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RADOSTINA NIKOLOVA

THE ADVENTURES OF THE MOTTs

HELLO, BRAND-NEW DAY



ILLUSTRATED BY MELINA-ELINA BONDOKOVA

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The Adventures of **the Motts**

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FOREWORD

“*T*he princess of the motts is much more delicate, soft, and graceful than the other motts. She sleeps soundly and wakes up only when each of her seven little court motts has stroked her and the king of the motts has given her a kiss. Yes, she’s that lovable.”

But more on her later.

I loved the stories about the motts, which my grandpa used to tell me before going to bed. We huddled together in the dark, and suddenly, he would begin his story. He knew all their habits and oddities. It was as if he had lived with those tiny creatures all his life, had petted them, put them to sleep, and slapped them when they misbehaved.

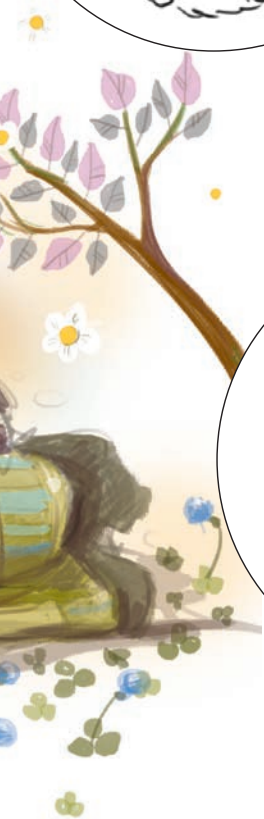
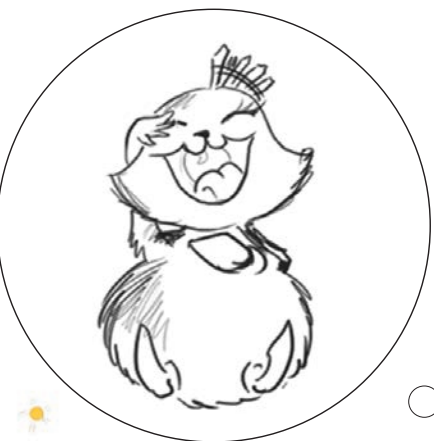
The first time he told me about them was when I was six.

“Motts? Come on, Grandpa. Where did that come from?” I grinned in disbelief.

“What do you mean, where from? The motts... well, those are some strange creatures...”

That’s the beginning of his story and the story of a funny mott—a story that turned into the great adventure of my childhood. The rest you’ll learn from my grandpa, or Dodie—that’s what Mux (the brave cuddly mott who lived at home) called him.





Chapter 1

THE MOTTS, THOSE STRANGE CREATURES

”*T*he motts? Well, those are some strange creatures...”

“Really! And what do they look like?” Bobo asked me, sensing that I was going to surprise him with something interesting. My little grandson was a very bright child. He would take everything in earnest and wait to hear my stories with big and curious eyes.

“Well, they live in every wardrobe, and they’re not very big. The female ones are soft and pretty—very delicate and lovable, too. Their fur is soft and a little bit long. And they have a really cute muzzle.

They have keen and expressive eyes. Frankly speaking, the male motts are a little bit clumsy, yet awfully brave. Instead of a left paw, they have a big claw. They're a true wonder of nature. Oh, I forgot to tell you that the females also have a claw, but theirs is a tiny and discreet one, just like the rest of their features. They are a bit showy, those female motts."

"And how do they live at home? Aren't they afraid of people?"

"Oh, they are afraid. They show themselves rarely and only to those whom they trust. Let's not forget about their claws. Once I accidentally stepped on one of them, and he tooted and pinched me lightly!"

"He, tooted! Really? Do Motts do that too! Why!"

"Because he got angry! When they get angry, motts toot. Well, not exactly, but it sounds like a bum burp. They also do that when they feel anxious. I'll show you sometime. You haven't seen them because they're hiding. They become invisible, and very few people have actually seen them. As I said, they have to trust you. But I'm sure that will happen, too."

"How big are they?"

"The biggest are around ten inches high. Their

claw gets bigger with age. The bigger it gets, the older they are. You'll love them once you get to know them!"

"But how can I get to know them if they're always hiding?"

"I'll tell you everything that I know and that I've gone through together with them. Then they might pluck up their courage to show themselves to you. If the male mott approves of you, he'll bring his female with him. They fall in love only once in a lifetime. They're happy creatures. The male seldom shows his companion to other creatures. I've seen a female mott only once. She was so pretty! They



also have a princess. Perhaps she's even prettier than most."

"The motts have a princess?"

"I've heard that the princess of the motts is much more delicate, soft, and graceful than the other motts. She sleeps soundly and wakes up only when each of her seven little court motts has stroked her and the king of the motts has given her a kiss. Yes, she's that lovable."

"Do the motts have their own names?"

"Of course! My friend—the one that lives in the wardrobe at home—is called Mux. I've known him since I was a child. He's very kind but rather stubborn. Sometimes he's playful; sometimes I won't see him for days. He's always mischievous and loves making trouble. He's a nice little fellow. A youngster. His blood boils."

"But you said you have known him since you were a child! How could he be a youngster?"

"The motts live for hundreds of years. Mux is just now entering his most wonderful years. He's now starting to find himself a wife. OK, that's enough for tonight! Off to sleep now."

"Good night, Grandpa! I can't wait to see Mux!"





Chapter 2

MUX WHO LIVED AT HOME

*M*ux had been living in my house for as long as I could remember. I didn't see him often because I felt uneasy most of the time. You know, motts can sense when someone feels anxious and show themselves only when they feel that people are in harmony with their inner selves. Maybe that's why fewer people see and know the motts today. They think that people have become more nervous and stressed out, which hampers their relationships with the motts—those strange, ancient creatures. Yes, ancient! There is historical evidence of their existence since thousands of years ago. When I told Bobo that, his eyes bugged out. "Really?"

"Yes, my dear boy," I told him. "If you ever go



to Egypt, look at the top of the Great Pyramid of Giza. There's a drawing of a mott—in his full splendor—right there next to the scarab beetle!”

Bobo is a smart child. He drinks in every word I say. But I was a bit nervous that day I sensed that there was something wrong with Mux. I could hear neither his toots nor the clacking of his claw as he cleaned it. Do you know that motts use their claws as kitchen utensils and then clean them very diligently after every meal? Mux wasn't a quiet mott, and I had gotten used to hearing the sound of his claw when he cleaned it. But today he was nowhere to be seen. Was it possible that he had felt my anxiety and hidden himself in the wardrobe?

“Dodie,” that's what Mux called me. “Princess Pagu is gathering the motts. She wants to talk to us. Immediately,” he added, popping up unexpectedly when I opened the wardrobe to take out a clean shirt.

“Good God! Mux, where have you been? I've been looking for you.”

“Oh, Dodie, I'm scared. The princess never calls us. I'm worried.”

He's worried? Dear me, motts are never worried; they're so smart and calm, always smiling and positive. It was the first time in my humble seventy-three years that I had heard a mott

was worried. And he was almost brown today. He's usually colored in brighter hues. Perhaps I forgot to mention that motts change their colors according to the moods of the people whose house they inhabit. They usually assume the colors of the clothes that hang in the wardrobe. If the clothes are multicolored, this means that the people who wear them are happy, and the motts color themselves in different hues. If the owners of the place are downcast and wear dark colors, the motts' fur is also a bit duller, and they hardly show themselves to the people living in the house.

