



STAGE



STAGE



Az Európai Unió
Erasmus+ programjának
társfinanszírozásával



Dramaturgical introduction

#generationZ

The #generationZ project is a theatre production with an educational dimension, dealing with the topic of digital safety among teenagers today. It is mainly intended for the later grades of primary schools and younger grades of secondary schools.

For this reason, we can speak of a kind of a contemporary "school play" in terms of genre. In other words, it is a form designed to be performed in a school community environment, and to communicate issues that are typical of it.

From a formal point of view, the play makes use of easily available theatrical resources - simple light-design, modern costumes, modest sets, extracted themes and very specific situations. The reason for this is the potential of its multiplicability, which means it's possible to be transferred and used by any group of theater-loving enthusiasts.

Topic-wise, it addresses the potential risks that the current generation of adolescents is exposed to. It is primarily motivated by the risks that the current technologisation of society generates - but it also involves the problems of their private human lives.

The individual characters' stories portray the crucial moments of the characters, the crises, the situations of failures and mistakes, and the questioning of own beliefs. The life situations of young people and their use of technological possibilities are deliberately portrayed from the negative point of view, through the lens of potential danger. (At the same time, we must not forget that the current young generation also brings an incredible amount of positive qualities and progressive thinking and behaviour.)

The purpose is not just to create dramatic tension, but also to open intergenerational discourse on what has become a dead end issue in parent-child communication. Technology is currently advancing at a pace we have not seen before. That makes understanding them, guarding against the dangers and taking full



advantage of their benefits very challenging. Difficult. But not impossible. And that's what the #generationZ project aims to communicate.

Barbora Mináriková

- the playwrighter

#howitworks

We are truly pleased you have decided to implement the #generationZ project within your community!

We prepared a text material, a director's book, a video of the original production (a sample) and the following text lines for you to help you create your own version of the play.

You can do the full length adaptation, or a cut version - it's up to you whether you get caught up in the stories of all the characters, or just a few of them. The plot is framed only by the opening and the closing scenes, and you can work with the sections in between as you prefer and need (you can only act out 4 or 5 stories instead of 7).

Whether you choose to perform in a theatre or in a classroom, the scenic and technical requirements are minimal. Props and costumes are easily available. Character backstories are specific.

In fact, instead of #generationZ emphasizing theatrical experience and production background, it focuses on making it simple and accessible for all those who are drawn by the topics and want to co-create and interact with their audiences.

#theatre

The essential aspect of a theatre play is the world "offline", the actual world. The presence of the spectator in the audience, of the actor on the stage, are moments that always happen live, directly in touch with the possibility of an immediate response to this mutual human communication.

This is also why, by some strange paradox, it becomes a suitable medium for communicating the topics of a world that only exists upon the lighting screens.

If you decide to implement the #generationZ project in your community, try to focus on the live contact brought by this form. It gives you the opportunity to actively explore each theme in depth (including possible details left out of the original script) with the creators, the actors, and the audience as well.

The means of execution of this project is theatre, partly because it offers a chance for open discussions. As a tool for appropriate intervention, we recommend it to be implemented in each rehearsal process of working with the actors, as well as in each performance while communicating with the audience.



Its most valuable aspect is the opportunity to talk about the things that are hard to talk about, and to clarify the topics. At the same time, however, it is also a way to learn about viewpoints from a different perspective, to get familiar with the opinions of the young people, and, last but not least, to provide this sensitive target group with a feeling of being listened to, of having their voice heard, of being important.

#discussion

Every discussion should begin with a very specific and brief description of the discussion subject. The facilitator/moderator of the discussion proceeds by naming the main aspects that it can generate and then by initiating the dialogue with the opening questions in order to encourage the audience's interest and involvement.

In the ideal case, this should progress into a broad exploration of each others' arguments and a multi-spectral analysis of the original problem.

It is essential to always remember that every participant of a discussion must know what they are actually discussing and that everyone has the right to express their attitude, while using appropriate language and logical arguments.

The following keywords serve as a resource: digital safety, online, school play, theatre production, educational project, discourse, young people, Generation Z, self-expression, open communication.

#maincharacters

One of the most outstanding specifics of the #generationZ project is the fact that it puts the representatives of this generation at the spotlight. They are the central protagonists, but they are also the main topic, and the creators at the same time. They create the world the play describes.

Therefore, while creating of a new theatre production, the viewpoints and experiences of the actors involved (the adolescents who are touched by the story and who inspired it), should not be underestimated.

We recommend the leading teachers/producers to put their trust in them and allow a part of the creative work to be in their hands, so that they can not only be the subject, but also an active author of the story told. They know it from the very core, for they are actively living it.

#topics

The choice of the addressed topics followed an expert discussion and research focused on the identification of the most urgent and frequent issues in Slovakia and among the members of the specified target group.

The resulting data arise both from long-term research of DigiQ, as well as from the discussions with a sample group of teenagers, and the discussions with the original (prototype) actors themselves.



The common theme of #generationZ is the young people's contact with the technological possibilities that are very easily available today. It raises the question of whether the teenagers are prepared for all the elements (positive and negative) that technology brings into their lives, as they are influenced by many external circumstances, searching for their own identity, so vulnerable as they are.

The individual stories (parts) deal with the problems in a specific way, on 2 levels - in the context of technology, and the life "offline":

	Technology aspects	Psychosocial aspects
ALEX <i>(the representative can either be a girl or a boy)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● technology addiction (with a specific focus on games)● what are the actual symptoms of an addiction? (there's a specific list of criteria which Alex doesn't meet)● subtopics: insta-mom, younger people's communication channel shifting to Discord	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● interpersonal communication difficulties● inability of insight● lack of family time and contact



LEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a desire to be an influencer (the pressure that comes with it - looks, frequent shopping - being "cool", choosing inappropriate role models on the internet)• hateful comments on the internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• self-hatred, unrealistic self-image, suicidal tendencies• societal pressure to behave and look in a certain way, expectations about achievements• negative impacts of the fashion industry (including environmental)
VIKI <i>- it's possible to change the gender of the main character if necessary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (unhealthy) activism - manifested on the internet by the need to comment on everything, to block uncomfortable voices and opinions right away, to be involved in everything but in the real world being totally unprepared argumentation whatsoever	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• polarisation of society• inability to make logical arguments, to discuss social issues effectively• failure to interfere with taboo issues among adolescents
MIRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the dark-web (not specifically named in order not to advertise its existence) - the illegal sale of drugs on the internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• vulnerability of teenagers in situations of crisis (poor financial conditions)• (mis)trust in the police• (mis)trust in parents



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KIKA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● complete rejection, aversion to technology● exclusion from society - if I don't have a FB account, a phone, etc. I am not a valuable group member● a situation example in which technology is a tool of necessity (the need of calling an ambulance also includes the need of having a cell phone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● ecology, alternative life style● a return towards nature● (un)healthy balance● ability to react appropriately in a situation of extreme crisis
MIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● false accusations, spreading misinformation on social media (false accusation of domestic violence)● the power of social networks (opinion-making, outreach, where information ends up, possible consequences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● the topic of domestic violence● relationships between stepparents and children● intervention of educators



ADAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● cyberbullying (bullying using mocking videos, messages, pictures, class groups exclusion, creating pages with hateful content, character killing in RPG games)● the ability to find and exploit one's potential in the field of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● bullying offline in a school environment as well● tabooing, trivialising or denying the issue● resilience and coping (represented by the character's ability to channel their energy from their negative experience into a positive action)
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We recommend choosing the topics through a discussion specifically with the actors of the characters. Each group of young people may have different experiences, connections, and interests in different topics - for this very reason, it is important to examine carefully which characters they relate to, and to explore them in more depth, or perhaps to develop them by their own experiences and insights.

#language

Both technology and language progress rapidly. They are also being affected by the social and geographical context. Therefore, some groups of teenagers may generally use quite different expressions than others. That's the reason why we recommend allowing actors to modify certain phrases/expressions as they consider suitable. This way they can express themselves in a more natural and relatable way.

#costumes

The costume aspect of the production is not strictly given. Since the story takes place in the present, it is possible for the actors to use their usual civilian clothes (even if they are styled in a certain distinctive way - this gives the production a touch of diversity), and the main characters should seem youthful, while the parents and the teachers should wear clothes or accessories that suggest their age (e.g. glasses, suits, costumes, scarves, etc.) as well.



We have attached some moodboards for inspiration down in the links.

Female characters:

<https://sk.pinterest.com/0njxajsn4ymcvja/digiq-kostymy-f/>

Male characters:

<https://sk.pinterest.com/0njxajsn4ymcvja/digiq-kostymy-m/>

#technology

Finally, it is important to remember that the crucial question of technology is not whether it should be considered as a positive or a negative phenomenon of this era. Technology is already here, and in such a large measure that we cannot, must not, ignore it.

It is therefore important to focus on the question of how to deal with this fact in a constructive way.

Kids and teenagers search for answers to their curious questions mostly online nowadays. As a result, parents are losing track of their behaviour and knowledge in many ways. It's a normal part of development now. However, the one thing a parent is able to work with is teaching the child a proper way of using the Internet. As long as the children are taught to be careful, to be digitally intelligent and to use technology to their advantage, they are ready.

