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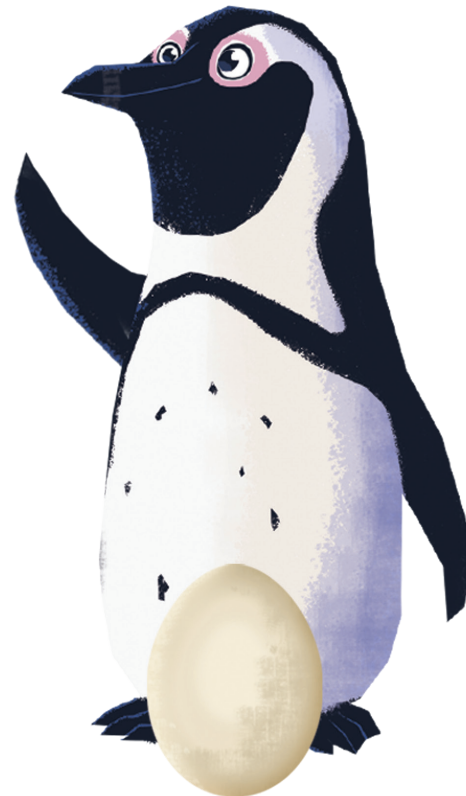
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MHLEKAZI'S

EGG-CITING ADVENTURE



**WRITTEN BY
MELUSI TSHABALALA**

**AND ILLUSTRATED BY
TEBOHO MOREKI**

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MHLEKAZI'S

EGG-CITING ADVENTURE

WRITTEN BY MELUSI TSHABALALA
AND ILLUSTRATED BY TEBHOHO MOREKI

During the special time called 'breeding season', a gentle lady penguin named Nenekazi had an important job. She needed to leave her dear husband, Mhlele, in their cosy penguin town of Boulders Beach.

She had to go on a journey to find yummy fish to bring back to her precious baby, once it hatches.



Nenekazi's name means 'Lady' in isiXhosa, and Mhlele means 'Sir'. Their penguin friends gave the couple these names because they were very respected in the town.

Even though all penguins look like they are wearing tuxedos, Nenekazi and Mhlele were treated like the only ones wearing business suits.



In their happy penguin town, Mhlekazi stayed behind because the daddies had the prestigious job of keeping the eggs warm and safe until the mommies returned.

Mhlekazi, proud and caring, was ready for his daddy duties.



One chilly day, Mhlekazi was on top of a hill, helping a clumsy daddy penguin with his egg. As they worked, laughter filled the air.



Suddenly, a playful breeze nudged Mhlekazi's egg off his feet, and it started rolling down the slope. At once, Mhlekazi chased after his precious egg.



Mhlelezi ran as fast as he could, flapping his flippers wildly, but a sneaky kelp gull – such a naughty bird – swooped down.

