

MUSALENKO'S MAGICAL ADVENTURE



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Do you remember the last adventure of our hero Musalenko?
He wandered across seas and oceans, at least 21 mountains, dealt
with a sea whirlpool, with the bad deeds of Evilla and Baddy and
taught us all that the greatest wealth is FRIENDSHIP.
And now, snuggle with Mum, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, or if
you can read - grab this book bravely and embark on the next
adventure of Musalenko and his friends.





It was a colourful autumn. Musalenko woke up, brushed his teeth and looked at the sunrise, which, as we all know, always appears from the East. The sun was fiery, and the sky and clouds were overflowing with all hues and shades of pink-orange-yellow-purple. He had a delicious breakfast, and put some food in the bowl of his friend, Mur. Not that he had ever forgotten to feed him, but he had heard that sometimes kids forgot to take care of their pets. For example:

- a kitten curled up on the sofa;
- an adopted dog hiding under the table;
- a goldfish that does not always grant wishes;
- a fluffy beaver knitted by the kind neighbour;
- an ant on the window

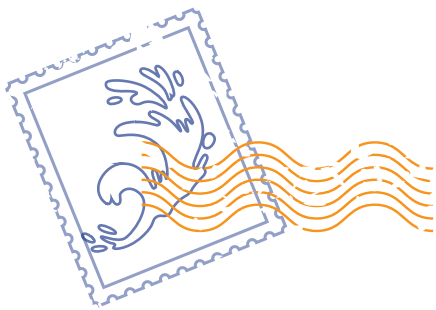
OR

- the biggest plush elephant with the biggest plush ears, stuffed under the bed!

Before taking off his pajamas and getting dressed, Musalenko looked out of the window again. He even set it slightly ajar and peeped out. It smelled of chill... and cinnamon buns. „Yoo-hoo! And what great puddles there are outside from the rain overnight.“ thought Musalenko. He reminded himself of the rule that there is no bad weather, but an inappropriately dressed Musalenko. He put on a fall hat, a warm jacket and his favorite yellow rubber boots with his even more favorite rubber overalls for the absolutely favorite puddles. He prepared his backpack, carefully arranging the following items in it: a water bottle, a thermos of not-too-warm tea, a box of carrots cut up like salt sticks, salt sticks proper, two







apples, a small purse with some money in it, a blue headlamp, a package of corn kernels for the ducks in the park, and a package of cat treats for Mur.

Maybe someone will think that this luggage is too much.

Musalenko's rule is to always have a well-prepared backpack when going out for a walk. Because one never knows how long a day might be, how hungry the tummy will get, and how many pleasant surprises may emerge.