"Mux, I'm sure there's nothing to worry about. Please, it makes me sad seeing you so brown! By the way, I've started to prepare Bobo for telling him about your existence. Do you think you could reveal yourself to him soon?"

"It's too early, Dodie. He's not ready. Don't push me!" He let out a discreet toot, turning his back to me. Motts are very amiable, but it's very hard to make them relax in front of people. And it was obvious that something was really troubling him. "Dodie, please, don't push me," he repeated. "What matters now is what the princess has to say."

And then he left. Just like that, without even saying good-bye. Oh, these motts, these strange creatures!

Chapter 3

WHAT TROUBLED PRINCESS PAGU

*M*ux hurried along toward the palace. He was both very excited and anxious. He was worried why the princess would summon them. This hadn't happened since the reign of King Mott who had retired many years ago. Then Mux was still a young, thirty-four-year-old mott. He had gone with his father (they still lived together at the time) and remembered what a great impression the palace had made on him—a magnificent wardrobe; a true closet, actually—a room with countless shelves in the house of one of the richest families in the area.

It was as if he had come to Mottodise (the paradise of motts).

The palace was still there, and the house was inhabited by the offspring of the owners I just mentioned. But Mux didn't worry about them. He would become invisible and enter through the cat flap as Princess Pagu had instructed them in the official notice she had sent them.



What's more, Mux was overwhelmed with excitement because he was going to see Pagu face-to-face. It had been ages since they first met. She was small and fluffy like a plush toy and he was just a kid. They ran around the palace, around the spacious chamber closet, playing and having fun

with each other. They had even slipped away from the sentry's watch and gone into the house's living room. He remembered they had participated in some mischief regarding the two children. And they laughed their heads off while they watched them looking for their toys. Pagu probably didn't remember the past. He had no idea why he remembered it. So much had happened since then. The old king had abdicated the throne, and Pagu now reigned over Mottland (the country of the motts). She had enough trouble on her hands to remember playing some children's games with one of her subjects.

Mux was at the cat flap before he knew it. He sneaked into the house carefully and rushed up the stairs quietly—well, his claw tapped lightly along the steps, but no one was going to hear it. The owners of the house were at work, and their children were at school. He heard the clamor coming from the wardrobe from afar. He felt uneasy and tooted barely audible. “Pull yourself together, Mux!” he said to himself.

He puffed himself up, smoothed his fur, and gently pushed open the door with his claw. Everyone hushed. Mux's best friend, Goula, shouted out, “Come on in, Muxie. We've been waiting for you!”

Mux looked around anxiously. Everything was as it had been in the old days. Pagu had barely changed or rearranged anything. Where was she? Was she late or just patiently watching her subjects gather in the theater hall from behind a corner? Goula pushed Mux forward. They were a bit late, and all the seats had already been taken. The theater hall held the important meetings, which every mott had to attend—it was the only place that was spacious enough to seat all 17,852 motts in their kingdom. (Of course, there are plenty of other mott kingdoms around the world, but we are interested solely in this one.) The gong was sounded, and the entire hall fell silent. Mux’s heart began to beat madly. He fixed his eyes on the ground.

A soft voice interrupted the crowd. “My dear motts! I welcome you all!” Princess Pagu stood before the crowd.

Mux lifted his eyes and froze. God, she was so heavenly beautiful! She had sparkling, soft, white-and-pink fur; a claw colored in coral; and eyelashes that arched an endless rainbow whenever she blinked her eyes. Pagu didn’t notice him while he stopped taking heed of what she was saying. He was mesmerized by her beauty. And, to tell you the truth, it was as if Mux really fell in love right at

that moment. The poor thing!

“So that is why I wanted to see you,” Pagu finished.

“What? I didn’t hear anything,” Mux whispered to Goula. “What did she say?”

“Shh! She’s worried! People have become too gloomy and depressed, and this affects the motts badly. Listen carefully, Mux!” Goula reproached his friend.

“This is a tendency that has revealed itself over the last couple of years, my dear friends,” Pagu continued. “It seems that people no longer enjoy their days and the little things in life. They have become too preoccupied with the problems of everyday life. They withdraw into their shells. And we can’t show ourselves to them. We have to think of a way to encourage them to shake it out, to change, to forget about their problems—at least for a moment—and see how beautiful life actually is. Life’s so short for people—they have to enjoy it so that we are calm and happy as well and continue to live in peace and friendship. I ask you to be more kind and good to them, to look after them and help them whenever they need a piece of advice or a hug.”

Pagu suddenly fell silent. Mux saw that she was staring right at him. Yes, she was looking at



him! Had she recognized him? Oh dear, did she remember him? He started shifting his little paws. Motts did that whenever they felt uneasy. He hadn't felt so restless since the time he was thirty-six and stole a piece of yellow cheese from Dodie's fridge. Dodie caught him instantly, and although he didn't scold him, Mux knew he had made mischief. But he was still little back then. And now—why did he feel so uneasy now? Pagu stood frozen to the spot. She wasn't shifting her paws, but her tiny muzzle trembled almost imperceptibly while her graceful eyelashes remained completely still.

She braced herself and resumed her speech. "I see a lot of gray motts today, and I don't like it. I will conduct private meetings with each one of you in the following month so that you can tell me about what's going on around you. We can decide if we'll have to change the home and family with whom you live. If you need any assistance, I'll be at your service. I want us to be united and act together as always. I believe that you think the same."

A loud roar of applause broke out. All motts loved the princess. They even worshipped her. There was only one mott that stood in the front row as if petrified. Private meeting. The words echoed in his head over and over again, and his heart raced wildly. That mott was Mux.

Chapter 4

MUX TRIES TO FIND A SOLUTION

On his way back from the palace, Mux felt as if he were walking on air. It had been a long time since he felt so excited. Did Pagu remember him? What did she think about him? Why had she ceased talking so suddenly? And what plan could he prepare to make people happy? Poor Mux—he had been through a lot lately. He sat on a bench, dangled his tiny feet, fixed his eyes on his claw, and began to play nervously with the fur on his belly. Now and then, he would sigh heavily. If someone could have seen him now, that person would have said he was in love. Good thing he

was invisible. He was thinking about going home to his wardrobe, cuddling in his favorite mohair sweater, and watching Casablanca. Every single mott totally loved that movie, for the classic love story, maybe, who knows. They owned some of the oldest copies, which they played on small portable players. I don't even know where they got those from. I just know that they had them and loved watching that movie. A lot!

"No!" Mux started suddenly, then shook his head and tried to overcome his melancholy mood.



He stood up on the bench, puffed out his chest, cleared his throat, and solemnly said to himself, “I’ll think of a way to save people!” Elated with this thought and having made up his mind to talk to Dodie, he ran straight home. The idea of meeting Bobo crossed his mind, but then he thought that he would need a little more time before he asked for his help.

He flounced into the apartment, slipped into the wardrobe quietly, and then started whispering: “Dodie, Dodie, Dodie!”



Chapter 5

MUX AND DODIE MAKE A PACT

I was just telling Bobo one of my mott stories. I was recalling how Mux had made me angry once when he was little and still lived with his parents. Motts become independent when they turn forty-five or reach their motthood (the adulthood so to say). After that, their parents leave them on their own to find themselves a wife or husband and to start a family. What a wanton life did Mux live after he reached his motthood! All the time, he threw parties in his wardrobe—motts came and went, and the clattering of claws and squeaking cackles resounded all over. I was really

worried about Mux back then. I thought he would go astray, but thank God, he had his fill of living the playmott life after a year and calmed down.

