



Ayur's

Tale

Once upon a time there was a village in the African desert called Eussauria, where a boy called Ayur was living.

Ayur was descendant of a numerous poor family. He had seven brothers and sisters and he was the fourth one. His parents were in serious trouble because it was difficult to maintain that large quantity of children, so one day all the family gathered round to talk about the hard situation they were immersed. Their parents' faces showed a glimpse of sadness and worry and it worried Ayur and his brothers and sisters.

That starry night became the saddest one in Ayur's life. Father started explaining the painful decision they were about to take.

-Ayur – Father said – we're very poor and unfortunately we can't give everything you need to you all, so we've taken the hard decision to send you to Majorca to live with grandfather Amyr. Your eldest brothers will also live with other relatives: with Grandmother, with auntie Fatima and Rashid uncle and they'll learn a trade. The little ones will stay with us... It's really difficult to take this decision, my son, but we have no other chance.

Those news made his heart shudder, breathless. Then Father prayed and begged Allah to take care about all their children wherever they were sent and prevent them from forgetting their brothers and sisters and they could get together in Eussauria again one day.

The following day at sunrise, all the family were called together to have their last breakfast together. They all kissed Ayur goodbye at the hall and he started, with his father, his way to a city on the coast where Majorcan fishing boats traded.

He got to the commercial port and an old friend of his father took him to a very old Majorcan sailor, who owned a typical Majorcan fishing boat called “ barca de bou” and was trading there those days. They decided to board Ayur in return for his work in the kitchen.

Ayur kissed his father goodbye and feeling really sad, he set sail out to the Mediterranean sea towards Majorca.



Days passed by and were fun because the sailors told him sea stories about sharks, mermaids, dolphins, hidden cities at the bottom of the sea... The work at the kitchen amused him because Andreu, the cook, was always kidding. But nights were long because he couldn't help thinking about the life he had left behind and the life he could expect in Majorca. He didn't know Grandfather, what he only knew about him was that he went into exile to Majorca thirty years ago. Father had explained him that Grandfather was once against the king who reigned their country and he avoided being killed by going abroad. This fact made the family fall from grace, all their possessions and money were taken and so they became very poor... And as he was thinking of all these things, he started to fall asleep...

Suddenly he woke up and noticed that the boat was up and down in a very strange way, but always moving towards the same side of the boat. Ayur felt his feet were wet! Water was coming up and up. He could reach the stairs up to the deck but it was very difficult and his strength was leaving him. Then after a strong wave, the boat wrecked and started sinking. Ayur fell in the depth of the sea. -What will I do now??? There's no piece of solid ground... I'll drown, Mother will never know what happened to me...- And he burst into tears...

He started swimming, but soon he was tired and breathless and let himself go by the waves... He was hopeless thinking he would never see his family and friends again, he would never start a brand new life in Majorca . His strength failed him and he fell asleep under the seawater... when some shadows from the depth of the sea appeared.

Half asleep as he was, he noticed that something was taking him to the seafloor.

-Sharks!- He thought as one of the shadows was coming near him and his heart was beating quickly... Out of the blue, the shadow jumped before his eyes.

-Dolphins!- he cried out as a dolphin came slowly near him to cherish him with his snout and whispered:

-Don't you worry, let's recover- and he took him to the bottom of the sea. While he was going down and down he recalled all the wonderful stories about dolphins his friends at the boat had told him. He remembered how they saved the shipwrecked and took them to paradise islands, how they taught them...

Ayur asked:

-Where are you taking me?- And the dolphin made a sign with his snout, Ayur took a look at his front and saw two towers with giant columns at the seafloor. It was a big city under the sea.

In his way to the city, the dolphin explained that there were kings, mermaids and shipwrecked that were once appealed by the island and had decided to stay. It was a wonderful ancient island lost under the sea where time never passed by and disgrace didn't exist.

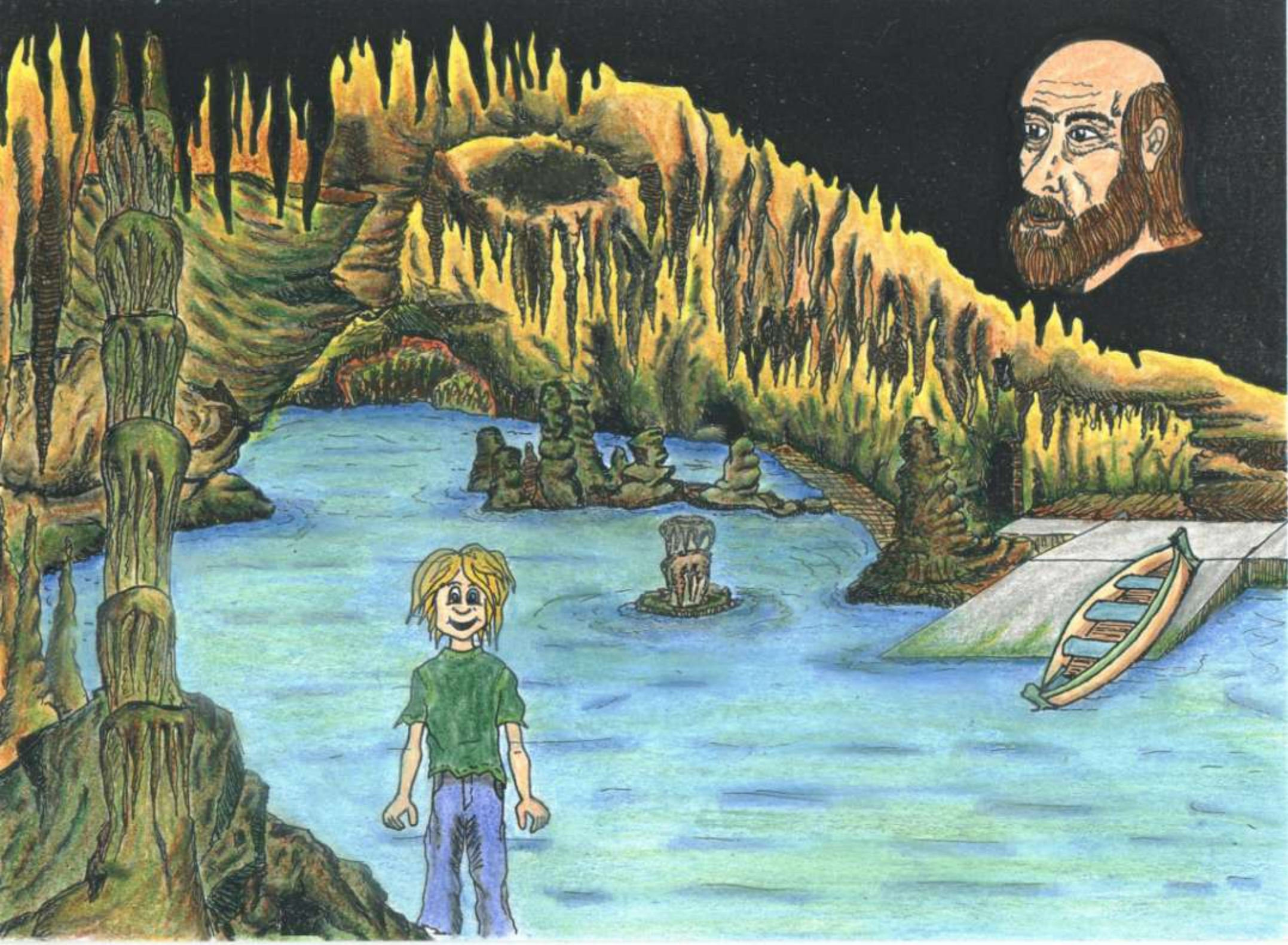
After a while, they arrived in that paradise place.

-Goodbye my friends, I'll never forget you! - Ayur cried out with tears in his eyes.

Now Ayur was in Atlantis, a dream world. All the inhabitants came out to welcome the brand new arrival and showed their generosity immediately. He was quickly offered food, a place to sleep and their company. Ayur explained his story, how he had to leave his family and the shipwreck of the boat that was supposed to take him to a better life, and how the dolphins took him there.

Days passed by and as he was recovered, Ayur thought of Grandfather who was surely waiting for him in Cala Bona. He had to find the way to get there. Rashim, one of the inhabitants in Atlantis, had a high-speed submarine and offered his help. He was an old sailor and knew a way out to Majorca near Grandfather's town. Ayur felt very happy when thinking he was to hug Grandfather.

Then Rashid, Ayur and the submarine went their way out of the sea. Ayur thanked Rashid for taking him there and when they said good-bye Ayur confessed he would never forget Atlantis and everything he had lived there. The submarine went away and he stood alone in a dark and quiet place.



He was sitting on a rock, somewhere he didn't know and doubtful about the way to start walking. He looked up and saw a cave with hanging tears of stone in the ceiling and also coming from the ground. It was a humid place where the sun couldn't be seen. He was a bit scared, maybe he shouldn't have left Atlantis, at least he was safe there; but he was waited in Majorca and his parents promised his life would be better there.

While he was getting used to the place, he heard a door was opened and several strange voices coming in. He was trying to hide; he finally found an old boat that was upside down and went in undoubtedly. Ayur thought people went in the cave to visit it and suddenly he heard a marvellous music... what was all about? While he was wondering that, some men took the boat and turned it... he had been discovered. Now he was opposite a great number of people...

-Great Allah, what is it about? Where am I? Who are you?- Ayur started talking.

The men were asking at the same time:

-Who are you? What are you doing here?

Ayur started his adventure, but nobody understood him.

Then, someone went away and came back with an old man called Tomeu. Tomeu was from Manacor and had spent a long time in the army in the north of Morocco. He learnt French and some words in Arab and also some of their habits. When he saw Ayur, he understood he was coming from far away and wanted to meet someone.

Ayur told him:

-My grandfather Amyr lives in Cala Bona and I sailed a long way to live with him... please, can you help me to find him?

Joan, who was Tomeu's neighbour, had a "golondrina", a typical tourist boat, which will take him to Cala Bona. When they arrived at Cala Bona, they went to the fishermen houses and asked if anyone knew his grandfather.





He was told he could probably find him at the fishermen's canteen. With tears in his eyes, rushed and recognized his grandfather sitting down. They hugged each other...

-Eerm...-someone was behind his grandfather. It was a boy who looked like Ayur, with the same age:

-Hi! -he said shyly, holding his grandfather's arm.

Ayur greeted back. They went to his grandfather's house in a car. When they arrived at the house in the countryside Ayur was surprised: he was being waited by a lot of people.

Grandfather said:

-Don't worry! They are all relatives and friends of mine and they all wanted to greet my grandson... one of the grandchildren I never knew before!

-But Grandfather, you came to Majorca without money and you knew no one here!

-Yes. That was it- Grandfather said.

-So... why have you got so many relatives and friends? Moreover, you don't look like starving any longer...

Grandfather was astonished with the amount of questions Ayur was asking and finished saying:

-Ayur, things went quite well for me here. Now it's better for you to rest and eat a bit. We'll have a lot of time to talk about it. Now I'll introduce you everyone. Here you've got Quim, whom you already know. He's your cousin he's the same age as you... Here...



During the following months, Ayur made new friends and Quim and he became close friends. He also started school in Cala Millor, Na Penyal school. This name was given after a mountain in the village that, as the old people say, it had some hidden mysteries...

He took part in some local celebrations, went on hikes with Grandfather, visited sometimes Joan, the "golondrina's" owner, and Tomeu and they told him old nice stories about the sea and the caves.

Almost every evening he rode on his bike over the paths of the outskirts of the village. Ayur was feeling completely happy and was integrated into the village and its people.

When he started his second course at the school, his teacher told them about the legends of Majorca and the Mediterranean sea. She also explained about the big quantity of caves that were surrounding the villages and towns. All his classmates wanted to explore one... and Ayur had already been in one at the very beginning of his arrival... When he finished the course at school he felt he wasn't completely happy because he missed his family and his country, and though he tried to forget these sad moments playing with his friends, he couldn't.



