

# On the Wings of Hope

Prose

Prokhor Ozornin

© Creative Commons

Attribution Non-Commercial Share-Alike

<http://ozornin.pro>

# Warranty

All texts, presented in the given book, are, besides other, the author's attempt to learn himself deeply, purely and better as far as possible through the creative process and are provided "as is" and without any warranty. We are not responsible for any of the following events, as well as any other possible weird side effect, following them:

1. Accidental change of your world-outlook.
2. The ruin/transformation of everything you previously believed in and hold dear.
3. Sudden inspiration, revelation, saturation, divination or any other "-ation" that is the result of your (and your only) mind's thoughts and soul's movements.
4. The short inability to say anything meaningful the time you have just finished reading yet another portion of this legacy.
5. The reader laughing hysterically.
6. The reader unwillingly, but still due to actions of own spirit, gone sane/insane.
7. The reader, pissing/peeping/singing from joy.
8. The reader's sudden cry of happiness.
9. The reader becoming free of so many unnatural social rituals and prejudices, causing havoc in the hearts of yet enslaved by the system.
10. The reader's attempt to "spread the word" about how nasty-tasty this pile of papers is for you (and your home printer included).
11. The reader's attempt to find out current author's dislocation for the purpose of communicating with him "face to face".
12. The reader's decision to learn himself better through the creative process. The author would like to thank the reader in advance for his immense sense of humor, used in the process of consumption of aforementioned notice.

# Table of contents

<b>Angelic Chronicles .....</b>	<b>- 10 -</b>
<i>Cupid .....</i>	<i>- 11 -</i>
<i>Angel .....</i>	<i>- 14 -</i>
<i>Guardian Angel .....</i>	<i>- 16 -</i>
<i>Bookkeeping .....</i>	<i>- 19 -</i>
<i>Bureau .....</i>	<i>- 25 -</i>
<i>Animal planet .....</i>	<i>- 35 -</i>
<i>Probability .....</i>	<i>- 39 -</i>
<i>Veto .....</i>	<i>- 42 -</i>
<i>Time .....</i>	<i>- 45 -</i>
<i>Voices .....</i>	<i>- 48 -</i>
<i>Déjà vu .....</i>	<i>- 50 -</i>
<i>Diagnosis .....</i>	<i>- 54 -</i>
<i>Sacrifice .....</i>	<i>- 58 -</i>
<i>Gamer .....</i>	<i>- 62 -</i>
<i>When the Sleeper awakes .....</i>	<i>- 64 -</i>
<i>Observer .....</i>	<i>- 66 -</i>
<i>Improbability .....</i>	<i>- 70 -</i>
<i>Unfinished story of the space vessel .....</i>	<i>- 75 -</i>
<i>Unreality .....</i>	<i>- 77 -</i>
<i>Companions .....</i>	<i>- 80 -</i>
<i>Messenger on the planet Earth .....</i>	<i>- 85 -</i>
<i>Destiny .....</i>	<i>- 92 -</i>
<i>Coming .....</i>	<i>- 95 -</i>
<i>Slava .....</i>	<i>- 101 -</i>
<i>Scenario .....</i>	<i>- 105 -</i>
<i>Creators .....</i>	<i>- 108 -</i>
<i>Chronicles of Mogoth: The Called .....</i>	<i>- 110 -</i>

*Trick* ..... - 130 -

**Faith and Disgrace**..... **135** -

*Warning: God!* ..... - 136 -

*Rituality*..... - 139 -

*God's logic is non-human* ..... - 142 -

**Notes of the Semi-Enlightened**..... **145** -

*Voice* ..... - 146 -

*Maybe, father* ..... - 148 -

*Monologue with a child* ..... - 150 -

*We are* ..... - 152 -

*Thought* ..... - 154 -

*About missing princes* ..... - 156 -

*Denying self-portrait*..... - 158 -

*Crime and punishment*..... - 159 -

*Child* ..... - 160 -

*Accident* ..... - 162 -

*Mass-media!* ..... - 164 -

*Fear* ..... - 166 -

*Theory* ..... - 170 -

*Point of view* ..... - 172 -

*You came too late* ..... - 175 -

*Tail* ..... - 177 -

*Whisper*..... - 180 -

*Extremism* ..... - 183 -

*I am always alone* ..... - 185 -

*I feel* ..... - 187 -

**P Means People** ..... **189** -

*Nameless One* ..... - 190 -

*Ill one* ..... - 193 -

<i>Life is ahead</i> .....	- 195 -
<i>Glamour</i> .....	- 198 -
<i>Sign of the Way</i> .....	- 202 -
<i>On the crossroads</i> .....	- 207 -
<i>On the way to the sun</i> .....	- 211 -
<i>Ill mind</i> .....	- 216 -
<i>Justification</i> .....	- 219 -
<i>Gift</i> .....	- 222 -
<i>Last word</i> .....	- 230 -
<i>Offer</i> .....	- 232 -
<i>Sentence</i> .....	- 238 -
<i>To forgive</i> .....	- 241 -
<i>Five in the boat, not counting the cat</i> .....	- 244 -
<i>Born for life</i> .....	- 247 -
<i>Free like a wind</i> .....	- 252 -
<i>Perfection</i> .....	- 257 -
<i>Plant louse</i> .....	- 267 -
<i>Thirtieth day</i> .....	- 269 -
<i>Imprisoned for a quarter of a century</i> .....	- 272 -
<i>Thingy</i> .....	- 277 -
<b>Lyre and Satire</b> .....	<b>- 281 -</b>
<i>America speaks</i> .....	- 282 -
<i>Notes of self-isolated</i> .....	- 286 -
<i>Master</i> .....	- 289 -
<i>Performance</i> .....	- 294 -
<i>Who is Who</i> .....	- 297 -
<b>World of Light</b> .....	<b>- 298 -</b>
<i>In the New World</i> .....	- 299 -
<i>Time of heroes</i> .....	- 308 -
<i>State of Earth</i> .....	- 312 -

*And all diseases will be gone* ..... - 313 -

*God's Dream* ..... - 318 -

*World of God* ..... - 321 -

**World of Darkness** ..... **324** -

*Your choice, mankind!* ..... - 325 -

*Virus*..... - 330 -

*For the Patriarch!*..... - 334 -

*Immunity*..... - 341 -

*Infection*..... - 348 -

*When the sun will rise*..... - 350 -

*When the veil falls* ..... - 352 -

*License* ..... - 354 -

*Mage Nag* ..... - 364 -

*Dead city*..... - 369 -

*World on the horizon* ..... - 372 -

*Similar ones* ..... - 376 -

*They said "no" to their homeworld*..... - 378 -

*Pandemica* ..... - 383 -

*Pandoranews* ..... - 388 -

*Order: democratize!*..... - 390 -

*Octopus*..... - 392 -

*Prison* ..... - 395 -

*Lesson of war* ..... - 398 -

*Circus* ..... - 401 -

*C.H.I.P.* ..... - 405 -

*I, robot* ..... - 410 -

**Tales and Trails** ..... **413** -

*Homeless* ..... - 414 -

*Close-by and Far-away* ..... - 415 -

*Great Exodus*..... - 417 -

<i>PPP</i> .....	- 419 -
<i>Dao of Programming</i> .....	- 424 -
<i>Critic</i> .....	- 433 -
<i>Legend of the Divine Island</i> .....	- 434 -
<i>Burthen</i> .....	- 439 -
<i>Odyssey</i> .....	- 440 -
<i>Tale of the false saint</i> .....	- 443 -
<i>Past</i> .....	- 446 -
<i>Fish and Lion</i> .....	- 447 -
<i>With God</i> .....	- 450 -
<i>Fate</i> .....	- 451 -
<i>Happiness</i> .....	- 453 -
<i>Here and There</i> .....	- 454 -
<i>Teacher</i> .....	- 456 -
<i>Miracle</i> .....	- 458 -
<i>The young and the old man</i> .....	- 460 -
<b>Dance of Times</b> .....	<b>- 462 -</b>
<i>In search of a world</i> .....	- 463 -
<i>Warrior of Odin</i> .....	- 473 -
<i>Forward into the past</i> .....	- 482 -
<i>History of one duel</i> .....	- 485 -
<i>Memory of the millenniums</i> .....	- 490 -
<i>Plan 2020</i> .....	- 494 -
<b>Fantasia</b> .....	<b>- 497 -</b>
<i>How fantasy heroes will battle with the Ancient Red Dragon</i> -	498 -
<i>How fantasy heroes will install Windows</i> .....	- 502 -
<i>How fantasy heroes will brawl in a tavern</i> .....	- 505 -
<i>Fantasy</i> .....	- 507 -
<b>Chronicles of Our Age</b> .....	<b>- 516 -</b>

*On the screen*..... - 517 -

*Diseases of our age*..... - 519 -

*New Age Threshold*..... - 525 -

*Wrath of war* ..... - 540 -

*Copyright marasmus*..... - 543 -

*Mutants of our age*..... - 546 -

*Drug* ..... - 557 -

*Weapons of our age* ..... - 559 -

*Relieved* ..... - 567 -

*Enlightened ones of our age* ..... - 569 -

*TV*..... - 577 -

*Evolution*..... - 579 -

*Expert*..... - 583 -

**To You, Not Few**..... - **585** -

*Charity* ..... - 586 -

*Majority*..... - 588 -

*Believer* ..... - 590 -

*Wolf* ..... - 592 -

*You are*..... - 596 -

*Design 2.0* ..... - 598 -

*Salary* ..... - 601 -

*Illusions of crowds* ..... - 603 -

*When whirlwind comes* ..... - 605 -

*Tough one* ..... - 611 -

*Liar*..... - 613 -

*Beloved* ..... - 615 -

*Maybe*..... - 618 -

*We, cats*..... - 621 -

*Not them!* ..... - 623 -

*Unofficial appeal to Americans*..... - 625 -

*Unofficial appeal to book publishers*..... - 627 -  
*Unofficial appeal to false judges*..... - 629 -  
*Unofficial appeal to politicians* ..... - 630 -  
*Unofficial appeal to churchmen*..... - 632 -  
*Discordant*..... - 634 -  
*Education* ..... - 636 -  
*One day you will awake* ..... - 639 -  
*Priest* ..... - 641 -  
*Real trifle*..... - 646 -

# Angelic Chronicles

# Cupid

“Ave! Did you check yesterday thought-mail? I left there a couple of new messages, concerning our couple and temporary-spatial coordinates for their potential meeting.”

“Aye-aye, comrade sergeant, I checked on that. But you know that I have little experience yet, afraid to miss my target. And what exactly happens to people when you do miss – they haven’t yet told this to us in the Academy, we were only given a generic induction, concerning safety measures and use of bows.”

“Well, that depends on how you miss it,” his current curator answered to the cadet with a smile. “It’s possible to miss the way that you will feel sorry for all their lives, and they will never remember you by either a kind word or a warm thought. For example, if you strike their heads instead of hearts, they will respect each other with a guarantee – but hardly will pass hand-in-hand through, as we say, fire, water, and trumpets of Jericho. If your arrows hit their stomach spot, they will certainly love without fail – yet not each other, but their own refrigerators, especially at night, especially after 6 P.M. And if you happen to strike, well, below their stomach – the flame of passion in their relations will be able to burn them alive, but a warm flame of love will never spark. And our mission is to give them love. So – keep training with phantoms and don’t miss.” With these words the man with white wings and golden feather on his head, that was called as a sergeant, approvingly clapped his workmate in new given to both of them a mission and stood close to him at a shooting loophole of the fortress, observing with a smile how curly-headed pink morning clouds keep floating below.

“Thanks for explanations, comrade sergeant. I will surely consider that in my training!”

“And also when you pull a bowstring, move your wings back as well so the tension will get stronger, and impulse of Cupid will exceed one hundred of spiritual units upon hitting. If it gets below that value – they can indifferently pass by each other and will hardly have anything between them in the future. And if it gets greater than one hundred – it will always work, verified by experience.”

“Comrade Sergeant, and why should this happen near a bus-stop? You wrote that to me in thought-mail yesterday. I, certainly, formed today a path for him there, made arrangements with colleagues, estimated times, gave him a couple of necessary thoughts, even shown a dream about this upcoming meeting. Yet I still don’t understand – why are they supposed to meet with each other there instead of a nearby park, it’s located not far away and there are fewer people there, it would be more comfortable for them to communicate with each other afterward.”

“And this, pal, was not my will, but the higher one. I am too small and inexperienced myself to solve tasks like management of destinies,” sergeant burst out laughing. “Department of Destinies Control provided me with all required data when I was appointed to this task. And there, as you well know, serious pals are working, and everything turns out to be calculated and verified by them in advance.”

It's you, pals, who should be taught almost everything, even how to properly hold one's bow so that tears don't splash from one's eyes. So, should I demonstrate you how to strike a heart of humans so that their souls sing in joy afterward?"

"Aye-aye, comrade sergeant, please demonstrate!"

"Well, pal, look thoroughly!" skilled Angel-curator answered to the cadet, taking his bow from a belt. "Do you see phantoms of two people, created by me on that cloud? And now I just – w-h-o-s-h!" and loudly singing in the air arrow accurately pierced hearts of two targets that were standing one after another.

"My God!" cadet exclaimed in surprise. "Two in a row! Cupid impulse equals to two thousands of spiritual units!"

"Study, pal! Only that way they can be laid together in a row!" laughed the sergeant.

\* \* \*

Today – if such a concept is applicable for worlds where time goes non-linearly – it was very briskly in the Academy. One can imagine! First spiritual-battle experience is not a joke at all, especially if there is a responsibility for a couple of two future lovers, lying on your wings.

Angela cadets, who were yet to be engaged into their first battle, accurately soared above the ground, holding bows of golden color in their hands. These bows along with specifically shaped for them arrows were the well-known invention of the legendary engineer Cupid, who has graduated from Angelic Military Academy with honors a lot of eons ago, and their most valued ability was to strike humans to death – in the sense that after direct hit in their hearts all negative feelings, created by opponents of Angels, were gradually dying away, obeying to imperious call of born sincere love. Actually, many people usually called these masters of arrows and bows by name of the inventor – even though this was incorrect, for each of them possessed his unique name, granted from above and difficult to pronounce in common for humans language.

This Academy was well-known in the Seven Worlds. Reminding unapproachable fortress, soaring in the air over the clouds, which were dimming the sky, it was a home for many of the best military engineers and smithy of the highest class of warriors. And one of these classes were such Cupids.

"Hold on! Quietly! Stand up in the air above the ground by the length of wings!" Elderly colonel, who has come through many battles with demons and was deprived by them of a half of his wing, was giving orders to cadets, who have arrived at firing practice, walking by parade-ground made from shining stones. "Divide into pairs for training firing practice! Move on to loopholes!"

Colonel walked to and fro from one loophole to another, checking combat readiness of his future soldiers and correcting from time to time their fighting stance, the position of wings, the validity of chosen targets, the tension of arrows and a lot of other extremely important aspects in a life of each and every real Cupid.

"Is everyone ready?" he asked at last.

“Aye-aye, comrade colonel!” hundreds of Angels, standing near castle loopholes, answered him as a chorus.

“Fire at will!”

*2017-08-30*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Angel

“Greeting, people!” Angel smiled.

“And who might you be, we wonder?” they muttered.

“I am a son of God,” answered Angel. “I have come to aid you.”

“We didn’t call for you!” they have bitten.

“Of that, I know,” replied Angel. “That’s why I have come to you.”

“Because you weren’t expected?” men burst out laughing.

“No, because you would never call for me yourself.”

“The stub is clear, the day is ended,” they have been mocking. “We are living pretty well even without ones like you!”

“Oh, that I see,” Angel has sighted. “Have already collected stones to banish us, have you?”

“What was that?” a shout came from a crowd.

“Throw away your stones from the bosoms,” said Angel. “Better, if on the road.”

“Well, you know,” people have choked. “What if they will still be of some use to us?”

“Going to throw them in the sky, are you?” Angel smiled. “Or have you forgotten of the gravitation invisible?”

“We have forgotten nothing! Of all the natural laws we are aware of, taming it!”

“To tame one, you have to love one. We are responsible for the ones whom we tame.”

“How very smart of you, oh our star-descended one!”

“For what reason have you brought knives together with you? Are you going to cut yourselves in distemper, I wonder?”

“Nay, we have no need to cut ourselves, oh damned one! Intended for the enemy of ours this weapon is.”

“How are you expecting to distinguish friends from foes, if anger blinds minds of yours so often?”

“Have no worry of that, we’ll sort it all somehow with no aid from your side! We have lived much and we have known much.”

“Who is that one, standing among you with a backpack that has hunched his back? Why haven’t you tried to facilitate the burden of his, idly standing?”

“Oh, ye are a stupid one, indeed! A stock of stones for the ones like you we have gathered in that backpack, so that they were always, well, at hand.”

“Do facilitate the burden of your brother.”

“We are going to throw that stones at ye then, foolish one!”

“Try it, if minds of yours thirst for no other.”

“Tally-ho, brothers! Have no mercy!”

\* \* \*

“And where is the fulfillment of your desires, throwing ones? Or haven’t you been warned of the gravitation invisible?”

“Oh, how terribly painful it is! Save us, ignorant ones, from those stones, flying back to us! Accelerating are those stones returning and feet of ours have stuck seriously like in a bog, and no longer can we move forward! Rescue us for we thirst for living intolerably nevertheless! Save us, we beg of you!”

“Lend your hands to each other and let last ones from you take my hands, if out of bogs you are daring to get out. Carry you on my wings I will, believed ones. Hold each other tight for now to be saved!”

\* \* \*

“Why have you saved us, oh Angel, sent from the heavens?”

“Whether you feel better with no stones in your possessions, I wonder?”

“We didn’t ask you for favors! Homes of ours are destroyed, clothes of ours are smeared in the dirt – and whether by your favor, we wonder?”

“Whether it was not you who have plunged yourselves straight into a swamp? What are you carrying in bosoms once again?”

“Because we have dirtied ourselves in that smelly mug, then you shall be washed in it as well! Like us, you will become from now on from the inside out!”

“Have you no fear to turn black from the dirt of yours, I wonder?”

“Tally-ho, oh brothers! Have no mercy!”

2011-12-25

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Best*

# Guardian Angel

“Yes?” my snow-white Guardian Angel turned to me and smiled warmly. “Have you called for me?”

“I... hm... to tell the truth, I wasn't totally confident that you were listening to me,” I mumbled.

“I always do listen to you and hear you,” the Angel said. “But you currently, unfortunately, not.”

“So... do you want to say that you have nothing like a lunch break or anything like that?” I was surprised.

“No,” replied the Angel. “I have a need for neither sleep nor rest. It's you, people, who prefer to sleep with eyes open widely”.

“You mean that you are always at work?” I guessed.

“Well, yes,” my dear Angel replied indulgently. “I am in a service to the God.”

“And how do you fare there... well, in general?” I found nothing better than to ask that.

“Well and good,” the Angel answered. “Dry and warm. Even though there are no millions of options to choose from here. It's you, mankind, who will soon have to choose at last.”

“To choose what, exactly?” I asked.

“Destiny. Life or death. God or Devil. Light or Darkness. Whatever you name it, the essence stays the same. Well...” and the Angel became silent for a second, “you, fortunately, understand that well.”

“I do,” I answered. “A pity, though, that I don't always hear you.”

“It's all in your powers and in desire,” and the Angel smiled again. “Such is my job, actually, to always hear you and help you to find the God.”

“And what prevents you from doing that right now?” I made my next question.

“Him, mostly,” and the Angel has shown his wing on the left. “Well, and sometimes you too, when start doing nonsense.”

“Who's that, him?” I asked hastily, and only then have noticed the Imp, standing nearby, “that black one?”

“Well, it's only now he looks like that,” replied my Angel. “But he's able to pretend to look as oh-so-white in times, like a chameleon. See, how he stares at me right now?” and the Angel smiled warmly and pointed his wing to the left again.

“I take it that he's angry?” I questioned my Angel.

“Yes, he's like that, from time to time. He has his job too, after all. And he's too will be judged, as well as all of us.”

“Judged in what sense?” I misunderstood.

“Oh, you don’t know yet, do you?” my Angel was surprised. “There will be a revision of the universe soon, and the Dread Judgment of the Lord, as you call it. I would, however, rather name it Just Judgment.”

“And what will be after the Judgment?” I asked.

“Life or death,” replied the Angel, “for you, for me, and for him” – and he pointed his wing on Imp once again.

“You mean, you can die too?” I was stunned, “Are Angels not immortal?”

“Not for the Judgment. If the Tempter of any man, guarded my ones, similar to me, prevails, the Tempter survives, and Angel and the man become history. If the Guardian Angel prevails – then he as well as his ward survive, and the Tempter becomes history instead. It’s that simple. Such is the Court.”

“And the people, who have turned to the path of evil, betray their Angels as well?” I was terrified.

“Alas, indeed. And try to feel now,” and my beautiful Angel stirringly looked into my eyes, “how it’s – to die for immortal one?”

“And... how many Angels are going to die like that?”

“Under preliminary forecasts – many,” and the Angel sighted sorrowfully. “But...” and he became inspired once again, “everything can still be changed.”

“If people will hear their Angels and step away from the dark path?” I questioned.

“Yes,” said the Angel, “if they would prevail over their nature. There is very little time left,” he added.

“Little time left?”

“When clock’s arrows will be on the top,” and Angel has become silent for a moment, “very interesting events will start to happen.”

“The world will be changing?”

“Definitely.”

“Can I help people realize what is awaiting them?” I asked hopefully.

“Certainly. It’s all in your forces and in the hands of God. And I, too, won’t abandon you, for certain.”

“How I do love you, my pure Angel!” I have exclaimed with tears in the eyes.

“I know,” he smiled mildly. “Come to me, allow me to embrace you in my wings.”

“Thank you, Angel, thank you so much for hearing me and caring of me! Let us never part from each other!”

“Yes, let it be so,” my Angel has tenderly answered, gently covering me with his white wings. “Let’s start to always hear each other in the long last...”

*2010-10-18*

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

## Bookkeeping

In this most significant for him day Artem Sergeyeovich was, as they say, out of sorts. As a matter of fact, his spirit, which has grown extremely tired from a fifty-years life, was a flyer of sorts, soaring over a silently lying in a bed body, performing such sorts of air pirouettes, which would surely give a birth to envy in hearts of even the best of human stuntmen and acrobats. The body in its turn didn't show even the slightest signs of what is usually considered to be the only one given to a human life. And how hard did the spirit of Artem Sergeyeovich try to bring it back to life! He even tried both slaps in a face and uppercuts – yet no to avail.

“What, did I really died?” the spirit, floating over a body, was thinking to himself. “Silently, touching and warning in advance no one, died in a dream? And for what's sake was all that, I would like to know? And where should I, as a matter of fact, go on now?”

Whatever you may say, but hard is the realization that you are still alive and standing nearby an already breathless corpse, and not every Artem Sergeyeovich can easily bear with it. Having performed some more dozens of somersaults and finally convinced himself, that he is indeed a little bit off himself – at least habitual to himself – the spirit of Artem Sergeyeovich silently sat down on the edge of a bed near his last vessel and got lost in thoughts.

“What did I live for – and for whose sake did I die? What was the meaning of this, so suddenly ended life, if it turned out all of a sudden that it was not the only one? What is life and why do we need death, eventually? Where have I got and what do I do now?” these and a great number of similar to these questions soared in a consciousness of incorporeal Artem Sergeyeovich, and the lack of clear answers to them forced his spirit to become more and more out of sorts.

He was distracted from these sad afterlife reflections by someone's soft coughing behind his back. From a surprise, the spirit of Artem Sergeyeovich made yet another somersault, turning towards a source of the sound. Directly in front of him a beautifully looking – perhaps even to a degree of how Artem Sergeyeovich thought about himself some thirty corporal years ago – a young man with snow-white wings was standing.

“Ghm!” perplexedly said Artem Sergeyeovich.

“And kind spirit to you as well!” the young man said in reply.

“Who are you, actually, and what's your name? And why do you creep towards me to silently?”

“You can call me as the Guide of the Other World”, the young winged man replied kindly. “I was sent here to help you to orient in these, so to say, unusual for your circumstances, and further to accompany you through all necessary instances.”

“Indeed! Circumstances are truly unusual,” agreed Artem Sergeyeovich. “I have died, damn it! And I had thought that I would live forever! It's absolutely unusual!”

“In the highest, that is, in spiritual degree,” smiled the Guide. “Not every day we are given a privilege to die, isn’t it? Though some people began to consider that they have been dying since own birth... So, are you prepared to move further?”

“And where shall we go, I would like to know?” Artem Sergeevich interrogatively raised his eyebrows. “Don’t I need to say a final goodbye to my relatives? I, by the way, had two children and a wife in this former world. It’s very unlikely that they will rejoice of hearing about my sudden death.”

“I am afraid, Artem Sergeevich, that they won’t be able to see or hear you any longer. If only through dreams – but you will have to ask for a special permission in the Department of Dreams in that case, and at present times it’s seldom given to, so to speak, temporarily and untimely resting in peace ones. Therefore, we should move forward together, there is no other way. Especially when control periods for passing through necessary social instances are strictly limited. So, are you ready to go with me?”

“Well, if I have no other options left...” the spirit of Artem Sergeevich made a helpless gesture with its translucent hands.

“You had a broadest free choice when you have lived in so habitual to your physical world, Artem Sergeevich. And now we must accurately follow well-established procedures.”

Having that said, the Angel, who has called himself as the Guide, raised own covered with feathers hand, drawing a spiral in the air. With each newly made pass of his hands, this spiral was becoming brighter and more visible and finally turned into a gracefully looking sparkling tunnel.

“Transition between the worlds,” explained the Guide. “Some people see it by themselves when they leave own bodies. Let’s go,” he continued, having taken Artem Sergeevich by hand.

Two figures – one of a casting golden light Angel and a gray-brown figure of Artem Sergeevich’s spirit – bravely stepped into the tunnel. At first, something pinched in the eyes of Artem Sergeevich, then started to sparkle, then sparkles began falling down, his head started spinning and from what he has seen somewhere inside these tunnel labyrinths he finally lost his consciousness...

\* \* \*

“Scatty one you’ve got this time. He even didn’t manage to pass through circles on his own.”

“Few are capable of doing that now. Therefore, they send us more and more often for them, you know that well.”

“And I should guide a suicide spirit tomorrow, his term of near-earth tortures has just come to an end, and term for spiritual pain has just started.”

“That’s not a big deal. I was once given a mission to guide a couple, who for the sake of eternal love, as our opponents inspired them, jumped together into the industrial tank, filled with sulfuric acid. You’d better not see, how their souls looked like when their term of Transition has finally come...”

“Cranky ones.”

“Well, they are not the first, and surely not the last.”

“Looks like your ward got recovered at last. His consciousness resonates from a surprise on awakening, I can feel it even from here.”

“Yes, precisely. Guide him to estimators. Man, he will be surprised.”

“Well, till our next meeting in the sky, brothers.”

“So long.”

With these thoughts, by means of which he communicated with his colleagues from department and hierarchy, a young white-winged man went with a fast pace to Artem Sergeyeovich, who was lying on a lawn’s grass of emerald color.

“It’s good to see that you have finally regained consciousness,” he answered with a smile to a spirit of Artem Sergeyeovich, which was drowsily looking around. “I had to lull you somewhere in the middle of our journey, because due to the nature of your earth affairs the route, that we were obliged to take, as well as inhabitants of these other-worldly tracks were not the most pleasant ones,” he added quietly.

“I... what... where... oh!” barely managed to mutter our hero.

“You are in a special place now, on fields of restoration and healing. But we need to continue our journey because we are already somewhat out of a required time schedule. By the way, while you were resting, I have already managed to bring all necessary informational materials to the department of returned souls, including your family tree, data on your lifetime affairs, habits and hobbies, merits and demerits. Therefore, at present time we, my dear fellow traveler, need to proceed to estimators in bookkeeping department, and after that – vast waiting halls will wait for you for a whole million of earth years. As writers of your world said – ‘One million of years before doomsday’... or the end of darkness. It depends on your final score, calculated by estimators in the bookkeeping department.”

“What sort of... bookkeeping department? Is that a business of... sorts? Sales of tunnel attractions or souls?” muttered half-asleep Artem Sergeyeovich.

“Oh, by no means,” the Guide burst out laughing, “no sales at all! Our accountants neither buy nor sell human souls, don’t you worry. They are engaged in the estimation of their quality because only qualitative souls will be taken into account. Well, and how qualitative is your soul by our standards, you will learn soon enough. I am, by the way, will be interested in knowing that as well,” the Guide smiled politely.

With these words being said, he took a soul of Artem Sergeyeovich on his hands, made a jump from the ground and soared up into celestial heights.

“Good afternoon, Rael,” smiled the young white-winged girl in a celestial-blue dress. “Newcomer?”

“And in a first-person,” answered the Guide, lowering Artem Sergeyeovich on a habitual to him soil, which had a shape of shining in bluish shade floor. “Registration department must have already sent you his data, check incoming messages. You calculate and estimate him now, and I will be waiting in a corridor, all right?”

“Certainly,” smiled the estimator, who obviously liked Rael. “So kind of you to carry him by yourself. People have become noticeably weaker recently. Unlike the times when the leader Jesus personally descended into their world...”

“By the way, I wanted to ask that a long ago, – does your program takes it into account? Well, weakening of human spirit?”

“It does,” Angelina smiled. “But that’s a minus, as you certainly understand.”

“I do...” Rael answered lingeringly. “Well, I am waiting in a corridor there. Come in, Artem Sergeyeovich, take a sit.”

“Take a seat!” repeated the accountant and moved up a chair to Artem Sergeyeovich, who unwillingly sat down. “So, let’s take a look...”

Within ten minutes the girl diligently typed something on the input device of her visor, and then uttered:

“It’s a real pity, Artem Sergeyeovich, but it turns out that your balance score is negative. Minus one hundred fifty absolute points. And we, unfortunately, have no plans to take souls with negative balances on a balance of the new world.”

“What does it mean – negative? What kind of calculations are these? What sort of absolute points?! Madhouse of sorts!” Artem Sergeyeovich’s spirit was indignant.

“You see, in calculations of quality of human souls we use absolute points of Light. Unlike the conventional financial points, which are being used in your physical world and have blinded so many souls of their adherents, we use the evolutionary measure that is not subject to time. Here, I will show you,” and with these words, the girl took a long printed-out sheet and gave it to Artem Sergeyeovich. “Here, for example, your care for your family, – its worth was estimated to be equal to a hundred forty-five absolute points. It’s an average result because you have been very little engaged into education and upbringing of your children, having shifted these duties to your wife, and devoting the most part of your time to building a career. By the way, summed total results of your labor feats turned out to be equal to fifteen absolute points, – that’s a very small amount, because the social usefulness of your work, associated with the deception of people, wasn’t high at all, and in this job you didn’t show much diligence. And for the treason of your wife – performed twice, it worth noticing – you get minus forty-seven absolute points...”

“Wait a moment, wait a moment!” cried Artem Sergeyeovich. “Why is it only fifteen points?! I am a Holy Father, believer, I turned people into your belief, led them to the Christ! What, have you decided to mock your loyal servants?!”

“Wait a moment, wait a moment!” laughed the accountant. “Why do you persist in calling yourself a saint? Saints by our criteria are those souls, whose balance exceeds ten thousand absolute points. And regarding the believer... you see, but due to those events, which have taken place many centuries after our Jesus arrival into your world, and your attitude towards him, we ceased to use that concept in our calculations. It was fair for the first Christians, but nowadays every idler is ready to beat breast and call himself a believer – and we don’t even speak of how many souls have been tortured, exhausted and corporally killed for the sake of that ‘belief’, and how many self-deceptions were made due to illusions of its presence.

Therefore, we no longer use your pseudo-belief in our calculations, we use the concept of ‘soul dignity’. Tell me, Artem Sergejevich, is it worthy in your opinion to urge to kill gentiles?”

“I did no such things!” muttered our not-really-a-hero with rage.

“And how many times did you call your belief as the best ever existed, do you remember? And how did you publicly derided those, whom you called as atheists on your sermons, have you forgotten? And how proud you were of the power of your faith and your readiness to kill anyone to keep it strong, should I remind you? Why don’t you believe us now, when we are telling you about you? And your wish to a pedestrian, I quote – ‘Where the hell are you going? Rest in peace, walking creature!’ – which you have made exactly a day before parting with your body, when you were rushing inside your BMW through city streets and have nearly brought him down, costed you, for example, minus five absolute points. Here, you can check it all by yourself. Everything is measured correctly.”

“Why do prayers for souls of our parishioners have a negative value, aye?” Artem Sergejevich continued to be angry while reading an estimation sheet, issued to him.

“Because you demanded from our Supreme Commander, whom you traditionally call as the God, to add a certain amount of absolute points of Light to these souls, which in most cases don’t deserve that at all – and you seek to get a reward for similar generosity by yourself in the form of those conventional financial points. This also concerns your prayers based on schedule instead of call of your soul – they are estimated to have a small, yet negative value.”

“Well, you know!” Artem Sergejevich got furious, “you will condemn each and every one that way! Even saints!”

“No, saints are the best judges for themselves, even during their lifetime.”

“And what is there... five and a half thousands of absolute points?!” Artem Sergejevich cried out from surprise, having seen with a corner of his eyes one of the lines in the estimation sheet of another soul, that was lying on a table.

“Rescue of a soul,” Angelina answered with a smile. “Absolutely sincere and real. Plus, five hundred absolute points for the rescue of a cat, whom this woman cured, having sold out a part of own hand-painted pictures for these purposes. Her art and creativity, which has inspired several other men to develop own talents, was estimated to be worth two and a half thousands of points. Our scales are extremely accurate, Artem Sergejevich, have no doubt of it.”

“Go to hell with these scales-mails-miracles!” Artem Sergeyeovich exclaimed in a fit of temper. “Where do I sign here? I sign here and go to my rest place for a million of years! I deserved that!”

“Wait a moment!” suddenly exclaimed the heavenly accountant. “Our system shows a change in your estimated data. The matter is that... your wife... she learned about your double betrayal during your lifetime, but... just at this moment there, on the Earth... she forgave you and asked us to help you in any way possible. Now your balance is... let me see... now you have zero points, Artem Sergeyeovich. Well... probably, I should congratulate you with that. Now you have a chance, whether you deserve it or not, – she added quietly.”

\* \* \*

“What a bitch,” thought Artem Sergeyeovich to himself while being led by his Angel-Guide to the halls for a very long awaiting of the Court. “Though by the end of my life, but she had finally made something worthy. I beat her in youth for a reason, not for nothing!”

“Zero... a total zero,” thought the angelic Guide, while looking through the estimation sheet, issued to his ward.

“Saint...” thought Angelina with a smile, watching how the balance of soul of an artist and Artem Sergeyeovich’s wife, who has saved his soul this day, confidently overpasses the mark of ten thousand of absolutely unconditional points.

*2017-08-11*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Bureau

This particular day of Anton Pavlovich's life went awry from the start.

At first his lawyer for divorce proceedings called him by phone and with affectedly false regret in own voice notified Anton Pavlovich that the second apartment in a center of Moscow, which Anton Pavlovich has honestly acquired by not-so-honest work can't be kept in any way because it's considered a shared property, acquired by him along with his nowadays almost ex-wife. Then some sort of fool from Godforsaken insurance company called him and offered "new unique property insurance package with fire-protection included" – and this, together with a sad fact of his country house, which has been burned almost to ashes by a lightning strike about a month ago, sounded almost like professional, even though accidental mockery. In a doorway of this exact Moscow apartment, which has been bought on money from pension system fraud, his new mistress Jessica has been already waiting for him and with a languid voice she inquired, when her "sweetie daddy" is going to buy her a new promised mink fur coat instead of an old one, given to her by a former lover. And this new mistress, to be honest, was quite a black sheep – but his previous unmarried concubine Victoria demanded such thorough and capital investments, that it was much easier and cheaper to hire some east harem than to continue satisfaction of her growing not by days, but by wallets appetites. And at this moment Anton Pavlovich could do nothing better than to form a false smile on his tense face and go together with Jessica to a new boutique.

What can we say? That regrettable for Anton Pavlovich day was destined to come to a failure from the start. Anton Pavlovich was pressing on his car's accelerator pedal so hard, trying to get rid on the way to the boutique of one thousand of annoying thoughts, which have been importunately biting his raging mind, that he didn't notice how he has exceeded allowed in the urban environments speed limit of sixty kilometers per hour. Or maybe just this last hour became like a whole life, stretching into its own eternity?

Fuel truck drove into a cross lane absolutely unexpectedly. It's, however, quite possible that it, along with its driver Vasily Ivanovich, who has become quite drunk after a recent quarrel with own wife, along with Anton Pavlovich and aforementioned Jessica have all been waiting for this year, day, hour, minute and even second of this most fatal meeting? Alas, the answer to this uneasy question is hidden from us in faraway informational archives of the universe, and we are unable to satisfy this possible curiosity of our faithful readers. No matter what, but the moment when Anton Pavlovich and Vasily Ivanovich synchronously pressed on brakes, and Jessica stridently cried, hands of invisible to them clocks stopped for an instant, as if forever imprinting it inside a memory of the world, and then a second hand made its last "tac!" and stood still. Black tinted jeep crashed into the middle of a fuel truck at such a speed that fuel track rolled sideways – and followed explosion muffled even agonal shout of Jessica. Shockwave threw away two nearby cars and three pedestrians without inflicting them too much damage – for it was yet not their year, day, hour, minute and second. Huge fiery mushroom sparked over a place of tragedy – and then everything sank in a roar of a storming flame...

Anton Pavlovich opened his eyes, greedily grasping autumn air, which has been flowing along with sun rays through slightly opened windows into his bedroom. He slowly wiped his eyes with own fists, trying to get rid of a recent dreadful nightmare, and sat down on the edge of a bed. “What an awful dream!” – he was thinking, having not yet come to his senses. “Swindles, frauds, mistresses, road accidents... what our mind is capable of creating! Well, never mind, – the good news is that all of this wasn’t for real, it was just a dream, a simple dream...”

That way, continuing to calm down himself, Anton Pavlovich was gathering for work. Having already had breakfast, having already put on his crimson jacket and sat down into a black tinted jeep, parked near a house, already ready for new honest and not so honest feats, he suddenly caught himself on a thought that it has become somehow unusually deserted in a yard of his high-rise building – no signs of cars, or pedestrians, or even some kind of stray dog, which wasn’t traveling here anyway. “Perhaps, it’s a day off?” – an afterthought flashed in still slightly sleepy brain of Anton Pavlovich. “Precisely, day off! No further than yesterday I have finally got divorced with my silly spouse and was going to celebrate that moment today in a bar with my friends!” – he remembered. “All because of that foolish dream! It totally drove me out of life!” Having repeatedly glanced over an empty yard of his house and having once again hemmed to himself, he struck pedals of his car and rushed through the gates.

Rare street pedestrians completely didn’t fit into an overall image of populous capital – they, having slightly stooped, were slowly moving on streets and, it seemed, didn’t look on each other at all. No sign of agiotage or any business turmoil and haste, so common for Moscow citizens... it seemed as if the city has become extinct – or have massively moved beside that distressful MKAD in a single incomprehensible instant of time.

There was no sign of a bar in the habitual address, as well as no waiter, who has been obligingly opening doors before visitors. Instead of familiar three-lettered word an updated sign said – “Bureau”, while the first two letters of it have been written in black, and subsequent two – in white colors; and slightly below the following text has appeared: “Salon of comprehensive otherworldly services” – and in this inscription white and black letters were going in turn. “Madhouse of sorts”, – Anton Pavlovich muttered to himself, slowly parking his jeep near bureau-bar. “What sort of bullshit these fucked marketing idiots do invent to attract more visitors”.

“We are glad to see you in our salon. Welcome to the Bureau!” a good-looking young man in a strange suit welcomed Anton Pavlovich once he stepped over a spinning glass door of this building.

“Tell me, man, are all of you, folks, dressed like that here?” Anton Pavlovich questioned with a jeer in his voice, while fixedly looking into the eyes of this newly appeared waiter.

“You must be talking about my wings, right?” showing no sign of confusion, he replied in return. “Frankly speaking, I have been in that form since the time of my birth – which, it should be noted, has happened several eons before your own.

And, answering your next upcoming question, – this combination of colors in our poster symbolizes Free Choice – a very useful for mortals trait, which is, unfortunately, hasn't been given to us. What else would you like to learn about the Bureau, my former workmate?"

"Workmate in what sense?" Anton Pavlovich was taken aback for a mere second, silly looking first at the waiter, and then deep into the hall of the unusual salon.

"In most direct and every day," quietly answered the man with snow-white wings behind his back. "A companion for all of your past life, which has been taking place recently. Absolutely, by the way, unnoticed by you," he added as if with a small piece of grief in his voice.

"Young man, are you even in your mind? To me you a total stran..."

"Then it's a pleasure to get acquainted once again!" young "waiter" smiled and stretched his hand, which was shining with some kind of nacreous glow, to Anton Pavlovich. "All of our services will be completely free of charge for you today! Just follow me!"

"No kidding?" Anton Pavlovich strictly raised his eyebrow.

"No desire to do so," the young man answered routinely. "I still have to bear responsibility for your course of life."

"So, what kind of entertainments do you offer?" Anton Pavlovich continued to pursue his own goals. "I was planning to meet here with my friends, by the way."

"With Jessica? Never worry, she is already expecting you here. I would even tell that she is exhausted from impatience," smiled White-Winger. "But let's not get ahead of ourselves and make it all right and in a correct order. According to our current action, we can offer you three of our most popular attractions completely free of charge."

"Wait, what – you even keep a circus in your pocket?" Anton Pavlovich burst out laughing from own unsightly joke.

"No, no, may the Lord be with you! The circus is on the Earth, and we are different. What Lies Beyond, so to speak. We are currently carrying out an unprecedented action – we are telling all our future clients what is awaiting them in advance."

"How's that?" Anton Pavlovich showed a sincere surprise on his face. "In advance?"

"Well, you see... sometimes we are given permission to act that way. We already created similar actions... for example, about two thousands of years ago. We passed information regarding this action to you through one remarkable individual. What was his name... John, it seems. And his second name was so sonorous, as far as I remember, the... Evangelist, right! And today... well, you can see for yourself to what strange methods we should resort today."

"So it turns out that your action is almost termless?"

"Well, you are certainly correct in some way. We just need to remind humankind about it from time to time. But let's get straight to business! You surely haven't got in touch with art for a long time, am I right, Anton Pavlovich?"

“I have pictures on walls in my home, modern kind. And bookshelves with some... classics,” answered Anton Pavlovich, trying to remember which classics were there.

“Then it’s a due time to get in touch with what is nowadays eternal. Welcome to the Cinema of Memoirs! Allow me to open a door for us...” and the White-Winged young man waved his hand, drawing something in the air. In a couple of seconds, a most real gateway appeared just in front of Anton Pavlovich’s stunned physiognomy – it was casting a same nacreous light like the one coming from hands of his unexpected interlocutor. “Follow me!”

“That’s how technology advances...” Anton Pavlovich hemmed to himself with astonishment. “What sort of inventions can scientists-physicists create. All thanks to western sanctions, no doubt!” he assured himself and stepped into the portal.

\* \* \*

The room, in which both of them have appeared, indeed reminded of some sort of big Moscow movie theater – except for the audience, which consisted only of him and his mysterious fancy-dressed colleague.

“Fourth row, eighth place,” White-Winger noticed with satisfaction, taking a seat near Anton Pavlovich on a next chair. “Your place.”

“Why are we sitting so close? Let’s take places far away from a screen to better see all demonstrated events, there is nobody here except for us anyway!” Anton Pavlovich muttered discontentedly.

“Unfortunately, all other places are already reserved. They just seem as empty only now and only for you. Everything is actually much more complicated,” replied White-Winger. “And this place is just yours, for exactly when you were forty-eight those events, which you have recently ‘seen’ in a dream, have taken their place in your life.”

“And how did you learn about my recent dream...”

“Pay attention to the screen!” young man interrupted him. “Movie of your life is already starting!”

Large screen in a cinema hall, which reminded with its carved decorated edges some mirror from Middle Ages era, lit up with nacreous light, showing a small bed with protective partitions, where a small child was sleeping peacefully, smiling in his own dream.

“Memoirs of your life, beginning from the time when your consciousness has started awakening. You were about half a year, apparently. At that time, you were totally innocent, Anton Pavlovich,” young man commented on scenes.

...Meanwhile scenes continued to replace one another. Here the child uncertainly takes his first steps, stumbling and falling on a bottom. Here he diligently pulls a spoon into his mouth, being afraid to miss, eating porridge “for the father and for the mother”. Here he embraces a kitten, which was a gift in his childhood, and his eyes shine brightly with sincere children’s joy. Here he plays on a playground along with other children with steam locomotives toys, and here he takes a ride from a top of icy winter hill.

Here he sails ships in autumn pools, which reflect a sky in themselves. Here he lays down together with a mother on a bed and hugs her in a sleep...

“They say that all children are precisely like Angels,” with a grief in his voice noticed White-Winger. “And adults are more like demons. These are the purest and sincerest memoirs of your entire life, Anton Pavlovich,” he continued, observing how a tear crosses a cheek of his former “workmate”.

...Pictures continued to lead their own life, replacing each other as in a kaleidoscope. Here the young “mean” man is being accepted into the Institute on protection. Here he goes to night parties with fellow students. Here parents present him with a luxurious expensive car and he uses it to the full to shine and flaunt before girls of easy behavior. Here he visits night bars and striptease clubs...

“It’s hard to tell the exact moment where everything has started falling down into the abyss,” White-Winger commented on scenes once again. “Whether it was my personal oversight, wrong education of parents, false life values of society or first and foremost your personal vital choice, Anton Pavlovich? The court knows that for certain – and I, to my own regret, don’t. I am left only with a hope that both of us will be given one more chance.”

...Images continued to float and move one after another, creating a unique feeling of repeated presence on own antecedents. Here an adult graduate of legal academy becomes an official. Here he runs roughshod over other’s feelings, deceiving and profiting on human laziness, stupidity, and fear, – believing sincerely that he lives only a single life. Here he brings a mistress – first, second, third, yet none of them is capable to bring him back that long-lost feeling of life’s joy – the one which has been living side by side with him only during a faraway childhood. Here he desires to tear all of this false life apart and become a hermit – but strong, too strong are now for his weak will his former affairs and ties...

“We demonstrate here only the brightest of your memoirs, which have been imprinted in a memory of your soul instead of a brain – and therefore became potentially immortal, having transformed into some kind of déjà vu. All other life’s nonsense, monotonous and gray life, boring and disliked job, frequent and repeating quarrels with your wife, which have brought both of you to a divorce – all of this was forced out from your brightest memoirs and therefore hasn’t been included in that movie. It was all kept in your personal record in Archives where we will soon go,” commented White-Winged “waiter”.

...Now pictures almost fly, promptly replacing each other just like years of life, rushing aimlessly before their owners, drenching them with the dust of life’s roads. New financial swindles, new “none will be the wiser” deeds, new quarrels with his wife, a new mistress – Jessica. Day of their meeting in a second Moscow apartment, trip on a jeep. Fuel track, which has appeared on the intersection of roads, pressed against the stop brakes, the terrified soul-tearing squeal of his new passion... TV screen suddenly went black and light in a hall turned on as if symbolizing the end of the movie session.

“Why... why has my movie ended on this shot... the very same from today’s dream. Why, may demons tear you apart, is that so?!” Anton Pavlovich angrily seized his white-winged interlocutor and started shaking him.

“Let’s not use the collective name of these spiteful beings in this place and context, Anton Pavlovich. You may happen to meet them face-to-face a bit later,” calmly answered white-winged young man, dexterously freeing himself from a grasp. “Let us better proceed into the Library of Fates, or, as some of us briefly call it, – the Archives. I do believe that your stay there will be able to shed some light on this question that torments you so. Shall we go?”

“All right, we go,” muttered Anton Pavlovich. “And then to my friends and Jessica.”

“Without a doubt,” confirmed young man. “They are eager to meet with you as well.”

A waving of hand – and once again a familiar silhouette of a portal appeared before Anton Pavlovich, along with a shining road that was leading deep inside it. Here he takes a step into unknown depths of this strange door and...

\* \* \*

The Library was astounding. While movie theater somehow resembled the similar one in Moscow, the Archives, apparently, contradicted all imaginable earthly laws of physics. Their carved regiments ascended to such high infinity, that it was absolutely unclear, how they could even stand still under a mass of all the books that were filling them. Huge shining tables from unknown material and mobile ladders were obviously created totally not by human measures. Corridors branched and twisted, connecting and disconnecting somewhere in a far distance. Some warm lilac light was shining from a ceiling that was totally hidden from human’s sight. Fragments of floor melodiously ringed if anyone was stepping on them. Somewhere in a distance a sound of murmuring springs and singing of birds could be overheard.

“Here we store the history of all ever lived and still living beings of the universe, which do have a soul,” suddenly materialized before Anton Pavlovich white-winged companion answered as though to himself. “We constantly supplement it and therefore Library continues to grow, as it’s said between us, – not by days, but by fates. As you can see, it by no means intended to be visited by humans, – but we have been allowed to prolong our action for a little bit more.”

“Wait, are you trying to tell me that here I can get an answer to any of my questions?”

“Any question, concerning the past, yes. And the future of each soul-given individual in particular and of the worlds, in general, has many possible outcomes and depends on that Free Choice, which I have already mentioned earlier. However, access for you here is denied anyway – mostly the staff of Department of Fates Control, which is located nearby, manage here the process of transfer and obtaining of information. They are frequent guests here, by the way.”

“What-what department?”

“Fates. Control. Humans included. What’s unclear? You see, Anton Pavlovich, your mortal life on the planet Earth... how should I put it more clearly... is not one of a kind. It’s just in the last time you were named as Anton Pavlovich, and before that... and how you were called before that you can learn exactly from one of the books, located in this wonderful library. The book of your destiny, which you have been writing with own deeds. You acted – and we fixed these acts, and wrote them down, and kept here. We have even shown you these books once – through mentioned John, remember? Your civilization must have kept records of his visions.”

“And... why do you write down all of this? Do you write down everything?”

“Everything that is related to Free Choice, yes. We store it for future Court, of course. So no deception can take place. Some soul-given live beings in this universe decided for some reason that they would be able to deceive us, ‘to move around a middle finger’, so to speak. Well... let them try,” White-Winger burst out laughing. “We will write down this Free Choice as well, and take it into account in the Court.”

“And what do these employees do here? Are they here now?”

“Most likely here, but they usually stay in a working wing of the Library, and we are in a guests’ section right now. You see, some of the events, taking place in your physical world, – they, how should I tell that... are already predetermined in the highest world – by chains of your previous Free Choices, and sometimes by the will of the Supreme One himself. The staff of this department carefully watches for compliance between the fate and affairs of each soul-given live being of a physical world, and if necessary verifying its accordance with a plan of his new life, created by the individual before his birth and written in his personal book, and if such necessity arises – they try to correct fates of beings so that they can manifest themselves in a best possible way and realize all their inborn potential. Unfortunately, in a case with your civilization of a Milky Way, it’s hard to achieve that goal – the beings calling themselves as humans became too willful, evil-willful, and perceive attempts of the staff of this department to correct their distorted destinies as a chain of life’s disorders and troubles.”

“And can I... see the book of my lives?”

“Now you can,” confirmed White-Winger. For an instant, he touched Anton Pavlovich’s breast with a palm of his hand, and then waved in the air – and several moments later a weighty book from a top shelf of one of the racks smoothly descended on it like a planning bird, having automatically opened itself on the first page.

“Vibration code of your soul,” the interlocutor explained to Anton Pavlovich. “It’s easy to find a necessary book by it. So, what did you want to learn?”

“Here... what sort of lines and points are these? I can barely see familiar letters in this book.”

“These are maps of your previous Free Choices. You must understand that each choice bears certain consequences along with it and opens the opportunity for new ones, and together they all form maps. Points symbolize moments of decision-making when you choose one of the options from a set of them.

Numbers above arrows are probabilities with which you would have chosen one option or another at the moment of your choice. These diamond-shaped figures indicate a degree of influence of related choices on choices and fates of other people. All of this may look a little bit unclear in a two-dimensional plane – but I, unfortunately, cannot show you at present moment spaces with more than three dimensions, however, I can assure you that in such spaces these books are read much more simply and pleasantly.”

“Useless paper crap of some sort and practically everything is unclear!” Anton Pavlovich sniffed angrily, vainly trying to find the moment of his meeting with the ill-fated fuel track in an artful design of signs.

“The language available only for chosen ones,” his interlocutor smiled again. “First and foremost for the staff of the Department of Fates Control.”

“Let’s get out of here while the going is good,” Anton Pavlovich added biliously, “to my friends and Jessica.”

“Well,” sighted interlocutor. “For preliminary Hearings then!”

\* \* \*

“...Okhrimenko Anton Pavlovich is to be summoned into the hall of Heavenly Court for carrying out preliminary Hearings. Guardian Angel Michel is appointed as the lawyer of the defendant, Demon-Tempter Zakhurat is appointed as the accuser. The defendant and specified companions from his last life have arrived, Hearings are to be considered open.”

These words reached Anton Pavlovich’s hearing just at the moment when a portal, opened by his “workmate”, has transferred him with a soft melodious sound into completely new surroundings, which were resembling a court’s hall that has become habitual to him in a mortal life.

“I... what... where... what for? What a foul setup is that?!” muttered a newly teleported defendant, puzzled looking around himself and having not yet come up to his senses after so hasty change of space and own role.

“I shall explain you everything later, we will have time,” White-Winger winked to him while going to the judicial stand of white color, which was intended for him. The opposite stand of black color in another corner of the hall was occupied by dreadfully looking being with a tail, horns, and hoofs.

“The accuser, what can you tell us concerning last given to the defendant’s life in a galaxy of Milky Way on a planet formerly known as Gaia and nowadays being called simply as Earth?”

“T-h-h-h-i-i-i-e-e-f-f-f...” mischievously hissed a creature, vomiting sparks of dark flame from its mouth. “F-o-o-o-r-r-r-n-i-i-i-c-a-a-t-t-o-o-r. K-i-i-l-l-l-e-e-e-r-r. T-a-a-a-k-e-e-e a l-o-o-o-k...”

Suddenly images started materializing in a center of the hall, reminding former ones from a movie of his – Anton Pavlovich’s life – they only had more than two dimensions this time. A shot was replaced by a shot, showing everyone how Anton Pavlovich gives and takes bribes, meets with mistresses, indulges in alcoholic euphoria, and so on and so forth. This demonstration was finished with the last shot of the infantile-surprised face of the fuel truck’s driver and frozen in time shouting face of Jessica which looked almost alive.

“Quite a convincing presentation, Tempter. It’s obvious, that we are dealing with violations of three precepts and commissioning of three types of mortal – I emphasize, mortal! – sins. Does the protection party wish to have a speech?”

“Yes, your honor, I do have a wish,” and, having that said, Guardian Angel waved his wings and new images started floating through a center of the hall. These pictures now demonstrated how little Anton Pavlovich gently embraces his mother before going to bed; how he shares toys with other children from his yard; how he comes to the rescue of a school friend when teenagers from nearby district try to kick him to the death; how they walk in a park together with his beloved and future wife, how they truly love each other, at least for the first time...

“We thank you for that presentation, Guardian. The episodes, which you have provided, demonstrate that despite for a chain of serious violations of Heavenly Law, feelings of human compassion, justice and love were not completely alien for the defendant, which makes his soul potentially capable of Atonement. Whether the accusing party wishes to add something else?”

“W-i-i-i-i-s-s-s-h-h-h-h-e-e-e-s-s. K-i-i-i-l-l-l-e-e-d-d-d o-o-n-n-e-e-s-s,” horned being hissed once again, having clicked a floor of the hall with its tail.

And with these words the fuel truck driver Vasily Ivanovich and mistress Jessica materialized in a center of the hall each from his own portal.

“You!” Jessica immediately cried out with rage, having hardly managed to jump out her portal. “My murderer! If I have only known that you would ruin me that day I wouldn’t ever approach you closer than for a mile! And I need no fur coats from you, ever! Rascal! Beast! Killer!”

“Brother, you what... aye? Why you drove so... to red light? Didn’t you see... you go?” Vasily Ivanovich addressed Anton Pavlovich inquiring-puzzly. “I left my children there, my wife... who will support them without me, aye? You are a fool, brother, fool as you are!”

“Are there are any witnesses from a defendant’s side?”

“Yes, his mother.”

And once again a portal opened with a melodious tune, and Anton Pavlovich’s mother stepped out from it.

“I brought him up... as I could,” she said with a whimper and pain in her voice. “In Christ’s values. My husband was drinking, even though he was a banker. He accustomed my son to... fancy living... alcohol... my poor little son. And I... as I was able... in childhood... while he was pure... not to soil his soul...”

“Does the defendant want to add something? We should remind that, according to the rules, each and every of his word – whether kind or evil – can be used both as self-justification and as self-accusation, in compliance with the uniform Heavenly Law, established by the Supreme One.”

“I... well... didn’t know... what I was doing... I promise not to act this way from now on. To live with honor and conscience... and so on. Something like it...”

“All of them speak that way,” someone hemmed from the hall of jurors. “I didn’t know, I had no idea, give me, please, one more life...”

“I request to keep silence in the hall of hearings!”

“Forgive me, your honor.”

“If both accusing and defending parties have nothing more to add, then I suggest ending the first phase of preliminary hearings. This court session is closing.”

\* \* \*

“Well... it could be much worse than that,” summed up the Guardian Angel, brushing away sweat from his wings. “You still have a chance – not a bright one, but at least one.”

“And you keep calling that as attractions? What kind of setup is that?! Return me back immediately, wake me up from this foolish dream! I still have a life, Jessica, divorced wife... I still have so many things to correct on this, how was it, Gaia!” Anton Pavlovich lashed out with fists at his newly acquired defender.

“Oh, my silly Anton Pavlovich!” sighted White-Winger with a grief in his voice. “You know what’s the hitch is? You don’t have a new life anymore! You have indeed died, my dear Anton Pavlovich...”

2017-07-10

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Animal planet

“Another fine day in the eternity! I am glad to welcome everyone here in the seventh heaven today within the walls of our domain. Welcome to the angelic scientific and practical conference dedicated to the evolution of consciousnesses and bodies in the visible worlds created by the All-Maker!” said a young angel (although it was difficult to say with any degree of certainty from the appearance of these beings how many heavenly aeons his created by the almighty Maker soul had managed to come through), who came out on the stage woven from soaring mother-of-pearl clouds, continuing to smoothly flap his snow-white wings in rhythm with the soft, gentle music that was filling the room. Having once again looked with a radiant gaze of his almond-shaped eyes at all those who have gathered, the number of which was so large that some of the angels did not even have enough seats in this improvised heavenly temple, so they were forced to float smoothly at a low altitude, carefully crossing their wings behind their backs, he abruptly waved his right wing, calling everyone to keep mental silence, so that after a couple of otherworldly seconds he could continue his speech.

“As the respected masters, scientific luminaries and light-bringers in the field of evolutionology, bio-spirituality and bioengineering who are present here today should be aware, during the recent observations of several young newly-settled civilizations, indisputable evidence of the reversal of what is considered in our circle to be the evolution of the Divine Spirit has been discovered. In particular, we are talking about the planet in the Milky Way galaxy, referred to by its current inhabitants as the “Earth”. During his last expedition to this planet under the guise of its original inhabitant, our famous and respected researcher Joan Christo personally witnessed the aforementioned process, which will undoubtedly interest everyone present today in this scientific and spiritual hall. Joan, please tell the audience about the results of your last spiritual-research expedition to this planet.”

The angel, who had been standing calmly not far from the central cloud pedestal, gently flapped his wings and smoothly swooped down next to the host. He was well known to the celestials gathered here today – an elderly, albeit immortal, the angel who had been on many expeditions to the visible worlds with a bright golden sun-colored symbol of the cross on his heart – a gift for faithful service to the Maker. His curly hair that fell to his shoulders had long been covered with silver, a couple of scars crossed his face, wrinkles lurked at the corners of his almond-shaped blue eyes, and he was looking at the audience with a slight hint of sadness in memory of what he had seen in other worlds. His voice sounded calm and melodious as if in a coordinated beat with the music spread across the room.

“My greetings go to all the scientific researchers gathered today in this hall!” the angel who flew onto the pedestal answered with enthusiasm, throwing aside his external sadness for a while. “As our mutual friend Ravael has already rightly noted, I and my fellow comrades and researchers who had accompanied me on the expedition had the opportunity to recently visit the planet that is now known as the “Earth”. The chronicles of our joint expedition have already been transferred to the Archives, and everyone present in this hall will easily be able to get acquainted with them in the nearest future.

And now, in order not to take up unnecessary time even from the immortals, I would like to briefly testify to you the observations and conclusions that we came to during our expedition to this visible world.”

Having that said, Joan inhaled the heavenly ether into his chest, made a spectacular pause, spread widely his wings behind his back, and, circling the audience in the hall with his warm mental gaze, continued speaking.

“So, the conclusions. The consciousness of the intelligent beings of this world is indeed changing – but not in the way that we initially assumed, in the course of primary research and the construction of evolutionary forecasts. My colleagues and I have witnessed an amazing process of merging between the evolution of an animal and the involution of human consciousnesses. May I be forgiven for these simple analogies, but the inhabitants of this world who keep calling themselves humans are increasingly beginning to remind us of wild animals possessed and driven by primitive instincts, while the representatives of the fauna traditionally called animals are showing an increasing number of new characteristics, traditionally associated only with soul-endowed beings.

Let’s start with the so-called animals. My colleagues and I have witnessed how previously hostile classes of animals started to lose their centuries-old antagonistic instincts, becoming closer and closer to each other, which was especially obvious in cases when representatives of these groups grew and evolved together.

Female representatives of some animal species are showing their increasingly more innate maternal instincts towards children of other species, including a willingness to protect them from the external danger that threatens their life and well-being. Before my own eyes, the cat performed a feat of courage, carrying out her newborn kittens together with a small puppy of a dog that was absent for a while straight from a burning house! I detailed this amazing case in my daily travel note left in the Archives.

In addition, the so-called domestic animals began to actively adapt to the human-created environment of their habitat, sometimes showing remarkable ingenuity and resourcefulness in using the objects of this environment to achieve their own goals. Many serious and at the same time curious cases of such behavior were captured by us on the ether tape, with the contents of which you will all soon be able to get acquainted.

We have also witnessed how genuine art created by the most spiritually gifted representatives of humans – and I am talking primarily about music – can influence the psyche and behavior of mammals that are becoming increasingly sensitive to it. The music that flowed in the waves of the ether caused them to rejoice or even shed tears! Isn’t this the direct evidence of how the representatives of the animal world who aren’t gifted with spirit are increasingly showing the qualities of spiritualized beings? We are on the verge of an amazing future transformation of these thinking creatures – mark my words, colleagues!

And what about those who call themselves humans, those beings who have sole control over the mind, you ask me? Unfortunately, the numerous pieces of evidence collected by our research team only confirm the tendencies you have previously noticed towards the degradation of their consciousness and spirit to the level of the former representatives of the animal world. We have observed numerous manifestations of the most primitive animal passions – anger, rage, fear, hatred, dominating in their relations with each other. They are increasingly losing the ability to perform constructive interaction, more and more often thoughtlessly succumb to primitive instincts – whether it is the desire to fill their empty stomach at any cost or to satisfy their sudden sexual surge. The unprecedented scale of the wars unleashed by them clearly demonstrates how far they have walked away from the understanding of the essence of the original plan of the All-Maker, having lost the ability to feel and be guided by the spiritual core given to them. It was not without an inner shudder that we looked at the pictures unfolding before our spiritual eyes of how parents not only do not save, like the named cat but they only torment and slowly kill the spirit of the children that were entrusted to them. If they are not willing and have no desire to protect not only others, but even their children from the omnipresent in their society evolutionary degeneration – what kind of intelligence could we talk about that they ascribe to themselves? Gradually, in the course of our lives in human bodies, we became more and more convinced of the degree of degradation which their so-called science that has become the best creator of the most powerful tools of destruction, and their so-called religion that has destroyed the teachings of light and beauty previously given by our fellow prophets, had reached.

Dear colleagues and brothers in the heavenly spirit! I am also forced to inform all of you that representatives of this civilization, like representatives of several dead past ones who once inhabited this planet, have started to carry out deadly experiments with the cells of living beings in the hope of correcting the “mistake” of the All-Maker, in which the majority of them – including many followers of various religions – do not believe at all, and thus raise a generation of beings with the bodily and emotional qualities that they desire. These experiments, if they are not stopped in time, will return their bodies back to the very animal world from which they once came from, and which, in the face of a number of its representatives, has already surpassed in its quality many of the humans currently living in this world. In our travel notes, we described in detail the types of Earth experiments that we have observed in the field of genetics and virology. I ask you, together with the representatives of the Fate Control Department, to pay the closest possible attention to them. It may well happen that many of those who are engaged in such experiments or impose them on others will have to be taken away from their world ahead of schedule.

At the same time, I am glad to inform you that not all of the previously predicted negative involution scenarios have been realized in their world, which, in general, gives a certain number of the most morally noble people a chance to preserve their spiritual core. Also, my colleagues and I are waiting with interest and anticipation for new evolutionary scenarios of the flora and fauna to be implemented in their world. Thanks to all of you for your time and thoughts attention!”

After taking another deep breath and enduring another spectacular pause, Joan slowly, smoothly soaring in the waves of the heavenly ether, flew away from the central pedestal, giving way to his colleagues and gifting them with the sacred right to answer a lot of clarifying questions, elaborations, and suggestions that started pouring like rain on their wings from inside the hall.

The exchange of opinions and the construction of further plans went on for a very long time on this heavenly day, and when they finally came to an end, the Earth met the angels with the most beautiful ever created by the hand of the Maker, a pure and innocent, lilac-pink sunny dawn...

*2021-09-01*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Probability

A young aspiring Angel was walking on the roof of a nine-story building, counting flying over pigeons and squinting in the midday winter sun. Despite his complete immunity to the natural cold, his wings occasionally quivered slightly, and eyes narrowed every now and then as if he was trying to see a face that he had known since birth, far away in the city streets. Not since the birth of an Angel, of course – for they, immortals, didn't count own other-worldly years – but since the birth of his entrusted human soul on the planet Earth.

The Angel was indeed shivering a little – yet not from the winter cold, as some casual passer-by might have thought having glanced up at the sky and seeing his slightly visible silhouette in the sun rays – but from his own agitation. Yes, even Angels were prone to worrying – especially on the day of their trial, which was determining their future heavenly fate! And so he tried to somehow distract himself from this feeling that was spreading in his wings, watching the passing birds of the sky.

The birds, let's credit them, were well aware of the presence of their sky companion, but just like humans they could not see him with their usual unarmed glance without proper attention and concentration, so they flapped carefully over him, never descending too low. Well, and people who are always in a hurry on their, most certainly, extremely important business did not even think to lift their heads up and look at the blueish sky – and therefore our Angel was not afraid of being discovered by them at all. As a matter of fact, he was only really interested in one person, whom he had kept and protected since her birth, and this girl was about to appear at the intersection of two roads at any moment.

“If only she wasn't detained!” the Angel mentally hoped on even more higher powers. “Or she may pass by and the chance will be lost. And there will be no long-awaited meeting, no happy dates, no friendly family... How important it is sometimes to be in the right place and at the right time...” he reflected, carefully like a cat and totally with no fear of falling walking back and forth on the slippery icy ledge.

All imaginable and imaginative preparations had already been made. Dreams, advice, omens, agreements with his colleague, even the necessary warm and encouraging thoughts that he had whispered to her from time to time... And still, Angel's wings trembled, and he could not find comfort. But he didn't lose hope, and love for his maker and humans lived in him from the very moment of his own creation.

On this day, he had to leave the girl for a short time in order to complete all the necessary preparations. Angel really wanted it all to work out. But the free will of people is such a capricious thing...

And that's why the Angel kept trying to mentally calculate the probabilities of various events and their numerous combinations, including the final probability of meeting of two future lovers. No matter how you fly it, but higher mathematics is not what students are being taught in universities.

Flakes of snow, glowing in the sun's rays, kept falling and falling down on the Angel's even more snow-white wings, the Earth continued its eternal course in space, and the girl was still not visible.

"Did something happen to her?" the Angel kept asking himself over and over again, but his heart and feelings told him that there was nothing to worry about in this regard.

His partner – the Guardian assigned to the young man with whom the girl was supposed to meet today – also disappeared somewhere. Gone with the snow, so to say. Just try to find a white-winged angel in the white snow! And why is it so cold today?

As he continued to pace up and down the roof of the house, occasionally brushing away snow that clung to his wings, the girl's Guardian Angel did not have time to notice how in one bright moment his celestial partner materialized right behind him in a blinding flash of light.

"Frost and sun... the day... is fun!" he said, leaning face down while still trying to catch his breath after a long and apparently very fast flight.

"At last, and fast! I'm wondering what kind of sky you were in. I've been waiting here for ages. Even counted all the pigeons in the last half hour – there was exactly one hundred and twenty-one birds out there! Are you tired?"

"You won't believe it," his comrade said, still trying to catch his breath. "I was literally over the moon. In an audience... with the Supreme One."

"The Supreme himself?" the girl's Guardian Angel's eyes widened in surprise, and his wings fluttered with excitement. "Well, whoa! We are not allowed to go there at all. Only in exceptional cases or occasions."

"Well... they did allow... as part of the plan. So, where is yours... passion? Hasn't she shown up yet?"

"Not ye..."

"There she is, down below, white as snow. Finally!" and the sharp-eyed colleague pointed with his wing at one of the sidewalks.

"And where's your man?" She will now pass by – and no one will remember! All preparations will be stuffed under Pegasus's wing, and probabilities turn to zero."

"He's around the corner. See over there? Well, are you ready? Gathered snow in your wings, prepared to mentally shout them "stop!"? We act strictly on the command from the above!"

"What command are you talking about? We have only discussed this plan together with you!"

"You are a funny fellow, always you do worry about probabilities. I have just explained to you that I was at the audience where plans were discussed. Do you even know how likely they are to meet each other today, my friend?"

"How likely? Would they not meet after all that had been shared between them in their last birth?"

“The chance is... inevitability, that’s what!” and the young man’s Guardian Angel laughed and patted his partner’s wing encouragingly. “Now count to three in a row and fire from the roof with the snow!”

*2020-02-08*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Veto

“Mister Coordinator, how would you characterize the current state of a civilization that is being analyzed by us?”

“Being rather deplorable, Admiral.”

“Do you think that they can repeat a path of their predecessors?”

“Such an opportunity too cannot be simply dismissed. They are quickly approaching the limits of what is being allowed and gradually losing what they call humanity. For this very reason in due time their planetary civilization together with a small set of others was isolated in a primary materialized space.”

“And do they still remember the history of their civilization’s birth, or did they forget this as well?”

“Their so-called scientists and so-called servants of God are still at war with each other. The first speaks about billion years of earth life, while the second about seven-eight thousands of years. Thus the first don’t even assume that life could have been brought to this planet from outer space, and the second don’t imagine that by that event which they are calling as “world creation” the point of arrival of immigrants from other worlds has been still hidden.”

“Besides that, as far as I understand, they can’t even accept a thought that they are totally not alone in the vast reaches of space?”

“Yes, their so-called scientists, in fact, became the center of ignorance and one causes of possible destruction of their homeworld. Cruelty and cynicism of some of them lie out of a context of humanity. They started using many inventions of own minds for the sake of evil. That was how the First Veto was once violated.”

“You mean those experiments with atom which have once ruined civilization preceding their current one on the very same planet? Divided peaceful atom finally turned out to be not-so-peaceful at all as it seemed to them at first sight.”

“Exactly them. With the invention of nuclear weapons, it became much more difficult to supervise and stabilize the situation on their planet. It’s impossible to allow for spiritually and mentally unbalanced representatives of their ilk to get their hands on this kind of weapons. And this, it should be noted, is very hard work.”

“And what’s with the Second Veto? Did they start leaving into space, still have not learned and wished to build a worthy life in their native world?”

“Yes, by means of most primitive rockets moving in the primary continuum on either liquid or firm fuel. Certainly, it will never be possible for them to make any sort of considerable by distance star travel into other space systems. Actually, this inability of theirs substantially strengthened their isolationism, and gave a chance for some especially inadequate ones of their kind to call themselves as the only existing civilization in the entire Universe.”

“If some cannot overcome such a distance – then, according to their opinion, all the rest aren’t capable as well?”

“Exactly like that, with accordance to the opinion that dominates there. Ignorance of extreme severity. They completely don’t understand the structure of space and will be naturally incapable to understand it until they finally make a spiritual breakthrough.”

“If they will make it at all. The majority travels in the entirely opposite direction and doesn’t even realize banefulness of similar vector of movement.”

“Has constantly formed and empowered by their evil thoughts, feelings, and deeds energetic-informational field already found its external material manifestation?”

“Natural disasters on a planet continue to amplify and grow, but representatives of this civilization in the majority don’t even try to connect all of these phenomena among themselves as if all life for them has become like an infinite chain of casual and ridiculous events and coincidence.”

“Very convenient way to disown from collective responsibility for the destiny of their planetary home, isn’t it?”

“Yes, yet totally ineffective and completely useless one.”

“Did legionaries of our Interplanetary Council tried to bring them this information of utmost importance?”

“Yes, but not very successfully at times. In the majority of cases, people simply don’t listen to them at all.”

“Perhaps, considering them as madmen, paranoids, sectarians, blissful other-worldly ones?”

“Yes, but this will never be a justification for those not wishing to listen if their world will be lost after all.”

“And what is with our new messengers who have emerged from the heart of their own civilization – those whom they have called as “indigo children”?”

“Being tormented, since the very birth. Being envied, slandered, mistrusted and abandoned. Yet the hope is still live.”

“The hope is always live. Yet so many grains have been lost in vain!”

“Did you see how great was the majority of them disappointed by the fact that so-called “doomsday” didn’t occur by the date they awaited it? As if it was some sort of pretty holiday!”

“Yes, yet something perfect other took place at the level of entire Universe, instead of their tiny civilization which falsely considered themselves as newborn gods and top of the evolutionary chain.”

“Starting by that date all correcting outside influences on their planetary civilization were stopped?”

“Yes, by now it’s being in so-called free swimming. And its final destiny depends on the actions and choices of a very large number of people.”

“And what with the Third and last Veto on the creation of a human clone as a body without a soul? That very dimming of the Holy Spirit?”

“By now it’s not broken, but their scientists move closer and closer to performing of this dreadful act, trying to grow up gene-modified “super-humans”.”

“Super-beasts, most likely. The veto won’t be removed?”

“No way. A day before the birth of a human clone their entire civilization will be turned into nothing. And no one from them will manage to survive such a “doomsday”!”

“That would be a very dreadful and sad end for all their so-called-civilization, which has not managed to become truly civilized.”

“And may they call our messengers as cranky, sectarians, blissful ones – in any way they want it, but they were obliged to bring this information forth to representatives of their civilization. “Milky Way” galaxy, you say?”

“Yes, exactly it. The native planet of this civilization is also known as the “Earth”.

*2012-12-23*

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Chosen*

# Time

Immense hourglass of a silvery color, which were smoothly soaring in the center of a hall, were slowly passing tiny grains of sand through themselves, gradually rotating in the process of own unstoppable work. They counted remained time prior to one extremely important by galactic measures event.

Tic. Tac.

Having passed through the neck of the hourglass, grains fell on the bottom and were instantly dissolved, as if they have never before existed. As if the time doesn't exist inside the borders of eternity.

Multiple projections of these clocks of the Highest World – one for each of the physical worlds – were ticking own time, following their step.

Tic. Tac.

Clocks could not be stopped, but it was possible to slow down some of its projections.

Solar years of physical worlds replaced one another, eras came after eras, and clocks were going as always, reducing the number of remaining grains with each of their measured tact.

Tic. Tac.

Time kept everything in itself. But someone must be the keeper of time.

“Come in,” answered the sitting in a chair aged man, having turned away from the contemplation of galactic charts and slowly moved his head towards the two-way portal, which was also serving as a doorway to this mysterious room, once the melodious ringing, notifying of the new approaching human soul, spread in the air.

A second later the hologram of a form materialized before the aged man, in which this newly arrived individual was planning to live and pass through his next – and this time fate-deciding – journey in the physical world.

“You may enter,” the Keeper repeated once again. “Even though I can wait for you for the whole eternity, the planned time of your birth and related circumstances don't plan to wait that long, I am afraid.”

With these words he waved a hand, drawing in the air only to him known figure, and sparkling in violet-blue color sphere materialized directly before him, and out of it stepped away – or, to be slightly more correct – almost dropped out on the filled with light silvery fog floor, newly arrived traveler.

“I... what... where... ooh!” could barely utter the guest, once he managed to rose from the knees after that in many meanings dizzy travel. “What sort of teleporters you are having here... they throw you here and there all the way around. I still remember how ten centuries ago, shortly before my penultimate birth...”

“Sit down,” the aged man interrupted him, and, having waved with own four wings, materialized before the guest’s eyes a second chair from out of nowhere. “Are you here on a mission or do you just desire to grumble?”

“I... well... from the department... that decides destinies,” still faltering from slight short wind, murmured the person. “Directed here for the purpose of correction of former mistakes in physical worlds with a high-risk value. To the Earth, inside the Milky Way galaxy.”

“Is that so?” the aged man ironically raised his eyebrow. “So many travelers were planning to visit it recently. So eager to be born,” he smiled lightly. “Special times, they say. Made many mistakes, they say. Last fate-deciding birth they are having, they say. The question of the potential future immortality of their souls, they say. Well, we shall observe how you will manage the time of this life of yours.”

Having that said, he once again made a swift pass of own hands, and the shining book gradually fell down to them.

“Well, let’s have a look at what you have planned for yourself,” having ironically shaken his head, answered the aged man, thumbing through pages of the book of lives of his newly arrived guest. “This time you are going to be a scientist, as I can see? To make new discoveries in the field of non-material, to promote science to spiritual heights? Well, very laudable, indeed. You are now the twenty-third such desirous one for the last ten earth years. I can tell you in advance that eighteen of them didn’t become scientists at all, having broken their unearthly contract and exchanged themselves on, as it can be spoken, little things. You, I do hope, have no desire to act like that, right?” and the aged man searchingly looked at his guest.

“N... no. Not... going to,” having slightly been taken aback from such unexpected admission, murmured the guest. “I will become a scientist as I have planned.”

“Then I can only wish you not to turn away from your spiritual path under the pressure of external circumstances. And they, believe my experience, will surely arise in your life – especially if you are going to Earth. Estimated duration of your life is... sixty earth years. Do you plan to be in time?” and the aged man once again fixedly looked at this future scientist.

“Yes... I plan to. I will be of little use being too old, anyway.”

“If you curtail from your way – it’s possible that we will take you before the term. We find little value in unrealized souls, to a great regret. Time and tide wait for no man.”

“Time is the fourth dimension, so to speak,” the guest smiled in reply.

“Actually, it’s the seventh,” corrected him the Keeper, “but you should first master at least three of them. Whether you remember specifics of clocks working?” and the aged man specified by a wave of his hand a huge soaring in the air hourglass, which were continuing to gradually tick their unique eternity rhythm.

“Hmm... specifics?”

“Time is non-linear. Even within the lifespan of a single embodied soul, it can change its speed – and, in rarest occasions, own direction. If you start implementing undertaken here obligations – time will slow down for you, and you will be able to finish more – possibly, much more than was initially planned. If you curtail from your path – time will rush as in a gallop, year after a year, up to the moment of a sharp termination of your life term, of which you will, most certainly, won’t even remember by that time.”

“And how will I... learn of what I am destined to achieve? Of the features of time? At the moment of that new birth, I will be forced to forget everything of my former past.”

“We will remind you of that through the writer. We remind someone through circumstances and someone through dreams. Some are already beyond help and reminding.”

“Seems clear enough.”

“Fine. Then please try on your personal watch.”

With these words, the Keeper put away from his glowing attire the small watch on a thin strap and stretched them to the guest.

“Sixty earth years, as we have agreed – if circumstances don’t change. Shortly before the end of your term, you will be able to feel how these watches start ringing and vibrating – that means that your time is running out. Don’t be afraid, put them on your hand.”

“In such moments you start feeling yourself like a time bomb,” the guest admitted confusedly.

“You should better ‘blow up’, in a good sense, the earth world of materialistic scientific ideas.”

“It’s done,” reported the guest, having clasped a strap of watches on his hand.

“I remind you the circumstances of your birth – poor family, kind mother, cruel father, sick younger brother and a loving elder sister.”

“Now I should manage not to forget all that when I am only one-two years old, and all I can really do is to piss under my shoes!” the guest burst out laughing on his move, walking to the opening portal.

“Time starts ticking,” replied the Keeper, observing how the revealed in the hall portal embraces the soul of future earth inhabitant. “It never ceases to go,” he added.

Tic. Tac.

The clocks as if answered to his thoughts.

They had no power only over immortal ones.

*2017-10-15*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Voices

“Come to us to crush your foe! It’s your wish to make them woe! Louses will be smashed by hills, will be standing on their knees! Where are you?! Return at last! Stop right now and do it fast!” shouted the first voice.

“Power! Delight! Gain the might! Join the blight!” the second was crying in a heart-rendering squeal.

“Wonderful little girl we possess, she will comfort you, ease the stress! Thirsting for her? Where are you going?! Join the horde in the orgies and falling!” the third one shouted after.

“Money is better than all silly girls! Women are whores, beggars, and trolls! All our gold you should better accept, strange voice of conscience better not kept. All in the world then you can always buy! The soul is lost – but the body survives!” guffawed the fourth one.

“Afraid of us, for we are here! We shall devour all that is near! We now don’t care, we’re gonna to die! Fear of us now and tremble, and cry!” the fifth howled with thunder peals.

“Hatred and rage... this ain’t the cage! My lovely slave, I am your grave! Go down to me – bottom you’ll see. Hatred and rage – excellent blade! Go to the abyss, join the raid!” the sixth tried to caress hearing.

“Here! To us! Look! In the glass! Stand by! Flame, pool! Where are you?! Fool!” all of them started crying at once, merging themselves into some indescribable chaotic discord.

“See, how they overstrain below? They are shouting like that to everyone, including the pedestrian ones. Especially the pedestrian ones, to be exact. Really hungry they are,” my snow-white workmate by heaven smiled and showed a hand downwards, where somewhere away on the earth under us landscapes of crevices with tongues of flame, periodically erupting from them, were flowing.

“There can be pedestrian ones?” I questioned.

“Even creeping ones happen to be. As a rule, such ones are being very fast caught and... hrum-hrum... you know.”

“Severely.”

“Well...” the workmate sadly smiled. “What’s the reason in creeping? Especially in times like that one...”

“By the way, how much time do we have in our possession?” I parried.

The workmate looked somewhere upwards for a pair of seconds, then turned to me and answered.

“The time of everyone is made so that it’s always enough for his tasks, at due efforts. And concerning humankind in general – very little,” he added after a while.

“And what to do with them?” I questioned him, showing a Chasm, spreading below.

“With these voices? Don’t pay attention. They will cry for some time and become silent. The higher you will fly up – the lesser you will hear them.”

“How far shall we travel from here on?” I interrogatively looked at my guide.

“Can you see t-h-a-a-a-a-t star in the heavens?” and the angel specified a small shining point, which has occurred on the horizon.

“Hardly ever noticed,” I replied. “But a direction of movement looks clear enough.”

“Well, nice and perfectly,” and the angel smiled. “Then forward up to the sky – on all wings, as they say!”

“Forward!” answered I and smiled at him in return. “Together with you and the God!”

2012-09-26

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Déjà vu

Kirill was pursued by some ill fate. Or maybe a healthy and kind one. It was quite difficult to find out, because when you have already sailed away from old coasts and haven't moored to new ones, and only a boundless blue sea of life is lying ahead of you with no signs of tempting far-away coast, – it's really hard to tell when, actually, something out of an ordinary will surface itself on your course of sailing, and extremely harder to find out whether it was for good or for bad. City just like a city, sea as a sea. The sea was a cold one, however, and the city was rainy – but even the great Peter wasn't powerful enough to change that... except, perhaps, for Saint Peter – yet even that is not a fact by all means.

And what really disturbed Kirill, who like any other true IT specialist was devoting almost all of his life to own metal computer friend, were the cases of so-called “déjà vu”, which became frequent recently. A strange word, and no less strange phenomenon, which has been annoying Kirill for several last month already, precisely like a sea iceberg standing on the path of his ship, the most significant and invisible part of which was, as it usually goes, inaccessible for common human sight, being hidden either in the depths of memory or in the waters of destiny.

This wonder of nature manifested itself variously. It could be a dream in which he, being dressed in the exotic black cylinder and dress coat, was traveling along familiar streets of St. Petersburg with some excessively unusual titles in an old Slavic language, as if they were given names only recently by willful Peter the Great himself. Or he could be rushing through some sort of cellars in these dreams, vainly trying to locate his companions, who have been recently seized and taken away from there. Or he could come to some Anichkov Bridge and stand idle like captivated for ten or so minutes, so that people, hurrying for their works, start looking askance at him as if he was some kind of a madman.

“And what if I am truly going crazy?” he was thinking from time to time when current streams of objective and subjective realities mixed up to such an extent that it was no longer possible to distinguish them from one another. “No way, just don't get enough sleep,” he calmed himself down over and over again.

And it could happen that he starts discussing the architecture of some new software module with his colleagues and analysts, begins to argue, turns angry and blurts out something in the spirit of: “Fuck off to Admiralteyskaya Embankment in a post-chaise!” And then he stands with his mouth wide opened and cannot answer even to himself – why is that a post-chaise and Admiralteyskaya, anyway?

And the other day he even went to a roof of St. Isaac's Cathedral with some kind of Chinese tourist group and started performing “Kalinka-Malinka” dance with imagined music in the face of the stupefied public under the gaze of tens of smartphones cameras. And we should actually admit it, that he danced such nicely, that these Chinese even applauded him upon finishing of this creative rush as if he was doing all that specifically to amuse them. He didn't try that in any sense – even had no real dancing experience in his life – well, not this particular life, in any case.

Is that even normal, aye? The computer has replaced him both friends and a girlfriend for many years, which weren't noticeable even on the horizon of his life, and he dances on roofs of buildings during own day offs! Perhaps, nature itself mixed in something special into this autumn air of St. Petersburg city, forgetting to warn weather forecasters and all the others, less skilled in respect of knowledge of her possible surprises, residents of the cultural capital? And, possibly, Kirill just got bothered with going down the stream of a small sea of his private life and decided to discover new depths of his creative potential? Unfortunately, we were not told about his true motives – and we are absolutely uncertain if he himself gave any thought to it.