We believe that promoting this project can be a helpful contribution to their readiness.

#links

If you are more interested in the topic of digital security, or if you find yourself in a situation where you need help, we recommend seeing the following links:

Slovakia:

Digital intelligence - digiQ: www.digiq.sk: digital citizenship, current prevention news and educational opportunities

Viac ako nic(k) (More than nick): www.viacakonick.sk : online counselling center

IPcko.sk: online counselling center, online chat with psychologists



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#generationZ

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CHARACTERS:

ALEX (the suspectedly addicted)

MIRO (the one involved in illegal business)

LEA (the influencer wannabe)





KIKA (the natural soul)

MIA (thoughtlessly vengeful)

VIKI (the future diplomatic)

ADAM (the cyberbullied)

+ several parents (biological and step), siblings, classmates, friends, teachers, a dangerous man, a redactor, a reporter and unknown voices from the internet

At the end of each section, there are three potential outcomes of the presented stories included (three versions of the concluding monologue). We generally recommend going with the option A scenarios - however, the other two options can help open up discussions about different experiences or feelings about the probability of particular outcomes.

Perhaps there is someone in your group who has had a personal experience with the issue, but it lead them to a completely different outcome.

Discuss these and other possible scenarios that might arise from similar situations. The more you explore the presented scenarios in depth, the more beneficial the project can be.

INTRODUCTION

(We are located in a classroom. Parents are sitting behind the desks. The teacher stands in front of the blackboard.

A meeting of parents a the class teacher is just ending.

The teacher's face is directed forward, we only see the figures sitting behind the desks from the back - as silhouettes.

They look very unspecific, sitting in the dark.)

TEACHER: The final grades must be submitted by mid-month. Most students already have the necessary amount of evaluations, and with a little luck the rest should be able to make it within the next two weeks, too. Speaking of grades, things have gone downhill again this midterm... A number of reasons can be attributed to why, but we mustn't make unnecessary



excuses now. I'm sure you all know who this applies to, so... Let's try to be more thorough next year. Every single student in this class stands a chance of achieving above average results. It's all about the discipline. The positive thing is that everybody has a positive view of this class. The class makes a great team, the professors like to teach here. They do make some comments once in a while, but it's nothing too serious. In that sense, we can really give them some credit. For those of you wondering what we used your financial contributions for this year, here's a list of expenses. This includes items such as class trips, minor repairs, class events catering, and so on. *(passing the papers around)* And now I would like to pass the word to you, dear parents. Is there anything you're interested in that I haven't mentioned yet? Anything you'd like to know? *(long silence, the figures behind the desks hardly move, they just stare at the teacher)* If not, then that should be all from me...

(The words get interrupted by one of the figures who speaks without letting us see their face.)

PARENT: I was wondering about one thing. It's not really related to education, but... maybe it affects more students. It's about my son's behavior. You've described the atmosphere in the classroom as very positive, professor, but... Lately, I've been getting a strange feeling. It's like... there's something... odd going on. And it's possible that this is not a rare case. Maybe others experience something similar.

TEACHER: What is going on? Do you suspect there are some problems in the classroom that we're neglecting?

PARENT: It may be a private matter, but it certainly impacts the school environment as well. There is one thing I would like to know your opinion on. *(stands up and turns slightly towards the other parents)* Do you think our children are able to use technology safely?

(The characters start moving nervously and murmuring something to each other. Generally, they should give out the impression of disagreement with the doubts about their children.)

ALEX

"Do you understand their concerns?"

"No. How am I different from them?"

(Alex is sitting by the table, mom is preparing dinner.)



- MOM: You don't need to stress about it. We'll go there together... we can get some cake as a reward afterwards...
- ALEX: Jeez, okay, great. *(pause)* Sorry... but it's complete BS.
- MOM: The very fact that you're reacting in such an irritated manner means it needs to be taken care of.
- ALEX: You'd also get irritated if someone accused you of something that's not true.
- MOM: Sweetie, you don't see yourself in a realistic way. I'm sorry, but you just need help.
- ALEX: Sorry but I really don't think so. I'm not doing anything everyone else isn't doing too.
- MOM: You don't need to feel shame.
- ALEX: I know, I'm not doing anything wrong. So there's no need to be ashamed...
- MOM: It can happen to anyone. The fact that it got out of your control doesn't mean you're a bad person. It's okay to ask for help.
- ALEX: I haven't asked for anything.
- MOM: The first step towards recovery is admitting the disorder.
- ALEX: Well, then we have a problem. *(shrugs)* I feel very healthy.
- MOM: Alex.
- ALEX: Look, are my hands shaking? Can't I sit still? Do I fidget with my fingers? No! So?
- BROTHER: *(just a voice from another room)* Mom, my Discord is crashing! The whole thing got frozen..
- MOM: I'll be right there!
- ALEX: And this seems normal to you, right? How is it that he's okay and I'm not, by your logic?
- MOM: He uses it to study. He doesn't waste his time. He doesn't play games.
- ALEX: Of course! So you think I do nothing else all day long?
- MOM: Your brother's approach is reasonable. He knows how to make the most of his time on the computer, he only uses it productively. You hurt yourself.



ALEX: He just lies to you about his studying and I'm straight up telling you about my playing...

BROTHER: Mooom! Are you coming?!

ALEX: Jeez...

MOM: Be right there!

(Dad comes to the kitchen instead of mom. He is wearing a bluetooth headphone in his ear, he grabs everything that comes to his hand very unsystematically, looking nervous.)

DAD: I am sorry, Mr Smith, but that was not within my authority. The marketing department received all the documents from us on time. ... I personally monitored the whole team. ... No, I don't know where the mistake was made but it wasn't us. ... Well, I can't guarantee it won't happen again as I don't know who' fault it was. ... Of course, I understand that. ... Yes, as soon as we figure out who's to blame... yes. ... Nice evening to you, too.
(He ends the call, sighs heavily, he's upset) Ah!

ALEX: Dad?

DAD: Yeah?

ALEX: Can I ask you something?

DAD: *(very casually)* Sure.

ALEX: Do you also think... *(dad's phone rings again)*

DAD: *(looks at the phone, sighs again, barely acknowledging Alex)* This is important, sorry. Hello, Mr. Williams? ... Yes, yes, they've already called me. But of course, we'll figure it out...

(Dad leaves the kitchen, mom comes back again.)

ALEX: Fixed?

MOM: He didn't actually even need my help. He's so smart with these things...

ALEX: Right. The best at everything.

MOM: Alex... we all have our strengths and weaknesses.

ALEX: It's just that some people have more of the one and some have more of the other. Right? *(Mom pushes their hand away as they try to grab something from the dinner plate)*

MOM: I don't have a picture of it yet. *(hands Alex a small ring light and a folding screen, starts taking pictures of the food on the plate)* Please just hold on for a second. Or you could help me and it'll be done sooner. Hold this...



Closer to the plate. That's great. Move the light more to the right. Aaall right. Great. This one's perfect. (smiles) You could help me out more often.

ALEX: Do you really enjoy this, mom?

MOM: I do! (*nods her head and smiles*) It's entertaining and it fulfills my creative needs. I can be at home with you... It's a great change compared to cooking lunches in the cafeteria. And it makes more money too. Have you seen the number of my subscribers? And it's still growing.

ALEX: Sure, when it earns, there's no problem with being on the internet constantly.

MOM: I use the internet to work. (*short silence, then shouting*) Lucas, dinner! (*silence*) Please text Lucas that the dinner's ready.

ALEX: (*sarcastically*) How? You took my phone!

MOM: Use mine. (*hands the phone over to Alex*)

ALEX: Wouldn't it be easier to just go fetch her?

MOM: If you feel like ruining your joints, be my guest. But I'm not running up those stairs for no reason.

ALEX: Mom... why do you think this is all fine but I'm not?

MOM: Because there's quite a difference between using your phone reasonably and being addic...

ALEX: A few hours a week does not mean...

MOM: Playing on a regular basis.

ALEX: What I do is not an addiction.

MOM: Alex...

ALEX: It's not!

MOM: Let's see what they tell us tomorrow.

ALEX: What makes you think that...?

MOM: You need help.

ALEX: No more than you do!



- A: „The psychologist clarified that computer game addiction has a specific definition and symptoms. I didn't meet them. But he advised us to talk more at home. Maybe not about computers, or games, or even about addiction. The topic apparently doesn't matter. We're just supposed to talk. What about though? How? Are we even able to do that anymore?”
- B: „I didn't go there. Of course. I just quietly snuck out of the house in the morning and ran away from all the disapproving looks and constant criticism. This time it worked. And the next time? I don't know. I have no idea. I don't care. Just don't think I'm running away from the problem because I'm not. I just don't have any problem. And I'm going to run until they get it, too.”
- C: „The psychologist clarified that computer game addiction has a specific definition and symptoms. I didn't meet them. He did, however, insist that there was definitely something wrong at our home and then he ordered us to try to talk a little more about everything. But how? My parents don't get me, and they don't seem to understand that they should start with themselves first.”

