

Igor Bondar

Dolphins

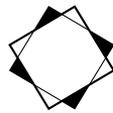


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Dolphins

A fairy tale

Illustrated by Alyona Garbuz



“Zolotoye sechenie“
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This fairy tale is about a merry dolphin called Bin and a romantic young girl, Karen. Who said that that they can never have anything in common? Foolishness can have much to say about it. That is what there are fairy tales.

Illustrated by Alyona Garbuz.

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Bin and his friends



Once upon a time there was a dolphin named Bin. More than anything, he loved the sea, the sun and a fresh breeze. Every morning Bin and his friends would cheerfully jump over the waves chasing each other. He would then swim to visit one of his friends and in the evening, he would head off to an island where people hand-fed dolphins. Of course, a fish caught in the ocean is always tastier, but...

At the hand-feeding Bin liked looking into the eyes of a girl named Karen. Her eyes were so pure and at the same time, so merry and kind that the dolphin took the food from her hands with great pleasure. Actually, Bin chose all his friends by their eyes. He liked eyes that were kind, calm and, at the same time, a little merry. His friends, Geo the dolphin, Ponty the octopus, Bolly the manta and a big kind turtle called Medky had such eyes.

Once, when Bin was jumping over the waves near a ship sailing to Australia he saw a hamster sitting on the deck with a big book in his hands, who had such eyes too. Bin had jumped up high right in front

of the hamster and the hamster looked up from his book and waved his paw.

What Bin really wanted was to find a nice girlfriend. It was high time for him to start his own family and Bin's parents were concerned that he wouldn't settle down. Almost every week they introduced him to some new dolphinet, trying to select for him a partner with the most elegant tail and beautiful fins. Bin would first look into their eyes, but... the dolphin often times found himself wishing that Karen from the island had a tail.

Today his parents were planning a new introduction. Bin arrived at his parent's home a little early and was listening to his mother. "I would sooner die than live without any grandchildren!" — She said, as usual. Bin greeted his father and shook fins with him.

Bin's father had wise and very kind eyes, too. He cheerfully slanted his eyes, first at his wife, then at his son.

"Have you seen her, dad?" Bin asked his father.

"Nope." his father laughed, "I don't normally do that until lunch."

"So, where did ma find her this time?" his son was still wondering.

"It seems it was in some skin cleaning and polishing salon." his father wrinkled his forehead, trying to remember.

"Oh, Neptune!" Bin sighed.

Dolphins often said things like that. None of them had ever seen Neptune but everyone knew that he

was somewhere and he could always be asked for help in difficult times.

“Hang in there on,” Bin’s father tried to cheer him up. “I remember the time when I had to meet more than two hundred potential partners before I found your mother.”

“When did you become so wise?” His son smiled in reply.

“Boys, we have guests!” they heard his mother’s voice and they both turned toward her.

A slim dolphinet with incredibly shiny skin swam into their home. Bin tried to look into her eyes but realized that it was impossible to see through all the glare. He took a deep breath and swam over to the table with his father. Well, at least now he was really hungry.

“Hello! My name is Bin.” he greeted the new guest, as usual, “The water is nice today, isn’t it? What’s your name?”

After that, he put a big tasty fish in shrimp bread-
ing into his mouth. His mother was the best cook in the world.



The next day, Bin’s friend, Geo the dolphin, swam over for a visit. Geo was big and very kind. He could not say no to anyone and that is why everyone always asked him for favors. Geo tried to avoid the constant

requests and as a tactic told everyone he was very, very lazy. However, if that had any effect it was the opposite to what he wanted and people just became more enthusiastic in their requests for his help.

So, there was really only one way for Geo to hide from everyone — to swim off somewhere far away with his friend Bin. Today they were going to visit their old friend, Medky the turtle.

“Well, how did you like yesterday’s new acquaintance?” Geo asked his friend with a smile after they had greeted each other.

“I don’t know,” Bin spread his fins and laughed, “She blinded me with her shiny skin and I couldn’t really see anything.”

The friends laughed together and swam on. They came to the surface and headed towards the turtle’s house. Sometimes they leaped up high from the surface of the sea and did somersaults in the air. The surface of the sea was calm today, the sun was shining brightly and the journey gave them much pleasure.

On arrival at their destination, the dolphins swam down into the depths of the sea. Medky the turtle lived at the very bottom, in the hold of an old shipwreck. The friends swam closer and looked inside of a big long pipe, which stuck out from a room in the ship’s front part. Every time they saw the shipwreck, they wondered: “Why did people ever need this thing?” However, they were never able to come up with a sensible answer.



The dolphins shrugged their tails, which was a gesture of puzzlement, and swam through a big hole in the ship's side to Medky's home.

When they swam inside, they saw their friend sitting in front of a big globe which she had found a long time ago somewhere in the ship. The turtle was spinning it slowly and thoughtfully. When she saw her friends, she took a break from her thoughts and warmly greeted them.

"Hi, Medky!" said Geo and added, "What are you searching for on the globe?"

"Oh, my dear friends," their friend said slowly, "Next year it is time for me to lay eggs on the beach. So, I am looking for suitable places."

Medky began spinning the globe again.

"There is a pretty good place on the Galápagos Islands and there are a couple of wonderful islands in the Indian Ocean too ..."

"Wait a minute, my friend!" Bin suddenly interrupted her and shook his head, "I don't understand something. Don't turtles have to lay eggs in the place where they were born?"

Medky gave the dolphin a somewhat wounded look and said:

"Of course, my clever friend! Turtles lay eggs only in the place where they were born." at this moment, the turtle narrowed her eyes mischievously and said romantically, "But where is it said that I can't dream of other places?"

Her dolphin friends burst out laughing.

“But seriously, Medky, where are you going to lay eggs next year?” Geo asked his friend.

“Here, not far away,” replied the turtle, “on a wide Mon Repos beach behind the island. I have already swum there a few times to investigate the place.”



“And what do you think?”

“Not bad,” Medky answered smiling and added, “only one thing is confusing me...”

“What exactly?” Bin asked with interest.

“Well, sometimes people sit near the turtles on the beach and watch closely how they lay their eggs.”

“Do they bother you?” Geo asked her.

“Not really, they sit quietly,” the turtle responded thoughtfully “But I can’t understand why they do that.”

“Perhaps, they want to learn from you how to lay eggs correctly.” Bin presumed.

“I thought that too,” Medky smiled again, “Otherwise, what other possible reason could there be?”

The friends kept silent for some time.

“Sometimes people are difficult to understand,” Bin finally broke the silence speaking slowly. “I am always puzzled as to why they feed us every evening on that big island?”

“Yeah, I doubt that they are learning how to eat correctly from you.” Medky smiled, “However...”

The dolphins laughed cheerfully.

“Perhaps, they just want to look at us,” Bin continued. “Because I swim there to look at Karen.”

“Have you ever noticed a light flashing in some of the people’s hands when they see us?” Geo said thoughtfully. “Maybe we somehow help activate these lights. Because there are no lights, when we don’t come.”

“Good thinking, Geo.” Medky nodded approvingly, “I’ve noticed this too and that the same lights are there when turtles lay their eggs.”

“That is true!” Bin agreed “They need us to make these lights. But why do they need them?”

None of his friends could answer that question.

“Okay,” Bin said finally, “Maybe we’ll work it out one day. If not, then we probably don’t really need to know.”

The dolphin turned his head towards the exit from the ship.

“By the way, friends, it is time for me to go and meet Karen again. Geo, are you coming with me tonight?”

“Yup,” his friend nodded confidently, “It’s okay if I get back home late today.”

“Then let’s go!”

The dolphins slapped Medky on the back as a sign of farewell and headed for the exit. But halfway out Bin stopped and looked at Geo seriously.

“You know, my friend,” he said thoughtfully, “I think that Karen feeds me not just because of the lights. She is different. She has never had a light in her hands. I think she just likes seeing me.”

“I have no doubt, my friend.” Geo supported him.

