

amazon shake



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welcome to amazon shake christmas edition

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We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!!!

Dear precious readers,

I hope that you all are in the christmas mood and ready to enjoy this holiday season. It's a bit hard this year I think. Just look outside, there's no snow and weather is way more like in a spring than anything. Than you watch Tv and commercial is wishing you Happy Easter. That's a mess!

So that's why we have decided to create this issue focusing on Christmas and winter, so you can soak up the Christmas spirit. Hopefully you will enjoy reading and feel free to contact us how did you like it, what we should improve, what did you enjoy the most etc.

At last but not least I would like to thank Mr. Coulson and the Amazon Shake team. Keep up the good work next year!

May you all have a very merry Christmas and I wish you the best to the new year.

-The Editors

It's the thought that counts, and I put an awful lot of thought into giving you absolutely nothing.



your  cards
someecards.com

You have a buttload of things to do and a pile of homework on your desk that somehow just keeps getting bigger? Don't know where yo begin, so you don't start doing work at all? You're stuck... procrastinating? You've come to the right place! [or not.] We are not here to make you work, although we recommend you to, but we are here to bring you some daily fun! Let's take a tour of some great places we use daily in order to waste time:



1. Facebook

Socialize, put up pictures, statuses, comments, stalk people.

Number one way to waste time doing useless things such as staring at your empty "notifications" tab and waiting for something to happen (you know it won't, but just in case...)

Oh look, Grandma put up another embarrassing picture of you... Bottomless pit of uselessness.

www.facebook.com



3. 9gag

Oh yes. 9gag is one of the evil websites that make you sign up and give away your soul. Just keep scrolling and laugh at all the posts [(until you take an arrow to the knee). Only 9gaggers will get this].<---bracketception

Fun fact: 9gag is Chuck Norris' favorite website. Your arguments are invalid.

www.9gag.com



2. StumbleUpon

Select your interests and never go to bed--again. This website makes pushing the "Stumble" button a reflex, as you browse through never-ending interesting websites, impossible to find or come across on a normal basis. this is a true time-wasting instrument of a procrastinator.

