

THE CHILDREN OF AIR-RAID WARNINGS

My name is Mia. I was born in a bomb shelter. In a basement of a maternity ward in Kolomyja, on February 25, 2022, at 19:06, during an air-raid warning, to be exact. It was the second day of Russia shooting and bombing all those born and not-yet-born, those who were ready—like me.

Everything went well. I was delivered by our doctor Susanna. My dad managed to set up a spot at the hospital basement to make it a bit warmer and drier. For just in case.

“Just in case” means that at any moment the sky can turn dangerous. The air starts moaning—it is being torn by all sorts of evils from the Russian military. When it happens, you have to hide underground real fast.

They call me a fighter girl. I have a power shared only by the children of air-raid warnings: I feel them, feel where they are and what they are doing, I have a connection with them.

This is Olezha. Olezha and his older brother Ivan are in the basement of the neighboring building in Kharkiv. It's super scary there. Ivan puts down Russian chats. He messages Allynnya from Dnipro, Rusik from Lutsk, and Julie2039 (from somewhere)—they all do the same thing. When it's time to rest for a bit, Olezha's brother shows him videos with all sorts of sounds from the evils. So Olezha now knows: this sound is from the furious Iskander, this one—from Grad, this one—from the Caliber rockets, and this one—a cluster bomb.

Olezha knows the shootings and the bombings firsthand: he is also a fighter boy; he was born in Avdiivka in 2015. I asked Olezha to describe the sound of an Iskander. It's such a horrific swooshing like everything around you starts howling, then you hear something like “r-r-r-r-r”, and then a loud thump. Olezha says that the evils can destroy the Freedom Square but they can never destroy the freedom in the hearts of the free. It's his mom who says so. We give each other a hug.

This is Leya; she is in Lviv now. Yesterday she made to hundred dumplings to feed the poor kids who made a long way to Lviv with their moms and grandmoms. They really need to get away from the evils a bit. Today Leya draws fighter cats with

really long claws, weapons and wingspaws. Those cats protect Leya's favorite sunflowers, all the pink ponies and unicorns, Leya, her mom, her dad, Lykjan and everyone, everyone else.