

The Crazy-balls

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To Marianna and Eleni

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What I'm about to tell you is very unusual. It happened in my city a long time ago, back when we children didn't know how to play games.

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My city was a common place, like all the other cities on this corner of the earth. And when looking at it you wouldn't know the difference between my city and the cities next door.

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The grownups would spend their day at work trying to acquire more money, while we children would spend our day in school, trying to acquire more knowledge so as when we grew up, we would earn money and become valuable citizens.

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In the evenings we would gather at the city's meeting-places to discuss. The grownups would discuss the commercial growth of the region and its expansion of the market. And we children would discuss the technical characteristics of airplanes, the roots of words or the new varieties of citrus fruits.

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And we had fun, because everything we did was aimed at making us useful and better people. At least that is what we were told, and we believed it to be true, until the day the first crazy-ball appeared in our city. Everything changed since then.

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The first crazy-ball fell from the sky a fine spring evening while my friends and I were discussing the cultivation of kiwi.

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While Milto was talking, I witnessed the crazy-ball fall on the pavement, bounce back up, pass over the hood of a car, hit an awning, tumble down the road and then bounce crazily towards the doctor's house.

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"Look!" I said and rose to chase after it. The other children followed. When I finally reached it I desperately tried to grab it, but the crazy-ball would slip away and bounce on the pavement with even greater force.

"Grab it, guys!"

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It took a great deal to finally corner it. It bounced up against a wall and fell straight into Jenny's lap.

"It's soft! How wonderful! Look!"