14th August 2016

When I was looking trough my old photos today, an adventure from the past came to my mind.

It happened two years ago. It was a beautiful, hot and sunny day. There weren’t any clouds in the sky. Me and my mum were on the beach spending time together. My mum was sunbathing on a blue towel with yellow stripes under a big red umbrella. I was walking in the beautiful, soft, yellow sand and collecting shells, because I love them, especially light pink ones with delicate structure. There were small waves that looked like wrinkles, which were slowly moving in my direction. The sea had impressive deep blue and green colour that only nature could make.

Then, I saw something in the water. I was curious what it was, because in the sun it was shining like a diamond. When the sea threw out the mysterious object I saw it was a bottle. But it wasn’t an ordinary bottle. It was a glass bottle closed with cork and inside, there as a folded piece of paper. I was really surprised so I decided to open it. The paper was a letter. It said:

“Hello,

I’m Rafael and whoever found this letter – I send greetings to you from magical Venice! I wanted to make a friend in a special way. So if you want to be my friend, here you have my e-mail address: [rafael.massimo@e-mail.com](mailto:rafael.massimo@e-mail.com).

Write to me soon,

Rafael”

I showed the letter to my mum and we decided to answer Rafael’s message. When he found out that I had received his letter, he was really surprised, because he hadn’t expected that someone would contact him.

Soon, me and Rafael became best pen-friends. He was only one year older than me so I got on with him very well. We also had similar music taste and liked the same writers. He was crazy about fantasy books and he was keen on One Republic’s music just like me! He also started teaching me some Italian and I really liked it. He wanted to meet me in real, no virtual world, so he was very pleased when I once told him I’d like to visit him in Venice. He invited me for the carnival, because he wanted to show me how Venice people celebrate this magical time. My mum agreed to this trip. She knew it would be a fantastic experience for me.

Only two months later I was already standing in the arrivals hall in the airport in Italy. I was standing on my toes because I was looking for Rafael in the crowd. And then I saw him. He was tall and slim. He didn’t look like strongman, but I could see exercised a lot. His hair was curly and blond with a few darker highlights. He had big eyes, the colour of stormy sky. I could also see a lot of tiny freckles on his face which looked funny but also charming. When he saw me, a big smile appeared on his face and he waved to me. In his hand, I saw a big piece of paper with my name written with colour pencils and beautiful flowers drown around it. When I finally stood by his side, he asked me about the flight, because he knew it was my first time on the plane. I told him that at first I felt a bit scared but when we were flying over those beautiful, white and a bit fluffy clouds, I relaxed. Those views were so impressive that I promised myself I will paint them, when I got home.

Rafael took me to his house and introduced me to his parents. They were very nice for me and said that they are really happy, that their son has a friend in other country. Rafael also gave me a beautiful room with a big comfortable bed and a lovely balcony. But the thing I liked mostly was a small but charming garden with many kinds of roses, which are my favourite flowers and a big stone fountain with unicorn, which stand in the middle of the lawn. I was impressed because his house wasn’t only beautiful and big, but also very old and I love old buildings.

Next day Rafael took me for a trip around Venice. I was sitting in a beautiful boat and my friend was steering it. Sometimes he stopped to show me incredible buildings covered with ivy. They all looked lovely with those colourful shutters. Then we got out of the boat and went for a walk to see beautiful palaces and squares with fountains. We also ate a tasty pizza in one of the best restaurants in Venice. We ended our day with gondola trip. I just loved our gondola. It was made of dark wood, in some places covered with gold paint. In the front, it had got a beautiful carved seahorse and inside it was full of big cushions so it was very comfortable.

Then came carnival and we spent the whole next week dancing in the streets, watching colourful parades and firework displays. I also bought for myself a beautiful princess costume and a real Venice mask.

But what is good always has its end so the day of coming home was approaching inevitably.

It was the day before my returning home. Rafael decided to show me all secrets of his house. We went downstairs to the darkest room I had ever seen. Even though we had a torch, we couldn’t see too much. I leaned against the wall. One of the bricks moved a bit and then the room became full of light. We couldn’t see the source of the strange light. Suddenly loads of smoke appeared from somewhere. We were very scared. I even screamed. And then we saw three mysterious people in the smoke. They were tall, wore black hoods and looked a bit like skeletons.

-Who are you? – asked Rafael

- We are the good ghosts of the city, – said the strangers together – we protected Venice our whole lives and after death we also do it. We used to live in this house.

Then the smoke formed into a sphere and inside of it we could see whole Venice, but it looked more magical. All seahorses, unicorns, lions, mermaids and nixes were moving. The ghosts told us everything about the history of Venice and revealed all the secrets of every monument of winged lion and every brick at the Saint Mark’s Square. We discovered that inside everything in Venice there is a little magic that protects the city from sinking.

After this meeting we knew everything about all the mysteries of this city. When the ghosts disappeared and we got out of the room we decided not to tell anyone.

The next day was really sad, because I had to leave Venice. But when we were saying goodbye to each other we knew that our friendship will last.

And when I was flying above clouds I still couldn’t believe what had happened to me. What a fantastic adventure! Maybe it was destiny?

Julia Świtek 1B

Gimnazjum nr 58 im. Jana Nowaka – Jeziorańskiego w Poznaniu