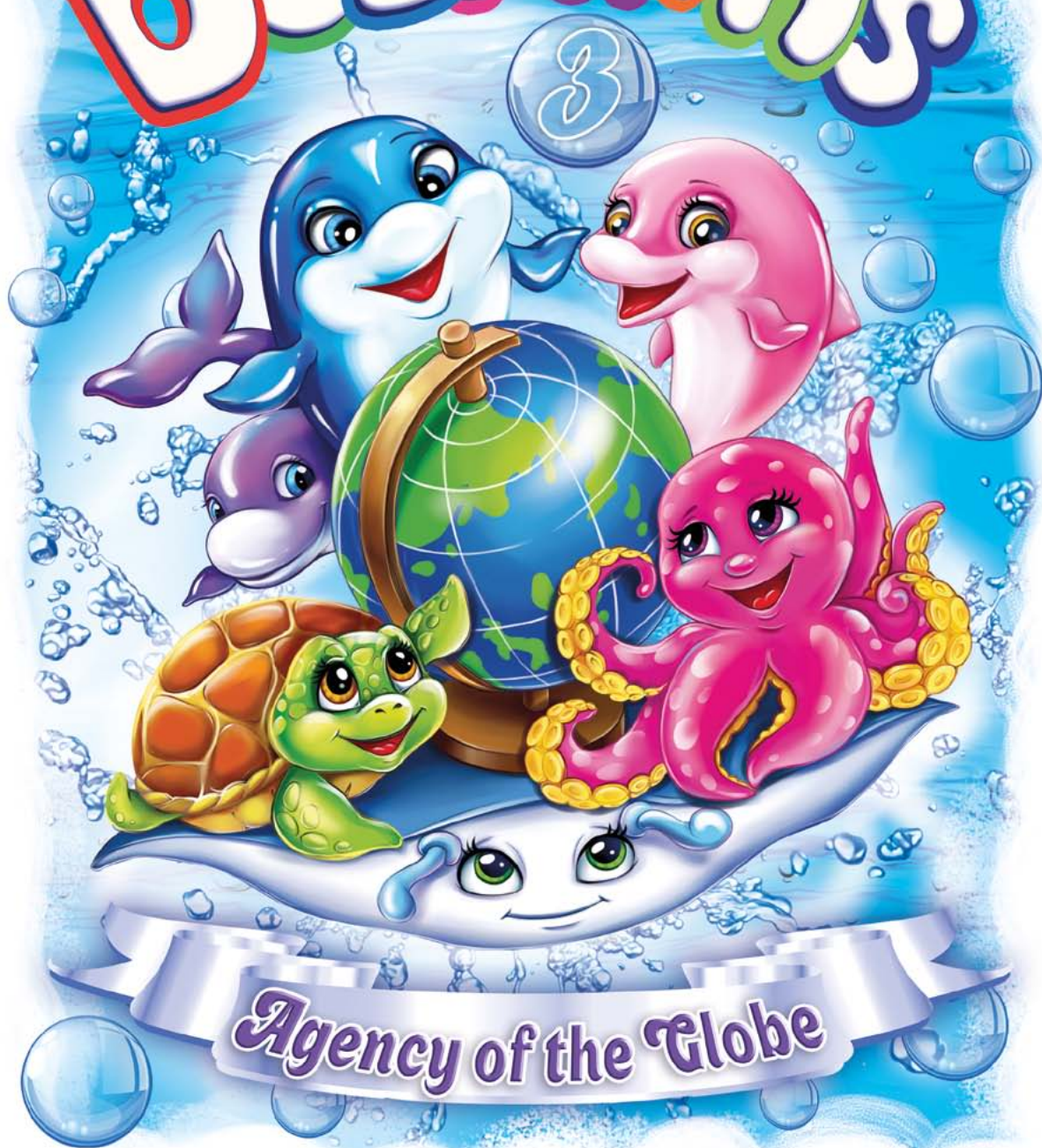


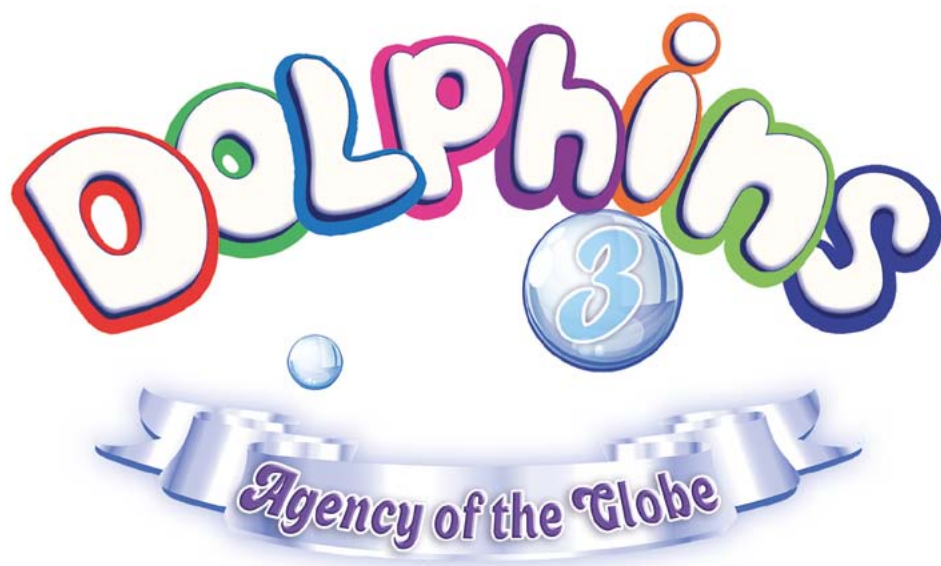
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DOLPHINS



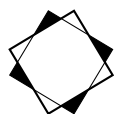
Agency of the Globe

Igor Bondar



A fairy tale

Illustrated by Alyona Garbuz



“Zolotoye sechenie“
private publishers
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Some new adventures of our underwater friends
in the Galapagos Islands.

Illustrated by Alyona Garbuz.

“Zolotoye sechenie“ private publishers.

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Agency



ix dolphin eyes carefully watched Medky the turtle spinning his globe. This went on for a long time but not a single word was uttered.

Finally, Bin broke down and said, “Oh, this idleness drives me crazy!”

“Actually my friend, dolphins don’t go crazy because of idleness” Geo replied philosophically.

“They do, they do!” Karen supported her husband. “Note that Ponty the octopus does massages, Bolly the manta tells jokes all day long and we’ve been staring at this globe for a week already.”

“It’s a good thing Medky spins it.” Bin tried to put a positive note on the conversation.

All the dolphins looked gratefully at the turtle.

“All right friends, I admit that I am a little bored too. But what can we do? We do not possess any special talent.” Geo said.

