

## Chapter 1

### About a Friday night's dream and a Conference of Parallel Worlds

14<sup>th</sup> of December, Kiev, -4°, cloudy

That night Maxim went to bed as early as he could to speed up the arrival of the next day and his upcoming journey. He closed his eyes and immediately fell into a long and sweet half-sleep. He understood that he was falling asleep and all events were happening only in his dream, but they were so real and bright, with colors, smells and even taste sensations as if all this was happening in real life. And since Friday night dreams are prophetic, it is worth recounting it briefly, because Maxim himself would often recall and retell it.

But first let's refresh the events of the past two years, starting from August of the year before last, or even a little earlier.

In fact, that August was so filled with the adventures that were so unusual - at times intriguing, at times enchanting - that they were enough to fill a whole book that you have hopefully already read. For those who did not have time to do this, don't you worry, we'll brief you on the events that made this adventure possible.

Here is how it was. About four years ago, Maxim befriended Ledvedik, a schoolboy from a parallel world, who, after a month filled with mind-bending adventures, had to return back to his world but not before he vowed to visit Maxim again in a year. When Ledvedik didn't show up as promised, Maxim was deeply disappointed and lonely. A chance



for a new adventure came when Maxim was allowed to invite a foreign exchange student to stay at his house, a girl he had fallen in love with after seeing her photo. But instead of the charming girl, a little cheeky boy named Vladi arrived with his big mean cat and oodles of fake stories. As it turned out, Vladi helped Maxim find Ledvedik, and all three became good friends. Unfortunately, the plans for the organized and informative vacation were scrapped when Vladi fell ill with the mumps, and the friends were quarantined with Maxim's great-grandmother and had to spend with her almost all of August.

The great-grandmother refused to acknowledge the achievements of the technical progress. Friends seemed to find themselves in the nineteenth century, and they expected nothing but boredom and a total waste of time. However, it turned out that life without the Internet, cell phones and even television had its advantages. They rediscovered such an old-fashioned form of communication as personal contact and discussion. This not only contributed to a better understanding between the friends, but also enabled Ledvedik, with the help of Maxim and Vladi, to develop a revolutionary idea that they managed to implement thanks to Maxim's uncle Sasha and the crew of his yacht.

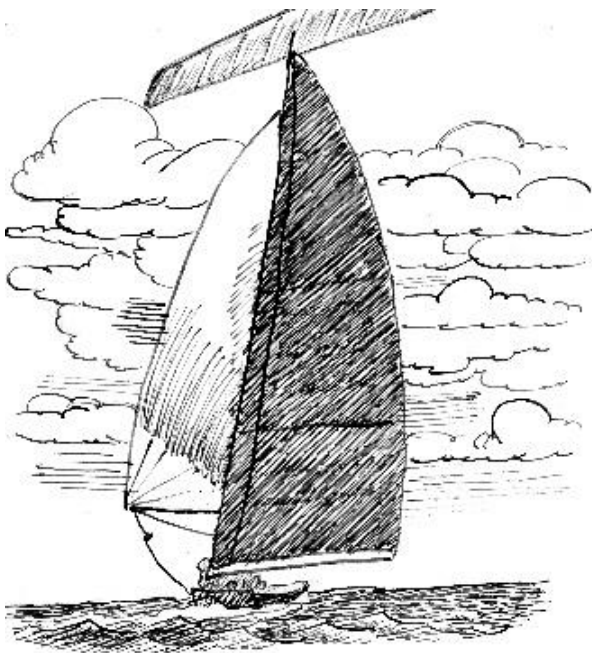
It was an aerodynamic wing that, attached to the top of the yacht mast, contributed to its stabilization, preventing the yacht from capsizing at high speeds even with strong gusts of wind and a threatening heeling, facilitating speed so high that the yacht glides barely touching the tops of the waves, like the Flying Dutchman, and can accelerate to record speed. Unfortunately, the inaugural sail with the wing was not officially recorded. With this somewhat disappointing event the August adventures ended, as Ledvedik and Vladi had to return to their homes.

The control of the wing in manual mode was very complicated and without Ledvedik simply impossible. It became necessary to implement automatic control, which seemed a very difficult, almost unrealistic task. But it was not without reason that the teacher of the Ukrainian boarding school in Munich, Ms. Ruzya, said that everything that could be imagined could be done. With the participation of a team of designers from an aviation company, a sophisticated automatic control system was designed and implemented.

Sasha promised to take his nephew, Maxim, as a cabin boy when he grows up a bit and masters the art of yacht steering. And even though

Maxim's mother strongly resisted it, Maxim enrolled in a young sailor training and in any weather, from early spring to late fall, he trained at the Dog Gulf of the river Dnipro. He learned to steer the yacht on various tacks, improved start and race skills, studied rules of how ships pass each other, and in absolutely merciless weather he crammed the theory - yacht arrangement, its equipment, basics of sailing, seamanship and meteorology. Maxim matured and grew up, he was already catching up to Sasha's height and dreamed of real ocean racing, with storms and winds, hurricanes and breathtaking speeds.

Over the past two years, Sasha has become a high-class skipper, a real sea wolf. He received a certificate that gave him the right to steer sailboats up to 24 meters long and to drive sail in all seas and oceans 150 nautical miles away from the coast. As part of his certification, he, as an active member of the crew, passed 3000 nautical miles, served thirty hours of night shift, and underwent a rigorous medical examination.



Sasha tested the "Beautiful Marquise" on the river Dnipro first, then on the Black Sea, and in February of this year, Sasha with his crew almost came third in the Caribbean regatta. Now he was one step away from his dream - to take part in the Rolex regatta, a race from Australian Sydney to Tasmanian Hobart. And all this thanks to Ledvedik's ingenious invention -

Aerodynamic intelligent stabilizer of the heeling of sailing yachts.

And Maxim, the sea wolf-cub, who was five years away from being allowed to participate in this regatta, could only watch and wave to his uncle from the shore of Sydney Harbor Bay under the strict supervision

of his dear mom and in company of Vladi, who promised to fly to Sydney on his private plane, according to this little liar.

Now that you know a little about the events of the last two years, let's go back to Maxim's dream in his half-sleep on the eve of the flight to Sydney.

The dream began with the plane landing at Sydney International Airport, named in the honor of Sir Charles Edward Kingsford Smith, the pioneer of Australian aviation, who was the first to cross the Pacific Ocean and, according to Vladi, was his twice removed great-grandfather (you probably remember that this boy's relatives represented all aristocratic clans from the Arctic to the Antarctic.) Vladi volunteered to meet Maxim and his mother along with some kind of sir, or peer, or maybe mayor.

Maxim took his carryon bag and, drowsy after a thirty-five-hour flight with a ten-hour transfer at the airport in Qatar, was so confused that he could not understand, where his mother was. Then he remembered that she changed her mind about flying with him and stayed at home. Maxim was glad that he was finally an adult and independent, traveling alone, free of his numerous relatives for two weeks.