Huh, I got carried away once again. So, I was telling Bobo about how Mux once stole my glasses. A playful mott he was back then, and a very mischievous one, too. I shouted, I searched for them all over the place, and I was angry. In the end, I had no other choice but to talk to his father.

“So what did he do?” Bobo asked, eager to hear the end of the story.

“Mux’s father was strict but just. What he told me was, ‘Don’t worry, Dodie, you’ll have them back right away. I apologize.’ Then he turned around and went into the wardrobe. I didn’t hear anything, but I guess Mux must have had a good talking-to because when he came out after a while, he kept his head bent and had tears in his eyes, and he handed me the glasses guiltily.”

“And what did you do, Grandpa?”

“I smiled, thanked him, and patted him tenderly on his little head. He lifted his eyes, looked at me rather devilishly, and quickly slipped back into the wardrobe. It was then that I knew we would become friends.”

“Dodie, Dodie, Dodie...” Mux’s voice rang quietly.



“Bobo, we’ll continue later. Now go to sleep. Children have to rest in the afternoon so that they grow up twice as fast.”

Bobo couldn’t hear that Mux was calling me. Motts were absolutely invisible and inaudible to those who didn’t know them.

I snuck up to the wardrobe and slightly opened the door, then signaled to Mux to go to my room so that we may speak at leisure.

“Sweet dreams, Bobo!” I told my grandson and kissed him on the brow, but he was already far away in dreamland.

Mux was already waiting for me in the next room, breathing heavily and visibly excited. “Dodie, you’ve got to help me! With a plan! The princess thinks that people are miserable, and I have to think of a way to make them happy. Why are they miserable, Dodie? What’s wrong with them? This affects us, Dodie. It concerns us as well. We’re turning gray. We might even disappear forever from your world. Pagu will organize meetings. Oh, Dodie, if only you could see her. She was so beautiful. She’ll organize meetings—private ones—with each of us. Dodie, you’ve got to help me!”

Poor thing! How worried he was! He spoke quickly and haltingly. I could hardly make out what he was saying.

“Mux, I’ll explain what’s going on with the people,” I said. “They are not miserable. They’re too busy and buried in technology. With all those mobile devices and technologies surrounding them, they have stopped paying attention to the beautiful nature and the miracles of the outside world. It is as if they have sunk into a world of their own, refusing to wake up and look around. Everyone is affected by the digital revolution. It’s sad, but it’s true. They go to work and then come back home tired, seeking refuge in front of the TV





set, the computer, the phone, or on all those tablets and whatnot. Children are the only ones who haven't been corrupted by this wicked, everyday life. It's not that people are miserable, Mux. They just don't know how to be happy any other way. They've just grown out of it. Perhaps that's why they won't have the chance to meet you, love you, and accept you."

Mux stood with his eyes fixed on the ground and a tiny teardrop slowly rolling down his muzzle.

"Oh, come now, little fellow! Please, don't cry!" I tried to comfort him. Goodness, motts were so sensitive. How could I forget that? "Muxie, don't worry. We'll figure it out. We'll find a way to fix things. OK?"

"We have to, Dodie!" Mux looked up at me. "I didn't know it was so serious. How will we clean up this mess now? Do you think it's already too late?"

"I'll think about it, Mux. Don't worry."

Chapter 6

DODIE SEEKS BOBO'S ADVICE

*M*y head still felt dizzy when Bobo got up in the afternoon. I had been contemplating how to help Mux for two hours, and I was completely out of ideas. Was the cause really lost? Were the motts doomed to extinction?

“What’s wrong, Grandpa?” Bobo came to me, rubbing his eyes, and sat down on my lap.

“It’s nothing, my boy. Did you sleep well?”

“Yes, I dreamt about the motts! Grandpa, I really can’t wait to see Mux already. Did you talk to him? Does he want to show himself to me?”

“Yes, Bobo, I did. Soon. Be patient. Tell me something, Bobo. Do you think that people are too wrapped up in their thoughts and obsessed with technology?”

“I don’t know, Grandpa. They work, watch TV, talk on the phone. Isn’t this what all grown-ups do? Like Mom and Dad?”

“Well, yes, but it wasn’t like that before, Bobo,” I said. “People used to enjoy life more. They weren’t so apathetic and obsessed with technology. It’s as if they don’t see the sun anymore. Mux is worried that this affects the motts. Their princess summoned them yesterday. She told them that if the situation didn’t change, they would die out and become extinct. She asked them to think of



a plan how to prevent this from happening. I've been racking my brains for two hours now, but I can't think of anything. You're a smart boy, Bobo. I'm sure that every mott will be very grateful to you if you can help them."

"Hooray! Thank you, Grandpa! I now have a mission! I'll figure out a way to help them. I promise, Grandpa! I just can't wait to meet Mux. I have to think of something as soon as possible."

I smiled and patted his head. Bobo was already absorbed in thought, devising his plan. He ran to his room, locked himself inside, and asked me not to disturb him for at least an hour. He thought he would come up with something in that time. He's quite a character, my grandson—a very bright child. He might think of something. Why wouldn't he?

Chapter 7

BOBO'S PLAN

It was even less than an hour when Bobo broke cover and, overwhelmed with excitement, came rushing to me in the kitchen.

“I’ve got it, Grandpa! I’ve got it!” He was all flushed and filled with enthusiasm by the idea that had come into his mind.

I stroked his head gently and sat on the chair behind me. Bobo needed me more than the noodle soup I was cooking at that moment.

“Would you share it with me, my boy?”

“No, Grandpa, I want to talk to you when Mux is here as well. I’m sure he’ll approve of the idea.

Please, tell him that I have figured it out! You have to explain to him! He'll trust me. He has to trust me!"

"I'll see what I can do, my boy. I'll try, but keep in mind that he's a bit stubborn. Who knows how he will react."

"Grandpa, there's no time! It's February already. April is the most suitable time to launch my plan. It looks as though nature wakes up, and everything is so beautiful! Now is the time. We should not waste time. Do you hear me?"

I was not the only one who was listening to Bobo's words. I saw that the kitchen door was slightly open and a curious but slightly scared little muzzle was peeping in.



Chapter 8

TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION

It was already the third week that Pagu had been conducting the arranged private meetings with the motts. But still, no one had found a solution. Pagu hardly smiled. She was usually kind and attentive, and now even her snow-white fur had started to turn gray. That was what Goula, who had seen Pagu the previous day, told Mux.

Goula and Mux had known each other since they were children. Goula was his best friend. He could share with him his sorrow, worry, and joy. Although Goula didn't look like the ordinary



“good guy” and liked to pretend that he didn’t care about anything, he had a good heart, like all the other motts, and was always ready to help. There had never been a mott that didn’t represent kindness and peace in the whole history of motts. We people could learn a lot from them—but first we had to make sure we didn’t lose them.

“What can I tell you, Muxie? The princess looks very sad. It breaks my heart, you know. I could barely hold back my tears!” Goula explained when he came to visit him in the wardrobe in Dodie’s room.