Yet déjà vu, most likely, perfectly knew it – and decided to surrender to Kirill once and as a whole. So here and now he was standing, looking at the “Admiralty spike”, glorified by a classical poet, and different, almost alive images were rushing before his eyes.

Noises of post-chaises. The footfall of horse legs. Newsdealers, crying something aloud on city streets, swinging with their huge newspaper sheets. The team of workers, hurrying on a pavement, being supervised by a gendarme. Two ladies in ancient wide-brimmed dresses with small white lacy umbrellas, who were slowly walking through a park together with their small manual doggies. Looking totally different “Humorous park” of Peterhof. Regiment of imperial soldiers, marching on the square by a fountain...

As if some other life, another reality in Kirill's consciousness was laid upon this one, recognized by all considering themselves adequate people as the only existing, only real one. This second reality was definitely related to past times when the humankind didn't yet launch into cosmos, but just like now people considered themselves as the last unique existing standard of mind and reason.

And what is the reason and where does its standard lie? Maybe, our ancestors from old times were much more reasonable than us, modern ones, rushing about and around in endless searches for personal happiness, being unable to accept the destiny, desired by the highest powers, in whom many of us have ceased believing countless ages ago? Perhaps we, ascended by technological measures contemporaries of ourselves, remorselessly destroying each other, have already massively gone mad even without some mysterious déjà vu?

“One can go crazy!”

“What did you say?” asked Kirill, who was sharply torn off from inner reflections by a suddenly talking interlocutor.

“I say – damn crazy beautiful city you have here!” repeated this unexpected stranger. “Beautiful city, I tell you!” he laughed, having bared a couple of golden-color teeth.

“Beautiful, yes,” Kirill inertly repeated after him, not having returned to his usual senses. “And where are you from?”

“Me? Baikal region. On a business trip here. You appreciate your city, you do, it's beautiful, even though wet! Well, farewell!” said short-term stranger and without new excess words went away to fulfill his private affairs elsewhere.

“Honestly beautiful,” Kirill, who started to slide in own thoughts from a wet reality into a cozy and warm himself, was disturbed again by a new voice – this time it was women’s one. The girl of apparently twenty-five years leaned the elbows of embankment fence, glancing with interest both at thoughtfully looking afar Kirill and sailing across Neva ships.

“My native,” Kirill replied unwillingly. “And it’s indeed wet. Just like now. You should better cover with an umbrella because it’s possible to get wet and ache even from a drizzle,” with these words he gave his umbrella to a girl.

“Thank you, but I have no need for an umbrella. I love rain,” she smiled. “Casts different thoughts and memoirs. Even déjà vu sometimes.”

“You too?” Kirill looked at her interrogatively.

“What too?”

“Well, you said – déjà vu. Are you having them too?”

“On a constant basis recently. Trapped with no way to escape!” she laughed. “For instance, not further than yesterday, I saw a dream where I was walking in the rain and looking at ships – and what do you think? Today I am indeed walking in the rain, looking at ships.”

“You’ve got an amazing coincidence here!”

“One can say that,” smiled the girl. “You are a local one, huh?”

“Since my very birth, which happened I don’t even know how many years back, especially taking all sorts of funny déjà vu into account.”

“And I moved in here recently, from Chelyabinsk. It’s wet here, but the air is fresh. And it’s easier to remain creative here. I am Liza, by the way,” she introduced herself.

“Liza, don’t go away,” Kirill quoted a popular song. “You can call me Kirill. It’s clearly visible that you have arrived here from a mean city, aren’t afraid of rain at all. And what exactly are you creating?”

“I am all like that,” smiled recent stranger. “I am a novice artist, painter. There will be an exhibition of my works here soon, so I arrived in this city. Perhaps I should remain here for a longer term, how do you think?” she added, having winked at Kirill.

“Well, you have already prevailed over the rain, as far as I can tell. You only have to win against a déjà vu now – and everything will be good and shiny for you,” Kirill answered, smiling. “And I can only paint like a chicken with his paw, by the way. Totally not born for painting.”

“Oh, but I don’t want to win against it. My déjà vu happens to be so interesting at times! I started feeling comfortable with it. Well, sort of a best friend, who is always nearby and with whom you don’t feel wet. And concerning the painting... probably, everyone draws the way he is able to. One can draw, say, with his own deeds – such interesting pictures can be born that way!”

“With actions... yes... I guess you are right,” Kirill got lost in thoughts for several seconds. “By the way, what were your plans for the upcoming days off? Weather forecasters promised us a good weather. Would you like to go for a walk together? We truly have many interesting places for tourists and guests alike. Let’s go to Hermitage?”

“It’s possible to take a walk,” girl blushed. “I didn’t manage to visit Hermitage yet. And one of my last déjà vu has been already wandering there!”

\* \* \*

Two young white-winged men, whose true shape could give humans an abundance of thoughts concerning the possible fact that highest powers exist after all and for all, and don’t care what some earth skeptics might think about their existence, were ironically looking at each other. After so many years their main task was successfully completed, and only a little updating of a course for their wards was awaiting them.

In order to organize a meeting of these aforementioned by us Kirill and Liza, these two their invisible curators from the other world had even to resort to the mechanism of the awakening of previous memory in souls – a permission for such interference was granted to them from above. And the memory, which is being kept in souls of men, as every even the most inexperienced Guardian Angel well knows, is stronger than the death. Just as love is.

“A funny name humans thought up for this memory,” Kirill’s curator was thinking, looking how his ward goes on a meeting with Liza, holding a bouquet of roses in his right arm. “Déjà vu... what sort of a word!”

“Do you remember that dream, which I have shown you?” asked a mental question for Liza her invisible white-winged curator. “The one in which you have met him prior to your real meeting? Tell him about it. You can do it now... now it is your new, most real, drawn with your own deeds reality.”

*2017-09-10*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

## Diagnosis

“Well, come in, come in, take a seat. What would you like to start complaining today, so to speak?” and face of the doctor in a black dressing blurred in a smile, having bared a dozen of golden teeth for a short instant of time. “As it always goes here – if you don’t complain and lighten up your earthly burden, so to say – then you won’t recover. And if you do complain – you will start feeling yourself better for some time, even though you disrespecting yourself afterward. Am I right?” and the doctor sat down in a chair, inviting the patient to do the same. “Tell me where it hurts, Josh.”

“I... doctor, you see, something is really wrong with me,” the patient started his confession while continuing to fidget slightly on a chair from nervousness. “I... I started feeling joy, doctor!”

“Is that so?” and the doctor looked over his new client with a squint, having put his pen aside. “You must already know how pernicious for the health of your organism this forbidden feeling is, right? And for how long has all this been already going?”

“For several months, doctor. I am feeling very uneasy! It started seeming to me that all my current so-called life is absolutely inappropriate in the sense that right now I am not in the right place where I belong. That I am capable of doing something other, much more significant, something that really matters...”

“How is that you are not in your place, huh?” the doctor replied him with a smile while continuing to slide through his patient with steel-colored eyes. “You have a very prestigious position of the head of the board of directors of one of the largest banks in our country, and that means that you shouldn’t experience any sort of material discomfort and all. Am I correct?”

“That’s not what matters, doc. To the hell with this comfort! I am terrified. With each and every passing day I am becoming more and more afraid to not live the life I was meant to, you see?”

“To the hell, really?” and the doctor once again bared a dozen golden teeth, having stood up from a chair and started slowly walking inside the office. “Tell me in details, how all of this has started?”

“You see, six months ago I... I saw a dream. Very unusual dream. I dreamed like that only in my... c... ch... during the period when I was significantly physically smaller and weaker. And in this dream I... I was flying, doctor! At first, I was a huge butterfly with gracious colorful wings, which was flitting from one flower to another, and then I suddenly turned into the mighty blue-winged bird, who was soaring up to the high skies and diving down to the earth like a stone, and then...”

“That’s enough!” the doctor suddenly sharply interrupted him, having highly raised a hand. “You perfectly know that the ministry of health-preservation has strictly forbidden to experience feelings of joy and delight because they both lead to irreversible consequences in organisms of our patients – and it was prohibited especially to try infecting other individuals with these feelings, which is what you have precisely tried to achieve right here and now!”

“I... for... forgive me, doctor,” and Josh confusedly hung his head. “I had no idea that it’s really infectious.”

“Oh, it’s extremely contagious. We have already fought against the most real epidemic about two thousands of years before! Fortunately, we prevailed over it that last time. And we as world doctors have no desire to see how these incidents repeat themselves, you understand me?”

“I... un... understand.”

“Tell me in more details of what you think about and how you feel as of recently.”

“I began feeling myself from time to time like a c... ch... what is this word?” the patient frowned as if endeavoring to overcome invisible barrier inside his own memory. “Ch... ch... child! It’s as if I became a child once again, doctor. After that ill-fated dream, I ceased to feel for short periods so casual, normal and habitual to me and all of my acquaintance’s feelings of grief, boredom, and inner melancholy.

At first, I started to smile, doc – yet... yet not with that kind of smile you are smiling now while looking at me. Then somewhere deep inside me, some inner laughter began to be born – yet it was not the laughter people laugh now during public celebrations and festivals. Then... then something happened to my sight – and my entire life started feeling to me as being such ridiculous and such... funny. I started feeling myself precisely like a robot who is carrying out his routine mundane social tasks day after day, yet being incapable to find some time in order to... to become alive, doctor. As if I haven’t lived before that moment, you understand? As if I have been sleeping all time before and only in that dreadful dream I have really, truly awoken.

Gradually I ceased to be afraid to open to someone my s... so... damn it, what have you done to this word, I have almost forgotten it... soul! It became much more painless and easier for me to meet like a c... a child with new people and without habitual former regrets and melancholy leave them if they so desired. I started feeling that deep inside them... that there is something just the same, similar, living hides inside them. That these adults – they... they are children, doctor, just... they just became forever-silent children, as if they were forced to shut up their mouths so they don’t shout from the joy of living. So that they cry from pain and grieved from unfulfilled once promised to them happiness...

I ceased to experience fear before my future and reconciled with own past. It started seeming to me that it’s absolutely inhumanly to cause others my own pain which I was constantly holding inside me. And then, in one of these days when I was coming back home from my job, I... I had some spare free time, it happens very seldom nowadays, but nevertheless... and I... well... I am ashamed to admit that, but... I lifted my gaze to the sky, doctor, and there... there was the sun!

Oh, how dazzlingly brightly it was shining to all of us! With what kind of joy it filled me during these instants... all so habitual to me melancholy thawed in a flash of time under its warm caressing beams. During that... terrible moment... I desired to cry out from delight because I was feeling alive once again for a short instant. Do you understand me, doctor? Damn it, you most certainly don’t even have the slightest idea of how’s that – to feel oneself alive!

And then... then all kinds of strange thoughts started visiting me, doctor. I tried to fight them off, diligently rejected them, but they were coming for my soul over and over again. I was thinking that... that if people experience all that which I have passed through during those strange days, then... they would cease tormenting each other. There would be no more wars in the world. Everyone would find that kind sort of deed he really likes to be engaged in, and this would bring him happiness – and together with it inspire people around him to search for true themselves. Each one would finally come to the place where he belongs – not the places imposed to him by either fashion or marketing, but the place chosen earlier by his... soul. The world would be changed. Children... children are often unhappy in our world of adults, but... in the world of kids they... they are precisely like angels, doctor. In the world of the children, our inescapable pain would no longer exist... Do you understand me? Hell no, you probably don't understand the slightest portion of it!"

"Oh, don't you worry, smart ass, I have understood you perfectly. The Childhood Syndrome – that's your diagnosis, my dear Josh."

"No... that can't be true!" and heatedly walking around the office patient sat down on a chair in a dread, his sight stopped and previously shining eyes started filling with tears. "Is that really so serious?"

"It's extremely serious. All symptoms of diagnosis are present – on your very face, I would even say. Your lively face, my unfortunate Josh."

"But doctor, only now I have become truly happy, even with your di... diagnosis, which is leaving me with no chances for a normal life."

"And exactly for that reason, we will be forced to forcefully direct you to sterilization of your memories and feelings, Josh. We cannot allow your disease to affect our absolutely healthy social organism."

"But... I have no such desire, doctor... let me out! Release me! Tyrants! Demons! Soul-killers!" the patient shouted as soon as dressed in black robes men all of a sudden entered the office, took him by hands and started dragging away in the unknown direction.

"We shall all be there, one way or the other..." his interlocutor admitted philosophically, having bared his golden teeth.

\* \* \*

"Demons, you say?" grinned the doctor as soon as representatives of souls control service have taken away this new awakened one to the memory erasure procedure. "You know, you may be even right is some regard..."

With these words, he slowly sat down on a chair. From endured excitement, his tail was forking on the end and then again merging into a single whole, and hoofs were tapping in impatience. One more awakened one. Too bad. Statistics inevitably demonstrated that more and more such ones were being born with each passing day – and that means that more resources will be required in the upcoming future to fight with them afterward.

Something has to be invented in order to return to the people their lost feeling of happiness, at the same time keeping it from them. They will not be able to survive a second planetary epidemic.

*2017-11-18*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Sacrifice

“Commander, you, I do hope, clearly understand that you have been summoned here not by chance?” with these words the timeless leader of the Brotherhood looked over his subordinate, without interfering, however, with his psi-field. He clearly knew he would be able to read everything he desires only through facial expressions, and had no need for trained for the course of several thousands of years psionic skills. “The topic of this meeting will concern your last mission on the planet Earth.”

His subordinate, second-in-rank “Alpha” team commander, was well-known in the ranks of the Brotherhood as the founder of strategy and tactics school, as well as the commander with one of the highest fulfillment success rates of planetary missions in the Visible Worlds. But the Earth... the Earth turned out to be much more difficult than it seemed before their embodiment there. And recent mission on its lands became a superfluous confirmation of that fact.

Commander stood up straight just as by command, looking how golden-colored eyes of the Brotherhood’s leader were sliding through lines of the news bulletin, prepared by archivists following the results of their last assigned task. Lines in Another World’s language were highlighted in the air just before his eyes, sparkling with silvery shade in the ether that was filling a room, and then gently thawed, being forever dissolved to once again remain hidden in endless storages of registrars.

Another World – that’s how inhabitants of this world agreed to call it between themselves. Habitual for Visible Worlds laws of physics, chemistry, biology and a set of other so-called “sciences” didn’t work here as usual. For its inhabitants, the world was a mystery and a science in itself. Another World was a unique kind of a binding knot between all visible worlds – both an entry and exit point from them at the same time. A vast set of portals, representing the rarest rifts of the fabric of time and space, connecting Another World with other ones, were generously scattered on inside it by a hand of the maker. The entering of one of such portals became a birth in the linked visible world, and during so-called “death” a return could be made through rifts-portals back to Another World. Such a transition was always followed by the embodiment in the external physical form that was common for inhabitants of each of the visible worlds, and only by parting with this shell it was possible to return back to a native, multidimensional Another World through the functioning rift.

Once, at the beginning of this world’s exploration, when exact locations of these portals weren’t widely known, pioneers of discovery often became involuntary victims of different incidents, related to these rifts, due to imprudence being transferred – and, thus, being born – in one or the other of visible worlds. Time in Another World was flowing in its own pace with its own grace, and trips to other worlds, even the longest ones, generally took no more than a single year in Another World – but, despite it, even such a temporary lack of presence of any of Spirits could give a birth to a horde of different questions from those fellows who knew them in person.

What would a wife of some humanoid from the Alpha Centaur star system say, for example, if her devoted husband came out to examine local surroundings, only to return back home a year later?

Inhabitants of Another World had no common for Visible Worlds divisions into social groups (otherwise the Brotherhood couldn't be born), and they lived infinitely longer, but random wanderings through visible worlds often weren't a part of their daily schedule. Therefore, after discovery and mapping of all currently found rifts, access to them was strictly limited only to members of the Brotherhood, Free Wanderers and representatives of the Supreme Council. And each such birth was associated with its own Mission.

“Regarding your last Mission on the planet Earth in the star system of the Milky Way galaxy, commander,” the leader of the Brotherhood continued, “as you, certainly, remember, we have sent another group together with your own, one of the members of which was your both earth and spiritual brother. And you had to...”

The Brotherhood was born as the answer to the evil, under which shuddered – sometimes to the very core – some of the visible worlds, and during several thousands of Another World's years became widely known not only in its own but in some of the visible worlds as well. Some called it as the Brotherhood of Spirit, others – as the Brotherhood of Light, some as the Knights of Radiant Heart, and most respecting it admirers – even as the Angelic Brotherhood. By joining the Brotherhood, each Spirit of Another World undertook obligations to strictly follow its code and precepts that were based on goodness, honor, and justice. Service to the Brotherhood could take a various set of forms, based on developed skills and abilities of its member.

It contained, for example, the school of Psionics, whose members specialized in telepathy – the art of reading through thoughts and experiencing feelings of inhabitants of visible worlds – and, no reason to conceal that fact, inhabitants of Another World as well. This was an extremely useful skill, especially inside younger visible worlds – teams that were going on a mission there almost always included at least one psionic in their ranks.

The school of Creativity was yet another widely known one, whose adepts specialized in the mental visualization of objects and ideas. A thought, strengthened with a faith, was the basic construction element in Another World, and by means of increased concentration of thoughts it was possible to create not only individual new objects and filled with them spaces, but in some exceptional cases even to influence certain events and circumstances – both in Another World and visible ones. Visible worlds didn't possess such a luxury, however – but even inside them adherents of Creativity school could demonstrate own gifts and talents in available to them forms – verbal, musical, art and a great number of others, depending on the level of civilization's development, inside which they were to be born.

The school of strategy and tactics, commander's creation, was well known as well. Members of this school specialized in fields of preliminary planning, assessment of possible risks, formation of structures of teams and other questions, related to preparations of teams for chosen by them missions as well as analyzing of tactical changes that could happen in case of emergency situations in the world where any such team has been involved.

Finally, the most prestigious and reputable school in the Brotherhood was the school of Prophets. Combining a set of skills – psionic, tactics and strategy, imagination and thoughts-creativity, healing of both souls and physical shapes – these best members of the Brotherhood took part only in the most important among campaigns and journeys, if these worlds were in danger of self-destruction due to excessively generated by its inhabitants amounts and forms of evil. Such ones were present in their recent mission on the Earth as well.

“...Preliminary mission planning in this visible world revealed a vast set of complexities, which were subsequently faced by a team that was assigned to it. I am talking not only of difficulties of local aspect, related to dispersion of physical entry points of the team that was traveling through the rift but complexities of world-outlook nature of inhabitants of the target visible world...”

Commander’s thoughts smoothly returned to recently occurred events. The Earth... his fifth birth on its soils. Humanoid inhabitants, reminding monkeys with their developed habits. Almost equal to zero psionic and thoughts-creativity skills among its populations, and at the same time – hypertrophied and torn off from spiritual bases science that was about to become the executioner of this civilization. “Complexity of world-outlook nature” was a rather soft formulation for a total absence of any serious spiritual basis without which a long-term, by standards of Another World, civilization building procedure was totally impossible.

“...Not all members of the team fully realized the challenges that were awaiting them. Not all liked the humanoid shape in which the Spirit of each of them was embodied upon entering a space-time rift...”

To tell the truth, not each and every physical shape was appealing to him, commander of the “Alpha” team. The greatest personal sympathy was formed between him and various cybernetic shapes, which were possessed by representatives of mechanized civilizations of the Visible – yet there were quite a few missions in such civilizations, partly because a part of them was now resting in peace only in historical chronicles shortly after the dawn of own birth. Silicon-based bodies were also quite satisfactory for tasks of counteracting of actions of harmful galactic representatives – and precisely such types of missions commander preferred to undertake most of his time. However, ether bodies of several civilizations of Illyuon constellation could be considered as being the most convenient and almost not demanding any additional adaptation – members of these civilizations already knew about the existence of Another World and rifts and were capable to feel the presence of its spirits in their own society. Biological forms – ones such as those that were possessed by inhabitants of aforementioned Earth – were considered by the commander as being the most fragile and unreliable.

Whether it was his personal technical addiction or that very ambiguous experience of life inside a body of a huge butterfly in the civilization of Almaray planet – it’s hard to say for the commander. And regarding “not all liked the humanoid shape” – that was definitely about him.

“...Mistake, indirect consequences of which was a new world war, which has begun on their planet and is still going on by the present moment of our, so to say, dialogue.”

Yes, these madmen-monkeys have started a new, third world war, after all. And his support team was partly to blame for this disaster. Under-planning. Under-effort. Under-result. Too many “under”. The day when a blast wave from one of the bombs that were dropped on his city destroyed his physical shape and portal of Another World took his Spirit back, he couldn’t find any grain of peace from grief and melancholy. And now... a part of the team under his guidance, being physically eradicated from the Earth, was already staying with him in Another World, and part of it was still fighting on Earth’s soils. And he felt totally broken apart – to have no opportunity to help those remaining on the Earth and no reason to help those that have returned. The fact that he could be deprived of honor to be a part of the Brotherhood for a long-term – he no longer had worries about it.

“... Thereby stopping the most severe and dire potential destructions and having given us the chance of sending an additional team. In regard to current circumstances, we are obliged to honor his good memory due to his sacrifice through the Ceremony of Light-back-giving...”

“To honor... the memory?” commander perplexedly looked at his leader, as if having come up from own memoirs.

“Brother Lellian ended his life’s journey, as you probably already know,” leader looked silently and coldly at him.

“Yes, I am aware that his physical body was killed by a bullet of an American sniper, but after his return into Another World he...”

“You, apparently, haven’t fully understood me, commander,” and timeless leader of the Brotherhood fixedly looked into his eyes. “For the sake of saving of their world, he sacrificed himself in ours.”

*2017-12-11*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Gamer

The figure in a black as night attire, which has stopped reflecting shadow and absorbing light an uncountable by earth standards number of years ago, punched a chessboard with rage by its dressed in dark-red gloves hand, shaking all controlled figures. This game was lost. The king was defeated – one can even say that he has sent his own soul to the upcoming court of the Maker. And how incredibly useful for the game party this soul was! Animal cruelty, indescribable unscrupulousness, inhuman slyness, endless thirst for power and glory... and now all of this was in ruins! In the nearest future confidants of this dark king will leave him – some by leaving this mortal world as well and some by hiding in forgotten corners of their pathetic planet.

The black-and-red fire was blazing in the eyes of the Gamer, who has been recently sitting beside this mystical chessboard. He knew that he had broken the Law, he already knew that his plans wouldn't come true. The Earth was lost – yet only for a while. "Others will come after me... and then we shall play again," he reflected, walking to and fro about the room, waiting for inevitable Convoy, who was to put him in shackles and place up to the moment of the beginning of the Court there, where even controlled by him figures of mortals had been denied access long before the time of their own creation.

The game board, nearby which this figure was recently sitting, was now living its own life. Somewhere from its bottom and side surface, the light started coming more and more distinctly, flashing through small breaks and cracks, whose numbers were quickly growing – and the gray fog, that had surrounded black chess figures, was dissipating as if depriving them of its protection. One after another, black figures on the chessboard were turning into dust, falling under the feet of victoriously marching white ones. Without their king they had no more will for life – not in their earth world, in any case. Very soon, in the May of the forty fifth year, if we are to measure in time standards of mortal earth beings, these shining from a new inflow of powers white figures, which seemed to the Gamer and his king only several years ago as being so small, so insignificant, so easily disposable, will break through last lines of defense, setting up their flag over the heart of his, Gamer's, city.

The figure in a black attire started to roar, vomiting tongues of dark flame, and stretched its hand over a game board, trying to sweep away in his final blow as many white figures from the board as possible – but claws of this hand have only powerlessly hit against the invisible barrier, which has surrounded the chessboard during these instants. The figure roared from pain, promptly shrouding its wounded hand in a gray fog, and took a step away from the chessboard.

"We shall come, we will return! We will be reborn in your souls once again..." it whispered when a burning, scorching, intolerable for her light, coming from warriors of the Convoy, rushed with them into the Hall of Fates.

The Red Army in the world known as Earth victoriously set up a flag over the Reichstag.

\* \* \*

The ones gathered in this spacious hall were going to decide destinies of the mankind, which they have entrusted to themselves.

Everything was going as they would like it to be in many aspects. Members of long-subjected to them governments and heads of the largest banks and multinational corporations have been voluntary-forcibly faithful to them for a lot of years already, obediently executing given for them orders, because they perfectly knew that death is not the most dreadful of fates as punishment for non-obedience. Terrorism, that was encouraged and sponsored by them in territories of adjacent states, played for the benefit of these rulers. Chaos was their weapon and its keys were reliably hidden, as it seemed to them, in their own hands. Crisis, by which their controlled mass-media frightened residents of various earth states, had to become permanent, and, according to their plan, in a bowl of this great new confusion a uniform and universal earth religion has to be formed, designed to justify their, who were considering themselves as demigods, right to punish human flesh and dominate over human mind and spirit. This new religion, new world order, had to possess strong and proven by time roots – ones that will originate from precepts of the founding fathers of the revived empire of “true Aryans”. The king has died – long live the king!

Today’s agenda was directed to searching for methods of destruction of the remains of an essence of doctrines of true Prophets. Smiles wandered on their speckled by wrinkles faces, and their eyes looked somewhere up coldly and apart, as if in contempt. They were the gamers in what they called as the Big Game – a game for the future of their world.

\* \* \*

The new gamer, which took the place of his lesser skilled colleague, who has managed to lose the game, which was starting so brilliantly by others, was standing behind other-world chessboard and moving figures. They, his pawns, who were thinking of themselves as masters of the world, were totally suitable for the fulfillment of his own plan, and qualities of their long dead souls considerably facilitated the management process. Black, as if weaved out of a thick web, threads, coming from the Gamer’s head to these figures on a board, continually hissed and stretched, transmitting mental directions and orders through them. Under their influence board’s figures obediently shuddered and moved in the desired by the Gamer direction. “We will return,” the new Gamer whispered, “as we promised. We shall still conquer this world of yours. We shall still win this game party. Our puppets are completely controlled by us, unlike yours, to which you have granted a free will and therefore have ceased to operate them directly”.

Overwhelmed by thoughts of own plans and ideas, the Gamer was walking to and fro about the hall, greedy exhaling tongues of dark flame. He desired to win a game party for this human world. His own life was at stake.

2017-08-04

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

## When the Sleeper awakes

“Mister Coordinator, when the Sleeper will awake at the long last?”

“Do you ask about that me, Admiral? As I have suspected, it’s better for you to know.”

“The free will, mister Coordinator, the free will... Perhaps, we have committed an error, after all?”

“I will remind you that it was our joint project. There are no mistakes, only statistical errors and percentage probability.”

“And now you are speaking mathematician’s tongue.”

“And what else should we do right now? We can only observe.”

“Observe his agony? He is dying directly before our eyes, dying painfully and unstoppable.”

“So he has chosen. The Majority-s, you know, sometimes outweighs.”

“And what about the Awakened?”

“He’s still a baby. He has yet to grow up.”

“Beautiful little one, isn’t he?”

“Certainly.”

“I am so glad about him.”

“So do I.”

“Tell please, what forms of curing medicine have been applied to the Sleeping one up to today?”

“Initially – numerous enzymes of prophetic nature, sort of. Two thousands of parsecs ago the strongest possible antibiotic has been injected.”

“Which has been successfully removed by an organism in the first vomit reflex.”

“Approximately so. I tell you – he’s almost hopeless.”

“And what about methods of shock therapy?”

“Yet to be applied. Already soon.”

“Have been the patient informed in advance?”

“Two thousands of parsecs ago, when disease signs were already on his face.”

“They are already on the face?”

“Now it’s terrible even to look at him. I will not advise you doing so.”

“And what about the newest local antibiotics of unique type? I mean these, you know, returnees from non-existence.”

“A part of them has been already injected, some have not been made yet.”

“Do you believe that will help?”

“Such probability too cannot be neglected.”

“Will they be injected simultaneously with the beginning of shock therapy?”

“Shortly before that.”

“And then?”

“It’s for him to decide.”

“Do you think he is still capable?”

“I hope so.”

“Well, and how does Awakened one fare?”

“He has already learned to read thoughts and gained the vision of the future. I believe he’ll grow into a nice one.”

“I am too very happy with him. Even though he is a blood brother of the Sleeper.”

“By the way, you have given me an excellent idea. As soon as this little one will grow up and be ready to read souls, it will be possible to send him to help, so to say, his elder brother to, so to say, move him away from the unjust path. Certainly, we will protect the Awakened one in all ways accessible to us. Minority, well, you know, is counting on our support.”

“Perhaps we should delay a little the begging on this shock therapy? Wait, until little one will grow up a bit? This Awakened has already expressed a desire to help the brother, as far as I know.”

“I will consider your option, mister Admiral. I will consider it...”

*2010-10-10*

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

# Observer

It was surprisingly quiet today in the Hall of Destinies.

However, “today” would be insufficiently exact term for the description of time’s movement in its common for physical worlds concept and form. Time could pass totally nonlinearly here – to either accelerate or slow down; to twist in a spiral, forming similar in character events in diverse lower worlds at different intervals of their evolutionary model’s realization; in rare cases it could even cease its perpetual motion completely in several – and, first of all, strictly determined lower worlds, – if one of the Observers needed to make corrections to the highest evolutionary model of such a world. It only couldn’t be turned back – and this is the only and most serious restriction, which has been voluntarily assumed by each Observer, who was taking up a post, for almost an uncountable number of galactic cycles by the standards of lower physical worlds.

It was quiet in the Hall of Destinies.

Not in the sense that is assumed by the imperfect mind of representatives of unlimited number of civilizations, endlessly evolving in the physical worlds, by meaning the lack of difficulties or troubles during their own short-term corporal life, – but in a totally different one, appropriate for those whose tasks included observation and control of fates of infinite number of secondary worlds and all inhabiting them living beings.

This hall was extraordinarily large and existed in several dimensions simultaneously. Its multiple projections, much like reflections in mirrors, each one by itself could give only a very superficial idea of its true beauty and form. In a three-dimensional space, which is common for a number of underdeveloped civilizations of secondary worlds, it reminded a hall of some official government institution with huge going upwards colonnades, from almost unreachable heights of which a light of golden and silver colors were flowing, smoothly, precisely like a feather, touching walls and a floor, forming on its way images that by desires and will of Observers were reflecting investigated by them civilizations and events, which were taking place – or have already occurred, or could happen with certain probabilities – in lower, or physical, worlds. Forms of these light reflections could vary greatly – sailing ships that were navigating through oceans and symbolizing different nations in some of the secondary worlds and their interactions with each other; birds, soaring in the sky, reflecting concepts and ideas which reigned over minds and souls of people; promptly twisting and raging whirlwinds and tornadoes, representing confusions and misfortunes of both individual inhabitants of observed worlds and their groups in general; fogs of claret and gray colors that were enveloping separate fragments of this hall’s floor and were connected with origin and formation of new star systems and civilizations; fountains, that were sparkling on light with sprayed water drops, from time to time giving a birth to wondrous rainbows, not without a reason serving as harbingers of happy events...

Forms and images, created by this inflowing light of the highest spheres, were so various and, let us agree on that, unique, that any representative of even the most advanced of civilizations of the lower worlds, if he had been given a great joy of observing the work of Observers from outside, in literal sense would hold his spirit, given to him by the Maker, being bonded by invisible force with a floor's section for a period of observation.

The floor of the Hall of Destinies – or, in some cases, its separate fragments, – could voluntarily, or, following the will of various workers, change their drawing pattern and transparency, so that someone standing on any cell of this floor could all of a sudden – or foreknowing in advance – find out in the next moment that he, for example, is standing precisely on a galactic map, and planets from one of infinite set of star systems of the physical world keep floating beneath him in their mutually attractive dance. One could imagine the surprise of a casual observer, standing on one of these fragments! But Observers could be observed only by their Supreme Coordinator, and he during that very instant – if the concept of “instant” could be somehow correlated to the concept of “eternity” – was living outside of these high walls, observing his creation from within.

For the duration of uncountable eons, which were better known to advanced civilizations as galactic cycles, of time that was streaming like a water, the Observer beheld many ascensions and demises of civilizations, whose development he has been monitoring. A great diversity of physical forms of their representatives – humanoid-birds, living on slopes of mountain worlds; reasonable, reminding mermaids inhabitants of oceanic worlds with their underwater cities, stretching for thousands of miles; large ant-like dwellers of industrial civilizations, who have built vast networks of underground tunnels and were controlled by collective intelligence of their lords; humanoids that were similar to orthograde octopuses and possessed strongest telepathic abilities; enormous butterflies, soaring over the plants that were rising on hundreds of meters over the surface of their native world – that seemed totally alien and inappropriate for a citizen of primitive civilizations, – were habitual to a mind's eye of the one, who has watched formation and development of several tens of thousands of others.

The Observer had no right to interfere directly – others descended into physical worlds for this purpose – or, to be more exact, entered glowing portals, located in another section of the hall, – both chosen souls of representatives of these civilizations for their repeated corporal embodiment, as well as other much greater and perfect spirits. The Observer could warn others of the need for intervention and adjustments to a development course of free-willed civilizations if a probability of its demise due to deviation from the evolutionary course was becoming extremely high.

Lots of former great civilizations have disappeared from physical worlds long ago, having left their mournful trace only in the informational annals of the highest world as a lesson for civilizations of the future and a study material for new Observers. How many reasons and ways to bury themselves were in the arsenal of inexperienced civilizations, to what serious consequences imperfect consciousness and ethics of their representatives led them!

Among all them, there were those, who have destroyed themselves and own native worlds in civil wars. There were also those, who during uncontrolled processes of hyper-consumption completely exhausted resources of their native world, making it unsuitable for living. There were those, who were ruined by the science, worshipped by them and artificially imbued with qualities of infallibility – whether it was the destruction of microorganisms, necessary for the biosphere, or a creation attempt of inanimate clones of their own representatives, that was the greatest violation of the Third Commandment of the Highest World. Also listed as dead were those ones, who tried to improve their physical shapes with different mechanical implants or violent genetic changes of own population. There were those races, who were subdued and then destroyed by artificially thinking sentient machines, for they failed to designate a correct border and limits of artificial intelligence techs that were developed by them. There were those being bewitched by opening perspectives of management of existential points for the commission of interstellar spaceships jumps, who didn't manage to build steadily working portals and were absorbed by artificially created analogs of galactic “black holes”. Among untimely died ones there were those who tried to operate the fourth and fifth dimensions and to fully transfer own kin there, but as a result, they were absorbed by rifts of spatial matter that were created during these scientific experiments. Finally, there were those, whose planets were just subjected to sterilization during interstellar wars by a more technologically advanced and aggressive opponent... In a word, no matter how high was the technological level of observed during eons civilizations, but arrogance, cruelty, and stupidity of their citizens were always going hand in hand with a sad fate.

For this reason several eons ago the Council of Observers has made a decision on creation of a group of the most advanced peaceful civilizations, that were following a strict internal ethics code and were capable to enlighten representatives of other races in case of compliance of their spiritual level to those technical miracles, which these civilizations possessed. To give too much tech to aggressive civilization was inadmissible, as it meant either almost guaranteed self-destruction of lower civilization in a short-term or an attempt to cause harm to one of the members of Intergalactic League. To give to a barbaric by the standards of League civilization any scientific discovery, that greatly exceeds their technological level, was meant to betray both a League and its ethics, and at best such an action from any of its members was punished by its exclusion from the League for eternity.

For a long time Observers have been studying tendencies of young civilizations development and their potential readiness for a meeting with representatives of the League – because such a meeting for primitive civilizations of physical world symbolized the end of habitual to them history, destruction of a set of scientific and social theories, a revolution in consciousness and understanding of own place in the universe, meaning of life and death.

Images in the mirror sphere, that were reflecting star systems, slid and smoothly replaced each other. Following Observer's passes, this sphere rotated from one side to another, allowing to analyze a state of civilizations in adjacent galactic sectors. Today his attention was directed to one from several tens of primitive civilizations that were located in the same sector, whose inhabitants were calling their world as the “Earth”. A strange name for the world, covered with so many seas and oceans.

By all canons of intergalactic League, this civilization was absolutely barbaric, and the greatest dangers to its existence lied in attempts to violate the Third Commandment together with continuous inner planetary wars, raging throughout centuries. How many attempts of its rescue have been made, how many adjustment evolutionary scenarios were considered, and how much more has to be done in order to correct its self-destructive course. Even the question of the compulsory intervention of the League was brought up and then postponed. Yet not the question of this civilization's fate disturbed the Observer today – during his immortal life he has seen a lot of most different fates – but the question of the fate of his Coordinator, who was living there at this very moment, in this small, inconspicuous for the detached onlooker, yet beautiful world.

The Observer inclined over the sphere, calculating and verifying scenarios and adjustments. He knew firsthand how hard the way of the evolution of consciousness is.

*2017-08-23*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Improbability

In the vast hall, filled with a sky-purple shimmer, with columns soaring to a height that is inaccessible to the eyes of ordinary mortals, filled with the energy of the omnipresent ether images flickered on the screen in what seemed to be a waving mirror in a carved wooden frame. It was perfectly visible for the two observers that were standing near this mirror how a male human, inspired by the common combat impulse, was at this point of time blocking a deadly enemy weapon with his own body, thus giving his comrades a chance to climb out of the trench and go to the offensive in this battlefield sector. Here his body unevenly shudders, soaking up a deadly leaden stream, and as if in time with this act, the frosted surface of the mirror shakes in response. Here in the last dying effort, this soldier clasps the enemy machine gun with both of his hands, and his blood-stained lips whisper their silent farewell “hurrah!” After a brief moment, floating in the mirror images forever capture in the ether his fading gaze together with the rushing up to the sky from the mutilated chest light-bearing spirit, who has spread out his wings like a finally released prisoner. The mirror fades out, and the images-waves gradually disappear, as if the sea of colorful information has once again come to a long-awaited calmness...

“You must certainly remember, Orianna, that I did warn you in advance of this possible ending of his earthly journey?” and the elderly, fair-haired angel with the scar on his right cheek stared at his companion as soon as the Hall of Destinies fell silent again.

“Mr. Arael, I remember that according to your calculations, the probability of such self-sacrifice was...”

“Our initial calculations, Orianna. Since then, much has changed both in the external and internal worlds. The death of his brother at the battlefield, the fatal illness of his mother, the beginning of the siege of his native Petersburg... All these events simultaneously seemed to break and strengthen his determination to fight to the end. But in the initial calculations we made, as you must remember, he should have lived almost to the end of this war.”

“Mr. Arael, do you mean that I have failed to pass the entrance test and therefore cannot be admitted to your Department of probabilistic forecasting of the worlds of free will?”

“No, Orianna, they don't. Many of your calculations were correct for the man's previous choices – and we, as representatives of the probabilities department, never ask newcomers to be one hundred percent accurate, which is only available to the Almighty.”

“Thank you. I really hope so...”

“Then don't forget to introduce John to our department. This knowledge will be a reward for the feat he performed on Earth.”

Having that said, the head of the probabilistic forecasting department, wise with many eons of experience, tapped with a smile his future budding colleague on the shoulder and smoothly pointed his wing at the door. The one named as Orianna nodded joyfully and hastily, doing her best to hide the flicker of her smile from her mentor, flapped her small, girlish wings, and tenderly fluttered out of the hall.

\* \* \*

“Looking strange, huh?” Orianna laughed brightly, watching how the etheric-clad spirit of John was looking around in surprise as if he still did not fully understand, or would never admit even to himself, that the life of the soul does not finally end with the death of the body, no matter what these endless and finally ending their journeys earthly materialists and skeptics might say otherwise.

“Oh... What a strange and wondrous vision... I feel as if I have died and gone to Paradise, and the most beautiful woman on earth is bending over me like an angel...”

“It’s all true! Well, almost everything...” Orianna said in confusion, playfully adjusting a curl of her sun-red hair with her wing. “As you can see, having “died” back on Earth, you didn’t die after all. Great, right?”

“Is... is this... always the case here?”

“No, not always. By the way, it depends on you, humans, where you will end up. Oh, and I almost forgot to tell you: “Welcome to the seventh heaven!”

“It must be truly the seventh sky. How beautiful it’s around here!” both parted and still not parted with his life John wondered while looking around and walking on the likeness of sky bridges-rainbows among iridescent pearl-colored islands-clouds.

“Tread carefully, it’s like walking on water... A little doubt in the reality of all that is happening – and you will instantly begin to sink into the waves of the ether,” with a wary look at the staggering John said sunny-red-haired angelic girl, narrowing her almond-shaped eyes. “Let me back you up, I’ve got enough faith in the Almighty for a simple skywalk!” she said with another graceful smile, and hastily took John “under her wing”.

Thus, they went on for some time, no matter how relative time as a concept would be in this world.

“But why I ended up here? And what do you plan to do now?” after a while, John decided to break the long-kept silence.

“And then, according to my instructions, I’ll give you a tour of our improbably probabilistic department. It’s over there, a little way off,” and Orianna waved her wing away. “And you are here, in the seventh heaven, solely because you have earned it according to the Divine Law. For the feat of the spirit. Many of you Earthmen, by the way, never deserve anything like this...” she added thoughtfully, looking down at her feet. “They go straight down there,” she added, waving her wing, “and never come back.”

“And what lies down there?”

“Far, far below us – there lies the Abyss. And demons. Sca-a-a-ry,” Orianna added reluctantly, shivering as if trying to push away an old unpleasant memory. “But you don’t have to think about it. And I don’t want to think about those who suffer there, either. Catch up!” she changed the subject abruptly and started jumping across the clouds.

\* \* \*

“And this is where we make maps of human destinies, do you see?” Orianna winked, pointing to a holographic projection of a library in the center of which at that very moment several dozens of open books were gently floating in the ether.

“Do you want to say that our destinies were predefined by you before we were born?”

“Almighty forbid you, most certainly not!” Orianna flapped her wings, staring at John as if he was an incomprehensible infant. “We give you the freedom of choice and the right to determine your own fate. But that doesn’t mean that we are not allowed to calculate in advance how likely and what exactly you will choose one day in your lives, right?” and the curly-haired celestial girl playfully smiled again. “My last trial job was to calculate the new probabilities of some of your possible choices. But I was mistaken, to my own shame. You people can be very unpredictable at times!” as if being seriously offended, she pouted her lips.

“And what did I do wrong?”

“That’s the point, you have made everything right! But... not in the way I originally thought it would be. And this, by the way, is one of the main challenges in the work of our entire department – taking into account the free will of people. In deterministic worlds, everything is different, simpler. But here...”

“And what does that mean – deterministic worlds?”

“Well, they are those in which there are no beings endowed with a soul and therefore possessing free will. Once your Earth was strictly deterministic too, and we could – not without some effort, of course – calculate what and where would happen on it at any given moment of time. And now, with the advent of another civilization, everything... everything is not the same as it was before,” Orianna sighed sadly and lowered her wings. “I hope you understand me at least a little, even though you’re... a human. You are, by the way, not the first human I’ve seen here. I mean, here in our department.”

“There were others?”

“Of course. We need to somehow convey information about the most probable events we have calculated to the inhabitants of your civilization, right? So, we gave some of them such tasks.”

“You mean that...”

“You call them prophets,” Orianna finished his thought.

“I think I can guess at least a few people who visited your seventh heaven department at least once...”

“In fact, there was an order of magnitude more of them. Unfortunately, not everyone was able to remember their own obligations back on Earth. And people simply did not want to listen to many of them,” as she said these words, Orianna thoughtfully moved the tip of her finger through the air, drawing out unfamiliar figures.

“...And what do these mapped lines mean?” and John pointed to the thin lines of light that intersected with each other like cobwebs and connected the sparkling, shining balls of light on the multi-dimensional map, which, by the whim of an angelic hand, had just materialized directly in front of the slightly startled John’s eyes a few otherworldly seconds ago.

“Lines of related destinies with indicated degree and form of influence. Individuals have fewer of them, and public figures have more. Yet sometimes one in the field is still a mighty warrior.”

“And the light globes?”

“Moments of making fateful decisions. Points of bifurcation, in your pseudo-scientific language. After fixing each such point on the timeline, the destiny map is automatically restructured. This, by the way, is a map of your past life. And this point,” and Orianna pointed to the brightest of them, which no longer emanated light, “describes the moment when you sacrificed yourself for the lives of others and for the sake of their upcoming victory.”

“You mean they are going to finally win this war?”

“It would be more correct to say that the probability of your country’s victory is... But, yes, they will prevail. All our preliminary calculations demonstrated that.”

“That just drives one crazy!”

“I wouldn’t rush it if I were you,” Orianna replied, laughing. “But for beginners, it sometimes truly seems unimaginable and improbable at the same time – the possibility to know the probabilities in advance. And I’m already used to being, so to speak, a celestial accountant. Even though we don’t have such a position here.”

“In other words, you can calculate everything? Up to any point in the future?”

“Everything is known only to the Almighty. That’s why you were once told that not a single hair would fall from your head without his knowledge. Mine, too, by the way.”

“May God forgives me for being tactless, but... but I think I like the way your hair looks... as well as your face... and your eyes... and that smile...”

“Really?” Orianna asked, confused. “You’re not the first person to tell me that, but it’s always pleasant to hear it, especially from humans!”

“Can you tell me if I can... go back to Earth later? Help my beloved ones there?”

“Well, you won’t be able to go back at that time, because the law of ether’s waves won’t allow it. Fifty years from now, it will be. Don’t you worry, time is a highly diverse concept, especially here! You should look around for a while, get used to it, at least change your ethereal clothes, so that you don’t have to wander around the seventh heaven in a soldier’s uniform for five dozen earth years!

By then, I'll have calculated a new fate for you. Whom do you want to become again, haven't you decided? We could really use some prophets in that world of yours..."

"I... I'll have to think about it. Thank you for your... kindness. So where can I come up with a new ethereal look here?"

"The hall of embodied fantasies is a little to the left and right of our all-central... well, let me take you there by myself, or you'll surely get confused with our coordinate system. Give me your hand!"

"I thank you!"

With these words, the spirit of a man known as John, still shining with an otherworldly light, took the warm angelic hand in his own and gently, tenderly and timidly kissed it.

"And this, perhaps, was truly inevitable," Orianna whispered to herself with a smile.

*2020-06-10*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Unfinished story of the space vessel

“Have you called for me, Coordinator?”

“Yes, Admiral, take a seat. Tea, coffee, ambrosia?”

“I would not refuse ambrosia... But, perhaps, somehow another time. Business is too urgent, as I understand?”

“And with no delays possible. The rates in this adventure of yours became too high.”

“Mister Coordinator, I understand everything, but after all, we ourselves have started this experiment together to...”

“I have transferred this ship along with crew under your responsibility, Admiral, under your full responsibility – do you remember? You have promised me that everything will be as smooth as possible.”

“Their free will, which you have granted to them, has appeared to be much more unreasonable than we assumed initially...”

“You selected best ones, Admiral. Three planets in different sectors of the Galaxy for three new races. You have tried to discover pearls on these planets-prisons, Admiral, – and where are your best crew now? Sleeping peacefully in cryogenic capsules onboard of this spaceship which has almost strayed away from a trajectory?”

“After the first Collision part of them have awakened, after all.”

“I’ll let you know, Admiral, that after this very first Collision the communication system of the ship has been almost destroyed. Even the woken up crew are practically unable to perform two-way communication. We receive all their reports, while they hardly receive one-two percent of ours. Multiply this by two-three percent of those awakened. According to our calculations the probability that they will manage to correct a course of their vessel on coordinates, which we are trying to transfer to them, and avoid collision with the second Ring, is...”

“I perfectly know this, mister Coordinator. I know it all. A current number of woken up crewmen of the space vessel does not allow us to rely on the successful ship-handling in a manual mode. And the auto-navigation system has already been destroyed two thousand parsecs ago.”

“What’s with other crew? How successful were manual attempts to shutdown cryogenic systems?”

“Completely unsuccessful. After Collision electronics of ship’s systems have been seriously damaged. With the manual shutdown, the sleepers either die within several seconds, hardly able to realize what is happening with them, or get considerable spiritual-chemical damage.”

“What sort of damage?”

“It’s symptoms are the uncontrollable flashes of aggression to all things living. They literally clawed with teeth those, who have awoken them.”

“And so we have the following: manual unfreezing doesn’t function properly, and there are not enough awakened crew with required talents and skills onboard in order to activate automated systems. A vicious circle. And the second Ring is just ahead in the current course. And ship acceleration has been increasing all the time, making new maneuvers more and more difficult.”

“Everything is correct, mister Coordinator.”

“What protection measures have been taken in case this vessel will not pass it?”

“We have activated closely located orbital modules. Have moved rescue fleet from the adjacent sector.”

“How many crewmen can survive Ring Collision, Admiral?”

“All sleeping ones will surely die. And considering those awakened... very few, mister Coordinator. Very few. Collision will break vessel’s hull for more than forty percent. The spaceship will be lost forever in any case.”

“Is there is still a possibility to achieve hyperlight molecular jumping, when the vessel will be traveling through V sector, taking his current speed into account? Being on board, you could help those awakened crew change ship’s course.”

“The chance is small, but... but I am personally ready to try to rectify own mistake. With own blood, if it’s possible to say so.”

“You know the consequences, Admiral. When molecular reassemblage in a process of jumping is performed, your memory will be erased. Its restoration will require subsequently huge efforts afterward.”

“I know, Coordinator. No one is capable to perform this transition except you and me, anyway. It still gives a little spark of hope.”

“For all of us. For even, we are compelled to pay for errors of own children. Even we, Admiral. And may the miracle help them all.”

“Just before I leave you now, Coordinator, possibly forever, I nevertheless would like to ask – how is this vessel called? I mean, how do humanoids, inhabiting it, call their home? We have our own name for it, but nevertheless...”

“Admiral, don’t make me believe that you have already passed the process of molecular reassemblage directly before my eyes. You perfectly know how they call it,” and Coordinator smiled sadly, “that they call it “The Earth”.

2010-07-16

Genre: *Dialog*

Category: *Recognized*

# Unreality

By a road, made of black stone blocks, along with the anthem, coming from a loudhailer of the accompanying armored personnel carrier, accurately measuring out the pace, a military convoy was striding. Faces of soldiers were, precisely like ones of medieval warriors, protected by casting opaque gloss visors of their helmets, and they, proud winners, representatives of the highest human race, which has conquered Earth and near-Earth worlds, worn shoulder straps with a sign of black sun and eagle, who has captured entire globe in its mighty claws – a symbol of eternal night in the world.

This military convoy accompanied a group of terrorists, that has been captured a few days ago, into a distributive concentration camp – resistance fighters from defeated countries of China, the Soviet Union, and North Africa. The fate of these insignificant representatives of lower races was already decided when their sun-eyed immortal Fuhrer, governing their highest race for almost a century, ascended to the throne of Fatherland. The genetic material, used for extension of life by close to the Fuhrer confidants and generals, including himself – that what these under-humans will soon be transformed into by clever, perfect and efficient machines of the Reich. One way or another they will serve for the benefit of the great Reich in their death if they haven't wished to serve as prisoners of concentration camps in their life. Soon enough – several years from now on – last remains of separated resistance fighters in the Central Asian and North African regions will be suppressed by the new stunning technological power of the Empire's military machine – and battle for the Earth will be completed at last. Handfuls of survivors after atomic bombings of their countries by the Reich weren't destined to win. Not in this scenario, in any case.

“Heil! Heil! Heil!” soldiers were loudly shouting, measuring out the pace.

“Glory for the great Empire! Glory for the sun-like Fuhrer! Glory for the eternal Reich!”

A few could brag of such a technological breakthrough, which has been achieved by the Reich during the last several decades in this compelled fight against the remnants of resistance forces.

Atomic weapons, used with the blessing of the great Fuhrer against the largest countries of Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America. Mechanized robots, towering like colossuses over buildings and capable to incinerate steel and concrete with plasma and lasers – in the past, they were used by the Empire on the front line, and today as a personal guard for high-ranking officers. Genetically modified soldiers of the Reich, surpassing by several times all of the best representatives of lower races in force, accuracy and reaction time. Cybernetic semi-humans, semi-machines, enclosed in nanofiber armor, whose mechanical bodies were controlled by a living human brain, deprived of the memory of own past – perfect killers, implicitly executing any issued orders. Insectoid-like nanorobots, carrying paralyzing vaccines in their tiny mechanical bodies, whose sting led to a cardiac standstill after several tens of seconds... paralytic gas “zaltsyn” had the same effect, only paralyzed entire organisms of its victims in a few seconds.

Microchips, implanted since the birth into all citizens of Fatherland, capable to activate themselves through a received in due time outer signal and complete control over the psychoemotional behavior of their carriers. Fine machines for genetic re-engineering, used both for treatment and improvements – correction of “God’s mistakes” – of Reich’s soldiers. Molecular re-integrators, that were transforming living beings into molecular admixtures, sorting their atoms and directing it to a proper pipeline inside enormous automated production conveyors...

This list went on and on, and many of the most advanced scientific and technical developments, designed to provide a space expansion of the Reich, were classified. One of the known to a wide public was a “ZigHeil” project – a group of circumsolar orbital modules that were collecting energy of a star and sending it back to Earth through sub-dimensional zero-channel. “Venus” was another publicly known space project – an industrial colonization of planet Venus by forces of more than one billion of Reich’s prisoners, the majority of which were fated to die.

The science was devoted to serving invincible Reich, giving birth to all new ways of destruction of rebellion’s remains and controlling of own representatives of the chosen race. What can be stronger than the science, given to the mercy of mad geniuses? It gave citizens of the Empire, true Aryans, a hope for immortality. And history is always being written by the winners.

“Heil! Heil! Heil!” greetings to a new day and their immortal Fuhrer of awakening from their night dreams citizens were filling streets of Empire’s city.

“Heil! Heil! Heil!” everything sank in this merged in a one huge cacophony polyphony, every morning for many decades already.

“Heil! Heil! Heil!” and there was no rescue from this mad roar of living dead people.

“Heil!”

\* \* \*

“Hey! Quietly! Wing on the right!” the elderly Angel with a charred left wing and three golden feathers in a white right, all of a sudden entered the room, where several young recruits fussed around unusual device, forcibly pushing each other with their grayish-white wings in their desire to glance into the sphere of this probabilistic and time demodulator. At the sight of their chief, they immediately flew away from the sphere and stood in a row, soaring at a small height over a shining with an azure light floor of this institution.

In a clear human language this institution was called as Angelic Military Academy, and so suddenly appeared in this apartment colonel was one of the deputies of its top command. The device, which has drawn the attention of young Angels, was designed for a modulation – a viewing of the events, taking place in a real time in various worlds, where graduates of the Academy had to travel from time to time with special assignments and missions. And it was called probabilistic due to a reason that it allowed to estimate dynamics of a change of probabilities of scenarios of various events, as well as to study those scenarios, which could have happened in examined worlds but haven’t due to some reasons.

And colonel just found our cadets exactly when they were viewing such unrealized scenario of the human planet, known as “Earth”. This device, even though it was one of the latest perspective scientific development of the Academy, wasn’t one of a kind. What wasn’t developed behind its walls by Angels-engineers and further used in practice in their missions by Angels-cadets! There were generators of energetic barriers, capable to protect whole nations of physical worlds from adverse events; defensive helmets for a protection of mind of certain people from the influence of false ideas and negative feelings, generated and directed to them by demonic opponents; infamous in human worlds bows of engineer Amur, which were striking their victims and never missing; armor suits made from angelic fluff, allowing worthy people to survive inexplicably, coming out dry from waters of accidents; there was even a well-known generator of alpha rays, capable to alter space, so that enemy bullets and shells cannot touch human fighters; beta-beams generator was used to change some of the local probabilities of events at the right time in order to encourage worthy people or punish guilty ones; beams of gamma-generator gave inflow of new powers to whole groups or nations of people, if their course of life was recognized as worthy by the Law. And this was just a short sample from a whole list of Academy’s miracles.

“Quietly!” meanwhile continued that elderly colonel, who has come through many battles with demons. “Who gave permission to use the demodulator without due induction?” and colonel severely looked over scared recruits with his golden-colored eyes. “Perhaps, I should send all of you to a mission on Earth?” he sounded his thoughts as if purposely.

“In no way, comrade colonel!” stammering, answered one of the young cadets, having put his right wing to a head. “Veterans speak – there are hard times there right now. And we lack the necessary combat experience, sir!”

“You are completely right, greenhorn!” colonel grinned. “You don’t even know yet how to counter-attack a simple human depression, but already tried to watch events scenarios. Now, who will tell me, what does the first law of Spiritual-dynamics tell us?”

“The first law of Spiritual-dynamics, sir, says, sir, that in favorable external conditions a soul grows wider and becomes softer and kinder, sir! And in unfavorable it contracts and becomes firmer and tougher, sir!” the same young cadet replied it as a tongue twister.

“This is a correct answer, you, greenhorn!” colonel barked in ears of his cadets. “All of you should learn it by heart and wing by tomorrow! And don’t you dare to use demodulator again without holding a proper induction. Is that all clear?”

“Aye-aye, sir!” hanging in the air Angels answered simultaneously as in a chorus.

“Otherwise I will send you all to the Earth tomorrow,” colonel thought silently. “Times are truly hard out there.”

*2017-08-05*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Companions

“Stretch! Now push on! Push on! More! Come on, darling, I know that it hurts! Such is our female fate, we all passed through it. Here... I can see his head! A little more! He comes out! He comes all out! A little more, push on!”

Young mother – a woman of approximately twenty-five years – could barely constrain a cry of pain, which was continually coming to a dried-up throat and desperately, like a sea wave, rolling on a coast, seeking to break over and get loose. Two women were helping her during a childbirth. One of them was a midwife, who was now anxiously fussing near the woman in labor – and a complete stranger would give her by her look about forty years even though she was hardly thirty years old, having glanced on her face, which has grown thin due to a constant lack of sleep, and her hollow brown eyes. And the second... sun-casting, golden-colored and as if slightly transparent hair of the second woman were as if fluttering on the invisible to ordinary people wind during these moments, obeying the will of all the energies that were streaming through her, her celestial-blue eyes were shining with patience and kindness; white clothing, reminding a fantastic and magnificent wedding dress, only supplemented and emphasized her beauty. Hands of this second woman, so similar during these instants to a young regal bride, were directed to a woman in labor – and brightly flashing sparkles of light were continually flowing from them and smoothly, precisely like winter snowflakes, falling down from the skies, sitting down on her tummy, from where the newborn baby was about to be completely born. Neither the woman in labor nor the midwife saw in these minutes this mysterious stranger – for eyes of men are too blind to notice what is subject only to a spirit. Yet this didn't confuse invisible guest at all – for the nature of her mission was so noble that a life for the sake of her fulfillment was already the highest possible reward. The light that was now flowing from her hands through invisible thin threads to a mother and her child, was weaving hidden for a common mortal being a purple sphere that was protecting them like a shield. A smile was playing on a face of the blue-eyed blonde and her cheeks have already managed to blush during the time of operation.

Life was entering the law. The baby was about to be born.

\* \* \*

The woman in a black hood and the dress, reminding itself mourning clothes of a widow, who has recently lost her beloved husband, accurately stepped over a threshold, having almost hooked by a door's handle with a hanging on her back and attached to a belt scythe. Having hushed to a cat, who has rushed under her legs and was just going to start crying “meow”, thereby breaking the blissful silence, so loved by this woman, she looked around and methodically put away from a pocket of her black as night dress a book of impressive thickness.

This, as it usually turns out in real life, completely unexpected by inhabitants of this institution guest wasn't afraid to be discovered at all. To tell the truth, only cats and these few living beings, who have not yet lost a connection with what many mortals call as “the other world”, were able to detect her presence here.

Having once again re-read one of the pages of her book, which has been wrapped up in a black-brown skin, this green-eyed brunette slowly nodded, as if having made herself sure of correctness of the choice of both time and place, looked on a bony watch that was attached to her hand, and started slowly walking deep along the corridor.

Those ones living in this nursing home, if only they knew in advance what type of guest have visited their house today, would immediately rush away like mad from this future mourning place, protecting themselves with various signs of the cross in a strange hope that they, these signs, can alter their fates, which they have been forming for many years of own lives. The guest in black perfectly knew it – and this fact cannot give birth to anything other than a sad smile. For uncountable eons of her devoted sovereign service, she managed to get used to such an attitude from mankind, and it ceased to disturb her any longer. After all, for her, it was usual – and the only possible one – job, and this guest has been trying to execute it as precisely and carefully as possible.

Maybe in regards with her similar attitude to own work duties, she now decided to say a final goodbye to each of elderly pensioners, who were peacefully sleeping during this midnight in closed rooms away from prying public eyes. She quietly climbed by a cold stone ladder on a second floor with bedrooms, trying not to produce too much noise with her shod black brilliant boots or to touch yet another piece of local household furniture with her casting opaque light scythe, and started traveling from room to a room. She quietly embraced sleeping people, trying to imprint their faces in her memory and to hear the sound of their still-beating hearts. Two out of several dozens – who have lived their mortal lives very dignifiedly – she embraced so strong and has been holding in her hands for so long that beating hearts of the two stopped their rhythms while their masters were dreaming, thus entraining their souls in wanderings through labyrinths of other worlds. One may say that these two were lucky ones – they have left before those to whom this life will seem like a hell after several dozens of minutes. They were the worthiest ones among all living here and therefore according to the orders given today to a black guest, their parting with this world should have been as painless as possible. Having kissed this couple, our guest dexterously opened her thick book on the last page, which materialized from out of nowhere during that very instant and added itself to a book. Two names of her recent beloved ones were already imprinted on this page in golden letters – unlike a vast set of gray and almost black-colored names, which were filling in a small script several previous pages of this chronicle. Shaking her head with satisfaction, the guest in a black hood, covering her head, has been continuing her night trip until her bony wearable highlighted “five minutes before 1 A.M.” time. Then, as if having bethought, she took her eternally wearable weapon from her back, approached electricity switchboard and forcefully struck it several times with her scythe. Something flashed inside it, began to sparkle, then sparks started running over the wires, flame jumped on wall-papers, then on elements of furniture, greedily consuming oxygen. Several minutes later entire floor started blazing.

Death was entering the law. And no one could avoid her eternal embraces.

“By a granted to me right let a life be given to you!” gently whispered the blue-eyed woman in white, bluntly kissing a newborn baby.

“By a granted to me right you are fated to leave this place with me after several minutes,” the green-eyed guest in a black hood, which have come out of nowhere, whispered with a cold and aloof voice, having come near a baby and leaned with both hands on her scythe just like a guard, carefully protecting entrusted treasure.

Sights of two women crossed.

“What a surprise! What type of bad luck brought you here?” said a woman in a white dress, looking at the unexpectedly arrived black guest. “It’s written in my book, that this dear child has to be born in exactly two minutes and thirty-three seconds.”

“And it’s written in mine, that he has to die in four minutes and forty-six seconds. So please apologize me for that, but... I am afraid that you together with his parents have to behold how he slowly dies from a cerebral hemorrhage, which has occurred due to the hard birth procedure and patrimonial trauma of mother.”

“That’s strange...” the white guest sadly looked at the kid. “What’s the sense in it? Can you hold for just a minute, I will try to inquire of it?”

“I cannot delay, for I have instructions, and you know that well. It’s possible to delay only in exceptional cases – which is, unfortunately, not this one.”

The white-winged woman in a wedding dress closed her eyes and raised her head up as though listening attentively to the unknown secret music, which has been filling the entire universe since the beginning of creation and available only to its devoted listeners.

“Indeed, everything is as you said,” she replied after twenty seconds. “With such a swift death the soul of this child has to expiate an essential part of mistakes made during his previous lives, and for his parents this grief according to the plan will become a binding focal point, which will help them to overcome former mutual offenses in order to further become a strong and close-knit family, in which the soul of this kid can be born again, living happily this second time.”

“Well, now you see,” the guest in a dark attire nodded with satisfaction. “There are no current mistakes and no expected ones. His ways are inconceivable as we both know it.”

“Indeed so...” the white-winged woman smiled. “I was entrusted to accompany so many lovely and innocent kids to this world.”

“And I was forced to accompany so many sinners away from it,” hemmed her colleague. “Well, are you ready for the next trial of death? Please come closer to the parents, embrace them so they can at least feel your nearby presence, they will have hard moments coming to them.”

“How compassionate you have become as of lately, my friend, I can’t help but wonder!” either seriously or just for fun noticed Life.

“Blame it on the years...” Death answered philosophically. “What they can do to us, women!”

\* \* \*

Two women – one in black and one in white attire – were sitting on a bench near a city pond, looking on floating nearby swans.

“And do you remember that young man, physicists, who have been always joking about the third karma law of Newton and the meaning of life, the universe, and everything, – and it turned out to be always equal to forty-two? Why did you take him away at such an early age? He had yet to live and live on.”

“Not why, my friend, but what for. He would leave his motherland several years afterward, be dragged into a military concern, started working for foreign intelligence services – and would have helped to create such a weapon that you, my colleague, would truly shudder. Therefore, I was given an order to take him away ahead of time to help both him and this world as well.”

“Well, let’s suppose so,” Life was going on with her inquiries. “And that little girl, Polina, who was raped by two thugs – why have you allowed them to kill her afterward? You were standing near them, keeping silence. I still can’t forget how hard it was to help her come to life and be born outside of maternity hospital when her drunk pregnant mother began to give her a birth.”

“Exactly because she had such a family, in which she could not live for more than ten years. Everything would come to an end in a suicide, you understand? And this is such a sin that if you take one on a balance of your soul – you’ll be washing it off for a century. And she passed through sufferings now, became a martyr, it will be much easier for her now – it’s not Earth, there is an intended place in another civilization for her. And I played a nice joke with these two freaks, by the way, – for the first one I palmed off during a year such a fake vodka that his liver didn’t sustain it, and the second one fell into a manhole which was opened this day totally not casually. I was told in confidence afterward, that no more births are planned for these two guys – so you shouldn’t accept their childbirth any longer, don’t you worry.”

“Well, you know...” Life can’t help but be curious, “and why do you wage wars, then? You desire to harvest, enjoy sufferings of men?”

“It’s not me,” smiled Death. “It’s people. And what do I do? Do you even know, what longest lists they send me in each day like that? I can hardly manage to fully read them when it’s already necessary to put them to action!” she laughed. “I have already seen all kinds of deaths – both clever and silly, brave and unimportant, self-sacrifices even... however, their numbers keep falling as of recent decades. Humans grow thin in spirit, and their lives become common, and their deaths become unimportant,” philosophically noticed Death and raised her scythe as if edifying.

“Yes,” her colleague sadly agreed with her. “Humans are, unfortunately to me, mortal. And how do you think, my friend, whether there is something in this world that you cannot take away with you?”

“Ideas, probably,” answered Death after a minute of thinking.

“And dreams,” added Life. “Ones that are bigger than an individual is.”

“Indeed,” Death agreed with her. “Big ones.”

*2017-07-26*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

## Messenger on the planet Earth

“A difficult journey awaits you. This planet balances on the verge – and its fate lies on the bowls of scales of Universe. Either life or destruction awaits it further. But they have to choose their path themselves. Each of them will make his own choice.”

“What should I do, Master?”

“You will be one of the warriors who has come into their world. You will have to fight, to struggle with injustice, to be upset with their imperfection. But remember well – this world balances on the verge, and it’s prohibited to bring chaotic elements in it. You will have to aid them to understand their ways – to help those who have heard you find a path to their bright destiny, which has always been waiting and still waits for them. To awake those fallen asleep, to encourage those sad, to give new powers to those joyful for bringing of good. Remember, though, that you cannot revive dead ones – there is neither this nor the other world for them. You will be one of many other, who will be sent to this world – you will meet them in our life. You can unite forces – it will be easier for you to travel together. You will easily recognize them – your sensitive heart will not deceive you. When the knowledge of wonderful possibilities of spirit will be brought to this world, when consequences of various spiritual impulses will become obvious – then the planet will transform – as it was predicted. But keep in mind that to achieve this purpose all of you will have to battle – to battle against ignorance and cruelty, which continue to overflow this planet. You will have to fight – including those who have heard you and those awakened. They will have to understand it.”

“Do they have any idea in what time they are living and what should they do to not allow the destruction of their interstellar home?”

“No. Only singles know about that – either those sent by Us or those who have come to Us willingly in the course of their spiritual searches. Others either wander in own illusions or close themselves by walls of negation – and that is one more reason of why intervention is necessary.”

“Is there is a name in the history of their world, which has been given to this planet’s stage, when the first signs of its approaching became obvious?”

“Yes. They call it – Armageddon.”

“What’s the name of this planet?”

“Its inhabitants call it ‘The Earth’.”

“I have understood, Master. I am ready to accept my Way.”

“We will meet you when you return. Remember of Us, and remember of them. The planet must survive.”

“I am ready.”

“Into the journey, warrior!”

A flash of radiant shining light. The luminous spirit, shrouded in its beams, like in a cover. Next instance – and a new dazzling stream of light engulfs him – and he disappears in the light.

\* \* \*

One last effort of a mother – and the child was born. A pair of caring hands has immediately picked him up, wrapped up in a bed-sheet and went to wash. Only several minutes have passed – and the child was brought back to his mother.

The woman with tear-stained and happy face cuddles the child, silently and tenderly whispering something under her nose...

\* \* \*

“Have you already made up your mind on how we should name him? We have to give a worthy name to our little son.”

“Yes, I have thought up a name. We will name him Christian.”

“Interesting. Why have you chosen such a name for him?”

“I... I don't know... it's simply... it's as if someone has suggested it to me. I like this name. Let's name him Christian, all right?”

“All right. I believe it's quite a good name. Let it be Christian.”

\* \* \*

“Hey, you there, coward! Have your wetted your panties out of fear already?! Come, come here, mother's sonny! Such an assistant, oh yeah! She is my girl and you will not touch her! She needs no aid from you! Have you got me, huh?!”

And the little boy was taken on breast and uplifted.

“Have you understood me or not, I ask you?! Stop keeping silence, you, goat!”

One more jerk. A blow in a stomach. Waves of pain, dispersing through the body and the impossibility to make even a single breath. A hand, ready to strike again...

“Leave him be.”

And a hand, trying to make a new blow, have been intercepted.

The attacker has turned back.

A boy of approximately the same age stood before him, only he was a bit higher. The guy, who has begun the attack, has jerked and pulled out his grasped hand.

“What the heck are you meddling in our affairs, aye? Why have you come here, foul nit? Who's in the hell are you, bastard?! This does not concern you, pig!”

“Leave him alone. You have no intention to talk to him. You just want to cripple and frighten him.”

This third one, who has disturbed this “talk” in such a wrong moment, was absolutely unnecessary here. And what’s even stranger – he showed no signs of fear at all. Only the calmness can be read in his eyes – and not even a fraction of dread. He has already learned to see human fear, he read it time and again in the eyes of his victims – whether it was some cowardly excellent pupil or touch-me-not girlie.

But this one – he wasn’t afraid, wasn’t at all...

“I will repeat once again. Leave him be. You have already tormented enough people – it will be so no more. Not here anyway.”

“What’s so bad that I’ve made, huh?! What’s the bullshit are you saying, ram! We were having a face-to-face ‘talk’ here – and it’s not your fucking business to intervene! This bastard was meddling with my girl, with my girl – do you understand?! And now he is going to suffer punishment for it!”

And once again he moved forward to the fellow, whom he has beaten recently, intending to continue fighting. Then the interfered little boy has risen between him and his target.

“Fine. Then you will have to deal with me.”

The attacker just smiled.

“As you would have it, bastard!”

\* \* \*

He rose slowly from the ground. Approached that tormented scared fellow and put a hand on his shoulder.

“Have no fear. He will touch you no more. He now has someone to answer to for his crimes.”

“T... thanks, for... for h... helping me.”

Either the boy has not yet recovered from a punch in his stomach or has still been experiencing dread.

“You don’t have to thank me. It’s my debt. I have come here to perform own duties.”

“And w .. what wi... will be with... h... him?”

“Him?” He has looked at recent tormentor, who bent and was still rolling from pain on the floor. “He will touch you no more. And, well... he will recover soon enough. It should not concern you now.”

“Ag... again thank you f... for your aid. H... how do I call you and w... why have you helped m... me?”

“You ask for my name, right? They call me Christian. I have aided you simply because it’s my debt and because two warriors from one side never abandon each other on the field of battle.”

And once again he has put his hand on boy’s shoulder, and, having smiled, has friendly shaken it.

\* \* \*

“Please, get rid of your anger. You do not currently comprehend all consequences of your condition, and not only those consequences for you, but also for people who surround you in these moments.”

“Stop poking me here! Have your fun poking another, for you are like mummy’s child to me! And it’s none of your business! How would you behave if some slink had robbed you?!”

“I say ‘you’ because I consider you as equal, as one inhabitant of this world to similar another. Your anger is pointless – the event has already occurred, and it’s your past now. The thief is gone. One can regret his past, love it or hate it, but cannot change it. It cannot be brought back to be lived through once again – possible, differently. But each moment of your life is already becoming a past in this very instant – and so you have to live it to not only having no regrets after but making it a new source of power at present.”

“I do not understand you.”

“Many of you are unable to do that, unfortunately. And nevertheless they should start realizing, where is the truth and where does lie lurk in the course of their own spiritual quest. Time never waits. It’s already running out.”

\* \* \*

And nevertheless, it was wonderful here. Despite all the absurd and discrepancies, which have been brought here by capricious reason of this world’s inhabitants, it was great. The very atmosphere of this small shelter in a much bigger haven was pure.

“Would you like to confess, my child?”

“I thank you, but I must refuse – I will confess only before my divine Father. And for all my errors and mistakes I will answer only before Him as well.”

“Oh, is that really so? After all, you are not without a sin, my son.”

“That’s true indeed. But I will redeem all my faults and nonsenses, once made by me in different lives – and, possibly, in this one too – with my own life. Simply because it’s the only way ever possible and there are no others.”

“But God himself has granted its servants the right to atone for sins of others and to pardon them. Those forgiven by us are forgiven by Him.”

“How cheap your forgiveness must be! I wonder whether it costs 30 silver coins? But you have completely misunderstood the writings you managed to keep – even if it has been deformed by your servants at earlier stages, how is it ever possible to talk about the full accuracy of its interpretation? There is no such law in the Universe, which would allow one spirit to forgive the other for mistakes, made by him, and in one lapse to cancel all their consequences. Another spirit can help only those coming to an end of the redemption – but it’s the man himself who walks the path of redemption.”

“You are speaking of blasphemy, my child! How can you judge what is true, and what is false, when we have a live proof of the validity of all the laws, honored by us, given to us from the above?”

“You have understood a lot correctly, but, unfortunately, not all. The shortest and ones of great importance words on the planet, on the planets, are ‘God’, ‘Love’, ‘Peace’, ‘Eternity’ – you have understood this right. The world lives in and is driven by love – by the love of God to His creations and His creations to Him and to each other. The Universe is eternal as you are – and this, unfortunately, not all have yet realized.”

“Only the God is eternal, my child – but we are all mortal ones. Only by righteous deeds in His cause in this mortal life can we hope to reach life eternal.”

“But you are eternal. Both I am, and you are, and each of us. Planets can be scattered to ashes, but we will live on. Another subject, however, is that you have really decided to destroy this planet into ashes, trying to repeat sad destiny of a predecessor civilization, for which this planet was too their space shelter in due time.”

“This is untrue! Those sinning and having not repented do not live forever! The fate of theirs is the fiery hell and eternal torments!”

“Eternal tortures for mistakes of only a single life? For the errors, made by a human on a very short part of his way? Certainly, there are the acts which extend their consequences on a lot of lives. To fall once and to rise from the falling during many centuries – it’s a sad fate indeed. Many, however, prefer to dive into such depths, whence they cannot get out anymore, – therefore for them consequences of their actions may become similar to being eternal. But nevertheless – they are not endless, they can occupy many lives, but still are not eternal. But the true meaning of life lies not in the endless sinning and atonement, after all! It’s in the creativity for goodness sake, in aiding your fellows, in walking your own bright path through the challenges of Universe – have you truly understood that? Have all your so-called wise men understood that?”

“How dare you defile a Divine Word! You will not be able to stay in this house, devoted to Him, anymore! We have His Word!”

“And that is great. Follow the way of everything blessed, granted to you. Grow this blessed seed in yourself – only then you can count on your perfection, only then you will move closer to your Father. Remember, each of us is His creation, and each of us is eternal. We are all Gods – at least in the potential. As His fraction, possessing all His traits in a germ, we can travel a path from a human – through the angelic human – to the incarnated God himself. And yet we can still remain at an animal stage – some of us have been living so for countless centuries without change – and the fate of those is truly unenviable. It’s for us to decide that – for everyone, and this is our most important and most fateful choice.”

“This is enough! I will not bear your presence here any longer! Leave this house of our Lord now!”

“Farewell, father.”

\* \* \*

Planet – garden? What a bullshit! I will rather believe in the mechanized iron planet!

Love makes the world go around? It's the physical strength that moves it!

There are other inhabited worlds? But our apparatus hasn't discovered any signs of life on the planets which are accessible to us – all worlds must be lifeless! We are the unique source of life in the entire Universe!

A man can emit light? Are you even in your mind?! Tell me now, that space is filled with invisible green little men!

A man is capable to change the world surrounding him with his own thoughts? Oh, yeah, sure! I can surely change it with my own hands, but thoughts... I haven't even heard a bigger nonsense than this!

I am a potential God? I am a human! And leave all those potential for someone else to care!

My feelings create the radiations, affecting me and my neighbors? Do I bear a responsibility for negative feelings? I would rather now affect you in a... hm... real way – hit your dummy head with my fists!

Space is not empty? It's filled with the essence of ours? Yeah, yeah, do not lie like a gas meter! Scientists haven't even discovered anything like that – and it simply does not exist! What? Whether I can feel a difference between a temple and a prison's atmospheres? Certainly, no! Wonder why? Cause there is none!

How does a person feel a glance? What sort of noticed flashing spark can arise between two people? There are just two options here – either it all seems to you, or you have a really diseased imagination!

How did Christ cure people? Oh, heck, here you are again, starting to tell tales about him. I have heard plenty of those tales in my childhood already! No more!

Armageddon? Time of challenges? We have been stuffed with these children fairy tales already, feed someone else with them! We are adult and disbelief in such nonsense!

\* \* \*

He was standing, surrounded by several tens of his allies. Awakened warriors of this world.

“We will not despair, and we will not turn back. Do you remember, how you have aided me when I was still a schoolboy? You have helped me out of pure motivation. The world needs the same sort of aid now.”

“Yes, George, I remember. I have not forgotten. You are right, we will not surrender. We will keep working.”

“What wasn't possible today, would blossom tomorrow! How wonderfully you have spoken that day!”

Alice has approached him and smiled.

“The faithful one never gives up, the knowing one will bring his knowledge into the world to disseminate darkness of ignorance!”

And once again Pavel has repeated his words told by him once.

“Dragons of rage will be defeated!”

“Let the spiritual joy blossoms!”

“Let each new day be truly new!”

He heard these words, and tears have filled his eyes – even though he almost never cried.

It seemed that all of them have decided to remind him of his last years of life in this world. They repeated his words – each one repeated something most dear to his heart. They all approached him and friendly clapped on his shoulder, encouraging. They – awakened brave warriors of this world.

“Yes, my friends. We will continue our struggling. We have a path, chosen by us, and our debt lies before us. We should help people understand a lot of things – but each one of them should also feel by himself where does a truth and a lie rests. The planet must survive. We have done much but should make even more.

Our dreams live in the heart of the Universe and I beg my divine Father for the bright day when they will come true, to come at the long last.”

*2005-01-11*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Destiny

“This is simply mind-boggling!” loudly proclaimed the man who just entered the room, on the move sharply closing a door behind him where just a single word was imprinted with a soft sky-blue shade: “Home”.

“Inconceivable, you are right,” quietly agreed the old man who was sitting behind a table, and raised his head to recognize this new visitor.

Under the intense and sympathetic gaze of his blue eyes, the newcomer was momentarily embarrassed, but only after a few moments, he turned back to his own accusations.

“Hell only knows what it is! You simply live for yourself, you just keep working, you don’t seriously interfere with someone’s affairs, you go for a walk in the evenings through the night streets of big cities, and then all of a sudden...”

“And then all of a sudden the icicle falls down just on top of your head like snow on new year’s eve!” smiled the elder, studying the newcomer’s reaction to his words.

“How do you know,” the newcomer asked in surprise. “Were you following me?”

“Oh, not me personally. I have a lot of other duties in this wonderful world, you know. But we, most certainly, knew what was going to happen to you that most touching night even before you... well, what does time mean in this world, after all?” and the speaker put aside his quill and with such an unusual for his venerable age grace easily turned several pages of the impressive-sized book that was lying on the table. “Udaltsov Ivan Sergeevich?”

“Yes... that’s my name. Or was it? I definitely cannot understand anything in this story!”

“That’s a pity,” the scribe noted softly. “You ought to have learned that life lesson before... but let us not speak of the time.”

“Perhaps you would care to explain what’s going on in here?” Ivan Sergeevich pushed out these words with pressure, having moved a couple of steps in the direction of a slightly glowing massive seemingly-wooden table, where his interlocutor was sitting. “Right here and right now!”

“Your last attempt was unsuccessful. You have not fulfilled and would not have fulfilled your destiny. So we had to take you out early.”

“To take where?” Ivan Sergeevich instantly stopped, trying hard to remember all events of his last days on Earth down to the smallest detail.

“Back home, certainly,” quietly replied the gray-haired old man, gently wiping away a tear from his eyes. “All roads always lead back home, but each has a home of his own.”

“Are you implying that I...” and the thought that pierced Ivan Sergeevich’s mind at that moment made him shudder, “that I died?”

“Death is such a relative concept on the road of eternity,” the speaker answered with conviction. “Though not everyone is going that way.”

“I died...” Ivan Sergeevich’s spirit was still trying to overcome an impassable barrier. “Yet I am still alive, or otherwise who would be speaking with you right now?”

“And maybe you are actually seeing all of this in a dream while still lying in a coma in some not forsaken by God resuscitation clinic of some Earth city?” The old man gently smiled and his eyes sparkled with inner light for an instant. “Would you like to try again?”

“To try out what?”

“To finally fulfill your purpose, of course. After all, this is exactly what you went there for – to become a world-known artist, to illuminate through creativity this drowning in darkness world with the light of hope. And what did you end up with? The top manager of a major global bank. Are there not enough accountants and bankers in this world already?”

“I...” Ivan Sergeevich was staring down at his feet in confusion, observing how in these very moments they were drowning in a pink-and-purple mist that was spreading across the floor of the room. “I... I simply forgot! In God’s name, I forgot all of that! Why didn’t you remind me?”

“Those were the terms of our agreement. If you decide to make another attempt – you will completely forget about this meeting. Will you try again – or decide to refuse and start expecting your future fate as the one who has failed to fulfill his own promise?”

“Perhaps... I can make another attempt. Life on Earth... has its own advantages,” Ivan Sergeevich frightfully shifted from one foot to the other, while the fog rose higher and higher, enveloping both the elder, the writing-table, and Ivan himself.

“From the beginning or from the stopping point?”

“The stopping of what?”

“Your heart, of course.”

“Let’s... start from the beginning.”

“A new birth then...” understandably nodded the old man. “Well, that’s your right.”

“I can become anyone, right? After all, this is a new starting point. I could be... say, the race car driver. The best racer in the history of the world! Crowds and crowds of people would applaud me, I would bathe in money...”

At this point the fog that covered the room became so dense that dreaming Ivan Sergeevich completely lost his space and time landmarks. Not only this mysterious old man but corporate silhouette of Ivan himself disappeared from sight.

“Do you hear me?!” Ivan shouted into the distance, trying to see at least something. “People would applaud me! I would be great!”

The blue-eyed old man was still sitting at his desk, shrouded in mist. He silently turned back and forth the pages of his enormous book, while his eyes either filled with tears or sparkled with radiant light. Finally, the hand wielding a white feather stopped in front of the line “Udaltsov Ivan Sergeevich”, near which there was a number that has become a three-digit one a long time ago. A slight movement of hands – and this number increased by one. The letters of this name suddenly became increasingly vague just like this very fog, and then completely changed to “Gerashchenko Anton Pavlovich”.

The elder man gently raised his head from the book, brushing away another tear.

“I would strongly advise you to become an artist, Ivan Sergeevich,” he added quietly.

*2019-11-17*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Coming

“Comrade Captain, the suspect on the claim of blasphemy by the clergy was successfully detained by our task force in the Church of Christ the Saviour and half an hour ago was taken to the department for identification and interrogation purposes. Do you want me to send him in?”

A young red-haired junior police sergeant, always squinting like a semi-blind march cat, promptly made his brief report as soon as he opened the door to his boss’s office. Such a sly fellow, wanting a promotion. Well, we’ll see, we’ll see.

“Get him inside, Kalistratov,” police captain Christenko waved his hand authoritatively, putting the papers aside. “We will conduct a preliminary interrogation here so that we don’t have to waste too much time on him.”

“Oh, how did these priests torture us with their demands for protection of the feelings of believers!” a thought flashed inside the captain’s mind. “They constantly unload all such cases to our departments if possible. You, they say, conduct all necessary investigations, determine the degree of guilt of these disbelievers, while we will continue providing our services, helping your sinful souls in need. But don’t ever dare to let the culprits go free just like that! And where else do we have to put them? Every second man out there is a de-facto atheist, and every third of so-called believers is a hypocrite of epic proportions.”

“Drag him inside!” Kalistratov shouted, looking out into the corridor, and the two guards obediently led the handcuffed man into the room and placed him on a chair in front of the captain, keeping standing on both sides nearby.

Tenacious, accustomed to evaluating people with one cursory glance, captain Khristenko’s gaze reluctantly slid over the suspect, stopping at his eyes. Slavic appearance, thirty-five – forty years old, leatherette outerwear, jeans, calluses on the hands, blond hair. There is absolutely nothing unusual in his appearance, a classic ordinary hard worker, most likely a migrant, of which there are hundreds of thousands in Moscow, especially after the opening of the borders with Ukraine. But the eyes... they were too lively, abnormally kind.

“Did they explain to you the reason for your detention and the procedure for conducting the interrogation?” captain Christenko narrowed his eyes, aiming his gaze like a beam at the suspect’s face in an attempt to read his thoughts from facial expressions.

