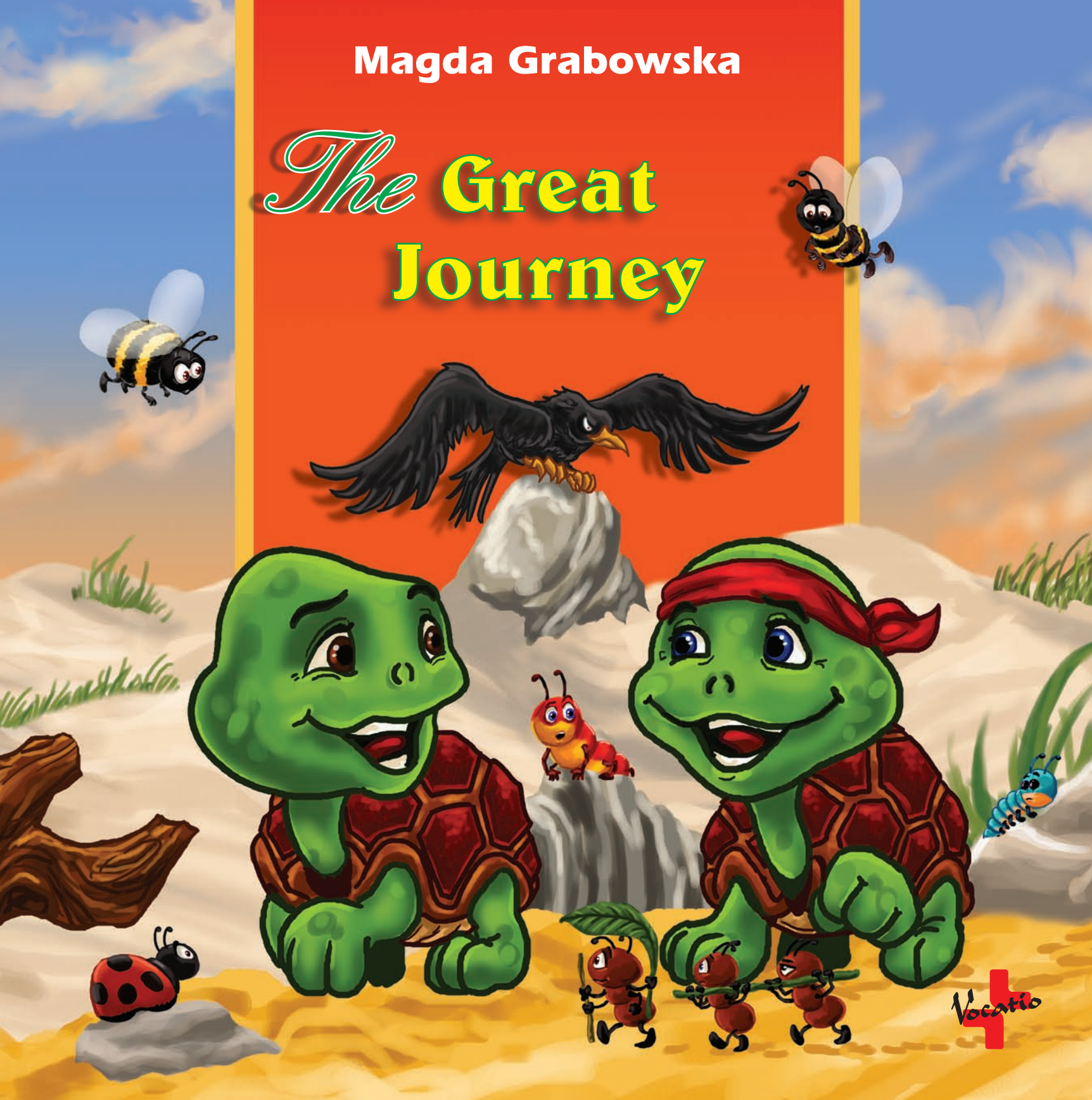


Magda Grabowska

# *The Great Journey*



Vocatio



*This book is a gift for:*

.....

*From:*

.....

*For:*

.....



**Magda Grabowska**

# The Great Journey

Illustrations by Łukasz Zabdyr

*I dedicate this book to my little turtles.  
Stay on the right path, find the Bridge,  
and get to your destination.*



VOCATIO PUBLISHING HOUSE  
Warsaw, Poland





Text and Artwork Copyright © 2012 by VOCATIO

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book, or any portions thereof, in any form. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, magnetic, chemical, optical, manual, or otherwise, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without prior written permission from VOCATIO. For the permission please contact:

VOCATIO PUBLISHING HOUSE  
Polnej Róży 1  
02-798 Warsaw  
POLAND  
e-mail: [ceo@vocatio.us](mailto:ceo@vocatio.us)

[www.vocatio.us](http://www.vocatio.us)

Printed in Poland

ISBN 978-83-7829-037-7

*C*rack, crack. Crunch, crunch.