He said goodbye to the pretty stewardesses, went through passport control, then customs officers checked him and his luggage for weapons, drugs, food items, such as lard, cheese or sausages, as well as plants, seeds and similar evil muck that could harm the continent and was strictly banned from entry into the protected Australian land. Maxim did not have anything forbidden, because he had studied all the customs regulations in advance, but one picky dog kept sniffing around him. It was obviously hungry and sniffed the sausage Maxim had eaten an hour earlier. Maxim feared he would be sent home, but a bulky customs official waved him off as if to say, "Go on, boy, it's obvious you're a safe person for the Australian continent."

Maxim emerged from the air-conditioned airport into the Australian December heat, because, as you know, when Europe walks in down jackets and warm boots, summer is in full swing in Australia.

Maxim stood at the exit, sweating in woolen trousers and a sweater, turning his head left and right, but there was no sign of Vladi nor any lord nor mayor. He was beginning to regret that his mother was not with him when he saw that a tall, slender, graceful girl was approaching him

with a joyful smile. Maxim looked around to see if there was any handsome young man behind him to match this beauty, but there was nobody, since all the passengers had long left for their home, and Maxim smiled back at her.

“Hello,” the girl greeted him, “don’t you recognize me?”

Maxim looked at her more closely - hair the color of fallen maple leaves, emerald green eyes - and remembered the photo of that exchange schoolgirl who could not come to Kiev two years ago due to an illness, and as a result, he got Vladi for a month's visit. Maxim was very embarrassed, not so much from her beauty but from surprise and also because his poor German.

“Hi Karolin! Glad to see you. Let's better speak English.”

“We are speaking English,” Karolin laughed, and Maxim was even more embarrassed.

“Sorry, it’s because of jet-lag,” Maxim managed to find an explanation, “that is, the disorder of the daily biorhythm in connection with the long-distance flight.”

“I know, I know, my head is also spinning from flights, and all the languages mix up in my head like in the Tower of Babel,” Karolin laughed.

“I thought Vladi would meet me on a Rolls-Royce,” Maxim also laughed, and his shyness was as if blown with the wind.

“My cousin has a runny nose, but he makes a real drama out of it lying on the terrace and treating it with tincture of eucalyptus.”

Maxim had no idea that Karolin was Vladi’s cousin, for he had never mentioned a single word about it.

“So, there won't be a Rolls Royce?” joked Maxim.

“Unfortunately, not. We are in a hurry. The start of the regatta was rescheduled for today’s evening, at eight. Sasha desperately needs a sixth crew member, because Lenny has an upset stomach.”

It is amazing how she knows about Sasha’s crew member Lenny, Maxim managed to think when a small plane nosedived directly at them. It was not a plane at all, but a huge eagle. Karolin saddled the bird like a

motorbike, Maxim sat behind her, he tightly grabbed her tiny waist, and they soared into the sky.

Hot wind blew through Karolin's hair, it smelled of the ocean, tickled Maxim's face, and he felt happy and content. They made a big circle over the amazingly beautiful Sydney Harbor, over which Maxim often traveled virtually on Google Maps - sparkling waters surrounded by hundreds of kilometers of carved coastline. He recognized the bays and beaches, repeating to himself - Manly Beach, Shark Bay, Blue Bay, Bondi Beach. Then they flew over Sydney's crown jewel, the Opera House with its sail-like white roofs that were shining like gold in the rays of the setting sun and approached the majestic Harbor Bridge.

The coast was dotted with hundreds of thousands of people shouting and waving flags, banners, and pennants. It even seemed to Maxim that he saw Vladi waving energetically a blue checkered handkerchief. Helicopters of dozens of the world television companies circled overhead, and the entire water area was dotted with yachts, ships, boats, and even rubber dinghies. Anything that could somehow float on the water accompanied the participants of the regatta, to make themselves a part of this great event. Most spectacular, however, was the ready-to-start fleet of the yachts. One hundred yachts were registered this year, and another, one hundred first, Sasha's yacht, they were flying to now.



The countdown to the start began. The Cruising Yacht Club of Australia's historic cannons fired the Warning Signal aboard the official starting vessel, Olympic Storm, and the Event flag was hoisted. This meant that 10 minutes left before the start. Then the cannons fired a second time – it was the Preparatory Signal and Code flag P was hoisted.

“Forward, beyond Harbor Bridge!” shouted Maxim. “The larger boats will start just north of Shark Island. Here, look!”

When both flags were dropped and the cannons fired for the third time, giving the starting signal to the race, the eagle banked steeply over Sasha's yacht, nosedived at it and tilted the wing so swiftly that Maxim rolled down onto the deck into the arms of the helmsman Matthew.

"Hello," he said calmly, as if it was usual for Maxim to drop from the sky on board of the "Beautiful Marquise" in this way, "just in time."

The yachts sailed north along the Tasman Sea to the capital of the Australian state of Tasmania, Hobart. The distance was generally quite short, some 628 miles, but due to the fierce south winds and the rapid northern current, this regatta is considered the most exhausting ocean race in the world. Maxim went down to the cabin to change his clothes. His heart was pounding with excitement. Suddenly his phone began to play the melody of blind lirnyks, and he ... he opened his eyes.

So, it was a dream, and no miracle in the world would help him take part in this year races on the Tasman Sea. Unless Ledvedik would appear and curse that nasty Lenny with something like appendicitis or just an upset stomach. But his childhood friend, an alien from a parallel world, has not appeared for the third year now, and one would think that he was the product of Maxim's fantasy.

"Oh, Ledvedik-Ledvedik," Maxim sighed.

"What does it mean 'Ledvedik-Ledvedik'?" a creaky voice came from the corner of the room.

"Oh, Ledvedik-Ledvedik!" Maxim cried out joyfully, ran to the closet, opened the door, and pulled out a funny teddy bear with a long lion's tail. Is it you?"

"It's me."

"And in the closet again?"

"The best way not to get



lost in the Transition is to choose the right closet. Well, let me go,”  
Ledvedik laughed and began to stretch his numb paws.

“Will you stay with me for a long time?”

“For two weeks, but not only with you. I signed up for a Conference of Parallel Worlds that begins in the Himalayas in two days.”

“Cool! And on what topic?”

“Self-deepening.”

“Where to?” Maxim asked not sure he heard it right.

“That is, I would say, a deepening in myself, in my inner spiritual world, in my feelings and experiences.”

“But if you deepen in yourself for two weeks, we will not be able to see each other.”

“Do not worry, I'll pop up from time to time,” laughed Ledvedik, “and I'll visit you and Vladi in Sydney.”

“How did you know about Sydney and Vladi?”

“I overheard him talking to your mom on Skype. Pack me into your carry-on bag, I really want to see the guy.”

“Why carry-on bag? You are not an object. You better teleport.”

“I'm sorry, but I cannot show you all those tricks anymore. Last time, I was punished because of these teleportations-antigravitations,” Ledvedik said sadly, adding, “Unless there will be force majeure situations. Besides, I am tired of running around in the Transitions. It is dark and uninteresting in there. I want to experience it live, as you travel, to explore your world.”

