

A Visit in the century

Our teacher slams the history book and smiles at us like we are a Pile of sweets. Class lesson's over but don't forget the presentation about "Our shared future as British German Friends". When she says the words with such an enthusiasm, I panic even more. Oh my Gosh how could I even try to forget it, when she tells us every minute, I whisper annoyed. "Is there anything I need to know about, Miss Smith?" Our teacher raises her brows and looks straight into my faces then she continues, "well in the next lesson we will see if you can allow yourself this inattention, right?" She opens the door and I follow my mates out of the classroom. But my hope for a free and chill afternoon blew away when my inner self reminded me of the presentation I had to prepare. And there is no way to hide from it. "Is everything okay honey" my mom asks carefully, while she watches me poking in my lunch. "Ahm yeah, sure" I think, I just need... a little bit fresh air I say quickly. Louis where are you, I shout out for my Jack Russel who quiks terrified, because he was sitting right next to me. "Oh, I am sorry" I stroke his soft fur. "What do you think about going for a walk, huh?" He barks, what I interpret as a yes.

The streets of London are grey and dismal this afternoon and it is very cold. "I hate November" I grumble, while I'm wrapping my coat tighter around me. Thoughtful I watch the gulls fly over the Themse and tourists taking selfies of themselves and their Fish'n'chips. My stomach automatically starts knorring, maybe I should have eaten more at home. I dig in my bag for sterlings to buy some chips for me too, but Louis starts pulling on the lush. "Stop it Louis ", I mumble, "I will get you some treats too, okay?" But Louis doesn't seem to be interested in treats, because he now pulls the lush out of my hand and starts sprinting over the Tower Bridge to the shore. "Louis NO, on foot, Louis!", I scream as loud as I can, but Louis does not mislead for a second, instead every person around starts staring at me. "Wow", that was exactly what I wanted. I smile insecurely and start running after him. Can this day become even more horrible? I mean it's hard to run ten rounds in sports lesson but trust me, it's nothing against sprinting after a crazy dog along the whole Tower Bridge plus everyone's watching you. "Why is my life punishing me?", I am whining inwardly, "this is not even fair." But someone seems to hear me, because Louis suddenly stops and starts to bark. "Louis there is nothing, everything's okay", I try to calm him down, while I'm catching my breath. I spread out my arms and try to catch him with one jump forward. Instead of catching him, I stumble and while I'm trying to keep the balance, I see myself falling into the water. "Nooo!" I scream while the cold wet envelopes me.

"Young Lady the Courtyard Fountain is not for swimming, neither taking a bath! Next time you should take the Bathtub." "Huh where am I?", I twinkle bazed, while my eyes try to accustom the light. A man with a huge green hat and friendly eyes is leaning right over my face. "You can consider yourself lucky that he found you, normally I don't check the Fountain for little girls." He starts laughing friendly. "He?", I ask and rub my aching head. "Well, a little dog was here a minute ago...he found you. I don't know where he is from but the Queen loves puppies so it shouldn't be a big problem", he added. "Queen, puppies, Courtyard Fountain?" I don't understand a word. Now the man seems to be confused and starts walking away from me. Over his shoulder he says: "I'll be back in a minute Miss, just don't move." Then he hurried away. But I was not going to stay in the cold water for another second. "Where the hell am I and where is Louis?" I try to stand up, which turns out to be not that easy, because my head is not the only thing hurting. In the next moment, I freeze. "Well, that is HUGE!" Right in front of me is a beautiful but big building, which I'm looking up to now. And it seems so familiar to me! I turn my head and take another look at the building. Funny, it looks like the Buckingham Palace. Buckingham Palace. In the same second, it feels like someone's hitting me right into my stomach, because I realized: It is the Buckingham Palace! Now everything makes sense.... okay not everything, but at least the things the man talked about. But there was still the question of

the questions: How did I get here? I can't find a logical way that could explain my whole situation. The Palace is around half an hour away from the Tower Bridge and not publicly accessible, obviously. Slowly I get the feeling that logic, mathematic or scientific laws, doesn't apply in my case. For whatever reason. But maybe I just hit my head a little too hard while falling in the water and now I am dreaming the wildest things. Okay, I am totally crazy! For now, I decide to discover the garden and think of a plan, while admiring a bush, which actually looks like it was cut with a nail scissors. That's when the silhouette of a boy comes closer. Next to him are two dogs, a Corgi and a Jack Russel Terrier. "Louis?!" Happy, I hug my little dog. At least one good thing! "You know this is a private area! Where are you from and how did you get here? James told me that you were in the Courtyard Fountain! I guess you have other intentions than taking baths in a royal courtyard, right?", the boy asks suspiciously. "Don't get the idea to ask too much at one time", I'm rolling my eyes ironically. What an unsympathetic person! But what should I do? Even if I wanted to answer a single question, I couldn't, because I don't know the answers myself. That's why I decide to introduce myself, because maybe, even though I don't like him, he could help me to get back home.