By the way, nothing ever did touch Goula’s heart. He didn’t even cry when he watched Casablanca! Can you imagine? Ten sobbing motts, cuddled next to each other, clutching their small claws and swallowing hard to Goula’s snoring, who had fallen asleep because he felt bored—a strange fellow he was! He was quite a character.

“And what else did she say?” Mux asked in a worried voice. “What else did the princess say? Has she moved some of the motts to new homes?”

“Yes, she’s moved Pinky’s family into another neighborhood—in the home of a young family with a baby and a boy of six. Pagu thinks that we should turn our attention to the children. Children aren’t so sad. There’s still a chance.”

“Yes, that’s true—children are the key to solving the problem,” Mux muttered under his breath and headed out.

“Mux, hey! How could you leave me? I’m your guest, you ill-mannered mott!” Goula shook his head angrily and fixed his eyes on a shirt featuring a floral print. Floral print? Man, that Dodie had some strange clothes in his wardrobe!

Chapter 9

BOBO MEETS MUX

I was chopping the carrots for the soup when Mux burst into the room with a bang and a toot. I jumped at his sudden presence. He rarely allowed himself to walk so freely around the house. He was timid and wary, fearing that someone might see him. I looked at him over the top of my glasses and sat down, setting the cooking aside. Judging by the way he came, I assumed he had something important to share.

“I’m listening, my little friend. What is it now?”

“I think you’re right, Dodie! I think it’s time I met Bobo and talked to him,” Mux said.

“Well, well, well,” I responded with unfeigned

surprise. “Have you really decided to take the plunge?”

“He said he had a solution to our problem and, um, that he would talk only with me. I have to see him before Pagu visits me. You know, she’s still very worried. It breaks my heart seeing her like that.”

“Mux, are you and she...” I winked him conspiratorially.

“Oh, come on, Dodie, this is nonsense. She doesn’t even remember me. We were kids then. Now we have more important things to decide. Really, when am I going to see Bobo?”

Oh, how well I knew that fluffy creature! It was more than clear to me that he had feelings for the princess, but of course, he wouldn’t admit it. I would really like to see that princess but she would never show herself to me even though she was going to visit my home.

“Hello? Will you answer me, old man?” Mux barked at me irritably.

“Old man? I’ll tell you who’s an old man! You’re almost my age, you mott! It doesn’t matter that you’re still a teenager by your standards! Don’t you dare insult me,” I said and acted as if I was going to slap him on the butt. “Bobo will be here any minute. He called me just a moment ago to tell

me that he had finished classes for today.”

Right at that moment, the front door opened, and we heard Bobo’s shout announce his arrival. Mux didn’t run away as he usually did but hid under the table.

Bobo entered the room, throwing his bag on a chair. “Grandpa, I had a tough day at school. I hope you’ve made me a tasty lunch.”

“Go wash your hands first, and we’ll see what tasty thing I’ve prepared you,” I said, winking at Mux.

Bobo went to the sink. While he had his back to me, chattering something about his math teacher and how he was the only one whom she called to the whiteboard, Mux slowly crawled from beneath the table, climbed on the cupboard, stood right next to the soup bowls, and began to wait anxiously. To tell you the truth, I watched what was happening with great interest.

“So she gave me a C once again! I can’t stand her anymore, Grandpa!” He reached for the towel, grumbling, and while he was drying his hands, he turned back to the table and, of course...

“Mux!” Bobo screamed and tossed the towel in the air. “Mux! Mux! Tee-hee! Muxie, finally!” He shrieked with excitement. “Muxie. I’m so happy that you finally found the courage. Tee-hee!” Bobo



kept squealing with joy. He was about to start kissing him, actually.

Mux stood completely dumbfounded. I bet this was the last thing he had expected. Perhaps he thought that they would get to know each other slowly, examining one another from head to toe before they said a word, but Bobo definitely managed to surprise him with his reaction. Frankly speaking, he surprised me as well.

“Hello!” Mux said after some time. “I’m Mux. You surprised me a little. I thought I was going to scare you,” he said almost imperceptibly, with his nose pointing at the ground. He shifted from one foot to the other, as he usually did. By the way, he could hardly refrain from letting out a toot. He didn’t want to give away his embarrassment.

“Aw, gee, Mux. I’ve been waiting for ages to see you. We have so much to talk about! I have a lot to tell you. So, how’s the princess?” he said playfully, winking at me.

The question immediately put an end to his embarrassment, and he hastened to defend his and Pagu’s honor. “Are you and your grandpa related? What’s wrong with you two? What’s with all that princess talk?”

“Go now, eat your lunch. We have work to do!” Mux commanded and disappeared, leaving me

and Bobo, who was watching at me with his eyes bugged out, still in high spirits.

“Come on, Grandpa! Didn’t you hear him? I have to eat because we have work to do! Let’s eat, quickly!”

Then he came up to me excitedly and hugged me. Even I felt a bit stupefied by that flood of emotions! But one thing was for certain: both Bobo and I were happy!

Chapter 10

PLAN “A BRAND-NEW DAY”

“*H*ear my plan,” Bobo told Mux, who was sitting on Bobo’s bed, comfortably snuggling into his pajama tops.

Hardly had five minutes passed before the two of them were together in one room, talking, joking, and arguing as if they were best friends. Obviously, there was some inexplicable bond between children and motts.

“Grandpa, come and sit down with us!” Bobo called. “I can tell Grandpa our plan, can’t I, Mux?”

“Of course. He’s Dodie,” Mux said and patted

the bed with his claw, inviting me to sit next to him.

“Is everyone ready? Can we start?” Bobo asked and stood up like a chairperson of a meeting.

Mux and I pricked our ears. “I’ve called the plan ‘A Brand-New Day’ because that’s exactly what we’re going to give people—a day, a morning, when they’ll be able to see how much everything around them has changed while they have been wasting their time with technology. It has to be morning, because it is in the morning that the new day is born and is most beautiful.”