“That sounds good. I'll put you in my backpack, like a teddy bear. Although it's a bit strange - a grown-up guy that carries toys,” Maxim realized that Ledvedik was a little offended and added, “Well, you will not be a toy, but a talisman.”

“That's better,” agreed Ledvedik, “and when are we flying?”

“This evening! Sorry, I have to talk to Mom. And you can do your self-deepening.”



## Chapter 2

### About how bad it is to immediately carry out mother's instructions

15<sup>th</sup> of December, Kiev, 0°, cloudy

“Ducky, you finally woke up!” Mom greeted Maxim cheerfully. “I already talked with Vladi via Skype. His uncle joined us. So nice of him. He said that they are waiting and had already prepared two rooms with a shared bathroom for us. With a terrace. Vladi said that Robbie is a ranger, that is, a Special Forces soldier. He probably carried out many heroic deeds behind the enemy’s lines. So romantic!”

“Honey, your English is not very good,” Dad intervened, a little annoyed. “Vladi’s uncle is a park ranger, that is, just a forester.”

“Still very romantic!” Mom said dreamily. “I will have a room with a bath and a terrace overlooking the ocean.”

“Your bathroom and terrace will be shared with Maxim,” Dad continued, “and the terrace overlooks the bay, not the ocean.”

“You are just a little jealous.” Mom ran out to put another bikini in her suitcase.

“Don’t get too upset,” Maxim patted his father on the shoulder, “she is a little old for this forester.”

“I’m only worried that she will accidentally fall off the terrace, as she did last year in Spain, when she wanted to smell the oleander flower,” father muttered with annoyance and retreated to his room.

All the relatives were coming for dinner to wish Maxim and Mom a happy trip, and at the same time to try Mom’s legendary cake with the not very appetizing name “Drowned.” Maxim helped a bit with the housework, and then he started packing for his trip. It left him plenty of time to catch up with Ledvedik, find out about his achievements in matters of self-deepening and tell him about his own achievements in sailing.

“Now, Ledvedik, stay for an hour by yourself and do some more of

self-deepening, and I will go to my relatives who have gathered on the occasion of the 'Drowned'.”

“Did any of the crew drown?” worried Ledvedik.

“That’s the name of the cake, because the dough must be submerged in water before baking,” said Maxim and went into the living room.

The relatives were already assembled at a large oval table, with eight chairs around it.

Maxim sat at the head of the table. On the opposite side there was a chair for Mom, but she darted back and forth from the living room to the kitchen putting dishes loaded with food on the table, because although the gathering was called “to try the cake,” the relatives had to be well fed and entertained with conversations, and most importantly, it was necessary to listen to each person’s tips and instructions on how to overcome the jet-lag; how to avoid sunburn in the hellish December sun of Australia; how not to become food for crocodiles, jellyfish or deadly spiders; how not to lose a passport, a credit card or a child, that is, Maxim; how not to forget to give Sasha his driver’s license and the ship’s passport for the “Beautiful Marquise” that he had forgotten to take with him, which wouldn’t have happened if he had listened to the advice of his relatives before the departure.



Maxim nodded his head politely and agreed with everyone, because it was the only way to shorten the outpouring of caution and insight. Actually, only women - grandmother and great-grandmother - spoke while men - dad, grandfather and great-grandmother’s new husband - ate ham and homemade marinated cucumbers. Great-grandmother’s new husband ate with the greatest appetite. Although the word “new” didn’t suit him too well, because if there was anything new on him, it was only a light green tie presented by great-grandmother on the occasion of the second anniversary of their wedding. As you remember, he was the Nobel laureate in the field of insects, who finally conquered the heart of the great-grandmother by employing

fireflies and cicadas to transform her garden into an enchanting place. By

the way, his name was Jerónimos Ebinezer, but since nobody could pronounce this somewhat unusual name correctly, all relatives called him by the title coined by Maxim, “Grate-Granma's new husband”.

Finally, Mom finished setting the table, and all the attention was now concentrated on her. Grandmother asked if Mom took that pretty red dress that she brought from Spain last season. Great-grandmother was very interested in whether they would go to the Sydney Opera House and what exactly Mom was going to wear for such occasion. Then they vied with each other for a chance to give her advices on where and what exactly she should buy, because - just imagine! - in the Southern Hemisphere, a winter sale has begun and all the things that will be sold there for next to nothing will become fashionable in our Northern Hemisphere only in the spring.

The men got tired of the women’s chatter and went into the hallway to give respite to their ears, talk about their men's topics and, before the “Drowned” is served, digest some of the ham, fish and salads.

“How did you get your school to let you go on the trip? Your school break begins at the end of December,” asked Grandfather.

“No problem, this is a private school.”

“Do you like it there?” Grate-Granma's new husband asked out of politeness, because he was not really interested in anything apart from the great-grandmother herself, insects and bitcoins.

“It’s OK. If it weren’t for those parvenus and their gossip, ‘Oh, my dad is an oligarch and his Bentley was scratched; ah, my mom got such a wonderful plastic that she didn’t pass passport control and was not allowed to fly to the Maldives.’ But foreign students are generally not bad. Most importantly, my English is no problem now.”

“And how much does this school cost?” asked Grandfather, because only the mother and the sponsor-grandmother knew about the cost of tuition, the rest of the relatives were not privy to this secret, so that no one would get a mental breakdown.

“Not too much,” Maxim said evasively, because he himself got a mental shock when he heard the number for the first time. “About two thousand.”

“Dollars or hryvnias?” asked the grandfather.

Maxim felt very uncomfortable because he could not answer this question honestly. The fact is, when he grew up and became a full-fledged teenager, his relatives began to gradually introduce him to family secrets. It turned out that in such a seemingly tight circle of relatives, where everyone loves each other and cares about each other, there are many small groups that for one reason or another conceal something from each other. These small lies were always justified by good intentions like concern for either health or peace of mind of an uninitiated relative. And before a new person is introduced into the circle of the initiated, the new initiate had to take an oath and swear that this secret would under no circumstances be leaked to one of the uninitiated.

“So, dollars or hryvnias?” grandfather wasn’t about to give up.

“Hryvnias,” Maxim lied.

“For a year or for a month?” grandfather continued the interrogation.

“For a year,” Maxim lied again.

“It’s still expensive,” grandfather said sadly. “That is my monthly pension.”

And the men began a long discussion about the school system, with all sorts of suggestions for improving it, which we omit here, because it would only be of interest to the Ministry of Education and even that only in an ideal society, like the one described by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato or by Thomas More in the Middle Ages. Then grandfather raised the topic of beekeeping and listened to a lot of useful tips from the Grate-Granma's new husband, and dad raised the topic of contacts with other worlds and listened to many tips from everyone, except for Maxim, who himself had already established this contact, but had to be silent about it. When the turn came to the Grate-Granma's new husband with his arguments about the profitability or loss-making of buying bitcoins, mother called everyone into the dining room to try the “Drowned.”

“Oh, dear, why is there lemon in it?” asked the great-grandmother.

“I decided to try a new recipe,” Mom explained in a slightly guilty tone.

“Never change a winning team,” the grandmother added with conviction.