“Then we should look for one.” Medky replied thoughtfully and began to spin the globe in the opposite direction.

“That is an interesting idea!” Bin perked up. “Maybe we can do something that would be useful to someone?”

Everyone on the ship fell silent for a few minutes. Medky sighed and was about to spin the globe in the same direction as before when Karen began to speak.

“You know my friends, if people on earth want to help someone they set up different agencies — detective agencies and many other agencies for assistance. People often ask them for help.”

“A good start my dear.” Bin caught her thought. “Do you think we can create something similar underwater?”

“Well, it will certainly be more fun to try than to sit around doing nothing. I’m convinced that its worth a try. It won’t be boring that’s for sure.”

“And how will other underwater inhabitants find out about us?” Geo asked.

“Hey friend!” Medky replied with a smile. “We’ve got a whole school of talkative mantas passing by Bolly every day. I think in a couple of months even a small leech on the other side of the ocean will know about us.”

Everyone exploded with laughter.

“Well the beginning sounds pretty good.” Bin’s eyes sparkled. “But what can we actually do?”

“Quite a bit.” Karen picked up the conversation, smiling widely. “We can get and eat pizza, search for Atlantis, drive a car on earth and laugh

a lot. Anyway, if someone asks us for something we can't do we'll just apologize and refuse the request."

"And also we have Aya!" Geo added gladly.

Everyone smiled.

"It's decided then!" Medky said cheerfully and sat on top of the globe. "What should we call our help agency?"

The friends thought for some time.

"How about 'Three tails and a shell'?" Geo suggested.

"Not bad." Bin said. "But I think it's a little long. If Bolly and Ponty want to join us, we'll have to add tentacles and wings."

The dolphins and the turtle burst into laughter.

"Then how about..." Medky began to speak and suddenly spun on his globe. "Maybe we should call ourselves 'Agency of the Globe'? After all, watching it rotate all day long brought this brilliant idea to our minds."

His last few words could barely be heard because of the united laughter.

"I agree." Bin was the first to say finally.

"Me too." Geo supported him.

"It's agreed then!" Karen said and began to move toward the exit. "Let's swim over to Bolly."

"And on the way back we'll swing by Ponty" Medky said swimming behind her. "He'll be glad to hear about this. Besides, sometimes he has lot of different visitors."

In no time the group of happy friends had already left the ship.

“One more thing!” Karen suddenly remembered. “Strictly speaking we should also have an office where our clients can visit and meet us”

“Hmm... Where can we put it?” Bin thought out aloud.

“Do not rack your brains my friends.” Medky said. “The office will be the place where our globe stands. It’s quite symbolic. Besides, I’m almost always here and won’t miss not even a single client.”

“Great!” Karen said. “Then our agency will have the following address: “The Great Barrier Reef, the Lame Penguin shipwreck, office No 1, ask for Medky.”

“That’s most impressive.” Geo said with respect. “I would definitely visit such a place if I ever needed something.”

After that the friends increased their speed.



They could hear loud laughter long before they swam up to the atoll. Skirting the underwater rock, the dolphins and the turtle swam into a large underwater plateau. Many laughing manta rays floated above it. In front of the mantas they saw Bolly performing and gesturing with her beautiful

wings. Now and then her speech was interrupted by bursts of laughter.

Our friends swam up to the side of the group and Bolly noticed them as soon as she turned her head. She then turned to her guests.

“I’m sorry my dear friends but I have some stuff to do. So it’s a good time to break for lunch. At the end of this atoll you’ll find some wonderful plankton.”

“Oh Bolly!” one manta could not get back her breath. “I laughed so much that I lost my appetite.”

“You should force yourself my dear.” the hostess said lovingly. “Otherwise you will not have the strength to listen to the second and third parts.”

Having said this Bolly swam over to her friends.

“Hello my darlings. I haven’t seen you for a while. What brings you here?”

“We’ve got some news for you.” Bin said. “How are you doing? How many mantas come to visit you?”

“Loads of them.” Bolly looked at Karen. “I adapted the human jokes and now I have a whole new series about an impudent tuna and a voracious barracuda.”

“A voracious barracuda?” Geo wrinkled his nose doubtfully.

“Don’t you like that?” the manta asked him and thought for a bit. “Well actually, when I was adapting the jokes I had another option about a dolphin who was too clever by half...”

“No no Bolly, a barracuda is just the thing.” Bin interrupted her with a laugh. “We came to you for another reason.”

“What’s the matter?”

“Well, out of boredom we decided to open the Agency of the Globe to help underwater inhabitants.»

“Hm, sounds nice and noble. So what can you do?”

“Many different things Bolly. For example, search for Atlantis, get and eat pizzas, tell jokes, make fun of mantas” Bin began to recite.

“And I can become a human” Karen added.

“And also we have our great underwater friend Aya.” Geo said.

“Sounds pretty serious” the manta nodded. “But how will underwater inhabitants find you?”

“With your help Bolly. You have a whole bunches of chatty mantas visiting you. They will quickly spread the news throughout the entire ocean.”

“Hmm..., that’s an interesting idea.” Bolly replied and smiled. “The main thing is to tell them this information in the beginning, otherwise they will think that it’s a joke.”

The friends laughed loudly.

Then Bin asked the manta:

“And what about you Bolly? Will you join our agency?”

The manta thoughtfully waved her wings.

“How about we do this: when you get an actual case come and tell me and I’ll give you my answer. Now as you can see, I have little chance of being bored here. By the way, who are the members of your agency?”

“So far we are the only members.” Geo said. “It opened only half an hour ago.”

“What about Ponty?”

“We haven’t caught up with him yet.” Bin said. “I have no doubt that he’ll be up for it — with all his eight tentacles.”

The friends broke into laughter. Karen smiled and turned to Bolly.

“Do you need some new jokes?”

“Oh, no, thank you my darling! I’ve got new guests every day and hardly have enough strength to retell the old ones.”

At this time, other mantas began to return from lunch and settle down on the plateau.

“Well Bolly they are waiting for you.” Bin said. “Tell them about our agency and give its address.”

“Address?” Bolly was surprised.

“Yup, this is all very serious — we have an office and an address” Karen smiled as she told Bolly the address.

“A serious approach indeed.” Bolly gave her approval. “Well I’ll swim over to my guests, okay?”

The friends waved their fins and the manta returned to her visitors.



Above the entrance to the cave where Ponty the octopus did his massages, was a placard: «Service break — 30 minutes.» Two large stingrays were lying on the sand nearby patiently waiting for their turn. The friends told them that they were there on another matter and swam into the cave.

Ponty was sitting in a corner turning over a Rubik's Cube which Karen once brought from earth.

“Oh my friends!” he brightened up. “I’m so glad to see you!”

The dolphins and the turtle warmly greeted him.

“It seems that you really like that thing.” Bin said, nodding at the toy.

“Of course.” Ponty agreed. “I like giving massages but sometimes I want to do something more intellectual.”

“Then we have news that you’ll definitely like.” Geo said with a smile. “We have decided to open a quite intellectual Agency of the Globe which will help all marine animals.”

They then briefly described their idea.

“Sounds interesting!” Ponty said as his friends finished explaining their plan. “I hope that soon there will be some new things to do in the ocean.”

Of course it's not that bad to sit in a cave massaging someone's back but I always think about our wonderful trip to Atlantis."

"Indeed." Bin smiled back. "We started this project for the same reason. Are you with us?"

"Why do you even have to ask?" Ponty laughed. "Of course!"

At this time a stingray glanced inside the cave.

"I'm sorry mister Ponty but thirty minutes are up."

The octopus sighed.

"Well my friends, business is business! All right, I hope that very soon we'll have new interesting clients and plans. Now I'm going to give massages and this evening I'll be making a large poster: "Swam away for a very serious reason. I don't know when I will be back."

The friends burst into laughter and exchanged warm goodbyes.



Two months had passed. During this time Bin and Karen had caught up with their already grown up children Bona and Loony, and spent some time visiting Bin's parents. Once they all got together and had a really great time. It was a treat for Bin's mother who more than anything loved to cook delicious dishes for her guests.

Sometimes Bin and Karen met their friends and had fun together. More than anything though they were waiting for news from their new agency. They had a feeling that something very important and interesting awaited them. Something that would bring some special meaning into their lives.

Now they visited not only Medky but also their office. They came up with lots of jokes on these occasions. Even the expectation of news made them happy. Needless to say all their expectations were destined to come true.

The first client.



edky was sitting on his favorite place next to the globe when someone began to swim into his house. This guest was so big that for some time he obstructed the whole entrance.

When he swam closer and Medky was able to look at him carefully and he saw rows of straight teeth belonging to a large white shark which was now right next to him.

“It’s strange that my life was so short.” was all he could think of. He didn’t even have time to get scared.

“Excuse me.” the turtle suddenly heard the diplomatic, gravelly voice of his guest. “Do you know where can I find Medky from the Agency of the Globe?”

“Th-th-that’s actually me.” speech and life was slowly returning under his shell.

“Nice to meet you.” the large visitor said politely. “My name is Larry. Your agency was recommended to me as very reliable and reputable.”

“We are always glad to help our clients.” courtesy began to return to Medky.

“I hope so.” Larry said and sighed. “I have nowhere else to go with my problem.”

“Before you start Larry, let me invite all the employees of this agency. Otherwise, you will have to retell your story all over again.”

“Oh of course.” Larry nodded. “I will have a rest after my journey and have a bite to eat somewhere near your ship. It was a long trip.”

“No problem.” Medky replied cautiously and like a bullet flew out of the ship’s hold trying in that instant to be as far away from home as possible.

About an hour later, the three dolphins, the manta, the octopus, and the turtle met on the ship to listen to shark’s problem. Medky had a hard time trying to convince his friends that their sharp-toothed guest was not dangerous at all.

They could not all fit in the hold and decided to have a conversation at the bow of the ship where Ponty had now relocated the globe. Medky introduced the guest to his friends and told him to begin his story. Larry looked sadly at everyone and commenced his tale.

“I was born and raised near the Galapagos Islands.” he began to speak and used his fin to show everyone the place on the globe. “I haven’t seen another place as beautiful as my home. There are millions of my kin of different species as well as manta rays, whale sharks, turtles and





of course dolphins. There is enough food and wonderful reefs for everyone.” Larry sighed. “To be more precise my home was like that until recently.”

“What happened?” Bin asked him.

“Fishermen — or poachers to be more precise.” Larry said abruptly.

“Fishermen? But we have always known about them.”

“Not the usual fishermen that we used to know.” the shark shook his head. “These are different — merciless shark fishermen. We, sharks and dolphins or mantas have never been good food for people. Therefore, they have never tried to catch us. But now everything has changed.”

“But what happened, Larry?” Medky asked him.

“It’s our fins.” the guest replied. “Several years ago people suddenly started hunting us for our fins. For some reason they want them.”

“I’ve heard that people make some fashionable drugs and cook expensive soup from fins. This is some sort of liquid food for people.” Karen broke in.

Larry looked at her with interest.

“Really? I did not know.”

“They catch sharks only for these fins?” Geo asked him.

“Yeah.” the shark grinned sadly. “They throw everything else back into the sea.”

Everyone on deck was silent. They were horrified.

“Does this mean that they are hunting only for you?” Geo asked him.

“Yes, however they catch many other animals. They killed many of my relatives. Even I was almost killed once and survived by a miracle.”

At this moment, Larry turned to them sideways and friends saw a big hook in his tail.

“Larry can I try to take it out for you?” Ponty offered his help.

“It’s sitting in there tight buddy.” Larry said. “Nobody has been able do that yet.”

“I’ve been training a lot when massaging my clients.” the octopus smiled and pulled it with force. The hook slowly came out of the shark.”

“Wow!” Larry was delighted. “The first good news I have had of late. It seems that it was a right decision for me to come here. Thank you so much!”

“I’m always glad to help.” Ponty smiled. “Now you can continue telling your story.”

“Larry,” Karen addressed to the shark, “to help us understand you better please tell us how they hunt for you?”

“Oh it’s a very treacherous and ruthless kind of hunting.” the shark said. “They throw very long cables into the sea from their ships. These cables are so long that you can’t see the ship from below. There are many sharp hooks on these cables. The poachers drag these cables behind the ship and hook up all the animals that swim in the vicinity.”

Larry continued with other details and began to answer some questions from our friends.



The members of the Agency of the Globe said goodbye to their first client until the next morning and then got together for their first meeting.

“Well the fight against poachers is a serious business.” Bin said thoughtfully.

“Larry said that he had nowhere else to go. I really want to help him.” Medky replied sadly.

“Yup. Seems the first task for our agency is really large-scale.” Bolly the manta began to speak.

“So are you with us?” Ponty asked her enthusiastically.

“My dear friends! How can I tell jokes after hearing such things? Of course I’m in.” Bolly replied.

“Great news!” Geo was glad and looked at Karen with curiosity. “By the way, why did you ask Larry about thickness of these cables?”

“Well, I have an idea” she smiled.

“Come on, tell us my dear.” Bin looked at her with interest. “Something tells me that you already have a plan.”

“Right now I only have some ideas.” Karen smiled back. “People have a special tool to cut these cables. It’s called a bolt cutter. So I thought what if Ponty could swim on Bolly up to the cable with these bolt

cutters in his tentacles? He could then easily cut the cable. After that the cable would fall to the sea floor and never hurt anyone.”