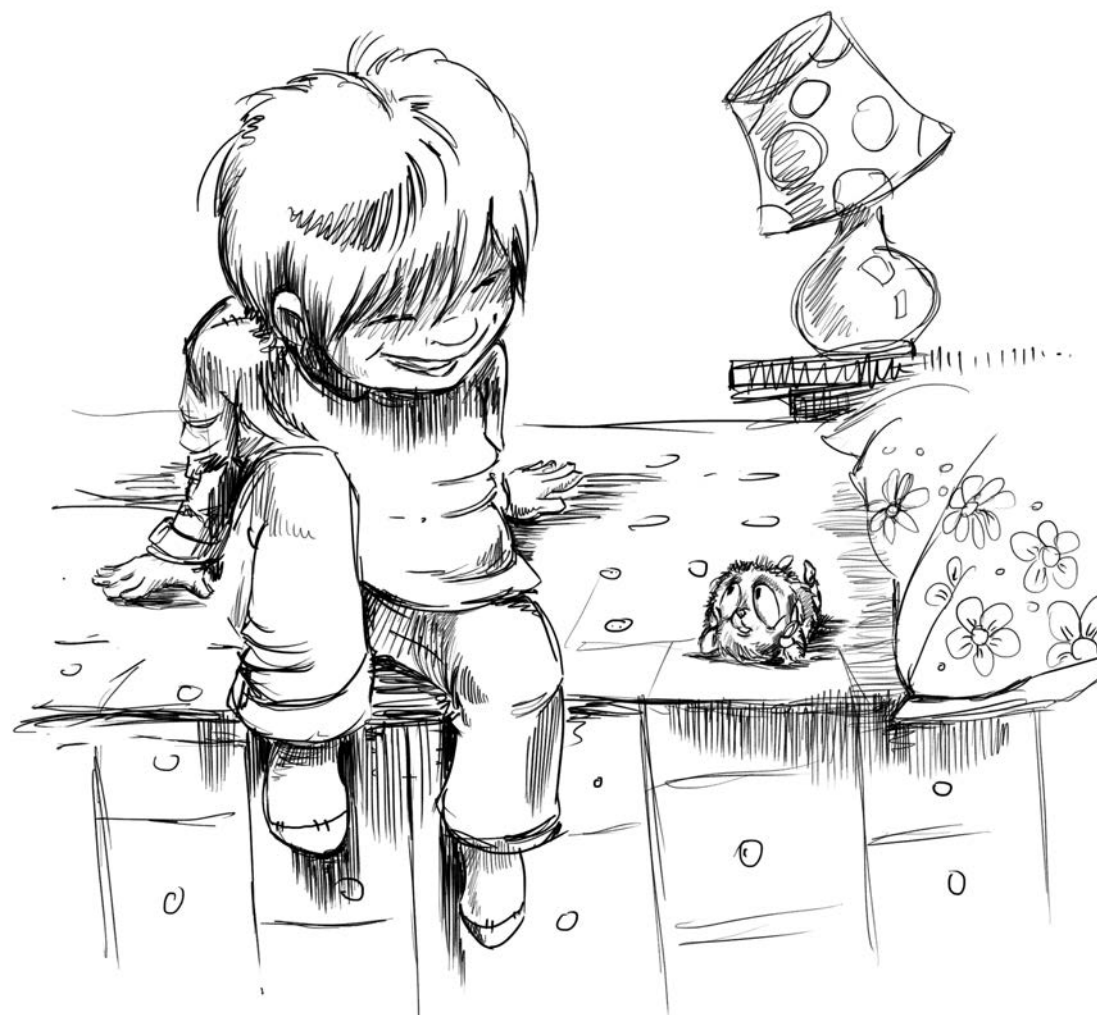
It seemed that Bobo was really excited by the plan and didn’t want to lose the connection with the motts now when he had finally met one of them.

“My idea is that all the motts that live in homes where there are children should meet them. It won’t work without the children. Mux, you have to talk to Pagu. She has to move everyone to a family with children. Every mott should have a child by his or her side if we want our plan to succeed. During the night, when everyone’s asleep, the motts have to get together and do only one thing!”

“And what’s that?” Mux shouted.

“You have to,” Bobo stressed the words slowly in what was almost a whisper. “Sneak in every

house on the same day, remain invisible until the morning when the parents start to get ready to go to work, and then cut the cables of all devices, hide every wireless gadget, and disappear as if nothing happened!”



“And how are we going to do this?”

“Ha, that’s the easy part! You have sharp claws, haven’t you? Just a make snip, and you’re done! When morning comes, it’ll be the children’s turn. They’ll have to keep close to their parents and make them go outside and show them how the brand-new day is born. So, what do you think?”

Both Mux and I stood silent as if hypnotized—it was such a simple and easy plan, yet no one had ever thought of it. Still—was it going to work?

“It won’t hurt to try,” Mux said. “I’ll tell it to the princess when she comes. Tell me, Bobo, what’s the date you have chosen?”

“April twenty-fourth. We have less than a month. It’s in the beginning of spring when nature awakens for a new life, when everything is in bloom and is so beautiful and fragrant. It would be a shame if people miss out on seeing such a beautiful view, wouldn’t it? What’s more, miss it because they have their eyes fixed on all those screens and whatnot!”

“But how will we reach the high floors?” Mux asked.

Bobo thought for a while. “With balloons! You’re so light that it won’t be any problem!”

“I agree, Bobo!” Mux rose to his feet. “My greatest regard and gratitude for your help. I appoint you children’s unit director of the operation ‘A Brand-

New Day.’ I, of course,” he said, coughing, “will take charge of the motts’ organizational work. Now I’ll go and think about the plan’s details, and we’ll talk again tomorrow.”

“And you, little director, off to your bed,” I ordered Bobo with a smile.

He would certainly have a good night’s sleep after such a flood of emotions!

Chapter 11

THE BIG DAY

*M*ux wasn't himself since the start of the day; maybe he hadn't had a snack for hours. He was pacing the room, entering the wardrobe and snuggling in his favorite mohair sweater, and then coming out again and pacing the room again. He was colored in bright purple. He had been rubbing himself against the sweater for so long that he had become purple from head to toe. You remember that I mentioned how motts assume the color of the clothes that hang in the wardrobe, right? But I forgot to mention that their emotions also influence their color. I had a hunch that Mux was about to turn crimson in only a few seconds. After

all, the princess was visiting our home later to talk about Bobo's plan. Poor Muxie; he was so nervous.

I closed the room's door and heard light steps behind my back, and I thought something had run past my feet. Of course, I didn't see anything. I didn't even hope that the princess would march around my house, putting on airs. She was invisible, and although I couldn't see her, I definitely heard her ginger tapping on the floor in the corridor before she slipped into the room with Mux's wardrobe. My heart skipped a beat. What was going to happen there?



Chapter 12

FACE-TO-FACE

“*G*ood day, Mux! You may rise!” the princess told Mux, who was kneeling down to pay honor to their monarch.

“Good day to you, too, Princess Pagu!”

Mux rose slowly before the beautiful creature and blushed when their eyes met.

“Please sit down!” he said and patted a pile of soft, knitted shirts that he had arranged especially for Pagu.

She settled herself comfortably. She was alone, much to Mux’s surprise. He had expected a whole army of sentries guarding outside the wardrobe. He took a deep breath. The princess fluttered her eyelashes in front of him, emanating greatness.

“Mux, I’ve been told you urgently wanted to speak with me.”

“Yes, princess. We don’t have much time. I think that you’ll be interested to hear what I have to say.”

“I’m listening, Mux.” The princess spoke in a polite and tender voice, like a mother to her children. But Mux sensed that her voice lacked emotion. It was as if she was sad and didn’t expect to hear something that would shock her or offer a solution to the problem.

But Mux had prepared himself and decided to pour all his optimism into the tone of his voice. He had rehearsed the way he would reveal the whole plan step-by-step. He began to speak with pathos and energy, which at first startled the princess but then absorbed her attention. She started to settle into the knitted pile more and more comfortably.

When Mux ended his speech, the princess rose to her feet and broke into applause. Such an outburst of emotion was unacceptable to most princesses, but Pagu couldn’t contain her excitement. It was a great plan. It was made for them. Her genuine joy instantly infected Mux, who puffed out his chest and cheered.

When the emotional moment ended and Pagu finally calmed down, she looked Mux right in the



eye and said, “Mux, from now on, I rely on you completely! You have my support, and I’ll provide you with everything you need. Act on your plan, and keep me informed.”

“And,” she glanced at him for a second, after which she began to fade away slowly. “I wanted you to know that I remember very well our children’s games at my father’s yard...” She grew dimmer and disappeared.

Mux, who was standing upright all this time, now instantly dropped down on the pile of clothes. A tear of pure happiness fell on his nose, and choked with what was a mixture between laughter and tears, he bristled up like a little ball of fur.

He couldn’t control this feeling. And he certainly didn’t know that the princess felt very strange as well on her way toward the palace.