LEA

„What led up to your suicide attempt?”

„I just wanted to be as perfect as everyone else.”

(Lea is sitting behind her desk, writing something on a scrap of paper, looking very annoyed.)

A ringing mobile phone interrupts the situation, Lea picks it up.

She keeps looking in the mirror while talking on the phone - running her fingers over her reflection.)

- LEA: Hello? Hey! ... I'm alive. What about you? ... Really? ... Oh, no, it's okay, Miuš. ... Sure, I'd love to. ... No, no, not at all. If I told you, you'd laugh at me. ... My parents have really dumb ideas sometimes. They keep forgetting I'm not a child anymore. ... Oh. I'm supposed to write a letter to Santa. You see? Like I'm five. #reallifestories... Hey, sure, but if I want them to give me something decent, I gotta write a list of them like an idiot. They just want it this way... (laughs, then pretends to read the letter in a mocking



voice) Stop it! Of course, okay. I wrote "Dear Santa... this is complete crap, but I'd like to ask you to pretend you exist and to bring me presents!" #christasmagic... *(Her energy fades, her annoyed mood is back.) I doubt they'll give me what I'm asking for anyway. ... Well, the merch from Kikushka, of course! Have you seen those sweatshirts?! Oh! Perfect. And those fluffy slippers. #teamkikushka ... You're a jerk. You can't tell what's good, really. ... It's not expensive! You're paying for quality. She only uses organic cotton, her stuff is conscious, design... totally cool! She even supports cruelty free. So actually, this is for a good cause. #charityshop Charity, you know. (laughs) You're such a dork... Ah. I'd like to be like her. ... Well, you know... #goalsettings (sighs) Okay, let's drop it. ... Okay, I'll be there. I just need to order some clothes and I'll be on my way. ... Well, because of the video. ... Sorry, but it definitely can't wait. Kikushka's already put her seasonal haul out long ago. I'm gonna have to step it up a little bit, too.*

(A shift in time. Lea is getting dressed, packing her things into her handbag, walking out slowly. As she is leaving, she glimpses her image in the mirror. She glances at herself and reluctantly takes a closer look at her face, her stomach, her whole appearance. Then she notices a pimple on her forehead.)

LEA: Damn it! Again? Why... Why do you look like this? You're disgusting, don't you see? Can't you really try a little harder? - But I am trying. Really. Well, apparently not since you look like that. Gross. I don't know what else to do. - Why do you eat so much? What? I don't know... Why do you keep buying cheap make-up? You gotta buy quality stuff. - It's not that easy. - What's not that easy? If you just tried harder... - I don't know how to try any harder. - Well, then you're a wreck. You look really hideous.

Aah! #wannabesomeoneelse *(she tilts her forehead towards the mirror desperately, then bounces back, slams the mirror, redoes her makeup, grabs her phone, takes a picture and starts typing)* Going out to meet my friends in the city. It's time for shopiiiiing! I've got a few minutes for your curious questions. Create a question poll... What would you like to know about me? #nomakeupmonday #selflove #everydayisagift *(she puts her phone in her pocket and briskly walks away)*

(Lea approaches Mia, who's holding her phone and watching something. When she sees Lea, she checks her out very curiously. Then she smiles at her with caution. As if she doesn't know how to start a conversation. They hug each other as a greeting.)



- LEA: Heyyy.
- MIA: Hi, Leuš.
- LEA: *(handing over a notebook)* Thanks for the notes, you saved me.
- MIA: It's cool. Did you see the homework from Hanzlová?
- LEA: Jeez, yeah! Has she gone crazy? I'm gonna spend my whole life on that task!
- MIA: I've already finished it. If you'd like to...
- LEA: What? Seriously? I don't get it, but you're just...
- MIA: Adam let me copy his.
- LEA: Ewwww. Really?
- MIA: Well... all it took was to smile and ask nicely.
- LEA: Si pani.
- MIA: I mean.. thanks.
- LEA: *(kývne hlavou k telefónu)* Did you see my prank?
- MIA: I just finished it.
- LEA: And? What do you think? A little less views, but I think it was really well done. I guess I just chose the wrong time to post it.
- MIA: Lei...
- LEA: Yeah?
- MIA: I don't think the time is the problem.
- LEA: So what is it then?
- MIA: Why don't you come up with something of your own?
- LEA: What do you mean? This was my idea.
- MIA: No, it wasn't. Just like the dog shelter post, and the boyfriend tag in the Tatras, and the Try Not to Laugh challenge with the monkeys weren't your ideas. None of it was.
- LEA: Excuse me?



- MIA: You copy everything from Kikushka. And I'm sorry but.. you don't do it very well either.
- LEA: You're a total bitch! Did you know that?
- MIA: Lei, I just want the best for you. Did you see those comments under the video?
- LEA: You're embarrassing yourself. You envy me, don't you? The fans, the likes.
- MIA: I don't envy you. There's nothing to envy. How many fans do you even have?
- LEA: What do you care?
- MIA: Tell me... how many people have answered your question poll now?
- LEA: *(she pulls her phone out of her pocket, and looks at the screen nervously)* I haven't checked yet...
- MIA: *(takes the phone from her hand, unlocks it with Lea's finger)* "What's up with these rags? Has anyone told you you're fat yet? Someone should block this dumbass. Or to shoot her. Do you ever look in the mirror, honey? Are you pregnant with twins? If I looked like you, I'd rather kill myself... The older you get, the harder it's gonna be to lose weight. You should start now. When I look at your picture, it makes me want to puke." Lea! Why do you want to do this to yourself? How can you be like this?!
- LEA: You're a total bitch!
- (Lea rips the phone out of Mia's hand and runs away.)*
- A:** „You can find all sorts of motivational videos on YouTube about how you should love yourself, avoid negativity, accept yourself as you are... but seriously? There's no advice available online on how to cope with all the hatred, with all the people judging you, with you judging yourself. As if that was okay... but hey! It really isn't! After what happened, I realized that I absolutely hated myself. And that this feeling had grown inside me because of the hateful voices of strangers on the internet. I did a stupid thing, but... finally I saw there is another whole world out there. With different people. Out there somewhere. And that not everyone thinks I'm a total loser.”
- B:** „You can find all sorts of motivational videos on YouTube about how you should love yourself, avoid negativity, accept yourself as you are... but seriously? Online, no one will help you with how to deal with all the hatred, with all the people judging you, with you



judging yourself. I've grown to hate myself. I figured that no matter how hard I tried, I would never be good enough. Good enough for everyone. So I decided to handle it - in that one way you are left with when all the other options have failed. Every comment has deepened my feeling that everyone here will be better off without me, anyway."

C: „You can find all sorts of motivational videos on YouTube about how you should love yourself, avoid negativity, accept yourself as you are... but seriously? There's no advice available online on how to cope with all the hatred, with all the people judging you, with you judging yourself. As if that was okay... but hey! It really isn't! After what happened, I realized that I absolutely hated myself. And that this feeling had grown inside me because of the hateful voices of strangers on the internet. But what am I supposed to do about it? No matter how much I try to convince myself I don't care about them, I still feel like a complete loser. Does that ever change?"

VIKI

„Are you alright? What happened?"

„How did all these people get so hateful and stupid?"

(Viki and the host of a TV show are seated in a TV studio. Viki is a participant of a project that encourages young people to deal with societal issues more effectively. They are shooting a short interview together about the project Viki took part in.)

REDACTOR: Viki, what made you decide to apply for this project?

VIKI: Primarily, the topic for sure. I wouldn't go into it if I didn't enjoy it. But the medium is awesome too. All the events, discussions, even the lectures were really cool. We dealt with things that normally I don't have anyone to talk to about, or things that people tend to argue about.

REDACTOR: But now, it wasn't that way.

VIKI: No. This was quite different. We were guided to be able to express our views... in a better, more reasonable way. More effectively, actually.

REDACTOR: What does it mean in practice?



VIKI: It means that you cannot force your opinion on others, you need to strive for mutual respect. And for rational arguments most of all. That's just... the fundamental difference between an argument and a discussion.

REDACTOR: I'm afraid such an approach seems to be lacking in our society...

VIKI: *(smiles)* I also felt that way. But lately I've met a lot of people who have convinced me that maybe it's not so bad. That maybe... it's more about the fact that... we don't really talk much about the most serious issues.

REDACTOR: Mhm, that's an interesting observation. I guess we generally tend to avoid serious debates. Why do you think that's the case?

VIKI: Well... the fear of being held accountable for your opinion? Or just the fear of this opinion not being accepted? That probably happens far too often. Someone says something most people disagree with and suddenly they get hit with a tsunami of hatred. Nobody wants that, of course.

REDACTOR: Is there a solution?

VIKI: Less hatred? *(laughs)* But really that's what it's really about. Trying to get people to hate less and to listen more.

REDACTOR: Is that possible? Do you have any suggestions?

(Viki is in her room. She turns her computer on and scrolls through a variety of posts and articles. She comes across one blog and starts reading.)