“It’s a good start!” Geo was happy. “But there’s one thing. There are many hooks on the cables, Bolly is quite big and could be hooked by accident.”

“Well, we could cover the hooks with shells first and then cut the cable” Medky said thoughtfully.

“You are a genius my friend!” Ponty smiled.

The turtle nodded modestly.

“Besides it would be better to ride on a dolphin rather than on Bolly when approaching the cable. It would be much safer” Bin suggested.

“Well my friends, we have already put together quite an interesting plan.” Bolly finally smiled too.

She then thoughtfully wiggled tips of her wings and looked at Karen.

“Darling isn’t it time to go to the shop and buy some bolt cutters?”

“Yes I agree that we should not waste time” Karen agreed. “Bin are you with me?”

“We are all with you darling” Bolly smiled and made a beautiful figure with her wings. “Otherwise you won’t buy pizzas for us. Lots of them! Who else will help you eat them?”

Her last words were muffled by a lot of laughter. The friends then set off towards the closest city and soon swam into a small canal on its outskirts.

“Well my friends I’m going for a shopping again.” Karen said almost routinely.

Everyone wished her good luck and to return as soon as possible. She lay in the shallow water and looked up at the sky. As soon as Karen finished saying her wish she turned into a girl lying on the beach. This time she wore pretty new shorts and top and had fashionable thongs on her feet. During her last walk on land she had decided to buy some new clothes.

Karen stood up and looked at her friends with a smile.

“So how do I look?”

“Exactly as you looked on the island.” Bin smiled. “Beautiful and extremely inaccessible!”

The girl laughed.

“All right then I’ll go and finish everything as soon as possible.”

Karen then checked her for her credit card in her shorts’ pocket, waved her hand to say goodbye and quickly headed off to the city.



In thirty minutes, she entered a large appliance supermarket called Bunnings to buy everything she needed. Karen did not know much about tools and asked an older salesperson with kind eyes to help her.

The good-natured Australian listened with interest to her request and asked her why she

needed the tool. The girl said that they were going to put things right underwater and cut unnecessary wires and cables. The seller who also liked the idea of a clean sea, nodded and went to the shelves. Soon he stopped and pointed at some large tongs.

“These cutters are produced by a famous German company and are made of very strong stainless steel. They will serve you many years underwater.”

“Great!” Karen smiled. “Thank you very much. I’ll buy them.”

She was about to go to the cash desk when the seller suddenly stopped her.

“And what shall you do if you find some cords, nets or fishing line underwater? These cutters won’t help you in that case.”

“Really?” Karen thought for a moment. “What would you recommend then?”

“A good hook knife. There is one of the same brand.” the man took another tool off the counter. “It will cut anything underwater except iron.”

“Thank you for the tip.” the girl smiled and put the hook knife in her cart. “You have helped me so much.”

“I’m always glad to help people who make our oceans cleaner.” the salesperson smiled back.

In a few minutes Karen walked out of the store with a small bag and then turned left. It turned out that the salesperson knew where to buy the best pizza.



An hour later a taxi driver licking his lips was helping a slim girl with a large pyramid of delicious smelling boxes get out of his taxi.

“Tell me if it is not a secret — why do you need so many pizzas?” he could not resist asking her.

“Oh if only you knew my friend Bolly you wouldn’t ask” Karen smiled back.

“Ho-ho! She has a good appetite.” the driver shook his head. “How much does your friend weigh if she can eat so much? A hundred kilos or so I guess?”

“A hundred?” Karen laughed. “Much more.”

“Oh my God...” the taxi driver could only say.

As the girl picked up the large bolt cutters the taxi driver looked at her questioningly.

“Well, it’s just in case I have to fight with her for overeating.” Karen explained, dying of laughter inside.

She then said goodbye and went to the shore. The taxi driver looked after her for a long time until she disappeared behind the coastal dunes.

“Yeah it’s no wonder,” he thought, “that her miserable glutton friend is sunbathing in such a lonely place. Well at least she has a loyal friend.”

After that he got into the car and drove back to the city.





The next day at the agreed time, all agency employees were waiting on deck for their first client. Larry swam in on time and greeted them politely. He then looked at them somewhat guiltily.

“Well my friends it seems that I have given you a very difficult task.” he began sadly. “But you were recommended to me as a very talented group. That’s why I came to you and you are my last resort. Anyway, what can we actually do against these poachers?”

“I’m sorry Larry. May I interrupt you?” Karen asked the shark. “Please tell us is the cable close to this ship’s side thicker or thinner than the poachers’ cable?”

Larry shrugged his fins in surprise and looked at the cable she had described.

“I saw the poachers’ cable four times underwater. This one here is thicker.” he said. “Why do you need to know this?”

“You’ll see.” Bin smiled. “Ponty, Geo, please provide a little demonstration for our guest”

“With pleasure!” the friends echoed.

The octopus then jumped on the dolphins’ back with some steel thing in his tentacles and they swam off the ship. Larry looked at them with surprise.

“What are you trying to show me?” he asked.

“Please be a little bit more patient.” Karen replied. “You will see soon enough.”

Geo and Ponty turned in the water and quickly swam back to the ship. Suddenly they stopped near the ship’s cable. Ponty took out the steel thing and they heard a loud click. Then, they swam to the cable on the other side and they heard a loud click again.

“Enough my friends” Medky broke down. “Otherwise, you will break the entire house and our office at the same time.”

They all laughed merrily.

“All right Larry,” Bin turned to the shark with a smile. “let’s swim over and take a look at our friends’ work.”

The puzzled shark moved after the dolphin. However, he soon froze in amazement — two cables from both of ship’s cleats were cut.

“Guys, how did you do that?!” Larry was bewildered and happy at the same time.

“The Agency of the Globe is always trying to intrigue our clients!” Bin smiled back and everyone laughed.

“Unbelievable!” Larry laughed with everyone in his loud bass voice. “If I hadn’t seen that with my own eyes I would not have believed it possible.”

He then turned and looked toward his home.

“Now you’d better watch out poachers!”

To the Galapagos Islands



he next morning all the staff of the agency together with Larry set off on a long journey to the Galapagos Islands.

It looked like this: an enormous shark was swimming in front and a big turtle with large bolt cutters and the hook knife attached to his shell was swimming behind him. Three dolphins swam together behind the turtle and the caravan was completed by Bolly the manta with an octopus on her back. Ponty was still holding a small mirror in his tentacle — Bolly's habits hadn't changed over time...

That morning all of Ponty's clients read the notice above the entrance to his cave about his indefinite leave. The mantas that day were listening to jokes told by Bin's father. Bolly had trained him for a whole month. Meanwhile Bin's mother treated all guests with delicious desserts.