The boy's name is Timethy, short form Tim. He turns out to be not that unfriendly, after he introduced himself too. We go for a walk in the very gorgeous garden. After some time of silence, he asks: "So tell me, where are you from?" "Surprise, I'm a London Girl", I answer. "But you are not from here, right?", I ask back, because his accent doesn't sound British at all. "I'm from Germany. I had the luck to get a job as a servant here at the palace, after the war." "Which war?" I ask confused. What is he even talking about? Tim raises his eyebrows. "And you are you sure you didn't lose your mind or anything?" "No, I'm totally fine! Just tell me, what year do we have?" He looks at me as if I was a garden snail. "It's 1947, the war ended two years ago, remember...?" His words send shivers down my spine! How the hell is that possible and how can I be sure that he isn't just joking? "Can you show me your mobile phone?" "My what?" His facial expression gets even more confused. I search my bag for my phone. "Look this is a phone, with no Internet connection. Not very useful, obviously! I'm from the twenty first century.", I try to explain. "And honestly, I have no idea how I got here!" Tim stares at me like I'm an alien. "Good Lord!", is the next thing he says, "and in your time I could be your grandfather, right." Now, he smiles amused. "That's not funny at all!", I try to give him an angry look, but Tim is not impressed. I sit down on the grass. "Would you help me to get back home? I don't know how I just...just need help." Tim still smiles, "You are a very good actress, really not bad, I almost believed you. From the last century, huh?" "I am not an actress!" I try to sound angry but my voice breaks. "Listen I don't know how and why that's possible, but I know that I need to get back home to my mother and my family! Tell me one reason why I would lie to you." I try to hold back my tears. "This is so surreal!" Tim's facial expression shows that he is still fighting with himself, if he should trust me or not. "Mhm sure, I will help you", he answers, "but you just arrived so you should stay for a little bit longer and then we'll find a way back to your time", he says ironically. He still doesn't believe me. "Wherever this might be?!" With a gaze at his watch, he says: "Dinner should be ready and I'm quite hungry, come on!". "Yes", I smile inwardly and stand up from the grass. Quickly, I follow him, because actually, I am pretty hungry as well.

The palace seems even bigger than the garden. I think, I would get lost every day. Tim seems to know where we have to go, which is quite practically, because I just have to follow him. He explains that the Palace has more than 775 rooms, but the Queen only uses around six of them. We go upstairs to a smaller room with a chic table and a pompous chandelier. In one corner, a fireplace is crackling. "That's our dinner room", Tim sits down on a chair. I sit down as well, while saying: "Actually it's quite cozy, I didn't expect that! In films, employees don't live that nice." "Well one thing you need to know is that one of the Queens highest priorities is that her dogs and employees are fine". I'm looking at Louis and the Corgi, who are laying in front of the fireplace together. I giggle: "That succeeded!" For dinner we get a roast beef with a delicious sauce. While we are eating, I recognize

that Tim stares at me a lot. I guess, he still doesn't trust me, what is not that surprising, because I probably wouldn't trust him to, if he suddenly appears and throws my entire world view into confusion. Completely full, I push my plate away from me "I have never eaten such a delicious roast beef", I joke. He smiles: "I will tell the cook that you liked it."

After dinner, Tim and I go to the Queens Gallery, and he shows me the ancestors of the royal family. I am surprised, how much he knows about them. "The Original name of the Windsors is Sachsen-Coburg Gotha but in the First World War, George the fifth decided to change it to `Windsor` "Why did he change it?", I ask interested, while looking into the face of an old man with grey hair. "Because Germany and England were enemies and the royal family wanted to hide their German name and roots.", Tim answers. I nod: "and the relationship isn't getting better huh...?" "No", Tim agrees, "not really right now. No one wants to remember that the British royal dynasty is actually British-German. It's like they try to repress their history, which I think is so sad." We stop in front of an empty spot in the gallery and Tim tells me that a painting of Queen Elizabeth's uncle hung there before. "He became a supporter of Adolf Hitler and at the same time a folk's traitor." Tim looks me in the eyes and asks: "Tell me, will Germany and Britain become friends again in the future?" I can see the sadness in his eyes and that it makes him very emotional. "Well, yes I think so. I mean we are a whole new generation", I start to answer his question. "I mean why should we have prejudices, there is not even a reason to be mad at each other. We are not tied to our great-great-parents' opinions. We are able, to form an own opinion about what's happening right now. It doesn't play a role what they did wrong, it's important that we do it right! The bad time of our shared history shouldn't be a border for a good future?" "I wish people would think the same in my time", Tim sadly says. "Don't worry", I try to cheer him up. "Wounds need time to heal, and the war is only two years ago." "I guess you are right, but I'd like to live in your time too, everything seems so easy and nice!", he nods. "That would be cool but trust me that all doesn't mean that there aren't any problems in 2019. There is the Brexit, for example, which means that our country is no longer part of the European Union, which I think is not very helpful at all, but there are other opinions too. It's difficult you know." Tim agrees with a light smile: "Politics are always difficult, I guess". I smile back and we end the little history class and decide to get us some scones with clotted cream.