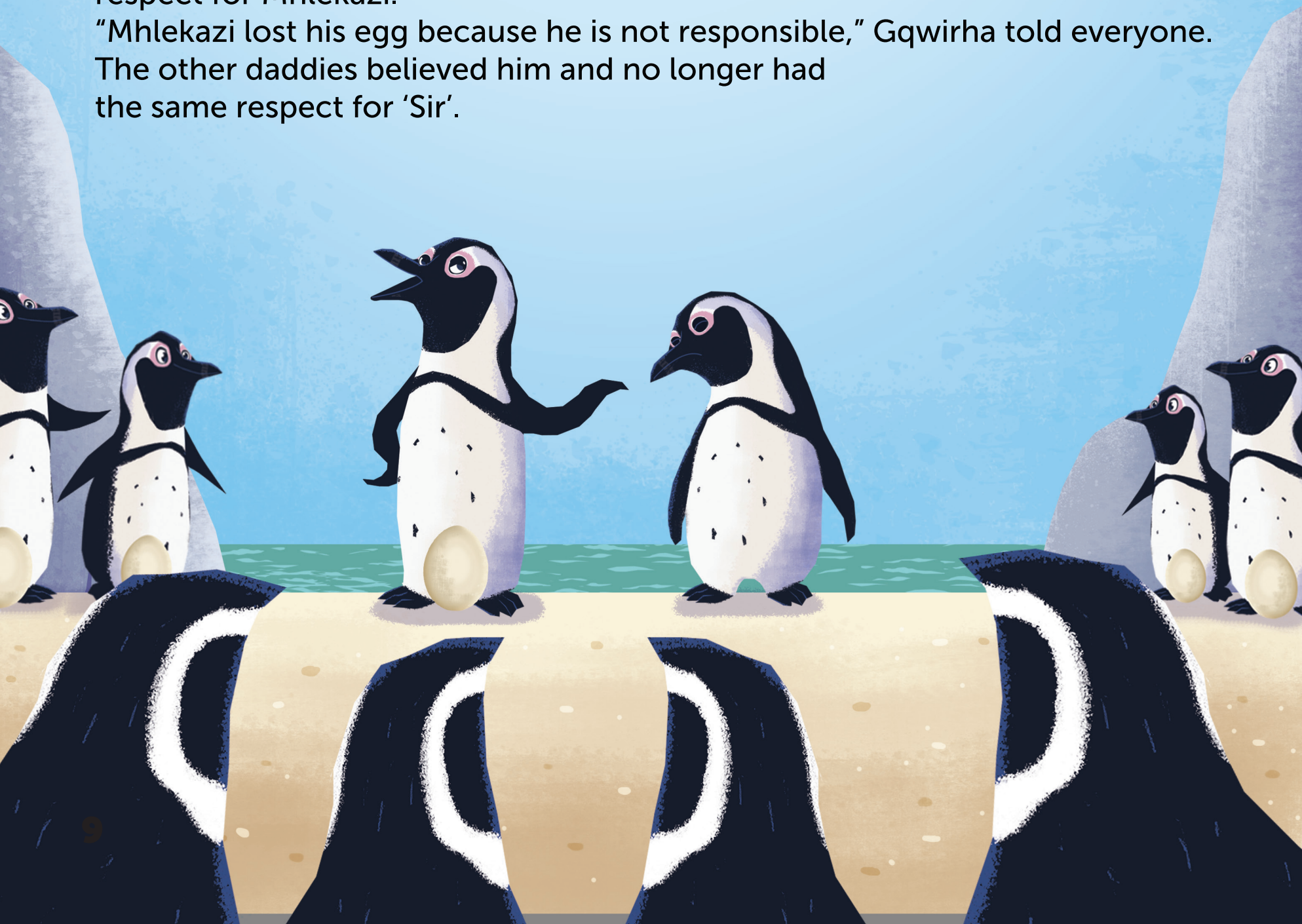


The daddies yelled, trying to scare the thief away from the egg, but the gull snatched up the egg and flew off, the egg firmly in its bill.



In the same penguin town, a penguin named Gqwirha, who had always been jealous of Mhlekazi, saw his chance to make the other daddy penguins lose respect for Mhlekazi.

"Mhlekazi lost his egg because he is not responsible," Gqwirha told everyone. The other daddies believed him and no longer had the same respect for 'Sir'.



Even the daddy he was helping when he lost his egg turned on him, no longer calling him Mhlekazi but calling him by his old name, Litha.



Feeling heartbroken and abandoned by his fellow penguins, Mhlekazi decided to go on a journey to find his lost egg.



Meanwhile, over the open ocean, the kelp gull dropped the egg because it was too big to carry. The egg fell towards a fishing boat, landing softly on a bundle of nets on the floor of the boat. Amazingly, it did not break. A kind fisherman saw the egg land and took it home to take care of it



Mhleleazi put on a human hat that he had picked up on the beach a long time ago, and in this disguise, he journeyed to the nearby Simon's Town. He had a feeling that going to the human town would help him find his egg. Along the way, he had to avoid being hit by cars, buses, and taxis, and by those busy people who always appeared to be in a hurry. There were friendly humans who greeted him though, thinking he was a short, distinguished gentleman because of his hat and tuxedo feathers.

These humans said, "Molo, Mhleleazi," which means, "Hello, Sir." They did not know his name was Mhleleazi, but they could tell he deserved respect.

An illustration of a penguin, Mhlekezi, sitting on a grey street. He is wearing a yellow hat with a red band. He is looking up at a man, Mawethu, who is standing next to him. Mawethu is wearing a green jacket, black pants, and green boots. He is looking down at the penguin. In the background, there are colorful buildings (blue, green, yellow) with balconies and a green hill. A yellow sign with the word 'SALE' is on a building. A yellow hat with a red band is on the ground next to the penguin.

As Mhlekezi walked down the street, he bumped into a man called Mawethu, and his human-hat fell off his head, revealing his penguin face.

"You are a penguin?!" the man exclaimed. "The penguin! The one I have been looking for!" At first, Mhlekezi was shocked that his hat had fallen off, but he felt a strong connection with this man. He sensed this was the man that would help him find his egg. And he was right! because Mawethu was the fisherman who had taken his egg to his home to care for it.

Mawethu invited Mhlelezi into his home. Once inside, they went into Mawethu's special room where he worked on fishing equipment, and there was Mhlelezi's egg, safe and sound. Mawethu had taken good care of it. Mhlelezi hugged Mawethu and cried tears of joy.



Then Mawethu took a photo from the desk and gave it to Mhlelezi. It was a photo of Mawethu, his wife and two children. "I show you this," Mawethu said, "so you can see that I am also a father. So I know how important this egg is to you, Sir."



