

In a Grid

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English translation

Dorota Koziarska



**SŁUŻBA
WIĘZIENNA**

In a Grid 8

The eighth issue of *In a Grid*. Adventure and dignity

The eighth issue of *In a Grid*. Adventure and dignity

What is adventure? It is something that changes us – a wise and profound answer. The seemingly shallow answer – that it is something that you can later tell tales about – is, come to think of it, as important and true. The *In a Grid* magazine, like the blog wkratke.pl, is such an adventure for all of us: the Authors, serving time in prisons in Olszynka Grochowska, Białołęka, Wołów, and recently also in Strzelce Opolskie. It is also an adventure that changes a lot in all of us involved in this project: the graphic designers, students, illustrators, editors from the Faculty of Law and Social Communication at SWPS in Wrocław – including myself, the person invited to be the editor-in-chief of the eighth issue of the magazine.

We all want prison writing and drawing to blossom out there in the world. Some say that only the life that gets reflected in creative work is real. We know from bitter experience that life inside prisons is all too easily forgotten, becomes invisible and somewhat unreal to those on the outside. But a fairy tale about an iron wolf in an iron castle. Yet being deprived of freedom should not and cannot mean lack of respect, visibility and meaning of "life in the castle".















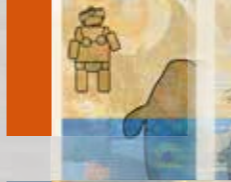









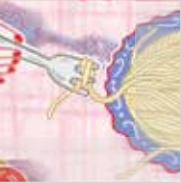


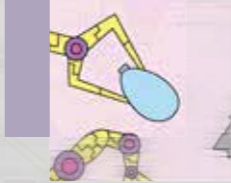

And this is exactly what *In a Grid* is about: dignity in a difficult, perhaps the most difficult situation. We want to show that life, humor, talent, the need for recognition and hunger for meaning, which can be difficult to satisfy even when free, all exist behind bars as well.

Together with the Girls from Olszynka and the Guys from Białołęka, we have compiled a list of articles for our magazine, trying to bring out the multifaceted nature of life in prison. In cooperation with the Authors from Wołów and Strzelce Opolskie, we managed to fill up our programme! The main theme of the issue is "Prison Games", while the magazine you hold in your hands opens with extensive material in which the Authors introduce themselves with the truth of their hearts (which occasionally differs a little from the truth of facts, but does that mean it is less important?). In the issue, you will find a cultural and culinary sections, advice for the soul and body, an exceptionally rich set of short stories, opinion pieces and even a poem. The issue closes with *In a Grid*'s own original Horoscope. Written with no certainty as to the date of publication, it contains advice and support valid throughout the year!

We invite you to enjoy our content!

Agata Czarnacka

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This is who I am

With a positive outlook on life, overwhelmed by my surroundings. On the outside a full-time mother ☺. I have been treated for depression for a year with various effects of pharmacotherapy (severe depressive episodes).

Karolina

True, I am, as they often say, a criminal, but also a human being, a mother, a wife, a friend, a sister. I am an explosive person – crazy, funny, but as is often the case: a hothead.

Heeli

My nickname is Mysza (Mouse). I have the soul of an artist, and my zodiac sign is Cancer. I like to meditate in order to quieten down – it helps me regain balance. I also exercise a bit to take care of my physical and mental health.

Mysza



My name is Olga, I am 22 years old. I am interested in sports, mechanics and tattoos. I got my first tattoo at the age of 17 and that's when I felt a huge passion for it. Now I have sixteen tattoos, which I feel very good about. Some of them have a huge sentimental value for me. I am perhaps most sentimental about the tattoo on my left hand, which is a rose. This rose reminds me of my grandfather I had no opportunity to meet, but I know that he is with me and supports me whenever I need it.

Nikson

Before I ended up in penitentiary, I used to be cheerful with a positive outlook on life. Mom of two daughters aged 6 and 16 – my whole world revolved around work and family. I am in a relationship with a wonderful man, the father of my younger daughter, Lenka. He adopted my older daughter when I ended up in prison. He is my support system.

This place taught me a lot of bad and a lot of good things. I've heard many stories. I know that when I get out of the penitentiary, I will change my attitude towards people who have spent time in a place like this.

Loluś

My name is Żaneta, nickname Niunia. I am a quiet person, to the point of being very unpopular. I really like drawing and writing letters. I am leaving the penitentiary soon and intend to change my life completely. I would like to get out and start over, glue my life back together. Also to get my children back. That's my life's priority.

Żaneta

Researcher of more or less trivial matters, lover of medium-rare steaks. Born in '95.

Panie Prezydencie, Proszę o Ułaskawienie.

A woman once very cheerful, now full of sadness. Time has changed her – tears have changed her.

Sylwia

My name is Anna. This unfortunately is not my first time here. I am interested in D'n'B music and manual and artistic work. I love the sunshine, nature, silence – barely accessible around here, which causes my frequent people aversion... ☹

I am 40 years old, have a beloved fifteen-year-old Son and a wonderful Mother. They are what's most important to me and their support is the only thing that keeps me alive, I guess... ☺ There's still a "long" time to go in here ahead of me, so my writing will likely fall into your hands more than once ☺. I wish you a pleasant reading, see you!

Taka Ja



My name is Selena, I will soon be 24, though really and truly I feel like I am in my thirties. By the month of my birthday, I will have been in prison for four years. I am a hyperactive, anxious person, though I have a lot of patience. I'm well-built, about 175 cm tall. My hair is black and red, and my eyes brown.

I love sports. Before having ended up here, I used to give myself to it completely. I like flowers. I am the kind of person that has to always keep busy. Just to avoid boredom, as that's when I get stupid ideas, which, on top of that, I sometimes implement! That is why I spend most of my time doing manual work, creating various things, practising various handicrafts.

Ikona Resocjalizacji 666



I'm Helena, I'm 22 years old. I love music, I write trap. Trash is my lifestyle. My interests are tattoos, horses, cats. Before I got locked up I used to have good results in sports, but I lost interest because of drugs, and they sent me to the wonderful place full of resocialization, called AŚ Warsaw Grochów.

I have 15 tattoos, I got the first one at the age of 15. I used to be a very impulsive person, even violent – here I learned patience.

Anioł Ciemności

My name is Kinga. For three months now I've had the impression that I'm inside a labyrinth.

Every now and then I try to move forward, but every time a wall will appear at some point. I stop, go back... go forward again.

Sometimes I meet another person momentarily, for a short while. Unfortunately, it is not always someone worth attention. Tangles, "Velcro" that one needs to peel off! Look only at oneself and ahead...

Every labyrinth has a way out. But where is mine???

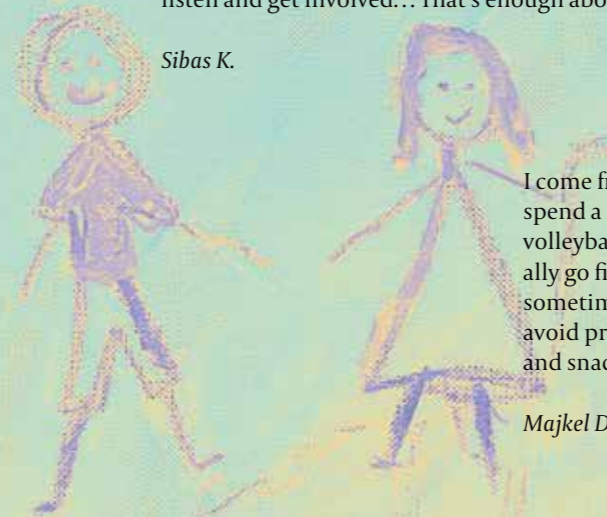
Kinga



I am accommodating, cheerful and help others. I believe that there is a way out of every situation, I support my family. I like spending time in a company of friends, hence my profession – bartender. Family is everything to me. I don't give up, I go through life with my head held high.

The situation I found myself in gave me a lot to think about, to reflect on my life. I believe that through conversation, support – we can change the world! I like to listen and get involved... That's enough about me, in short, I guess.

Sibas K.



I come from a small town, I'm young, I like to spend a lot of time outdoors and love playing volleyball. I'm not picky. In my free time I usually go fishing. I like to sleep in during the day sometimes. I'm generally cheerful and try to avoid problems, I like to have some good food and snack on sweets.

Majkel Dżekos

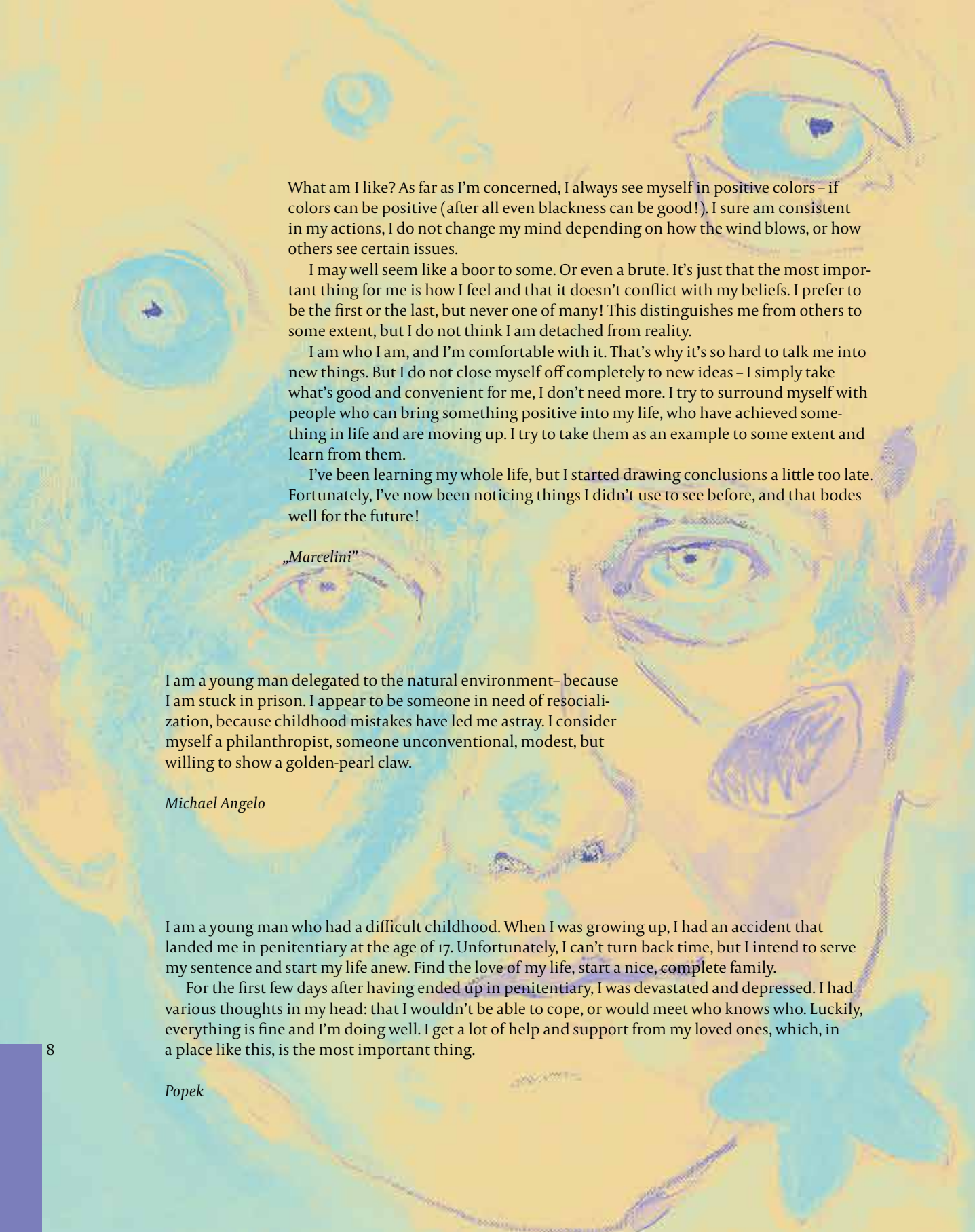
I'm Wiktor. A young, energetic, hard-working man – normally employed. I have a partner and two children. As a youth I did many bad things, which is why I'm stuck here now. Hopefully once I get out, I won't be making such mistakes again.