“Do not listen to them, dear lady,” Grate-Granma's new husband got into the conversation with a full mouth. “Yummy incredibly! If my

friend, Sir Alf Ramsey, whom Madame had just quoted, could try your cake, he would give up his awards.”

“Did you know Ramsey himself?” Maxim jumped from excitement. “Have you played soccer too?”

“We were once in the same lodge,” he answered.

“In a hunting lodge, or what?” did not understand Maxim.

“Dear lady, the name of your masterpiece seems a little strange to me,” the Grate-Granma's new husband changed the subject. “It's kind of inappropriate considering Sasha's upcoming race in the Tasman Sea.”

And Maxim had never found out if his new relative was a football player and in which lodge he sat with Sir Alfred Ramsey.

“Why are you scaring us?” the great-grandmother got excited. “Our 'Marquis' is an absolutely reliable yacht, and Sasha's crew had a good training in the Caribbean. They went around fourteen islands!”

“What an amazing expertise,” said dad a little mockingly.

“Of course, I was involved in the creation and testing of the wing on the 'Beautiful Marquis',” the great-grandmother said offended. “And I watched that regatta on-line. It was the epicenter of the gentleman's establishment with a bias to the offshore format. That is, the entire offshore elite was present there. And our Sasha was among them! And what a wonderful starting place - Antigua. Vice Admiral Lord Nelson finally won Lady Hamilton's selfless love there. And in what hotel Sasha lived! With pool, tennis courts.”

“I don't think he had time to play tennis and splash around in the pool,” mother objected. “It was a very difficult regatta.”

“Sasha said, just brutal!” Maxim added, and then bit his tongue, so as not to raise a dangerous topic.

“Of course, we also watched on-line, but we didn't talk about that, so as not to worry you,” said Grandfather. “The regatta was really brutal - one yacht got out of the race because the sails broke, the other because



of problems with rigging, then another yacht had problems with ballast, and one skipper was injured.”

“The wound was not fatal,” Maxim clarified to reassure relatives. “I am sure that Sasha will be the winner of the Sydney regatta and will receive a Rolex watch as a present.”

“He already promised that watch to me,” proudly announced the great-grandmother. “The only thing that bothers me a bit is whether he would have problems with the ballast.”

“If you took part in the development of the wing for stabilization of the heeling of the yacht, you would have known that the 'Beautiful Marquise' has no ballast,” Maxim said mockingly.

This amateurism was already beginning to annoy him, because everyone considered himself a great specialist in the field of yachting.

“Then I'm completely calm,” the great-grandmother said. “So, this time the victory is ours.”

“Sasha would have won in the Caribbean if the boom didn't tear off just before the finish,” said Maxim. “And the Sydney regatta is not so dangerous. Once, even an eighty-eight-year-old man took part in it.”

“So, I would also have a chance to steer a sailboat,” the Grate-Granma's new husband got excited.

And before the relatives began a new round of regatta idle talks assessing the chances of being a member of Sasha's crew, Maxim pointed a finger at the clock in the living room, which had already struck seven.

“Oh, really,” grandfather noticed, “time to pack up. Then the last one for the road.”

Men filled their glasses with dry wine or mineral water, depending on age and state of health, while women began to line up and recount suitcases, bags, and handbags.

“Best of all in this case...,” began the grandmother, who, according to her calculations, had already circled the globe twice. “Hey, listen, dear girl! In this case, it is best to recount all the luggage pieces, including suitcases, bags, and the child. Here, together with Maxim, it is eight pieces. So, from time to time recount, please!”

Then everyone sat down on the couch and chairs and had to remain silent for a minute, as the ages-long tradition dictates to do before a long road. But great-grandmother could not be silent even for a minute.

“Have you got your documents and tickets?” she asked fearfully.  
“Come on, check it out!”

“O-o-oh,” groaned Maxim, “everything has been packed and checked a long time ago.”

“No, no,” grandmother joined in. “Show us all the documents.”

With a pained expression, Maxim pulled out his passport and ticket. Mom began nervously extracting documents from her purse and laying them out on the table.”

“Maxim, where is my passport?”

“You have it.”

“Didn't I give it to you?”

It was a rhetorical question, which Maxim didn't bother to answer, because he had tried to persuade her to give him her passport. Mom became very nervous and was on the verge of bursting into tears.

“Don't worry, dear,” dad began attempted to calm her. “Try to remember where you saw it last time.”

Mom began to recount the places she was transferring it to, then looked at her son and uttered in a hollow voice, "Maxim, did you by any chance take my cardigan to dry cleaning?"

“Which cardigan?”

“Well, that collarless jacket I brought for your mother from New York,” the grandmother tried to help.

“The burgundy one?” clarified Maxim.

“Burgundy,” Mom whispered.

“Well, I took it that same day. To the 'Miracle Cleaning' around the corner. Already picked it up. It is hanging in your closet in a plastic bag.”

Mom dashed to her room leaving her numerous relatives as if paralyzed in the heavy menacing silence, as happens before a storm. It seemed like half an hour had passed before mom returned. In her hands was her brand-new biometric passport.

“See, darling, you worried in vain...,” began dad and stopped in mid-sentence, because mom opened the passport for all to see.

“Look at that, this 'Miracle Cleaning' is a miracle,” said Grandfather, and everyone burst out laughing, because, as you know, comedy is somebody else’s tragedy.

Mom began to cry, and the relatives felt very ashamed, so ashamed that it can hardly be put into words.

“We are not flying anywhere,” said mom tragically.

“Why aren’t we flying?” Maxim jumped as if he was stung.

“Because we do not have passports.”

“Some don’t, but others do,” Maxim said firmly. “I’ll fly.”

“Alone?” shrieked the grandmother looking at Maxim with wide-open eyes filled with terror. “How so? Let me fly with you, honey.”

“You do not have a visa to Australia.”

“But I have one,” the Great-Grandma's new husband stepped forward, and everyone was relieved that an adult family member would look after the baby Maxim.

What a bad luck, Maxim thought, because it was questionable who would be taking care of whom, and he began feverishly making up arguments against it.

“That would be great,” he said with exaggerated enthusiasm, “but tickets cannot be returned or exchanged, and name change is not allowed,” he added with feigned regret.

“Our three thousand one hundred and eighty-seven euros just flushed down the toilet,” mother said desperately.

“... and sixty-eight cents,” added the dad, who liked precision in everything.

“Our one thousand five hundred and ninety-three euros, eighty-four cents are down there,” said Maxim, and added stubbornly, “I am flying! Even this kid Vladi flew alone to Sydney. And Mom will expedite a new passport and join us.”

“Maxim is right,” said Grandfather. “He is already a real man! He sails a yacht, drives a car,” grandfather stammered, because it was their man’s secret.



Sasha did teach Maxim how to drive a car and would allow Maxim to drive the crew home via rural roads after their training when Sasha was exhausted. Maxim even learned to repair that old rattletrap, in which motor stalled from time to time, and oil leaked.

“And besides, I have to bring Sasha the passport for the yacht,” Maxim found the decisive argument and glanced triumphantly at his relatives.

“You know, maybe it was a sign from above,” great-grandmother almost ruined everything. “Somehow, one thing led to another – first 'Miracle Cleaning', then 'Drowned'. I read that at the Sydney Regatta in 1998, out of 115 yachts, only 44 arrived in Hobart, and the six participants of the race,” here the great-grandmother made a dramatic pause, “dro-o-o-owne!”

“Missis Maria,” father intervened, “what are these prejudices for? Let the guy fly.”

“Indeed, let him fly,” the Great-Granma's new husband put in his word.

According to a democratic vote, four voted in favor, two against, and one abstained. This meant that Maxim would fly alone.

Time was running out. They ordered two taxis and drove to the airport. Maxim hid his joy in every possible way and tried to calm down his mother as sincerely as possible. In the end, he felt sorry for her. A little bit.

### *Chapter 3*

#### **About the flight with Persian poetry**

15<sup>th</sup> of December, Kiev, -2°, cloudy / 16<sup>th</sup>, Doha, 25°, mostly sunny

When it seemed all the obstacles were behind him and he was kissed by all the relatives and made it to the registration, the airline clerk looked at Maxim sternly and said that a minor traveling alone need a written and notarized permission from one of the parents with a copy of the passport proving the identity of this parent or guardian responsible for the child.

Maxim thought that everything was lost, when Ledvedik poked out of the backpack, which Maxim, at the insistence of his relatives, carried in front, so that documents would not be stolen on the road. He winked at the stern woman and affably waved his paw. By the time she recovered from the shock, Maxim was already inside and out of her sight.

“Thank you, Ledvedik, for making an exception for me and pulling such a trick,” whispered Maxim in his ear, waiting for boarding.

“This was not an exception, but a real force majeure. When I saw that you were in trouble, I dived into Google, read the relevant laws and legal acts and established that force majeure could be caused by a strong storm or black ice. In Cairns, where Sasha is training now, it is storming and in Kiev it is icy. That established the cause, and the necessity to deliver the documents to Sasha makes it legal, doesn’t it?”

Ledvedik smiled slyly, and then asked not to disturb him during the flight, because he has to work on perfecting his self-deepening. Ledvedik settled himself comfortably in the backpack and added in a very self-deepening voice, “Unless, of course, some force majeure happens.”

What could be force majeure in an airplane of such a renowned airline - Qatar Airways! Unfortunately, this was not a two-story giant aircraft A-380, only the A-320, but, as for Maxim, it was enough to enjoy a comfortable flight in the economy class. The plane took off exactly on schedule, at 10:40 PM, and by about five in the morning it was supposed to land on the coast of the Persian Gulf, at Hamad Airport.

When he and his mother were searching for a cheaper flight, Maxim insisted on choosing this one, which was not very optimal from the mother’s point of view, because they had to wait for a connecting flight in the capital of Qatar, Doha, for ten hours. But Maxim really wanted to take a walk around this brand new airport, which recently received the status of the best in the world, and he let in a little romance that his mother loved - the Persian Gulf, melodic Persian language, Persian philosophy, Persian immortal poetry ... And mother finally agreed when he recited:

Oh, threats of hell and hopes of paradise!  
One thing at least is certain — this life flies;  
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;  
The flower that once has blown forever dies.

“OK, my love,” the mother laughed, “although this is a poem by an Iranian poet, and the only Qatari poet I know was imprisoned for fifteen years because of criticism of the emir, but such a love for Persian culture should be rewarded with a ten-hour walk near Persian Gulf between standard airport boutiques.

“Yes! Thank you, Internet! Thank you, Wikipedia!” Maxim yelled mentally.

That is how in three minutes you can become a specialist in any field of life. That is if nobody digs deep enough, because real experts will expose you in the same three minutes. But the mother did not dig deep and ordered this long, long flight.

Maxim sat down in his tenth row by the window. He was beginning to enjoy complete freedom. No one will lecture, exhort, or forbid. The plane was filled with passengers, the message “Boarding completed” sounded, and only one place to the left of Maxim, where mother was supposed to sit, was empty. Suddenly, Maxim felt so sorry for his mother that his heart sank down below his ribs and ached there. He became very ashamed as he remembered her bewildered look standing with a completely unusable passport in her hands, and especially that inappropriate laugh of relatives, and his current joy on the occasion of his freedom from his mother’s guardianship.

He tried to put himself in her place. How would he feel if he had been preparing for such a half-around-the-world trip for three months, planning it in small details, studying maps and routes, blabbering about it to friends and neighbors, and then spin his jeans in the washing machine with the passport mindlessly tucked in its pocket? And when a charming stewardess that looked somewhat like his mother, in a jacket of the same color and almost the same cut as his mother’s cardigan, began to show how to fasten and unfasten the seat belts and what to do if the cabin is depressurized or they fall into the sea, Maxim thought that maybe this is his last flight and this not-so-modern airplane will disappear in the Persian Gulf twenty kilometers from the coast.

“Oh, threats of hell and hopes of paradise!” Maxim recited in whisper.

“Don't worry, child,” an elderly woman that was sitting by the aisle was trying to calm him down.

“But I’m not worried.”

What the hell, Maxim thought. Is she reading his mind? Or was he so scared that he really said those words out loud?

“Ah, were you just reading Omar Khayyam’s poems? I also love his poetry, and these lines are very agreeable with me. ‘One thing at least is certain — this life flies ....’ Is the seat next to you unoccupied? I will call my husband; he’s all the way back. Ok?”

Maxim nodded, but demonstrated his feelings by yawning loudly and closing his eyes not to be drawn into any further conversations, because he had already noticed that those travel conversations, even if they begin with highly intelligent topics like Omar Khayyam, end up being boring mundane everyday chatter. And once drawn in, you must listen to the endless stories of your random traveling companion about unfamiliar and uninteresting relatives down to seventh generation; and so many family secrets and Shakespearean intrigues are spilled over you that blood runs cold; and you sit pinned with a safety belt, having no way to run but forced to show interest, nod your head and admire hundreds of photos on tablets or mobile phones throughout the journey. Apparently, this spiritual exposure, as his uncle Sasha calls this verbosity, is due to the fact that a person who is forced to hide and hush up some things in the family circle, feels free from prohibitive shackles and has a desire to remove the burden of this information and shift it to a poor fellow traveler.

So, Maxim yawned and closed his eyes tightly, because Sasha has taught him a simple but effective technique - to avoid eye contact. But then he sneezed, the woman wished him health and offered a tissue. He had to open his eyes and thank her. She seemed to be just waiting for this, and Maxim had to listen to the minute details of the purpose of her journey with the husband, who successfully pretended to be sleeping.