VIKI: *(reading)* Generally, when I write comments on my blog, I try to take an open-minded approach and when I comment on social issues, I try to be as objective as possible. I have been carrying a certain subject in my mind for some time now, though. Therefore, this time it's going to be a bit different. Personal. I want to write about my experience with comingout..

VOICES (from the internet): Ew, gross. You make me sick. You little faggot! What kind of example for the kids are you setting? It's getting twisted in here... Why are you writing about things like this? Who's supposed to read that? That kind of disgusting stuff has no place here! We don't want the Homos here! You bastard fag! Idiot! You can take your opinions and go... Who cares?! Mind your own business! Such nonsense! Don't bother us with this stuff! You better just shut up!

VIKI: For real?... Jesus... You can't be serious... Bigots. What century do you live in? ... Wow. I'm not even talking to you, mate. You all are such dirtbags,



like, actual retards ... What do we do with you? ... (she browses the page, mumbling the things she sees) ...moderated discussion ... blah-blah-blah... violates the rules of discussion... report a post. Report account. (clicks) And what are you going to do now, electronic28? You can do nothing but go to hell! Majuska779, sweetheart, you actually think anyone cares about your stupid opinion...? MariaTerezaBernardo, what an enlightened person you are... Report.

(School gym - effort to decorate and rearrange it is noticeable. There is a microphone on a stand in the middle, two chairs next to it, lights on, a couple of bright coloured ribbons on the wall ribs.)

TEACHER: *(looks to the microphone to open the event)* Hello, dear students, colleagues. I am sincerely pleased that today, right here, at this very place, on the school premises, by the initiative of our student Viktória Kováčová, we have met for this inspiring event. Viki represented us in an interesting pan-European project and today she brings us the experience she gained there. We are going to use them together in today's moderated discussion. And what will it be about? Viki? I'll let you take over. (lame applause, the atmosphere is awkward)

VIKI: *(she's visibly nervous, anxiously gripping the microphone, fidgeting around, stutters from time to time)* Thank you, professor. *(clears her throat)* Hello, hi. Thank you for coming today, for being here, there's so many of you, and for... being curious about other people's opinions on... on... things. on important things...

SOMEONE from the AUDIENCE: Did your processor crash, nerd?

ANOTHER VOICE: Cause she's trolling with stupid stuff.

TEACHER: Kids, you should give it a shot. Do you know how hard it is to talk in front of so many people?

ANOTHER VOICE: Right, Professor. We know. We heard your intro...

VIKI: Um. I'm sure you know you had a chance to... prepare suggestions for the discussion topics. Topics that... you're interested in. Have you thought of anything? *(quietly looks around)* Anything's cool. Anything you can think of.

TEACHER: Well? 5 minutes ago it seemed to me as if you were all dying to make a point and now you're speechless all of a sudden?



SOMEONE from the AUDIENCE: Jesus, this is such stupid nonsense. Do we really have to be here?

ANOTHER VOICE: Like, honestly, who even cares?

ANOTHER VOICE: Victoria, you're getting really annoying with this BS.

TEACHER: So you'd rather be studying?

ANOTHER VOICE: Anything would be better than this cringy meeting.

TEACHER: Well, that's enough. Give me some suggestions. Huh? I'm all ears!

VIKI: *(still silence)* Don't you have anything? *(silence, Viki tries to be brave, pulls a piece of paper out of her pocket)* All right, I'll start... I came across this post online yesterday. A guy decided to write a blog about how... he publicly admitted to being... a part of the LGBT community. It was very honest. But the reactions... I'm surprised that today there are still people who are so... *(looking for a decent word)* bigoted reaction to gayness. Can you imagine?

SOMEONE from the AUDIENCE: Eeeew! Dyke!

VIKI: What? But I'm not... Uhh. Well, um... Obviously, internet is not the only place with bigots...

TEACHER: Viki!

VIKI: Yeah, let's keep going. Okay... so... The article opened the topic of identity, but there were other, perhaps a bit more complicated questions that came to my mind. *(looks at the professor)* I thought that LGBT was not a problematic issue at our school, so I wanted to do something a little...

SOMEONE from the AUDIENCE: Victoria, shut up and go to...

TEACHER: Oh come on!

SOMEONE from the AUDIENCE: Stop dealing with stupid stuff, you loser. Nobody gives a damn.

TEACHER: That is a bit much, don't you think?

SOMEONE from the AUDIENCE: Guys don't fancy you, so you're looking for a girlfriend?

TEACHER: Am I really supposed to write this onto your record or what?

SOMEONE from the AUDIENCE: Put it in hers instead. About harassing the profs in the bathrooms.

(booing from the audience)



- VIKI: *(outsbouts noise)* I wonder... what you think about the possibility of adopting... by homosexual couples? Hm?
- SOMEONE: Bullshit! You're such a cow. Go to hell. Ew! Like I'm supposed to watch two faggs hanging out in my bedroom every day?
- VIKI: Can't you block them... stop them somehow, Professor? This is beyond normal! All of you go to....!
- TEACHER: Kids! Hey!
- SOMEONE: You can go eff yourself with your opinions... Who cares?! Mind your own business! Jeez! Don't bother us with all this stuff! You better just shut up!
- TEACHER: Tame yourselves! Perhaps this is a sensitive, somewhat personal topic for Viki...
- VIKI: Seriously?
- SOMEONE: What? Are you scared your folks are gonna shove you back into an orphanage?

A: „It was easy to have discussions online. You could just report a post if you didn't like someone's opinion, block them, and bye...! Or argue to the bleeding point. No fear and no censorship. With absolute confidence in own truth. In fact, having my IQ questioned by someone with a username idiot991 was purely bizarre. I was extremely amused by how ruthlessly I could shut down all of the inconvenient opinions. I thought no one would break me. It hadn't really occurred to me that in real life... debating is something entirely different. It wasn't until I got smacked in the face that I realized I was completely off. Annoying comments can't be blocked in real life. It' s a shame, really. But that's just the way it is. The only option left is outfighting them. With promptness and logical arguments. Or maybe also... listening to another points of view. Maybe they'll be pleasantly surprising from time to time.”

B: „It was easy to have discussions online. You could just report a post if you didn't like someone's opinion, block them, and bye...! Or argue to the bleeding point. No fear and no censorship. With absolute confidence in own truth. In fact, having my IQ questioned by someone with a username idiot991 was purely bizarre. I was extremely amused by how ruthlessly I could shut down all of the inconvenient opinions. I thought no one would break me. It hadn't really occurred to me that in real life... debating is something entirely different. All those looks, all those words, the screams.



Suddenly I realized I was completely done. With them. That I feel awful. And all I want is for them to be quiet. To shut up. Why are they so stupid? Why do they hate me? Why won't someone just block them?"

- C: „It was easy to have discussions online. You could just report a post if you didn't like someone's opinion, block them, and bye...! Or argue to the bleeding point. No fear and no censorship. With absolute confidence in own truth. In fact, having my IQ questioned by someone with a username idiot991 was purely bizarre. I was extremely amused by how ruthlessly I could shut down all of the inconvenient opinions. I thought no one would break me. It hadn't really occurred to me that in real life... debating is something entirely different. It wasn't until I got smacked in the face that I realized I I don't have a patent for everything. That I don't actually have the answers. And even if I do, no one listens to them. And even if they do, they're not strong enough. Being right is completely useless if you can't pursue it.”

KIKA

"How come you didn't have your phone with you?"

"I didn't want my life to run through my fingers."

(Kika is standing on stage in the spotlight - she's giving her "revolutionary speech". Other figures - her classmates - flash around her in the dark. Her words are enthusiastic, but no one really responds to her. The characters' faces are only lit by the glowing screens of their phones.)

- KIKA: Do you realize how brainwashed you are by technological gadgets? What they're taking away from you? How they manipulate you? You never focus on what's here and now because you've become slaves to those nasty, distracting notifications that keep popping up on your screens. Not even a mother reacts as sensitively to her baby's crying as you all react to the buzzing of your phones! You don't know who you are, you don't know what you think, because all your thoughts have been hijacked by the algorithms of the internet. Everything that matters to you is happening on



the screens of your phones! But real life is somewhere else. Do you realize how it runs through your fingers? It's right in front of you... Technology is evil! IQ and EQ decline, memory and concentration impairment, pathological relationships, inability to communicate openly, neuroses, aggressive behavior patterns, loss of identity, sociopathy, increased rates of addiction, obesity, loss of privacy, leakage of confidential information, climate and genetic changes. We can find a common denominator behind all this. Enough of technological terror! Enough of robotism! This world was made for humans, not for machines! No more technology reign!

(Camera clicks - someone has just taken a picture of Kika, others join in one by one. Everybody takes a picture of Kika, we see flash lights, ironic names start to be shouted.)

HLASY: #helpme #whatabitch #minioninaction #alien
#internetwillbethedeathofusall #billgatesisgonnagetya
#becomigaslavewithmicrochips #stealingyouridentity #shiftingtorobots
#brainwashing #someoneiscuckoohere #theearthisflatandsoiskika
#wereallgonnadie #alternativevoice #saveyourselves #deathtointernet
#revolutionishere #lol

(The clicking stops, the characters disappear. The spotlight expands into a slightly greyer looking environment. Kika sighs and turns silent. She continues talking to herself.)