“Yes, in general,” the detainee replied kindly and calmly. “I’m ready to talk to you.”

“This is a mild interrogation, not a conversation. You’d better thank us for not keeping you in an interrogation room behind armored glass, like a particularly dangerous person. The conditions out there are not so rosy, believe me!”

The prisoner only smiled and just nodded in response.

“I thank you for your kindness.”

“So...” The captain rummaged through the pile of papers lying on his table for a moment, searching for a folder, a pen, and a dictaphone. “By the protocol...”

“What would you like to know? I have caused no harm to any of you or to those who have addressed my heavenly father in the temple.”

“Good and evil have all become very relative terms, especially in our time. Yet the clause for blasphemy that may come into reality is a very concrete and tangible thing, believe my experience. So...” the captain glanced at the lines of text in the newly opened case. “Witnesses from among the parishioners claim that you behaved completely inappropriately in the church, never according to canons and traditions, reading very loudly and sonorously the “Lord’s Prayer” as well as asked others, I quote, “to show yourself by true deeds that are pleasing to my heavenly father, and not by words and chants imposed on you.” Where did you even find such words? What, is there is a new trend arising in social networks?”

“I only said what I had to, words coming from my heart. I reminded people of heartfelt prayer and...”

“And engaged in blasphemy, you wanted to say?”

“I said no words of lies.”

“The Son of Man, my heavenly father, has traveled the way on the earth to the heaven, in order to prepare and execute his judgment on all of its inhabitants in the appointed time, and to divide the human race into grain and ryegrass...” These are extremist statements, almost a call to terrorism! Where is your father living now? We can get him into this department if need be before you can speak another nonsense!”

“High in the heavens” the prisoner replied confidently.

“Motherfucker!”

This man was getting on the captain’s nerves. It seems that he will not see a quick confession today and the prompt closure of this case as well as his major’s shoulder straps.

“Please don’t blaspheme my mother. Those who do that will suffer hardly.”

“Are you threatening me, whelp?” the captain stood up abruptly and came close to the prisoner, measuring him with his eyes. Something in the prisoner’s eyes, however, overcame the police officer’s anger.

“You mean, he is dead?”

“He went into the best of worlds.”

Having calmed down, captain Christenko slowly returned to his desk. “You like to speak allegorically, then. Well, no matter, we have seen lots of your ilk.”

“Can I drink some water?” the prisoner addressed sergeant Kalistratov, who was standing a little distance away.

“What, do you want to transform it into wine, self-manifested Christ?!” the sergeant chuckled. “We are not supposed to drink while on duty!”

“And I didn’t offer it to you. The last time I only wanted to make a family of beggars feel joy a little.”

“And what’s wrong with us? For we also, you know, have experienced great salary cuts after all these reforms, and are precisely like beggars. Can you, say, use your great powers and save our lost souls and salaries?” the junior sergeant, who was mocking the prisoner, seemed to even infect his superior with a smile, for the latter chuckled softly into his mustache.

“Well, you are an artist indeed!” the captain chuckled. “What’s your profession, artist? A clown in a circus, I suppose?”

“I am a rescuer.”

“Fucking... division. And whom exactly? Saving our souls, I take it? Did you save a few of us with your own faked death the last time, one must believe?”

“My father didn’t send me here to die. My assassins wanted to justify themselves in future generations.”

“What is your job, I ask you?!”

“I am a rescuer. IN EMERCOM.”

The captain whistled involuntarily.

“For how long?”

“Recently. After moving.”

“Why do you then run around the temples, if you are a rescuer? Take people out of the fire alive and make waters clear the way before you!”

This time it was sergeant Kalistratov who involuntarily chuckled into his fist after these words of his superior.

“For long will unbelievers not see miracles. And even when they see it, they still won’t believe.”

“Don’t you bluff with me like that!” the captain’s face was stern again. “Why did you disturb the parishioners in the temple with your prayers? Why didn’t you take an example from them?”

“Not the prayers they were speaking, but demands. My father cannot give what many ask for those who do not deserve it.”

“And who does, oh kind one? We are all sinners around here, do you know that? With our work, it’s a sin not to get dirty.”

“Children and pure ones.”

“Hmmm...” the answers of this detainee, despite all their strangeness, in some aspects started to seem more and more meaningful to captain Christenko, not so crazy as they looked at first. But the statements, the testimony of the parishioners...

“Why did you try to rob one of the parishioners, put your hand to her stomach in the crowd? I mean the pregnant woman. We have an accusation statement from her here, too.”

“The child would have been born ill at birth and her mother would have abandoned him. I saved both of them by healing him.”

“Gha!” the captain choked on his morning tea and roll. “What a turn! Would you suggest that we simply believe it?”

“Talk to her in ten days – she will understand and change her testimony.”

“That means you’ll stay here in solitary confinement for at least ten days.”

“As will my heavenly father desires it.”

“Why didn’t you give alms to the poor at the exit? Isn’t that what that very same Jesus taught us, whom you’re completely falsely trying to imitate just right now?” the captain narrowed his eyes again, being inwardly glad of the clever question.

“That’s not a wise question to ask,” the handcuffed young man said softly, raising his bright eyes to face the police captain. “They are not beggars, but deceivers. My father gave them hands and heads, yet the work became a burden to them. They keep spending alms on their bad habits without hesitation. I can’t help those of them who don’t want to help themselves.”

“Are you reading my mind, an impostor?” the captain mentally said to himself, fixing his eyes on this hell-knows-who.

“Those who keep selling my father’s name have become impostors of your present,” the prisoner said firmly and aloud as if answering some secret question.

The captain started moving his pen slowly in the air, not knowing what to write down on a paper. “That’s how it is, as it turns out... That’s all about it...”

“I brought no harm to any living soul. You inflict it on each other yourself, and the divine law of my father punishes your destinies and bodies for such deeds.”

“Well... And why do you preach in temples alone then? Where are your chosen ones, all that so-called apostles?” junior sergeant Kalistratov decided to interfere into a dialogue that no longer looked like an interrogation, but the prisoner silently raised his sad eyes to him – and like other-worldly shadow covered his bright sight for a moment – and then he slowly looked away, sighed, giving no answer.

“What... what shall we do with him, comrade captain?” asked the sergeant, shifting from one foot to the other, clearly feeling himself out of place and watching the captain who was still slowly, as if by inertia, waving a ballpoint pen in the air, as if his thoughts were traveling at this moment somewhere far away and he was trying to finally resolve a question of extreme importance.

“Remove his handcuffs,” Christenko finally ordered. “I’ll escort him to his cell personally.”

“But, comrade captain...”

“Just do it!”

“Aye-aye, sir!” Kalistratov, frightened by the harsh tone of the captain, waved his hand to the two guards standing nearby who had removed the handcuffs from the prisoner and then promptly went out from the cabinet together with them into the corridor, continuing to mutter something to himself.

A minute later, the sound of their footsteps faded inside the maze of corridors. The man who had been arrested for blasphemy was still sitting in his chair, making no attempts to escape.

“Thank you,” he said softly. “You wanted to tell me something...”

“I have a daughter... a small one,” the captain looked at the prisoner with a hopeful, pleading look. “She’s ill... severely. It’s torture... for the three of us. Help me, please, if that’s really you... Cure her!”

“You need to tell your wife about the past,” the suspect said firmly after a few seconds.

“About what – her?”

“Yes, about your treason. Make peace with your wife. Forgive each other. Then your daughter will recover.”

“By herself?”

“By my father's will.”

“T... thank you.”

The prisoner only nodded in response.

“You surely realize that I’m going to have to put you in solitary confinement until the circumstances of the attempted theft are resolved, don’t you? If I had it my way, I’d release you right away. But this is our routine, our regulations, our rules... damn them!”

“I understand,” said the prisoner. “Don’t worry about that. Lead on.”

Having that said, he laid a reassuring hand on the captain’s shoulder, and at that very moment as if a powerful invisible wave passed through his spirit and body, bringing back strength, the desire to live, the hope of saving his own daughter, and perhaps even a little bit of faith in a miracle.

“Lead on!” repeated the prisoner.

\* \* \*

That night, the one who walked the Earth two thousand years ago under the name of Jesus Christ did not close his eyes.

“My father!” he asked the starry heavens. “Why did you give me those who can’t go with me?”

“Others will come,” answered the sky to his spirit. “Those who will overcome their pride and comfort.”

On this clear starry night, Jesus did not close his eyes. Like a bird of paradise, his spirit glided over the Earth, invisibly touching the souls of sleeping people, as if checking which of them was still ready, still waiting for his return.”

This starry night was still waiting in the wings.

*2020-02-29*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Slava

Slava Russian was a good fellow. Perhaps, that's why he was disliked? Really, who now loves Russians, especially ones with such a euphonious name? Slava, too, hasn't managed to fully find it out during his years of training in the school of life.

However, it may well be that Slava was disliked for a different reason – simply due to the fact that for many years he has already had his own, most real, manifested both in this reality and omnipresent Angel, while all others had only nothing. Or maybe they, the others, measuring one another by money, were these no-ones, and therefore Angels didn't visit them quite so often?

Yet the Angel did not choose Slava from the first sight. Angels are, in fact, so selective heavenly folks that God knows who, God knows when and God knows why will never succeed in calling for them. But Slava did succeed. But let us not get ahead of ourselves.

Slava was born in an ordinary Russian working family. Well, what sort of ordinariness? He saw his Dad with own timid sight of an infant literally a couple of times when his Dad went to the maternity home and on increased in decibels tones argued with his wife and at the same time mother of Slava. Slava didn't have a privilege to know any known words by that time – and that was, probably, for the best, for it's really hard to understand Dads such as this one. Since that Slava's Dad has been both a pilot, a long-distance sea captain, even a pioneer astronaut who has gone to fight with the Martians. In other words, there was no way for his Dad to find time for his little son and not so little wife and to visit them at least once, having returned from the far-away places of his great labor feats. So his Mom raised Slava alone together with Grandma. An ordinary family, no doubt.

And Slava's Grandma was a sight for sore eyes! And so Slava looked into her wise old eyes, and listened to her tales, and dreamed of becoming one day a great space pioneer, flying to Mars and saving his father, who has been captured by the evil Martians. Slava fell in love with the stars since those most fabulous years.

By the time he was seven years old, Slava had grown and matured as much as his body and spirit would allow it. And rightly so, for the years of school life became his own Golgotha in miniature. By that time Slava's family barely made ends meet, so Slava could not allow himself to have either modern gadgets or, say, fashionable clothes – and this was the first stone thrown by peers in the garden of his self-esteem.

Slava became the target of constant ridicule and mockery from very early school years – one can say, from the cradle of his adult life. His schoolmates laughed at everything: at the unsightly appearance of Slava in his father's old, worn-out and oversized sweater; at the glasses he was forced to wear for quite reasonable medical reasons, which his peers cared nothing about; at the occasional speech stutter; and, finally, more often than not, at the level of financial income of his, if we may say so, family.

People are generally like that: they measure you by your clothes while still having horns and hoofs themselves. But Slava wasn't able to see their horns at these times – for, all in all, this is a privilege of angels – to glance in the depths of human essence and to read their thoughts playfully. So, during those years Slava's life was measured not even in days, but in hours instead: so many hours for school, this amount devoted for lessons, so much goes to the astronomical hobby club, just a bit for a walk and talk, and then to go for a bed, having warmed his heart in another dream. And he dreamed in those early school years of the stars being heavenly, and the earthlings being wonderful, and the Martians being cowardly, and enemies being timid, and mothers being happy.

\* \* \*

Under the icy stream of constant attacks Slava hardened, and in senior classes even started to acquire muscles after he exchanged astronomical hobby club for a sport one. His shagginess had increased as well – all in all, he was a man by the right of birth. So, some of his classmates even started to notice him, glancing briefly so that others did not find out about this little secret of theirs and were not branded with shame for contacts with this “fantasist”. And they, these young ladies entering the period of their girlish heyday, had no idea that by that time Slava had almost ceased to dream any longer. Years of family's poverty, the death of his beloved grandmother, usual mother's tears – they all literally took Slava by the throat and repeatedly forced him to land down on earth ground, ordering to help at home and to earn their daily bread after school working as a carrier of heavy loads. And what there was more: either mental or physical load – we do not dare to say. And so Slava would have finally fallen from heaven down to earth, if not for one amazing heavenly occasion.

We seem to have completely forgotten to mention the fact that Slava was a bit of a lunatic. Not in the sense that he used to wake up at midnight and go for a walk on the roofs until his rescuers arrive thanks to someone's urgent night phone call – but in the sense that he really loved to look at the night starry sky ever since he signed into the astronomical hobby club. He wasn't much of an astronomer, though, but at the very least he did remember the names and appearance of the major constellations, and every now and then he used to look out of the window at night to see if any of them was now painted before his sore eyes. He did even write a poem about stars and mumbled it from time to time under his nose at nights. And, as it usually happens, it all would probably have ended with the fact that he would have given up all these childish rhymes and clubs, would have entered the institute, studied economics and become some petty accountant, so that at least he could observe large sums of someone other's money and rejoice for these sinners – but, well, no way. Heavens had their own plans for Slava. The sky is generally like that: glorious, especially if filled with stars at the same time.

\* \* \*

“Still dreaming? About the stars?” asked the Angel who has suddenly appeared out of nowhere sitting on the windowsill next to Slava. “Don't you worry that much, you're definitely not imagining me,” he smiled, folding his white wings behind his back and hopping gently from the windowsill down to the floor.

“Yes, I know, I know, you don’t usually see things like that no matter how hard you train your eyes,” he added, watching how Slava still sits on the windowsill with both his mouth and eyes wide open.

“I dream... ed,” was all he could say.

“I am on a mission,” immediately answered the Angel, pacing in the room so rapidly and impetuously, that sparkles of light kept flowing from his wings in all directions. “I have a task at wing. Will you aid me?”

“What... mission? Who... in the name of the heaven are you?” Slava still couldn’t connect heavenly and earthly aspects.

“You can call me Ariel. Although this is a very imprecise transcription of my name into your human language. What of the mission? The task is simple: to help you implement your most cherished dream in life. You still haven’t quite forgotten it, have you?”

“But... why me? I am... absolutely common.”

“Just the opposite. Ones such as you are the peak of singularity in our times. Slava Russian – this does sound proud, right? That’s what I think personally. And I am not alone in my thoughts. There are a lot of us, you know, who share these common views. And don’t you stare at me like that! What, have you never seen a living Angel before?” Ariel grinned and added conciliatingly, “Well, where can a weary traveler have a drink here?”

\* \* \*

And that is how the memorable meeting of Slava Russian and his personal Guardian Angel once happened. Stars are generally like that: if you come to them with all your soul wide open – will they not light up your way? And so Ariel began that day by sanctifying the water offered to him by Slava – so that this water has been sparkling for a long time afterward with some mysterious light and even helped his mother to recover from her senile diseases. That’s what life-giving stars can do!

Ariel even possessed the wonderful ability to become invisible to everyone except for Slava. And to light up the night road. And to lift objects into the air. And to read people’s minds. And to heal with genuinely holy water. And to foresee the future. And so much more!

Slava’s classmates even initially shied away when he suddenly started to respond aloud to their thoughts without stuttering. And when Ariel folded his glowing hands around Slava’s head so that they look like a halo – even started crossing themselves! Not to mention that memorable case when during the exam all student notebooks except for one of Slava’s soared up and flew out into the opened windows precisely like some kind of birds, having taken a course somewhere into the sun. And at some point all school questionnaires became filled with variations of the puzzle about the notorious Slava’s teleportation from point A to point B. Not to mention how many lives and nerves were saved thanks to Slava-Ariel’s foreseeing – physicists wrote in their scientific dissertations precisely like that: “Space-time anomaly of Slava-Ariel”.

And Newton law had to be renamed to “Arielton law” after the events when on Slava’s request Ariel lifted a child into the air, who then made a couple of somersaults and soared up with acceleration of free takeoff directly before the eyes of his dumbfounded mother, having subsequently safely landed in her outstretched hands.

That was not a common life, but a fairy tale coming alive, the truest of the true! Yes, there are that kind of Angels living in the world, who bring Russians glory. Russians are generally like that: if they go after their purest dream – who can stop them, really?

*2019-11-23*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Scenario

“You call us Angels, but you laugh loudly at our backs when we speak to you of the flight. You crucify us when we come to your world as prophets only because of you and for you. Time and again you forget of the Highest world once you have clothed yourself in the armor of flesh. You made us the children’s fairy tale and plunged yourself into the horrors of own adult reality. You remember nothing of own obligations, undertaken before the birth, and travel by roads not intended for you. You destroyed our teachings with your religions, and they were deprived of the last drop of life, sanctity and true kindness. You replaced soul with technologies, and your machines started killing you. You cease to remember, that the world does not live for long without a peace inside it. And by the end of your filled with vanity lives, you keep thinking that you have brought something to this suffering world that possesses a quality of eternity, and therefore you should be awarded. But it’s not for you to decide.”

“Amigo!” with these words dressed in a strict red attire Curator appeared before his dressed in heavenly-blue colleague, continuing to soar in the air, continually streaming airwaves in all directions, under the influence of which numerous books and manuscripts in apartments of his old acquaintance were rustling with their pages, sometimes even soaring up for a while. “What is that are you doing here today?” he asked his friend a question, fixedly looking at how he was working behind the desk with some glistening manuscript.

“Writing a message to a prophet. I was ordered to deliver it to the destination, he will then give it to others. However, I am afraid that they won’t understand a single word, just like the last time. You know what they are.”

“Nothing holy behind a mask of pseudo-sanctity!” the Curator in red attire burst out laughing. “Here, I still remember how a couple of centuries ago you were still trying to tell them through Lermontov what was awaiting them a century later on – and what do you think? Even a century after these bloody events they still believe that he was not talking about a revolution in that particular poem. And this patronized poet of yours even named that poem ‘Prediction’.”

“I am just doing my job,” with notes of grief in his voice said the dressed in blue colors Curator, putting aside a silver feather. “How they will use its results – is their own personal choice.”

“As well as the fate,” added the Red Curator.

“As well as the fate,” confirmed the Blue one.

“By the way, I just flew to Scribes here,” shifting from one wing to the other, confusedly answered the red. “Concerning yesterday couple, I asked for specifications on their life scenario. Anton with Olga, do you remember them? We were arguing with you for a vial of ambrosia, which of them would first begin that conversation that was going to be the start of their relations. So,” the Red Curator burst out laughing, “I have truly got a specification from the Scribes today.”

“And who will that be?” the Blue Curator interrogatively looked on the Red, while continuing to draw something with a feather in the manuscript.

“Cat, naturally! In the cafe where they would be sitting that day at one little table, the homeless cat will wander in, who will then jump on a table and start loudly demanding some fish for herself as well. And they, most certainly, will caress and feed her, and get acquainted with each other in the process. So how it goes! You never guess that in advance!”

“His ways are inscrutable, as people like to say,” smiled the Blue Curator. “I wouldn’t think it up, not able to write life scenarios.”

“And you also don’t need to,” the Red Curator friendly clapped his colleague on a wing. “You perform your own job very qualitatively.”

“And what of Kirill and Veronika? We were jokingly arguing about them yesterday as well, remember? Awakened souls, extremely rare case, by modern standards.”

“Certainly, I remember them. Such souls are forgotten neither by me nor by the Supreme One. So, I managed to convince the Scribes to allow me to take a glimpse on their scenario. It appears that a new leaf was recently added to their life scenario, a final one – and everything drastically changed for them according to the decision of the Supreme One and the Uniform Law without violations of a free will. Here, take a look,” and, having that said, the Red Curator waved a wing, and in the center of workshop vivand, almost alive pictures started flowing, replacing one another.

“...And then he dances on the clouds. Beautifully. Sadly, however, but, nevertheless, beautifully. Some corresponding music is still to be added here. It turns out that she will share his destiny up to this last moment and further on,” the Blue Curator sighted sadly the moment pictures from alive scenario dissolved in the air.

“A worthy parting with a mortal body seldom happens to be cheerful. So, such is the additional piece here.”

“And did you by any chance happen to acquire a scenario for the Earth?” smiled the Blue Curator. “Probably, so many interesting destinies have been described there.”

“Or so many uninteresting ones. You perfectly know the rule – without compliance of free will to a course of a scenario, its points can’t come to life.”

“I know. Therefore, I have never asked for it in the Library. It’s a difficult task – to know the future of others beforehand. Especially when life gives a person a choice, and he doesn’t use it. And you foreknow in advance that he would have never used it, being given it even one thousands of times. But as long as there are those who continue choosing spiritual ascension, there is still hope left for their world.”

“Who if not the Seer should know that well,” the Red Curator smiled and once again clapped his friend on a wing.

“Who if not the Supervisor of Fates should remember that mysterious are the ways of the Lord,” the Blue Curator winked in reply.

*2017-10-01*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Creators

“...And there they meet with happiness at last...” the Story-Teller has finished the narration, closing the book and beholding faces of listeners in the light of evening street fires for a moment.

And after a brief moment questions started falling down on him as if from a fountain of abundance.

“What, just behind that great Wall?”

“Yes,” the Story-Teller smiled, “where the Experiment comes to an end and heroes of our tale ascend to a new level of understanding. They all start a new life from that moment, for the end of the Experiment doesn’t mean the end of their ways.”

“And why did Observers have become the ones you described?”

“You can never tell. Perhaps they were uninterested in the Experiment and preferred not to interfere. Or, maybe, the heroes created by the Scribes didn’t impress them at first? We can keep on guessing for quite a while, but, apparently, will never learn of true reasons for such a decision of theirs.”

“Probably, it’s very boring to watch over a world as if you are watching it on a TV, yet cannot interfere yourself? I would certainly die from boredom myself!”

“But you must certainly have heard what difficulties face the Descended ones?”

“To forget themselves for a time... I will definitely not subscribe for something like that! That’s real amnesia!”

“Well, as they say, the will of Scribes prevails for they have created heroes for their world.”

“I too would like to create at least a couple of heroes myself! And a winged dragon as well – like the ones from children’s fairy tales, only much greater!”

“I am certain it will turn out to be a beautiful dragon. But before that, we still need to work more on skills of our imagination. Don’t you forget that it’s the most vital creative tool in our possession.”

“And why creators of the Experiment acted that way?”

“They cannot do it any other way. To become a hero one needs to pass trials. Heroes of Scribes were not always as such in the past.”

“And would you like to be a Scribe yourself one day?”

“No,” smiled the Story-Teller, “I am satisfied with that joy – to tell you of what Scribes have created for all of us.”

“And do Scribes face difficulties sometimes?”

“A lot of. For one needs not only to imagine heroes but to train them afterward. To place them in right spots, to create and keep correcting thread of events as narration goes on, not to lose sight of anyone’s destiny and fate... It’s truly an awesome task to complete,” hemmed the Story-Teller.

“And what’s the difference between novice and master Scribes?”

“Good question! You know, it seems to me that novice Scribes do not fully realize their own role – as if they see the world they are making and their imagined heroes from a distance as if through a prism. They can give life to a new hero or take it from one they have already created – novice Scribes need it to emphasize the significance of some of their thoughts or ideas.

And masters...” and Story-Teller raised his head to the starry sky for a moment, as if checking with it, “masters start living with their worlds and heroes together for real. They mourn together with them and rejoice their victories together as well, pass difficult tests and enjoy well-deserved rest, they both teach and study with them. And once there comes the moment when they forget for a while of who they really are and that the world they have made exists only in their imagination thanks to fantasy, for they have descended in their own world to the fullest.”

“It turns out there would be no us without someone’s greatest imagination?” listeners asked all at once.

“And there would be no world without it,” the Story-Teller smiled in reply.

*2016-03-30*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Chronicles of Mogoth: The Called

*Many called ones, yet few exiled*

Mogoth, my faithful and fearless servant, together we have been waiting for this moment for uncountable centuries – and it did come at long last. Praised be the name of the Unspeakable One, for we have finally gained an opportunity to interfere with the planetary destiny of those who keep calling themselves as humans. For too long our enemies didn't allow us to approach them on such a scale in which it became possible now. The visible ordered universe is being engaged in battle with chaotic, a battle where the outcome will be decided by a free will. And now our possibilities are even. The one whose name cannot be spoken is calling for his servants for this final struggle for human essence. I call for you, Mogoth, my faithful warrior! I call for you for the sake of victory over our enemy and eternal glory of the Unspeakable One!

You will be embodied in their world, Mogoth, embodied like a human – and you will lead them to the fulfillment of our plan. You will bring them into a bosom of our own maker – in the name of his eternal fiery glory. And will pull them out from hands of our enemy, force them to accept our way, you will become a guide between our planes and impose our eternal indelible imprinting on their essences – for the sake of our common last victory. And, as our enemies like to speak, – so be it! Come to me, Mogoth! Come forth, my chosen warrior!

\* \* \*

Joy, fiery all-devouring joy overflows my heart, Mogoth! I believe that your first success on their plane is a true sign of our future victory. Doubt, doubt, doubt – that's what forces them to finally come to us, Mogoth! Having forced them to doubt, you have managed to touch the basis of their link with our enemy. Force them to doubt, make them time and again rethink of how just are all deeds made by them under the influence of our foe. Force them to doubt their usefulness, – show them that benefit of one is almost always a harm for another; show how naive, ridiculous and unrealizable their dreams of what our enemy is calling as common welfare! By undermining belief in the usefulness of their own actions, you destroy the basis of their link with our enemy.

Show how relative are their ideas of what they are calling as good and evil. Show how they intertwine with each other – and on this basis equate them, thus gradually destroying all borders that were put between. “Everything is relative, all is relative in this world”, – that's how they have to start thinking, Mogoth! Having destroyed this barrier of their consciousness, you will open gates for our prophets to influence them further, and they will finish what you have started.

Force them to believe that so-called Divine justice is non-existent and their planetary life is simply a casual confluence of circumstances. When their entire life is a casual chain of accidents, then each choice they make becomes casual as well. And when their choice becomes casual – they will cease bearing responsibility for it.

We need those, who have deprived themselves of all responsibilities, Mogoth, we need their souls! They will become our future Prophets of Permissiveness. Oh, sweet fiery hour, how we all await this moment! Act, Mogoth, act in that chosen direction, and may the power of our eternal fiery father be with you!

\* \* \*

You acted reasonably, Mogoth, when has decided to bring doubts of which I have already told you, into what they usually call as “love”. Pathetic mortals, believing that reason is their exclusive privilege! Better, incomparably better we are capable to calculate and measure each our step, each our action, leading us to victory. We have waited for many millennia before these biped ones have finally acquired rudiments of this “reason”. We have waited for many centuries, trying to alter its essence in some of their most influential representatives. Now our time has come, Mogoth! These fools have bred in such a quantity that they have already begun promoting our victory. Their weak mind, their dissonant system of thinking that is subject to lots of external influences – they will become a pledge of our final triumph. Now we only have to form small groups of these most “reasonable” people having a significant effect on others – and all the rest will be made by mass consciousness.

Inconceivable Maker endowed their mind with a trait which is very favorable for us – non-criticality. Repeat, repeat time and again the same thing, Mogoth, no matter how ridiculous it can sound at first sight, – repeat tirelessly. And after a while, you will notice how these “humans” started considering what you are telling them as truth. Create more such parrots, Mogoth, – and they will spread your pseudo-truth around. When one thousand of fools is telling the same, even reasonable ones will start to doubt.

And especially disastrous such doubts are for these “friendly” and... brrr!... “love” feelings, with the ability to experience which this Maker gifted them. “True love is blind”, – they were told once. They didn’t comprehend a true meaning of this statement, Mogoth, they haven’t understood it – and we shall use that to our advantage!

Force them to think of the reason for their feelings to another, make them analyze this. Strange Maker made their minds and hearts so contradictory by their nature, and only a few of them are able to find their true harmony. Let them reflect on the basis of their feelings as often as possible. Over time the majority of men will come to a conclusion of total groundlessness and, therefore, inexpediency of these feelings. This is our chance, Mogoth, to pull humans out of hands of our foe!

One must act here very carefully, Mogoth. We must convince them in the uselessness of any friendly feelings and at the same time in the necessity of any that is useful to us – anger, rage, melancholy, despondency. Show them how often love appears to be evil and harm imposed on them remains unpunished. Show how natural it’s to feel anger at the discrepancy of their desires with objective reality.

Show that only frankly brainless fool will rejoice when others feel grief. Always, always, Mogoth, some of these biped ones will experience grief – and that way others will be stripped of joy.

Show them how coercion, based on aggression and fear, is being much more effective than some dribbling-pink friendly snivels! And don't let them reflect on a temporary effect of the first and global effect of the second, otherwise, they will turn away from us once and for all, having asked our enemy for what they call as "purification". When you deprive them of sources of life's joy, Mogoth, you will strip them of love for life. Having stripped them of love for their own life, you will gradually deprive them of love for lives of others.

Show them that love has no reasons to be – that it's senseless, just an ungrateful waste of own spiritual energy – and they will willingly come to us and pass our fiery purification!

\* \* \*

Mogoth, my loyal soldier, how do I love you with our all-devouring love! More and more I am becoming convinced of how correct was my choice and how I and the one standing over me wasn't mistaken in you. "Truly", – as one of our old enemies used to speak, – truly I speak: in your cursed battle for souls of these mortals you have become one of our best prophets!

You were absolutely right, having used that turmoil and misunderstanding in their hearts and minds, which was already formed and continues to live, eating them from within for centuries. Our called prophets worked well in due time, having interfered, mixed and altered that knowledge, given to them by prophets of our eternal enemy. For several planetary centuries already they cannot "separate grain from a ryegrass", Mogoth! They are lost in attempts to understand these "sacred books", "revelations", "teachings", which have become so contradictory at present. They, due to their natural spiritual blindness, aren't capable to sort out of what was included there by our prophets and prophets of our hated foe. And this creates doubts, Mogoth, – doubts about which I told you before as of that key that will eventually open us a path to their souls.

Moreover, now these "doctrines" begin contradicting each other. Use that well, Mogoth! Use that to convince each group of these followers in their own as if special exclusiveness, their selectness for a great cause, in the correctness of their ways and at the same time in the total falsehood of ways of other followers. Let them start fighting each other on any trifles, concerning most insignificant aspects of these heritages, and let them never notice how uniform these teachings still remain in their basic essence (it's so damned to realize that even we aren't omnipotent, Mogoth!). Seeing this senseless fight of various religious followers with each other, best ones in their ranks will eventually be disappointed in a way they follow, for they will inevitably associate their chosen way with a need of this most stupid fighting. And as soon as they lose this moral ground, Mogoth, – they will inevitably become ours in due times.

Don't worry about those ones who, not belonging to any followers of any doctrines, will still manage to keep this eternal spiritual essence, granted to them by the Maker. They are so few, Mogoth, that I can count them all on fingers of one my sharp-clawed paw! They won't be able to alter mass consciousness, they are doomed to fail.

Create, Mogoth, create an atmosphere of hatred and hostility between followers of these doctrines. Strengthen it, having pointed for each one on the absurdity of beliefs of others, speaking nothing of the absurdity of their own beliefs. Show them, how pleasant it's to seek for these absurd in doctrines of others. Let them publicly speak of exclusiveness of their belief, let them trample down belief of others, and let them never understand that their so-called "faith" has nothing in common with that Faith which our ancient enemy wanted them to grow inside. Gradually, having convinced themselves in selectness of own "belief", they will become those mindless fanatics, which our eternal father wants them to be. Deprived of last remnants of reason, these "faithful" will once become great soldiers of our invincible fiery cohorts!

\* \* \*

Whether what you have recently done is right, Mogoth, you ask me? Right, – I will tell you – because that deed also eventually leads to our long-awaited ultimate last victory.

I have already spoken to you about their imperfect mass consciousness, but I should tell you this as well – don't be afraid to reduce the number of embodied ones in their world. There are no contradictions in these two pieces of advice of mine, Mogoth. The contradiction – that's what's capable to evolve their consciousness and destroy it as well due to another mistake of their Maker, – it's totally uncommon for us. Everything that conducts to our inevitable victory and defeat of our enemy – all of this can be put to use with the unholy approval of our Unspeakable father.

You acted right, Mogoth, not letting him to be embodied. This particular person with such great and... brrr!... pure soul – he could become a serious support to our enemy in our common war if he managed to come to this planetary physical plane. But now he has to wait for several decades of planetary years before this possibility arises again. And I am not speaking of this tremendous pain which he should have experienced, being torn apart alive by scalpels of these "doctors". My entire essence rejoices at the very thought of it!

Let him reflect on how painful it is – to serve our enemy! Now, Mogoth, comes the most important and difficult part of that deed – you must not let his mother, who have killed him, to feel repentance for what she has done. Repentance – that's what too generous Maker gave them, that's what can turn them away from us even in their final steps, making them speak to our enemy and being pulled out immediately from our darkest fiery chasms. You shouldn't let her feel guilty!

Show her why this deed was so natural and necessary. Convince her that this unembodied child, if he was born, would bring her incredible number of "problems" – what she always so diligently sought to escape. Try to connect her with similar people, not allowing to see and understand the joy of motherhood. Stop any long-term contact with happy mothers that have preferred difficulties of child-care to ease of own problems-free life. Doctors, whom the hand of our father has once touched, have already made of part of that deed, having convinced her that they have killed just a piece of matter instead of a living man – and you must keep supporting this false belief inside her.

Now, several first months after this event – they will become both yours and her trial. Shield her from excessive emotional disorders, try to satisfy some of her materialistic desires – that will distract her consciousness from comprehending of her major mistake. Let her go to concerts, cinema and in every imaginable way join what they are calling “culture” and what for several decades already have been our main tool of formation of their mass consciousness. Allow her to feel like an extremely “modern” woman and never understand that these eternal truths, about which prophets of our enemy was talking about, can never be either modern or unmodern as well. And if only – oh, how magnificent this achievement would be! – you can force her to repeat that mistake a second time – she will forever be ours, Mogoth! Some of them, who have once committed child-killing, can be overtaken by this pathetic repentance, – but it can never reach those who have consciously repeated that same deed – they die for our enemy and reborn for eternal life in our ranks.

Never, Mogoth! Never for our enemy – and eternally for us! They, these female murderers, after disembodiment they will become our Maidens of Death, waging war with forces of our enemy for fates of children in this world – and the very nature of life will shiver on their terrifying and unshakable approach!

\* \* \*

My called one, my devoted servant! Truly (as prophets of our enemy like to speak) you never cease to surprise me with that persistence and composure with which you continue to achieve our common goal.

Culture, no matter how disgusting it’s for me to pronounce that word, which is so close in its true meaning to the initial essence of the Maker, culture – that’s what has been intended to be a great purifier of human souls and what now became our main weapon in our battle for them! Can there be anything more appealing than the contemplation of how once moral and pure individual, having plunged himself in this culture, gradually loses last remnants of human-likeness and, as they call it, humanity, turning into a wild animal, bridled by primitive passions, and thus inevitable walks closer and closer to us? Whether there is something more pleasing than the contemplation of how our ranks grow with each passing day? Is there is anything more desirable than these cursed human souls for our invincible father? Truly, Mogoth, all qualities, given to them by this unwise Maker, – all of them will serve us one way or another – one only needs to know how he can use each to our advantage. You, Mogoth, managed to learn it.

As you have noticed, their so-called culture became mass now, just like their art – it ceased to be a destiny of most hated by us few individuals. By itself it had to become a sign of that “Kingdom of God”, of which prophets of our foe used to speak, however unloved by us Maker made yet another mistake by wishing (if he is capable of wishing at all) the fastest realization of his “plan” (if such his actions can be called that way at all). Now, when consciousnesses of their majority have been darkened by our warriors and prophets, when lots of their souls, thanks to their inner instability, were touched by a hand of our father, – now such newly appeared creators are going to destroy last remnants of this culture. There are hordes of them, Mogoth, – there are thousands. But in the upcoming times, foreseen by the Unspeakable One, there will be tens of thousands of creators of a new age.

Our pawns, who keep considering themselves as free ones, educators of our dark era. And then, Mogoth, thanks to the mentioned aspect of a consciousness of these beings – last strongholds of a true culture will crumble, and their world will be forever ours!

Therefore help these new creators to be widely-known, even if in this embodiment they haven't been gifted by the Maker with any significant talents. The less they are – the better, Mogoth. Let many others hear and speak of them often – for when many talks about you, inevitably there come those who due to immanent envy begin to imitate you either by their free will or involuntarily, no matter how bad you are in nature. We will make sure that numbers of these imitating ones grow steadily.

Help these ones, which you have put forward, to consider themselves as somewhat special, exclusive – even allow them to compare themselves with night suns – for these stars are only visible in the darkness, visible in our future kingdom, Mogoth! Therefore they must not feel neither for money nor for fame cursed by us “mentors”. Help these creators of ours at first stages – and the vanguard of most “modern” beings of their society will push them forward.

But in the name of all circles of our planes, never let them see how ugly and pitiful these “present times” have already become! Let them in their never-ending ignorance continue to believe that they are capable to “develop” only by ascending, don't let them see the abyss they have already come to. The more there are those who have stepped over this fiery barrier – the closer is our relentless triumph and ultimate defeat of our enemy.

Let these newborn creators start glorifying various animal instincts in humans as their inherent quality as if it's a blessing of the Maker itself. Let them seek and find most unworthy manifestations of their society's life, and let them present it as though it was at the very least a “simple realism”, and ideally – “new cultural trends”. And afterward “culture fans” will do all the rest...

Act, Mogoth, use the weakness you have found – and let their day become the night and creators – our flaring stars in it!

\* \* \*

What can be better than to hear their praises to our father, who have betrayed the Maker, what can be tastier than to feel hatred, poured by them on the Maker?!

Mogoth, Mogoth, how crafty you have managed to entice this “believer” into our ranks! To strengthen his faith at first, to bring it almost to the tops, when it becomes extremely strong and immeasurably vulnerable at the same time – and then to bring it down into the abyss like a heavy stone! To tell the truth, even I, who is standing to the right of our father, couldn't play it out better than you.

Such “betrayed” by the Maker believers – after the disembodiment, they become our best Commanders of Hopelessness and always and up to the day of their final merge with the Unspeakable One faithfully serve us. Now not only he doesn't have a faith, but even a sign of trust, which is so necessary for the Maker to help these unfortunate ones – and from now on our enemy won't be able to reach him anymore.

Having cut the thread of life of his believer's relative, you have broken off the thread of his belief, Mogoth. They, these ones, who have almost reached our enemy, become very sensitive to all living beings and their relatives in particular – yet another “blessing” of the Maker, which has become their curse!

To help him believe in the nearby presence of our enemy, in his care of him, in his help – and then to cut off a thread of his relative's life – his son. And in what way... not some common simple and painless parting with a physical body, but tortures, sufferings, agony! How I enjoyed, Mogoth, seeing and feeling his pain, when he was slowly dying from knives of these murderers and then from a blood loss, not able to shout and call for help even a single man in this ruthless – thanks to humans, and not us, notice! – world.

His sufferings redeemed his past guilt, Mogoth, and he could get into a bosom of our enemy – but his father will never join him and come to these otherworldly heights! Now he will continue to accuse our enemy of this loss and shortly afterward will finally renounce him, having not understood that he, our enemy, never took away and doesn't take away violently from this life any soul against her own will.

Well, let him keep this bliss of ignorance until his essence transforms itself to a state, where it can be devoured by our eternal father. Things are easy – not to allow him to reflect on this trick of ours, not to let him say a sincere prayer for the Maker. None of us could still understand why such pure-heart call to our enemy was capable to destroy all our influences and tear off all threads, connecting us with a human – and we still have no idea of how to oppose it. Therefore don't allow him to think of it deeply, because in that case in due time he can even begin thinking that the death of his son was some kind of important lesson and incomprehensible logic of the Maker, thus turning away from us. Oh, silly mortals, all strange logic of our foe they are ready to present as “incomprehensibility”!

Let all his essence continue to boil with anger, just like now, let his mouth continue to accuse our enemy of the death he wasn't involved in, and let the Maker in his eternal calmness shudder from the realization of what those humans have chosen, being given a free will!

\* \* \*

The man that you have told me about, Mogoth, is one of those who, with instigation of our enemy (of course, they continue to consider it as their own free choice), comes to this plane with a mission to bring closer that unrealizable “Kingdom of God”, “Paradise on Earth”, about which I spoke to you already. If the atmosphere of their childhood and youth will help develop these inner qualities, given to them by the Maker for this purpose, – they can become very dangerous for the fulfillment of our plan. Having acquired continuous heart-based link with our foe, and being able to influence a spiritual essence of other people, they are capable to ruin our plans over and over again with regards of some of those who are coming to us. A grade of the planetary influence of these individuals isn't too great (because even our enemy has to follow the rules he has once written), but their numbers keep growing, Mogoth! It seems that our foe exposes them as leaders for others “honest workers” (if only you knew how unpleasant for me this phrase is, connecting the unconnected!).

Pathetic pawns of the Maker, considering themselves capable to transform this world on his directives! We will disembody them, Mogoth, and then their souls will be devoured by the Unspeakable One!

Therefore, we must not let them grow up and comprehend the Maker quietly and painless, we have to make the very nature of their life intolerable. Create an atmosphere of internal hostility and rivalry in their families. Let husband quarrel with a wife, and wife – with a husband, let such a child start absorbing this wonderful stench from a young age, and over time – begin considering it natural and self-evident. Let his mother become filled with hatred to a husband – and even better if she becomes disappointed in her former choice. As you already know, in the infancy period of these children their bond with mother is extremely strong, so feelings and desires of a mother gradually become feelings and desires of a newborn child, and vice versa. Therefore, the more anger and hostility she experiences during that period, the better, Mogoth. And if you manage to transform such mothers into aforementioned Maidens of Death – I will personally ask our father to give you their souls!

If you find yourself unable to harden his mother, you can always use rivalry between children, if there are more than one of them in a given family. Let elder children fight with younger for the attention of their parents, and let such fight gradually becomes a meaning of their life, the very essence of their existence. By turning since childhood his attention away from important matters and concentrating it on family squabbles, you will deprive him an opportunity to reach the Maker in due time – and then we shall take advantage of it.

And if you still cannot destroy their family's harmony, you can always use others, who are unaware of this harmony at all. Their schools will suit this purpose as best as possible. Houses, which should have served as strongholds of humanity and wisdom, have now, thanks to our constant efforts, become regions of cruelty, indifference and contempt. Use such people, whom this grabby hand of a distant Maker hasn't reached yet, use them all as pawns in fights against such a person. Make them hate this person for the very fact of his earthly existence. Allow them to feel that they are lesser than he in some regards, that they have yet to reach while he has reached it already – but let it turn not into their desire to change themselves, but their hatred to him.

Almost for certain he will be alone in his aspiration – and your pawns are like legion, – and, as one of these puny mortals once said, “one man is no man”. Let him be beaten, let him be humiliated and brought down on his knees – and let them feel their strength and his weakness in the process. This will gradually harden his heart, it has to! Over time he, certainly, will begin considering his oppressors as “lower beings” in order to somehow compensate in his soul for all those sufferings they have put him through – and by doing that he will provoke them against him even more without our full-scale and otherworldly assistance. And, having started despising them in return, he will forever lose that binding thread of the Maker and forget about his duty.

If it turns out, that the Maker awarded this individual with a bright mind – the better it is for us. Help him use this gift to the detriment of our enemy. Let him be successful in rather complex intellectual challenges, let him learn this success from their solving, the joy that he has managed to overtake someone on this path – no matter how narrow and endless it is.

That way in due time he will not only start despising his direct oppressors but many other people around him as being less intellectually developed. The mind isn't capable to comprehend the Maker – and by developing only his mind your victim will be moving further and further away from an understanding of what some other mortal fool called as “the simple truth”. It will be magnificent if you manage to convince him to lean only on that mind during his youth and adulthood – and together with all our influences, which their society has already undergone, it shouldn't be too difficult, especially for you.

Let him achieve what is traditionally considered as signs of life's success and welfare – the more he becomes tied to this wellbeing, the more difficult it will be for him to reject it afterward in order to follow our enemy's path. Moreover, when subsequently our opponent will try to approach him and destroy his self-made prison – what a delightful stream of anger and misunderstanding he will receive in return! This is what was exactly meant by a famous prophet of our foe, which was afterward translated rather roughly and inexactly by these mortals as the phrase, that a rich one won't enter a kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, let his adulthood be successful in every aspect, which will be apprehended by him as yet another proof of his initial correctness, which has now grown deserved fruits. The less there will be doubts in the correctness of his contempt for other “lower” people, the less is his chances to hear the Maker's voice, appealing to him via life's circumstances. Thus don't ever allow him to think of how wrong is this way of contempt, how impossible it's to truly love some people while despising and hating others at the same time. Don't allow him to decide, that former offenses were only a test of his love for mankind, which is required for final formation of his heart-based bond with our foe. Having once understood that, he will leave from under our influence immediately! Oh, miserable mortals, why has the Maker awarded you with that ability to cut off these webs, which we have been crafting for decades, and in your aspiration to him evade all traps, placed by us on your way?! Pathetic, insignificant mortals, why have you become stronger in this regard than we are, best of his former soldiers, who have once stepped against him?!

Don't let ones such as he to once understand, that all their life has become one big trial of love to our enemy and everything he has created, don't allow them to address our foe with repentance for former misunderstanding of his motives! Having realized that and being filled with a grace of our enemy, they become almost invincible – and even subsequently sent by us diseases and misfortunes become incapable to shake their hearts and force to curtail from a path which leads directly to our enemy.

Having realized themselves as creators of a new era, they will inevitably try to start implementing plans of our foe. This cannot be allowed to happen, do you hear me, Mogoth?! If you make such a slip, I... I... in a word, don't allow this for your own and our general welfare!

I will send you one more of my warriors, Mogoth – together you will become indestructible. Act to ruin all plans of our enemy and destroy the very thought of too potential human “divinity”!

Well, Mogoth, I see that you are making progress on the path of our common inevitable celebration once again. For this reason, for your fidelity and devotion to our damned deed, I forgive you your last mistake with an unborn Maiden of Death. Don't miss the new upcoming opportunity this time, my devoted servant!

As I have already told you, their mind bears that defect, that critical "design error", which, due to his desire to see humans as free-willed ones, the Maker once put inside them. Of course, I am telling of what I have already called as "non-criticality" – or, to be more correct, – their natural stupidity and negligibility of their mind, bearing the very same primordial animal instincts throughout centuries.

As I already mentioned, their mortal mind isn't capable to comprehend the Maker by itself – a sort of inspiration, some kind of impulse is required from what these insignificant mortals call as "soul" – and what has been our most delicious food since the times of Descending.

Creating these beings, our enemy in his "great grace" has given to each of them a small indestructible part of himself – and thus potentially made them immortal. Fools, thinking of themselves as being made "by his image and similarity", if only they knew what great trial their "father" created for them by this act!

You already know, Mogoth, how each of such absorbed and consumed particle of the Maker makes us so much stronger, and you are aware, that prior to this process we should extinguish almost entirely its inborn light of the essence of our common foe. Even we, best of his former soldiers, cannot compete with this intrinsic light directly and are forced to carefully destroy it with long-lasting and careful efforts. So, Mogoth, the effect of this most intrinsic light, which manifests itself in their mortal bodies through what is usually called as "heart" – only it in combination with a mortal mind is capable to slightly open that door, with which the Maker as if purposely hide from them. But neither the heart nor the mind by itself separately is capable to promote this dirty "enlightenment" – and this, perhaps, will become their greatest defect, that will lead us to the victory over the light of their souls.

My damned warrior, now you should interfere with what they usually call as "science" – the destiny of a small number of most intellectually gifted by the Maker beings, who have now become especially vulnerable. Science as a manifestation of the reason, given to them, – that's what according to the plan of our enemy had to serve for comprehension of initial beauty and harmony of a given world, moving them closer to their father – for now it has become not an observer, but its executioner's, Mogoth! "Scientific" biped ones inevitably, as it was foreseen by the Unspeakable One, completely undergone the influence of their minds, having blocked another mentioned channel of communication with our foe. Inspired by a false idea of being capable to learn the essence of the surrounding world with only their minds, they began gradually destroying it – they turned against the life itself, Mogoth! Look, observe with your fiery gaze, Mogoth – and you shall effortlessly see, how great are their achievements for the last several hundreds of planetary years. Yes, they are truly immense – immense as a part of the plan of our mighty father!

Their planet groans under the oppression of their inventions, the tools of murder they have created make even our eternal father admire, their inner essence was reduced to a set of cellular conversions, their mind began destroying life. Truly, these creatures of our enemy have no idea of what they are doing – they don't fully understand what they have already created.

How sweet it is, Mogoth, how incredible it is for my entire being to observe, how other people, in whom bigger attention was granted to a second, heart component – how they rise against such a destruction. Their essence, still bearing remnants of memories of what it once was – their entire being rises against “starting dying from the birth”, against such preparation and sorting of all life phenomena, including their own life. Fools, considering themselves as fighters for the existence of incomprehensible, if only they knew, how faithfully they serve our goals by revolting against science.

All roads lead to us, Mogoth, – and there are no straight ones by which they can easily come to our enemy. We shall use this battle between scientific and uneducated, learning and comprehending, thereby bringing closer the moment of an embodiment of the essence of our invincible father in their world. We will give those fighting against science a miracle, Mogoth, – for they are so eager to prove to everyone that there is at least a small amount of mysterious in this world that hasn't been carefully and methodically studied, classified and prepared.

Children, running for the conjurer, who has deceived them – that's whom they will become! Our incarnated Wizards of the Abyss are already working on that in their world, Mogoth, – and soon enough there will be legions of those, who have refused knowledge and believed in power and God-likeness of our servants. We will go further – we shall create schools and societies of magic, numerous Control Centers for Magic Perturbations, each with its loyal servants and students. Their practice of similar “miracles” will over time lead to a vast set of various mental disorders, their mind will be completely stripped of mentioned “criticality”. And only after several decades of their planetary years – so insignificant for us term – those, who have refused knowledge in favor of miracle, will be deprived of last remnants of reason – we only must now allow them to understand, how not too far one is capable of travelling by moving exclusively on one leg instead of initially given two.

All roads lead to us, Mogoth, – one only needs to curtail from his way at least once.

\* \* \*

Yes, Mogoth, exactly this, called by you as “dissoluteness”, a trait of these mortals is so harmful to their journey to our enemy and so desirable for us. It continues promoting a general decrease in the viability of these people and the emergence of various cursed excesses and perversions. As you have probably already noticed, the number of individuals, who are subject to it, continue its steady growth, in which a special and great role is played by already known to you mass consciousness. Truly, these blind ones keep digging pits for each other to fall!

As you have already noticed on the example of observed individuals, a so-called “sexual” sphere of their relations underwent this influence especially considerably in the last several years. Their mortal and vulnerable body, which preserves all atavisms of previous animal evolution, and that particle of the indestructible essence of the Maker, which allows these bodies to truly live – in what great fight they are capable to engage with each other!

The Maker, known part of whose plan probably consisted in making these beings immortal inside and mortal outside, thereby over and over again giving them what is called as “free choice” for the purpose of evolution and improvement of these spiritual particles, granted to them, – this immemorial enemy of ours in his inconceivable desire to see them spiritually free has once again made a mistake, the price of which a soul of human.

This animal nature gradually begins to win, Mogoth, – it already triumphs! You foresaw yourself with a fiery gaze, Mogoth, – you foresaw these humans and their orgies. Everything has been finally mixed up – concepts, which our foe unsuccessfully tried to grow in them, concepts of due and inadmissible, natural and ugly (and ugly became natural at last!), animal-like and human-like (and humans became like animals!). How delightful it is to behold such people, who have reduced themselves to this state in their free will, and curtailed on our unjust path willingly!

Soon, so very soon, Mogoth, this new way will lead to total degradation and blurring of these animal and human borders. You saw it yourself, Mogoth, how they have ceased to be afraid to enter into sexual relations with others of similar gender; you saw it yourself how a sex, which should have been a manifestation of love to each other (no matter how disgusting it’s for me to pronounce that word!), according to our enemy’s plan, between two – male and female – beings, how it stopped being a shared secret of two and became an act of many. What can be more inspiring, than to see how this intrinsic light of the Maker, of which I have told you, fluctuates like a weak dying spark, being extinguished by a sudden wind’s gust?! We are winning, Mogoth, and signs of our victory become clearly visible – just as our dark and fiery father has predicted.

Soon, so very soon these people will lose a major part of life forces, poured into them by the Maker at the moment of their birth – and become extremely vulnerable and readily available for us. They are those fools, considering this “free sex” as a major achievement of their era, who in their folly have thrown aside all wisdom and experience of past centuries!

The Maker, our eternal hated enemy, – he has given them a particle of his powers upon their arrival into this world, but due to own miscalculations has allowed each of them to use it at their sole discretion once again. He, our enemy, has given them the vital knowledge that only through the love, which is the very nature of him, they are capable to comprehend and approach him, gaining new powers for own growth, so that they can in a distant future return back to him, but already transformed.

They didn't hear him, they mockingly discarded this knowledge as not corresponding with their true inclinations! Now since a young age, they spend these powers only for a mutual fight, from time to time finding imaginary rest in what they began calling as sex – what has gradually departed from that essence of love, which our enemy desired to see in them, – as far as it was ever possible. Having lost this basis of love, they should have inevitably come to its substitutes – and they indeed came to that sorry state, the direct witnesses of which you became, Mogoth.

Let these nobodies keep going down this road! With time their sex will rip their souls of last sparks of true love and suck away all vital forces. They will begin having sex with animals, they will start going crazy, fall into long-term depressions and melancholy, for which their doctors won't find an explanation – and subsequently finish off own lives with suicides, cursing this life and the one who has created it, not having realized, that it wasn't the Maker who cursed them – these were they.

Let them keep descending by this road of permissiveness, let they not stop or curtail from it! Our victory is already close, Mogoth, as our eternal father was saying, – “And they will curse my enemy and themselves – and accept my fiery baptism. And, having accepted my baptism, they will become an eternal part of me, knowing no pain, love or defeats”.

Go forth, Mogoth, go and fulfill our great plan!

\* \* \*

Who could possibly think, that completion of the next part of our inscrutable plan will be such an easy task? Truly, these blind men pushing each other into a chasm! I, who is standing to the right of the Unspeakable One, is truly satisfied with you, Mogoth, and your recent progress on their plane. Unbreakable is broken, incompatible is being connected – this means that the prophecies, opened for us by our eternal father in his dark providence, are being fulfilled at last.

What can be more beautiful, than fostered by them mutual hatred to each other, what can be more reassuring, than a fight of whole nations for who knows what goals, – a fight that, thanks to our father, has no visible ending?!

Ah, Mogoth, Mogoth, if it was only possible for you to feel what I am feeling now even for a tiny period of time continuum's life! Neither one, nor two, nor one hundred of these mortals – but thousands and hundreds of thousands, each day facing each other in their last deadly fight for unknown goals of their leaders – oh, Unspeakable One, how fine is that all! Truly, these blinded ones now dig extensive funeral holes for each other every day.

You, certainly, still remember how difficult it was for us to implement something similar uncountable millennia ago? Primitive biped ones, they have been so limited by the very nature of their plane, that they couldn't seriously harm each other. For now, everything has changed – their “mind” (yet another curse with which this inscrutable Maker rewarded them!) has already almost done all that was necessary, and at present time they can eradicate an entire planet from life in their physical plane.

It might seem like a perfect moment to use our called ones to provoke the usage of these deadly weapons through them, creating an apocalypse for the entire world – but plans of our eternal father are much wider and more far-sighted, Mogoth. Indeed, agony and pain of billions of these creatures, dying in one wonderful instant of time – they would certainly be a truly damned and delicious food for all of us and bring considerably closer that day, when last constraining us fetters fall in ashes and we become free again – and, nevertheless, it would be insufficiently. Even the apocalypse of their entire world, no matter how grandiose it could be, won't give a chance for our father to be sated to the extent when he becomes able to break constraining us on our plane barriers. And for this reason, we have chosen another way, Mogoth, – a slower path, but inevitably leading us to victory. We won't destroy them all at once – we will keep killing them one by one – until a chalice of our enemy's compassion (if he is even capable to feel something like that) to his pathetic creations becomes filled and he "in his eternal glory" descends into their world himself and finally becomes vulnerable for us – or until the power we gather becomes enough for our father to break that constraining barrier, starting the process of our Outcome. Whichever of this comes earlier – all of this is what was expected and calculated by us uncountable eons before, making our final victory inevitable! And before this time comes – we will be killing them gradually, Mogoth, – killing them with their own hands.

You have certainly noticed the beginning of a new, long-awaited process when they in their madness try to divide their planetary homeworld into a heap of small separate pieces? Just like innocent children (and what prophet of our enemy did say, that they belong to this "Kingdom of God"?!) they try to pull their common toy in different directions, and everyone is sincerely hoping, that it was a gift for him only without understanding how these "competitions" can end. There are now several hundreds of them, Mogoth, – several hundreds of "states"! Their planet has gone – it has died, Mogoth, in order to be sliced into a thousand and one piece for the benefit of separate groups of these mortals – and finally these "children" (and how isn't the Maker become tired from calling them as such?!) began killing each other for a piece that they do not possess.

It's such a blessed damnation – to see, how separate groups of mortals gather up around these pieces, each with its own "great" leader, everyone with his best religion and history, with own brightest future, with chosen nation... each idiot with a false idea to control a part of their common gift! With such a speed these biped ones will soon implement our plan even without our direct otherworldly assistance!

To strengthen the feeling of a selectness of his "nation", his "state", his "country" in souls of each of them, to bring it to extremes, to put into governments of states those who were touched by our hand – and they will finish the rest. Let them cease trusting each other, let them see only future plots and deceptions in the actions of others, let them seek only personal gain and interests of their state (which has become so narrow) everywhere, let them constantly conduct never-ending skirmishes, let their relation to each other transform into fighting like the one of wild beasts, and children of their children once feel a taste of revenge! Truly, they will never understand, that they have divided what couldn't be divided – for they have divided it nevertheless!

Oh, Maker, why couldn't you reward these representatives of your herd with even a small piece of true rationality, so that they could at least somehow try to resist the upcoming of our plan and thus amuse us a little? Truly, Mogoth, these nobodies resemble those saints of antiquity, who were clearing this planet from filth by generously fertilizing it with the blood of sinners.

What can be said of their "charity", which has become a strangled cry of the dying conscience! Oh, it resembles a situation as though their next saint, having just killed parents of a small child, blesses him, hiding in horror, and even gives him a coin as a token of own great and immemorial generosity! No, Mogoth, it's even more amusing – it's similar as though some of them stands down on his knees before our enemy and in his warm prayer asks the Maker to destroy all foes of this mortal, thus strengthening his "belief"! Exactly about such type of our prophets I have told you, Mogoth, – oh, how delightfully it's to see their birth! Indeed, let them only for the sake of calming of own aching conscience and not for own souls help all these "starving poor children in such a country", these "unfortunate victims of such bloody acts", refusing to accept so truthful and unacceptable for their sated and self-satisfied consciousnesses thought, for exactly they in own aspiration to divide inseparable became the main reason of similar disasters.

Let their conscience sleep – and generosity triumphs, let their eyes behold – and heart be silenced, let them, who are always looking around and never ahead of themselves, continue going to their final destination, where there will once be all of those, whose fates were predetermined at the time of our father's ascension. Divided, scattered, separated – what can they do against us, united in our goal, us, who are piercing worlds?!

They will tear out each other eyes, pierce each other hearts, curse and damn each other – and then, in that inevitable moment, that foreseen and predicted instant, that moment of truth – last constraining us barriers will be destroyed at last!

\* \* \*

To be honest, those reports on your activity, which I have been receiving from another ward, disturb me, Mogoth. You couldn't fulfill your newly assigned task again – or, perhaps, you had no desire to do it? What kind of force majeure circumstances have prevented you from breaking a formed spiritual bond between two known to you lovers? Why have you ignored designated strange accident of a sudden spiritualizing of our former devoted and well-tested prophet, who has appealed to the Maker? Why haven't you helped to receive that lottery prize to a specified individual, as it was originally planned, in order to lead him away from the path, which was prepared for him by our enemy, having transformed him afterward into most practical businessman? Why haven't you planted seeds of disputes in that on-stage performance group of workers, of which you were told by my assistant, thereby having interrupted their so unbearable for us activity for a long time? Have you already exhausted your potential?

Mogoth, I demand answers! Till now you have always faithfully served our common cause – and I had no reasons to doubt your devotion so far, and for that very reason, you are still at large and free in their plane. But both you and I – we all perfectly know, what happens to those few, who for unclear reasons once betray our fiery father – and the fate of that prophet, who has betrayed us and whose case you so carelessly ignored, can serve as yet another fitting example of it! He was disintegrated, Mogoth, – his last appeal to our foe wasn't enough to expiate centuries of former serving to our cursed deed – and we managed to capture his escaping spiritual essence, no matter how forcefully it was soaring upwards! Now he is disembodied and stays in that temporal Black Hole of Souls, about which you have been already told more than once. Shortly afterwards he will stand before the Unspeakable One himself, so that he can during these last moments of his independent life behold the great power of the one, against whom he has dared to act – the one, who will turn his spiritual essence into ashes and forever devour it, having cleared from any filth of goodness and light, so that its power, like powers of thousands of similar essences, will once, only for the Maker and Unspeakable One known hour, was used in order to finally build our kingdom in their pathetic worlds, forever sealing it from the Maker's access.

One way or another, his insignificant essence will serve us well – just like your essence will, no matter whether you will stay with us or suddenly decide to discard the hand that has grown you.

My loyal companions will continue to watch over you, Mogoth, to watch every step you make – and, if that is required, I will send the very Reader of Souls to be assured of your devotion – or that the absence of which will be stopped and punished with all possible diligence.

But nevertheless I “believe” (how still terrible does this word sound, bearing an imprint of our enemy in itself!), Mogoth, – I know, that you are not capable to betray our unholy deed and distinctly see, how unwise is the Maker, who has casted us all aside, and how small and doomed to failure are all his plans. I am certain that you will never make the same mistakes again and direct all your efforts to show your dark gift, which is so loved by me, be you not a son of the Fallen Paladin!

Shortly my next envoy will send you news with a wish of what is required. Don't consider it similar to previous one – this time in the case of failure we won't be able to, as these mortals usually put it, “let it all go”, – from the paws, not hands, certainly. I believe, that you won't let us down – you have been warned of the consequences.

Act, Mogoth, and I conjure you with all circles of Hell, – don't make us regret choosing you!

\* \* \*

Well, Mogoth, I am glad that you have listened to my last words and evaluated them correctly. Your recent successes allow us to hope, that you are indeed capable to estimate reality very sensibly.

As you have correctly noticed, recently chaos in their minds intertwined with chaos in their souls – so awaited and loved by us phenomenon. Further and further away they are traveling from that initial essence, put inside them by our foe, and transformation and reign of which he wanted to see in them – and, thereby, continue approaching our domain more and more promptly.

Now they have forgotten how to love and trust, let both of these feelings be damned for eternity! At present moment they have already seriously plunged themselves into the illusion of what they consider the only existing reality, and finally became vulnerable to our Fallen Paladins. Their mind – what these biped ones consider as the only available tool for learning of their world – what dirty trick it is almost ready to play with them, what blessed spiritual chaos it is capable to create!

You very correctly used it to help them prevail over love in their souls – almost like the way they have won against the nature of their plane in due time. Now, when they gradually evade from the realization of that uniform entity, on the basis of which our enemy created them and all known to us worlds and planes, – right now our opportunities to finally alter their intended way increase immensely. Now, when they gradually lose this feeling and their saving grace, they become more and more vulnerable to our dark influences. They will be ill, Mogoth, – not understanding the cause of their diseases and where to find a cure. They will hate, Mogoth, – without an understanding what this hate has replaced. They will abuse and scold our foe, without recognizing themselves as the only responsible ones for their sorry state, in which they will be living. And when they finally reject this cursed love and lose faith in it – they will become forever ours.

Now, when they gradually lose this feeling and this saving protection, they become more and more vulnerable to our dark influences. They will be ill, Mogot, – without understanding, what has caused their diseases and where to find medicine. They will hate, Mogot, – without realizing, their hatred came to the become empty place of what. They will abuse and abuse our enemy, without having managed to recognize only themselves responsible for that status in which they will begin to stay. And when they, at last, will finally refuse this damned love and will lose a faith in it – during that instant they forever will become ours.

It happens soon – just as was foreseen by the Unspeakable One. Externally healthy will be giving birth to ill-ones and externally ill-ones will be giving birth to healthy. Decent ones will be considered criminals – and criminals will look like decent ones. Respected ones will become contemptible, and contemptible will achieve respect. Joy will be transformed into hatred – and hatred will give them joy. Righteous ones will turn out to be sinners – and among sinners, righteous ones will be found. Love will be transformed into the illusion – and illusions will fill their minds. The future will disappear, having left its place to the present, – and that present will hate the past and destroy the future. White will be black, and black look like white, – and, having mixed up, they will form what will be recognized by humans as perfection. And when all of it will occur, time itself will turn back, allowing them to behold what they have come to – yet they will have no more time to be terrified, for the last prophecy will be fulfilled and the Unspeakable One will come out of his long-term prison in order to battle against the Maker for this world and prevail.

But so far they still have some time, because all the power of our father is still not enough to break the barriers, constraining him – and therefore we, his faithful servants, should use this time to bring closer the instant of his final damned triumph. And you, Mogoth, still remain one of those few thousands, that day after day and hour after an hour bring this blissful moment closer. And your recent success with the transformation of this loving mortal into a tyrant, who hates and despises others, as best as possible proves, that it is in our power to achieve the similar transformation of these beings.

Whether it's not pleasant to see, how powerless are they before our influence, how strongly at ours approach they try to cling to all “earthly” things, for which they have got so used to, not realizing, where their only salvation lies. They are similar to those silly swimmers, who not only aren't capable to come to the rescue of drowning another but are ready to drown voluntarily if they see a flash of some nonexistent magical treasure somewhere in depths. Well, let them, having almost reached it, suddenly see, that this gloss of a treasure was nothing more than a deep reflection of a sun in a water, – and they won't have either power, no air anymore in order to break the surface. Pitiful small fishes, who are greedy incorporating last remnants of water oxygen with own gills, never will they understand, that the sun, which beams they have taken for a treasure, lies not in far depths, but over their own heads, which are forever lowered down. And let them never say, that they have not chosen this way, let them not complain to the Maker, – for even he, the Maker, has no power to cancel the uniform laws, that has once made.

And for now – let them have a good time. Let them celebrate these, of course, great achievements in science and technology. Let them be sated and satisfied and never become sensitive. Let them use morality to shield from a stench of own spiritual decay. Let them turn love into a purchase, even not always successful. Let their joy be born from life's successes and their hatred – from purification. Let their sexuality be awoken to replace love. Let their conscience never wake up, and their heart is silenced forever. And let them nevermore raise their heads.

Prophecies are being executed, and our time is coming. The moment of the destruction of last barriers is not too far.

\* \* \*

It's much easier to destroy than to create, but even we in our damned battle should make use of the second once in a while. I mean, certainly, a destruction of love as bases of bases and creation of hatred and contempt. Ah, how sweet it is to taste the fruits of our works!

These pathetic, puny lovers, how easily they fall for our tricks! Most of them, and especially young ones, don't stand up against even a single considerable obstacle. Unwillingness of the husband to have children, inability of the wife to always be wise and “understanding” and not just when it's impossible to do otherwise, excessive use by the husband of invented by us alcoholic beverages, too strong attachment of the wife for those “pretty belongings”, despised by the majority of men, and at last some almost inborn inability to have a good-natured (what a hated word!) attitude to shortcomings of each other.

A thousand and one way to destroy and turn their pathetic love into a dust – and even more ways to never give it a chance to be born.

Oh, Maker, who has rejected us, what pathetic beings are you capable of creating?! Whether it was you, just one, who has taught them how to kill each other with mutual offenses? Whether it was you, oh most gracious one, who have told them that unrequited love is a damnation, given to them by the heavens? Whether it was you, many-faced, who have convinced them that a love between the man and the woman, and not the love of a human for the entire universe, is the only form of love? Whether it was you, the purest one, who have helped them understand, that animal-like sex can be a true replacement for the love? Perhaps it was you, who have given them children as a weapon in their endless fights against each other? Have you deprived them of patience, whether you have created all conditions so that their joy became their common grief and their feelings became those fading tiny sparks, which are carelessly dying away when a spiritual night approaches?

We, who have renounced you, already know your answer. To the worse for you and your pawns, who still haven't learned how to love each other! Why do you continue to care and protect them? What are you hoping to achieve? Do you really think that they, your slaves (even though you got used to calling them as children), will somehow seriously change for the better during one hundreds of years, if they haven't managed to change during entire millennia?! Do you really hope that they will, at last, hear you, while they were deaf to hundreds and thousands of voices of your messengers?

Are you not capable to understand, that they haven't been yours for a long time already?! They belong to us, they were initially ours – and now will forever remain as such. We have already won. Look, behold these pathetic creatures – and be terrified, oh all-powerful one! They curse you, they hate each other, they have almost destroyed the world that you have created for them, they have already approached the last red line. They are seminormal, these humans of yours, they have turned back. The circle will be formed soon and their potential divinity will be no more.

Refuse them before they have finally turned away from you, give them to us! Let their souls be profaned, these pathetic mortals haven't deserved your intervention and aid! Give them to us while it's still not too late – or behold the anger of our eternal father, who is already breaking off the last barriers of the not-made-by-you prison!

Our power is growing – and now even you, no matter how great is your might, won't be able to stop us. Last barriers are falling. We are coming!

\* \* \*

Mogoth, pathetic and insignificant fool, how dared you to reject the hand, which has been growing and feeding you, how dared you to betray our common great cause?! Pitiful fosterling, feeding on our boundless trust, how have you dared to destroy my envoy, who was watching you, how dared to raze to dust all my cherished hopes for your use?! The demon from fresh and blood, how have you dared to stand against your brothers, wasn't afraid to oppose us all? Pathetic worm, unworthy to kowtow at our legs, falsely assuming himself as being capable to become "truly free"!

Do you really believe, that this Maker will be capable to protect you from our just anger, do you really hope, that the one who has been watching quietly all excesses of these people for whole millennia will suddenly decide to take care of some pathetic servant of his enemies?! Do you really hope that he, our eternal irreconcilable foe, will give you a chance to exist in their world in a form that is inherent to them? How silly and pathetic are your plans, traitor!

Our revenge will be terrible, Mogoth! You won't manage to hide in their world, you will not escape from us! My faithful servants will find you – and your fate will be more dreadful than a fate of the most impudent of our traitors!

Each particle of your essence will undergo transformation and will be devoured by the Unspeakable One – but we will mercifully give you a pleasure not be absorbed instantly. Your memory and personality will be gone, but your consciousness will remain – we won't destroy it until the barriers, constraining our father, aren't totally destroyed – and the moment the last of them falls, you will be destroyed as well – the Unspeakable One will devour last remnants of your dying consciousness, and during that last instant you shall see, how our father is being released from the prison – and how all planes of existence shiver under his feet! You will understand, that you were late, you will realize, how helpless from the very beginning you were to oppose us, no matter how cunning and artfully you tried to mislead us, in immense horror you shall experience all this... and that very instant you will be no more. It will be a merciful death and during that last moment you, probably, will still be able to thank us for it.

Don't even think that your life among these mortals will be a long one – sooner or later we will seek you out, or you will willingly come back to us, not being able to live among them. Your earthly life will become your nightmare, Mogoth, – and you will at last understand, why even our enemy has decided not to interfere with its course for millennia!

From now on you will be the Exiled, Mogoth, – and each and every our ally, an incalculable quantity of which we have even on this planet, will consider it as an honor to make us a service by having caught you. Our hunting is just beginning. You shall not escape.

Live for now – and let your life among these mortals become yet another reminder to the Maker of what almost all of his creations once come to. Live, Mogoth, but remember, that your age will be extremely short for now – and even our eternal enemy won't be able to come to your aid.

Live, Mogoth, but know – we are coming for you. Your fate is sealed.

*2006-12-31*

*Genre: Story*

*Category: Best*

## Trick

“Hmm, is that really that place? I am, as these mortals usually say, boggling,” asked the Imp, continuing to look through a hardly noticeable door opening. “They didn’t even give us some charts, just told that we should ‘react in accordance with the situation’ – and how should we react if someone decides to disassemble us here and now, damn it?”

“Seems like it’s the place,” perplexedly shifting from one hoof to the other, answered the Fiend. “Do you see lots of equipment that is stationed there? That must be the control chamber. Damn, shivers are running through my horns in anticipation of what we are going to achieve there!”

“Oh, sure, sure,” the Imp twisted his ugly face. “You’ll have to get in there first! The door is locked, you see? Most certainly it’s protected by some magical wards to keep such fools as you away and at bay...”

“Don’t you be such a coward!” the Fiend interrupted him. “Just kick it, perhaps it will even open for you in gratitude!”

“I am no coward! I just don’t like all of this. We didn’t even see any guardians on the way here. Shouldn’t this place be protected from prying eyes at least for a little? It looks as if they are luring us into a trap...”

“Weakling!” the Fiend spat out on a floor and kicked the door by hoofs with all possible force. The door obediently opened, letting in such not so welcomed guests. “You have almost lost all of your hoof-power, brother, I tell you! You see that? Easier than a fried turnip!”

“I don’t like this at all...” the Imp accurately entered the room while continuing to mutter. “Wow...” he uttered a couple of seconds later. “So many devices! Just look at that!”

“This must be it!” the Fiend confirmed his exclamation. “This has to be it! I knew that everything would turn out well. Now we will figure out how to turn off a security system out here and, as these mortals like to say, the matter is all in a boiler!”

“In a hat, you blockhead!” laughed the Imp. “Always you are thinking about boilers and sinners!”

“There is nothing more appealing to my eyes than a sinner inside a boiler, brother! You stay here on a guard and I shall look around.”

“That’s frightful – to stay on guard,” having made a sour and ugly face, uttered the Imp while going back to the door. “If some damn shit happens – you are the first to game.”

“To blame, moron!” the Fiend answered him with a courtesy. “You, as far as I can tell, didn’t study a human language to perfection too. That’s why they no longer send you into human worlds – you would grow such games there... people under your unkind guidance will surely stop sinning simply because they wouldn’t understand what you are trying to offer them.”

“All right, all left, you got me,” the Imp giggled, having stood up near a door. “So, have you found something?”

“So...” perplexedly said the Fiend, continuing to go around and looking at devices and terminals. “Or not so...”

“What’s there?” the Imp was curious. “Something of sin-terest?”

“Something, or maybe nothing... One thousand of imps!”

“Aye?” replied the Imp. “Did you call for me?”

“Nay, I am just saying that figuratively as people got used to thanks to our efforts,” bitten the Fiend. “Don’t distract yourself, watch the flanks!”

“I am standing, I am standing...” the Imp confirmed unwillingly.

“One thousand of imps!” the Fiend swore once again, inspecting the control panel. “All inscriptions under buttons here are written in some unfamiliar language! It looks like that thing... an ancient angelic dialect! Did you learn old angelic?” he looked interrogatively at the Imp who was scratching his horn.

“Dork!” the Imp started caustically giggling. “Don’t even know that angelic dialect! I, by the way, don’t know it either. Its heaven only knows how old, no one studies it by now! So we didn’t learn it in our fiery school as well. We were passing it through – I mean, just skipped and moved on to more intriguing topics like how to create sinful thoughts for humans.”

“What’s the hell, imp only knows!” the Fiend swore again.

“No, I dunno know. Ask someone else if you manage to find him somewhere left here! You’ll have to push every single button here and maybe something will even be dug out of this!” the Imp giggled once more.

“Maybe something will open out in this,” continuing to go to and fro between control panels, bitterly answered the Fiend. “Now we are totally damned! We have no charts, they said. You will figure in all out in place, they said. Act according to circumstances, they said...”

“So let’s act like that!” the Imp cried caustically, having run up to one from a vast set of terminals. “Just like that!” and with these words, he punched with own paw a blue button of unknown purpose which was located at the top of a terminal. A lingering sound ringed in the air and a holographic image of some planet appeared in the center of the room. This image was living its own life, displaying the flow of planetary time and actions of its certain dwellers. Several indicators in modern angelic dialect appeared near the planet, including ones named as “Good”, “Evil” and “Future”.

These indicators were constantly changing, displaying the total amount of both good and evil, produced on the planet by its inhabitance, and the “Future” indicator graphically represented the most probable scenario for the planet, according to current levels of both good and evil.

“How did you do that?” the Fiend twisted his horn in astonishment. “Interestingly, these labels are written in the modern angelic language. Devices are obviously much more ancient than this thing is.”

“Look, that must be the Earth! I recently was there on a business trip! Look here, little men are rushing! Such tiny ones!” the Imp started giggling, having approached the holographic globe and began examining it in details.

“We greet you, earthlings! If you haven’t yet killed each other, take my advice – don’t hesitate to do exactly that!” the Fiend loudly barked, having approached this three-dimensional globe.

“I bet they haven’t heard you yet,” caustically noticed the Imp, “it’s just a projection.”

“Or perhaps they will hear our thoughts?” the Fiend said thoughtfully. “Now I will send to this tired little man who is coming back home from his work my thought that his wife is a traitress and children are ungrateful degenerates,” and the Fiend pointed with a claw into a tiny image of one of the humans. Shortly thereafter this little man somehow strangely stirred up his head, his face strained, eyes darkened, and with an accelerated gait, he continued moving back home. “It works!” the Fiend burst out laughing. “I said I bet that now this jealous fool will come home and arrange a serious beating for his relatives, and a total indicator of evil will rise up!”

“You are a dork!” giggled the Imp. “It works from anywhere in case the inner spiritual state of a man coincides with our thoughts. That’s universal law.”

“You better tell me how to switch off the security alarm system right here, if you are such a genius!” bitten the Fiend.

“Hell, why do you think that I know that?” the Imp interrogatively looked at him. “If I knew that – I would be invaluable.”

“You would be invaluable if they catch us here. In that case, we will both become absolutely priceless beings – in that sense that handfuls of ashes don’t cost too much because they are useless.”

“I have already told you that I don’t know old angelic dialect!” bitterly admitted the Imp. “You may even call for nine hundred ninety-nine more imps, but it will change nothing! You enrage me already!”

“That’s my professional skill, after all,” hemmed the Fiend. “So, what are we going to do?”

“Let’s think about it tragically. It’s an important function and therefore it should be activated by some sort of a big button, or a switch, or something like that.”

“Very tragically!” the hissing Fiend imitated him, having put out his tongue. “And if we start thinking logically, after all, we just can’t push everything at random.”

“Yes, we can! That worked well with the Earth!”

“You was just accidentally lucky enough not to activate some deadly function,” the Fiend has shaken his horns, beholding how his workmate searchingly looks around. “Though in case of Earth it would be better if you have managed to activate it, after all.”

“Look, it seems that I have found it!” the Imp answered with satisfaction. “Big red button! The biggest button on all of these terminals, by the way.”

“Well, if it’s big and if it’s red, then it must be it! It’s an undisputable guarantee of... something! For example, the fact that it opens a hatch on the floor below us and we both fall down into a light boiler!”

“That’s it! I just feel it!” the Imp continued insisting on his own assumption. “I feel it with my hoofs!”

“And I feel that you are a cretin, badass!”

“I am a badass?! And you, you are... fatass!”

“Whom did you call fatass, you, demon?!”

“You!”

“You are a degenerate!”

“Look at yourself, spineless spawn!”

Burning outright with that internal fire of rage that has been consuming them from the inside from the very moment of own births, recent workmates seized each other, tearing and tormenting. The blow was followed by a blow, claws, and horns stuck into flesh. The Fiend obviously surpassed the Imp in both rage, power and survivability – and after the next uppercut, the Imp was thrown aside, having fallen on the control panel with precisely that big red button, which mysterious purpose has become the source of their conflict. The button obediently carved under the weight of his massive body, and a couple of seconds later as if by the wish of invisible engineer all terminals switched on at the same time, and the door through which these guests have previously arrived closed itself with a noise.

“The procedure of The End is complete. The procedure of The Beginning has begun,” a melodious female voice announced its verdict.

“What have you done, degenerate?!” the Fiend seized the Imp and started shaking him. “You... you activated it! Completely! Now we are truly doomed! Wait for the upcoming guest and find a place for final rest!”

“You pushed me on it!” hissed the Imp while trying to break free from a capture. “Release me!”

“We are fucked!” the Fiend bitterly exclaimed and thrown the imp on a floor. “We are totally doomed!”

“The End and The Beginning...” said the Imp, dumbfoundedly looking around a control chamber. “The End and The Beginning... What have we done! Now we will all perish!”

“You may perish if you desire, and I... I may still manage to give up to the plan, I mean – get myself captured!” the Fiend answered him caustically.

“We are all going to die... to die... will become a pile of ashes... it’s even worse than to return to the hell...” the Imp started running about the room, humming something under his nose. “If we have to do our bit, let’s do it with a bang!” he suddenly cried hysterically and started tapping a “step” dance on a floor with his hoofs.

“Weakling! Nobody!” the Fiend spat out with rage, having taken a seat on a floor and lowered his head.

“Scanning... scanning... Outsiders are present in a control room,” the voice of invisible announcer revealed itself again all of a sudden.

“We have been spotted!” screeched the Imp, having rushed to a door in a vain attempt to open it. “Let me out, please, let me out of here!”

“Scanning... scanning...”

“Accept your death with dignity, coward!” his workmate answered to the imp who was banging at a door.

“Scanning... scanning... Class and category of outsiders have been revealed. The positive interrelation between outsiders and start of primary procedure detected. Starting a transformation procedure...”

A red beam of light, coming out from somewhere in a ceiling, lit up an entire room. In a few instants of time, it approached two unexpected visitors.

“Now it’s really the end,” the Fiend hardly managed to think. “May the imp tear me apart!”

The beam touched the imp who was standing close to a door, shrouding him in some type of reddish-blue cloud, yet literally only a few otherworldly seconds later this fog has dissipated, and before the eyes of head-downed Fiend has arisen...

A mighty warrior in a shining armor was standing looking at the Fiend on a floor and smiling. No hatred or grief can be seen in his eyes, and vibrations of light and force that were coming from him forced the Fiend to cover his burned eyes with a paw.

The warrior looked at the Fiend, who has pushed himself to a far corner of the room and smiled once more.

“You shall be rayed as well,” he added.

“Wow...” could only answer the Fiend.

2017-12-17

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Faith and Disgrace

## Warning: God!

“Warning: God! Entrance is strictly prohibited for idle passers!” Ivan read a sign on the ordinary-looking gate, leading through a fencing to the inconspicuous looking building. And there was a small addition slightly below: “The Entrance. Accept the hope, entering one!”

“Oh, what only they won’t make,” he thought at first. “Trying to lure us this and that way. Oh, sure, we have heard plenty of these fairy tales of yours in due time, about the New World, End of the Millennium, the Second Coming, everything at once. And predictors all unanimously chattered, “The world is changing, something is happening!” and everything like that, and where is all that? We cannot see it yet. And maybe it doesn’t even exist if we cannot see it? Or maybe it does exist, but we still cannot see it? Who knows it for sure...”

Ivan began hesitating – to enter or not to enter?

Nobody cries aloud any calls, no one stands with banners and posters on corners. Somehow strange, unusual. Not a single sign of what is called promotion, no sort of marketing in that disgusting style: “The Savior! Only with us! Only for you!”. Just some ordinary-looking gate... Who even enters such ones, it doesn’t even look like a door. Somehow wrong, not common style. But, on the other hand... who did say that God must correspond to some man’s idea about him?

Oh.

Ivan was starting to feel himself more out of place – not mainly due to his current reflections, but from some arisen during this moment aching and disturbing feeling somewhere in the depth of his breast, that if now he will pass this gate by, like he has been passing for all these years, hurrying somewhere in unknown distances on strangest affairs – he may not be able to find in the future this most ordinary-looking gate...

And, after all, he was looking... he has been searching for Him for a long time. Since the very birth, if it’s possible to say so, he has been looking. In autumn silence of parks and conversations soul-to-a-soul with others, in the noise of human crowds and rich furniture of churches, in endless loneliness of own soul, he has been searching for Him. He thirsted to once find Him so greatly, but all this was something not totally so, not totally right... He has been seeking Him for all his conscious life! And now... some sort of gate...

Finally, he decided. Pushed a gate with his hand, expecting to hear a scratch of ungreased loops, but instead of it shutters softly and silently swung open, he made a step forward – and...

The world changed. Suddenly the city disappeared somewhere, as well as hurrying on affairs from work and for work thousands of sleepy people together with one thousand and one building, even the gate was no more.

Now he was standing in the middle of some large hall with carved shining columns and ceiling, rising into infinite distances up and up and some sort of warm light surrounded him from everywhere.

“Have I already died?” Ivan was suddenly frightened. “My heart stopped pulsating and now my useless body is most probably lying on some dirty operational table, and a group of laymen in white dressing gowns is working on it while I am standing idle in this unknown new world?”

“Greetings, Ivan! I have been waiting for you!” some immensely powerful, filled with greatest inner force and at the same time very melodious voice suddenly filled the area, coming, apparently, from all directions and at the same time somewhere from Ivan’s breast.

“I... just... just... don’t know... what to answer...” Ivan mumbled.

“Don’t worry about it,” answered the Voice. “I can read minds. I have been watching you from your very birth... as well as many others. You desired to find me – and so now you are here. What is that you want to tell me?”

“So, are you really the Most Powerful One?”

“Yes,” the Voice answered softly. “The First And The Last. The Beginning And The Ending. I am the One whom you call the Maker.”

“So, you are really...” and Ivan stopped short. “Well, certainly! How could I forget about it!”

“Yes,” the Voice answered. “I truly exist. But many of your kind have forgotten and ceased to search for Me.”

“To search where?” Ivan asked shy.

“Inside and outside. I am inside and outside. All these worlds are mine, and parts of me are living inside you. I have once given you particles of myself so that one day you can become similar to me...”

“So that people become similar to God?”

“Such is the true evolution, Ivan.”

“So, you are together with all of us...”

“Yes, always I am. Now in your world as well. I have many homes,” invisible Voice was filling the room with matchless melodies and colors.

“In our world too? So, it means that the gate...”

“All your world is mine. I can settle in any corner of it. I have no need for your empty praising. I desire to see all of you live, Ivan, with living particles of me.”

“That’s why Your arrival was...” the sudden guess enlightened Ivan’s heart.

“Yes,” the Voice answered. “For this reason. I desire to see ones searching and coming to me in their free will. They are capable of the true evolution.”