www.stumbleupon.com



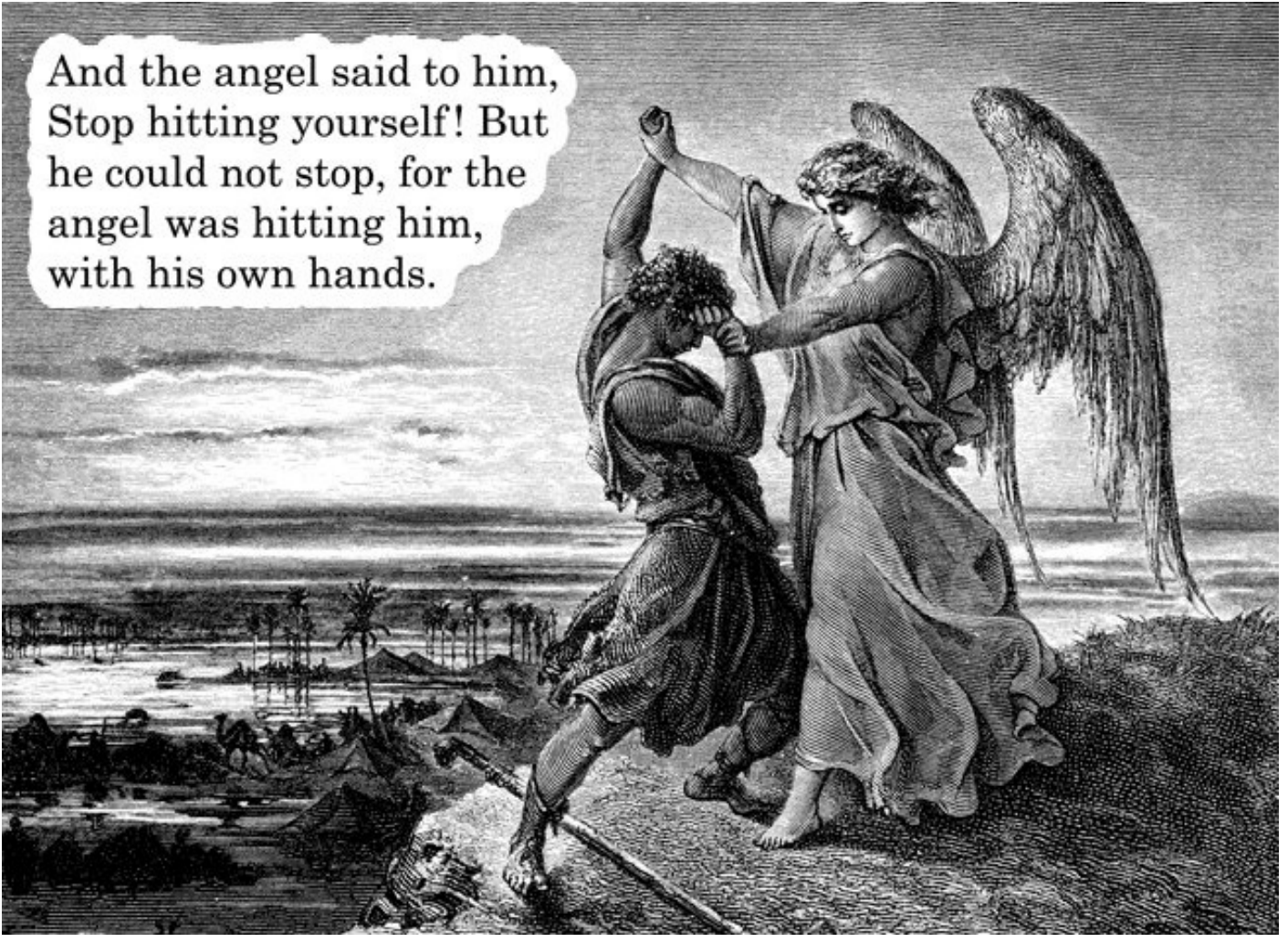
4. YouTube

Music videos, movies, shows you missed on TV... Youtube is just another source of time-sucking. Start watching daily vlogs by Tobuscus or Ray William Johnson and you will just keep watching... watching..one more episode... until it's passed your bedtime and time to get up to go to school again. Mostly used for listening to music and showing others what songs you are talking about on places like Facebook.

www.youtube.com



And the angel said to him,
Stop hitting yourself! But
he could not stop, for the
angel was hitting him,
with his own hands.



Nothing to do? Go to 9GAG.COM

looks like what your
older siblings do to
you doesnt it

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Carols | Presents |
| Christmas | Raindeer |
| Food | Ornaments |
| Gingerbread | Santa Claus |
| Holidays | Shopping |
| Love | Snowflakes |

Kill some time and
look for words.

Word!

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q | B | P | W | P | S | S | E | R | T | S | E | S | S | R |
| W | E | M | F | E | D | O | O | F | N | R | U | P | N | E |
| T | L | A | Y | X | Y | G | T | P | Z | O | K | W | O | E |
| F | F | R | B | W | A | I | D | S | Z | D | M | G | W | D |
| A | G | O | Y | K | Q | N | G | T | S | D | C | Q | F | N |
| A | M | L | F | M | P | G | H | N | Y | H | P | S | L | I |
| C | I | S | M | L | R | E | C | E | A | B | I | H | A | A |
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| M | O | R | M | M | S | D | Z | N | K | Z | C | G | O | X |
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| S | N | M | J | S | U | A | L | C | A | T | N | A | S | I |

opinion section

By Zdena Hoffmannová

Tons of Christmas commercials everywhere, carols playing in every shop, Christmas decorations on every step, overcrowded public places, Santa Clauses but mainly... the sales! This is where the Christmas madness starts. Everyone wants to find the best presents for their friends and families.

This all surely evokes something like the Christmas atmosphere but what is actually the real Christmas atmosphere that is not based on throwing ourselves into buying presents? Isn't Christmas too commercialized? And does it still mean for us anything else but scrambling for gifts?

I think there is a big difference between the ways people used to perceive Christmas and how they perceive it now. As it is always said, Christmas is the holiday when the whole family gathers to enjoy each other's company and to take a rest. This is what used to count for Christmas and I guess that people adhered to it more strongly earlier. They didn't have so many resources and were resigned with getting something more practical and symbolic than being given spectacular and expensive presents. We all have to admit that these times are gone. You have to buy presents like crazy to make people close to you believe you like them. It is really ironic from how many people I've already heard that they despise it and still, we



the new face of christmas

Spend as much,
as you can!

Pre-Christmas nightmare – overcrowded shops

All keep buying expensive presents and are stressed out if the presents will be successful. This makes our Christmas stressful and makes us think that this is the purpose of these holidays.

On the other hand, if you won't take Christmas too seriously and you won't let this to ruin the right atmosphere of Christmas, you still can enjoy these holidays the way you want to. Some people arrange with their family that they won't give pres-

ents among them to avoid the crowds and all the stress around it. Maybe that can bring them to enjoy the real spirit of Christmas and focus rather on the time spent with family than what presents to give.

Eventually, I think that Christmas is different for everyone. It is your choice how you like to celebrate it. Just don't let anyone and anything to spoil you one of the most pleasant times of the year.



the magic

Who can argue about Christmas not being the best time of the year?

Yes, Christmas is about very strong emotions which many cannot ignore. Despite some difficulties which Christmas could bring up, it is the magic that everyone believes in. From little children who stay up on the night of Christmas Eve to hear or see Santa, the Christ Child or Father Christmas to grownups whose dreams



were once ruined. When the adults find themselves again after the big 'fight' of deciding, who am I and why am I here? Their hopes and dreams are restored. Even though it is rather difficult to argue about Christmas, there are some individuals who do not like this time of the year or who have nobody to spend this time with.