The eggs were cracking. Tiny turtles were stretching their little legs and backs. They were sticking out their little heads, climbing on top of each other and trying to crawl out of the little sandy nest where they had just hatched.

Their little eyes opened wide as they looked around with curiosity. They could see quite well, even though it was still dark. A large, sandy beach stretched out in front of them. Everywhere they looked all they could see was sand, sand and more sand. They were amazed.

One of the turtles was named Miko. It was way too tight inside the egg for him. Miko was so excited to finally be outside! What a beautiful beach! It looked like so much fun!





Soon the sun rose and it was day.

The little turtles played in the warm sand. They brushed through it with their little feet squeaking joyously. They felt so happy.

Suddenly, one of the turtles named Mimi, who hatched first, said to the others: "I am going on a trip!" Others said, "We want to go too!" But which way should we go? The turtles looked around not knowing where to go.

"I think we should go... over THERE!" Mimi pointed with one of his feet in the direction from which a mysterious Roar was coming. Other turtles nodded their heads. "Yes! That's a great idea. Let's go and see what that noise is all about! Let's go!" And so they took off. Timmy, Davie, Bobo and others whose names Miko did not know.

But there were other turtles that decided to go in a different direction. Some turned left. Some turned right. Some wandered off by themselves. Others stuck together.





All of a sudden, a strange and scary sound came from over their heads. Right there, in the air above the sandy beach, The Great Bird was flying and watching the baby turtles closely.

Miko's little heart filled with fear. "What a terrible bird" he thought. "I don't think we can be friends."

Miko felt he should also go on a trip. But where should he go? Should he follow Mimi and the others towards the Roar? Or maybe he should catch up

with the ones that wandered off to the sides? He really wanted to go towards the Roar, but the other turtles were waving their little feet at him saying "Miko! Join us! It's very nice here!"

"I think I will go with them. They seem pretty happy," thought Miko. He joined one of the little groups. It was a happy bunch. The little turtles were having fun and joking and they did not even notice that the Great Bird was watching them closely. Miko felt anxious again. "This is probably not where I should be." He stopped and looked around. He sensed more and more that he should go towards the Roar. Something in his heart was telling him to go there.





And that's just what he did. The other turtles were far ahead of him, but there were some, who, just like him, could not decide which way to go. Miko started off. All he could see before him was a big beach. He stumbled along on his little, clumsy feet. He was getting tired. Every now and then he looked back wondering whether he had made the right choice. The turtles that had gone in other directions were making sand castles or lying in on the sand and enjoying the sun. They seemed happy, but were they really?

The Great Bird was hovering above the beach.

"No. I am not going back" thought Miko and kept on going. The Roar was getting louder and louder. Miko felt attracted to it. "I have to get there and see what that noise is." His heart longed to be close to the Roar. When he thought the Roar was not as loud, he listened carefully to follow the sound. When it got louder, he wanted to get there even more. He knew he had to reach his destination. He knew he had chosen the right way.





*H*e saw that other little turtles were also going in the direction of the Roar. Some fast, as though they were not tired at all. Others were losing strength and had to stop to rest before pressing on. Still others quit altogether and decided to stay on the beach. Meanwhile, the Roar was getting even louder.



Suddenly, in front of the turtles, there appeared a big, long trench along the beach. The turtles had no idea where it came from or who had dug it, but it was an obstacle on their way to the Roar. Miko stopped with the others on the edge of the trench. “What should I do to get to the other side?”—he thought. He looked around. Some turtles had an idea. They were gathering little sticks and trying to build a bridge. Miko joined them. But, as hard as they tried, they just could not get any sticks to the other side of the trench. It was too wide. “We can’t do it this way,” said Miko. But the turtles kept trying. A few turtles tried to jump over the trench, but they ended up getting stuck at the bottom of it and could not get out. Miko watched them and said: “Don’t do it! I am not jumping. I don’t want to fall in there!”





Some turtles decided to go around the trench. But it seemed to have no end...

“I hate this trench”—Miko said to himself with a sad face.—“I will never reach the Roar.”

He looked around sadly and tears started flowing from his little turtle eyes. “Is it really impossible to get to the other side?”

