

Igor Bondar

Bizuka

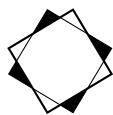


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Bizuka

A fairy tale

Illustrated by Alyona Garbuz



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This fairy tale is about very unusual underwater creatures — cheerful and kind bizukas.

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Searching for the “bizukas”

Once upon a time, there lived a big underwater Bizuka. He was so kind and cheerful that everybody around him loved him very much. Other underwater dwellers asked him quite often:

“Bizuka, Bizuka, who are you, really?”

“What do you mean ‘who’? Bizuka, of course”, he replied.

“No”, his friends replied, “it is not enough. Well, for instance, my name is Chio and I am a dolphin because I have fins and a tail. And, this is Umbrel, an octopus. All octopuses have eight tentacles. And on that reef, our friend Konty lives. He is a Napoleon wrasse. All napoleons are of green color and they have a gibbous forehead. And, you are simply Bizuka. It can’t be so!”

“It can be, it can,” their friend replied, as he usually in this situation. “I’m simply Bizuka.”

If he was too bored with these kinds of questions, then he added:

“Well, fine, then we, bizukas, have also got nice teeth for those who always ask about nonsense.”

All the questions would fall off after this, as a rule. However, being left alone to himself, Bizuka would often start thinking: “Why am I alone, indeed? There are many dolphins and turtles swimming around here. But for some reason, I have never seen other bizukas.”

One day, being tired of having these thoughts, Bizuka decided to travel across the oceans to search for other bizukas. For some reason, he firmly believed that they were dwelling somewhere.

Having told his friends of his plan, he heard a sudden reply:

“You know, Bizuka, I will swim with you, too. For some reason, I very much want to help you find your relatives,” dolphin Chio said.

“And I will, too”, napoleon Konty supported the idea of his friend cheerfully.

Bizuka even shed some tears from all the emotions and gratitude.

“Thank you, friends,” he said finally. “It will surely be more cheery to look for other bizukas with you.”

The next day, they set off on their trip together.

* * *

After a couple of days’ travel, the friends swam out of their familiar reefs and headed further along the places that were unknown to them. They asked all the dwellers on their way, whether they had ever met someone that looked similar to their friend Bizuka. However, the local dwellers just made helpless gestures in replay: some with tentacles, some with fins and some with claws.



“Listen, Bizuka,” dolphin Chio once asked his friend. “If you meet someone of your kin, what will you tell him first?”

“I don’t even know. I’ll probably say hello,” Bizuka shrugged his tail.

“Hello and that’s all?,” the napoleon Konty wondered, “even though you have been looking for him so long?!”

“Well, what do you suggest I say?” Bizuka asked with curiosity.

“Well, I don’t know, something much more beautiful and solemn. For instance: “I am glad to meet you, my dear, long-searched kin! Let me tell you about the incredible feelings, my soul is flooded with! I am so happy that I am not alone underwater, as I have got you now,” dolphin Chio spouted a lofty rhetoric.

“Cool!” Konty appreciated his friend’s efforts.

“Hum,” Bizuka scratched his head with his fin, “that is impressive, of course, but isn’t it too much?”

“Of course, not! It fits perfectly!” Chio replied. “Here, the more beautiful it is, the better it will be.”

“Well, alright, I’ll say exactly that,” Bizuka agreed finally, “but I will have to learn this text by heart as I won’t manage to say it exactly like that on my own.”

“That’s not a problem,” the dolphin smiled. “We have plenty of time. We will make this phrase even more beautiful.”

After that, they swam further.

Several days passed. In the meantime, the friends managed to ask, probably, a thousand of various underwater dwellers, but each time they only heard: “We have not met anybody like him.”

* * *

One day, they were swimming near the water surface as usual, when suddenly they heard a loud creaking noise ahead. The friends guessed it was a whale and swam towards him.

Soon, they saw an immense giant of the seas.

“Wow!” the dolphin said, “what a great whale. He has probably been living for long and has seen much.”

“It looks like so,” Konty agreed, then all of them swam up to the giant’s head.

“Umm, excuse me, dear whale,” Bizuka addressed him politely.

The giant turned his head to him slowly with his eyes rounded in surprise.

“Whoa! Who is calling me?!”, he roared. “Hello, our rare sea dweller! What would you like to ask me?”

“A rare sea dweller?”, Bizuka said, smiling skeptically in response. “Generally, everyone calls me a unique or wondrous one. You are the first to call me a rare one.”