First what comes to my mind when talking about Christmas is the love in the air, traditions and all these romantic movies. Christmas highlights love with colorful wrapping paper and the 'biggest' presents.

In my opinion, Valentine's is the day of lust but Christmas is the the season of love. Who can resist the temptation of kissing their soul mates under the mistletoe? I think, everyone who has a lover will never be able to resist, just as it is shown in the movies. Perhaps romance is not the only important thing but when the families spent a proper time together and when parents see their little children with big smile and shiny eyes, there are no more words important.

I wish that not only Christmas time would be about love but everyone should be kind, respectful and love the whole life in order to be happy and make everybody else happy.





As you know and as the cards and carols like to remind us, Christmas is a holiday that we should spend with our family. But it might happen that you do not have anybody with whom you could celebrate this holiday. So my question is 'How to 'survive' Christmas alone?'

another point of view of christmas

People have to spend Christmas on their own for many reasons. Of course it depends if you are physically alone, without anybody, or just lonely in some group of people. However, it need not be a sad time at all. Plan ahead for a positive experience during the Christmas holidays. Christmas isn't only a time for families and togetherness, it's also a time for peace and well being for everybody, no matter if you are alone or with your family and friends.

Most people want and need to be with their families/friends on Christmas. It's just normal. But I want to show you another point of view. Why couldn't someone prefer to be alone? Alone on holidays. Alone on Christmas.



It might be an interesting and mysterious experience. Just imagine... You're sitting on a big, comfortable sofa in the living room with a cup of cocoa and looking outside through a huge window... It's snowing. Nobody is on the street. Your living room is decorated with different Christmas ornaments. You have a beautiful Christmas tree and some gifts under this tree. There is a fire in the fireplace. You're listening your favorite chill-out music... You can think about anything you want. You can do anything you want. You just feel the aroma of cinnamon and cookies... You feel Christmas. Simple, but impressive Christmas.

By Iryna Melnyk



Ahh Christmas. The tree, the stockings, the mistletoe and - of course - the holiday television programming.

Some of my best Christmas memories were spent in front of a television watching such classics as the animated Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer or one of my favorite Christmas movies from Charles Dickens 'A Christmas Carol'.

What people from Europe may not know: Opening the doors of the house at midnight, Christmas Eve is supposed to be good as it lets out the evil spirits. It is considered unlucky to sing Christmas carols at any occasion other than Christmas. It is believed that if you make a wish while stirring a Christmas pudding, it will come true. The table set for Christmas Dinner should be set for an even number of people because an odd

Finally, one of the most beautiful holidays of the year is here.

The whole world gathers around with their families and friends. Christmas is all about love, friendship, being nice, helping and food of course!

Here are some lovely carols to listen to:

Frank Sinatra-Let it snow,Let it snow,Let it snow

Eartha Kitt-Santa Baby

Ferrante & Teicher-Sleigh Ride

Nat King Cole-The Christmas Song (Merry Christmas To You)

Being Crosby-White Christmas

Frank Sinatra-Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

and so many more.!

numbered dinner table brings in bad luck. Hanging stockings near the chimney is said to be good as it brings in luck and children believe that Santa Claus will fill them with loads of goodies.

christmas time

Everyone is probably going crazy and thinking about what to buy for their loved ones. Decorations have even started in October. Malls are full of Christmas trees, stars, decorative reindeers, Christmas carols and stores are filled with many people.

But the atmosphere is still lovely. The beautiful trees the lights the carols. Ohh how I love Christmas carols.

TYPICAL CHRISTMAS DINNER IN AMERICA

roast turkey, beef, ham, or pork; stuffing, squash, roasted root vegetables, and mashed potatoes are common. Common desserts include pumpkin pie, plum pudding or Christmas pudding, trifle, marzipan, sugar cookies, apple pie, fruit cake, Gooseberry Pie, and mince pies. In the south,

coconut cake and sweet potato pie are also common.

Well, I wish you all a beautiful, Merry Christmas and a Happy New year!

Anila Hasani



opinion section



When I was asked to write my opinion on the theme winter/Christmas I thought to myself that it's funny, I'm a person with an Israeli passport where there is no winter at all, and I have lived in Russia where the winter is very cruel and the temperatures go up to -50 and it's practically impossible to get out of the house. I actually saw this time of year as a very hard time, but as it goes, my life is very closely tied to the Czech Republic and my vision of the winter changed completely after moving here.

Here it's about the soft, fluffy snow, long cheerful holidays, the whole family getting together, beautiful Christmas trees, colorful streets, an amazing atmosphere and last but not least the greatest tradition of giving presents.

Our family was happy to take over these habits and we specially like how the Czech people love food in this time. For example their carps, salads and ducks. For many years we have had a Bohemian tradition with our close Czech friends, we eat Burgundy snails the day before Christmas.

But apart from all the celebrations, the winter is a great time for skiing, which I love.

I have been in many countries just to ski and every one of them has their own magical atmosphere.

