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Koala on his travels

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Translation: Kitz Global Translation

Print and distribution on behalf of the author: Buchschmiede von Dataform Media GmbH, Vienna
www.buchschmiede.at

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ISBN:

978-3-99139-928-5 (Hardcover)

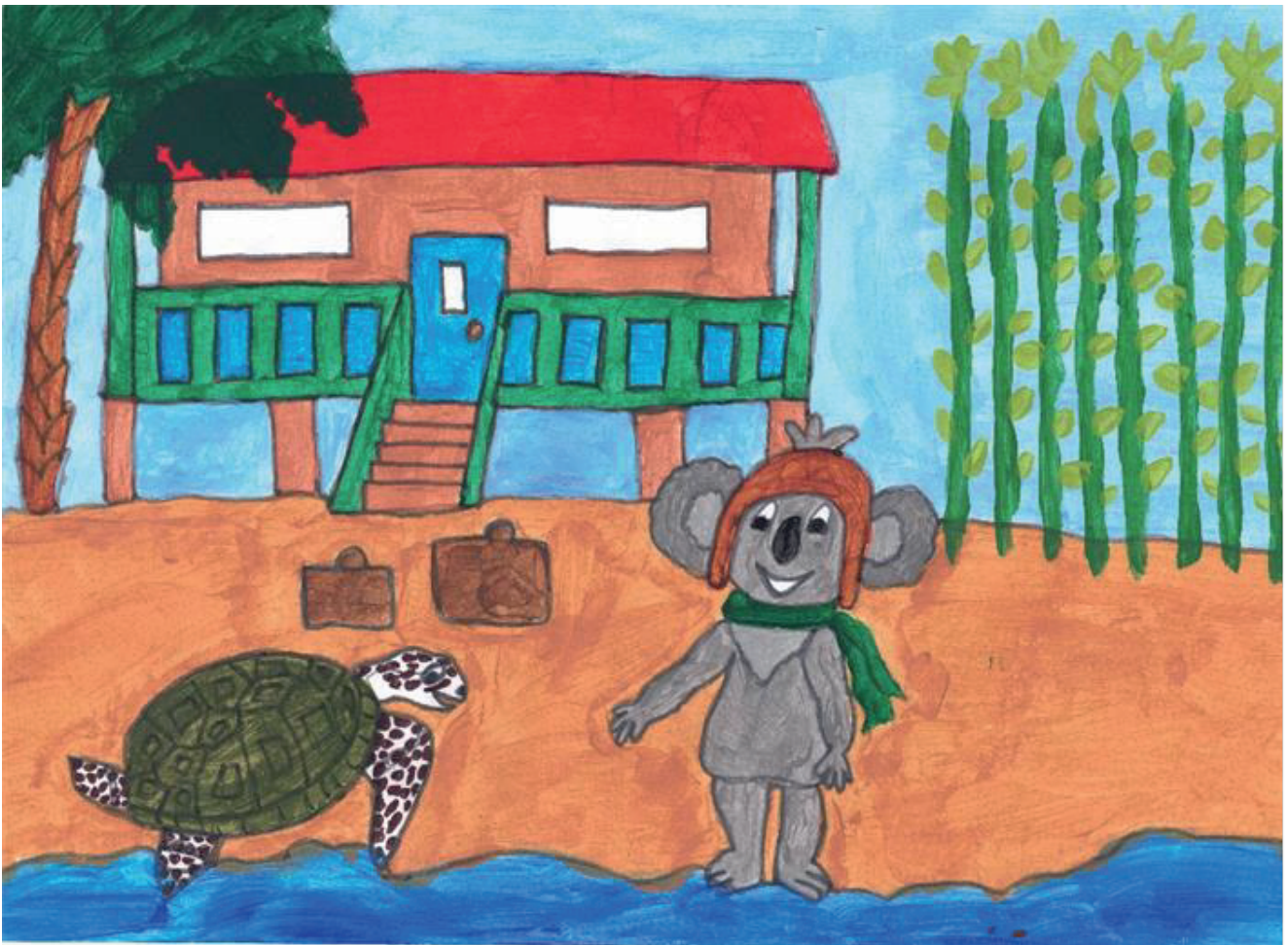
978-3-99139-929-2 (E-Book)

Printed in Austria

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Koala on his travels

One day, a koala living in Australia wanted to finally visit his friends, Bunny and Bear, in Europe. Where Koala lived, there was no snow and when Bunny and Bear had visited him last spring, they had told him all about snow. So he packed his bag and acquired some winter clothes before his trip. It was the end of autumn when Koala finally set foot on his small plane and jetted off north.



He paid a brief visit to his friend, Elephant, in India. Elephant was pleased to see Koala again and was waiting by the runway when he landed.



“Hello Koala!” he called out and had brought a little picnic for them to enjoy together. Koala asked Elephant, “Why don’t you come to Europe with me, we could go sledging?”

But Elephant imagined that his trunk could get tied in a knot, should he fall. He was not happy about the idea. “I think I’ll leave you to enjoy your winter holiday with our friends. The snow is too cold for me and I am such a big animal that I prefer splashing around in water to racing down a mountain. But why don’t you all come and visit me again in spring before it gets too hot in India so that our friends Bunny and Bear won’t break out in a sweat. I hope you have a great trip and look forward to hearing all about it!”