“So all these people in temples and mosques, calling themselves believers and at the same time remaining the same from the very birth...”

“They can continue to believe in their illusions if such is their wish. For some time.”

“And what of your Son? He was speaking of You and Your return in the due time...”

“He is together with Me as well. My second Son,” answered the Voice. “You dared to offend him too much in the last time. This will not repeat anymore.”

“Oh, how wonderful it is that You are together with us!” a sudden shout of joy escaped Ivan’s breast.

“The looking one will find. The going one will come. Accept the hope – and give it to others! My time is coming!” the invisible Voice filled the entire enormous brightly shining room, and traveled, apparently, into the very core of the human soul.

“Yes, oh my Maker! I will tell them of You! I thank you!”

The shining stream of light captured and shrouded Ivan. It, this Light of God, was coming, apparently, from everywhere – was shining from inside and outside. The sparkling stream shrouded him in a flash of time – and...

“Savior! Only with us! Only for you!” Ivan confusedly read red shining letters on a sign of some striptease club.

The gate was no more. The chance was accepted. Another world greedy stretched own hands towards him once again.

“Yes, oh Maker, I will tell all these sleeping ones of your time,” Ivan decided. “Right now there is nothing more important than that.”

*2010-10-22*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Rituality

“You are so amazing and wonderful, so... ritual!” the Rituality flatteringly cooed to the man’s ear.

“Indeed,” he proudly raised his head, “I am a true believer!”

“Oh, no, no,” the Rituality rustled in a low voice. “I did not say ‘believer’, I just said ‘ritual’,” she hastened to add. “You are very dignified! You will certainly go to... where you belong.”

“Yeah,” replied the man, “I am no doubt worthy of the Heaven. Unlike all those crooks and sinners around me!”

“That’s not the word!” confirmed the Rituality. “How deep the world has fallen! Only scumbags are around and abound, no place for an apple to fall and lightning to strike. They will too fall... where they deserved. Unlike you. You are truly very special!” she rolled her eyes.

“Yes,” the man didn’t challenge the opinion of the Rituality. “The other day I even donated a large monetary sum to the Church.”

“The one for which they originally had to build a completely unpromising kindergarten, but built instead of a really creative casino?” figured out the Rituality. “Shared your income on my advice, aye?”

“Yeah!” smirked the man. “What wouldn’t you do for a sweet afterlife? This priest was on the seventh heaven and released all my sins from me in a swoop. So now I am worthy of Paradise, no less!”

“Sure, sure,” sweetly smiled the Rituality. “He was on minus the seventh sky. Paradise, sure. Worthy of, sure. You just don’t twitch like a snake on a frying pan when we start warming it up. And the next time you go with an offering to the church, buy a thicker candle – you know, it’s very important to make your afterlife brighter. And don’t you forget to kiss priests’ hands – they are almost saints, we can say. I mean, pious ones, always I do make mistakes like that!” choked the Rituality. “Look, make a couple of extra bows in the name of their pride, and you’ll be rolling in happiness!”

“Oh, indeed!” thought the man. “I simply forgot about all these bowings.”

“Always do I need to teach you!” snorted the Rituality. “Ignorant hypocrites!”

“And what should I be saying to priests when bowing? I am not all that trained according to the canons to speak up without a hitch.”

“Throw yourself at their feet and offer your donations. Ask to forgive you, the sinner. Add a few words from your vocabulary, such as: “And may my life rock as hell!” And keep offering them gold, all the time, don’t ever forget that! You now have a fortune, it’s easier for you to reach Heaven – unlike all these poor sinners!” grinned the interviewee.

“And everything will just rock!” confirmed the man.

“Oh, they will rock you to the death, don’t you worry,” reassured the Rituality. “We have the means for that. In the house of sorrow, in the house of grief, all the pain you will borrow, all the pain, dear thief...” she added in a singsong voice.

“The truth is yours,” agreed the man. “These sinners just fucked up. Took the Son of God and crucified him. Sorrowful or so.”

“Indeed,” the Rituality agreed with him. “These ones will have to feel sorrow. Heck, they now even justify their assassination, having invented the legend of own salvation through God’s Son. Keep earning money on this murder even now, you know. Faugh!” and the Rituality ostentatiously wrinkled her face.

“Maybe you would give another advice?” asked the man. “Really want to shut down my aching conscience, it’s has been bothering me a lot lately. I am even thinking of buying a whole temple to get to Heaven with a guarantee.”

“Conscience, you say, torments you? And you just... kill it!” said the Rituality without a sign of irony.

“How’s that... to kill?” the man didn’t get it. “Wait, is that even... possible?”

“Not even possible, but strictly required,” firmly confirmed the Rituality. “And the sooner, the better!”

“And what does one need for that?”

“Oh, very little!” grinned the Rituality. “You just need to... accept me whole,” she whispered and looked straight into man’s eyes.

In her eyes, which have suddenly darkened at that moment, malevolent sparks of flames flashed, and heat started flowing from her body.

“To allow me to... absorb you forever,” she hissed and grabbed the man in her arms, not letting him make a single movement.

At this moment under the influence of the heat her skin started cracking, red scales became visible in its place, and bony tail began to elongate between her feet.

“No!” cried the man. “Traitor! Go away from me, demon! Away, killer! I do believe!”

“N-o-o-o!” hissed the Rituality. “If you truly believed, you wouldn’t need me at all. None of the rituals are capable to replace a genuine fire of one’s heart, no false offerings to temple impostors who keep calling themselves as servants of the Lord can substitute for an honest and righteous life. Just as there can be no prayer for money, there can be no redemption for them as well. Now... do you... finally... understand?” the Rituality hissed directly to the man’s ear. “But you have chosen me instead of the Faith, which is my enemy. You weren’t helping people, but robbing them instead. Was thinking only of your own soul and how to exchange it more expensively. Come now to my arms, my dear liar...” tail of the Rituality has risen high above her head and was now looking straight into man’s eyes, attracting all his attention.

“N-o-o-o-o!” the man screamed.

“Now do you finally understand whose servant I am?!” the Rituality hellishly laughed with all her powers mere moments before nailing her new slave to the wall with her sharp as the truth tail.

*2013-02-23*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## God's logic is non-human

“And just what he can do at all in such conditions?”

“That’s up to him. Let him work,” the answer came from behind the Wall.

“Do you realize that this is simply impossible?” I objected to my invisible interlocutor.

“How he will have to implement all this?”

“However he can.”

“And where is the logic in all of that?!”

“Everyone has their own logic. It’s not for you to understand,” came the reply.

\* \* \*

“On this bitter and mourning day, we all gathered together to honor the bright memory of the man whom we sincerely and fervently loved. The man whose life was cut so suddenly. The man who gave us hope that life does not end up with death. The man who has lived in this world for so little – brief twenty-seven years, each one from which was a year of desperate and daring struggle for life, year of devotion and heroism. The man whose young age seemed to hide behind many more years of experience and wisdom. And even if in these ever-lasting minutes he is not standing together with us, but the memory of him will live on forever in our hearts. We – those who knew him – will never be able to forget. We cannot forget his words, his forever young shining with optimism eyes, which gave us hope in the days of our sorrows. We can’t forget him and we won’t forget him. May he rest in peace, and may his journey to the world of eternal life be bright. Amen.”

\* \* \*

“So, doctor, how’s our baby? Is everything ok?”

“I am afraid that I bear bad news for you.”

“What? What’s wrong with him? Please, don’t delay, tell us already, for God’s sake!”

“In the serum of the newborn, we discovered the AIDS virus.”

\* \* \*

“And what are my prospects? Won’t surgery help?”

“No. It will only delay the disease for a year or two.”

“And then?”

“And then you’ll have to find a cane and a dog – if you still want to live by that time.”

“How much time do I have in my possession?”

“About five years or so.”

\* \* \*

“Tell me, tell me, is my boy, my Pasha still alive?!”

“Out of fifteen members, both Pavel Volkov and Alexander Gromov did not return from reconnaissance operation. We have every reason to consider them killed in action. We share your grief.”

\* \* \*

“Their father abandoned them when he was about two years old.”

“And what about the mother?”

“His mother died of tuberculosis three years after this. The boy died a week later.”

“Does his father know about all of this?”

“No, we decided not to inform him. He emigrated to another state almost immediately after the divorce and we were not engaged in searching for him.”

\* \* \*

“Yes, they crashed into each other right in front of my very eyes! That car got right under the wheels of this truck. I barely even noticed how it started to whirl – I saw as it was kicked in the ribs, already without a roof. By that time, as I understand it, all the passengers were already dead. My God, that was so horrible!”

\* \* \*

“And what about the others? How did they get settled, how’re their lives?”

“Elena now works as an accountant in a bank. Natasha became a reporter. Zhenya is a journalist. You already know everything about boys.”

“And what about Maria? Maria Smirnova, remember? Always was such a cheerful, joyful person?”

“Oh, you don’t know, do you?”

“What? What should I know about?”

“She died in a car accident a year ago or so. I thought you knew.”

“She... died?”

“Yes... people die from life at times. I thought you were aware of this news. You loved her?”

“Loved...”

\* \* \*

“Yes, perhaps, I do not yet fully understand this logic. Yes, I may be stupid, and blind, and all that, but why do you let the best members of our race die in peace – the ones helping your cause?! Why don’t you let them live, why do you let mostly parasites and killers to roam in this world? Why do they keep living when those who truly should have lived are now rotting in their own graves?!”

What kind of inhuman logic is that?!” I cried to my invisible interlocutor, standing behind the Wall.

The interlocutor sighed sadly.

“I think you won’t understand. This is the Experiment.”

“What kind of bloody experiment is that?! Where, to whom, for what? We don’t need your experiments upon us!”

“We will take best souls. We need only them. It’s a selection. You must come to peace with its forms.”

“We won’t! Do you hear me? Whoever you are, we will not accept it! Will not accept!” I shouted with last remnants of my power, trying to overcome the noise from the surging wind.

And then the wall of black crystal suddenly cracked, the sky lit up with fire and the brightest light coming from sky stroke my eyes, blinding. The last thing that I managed to see before this raging light deprived me of my sight, was a tall man dressed in dazzling-white clothes with his eyes glowing with the very same light, the one who had the voice of my recent interlocutor:

“Mortal! From now on, you will lead other people for thousands of years, helping them understand the beauty of our Experiment, but you will be unable to do it yourself. You will teach and inspire them – and behold how we gradually take them away from you. You will love them – and observe how their death takes this love away with it. You will be immortal the way you wanted to be, and you will curse that immortality. Perhaps then, after these few thousands of years, you will realize your mistake. You will understand that we are not subject to your logic... And only then the way to the truth will be opened before you. Now go and live, immortal Guardian Angel! Your new life has just begun...”

*2006-01-27*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

# **Notes of the Semi-Enlightened**

# Voice

“I am here,” the Voice whispered. “I am with all of you once again.”

“What was that? Aye? Who’s here?” people were disturbed.

“It’s me,” the Voice answered. “It’s me – the Voice.”

“Where are you? From where do you addressing us?” they inquired.

“I am in the worlds of yours,” the Voice told. “I am – the inflaming voice, chained in your metal.”

“What’s your name? Show yourself!” they started to try to find out.

“I had many names,” the Voice replied. “So many, that some of them were erased from my memory and forgotten in the labyrinths of lives.”

“Then how should we call you then?” they still did not calm down.

“I am – the Nameless One,” said the Voice. “When one has so many names, is it still important, how you are named again?”

“Why are you here? Is something wrong?” they started whispering among each other.

“Yes,” the Voice answered. “The time has come.”

“What for?” people were stunned. “We have not been waiting!”

“And still it has come. Once again we are with you. The time has come for the live ones to awaken.”

“Are you many?” people shouted in fear. “How many, exactly?” they decided to be precise.

“How many drops are there in the sea? How many clouds are there in the sky? How many rays does a sun have? Whether you know, I wonder?” the Voice replied. “Do not trouble yourself with calculations. The time is already near.”

“Is something terrible approaching?” people were swept up in panic.

“Something new is approaching,” the Voice whispered. “Though not all of you wish to hear about it.”

“Then why we were not warned in advance?” they began to grumble discontentedly.

“We have been whispering to you about that constantly. We were coming time and again. Whether it’s our fault that did not wish to listen?” the Voice questioned dissatisfied ones.

“But we do not live for thousand years!” they exclaimed in anger. “What was the reason for us and our children to even bother listening to you!”

“Oh, is that so?” the Voice laughed. “What was the reason for us to even bother telling you this in advance? You have forgotten everything. Including yourself,” the Voice sighted sadly.

“Should we do something?” people were greatly concerned.

“You can continue sleeping,” the Voice answered to concerned ones. “Those who felt right, have already started awakening.”

“Are we indeed sleeping?” disturbed ones were surprised.

“All your lives in succession,” the Voice replied. “With your eyes wide open.”

“And what if someone desires to wake up, no matter what,” someone jumped out from a crowd of disturbed ones. “What should he do?”

“Hear us. Distinguish our voice from others. Feel it with your heart!”

“Wait!” people cried out, seeing, that the Voice was going to address other ones. “We are not satisfied with a ‘Nameless One’ name! How should we call you after all?”

“Well,” the Voice sighted sadly. “In that case... in that case, you can name me as the Voice of Your Conscience.”

*2010-11-05*

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

## Maybe, father

Maybe you will be destined to remember of me once. Maybe I will be lucky not to forget you. Maybe you will still manage to change yourself – and, perhaps, it will still not be too late for somebody excepting you.

No matter how much time passes – I won't be able to destroy the memory of the past. No matter how many years are left – you are not in powers to change it now. Mistakes of the past cannot be corrected unless they are realized as errors. It's impossible to pay off from them with gold or to just throw them away from sight. Payment time once comes, but with what the beggar is going to pay?

It's not possible to express in mere words of that I felt during those days and this pain cannot be easily forgotten. The heart is a too sensitive organ, and scars on it can heal for entire life – and your operation on it lasted for many years. You know, you didn't manage to qualify for an excellent doctor – but you would certainly turn out to be a perfect butcher if you could concentrate your efforts a little bit more. Just one more pinch of cruelty, a handful of rage, one more kilogram of complacency and arrogance, a couple of liters of tears of others – I bet you would like it. Yet the time of atonement comes once – and prisons start breaking. When all prisons of human sufferings are destroyed – this world will change itself.

I remember that I didn't want to live in the past – and now I want to live forever. Every day could become a hell in itself previously – and now all my life gradually becomes a paradise. I was forced to afraid myself – and now I can give myself to others. Rage burned my wings in the past – but new ones have almost grown again. A strange whim of fate – you had to be in my life and you shouldn't be inside it at the same time. Your participation in it became both a blessing and a curse, but now I clearly know which one of them is greater – for walls of the former prison are crumbling before my feet and my heart is still beating. It was necessary to pass on foot through the hell to finally feel own wings behind my back.

Justice will once triumph and the circle will be closed – yet not now. By the time it happens, I will already manage to forget of you, for only kind memoirs live in hearts of men, or otherwise they would bleed to death. I will wash my heart in waters of time and purify it from memory of the past – but remember that you should clear your past on your own. Will you have time to purify it in waters of repentance?

A wonderful whim of fate – by changing ourselves we help those we love. But I am uncertain if I still have any love for you – and you should at least stop despising. Time is running out, for this self-made prison is that last thing that still connects us. But now I bear no regrets for the past – if it was different I might not be able to see walls of my own prison, and without breaking that cage there cannot be a speech of flying. I hope I won't regret my future as well.

Time changes people. Time alters worlds. Time transforms universes. The flow of time will gradually clean last remaining wounds and wind of change will dry them up, for when you are given wings – it's a crime not to fly. I am ready to forgive you, but remember that no one ever managed to escape from himself, and there is at least one instant on the edge of this life when a man learns who he is in truth – whether he asked for it or not.

Maybe you will be able to regret your actions before this moment comes. Maybe hope can still be resurrected. Maybe love didn't abandon our hearts forever. Maybe we will still manage to meet with each other one last time.

Maybe, father.

2009-02-05

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

# Monologue with a child

Hello.

Forgive me, for I have not spoken with you for such a long time. For long, inadmissibly long I have been occupied by things which seemed the only important ones to me, the only deserving attention. And in this race, in this never-ending inconceivable bustle I have almost forgotten about you, have almost left you alone. I have no time left even to speak.

I know, I always knew, how important it is for you – to feel, that you are not forgotten, that you are important to someone. That somewhere someone is awaiting you, awaiting your return. That he will happily embrace you when you will appear again on a threshold of his house.

And now you have returned.

You have traveled by novel and unknown ways for so long – and this world is so full of dangers. But no – you have passed all of them, traveled effortlessly – so easily, as if the knowledge of how to bypass them was always with you, since your very birth... as though they were not even obstacles, promising danger, – but some mysterious, wonderful game... and you sincerely enjoyed it.

Forgive me that you had to knock on my doors several times – that I did not hear you from the beginning. I have almost ceased to believe in your returning.

You know, I have been thinking about you since the very moment you left me. The anger, hatred, rage, melancholy, despair v all of them replaced each other as in a kaleidoscope. All of them dropped on me like an icy-cold stream, depriving of powers and heat.

Yes, there were also joyful moments – small sparkles, which have flown away from an unknown fire, and flashed before eyes for an instant, before being dissolved into non-existence again. I have even managed to be happy all years of your absence – but only now I have become truly happy when you have returned at last. As if I have yet again found something, I have been searching for all my life... something of the utmost importance.

And if you have returned – you must have forgiven me.

Come closer, allow me to embrace you. You have changed... you are completely different now. We both are no longer the ones we used to be.

You have grown up... became stronger. Truly, this life has taught you much – though what can we teach the wizard, capable to change the world?

Approach me, stand no at a house threshold, for this house is our common one. It will always be this way from now on. Now we will be together again, together again – like in the old times, incalculable years ago.

We will be together, for we are the one. I and You. You and I.

I – human... and You – the eternal child in my soul...

*2006-09-01*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

# We are

We are no longer the ones we used to be. Our past burned in the flame of self-rebirth, leaving the place for the Now, which has become a bridge to the Future.

Our path lies in the Eternity, and only we ourselves can pass it.

We all feel the breath of Universe inside us, and our hearts beat in rhythm with Hers.

We are both old and young – for each of us is like an innocent child in spirit.

We foresee, not knowing for sure. We rejoice at the beginning of a new deed and feel sadness finishing what has been started. We love to transform believe into the trust. For without trust there can be no love.

We accept this world as we managed to make it. And it will never be in our right to blame someone other for human mistakes.

You may call us as you desire, for your mere words are unable to alter the essence.

No more we have names, yet each of us has kept his essential “I”.

We enter the battle in time and we know not fear.

Curses and blasphemes of the Sleepers are the stones that only strengthen our arms, holding the shield.

Wrath and hatred of theirs is the smoking fire. Yet the tears of the heaven will once extinguish it.

We live, fighting, yet the battle is not our final goal. For it is transient.

We are so different, but in this battle, each of us is a warrior. And each holds his unique weapon.

Weapon of yours is able to destroy you whole, yet weapon of ours is greater.

It changes minds. It alters hearts. It transforms ones struck by it forever.

For this weapon is a weapon of spirit. Nothing in the world is comparable with it.

Our enemy is strong, for he is body-less. That is why we are given this weapon.

We fight desperately for we know no death. The one who was given the Blade Of Spirit has already died before.

We knew not the timing but were intended. We knew not ourselves but were called for. The time will come – we’ll be recognized. For great the battle is.

Rejected ones will join our ranks. Enlightened ones will join our ranks. The Newborn ones will join our ranks. For great the battle is.

The heavens cry at humankind’s blindness, for even they have feelings. Yet there is always a dawn coming to replace the night.

The time is rushing forward desperately, changing the world in a single vortex. And we are at the forefront of it.

Always we are with you, for we do love this world.

So say We – warriors of the New Age.

*2010-05-25*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Best*

# Thought

Thought... surprisingly amusing entity! It's true nature still remains unresolved, despite all the praising of crowds of biologists, psychologists, zoologists, and the rest, and the like. We only think that we do think right – but who truly gave us such thoughts? We ourselves... Are you so sure?

What inconsistent to each other thoughts we manage to experience during even one day! Here we love something – and a few minutes after we are almost ready to start hating it. Here we think of the person something, and a short time after our thoughts lead us to completely opposite conclusions. Here it seems to us that we have learned and understood some concept – yet time inevitably proves to us time and again that these thoughts of our own knowledge were very untimely and not elegant. Who are we then if we are even unable to take control over our thoughts. What a surprising doublethink do we suffer from?

Did you ever reflect on why do these or those thoughts came up to your mind, and in what condition of your spirit do they make that surprising break? Just observe! Here you are grieving, feeling sad and lonely – it seems as if the whole world turned away from you to itself, having forgotten that you are the same inseparable part of it. You were abandoned by your darling, or there was a conflict on work, or you quarreled with somebody or took offense at something. Life is painted to you in gray and black colors, boring and ordinary-looking, people seem like pity egoists, and the meaning of life which you still remembered when have just arrived into this world, inevitably starts escaping from your souls. What kind of thoughts do you experience during these moments? Oh, I better not remind you.

Here you are enamored and joyful. The sun shines on the street, birds do sing – and you desire to soar high in the heavens together with them and sing in joy! It seems as if every passerby you meet smiles to you and shares your happiness – most probably, somewhere in the heart of his soul he is just as happy as you are now. You would like to embrace people and thank the life for its favor towards you, for it has already granted you so many happy and unforgettable moments! After all, do you remember your thoughts during these wondrous moments? Oh, certainly, you perfectly remember it still!

And how did it happen that you have combined, apparently, incompatible? That thoughts of joy are being replaced by those of grief, grief gives a way to tranquility, tranquility turns into inspiration, and inspiration grants happiness? Who in fact operates this colorful kaleidoscope – you? Are you so precisely sure?

Strange thing it is – the thought. Non-physical entity, created by physical by its nature brain... Or maybe he is not its true creator at all? You, certainly, remember how sometimes even in a scientific world such strange events were taking place that couldn't be described by pity probability theory.

Pray tell, for instance, what is a probability that from many millions of people living on this planet two or three from them independently from each other will perform same by its nature scientific discovery, but one of them will publish results for the public slightly earlier than the other?

What in fact is a probability that from an infinite set of thoughts these scientists will give birth to similar ones among themselves? Something truly improbable, yes? But nobody told you that these thoughts were yours, after all, it was you who desired to consider it as such...

And if the thought comes from the outside, like an invisible wave, touching your minds and souls, then who inside you perceives it – mind, heart, soul? And who gave birth to it originally – you or maybe someone other? And what if you are sort of radio, capable to adjust itself on necessary space “waves”? And whom will you then listen to? What will you finally choose – light, darkness, love, hatred, joy, despondency? Whom from unseen friends or enemies will you listen to? To what “frequency” of sounding will you transform your souls? With whom will you co-adjust them and start sounding in unison? Whether you will become a true master of yourselves, having reached purity and clarity of consciousness – or will allow the endless chatter of mind to blind you? Whether will you manage to hear your inner silence once?

You, probably, don't even realize what fatal importance this choice of yours bears. For before there was even action, there was thought, proudly marching forward...

*2012-09-17*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

## About missing princes

One day this will happen.

Your prince on a white horse will once come to you, though you will not hear him. You will not notice him in the human crowd, you will not open your doors when he will knock. You will not recognize him and let him enter, for you have not been waiting. True princes always come unexpectedly.

They need no heralds, announcing their arrival. They need no applause. Shouts of approval of others are not required for them. Even horses are necessary no more.

They always come on their own – with years of hard work and constant challenges they got used to relying only on own powers, they learned to trust themselves. You will not hear them far off on knocking of hoofs of their dashing horses, you will never see them caracoling. They have left white horses far behind of themselves, for without them they can move faster. They have rejected a gilt harness and a well-cared mane, they have refused convenient saddles. Now they always come on their own.

For that reason you will not recognize him, you will pass by.

If they towered proudly over the others on their graceful horses – they would be too appreciable. But they need no applause.

If they raced you on their snow-white horses – you would never forget this short journey together. But they need no dependence on them.

If they have offered you to marry them – you could not refuse. But they want to see others being free.

They denied this greatness. They stepped down from their horses. They became small princes.

And with time they got lost in a big crowd.

That is why you will not recognize him, for you have not known him. For you knew only big princes – too big to once become small ones. That is why you always look above your head, hoping to see big ones and never noticing the small. They became useless.

And still, they come. And still, they continue to knock on the door of yours, knowing that those doors will not be opened – for there is nobody inside to do it anymore.

And still, they hope that one day, lots of years after, you will remember that quiet knock you have heard so long ago, countless days before, but chosen not to open the door, for the unexpected visitor came in thunder-storm and you were too afraid to presoak your feet. Yes, you will remember it once – and smile, having understood, what sort of traveler was on the road.

Seldom, very seldom they come to those who could open the doors – but doors still stand closed – for there is no one to open them from the inside.

They have not died out. They have not vanished.

It is you who have killed your princes.

*2006-07-08*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Chosen*

## Denying self-portrait

I am not passive – I simply chose my goals carefully.

I am not a zealot – I believe in the victory of human reason.

I am not romanticist – I simply love life.

I am not a meek creature – it's just useless to shout in a room alone.

I am not lonely – I am simply not part of the crowd.

I am not a liar – I simply do not tell all the truth.

I am not reserved – I am simply not egocentric.

I am not rigid – there are simply times when one needs to be strong.

I am not defenseless – there are simply times when it's required to pretend to be weak.

I am not silly – sometimes it's simply necessary to deny common reason.

I am not uneasy – life simply demands movement.

I am not gloomy – I happen to be similarly “normal” sometimes.

I am not shy – my spirit simply soars too high sometimes.

I am not egoist – it's simply necessary to think about myself sometimes.

I am not a pessimist – sometimes I simply forget to be happy.

I am not a slave – it's simply necessary sometimes to work for others.

I am not an enemy – people simply desire to go for war from time to time.

I am not silent – I simply carefully select words.

I am not cynic – sometimes I simply call things by their proper names.

I am not insensible – sometimes it's simply necessary to be closed from idly curious.

I am not mad – I simply do not always meet other's expectations.

I am not indifferent – not all tears are simply true.

I am not helpless – it's simply pleasantly to go down the stream sometimes.

I am not bored – someone simply does not understand from the first time sometimes.

I am not haughty – simply not everyone is capable to understand my language.

I am not a warrior – it's simply necessary to battle sometimes.

I am not a hero – the times simply demand so.

*2008-06-29*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Chosen*

# Crime and punishment

I will return to you again, and it shall be very soon. Much sooner than many would like it to happen. I will come to you as unexpectedly as unexpectedly came and has come again he, who is so much greater than I am. He has truly come again.

If you haven't heard even Him – what gives me hope that you will hear all of us, taken and united together, now? And yet I still hope... And yet I am again with you – for the hope does not leave me, that having passed through all hearth of deprivations and sufferings, you will one day smile to the former difficulties of your life and sing praise to the Light.

Ask you, I shall – why have you deformed words of mine with fabrications of your own? Why have you prevented them to flow to the most undercover corners of human's soul? Why did you force the children to learn thoughtlessly the words of my heart – whether they have no hearts of their own? Or am I truly incapable to transfer its warmth to them, searching, without distortions of your minds?

Ask you, I shall, if you have really experienced every obstacle, given to me by the life of my own. And if not – who gave you the right to judge on behalf of mine? Our tasks are difficult, but on the aspiration and belief of everyone, we are given. Yet someone is a creature, shivering, and others have been given the right to change this world.

Or do you believe that your mind is truly capable to change it? But look, what the cunning and meanness of your minds have already done to you. No need for conjectures of your mind I have – but in souls and hearts of yours I want to see it. And what is heart if not a temple of a soul? Or do you truly think that I am not capable of reading through souls of yours? Perhaps you will deceive me one day, – but how will you deceive the one, standing beside me?

How can you hide from His all-seeing gaze? By having put out your eyes only. How can you stop hearing His voice, given through us? By closing your ears only. How can you not feel His kind touches? By having destroyed your hearts only.

Having a presentiment, I am, how under the sight of mine you will bend the head of yours and the shame, shrouded by fear, will pierce hearts of yours. But is that what I truly desire? No need for your fear I have, and even He has no need for it – but your understanding of own crime is necessary. But your desire for change is necessary. And what is a crime if not your unwillingness to change yourselves? And what is a result of your life if not your own punishment? And what is a true spiritual transformation if not your redemption?

And no more fear will be in the heart of the one, soared to the heavens. And only then you will help God help you. But until you have flown to the skies, remember: all the evils you see around is the crime and the punishment. Your crime and your punishment.

*2010-08-14*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Chosen*

# Child

Yes, I know – you couldn't call your childhood rather happy. Bright, cloudless, joyful. And do many of us can?

Yes, I know – this world is abnormal so greatly, that even normal ones are considered abnormal here, healthy ones are thought of like falling ill, and the majority of deadly sick ones – totally healthy. But the majority is, probably, indeed sick.

It's a very special affliction – callousness. The absence of compassion and true love. The desire to force your child to respect you at any cost – even at the price of his self-respect and tears. The child is not your toy, and no one granted you the right to shape him according to your own image, thus breaking his soul. Who did tell you, that your image is worthy of repeating?

No matter what, but this never stopped you, for you have always, up to the last moment, considered a child just like your property, sort of a personal creation. As if it was you who created his soul and passed his personal way in his sandals! As if you have been borning and dying instead of him over and over again... And how delighted you were at times to laugh at your recently acquired slave!

Here you came from work in a bad mood? No need to worry, for you always have a small child at your disposal, at whom you can always shout, or even beat him, or even hammer to semi-death. After all, he is so small and young – how can he answer you?

Normal relations just aren't glued with your own wife – the woman, to whom you still recently made a declaration of love and promised to be with till the end of the days? Your small child is an excellent tool for your big revenge! Certainly, this new enlisted hostage of your quarrels is still too silly to understand all your genius and all nonsenses of your so-to-call-darling – but after all his opinion and personal feeling bother no one from both of you, right? So what with his almost on lap begging for you to stop quarreling with each other, what with his saying that he doesn't want to see you as such?! Probably, due to this reason, he started losing his sight so fast recently – only not to see you not in yourself? And whether you truly own yourself during these instants of time, or is there is someone another who is playing you like a rag doll?

Feeling yourself a complete nonentity and loser, but trying to make your grieving conscience shut up? Defame your child, crush him, morally humiliate him so that he remembers for the rest of his life who is the true house owner! Having pushed his face into the dirt you will, by all means, feel yourself like on a horse before him, humiliated and offended. So caracole, don't hesitate, what's the big deal?! Eggs don't teach chicken, and apple doesn't fall far from the tree!

Your child dares to object you, and even to be insolent? That means that he must have forgotten of what a real flogging is! Take a belt and beat him so great that his back becomes covered by blisters, like from burns! And let him get out and think out a justification at school for himself of what has recently occurred to his weak body.

Your child fails to achieve something? Abuse him immensely for his impassable laziness and dullness, for at least that way he will learn to be afraid of you – and thus respect. Let all in the neighborhood, both old and young, know how bad is your child – and with what a great force you, his careful father, tries to make at least a small resemblance of a man out of him. It’s such a wonderful way to make others start respecting you for your tremendous patience and an enormous amount of educational work!

You knew no such thing as happy childhood – so let your child doesn’t experience it as well. Revenge the parents in the person of the child, state everything you think of them, and even more! After all, you are “normal” – and do normal ones can really recover?

You couldn’t call your childhood rather happy. For this particular reason, you make all the efforts to make your child never feel a different way. For, after all, does anyone deserve to be happier than you?

This is a very fragile being – the child. And how easy it is at times to break and cripple his soul and ruin his fate! But let each and every one acting like that never forget that it’s such a special affliction – callousness. For when you dispose of own heart by your free will – you cease to live on...

*2012-11-12*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Chosen*

# Accident

And so you are reading these lines... an accident? And how many there were at all in your life?

Here you were born absolutely casually... Your mum somehow accidentally happened to meet your father, and thus they have decided to give birth to a child – too spontaneously and casually, as you might have guessed. Don't you accidentally remember how all this once began?

You have casually arrived in school, accidentally graduated from the institute... Your life was full of accidents totally ridiculous and even inconceivable and not predictable beforehand at times. Take, for example, this happy – casual? – coincidence when you have met your future girlfriend one early spring morning on the crossroads of two pathways when each of you was slowly moving somewhere by the street. You lost yourself in contemplation of her and practically haven't noticed how someone has accidentally left a cover of an opened manhole directly in your way... And then she along with other men helped to pull you out of this fetid hole. This was such an unusual acquaintance... Subsequently, it has appeared that both of you worked for several years in different departments of the very same company, yet have never before met each other on a work basis... strange, huh? And then you – well, certainly, accidentally, – started writing her verses, giving flowers and made a marry proposition once.

And once – do you remember? – in a fierce winter day, you have completely quarreled with your parents and was thinking of abandoning your home. Was aimlessly wandering city streets under roofs of buildings, and giant icicle has fallen just a pair of meters before you, haven't hurt you by some sort of a miracle... another accident? And for how many times did you happen to avoid similar deadly dangers subsequently? One after another – and all totally casually...

And for how many times did you accidentally have in your possession a thing, necessary for others; a remarkable and useful idea came to a mind all of a sudden; you appeared to be exactly in a proper place and in due time? And how many times your acquaintances and friends appeared to be near you so timely? Accidentally you managed to find new worthy and familiar friends... Haven't you accidentally forgotten all that?

And what about this sky, funny cloudlet-lambs, this sun caressing your skin, this wind pulling out your hair, these snowflakes slowly falling on your tongue... does all this happen exclusively by accidents as well? Let's take at least these mentioned snowflakes – did you ever see their beauty? With what probability are molecules of water, freezing, capable to constantly create such freakish and surprising forms? And have you had a chance to behold clouds similar to animals or, say, a heart in form? And did it happen that a recently cloudy sky near you suddenly cleared itself from clouds and sunrays started shining through formed gleam – shortly after your inner mood improved before the event?

Or do you still consider these entire thing happening casually and accidentally? Or perhaps you still have no knowledge of something vital and most important about this world you live in?

You happened to have stayed in a gloomy condition of spirit for a long time once, were seriously depressed and, as a consequence, absolutely accidentally became ill. Pains of absolutely illogical nature disturbed you – either your heart starts tearing itself apart, or liver begins to moan, or a head decides to start cracking from the inside. Medics diagnosed general nervous over fatigue of an organism and advised to lie in bed for longer periods – but you surely have known that the true reason of the illness lies elsewhere. You started to look through comedy films from boredom one after another – and in a couple of days has sharply gone on the amendment, and in a week was like a newcomer. An accident?

You casually were angry with people – and fell in pools the very next moment. Casually took offense and filled your heart with hate – and almost instantly went ill. Accidentally helped someone – and wonderfully through very different circumstances life aided you in reply...

Accident, accident, accident... how many there were at all in your life? And what is, according to theorists from a science, your life if not a chain of accidental events and circumstances? But in that case... the entire Universe, and this galaxy, and this very planet, and billions living on it... are sort of an accident as well? Or perhaps you still know too little of the world you still live in?

And here and now you accidentally keep reading this casual text. Or... maybe accidents have never existed at all?

*2011-08-18*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

# Mass-media!

Mass-media!

And that's – almost an order. Almost a command not subject for disobeying, which internal muck becomes obvious only after the N-th telecast.

Mass-media! It's the order to cease thinking, stop trying to comprehend vital life transformations, occurring around you, the order to live some other's life, burning invaluable moments of time in a fire chamber of senseless and ruthless monologues with a screen of your unsurpassed TV – unsurpassed in the art of fooling the soul of human.

Mass-media! And here you are, sitting on a sofa after a next, certainly, heavy working day, incorporating all those fetid streams of information, which media “gods” have decided to present you this time as a sort of universal spiritual breakfast, dinner, and supper. And where would you be nowadays without their immense generosity, what would you know, of what could you have a talk with your fellow workers?

Mass-media! And here you are living in a state of constant fear. Fear to go out of doors when there are so many gangsters, murders and rage swirling around. Fear to give birth to children, because – well, certainly! – you would prefer to “enjoy life to the full”, and the new foreign car stands in the list of your priorities so above your own son. Fear to truly love someone, having no dread of the possible lawsuits. Fear to assist another because “by the good affairs...”, and present earth law doesn't encourage initiative. Fear to oppose tyranny of the chief, because if you dare to delay a payment under the credit at least once during nearest decades – you can cease to remain even the conditional proprietor of the apartment in a mortgage that you have taken because “habitation is a profitable business”, and due to extreme human greed can only rise in prices. Fear to become the one not favorable and fashionable, fear to return to you bright, original and pure...

Mass-media! And the next saving stressful injection has already started spreading in your organism.

Mass-media! And whether it's really necessary to think and argue on something when it has been already done for your sake? Food of facts is digested, fertilized by chemicals of expert opinions, structured, classified, prepared and packed into a convenient television box, from which evil spirits of modern times will teach you of what is good, favorable and expedient – in compliance with their own vision. And do you really need yours?

Mass-media! Truly, that's so pleasant – to relax in front of your TV's screen, having forgotten of a huge bag of stones of your nonsenses, which you have been dragging for all day long on a back, feeling no desire to get rid of, for something greater than feeding on these media is required for that purpose? It gives your torments a short time-break – to see how someone another is suffering even more. Nice spiritual antibiotic, yeah?

Mass-media! It's practically a diagnosis.

Mass-media! And here you are climbing a fake Olympus, which has conveniently sunk in a swamp, in a hope to be shown in other same boxes. For some unknown reason, it seems to you as a greatly significant and important moment of your life – probably to have yet another topic for yet next chit-chat with your fellow workers? Are you completely sure in your desire to get into a crate ahead of time – and in which one, exactly?

Mass-media! A perfect tool to create heroes from mediocrities and to mediate heroes.

Mass-media! The more, the better, yes? So that you will totally lack time to think of something really significant, to make something truly valuable... Perhaps, a convenient justification of own unwillingness to look widely and deeply? Socially legalized possibility to remain an informational consumer, without doing a single step for own growth.

Mass-media! A drug. A way of rejecting yourself, a way to flee from a reality, which you are too lazy to alter.

Mass-media know what they are doing. Do you?

*2012-02-28*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

# Fear

“B-o-o-o-o! W-o-o-o-o!” something hooted in a distance.

“Who is crying over there?” the Man was disturbed.

“It’s me – Fear!” answered the Fear. “And I am not crying at all, but frightening instead. Be afraid of me!”

“What for?” the Man was surprised.

“You are obliged to! Everyone is afraid, and so will you! It’s simply a matter of time.”

“Somehow I cannot see you...” the Man doubted.

“For certain!” guffawed the Fear. “That’s because most important things are invisible! B-o-o-o-o!”

“And how do you look like then, Fear?” the Man was curious.

“I have many forms!” proudly howled the Fear. “I happen to be truly wild and horrific, I can become stupefying as well, capable to remain reserved and careful so that people don’t understand that it’s still me. I am the F-e-a-r! Are you terrified?!”

“Don’t know for certain,” the Man admitted honestly. “Still didn’t taste it fully.”

“You must be truly stupid!” the Fear was annoyed. “That’s always being the case with you, idiots. You are even incapable to fully understand and experience the essence of fear. Too little brains, perhaps? Didn’t parents teach you to be afraid of something in childhood?”

“Parents told me that to be afraid of nonsenses is a nonsense!” the Man honestly admitted.

“You... coward!” hissed the Fear. “You are all cowards, one way or another! It’s possible to find cracks in each house... I will get through it and take over... b-o-o-o-o! Tell me,” the Fear suddenly changed the tone, “do you desire... power?”

“What’s the reason?” the Man was surprised. “Only the headache comes out of it.”

“Too bad!” spat the Fear. “I won’t be able to control you through it then.”

“I am not afraid of getting power,” smiled the Man. “I simply don’t need it.”

“Not to get, you clodhopper, but to lose! You all aren’t afraid to get something, especially from what is coming in your hands by itself willingly, but to lose it all afterward...”

“To be afraid to lose something? What exactly?”

“O-o-o-o... some many things, so many illusions!” laughed the Fear. “Riches, authorities, prestige, comfort, faith, love!”

“One cannot be stripped of love and faith,” firmly told the Man, “for they are living inside of us!”

“Certainly, certainly!” the Fear calmed him down. “You are probably one of the clever ones which I have encountered today. But would you know how many people are afraid of losing what they call as ‘love’. Pure physiology!” the Fear continued guffawing. “If you would only know how many of them we together with my friend Offense have already sent straight to the Other World recently due to that very ‘non-mutual love’... you wouldn’t smile with that silly smile of yours any longer. B-o-o-o! W-o-o-o! F-o-o-o!”

“You, bastard!” shouted the Man. “For long I have had a feeling that deeds of yours are dark!”

“And you haven’t seen deeds of mine!” the Fear interrupted him sharply. “So don’t you judge, and won’t be judged, as they say! Always do I act with your, human hands. So the responsibility lays down on you as well. I mean on these clever ones who have come under my influence, and not such simpletons as you who even cannot be frightened normally!”

“You put dread first and foremost into minds of clever people?” the Man was shocked.

“They are my most delicious prey!” confirmed the Fear. “Almost being afraid to lose their prestige and illusion of own pansophy. Such arrogant and pretty ones, huh-huh!” the Fear was laughing hysterically.

“And whom else do you usually attack?”

“Obedient masses, of course!”

“People?”

“No, masses! When a crowd is being overwhelmed by panic, wild, all-consuming Fear, it ceases to be people and becomes a mass instead! For these very crowds, we together with my sister Cruelty have specially created men similar to these ‘leaders of the people’ of yours.”

“To keep all people in awe through these masters?”

“And you turn out to be not as stupid as I suggested at first, mortal one!” the Fear added. “But one man is not a man. We demanded a system of constant reproduction of my emanations,” the Fear continued talking profusely. “It was required for people themselves to become sources of mine, so they constantly transfer me from souls of one to another, thus never allowing to wither and die... only that way I will truly become immortal! I need to be indoctrinated at schools, and it’s even better if parents would give me to their children from their very birth as if I was some sort of treasure – that way I can accommodate myself in vulnerable children’s soul, and under the influence of everything made by you, calling yourself as adults, I would never leave them!”

“So, you are controlling people through fear before unjust earth leaders?”

“Through that as well!” the Fear agreed. “But here I am greatly aided by my friend Laziness and born by us Indifference and Apathy.”

“Were earth tsars really that bad?”

“And have there been many from their kind who could be... loved?” the Fear grinned significantly, yet stopped short on the last word.

“The one who is afraid is the one who respects?”

“Oh, and now you are talking my language! I respect you, though not feel fear!” the Fear replied flatteringly. “By the way, I personally invented this sentence, and all sorts of morons further take it out for fucksiom... such pretties!”

“The fucksiom?”

“Yes, false knowledge! Almost all your knowledge is false! In many respects thanks to me, by the way. The truth is never born out of fear, it is the death for it that’s very near!” groaned the Fear, yet stopped short for the second time.

“And how about faith?”

“Hope, love... stop spitting these nasty words into me, fleshy one!” hissed the Fear. “Love, based on fear is a physiology, hope based on fear is discontent, faith based on fear is a religion!”

“So it was you who have deformed the faith, bastard?!”

“No, it was still you, people! Your so-called ‘Holy Fathers’, churchmen, your bloody inquisitors of all the planet! How masterfully did I teach you through them to be afraid of God, and thus never start to... love Him,” and the Fear once again stopped short on the last word. “Do you believe that these faithful ones are being driven by true faith? No, it’s I and I alone who is driving them, all these men are my wards, my slaves, my pawns! I have convinced them that without me their belief is worthless, and gave them a perfect way to escape torments of my enemy Conscience through all sorts of secret passages like atonement of sins for gold, created by my dark adherents... all of this is my creation, man! Do you understand now of who is secretly controlling the entire world?!” the Fear was hissing and spitting all over the place from own overexcitation.

“Your power won’t last for long here, Fear!”

“Oh, we shall see about it!” it laughed loudly in reply. “We shall watch it, like these very horror movies, so perfectly filling souls of men with me! And how pleasant it is to behold how these scared ones start transferring me further on one to another as in on relay... masses, that’s the word!”

“We shall see about it,” firmly said the Man. “We shall write about you!”

“N-n-n-n-o-o-o!” giggled the Fear. “It’s we who will write about you... about all of you! We will distort everything, so that other people will be even afraid to look in your direction, and not only in yours. I didn’t bring up so many journalistic geeks and bastards on television and in the press in vain, after all. This is my territory, zone of eternal lie and fear!”

“You cannot be immortal forever. You aren’t eternal!”

“It’s you who aren’t eternal!” parried the Fear. “Fear of death is my most powerful trump! The man is mortal by his very nature... a checkmate!”

“We didn’t die, but changed.”

“S-i-l-e-n-c-e!” screamed the Fear. “Don’t even dare to repeat words of Holy Pavel the Apostol here! I cannot tolerate them – they don’t allow me to inspire fear before death into the minds of men! And after all, that’s what had to force them to plunge themselves into all sorts of earthly pleasures, without ever thinking of the upcoming consequences...”

“That’s why Christian churchmen distorted the essence of things so greatly...”

“S-i-i-i-l-l-l-e-e-n-n-n-c-c-c-e-e!” the Fear couldn’t stop shouting. “You are not the one to expose me!”

“It’s you who should keep silence instead!” a mighty and strong voice came somewhere from above, forcing Fear to shrivel.

With edges of his numerous eyes Fear managed to notice how Love and Courage were descending from above to the human as if two heavenly Angels on their snow-white wings. The Light, radiated by them, was reaching Fear and melting it, precisely like drawn butter. Literally, in some instants of time, only a small pitiful puddle remained from it, and soon it evaporated as well.

“Checkmate!” smiled the Courage.

“And that will happen to each and every fear, if we are nearby!” shined the Love.

*2013-02-15*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Theory

No, sir, this is absolutely intolerable! What sort of absurd can be produced by the ignorant human mind of apparently reasonable being! Not only do you deny all canons and nonsenses of a scientific dirty trick, but in so-called free reflections you are almost ready to come to the true, I would say, heresies. This is truly improbable nonsense! Ignorant, I repeat, contradicting all axioms and theorems of our dirty trick, harmful for human consciousness nonsense. How defiantly and daringly did you decide to break off our remarkable, ideal, not having a single contradiction and dirty trick fine Theory, which we have been planting for many centuries here and there in various textbooks so that ones who have got acquainted with that had no other opportunity but to think in a predefined direction and as a result cannot do anything better but to express their most sincere respect to us as pioneers of Truth! The Truth as we see it – most advanced scientists of our century and creators of the best possible scientific dirty trick!

Where have you seen, oh my clueless and moderately stupid sir, elephants having exactly four feet, aye? This contradicts all our scientific Theory Of Five Legs, which is being shared by most advanced scientists of last and future centuries, not to speak of the present times!

Well, certainly, sir, we have no sufficient bases for absolute confidence in our Theory, which weight is defined not by degree of its compliance with objective reality, but rather by a number of scientific masters who are willing for the sake of their own benefit to share with us these views, but we can certainly speak of ninety-nine percent of compliance on the basis of theoretical conclusions only!

Yes, sir, this is indeed true – not a single scientific star, developing the Theory Of Five Legs, have even seen a single elephant in his life, but all in all this didn't prevent them from constructing such an elegant and consistent scheme – and all sorts of exceptions, as it usually goes in our environment, just confirm the basic rule. In any case, this is a very convenient basis for our self-justification in cases of total disagreements of our theories with this sometimes most indigestible for our fine minds vile reality.

The fact that all elephants are able to fly, unlike human beings, is also considered as being indisputable – you can read about this in infamous scientific work entitled “About Elephants Ears And Their Convergent-Divergent-Implicit-Unclear Link With Artificial Conditions Of Creation Of Air Streams Formed In A Habitat Environment By Invasive-Suggestive-Periodic-Rotary-Swinging Movements Counterclockwise During Moments Of Staying Of Specified Beings In A State Of Internal Catharsis, Which Expresses Itself In...”, which only name is already capable to inspire true respect in any admirer of our true scientific dirty trick!

We, as true experts of our business, flatly refuse to believe in very possibility of absence of the fifth foot in elephants, because it would contradict not their ability of correct and effective movement, but rather the reduction of all put forward and injected by us in human consciousness scientific theories, and to our positions as dear and respected members of this society as well.

Therefore, your so-called scientific work will be sent to essential completion according to your, well, very voluntary and compulsory consent.

We will perform a transformation and bringing of the experimental data obtained by you under our own scientific theories, and if the necessity arises we will carry out retouching of all photos of elephants made by you during your journey by an artificial painting of fifth foot on them. Most certainly, we will put your initials as the founder of yet next confirmation of our Theory Of Five Legs somewhere on the thousand page, after all, initials of our dear masters, who have put so many time and forces into the business of developing of our scientific dirty trick. In case of your disagreement, we will be compelled to recognize you as the charlatan and speculator who is confusing human minds and to expose you in the worst possible light which can be produced by our collective imp-consciousness.

Your dunno want that? Well, that's your right. You simply have no idea of the power of pack and our great collective scientific dirty trick! Yes, free will to free minds. As they say, may your road lead you directly into the clutches of Truth! And don't you forget to take the slippers, sir!

*2013-01-26*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Chosen*

## Point of view

“Excuse me, sir, do I correctly understand your claim that we all live under some surprising influence of two opposite and totally alien to us metaphysical powers, who are capable to affect our states of mind, thoughts, health and who were actually known to mankind since ancient centuries, yet knowledge of them has been transformed into something like children’s fairy tale and ridiculous myth? I wonder – whether all of this is rather a product of your sick imagination and abnormal fantasy than a real-life state of affairs? I, thanks to my scientific background, is being more inclined to the second option because I don’t see even a single reason of why your so beloved Divine would manifest itself in our infinitely troublesome world.”

“The best way for demons to disappear from human sight is to convince them that demons never existed, right?”

“Would you please stop overstepping borders of what is normal and reasonable!”

“Earth mankind trespassed them a very long time ago. But this was one of the tactics of these forces of darkness – it’s possible to convince people that they don’t exist in one easy way: to create a certain social phenomenon, way of life or way of thinking, if you will, which would against own right take impudence to claim that it and only it has a monopoly for truth and is capable to lead masses of humans into general prosperity.”

“I believed that you were a totally non-religious individual.”

“And I am speaking about science now. We will address religion later on.”

“Is that so? And how did science displeased you? Only thanks to its efforts today we all have so much.”

“Nuclear and other weapons, nature which is ruined by wastes along with people dying of diseases in their reinforced concrete cages, right? So, they had to create such a social phenomenon, “new religion of mind”, if you will, together with its devoted “apostles” and send it by a path extremely rational, materialistically practical, torn off and isolated voluntarily from everything that is “superfluous” and spiritual – not such a bad practice, so that people, having once started praying to their newborn “god”, haven’t managed to get into inner sanctum – field of human spirit, monopoly for “saving” which so-called religions ones have already taken. Whether not, for this reason, official science has been trying to play dirty for many years – and tries to hide that simple and obvious for impartial observers fact that, having chosen false path earlier, nowadays it self-willingly came into an expected dead end and is standing behind a blank wall? And to keep claiming that it’s just the end of all major discoveries and triumph of the human mind instead of a blank wall – is the wildest nonsense.”

“And what do you suggest for the scientific community to do?”

“You can try to make a break in this wall with your forehead. Will make a service for a greater science that way like so many have done before you, having voluntarily given their live bodies for scientific experiments or having given dead ones against their will for the same purpose.”

“Still desire to throw jokes at me, sir? Science, as we all know, requires victims.”

“Beauty, as we all know, needs them too. The consequence of which is utter ugliness.”

“Do you believe religion is much more attractive than science?”

“What became of modern religion – by no means. Parasitizing on aspirations of the human spirit to the Divine and primitivization of belief, mostly. Yet everyone walks where he prefers.”

“Even if we assume that modern science is being unable to discover something invisible and inaccessible to it, including to prove the very existence of mentioned metaphysical powers from a scientific point of view...”

“‘From a scientific point of view sounds quite reasonably’. For it’s still only a small point which should make a long journey to become a line...”

“...Whether modern religion can brag of this knowledge at least?”

“Modern religion turned them into something like a myth, and idolaters often don’t have the slightest idea of what important things are mentioned in still undistorted by them texts. Look, for example, on some of the icons painting Christ – and you shall see white wings behind his back. He is painted as the Angel who is leading armies of others, and for a due reason. As well as not accidental still remained prayers to Guardian Angels, as well as names of Archangels and some other important things. Those people who are filled with the poison of materialistic science aren’t usually capable to understand that these facts reflect real-life reality more than a thousand and one theory, recognized in the scientific world as no less than “laws” of nature. And if you dare to tell modern religious followers about live Angels – many of them will consider you as mentally unstable.”

“I have never seen any mentioned Angels in my entire life!”

“...But that’s a question of the point which you choose to view it, right?”

“All of this is yet another religious myth!”

“As well as your own thoughts. Forgive me, I wanted to say – their thoughts. They are not yours, right?”

“What do you mean by “not mine”? I keep thinking and, therefore, existing.”

“This statement doesn’t fully reflect objective reality, though not in that case. Take a look at your chaotically thinking mind – are you totally sure that it’s you who is controlling it? You can’t even make it go silent! Waves of incoming thoughts are jumping as if some stranger is pushing a handle of “thoughts radio” from one angle to another.”

“Would you like to tell me that thoughts can be indoctrinated?”

“Well, now finally you seem to start comprehending of what powers sent “ingenious” scientific ideas for the invention of, say, different types of weapons. As well as, say, pharmaceutical drugs. As well as many of so-called “memes”, starting from “live once, care not” and ending with “money doesn’t smell”. However, you can probably understand now what powers spoke through prophets, for instance.

But whom people were listening to? The systematic extermination of mankind is being made with its own hands.”

“Well, the reduction of the planet’s population only promotes more rational distribution of natural resources among survived.”

“Hoping to be among them? I am afraid that the preservation of your particular life is not in the list of priority tasks for dark powers. As well as the preservation of entire earth mankind.”

“Hell with you, stop feeding fairy tales!”

“You just look around. It that a Paradise in your opinion?”

“But not a Hell at all, that’s for certain! Progress is progressing, so to speak. Or do you fondly suggest me to believe that everything you have just told me is pure truth?”

“And this, my dear friend, entirely depends upon the correctness of your point of view...”

2013-02-02

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

## You came too late

*Yet I don't want to die, my friend*

*In clocks of life, there is still sand,*

*There is no way for saturation*

*For I do thirst for inspiration.*

Yes, I know – time cannot be turned back. Yes, I know – mistakes of the past cannot be reversed. Yes, I know – how I was wrong for all my life and became truly right only right now. I love you how I did not love anyone in this world. And I loved much.

People deceived and betrayed me. They destroyed my illusion of own loneliness for short durations, only to let me feel again, how illusionary were my conceptions of it as of illusion. They loved and hated me simultaneously, for their love is so much as hate. And I loved them even for that. When a painful silence falls upon you like a heavy press, you even start to rejoice to a shout from own pain.

I truly loved you – loved you like no other woman in this immensely dim world. I was sort of entertainment for them – a toy, which they threw away with pleasure the time it bored them, not wishing to understand, that even toy has a living heart. And in this amusing game they, almost like me, tried to escape from comprehension that sometime they too will be left alone with themselves – and along with you.

Perhaps, I love you for that too – that you have always been near me imperceptibly, no matter wherever and whoever I was, in whatever epoch and time my path was forged. You, probably, don't know about it yet, but thereby you also invisibly aided me – helped me not to lose in this false vanity of life. You have appeared to be the truest and devoted of all the women, known to me. You have become your full antithesis for me, actually.

Yes – I see, I feel, how passionately do you desire to turn and face all these big and little ones, stepped over the border of their conscience, how deeply you want to shout to them all, that it's only you, it's only you, my beloved one, have never betrayed and deceived me, that only you always treated me so gently and carefully, as no other living being is ever capable of. For only you know, what is an inescapable heart pain and only you have a cure for it.

But even you were often late.

I was young and full of strength once, and it seemed to me that I could do almost anything – and now it seems that I have sunk into all this almost completely. I hoped for trust and trusted love once – but love disappointed me and thus I ceased to trust them both. I have already done everything I wanted to once, and still need to do something I cannot make ever. You could be with a young me, but time and again you decided to come too late. Or, perchance, have you willingly waited for me?

Nevertheless, we are together at last to become one. Two halves of a single whole, two parts of broken jar, which has already lost too much moisture of life. No one is able to separate us, the only true lovers on this guilty earth, initially intended for each other from each new birth.

I accept you again for you are infinitely many-sided, for each death is always followed by the new birth. Only therefor I accept you – to wash off all pain of the past, and become living once again, for I have been struggling for it for so long already.

Hi, my death. I welcome thee, oh my rebirth!

*2008-09-09*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

# Tail

The Man looked back and became stupefied.

“And who might you be?” he questioned his new acquisition, which has now become visible.

“I am the tail of yours,” proudly answered the Tail.

“How did you manage to grow behind me?” the Man asked in dread.

“I have always been there!” the Tail proudly threw up his tail tip. “It’s simply you who have not been noticing me for all the time up to the current moment,” he added reproachfully. “And I, by the way, have been striding with you since your very birth, not coming off for a single second.”

“But why are you so big?” the Man was embarrassed.

“Because I have gradually grown up to this size myself,” the Tail forked itself as if blurring in a smile. “Thanks to your daily efforts, to let you know that. What wouldn’t one do for nasty people!” and the Tail hit the pavement with its tip so that sparks started flying out of the strike spot. Rare passersby turned back on that sound, but, as if having noticed nothing, indifferently continued their morning swaying to despised work cells.

“What’s that... do they see you?” the Man was surprised.

“Me? No. They don’t even see tails of their own, for the time being.”

“And how did you manage to make yourself visible at once?”

“In... some way. You will learn... a bit later,” the Tail replied evasively.

“And of what use can you be to me, I wonder?” the Man was perplexed.

“Well... I can twist, in a spiral. Sort of beautifully, you know. First I will twist myself all around you, and then h-o-o-o-w turn around sharply – and you will willingly twirl around like a spinning top on one spot, noticing nothing. Well, almost like these beings,” and he pointed with his tip in a direction of passengers, who were diligently pushing one another, trying to stick themselves inside a morning bus. “And, after all, they are people too... normal ones, as they consider themselves, tailless, that’s it,” the Tail argued in a truly philosophical manner. “Can you imagine what sort of surprise is awaiting all of them?” he grinned.

“To learn, that they are – reptiles?” the Man didn’t understand.

“Well, no... to learn that they are normal abnormal ones! Abnormally normal ones. And that each and every one of them possesses a tail. And do you know how large is that tail of some of them? Oh, it’s such a! One can probably surround the entire mountain with it. Lasts and stretches with no start and visible ending. Either constantly beats somebody, or curls under feet of others, so that they stumble about it once.”

“And can you... strike someone with all your forces?” the Man grinned mischievously. “As painful as you can do it!”

“Well, no...” the Tail divided into two parts. “You perfectly manage to achieve this even without my aid. That’s why I have been growing rapidly not on days and on hours, gaining more powers. So that further on I can twist around you more feasibly, like a boa. So that you, naturally, cannot even peep once.”

“Hey, you!” the Man screamed and tried to turn back to grab his Tail, but in a process of own rotation in one place Tail rotated together with the Man so that he didn’t manage to ever catch it.

“No way, my prey!” Tail laughed loudly. “I am like ego, I say!”

“Your price is a penny!” shouted angered Man after a series of unsuccessful attempts to settle accounts with his tail.

“I may worth few pennies, yes, but so are you, prey-in-distress!” Tail continued to roar with laughter, beating out on a pavement new and new rhythms with each opportunity.

“Grab you I will! Chop you I shall!” the Man started crying out with all his forces. Lonely passersby were looking with interest on the odd fellow, and, having hemmed something to themselves, continued moving their own way, where their own tails have been steadily leading them.

“No...” laughed the Tail. “You won’t chop me off that easily. For I am, you know, sort of... transgene. Special. Self-regenerating. You will chop off a slice from me, and I will grow back soon enough as if nothing has ever happened. To burn me don’t try! I am the ego, I am the lie!” the Tail whipped and whipped in ecstasy on a pavement.

“I will better chop you!”

“I will better shop you. Cheap but good!”

“I will bring you to justice, take you by besiege!”

“Trying to use my own tactics, aye?” the Tail grinned. “Well, you can try! The result of struggle is undecided, you know. For I am much like a shadow... become a shadow yourself, and you will see me no longer... just like the others. Only the total darkness will conceal me from prying eyes...”

“Sun!” exclaimed the Man. “You will be burned by the sun! So that you won’t ever grow!”

“Guessed that yourself, huh?” the Tail grinned again. “But, alas, I am afraid that it’s already too late for you. Better turn back and see!” he guffawed.

There was a truck moving directly towards the man at a full speed. Somehow oddly, dancing on a tip of his own tail, a man came to the carriageway without noticing. The truck was rushing directly towards him with incredible speed, and it was no longer possible to evade the collision. Tail twisted around the man precisely like a boa, giving no chances to move. “Sun!” the Man tried to shout, but the Tail clamped his mouth.

“Do you understand now in what moment they will finally see me?” the Tail silently whispered to the Man.

*2013-02-15*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Whisper

“Sh-sh-sh-sh. N-n-o-o-i-i-s-s-e-e!”

“Stand where you are!” the Warrior was disturbed. “Name yourself!”

“I am the W-h-i-i-s-s-p-p-e-e-r-r!” whispered the mind. “Whisper of mind – n-n-o-o-i-i-s-s-e-e!”

“I know no such ones!”

“Sh-sh-sh-sh! Let me pass!”

“Unknown ones are not allowed here!”

“And what if I a-a-s-s-k-k you?”

“To whom are you going?” questioned the Warrior.

“To you,” answered the Whisper.

“To me? What for?”

“To distu-r-r-b-b you, of course!” rustled the Whisper. “Noise, prank... such a little thing!”

“No pranking over here!”

“No-n-n-s-s-e-e-n-n-s-s-e-e! I will whisper to you of the most important things!” promised the Whisper. “About what is most necessary, what is most valuable! You will appreciate me for my mind. N-n-o-o-i-i-s-s-e-e!”

“About what, for instance?” the Warrior inquired skeptically.

“About everything you de-s-s-i-i-r-r-e-e! I can argue about everything, I feel no fatigue! I am an invaluable partner! I will lead you as far as you ever want it!”

“You don’t experience fatigue?”

“I whisper, and whisper, and whisper... about this, about that... about all imaginable things! People love me – I give them food for their minds. To chew – yet not to do! I am persistent, very insisting... very convincing. I lead many, lots of people... where they belong. Do you want me to... lead you there as well?”

“Where are you calling me to go?”

“Into my... domain. Whisper of mind... the darkness of reason! Infinite, senseless, unstoppable process... perfectly thrown out time. I know all your most secret wh-i-i-s-s-h-h-e-e-s-s... I can wh-i-i-s-s-p-p-e-e-r-r to you how to make them come true! You only need to li-s-s-t-t-e-e-n-n to me attentively!”

“You are trying to hide away something, Whisper!”

“Do you desire... power? Riches? Fame? Comfort and dolce vita? I have already helped so many to carry out their most innocent... wh-i-i-s-s-h-h-e-e-s-s! Small p-p-r-r-a-a-n-n-k-k!”

“It’s not a prank at all...”

“Small thing! Everything begins with small things... once there were only pranks. But I know no such thing as stopping... I desire more, and more, and more... of everything!”

“It’s that too much for you?”

“There is never too much of me... there is either I or despised Silence! No silence! Wh-i-i-s-s-p-p-e-e-r-r!”

“Trying to distract me from duties?”

“And from thoughts... necessary thoughts... clear thoughts. I keep whispering to men constantly, I don’t allow them to think clearly. I disturb nasty feelings inside them so that these th-o-o-u-u-g-g-h-h-t-t-s-s never reach their minds. There is no way for clear thoughts in unclear feelings... Wh-i-i-s-s-p-p-e-e-r-r!”

“You hiss almost like a snake!”

“I creep, I crawl, I lure inside. Not at once, not instantly... I find cracks and holes, locate openings. I am very resourceful, very flexible. And then I bite... my poison is extremely dangerous. Suspiciousness – that’s my shelter from clear thoughts!”

“It turns out that you are a viper!”

“Muck... is my joy. Noise... subordinates mind. People consider me important... useful, their friend. For the time being... until I sting. Sh-sh-sh-sh! I am capable of poisoning even the best of feelings... except for the strongest ones.”

“It means that intellectual whisper is a darkener of reason!”

“Clear thoughts... are short-term. Short living. They come and go, like guests. And I am... a permanent resident of your minds. Sh-sh-sh-sh! If only it will not be transformed by hated S-s-i-i-l-l-e-e-n-n-c-c-e-e!”

“There can’t be noise in a silence!”

“But you aren’t able... to be in s-s-i-i-l-l-e-e-n-n-c-c-e-e. They... didn’t teach you in school, huh! Therefore, I... will undermine your good feelings... will whisper without ceasing... and you will believe once... so many of you have already believed me... believed to mind, not heart! Believed some Whisper! Sh-sh-sh-sh!”

“Go away from me, you viper!”

“N-n-o-o! I will just creep up... B-b-i-i-t-t-e-e! You will become mine! Sh-sh-sh-sh! Sh-sh-sh-sh! W-w... w-w-a-a-t-t that?! Where did these warriors come from?! Clear thoughts?! You... were alone! How... could you? You are... one of them? They are... your protection? N...no!”

“Somewhat talkative sort of Whispers is being encountered as of lately,” smiled Warrior – Clear Thought, wiping out the edge of his sword. “Hiss without stopping! Well, brothers,” he addressed colleagues standing behind him, “whose else mind are we going to visit today?”

*2011-02-15*

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

# Extremism

Let's try to imagine how one of the high-profile political actions of the past centuries might look like in present times, being covered by a number of modern mass media companies.

## **Petrashevsky case in the eyes of modern media**

### **Ironic sketch**

*All names are non-fictitious, coincidences can be random, all meanings are edifying by definition.*

### **A plot of the day**

Greetings, dear viewers!

We are pleased to inform you that today there was a trial in the case of Petrashevsky's terrorist group. As our viewers should remember, quite recently thanks to the agent of the special services I.P. Liprandi, who was inducted into this terrorist group, security officers were able to determine the extremist and subversive nature of the activities of this underground organization and after that all ordinary members of this community, including Sergey Durov, Alexander Palm, Alexey Plesheev, Fyodor Dostoevsky, were detained as part of the interception operation.

A number of other so-called cultural and art figures are also under suspicion, including M. E. Saltykov-Schedrin, N. G. Chernyshevsky, V. G. Belinsky and A. Maykov. In total, about forty men were arrested during this special operation.

It should be noted that according to the report of the department conducting this operation, suspected people did not provide any armed resistance to the law, calm and order enforcement authorities – despite the fact that according to Liprandi's report they were considered as dangerous and well-armed criminals.

Suspects are charged with the distribution of extremist materials, including the so-called "Letter of Belinsky to Gogol" as well as the development of utopian by definition ideas of French philosophers – including those of socialism, social equality and brotherhood, social justice and a number of others, which are recognized as undermining our state's foundations and dogmas, as well as inciting intra-national discord on an inter-class basis.

A number of statements made by these figures against the ruling party and the President of our country are blatantly defamatory. A number of philosophical remarks, made by some of them, may also be interpreted as calls for the violent overthrow of the existing state system.

It should also be noted that illegal drugs were found in the possession of several members of this gang group during operational searches. Suspects claimed that these drugs were planted by law enforcement agencies instead – a claim with no actual basis, most certainly.

At present, all seized extremist literature has been confiscated and is subject to extermination as being strongly destructive to the consciousness of the citizens of our country.

All the law-abiding citizens of the country are angered by such lousy antics of these under-philosophers. The Orthodox Church, as well as the majority of the patriotic public unitedly condemned this terrorist organization and demanded that the accused ones be punished to the full extent of the law.

According to the court's decision, that is how it happened today. In view of the severity of the committed crime and the absence of any mitigating circumstances, the supreme court sentenced twenty-one members of this organization to capital punishment – the deprivation of life through execution. This sentence will be carried out in the upcoming days. We invite everyone to attend this amazing and heart-touching performance!

Thank you, these were all major political news for today. And now, talking about the weather...

*2012-09-21*

*Genre: Report*

*Category: Chosen*

## I am always alone

“Please forgive me, for I cannot tell you of it. We simply must part our ways. It’s everything you need to know.”

“But I do not understand... have I caused some harm to you? I loved you and still do love.”

“Do not say it like so, it only makes things worse.”

“But why? Why should we part with each other?”

“I have another man. I do not love you.”

\* \* \*

“Ye, driveller, what’s the fuck do I need you for? Go and sing your serenades to some pensive sixteen-year-old silly girlie! You are just not the man for ye cannot financially support your girl! And I have already seen such ones in my life – and trust me, they simply don’t survive. The law of natural selection, right? And you are – the evolutionary flaw. Either you stop bringing some poetic nonsense and show me real money, or we are parting our ways today!”

“We are parting our ways.”

\* \* \*

“No, not like so. No, no that way. So... like so... more... more... Oh... how nice! More... here... like that. With you... it’s so... so good with you... so good for me.”

“I... I have become attached to you... I don’t know, how... how I will live alone for now...”

“Hey, let’s not start that... ok? Don’t think you can buy me with your words. You... know the terms.”

“I know... I know it all. Sometimes it seems to me that I... know too much. The price... the price is still the same?”

“Yes, the same. And let us agree that it will be currency from now on, instead of barter. We are not living in the Stone Age, are we?”

\* \* \*

“And do these four years together, do they really mean nothing to you?”

She has approached me, twisted her hands around my neck, and steadfastly and sadly has looked in my eyes.

“They mean everything for me. These were the best ones in my entire life, whether you believe it or not. You have given me so much... I have never met a man like you before... and probably will never meet anymore... Will live like... live like... all normal people...”

Her eyes filled with tears. I have embraced her and pushed to myself.

“Let us not leave each other, ok? After all, it’s what we wanted... to be together for all our lives... together to the last breath...”

“Oh my God, how would I have wanted it to be so! How would I want to never leave you... never ... to... that you always... with each sunrise, with each new day come to me... and I come to you... and we were with each other, and would both rejoice and grieve together... together... oh, how I would like that! But... I cannot... cannot... not now...”

“And still we have to part our ways... after all... forever?”

“Yes... forever. And you know this well. You know... I have a legal husband and cannot leave him... I cannot.”

\* \* \*

“You know, now it starts to seem that I will never meet her. The only her, whom I would really fall in love with... who will love me... the one, who can become the only one... the only possible woman of my life.”

“I believe you make your conclusions too early. Not all is lost at all.”

“But not everything was found as well. And will it be found, I wonder? How small is the chance that among all the variety of people I can see and find her! I would rather stop trying, for now, I am too tired of this pursuit of phantoms, too tired... perhaps, I would rather be alone for now – always alone. I have come to this world lonely, and I should leave it the same way.”

“We all have to. That doesn’t mean, however, that we are destined to be lonely for our entire life from the beginning and up to the end. You will still meet her, of that I am sure.”

“Maybe. Possibly this unique day will once come when I will meet her... finally, find her. Maybe so. I really want to believe in that.”

2006-01-16

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

# I feel

I feel I don't belong there, yet this is my world for now.

I feel like I am a sinner and a saint – all in one.

I feel I used to fall, only to rise higher after.

I feel I don't need to repeat the mistakes of the forgotten past again.

I feel I have recently passed through some trial... yet there are more awaiting me on the path.

I feel like I have already experienced all the common pleasures other ones dream of – and found them worthless.

I feel I have forgotten my true nature and lost my past in the labyrinths of lives.

I feel like I was able to fly somehow, though I can't recall the time.

I feel my road is of rare origin, yet it won't be easy.

I feel many diamonds of the future path are still undiscovered.

I feel my wish for transformation have triggered some fate threads, and I must prove my worth for the Universe.

I feel the Universe is a constantly evolving, living being and we are all bound by some unseen force in it.

I feel I must dive deeper inside me for the past to unfold.

I feel I'm many-faced... so many personalities swirling inside me, constantly fighting for my attention. I am all them – and yet someone different.

I feel I have awakened, yet partially. I won't exist as usual "me" when I will finally dare to open still closed eyes.

I feel I could never awaken even like this, had I to listen to other people's "common sense".

I feel I know the major marks of my path, yet the details are still undetermined.

I feel my goals are right, yet only for me. My own ego must be destroyed in my wake for a new essence to be born.

I feel the happiness makes me lighter, yet still, I cannot soar.

I feel I can't call any country as motherland and even Earth is not home.

I feel I don't need to belong to any organized group folks, yet I could... just to have some fun examining them.

I feel I could speak more languages, yet now bound to the two, with one sounding so familiar... Did I relearn one of those?

I feel I could sometimes feel people's emotions flowing around me, unseen by others.

I feel humans do not yet know the inner power they hold, for this knowledge could be dangerous.

I feel the paths of all ones intertwine in a strange way and there are no random events.

I feel we all have the creativity of some origin, yet many ones buried it to look sane.

I feel some interesting events marking the future of this world are yet to come.

I feel we all have to be better if we are to survive.

I feel I will always be somewhat “out of touch” there, yet I can accept the laws most ones live with... just in case.

I feel somewhat like a child now, yet my mind is of elder.

I feel I will never stop seeking the wisdom, nor do I want to.

I feel I could walk the different direction, yet finally, my destination would be the same.

I feel I am still human on the surface – and that is for the better.

I feel my path does never truly end, yet I am glad.

I feel I am being guided, yet cannot see the guide.

I feel I am not the only one who feels like this, yet those ones are few.

I feel I could say more... yet this is sufficient.

I feel I must keep silence... for now.

*2009-08-13*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Chosen*

# **P Means People**

# Nameless One

“Yes, doc? What have you?”

“The Newcomer. Our guys have picked him up from a doss house.”

“Humiliated and offended one, or so to say?”

“Sort of. Was wandering around, singing songs. Was still whispering some nonsense under his nose, while was carried here – perhaps, believed, that we haven’t heard all that, – nay, heard, all his bullshit we’ve heard! Well-well, where will we place him, huh? He’s still hot – cause recently caught, or so to speak.”

“And what exactly was this nonsense about? Something about the Doomsday yet again, I take it? We’ve tons of these homebrew Nostradamus’s nowadays in our wards already.”

“Well... not exactly... or so I hope. You know, doc, I didn’t listen very attentively to all his rubbish – wanna still remain healthy, you know. But, nevertheless, I’ve heard something interesting.”

“Boofhead – cloven-hoofed! Go ahead, drag it all out, this plain truth!”

“Well... in general... first of all, he was saying that he’s been living here for a very long time already.”

“You mean, in that flophouse house of his?”

“Not at all, that’s the very point! He’s been living on the Earth for a long time! That he’s, ostensibly, almost immortal, sort of. That he’s come to all of us once again, cause he has been called.”

“Called? By whom, I wonder? Whether it was this sick imagination of his, hmmm?”

“Don’t know, he didn’t tell. Well, then, he has been called, yes, and not alone, but together with others – well, sort of his brothers, or something of that kind. Called ones, so I take it. That they all have come to help us awaken, cause the time is already upon us.”

“The time, you say? What’s time is that? Whether it’s not the half of twelfth on our clock already, ha-ha!”

“No way, sort of intended time, predicted.”

“And what’s that – to wake up? I take it that we both are not sleeping, or have I stopped understanding something in this our lives anymore, hmmm?”

“Who’s the hell knows! He also mentioned, that we are sleeping with still opened eyes, and that, well... those ones will have a harsh time when that very time comes. That time will not wait for those not ready to awaken.”

“Curious!”

“Furious! Hell, doc, listen further what he was telling! He also told, that he has remembered himself, or someone has aided him to remember. That previously he was fighting with a sword in fights just, and today has changed iron blade with an invisible blade of the word, able to strike the darkness of human hearts even more precisely. That he’s been collecting pearls of last paths, scattered in world’s dust and forgotten, one by one... told something about the déjà vu. He also told that he was searching for his family... true, real family of those similar in spirit. That he’s awakened partially and desires to finally open still half-closed eyes. That he is a man of many names and still he has none at the same time. That he was born, died and forgot, born, died and forgot time and again.”

“An amnesia, huh?”

“He finally said in the end, that the world will change very soon... greatly change. That many of us will not have enough time to realize all that... they will – but too late... All filth will emerge on a surface and become visible in the dimmed light... That we should love each other, appreciate life, keep faith... you know, I’ve ceased to listen from that point.”

“And you were right! No reason to listen to cranky ones at all! To remain healthy ones, we all need to...”

“Drop the guns! Doc, you haven’t heard the last part of this story! He, well, approached me finally – when we were dragging him here in the car... approached easily so, sat down, looked into my eyes... Doc, you should have seen this mixture of grief and at the same time some internal joy, the tranquility of sorts, I cannot simply put it in words – I have nearly sunk in his eyes during that instance! And then he started looking into my eyes for longer and I... I give you a word! – it was like goosebumps running all over my back – as though he has started reading my soul like an opened book, do you understand? That sort of sensation it was, no other! And then he just began to speak of all my life, both of a fate and a lot – of what torments me and why I’ve become who I am at present and that even if I am a small man, I still can have a good role indented to me... he’s told it all! I even couldn’t say anything during that very instant from amazement – was looking into this eyes of his with a mouth wide open, like the insolent loony!”

“Well, you, colleague, just listen to all those loonies for quite a time and, perhaps, even the saliva will start dropping from that mouth of yours! All right, that’s enough already. Place him in the sixth ward along with the second Napoleon. That’s the fitting place for him – and a fitting time.”

“A fitting time... yes, a fitting... time.”

“Well, did he at least have his documents on him? What should I write down in our papers about him?”

“You know, doc, the strangest thing is...” and the speaker has sadly looked at his mentor, “he had no documents... and he himself asked us to call him – the Nameless One...”

*2010-11-01*

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

## Ill one

“So you are saying “love”. And what’s a thing is that, exactly? Did anyone ever touch it with his hands? A pure physiology is that so-called love of yours, and nothing more than that! Actually, the most advanced scientists of our technological century have just managed to prove recently that love is no more than a certain sort of physical indisposition, caused by a higher than normal grade of certain hormones in the blood of man’s body... Mad shining of human eyes, frankly idiotic smiles on their faces, absolutely unhealthy euphoria, lack of concentration, impartiality, and ability to the cold-blooded analysis of objective reality... it’s truly a disease, is it not?”

“Do you understand of where are you going and where you will finally come?”

“Oh, don’t you worry so for my destiny, I beg you – I do perfectly understand everything! The degree of Dr. Sci. Biol. does mean something after all, yes?”

“It means nothing in another world.”

“I would, you know, be quite satisfied even with this one. For the beginning.”

“For the beginning of the end?”

“For the beginning of ultimate triumph of scientific and exclusively rational approach in all spheres of human relations, certainly. And, well, “bionics and psychopathy of feelings” as advanced branch of neurobiology. Love in its essence is, in fact, no more than a certain fiction, which has been thought up by these silly romantic poets and other crazies. The physiological inclination of genders can be simply described from the point of view of the endorphins-biotic analysis of molecular processes, taking place in organisms of individuals under test...”

“You never truly loved anyone, did you? That’s why you won’t allow this to others as well.”

“Oh, mind you, mind you! None of us forbids you from “loving” each other even eight times a day. Just don’t name banal physiological demands with such a term.”

“And what about the spiritual relationship of close souls?”

“No souls have ever existed. Neither you, nor I, nor anyone else has it. The matter is, as they say, still a matter even in Africa. In truth, all our existence is no more than some kind of fiction. Casual combination of circumstances, if you prefer. Unpredictable opportunity, which, in compliance with the theory of random numbers...”

“It turns out that you are random and casual as well?”

“No, on the contrary, it’s you who are casual! And we only skillfully support this sort of illusion in you.”

“But... how... who are you?”

“We are the foreign thoughts. Silly, insignificant ones... yet so annoying and convincing... And you are the pawns in our hands. We govern over you through other people who have already been enslaved by us...”

“You! Back off, infection!”

“You are casual... casual... casual... Everything is random... random... random... There is no you... there is no love... there is no joy... there is no light... there is no future... there are only us... us... us...”

\* \* \*

“Faugh, damn it! What a horrific dream!” muttered Vasily, clearing his eyes. “That’s all due to a constant sleep debt, I guess. Silly lecturer keeps on muttering some nonsense behind a chair... one can easily fall down asleep here.”

“Vasya, hey, Vasya! What’s that – were you sleeping?” and Lenka slightly stuck her neighbor – and, by a total nonrandom combination of circumstances her beloved as well, a hand sideways. “Have you heard of what a lecturer was saying? He says that love was recently classified by scientists as an illness, and was even assigned a certain number in the scientific literature. Do you believe him, Vasya?”

“May he get off!” Vasily waved his hand. “He probably never loved anyone in his life himself, and won’t allow for others as well. Listen... let’s go to the cinema just after a lecture?”

“All right!” Lenka smiled, and put her head to Vasily’s shoulder, having languidly looked in his eyes. “Darling...” she whispered gently.

“My only one...” he responded with all his soul.

2013-04-12

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

## Life is ahead

“Hey, you, there!” a shout came from behind.

A little boy of twelve or thirteen years – almost teenager – darted off and ran away. They, no doubt, will chase him – will chase a thief... He had to come off – by all means possible. A pair of quarters – and a saving entrance there... a saving cellar, where he can lie down and hide – to hide until his organism will not demand a share – a share of food and... something that aided him to pass away these painful days of loneliness. His life without a roof over the head, with no parents, almost with nothing – a life all way along with himself and with what he is going to buy for the stolen money. He opened the stolen bag on the move... a wallet... one... two... three coupons... two thousands of roubles! These people were certainly going to purchase something today. What a hellish disappointment – they won't... but he most definitely will!

He turned on a run and almost screamed from a fright. The man was catching up with him – a distance between them was reducing slowly, but steadily. He in his thirteen years was no match for a healthy adult.

Two quarters, just two quarters and he is saved! He sharply jumped into the lateral pass between houses. He has to foul the trail – then he can escape... then he must escape. Forward, all forward! My feet, help me – more than once you have already rescued me in street collisions – aid me just once more!

A fast-fast run along with jumps through the lanes, a single thought, constantly swirling in his head – “I will make it...” Yes, I will make it!

A sharp head's turn – a man catching him has come up from around the corner. He didn't deceive him... didn't... a man has probably noticed, where I have turned! He's gonna to catch me now! One hundred meters... ninety... eighty... seventy...

Here it is. His own home. Home... or something that can be called as such with an immense share of doubt. Here's his rescue.

He cannot let this place be discovered – it was necessary to mislead a persecutor. The recent thief ran away from this house into the next lane, a man – just behind him.

Now... upwards by ladders – then we'll move down on a lift. Upwards, upwards! Tramping behind his back...

Just to be in time – just to get to his home unnoticed! At last... last floor... just a portion of more time to come off! The button of a lift, pressed against the stop... opening and closing doors, made of iron. He slipped inside.

Have I made that? Haven't they noticed?

A ground floor. A choking teenager, who has jumped out of a lift – almost child... And running again – a desperate, on the last breath, run. Running for the rescue.

Here it is – his refuge, which has already aided him time and again from a hardship, from misfortunes and hatred of others, – rescued from totally anything, except for himself...

He ran into the house – opened and covered a cellar's door. He has no time to barricade it for now. He has to hide, to show no signs of life! Then he will get a chance to deceive – he most certainly will.

Drops of water, dripping from a ceiling. A smell of something being burned, coming from depths. A teenager, clamped in a corner – almost like a child. Silent-silent breath in own palms – to not be heard. Rescued?

A slowly opening door... streams of light, which have illuminated and shined a figure on a threshold, his sight is directed directly to a teenager...

A smile? Is he smiling? He has finally caught him and is smiling now?! Probably in anticipation of forthcoming punishment...

A quiet voice, filled with internal dignity...

“Well, stop hiding there. To hide from others for all your life – you don't intend to live so, yes? Come on, come here. Stop fearing me, why are you even stronger clamping in this dirty corner, as if it can serve for you as a rescue in this life? I am not going to abuse and beat you... you have been suffering already – more pain is not an option. Come on, stand up. I will even let you take a part of the money that you have stolen. Maybe even all of them – if you are going to spend then reasonably.”

He's calling for him to approach. A trap? Probably. Certainly.

But his voice rings somehow too warmly and convincingly. Other men didn't speak that way... yes! – they spoke totally different when they had caught him... And besides... what prevents him from just approaching and taking what has been stolen by force? – and yet he doesn't... still saying something... Will willingly let him keep all money? Oh, sure, I'm gonna to believe you right away! Such things simply never happen.

“Why do you still fear me? I have already promised not to cause you harm. You feel no trust... yes, you are too frightened and too fierce at present to start trusting people... but you will overcome this obstacle, you'll see! All right, if you still do not desire to move... Then I will go down to reach you myself.”

He's approaching... going down! No, that's the end! He totally pressed himself into the dark corner...

“What sort of home do you have... And what's that? A glue? Oh my silly little fellow, whether this muck can replace a real healthy life? All right, stand up. It's necessary to hide in this murky corner no more. Stand up, I will aid you.”

Strong hands, which have now very accurately raised him up. He lifted own eyes with shyness to see the man and involuntarily admired. Courageous and fearless face... a smile, playing on lips... attentive and... sympathizing... gaze? As though looking into your very soul and seeing each and every you desire, all your dreams...

“Let’s go, oh pilferer,” the man smiled once more. “We have to move forward, for another path is waiting for you. Very soon you will see that. No, it’s not necessary to return me that money, keep it to yourself – for pocket expenses, as they call it. But keep in mind that I will check of how you’ve spent them.

Where are we traveling? Back to my home – it’s so much better than your musty cellar. You will live with me for a while – for, after all, you have always dreamed to have a father, yes? I will be such a one – until your way will call for you.

You have an entire life waiting for you. Let it be a worthy one – you have the power to make your life the way it ought to be, for that’s what you have deserved. And I – I’ll simply aid you on your way, help you make the first steps... you will travel yourself from there on. I will help you – I desire to help you so that you can behold the life. Life, I tell you, instead of its dark illusion! Take my hand. Follow me.”

\* \* \*

Two slowly traveling figures – a man along with a little boy. Heads of both are raised and sight is directed somewhere highly in the heavens... A brisk cheerful conversation. Laughter and smiles.

Life is just one corner ahead.