In Russia winter seemed to me as a very boring, long time of the year and I was always looking forward to its end. However, in Europe it ends too soon and I don't even have enough time to enjoy it.

Therefore my opinion on Christmas is, that it's a great chance to get together with the family and have a nice time off from everything else.

Hope you enjoyed my work. Happy holidays!!
:]

Dasha Gurevitsh

**dasha's
opinion**



YOU CAN WATCH:

THE ART OF GETTING BY

George (Freddie Highmore-Charlie and the chocolate factory) is an 18 year old high school student who has made it all the way to his senior year without doing any real work. While his classmates are busy choosing universities and preparing for the final exams, George decides to boycott the whole idea of school and responsibilities. Eventhough he is a talented artist, he is haunted by the re-

alization that he will die someday anyway and so he finds everything meaningless. That is, until he meets Sally...

The Art of Getting By is a romantic comedy drama that was premiered at this years Sundance Film Festival. Honestly, it might be a movie that you will only see once and never come across again, but despite this possibility the movie has a very pleasant atmo-



you hate christmas? we don't blame you!

Have you ever wanted to do something really cultural during Christmas but you were never really into Christmas carols or pathetically sentimental Christmas movies? Be a Christmas rebel and arrange your own Christmas cultural program with these tips!

Then again, if you already got annoyed by Christmas carols over all these years, you can prove how rebellious you are and lock yourself up in your room listening to "The Subways". It is guaranteed that nothing will release your musical spirit as much as Rock'n'roll queen, It's a party or Oh yeah. If you are still depressed by your financial situation after beeing forced to buy Christmas presents We don't need money to have a good time is a song for you. Romantic souls will love Staring at the sun or Lines of light.

This indie-garage-post-punk rock band from the UK will

keep you warmed up in the coldest weather. It's sharp sound and rebellious lyrics are simply unforgettable.

YOU CAN LISTEN TO:

THE SUBWAYS



Lenka Filipová

What Does a Christmas Tree Actually Stand For?

Objects typically associated with Christmas certainly include a good old Christmas tree. However, few of us actually know the original meaning of a Christmas tree. This article will take you on an excursion to the history of Christmas trees. When passing a Christmas tree next time, you might like to toy with the idea of Christmas trees then and now.

The legend about the birth of the Christmas tree

According to a generally known legend, the first person to ever decorate a Christmas tree was a certain Irish abbot called Columban. He was sent to Burgundy to preach to local pagans about the birth of Christ. In order to catch the attention of as many pagans as possible, he put burning torches together and attached them on an evergreen, in the shape of a cross. The radiance did indeed attract many people who, therefore, got to hear the story of the birth of the Messiah. Hence an evergreen tree became a symbol of Christ's birth. However, there are other explanations available. As people used to be convinced that the dead could enter the mortal world at some occasions, they got prepared for such visitors. Decorating the Christmas tree with sweets should trick dead souls - feeding them prevented the dead from hurting anybody. This ritual is accompanied by the

habit of not leaving the table during the Christmas meal, as to prevent the dead stealing someone's seat. Placing the tree in front of houses also has its reasons: worshipping the god of the Sun, according to old German legends.

The first decorated trees come from the times around 700 and the first decorated Christmas trees come from the 16th century, from Germany. The church has given this tradition a Christian meaning: the tree (wood) is a great symbol representing man; the cradle of Christ who was later crucified on a wooden cross.

Another known fact is that certain types of trees were worshiped by old Romans, for whom they symbolized the solstice. Moreover, during Celtic celebrations trees symbolized life and its lights represented the Sun.



The Church and a Christmas tree

Tree decorations were considered a pagan's tradition still in the 16th century. Only by the end of the 16th century it was accepted by the Church and marked this tree decorating tradition with a substantial amount of religious symbolism. Green branches of evergreens symbolized eternal life and the tree was supposed to remind us of the paradisiac tree of Adam and Eve.

Old Czech Christmas

A Christmas tree was fully accepted throughout Czech in the mid 19th century. It was perceived as a religious symbol, which made strongly religious Czechs fancy this new tradition. The tree in churches symbolized the world, its green branches stood for Christ's eternal life, paper roses lying on the tree's branches represented the Virgin Mary and dry apples embodied Eve -

the mother of human kind. At homes, Christmas trees were decorated in a very modest way - tiny gingerbread cookies, dried fruits, apples as symbols of health and walnuts representing love and luck. The tree would be hung above the Christmas-Eve tree, put in the middle of the table or hung in the window.

Veronika Spurná



The cinemas have plenty to offer, and you can watch a Christmas-associated film too. Arthur Christmas should certainly please you! Arthur Claus is the son of Santa. Arthur is relegated to the Letter Department where he can presumably do no damage. Arthur's brother Steve is the heir apparent to the title of Santa. Steve is handsome, confident, and in charge of the North Pole command centre that monitors Santa's gift-giving flight around the world. The film starts with showing how Santa is able to give presents to millions of people in one night. How does he manage? See for yourself.