Bin smiled happily and swam on to the exit.



“Charlie, Charlie, hello!” Bin, heard Karen’s cheerful voice when he came really close to the beach.

Karen always called him by this strange name. Bin had tried to tell her his real name many times, but she just smiled and it seemed that she couldn’t understand him.

“Titan, Titan, hello!” Karen shouted again as she saw Bin’s friend.

Bin smiled. Geo’s human name was even worse.

Today, there were hardly any people on the beach. Only those people who feed the dolphins every day stood in the water — Karen and two other young men nearby. Bin also knew them well — Ian and Jack.

“So, how was your day, Charlie?” the girl asked with a smile, handing him the best piece of fish, “I bet you swam to many places today!”

“Hello, Karen!” Bin replied warmly, “I am glad to see you. I had a great day today. Geo and I visited our friend Medky.”

Karen sighed after listening to his twittering. It was such a pity that she couldn’t understand him, because it was obvious that he was trying to tell her something. His eyes were so clever and expressive. Even on land eyes like this cannot be seen often.

“Oh, Charlie,” Karen stroked the dolphin’s head, “I wish I could understand what you are saying. I could probably learn so many interesting things.”

Bin happily rubbed back against her hand.
“Yes, my friend,” he heard Geo’s voice behind him, “It would be great if she had a tail. You would be a perfect couple.”

“Or if I had legs...” suddenly said Bin.

“Are you serious?” Geo looked at him with surprise.



“I don’t know,” Bin shrugged his fins, “Running with her along the edge of the sea doesn’t seem such a bad idea.”

He ate the last piece of fish from Karen’s hands and thanked her loudly. The girl smiled back — this time she understood him. The dolphins made a couple of loops around her and headed back out to sea. Karen still stood waist-deep in the water and waved her hand.

“They are so kind and merry,” she thought, “So free and open. It’s such a pity that there are not many people on earth that are like them.”

The girl sighed at her thoughts and slowly walked back to the beach. It was a slow season and besides it was Monday, so there were only a few tourists on the island. So today, she would go home early.



Ponty the octopus was painting turtle shells. He held five brushes of different colors in five tentacles and held on to the coral with the other three. Even though Ponty was very fast, the queue of turtles was quite long.

Geo and Bin, who had come to visit him today, froze in amazement when they saw such an unusual scene.

“Ponty, I don’t believe my eyes” Geo the dolphin called to the octopus. “You’re working as an artist!”

“What choice do I have?” Ponty greeted his friends and sighed. “At first, I refused their requests. But it is the latest fashion — they like to paint their shells. You see, these turtles found some artist who could only paint black and white fish skeletons. Can you imagine what it was like seeing that swimming around me? Now look!”

Ponty pointed with his brushes in four different directions. Indeed, as far as the eye could see, there were multicolored, bright and cheerfully painted turtles.

“Beautiful, right?” the octopus smiled.

“You are right, my friend,” Bin nodded thoughtfully, “I haven’t seen such a bright reef before.”

“What did I tell you!” said Ponty making a final stroke as he pushed another turtle cub into the sea.

The cub was about to shoot off when the dolphin friends blocked his path.

“And where is your “thank you”, little one?” They asked him in unison.

“Oh, I forgot...” replied the turtle cub who then looked up and shouted, “Thank you very much, uncle Ponty!”

The three friends burst out laughing.

“What’s new with you?” the octopus asked the dolphins.

“Well, nothing special,” Geo answered for both of them, “Yesterday, we visited Medky and then went to the island for dinner.”



“Is Karen still there?” asked Ponty narrowing his eyes.

“Yes, she is, and she still doesn’t have a tail.” Bin laughed making a helpless gesture.

They heard a grumble of displeasure among the queue of turtles. Ponty sighed and dipped his brushes into the paint again.

“All right, my friends! There are no more than a couple of hundred of them on this reef. I think that I can finish all of them in a week and after that I’ll definitely swim off somewhere with you.” he announced as he made his first four brush strokes on another turtle’s shell.

The dolphins said a warm goodbye and started to leave.

“If you like I could paint your tails,” they heard Ponty’s cheerful voice, “You can swim right up without having to wait in the queue!”

Bin and Geo swam off a little faster than usual.



Bolly the manta was spinning in front of a diver’s mask that had been lying on coral for a long time. She used it as a mirror. Although Bolly knew that without doubt, mantas were always adorable, it wasn’t difficult for her to regularly confirm that fact. Bolly spun around once again — oh, such beauty!

The manta had been living on the slopes of this beautiful reef for quite some time. The reef offered an amazing view of fan corals. Every morning Bolly, either alone or with her friends, took a long walk along the atoll. Once every three days she swam into the shallows where she was spotlessly cleaned by the cleaner-fish. The manta ate the delicious plankton that flourished on the reef in abundance. Apart from mantas, only rare whales and whale sharks ate that plankton and that's why Bolly had never had any problems with food.

Sometimes, out of boredom, she swam close to some of the divers or to the pier of the neighboring island passing under the light spilled by the lamps. People always shouted with joy when they saw Bolly and it made her feel very happy. Well, if they are so excited, I must look amazing she would think. The manta made another circle in front of the mask.

"You are the most graceful inhabitant of this reef after Geo and me," She heard Bin's cheerful voice behind her and turned around with a smile.

"Hi, guys" she jubilantly greeted her two old friends. "I have learned so many interesting things about modesty from my friends recently and I am going to share it all in meticulous detail with you now."

"Oh no, please, no, Bolly!" Geo wrinkled his nose. "Okay, we surrender, you win. First place goes to you. How about you tell us a new under-



water joke. Your girlfriends always seem to have plenty to share with you.”

“A joke?” Bolly folded up her wings and thought for a moment. “Okay! There was a sea bass. He was so mischievous that no one wanted to make friends with him.”

“Yeah, yeah we know that joke, Bolly, we know how it goes, — Bin interrupted her, “He makes friends with a fisherman by mistake and all that stuff...”

“No, no,” Bolly replied, “This is a different one. So, once he swam to a wise whale to get some advice and asked him how he could make some new friends. The whale thought for a long time and said: “Look, sea bass, if you start to greet everyone on the reef you will quickly find yourself many friends.” The sea bass was delighted and swam off only to return the next day all battered and bruised. “What happened?” asked the surprised whale, “Who did that and why?” “Many and for friendship,” the sea bass replied. “Today, a large school of yellow snapper was passing by me. Well, to make more friends I decided to say hello to all of them. However, when I said “Good morning, eighty-seventh snapper”, for some reason they attacked me”.

The laughter of the dolphins muffled Bolly’s last words.

The friends stayed with the manta for a while and chatted as they went for a walk with her around the atoll.

Karen



A few days later, Bin was again near the island where Karen lived. Today he was alone. He had swum there a little earlier and looked at the shore from a distance. The girl with beautiful eyes was sitting on sand and looking at the water thoughtfully. It was strange but it seemed that Bin knew her thoughts. Sometimes he liked to keep silent and look at the water too.

The dolphin waited for some time and when the feeding started, he swam up close to Karen.

“Charlie, Charlie, hello!” The girl was clearly happy to see him.

Bin greeted her warmly, looking attentively into her eyes.

Karen gave him the biggest piece of fish ever and said thoughtfully:

“Charlie, sometimes I think that you understand me better than any person on earth.”

This time the dolphin did not say anything and just nodded. He suddenly remembered that people

nodded too in the same way dolphins did when they agreed with something.

The girl was so surprised that she could not even throw him another piece of fish.

“Do you... Do you really understand me?” Karen asked him quietly and slowly, by syllables.

Bin nodded again.

“No way, Charlie!” the girl said with surprise.

The dolphin shook his head. He knew this negative gesture of humans too.

“What are you trying to say, Charlie?” the girl began speaking and suddenly realized, “Your name is not Charlie?”

Bin happily nodded.

“Wow!” the girl laughed. “I am talking to a dolphin and I understand him!”

