

### Book title

#### One feather<sup>1</sup>

(from the story collection 20 +1 best stories of summer 2014.)

### Author

#### Ksenija Kušec



### Bibliographic information

The short story 'One Feather' was published in a short story collection 20 +1 best stories of summer 2014. Until now on the internet portals, it was published under three titles: One feather, Grandma in my pocket and Revolution. Most often is it seen under the last name of the story collection Revolution

Author: Ksenija Kušec

Country: Croatia

Language: Croatian

Genres: Short story

Publisher: Brod knjižara, Zagreb

Year of publication: 2014.

Type of release: soft copy

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<sup>1</sup> The same story can be found under three different titles; One feather, Grandmathor in my pocket and Recolution. However you will find that it is under the last title Revolution. The materials used here are under the title One Feather, unde which it was published in 2014 in the book collection 20 +1 best summer stories of 2014



## Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

- <https://www.vecernji.hr/kultura/revolucija-972367>
- <http://radio.hrt.hr/ep/boje-haljine-teta-vanda-ksenija-kusec/251042/>
- <http://fama.com.hr/ksenija-kusec-nije-dobro-naci-se-u-mojim-knjigama/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARzRHBiumYI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3EnYzQldNE>

## Theme

The story is told in the first person by an unnamed girl who arrives at her grandmothers apartment too late, which is now an empty apartment. The owner of the apartment is now the bank. Even though the exact reason why the apartment didn't stay in the family's possession is unknown, we can guess it is about covering up debt by the repossession of movable possessions and real estate.

## Short summary

She enters into her grandmother's empty apartment, she's too late, the bank has already emptied it, she wasn't able to say goodbye to neither her things nor the space she was attached to as a child. She's furious, but in the apartment, in the empty rooms, she is able to find memories of happiness she felt while being with her grandmother. She looks at the place where the stove was, where the flower pots were, and paintings, she also recalls the way the furniture looked like. She moves on to the kitchen and balcony... There is nothing there, only memories, scenes and conversations with her grandmother. She learnt a lot from her. It's like she's talking to herself, mentioning Eingemachtes, ashtray, soup pot... items that remind and bring her back to the past. From all her grandmothers' stuff, she only found a feather on the floor. Furious and hurt with injustice, she decides to fight for her grandmothers' possessions and apartment.

## Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

In the story, an everyday situation is brought up, actually it's the reality of this world. Students know how to recognize injustice and similar or the same motives in literary texts. This story is suitable for a specific RSP group of readers as it encourages the



understanding of problems of society this girl went through herself, through analyzing and interpretation this specific problem (she was left without the right of her family's possessions). The situation she was put into leaves the students to feel empathy and have a certain amount of criticism towards the ineffective administration and bad system. This story is also suitable for working with students because of the linguistic features and style: contains Germanism typically used in conversational idiom of older people in Zagreb and northern parts of Croatia. This is why this text is good for a lingvo methodic template for class's lexicology in the last year.

### **What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?**

Taken into consideration that social problems are everlasting and are present everywhere, this story can rise interest of the reader in various ways:

- The main character (and narrator) is a young person who decides to fight for her rights and oppose the bad system.
- Memories and returning back to her childhood and remembering a loved one – are general experiences which help readers to feel empathy towards the main character and find similarities with themselves.
- The text offers linguistic content that connects us to the past, brings up emotions towards memories and encourages us to think about real life problems.

### **Why is this story motivational for the pupils?**

Students are faced with real life problems that are present in their surrounding whether its close or far, they find similarities in all personal experiences

### **Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?**

In this story, present and real social context is recognized: the amounts of social responsibility banks and state law have towards an individual, which most times end up feeling cheated on and unprotected.



## METHODOLOGY

### **Title of Activity**

#### **Empty Apartment**

### **Description of educational activity**

**Duration:** 4 x 45 minutes (two two hour class – 2 x 45 min)

**Student age:** 17 - 18 (senior)

#### **1<sup>st</sup> class**

**Introductory part of class:** the whole class (all students)

Student homework: students listen to the introduction of the story, the professor reads: I climb up the stairs and everything is clear: I am late. The bankers cleaned out my grandmother's apartment to the dust. On the front door, instead of a lock, there is a hole, and the door is ajar. It is probably the time when bankers don't care if someone will come in the apartment and steal something. They have already become the owners, it's all crystal clear.

- After the introduction the students think and discuss the possible reasons why the bankers cleared out the apartment.
- They assume the age of the narrator/main character
- Comment about their ideas of the stories ending

**Middle part of class:** whole class, later on working in pairs

Student homework:

- After the introductory discussion they receive text stories in their entirety and read the story to the end
- In pairs they comment on the main plot, express their thoughts, comment on the narrator and event
- After working in pairs, a conversation follows about their impressions of the book created (reports on how their pair perceived the story)



- Followed by the question, do you know the meanings of all the words in the story One Feather?
- Students in pairs find the meaning of unknown words (ajngemahtes...) on the internet
- They conclude why these words are used in this contemporary story
- They suggest a student (girl) who will play the main characters part/narrator
- Three students voluntarily create a group of 'helpers' that will help in answering the questions other student will ask

**Last part of class:** everyone (girl, group of volunteers and the rest of the class)

Student Homework:

- Girl plays/acts the narrator
- The 'helpers' help answer and shape the questions which the girl will not be able to answer independently
- The class examines/asks the girl based on the plot of the story