It's pretty freezing outside, at least most of the time so now's the best time to hit a cinema if you aren't at a party right now.

christmas at the cinema

When Arthur discovers that one gift was accidentally undelivered, he becomes determined to get it to the unfortunate girl before it's too late. But can Arthur travel around the world in time?

The film tells us that Santa is actually a dynasty and that the title is handed down from father to son. Arthur Christmas is said to be fun, creative, and original. Arthur Christmas is produced by Aardman Animations in association with Sony Pictures Animation.

It is expected that Arthur Christmas will become a Christmas favourite for years to come.

What else? The film New Year's Eve didn't please many. Some wrote that it's just a 118 minutes long commercial for New York, many don't like the actors. It's said that it was made just to make money. But isn't that fun sometimes? Just have a laugh with your friends? Relax (from all the studying, all the hard work)? Maybe you'll love it, you might hate it, but enjoy the summer time.

Star actors! Sarah Jessica Parker, Robert de Niro, Josh Duhamel, Ashton Kutcher, Zac Efron and many more.

Enjoy a Merry Christmas!!!

We're lucky it's winter!!!



Arthur,
future
Santa?

culture section

The first ballet was written by a brilliant musician and composer, a big historical artist- Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, who presented a huge hit for fresh new ballet dancers called Swan Lake (Gossip From the backstage: Tchaikovsky found inspiration from a Czech composer- Antonin Dvorak- from the opera called Rusalka and its story)

By the time ballet got much more extended and very popular all over Europe, its central place had been in Moscow and finally we had an opportunity to meet the very first prima-ballerina- Ana Pavlova, who was able to dance in a Swan Lake- the main role, which is the Swan Queen. While she had been dancing her variation called "The dying swan," every time she made the whole audience cry like little babies.



Ballet has a much deeper history than you think. The first ballet movements could be seen during the Russian ball of Tsar Nicholas in Moscow. Ladies got more mobile and instead of the classic dance they said "bye bye" to their dance partners and became like dancers taking their first solos in front of the whole audience, and this

ballet

a passion or fashion ?

I came to try my first steps in 1999 into the ballet school of ex- ballet soloist of the National theatre -Ján Nemec, whose's actually Slovak. I just remember the moment when I had two pony-tails on my head and was trying to do my best by acting like a real dancer and taking my basic positions of arms and legs as well.



Ballet deeply touched me once I saw Tchaikovsky's other ballet (very popular during the Christmas time) called the Nutcracker. (If you have an opportunity- run as fast you can! There's every year right before Christmas the Nutcracker presented by the National theatre in Prague danced by brilliant Czech ballet dancers)



So, how does it actually work these days? Essentially you need to have the passion- passion for music to become the music, feeling it and sharing it with your emotions. If a ballet dancer falls down into this "big magic hole", it is really easy to get into a ballet school. In these kinds of schools, you need to audition in front of the judges, who are the professors of the school (see the flashback from a brilliant 80's movie- Flashdance). To get accepted, you need to have the correct proportions for a dancer and - this is what makes me think that Czech ballet schools are ridiculous - that you may dance only if you do not reach 55 kilos. Also in school you are getting grades every month based on how your body looks and how stable your weight is. After you reach 35 years as a professional ballet dancer, your career is completely over and you are desperate about what to do afterwards.



Check it out, if you're more curious:

Wonderful shots of American dancers

:www.ballerinaproject.com

Want to try? Don't be shy! : www.baletniskola.cz

Alexandra Baraková

That is why I stayed on an amateur position in this ballet school, where I feel comfortable the most, where no one cares about how your body looks. We have competitions and others performances as well, which are bringing the whole crew a lot of fun. This year my dream finally came true and by practising Swan Lake, I danced as the Black Swan.

My opinion about ballet dance as a complete piece is still changing. It is a really challenging piece of art, it makes you try to do your best to be pushed forward until you are completely perfect, but since the money and quality of the choreographers sadly went down, fresh ballet dancers are losing future positions in theatres.



christmas markets in prague

Soak up the festive atmosphere, browse the stalls and enjoy Christmas carols, hearty food and hot wine.

Christmas markets are a key ingredient of the Czech festive magic. The Prague Christmas markets light up the city centre at this time of year, bringing tourists and locals together to enjoy the holiday spirit, in a true 'winter wonderland' setting.

The markets run daily, including on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

The main markets are held at the well-known Old Town Square and Wenceslas Square, with smaller ones at Republic Square and Havel's market. All are within a few minutes to walk between.

However, Christmas markets are not just about shopping. At the animals stable in the Old Town Square children can pet sheep, goats and a donkey. And a large Bethlehem scene depicts Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus and the Three Kings in a wooden stable.

When? 26th November
2011 – 8th January 2012

Where? Old Town Square
and Wenceslas Square

Probably most impressive of all is the Christmas tree, shipped from the Krkonose mountains in the North of the Czech Republic. The tree is erected in the Old Town Square and draped in a blaze of lights, which are turned on around 5pm every night.