Over the first few days our friends swam past the Fiji Islands, Cook Islands and finally reached the numerous islands of French Polynesia. Before the long passage to the Galapagos Islands they decided to take a rest.

Our friends found a beautiful lagoon and everyone was doing their favorite thing: Larry was talking to his local kin, Geo, Medky, Ponty, and Bolly were chatting, discussing things and having fun. Sometimes they listened to some of the manta's new jokes. Bin and Karen were swimming around the beautiful local islands.

They were happy together — as if they complemented each other in some way. Together they could laugh, jump over waves, look at the sunset or just sit in silence — it would change nothing. There were two of them but at the same time they were one united body. It was something complicated and at the same time more interesting and harmonious.

“You know Karen, I would like you to explain one thing to me.” Bin said suddenly.

“What Bin?”

“Those fishermen, poachers...” he began, “I want to understand one thing. How dare people cut off animals' fins and throw them away to die in the water?”

Karen sighed.

“It’s hard to explain my dear but I’ll try.” she said. “People may look very similar but may be as different as day and night.”

“Really?” the dolphin was surprised.

“Unfortunately it’s true.” Karen nodded. “Many people are capable of very beautiful and noble actions. They can help other people, protect them and care about them. Such people would never hurt an animal. Right now there is a groundswell of people who are trying to protect sharks. However, there are also other sorts of people who can do very ugly and horrible things, especially for money. They haven’t even heard of the word ‘compassion’”.

“That’s so strange.” Bin thought for some time. “Here underwater it’s much easier and clearer. There’s no bullying, meanness, deception, lying or revenge”.

“And I really like this world” Karen smiled. “Especially being in the company of your wonderful friends. On earth everything can be much more complicated.”

As Karen said that she sighed sadly.

“Sometimes you don’t even know who is standing in front of you — your friend or your enemy...”

The fish net



he next morning, our travelers swam out into the open ocean and continued towards the Galapagos Islands.

“We should be very careful when we get there.” Larry said to everyone. “My friends said that there are a lot of poachers. However, it seems that they use mostly fish nets for hunting.”


The friends quickly discussed this news and decided to change their formation. The large shark was still swimming in front but Geo and Bin began to be on lookout duty taking turns behind it. However, as it turned out, it did not protect our friends from problems.

On that day underwater visibility was very low due to abundant plankton and a fish net appeared very suddenly. Geo swam behind but managed to warn his friends.

“Look out! A fish net! Save yourselves!” he screamed loudly and rushed to the side.

His friends followed him quickly, however Medky the turtle was not quick enough and was





caught in the net. All the friends gathered together quickly and began following the net with their friend inside.

“All right guys, how are we going to save Medky?”
Bin asked first as he calmed down.

The net was moving slowly, so they could keep up easily.

“Oh our hook knife would be very useful now”
Karen said. “But it is attached to Medky’s back.”

“Then we should try to take it out.” Ponty said.

“Can I help you somehow?” Larry asked everyone.

“I think you can.” Geo answered. “Please bite the net near Medky, and hang on. Ponty will get on your back and try to get the hook knife from Medky.”

Larry nodded caught up to the net and clung on to it. Ponty moved from Bolly’s back onto Larry’s and then crawled on to the net. He strained to reach the hook knife with his tentacles but it was in vain.

“The net is too narrow” he finally said impatiently,
“I cannot get deep enough inside.”

The friends looked at each other.

“What can we do?” the manta asked anxiously.

“We have only one solution left in this case.”
Bin said and cried loudly toward the sea. “Aya, our friend! We really need your help now!”

In a few seconds a cloud man appeared near them. He looked around, shook his head and said:

“I see my friends that you’re having a bad day. Poachers again? Well do not worry, I’ll figure something out”.

Everyone looked at Aya with hope. As for Larry, he watched this magical scene in complete astonishment.

The cloud man then moved close to the net and slowly tore it with his hand. His hands cut it like a sharp razor blade. Soon all animals inside began to fall out of the big hole into the sea. Our friend fell out too and slowly swam up to them.

“I-i-it’s been a b-bad day” he could only say stammering.

All friends looked gratefully at Aya.

“Thank you our dear friend!” Bin said for everyone. “You have helped us so much!”

“It’s a pleasure to help my friends!” Aya smiled. “Be careful in these waters and call me if you ever need anything.”

After that, the cloud man smiled waved his hand and began to disappear. Soon he had vanished.

“Wow!” Larry said with surprise. “If I didn’t see that I would have never believed it. Who was he?”

“Our good friend from Atlantis.” Ponty explained.

Larry looked at his companions with great respect.

“Well my friends, it was a good idea to come to you! With your abilities and contacts I think everything will be fine.”



Meanwhile the friends were clapping rescued Medky on his shell. They were glad to be with him again. As for Ponty, he took the hook knife and placed it in a container attached to one of his tentacles — just in case.



The journey to the Galapagos Islands took a couple more days. The dolphins did watch duty in turns at the rear of the group and Karen insisted to taking part too.

On one of those days, Geo and Bin were swimming side by side discussing an interested topic. Bin had started the conversation.

“You know, my friend” he began. “I’ve never seen you looking for a girlfriend underwater. Why, if it is not a secret?”

Geo looked at his friend with a smile.

“Because I’m a romantic, Bin!” he replied. “Of course I want to find love but it should come into my life all by itself, not as a result of my searching.”

“Can you explain that?” Bin asked with interest.

“Of course.” Geo laughed. “You know my friend, searching is not for me. I just keep an image of my other half in my heart and day by day it acquires new virtues and traits. If I search for someone and

finally meet her then I think my expectations will melt away day by day.”

Bin smiled.

“And what if you don’t search for anyone? What will happen then?” he asked.

“You already know the answer to that my friend” Geo laughed and pointed at Karen with his eyes. “Then it is possible that someone will grow a tail.”

The friends laughed merrily.

“Do you still believe in fairytales?” Bin smiled.

“Otherwise this life would be so boring.” Geo shrugged his fins. “Like hearts are joined together in a very different place as you know. True love is not a matter of chance but of faith in such love.”

“Well said.” Bin replied after a while. “Of course. It is only faith and belief in love and in its purity and depth...”

“Exactly.” Geo nodded. “That’s why I have faith and wait. If it is destined, I’ll definitely find my love. It may happen anywhere. My friend you are the best example of that. And as for compromises...”

Geo screwed up his face.

“Any compromise brings future frustration. In the circumstances I will just keep my other half in my head. I have enough space for that.”

Bin laughed loudly.

“You are a real romantic, my friend! I have no doubt that you will definitely find the one whom you are waiting for.”

“Thank you Bin. I have no doubt as well.” Geo said with confidence.