**2<sup>nd</sup> class**

**Introductory part of class:** everyone (girl, group of volunteers and the rest of the class)

Student Homework:

- Girl plays/acts the narrator
- The 'helpers' help answer and shape the questions which the girl will not be able to answer independently

The class examines/asks the girl based on the plot of the story

**Middle part of class:** whole class

Student Homework:



- students independently note information about the story (students are given the information before hand?<sup>2</sup>)
- student on the internet explore about the contemporary author Kseniji Kušec
- after gathering information for 10 minutes they write them down on the board, students note the most important information (the most important information is described in advance to them<sup>3</sup>)

**Last part of class:** everyone (girl, group of volunteers and the rest of the class)

#### Student Homework

- Chose the most acceptable student idea from last class – what actually happened to the narrator that she came to an empty apartment?
- Discussion: is the narrator the author of the book?

### **3<sup>rd</sup> class**

**Subject area: LANGUAGE**

**Introductory part of class :** five groups of four

#### Student Homework

- Students remember the unfamiliar words (ajngemahtes...)
- They repeat their conclusions why the author used exactly these words in the contemporary Croatian text
- What similar foreign words do you use or have heard of?(one student writes down the words on paper, thus the groups president writes them on the board, the professor keeps track of the words and if applicable (Germanism). With this a list an introductory is created in the subject area Language Lending - Germanisms in Croatian)

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<sup>2</sup> Because it has to do with seniors, the Bay of work is arranged upfront so simple tasks like this are not to be explained everytime from the beginning. Basic elements of analyzing and interpreting the story is noted: theme, character, setting, message sent, style and language

<sup>3</sup> It deals with simple information that describe the authors life and work.



**Middle part of class:** five groups of four

Student Homework:

- Every group works on the word they suggested: they talk about their use in language practice (they imagine and demonstrate the situations in which the words can be applicable to)
- The groups president reports about the results of the discussion in each groups

**Last part of class:** five groups of four

Student Homework: for everyone (not group work)

- students write an essay (method 'hot pencil'), in which they imagine the narrator from the story 'One Feather' in a new situation: after which she came out from the apartment, went to the bank, asked for a meeting with the person who is responsible for her case. A lady in a business suit comes and asks her to join her in her office.
- Students need to use existing and new germanisms in the imagined conversation

**4<sup>th</sup> class**

**Introductory part of class:** the whole class

Student Homework:

- Reading their essay

**Middle part of class:** the whole class

Student Homework:

- evaluation of students work (having in mind it was done using method 'hot pencil')
- announcing the best essay
- discussion about the imagined character and the real character from the story

**Last part of class:** whole class

Student Homework:



- evaluate the class unit (all four classes) with a survey: in the survey include the question of the possibility for students to read another story by Ksenija Kušec in the same educational period

#### Support materials:

- the printed story 'one feather'
- or <https://www.vecernji.hr/kultura/revolucija-972367>

#### Evaluation and assessment method:

The evaluation of the teaching process will be visible from the survey conducted on the 4<sup>th</sup> class. From the student's reaction during all the four classes, the professor will evaluate the interest of the theme and author who deals with the social subject matter.

#### The effect of the activity on RSP reading or motivation for reading:

After reading the introduction paragraph and discussion of possible problems why the apartment was emptied, the students whose interest for the emotional aspect of the narrator. Shortly after they have a protective attitude towards her, they recognize and judge the social injustice and come up with possible solutions.

#### **Connection to curriculum**

Secondary education programs for Gymnasiums: senior year

Croatian Language:

Language – lexicology, the use of aliens, germanism

Literature - Contemporary Literature and Postmodernism

Politics and economy: right or need for order and security

#### **Knowledge, Skills and Competences:**

- a) recognize serious problems in the society in which we belong and time in which we live in: estimate the possibilities and direction of action that can be taken to solve the problem; to act, not to passively watch





- b) articulate the underlying problem, describe it, argument the situation, show emotion, as well as critically read the text
- c) communication competence: ability to work in a team, inform and act upon.

### **Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity**

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Year of publication: 2014.

Type of release: Soft cover

ISSN 1849-0026

Number of pg.: Story 'One feather' – 5 pg., whole collection 171 pg.



### **Short description of digital sources (applications, games, webpages, FB pages etc.)**

To better understand the life of the author as well as her opinions check the following:

- <http://radio.hrt.hr/ep/boje-haljine-teta-vanda-ksenija-kusec/251042/>
- <http://fama.com.hr/ksenija-kusec-nije-dobro-naci-se-u-mojim-knjigama/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARzRHBiumYI>

### **Results**

Students will be able to:

- Recognize, describe and comment the social injustice as a literature theme and real life problems



- Understand why contemporary literature texts talk about the different occurrences in social injustice
- React to similar events in everyday life

### Recommendations

The story One Feather, Ksenija Kušec describes her grandmother's apartment in which there is nothing left. The bank had emptied it fully. The narrator is a girl who recalls her childhood memories and conversations she had with her grandmother while looking at the empty apartment. From all her grandmothers' things, she was only able to find a feather on the floor. Furious and hurt with the social injustice, she decides to fight for the repossession of the property and other assets. It is easy to see that action needs to be taken, and this is where the students quickly stand by the characters side, who finds herself in a pool full of social injustice. They put themselves in her shoes and propose different solutions.

(The story can be found under the title 'Grandma in my pocket' or "Revolution".)