On the way to the kitchen, we meet James again, the gardener. I think he is still a little bit confused about me appearing in the Courtyard Fountain, but he is willing to drink his five o'clock tea with Tim and me. Of course, we drink Earl Grey tea with some milk, which is very cheesy but also traditional. James tells me that Tim normally prefers apple tea, because his family used to drink it all the time. "I didn't know that." I look at Tim who is about to take a bite of his scone. "Yeah, when I was a child, my grannie made tea for the whole family at five o'clock, because my grandfather insisted on his afternoon tea. He was British that's why it was so important to him. But my grannie hated the British earl grey tea and cooked apple tea instead.", Tim tells us, with his mouth full of scone. "I also didn't know that you have British roots too.", I notice. He laughs: "I guess there are many things, we don't know about each other." His voice suddenly breaks. I know what he is thinking, because in that moment, I feel it as well. I would like to know more about him, his culture and life. I become sad, because at the same time I know, it's not possible. I must go back home, sooner than I would like to.

Tim and I are sitting next to each other on the terrace. Louis and the Corgi lady are playing together on the grass. I think they both became friends, just like Tim and I did. "I guess we should go back to where we found you!", he suddenly breaks the silence. "To the Courtyard Fountain, seriously? One bath was enough for me today.", I say, not amused at all. But I know it is the only possible way, even if I have no idea how it works. We both run over to the fountain and take a look into the clear water. Louis starts jumping into the water, but nothing happens. "That wont work", I notice frustrated, but Tim seems to be completely relaxed. "Well, I guess there is no other option than trying it out!" For a

second, he looks into my eyes, before he reaches out for me. "Let's go." I'm shaking my head and cross my arms in front of my chest. "I'm not going to make myself a fool in front of you, turn around please." He lifts his eyebrows like he did when I arrived. "Come on, I have to check if you aren't making ME a fool right now." "But what if it works and I won't see you again?" Now my eyes start to fill with tears. Tim pulls me in his arms, and I hug him tightly. "You know what", he says, "We are friends, no matter in what time we are. Also, I am pretty sure that we will meet again someday. I am sure it will happen when you expect it the least." He seems to be sad as well, but his eyes are still smiling. "Nothing will ever come between two true friends.", he says thoughtfully. I try to find any words, I could reply to him, but I can't. Then, Tim pushes me into the water. Again, blackness envelopes me. All I can hear is my own breath.

I gasp, while I try to orientate myself. "Help", I try to say but there's no sound coming out of my mouth. The first thing I see is Louis next to me in the water. Am I back in London? I take a look around, while I try to keep myself over water, which is not that easy, because I wear a very long coat. Yep, I'm in London, the Tower Bridge is right in front of me. Wait what, I'm swimming in the Thames right now. Slowly I get back my memory. That means... while I'm still overthinking, someone's screaming from the Tower Bridge: "Oh my Lord, there is a young lady in the water! HELP, we need help!" She's screaming so loud that my ears hurt. I try to tell her that I'm fine, even if I know that I'm not, because this situation can't get more awkward. A man comes closer to the shore and throws a lifebelt to me. He pulls me out of the water. "Are you okay", he asks with a friendly voice. "Oh dear, how did you get in there? Next time, you should better take the bathtub for your bath", he laughs over his own joke, which reminds me of a person I've met not that long ago. "James", I breathe softly. But the old man seems to hear it. He smiles and winks at me. "I guess you should go home fast, before you freeze to death." He now seems to be in a hurry, because he starts picking me up from the floor". Then he says: "Go fast so your mum is not worried". I nod confused but start walking, because I am actually freezing, and Louis is shaking too". I turn around once again, but I can't see the man anymore. What a weird conversation!

My mum seems to be more worried about the freshly cleaned floor, which is getting dirty again, because of me. But I'm fine with that, because I don't have the energy to explain anything right now. All I want is to take a hot bath. While I go upstairs, my mum asks about my presentation, which I should have prepared today, but I already know what I am going to present. I will talk about the history of the countries, Tim told me about. I will tell how important it is to keep the light on, especially now, in the time of the Brexit. Instead of losing the connection and turning the light off, like it once happened in The Second World War, where many British people barricaded their windows, when German war planes flew over the cities. To fight for our friendship is what we need to do for a good relationship in our shared future!

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