**23.06.17**

Today is a typical day – I thought and stood up. It was a beautiful Friday morning. I went to the bathroom, looked into the mirror and asked myself: “Who decides what I do every day?” The answer couldn’t be different than: “Only me, of course!”. I was feeling cheerful all morning. I made a cup of tea for myself, dressed up in my favourite tight jeans and left home.

‘Hey, do you want a lift?’ – somebody shouted behind my back. I turned around and I saw him. That was my neighbour. He was sitting in his car and looking at me with that smile which I really liked. He was a Taxi driver.

‘Yeah, sure. But I will not pay you!’

‘Sure, like always.’ – He answered and opened the door for me.

‘Thanks!’ – I said and sat next to him.

‘Are you going to school?’

‘No, I’m getting married.’ – I laughed and we left our street.

‘What a beautiful wedding dress!’ – He said and he winked to me.

I smiled.

‘Hey, do you know about the new competition? Young people from all over the world come to Valetta where it takes place, to show what they can do. It is a very diverse competition. You can dance, act, paint, photograph, make films or music. It’s important to share your abilities.’

‘Is it only for artists?’

‘Yes, it is. In the jury there are students which came from as many as on eighty different countries. It’s compulsory to know at least one language fluently. And what’s more important, there are no restrictions to touch the basics issues of nationality, religion or politics.’

‘Nice. What about the money?’

‘The fee is 200€ per week. The organization helps students if they need money.’

‘I like it. When will it take place?’

‘Next week.’

‘Next week?!’

‘Joke. Next month.’ – He smiled and winked to me again.

‘I hate you.’

‘I know.‘

‘I’m allergic to you.’

‘I will be missing you, but I think you should try!’

‘Try what?’

‘Try to win the competition.’

‘Please, I’m not good enough.’

‘How long have you acted?‘

‘Thirteen years.’

‘You see?’

‘I prefer dancing to acting.’

‘You’d rather be a film director!’

‘Dancing film director!’ – I corrected him and we laughed.

**22.07.17**

‘Take stewed trout with courgettes and steamed salmon with couscous, please’ – said my mom. She cooked this for me.

‘Snack and fast food you can buy everywhere but they contain lots of calories which cause health problems like diabetes, heart diseases and strokes. Remember.’

‘Cancer and obesity too, of course. I know, mom!’ – I answered her and kissed her on her cheek. – ‘I love you, I’ll be careful. Bye!’

I left my home full of doctors and started a great journey – my trip to Malta.

**23.07.17**

The hall was full of acrobats, dancers, gymnasts, jugglers and trapeze artists. I went through the corridor missing training magicians and human statues. I walked into the second hall. There were lots of musicians, singers and storytellers. I was standing in shock and watching this distrusting.

‘Hi!’ – somebody scared me – ‘May I help you?’

I turned around and saw her. Short petite girl. She had curly black short hair and big black eyes. She was smiling. She had a very beautiful smile.

‘Yes, I’m looking for the staff room!’ – I whispered amazed of her beauty.

‘You are new! No problem. Follow me!’

We went along the hall and walked into a third one. It was as huge as the first one. My head was full of the screams and whispers. In this hall there were actors and film directors. This much I was sure.

‘The second door on your left.’

‘Thanks.’

‘You are welcome!’

‘I’m sorry. I’m Nel. What’s your name?’

‘Ow, forgive me… I’m Chiara.’

‘Nice name!’

‘Yours too!’ – She smiled – ‘Where do you come from?’

‘Poland. And you?’

‘I’m from Italy. I’m going to show my photos and music here. What are you going to share about?’

‘I’m torn too. I come here with scenario and short etude.’

‘So, you will be at the “Vinci” group like me!’

‘What does it mean?’

‘When you prepare something more than from one category, you have to go to the “Vinci” group. There are people with some talents.’

‘I see!’

‘In my room I’ve got one free bed. Come to me!’

‘It’s very nice. Thanks!’

‘Stop talking. Just go to the staff, tell them what you have to tell and come. It’s not far from here.’

‘So where does it take place?’

‘Well, we’ll go upstairs and fourth door on your right will be number 201. That’s it!’