Witek

I'M A COOL GUY!

Piętaszek

illustration: *Zuzanna Sadłoń*



What am I like? As far as I'm concerned, I always see myself in positive colors – if colors can be positive (after all even blackness can be good!). I sure am consistent in my actions, I do not change my mind depending on how the wind blows, or how others see certain issues.

I may well seem like a boor to some. Or even a brute. It's just that the most important thing for me is how I feel and that it doesn't conflict with my beliefs. I prefer to be the first or the last, but never one of many! This distinguishes me from others to some extent, but I do not think I am detached from reality.

I am who I am, and I'm comfortable with it. That's why it's so hard to talk me into new things. But I do not close myself off completely to new ideas – I simply take what's good and convenient for me, I don't need more. I try to surround myself with people who can bring something positive into my life, who have achieved something in life and are moving up. I try to take them as an example to some extent and learn from them.

I've been learning my whole life, but I started drawing conclusions a little too late. Fortunately, I've now been noticing things I didn't use to see before, and that bodes well for the future!

„Marcelini”


I am a young man delegated to the natural environment– because I am stuck in prison. I appear to be someone in need of resocialization, because childhood mistakes have led me astray. I consider myself a philanthropist, someone unconventional, modest, but willing to show a golden-pearl claw.

Michael Angelo

I am a young man who had a difficult childhood. When I was growing up, I had an accident that landed me in penitentiary at the age of 17. Unfortunately, I can't turn back time, but I intend to serve my sentence and start my life anew. Find the love of my life, start a nice, complete family.

For the first few days after having ended up in penitentiary, I was devastated and depressed. I had various thoughts in my head: that I wouldn't be able to cope, or would meet who knows who. Luckily, everything is fine and I'm doing well. I get a lot of help and support from my loved ones, which, in a place like this, is the most important thing.

Popek



I am a young prisoner serving a relatively short sentence for dealing and possession of a significant amount of intoxicating substances. I ended up here at a young age. I had made a lot of mistakes and, to my mind, having ended up here is a good thing because I didn't use to be a good person. Staying here has benefited me a lot, I'm beginning to understand what I had done wrong. Now I am trying to change all of it.


Once I get released, I intend to complete my education and try to open a workshop with my father. I have many ideas, but for now the priority is to get out of here and become a new, better person. Staying here has merely ensured me that no money is worth being deprived of freedom. Currently, after much reflection, I believe that it is better to work for pennies and be able to see my family, be able to reach for the phone at any time, than to make huge amounts of money and live in constant fear, expecting to be deprived of freedom and contact with relatives.

I have gotten to understand a lot while in here. I want to get out as a “repaired person”, to work legally and reunite with my family. Only when in here did I understand that family is the most important thing – you might lose everything and everyone, but your family will still “wait for you”. And be a constant support.

Szymon Ż.

Well, I am somewhat headstrong. Hard-working. A bit less consistent when it comes to what I set out to do. Too trusting, a little naive, sensitive to the suffering of others. I don't like complaining that something can't be done – I like to act. A Kashubian proverb says: “mało gadać, robić dychtych, to je rychtych” (speak little, do a lot, then all is good). And that's a proverb I identify with.

Kaszub



I think prison taught me a lot. I used to make mistakes when I was out, and this here is the punishment. But when I get out, I will do anything to be with my family and my children. I regret my mistakes a lot. Once out of penitentiary, I will take up a job, I'll be raising my children and helping my sick mother.

I love freedom, family and life.

A.S.

This is what I am like:

- Ears that stick out... but hear only what I want to hear - good advice doesn't get through cause I'm the smartest.

- Eagle eyes: I can see everything even through a wall.

- 42 size feet (can do a roundabout kick).

I seem to always have a lot to say, but when it comes to speaking up... I say nothing. Or miss the point.

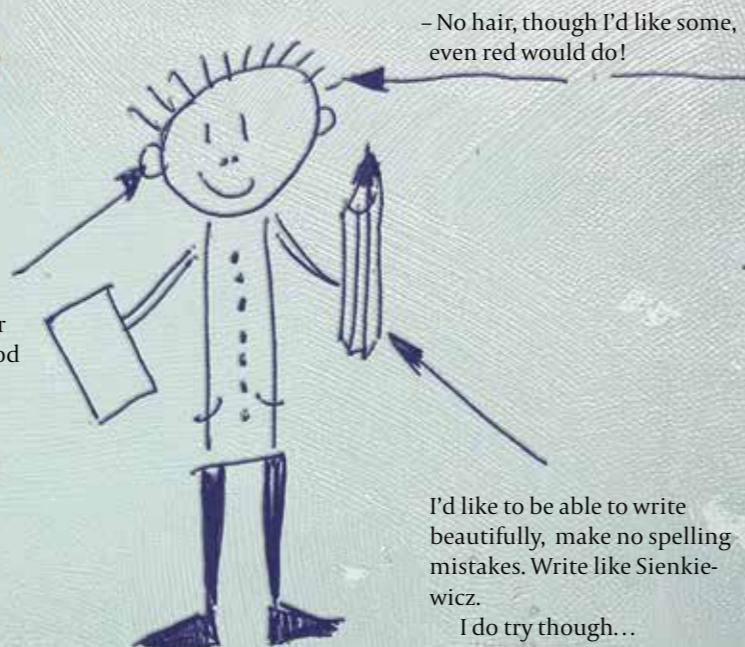


illustration: Gal

Prison games

What can one play in solitary confinement?

What games can one play while serving a prison sentence? And that's the question? It depends on what one likes and what resources are available in the cell or the ward's recreation room. In the recreation room, you can not just borrow a book, but also play ping pong or board games. The latter can even be borrowed and taken to the cell. Chinese checkers and Eurobusiness are incredible fun! You forget where you are for a moment, transported to moments from childhood.

Card games are also quite popular - I don't like them very much, but I've played them many times. Just two years ago or so, it was ok to have TV games like Xbox, well... now you can't, because you can't, that's it! Luckily there are always a few people in the cell so there's no way to be bored. A few heads are better than one!

A dozen or so years ago, when I was still quite muddle-headed, I bothered the prison officers so much that out of the entire selection of punishments available at the KKW, the only one left was solitary confinement. And that's where I got quartered for two weeks. My first thought: it won't be so bad, I'll get to quiet down a little, catch up on literature and time will fly by... I'll tell you this: the longest two weeks of my sentence! In the first three days I read two books, I still remember them: *The Silence of the Lambs*

and *Hannibal Lecter*. Since you are not allowed almost anything in your cell except pens, a notebook, sanitary products and prison uniform, I had little room to maneuver. I'd written letters everywhere, books were starting to bore me, because you can only read so much, especially if there are no books on subjects that interest you. During the second week I was completely bored with the isolation - I had no one to talk to, and my mouth never used to shut since I was little!

When I was a child I used to be a scout. The only skill I never got was keeping quiet (we were supposed not to speak for 24 hours - I don't know why anyone would need such a skill. Of course, I lasted a few hours, then my nature, i.e. talkativeness, got the better of me). So you can imagine how I suffered during those two weeks!

During the second week I suffered from loneliness and the days seemed to stretch on forever. There wasn't much room to walk around the cell either, as I literally had three steps along, and at the third step there was the sanitary corner, with only a toilet and a sink - so much for luxury! Along the wall stood a bed, above which there was a small window, with plexiglass of course. Opposite the bed there was the gate (door) and a grille in front of it, so that one wouldn't be able to get too close when meals were being served.

illustration: Natalia Gudzińska

In order not to get too tired during one's stay in this exclusive apartment, after getting out of bed one literally had to make one step to be at the grille. So as you can see, when it came to diversifying my stay during those two weeks, I didn't have much choice.

I needed you to visualize the way the isolation cell looked like at least a little, because it is crucial to my story. So, bored with life, and even more so with having no one to talk to, I would sit on my bed and watch lights shimmering on the wall behind the grille, reflecting the setting sun. While I kept looking at them... there it was! I had an idea! I took a pen, took the refill out, made balls out of paper and shot at those blinking lights. It wasn't easy to hit them at all!

Time flew by incredibly fast. Before I knew it, the gate opened for dinner. The ward guard looks at the floor behind the grille, and right there... there's a carpet of paper balls! He looks from me to the floor! He's waiting for an explanation while I, as if nothing happened, take a plate and go to get the food! Finally, he points

to the floor and asks: 'What's that?' 'What do you mean? A PlayStation!' He burst out laughing and said to the auxiliaries - 'See, that's how you play bunnies!'

That's how I spent my stay in solitary confinement. The day I went back down to the ordinary cell felt to me like salvation! Having done so much nothing, as soon as I got back, I had so much to tell the girls that I couldn't stop talking until late in the evening. I could finally let it all out!

Warmest wishes

Majki



Checkmate on the floor, or chess players in the detention centre's recreation room

They are not twenty years old, but rather in their forties or fifties... They have a lot of time to spare.

Their keenest interest and main activity (apart from new cases) is playing chess. They usually play with themselves in the privacy of their cells. When the new schedule comes, they gather in the recreation room to sit at the chessboard and play.

'You have to really like it to come here twice a week,' says K., picking up a bishop, also known as Laufer.

'They can play like that for a whole hour,' adds Gal with admiration. He accompanies his mates on their trips to the recreation room.

Everyone agrees that the recreation room is not a place for amateur players, it is not a school where the good players give lessons to the weaker ones. They should learn in their cells and only then come to the recreation room. Only the best play here. There are also those who always win. When the regular hour ends, the biggest mani-

acs continue their education in their cells, using technological inventions (books!).

The chess buddies from the recreation room wait impatiently for the entire week for the next gathering, the next game, the next win. What could be more enjoyable for recidivists like them than a game of chess? It's just a shame that their eyes start to fail, that they have to play on the floor as there are no tables or stools, that sometimes they can't go to the recreation room cause someone forgets to set up a schedule for the new week.

