



An adventure of *E* and *S*

E belongs to the noble family of *Chamaeleonidae*, born more than 100 million years ago. However he is a humble living creature. One day he left Sahara and crossed the Atlantic Ocean, inside a big bunch of bananas, in his way to Portugal. During the voyage, he made a huge effort not to make a sound. If he were discovered, he'd be thrown overboard. When he heard that *S* was changing the route and sailing to Alasca, he was in panic: he rolled his eyes, each one to its side, giving him an ugly-looking and twisted his holding tail in vain. Fortunately, they were false news!

He is a big chameleon and likes butterflies, beetles, lady-birds, dragonflies, mosquitos and leaves. *E* appreciates, above all, a good dry leaf! However he also loves paw-paws, figs, bananas and apples. In the voyage, he didn't even know what to do. He felt like eating a fresh dragonfly. He came out of his hiding-place and went as far as the bow of *S*. It was late in the afternoon and the smell of the ocean filled the air. And, well leaned on his strong feet, he moved slowly not to be noticed. But, suddenly, a stunned dragonfly bumped into the sails of *S*. He would only have to move his sticky tongue at top speed! He stared at her with an eye and the other was checking if there were predators around. What a mess! I see two images, each one related to each eye. I have to put them together; if not I'm lost! – he thought. As far as he was approaching the prey, he fixed his eyes tight aiming at her. He caught and ate her very fast, and he was



ready to return to the disguised comfort of the bunch of bananas. However, Captain Smith, who was drinking a whisky, saw *E*, who was escaping, leaving a trail of keratin in the wooden floor. *E* was replacing his skin and Captain Smith soon adopted him.

They arrived at Albufeira. And *E* settled in the thick bushes of Beato Vicente's small farm. He was feeling lonely, though. He needed to be sociable, to go down the trees and to make friends. So, in a lovely morning, his skin changed to a colourful pattern of pink, orange, green, yellow, turquoise and purple, went down to Peneco beach, where *S* had been left and together they sailed to Oura beach. During the voyage, he had heard about the Street of the Bars!

On the way everybody looked at his multicoloured skin and noticed he was looking for a female. He met some fellows who talked to him about Formosa Estuary, a famous habitat for those of his own species. It was exactly there that, next morning, he met his beloved, Maria Aparecida. *E*'s life became a sheer folly then. They travelled a lot and, one day, already within Barrocal, they got into Paderne Castle, one of the castles represented in the Portuguese flag.

They immediately climbed the highest wall of the fortress, so that *E* could confess his love to his beloved at last. However, something unexpected happened. On the edge of a cliff, near a red shawl someone had left there, Maria Aparecida quickly disappeared. *E* was so desperate that he looked for her in vain, crying for help out of the tower, while *S*, on the river-bank below, was trying to figure out



what had happened. What an extreme distress! The night had fallen and she kept on being vanished. The searches continued steadily for hours without results until dawn came. The sun had already risen when *E* and *S*, completely exhausted, slept for a while to continue searching again. His fellows from Formosa Estuary and the skilled Captain Smith, who were informed of the news by a swallow on the way to Azores, also came to help. They looked over the whole castle: the chapel of Our Blessed Lady of Assumption, the deep cistern and other unusual corners. And they searched everywhere in the suburbs as far as the Roman bridge and they only found out some uncommon footprints. They returned to the interior of the fortress completely depressed, while *S* was trying to discover some evidence in the waters below. At that same time, they heard a whispered weeping which they couldn't find where it was coming from. Surprised as they were, they made their way to the wailing. But now they couldn't hear any more sounds. Their friends returned home, leaving *E* and *S* lonely in their search. Later on, already at night, when he had already lost his hope to find Maria, *E* caught a glimpse of indistinct figures in a passage of the castle. But what was going on out there? He was frightened. Suddenly, he caught sight of a lovely she-chameleon whose skin was turning colourful and was showing him sexual interest. He became more and more astonished! She must be an enchanted Alandalusian Moorish she-chameleon – he thought. He took two steps ahead and noticed the red shawl half-



hidden. He couldn't believe! Would that be a clue? He picked up the shawl and smelled it. It smelt to Maria Aparecida's sweet scent! In sight of that, *E* and *S* went on with the searches. They hunted up and down but once more they didn't find anything, what made *E* completely shaken. By seeing him in the dumps, the cynical she-chameleon clung to *E* who repudiated her away. What have you done to Maria Aparecida? – he replied sharply. The malicious she-chameleon was laughing at *E*, who was more and more terrified. One could only hear: muahahah! everywhere in the castle. *E* cried out, telling *S*, which was sailing below, what was going on. They were puzzled! Suddenly a light appeared at the end of the corridor. It was a glow-worm. *E* didn't think twice and asked her for help to find his beloved in that dreadful darkness. Immediately, the sweet insect took him to a confined deep trap. *E* bent down and, to his amazement, he caught sight of the tricky she-chameleon, very angry, kicking a very round and very smooth stone that was weeping. Might that be an enchantment? – he thought out. The very fast glow-worm discovered a secret entrance, passed through the trap-door and intensely dazzled the spiteful she-chameleon, immobilizing her. At that time, *E* was going down the abrupt but already enlightened stairs. Down there, he affectionately looked at the wonderful stone that was still weeping. *E* didn't have any more doubts. It was a cursed enchantment. Carefully he picked up the stone that, by feeling safe in the arms of her beloved, transformed into the superb Maria



Aparecida. Still stunned, Maria told him about the whole cruel suffering she had experienced, explaining that the wicked creature that had enchanted her, wasn't Arab, but truly Lusitanian. It was midnight when Maria was released! Like a knight of the Crusades, **E**, showed his beloved the strength of his true love and transformed the wicked she-chameleon into a rough rock. Maria Aparecida and **E** were very happy and descended, at last, the slope of the castle. At the foot of the hill, **S** was waiting for them and, quietly and without further delay, they started their voyage. On the way to Albufeira, **E** proposed to Maria Aparecida's. At last they both returned to Beato Vicente's farm, where they have been living very happy, eating figs and dragonflies.

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