The one-hour monologue was illustrated by numerous photographs. She and her husband were flying to the engagement of her son with a girl whose father lived in Sydney but was from Venice (and here Maxim listened to the detailed history of this Venetian family superimposed over the historical and geographical background of the Veneto region); whose mother also lived in Sydney but was born in London (and although the bride’s mother lived in London for two months only, Maxim learned a lot of interesting things about her family, as well as the history of England from the first Viking invasion); and the bride’s grandmother (here Maxim mentally groaned from the need to listen to the list of all

her old-age ills and pains), an old rocker from London, lived with her friend in New Zealand, where, not for money but for fun, bred draft horses and where her granddaughter's magnificent wedding was planned according to the Maori rite (and here the story became really spectacular and Maxim looked with interest at photographs of draft horses against the backdrop of breathtaking landscapes, a fragile rocker grandmother in a hippie dress, her Maori friend, a mighty giant, covered with a beautiful tattoo all over his face and body, and especially photos of all the Maori relatives.) At that time, the stewardesses distributed menus with an exquisite selection of dishes, taking into account all possible international tastes and religious prescriptions. The woman woke up her husband and began a long discussion about what to eat. Maxim poked a finger at menu number two and fell asleep without having a chance to taste his choice. And he did the right thing getting enough sleep because there were a lot of interesting things awaiting him at the airport.

Maxim got out of the plane and found himself in a fairy palace. He pulled Ledvedik out of his backpack, put him on a bench so that he could stretch his numb legs a little, and both began inspecting the building. The design of the airport was striking. The intricate plexus of the ceiling and arches that refracted the rays of the rising sun, creating natural lighting of incredible beauty and filling the hall with streams of pale pink light. Maxim wouldn't have minded if his next flight was postponed for any reason for another ten hours, because then he would be accommodated in an airport hotel with its incredible luxury and magnificent pool.

Maxim wandered under the crystal vault of this palace, his backpack with Ledvedik fastened in front, so that he too could enjoy the walk - a panorama of the Persian Gulf, huge airplanes, elegant interior design solutions, cozy oases with flowers, magnificent sculptures, and above all, the passengers, people of all races and creeds that ran, walked, or rested in comfortable chairs, depending on the time they had before the next flight. Of course, there was no trace of the Persian culture that Maxim was going to touch, except for men in white robes and white or plaid keffiyehs on their heads fixed with black cords, and women from head to toe in black. As his mother said, there were many boutiques with all the standard range of airport goods, which, however, did not interest either Maxim or Ledvedik.

In the central hall sat a yellow teddy bear named Teddy. Maxim and

Ledvedik stood in front of him with their heads up, for this was a teddy bear in the name only. This bronze sculpture weighed, according to



Ledvedik, seventeen tons, no less.

“And you wanted me to teleport,” said Ledvedik. “I would’ve never seen this beauty. It seems they look alike.”

“Who?” did not understand Maxim.

“My grandfather and this bear. Only grandfather doesn’t have a flashlight on his head, which would’ve been

useful for him, since he began to see poorly at dusk. Take a photo for memory please.”

“They look very much alike,” Ledvedik said with satisfaction, enlarging the image on the screen of Maxim’s phone. “Now I have to digest my emotional perceptions.”

Maxim did not have time to clarify what exactly Ledvedik had to digest, because he plunged into a state of self-deepening again, and Maxim continued loitering around the airport for a long time, drinking cola at the bar, then enjoying chips and lollipops, and no one said that he was harming his stomach.

Finally, boarding was announced, and the first thing Maxim did was conspicuously putting earphones in his ears, because there was a twenty-hour flight to Sydney, and he was already overfilled with his neighbor’s family stories. Maxim lost the sense of time. He was fed, given plenty to drink, wrapped in a blanket, he fell asleep, woke up, watched action movies and listened to music, then ate and slept again, and it seemed to him that this was a continuation of his dream. Finally, he fell into a deep sleep without dreams and woke up only when a beautiful young woman in a burgundy cardigan touched his shoulder.

“Mom,” Maxim smiled at her half-awake and then remembered everything.

## Chapter 4

### About some similarities between dream and reality and meeting of old friends

17<sup>th</sup> of December, Sydney, 21°, clear

Maxim took the suitcase, hung his backpack with Ledvedik on his shoulder and went out. He passed through passport control, and then went to customs. The first thing they asked him was if he was carrying some kind of contagion into the Australian continent, and Maxim sincerely assured that he was well aware of all the requirements and had nothing forbidden to declare. Except for an alien from a parallel world, he thought, but there was not a word anywhere about the ban on the import of aliens.

Maxim went to the exit, but the security dog blocked his way growling furiously, apparently sniffing Ledvedik in his backpack. However, a huge customs officer pulled the dog by the leash and waved his hand to Maxim with a hand as if saying, “Go on, kid, do not distract us from catching drug dealers and smugglers.”



Maxim left the airport building. The sun had already set, and it was dark. He stood at the exit and sweated terribly in the woolen trousers that his grandmother, a great expert in the field of air conditioning during such

long flights, forced him to wear. There was no trace of Vladi with his Rolls-Royce, and Maxim begun to calculate for how many days his money would last for independent trip across Australia.

Then he saw a slender blonde girl approaching him. She waved friendly to him, and he recognized her immediately.

“Hi Karolin! Glad to see you!” Maxim promptly switched to English, because his German was rather bad.

“Hi, Maxim! Glad to meet you too. Hey, you are taller than I thought, and wider in the shoulders.”

Any man would’ve liked such compliments, but Maxim was a little embarrassed and changed the subject, “And where is Vladi?”

A strange feeling swept over him because he knew in advance what she would say.

“My cousin has a runny nose, drinks eucalyptus tincture and is waiting for you at home. Let's go to the car. We must hurry.”

“What happened? Has the regatta been moved to today?”

“No, it starts, as usually, on the twenty-sixth. Robbie needs to bring the original documents for the 'Beautiful Marquise' to the organizers urgently”.

Maxim noticed a huge bird circling above them, exactly the same as in his dream on Friday night. Or maybe this is such a multi-stage dream, which Vladi was talking about? You sleep, but you see a dream inside a dream, then wake up in a new dream, and so on, until you wake up in real life. The phenomenon is quite rare and little studied. Some say that this means trouble, while others say that it is a sign of high intelligence and a large supply of strength of your brain.

It will be very unfortunate if this is really a multi-stage dream, Maxim thought and ran after Karolin. The bird made a sharp turn and flew so low over their heads that Maxim even recoiled to the side.

“Don't be afraid, it's Harpy,” Karolin calmed him down.

The bird named Harpy quickly rose into the sky, and Maxim, having looked at her, tripped over the fence and scratched his knee. So, it was all for real, indeed.



Robbie, a thin man in a leather jacket and a leather hat, was waiting for them by the Land Rover with the engine running. He greeted Maxim briefly, took the documents for the “Beautiful Marquise” and got behind the wheel that was on the right side. Maxim and Karolin settled down in the back seat, and the car started at full throttle towards new adventures.

“Cool car,” said Maxim.

“Yeah,” answered Robbie.

“I like it too. Beautiful color, blue,” said Karolin.

“Yeah,” answered Robbie again, and he did not utter a single sound the rest of the way.