At this time Karen joined them.

“I have finished my watch.” she said. “Whose turn is it now?”

“Geo’s” Bin replied quickly. “I think he’s in the right mood for that.”

His friend laughed out loudly and swam to the rear of the group.



Finally, our friends reached the Galapagos Islands. On their way they had already met many underwater inhabitants. They saw many sharks, dolphins, mantas, turtles and other animals. When they reached their destination they had a rest and got together for their first meeting.

Larry and three of his closest assistants participated too. They were just as large and as toothy. Larry had already relayed to them the first success of the Agency of the Globe and everyone treated them with great respect.

“So” Bin started, “Now that we have finally arrived I think that we should not waste any time.”

“Where do we start then?” Larry said in a businesslike manner.

“First of all, I think we should gather information about the poachers who are hunting now in these waters.”

“That’s right, Bin” Karen agreed.

“Larry, could you find a few volunteers among sharks or dolphins who could swim around today in different directions and look for the poachers’ ships?” Bin asked the shark.

“I’ll find enough volunteers.” Larry replied briskly. “Poachers do not usually hunt at night. Therefore, we’ll get a clear picture in morning.”

“Great!” Medky smiled.

“What else?” Larry asked.

“Hmm...” Ponty became thoughtful. “It would be nice if you found several more volunteers among local octopuses. But we only need the strongest and biggest ones.”

“What for?” one of Larry’s friends asked them.

“We’ll swim home after we do our job.” Bolly the manta answered for him. “But the poachers will come here again and again. It would be better to train a couple of groups of local guys to cope with these cables in the future.”

“Such a brilliant idea!” Larry said enthusiastically. “There’ll be enough volunteers, I can guarantee you that! But what about the tool? It’s yours.”

“We’ll get more tools when we come back. As for this tool, we’ll leave it with you after our work is done.” Karen smiled. “If you need more then come and visit us.”

“Thank you very much!” their toothy friend delightedly replied. “Well take rest guys and have a bite to eat. I have made all necessary arrangements for you.”

After that the sharks swam away and our friends were left alone. They had a perfect dinner and decided to laze around for the rest of the day as tomorrow promised to be a difficult day. They could laze around doing nothing very professionally too.



Larry and his assistant visited them early in the morning. The sharks greeted everyone and relayed the news.

“Our scouts have come back. They have found two of the poacher’s ships. One is located an hour away from here and the other is a little further out but in the same area”.

“Great!” Bin said and looked at his friends. “Well, guys, I think it’s time to get to work.”

“Do you need any assistants today?” Larry asked them.

“Only a guide” Bin answered. “We must first study these cables and learn how to deal with them ourselves.”

“We will bring the apprentices only when we are absolutely sure that it is safe to do so.” Geo added.

Ponty then took the cutters from Medky's shell and climbed on Bolly's back.

"I'll climb over on to you guys when I'm close to where the job needs to be done." he said with a smile to the dolphins. "Your narrow backs cannot be compared to the perfectly comfortable back of my friend."

"Thank you my dear Ponty for such kind yet truthful words." the manta smiled. "I'll promise never to tell jokes about kind octopuses."

Laughing merrily our friends followed the shark and headed off to the first of the poachers' ships.



After a short trip Larry stopped the group.

"All right guys, we need to be very careful now." he said. "The cables may appear long before we reach the poachers' ship. Swim behind me head to tail."

"In future we should sleep under the ship before we go to work." Karen suggested. "Then we'll hear when they start the engine and begin moving. After that we'll be swimming safely under their ship until they release their cable."

"Good idea!" Larry said. "Well anyway, be very careful now."

They swam for about fifteen minutes in silence. Finally, Larry stopped.

“There it is!” he said and pointed to the right with his fin. “This is a cable.”

The friends looked in this direction and saw a metal cable flowing in the water with many hooks on it. The hooks were attached to the cable with thin wire leads.

“Thank you Larry” Bin said. “We’ll take care of the rest.”

The shark nodded and swam slightly to the side.

“All right friends, any ideas?” Bin asked everyone.

“First let’s swim along the cable, estimate its speed and direction.” Geo suggested.

All the friends agreed and for another five minutes swam next to the cable at a safe distance.

“It seems that the speed remains constant.” Bin said finally.

“However the cable moves in a curve.” Karen stated her observation. “That’s why it is safer to swim on the outside of the curve. We should change our approach to the other side.”

“Good job my dear, you are very observant!” Bolly complimented her and added. “These hooks hang down off the cable for approximately one meter. That’s why we should swim under it by at least five meters.”

“Yes good call.” Bin said. “Are you ready?”

The friends and Larry who was listening carefully to them kept silent in agreement and then moved to the other side. They speeded up and moved along the

cable toward the poachers' ship. On the way, they encountered several hooked sharks, one turtle and a dolphin. The animals followed our friends with their sad eyes and had no idea that they were going to rescue them. Soon they heard the noise from engines. They stopped about one hundred meters away from the ship and began moving at the same speed as the cable.

"Well" Bin said, "I think we are ready to start. Ponty! Take the cutters and climb on Geo's back. You work well together."

The octopus jumped on the dolphin and Bin continued.

"Now it would be better for Bolly, Medky, and Larry to swim away. We'll do the rest of work."

"Maybe we can help you somehow?" Bolly asked him.

"You can only call Aya if something goes wrong" Geo joked and added, "I think the four of us can manage this job."

"So Karen, let's swim to the bottom and collect some big shells. We'll need to put them on the hooks" Bin said.

Karen nodded and they quickly moved down.

"In future I'll bring a dozen or so shells in my shell to save some time." Medky thought aloud.

Meanwhile Bin and Karen came back with shells in their mouths.

"Be careful near the cable, guys" Geo said.

Two dolphins came closer to the hooks and carefully took turns putting their shells on the hooks so

as not to interfere with each other. When they had finished they swam aside.

“Well Geo and Ponty, you’re up.” Bin said.

They wished them good luck and watched them work. Larry was very concerned about them and was very worried — his relatives’ survival depended on their success.

Geo and the octopus carefully swam closer to the cable between two shells. They began to move at the same speed as the steel cable. Ponty then got up on Geo’s back, opened the cutters and attached them to the cable. In a second they heard a loud click and saw the shells and the steel cable sinking.

“Hurray!” the friends shouted joyfully.

“All right! My friends I congratulate you on your first success!” Larry said.

When they calmed down Bin began again.

“That’s not all folks. We’d better go back along the cable and rescue all the caught animals.”

“Well that is a much easier and more pleasant task.” Ponty smiled. “The hooks on the bottom are harmless.”

“Guys cut this cable in a few more places. Just in case.” Karen said providently. “The poachers may decide to look for it and use it again.”

