



*THE GIRL
THAT COULD
FLY*



OWNER: EDUARDO

CONTRIBUTORS: JULIANA, RODRIGO, DARIO

COUNTRY: BRAZIL

MAGNOLIA, an Italian suburban girl from Cortina d'Ampezzo was a regular girl. She lived with her parents in a small house under the Dolomite Mountains, where it was cold all year long. But she was used to it. The Bella Bambina, as her mother liked calling her, didn't intimidate her with homework, nor with household chores. She got told off, just like every eleven-year-old child would, and loved terror stories on TV.

AND AS EVERY ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD CHILD, she had the world in her head. Questions popped in each corner, in each raindrop, in each small animal she'd see in a documentary on TV. She used to spend afternoon drawing and writing little poems and confessions in her diary. Her imagination transformed smiles in stories, tears in memories.

ONE DAY, after a difficult Math class – Magnolia's never been a fan of numbers, she'd say they were too 'squared' to understand –, the girl got lost in her way back home. It was pretty common for her to get distracted in her daydreams and she'd always pass one or two blocks from her destination. This time, though, she found herself in a place she'd never been before. A dark and gloomy place, gray, where the water pools on the floor didn't reflect the sunlight. A place that made her bravery crumble, which had only been tested in front of the TV.

AT THE FIRST INSTANT, Magnolia's thoughts were surrounded by despair. Looking from side to side, the little one doubted what she should do next, and then, decided to imagine. Magnolia started outlining the sky with a darker color, a burning red. The sun, which was gray a while back, became orange. The pools became lakes. The fun was already happening, that was her trigger. Her objective was to balance on the curbs, making little pirouettes and imagining whether she should or should not move on. If she fell, she could drown. If she jumped higher, she'd get burned.

TEN MINUTES LATER, the Bella Bambina got tired and was still lost. She wondered if her parents were worried. If they were looking for her. Magnolia's instincts would tell her to cry until she found someone, but she wanted to be capable of finding her way back home, just like any other day.

THE GIRL COULD BUILD STORIES, with beginning, middle and end, without thinking twice. Many didn't tolerate such behavior, after all, "Stop inventing things! It won't take you anywhere, Mag!", or, "Stop that, girl! One day you'll be lost in your own thoughts!".

That's why she decided to redo her steps. She wasn't scared or terrified anymore – she was confident. However, who said Magnolia could remember? Her memory was failing her. What do, then?

RUN.

AND SHE RAN, more than she could. Which side? She didn't know. The streets were identical to one another, there were no signs, not even vehicle noises or people talking, waiting for their dearest children to return home safe. What was happening?

MAGNOLIA SAT DOWN AND WAITED. The darkness had already swallowed her shadow, the hunger insisted in jumbling her thoughts and the cold began to distract her. She cuddled in an alley and decided she'd think, like "a big girl".

IT WAS WHEN SHE HAD AN EPIPHANY. Magnolia remembered of what her teacher had said in class on that day. The topic, although dense, was quite related to her current moment. The scholar had told the students that in order to fly, Math was also needed. Intrigued, Magnolia listened carefully while he explained about the cardinal points, latitudes, longitudes, and as a compass helped sailors, through sky or land and, at the end of the class, he gifted everyone with a little compass and recommended that they should always hold the device horizontally and visualize where to go next.

MAGNOLIA, then, climbed up a high wall, covered in coral-blue small tiles, from an abandoned house she'd found along the way. From that place, she could see the little cathedral located near her own house and realized it wasn't very far and pointed the compass in that direction. With a timid smile, the girl repeated to herself something she'd always hear from her grandfather when she was younger: "very well, little one".

WHILE SHE WAS CLIMBING DOWN THE TILES, her nylon shoe laces got stuck in the structure and the little girl fell on the floor, leaving her left shoe hanging from the wall. After getting up, Magnolia felt her heart beating fast like never before, the adrenaline and the fear took control of her body for a moment – she realized she was facing the front door of the abandoned house.

“AM I A CRIMINAL?”, she thought. No, she hadn’t stolen anything, she was just about to enter a vacant house, what’s the problem with that? She told herself in a low voice, trying to believe. Observing the place, Magnolia noticed a great amount of weed and a sour smell, as if something was rotten nearby. The doors were locked and the windows had tables of wood, filled with nails, which weren’t covering everything properly and a well-lit crack indicated the way in.

TO EVERY STEP SHE GAVE inside the house, an eerie creek would freeze her stomach.

YET, stronger than the fear dwelling inside children is their curiosity so that Magnolia followed exploring the place. Slowly, but always forward, the girl arrived in a room swallowed by twilight. She coughed sometimes, due to the dust that would get stuck in her throat. There was furniture covered with white sheets and heavy books darkened by time made the shelves bend.

AT THE CENTER OF THE ROOM, on the fireplace, there was a faded picture of a very scary man. Magnolia felt her heart race, as the creature inside the frame seemed to limp and come towards her:

– What is it, girl?!

– AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH! – screamed Magnolia.

THE PEOPLE ON THE STREET looked at her, standing in front of an old man who was walking with a cane. Little by little, the sky and the tiles recovered their color, different from those painted by Magnolia, and she took notice of her surroundings.

THE FANTASY was, at last, dispelled.

SHE LOOKED AT THE OLD MAN, who was even sweet. She smiled her shiest smile and apologized. Still breathless, she ran, this time five blocks back home (would that be a new record?) just in time to sit at the table with her family, to have lunch.

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STORY-TEAM EDUARDO (OWNER)

JULIANA, RODRIGO, DARIO (CONTRIBUTORS)

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