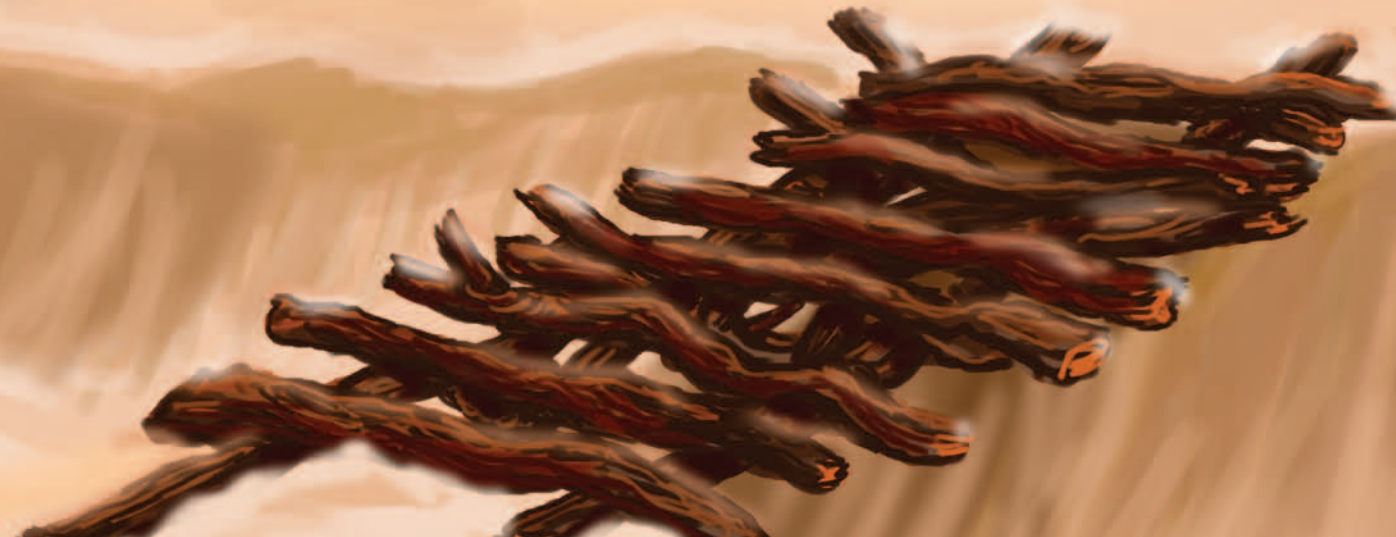


Suddenly, Miko heard a voice. He lifted his little head and saw another turtle standing on the other side of the trench. It was Timmy, one of the turtles who had set off down the beach with Mimi. Timmy was pointing at something with his little foot and yelling. It seemed that he really wanted Miko to hear him. Miko listened carefully.

“Miko! There is a bridge! Someone Good has built this bridge for us. It’s here. Look! You can easily cross the trench now. Don’t be afraid!” Miko looked around and found the bridge. He was surprised he had not seen it before. He got close to it, still a little unsure of himself. He looked at it with doubt in his heart. The bridge was not very impressive. It was narrow and crooked.

“Don’t be afraid, Miko” Timmy shouted from the other side. “I’ve already crossed it. So has Mimi.” “But what about the other turtles? Why did they not go over this bridge?” Miko shouted back. “Maybe this bridge is not so good after all?” “It’s the best bridge! It’s the only bridge! Many turtles have already gone across. The others? They think they can get across on their own.”

“But it’s impossible” thought Miko, “I tried too and could not do it.” He made a decision. “OK then, I will go over this bridge.”





*H*e set one foot down. Then another. And then he saw that the bridge did not shake. It was narrow, but solid and strong. Miko crossed over with confidence. His heart filled with strange joy. Timmy smiled at him. "Welcome to the other side of the bridge, Miko. Now we can reach the Roar together. I am sure we can get there. It can't be too far from here." And the little turtles continued on their way.

The sun was shining brightly and the hot sun burned their little feet. Its grains were getting under the turtles' shells and pinched a little. When the sun hid behind the clouds, it got a bit cold and unpleasant. From time to time they came upon a sandy hill or a rough place in the beach. Sometimes they saw a big stick or rock. These obstacles made their travel even more difficult and uncomfortable. But they encouraged and looked out for one another. "You can do it!" said Miko to Timmy. "You can do it, too" said Timmy to Miko. They did all they could to help each other. They used their feet and backs to help each other up when one of them fell and turned around. There were also times when each of them had to overcome some obstacles on their own. Each of them had to face their own fears, pains and discomforts. But the joy that followed was great. And so was the satisfaction that each little victory brought. Whatever they were going through, things were better, because they stuck together.





