

## WRITING CONTEST

### Winning Stories

#### Story 1: Lost in the Oceanarium, by Gabriela Dias (9º A)

*I still remember our family trip to Lisbon. Last summer, my family and I decided that we would go to Lisbon on holiday; we were excited because we had never been to Portugal. However, on the last day, something went wrong and we missed our flight because of shark eggs and my brother.*

*It all started at night when we all were in my parent's room to decide what we were going to do the next day, the last before going back to the UK. We decided we were going to visit the Parque das Nações and go to the Oceanarium, the only touristic attraction we had not visited yet. We were excited; after all, it is the largest indoor aquarium in Europe.*

*In the next morning, we woke up very early and walked to the shopping centre in Parque das Nações and explored it. We even went for a ride in the cable car that moves above the river. While we were having lunch, we decided to spend the afternoon at the Oceanarium before going back to the hotel and then to the airport. Everything was going as planned until much later.*

*The Oceanarium was huge; the largest tank had capacity for 5000m<sup>3</sup> of water. It was impressive so my brother and I started telling each other what we knew about it:*

*'Alice, did you know that the Oceanarium's mission is to promote knowledge of the Oceans, educating visitors and the public about the necessity of protecting Natural Resources, through changing their daily habits?'*

*'I just read that in the folder, John. Did you know that the Oceanarium was opened in 1998 for the EXPO'98 themed "The Oceans, a Heritage for the Future"; nowadays it receives over one million visitors per year.'*

*'Really? That was sixteen years ago! However, the most interesting facts about it is that it houses over sixteen thousand animals and 450 different species.'*

*'Those are big numbers!'*

*Our parents wanted to see the coral reefs and little fish and my brother and I wanted to go to the Antarctic exhibit, so we took different paths. The hallways were dark and I was distracted looking at the fish tanks so I didn't notice when John decided that it would be a good idea to go see the sharks, their eggs and the jellyfishes instead of going with me to see the penguins and without telling someone where he was going.*

*At first, I was not worried; I thought he was trying to scare me. I was looking everywhere so that he could not surprise me when he jumped out of his hiding spot. But after fifteen minutes, as he did not show up, I freaked out. I started yelling "John!" all over the place but still could not find him. I did not know what to do so I started looking for my parents. I was very lucky to find them within five minutes since they had not went far. Once I told them what happened we decided to split up and look for him and meet at the lobby after twenty minutes, if we could not find him we would ask the staff for help.*

*We were desperate after meeting again because no one could find John. We asked a security guard for help and he called his co-workers to help too. We showed them a picture of John and described his clothes. It took very long but they were able to find him. We were so mad at him and relieved at the same time.*

*Since we had not finished our tour, we decided to go in again and see the rest of the tanks. The problem was that it took longer than we had thought and we ended up missing our flight. We spent five hours at the airport waiting for another flight. I was so mad at John I did not speak to him for a week! On this year's vacation, we decided to keep our mobile phones with us at all times.*

## Story 2: When We Met in London by Julia Malard (9º B)

*"I was visiting London for the first time. It was 2003, I was seventeen years old and first went to many interesting sites of the city, such as the Big Ben clock and the Buckingham Palace. In only 2 days me and my group were flying back to New York so we had to visit the last special place: the London Eye. We were really excited to have this experience. I had seen the view a few times on the television and on the Internet, but never in person. Our guide told us that it was designed by some architects and it was opened to the public on March 9, 2000.*

*The moment finally arrived. I woke up early and met my guide and the other tourists. We waited for the bus to pick us up and in only 10 minutes were in front of the big Ferris Wheel. I just couldn't believe that I was finally buying tickets for it! I was one of the first people to enter the capsule. When it started to go up to the sky, butterflies were already flying in my stomach. I can still remember the feeling.*

*'The entire structure is 135 metres tall and the wheel has a diameter of 120 metres', the guide woman said. Do you know that it is currently Europe's tallest Ferris Wheel and it is the most popular paid tourist attraction in the United Kingdom with over 3.5 million visitors annually? OK, let's go back to the story. While the woman was talking about the attraction, I walked to the front glass of the capsule and started looking at the view. Suddenly, I saw a really handsome guy in the capsule next to mine and I couldn't stop staring at him. His hair and clothes were on point. And his face? His face was perfect. After a few seconds he turned his head and saw me looking at him. I felt weird and turned around. When I went back to the front, I caught myself searching for him. I found the mysterious guy and yes, he was still staring at me. We kept playing this game until both capsules were on the floor".*

