



## **A common memory**

What if I told you it was a common memory? I mean almost everyone has a memory at the beach, either with their family or their friends. It doesn't matter as long as you have fun. But, I guess something was special about that exact day, or I wouldn't remember it perfectly, would I?

Let me begin with the beginning, shocking. It was in Algeria during the summer of 2014. I live with 3 of my uncles and their families but in separated houses. It may seem like a useless detail but I love it, I love the fact that I'm close to my family even though I don't live in the same country. I feel like during summer, everything is better, it seems like all my dreams could become reality and I could live magnificent experiences, when in reality I'm just wandering around not having anything to do, for almost two months.

During summer, I feel like I'm living in another world, a world where all my worries, all my pointless fears just disappear, as if they never existed. I'm sure you feel the same way, at least a bit, you can't seriously tell me that you feel like the same person when it's summer and when it's not? Anyways, I have to keep going with my story, here. So, I was in Algeria and I had this envy for the past few weeks, I wanted to go to the beach because it felt as the right thing to do. I wanted to enjoy my holidays a bit more and to have fun for at least a few hours with my family. I convinced my father to consider going there and only 2 days later we were on our way. Oh, and I forgot to tell you...The beach is two hours and a half away from where I live and you have to keep in mind that in Algeria people who are not sitting in the front seats don't have to fasten their seatbelts. We were on a sort of minivan that my father had rented for the day, for almost nothing because the driver is one of my father's childhood friends. While I was on that bus, I knew that I would remember that day. I don't know why, I just felt it, even when I woke up that day I felt something in my stomach that just warned me about an explosion of joy. I guess it happens sometimes. I was on the third row. and I was falling asleep because I hadn't slept enough the night before and being in a car or a bus is relaxing and makes me want to sleep. I was listening to music, it went from The Neighbourhood to Twenty One Pilots and Janet Devlin, it was flawless. The landscapes kept on changing as we approached the beach little by little, each one having a special detail that made it marvelous; it was either the sunlight or the expression of the few people that stood there. That's the main reason I love going, besides the fact that I was born in Algeria and that half of my family lives

the country, everything is so different each time I go there, everyone seems different, in a bad way or in a good way. During that ride, we could see cornfields, sheep, cows, donkeys, little towns but we could also see children playing football with a torn ball but they would still be smiling, women and men carrying many bottles of water... It was outstanding but awful at the same time, I could make an exhaustive list but that's not my point here. On that bus, we were singing, laughing, playing drums and even telling stories, there were scary ones that were absolutely true and funny ones, that were more enjoyable to me.

We were close to the beach when we arrived, for the fifth time, to a dam with army officers who asked for every boy's identity papers. As we made that step, I felt the excitement in my brain and I thought my heart was going to explode, I wanted to see the ocean so badly.

We all got off of the bus and started walking to the beach to find tents to put our stuff there and to relax: we finally arrived to "Africa's village". The sand was burning, I thought I would die there, every time I saw shadows, I went there for my feet not to burn. The fact that it's really hot in Africa isn't just a legend, trust me. As I looked to the sky and the ocean, I felt as if I was a feather, I felt feathery, every place I looked at seemed giant and endless,

the sky, the ocean, the tents, the people, everything. At the same time, I felt like crying of joy because I was really happy to be with my closest family to live such a moment.

That day, my brother talked to me for the first time since 2009, I mean for another thing than to ask me if I could lend him my keys, I saw my family closer together, I saw my grandmother for the last time, I cried of happiness for the first time, I never saw the ocean and the sky as beautiful as that day and I only owe it to my family because everything is better with them. As much as I loved the view, the best thing about that day was the good vibes that family sent.

As the American writer, Jim Butcher, once said "There's nothing that makes you more insane than your family. Or more happy. Or more exasperated. Or more... secure."

**Radia OUALLI**

Lycée Michelet, Vanves

Teacher: Dominique GERAUDIE