

Title (up to 20 words) - Expectations over Reality

Strapline (up to 40 words) - The year of 1982 contained experiences a young boy has to encounter in a communist era that lasted for half a decade in Albania. He meets a young girl where little did they know one idea would make a difference.

Copy (between 900 and 1000 words) -

Dawn of July the 20th crept around a boy's house, Andi; thunderstorms howled, heaps of rain poured curtains over the white houses and people.

The earthquake of communism struck Albania where waves of experiences vibrated towards every direction for 26 hours a day.

His mother was preparing stew until her ears tingled - fierce and wild knocks shouted from downstairs.

'BAAANNGG' 'BAAANNG'

The knife dropped from her hand, her feet bolting for the stairs and waterfalls of sweat trickled from her forehead. The boy followed...

Few seconds later, panic struck both of them.

Handcuffs trapped his aunt's hands where three policemen covered with stern features surrendered her.

His mother raced forwards, snatching her sister but the towering policemen who wore an intimidating character shoved Mother with strength that almost knocked Andi.

'Qërrohu, ikni andej!'- he roared.

Fear brushed the boy and his mother, Get out, go away! - the policeman declared where his finger pointed at Mother.

Andi stared at his aunt's face.

Watery eyes that sparkled by the glimpse of light. Soft sniffles from her nose. Lips twitching.

His aunt wished they wouldn't leave but her head nodded slightly.

He gazed around and holding his position, his lips opened.

'Why is my aunt being arrested? She is innocent!'

'Pusho! (Shut up!) She shouldn't expose her needs or feelings- *I am starving, I hate living here, I feel miserable* that's what she said!' – The policeman jokingly pulled a high pitched voice, imitating her.

'She will be locked in prison.'

They headed for the door, Aunt clutched by their hands, where they suddenly froze.

'This is unfair!'- Andi shouted. The policeman who spoke before left his team in charge of Aunt, his harsh boots forced steps that hiked closer to the boy. Whilst clearing his throat, his eyes glued on Andi's like a hawk.

'No one cares about what you say child! One more word and you will go to prison!'- He brawled where his Mother grabbed hold of Andi and nodded assertively.

What was next waiting for me?

Andi's body stretched as people joined the queue line for bread- it had been Mother's orders, she was too exhausted to go.

After four hours, he glanced at the people rushing behind where a young girl he hadn't seen before stood after him.

'Çkemi!'- The girl greeted Hi!

'How are you?'

She paused.

'I am great!'- A smile forced upon her face- 'And you?'

Flashbacks of Aunt's arrest popped up.

Punished for saying the truth?

'I'm well. What is your name?'

'Leona. Nice to meet you.'

Leona and Andi chatted whilst the line slithered and Andi's turn finally arrived. His eyes scanned the table where his hands reached for a loaf of bread resting aside.

As he walked away, he heard distinctive yelling echoing from that line and saw a man shouting at a girl.

'You are only supposed to take ONE loaf!' - He screeched where he snatched a loaf from her.

'I need two for my family' - Leona pleaded.

'How dare a useless child speak to an adult like that! Go home everyone, you won't be getting any bread!' - As people left, they shook their heads and threw nasty glances towards Leona.

He strolled towards her and they exchanged similar thoughts- they had to part.

8 years travelled where 19 year old Andi sculptured by life attended University of Tirana (capital city)

Andi recognised everyone in his class until he saw a girl sitting by him.

She noticed and whispered:

'Andi? Do you remember me? I'm Leona. It's my first day'

Images of the young Leona flashed in his head. *It really is her.*

He nodded and decided to confess:

'I need your help' - A piece of paper crashed against his head. He made a face at Erik but Erik pushed his arm. He enclosed the paper. His eyes enlarged and whilst reading his mouth drew wider.

My father works for the Secret Police and spied on your aunt.

Andi tossed a vexed and disheartened look.

'We will protest tomorrow evening by the Student City' - He whispered to Leona.

'Won't we go to prison?' - she questioned.

'Perhaps but it could make a difference to the 3 million of us.'

The next evening shone below the two protesters, chains of fear clinging around them but *will that stop us?*

'FREEDOM OF SPEECH!'

Pedestrians smiled by their bravery but no one joined.

A few seconds after, the two protesters felt tight fingers gripping their arms and they spotted Security dragging them.

'LET US GO!'- they screeched where more officers rocketed....

The police car waited for them until rivers of students broke from corners and protested.

'WE WANT HUMAN RIGHTS!'

This grasped the attention of the officers where they charged against the crowd.

The 20 officers clutched some of the protesters, it was difficult to throw 100 students in prison. The few victims escaped from them and the 100 conquered the streets of Tirana like soldiers.

The protest all began with two students and in three days, it reeled over 800,000 people across Albania.

There was a sudden halt by the Central Committee.

The communist leader Ramiz Alia and his supporters stepped out, demanding an explanation from the vast public.

Not a peep. Then, protesters confessed:

'800,000 of us noticed that our voices are built for a reason. Have you realised that more waves are created when water is flattened? Suppressing our sadness, simply leads to more sadness. We should accept what we feel, express our needs and take action otherwise how will conditions improve? We want a different system so elections must take place'

The leader raised his eyebrows and required silence.

Their distant chatters made everyone hold their breath until the decision arrived.

'Everyone's courage and persistence has won the chance for an election'- the leader announced.

Every protester leaped with joy and cheered; Andi bumped into someone...

who was Erik and promised Andi that his aunt will be released.

December 11th 1990, the day reality succeeded over expectations.