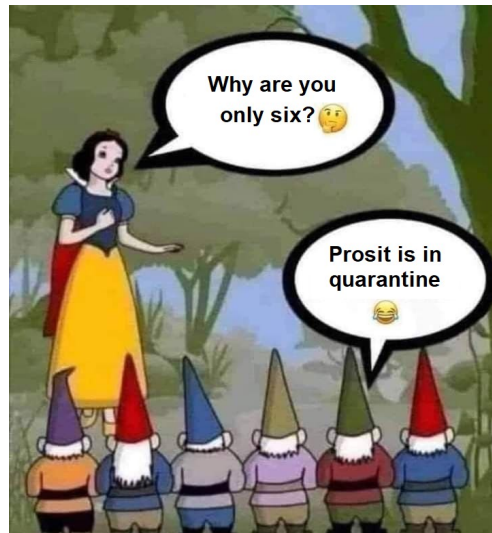


Dear friends

This year has been a very different year due to covid-19. To be allowed to work, you had to be negative, and to smell alcohol. Twice I have been in Mexico, and both times, it was doubtful whether I would be able to come back to Sweden again. And both times, flights I had booked, were cancelled, and I had to choose other options. The last time, in October-November, when my flight was canceled, I changed to another. And this was cancelled too. Third attempt was succesfull.

Similarly, Marisol could not go to Sweden due to travel restrictions. In such situations, internet is a blessing, so we have been in touch daily, and during two periods, we have been together face to face. The covid-19 started in China, in the city Wuhan. And now, it has spread all over the world – even to the country of fairy tales.



Lover I

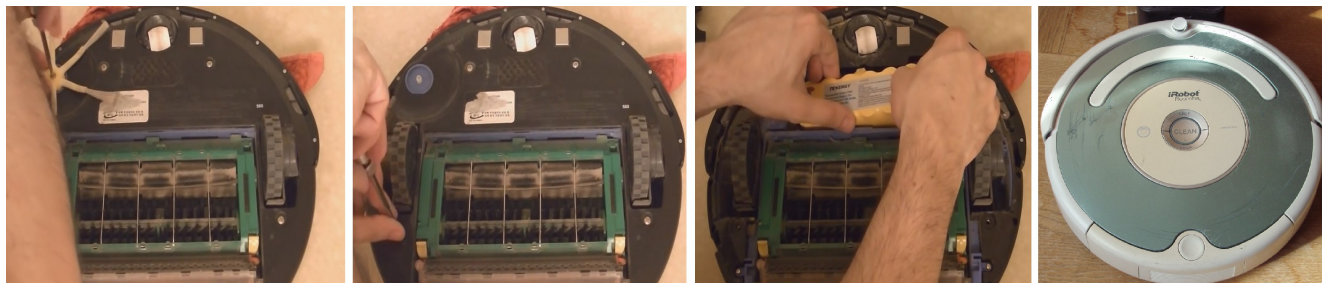
When Marisol visits Sweden, she often is jealous towards my maid Martha. Marisol says that Matha is my mistress. That she controls my life. In a way, this is perfectly true. Martha does not allow me to go to bed until she has finished her job and is ready to go to rest too. She is not very talkative, and her speech is rather indistinct, just growls and murmurs. In spite of that, I can assure you that I really love everything she does. But I can also tell you truthfully that Martha has never tried to come to my bed. And I also try (in vain) to convince Marisol that I have never even hinted to Martha that I would want her to come to my bed. Can any of you imagine having a dishwasher in your bed?

Lover II

I have another maid too (or lover according to Marisol), Roomba. She is much more talkative than Martha. When there is some problem, or anything she is not able to do, she shouts: "Roomba needs help! Roomba needs help!"

If I do not come to her aid, she gets very sulky, and stops talking to me, and actually stops doing anything at all. But if she is treated kindly, she does a very good job cleaning the floors.

Earlier this year Roomba got very sick. As you might know, I am president of SAFAS, the Swedish Association For Amateur Surgery. And soon my diagnosis was ready. I realized that I had to do surgery upon her. A heart transplantation. It took a little more than one week before a donator was found, and I could get a fresh heart for her. One day, the new heart arrived by mail, and I could start the surgery. It was a rather quick work, and in less than half an hour, the new heart was in place. Roomba had to stay in bed for 8 hours, but after that she woke up, totally recovered.



Lover III

I finally realized it!



People are prisoners
of their phones.
That's Why they are
called cell phones!

I have found that Marisol has a lover too. She does not even try to hide. Sometimes, the lover has hidden himself. Then she is very unhappy. In some cases, almost turn the house upside down to find him. Whenever he wants her attention, she interrupts whatever she is doing and goes to talk to him, or to cuddle or whatever they are doing when they are together. This lover is her cell phone. By the way, do you know why they are named cell phones? It is because the owners are their prisoners.

Electric car and cell phone

Talking about cell phones, they can play really dirty tricks with you. Last Christmas I got a smartphone from Gunhild and Oskar. The cell phone I had was more than 20 years old. It could be used for phone calls, and I thought that was what I needed. When I opened the package with the gift, Gunhild said that I needed something more useful. “You cannot have that old thing any more. It should be in a museum, not in your pocket.”

