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Dans un pays où les pâtes sont aussi essentielles que l'air, les Italiens ont montré leur résilience face à l'inflation galopante. Tout comme les femmes de la pièce "Lysistrata" d'Aristophane qui ont refusé leurs faveurs pour mettre fin à la guerre du Péloponnèse, les Italiens ont boycotté les pâtes, leur plat national, pour lutter contre la hausse des prix. Les associations de consommateurs ont appelé à un grève des pâtes du 22 au 29 juin 2023, exhortant les Italiens à ne pas acheter de pâtes dans les supermarchés. Le but? Faire pression sur les entreprises pour qu'elles réduisent leurs prix.

2

La grève des pâtes s'est avérée être un outil puissant dans la lutte contre l'inflation. Tout comme dans "Lysistrata", où la grève des femmes a conduit à un traité de paix, le boycott des pâtes a entraîné une baisse significative des prix des pâtes. Après seulement deux jours de grève, le prix des pâtes est tombé en dessous de deux euros le kilo, une baisse significative qui a été célébrée par les associations de consommateurs à l'origine de la grève. Cette victoire pour le peuple Italien démontre le pouvoir de l'action collective.

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I really hate flying. It's not that I'm afraid or anything, though I do get a bit nervous if the flight's bumpy. The thing I really object to is that flying is so boring and so uncomfortable. The last long flight that we did was from Los Angeles to New Zealand. It took about twelve and a half hours overnight. Of course I was seated next to someone who dropped off to sleep immediately after we had taken off and spent most of the night snoring. I find it really difficult to sleep on planes. It's just totally impossible to get comfortable enough. When I did manage to get to sleep, the person sitting next to me woke up and wanted to get out to go to the toilet. Then the stewards kept coming round every half hour and offering us tea or water or orange juice.

2

When I got to the restaurant, it was empty.

I thought it must be quite late for them to be closing. I asked the man who was putting out the bins. 'It's past midnight, madam,' he said. Really late then. There was no point hanging around, so I went back home. When I walked in I realised there was dust everywhere, as if the place hadn't been cleaned for ages. That was not possible. I had given the house a thorough cleaning the day before. I went to my answering machine. Maybe they had tried to let me know where they would be. The computerlike voice said, 'Wednesday September the eighth. You have twenty messages.' No, that could not be right, surely. It was March. I turned on the television to check the Ceefax pages. The same date came up on the screen. I had been away for six months. I felt very dizzy, so I sat down and put my head in my hands. What was I going to do? Where had I been?

I've just been told a tragic story. A friend of mine's recently been on a trip abroad. He was doing some lectures at a couple of universities in South America. I think he went to Chile, Argentina and Brazil. He had a wonderful time. Apparently, while he was there, he had quite a lot of free time for sightseeing and he bought masses of souvenirs to bring back with him. He and his wife are very keen collectors of pottery and paintings and rugs and things like that. He was a bit concerned while he was over there that some of this stuff would get damaged, because some of the trips he did were in really rough country and the transport you have to use is often quite primitive.

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He told me that once he had to do a 40-mile journey sitting on the roof of a bus. Anyway, he managed to get back to England with everything in one piece. He landed back at Heathrow airport at some really uncivilised hour and decided to get a taxi back home, rather than struggle with all this stuff on public transport. He had all his clothes in one case and all these beautiful things he'd bought in another. The taxi dropped him at his front door and he got out with his suitcases and put them down while he paid the taxi driver. The taxi then started off, but for some reason in reverse, ran over his suitcase and ruined everything he'd bought.