In addition, a programme of events runs daily on a stage in the Old Town Square with Czech and International choirs and dance groups entertaining visitors.

The atmosphere of winter Prague is magical!

Zora Šecová



Christmas markets consist of brightly decorated small wooden huts selling traditional Czech handcrafts, such as wooden toys, scented candles, jewelry, ceramic mugs, hats, scarves, traditional puppets and Christmas tree ornaments.

Do you feel worn out from all the hard Christmas shopping? Take a break. It is so much nicer with some hot food, warm drinks (e.g. popular hot wine called „svařák“), or Czech beer.

The Russian Orthodox Church celebrates Christmas on January 7th, thirteen days after Catholic Christmas.

The history and tradition of this wonderful celebration was banned after the 1917 Revolution along with other religious celebrations. Communists didn't like the fact that people believed in something different from their leaders, visions and plans. Christmas Day is not as important as it is in the West, because it was forbidden almost for 75 years until 1992. Since 1992, celebration of Christmas has become more and more popular.

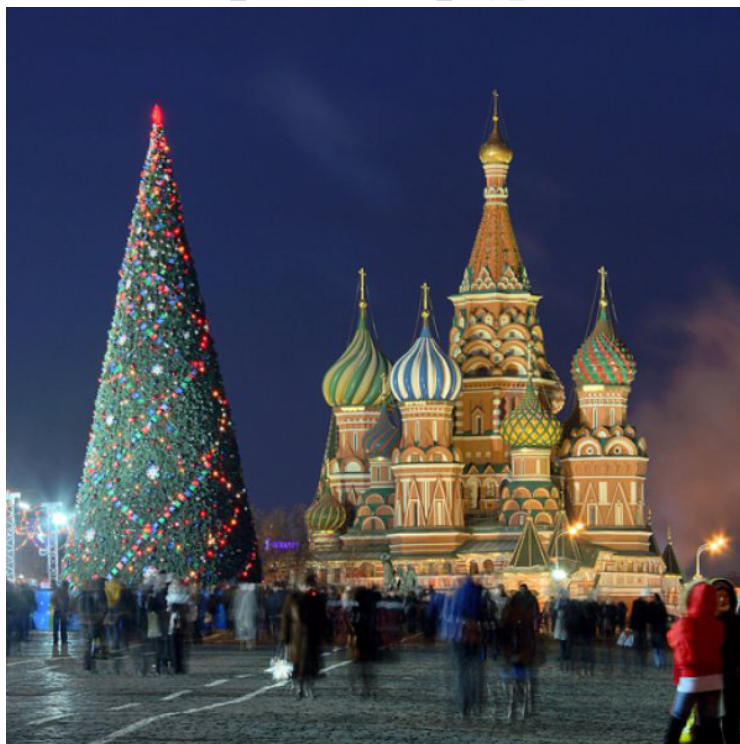
When the first star appears in the sky, the celebration starts. The whole family gathers together around the table to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The tablecloth is white and symbolizes Christ's clothes. Hay is brought as a reminder of the poverty of the place where Jesus was born. A white tall candle is put at the middle of the table and symbolizes "The Light of the World".

Food at the table is meatless but at the same time festive.

The primary dish on Christmas Eve is a kutya, a type of porridge with various ingredients such as wheatberries or

other grains symbolizing hope, peace and happiness.

christmas in russia



The Holy Supper

Usually the Holy Supper consists of 12 different meals. The most common ones in Russia are:

- 1) Mushroom soup with zaprashka; this is often replaced with Sauerkraut soup
- 2) Lenten bread ("pagach")
- 3) Grated garlic
- 4) Bowl of honey
- 5) Baked cod
- 6) Fresh Apricots, Oranges, Figs and Dates
- 7) Nuts
- 8) Kidney beans (slow cooked all day) seasoned with shredded potatoes, lots of garlic, salt and pepper to taste
- 9) Peas
- 10) Parsley Potatoes (boiled new potatoes with chopped parsley and margarine)
- 11) Bobal'ki (small biscuits combined with sauerkraut or poppyseed with honey)
- 12) Red Wine



amy winehouse releasing her posthumous new album



On the 5th December, "Lioness: Hidden Treasures", the third album from Amy Winehouse, was released through Island Records. This was announced on Halloween.

Following her tragic death in July, some of the producers and musicians Amy Winehouse cooperated closely with, among them Mark Ronson and Salaam Remi, spent time listening over the many recordings that Amy had made, before, during, and after the release of "Frank" and "Back To Black". It is commonly known that each and every one of Amy's singles is very special, very unique. Salaam and Mark quickly came to the conclusion that they had a collection of songs that deserved to be heard by the whole world.

This album contains of 12 songs, previously unreleased tracks, alternate versions of already existing classics and of course a few new Amy compositions. The album "Lioness : Hidden Treasures" is a tribute to the talented artist. It is a reminder of Amy's stunning powers not only as a singer and an interpreter of classics, but as an extraordinary songwriter as well.

dreams

The dream of the heart, describes the line between conscious love and unconscious.

