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KANELIS EXPLORES ATHENS

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To the children of this world with love



1. Kanelis' martaki and his wish

- Koraliiia, I'm waiting.
- -I'm coming, Mimis, I'm coming, I'm flying to you. I need a second to get the threads. Here you go, hold the one end, tightly please, in order to get it right.

In fact, Mr. Mimis waited, as he does every year at the end of February, for his wife to make a martaki for everyone. You don't know what a martaki is? Oh what an omission! Please, allow me to explain.

A martaki is a bracelet made of two threads, one red and one white, twisted around each other. People wear it in March and this protects them from the hot sun, which comes out after the winter break. Believe me, it works.

Mrs. Koralia braids a martaki for everyone in her family, but also for every friend of her children. Of course, her twin pains, oops pardon me, I mean twin sons, Vassilis and Yiannis, wear it proudly the whole month long. Not only the children enjoy it very much, but also Mr. Mimis is happy to wear it every year.

- God bless you, my dear Koralia. Bravo for carrying on the tradition, Mr. Mimis said and wore his martaki proudly.
- God bless you, too my dear Mimis and be happy, Mrs Koralia answered coyly.

March passed by soon and the custom reached its final phase. You must wonder what phase this is. Of course, of course, I will explain immediately, my dear friends.

According to tradition, people throw the martaki on the roof tops or in the gardens or on tree-branches and the swallows, which start building their nests, use the threads as building material. In return for this help offered by the people, and especially by the children, they leave a small gift in the place of the threads! Yes, yes, it is true. Last year, for example, the twins found a bag of colorful balloons, another time they found beautiful stickers with cars.

Of course Mr. Mimis doesn't expect anything, but every time he leaves his martaki, he makes one particular wish. If only all living creatures on this planet were safe and well. But this year, while he was walking to the bakony of his house in Holargos, he saw me, stuck into the flower-bed, enjoying the morning spring sun.

- Here, this year I give it to you, Kanelis, he told me and put the martaki around my neck. You should make your wish to the swallow.

Oh, my omission: I have been talking to you for so long now, but I haven't introduced myself, my dear friends. I am Kanelis, the bronze horse of Holargos and I am located in the big flower-bed of the bakony of a second-floor apartment.

My godfather was Mr. Mimis, who while sprinkling his rice pudding with cinnamon (kanela in greek), came up with a flashing idea for my name. Anyway, that's what happens when you live with people who like naming things. But, let's ignore this, please, in order to continue with our interesting story.

I didn't sleep the whole night long, my dear children. I was thinking what I could ask the swallow in return for the martaki offered to me so generously by Mr. Mimis.

Mrs. Koralia is a very kind hostess and often, in the summer, she invites friends at the balcony to have dinner and chat. Not that I eavesdrop, but willingly or not, I participate in the conversations. It's a fact that I'm impressed by the descriptions of the public works happening in Athens due to the Olympic Games. They talk about the stadiums, the renovations of the museums, the new pedestrian alleys, which link

the archaeological sites, and many other things. Oh, how I wish I could see them even

for one day.



2. The joy of the first flight and the encounter with Flat, the road roller

- Wake up, Kanelis, wake up.

I opened my eyes and saw a young swallow which had my martaki in its beak.

- Are you ready, Kanelis? I'm waiting for your wish.
- Hey, just a moment, give me a moment please to wake up. Yes, yes, if it is possible, I would like to fly over the city and see it. If ... if this is possible, of course.

I don't know why, but I was a little embarrassed for asking so much from the little swallow. I looked down and waited.

It touched me with its wing and flew away.

That's it, I said, it must have found my wish exaggerated and left me, what a pity...

How? What? But is it possible? I feel so light, as if I 'm not in the flower -bed of my dear Mrs. Koralia. And yet, my dear friends, I can fly...

Hurray, what a great feeling is this! What an unimaginable joy! I'm already over the fifth floor of the building where I live and I can see the whole street with the

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