



ERASMUS+

Story of a friendship

PART ONE

(by Italian students)

I think I could not exactly explain the term friendship, because this is not only a concept but it's a feeling that holds a lot of affective, moral, psychological aspects that I can't express with words.

I deeply feel in my heart its strength and comforting capacity, its stimulating energy and I think to be very lucky because I have had the possibility to experience what having a friend means.

I will never forget that day when a sudden phone call late at night arrived and changed my father's face expression and my life.

Curious for the unusual event, my mother, my sister and I approached the jamb of the door.

Breathless and in absolute silence we listened to the conversation, I mean my father's answers and we observed every enigmatic expression of his face.

We realized that on the other side of the phone somebody was announcing him something important, beautiful and rewarding concerning his job.

Anyway, he listened to all that with a controlled joy and I soon understood that behind all this there was a price to pay.

I had seen my father working hard with an admirable sense of duty that sometimes I could not understand.

In less than a couple of years he had managed to take the company where he was working out of the crisis and find the right strategies to make it grow.

Everybody respected him, and now he was receiving the precious chance to have an even more prestigious role: becoming the manager of a very important European company.

It was "wonderful news", "an awesome opportunity", "a golden chance" "a renounced career leap" and while he was explaining the content of that phone call, I was waiting that he revealed that uncertainty I had seen on his face, the reason of a suffocated joy, as I supposed, that "but" which he soon said.

So, he used words like “dislocation” “detached office”, “abroad”, “sacrifice of all”, “immediate and inevitable transfer” that stunned my mind and prevented me from lucidly following his speech and filled my heart with a deep anguish.

I was 15, I was about half way through the school year and I was attending the second year of high school in a city of southern Italy from which I had never moved, except for short holiday trips, always doing the countdown waiting for the return.

I did not love leaving very much. I enjoyed going out with my classmates and organize myself with them. I loved spending my time in my room, that was my shelter, my headquarters provided with all things necessary to survive: colors and paper to give a shape to my ideas; the Fender that I strum imagining to be on the stage like one of my favourite idols, applauded by all the school.

My experience was limited to the small world that surrounded me, made up of people and friendly things.

My father’s transfer, suddenly, forced all of us to leave our house, city, everything, my world.

It was as my all life, everything that was part of it, had lost importance in front of a need that took away all the rest.

No matter how long we talked about it in the family, and even if I understood the importance of that choice, I felt oppressed by something much bigger than me that had made me lose everything, irritated me, crushed me, annihilated me.

I would not see my classmate again, the red-haired girl of the next class who made my heart beat fast, I would have been replaced in the soccer team, supplanted by another who would wear the number “11” shirt and would conquer my friends and steal my space.

I was leaving the reassuring certain for the terrifying uncertain.

And while the car, at dawn, was moving away from home, I embraced with my look the streets, the buildings, the tree-lined avenues, the shops, the fast food on Saturdays afternoon and the ice-cream shop on Sundays, I was melancholy and I had pessimistic thoughts about the future that awaited me. After a two hours flight a driver with a dazzling smile who held a sheet of paper with my father’s name written on it picked us at the airport.

I was immediately struck by the surrounding landscape, it seemed that even the earth, in honor of the new leader, had worn a white velvet blanket.

I gripped in my jacket and put my hands in the pockets to protect myself from the cold that was freezing my body, my heart and my mind.

I thought that we had left our lush and warm land for a very cold and dangerous place, since we risked slipping with each step.

My mum with a light and reassuring tone smiled and expressed the need to buy clothes more suitable for those temperatures, an idea that excited my sister and threw me into despair.

The comfortable straight road on which we had driven at the exit of the airport, after several kilometers left the place to a narrow road where the houses became more and more rare until they disappeared to leave space to a dense patch of trees.

I carefully looked at the landscape with my forehead against the window. The road became impervious and climbed up the mountains, between bends, hairpin bends and steep climbs until it penetrated more and more into a real wood in which vigorous firs rose upwards as to touch the sky.

The white foliage of the trees danced with the light wind and waved on both sides in front of me, as they wanted to greet me.



Even the earth seemed to wear its more candid clothing of shining brilliants to make homage to the newcomers.

