



MY SCHOOL

By: the students



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My school

My school is in a foxy building. From the outside it seems totally like a school with an old, traditional look. On the inside though it is already a zigzaggy labyrinth, in which someone who is at home can easily know his way around, but someone from the outside gets lost in no time. First he wonders around, puzzled, then starts to be interested, and finally he asks for help in desperation. And he regrets that upon entering he turned away the students politely surrounding him, saying that it is impossible that one can get lost in a school. But it is possible. Let's start with the entrance. In front of the reception booth a debonair retired railway man is on post, and he orients the students based on whether it is after the whistle of the Hungarian Railways Vehicle Repair Shop or it is not time to go home yet.

Across from the entrance there is the school's small courtyard. With devotion we could call it the Atrium Hyatt, as we are talking about a courtyard made cozier with benches and full of flowers, which unfortunately does not belong to the school's area. As a result of this decision of the principal mainly individuals belonging to the smokers' group can be found here (see Brehm), who puff in peaceful harmony – some of them really just blow the cigarette, rather than inhale it –, and they discuss the world's present situation from a student's point of view. And they are doing this with the instructors on break in peaceful harmony, who at this time only nod with approval to the world shaking ideas of their students.

There are corridors on the right and on the left, and someone coming unguarded can take a lot of turns, since the choice of direction means a different faith for him. On the left there are classrooms, from where occasionally even cheerful melody fragments filter through into the ears of the curious one. This is not a miracle, as music and dance are an integral part of Gypsy folk studies. What is surprising is only that the bystanding visitor is abashed at the scenery of Gypsy and non-Gypsy youngsters preoccupied with the thrill of music; what is the prejudice and its foolishness in the newspapers and the media for?

The visitor shrewdly turning right is met with another dilemma. Forward or up? – that is the question here. The one going forward faces tramping, shouting and loud ovation. He immediately recognises that this is not other than the hall of physical education, the gymnasium. Boys are shouting next to the wall bars, cheering their favourites, and on the court females losing all their tameness are kicking the ball – and sometimes each other with a shriek –, rebutting the prejudiced thinking that itemises the female sports from a man's standpoint. Then comes an entrance, which shows a staircase hidden in its quietness, a spiral staircase, on which one can get higher and higher upwards, all the way to the top. Meaning that if the internet is the top of computer science, then the internet-equipped computer rooms in fact mean the top of the tops. Because in my school they submit tenders. We submit all existing and possible tenders, and they are usually awarded to us. As a result of this the

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number of computer science rooms is already three. One for the big ones, who learn a profession already after graduation, e.g. printing house text recorders, one for the smaller ones, like the computer operators or typists-text editors, and one for the even smaller ones, who should be happy just to be here. Because a 9th grader should be happy just to be here. OK, in this school we, the big ones are also happy that the first graders are here, but it is not the jam that preserves the granny! A ninth grader should be happy for just about anything. When he grows up, then he will be able to tell the small ones that they can be happy, etc.

In the computer rooms there are P4 machines with internet connection, laser printers, scanners, CD writers, speakers, digital cameras, video recorders, printing machines, laser copiers, digital voice recorders, central server – what server, servers! –, modems, power backup, montage machine – is there anything I've forgotten? – and with also many things the names of which I don't know; they only look good. Upon stepping out into the courtyard the Palace of Miracles and the House of Horrors appear first. In the former there is Mister Tibi, who simultaneously saws, bolts, welds, solders and hammers, while explaining the beauty of maintenance work to the gaping crowd by gesturing with his other hand. Seeing the populous army of his followers, reserves in the future generation are not lacking. On the other hand the doctor's room has seen many gruesome things. Primarily it witnessed the rise and fall of individuals caught escaping from examinations by simulating headaches, which is a great lesson for posterity. This tragic situation can only be forgotten with the help of the aroma-filled world of the adjacent dining hall. In my school Lady Magdi distributes the food in a white coat and recommends the small or the big dish and the buffet across, knowing every student by name. Bon appetit to the skinny ones and a thorough walk to those fighting with challenges in terms of weight. Of course not before or after lunch, but as an alternative.

