



BODI PISATELJ/ICA 2021

Dijakinji novogoriške gimnazije sta prejeli priznanji za **najboljše literarno delo** (angleški jezik, srednja šola)

TINA KOSOVEL (3.c): A Second of Forever

Mentorica: mag. Jana Fajt, prof.

Obrazložitev žirije:

Izvrstna zamisel in odlično izpeljana pripoved. Prepričljivo izrisan lik glavne junakinje, čistilke Aline, je prva odlika zgodbe, a nikakor edina. Vzdušje učinkovito gradijo preproste povedi, ki se premišljeno nalagajo druga na drugo, in zavestno nekompliciran jezik. Avtorici pripoved niti za hip ne spolzi iz rok; v dobro nadzorovanem tempu prebrisano zapelje bralce v sum, da bo zgodba zavila v parafrazo pravljice o Sinjebradcu, nato pa jo nepričakovano zasuka v presenetljivo in pretresljivo razkritje z močno empatično noto.

A SECOND OF FOREVER

I often ask myself why I love my job so much. For one thing, I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that is one reason I do not mind working as a cleaning woman. It is just like reading a book. You can live a thousand lives instead of only one.

Bending down, I retrieve the mop I used to scrub the entry hall. How lucky am I to have landed this job? The house is gorgeous and the owner is a kind man about my age. He lives alone and has no family that I know of. Glancing around, once again I am taken aback by the absence of any family portraits or personal items. It is as if the space is void of anything that makes a house a home.

I pick up my dustpan and go to the kitchen to empty it. Gleaming spotless surfaces of high-end appliances shine in the morning light. I am happy with my work here. I noticed some dust yesterday so I scrubbed all night to make it pristine again.

“Did you clean the kitchen again, Alina? It’s the third time this week and nobody even uses it,” snidely remarks Mr Bowman.

He never sees the things I do. The fine specks of dust and filth that accumulate in a matter of minutes.

“You should have seen it before. It was positively filthy,” I assure him.

“I’m going out now, I have some errands to run. I’ll be back later this afternoon. You’ll be fine by then?” he sighs.

“Yes, yes, I’ll be fine,” I respond half-heartedly, noticing a stain on the counter I must have missed before.

I decide to dust while Mr Bowman is out. As I am slowly advancing down the second-floor hallway, I notice the door at the end of the hallway is slightly ajar. Mr Bowman never lets me clean that room. He says it does not need cleaning but I know it does. He never sees the filth that I do.

I creep closer, walking carefully, not making a sound even though I know he is not home. At last, the house will be clean, I smile to myself feeling immense relief. The door gives way and my breath is cut short. The room is foul. There is fine dust everywhere, the carpet is stained in some places, and the windows have spots on them. It is almost too much. The cleaning needed here is much too extensive to accomplish by the time Mr Bowman returns.

I begin immediately frantic to clean it all. As I am sweeping the dresser, my dusting wand catches on something. It is a picture I have not noticed before in my haste to clean. Two boys are laughing happily between Mr Bowman and a beautiful woman. The picture must be old because he does not have grey hair yet. My gaze is drawn by

the woman. Strangely, she looks familiar but I cannot quite place her. I feel as if I have seen her, as if I know her and yet, she never knew me. It is a familiar sight, but so unsettling at the same time.

Looking around the room, I notice there are many pictures on every possible surface. In some of them, the boys are alone, some are of other family members, some older, and some seemingly recent. Halfway through, I notice the woman's absence. Why is not she in the pictures with her family? Did she die?

I stop when I come across a box. It is small, made from sleek rosewood with beautiful carvings. The swirling flowers mesmerize me and I do not even realise I am opening it. Inside there is a delicate perfume bottle. I lift it gently to smell it. The sweet scent is intoxicating and fills my head, rendering me powerless to the onslaught of memories and sensations.

Mr Bowman

I park the car and hop out. I visited my sons today. It was great, I played with my granddaughter and grandson. They are growing so fast. The visits are always bitter-sweet. I love them so much but I am constantly reminded of what my wife will never get to see.

Entering, I am careful not to trail in any dirt. Alina is obsessed with cleanliness enough as it is. Walking through the living room, everything is silent. She is probably cleaning upstairs.

I climb the stairs slowly, not quite ready to let go of the happiness from my visit.

The landing is empty and the door to my room is ajar. I creep closer slowly, praying that she did not go in there again. The last time it happened was disastrous.

Stepping into the room, I already know what I will find.

She is sitting on the floor, surrounded by all of the pictures. Her eyes are glassy and there is an expression of pure pain etched onto her face.

As I sit beside her, she lifts her gaze, her eyes telling me everything she cannot and just like that, I forget all of the pain, and every single moment of suffering becomes worth it. She remembers. If only for a short time, she remembers our whole life again.



EMA ŠINIGOJ (2.A): Grandma's Hands

Mentorica: mag. Martina Kobal, prof.

Obrazložitev žirije:

Spomin na babičine roke, zaznamovane z leti, je izhodiščna točka za občuteno, toplo pripoved o življenju, odločitvah, ki jih sprejemamo – oziroma smo jih prisiljeni sprejeti – ter dediščino, ki ostaja za nami. Avtorica nas v širokem zamahu popelje skozi desetletja preteklosti v sedanost, ki jo zaznamujeta sprijaznjenost s krogom življenja ter globoka hvaležnost. Zgodba je tekoča, slog mehak in rahločuten, premišljena dramaturgija pa poskrbi za gladko bralsko izkušnjo.