KIKA: You really don't get it?! I'm not kidding... Is this what you're into? Is this what you want? Just you and your cell phones... You're completely out of your minds. Is this how you want to live?

(Kika and Sara, and possibly other women, in sports clothes, exercising together. During yoga, the girls have a chat.)

SÁRA: Why didn't you join us last Saturday?

KIKA: What was last Saturday?

SÁRA: We were exercising by the rising of the sun. I sent you a text in the group chat.

KIKA: Oh... I didn't know about that. I'm not in that group.

SÁRA: Seriously? Jeez, sorry about that. I'll add you right away.

KIKA: Don't worry, it's fine...



- SÁRA: It's just a matter of a second. What's your username?
- KIKA: None. I don't have one.
- SÁRA: I see. So if you want... I can always send you a private text message when we have something like this scheduled...
- KIKA: I don't have a cell phone. I'm sorry, but I think it's... a bad thing. I don't want to succumb to this technical garbage. I think it's a total brainwashing machine.
- SÁRA: *(for a moment she smiles mockingly, then tries to respond in an understanding way)*
Well, it's up to you, of course. But it's a shame. Some events get thrown together on the last minute, so we figure things out on the spot...
- KIKA: So I'm gonna miss a few events. So let's be it. As long as my life doesn't get stolen from me.
- SÁRA: Hm. Yeah, right. Well... you know better.

- KIKA: What is that great smell, Mom?
- MOM: Vegetables from a nice gentleman who has a small organic farm just outside the town.
- KIKA: I didn't know there was an organic farm here.
- MOM: Neither did I.
- KIKA: *(smiles understandingly)* Has Aunt Anita been on some sort of a scavenger hunt again?
- MOM: No, no. A lady from the internet wrote about it.
- KIKA: ...from the internet?
- MOM: A sort of a Facebook group where people share inspirations for a more sustainable life.
- KIKA: What?!
- MOM: It's great. They post all sorts of recipes, local suppliers, different organic alternatives. Lots of interesting stuff...
- KIKA: Mom, you can't be serious, are you?



- MOM: What is it, baby?
- KIKA: You have a Facebook now? Killing your time with it? Killing your own life with it?
- MOM: *(laughs)* I don't think looking there for inspiration for a more sensible way of life is killing your time.
- KIKA: You've been completely brainwashed.
- MOM: Excuse me?
- KIKA: It took control over you.
- MOM: Kristi, aren't you going a little overboard here?
- KIKA: No, excuse me! You just deny everything you've ever led me to and I'm going overboard, huh? Mum... I thought you... I thought you felt the same way I did. I thought you knew how awful it is that everyone's constantly stuck to their phones. I thought... you understood. And agreed.
- MOM: I do agree, completely. But this is just...
- KIKA: No. No buts.
- MOM: Kristínka.
- KIKA: Let's just leave it alone, please. I'm going out.
- MOM: Where?
- KIKA: I don't know. Somewhere. Just for a walk.

(Kika goes out. It's dark on stage. We can see two figures in the darkness. Kika mumbles swear words)

- KIKA: Sure. Why shouldn't we accept that? Everybody is that way, let's also be that way! We need to fit in with the crowd. Make sure you don't stand out. And be just as stupid as they are. Let yourself be manipulated. That's how it works. And she's not resisting either, of course...

(A sound of brakes screeching and a scream interrupt the silence.)

- KIKA: Careful!



(Crashing sound, one of the characters collapses to the ground. Someone swears and the car's engine starts up again, the sound of it fades into the distance.)

KIKA: You can't be serious! Hey! Stop the car! ... (runs up to the figure lying on the ground, grabs it in a panic and starts to examine it) Can you hear me? Can you hear me, little angel?! Where's your mommy? What?! ... Help! Help!!! Hey! Can anyone hear me?! Is anybody there? I need to call an ambulance!!!! ... (crying) Damn it!

A: „It never even crossed my mind that one day the moment might come when a cell phone would become essential for life. I didn't want to end up like the others. With my nose buried in my phone all the time. Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok... it doesn't matter what's currently trending. At the end of the day, it's about the same thing. Everyone keeps posting laughing photos from their pseudo perfect life, while the real one leaks through their fingers. People are going insane. Every ten seconds they grab their phones, light up the screen, check the notifications. They will forget their wallet, but never their phone. They're completely out of their minds. It's just... Sometimes other things come into it too. As I stood over that little wounded girl, a feeling of helplessness rushed all over me. And it just had hit me how easy it would have been to handle everything if I'd had a cell phone in my pocket. All of the sudden, there was nothing else I wanted more. 'I wish I had my phone. I have to get a phone!' kept running through my head. And I desperately sought for someone who already had it there to save us.”

B: „It never even crossed my mind that one day the moment might come when a cell phone would become essential for life. I didn't want to end up like the others. With my nose buried in my phone all the time. Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok... it doesn't matter what's currently trending. At the end of the day, it's about the same thing. Everyone keeps posting laughing photos from their pseudo perfect life, while the real one leaks through their fingers. People are going insane. Every ten seconds they grab their phones, light up the screen, check the notifications. They will forget their wallet, but never their phone. They're completely out of their minds. As I stood over that little wounded girl, a feeling of helplessness rushed all over me. Anyone else would've already been dialing 911 and raving about what a hero they are. But I had to be a hero even without that. To rely on myself, to believe that I could do it. And that the little one would be able to make it... But... sometimes it's just not possible without help.”



C: „It never even crossed my mind that one day the moment might come when a cell phone would become essential for life. I didn't want to end up like the others. With my nose buried in my phone all the time. Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok... it doesn't matter what's currently trending. At the end of the day, it's about the same thing. Everyone keeps posting laughing photos from their pseudo perfect life, while the real one leaks through their fingers. People are going insane. Every ten seconds they grab their phones, light up the screen, check the notifications. They will forget their wallet, but never their phone. They're completely out of their minds. It's just... Sometimes other things come into it too. As I stood over that little wounded girl, a feeling of helplessness rushed all over me. And it just had hit me how easy it would have been to handle everything if I'd had a cell phone in my pocket.”

MIRO

"Could you please tell me... how the accident happened?"

"I needed the cash."

(Miro and Lea appear on the stage. Miro is staring into the distance, Lea is sitting in his arms, struggling to get his attention.)

LEA: Shall we go to the movies tonight? Or for a drink?

MIRO: Hm.

LEA: Or... if you'd like, you can come over to my place. My parents are going out for dinner. I'm sure they won't be back before ten.

MIRO: As you wish.

LEA: And I've bought a new... *(she whispers the rest in his ear, smiling)*

MIRO: Cool... Cool. *(he seems to realize something)* Ahem... Lei? Babe...

LEA: *(she's getting a little frustrated)* Well? What is it? Please tell me, what's going on with you?

MIRO: I just need...

LEA: Yeah? *(she starts to wrap her arms around him again)* Tell me what you need...



- MIRO: Lei... No, wait... I would...
- LEA: What is it?!
- MIRO: I have to tell you something.
- LEA: Yeah?
- MIRO: It's nothing, actually.
- LEA: You can't be serious, right?
- MIRO: It's nothing, really. In fact... it's better for you not to know.
- LEA: What? ... Have you cheated on me?
- MIRO: No! No, let's drop it. Really.
- LEA: So you have?
- MIRO: No, I haven't. I don't understand why you act like such a jealous bitch now.
- LEA: Excuse me?
- MIRO: You heard me.
- LEA: Are you insane?
- MIRO: Just stop it, please, and forget about it, okay? I'm really not in the mood for this, sorry.
- LEA: So you have cheated on me?
- MIRO: Jesus Christ, how many more times do I need to..? You know what? I have. Will you stop bothering me about it now?
- LEA: You are such a dickhead! Jeez... (she gets up and picks up her things) I really don't need this...
- (A dangerous-looking guy briskly walks onto the scene. He's holding something metallic in his hand (probably a boxer), he's wearing a leather jacket, and a variety of chains and rings with sharp edges. He shoves Lea back into her seat as she tries to leave and seizes Miro in a tight grip. He doesn't try to resist at all. Lea watches the scene in horror. She pulls out her phone and starts filming him.)*
- GUY: How are we doing? Hm? (he spots what Lea's doing and angrily points at her phone) Put it away! Put it away right now! (Lea turns off the phone and hides it in her pocket)
- MIRO: All right, good... what about you?