Bin laughed happily too in his own language.

“All right, my dear!” Karen said again, “Anyway, I can’t guess your real name, so, can I call you Charlie as before?”

The dolphin nodded his head again.

“Great!” Karen smiled warmly, “Because I have gotten used to that name. I really like it.”

The girl lowered her voice, leaned close to the dolphin and said in confidence, “Charlie, once I even saw you in my dreams. It was a beautiful dream: we were swimming together somewhere.”

The girl rolled her eyes romantically but suddenly laughed with joy.

“However, this wonderful dream was ruined by my annoying alarm clock. I don’t suppose you know what that silly human thing is?”

Bin shook his head.

“It’s probably better you don’t know what it is,” the girl said emotionally and added, “but you see I always oversleep and miss breakfast without this thing.”

After that, Karen looked warmly into Bin’s eyes and stroked his head.

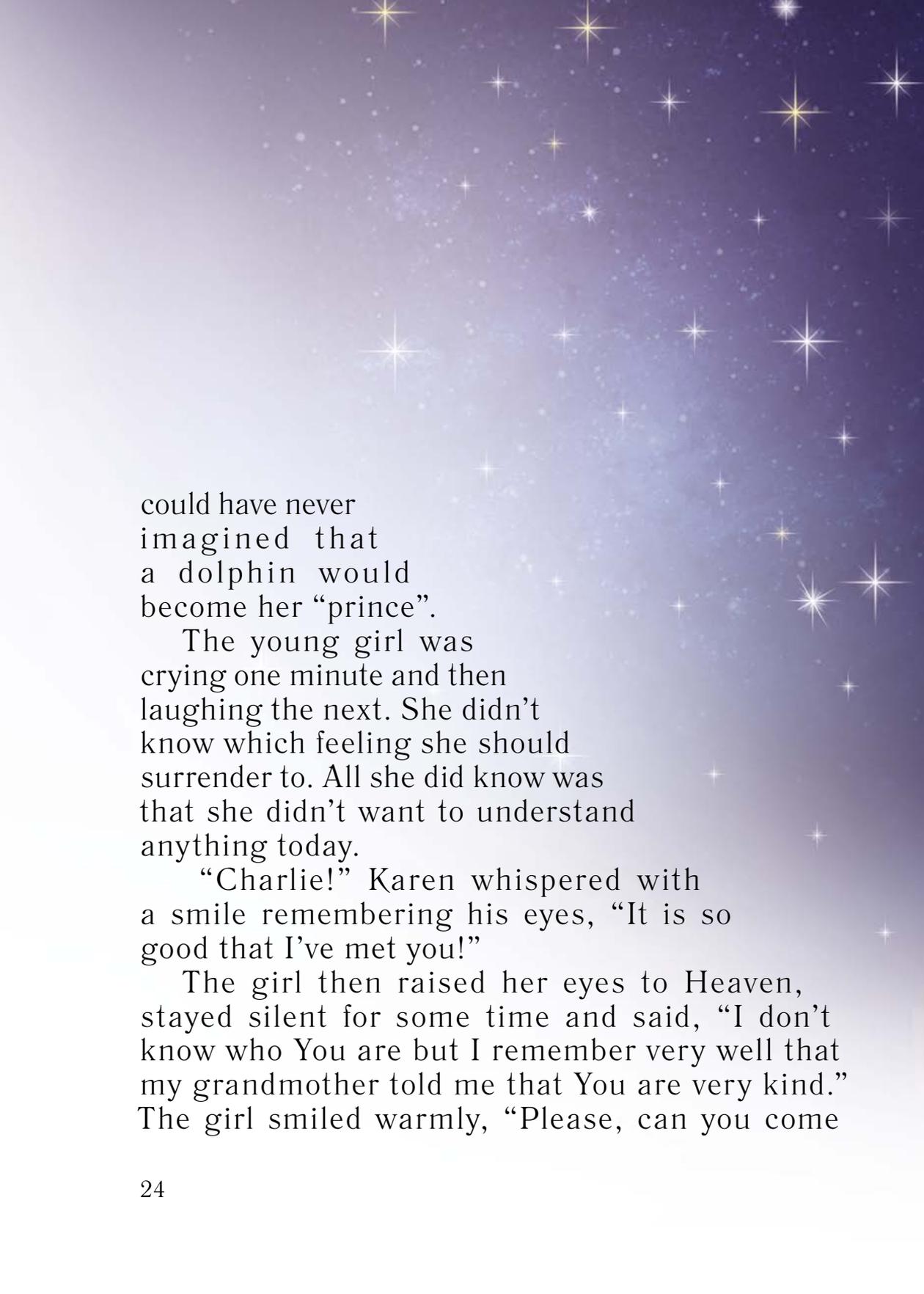
“Charlie, it is so good that I finally managed to talk to you! I have always wanted to do that very much.”

Bin did not answer. Why would he spoil such a beautiful moment? He basked in the warm feelings coming from the girl and let them envelop him.



That evening Karen was sitting on the porch of her small house looking at the stars. She felt something strange was happening inside her. It seemed that for the first time in her life she had met someone who was really close to her. So close that only her mother could be compared to him.

Karen had been dreaming about this feeling from her childhood and had read dozens of different beautiful fairy tales on the subject. However, she



could have never
imagined that
a dolphin would
become her “prince”.

The young girl was
crying one minute and then
laughing the next. She didn’t
know which feeling she should
surrender to. All she did know was
that she didn’t want to understand
anything today.

“Charlie!” Karen whispered with
a smile remembering his eyes, “It is so
good that I’ve met you!”

The girl then raised her eyes to Heaven,
stayed silent for some time and said, “I don’t
know who You are but I remember very well that
my grandmother told me that You are very kind.”
The girl smiled warmly, “Please, can you come



up with something? Please! I should be with him, You can see that!”

The girl thought for a second and added, “And thank You for everything!”

She then stood up and went to the door. “All in all, a dolphin is not so bad. It could be a rabbit or a cat, but Charlie is a nice, smooth and big dolphin!” Karen mulled over the thought, lay down on her side and soon fell asleep. She forgot to set her alarm clock again.



That evening Bin the dolphin swam deep into the sea. He had never done that before but once he had heard from his grandfather that Neptune lived there — deep, very deep in the sea. Now he was going to find him.

Bin swam around for a long time until he suddenly felt a warm glow around him. Something inside of the dolphin told him that he was in the right place. Bin froze and thought for a minute before he started to speak.

“Hello,” he began quietly, “Perhaps, I know You already. When I was a child, I appealed to You several times and You always helped me.”

Bin was silent for a moment.

“Thank You!” he continued after the pause, “Today I come to You with an unusual and

perhaps, daring request. You don't have to help me, but..."

Bin could not take his eyes off the now visible glow.

"...but if it is possible, I would like to spend some time with her." He smiled and quietly said, "Just a little time..."

The glow around him suddenly disappeared. Bin looked around, "Thank You once again and sorry if I asked for something that I shouldn't have. Goodbye!"

The dolphin then turned around and swam home. That night he had a strange dream. As if he was flying through some warm and soft light, which was not water. Then he heard some gentle and deep voice that woke him up.

"Two weeks!" the voice said.

Two weeks on land



hen Bin opened his eyes and stretched out as usual, he realized that he was not underwater but on sand. Bin was amazed and for some time he just lay on his back. Then he began to turn his head in different directions. On either side of him, he saw his own arms. The former dolphin tried to move them. It felt strange at first but persisting he slowly succeeded and soon he was able to move the fingers on his hands. Bin was delighted by his success and tried to sit up and then he even tried to stand.

It was amazing yet it happened naturally. As if his new body knew what to do even better than its owner. Bin only had to wish for something.

He stood up, wriggling a bit and looked down at himself. He wore the clothes that he had seen on humans before and shoes. Bin looked around. He knew this place very well. He was standing on the shore of the lagoon, which he and Geo often visited after having



dinner at the island. The lagoon was very close to the place where Karen lived.