“Good idea my darling” the manta said with a smile.

The group then set off along the bottom in the opposite direction rescuing all the animals on their way and cutting the cable in several places.



Less than an hour later the job was done. Dozens of released animals gratefully thanked their rescuers. At the same time, they were interested in how they had managed to do it. Our friends sent them to Larry who that day acted like a press secretary for their group.

When the animals were all rescued our friends got together for a meeting again.

“Well, what are we going to do now?” Bin asked.

“I suggest we celebrate our first victory!” Larry said merrily.

“Good idea but a little bit later.” Karen smiled. “First we have to swim close to that ship and listen to the poachers. They probably have another cable, who knows.”

“Seems logical.” Geo agreed.

“Then let’s swim to the ship” Bin nodded. “but be careful, my friends. These poachers may have dropped another cable.”

However, they didn’t have to swim far. The Poachers’ ship had stopped immediately they lost their catching weapon.

“I’ll swim closer to the ship” Karen suggested. “I know a few languages.”

“Really?...” Larry scratched his side.

Karen swam away.

“You see my friend, we must keep our standards high.” Medky announced with a smile. “Otherwise no one would use our services.”

“Yes — of course.” their toothy friend said with respect. “Now you can ask for help from any shark you want. I will definitely tell everyone about you.”

“Thank you Larry!” the friends gave him a warm thanks.

“Of course mantas have already spread the word about us.” Bolly said. “But a sharks’ recommendation would be both useful and pleasant.”

At that time Karen was lying under a small ship and listening to one phrase. It was pronounced loudly by all members of the team. Karen did not know this language but the tone of speakers indicated that they were extremely frustrated. It seemed that they didn’t have any other cables.”



That evening hundreds of happy residents of the Galapagos Islands welcomed our friends. Several of the rescued sharks had already told everyone about their miraculous escape and this news spread very quickly. Larry suggested throwing a party on that success but our friends interrupted him.

“There’s another ship my friend” Bin said. “We have to render it safe as soon as possible. Your relatives should not suffer from the poachers.”

Larry agreed. They then called another meeting.

“All right my friends” Bin began again. “Our first operation was quite successful and that’s great. But we should build on this success and train a couple of local teams. Any suggestions?”

“I have an idea.” Geo said. “There is only one ship left. So if we cut the cable immediately we won’t have a chance to train other groups. I suggest cutting it by parts starting from the end until everyone is trained.”

“That’s a great idea” Bolly said. “We have to refine this process to perfection.”

“Larry do we have volunteers for tomorrow?” Ponty asked the shark.

“Of course.” the shark smiled. “Octopuses and dolphins. How many groups do you need?”

“Hmm...” Bin became thoughtful. “I think we will begin with two groups. Then, they will train the others themselves.”

“I get it.” Larry nodded. “The two best teams will be ready tomorrow. Who should be in a team?”

“Well one strong octopus, three dolphins, two of them to put on the shells and one carry the octopus. In addition, it would be a good idea to include a turtle to carry a dozen or so shells on its shell. Sometimes they are hard to find on the bottom.”

“It will be done in the best possible way.” Larry said and looked at Bolly. “Do we need mantas in these teams?”

“No.” Ponty answered for her. “Our Bolly is an exclusive luxury element for a very kind octopus.”

Everyone burst into laughter.

“One more thing Larry” Bin said. “Please send scouts out in the evening. We should know the exact mooring place of the second ship.”

“Already done.” the shark smiled with all his teeth.

After that there was a small feast. Larry as a good host could not resist the temptation to delight and entertain his dear guests. However, they did not mind at all.



The next day early in the morning, our friends with two teams of future rescuers swam to the second ship. Their journey took about an hour. They swam until Larry saw the poachers’ cable.

The three dolphins and Ponty immediately got to work. Medky brought them shells just at the right moment. Bolly the manta explained everything in detail to the new teams. Her public-speaking skills made her a wonderful teacher. In the meantime, Bin and Karen used all ten shells and Ponty and Geo cut the steel cable five times. They cut it in small sections so the poachers would not suspect something was wrong.

All the new recruits watched in admiration the work of the Agency of the Globe members. After that it was their turn to have a go. Our friends stayed close supervising them and providing advice on what to do. There were some incidents — one inexperienced dolphin got caught on a hook. However, an octopus quickly released him using the cutters.

Two new groups swapped places and passed the tool to each other. It was not long before they could cut the cable just as well as their teachers. Larry happily watched their progress.

When training was over it was time to cut the cable near the ship. They entrusted this to local inhabitants. They used up the last two shells and the cable sank to the bottom of the sea to the great delight of everyone.

Larry was over the moon.

“It was such a great idea to visit you!” he smiled. “Peace will come to my homeland. What a pity that we have only one tool. Otherwise I’d send two or three patrols from different sides of the Galapagos Islands.”

“Send one of your guys to our office and we will provide you with another one.” Bin said.

“Or we’ll find something here...” Karen said thoughtfully.

The friends looked at her questioningly.

“Not now.” she smiled as she did not want to discuss that topic in front of strangers.

That evening there was a big celebration underwater. Everyone congratulated the members of the Agency of the Globe and rejoiced in the success of the rescue teams. Larry and his assistants cooked the most exquisite underwater delicacies and served everyone. All they needed was pizza for complete happiness.

The Island



he next morning, the all the Agency of Globe Agency team got together. “My darling!” Bolly began to pry addressing Karen. “What did you mean yesterday when you talked about getting tools locally?”

“Well I have a thought.” she smiled back. “I found out that there are two towns in these islands. There is a chance that we may find a hardware store there with tools.”

“Do they have pizza?” Ponty asked trying to sound disinterested.

However, they all kept silent as they waited for an answer.

“I don’t know” Karen laughed. “But I really want to find out too.”

“Honey” Bolly the manta’s mood had obviously improved. “Please look carefully for pizza — make sure you ask everyone.”

Laughter drowned out her last words. The company then headed off to the island trying not to attract atten-

tion. By lunch our friends were swimming into the harbor of a small coastal town. Seals were swimming around them, various birds were sitting on the water and on the shore some giant lizards were lying on the rocks. The local people that lived here mainly relied on tourism for income and people tried not to disturb the animals.

Our friends swam to another deserted lagoon and approached the shore. Karen as usual laid down in a shallow place and looked at the sky. Soon as a girl she stood up on the pebble beach.

“Guys wait for me there” she said and added, “and cross your fingers.”

“What for?” Geo asked with surprise.

“I know.” Bin replied for Karen. “People on earth cross their fingers if they want something to come true. And if we want Karen to find pizza for us...”

He was interrupted by Karen’s loud laughter. Bin and Geo looked in the direction that she pointed with her finger and burst out laughing too.

