

Letter to Lena Lukyanov

from Valya Kanuchina (11 years old) on 3 January, 2000
to her future foster mother at Kitezh

Valya was living in an orphanage in Kaluga, awaiting the adoption procedure to be completed. Until this was done, she lived in hope that she would return to Kitezh.

Hello Lena,

When I came back to the orphanage my head was just pounding and racing, full of all the shouts and cries inside. Now I don't like what I see around. While I was absent my roommate took all my toys and destroyed them. Now I will have to sort the problem out with that person. I was told that Vasya will go to Kitezh. I want very much to go and I decided very definitely, very strongly, to go there. So now I must only speak with my Babushka (to get her agreement).



Can you imagine how difficult it is to write to you at the moment - it is nearly impossible here to get any peace to write. My neighbour in the room is running along the corridor crying and shouting, the other girls are around the wall and they are shouting "Mulvina come out". They are calling her Mulvina. The racket is terrible and it sounds in my head like a gun going off. Please send me an envelope because I have just ruined the last one so I cannot send another letter.

Say hello to everybody and if you have a photograph send it to me too. I want to have it with me and remember Kitezh. By the way, I got a present of a dragon for Christmas. I am waiting to be free for some weeks already. This morning I went to have my breakfast and then the teacher told me to eat the Kasha (porridge). Do you think I ate it? No, never! I just took a piece of bread. No one asks the girl Julya and boy Dima to eat the same Kasha, why? They just take the bread and go away and don't get told off! So now I want to go to your place even more after this, and what is more, when I came back everyone asked me about Kitezh! I want to go to Kitezh. I am sick and tired of being here because in comparison with our orphanage, Kitezh is like a sun filled paradise. Waiting for your answer!

Valya.



Valya did return and lived in Kitezh for six years.

Now, at 23 years old, she is completing her studies in Russian Literature at Moscow University of Humanities. She says: "*Kitezh has given me many opportunities in my life. When I lived in Kaluga in the orphanage I had no idea I could go to Moscow and apply to university.*"

Valya is a talented poet and hopes to become a writer.