*"And what happened next?"*

*"Well, we started looking for each other. I went to the left but I think he went to the other side. Unfortunately, after 5 minutes, the guide called my group and I had to stop searching for him. We were heading to the bus when I looked back for the last time and saw him again. Hugging a girl. I felt embarrassed and horrible. I didn't know he had a girlfriend.*

*I went back to the hotel in the evening and went to bed earlier because I wanted to enjoy my last day in London. I often found myself thinking about the mysterious guy and wondering if he really liked me".*

*"So how did you see each other again? Didn't he search for you?"*

*"He told me that later that day he went to the local building of the tourism company I was travelling with, because he had seen the colored vest of my guide and the number on it. He found out that we were going to Trafalgar Square the next day to watch a famous band's concert and that we were also heading back to New York. So yes, he searched for me".*

*"Tell me how the story ends!"*

*"The next day, me and my group went to the square and the concert started. I used to listen to a lot of songs of the band so I was singing along to them. During the performance of a track called 'Tangled', I felt a hand on my shoulder. When I turned around, I saw the guy I thought so much about for the last 24 hours. I had a heart freeze. He smiled. I smiled. I couldn't say a word. He didn't say anything either. I was almost walking away when he broke the silence:*

*'Hey, I'm Chris'*

*'I'm Mary, it's nice to meet you,' I said, and we shook hands.*

*He asked me if I was the girl he'd seen in the cabin.*

*'I guess I am', I said.*

*'I think you're so pretty, I went looking for you but you had to leave, I think,' he said.*

*At that moment I got up the courage to ask:*

*'Thanks, but... Don't you have a girlfriend?'*

*'Girlfriend?' He had a weird facial expression. 'I don't have a girlfriend!'*

*'You don't?'*

*'I don't,' he said. 'Yesterday I was showing the Ferris Wheel to my sister'*

*'OK, then...' I was extremely happy but didn't want to demonstrate that.*

*After that, we finished watching the concert together – he was also a fan of the band. It was one of the best moments of my life; we'd enjoyed it a lot. Then, the guide called us, it was time to go to the airport and we had to say goodbye.*

*'So... I have to go.'*

*'I'll miss you.'*

*'I should give you my number...'*

*We exchanged numbers and the guide called me again.*

*'You can visit me whenever you want to,' he said.*

*'Same to you,' I said.*

*A strange silence began. I didn't know what to do when, in a second, he came closer to me and put his hand on the back of my neck. 'Wow, his eyes are amazing,' I thought. We were getting closer and closer when our lips touched. I still remember the kiss, it's unforgettable. And this is how Chris and I met".*

*"I think I'll cry, this is so cute! Your destiny was to see him there!"*

*"People say that destiny is a matter of chance, but it isn't. It is a matter of choice"*

*"What do you mean?"*

*"It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved. If Chris hadn't been to the building of my tourism company that day, we wouldn't have met each other again. We wouldn't be married right now and you wouldn't be born!"*

*"I guess I'll visit the London Eye though, I need to find my mysterious boy!"*

### Story 3: My Love Story by Sofia França (9º A)

*My name is Thomas Maximoff. I've been in hell for almost 17 years and now I'm finally free. Yep, that was my graduation speech. I have just graduated and I am finally free. These past few years I spent in school were really hard. My dad was fired, so I had to find a job to help my family pay the bills. Living in a small town in the US isn't easy, there aren't many schools to go to and finding a job is hard. However, I've always had my girlfriend, Rachel, supporting and helping me whenever I needed. I met Rachel when I was 7. I was at school, sitting on the floor of the library listening to music in my MP3 player. I didn't have any friends. I remember I was very sad that day because some kids came to me pretending they were my friends. Then, they punched me and said I was a freak. Rachel came and sat next to me:*

*'Hey!' - she said.*

*'Hi.' - I said.*

*'What's your name?' - she asked.*

*'Thomas. Thomas Maximoff.' - I answered her.*

*'What are you doing here alone? You seem so nice.' - she said.*

*'Tony doesn't like me, so he doesn't let people be my friends.' - I said. 'And he and his friends punched me.' - I said, pointing to my face.*

*'Tony and his friends are jerks. Why don't they like you?' - she asked.*

*'That's because my family is Russian and I have an accent'. - I answered.*

*'I like your accent, it's cute.' - she said.*

*And that was the day we became friends. Since that day I've had feelings for her, and each day these feelings just got stronger and stronger. She was different: she liked old things and her hobby was visiting museums and monuments. We've always had special things in our friendship like things that had a meaning for us and reminded us of each other. Sometimes we spent the whole day sending blurred pictures to each other and it felt like we would never get bored or tired. We've known each other better than anyone else, she always shares me her secrets and I share mine.*