Bin understood that he first needed to learn to walk. Of course, he saw how people did it, but it is one thing to see and another to do. However, his new body helped Bin once again. It seemed as if it guided and helped him.



Bin the human took his first step, then another and another. If only he could have seen himself, he would have seen a wide and quite silly smile on his face. Bin wanted to test out his new body, so he walked faster, and then began to run. Somehow it all worked.

Bin laughed joyfully as he ran to the water's edge and looked into the distance.

“Thank You, dear Neptune, for fulfilling my strange wish! Everything is even more unusual and interesting than I expected.” Bin smiled warmly. “Well, now I'm going to visit her. I won't waste any more time.”

Having said that, he waved his hand toward the sea as Karen did when saying goodbye to him and walked elatedly along the shore.



On this particular morning Karen overslept her breakfast. Some-times her annoying alarm clock was quite a useful thing. The girl rolled around in bed for a little while but a sunbeam broke through a gap in the blinds on the window, quietly convincing her to get up.

The girl stretched one more time and threw off the blanket. She put the kettle on, made her favorite drink, a big piece of sponge cake from the fridge and went to sit on the porch. She settled comfor-

tably on her favorite step, began drinking her tea while looking up at the clouds floating in the sky and the nearby seashore. She finished the first piece of sponge cake very quickly and went for a second.

After her breakfast, she put on her training shirt, shorts and sneakers and headed out for a jog. She always enjoyed running leisurely along the beach in the morning and breathing in the fresh sea air. Only the seagulls were not in favor of her morning jogs because they had to get out of her way. However, Karen had no doubt that a little bit of exercise was very useful for them too.

The girl closed the door to her room, slowly ran to the waterline and then jogged along the water's edge of the deserted beach. Five minutes later, she came across a lonely figure walking in her direction.

Karen regularly encountered people during her morning jogs. Usually they were tourists or one of the hotel staff. She was getting ready to say "Good morning" to the stranger when she saw the person stop and look at her very strangely.

Receiving attention from young men was not a novelty for pretty Karen but this man was acting a little strange and unusual.

"Maybe he knows me?" she thought and slowed her pace.

The young man had blonde hair and looked pleasant enough but now he was staring at Karen with a silly smile on his face.

“Have we ever met somewhere?” the girl asked him with surprise as she ran up to him.

She looked closely at him and she was almost sure that she had seen this kind and jolly look somewhere before.

“I think so!” the young man replied cheerfully and somewhat excitedly. “Do you have some fresh fish for me?”

Karen went weak at the knees as it dawned upon her that she had seen those eyes before.

“If you want to feed me today, it won’t be necessary to go into the water” said the smiling fellow, then added warmly, “I am so glad to see you again, Karen! I am Charlie. Actually, my real name is Bin. However, you can call me what you like.”



Geo had lost his friend Bin. Since early morning, he had been looking for him everywhere and asking everyone if they had seen him, but nobody had.

“That’s strange,” Geo thought, “Usually, Bin tells me about his plans. Where could he have gone without even mentioning it?”

Geo continued to search for him for some time and decided to swim to the island where Karen lived as Bin visited the island regularly.

It was already dark by the time the dolphin had swum there. From a distance, he saw Karen and



also a stranger walking next to her. Geo swam closer while keeping an eye out for his friend.

“Geo, my friend!” he heard someone’s voice. The dolphin froze in amazement.

“Who could know my real name here?” he thought in surprise.

“Geo, Geo, look at me!” he heard the voice again.

The dolphin stuck his head out of the water and looked with both eyes at the man who was calling to him.

“Come on, friend, don’t you see that I have legs now?” said the young man with familiar eyes as he came closer to the dolphin and touched him. “It is me, Bin!”

Geo was stunned and stared with wide eyes. Eventually, he was able to speak.

“You... you are trying to say that...” he began.

“Yup,” the man interrupted him with laughter. “So you can say hello to Medky, Ponty, Bolly and my parents. Tell them that I am having a vacation on land, for exactly two weeks.”

“Bin!” his friend had finally recognized him, “Buddy, how did you did that?”

“Geo, it worked,” his friend smiled warmly, “Neptune helped me with it. Now, please say hello to Karen because I am being embarrassed by your lack of manners.”

Geo looked at the girl who was standing next to Bin. She broke into laughter.

Geo said hello to her.

“Hello, Geo!” she finally said, “Now, I know what to call you. Would you like some fish?”

“Not likely!” Geo replied. His friend translated what he was saying for Karen. “I lost my appetite today. First, this morning because I lost my friend and now because of all that is happening. Amazing things are happening here!”

“That is true, my dear friend! Tell everyone not to worry and to swim to the neighboring lagoon in the evenings.” Bin winked at him just like a human. “I will tell you about everything that I have seen during the day.”

“Okay, Bin!” Geo began smiling too.

His shock was slowly wearing off. He even turned his head and looked at Karen.

“Maybe you could give me a few pieces?”

The girl smiled and gave him what he wanted.

“And what do you eat now?” Geo asked his friend.

“I don’t know yet.” Bin shrugged. “Karen promised to take me to some place where people eat. It’s called a restaurant. I’ll tell you all about it later.”

“All right, Bin.” Geo replied. “I will stop bothering you both. Two weeks will go by quickly”

The dolphin then thanked Karen for the fish, looked at his happy friend once more and swam home. What news he had to tell everyone!



It was pretty crowded in the restaurant that Karen decided to take him to. It was Friday and people came here to eat and relax after their workweek. Bin followed the girl and looked around. He tried to look and act like other people in order not to attract too much attention.

Their table was in a very cozy corner of the room near the window. Bin and Karen sat at the table smiling happily at each other. They had spent the whole day together immersed in interesting conversations. Bin told the girl incredible stories about the underwater world and Karen introduced him to human life on earth.

Bin now had some notion of a refrigerator, a lawn mower, a kettle, and a camera. Information about the last item revealed the secret of the flashes of light coming from people's hands.

Karen smiled as she looked at her unusual guest. He was so cheerful, sincere and open that she felt very comfortable with him. His stream of naïve questions amused her.

The waiter came over and placed a menu on the table. Bin looked at the girl questioningly.

“This book is called a menu, Bin.” Karen explained. “There you can find all the dishes that we can order.”

First, Bin opened the book upside down but when he saw Karen burst out laughing, he turned

it right side up. Fortunately, all the dishes had pictures. It was Bin's turn to smile. Besides, he was very hungry.

He quickly flipped the pictures and looked at the fish dishes. The former dolphin immediately chose his dinner. The dish on the picture looked just like one that his mother always cooked. Karen looked at his choice and nodded.

"Salmon in shrimp breading. Delicious!"

It didn't take long for the waiter to bring their order. Bin carefully watched how Karen took a knife and a fork in her hands.

"Why ever would you need that?" he asked her in a low voice.

"To make it easier to eat." the girl smiled back. "All humans eat like this."

First, Bin looked at his hands and then at the cutlery.

"Oh, really?" he said doubtfully. "I think that eating without them is easy too. Oh well..."

He shrugged and as he tried to master the two metal items the girl burst out laughing. After the main course, the waiter brought a dessert that Karen chose. Bin tasted a piece of it and his eyes closed with pleasure.

"What a wonderful taste!" he said, took a knife and cut off a half of his piece. "May I take it to Geo? He must try it."

"Of course!" Karen laughed. "If he likes it, I can bring such treats to the feeding sometimes."

When they finished dinner, the waiter brought them the bill and Bin saw that Karen put some papers in the check holder. He gave the girl a questioning look.

“This is money.” she explained with a smile. “First, people earn money and then they use it to pay for their food, accommodation, etc. Money can be either paper or metal — white and yellow.”

Karen showed him a few coins.

“Oh! I have seen that before.” Bin exclaimed. “There is a box full of them on the old ship where my friend Medky lives. However, they are mainly yellow. I can ask Geo and he will bring them to you.”

“Wow!” was all the girl could manage after a minute of silence. “That is actually treasure! You can buy a house or even this restaurant with only a few of those yellow coins.”

“Who would have thought?” Bin was surprised. “We don’t buy anything underwater. We already have everything we need. So, would you like me to bring them to you?”

The girl thought for a moment.

“Thank you, Bin! Maybe later.” she smiled. “If I really need them for something, I will tell you. Money is not the most important thing in life for me.”

They got up and walked outside under the starry sky.

“What is the most important thing for you, Karen?” Bin asked the girl after a little while.



“I don’t know.” She thought for a while. “Perhaps, freedom, happiness and love. I always want to be with my loved ones. I like to see the sea and many smiles around me.”

“Me too,” Bin was surprised and looked at Karen. “It is no wonder I swim to you every evening.”

The girl looked at him attentively but said nothing. They slowly came to the room where Karen lived.

“It is time to go to sleep.” she said. “I will make up a bed for you in the kitchen. It will be very cozy.”

Bin hesitated.

“Karen, maybe next time?”

He looked towards the beach.

“Today, I would like go for a swim with Geo, tell him all the news and try to sleep in the sea as usual. Besides,” Bin looked into the girl’s eyes, “two weeks will go by very fast. After that, we will be apart again. I think we should not become too attached to each other.”

Karen lowered her eyes.

“If only our life was controlled by our wishes, my dear Bin. However, there is one small part inside of us called a heart, and it lives by a different set of rules.”

Karen stood up on her tiptoes and kissed Bin’s cheek.

“Go to Geo. Have a good swim and come back tomorrow morning.” She stepped back and waved her hand. “I will be waiting for you.”

Tails and legs



ot only Geo but also Medky, Ponty, Bolly, and Bin's parents were waiting for him in the lagoon. The news that the dolphin brought had caused a stir underwater. Everyone wanted to see Bin in human form and make sure that he was okay.

When Bin undressed on the beach and walked into the water, it caused quite a stir.

"My dear child, is it really you?" he first heard his mother's tender voice.

"It is me, mother, me!" Bin smiled at her and turned to his father. "Hi, dad! How do you like my new body?"

"Hey, son! This is so exciting! To spend two whole weeks among humans – that's something I've never heard of before. You can give us all the details later." replied his father as he slapped Bin with his fin just below his back in a sign of greeting. "I don't even know now how to greet you anymore..."

"That's Okay." Bin smiled and turned to his friends. "Hello my friends! Why are you still awake?"

“We can’t sleep!” Bolly grumbled, “Geo told us that now you are now definitely more beautiful than me!”

Everyone burst out laughing.

“And considering the number of limbs you have, it’s me you resemble most.” Ponty the octopus looked at Bin under the water.

“Oh, Ponty.” Medky the turtle joined in the conversation. “We love you and others not by the number of limbs they have but for their intelligence and humor.”

“Well, my friend,” Geo spoke to Bin. “Tell us about the interesting things you’ve seen today in the human’s world.”

“Oh, I have seen so many interesting things that I can’t even remember everything.” Bin scratched his head with his fist. “Well, first of all, they all watch some black box that shows different pictures, people, nature, news. This thing is called a TV set. Karen said that people always know what is happening everywhere in the world.”

His underwater friends exchanged looks.

“Hmm...” mused Bin’s father. “To be honest, it’s enough for me to know the news from our reef. Why would I be interested in what is happening in the entire ocean? I don’t even think about it!”

“Of course, sometimes I twist my globe,” Medky agreed, “but only when I want to dream a little. Anyway, ignorance is bliss.”

“What else do they have?” Bolly asked her friend.

“They also smoke.” Bin said and seeing the uncomprehending eyes of his friends he tried to explain. “Well, they light the fire at the end of some white stick and inhale the smoke.”

“Why do people need this?”

“Just the opposite! There is a warning written on the pack of these sticks: “Smoking kills” Karen has told me.”

“Wow!”

After a moment of silence, Ponty began speaking and put forward a theory.

“Perhaps, people smoke when their time has come... Well, so that end comes faster.”

“Very likely.” Bin agreed. “I’ll ask Karen about it tomorrow.”

“My grandfather told me,” Bin’s father took up the conversation, “that sometimes whales beach themselves. Maybe it is something like that?”

“Could be. It is really unusual.” Medky agreed. “What else do they have?”

“They also have many tasty things.” Bin smiled and shared with everyone a piece of cake that he was now holding in his hand.

However, only the dolphins and the turtle liked the taste.

“Write down the recipe for me, son.” the mother instructed her son.

“They also have money.” Bin continued. “Paper and metal disks. Medky, do you remember that box with yellow disks in your room? That is money.

People exchange it for different food, clothes and so on.”

“That is rather peculiar too.” Bin’s father said. “So, a plain small disk equals a big delicious fish for them?”

“Sometimes even a lot more!” Bin laughed. “Karen told me that I could exchange some of those yellow disks for an entire school of fish.”

“Wow!” Ponty was surprised. “Where is the logic in that?”

“Who knows, but logic must be here.” Bin responded. “People are actually quite clever and quick-witted and Karen seems very smart too.”

“Do you like her, son?” his mother asked.

Bin smiled.

“If you were to introduce me to such a dolphinet, ma, I wouldn’t hesitate! She is a sweetheart.”

“I’m happy for you,” his father said, “even though the situation is very complicated, your feelings are pure. I even envy you a little bit, my son.”

Bin’s mother gently slapped his father for his comment.

“All right, friends,” Bin said finally and thoughtfully, “that is all very well but I need to sleep. Karen offered me a bed but I decided not to impose on her. I can’t sleep in the sea anymore because I will drown. What should I do?”

“Look,” Bolly offered with a smile, “I’ll lie on the sea surface and you can lie on top of me. You won’t drown and you will be able to get some sleep.”



Bolly then threw Bin a cheeky look and continued.

“When you wake up, you must spend twenty minutes telling me about your love for each other” the Manta rolled her eyes, “How I love these sentimental stories!”



The next morning Bin walked towards Karen’s room with a plastic bag full of fresh oysters, which Ponty had picked for him from the bottom of the sea. Yesterday the girl had mentioned that she loved them.

Karen saw him from afar and ran towards him. Bin looked warmly at the girl’s face. Her open and joyful smile was in complete harmony with this fresh and sunny morning.

“Hi!” They greeted each other almost in unison and laughed.

Bin gave her the transparent bag with oysters and she clapped her hands in delight.

“Thank you! Looks like I am going to have a fancy breakfast today.” she said delightedly and asked, “Did you sleep well last night? Did you sleep in the water or on the beach?”

“Oh! I had the most unusual sleep of my life.” Bin laughed. “I slept on Bolly’s luxurious back. The sea swell kept swaying me back and forth.

To thank her for the “bed” she had provided me with, I had to spend the whole morning telling her about your eyes and how everything started between us. She can’t get enough of such romantic stories.”

Karen looked teasingly at Bin, “I would also like to hear those stories.”

“Oh, no,” Bin was confused, “I made up so many things that I don’t even know anymore what is true and what is fantasy.”

“As always,” the girl sighed playfully before breaking into laughter.

Then in a more serious tone she asked Bin

“What are we going to do for the next two weeks? I have taken the time off work and I am ready to show you everything you are interested in.”

“Thank you very much” Bin smiled gratefully. “But I don’t know what is interesting for me yet. Is it ok if I leave it up to you?”

“Of course, but first promise me one thing.” Karen looked seriously at the young man.

“It depends on what you are asking.” Bin replied just as seriously.

“For example, if you ask me not to become a dolphin in two weeks, I might not be able to grant that wish.”

“Not that,” the girl was a little embarrassed, “I’m only asking that you sleep in the house at night. I think that sleeping in the water is not as com-

fortable for you as it used to be. But you certainly must see your friends in the lagoon every day and,” Karen smiled and continued, “if you don’t mind, take me with you one day. I really want to meet your parents and friends.”