They may be playing better and better, but their eyesight is getting worse and worse. S. is worried as they have been coming to the club for a good few years, they know each other well, occasionally someone joins in, but more often - unfortunately - someone drops out.

Such is the life of a recidivist - says one of the players. He makes a quick move with one of the pieces and looks triumphantly at his opponent: 'CHECK MATE!'

Gal

illustration: *Julia Orzechowska*





To win a heart

One could write endlessly about the game, it has so many meanings... Our entire life is, in a sense, a game, whether one is a child, a teenager, or a mature person, so to speak. We often play in order to win something, say at work or in private.

This could be a word game, but one that somehow relates to the reality of life. Like the beginning of love. From exchange of opinions, verbal provocations, word play, which usually serve to test the waters, to foreplay where eroticism appears and emotions of desire, getting to know each other's bodies and each other...

For many years I had the "pleasure" of being an object of someone playing a game with my feelings, emotions. The game was so powerful it had the ability to drive me into guilt. Until one day the person closest to my heart told me I suffered from Stockholm syndrome! Only years later did I mature enough to admit she had been right. His manipulation and the way he played with my emotions must have been flawless, seeing how, for so many years, I would give in to it, allow it, and feel guilty on top of it.

Sometimes I think that acting would allow me to embody someone other than who I am, to feel someone else's emotions, worries, happiness or sadness. To move into someone else's life and be able to cut myself off from my reality. From the place where I am, which overwhelms

me so much... Then no one wanting to play with my emotions would have any influence on me, would be able to tear the little heart out of this marionette with a sad, pale face. Inert, subjected to someone else's will and the strings to which it is attached, regardless, the marionette is left with a part of itself that no one will be able to tear out!

Just like actresses in the great theater of life, we play our roles like puppets, marionettes, putting on a brave face while the GAME is rigged, forgetting ourselves. Just occasionally one of the marionettes makes an uncontrolled movement... Just like this marionette protecting her own heart - I do not give up! I play my role until the very end, bestowing the puppet with my own features that no one will change.

This is my BLESSING IN DISGUISE!

Taka Ja



illustration: Hanna Olechno



Favourite game

Since I am lucky to have siblings and our parents had always been cunning enough to give us a lot of board games to keep us busy - they instilled in me the gamer (and winner) gene. As an adult I had no time for games, but the penitentiary system listened to my needs and offered me a game tailored to my needs, with an unlimited number of levels to that. I've been playing it for three years and keep having a great time without fail.

I am talking about collecting tokens. I'd never noticed the tendency towards addiction in myself before, but with the games here you really get hooked. The rules are simple. For the uninitiated - if we feel the need to own an item, we need to ask the management of this establishment for permission to get it. It is quite complicated, because the road to the very top of this hierarchy is bumpy. The first opinion, second opinion, then this, that and the other (I don't really know what it is, but it may well be deliberate setting of obstacles in our game). It's really persistent, though I think the entire unit plays it, even if they are not aware.

To sum it up - to get to the next level, you need to overcome obstacles and get a coupon for a gadget, the possession of which is not obvious. The game involves: prisoners, lower and higher-ranking officers and the Director.

Everyone shows great interest and commitment. It reminds me a bit of my childhood, when my brother got on the bad side of dad by constantly playing, dad then got interested in the subject and started playing with him, then when mom got pissed off and took the PlayStation down to the basement, they went to play in the basement so as not to get on mom's nerves. It works like that here too, as once I materialise my gains, I often need to hide them so that they don't get on anyone's nerves.

Still, despite having struggled to get to the successive levels, I recently hit a wall just cause I ran out of ordinary hairbands. I used to have about 666 of them from better times, but I've given them away of course so now I'm on the last one and it's about to break. Maybe this is the last level of the game, the finishing line being freedom, when I go to Rossmann and buy myself a dozen hairbands... But for now - I'm saving the remaining hairband and pretend that I like wearing my hair down.

Kerasu

illustration: Julia Danielska

The Mole – a secretive insectivore, a hero...

The diary found by a molehill

Walking through the wilderness of an overgrown allotment in autumn, I found myself next to a molehill. There was a strange, tattered notebook beside it. I narrowed my eyes to make reading easier (as my eyes have been failing me a little). The word “DIARY” was scribbled on the cover. And inside?



April I only broke free on April 2nd, just so nobody thinks it's an April Fool's joke. I am not some MEP to abandon my native homeland for money. They wanted to kidnap me, take me to Warsaw, to the Saxon Garden, and make me jump around the flower beds by the fountain for someone else's entertainment like some kind of celebrity. No way! I took the first opportunity to flee from the bucket. My escape was aided by the disbelief of our gardener, who would not immediately believe that I had run away. Therefore he did not initiate the chase right away, which allowed me to hide in the grass.

May Curled up in a dark hole I was sound asleep, when suddenly some hounds attacked me from all four sides... It may be a good thing that I don't sleep very well, otherwise I would have not escaped the raid organized by the gardening and allotment forces in the morning. I barely managed to flee to the neighbors' pantry, situated near my burrow. I stopped and listened in silence. I made promises to a local called Jola that she might get some “heart dances” with me if she kept quiet.

Nine and a half weeks later It has come to my attention that I've become popular and they've written about me in the *Allotment Weekly*. Even my guardian has given an interview. They give my description (insect eater, 15 cm long, of which only 3 cm is the tail, black fur). Luckily, Jolcia is well – the little ones are on the way. There's still plenty of food.

August Summer, summer all around... And the traps are everywhere. Someone even set up trap-cages (for me)! I avoided them craftily, as I have a thing going with Renata from the allotment next door, and I know she's particularly fond of moles.

September I found the *Allotment Weekly* behind the neighbours' molehill and learned that a high reward has been offered for me. What should I think about this? Should I report myself and demand money for winter? I've been so lonely and sad here – I left Jolcia for Renata, but the cheat got involved with someone else! I have to get ready for winter. Soon everyone forgets about me.

October No point counting on kindness! Too bad. The pantry is empty. I think I'll come forward myself. Maybe they'll still send me to Warsaw – to the Saxon Garden?

Nothing more was written in the diary. Only the claw marks leading towards the bucket show that the hero went where no money would have made him go before...

Gal



Opinion piece

What do you need to own in prison?

The long and short of it is that in prison you need everything. Even things that might seem completely useless initially can be made use of. I'll give you an example: we get dishes, which are a plastic bowl with cutlery. They can be easily confused with those of others as everyone gets identical sets. But we also get, for example, bread in a bag with a wrinkled "catch". We don't throw this "catch" away – but attach it to the cutlery! And the bread bag doesn't end up in the bin either as you can put an open bag of coffee inside, for example, so it doesn't go stale.

On entering the cell, we may "encounter" some books on the table. One could read them, but also, pay attention! use them as a "hold-down" for the mattress. The mattress on the bed consists of three parts and needs to be moved up so that the bottom doesn't keep sliding, otherwise a hole will appear in the middle. You won't even be able to rest for 5 minutes on top of such a hole!

Sylwia

illustration: Jakub Misiek

Short story



New, difficult beginnings

Three and a half years have just gone since my earthly life turned into the prison Matrix. I kind of knew that I was going to do time and I really was preparing myself for it, but it's one thing to know something in theory and another to actually face it. That's why I did some preliminary research on the dangers that awaited me in prison, I secured myself and my fertility, tied up loose ends, bought basic black clothes, made a list of books to read, had laser hair removal done in case a razor was considered a dangerous tool. I even went to see a psychiatrist I know, so he could check whether I was all OK or needed treatment in advance.

I also set up a Whatsapp group comprising my closest friends, and we would discuss my going to prison there. Then my friends set up groups among their friends to find someone who had already survived prison. This turned out to be a great idea as they then brought those people to me and the people eagerly encouraged me to serve my sentence as soon as possible (they even offered me a 19-inch TV and a ride to Olszynka Grochowska), as it's a waste of life to delay what's inevitable. At the time, I thought they were idiots, since I was looking for a solution that would allow me to avoid prison, and they kept trying to convince me to go, and as soon as possible at that. Whereas I, a princess,

could hardly endure a holiday in a fancy camper, let alone the Penitentiary. I was simply unable to imagine voluntarily subjecting myself to all the rigour in prison. Despite all the preparations, I still believed I would somehow magically avoid incarceration.

My optimism decreased in direct proportion to the passing of time, as, when I received a summons to serve my sentence and immediately sent a photo of it to my parents, they responded with "congratulations". Those congratulations came as a shock, so I immediately came up with the idea of serving my sentence abroad, which would make it a kind of a cross-cultural experience and it would somehow not register that I had been to prison. I knew that German prisons offer 9m2 per person, Polish 3m2, so I decided to write to Angela in Bundestag. I praised my strengths, I even quoted one of the classics – YOU WILL BE SATISFIED. Angela must have been torn as she quickly wrote back saying that naturally, I was cordially invited, after having served my sentence. It was embarrassing, because it's supposed to be a Union, a community, etc., but when it came down to it, I had to go down in Poland. I had been running out of ideas. I still counted on some magical COVID law that would bring amnesty or something, but nothing of the sort occurred. They locked me up shamelessly in ward VII of Warsaw-Grochów.

illustration: Zuzanna Sadłoń

I remember the beginnings vaguely, as I was in shock after all. But the moment when on admission I received the starter pack (blanket, sheet, plastic dishes, towels, etc.) I remember perfectly well – the first thing I saw was a towel with the AŚ-ZK logo. The design was very familiar to me, as a dear friend (actually, fate brought him to me, along with my partner) who was inseparable from us, bought himself a beautiful apartment – a penthouse in fact – in our block, which is significant because in that fabulous apartment, instead of a proper doormat, there was a rag of questionable beauty and usefulness with that very logo on it. I admit I'd never wondered what it meant. I'd be there practically every day and I would keep telling him that I was taking the rag to the rubbish bin, and he'd always defend that rag the way Americans defend the federal reserve. Only then did I understand where this sentiment came from, though understanding is too strong a word. Don't go thinking I had been in regular contact with thugs. It's just that about 10 years ago our buddy – let's call him "Cool" (because everything is always cool according to him), made a somewhat reckless use of his computer skills and, in the wake of some massive action, ended up in the can. Polish resocialization turns out to be effective after all as he is currently a law-abiding citizen, and if Tinder were to match him with someone, it would most likely be Themis.

