

The lies within

by Catharina Schiffmann

You are being carefully chosen, you slowly crawl out of brains onto screens, and you make your home on various brochures.

You are being loved, shared by words of affirmation and support, and you slowly infiltrate each one of their minds. You are speaking the ever so mesmerizing tongue of lies, curling around their brains like a cat, purring violent nothings into their ears, ever so eager to listen.

And, eventually, there is another *you*. That *you* kills a man. It's fun. It really is. And you actually didn't mean to. You never do. But resisting the voice is something you can't bring yourself to do, as it whispers so loudly to stay on screen, you infiltrate another woman's brain to stay somewhere in the back of it, breathing hate into her.

And so you just happen to be there. You happen to thrive under the aggression radiating from your propagator; happen to cackle when the first punch hits a man; happen to watch with a mad twinkle in your eyes when the bruises and the blood begin to paint a picture of deranged beauty; happen to be there when the woman locks arms with her friends and they disappear into the night, creating more *yous*.

You stay back, observe the man lying in some gaunt alley, and grin at the information brochures scattered around him. You like to keep trophies. Always have. So you take one of the brochures, slightly torn apart and muddy, scan the lies within and toss it into one of your bags.

People like that woman are so easy to toy with. Your cackle stays behind as you leave the scene, ready to play some more.

Justification:

Why do I want to participate in the project "Fact Scouts"?

The text you've just read is my attempt to reflect on the harm fake news can cause with no real thought behind it. The fake news simply infiltrates one's mind and fills it up with nonsense, which often gets believed and - in the worst case - leads to physical harm being inflicted on innocent bystanders, like the man in my text. The point of view in the text is made dynamic by moving from the word ,you' which means the original fake news, to the word ,you', which also means the newly created propagators, forcing the reader to take on these developing perspectives. I am highlighting how easily accessible fake news is in today's society, because of its online presence.

As the population, which uses social media, grows and vast amounts of content is shared across borders, it gets easier to spread fake news. A problem leading to harm in various shapes and forms, ranging from verbal harassment to serious threats and, oftentimes, even

to physical ambushes. To combat fake news one needs to spot it first with the help of an established media literacy, which, unfortunately, often isn't developed enough in today's society, even in schools.

Therefore, I'm keen to learn more about fake news and intend to share this knowledge with my peers in school, through my work in the MediaScout Club.

One can spread the truth more easily with the wider reach of a group. Your project enables many people from different countries to exchange ideas on combating fake news, while spreading media literacy.

Photo:

