

Igor Bondar

*Once upon a time  
in Heaven  
Nowadays*



***Fictional story***

In this book, four friends search for sunken shipwrecks in the unexplored areas of the Great Barrier Reef known as Swain Reefs.

*The history of Eternity never ends.*

*It has always been and will always be. So, of course, it exists today.*

*Everyone can touch it in their life if they rise above all the fuss that surrounds us, if they can believe in a fairytale.*

*Then suddenly you may find out that the true reality is more, much more than we see. Moreover, it is much more interesting and kinder.*

*Everyone can open their eyes in this life. Everyone who really wants it...*

*No one can tell us exactly*

*what is fact or fiction here.*

*Only our heart can tell...*

## *Chapter 1*

# **Swain reefs**

The anchor chain of a ship was moving down into the blue water to the sandy bottom with a pleasant noise. Forty-two feet sailing catamaran «Dolce Dive» made its first stop at the western end of the Twin atoll, which was located in the most remote place from the coast of the Great Barrier Reef, called Swain reefs. The weather forecast for the next week was just brilliant and all the passengers excitedly anticipated the upcoming dives on these Australian reefs that were almost unexplored by other divers. There were four friends on the ship – the Australian Josh and his young nephew Bob, the American Mike and the Russian diver Yegor. Different circumstances and ways brought them together to this distant place but more on that later. Among other things, the ship's crew had one dearest wish – to find an ancient shipwreck on these reefs.

The fact is that during the exploration of Australia, more than a thousand of various ships sank in the Great Barrier Reef area. So far, only a few dozen of them have been found.

Several years ago, Josh and Yegor became very interested in this fact and immediately started to explore maps of this part of the Great Barrier Reef. They studied currents of this area, winds and always tried to put themselves in the place of the captains who sailed long time ago in these waters without accurate maps and navigation instruments. They came to an interesting conclusion – the ships that sailed in bad weather in some areas of the Swain reefs had a little chance of surviving using only sails. In some places, the reefs were located almost in a chequer-wise pattern.

Sometimes they even created a sort of traps for big sailing ships in bad weather with poor visibility.

For better reliability, the friends made a small model of this area where one could clearly see the possible locations for shipwrecks. The only thing left was to put this theory into practice.

As it turned out later, almost no one dived earlier in these places before. Friends found only one description of an Australian diver – Tom Byron who made a dozen dives there more than twenty years ago. No more information about the underwater world of the Swain reefs was found.

As a result, the part of the Great Barrier Reef several thousand square kilometers, was in fact a white spot on the Australian diving map.

Of course, for many dozens and even hundreds of years the ships on the bottom became overgrown with corals. It will not be easy to recognize them among the living reefs - everything becomes overgrown with living creatures very fast in these warm waters. Therefore, it was necessary to be very attentive to the reefs of unusual form, especially to crosses. Such cross-shaped reefs can actually be an intersection of masts or any other structure of these ships. Nature does not create crosses of a regular shape - any cross is the work of human hands.

\* \* \*

The Father watched his Land with a sad smile. How much had changed there over the last two thousand years! People were now flying in comfortable planes, living in beautiful apartments with all the modern conveniences, driving cars, frequently going on vacation in different parts of the world and always keeping in touch with each other, and monitoring all the news in the world. Of course, the Father did everything for the joy of his children on this Earth.

However, the development of human souls fell behind this external well-being. True love grew in them very slowly. Everyone talked about love

on Earth. However, mostly it was just empty talk. Love itself and the concept of it were heavily distorted. There was very, very little true love on Earth.

The Father looked up from Earth and looked around with warmth. So many nice and sincere children came here, to Heaven, over the last two thousand years! The coming of Jesus to Earth left a deep imprint there and helped many people to find the right way in life. However, today everything looked different, everything had changed.

The last one or two hundred years in the history of Earth have brought more changes into the external life of people than the previous seven thousand. The bad thing about it was that people began to serve their new way of living and often forgot about their souls.

The followers of His Son could not maintain unity in their ranks on Earth. Christianity itself had today many different branches which in some ways contradicted each other and sometimes even rejected each other. The passion of spiritual leaders of different years and eras did its job – Christianity was divided. Almost no one today remembered the former unity of Christians. Important words of His Son and teachings of His first followers were forgotten.

They quarreled over insignificant things and could not unify around the main thing that Jesus brought on Earth. It was ordinary people who suffered most from this. Today they often fail to figure out what is in fact true and where the true God is.

The Father sighed. Today His angelic world, little by little, in different ways, brought to people the truth that was once had already given to people by Him. Angels led their pupils on Earth since their childhood, through kind cartoons and good films, through useful books and kind people. Sometimes good and kind priests helped them. They still remained in different parts of the world and carried a spark of God's light and love in their hearts.

These were challenging times. Humanity fell into disbelief and atheism, meanwhile money and other Earthly goods were often becoming a new “god” for people.

Nevertheless, nobody gave up in Heaven. Love had to go through many trials on Earth over two thousand years. But it survived and was still cherished in many bright and kind hearts. The struggle for each light soul continued today.

\* \* \*

It was Mike’s birthday and he was lying on a surfboard far away from the shore, thinking. Waves were really worse than ever but he was not upset. The morning sun sparkled happily on the water surface and that was quite enough for him. To be honest, Mike wanted to spend this morning far away from everyone and everything, alone with the sea and his thoughts. In fact, he had something to think about.

The past forty-five years changed a lot in Mike’s life - a lot, but not everything. Years did not touch his soul. He was still a hopeless romantic like many years ago. Mike tried to believe in a fairytale but, frankly speaking, all of his “fairytales” had either a banal or a sad ending. In addition, some of them, and this was the most unpleasant thing, for some reason did not want to end at all.

Mike ducked under a small wave crest and shook his head. Birthday...He knew in advance everything to the last detail about this day. He knew who would come today and he knew what everyone would say, and even knew what they would eat. He knew as well that many of these wishes would be said of habit. Ever since childhood, Mike’s soul had been very sensitive to every insincerity and he could not do anything about it.

Once, a jolly fellow said to him over beer in a bar: “Mike, try not to congratulate anyone for the whole year. The one who will come to your birthday after this is your true friend.”

Mike incredibly wished to try out this advice, but it was unacceptable here. This is unacceptable, that is unacceptable, this will not be understood, that is forbidden... Oh God, Mike was sick of all these formalities he had to follow in this life. No storm could make him that sick.

Many friends and acquaintances often envied him. He had all the things most of them were striving for: a nice house on the water, a beautiful wife, polite children, good business and even a large white yacht - the envy of all male neighbors. However, Mike was lying on his board and envied the merry twenty-year old guy who was swimming nearby. Some time ago, he also had such bright and happy face. He used to be that free and light-hearted.

If Mike really wanted a gift today, it would have to be a gift for his soul. Mike looked at the sky and sighed. He did not really believe so much in the God everyone around him was talking about. However, at the same time, Mike has never doubted that the Creator is actually real. Moreover, sometimes he addressed to Him.

And now, he looked at the sky and thought: “It would be nice if something suddenly changed in my boring life today. Hey, are You there? Hear me...’

Mike thought that and began to turn his board towards the shore – it seems that today he will have to swim again to come back. Suddenly, he saw a big wave and he rode it in style right to the shore. Mike smiled at heart to his first success of this morning and headed to his car. Then he took a shower and decided to check his smartphone - another gift that someone gave him for his last birthday.

There was only one message from his old friend from Australia – Josh. Mike liked scuba diving with him on some distant reefs from time to time. Josh was a very merry and light-hearted guy who sometimes liked to hide underwater from all these never-ending problems.

“Dear Mike! – The letter began. – One day we discussed a good idea of diving in some little-known places. My Russian friend Yegor and I are planning an interesting expedition to these reefs with a real chance to find a shipwreck there. If you are interested, please let me know. Sincerely, your friend Josh”.

When Mike finished reading this short message, his hands had already begun to shake with anticipation. Without a second of hesitation, he started typing a reply but soon he gave up on this artificial form of communication and pulled out a good old notebook from his bag where he found Josh’s phone number.

In half an hour, he was sitting on a sandy beach, smiling and looking at the sky. “I don’t know who You are, but I thank You for such a birthday gift,” thought Mike.

\* \* \*

Yegor waited with philosophical patience for the end of these endless negotiations that he was now conducting. Maybe someone was interested in these never-ending gatherings where they discussed many ‘important’ issues on the upcoming construction, but he was not. Yegor yawned, but politely covered his mouth with a palm.

He was a director of a small construction company and now, they were conducting negotiations with a new client about next construction. Yegor helplessly sighed again. Of course, he had to earn money. His large family and numerous subordinates always had a surprisingly good and healthy appetite, and Yegor liked to feed them well. Well, what else could he do? Once, he gladly got into this attractive and tempting collar of a chief. And now, after all these years he only dreamed about the day when he could get out of it nice and quiet.

The negotiations finally came to an end. Yegor said goodbye to the guests and made a dived into the Internet. Yes, there was a message from Josh! His Australian friend sent new information about their



upcoming expedition to the Swain Reefs. That was the place of Yegor's soul and real life! Everything else was just the necessary means to turn these plans into reality.

One day when Yegor was eleven, he had a chance to scuba dive for the first time. Since then, the sea would not let him go. Yegor spent all his spare time travelling to various beautiful reefs. To be more independent in these places, Yegor honestly climbed the diver's ladder from an ordinary diver to the instructor. Now he had much more freedom in choosing places for diving.

His Australian friend Josh recently became a diving instructor as well. Considering the fact that Josh was a lawyer by profession, a rather rare hybrid swam underwater with Yegor. However, very kind and cheerful.

Yegor met him many years ago when he came to a law firm in Australia for advice. He really liked that tall and attractive Australian who was also a diver. Yegor was even more surprised when he found out that Josh often puts everything aside and travels alone to the desert for a week. Yegor sometimes also liked to hide in some wilderness from all these endless affairs, so he understood then, that the letter of Australian law did not leave a serious imprint on Josh's romantic soul.

Later, they became very close friends and often spent their vacations together with or without their families. Considering the fact, that both of them had painfully creative nature, it was not a surprise that over time they became interested in such an interesting project as the search for shipwrecks.

Yegor looked at his watch and dialed his home number. It was spring in Moscow and children had to go to school. That is why this time he was flying to Australia alone. However, his family usually spent the school holidays together on some interesting reefs. Yegor's wife Veronika and their children also liked diving and the underwater world. And they dived a lot with Yegor.

After calling his wife, Yegor immediately dialed the number of Singapore airlines that he knew by heart. The voice of an operator that he heard from the handset seemed to him the most beautiful voice in the world.

- One ticket to Brisbane, please – Yegor said a sacred password that opened a door into absolute freedom for a couple of months.

- There is one ticket for tomorrow, - he heard an absolutely correct “response” of the sweet-voiced operator.

\* \* \*

Josh looked at the stars. They were always closer and brighter in the desert. He was lying on the roof of his trailer with a thermos of hot coffee and thinking. Nowhere else in the world could he think so clearly as here, in the wild desert, alone with the stars. However, recently he has started to enjoy thinking somewhere on the upper deck of a ship during his diving trips on distant reefs.

However, it had its own advantages and disadvantages. The main disadvantage was that he ran out of coffee twice as fast on these trips – his Russian friend and his diving fellow Yegor never refused a cup of coffee and generally did not take his sad eyes off Josh’s thermos. Of course, there were more advantages. Yegor was also a romantic and their endless conversations after diving often led them to such interesting places from where they did not want to go.

For example, they once decided to open a small diving center with an interesting direction. For divers’ amusement, they drove through remote Australian villages and bought old metal things – irons, old instruments, etc. They planned to drop all these stuff on the sea floor for a year or so, for overgrowing with corals, and then lay it on the way of their future guests – divers. Of course, they would dig them into the sand a little... It would not be nice to deprive them of the joy of their own discovery.

Josh and Yegor had already started collecting this old scrap metal, which later could turn out on the most honorable places in the homes of divers from the whole world but suddenly a new idea crossed their mind. All of a sudden, the friends decided to search for information about shipwrecks on the Great Barrier Reef of Australia. Very soon, it became obvious that they had to move in a different direction, and preferably not by car, but by a good ship.

Josh smiled at his memories and poured himself some coffee. After all, it feels good when no one is begging it from you, looking piteously with his innocent eyes! Josh made a sip and looked at the stars again. He always felt comfortable looking at them. He looked at them as a child, as a teenager and he was looking at them right now. Life around him flowed and changed but the stars always stayed the same.

Now, he was a respectable lawyer with a big family and a nice house. However, he could hardly say he was happier than before because of that. Of course, he loved his family very much and always took care of them. However, there was something very important in this world, something that did not depend on the environment, place or time. Something that his soul always needed. Needed so much that he began to suffocate without it.

That is why Josh has never stopped talking to the stars. No one could understand him as much as they did. Well, maybe only romantics like him could. And there were just two such romantics in his life – Yegor from Russia and Mike from California.

Josh was finishing his last cup of coffee when he suddenly realized that he was full. He shook his fist in the direction of Russia and finished his drink out of spite – it was his Russian friend, who'd made Josh's stomach smaller. But, to be honest, Josh would now be glad to see Yegor with his eternal thirst for coffee. Well, he and Mike would be here very soon and Josh would quickly regret this moment of weakness.

Josh looked at the stars for a few more minutes and then turned on his side. He had to come back in the morning...

\* \* \*

Bob was bored. To entertain himself a little, he opened a magazine that was left by one of his guests yesterday. The magazine opened on a page with a description of some party in Sydney. Bob yawned.

Why are all these people try so hard showing their teeth in the photos? Sometimes it seemed that it was not a magazine that he was reading, but an advertising leaflet of some dentist. Bob tried to smile in the same way in front of the mirror and unwittingly shuddered. No way! He will smile as he wishes to.

Bob threw the magazine back on the table and accidentally knocked off an empty bottle of beer from the day before. After that, he looked out the window. Bright sun just ordered him to go out and run from this stuffy kennel. The guy quickly put on his t-shirt, took his inseparable phone and went into the yard. He walked down the alley, sat on a cozy bench in the shadow of a blooming tree and began to check his messages.

Kathy wrote that if he did not show up, he would not see her again. Bob broke into a broad smile. Apparently, his silence was precisely what awakened in the restless Katya the thirst for hunting him.

“Should I try answering her someday?” - Bob thought cheerily and opened another message.

His old school friends called him to some party with lots of girls in Brisbane. “Oh my God” – Bob thought and swiped the message.

The next one seemed interesting. His Uncle Josh from the Gold Coast wrote that he was going for a trip on a catamaran to the distant reefs. He invited Bob to join in warning him that cellular network might not be available there.

“That’s a good idea!” – Bob thought to himself. He returned to Kathy’s message, looked at her grumpy face for a second and immediately called his uncle.

“Distant reefs! That’s the place where no one can find me”, he thought joyfully. Besides, Bob always liked to travel with Uncle Josh who taught him how to sail a catamaran and scuba diving. Indeed, Josh was a cheerful and easy-going self-taught philosopher, just in Bob’s style.

After a conversation with his uncle, Bob strode cheerfully towards the sea. But then he suddenly felt guilty – he imagined how upset would Kathy be. He struggled with his conscience for several seconds and finally found a compromise. “I have to meet with her before I leave”, he thought, and having found harmony of the soul, he went on.

\* \* \*

Seven snow-white angels were sitting on a beautiful shore of the Heaven Sea and talking to each other. Among them were angels that we know very well – Nias, Fiu and Asly, and new angels – Sain, Manif and Leyla who came to Heaven about two thousand years ago. The seventh angel was called Ikos. He was a former ward of Manif and came there not so long ago.

The angels talked about the difficulties their Father had to experience nowadays to lead people towards their happiness. Everything changed dramatically over the years. Only four out of seven angels now had their wards on Earth.

Angel Sain helped a romantic Australian Josh, angel Nias was always near a cheerful American Mike, angel Asly took care of a joyful Russian guy named Yegor. Merry angel Fiu did not take eyes off young Bob.

Since all the wards and angels themselves liked the sea very much, the Father allowed them to go for the expedition to the little-known Swain reefs. That was not surprising – the main romantic in the world was, of

course, the Father. That is why He helped his children to take a break for a couple of months from this sticky and restless civilization in such a beautiful place. Where there was nothing but the sea, the stars and the sea breeze. Where He was much closer to them.

What about shipwrecks? We'll see! Of course, He will give them something, if they do not forget about the stars there. If they do not get carried away too much with a treasure hunt, but remain cheerful and easy-going.

- That's right, my friends, it is not that easy for the Father today to lead the humans towards goodness, - Sain continued the conversation. – In our time, everything was different – almost everyone believed in God, and humans' life was so much easier and clearer. Few things could then distract us from the right thoughts and feelings.

- Exactly, - angel Nias supported him. – When I helped you two thousand years ago, you looked at the stars almost every night. You then thought about eternal, elevated things. Now on Earth, only movie stars attract people's attention. Only few look at the sky and even then not so often.

- That's fine, my friends, - angel Asly cheerfully got into the conversation. – Everything is not that bad. Right now, we are taking our wards to the distant reefs and there the Father will definitely come up with something. We shouldn't even complain about our wards – look at them, they are so kind and romantic. Conversations with other angels sometimes even scare me! Poor things, they try so hard to melt their wards' hearts in this cold and fussy world.

- That's for sure! – Cheerful Fiu caught up with the topic. – Our wards are just great! And the Father will think of something and push them in the right direction. He chose such a beautiful place! As if it was created for various unusual events and miracles. Maybe they will find a real treasure among this underwater scrap?

All the angels laughed at a witty joke of their friend and joyfully ran into the sea. By the way, there were no shipwrecks in Paradise, but no one has ever looked for sunken ships here either.

## *Chapter 2*

### **Dots on the map**

The beams of the rising sun played gaily on the surface of water. Josh, Mike and Yegor were sitting at the round table on the rear deck of the catamaran, drinking their morning coffee. Young Bob was still sleeping. Mike and Yegor had heard a lot about each other from Josh and, thus, got on rather quickly. Similar outlooks on life and common interests often draw people together. As for cheerful Bob, he seemed to like everyone around except for the worst bores.

So, that wonderful morning the divers welcomed away from all the earthly concerns. A detailed map of local reefs laid in the middle of the table with a great bunch of notes on it. From time to time, the friends idly looked at it and then hastily returned their sights to the igneous horizon. The map was useful at home, where it was like a window into the world of interesting plans. Here, it was much more enjoyable to look at the reefs themselves.

- Where do we start, my friends? - Josh's voice came at last.

Mike and Yegor looked up from the horizon and stared indignantly at the peace-breaker. But, soon remembering that he had also prepared them excellent morning coffee, they turned to the table at once.

- Well, to begin with, we need to plan our dives here, - as the most experienced diver in the group, Yegor was the first to open his mouth. It seems, he couldn't get away from his negotiation experience, however, now it had a much more pleasant shade of treasure hunting. - I suggest

we dive in pairs, changing all the time. This way, everyone will have the same level of nitrogen in the blood. Bob will rule the zodiac and pick the divers up from the water. The third person must stay on board to refill the diving tanks and for safety reasons.

Having thought it over, Mike and Josh nodded in agreement. All of the divers present had a skipper license and knew very well how to act in different circumstances.

- For starters, I also suggest limiting the depth of our dives to thirty meters, - Yegor continued. - At that depth we will be able to see clearly for another ten-fifteen meters below. There is no point in diving deeper to search for the ship. There we will need special equipment, which we do not have.

- Wouldn't it be better to limit the depth of our dives to twenty meters? - Mike, who was also an experienced diver, joined the conversation. By doing so, we could easily dive three times a day, since there will be less nitrogen in our blood. As a result, we would cover a bigger area in the same amount of time. And, frankly, it is much better to find a ship in a shallower place.

Josh and Yegor exchanged looks and nodded in agreement.

- From which reef will we start diving? - Josh asked once again as he moved the map to the center of the table.

Mike and Yegor looked at each other in perplexity and suddenly laughed as they realized that they were thinking about the same thing.

- Josh! Of course, we will start right here. - said Mike for the both of them. - First, let's look at the fish, clear our heads and further plans will come by themselves. Ideas love clear heads. Anyway, it does not matter where to dive here – all those reefs unexplored and no flipper of diver has ever touched them.

Yegor agreed with him and smiled.



- Which pair will go first today? – Mike asked his friends later and immediately suggested - Maybe we'll draw the good old lots?

No one objected. Josh quickly tore off two light pieces of paper and one dark piece from a half-empty pack of coffee. After that he put them in a big captain's cap – someone's gift for his birthday – and stretched it out first to Yegor, and then to Mike. They pulled out two light pieces of paper. Josh had a pleased smile – the law of Australian hospitality was fully observed.

Mike and Yegor finished their coffee and slowly began to prepare their equipment. Josh went to wake up his nephew.

\* \* \*

Angel Glay watched with a smile as his ward Katie periodically hit and then kissed Bob's photo. This lasted the whole morning but it seemed that the energetic girl was not going to do something else today.

*Indeed, the Father tightly tied her heart to that cheerful guy! But how can she learn to forgive without this thread? She'll just find someone else and that is all. So now sit here and keep on hitting his picture. But don't forget to kiss it sometimes, silly! After all, moments like that make you feel better. I hope one day you will understand that only your pride prevents you from being happy. I really hope so.*

Little by little, Kathy began to calm down and kiss the photo more often than hit it. Finally, sighing blissfully, she smiled and put it under the pillow.

*That's better, silly. Do not worry - he won't go away. He will swim for some time and come back. Should you scold him less, he will return even faster. The Father will take care of it – because only He is the master of people's hearts. He might tighten one screw in Bob's heart and Bob won't be able to live without you. But only good behavior is rewarded, dear Kathy.*

The angel looked at the wall clock in Kathy's room and nodded with satisfaction. Today she whacked Bob's photo for four minutes less than last time. *Not bad, not bad.*

Gladya kissed Kathy's forehead. After that, the girl warmly sighed, took Bob's picture again from under the pillow and pressed it to her heart. The angel smiled at her and flew out the window. Birds greeted him outside with loud cheerful twittering.

\* \* \*

Mike and Yegor swam along the reef slope overgrown with big fan-shaped corals. They felt easy and joyful at heart. Not every diver today can dive in the place where nobody else ever dived. Only the fishes and some other sea animals had seen this reef before. And, of course, God who created it.

The friends did not hurry, why would they do that? Among all this heavenly beauty, all they wanted was to enjoy it and fill their souls with some childish delight. Multicolored schools of small fish surrounded some of the corals like bright clouds. The sunlight penetrating under the water cheerfully played and gleamed on sandy parts of the seabed. Sometimes, larger fish swam past the divers: various types of tuna, groupers and small reef sharks.

Once a huge black skate swam past them. Its slow wave movements were in harmony with the general rhythm of this reef. No one was in a hurry here. Well, maybe just several fishes that sometimes escaped from the teeth of their larger neighbors. And then, peace and tranquility was restored over the reef again.

Mike and Yegor swam to the southern end of the reef end and saw an entrance to some large grotto. They turned on their flashlights and moved inside. Beams of light snatched incredibly beautiful and colorful pieces of underwater life from the darkness. A huge giant grouper who,

apparently, was the host of this cave, became a little confused and gave them way. Perhaps, Mike and Yegor looked like bubbling aliens.

Suddenly, they saw the light glimmering around the next corner. Mike and Egor guessed that there was a second exit from this underwater cave. They swam towards it, sometimes swimming through clouds of small fish. The darkness was disappearing with every move of their flippers and very soon the friends were near the wide exit from the underwater cave.

Here the friends stopped as on cue - a giant manta ray circled around the cave entrance. Like a big plane, it performed aerobatic maneuvers in front of the divers. Actually, it was just hunting for plankton and small fish that harbored there in abundance. However, the friends liked to imagine that Neptune himself organized a beautiful ballet for their visit to the reef.

The divers sat solemnly and gratefully in the front row of the underwater cinema and began to watch the performance.

\* \* \*

- So, gentlemen! – Josh began. He looked especially solemn in the rays of the setting sun. – We are going to make a plan of our future dives on these reefs. Any suggestions?

Yegor, Mike and Bob looked at each other and thoughtfully propped up their heads with their fists. For the next few minutes, one could only hear the sound of waves hitting the shipside. Finally, Yegor raised his head and looked at his friends.

- Dear novice treasure hunters! – He began in Josh's style. – What do you think about intuition?

- I think that is a very good thing, - Mike immediately responded.

- I don't think I would have survived without it, - Josh philosophically added.

Bob nodded too. He probably did not even know the meaning of this word, but a true Australian would never spoil the company.

- Great! –summarized Yegor. – I will not take a single step without it either. Besides, there is one interesting word in Russian language – *avos*'. A foreigner can only understand its meaning after a bottle of vodka. Speaking seriously, it means that a person hopes for something illogical or even sometimes the opposite of common sense. It's strange, I agree, but in Russia it seems to be working and that's why it is quite popular there.

Yegor waited until his friends stopped laughing and continued.

- So, we have only one paper map. However, there is also an electronic copy. I suggest each of you intuitively mark ten places that seem promising to you from the point of view of searching for sunken ships.

Yegor took a sip of juice and finished his speech.

- Well, and after that we will compare these maps. Maybe something interesting will come out of it.

Other friends at the table looked at each other. They had obvious interest and curiosity in their eyes.

- I like it! – Mike answered first. Then added, changing the sound of a new Russian word in a funny way: *Avos*. Hmm ... Before that, I had only heard about "Russian roulette". I hope this is something luckier. Anyway, it means either wasted twenty minutes or something curious.

- I'm in too! – said Josh. – Of course, it's unusual but there is a flavor of mystery in it. At least, it's fun.

- And what about you, Bob? – Yegor asked the guy.

Bob gave an affirmative answer in a cool Australian slang and raised his finger high.

- Let's go then! – Josh summed up and moved to the computer to make copies of the map for all participants of the game codenamed *Avos*.

The angels were happy. Today the Father managed to lead his “treasure hunters” in the right direction. The Russian word *avos* that Yegor remembered at the appropriate time really helped them. That was a good start and could actually bring these dreamers to some more serious discoveries in the future.

- Great job, Asly! – Angel Nias complimented his friend. – You put that *avos* in Yegor’s head at the right moment when he was holding it on his fist.

- Yes, it was quite difficult, - Asly responded laughingly. – Russians sometimes have very hard heads.

- But they can keep these thoughts well in such heads, - Fiu went on with the joke. – This word has been in Russian language for centuries and people still use it there.

The angels burst out laughing.

- Well, now we should push them in this direction, - Nias said after a pause.

- The Father will think of something, - Sain joined the conversation. – The guys will find something very interesting in their decision to follow intuition.

- I think, the Father has already thought something up, - angel Fiu said. – And we have to listen to Him carefully, as usual, and convey it to our wards.

- That’s right! The Father’s beautiful solutions always fascinate me, - angel Sain smiled.

- Tell me about it! – Asly said laughingly. – When He told me about *avos*, I immediately realized that it could work.

After that, the angels stood up.

- Well, my friends, - Nias cheerfully said to the angels. – Let's fly to Earth and help our romantics correctly put the dots on the map!

The angels laughed, and those who had the wings flapped their wings.

- I love this job! – Fiu said in flight and smiled.

\* \* \*

Four pairs of eyes peered into the computer screen with interest when Josh summarized the information. He put the dots of all participants on one map and in ten minutes finished the job. Now there were exactly forty dots on the screen. Many of them were scattered but it was obvious even at first glance that the dots of the participants of the *Avos* game were very close to each other in three places. Moreover, there were four dots in two places and three dots in one place. No other close matches were found on the map.

- Well, what can I say? We do not have perfect matches but three places obviously deserve special attention, - said Josh after several minutes.

- I agree, - Mike picked up his thought. – If we decide to follow the *Avos* plan, we should start diving right in these places.

- Gentlemen! – Yegor joined the conversation. – Even if these coincidences are just rubbish, we will not be at ease until we check these places. Besides, we need to start somewhere anyway.

- I have never imagined that serious men could engage in such nonsense, - Bob added with a laugh. – But I absolutely enjoy it. Just like a new super game in 10D format.

- Our life is nothing but a game, dear Bob, and precisely in this format! – Uncle Josh said to his nephew, meaningfully raising his forefinger.

Bob liked him for such philosophy.

- Which place do we visit first? – Mike asked his friends.
- I suggest a place with three dots. All good restaurants serve a small salad first and the main dish comes only after that, - Yegor suggested with a smile.
- Accepted! – Josh, who liked a good meal, agreed. – Besides, this place is almost on our way. Just a couple of miles aside.

While the friends sat in front of the computer, the sun finally went down. Now the beautiful starry sky was shining in all its glory. The friends returned to the table on the rear deck and looked at this beauty in silence for several minutes.

- The stars somehow remind me of the dots on our map, - Josh finally suggested a romantic version.
- That's right, - Yegor agreed. - And in some places stars are concentrated more. Maybe there are also some treasures, as well?
- There probably are, - Mike made a small contribution to the overall romantic mood and then brought everyone back to the ground. – Well, that is something we'll never be able to check. Let's go to bed.

All the friends smiled. After a quarter of an hour, they went to their cabins. They planned to make an early passage to a new place the next day.

In Heaven, the angels of the romantics also smiled widely. Their wards just had brilliant ideas today.

\* \* \*

The Father smiled from Heaven while looking at the cute divers who were sitting in front of the computer with an opened map.

Intuition... It's great that they learn to trust it. After all, this is the direct relationship connection to Him. And sometimes it can be pure, very

pure. All the angels in Heaven always hear His voice correctly. When they have to make some decision, they have no doubts about it. That happens because they have a very pure soul and live in kindness and love.

People can hear the Father's voice all the time. Heartfelt poetry, scientific discoveries and beautiful music – all of this is coming from Him. The Father always shares with His good children everything they ask for. And even if some children are far away from Him, He still cares for them. Moreover, if they try to find Him during their earthly life, or at least move towards kindness and love, then the Father will respond with special joy to many of their desires.

After all, it is His great joy is to enjoy the success and happiness of His children. There is nothing difficult about it. Even the Earthly loving parents are always happy about the success of their children and need nothing but children's love. The joy of the Heavenly Father is a million times purer and brighter.

And, of course, the Father always helps His children to take the right steps and act correctly in different situations. All over the world people give different names to the ability to hear the Father's voice. Our romantic friends liked the word "intuition".

The Father smiled. Indeed, today they found another good word – *avos*. In essence, it meant trusting something beyond the Earthly rules; but in reality, they trusting Him again.

Of course, everything in this world comes from Him and returns to Him, that's for sure. But how pleasant it feels when you are surrounded by many nice, kind and loving children. True children of the Father, about whom He always takes special care.

Everyone can hear intuition - that is His voice on Earth. This is like the main radio wave there. It can be clearly heard if a person has the right "antennas" to pick it up. The less a person is sunken into the fuss; the



kinder and calmer he is, the higher his antenna is to hear the Father's voice clearly. And vice versa.

The Father smiled and looked again at the dots on the map. Indeed, his romantics were purified by the sea and had very good "antennas". They were very close.

The Father laughed again and remembered their *Avos* plan. Oh, these kids, how many names they have already given Me!

### *Chapter 3*

## **Everyday life of treasure hunters**

Bob was cooking breakfast. He was eager to be helpful on the ship so he convinced his uncle the day before to let him cook spaghetti for breakfast, the dish that he himself loved very much. When Josh asked him whether he knew how to cook it, Bob only gave a confident nod. Actually, the guy just had the recipe saved on the phone but Bob was sure that it is the same.

Bob opened a file called "Spaghetti carbonara" and got down to business. He meticulously followed in detail every step of the recipe and already began to think that he would be a perfect cook. There is a rumor that they earn a lot, but all their work – a big deal! – is to follow the instructions and add the ingredients in the right order and in the proper time.

The first doubts about the simplicity of this profession the guy had when the oil on the frying pan suddenly caught fire. Bob extinguished it quite quickly by covering the pot with a lid. The second portion of doubt appeared while he was ripping the spaghetti off the sides and bottom of the pot during the stirring process. However, Bob bravely dealt with

these insignificant problems and breakfast was served at six-thirty on the dot.

The friends came from their cabins with cheerfull anticipation of their first dive in search of shipwrecks. Of course, after a good breakfast.

- What do we have for breakfast today? – Mike asked first and sniffed the air.

- Spaghetti carbonara – Josh replied proudly for Bob and added – And the cook is my dear nephew!

Bob stood by the stove happily blushing and tried very hard to look indifferent to the high praise.

- Oh, really! – Yegor said, surprised by Josh's words. – Well, many people can follow the example of the Australians. I am forty-eight and still cannot cook properly.

Bob's heart skipped a beat again. The divers sat down.

- Well, Bob, uncover the pot. – Mike solemnly proclaimed and the guy pulled the lid. It would not open... Apparently, the pieces of spaghetti got stuck between the pot and its lid, and firmly glued them together. Bob used more force; the lid made a gurgling sound and finally made access to the dish.

- It smells strange, - said Yegor who was sitting near the pot, and added - it seems that the Russian recipe is a bit different.

Josh wanted to lay out the dish and was first to plunge his fork into the pot. After that, he began to twist the spaghetti on it. The other divers could clearly see how muscles moved under his skin. The fork would not twist at all.

- Bobby, - he gently addressed the nephew, gradually increasing the force, - When was the last time you cooked spaghetti?

- Just now, - the guy answered, gradually losing his interest in the profession of a cook.

- And before that? – Uncle Josh asked even more gently and finally pulled the whole lump of spaghetti from the pot.

- Well, I sa-aw Mum cooking and read the recipe, - the guy replied slowly, syllable by syllable, and could not take his eyes off the big lump of food on his uncle's fork.

- I see, - Josh sighed and began to cut Bob's spaghetti on his plate, like bread and distributed it to his friends.

- Pour more sauce, gentlemen! – He instructed everyone. – More sauce.

Nobody talked during the breakfast. Friends spent all their strength trying to open their jaws. Sometimes they smiled at Bob in order to support him and show that everything was not too bad.

\* \* \*

Jesus sat next to the Father and looked at Earth where He once lived and that He left two thousand years ago. People's lives have changed so much! However, the souls of people since that time have remained unchanged since that time, and each of them is still seeking happiness and love. Seeking, but rarely finds.

This was despite hundreds of “recipes” for happiness that humanity invented over its long history. A soul does not need a hundred, but only one reliable and time-tested path, given by God and the Creator of all these souls. But people lost or distorted that very path. To a greater or lesser degree.

Jesus sighed. He did not know back then that people could distort so much of the truth that He had given them. Today people were preaching such strange ideas on His behalf! And all of that “grew” from His simple words about love and forgiveness, about honesty and mercy, about faith and kindness. He did not mention anything then that would be difficult to understand.

How much violence was done over these years by people, hiding behind His name? These people have probably never read the Gospel and His words. It is not surprising that few people trust such His “followers” today. How can they know which direction to trust? There are dozens of them today and each of them interprets His teachings differently.

It is difficult, very difficult for ordinary people now to find the right way in all this confusion. It would be better for them to take His words and simply read them, but there is another problem – today they cannot take their eyes off the screens of TV sets, computers and phones. Sometimes they do not even have time to look at the nature. Yes, then there is no place for miracles and eternal life. It is just a fairytale to them.

Therefore, they often look for happiness where it has never been. And Earthly life is passing by... The life that was given to them with one single purpose – to find one’s own happiness, love, and eternal life after it. A very short life...

In reality, everything is so simple. A body needs food for life, and a human soul needs love for happiness. A soul cannot be happy without it. And He told people about things that lead to love two thousand years ago. However, many His words were forgotten or distorted which is even worse. Sometimes it is better to stop and not go than to go in the wrong direction. Because you will not have to return.

- Yes, Father, - Jesus smiled sadly, – back then in Jerusalem, only Pharisees led people in the wrong direction, and now I can hardly count the number of false paths. Today, it is not easy for people to find the truth.

- No more complicated than usual, son, but there really is too much confusion on Earth these days. I’m sure we will think of something. Not a single soul that seeks us will be forgotten, not a single kind person will be forsaken. – The Father looked warmly on Earth and smiled. – Make no doubt about it.

\* \* \*

Fresh southeast wind blew this morning. The friends quickly weighed anchor and set the sails. The trip to their next stop should take a little more than two hours, so Mike and Yegor pulled out fishing rods in order to pass the time efficiently. Bob sat down next to them with interest, and Josh sailed the catamaran and could only give advice at that time.

There is nothing tastier than fresh well-cooked fish on the sea voyages. Besides, the friends urgently needed to block the aftertaste that was left from Bob's not-so-good spaghetti. We shall not call it "carbonara" out loud, otherwise Italy will declare us war.

So, our friends attached the biggest blinkers to their fishing rods and threw them into the water. Yegor said a quote from a Russian fairytale: "Let fish be caught big and small", then he thought for a moment and added: "Of course, the big fish is better".

The sea was calm that morning and the fishermen sat at the table. They were drinking delicious green tea and sometimes watched their fishing rods sticking out from the ship's sides. Fish always bites when you least expect it. Cracking sound from Mike's fishing reel began just as he reached the climax of his brand new American joke. He apologetically looked at his friends and rushed to his fishing rod. Bob and Yegor moved closer too and watched what was happening with interest.

Apparently, the fish on the hook was not small as Mike's fishing rod sometimes bent in a steep arc. In three minutes, friends could discern the fish's shadow in the water, it was quite big as well. For another ten minutes, Mike either pulled the fish closer to the ship or eased the line. Everything ended well and soon a large and tasty wahoo fish was jumping on deck.

Everyone congratulated Mike on his first successful. After that, the senior divers loudly began to discuss the best dish and sauce for cooking wahoo fish. For some reason, Bob did not take part in that conversation. It seemed that he had lost interest in the art of cooking for the next one hundred years.

After that, Yegor's fishing reel began to make a loud cracking sound. He picked it up quickly and tried to pull up the fish too. However, the fish on the other side of the line was too big – the reel continued to unwind. Strong jerks of the reel made Yegor think that he caught not a fish, but a submarine. On one of these jerks the fishing line broke.

Yegor silently said goodbye to the blinker and a big fish, and began to repair his fishing rod. In twenty minutes, he put on a new blinker and repeated quote from the fairy tale in a new manner: "Let fish be caught big and small. A big one, of course, is better, but so that I can pull it out".

\* \* \*

For a long time, Josh was looking for a sandy bottom for the ship to stop – a true captain-diver is always trying to save the corals. Finally, the anchor noisily went underwater and the friends slowly began to prepare for the dive. It was the first place out of the three marked on the map. Here the three dots of their unusual *Avos* plan stood side by side. That is why the friends were going to make several dives in that area.

Mike and Josh were supposed to dive first. Yegor settled himself on a rear deck of the catamaran with his friend's thermos. Josh still could not figure out how to drink coffee underwater so that was why thermos was in full possession of the Russian coffee addict for an hour.

Soon, the two fully equipped divers got into the Zodiac and Bob drifted off from the ship. Yegor waved them goodbye with a hand that was free of thermos from the rear deck. The path to the location of their first dive was short and only took two or three minutes – Josh managed to park the catamaran very close to all places of interest. Soon, the divers arrived at the place and Mike with Josh somersaulted overboard together on Bob's command.

The visibility underwater was very good that day. The friends slowly swam down along the reef slope to the appropriate depth and then swam

with the current. The divers did not forget for a minute about their treasure hunt – they were carefully looking at large detached reefs, trying to understand if they were overgrown parts of some shipwreck or not. However, even their violent fantasy could not help them to see anything resembling a ship's shape.

However, they were not disappointed by the underwater life around them. They saw so much on the reef in that hour! Several turtles, one of which was swimming close to the divers for several minutes, a couple of reef sharks, one grey nurse shark that looked very serious but was not at all dangerous and many other things. The corals there were very beautiful and vivid as well.

At the end of the dive, Mike and Josh swam to a beautiful sandy bottom among coral hills and stopped - five large and graceful leopard sharks swam over the field. Despite their 'predatory' name, this species of shark is absolutely harmless. So now their beautiful long tails swayed graciously in the water and fused into a single unique sea dance.

Mike pulled out a camera from his pocket and took several pictures. After that, Josh slowly swam out to the middle of the field. The largest shark, which did not even have normal teeth, moved towards a new visitor – either out of curiosity or simply to check whether he would be afraid or not? Josh was a father of four children and already no longer afraid of much. Apparently, the shark soon realized that, turned around one meter away from him and swam off while taking the other members of its "leopard" school with it.

Josh stayed in the middle of the field and thought about what else to do. He just sprawled for some time on the beautiful bottom sand, then the friends checked the air in their balloons and sent a beacon to the surface – it was time to come back.

\* \* \*

Angel Sain looked lovingly at his ward Josh. He understood his feelings. Once upon a time, long ago, he was a human being too. Sometimes he felt sad, sometimes he felt happy, sometimes he tried to find the meaning of life. And he succeeded.

It was so long ago. Now everything changed. Josh dedicated fifteen years of his life to his studies. The whole village where Sain lived studied less than one Josh did. Nowadays, many people on Earth live like that. However, all that knowledge has no value in Heaven. These “goods” only valuable for a short human life though, and frankly speaking, this does not always happen. Earthly knowledge does not lead people to happiness, joy and love— sometimes even the opposite.

It is very easy to miss the main thing because of that. And one does not need knowledge for that. Humanity reads many books of the authors who had almost no education. Nevertheless, these books have passed throughout many centuries and are still popular. All this is because every happiness has only one source – God. If you find Him in your heart, you will find everything you need. So by using your mind, you can search for the part of life that is really essential for happiness.

Sain smiled. If only these nice people knew, close to what they are live from morning until evening and live arm-in-arm. One day they will all find out. Several times Josh managed to touch such sensations and these were the brightest moments, which he would never forget.

One way or another, everyone is always looking for happiness in this life. Happiness is the ultimate purpose of everything that a person does. However, true happiness is always hidden within us. This is our soul, if it is clean, free of all passions, and full of love. Nothing on Earth can be compared to the happiness that comes from a pure and loving human heart.

Once, when angel Sain was human, he discovered this happiness inside of him. He discovered it and was astonished how beautiful the Father’s world was. Now most of all he wanted Josh and all other people to



understand that too. Such joy is every day like a holiday, and these holidays last forever. The Father gave this possibility to all His children, to everyone without exception.

Sain lovingly looked at Josh who was now driving the catamaran. “*Sail, my dear Josh. But sail in the right direction*”, - he thought warmly.

\* \* \*

The friends happily dined on the back deck of the ship while enjoying the setting sun. The day did not bring them a sunken ship, but Josh bring them an amazing dish: a rack of lamb with a spicy sauce. And it remains to be seen which of the two options hungry divers were more preferred now.

- Uncle! – Bob addressed Josh when he threw another bone of meat overboard. – What will other divers think when they discover this bone on a distant reef one day?

- My dear Bob, - his uncle answered with a smile. – It depends on the person who discovers it. For example, if it is a famous anthropologist, he will make a coherent theory about flocks of sheep that were feeding here many centuries ago. Maybe, he will even be awarded for that. Or, for instance, if a pretty blonde finds it, she will nag at her husband the whole evening because the only thing that they’d been eating the whole week is fish.

- And if your Uncle Josh sees it, - Mike added cheerily. – He will throw it even deeper to save everyone from overthinking.

After that, Mike threw the bone far into the sea and his friends burst into laughter.

- Actually, it is very strange. How it is possible that people see the same thing but make different conclusions? – Bob continued his philosophical reflections and involuntarily remembered Kathy.

- And very often different! - Yegor, who did not throw the bones into the sea, but put them into a beautiful pyramid on a napkin, joined the conversation. – It is much harder to find those who make the same conclusions. All our knowledge about the world, about everything that surrounds us – it is like telescopes. We look through them at our world. And everyone has his own telescope.

- Do you think that people never have the same telescopes? – Josh asked him with curiosity.

- Never, - Yegor replied. – People cannot acquire absolutely the same knowledge and upbringing; there are always differences, and that means there will be different worldviews. However, sometimes there is another approach. Sometimes we can just throw away those telescopes. After that, people begin to see the world in the same way, but the point here is no longer in knowledge, but in completely different things. By the way, intuition is also included here.

- How do you know that? – Mike asked him with interest.

- I do not know, - Yegor answered. – I just see it that way. And maybe, it is even better that I do not know. Who knows, maybe in this case a new telescope will simply appear.

- Mmm... - Josh mumbled with a deep thought, and reaching for the cupboard to get some wine. – It seems that one cannot understand Russian avos and telescope without a bottle.

- That is right – Yegor answered contently and took out the glasses from the other cupboard door. – Russia drinks because it understands a lot!

\* \* \*

Angel Bloss dipped his brush made of fluffy feathers into the paint and made another brushstroke on the canvas. His work was almost done. Friends of Bloss – angels Anrie and Maty sat nearby, cheerily talked to

each other and watched Blos's work. At last, the final brushstroke was made and their friend put the brush down.

- That's it! – he said and turned towards his friends.

- Perfect! – Angel Maty who also liked to draw replied and then added, - but I think, my dear Blos, that it's time to change your brush.

The angels laughed loudly. The thing was that one bird was pulling the feathers out of its tail for Blos's brushes for many years. But only when Blos drew it in the corner of his picture. Nothing else could persuade the bird to sacrifice its feathers. Blos smiled and sighed. He picked up his brush again.

- Well, it likes to be in my picture, - he said gladly, quickly drew a bird on the canvas and explained, - but it likes to be drawn alone. Once, I drew a whole flock of these birds, thinking that it would give me more feathers, but in the morning, I saw only one feather in front of the picture.

While Blos's friends were laughing at this news, he put the paints away and sat next to them.

- Do you know, - Maty asked Blos, - that the wards of our friends Nias, Sain and Asly are looking for a shipwreck somewhere on the distant reefs in Australia?

- Oh wow! – Blos could only say. – One can rarely find that on Earth. I am sure that this trip will be good for them. In such remote places, people always hear the Father's voice in their hearts better.

- Oh, I am so happy for them! – Angel Anrie smiled and then got sad. – ut I couldn't do anything for my ward – he still spends all day in front of a computer and thinks only about money. That does not surprise me - it is all that he sees around him every day. I even have a hard time sending him on vacation once a year!

- That is right, today it is difficult for the Father to reach people's minds when they cannot take their eyes off computer and TV screens, - Blos

agreed. – It would be fine if they see there something good or useful, but they usually see either bad news or endless advertisements.

- Well, I will keep trying to drag him on – Anrie said. – He is good and kind inside, but he does not want to understand the meaning of life, even though he is in his late forties already. In some twenty years, he will have to leave everything anyway. But he still thinks only about things. And doesn't think of his soul. I feel so sorry for him...

Anrie's eyes filled with tears.

- Don't be sad, my friend, - Blos hugged him. – Maybe the Father can give you some advice. Just keep trying to wake him up.

- Well, Anrie, - Angel Maty told him with sadness. – It can't be helped, these are the times. The Father gave people the right to choose the life they prefer. We can only give them advice.

- I know, dear Maty," Anrie replied, "but I really want him to be happy. However, there is no happiness in the place, where he always sits.

- All right, my friend, enough with sad talk. Time goes and the Father does not sleep. He will come up with something, - Blos stood up. – Let's fly to Nias and Sain and swim in the sea together? It has been a while time since I rode that underwater geyser.

Angels smiled again and soon flapped their wings.

\* \* \*

The bottle of wine on the table was almost finished when Mike and Josh began to understand something. As for Bob, he drank his beer and was not really interested in philosophical topics.

- Your country is so unusual, - Mike said thoughtfully. – You do many things in a different way.

- Right you are, - Yegor agreed. – Sometimes even I don't understand something. But today, to be honest, Russia is a little boring, unlike the old days... Everything was different in Russia before.

- What happened before?

- Earlier, honor, dignity, nobility were in favor in Russia. Women had even schools for noble maidens. Many people in those days would rather lose their life than their honor.

- And now? – Josh asked him.

- Now Russia is like a market, - Yegor replied sadly. – And the word “honor” has almost lost its value. Nowadays, many people think that it is an unnecessary oddity that hinders them from earning more money.

- But this happens not only in Russia, - said Mike. – I think, you can see it in all countries today. However, we really need to earn money, don't we?

- No doubt, - Yegor replied and suddenly smiled. – But there is one interesting thing. In the Russian language, a person who has a lot of money is called *bogatiy*. And the funny thing about that is the word *bogatiy* does not have the root *money* or *treasure*. This word has the root *God*.

It took five minutes for Yegor to explain this thought to his friends. After that, Josh immediately reached for the bottle.

- Yegor, you know what! We will drink ourselves to death because of your Russian language, - Mike said, laughing. – However, that is a really interesting word.

- I find it interesting as well, - replied Yegor. – I think our ancestors knew much better what true wealth was but that knowledge has not reached our times.

- *Money* and *God*! – Mike said somehow slowly as if he was trying to remember something, - I heard that before...Wait a second!

Mike quickly jumped off his chair and rushed towards his cabin. In a minute, he came back with one US dollar banknote in his hands. The friends looked at him with interest.

- Do you see what is written here? – he asked and showed an inscription on a well-known bank note.

- In God we trust, - Josh read the inscription that he hadn't even noticed before. – Mmm...Wealth and God again, gentlemen. Not bad!

- And money with that inscription is the most common in the world now, - Yegor added slowly, - well, a new topic for thought.

- I think it's not all only about money, - Mike broke on. – I doubt that God needs an inscription without its meaning. It's difficult to argue with the fact that there are a lot of believers in America. And faith brings us to the commandments of God.

- Money and God...I think Yegor is right, our ancestors knew much more about true wealth, - Josh said and suddenly changed the topic, - Do you believe in God, Yegor?

- I do but I am not sure which One, - Yegor said. – Since childhood, I was sure there was a higher power and I always tried to find it. Sometimes, I like to stand by myself in some old temple. There are plenty of them in Russia. There, you always feel something unusual, something above the time itself. I cannot explain it in more detail. I also attempted to come to The Divine Liturgy a couple of times. However, I did not understand much – priests use an Old Russian language, but for me it is not clear.

The friends smiled and proposed a toast to the new and interesting Russian word – *bogatiy*.

- I have almost the same thing, - Josh said after a pause. – My parents were moderately religious people, and I have been sure since childhood that God is real. At the same time, I felt that He is different in some way.

- Yup, it seems that we have a lot in common in that issue, - Mike joined in the conversation. – I still cannot find the God that I feel inside of me. But He is real. And He sent me here for my birthday.

Mike looked at his friends' round eyes that were full of surprise and told them a story from his recent past. Suddenly, Bob interrupted their conversation.

- Hey, friends! Do you know what time it is? Someone was going to dive tomorrow at dawn...

- Wow, it's eleven o'clock already! – Josh was surprised when he glanced at his watch. – Let's go to sleep, gentlemen. It seems that we can spend a week discussing this topic.

The friends stood up.

- What a strange language! Why do we need to understand each word with a bottle of wine? - Mike grumbled throwing two empty bottles into the bin. – Now I understand why many people drink in Russia. It turns out that they are just trying to understand their language better.

## *Chapter 4*

### **First findings**

Josh and Yegor swam along the coral shoal. They were about to finish their dive. It was their last dive in that area and afterwards "Dolce-dive" was going up the anchor and move further into the Swain reefs atoll. The friends have not found any signs of shipwrecks here yet, but beautiful underwater life of local reefs compensated for that over and above.

They have seen so many things under water during these days! They met huge schools of different fish, many kinds of sharks, dozens of turtles

and, of course, mantas. There was plenty of these graceful underwater beauties in these places.

Then, they saw three large mantas circling over the same place at the end of the reef. Josh and Yegor swam very close to them and laid down on the bottom. Apparently, mantas were not afraid of them at all, quite the contrary – sometimes they played with air bubbles coming from the divers.

Yegor enthusiastically took pictures of that beautiful “trio” with his underwater camera, and Josh filmed them on video. The divers took pictures of mantas from every side, put away their equipment and laid on the bottom. They continued to enjoy the performance because it was impossible to get tired of it. Suddenly, Yegor remembered a story that he once heard from an experienced diver. The diver assured him that if one makes wave motions with his hand in the water, mantas become interested and sometimes swim closer.

Considering the fact, that they still had plenty of air in the tanks, it was the right moment to test this story. Yegor began to wave his hand in the water, trying to do it gracefully and at the right speed. The nearest manta was quite interested and squinted its eyes. It had never seen such an underwater “relative”, for sure.

Yegor did his best and saw out of the corner of his eye that Josh was bubbling with laughter. Yegor used his other hand in order to convince the mantle that he was indeed its “relative”. Josh produced even more bubbles. However, in a minute the mantles came closer. “*It seems to be working!*” – Yegor thought and made his movements even more graceful. He did not pay attention to Josh’s bubbles anymore.

Soon it became obvious that the mantas were not afraid of him at all. Yegor mentally thanked the experienced diver and tried to build on the success. Listening to his heart, he pushed off the bottom and swam to the mantas. Josh stopped laughing, but his eyes in the mask were of the same size as the glasses of the mask. “*One day I will translate for him*



*the Russian proverb: laughs best who laughs last*”, - this thought floated in Yegor’s mind. However, he realized that wine would be needed again, and abandoned this idea.

Meanwhile, the mantas saw this bubbling wing-handed creature and swam aside, but at the same time they did not take their eyes off Yegor. As for Yegor, he tried not to give himself away and rhythmically waved his hands, swimming around the same place. It worked – the most curious manta cautiously moved to its old place and the other mantas followed it. Soon, a mixed group of mantas and a diver was circling above Josh. He could only film this unusual “round dance”.

It would have lasted longer, but boasting was Yegor’s undoing. After several minutes of “schooling” life, he wanted to show a new swimming style to his counterparts – the “eagle” style. To do that, Yegor proudly and sharply lifted his head during one swipe like an eagle and...

It was either a ringing sound of a Russian diver's head hitting the tank, or a waterfall of bubbles coming from Josh, who was choking with laughter. Either way, it scared the mantas and they swam away. Yegor thought with the pain in the back of his head that everything was pretty good today, but the eagle style was obviously too much.

\* \* \*

Paisius came to the Father. It has been several years since he left earth, his admirable Greece. Today people on Earth canonized him. God's justice has been done. However, in Heaven he had long been among God’s most faithful and beloved children.

- Hello, my dear Paisius! – The Father greeted him warmly. – I am so glad to see you! Today people have glorified you on earth. I congratulate you with all my heart!

- Thank You, - Paisius replied modestly. – However, You know that all my glory is a grain of sand in Your glory.

- I know, I know – the Father replied with laughter. – By the way, maybe you also know how pleasant it is for me when people on Earth glorify my best children?

Paisius smiled.

- I can only guess.

- I feel very pleased, my dear! – The Father said and continued in a serious tone. – Moreover, you left Earth not so long ago and all the books about you and miracles connected to you can be very beneficial. People desperately need a living faith and understanding of what to do with this life. And you even gave them sound recordings with very useful words. Nothing like this had ever happened to holy men before.

- Yes, Father. You performed so many miracles through me. Thank You so much! – Paisius smiled. – Today there are many books on Earth dedicated to this and my life on Mount Athos.

- This is very important, my dear. Nowadays, people just need to touch something real and modern. Their faith have become so weak over the recent years. They got used to the old miracles and lost their interest in them. Perhaps, the miracles that were seen by people living on Earth now will help them?

God looked at the blue planet with hope.

- I wish that so much...

- We all wish that so much, Father, - Paisius said. – All that fuss of the modern world obscures the most important part of their lives. Without this part a short human life has no meaning at all...

- Today people choose such life themselves even though they have so much evidence of me and Heaven, - the Father reminded him. – They are my children and they are completely free in their choices. It has always been and will always be that way. I respect their choice even though I do not agree with it. Besides, I want to have real and loving

children next to me. It will be difficult for them to love and respect me if I don't respect them first.

Paisius bowed his head to Him.

- Thank You for such high attitude towards us!

\* \* \*

In the evening, at dinner, the friends cheerfully remembered all the interesting events of the last dives in these places. Josh's story about Yegor's recent attempt to become a relative of mantas was several times interrupted by bursts of laughter from Mike, Bob and Yegor himself. Fish was steaming on the table, baked in a special way. It was a snapper caught by Mike while his friends were underwater. There was no wine on the table because Yegor did not touch upon the Russian language today.

After dinner, the friends came out to the ship's rear deck without haste while holding cups of green tea. The starry sky above them sparkled again in all its beauty. They did not want to talk about banal things while standing under it.

- I am still trying to understand, - Mike slowly began to speak looking now at the sky, then at his cup, - what is the purpose of this life? Today I have everything that I wished before. My family, a good job, a house, even a yacht. However, I cannot say that I am happy from all of that. But when I swim on my board in the sea, I feel some right notes in my soul. They make me feel strong; they fill me with joy and harmony for the whole day. How come?

- The question about the purpose or meaning of life is as old as this world itself, - Josh replied with a smile. - Perhaps, everyone have asked themselves this question at least once in their life. But has anyone found the answer? It is hard to say. I have not found the answer yet, either.

At this moment, Josh cheerfully laughed.

- And I do not put away my surfboard too. As well as the diving tanks.
- I think that such people existed on earth, - Yegor thoughtfully joined the conversation, - at least I know one of them.

All his friends looked at him with interest, waiting to continue.

- Once, a few years ago, I visited the city of Nizhny Novgorod, which is not far from Moscow, on business, - Yegor began, - on the way back I decided to stop in a small town of Diveyevo. I'd heard many interesting things about that place before. A famous Russian holy man lived there more than a century ago – St. Seraphim of Sarov. I bet this name does not ring a bell to you.

To confirm, Josh, Mike and Bob shook their heads.

- I myself found out about him not so long ago, - Yegor continued. – I remember I stayed for a couple of nights in a cozy hotel and in the evening, I visited a local café. There, I heard so many interesting stories about this holy man from pilgrims that my former worldview was shaken.

- It will be very interesting to hear. – Josh said. – We do not have holy men in Australia, but I have read about them before.

- What impressed me the most, - Yegor continued. – was the scope of wonders performed by this man of God and the number of witnesses who saw them. For example, several people saw St. Seraphim walking above the ground. His face often shone so bright that it was impossible to look at him. The number of various healings that he performed is just amazing. Moreover, even today he heals many who turn to him with their prayers. I especially remember two interesting facts. First, the Lord himself appeared to St. Seraphim. Second, the Mother of God visited him twelve times, sometimes with witnesses!

- It is strange that I have never heard about it. Twelve times?! – Mike said in surprise.

- There is no surprise. I myself only found out about it in Diveyevo, even though I lived in Russia - Yegor replied and continued. – But even that was not the most important thing that I understood there.

Everyone looked at Yegor in wonder.

- What was it?

- Of course, all this interesting and important. However, it was more important for me what I felt there, - Yegor said and smiled. - So, I have never felt such joy in my heart that I felt near the remains of this holy man before, even in childhood. How much joy he irradiated when he was alive, if he diffuses such joy even after death? In those places there are legends about his kindness and love for other people. Therefore, it is not surprising that hundreds of people from all over Russia visited it every day during his lifetime!

Yegor took a sip of his tea that had already become cold.

- That is why I have no doubt that St. Seraphim knew the true meaning of life. Even I was happy and joyful for several days, though I just touched him.

All the divers on the ship were silent for some time.

- The Mother of God appeared to him twelve times... - Bob said, pondering. – It is like close friends visiting each other. Wow!

- Exactly, - Yegor said. – Sometimes we can live next to something really important and interesting, and know nothing about it. After that trip, I no longer doubt that there really is some great meaning in this life. But you should look for it very carefully...

\* \* \*

The passage of our friends to the new place for diving took no longer than an hour that morning. However, Josh, who navigated the catamaran

again, had to be very attentive. There were many scattered reefs and their tops were very close to the water surface.

- Well, Mike, - Yegor said to his friend, standing at the catamaran's bow, - one should be very careful here even during the good weather. I can only imagine how difficult it was to control a sailing ship here in the bad weather.

All the divers were standing on the ship's bow to help Josh notice any treacherous reefs. GPS was good, but six extra eyes could be really helpful.

- Well, - Mike said. – I would not like to be here on a sailing ship during a heavy storm. It like someone played chess with these reefs.

- What is “chess”? – They heard Bob's voice from behind.

Mike and Yegor looked at each other sadly, sighed and said nothing. There is no need to fill the head of a wonderful child of civilization with trivialities.

- Game of chess is an ancient game, - They heard Josh's voice who took pity on his nephew. - People played this game long ago when there were no computers.

- Ah-ha... - Bob said emphatically. – Were there such times on Earth?

Even Josh did not answer that question.

- Cap, be careful, - Mike said loudly and pointed at the small waves on the left side. – It must be shallow water.

- Thank you, Mike! I already noticed, - Josh responded. – This reef is on the screen.

- Indeed, nowadays captains have almost everything they need for safe sailing, - Yegor thought aloud. – However, are there only advantages to this?

Mike looked at his Russian friend confused.

- Well, I mean, if the GPS goes off, what when? – Yegor explained. – Could we do without it, like in the past?

- Oh, I see what you mean. Perhaps, there is a grain of truth in your words, - Mike replied and when smiled. - By the way, if all the electronics died on the ship, Bob would probably have died of boredom too.

Bob felt some kind of trick from his older fellows and asked them cautiously:

- So what about you, would you die as well?

- No way! – The friends replied in unison. – We would play a game of chess.

\* \* \*

That morning Mike and Yegor were the first to dive in a new place. They, as usual, did a back somersault from the zodiac, descended to a sufficient depth and looked around. It seemed that this place was no different from the previous ones, but something inside our friends told them that here was a better chance to find some “figure” on this reef “chessboard”, for example, a sunken ship. That is why Mike and Egor began to take a closer look at the unusual reefs around them.

Sometimes Yegor looked with envy at the fish that were swimming so fast next to them. *“Well, - he pondered dreamily, - it would be great to tame some dolphin here. After that, we could use it to search for these shipwrecks. Like with dog – we show it our ship and then would say “Look for the same thing underwater!”. It would inspect the entire bottom in just one week”*. But today, even sea turtles easily outpaced the slow divers.

Yegor was still thinking about his brilliant ideas when Mike called him. He swam to his friend and gave him a questioning look. The American pointed at an unusually straight coral on the bottom about three meters long. Everything else around them was pretty common. Mike and Yegor

slowly swam around this unusual reef with a proper shape and tried to scratch it with their knives. No way! It would not give in, even for a centimeter.

Of course, it could be anything: a truly unusual coral or just a sunken tree. It could have easily been a piece of mast. There was “too little information”, as scientists say, to make more accurate conclusions.

Just in case, the friends took some pictures of the reef from different sides and swam further. Even though they did not find anything special so far, a special interest awoke in their souls, which only the real treasure hunters had. Well, mushroom hunters have it as well but in a milder form.

A rich underwater life of this reef did its best to distract our friends from searching for shipwrecks. Sharks, scats, mantas, turtles and many other local inhabitants often swam past them. Sometimes, divers forgot about their treasure hunt and were simply looking around. But then, they remembered about it and got back to work.

Little by little, the reef ended, and the friends had to choose – either swim around for ten minutes before going to the surface on that place or swim further, the other side of the reef against the current. Our divers always tried not to overlook a fitness opportunity, especially since Josh promised to cook a good, but very calorie dense fettuccine for dinner. Of course, it is not a secret that fettuccine is just wide spaghetti, but friends tried to avoid this word in order not to hurt Bob’s feelings.

Suddenly, Yegor noticed a painfully familiar object. “*That’s a bottle!*” – He thought joyfully, looking at the first find, and felt his heart beating twice as fast. The bottle was so much overgrown with corals that it could be ten, a hundred or even two hundred years old. Yegor called Mike, knowing in his heart, how many jokes about it he will have to hear in the evening. Why do Russian divers find bottles underwater?

After several minutes, he finally tore the bottle off the bottom and the friends swam back to the ship with their first trophy.



Seven snow-white angels were again sitting in a beautiful forest glade near a small lake. They discussed with interest the latest adventures of their earthly “treasure hunters”. They were so happy about their success in understanding new and important truths.

- Well, Asly, - angel Nias said. – It is great that your Yegor spoke about Seraphim of Sarov. It was very useful for everyone to hear.

- I agree, my dear Nias, - said his friend with a smile. – The Father sent him to Diveyevo to meet father Seraphim for a good reason. It’s stuck in his head.

- Oh, I wish there were more places on Earth where people could literally touch Divine Providence, - angel Fiu said with a sigh.

- There are quite a lot of them around the world, my friend, - Asly objected. – So many of such places are in Israel, Italy, Egypt and in many other countries. It would be enough for everyone if people were really interested in it. The problem is that many people today prefer various earthly “toys” to the search for such important things. Therefore, they often forget about the purity of their soul, love and kindness. And this is really sad. How can they think of Heaven without pure and loving soul?

- You are right, my friend. Today people are so educated but they cannot understand one simple and obvious thing. God is the author of a huge number of miracles that happened on Earth. Who else could surpass all the laws of the physical world? – Angel Manif joined the conversation. – But despite this, for some reason people often try to look for answers to their spiritual questions in other places. Sometimes they find themselves in such dead-end labyrinths that the Father is not able to get them out of there until the end of their lives.

- Yes, all these modern and trendy theories on earth are so “sticky”. Words are beautiful, but mostly empty, - Asly agreed. – Thank God, our romantics did not get into anything. Oh, then we would struggle a lot with it. Now it seems that the Father and we can guide them towards right conclusions day after day.

- Of course, we will! Especially, when they are in such places. Look, they have been there just a week but have already been thinking about so many things! – Angel Fiu cheerfully joined in the conversation. – My Bob even heard about chess.

Other angels’ laughter muffled his last words. When angels stopped laughing, Fiu stood up first.

- So? Let’s fly and visit them! - He asked his friends. - It is time for our ‘treasure hunters’ to explore that bottle. I would not miss that for the world!

All the angels nodded cheerfully and stood up too.

- We're coming with you! – Leyla, Manif and Ikos said. – You have very nice wards. We are excited to know how it all turns out.

- And I will be with you, My dear! – They heard Father’s warm voice in their hearts. – I would never miss that, too.

\* \* \*

The examination of the bottle took two hours. The friends spent the first hour cleaning it off the outside from adnate shells and algae. The bottle was quite clean inside because its neck was quickly overgrown. Friends had to be very careful in order not to break the bottle. Good thing was that shells do not stick to glass as strongly as, for example, to clay or wood.

Finally, the clean fat bottle took its place in the middle of the table. The divers sat around it with cups of tea. The first scientific council of treasure hunters has begun.

- So, - Josh started. – What do you know about bottles?

Yegor was about to open his mouth but wisely remained silent – his name has already been associated with different bottles. It was better to wait for a bit.

- I read in some book, - Bob began cautiously, - that people throw bottles with notes into the sea from sinking ships to ask for help.

The friends nodded with agreement. It seems that sometimes Bob came across good books.

- This is not our case, Bobby, because the bottle is empty, - Mike replied and continued. – In America, we manufacture different types of bottles. But this one does not look like a modern bottle at all.

He carefully turned the find over in his hands.

- It does not have any notches on the bottom; therefore, it was not manufactured during the last fifty years. Nowadays, almost every bottle has notches to make it easier while passing on the conveyor belt, - Mike continued. – Therefore, it is older than fifty years and that is all that I can say for now.

- Then I will try, - Josh continued the topic. – At home, I have a small collection of wine, including very old ones. I've heard a few things about bottles, but not a lot.

Josh sipped his tea with mint.

- Actually, as far as I remember, the manufacturing of bottles started a long time ago. Venetian glassmakers gained fame in bottles manufacturing while decorating them with various patterns. However, at that time bottles were very expensive, and that does not seem to be our case either. The manufacturing of the first wine bottles, more or less

similar to our bottle, started in the middle of the seventeenth century. However, at the beginning they were mostly black and then olive color. Judging by the color, our bottle does not belong to this period.

Josh took a deep breath.

- Actually, judging by its form, manufacturing technology, thickness and transparency of the glass, I would say that it was manufactured at least in 1870 and maximum in 1930. Even though today many bottles are manufactured in “antique” style, the actual antiques are easy to recognize. This one is definitely one of them.

Josh finished his tea and concluded:

- That is all I can say about it right now. However, you understand that it is a very approximate guess. If we had the Internet, we would learn more about it, for sure. Unfortunately, or fortunately, we are cut off from any civilization here.

After that, the friends kept silent. Everyone looked at Yegor – he was the only one who had not commented on the bottle yet.

- Actually, I know too little about bottles, - Yegor said with a smile. – In the USSR, where I grew up, all bottles were standard and simple.

After a short pause he continued.

- But I like reading detective stories. I think that the deduction method would help us in this situation.

Everyone looked at Yegor with interest. He sipped his tea and continued.

- So, logic suggests that the bottle could have fallen into water in only two ways. First, some a local fisherman drank its content and threw it away some time later. Perhaps, after celebrating his catch. This is not very civilized indeed, but it happens. Moreover, back then people did not care much about the cleanliness of the sea.

Yegor looked at his friends. They nodded agreeably.

- I would like to add here, - Mike intervened in Yegor's deduction, - if this bottle had been old, one would not have thrown it away at that time. They cost some money and were used to store something.

- I totally agree with you, Mike! I am moving in this direction, too, - Yegor nodded. – Therefore, if this bottle is fifty years or older, it could only get to the bottom in the case of a shipwreck. Of course, it does not tell us anything. The ship itself could have survived or might have sunk hundreds kilometers away from this place. Apparently, we cannot extract anything else from this bottle.

- Most likely, - Josh agreed. – There is not enough information for any more serious conclusions, but we already have something. I definitely like our findings today – the reef of unusual shape and this bottle. Something is telling me, my friends, that all this “news from the bottom” is not the last.

The divers slowly drank their tea and went to sleep. The bottle remained standing in the middle of the table.

## *Chapter 5*

### **To the secrets of the depths**

Dives during the next two days were not successful for our divers. The underwater world, as usual, was at its best, but the number of their findings did not rise. On the second day in the evening, the friends were having dinner on the ship's rear deck in the open air. A beautiful sunset was burning down on the horizon and the air stood still – this is rare in these places. All the worries and problems of our friends drowned at one of the reefs and they just wanted to philosophize and laugh.

- Uncle! - Bob called Josh. - Why are you looking for these shipwrecks? What do you want to find there? Treasures?

This simple question suddenly caused a long silence on the ship.

- Great job, Bob! – Josh complimented his nephew. – Yes, friends, it is time for us to decide what we really want to find here. Does anyone have anything to say?

After a few minutes of thought Yegor was already looking at the door of the cupboard for salvation. Mike caught his eye and gladly joined him. Josh looked at his friends and went to get a bottle of wine.

In twenty minutes, friends were ready to give Bob a full and complete answer. Mike was the first to speak.

- You see, Bob, - He said slowly. – Treasures are not the main thing, although, of course, we would be happy to find them. But anyway, it is not so important.

- So what is important then? – Bob asked, opening his beer can. He did not have much respect for wine.

- Oh, that is not so easy to explain, my dear nephew! – Josh said. – Unfortunately, or fortunately, you are still so young! You need to live a long time and yet to accomplish a dozens of your desires to understand us. Then you will understand that sometimes there is a great difference between anticipation of pleasure and real pleasure. Most likely, over time, you will also become “overgrown” with everything that is thought to be a standard of a happy human life on earth. But if you save your romantic soul, you will feel that this “everything” is not all that you really need. After that, you will look for “this something” that will make you really happy.

- Perhaps, you will be surprised, - Yegor continued, - that “this something” is not the expensive houses, cars or huge sums of money. Sometimes it’s just the sea, the sun and the people who make you happy, especially if they think like you do.

- And who also like to drink good wine, - Mike finished his thought and filled the glasses.

- And about treasures. – Josh added with a laugh. – My dear Bob, who in our families would let us sail here for a month without an important reason?

The friends laughed cheerfully.

- Josh! – Yegor said to his friend, - How big are the Australian taxes for discovered treasures?

- Twenty-five percent, - his friend replied professionally, as he had already studied this issue.

- Well, if we come across real treasures, - Yegor continued, - I will build some kind of station here, like “Swain Reefs Romantic Corporation” with a good helicopter pad and a cozy restaurant.

- Do you still accept partners? – Mike asked him.

- Well, I’ll have to join you, too, - Josh sighed. – I tried what you cooked without me. Sad times await you without me ...

The friends laughed again and raised their glasses.

The Father looked at them from Heaven with a smile.

“That’s right, My dear romantics, that’s right. Oh, apparently it’s time for me to give you something more at the bottom for such good thoughts”.

\* \* \*

This morning Bob woke up at dawn. Although it would be more correct to say that the alarm clock that he set yesterday woke him up at dawn. Fishing was the true purpose of his early awakening.

The day before, he tortured his older friends with dozens of questions on this topic. Now he was absolutely ready for independent and serious fishing. Bob faithfully followed all the advice of experienced fishermen. First, he had a cup of good strong coffee, looked at the horizon for a

minute and after that threw a hook with bait overboard. He did not repeat the Russian proverb that he learned from Yegor but came up with his own version. It sounded like this: *“Let interesting and unusual fish be caught, to surprise everyone”*.

After that, Bob installed the fishing rod on board of the ship and sat on the steps nearby. The sky began to dawn and the sea around the ship became clearly visible. Bob spent the first fifteen minutes of fishing in complete silence. Nobody on the bottom tried to make him happy or surprised. Bob was about to change the bait when he heard a small splash overboard. The guy slowly stood up, crept up to the board of the ship and cautiously looked over it.

A big light brown sea turtle was lying on the surface of the water just two meters away from the ship. Its head, peeping out of the water, thoughtfully looked at the horizon. Bob gasped in surprise, but it was for another reason. One word was written in big and clearly visible letters on the back of the turtle – ‘Kathy’...

Bob whispered it several times in utter disbelief. Then the idea struck him and he rushed to his cabin to get a camera. But as ill luck would have it, he could only find it after a few minutes inside the furthest drawer. When Bob finally ran out to the rear deck, there was no turtle near the ship already.

The guy sighed in frustration and sat down on the steps. *“Well, it is okay, they will believe me anyway. Today’s fishing is unusual for sure. I imagine how surprised they will be!”*

In fifteen minutes, Yegor was the first to leave the cabin, yawning. He greeted Bob as usual and was about to sit at the table with a regular cup of coffee when Bob suddenly stopped him.

- Yegor! – Bob said with a serious tone. – Can you imagine that I just saw a turtle with the word “Kathy” written on its back?

Yegor looked at him sharply and asked slowly:



- Did you see her phone number next to the name?
- No, - Bob replied in surprise.
- Then it could be another Kathy, - Yegor sipped his coffee noisily. – Relax man and do nothing until she swims here again with proof that it is really her.

Five minutes later, Mike was the second person to sit next to them. When Bob briefly told him the story about the turtle, he heard another question:

- Did it say anything? – Mike asked.
- Not really, - Bob said thoughtfully. – It was silent.
- Then relax, my boy! Judging by your stories, Kathy would not keep silent for sure. She would definitely tell you everything that she thinks about you.

Josh was the last one to come out of the cabin. When he heard the story from his nephew, he thought for a moment, and then told him seriously:

- You know, Bob, if you do not want to feel guilty, write her a letter, put it in a bottle, plug it and throw it into the sea. And one more thing, - Uncle Josh hesitated for a moment, - Bobby, you'd better not go fishing so early. Have a good night's rest – a young body needs plenty of sleep. And these stupid chips – do not eat so much of them at night...

Meanwhile, angel Fiu was, with a smile, wiping off the inscription from the shell of the big beautiful turtle – the desire of his ward Bob to surprise everyone was fully complied.

\* \* \*

The angels of our friends in Heaven were happy and excited. The remoteness from the whole world obviously did their divers a world of good. They have already begun to find more and more fine and high “notes” in their souls.

- I wonder, - Angel Fiu asked his friends, - what else the Father prepared for them at the bottom?

- Oh, you can be sure that it will be something interesting, - Angel Asly replied. – I think it must be something more than a bottle. But it must be something interesting for sure – we will know it soon.

- I am so happy for my Bob! – Fiu continued. – He learns so much with your romantics. Where else can he get that? Oh, I hope that he will not be “stuck” to his screens again when he comes back. They distract him so much from real life.

- The Father will say how to help him, - Angel Sain said. – The most important thing is that he is honest and sensitive. Little by little, he will reach the right conclusions in his life. He is only twenty.

- By the way, the Father’s idea of the bottle was just brilliant, – Angel Nias added cheerfully. – It is so small but made our divers so happy. Oh, I would give them a bottle at the bottom every day! And day by day, it would get older and older.

- That is why we are only angels, - Asly replied with a laugh. – Only the Father knows for sure when and what to give them and what will not harm them. Benefiting their souls is the most important thing. If we only had the chance - we would fill the sea bottom with ships. But what would happen to our romantics after that?

- Exactly! – Angel Nias agreed. – But I always want to make them happy so much.

- Wait a bit. They will come here and be happy with us forever, - Angel Manif replied. – But now on Earth, it is like they are at school – they have to learn and understand the main things, the true values of life.

- Well, I hope they will succeed, - Angel Nias, sitting nearby, looked at Manif warmly and smiled. – I was worried about you as well, my dear, two thousand years ago. As you can see, it worked out well. This time it will work too. I have no doubt.

Manif came closer to Nias and hugged him.

- Thank you, my faithful friend! For everything, for everything!

- Isn't it time to fly for a swim in some waterfall? – Angel Fiu offered. – While our treasure hunters are sleeping on their ship.

- Well, it seems like a brilliant idea, - the other angels said and soon they were flying together through the sky towards beautiful mountains.

\* \* \*

This morning Mike and Josh were exploring a new reef. Visibility underwater was worse than the day before but still good enough. The divers could see any large object at a distance of fifteen-twenty meters. Friends were looking at large reefs very carefully, as usual, and did not forget about the underwater creatures around them. There were plenty of them. You could never get tired of this abundance.

The life of the reef is a sight that one can watch forever. That is why people are so fond of aquariums at home. A real reef with countless underwater inhabitants is much more than just an aquarium. The friends cheerfully stared everything around them as usual, but suddenly one thing caught their eye. It was a reef, not like an ordinary one. The divers, without any discussion, simultaneously swam to it.

When Josh and Mike were finally above it, they uttered an exhale of surprise and fascination – below they saw a large wooden boat. It was very overgrown with corals and crushed by many storms over many years, but it was a real large boat for twenty passengers.

When the excitement of the friends passed off a bit, they moved to explore it in detail. The divers took a picture of every detail that could help them understand the age and origin of that boat. They examined every inch of the boat and began to inspect the territory around it. However, they soon came back – there was nothing interesting nearby. No oars, no any other item of a terrestrial origin.

During the time left to surfacing, Mike and Josh were trying to find the boat's name on its sides and back part by any means. But it looks like they could inspect any nearby reef with the same result.

Nevertheless, the first true floating trophy was found! The friends swam around the small boat once again with passion, memorizing this place, and began to ascend.

This news will make Bob and Yegor happy, for sure. They need to make a good dinner tonight for that occasion and open the best bottle of wine. Neptune has respect for divers who are happy about his gifts. As usual, Russian Yegor had a more accurate proverb for this case: "*A gift has a short life if it is not celebrated*".

\* \* \*

The evening feast in honor of their first serious finding on the bottom was in full swing. Before nightfall, Yegor and Bob came down to the small sunken boat as they also wanted to touch it with their own hands. They came back from the dive excited and inspired. Needless to say, the search for shipwrecks is a really interesting and unusual activity.

When the bottle of wine on the table came to an end, the friends began to quietly discuss different ideas about the boat at the bottom.

- Gentlemen! – Josh said officially. To be honest, he always spoke in an official and solemn manner. His tall height and natural staidness always made impact on his every word. No wonder clients trusted him. – Though we could not find the name of this boat, it does not mean that we cannot invent it now. Besides, we definitely need a working title so as not to confuse this boat with other ships.

Everyone laughed out loud. It seems that this boat made the team more confident about their project.

- I offer you the following, - Mike began, - we found the bottle, the pole and the boat as a part of a project which is called *Avos*. Without it, we

would not have dived here and found anything. That is why a new name should be somehow connected with it. Maybe, we should call the small boat *Avos-1*?

- Too technical for a name, - Yegor frowned a little. – But the idea itself is perfect. You know, there is a very similar word in the Russian language – *avoska*. This is a small bag for carrying something. It funny fits both into the general sound of the theme and into the size of our “firstborn”. I suggest giving this name to our small boat.

- Oh! – Bob exclaimed. – I also know one funny Russian word – balalaika. I have a picture of it on my phone.

- This is different, Bobby. However, - Yegor thoughtfully scratched his head, - I think that these two things are equally useful for humankind.

- Avoska... Sounds fun, - Josh said. – I am for it!

The other treasure hunters nodded cheerfully.

After that, Yegor filled the glasses and tried to say solemnly in Josh’s manner: “For Avoska!” But all his *solemnity* caused a burst of laughter among friends. No, this role only suited Josh.

A little later, the friends began to plan their upcoming dives. They have almost finished exploring this area; only the third area marked on the map with a large quantity of concentrated dots was left.

The divers made a decision to move there the day after tomorrow. They decided to dedicate the next day to *Avoska* and its surrounding area. It was important to inspect every detail. Perhaps, it was their last chance to dive here.

\* \* \*

Mark was sitting in a spacious office and skipping through the news on a big screen of his inseparable computer. Everything seemed just fine and he spinned on his chair with satisfaction. For more than twenty years

Mark Schultz was working in that company, dealing with the service and sale of cars in Germany and abroad. Over that time, the company developed and set up two branches in the country. Now, he was working on the opening of the third branch.

Actually, Schultz had already become the second person in that company and had a good share of stocks. From a business perspective, everything was going just fine.

However, his angel Anrie, who was also in that office at this time did not seem to be satisfied with his earthly ward so much. Many times he tried to put thoughts about vacation into Mark's head that he and his wife Marta really needed.

Mark leaned back in his chair and stared at the big picture with beautiful sea scenery for several minutes. That picture was hanging above the computer screen on the wall in front of him for a long time.

“Such a beautiful picture!” – He thought. “Who gave it to me?”

His angel smiled, “It was your children that presented this picture eight years ago for your fortieth anniversary.”

“Perhaps, children gave it to me on one of my birthday parties”, - Mark began to remember. “Such a vivid sea landscape, just like a real one”.

“Yeah”, - angel echoed cheerfully. – “Back then, I rushed through the whole city to find it. I remember, even angel Blos was helping me”.

“Oh, it's been a long time since I have snorkeled”, - Mark was still thinking, “and my Martha has been thinking about the sea lately. Maybe we should go on vacation somewhere for a few weeks?”

Mark thought for a moment but then shook his head and moved close to the computer again.

The angel became worried. The vacation was in danger - he had to do something immediately. He mentally asked the Father for help. In exactly a minute, Mark's boss Heinrich joyfully came into his office.

His tanned face was shining with a smile – just a few days ago he returned from his trip to Thailand.

- Hello, Mark! – he greeted happily. – How are you doing, my dear?

Friends shook hands.

- You have tanned so much, - Mark said with a little envy. – You even look a little bit inappropriate for Germany's winter.

Heinrich laughed cheerfully.

- Vacation, my friend, is always good! – he replied. – What for have we been working for such a long time? To take care of our children and enjoy our life of course. In this life, we always need to find the right balance between work and rest.

The boss looked closely at his friend.

- By the way, you haven't travelled anywhere for over a year? That is not good, my friend. Take your Marta and fly to some beautiful place. The color of your skin is already looks like this grey computer.

Mark stretched himself dreamily and smiled.

- Perhaps you are right, Heinrich, I have to take a vacation and go somewhere, - he said with a smile. – Indeed, we have not dined with Marta on the beach at sunset for a very long time...

The boss tapped him on the shoulder.

- Deal! I order my friend to go on vacation immediately! – He commanded with a laugh and soon left the office.

Angel Anrie smiled gratefully: "Thank you, Father!"

After a minute, Mark Schultz called his Marta.

- Hello, my dear! – He said happily. – I have decided something! Let's go on vacation to some islands. Call our agent Elsa; let her find some good options for us.

Mark listened to the joyful twittering of his wife and added:

- Yes, start packing our big blue bag. One more thing, - he looked again at the picture hanging on the wall, - do not forget to pack our snorkeling masks and fins. We will swim a lot in the sea.

Angel Anrie cheerfully spun, - “I did it!” He caressed the picture on the wall with a smile, looked cheerfully at Mark and flew back home.

\* \* \*

“Dolce Dive” catamaran weighed anchor. Mike and Bob raised sails together; Josh was standing at the wheel. Meanwhile, Yegor fastened the anchor on the bow of the ship and kept a look out for all the shoals around. Fresh morning breeze was raised small waves over the water surface and filled the divers’ sails.

The passage to the next place for diving should have lasted for less than three hours. The friends had to sail around several groups of reefs and after that enter the desired area. To have fun, the divers took out their fishing rods again. On the evening of the day before, they suddenly remembered that they had not eaten fresh fish sashimi with soy sauce and wasabi in a while. And this happened in the middle of the ocean full of almost ready products for that dish! All in all, they urgently had to fill the gap in their fish diet.

Along with Mike and Yegor, Bob took out his fishing rod too. After his last fishing in the morning, he considered himself a more experienced fisherman than before. Soon, three spinners went underwater. Mike took a place on the left side of the catamaran, Bob on the right side, and Yegor in the middle of the ship’s rear deck.

For the next fifteen minutes, the fisherman turned their heads in silence, looking at their still fishing rods and those of their friends.

- Which fish is the most delicious for sashimi? – Yegor was first to break the silence.

Josh who was standing at the helm brightened up.



- It depends on the person's tastes, but wahoo, snapper and perch are considered to have the softest meat. I prefer the blue perch. . It has such big eloquent eyes and the tenderness of the meat is just as good.

On the rear deck Bob swallowed a mouthful of saliva and sat closer to his fishing rod.

- I also like fresh salmon, - Mike added. – But it lives in cold waters so wahoo and perch will be the most delicious here, I guess.

Another twenty minutes passed; no fish was biting.

- Our dear Josh! – Yegor began very gently, already looking at his fishing rod without any interest, - what delicious meat do we have on board now?

- Oh! – Josh exclaimed emotionally. – We have lamb meat on the bone and Black Angus beef steaks. They are made from special black cow's meat; the capital of which is considered to be the city of Rockhampton. These steaks are my favorite and I brought a couple dozen of them on board. Nothing comes close to this dish, if you cook these steaks on the barbeque with a special sauce.

All the fishermen on the rear deck, without saying a word, began to pull up their fishing rods.

- Dear Josh! – Mike, who pulled up the fishing reel first, addressed to his friend. – Let me stand at the helm for a while. Get some rest and at the same time defrost your delicious steaks in a microwave. After all, we happen to be close to its capital.

After that, Mike gave an expressive look at the other fishermen.

- Friends! – He appealed to them. – Do you mind eating sashimi some other time?

- No-No! – Yegor and Bob cried in response.

- Anyway, we are not Japanese to eat raw fish for breakfast, - Bob added. – We are in Australia and people here like delicious meat!

## *Chapter 6*

### **Sailing ship**

By afternoon, the “Dolce Dive” catamaran was already anchored in a convenient sandy lagoon. The friends finally reached the third place. The team decided to spend the rest of the day solving everyday issues and leave diving for tomorrow. The divers checked water, food and fuel supplies one more time. Their autonomous sailing had already lasted fourteen days and it was time to conduct a small provision check.

After the detailed inspection of the ship, Josh voiced his opinion at the table.

- We have enough water, my friends! On-board desalinator does a good job and satisfies our needs, - he took a sip of hot coffee and continued, - food supplies will last for ten more days even if all the fish around us ignore our spinners.

The divers burst out laughing. Steaks made from the famous Australian cows that were eaten not so long ago raised their spirits.

- The situation with the fuel is practically the same, - Josh continued to explain. – It will be enough to start the engine twice a day and charge all the batteries on the ship. The diesel will last for ten days.

Mike and Yegor exchanged looks.

- So, if possible, we will have to stop by some port in a week, - Mike said first, - to replenish our food and fuel supplies.

- And also visit some local pub with fresh beer and tasty sausages, - Bob added dreamily.

- And do not forget to call our loved ones, - Yegor raised his finger edifyingly. – Because officially we are now diving in wild waters with dozens of biting sharks.

After that, Yegor cunningly folded his hands and continued, imitating a female voice.

- However, we can also find some beautiful antique tiara here...

The divers burst out laughing, but then nodded in unison. After all that, Josh took a map and a special ruler.

- Then it is better for us now to choose a place for refueling and a short rest, - He said. – Besides, the weather can change quickly. That is why we listen to the weather forecast several times a day on the ship's radio.

- What are the options for good ports here? – Yegor asked, looking at the map.

Josh put the ruler on the map and began to measure something.

- We need to sail three hundred and seventy kilometers to Bundaberg port, - he finished his first measurement.

- Bundaberg? - Yegor repeated softly, - Is this the small town where a wonderful rum is made which was the favorite drink of all sailors of the world not so long ago?

- Exactly, - Mike said with a laugh.

- But these three hundred and seventy kilometers mean a two-day journey for us, and we can buy this rum at any liquor store in Australia, - Josh argued to Yegor.

- But it is the rum birthplace, - Yegor said romantically but gave up anyway. – Okay, let's move on.

- The distance to the other port called Mackay is three hundred and forty kilometers.

- Not much better, - Mike said.

- I agree, - Josh replied and moved his ruler further on the map.

- About two hundred and forty kilometers to Rockhampton. However, there is no good port on the seashore and we will have to sail more forty kilometers along the Fitzroy River to reach the city.

- Not much fun, - said Yegor. – There are usually a lot of mosquitoes near rivers. Besides, rivers have different navigability depending on the time of year. I think we should not take any risks in unfamiliar places.

Josh and Mike looked at each other and nodded in agreement.

- There is a nice place in Gladstone, - Josh continued his measurements. – It is a big port and a city. The distance to it is just two hundred and thirty-five kilometers.

- That sounds better. – Mike said.

- But there is one drawback, - Yegor made a wry face. – Gladstone is a big commercial port and its landscape is way too industrial. The contrast with Swain reefs will be huge.

Josh moved his ruler on the map again.

- Then we have just one good option – the port in Rosman. The distance to it, - Josh closely looked at the ruler, - only two hundred and twenty kilometers!

- If we set off at dawn, we will manage to reach the port by the end of the day, - Mike quickly counted.

Yegor pulled the map closer and took a good look at that place.

- There are some good beaches and the city itself is not so big, - He glanced sideways at Bob. – There, we will definitely find a good country pub with excellent sausages and cold fresh beer.

Bobby livened up straight away.

- So? Let's vote! – He said. – Who is for sailing to Rosman?

Four hands were raised. It seems that everyone including Yegor was “hooked” on the advertisement of a local pub.

The next morning was surprisingly calm. The sea looked like a big mirror that reflected white fluffy clouds. Josh and Yegor were the first pair to go underwater. As they began to board the zodiac, a big pod of dolphins swam near the catamaran. The whole team on the ship froze and stared at them.

- It is a good sign, - Mike said with a smile and waved to his friends. – Have a nice dive!

Josh and Yegor waved back and Bob sailed off from the ship. Visibility underwater was wonderful. The friends went down along the reef slope and moved further along it with a fair current. The sea was quite deep in that place – the flat sandy bottom was about thirty meters from the surface. Josh and Yegor were habitually looking in different directions while searching for sunken items; however, they did not forget to look at the local inhabitants of the reef.

However, they did not have to search for a long time – the shipwreck itself found them. It just slowly came out of the blue. Josh and Yegor were swimming when they suddenly ran into its rear part. It was so unexpected and yet so real that the friends just froze and did not know what to do next – a big wooden sailing ship was just in front of them.

Outwardly, it was about forty meters long and only one part of mast with a small cross-form survived on it. Like in a beautiful fairytale, Josh and Yegor looked at the ship in fascination for a few minutes before they became able to do anything and to think in general.

Yegor swam closer to the rear of the ship with its name on it and cleaned the letters a little with a knife. It was composed of only four letters: **SOVA**.

Yegor and Josh took several pictures of the rear of the ship, came down to the bottom and swam around it. Obviously, the sailing ship remained

in a good condition because it was lying on an open sandy bottom. Despite all the bushes of corals on some of its parts, it looked really magnificent and grandiose.

Near the ship's bow, the friends found a large two-by-two meter hole in its hull, which was apparently the reason for its crash. The divers shone a flashlight on inside without entering – a visual inspection was enough for now.

Josh and Yegor tried to take a picture of all the interesting details on the ship. They read its name on the bow once again and were convinced, that the ship indeed called *Sova*. After the divers inspected the lower part, they swam to the upper deck. The distance to the surface from here was eighteen meters; therefore, the friends had enough time remaining until the end of the dive.

They inspected everything very carefully and found four entrances leading inside the ship. Two of them were quite narrow and overgrown with corals, but the other two entrances allowed the divers to swim inside with their equipment. Josh and Yegor photographed everything around them and, as far as the camera flash allowed, inside. They looked into all the illuminators and artillery compartments. Of course, the last things the divers wanted was to come across someone's remains. They were lucky – it seemed that the crew of the sailing ship managed to sail away on quarter boats during the crash.

Soon, the diving computers of Josh and Yegor started beeping to remind them about surfacing. The friends exchanged looks and began to rise above the ship, taking pictures of it from different angles at the same time.

When Josh and Yegor surfaced, they immediately took their regulators out of their mouths. However, they did not really want to talk for some reason.

- Well, - Yegor finally broke the silence. – Our dream finally came true, my friend! I cannot even believe that we actually found a shipwreck.

- That's true, - Josh replied slowly, - only an hour ago we were dreaming about it and now it has become the reality of our life.

Afterwards, Josh looked at Yegor and said thoughtfully:

- I have strange feelings in my soul, mate. It is difficult to express them.

- The precious cupboard will help us, - Yegor smiled in response. – Well, my friend, it is time to inflate the signal buoy. The guys have to come down to the ship before nightfall.

Josh pulled the signal buoy out of his pocket, still thinking aloud.

- *Sova*. A very interesting name. What does it mean? There is no such word in the English language. Is it someone's name, name of a city or just an abbreviation?

\* \* \*

On that evening, the friends were sitting on the rear deck of the ship at the table, as usual. It seemed strange, but they did not even want to talk about such a great event. They were smiling calmly as one would after a successful ending to some serious and responsible work. However, coffee and a bottle of the best wine did their job – soon they became lively again.

- So, gentlemen! – Josh began first. – Today we have changed our status from “shipwrecks hunters” to “successful shipwreck hunters”. Congratulations!

- Thank you, - Bob responded with a serious tone and asked, - and what can we do with this status?

Everyone kept silent. Finally, Yegor spoke.

- We have no idea, Bobby. We have been in that status only for a few hours and also for the first time in our life, - he smiled broadly. – But we have four heads, intuition and a real shipwreck. Therefore, you can be sure that we will come up with a brilliant idea very soon.

- We also have a precious cupboard, - Mike added cheerfully. – If we are short of ideas, we will always find “fuel” there for inspiration.

The friends burst out laughing and filled the glasses.

- Well, my friends, - Josh said, raising his glass of wine. – To our sailing boat *Sova*! Let it bring us luck.

They clinked their glasses, as Russian Yegor taught them and drank their wine with feeling. Today even Bob did not stand out among friends with his beer on that occasion.

- So, - Mike continued the conversation, - we have to make a plan for our future actions. Any ideas?

- Of course, I wish we could *dive* into the Internet right now, - Yegor began, - we could look up information about this ship, what it was carrying, what rooms it had inside. This information would be very useful for our work inside. But we do not have the Internet.

- But we have a small book with images of sailing ships. I read it a little before going on a trip, - Josh joined in the conversation. – The design of our sailing ship reminds me of a frigate or a corvette, of the first half of the nineteenth century. A frigate is a military vessel; a corvette is a multipurpose ship. It would be great if we could draw its outside view from the photos we took. It would be very useful.

- Can anyone of us draw? – Mike asked.

Bob raised his hand.

- Bobby, - Yegor asked him with a mischievous smile, - didn't you learn to draw on the Internet by any chance?

Everyone at the table burst out laughing.

- Not really, - the guy responded, smiling broadly.

After that, he took a sheet of paper and in a couple of minutes made such a good caricature of Yegor that Russian diver regretted about his joke.



- Well done, nephew! – Josh said, looking at the drawing with a smile. – Then, take our cameras, go to the cabin and draw the sailing ship. We will listen to the weather forecast for tomorrow on the radio.

Josh switched on the radio and turned up the volume – the weather forecast for sailors was broadcasted at the beginning of every hour. After several minutes, they heard a mechanical voice from the speakers. As they listened to that weather forecast, our friends' faces became more and more unhappy.

As it turned out, Cyclone Fiona was approaching Queensland State – their place of diving - from the Fiji Islands with the wind speed of up to one hundred and twenty kilometers per hour. It was to reach Australian shores by the day after tomorrow.

When the weather forecast ended, friends were silent for another minute.

- Gentlemen, apparently our plans are changing, - Josh finally spoke. – One hundred and twenty kilometers per hour on open reefs is very dangerous.

- Yeah, I would not like to be here when it happens. And we do not have any other options - tomorrow at dawn we need to sail towards the shore, - Mike agreed.

- At least, we will have the Internet, - Yegor perked up. – Such cyclones do not last long. Two or three days and after that we will be fully ready to explore the inside of the ship.

After that, Yegor turned his head toward the cabin where Bob was drawing the ship and shouted.

- Bobby, what do you think about beer and delicious sausages at the pub tomorrow evening?

\* \* \*

The angels were swimming in a beautiful lake next to a small waterfall. Sometimes they swam under its colorful streams and frolicked there – swam, dove, played. They swam to their heart's content, then came into shallow water and sat in a circle on the sandy bottom.

- I am still so happy that the Father came up with such a wise and fun idea about this shipwreck, - Angel Nias said first with a smile.

- That's true! – Angel Fiu laughed. – Our romantics have a lot to think about. Yeah, I think they will never forget that.

- Exactly, - Angel Asly agreed. – And we will never allow them to forget anything important from what happened and what will happen to them.

- By the way, - Angel Sain threw water up with his wing and it showered our smiling friends like rain. – The Father sent Cyclone Fiona just in time. It is very good that they have enough time to think carefully and make the right conclusions.

- All right, my friends! Let's fly and see how they wake up after their delicious sausages, - Angel Manif suggested. – They will have a lot of news today. I cannot wait to take part and help them to understand everything.

The angels splashed in the water for some time and then flew to Earth. The Father looked at them with a smile – His older children were flying to help His younger children. What else could be more beautiful and touching for the Father! Good luck to them; He will always be next to them.

\* \* \*

This morning the friends woke up very late. Even the desperate bird's singing outside the window could not disturb their good sleep. The long passage on the day before from reefs to the shore and delicious sausages with beer in the pub did their job – the divers needed a good rest.

At nine o'clock Yegor was the first to come out of his room into the garden and sit at the table that by the door. He had nothing to do, so he took a sheet of paper and wrote the word *Sova* with a black diving marker. From time to time, he raised his head and looked with a smile at children playing in the swimming pool nearby. After a quarter of an hour, Josh came out from the next room. He greeted Yegor and sat at the table as well.

- Good morning, Josh! – Yegor smiled. – Did you sleep well?

- Just marvelous! Actually, I have been awake for an hour already, surfing the Internet and searching for information about our ship, - Josh replied.

- Very good news! – Yegor rejoiced, turned the sheet over and prepared to write down the information.

However, Josh looked at his friend thoughtfully.

- Actually, there is nothing to write, Yegor. It seems that we found a ghost ship. I did not find any information about the ship with that name on the Internet.

Josh opened a bottle of ginger beer and took a few sips. Yegor considered this news in surprise.

- And I was not able to decrypt the word *Sova* as well. I did not find any cities or understandable abbreviations of these letters.

- Wow, - Yegor sighed. After that, he closed his marker and put it on a clean sheet of paper.

- Perhaps, I will not add much, my friends, - they heard the voice of Mike, who was coming up to the table.

The friends shook hands.

- All that I found was a Swedish word that translated as *dream*. No more useful information for you.

- A Swedish word? – Yegor was surprised. – Does that mean that we found a Viking ship? Did they reach this place too?

- No, - Josh replied with a smile. – Vikings sailed until the eleventh century and their ships were totally different. And our ship was probably built in the middle of the nineteenth century.

- Good morning to everyone! – they heard Bob's voice. The divers shook his hand.

When the guy sat at the table too, Josh asked him:

- Bob, have you found anything about our ship over the Internet this morning?

- Kathy called me, - the guy replied, blushing. – Well, you know her... All in all, I didn't have time for anything else.

Everyone at the table burst out laughing.

- All right, friends, - Yegor changed the topic. – Whether it is a ghost ship or not, we need to have breakfast. Breakfast ends at ten o'clock at that hotel, so we need to hurry.

All the divers stood up and went to the hotel's restaurant. A few minutes later, it started to rain – Cyclone Fiona finally reached Australian shores.

Half an hour later, the sated divers came back to the table and saw Yegor's paper floating on it in a puddle of water.

Josh and Mike came to the table to take it under the shed but suddenly froze. Yegor and Bob intuitively felt that friends saw something unusual and came closer. After a moment, they stood astonished next to them.

On the paper they saw a word that Yegor had drawn that morning. Because of the water, the paper became transparent so that the word from the other side could be read, but backward. Now they saw the word **AVOS**.

- Avos... - was the only thing that the Russian diver whispered.

The divers were sitting on the pub's porch and looking at the rain in silence. Sausages were good today but nobody even thought about alcohol.

- So, - Josh finally spoke. – We have a ghost ship built around the beginning of the nineteenth century and it is called *Avos*. If you have any thoughts left, please share.

Bob was the first to speak after a minute of silence.

- Guys! – He exclaimed happily, - I just remembered a movie about a ghost ship. It was called “The Black Pearl”. There was a captain ...

- Bobby, Bobby! – His uncle interrupted him. – We have all watched this movie, too. If we rely on it, we will have to be ready to meet underwater pirates with heads of hammer sharks and octopuses.

They all laughed oddly and fell silent again.

- You see, Bob, - Mike decided to continue this topic, speaking either with the guy or himself, - it is a fairytale, but we live in a real world.

Yegor raised his eyes.

- I do not think so, - he said thoughtfully.

- What do you mean? – The surprised friends asked him in unison.

- Is the reality where such things can happen much better than a fairytale? – Yegor asked the question in return.

- So what does this mean? – Josh tried to understand his thought.

- Look. If someone can make such fairytales in our *real* world, then what is this reality?

The friends kept silent for a few more minutes.

- Perhaps, Yegor is right, - Mike said quietly. – I think, the One who sent me here for my birthday does such things to us. And it seems that He can definitely influence reality.

- So, what should we do now? – Bob asked somehow piteously.

- Follow Him, of course! – Yegor replied emotionally. – That Someone is a kind storyteller and, obviously, very funny. He made our voyage so interesting! It's like He is trying to explain something really important to us. So we should just follow Him and guess what He is trying to tell us.

- Is He really kind? – Bob asked Yegor incredulously.

- Absolutely! – Uncle Josh said. – Did anything unpleasant happen to us during that time? On the contrary, we had so much fun.

- Do we have to do anything now? – Bob asked another question.

His older friends exchanged looks and finally smiled. It seemed that they began to understand something.

- We don't need to do anything special, Bobby, - Mike answered for everyone. – We just have to live on and do what we are used to. And try to understand all the important things that this Someone is trying to say. I think we will find many interesting answers on that shipwreck.

- I watched the weather forecast not so long ago, - Josh changed the topic. – It is too early for us to sail tomorrow. We'd better replenish our fuel and food reserves. But the day after tomorrow the sea will be calm and it will be easy to come back. I cannot wait to dive inside this fantastic ghost ship.

- Avos, we will find something interesting, - Yegor replied in the same manner. – For some reason, I have no doubts about it anymore.

- Neither have I, - Mike agreed.

- I have no doubt as well, - Josh said.

Everyone looked at Bob who was silent for some reason.

- You can tell me all about it later! – The guy cheerfully escaped the situation with honor.

Apparently, that movie about the pirates on a ghost ship still left an indelible impression on him.

The friends moved towards the door when Yegor stopped them.

- By the way, my friends, we definitely need to replenish our cupboard – he said and then added, - it seems that many of these puzzles cannot be solved if we are “dry”...

## *Chapter 7*

### **Back to the reef**

“Dolce Dive” catamaran was returning to Swain reefs. Even though it was early morning, the friends had already sailed quite far away from the shore. The ship’s tanks were filled with fuel again, refrigerators were stuffed with delicious food and perfect wine was in the cupboard. After rainy days, the sun was shining bright in the sky again.

The sea calmed down and it seemed to already forget about the recent cyclone with a strange name. Besides fuel and food, the divers also bought additional ropes and underwater flashlights. After that, they went to a local garden store and bought a couple of short shovels, buckets, several strong waterproof bags and a certain instrument. The cashier who processed their payment had no doubt that the items were bought for the house. He would be surprised if he found out what our friends were intending to use it for.

In addition, at the hotel, our divers printed out all possible versions of the internal structure of ships manufactured at the end of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Josh also contacted his law firm in Gold Coast,

just in case. He asked them to check all the laws and regulations concerning their discovery and prepare all the necessary documents if they really find something. Therefore, this short break on the shore was quite useful for our friends.

Now, they were coming back to their shipwreck fully prepared not only technically, but also legally.

- Josh, what are we legally required to do if we find treasures on that ship? – Yegor asked his friend.

- Actually, it is not actually covered in law in detail, - Josh, who was standing at the helm, smiled. – It seems that people do not find those things very often. The main thing is that we should disclose our findings to the state and pay twenty-five percent of the value found. We will deal with the situation on-site. My guys will prepare all the necessary documents just in case. We will only have to list our finds.

- And one more thing, - Mike interrupted their conversation with laughter. – We need to find these treasures on the ship. But this is a real trifle.

Everyone burst out laughing.

- What could these ships have transported in those times? – Bob asked his friends.

- They carried different cargoes at different times, - the uncle answered. – Once many prisoners were transported from England to Australia. Later, in the days of industrial and agricultural development, all these became more like a regular commodity exchange.

- What do you think, uncle, what could our ship carry? – Bob took interest.

Josh smiled.



- I think, nephew, our ship falls under the new category, - He looked at Bob playfully. – These ships carried cargo under the general sea name OGKWIT.

- And what is OGKWIT? – Bob even leaned forward a little with wide eyes.

Mike and Yegor came closer too.

- OGKWIT, Bobby, means “Only God Knows What Is That”, - Josh replied.

The friends’ laughter muffled the end of his phrase.

\* \* \*

Kathy was sitting at the table in her favorite café and drinking delicious cappuccino. Sometimes she looked at the phone screen with a picture of smiling Bob. Each time she smiled in response. She missed him so much! Their conversation the day before could last forever if only her phone did not run out of battery.

*Oh, Bobby, he is such a storyteller!* Yesterday, he had been telling her about some kind of a shipwreck for one hour. But everything is fine, the main thing is that he finished his journey faster and returns home safe and sound. And TV showed such terrible sharks in the ocean. It is good that Bobby does not dive much but just sails on the ship. Oh, these men! Something is always dragging them somewhere. Why do they ever find a wet shipwreck more interesting than this city with its beautiful parks and wonderful shops?

Kathy took a sip and looked at the street. Birds were cheerfully jumping on the branches of a nearby tree. People were peacefully walking down the alleys and sitting on benches with books. Wonderful! What else does one need in life? It is warm and bright here, and cappuccino is always delicious. Kathy sighed, feeling sorry for all men in general and for her Bobby in particular.

Actually, one thing was not clear to her in this life – why can't she live without this funny, simple guy? Look at all these young men – many of them would be glad to be friends with her. Perhaps among them she could find a calm guy who would never leave her and run away from her somewhere to the end of the world for a whole month.

But for some reason she was scared of the thought of losing Bob. Katie tried to cope with it several times, tried to start living without this guy but every time she felt so bad that she decided to make peace with him.

The girl smiled at Bobby from the phone screen again, finished her coffee and went outside. There, she was welcomed by a cheerful sun, singing birds and a gentle breeze. Kathy stood still for a while and walked on.

Her angel Gley watched her go with a smile. His favorite “Kitty” was becoming kinder and kinder slowly but surely.

\* \* \*

The next morning, after a good night's sleep, the friends sat at the table for their first meeting. They had only one question for today – the exploration of that sunken ship. “Dolce Dive” catamaran was anchored in the same spot, next to their find. The friends filled their cups with delicious coffee, spread sheets of paper with pens and even put a small laptop on the table which they hadn't done before.

- Dear treasure hunters! – Josh spoke first, as usual. – We are going to explore this ship. Unfortunately, we do not have any practical experience in that field; therefore, we have to come up with a clever plan. This plan should consider security issues and describe a competent sequence of our internal operations. Please, give your opinions on this subject.

After a small pause, Mike began to speak.

- Our trip to the shore was quite useful. We have spent many hours surfing the Internet and searching for the necessary information about shipwrecks. In our computer, we have dozens of plans for the internal arrangement of cabins and rooms typical for sailing ships of that time. Our goal is to find the most suitable one for our sailing ship. This will help us understand what we should explore first.

- Let me add something, - Yegor joined the conversation. – Of course, the cargo hold and the captain's cabin will be the places of special interest for us. First of all, we will see what kind of cargo this ship carried. Any treasures that we may find should be located in the skipper's cabin, unless the ship carried some special treasures that required a separate compartment space. However, it is unlikely. I do not think something like that was ever shipped to Australia. That was more typical for pirate ships or, at the very least, Mediterranean ones.

- I agree, - said Josh, - besides, there is also a chance of finding nothing. The captain could have taken all the treasures onto the quarter boat.

Yegor smiled cunningly.

- I would agree with you, my friend, if we were talking about a simple shipwreck, - the Russian diver sipped his coffee and looked thoughtfully into the distance. – But our ship's name, as it turned out, can be read backwards as *Avos*. How many of you think that this is a coincidence?

All the divers thought for several minutes but no one objected.

- That means that the location of treasures inside of the ship probably won't be according to the general rules, - he continued, - but according to the good old *Avos* plan.

Yegor smiled broadly and happily and finished with:

- That means, my friends, that anything can happen.

- Yes, - Josh thoughtfully continued the topic after a pause, – this is all so unusual. On one hand, we have a real shipwreck made around the

nineteenth century. On the other hand, we live by the modern *Avos* plan, which apparently has control over time and all circumstances.

- That is even more interesting, - Mike said with a smile. – I have never thought that my birthday present would be so grandiose.

- I will also have a birthday in a couple of weeks as well, - Bob said in a cunning and pitiful manner.

The friends at the table burst out laughing.

- All right, gentlemen, - Yegor continued after a short pause. – Let's move to the technical side of our dives. I will briefly tell you about the safety regulations for diving into caves and internal parts of the ship. After that, we will think of how to apply them on our sailing ship.

The friends moved closer to the table to listen.

\* \* \*

An hour later, Mike and Yegor were the first pair to go diving. Today their zodiac was filled with many items and equipment, which they were going to use in underwater works. First, the friends wanted to tie a rope with a buoy to the sailing ship - that would make their future dives easier. Yegor began to do this job. At that time, Mike carried to the ship a spare tank with a regulator; this guaranteed safety during the internal work on the ship.

Yegor looked again at the majestic sailing ship and began to search for the highest point to tie the rope. It was the broken mast in the middle of the ship. When Yegor approached it, he suddenly realized that the mast's fragment with a small crossbar surprisingly resembled a cross. Yegor thought for a minute and tied the rope.

“Perhaps, it will be very symbolic to start work from that place every time”, - he thought. When Yegor finished knotting, he swam closer to Mike who had already put a tank in a safe place on the ancient deck.

After that, friends signaled Bob by releasing several big bubbles from the regulator under his zodiac.

A minute later, Bob began to lower different loads on the rope, which Mike and Yegor then carried to the sailing ship and placed next to the tank. When no more loads were left, the friends fastened it with a rope. Of course, not against theft. This load was worthless rubbish to the inhabitants of this reef. However, the divers clearly understood the danger of strong currents at that place; therefore, they secured the goods, just in case.

After that, Mike and Yegor continued the external inspection of the ship, according to their plan. It would help them to determine its type, age, and, possibly the precise location of its cabins. First, they explored and photographed all the parts of the upper deck, then found an anchor compartment, inspected and counted all the artillery places along the ship's sides. Then they measured the length, width and height of the ship with a measuring rope.

After that, their job was finished. The friends swam closer to the mast and slowly began swimming to the surface. At a depth of five meters, they stopped for the decompression stop and looked at their sailing ship for three more minutes. From this distance, it looked very graceful and majestic.

\* \* \*

- I wonder what finds the Father prepared for them inside the ship. – Angel Fiu asked his friends, playing with his hand with the fish in the pond.

At that moments the angels were sitting together in the garden near Asly's house. Cozy colorful chairs stood by the water and the angels could look at the fish and even play with it.

- Very soon, we will see, - Angel Nias replied. – But do not even doubt that these finds will not just be interesting, but very useful for our divers as well.

- To be honest, I am still surprised at how quick and lively the Father led our romantics to the understanding of such important things, - Angel Asly said with a smile. – Their faith definitely got stronger.

After that, angel Asly made a serious face and continued to speak by imitating Yegor's voice.

- “The presence of treasures inside the ship will probably go by the good old *Avos* plan,” - he said among with the laughter of his friends. – Two weeks ago, he did not even have such thoughts in his mind. And yesterday he noticed a cross on the ship, what an eagle sight!

- Listen to, what my guy said, - Angel Nias said and continued with Mike's voice. – “I have never thought that my birthday present would be so grandiose”. It is such a pleasure for the Father to hear these words from them!

- That's right, - Fiu gave a warm sigh. – Even my Bobby remembered his own birthday.

The angels burst out laughing.

- Your Bob is so young and sweet, - angel Leyla said. – All the things that he is learning now will be so useful for him in the future.

- Indeed. The Father and I will not let him forget anything, - Fiu said.

- Well, my friends! – Sain addressed the angels. – Perhaps, we should ask the Father about the next finds. And after that, visit our divers.

Everyone addressed the Father in their minds. In a moment, they smiled cheerfully.

- As usual, - Angel Manif laughed, – simple, fun and brilliant. Our Father always does like this. So, let's fly? It is so interested.

The angels flapped their wings and headed to Swain reefs.

\* \* \*

- For a better understanding of what we should look for and where, let me tell you how sailing ships were loaded back then, - Mike said, looking at his computer screen. He had already downloaded all the necessary information while on the shore.

The divers were sitting on the rear deck and drinking their evening tea.

- So, - the American continued the topic. – It was necessary to put cast iron or stone ballast on the bottom of all wooden ships to provide good stability. Therefore, there is no point in digging to the very bottom.

The divers nodded in agreement. They were not enthusiastic about digging out some ballast no matter how old it was.

- Next, the heaviest load was put on the bottom: cannonballs, gunpowder, and so on. The freshwater compartment was usually located in the front of a ship where it was stored for the rest of the long journey. It was poured into the barrels. The lower barrels were covered with stones and the upper ones were fixed with wood to prevent them from rolling during the sway.

Mike took a sip of tea.

- There's hardly anything interesting about this load as well.

- We have enough water, we do not need it, - Josh replied with a smile. – And we do not need cannonballs either.

- It all depends, Josh, do not rush, - Yegor stepped in cheerfully. – Why don't we return to the port with two cannons on our catamaran's bow? I think that would be the perfect advertisement for our expedition all over the news.

- Maybe we should raid a couple of ships on the way there? - the Australian lawyer muttered disapprovingly.

- All right, leave all the jokes for later, - Mike interrupted them with a smile. – Let's move on. Behind the freshwater compartment, by a foremast, ropes and other spare parts for sails and anchors were usually stored. In those times, storms often damaged sails and tore off anchors, therefore, sailors had to keep spares. The main cargo was stored in bales behind a mainmast.

- And where did the ship's crew live? – Bob asked Mike.

- Usually, they lived on the next deck up, - Mike said. – The sailors lived closer to the bow; if it was a military ship, soldiers, officers and warrant officers lived next. The captain's cabin, as a rule, was located at the back of the ship on the upper deck.

Mike finished his tea.

- In case it was a military ship, the heaviest cannons were located on the next deck and in case of a merchant ship the main load was held there. As a rule, there were very few cannons on merchant ships and they were placed a little bit higher.

- How many cannons does our sailing ship have?

- Yegor and I counted twenty. Considering the fact that our ship is forty-two meters long and ten meters wide, it looks more like a merchant ship with good armament. However, it can also be a multipurpose corvette.

- How can we determinate it more precisely? – Josh asked him.

- Of course, the captain knew best about the ship and its load, - Yegor answered for him. – I think we should start inspecting the ship from his cabin. If there is some information about this ship, it must be here. If no, we will take a look into other cabins and holds.

- I think Yegor is right, - Mike supported his friend. – Besides, the access to the captain's cabin is the simplest. It is located at the very top at the end of the ship.

- What do we know about the ship's age? – Josh asked again.



- So far, we can say for sure that it is no older than 1820, - Mike replied.  
– It has iron chains on anchors and iron beams for boats. All these innovations appeared in those times. I am afraid that we cannot be more precise so far.

- I can only add, - Yegor joined the conversation, - that sailing ships were used until the end of the nineteenth century. I once read about a competition between two legendary sailing ships in the seventies of that century: Cutty Sark and Thermopylae were carrying wool from Sydney to London. However, sailing ships fell from grace after 1869, when the Suez Canal was built – as only steamboats could pass through this canal. Sailing boats had to swim around South America and it took them several months. Therefore, our ship's age is somewhere between these dates. It might have been built long before the shipwreck. As soon as we find something on it, we'll be able to be more precise.

- Well, - Josh said thoughtfully. – We will see what news the captain's cabin will bring us tomorrow.

- Tomorrow is your and Mike's turn to go first, - Yegor said. – Bob and I will be waiting for good news from you.

After that, Yegor looked cheerfully at Bob.

- We will also think about one more question. Perhaps, we should place one small cannon on the catamaran? For symbolic purposes. For example, we can shoot from it to gather the team for lunch or coffee....

\* \* \*

It is hard to convey the sensations that the divers experience when they are swimming above the old ship's deck. Many years ago, people lived there and walked on it. Simple sailors, officers, the captain – all these people were this ship's crew among the endless waves. Since that time, everything remained untouched. Only schools of fish sometimes swam inside to brighten this once fast and beautiful sailing ship.

Josh and Mike swam from the mast in the middle of the ship towards the captain's cabin. For some time they hovered above the helm and looked at it. Of course, everything there was overgrown with corals but some parts could be clearly visible. Friends took some pictures of that place and moved further.

Soon, they swam up to the superstructure at the back of the ship, which was apparently the captain's cabin. In the middle, friends saw an open doorway. There was no door, which was understandable – who would close it during the shipwreck. Over time, waves and currents tore it off completely.

Mike and Josh illuminated the cabin used a flashlight through the door and side windows, then they brought a reserve tank with a regulator and put it inside the cabin near the entrance. After that, Mike turned on the brighter flashlight, took one end of the rope and swam inside. Josh stayed at the entrance. The rope was needed for divers during their work inside the ship to know where the exit was. This is because if you start doing something inside the ship, mud and silt will rise up and reduce visibility. Besides, by holding the rope the divers can give each other simple signals.

A few minutes later, Josh felt three pulls on the rope in a row. It was a signal that everything inside was okay and that he could join Mike. Josh tied the rope outside, turned on his flashlight as well and swam inside while trying to move very slowly as he did not want to raise the dust. Inside, he started to look around with his flashlight. That was it – the main room of the ship – the captain's cabin!

In the far corner of the room, Josh saw the light from Mike's flashlight sliding on the walls. After that, he turned back to the doorway and began inspecting the cabin's interior from the very beginning.

## *Chapter 8*

### **Chest**

The Father was looking with a smile at His romantic divers who swam inside the captain's cabin. Cute children! At some point everyone leaves something behind on Earth be it a ship or a dwelling, or something else. Human life is not so long, and no one lives there forever.

The Father sighed. Only a few of His children are trying to understand the true meaning of their lives. Mostly, they prefer to spin in their worldly affairs and troubles like a squirrel in a wheel. Rarely do they lift their heads towards the sky. And the possibilities of their lives, that He once gave them, remain almost unused. After their life, only all these ships and ancient cities remain. However, neither they nor He need them anymore.

It is good if some tourist walks past them and thinks of his short life on Earth. However, even this does not happen so often.

But a human can be happy both during his earthly life and afterwards. He just needs to learn to put the true desires of his soul in the first place, to appreciate kindness and love. A piece of the Father himself is hidden inside human souls. Man cannot find it anywhere else – neither in things nor in earthly projects. Only that path leads people to happiness. And after earthly life, it leads them to the Father's house where they stay forever among the same bright, kind and loving souls.

It's so simple and clear! He gave so much evidence of this to people over these years! However, for some reason they prefer to turn away from them or ignore them. And as a result, people voluntarily choose a completely different life for themselves on Earth and afterwards. Unfortunately, in recent years, more and more people are doing this.

What will happen if sincerity and honesty, kindness and love leave the Earth? Who will need such Earth? Once, His Son explained everything to people on Earth. He supported His words with hundreds and hundreds

of great miracles. But nowadays, less and less people are interested in such things; instead, they prefer cheap daily worldly pleasures and endless hassles.

Such a pity! Many people on Earth are so educated and can learn about this so fast and so easily. But if people reject the true desires of their souls, reject kindness and love, honesty and unselfishness, they reject the Father. After all, the world where money rules and there is no love, is no longer His world. His Son also told them about this many times.

The Father looked again at his underwater romantics. Yes, this way, one at a time, several at a time He saved pure souls on this Earth. And He will help everyone! The main thing is that people should not turn away from Him, but always turn to Him.

\* \* \*

Josh found three big hooks very close to the door with his flashlight. The captain would probably once hang his top clothes and of course, his big captain's tricorn hat on it. "I wonder if he had a parrot on his shoulder?", - Josh cheerfully thought, remembering his favorite book about pirates and continued to flash his torch.

Then there was a closet. All the furniture in the cabins was securely hooked to the floor or the walls due to an endless sway, therefore the closet remained in its place. All its drawers were also hooked. Josh tried to lift one of the hooks with a knife and succeeded. However, he failed to open the drawer itself – he needed more serious equipment. The friends planned this dive only as an initial examination of the cabin. They were supposed to open only what could be easily opened.

Josh took several pictures on his camera with a flash and flashed his torch ahead. There was a big table next to the closet. The captain must have been sitting at that table with nautical charts, planning the ship's course or reading an interesting book. He probably dined here too.

An armchair stood right behind the table in the corner of the cabin. Apparently, once it had a beautiful upholstery but now it was hardly noticeable under a layer of sea mud.

*“And there the captain must have been smoking a pipe!”, Josh thought. “Did the parrot fly away from his shoulder at this time or did it keep sitting there no matter what?”*

Then he saw a wall with small windows, several of which had intact glass. Mike was already waiting for Josh in the next corner of the cabin. A ray of light from his flashlight was beaming on a single spot. Josh had a look and his heart started beating faster. A chest!

In the corner of the room, at the head of the captain’s bed, they saw a real wooden chest with three iron ribbons. The divers were pleased to see that the lock was still intact. It meant that the captain had no time to take anything from it before the wreck.

Mike and Josh exchanged the prearranged signals, undone all the hooks of the chest and tried to move it. After five minutes, they were breathing heavily and stopped to rest. It seemed that the chest had grown into the floor and did not want to leave that place.

During the break, the friends inspected the captain’s bed. It was not very wide, but the experienced captain apparently was not afraid to fall from it during storms. *“Perhaps, he tied himself to the bed with a rope on those occasions”,* - Mike thought. He read about it in some book.

The friends continued to flash around with their torches in different directions, searching for interesting details. Suddenly, Mike’s spotlight stopped at a bump on the wall near the head of the captain's bed. Mike reached out and swiped across the object. After that, he took off his glove and continued to wipe the dust off it. Soon, our friends could clearly see a crucifix. The captain must have been a believer.

Then our friends came back to the chest again. It was strange but now they were able to move it on the first attempt. Josh and Mike smiled

cheerfully even though the regulators in their mouth hid it. They were carefully carrying the heavy chest towards the door and thinking about those very few divers who experience such happiness. Bob and Yegor will be delighted to see what they have found!

The chest barely fit through the doorway. Soon, friends securely tied the rope around it. After that, Mike and Josh came back to the captain's cabin to finish their inspection.

In the remaining part of the room, near the bed, they saw a dresser with big drawers kept closed by the hooks. Perhaps, the captain kept his clothes there, navigation instruments or some other things. In the last corner of the cabin, right next to the entrance, they saw a large bench bolted to the floor. It seemed that the captain was taking off his shoes while sitting on it or perhaps guests sat there for a private discussion. At that point, our friends finished the inspection of the captain's cabin and were ready to surface and lift the chest to the catamaran.

*"We must take a picture of Bob's and Yegor's faces when they see the chest for the first time!"* Josh thought happily.

\* \* \*

Mark and Marta Schultz were sitting on the veranda of a cozy Maldivian restaurant enjoying the sea and the clouds in the sky. The restaurant was built on a coral shoal in such a way that its guests could walk down the stairs right into the water to watch the fish or to swim.

Sometimes guests threw pieces of bread into the water and schools of multicolored fish ate it right away. Mark looked at the sea, at the fish, at his happy wife and quietly smiled. They had already been living on this island for a week. Every morning, the spouses snorkeled for a long time over coral gardens, walked on the soft sea sand around the island and sometimes rented a canoe. After dinner, when it was already dark, they enjoyed coming to the well-lit pier and watching the night sea world that

was revealing itself in the light. There were big scats and other sea inhabitants, and sometimes they even saw a small manta.

Mark sipped his juice. Strangely he didn't think about his job and the problems he had at all. He had a feeling that these bright fish, sea and sun were quite enough to make him happy. At this moment, it was all he craved for.

Sometimes such thoughts surprised Mark a little, but in such moments listened to his heart and realized how good and comfortable he felt. It was odd how little he needed to feel happy. Here there was no need for huge amounts of money, endless business projects and all the things he couldn't go without back at home.

Marta took her diving mask, smiled at her husband, and went into the sea to swim with the fish. Mark laughed and started throwing pieces of bread next to her. As a result, his wife was in the middle of a boiling "Jacuzzi" of small fish. In the water Marta, enthusiastically clicked her camera.

*"Why can't we be as happy and joyful at home?"* Mark thought pensively. *"There we always have some endless routines and problems. We only manage to walk in the nearby park a couple of times a year. This is so strange..."*

Mark looked at his wife with a smile. He had not seen her so happy and cheerful for a long time. She was again like the happy girl whom he once met and fell in love with. It was so long ago...

*"Why can't I always feel this good at heart?"* Suddenly, he was thinking again. *"What stops me from always being this happy?"*

Mark did not ask himself those questions for a long time. Strangely, those questions only came to his mind when he was on vacation. Thoughts like that did not bother him at home, in the usual working environment. However, there was no particular joy there either.

*“Oh, I need to think about this some more!”* he concluded, took his diving mask, a big piece of bread and went into the water to his wife.

His angel Anrie was also smiling. It is so nice when your earthly friend starts asking himself really important questions. After that, he descended underwater to move a pair of spotter stingrays closer to Marta and Mark. They will look perfect on Marta’s pictures.

\* \* \*

On the “Dolce Dive” catamaran, the process of opening the captain’s chest was in full swing. The friends’ faces were shining with some new and enthusiastic mystery. After all the water leaked out from the chest, the friends placed it in the middle of the rear deck on a beautiful rug. The whole team of treasure hunters surrounded the chest and could not take their eyes off it. Indeed, it was worth it – it was a big old chest with a huge lock in the center.

- What a piece of beauty! – said Yegor.

- Yup! – Mike cheerfully agreed.

- I wonder what is inside, - Bob, who had already managed to take almost fifty pictures of it, smiled. Now, Kathy will not make fun at his story!

- The good news is that we will find out soon, - said Josh. – How are we going to open it, friends?

Mike carefully examined the hinges on the lid and said.

- The hinges are very rusty, but may still working. I think the lid should open.

- What are we going to do with the lock? – Josh asked his friends again.

- It spent over a hundred years in seawater, so I think there is no chance for us to unlock it, - Yegor replied. – So, let’s just saw it off. People did



not have any strong steels in those days, so I think it will not take much time.

All the friends agreed with this proposal and Josh went to bring the tool. However, the sawing took much longer than Yegor expected – every diver wanted to take a picture during such an extraordinary activity, so the saw changed hands four times. Bob was entrusted to finish this job. His uncle filmed this process with a smile, imagining how excited Bob's friends would be when they once see this video.

The end of this process was greeted by friends with loud cheers. Later, Josh and Yegor with the help of pliers pulled the rusty metal in different directions and it gave in. Soon, the precious chest was unlocked. After that, Mike and Josh got to work on the cover. First, they handled flathead screwdrivers along its entire length and then put them under the lid in places where the steel upholstery ended, and pulled it up with the force.

The lid of the chest made the most pleasant scraping sound in the world and lifted up a little. After that, the four friends put their hands inside and pulled it up. In a few seconds, the chest was opened. Four heads of treasure hunters hung above it and looked inside with great interest.

\* \* \*

Angel Asly was sitting and thinking by the sea. How difficult and complicated the earthly world has become lately! People have published thousands of books about happiness over these years but they were still so far away from it.

In fact, every person on earth can understand what makes him happy and what he really wants. It's enough to listen to the music of feelings inside oneself in the moments when he does fine and beautiful things, when his thoughts are pure and noble. These feelings are more important and higher than satisfaction from fame, money or some other worldly things. Like a precious diamond compared to a cheap piece of broken glass.

The paradise world of the Father lives by these fine and noble feelings and thoughts. That is why everyone is happy there. Everything there is sublime, beautiful and dazzlingly pure. Perfect music of souls and hearts of Heaven's dwellers is the main value of the Father's world. What is why His world is above all the visible.

If a person is really looking for beauty and nobility in this world, he can find its source only in Heaven. It is only there one can find pure love without unfaithfulness and any sense of ownership, forgiveness without future resentment, help without hesitation and generosity without limits. But, this is only if one really sets his mind on findings those true feelings.

The souls of people on Earth can approach this light and height. The purer the soul is, the higher feelings it can experience. There is only One source of this beauty and every inhabitant of Earth can touch It.

Back in the day, people were given a main commandment: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*". But a soul cannot love just like that. However, a soul will certainly love Him, if it sees infinite beauty, love and nobility in Him.

\* \* \*

The chest was half full. From the first glance it was evident that almost two hundred years underwater left an unfading mark on it. All the items inside the chest looked more like one large thing of an indeterminate color.

Josh and Mike, being the most careful members of the team, armed themselves with flathead screwdrivers and blunt knives, and then began their part of "archeological" work. Bob and Yegor laid out a rubber rug nearby and started placing the items from the chest on it.

Two handguns and a big dagger were first to come into view. Perhaps it was not always calm on the ship, since the captain kept them close at

hand. On the other hand, he could have been keen on beautiful weapons, which is not uncommon even nowadays. Then, the friends took out what remained of three books. The paper inside them had turned to mush years ago but some elements of old bindings remained undamaged. Inside one of the books, the friends found a small cross and presumed that they were dealing with the remains of the old Gospel. The second disintegrated book was bigger and looked like a logbook, where captains used to put down necessary information about the voyage. The genre of the third book was impossible to determine.

After the remains of the books, the friends took out a big bloated bag. Some homogenous mass came out of its holes. Yegor took a piece with his fingers, mashed it and sniffed.

- Tobacco! – He said with certainty.

The friends immediately did the same and agreed. Even two hundred years could not eliminate the smell of tobacco.

- I wonder... – Bob suddenly speculated. – What if we washed it properly in fresh water and then dried it... could we smoke it afterwards?

- Well done, Bobby! Good idea, - Mike replied with laughter. – I think it is possible. Although, the person smoking such tobacco must be a true aesthete. And have strong health.

Having had a few laughs the friends continued the “excavation” of the chest. In a while, they took out two items that apparently once were pictures with some images. Perhaps, they used to be the portraits of the captain’s loved ones but now it was hard to tell. The friends examined them carefully from different angles and put them aside on the rug.

Then, our friends found some piece of thick fabric lying over the whole area of the chest. It looked like a warm jacket, but obviously there was no need for it in these hot places, so the captain hid it in the chest.

Under the clothes, there was an iron box of a decent size. Bob and Yegor smiled as they saw how much effort Josh and Mike made to lift it from the bottom of the chest. The treasure was showing up at last! No treasure hunting could be imagined without it!

After the box took its honorable place on the deck, the friends carefully examined it. On one side of the lid, there was a small lock. Now the divers had no doubts about the purpose of the chest.

While Josh was sawing through the bow of the lock, Yegor was cracking jokes.

- I think, my friends, after a couple of such chests we can place an advertisement like that: “We will professionally open a chest of any complexity and age for only ten percent of its value!”

Meanwhile, Bob filmed the opening of the box as requested by his uncle. Some extra evidence of the treasure found on the bottom would not hurt.

The friends were not disappointed in their expectations. Indeed, the box was a repository of money on the ship. Gold coins of a different size, slightly faded over the course of time, were lying in an even layer. There were no other precious items in the box.

- I am sorry, darling, - Mike said cheerfully, looking towards the horizon, - but there was no tiara. Do not worry; we will keep looking for it. There are hundreds of sunken ships here...

Everyone started to laugh. The friends did not want to bother much with the coins right now, so they just measured their total weight. Scales showed a little more than nine kilograms. The friends put the old money aside and got back to the chest.

- What is that thing? – Josh said in surprise, taking out the last item from the bottom.

All the friends came closer.

After a moment, they saw a large and beautiful chess box. Unlike other things, this item was well preserved. The box itself was made in the old style and probably from ivory. Josh shook it a little in his hands and everyone heard noise from jumbling figures inside. After that, divers handed the box over to each other in complete silence.

Bob was the last to take the chess box from Yegor's hands. He turned it over in his hands and asked:

- What is that?

- This is chess, Bobby! – His uncle answered with a smile.

The guy continued to turn the box over in his hands. Suddenly, he noticed a small sign plate near the hook. Bob wiped it with his finger and read the inscription aloud: "Happy birthday!"

Bob became thoughtful for a moment and then asked.

- Does it mean that the captain liked playing chess and it was a gift for his birthday?

No answer followed. Bob looked at his friends who, in turn were looking at him strangely.

- Why are you silent? – The guy asked them.

- We just think, Bobby, that this chess has nothing to do with the captain, - his uncle answered quietly.

- But to whom then? – Bob was confused.

- We think it has something to do with you and your birthday, - Mike said with a smile.

Angel Fiu, who was standing beside them, silently clapped his hands.

*"Happy birthday, dear Bobby!"*

\* \* \*

Bob was sitting on the bow of the ship and looked at the burning sunset. Yegor came up from behind and handed him a bottle of cola.

- Don't you mind if I join you? – the Russian diver asked him.

- Not at all - Bob smiled. – Quite the contrary. I am trying to understand what is going on but my head is spinning. As computer nerds say, too big a file has dropped on my modest processor.

- In such cases, I sometimes open the cupboard, - Yegor cheerfully shared his experience. – Then the processor turns off for some time, and you start looking at things with the help of something else rather than your head. How about some beer?

- Good idea!

Bob stood up and after a minute returned with two cans of beer.

- You see, Yegor, - the guy said after a while, - only a month ago I lived in a completely different world. To be more precise, I thought that it was different. Well, how can I express it better...?

Yegor pointed at the beer. Bob nodded cheerfully and took a few sips.

- The world is the same, Bobby, yesterday, today and even tomorrow, - the Russian diver said after a short pause. – The only thing we need to do is to understand it, and to take it slow. It's important not to make a mistake.

- Yegor! – Bob looked seriously at his friend. – Who is He, who presented me this chess? It is very important to me!

- Let's think together, - Yegor replied and opened his can. – First of all, He likes kind jokes. Do you agree?

- I think so, - the guy answered. – All His jokes and presents are very cute and funny, indeed. Why does He do that?

- Why do we joke on the ship?

- Well, to laugh and have fun together.

- I think, He does that for the same reason, Bobby.
- You think that He likes to talk to us and have fun with us? – Bob said with surprise.
- Well, yes, because we are His children, - Yegor replied with a smile. – Could there be any other explanation?

Bobby thought for a couple of minutes.

- I do not see any other explanation, - he finally replied.
- So, He is funny, kind and likes to play with us, - Yegor cheerfully summed it up. – And He gives us advice on the important and exciting things in life.
- It seems so, - Bob finally agreed with a smile. – Why wasn't He in my life before? Why do so many people live without Him?
- Stop, stop, stop! – Yegor raised his hand in protest. - Let's slowly and in order deal with what concerns only us.

He pointed to the beer can with a laugh.

- All Australian beer might not be enough to solve the problems of all mankind, Bobby.
- Agreed! – the guy smiled. – Then, I will put it this way: why didn't I know anything about Him before?
- Well, mate, you are not quite right, - Yegor replied. – It's more likely that you did not want to know about Him.
- What do you mean?

- Well, have you ever seen Christian churches on the roads? There are millions of them around the world! – Yegor smirked. – Do you really think that people would build them if it made no sense? You were just not interested in that topic before. However, that does not mean that the topic itself did not exist.

- Millions of churches? – Bob was surprised. – I will have to check it out on the Internet.
- Yup, Bobby, - Yegor said with a smile. – people would only build something in such a number if it was truly meaningful. And it must be real, as we all felt here.
- And very cool! – Bob added, smiling broadly.
- Very cool, Bobby! – Yegor supported him. – Life is always interesting and exciting with Him. Keep it in your heart and open Him to yourself little by little.

## *Chapter 9*

### **Into the depth**

A new day on the ship began with a small meeting of the treasure hunters. Friends sat at their favorite table drinking coffee and discussing the latest news.

- Well, dear treasure owners! – Josh said cheerfully. – I congratulate you on your new status! Of course, our treasure is not that great, but it is a treasure nonetheless.
- And the moral satisfaction is even greater, - Mike added. – Only one out of several millions finds treasure during their lifetime.
- So what about financial satisfaction? – Bob asked.

Everyone laughed cheerfully.

- Of course there is financial satisfaction, my dear nephew! – Josh answered with a smile. – I think it will be enough for that sports car that you've told me so much about.
- And Kathy dreamed about a diamond ring...- Bob added in confusion.



The friends nearly fell off their chairs with laughter.

- Welcome to adulthood, Bobby! – said Mike after he recovered his breath.

- But seriously, Josh, - Yegor said, - have you figured out how much our box of gold is worth?

- It is hard to say, - his friend replied. – Simply as gold it isn't worth much. Perhaps, half a million Australian dollars. However, I am sure that its numismatic value is much higher. Almost all coins are made of gold and they are from different countries – Portuguese escudos, Indian mohurs, British guineas, and Dutch ducats.

- Very good! – Mike nodded with a smile. – Next time it will be much easier to get permission from our wives to go on our expeditions.

The friends smiled contently.

- Do you think Kathy won't be mad at me next time? – Bob asked everyone and caused a new wave of laughter.

- So, what about the year these coins were manufactured? This information could tell us the year of the shipwreck, - Yegor said again.

- Josh and I looked at the dates, - Mike replied. – The majority of the coins belong to the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. The last two are dated 1823. As you know, in 1826 Australia completely switched to payments in British pounds. That is why our sailing ship was carrying the old currency.

- Wow! – Yegor was surprised. – It means that our ship is a real “greybeard”. It is almost two hundred years old.

- Looks like it, - Josh replied.

After that, he took a few sips then addressed everyone:

- All right, gentlemen! I have only one question – what are we going to do next?

Everyone started thinking.

- I think we still have to briefly examine the main compartments of this ship, - Yegor finally said. – Treasure is good but we are not here just for the sake of it. We can earn all this money at home but there won't be another chance to inspect an unknown sunken ship somewhere at the world's end.

- I couldn't agree more! – Josh supported his friend's idea and smiled. – However, for Australians the world's end is located somewhere near your home countries.

The divers laughed.

- I think we need to dive for another week or two on this ship, - Mike added. – It is so great that we are the first ones to get into the compartments and cabins of an old sailing ship. Besides, our “Avos” plan brings us many unusual and interesting surprises. How can we ever leave this place without knowing more about it?

- I also want to stay here for some time, - Bob said. – I am thinking about diving back to the ship for a couple of times more. I should thank Someone for the chess.

After that, Bob finished his coffee and looked cheerfully at his friends.

- By the way, guys! – He said. – Will someone teach me how to play chess?

The three friends, under different pretexts, immediately scattered in different directions like peas.

- I will send you the rules from the Internet when we get back home, dear nephew, - the guy heard his uncle's voice from a distance. – It takes at least two years just to learn the basics...

\* \* \*

Angels Maty and Anrie were sitting in a beautiful garden of their friend, angel Blos, talking. They came back here after swimming in a mountain lake and now they were chatting and relaxing in cozy armchairs.

- Dear Anrie,” Blos addressed his friend, “how is your ward Mark doing on earth? When you last talked to him, he’d begun to think about serious things in his life.”.

- Yes, my dear Blos! – his friends replied with a smile. – The longer my Mark is on vacation, the clearer he sees many things. Such a pity that he and Marta have to go back home in a few days. Unfortunately, he switches so quickly from the right thoughts to the hustle and bustle of the human world and rarely returns to them again. However, I think that this time his thoughts are deeper than usual. Perhaps, this time he will not forget them so soon.

- That is right, the modern world on Earth today is very *sticky*, - Angel Maty agreed with him. – A human should have a great desire and efforts to avoid it. If people do not think about the meaning of their life on earth, about the shortness of their time, about the One who created this world and why, about what will come next, they will never escape from this bustle. Only the desire and effort of people will help them overcome the world and find the correct answers in this life. Then, the Father will help them to understand life and to find the right way. However, people always need to take their own steps.

- Unfortunately, many people of our time have a serious mistake in their worldview, - Blos said sadly. – Many of them believe that if they just live day after day on earth in that bustle, then everything will be good. Poor things, they don’t understand that this is not enough. If there is no love and kindness in their heart, then they are not yet with the Father. That also means that worldly interests are more important and close to them.

- Yes, many of them do not see that yet, - Anrie agreed with a sigh. – After their death, the heart stays with the things, that were the most

important to it on Earth. However, without their terrestrial body they will not get the former satisfaction from earthly values. This will turn their lives into hell. There, the heart will not be able to get rid of those empty affections and plans. One needed to do that while living on Earth.

- It will be a bitter moment for many, - Angel Blos said. – Therefore, you should fight for your Mark until the final day, Anrie. Ask the Father. He will come up with something. Perhaps, he will reveal a certain miracle to him. Ask, my dear Anrie. You cannot overcome the world within his soul without the Father.

- I am asking and I will definitely be asking in future! – His friend replied. – But Mark needs to choose many things by himself. You cannot lead a person to God if he doesn't want to.

- All right, friends, - Angel Maty joined the conversation, - enough of that. Let's fly to my new neighbor, angel Louis. He is building his new house. I will introduce you to him and maybe he will need your help.

His friends gladly agreed, and soon the angels majestically flapped their wings.

\* \* \*

Josh and Yegor dragged the captain's chest back to his cabin. All members of the "Dolce Dive" crew decided to put the captain's personal belongings back in place. Perhaps, other divers will swim there someday and it would be interesting and pleasant for them to spend some time in the role of treasure hunters.

Josh suggested keeping the handguns and the dagger on the catamaran and presenting them to a local museum. The friends have not touched the cannons yet. Mike convinced everyone that today one can buy such an "semi-antique" cannon on the Internet for only several hundreds of dollars and it would be exactly like from the ones from ship. In general,

the game was not worth the candle so the friends decided to leave these cannons as decorations on the old sailing ship.

The friends put several modern Australian, American and Russian coins on the very bottom of the chest before putting the captain's belongings back. Let future divers scratch their heads over these modern coins. However, if they swim here in a hundred years, these coins will be valuable indeed.

When the chest was fixed with hooks in the old place, the friends began to open the drawers of all the cupboards in the cabin. Wood swells in water and the divers had to spend more time on that problem. Finally, all the drawers were opened one after the other. Friends looked through them and took pictures of all the items inside.

There were mostly clothes and various items of the captain's everyday life. Moreover, the friends found a box with souvenirs. Probably, the captain was going to give them to someone. There were boomerangs of different sizes and other objects of aboriginal art. They also found a small box in the corner with various small coins inside.

Yegor was the first to open it and looked with surprise at three coins with big holes in the middle. A couple of roundels in this box accurately fitted these holes in size. Yegor shrugged his shoulders and swam to Josh with this box. He shuddered joyfully as he saw these coins and Yegor realized that it was a very interesting finding.

After that, the friends found an astrolabe in the next drawer. It was a device that helped sailors of those times determine the exact location of their ship. The friends slid the drawers back to their original places and put only interesting things in their bag. Besides coins and astrolabe, they took an old fork and a spoon, a couple of new smoking pipes, some colored stones and something that strongly resembled a captain's tricorne hat. Yegor would never leave that hat behind so friends took it on the catamaran.

After finishing all the work, the friends inspected the cabin again. Everything was in its original place again – an underwater museum was ready for new visitors. Whether it would happen in a year or in two hundred years – that did not depend on our divers anymore.

\* \* \*

Angels Sain and Manif were sitting on the top of a beautiful mountain enjoying the magnificent view of the valley. Two thousand years ago, when they were still humans, the brothers liked to climb the mountain and talk there. Not much has changed in this good habit over these times except for the mountains that became even more beautiful, and for their life that now had no end.

- Well, what do you think, brother? – Manif asked Sain with a smile. They still called each other “brothers” in Heaven like they did on Earth. – How is your Josh doing? What happened to him during that month?

- Nature always helps people to cleanse themselves, you know that, - his brother responded thoughtfully. – However, this is not all. Not a clean head leads people to Heaven and the Father, though it helps them see things more clearly. Only love unites them with the Father but it grows slowly and as a result of their desire and constant attention to their feelings and thoughts. A person has to make kind things in his life. He should also try to do only good and honest things. He has to sincerely forgive all people. In fact, a person should act according to the rules that the Father once gave us through His Son. Only such efforts eventually lead people to the growth of their souls, to true love and happiness in their hearts.

- Does your Josh make these efforts? – Manif asked Sain.

- Yes, sometimes, - his brother answered. – However, he mostly does it unconsciously. He has not even read the Gospel yet and heard only some parts of the Father’s commandments. Therefore, Josh does some things

correctly, but intuitively. It would be very useful for him to read God's words but he should want to do that.

- Indeed, brother, there are big problems with that on earth, - Manif nodded sadly. – Many spiritual teachers today, instead of reading the Gospel, often fill a person with their interpretations and rules. It is better to avoid such 'teaching' at all, because it will be much more difficult to correct mistakes later.

- That is true! – Angel Sain nodded. – I have never thought that those simple words that we once heard on Earth from Jesus hundreds years ago, could be interpreted so differently and in dozens of versions.

- Oh, God! – Manif said. – That is why the Father has to lead His children on Earth very carefully so they will not get involved with wrongful beliefs. It would be much harder to deal with the consequences, especially in such a sensitive matter as a human soul.

- Don't worry, - Sain smiled. – He is the Father after all! You see how delicately and interestingly He leads our divers. Everything will be fine. As for us, angels, we just need to love our wards and help them.

- Indeed, - Manif agreed. – We need to love, help and believe in them.

- What now? – Sain looked toward the ground. – It is time to see how our treasure hunters are doing. Are you with me?

His brother nodded cheerfully and the angels flew above the mountain.

\* \* \*

The next evening the friends were relaxing on the rear deck of the catamaran after several of dives to the ship. Josh and Yegor were sitting on the steps near the water; Mike and Bob settled down at the table. The guy finally convinced the American to give him several lessons on how to play chess. There was the captain's tricorne hat on Bob's head – Yegor gave it to him for this evening. The guy convinced the Russian diver that it would definitely bring him luck.

The passing day did not bring any surprises for our divers. All of them, including Bob, dove to the ship one after another. However, Bob was allowed to visit only the captain's cabin due to his lack of diving experience. Josh, Mike and Yegor swam inside more complex rooms one after the other.

Today, they had examined the ship's wardroom and small cabins of officers and navigation officers. To do that, Mike and Yegor cleared the entrance and prepared the safety equipment during the first dive in the morning. The tiny officers' cabins on this ship were located close to the mess deck and were separated only by curtains. Around the big table, they saw eight of the officers' chests, which they probably used as chairs to save space. All the chests were attached to the floor with hooks and each of them had a small padlock.

The friends already decided that carrying the chests from inside cabins to the surface and returning them later back to their place would be too troublesome. Besides, they did not expect to find anything particularly valuable inside. Therefore, the divers decided to saw through the locks' bows on the spot without detaching the chests from the floor. Friends' assumptions were justified – they inspected half of the officers' property and took only some coins, four handguns and a couple of interesting knick-knacks.

The divers decided to open the four remaining chests on the next day. Needless to say that these new, unusual and sometimes unpredictable dives made our friends very happy.

Josh and Yegor were drinking tea on the steps in silence and sometimes smiled, partially listening to the news from the chess table. Apparently, Bob's gaming experience was growing very quickly. He already knew what a mate in three moves and a mate in four moves is.

- Listen, Josh! – Yegor said seriously, looking into his friend's eyes. – What are we going to do next? All last year we were planning this expedition and I must say it is going quite successful. But what's next?



What interesting adventure is waiting for us? After all, we are going to die from boredom without any interesting plans...

- I also thought about it recently, Yegor, - Josh said thoughtfully. – You know, I even a little sad. Of course, we can start looking for the second ship, the third, the tenth, but there will be nothing new about that and it is frustrating.

The friends accidentally heard that Bob just learned the mate in eight moves and mentally congratulated him on a great step forward. After that, Mike came down to the steps with his cup of tea.

- Would you mind a chess coach joining you? – He asked his friends with a smile and sat down next to them. – I heard your conversation, my friends. I am also concerned about it. What other new projects may there be in our routine and boring life?

Everyone was silent for a long time. Finally, Yegor deeply inhaled the air with his nose and made a suggestion.

- Maybe we should dip into the cupboard again? It always helps us solve serious issues.

The friends stood up and went to the table without saying a word. Bob had already put the chess in the box and placed the lucky hat on top.

\* \* \*

All the angels were sitting on the ship not far from their wards. They looked at them with love.

Yes, many interesting and unusual things have happened in the lives of their dear romantics over the past month. Now the angels also wanted to know what had sunk into their souls most. Was it the shipwreck, the treasure or something else? This very interest will determine the plans of their friends for the next month or maybe for the next few years.

Most of all, the angels wanted them to understand the most important thing. The thing that will always help them in any occasion. However, they had to understand this by themselves, only by themselves.

\* \* \*

The first bottle was almost over when Josh suddenly made his proposal.

- Friends! – He began. – Let's first try to understand what we liked most in this expedition.

- It is logical, - Mike replied. – We can even make a list of the most interesting things that happened to us over the past month and everyone will rate these events on a ten-point scale.

- Great idea! – Yegor said. – Then we will understand which activities are most interesting for us. After that, it will be easier to rack our brains over the next plans and steps.

- Brilliant! – The young chess player supported his friends. He put the tricorn hat on again for that occasion and went to get four sheets of paper from the drawer.

- So, - Josh said when they took pens. – Let's write the most interesting things together and appraise them at the same time. As for you, Bobby, I will ask you not to copy off the neighbors – this is a serious matter.

The divers smiled.

- I propose to put “a trip to unknown reefs” first on the list, - Yegor suggested.

The friends nodded and leaned over their papers.

- I would put “searching for shipwrecks” as the second, - Mike said.

The divers picked up their pens again.

- What about the third one? – Josh asked.

- Treasures, I guess, - Bob suggested.

The friends thought for a while and nodded again.

- What else? – Yegor said.

Everyone was silent, thinking about the most joyful and pleasant moments of this trip.

- Perhaps, just “observing the underwater world”, - Josh said, thinking. – Well, we could add fishing or something like that.

- Accepted, - Mike nodded and the friends gave their scores for that point.

- I would make a separate point for our conversations in the morning and evening, sunrises and sunsets. In short, I would call it “the joy of communication and beauty of nature”, - Yegor said.

All the divers nodded in agreement.

- Yes, that must be a separate point for sure, - Josh added, and then asked. – What else?

For two minutes, one could only hear the slapping of small waves against the board of the ship.

- Friends! – Bob perked up suddenly and raised his tricorne hat. – How could we forget about our *Avos* plan?

His older fellows scratched their heads in embarrassment.

- Oh, God! – Yegor could only reply.

After that, the divers immediately leaned over their sheets of paper and appraised this point.

- Any other ideas? – Josh asked again.

This time all the divers were silent. Bob collected the papers to calculate the average score and gave them to his uncle. After five minutes, Josh was ready to announce the results.

- So, gentlemen, - he began. – The average score for the “trip to the distant reefs” is ten points.

The divers applauded loudly.

- The next point about searching for shipwrecks got eight and a half points.

- Wow, - Mike said emotionally.

- The point with “treasures” took only seven and a quarter points, - Josh continued to announce the results.

- My great-grandfather was a banker and he would definitely kill me for that, - Bob said with feeling.

The friends burst out laughing.

- “Underwater life and fishing” took nine points, and “sunrises, sunsets and communication” took ten points.

- Well, it seems that these things are more valuable than the chest, - Yegor commented on this result.

- I am sorry but I could not calculate the last one, - Josh said with a smile. – There are two with 100, one with 1000 and 10 with three pluses.

At that moment, Josh became a little confused.

- Well, I am the lawyer and I cannot break the agreement. That is why I put pluses.

All the friends laughed cheerfully and applauded loudly to such an unexpected result.

- It seems that following the *Avos* plan was the most interesting thing for us, - Josh summed up and addressed his Russian friend cheerfully, - Yegor! Is another bottle coming for this occasion? It seems the direction for our next plans is beginning to take shape ...

The Father and the angels looked warmly at their divers and smiled happily. Great job!

## *Chapter 10*

### **New findings**

The next day, the friends finished their inspection of the mess deck. The remaining four chests of the officers did not bring them anything unusual – the divers took on board only four old handguns, a knife and a few small items. After inspection, the friends put the contents back to their places and closed the chests' lids.

On the day before that, after dinner, Yegor voiced his regret for not buying ten good padlocks on the shore. It would multiply the joy of discovery for the future divers. After that, the friends had enough time left to clear the entrance to the cabin where the ship's sailors once lived and look for hatches into the ship's hold. However, they postponed a more thorough examination of these rooms until the next day.

Mike and Yegor were the last to come back from the shipwreck today. When they finished all the work inside, they swam to the upper deck and shook the dust and mud off each other. Then, they enjoyed looking at different sea animals that were swimming around them and then moved towards the rope. Friends held it and slowly rose to the decompression stop.

The sun on the above was already sinking to the horizon and it was not so bright underwater. Yegor, who was last to climb the rope, at some point looked back and froze in surprise. After that, he pulled the rope several times to attract Mike's attention. When he looked back, Yegor pointed him to the broken mast in the ship's center. Judging by the fact that Mike froze too, Yegor realized that it was not his imagination – the broken mast in the form of a cross actually glowed slightly.

That evening, on the rear deck, friends were drinking some kind of the new fruit tea that Josh grabbed on shore out of curiosity. Everyone liked its taste and friends were refilling their cups again and again.

At that time, the sea surface was completely calm again and white fluffy clouds seemed to float not only in the sky but on the surface of the water too. Mike and Yegor told their friends about the unusual phenomenon that they saw underwater. That became a topic for active discussion.

- Well, a month ago I would say that it happened because of some luminous plankton stuck all over the mast, - Josh said with a smile. – But now I would not say so.

- I think a month ago, you would not be alone in your thoughts, - Yegor supported him and added. – In fact, people always try to explain the unusual things that happen on Earth by all means, as if it makes their life easier and happier. But it is so silly... Life is more joyful and calm when you know there is something great in this world, that there is God in it.

- You are right, Yegor! – Mike nodded cheerfully. – I have recently heard another version of scientists about how Moses led people out of Egypt along the bottom of the sea. The wind was so strong that it ‘blew a corridor’ in the sea. And they were able to exit through this passage.

- Strange wind, - Bob commented. – It blew away the water but brought no harm to the people.

- Yup, even Bob understood that immediately, - Mike nodded. – Why do scientists need that?

- When there is no God on earth, people and their explanations take first place, - Josh said thoughtfully. – It seems that life this way is easier for some.

- It is strange, - Bob said. – Life is much more joyful and interesting with God.

- This is a delicate subject, Bobby, for some reason not all people need this, - Yegor smiled to him. – That is why nowadays, two thousand years after the emergence of Christianity, there are so many people on earth have no faith. However, even non-believers have to believe in something. In some unusual wind, for example.

All the divers burst out laughing.

- But that is boring anyway, - Bob did not give up.

- Not everyone in this life likes to believe in beautiful fairy tales, - uncle smiled to him. – Some people prefer thick and very clever books. In this life, my boy, everyone chooses what he likes. Actually, many scientists believe in God. For example, world-famous Einstein, a great scientist, who was ahead of his time for decades to come. At the end of his life, he liked to repeat: “All I want to know in this life is the thoughts of God. Everything else is just details”. That’s how it is, guys. Sometimes, even scientists understand that God stands above science.

Josh sipped his tea and finished the thought.

- Yesterday, we unanimously called the *Avos* plan the most interesting thing about our adventure, - he looked cheerfully at Yegor and Mike. – Something is telling me that the glowing mast-cross is related to it.

\* \* \*

The examination of the sailors’ cabin did not take much of the divers’ time. Everything in that room was simple and modest. Almost everywhere, the divers could see hooks for hammocks, where sailors had rest after a watch, in some places there were small chests, mostly without locks. The friends did not even properly check them. Sailors who earned only a few coins during the sail could hardly put anything valuable inside them.

The friends briefly looked around the big cabin and began searching for the hatches leading the ship’s cargo hold. One of them was right next to

the mess deck. Luckily, friends did not find a lock on the hatch, even though it had hinges for it. Mike and Josh struggled a little with a door swollen from being in the water and finally opened it. After that, both divers leaned inside the hold with their flashlights and started to carefully examine it.

Everything that they could see were big bulgy grey bales illuminated with flashlights. Only a small space above them was free. Mike and Josh took out their knives and made incisions on the closest ones. Only homogeneous grey mass came to light from these incisions. The divers examined it carefully in the light shining from flashlights and even kneaded it in hands. Apparently, sheep wool was inside all those bales.

The friends carefully examined everything around them once again but did not find anything new and closed the hatch. Everything became clear about the ship's cargo.

\* \* \*

Mark Schultz was sitting again in his office. His working day was long over, but for some reason he was in no hurry to go home. The thoughts, which he had on vacation, got stuck in his head. Mark just could not get rid of them and plunge into the ordinary daily routine. Something inside him told him that this road leads to nowhere. At the same time, he did not know where these questions were leading him to. However, he really wanted to know.

Mark was slowly drinking his tea, looking at the picture with the sea view and thinking. "*What is the meaning of my life? What is the secret of happiness? True happiness, not a temporary one*". He felt that he had touched something very important and real on vacation. And he did not want to lose it. He probably could not lose it anyway – his soul resisted it every time he was trying to get rid of these thoughts and return to his old life.



One question bothered him: *“Do I really have to live the way I do? Is there any other happy and joyful life that I do not yet see, but which I feel inside me?”* Overall, Mark had no problems with the questions, but as for the answers...

*“I definitely should take my time to think about it. Without it, I can get stuck in the old rut”, - the German thought on. “Perhaps I should also read some books on that topic. Something that will help me see and understand everything more clearly. But where can I find what I really need? Nowadays there are so many books around that I can spend half of my life and not find what I need”.*

Mark sighed and got ready to go home. His angel Anrie was sitting nearby, smiling warmly and cheerfully. It seemed that his ward's “train” was slowly turning in the right direction. It was time to prepare the right books for him. But this task was much easier!

The angel smiled cheerfully, thanked the Father and happily flew back home.

\* \* \*

During tea time, Josh explained to his friends sheep wool had been the main export article in Australia for about one hundred years since 1800. Apparently, their sailing ship was not an exception.

- Josh, what do you think, what was the place of origin of that wool? – Yegor asked his friend.

- Probably, from Sydney or Melbourne, - the Australian answered. – In 1823, ships only docked in those ports on the eastern coast. First ports in Gladstone, Bundaberg and Rockhampton only appeared by the very end of the nineteenth century.

- What about **City 1770** between Gladstone and Bundaberg? – Yegor asked his friend again, looking curiously at the map. – Perhaps, the foundation date is inside its name?

- This is the date of Captain Cook's arrival at these places, - Mike answered to Yegor with a smile. – I have recently read about it.

- That is right! – Josh nodded. – But the first cargo was shipped from the local port only a century later.

- By the way, I forgot to ask you, Josh, - Yegor suddenly remembered one thing. – What were these coins with holes in the middle that we recently found in the captain's cabin? I remember you were so happy about this finding or was I mistaken?

- No, you are not mistaken, my friend – Josh replied with a wide smile. – It seems to be the first Australian money called “holed dollars”. They were manufactured almost two hundred years ago from the silver coins by hammering out their middle. After that, the export of this money from the country was stopped. Nobody needed these coins abroad. At that time, there was not enough cash in Australia – people paid Europeans with it for various imported goods. The main currency before the “holed dollars” in our country was rum.

- Wow! - Yegor vividly reacted to the news.

- Yes, yes, - Josh smiled. – Even the first hospital in Sydney was built with it.

After that, he continued his story about money.

- So, you will probably be surprised but this money has of real value for coin collectors. As far as I remember, one “holed dollar” in good condition was sold for a few hundred thousand dollars two years ago at the last international auction.

The friends at the table loudly whistled in surprise.

- That's right! – Josh nodded. – And we have three of them. Besides, we have two internal coins, which were squeezed out of them.

- Are they expensive too? – Bob asked with interest.

- Not as expensive as “holed dollars”, but together they may be worth several dozen thousand dollars, too, - his uncle answered.

After these good news, friends slowly finished their tea and went to their cabins to rest after a long diver’s day.

\* \* \*

At night, it rained a little. Josh woke up first on the ship, he wiped the chairs for himself and his friends by the table and sat down with a cup of coffee while waiting for another the sunrise. He was never tired of this nature’s “program”, or of its other “channels”. A bit later, Mike and Yegor came to the table. They poured some coffee and joined in the viewing. After twenty minutes, the sun rose above the horizon, completing all the stages of its ascent from the sea.

- I feel so good here! – Josh said thoughtfully. – But to be honest, I already miss my family and home. How are they doing? Sometimes even my boring phone does not seem like such a useless thing.

- It looks like many things synchronise here, - Mike smiled in response. – I have been thinking about my family and home for the past few days, too. What about you, Yegor?

- My daughters have probably pestered the life out of their mom with questions about me. Poor thing, she does not even know anything herself. - The always cheerful Yegor became unusually sad. – The last time I called them from the shore and told them about the sailing ship *Avos*. They are probably very interested about what is happening to us.

- So, what do you think about our next steps? – Josh asked his friends. – We have enough food and fuel on the ship for another week.

- I have no idea, - Mike said first. – We have already inspected the main cabins of the ship; only household cabin holds are left. However, we will not find anything interesting there, for sure – at most a few more bales of wool.

- I also think that it is time to complete our expedition. Everything that we had planned to do was done, - Yegor said. – I think that it is time to come back to the shore. What do you think, Josh?

- I agree, my friends! – the Australian nodded. – Let's take up the safety equipment from the sailing ship today and prepare our catamaran for the journey home. I think it will take us three or four days to reach the Gold Coast with good wind. We will spend the first night in the bay behind Fraser Island, the second – on Tangalooma, and then we will be very close to our port. By the way, phones should work on Fraser Island.

- Accepted, - Mike approved this plan. – Let's dive before lunch and then prepare the ship.

- And later, at night... - Yegor began with a sly smile. – Gala night to mark the end of the expedition! Dear Josh, please, do not close the cupboard tonight.

The friends laughed cheerfully.

- All right, - Josh agreed with Yegor. – We should definitely celebrate such a successful expedition. Our wish came true and we got everything we wanted – to the full and more.

- I screwed up with the tiara a little, though, - Mike smiled broadly. – However, our *Avos* plan compensated for that. Overall, Josh, do not close the cupboard tonight, indeed.

- We do not close it at all! – Josh answered, laughing. – I threw the key into the sea a long time ago. Okay, I am going to wake Bob up. I hope that he will not damage the ceiling when he skips for joy after hearing this news. He is missing Kathy so much too... Oh, that spirit of youth!

The friends smiled, finished their coffee and got busy.

\* \* \*

The Father looked at His divers with a smile who were happy to go home. Another group of His children spent some time alone with nature, touched His miracles, thought about Him. It is always nice when kids think about their parents. It is even more pleasant when they love them.

However, love is something that does not appear without a reason. Love appears in response to love and kindness. Those who begin to see beauty and nobility, generosity and love of the Father cannot help but fall in love with Him.

So little by little, His big Heaven family grows – loving children come to the loving Father's Home after their life on Earth. That is so simple and clear!

The Father sighed. It would be so nice if more people understood that. Then they would definitely cleanse their souls of everything alien to true love. It is necessary. All human passions – anger, lies, condemnation and others - will never let love to develop in the soul.

People fear God only because they don't know Him. God is Love and people were told about this many times. However, people always forget about it for some reason.

From the beginning, God gave His children free will on Earth. At the same time, He gave them many evidence of His existence, His love to them, and showed the right path to Him. His Son, Jesus and His followers told people about this long ago and showed great miracles to confirm their words. Then every person makes his own choice.

The Father is always close to every human soul. In the life of almost every person, He shows His presence in the form of small miracles and events that cannot be explained by earthly understanding.

What else can He do to spark their interest and love for Him? The real Father never forces His children to love Him. He sparks their interest by showing the beauty of His world, the height of senses, by calling them to

Heaven. However, not everyone chooses Him even after all these things. And they have the right to do so.

The Father looked at His romantics again. *“Go, My dear children! Keep going this way and in the end, I will meet you, - He thought warmly. – Do not get lost, My dears, in this life!”*

## *Chapter 11*

### **Back home**

Mike and Yegor tied the tank with the regulator and different equipment of treasure hunters with the rope in turns. After that, Bob lifted it up to the zodiac. Meanwhile, Josh was preparing the catamaran for the long journey. When all the equipment was lifted, the friends signaled to Bob, by making big bubbles under his zodiac. After this, the guy brought the cargo to the catamaran. Mike and Yegor continued their dive to enjoy their beautiful discovery for the last time.

Over these days, the sailing ship became very familiar and even dear to them. As if they were its new crew. The friends swam along its deck and enjoyed the clouds of colorful fish around them. In their hearts, they were sad to leave their new underwater friend that brought so many unusual and interesting things into their lives. However, people are just guests underwater.

The friends made a full circle and slowly swam to the mast. When they raised their heads, they saw that Bob’s zodiac was again in the same place. It was time to go up to the surface – Josh and Bob wanted to dive before the noon and say goodbye to the sailing ship. Mike began to untie the rope from the mast and Yegor was looking at it thoughtfully.

There was some great meaning hiding inside of it all. They will have to think carefully about it later. It seems that the sailing ship *Avos* would be

giving its “treasures” to its new crew for a long time. To the crew, that it waited at the bottom for one hundred and ninety years.

Mike and Yegor slowly swam up to the decompression stop. They stood at a shallow depth for three minutes, waved goodbye with their hands to the sailing ship and rose to the water surface. The morning sun immediately reminded them of many chores yet to finish and quickly dispelled their sentimental mood.

\* \* \*

Gala dinner marking the successful expedition of the treasure hunters to the Swain reefs began shortly before sunset. Josh cooked a wonderful rack of lamb for that occasion, Mike made his favorite “Texas” salad and Yegor opened two bottles of the best wine, and sliced some cheese. Bob helped a little bit with everything and at the same time tested all the dishes. That evening, the tricorne hat adorned Yegor’s head. Bob borrowed it from the Russian diver only when he played chess with someone, and Mike - when he was fishing.

After finishing all the preparations, the friends sat at the table. Yegor filled four glasses and Josh took charge of the meat and salad.

- Well, my friends! – Josh began speaking. – Strangely enough, our seemingly hopeless and even a bit fantastic adventure turned out to be a complete success. An ancient underwater sailing ship became real and seventy-five percent of its treasures’ value will be shared among the members of *Avos* expedition. That is why I suggest this toast: for dream, for fairytale and for the one, who made our dreams come true! For “Avos”!

All friends at the table loudly applauded that toast, had a drink and started eating.

After thirty minutes, they were full and leaned back on their chairs.

- Josh! – Yegor said to his friend. – How much time do you think it will take to sell the treasures and pay taxes?

- Oh, Yegor...- Josh could only say. – Such occasions are rare and even though my lawyers have already prepared the necessary documents, I think it will take several months. We probably should not rush. It is better to sell all the treasures from the ship at international auctions to the highest bidder.

- Josh is absolutely right, - Mike joined the conversation. – I know a few guys who have experience in this. I think they can give us some advice.

- Well, Bobby and I will flip through the catalogues and look for our future purchases. By the way, Bob, did decide on a sports car? – Yegor asked the guy.

- You know, Yegor, - Bob suddenly replied with a very serious tone. – I have changed my mind. I think it would be better to buy a conventional SUV and a small yacht which can be later moved on a trailer. I have seen it on the roads.

Bob got a little embarrassed.

- I just grew attached to the sea, my friends. That is why I would like to have the opportunity to go sailing in my spare time. I think that Kathy would like this idea too.

His older friends unanimously clapped their hands.

- Good for you, nephew! – Josh could only say.

- Chess was good for you, Bobby, - Mike smiled cheerfully.

- And I think it's all about the captain's tricorn hat, - Yegor said with laughter and put the famous hat on the guy's head. – It just makes any person who wears it to fall in love with the sea.

- Do you think so? – Bob asked seriously. – Maybe I should put it on Kathy's head for a couple of days.



The friends nearly fell on the deck from laughter.

- It can cause a different effect on women, Bobby – Josh finally said after taking a breath. – For example, I would not take such a risk.

The friends joked until midnight and the cupboard's door began to creak at the end.

\* \* \*

The next morning, at first light, “Dolce Dive” catamaran weighed anchor and headed south. A fresh side wind cheerfully filled its sails. There was enough fuel in the tanks and Josh started the engines to increase the speed.

Today the friends had to overcome a considerable distance. They were about to spend the night in Hervey Bay – a big inner water area between the huge sand Fraser Island and the shore.

During the first two hours, the divers made their way between random reefs of Swain atoll and once in the open water they took course towards the farthest point of the Great Barrier Reef – Lady Elliot Island. The distance was more than two hundred kilometers so Josh increased the catamaran's speed to twenty knots per hour. The friends spent the next six hours having fun by jumping the on waves. Fishing at such speed was impossible and sitting at the table was uncomfortable during such pitching. That is why the older divers stood at the helm in turns and the rest were lying with books in their hands on the sofas in the mess deck. By three o'clock, they saw Lady Elliott Island on the horizon. “Dolce Dive” passed it without slowing down and sailed on.

Hervey Bay was famous for a huge population of whales that come here during the winter months. However, it was now autumn in Australia and the divers occasionally encountered only small flocks of dolphins.

The sun was verging on the horizon when the catamaran entered the Urangan port. First of all, the friends refilled the ship's fuel tanks and

after that stopped at the pier. Josh contacted this port in advance by radio and arranged a place for them.

When all moorings were attached, the crew happily came ashore with phones in their hands. First, the friends headed to the café where they talked to their relatives and close friends for an during a good dinner and a cup of coffee. Nobody was worried about the treasures left onboard – Josh and Mike hid them so well inside the catamaran that it was almost impossible to find. Besides, theft from ships in Australia are extremely rare.

It was dark when the friends returned to the ship. They decided to get some good sleep before the next passage so they headed directly to their cabins.

\* \* \*

The next day, the passage was much shorter. In the early morning, “Dolce Dive” left the hospitable port and headed southwards again. The first part of their day’s route was planned through the calm canals of Hervey Bay. The wind was light that morning and the catamaran moved on its engines. But that did not worry the divers – the ship’s fuel tanks were full. The quiet and calm weather in the morning let our friends share their impressions on the rear deck lively. Mike was the first to stand up at the helm and three of his friends sat at the table nearby with bottles of ginger beer in their hands.

- So, my friends, - Josh said. – Did you manage to talk to your loved ones yesterday?

The divers nodded their heads.

- It seemed to me that Kathy still does not believe that we really found something, - Bob said with a smile. – Yesterday I sent her a dozen pictures of the chest and even the one where I am sawing through the

lock. But she calls me a big tale-taller, and our chest is a good joke. She asked me which antique store we bought it from.

His friends almost fell off their chairs from laughter.

- It is not surprising, Bobby, - his uncle replied. – Actually, not so many people are going to believe it. I sometimes can hardly believe it myself that what happened to us was not a fairytale. In such cases, I usually pinch myself and look at the chest.

- That is why I always wear the hat, - Yegor laughed. – I only need to look in the mirror to see that it is true.

Everyone burst out laughing.

- As for me, chess does not let me forget about it, - Bob cheerfully said. – By the way, Mike, let's play some after your shift? The last time I was struggling against you for half an hour!

- You are making progress, for sure, - Mike answered with a smile. – Okay, Bobby, let's play. But do not forget to put your hat on!

- By the way, Josh, - Yegor asked. – Where will we spend the night?

- If the weather is good, we will have enough time to reach Tangalooma on Moreton Island. We dived there once, three years ago. Do you remember those half sank ships in the shallows? The bay has a beautiful shore and calm waters. Besides, there is a pretty good restaurant on the shore, where you can order perfect steaks.

- It would be great to get there today, - Bob gulped.

- There is one difficult section on our way at the end of these canals. It is located right between Fraser Island and the shore and is called Inskip Point. We will reach it in an hour. It is difficult to pass this point only at low tide, but now it is high tide. Therefore, everything should be fine.

That was exactly what happened. The catamaran jumped for a while in the incoming waves, passed this place and sailed out into the ocean. Next there was a straight way to Moreton Bay. Josh increased the

catamaran speed up to twenty knots per hour again and by four o'clock the friends had already anchored in a picturesque place called Tangalooma. Internet and phones worked very well here and all the divers checked their emails and messages.

Later in the afternoon, the dressed up friends boarded the zodiac and headed to the restaurant on the shore. Yegor's hat, despite his protests, was left in the catamaran.

\* \* \*

For the entire evening, Kathy was looking through the pictures on her phone that Bob had sent. *Here is Bob sitting near a chest, here is Bob sawing something on it.* Kathy tenderly looked at the beloved face of her boyfriend and did not notice anything else around her. *Well, finally he will be home soon!* Kathy flipped the photo and saw the last picture. *What kind of stupid hat is that? It looks like he is trying out the part in a pirate movie. Where did he get it from?*

The girl stared attentively at Bob's face. Something has slightly changed about him. And she definitely liked this "something". His eyes looked more serious. Or maybe it was just a picture. Oh, what is the difference? She loves him anyway!

Kathy sighed and put her phone under the pillow. She rolled around in her bed for a minute and took the phone in her hands again. After a second, the girl was looking at the picture of Bob near the chest again.

*"A chest. Why would he ever need a chest?"* – Kathy reflected and suddenly became thoughtful. *"Although... What if it is true? Wow! Then Bob maybe buy her that wonderful ring in the jewelry store? But that is unlikely. Bob would never find anything underwater, it is just impossible".*

To be honest, that was not so important to her. Nothing mattered more than Bob! Finally, Kathy began to fall asleep. Just before the sleep, one

thought crossed her mind. *“I hope that Bob will not bring that awful hat home. He looks like a clown”*.

A minute later, the girl was enjoying a sweet sleep. Her angel Anrie was standing nearby looking at the walls with a smile. *“Which hook in this room would Bob’s hat look best?”* – He thought.

\* \* \*

- Well, my friends! –Yegor said with a sate voice, an hour after the start of the dinner. – This is the last evening that we will spend on the ship together. Tomorrow, after we complete the last passage, Josh and Bob will spend the night at home and Mike and I will sleep at the hotel.

The divers were sad and kept silent for some time.

- Well, sooner or later, everything comes to an end in this life, - Mike said thoughtfully. – Our four-week expedition is over too. Even though we are sad now in our hearts, I have no doubts that we will come up with new and interesting plans in the future.

- Besides, now we know in which direction we should dig, - Yegor smiled. – Now, we will deal with the issue of treasures, live with our families for a while, work and eventually new ideas will come to us by themselves.

- When will they come by themselves? – Bob inquired.

- Perhaps, when you really want them to, - his uncle replied and smiled.  
– Or when you put on the right hat.

All the divers laughed again.

- But Yegor will take the hat to Russia, - Bob said sadly.

Yegor looked warmly at the guy and smiled.

- Bobby, I give it to you with all my heart. Put it on more often, look in the mirror and sometimes put it on Kathy. Perhaps, it would really help you.

- Oh, thank you, Yegor! – The guy was happy. – I will definitely bring it with me on vacation when we are together.

Everyone became thoughtful.

- Seriously, guys, when will we think about our next trip? – Josh asked the question.

- It is hard to say, - Mike replied after some time. - It depends not only on us.

- I agree, Mike, - Yegor understood his thought and nodded. – This time we only followed the *Avos* plan that was made by Someone else. He should tell us where we should go.

- Yes, my friends, - Josh agreed. – The most interesting thing is that it can be anything. *Avos* plan is a serious thing. It gave us to understand that many times. I think we should feel in our souls what we want to do next. If we do not make a mistake, everything will be just fine.

- How to find out where the mistake and where is not? – asked Bob.

- Intuition, Bobby, intuition once again, - Yegor replied. – It always helped us on this trip. I suggest everyone think about it and then get together to compare the results.

The friends at the table became thoughtful.

- You know, Yegor, - Mike said, – that is interesting. We have been searching for our shipwreck in the same manner. Even if one of us makes a mistake, four of us cannot be mistaken. Of course, we should not make mistakes – actually, life is not that long.

- I agree, my friends. We should not make mistakes, but we also should not hurry, - Josh nodded. – It is always interesting to follow a good plan properly. And I would not waste my time on boring projects.

- Do not forget about me, guys! Call me and I will come. – Bob smiled and added. – Unless Kathy does not kill me...

The divers laughed.

- So, when will we meet again? – Josh asked his friends. – And where?

- Friends, let's meet in a year on this day, - Bob suddenly suggested.

The divers thought for a while.

- You know, I like this idea! – Mike said first. – Good plans need some time to mature. One year is just the right period. Besides, we will have enough time to deal with all other formalities.

- I am in, too! – Yegor said. – It reminds me of a book about musketeers. However, they only met after twenty years.

- Maybe we should meet in twenty years as well? – Bob continued to come up with ideas.

- Mike, Egor or I may not make it, Bobby,” Josh shook his head skeptically. – One year is enough. We should only determine the meeting place.

- I suggest don't do that yet, - Yegor suddenly suggested. – We can determine it, for example, a month before the meeting. Perhaps, it would be another surprise and a new chapter in the *Avos* plan.

All the divers were pleased with this idea.

It was already dark when the zodiac approached the “Dolce Dive” catamaran with the glowing lights. The friends said good night to each other and went to their cabins.

Tomorrow they had to return to normal earthly life.

\* \* \*

The angels were looking at their Earthly romantics with great love. The trip to the distant reefs was so useful. The Father showed them so many unusual things!

The angels would really like them to remember it all. They would be happy if their earthly friends continued their life path discovering the Father in their hearts, His great love and infinite goodness. They would be happy if their divers always wanted to touch that incredible height and beauty which can only come from Him and to learn that kindness and love from the Father.

After that, the end of their Earthly life would be just an opened door leading to Him, whom they knew and loved for a long time. And they, the angels, will always be close to their friends. They will always advise them: the right action, a good thought, a funny joke or some interesting plans. And they will always love them very much.

## **Epilogue**

Four men were sitting on the outdoor veranda of a restaurant located on an island in the Indian Ocean. All of them arrived the day before. Two men, one of whom was very young, came from Australia. The third man was from America, and the fourth one was from Russia. The sunset was burning out in the sky when the visitors finally shared their news with each other. After that, they got down to the main thing – the reason for their meeting.



- Well, my friends! – the older Australian, whom everyone called Josh, solemnly pronounced. – Do we all have an understanding on what to do next?

The other three men at the table nodded.

- Well, in that case, let's do it like the last time, - Josh said and after that addressed the young guy. – Bobby, please, hand out blank sheets of paper. Each of us should write the best idea that came to his mind over the past year. And after that...

- We have been waiting for this “after that” for the whole year, - Yegor said with a smile. – So, as the phrase goes, - here we go and let it be.

Everyone leaned over the papers.

The angels also leaned over their wards. Each of them tried to help his earthly friend write the correct answer on the paper. The Father smiled cheerfully, looking at his friendly company made of Heavenly and Earthly members.

When Bobby collected the sheets of paper five minutes later, the first star lit up in the sky.

\* \* \*

[www.DolphinsDivingDreams.com](http://www.DolphinsDivingDreams.com)

## Table of contents

Foreword.....	2
Chapter 1. Swain reefs.....	3
Chapter 2. Dots on the map.....	15
Chapter 3. Everyday life of treasure hunters .....	25
Chapter 4. First findings.....	39
Chapter 5. To the secrets of the depths .....	53
Chapter 6. Sailing ship.....	65
Chapter 7. Back to the reef.....	79
Chapter 8. Chest.....	91
Chapter 9. Into the depth .....	104
Chapter 10. New findings.....	117
Chapter 11. Back home.....	126
Epilogue.....	136

Another book from the "Once Upon a Time in Heaven" series. Using the fantasy genre, the author tries to look at some earthly events not just from the standpoint of the inhabitants of the earth, but from a slightly broader perspective.

ISBN 978-5-904020-80-4