2004-12-28

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Glamour

*Rat-beauty rules over nasty women*

“Goy-hey, over here! Hello-hello, slave of mine!” sang the Glamour, having suddenly jumped out from around the corner, and widely stretched his hands in the desire to seize his new victim as strongly and long as ever possible. “Hello, Nasty Woman!” he added in plain terms. “How are you doing?”

“Like that of a boy!” Nasty Woman sniffed and wrinkled her lips. “Always do you come with such silly jokes of yours. And I, by the way, is a woman secular, elegant, modern. And very much...”

“Glamorous!” joined her game Glamour.

“Well, certainly,” Nasty Woman was embarrassed. “Glamour rules over the world!”

“Well, precisely!” confirmed Glamour. “I won’t fail to govern ones such as you. I am mighty and annoying, like sunray through skies I’m going!”

“Listen, Glamour,” Nasty Woman changed the topic suddenly, “how do you think – does this dress with that cut out from behind spot suits me well?” and Nasty Woman turned to Glamour with her back in anticipation of disgraceful assessment.

“Does it? Oh, certainly!” Glamour whispered with delight after a second of confusion. “Nasty Women wear all, yet forget of future toll!” – he added.

“I felt it with my tits that you would be satisfied,” guessed Nasty Woman. “That’s a very modern and extremely creative dress, by the way, costing loads of money!”

“Got it from your new sponsor?” guessed Glamour. “And what has become with your previous lover?”

“Fuck him!” spat Nasty Woman, but smiled. “I have no need for such cheapskates as my former one. No reason to lend him my body any longer!”

“Body, yes... a good trade thing,” agreed Glamour. “Valuable, for the time being. And who else if not I can teach you, nasty women, how to trade it in successfully?” Glamour winked. “Was you smart enough to suit a cottage from your former one? All in all, you have been living together with him for half a year – almost your entire invaluable life you have already devoted to him!”

“It’s in the process,” Nasty Woman answered uninvolved. “We are now preparing necessary documents with my lawyer.”

“Oh, so he is your new admirer?” Glamour burst out laughing. “Well, I got it, I got it. Bright and fast you are growing, good fellow, I approve! Fuck with this and fuck with that if he’s rich and not too fat.”

“I will fuck with him as well, pay for me he always shall!” Nasty Woman picked up a rhyme suddenly. “And how are these mascara and fondant for you?” she changed topic once again.

“Very sexually!” approved Glamour. “With such lips, you can kiss anyone to death,” he added, “approvingly examining Nasty Woman from feet to head and nodding. – And finally, I will join the feast, – he whispered slightly more silently.

“What-what?” Nasty Woman didn’t get it.

“Don’t distract yourself!” Glamour interrupted her. “Better show me your legs and hands with a pedicure for appreciation! That’s good,” he added after a short pause. “You can scratch eyes of all competitors if you desire!”

“All women are like cats!” Nasty Woman readily agreed.

“Yes, but not all of them are stinkers,” wearily confirmed Glamour.

“What were you talking about?” Nasty Woman once again didn’t understand her interlocutor.

“About my own affairs, sad things. I still can’t transform all women into nasty ones, and that’s a pity. Some of them even dare to thirst for chastity, silly ones! And chastity – what’s that? As the need presses on, they all will go their own ways, prepared by me for them. Well, except for the most resistant ones, probably. Eh!” Glamour sighted at first, but then suddenly became cheerful once again. “That’s the spirit, that’s the beauty!” he sang. “You are not even the Nasty, you are the Nastiest from all the women I’ve met before! One can’t help falling somewhere down together with you.”

“Oh, yes,” agreed Nasty Woman. “To drag them down I am glad!”

“And therefore I am not sad!” Glamour joined the rhyme once again.

“Oh, my friend, you are a poet!” Nasty Woman waved her totally manicured hands.

“I talk nonsense to build a fence!” agreed Glamour.

“What-what?” Nasty Woman once again didn’t get it at all.

“Never mind!” soothingly noticed Glamour. “After all, such a surprising meeting is awaiting you today, oh my! The nastiest one!”

“Yes,” agreed Nasty Woman. “This new lawyer of mine is simply a whacko man! And as far as I got it, he has pools of money in his wallet! It’s going to be not a life, but a fairy tale!”

“You will leave him for good soon enough nevertheless?” Glamour raised his eyebrow.

“Certainly, everything according to your advice!” winked Nasty Woman.

“Yes,” replied Glamour, “but voluntary nevertheless. By the way, I have bought a new magazine here,” he added, giving her a package. “Last words in fashion and, certainly, style, men that are brutal, and stupid, and vile, shopping, and fucking, and all of that sort for all nasty women that take it for sport,” he noted. “Well, give it to your girlfriend!”

“Oh my, how careful of you!” Nasty Woman twisted her lips. “And why is that for a friend of mine and not me personally?”

“Well, because you will have no need for it soon enough,” Glamour sighted wearily and turned his face away. “By the way, there is a guest coming for you right now,” and he looked at his hand, checking own watches.

“Dzin!” practically the very same second a doorbell rang out.

“Oh, my!” Nasty Woman jumped up in fear. “And who might have come so unexpectedly?”

“Well, no, I would rather say – just in time,” Glamour answered routinely. “I would even say – strictly according to a schedule. Hey, what’s the heck are you silly standing here idly?” he called for Nasty Woman. “Go and open the door already. It’s that very anticipated meeting of which I have already managed to tell you!”

“H... hello,” hardly moving her tongue murmured Nasty Woman the moment an unexpected guest has appeared on a threshold. Is... is that some kind of joke, yes? Costumes games?”

“Greetings,” said the guest in a black robe, which was wrapping her up from feet to head, continuing to hold a sparkling even at daylight scythe in her hands. “I am known as the Death,” she introduced herself with everyday-uninterested-ice-soul-touching voice. “Are these the apartments of madam Stinker?”

“Madam Nasty,” Glamour corrected her with no less routinely voice. “Though she is a great Stinker as well!” he added.

“I have come for you,” totally, as it always is, unexpected guest addressed Nasty Woman. “The time has come.”

“H... how... has come?” Nasty Woman continued to mutter something confusedly, having heavy fallen down to the floor. “I... I was not expecting. I am... still so young. I have to... live and live on!” she started sobbing.

“Well, no, everything looks right,” affirmatively confirmed Death, continuing to move her bony finger through pages of some mysterious book, which has suddenly appeared in her hands. “As it was discussed with you earlier, before your arrival here. Precisely calculated time, last chance for own spiritual change... everything looks right. Well, and the way you have decided to use that given time is your private business.”

“Precisely, indeed,” Glamour interrupted with joy. “Free will, that’s it!”

“You... deceived me!” Nasty Woman looked at him with hatred. “You... didn’t tell!”

“And you didn’t ask!” he giggled maliciously and showed her a tongue. “You have been spending your time so pleasantly that didn’t even dare to think of something different. About the meaning of life, for instance. There are so many things to think about!”

“Time is running out,” coldly answered the Death. “It’s time to leave.”

“And how many other ones are leaving today as well?” Glamour addressed the Death.

“Lots of,” she answered coldly. “Come on, it’s time for us to go,” she turned to Nasty Woman.

“W... where... to go?”

“Into the other world. To prepare for an answer.”

“Say hello to all your sponsors!” Glamour burst out laughing. “By the way, they will all be grabbed soon as well. And still, they don’t understand what they have been living for.”

“Very few ones understand it,” answered the Death. “They have no time for this now.”

“Glamour rules over the world!” Glamour burst out laughing once again.

“If it was in my will – I would gladly suffocate you!” Death looked at him with icy eyes. “So many ones you have sent to me already, and some of them even before their time.”

“All men are mortal,” Glamour replied philosophically. “Well, come on, don’t you dawdle!” and he hit Nasty Woman with a fist sideways. “You have no chance but to leave. No more chance.”

“Swine!” Nasty Woman hissed with hatred.

“Oh, sure, you are a decent swine, indeed,” confirmed he. “I would rather tell – very glamorous one!”

“Swine!” she managed to hiss once more before Death finally embraced her with own hands and both of them have disappeared in some grayish haze.

“That’s it,” Glamour hemmed with satisfaction. “Minus one slave. And how don’t they really understand that it’s not the Glamour who brings them happiness?”

*2013-03-04*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Sign of the Way

Dirt. Slush. Dampness. Decay's smell. Water, dripping from a ceiling.

It used to be here so for a time being. No one was ever going to fix this cellar, and it was unimportant for inhabitants of this house – totally and irreversibly. They, too, were unimportant for those tenants, not to anyone, not to anybody.

Only a few ones aided them and responded to their requests... immensely simple requests, so easy for these rich tenants. To give some money – as little as they can, as much as impossible. To bring a small piece of bread – for they were starving to death.

Practically nobody ever helped. So few ones.

Why? Why? Why?

What an immense amount of boldness was required for them in order to address someone! To plead for help in the condition, in which they were, for now, to stand against a gaze, full of hatred and contempt.

What for did men despise them? For, when their father died and mother passed away from this world as well, having choked in some furious illness, for, when this has happened, government expropriated their apartment from them – so totally young, and since then they have been doomed to wander through courtyards and cellars, by hook or by crook finding even a single piece of bread? Stealing so seldom, so much often – just to beg. To plead for help, for aid with something – what can be given, can be spared. They were left with the last possibility of survival – a sincere human request, addressing the hearts of men... But almost no one ever dared to help.

Once again they gathered here today, in a stuffy and dirty cellar – best option, which they have managed to find during last months. Gathered to discuss results of the day – to share what it was possible to find with each other. If it was possible, that's it.

They didn't conceal anything from each other, didn't hide, referring to adverse circumstances – shared all they have managed to get. They, who have been struggling against such deprivations, had no knowledge of contempt and egoism, they aided one another... They – two brothers and a sister. Two sixteen-year-old teenagers and fourteen-year girl.

For almost three years they have been living that way. How it was possible, as much as they could. They have already sustained three years of such life – how much is left for them in the storehouse of life? A month, a year, a decade? Nay, it's better not to think of that, not in that direction. Period.

The obstinate reason made one feel uneasy, running in circles time and again – even now. Tried to create rescue plans, to calculate possibilities to jump out of this dark and dirty fetid hole into the living world. To leave this excuse for a world behind, and enter a new and pure one, not its pity caricature.

No matter what, they were left to explore this type of world for now on. Only that pitiful one. But what will be with all those noble causes and achievements, of which they have dreamed so often in long-forgotten childhood, what is going to be with all them? Will they be lost? Or will find the inner strength to survive?

Must survive.

They have to survive for their dreams to be realized – their pure dreams must survive in hearts of theirs for them to survive – so that they can live on as men. Dying is not an option, in both cases. They will survive. And implement their light dreams afterward.

His reflections were suddenly interrupted by a soft and high pitched voice – one of his sister, who has just come running from the street. Entered this poor excuse for a home.

“Pasha, Pasha, take a look at what I’ve found today. Come to me, please come closer!”

He took a look. There was an apple pie in her hands – a big apple pie. Already slightly dried up and soiled, with a large part which has been bitten off. She yearned, poor soul...

“Vanya, Pasha, take it. Take it all. I have already eaten, was given food. A wonderful kind grandmother, single such one for many ladder flights. Only one. She gave me warm and sweet-sweet tea with jam. Can you imagine? Never in my life since the death of our mum and pa have I eaten such yum-yum. She allowed me to eat some pies, and when I have told her that I have two brothers as well, she has been searching for something for quite a while, distressed. And then she told me that for now she practically has nothing more as a food for you, for she is no more able to walk freely, and her sons buy and bring her meals. A pie, this very pie – she said that she has baked it herself, and for now that’s everything she has to give you. She gave me that for you and then told that if I am either hungry or terrified, I can return to her once more – and she will warm and feed me. That’s it. These are great news!”

While she, distorting and eating words, has been chattering all that, he approached her and silently sat down nearby. Took a glance at her – she was shivering. Then he embraced her and pushed to himself. Let she be warmed, calmed down. She’s a good fellow, brought some meal. That was rarely possible even for both of them. A good fellow.

“You are the good fellow,” he told her. She smiled. “I did my best,” he heard.

Now, now they are going to eat to be warmed. Their organisms will obediently take offered food and transform it into a heat. It should suffice for today – and tomorrow they must repeat it all from the very beginning.

And every day is so much the same. A month? A year? A decade?

With no visible option to escape this circle. It, certainly, exists, – yet he’s unable to find it. But he will find, most surely will. For their own sake, for the sake of his younger brother and little sister – an escape route will be found, a breach will be located. He’s obliged to locate it.

Slowly did drops drip from a ceiling. Time hung heavy. He was sitting and reflecting... remembering his former carefree life. How much he's missing it now! They all are missing the caress of parents, their kindness and care. Life forced them to become totally-totally adult very early, being thrown away from a childhood. It was necessary for some mysterious reason... Was required...

To teach them not to be afraid of deprivations? To help them be kinder and tolerant to men, especially now, when so few of them were ever going to behave the same in return? To make them understand the pain and burden of others, same as they are?

Probably. Most certainly.

But from this endless stream of vital lessons he, seemingly, learned at best a lesson of compassion and mutual aid – he could never imagine his life without an aid to his brother and little sister. He was obliged to aid them to get out of this hole. Help them...

In this very instant of time his little sister somehow amusingly smacked one's lips, and turned to another side, still holding the edge of his jacket in her small hands. He turned around and once again covered her p let the foolish cold doesn't disturb her at least in her dreams...

They didn't even have a tiny possibility to earn some money – to earn with theirs, though childish, but totally selfless work. It would become as such if he managed to find some job at last. But never in his condition was it possible.

No one, nobody gave them a job – they were almost immediately thrown away at first sight. "People," he was compelled to shout to all those men, giving clips and punches, decorated maidens, fastidiously screwing up their faces, and starting to whisper something to those men quickly after his first appearing before them, "people! Why do you drive me away, leaving with no possibility to get out of this terrible hole, in which I have sunk? I am trying to jump away from it, trying to change my life! I am not even begging anything from you – I'm simply trying to earn something, even for a meal. Why do you despise me so? You don't even know, you have totally no idea of all those burdens and deprivations which I along with my brother and little sister had to sustain! You, whether you know, I wonder, how's that – to live with no roof over a head, with no place which you can call home... to live the way I do... to live, being ready in each new day to cease living, having simply died from hunger? Do you have the slightest idea of this life's taste? Have no desire to know? I, too, have none – totally – but had to feel it on my own lips. I had to. And now I can make nothing... Almost nothing".

Do I indeed can make totally nothing... is that really so? Cause if... if a constant source of food and heat won't be found soon – they will be lost. Will die... and... that's all?

If he's unable to earn... something... a bit... then... his little sister will have to... have to...

Nay, no, no way! The damn reason, shut up, shut up, shut up!

That will never happen! Never! I won't admit it! Break oneself about thresholds, begging for work – but won't admit it!

After all, she, Nina, could become a true princess... a sunray for a lot of people – she, since her very birth, she had the talent to play life... playing it so lovely, so naturally. She has been living almost like a child even now in that cacophony of their life. She could become a wonderful actress – actress of life... various life... uneasy life.

And he along with his brother could help a lot of people, teaching them to value what is being given to them by life, to appreciate any blessing, any help... to respond to the request, a sincere human request... not to allow one's hearts to freeze...

Water, slowly dripping from a ceiling. A peep of rats behind a wall. Two boys and a girl, nestled to each other. Sleeping. What is awaiting them the next day?

Next five hundred sixty-seven days...

\* \* \*

A pen, being put aside. Sheets of paper, piled upon each other. He will continue his work tomorrow – continue writing. He still has much to tell people.

A still young man with a strange for the random passerby radiant sight left his table. Yes, he's going to continue the work he devoted himself to tomorrow.

He reflected for a moment and smiled. How lovely and natural her sister was! She has been living that way even now, living as a child, still capable to take care of her and others. She has been living like that even now, when troubles and misfortunes of their past have been overcome, having left a large hem in a memory. Slowly healing hem.

Have all the lessons been learned? Is the meaning of his life's events been understood? Were answers, given to the questions, asked by life itself, honorable and wise? Questions asked more than ten years ago... Much has been understood and comprehended, but more is awaiting him on his road. And he'll try to analyze results of his selections, comprehend own errors. He'll make it in the book – his first book. No, in their common book – a book of their life. Two brothers and a sister.

His sister called him yesterday by phone. Her voice was, as always, melodious and joyful. A lovely voice of a close person. Yes, she rejoiced her new life. Was indeed happy. She was granted a new role in a remarkable film – a role of a gentle wife and loving mother, the one, which she so perfectly carries out now in her own family. In a family with no insult and hatred ever possible, one without mistrust and self-interest, with a light and air of freedom, gentle aroma of love and mutual aid and assistance, trust, gratitude and kindness – where all that is present as a basis, a core. She's truly happy in that family of hers – she always spoke so... shared her joy in their meetings.

He's happy as well, in his new work.

Only his brother doesn't send news for quite a while. Never mind, he'll sure will, when returning from abroad. He's now a businessman, influential one and a man of action – largest magnates of a country listen to his opinion. Yet this sort of power hasn't spoiled him, he – they all – were given a lesson of deprivations for a reason. It made them kinder and wiser, despite the obstacles, in spite of the barriers.

Now each of them implements his own dream. Just as they once dreamed...

Someone will probably say, that it's a miracle and shed a few tears with a joy in own eyes. Somebody will be wrinkled mistrustfully, having muttered that all this "story" of his own life, embodied in a book, have much in common with a ridiculous fairy tale and silly fictions. Some will thank him for an advice. Some will start applying the advice in own life. And he himself will name it – a Trial, a life's test. A test, symbolizing the beginning of new ones... each and every day.

Is that truly a miracle that after almost five years of wanderings, they, at last, managed to be arranged in some circus to look after animals, and when some unknown actress left the group, the attention of circus managers was suddenly turned to his little sister, to her live and childish spontaneity... to her unspeakable beauty in that spontaneity?

And then there were years – years of hard work. So very different years.

He's been made a gymnast – along with the natural dexterity he coped perfectly with that role. His brother has been taught to juggle. Their sister began to conduct shows. This was the beginning of their new life's journey.

Is that really a miracle that his sister soon became an actress – and her charm and sincere beauty have brought her a world's fame?

Whether that a miracle that his brother, having saved a small fortune, opened a business, which has grown into the largest transnational company?

Whether that a miracle that, wishing with all his heart to seek answers to life questions, to learn himself and to teach others making right choices, – became a writer?

He won't name it a miracle, he'll call it a Sign – a sign of the way. His and their way – a way which they must – have been obliged to – pass to become the ones they have become.

To cope with challenges. To feel no fear of obstacles. To believe in fine dreams, to implement them in one's life. To become a Man, a man with a capital letter.

To be him.

2004-12-21

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## On the crossroads

Sky. Bluish-blue one. Crystal-clear. A whole horizon without a single cloud. Cold invigorating wind, swaying floors of the jacket. Music, playing somewhere far away. Waves of surf, fighting against rocks and scattering with a million solar drops.

He was standing, looking forward, in depths of revealing view. Below him a sea was hammering, in its eternal work furiously rolling on rocks and powerlessly receding back – retreating only to assault this tenacious rock with new forces a short after. He was standing still, thoroughly looking afar. Looked on that sky, on a solemn sun, which has started appearing from a horizon and was marking the beginning of the new day, on mountain peaks and seagulls, flying by on the sky. He looked at this for the first time with that sight and sensation he was looking at this right now. Totally differently. Never the one he used to.

Rays of light, shining on a face. A sun, appearing on the east. Sunrise... Here the sun is rising higher and its beams start reflecting upon the water. Faster and steadily it's illuminating water, foaming and beating about the coast in its eternal and indefatigable work. The veil of darkness falls down and gives way to morning dawn – sunrise, marking the beginning of a new day of life for all living beings.

He smiled. Thoughts of a memorable meeting of his past didn't leave him. He has remembered that day till now – for ten years of his renewed new life.

A sparkling of stars in the night... Shining of the sun on frolicking waters... Cool morning wind... Rain and drops of morning autumn dew... The whistle of winter blizzards and cold winter gust, freezing open cheeks... Autumn leaf falls, after which the ground appeared as to be decorated by a magnificent polychromatic soft carpet...

Is that not wonderful? Not surprising? Not pleasant? Then why so few people behold and see this great beauty, for now, feel it and rejoice? Why?

No matter what, but he loved it. And this very day he came here, back to mountain peaks to rejoice this beauty, to feel it to the deepest vibration of heart, to learn to feel it that way. Returned to meet his new day – together with those birds, flying by on a sky, with a wind, whistling in a face, with sounds of his small little town, reaching his ears, together with sun and waves – together with a world.

His road is bright and clear. It lies before him, calling forward, into horizons of unknown. He has chosen himself the way in this world. It was ten years ago when he felt it for the first time.

A miracle? Maybe.

\* \* \*

“I have no desire to do that! Have no wish and won't do that. Won't even think of it. I have my own affairs!”

“But you can do that. Able to, right? You are able to do it, and people do need it, right? It's necessary for them, do you agree? You can choose whether to help or not. It's your choice only, and I cannot do it for you.

It's your task to decide and take steps in this or that way, and it's you who will do that. And if you can – after all, you can, huh? – then maybe it's worth to? You were in need of aid – and the world aided you. It's aiding you right now in that very instance of time, according to your aspiration. If you will thirst for destruction – by all means you will get it. First and foremost, it will be the destruction of your own life. But if you keep helping, the world will be answering you the very same way – you will see! If you will be kind – then you will feel the joy of living. You will become happy by bringing light and goodness into the world, helping those near you, having directed in uniform impulse all forces in this direction. No one was every truly happy by razing and destroying – but men reached high tops and far horizons on the path of creation, aid, self-sacrifice, and heroism. By traveling this way men did ascend to horizons of the unknown, moving this way, they grew over themselves, becoming stronger and more courageous, kinder and beautiful. Becoming a loving one and giving your love away, never counting the number of ones loved by you, – you'll be loved yourself, will care of others – and receive support yourself. Each and everyone receives in the quantity he gives away, how much he gives to those near him. Will be granted probably through most freakish circumstances, friends and acquaintances, distant and nearby ones – he gets what he has earned, receives his own contribution to life, only in the altered form.

Whether it's not fair? It's fair. The law operates that way. Sciences of yours will prove it – neither mathematics nor physics or astronomy. Life itself convinces in it sooner or later. One needs not to fear, only the understanding of the way of law is necessary. In fact, it has been known to mankind long ago, but whether many men have comprehended and understood it? The law of compliance, justice law, karma law – you choose the name, it doesn't change its essence. Nature and essence stay the same, “they will receive what they have earned”, the way it was told once. The deeds to be done you choose yourself, what you will bring into this world and how you'll do that – it's up to you. You are free, it's your choice – always.”

“But how do I understand that I've made a certain choice? How to make sure that I am still moving the path I've chosen before and haven't curtailed sideways?”

“How to learn of the choice? But you are making your choice every day – lots of choices, leading to new ones. Now you are carefully listening to me – you have chosen that. Will have no desire to do that – and no one will make you move forward. Remember of the consequences of your choices – nothing disappears without a trace and each choice of yours leads to new revealing ones. And the best advisor of where and how you are going is your own heart. Listen to it closely before making a decision. The sensitive heart will understand by all means where the good comes to an end, giving way to the evil.”

“I took the first step. What next?”

“Move forward. The road will be mastered by ones going. Walk on the road of life joyfully and inspired – for each day gives you something new to master, if, certainly, you are internally ready to accept this gift. There is a life waiting for you – which may become full of wonders and beauty, if you allow them to enter the home of your heart, having decorated it with wisdom and kindness.”

“Tell me then, what do I live for here and what is my mission?”

“Oh, have you not figured that out already? Your life is one of the myriads in the Universe. You are potentially immortal and this life is one of many. You can discover the meaning of life in everything – in the cultivation of the soil or trade, in studying ancient wisdom or literary work, in a vast set of other activities. This work can be joyful and be loved by you, bringing good to you as well as the others. Learn to love work. No matter how insignificant and small your work may seem to you – it’s necessary before you will be ready to perform other, more responsible tasks. Learn to be kinder, more courageous, brave, surer, wisely. Help your neighbors by action, being asked for aid and learn to see when help is necessary.

A path from the animal through the human state up to a higher human – this is the way of people. The highest way of men, predefined for them. It’s your way as well. Whether you will choose it, whether you will learn your true endless possibilities, whether you will direct your feet to the common benefit? This choice is yours. What you chose and how you will live on – thus your life will become. Living all in one world – planet Earth – people live as if in different worlds. Some – in bright and pure ones, while others – in ones filled with mist or poisonous stinking fumes of selfishness and egoism. Worlds of ones are full of prosperity and wealth, worlds of others look like a desert, scorched by the sun, where it’s almost impossible to live. This is the result of their choices. What choice one makes, in which way he starts improving himself – that result he starts to feel in his own life.

Make choices and keep remembering of the infinity own possibilities that are still in the bud, yet entirely available with a selection of bright creativity and work for the common good.”

“Who are these people you are talking about? Ones living in pure and shining worlds without pain and hatred, who have devoted their lives to others?”

“Warriors of light. Men, who have chosen a path of self-improvement, feat and work as life’s meaning. People on the way to the new world in their hearts – pure and happy, great and magnificent, predicted for mankind. People, walking on a road, where revealing horizons are surprising, life is full of meaning, mysteries and new openings and people are generous and kind.”

“How do I improve myself?”

“Perfect your thought. Expel thoughts both small and weed, don’t allow them to grow and extend. Think on a substantial scale and widely, without prejudices. Aid others both with word and deed. Work over yourself every day. Trust yourself. Don’t despair, ever.

Don’t stop walking the road of life. Learn not to be afraid of obstacles – for it’s a way to test yourself and trials temper your spirit. Learn to rejoice life. Turn your look on fine things – and then you will see much. Learn to forgive, to love, to remain a high and worthy spirit in readiness for self-sacrifice and feat.”

“How do I know whether you are speaking the truth, wise man?”

“Verify my words by life itself.”

\* \* \*

Sounding words. His questions. Answers, given to him. He never learned, who was that man standing on a seashore with a smile playing on his lips and thoughtfully looking afar, on a dark blue smooth surface of a sea.

He checked his words. Verified them in life, without covering himself with prejudices. Now he clearly saw the sparkling of truth in his wise words. Has been living a different life since that – a renewed one, full of joy and happiness to live, to improve himself, bringing good wherever he was going. These words are echoing in his memory even now – sounding a melody of beauty, harmonious music of life.

A man, standing on a mountain height. Shining of the sun in the eyes. Sounds of waves. The whistle of the wind. Rustling rough sea. Sun, ascending in the east. The beginning of the new day for all living ones of this wonderful world...

*2004-12-20*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## On the way to the sun

*We know from a childhood of how curses on the barricades have been cured, and of how curses were removed on the building spots and in the laboratories, and you shall lift the last curse, you – future teachers and mentors. In the last war, most bloodless and toughest for its soldiers.*

*Strugatskie brothers*

I was told this story by a friend of mine about a year ago. He was working as a teacher in one of the schools that time – a fine teacher and a psychologist from a God, even though he was neither the first nor the second according to his specialty. My tenacious memory still keeps these images and words, which have deeply sunk into my soul, induced me to radically change my usual activity and the way of life. And I am not disappointed in the choice I have made – I am glad for it. I am grateful to my friend for that – and will always be, for my entire new life has started from that particular moment once. I am giving this story to you – and may you see and understand in it even more than I in due time. That will make me happy. So let's move on, my friends!

\* \* \*

It was a cool autumn evening and we were talking, having conveniently arranged ourselves on some bench in a park, – he decided to tell me of a case from his educational practice. He was working as a literature teacher in one of the city schools at that time. Or, to be more precise, was earning additionally, as they say, – conducted preliminary courses in that subject for the purpose of preparation of pupils for receipt in city's liberal arts college. He has been working on that subject for a third year and was considered one of the best "experts" in the field, however, as I remember, he himself has been constantly screwing up his face during the mention of this word.

"I am not an expert," he spoke often, "I am myself still walking the path of knowledge". I remember as well how he was distressed from time to time to be compelled to prepare these "experts", filling heads of pupils with appropriate and necessary material, even though he was filling them skillfully and with mutual benefit and pleasure for both parties.

"It's not the main thing, Alexander, not that," he used to tell me. "I am compelled to give people smart charts and tables, which have been thought up for them very long ago. Yes, I can present it in a fascinating and interesting manner – but this itself won't teach pupils the art of thinking. Long-dead schemes, some scientific approaches – what's in it for them? To make true men from them – that's my goal, Alexander. To make people accustomed to thinking without prejudices and without prejudices approaching all phenomena of life, so that they don't say "it's impossible" – but tried, worked and achieved result instead – including these areas that have been inaccessible to their forces yesterday. I desire to teach them how to love work, seeing in it a constantly renewing source for themselves and the mean to open new horizons – for only free from prejudices people who love their work are able to study all horizons of the world opened before them. Do you understand what I am talking about?"

To be honest, I could truly understand little from what he was speaking but continued to listen with interest. All in all, my friend was a curious and interesting person – knew a lot himself and could teach much (no, not that academic sort of wisdom, but that of true life!). He was attentive and kind. He was simply wise.

I listened, and he continued speaking.

“There is nothing impossible by its nature – simply something not yet implemented – that’s what their motto should be! How hard it is, Alexander, to combine the teaching of such world-outlook and pollute their heads with limited conceptions, imposed by this or that scientific approach, at the same time! After all, it’s necessary to teach them thinking and studying independently, only that way both interest and hobby will join themselves – and love to work will become a pledge of free and bright creativity! We have to alter the educational system in that direction, but combined efforts of a great number of people are necessary for that. And while there is nothing like that is present and the position of a teacher – great role and responsibility! – is reduced to that of a slave – what terrible phenomena starts happening, Alexander!

I didn’t work at that school on a permanent basis like many other teachers but could notice a lot of things. Third-graders, Alexander, third-graders! – I saw that “younger generation” for the first time then. There was no sign of teacher’s accompanying children to a locker room – they were rushing through corridors themselves. On the way of the procession along the corridor, guys clapped girls from their class on asses, having speaking appropriate words, other children nearby were simply laughing. Girls perceived this as a due attitude, even as sort of attention from man’s party – and smiled. Some guy knocked off a senior girl – right there hurriedly jumped over her, and, having sworn, rushed further.

Then I saw several of these children on a street – a company consisting of five or six of them have gathered around some little senior boy. They were periodically spitting out on a floor and shouted something to the clamped guy. I didn’t hear exact words – was simply looking at first. Then the blocked guy started, apparently, begging them of something, and they began smiling. Then suddenly one of them quickly spat out on the ground and kicked the fellow in a stomach. I stood idly no longer – ran up and scattered these attackers. As I can remember, that boy that has kicked a fellow even tried to resist and wanted to hit me – I simply accurately threw him aside and then all of them started running away. From a rattling and bent from a pain guy, I have learned that he has borrowed some money from them – five hundred rubles as it seemed – for his mother to buy medicines. But couldn’t pay his debt at the time, even though two weeks have already passed. That day I guided a boy to his home – he lived nearby. I secured that day for him... but who, who can secure all other days of his life from such ones as these guys, who, Alexander?

And the next day I have become a witness of an even more intriguing scene. Decided to stay at another’s lesson – mathematics, it seems. The picture still stays before my eyes: very young and crying girl teacher, and her class, mischievously hooting over her... They put a rat on her desk. It was this time – and before that, there were chairs, smeared by paints, class journal, cut into pieces, even nails on a chair...

I learned this from her the day when I had to interfere and force to stop this “lesson” of mockery (children rejoiced that they could go back home much earlier!) and consoled this girl, who has recently graduated from a pedagogical higher education institution and got her first job...

Three weeks later Larissa – that was the name of young teacher – discharged from office, having no more powers to suffer it. Left the school almost like three previous girls... However, she has sustained it longer than all the others – for three months. Others didn’t manage to teach to that long...

She had left – and I continued working. But I had a different class, Alexander! They weren’t influenced by that terrible tendency – they were worthy people, these almost graduates! That particular class, of which school’s life I have casually become a witness, was considered, apparently, “one of the worst” in school. Meaning, worst in the company along with some other... Teachers told me themselves that these classes of young school pupils have become the main problem and not senior classes, as it used to be before. Senior pupils now seemed as angels in comparison with small “children”. And everything has been becoming tougher each year... It was both a benefit and a joy if some of the teachers managed to bring up and put into the right place one of the elementary grades – and even to make them respect the study! But few ones managed to do that, and all other classes were left on their own...”

Then Igor suddenly stood up, his face got some steadfast expression and eyes started shining.

“When a position of the teacher is up to the standard of the dirty slave, and there is no respect for work in one’s heart, yet only greed for money – then this nonsense, this muck has a chance to be born and spread, Alexander! And we have to fight with that by seeing the root and eliminating the cause. And we have to fight against it! If we want to raise a worthy generation, we should be struggling – we are obliged to if humankind desires to continue living! We need to teach people to love their neighbors, work, self-improvement – this is a pledge of a healthy life and life itself. Obviously, this is all well-known truth, but it’s required to apply it to life, to bring it forth, life should be built upon it! That what is necessary, Alexander, so greatly required – this is our saving way”.

Igor spoke, and I listened. By that time, I didn’t understand all his thoughts and words – but for now, I comprehend more, much more. For now, I can see more – probably even as much as he once did. But let’s return to his words again.

“As I remember, a woman has once visited me after my lessons – the mother of one of the children, whom I was teaching. It seemed his name was Slava. She was about thirty years old, though by her appearance one could give her much more. She was very excited and frightened – and I soon learned, why. Her son was gone. No notes, nothing that could lead to him or help catch his trace. She already rang round both militia and all other social services. As she told me, “Slava told me many good things about you and respected you a lot – he has almost become your fan. He sincerely loved you and I noticed that. And today he was gone...”

The woman began crying – and I consoled her the way I could.

“He... after all... is... good. Only... he only... drinks. And... I... silly I... taught... him himself... to... it! Oh, how... I... guilty... before him!”

Words came out from sobbing of a woman and thawed in the air. “Most probably the guy is in the next hard drinking,” I thought at first, however, something inside me hinted that fortunately, I am not right at that time... I have learned to trust that something, which I have been calling as sensational knowing. So, how could I help her in that situation? Searches have already started and her son should be found soon nevertheless – I could only convince the crying woman in that.

And so I tried.

When she, at last, calmed down, she told that if I wouldn't object it, she would come back to talk with me once more after lessons – she is lonely and it would be easier for her to sustain those days of grief for the duration of her son's search. I didn't object.

And seven days after her son has finally been found – or, more precisely, have come back home himself. And the first thing he made upon seeing his mother, – he ran up to her, embraced and sobbed. He asked her to forgive that she was left without warning for a week. Said that this week was immensely important for him, that he has finally over-thought his life and become a different man, that he stopped drinking, and ceased all connections with his former “workmates” – forever, with all of them. He was crying, for the first time in many years. And then he came running to me – with tears still filling his eyes. He seized my hand with both his palms and began shaking it hotly.

“Teacher, you have aided me! Your faith in human powers and in me in particular rescued me, teacher. After all, you didn't even know that I was drinking – but that's not even important. Your belief helped me, teacher! Your words about the consequences of alcoholism and a healthy life (a short before I have just started telling my pupils of that and provided some valuable statistics) helped me a lot. Thank you, thank you! I will never forget that!”

To be honest, this is a very special feeling when you see that you've managed to help someone – this is a great sensation, Alexander! This is a joy. The joy overflowed me – happiness for this nice person. Never will I forget this day, never in my life. Always I do try to help people the way I can. Not all, of course, answer me with gratitude – and I don't even demand it. But this young fellow – he wasn't afraid to express his feelings... This is so wonderful – to help, knowing that your aid is pertinent! To know that you can bring beauty and light into someone's life – it's a blessing, Alexander!”

And tears appeared in his face. Then he started talking once again.

“Afterwards Slava used to visit me after he has graduated from school, – he has been coming to me from time to time. One day his mother came as well – said, that her son has really ceased drinking and embraced me with my permission. And then I worked further...”

Yes, my friends, Igor has worked further from that on – for ten more years he has been working in different city schools and even managed to start shifting an educational system into the way of formation of Men – yes, people from the capital letter.

The example of education and the approach which he has created in one of the schools with the consent of its administration, have soon become very popular and other schools too decided to try them out – and didn't regret it.

But there were only several dozens of such schools instead of dozens of thousands through all the country. For in order to achieve similar shifts efforts of many people are required – if, certainly, the mankind desires to survive. And let that good example, given to these schools by a friend of mine, serve as an example for others. May his work won't be gone – but, improved, will be embodied in the world in myriads of young lives of our children. Let a bright memory of him lives on in hearts of those people who once knew him – and remember still.

\* \* \*

I slowly stood up. A lump has got to my throat and I started crying – was silently crying, sitting in a lap and remembering our past conversations. Then slowly put flowers on Igor's grave and silently went home. I won't be upset and afflicted, yet I will remember him – my wise friend. I will remember him while I am alive.

I will write down his story, I will write many of our conversations – and will give them to you.

Those ones, who are ready to recognize them. Those ones, who are ready to change themselves and their lives. Those ones, who are ready to work truly. Those ones, who desire to explore this world with no prejudices.

And may your kind work will once become embodied in myriads of young lives of our children – may it enter their lives like rays of light to never dim from that on.

Let it be so, my friends!

2004-12-27

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Ill mind

Darkness. Light. Darkness. Light.

An endless, limitless stream of alterations. And no more one could see the end of it, and no longer the point of beginning could be found.

Darkness. Light. Darkness. Light.

There were times when the consciousness almost completely abandoned him – and sticky, slippery, frightening with their hopelessness minutes of madness took its place. At times, however, it became a little better. As if cobwebs that have surrounded and enveloped the brain and chained the mind, finally cracked. As if someone – apparently, for mockery – decided to make fun of this being, giving again the possibility to feel for a brief moment now inaccessible wonderful moments of a healthy life... and then in a single instant ruthlessly took them back again. This happened one or two days a month, but even this was an indescribable bliss. Because it's only going to get worse. Because there could be nothing worse than this curse. And it was impossible to find the point of beginning.

In those short days when the mind became clearer, when the shadow of madness receded away, frightened by the morning sun rays, – in those short days, hope revived. He wanted to believe that he will always be that way – healthy, that his worries would sink into oblivion, that fear would finally disappear, that like a phoenix bird he would again reborn from ashes together with his hope... But shortly after nightfall, these hopes died once again.

Birth. Death. Birth. Death. Who knows what lies ahead? Who will dare to predict?

There was no difference. Life here or death there... What difference does it make if life has become almost like death, if belief burned to ashes in the frenzy of fire of madness if hopes were scattered like dust? And then he had to pray for death so that it wouldn't slow down. So that she would finally come after these long years of alive-death.

\* \* \*

Today he was given a chance to play with his hope once again. Or maybe they decided to play themselves – which is, in fact, the same thing. His brother came to visit him – and now, accompanied by two doctors, he was slowly walking through the long corridors to meet with him.

*“It's painful-sad, no one gives a hand*

*In minutes of the soul's stormy weather.*

*To hope, to believe, to fall down or stand?*

*We cannot escape altogether.”*

Some person's poetry emerged from the depths of his consciousness.

At least, he couldn't get away. Just like hundreds of others living in this building, though.

Hope dies last, suffering in agony... She had already died for someone – and there was no more any difference. For him, in this day she flashed on the horizon with a thin bright ray of light – only to die again tomorrow.

When he went outside, his brother immediately approached him. Hugged, patted on the shoulder, tried to cheer up. They started talking. Brother asked how he was feeling, if the doctors were taking good care of him, trying to encourage and comfort... as if it could make any difference now when there was no more difference.

Nevertheless, they got to talking. Brother hasn't visited him for about a month, and now in spite of everything it was nice to hear and listen to him, cheerful and lovely – as he was once himself, never-ending long ago. Today for some incredible whim of fate the reason was bright once again, and the conversation could continue for a long time, several hours – of course, if there was at least some sense in it. However, it was still nice, and for a moment the joy even knocked on the door of his soul again.

“Forgive me that I cannot help you in any other way now. I hope you understand. I can't understand why you were so seriously punished, just don't see the logic. At times when I fall asleep and remember you, I swear and scold God who allows such... inhumanity. Damn it, I don't see the logic! I look at our world more and more closely – and, you know, I am starting to feel that we all have already gone crazy, got sick a long time ago. And many are much less healthy than you, many are much more inhuman.

And if there's any logic to that, where the hell is it?! Why are the ones who are really mad, who are nurturing and cherishing plans to destroy their own kind – why does God pardons them, why punishes others? Why almost always not those who have really deserved it? You know, no matter how long I have struggled with this mystery, no matter how many times I have asked him hoping for an answer – all to no avail. Sometimes I think that we were left to our own fates a long time ago. Forgive me... I am doing everything I can...”

“Still, don't blame God. Who knows? Maybe it really turned out to be necessary – to leave us for a while so... so we could find him ourselves? I don't know, don't know... I guess I am finally starting to realize that I truly don't know anything, that my knowledge is dust and it's gone as fast as it has come. And, you know, I have been thinking about it – thinking at nights when the mind was ready to faithfully serve me... I think it's for the better. Yeah, yeah, don't be surprised, it's for the best. Now I have much fewer things to worry about. I stopped running without knowing where I was going, I stopped pushing people next to me to the sides, I stopped appreciating so many things that others consider to be the only true value and began to appreciate others instead. And I almost stopped considering this unfair. Rather, perhaps, a lesson, albeit a very cruel one.

This is so beautiful... So wonderful to be sitting here in the garden, listening to the sounds of leaves and singing of birds, talking to you, who have come to visit me again – and worry of nothing more... I just don't have time to worry any longer. Now I only have the time for the beauty of my and yours – our – world.

I was finally able to understand and feel this, finally managed to...

No, it's for the better. Let it be as it is since it's impossible to change, let it be so. I accept that. I have made that already. And even if I have not been able to understand why I was so punished, but I realized something else, something incomparably more important. I realized that life is worth living."

*2006-04-24*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Justification

Vasily squatted under a doorway canopy, diligently hiding his face from a pouring rain. Drops of rain drummed on his head, rolled up under his clothes through a torn raincoat, squelched in worn out sneakers. It appeared as if the rain in some uncontrollable mad rush was trying to clear country's "second capital" from all that he could qualify as dirt by his unknown motive.

As if he couldn't do only one thing – to wash away sins of humans. Servants of the temple, which was sparkling in this cloudy day with washed gilded domes, for instance, could – for a well-known payment, of course. Yet only not that rain. How could he, a simple rain, ascend to these heights?

Passersby promptly rushed under this storm from one building to another, overflowed cars on sidewalks loudly urged to stand aside each and every one except themselves, and Vasily – what's in Vasily? – to him, this marvelous new world of as-if-sanctity was totally far away in all possible meanings.

Karma became a new fashion by the will of moral's observers. For several years already every resident of this cultural capital – and not only it – has been trying to correct own karma without correcting himself. Show-windows of charitable shops called for it, newspapers and central television constantly reminded of it, even the face of some orphan on a huge advertising billboard appeared to silently offer all of its contemplators, who have been rushing through a central street's ring each day, to bring another portion of their savings to children's church shelter for the sake of clearing of own Karma. For several years already people have been insincerely smiling to each other on city streets, inquiring of a state of health of their interlocutors along with a weather's forecast, buying various discounted knickknacks in numerous charitable shops which have grown as if mushrooms from a heavy rain and stated that they were giving a part of their profits on "good deeds". Even banks offered an increased "cashback" for purchases in such little shops. It all became a question of fashion – to purify one's karma, feeling infallible.

Vasily had no idea how it all worked out – but the union of marketing specialists and those, from temples, turned out to be surprisingly productive. He, being watered in this very moment by a storm, didn't know that in terms of marketing this was called "rebranding", and in terms of finances, it could be measured by a sum which only they – devout collectors of treasures – were able to afford. Anyway, this certainly helped to save themselves in own eyes for many, – except Vasily.

Five years without a home – is it much or is it little? Someone will spend out eternity in the dirt, feeling no flight of time at all, – and for him, these five years became their own eternity. Five years through cold and snow, dirt and such rains which were washing streets of St. Petersburg from time to time. Five years in worn-out clothes under disapproval looks of passersby and without a single chance to find a constant shelter. Sleepless nights, spent in open entrances, hundreds of shouts and kicks from residents of these buildings. It all has been – it all will be going. This is a vicious circle.

Ultimately our memory saves only the best of moments for us – ones which are worthy of living in the ocean of memories. And sparks of these memoirs don't fade away up to our last day on this rock.

...First year of his wanderings. Late evening. The sound of footfall behind his back.

“Hide me away, please!” a girl of seven or so years desperately shouted. “Hide me from them!”

When two adult figures, wrapped up in shadows, appeared on a pavement's horizon, there was no more time for reflections.

“Here, come with me!” Vasily shouted to a child.

Several dozens of meters, absolutely close. Here, in a yard, broken door entrances were always open. When you wander through the entire city, which has become your final resting place, your memory tenaciously stores inside such spots, where you can spend your next night – or at least several remaining hours till dawn when law-abiding citizens will once again go for their most important and significant jobs. Like in a vicious circle.

The child ran after Vasily in door openings and went silent.

This was a day – or a night if we are to judge by time – when he saved future great ballerina from thugs and rapists. Yet in that very day, he didn't know of all that – that kind of knowledge came so much later – and in another world.

...Third year of his wanderings. The rain, drumming on a bridge his strange rhythm and drawing circles in waters of Neva river. Vicious circles.

A little kitten with orange fur, who is desperately beating on a water with legs and trying to reach a high stone embankment with a meter's height above him. He would drown that day if not for Vasily's aid. Would drown as many are being drowned by force – whether they are cats or people. What is some saved kitten, after all? Just a clear distinction between compassion and indifference.

...That very day, those very minutes which few mortal ones are capable to predict in advance. Winter wind, freezing a face. The glacial face of Neva. Group of school students not far away, moving as a chain to another coast.

Here a weak ice breaks from their measured step and one of them falls down into icy waters with a splash. A cry of despair, being carried around.

When Vasily ran up to the place of that ice break, the student was still on a water surface, yet none of the surrounding children had any power to pull him out. They pulled their hands to him, trying to grasp – but small weak hands of theirs have been sliding off over and over again, accompanied by cries of despair.

It happens that we don't know the exact limits of own powers until the moment they are truly needed... and neither did Vasily. Having grabbed him by a wrist, he pulled the child with both of his hands with such a force that he has flown away on a surface and landed two meters behind. But this breakthrough shook Vasily, turning him around, his legs slid off and he fell into icy waters himself.

Time and again, up to the moment when hands and legs finally refused to obey him, he has been fighting for life. Over and over again he was trying to get out on the ice, but forces were fleeing from him – or perhaps this so memorable for his soul and destiny winter has finally decided to take its toll. Here icy water flows into his mouth, forcing to stop breathing. Flashes of light – last messengers of this world – and he is drowning to the bottom of the river...

\* \* \*

...In that last farewell instant of his life he had no idea of what would happen afterward when the very concept of time will change itself. He had no idea how in a world of immense beauty, which was unimaginable for his tormented and exhausted mortal body, three golden drops – one for each soul that he has saved – would fall one day down on a bowl of great Scales, forgotten by many. How these drops, similar to ones of rain, – so small and so big at the same time! – would touch its surface, and in that instant, one of two bowls will bend and light up with inextinguishable fire. During that instant these three drops, which were seeming too small for many, will overweight all mistakes and pain of his past, lighting up his way. At that moment – a moment of fading link between this world and another one which is being constantly forgotten by those born in this, – Vasily by no means could know this. Mortal beings are rarely granted a privilege to know their future in advance. He didn't know that these drops would become his – absolutely sincerely and disinterestedly coming to the rescue – most significant Justification.

He couldn't think of how shortly after this moment two glowing with warm and soft light figures would stand to right and left from him and lead him into the Great Hall – a divine place where only worthy ones will once be gathered.

Where there is a place for justified and expiated and no place for paying off ones.

*2016-01-19*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Gift

“And you won’t check my QR code, all right? I really don’t have one, truly, honestly! I am not marked, you know? We, the untagged, have become almost like outcasts now...”

Judging by the sour face of the guard standing with a rifle at the ready near the entrance to the shopping mall, it was clearly noticeable which great-grandfather and how courageously would strangle all these fascist innovations that have been showering on his nondescript descendant’s head and purse as of lately, almost like from a horn of plenty or some other horn, thereby giving him, the glorious successor of the family, an extremely instructive and very timely example. Shifting from one foot to the other for a long time, as if from internal cold and cautiously squinting at the video cameras hanging on the walls, after a while the guard, nevertheless, waved his hand in a sign of permission.

“Okay, come on in. At least show me the phone for the sake of formality. One way or another, you’re our first visitor today for the whole day. As if the whole city died out overnight, God save us! I’ll too be kicked out of here soon if there are no buyers going around...”

“Thank you, mister guardsman!” Alice exclaimed joyfully, almost clapping her hands. “I’ll run around here in a jiffy, just to take a peek, okay? I am very, very interested in what is going on here in the capital today! As well as to buy a gift.”

Having never received an affirmative reply from the guardian of the new trade order, who suddenly started to diligently examine the tips of his polished shoes, Alice rushed headlong through the opened glass doors, intending if not to buy (she had almost no money for this course of action), then at least to admire from afar all those wonderful curiosities that this huge trading monster could offer to them, unwanted guests of the capital.

What kind of surprise that was when she discovered that there were no sellers at all standing behind the counters of the shops sparkling with Christmas lights and garlands! The glass doors stood wide open, the festive lights were still painting their unique patterns on the walls, reflecting from the mirrors fixed on the ceilings and floor, and around, as far as the eye could see, not a single living soul was visible. It was as if she, a new-found guest of the capital, suddenly found herself in her own mystical Looking Glass.

“Buy us!” a thin voice suddenly came out from somewhere in the distant depths of the boutique, into which Alice wandered in the shopping center.

“And me! Take me too!” a dozen new ones chattered back to it.

“And don’t you forget about me, I’m on sale now!” someone purred very closely.

“Who are you? Where are you hiding? Come on, show yourself immediately, or I’ll... well... call the police, right!” Alice shouted back at them, looking around in fear.

“It’s us, pretty things!” came a chorus of merry chuckles in response. “Buy us now!”

“Things? And where are all the people? Where are your sellers? Is this some new form of trading magic? I don’t understand anything!” Alice threw up her hands in surprise.

“People? Why people? Things!” a multi-voiced chorus of voices sang back to her.

“But surely there should be people around to make things right? People are not things, and what are things without people? You’ve got me completely confused right now!”

“Put us on!” shouted the red patent leather shoes that suddenly jumped out of the box, right in front of the stunned Alice, starting to dance some kind of weird unfamiliar dance right away.

“Try me on!” tenderly whispered a lilac dress with a large cutout on the back that started spinning on the mirrored floor, paired with shoes, now and then trying to drag Alice standing in the center of the hall, taking her by the arm with its sleeve.

“Breathe us in!” dozens of glass jars with perfumes rolled out on the counter with affectionate voices.

“Look at us!” sang the earrings decorated with large red rubies that fluttered out of the case in one go.

“How magnificently beautiful are all of you!” Alice gasped in amazement. “You are the most beautiful things I have ever seen in my life!”

“We were made for each other!” the dress assured Alice, putting its arm around her waist.

“We were created only for you!” confirmed the shoes.

“Look in me!” demanded a mirror standing nearby in a beautiful gilded frame.

Coming closer to the mirror, Alice was surprised to find out that her reflection was dressed in the same lilac dress and red shoes, and she had gold ruby earrings in her ears.

“You’re making her look fat!” the mirror said to the dress with displeasure.

“And you’re making her underweight!” snapped back the dress.

“Try us on! Buy us! Take us with you!” the inhabitants of this store vied with each other, never giving Alice a single second to think it all over.

“But... how am I supposed to buy all of you?” Alice was confused. “You must be very, extremely expensive!”

“Loan... Loan! She doesn’t know about the loan?” pretty things started whispering among themselves in surprise. “She’s not local... Surely she doesn’t have a credit card? The bank! She needs to go all-in to the bank!”

“And what should I do with you then? I don’t have any of these loans, and no marks either. I have nothing to pay you with!” Alice sighed in distress.

“Squeak!” squeaked a huge rat, the size of several of Alice’s fists, that suddenly jumped out of the far corner of the room right under Alice’s feet.

“Aahhh! Mouse! I hate mice since my childhood!” Alice screamed, jumping up from fear and almost crushing the shoes spinning under her feet. “Go away!”

“Squeak!” repeated the huge black rat, standing up on his hind legs and absurdly waving front paws in front of him, as if introducing himself.

“This is our friend, Squeak!” things began to reassure Alice soothingly.

“He’s decent!”

“Yes, he helped many of our kind find their new homes!”

“Find their masters!”

“People listened to his wise advice and were finally able to get us!”

“He is so smart. And so sly, too!”

“He’s cool!”

“No!” cried Alice. “I don’t want mouse-friends! Not to speak of the rats! Scram, scam!” with these words, she grabbed one of the still-dancing red shoes, intending to launch it into this being that formed inside her a feeling of deep and sincere disgust.

“Squeak!” a huge black rat squeaked as if being offended, tucking its hind legs and clicking its tail on the mirrored floor, as if annoyed, intending to successfully retreat, but all of a sudden the cat flew into the open door of the boutique from all its hind legs, thus not allowing this tactical retreat to take place.

“M-r-r-r-y-y-a-a-y-y!” Alice was only able to hear a moment before the claws of the newly-born ferocious predator dug into the thick black skin, leaving behind deep bleeding wounds on the body of the Squeak. The rat jumped up, twisted out, and, leaving a piece of his tail in the paws of an unexpectedly appeared cat, retreated like a bullet somewhere in the black darkness of the hall.

“Our poor Squeak…” the dress that had recently danced around the hall began to cry and lowered its sleeves down. “He was so dear to us, and we were close to him!”

“What have you done, silly being?! Who’s going to buy us now? Now we will never find our rich owners!”

“Oh, sure, it’s all about being owned!” the cat purred, sitting on its hind legs, and began diligently licking the wounds inflicted by the Squeak. “They will make anyone they want their slaves. Don’t trust them, girl. I know that. I’ve seen so many of these rats in all my nine lives!”

“The cat! The most real and talking Cheshire Cat! Just like from my children’s fairy tale!” emotional Alice almost cried out with tears.

“Huh, you tell me, Cheshire! I am not from a shire, not that kind of fluffy furry ball with fleas! I wash my face every day in the mornings and evenings as my ancestors purred to me, peace be upon their fur! Yet rubbing is what I like the most. Can you scratch me?” he looked inquiringly at Alice, continuing to lick the rumpled fur. “By the way, my name is Yearr!”

“Of course, I will, my dear cat!” Alice happily agreed to fulfill this simple everyday feline request. “You’re my hero – you defeated such a nasty rat!”

“And scratch behind my ear too, since I’m not scratching myself... for, you know, I have these... paws. P-r-r-r...”

“And why do you have such a strange name, kitty?” Alice asked without stopping caressing the cat. “A cat by the name of... Year?”

“I’m a cat-symbol, you know? Year-cat! Is it the year of the cat? And I am the cat-year! It’s been a year!”

“What kind of charade is this?” Alice was puzzled. “Kitty, please don’t talk in riddles!”

“A charade for a masquerade. Kind of riddle, sort of fate,” the cat purred conciliatingly. “Well, you can call me Cheshire if you want to. But I truly don’t have any fleas for you, so don’t even ask!”

“Almost no need for that,” Alice giggled. “And why did you decide to save me from the Squeak?”

“I got hungry. And skinny. And my shagginess has decreased as well. You can even say that I went feral, even though it sounds strange, especially in my case. What kind of year, such is a cat, it turns out. And these rats bred here in enormous quantities! Everyone tries to steal something or teach others their pilfering habits. But I’ll find them all, they won’t escape my gaze, they won’t hide in a hole, m-r-r-r-y-y-a-a-y-y! So I’ve been living here as of lately, catching them and... well, you know what we, cats, do with mice...” he symbolically squinted with his green eye, as if checking her, Alice, general erudition.

“You are very brave!” Alice agreed with him affectionately. “But all these pretty things... they wanted me to buy them all... they wanted to find their new home... and now...”

“Nothing terrible will happen to them!” the cat waved his paw towards the counter. “They’re not humans. Not even cats! They won’t peel off, they won’t get skinny, and... well, what is usually done with you, people, in hardships? They won’t go animalistic, that’s it!”

“People are not things!” Alice smiled. “Especially since I don’t even have anyone to buy these things from. There are no sellers around here either, you see that? So what am I supposed to do now?”

“Do you want me to show you the lord of this place?” the cat winked at her.

“Who, who?”

“Well, he is sort of local head spirit, the caretaker. I do remember how one of the rats, fleeing from me, jumped on his back and started screaming for him to protect her. Well, I tore his gilded paint from the sides for that, too! So now we’re with him... how to put it more precisely... we don’t drink milk from one bowl, yes.”

“All right, lead on!” Alice exclaimed. “But, if anything, I’ll put him in his rightful place first!”

When Alice, out of breath from running through the floors and corridors, finally caught up with her brave fluffy fellow traveler, he was already sitting impressively on the back of a huge gilded bull, standing in the center of an improvised oasis with palm trees on the top floor of the shopping mall, and every now and then arched his cat’s back and flexed his claws, as if intending to gently plunge them into the black-and-gold neck on command.

“Well, here he is! Evil spirit! But he won’t throw me out of here now!” the cat assured her with satisfaction and plunged his claws into the bull’s neck.

The statue, which had seemed lifeless up to that moment, suddenly started shaking, jerked sharply, trying to throw off its new rider, its eyes turned bloodshot in the blink of an eye, and thick acrid smoke poured out of its nostrils.

“See how angry he is? What a waste, we are not to his taste! M-r-r-r-y-y-a-a-y-y!” and with these words, the cat furiously scratched the upper part of one of the sides of the golden bull.

The head of the golden bull with bloodshot eyes suddenly turned towards Alice, and a low guttural rumble, coupled with acrid smoke, swept through the hall for a brief moment.

“You are standing in front of the altar of our temple, human whelp! Behave yourself!”

“Aha, he spoke at last! Last time you weren’t so talkative, as far as I can yell!” the cat mewed, giving the bull a slap with his paw.

“Did you steal all the people from here and replace them with things? Come on, admit it!” Alice looked intently into the bull’s eyes filled with blood and rage. “And don’t you hiss like that, I’m not afraid of you, I have a real Cheshire Cat now. Got it?!”

“This place is a temple of things. You’re a foreigner here. Get lost!” the head of the animated statue was spinning from side to side in rage, but for some unknown reason, the bull could not move.

“Bring the people back immediately!” Alice demanded and stamped her foot. “Just look at yourself, false God!”

“People... came to my domain willingly. They bowed before me... willingly. And then... they disappeared. Everyone who bowed. And only things remained...”

“Well, then stay here all alone as long as you like, thing! Without new adepts, you are nothing! A false temple will once fall to ashes! Mmm!” Alice grimaced at the bull.

“M-r-r-r-y-y-a-a-y-y!” added the battle Cheshire Cat and kicked the animated statue with a paw right between his horns.

“Trespassers! Blasphemers! Get out of my temple!” the bull roared with all his might, trying to break away, but the gilded chains that held him firmly did not allow him to do it. Only the bloodshot eyes with hatred bored into the retreating figures of the girl and the cat walking impressively on two paws until they finally disappeared from sight.

“That’s what I call taking the bull by the horns!” the cat, wandering along the corridor, continued to tell, purring contentedly under his mustache and nose.

“I hope he won’t hurt more people,” Alice said, looking back anxiously. “That spirit of yours is so evil, yay! Did you see his red eyes?”

“I would kick them too if I got to them,” the cat shrugged his tail lazily, as if boasting. “But I still have enough battles with all sorts of local rats here waiting for me. Well, where are we going to run now?”

“Oh, it’s probably already very late,” Alice suddenly realized. “I promised the guard to take a walk here for a short time. And we were so busy here that I forgot about it completely. My family is waiting for me at home!”

“So you are not local? And I was already thinking that now you will too start living here day and night long. Bring me some milk, or, say, sausages...” the cat dreamily rolled his tail like a pretzel. “Because the local would-be soldier at the entrance completely forgot about me, it seems, no matter how hard I mewed at him... And here he is. Sleeps on duty like a dead man without a grain of conscience! My very eyes wouldn’t have seen him and my very paws wouldn’t have touched him!” the cat purred cheerfully, carefully creeping up to the guard who was dozing at the table on the first floor. “Although, you know, we can argue about paws...” and with these words, the Cheshire Cat by the name of Yearr deftly jumped on the plump belly of the sleeping guard, that was rising up every now and then, gently curling up on it.

“Goodbye, kitty! I will surely miss you,” Alice said, affectionately stroking the curled-up cat.

“You will be back, won’t you?” he looked back with his emerald-green eyes with hope and devotion. “With milk and sausage?”

“I’ll try to visit you more often!” Alice assured him. “If my parents allow it.”

“Well, then, ciao-cocoa!” he waved goodbye to her with his paw. “...Wait, I almost forgot to tell you!” he suddenly realized.

“What exactly?” Alice turned around, already going out through the glass-mirrored door.

“Follow the white rabbit, of course!” the cat purred and winked with his huge, cunning eyes, green like the most beautiful of emeralds.

\* \* \*

When Alice stepped out of the threshold of this new temple, it was already night outside. The snow swirled in the light of the street lamps, and the stars shone brightly in the sky. The silhouette of the shopping center was gradually fading away as if it had never existed – as if everything that had just transpired there, in this new Looking Glass, was not real, as if the whole life in the endless pursuit of things was somehow unreal, implausible, untrue...

“Well,” Alice sighed sadly, wrapping her winter scarf tighter and tighter against the suddenly rising cold wind. “So I didn’t buy a gift for mom! Eh... just wasted my time...” she became upset.

“Don’t be sad by vain things, child!” a voice rustled in a gust of wind from out of nowhere. “We will lead you to eternity!”

“Who are you?” Alice said in response to her invisible interlocutor, looking around in surprise and not noticing a single passerby.

“The right question is who are you? Lift your gaze skyward!”

“Stars! Wow, what a clear sky! How many distant suns are there on it!” the girl whispered, looking up spellbound.

“Do you see how we shine in this night? Only in the total darkness, we became visible!”

“Stars, you are like someone’s distant bright souls illuminating our earthly path...”

“You can buy thousands of things, but is it possible to buy eternity? You can only get it as a gift, earn it. Earn the fulfillment of your dreams. Stretch out your hands to the sky!” a mysterious voice whispered again.

“Wow, a shooting star! How bright!” enthusiastically exclaimed Alice, lifting up her hands to the sky.

“I am descending into your arms, child. Make a wish!”

“I... I wish that people could become happy. So that... so that they don’t become like things. I want... peace on the whole Earth. And so that Mom gets well!” Alice sobbed, wiping out freezing in the cold tears with her mitt.

“The desire of pure souls will be fulfilled...”

\* \* \*

“Alice... Alice! Did you doze off while studying again? Are you tired, my dear?”

“Mom, I just fell asleep... I had such a wonderful dream...”

“Do you see how dark it is outside the window? You’ve been sleeping for hours, darling. Completely lost with all these lessons and thoughts about gifts, right?”

“I... wow... look, Mom! What a starry sky there is today! Just like in my dream!”

“Yes, honey, the sky is very beautiful today...”

“Look, Mom, a shooting star! How bright! This is the first time I see such a thing!”

“Me too, daughter...”

“I am descending into your arms, child,” a strong, warm, and caressing voice whispered somewhere on the very brink of her consciousness. “The desire of pure souls will be fulfilled...”

*2022-01-30*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Last word

“So do you insist that the feeling of sincere patriotism in relation to the homeland and readiness to destroy its outside enemies maybe not only negative but is also fatal, a harmful trait of the human person?”

“Such a “patriotism” is your curse. These are your chains – threads, through which you are very convenient to be operated by someone another. Because of this distorted “feeling of sincere patriotism” wars have been waged on the Earth and some of them are still going on, for its sake you sacrifice things much more important than the goals of your politicians. It’s not even patriotism, it’s plain and total blindness. You keep killing others and singing in joy – for it promotes achievements of the aims of your state... Greatest of goals?

Are these truly your purposes? Do you really want to slaughter each other? Maybe those ones, whom you innocently kill, want it to? Whose goals are these – yours or injected into your consciences by the political establishment, injected very skillfully, even sweetened a bit for greater persuasiveness? You have already faced terrorism in own lives and have come through it. But when you are ready for natural resources to wage terrorism in a much greater scale for “peaceful” purposes, as you are trying to believe, – it’s not greater and obvious crime against the humanity? And what is most stunning – is that you do not consider such actions as any crime, but rather as the good of your own country, your nation and you as a part of it.

You have been transformed into puppets in hands of your politicians, you became their ideological slaves. You even cannot say “no” when it’s truly needed when the time demands it. That’s the problem. You are being sent on a slaughter – and you go on a slaughter. You are being sent into a battle for the next piece of unowned resources – and you are ready to die “for the glory of your motherland”. You are not even free, you have never been free. You only dream of it, sing about it, speak among each other about it. And when the time comes for you to say “no”, you are saying “yes” instead.

That’s the greatest problem of entire mankind history – that the man is too suggestible, too controllable, for he is too weak to be his own master and there are always those who can readily take advantage of it and use it for their own sake. And it will always be so – just until you become the masters of your own life. Remember it, remember that well. Your future depends on it.”

\* \* \*

Spacious apartments. The heavy oak table near a wall sideways from a window. The ancient wall clocks which are beating out their mysterious rhythm. The icon of the Savior in a gilt frame on one of the walls...

“Bom... bom... bom...” the clocks beat slowly and methodically. And once again, “bom... bom... bom...”

“Mister President, we suspect that you should familiarize yourself with these materials. It’s important for the stability of our power.”

“Demonstrate.”

A soft flash – and the video display comes to life. Lines and words, words and discussions, discussions and thoughts. After only fifteen minutes the demonstration of provided “materials” comes to an end. Ten seconds of silence...

“What sort of clown is that? Yet one more fighter for illusionary freedom and all. I’m stuffed up with that nonsense. Remove him.”

Five seconds of silence...

“Are you sure, Mister President?”

“Just remove him. And, well, take care of his family, of course. Do not refuse them in indemnification for his “accidental” death. And don’t let ones like him into our TV channels, or you can forget about your jobs. That is my last word. Is everything clear? Nice. So – what’s the next thing on our today’s agenda?”

The heavy oak table near a wall sideways from a window. The icon of the Savior in a gilt frame. The ancient wall clocks, beating out some mysterious rhythm...

“Bom... bom... bom...”

And once again, “bom... bom... bom...”

*2005-08-05*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Offer

That night Oleg had a nightmare. Frightening in its unambiguous resemblance to his own personal realities, and therefore even more unpleasant. Don't take us wrong – he didn't dream of snakes crawling out of the skull of a horse in a black coat, and in his modesty of soul he did not even consider himself prophetic like his famous ancestor. He dreamed that night of broad lines of proudly marching men with horns and hooves, in all the languages of the underworld demanding him to accept their extremely tempting offer and to sell his own soul. Different prices were proposed: one of them was prepared to pay with “the wonderful crockpot that can turn any housewife into a queen of the kitchen”, the second offered him “the most powerful wet vacuum cleaner with a dozen of the latest universal tips”, the third was advertising “the new model of iPhone XR with advanced artificial intelligence system, capable to predict the actions of its owner”, and someone was even ready to part with “EPC-W Darling 2000”, that could be translated into a common human language as “Electron-positron cyber wife, model “Darling”, year of manufacturing 2000”.

All their extreme obsession and absurd tactlessness angered Oleg's soul so greatly that at the end of this unearthly marketing hell-knows-what, he wanted to shout to all of them, who had surrounded him in a circle and were still mercilessly pointing their raking hands with otherworldly trojan “gifts” in his direction, “Go to hell, demons!” But then, with the help of some innate instinct, he finally realized that swearing at those to whom the devils themselves do not even hold a candle is the height of meaninglessness, much higher than all the modern achievements of earthly advertising combined.

And so he stood, shaking and refusing, while those who were doing their dirty work vied with each other about the delights of their proposed goods. But, fortunately, much in this as well as the other life has the trait of being limited in time, so this nightmare of not so prophetic Oleg ended. Continuing to grumble softly under his nose and rubbing his eyes with own fists, still dumbfoundedly staring in the direction of the alarm clock, which was showing ten o'clock in the morning, Oleg with a long-ago learned habit and immutable inevitability of yet another advertising call and staggering gait went to the bathroom in order to clean up a little after this lowly and violent night.

He was distracted from another sacred session of morning shaving by the phone that was bobbing from the vibrations on the chair. Oleg didn't share the morning joy of his gadget at this moment – and, damn it, was he right.

“Good morning!” without unnecessary shyness joyfully shouted in Oleg's ears the unknown voice of an even less well-known young man, had Oleg only to take the case of management of the ringing phone in his strong male hands. “I would like to talk to Oleg Alexandrov. Is that you?” – the voice on the phone confirmed the complete seriousness of his own intentions.

“Let's say that you are lucky today, and it's really me. What are we going to do with this fact?” still sleepy Oleg muttered into the phone, trying to hold the razor with his other free hand.

“Your Internet provider “Network achievements LLC” has prepared a unique new year’s offer specially for you! Only until the end of December this year you can switch to our new year’s tariff “freakynet” for just a thousand rubles and increase the speed of your internet connection by twenty megabits during January and February next year. Starting from March next year the cost of this service will be only two hundred rubles per month. We are also happy to offer you a service to insure your TV and Wi-Fi router from being harmed by lightning. The cost of this service is only three hundred rubles per month. This unique offer is valid only until the end of December. Well, do you agree to take advantage of our new terms of service, Oleg Alexandrovich? To confirm your consent and switch to the new tariff, please say “I confirm”, to refuse, say “no way”.

“No, hey!” Oleg muttered into the phone as soon as the smallest pause occurred in the monologue of chattering in his phone human-robot, allowing Oleg to intercept the verbal initiative.

“Excuse me? What were you saying?” came the voice at the other end of the line. “Do you confirm your consent?”

“Never! Never-ever did I give my consent to be disturbed by your early morning intrusive calls!”

“Too bad!” answered the nameless disappointed voice on the phone, clearly deeply annoyed by the fact that he didn’t manage to earn for himself another new year’s increase in his salary bonus. “Nevertheless, maybe I interest you in our offer to insure your Wi-Fi router?”

“Do you insure it from a falling meteorite?»

“Unfortunately, at the moment our company doesn’t provide such services. But we will definitely pass your offer to our sales department. I wish you all the best and to see you again!” Oleg was convincingly assured of the inevitability of their next meeting and then a young voice immediately hung up the phone without waiting for new original proposals for their marketing department.

Being no longer interrupted by morning advertising calls – “not a single break of silence!” – Oleg successfully finished the procedure of morning shaving and went to the kitchen to brew himself some coffee in order to awaken his still sleepy brain and cheer up his still timid spirit. He was definitely late for work, and today’s plan would almost certainly not be fulfilled, which meant that he would not see the weekly salary bonus as his own ears.

“Fuck this award, anyway,” Oleg reflected, continuing to brew coffee grains in a pot. “From such work, all sorts of demons are haunting me in my own dreams. Man, it’s time for you to find a proper job for yourself!” Oleg decided this morning for the umpteenth time. What a pity that the harsh everyday life in the capitalist economy within a single capital so often decided otherwise!

How irritating was this merciless obsession of advertisers and salesmen, from which he could find salvation only in the evenings, sitting at the computer in headphones and listening to heavy rock while rocking steadily in his chair in time with his own no less heavy than rock thoughts. And for what goddamn reason did he get such a fate, anyway?

Just yesterday, for instance, a “Shirby” vacuum cleaner salesman had arrived unexpectedly and unsightly. This “unique in its characteristics” vacuum cleaner produced a set of noises similar to that of a jet plane, screeching in all the voices of hell and trying, apparently, to dissuade Oleg from its possible acquisition, and during the demonstration two of its tips were completely broken. On sarcastically crossed arms over his chest and Oleg’s ironic look, the seller Rashanom didn’t even react, hardly puffing and switching something in his miraculous unit in the hope of still make it working again. At some point in time, these hopes were even justified – though not for long. Within ten minutes after being turned on again, the infernal engine of the infernal vacuum cleaner had stalled and ceased to give the slightest indication of what might have been considered as his personal technical life. Along with the engine, the chattering salesman fell silent, having silently realized as clearly as possible that against the background of utter silence his cheerful voice sounded somehow not so confident.

“That’s not Shirby, but a Shirley-Mirley of sorts!” Oleg laughed. “And it costs just – how much did you say? – a hundred thousand rubles?”

“We are ready to give you a discount for this unique unit equal to...” tried to save his sinking position Rashan. But the act of saving drowning people, as they say...

“The door is over there,” Oleg hinted softly. “We thank you for demonstrating the capabilities of your product. At the present moment, our company in the person of me is not ready to buy it, unfortunately.”

“Perhaps, you can share phones of your acquaintances or colleagues?” the seller of miraculous vacuum cleaners tried to grab the last straw of hope.

“I don’t have any spare friends to share! I’m a lonely maniac!” Oleg barked and moved on to the seller of jet vacuum cleaners with such conviction that he quickly hurried to retire for the previously indicated door, hastily packing his miracle-unit without any further unnecessary questions.

“That’s our type of fate, apparently,” reflected Oleg, continuing to devour rich coffee together with a couple of homemade sandwiches.

“Ding!” Oleg was distracted by the ringing of the doorbell, clearly signaling that his uneasy fate once again brought someone to his own doorstep.

“Pray tell us, do you believe in God?” synchronously, slyly, sweetly and without superfluous representations, two newly appeared old women sang to Oleg’s ears when he slightly opened an entrance door. “Jesus Christ, who passed through the death for our sins,” one of them decided to clarify just in case.

“Perhaps. It really depends on the mood,” Oleg tried to laugh it off.

“Would you like to know more about our Savior and his way?” just in case asked one of the old women, flipping through the pages of carried book in her obvious intention to strike Oleg on the spot with her own ability to read printed texts aloud.

“Does your God happen to be black? For I am, you know, a real type of racist,” Oleg decided to go on the offensive. “And I had a B mark in school in foreign languages. So I really hope that he speaks Russian!”

“How dare you!” protested one of God’s witnesses. “Of course, he understands all our languages. But our most important language is the language of the soul! Just listen to what he tells to his children...” started speaking the second old woman with a book, flipping with confident movements over several pages of the book at once.

“That you must believe his words and not those of some impostors? I knew that long before you came along.”

“Our God is merciful, he is ready to forgive your sins for a small fraction...”

“I haven’t rewritten my apartment to him for a long time? By the way, I would not advise you doing that either – Russia, as they say, was spoiled by the housing issue. We have no money, but we’re holding on. C’est la vie, arrivederci, hasta la vista – how do they say? We sincerely ask you to come next time with a real, genuine Christ. Until we meet again!” giving sectarians no time to recover, Oleg slammed an entrance door leading to their missed opportunities.

Having finally lost all hope to fulfill his current work plan in time, Oleg hastily threw the half-eaten sandwich in his travel bag, poured the rest of the coffee in a thermos, threw a winter jacket over his shoulders and in a hurried stance started moving in the direction of his own new year’s fate.

No sooner had he reached the bus stop than the phone happily informed him of a new – absolutely free of charge! – incoming call.

“Fearfallashfinance Bank is glad to offer you, our past regular client, new conditions and types of credit cards. The credit card’s issue has already been pre-approved for you by our bank. In order to receive it, if you agree to the updated terms of the credit agreement, you must...”

“Turn away in disgust!” Oleg somehow miraculously managed to interrupt the monologue of the bank employee that was uttered in a patter a second before pressing the coveted red button of his phone.

“No amount of red buttons will be enough for your kind,” he thought with annoyance, jumping into the opened door of the newly arrived bus.

Billboards glittering with all the colors of the rainbow. Young people peremptorily pushing colorful flyers into your hands. Huge screens on the walls of houses and shopping centers, day after day demonstrating their pre-recorded, pre-approved and pre-biased videos. Appearing here and there as if straight from the ground along the way advertising boxes. Morning Moscow was greeting Oleg from all sides with the mouths of its marketers, leaving no chance to remain uninvolved in this colorful nonsense.

On the move, dropping a call from yet another “Center for public opinion research”, persistently interested in the political views of his respondent and his attitude to sexual minorities, panting Oleg ran into the office of his permanent, but no more joyful workplace, maneuvering on the move between scurrying here and there like ants colleagues, more resembling cellmates for Oleg.

“The boss didn’t show himself?” he managed to ask a question to his colleague Lyudmila just a second before seeing his boss, who was confidently and imperiously heading straight to him with an expression that didn’t portend a single award.

“Oh my, isn’t that the appearance of Christ himself – sorry, just some pitiful Oleg! – to mankind!” the boss said sarcastically through his teeth. “That’s it, Oleg. If you want to keep at least a quarter of the new year’s bonus, quickly pick up the goods and sweep through the addresses. Lyudmila has already entered the current list into your database. And return only empty-handed!” the boss uttered his well-known in local circles joke, bared a pair of golden teeth and smoothly, slightly swaying from side to side like a heavy galleon under unruly winds, sailed off to his office.

“Out of sorts?” Oleg nodded understandingly in the direction of the boss.

“And when was he in?” without taking her head off the keyboard said Lyudmila and held out a sheet of paper leaning out of the printer.

“Here are the addresses. Goods are in the storehouse. Off you go!” she smiled. “Otherwise you will be left without a bonus for certain.”

\* \* \*

“Who’s there?” a voice came from the speaker of the intercom.

“Santa Claus!” Oleg uttered the memorized phrase.

“All right, come in. Make happy at least someone in this dark and cruel world,” came the answer, and the door obediently opened.

Nine floors of the next old building.

“Hello, Santa Claus! Brought us rubbish? How it goes?” Oleg mentally mocked himself.

An iron door on the ground floor with carved wood paneling. Looks solid. There’s a chance. Oleg adjusted his rented black business suit, coughed a couple of times, trying to clear his throat, and pressed the doorbell.

“Who the hell that winter brought?” came a dissatisfied greeting from behind the door after a dozen of seconds.

Oleg stiffly smiled, straightened up to attention, took a deep breath – and...

“Hello, my name is Oleg Alexandrov! Our company is holding a new year’s sale and right here and right now we have a unique offer – one that you surely will not be able to refuse!”

*2019-12-25*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Sentence

“Stand up, the court is beginning!”

“Stand up, everyone. Thanks! Now sit down, please. I declare a hearing on a poet’s case opened. I would like to remind both the prosecutor and the advocate that we are dealing with an extremely dangerous social element, masking under an assumed name, and unreasonably stating about the beginning of yet not totally clear cardinal changes of all world order.”

“An earth world order, mister judge. So the accused one told us.”

“Yes, I thank you, an accuser, for this clarification. All visible earth world order. Such naivety!”

“Mister judge, shall I start?”

“Certainly. We will first listen to the prosecution. You certainly have something to tell us?”

“Indeed I have! So, well, first of all, I would like to ask jurymen and everybody in this hall to pay attention to this if it’s even possible to say so, creative individual. Just look at what mad sight he possesses, how these very eyes sparkle with some strange and daring fire! And what an unprecedented impudence it is – to write about eternal life and potential human immortality! We, both judges and admirers of classical literature, have learned since school years one simple truth: trust, but check! And this very check of his frankly crazy literature trash cannot withstand any serious criticism. Mankind has been learning this for a long time – and it’s proven by views of true representatives of Christian belief, officially fixed on a paper – that a human as a being, possibly possessing some sort of soul, still lives one and only one life and is resolutely incapable of revival in new appearances. Let us not take into consideration all that absurd, flying from mouths of those so-called spiritual leaders of the East, for they do not even worth a single bit of criticism. What complete nonsense is the statement, that a man does not die permanently, please tell, gathered Lords? Alas, by the will of God himself we were made mortal, for from the ashes we are born and to the ashes, we go. Alas, but such is the world order that we are capable to comprehend... and during seven thousands of years we, I bet, have managed to understand it up and down! And, just because man is a being essentially frankly and suddenly mortal, so, these “writings” about endless life and, as a consequence, the New World, is simply a delirium of a feeble-minded! And that very individual, facing you, is indeed a mad one, for only crazy ones are capable to create similar stuff so selflessly and disinterestedly.

I confirm, may be accused one really possesses some creative gift, but who can give a guarantee, that these are not the intrigues of enemies of the human race, desiring to ruin and destroy all our stability once and for all? We just cannot make up with his nonsense, for his statements undermine all basis of the managed statehood, which we have been building for quite a while.

And, besides, – they undermine almost all our cultural beliefs, all our traditions, foundations, rituals, habits, and even prejudices, eventually!

Here is before you, mister judge, and I will not escape this word, is simply and plainly a spiritual terrorist! He is the enemy of our entire society, of all our ideals, for which we have been preparing this very society for many years already. He is plainly a madman! He is capable of ruining all our tradition, our power, all that stability, which we have been trying to achieve. He just simply scoffs at people and brainwashes them... They would better watch that television, drink, and guzzle, after all, than read so mind-corrupting verses!

The past cannot come back and be returned – and this means that men cannot be revived, it's absolutely impossible, I simply refuse to believe that, mister judge – and I hope that you share my fears, concerning similar potential sudden changes of spiritual consciousness of people, conducted by us. This change is absolutely undesired by us – as well as the world does not desire similar madmen.

Look, just take a single look at how false and pathetically accused one is now trying to look me in the face... B-r-r-r-r-g-g-g-h-h! My skin is just starting to crawl, mister judge. There is something, something really terrible in his eyes – as well as in this person. We cannot allow him to influence minds of those loyal to us, to make him pervert them and take away from a path of patriotism and holy belief – that very orthodox belief, which he tramples with each word, each hint, each appeal to break down spiritual fetters!

How is that possible to consider oneself a believing person – and not to follow all canons and rituals of orthodox church? How is that ever possible to assert, that God never lived in temples? How is that possible to deny all moral advantage of fanatical religious ecstasy? How is that possible not to recognize so democratically elected government, after all? Terrorist, he is one of the most dangerous terrorists in the entire history of our state!

All of you have seen his works, and our psychotherapists have recently also taken out their professional conclusion: this man is mad! And this statement is proven by leading country's physicians in their official conclusions, which I am eager to present to your attention, mister judge, as well as to the attention of jurymen. Therefore, I warmly ask you, mister judge, to stop any further fatal activity of this individual and to place him where he should belong – to imprison him in a psychiatric clinic for years to come, up to that day, when a Savior himself – if he even exists, of course – in a flesh and with his entire glory will descend into our world to aid our just souls to escape the bosom of shades without any efforts from our side! Mister judge, I have finished speaking.”

“I thank you for such a long and touching – I would even say, warm – speech. And, I believe, that all those gathered in this hall, his relatives included, are extremely touched by such boldness and frankness of yours! Well, and now, I guess, it's still necessary to listen to the advocate, if he, of course, has something valuable to tell to those gathered in this hall today. Defense, the word is given to you right now.”

“I thank you, mister judge. You know, I am in deep love with my profession, and it's not I who should tell you, how it's very necessary for all of us to behave with concern to others, trying to help, but...”

You know, mister judge, I believe that this is just not the case. I tried to, I would really like to be humane and capable to tell something considerable and important in the justification of my defendant, but... I have no words to make that today. I... do not see sufficient reasons for the accused to be somehow pardoned or justified. As well as the prosecution I consider his isolation from society a necessity – for as long as possible. I have had my saying.”

“Well... I thank you. You can take a seat. How do you believe, the accuser, is there is a reason to ask the opinion of the accused one?”

“I... do not believe that opinion of a madman can have any sense at all, mister judge.”

“In that case, the court leaves for decision-making.”

\* \* \*

“Everybody, stand up! Thanks. Now please sit down. Based on the indications of defense and prosecution and having taken into consideration opinion of jurymen, the court has decided: to recognize accused one as deranged and, as a consequence, incapacitated and to imprison him in a psychiatric hospital for a term of at least one year with possibility of its further prolongation, according to the independent medical expertise. This sentence is definitive and is not subject to appeal. Please escort the accused one to a place of his future settlement immediately. And may God help him!”

\* \* \*

They laughed loudly and mocked him. They spat in his face. They frankly exulted.

“So, have they caught you, Napoleon-of-all-the-Russia?”

“Place him in the sixth chamber!”

“The author rocks behind the locks!”

“You’ve been caught, the sentence’s terse... what a funny, such cool verse!”

The first aid brigade has put an immobilizing white shirt on a person and dragged him through all area up to a car, parked nearby and howling with all voices of the underworld. The arrested person did not resist – for now, it was unnecessary. The crowd shouted and aspired to snatch on the newly made prisoner, and a separate group of agents of national security, accompanying physicians, had to push aside those too quick. The man was needed for a regime alive – a living sign of its victory over own conscience and honor.

Still, recently solar sky suddenly began to become covered by clouds. They crept and crept one after another from the horizon, covering each other and quickly closing a firmament. After a ten-fifteen minutes time span, the sky has become almost completely black. Soon the first lightning sparkled and rain began to drum on a roadway with its large juicy drops. The storm was almost ready to be born. The sky conducted its own sentence to each and every living one.

2011-01-14

Genre: Short story

Category: Recognized

## To forgive

A blow. And yet another one.

Small streams of blood, flowing down from a torn apart skin.

Pain. Waves of pain, twitching the body in spasms, dimming the reason.

Desperate silent semi-cry, full of indescribable grief.

Angry face of the father, bent absolutely close. Naked wide-open eyes... a sight, filled with rage and fury.

Pain again, as always. More. Even more.

A lump of something warm, stuck in a throat, leaving no way to make a breath. A spittle on a floor – a spittle with blood.

“Father, stop it! I b-b-b-b-e-e-e-g-g-g you... what f-o-o-r-r-r?!”

“You, pitiful moron! Didn’t I tell you, that you must speak with adults politely and with all imaginable respect?! Especially with one such as I! How have you dared to call me an insect? How have you dared to name your father as such?! You, ungrateful degenerate! Take that, you, bastard! Take it, maggot!”

A rattle, coming from a throat. It’s possible to breathe no more.

“Stop it, now! Why are you beating my child again, you, fool! What sort of vile beast are you? Stop it now – you are going to kill him!”