GRANDMA'S HANDS

When I was younger I once heard that hands could tell you everything about a person. Every scar, every wrinkle, every visible vein and even the nails, they each carry a small but important story that you can combine and read just like a book.

I remember it was dinnertime, and I was staring at my grandmother's hands instead of enjoying my food. I wondered about the magnificent stories they must have secretly possessed. So I watched her hands as she ate, and later when she washed the dishes. I watched her hands when she hugged me and I watched her hands when she waved goodbye before getting into the car and driving back to her house. That night I couldn't sleep. I just lay in bed, staring at the ceiling. I kept on thinking about the stories those hands were hiding.

My grandmother had been through a lot. That I knew. I found out a little chunks of my grandmother's life story from her recollection of events. My mom and aunt would chime in and tell me stories about my grandmother, adding details that had been spared by her. When my mom was five years old, she had twin sisters, my aunts Clara and Tara. Beautiful girls, a beautiful family. Unfortunately, Tara had heart problems and was only a few months old when she passed away. That same year my grandfather died in an accident. It had happened inside an elevator at a construction site. I remember finding an old newspaper clipping in my grandmother's bedroom, detailing how and when he had died. Something that really struck me from the article was a sentence that said he had a five year old daughter waiting for him to come back home. That daughter was my mom and despite her eagerly awaiting his return home, it never happened. I don't know a lot of things about my grandfather. My grandmother

never talked about him and my mom and aunt Clara were too young when he passed away to really remember much. However, even without my grandfather, my grandmother managed to raise her children beautifully, honoring him in every way possible. She also took in her niece Saša, whom my grandmother's sister had had when she was sixteen and had been rejected by her new husband, and treated Saša as her own daughter. She built a house for the family, working day and night, to provide her girls with a beautiful childhood. She provided them with a good education, good clothes and food, and they never felt as if a father figure was missing in their lives. She did it all, my grandmother, and she did it well.

As the time went on, my mom and dad met and they fell in love. That's where I come into the picture. My parents have always had important jobs, big jobs, so they come home late almost every evening. When I was still in primary school, my parents couldn't come to pick my siblings and me up, so my grandmother would come and drive us home. She would cook us lunch and dinner, she would clean our entire house so my mom didn't have to, when she came home tired. She would talk to us, gave us advice and, most importantly, she would teach us how to work, and why it's important to work.

My grandma's job before she retired was important, and no, she wasn't a politician, a policewoman or a doctor. She was a cleaning woman. She worked for families like mine, for those whose parents worked non-stop and didn't have time to clean the house. She worked for older couples, who were too worn out by their age to clean up their house, and she worked for anyone who would hire her. Sometimes, despite all of the hours and effort she had put into her work, people didn't pay her or didn't pay her enough, but she would still help them, because she would see them struggling.

I love how talented my grandma was. Mom told me how beautifully she painted and drew. I just didn't understand why she decided to be a cleaning woman instead of a painter. I kept on thinking about it, and I couldn't figure it out. That was when I was about ten years old. I decided to just ask her about it.

It was winter. The air was cold and snow was falling, piling down on the streets. As usual, she picked my siblings and me up from school. As she was driving, she was telling us about a trip she was going to take some time soon with her friends. Later, when we got to our house, I went into my room and did my homework while she prepared lunch. I had dance class that day so I had to get ready and my grandmother took me there after we finished eating. While we were driving I looked at her hands as they rested on the steering wheel. She noticed how quiet I was so she looked over and smiled.

»What are you thinking about?« she asked me before she placed her eyes back onto the road.

»Grandma? Why did you decide to be a cleaning woman instead of a painter?«

She quietly exhaled and smiled.

»After your grandfather died, I had to provide money for the family. I didn't have time to go to some fancy school and become a painter, or the money for that matter. The only thing I was able to do was become a cleaning woman.«

I was saddened when I heard that she hadn't had the opportunity to choose her profession.

She then continued, »However, I like my job. I get to help others and I love houses, all the things they tell me, so that's one reason I don't mind working as a cleaning woman. It's just like reading a book.«

I just nodded and smiled. When we arrived at my dance class, she grabbed my hand and kissed it gently. She looked me deep into my eyes and said, »Honey, it doesn't matter what your profession is, the only thing that matters, is that you work hard and do everything in your power when completing a task. You are very talented and I know you will accomplish great things in your life, and I'll be there every step of the way, supporting you endlessly.«

I think that day was a turning point in our relationship that bloomed, each year more and more. Grandma came to all of my dance performances, she came to my primary school graduation and years later to my highschool graduation. She was there when I fell in love and when I got my heart broken for the first time. She taught me how to drive a car and she encouraged me to take the driving test over and over again, until I finally passed. She was there when I discovered my love for painting and she guided me when I felt lost and supported my every decision, good or bad.

Years later, when I started college, my grandmother got sick. I decided to pause my education, so that I could take care of her. I cooked for her, read her different books and stories, painted with her, laughed with her and cried with her. I was with her when she painted her last picture and I was with her when she heard her favourite song for the last time. I was with her when she took her last breath and I was with her while people were saying their goodbyes to the beautiful woman who had raised me. I admired the beautiful hands, full of stories, for the last time and I thanked them. I thanked every scar, every wrinkle, every visible vein and even the nails. They each carried a small part of my grandma's story.

Grandma was there when I finished college, and she was there when I opened my gallery. She was there when I got married and she was there when I welcomed my first daughter into the world. Grandma has always been with me, every step of the way. She is in my heart, in my words, and she is in my hands.