- GUY: You know what, I could be doing great, buddy, but... um, you're not gonna believe this. Somebody tricked me. And I got fucked over.
- MIRO: Really? That... that sucks. I'm sorry about that.
- GUY: You should be, sweetie. Because if I don't get what's mine, you're gonna pay for it. Where is it? Hmm? Tell me where it is right now!
- MIRO: I don't know, I really have no idea, sorry.
- GUY: You will not steal from me, darling.
- MIRO: I didn't take it, I swear!
- GUY: I really don't give a damn about that crap, shorty. Either you give it all back to me right now, or... (he pushes him against a wall, Lea keeps watching what's going helplessly, she has no idea what to do)
- LEA: Miro...
- GUY: You shut up!
- MIRO: Lea, go away.
- GUY: And you pay attention to me! I want either the stuff or the money on my desk tonight. And if I don't, you know I'll find you. The boys are already eager to meet you.
- MIRO: But I haven't taken it, don't you get it? I don't have any of it! I have nothing to bring to you.
- GUY: The stuff, or the money. I don't care about anything else. I want it tonight, shorty.
- (He pushes into him, then lets go and walks away. Lea quickly grabs Miro in her arms. She's terrified.)*
- LEA: What the hell was that?
- MIRO: Best if you know nothing about it.
- LEA: Have you completely lost it? You tell me what happened this instant.
- MIRO: Sorry, love. I gotta go get some money.
- LEA: No. You have to tell me what this was all about. What's going on?
- MIRO: You really want to know?
- LEA: Spit it out. Now.



- MIRO: I needed some cash.
- LEA: Cool, and?
- MIRO: I thought it was fake. Just a joke. I just... I came across this website...
- LEA: What have you gotten yourself into?
- MIRO: I didn't think it could actually be... it's so easy to get to...
- LEA: To what? *(gets quiet)* Miro!
- MIRO: I just... I started dealing.
- LEA: You're insane. *(walks away)* I don't want to have anything to do with this.
- MIRO: I just wanted to... *(he shouts at Lea as she's leaving)* I just wanted us to be able to go out. To buy you anything you'd like. Help the folks out... so we wouldn't get kicked out of our home...
- LEA: Couldn't you have come up with a more stupid idea? And you told them about it?! You're a moron, you know that? *(she is almost gone when suddenly she realizes something and comes back)* Wait... so you lost the... you lost the batch? You really have no idea where it is?
- MIRO: I have no idea, honestly. Someone must have stolen it, Lei. What am I supposed to do...? Shit, what am I gonna do?!
- LEA: Can't you report it?
- MIRO: What, drugs?
- (silent pause)*
- MIRO: Lei... He's gonna kill me.
- A:** „I was totally... screwed. I had no idea that you could do black business on the web in just a few seconds. Let alone that it could actually be real. And then... I don't even know how but I was drowning in it. At that point, I had two choices. Get myself killed, or get locked up. Finally, I confessed everything to my parents. Of course, they almost killed me too. And then, against all my begging, they filed a police report anyway. They said they weren't going to risk some thugs coming to deal with us. I was sure I was doomed. But in the end... that shit really got sorted out. They got me out of it. And I wasn't the one who ended up in jail.”



- B:** „I'm totally... screwed. I had no idea that you could do this shit on the web in just a few seconds. Let alone that it could actually be real. And then... I don't even know how, and I started drowning in it. And now I have two "amazing" options to choose from. Get myself killed, or get locked up. Should I tell my parents about this? Bollocks! They'd kill me for it, as well. Or maybe they'd do something dumb. Maybe something could happen to them, too. No. This is on me. This is my shit. I can't drag them into this. So... I guess I should turn myself in. At least that way they'll be safe.”
- C:** „I'm totally... screwed. I had no idea that you could do black business on the web in just a few seconds. Let alone that it could actually be real. And then... I don't even know how, and I started drowning in it. And now I have two "amazing" options to choose from. Get myself killed, or get locked up. Should I tell my parents about this? Bollocks! They'd kill me for it, as well. Or maybe they'd do something dumb. Maybe something could happen to them, too. No. This is on me. This is my shit. And I have to face it myself. I just need to strike before they do.”

MIA

„Do you think this is payback? Did you really want to hurt him so bad?”

„I had no idea it could turn out this way.”

(Mia and Alex come to the front door. Alex, supporting a very drunk Mia, rings the doorbell. The door opens, Mia's stepfather is standing there.)

The angry father responds in a way that sounds like he's really trying to sound calm. Alex seems sober. Mia responds to everything with drunken mood swings and a tangled tongue.)

ALEX: Good evening, sir.



- FATHER: Evening? Do you have any idea what time it is?
- MIA: We don't... our phones died...
- ALEX: I'm sorry. This was... not really our plan.
- MIA: Because the best experiences are the unplanned ones...
- FATHER: How much did she have to drink?
- ALEX: I don't know. I have no idea, I'm sorry. She got out of my sight.
- MIA: And now I should probably get out too... there's gonna be trouble. *(she starts singing out loud)* Trooooooble, trooooooble...
- FATHER: Get in now, would you? There's no need to wake the whole house up. (to Alex) Are you gonna be okay? Do you need a ride home?
- ALEX: No, no, it's cool. I'm just a minute away.
- MIA: Don't you let somebody steal you...
- ALEX: You look after Mia instead. She probably needs it more...
- OTEC: Okay, all right. Just send a text to Mia's phone when you get home, would you?
- ALEX: Sure. Okay... bye.
- OTEC: Bye.
- MIA: Byesies!
- (The father pulls Mia in. Suddenly he looks harsher, angrier.)*
- FATHER: Do you realize you're not eighteen yet?
- MIA: Right now, counting is a little bit hard for me.
- FATHER: So I am the one responsible for you.
- MIA: Oh no, you're not.
- FATHER: Oh really?
- MIA: You're not my father.
- FATHER: Unlike him, I take interest in making sure you're okay.
- MIA: Don't you dare to speak shit about him.



- FATHER: Try to at least sound polite.
- MIA: And you better not comment at all. You can tell Mom how to live her life if she likes it. But I don't need your lecturing!
- FATHER: You're lucky she's not here. Can you imagine her seeing you like this? *(pause)* This has happened for the last time.
- MIA: *(mocking him)* Yeah. This has happened for the last time, young lady... *(he reaches out to slap her, then stops and just threateningly holds up his finger)*
- FATHER: That's really enough, understood? You're very far from a lady, my dear.
- MIA: Moron.
- FATHER: Excuse me?!
- MIA: A crowned moron.
- FATHER: Go clean yourself up and get some sleep. We'll talk in the morning. *(He's leaving)* Good night.

(Mia is left alone in the room. She touches the cheek she almost got a slap on, grabs her phone, and checks it out through the front-facing camera. Initially she seems grossed out, then she gets an idea. She takes her make-up bag out and starts painting some bruises on her cheek and under her eye. She takes a few pictures and leaves.)

(A different environment. We are located in a teacher's lounge, with two teachers sitting there. One of them is preparing her papers and textbooks, the other one is sipping her coffee and casually scrolling through her screen. Suddenly her expression changes and she reads something with a stiff expression.)

- TEACHER 1: *(showing the phone to the other one)* Look.
- TEACHER 2: What is that? Jesus... what kind of pictures are these?! Another campaign against domestic violence? You look at whatever you want, but I really don't need to see everything...
- TEACHER 1: It's one of my student's account.



TEACHER 2: What?

TEACHER 1: Listen what she wrote about it... Every once in a while I read quotes online about how you need to talk about your problems. How when something is wrong, you need to shout for help... But I must say, it's not easy at all. It's so hard for me to write about this, but I'm really scared.

When it happened for the first time, I thought it was just a brief tantrum that wouldn't happen again. The second time it happened, I thought maybe I had provoked him, that I must have made a mistake... but then it happened for the third, the fourth time... And so on and on. We never had a good relationship, my stepfather and I. He's always hated me... but this? Really?!

Mom won't believe me. She says I'm teenage crazy and that I just want attention. And he carefully acts like the sweet, loving daddy in front of her. I don't know what to do, how to handle this. What do you think? Should I tell someone about this? Will anyone even believe me? (desperately puts the phone down)

TEACHER 2: Do you think it might be true?

TEACHER 1: I... I really don't know. But you can't just make something like that up, can you?

TEACHER 2: No idea.

TEACHER 1: But if she is not making it up, she is in real danger. We should trust her.

TEACHER 2: I guess you're right. We need to report this!

A: „Once, when I shattered my brand new phone in a tantrum, my mother told me to always think through my actions to the consequences. I didn't get another one until a year and a half later. I was taking incredible care of it. I was so worried about it. I didn't have any interest in her boyfriend. None at all. He was acting as if he were my old man and he was disgustingly flirty with my mom. He was always bragging about something, acting all jokey and understanding, but all he ever did was lecture me. I despised him. Until I realized how much he was able to forgive me. It's crazy how much can happen when a person lies even just for a moment.”

B: „Once, when I shattered my brand new phone in a tantrum, my mother told me to always think through my actions to the consequences. I didn't get another one until a year and a half later. I was taking incredible care of it. I was so worried about it. I didn't



have any interest in her boyfriend. None at all. He was acting as if he were my old man and he was disgustingly flirty with my mom. He was always bragging about something, acting all jokey and understanding, but all he ever did was lecture me. I despised him. But the way things ended up, I really... It's crazy what can happen when a person lies even just for a moment. I didn't mean to hurt him that badly. But there' s no way I can undo it. I can't confess. If I did, no one would ever believe anything I ever said again..."