On one summer day, Quim, his friends and Ayur, after lunch went to the mysterious mountain called Na Penyal. The legend said that a giant left a huge rock on the top of the mountain to cover the crater of a volcano and so, protect the village.

They went on their bikes. They got at the rock's shadow, sweating with their hearts beating quickly. They sat down and felt the blissful peace and breathe in the fresh sea breeze that was around them. Ayur and Quim were falling asleep and with a happy smile when suddenly...

BRMMMM, BRMMMMM, they slipped and started falling down... the mountain was swallowing them to its inside and they couldn't stop it. They finally stopped in the dark and the silence was surrounding them. They were all wet with mud.

-Where are we?- Ayur asked.

-Look at there. There's a light at the very end!- Quim answered.

They both run towards the light, instinctively and they could hear the noises of an animal louder and louder as they were approaching. They found a gate and went in. The magnificent show was only for their eyes. They looked at both sides and saw some cliffs and waterfalls and loads of leafy trees full of intense orange coloured fruits. Among the spray they could see a stream that flew into a vast lake with all the tonalities of blue, white and green. There were also some caves that seemed houses and on their right, there were some rocks with delicate shapes.

The noise they had heard before was increasing and was getting mixed up with the sound of the water, the light...

They were such in awe they didn't see a bird with the body of a horse and fire coloured wings that was getting close.

Be careful!!- Ayur said when he saw the monster coming.

Both cousins hugged each other in fear and the animal stood still, looking at them. The animal couldn't get closer because it was tied with a long strong rope. It was crying and seemed it wanted to say something to them.

-Who are you? -both boys asked.

-My name's Phoenix.

-What do you want?- Ayur said.

-I want you to free me.

-Why?- Quim said scarily.

-I don't want to cause any harm to you, I only want you to free me and so I'll die and then I'll be born again. This way I'll bring you good luck and your deepest wish will become true.

Ayur asked:

-What do we have to do?

-Take the rope around my neck out.- Phoenix said.

Ayur was determined to take it out and so he did.

Phoenix melted itself in the bright lake and colourful lights started to go out of the water. Afterwards, Phoenix was born again as splendid as it had ever been. It took them on its back and led them to the way out of the cave.

They said goodbye, thanking each others for the help and they promised they would meet again some day.



Quim and Ayur took their bikes and rode back to Grandfather's house. It was late night and told no one whatever happened to them because they made that promise to Phoenix.

The things that went on after that day, surprised everyone, including Ayur, as their wishes were becoming true.

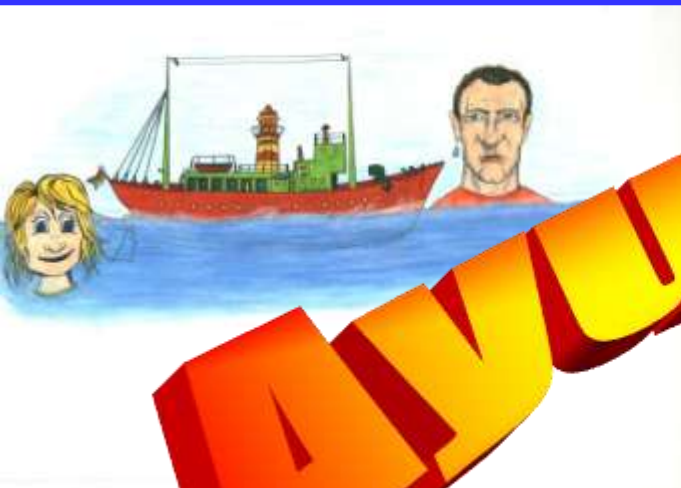
Ayur could go back to his country with his grandfather. The war was over, the king was deposed and everyone was free again.

So that's how the whole family joined forever again and kept the promise they made two years before.

And they never lived in poverty again and they lived happily ever after.

A simple line drawing of a commercial airplane flying over a landscape. The airplane is shown from a side profile, flying towards the right. Below the airplane, there are several stylized, fluffy clouds. In the background, there are some simple outlines of trees or bushes. The overall style is minimalist and illustrative.

The end



AMUL'S Tale