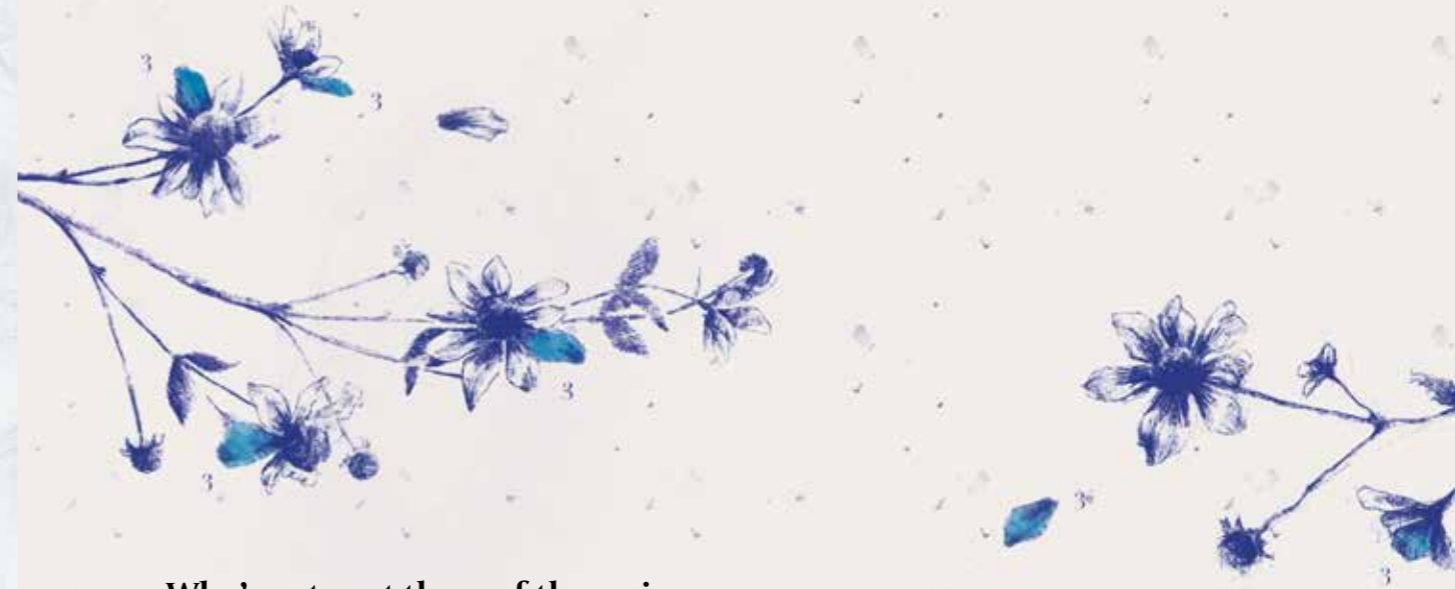
Back to prison though – I also remember that on admission, the guardian who interviewed me, asked some useless questions – what did he care if I'd had breakfast? It's not as if he wanted to give me his. Later he started explaining that if my family paid in some money for me, a percentage of the average wages would be transferred to ŻELAZNA (THE IRON). I immediately thought to myself that there was a mint on Żelazna Street, only I couldn't see the connection at that moment, why should my money go to the mint, certainly not for the sake of aficionados of numismatics, but since there were too many unknowns – I left those musings for later.

Still, to bring you closer to the prison reality, I shall explain what ŻELAZNA is. In colloquial

terms it's a kind of "piggy bank". Every time money comes in, the finance department in the detention centre sets aside a statutory amount, which is untouchable until the moment of one's release. Upon release, you receive the collected amount so that drunks have money for alcohol, junkies for drugs, and those more sensible for some kind of a start, so as not to – to quote someone I know – "come out empty in the mug".

After that strange interview, a woman in uniform (a warden, as it turned out later), locked me in a cell with four other women. I won't tell you what happened, because I remember only some random bits that are not worth mentioning. Time would pass, people would change, and I'd keep being stuck in that ward. You could say I was a permanent part of the decoration. I would be unbearable sometimes, I'd get into arguments, because I believe being yourself to the bitter end is always worth it, but too many people didn't get it. And then it occurred to me that I was ready to be released from the cage into the barn (not to be confused with free-range). I had been looking forward to it for so long that now, paradoxically, I'm unable to enjoy it. Perhaps all the magnesium in my body has precipitated from excessive exertion and my brain has fossilized, I can't explain it any other way, but apparently it will be fine, so please keep your fingers crossed!

Kerasu



Who's got part three of the series with Commissioner Frost by Remigiusz Mróz???

It's been a good few months now that we've been stuck in a cell with no TV. It's true that though the TV shows contribute little to our lives they are effective time-eaters, but for me the lack of access to them is no additional punishment. Instead of torturing my brain with those productions, I've been catching up on overdue reading. To put it more figuratively: I am falling into a vortex of devouring novel after novel, crime story after crime story. Just a new addiction...

I have no idea why, but in prison – oh, irony! – the most sought-after books are thrillers and crime stories (as if we didn't have enough of this subject matter...). Crowds of women who supposedly can't stand the police and avoid any contact, literally kill each other for novels with some super-talented male commissioner as the main character. Or a female commissioner. While holding their breath, readers mentally connect with police profilers, become very fond of technicians, and sincerely root for investigators handling cases. What a strange paradox!

It cannot be denied that I myself also belong to the group of avid readers of such novels. I even get surprised sometimes at how much these novels absorb me and how engrossed I get in the stories presented!

This is how I reached an impasse or a sudden break in the plot... It happens very often in prison that you get engrossed in a book series and suddenly it turns out that one of the volumes is missing! You come across a continuation but you are missing one link somewhere in the middle. Not wanting to spoil the story, you keep volumes IV and V under your bed (you can't return them to the library in case someone takes them out at once) while desperately looking for volume III, which is nowhere to be found! You ask people, guardians, you get through to other departments... nothing!

I've also recently been stuck in such a frustrating situation. Hence my question: does anyone have Remigiusz Mróz's book *Trawers* stashed?

– A –



Everything but freedom

A TV show that made a huge impression on me from the very first episode was *Nikita*. The title character is a young woman, framed for a murder she did not commit. That is how she got recruited to “Section I”, where she was told that she would either cooperate or die (she was even shown a plot prepared for her in the cemetery). *Nikita* agreed, even though her heart was breaking with pain... She started to follow all the Section’s orders. She did everything flawlessly. In return, she also got everything – everything but freedom!

One day, she went to the head of the Section and asked directly – was she to complete all the tasks and orders, would she finally be free? Would she ever be free? The answer was “no”. *Nikita* collapsed under the weight of sadness. She returned to the apartment, where she wanted to commit suicide – but Michael, her partner in the Section, came in just in time and saved her.

Nikita survived and, even though her heart was breaking, she continued to carry out

the tasks. She knew that she would never be free again! She survived – and turned failure into spectacular success. The way the show ends is so surprising that I’m telling you, it is worth all the money in the world!

I watched *Nikita* when I was 20 as a “free” girl. Now I am 45 and “not free” (definitely until November of this year). I don’t know how it happened that even when I was a brat, this series was so close to my heart. Now I am locked up here, and the thought of that show’s *Nikita* gives me strength every day. Every day that is so hopeless here, that I am at a loss for words, though my vocabulary is quite rich!

To all who think that it can’t get any worse – I recommend *Nikita*, including those who believe that “you can get back up even from the bottomless bottom”.

Best wishes,

Sylwia

illustration: Julia Wojtaszek

This is worth reading!

The History of Communism in the World – author Thierry Wolton. *Volume I The Executioners, Volume II The Victims*

The first volume of Wolton’s monumental trilogy is devoted to the executioners, and the second one, as the subtitle suggests, tells the story of the victims of communism. The French journalist and publicist proves that regardless of the geography, history and culture of the countries where the communists took power, they used similar methods everywhere. Intimidation and terror, which resulted in millions of victims in this world.

The chapter *The Death of God* and the author himself deserve special attention. Wolton shows that from the perspective of the communists, “God, who was created by people, becomes an obstacle, his death must be announced, so that through reason... freedom can come”. That is why in every country where they took power, they pursued a brutal policy of atheization. It did not work in Poland!

illustration: Jakub Misiek

This film is worth watching!

Son of God, directed by Christopher Spencer

Christopher Spencer’s film presents the most important episodes of the New Testament. It contains scenes used in the main series *The Bible* and those filmed specifically for the cinema version. Jesus was played very well by Diogo Morgado. The scenes of scourging and crucifixion refer to a large extent to Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of Christ*. Presented with all their cruelty, they are naturalistic, the makers do not avoid expressive images. However, they were not filmed for the effect itself. They depict the voluntary sacrifice of “Christ” who accepted suffering and the cross for the salvation of people.

These are my feelings after watching this film. I recommend it.

Michał M.



The Opposite Pole of Freedom

The hardest thing is to come to terms with it. A major life flop. There, me in a nutshell. An outcast in a habitat of other outlaws. I don't want to – for the sake of the article – rush into seemingly logical stories that would serve only my self-justification. You can fool everyone around you, to fool yourself... a hard thing to do!

I shall make it clear – I am a criminal by choice, more or less unconscious. Nothing praiseworthy, nothing worthy of special attention. More like embarrassment and shame. Prison has been my

unwanted home for many, many years. I can't provide greater evidence of my own stupidity and it's hard for me to come up with anything in my defense. Truth be told, I am worse than others because I had the opportunity to choose. I made a wrong choice and this is the sad result. I don't come from an environment of so-called vulnerable people. My family home was relatively normal, wealthy, filled with love and trust. What more could you want, what more could you expect?! In my life, I could have put up

a serious fight for everything, but I ended up, as the saying goes, going astray. All the resentment and regrets I direct at myself...

Throughout thousands of sleepless nights spent within the prison walls, I struggled with questions: what brought me here? Am I so "twisted" that I'm not capable of living a normal life? The questions tormenting me remained unanswered for years. I kept running away. I ran successfully, I ran so fast the dust rose behind me. I kept running from myself. Today the right

moment came to give the answer to the guy whose face I see in the mirror every day.

There must have been a turning point, a moment that encapsulates the element of faulty choice. The encounter with the tree of "Good and Evil", and an ambiguous decision against one's own interests. A long long time ago, though this is not a fairy tale, I had the opportunity to come into contact – for the first time – with the justice system. I didn't give a damn about the presumption that staying in a con-

fined space would change me, transform me for the better. I lived one day at a time, through unfavourable factuality, just to survive each coming day. It was neither easy nor fun. But I turned my lack of reflection into an asset that would help me function in this mediocre, alien place. I submitted to the seemingly military drill. I would jump to my feet in the morning, roll calls, cleaning, daily ploughing, and in the evening I'd fall on my proverbial nose. My daily cycle was determined by folding clothes into the mandatory cube of 30x30 cm. There, that's all there is to my being in captivity (the conventional opposite pole of freedom).

One day the gate that had up to that point been closed, opened its doors and... nothing! The world was supposed to be beautiful, colorful, better, and everything was supposed to go smoothly. Wishful thinking, high demand for imagination. Unfortunately, something went wrong. A new idea, albeit stupid, appeared immediately. These appear at once. The evil devil suggested a simple solution. They don't want the good you, so they'll get the bad. To spite my mother, I'll freeze my ears off – there's no wisdom in that, not to mention cunning.

Before I could think, I took action. Money appeared immediately, quite a lot. Peace disappeared though, and I became nervous and started looking behind me. A thief's hat burns – this is an old and proven truth. One day the money ran out and I lost safety control over my life. The dream of incredible wealth ended the moment the metal handcuffs snapped shut on my wrists.

I entered the prison walls with the aura of an old hand who knows a lot and has seen a lot. All I was left with was loneliness in the crowd. Day after day; hour after hour, among the same faces and repetitive behaviors. Zero privacy, small living space, manners definitely not from Jędrzej Kitowicz. The only thing left was complaining, who about, though?