A quarter of an hour later, they drove to the Sydney suburb, Elizabeth Bay, located three kilometers from Sidney’s central business district and just a kilometer and a half from the Royal Botanic Garden. The suburb named after the wife of a governor, was once called by the aborigines Yarrandabby. Karolin told him about this along the way, and Maxim listened to all this and could not believe that he was in Sydney, Karolin was next to him, there was a real ranger at the wheel and he was going to see Vladi now.

They drove up to the house on the coast of the bay. Robbie let them out of the car and rushed off to fix the problems with Sasha’s yacht registration. Maxim was standing in a warm and humid night, he took a deep breath of thick fragrant air and tilted his head to the sky to make sure that he would not see there the Wagon, i.e. the Great Bear constellation, which would mean that he really got into the Southern Hemisphere. There was no Wagon in the sky, as expected.

The full moon shone brightly in the sky. Dark spots on its surface resembled the shape of a rabbit. This is the Moon rabbit, Maxim recalled. In ancient China, it was believed that he lives in the Moon Palace and all year round grinds a potion of immortality in a mortar. But the rabbit was not sitting anymore, as in the Northern Hemisphere, he was laying. Wow, that was another confirmation that Maxim was in the Southern Hemisphere!

“Hey, did you lose something up there?” the gate swung open and Vladi jumped out of the dark garden. “Well, man, come in.”

The boys hugged and patted each other on the back.

“Nun, du bist aufgewachsen!” Vladi exclaimed.

“Du auch,” Maxim said, and then whispered, “Let's speak English, because my German isn't very good ....”

“So, let's speak Ukrainian, I have not forgotten it.”

“But Karolin wouldn't understand.”

“Ah, I forgot that the lady is not able to master Ukrainian. Well, enjoy my Oxford pronunciation: Honorable gentlemen, please welcome to my hut! I will be your host today. Oh, Ledvedik is also here! What's new in your parallel ...?” and stopped in the middle of the sentence, because Maxim gave him a look and Vladi realized that Karolin was not initiated into the developments of the communication with the parallel world.

They walked along the path through the blooming garden, and when they turned, a large two-story cottage appeared to their right. It surprised Maxim to see all its windows brightly lit.

“A lot of guests have gathered?”

“Nobody. It's to scare away criminals.”

It was hard to imagine that criminals were snooping around in this rich coastal quarter, although Vladi was quite logical in this fear, because it would not make much sense for criminals to prey in poor neighborhoods.

The boys were sitting at the table in the spacious living room with the terrace, and Karolin busied herself in the adjacent kitchen, preparing some snacks. She had headphones in her ears and was singing softly a melody. Through the terrace door the sound of the sea surf was heard, or rather, the ocean surf, and Maxim closed his eyes with pleasure. It was good that Mom would come later.

“Okay, let's eat quickly, and then go to your room. I want to chat with Ledvedik. Poor thing, probably tired of pretending to be a teddy bear. Isn't it so, Ledvedik? I couldn't believe that you are not a dream of mine. Oh, how long will Karolin be messing up out there?”

“You don't really like your cousin?”

“A cousin seven times removed!”

“Is there such a consanguinity?” Maxim wondered.

“Near or distant, blood or water, it's all one.”

“What?”

“You should read more, my friend! It’s Charles Dickens.”

“I just wanted to know, what did you mean?”

“My grandfather eight generations ago courted her grandmother in that same eight’s generation, and that is how Lady Karolin is related to me several centuries later.”

“Why do you always call her 'lady'?”

“Because she is really titled. Among my relatives, almost all are titled persons. Only Robbie is without a title, and it is because he lost it.”

“Where did he lose it?” Maxim asked smiling, because unexplainably, he missed the stories of this kid, in which it was impossible to separate the truth from fables.

“Not 'where', but 'why'.”

“Well, OK! Why?”

“He fell in love with a regular girl and became engaged to her, against the will of his grandmother- baroness.”

“I would also prefer love over the title.”

“You are right, baby, but not quite so, because this regular girl ran away with some rogue right on the wedding day. So, Robbie lost both, the title and the bride. Living with the title is much nicer. I myself could become Peer.”

“I know, I know, if all your cousins just happen to be bitten by a wild pig,” Maxim laughed.

“Hey, monster, when will you feed the men?!” Vladi shouted towards the kitchen.

“That was very rude to Karolin,” Maxim became angry.

“Is it polite to run around with headphones like that? She does it all the time. When I am nearby, she turns the volume up to the max. So called cousin ....”

Karolin came into the living room with a tray in her hands. She was extremely graceful and sweetly smiled to Maxim. And the dinner was very tasty - the salad was fresh, just like from the garden, the avocado had rich flavor, just like from the tree, the baguette was crispy, just like from the stove. Maxim ate with gusto, and Vladi moved fork over his empty plate and was clearly not in a good mood.

“You see, she feeds us like rabbits. She is just incapable to cook such normal and tasty food like borscht as your mother does or meatballs like your grandmother. Don't we have meat in the fridge?!!” Vladi hollered.

Karolin smiled an angelic smile and ignored him.

“Deaf like a black grouse,” Vladi was seriously angry and pulled an earpiece out from her left ear. “Is there meat in the house, I'm asking.”

“Yes, but it's for Harpy,” said Karolin, keeping on the same sweet smile, and put the earpiece back into her ear.

Vladi chewed on baguette and washed it down with cranberry juice.

“Not even Coca-Cola in the house. She is completely crazy with her healthy lifestyle.”

Karolin ate like a little doe, only a few leaves of salad. Maxim ate for the three of them and admired this girl. She was silent all the time and smiled either at her thoughts, or at the music, and that's why she seemed mysteriously beautiful. And not because she had a title, but because she had a style. His great-grandmother was right - real woman should have style. Maxim would have sat like this until dawn, if Vladi hadn't reminded him about Ledvedik's tired paws.

No matter how slowly and thoroughly Maxim chewed the crispy leaves of Australian salad, all the plates were empty, and he and Vladi went upstairs to the two adjacent rooms allocated to him and his mother.

“May I move to your mom's room?” asked Vladi.

“Sure, with a neighbor like you it would be more fun.”

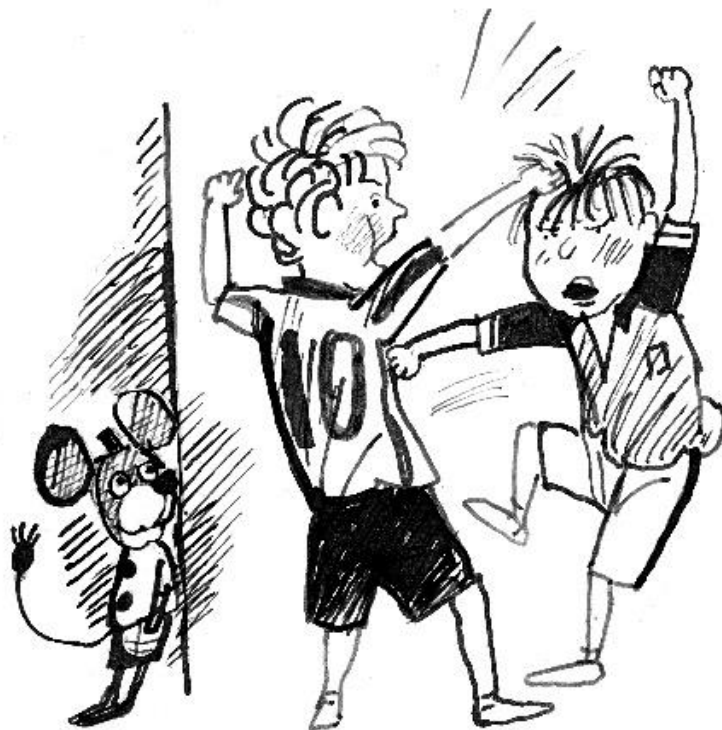
At last, when all the Maxim's things were hung and folded, and Vladi's things were scattered all over the room and haphazardly dropped into drawers, they laid plaid blanket on the terrace and settled on it. There didn't seem to be much the guys had to tell each other. Regular use of social media kept Maxim and Vladi up to date in every detail of their everyday life. Ledvedik reviewed this information in a matter of seconds, and he himself had little to tell, because for the past two years he had been occupied practicing self-deepening.