The whale nodded his head.

“I see. So, what would you like to ask me about?”



Bizuka sighed sadly.

“You know, I am looking for my underwater kin but I have not met anyone like me yet. Perhaps you, dear whale, have met someone resembling me, at least slightly?”

“Well, yes, I have,” the whale nodded, “that is why I have called you a rare one, but not a unique one.”

The friends froze for a moment in amazement and then began to perform various cheerful tricks in the water. Bizuka’s friends were even happier than he was. Finally, when all of them calmed down, Bizuka addressed the whale again with hope.

“So, you mean you have seen someone like me? That’s incredible!” Hardly had he started speaking when, suddenly, he lowered his head sadly. “Oh! It was probably me, you saw then...”

“No, no,” the whale shook his head, “you have a blue tail and the one I saw had a green one. Has your tail changed its colour in recent years?”

“No,” Bizuka shook his head from side to side. “It has always been blue!”

“So, you see, it means it wasn’t you.” The whale wrinkled his forehead. “Let me remember where this encounter was...”

The friends held their breath.

“Exactly!” The giant spoke out with certainty. “It was two years ago near Plankton Island. There I met your kin.”

“The Isle of Plankton, you say?” dolphin Chio asked him. “Where is that?”

“It is a week’s trip of your swimming in that direction,” the whale showed them the direction with his huge fin. “You won’t miss it, as there is a lot of plankton there and the island is in its centre.”

“Oh, thanks a lot!” Bizuka smiled cheerfully. “You don’t know how important this is for me.”

“Right, I don’t,” the whale agreed. “I happen to meet whales like me every day.”

“Oh! You are so lucky!” Bizuka sighed.

“Am I?” The whale wondered. “Hum. I will think of it sometime. It appears I have got a reason to be happy, but I know nothing about it.”

After that, the friends thanked the whale that was deep in thoughts one more time and swam quickly towards Plankton Island.

Plankton Island

Several days later, there was indeed much more plankton in the water.

“It seems that we are on the right way,” dolphin Chio said. “The whale was not wrong with the direction.”

“Certainly, he wasn’t,” the napoleon smiled. “The plankton is his food. Do you often wrong with your food?”

Everyone burst into laughter.

By the evening, they swam to some reef to stay for the night and continue their trip the next morning. They did not really want to swim in the darkness, as they could miss the Isle of Plankton.

The friends chose a beautiful place for themselves near a small cave and settled there comfortably. They were about to say good-night to each other when they suddenly heard someone coughing tactfully.

“Who is here?” Bizuka asked, turning his head towards the cave.

“Oh, I am here, I am. And for some thirty years already,” a giant lobster with very long feelers slowly crawled out of the cave.

“Hello,” dolphin Chio greeted. “Hope we won’t trouble you if we stay here for the night?”

“Won’t trouble?” The lobster repeated thoughtfully and scratched his one feeler with another. “Well, no, I don’t feel troubled with you. You can stay. But when some strange bubbling animals with bags swim past me, I will always be troubled for some reason and hide deeper into my lair.”

“I see,” Bizuka said. “May I ask you something?”

The lobster looked at him and immediately moved his feelers to the sides.

“Wow! What a rare visitor!”

“Rare?” Bizuka asked him, with a good feeling. “So, does it mean there are others like me here?”



“There are, there are,” the lobster nodded positively. “You will reach them by midday tomorrow. Now, excuse me, it is time for me to have a rest. I have already talked too much for today.”

Having said this, he crawled back into his lair.

“So, it means I will meet my kin tomorrow!” Bizuka spoke out dreamingly and closed his eyes.

* * *

At daybreak, Bizuka quickly stirred up his friends. They swam away from the reef and headed in the same direction. Around lunchtime, a big island finally appeared in front of them. There was so much plankton around, the friends realized that they had reached the right place. They all started to look around, while searching for Bizuka’s kin.

“We should swim around the island,” dolphin Chio said, “then we won’t miss anyone.”

The friends nodded in agreement and headed along the underwater slope. Bizuka, being impatient, swam slightly ahead of them, turning his huge eyes all around the area.

And, it was not in vain, of course. Soon, behind the next turn, they saw two “bizukas”, who looked exactly the same as him but had slightly more green in their colour.

“At last!” Bizuka gave an involuntary sigh of relief and happiness. “They exist!”

His friends smiled happily as well. Meanwhile, two new “bizukas” were chatting with each other without noticing the visitors. Bizuka solemnly headed to them, remembering the words of the greeting speech.

As if felt something, his two relatives suddenly turned their heads and stood still in surprise. Our Bizuka swam up to them and they kept staring at each other for more than five minutes.

“My dear kin!” Bizuka finally began his greeting speech, “on this solemn day...”

The big eyes of the two bizukas became even wider. When our Bizuka finished his speech, one of the local bizukas pushed the other one with his fin.

“What a clever kin has swum to us! Hey, Jocha, you are a little savvier, say something beautiful in reply, eh?”

“I won’t manage to do it as nicely, Bocha. Let us better bow to him very politely. I have seen it somewhere, it looks quite cool.”

And they both bowed to him as synchronously and respectfully as they could, spreading their fins wide apart.

“Well, umm...,” the one whose name was Jocha finally spoke, “well, so... We are kinda glad to see you too, our new umm... unknown kin.”

“Where are you from, fellow?” The one whose name was Bocha curiously interrupted that, not very intelligent speech. “So what’s your name?”



“I am Bizuka,” he replied simply, realizing that he overdid his greeting speech.

Then Bizuka clenched his fin into a fist and discreetly showed it to dolphin Chio.

“And who are you? Are you bizukas too?”

“No,” the two friends shook their heads. “I am Bocha and this is Jocha, my brother.”

“We also have a sister Konucha, she is probably still sleeping,” Bocha said.

“Konucha...,” Bizuka repeated slowly in a singing voice. “What a beautiful name!”

“Really?” Jocha and Bocha glanced at each other, surprised. “Well, maybe...”

“Is there anybody else like us here?” Bizuka asked.

“No,” Jocha shook his head. “It’s only the three of us.”

“And now you’ve come,” Bocha corrected his brother.

They both nodded their heads contentedly. After that, the three of them simply looked at each other, smiling happily.

“Jocha, Bocha!” Bizuka finally spoke. “I have got a question for you: “Who are we?”

It could instantly be seen that he had just baffled his relatives.

“Well, we are Jocha and Bocha,” Bocha began to say a little hesitatingly.

“Well, and there’s Konucha too,” Jocha added. “That’s who we are.”

“So what is our kind called?” Bizuka asked them. “The others here are called dolphins, whales and octopuses...”

The brothers thought it over in silence for a long time, then Bocha asked:

“What do you need it for?”

“I don’t know,” Bizuka shrugged his fins, “the others ask me about it sometimes.”

“And what do you tell to them?”

“Well, that I am simply Bizuka. And if they annoy me much, I show them my teeth.”

“That’s a good trick!” the brothers said synchronously in admiration, after that, they closed down the topic.

* * *

Sometime later, Bizuka asked the brothers.

“Can I meet Konucha?”

“Of course,” Bocha replied.

“But sometimes, our sister isn’t in a good mood in the mornings,” Jocha choked suddenly.

“That’s ok. I am so glad to see each of my new kin,” Bizuka said and the three of them swam to the brothers’ cave.

After a while, they swam up to it, when suddenly they heard someone's loud grumbling inside.

“Where do these brothers put my sponge for scales? They’ll get some day!”

“This way,” Jocha and Bocha said together and pointed with their fins to the cave. “We’ll wait for you here.”

Bizuka nodded and swam inside. It was quite bright in the cave. He swam a little further and stopped. In front of him he found another bizuka with rose-coloured fins who was looking under every stone.

“Umm...,” he began to speak.

“Huh! You are back, my loafers! Now you’ll get...,” the rose-coloured bizuka turned her head towards him and stood still in astonishment. “Oh! Who are you?”

“Hello!” Bizuka nodded his head politely and, having thought for a while, he added several words from his recent speech. “I am – Bizuka. And I am indescribably glad to find another one of my kin in this endless ocean! Um, a very beautiful kin...”

“Oh!” the other bizuka repeated and her rose fins flushed with more rose colour. “You’ve spoken so beautifully. I have never heard anything like that at our reef!”

She smiled charmingly at the new guest, but then suddenly collected herself.



“Oh! Don’t swim at the door, please, come in, make yourself comfortable...”

She wiped her fin against her side and cheerily stretched it to Bizuka.

“My name is Konucha.”

Bizuka could not take his eyes off her.

“I have already heard a little about you. What a nice name you’ve got!”

“I like yours too, very much!” Konucha replied. “I should serve you something tasty.”

Embarrassed, Bizuka crossed his fins on his belly.

“You shouldn’t, dear Konucha. I am not hungry yet and there is nothing else I need,” he said and looked at her with hope. “Could you just show me the island and tell me a little about yourself?”

“Oh, of course!” Konucha cheered up and, having taken him by his fin, led him out of the cave.

They swam by dolphin Chio and napoleon wrasse Konty, then between Jocha and Bocha.

“Hi, brothers!” Konucha greeted Jocha and Bocha as they swam past them.

They headed slowly along the underwater slope of the island while the brothers stared at them in awe, not believing what their eyes were seeing and what they’d just heard.

“Brother,” Bocha spoke out finally in a trembling voice, “bite my tail. It can’t be! Our Konucha called us brothers instead of loafers. And, she hasn’t grumbled for the whole minute...”

“Everything’s clear, Bocha!” Jocha replied to him somewhat solemnly. “It’s Neptune, who was tired of seeing our suffering that sent dear Bizuka to help us.”

After that, both brothers bowed gratefully towards the blue abyss, where, in their opinion, Neptune lived.

“Eh, we should treat our saviour with something tasty”, Bocha recovered first.

“Exactly,” his brother agreed, “and give him a lot of it.”

Together with Bizuka’s friends, whom they already managed to get to know well, they swam to the other side of the island.

* * *

A month with the new kin passed like one day for Bizuka. He often talked with Jocha and Bocha, went for walks with Konucha and chatted with his old friends when he had free time. The dolphin and the napoleon cheered much seeing their friend happy or even too happy at times, after walking with Konucha.

However, after a month passed, Chio and Konty decided to go back home, to their close relatives and friends. Bizuka promised to visit them at least once a year.

A couple of days later, the dolphin and the napoleon said good-bye to everyone there and swam home from the Isle of Plankton. Four nice bizukas waved them good-bye for a long time.

The Grandpa

Once during a walk, Konucha told Bizuka about her grandpa. She was very young when her grandpa disappeared, but she remembered very well many of his stories. In the evening, Bizuka recalled this as he dined with her brothers.

“Jocha, Bocha, do you remember your grandpa too?”, he asked

“Yep,” Bocha smiled.

“He was cool,” Jocha added. “Although, we were very young then.”

“So, what happened to your grandpa?” Bizuka asked cautiously.

Brothers and the sister glanced at each other.

“The thing is that we don’t know for certain. Grandpa used to tell me that our kin doesn’t die, but that they swim over to another place...” Konucha started speaking.

“Ah, he was joking, sister!” Jocha interfered, “you were too young then, so he told you different fairy tales that you liked listening to.”

“Right, right,” Bocha added. “And now you’ve grown up, but still believe them.”

“I do believe and I will,” Konucha said with her fins akimbo. “Grandpa was honest and he always told the truth. There is definitely a whole sea filled with those like us for sure. They live there eternally and grandpa swam to them.”

“A whole sea?” It was Bizuka’s turn to wonder. “Live eternally?”

“Well, yes, dear Bizuka. If you had known my grandfather, you would have believed his every word,” Konucha spoke quickly, taking his fins.

“Mmm, there may be something in it,” Bizuka spoke in a sweet voice suddenly, “because I have known nothing about you until recently as well.”

“Yes!” Konucha nodded cheerfully. “It means, that there is a sea with other bizukas somewhere out there too.”

“Yep, two seas!” Jocha smiled.

“No, three seas and a small puddle,” Bocha giggled.

Konucha snorted scornfully.

“So, where is our grandpa then? Can you tell me, smarty pants?”

“Well, he swam away in order not to upset us...” Jocha started speaking.

“And there, you know,” Bocha added sadly, “there he dropped his tail, as the saying in our ocean goes.”

After that, the brothers looked towards a blue ocean together and dashed away their tears.

“You are wrong,” their sister argued. “He swam to the sea of bizukas and he is still there. I’ll prove it to you.”

“Is that so? How are you going to do this?” Bocha looked at Konucha with compassion.

“Indeed, dear Konucha, how are you going to prove it?” Bizuka engaged in the conversation.

“It’s simple,” she replied, “I’ll find that sea for you.”

Everyone became silent.

“Hey, brother,” Jocha sighed deeply and looked at Bocha, “let’s swim to octopus Mozgustus, our reef psychoanalyst, to arrange a visit for our sister.”

“I guess, it’s time for that,” Bocha nodded agreeing.

“Wait”, Bizuka entered the conversation, “perhaps, we’ll do a little differently?”

“So, how?” The brothers looked at him with interest. “You know a better psychoanalyst than Mozgustus?”

“No,” Bizuka shook his head. “I suggest looking for that sea of bizukas for a month together. What will we lose? We’ll travel and see the ocean, and if we find nothing, your sister will settle down and forget about her theory. Do you agree, Konucha?”

She nodded her head cheerily.

“Hum, not a bad idea,” Bocha spoke out slowly.

“It’s a very nice idea, indeed,” Jocha added. “Besides, Mozgustus charges as much as one hundred oysters for a visit.”

Konucha looked at her new friend gratefully.

“It’s so good that you have swum to us, dear Bizuka!” She spoke out tenderly.

“We agree completely, sister!” The brothers said together and again gave an emotional look towards the blue of Neptune, who had helped them.

* * *

The friends decided that they would set off on this far trip in a couple of days. Later that evening, Bizuka and Konucha went for a walk around the Isle of Plankton.

“Konucha, can I ask you something?” Bizuka addressed her during their walk.

“Sure,” she said smiling cheerily. “I have no secrets from you.”

“Tell me, do you have a plan where to look for that sea?”

Konucha kept silent for some time.

“You see, Bizuka, I was a little girl then, of course,” she spoke slowly, “but, I remember very well what my grandpa told me.”

“What exactly?”

“I remember that once I also asked him where this sea could be found...”

“Did you, really? That’s interesting. What did he say?”

Konucha smiled thoughtfully.

“He told me one strange thing. He stroked my head and said: “This sea cannot be found, granddaughter, but it will find you, if you are kind and you believe in it.”

Bizuka stood still astonished.

“Really? These are unusual words indeed,” he thought for a moment. “Did you tell your brothers about it?”

“No”, Konucha shrugged her fins. “Even without this, they laugh at me all the time as they still consider me little.”

“You have great brothers.”

“I know,” she smiled.

For a moment, Bizuka became thoughtful.

“I don’t know why, but I believe you and your grandpa. And I really want to know what these words mean.”

“Perhaps, the answer will be uncovered during our search?” Konucha shrugged her fins. Then, they continued their walk around the island.

The Grouper

A couple of days later in the early morning the four friends swam out from the Isle of Plankton.

“Which direction should we swim to, sis?” Jocha asked Konucha when their home reef disappeared from sight.

“There,” she answered without thinking and showed the direction with her fin.

“Why there, exactly?” asked Bocha, but his brother interrupted him.

“Why should it matter where to swim for a month? The main thing is, our sis will settle down after it.”

“That’s right,” Bocha agreed.

“Konucha, why should we swim in that direction indeed?” Bizuka asked his girlfriend in a whisper after they swam slightly away from her brothers.

“I don’t know”, she smiled, “but if my brothers find out that I don’t know the route, they’ll laugh at me all the way.”

“That’s a reasonable go!” Bizuka nodded to her laughing.

“Not an ideal one, of course,” Konucha agreed, “but they won’t bother me for at least a month...”

A couple of days later, our friends came across a small island. The “bizukas” planned to rest there for a bit and decided to look around. They marveled at the beautiful corals that grew on the slopes of the reef. After a while, the friends started looking for a place to stay for the night when suddenly Jocha stopped and raised his fin.

“Hey, friends! Am I the only one hearing voices or do you hear them too?”

“Actually, you’d better see Mozgistus about the voices,” his brother joked, making everyone laugh.

Nevertheless, everyone stopped talking and strained their ears.

“Hum,” Konucha said, “it seems to me that I hear voices too, don’t you?”

Bizuka nodded his head and Bocha shrugged his fins in uncertainty.

“Let’s swim around and see,” he said, “if these are indeed voices, we’ll find the source.”

All of them moved forward. After some time, the voices were heard well underwater. A moment after, the friends could hear the meaning. All of them cried a single word: “Help!” The bizukas immediately picked up speed.

Behind the next corner, they saw an unusual spectacle. On the slope of a small underwater mountain, there was a small ship which was heavily overgrown with corals. Around it circled a dozen young groupers. Time and again they shouted one word: “Help!”

Our friends hurried to them.

“What’s the matter, little ones?” Bocha was first to address the groupers.

They heard a deep voice in response from the inside of the ship.

“The matter is me, perhaps,” it said and the head of a giant grouper appeared in the ship’s illuminator. “Hello, dear travelers! My name is Bob. These are all my children. Who are you?”

The bizukas, presented themselves one after another.

“What’s going on here, dear Bob?” Konucha addressed him.