*At first, I thought it was just a crush, because I didn't know her very well and every time she sat next to me I would get nervous. Then I was confused because I didn't think it was just a crush anymore and I couldn't take the idea of being in love with my best friend. I finally understood that friends can fall in love with each other when I was 15, the day we were rehearsing a play for school. It was the last day of rehearsal before the play. I had to organize the stage and move the things when the scene was over. I had to pay*

attention to everyone and everything that was happening, but that day I couldn't do anything. I remember she was wearing a leather jacket. I haven't got words to describe how beautiful she was. I don't know how much time I spent watching her acting. I just realized that it was my turn to organize the stage when I heard:

'WHERE IS THOMAS???? I'M GONNA KILL THAT BASTARD!' – Jack, the director, shouted. 'WHERE ARE YOU MAXIMOFF?'

'Sorry? Oh, I'm here. Why are you screaming at me?'- I said. 'Did I do something wrong?'

'You? No, can you ever do something wrong?'- said Jack, ironically.

'Sorry, I don't know what was that, I'll never do this again I'm sorry.'- I said.

'Oh, you're sorry?! THIS IS THE LAST REHEARSAL BEFORE THE PLAY AND YOU'RE SORRY!?!?!'- shouted Jack.- 'Ok. Let's do it again. But before that, let's have a 10-minute-break.'

Rachel came in my direction and said:

'What were you doing Thomas? Jack is going to kill you.'

'I...I wasn't doing...anything.'- I answered nervously.

'Tommy. You know that you can tell me everything, don't you?'- she asked.

'Yeah, I know it was just... It was nothing. Nevermind.'- I said.

'Is it Beth Richards? Sarah Hemmings? Allison Wood?'- she said. 'I can help you with them.'

'It was...it was...it was you. It has always been you.'- I said. I knew I couldn't just say that and go away, so I kissed her, and then I ran to my house.

I skipped school the whole week. I locked myself in my bedroom because I was afraid Rachel would come to my house to say she didn't like me back. How did it end? Well, she came to my house a week after and she said that she got very confused when I kissed her, but she felt something that moment. She said that we had to try and see how it would go. I guess it went well, now we are...Well, I will tell you where we are later. First I have to tell you the rest of the story. Let's go back to the graduation day.

Rachel and I didn't go to the party that happened after the graduation ceremony, we went to my house and started a movie marathon. I had organized a surprise for her. She liked visiting monuments, so I would take her to Stonehenge, her favorite monument. Her dream was to visit it. She used to say that Stonehenge is mysterious because they built it in stages, three or four stages. She was going to love it. Her birthday was going to be two days later, but I had to tell her that day. I made some popcorn and waited her to find something.

'Tommy?' - she said.

'Hm?' - I said.

'There is something weird under this popcorn.' - she said, worried.- 'I think it's a cockroach. Tommy! Take this thing away, please.'

She was so scared. She is afraid of cockroaches, but I couldn't let it screw my surprise up, so I said:

'Is it moving?'

'No.' - she said.

'Well, so I'm sure it isn't a cockroach. Take it out.'- I said.- 'C'mon, let me see it.'

'Ok.' - she said. 'THOMAS. WHAT'S THIS?!? TOMMY YOU DIDN'T!'

'You know, I kind of got a job at a pizza place for a while.'- I said. 'But, I mean, it's not important, you're wasting your time, Rach. We leave like tomorrow 10 am and you're here looking at me. Oh, you should pack some warm clothes because I heard that in England it's kind of cold.'

'TOMMY. I. WHY? I...' - she said. 'THOMAS DMITRI MAXIMOFF I LOVE YOU.'

We took the plane in the next morning at 10. I won't tell you what time we got there, in what hotel we stayed or what we ate for lunch because it's not important, you just have to know that we were finally there.

Her eyes were shining, she couldn't stop smiling. Wow, watching her was like watching the sunset. That moment I felt like I was complete. In that moment all I could think was: she is so beautiful. I love her. Oh how I love her. I'm so lucky to have her and I want to spend the rest of my life with her. I could stay there looking at her forever; I would never get tired. She is what I need. She makes me happy. She is the only one that can make me laugh when I'm sad. I smile every time I look at her. She makes me want to be a better person. She completes me.

She looked at me and said:

*'Thomas, I love you.'*

*'Rachel, you're the best thing that has ever happened to me'.- I said.*

*I didn't have words to say how much I love her, so I just kissed her. That kiss was different from the others. It had something more. It had not only passion, but love, real love. I could still feel the taste of her lips on mine.*

*I learned something that moment: we don't search for love, we try to help love to find us. But the truth is that love only finds us at the right time. It doesn't matter if you try your best. Love finds us when we need it the most and when we less expect it.*