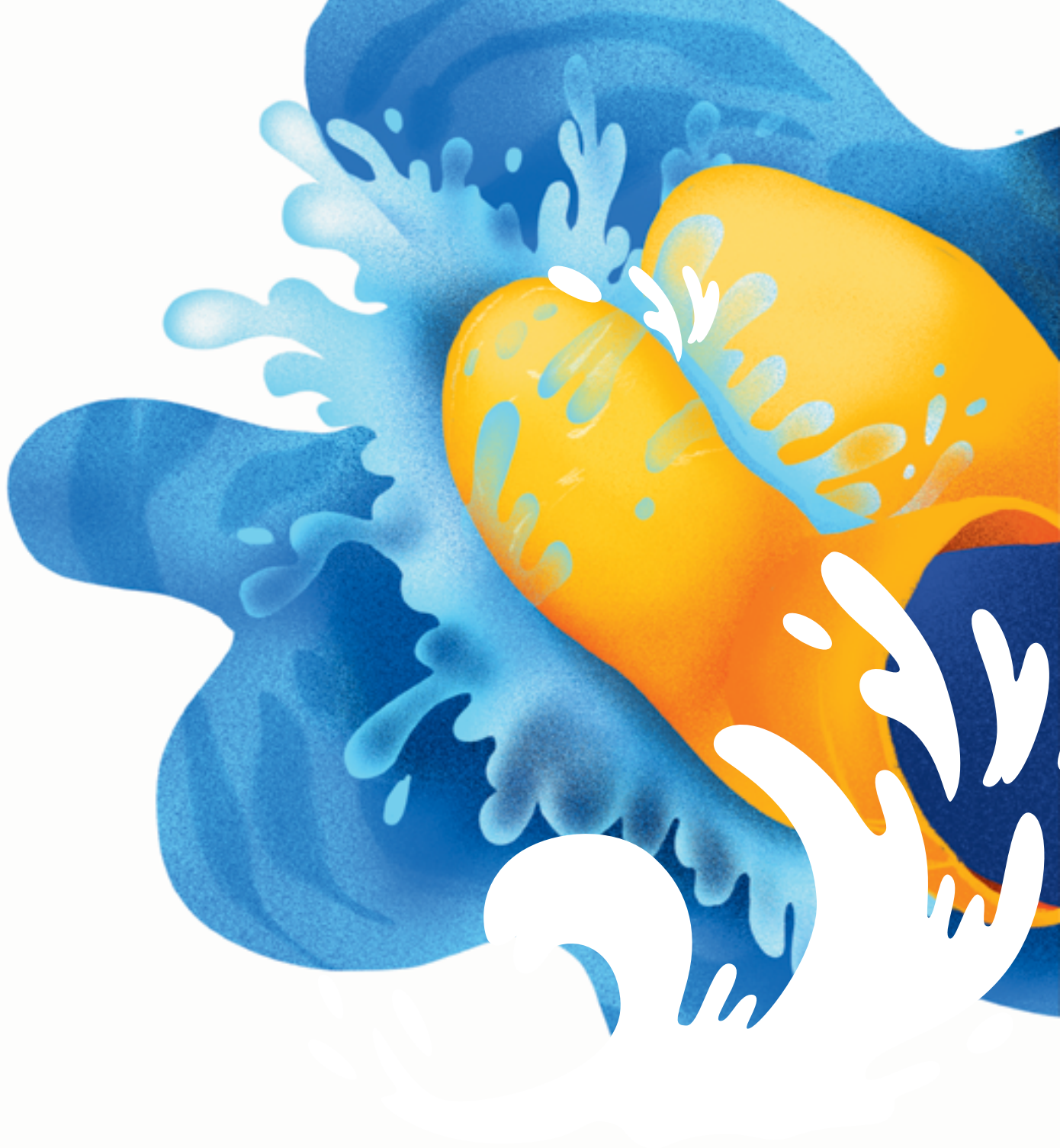
- "We're ready for a walking-adventure," Musalenko told Mur.

Musalenko locked the door, straightened the doormat and checked the mailbox. He was expecting a letter from a friend. There was no letter, but a whole parcel! He opened it to find a present inside - a snapshot camera. Musalenko smiled, put the gift in the backpack, and both he and Mur walked cheerfully out of the house.

„It is so interesting to walk without hurrying," Musalenko thought.

„That's when you come across the greatest number of treasures, even if passing along the same way every morning."

As he was walking, Musalenko crossed several ant trails, jumping over them with a lion's leap. Then he turned past a pile of stones and encountered a large yellow excavator repairing the road. Soon the familiar giant sequoia tree at the head of the park appeared before Musalenko's eyes. It was an old coniferous tree, as tall as a 5-storey residential building and almost 150 years old. It occurred to Musalenko to collect the cones scattered around it, which he could turn into toys for the Christmas tree with string and some paints. He headed for the majestic tree when a large puddle not only



appeared in his way, but shone in all its majestic glory. „Splash!“ With an Olympic rush, Musalenko nearly dove into it. The water in the puddle sprayed all around, everything glittered , and suddenly Musalenko and Mur found themselves in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by orange mountains of sand.



Musalenko sipped some water, breathing in and out deeply 10 times, counted to 24. He looked around and plucked up the courage to ask the passing camel caravan:

"Hey, excuse me, where are we, my friend Mur and I?"

"In the Sahara Desert." - replied the camel - leader of the caravan.

"This is the world's largest hot desert. It's the largest desert in the world, preceded only by the South Pole continent of Antarctica and the Arctic, which is the furthest north. But both have only ice."

"Strange... ", replied Musalenko. "Isn't a desert only called places with a lot of sand?"

"Some non-sandy places are also called deserts", said the camel with the braids. "Because it's deserted, there are hardly any plants, and there aren't many people around, nor any camels."