“Of course, I will,” Bin said happily and added after a moment, “and I promise to spend the nights in your house if you want me to.”

The girl held Bin’s hands and gave him a longing look.

“You know Bin, perhaps I am the only girl in the world who liked a dolphin that much, that ...” she went silent for a minute, “I asked Somebody to help us be together. He knows better what we can and can’t do. Since He has brought you to me that means that He wants us to be together.”

Bin looked down deep in thought. After some time, he looked at Karen and smiled.

“You are so cute. Let it be so.”

They both laughed happily and started walking along the beach just near the water holding hands.

“So,” Karen said in a businesslike manner, “I think, during our time together you must see...”

Bin was smiling as he listened to the girl’s flowing voice, hearing words he did not understand to the background of the gentle murmur of breaking waves and squawks of seagulls in the sky. At that moment he felt with every part of his being just how happy he was!

* * *

The God Neptune was looking at the most unusual couple in the world with a smile. They were so full of sincerity and hope that He could not say no to their request. Actually, He could never say no to true love...

A trip to the city



he next day, Karen decided to show Bin the city. Early in the morning the young couple boarded a passenger catamaran that connected the island with the mainland. After a relaxing cruise of about forty minutes, they safely approached the main city pier.

During the trip, Bin mastered the operation of a vending machine which dispensed fish sandwiches and also learned how to order a latte coffee that he had really grown to like. He intently watched the demonstration on how to use a life jacket in the event of an emergency. Karen was watching him and literally choking with laughter.

The whole trip they reveled in each other's company — they were smiling, playing and through their eyes saw everything cheerfully and optimistically.

Their catamaran landed at the pier on the bank of a river, not far from the city center. Bin disembarked from the ship and looked around in astonishment. He was surrounded by unfamil-

iar high-rise buildings that were everywhere he looked.

“What is that, Karen?” He asked in surprise, pointing.

“That’s the city, Bin. A city is where people usually live.” the girl explained with a smile. “Their apartments are in some of those buildings and people live there with their families. Their offices are located in other buildings where they work and where they earn money.”

“Really? Do they feel comfortable there?” the young man asked a little timidly.

“Some people do; others prefer to live in houses on the outskirts.” Karen looked at Bin. “I was born in the suburbs, an hour’s drive from a small town. That is why I prefer living in calm and quiet places close to nature.”

“Wow, that is so unusual!” Bin said. “I have always thought that people only live by the sea-side or on ships. Where are we going now?”

“To the city center.” Karen replied. “It is considered to be the most beautiful place here. There you can find a nice green boulevard with lots of various cafés and shops. Sometimes I like to walk there and buy some trifles.”

While chatting the young couple left the pier, walked into the first main street and merged with the flow of pedestrians. Bin twisted his head around in amazement at the stream of people.

“Wow!” he said to the girl excitedly, “It’s just like my underwater world where fish swim in large schools. It seems very similar.”

Suddenly, the young man noticed that flowing beside them was a large school of multicolored metal boxes with windows.

“What are those?” he asked in surprise.

“Those are cars Bin.” the girl explained. “People use them to go to work or if they have to travel far. I also have a car on the island and I will definitely take you for a ride somewhere.”

She looked at him mischievously.

“If you want, I can teach you to drive on a deserted beach.” Karen rolled her eyes in anticipation. “I am sure that you will become the only dolphin in the world who can drive a car!”

“Actually, it is enough for me to be the happiest dolphin in the world,” Bin said with a smile and gently kissed the girl.

They joined hands and walked down the street. When they arrived at one of the crossroads, the girl pulled him from the stream into a quiet side alley. They walked for a while and she showed Bin a big, beautiful building.

“This is a theater, Bin!” she said, looking into the uncomprehending eyes of the young man and continued, “Well, sometimes people invent beautiful stories and then try to show them live to other people. They call it “a performance” and sometimes I like to watch them.”



Bin thought for a moment and suddenly laughed. “You and I have something similar to a performance as well. We made up a beautiful story and are now living it. However, the only spectators are my underwater friends.”

At this point, Bin became thoughtful and asked Karen.

“What happens when a performance ends?”

The girl shrugged.

“People go home and then think up a new story.”

Karen pulled Bin by the hand towards a door.

“Come on, here is my favorite café. After many performances I would sit here dreaming about my prince!”

“What is a prince?” Bin asked her with interest.

“Well, he is an odd well-mannered fellow.” she laughed happily and kissed Bin’s cheek. “Don’t ask me who here is like that...”



Bin and Karen came home that evening and had a rest after their trip into the city. They then went to the distant lagoon to meet Bin’s dolphin friends.

The sun has already touched the horizon when the young couple descended hand in hand into

the water. Suddenly, the water around them came to life and the curious eyes of Bin's parents and friends began to appear one by one.

"Hi, Bin!" Bolly the manta said first and looked at Karen. Of course, the dolphin translated all her words for Karen.

"Well, what can I tell you, my friend! You didn't lie about her beautiful eyes. Hello, Karen! I am Bolly. Perhaps, this lazy romantic has told you something about me."

The girl was then introduced to Bin's parents, a turtle and an octopus. Karen looked at them with admiration, greeted them and answered all their questions with Bin's help.

"What have you been doing on land today?" Bin's father asked him.

"We have been to the city, dad." Bin answered and explained, "It is sort of like a collection of large square corals on earth and many people live inside of them. There were so many of them — as far as my eyes could see."

"Wow!" Medky was surprised. "Do people feel comfortable inside them?"

"Many people do, but not everyone. For example, Karen prefers living in a small lodge by the ocean."

"Such good taste!" Bin's mother nodded and addressed the girl, "What is that fluffy thing on the top of your head? What do you need that for?"

The girl listened to the translation and smiled.

“This is called “hair” but I am not sure, dear Cony, why we need it.” she smiled as she addressed Bin’s mother by her name, “I strongly suspect that its purpose is to make us prettier. I don’t recall ever getting any practical help from my hair. It only brings more troubles into my life.”

“In my opinion, it is really beautiful! However, we, dolphins, do our face in a different way. It all starts with...” Bin’s mother continued a lively conversation and seemed oblivious that her interpreter-son, did not, to put it mildly, find this topic interesting at all.

After the girl talk, the young people spent almost an hour in water talking to Bin’s friends. During that time, Karen rode the turtle, the dolphin and the manta. Bolly made sure to swim near the water’s surface to make it easier for the girl to breathe.

At that time, Bin was telling Medky that the long round tube from the ship is called a cannon. Karen and he saw the same cannon on the street near some museum. However, he could not explain to his friends why people shot out of it.

That night, there was a full moon in the sky and it was basking everything in a golden glow just like in a fairy tale. It was late in the evening when the young people said their goodbyes to Bin’s parents and their friends. Each of them waved goodbye to Karen — they waved their fins, tentacles, flippers or wings.

“They are all so nice.” Karen said with a thoughtful smile on the way home, “Just like children.”

Bin looked at her in confusion.

“Well, you see, on earth only children are completely happy and carefree and find pleasure in everything.” the girl explained. “With age, people accumulate many problems and worries and their carefree and easy going nature quickly fades away.”

Karen suddenly stopped, took Bin’s hands and looked in his eyes.

“Thank you! I had never thought that one day I would see such things,” snuggling into him she continued, “and that I would be so happy!”

Around the island



he next morning, Bin and Karen jumped in the girl's car for a trip around the island. First, they needed to drive across the island through the forest to get to the opposite shore where there was a wide deserted beach and there they would be able to drive fast along the very edge of the ocean.

During the first twenty minutes, the girl's small red jeep was dodging in and out between tall majestic trees. They opened all the car windows and enjoyed the sounds and smells of the forest.

"So beautiful!" Bin said excitedly. "We also have coral gardens and large fan corals under the water."

"Yes," the girl answered with a smile, "Nature is beautiful everywhere and it is beautiful everywhere in its own way."