**26.07.17**

This place is adorable. I feel so tired, but these people give me new energy. Workshops here are very demanding but I’ve learnt here more than I had in my whole life. I’m proud I came here. It was the best decision of my life. I dream about the kind of life like I have here. Life among artists. We are from various countries but it doesn’t matter. Actually, we don’t feel any language barriers. I’m in love with this place and the people.

**28.07.17**

After five days I knew almost all the building. About a hundred new people and a new friend. Chiara turned out to be a lovable person. My accommodation was really great. Apart from me there were also two other girls in the room. Annalisa from Eesti who could sing and play on eleven instruments and Tula from Greece. She was an ice skater, a gymnast and a trapeze artist. Both were funny people. They were eating a lot and listening to loud music. Every evening they were making a party in our room. I loved them, but Chiara was my best friend. She was standing next to me and holding my hand. It was this day. It was time to go on stage and show them. Show the jury my abilities.

‘Are you ready to show them who you are?’

‘Yes, I am’ – I answered with deep sigh.

‘I believe in you, honey. Burn it to the ground!’ – She whispered and gave me a kick in the ass.

I stood in the middle of this huge stage. So small. So alone. The music started. It's time to show them what is in my heart. I felt it very clear. My heartbeat was so strong.

I started my dance straight from the heart. I really felt it. Every small emotion in my soul, every memory in my heart I was feeling it in my muscles. My body was my voice. I stopped thinking. I was giving myself. I forgot about the jury. I forgot about the spectators. I forgot about the competition. I had stepped into a different reality. I was in another world. I was dancing about hunger. Every hunger you can imagine. I was alone in the middle of an unfamiliar world. I was dancing about fear and I totally lost awareness of the dancing. I was just sailing. Finally, I felt abandoned. So useless. So unwanted. It was a hopeless feeling but suddenly I heard something inside my head. No, that was behind me. A message. I am strong. I’ll kill everything that makes me depressed. I’m a queen. This much I’m sure. I won this war.

**30.07.17**

I know I was stunning. I gave them the truth. I gave them all myself. Two days ago I was satisfied. Today I am proud. I was standing in the middle of the crowd. We were waiting for the announcement of the results of the competition. We were all extremely stressed. The jury of eighty walked into a stage. They looked like the kings of our lifes. All were young. Almost as young as we were. One man raised his hand. Everybody became silent. He smiled and started talking to us.

‘You came here from all over the world to show your abilities. You were living here seven days. You took part in full-time workshops. You were working hard. Day by day you were training twice a day for five hours.’ – He looked at us with pride. – ‘Day by day and everyday.’ – He laughed. – ‘Some of you had no sleep because of the parties. It’s an additional training.’ – Everybody laughed, I liked him. – ‘Lots of you slept only few hours this week. You were getting up early to train and you were also training after parties. All of you are the winners. You proved your strength, endurance and force. You were resistant. Most of you were eating almost nothing. A slice of some cold meat and scrambled eggs for the whole day isn’t a lot. I think you agree with me. I know almost everybody here is on a diet, but you hadn’t got varied meals here. Even cutlery was a problem. I will not hide it. It was a test. At first day came here a hundred thousand wishful of victory people. After first day twenty percent escaped. To final exam survived only seventy-eight thousand volunteers. In each category jury chose ten people. Ten winners.’ – The crowd began to cheer. – ‘Don’t celebrate. You showed us your motivation, discipline and willingness. People who are chose by jury are extremely demanding for themselves but they should to know it isn’t enough. Their personal development will change with us. Their career won’t be easy. They’ll must to work long hours to get wage or salary which sometimes can be too low to live as worthily as they’ll expect. Seldom they’ll be unemployed, hardly ever work on shifts, but often it can be something different than their dream job. We will give them schools and jobs for four years. We will pay for their artistic development for six years. Finally I’ll tell you who are the winners.

He was reading surnames by few minutes but it seemed to be like an eon. I was so stressed. I was getting crazy. All my body was shaking. I saw black hole in front of my eyes. I almost collapsed when he read my surname in the end.