

III cl A

50th Earth Day

22nd April 2020

Shakespeare's sister - Agenda 2030

Hi everyone,

Hi everybody, we are the III cl A!

With this project we want to tell you a story, a particular one: the story of a woman, so intelligent and smart, but whose mind was hampered by the society. She was Shakespeare's sister and, like him, she was an incredible genius! Unfortunately, the time in which she was born, was not so open-minded, therefore she was restrained at home. Poor lady! What a pity!

Now, what we want to tell you, is a story on what could have happened had she rebelled, had she decided to change her situation. We took inspiration from the text by *Virginia Woolf* "Shakespeare's sister", and we invented an ending to the story, either positive or not. In this way we wanted to ponder on the values present among the 17 Goals for a Sustainable Development from the *Agenda 2030*: gender equality, no poverty, quality education, decent work, peace and justice. We also considered *Malala*'s speech for the Nobel Peace Prize of 2014.

How free women were? Why there was this need for discrimination? But, most importantly... What is the situation like now?

We cannot truly understand it, because we live in countries where this discrimination has almost disappeared. Although it is not like this everywhere. Women are still trying to affirm themselves; they want to be recognized; they want their rights to be respected.

Why can't they go to school? Why is it not allowed to them to learn, work and become 'someone' in their future? Are men scared of them? Is it their way to suppress women, so that they cannot do any harm to mankind?

We wrote different endings to *Shakespeare's sister's* story.

Please, enjoy and, above all, consider what is beyond a simple tale.

It hadn't been long since Judith left the house at night to go for a walk in the nearby meadows, thinking about what she wanted to do in her future.

She had a thousand thoughts rattling around in her head.

She already had a dream, that of becoming an actress like her brother, but she knew very well that she was not allowed because she was a woman and she knew that her parents would not have allowed and supported her.

There were many plans in her mind and Judith was sure that, if it had been possible, she would have made a career, and who knows, maybe she would have worked with her brother.

Immersed in her thoughts, she decided to lie down on the grass to look at the stars and fantasize a little more about her future.

The hours passed, it became late at night, and tiredness began to be felt; therefore Judith, forgetting about being away from home for a long time, closed her eyes and fell asleep.

She had escaped from her daily reality for one night and was happy to have done so.

As she was sleeping, she began to have chain dreams, strange and realistic ones.

*First of all, she dreamt of starting a career like her brother,
for this reason she decided to run away from home.*

She was not cultured, but she was willing to learn and study more to start acting.

*She had always been held back from achieving her biggest dream
and now she wanted to take the chance.*

*She was happy, even though she felt guilty for running away from home,
since no member of her family would have imagined it.*

*Over time, she tried in every way to convince the men of the company
saying that she was ready to do anything to act.*

*Judith also told them that she had a deep interest in acting and that it would have been nice if,
for the first time in history, a woman played a role in a performance.*

*The men were convinced by her words, but they told her that she should have initially played less
important parts, and that, if she had talent, she could have continued to play even primary roles.*

*They advised her to start studying the textbooks offered by them,
which concerned the most famous authors.*

She did not refuse, on the contrary, she could not wait to prove her potential.

*During this journey, she lodged in her brother's home and, also thanks to his help,
Judith asserted herself and became a successful actress for the first time in all history.*

After that, Judith woke up in a restaurant, not knowing how she had got there.

Everything started again.

Everything changed.

She took the chance and decided to eat something.

*The young woman called the waitress and asked for a rare steak with a portion of chips,
a beer, and a piece of apple pie.*

While eating, she started to think about her uncle, who had disappeared when she was just a kid.

*Judith missed him a lot and when she asked for the bill,
she was given a leaflet advertising a show.*

On the front page there was a man, whose face was familiar.

Judith soon realized that he was Jace, her uncle.

She was so glad to know that he was alive that she cried.

After paying, the girl left the restaurant and went to the theatre to see him.

*She sat along roofed benches that surrounded the stage,
just like the richest members of the audience used to do.*

During the play, Judith noticed a man who was staring at her.

*At first, she ignored him, but then since she was fed up and everything was becoming awkward,
she took the chance and went to talk to him.*

He was so embarrassed that he ran away, but she chased him.

They talked for a while and discovered that they had many things in common.

His name was Alex and he had hazel eyes.

They fell in love and started to date secretly.

The boy was grown up by a peasant and he loved his father, even though he was poor.

After a couple of months, when he died, a hidden truth came out.

Alex was the son of an actor who had abandoned him when he was just a baby.

When he found out about his adoption, he was upset and went to seek his father.

Once he found him, they were reconciled and Alex's father, whose name was Simon, met Judith.