Gradually, I learned to handle it, and when I got my new electric car, I found that the cell phone was necessary. This car cannot be fully controlled without a smart phone. Generally, I charge the car at home (mostly with power from my solar panels, that I also installed this year). But one day in November, I decided to try a public charger, just to see how it worked. I downloaded an app from Vattenfall (electric company), went to the closest public charger and connected. All indicators showed connection to be ok and that the car battery was charging, so I sat in the car and waited fifteen minutes. Then checked, and found that no power had gone into the car. A call to support told that this charger was not theirs, so they could not tell what was wrong. I tried several other chargers with the same result. Finally I found one belonging to Vattenfall. Same there, but now support could check the problem. The diagnostics told that my cell phone had switched off charging. It had ordered the car to accept power only from the outlet in my garage.

Swan lake

In 1876 Pjotr Tjaikovsky had finished his ballet “The Swan Lake”. Originally, it was no success, and in 1895, he rewrote it for the Imperial Ballet at the Marinsky Theatre in S:t Petersburg. It is now perhaps, the most successful ballet of all. In February-March, I was in Toluca. It was before the corona really hit the world. Marisol invited me to the “The Swan Lake” given in there. Toluca was guested by the ballet of the Marinsky Theatre in S:t Petersburg. They were there to give the ballet specifically written for them. So incredibly beautiful. The music, the story, and of course, the dancers. Every one of them is an outstanding artist. It appeared incredible that humans are able to move in such gracious ways. And now, finally, I have found out how they recruit their dancers.





Christmas tree

Finding a good Christmas tree, always tend to be tricky. Ever since we moved to Hemsjö, we have taken Christmas trees from the forest nicknamed as “garden” surrounding our house. It has always been my duty to get it. This year, my idea was to choose one early in the autumn, while the weather was still reasonable. So I went out with the chain saw to find one, and started cutting down the first tree I met. I did not look carefully enough. So when i fell down, I could see that it was the wrong kind. Well there were many more, so I continued to next tree and cut it down. Again

wrong kind. Eventually, I had a pile of trees cut down, and all of them the wrong kind, or, as you can see in the picture, unfitting in some other way.

Then I realized that it was wrong time of the year. The fir trees fit for Christmas had not yet arrived from their summer homes in the deep forests. So I have to follow the ordinary tradition. A couple of days before Christmas, I use to go out to find a (supposedly) nice tree that could be our Christmas tree. And every year, the same procedure. I bring a saw, put on warm clothes and get out. It always turns out to be disastrous weather just that day. What kind of bad weather differs between the years, but the result always is the same: If it is heavy rain, my glasses get wet and my sight is blurred. Same thing happens if it is a snow storm. A third variant is that there is half a meter of snow, and all trees are just piles of snow. The only difference visible is the size.

So choosing a tree is like a blind date. You never know what you will get. Well, more os less blind, I cut something down and bring it indoors. And then the tradition continues. From the other members of our family, there is the traditional complaint: “This is the most ugly tree I have ever seen! Were you not able find anything even worse? Look at this. Only branches at one side, and it is not straight. Why can't we do like all normal people? Go to the market and buy a really nice one! You are just so lazy and greedy!”

Well, eventually, the oral storm calms down, and decoration is started. Some time later, it is ready, and as usual, it turns out to be one of the best we have ever had. The advantage of cutting the tree down just a couple of days before Christmas is that the tree will stay fresh for a long time, usually until Easter, and even shoot new twigs. But one has to not forget giving it water.



Universities

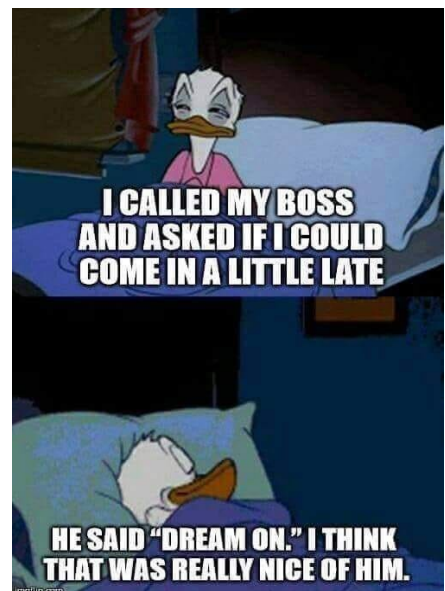
A university is supposed to be a place where all kinds of knowledge is concentrated into one organization. Many universities are like that, but some are missing one ot more faculties. One day

when I was in Toluca, Marisol drove me to another city, not far from Toluca, and there, I saw the faculty that is missing in all Swedish universities: FACULTY OF FUN.



Sleeping beauty

I had an appointment with my dentist at ten on the day after my return from Mexico. I was supposed come home at 17.00, so this would not be a problem. But that flight was cancelled, so I was rebooked to a later one. Traveling more than 30 hours is tiresome, and trying to sleep sitting in economy class does not give the best kind of rest. So I was quite tired already when I came to Paris. There, I had to wait many hours. Due to corona, all shops and restaurants were closed, so I could not get a lunch either. Fortunately, Marisol had urged me to bring a couple of sandwiches. Water was available, so I did not really starve. Hoped for something to eat during that flight. But no! All serving was canceled due to corona :(I came home at 01.30, and put the clock radio to wake me up at 07.00, so I would have plenty of time in the morning. When I woke up, it was already 12.30. I had slept like a bear while the clock radio had been speaking for one hour trying to wake me up. I called the dentist, and said that she of course should charge me for the missed appointment. But she did not. I think that was really nice of her.



Finally, Don't forget to water the Christmas tree! Perhaps not too often, however.

Now, God bless you, and

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Fröhliche Weihnachten und ein gutes neues Jahr!

Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!

God Jul och Gott Nytt År!

Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo!

Allan Emrén and Marisol del Mazo