C: „Once, when I shattered my brand new phone in a tantrum, my mother told me to always think through my actions to the consequences. I didn't get another one until a year and a half later. I was taking incredible care of it. I was so worried about it. I didn't have any interest in her boyfriend. None at all. He was acting as if he were my old man and he was disgustingly flirty with my mom. He was always bragging about something, acting all jokey and understanding, but all he ever did was lecture me. I despised him. Until I realized how much he was able to forgive me. It's crazy how much can happen when a person lies even just for a moment.”

ADAM

„How could anyone do such awful stuff to you?”

„Apparently it was just a joke...”

(The classroom. As the school bell rings, everyone hurries to pack up their things and to leave.)

TEACHER: Just hold on for a minute... (they all stop and seem disappointed) Well, look at all this excitement. I'm just gonna bother you with one piece of good news and off you go. The headmistress has checked your grades and class records... and... she's allowed us to take the field trip. We're going sailing.

CLASS: Yes! Finally! Thank God! We're going on a field triiiiiip!

TEACHER: *(handing out papers)* All I need is a consent from your parents, some donations from your piggy banks, and then you can start packing your PJs into your backpacks.

MIA: We're gonna partyyy!

TEACHER: And of course, any alcohol is strictly forbidden.



- MIA: Of course.
- TEACHER: Keep in mind that this is a school trip. You can get expelled from there as well.
- CLASS: Jesus... sure, chill. No fails. We're on our best behavior. No problem. OMG, we're not dumb. All right, Mrs. teach. No stress. Everything's gonna be okay.
- (The class teacher proceeds to Adam, who had been sitting quietly in the corner for now. She hands the paper over to him, while Adam looks at her in doubt, not taking it.)*
- TEACHER: Adam...
- ALEX: We don't take losers with us!
- TEACHER: Fortunately, it is not for you to decide who we take and who we don't! And if Alex plans on coming with us, s/he's gonna start watching his/her tongue, okay? Adam. *(She hands him the paper again, Adam takes it unwillingly)* I want to have all the applications signed by Wednesday. Goodbye! *(she leaves)*
- (One of the classmates runs to Adam, snatches the paper out of his hand and aggressively rips it up in front of his face. He throws the scraps in the air, they fall around like snowflakes. Adam watches the scene without moving. They all leave.)*
- MIA: *(leaving)* If he comes with us, just don't add him to the group chat, please...
- ALEX: Of course. I wouldn't have even thought of that. Did you see the meme about the loser that Luke did?
- MIA: Cringy...

(Adam gets left alone on an empty stage. He takes his laptop out and plays a video - it's the only sound we can hear.)

- VIDEO: Hello, hey! Today we made a video about what a smelly dirtbag we have to share a classroom with every day. His name is Adam. But if you ever need to find him, just ask where the loser with glasses is. I mean, who would even want to find him, right? Watch out: if you get spotted with him, you'll get blacklisted. What does that mean? It means you'll be classified as the same type of loser as he is. And that's a rock bottom. The rockiest of the bottoms. Trust me, guys. You don't want that. Since you've been enjoying our pranks lately, we've decided to do a whole series of



pranks for you today, titled as "Prank The Cringe!". We have prepared a number of tricks for our top embarrassment... starting with glass instead of ice in his juice, through a hidden restroom camera, and a used condom in his backpack. How did it all turn out? Watch and see!

(Adam hopelessly shuts the laptop, breathes heavily, he's about to burst into tears. His mom walks in. He gets startled and tries to act casual in front of her. He opens the notebook and starts typing vigorously)

MOM: Adam? How did it go at school?

ADAM: It was fine, mom.

MOM: What about that math exam?

ADAM: It's an A.

MOM: Hm... full score?

ADAM: Mmmm.

MOM: Are you all right?

ADAM: Sure, Mom.

MOM: *(tilts her head towards the laptop)* Are you gaming?

ADAM: Not anymore.

MOM: Really? You were so enthusiastic about it being such a fancy game and all...

ADAM: Hm.

MOM: Are you bored with it already?

ADAM: No. It's just that... my character died.

MOM: Really? You were so good at it...

ADAM: Well... it was an RPG. But... I mean... the others conspired against me. And they killed me.

MOM: Wait, I don't get it. Like, your friends?

ADAM: These aren't my friends. Whatever! I'm just... not playing anymore. But I'm working on a certain app right now.

MOM: I see. Curious to see what you'll come up with.

ADAM: I'll show you the trial version and you can tell me what you think.



MOM: All right. (she smiles and walks away)

**we don't need to hear the answers from the phone - we only include them to provide an idea of the teacher's attitude*

MOM: Hello. Taylor speaking, Adam's mom. Professor, could I have a moment of your time? (Hello, Mrs. Taylor. Of course, what's the matter?) Forgive me for bothering you, I didn't mean to handle it this way, but this... it's really crossed a line. (Yes...? Is there a problem?) You know Adam is not very popular amongst the peers... (Well, he's a little more introverted...) But that it could go this far... (What happened?) I found this page on Facebook... It's called "Death to Adam T. from the East High sophomore class ". (I see. What kind of a page is this? Does it have anything to do with our class?) The profile picture is a photo of my son. (Well... I'm sorry about that. You know, kids don't always realize what they... I'm sure they didn't mean it.) Excuse me? They didn't mean it...? Do you have any idea about all the stuff that's in there? (No, but...) For instance, "Have you heard the story of Adam who got seduced by Eve in Eden? What a load of crap! Even a paid whore wouldn't want Adam." (I can understand how that's uncomfortable and might scare you. I'll try...) Then a picture of him changing after a sports class, with an attached comment saying, "Do you know why he smells so horrible? Apparently he didn't want to shower in Auschwitz. And now he poisons this place." Or... " A petition calling for killing Adam T. Sign it so you don't have to look at his fugly face anymore!" (You're right. They can get really creative when it comes to hurting others. I'll try to talk to them about it.) You'll try? I mean, this could be a matter of a lawsuit! (Mrs. Taylor, they're just kids. They don't really understand it yet.) Seriously? You're really not going to take any action? (But of course I am. We'll sort it out, they'll apologize to Adam...) But that won't change anything! I thought you'd understand better, but... Okay. (Mrs. Taylor, try to calm down a little. And try to look at this from my point of view. I understand you, but what can I do about it? I mean, it's what they do in their free time, after school...) So you can't do anything about it, can you? That's really not a way to help Adam, no offense. If you don't want to figure this out, I will. Goodbye!



REPORTER: A young student achieved an extraordinary success. With his company, he managed to find his way into Silicon Valley - a technology mecca of California. What was his journey to happiness like? You can find out on the News at 7:00 p.m.

A: „The weirdest thing was when they got to me in the very place where I used to hide from them. One of the fun things about games was that nobody knew it was me behind the nickname. And because I was good. But then they found me there, too. And it became unbearable again. I had to start looking for a new way to escape. And hiding behind the monitor, I discovered a whole new talent in myself. New worlds. I was even better than before. Better than I expected. I was good. Actually, without all their stupid hatred, I don't think I would have found out what I was capable of. Maybe I should even be grateful...”

B: „The weirdest thing was when they got to me in the very place where I used to hide from them. One of the fun things about games was that nobody knew it was me behind the nickname. And because I was good. But then they found me there, too. And it became unbearable again. I had to start looking for a new way to escape. Except you can't run forever. And what if they were right? Maybe I really am just a dumb loser. How come everybody else is cool but me? Maybe it would be better if I just... weren't. Delete. Click. Done.”

C: „The weirdest thing was when they got to me in the very place where I used to hide from them. One of the fun things about games was that nobody knew it was me behind the nickname. And because I was good. But then they found me there, too. And it became unbearable again. I had to start looking for a new way to escape. I couldn't hide from them in class, but where I could was online. All I had to do was press the red cross and disappear into another world. I figured what my monitor showed was up to me. A single click... and all the hate was gone.”

FINISH

(The classroom with the teacher standing in front of the whiteboard. The setting strongly resembles the opening scene. This time, however, the figures are not masked within the



STAGE

anonymity of darkness - we can see they're the protagonists of the previous shots - the students of this class.)

TEACHER: Do you think we are capable of handling technology in a safe way?

(Everyone is looking at the teacher, then they turn towards the auditorium - with their backs turned to her. One by one, they start taking out their phones, looking at the displays... It gets dark.)

THE END





Director's book

This director's book is meant to serve as a manual, a guide or an inspiration for the future fellow producers of #generationZ. It does not prescribe precise staging procedures, rather it describes the way in which the first version was produced, and it even suggests other possibilities of how to adapt it. The producers can, therefore, decide whether to use it as a manual (recreating the original version), as a guide (using the same principles but changing the means of expression - events, mise-en-scene, props), or just as an inspiration, remaking the whole script according to their own ideas.

We are available for consultations about all three versions. It is our responsibility to follow the development of the script and its adaptations, and we are excited about your premiere performance and we wish you the best of luck with the production of the play.

Michal Paulovský

director

Genre classification

School play - we use the principles of abbreviation, moral call, educational principles and the clarity of characters, behaviour, situations.