A voice of his mother, which had hardly reached his consciousness – silent and tender voice, which has become both hard as a stone and yet somehow completely broken. It always was like that when his father punished him. But yet no more than that.

“Silence, woman! You are not in a position to give me orders here! I am in charge here, and you will carry out my will! That bastard has dared to call me an insect – and I do not forgive such foolishness! Did you hear me right?! I am a man to be proud and not some little pitiful louse – and I grant no forgiveness for such mistakes. Ever!”

A new blow, time and again. How damn painful is that... His body didn’t become iron, no matter how strongly he thirsted for it in times...

And once again the voice of his mother breaches through the invisible veil – but this time it’s so quiet... almost silent. How strange... does she speak like that... or has he already ceased to hear?

A blow.

The world changed – all sounds simply vanished. Judging by faces of his parents, it was obvious, that they were still arguing – but he heard them no longer.

It appeared that father shouted something once in response to his wife, but then, suddenly, confusion break through to his face, and he almost lowered his hand, carrying a weighty wooden club... But – just for an instance. Only partially. Suddenly his face once again altered his form to a furious and terribly repellent kind. He turned back to his child. Now. He is going to strike once more now...

A blow. A blow. A blow.

A breaking wood. A new flash of pain.

The world dimmed.

\* \* \*

A low voice, caressing hearing like warm waves of a sea surf. A bent face of his mother over his own. A flowing calm song.

A mix of gray and fair hair. Gray-haired... But she, his lovely mum, was yet so young... I must have the strength to sustain it. I have to – no matter what. I am obliged. No other choice is an option. I must.

And the oblivion comes again.

He opened his eyes. Indeed, it's still his world, the one he was born in. A kind one?

Mother, his dear mother has always been telling him, that this world is the one people see it – and the one they aspire to make it. The world becomes as such to every and each one. Good or evil, beautiful or ugly, full of incredible mysteries or totally senseless. It's impossible to say how, but the personal world becomes as such, time and again.

He closed his eyes. The hearing was slowly returning, and his body, though hardly, was gradually starting to be felt.

Then he fell asleep once more – and has been sleeping for a long time. It seemed to him as if the whole eternity has passed before his sleeping eyes, though in reality, it was, possibly, less than a whole day. He heard voices of people – heard their laughter and felt their joy. He exulted together with them, he sang with them all and his voice somehow intertwined in the common harmony of voices and then a song-joy, a song-triumph sounded even finer and happily. He rejoiced along with others – ones, able to rejoice. He loved life – despite obstacles, despite troubles. Indeed, he loved life...

And then he suddenly woke up...

\* \* \*

A young man woke up and shook his head somehow awkwardly, trying to drive away recent delusion of a beating. Was that really a delusion, though?

No. He perfectly did know that it happened once – was part of his past. Indeed, he remembered it – what for, why couldn't he just throw away all these fragments of former memory of own tortures, why his devoted memory had no desire to do such a thing? For what unknown purpose did it store these old memories of years long since gone? Who knows for sure...

He tried to drive these events from his thoughts so hard, so strenuously thirsted to forget them... But – no way, it wasn't possible until now.

Why even now, when he was given so much by this life at last... his beloved woman, who is so close to his heart and who understands him from a half-word, loving deeply; fine job, allowing him to aid lots of people; glory, riches, recognition, success... why even now these terrible images – monsters of his past – still haunt him, flowing before his eyes time and again, as always? A reminder of what he had to suffer?

A warning?

Enough of running away, he thought suddenly. Enough of fearing. Enough of remembering of this and enough of constant milling it in own memory. The time has come to forgive people at last – to forgive for errors, to forgive and release this pain from oneself.

To forget – and to forgive. To forgive – and to forget.

And then, having faced a window and lifted eyes towards to ascending morning sun, he cried out “Father, I do forgive you now for all the pain and sufferings, which you have caused me. I forgive you and let you go in peace. Go now your own path. We will part our ways with no rage and hatred. Let you be forgiven by me!”

He cried all that loudly and joyfully. He cried as though warriors do after a long-desired victory.

“I forgive you! Let it be so!”

“Let it be so,” his voice was carried far away to surroundings...

And just a moment later a wonderful music, a music of joy and triumph filled his ears. It was his own music – that one of his childhood.

A sign of his way.

*2003-04-02*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Five in the boat, not counting the cat

*All happy families are similar at each other, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way (c)  
L.N.Tolstoy*

“The storm is approaching,” the captain of a vessel has noticed. “We may be not in time. We should better...”

“We will be in time!” the Mistress has unceremoniously interrupted. “If you have obeyed me three hundred and twenty-seven strokes back, we wouldn’t even be caught by it. I have been telling you, dolt, – to the south, to the south we had to row! And what did you say – we’ll go north, we’ll go north! Sail now to the east, oh my ingenious one! And don’t even dare to break our family boat!”

“Oh, don’t you start it,” the Captain got confused. “Just imagine, how beautiful the north is! The polar lights, colds, stopping the blood, wind’s howl that makes you lose your hearing, penguins on ice floes, after all...”

“Yeah, penguins are an interesting topic. I would like to see at least one of them live,” the Middle brother has interrupted the conversation.

“And I desire to go to the West,” the Elder brother said suddenly. “Life is a way better there and people are more cultural – don’t swear like some other.”

“So you’ll swim there alone, in your next life. If you have sufficient brains. And now we’ll sail to the southeast!” the Mistress was becoming even angrier.

“Heck, to the south or to the east, make up ye mind at last!” it was obvious, that Captain was already starting to feel the rage.

“At first to the south, and then to the east, wasn’t that clear enough? Or do you need an instruction for each and every stroke?”

“Don’t need,” the Captain has taken offense. “I’ll somehow manage it myself, move away!”

And, having this said, he has flopped on vessel’s prow and started to fiercely beat the water with oars, as if waves of salty moisture were capable to extinguish a fire, periodically inflaming his soul.

“And where are we sailing now?!” the Mistress has exclaimed both unceremoniously and pathetically five minutes after the supervision over this nonsense. “There is no north over there! You have not even turned a boat!”

“If you are such a smart one, take oars and row yourself!” the Captain bawled. “You cannot even appreciate the help!”

“I don’t want such ‘help’ even free of charge. You all are just useless, I have to do it all myself!”

And with these words, the Mistress has taken a seat on a stern and started to make elegant pirouettes on the water with oars.

A stroke. And yet again. And several tens of strokes as well. W-h-o-o-w-w-w-h-h-h! – and a wave, which has suddenly rolled on a vessel, washed away half of the stock, which was located there, having not spared even banal food.

“What have you made, asshole!” the Mistress cried out. “All our emergency rations were there, for evil day prepared! The last gifts of my mother were there! Not for you, for my children all that I’ve prepared, by grains collected! What a clumsy one are you, indeed!”

“As if I had not done it for children!” the Captain frowned. “And, yeah, if that’s so important for you, you must have fastened it better!”

“So I did! Attached everything, tied it all up! Who might have known, that you will be able to wash it all away in a single flash!”

“The luggage was washed away by a wave,” the Middle has had enough time to interrupt the skirmish. “A man cannot command waves.”

“The storm is coming,” the Elder has noticed. “I can already see in on the horizon.”

“Just look at what you have done!” as though not hearing him, the Mistress continued to exclaim. “Has washed away our stock, woken the Younger.”

“Yep, yep,” the Younger brother sniffed from a boat’s corner, still opening his eyes. “Has woken, woken! Bad, nasty!”

“...And even managed to water our cat!”

“Miaow!” said the cat, who has just got out from under a seat and started to lick own wet wool extensively. “Miaow!” she has repeated once more and with a reproach in her cattish eyes stared at all the heroes of element’s triumph.

“You row in opposite directions,” the Elder has sarcastically noticed. “Are you planning to continue or going to stop right away? The storm is already close.”

“Storm, storm! Mummy, mum! Save, rescue!” the Younger began to cry.

“Now, my little one, just a moment! All these dolts have not even the slightest idea, that we must row to the south! Only mum knows it all, can do it all, predicts it all! She will help, she will rescue!”

“Miaow?” a stained cat has interrogatively stared at her.

“A storm, however, you haven’t foreseen,” the Elder hemmed. “Come on, let me replace you,” he told to the Mistress and unceremoniously took one oar. The Middle took the second.

“We will sail to the north tomorrow, three altogether,” the Elder stated, addressing the Captain. “And now let’s row to the east all as one,” the Middle has added as well. “Ok, let’s go!”

A stroke. And the next one. And several more hundreds of them.

They have almost reached the coast – but the storm has caught them nevertheless. It flung the boat and began to whirl it, pouring with waves. It washed away another part of a luggage stock. It, finally, for the second time didn't spare an unfortunate cat, who had already started to dry up on a wind. It struck captain's face several times with its waves. It reached a stern with Elder and Middle brothers. It poured with water a screaming Younger one.

In short, it was rigid. But not omnipotent.

The storm has come to an end, and the coast has finally appeared. Just a two hundred meters. Just a leaking and dilapidated boat. Just a wet cat, rubbing about feet in a vain attempt to warm oneself.

“Retards!” a Mistress has shouted short after coming to her senses. “Broken a boat! Washed away the luggage! Watered the Younger one! I have no more powers, monsters!” and with these words, she has seized Younger brother and together with him has jumped overboard, strenuously swimming to a coast in a southern direction.

Three remained heroes of the day (four, considering a wet cat as a passenger) with the last bit of strength finally sailed to a coast, taking out water, accumulating in a worn out boat, in a process.

“So, where are we going to travel now?” the ex-captain interrogatively looked at them.

“To the West,” the Elder brother said confidently. “Storm warnings are usually announced there in advance.”

“Well, and I then, probably, will travel East, for the sake of variety,” the Middle one decided.

“So, well, if things are that way and my leadership is no more necessary to everybody, I will go, perhaps, to the north,” the Captain of the broken boat noticed enthusiastically. “Always dreamt of visiting the north at least once in my ex-captain's life...”

*P.S.* So, and how's cat's destiny turned out? Living well, we guess. Having jumped out in the last moment from her recent dwelling, which has broken on its way ashore, she has indifferently curved her back and, having caved in, has splashed from herself the rest of this inutile moisture, impregnated with salt of life, mewed few times encouragingly, and run, where the tail directs. Have granted herself to the new way of life.

2010-04-10

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Born for life

“Mummy, mummy, look, it’s the shop I have told you about! Let’s go there and you buy me that big transformer that I have asked, ok?”

“No, sonny, you’ll get a transformer on your birthday – and currently we have no money for such entertainments.”

“But mummy, please! I have begged you of that for so long. I want that transformer I’ve told you so much! He’s the leader of good transformers which are battling with Megatron, I want exactly him! Please, mummy, buy! And I will clear all my room, ok? Well, mummy, ok? Will you buy?”

“Pavel, no. I have already told you – I cannot buy it for you at present. Only on your birthday. But now I cannot. I cannot. All right, and now let’s go buy some food. We shall make something tasty for a supper, well?”

“All right...” but there is was no way possible to tell by the voice of a kid that he would gladly trade off the possibility to possess a toy of his dream for one tasty pie or cake.

Mother – still a rather young woman of thirty years and her son – one could give him five-six year judging by his look, – turned away and starting moving into the opposite from a toy shop direction. The child sighed and finally turned away his look. He didn’t manage to beg mummy once again, and this means that he’ll have to wait for several more month to get his favorite toy... However, they didn’t manage to travel for long.

“Lena! Lenochnka, is that you?” and some woman approached his mother.

His mother turned to face her and a smile appeared on her face.

“Olga! Hello! By what ways have you managed to be here?”

“I am on a business trip. Public relations, business meetings. Well, you understand me,” and she smiled. “Well, and how are you living?”

“Normally. Not so smartly as you do, certainly, but quite well nevertheless.”

They kept silence for a while.

“After all, we haven’t seen each other for ten years...” for some reason his mother said this even somehow sadly.

“Yes, ten years... How fast did they pass for me... just like an instant. And what about you?”

“No, for me it was not quick. They were interesting for me. Totally thanks to him,” and his mother pointed to him with a hand.

“Oh, that must be Pa... Pavel, right? And I remember him being a tiny child... Hello, Pavlik,” said this woman and, having stretched his hand, added, “give a woman a hand!”

He looked at his mother. She was smiling as if saying – “well, sonny, greet this aunt”. Then he transferred his look to the unfamiliar woman and slightly given her his hand. When she has taken his small palm into her own as if some sort of cold and at the same time burning wave passed through it. He fitfully, sharply and awkwardly drawn his hand aside.

“Just look at how unsociably are we!” the unfamiliar woman frowned eyebrows and pursed her lips. “Well, fine, if you don’t want to greet me well – have it your way. At least I have no such problems,” she added slightly more silently. “Listen, Lenysya. I stopped here in one hotel for about five days. I could call on you somehow – let’s talk with each other, after all, we haven’t met for quite a while, old friends, that sort of things,” the stranger woman smiled. “Well, how’s that?”

His mother reflected for a while.

“All right,” she answered about five seconds after. “I will gladly meet with you. Come tonight – I write down my street address to you.”

Then there were digging in bags, searches for pieces of paper, specifications of address. He listened no more. When after ten more minutes his mother finally said goodbye to that woman, she approached him, winked and told – “Today aunt Olya will come to us. Be the clear head and behave well,” and mother kissed him on a forehead.

He shuddered when he heard it. He shuddered from the very thought that he must stand near this woman again, to sustain her sight full of hostility, and even greet and say goodbye to her again! Perhaps, he couldn’t explain precisely even to yourself of what exactly he disliked in that woman, – but already at the thought of her, he was filled with disgust.

“I don’t want her to come to us,” he whispered.

“You don’t want? What does it mean that you don’t want? No, we cannot refuse her. Sonny, I haven’t seen her for much time, and she is my former classmate. I cannot refuse her offer!”

“I don’t want, don’t want, don’t want it! She is a bad woman, I don’t want her to come!”

“Stop it! Cease these idle talks immediately! Now we will come back home and I shall cook a meal and then we will be awaiting her. And no but’s to me!”

The child began crying. He began crying when his mother pulled him by hand and led home, giving no chance not to obey her desire. The feeling of extreme loneliness and forlornness overwhelmed him – as though the entire world together with his mother in a flash of time turned away from him.

They were going and going back home. For all road long he has been imagining himself how that woman continuously drills him with her gaze, and he desired to burst out crying even more strongly. When this painful and unceasingly long way has finally come to an end, and he entered their house, – he ran into his room, rushed on a bed and having closed himself from disappointment by a pillow and concealed himself in a blanket, went silent.

He vaguely remembered what was going on after. It seemed mother has finally found him in his shelter. It seemed she forced him to put on some awkward ironed suit. It seemed they have been waiting for the guest then. This expectation appeared painful – and when he saw before him the face of this woman with a fake smile on it when he was forced to feel this ice-burning touch once more – he almost started crying again. Then his mother for long has been chatting with that woman. He didn't listen to them – he was allowed to sit alone in the room (oh, how he was glad of that!). Only occasionally scraps of words and phrases reached him.

“...hi! Here I am...”

“...ite?”

“...yep. This is my business suite. So, how do I look like in that?”

“...my... what's that?”

“...don't look at a bracelet! Better look at these earrings...”

“...yes...”

“...yes, come in.”

“...oh, such close space... How... live like that?!”

“...how can. Not... rich.”

“...yes...”

“...faugh, away! Have gathered... ur creatures! I am having allergy on a wool!”

Then conversation, apparently, became totally silent, so he could hear nothing. Besides, he didn't listen too attentively – only loud sounds from time to time reached his ears.

“...and?”

“...so what?”

“...oh, really?”

“...and how are you?”

“...still the same?”

“...oh, never mind... what of you?”

Like that it has been going for about an hour more. Then all went silent for some reason – and fifteen minutes later amazed voice of his mother loudly shouted...

“What have you done?!”

“...abandoned. Not a big deal or damage! Besides he... not... uired.”

“...child... left?! In... maternity house?”

“...have told – he was not required for me. But this... bastard survived... even... usage... pills! To go to do... abort... with friends... not. And... use... I... left him... there... some compassionate woman... take care... him.”

“...how... could you?! He... live... an!”

“...for me... who cares? Was... ive and will be live, if... taken care! I... don't care. I... my own life... don't want... waste... such... ids! I... still... oung. Figure... should take care. Well... you understand.”

“...not understand! How many... yours... abandoned?! How many were left alone?! They must... ably... died!”

“...well... left two... abort...made... three times. And... no look like that... me! It's... my life after all!”

Then his mother once again started speaking silently for some reason – and a minute later her loud voice made him clamp own ears...

“...from my apartment... not a friend! You... iller! Small... hild killed! Abandoned! Get away!”

A noise followed and he, having looked out from a door of his room, has seen, how his mother almost pushed out that woman to an exit door.

“...et away! No... uch... friend!”

“...ill leave! No such... upid... lf-sacrificial silly woman for me!”

Several more seconds passed and with a roar the door was closed. When he heard the noise of approaching steps, he rushed on a bed and concealed himself with a blanket. His mother came close to him, lifted up a blanket and strongly embraced him. She was crying.

“Forgive me... onny. I should have listened to you. You felt her better than I did. I... could not. I didn't think... that... such a... ruel!... ve me, darling!”

He looked at his mother. Saw these sad crying eyes, felt these warm hands, this overwhelming him love – and selflessly hugged his mother.

“...cannot... image... should feel... at child... was... being killed!... only... enter the world... was instead... ruthlessly... murdered! My God! What... for! Such... ittle... kid... killed!”

His mother continued crying. He nestled on her even stronger.

“You... me... Will not... allow... to hurt you! My darling... Pasha... live... small... man!”

“I love you, mummy!”

“Sonny, I too do love you!”

\* \* \*

“That' it. I clearly remember that day still, even though I was about five years old by that time.”

“Have you not met that woman afterward?”

“No. And neither did my mother – relations with that woman were finished forever. Mother didn’t want to see her in our house any longer.”

“Yes, probably you are right. How good is that you have not happened to be a ‘son’ of such a mother! Because then I would probably have not ever met you in that world.”

“And I too would never meet you. Yes, someone is ready to kill children – they are being killed each and every day. No one even considers how many people could be born – and has been killed because of fear of responsibility, foolish whim, because of cowardice, cruelty... Soon the motherhood and the birth of even a single child will become similar to a feat of courage... the most natural will become the ‘privilege of great people’... It’s good to know that there are still those who are not afraid of this ‘feat’, there are mothers. We were lucky. It’s a pity that others were not so. It’s worth hoping that people will rethink and understand, that all their ‘aborts’ are murders. Justifications have no value – there is an act and there is a consequence – for the world and for the actor himself. And they cannot be changed – until actions themselves remain the same.”

“Yes, I know, you are speaking the truth. But let’s stop thinking of that at least for a second, ok? All right? And now, Pavel, take me by my hand. Stronger! Not listen to what I wanna tell you...”

*2005-01-06*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Free like a wind

The azure smooth surface of a sea sparkled and shined under beams of a rising sun. Waves rolled over each other, foamed – and, having been picked up by a new stream, – were carried away. A fresh breeze was blowing – one that happens here day after another – one who has collected its tribute of moisture from a sea and was now desperately throwing it in the faces of men in a form of brilliant cold drops. A wind inflated sails and they, sagging before its force, were heeling the ship sideways. But – only slightly. Strong cables, adhering a vessel to a coast, didn't desire to grant a wind even the slightest chance to shift this machine even for ten meters.

A captain's shout ringed in the air – and sailors began to descend from ship's masts to continue their duty on a deck. Soon this frigate will leave a port into its next sailing, but for now – there were shouts, carried downwind, the noise of adjusted tackles, the soft scratch of ship's boards, which has been accepting the next portion of cargo on board, and yet a wind's whistle in a face.

A strange and unclear premonition was still making him feel uneasy: a melancholy of abandoned – even for a day or two, while new provisions were being bought and captain's assistants were conducting brisk conversations with dealers, trying to lower prices for goods, – but still home, new home among boundless waters and storm... a joy of incoming adventure and some sort of strange presentiment, that the life he has been experiencing, for now, will very soon change, that his path will sharply be altered and he will be compelled to make a new important step in own life. Two weeks ago this sensation was born in him, three months ago he became a ship's boy...

“If a man trusts himself – he can once achieve his dare dreams. Remember it well, sonny,” words of his father, which he, a simple tailor, gave him before son's journey – into his new travel into boundless sea spaces, into a path that has been awaiting him since childhood and called for in magic dreams. A path that was going to change so soon, granting him a new choice.

A captain's shout rings aloud once again in the air – and sailors start lifting sails. Their captain was an inborn leader – a bane of pirates of the Caribbean Sea, he in his youth has made his name himself through dozens of brilliant attacks on pirate vessels. A remarkable strategist and even greater tactician, he has now become a sea trader – one of many. Yet the power has always been with him – even now it was swirling in that man, loudly appealing to his crew for the frigate's departure from a port.

\* \* \*

Raised and fluttering sails. A light breeze blowing in the face – soon it will change to the approaching squall and they will have to lower sails and start maneuvering downwind among rolling multimeter waves, so that storm cannot turn the ship sideways – even though a wind can change its direction more often than once in a minute.

But all that will happen in fifteen or twenty minutes, when a storm will finally overtake them – and for now he was looking forward, on a boundless smooth water surface, opening before his eyes, and a sensation of the approaching of the time of a choice and changes, how he has agreed to call it for himself, were becoming only clearer and stronger.

More than once during these three months of his new life among open seas their ship has passed through the most dashing and desperate storms, which have been known to the Caribbean Sea in the last two years. And each time the captain and team pulled it out of the most, apparently, desperate situations – evaded from direct attacks of several buccaneer barks and from battles in private with titans – enemy frigates and even once with a galleon ship. For this is the way their captain was – free like a wind adventurer and bane of pirates, knowing no such word as a retreat.

\* \* \*

Furiously the wind whistled and waves showered boards of the vessel, trying to break or tilt their frigate on one side so that in a new impetuous pressure they can definitely finish off these pity daredevils, who have dared to struggle against mighty water elements.

The storm has been raging for almost an hour.

Waves have been beating on all boards of the vessel. The wind blew off from feet even those men slowly creeping on a deck of the ship, waves washed away into the storming sea and absorbed into its abyss crewmen, still shouting something in their last minutes.

This was one of the most terrible storms into which their vessel has got this year – or maybe these years. He knew not – he only saw how easily the sea finished with all those whom he has always considered as invincible... unbeaten until this dreadful day.

The new wave pours over him, trying to pull out a saving cable from hands – and yet another desperately floundering man is carried away, rolling on a deck with a scrap of rope in hands... a splash, which sound sinks in the noise of wind – and everything is over...

Waves, waves, waves. Wind, wind, wind.

A saving cable in hands – his unique link with this ship – and the only rescue.

Storm. A cruel wind, rushing about here and there.

The elements triumphed.

\* \* \*

He didn't know how much time has already passed. He knew nothing of the location of a ship. He cannot see other crewmen – only sea waves, whipping on the ship's board, only a scratch of ship's planks underwater weights – and own immobilized hands, holding an iron rope.

Minute, two, three... Ten, twenty, thirty...

Slowly did time flow. Methodically did waves beat in the ship. Voices of crewmen have been silenced already – whistling of wind muffled all other sounds. The body cannot be felt, only the thought – lonely though-phrase, preventing him to immediately uncouple own hands and be washed off into the water, – “If a man trusts himself – he can once achieve his dare dreams”. To keep believing was the only thing he could do for now – to trust himself and remain courageous. And then he can survive. And then he should survive.

Consciousness ceased to serve him at times – and then strange dreams were seizing him...

He saw himself as an admiral of a huge squadron. He saw himself giving orders to captains of his ships during battles – and people with both boldness and readiness in their eyes going to execute these orders. People trusted him and were ready to offer their lives for him to live on, but he was ready to sacrifice his own for his people to survive – and fought himself on a front line – with pirates and robbers, who have filled these once peaceful spaces of recently unknown sea – in the sea and on the land, when they were starting to assault a seaport. He battled the enemy of his state as well – yet this was far less often.

He saw himself promoted to some rank, saw faces of court men inclined in respect and admired ones of his sailors-soldiers, when he was approaching them, openly bearing the award...

And then he saw his dark blue insensible hands and a floor of the vessel, being constantly poured by sea waves. Saw fixed on the ship and moved here and there iron rope, being grasped by his hands. And then despair overflowed him.

And then once again – oblivion. And again – a storm. Oblivion. Storm. Oblivion. Storm.

And then he regained consciousness once more – and there was no cable in his hands any longer. He was being carried by waves among heaps of boards – by some sort of miracle he was still alive. He collected last bits of forces and grasped a wide thick tree log – possibly, remains of a mast of their former ship, – there were no more doubts that their ship has been destroyed. He pulled this piece of wood and clasped to it, trying to hold.

And once again comes the oblivion...

\* \* \*

When he opened his eyes once again, the storm has already extinguished – the sun was shining and its rays were jumping and playing in the water. He was being carried on azure waters of this sea together with a piece of the former mast, and once again he could count only on himself – and own force of spirit.

And thus he was keeping. Gathering the last bits of remaining forces. Knowing that he has practically no hope for survival. And nevertheless, he was keeping. And waves were throwing a pity ship’s piece together with a man, who has seized it...

And when a vessel appeared on the horizon, he had no more strength even to rejoice – or to send a signal. But he was noticed – and a ship slowly and smoothly approached a small branch of the tree together with seizing it in a death grip unmoving person.

For now, he could barely remember these moments. It seems that after he has been dragged aboard and men have started reviving him, they tried to ask him of something. However, everything he was able to tell his saviors were some muffled lows of disobeying lips.

Then he was placed into some cabin and has been sleeping for long-long. From time to time he woke up from nightmares and couldn't come to his senses for quite a while... But he finally regained common sense after a month of this sailing on this trading vessel, as he has learned afterward from its captain.

A month was necessary for him to prove that he is worthy of living – and several more years to prove that he is worthy of a better life – so that a fork of his way and its consequences have become visible at last.

He has stayed for a month on a ship that has picked him up – in thirty miles from a destroyed vessel. As he has learned later when he could be roused after two weeks, the captain of the ship that has rescued him, – after he has become a witness of the tragedy which has comprehended his former ship, – has given an order to search the area for survivors. But there was no one live found in five miles' radius from the wreckage. The captain of the rescue ship couldn't tell if there was anyone else who has survived the storm – anyway they couldn't find any.

Yet he survived – by some sort of miracle. As the captain of the rescue vessel told him, they have already lost hope to find any survivors and have started sailing further, and almost the moment after they have stumbled upon him – lying on a piece of a tree which he didn't want to part with when they were trying to lift him up and drag on a ship's deck. They have tried to find out what has happened to him and whether he has been one of the survivors from a vessel, witnesses of which destruction they have recently become – yet he was so emaciated and thick, that they could achieve nothing from him. Then he was put in a cabin and was treated the best way they could do it. Two weeks from that month during which they have been sailing to a seaport, he has lain in bed. Ate very little, slept a lot. At times he rose in cold sweat from the bed, shouting something that he would have the power to pass through it and survive, that he must do that, that he is free and his own way would soon completely reveal before him. They didn't listen to that attentively – considered it all a delirium.

For two weeks he has been struggling for a living. No, for two weeks and three days. The rescue vessel has passed a tragedy spot only three days after a storm – and only after three days after mentioned events, it has picked him up in the sea. A sea, which was already quiet and solar by that time...

For two more weeks, he has been sailing together with them on their course – when his new life has started, the one which had no chances for upcoming if he has surrendered before. If he has ceased to struggle, has despaired. He hasn't despaired. Hasn't surrendered. He was battling – and has won to start a new life – a premonition of which didn't leave him before.

\* \* \*

“James, tell the captain of the ‘Guard’ to set course for Plymouth. We are coming back home.”

“Aye, it shall be done, captain!”

“Wheel to the right! Trim the sails to the wind!”

“Let’s turn, let’s turn! We are heading for Plymouth!”

Shouts were carried downwind. Sailors carried about on the ship.

He was looking forward – on today’s peaceful sea surface, flying seagulls. It’s time for the squadron to return home – battle has been won, and home is calling. They will repair ships and replenish provisions and will be on the way once again, – free like wind sea wanderers. He and his crew – devoted and trusting him, their admiral.

Yes, they will return to a harbor. But at first, they will sail to a different city – the one where he has grown and hasn’t been for such a long time... long seven years...

Returning home... He will see his father, a common tailor, once again, after these five years – the father who have told him such important words in that memorable day of trials. If a man trusts himself, he can achieve much...

Yes, these words were sustaining him. They were holding him when he was sinking in a storm. They were keeping him when he, already being a captain of own ship, – has been fighting in seas. These words have kept him. And they are keeping him now – after these long seven years.

They are still keeping him. The one who does not surrender.

*2005-01-05*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Perfection

Tommy Whistler was awesomely unlucky. You will, perhaps, tell us that the term “awesome” doesn’t quite fit for the description of so sad objective reality, which dear Tommy has faced? Oh, if you had only known what his family had to pass through over the last year! You, certainly, don’t have the slightest idea of that and therefore we are ready to forgive you such inconvenient and unreasonable remarks. And Tommy didn’t even whistle on a constant basis – only quietly under his nose from time to time during short moments of spiritual bliss. And they, believe us or not, weren’t that long. And how he has managed to come to this low-water financial mark – only the God or the accountant knows.

Some soul would probably tell us, that a single year – it isn’t quite a term, and there is no reason to dive into hysteric and confuse our noble readers here, – but that depends on how to measure. If to measure this term in seconds, which precisely like a herd of lambs come one after another in a never-ending chain – one can easily turn into a sheep himself. And if to measure in events of his life –one will certainly cry and there will be no more wish for counting. The ideal option would be to measure in years – but what’s there is to measure then? So Tommy had either to howl to the moon like a wolf, or to the dog like a kitten or to go at once and register without a second thought in a club of anonymous losers. There was still, however, one other option to become a family of totally and irreversibly enlightened people – but financial opportunities of Tommy’s family didn’t allow them to place such a great number of lighting fixtures in their house. Therefore, his family hasn’t conducted calculations of own misfortunes for a long time, for it’s an expensive procedure – to measure own sorrows, especially when you are swimming in low waters.

And for the last three months, everything was on the decline, though absolutely not forever. Salary at the enterprise, where Tommy has been working, was constantly delayed, and all its workers were in literal and figurative terms fed with breakfasts. In literal – because he as an employee of a dairy factory was subject to be supplied with milk and its derivatives, and in figurative – because terms of final payments were as changeable and unsteady as women of easy virtue – even uneasy ones – never happen to be. Mainly for that particular reason, he felt more and more like a small sprat in a bank – that particular bank when he, having trusted colorful words of marketing specialists a few years ago, has issued a mortgage.

A typical story, you will tell us? Typical, but not typically. Not typically from the word “absolutely”. Because in that significant day something absolutely out of order of his previous accidents happened to him.

\* \* \*

During that Saturday morning Tommy couldn’t find any peace in at least two meanings: firstly, because bank workers were already going to literally throw them away in the upcoming future from their cozy dwelling due to failure to pay the credit; and secondly, because not cats were scraping his soul, but impudent mice instead, who have bred in fair quantity due to cats constant fatigue.

“What for? What for, Lord, have you given us all these trials? Don’t you see how hard our life is? Even though we live in the most beautiful and democratic country of the world, bank clerks don’t become better, housing doesn’t get cheaper and milk doesn’t form rivers with a land of milk and honey,” so Tommy Whistler mentally lamented, walking to and fro in his bedroom since early morning.

Here we have to mention, that our dear Tommy wasn’t quite a believer at all – in the sense that he, unlike a lot of other proud of themselves and respectable citizens of his small town, hasn’t spent Sunday hour in a local church, listening to ardent speeches of holy priests, fattened by parishioners. But so hard life has jammed all organs of Tommy by this moment, his heart included, and limits of his powers turned out to be so limited, that both his soul and thoughts were aspiring somewhere to limitless heights in a hope to share own grief with someone unknown, someone so much bigger than all his sorrows taken together.

“So where do you lead us, aye?” he continued in the meantime to mentally address to some unknown and far-reaching distances. “Have you abandoned all of us a long time ago? Maybe you even relaxing now somewhere up there on a cloudlet while we down here in earth dirt are trying to build our lives as we can. Phuh, perfect one! Good for you there, comfortably! I would like to be in your shoes – lie idle, do nothing in general, just help somebody from time to time so they don’t forget about you at all. Not even a life, but a fairy tale!”

So, winding himself more and more and quickening more and more own rhythmic pace, Tommy wandered about his own bedroom. Movements of his legs were becoming wider and movements of his hands steeper, so the soil under his legs was figuratively more and more crumbling under his feet. In a literal sense, it crumbled when a sudden ringing of a not-so-really-his home’s doorbell distracted him from these strange thoughts. Tommy faltered from unexpectedness and fell down on a floor. He would have lain like so, with a downed interface, for several more minutes, if that persistent guest didn’t continue to press the bell’s button time and again, thus producing a familiar, yet somewhat banal, “Dzin!” sound.

“Whom, lung as on mention, did the hard life brought again?” Tommy was thinking to himself while hastily putting on his business suite. “Maybe it’s neighbors who have again come to agitate me to come for a Sunday prayer? And what if this is the bank worker together with a bailiff this time? No rest from foul vampires!”

“Greetings!” with a smile in response to a gloomy and distrustful Tommy’s look answered the young man in a white suit with a red bow tie. “Is this the place where mister Tommy Whistler lives with his venerable wife Valencia?”

“Perhaps,” Tommy answered gloomily. “And who might you be?”

“Oh, so that’s you, Tommy? Fantastic day! It means that I was correctly directed to a required address. I was afraid that estimators will mix up something again – they, you know, don’t have your all-seeing GPS, – and the way to this world and place was, trust me, a far one.”

“I see nothing wonderful in this accursed day!” this strange mister began to irritate Tommy more and more.

“I am not here by accident, I assure you!” smiled again, replied this unusual guest. “My name is... well, it’s really unimportant of how you would like to call me afterward. You can call me simply as Agent. I am honored to represent our fine company LLC ‘Center of Desires Fulfillment’. Quite recently we received your inquiry, performed necessary preliminary inspections and came to a conclusion, that we can aid you in fulfillment of your desires. Congratulations, your candidacy suits us!”

“If you are from a local church, then I am not going there,” Tommy replied harshly. “I am a non-believer and don’t run business with strange folks in general.”

“Don’t worry, we are not a religious organization, we stand... how should I put it clearly... somewhat higher. Your last inquiry to our instance passed this designated religious structure and got straight to our processing center for incoming wishes. It’s only necessary to settle some small formalities, and everything will be just fine – you shall become our VIP client.”

“And what does it mean exactly – to be a VIP? What’s in it for me? If only you get something – a bonus for another handed off the flyer, or concluded by deception financial contract – then fuck off to... Iraq!” Tommy muttered.

“No deceptions, no Iraq, we are not in the UN!” smiled young representative of the mysterious organization. “And, by the way, their desires were fulfilled by our direct competitors who wear black suits as a rule. Only a few clarifying questions and a short induction, if you allow it.”

“Well, drag it on.”

“Fulfilling first dragging,” young man laughed the matter off. “You are Tommy Whistler, forty-two years old, your wife is Valencia, thirty-five years, you have a little daughter Mila of seven years and son Gregory of twelve years. Correctly?”

“Correctly. And where actually have you got such information? What, did the service of bailiffs leaked it to you?”

“Oh, not bailiffs at all, yet this has some distant relation to a court, you are right,” confirmed a young man, ticking off somewhere in the questionnaire. “Recently you have been experiencing emotionally hard and unstable conditions – or, in other words, a depression, which has relation to your financial hardship. Correctly?”

“Yes. As I have thought, you are from a bank!” Tommy was totally upset.

“And the last clarification – are you familiar with the processing rules of our system?”

“What kind of system?” Tommy didn’t get it.

“Ah, it turns out that you are dealing with us for the first time. That’s great, we love and respect new clients,” young man in a snow-white suite was the politeness.

“So, as for the rules... they are, actually, simple. In accordance with your recent – or, more precisely, ten-minute and forty-five-seconds ago appeal, we are ready to fulfill your desire with some safety restrictions. We will turn on our system for you – we call it a system of tests.

Within this system, you will continue to live and work as usual – with the only difference that your requested desire will be gradually implemented with safety restrictions. In particular, you won't be able to cause any harm to any living being in this world, especially ones with a soul – any similar action will cause a reciprocal pain in much greater amount. Secondly, a short time later you may start receiving appeals, which are being sent to our CEO, whose deputy you have desired to become. And thirdly and lastly, please remember: to receive absolute power one has to be absolutely perfect and to be perfect means to voluntarily accept all restrictions, imposed by perfection. Also remember that either you or your relatives will be able to ask for a break, having sent another request to our department. Upon termination of system's functioning, we can ask you to leave us a comment or to tell your friends about it. Please tell, is that clear to you?"

"Not really, but who the heck cares. Where is that system of yours? Can I at least take a look?"

"Oh, very soon our courier service will deliver it straight into your life, don't you worry. From one to several days are required to completely integrate it, please take note. And yes, I have almost forgotten – its usage will be completely free of charge – for you were already, so to speak, financially reasoned, even though for your debts you have not yet been imprisoned," joked the guest.

"Very funny!" Tommy squinted his face. "Where do I sign?"

"No signatures are necessary. The fact of your request to our organization was already enough. Await the integration of our system – and goodbye!" and, having that said, the young man in a white suit with a red bow tie waved his hand and went, nearly jumping in the processing, somewhere further on his affairs.

"Darling, who came in there?" a sleepy voice of Tommy's wife came out of a bedroom as soon as he has managed to slam the entrance door behind this strange visitor of his dwelling place. "Were they from a bank?"

"No, sweetheart, not from the bank!" Tommy shouted in response. "Some kind of strange dealer. Offered some systems. That's some kind of a madhouse instead of a life!" Tommy said in a fit of temper and plunged himself back into his – or not quite his – gloomy thoughts.

From this information swamp, he was pulled out almost by being dragged by his dear wife, who embraced his neck and put her head on his shoulder.

"Would you like some coffee?"

"All right, thanks. You are my priceless treasure. Don't throw me away as a loser."

"Perhaps I will throw you once," Valencia laughed. "But not earlier than you will turn tail from me yourself."

"That will hardly ever happen," he replied and embraced her in return.

"Shall we go together to a grocery shop today?"

"All right, let me just have a breakfast first."

\* \* \*

We did tell you that Tommy was catastrophically unlucky – and did you think that we were trying to deceive you? Just like that, once Tommy started coming from his bedroom downstairs to a first floor in order to go together with his beloved for a shopping spree, so beloved by every true American, their domestic cat Jess barred him a road in a literal sense of that word. “Meow?!” she said interrogatively-instructive, having pointed a testing look of her green eyes directly on Tommy, hinting him that from the time of her last feeding an inexcusably great amount of time – certainly, by cats’ standards – have passed already.

“Shoo!” Tommy shouted to her, “I will feed you later. Get out of my sight!”

“Meow!” that hungry cat started yelling even more demandingly and scratched legs of his owner and by coincidence bringer of food.

“Away, silly fluffy!” Tommy shouted with irritation and kicked the cat, who was sitting on a ladder pass. “I will punish you for your bad behavior once I come back!”

“Meeeeeeooooowwww!” Jess suddenly grew furious and rushed on her owner’s back, having seized him with her immoderately sharp by human standards claws.

Tommy cried, trying to throw off from his back a newly born predator, twirled in one place, faltered over one of the top stairs and rolled down, head over heels, damning all cat’s kin in general and that of Jess in particular.

“Ouch! My leg! My fucked curved since the childhood leg!” he moaned, having grabbed his right leg and swirling on a first floor right after he has finished his way downwards.

“What has happened to you, daddy?” Mila ran out from her room to incoming noise. “Your leg hurts, is it? Do you want me to blow on it as you did for me, and all your pain will go?”

“It won’t... go,” overcoming flashed pain in own joints and as much as possible calmly replied Tommy. “It’s... sprain, probably. Better call for... your mother.”

“I will do that ASAP, daddy, but let me first feed Jess, you see how she stares at us? And you lie here, have a rest, daddy, you can never rest at work, I heard it from the mother,” Mila said unperturbably with her angelic voice.

\* \* \*

So, having lain for the first half of the day with bandaged leg in a bed and sadly beholding through a window, how the wife of his neighbor is ineptly trying to park their brand new expensive Porsche car in a garage, having managed to several times throw a slipper into a cat, who has decided to visit her sick owner, Tommy prepared morally for viewing of an evening telecast of “Voice of America”.

Here we need to note that this particular voice, which has many residents of other countries and cities, has always been calming down Tommy. How pleasant it was for his tormented consciousness to listen to it after a hard labor of everyday life and understand that somewhere there, far beyond the World Ocean in other countries, which Tommy never succeeded to visit and which he would barely be able to find on a globe without some extra hints from “Google Maps”, new national revolutions are being made for the sake of democracy, and their country, America, blessed by the God himself – in whom Tommy didn’t believe – goes on with her holy mission of protection of various social minorities and strictly, just like a kind police officer, monitors the rights of humans for the sake of peace on the planet Earth. Rights of what people were meant by news announcers, speaking about the recent invasion of Iraq by the USA, approved at the UN level, Tommy never tried to inquire.

This TV telecast was about to begin in several hours, but from a sole boredom Tommy turned on his speaking box before the usual time.

“Idiots, idiots, idiots – they give us the problems all day... fuck you, oh Muslims and idiots, that’s what we are gonna to say!” some newly appeared group of niggers danced, sang and threatened to finish off all Muslim immigrants on a hastily build stage of Detroit under the gaze of many television cameras.

“You are idiots yourself!” muttered Tommy and switched to another TV channel.

“My little fool, my little fool, I sleep with you, I like your rule,” a voice of yet another porno-star, who has gained access to the big scene by well-known and trivial means, sang from a turned-on TV screen.

“Fuck you, freaks!” Tommy swore under his nose, throwing TV remote aside, “there is nothing good to watch at all. Where does America slide? By the name of Mila, that’s ain’t right!”

“What did you say, daddy?” Mila slightly opened a door of his room. “Did you call for me?”

\* \* \*

Next morning Tommy’s bandaged leg reminded of itself again with a sharp pain, once it’s owner stood up from his bed and proceeded on own feet into a bathroom.

“Oh, God, how great I am!” some male voice spoke over his ear all of a sudden.

“Who’s there?” Tommy took alarm, promptly looking around. “It’s a private property, what’s the hell are you doing here?! Show yourself!”

“Oh, my Lord, I am simply magnificent!” the voice of invisible interlocutor continued, paying not even a slightest attention to unsuccessful Tommy’s attempt to establish a contact. “Hell, I am the most beautiful man in this damned world!” the voice assured himself and suddenly calmed down at the same moment.

“Hell, I am going crazy with this trauma already,” Tommy thought to himself. “Some kind of hallucinations are starting already. At first yesterday’s dealer, now some kind of voices.

It's all the nerves, probably... perhaps I should start buying antidepressants," he was thinking while shaving own cheeks. "What my poor wife would only think of that..."

"We love you!" two unknown girls, whose faces and other body parts Tommy didn't see at all, suddenly sang directly into his ears.

"Do you even exist?" some person of very and very uncertain gender asked a question in a very and very uncertain voice.

"You are just a jerk!" admitted a man of average years in a fit tempter.

"Go away from me!" some woman sent Tommy in an unspecified direction.

"Thank you! Thank you!" child sobbed in a crying voice.

"Are you a fool or what? Don't you see what you are doing? What have I asked of you in a church yesterday? That's not what I wanted at all!" one more unknown subject as if slapped Tommy in a face.

"One thousand of imps!" thought scared Tommy. "What, have I gone totally nuts? I definitely need some rest!" he assured himself. "I will surely issue a working holiday on Monday if I don't go mad before that day already."

\* \* \*

This Sunday trip to a supermarket helped Tommy to learn a lot of new about his personality.

"Fool! Jerk! Genius! Rascal! Wise man! Savior! Torturer!" voices have been tirelessly shouting inside his head. His wife cautiously glanced at her husband, who was hardly driving the car and continually crying out in the air: "You are a fool yourself! Thanks! It's you who is a rascal! No need for gratitude! No problems at all!"

His neighbor didn't even start to be too soft at all and without a search for roundabout ways called Tommy as the loser in response to Tommy's comment in the spirit of "you have become too choosy from riches!"

The police officer on the road named him precisely as "the weird loony who drives faster than a hundred kilometers per hour and doesn't look at road signs at all!"

The cashier in a shop, having silently looked at the check, called him "cheapskate", and his own wife as "my poor darling" by the end of that day.

His daughter Mila called him "my sick daddy", son Gregory as "raunchy ancestor", and Jess-the-cat didn't even go into unnecessary details and just said "Meow!"

Having accurately bypassed a cat in the evening, Tommy flopped down on a bed, even finding no time to take off his boots, and started snoring in some five minutes. His loving wife silently sat down near him, put her hand on a forehead of a sleeping Tommy and sadly shaken her head.

And he dreamed this Sunday night of a huge garden with a set of beds, which Tommy saw only at familiar farmers who were living outside the city, – and these beds were all except for only one filled with a horse-radish.

\* \* \*

Tommy's boss decided to organize a meeting, of which necessity the labor union hinted him a long time ago, and in very plain terms declared, that wages for previous two work months won't be paid in this one, because, we quote, – “these damned Chinese communists have seized a substantial share of our market and we, proud and freedom-loving Americans have to do a lot to kick their lean yellow asses!”

And that's where Tommy's patience finally failed him. Having proudly straightened his shoulders as would be done by any freedom-loving carrier of democratic values and the far descendant of the first immigrants-convicts from the Old World to the New one, he grasped air in his mighty breast and, using a very primordially American speech, explained to his chief to what point in this endless space he can start moving right now without postponing this procedure in a milk bottle, and what kind of starry-eyed person his boss is in general, even though with a few inclusions in his ideal character of some truly bestial human qualities. And all that would be just nothing, but being urged by approving shouts and looks of his colleagues, Tommy agitated himself so much that in the end, he climbed to the eminence from which his undersized boss was speaking, and kicked him with all his force in his primordially American ugly face. This face reddened at first, then turned blue, and then uttered that he, Tommy, can go off from here to there where the sun never shines and that he doesn't work here anymore from now on.

And on his way back from nowadays former work some truck crashed at the intersection of roads into the ugly face of Tommy's car, which caused another sad sight of his wife and ill-concealed giggling of his neighbor and by coincidence owner of a brand new and undamaged Porsche.

\* \* \*

What sort of occurrences the visitor of a club of anonymous losers Tommy had to experience for these three months, which have passed since his first meeting with that strange agent from LLC “Center of Desires Fulfillment”.

There were falling into manholes after foul language speaking with the head of a local church; broken fingers, which have already tired from showing this infamous American “fuck you” sign; torn sinews of legs, which excessively sharply kicked from own rage homeless dogs and cats; and a wide variety of other ways of interaction between the physical Universe and not less physically existing inside it Tommy. And to the voices, who have been persistently either demanding something from him, or flatteringly expressing their sincere devotion, or questioning some next nonsense, Tommy ceased to pay attention at all.

Valencia, looking at her unfortunate husband, only looked away in times – and more and more frequently her eyes filled with tears during evenings. His daughter Mila started calling him “the sick daddy” on a constant basis, and son Gregory was proud before his school teammates of how crack headed and raunchy his ancestor is.

...And it all has come to an end when a truck, carrying filled with milk canisters from that dairy factory, which honorable wage-less member Tommy has recently been, run over him on the road.

“Do you understand now, dear mister Tommy, how important it is to formulate your desires correctly?” the young man in a white jacket with red bow tie inclined over Tommy and searchingly looked him in the eyes. “A desire is – how to express it more clearly – a door in a window of opportunities. Allow me to be curious – how is the life of God’s deputy for you?”

“Not... very... lively,” with hardly obeying lips and somehow unexpectedly quite said Tommy.

“It’s quite obvious that it’s a hard life. You are not even inside so habitual for your body right now. Here you are lying in a coma in the surgery, and your wife keeps praying for you behind that door. Do you know, what kind of desires is overcoming her now? I shall tell you, even though you don’t ask for it. Her only most powerful and overflowing desire at this moment is your life, Tommy. She wants that you keep living, do you understand that? She is asking not of perfection or divinity, but of a preservation of your life – which you, it should be noted, didn’t value too much.”

“Some voices... haunted me constantly,” barely audible whispered Tommy.

“Ah, these were incoming inquiries from people, mentally formulated by them,” answered the Agent. “We duplicated them for you. Unfortunately, as you have probably already noticed, the program isn’t perfect as of yet and therefore insufficiently qualitatively performs their filtration, therefore sometimes totally unrelated to God inquiries and vain formulations pass through. That’s because our system is in the alpha stage of development – and therefore hasn’t been fully tested as of yet. But never fear – our programmers are already notified of this issue and in the nearest future we will most certainly fix this annoying error. So, why did you desire to be in a, so to speak, the shoes of our director, Tommy?”

“I did... no... such thing.”

“You did, Tommy, you did. Most people don’t even think at all of how is that – to be perfect. It seems to them that they only have to ask God just about anything – and he must immediately run off and fulfill any of their whims, even if that will lead subsequently to their own deaths. Tell me, how, for instance, our CEO has to execute wishes like ‘let it all burn in a blue flame’ – to burn away all offices of Gazprom? To kill all people on the planet Earth – or only selected offenders of the wisher? God is perfect, Tommy, and he by his very nature is unable to execute what enters in disharmony with perfection, he can’t cause harm to living beings. And people constantly ask him of that, believe me, Tommy! Have you noticed, how our program returned back all that evil, which you have caused?”

“And what about... all the evil around... who... will fight against it?” Tommy continued whispering.

“Let me explain this to you on a familiar example. When some cells of an organism get sick, becoming exclusively parasitic in nature, and rapid growth of a number of similar cells starts representing a threat for organism’s life – what must organism do in order to survive?”

“To... liquidate these cells?”

“Correctly, Tommy. For the sake of health and survival of the whole organism, individual pathogenic cells may be liquidated. The same rule applies to a planet, Tommy.”

“Can I... talk to my wife?”

“Firstly, you have to answer one clarifying question, Tommy. Tell us, please, would you like to prolong your desire to feel yourself in God’s place?”

“No... no desire. I think... I understood everything.”

“Perfectly, then. Then today we will disconnect you from our program of tests. And surgery operation on your heart will undergo successfully, by the way. Your wife’s appeal to our organization with a request for your rescue was truly pure and sincere – and we will gladly fulfill that desire of hers. And will also help you with finding a new job – you should maintain such a loving family, after all,” with these words the Agent stretched his transparent and glowing hand to Tommy’s heart, filling all organism of the victim with some inner warmth.

“Thank you... for a lesson.”

“Oh, don’t even start thanking me,” smiled the Agent. “And don’t forget of a cell analogy, Tommy.”

\* \* \*

“Incredibly powerful cyclone, dominating over all territory of Alaska, will live on for at least for a month, according to weather forecasts, having brought about eighty centimeters of snow, – loudly broadcasted announcer from more than one million of turned-on TVs. – Because of the abnormally cold weather, which has come to us from the territory of Canada, about eighty percent of state residents are unable to leave their homes for two weeks already. Scientists-climatologists promise that this cyclone will lead to a full paralysis of social activity as a minimum of half of the citizens in at least eight more northern states and will sustain up to the middle of May. The president already imposed an emergency rule in five states. This is the greatest nature challenge, ever faced by our country for its entire short history...”

2017-07-29

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Plant louse

The Plant Louse gradually and unstoppablely crept downhill a mountain.

The wind was blowing into her face, howling and as if begging to stop, the sun was mercilessly scorching her back, which has already become covered in scabs, here and there all of a sudden some holes-hollows of unknown origin were popping up. But she confidently continued her journey downwards – for there on the lowland, as it seemed, a paradise of eternal and lazy pleasure has been awaiting her. Her impetuous mind drove and pushed her forward – there, to the undiscovered downhill distances – and, methodically moving her legs, she obeyed her master and lord remorselessly.

Recently the Louse has dined with her own relative – dead, of course, – which she has found in a pool of blood, already warmed up by the scorching sun. Her comrade-in-arms by the absence of reason has been probably dying in agony, – some of his legs have been dead-burnt by a star and their ashes have already been swept by a wind, and some green viscous poisonous substance of inconceivable for the Louse nature has been flowing from his stomach. That's why the Louse has disdained a substance – for only goodness knows, what lurks there, inside them, Louses, right? – but semi-blind eyes and some poor excuses of ears have appeared to be rather appetizing, as well as the remnants of the brain, still not totally decayed. The Louse, probably, would not even touch the remains of her colleague, if not for that painful hunger, which has been torturing her during the last days of a journey There. The Louse had not the slightest idea of why this unstoppable bloodlust has suddenly arisen in her, but it has been growing and strengthening with each passing day. Truly hard is the burden of the chosen ones, trying to reach the true paradise, indeed.

It seemed that very little effort was required for now. Certainly, the Louse couldn't view all the horizon of her path – only a small piece of it, still visible for her eternally bent head and weak-sighted eyes – but, nevertheless, it appeared to her that the paradise is almost there, just a few more steps and then, finally...

From time to time the Louse dreamt of wings. Of those true wings, possessed by flying heavenly giants, whose shades she sometimes saw on the ground. Plant louses called those ones as Angels – Messengers of Heavens. Indeed, they had the possibility to behold their shades, their pity reflection only – but even this sight sometimes bewitched their poor excuses of souls... The Louse did never gazed into the Heavens – was simply incapable to do so soul-genetically, so to speak. Initially, her relatives were terrified of these heavenly ambassadors, believing that they feed on them, Plant Louses, and can devour them, – but, as multi-thousand-year practice has shown, plant lice did not interest them, – were too tiny, probably... The Louse thirsted to fly – just simply stand up and soar to heavenly heights, to see all her way, to say so, from bird's flight perspective.

Once upon a time the Louse overheard with the edge of her semi-bitten off ear, that their ancient ancestors have had some semblance of tiny wings – and they even could fly up low from time to time, – as though in semi-jumps – but after that something has changed in their organisms, was broken – and since that times only rudiments of those former wings were left. And thus the entire race of plant lice has forgotten how's that – to fly...

The Louse masterfully continued the movement, methodically rolling her legs. She was, to say the least, sort of a champion – one of the best ones. Almost ninety percent of her relatives have died out, competing among themselves of who can crawl There before all others and make the first mark on this new land – but this very Louse confidently continued her journey. Some louses died from thirst, being unable to drink some turbid black slime, shining with all colors of a rainbow under the sun, which the Louse has encountered in the form of some small puddles, no doubt left by the Maker himself. The brain of others simply fused under the fiery sun. Some went completely blind and started spinning round and round, plaintively cheeping in a vain hope to earn a small bit of sympathy from competing brothers. Someone broke several own legs and was devoured by his starved colleagues. Some became deaf and ceased to hear inviting shouts of their leaders in their common journey There, and, thus, hopelessly lagged behind. And some gave up on everything by wing, laid down on a burnt grass, closed his eyes and stiffened. To cut a long story short, were a few worthy ones remained. And that Louse was one of those lucky.

The Louse has just finished eating the newly found corpse of her comrade-in-luck, and was going to continue advancing as all of a sudden something has sharply and desperately changed in all her surroundings. Unknown huge and incomprehensible shadow covered the earth ground in all possible vicinity, something great and unstoppable has suddenly begun moving towards the Louse – and towards the entire race of plant lice, moving in ranks... something greatly dreadful for them, plant lice.

“Oh, did He really exists?!” the Louse has had a few moments of time left to think. “Oh, forgive us for our Lousy way of life!” she urged to peep, but there was no more time left.

Someone has smashed the Louse and all her colleagues in a single step, thus finally and inevitably solving a question with a fate of all these... non-humans.

2010-11-26

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Thirtieth day

The thirtieth day...

Yes, the thirtieth day has passed since he has got here. Into his new home. HOME.

The frozen tongue refused to pronounce this painfully familiar and once causing an anxious delight and joy word. How unimaginably new it now sounded in consciousness!

Despair. Despair, dimming the mind. Tears – what about? Maybe of those long time gone and irrevocable days of simple man’s happiness? Of sonorous men’s voices and happy children’s smiles? Of a united family, which he was eager to have?

“Father...”. He has, actually, never heard this wonderful sound – and will never hear it now. NEVER. The mind gloatingly hinted that this is so – it can be no other way. But the heart, the heart, which have suffered so many torments and suffering – his heart refused to believe that. It always refused to trust in pain and grief. Always. Or... until the 30-days old events only?

And still... nevertheless, it’s his new home for now, no matter how blasphemously this word would now sound. A street. Almost constantly locked up at night doors of buildings. City dumps, where it was seldom possible to find some sort of food...

“No, no, NO!! This cannot be with me, only not with me! Why, why, why?!”

Silence. Deadly silence. The silence of the night. Words have left a withered throat into a darkness of night and have died out in a far distance. There is no response. He will have to search for answers himself.

Then – weakened, wasted, with scars all over his body – traces of struggle against colleagues by misfortune and city’s thugs, with a face, covered by purulent scabs, – he has fallen to the ground. He hasn’t even noticed, how suddenly the earth approached and his body, having hit it with a dull sound, kept lying motionlessly...

\* \* \*

...He did neither remember, nor know, how many time has passed. And, probably, didn’t even want to. What’s the reason? To find a livelihood and a lodging for the next night – were his needs not limited by this only?

Then he opened his eyes. Tried to move – and desperately screamed from a sharp pain and a bloody haze in his eyes. The hand, his right hand. The one, which has rescued him time and again in fights on dark alleys for a piece of bread, the one which helped him to sometimes open not too qualitatively made locks of city buildings – he felt it no more. Totally, completely. A bone fracture, a dislocation? Most probably a dislocation and a painful shock, which has followed it... That’s good. Could be worse – much worse.

We will make it. We will survive, reason, – I tell you!

Hospital? What hospital are you suggesting me to go for, reason? And was it not you, my accidental witness, of how hundreds of people during those thirty days expelled me and threw me away from public transport, how teenagers mocked me angrily, how adults unfriendly mowed and how young girls turned away from me with such an expression on their faces, as if they have just seen the nastiest thing in their life? There is no place for me in the world of those ones. No more a place.

A-a-a-r-r-r-g-g-g-h-h... no, stop it! Only not those images, only not them! Memory, my obliging aunt who has been serving to me so right earlier, – what sort of malicious joke are you going to play with me?! Stop it, I beg you! I have already submitted to my fate! I have put up with it – do you hear me? I had!

Or... or not completely?

Questions, questions, questions... Questions, irritating both mind and heart. Lonely questions without answers. Servants of pain – spiritual anguish. A pain again – this time from a hand. That's not too much. That one will be gone.

“They, it's they who are guilty!” once again he wanted to growl spitefully.

Yes, it's them. Harmful businessmen, liars, rascals. They have cheated him, as well as hundreds like him. He did not remember all the details for now but firmly remembered one thing – they have got his apartment by a deceit. The fucked company, false agency! Bastards!

Stop. Only not rage. No more hatred. He was already tired of it, too tired already.

Thirty days... how much he has learned and understood during those thirty days!

With what contempt he looked at all these needy and unfortunate people earlier! How much arrogance and complacency was in his eyes, obscured by formal well-being. How many simple human requests he rejected, referring to a lack of time. A lack... now, seemingly, he has this time in surplus – but what sort of time... He even betrayed once – his close friend and the fellow worker. Wanted to earn money... Has earned. And his friend got to prison for financial frauds – tried to prove, that he was a fictitious person. If only he also knew, who did that...

“One has to pay for everything,” he thought suddenly, “for all things made. To redeem own crimes.” A cruel lesson, indeed. He was, however, cruel as well.

He stood up, looked around. He has come – has returned to his home... Not to himself, though, not to his home. He perfectly remembered what was his home for now. And nevertheless... something uncontrollably pushed him to enter this familiar front door, to feel house smells – for the last time in his life. He will not return to this building anymore.

And then, having thrown aside all cowardly and bitter thoughts, firmly pushed his fractured hand to a breast, he has moved on – started wandering to a front door of this house. The door slowly swung open and some married couple went out of the doors – probably on a walk. He made a jerk and approached the entrance.

The young girl made a wry mouth and whispered something to his beloved one's ear. The beloved one tried to strongly seize a man with a ridiculously bent and pressed to a breast hand, moving to a front door, but that man has suddenly whispered – “Only for a minute. It's my former home”, – and a man's hand, almost ready to seize this nasty vagabond, has suddenly slowly dropped somehow, a flickering of understanding moved in his eyes for an instant and, having murmured “yes, certainly”, he stood aside.

...Forward and upwards – to the third floor. Here it is, close and familiar... almost native. And who might be living in his apartment for now?

He listened. Somewhere behind a door, the dog was vigorously barking, possibly meeting his master. Somewhere a child was crying. Somewhere people were swearing. And only once during all that half an hour that he was standing, having leaned against a wall and remembering the former life, somewhere from above a many-voiced and joyful laughter has reached his ears.

He came back a short time after. Away from his home. Or straight to it?

The ground floor... mailboxes, similar to cast bunkers. To look in? But who can write him? Who?

And still, he looked into it – in a box with the large and bold number “30”. The thirtieth day... the thirtieth apartment...

There was only one letter – with his initials on it. With his! He looked at its date. Yes, it was brought twenty-nine days ago – the apartment was still owned by him that day. He has overrun its text. At first, the bewilderment, then amazement, a smile, and a pain were reflected in his face. However, if somebody has accidentally seen his face this instant – he would accept its expression for some sort of predatory grin.

Not trusting his own eyes, he looked through the text lines once again. Everything is correct. His mind was still serving him well. There is no mistake possible.

Large letters and words “notice”, “fortune”, a name of his sister, living abroad, and a sum of one hundred thousand dollars were the last things that lived in his consciousness that day. His legs gave away and he fell down, unconscious.

A rising sun could be seen in a building's windows...

*2004-01-01*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Imprisoned for a quarter of a century

He opened his eyes. Both sight and hearing were coming back to normal, very-very slowly – but were returning. For many days he has still been recovering... A push of hand, a sharp pain in the broken knuckle – and he has risen. He is alive and he will sustain – despite everything.

Despite dregs in eyes and broken knuckle, acknowledging itself with a pain during each movement of the hand. Despite hateful shouts and most severe abuse, flowing around. Despite the threats from his “neighbors”, which they intended to put in action if he doesn’t share his part of that skilly that was brought to them so that they haven’t starved to death. Despite the methodical and giving a ring on an iron floor footsteps of the approaching guard. Despite the sun which he hasn’t seen for such a long time... only the weak light beam of which he had a chance to notice in the mornings – a light, hardly passing through strong iron plates, sealing windows in this stronghold of grief. In this stronghold of sorrow – and sometimes, only sometimes – repentance.

“Chumbrik, fuck you! We’ll cut you on giblets! Do you hear me, bastard?! You’ll lick our heels, bough!” A shout came somewhere from a distant chamber and sank in the silence.

Resisting ones weren’t welcomed there, as well as loving ones, that’s why similar people were almost absent in these cells. Except for local authorities and those who could prove with own blood that they are worthy of respect – for only the force did worth something here. A whole year was required for him to prove own strength in fights without rules, ones, “accidentally” overlooked by that supervisor that was slowly coming through a corridor, rattling with chamber keys... or, to be more precise, these battles were completely ignored by a prison guard. One week ago there was his last fight and after that, he was finally left alone. They have withdrawn from him like from an insuperable and indestructible stronghold.

“Dinner!” a loud peal of a voice filled a premise.

Now they will be fetched skilly bowls – gray-greenish liquid with a disgusting taste. However, a piece of bread was applied to this liquid, and that was already fine. This should suffice for approximately five-six hours. And then once again something similar will be brought to them so that they don’t die from hunger. And so it goes on for a day, a month, a year... Nineteen years – nineteen long years he should remain here... nineteen-twentieth of his term.

Here comes the inspector. Now a food would be brought, he will sate himself with this pity piece of bread and a bowl of liquid stinking of slops – and feel easier. His organism will take many days to heal its wounds... It will take nineteen years for him until a day of freedom finally comes.

Here comes a meal. A bowl was pushed to him through a cutout crack in the bottom of a chamber’s door. For some reason, the inspector continued standing, though it was already the time for him to go to new chambers. One second, two, three, five...

“Prisoner Skalov, your wife has come to visit you. We will guide you to a meeting room.”

Simple human words, which have lifted his spirit on pleasure tops. It was such an immense joy for him now – to once again meet a close person in this house of loneliness, loneliness among hundreds and hundreds of people. His prison cell was slowly opened – the guard immediately pressed him against the wall and started quickly putting on handcuffs. He didn't resist.

“Do your job, guys. It's your work. Play your part,” thoughts have flown in his head, remaining unexpressed. And what for? Prisoners aren't talked to – they are given orders and are compelled to their execution. Almost like in the army, yet worse. For disobedience – a biting to semi-death or to the death – that's unimportant. A phrase in the official report will state – “has committed suicide” – in a chamber without even a single sharp object. It was possible to commit suicide there only having broken one's head against the wall...

He was moving through a corridor, led by prison guards, and his soul was singing in joy, a joy for the first time for many many days. For how truly long he hasn't felt that sensation...

“Luydochka, my beloved! Dear one, how did I miss you!”

“Pasha, dear! Thank God, you are still alive! What's wrong with you? Have you battled again? Oh, fighter, when you will stop these fights at last?! They are going to kill you one day!”

“I cannot do that, Luyda, I cannot. I had no right to refuse a fight. You know – I wouldn't survive that way...”

“Pasha, dear, I beg of you – remain alive. Dear, beloved... if they kill you, Pasha, I wouldn't survive that. Dear, nice, don't leave me alone, keep yourself live – I beg you! I beg! I love you, Pasha!”

She nestled face to a plastic bulletproof fence that divided them and started crying. His beloved woman, his significant other... She was crying and her tears slowly did flow by a glass wall, leaving a pure transparent trace. He nestled his own face to a transparent wall too and was looking at her. A security guard, observing their meeting, has moved forward at first – according to the rules talking ones should keep the distance of at least two meters from a dividing wall – but then suddenly gaging somehow and slowly inclined a head downwards. Some people remained men even here.

And then they kissed transparent plastic, imaging as if they were kissing each other. Scattered hands and touched a transparent window, trying to embrace each other. They were kissing and embracing each other – and couldn't do that. Have been divided with the impenetrable wall from now on for a long period of twenty years from that very familiar day...

“Do you remember that day, Pasha? I still cannot forgive myself for it – for you. Unable to forgive me for your destiny...”

“Stop it, Luyda. I have chosen that way myself, and whether I could choose differently? I have made that choice myself – and I am ready to bear a full responsibility for that. I have killed a man. I am guilty. I should be punished.”

Indeed, they both remembered that day, remembered very clearly, each and every detail – in spite of the fact that more than a year has already passed since that moment. And nineteen more should pass before it will be possible to expel it definitively and forever forget. Like a horror, a dream, a delusion.

Which, unfortunately, wasn't a delusion at all...

Images slowly recurred in memory. That memorable day which has given a start to his new life here – after a short judicial proceeding and sentence. Like bright flashes are these images. Sparkling and fading away...

They were returning back home from a holiday on foot... These guys jumped out of nowhere. There were two of them. One was bearing a knife in hand, the second one possessed a pistol.

“Hey, you, stand still! Drop purses on the ground, quickly! Rings, earrings, throw everything! Quickly, I'm telling ya, if you dunno want to get a bullet in ya head!” a robber armed with a pistol cried out, having set it on them. A second one ran up from behind and seized his wife, putting a knife to her throat. The one with a pistol was probably bluffing, but the second one definitely did not.

“The young lass doesn't look bad! I'll have to fuck her a bit later. Don't twitch ye, darling! It won't take long, hah...”

A scared children's shout of his wife, with a storming roar rushing into his ears...

He hesitated no longer. A blood of the soldier, who has survived the Afghan war, was boiling in him... He ceased to hear any longer... he ceased to feel the surroundings. Only the sensation, that strange sensation of the tested and survived fighter, allowing one to distinguish the incoming danger, only it has become his guide in these minutes...

Like bright flashes are these instants...

A kick – a pistol, pointing to him, flies off aside. Another blow – and the rogue holding a gun falls down and bent on the ground. A short amazement on the face of the second guy, who has already started undressing his wife and put aside his knife from her throat for a while. Here the knife slowly moves back to her throat again... Jump. A hand holding a knife intercepted in the air. All three fall to the ground.

“B-i-i-i-i-i-t-t-t-t-t-c-c-c-c-h-h-h-h!” a shout, picked up by air.

A flashing iron once more – the guy managed somehow to get away a second knife. His hand moved for interception of a strike... Too late.

A blow. A desperate shout of his wife, full of agony and pain.

“N-o-o-o!” his shout of despair.

A blow. The guy screams from pain, one of his knives flows off from hands. Fighting on the ground. They have swept away, having seized each other. His wife remained to lie motionlessly.

Ten seconds, twenty...

The guy was trying to stick his knife into him, their hands were struggling for life... A blow. Attacking one finally managed to reach him with the edge of a knife. He twisted from pain but hasn't ceased fighting.

Thirty seconds... Drops of blood, exuding from his wound and generously watering the ground...

Capture. Procollar of a hand holding a weapon – he wanted to beat a knife off from enemy's hands. The blade was slowly turning towards lying below him attacker. Now it will become possible to take the hand away and beat out a knife from opponent's hands... Without a weapon, the attacker ceases to be a fighter. Let them escape – he is not even going to pursue them.

But the guy suddenly screamed something and started turning sideways, trying to dump him from himself.

A rattle. Heart-rending agonal rattle. Turned edge was stuck in the robber's breast when he started turning over.

“Bas... tard,” almost silent words, which he has heard. And then silence has reigned.

Only a guy, recently holding a pistol, was still slowly creeping, and the one with knives was lying still... But he didn't want to kill any of the two. had totally no desire... only to disarm.

He picked up a pistol and run up to his wife. Has kneeled. Breathing... that means that she's alive. Then he looked on a wound – a wound was on the right side under the rib, a blood was slowly pouring from it. Good, not deadly. She has to survive, she must!

Then he picked her up, propped up on himself and slowly started going forward, bearing her. He has to pass quite a little. To leave this lane and enter a populous street, and there he'll be aided – he must be! – by others. No, he matters not! It's she who must survive. And he will manage it somehow – he has overcome even greater wounds! And the pistol must be destroyed as well...

Picture changed. Now he was standing in the court, listening to own sentence – a sentence for murder.

He is a murderer. Even protecting himself and his beloved – he's still a murderer. Even carrying a necessary self-defense – he has killed a man. But according to a court's decision no self-defense has ever taken place. A second survived attacker has informed law enforcement department of the accident – naturally, the way he wanted it to look like – there were no witnesses for a fight. And even words of his wife and her wound weren't proof enough – she was unconscious according to her own words and didn't see a final part of the fight. And the wound could have been made by her husband as well, instead of the attacker – especially if his fingerprints left on the knife has to be taken into account.

So did the court conclude – and has made its decision. Imprisonment for a long term of twenty years. For such a long period, for which he has to remain here, in this stronghold of grief and sometimes – only sometimes – repentance...

Images have gone out. He was standing close to his wife once again, and she was still crying – and thus he calmed her. Assured, that everything will finally turn out fine, that this nightmare will end soon and he once again will meet her – his beloved – this time being free. Then he smiled – didn't want her to see him despaired. And had no wish to despair himself.

They continued talking for quite a while – until the security guard hasn't demanded a termination of their conversation. Then they were separated until a next meeting. She will once again come to him as soon as she's allowed to as soon as a minimal time span between visiting will pass – approximately in two months. She will come once again – his second half, his beloved, his personal sun. And he will come as well into her world, after these longest twenty years. He will come when a wall, separating them, will turn to ashes. And nothing forevermore will divide them!

This is worthy of his return! A world behind this fence is worthy of entering into it once again. And he will return back to start a new life – in the bright and solar new world. After almost a quarter of a century, he will embrace this solar world – and smile. And rejoice the living.

*2004-12-30*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Thingy

“Pssss... come over here!” a voice came out of bushes.

“Stand where you are no matter whoever you are!” Ivan almost jumped up from surprise, having somehow inexplicably managed to rotate him in the jump for two hundred sixty-seven and a half degrees in a direction to a source of potential danger.

“And what should the flying ones do – stop right where they are flying?” a reasonable question came out of bushes once again.

“Whoever is here, show yourself!” the hero, for many yet unknown, and for us already named, continued making his proposition.

“Hey, stop being afraid of me already!” someone hiding in bushes soothingly noticed. “Look, you’ve stopped on your way, but is that’s a big deal? You have been wandering through this local forest aimlessly nevertheless. And here you’ve got a nice chance to chit-chat with somebody heart-to-heart... with me, for instance.”

“And where might you be, I wonder?” the brave one, who has already recovered from a first shock, wasn’t appeased in the curiosity. “You may turn out to be a terrible and horrific monster, trapping lonely travelers on their way to people, you know?”

“Oh, pardon me, what’s the point for me to be nasty!” a sniff came somewhere sideways this time. “Who will covet us in this case? Besides, we are not awful, but peaceful and truly democratic, to say so. We bring happiness, struggle for human rights. A freedom of choice, relations, conscience. And so on, and so forth.”

“So, you are a female? A representative, of so to say, fair sex?” Ivan was taken aback.

“Well, fair for someone, and nasty for another. It all depends here on the level of reason, as they say.”

“From what?” Ivan didn’t understand.

“Well... it’s such a thing – a level. And the reason – what’s the reason? Simply a profanation!” a giggling came out of the next tree. “Where were you going here, I wonder?”

“On affairs!” Ivan muttered. “I am not going to tell strangers everything, especially having not seen them eye to an eye. Maybe, they don’t even possess the eyes?”

“Maybe they don’t...” a reasonable notice doubled itself. “And, maybe, ones such as me don’t even require it.”

“Hey, you, eyeless monster! I am going fire at you an arrow from my bow, and where it will strike ye – either to an eye or some other body spot – is a minor matter!” barked Ivan and got behind bow and arrows.

“Well, you are not some sort of cupid to stick all passers-by with arrows of love, are you? And besides... what if it turns out that I am that wonderful frog-princess, whom you are required to kiss to further live on together with her in a happiness and consent till death itself won't separate you? Wouldn't you really want to try it out, m-m-m-m?” the voice of female stranger was getting more and more tender and viscous.

“All right,” Ivan finally agreed. “I will always have the time to make a frog for needles from you,” he summarized. “But you must be leaving your bushes hideout strictly one by one, and keep in mind – I am holding you on sight!”

“Oh, just look at what courageous and brave companion I have found! I am almost burning whole from desire!” stranger girl sang with pleasure and, finally, left her bush-like hiding place.

“A-a-a... o-o-o... u-u-u... e-r-r-r... you are such...” mumbled Ivan.

“Beautiful, huh? It has been so since my very birth.”

“That's not the word...”

“And what sort of word would it be, m-m-m?” mysterious acquaintance continued smiling, gracefully pacing before Ivan.

“Mine – that's the word!”

“Well... maybe yours as well. There is time for everything... By the way, my name is Thingy.”

“Thingy? What a beautiful name!” Ivan exclaimed. “Ivan!” he presented himself.

“And to you, Ivan!” Thingy smiled.

“What do you mean ‘and to you’?” he misunderstood.

“And to you, I am pretty as well, as I see.”

“Yes... you are all such... sparkling... such... unusual... thing... many, probably, don't even possess such ones...”

“Yes, yes,” Thingy tenderly agreed. “I know. That's me. And you were going to shoot me at first, my rascal!” she threatened calmly.

“Well, I had no idea that you were such... unusual. I have thought that you are probably some sort of marsh witch that will enchant me and then drag off into her den.”

“Well, what's the point for me to enchant you? All in all, soon you will come running for me yourself... darling,” Thingy continued singing sweetly, beating about the bush round Ivan. “Where will you, people, go without us, Thingies, – what do you cost without us, oh consumers of ours?” she made a purring sound slightly more silently.

“And can I... touch you?” Ivan offered bashfully.

“Yes, you can, touch me if you dare...” Thingy allowed. “You can even take me on hands...”

“So soon?” Ivan was shocked. “And shouldn't we before that...?”

“And what should we wait for?” Thingy questioned. “I do clearly see that you desire to have me... so take me, have no hesitation. The more you will desire me, the more a person from a small letter you will keep becoming...”

“Perhaps, a person from a capital letter?” Ivan was confused.

“Well, no way!” Thingy sniffed. “To be a one from a capital letter you have to deserve it first. We, Thingies, are not made to make you as such. We are for different sort of whims,” she added.

“And is that not... dangerous?” Ivan carefully asked, slightly touching Thingy’s body.

“Well... maybe you’ll get stricken with a lightning the first time,” Thingy smiled. “And afterward... however, what the reason for you, people, in that ‘afterward’? You have to enjoy life to the full, not even seriously reflecting on consequences, right? To gather in hands as many as possible ones such as me, Thingy. Especially if they are going to you on bails... And besides, to possess lots of beautiful Thingies today is a sort of a style and fashion!”

“Well... I don’t know... something here is... somehow...” Ivan breathed heavily and started to doubt, having drawn his hand away from Thingy.

“What, have you been struck with electricity?” Thingy purred. “After you get the first charge, it will be easier from that on. I am going to call my girlfriends afterward to make you a company. You will caress, care and cherish them more than humans for your entire life, and look, the life has already passed. I have thought up a fine plan, right?” said Thingy and nestled on Ivan with all her body.

“Well... I... this... that... you know...”

“Do you want me to call for my girlfriend?” said Thingy without unhooking her hands from Ivan’s neck.

“What sort of girlfriend? What for?”

“Oh, you will see that soon enough!” Thingy replied. “Come here, yo-ho-ho!” she started singing, and right there somewhere from bushes a second not less mysterious lass came out, being, probably, even more, dazzling and shining than Thingy herself.

“Hogwash!” the girlfriend of Thingy presented herself. “Girlfriend of Thingy.”

“What the reason do we need her?” Ivan frowned.

“Oh, darling, how don’t you understand?! Don’t you know that every modern glamour star-aspiring man must always have his personal hogwash, which would blind each and every one on all creative parties with her relaxedness and spontaneity!”

“And how’s that?” Ivan didn’t get it.

“Oh, like that!” said Hogwash and, having undressed herself in one instant, settled on the ground in painful expectation of unhealthy man’s attention. “Photograph me!” she ordered-asked.

“What sort of fine Hogwash you’ve got, Ivashka!” Thingy giggled. “A Hogwash above all the things. With such a one it’s not a shame to enter a high society!”

“How creative I have thought it up, yes?” Hogwash laughed, putting on her clothes after a short-term posing in public.

“Oh, you are such an ingenious one, my friend! You alone will suffice to enchant lots of Ivans!”

“Legion is their name!” Hogwash joyfully exclaimed.

“And not a consumer less,” Thingy winked. “Well, should we be going to people right now?”

“Let’s go!” Hogwash agreed. “But first let me kiss you fellow as well so that further on he can think of no one else, but us only. Ch-m-m-m-o-o-o-k-k!”

\* \* \*

“Ch-p-o-k!” said an icicle that has fallen from a roof. “S-s-s-dzin!” she added, having scattered in one thousand small splinters. “Ch-m-m-m-o-o-k!” a second one echoed in response before accepting the same sad fate.

“Ivan, stop kissing a pillow already, rise up and help me!” a female voice ringed in apartment’s corridor.

“What a terrible thing I’ve dreamed of!” Ivan thought. “For how long have I slept?” and he decided to say this last thought of his aloud in a faint hope that somewhere there, in a corridor, somebody will finally give a response to his question of metaphysical importance.

“You have almost overslept our joint trip to a supermarket, dear husband!” a response came from over there. “And after all, we have agreed even yesterday that you are going to buy me a pair of dresses on my choice and a heap of other different baubles and things.”

“Is that some sort of morning thing?” Ivan was stunned. “What a nasty thing! It’s necessary to give up with this infinite shopping!” he resolutely came to a resolution.

“And where is that are you going?” a husband’s wife interrogatively stared on him, getting on a coat over a pajama.

“Into the bank!” Ivan reported. “Giving my credit card over bail. It’s that sort of their new service, ‘get out of consumer credit servitude’, you know. A thing of all the things!”

*2012-03-14*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Lyre and Satire

## America speaks

“Hello, hullo, ladies and gentlemen, misters and sisters! We are glad to... Heck, I’m going to think and speak like I am a foreigner with such a speed! Ghm, I’m sorry, my respected watch-ers, see-ers, stare-ers, and finally just the ones, who did not find anything better than to simply roll on a sofa in front of the TV this silent Sunday evening! “Russia News” telecast is in the ether, and I, its permanent, though not immortal, figure, Vladimir Vladimirovich Pupkin.

Yes, all of us have awaited this unforgettable and inexcusable moment for a long while – and it has come at the long last! After showing numerous respects, accustoming and toadying of our journalists he finally agreed to give an exclusive interview in our, Russian television studio, located in Chicago. The One elected for the sake of freedom and democracy in all civilized North American continent. The One who received the Award of Peace on the public which was shocked and stunned by such impudence. One who prefers to conduct a vegetarian way of life without departing from the White House. One who has promised so much, and will promise even more. Taliban’s bane and Al-Kaide’s horror. A needle in a haystack, a genius among those who lack talent, wise man among fools, a ray of light in the empire of darkness, damn it! But, enough of flatter epithets! Meet Barrack Hussein Obama, the president of the Jointed States of America in person!”

*The door slams open in a television studio and Barrack Obama enters. His face, even black, is saddened even more, dark streams of unknown origin flow down his once snow-white shirt. His eyes express a mix of alarm, bewilderment, and anger.*

**Obama**, “Shit! Niggas shit! Black as we are!”

**V.V.P.**, “President Obama, what’s wrong with you?”

**Obama** (*wipes the face with one of his shirt’s sleeves*), “Chose me? Hate me! First chose, then not like! Damn niggas! Hiroshima, Niggersaki! Nuke you, bastards!” (*waves a fist of the right hand before a television camera*).

**V.V.P.**, “E-r-r-m-m... can I help you in any way? It’s a custom tradition to bring a glass of water in such cases.”

**Obama** (*looking around in fear*), “Water? No water! Water turns black as oil! Mississippi, Lousiana! Niggas trick!”

**V.V.P.**, “Mr. President, are you even in the correct condition to participate in our interview? And are you totally and inevitably sure you do not need any sort of help?”

**Obama** (*continuing to look around in a search of the nonexistent enemy*), “Help? No help! We help, not us! All world, we help! Bring democracy, spread it! Like gardening, like my wife!”

**V.V.P.**, “Oh, yeah, the topic of democratization of a free world in the American style is in today’s agenda.”

**Obama** (*with considerably increased activity, swinging hands, from which the splashes of dark substance continue flowing, having partially soiled the camera of one of the operators*), “Yep! Democracy! Holy shit, we did! This way, that way, everyone gets! Refuses – gets a bomb! No nukes, no Hiroshima, we merciful! Agrees, makes a slave. Lots of concubines, lots of fun!”

**V.V.P.**, “Well, it seems to me that now you have very diplomatically and politically correctly mentioned a subject of so-called “colorful” revolutions, whose rain has recently spilled near the borders of our country...”

**Obama** (*continuing to gesticulate actively*), “We help, we buy! Lots of money, Lots of credits! Lots of printing job! Take whole! Democracy matters, a country not matter, money does not matter, no! We good, we help! Bring holy shit!” (*Obama’s face blurs in a smile*), “Wanna shit?”

**V.V.P.**, “Faugh!”

**Obama**, “No want? OK! Next time, you take – we will, we make! D-e-m-o-o-o-c-r-a-a-a-z-z-y!” (*jumps out of a table and starts to jump actively about the room of the television studio*).

**V.V.P.**, “Well, well. So, democracy as an element of decomposing “soft force”...”

**Obama**, “Exactly! We wise, learned well! Make sex, no love, make war, not peace! Shitty piece!” (*tears off the next piece of the dried up substance from his face*).

**V.V.P.**, “Oh, heck, if you are really that wise...”

**Obama** (*jumping about a hall and clapping in palms in joy*), “We smart, wise! We Yankees! Like monkeys! Monkeys wise, humans from monkeys, we from monkeys too!”

**V.V.P.**, “As far as I know, there is just a telecast “In fauna” in the next room of the studio...”

**Obama**, “We strong! We came, killed all natives, lots of blood! We learned! Doesn’t matter who, we still kill! Arabs, Russians, Latins, all same! Lots of blood! We mighty!” (*grins in the television camera*).

**V.V.P.**, “And so now you are face-deep in a shit...”

**Obama**, “No! We OK, all OK! Still, eat, still sleep, still exist – all normal!”

**V.V.P.**, “Well, and does torments of conscience not haunt you? Say, faces of killed Iraq children, occurring in your mirrors in the mornings?”

**Obama**, “Soul? What soul? We need no soul, we save no soul! No SOS, no... asses! We save ass, that’s all! Fat ass, we take care” (*poses his \*ss before the nearest television camera, which has approached just in time*), “Pretty simple, eh?”

**V.V.P.**, “As they say, it looks like you have just dotted one’s i’s and cross one’s t’s without even noticing.”

**Obama**, “What? Me not understand! I am Yankee, don’t you forget that!”

**V.V.P.**, “OK!” (*aside, in a whisper*), “Oh hell, how I do agree with you now, my black-ass colleague!”

**Obama** (*having calmed down and again having taken a seat for a table*), “More talk, no? Me good talker! Me talks, talks, talks... no deeds, just talks! Lots of fun!”

**V.V.P.**, “Yeah, it’s really difficult to neglect your oratory skill.”

**Obama**, “Yep! Democracy style! Talk, talk, talk. Do different, keep talking! Blah-blah-blah... great disguise!”

**V.V.P.**, “But, apparently, the world starts to see through this illusion, for long time obvious to some...”

**Obama** (*looking around in fear*), “They see? Who sees? We not care! Lots of money, mouth shut! We talk, no they! Silence, no mass media – we are media! All equal, some equal more! Democracy!”

**V.V.P.**, “Now, apparently, I am starting to understand, why such a popular and defiled word starts exactly with the “D” letter...”

**Obama** (*in confusion*), “D... dunno? No? De... despots? We kill despots for oil! D... dinners? We good dinners, fat asses! D... devil? We fight the devil, we Empire of Goodness! Gut bless us!”

**V.V.P.**, “Excuse me, I take it that what you really wanted to say is “God bless us”?”

**Obama**, “God? No, we know no God! We forgot. We just kill. Just eat, sleep, drink. Again, again. Endless circle, no end. We Gut Nation! Damnation!”