*As soon as she told him that she wanted to become an actress,
he allowed her to play a role in his play.
While rehearsing, she met Jace, who was so proud of his nephew that he couldn't help crying.
She soon became the first actress of her country and a heroine,
since she was able to prove the world that women were able to pursue their dreams, too.
Another happy ending, isn't it?*

*All's well what ends well, until you wake up in the middle of nowhere,
which is what happened next.
Judith got up not knowing where she was.
She wandered around the centre of the unknown town.
She just went sightseeing and promised herself that she would have continued to keep dreaming
and pursuing her dreams, but she knew that she was not William Shakespeare.
She was born in a century in which women were considered nothing compared to men,
useful "objects" to keep alive a dynasty or useful to the house.
She was born in the wrong century and, for this reason, she had to bear the consequences.
Even if it was very difficult, she faced all the problems and started writing with her name.
Judith began acting secretly in her bedroom when she was back from the theatre.
She used to act alone with a copy of the script she borrowed from the actors of the play.
She did this for three years and then she finally achieved her target only thanks to her strong
desire of acting and becoming an inspiration for the other women.*

*Later, another situation came up.
Any man told her that she had no chance of being a writer as she was a nullity.
Their words hurt her like a sword, but still she did not give up.
Judith kept writing and decided to hang all of her poems and theatre scenes on the walls of
London with the hope that someone walking around the city would notice her enormous
potential.
She also went to talk to some people in charge of theatre companies, showing them her skills,
but none of them took her seriously.
All the members of the theatre did not stop laughing at her.
Judith ran away in tears, but she still had not given up.
After a few days, she decided to show up at another theatre and, as usual,
she showed her potential and received the usual criticism.
She was so frustrated that she threw all of her scripts onto the ground and unexpectedly a
handsome, cultured, and elegant gentleman, who had sat at a sideline, came forward.
He was amazed by her performance and decided to take Judith at court, where she would have
secretly written the scripts for the duke's theatre.
But that is not the end.*

*Once more, Judith realized that even in London, a city that she considered as more advanced
than the others, women weren't considered in some sectors, such as the one of theatre and,
tired of bad comments, she decided to disguise herself as a man.
To achieve her dream, the one of acting on a stage,
she had the idea to go to her friend Tom's house in London.
Judith asked him if he could lend her some clothes, a pair of shoes and a hat for a day.*

The same night she went to a bar dressed like a male where there were some actors. A girl named Mary saw Judith and, thinking that she was a man, fell in love with her. Judith, keeping her secret identity, managed to have an audition for the following day. At the audition, twenty men had to perform to take part in the new show of the season.

Nowadays gender equality is a subject of frequent discussion, some people believe that the topic in question is just a myth and therefore not existing, while others, relying on new laws and decrees that have been recently established, have no doubt that gender equality is indeed undeniably present in modern society. Yet, reading the story of Shakespeare's sister, the one question that might come to our mind is: what would have happened to her if she lived during these days?

The majority of people reading this, probably have in hand free access to a good education and are endowed with all of the rights you are supposed to have as soon as you are born, contrarily to some of the LEDCs where these laws are not valid or simply just not respected. In this readjustment of '*Shakespeare's sister*' the students of III cl A decided to end the story with a different outcome. We did this in order to 'modernise' the story and worked on highlighting the fifth point of the Agenda 2030 which is, as a matter of fact, *gender equality*. We found this point a key fundament for the ending of our narration.

Moreover, we determined that another aim for this story was to link the actions of Shakespeare's sister to the movements of other extraordinary women that we studied, who fought and gave up a lot to put a stop to gender inequality, for instance *Malala Yousafzai*, simply known as Malala, who is a Pakistani activist for female education and risked her life just to assure to women an education. The story of Malala utterly moved many of us and therefore we decided that it would be right to reflect the strength and boldness of Malala on to Shakespeare's sister.

Thus, all things considered, we could say that the way we decided to conclude the stories with both negative and positive outcomes, could be impersonated as a comparison to the old *Shakespeare's sister* where the girl couldn't get on stage and did not have any right to perform, and the new Shakespeare sister, ergo a female with a lot of courage and strength to fight this injustice.

*Judith woke up early that morning, she was too excited for the great debut.
She went to the kitchen and got a hot cup of milky coffee (her favourite one),
took some biscuits and sat on the sofa in front of the window,
facing a tired and young London that was slowly waking up.*

*After her fifteen minutes of heaven she suddenly came back to reality,
she brought the cup back to the kitchen, leaving it into the full and old dripping sink.
“This evening I should really wash these dishes...” she thought exactly like she had been doing
for the past three days exiting from the shower.
After putting on her favourite casual outfit she grabbed an apple and went out the woody door.*

*She reached the theater at nine o’ clock.
Fortunately she hadn’t found any traffic and she exceptionally arrived on time.
“Good morning everybody: are you ready for the great show?” – she shouted – “We still have a
lot of things to do so saddle up!”*

*The job of playwright had always fascinated her, the power of writing about someone else’s life,
making him or her do whatever she wanted
gave her an indescribable sense of responsibility and happiness.*

*After a whole day of practice the actors were ready,
the costumes perfectly sewed and the background detailly painted.
The lights dimmed, the curtain slowly pulled up, silence in the tribune,
everybody took a deep breath and...*

here we go ... act!

And this is how the students of III cl A though it would have ended the story if it had been set nowadays.

Thank you for reading :)