

# ON THE EDGE OF IGNALINA

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On the edge of Ignalina close to the forest there stands an impressive building housing High School for 12 years. Young people at the age of 14-19 horse around at school every day. Each day is different, full of adventures and thrill. There is life inside.

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One morning as usual my friend and I were on our way to school. Coming close to the school building we saw a crowd of people, an ambulance and a police car. „What has happened?“ we wondered. People in the crowd were whispering and waiting for the news. After a while the principle of the school showed up and informed the there would be no classes that day. All students cheered but my friend Ieva and me.

When the crowd thinned out and other schoolchildren were about to go home we couldn't leave. At the right point we approached a policeman and asked him what had happened. We were told that a crime had been committed. A murder. The schoolgirl who had been murdered appeared to be our classmate. Ieva burst into tears. I could hardly stay calm.

The next day lessons were in process. During the second lesson the policeman we had met the previous day entered the classroom and asked us to help him to investigate the murder. He took us to the police headquarters. We were asked to give information about the murdered girl, her relations, possible foes and suspects. We had known the girl for long and had close relationships with her. We told everything we knew so that the murderer could be found and punished. We felt like detectives in this case.

Not long afterwards the murderer was exposed. It happened to be Alvita, the victim's best friend.

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One more amazing day at school. The early autumn morning was promising much fun. The sun was shining. It was war. Even the teachers of the school were in good mood. Everything seemed to be fine to everybody except Vaidotas. As usual looking glum and lonely he was sitting at the window alone with glazy stare.

Vaidotas was smart, reasoned, keen-minded and discreet. He liked reading books and reciting great philosophers. He was loved by teachers and his marks were high. However, he was lonely. He had no friends. His classmates treated him like outcast and call him names. He was a social misfit and a cocky upstart to them.

Vaidotas was leaving the school canteen reading his chemistry notes when he saw three guys mugging a young girl. He approached the company and tried to protect the girl. He was brutally attacked and clobbered. After the accident the trio withdrew. Vaidotas' eyebrow was cut, his knee and elbow were bloody. He had a black eye.

The frightened girl cautiously came up to Vaidas. Her name was Agnè and she learned in the parallel class. Vaidas used to know her as a friendly, amiable and kind contemporary, always smiling when addressed, but he never thought of speaking to her. And now she looked so beautiful..

- „Is everything OK? Have they hurt you? Everything is because of me..." asked Agnè with concern in her eyes.

Vaidotas was captivated by the azure of her eyes deep enough to drawn. Getting over he noticed the girl waiting for his answer.

-„Hmm... It's Ok. Some bruises...Don't mind..." Vaidotas was surprised at his stammering.

-„You've saved me from those beasts. I want to thank you and I'm inviting you out to the town square and have some ice-cream with me tonight. „No" is a wrong answer." - There were sparkles in her eyes. With a boyish shy simper on his face Vaidas said,

- „All right then. I'm not going to say „No".

The girl was still smiling at him. A spark of some feeling was felt in them when they rushed to the classes chatting.



From that day on they were a couple. Agnè was a good companion. They spent their free time together, kept each other company on the way to school. Vaidas helped Agnè with the coming final exams.

Some tongues wagged that Agnè was taking advantage of Vaidas, but the young people did not pay attention and enjoyed each other's company.

On Thursday after school Agnè and Vaidas were in the school stadium. They were sitting, chatting and footling about, when Agnè with her eyes down asked shyly:

- You know, I have always wanted to ask you about a relationship between a girl and a boy, I have in mind not „simple“ relationship but something more?

Vaidas stared at her -it seemed to her- like at an idiot, then growled out something like:

- You mean love? I'd say it's stupid and childish. It's not love. It's nothing but admiration and appreciation. It doesn't last long. You think there might be „something more“ between us?

A little bit astonished Agnè gave him a playful poke on the shoulder and laughed:

- You are the biggest cynic I have ever known. I would never have a serious relationship with you...

Embarrassed Agnè stuck out the tip her tongue- the way she used to do in her childhood when she got angry. Vaidas eyes sparkled at her frantically. He had his blood rush to the head. He got angry and resentful. He grabbed Agnè and started tickling her. She was screaming. He was laughing. An old lady passing by glanced at them and smiled kindly thinking that they were rejoicing. It was hard to imagine that they two were fighting.

Two months passed. Agnè realised that she wanted "something more" from their friendship. Having screwed up her courage she decided to have a word with Vaidas to uncloze to him. One evening on their way from the library she breathlessly reeled off:

- I'm not aware of how it happened but I'm madly in love with you like an idiot, and I am sure I want „ something more“...

Horror- stricken Vaidas snapped out ironically:

-My dear, I can't give you what you want. I can't love you!



Though it was hard to see Agnè's eyes full of tears he continued:

- Love hurts. It deprives of everything we've created. I don't want to get hurt and discomposed. So, let's end our relationship now.

The guy turned around, left Agnè with the face awry with pain and left for the night. The girl couldn't control herself. Crying she screamed so that her words could reach him:

-Coward! You're the biggest coward I have ever known! I will never be myself without you! I hate you! Go to hell, damn you!

The girl fell on her knees on the pavement sobbing. Now she realized what Vaidas' words ment: love hurts. Love took away her vitality and joy. And what is the most important it gave her a unique lesson: life is colourful, black and white and you have to appreciate it even if you do not want.

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One day all were panicked at school. There was a rumor that there were some pupils infected with fatal virus still unexplored. Nobody knew who were those pupils.. To prevent the virus from spreading nobody was allowed to leave the school building, which was surrounded by armed forces. In five minutes experts were to show up. There were no lessons. Classrooms were messy and chaotic. We were going to be locked for the coming five days!

The first night was full of strain. Nobody slept. Only horrible screams were heard. The next day fear replaced the panic. It was scary to look into each others' eyes because nobody knew who was infected and who wasn't. School classrooms were like fortresses. You could hardly break through. Teachers and pupils had divided into groups and were hiding in the classrooms. Unfortunately, signs of infection revealed themselves. Their eyes went red. They coughed out phlegm and developed sores that festered badly. Everybody tried to stay alive escaping contact with others. The night brought first casualties. Fifty people died.

Panic and strain came to a head. Those who hopelessly tried to escape from the building were shot by the guards. Despair replaced fear and depression. That day the virus killed a hundred more people.

Silence everywhere. More and more people died. Having no hope to survive before experts come, some people managed to escape. They were lucky to be not infected. They would always remember the horror they had experienced.

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Some people claim that love is immortal and everlasting. Others consider it to be an illusion. French writer A. de Saint-Exuperi wrote about love: „The beginning and the end of love are alike: while meeting you are short of words“. J.V. von Goethe said that „the crown of nature is love“. It creates differences among people as if it wants to absorb everything; it emits in order to join. Some drops from love goblet are a reward for the life full of suffering and trouble. „Love is possible after friendship, while friendship is impossible after love, because there is no medicine to cure you when you are dead.“

Everyone would choose a different quote, but definitely the right one, because love fills our life with both good and evil.

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