Chapter 13

THE PLAN WORKS

*N*ow that Pagu had given the green light to the plan “A Brand-New Day,” there was no time to waste. All the children and all the motts had to get started if they didn’t want to miss the date.

Bobo was gathering groups of children at my place. He didn’t dare invite them to his mom and dad’s in case they suspected him of mischief. Who would have believed him even if he told them the truth? He really took his leadership position to heart and was giving orders like a true commander.

The children who were going to help him went through detailed instructions. Bobo was preparing the children, and then their home mott showed

himself shyly to prove the plan's authenticity. It was when he had made sure he could trust them that he began assigning tasks and responsibilities.

The plan for the children was very simple. First, they had to blow up the balloons for the motts the previous day. Second, they had to hide them in their wardrobes so that the motts could use them in the morning. Finally, they had to keep close to their parents on the morning of April 24. When the motts had snipped the cables, the children had to take their moms and dads by the hands immediately and let them outside to enjoy the beautiful morning so that they realized that there were more important things than their hectic rhythm of life—things such as family, home, harmony, and nature. And, of course, some little motts that were eager to give love and be loved.

All sounded great and easy to do, but Bobo had no idea that a boy from his class—that Tommy, who was always picking fights and poking fun at the good children—was about to ruin everything!



Chapter 14

SOMETHING GOES WRONG

*M*ux was assembling all the motts in Mottland. During the whole day, I could hear thousands of tiny steps pacing the house but couldn't see them. Mux told me that motts of all kinds were coming—big, small, children, female, male, fat, thin—there were no restrictions on size, age, or gender. Whoever wanted to help was welcome to come. After all, there were enough cables for everyone! Besides, motts had only one claw, and everyone had to act quickly if they wanted the plan to succeed—there were many homes to visit.

Mux even organized classes, at which he showed the tactic of snipping a cable quickly enough, and they also practiced how to fly a balloon. In the end, each of the motts had become so skilled that they could barely wait for operation “A Brand-New Day” to start.

People didn’t suspect anything. But there was hardly anything that could impress them anyway, unless it had to do with technological innovations. Perhaps this plan could make them wake from their mechanized trance, at least a little.

“Mux, I can’t stand it anymore!” Bobo stormed into Mux’s wardrobe one day, drowned in tears. He was crying uncontrollably, and I went to see what was going on with my boy right away.

“What’s wrong, Bobo?” Mux and I asked worriedly.

Bobo began sobbing. “Dodie, Muxie, Tommy will ruin everything! Everything! Why is he like that? Why?” He couldn’t stop crying and was barely able to take a breath. Mux and I exchanged worried glances. He climbed on Bobo’s knee and pinched him lightly on the nose with his claw.

“Hey, commander! You are not supposed to behave this way!” He tried to tease him. “Tell me, who’s this Tommy boy, and would he like us to call his mommy, eh?” Mux tried to make a joke

but to no avail.

“I was telling the children—I’ve been telling them for days now—about our plan and how indifferent people have become and everything. And about you, too. And this Tommy, this bad Tommy, had heard me. He came to me and started to point his finger at me and make fun of me. He’s making fun of me in front of all the children and pointing at me, imitating me, and saying that I’ve gone bonkers. And he also wrote Bobo the wacko! on the whiteboard and kept shouting, ‘Wacko, wacko! Is there some brain in your head? Oops, no—some mott must have sucked it!’ And he laughed mockingly and harshly. He doesn’t believe that motts exist and is always thinking how to turn the other children against me!”

Mux stood listening, clenching his paw in a tiny fist. He couldn’t check himself and let out a really loud fluff.

“Ugh, that Tommy boy! I’ll show him!” Mux said and then disappeared.

“Don’t, Mux!” Bobo shouted after him. “Please don’t interfere. I can deal with him.”

But it was too late. Mux had already headed for some place. And he knew very well where he was going. He was going to see Pinky!

Chapter 15

AT PINKY'S

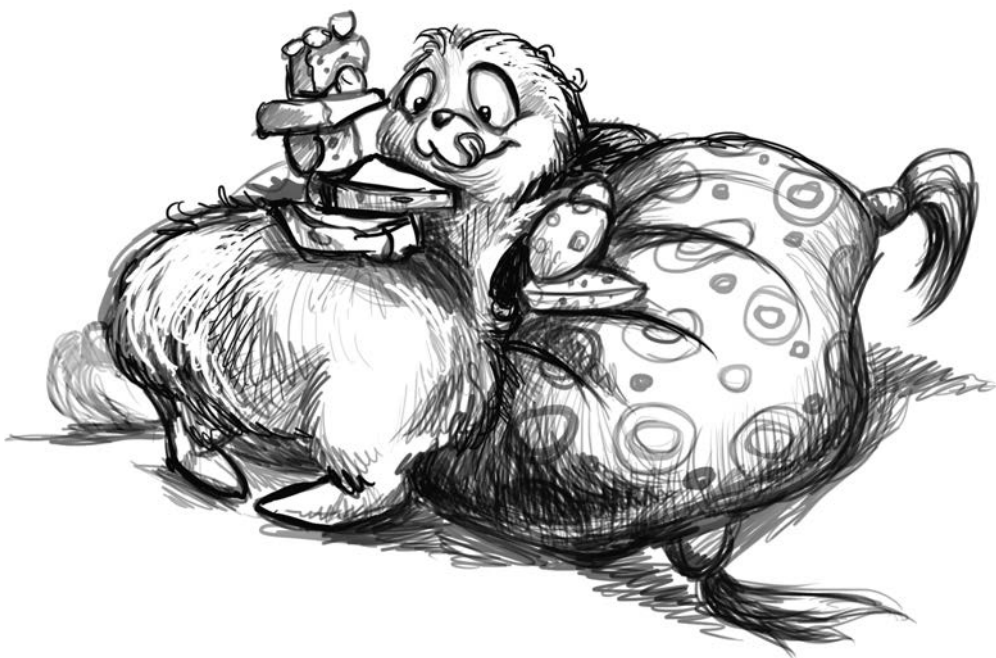
*M*ux stormed into Pinky's wardrobe with a bang and a toot. Pinky, who was the fattest mott in mott history, was lying on his back with four pieces of cheese arranged by size on his big belly, wondering which one to eat first.

"Are you eating again, Pinky?" Mux shouted angrily and so startled Pinky that one of the pieces of cheese flew up in the air.

"I, I...no, I've been practicing on the cable and, um, you see, I got tired and decided to lie down for a while, to, um, have a bite, you see, because I got a bit hungry. Besides, there's so much food in this new house that...well, I was tempted, you know. Here, see my cable." He reached his paw

and took out a chewed cable from beneath the pile of crumpled clothes and crumbs.

“Pinky, what’s this?” Mux bugged out his eyes. “Why is this cable chewed up? Have you chewed on it? How did you practice, exactly?” Mux took a deep breath and closed his eyes to compose himself. This Pinky fellow was not only the fattest but also the dumbest mott in Mottland. “Pinky, we agreed that the cables, which I gave you to practice on, were not for eating. If we want the operation to succeed, you’ll have to cut them with your claw, not nib at them with your teeth!”



“Oh, yeah, I remember now. I’ve been wondering why it was so easy when we practiced it together but didn’t work when I was alone. So I should use my claw, not my teeth. That’s why I—you know, after all this chewing on the cable, I got a bit hungry.” He looked down and tried to reach a morsel of cheese that had rolled down next to a yellow sock.