“The whole problem is in my very good appetite,” the grouper roared. “This ship has been our home for a long time. We feel very comfortable here and food often comes here by itself. Its excess and trapped me in.”

“How’s that?”

“Dad has not swum out of our ship for a long time,” a small grouper replied for his father. “Yesterday we decided to go to our grandmother’s birthday, but dad could not swim through the illuminator.”

The grouper inside made a loud sigh.

“That’s right...”

“What shall we do now?” Konucha raised her fins in anxiety.

“I don’t know,” replied the big grouper. “Today, my friend the octopus Fitnesson swam to see me. He suggested that I go on a diet for a week.”

The bizukas, who always loved to have a good meal, moved back in fear.

“I don’t even know what to do,” Bob spoke out thoughtfully.

“Well, maybe...,” Bocha addressed him thoughtfully, “maybe we push you from behind, fellow? Then, you’ll squeeze through the window.”

“All right!” Jocha nodded. “We are a little smaller than you and can easily get inside the ship.”

“Then, all four of us will give you a push at full speed!” His brother concluded the thought.

Bob wrinkled up his forehead.

“Well, if there are four of you, then it may be worth a try,” he finally said, “I won’t much like to go on a diet for a week.”

So they did. The four bizukas swam inside the ship, took Bob by his sides and rushed towards the window at full speed.

When the dust settled, everyone there could see a giant grouper stuck in the window, somewhere near his middle.

“Well, our plan has been half successful,” Bocha said with uncertainty, after all the bizukas swam out through the other window.

“It is possible to sit on a diet in this place too,” his brother found a positive point.

Bob looked around everywhere embarrassed while his small grouper-kids were swimming around with curiosity.

“You mean, I have moved slightly closer to freedom?” he asked.

For some reason, no one replied this time.

“So, what should we do now?” Bizuka asked his friends.

Everyone kept silent again.

“Wait a moment,” Konucha said, “I have got an idea.”

Her brothers laughed sceptically. Meanwhile, their sister swam up to the big grouper and scratched him under his side fin.

“Oh, it’s tickling!” Bob jerked.

“Bizuka, swim up here quickly and scratch under his other fin.” Konucha said.

Grouper stared at them terrified.

“Are you sure...,” he started to speak, but suddenly he began shaking from the double tickling, “aargh!”

“Scratch harder, Bizuka!” the inventive Konucha said.

Jocha and Bocha looked at what was happening in amazement.

“Aargh! Ah!” Bob’s voice timbre became higher and higher. He jerked so much that even the ship vibrated slightly.

“Harder!” Konucha shouted in excitement.

“A-A-A!” Bob’s voice reached its highest note, he jerked desperately and... popped out of the window like a cork from a bottle, throwing Jocha and Bocha aside.

“Whew! We did it!” Konucha said with a big smile.

“Right!” Bizuka responded cheerily. Then, looking at the ship he added: “look how big and round the window has become! It seems that Bob can live inside again.”

“No way, thanks,” a low voice of the returning grouper roared behind them. “I’ll never want to be stuck in there again.”

“Don’t worry, daddy!” his kids around him spoke in cheerful voices at once. “Now we know what to do!”

The bizukas smiled a little equivocally.



The Net

The next day, having said a warm good-bye to the huge grouper and his children, our friends set off on their trip again. Konucha showed the direction with certainty, however, this time, Jocha and Bocha did not laugh at her. After an inventive rescue of the grouper their sister apparently seemed to be a grown up to them.

This part of their journey proved to be slightly longer. They came across the next island only in a week. But our friends were not bored at all: Jocha and Bocha would constantly chat about something and entertain Konucha and Bizuka. Also, the brothers tried singing, but it was so awful that Konucha even suggested them cutting the search of the bizukas' sea for one day in exchange for their silence. The brothers willingly agreed with such a wonderful condition.

One day, they finally ran into a big island covered with colorful corals. They settled there and had a good night's sleep. The next morning, our friends decided to look around. As they turned behind the nearest cliff, an unusual spectacle opened in front of them.

There was a small cave ahead of them, however, it was unusually covered by a fishing net. It was apparent that the net had clung to the island's stones and broke away from the ship.

The bizukas had already seen pieces of torn nets on their island, so they were not surprised much and prepared to swim on.

Suddenly, someone's voice was heard from the depths of the cave.

"Friends, could you please help me get out of here?"

Everyone stopped and stared inside the depth of the cave covered with the net. A big turtle swam out of the darkness towards them.