Mhleleazi thanked Mawethu from the bottom of his heart, but he needed to rush back to the penguin town before the mommy penguins came back. Mawethu understood and offered to drive Mhleleazi back to Boulders Beach. It was faster than walking. They drove out of Simon's Town and onto the freeway, then got off the road and eventually arrived in Boulders Beach, surprising the other daddies.

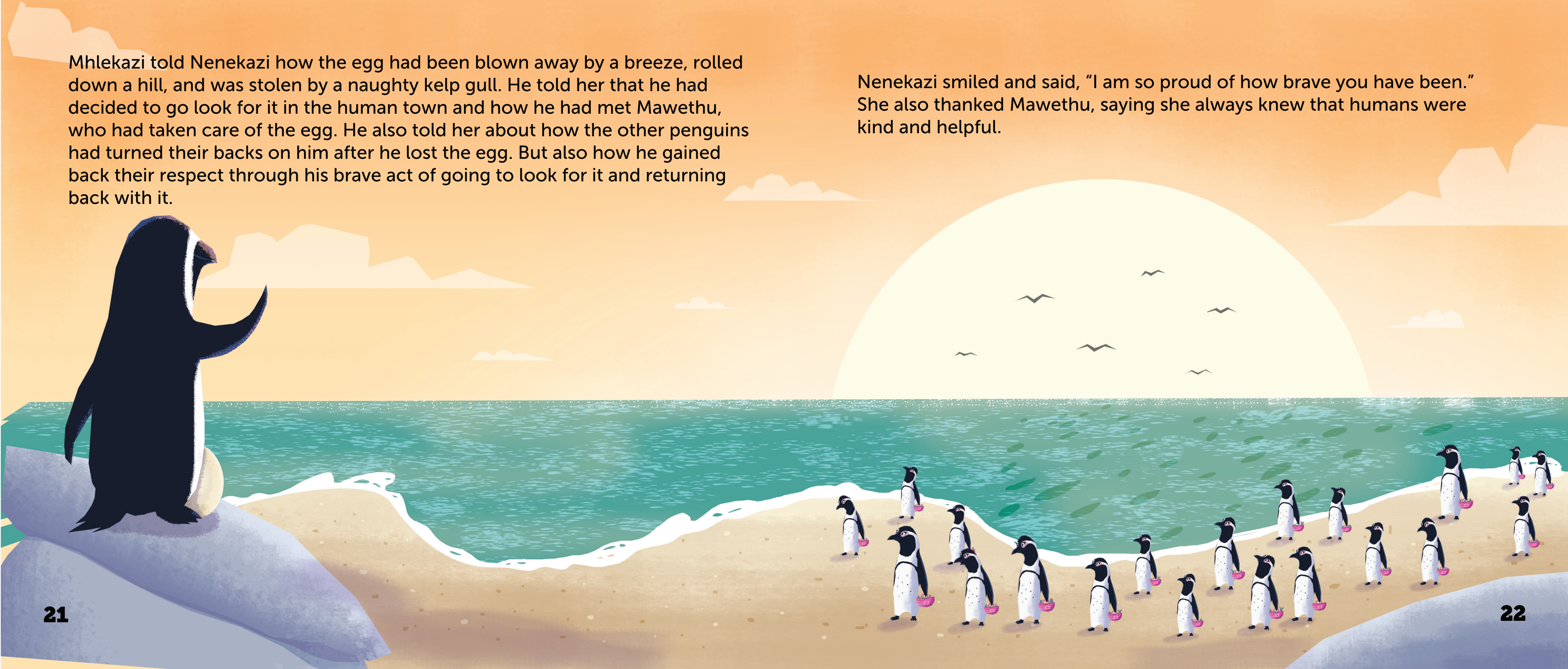


Mhleleazi introduced Mawethu, a kind fisherman, and the daddies erupted in cheers. Even Gqwirha, the jealous one, was astonished by Mhleleazi's bravery and that he made a human friend. When Mhleleazi revealed the egg, the daddies broke into chants. "Mhleleazi! Mhleleazi! Mhleleazi!" Gqwirha chanted the loudest.



Mhleleazi told Nenekazi how the egg had been blown away by a breeze, rolled down a hill, and was stolen by a naughty kelp gull. He told her that he had decided to go look for it in the human town and how he had met Mawethu, who had taken care of the egg. He also told her about how the other penguins had turned their backs on him after he lost the egg. But also how he gained back their respect through his brave act of going to look for it and returning back with it.

Nenekazi smiled and said, "I am so proud of how brave you have been." She also thanked Mawethu, saying she always knew that humans were kind and helpful.



As they talked, Mhleka's egg hatched, and a baby penguin was born. They named him Mawethu because of how much Mawethu had helped them.



Then suddenly, all the eggs hatched! All the penguins rejoiced and also named their babies Mawethu. This was not expected, but it was wonderful.



THE END