"And if you decide to spend more time in the Sahara, you have to wear clothes for both summer and winter. Although the weather is always the same during the year." Added another camel with pink glasses. "Here it rains once or twice at the most, a year, and temperatures range from -18°C to 56°C. By comparison, it's about 2°C in your fridge."

"And you're definitely out of place here with these rubber rain boots." Said the third camel with a white hat and patterned braces on his teeth. "Even given the fact that it is winter now. The temperature of the sand in the desert may reach 81°C. Best go over there, by the pyramids. There is a little marketplace where you can buy sandals."

Musalenko was looking with his eyes wide open, trying to



remember everything the kind camels told him. He thought for a moment and asked:

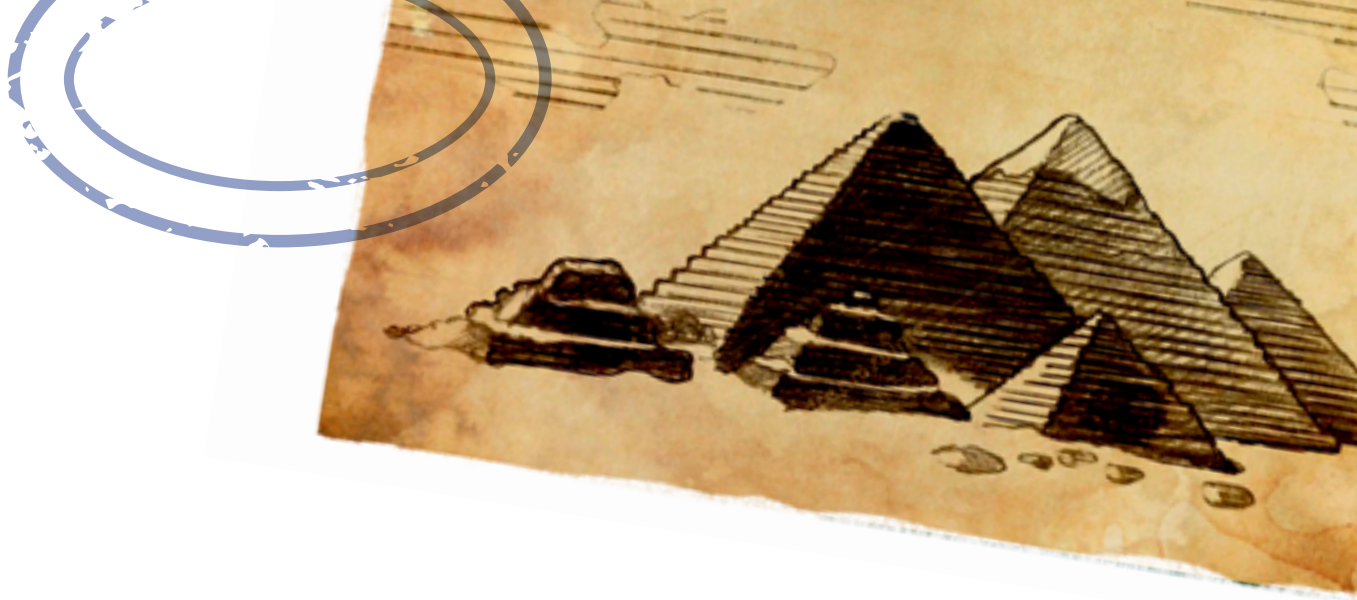
"Pyramids, sand – evidently I am in Egypt. Thanks for the useful information, dear camels. I think I understood everything... I just don't understand how I've ended up here, nor do I have any idea how to get back home. Can you help me?"

The first camel, leader of the caravan, gave him a small pyramid and replied:

"It is often good to be patient, Musalenko. You will find out everything as and when you need to. Which doesn't mean you shouldn't ask questions. We camels learn most things by asking. Put that pyramid in your backpack as a memento of our encounter and keep noticing the interesting signs along the way. They will show you the direction."

"And a photo from me as a souvenir!" exclaimed Musalenko, who remembered the camera in his backpack. Musalenko pulled it out quickly, snapping a picture of himself, Mur and the caravan of camels. The photo appeared immediately on special paper from the camera, and Musalenko handed it to the camel leader, writing his address on the back beforehand.

And slowly the caravan headed westward towards the setting sun. Musalenko sent the courteous camels off with a look, sipped from the water bottle and headed for the Egyptian pyramids. Along the way he saw snake tracks on the sand and was almost certain he spotted a scorpion as well. He also dreamed of seeing a real crocodile in the Nile River, which must be somewhere nearby.

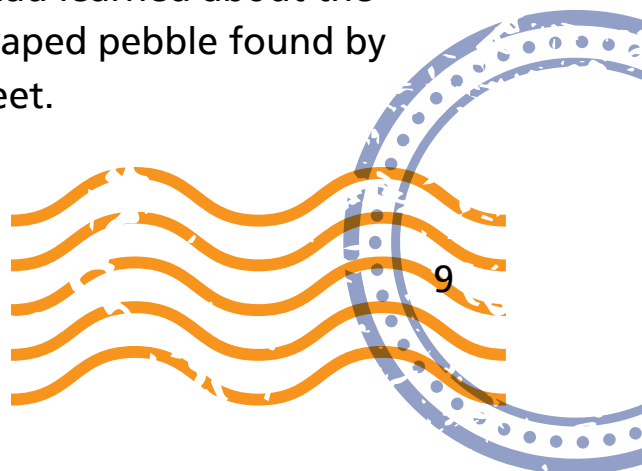


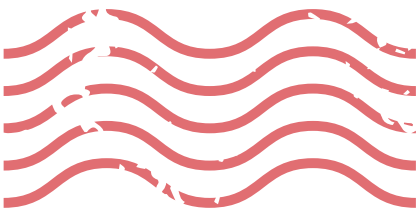
But that was for another trip, one that was at least a little more planned... Now it was important to figure out how to get back home.

After buying some sandals from the nearby marketplace by the pyramids not far away, Musalenko decided to enter a pyramid with Mur and look for any interesting signs, as the camel advised him. There were no road signs around, no mountain markings or illuminated signboards. Maybe he should look around for flags? Musalenko wasn't exactly sure what those signs should look like, but no one knows everything. And he reminded himself, „It is often good to be patient!“

Musalenko enters a pyramid for the first time. This wonder building looks very much like a triangle and is made of huge rectangular stones, there are no windows, and on the walls there are exquisite drawings of dancing people or... just people walking around, animals, birds, the sun, circles, dashes and here and there a very beautiful eye with enormous eyelashes.

“These are not ordinary drawings, but inscriptions in ancient Egyptian. They are called „Egyptian hieroglyphics“.” Musalenko told Mur as he recounted aloud what he had learned about the pyramids. “And this is a beautiful heart-shaped pebble found by chance.” Musalenko added staring at his feet.





He picked up the pebble and in an instant everything glittered and he and Mur found themselves on the coast of a large body of water. „What is that? - Musalenko thought. “An ocean, a sea, a lake, or perhaps a giant tear of a giant... or giantess?”

“Welcome to the spring-scented Macedonia!” shouted a rather jolly captain from a passing ship.

“Hello... umm... Mr. Captain!” said Musalenko uncertainly, but quickly pulled himself together. “But... how on earth, Macedonia?” He continued in a louder voice.

Mr. Captain didn’t hear him at all, and the ship passed and went on its way. Musalenko sat down on the shore to think. He realised that he was travelling to different countries, not by ticket, but by some magic. That was good on the one hand, because he didn’t have to spend any money, he was learning new things, and he hadn’t even dreamed of such an adventure. And was he not dreaming? He pinched his cheeks hard and nothing changed except for the pain he felt. He thought for a while and looked around for any signs. „On the other hand, I need to figure out how to get home, Mur. Let’s go!”

He and Mur strolled through the small, narrow streets of the nearby town, walked along the wooden piers over the water, and learned a lot about the town and the lake that was not a giant’s tear. The town’s name is Ohrid, and the big water body next to it



is the deepest lake on the Balkan Peninsula. It is called Lake Ohrid and its deepest point is 287 meters. Musalenko thought it was frightening. Do fish live at 287 meters? It must be very dark there? Do fish have any flashlights? And had any divers dived all the way



down to those 287 meters? Maybe they had, however... to measure such a deep bottom?