Bolly the manta tried to cross her wings but instead curled up into a loop. Whereas Ponty had tied himself in a knot.



Karen was gone for about two hours. The friends were beginning to worry when they saw the girl stepping carefully over the rocks with many boxes and a bag in her hands. Everyone sighed with relief.

“You’ve been absent for a long time today my dear.” Bin said. “Did something bad happen?”

“Well no.” Karen smiled. “I was just barely able to find a small pizzeria on the outskirts of town. It took a lot of time to fill such a big order. But the cook was a true Italian. Besides he advised me where to buy a good tool.”

The girl put a hand inside the bag and pulled out two big cutters one small pair of pliers.

“That’s all that they had. The quality is very good. They will serve underwater for several years. As for the small pliers we’ll take them home. After all we’ll swim passing by many hunting sites.”

She put them in the water and pulled out three knives in a case.

“These are diving knives with a hook knife on the top side. They didn’t have anything else but it’s enough for our purposes. Besides they are manufactured especially for underwater work.”

The girl threw them in the water and pulled out some sort of net with a smile.

“What is that?” Medky asked her as if he felt that this thing was for him.

“This is a rubber net with hooks. Karen smiled. “I had the same in my car. We’ll fix it over your shell and you’ll be able to carry any load.”

The turtle smiled happily.

“Even pizza?”

“Well, three boxes should fit in” Karen replied thoughtfully.

“Where do you want to carry our pizza?” the manta asked him with a suspiciously sweet voice.

Everyone laughed loudly.

The girl then proceeded to break the pizza into pieces and began give it to the dolphins, the turtle, and herself. Ponty fed himself and Bolly.

After dinner Karen put the net to Medky’s back and after attaching the tool, laid down on the pebbles near the shore. The girl looked up at the sky, said “thank you” and became a dolphin in a second.



The Father looked down at His good and kind gluttons and smiled happily.



Three days later our friends were ready to go home. Bolly had to get back to her mantas, Ponty to his massage cave and the rest of them back to the office.

Larry tried to persuade them to stay for a few more days but they had things to do waiting for them at home. They gave the shark two of the tool kits and took one away. Larry smiled in delight.

“I don’t get surprised by you anymore my friends. That’s why I won’t even ask where you found these tools.”

“That’s a good move my friend, don’t even ask” Bin smiled. “The main thing is that we have them and there will be peace in the Galapagos Islands again. However, you will have your work cut out for you.”

“Well that’s whole other matter.” the shark smiled broadly. “Now we know how to protect ourselves I think that the poachers will give up very quickly.”

“Most likely.” Geo said. “If they come up with something new, call on us.”

Larry nodded and said some warm goodbyes to his friends. They then said their goodbyes to his assistants, two rescue teams and everyone else who was there.

With one last parting look the Agency of the Globe started off on their long trip home. Larry and his friends waved after them with their fins for a long time.

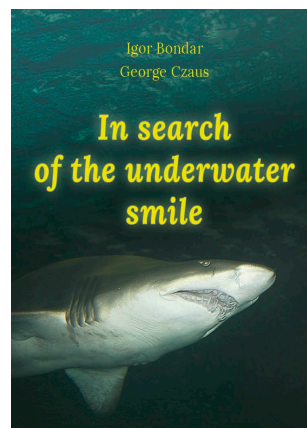
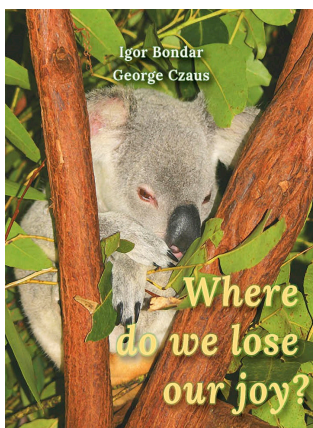
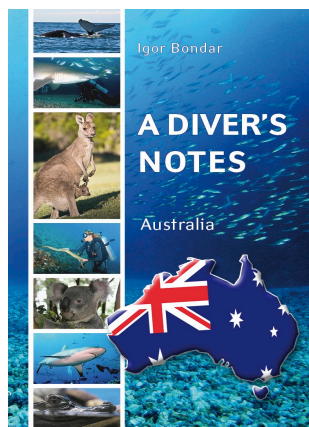
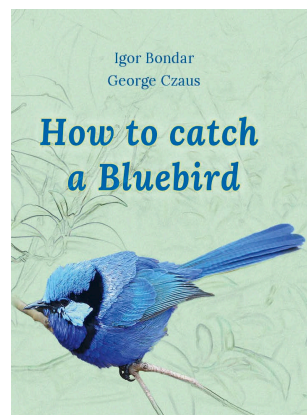
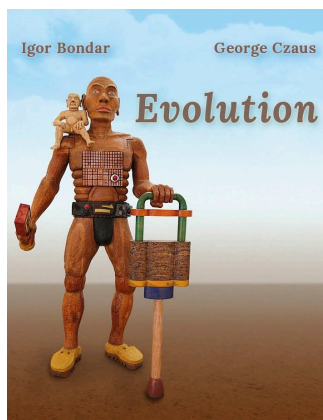
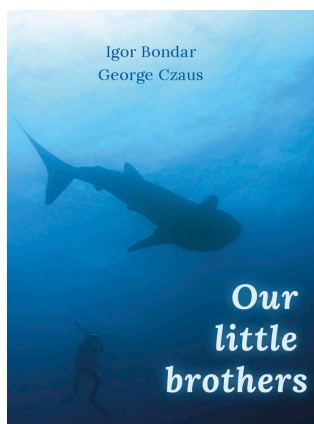
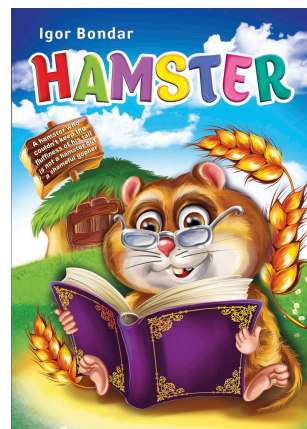
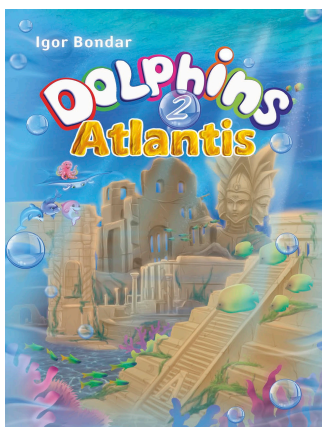
Epilogue

Six dolphin eyes carefully watched Medky spinning his globe. It seemed strange but they were not bored this time. After their long journey and adventures they wanted to do nothing but just lie around and watch Medky spinning his globe.

Spinning very slowly...



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