It was not long before they drove out of the forest and down to a sandy ocean beach. Karen stopped the car and looked questioningly at the young man.

"Do you want to drive along the beach?"

“Yes, I think so!” Bin smiled broadly, “I need to have something new to tell my friends this evening.”

They both laughed happily.

“Your family and friends are so sweet.” Karen said warmly, “Can I visit them with you?”

“You don’t need to ask. I am always very glad when my close friends get along well with each other.”

The boy and girl changed places in the car and Karen began explaining to Bin what he needed to do. He turned out to be a very capable student. Although he did stall the jeep a couple of times, he quickly got the hang of it and drove it merrily along the beach.

Karen put her favorite song on the player and turned up the volume. The pleasant noise of the sea outside the window didn’t spoil the beautiful melody.

“Cool! We also like to sing, however, our sounds are different.” Bin smiled. “Does everyone on earth sing?”

“Not everyone, but many of us.” the girl replied. “I also try sometimes. I even have a guitar under my bed.”

The girl noticed Bin’s blank look and explained.

“Well, it is a thing on which we make sounds, to accompany human singing.” Karen laughed loudly. “Okay, I’d better show it to you this evening. Promise not to laugh!”

Bin nodded earnestly.

Meanwhile, the beach was starting to run out and the road began to go up a hill to where a lighthouse stood. Karen got behind the wheel again because the way had become much more difficult. A few minutes later they drove up to the top of a beautiful cliff.

The young couple got out of the car and sat near the edge with a thermos of hot coffee. The ocean view was just incredible. Karen placed her head on Bin's shoulder and they sat in silence for a long time.

"It is so beautiful that I don't even want to talk!" Bin broke the silence first.

"Well, how can I help you keep silent?" the girl smiled secretively and kissed him gently.



Since their first meeting Karen had been visiting Bin's friends in the lagoon every evening. The girl had made friends with everyone very quickly. She always brought cakes for the dolphins and they happily gave her rides on the waves. She delightedly exchanged female beauty secrets with Bin's mother. (For some reason, Bin as the interpreter always tried to shorten such conversations). She also presented a beautiful mirror to Bolly the manta, who was so appreciative she acknowledged the girl as the most beautiful creature on earth. Sometimes Karen and the turtle built sand sculptures of animals on the beach.



At first, Ponty the octopus was more concerned than anyone else. He could not give the girl a ride and thought that he couldn't do anything which would be interesting for her. However, charming Karen taught him how to do a massage. To do this, she told Bin to lie down in shallow water, put the octopus on top of him and she showed the octopus what to do. Very soon, the talented Ponty had outshone his teacher. After all, he had eight strong tentacles and even suckers. Thereafter, a relaxing massage became a mandatory procedure for Karen and Bin.

Even the marine dwellers tried out Ponty's new talents. The turtle said that she did not feel anything but dolphins and mantas found the process very interesting. However, the octopus had to modify his technique according to the different shapes of their bodies.

All in all, everyone had fun and nobody got bored of these meetings. As for the boy and girl, they came home happy and joyous every time.



One day, Karen and Bin went for a walk along the beach in front of the tourist accommodation. As they walked some tourists came out from the hotel precinct and made their way on to the deserted shore.

“Hey, Karen,” Bin said to the girl, “I have noticed that many people have some sort of monitors in their hands which they look at. What are they?”

“They are small computers and phones.” the girl explained with a smile. “They were invented not that long ago; maybe just a decade or so ago. Everyone uses them to watch weather forecasts, news, different movies, to have conversations with each other, etc.”

“Do you have one too?”

“No, I don’t really like to know absolutely everything that is going on everywhere.” the girl answered with a smile. “I like any weather and the news I like is when I read at the sea, and look at the stars, and...” the girl’s voice trailed off as she took Bin’s hands, “and look into your eyes. What I like even more, is that the news there is always good news.”

Bin smiled.

“And what about other people? Don’t they like that too?” he asked.

“Some people do and that’s why they come here on vacation. Sometimes they even buy houses here. However, most people prefer living in cities.”

“That’s strange. Nature is so beautiful here!”

“Not everyone can live in peace and quiet.” Karen said thoughtfully. “A person needs to have peace and comfort inside their soul to live happily here.”

Bin looked at Karen with a smile. Her eyes were glowing with a soft light.

“Well, I have made no mistake about your eyes.” He said warmly. “You are wonderful!”

After that, Bin took the girl’s hand and pulled her towards the sea.

“Let’s go for a short swim.” he said. “I will tell you something new about my world.”

“Of course!” the girl agreed and ran happily with him into the water.



One evening, Karen and Bin were cuddling on the steps of her porch. The stars burned brightly in the sky and they were surrounded by silence broken only occasionally by the sound of the sea.

“You know, Binny,” sometimes the girl called him by this gentle pet name, “Just ten days ago I was sitting on the same steps and asked Him, Who lives in the sky, to bring you and me together.”

Bin looked at the girl with interest.

“Hmm,” he said thoughtfully, “Ten days ago, I also asked Neptune to bring us together. Neptune is our almighty underwater friend. And Who lives in the sky?”

“People call him God.” Karen smiled. “My grandmother told me that He is very kind. As you can see, we are together now.”

The girl snuggled against the boy even harder.

“God! That is interesting.” Bin said seriously. “Has anyone seen Him? Nobody has seen our Neptune yet. All that we can see is a slight glow in the water.”

“Yes, some humans saw him but long ago.” Karen replied. “Two thousand years ago, He came to people as a common person to teach them everything. My grandmother often told me these stories when I was a child.”

“Unbelievable!” Bin even stood up. “God came to people? That is so interesting! Please, tell me some more about it.”

The girl was trying to remember the story.

“Well, He was born and raised on earth. He taught and healed many people and he was very kind. He explained that after their human life people could come to Him and live with Him forever.”

“Wow! Forever?” Bin’s eyes were burning in astonishment. “Did God Himself say that? What happened next?”

Karen sighed and looked down.

“You know Binny, you will probably not understand the end of the story,” Karen continued, “people killed Him.”

Bin slowly sat down back on the steps. After a while, he asked the girl.

“Why did they do that?”

“Well, people at that time were cruel. They did not like His teachings about love and kindness.” Bin

kept silent for a long time. Karen saw tears in his eyes for the first time. Finally, he began to speak again.

“I won’t tell my friends about that — is that all right Karen?” he asked slowly.

“Of course.” the girl replied.

“Does that mean that one can kill God?” Bin asked the girl after a minute or so.

“No, he rose from the dead after three days. However, that did not change anything for people.”

After a while, Bin asked another question.

“Are people kind on earth nowadays? Well, I mean, if He came there today, would people be glad?”

Karen thought for a while.

“I don’t know. Although He did promise to come back.” She answered after some time. “I would like to believe that people are kind, but...”

The girl sighed sadly.

“For some reason, I think that many people today are not waiting for Him anymore.”

Back to the sea



It was their last evening on land together. Bin was holding the girl's hands and looking into her pure eyes as if he wanted to stay inside them forever.

"Thank you for everything!" he whispered. "These have been the most beautiful days of my life!"

"Thank you too, my wonderful Binny!" her eyes momentarily filled with tears but she managed not to cry and smiled. "I finally found my true prince!"

During their days together, they had never once discussed what would happen next. There was no need to spoil their holiday. Besides, it didn't depend on them. Love always finds its way — of that they had no doubt. Of course, only if love is true and very pure.

"Can I sleep on the beach tonight?" The young man asked her and looked down. "I want to say goodbye and leave instead of disappearing from your house."

Karen swallowed the lump in her throat.

“Of course, Binny.” she said and asked him, “Will you still visit me?”

Bin looked into her eyes.

“No, Karen, I can’t. I want to stay in your memory as a young man embracing you, but not as...” the young man smiled sadly, “as a dolphin eating fish from your hand.”

The girl nodded.

“Perhaps, you are right. I have thought about it too.”

She hugged him and kissed him gently. After some time, she looked into his eyes with hope.