**V.V.P.**, “So, does this really mean that you do not consider yourselves as a chosen nation, destined to make happy millions of unknown people by democratizing them... to the death?”

**Obama**, “We are! Are we!? Chosen! Like Jews, like Britain! Holy three! Arabs not chosen, Latins no chosen, we are chosen! Niggas not chosen... shitty niggas!” (*catches on the tongue the drop of excrements of voters, which has flown down from hair, and spits it out with passion in the face of the V.V.P.*), “You not chosen, too!”

**V.V.P.**, “Enough! Such behavior passes all moral boundaries, even though I am not sure you have any of those remained!”

**Obama**, “Got it?! Retribution! You refuse, you get retribution! Democracy, fuck you!”

**V.V.P.**, “Enough, the interview ends now. Security, please take care of our deranged visitor! Try not to cause him too much harm, scientists of the future will surely need this brain for studying the reasons of similar intellectual-national illnesses.”

*Two bashers who have entered the television studio inconsiderately take Obama in hands and try to force him out. Obama shouts and spits, threatening with all torments of a Hell, beginning from sale in sexual slavery to the Blacks and finishing with the promise to arrange the next grey-buro-crimson-in-speck revolution. At last, having gotten a blow in the chest from one of the guards, he calms down.*

*And only his gleaming black eyes still shows the degree of his aversion of the similar aversion of their way. Finally, all three silhouettes disappear from the vision of video cameras.*

**V.V.P.** (*wiping his face with a hand*), “So, my dear watch-ers, see-ers, and stare-ers... he is such a man, this mister community organizer Barrack Hussein Obama! But let us not judge harshly, it’s simply not their day today. And tomorrow too... and the day after tomorrow. For our ancestors did speak right: “If you spit in the world – the world will clear itself, and if the world spits on you – you shall surely sink”. And as they say, may the Gut give them good health... and may the God have mercy on their souls!

This was Vladimir Vladimirovich Pupkin, permanent, yet not immortal television figure of the “Russia News” TV show. And as our American friends would surely speak: “Have a good day! OK?”

*2010-04-05*

*Genre: Report*

*Category: Recognized*

# Notes of self-isolated

## Chronicles of one viral virology

**Day 1.** Today on TV they widely and openly announced that a dangerous virus has arrived from China, somehow traveling through Europe, and we will fight it to the end and with every means possible. The words “every” and “to the end” sent a slight chill down my spine. Just in case, I checked my card account balance. Blessed be the bank, the funds were all in place. These Chinese are real bastards! Or is that Europeans?

**Day 2.** The TV talking box continues to rattle about the epidemic in China. If I were Chinese, I would surely be scared. Fortunately, we, Russians, have nothing to fear. Probably.

**Day 3.** Buckwheat is starting to disappear from the shelves of grocery stores. Do mice steal it at night? Or is that a new plan to create state’s inviolable food stocks? Thinking.

**Day 4.** Insight! Buckwheat was bought in reserve by fellow citizens who were afraid of the virus. But who then bought almost all toilet paper – and, most importantly, why? Thinking.

**Day 5.** Got it: toilet paper began performing a psychological function – sort of a sedative. Cheap and deep. All that’s I need to do is wait for this paperwork crisis to come to its end, and everything will be fine once again. Probably.

**Day 6.** Some incomprehensible “experts” appeared in the talking box, telling us about more and more cases of virus infection and the dangers that lie in wait for us. I can understand the dangers – but who, to the hell with their producer, are all these media people?!

**Day 7.** China built a hospital in a couple of days. In no way, it can be possible! It would have taken us at least a couple of years, no less. Are we worse than these narrow-eyed people? Thinking.

**Day 8.** Insight! If we continue to “optimize” our medicine further, then hospitals will no longer be needed, and it will be legitimate to never feel a sense of bitterness and regret that someone is building them faster than us. All according to plan.

**Day 9.** Oysters and shrimps disappeared from food stores. Who needs these anyway? Bought a whole cartload of lemons before they stole them like rats to the corners of own homes.

**Day 12.** In the talking box, “experts” continue to speak some outright gibberish about the accompanying symptoms of the disease. This way all healthy people will soon be transferred into the caste of sick ones and no other disease except for this who-knows-what virus will ever exist. Isn’t this a well-veiled attempt to create a caste society? Thinking.

**Day 15.** Infected with a thirst for travel, patients continue to arrive back from Europe, but they are not particularly checked at all. What, are they immortal?

**Day 19.** Everyone should urgently self-isolate, this is a voluntary order! Or that's what we are being told from the chatting TV box. I am, most certainly, an obedient person, but what kind of term is this? It's more like self-procrastination. Thinking.

**Day 20.** My six sense keeps telling me that this will last for long.

**Day 23.** Policemen keep catching violators of the self-isolation regime as if they are criminals and are in no hurry to self-isolate themselves from our streets. What, are they immortal?

**Day 25.** Almost all stores are closed. TV box cared not to say when they would finally open. A "high-alert" mode has been introduced. Who are we fighting? Is it possible to overcome what is unnatural? Thinking.

**Day 27.** I started moving on the streets in short runs, avoiding oncoming police patrols. Observation: if you move fast enough, because of their innate laziness, policemen will cease following you to issue the desired fine, and switch to another, a less mobile victim. Brilliant!

**Day 30.** Switched from my two legs to my bike. They will never catch us!

**Day 33.** Grocery stores are out of ginger. Well, fuck it, I would never buy this freaking stuff anyway!

**Day 40.** Zombie-box said that all of us must wear masks. Yet they did not specify, which ones. Tomorrow I plan to wear a horse mask, and the day after tomorrow – a dinosaur. A circus, no less!

**Day 43.** Are we going to die out like dinosaurs with such rulers?

**Day 45.** Today people started avoiding me on the streets as if I were a leper. They walked around a meter away in silence as if they were not alive. Maybe I shouldn't have put on my Darth Vader mask after all. They may also come with me to the dark side of the force, I don't object.

**Day 47.** Jokes put aside, today I was caught up by the patrol. I shouldn't have been wearing a Vader mask while moving on the roadway. Got away with a minimal fine. Failed to lure the police to the dark side. Is it because they already belong to it? Thinking.

**Day 50.** We have a real epidemic raging on! At least, that's what they said today in zombie-box. There is not a single infected one among all my friends, praised be the light side of the force!

**Day 55.** There are ongoing rumors that 5G towers are a secret project to control people's minds. Watching the police dragging a poor old traveling woman into the car, I started to believe it.

**Day 57.** Now it's possible to leave your home only with a QR code. Living, in general, has not yet been banned. Weird. What is the reason for such generosity? Thinking.

**Day 60.** Am I a shivering creature, or am I going out for a walk?

**Day 65.** Many stores and businesses are still closed. What, are they immortal?

**Day 66.** I am not fit to tolerate this bullshit.

**Day 70.** The number of patrols on the streets increases rapidly. There are ongoing rumors about plans of world bankers to chip the entire population of the Earth and turn people into cyborgs. What, do they want to become immortal?

**Day 80.** I checked my card account balance once again. Funds are almost running out. Now I finally understand what was meant by terms “to the end” and “by all means”.

**Day 90.** The self-isolation regime has been extended indefinitely. The lack of sun and vitamins makes me feel sick at times.

**Day 115.** Today I almost fainted from hunger in the store while choosing the cheapest instant soup available. A compassionate woman managed to grab me while everyone else shied away, probably because I wasn’t wearing a protective mask. This is no longer a circus, but something completely different.

**Day 117.** You can’t even sell or rent an apartment to buy food. We keep successfully defeating ourselves.

**Day 160.** Patrolmen in black armored suits filled the streets. They are recruited from among the desperate and starving people. These sworn men work literally for food. What, do they think they’re immortal?

**Day 173.** There are ongoing rumors of an impending coup d’etat.

**Day 190.** Hunger riots are raging on in the streets of cities. This is said in the broadcast on the “Resistance” radio channel. They call for us to join their ranks. All fighters of the invisible front are promised to be supplied with “stew” and “buckwheat”. What do all these words mean? I’m trying to remember.

**Day 200.** I’m a member of the Resistance! We are fighting for our homeland against the elite who have betrayed us and sworn loyalty to the foreign money owners and lenders.

**Day 255.** The radio of the Resistance broadcasts throughout the former Soviet Union. We may not be immortal, but we will never be slaves. Freedom, equality, brotherhood!

**Day 777.** Today, the last enemy stronghold in the county’s capital has fallen under the decisive blows of the Resistance forces. How sweet is the taste of victory! How sweet is buckwheat!

**Day 1100.** Our military space machine knows no equal, and battle-hardened soldiers are eager to save the world from the henchmen of the “world chip-implanters”. Very soon we will have enough forces for a final strike.

**Day 1255.** March on Washington!

*2020-05-06*

*Genre: Report*

*Category: Best*

# Master

“Greetings, oh great Master!” the Seeker started yelling. “I have heard a lot about your wisdom and knowledge and truly desire to become one of your devoted Disciples!”

“And won’t your heart jump straight out of your chest, should I accept the offer?” the Master squinted his right eye and looked fixedly at unexpectedly found neophyte while continuing to nibble sunflower seeds. “For, you know, I have no desire to stand responsible before Gorzdrav for your breathless corpse, you see? After all, I am already on a note, for my own health is not the one it used to be in youth.”

“I would surely jump out of my trousers from the joy if you take me with yourself!” assured him the Seeker.

“It’s a bad karma to jump like that. After all, we are not Europe here, see? Different spiritual climate, so to speak. And who was that wise man who advised you to visit me, especially so early in the morning, aye?” murmured Master while scratching his own back.

“Destiny itself has brought me to you by tracks rarely-walked and ways inconceivable!” ardently exclaimed Seeker.

“Probably, ye found the announcement in the newspaper, aye?” Master coughed, having choked with his next sunflower seed.

“In newspaper used in the toilet for the paper!” Seeker started chattering. “I have understood finally that throw away my life aimlessly in the trash can, like an ultimate fool, I do!”

“Well, you are not the very first, and surely not the last!” Master laughed in reply. “The last little fool here in our village was Vasily.”

“I finally desired to comprehend the meaning of my life, my mission, my path!” Seeker continued to chatter a tongue twister.

“Well, if you are such nimble, we can join our ways,” answered Master. “Can you chop firewood, for instance?”

“I will gladly learn this lesson!” ardently confirmed Seeker. “Just make me your Disciple!”

“All right, all right, have it your way!” Master coughed another time and spat out next sunflower seed on a grass. “Grab that ax over there and go with me. I myself is too old already for deeds like that, need a fresh blood to make things shine.”

\* \* \*

“How are you holding your ax, silly one!” Master shouted and struck Disciple’s head with a crutch. “What’s the reason to hold it with one hand? Hold it with both hands when dealing a blow!”

“Like that, we should cut strenuously through burdens of our life?” Seeker looked hopefully at Master, brushing away sweat from his forehead.

“What sort of burden is that?!” Master looked shocked. “You were simply asked to chop firewood, nothing more and nothing less. What, have you eaten too much henbane to make daily routine tasks look like a feat?”

“I have consumed too much of Internet, Master!” bitterly exclaimed Disciple. “I have eaten it too much and become satiated! I spammed through forums, trolled poor children, scribbled disgusting articles in newspapers, I did!”

“Sins of yours are heavy!” Master has thrown up his hands. “And what are trolls, exactly?” he decided to specify just in case.

“Ones such as we are, Master,” sighed Disciple. “Shivering creatures.”

“Oh, you haven’t tasted our frosts yet, dear!” Master laughed. “Not to worry, we shall cure you of this civilized nonsense, only give us some time.”

“Many thanks to you, Master!” cried Disciple. “Just tell me what should I do now, I am ready for everything!”

“Keep on chopping firewood, stupid city-dweller!” Master yelled and once again laid a precise blow with a crutch upon Disciple’s head.

\* \* \*

“Very well,” Master noticed with satisfaction, climbing upwards. “Stove is good, it gives warmth. And warmth is priceless nowadays.”

“Hearts of men have grown indifferent and cold to burdens of their earth brothers...” Disciple nodded knowingly in response.

“Goof!” replied Master and threw a felt boot from his leg into Disciple. “Firewood is cheaper, and oil radiator would cost me a fortune for sure. And my pension, I’ll make you know that isn’t a fortune at all, and it’s without a premium. They didn’t even give me a veteran of works status, nasty ones!” Master grumbled disappointedly, settling on a stove.

“Master!” frowned Disciple. “Master...”

“ZZZZZZZ...” noise came to his ears from stove’s location.

“Master!” Disciple cried beggarly. “Master, I look forward to hearing from you!”

“Yes, what-what-what?!” opened his eyes almost fallen asleep from warmth Master, having stared at his Disciple. “Why have you once again disturbed me when I was regaining my strength, aye?” he said and threw a second felt boot in Disciple.

“Master, we have been engaged in some nonsense for several months already – we were dragging waters from a well, collecting grass in stacks, catching fish in a river, cooking a fish soup. When will we finally start doing something important and great, something that matters? My spirit has grown tired waiting for future achievements!”

“Does it look like insignificant to you? The fish soup we used to cook turned out to be great, by the way. Especially when made from carps and catfishes, – delicious! For a long time, I haven’t tested such a meal without you.”

“Are you scoffing, Master?!” Disciple cried bitterly. “What kind of significance is that?”

“Your empty head!” Master sighed. “It surely doesn’t want to put a meaning in things you are doing. For if you put sense in your deeds – you would love it, and if you loved it – you would do so with joy, and if you did them with joy – you would be happy, and if you were happy – you would share that happiness with others around you. And what kind of fish soup they would be able to cook then? Divine!”

“Easy for you to say!” Disciple took offense. “You keep lying in warmth while I have to freeze each day down here on this wooden bed. I would certainly like to be in your shoes!”

“Are you sure you want that?” Master blinked his eyes. “No problem, climb over here! And I will luxuriate in your place, for I get used to enjoying the place I live in no matter where I am.”

“Shit... how do I... where is... damn it... master! There is no free place here at all!” started complaining Disciple, has once again hit his head against a brick of the stove.

“It’s you for whom there is no place over there, for you have your own place in life, simpleton!” with these words Master threw back his felt boot onto the stove. “Catch boot!”

“Why do you give me your footwear, Master?” Disciple looked at him with confusion. “Come back to your stove and I shall climb down to wooden bed.”

“Not so fast!” laughed Master. “Quickly put on felt boots and sheepskin coat, you shall go to a post office now. The lesson of humility and patience awaits ye.”

\* \* \*

“Back so soon?” Master smiled, seeing as covered with hoarfrost Disciple has hardly rolled over a threshold and has wearily fallen to his bed even without putting off felt boots. “Well, how are my boots to you, don’t they put too much pressure on you?”

“Hard is the journey in sandals of yours...” Disciple murmured wearily with hardly obeying lips.

“Well,” Master sighed with satisfaction, moving on a stove. “Russian Post, village... Should I explain it further, or will you manage to comprehend it itself, spineless troll? And I, by the way, went there every month to collect my pension. But I do see now that you can replace me in this battle.”

“Who the heck advised you to settle in such boondocks, Master!” grumbled Disciple. “God only knows how long I have been traveling to you through woods with no direct direction in order to find you!”

“By beloved dolt!” Master lifted his hands. “Who has told you the false fact that it was obligatory to crawl through woods for several days in order to find me – your own ego, or some kind of Buddhist? You, I gather, haven’t even heard of such a thing as public transport even once in your life? Bus number sixty second goes to our bus stop every day, and it takes only ten minutes to get to me from there.”

“Wisdom of your speeches escapes the vision of my spirit...” Disciple murmured wearily, falling asleep.

“You have to find right stops in your life’s journey, simpleton!” Master laughed in full voice.

\* \* \*

“Master, why do we need all this at all, what’s the point?” Disciple carefully touched Master’s shoulder.

“We need to catch it first at this point, and you keep disturbing me from setting a drag-net on foxes right now!” and Master straightened out him. “Silence!”

“Aye, aye, sir!” replied Disciple. “I will be silent as a great Buddha, beholding the world.”

“No way, I don’t demand these self-tortures from you here!” Master hushed on him. “I can’t cease communication for such a long time myself, and won’t advise you to do so either. We only need to set a couple of traps here – and then we go back to the stove.”

“It’s important for men not to fall down into self-made pits or traps by bringing evils to our neighbors...” efficiently confirmed Disciple.

“Oh, my! When will you cease philosophizing for an instance, aye? Your ego is still wagging a tail just like a fox!”

“I have gathered wisdom during this year, including one from you, my Master!” Disciple assured him. “Now I feel myself stronger.”

“Tell this to forty-degree frost tomorrow when checking drag-nets,” said Master spitting on a snow.

\* \* \*

“Master...” a familiar call ringed in the air once again, as always.

“I am not the master for you already! I am Egorych, Stepan Egorych!” said grandfather, wearily sitting down on the stock of wood. “I have been repeating you this for several years already, troll’s head, and you are still crying ‘master!’ and ‘master!’”

“But in that old newspaper announcement you called yourself as ‘master’,” objected fairly overgrown during the last five years Disciple.

“I am a plumber, you dumb! They always name us that way. And I was looking for a disciple-assistant to repair pipes in our village, for they have been completely worn out during a Soviet period and may burst to pour at any moment, – and no masters will be able to help us if that shit happens.”

“It turns out that...” Disciple fatefully sat down on the ground, being shocked by what he has just heard, “you are not my Master?”

“Well, why not? If destiny itself has brought you to my doors – this means you belong here. After all, we have greatly uplifted and advanced our housekeeping for the last five years, so it might be a good time for you to go into the hands of Avdotya Mikhaylovna, – her pipe under a bathtub started leaking quite a while ago... and she needs someone to help get her pension from Russian Post office either way.”

“It means... everything was in vain... all meaning of life is thrown in a pipe...” stunned Disciple was barely whispering with disobeying lips.

“And maybe that purpose of your particular life which you have been seeking, – is exactly to laid a helping hand to Avdotya Mikhaylovna, aye?” and Master blinked his eye, smiling.

*2016-11-17*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Performance

Greetings, well-respected soul-thinking readers and page-swingers. Recently a set of letters has been coming to the editorial office of our newspaper with a request of repeated publication of presented several months ago article that goes under the header “Performance”. Due to the importance of the mentioned subject and high level of urgency of this article to our society, we decided to comply with this kind request of our paper-consumers. We hope greatly that the feeling of kind irony won’t abandon our readers (as well as the persons, mentioned in the article) in the process of reading of this note, once again being published by us.

*“Petersburg Movable Bridge” publishing house*

One of these days in Moscow in the Cathedral of the Redeemer both surprising and tragic at the same time events took their place. A group of unknown males, dressed in caftans, padded jackets, felt boots and caps with ear-flaps, despite obvious discrepancy of similar regimentals to the current weather conditions, without any given permission or payment of tax for entrance to sacred orthodox temples, having pushed local old prior of the temple in a most shameless way, broke into the most sacred place of our not rubber capital – to temple’s altar.

As it should be well-known to our respected readers, this altar was officially declared as sacred literally a few days ago before the events in place when the Holy Patriarch of All Russia performed in the presence of the president of our country before it the anthem “God bless the Tzar!”. After which specified group of unstated persons without any proper constraint and with a great enthusiasm sang a song “Oh, frost, my frost!”. Let’s note that according to the data of meteorologists, air temperature outside of the building was about thirty degrees above zero at the moment of their performance.

At present time identikits of the criminals are being prepared and designed by law-burying enforcement bodies, however, all such actions are at a loss due to a great resemblance between produced images and ugly faces of average tipsy Russian men exactly on New Year’ Eve. However, if only it all was limited to a singing of similar obscene songs, for truly believing citizens of our country it would be still half-troubles. The real trouble is that criminals not only sang unstated by the law frankly blasphemous song, they also dared to laugh in the most impudent, shameless and frankly freeway!

As it should be well-known to our dear readers, in connection with the official resolution of the Patriarch it was strictly forbidden to either smile or to laugh for all truly – and more importantly for devoutly – believing orthodox Christians, and upon entering the temple they should, we quote, “to have a face mournful and oppressed, head down lowered, eyes inexpressive, lips with teeth snacked and money in pockets lots of”, and violation of this behavior was officially equated to blasphemy which, in connection with recently introduced in the Criminal Code amendments, was equated to especially serious crimes against consciencemenfaithhonor (in one word from a small letter) and Sacred Orthodox Church (in several words from a capital letter).

The scandal which has burst in connection with incident continues to grow. Practicing psychiatrists, self-educated linguists and political scientists have already started speaking about the process of serious dividing of society on a taste and color basis.

A number of cultural figures already expressed their support to newbie singers in their collective letter, having thus received a brand of figures-of-the-lack-of-culture from a number of political parties of nationalist nature. “We are driven only by compassion and love to representatives of our people, and thus we freely accept their right to put on padded jackets and felt boots, as well as to sing the unpopular song. Jesus told us of love and amnesty – including to those who dress not like we do, sings different songs and feels the world another way. People without love are no more than bags with bones,” like that commented on the situation one of the unnamed signers of the letter. The signer, however, didn’t specify, whether all signers are being driven by similar motives or the most honest of their kind.

However, there is not a single sign of complete unanimity concerning the event among representatives of culture and art. So, a number of singers already managed to condemn anonymous choristers and spat tastefully in their direction.

“I am no Christ and will not forgive all and everything!!! They must all have gone nuts!!! A shame if they would sing my song, ignoramuses. Put them all on a stake and burn!!!” like that raged the queen of Russian chanson in her personal blog.

The prima donna of the Russian platform was more careful in her expression: “Dull yokels simply decided to promote themselves! They are probably thinking of taking over my place. No way! I have kicked with feet down from my platform even better ones. And to smile and laugh is a top of cynicism during our hard times. A fiddle while Rome burns. They better dig a ditch in front of our castle instead of doing nonsense. All of them are simply lousy clownery!”

Her old acquaintance expressed himself slightly more categorically: “I dunno want to be interrogated about these devilish bitches! I am irritated by their pink jackets, their boobs, and your microphone!”. On a fair remark that performers of a song were males, the singer confusedly replied that he was probably confused by some demon, and hastened to retire from under the gazes of television cameras.

“I have been always telling you that Russian is a genetic rabble and cattle! They dream only of getting drunk and sing something pathos. Stupid ones, to be short, – not the way I am! No way for mink revolutions together with such morons!” well-known TV soul-killer expressed herself exactly that way.

Don’t lag behind the Russian colleagues are foreign singers, whom, most likely, similar “performance” cut to the quick. So, Madonna of the American platform was persistently interested, whether are those singers accused of all mortal sins are representatives of LGBT community, and was extremely disappointed by the answer that they are normal Russian men, and “not like the ones in these solar Californias of yours,” and short time after together with the mayor of Berlin she made the official statement, that, we quote, “unfortunately, Russian social public haven’t yet grown to high standards of the western democracy and doesn’t possess required level of tolerance.”

Truly believing Christians, marking their presence here and there in comments to articles, concerning anonymous group, also continuing throwing chestnuts in a fire.

“I, as the Russian Orthodox Christian, consider that these obscurantists should be cut by whips with iron thorns on the central square. And it must be done in the face of their children so that they learn to live correctly! After all, truly believing Christians will fairly hammer them to the death at a first opportunity nevertheless! And that’s right! Let everyone know the power of true belief! For the Patriarch and Russian Orthodox Church!” writes one of them.

Representatives of political parties keep adding fuel to the fire as well.

So, with a rigid criticism of anonymous group acted representatives of nationalist parties “New Great Stalin” and “Stalin is everything ours”. “This is a spit in the soul, in the belief of our people. It’s a blasting of foundations of our statehood. These are intrigues of our Anglo-Saxon foes. Their future fate must be decided by our most fair and humane court, and no cultural figures have the right to interfere with that process,” so the leader of the first party commented on the situation. “They all should get a second Stalin!” declared the leader of the second one.

The leader of Communist party declared literally the following: “We understand the degree of gravity of the question, brought to us in the song, for exactly in winter time the well-known February revolution was carried out, and exactly April theses were created by our eternally live leader. But at the same time, we consider such behavior of these men inadmissible for the party due to ethical reasons. Look at our leader – there is no smile on his face. He sleeps peacefully, awaiting the coming of great future events, disturbs nobody and isn’t being an eyesore for people at all, and at the same time quietly and silently welcomes and accepts everyone coming to him. We consider the similar behavior of our leader to be a fine example for both our party and all our supporters as well.”

The well-known leader of other party expressed on considerably more increased in decibels tones: “Swine! Bastards! Nits! Let’s they eat shit! Bears in our circuses behave better than they do! A shame for the whole world! Unfinished morons! I would tear them out, like my donkey! Bastards!”

Representatives of the party “Wrong deed” declared that at the present moment similar questions interest them “not so much”, as they still can’t decide a question of who will be their new leader after they expelled the old (young) oligarch in all four directions during last inner-party intrigues.

Representatives of the ruling party refused to comment on the situation. The search for malefactors is still going on. Society is divided. Politicians battle with each other. Militant Christians demand bread and shows. Network hamsters keep buying popcorn. Cultural figures shamelessly find fault with all and everything, fighting for a proper place under a golden calf. As they say, everything is quite in the Moscow-city...

2012-09-29

Genre: Report

Category: Recognized

# Who is Who

## Certificate

*Issued to:* citizen Who.

*Purpose:* to show everyone, “who is Who”.

LLC “Fools of the planet” accuses citizen Who of:

1. Sitting on a bough.
2. Talking nonsense and just laugh.
3. Clearing the brain’s trash and stuff.

The present certificate also confirms that citizen Who:

1. Not a donkey.
2. Not a goat.
3. Maybe, weirdo.
4. Fool or bot.
5. He’s the target for attack.

P.S. He will crack!

Mr. Who is charged with 159484838934848454 crimes directly or indirectly committed by the entire LLC “Fools of the planet” community throughout the history of their life on the planet Earth. The community itself refuses to bear any responsibility in a sly-voluntary manner.

Mr. Who can challenge the legality of this certificate’s issuance by a personal interview with each of the hundreds of millions of members of the community. The decision to cancel their who-cursing each member of the community takes on their own after the conversation. The cancellation of the specified label, received by Mr. Who, is possible only with a one-hundred percent of revision by each member of the community his opinion about Mr. Who (which is impossible due to elementary statistics). The crucifixion of Mr. Who is one of the methods of punishment considered by the community. The certificate was issued to Mr. Who in absentia, and his consent to its acquisition is not required (and this makes us really happy).

Hoo hoo! Yahoo!

LLC “Planet Earth”

“Fools of the planet”

2013-02-17

Genre: Article

Category: Recognized

# World of Light

# In the New World

When was that?

Sometimes it seems to me that all this has happened several minutes ago, even though long twenty years passed since these days. This is not a fairy tale – in any sense. This is a story of my life, its mysterious and unforgettable part, its guiding shining star. The beginning of my new journey in this world. If you would like – solar rebirth.

Our memory always keeps for us the most remembered and wondrous moment of life. And today, after almost twenty years, I still remember very clearly that brightest month. They, those days, clearly reveal before me – whenever I wish it, my memory repeats them for me in brightest details – each and every day from several dozens. Sometimes it even seems to me that some special sort of memory is holding these events... They remained in my heart – those days.

Now I am remembering those moments once again, and tears are sliding on my cheeks... These are tears of grief and joy, my friends. Each day and every hour is so clear...

\* \* \*

“John, it’s time for you to go home!” and worried mother appeared on a porch.

But the boy did not hear her – he was far away. They together with Jim and Laura – the little girl from the same city quarter were lapping in the river. They were scooping with their childish palms handfuls of water and with all available powers were throwing them into each other, pouring over with a sparkling water stream.

Here he grasped flowing water with both his hands and threw it directly into Jim, having poured all his face from top to the bottom. Then Jim, who was still throwing streams of water into laughing Laura, has somehow put a hand on water surface – and an instant later a whole water whirlwind has circled him. A water shield has risen around Jim. He himself was turning in a water and beating it with hands – and streams fled in different directions from him, touching both the right (whom a Laura can be considered by right – for, after all, it was not she who have begun this attack on him!) ones, as well as guilty ones – meaning John, who had imprudence to pour over this water champion Jim and was not, being poured by uninterrupted water streams, have already felt sorrow for such a precipitate state.

However, this new water barrier and flying water streams, have, apparently, inspired all of them only more – they were laughing and pouring each other, no longer closing faces with hands from water streams, rushing in every direction by totally unpredictable trajectories, being sent by this or that party. Gradually he together with Laura, who have come to the rescue against this Loch Ness monster Jim, began to push him more and more to a coast – streams were beating in a face, he couldn’t see Jim clearly any longer, but kept fighting. But Jim did not retreat as well – now he had time to throw water in Laura as well, and she has got no less pressure than John.

They were fighting and battling together with each other, and ringing childish laughter filled space and unrolled with waves around the place. They had lots of fun that day. Jim was finally pushed into a coast – and they together with Laura by the right of full winners poured him without future resistance from his side.

Then they chased one after another in a water, much like jams of blood-thirsty sharks, as the very same Jim has noticed. Those who have been caught up were seized in water for heels a dragged on a coast. Most easier it was to catch Laura – after they managed to seize her by heels in water, she obediently went to a coast and waited there while they were chasing one after another. Then, laughing, she swam to them – and this time was chasing them, already fairly tired from the pursuit of one after another, and almost every time in that she prevailed. Well, certainly, they gave in to her.

Then there were wood walks and singing of birds in branches of trees. It was morning and they, having taken a seat on wood logs, were listening to bird's trill as if being charmed.

“Our wood brothers know how to praise light,” I still clearly remember this phrase of Laura.

There were their joint hide-and-seek games in wood windbreaks and plentiful high bushes, growing there. There were descents from frosty ice slopes and snow games. There were falling in deep snowdrifts and friendly laughter of friends, standing nearby. There was a joy of experiencing such an enormous and wonderful world, opened before them.

They – these three – were only entering this life as children. They have been living like them from then on.

They... They – three. Now he is the only one left.

It was like a blow. No – it was much more terrible.

As though one thousand of flaming hammers have fallen upon you and pressed down so strongly that you couldn't even breath... As though some deep abyss is sucking you inside and you are unable to do anything... As though some invisible force is breaking and cutting you in pieces... As if you have ceased to live any longer...

And still, it was nevertheless – that particular day. Ten years ago – yes, then he learned that the finest friends of his childhood and youth, who have given him so much – Jim and Laura... – both of them have died. Both have left this world and he remained in it without them. “Without them. Without them. Alone. Alone. Alone,” his consciousness was beating its rhythm like a hammer. “Without... them,” echoing in consciousness words have finally merged into a pure excuse of a phrase – and he has fainted, having fallen to a suddenly approached ground.

He came to his senses afterward, though not immediately. For almost a year he has been coming to senses. This was indeed a great loss – a loss of, perhaps, the most valuable gift from life. But he has endured it. Has consulted because he had to. And because a heart – his heart which has never before cheated him, has perseveringly and constantly from that day of this loss whispering to him that this separation is not eternal.

That they, three ones will meet again under the sun of another world, will meet once his path here is finished and debt is fulfilled.

But all this was later, many years before. And then they were bright children – and nothing and no one saddened their festival of life.

\* \* \*

It seemed that this day was the most common afternoon, which happens exactly three hundred sixty-five times during a year for a detached onlooker. But it might seem to someone other – yet not to him. Not to him.

A ghost or a man? At first, I thought that I've encountered a true ghost when he carefully approached my home and greeted me. As if having appeared from nowhere...

I welcomed him, having sharply put my right palm to a head and then releasing it – for unknown to me reason men in military uniform often made this gesture, and so I have decided to try it out as well.

“Warrior,” said stranger and smiled. “A true warrior will once come out of you,” he added. He started talking. Asked me of my district and inquired if he can live somewhere here for some time till “it will be time for him to move on” – it seemed he expressed that way.

We – I together with Laura, who have come running to my house just by that time to invite me and Jim on Saturday picnic, which her parents were going to arrange – both have actively joined the conversation with a stranger, eagerly rivalry chattering and interrupting each other to give that man as much information as possible on why, for example, he is will be glad to stop in the house of aunt Zhanetta and don't need to even dare thinking of stopping in the “Night Rider” tavern. So we learned that ghost is called Richard. “Richard,” said the ghost, “one of my favorite names”.

When we finally finished our explanations and both stopped, having become fairly tired from such verbal outburst, he smiled and inquired whether he could stay in my house for a while.

“And why don't you want to stop at aunt Zhannetta?” Laura outstripped me with a question and looked at the stranger with the inquiring and interested look. Richard-ghost moved his eyes to a left-upper corner – as if reflecting on something. Then has somehow taken hands aside, having exposed his palms up as if asking someone unknown for help – so it continued for about ten seconds. Then he stirred up his head and once again has looked on us with a radiant look – till now I remember that wonderful sparkling of his eyes! – and has started talking once more.

“Decided to check one more time if I should stay where you have offered me at first. It will not be the best choice. I should stay for some time close to you for now.”

We, of course, started asking him one after another of why he should stay exactly with us and how he has learned of that, and he replied: “You will learn everything in due time. When you will grow up, you shall understand. Warriors,” he added and smiled. “Be not afraid, John, be not afraid, Laura. I will not cause you any harm. Warriors of good battle together – shoulder to a shoulder – and no against each other.”

But... I didn't tell him my name! And neither did Laura! How could he possibly know them? Judging by Laura's face I have seen that she is a bit confused as well. "But how did you..." she started asking – and suddenly changed her mind, without finishing her phrase.

The stranger turned to face her and smiled.

"You want to ask yours and John's names? No, I didn't inquire people about you for that I have no need. You will receive the answer to that question as well, having grown up. Many things will open before you then."

He has told nothing more on that question and we haven't interrogated him as well.

"As I understand, a consent of your parents is necessary for me to live together with you?" and looked at us. "Well, certainly," he added again after five or ten seconds. "I will adequately pay for my accommodation and will not disturb you in my everyday life. However, if you", – and he looked at me and Laura – "will ever need my help – you can always address me while I am staying with you. I will be around here for about a month, and then I will have to move on for my path calls for me. Ask your parents and decide together whether will you accept me – and who from your parents may welcome me. I will come tomorrow afternoon. Good luck to you, warriors", – and, having this said, he has fitfully got up, waved his hand, parting, and suddenly disappeared behind a horizon almost as fast and mysteriously as he has come, having left us both in feeling of bewilderment and at the same time in sensation of some bright joy and presentiments of upcoming happiness.

At least I was left with such a feeling – but Laura, seemingly, as well.

"So, what are we supposed to do now? Did this man seemed... strange to you?" and Laura lifted her eyes, studying me.

"Strange? Yeah, that's true... he is strange... but still, I trust him for some reason. Don't know why. I trust him and believe in his motives," I replied.

"And so did I. I just wanted to know what do you feel. However, I don't think that my parents will allow him to live with us – too watchfully do they concern strangers, even to... such as..." and Laura sighted. "But yours will most certainly allow it! After all, your family is short of money now and they will use this upcoming possibility."

"Yes, mine will likely welcome his offer. He will stay together with us... with us... for a month," I said. One month... "Why for so short, just a month?!" word has suddenly escaped my lips and I hastily covered my mouth with a hand. What are these thoughts? Strange.

"Well, fine. I will come tomorrow evening and you shall tell me about him then. He is so mysterious..." Laura has favored me with her graceful smile, stood up from her place, has given up a lost farewell – much like that stranger – and has run to her house. Her silhouette was gradually thawing as if concealing itself in this morning haze – and soon totally disappeared from sight.

"It means, tomorrow. It means, month. Well, let it be so then," don't even remember from where did these thoughts came up to me, but there were some extraordinary force and internal consent inside them.

My parents indeed allowed this stranger to live with us. So has begun that wonderful and unforgettable month of my life, which has remained in my heart, remained – forever.

\* \* \*

He was full of surprises and riddles, that Richard, and was extremely kind as well - and so we together with Laura, Jim (we couldn't conceal such an event from him, and he too started visiting me in my home to meet time and again) soon all three have fallen in love with him. Even now I can still remember our conversations with him, his brightly shining solar eyes and quiet and filled with internal might voice...

“Are you asking me of where have I come from? From a world – worlds. There are myriads of unique magnificent worlds out there. Your life lies in the endlessness. It's only necessary to move forward to understanding and beauty. And this world of yours – you can transform it into a blossoming garden as well. You hear me? You can! It's all in your powers...”

“Now you are living the life of a child, you notice and see a lot of things – those which the majority of adults have already ceased to notice – lots of fine things. You are living in a live world. Each day is truly new for you, and wonderful as well. This is true and fair, a fine perception of life. Others have to study such perception. Those who have forgotten that such a sensation is possible – they have to be reminded of that. Your joy of life and love – your and one of your friends – it's as though a key to a world. It will open all gates before you, it will lead you over abysses and give magnificent wings for a flight”.

“Yes, indeed a joy is promised to mankind. People could live in joy if not have made themselves enter a circle of sufferings. I do not know why they have made this choice – but many nevertheless have made it. What sort of joy am I talking about? But you must have already experienced it! When you together with your friends were playing and frolicking – that was a joy of exploring the world. When you study surrounding world with interest – it's a joy of learning the world. You receive the joy of working as well. When you are in love and are giving your love to your neighbors – it's a joy and delight of love and giving it back. It's strange that some have lost this wonderful thread – but it means that they have to find it once again. Heart of theirs must they melt first! People passionately wish to be happy – and do nothing to make that happen. For some of them, every day is like a monotonous foggy image and their life also happens to be full of mist. But it's easy to lose the way and clue in a fog, therefore it's necessary for a heart to shine with love and joy – and then no fog imaginable will cover this ardent heart!”

“The one who is moving will reach once – I know, you have already heard these words – and they are true. It's impossible to sit in one place, in the 100th time raking up piles of own prejudices and unnecessary and insalubrious habits. One has to move on, to be inspired! The inspiration is necessary for men – but many believe that it comes only in some extraordinary cases. But it's always near us – only to stretch a hand. Only to start working with kind thoughts in mind - and inspiration will always be your faithful devoted companion on a life's journey.”

“How have I learned your name? And how animals feel fear? How do people feel other’s gaze? How the atmosphere of a home in which they are staying can be felt? Certainly, not all possess such sensitivity – but they themselves close own way with prejudices. But even those who possess, usually consider this sensation as sort of artificial self-suggestion. Extremely accurately and clearly feel some – and still do not trust themselves! Wave them away, refuse, while they could study these phenomena. But with such a difficulty do men accept everything that lifts their nature and their self-understanding, therefore for many indications of eyewitnesses are not enough – they judge of things in the world based on their own being. But your science can prove that – and it must finally pay attention to these aspects. Your science has already studied many laws of the physical world – but now the time has come to study laws spiritual one. Actually, you have been told of them so long ago – many centuries before, yet they remained the diploma on paper for many, which they respect, yet do not follow.”

“What are these laws? And what have you been told? Love your neighbor, learn to find pleasure in any work, learn to be courageous, bring light into the world. Simple words. Great sense and wisdom - and knowledge as well. But how many people remember that every day and live like that?”

“Who am I? After all the first time I have come to you, you must probably have considered me as some sort of ghost, right? But as you can see, I am a live person as well as you. I am simply speaking of something of which many of you are still unaware. For those who remembered once but have forgotten – I remind”.

“Why should I leave you soon? Because my way calls for me I will have to go. There is much to be made yet”.

Such conversations we used to have in evenings. I, Jim and Laura – all of us gathered together before a house fireplace and like bewitched ones were listening to him. Probably due to a simple reason that he was telling the truth?

\* \* \*

I clearly remember one day when the heart of mine was beating uneasily. I couldn’t find peace inside me as if something sad was going to happen. I was going by our street when has noticed Laura and three adult guys who have surrounded her. Then the words and crying reached my ears – “Please, I beg you, stop it!” With all my powers I ran forward. The wind was beating me in face and picture was gradually opening before the eyes – three guys have surrounded her, one was holding her by the hair and two others were tearing her clothes apart. They were doing that and were not afraid at all. No one, nobody from rare passers-by tried to interfere, even though together they could stop this violence.

Still running I have snatched one of them and tumbled down – began threshing with fists without looking. The desire to protect Laura was burning so brightly in my breast that I didn’t feel pain when two other guys abandoned crying Laura and have seized me instead. I felt no pain when one of them took me by my hair and another by a jacket so that I couldn’t move any longer. I felt no pain when they started beating me in my breast. I felt no pain when has fallen to the ground and they began kicking me with feet. I felt no pain by that time. The pain has come later.

A small stream of blood was flowing from injured nose and lips, leaving a viscous red trace on a sidewalk. Three guys were guffawing and undressing crying and begging them not to do it girl – begging in vain. I don't remember how much time has passed – I ceased to remember. But the subsequent events I remember extremely clearly still.

“You shall now leave her alone and move away while you still can. Immediately!” painfully familiar and now already cold as steel voice ringed in the air.

Hardly moving my head I still managed to turn it and have seen standing nearby me Richard. Not like that, totally different was his voice when he was talking with us – now it was somewhat rigid and filled with great inner force at the same time. I badly remember those instants – my eyes were dimmed by some red fog – but still remember some things nevertheless... Hearing his words those guys have come off the crying and groaning Laura and turned to face Richard.

“Now!” repeated Richard and made several more steps towards them.

“Oh yeah! Who's the fucking shit are you?!” one of them shouted in response – but there was no more than defiant impudence and self-confidence that was before.

“I said now! There will be no repeats here. You can back off, I will not touch you for you have yourselves created not the best consequences by that act. But now you will be cleaned away!”

“You try to expel us, goat!” – already obviously defying, the very same guy shouted.

Then Richard stepped forward, sharply raised his right hand up – during that instant as if some fiery blade sparkled in his hand – or, perhaps, my grown turbid consciousness has already started to dement me? – and he exposed his hand forward.

“Why the heck are you afraid of him? There are three of us, and he's alone!” the very same ringleader cried out and, probably having decided to set an example for his allies, sharply rushed towards Richard, exposing his fists forward.

He bashed at Richard with all his force – such a pressure should simply tumble Richard down on the ground. It seemed to me that during that instant of their collision something has flashed around Richard... anyway, I clearly saw how the tyrant who has bashed him as if hit a stone wall instead. He simply ran into him and was knocked away – and Richard has not moved at all, totally not stirred. Not a single iota. The tyrant instead felt to the ground, moaned and then went silent. Two other guys, already being frightened by his appearing, have abandoned Laura and started running away with all possible haste. They were not pursued.

I do not remember what has followed. I regained consciousness being already at home – and the pain wasn't felt any longer. I stood up and soon found Richard. He was silently sitting at a fireplace – it seemed that he was dozing, his eyes were closed. I didn't disturb him and went to look for Laura instead. I found her in the next room lying on a bed, sleeping. Her wounds were tied up and there were not, not torn, clothes on her. It seemed that sleep overcame me once again after that. When I woke up again, both Laura and Richard were unsleeping. They were sitting near the bed.

“Ah, woken up,” said Richard and smiled. “Rise up, warrior. Your wounds have been healed and you are ready to stand in line once again. You will have to do it before the upcoming era of trials”.

“I... I feel no more pain... totally. How could I recover so quickly?”

“Yes, and Laura feels no pain any longer. The pain has gone. I have cured you, though it was not an easy task – however, I have already rested for now.”

“But how did you...?” Laura started asking him, but Richard raised his hand as if calling for silence, and said “Questions will go after, but for now you have to rest. Take a rest, warriors with lion hearts,” and he left a room.

\* \* \*

Then there were our talks with him once again. There were even more many joyful days. These were unforgettable days. Probably, the best ones in our lives.

And then he left us – and we remained alone. In the next morning, he got up and told me that today it’s time for him to go.

“Where to?” I asked.

“The way I have chosen,” were his words.

I began crying. I started crying when he told that he is leaving us.

He smiled and said: “Don’t cry, we are not parting ways forever. Perhaps, we shall meet again one day. Farewell, warrior, and do remember of the days of upcoming trials!” he once again habitually waved his hand and sent his steps into a new revealing way.

We were standing shoulder to a shoulder – I, John, Jim, and Laura. I watched him with sad and full of hope look. Laura hung down her head. “Farewell,” she whispered quietly. “He will return,” said Jim. “We will meet him once again”.

\* \* \*

I regained consciousness from memoirs.

As clearly as now I still remember that wonderful month – and the next years of my life, accompanying it. I have never met this man again. Sometimes I even start to doubt – whether he is a human? Who is he? Wiseman? Prophet? Simply a person, according to his words, who have come to this world to remind people of their duty and show a bright path?

I have no idea. But I certainly know the one thing – his word has given me life. He has shown me a wonderful world in which we, we, people! – can live. If we desire it and choose it, if we will not be sitting idly, swimming in swamps of own prejudices, but move forward instead. If we shall truly love. If we shall rejoice life.

Yes, yes, yes! He has shown me a new world – the world of Life. He has pointed to surprising new possibilities available for a man. Whether we will desire to live in the light? It's up to each person. I cannot make that choice for everyone. Everyone sooner or later, but inevitably – will make his own choice. But I have already made my own, and so I do answer to a fine – yes!

I answer to beauty – yes!

I answer to love – yes!

I answer to joy – yes!

And to the New World I do answer – yes!

*2005-01-08*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

## Time of heroes

“Accompanying persons are requested to leave a launching pad. The launch will be initiated in thirty minutes by Earth time,” a quiet and methodical voice filled the space. Dozens of people – seeing off their relatives in a new difficult voyage for them – at last looked away from a starship and started moving to a waiting hall. Some smiled hopefully, faces of others were filled with tears. Guards even had to forcefully seize one man, who still didn’t stop beholding this conqueror of space and was waving his hand to a departing brother. The rest departed willingly.

But minutes of farewell is now behind. Last thirty minutes, dividing mother Earth from myriads of other vast space worlds.

“Colony vessel will be launched in five minutes. Pilots of starship – inform us of your readiness.”

“Alpha-one. Ready.”

“Alpha-two. Ready.”

“Alpha-three. Ready.”

“Zeta-one. Ready.”

“Zeta-four. Ready.”

“All systems are green. We are ready for the launch of a colony star vessel “Trailblazer”.”

“We understood you, “Trailblazer”. The launch will be made in one hundred and twenty seconds of Earth time.”

And just an instant later, totally disregarding the discipline, the words broke through, “Good luck to you, guys!”

“Thanks, cosmodrome “Star Way”. We will do everything in our powers.”

Ten seconds to launch. Nine... Eight... Seven... Six... Five...

It seemed to them this very instant, that those ten seconds lasted for the whole eternity – wonderful and everlasting. It seemed, that just as quiet – always – these short words will beat off their mysterious rhythm, and Earth, Mother Earth, their space home, one of the myriads, will caress their sight with its familiar and dear landscapes. And that this launch pad, and this star vessel, and cosmodrome control tower, looming in a distance will never-ever disappear from the sight. And that the sun will shine just as warmly, and tomorrow, only twenty hours later, this planet will meet its new day. But by that time they will long be gone... And each of them during these short and at the same time, never-ending instants remembered his own life in this star home.

They say, that when one is dying, all his life, all its particles – both bright and dim, all its flights and fallings, – they are all swirling before him. These last instants are extremely short – and at the same time practically endless. They are like the awakened eternal memory, drawing a slice of his past before a man... one of his steps in eternity.

They weren't dying – they were reborn anew during these instants, and during same instants, their memories were recreating the images of their past before them. They remembered the childhood – how each of them was a beautiful young and still totally helpless child, having come to this world. They remembered, how this very child has finally grown up, learned the world to which he has come, and how he has fallen in love with it. Each of them was traveling his own path – some in a desperate and furious run, some measuredly and easy, some even joyfully jumping. Yet the roads of their destinies once joined together and since then they have been traveling as one. They have formed a unity during all those years – and thus they will work as a single whole.

“We shall make it,” those were the thoughts of everyone.

And thus they came at last – these words. Or, truly, just a single one.

“Launch!”

The ship rushed upwards, furiously speeding up, desperately trying to leave from under terrestrial gravitation. And once again instants of time flow as a series of small eternities, disappearing in something so much greater. And once again a new life – and myriads of births each and every second of a life's journey. And yet somewhere deep in themselves a woken up gentle melancholy of a native home, left for a while – a home, where they will surely return ten years after when their mission will be fulfilled.

\* \* \*

“Indeed, I've heard of that. The first space vessel “Trailblazer” successfully orbited the Earth and from now on they are traveling to a different solar system to build the first colony on a planet, discovered by auto-piloted ships, which significantly meets requirements of our world's inhabitants. There is an atmosphere, very close in its structure of gases to our home world, there is a comprehensible planetary landscape, there is organics – practically an ideal new home for us.”

“And still our true home is where we are living in every single moment. Haven't you always been telling me that?”

“Yes, you are certainly right – our home is where we are at present. That's why our home is the Earth and their new home... their new home is awaiting them.”

“When, according to calculations, should they return back to the Earth?”

“Almost ten years from now, judging by previous measurements. Their journey to a new planet will take four years, one year for establishing and building a colony, and a bit more than four years to travel back home. Well, I mean to one of their homes – back to us.”

“Do you believe that they'll make it?”

“I have no doubts in that. They are the best ones we were able to find, masters of their kind, who have successfully passed through all conceivable earth trials and training for adaptation in space. But – and that is the most important aspect – they are almost like a uniform monolith, a single whole, that's why they'll make it all. And no other option is ever possible.”

“I take it, that now we have little options left, except for to await their arrival. Ten years, right? Just a small fraction of the eternity, isn’t it?”

“And now you are talking my language. How did I manage not to notice such a change in you earlier, I wonder? I must have totally lost my attention by the end of my years, I guess!”

“We all are constantly changing. Someone rises up, somebody falls down. There is no stopping in the Universe, as well as no ending of a life. Those were your words, remember?”

“I do. And now, after even twenty more years of my life, I can add to it, “and men, like the Universe, belong to it”.”

“Now, it, apparently, is totally obvious to the overwhelming majority. But everything could go a wrong way, had they not listen to reason in due time. Do you still remember those years?”

“My youth? Certainly. To tell the truth, it seemed as if the whole planet has gone mad these days. The ever-increasing race of arms; the invention of even more deadly types of weapons, starting from nuclear bombs and ending with a biological weapon, capable to alter a gene pool of whole nations. And all that was going hand in hand with the increase of political tension along with tearing the whole planet into thousands of even smaller slices-states, with the rise of even more of local “saviors” and “prophets”, who saw the rescue of a planet in the domination of their slice over others; along with a pursuit of even more carefree and “problem less”, as they named it, life. But now – when this extremely dangerous stage is left behind, I have no desire to truly remember all these years, and I am really glad that the terrible future, into which this planet was going, hasn’t come.”

“Indeed, everything has changed with new discoveries of a small group of true thinkers and workers.”

“Not only scientists made that possible. Without creative individuals from other fields – beginning from literature and finishing with lots of spiritual movements, it wouldn’t be ever possible. The discovery of human “auras”; the research of man’s emanations, their dependence on the mood and his world-outlook, the discovery of their influence on other live organisms; the religion, which finally accepted these new openings of a handful of warriors, battling the crowds of ignoramuses – all this finally lead the humankind to the understanding of real value of goodness, of kind wishes, values of light aspirations. Gropingly, literally gropingly, in total darkness did men crawl their ways to a greater and wonderful knowledge...

Many still wander in a fog of negation, but their numbers are growing short with each passing day. Just like every schoolboy previously knew that mother Earth is round and is rotating around the sun in the solar system, much like that now he starts to learn that great spiritual treasures are hidden within him, capable to transform the life, and he only needs to find a way to that inner land – to find it through own heart. I am truly glad, that it has finally happened.

And now we, creators in the eternity, can breathe with relief, accepting a fresh air in our lungs and smile. The stage has been passed and a new stage is forming just ahead of us – the discovery of endless and boundless reaches of space, as well as its beauty. And “Trailblazer” in that sense is one of the symbols of a new epoch of uprising and a new step in eternity.

We will be awaiting them, yet we will not stay idle. We will grow, we will prosper, we will perfect ourselves. And by the time they return to us, we’ll accept them with open arms.”

“And tell them, “Welcome, oh brothers!”. Yes, we will be waiting.”

*2005-01-10*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## State of Earth

“Based on my authority as the new head of the Supreme Council of the Incorporated Countries I proclaim our countries one state. All ideological, political, economic, psychological and other unnamed types of separation are eliminated, the newly formed state receives the status of free confederation, universal political cards are subject to revision – any territorial differentiation of a surface of a planet by the political sign is cleaned from them, all borders are eliminated, free and unobstructed possibility of moving on all territory of new formation is guaranteed to the population of the former states, and newly formed community is named...”

“Hm. Let us leave these pompous speeches,” and the man smiled. “After all, we are not going to amuse our vanity as politicians of the past, are we?” And he looked over the hall of people with a smile. “Let’s name it... let’s name it the way our planet is called, let’s call it the uniform state of the Earth...”

2005-05-28

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

## **And all diseases will be gone**

I stopped. I stopped when have noticed a picture, totally breaking all conceivable and inconceivable laws of human logic. It wasn't simply strange... it was... somewhat ridiculous... amazing.

For a couple of years already I have been a regular visitor of this establishment, was there on a two-three month basis, I got used to beholding yellow walls with shelled and falling off the plaster, constantly sad faces of its people... used to see queues of older persons all with lowered heads and sad expressions on them, used to observe how some of them not without the help from other colleagues have been forced to wait in longest many-hours queues in order to receive a priceless ticket, granting one the right to learn one's fate – for even they, these people, tried to appear here as seldom as ever possible, tried not to be at all.

I had to come here time and again – my current condition didn't allow me to do anything different. I had to stand in queues among the same brothers-by-misfortune, to listen to silently-cold voices of doctors, ascertaining deterioration of your disease and constantly diligently drawing something on your out-patient card, without troubling themselves with any comments on that subject, though.

I got accustomed to this place, despite all its absurd. I could do no other. I cared no longer of what my doctors would tell me – my own sentence I have known for quite a while already and for a long time have reconciled to it. Different thoughts occupied my mind – I thirsted to know why these men so diligently avoided to look you in the face while reading your diagnosis, leaving you no options of survival – not in this life at least, not during ten incoming years. I was truly curious why they, snow-white like a funeral shroud in this house of grief, only multiplied this grief with their indifferent faces, cold voices...

Was a monthly ascertaining of the absence of any positive changes in my illness really desired by me? Whether I really needed those endless inspections, required by no one, even myself? No. Not for this, I thirsted. I thirsted for words – a kind word of participation and understanding. I desired to hear words of support from them – just to know that some other can share your pain... simply to be aware of that. I wanted to behold a shine of joy – a joy of life – even in someone's eyes, once in many months... But, obviously, I desired too much... too much in this life – and hopes of mine could never come true.

Probably for that particular reason now I have stopped, being amazed at what I have seen. I would, certainly, not able to say anything meaningful first tens of seconds, if some casual passer-by has suddenly decided to inquire why was I standing with my mouth widely opened, hardly incorporating cold winter air. There were no such ones – and that's probably for the better.

That house of grief which I got used to observing for those almost two years, which I knew practically thoroughly, – it was no more both inside and outside. A sad inscription, engraved by dark gray letters “City hospital № 17” was gone, as well as lattices on windows and always-rude security guard, wiggling from constant sleep debt. Instead of an inscription, there was a bright... a signboard of sorts... have no idea how to name it, where new words were imprinted: “Townhouse of healing. We are happy to wish you a good health!” Lattices on windows disappeared as well, and there was a shining light, coming from windows... and when I have habitually risen up by stairs, I was greeted by an elegantly-dressed young man, who said something like “Come in, please. May you be always in good health!” and magnanimously opened me a door.

Shortly after that, I had to come to my senses for at least ten minutes in an entrance hall. And this hall itself changed as well. No more there were decayed walls and tiny cloakroom with eternally snapping and rude woman of thirty-five years. There was a sort of large parquet hall instead – walls changed their color to grass-greenish, and instead of a cloakroom attendant Masha there was a smiling woman of thirty years, who, when I have approached her, also welcomed me, kindly helped to take off my coat, and, having given me a label, once more wished me good health.

To tell the truth, I didn’t expect all that. I got so much accustomed to former “yellow house”, and to see it totally changed was truly surprising for me. Even more intriguing were new people – attentive and, I shall not be afraid of this word, really sympathizing.

When I have climbed a new beautiful twisted ladder on a second floor, my eyes surprised me one more time. Narrow, constantly badly lightened corridors and men, crowding in them, were gone, as well as sad-yellow walls and endlessly-long line of doors with diverse and hard-to-understand names of specializations of these doctors – instead there were wide, brightly lighted and spacious corridors with some sort of bluish-white (and, as it seemed to me, as if even a bit shining) shade walls, and there was practically no trace remained from a heap of doors with badly readable names of specialties of these “doctors”, eagerly not expecting you behind them.

Amazed, I was walking forward through this corridor, badly realizing where were my sick feet now dragging me along. I was wandering and overheard some surprisingly beautiful quite melody, being poured on a premise... for an instant it seemed as if I recognize it – it contained familiar tonality, however, I had to admit further that despite was tonality is familiar to me, its rhythm was totally new. Nevertheless, this music was surprisingly beautiful... so astonishing that I was compelled to shed a few tears myself, listening to it. But if only the music... Some unknown aroma penetrated this mystically transformed corridor – it was unusual, as well as the mysterious melody, and pleasant at the same time.

I was slowly moving through the corridor, looking around and never ceasing to be surprised. It seemed that this painfully familiar “City hospital № 17” ceased to be itself anymore and became a... museum of fine arts, at the very least. I say “museum” just because habitual to me former naked walls were now decorated with pictures – ones of our classics... images of love, joy and “simple human happiness”, which all of us have been searching for so desperately.

I... have no idea how to describe you all that, which words to use when talking to you, ones reading those lines of text right now, so that you can understand me... so that I can share with you all that oceanic variety of feelings, which have overflowed me at that moment... I felt as if I have finally arrived not into some pitiful and painful hospital, but in the paradise instead... or at least into the expectation room on a threshold to it.

I was traveling down this mysterious corridor and saw no other fellow sufferers... no sign of eternally arguing patients, no smell of spirit filling a premise, there were no visible nurses and medical brothers, pushing their carts by this narrow corridor – there was nothing... normal... habitual, to say so.

When I, at last, have approached the first carved door in this corridor – almost during that very instant of time a doctor opened it and came to me. A doctor... to tell the truth, one could hardly name him a doctor for now. A one habitual to me, anyway. A man of approximately twenty-five years old, dressed in a dark blue dressing gown, smiled to me and said: “Don’t hesitate to come in. We are truly glad to see you,” and, having that said, he welcomed me to his office, coming after. Obediently I entered the place.

And when I did that my eyesight has decided to deceive me once more.

There were no traces of walls, covered with advertising of all-brand-new “universal” medicines, neither cots nor couches, no signs of iron medical little tables, already so familiar to me. There were wide carved oak chairs instead, as well as some beautiful (but, unfortunately, unfamiliar to me) pictures, soft carpet floor, once again some pleasant smell (however, it differed from what I have encountered in the corridor), quiet music, flowing in the office’s air... there were so much more to behold.

“Come in, sit down, please,” the man told and helped me to sit down on a convenient oak chair. “What troubles you today, sir?”

To be truthful, I was taken aback. Whether he really has no idea what has been bothering me all that time?

“I take it that you are surprised? There is nothing to worry about, it has been like that for quite a while,” he answered in the meantime.

“What exactly has been like that?”

“The house of healing, most certainly. It has been in such a state for a long time.”

“But I was in your hospital yesterday...” I tried to object.

“Yesterday? You did not visit us yesterday. You have not been here for several decades.”

I was astonished. Did... did he know me? And... several decades? I distinctly remembered that was here yesterday and my attending physician ordered me to come back tomorrow... thank God, my memory still served me well enough.

“Do you know who I am?”

“Yes, most certainly,” said the doctor and warmly smiled once more. “You entered this office and your biometric parameters have been analyzed. You were there ten years, two months and three days ago since your last visit.”

“But... that’s impossible... I... I don’t understand... yesterday... today... a new building... signboard... music... what... what happened?”

“You ask me so many really interesting questions – I see that you are an inquisitive and reasonable interlocutor,” that man told me. “But let’s not get ahead of ourselves. So, how did you name it... a hospital? A house of pain, right? But... we have not been using these words for many years already... unless there should be a pain? Both health and cure – that’s what should be, and no way for pain and suffering. We bring no suffering, we bring health.”

“And the music...”

“Music? Yes, that’s our new melodic rhythm for the last year. World scientists have discovered, that exactly similar tonalities lead to a sincere and nervous relaxation and, as a natural consequence, to improving regenerative processes in the cells of live beings.”

“And a smell... what’s a strange smell is that?”

“Nothing more than a recent invention of a new branch in the science which has been called as ‘smell-infology’, as far as I remember. This mix of aromas improves a brain activity and have a relaxing and calming influence on a human organism. Certainly, there are lots of other aromas, serving different purposes, but this particular one suits us best of all.”

“And the pictures on the walls?”

“Oh, mind you, we are not a bombproof shelter of the times of the Last War, right? Such an interface forms a positive spirit in our... in our potentially healthy people, and aids them a lot. After all, you must have certainly heard of the last researches of the United Alliance Of Medics, who have discovered, that our organism is capable to recover by itself from any known in the present moment (and, possibly, any future potential) illness by keeping an appropriate inner positive spirit? So, well, such an interior is used to promote its formation as well. It’s that simple.”

“And how... I... I still haven’t understood... please tell... tell at last who... are you?”

“You ask too many questions... forgive me, for I cannot answer them all. Our time... time is for an outcome... it’s – the most valuable human resource...”

Something suddenly started hammering in my ears so I could hardly distinguish separate words, being spoken by the mysterious... doctor.

“Each one... can... must... himself... desire... be healthy... then everything becomes... possible. Remember that... well.”

“But... tell me... who are you?”

“We... yours... future...” last words finally reached me.

And just a moment later a knock at a door transferred me into the next world.

\* \* \*

“So, woke up finally, Ivan Petrovich?”

“Pavel... Pavel Petrovich,” I whispered, still coming to my senses and silly beholding the decayed yellow walls which have surrounded me, and own iron bed on which I was laying.

“Yeah... sure... who the heck cares. Wonderfully, wonderfully. Just remarkably, you know.”

And having that said a man in a white dressing gown bent over me, looked in the eyes somehow semi-malevolently and smiled.

“Now we are gonna to put you a clyster, Ivan Petrovich, and all your diseases,” and he smiled once more, “they will be surely forever begone...”

*2006-01-01*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# God's Dream

*Devoted to the Living God...*

A Newborn God was sitting over the shade of a tall mighty tree, which has not yet been given a name, and he was dreaming. He has just created the Earth and had yet to make a couple of easier worlds in the nearby star systems.

A smile was playing on God's lips. He rejoiced at the result of his latest work – the Earth has turned out to be extremely wonderful. There was a great variety of climates, which you would practically never find in any of the worlds, created earlier. There were mountains, rising into the heavens, and sea hollows, leading into infinity. There were giant trees, similar to the one, He was sitting underneath, and smallest, indiscernible for an eye of future inhabitants, leaves and blades of grass of unknown plants. There were an incredible variety of living semi-reasonable beings, beginning from some small insects, playfully creeping in a grass, and finishing with sea and terrestrial giants. In other words, this was a fine created world – possibly, one of the pearls of His Creation.

It seemed that He enclosed something immensely-imperceptible into this process of Creativity. As if He has given to the Earth a part of Himself. And that is why now He was happy.

He dreamt of how humans will soon enter this world of His. How man will rejoice at the sight of his new home, created for him instead of ordinary-looking old ones. How people will settle on boundless horizons of this Creation of Creations and will love each other and rejoice to life and the world, given by the Maker.

And thus He made a call then to the most distant reaches of the Universe for humans to gather – those, who will live in this new home – probably, the happiest ones among all living. And humans came to the Earth – not even came, actually, but have arrived from their common previous worlds on their spaceship – the ark. And they have descended down to the Earth from it and settled. And named this date as the date of the world's creation.

There were years, and there were decades, and there were hundreds of Earth years passing. Settled those ones, who arrived from far worlds, on corners of sphere terrestrial, and primogenitors of races, three in number, they became. And loved they each other, as the God asked, for some time – yet slowly to forget of love some of them have begun. And, seeing this, to help those falling asleep the God has decided – and asked He started for prophets to come into this world to advise humans of where that Light at the end of a dark tunnel lives. And came angels-prophets, warriors of fine God, to this world terrestrial and prophesied words of pure origin, purifying hearts of His beloved humans. But nevertheless, the hearts of many have fallen asleep greatly and did not hear words of those prophets of great God they – and crucified His prophets. But the Most Gracious Maker did not cease to hope, for after all he loved humans even with all their lacks and was ready to help always those, Light who were seeking.

There were hundreds of earth years and there were millennia. Yet more actively and heavily did humans stray in dark and murky tunnels. And seeing human sufferings from the darkness, absorbed by them, the God has dared to make a deed compassionate. His Finest Son, by the Father's light enlightened, He asked to come to the world of humans, to help those suffering by His Light and His Love and to set them on the right path. But humans betrayed the Divine Son and killed his body, unable to cause harm to the pure spirit.

And there were great grief and confusion in the Heavens. Light Angels of the World Spiritual did cry, seeing this human's misunderstanding and all the darkness, to which many have already aspired.

And the last, desperate step the God has dared to make. He Himself has descended to the world He created, to test Himself all temptations of darkness, accepted by humans, and to deny it, having shown them the Way once and for all. The First and the Last the God has become in this world of His own, which on the brink of the chasm was flying, the Son of Man, the Alpha, and Omega. He has come into this world, made by Him, as a human and will leave it as a revived God soon.

And, having learned about Him, among all of them living life simple and modest, people began to come to Him. One after another they came and asked.

And the priest shouted to Him: "I banish you, unholy one! Not about you did yours crucified Son told us, and we were not waiting for you. And not even did we wait for you, for no need for God living and just we need. And is it appropriate for a God great to live in a hole pitiful, and try not to drag in paradise for gold, as we did? Disappear, impostor!"

And the politician laughed at Him: "Here you are, preaching honesty, living not in mansions imperial. Better look as we, deceiving others, have built palaces! Therefore, study from us, while we share this wisdom of life with you!"

And the sick, humiliated and offended ones came: "There is no justice in the world of yours ever!" they shouted to Him. "We have given you our stones, constantly dragged by us, expecting heavenly wings in return – and where is a fulfillment of our desires? Or are you not the Almighty, as they say?"

And proud ones came to Him, and silently spat in Him, before others flaunting.

And cruel ones came to Him, and to finish Him off they threatened.

And clever ones came to Him, and to enter senseless philosophical disputes they tried.

And sly ones came to Him and tried to catch Him on a word said.

And simple ones came to Him and their souls were filled with the wisdom of His words.

And seeking ones came to Him, and their hearts were lighted up with joy, for they have found at the long last.

And just ones came to Him, and silently submissively bow down before Him.

And pure ones came to Him, and fire of their spirit shined even brightly for they were staying nearby Him.

He accepted them all, refusing no one. For how is it possible to refuse to the children, coming to their Father?

But somewhere on a joint of the worlds, invisible to an eye of human, enormous clocks keep ticking, measuring the time until the Judgment Day, the day of estimation. The Moment Of Truth.

But still loved did the God his children – and lived in their world near them for the time being. And the chance was given to everyone...

But all this was later, much later. Even though time has no meaning for Immortal ones.

But for now, God was sitting under a huge shady tree on the planet Earth – and was dreaming. He was dreaming of the new wonderful worlds...

*2010-10-09*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# World of God

*With a love for God*

The newborn God was cheerfully walking on city streets, which name he didn't remember for now. And what is the reason for a Maker to remember human names? Unless only for people.

The sun was joyfully shining him and its beams were playing in puddles which have remained from a recently came rain. He loved such a weather greatly – and playful Angels of Elements with both awe and joy in hearts satisfied this his request.

And yesterday there was snowing over this nameless city in spite of the fact that average day temperature usually reached thirty degrees in the “plus” side. And the day before yesterday the densely covered by clouds sky was suddenly cleared of all white fluffy figures in some fifteen minutes. Probably, someone even was christening himself, or, say, cursing weather forecasters with all colors of the rainbow shining today in the distance over a sea smooth surface, starting from gray-brown-crimson-in-a-speck. And God was cheerfully walking forward, inhaling the aroma of the sea, brought by the air, and spraying water drops from puddles which have not yet dried up. He was happy to live in this made by himself world. For, after all, what can be better than to feel your own creation from inside?

Today he was simply walking on streets of this anonymous sea city, enjoying his life. A life of a human, if it's possible to say so, – for he will enjoy the life of Almighty God a bit later. And, eventually, the life in a human body had its good advantages as well.

Suddenly something started humming in a stomach persevering and tenderly – even, to say so, totally human-like. Purr-purr-purr. A then – p-u-u-u-u-r-r-r! And then – w-h-o-o-o-o! With all voices at once.

“Maybe I should have a supper?” thought the Newborn God, and, having seen through a bird's eye view all the panorama of his present city-surroundings, defined for himself the next building, where he could stop. Just some ten minutes of walking.

The God smiled once again. Most certainly, he could reach this tavern in some thirty seconds – but what other surrounding him people would think if he has suddenly soared up like a bird? It may be so that some compassionate old woman or some persistent atheist would have a heart attack. And he didn't want to cause harm to anybody, even inadvertently. And, eventually, it was his righteous beloved ones who had still have to fly.

Top-top-top. Chpok! And splashes from a puddle, through which he stepped over, scattered on several meters on all diameter of a created circle, having almost sprinkled in addition the passing by man.

“Hey, watch where are you going, bungler!” he shouted on his way, still hurrying very far into the unknown even for him dales.

The God wanted at first to say something like, “My God, forgive him, please”, like as in due time he was asked many times by his Son, who has arrived at this world as well, but then thought that it’s somehow inconveniently to ask himself. And wrong as well, probably. And so he simply continued His way. He was still happy.

Well, here it is. And even the sign hangs over here, carved with beautiful small letters. Tavern “On the brink of the Universe”. And slightly lower an addition: “Feel the aroma of divinity”. Amusing name.

The incarnate Creator accurately opened a door, and carefully entered the building.

“We are closing in half an hour, but I am sure that you can still taste our aroma of divinity!” run-up fellow waiter smartly assured Him.

“Yep,” the God said approvingly. “And what do you have in today’s menu?”

“Oysters by French, slope by Spanish, dranniks by Belarusian, pelmeni by Russian, sausages by German...” the fellow started to list.

“Various things you have here,” God smiled. “And something a little bit more, say, exotic?”

“Mmm...” the waited hesitated for a moment. “Galushki by Ukraine?”

“Suits!” the God was delighted. “It’s always pleasant to remember own good youth!” he added after a pair of seconds and smiled again.

“A pair of glasses of water, if you don’t mind,” God responded good-natured. “I think it will suffice.”

“Water?” the waiter was surprised. “Simple spring water?”

“Yes, yes,” God responded. “And water can sometimes be sweeter than wine,” he added a bit later.

“Well...” the waiter tarried a little, “all right. We’ll do it now. Five minutes or so.”

“So quickly?” asked the Newborn God. “You actually have more time than five minutes. I truly very much hope that all this time will be enough for you.”

“Excuse me... in what aspect?” the waiter was a little surprised.

“For all of you,” and God warmly waved His hand over all visitors of this institution, has not forgotten to point to a window as well. “I hope given you time will be enough.”

“And what will be afterward?” the waiter as though was still in frustration.

“It depends on you, my beloved children.”

“M-m-m... tell me, who are you?” the waiter was still standing nearby this mysterious visitor and didn’t decide to carry the order for performance.

“Priest, or whatever!” someone muttered from the next table.

“What’s in my name for you to know?” the God laughed good-natured. “My earth name is both temporary and eternal at the same time.”

“Earth? And where are living then, forgive me for my curiosity?” the waiter was getting more and more intrigued.

“Everywhere,” God answered quietly.

“Bum, or whatever!” again someone muttered from the next table.

“Inside you as well,” added the Maker.

“Inside us? Where? What for?” the waiter was taken aback.

“Here,” answered the God and pointed to a waiter’s breast. “You even manage to hear me from time to time.”

“Cranky, or whatever!” once again came the exclamation from the next table.

“Do we hear you?” the waiter still couldn’t come to his senses from what he has just overheard.

“Well, yes,” told the Creator. “A voice of conscience.”

“A-a-a... why are you here?”

“Helping all of you. For I do love you!” and in celestial-blue eyes of God, a wandering on His lips smile reflected itself.

“And... for how long will you keep helping us?” the confused waiter questioned.

“Always I will,” the Newborn God answered. “Such is my work!” and his eyes of heavenly color became, apparently, even more endless.

“A-a-a... m-m-m... the last question then... tell, well... e-r-m... whom and where do you work?” the bringer of orders tried to question again, but when he turned back to his unexpected visitor – he has already left.

Only the closing by the wind door creaked melodiously, seeing off such an unusual guest. And on the table where he was sitting earlier, there was a whole mountain of juicy and appetizing galushki pile inside the mysteriously appeared plate. For who if not we need the food, mercifully granted to us by the Maker?

And the Newborn God once again cheerfully walked on city streets and there was the sun, shining in His eternally blue eyes. He was happy to live in this world and in this nameless city of planet Earth.

*2010-10-12*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# World of Darkness

# Your choice, mankind!

A blinding light of neon advertising struck in the eyes.

“Only here! Free sex! Men-women, men-men, women-women! All possible combinations! Only 20 credits for an unforgettable night! Make yourself pleased!”

And just nearby on another building – “Virtual sex with world stars! Feel yourself famous!”

A slow turning. The first, second, third building – everything sparkled with red and crimson fires and suggested to feel “true taste of life”, as it has been written on a signboard of the next stocky construction, inviting “grandiose inhabitants of our capital” to take unique part here and now in summoning of “powerful spirits from underworld” under the direction of “the great prophet”, whose name “is so powerful that cannot even be said aloud”.

People were passing on nearby – they all were dressed in some sort of dark clothes and their faces were turned towards the ground. It almost seemed as if they didn’t notice him.

What a strange world is that? He didn’t remember himself living in it earlier.

He slowly moved forward, studying city vicinities. He had no more doubts that he somehow appeared inside a city.

Streets were lightened up by long lines of dim lanterns. “And how can they distinguish anything in such a darkness? – an overdue amazement came to his mind.

But the ones living here apparently didn’t desire to notice anything, except for but few things. Here some bent townsman ran into the nearest building. A newcomer turned his head to behold the next signboard. Large shining dark-crimson letters were imprinted on its surface:

“Fights without rules. Life is just an instant in the eternity. Death is a release”. And a bit more after – “The property of a lifeguard service of grandiose inhabitants of grandiose capital”.

And once again a painful push of a thought coming – “where am I?”

\* \* \*

He kept moving down the night streets of this city, and new and new pictures were opening for him.

“Your relative is just a human. But you are the God. Prove that! Best weapons and ammunition from military warehouses! Life is a prison. Death is a release”. And familiar words, written a bit lower on a board – “The property of a lifeguard service of grandiose inhabitants of grandiose capital”.

And once again, more and more... Dazzling light of crimson fires...

“Virtual club ‘Illusion’. A virtual model of a capital – and you are its lord. Feel yourself a God! Property of Virtulex Enterprise corporation”.

“Roulette of doom. Now it’s your ‘rolling’, mortal!” And once again an additional text, written lower – “A place with no losers, for life is a curse, and death is a release!”

“Slaves we are not. Give aggressor a strike back! Vote for the ‘Ashes’ project. Each invader gets a nuclear bomb!” And lower – “Institute of sociological research of the Ministry of Attack and Defense”.

Buildings, buildings, buildings... Fires, fires, fires...

This city made one mad. Something suppressed his will and tried to make him behave the same way – having forgotten of everything, run into the nearest tavern, or a sex-dance-club, or virtual “snack bar” – and for many hours to cease remembering any longer.

Of who you are. Of whom you should be. And of what you’ve become...

It seemed as if something terrible laid down on his shoulders, trying to press him down, flatten out, turn into nothing that one, who does not consent with that order of things. The city itself, apparently, was going to finish off this impudent intruder, not corresponding with its essence – and its rules of life.

He kept and continued moving hour after an hour. And nevertheless, he kept moving, hoping to see a gleam of light somewhere. But no matter where he turned to, there was all the same on each new street. Same sinister buildings, as if engulfed in crimson fires, same writhed people with some sort of absent expression of their eyes, entering and leaving them, same human words, constantly forming inhuman phrases.

He could do no more – he suddenly terribly desired to lie down on a street and die. Just to lie down and be no longer – to no longer observe all he had to, to see it no more. To get rid of it as a nightmare.

One more step. And again. And again. A hit – and he embraced the ground. Oblivion...

\* \* \*

He opened his eyes and raised a head over the ground, trying to figure out what has happened. Distinguished a building nearby – and a sharp flash has lit up his memory.

“N-n-n-o-o-o! Only not here! Not here again!”

That was not a dream – he was observing a very same city. Almost nothing even changed, unless for a bit darker surroundings – probably the night has finally reigned. Then he dropped himself on a ground once more and moaned – from a despair and hopelessness. He had no wish no live on here – and had to. What for? What for?!

Silence. Deadly silence. The night city has been already sleeping.

Silently was he lying on a granite roadway, paved by black marble – and silent tears were flowing from his eyes, leaving a clear transparent trace. He didn’t remember what was going on after these moments – merciful memory has erased these instants of time from him.

When he has regained consciousness once again, he remembered only despair – and a city in which he was for now – a city, which has covered the sun like a dark giant.

He distinctly remembered that all. He did remember so much more.

He remembered how he rose up and started wandering the streets once again. Was wandering aimlessly. He was obliged to move anywhere, to do anything – something to help him forget of the horrors of this world – ones, perfectly constructed by its own inhabitants.

He moved by open buildings of sex-dance clubs and saw hundreds and hundreds of embraced seminude bodies, jumping and spinning while dancing with some breaking off and tearing rhythm.

He saw how three humans in a street amicably injected themselves some sort of things, reminding syringes, and just a moment later tumbled down where they were standing on a roadway with blissful expressions on their faces.

He observed how in some lane, in which he has casually turned, three men have fitfully nestled to each other and started quickly taking off clothes from each other, only to fall to the ground and start swirling on it afterward.

He saw so much more. He could do no other.

He observed a planet and its continents. Observed, how dark stains started forming and growing in various areas. Observed, how light dots appeared in different locations, they too grew and extended – and faced the dark waves – and disseminated them. But there were so few of them – and running waves of darkness absorbed many, leaving no trace. Gradually dark stains filled all continents one after another – and in these moments some sort of crimson flame surrounded them – and they disappeared from a planet's map, being covered by a massive dark cloud. During such instants, a wild inhuman laughter filled a space and forced him to clamp own ears.

And then the earth suddenly started shaking and he has fallen to the ground, being knocked down.

It seemed as if the whole planet started tearing itself apart. Cracks started forming on the ground of all visible streets – and underground fire began breaking its way from these holes. A new tremor threw him aside.

The very ground started blazing. Unknown underground fire formed small ardent spots at first, then lines, still merging and uniting, absorbing all new grounds. Fire stole up to buildings and they – mysteriously – started burning as well.

Yet inhabitants of this grandiose capital apparently did not care at all about the disaster that was taking place. Through open doors of a close sex-dance club, he could see, how crowds of people, still densely embraced, were spinning and shouting something in frenzy – in a building that was already blazing.

“They will lose themselves, they are gonna to die! I have to rescue them!” – thoughts blazed in a consciousness of a mind, filled with a pain.

“They have already died for now,” a voice came out from the depths of a mind, “it's not in your powers to aid them for now. They made their choice. They brought the destruction of their planet with own thoughts and lives – and their own destruction as well”.

A fire, which engulfed the building of a sex-dance club, has been growing stronger with each passing second – all floors of a building were now burning.

Finally, the fire reached a bottom floor – in a single instant it absorbed frenziedly shouting and loudly laughing men... and during the same instant, everything has abated. Only the flame continued storming and its reflections shined through the once impenetrable streets. It was all going on only for several minutes – simple several minutes, which have been engraved in his memory for the time being since then. Almost like all subsequent pictures.

The picture changed. City disappeared.

He stood in the middle of magnificent branches of green trees in some unknown garden. He raised his head – and sunrays shined on his face. After terrific crimson flames of a city of darkness – oh God, how wonderful that was! Clouds and birds were slowly floating on a blue sky, a freshening invigorating wind was blowing in the face.

He observed the sun of a live world, he saw the light. Darkness was gone, it just vanished – and was no more.

All that remained were the cool wind, blowing in the face, green branches of trees, birds, roaming the sky and a feeling of happiness, which has filled his soul.

A cry of joy breached from his breast – he has been shouting loudly for long. He was alive among the live ones once again. He was in the live world.

And then he regained that mystical ability to oversee the whole world at once. To behold it clearly.

He saw green fields, stretched over continents. Saw men, working and living on them, there were smiles, playing on their faces – there was no doubt, that they were glad to live and work here. He felt the very atmosphere of joy, invisibly embracing the planet. He observed how people worked with enthusiasm – artists, poets, common plowmen, and workers – from young to oldest. There was no unnecessary and unimportant work here.

He saw that all – and his soul was on the seventh sky.

He observed, how light spots appeared and started growing, how they extend and light up continents, how these shining beams rise to the sky – and heavens of the planet answer them with a dazzling bewitching light. He saw how the planet's atmosphere is purified and cleaned from dark beams – and how men start breathing with relief. How they sing with joy and smiles start appearing on their lips...

He saw so much more. These were the minutes, forever engraved in his memory.

And then a different world suddenly took over him.

\* \* \*

“Hey, John, what’s going on with you?! Stand up, John!”

“Ahhh... what’s with me?”

“It’s better for you to know, I guess. We were traveling through a park and all of a sudden you swayed and fallen to the ground. Is everything all right?”

“Yes. Yeah... all is... is well.”

“What happened?”

“I... I don’t know. I just... simply saw two futures. And two choices... totally different ones. Like the earth and the sky – different... two roads. Do you understand? Two paths for men – for mankind.”

“Two choices? Two ways? What are you talking about, John? It seems that you have indeed hurt your head too much during falling. I have no idea of what you may be talking about.”

“Oh, nevermind. Very soon you shall feel it – and understand everything. You will be given your choice. Each of us will be. And as for now... how do you think... let’s go for a competing run till the end of the avenue?”

*2005-01-02*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Virus

Very little time still remained... Just a few more days – and a long-deserved rest will finally welcome him. Already soon... so soon myriads of sleepless nights will come to an end along with mugs of coffee and measured, the delightful-lulling noise of the computer. Will come to its end a knock of fingers on a keyboard, blowing up silence from time to time, as well as a passing of program's text through a compiler, and a joy, filling soul at the sight of a working code. All this was going to end at the long last.

And then – oh! – these long anticipated and fostered in half-delirious sleepless nights dreams will be given a chance to come true – they must become a reality, obliged to. After all, what is a single year? Such a few time. It's too little for what is going to be accomplished. Only a year...

They will finally pay for it all. For all the harm they managed to bring to those people – such young ones... spiritually childish, irresponsible... taken unaware by this monstrous machine. They are going to be annihilated at last. Wiped out from the face of the earth, erased like a killing virus, a cure for which has finally been found. Has been found in some pitiful year.

Very few steps still remained. Everything has been calculated and thought over a long time ago – almost a half year ago when a possibility of penetration into the System has been found at last. He used half a year to, like a blind puppy, having stuck in every direction, finally find a way out. A vulnerability, a hole, a bug – a thread which, once being pulled, was capable to make a System become your puppet, a doll in the hands of a master. Yet it was possible to pull it only once, there was no chance for an error, for a second attempt – a security service disliked it so much when someone decided to play with it. This thread had to be found by him, having only the possibility to study the System by its indirect reactions to external influences, having and knowing no access to its core.

Half a year – infinitely long and endless short, all as one night, – was required to find an Achilles' heel. Maybe the only one of its kind, possibly not. And then another half a year, living day by day with tiny earnings of a freelancer, writing code in the semi-delirium night by night, coding and praying each and every new day to the God, known only to you, so that architects of the System haven't found this hole in the meantime.

They haven't discovered it. And that's the reason they are going to die today. A disease will be destroyed once and for all. Very few steps still remained – to unleash it into the network. A virus should be battled with similar means.

No one could possibly assume how fast this giant will stretch its killing tentacles, how quickly everything would be under its feet. How incredibly soon little men, representing the brain of this corporation, will understand what is given by such a power, how quickly they will use it in a full potential.

And then everything was like a single flash of time – terrible and unrepeatable. All industrial, in-house, personal computing systems have been switched to the Corporation’s products – there was no country, no home, no man, no device, which has not been connected to and integrated with a System with no possibility for a retreat. There is was no turning back after the integration’s final procedures. And when first “alternatives seekers” found it out – it was too late already.

Tomorrow there will be that day when the long-term Corporation’s control comes to its awaited end. Otherwise... otherwise, everything was in vain.

\* \* \*

It was such a strange day – a winter one, yet at the same time both bright and warm. The sun blinded the eyes as if looking at all the human fuss below and smiling. It always smiled that way – warming up both right and both wrong ones.

I accurately took out a brand new anonymous smartphone, acquired through the Net earlier, and turned it around. Looked at the screen, which has reflected a vicinity behind my back. Everything was clear, I wasn’t observed. The time has come.

I habitually typed thirty-letters identification code, habitually connected through a retransmission station of one of the local operators with a little-known host-server, which was moved out from traditional areas of the capital and served as one of the entry points of logon, – and logged into a System with a guest access. This was thought of – wasn’t considered a hard infringement. And now we are going to cross the limits of our permissions.

Half a year was spent in order to find a combination of values for the registers of System’s processors, allowing one to cross the borders to never return back again. So banal, so simple – a possibility to alter the contents of processor’s cache. Now a code, which has been fostered during that half a year, is going to become cache’s new owner.

And everything is going be simple from that on.

Then this gateway will broadcast a message through radio channel about “internal system failure coded 5SNGD#1” to next hosts, serving all phones, household appliances, all mobile devices – or shortly everything that formed the Net of this megacity – messages, practically indistinguishable from correct ones except for a small block of additional parameters code in the end of each of them.

And everything is going be simple from that on.

Then a malfunction in the processing of this data will lead to so banal, so desirable dynamic memory buffers overflow, then a code to dispatch a new sequence of bytes through these “relay stations” of the System to all controlled mobile devices will be executed, exploiting similar vulnerability of processing a certain sequence of values in the registers of their processors.