As all of these questions were rushing into his head, Musalenko grew hungry. He and Mur decided to find a suitable picnic spot on the shore. Or rather, to get slightly lost and allow a nice picnic spot to find them. They sat down on a beautiful beach, strewn with round rocks. They pulled out things to eat and stared at the boats in the lake. Suddenly a white swan with a royal crown swam up to them:

"Hello! I am I. May I have a salty stick? Or a cat treat - I've never tried cat food!" said the swan with the crown.

Musalenko had been attentive in biology class and immediately explained to the swan that he would get a swan bellyache from salty sticks, carrots, cat food, and from all sorts of unholy human and cat goodies. He also remembered that he had corn kernels in his backpack for the ducks in the park and poured some of them on a large leaf.

"What an interesting leaf," said I am I. "With its petiole it looks like an umbrella, but without it it looks like a pizza plate or a swan feeder."

The swan I am I prepared to take a bite when Musalenko impatiently asked him:

"I don't know how Mur and I got here, and I don't know how to get back home. Can you help us?"

"You must never talk to an eating man, swan, cat, or whoever and wherever."" said I-am-I.

Musalenko fell silent... „I must be patient!" They all ate with relish, contemplating the reflections in the surface of the lake, the

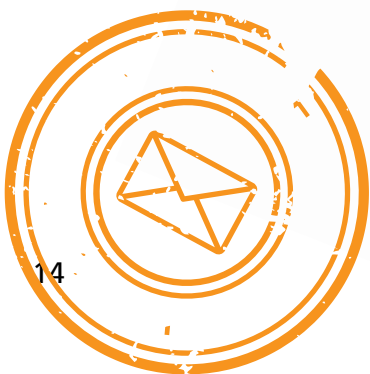
fragrant spring, the green hills all around, the beautiful church on the edge of a cliff.

„How come that church does not fall from over there?“ thought Musalenko, while munching on some carrots. “It looks ancient. Like the pyramids. And they are very, very, very ancient. And Lake Ohrid is even more ancient. Nobody built it, and maybe only the dinosaurs remember how it got so deep and filled with so much water. „

“Thanks for the advice and the delicious food. Here is a memento feather from me“, said the swan as soon as he had finished eating and plucked a feather from his right wing with his beak. “And don’t forget to ask around and look for signs. That’s how you’ll get home. And the signs are all around you and Mur!“ I am I turned around and flew away.

Musalenko took the white feather, as delicate as silk, and put it in the backpack next to the pyramid. He filled the bottle with water from a nearby fountain and poured some for the thirsty Mur. He made a small tower of pebbles on the shore and decided to rest under a centuries-old tree. He might have been dozing when a stick from the tree rustled, fell and startled him awake. When he picked it up, he saw that it was in the shape of the letter „Y“. Suddenly, everything glittered... and it became much warmer. Musalenko opened his eyes and looked around. In front of him there was the







bluest water in the world, bathing the yellowest sandy beaches surrounded by palm trees.

“Mur, I think I’ve only seen places like this in a picture in the big world map in the library next to the park”, Musalenko said. “I have no idea where we are, but my travel experience suggests we’ll soon find out.”

Musalenko and Mur headed down the road toward the interior part of the island and found a bike near the road with a sign saying: „Pick it up. Use and leave where you see the same sign.” Musalenko was overjoyed, grabbed the bike and put his backpack and Mur into the front basket. The road was flat and passed through groves of avocado trees, fields of sugar cane, and the oh-so-delicious guava fruit could be found at every cyclist’s step. „We left from God-knows-where and it is unknown when will we get somewhere?” Musalenko thought. They rode a while longer, stopped to pick a fruit and looked around - a town was visible nearby. They rode in that direction with the bike and saw another signpost saying „Welcome to Havana”.

“Cuba!!!!!!” Musalenko exclaimed excitedly. “Mur, we’ve ended up in such a country that has its entire territory on an island and where it is always summer. It’s surrounded by a sea and an ocean. If you look closely at any geographical map you will see that Cuba is shaped like a crocodile. There are over 250 beaches here for swimming, for building sandcastles, for watching sunrises and sunsets. Good thing it’s not a wild island and you have someone to talk to about things. And the capital of Cuba is this Havana where





we are now. I have read that it's full of colors."

