

# THE FLOWERS OF WAR

**CO-WRITERS:** Gaia Albino  
Sara Doménech Doménech  
Natalia Varandela Espinosa

**YEAR:** 2nd Bachillerato

**SCHOOL:** Santísima Trinidad, Valencia



It was a Saturday morning. Shanna should have gone to school but, unfortunately, she lived in a country attacked by the war: Syria.

Every morning, she went instead to a health centre, where she helped people injured in combat, since the only active role women could have was to care for the sick.

Unfortunately, Shanna was watching many people die every day and her big heart made the young girl draw paper flowers to place them next to the dead, hoping that they would go to a beautiful and peaceful place in the afterlife.

Years passed and Shanna suffered different attacks to which she could survive. She saw her whole family die and, when she turned 16, she was kidnapped and was moved to another country where kids were exploited. As she grew up, however, she kept drawing paper flowers.

After several months of suffering, she managed to escape to Western Europe and travelled through several countries for months until reaching the city of Valencia in Spain.

Like all teenagers, it took her a long time to adapt, but she realized how many and varied flowers existed in her new country, flowers that she could not have even imagined when she was little.

Then she had an idea to grow as a person and to bring a peace offering to those who were dying in her country. She gathered flowers and made a small altar under a tree in homage to the deceased in Syria.

Aware of the seriousness of the occasion, she also decided that those paper flowers she had been drawing since she was a child would become a reality and be an instrument to help families who had lost someone.

She looked for resources and help and, with the support of a refugee association, got the necessary papers to be a resident and build her own flower shop.

Her flowers would be a colourful welcome for those who are born as well as a nice farewell for those who had left. Soon, her flower shop became well-known since Shanna included in each order of flowers a small note containing her own reflections.

Little by little, the people ended up knowing Shanna's story. They wanted to participate in such a beautiful project and suggested the idea of sending to Syria some of the money she raised with the flowers to help people in need.

Today, Shanna's flower shop is famous all over the country and numerous media have wanted to tell everyone this beautiful story of self-improvement. Shanna hopes to be able to go home one day, when the war is over. Meanwhile, she will continue to make her little paper flowers come true.