“Pinky!” Mux scolded him. “Listen very carefully. First, from now on, I’ll visit you three times a day to make sure you’re practicing. Second, you’re going on a diet! How should I know that you won’t



burst the balloon you'll be riding with such a big belly like yours? Third, did you meet the boy that lives here? Because this is why you moved in here, right?"

"Oh, that, yes. I don't know. He looks a bit odd. I don't know if I could...I don't know."

"How's that you don't know?" Goula had told Mux before that it was Pinky who had been moved to that Tommy boy's house. So Mux figured it out quickly that it must had been Pinky who still hadn't introduced himself to the boy he lived with, and perhaps that was why Tommy was about to ruin the whole plan.

"But...but...he's very rude and always playing his video games. And he eats a lot. He doesn't leave me a single crumb on his plate. I have no idea how we'll get along."

Mux blinked his eyes a couple times, then looked at Pinky and decided to change tactics.

"Listen, Pinky, if Tommy loves eating as much as you do, you'll have something in common. Imagine how much food you'll have if he grows fond of you!"

"Yes," Pinky said slowly, as if hypnotized. "All right, enough with the scraps. Tonight, Tommy and I will have a talk."

Chapter 16

TUMMY FORWARD

*T*ommy got home after the long school day, entered his room, and threw his school bag on the sofa.

“What’s with those motts? Bobo must have really lost his mind. I don’t get how all the other kids believe his nonsense. Pfft!” Tommy muttered to himself while he opened a pack of cookies, which he took out from the lower drawer of his desk. “Motts, ha-ha. At least he could have invented a better name, like miorins, barbuns, vitrons, or something more interesting. Motts! Gee.” He took a bite from a cookie and then set it aside while he changed his clothes. Then he turned around and groped for his cookie, but it had vanished.

“Hmm, where did that cookie go? I’m sure I left it right here...” He took another cookie, bit a piece off, then again left it aside when he remembered he had to hide his grade book before his parents could take it and see the remark his teacher had written earlier that day: Eats in class!

“Aren’t they tired of writing the same remarks? Eats in class, blah, blah, blah. Of course I’ll eat. I’m hungry!” Tommy muttered under his breath. Remembering his cookie, he reached to take it, but much to his surprise, it was gone again!

“What! Am I going crazy? Or I’ve started to forget things from all that sugar.” He scratched his head and began to look around. Suddenly, he spotted a few crumbs near the wardrobe. He screwed up his eyes and scratched his belly, then quietly drew near the wardrobe. He put his ear to its door and heard a strange sound coming from within, resembling munching, crunching, and belching all at once.

“Jeepers, there’s something in the wardrobe! Gee, really, something’s stealing my cookie!” he shouted to himself and opened the door, but there was no one inside. There were only the crumbs left from the eaten cookies on the pile of clothes. He rummaged through the clothes, but there was nothing! There was nothing and no one there.



“Shoot, I must have caught some of Bobo’s madness! I have a screw loose!” Then he remembered. “Bobo! That’s exactly what he said. That motts are invisible, that they live in the wardrobe, and that...oh dear, no, that’s crazy!” He slammed the wardrobe door shut and sat on his bed. “Gee, am I going mad, or am I just hungry? Seriously, I really don’t know what to do. Am I going crazy? Just let me take one more peep.” He drew near the wardrobe once again, opened the door slightly and carefully, and...

“Ahhhh!” he shouted so loud that even the neighbors heard him. He jumped back and fell on his butt. There, sitting majestically on a striped blue shirt, nibbling at Tommy’s cookie and covered in crumbs from head to toe, was Pinky.

“Howdy, Tommy!” Pinky shouted, munching. “Do you have something else to eat?”

Tommy stood up and stared into the fat pink mott standing in front of him.

“Oh, and before I forget, barbuns? Seriously? Couldn’t you think of something even more stupid? What’s wrong with motts? Hello, the hypnotized guy? Earth to Tommy!” Pinky even rose and started swinging his claw in front of the dumbfounded Tommy to get his attention.

“He was right,” was all Tommy could say. “He

was right! I need to grab something to eat and think for a while.”

“Now that’s what we’re talking about!” Pinky cut in. “Let’s go and pick up something from your fridge, all right?”



Chapter 17

BOBO AND TOMMY UNITE

*T*he next day, Tommy threw paper notes at Bobo in their biology class.

“Psst, Bobo! Psst!” he called him from his desk, but Bobo had made up his mind not to pay attention to Tommy’s rude hints. He had suffered enough because of him. What’s more, he was determined that he wouldn’t let some bully ruin his plan to save the motts. He still had the other children on his side, and Tommy could do whatever he wanted to, for all he cared.

“Bobo! Psst! Psst!” Tommy kept on calling him.

“Children, please, keep silent, or I’ll order you out of the classroom,” Mrs. Donoghue intervened.



“Bobo!” Tommy hissed yet again. He threw a crumpled sheet of paper at him, which missed him but hit Mrs. Donoghue right on the bottom instead.

The class burst out laughing, while the missus flushed red and cried menacingly, “Enough! You two leave your grade books on the desk and leave the room immediately!” She pointed at Bobo and Tommy.

Bobo shot an angry look at Tommy and left the room infuriated. He was totally fed up with him. Pfft! If he could only get ahold of that living marshmallow in the hallway! He was sick and tired of his insults.

“Bobo!” Tommy shouted behind him once again.

Bobo turned with a jerk and cried out, “Leave me alone already! If you don’t want to help me, then at least don’t stand in my way! I don’t care if you believe me or not! Just mind your own business!”

“No, wait! I believe you. Wait! I’m sorry. I really got a bit carried away the other days. I’m sorry. Really, I mean it.”

“Look, if that’s one of your stupid jokes, I won’t buy it!” Bobo shouted and kept on walking.

“No, Bobo, honestly! I believe you. I...I have a mott, too. His name is Pinky. He loves eating,

just like me. Really, Bobo, stop for a second. I got tired!”

Bobo slowed down his pace and turned around, still looking angry.

“Pinky,” Tommy continued. “We met each other yesterday. I mean, yesterday evening. We laughed the night away, stuffing ourselves. We had a great time. He told me exactly what you told the other children. I know about the plan. I want to help. Pinky’s really cool. I don’t want to lose him. My parents would never let me have a pet, and this one here is invisible to their eyes and even talks! He’s awesome!”

Bobo heard him out carefully, then sighed and said, “Thank God. You had really started to get on my nerves.” He smiled and winked at him. “Come, let me tell you everything, down to the last detail.”

They headed down the hallway. The animosity between them evaporated that day. They were to become best friends.

Chapter 18

THE DAY BEFORE TOMORROW

*T*here was only one day left until the plan “A Brand-New Day” was put into action. Anticipation, trepidation, and excitement spread over Mottland. Pagu had told Mux that she would visit him fifteen minutes before the operation started so that they could watch together the course of events. We lived on a high floor, which offered Pagu a perfect spot from where she could see the whole city.

The final preparations were completed, all tasks had been delegated, the balloons were in their places, and Bobo had gone back home to spend the night at his parents’ house. He himself was part of

the plan and had to bring his mom and dad outside on the balcony in the morning. Tired, he snuggled under the covers and set his alarm clock for 6:45 a.m. That was what the motts and the children had agreed on. It was just before everyone got up! A warm gust of wind and calmness drifted through the room's open window. It seemed that spring was really approaching.