But if someone in my school starts to go up the stairs with steady steps, he will experience something that those turning left or right don't. He will reach the first floor. From up there the world is still together. Like the army of students chattering in the hallway, who live their lives contained within their everyday problems without paying attention to the bystander. Love relationships and friendships are born and broken even in a minute's time. While the notes written in the notebooks complemented with the stern text of the textbooks make the adolescent youth gloomy or even curious. The classrooms here, in the school of my dreams, are different from the traditional ones. The seats are situated in a U-shape, enabling not only a direct student-teacher discussion but the verbal and also the so-called metacommunication between the students. Because it is easy to speak up from the back, but when one is always directly facing the others, that's different. Then one even has to think about gestures. Of course the parrots, which were awarded a space in one of the classrooms, have their own opinion of this, as well. And most probably the golden hamsters, which are under the guardianship of another classroom, also have their own opinion. I reckon this could be said of

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the fish living in the large aquarium of a third classroom, but they only swim around quietly, without mentioning a word about the school or the student population, but they haven't told their opinion of the National Curriculum, either. Although it is possible that they also have one...

On the walls there are pictures, drawings and paintings everywhere. There are textbooks on the shelves and flowers on the flower-stands, and the computers are constantly on, driving the internet bill payers of the Ministry of Education crazy from the continuous use. But this is our home. We live here, learn here, and this is our world. The principal only doesn't tolerate one thing: when someone wants to have a voice in the design of his office. That is his privilege. Even a few railway engine models can be found on the shelves, in front of the books, indicating that everybody can have a hobby, but only he can have a model railroad. And let's not even talk about the teachers' room. Because it's OK that there is everything here in the teachers' room, from the colour television through the VCR to the HiFi center, from the microwave oven through the toaster to the tea maker – these the instructor staff can even expect –, but that the computers are still operating even in late afternoon, because the teachers have no desire to go home, that is a little bit too much. They are sitting, chatting, writing exams on the computers, watching soap operas on TV, but mainly are having a good time. And the big ones that totally became shameless by now, just like myself, (see: graduation and almost graduation) come in, make a toast, make a tea or join the conversation, and they don't desire to go home, either. Just like the boarding students. They also stay there for the weekend, because it is nice here, and at home there is only poverty. They have their own room here, there is a TV and a VCR in the room, the girls cook lunch in the kitchen, and the boys wash the dishes – an interesting tradition! –, they can play soccer, go to the movies, or to the dormitory yard to clean, to groom the garden and whatever...

In this school there is a great variety of teachers. One is like this, the other is like that. There are young and old, cheerful and morose, and men and women among them. Just like everywhere in the world. Only in this school they know that everybody is what he is and must be accepted like that. And if somebody accepts someone, then it makes no sense to argue about who is better, more beautiful, smarter and whatever. So the instructor staff is on the side of the children, because they remember that once they were children, too. They know how much they needed a sympathetic teacher to whom they could tell anything. Then they swore that when they would grow up, they would become teachers like that. And now they are here. In my school.

There is a saying that a gentleman doesn't bet on sure things. And I have written about something that is certain. I should have written about what a school is like. And I just went inside my school and looked around. I wrote down that this school is like that, what I see it

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like and why I like to be here. It is easy for me, because this is a foundation middle school, in which I have been here since the beginning. 60 of us started it, and now, six years later, there are 450 of us. Then it all started when the principal brought in his old 386 computer with a black and white monitor and showed us that this is the computer. Now we have three vocational classrooms equipped with the latest equipment. We received a new school building from the city, and the old one became a dormitory with Phare assistance. Here in this friendly and beautiful place eighty students live. The children – with a startled look on their face, chasen away from other schools, their lives full of sorrow – got a profession and graduated, and many of them go on to universities and colleges. If I create a plan, a dream, there is a way and an opportunity for me to make it come true. I like to be here. I would also like to write down its name: Dr. András T. Hegedűs Foundation Middle School Vocational School, Evening Elementary School and Dormitory. In Szolnok. This is my school.

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