My look was enchanted by that unprecedented beauty that surprised me, but when I looked at the roadside, at the edge of the steep place, my heart fell and then jolted between fear and emotion making me feel a sense of vertigo.

I glimpsed down a river, in which a white blanket, which from time to time, let us glimpse what force was under it, hid the vigor of the water.



Exactly like in my heart. I apparently looked calm and controlled but inside me a surge of emotions, fear, anger, uncertainty stirred furiously.

The dusk enveloped the landscape that flowed before my eyes and made the footprints, which at times I could see in the snow, even more mysterious.

I began to glimpse old stone houses with very sloping roofs that faced the road, side by side and heaps of carefully cut wood piled up beside them.



It was the oldest part of the mountain village.

Suddenly the driver stopped the car and invited us to get off. We were already there.

The new house was small, warm and welcoming and I immediately went for seeing what would be my room, I needed to find a new nest where I could take refuge.

After dinner and my parents reassurances we all went to bed but despite the tiredness I couldn't sleep peacefully.

I was very restless. I thought of the day after, the new school, the new class, the new language that I had to learn quickly.

Mom's alarm clock set off just when I was able to sleep.

I wore heavy clothes and my parents took us to school.

We crossed the courtyard under the curious eyes of all the boys who whispered something that I could not understand.

Everyone in my family was familiar with English.

My father used to say that "English is not important but essential, a passport to the world!"

Instead, despite the innumerable courses to which he had enrolled me and that I attended listlessly, I could hardly communicate in this language and this made me even more anxious.

All this seemed like the bill to pay because I had not paid much attention. The headmaster of the new school welcomed us and tried to reassure me and said that in the class where I was, several teachers and students could also speak Italian and encouraged me to make friendship.

I would not even be able to describe in my language the great sensation of uneasiness and anguish I felt on the first day that I was in the new class. I saw twenty-three guys looking at me with a slightly hostile curiosity and who, tacitly, seemed express the desire to put me to the test, to judge if I was worthy to be with them.

I was very anxious and paralyzed by the emotions and I began to stutter when the teacher asked me what my name was.

"Ru...Rru..." like a record that had jammed.

All my classmates burst out laughing and some shouted scornfully: "RURU' has arrived".

Sunk in the shame, humiliated and incapable of saying a single word, I sat in a free place of the second row, I lowered my head and I brought a hand to the forehead to avoid the look of everybody and in the same time it was a way not to see anything. The teacher called the class to order and gave instructions for the lesson.

While I was closed in my thoughts, I felt something sharp penetrating into my back that stuck in my sweater.

It was a "dart" that is a rolled sheet of exercise-book with a pin in the point.

My anguish turned immediately in anger.

I turned immediately to find out who had launched the “dart” with the intention to hit him, but I saw behind me a guy who was smiling friendly and told me. “Ciao, vuoi dire me come ti chiami tu?”

My fury calmed down but I did not answer and I just looked at him.

I felt a sense of relief, because, even though in a rather abrupt way, someone was trying to talk to me.

He had to wait the following day to talk to me, but since then we started having a dialogue and we became inseparable friends.

We reciprocally learned our different languages, we talked about so many unknown things for each other, we exchanged our experiences, we were fine and we felt the desire to spend our afternoons together.

Our friendship became ever more profound, becoming a mutual stimulus to face and overcome many difficulties.

He had managed to make the village beautiful, the day fun, the curves and the bends hilarious, to transform the ice that covered the river in water, to make the world around me better and make me feel that place also mine.

I was sometimes full of doubts about the decisions to take, scared by the news, disoriented by the changes and above all reflective, but he was too precipitous in his choices and sometimes "hit his nose" violently.

Our characters complemented each other and we got used to discussing for a long time before we took a decision, from an enrollment to a sport activity, to the way of spending free time, up to the most important choices of our life.

I liked and spurred on his way of seeing the world. His judgment of me made me feel like a better person and he loved and amused all that I could do.

He could always grasp my mood changes, he knew how and when to be near me and relieved me in moments of discouragement.

He had become the best friend I ever had.

I was happy again and soon I realized what an important opportunity the fate had offered to me.