They have been dreaming
the same dreams. . .

In the dreams they were
those people who they will
never be. . .

When she was looking at him, even for a moment, her heart was getting out of time and he felt it. When he touched her she was sinking in happiness. He was kissing her and she wished it would never stop. They have been hurting each other, jeering at each other. He never passed in her marble or consoled her but trusted. She was so angry at him. Especially, when he looked at her like he was saying: "I know you feel pain, I know all about your feelings, but you can handle it, because you don't have a choice." She was losing her temper, and it was one of the other million things she could never show him.

He knew. They knew. . .

All about the life they lived. From the beginning. They foresaw everything, the feelings, the pain, the actions.. like they were writing their life line by line. I guess that's why they had been playing with it. They had been putting each other and their fate to a test. All the time. They had been arguing, yelling, loving, missing. They knew it was going to hurt but were grinning like nothing was going on. They were killing each other and then were revived in the last sighs. She was listening only to him



When he was mad she was the only person who could calm him by accepting his madness. He could yell and she was smiling. They had been never dreading each other even when there was nothing else to do or feel. They had been the only human beings who could do that. Together they would conquer the world, but the paradox is – it is not possible until they are they. And it's not about the world.

They need just them. . .



Kitty's birthday

a short story

So I finally finished the reconstruction of my household. For you to understand, I got this flat as an heirloom from my grandpa, who died few months ago. My best friends helped me, just because they love my place and their intention was to move in with me.

Quito the kitty got an awesome place by the window, near the staircase. I'm not a crazy cat "gentleman" if you excuse me, but she's the second "girl" that I love the most so I had to make her nap-place really comfy.

My new flat is really a huge, open space.

Quito's an active cat, so she runs around a lot, and it's really funny to often see/hear how she's trying to run on the newly polished wooden floor, and the sound of shearing and the hollow fall noise. She also meows a lot.

And because Quito seems to love watching the street crowds passing by, I dressed her up in a Santa costume, and watched from the window next to hers, how little kids with their parents stopped by, pointing towards her, saying they saw Santa.

Suddenly a wild friend appeared. He jumps through the snow in the front garden, and rings the doorbell.

She forgot her keys, and because I work home most of the time, I have to open the door to my forgetful friends. Four of them live here. I even thought about idea of teaching Quito how to open the front door, because she knows how to open others, but the handle there is just too hard to push down.



After a few more minutes, other roomies arrived. Tonight, because we're all single and childless, we're gonna celebrate Quito's 3rd birthday. Yeah, it's pretty lame, but last year's party was pretty much fun, so we ought to do it again. To somehow introduce my friends, I'd need thousands of pages of this wierd diary or so, but let's do it fast. The first friend that arrived is almost a chef named Alex. She has the greatest imagination for food mixtures ever! And with her eyes for art she even makes the food look nice. She's a funny person although you often cannot tell what's irony, sarcasm and what she means seriously.

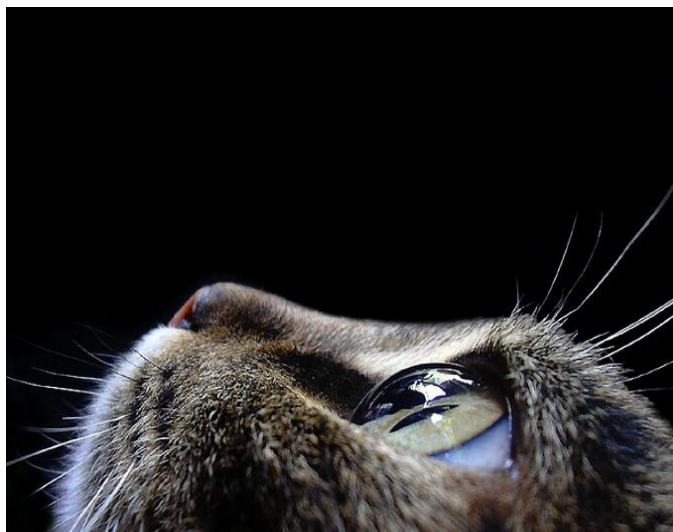
The dirty blonde chick, with afro style curly hair is Boom-shalaniqua. No, just kidding, her name's Gwen. She plays bass in one so called rock band, with which she played about.. umm.. once? -because she's been always sick on days of their gigs.

That short haired guy, see him? Used to wear a mullet in highschool! His name's Greg.

He's a good guy, loves Jamaica and Holland for no particular reason. And I don't really know how it's possible, but he works as a computer game developer, and is still pretty much a social being.

He has a weakness for flowers, and is even a great tailor! He sewed up a few toys for Quito the other day, but let's get back on the track. The last one of these people staying over is my soulmate. Oh she's a girl. We "studied" alongside for few years in college, although in different fields. Her name's Summer. She loves to travel, and visited almost every part of the world. We spent a lot of time together and she laughs so nicely. She's the one, the coffeelover I told you about last time!

