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Differences Do Not Divide Us, Through Them We Get To Know Each Other

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We are perfect. We do not make mistakes. We comprehend. We are the best. We are going to win. We will show them all. We can. We will. And we have bribed help at our disposal, too. We dream. We see. We accomplish. We win. And then you inhale for the first time in your new life. The perfect children. We are the X. We don't need Y. We are the Y. We don't need X. Sufficiently conceited, not too much. Independent, with a taste of our own. Wise just for ourselves, unlike anyone, anytime before. The children of peace. The perfect children.

And can you see now? Nothing is left of the sand beneath the toboggan. The sand is scattered all over the park. That is so, because we fought over different names. And beneath the swing, there is a beautiful blue-yellow ball over which we could've fought...but we didn't. Only, Franjo told Muhamed, who told Vladislav that he hates him. Who hates whom? Nobody understands. It was the very same thing that Ana told Emina, who told it to Marica. The ball lies forgotten. All the sand is exploited. We pass on to something more dangerous and rougher. Deceitful children. Perfect children.

We are still very young. But we are not so solitary anymore. Franjo married his Ana, Mehmed married a certain Amela, Marica married a certain Mladen. Only Vladislav went crazy and married Emina. Vladislav has made a mistake. Emina is not his. Emina is dead, a certain stray bullet of condemnation is to blame. Vladislav is in a mental hospital. Everything is exactly as it should be.

A long time ago, we replaced the sand with more dangerous gravel. And rougher, too. Now, we throw bullets in each others' eyes. We are all our own heroes. Perfect, deceitful, deadly children.

When we slaughtered nearly everything, we felt like making a truce. We found that blue-yellow ball again and now we (very honorably!) quarrel over the ball.

Lucky us. Vladislav was released out of that mental hospital the other day. But what is wrong with Vladislav? He says it wasn't he who should've been in that mental hospital; it should've been the rest of us instead. Then he became ill of jumping off a skyscraper. We are intelligent people. We are not children anymore. We don't pass on to anything more dangerous after bullets. If we were given a chance to use something more dangerous, we would not miss it, of course. People progress, right? We were the perfect children.

Pledged to disappoint, we just realized that we hadn't done anything new. People were being

slaughtered for a long time, and they are slaughtered now. We, the perfect children; we haven't done anything new. God, we have been deceived! And now we have to figure out who deceived us.

We were deceived by the ones who, when we were children, were exactly like we are now. We were deceived by the ones who used to tell us we were great, but sincerely, we weren't great enough to be told that we were great. We were deceived by the fact that the apple of your eye isn't the apple of my eye. We were deceived by everything at least a little bit. We got tired of quarreling while we were making a truce, so now we ignore each other while we quarrel. Everybody looks after her own interest; everybody appreciates only the color of her own skin. We met (separately) a bareheaded little boy, who didn't want to be either X or Y. He told us (separately) that the price of our skin was nothing, that everybody's skin will be the lining for the coat of Mother Earth. That "neither-X-nor-Y" little boy, he is an even bigger fool than Vladislav. We will not be able to figure out who deceived us while we were listening to fools.

Just yesterday, we watched how a man called Marko saved the son of a man called Fikret from the river that flows beneath our rich houses. Spying on little people from our golden terraces, we found out that Fikret wasn't there to save his own child because he was driving Marko's wife to the hospital. Oh, how foolish they really are! These little creatures whom we look down upon, how foolish and hopeless they really are. But it is not their fault. They are just not perfect like we are. Wait a minute ... maybe they were the ones who deceived us?! Oh no, the imperfect little things couldn't possibly outwit their masters.

Today, we watched a boy and a girl in a very suspicious situation. Adnan and Vesna were standing beside each other on the street, by the traffic light. O, God! What can be done?! We have to help them! It would be INHUMAN to let them end up like Vladislav and Emina.

We decided to act quickly. We invited Adnan and Vesna to come over; we have something very important to tell them. They entered through one door, ill, and they went out through two different doors, cured. Only, it looks like Adnan wanted to play that foolish game called "Romeo and Juliet," the very same one we wanted to prohibit last year. Adnan's common sense has left his body, and that is dangerous and lethal, like a derailed train. He obtained a black apartment somewhere in Emina's neighborhood. Vesna's common sense has left her body too, which is as lethal as a mortal wound... She got a black apartment somewhere in Vladislav's neighborhood. Imagine that! You can just imagine how we felt! We try to help people, and they run away from us like that. They left us a message.

OUR DIFFERENCES DO NOT DIVIDE US—THROUGH THEM WE GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER!!!

We are smart, so we asked a smarter man what the message means. We went to his house, shinier and more beautiful than ours, a proof of his wisdom, but he didn't know how to explain the meaning of the message. We weren't lazy; we looked everywhere, to the very top and the smartest man, in the whitest and most beautiful house, and still they couldn't help us, explain the message to us... Tired, we were going home, when we met that „nor-X-nor-Y“ little boy, who told us that Adnan and Vesna wanted to tell us we were stupid idiots. A poor, confused, bareheaded little boy! He really doesn't have an idea about what he is talking about!

We are trying to grasp who was it that has been deceiving us for two days already. Yesterday, we observed how a life was saved. Today, we observed the only way to love. Tomorrow, MAYBE we

will figure out what it was that Adnan and Vesna tried to tell us.

Translated by the author – © 2008 Ena Še?i?

(The essay took 1st place in the Human Rights School competition for the best text in Bosnia-Herzegovina in response to the writing prompt, “Differences do not divide us, through we get to know each other.”)

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