Out of nowhere, I realized that it wasn't the high walls, the reinforced bars, or the officer in control that I found unbearable. I myself became indigestible and unacceptable. I under-

stood that you can fool everyone, the whole world, except yourself. In the morning, we stand in front of the mirror and the reflection shows the whole truth. Not blurred, full of lies or brought to life for the moment's need or other reasons.

Meeting yourself can be difficult and painful. It's easier to blame others, even everybody, than to stand in firm opposition to your life's failures and disasters. It's easy to assume someone else's fault, because it gives us an alibi. However, when the day of trial comes, no explanations will be enough. They will no longer be enough for ourselves! A rhetorical question appears – why? And in response – deafening silence.

Silence does not balance the emptiness that surrounds us. You review your gains and losses; the deficit becomes visible. A deficiency in all possible aspects of life. Two options remain. The first is waiting for a miracle. There is a certain proposition when it comes to “expecting a miracle”. Namely, the belief in a miracle as an unreal event is an expression of great trust. What I myself need more is evidence of a cognitive nature, as you can touch, taste and, at the very least, smell it. Nevertheless, when faced with life, a piece of a miracle up the sleeve for our private use would be worth having. . .

The class of miracles is fundamentally diverse. Out of respect, I will allow myself to skip miracles in the area of

faith, but I will boldly speak out on the subject of minor miracles. My encounter with the subject is, naturally, the miracle of conception, which, through my being called to life (birth), is evidence of personal, albeit passive, participation in a miracle. In many cases, the completion of one's education should also be classified as a “miracle”.

When we come across bad times, and ending up in a prison cell should be considered such a time – the need to AWAIT A MIRACLE naturally activates.

Whatever kind will probably do, as long as it happens, immediately if possi-

ble. Patience is not the strongest point of our characters. That's how accumulated stress manifests itself! Unfortunately, there is guilt and there is punishment – two elements irrevocably linked together. Here too, the issue of MIRACLE appears, because in the well-known situation we become addicted to awaiting destiny. Fate winds in various ways, you win some, you lose some; but we only raise our eyes to the heavens, hoping for a change, when problems begin to overwhelm us

While waiting for a miracle, it is worth remembering that everything happens for a reason, we create our factuality ourselves. There is no demonic demiurge acting to our detriment. Let's not wait for a miracle, let's not count on a divine action, as we can always take matters into our own hands. Responsibility, reliability, awareness of the act. Period! Let's also take into account the fact that prayer has never hurt anyone.

While consciously not waiting for a miracle, we can roll up our sleeves and take up the battle for ourselves. Of course, we allow for the assumption that someone will throw the white towel of surrender into the ring at the start. Ah, resignation descended upon us. I understand such attitudes too; an unfamiliar environment, difficult conditions, unfavorable circumstances – these can discourage one in the effort to fight for oneself. Fighting for oneself – this means taking up the gauntlet thrown by adverse fate; receive with open arms a situation that is an unpleasant outcome of our ill-considered action.

The issue comes down to a few aspects that are, in essence, quite simple. Prison grants us time that we can use to reflect and take action towards changing our behavior. There are dozens of forms of support. These include, for example, education. During the few years that you are to spend in isolation, you can not only supplement, but also significantly improve your education. Vocational courses and schools with vocational profiles are not the only things available, there are also general and technical secondary schools (maturity test), as well as higher education.

The titular “Opposite Pole of Freedom” is essentially a battle for oneself, “moving the world from the foundations” of one's own mass. You can start with information about courses, trainings, programs of all sorts and kinds (of which there are a huge number in the penitentiary space). We are not doing this for someone else, it is our reasonable duty towards ourselves and the people close to us.

Although prison is a place that is fundamentally quite absurd (due to the limitations), still we are given space to face adversities. The fact of limitations does not exclude our individual development. Each day brings us closer to the exit, so it is all the more worth undergoing the process of “repair”, or in fact self-repair. There is a potential for transformation in each and everyone of us. Something that will make us look at life and the world through the eyes of a realist and understand that although there's a stretch of scorched earth behind us, ahead of us – there is everything.

Jacek N.



Culinary Section

Chicken Salad

List of ingredients:

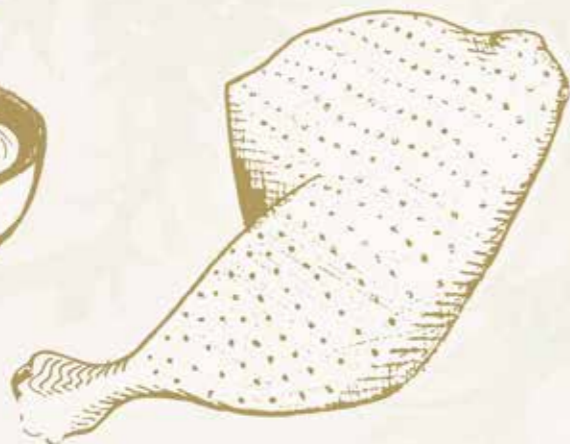
- cooked chicken thigh,
- vegetable salad (the one bought in the canteen will do, but also vegetable salad from PK),
- mayonnaise or tartar sauce,
- rice or pasta (this ingredient cannot be bought at the castle, but it is sometimes served for dinner),
- pepper,
- salt,
- paprika,
- curry.

And so: we put the thigh inside a bag, place it in a bowl of boiling water and wait for it to heat up, then peel the skin off and cut it into small pieces. Pour the fat (sauce) from the meat, that has dissolved, into a bowl. Pour boiling water over the rice or pasta (you know what rice or pasta served in prisons looks like), drain the water, add it to the chicken and mix. The same applies to the salad, though it is well known that depending on whether it was purchased or came from the diet, the former one is good to just pour in, while the diet one should be cut into smaller pieces. Add it to the bowl, mix together, add the mayonnaise or sauce to your liking and season to taste. I recommend leaving it for a while for the flavours to combine, this way it tastes better!

Just finger-licking good!

Heeli

illustration: Julia Danielska



Quick Italian dish

I would like to share a recipe for a quick Italian dish that can be made in A.S. Białoleka. You will need:

- pasta,
- concentrated tomato paste,
- spices: salt, Provencal herbs mix, chilli, granulated garlic, Vegeta,
- cheddar,
- long-matured raw sausage.

We will start by preparing the sauce. To infuse it with the flavors of the spices, we put the tomato paste inside a jar and season it - I put the spices in first. Everyone needs to find their own ratio of flavors!

We then cook the pasta and, in the meantime, cut the sausage into pieces or cubes - whichever you prefer. When the pasta is ready, we pour boiling water into the jar with the seasoned tomato paste to create the sauce. Then drain the pasta, put it on a plate, place the sliced sausage on top of it, pour the sauce over it and add the cheese on top. And we have a delicious dish ready.

Enjoy!

Marcin

illustration: Gabriela Pytel



Apple pie with crumble

This recipe is laborious and time-consuming. But we don't really suffer from shortage of time here! The result is worth the effort anyway – no one will guess that you don't have an oven!

You will need:

- 1 pack of biscuits (220 g),
- 2 small or 1½ large apples,
- a small handful of raisins,
- ½ packet of instant orange jelly,
- ½ packet of instant cream custard (for cooking),
- ½ pack of Snowflake (instant whipping cream),
- approx. 5 tablespoons of granulated milk,
- 1 tablespoon of whole milk powder (can be replaced with granulated),
- approx. 3-4 tablespoons of sugar (to taste),
- a few pinches of cinnamon + a tiny bit of vanilla sugar,
- 1 tablespoon of “Winnie the Pooh” cocoa,
- a rectangular baking tray (e.g. a large tea tin),
- kitchen foil for lining (I recommend gluing together two plastic chocolate wrappers)
- a kettle.



Stage I

PREPARE THE CRUMBLE: crumble 5-6 biscuits into very small pieces inside a small container (crumbs similar in size to one grid in a notebook). In a separate container, dissolve 1 tablespoon of sugar in a small amount of boiling water (use as little water as possible – it's meant to be a syrup). When it cools down, add a little granulated milk (about ½ tablespoon) and mix, eliminating lumps. Pour a little syrup over the crumbled biscuits – they must get thoroughly soaked. Set aside so it dries a little. Separate the pieces in the box from time to time, making sure that the biscuits do not turn into one lump.

PREPARE THE BOTTOM OF THE CAKE: place successive layers of biscuits inside the tin lined with foil – there should be 3 of them. Sprinkle each subsequent layer with gently mixed warm cocoa (water + granulated milk + ½ tablespoon of “Pooh”), then sprinkle with a little “Pooh” powder. Sprinkle more over the last, third layer. Set aside to dry.

MAKE APPLE MOUSSE: grate the peeled apples into a pulp (you can do this by rubbing them on the bottom of a soup bowl). Grate the end (close to the core) into larger pieces (using a knife). Place the apple pulp in a cup – it should take up about ¾ of a 0.25l cup. Season with a generous amount of cinnamon and sugar. Scald the raisins with boiling water and add to the pulp. Leave it for a while to combine the flavours.

Stage II

PREPARE THE ICING: start by whipping the Snowflake – in a tightly closed box or jar, combine 100 ml of milk (I recommend granulated, but regular milk will also do) and ½ package of Snowflake. The milk must be very cold!!! Shake vigorously until whipped. Then “cook” thick custard: mix the contents of ½ bag of custard powder in a bowl with a tiny amount of cold water. Pour boiling water over it, stirring vigorously all the time. Use less water than the manufacturer recommends – the custard should be as thick as possible. Add powdered

milk and a spoonful of granulated milk. Sweeten and add a little vanilla sugar, then cool slightly. Once the custard is ready add 2 heaped spoons of previously whipped Snowball. Mix gently.

LAY OUT THE LAYERS: Spread a thin layer of the custard on the previously prepared cake base. Spread another layer of biscuits, also soaked with cocoa and dusted with powdered “Pooh”. Then use the remaining Snowflake (left-over after making the custard) – gently spread it over the last batch of arranged biscuits.

FINISH THE APPLE MOUSSE: mix the orange jelly with a small amount of water, approx. 100-150 ml for ½ of the package. Cool slightly and add to the grated apples. Mix well and set aside for approx. 30 minutes.

Stage III

FINISH YOUR “BAKING”: gently spread the mousse with jelly on top of the layer of snowball. Set the whole thing aside in a cool place. Once it has set slightly, spread the crumble evenly (it should be fairly dry, but not hard). The crumble does not have to cover the entire layer of apples – it will be enough to cover part of the surface. Set the whole thing aside to set again.

Stage IV

That is CONSUMPTION! Remove the cake from the tin together with the foil, pull its sides away from the “bake”. Voilà – the apple pie is ready to serve!

Enjoy!

– A –



Jealousy

I'm here for the fourth time and most of the people here know me, or at least "recognize" me. Generally, I have a positive attitude towards life and people, but very often (or even most of the time) the perception of me is, hmmm, let's say: controversial. I am unable to fully explain it myself, but after some discussions on the topic with "experts" such as the prison psychologist or the guardian, I learned that in this place, considering that there are mainly women here, it may result from simple jealousy. If this is the reason for how I am perceived – then I have no direct impact on it myself and I'm not going to have any. I am glad that the situation changes whenever someone gets to deal with me for a longer period of time.