"Hello!" she said. "My name is Kelly."

"Hello!" the bizukas replied her. "What happened to you?"

"Well, about ten days ago, I stayed the night in this cave and the next morning, I realised this net had blocked the exit. Many times I tried to get out of here, but the net clings tightly."

"What the ocean we have?", Jocha grumbled displeased. "Someone can always get stuck somewhere."

"Right," his brother added, "but now, we know what to do. You'll be stuck in somewhere here and we'll start tickling you."

The turtle, having listened to him, laughed.

"I don't think it's a very good plan, mate."

"Why?" Jocha wondered.

"Look, brother," Konucha looked at him cheerily, "you can't tickle the turtle: she has got a shell!"

"Oops!" Jocha could only say.

"What should we do then?" Bizuka asked.

"I don't know, let's try pulling a corner of the net together," Bocha suggested.

All the bizukas nodded in agreement and bit the net.

“Ready, heave!” Bocha commanded loudly.

But the fishing net would not surrender. Only dust rose from their attempts.

“That’s a tough net, eh,” Bizuka said. “It looks like we have to find another way.”

“So, what should we do?” Bocha asked.

“Don’t you worry too much,” the turtle soothed them, “there are many soft corals in this cave, so I have enough food for a very long time here.”

“In any case, freedom is freedom!” Jocha said.

“It is so, of course,” Kelly sighed.

After that, all the bizukas stopped talking and began to look around, thinking. At that moment, out of the corner, a globefish appeared. It was in a deflated condition and could not be distinguished from an ordinary fish.

Bocha looked at her somehow strangely and struck himself on the forehead.

“It looks like I’ve got an idea!”

“What is it?” his brother asked him with interest.

“You’ll see now,” Bocha smiled, “but here we must use all our knowledge of women’s psychology.”

Curious Konucha and Bizuka swam up closer to them.

“Excuse us, please,” Bocha addressed the globefish politely. “Could you swim through the cells of this fishing net?”

“Through the cells of this fishing net?” the female globefish repeated. “Alright, why not.”

After that, the globefish swam calmly inside and started swimming back out.

“I told you she is so skinny that she would easily swim through the net,” Bocha said to his brother in a quiet voice, but so that the fish could hear him.

The globefish suddenly stopped in the cell of the net and looked at Bocha surprised.

“What do you mean I am skinny?” she said with indignation and began swelling.

Jocha instantly caught his brother’s plan and played along:

“Please don’t worry that much. Being skinny is not too bad at all,” he added. “There are many, much more unattractive things in our sea.”

The globefish kept inflating more and more. Soon the threads of the cell stretched and began to tear one after another. The other bizukas started playing along with the brothers too.

“What are you saying,” Konucha said cheerfully. “Who would tell a slim lady that she is skinny? You, brothers; have you forgotten good manners?”

The globefish kept inflating with incredible speed tearing the threads apart.



“I am not skinny!” she yelled.

“Of course not,” Bizuka interfered. “The sea helminths are skinny, but you are much stouter.”

Meanwhile, the globefish reached its maximum size, making a huge hole in the net. Now, she had to somehow deflate back.

“Oh! What’s going on with you now?” Konucha asked. “Now you are so round and beautiful!”

“In fact, I am a globefish!” she replied slightly calmer.

“Wow! Why didn’t you tell us that right from the start?” Jocha spoke out and looked angrily towards his brother. “How dare you call her skinny?”

“Oh, I didn’t know,” he apologized cheerfully. “I am sorry!”

The globefish began to calm down, gradually decreasing in size. Soon, she easily swam out of the net that now had a huge hole.

“Well, fine. Don’t worry, your apology is accepted,” she said in a calm voice and swam further along the reef.

“Please come out, Kelly!” the bizukas said cheerfully to the turtle who had been sitting inside the cave.

Epilogue

Having stayed on the island for another day, our friends set off on their trip again. This time, it took them two weeks to swim to

the next island. And even though the four of them always had fun, they missed the colourful reefs. That was why when a new island came out of the blue, all of them were very happy.

The bizukas settled down to rest between beautiful, fan-shaped corals and began to chat with each other.

“So, sis,” Jocha began speaking, “there is only one day of searching left.”

“I know that,” she replied calmly.

“It seems that the sea of bizukas doesn’t exist. Do you admit it now?” Bocha continued.

“Don’t hurry, time hasn’t run out yet,” she smiled.

“No, she is indeed crazy”, Jocha sighed.