The concept of shape

The text consists of an opening scene (Start), 7 sets of shots (each named after the main character) and a closing scene (Finish). The producers should follow the structure of "opening - scenes - finish", but are free to choose which scenes they would like to include in their own version of the play. We recommend choosing 5 shots for the main sequence. The script is designed to take approximately 40-45 minutes (i.e. one school class) to perform the Start with 5 scenes and the Finish. Of course, it is also possible to perform the full 7 scenes, in which case it should take approximately 55 minutes.

Choose the scenes with the topics that you find interesting or want to elaborate and express your views on. The capability of the actors to perform the scene may also be relevant. Apart from these attributes, the script does not oblige you to make any compromises within your choice.



The scenes Start and Finish feature all the actors. In Start we can only see the teacher's face, the rest of the characters who portray the parents are sitting with their backs towards the audience. In Finish, we can see all the protagonists' faces (they are seated "en face" to the audience). This symbolises an initially unknown theme which reveals itself during the course of the performance and ends with an open call for the understanding of Generation Z.

Each shot opens with a recorded voice-over, followed by the actual scene, which ends with the sound of a school bell ringing and ends with a final monologue. This principle makes it possible to change the settings during the monologues and therefore it supports the fluidity of the performance. At the same time, it provides a systematic framework for the spectators as well.

The duration of the ringing at the end of each scene should be approximately 5 seconds. This should be enough time for the protagonist to move to the spot to deliver their monologue. It should take place aside (to allow for the acting area to be reset).

The monologues should be delivered by the actors over a microphone - creating a more intimate atmosphere in which the protagonist explains his feelings and situation.

The requirements for the lighting are simple - a key light to illuminate the stage space (only in the 4th part of Kika, taking place in the evening street, the light should be muted) and a spot light for the monologues. Of course, it is possible to rework the lighting design to fit the atmosphere of the scene, but it is not necessary.

Scenic requirements

- 2 desks are used in the play (wide enough to safely put a chair on and sit ON the desk if the Viki scene is being staged. If it's not, classic two-seat desks will do) and 6-8 chairs depending on the amount of actors.

The supporting cast

The casting of the supporting characters is entirely up to the producers. The only rule to be followed is that the main character in one scene should not be a supporting character in the subsequent scene (respectively at the beginning of the scene), so that the actors have time to change and prepare for the next performance.

The technical management of the scenes



The audience's entry

- a scene is set for the teacher - parents' meeting
- the stage is dark

Start

- opening music, during which the actors take their seats
- the stage gets lit
- the text of the actual play
- darkness and music, re-setting for the next scene

Alex

- the scene setting portrays a kitchen, one desk represents a counter, the other is a dining table
- voice-over
- Alex is sitting by the table, Mom is standing by the counter (Brother is just a voice-over from backstage, Dad comes from the left portal later on)
- the actual text of the shot
- the shot ends with a ringing, Alex moves over to the microphone, the stage setting changes during Alex's monologue

Lea

- the setting depicts her room, with a desk in the background representing a wall in a park
- voice-over
- Lea is sitting at her desk trying to write a letter
- a cell phone rings, the sound comes via a loudspeaker (tip: stop the ringing when the melody is quiet; the actress responds to the sound - she doesn't hold the phone against her ear until the sound has stopped; if there's a technical problem and the sound does not stop, the actress can act as if the phone was freezing, crashing)
- the actual script



- after inputting the hashtags for the uploaded video, the scene ends with a sound of a clock ticking, the actress puts her shoes on and leaves the stage (with her notebook, which in the following scene she gives to her friend)

- the friend appears on the set (referred to as Mia in the text, but not necessarily played by the same actress as in the Mia's shot), she sits atop of the wall and waits for Lea. Once they come and greet, a dialogue is carried out, at the end of which Lea leaves following an argument, and after a while Mia leaves as well.

- The shot ends with a ringing, Lea moves over to the microphone, the stage setting changes during her monologue

Viki

- the scene portrays a TV studio. There is a chair for the presenter on one desk, and another chair for Viki on the other desk. There are chairs beside the desk to enable the actors to get in and out quickly and to increase their safety.

- the part of the script happening at the studio

- a change of the setting supported by the sound of a ticking clock

- a change to Viki's room, Viki is sitting by the computer. Voices from the internet are done by the other actors - either live from the portal or from the backstage with a microphone.

- Setting change - clock ticking

- the gym scene doesn't require a setting reconstruction

- the scene can be opened by the Teacher's technical problems with the discussion initiation, i.e. with the microphone and it (non)functioning

- the rest of the actors (portraying the classmates) are seated with their backs towards the audience. If the room acoustics are poor, they may also be filmed so that they speak more towards the audience.

- During this scene, the students have their on stage - always make sure that the phones do not light up before the stage is lit.

- the scene ends with the ringing, Viki moves over to the microphone, the stage setting changes during her monologue

Miro

- the scene portrays a bench in a city park

- possible limits of the scene: a guy bumping into Miro's girlfriend (referred to in the script as Lea); gripping the guy in a way that would lead to him being able to lift Miro off the bench; shoving Miro into a wall (if you have no portal wall available, replace the shove with holding him in the air).



- the scene ends with a ringing, Miro moves over to the microphone, the stage changes during his monologue. "I was totally f..." it is necessary for the actor to mean to say the curse word, stopping only at the letter "f".

Kika

- the scene depicts a class during a break

- classmates are scattered around the area - depending on the number of actors, we form pairs, groups of three or more; they are communicating, but they are holding their phones

- Kika opens her scene backstage, playing a siren on the megaphone. If there is no megaphone available for you, it can also be done with a paper roll (this solution is less effective, though). The volume of the megaphone needs to be configured according to the size of the room, but also according to the distance between Kika and the other actors.

- After the scene is over, the setting changes to yoga - but it's also ready for a follow-up dinner at home.
Sound - the clock ticking.

- yoga positions should be chosen according to the abilities of the protagonists - the more difficult, the more functional the joke with the attempt to type something into the mobile phone during the exercise can be

- the clock sound, the scene with the mom, a change of the scene to the outdoors

- in the outdoor scene, it is advisable to use a low light. The actress reacts to the sound of the moving car and then the sound of the crash. The imaginary child being hit should be positioned so that it lies outside the visible area. The actress is not "touching" the child, she is just kneeling beside.

- The scene ends with a ringing, Kika moves over to the microphone, the stage setting changes during her monologue.

Mia

- the setting is made up of tables from the teacher's lounge, in the first scene they portray a table in the hallway

- Mia is drunkenly singing to herself while still being outside the auditorium, some form of tripping can be acted upon her entrance, according to the actress's experience and abilities.

- the slap (CHANGE - the slap happened in the recording, but after a further discussion we decided to leave it out = the father just extends and tensions his arm and stops) needs to be the result of Mia's provocation; the father's nerves snap, but he manages to control himself and stops.

- the fake black eye make-up is done using dark eye shadow (purple, blue, brown or black - but it must be done quickly), which the actress has with her

- change - a ticking clock



- teachers' costumes should look stereotypical, but also serious, in order not to undermine the seriousness of the given subject matter (it is one of the more controversial ones). There is a possibility to use props such as distinctive (dioptric) glasses, a typical mug, etc.

- the scene ends with a ringing, Mia moves over to the microphone, the scene setting changes during her monologue

Adam

- the scene portraits the class from the first shot

- the shot begins with a longer ringing - the class has just ended (it is necessary to wait for all the actors, 1 may be missing and run back as if from the toilet)

-Adam sits aside like an outsider. When classmates talk it's important to be careful about them not overshouting, as well as when acting around Adam - e.g. the tearing of the application.

- the scene changes as the clock ticks

- We see Adam in his room, watching a bullying YT video. You can either use the existing footage from our pilot version, or make your own.

- the scene changes as the clock ticks (without a change of light this time, as no dramatic change of scenery occurs, the mother just moves to another corner of the apartment).

- a recording of the reporter at the end, the ringing, Adam comes over to the microphone from the backstage, and says his monologue.

Finish

- the stage setting remains unchanged, the classroom lit from behind, perhaps a small change in lighting

- all the actors sit in chairs or on desks (Adam comes from behind the microphone), except for the Teacher, who says her line while the ending music is playing, and sits down on one of the chairs. It slowly gets dark and quiet.

The bow (credits)

- together (everyone)

Setting change



- these are the most important rules: setting change is to be done as quietly as possible (do not drag the tables/chairs across the floor), to be performed by the actors who are not preparing for the next performance, preferably in the dark to avoid distracting the spectator's attention.

Lighting

- either using the curtains, walls, etc. The monologues should be lit with a spot light, to keep the unwanted backlighting of the story area as low as possible, which makes the rebuilds less attention-grabbing. In between the shots (during the monologues - Lea, Viki, Kika, Adam, Mia) the light should be lowered to about 30%, so it doesn't create a sense of darkness and change, but maintains the continuity of the story. The final scene in the classroom should be enhanced, for example, with a counter-light from the back of the stage to make the characters appear more subtle.

A set of the soundtracks can be provided on request.

Slovník pojmov:

en face -the body facing forward, to the audience

voice-over - speech without a visible protagonist, usually recorded

portal - side entrance to the stage

counter light - the light facing the auditorium, the beam of light is directed towards the audience