This "jealousy" causes many unnecessary problems. It also simply hurts me. As I have stated before, I have no impact on it, and I like to be in control over my own life and things happening around me – after all, I am human! Unfortunately, such situations have the ability to defeat me, even though I have a strong character. It is this helplessness that affects us all in here.

In conclusion, I will just say that I am currently looking for ways to get out of the bad things that are happening around me – that I'm not involved in but, at least "in theory", I am. I would very much like to change it, though I don't know if it's possible.

Black

Appreciating discount stores

Think back to how many times you didn't feel like going shopping – cause it's too far, cause you are tired, cause you don't like pushing through people, and to avoid crowds at this hour is impossible?

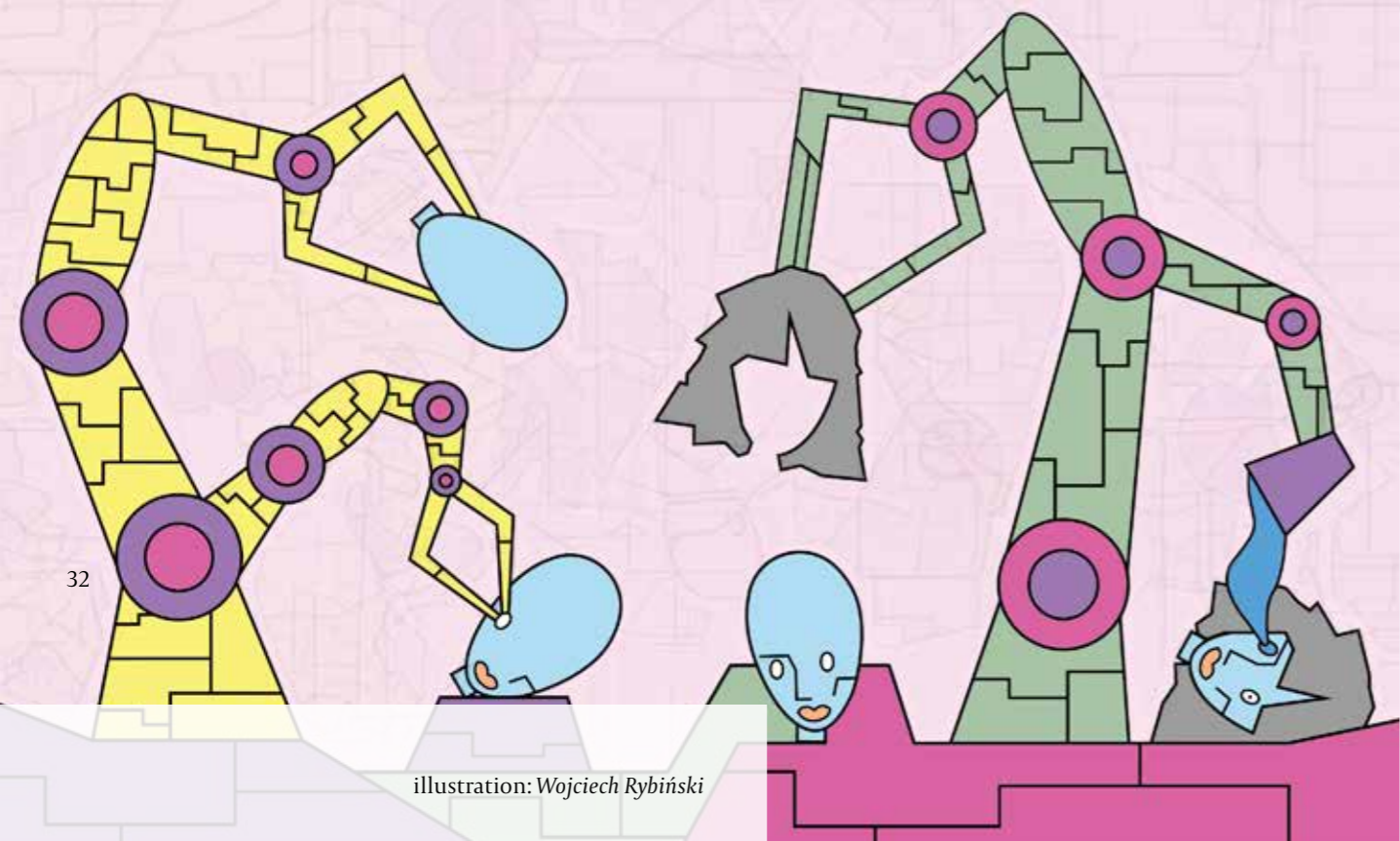
How many times have you cursed under your breath cause you forgot to buy something really important, that you remembered only after having left the shop – when you were already loaded with shopping bags and all you dreamed of was the comfortable sofa at your house?

How often do you get mad standing in an exorbitantly long queue to the checkout?

Do you often have to choose between buying something right outside your block, where it's expensive and going all the way to Biedronka two bus stops away – just to save a few pennies?

Would you believe that I am surrounded by hundreds of people who would love to be in your shoes at such moments?

Humans are a very distinct species. We stand out because nothing lifts our mood better than the realisation that OTHERS HAVE IT WORSE. Which is why I will tell you what it is like to do your shopping at the Warsaw-Grochów Detention Center.





Seeing as using the write-outs is economically unviable more people rely on getting supplies exclusively through the second option. Food parcels are only allowed once a month. Unfortunately, the image of a parcel that most non-prisoners will have has long been outdated.

In the old days, unjustifiably gone, families were able to send us food from the outside. Nowadays, a parcel remains a parcel only in name, and the way it's processed is very similar to the write-out (and so everyone has forgotten what meat looks like...). Our families can send us money to spend in the canteen. The order can be sent via internet (the downside is that then the families decide what we need) or by mail. Unfortunately, orders often "get lost" or go via the Caucasus, so the supposed five-day waiting time is a mirage, as in reality no one knows when these five days should be counted from. There is no way to check whether the money and the order have arrived. Complaints can be filed even with the Pope

himself – the prison canteen is a "state within a state" and no one has any power over it.

Since life is not supposed to be too easy, problems begin at the stage of preparing the order. Both with the write-out and the parcel you are allowed 6 kg of weight. It must be meticulously counted, and exceeding it means that the order is considered invalid (which no one will even notify us about). Alternatively, the canteen itself can remove some of the products that exceed the limit, but then we have no say as to which products those will be. 6 kg of food is really very little... The amount of sugar we can buy at one go is also limited (1 kg).

The canteen is actually just a small kiosk "with soap and jam". The prices are at times astronomical, but going to another shop is not an option. The selection of products is truly paltry, and if someone is stuck in a locked-up room for years, after a while they become disgusted with it all. Over the past dozen or so years, the assortment has practically not changed, apart from the abolition of cans and

jars. We only get new stuff from TV commercials. Often, even the products, flavours or varieties that in theory are on offer, are missing. In such cases we get whatever – usually things that are not selling – and nobody asks if the replacement suits us (and what they send instead can really surprise you!). Given only one opportunity per month to do our shopping, if we "miss out" on something important (like toilet paper) or simply forget something, we don't get an opportunity to buy it for the next 30 days. Also, should the canteen allocate part of our modest budget to something we have no use for at all, we can only hang our heads and take what's given. No one will even let you choose the type of shampoo you use – and all this for YOUR MONEY.

The worst thing is that even if you had millions, the weight limit will not allow you to get carried away, and there are many things you simply WON'T GET. When it comes to fruit – apples, lemons; vegetables – tomatoes and garlic.

So next time you feel like being picky in a local shop or getting frustrated when you have to carry heavy (i.e. over 6 kg) bags, remember that YOU chose what and how much of it is inside those! What if there was no such choice?

So appreciate the crowds in hypermarkets and the amount of goods you find it hard to choose from. Appreciate standing in line, because this way at least you know that someone WILL SURELY SERVE you at some point. Be happy that you can have your shopping today, right now – there are some, who envy you very much..

– A –

PS. Forgive the lack of humorous inserts in this text, but I've been waiting for a package for two weeks... and I'm simply HUNGRY.



Benefits of meditation.

For beginners and advanced practitioners

The benefit of meditation is that it helps one to become quiet, relaxed and regain physical and mental balance.

We will start with the easiest exercises for beginners:

- sit up straight (in a chair),
with your feet flat on the ground,
- place your hands on top of your knees,
- check if your spine is straight,
- breathe in and out a few times, very slowly and deeply.
- While inhaling through your nose, imagine that you are drawing energy from the base of your spine, leading it up to the top of your head.

- While inhaling through your nose again, imagine that you are drawing energy from the base of your spine, leading it deep into your heart and soul.

Let your energy follow your consciousness. Breathe with the intention of relaxing and letting go as you separate your mind from your body.

Meditation for advanced practitioners

It is said that the benefit of meditation for advanced practitioners is that they are able to open the Akashic records and personal chakras. Through this meditation, you can even learn to predict the future and learn a new language of the body and soul!

Connecting with your Akashic records is the result of intention. You should lie horizontally, be able to raise your energy to the level of the eighth chakra and maintain the vibration at this level throughout the communication. It is easier than it seems. When connecting with your records, you can have the intention to receive answers that support you in your life journey, find peace, get to know your soul, but on the condition that your intentions are conscious and sincere – this means that you are aware of it.

Eighth chakra – universal heart

The eighth chakra, or universal heart, is a portal to the higher self. From the physical point of view, the eighth chakra, unlike the rest – the seven main chakras – is not located inside our body. It floats above the crown chakra located at the highest point of the head. The effect of opening the eighth chakra is new spiritual awareness that encompasses all events in a person's life and can bring about great personal, professional, mental, and emotional transformations. An open eighth chakra helps one see one's connection to all life and opens the gateway to deeper, spiritual and creative insight.