So as we all gathered up at the dining table, and sang a few happy birthday songs to Quito, now with a birthday cone on his head, currently digging through a pile of something in the corner of the room "next-door". We popped the champagne, opened a can of premium fishfeast for our darling and we talked and talked and talked.



When I woke up in the morning, my head felt like a grenade ready to boom. As soon as I opened my eyes, I realized Quito was sitting next to me, with her little paw covering the other one, she looked at me with one eye.

"Facepaw? Pfft" I said with a sore voice. "cheap one Quito!"

I stroke her on the neck, she meow-d and went to other rooms to wake their inhabitants up.

A few seconds later, after she walked by the corner I heard a boxy sound ring out, and a few probably swearing cat-sounds, as she walked on.

when in adellas

~A saga of queens, dragons and broken loyalty~

by Juliana Vaculiková

chapter one: the only thing left to lose

I sit here on top of the tallest house in the city of Adellas, writing an entry in my diary. Yet the oak tree is taller and partially shields me from the descending snow, for which I must thank the god Abiswa; in secret, however, as residents of Adellas do not look well upon my kin. I don't blame them. Our gods and cultures are different and we all meet here for the sole purpose of trade before going our separate ways. I sit on the roof of Ulver Theralas, leader of the Eaglewing mercenaries himself. I'm not worried, as with his busy schedule, he barely ever gets home before dark to see my little nest. Even if he noticed, as my superior, he would surely pardon me – or cut a percentage of the payment on my next contract. If the worst were to come, I can always skip town; it's not like anything ties me to this place. I can prove my allegiance to the queen elsewhere.

The day has been slow so far. I have been freed from the court for lack of evidence, as always. There's no doubt in my mind the guards had found sufficient proof, but knew better than to mess with an Eaglewing, although Asterian. I chuckle as I remember Ulver's face when he saw me smiling during the trial; he was sure I was about to speak, but I would not. What I do, I do for business, not blackmail.

What surprised me was the lack of Rein's presence in the court. Not that the absence of the one who was supposed to defend me altered the process in any way. I do not blame her, either; after all, we do have a history. After today, I have no need for her, anyway.



My mission was to sneak into the abandoned keep nearby – the Keep of Withering, they call it, for the many flowers that crawl through the ruins during the summer and appear dead on the outside, but in the keep itself, all are in full bloom – and find an enchanted ring of the one of the queen's human ancestors, which was to be presented to her as a sign of good will; and if anyone were to block my path, kill them. A curious case; though I am not too fond of humans, I was intrigued by the idea of them knowing advanced magic, next to their fancy colorful stars exploding in the sky and their cheap tricks with swords and saws. How was I supposed to know a sodding frost-breathing dragon had decided to make the place its home? By the gods, I was scared to look him in the eye! I realize the ring was important, but I also realize I had been tricked by the local Eaglewings since people living in the city must have known of his presence long before. The main objective here was to kill the dragon or die trying. I apologized for my rude intrusion and politely asked for the ring, for what need could a dragon possibly have for magic that paled in comparison to his own? He slammed his scaly tail on the ground and turned his head towards a corridor dark enough for a cat to get lost in. I thought he would make the wall collapse behind me right as I walked through, and was hesitant to obey. After all, there aren't many vegetarian dragons in the world, are there? I subtly readied one of my poisoned knives and went on. I could feel his stare on my back. And then I heard the sound of the rings around his tail clicking on the ground and I knew I had been right. I threw the knife, hitting him in the scar on his left wing that I had observed earlier. The wound itself would have been just a scratch, but the poison and the scar combined gave me enough time to run out and have a fighting chance. At least I got an opportunity to try out my skill with fire arrows.

Long story short, I'm alive and I have the signet ring, but of course, dragons are protected by the highest law and nobody cares I never asked to be his potential dinner. However, when they decided to take me to court and Ulver saw me alive and well, he persuaded the captain of the watch to, ahem, reconsider the whole case. After all, I had done the Eaglewings a great service; as it turns out, Delain – the dragon – had not exactly been on good terms with the order, having eaten a few of their comrades here and there. I don't approve of being used, but I must admit it was a good plan. Whom else to get to strike down a dragon than a stranger who has nothing to lose and no reputation to corrupt?

Suddenly, an ear-piercing cry is heard from the top floor of the archmage's tower in the castle. I spring to attention; it is familiar to me. No, no, that makes no sense. Rein was – she was – nowhere to be found today. In fact, I haven't seen her for more than a week, but I'm sure she never left the town. Why would she be – argh! There's no time to think. If I'm mistaken and act, the worst that can happen is that I will embarrass myself and possibly kill a few innocent guards I have known and will never miss. If I'm right and don't act, Rein will die.

If I'm right and don't act, I will lose the only thing I have left to lose.

–CHAPTER CLOSED–