“You’ve got a very good sister,” Bizuka said. “What is so bad with her believing in the sea of bizukas?”

Konucha looked at him gratefully.

“Well, generally, there’s nothing bad in it,” Bocha shrugged his fins. “We simply want her to grow up and stop believing in these fairy tales.”

“What’s wrong with believing in fairy tales?” Bizuka asked them again.

“Well, there’s nothing too bad there too,” Jocha replied instead of his brother. “However, fairy tales don’t come true. That’s why believing them is silly.”

“No, it’s not,” Konucha interfered. “Kind fairy tales will always come true! And finally, it doesn’t mean that I don’t believe in the sea of bizukas if I don’t talk about it anymore.”

Her brothers sighed.

“It looks like we cannot avoid Mozgistus,” Bocha said sensibly.

“Yes, and gathering of oysters for him too,” Jocha sighed.

“Don’t rush it,” Konucha said. “We’ve got a whole day and night ahead of us.”

The brothers sighed deeper.

For the night, “the bizukas” stayed at a beautiful slope of the reef near a small cave. Jocha and Bocha fell asleep quickly and Bizuka chatted with their sister in a half-whisper voice.

“Konucha, what if this sea doesn’t really exist?” he asked her. “No one told you about it besides your grandpa.”

“It does exist, dear Bizuka,” she responded warmly. “I feel it with all my heart and the heart can’t be wrong.”

Bizuka smiled.

“When I listen to you, I believe it for some reason too,” he said and sighed. “but, when I start listening to your brothers, then...”

Konucha burst into laughter.

“Listen to me more then,” she said. “Certainly, it is possible to live well without a fairy tale, but it is quite boring so.”

“You’re right,” he nodded cheerily in response. “It’s much more fun. Alright, let’s sleep.”

“You can sleep and I’ll dream a little here,” Konucha replied.

However, Bizuka had very little time to sleep as Konucha's voice awoke him sometime later.

“Bizuka, wake up! Bizuka! Look, what’s there?” he heard her agitated voice.

He opened his eyes and instantly shuddered in amazement. In the sea right in front of him, there was a bright shining sphere.

“What’s that?” he asked in surprise.

“I can’t tell myself, but I like it.”

In the meanwhile, the sphere was increasing in size.

“We need to wake your brothers,” Bizuka said.

Soon, all four of them looked at the sphere. The brothers' eyes were round and big, like half of their heads.

“Oh, Neptune! I’ve never seen anything like that, brother,” Bocha said.

“What could it be?” Jocha wondered, being next to him.

The sphere continued to increase and reached the size of a whale.

“It might swallow us soon,” Bocha said somewhat frightened.

“It will, for sure,” Jocha caught up.

“That is why we must swim inside it first,” their sister said.

“Oh, Neptune!” the brothers groaned together.

At this time, Konucha moved quickly towards the shining sphere while looking back.

“Bizuka, are you coming with me?”

He nodded and followed her.

“Oh, no! She’ll be lost out there without us,” Jocha said and swam after his sister.

“Though it looks like she’ll be lost with us this way,” Bocha added philosophically and followed the others.

Soon, all bizukas disappeared inside the shining sphere.

* * *

“Where are we?” Bizuka asked, looking around.

The water was sparkling with all the colours of the rainbow all around the friends and as far as the eye could see.

“It’s so beautiful here!” Konucha spoke out with excitement.

“Brother, bite my tail so I can see if I am dreaming,” Bocha said, looking around in amazement.

“Okay,” Jocha replied and added, “then you’ll bite me after that, agreed?”

“That’s the sea of bizukas!”, their sister said happily and pointed in one direction with her fin. “And it looks like they’re swimming to us themselves!”



Indeed, bizukas, who were just like them, were approaching them from all around. Their grandfather was swimming at their head.

“My granddaughter! Jocha, Bocha!” they heard his happy voice.

“Grandpa!” Konucha shouted and rushed to him.

“He’s alive!”, her brothers took off to meet their grandpa too.

Bizuka swam after them cheerfully. Soon their family, as well as many other bizukas, swam together.

“Grandpa!” Konucha pronounced, looking into the eyes of her dearly loved grandfather. “I have never forgotten any of your tales and have always believed in them!”

“Well done, my dear!” he stroked her head with his fin tenderly. “Believing in something is often more important than knowing something!”

After the cheerful reunion, they all bizukas headed deeper into their sea.

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Igor N. Bondar

BIZUKA

A fairy tale





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