we were kids. But mind you, the field was nothing like you could possibly imagine; it was filled with dirt, sand, and rocks that cuts your feet. The neighborhood had one ball that was inside the aid boxes from America years ago. Yes, those boxes with 'God bless America' written on them. Maybe that ball was mistakenly put inside one of those boxes, or perhaps a brave soldier had thought of us, kids. That ball has been in our village for over 20 years. It's a patched-up ball that is nearly at the end of its life. I was finally able to touch that ball when I was eight years old, yes, eight years old. It took that long for our turn to come among our older brothers." Football is everything in my life as if I realized it the first time I hit the ball. When I touched the ball, that fire inside me was telling me everything without talking to me. As a 34-year-old footballer today, I still feel the heat inside me when I touch every ball. I was created for football. Anyway, let's go back to the old days. If you're born in Brazil or a country where football is developed, even if your family's financial situation could be better, it's not hard to find out. But still, if you pray to God as much at night as I do, your luck may be with you.

At eleven, a talent scout came to our village; at least, he introduced himself and came to watch us. He was only 20 years old and a young man with a slightly creepy face. There was no proper job for advancing the profession or the sports clubs, just like I tried to prove myself to him when I was young. It was only an hour later that the turn came to us from our incompetent brothers.". I could only play 10 minutes before the talent hunter's eyes. But 10 minutes was

enough to get into the talent scout's eye. After the game, he came to me and asked for my last name and phone number.

Well, I didn't have my phone. We didn't have a cell phone in our house, and the whole village used a standard telephone. We gave him that number. Fearing he couldn't reach his phone, I held his hand and drove him straight to my father's field. My father was staring at him with eyes that didn't believe him. He was going through what he said. The talent scout said he'd take me to France, where I'd stay with a protective family, train, and attend school. As I portrayed those days in my eyes, my father ran off the man, thinking he was a fraud, and he gave me a big blow. I was very disappointed, but I didn't give up. I approached the guy and asked him to kidnap me, and he said, of course, I couldn't do that, but, unfortunately, I was going to keep pursuing my dreams. There was only one solution left: to escape secretly. I hid in the trunk of his car while the talent scout was in the village, and then I ran away with him. When he noticed me, he was too busy with everything and had to take me with him. We went to France together.

Meanwhile, my family had stirred up the whole country in anxiety. When I arrived in France, I called the village phone and reached my mother. She was a little more calm, but how calm could a mother plan to flee her eleven-year-old child to another country secretly? The talent scout helped me to sign up for the Nantes Football Club trials. The coaches there liked my talent, but there was one thing I needed to improve: my body. I was solid but fragile, and the coaches immediately took me to the camp and started doing loads to improve my physics.

Everything was going well, but I couldn't stay in the team facilities forever; I needed a place to stay, and it was a requirement for me to live with a foster family. The club found me a foster family and a foster family finally accepted me. It was the first time I had to confront racism honestly. During my time in Nantes, I wore the jersey of the French national team in almost every age category. At 19, the day I had come to sign a professional contract.

The following year, with great hopes, I transferred to Angers, a team from the French Ligue 1. Although I initially struggled to secure a spot in the starting lineup, once I started playing in the first 11, I never became a substitute again. However, despite all our efforts, we couldn't avoid relegation from Ligue 1; we were relegated. I felt a great disappointment, but we were determined to do everything we could to get our team back to the top league with my teammates. While playing PlayStation with my friends at home, my phone rang one night. My manager, the skinny talent scout, discovered me; yes, he had become my manager. He told me there was an offer from Turkey. When you hear "Turkey," the three major sports clubs in Istanbul probably come to mind: Beşiktaş, Galatasaray, and Fenerbahçe. But the offer wasn't from one of these Istanbul clubs; it was from the club of that city, which, along with Napoli, holds the title of the world's largest city club, with fans all over and known for its slogan "Everywhere is Trabzon." This club, which emerged from Trabzon, the pioneer and leader of the Anatolian revolution, had broken the hegemony of Istanbul clubs with a handful of young players in one era, winning six league championships and three national cups in 10 years. Our coach, Abdullah Avcı, had once said in a press conference, "When an offer comes from Trabzonspor, you can't sleep." It was true; I couldn't sleep. It could be a significant step in my career. Many young footballers had gone to Trabzonspor before and transferred to major European clubs. I could be like them. Moreover, I made the transfer by playing for this



passionate fanbase and being a part of the team, symbolizing the revolution. I immediately gave my manager full authority to finalize the transfer. Everything seemed fine, but my club demanded too much money for my transfer fee. After lengthy negotiations, my transfer to Trabzonspor was completed for approximately 5 million euros. Although it wasn't the best start of the season, we ended the year with two trophies. We won the Turkish Cup by defeating Beşiktaş and the Super Cup by beating Galatasaray, the league champions. The following year, we reached the round of 16 in the UEFA Europa League, and my performance caught the attention of European clubs. At the end of that season, I transferred to the French team Olympique Lyon for a transfer fee of 15 million euros. I achieved the goals I set when I came to Trabzonspor, and I spent beautiful days there. I even have a tattoo on my arm with the city's area code and the symbol of the number 61, representing the trophies we won. I will never forget the wonderful people and that beautiful city with fond memories. After Lyon, I was invited to the French national team, and I quickly progressed to becoming a star footballer. Then, I transferred to Real Madrid, the world's biggest club, for a transfer fee of 124 million euros. In my ninth year here, I have won the best footballer award seven times, 4 UEFA Champions League trophies, six league championships, and many other achievements.

Now, to many people, I am one of the best footballers in the world. Every game I play, I represent my family, my village, and my past. Perhaps most importantly, I represent hope. Because I am a child who emerged from the remote corners of Africa, where there isn't even electricity at home, to fulfill his dreams. And I want to tell everyone from here that you need to try the impossible to see the limits of the impossible.

**END.**