Mysza



Connecting with God

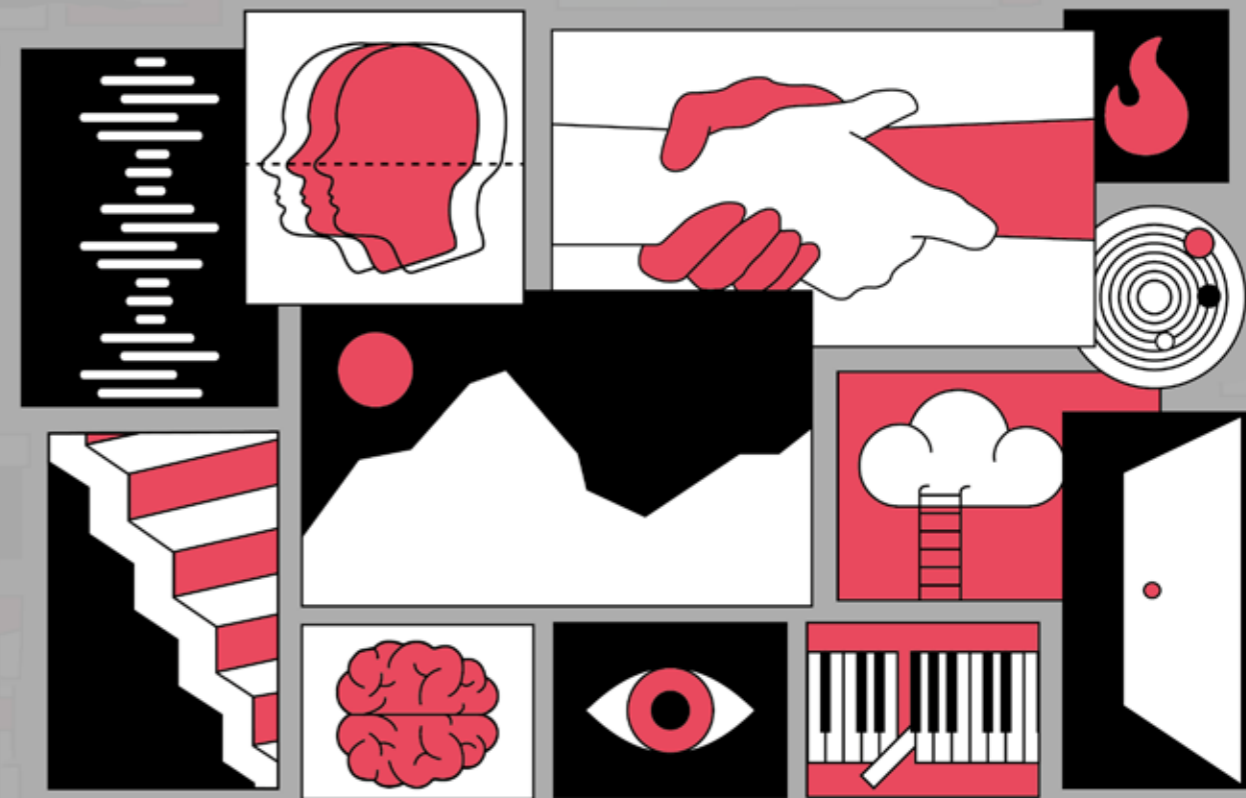
I am a 37-year-old person and for quite a long time I've been reading and discussing the Holy Scriptures at meetings. Truth be told I am most interested in the New Testament from the birth of Christ but I also try to work through other topics of the Bible. While reading the Bible, I feel much lighter in spirit, my overall mental well-being improves significantly and I become much calmer. Some time ago, when I started reading, it was like an ordinary book to me but, after several readings, I understood that it was something more. At the moment I strongly believe that every word contained in the Holy Scripture is the word of God and it is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

I will honestly admit that taking the first step, that is the step of faith, was quite difficult for me.

At the time I was not able to honestly and wholeheartedly believe in it. At the moment, however, I know that I am a person of complete faith, and I am proud of it.

If I can say more on the subject of spirituality, I will say that I will never deny it. I connect with God through reading and prayer. I would like to add that I recommend that everyone at least once tries to read and connect with God, not just through prayer, which is of course very important, but also through the Holy Scripture. If you understand this, faith will be born in you with time.

Agniecha 87



“In the state of struggle”. How can you deal with fatigue?

Fatigue is a warning signal – our energy reserves are running out and we need to recharge the battery. We then often say: “I’m running on fumes”. Fatigue can be divided into:

- Physical – e.g. muscle soreness,
- Mental – we struggle with difficult tasks or problems without an idea for a solution,
- Psychological – a sense of guilt, loss, helplessness, unexpressed anger or unattended sadness.

The greatest impact on the feeling of fatigue comes from lifestyle and the ability to rest. One’s diet, the composition of the intestinal microflora and the general condition of the body are also important.

The feeling of fatigue is subjective and cannot be assessed.

The body sends various signals indicating that it can no longer cope with being “in the state of struggle”, that it needs regeneration and rest – fatigue is one of them. If we don’t listen to it, we may even experience panic

attacks. That is why we need to somehow vent difficult experiences, release energy. For some, physical activity will be helpful, for others, lying down, closing your eyes or relaxing will prove more effective. The idea is to pay attention to how you feel, for example: I call a friend and check how I feel after the conversation.

We can create a magic list full of memories of feeling good throughout our entire lives. It is also worth having another list – of what to avoid. This will allow us to have control over our own fatigue.

Sylwia



Beautiful hair? Where there's a will, there's a way!

As you know, in prison we don't have as many opportunities to take care of our hair as one does on the outside. Though the position of "hairdresser" does exist, unfortunately it leaves much to be desired since, haha, I am currently the one holding it. I don't have much experience, just enough to trim the ends or give someone a crew cut. But inside here it's not important, they refer you to a position and you have to accept it.

Luckily, we have our ways of having beautiful hair. The prison equivalent of keratin smoothing of hair is something we call "the applyer", which is to say you keep the conditioner on your hair through the night. The effect is similar, except it doesn't last nearly as long.

We don't have a curling iron or a straightener either, but also manage just fine. You can twist your hair into little "snails" or make curlers out of newspaper, and voilà! There is also a way to straighten your hair, but not everyone has access to it (and it may well be better to keep it a secret...).

At times by ourselves, at other times - when it comes to dyeing or other such treatments - with the help of fellow inmates, we manage in various ways. As you can see: where there's a will, there's a way!

Heeli

Prison fashion

Let's start with the green suit. You own dark green trousers with a pseudo crease, you put them on, then roll up the legs and you have "cigarette pants"...

A green jumper - you turn it inside out. Of course, if you manage to get a needle and thread, you make, or rather sew a basting stitch, that is we narrow the sleeves and sides along the seam, not in a straight line but with a slight curve at the sides, turn the right side back out and you have an elegant little jacket!

I also recommend a nightgown for a PYJAMA PARTY in winter time (because they provide warmer flannels) - blue or with stripes along the body, like COCO FLANNEL. I do not recommend this outfit for a blind date, though sometimes, when swapped for a fresh one, it may turn out to be above the knee, surprisingly, which makes it look cute and more sexy!

This partial assortment is served to us FIRST THING, after crossing the gate and the door to the warehouse.

Taka Ja

illustration: Julia Wojtaszek



Relationship fixer on duty

Have I already mentioned that I was the only relationship fixer on duty here?

Everyone (well, 95%) who ends up here sooner or later (usually sooner) comes up with the brilliant idea that under the given circumstances she should make things worse for herself, and decides to break up with her boyfriend, husband, or otherwise chosen one. Let's call him Armando.

At this point the others eagerly cheer for her. Right away, the person in question starts listing the entire litany of her partner's faults, the bottom line being that only now has she seen the light and, as a result, the chosen one is no longer the chosen one.

At this point, everyone cheers even more vigorously, nod and say that it's high time, the guy

is hopeless, how come she'd not realised that earlier.

Looking at this sentencing in absentia of the unfortunate, unaware male, I come to the conclusion that it's time to speak up.

It usually goes like this:

'Hey, but I guess he's not that bad, since you've been together for so long.'

'I was stupid.'

'There must be some positive things about him though?'

'Sort of, but not many.'

'So what are they?'

She names things - '...but nothing will compensate for...' - she lists the flaws.

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illustration: Małgorzata Jabłońska

'When you made the decision to get involved with him, you considered some of those positive traits as a sufficient guarantee of a successful relationship, right?'

'What are you getting at? Back then, I didn't know about some of his flaws.'

'Just because you couldn't properly assess his character or didn't have enough data doesn't mean you were stupid or that he's a complete failure. What do you think makes you smarter now, capable of only right decisions?'

'The fact that I now know what to watch out for.' – She brings back the flaws.

'And you didn't know before that these were negative traits?'

'I told you, some of these flaws I had not known about.'

'What about the other part?'

'I downplayed those.'

Finally, we're halfway there.

'And why did you downplay them?'

'Because they seemed insignificant to me, and besides, back then...' – She names the good traits.

'We also said that there were good traits as well, that you learned about later. You couldn't have known about them initially. They sort of came as a freebie, right?'

'But how many times do I have to tell you that he has lots of flaws and that even more came as a freebie, as you say, when I got to know him better?'

'You must have also tried to show your best side at first, didn't you?'

'Maybe, but what does that have to do with anything?'

'We crave positive emotions and avoid negative ones, no? We maintain relations and enter into relationships with people who provide us with positive emotions, right?'

'And?'

'And we make an effort for other people too, because we want the positive to continue.'

'And so you see, he didn't make the effort, so I also stopped. We started to piss each other off and that's how everything fell apart. I won't make an effort for someone who doesn't make one for me.'

'And what behavior on the part of (Armando's name here) made the spell break and made you stop trying?'

She lists the whole litany.

'What started it though?'

She lists.

'Did you tell him then that it bothered you?'

'NO, I MADE HIM UNDERSTAND' (this one's a hit, every each one says this).

'Are you sure he got it though?'

'He should have!'

'So you told him loud and clear what in his behavior made you feel bad? You told him why and added that it was important for you that he change it, because it made you feel this way and that... that feeling this way for a long time makes you lose faith in things working out so you stop making emotional investments yourself, right?'

'No, of course I didn't say that.'

'Would you admit though that it's a simple and logical message that leaves no room for ambiguity?'

'Sort of, but I won't say it because it's too direct. I gave him a lot of clues. He should have guessed.'

'And so you see where the assumption that someone will guess leads...'

'I won't go asking for things, especially from someone who behaves that way. Shouldn't he know what's okay and what's not okay?'

'Since you two were raised in different families, you are bound to have different standards.'

'Lying, being late and hanging out at bars is not a standard anywhere.'

'True, but someone who does it, does it most likely because all the people they'd previously encountered, manifested their disapproval with snarls and understatements, like you did. Tell me, why do you always have everything so neatly and carefully arranged?'

'That's what I was taught.'

'Your parents probably told you directly that you have to keep your room tidy, because cleanliness and tidiness are very important for them and reflect the character of a person, right?'

'More or less.'

'Then what's stopping you from telling (Armando's name here) that lying is dishonorable, therefore it's very important for you that regardless of the circumstances he doesn't tell lies? The moral courage involved in telling the truth reflects a person's character more than tidiness.'

'He won't learn anything.'

'It's worth a try, isn't it?'

'What for, though?'

'It doesn't cost you anything. True, had you done it right at the start, your chances of success would have been five times greater, but still, the benefits of taking action in the form of a thoroughly honest conversation, clarifying misunderstandings and hidden grievances, outweigh the costs. Among the expected costs is the potential loss of three hours, among the expected benefits – potential repair of the relationship. The balance is simple.'

'If you look at it that way, it may be so.'

'Go and write down what is important to you, what you think is important to (Armando's name here), what you hold against him and what, in your opinion, he might hold against you. Let him also write down those things, exchange notes, talk it over. You can break up any time, any fool can do it (and any fool can advise you to do it).'

'You're right, that's what I will do.'

Panie Prezydencie, Proszę o Ułaskawienie



Be by my side

You are so close to me,
so close to my heart...

Yet so far away that I can count the miles...
they feel like the world's end...

Every day I look at your picture,
waiting for the moment when
I'm able to touch your face,
remember every wrinkle,
every detail and feature!