“Maybe we can ask to be together one more time? Perhaps, you can stay on earth forever?”

Bin shook his head.

“I have thought about it a lot Karen. People have many good things but at the same time, there are lots of things that I don’t understand. This is not my world, I know that for sure. Only your heart is mine here. It is only because of it that I became a human. It will always be with me — and it does not matter if we are together or not.”

“You are right, Binny! It is only yours,” she replied and added, “and I can see that this world is not for you.”

Karen smiled sadly and looked down.

“Sometimes I think that it is not for me either.”

Bin put his arms around her shoulders and held her tightly.



It was late at night when the young man came out on to the sand on the lagoon. He did not want to sleep but sat by the sea and began looking at the water and the stars. He did not want to think or do anything. Emptiness was echoing inside him.

“My Neptune!” he said after some time looking into the water. “You have already done so many things for me. Thank you! Perhaps, I do not have a right to wish more. But...”

Tears filled the young man’s eyes.

“but I so much want this beautiful fairy tale to never end. Please, come up with some way to make it come true, can you?”

Having said that Bin lay down on sand and closed his eyes. In a minute, he was fast asleep.

Karen fell asleep at that same moment too.

Before that she had spent a long time sitting on her porch...

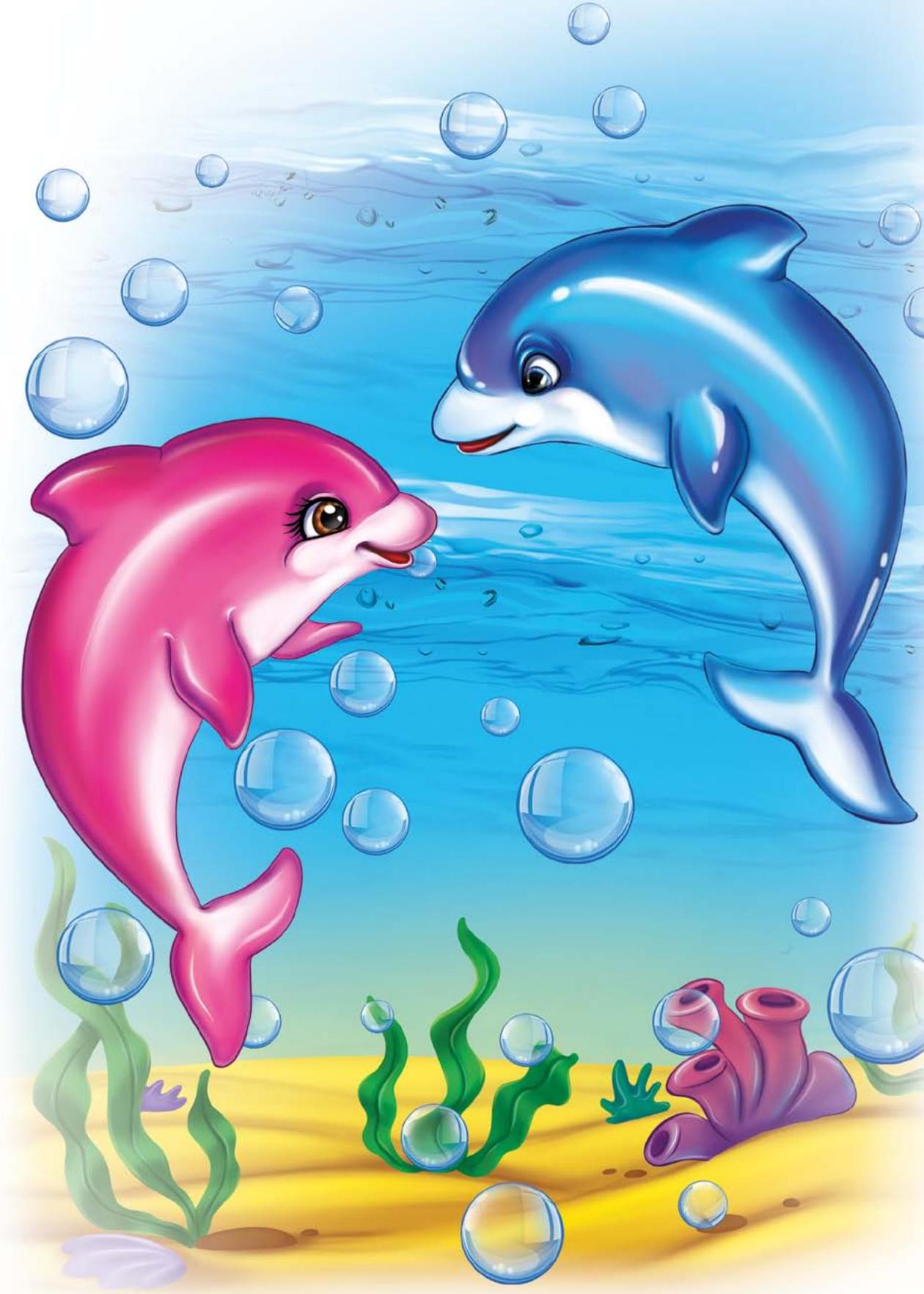
Epilogue

Bin opened his eyes. Some small fish were swimming near his mouth without any thought that something bad could happen.

“I am home!” the dolphin smiled. However, at the same time he remembered Karen and the smile vanished from his face. Bin turned around slowly and started to swim home. It wasn’t very long before he encountered another dolphin. Bin was about to say a passing hello and swim on but something made him stop. He raised his head and carefully looked into the eyes of this dolphin. He had never seen such eyes underwater. However, there was one girl on land whose eyes looked exactly the same.

“Hello, Binny!” he heard the gentle and unmistakable voice of the dolphin.

“I didn’t take too long to think did I, huh?”



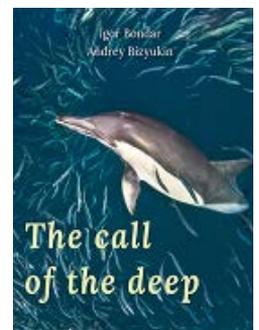
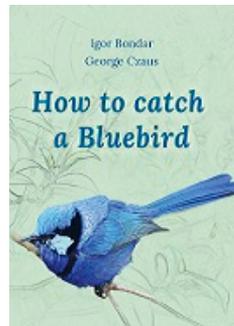
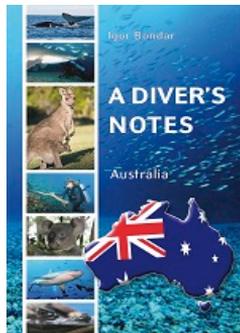
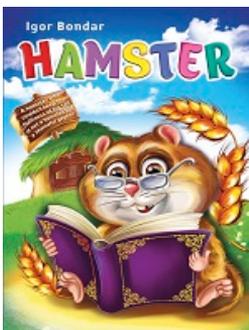
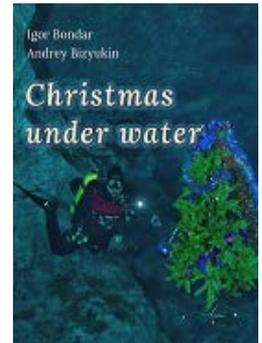
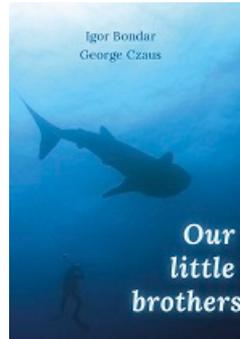
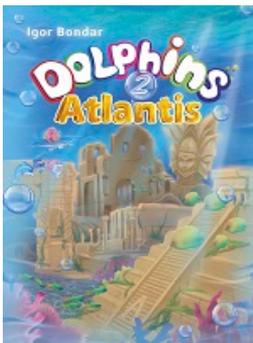
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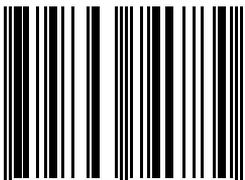
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