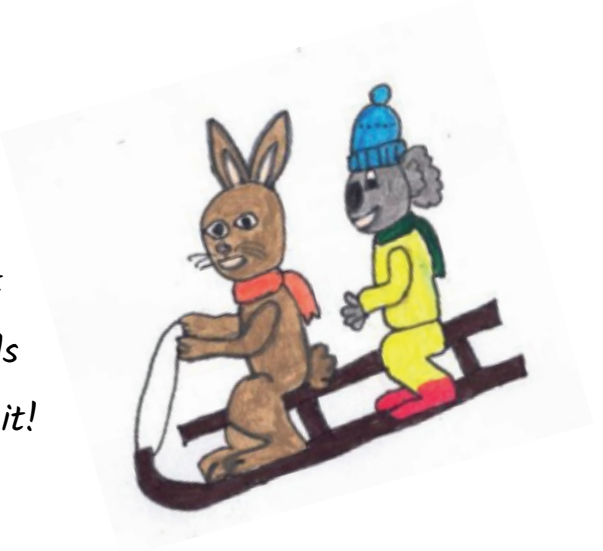
Koala got back on his plane and flew on towards Austria in Europe. In the evening, he arrived at the airport where Bunny and Bear were already waiting for him. They were delighted to see him and took his case and went to their home in the forest where they lived in a small wooden hut. "It's really cold here," said Koala, quickly disappearing inside.



Then he asked his friends what smelt so good – he could smell cinnamon. "They are cinnamon stars with white icing. We whipped the snow mixture quickly before you came so that the glaze would set in time. "What? You went out and whipped the snow?" "No, it's egg white and we call it snow because it's white like snow". "Aha, but they are delicious, thank you!"

The next day, after breakfast, they all put on their winter clothing. Bear asked, "Koala do you have enough winter clothes with you? It's quite a lot colder here". "I have a yellow snowsuit and a blue hat but no winter boots". Koala was briefly sad but then Bunny said, "I thought so! I got some extra red winter boots – I think these are just your size". "Thank you, they fit perfectly".

So they picked up their sledges and off they went! They had a great view from the top of the mountain. Koala suddenly felt queasy but then he saw how much fun the other animals were having and he couldn't wait! "Off we go!" his friends shouted.



A little later, a Siberian tiger asked whether they wanted to take part in a sledging race. They were very keen and lined up in a row. Hedgehog and Squirrel were on the first sledge,



Dog and Bear on the second,

the Siberian tiger and Duck on the third,



the snail family on the fourth

and Bunny and Koala on the fifth.



Tiger called out to the snail, "Don't you need to be fast?" Bunny laughed as the snail grimaced and then smiled and said, "Just wait!"



Owl gave the signal to start. "On your marks, get set, go!" At the beginning, the Siberian tiger was out in front but then he was overtaken by Squirrel and Hedgehog. The snail family tried to overtake them both on the second bend. Unfortunately, they didn't see the snowy mountain and landed in it! Dog and Bear were hot on the heels of Tiger but Bunny and Koala had a plan for overtaking them both. Suddenly, an avalanche of snow dropped down from a tree. Duck startled and briefly blocked the view of the Siberian tiger. They applied the brakes and the others were quickly able to glide past.

Bunny and Koala along with Dog and Bear quickly came to the front, followed by Hedgehog and Squirrel. Owl flew along with them and observed the sledgers so she could see who would be fastest. On the last bend, Hedgehog could not hold on any longer and fell from the sledge, right into the thick snow. Now only Dog and Bear and Bunny and Koala were left in the race. They both raced towards the finish line

and celebrated their successful ride. A short time later, the other sledgers crossed the finish line but were unlucky.

“Woohoo!” Koala shouted! “I will have to tell Elephant about it!” They all continued having fun until it got dark. Then Bunny said, “I think that’s enough sledging for one day, what do you think?” Koala and Bear agreed. “Thank you for taking part,” the Siberian tiger said, saying his goodbyes. Once back home, the three sat down for dinner as they were very hungry.

“Atchoo,” Bear sneezed. “I have probably just got a cold. I will make myself a hot cup of tea”. Koala had a tip for Bear. “Can I give you some eucalyptus salve? It helps with colds and opens the airways.” Bear said, “Apart from rosehip tea, I haven’t tried anything but I would happily give it a go”. He slept like a bear – very well!

Another day in snowy paradise

The next day, they all felt refreshed and were looking forward to the last day before Koala had to go home. “Today we will visit our friend, Horse. He will pull the sledge through the beautiful snowy landscape”. A few minutes later, they arrived at the stables and climbed aboard the horse-drawn sledge.



Bunny had brought some carrots for Horse because he liked them so much. Once the friends were sitting on the horse-drawn sledge, Horse set off. The sun was warm on their heads and the snow sparkled and glistened everywhere as the sun shone upon it. Koala was amazed. “Are they diamonds?” Bear said, “No, they are frozen snowflakes sparkling and shining in the sun”.