Kiss your lips... eyes, cheeks...

Your little nose, kiss you till my last breath, with all my strength.



I want to snuggle up in your arms,
and I want to feel safety in them,
Feel all your love, while smelling your scent
and trying to remember it so ardently...

keep in memory.

Be with me, near
or far, simply be!

Love me constantly,
just the way you can,
till infinity, the END OF THE WORLD...

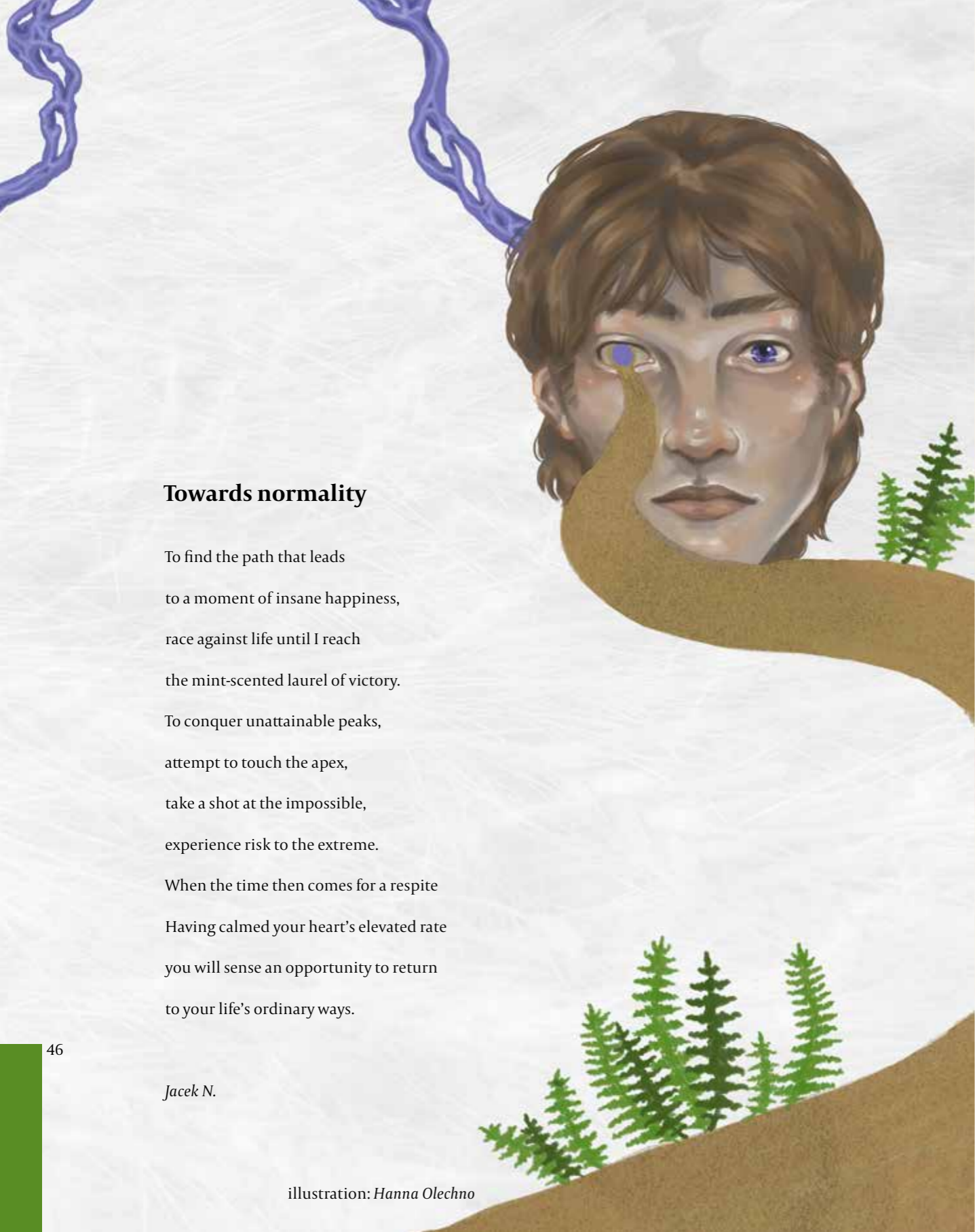
Simply love...

Thank you, baby, for being here!

"Love and Be"

Taka Ja





Towards normality

To find the path that leads
to a moment of insane happiness,
race against life until I reach
the mint-scented laurel of victory.

To conquer unattainable peaks,
attempt to touch the apex,
take a shot at the impossible,
experience risk to the extreme.

When the time then comes for a respite
Having calmed your heart's elevated rate
you will sense an opportunity to return
to your life's ordinary ways.

Jacek N.

illustration: Hanna Olechno

A pinch of humour



How to Write a Romance in Three Easy Steps

First, the characters. Create characters. Not too many, or you'll create a cohort like George R.R. Martin in the Game of Thrones and your female readers in boarding houses will give up after the first chapter. Start with the basics – her and him. After all, you're writing a ROMANCE. Make them ordinary, so as not to shock your boarding house dweller with the extent to which your book differs from the ones she's already read in the same genre. He has to be rich, young and handsome (don't worry about the fact that these are usually mutually exclusive). She – poor, downtrodden, but ambitious.

Secondly, the plot. The standard: he wants her, she doesn't, then the other way around. Don't worry about why the millionaire prince you've created would bother with your heroine, given all the options he gets. The female readers will buy it anyway.

Thirdly, the ending. Stick with the good old "and they lived happily ever after." If you eliminate everyone like Shakespeare or George Martin, the shock might prove to be too great for the boarding house girl.

Good luck!

Panie Prezydencie, Proszę o Ułaskawienie

illustration: Małgorzata Jabłońska

Horoscope

The horoscope below was written for inspiration – particularly since *In a Grid* magazine is an irregular, so there's no way to predict when the advice gathered in it will come in handy!



ARIES – you will start a new chapter in your life, it will be a long-term undertaking. You will come out of all the turmoil unscathed.



CANCER – you will feel like you are on top of the world, everything will go smoothly and on the plus side!



TAURUS – a change will occur in your daily life that will make it easier for you to function around here. Don't hang out with Aries, as that's trouble guaranteed.



LEO – for a moment you didn't know how it would all end, but you are a born strategist, so next time this kind of attack happens, you will be able to foresee it.



GEMINI – enjoy life and forget about problems, anxiety and agonising over things never help with anything.



VIRGO – you were born under a lucky star. Though everyone takes a wrong step occasionally, it's time to learn your lesson and move forward!



LIBRA – certain questions keep you awake at night. Which path should you take? As even though your life has for years been stable, you will suddenly be showered with new offers.



SCORPIO – things you have been working on so hard don't seem to be bringing the desired results. You're wrong, it's time to put the plan into action, don't hesitate.



SAGITTARIUS – you will see old friends and forget all your troubles for a moment, beware lest they talk you into shady deals.



CAPRICORN – you can congratulate yourself, this will be a good time to catch a breather from daily life. Might this be time for a holiday?

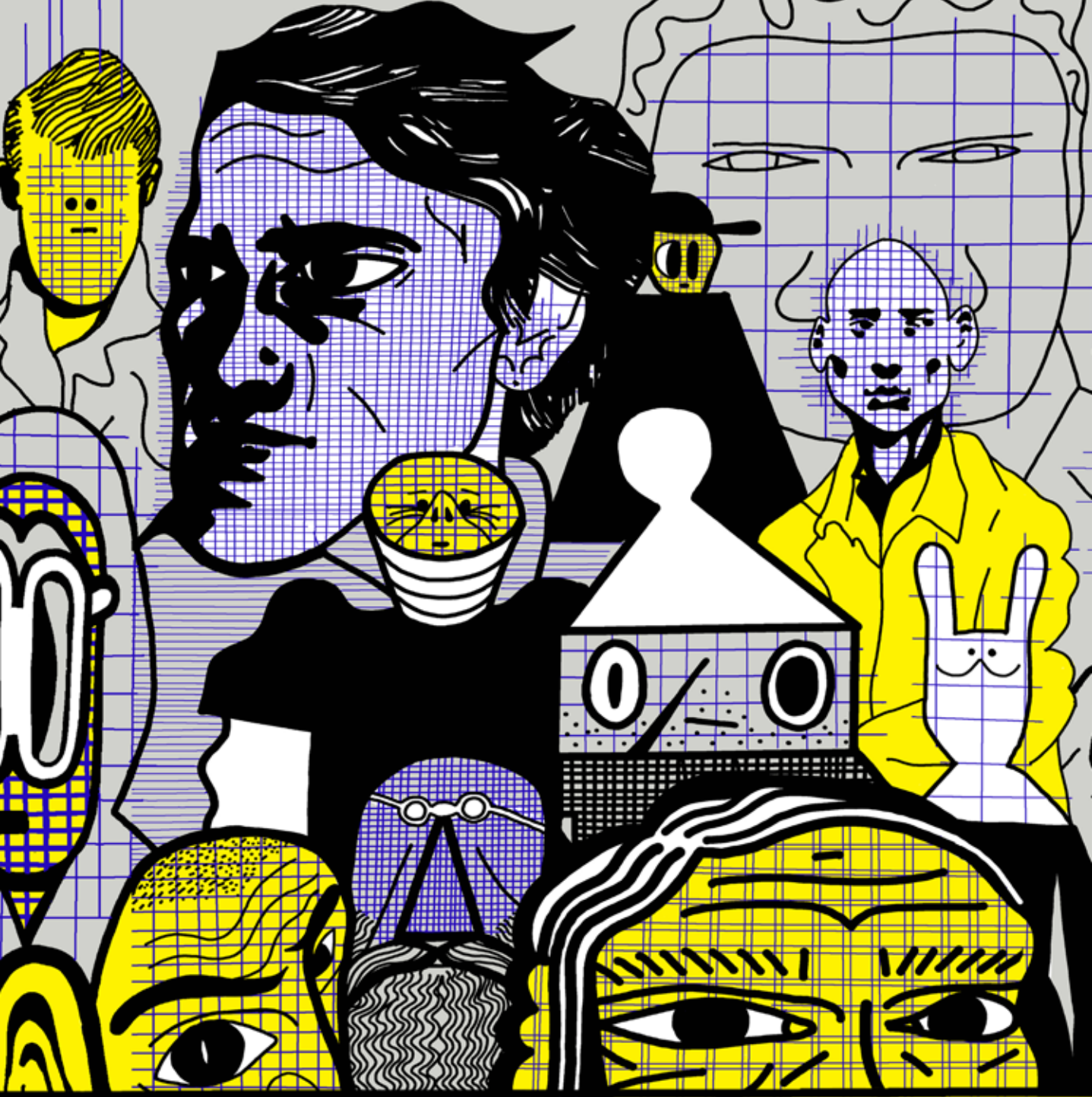


AQUARIUS – something new will creep into your daily schedule. Don't judge a book by its cover, not everything is as it seems!



PISCES – you're increasingly neglecting your own affairs. Change your lifestyle and diet and the results will be stunning.

MARCIN



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