There was, however, one more danger. The Great Bird. Sometimes it appeared out of nowhere and hovered above the little turtles screeching loudly. Often, there were other Birds with him. It was good that the turtles had their shells! When the Great Bird appeared, they arched their little backs and hid their feet, tails and heads. They couldn't hide, but they could hide just enough to protect themselves from the Great Bird. Their shells were getting harder and they offered protection from danger, if the little turtles used them wisely.

The Great Bird knew how to plant traps. Sometimes he would bring in his beak a delicious snack, a shiny piece of glass, or a rustling piece of paper and drop it in front of the turtles. He wanted them eat the snack or play with the toys and forget about their shells. That would make them easy to catch! That is why the turtles decided to warn one another when they see danger. Miko would often shout "Timmy! Watch out! The Great Bird is coming. Let's hide!" Timmy would do the same: "Miko, don't eat it! It's not good for you!" or "Don't touch it!" The Great Bird kept hovering over the turtles and then would disappear for a while. But the turtles knew very well that he would be back and they had to be on guard.





When Miko found a little beautiful stone and started playing with it, Timmy said: "Let me see that." But Miko put his foot on it and said "No. I found it. It's mine."

Timmy got angry. "I saw it first from a distance! It's mine!"

"No, it isn't. I am not giving it to you!" said Miko.


The two turtles faced each other, both mad. Their little eyes were full of hostility, and their little faces crinkled in anger.

"OK. Be like that! If you don't want to give this one to me, I will find another one. And you can stay here by yourself" shouted Timmy, and then turned around and went his way.

"Very well. Go!" thought Miko and played with his stone all by himself. Up in the air, the Great Bird started screeching again. This time it sounded a little different. The Great Bird was happy to see the little turtles fight.







Soon, Miko got bored with the stone. It didn't seem so pretty to him anymore. As a matter of fact, it looked just like any other stone. And playing by himself wasn't so much fun. He became sad. He looked around to see where Timmy was, but Timmy was far away. "I will go by myself, then"—thought Miko and went on his way. He was still angry with his brother as he marched on. It seemed that he could still hear the Great Bird's screech.

He came across a long stick. He tried to lift it a little and squeeze underneath, but could not do it, though he tried hard. "If only Timmy was here he could help me. I will have to go around it and it's so long"—he thought. He was getting more and more sad. He wanted to sing a song, but couldn't remember the words. Timmy would remember. He remembered how they used to sing it together. Traveling was a lot more pleasant then. It was good to have a companion. They didn't always agree, but two was definitely better than one.

"Timmy, where are you? I miss you!" Miko started crying loudly.





All of a sudden, he felt a tap on his back foot. It was Timmy! Miko's heart filled with joy.

"Timmy, I am so glad to see you! I wasn't nice to you. I'm sorry. Will you forgive me for not wanting to share the stone? I don't want to be by myself."

"Yes, I forgive you. Will you forgive me, too? I was envious of your little stone and I wasn't kind. I left you. I don't want to be by myself, either."

"I forgive you, Timmy. I am so glad you're back."

The two little brothers hugged each other, and then continued on their way smiling.

"I couldn't recall the words of our song" said Miko, "I wanted to sing it, but couldn't do it by myself."

"I couldn't sing it, either" Timmy laughed, "because I forgot the melody." Now they could finally sing the song together. And they learned how important their friendship was.

The Great Bird's screeching stopped.





The beach finally ended. The sand was wet, and what the little turtles saw in front of them was simply amazing. They didn't know what to call it. It was so huge and strange. And it roared louder than ever before. The crashing, rumbling sound overwhelmed them. So, that was it! That was what their little hearts desired. The little turtles couldn't stop staring. Their joy was great, but they were also fearful. They wanted to both stay there forever and run away.

They realized this was the end of their journey. They finally got to where they were going, but also felt like it was a beginning of something completely new. Miko stretched out his foot. A gentle wave came his way. Miko felt the touch of water for the first time in his life. It brought a warm feeling to his heart. He did not want to let go of the wave. He let it take him away. It felt so good. His feet were not burned from the sand anymore. He was on top of waves, filled with happiness. All around him there were lots of beautiful, colorful fish. Miko saw that Mimi, Davie, Bobo and other little turtles he had seen during his trip were there. They smiled at him playing in the waves. He was surprised by a gorgeous coral reef, with its shapes and many colors. He felt so good in that wonderful place. The place he had longed for. He saw Timmy on another wave and waved to him with his little foot. They smiled at each other.