Awkward silence settled in with the guys realizing that knowing what the other one ate, where and when he went is not the same as sharing your experiences. They lost the ability to communicate with each other like it used to be in the pre-Internet good old times. Maxim was ready to

use the “jet-lag” excuse and go to bed, when Vladi suddenly burst out laughing and said, “Do you remember, Maxim, how we thought that your great-grandmother forgot her boyfriend in the attic, and he skeletonized there ....”

“...and it was my Ledvedik ....”

“...and I had already lost all hope of being found and was considering morphing into the plasma state,” Ledvedik added.



Everyone laughed, the ice was broken. They began to recall their tricks and adventures that happened more than two years ago, in that August, the best one in fifty years, according to Maxim’s great-grandmother. They interrupted each other remembering about the key lost by Maxim’s mother and the savior of the duck; about his dad, who almost broke his neck but saved the family dinner; how Sasha took them on his yacht and they got into the “eye of a hurricane,” and Ledvedik saved them all by lifting the “Beautiful Marquise” into the air, so that the newspapers later wrote about the appearance of the “Flying Dutchman;” how Vladi fell ill with mumps and they were quarantined by Maxim’s great-grandmother, and she usurped power and founded a philosophical Society of Eternal

Questions; about Ledvedik's ingenious invention - the aerodynamic wing to stabilize the yacht's heeling; and at the end, as the apogee of that holiday - the actual testing of this invention; and how they did break the record, which, due to Maxim's great-grandmother fault, was not recorded on the camcorder, and ...

"... and due to Vladi's fault the mast was broken and the boat almost sank," Maxim concluded of their adventures," and he pushed Vladi's shoulder in a friendly manner.

"Hey Maxim, are you going at it again?" Vladi was seriously angry. "I thought you had acquired some brains in these two years!" and hit Maxim in the stomach.

"You are stupid yourself," Maxim was enraged and punched Vladi under the ribs.

The boys began to wrestle on the plaid while Ledvedik was watching and, instead of separating them, he was making fun of them.

"Why are you, alien, cheering?!" Vladi shouted, crawling off the plaid, because Maxim was winning.

"Guys I missed you so much," Ledvedik laughed. "I'll go try the Australian current."

## *Chapter 5*

### **About the ecological continent, prison for cats, and magic carpet**

17<sup>th</sup> of December, Sydney, 18°, clear

Ledvedik went into the room, put his tail plug into a socket and purred with pleasure; and the guys decided to make peace and not fight anymore, because they really matured and maybe even became a little smarter.

"What an incredibly delicious current," said Ledvedik, sitting down on the plaid. "Crystal clear like spring water, transparent like a stream." "And all because the Australians take care of the environment," Maxim explained. "This, in fact, is thanks to the Brits, who brought their civilization to the continent."

# Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	About a Friday night's dream and a Conference of Parallel Worlds.....	5
<b>Chapter 2</b>	About how bad it is to immediately carry out mother's instructions.....	13
<b>Chapter 3</b>	About the flight with Persian poetry.....	21
<b>Chapter 4</b>	About some similarities between dream and reality and meeting of old friends.....	27
<b>Chapter 5</b>	About the ecological continent, prison for cats, and magic carpet.....	34
<b>Chapter 6</b>	About jogging in new sneakers, educated hero, and the namesake of Ms. Horpina.....	43
<b>Chapter 7</b>	About a happy piglet, the hour of the Ox, and Wormholes.....	53
<b>Chapter 8</b>	About a method of unlocking iPhones, shopping, and Karolin through the looking glass.....	58
<b>Chapter 9</b>	About the dog named Barry, suspicious neighbors and a date.....	63
<b>Chapter 10</b>	About Harpy's navigation and how to open combination locks.....	72
<b>Chapter 11</b>	About the wrong switch, course into the blue, and a rescue crane.....	80

<b>Chapter 12</b>	About the need of idiot-proofing, fata morgana, and a false message.....	89
<b>Chapter 13</b>	About the peculiarity of a leading foot and a boy from Black Duck.....	96
<b>Chapter 14</b>	About exotic languages and freedom-loving peoples.....	101
<b>Chapter 15</b>	About strange meowing and Ledvedik's fantastic reaction.....	105
<b>Chapter 16</b>	About cross-examination and noble manners.....	111
<b>Chapter 17</b>	About the causes of the ozone hole and the Congress of Parallel Worlds.....	115
<b>Chapter 18</b>	About smugglers from Diamond Dwarf and fishing with live bait.....	122
<b>Chapter 19</b>	About arachnophobia, the sudden disappearance of Vladi, and unforgettable walk across the bridge .....	130
<b>Chapter 20</b>	About the secrets of crocodile meat preparation and some disturbances in the continuous flow of time.....	138
<b>Chapter 21</b>	About fishing in the Tasman Sea, bouillabaisse without fish, and branched worlds.....	146
<b>Chapter 22</b>	About flying over the Great Barrier Reef and dangerous fauna of Cairns.....	156
<b>Chapter 23</b>	About an educational walk through the rainforest and how not to become a prey for crocodiles.....	163
<b>Chapter 24</b>	About a trip on the "Beautiful Marquise" and underwater travel across coral reefs.....	169



**Chapter 25**  
 About the return to Sydney and the odd behavior  
 of the moon.....177

**Chapter 26**  
 About dangerous botulism and pursuing  
 of Wormheads.....181

**Chapter 27**  
 About a thunderstorm and an erroneous course.....190

**Chapter 28**  
 About a mysterious island and an advance airfield.....200

**Chapter 29**  
 About the water search method and the event  
 Horizon.....207

**Chapter 30**  
 About the forgotten binoculars and antimatter  
 firecracker.....217

**Chapter 31**  
 About setting of a world record and a lady named  
 Gloria Mundi.....224

**Chapter 32**  
 About TV shows, the benefits of ambivalence and  
 Ledvedik's departure.....237

**Chapter 33**  
 Very short, about the last day in Sydney.....249

**Chapter 34**  
 The shortest, about the homecoming.....253