Chapter 19

HELLO, BRAND-NEW DAY!

*W*hen morning came, Bobo's alarm clock went off, and he awoke from his blissful dream. But this time, he got up without a problem, much to his mother's surprise, who had gotten used to begging him to get up for school for at least twenty minutes. The minute he rose, he began looking around hastily. The operation had to start at 7:00 a.m. sharp so there was enough time and he didn't have to worry that something might go wrong.

His mother turned on the TV right away. Nothing and no one could get her out of her

favorite spot in front of the screen, where she had her morning coffee and mustered her strength to start the day for at least ten minutes. During that time, his father read the online newspaper. This is going to change pretty soon, Bobo thought and started looking around. Were the motts, who had their cables allocated, already here, hiding themselves? Everything looked as it always had, and that made Bobo feel uneasy. What if their plan failed? What would happen then? What if it didn't have the result they expected? Perhaps then the motts would disappear and hide forever and no one would ever see them again. Bobo was seized with nervousness, but he quickly banished the bad thoughts from his head. It was almost 6:55 a.m., and Mux had just received his guest in another part of the city. He had prepared two cables: a thin cable from a radio for Pagu and a cable from a TV set for himself. The motts had agreed that they would spare the cables of appliances that were of necessity to the household like the oven, fridge and so on. They would snip only the "evil" ones, those that stole the little joys in life and time that belonged to families.

Right at 6:59 a.m., Mux and Pagu looked at each other and snipped the two cables at the same time. After that, they gave deep sighs and ran to the

balcony, where they climbed on a pot and gazed at the city.

“What the what!” Bobo’s father shouted angrily from behind his computer.

Bobo jumped from his chair while he was having breakfast. It had begun! His heart started racing. Then he heard his mother’s voice.

“So what’s happened now?” The two of them almost ran into each other in the kitchen, saying, “The power’s out!” at the same time.

“No, it’s not!” Bobo said indignantly and showed them the clock on the microwave, which was working.

His mother switched on the light and saw that it worked, too. While they stood completely dumbfounded, Bobo jumped to his feet. Now it was his and all the other children’s turn to do their part. He went to the balcony and let his parents speculate what might have happened to their precious high-tech devices. After a moment, he shouted at the top of his lungs, “Mom! Dad!”

They hurried to the balcony for fear that something bad might have happened. They found him standing in front of them, smiling broadly.

“Come see how beautiful the view is!”

And indeed it was! The city was just awakening right before their eyes. Birds chirruped joyfully,



the sun shone warmly, and the verdant leaves softly swayed in the wind. It was a magnificent spring! The whole sky was covered with balloons of different colors to boot.

“Just stay here for a while. Why don’t you drink your coffee on the balcony for a change?” Bobo suggested.

Then he darted inside and fetched the cups for his startled parents. They sat down by the table and gave themselves over to the peaceful atmosphere. Bobo cast his glance over the nearby buildings, seeing more and more people come outside to watch the awakening morning.

Everyone felt perplexed by the hundreds of balloons that floated in the sky. It seemed that the motts had done their job.

His mother smiled faintly. Bobo knew that his parents were going to leave for work soon, but the confusion created by the cutting of cables and the rainbow of balloons was yet to spread to the media. Bobo went inside. He could barely wait to go to school and hear how the plan had gone with his friends. The number of people who came out on their balconies and gardens rose every second. It seemed that everyone was experiencing spring for the first time through their whole bodies and enjoying the warm rays of the sun. Everyone’s

faces wore genuine smiles.

Although the change was not instantaneous, and this little conspiracy hardly meant the end of the technological era, the motts were happy. They had achieved a symbolic victory. They had succeeded in awakening people's desire to enjoy some miracles apart from 3-D technology and virtual reality. They had stirred their wish for people to reunite with nature and take pleasure in the small, happy moments together with their families.

The motts felt that immediately. The gray that had covered their fur began to disappear, and they started to assume different hues.

Meanwhile, on a high and distant balcony in a cracked pot with a geranium plant stood Mux and Pagu. They were gazing at the sun, Mux's right paw pressed close to Pagu's claw. They looked happy and calm.

The two of them were to remain there, silent, until sunset.

THE END





Some worldly wisdom and nonsense from the life of the motts:

If you feel like having candy
Take one piece
Then take one more
Make them three
Then make them four
Five, six, seven
And I'm in heaven
But if your tummy starts to ache
Just relax and take a break

— A poem by Pinky





Rule No. 1:

If you have already eaten strawberries, a bunch of grapes, half a watermelon, three tomatoes, two cucumbers and a half, never, ever eat a pack of cookies (even if they are your favorite chocolate ones)!

Rule No. 2:

If you still break Rule No. 1, make sure that there's a bed nearby so that you may

lie down, and also...a toilet!

— From Pinky's worldly opinions

My most favorite song of all time, to the accompaniment of which I want to marry Pagu, is Motthoven's "Rhapsody in Patterns" performed by the choir of the Tooting Motts. I get so moved when I hear it that I begin tooting in time with their song.

— From Mux's secret dreams

The most difficult decision—that is, to choose between snuggling into Tommy’s washed sweater and having a delicious slice of strawberry pie.

— From Pinky’s words of wisdom

When I grow up to be a big mott, I’ll grow a mustache. Then, even if I’m not smiling, no one will know about it, and they’ll stop telling me that I’m a mott as sour as vinegar. Some even call me sourmott vinegar or sour vinemottegar.

— From Goula’s secret dreams

Goula is what they call me
And in one second only
I can make a big mess
Or save a friend in distress
Why do I rhyme all this time
I can’t really tell, but oh, well
I even let out some fluffs, yay—
Let’s shout, “Hip, hip, hooray!”



— a poem by Mux for Goula’s motthood

It’s hard being a princess. Every morning when I wake up, I tease my fur for an hour, then paint my claw for around forty-three minutes, powder my tiny nose for ten minutes, sharpen every single pencil on my crown and then solemnly come out of my closet. But if one of the mischievous little motts in the kingdom gives me a scare and I accidentally ruffle a single hair from my fur, I start all over.

— From Princess Pagu’s personal habits



The princess should not:

toot loudly
talk in a loud voice
take big bites
laugh with her mouth open
take long strides
appear unkempt in front of the other
motts

— From Pagu's worldly rules

The prince of the motts should not:

toot loudly
eat beans (so that he doesn't toot loudly)
walk fast because it is important that the princess follows
him without taking long strides
eat the last morsel of his dessert because it is always intended
for his princess
fall asleep or get distracted when the princess is telling him
about her day

All princesses get really mad when others don't listen to
them.

— From Pagu's worldly rules





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BOOK TWO

THE ADVENTURES OF THE MOTTs

MUX STRIKES BACK



The princess of the motts is much more delicate, soft, and graceful than the other motts. She sleeps soundly and wakes up only when each of her seven little court motts has stroked her and the king of the motts has given her a kiss. Yes, she's that lovable.

I'm sure that you also have a playful, fluffy mott, who makes all kinds of mischief, living in your wardrobe. So why, you would ask, haven't you seen it? You know, motts are definitely very strange creatures, and they rarely show themselves to people because it is hard to win their trust. But this is about to change. A little brave mott will take on a difficult task. He will think of a way to make people a little bit brighter—and the world—a little bit kinder.