*S*uddenly, he heard a voice. It was loud and clear. "Welcome home, Miko. You belong in the sea, and not on the beach. You never belonged on the beach. That's where you hatched, but your place is here. This is your home, in the waves and in the depths of the Wonderful Ocean. It was this ocean your heart longed for. The Roar guided you here. Dive in. You're home!"







## FOR THE PARENTS

We are born into this world, but we don't belong here. Though we strive to find ourselves in its reality, our hearts experience a strange longing for love, beauty, joy, justice and happiness. We try to find fulfillment in human love and beauty that we can create and admire, and in the joy we get from our accomplishments. But soon we discover that it's not enough. Our longing grows and we hear a voice. It's the voice of God, though we might not recognize it at first. He created us for Himself, so that we could be with Him and live for His glory. He is our "natural environment." Our longing is nothing but a longing for Him and His presence. Some choose to go in His direction; others choose their own paths. Those who choose to walk towards Him will soon find out that there is a great divide between man and God. It's a divide of sin, guilt and ungodliness towards the Holy God. They try to cross over it and reach God by practicing some religion, good lifestyle or good deeds. But all of those efforts are not enough. The divide is too big. And even if we lead the best possible life, the moments of imperfection, sin and ungodliness separate us from God. He lacks nothing. Our situation only seems hopeless. But our good God gave us His Son Jesus, who became for us the Bridge over the divide.

*The Prophet Isaiah wrote:*

*53:2-5 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, [there is] no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were [our] faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

If we abandon our own ways of reaching God and receive His solution in the person of Jesus Christ we will cross over the divide.

*1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

There will be many temptations on our path. The weaknesses of our own nature will also test us. We will have to face envy, greed, strife, slander, and many other things that are not Godly or holy.

Fortunately, in our churches and fellowships, there are others around us who are traveling the same path. We can encourage and help one another. Saint Paul says:

*Hebrews 3:13 ...but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

We also possess a spiritual armor, which we should learn to use.

*Ephesians 6:11-17 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*





God offers us a special helper in the person of the Holy Spirit, who strengthens our hearts. One day we will finally reach our destination and enter a new reality, for which our hearts are longing. We cannot fathom this reality or express it with words, because “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

The crucial moment in Miko’s life was setting his feet onto the bridge. If the bridge wasn’t there or Miko didn’t choose to use it, his efforts to cross over the divide would have been futile. And though there were some fears and doubts in Miko’s heart, he made up his mind to go over the bridge. It saved his life. Have you made the decision to accept God’s offer to solve the problem of the divide that separates us from Him? If not, it separates YOU from Him! If you haven’t, I encourage you to do so now. You can do it with a simple prayer. God knows your heart. He doesn’t need big words. He’s looking for a sincere decision of your heart expressed in the simplest way. You can use the prayer below as your guide:

“Lord God, I know that I am a hopeless sinner separated from you. None of my own efforts will bridge the divide between You and me. The only sacrifice that can make it possible for me to be with You is the sacrifice Your Son made on Calvary. He said “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6). I believe this, God. I confess that the Lord Jesus died in my place. I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord of my life. May He lead me to You.”

Now, set out on your journey waiting for the day you will meet your Creator and Lord.





*The Great Journey* is by no means just a small story for children. It is a tale of a wandering which is our life itself. A story about striving to satisfy a great longing which dwells in each of us. There is a voice in the heart of every man, a longing for something Unknown and Great. What or Who is calling us? What is the call to? Are we going to follow that voice or to choose our own way? And if we do choose to follow that voice in our heart, will we not go astray, will we not cease on the way? Will we be safe from the Great Bird? How are we going to get over the large trench? How will we overcome the obstacles that we stumble upon during our journey? These are questions that both we and our children need to find answers to. We can help our children find them.

We wish you many beautiful moments with your children, spent on the reading, reflecting and conversation. May these moments help us in our journey and in reaching the ultimate destination.



**Magda Grabowska** is a marriage and family counselor as well as a lecturer at conferences for women. She and her husband lead seminars for couples, parents and fiances. She wrote two books *Kobieta warta królestwa* (Woman Worth of a Kindgom) and *Klucze do pokoju* (Keys to Peace), and co-authored another one – *Zanim wybierzesz* (Before you choose). Practical study of the Word of God is her passion. Magda is the mother of three adult sons and a grandmother of five grandchildren, to whom she dedicates this book.



VOCATIO  
PUBLISHING HOUSE

*Books For Those We Love*

ISBN 978-83-7829-037-7



9 788378 290377