Musalenko and Mur left the bike in a place designated for such purpose and started walking through the small streets of the town's old quarter. Bright colors surrounded them everywhere - in the painted buildings, in the well-kept old cars, in people's clothes, in the flower and fruit vendors. And so much beautiful music from every corner, circle, square and plaza. Our heroes walked around all day and sat down exhausted next to one of all the countless palm trees. Suddenly they heard a buzzing, one as thin as a bee's:

"Hey you, ginger kitten and little blue forelock man! Why aren't you dancing?" Asked them not just any hummingbird, but the smallest hummingbird in the world. "All can dance here. Even me, never mind that I'm a bird as big as your little finger."

"I can't dance... Actually, I can do some moves, but I can't do your Cuban dances," Musalenko replied, a little embarrassed.

"But I play baseball" replied the hummingbird and continued almost in one breath, "I can dance, my cousin makes the most delicious banana dish in all of Cuba, my sister is a doctor and my aunt is a music teacher and can play the double bass for 3 hours without stopping.

"And I can dream and enjoy traveling. My greatest dream is to become an astronaut", Musalenko added. "I often fly in my dreams. Once I was in a country full of fountains flowing raspberry syrup. There was also a real dragon!"

"Surely it is the planet of raspberries?" Said the smallest hummingbird in the world. "I imagine it tasted very good. And are there any orchids on this planet? They're my favorite and they're



very beautiful. I always wonder do they look like huge butterflies or do butterflies look like orchids. When they hear Cuban music even the orchids start dancing.”

“Maybe the music here is magical,” Musalenko continued, spinning around excitedly.

The smallest hummingbird in the world flew away and together with about 600 other smallest hummingbirds brought Musalenko an orchid.

“Here you are, little blue forelock man! “An orchid to remember Cuba by,” said the world’s smallest hummingbird.

As soon as Musalenko touched the petals of the flower, everything glittered...



... and our friends ended up in a completely different place. As far as their eyes, ears, noses and imagination could reach, there were mountain peaks, blue skies and some scattered fluffy white clouds. "Here you are, a sprig of mint and a handful of fresh blueberries for you. I picked them as I was coming up here." Said a wild goat wearing a helmet with a headlamp on his head. "You and the ginger cat may stay and we can watch the sunset together and drink mint tea with a little honey. I climb all day up and down and down and up. And this is where I love to say "hello" and "goodbye" to the sun the most. This peak is called Musala - the highest one in Bulgaria and on the Balkan Peninsula. I wear my headlamp to keep it lit if I'm late on the way home, and my helmet protects me from shooting stars. When I lie down here at night, I help the Earth - I prop up the sky and the stars with my horns so they won't weigh it down."

"Shooting stars are not stars! They are meteors that make wishes come true. They come from space and shine when they burn up in the Earth's atmosphere. And it's really very beautiful... ." a wallcreeper hidden nearby added. (author's note: very few people know that this is a grey bird with crimson red wings that lives in some high mountains).

Musalenko was sitting on the peak, sipping from his tea and, gazing at the stars, added:

"And yet, sometimes the most beautiful is visible to the eye!"

The less warm and rather colder mountain evening was filled with the scent of herbs and a pleasant chill. The wind blew the aroma of cinnamon buns from the nearby hut. Suddenly an entire shower of shooting stars appeared in the endless sky - twinkling and with

flashing glowing tails. Musalenko thanked the whole universe for this moment, for the adventure, for the interesting encounters and signs along the way. And he wished for many more adventures ... and yet, also to go home soon to check the mailbox. It is nice to receive letters from a friend and answer them.

"And is there a mailbox on Musala Peak?" Musalenko asked the wild goat. It handed him a sprig of mint, everything glittered, and Musalenko found himself standing in front of the great big puddle in the park. He was wearing his rubber boots, with the backpack on his back and Mur wandering around.

In his hand Musalenko saw that he held the fragrant mint, and as he opened his backpack he found a small pyramid, an orchid, and a white feather as delicate as silk. The camera had unknowingly photographed the camel leader from Egypt, the swan I am I from Macedonia, the world's smallest hummingbird from Cuba, and the wild goat with helmet and headlamp from Bulgaria. And on the back of each photo there was a full address, a smile and a verse:

In various parts of the WORLD
We are FRIENDS TOGETHER
In adventures, joys and troubles
SUPERPOWERS we gather
And we climb to the TOP.







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