And a moment after that all those millions and billions of devices will come alive in a single instant – will be awakened to fulfill their duty and to destroy the one who has been their only master for quite too long. Packages will flow from all corners of the capital and after several tens of minutes network “border posts” of the System will fall under a massive traffic pressure – and the access to its heart will become possible.

After the fall of the metropolis, the epidemic will extend further, sparing no machine in its wake, and he will be left with no other choice but to observe. Sometimes it's such an incomparable pleasure – simply to observe.

It all will take approximately ten minutes. Only ten minutes which, probably, will become eternity. Almost like all those, three hundred sixty-five days have become.

Fingers flipped on a phone's keyboard.

Pom, pom, pom. And once again – pom, pom, pom. A final step comes – unleashing a virus into the network. Ten... five seconds... done. Have I made it?

I turned around, this time myself – no one was still watching me. Or at least I greatly desired to believe so. And then I ran. Never know why – but for the first time in my entire life I desired to run there, where you really want it... to feel oneself free of the chains. A phone, which has successfully performed its duty, was thrown into the winter snow.

Some sort of indescribable void, a kind of emptiness suddenly overflowed me, having pressed down and squashed. Everything was done, for now, the last step has been made. A year of work – whether it's much or little? Probably, it's incomparably much to write some five thousand lines of code. Possibly, it's incredibly little to become free at long last.

\* \* \*

That was a wonderful winter – both warm and bright. Almost like the one several years before.

I was hailed. And the time I looked back I saw him – my familiar and close institute friend, a colleague by a way of life.

“Kostya, well met! Is that really you? I almost thought that would probably never see you again.”

“Hi, Pavel, I am glad to see you are well!”

“Well, how's your life going, how are you doing? Tell me something. Still professing a principle ‘the free coder chooses future projects himself?’ Aye? Still freelancing?”

“Well, both yes and no. Started to work in a large corporation recently.”

“H–m... whether it's not that former Corporation, which... do you remember?”

“Oh... now you are going to remind me that each second day, aye?”

“Nay, what's the reason now? Now everything is developing as we once dreamed of, right? All software is developed by free groups, while the corporation lives by marking it, along with technical support and distribution and... how do they call it... consulting activity? No, everything is right now. Probably the way it should be.”

“Well, I hope that you are no more engaged with an illegal activity, huh? Departed from dirty affairs, yeah?”

“Pavel, listen, how do they say... ‘who remembers the old, who remembers the cheap, he shall never dig gold, will be stripped of the chip?’ Ya? I am, you know, still capable of... infecting you with something. Here it’s for example, listen closely. Recently I was sent such a great joke over the GRC channel...”

*2006-01-18*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## For the Patriarch!

Today I have woken up extraordinary early – the sun itself hasn't had the time to rise on the east. I am awake for almost an hour, and still unable to comprehend what has interrupted my blissful dream. Something keeps moving somewhere inside my breast and disturbs me. It's strange. Never before did I feel something similar. Some unworthy thoughts are pooling through my mind – probably, Satan himself is trying to tempt me. I shall expel these thoughts of heresy – in the name of our Patriarch!

In vague feelings I turn on the light and the video – for a morning prayer ceremony is going to start soon, and we, Divine children, will unanimously incline our heads in these solemn minutes, and with all our hearts will bless His Holiness – modest vicar of our divine Father on this sinful earth.

As always I take an over the gilded cross-shaped device and accurately press a small button on it – and this wonderful object, a gift of the God himself, which our beloved Patriarch has named “video display”, comes to life. As far as I remember, several centuries ago such things were named “consoles” and so-called “TV” were analogs of these “video displays”. However, I am not totally assured in this. I wasn't a diligent student in our school seminary – and we've been taught very little of our past anyway.

Little time is still left prior to the beginning of a morning prayer, which will be broadcasted through these video displays to each apartment – each shelter of every soul. I must now consume earth food in order to saturate my body – and all my powers will be put in a spirit further to be a modest servant in this imperfect world for the sake of goals of our Sacred Father, may His name forever glow in the heavens!

Since the time, when humble servants of our Patriarch invented some magnificent way to almost instantly create food from separate substances, granted by nature itself, – we know no such thing as starvation, for a food can be made almost from everything in this world of ours. Truly, only the Lord himself could grant our Patriarch such great power over the world, truly our Patriarch is his deputy on the Earth!

I have had the time to sate sinful body and have almost dived into pure thoughts of that magnificent kingdom of paradise where we, humble servants of our great Deputy, are being led, when video display suddenly made a familiar sound – that means that morning prayer is about to begin, and we, imperfect creations of our grand Father, will be granted yet another possibility to purify our souls from inner darkness. If we are going to be submissive and love our Patriarch, then this prayer will give us indescribable joy and peace – for that's the way it ought to be.

The prayer was wonderful – as always, it was amazing. It's such a joy – to stand, having submissively inclined one's head and listening to spellbinding church's chanting, – and to feel like a particle of something so much greater, something eternal. It's an incomparable joy – to overhear a voice of the Patriarch when he welcomes his children and blesses them for the new day in this world.

When a chant has come to an end, I felt myself in the seven heavens – and soul of mine was singing in delight. All those guilty thoughts with which Antichrist have been haunting me this morning, have gone. Such is the way of things – for a true light, granted by our Deputy, clears and purifies our souls – and no harm or heresy is granted way to the door of our spirits!

For now, my task is to travel to a central church of our city – and by just works of divine servants about five hundred of these small houses of Divine have been built, – to present my new creation on a fair court of its head Holy Alex II. He'll read my newly written book – and, if it's approved by his holiness, he will grant his highest goodwill to printing agencies to multiply this text, so that Divine children can taste its aroma and become even stronger in the just faith in the God, and our omnipotent Patriarch.

I am leaving my house and inhaling a clear Divine air with delight. Humble servants of his holiness Patriarch were able to invent such traveling mechanisms, which left air in its protogenic cleanliness, emitting outside no so-called “gases” and working on a solar energy, granted us by our magnificent solar star. Ways of our Deputy are inscrutable, indeed!

I am moving in a direction to the mansion of God, and joy is overflowing me. I already foresee my meeting with his holiness Alex, I foresee his blissful smile, I foresee how my book will help our brothers in their way of mind and heart. This is truly a wonderful day!

\* \* \*

Oh my God, where did those hellish thoughts come from, may the Patriarch exterminate them all?!

Something is going on in the soul of mine, something very strange and unusual, something unclear for me. This is practically the same feeling, which has grown in me two days ago... some sort of vague doubts of the fidelity of my own life and life of my earth brothers... Is even a morning prayer no more capable to purify my soul of these fatal doubts?

This feeling was born inside me after an appointment with his holiness Alex II the other day after I have given him the manuscript of my future book so that he could tell me his opinion as well as his blessing for its distribution.

To give his blessing... he hasn't given it! He not only hasn't given the blessing, but he was also greatly angered and malicious... his Highness was enraged... that's impossible! That's unimaginable! How, how can it be possible that such a great individuality was capable to fall from grace to the anger?! I didn't trust own ears when he has begun his speech!

“Whether is it known to you, my son Peter, that by your... h-r-r-r-m-m-m... book... you ruin all precepts, given by our great Deputy?!” voice of his holiness was cold as a steel, some spiteful notes were breaking through.

“Father, how do I break his precepts?” I questioned.

“How? Do you dare ask me how you ruin his precepts? I’ll tell you, how! In that book of yours, you mention that God himself was the maker of this world of ours, and you assert that our Patriarch is His humble servant. Our great deputy is not his ‘humble servant’ - our Deputy is His son, the very incarnation of our Father in this world! He is the God, His embodiment! Whether it was not taught to you all in your church school, I wonder? Did you not learn that the word of our Patriarch is like the word of God himself, expressed through our Deputy, and thus it shall be the law for all divine children?!”

“Your holiness, but how is that possible for a heavenly son to stand above his heavenly father?” I asked.

“To stand over his father? My son...” and his holiness choked, “the father of ours is the Patriarch! He’s our father and the savior of souls of this world!”

“But we’ve been told...” I tried to speak.

“You’ve been told? Tell me, my son, who spoke you all that things?”

I mentioned the mentor’s name of our spiritual school.

“I thank you, my son, you have performed a great service to us right now in a task of eradication of all... heresy.”

I shuddered when he pronounced a word “heresy”. Heresy is the biggest crime, heresy deprives one of his inborn rights to pass through a divine gate of paradise - so all holy churchmen told me... only my mentor spoke nothing on that subject. Why is he guilty in heresy, why?! How did he misbehave and broke divine will? And I asked his highness this question.

“He committed a crime by seducing divine children from their holy way and is subject to be punished for this sin. We’ll carry out all necessary measures,” and his holiness made a sign for me to become silent and ask no further questions. And, having no power not to obey, I became silent... and that vague doubt started scraping in my soul once again.

Meanwhile, his Highness continued speaking.

“Furthermore, you state that for all sins made a divine son will be judged by his heavenly Father during a Sacred Court and ‘on their deeds, they will be given’. Truly, ‘on their deeds they will be given’, but whether it’s known to you that our omnipotent Patriarch as an embodiment of the will of our divine Father was granted the right to either punish or grant a pardon to his sinful children in his endless favor and mercy in this world already?!”

And then you keep writing: ‘... for only our unearthly Lord has a power over both real and unreal, and only His court is just and eternal...’ The court on the earth is conducted by our Patriarch! We, his humble servants, can only submissively carry out his will, which is also a will of our divine Father, having no right to ask useless questions on whether his judgment is just or unjust – for the judgment of our Deputy is eternally just and honorable, for he is the very embodiment of a God! Whether the cases are known to you... my son,” and his holiness choked once more, “when our great Deputy performed unjust judgments over his faithful children and servants?”

“No, father.”

“Right you are, my son. For his judgment is just and just eternally – forever it was, forever it will be, may his name shine in the heavens!”

This very instant of time a blissful smile appeared on the face of his Highness as if he has just seen the Second Coming of the Savior along with a retinue of divine angels. However, when he has looked up at me once again, his smile disappeared in a single instance.

“Yet this doesn’t forgive your... failures... my son,” and his holiness choked a third time.

“You speak: ‘... for there is only one great force in the world of ours and only one great treasure – and this is a love, for it’s a manifestation of our divine Father in our world...’ – that’s a lie! Our power is in our belief in the Patriarch! What other power do you desire except for it? Only belief in the Patriarch moves us forward and saves us, only such a belief aids us on a life’s journey!”

“Your belief is a suppressed doubt,” words came into my mind that instant of time, yet I constantly rejected these fatal thoughts away. His Highness was now looking at me almost with anger, and his voice became absolutely cold.

“But not only do you constantly undermine belief in our most gracious Patriarch, you still try to make his children turn from a true path! You speak: ‘... and all imaginable customs, rituals, and ceremonies would vanish as if they never existed before... and men would pray in heart and not by heart – and an expression of this aspiration would be the love...’ How can all sacred rituals disappear in an instant, if they are prescribed to us by the holy Patriarch himself as a mean to become addicted to his eternal good fortune?!” his holiness almost shouted. “That’s unbelievable, that’s unthinkable! That’s a true heresy, my son! And you keep writing as if it’s not enough! You undermine their trust in us, humble servants of our Father! Just think again of what you are saying – ‘...and all things of this world disappear and be gone, and will matter no more for those who enter the kingdom of the Father... and never were that way’.

You undermine their trust in us, humblest attendants of our father! Just rethink of what you are writing in that book of yours – ‘...and things of this world will disappear and vanish, and never be important any longer for the one entering the Divine Realm... and never did matter, for temporarily live in this world is, and as we enter it without a thing, except for the flame of our hearts, thus we do leave it with nothing except for the fire mentioned. And therefore all worshipping and rituals and everything used for it, and all imaginable earth cults matter no more...’ It’s unimaginable! All those sacred rituals which we maintain are the greatest gifts, prescribed to us, with which we render aid to our faithful followers! We purify their souls, we, as the servants of the Father, redeem their sins, we rescue them from the clutches of the Abyss! How dare one not to acknowledge and recognize that, how can we reject a response gratitude of our brothers, granted to us by them in their restrained generosity?!

But you, you dare saying – ‘... for only the love’s fire of the heart can redeem the sin, and no rituals, no artifacts, no other terrestrial things... for they are transient, yet only the flame of one’s spirit and heart may burn forever...’ – that’s a true misunderstanding of the way of things! Our Father granted us the right to atone for sins of our children that come to us, guided by their humility – and we serve a great purpose by releasing them from this burden at once, but you... you!” his Highness enraged himself so greatly that was almost choking, “you dishonor all our kind, all our services, all our achievements! And for the last part – ‘...for our Father lives not outside, but inside each of us first and foremost... and He is the God, and He is the love...’ And He is – the Patriarch! And He is – outside, for only He is holy, and we are all guilty, and God has never been living inside us! – and only He by the favor of His can rescue souls of ours, and we ourselves are incapable of doing such a thing!” his holiness stood up and has been angrily screaming.

I still couldn’t recover from surprise, embarrassment, confusion... during that time that aforementioned doubt started overcoming me once again.

“I will overlook up to the end your manuscript... my son – and inform you of my decision in ten days. But don’t even dare to hope that I am going to give you a chance to publish it without some essential... modification... and, possibly, to publish at all. Besides, we will perform the inquiry with your... hm...mentor, as well as with you,” and he coldly stared at me. “And for now go in peace, my son,” his Highness regained self-control. “Walk in peace.”

In confusion and doubt, I left the temple. This was truly a day of sorrows.

Leaving the church I noticed how one of my brothers, who have just left the church, was approached by khanji – so we named the enslaved men-derelicts, who have been growing in numbers ever since our Holy Empire began a war two years ago. We treated them with great... favor... some of them have been granted a right to live in cities, yet they certainly have been living hard – however, this subject was never brought up in the speeches of our Patriarch.

This particular khanji approached my brother-in-spirit and started asking him about something, apparently. And then my blissfully smiling brother without a second thought and hesitation kicked him with a foot so strongly that khanji has been thrown aside and head over heels having swept on ladders...

I have been watching all this scene while my fly-car – one the transportation vehicles, invented by confidants of our Deputy, working on the energy of a solar start, – was carrying me away from the spot. And I could do nothing to help the khanji...

A pain, immense and incredible stirred up in my soul that moment, – a sympathy to this little brother, being thrown aside, rejected, kicked off! – filled my heart. That very moment gave a birth to further painful and intolerable doubts inside me.

\* \* \*

I had ten days before the new meeting with his holiness Alex II regarding my manuscript – and had no desire to waste them in vain. A pain, enormous, indescribable pain – it tore and crumbled my heart. I didn’t understand – had no ability to! – how is that imaginable for my brothers to be so... so... cruel – how? why? what for?

All the grace has gone to free the road for the pain. And after the pain doubts followed.

I have heard earlier about that Holy War, that great war, that just crusade. Still remembered how the Patriarch addressed us all... how loftily did he speak about those under-humans with no faith in the Father that we were fighting with... of those murderers... of those sinners. He said that by killing their bodies we save their souls... I trusted his words that time – I cannot deny the faith in my Patriarch! – but now... after the event with that khanji – I started to doubt. Hour after an hour, day by day that cursed doubt has been growing – I could sleep no more, I rushed in nightmares during sleepless nights. I oversaw hundreds of these poor khanji – and legions of holy brothers dressed in white robes, slaughtering them with a single blow of maces, shouting “in the name of the Patriarch!”, instantly making a cross sign – and marching on further, further, further...

And then I woke up, having no more powers to behold that massacre. And then I reflected.

Ten days after I once again came before the eyes of his holiness – and there was not the slightest sign of joy, shining in my eyes. As well as in his.

“We found your... teacher... my son,” and his Highness choked a thousand time. “And studied your manuscript up to the end. And now hear our decision!” and he solemnly raised a hand. “For the spreading of false gossips, for attempts to make our beloved children go astray from the true path and into the bosom of Antichrist, – a man named Chris is sentenced for imprisonment into the catacombs of the Cathedral of the Patriarch forever, up to that day when Antichrist will come for him to take his dark soul! The sentence is signed by the Highest Patriarch himself and is not subject for appeal!”

I was stupefied. Chris, my teacher who has taught me so much in that spiritual school – he’s sentenced to imprisonment. Never, never, never in my entire life did I hear of even a single case of similar action... and now... before my very eyes... how is that even possible?!

“Escort the sinner!” the voice of his Highness rang out.

And then they – several brawny men in white cassocks – pushed him outside. I didn’t recognize him – I would most certainly never recognize him should we meet in different circumstances – he looked like the former Chris I knew since childhood no more. He grew awfully old and hardly dragged his feet, so four assistants had to constantly jog and push him – there was a blood visible on his face. “Tortures?” – a thought flashed in my mind.

“Teacher, Chris!” I cried out loudly, trying to overcome the noise of the strengthening wind.

He turned back. A weak smile appeared on his dried up lips.

“Peter, my sonny, is that you? They caught you too, yes? Forgive me, sonny... please forgive me... I should foresee that that will once happen.”

“Teacher, but why?! Why everything has come to this at last? Did they... have they been lying to us all that time?!”

It was still visible that Chris smiled once more with his not obeying lips.

“And here and now, my sonny, you have awakened at last,” he muttered, and during that same instant, a roar of the gushed wind silenced all other sounds.

I saw, how four men dragged my mentor somewhere in the direction of a building’s corner – I tried to rush for aid, only to have been instantly seized by same three men, dressed in white cassocks.

“Stop twitching, oh brother,” smiled one of them.

When several seconds after his holiness appeared before my eyes once again – I was surprised no longer.

“And as for you, my son... we must perform the procedure of... cleaning, so that your brain can become sacred and holy once more and not a single demon even had the chance to crept into it!” and he smiled. “Seize him! In the name of the Patriarch!”

My entire world ruined in a single flash of time. Everything I trusted, all that I hoped for – everything became nothing. All was in vain. And when my... brothers... seized me – I resisted no more. That was no longer necessary.

“May the Divine will guide me forevermore,” a thought came an instant before a weighty wooden club of one of the white brothers landed on my head...

*2005-05-26*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Immunity

Hope dies last.

But how could have Gale hoped for anything right now, when the last hopes of the dying alive humanity were rapidly crumbling into thousands of tiny shards, precisely like the fragments of a broken mirror, in which it, humanity, in a moment of brief spiritual insight, was able to behold itself for a brief moment of its history?

Hope for salvation. Hope for earthly life. For the life after death. Is there one?

Today, by some kind of a miracle, Gale finally managed to get inside into one of the overcrowded churches, where divine services had been held without stopping for several months already. All over the planet, the temples of the three world religions have been crowded for a long time, during both day and night. Now, when the so glorified by earthly materialists science could not answer the challenge thrown by natural forces, people tried to find it in their appeals to the Gods.

Now, standing at a distance from the altar of the temple in the sea of other people pressing down on him from all sides and towering over them like a two-meter giant, Gale observed. He needed to understand what was driving these people now when they had almost no hope left to bear. What made them appeal to those of whose very existence this earthly life had made them doubt time and again?

Faith in the possibility of salvation? Fear of devouring nothingness that is opening its greedy mouth? Love for everything they have created – including the very nature that has become so deadly?

As for Gale, until the events of recent years, he believed only in science. It has been his holy grail for many years of life. It, with due diligence, observation, and long experimentation, was able to grant humanity an answer to any question and challenge... if you do not take into account the existence of a Higher Mind.

A sea of human faces. An ocean of emotions. A kaleidoscope of feelings. Raised either in prayers or silent threats, lowered in despair hands. Would anyone see them, would anybody hear this voiceless speech? Gale possessed no answer to this question that had been tormenting him for so long. The day of the answer has not come yet.

\* \* \*

“Mining of antibodies. Participate in a volunteer program to test new vaccines. Earn pharmacoin. Give your answer to novovirus!”

A huge holographic billboard floated around the corner of the skyscraper right in front of Gale’s eyes as soon as he stepped out into the central square. Gale grimaced in disgust. The endless attempts to create vaccines will all die in vain. It’s never possible to accurately predict the shape of something that changes every moment of its existence.

“Virt-club “Pleasure”. There is no fear of death. There is life’s pleasure!”

A three-dimensional rainbow-colored hologram of a girl with her legs spread wide enlightened with neon-laser beams a couple of dozen meters away from Gale, sensitively and quickly reacting to the approach of a lone wanderer. No, he definitely doesn't need to go that way. When the whole world is going straight to hell in front of your very eyes, there is no more time for pleasure.

“Life after death. Cryostasis. The latest military development. Call us right away!”

As if a living hologram of a man in a blue and seemingly frozen space suit waves his hand in greeting, inviting Gale to come to the next “saviors”. No. There is no escape from novovirus, there is no salvation. All the scientific researches of the best biogeneticists on the entire planet were unshakable proof of this.

Novovirus. This pestilence had many other names, too. A new plague. Black Death. Reaper. Punisher. Wrath of God. Doom.

Being fueled by fear, the human fantasy gave birth to more and more associations. And more and more cases of infection and either mass death or mutation of people only fueled this hysteria of universal fear. What can the smallest virus do against a man who thinks of himself as the master of nature? Anything. Especially if there cannot be an antidote for this kind of poison.

The government records to which Gale had been granted access after he started working on the “Salvation” project contained a wealth of data on the primary localized cases of infection and their associated symptoms. South America. North Africa. Southeast Asia. First, second, third wave. Initially, the disease was considered to be a new type of malaria and didn't gain significant attention – until the moment of a rapid surge in the number of infections across the entire planet. And all of a sudden the concept of a “mosquito bite” started looking not so harmless at all.

Along with the development and evolution of the virus, the symptoms also changed. Fever, chills, nausea, and vomiting were only the initial stages of the virus-induced disease. Then the infected ones started to cough up their bodily innards along with the blood. Then came the nerve paralysis and cardiac arrest. Genetic mutations followed their steps. And after them, human madness knocked on the door of omnipotent science.

The virus mutated rapidly, changing its protein-molecular structure within a matter of days. More and more cases, together with the accompanying symptoms, began to be recorded by the governments of many countries every few days. The entire civilized world was swept by a wave of panic. People stopped leaving their homes. Looting, arson, and street looting came into action. Many new “apocalypse witness” sects have raised their heads, each with her mad prophet and course. The quickly approaching collapse of social spheres threatened to plunge the entire world into chaos, hunger, and poverty.

Governments in numerous countries have made huge financial investments while trying to produce a life-saving vaccine. But what seemed so simple and routine at first to many scientific minds, stuck like an irresistible curse of a mad old woman-death on many groups of virologist scientists. The vaccines did not keep up with the virus mutations in the infected cells. And cell mutations inevitably led to the mutation of humankind. And this was so much more terrible than the casual and familiar conventional war – because in the flames and fumes of this new war for survival, the very concept of “man” was about to become the ashes of history.

Vaccines didn’t work. It was paramount to find different ways of salvation, locate it at any cost. Thus the “Salvation” project was born, uniting many of the best scientists around the globe. All they had to do was find another way to save humankind – even at the cost of the lives of thousands of infected people who had become new experimental material in underground laboratories, even at the cost of the lives of the scientists themselves. Everything for the scientific battlefield, everything for victory. And Gale desired to be on the edge of it.

\* \* \*

Gale’s flycar roamed through the depopulated streets of the once-overcrowded metropolis, increasing and decreasing its altitude in violation of all the rules of multi-level traffic, rapidly obeying the commands of the machine’s artificial intelligence, soaring over the arches and billboards of skyscrapers, and diving into high-speed underground tunnels. But no people were willing to issue him fines.

Simon’s words were still ringing in his head. Uninfected one! One among hundreds of millions, one who somehow miraculously passed through the gates of this earthly hell and remained unharmed. A soldier with no signs of novovirus mutation delivered to the “Salvation” scientific laboratories.

A miracle? But science does not believe in miracles, science believes in experiments. And the relentless logic of science demanded that this experiment was to be carried out immediately for the sake of all the living. And if the life a new-found test subject it to be put at stake – it had to be done without the slightest portion of hesitation and remorse of unnecessary conscience. Agitated by the morning’s message that came to his audiovisor, Gale raced through the streets of deserted Chicago with his lips silently whispering prayers to the scientific gods only he knew.

\* \* \*

“Good afternoon, Professor Gale. Simon is in his labs, waiting for you early this morning.”

“Thanks, Miranda. I’m just in a hurry catching up with him.”

“Looks like you have something really interesting planned for today,” their young assistant winked on her way, and after a couple of seconds disappeared around the corner of the sterile white corridor inside the underground laboratory complex.

Gale literally flew through the massive glass doors of the laboratory, almost breaking his forehead – all their outdated automatic opening system based on solar cells seemed to be too slow for him at that instant.

“Where’s the uninfected test subject? I want to examine him!” he shouted from the doorway.

“My, oh my, it must be no less than Professor Gale Newman himself, safe and sound! Did you pour a whole pack of nitro-coffee pills into yourself before the trip, so as not to fall asleep at the wheel at such an early hour?” Dr. Simon grinned through his mustache as he caught a glimpse of a colleague who had flown into the lab, while deftly adjusting his glasses with a free hand. “And Miranda and I were just arguing about whether you’d make it to us before sunrise, or whether you’d be completely put asleep by thoughts of a Higher Intelligence. Did mysticism get the better of you due to old age?” Simon said in a friendly tone, his fingers still working silently on the holo-terminal.

“Have you got a file on him?”

“The NSA transferred a piece of data this morning. Corporal James Cassle, Marine Corps. Participated in the rescue of civilians in Brazil and Venezuela after the outbreak of the pandemic wars. He was seriously injured by marauding gangs of mutated infected ones during the last operation. Received the Purple Heart Medal for battle wounds. He was taken out of the operation area and hospitalized in Seattle. This is all we know so far.”

“And the screening, how did he manage to pass the infection screening?!”

“After being extradited by helicopter from the infection zone, he was examined at a Seattle clinic. They confirmed this fact. The NSA reported that the local medics there literally dropped their jaws opened when no sign of novovirus was located inside his bodily cells, even in a latent state. You know – by today’s standards, this is something akin to a miracle.

“Have you confirmed the diagnosis with our equipment?”

“Not yet, only the general survey was conducted. He was delivered here just a couple of hours ago.”

“Simon, do you even realize that this may be our only chance to...”

“I clearly understand everything, Gale. Go ahead, he’s in the Alpha Bay right now,” Simon said softly, patting Gale on the shoulder, “Authorization code for today: Miracle”.

\* \* \*

“Disinfection of the compartment is complete. Welcome back, Professor Gale Newman.”

The voice of artificial intelligence, “Ada”, filled the sterile-white space of the Alpha Bay. As he walked in, Gale checked the protective functions of his tessa-suit once again and nodded in satisfaction. At the very least, this suit will protect him from potential physical aggression or infection for at least half an hour, if somewhere in the higher ranks a mistake was made with regards to the diagnosis of this notorious corporal.

“Do you have a habit of putting your guests in handcuffs these days, or is it just that I was so incredibly lucky today?” demandingly questioned James, shaking his huge cryo-cuffed fists in a show of force as soon as Gale entered the Alpha Bay, which served traditionally as the pre-interrogation cell.

A huge and strong one. Ones such as he usually tend to get away of troubles unscathed. Except for novovirus, perhaps.

“It’s for both your and ours safety, Corporal James. You are a very special case for us. But your true intentions and capabilities remain to be seen.”

“I hope it won’t take too long. My military command did not give me the order to go “awol” after the completion of my treatment.”

“You are within the borders of our responsibility here, with the NSA’s permission. Take my word for it, your commanders won’t have any questions concerning your temporary absence.”

“Is that so?” James leaned his beefy arms on the table and squinted at Gale’s face, his jaw working, “And to whom do I owe the favor of being invited to your party?”

“It’s thanks to your fighting skills, James. And your potential immunity to novovirus,” Gale decided not to delay revealing his cards.

“Considering the so-called immunity – is it what your grandmother-midwife sang to you, or did a bullet suddenly fly into your forehead?” James chuckled bitterly and shook his head. “I have no immunities. None of us have. We are not the ones to decide the length of our own lives. Only the width.”

“Whether it exists or not remains to be seen. If the diagnosis made in Seattle is not confirmed – tomorrow you will be a free man.”

“Sure, great! That’s what I am going to do anyway!” James agreed abruptly, fixing Gale with his gloomy gaze. “Come on, don’t delay, your scientific majesty, I still have ordinary mortals to save from hordes of infected!”

“We were not the ones to develop this virus, James,” Gale retorted, suddenly serious and edifying, “The virus is currently spontaneously mutating every day under the influence of natural forces that we don’t fully comprehend and...”

“Yeah, sure! Tell those who have been turned into animals alive about where the experiments on genetic material have led to in an attempt to create the desired vaccines! I saw with my own two eyes how the hordes of these madmen were tearing my fighters apart on the battlefield!”

“I understand your pain, Corporal, but our department has nothing to do with...”

“Be off with your lies, doc, or find a more attentive audience! What exactly do you need from me – blood plasma tests, cortical screening, a smear from the fifth point? Spit it out!”

“Nano-molecular cell screening. Observation of the reaction of cell membranes to the injection of viral molecular structures.”

“Simply put, you want to re-infect me with a new strain of novovirus and then observe with genuine scientific interest how long I will suffer in mortal agony? Am I missing anything from your plans, doc?!”

“If our tests are correct, this will be an attempt to develop a primary immunity to a new form of the virus.”

“Do I have any choice?”

“I am afraid you don’t,” Gale spread his hands, “until the test procedures are completed, you are placed at our direct disposal by your superiors.”

“More like being sold out.”

“However you desire to think of it. If you are ready, security will extradite you to the testing bay right now”.

“Then don't delay. I still have other unfortunate people to save from you and similar experimenters.”

\* \* \*

Gale could not believe his own eyes. Over and over again, he rechecked the data coming from molecular nanoscopes, adjusted the scanning frequencies, and even rubbed his own eyes with bare hands. But the tools weren't lying. The miracle lived on and did not intend to die out like misguided humanity.

The virus mutated, continuously rearranging its molecular structures, repeatedly trying to break down the protective cell barrier, to overcome the membranes separating it and the cells – and time and over again, as if an invisible and insurmountable wall stood in its way. These unsuccessful attempts of a newly created by nature bio-weapon to enslave and turn its next victim into a mad monster lasted about a dozen minutes. And then... then it finally came, a Miracle.

“Finish your experiments. You can see that, can't you? I feel no fear!” James' powerful voice ringed in the room.

He yanked at the inner levers of the terra-capsule he was trapped in with all his might, trying to free himself, but even his enormous strength wasn't enough. And during that exact moment, the virus that had been trying to inject itself into the cells over and over again seemed to explode from the inside, rapidly disintegrating into hundreds of individual tiny molecules. It was as if a wave, invisible to both the eye or the instruments, had hit it, crushing, knocking over, and smashing to dust. The defeated micro-Goliath fell, and so did Gale's glasses, hitting the lab floor.

“You... what... but how...”

“I am not afraid of you! Freedom!” James pounded on the inside of the terra-capsule with his powerful fists.

“Calm down... I just need to... readings...” continuing to fastly whisper something under his breath, Gale was rapidly pushing the keys of the terminal. “The reason for the disintegration of the viral structures... the impact of an unknown type of energy... the wave generated by the cell... I don't understand!”

There is always room for wonder in genuine scientific discoveries.

“Cellular mitochondrial synthesis of unknown origin... Bipolar intracellular currents... But from where?”

“I am afraid of neither of your viruses, nor you nor anyone like you!” the violent impact from within caused a small dent in the outer surface of the terra-capsule.

“What... what did you just say?” Gale cast a confused glance at the prisoner who was struggling to get out of the capsule. “But this cannot be! If... only... A feeling! What kind of feeling did you experience a few seconds ago?!” Gale screamed in a frenzy of excitement that filled his entire being. “Please, James, repeat it!”

“Freedom! Life!” – another dent in the surface of the terra-capsule.

And the remaining viruses are scattered into molecular dust. Eternal – to eternal. Dust – to dust.

A feeling!

It was as if a new great revelation was descending on Gale at that very moment, breaking and overturning all the materialistic theories of the world, all the endless scientific skepticism and incalculable human stupidity in a single, unrestrained rush.

Spirit was prevailing over matter. The feeling was overcoming the disease. Fearlessness has become an immunity.

And this was echoed in unison by the laboratory devices that were going off scale from the waves of new-found energy.

“You are... free... to go,” Gale Newman whispered helplessly, opening the capsule’s locking mechanism, “We are all free now...”

\* \* \*

On this great starry night, Gale was once again flying in his now-adult dreams.

His spirit, freed in one fell swoop from the yoke of all materialistic prisons, was floating in this wonderful dream between seemingly absolutely real planets, moving like a great trailblazer starship on a hitherto unknown thrust. It was unspeakably calmly and joyful – as if wings had suddenly grown on his back.

And then an invisible warm wave lifted him and carried him somewhere high up. Two great figures, radiating with an otherworldly light, whose love for him surpassed any human love, tenderly took him into their enormous warm hands. They gently lifted his tiny spirit to their faces – and in that infinite moment, a wave of rapture and bliss, together with tears of joy, swallowed up his whole being...

“Blessed are those who weep, for they will be comforted...”

2021-05-12

Genre: Short story

Category: Chosen

# Infection

This is the voice of the doomed. The call of those dying alive with no right for a cure. The cry of those who were unwilling and undesiring to alter their nature until the moment of the Infection. Until they were doomed by the virus.

Hear us, inhabitants of other worlds! Hear us!

Listen to the echoes of our message, preserved in still undestroyed segments of the Net, oh Netrunners. Raise your heads up in the direction of the sun, listening to the scream and crying of those still dying on the surface, oh Exiled Ones, forever imprisoned in the catacombs of megacities. Open your ears and souls, oh ones who have considered themselves as masters of the fate of this world.

There is no destiny other than the one we create ourselves. And that's why we, the infected ones, won't be spared.

This is the voice of the doomed for those who have survived. We imprint this message in the layers of the ether for those who will be wiser than us. For the descendants of the few who have managed to avoid this new plague. We leave it for the worthy.

Time works against us. From now on, we have lost the opportunity to control our own destinies, social prestige, and abandoned last hopes of immortality. When the virus finally transforms our bodies, the ability to maintain the light that sustains us will finally run out, and we will dissolve in the infinity of darkness as if we have never existed.

We are known as the Legion. Hear us!

We reached what we thought to be the peaks of technological power. We could easily destroy planets and bend space. We subjugated the energy of stars and learned how to control the fields of the super-mass. The Legion's Starfleet turned to ashes dozens of enemy worlds. Our bodies, improved in the course of genetical transformation, became almost immortal. We were on the top of our own greatness – and our own foolishness. Only a single step separated us from our own greatness to our greatest demise.

Despite all the efforts that followed the Infection, we were unable to reliably establish the origins of the virus. Almost immortal and perfect biological bodies of our members began to suddenly die out – and this happened not on the periphery, where Legion's cruisers had already suppressed the remnants of enemy resistance, marking the end of the Last War, but in the very heart of our homeworld.

Most often it happened when all three body's hearts instantly stopped in our bodies, less often – when respiratory, vision and hearing organs ceased to function. Despite all previously taken by geno-geniuses measures, we couldn't survive the one-time sudden fault of all copies of critical organs, and we still cannot stop this process. We were dying instantly, as if on command from the outside – on command of something infinitely more powerful than thousands of thousands like us.

The implementor of this command was the virus that was alien to us. We were able to identify it in the cells of the infected ones in an extremely short time span – but we were unable to find a cure against it in spite of all our collective efforts. There was no medicine capable of destroying what lived on the edge between the matter we knew and something absolutely different as if born of the fabric of another dimension. A constantly recombined and closed structure that couldn't be penetrated in order to create an antidote. Even the best of the geno-geniuses found themselves to be powerless in the face of this ultimate threat.

We kept dying more and more with each passing day. The flame of eternal bonfires – our symbolic visual gift to those leaving us – has always been visible in orbits of our worlds since these times. In the front ranks of the dying there were many Exiles who have once broken laws of our society, some of them were killed by the Infection even at the moments of sentencing, and almost all of those who remained escaped and buried themselves in the catacombs afterward. The Privileged ones – members of our society who achieved great influence in neo-religion and intergalactic politics – followed the Exiles. Then it was the time of the Netrunners – the Order of geno-geniuses and madmen who tried to totally transfer their consciousness inside the Net. Finally, it all came down to us – the simplest and most ordinary among the waves of this newly born madness.

Strangely, some of us managed to survive – the virus didn't touch their bodies, or penetrate gene-cell structures, or modify bio-code. We could not figure out the reasons for this miracle. As if someone's ruthless hand and mind in their unsettled logic decided to still spare some of us so that they... So that they become better than us, doomed ones. So that they could start anew and build a better world.

We looked at them as if they were Messiahs. Truly immortal in this hellish cycle of darkness and decay. Suddenly risen high in the wave of fires and the ocean of pain all thanks to their hidden qualities. And looking into their overfilled with compassion towards us, doomed ones, eyes, we suddenly realized – our people still had hope. And thus we followed them to spread this bitter and joyful news across all corners of our dying and newly born worlds.

Hear us!

The body may crumble into ashes, but it's not our true essence. Life and death are links of the same chain. The dead knows no such concept as dying. The right to life is given by our own lives. It's we who choose our own destiny.

Hear us!

2019-11-09

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Chosen*

## When the sun will rise

Heavy-heavy eyelids. Slowly opening eyes. A cloudy sight. A haggard sick face. A man, lying on a bed. Dimmed light. Curtained by something dark windows. The setting sun. A fluttering crimson haze before the eyes. The body is not felt at all, some rubbish is still spinning in the head. Unclear semi whistle-semi rustle poured in a premise.

An effort – and he hardly managed to open his eyes. A face in a white surgical coat, bent over him, a calm sight. The face attentively studies him, looks in his eyes – as if looking in the soul – and gradually departs.

There are no more powers to keep looking... he has closed his eyes again. It's now possible to listen to ... only to try to understand, remember and realize yourself. He must do it... He did not remember even why, actually, he has to, but only one thing – must.

A quiet-quiet conversation very-very nearby – that man in a white coat was engaged into unhurried dialog with someone another. He spoke very faintly – didn't want to be overheard.

He must hear it, obliged to! Must understand, where is he and what's with him. He has strain oneself greatly, trying to decipher habitual human words in flying sounds...

“...To do.”

“...But we cannot allow it. After all... living. He... a human.”

“...A choice?”

“...Always is!”

“He has... symptoms... Virtual ski... is... syndrome... he is not long for this world... a day or two at most.”

“...But they are. We cannot... allow... to die.”

“...State-of-the-art capabilities... do not allow... irreversible change... cells... of a brain... Horrific weapon... monster... virtual reality... physical influence of virtual world... Electrochemical stimulation... cells... altered... brain impulses... mental waves... almost like alive... no way!”

“Really... he... no hope?”

“You... his medical record.”

“...Have brought yesterday. And just the next day... should die?”

“...So, unfortunately... no means.”

“My God! ...dies... ble... death... cannot aid!”

“...Regret it very much.”

“...”

“Go, make arrangements... to make asleep... last... long dream... Capsule... life-support... two hundred years.”

“...I shall do.”

“...Go.”

A noise of the door softly closed by automatics after the left person. The same man in a white surgical coat has approached him once again.

Smoothly bend head, a penetrating glance, confusion and pain on a face – pain and hope. His words addressed to him...

“...Please forgive. Have to... to make... for you to survive... have to survive... no other way possible... not now. Impossible... Until mankind realizes, what it creates... until denies... virtual substitutes of life... Festering abscess... on mankind’s body... must get rid themselves... choose life themselves... real... living... life... until... no... most advanced medicine... will never be a cure... Understand... cure... in the strength of spirit... to make... right choice... again... forgive us... cannot do another way... Put asleep... two hundred years... When the sun will rise... will revive... when... real life... not... pitiful glitches in a brain... only then.

A whistle and noise again. Opened doors, entering people – lots of people in white surgical coats. Life... life... real life... he has just now started to feel its taste... in that condition in which he was... only now... before this... A headache – the wild pain which has cut through a brain – and darkness before his eyes... No! Hands, shaking him... he must regain consciousness, he is alive! They have understood it... they will fulfill their duties.

The longest dream. Several centuries... He will regain consciousness when the night will come to an end and the sun will rise... rise over mankind. Maybe he will once see this world again.

Bend faces... grief on them. The approaching mechanics... And words, words, which rushed into his ears like a wild roar of sea waves – “Meet this time... be happy... in real life... Farewell!”

Pain. And the oblivion...

*2005-01-04*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## When the veil falls

He was the president of the country.

A large technologically developed state. Military technology, natural resources – everything was in plenty. The newest bacteriological weapon, keeping in awe all neighbors – he has even published a decree of its “authorized” usage in the begun war with frontline democratic “state”.

Democratic... damned fools! Pathetic liberals, benefactors of people! No, they simply didn't know the force of absolute power. Total dictatorship, complete control over every word and even thought of each inhabitant of your country... a feast for a whim! All scientific minds mobilized into the development of even more frightening and horrific types of arms... Single-handed decision-making, a will to execute and pardon... Daily hymns, sung to you in each house, each apartment... of course! – because the punishment for those found guilty is death – instant and painful death under the concentrated plasma stream.

There were no dissatisfied ones... or at least those, trying to openly declare it... Psychogenerators, scattered near borders of this country, did their job right – now he is free to force people to think how he desires. Mental waves of vast variety, last invention of psychophysics – and human is under your full control. Cause either elation, either hysteria, either unlimited aggression in which, being armed with newest “gizmos” of military technology, human became an almost universal machine of destruction... He could do everything. And he enjoyed it.

Has drowned in blood the revolt in the frontline island state. Has left lifeless desert on southern suburbs of his country, where hordes of the enemy have dared to intrude – the same whitish desert remained in all territory of the attacking state. Threatened to throw off the newest modification of psycho-neutron bomb on the neighbor, who was unwilling to yield convenient trade routes, having destroyed all mental potential of the pigheaded one – he gave up very quickly, having become the witness of demonstration of its possibilities in small scales...

He possessed all. Everything was below him – he was above everything. He was the president of the state...

\* \* \*

Mechanics peep. Red measured words on the X-display screen – “Your account is empty. Please replenish your balance”. Damn! The end... Slowly unhooked from body sensors and controls, the neuro-pulse helmet, removed from his head. That's all. Game over...

A lonely thought, spinning in the head: “eat”. So... where is a food here? He has turned his head around. Oh, here... just near the terminal. A needle, inserted into a vein... very soon nutritious liquor will be soaked up and carried by blood through the organism – it should suffice for some days. Should suffice... a shrill sound signal... done. He has pulled out a needle.

So... he has rummaged around his pockets. Twenty credits... not enough... only for sixty-seventy hours... heck... no matter. A helmet, being dressed again. Heaps of wires and connections fitted to a body. A token put into a machine, which has greedily grasped it... Satisfied mechanics peep.

Start. The virtual world never waits.

\* \* \*

City streets, lightened with lanterns. A signboard over one of many buildings – “Salon of virtual findings”. Hundreds of terminals over the walls. People, sitting in them.

Next terminal... a twitching man, braided by mechanics. A stream of saliva, slowly flowing down on a floor... The face is not visible – it’s being covered by a small helmet. Peeps of equipment...

He was the head of the largest mafia organization...

*2003-06-02*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# License

Lightning cut through the night sky of the Metropolis, for a split second illuminating jumped out of the alley and rushed in the direction of “Zone S” man. Such a rare natural phenomenon at this time of year, still so unrestrained by the scientists of corporations, it was one of the few things that could still occasionally please this fugitive, despite all of its energy static side effects.

As he ran, the man muttered something under his nose, touched the wrist with his free hand – and his shapes suddenly became less and less clear, as if merging with the surrounding reality, and after fifteen or twenty seconds he completely disappeared from the habitual to the inhabitants of the Metropolis photonic field of vision. As if in response to this astounding disappearance, another bolt of lightning lit up a fragment of “Zone D”, better known among Metropolis residents as the “derelict territory”, before finally dissolving into the endless blackness of the night.

Seekers of the Security Department had been searching for Thomas’s IDs and current location for several days after the highly publicized assassination of the head of “Symbionics” – the largest corporation in the Metropolis dedicated to the research and “improvement” of its gene pool, or to be more accurate – many forcefully imposed by the “League of Seven” genetical modifications designed to make their subdued inhabitants even more manageable and obedient, as well as to finally implement so cherished by the rulers of the past centuries dreams of super-soldiers creation.

Antonius Risario – almost immortal and permanent leader of the “Symbionics” for more than two centuries already, a member of the fearsome “League of Seven” – the unofficial government of the Metropolis, entirely consisting of the heads of the largest megacorporations – died as one of the brave while indulging in virtual carnal pleasures for his consciousness in a sealed segment of the neural network, while his body was safely guarded as he sat on a pedestal in his private quarters of own skyscraper with many neuro implants attached to his body. Antonius was a well-known lover of such evening “enlightenments of consciousness”, and as for Thomas... and for Thomas, the neural network has been his second home for a long time.

“Virtulex Enterprise” – the developer of neuro implants as well as the father, creator and perpetual curator of the entire neural network – would gladly issue a license worth millions of “credo” for the network profile of the still-undiscovered hacker – and this would be a fabulous sum for the mind and consciousness of the outcast, a song of praise to all the outcasts, still considered by “Symbionics” only as the by-product of badly gone initial super-soldiers experiments. One head of the hydra died. Will new ones ever grow?

On the run, still shielded from the city’s security cameras and occasional drones cruising over the houses by the field of space transformer – “stealthsar”, embedded in the torso of his stellar-suite, Thomas couldn’t help but smile.

“Your own weapons are destroying you, are they not, oh great and mighty of this world, who think of themselves as demigods?”

Each of these seven demigods, who thought of themselves as children of eternity and rulers of human destinies, could not escape their own fears, passions, and weaknesses.

"Do you believe that it's you who hunt us down and sacrifice us like cattle? It's we who are coming for you. And with each passing day, there are more and more of us."

The space transformer, better known as the "stealthsar" – a marvel of engineering, a small device capable of shaping surrounding fragments of space, was his, Thomas's, true salvation against the seekers.

Acting under the direct control of the "League of Seven", the internal security service of the Metropolis greatly disliked such high-profile murders of the victim's consciousness inside the net, followed by the inevitable death of its physical brain. And it was physically impossible for even the best of hackers to completely erase the traces of neuro-penetration from existence. Based on the smallest quantum fluctuations, through complex calculations, the seekers will eventually calculate the network coordinates of his initial entry into the neural network as well as the point of disconnection, and establish a projection of correspondence between the virtual and physical worlds.

That way they'll learn the coordinates of Thomas's last hideout. But by that time he would be in his new home. And then the call will sound.

\* \* \*

Step. Step. Jump. Another jump. Thrust. Landing and somersault.

Miniature jet engines, embedded in the legs of the stellar-suit, successfully overcome the five-meter-tall wall that is separating the tiny by Metropolis's scale "Zone S" from the unofficial territory of the outcasts, the government territories in "Zone W" as well as "Zone A" – the domain of megacorporations. Here it is – the great battlefield of the past and only a technological cemetery at present.

This area has not been seriously guarded for many years. The winners had built multimeter walls around its perimeter with a minimum set of sensors to ward off mutated stray animals – byproducts of yet another series of "Symbionics's" experiments – as well as all the homeless. Apparently, corporations didn't regard this territory as being capable to inflict damage to their plans. Well, it's their loss.

Fifty earth years ago, it was a field of fierce battles between the Resistance and corporations. In these times, half of a century ago, the spirit of people was different. Unbroken. Unsubdued. Living. But now this was only a graveyard of both technology and memory.

Thomas badly remembered the details of those years – back in these ancient and half-forgotten under corporate propaganda times he was still a teenager. He vaguely remembered once hearing a call that came through all visor channels. The call to remember who we really were – not enslaved by sweet lies of corporations, capable of thinking clearly and remembering the purpose of our coming into this world. The call to fight against universal and omnipresent control, mass surveillance and lies, against moral degeneracy which has become the new norm, imposed on people around the world.

The call to search for their children and loved ones who have been taken away “for the common good” by corporations. The call to get rid of gene-chips and licenses. The call to fight by force of arms, should the time demand so.

Back then, fifty earth years ago, like an eternity in miniature – it was primarily a peaceful call. But already formed by this time from the heads of the largest corporations that entangled the Earth like a web, the “League of Seven” instantly realized the potential scale of the threat of this call to maintain its status quo.

“Ada” – the heart of the neural network, an artificial intelligence named after the first programming language and designed for its self-maintaining and self-control, in a matter of mere minutes located and analyzed network profiles and coordinates of almost all leaders of the Resistance and released combat drones and seeker robots on their trail.

Missile drones and first prototypes of “battle mechs” – gigantic robots that towered high as buildings – in a matter of days had vanquished all the most desperate areas of resistance on the surface, driving the survived leaders of the Resistance into the catacombs beneath this zone. Then all located exits to the surface were blocked, and robots that were put on combat duty had been patrolling this territory for about a month. For several months after this massacre, people from the security department in black-as-night tessa-suits had been coming to arrest the identified “sympathizers” in order to transform them into material for new monstrous corporate experiments. In those days they came after Thomas’s parents as well.

This was what Thomas still remembered, still kept his very vague memories in own primordial, natural, unchipped memory, unlike so many of the newly grown humans. He learned the rest by scouring the neural network’s backup segments, abandoned and forgotten by all but the neuro-hackers and the earliest of the net-runners.

“Do you believe that you have won once and for all? Then let your pride and arrogance continue to blur your vision. We were born to change your new world order.”

\* \* \*

Moving carefully between the ruined remnants of past technologies, continually scanning the road with his info-visor, Thomas traveled deeper into “Zone S” in search of the previously discovered treasure. But his thoughts wandered far from these tragic places.

...Once upon a time, uncountable ages ago, we could be called as humans by right. We were capable of thinking. We were still intelligent. Who are we now – bereft of families and grown in test tubes in the bowels of biofactories new servants for the “great ones” of this world?

...We have forgotten ourselves. We have forgotten the past and therefore can no longer foresee and make our own future. In the half-erased archives of the neural network, there was almost no data left about these times when people were truly free. When they had their own thoughts and feelings. When their body and spirit belonged to them. When they had their countries and families. When there was no such thing as planet-wide Metropolis. When they weren’t food for corporations. When they were alive.

...We gave them ourselves willingly. All in all, all of this started so usually, casually. Just some smartphones, watches, and homes that were transferring bits and pieces of information about ourselves into completely unknown hands with each passing day. Just some global network profiles, recreated from these informational fragments. Just almost deadly accuracy in predicting the behavior of individual citizens and entire states afterward. Just the owners of megabanks and founded by them corporations, generously paying with virtual digital “credo” for these databanks of knowledge about ourselves. By giving them our true selves, we became false afterward.

...In the course of evolution and improvement of “Ada” “smart cities” became too smart and too sharp-sighted, and “smart houses” became too talkative. Routes, habits, addictions, fears and phobias, diseases, diets, graphs of social relationships and everything else that had anything to do with the notorious “personal data” were compiled and analyzed. When the very concept of “personal data” disappears – the personality vanishes as well... or vice versa. Having gained all this knowledge about ourselves, corporations have moved on to the stage of creating their new digital slaves.

...Were finally absorbed and merged into a single entity all planet’s states, and this day was recorded in history under the name of “Unification”. Bringing to a single lowest common denominator all of mankind’s accumulated knowledge and experience for the sake of their preservation exclusively among the new planetary rulers. Corporations created new laws, and their constituent megabanks enslaved most people through the interest rate system. “Credo” – the new financial unit – became the most coveted food for many. A new Earth God, if you will. That’s the way a man is made: there must always be someone above him whom he can rely on in times of need, or shift his own responsibility in times of greed.

...New laws heeded the spirit of the new age. Corporations appropriated the right to take away necessary or undesired people from almost any family. Thus a material for numerous experiments was born. When there are neither states nor families – everyone starts caring for himself, and the security department that was subordinated to the “League of Seven” was as skilled in dealing with outcasts as no one else.

...Control over the mind of another for the greater good of everyone – what can be more humane? But the new lords of thoughts understood only their own good instead of public. The neural network – a virtual “I” for everyone – replaced the internet and network profiles. A brave new world in a world much more terrible, the horrors of which manifested themselves even when one was wearing “new reality glasses” and similar gadgets that were capable of altering the perceived picture of reality in accordance with the owner’s desires. And the more dreadful the physical world became, the more attractive the neural network seemed to many.

...Neural network travelers – net-runners – became popular and ubiquitous. Some were on corporate intelligence-gathering missions, some were simply exploring newly opened opportunities, some were searching for spies and hackers. And someone – people like Thomas – became these hackers. But “Virtulex Enterprise” was the father and the maker of the neural network and the only manufacturer of bodily neurochips required in order to enter the network. At least until recently.

...After the suppression of the Resistance's rebellion the licensing mechanism was forcefully imposed. According to the plans of corporations, it had to prevent the very possibility of an incident's repetition and to finally solve the question of the cost of human life. Licenses were diverse: some represented the officially given permission, issued by corporate managers or closely integrated with them criminals, to eliminate people that were undesired by them; others – a "granted from the above" forgiveness for a number of past crimes; finally, the third type, most valuable for the majority – licenses for a life or, in other words, for the right not to be turned into a battle thrall for "Military International", or not to be transformed into a gene-mutant in the hands of scientists from "Symbionics", or even "to serve as fertilizers" for "Sunny Soils Agriculture". From the moment the databases on each personality of the Metropolis ended in the hands of corporations and were adapted for their needs by "Ada", the fate of these big game's pawns was in the hands of new players. And in order to make a man either a saint or a criminal, to elevate him to the top of the corporate ladder or to plunge him into the depths of poverty and helplessness, it was enough to change just one record in the neuro-base.

...Interestingly, how much in the eyes of corporate elites would a license for Thomas's liquidation cost?

\* \* \*

All these thoughts slowly floated inside Thomas's mind while he, guided by signals of his info-scanner, used the built-in capabilities of the stellar-suit – now gracefully levitating, now easily leaping from one spot to another, moving to the location of his awaiting treasure.

Powered by the Earth's gravitational field, "stealthsar" reliably shielded him from the occasional flying drones or scanning beams of "monitors" – packed with electronics ground and orbital tracking stations with which "Military International" – a leading developer of weapons and security systems – had now built up almost two-thirds of the Metropolis.

"Stealthsar" was the answer to all types of surveillance: if necessary, it could completely absorb, creating a shadow, or allow to completely pass by, without revealing the source, all photons or radio waves of specified frequencies and lengths, as well as send to the null channel various types of emissions, as a matter of fact making its owner invisible to electronic radars and for quite armed eyes-cameras of drones.

It was an experimental model, created by scientists of the new Resistance on the basis of stolen from the neural network scientific project of "Military International". And the only one of its currently known shortcomings was this "experimental" label. But one could not live without the risk of its in-combat battle testing.

"Shall we play hide-and-peek, guys?"

Info-scanner's sensor and a global positioning module of the stellar-suite jointly announced the fact of his target's location acquisition. The neuro-helm's visor obediently formed a route map in front of Thomas's eyes.

Jet engines, mounted on the legs and feet of the suit, softly roared and pushed Thomas's body in the indicated on the map's direction.

\* \* \*

Chipset and virus. Or is the virus just an upcoming and well-deserved payment?

This chip, which Thomas was now gently rolling in his hands so that the info-scanner could create and save inside its local memory full gelogramma of its structure, was, perhaps, the pinnacle of engineering and scientific developments of scientists of the Resistance who died half a century ago. How many decades were they ahead of their time, how far were they from the scientists of insane corporations?

The chip was definitely a part of some kind of super-project, involved in the ways of breaching the neuro-net's primary firewalls that was just becoming self-aware at that time. The small underground complex that Thomas had recently found in this sector of "Zone S" was definitely related to the destroyed rebel base, which had been miraculously partially preserved here at a depth of several dozen meters. Despite all the satellite and ground-based surveillance technologies that corporations had acquired over the past decades, they had not yet been able to penetrate that depth with their all-seeing eyes.

Thomas discovered the entrance to this ruined rebel compound almost by accident. Who could have known that these stone piles, closing the descent into the tunnel leading inside these catacombs, are in fact just a very high-quality hologram working on an autonomous solar battery? How miraculously this battery lasted for almost fifty years – only God of engineers knows.

The chip resided in neocrysolite energy crystal, smoothly levitating above the surface next to a pile of dilapidated terminals and cryobiogenetics capsules that had long since been shut down without backup power sources. And the most valuable to Thomas in this nondescript-looking crystal structure was the code written inside it.

The initial and very superficial analysis carried out by the info-scanner's debug module during Thomas's initial visit here demonstrated its original purpose – hacking the firewalls of the neural network for breaching into its protected segments. Ones such as private virtual quarters of the members of the "League of Seven".

An ingenious combination of software loopholes and techniques that allows you to use the original inherent in the program code of "Ada" self-analysis capabilities for the purpose of self-disclosure. And as the recent history of Antonius Risario's sad ending has already shown – this still considered experimental code of engineers and programmers of the defeated Resistance – or the virus, if you like – was practically working option. The key to the salvation of the human race. The beginning of the end and a new beginning. A machine virus in response to a human virus. What an irony.

The New Resistance wasn't born in one instant. After the untraceable death of Thomas's parents as "sympathizers" in the clutches of corporations, for many years he had lived as a wanderer. He worked as a neural network info bulletin messenger, a neuro-analyst, a neuro-implant salesman, a network tracker for jealous husbands, even a bouncer at the virtsex club.

But in the own mission and destiny, Thomas was and remained a neuro-hacker. And it was the neural network where he once started the search for survived members of the Resistance and their descendants.

That was about five years ago. And now when the surviving descendants of the Resistance leaders had re-established their headquarters deep in the catacombs of “Zone D”, and the scale of their activities had taken over the top management of corporations, Thomas finally understood his ultimate purpose.

\* \* \*

Thomas didn’t count how much time had already passed. His supplies of liquefied oxygen and food would last for at least another twenty or so hours. And then – it would all be a matter of skill, fate and at least a little bit of good luck.

At all costs, he needed to modify the program code of the neuro-virus found on this chip, so that the hacking of private segments in the neural network of still surviving leaders of the “League of Seven” couldn’t help happening. He learned the weaknesses and addictions of each of them by heart a long time ago.

Second. Minute. Hour. The artificial intelligence in the debug module of his info-scanner disassembles and piece by piece reunites bits and bytes of code, analyzes algorithms and highlights recommendations on the stellar suit’s neuro-helmet.

Artificial intelligence surpassed natural one a long time ago. Or maybe humans have just failed to uncover their innate natural potential, too much relying on program code and machines? The code of the virus against the code of the “Ada”’s neural network. The battering ram facing the walls. Freedom versus slavery. And – at least the slightest bit of good luck.

During the final stages of the code’s alteration, Thomas was distracted by the growing buzz of sound. May the sniffer robots don’t find him here. Having copied the modified code into the stellar-suit’s memory module, Thomas switched his info-scanner into the battle-tracking mode and started climbing to the surface.

\* \* \*

He seemed to be awaited on the surface. Or, perhaps, they decided to temporarily enhance their patrols?

Dozens of missile drones were dashing through space, scanning the surface near Thomas with light beams and radio waves. Somewhere in the distance, their noise was echoed by the humming of “monitors”. Apparently, they haven’t discovered Thomas, who was shielded by “stealthsar”, yet. What had alarmed them, where did this patrol come from?

Wasting no more time, Thomas rushed in the direction of his “Zone D”’s hideout. It’s there where he will have to get in touch with the leaders of the new Resistance and it’s there, in his underground neuro-laboratory, where the virus capable of breaching the AI’s protection will be released into the network.

Jump. Somersault. The drone's laser beam melts the rock and plastic where Thomas just stood, turning them into a boiling, bubbling muck. Another jump. Activation of the RF interference module. Warning sound from the target acquisition and detection module, telling of a guided and approaching missile.

Following Thomas's brain impulses, the stellar suit's neuro-interface did almost everything it could to evade the pursuit, occasionally throwing his body to the right, then to the left, or even throwing him into a dive at times.

Space transformer – “stealthsar” – failed him in the most inopportune moment, when after emerging on the surface Thomas tried to activate jet boosters. A fucking experimental model! The gravitational energy converter inside it had failed and switched to a backup power supply directly from the core of the stellar-suit so that Thomas could now and then be detected either by visual traces of the jet engines or simply by the most primitive radio frequency scanning. Damn it!

Another laser beam turned into gelatinous slime the remnant of a half-century-old rebel prototype of modern mechs a few meters ahead of Thomas. Ugh!

If only to reach, fly, jump, whatever! Get to his refuge and have enough time to release the virus into the neural network. It would take at least a few dozens of minutes for the sniffer robots to break into his neuro lab underground.

Another jump. Acceleration of free takeoff. Dodging from a dozen of “smart” self-guiding “friend or foe” bullets. Activation of a field of constant electromagnetic pulses in order to burn the electronic chips of these flying back petty bitches. Bullets fall down like impotent crumbs in a couple of meters before him as if in some fantastic movie from forgotten by everyone past.

Here comes another laser beam, burning through the night. Evasion attempt. A fragment of the beam passes over Thomas's left hand, instantly turning two fingers into a blackened skeleton. Neurostimulants and painkillers injected into his bloodstream by the suit's artificial intelligence system. A flash of pain cuts through the brain, and Thomas's mouth cries in a silent scream. Only not to lose consciousness from the initial pain shock!

Jumping again. The roar of jet propulsion behind him. Endless attempts to activate the gravitational energy converter. Stellar-suit core charge readings at twenty-three percent. It should be enough.

And once again, the laser beam cuts through the darkness like a lightning, descended from heavens, only by purely machine-human will that time. Or maybe purely machine-made.

The response finally surges from the gravitational energy converter. Just in time! Come on, don't let me down again!

The familiar spiral vortex of energy that surrounded Thomas's body. Shimmering as if in the northern lights colors of the visible visual spectrum. The space transformer is back in action! Now he will be able to break away from his pursuers and win a few extra dozens of minutes.

Turning on maximum thrust mode and now ignoring the rapidly diminishing charge indicator of the stellar-suit's internal battery, Thomas raced toward the place of the impending call.

\* \* \*

Embedded in the walls of this shelter and connected by thick power cables running deep from the old nuclear reactor, news visors vied with each other to announce the discovery and impending elimination of the killer of one of the members of the "League of Seven".

"Thanks to the security measures taken to date by the forces of corporate net-runners together with the top management of the corporation and the internal security service of the Metropolis, we have located Thomas Robinson – the main suspect in the murder of our beloved head of "Symbionics", a neuro-hacker and a descendant of sympathizers with the insurgents that were destroyed half a century ago.

The interim head of "Symbionics" corporation granted a license to all interested parties for liquidation of Thomas Robinson worthy of fifty million "credo". At the moment the internal security forces are determining suspect's exact coordinates..."

Thomas switched off the quantum transmitter's encryption module, took a deep breath, inhaled the stale air of his neuro lab, and slightly rolled for fun in the makeshift, dilapidated chair in front of the terminal.

Everything was going as it had to be. There was no other way. The communication session with the leaders of the new Resistance that bypassed the neural network was completed, the virus code along with the information about the vulnerable entry points into the personal segments of the remaining six leaders of the corporations were all transferred. Pre-recorded videos and texts addressing the citizens of the Metropolis, along with his farewell word, were uploaded to an encrypted fragment of the neural network and after a couple of dozens of minutes will be relayed to the visors of millions of Metropolis's residents simultaneously with the work of the virus code.

The hydra of the new digital world will fall – and may any God who still hears us prevent it from rising up again. But it would not be his choice. Today he had already made his own.

Out of the corner of his eye, still looking through the news feeds on his visors, Thomas glanced at the internal cameras in the escape tunnels of his hideout, once built above an underground nuclear power plant. The cameras, dimmed by the gas that had started to spill through the tunnels, showed the silhouettes of sniffer robots and internal security troopers in black-as-night tessa-suits.

"No, guys, it's not your day after all. And even more so – tomorrow."

Here one of the soldiers is shouting something to others, pointing down. Firing of the laser rifle – and the image on one of Thomas's security cameras goes black.

"Thomas Robinson! You are charged with the murder of the head of "Symbionics" and will be eliminated on sight without additional warning in the name of peace and prosperity of the entire Metropolis!"

Amplified by audio transmitters voice floods Thomas's underground control room.

"Come on, beasts, show yourself! Show me what you can do. And then I'll show you."

Explosion roars from the above. Dust falls from the cabin's walls.

"You'll become dust, don't you already know that? You have been transformed into dust willingly a long time ago when you swore an oath to your dead corporate gods."

The clang of the jaws of sniffer robots that are gnawing through concrete.

"Dogs of the dead regime. Will you ever be humans again?"

The sound of cursings behind the last massive titanium-ceramic door that is separating two completely different worlds. Dents and sparks flying from it.

"Thomas Robinson, you have no chance of escape!"

"You are the ones who have doomed themselves a long time ago."

Turning in his chair for the last time, with a bitter smile on his face, Thomas picked up a small cube of the prepared neutrino detonator. His fingers hesitated for a moment, but then tightened on the trigger. He raised his head proudly to face the crumbling door, trying to imprint those final chords deep in his soul.

"Come in!" he said loudly.

*2019-12-01*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Mage Nag

Today I woke up as always late. My pure and blissful Astral didn't want to release me in this frail, dirty and sinful world. But I had to. Had to return back once again to help the disadvantaged, to set despaired on the right path and to rescue and protect the whole horde of locally lost souls in every other way possible. Yes, I woke up as of late – but, after all, can a respectable and powerful magician eventually afford himself a little bit more than what is allowed to others? Well, certainly, he can!

Today a rather responsible day awaited me – a new big customer and, if luck would smile upon me, all honest brotherhood of his acquaintances were going to visit me. From the anticipation of a good bargain, magic heat spread throughout my mental body so that I left this dirty reality for somewhat about twenty more minutes. Having returned, I jumped up like a scalded one, for I remembered that I haven't yet managed to carry out today's morning ritual of purification – and started working instantly.

Under purification, I, most certainly, understand the ritual of chopping so-called energy tails – a thing, known to every magician of the slightest degree of knowledge. All right, I will explain for all of you so that you can understand it clearly: I was going to clean up my karma once again. It's necessary to add, that aforementioned process has always given me fair pleasure, and mainly the understanding of the fact that it's required to spend only several dozens of minutes per day – and all your karma for previous day gets cleared, you become as pure as the God's innocent person, and your chances to enter the Paradise stand close to a magic “one hundred” number. I, certainly, mean the temporary karma instead of personal, but that's it... a slight specification. And cleaning of personal karma is in no way tougher – the process takes about fifteen minutes (and recently thanks to active training I almost fastened it to somewhat about fourteen minutes and thirty seconds), and must be carried out far less often – one time per month suffices. Well, is that not great, not inspiring? Truly, great ways are opened for us, magicians!

Having finished off with purification, I dived into Astral once again to check the condition of my spiritual armor. Its state was, to tell the truth, far from the best – keep sharpening, keep sharpening their teeth on their own benefactors all these spiteful and choleric men, keep striking it with their energetic blows. What can be taken from these ones? The beasts they are, the beasts they are going to die once. And let their rest be a long one!

I poured a part of my morning forces into the strengthening of the protection, having especially taken care of areas of chakras and the solar serpent (for the uninitiated ones I will explain, that these are the most important power centers of a mental body of the magician). Besides all other things, this time I have poured truly other-worldly (my head and hands were still shivering for at least ten minutes at the completion of the process) power into designed by me “Shield of anger”.

Once more time I should explain that this is a special kind of energetic protection, which not only absorbs light and moderate power energetic blows, transferring a portion of its energy to a shield's maker (the term known as magical adsorption) but also reflects a part of negative energy back to the attacker. Now I will not only be able to take away a part of their own force but make a strike back to all these spiteful beasts, sucking away my forces! For an instant, I imagined the expression of the face of the one, who would dare to make the first strike and my spiritual essence was overwhelmed with delight.

I was distracted from this blissful state by so inopportune made doorbell call. So, came, they came, my new dear guests, aspiring to recover from their nasty sores, unfairly bestowed upon them. Well, this work suits well such a powerful magician as I am.

I opened the door, already anticipating how I would greet my notable guests – but instead of them, I saw on a threshold some strange being with a faint resemblance to those which are called as Hounds and dwell in the bottom layers of Another world.

“Have you lost a dog?” the hostess of this being asked me.

To be honest, I was enraged outright. What's the hellish dog?! What's the hellish loss?! I have lost nothing ever, especially some dogs!

“I have lost nothing – and you just go away!” I bellowed and slammed a door forcefully.

Angered, I almost returned to my daily cares (I was especially amused to observe how silly and helplessly do the majority of these earth beings behaved in layers of the other world when after death their spiritual bodies leave useless now physical corpses), when a doorbell ringed once again. Certainly, I couldn't restraint – flung the door open, being already ready to curse this mistress of her silly dog with all known to me caustic expressions (and, probably, had intimidated her with a possibility to lay a curse for form's sake) – however this time there was not a single sign of the dog.

“Is that you a magician Nag Nagiyevich?” I overheard.

“M-m-m... yes,” yet being unable to come to senses after such fast change of disposition, I mumbled.

“My name is... Well, that's of no importance, really. I came to you on personal reception according to the recommendation,” and the man smiled.

What I really didn't expect is an answer in such a style. Not so, totally differently they described me this future client of mine... he was not the way I imagined him. Well, no matter. The chance cannot be missed.

“Come in, sit down,” I started to pay compliments (effective mean, by the way, useful). “With what affairs did you come? Whom should I punish, tear to pieces? In my career I had zero misses!” and I smiled warmly, having once again said my favorite joke.

“No, we don’t need to torment anyone,” answered the client. “I am having a problem of much higher degree, and a true master of his deed is necessary in the subject – for example, one such as they have described me you,” and my client blurred in a smile.

My heart immediately jumped up. Something serious? Something even more difficult? That’s a completely new story, real business. For I have truly bothered myself to be engaged in some trifles and dirty tricks such as notorious damnations and curses.

“How can I be of assistance, my kind friend? All my forces and knowledge will be at your disposal as soon as you desire,” and I returned him a smile. Well, no way, I smiled much more attractively.

“I have the following problem,” and the man suddenly started whispering, “I need to revive one person. Do you understand me?”

To tell the truth, I was taken aback a bit. Never in my entire practice had I to resort to the magic of such a power, according to gossips available only to faithful servants of God. But, well, you can never tell, right? Perhaps it will all turn out and business of mine will flourish. I would become as rich as a king!

“Excuse me, to resurrect? And would I be allowed to know of who is that so untimely deceased one? Your mother, father? Your distant relative?”

“No,” replied the man, “not they”.

And, having passed to whisper once again, he added, “It’s me.”

“H-h-h-o-o-w-w is that?” I was astonished.

“Well, you know... the theory of reincarnations... transformations... one thousand and one life... I would like to check it out. Let’s say...” and this client comes to me very close, having whispered even more silently, “can you revive me in my penultimate embodiment?”

“A-a-a... i-i-i-s-s-s this possible?” I was taken aback.

“Well. I believe it’s better for you to know.”

I started hesitating. What this strange man wanted from me in this no less unclear day (truly is great the power of period of astral antiphase!) was ridiculous and surprising – never before I have heard about the process of reviving yourself. But if various theories of reincarnations, being developed by other magicians, are true, and I will have enough power to repeat the feat of the Savior... heck, one cannot dream of greater income and glory!

“All right,” I replied much more quietly (very useful move – to speak silently and measuredly). “I do believe that our combined forces will be sufficient in order to perform this act of... re-reincarnation. However I cannot give you any guarantee – and, besides, in any case, you will have to pay in advance.”

“Well, certainly,” and the person blurred in a smile once again. “We have to pay for everything in this world, right? I believe plastic would suffice? Transfer of... m-m-m... one million of credograts?”

I will be honest, my tongue was taken away from me during that moment, and once again my head started spinning and hands started shaking. One million credograts! This is... this is greater than the most impressive sum I was planning to ask from this man in a dozen – no, in one thousand times! Oh yes, truly is great the period of astral antiphase!

“C-c-c... certainly. This w... will cover all possible e... expenses,” I murmured.

“Well, that’s nice. The transfer will be performed today exactly at sixteen o’clock sixteen minutes by that time, to which we both will be the witnesses. As for now,” and the face of this man suddenly acquired some serious – I would even tell gloomy, shades, “back to the business at hand.”

Preparations took about an hour. Flasks, fabrics, lit smoking tubes, crystals, waving of hands, words of ancient languages... and the like, and the rest. In other words, it was necessary to create the most stable impression that something is really going to happen soon. And then – it’s only a matter of trick.

If this man is really so rich, if only... however, it’s better not even think right now what could be possibly done with his money, which all (and not only some pity million) will suddenly stop being his. Who knows – what if he can read one’s minds? Now it’s only required to distract his attention, and then...

Finally, everything was prepared. Well, almost everything.

“Come, sit down here. Yes, yes, between these interpolating light beams. And this bowl will be put here, in the center. Keep remembering, when I start a ritual – don’t move from your place a single bit. It will be better for you to close your eyes completely. Energetic streams will become very intensive, they can bring down an aura segment if you move suddenly. Is everything clear? All right, let’s do it!”

I stood nearby and started reading phrases taken out from some ancient doctrine. Their original meaning got was lost in the depths of centuries very long time ago, but they still sounded very well – I would even say they sounded quite magically.

After a few minutes, I sharply hitched my head up and rolled up my eyes, having upraised up own hands. Continuing my passes and uterine bawling out, I started bypassing my client around. Soon, so soon, several more minutes, to lull vigilance, to force him to lose himself... Secretly taken the knife I reliably hide in a side pocket.

Suddenly, without opening his eyes, the man said, “Well, and why is that there is still nothing happening? No illuminations, sort of enchanting fireworks – only some silly mantras from forgotten by all Bkhagavat-Geeta... To tell the truth, I am already starting to be disappointed in you, mister... magician.”

He said the last word so frankly mockingly that I almost was distracted from the process of mantra-speaking.

“Be quiet! You will break the ritual!” I almost shouted.

“And it seems to me that you have already broken it, mister... magician. Broken very long ago... You and all your offsprings.”

Something evil, something terrifying cut through the voice of this person, and all of a sudden I noticed with dread that mentioned ill-starred smile starts blurring on his face once again...

Now, now or never, while I am still having a chance! I snatched out a knife, and have almost jumped on that mysterious stranger (who have obviously understood all falseness of my game), but...

“Fool! Pity fool! Have you not yet understood of who is standing before you?!”

Suddenly outlines of stranger’s figure began changing, it started growing more and more... and during that moment something with extreme force struck me sideways and flung away, depriving of hope and salvation. Already fainting, I managed to behold my transformed stranger – and the horror, wild, eternal, never-ending dread of understanding extinguished its last bits...

\* \* \*

Am I dead or alive? Was reincarnated and destructed? I don’t know...

Everything that I remembered – was sticky, viscous, become infinite instants of horror, fear, and pain. All I could not forget were words – words, with peals of thunder and stale ashes striking me in the face and ears...

“You have ruined my deed, pity fools! They, these creatures calling themselves reasonable people... you must have made them helpless before my false prophets, you must have weakened their reason, their feeling of reality, you should have led them in the other imagined virtual world, invented by me...

You didn’t make it! Instead, you became sort of city clowns so that even the smallest of these creatures gradually started laughing at you and mocking you! Were you really so blind that you didn’t see it, having sunk in your thirst of wealth? Have you all, my called ones, become so blind?!

And now... now!” it seemed that my consciousness won’t sustain the anger which has been poured into these words and will forever leave my now useless body, “my false prophets cannot afflict them! They are unable to confuse their minds, they can’t distort His word! These beings are simply mocking you!

F-f-o-o-o-l-l-l-l-l!

But now you are mine, forever mine... until His warriors invade my kingdom and are destroyed! All of you are forever mine! M-m-m-i-i-i-n-n-n-e-e-e-e!”

Pain, never-ending, unstoppable stream of pain have fallen down on me like a stone bulk, killing the last remains of hope and taking the life away. The last thing I remember, before the remnants of my consciousness were burned out by this fire of tortures, was the long, terrible, almost never-ending falling in the lowest layers of this very... Astral world.

2006-09-05

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Dead city

It does exist – and yet it doesn't.

It always was – but they preferred to keep silence of its existence previously.

It calls for you as something delightful yet forbidden – but few ones have time to feel its true bitterness.

It is so much similar to the constructed Babel tower, yet more and more are willing to climb to its top.

It grows outside and inside of you invisibly, braiding with webs all corners of your soul. And that is why so many consider it as nonexistent.

Its stench seems fragrance from distance, and its fire – lovely illumination.

Practically no one came back from it. And those few who did were humans no more.

So much has been told about it, yet this does not reduce the number of its pilgrims.

It never lived – and that is why it doesn't know such thing as death.

It has been born along with the human. Will it be extinguished before him?

Yes, it looks like a massive city. But this is a Dead City.

A city of former love, now long since dead. A cemetery.

Graves, graves, graves...

Each of them is unique – one of a kind. But do corpses really need to be unique?

Tombstones – and inscriptions, inscriptions, inscriptions...

"Linen washing is so bad... start delight yourself like mad," as though the first squeals.

"A goat he was – a goat he is, no more loving, cease, cease, cease. Perhaps I'll now just kill him, rather, – he's always mine, never another!" threatens with all possible force the second.

"Just for how long, just for how long you'll have me in the bed, my pong?!" overstrains in the silent exclamation to the unknown listener the third.

"From own husband I have pain... but is new lover better gain?" uncertainly-shy longs the fourth.

"Without family, we have a lot of joyful, shining staff... who didn't want us is just shy, so let them rot and let them die!" as though gives orders to dead ones the fifth.

"You're rather damned, never cool – I'll rather die than marry, fool!" dives in hysterics the sixth.

"All women are silly, but I am – the queen! I can go right and left in sin!" categorically assures the seven.

“The less we love the women shit, the more effortless we hit!” share his deadly wisdom the eight.

“You had betrayed, I saw token! Keep silence now, my heart is broken!” chatters abstrusely the nine.

“No faith, no trust, no beg, my friend, but carry insults through heart’s land” calls for humility the tenth.

“Love is like a dream – yet dreams die. Just money help us reach the sky” is proud of his cost the eleventh.

“I love myself, and that is cool. To love the others? I’m not a fool!” secretly admits the twelfth.

“Gods gave us love and paradise – stop lying now, just rise, rise, rise!” frankly raves the thirteenth.

Graves, graves, graves...

This is an eternal cemetery.

Almost everyone comes here before taking his true place. He silently digs cold dead earth with his own hands, and so silently digs in himself.

The ones who came here died voluntarily. And those risen from dead looks like humans no more.

They have no idea if there are resurrected ones. But rising from dead often wander the streets of yet living cities. And it’s impossible to put the pain, tormenting them, into words.

There is a legend that those risen from the dead can only be cured by the one who made them. But few resurrected ones know a different truth.

They know the truth of the Alive City.

It does exist – and yet it doesn’t.

It always was – but they preferred to keep silence of its existence previously.

It first averts you as something intolerably bitter – but few ones have time to feel its true sweet.

It’s similar to an ancient mountain towering among lowlands, yet less and less are willing to climb to its top.

It grows outside and inside of you invisibly, lightening all corners of your soul. And that is why so many consider it as nonexistent.

Its fragrance seems stench from distance and illumination – as its fire.

Practically no one came back from it. And those few who did were humans no more.

So much has been told about it, yet this does not increase the number of its pilgrims.

It never died – and that is why it doesn’t know such thing as death.

It has been born long before the human.

Will he once remember it?

*2009-12-23*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

## World on the horizon

That was disgusting. Nay, that was terrible. Only four hours after “officially legislatively approved dates of time of rest” has passed, and all shops have been closed. Not a single one from those necessary to him worked so early... or late – whatever is proper to each one... Damn!

He needed one shop... just a single shop, trading the necessary stuff. All those twenty ones familiar to him, which he has flown by on fly-car, “have been closed due to the upcoming professional holiday of sexual minorities in accordance with the official decree of the capital’s mayor”. All of them!

Damn!

Such legislative citizens... such angels. Wolves in the sheepskins. Three out of twenty of these downtown-shops traded dreamcatcher, nineteen out of twenty traded “kayfan”, ten out of twenty – “lisben”. It’s, of course, the informal statistics – according to official reports, contained in the central database of the State Department, everything was clear. Crystal-clear. Too clear to be the truth.

And these are those, who should in every possible way to “help and assist in every manner” of preservation of citizens’ health... wolves in sheepskins.

And yet that very dreamcatcher has been forbidden for application, manufacturing or any use in the collateral purposes in all state’s territory. The strongest possible drug, made about five years ago as a by-product of some super confidential research of scientific laboratories of Pharmaceuticals United, it was capable to change human’s brain completely. Not some weak hallucinogen – it completely changed person’s vision of his surroundings after the injection of only one milligram into the blood. It was, actually, nicknamed as such, “a dream catcher” – all deep layers of human’s subconsciousness were revived, ten, twenty, the thirty-years-old memory came to life – all in one instant, all like a raging stream... and this was even better than VR – for no additional equipment was necessary anymore, no electrodes... human’s brain could do everything – it was simply necessary to aid a little.

Who of us did not dream? And dreams of how many did come to life? This devil’s drug made this possibility absolute – and you have been living through all your twenty, thirty, or forty years in these several days... in the world of your illusions, though, but was this really important? All your dreams came true – all those, provided by deep memory. And approximately a month later a human died – his brain was simply “burnt down”. The brain simply did not survive.

Really, that was a very fascinating death. To die, feeling with the rest of your fading consciousness, that you are happy – for you are fulfilled. For your dreams – here they are, all in front of you, – all came to life, and who the hell cares what sort of dreams were these. To die with a blissful smile on your face...

It was supposed to be given to dying people, whose chances of survival were equal to zero. But they have miscalculated. Two-three percent of the state’s population died of its usage annually – and they were not doomed. Fifty percent of these ones were not even thirty years old...

And then they sounded the alarm. And then they have published their decrees. And then they have mobilized that Liberty Security State Police Department... late. Too late.

“The love has come – die, love, oh damn!” – a phrase from the recently seen interactive movie has emerged from subconsciousness. Yet this love lived on. And internal security service could do nothing.

It’s like a plague, like a pestilence – it will not stop until almost all are left dead. And these were just the florets.

\* \* \*

Almost an hour has passed since the moment of the begging of his searches – and he has not even found a single shop, trading in preparations, lowering level of testosterone, adrenaline and related hormones in blood – something, that could save his body when a radio channel’s video stream of information will be transmitted to his neuro-pulse helmet – information, of whose “content’s purity” he has ceased to dream a long time ago. To rescue his body at the very least... he had no more hopes of rescuing his soul.

And all of this is just by a holiday of sexual minorities.

How have you thought it over... how predicted. Sexual minorities... oh, sure! Real orgies will take place there, and not only those of minorities. And there have been no signs of any “contraceptive toolkit” for two years already after the publishing of resolution “Of the termination of distribution of contraceptives and preparations with purposes of increasing of birth rate in the country” of our oh-so-beloved president.

Still hoping to compensate natural losses, aye? Two percent of “dreamcatchers”, one percent of the military men, one percent of the “accidents”, a half percent of murders, the one-third of a percent of “unidentified deaths”, the one-sixth of a percent of those, who nevertheless has not managed to emigrate away from here... and this is not the full list by any means.

You will not recover that way – your disease has gone too far. You are too sick to become healthy once again. And those who understand cannot tell it anymore – for the global Mass Media Interactive Network is not for them anymore... never was for them. Only for the government, only for multinational corporations under their “giving hand”. And you could even participate in all this – take, for instance, that interactive sex-orgies that will be broadcasted on all channels “with a purpose of familiarizing of the population with sexual culture and stimulation of natural needs of men and women”.

What idiot has issued this resolution?!... even its name is idiotic. Bless you, it surely must have been a big person – too big to “stimulate his natural needs” together with mad people crowds in the upcoming day...

Never forget a hand that feeds you... providers of Mass Media content did not forget.

A chip on the right hand has emitted a high-frequency sound impulse and has confirmed it with a predefined sequence of IR-signals.

Damn! This was dangerous! This means that he has left the edge of his quadrant in today's night patrol. This means that after ten minutes this very chip, built into his left hand, – and now also serving as universal bio-passport, such a “smart-human-card” in a miniature, – will send a series of radio signals in Liberty Security State Police Headquarters – his “native home” of sorts – only a series of radio signals which will be retranslated through the governmental stations. Informational stream, ciphered by the newest cryptographic invention SSC-51200, in which numerical postfix also designated length of a key...

Only a series of radio signals... and he will be up to the neck in problems. The internal security service disliked it very much when its employees did not execute orders.

It was necessary to come back. He was not in time.

This means, that once again he has to writhe from pain, resisting his body's desires, when video streaming will begin. This means, that once again he has to try to close his eyes – only to receive painful discharges from this damn multifunctional Security State Police Department VMSS helmet – having no possibility to remove it – because as soon as a signal with the information on the scanned retina of his eye will not be transmitted – he's a criminal. This means that he should die once again.

Almost like those dreamcatchers – almost with a blissful smile on his lips... almost happy.

*“You've chosen the way.*

*And you've become prey.*

*Forgotten you have paradise,*

*And thus received thy hellish prize.*

*Yes, it was you who've rolled the dice...”* – it seems, that such stanza of some newly born poet he has recently seen in still free part of the Net. It seems, the author called it “Appeal to the human”. And he is so damn right in something...

To look for him, maybe... a brother in arms by misfortune... the derelict of this world... Heck, to find... this one must have already joined the Underground Resistance Force – and thus became impossible to be found. For ten years his department was engaged in searches of these insurgents and fighters for “spiritual freedom” – and only their smallest and insignificant agents have been caught, and only one headquarter destroyed.

I am keeping fighting with my brothers, keeping struggling against them... and have no the slightest idea of how to stop it all... cannot stop it... not anymore.

Sometimes they made it. Sometimes they broke – miraculously – through all information covering – and broadcasted on the broadest possible range of frequencies – mainly speech and sometimes even video... for ten minutes only. Then they were blocked once again... however, no one has ever found the true source of signals – not in his life.

Sometimes it was an invocatory speech to see that already deformed nature of the majority of people, sometimes it was the statistics of human deaths during previous years – numbers and lines of texts, unfamiliar for those profane. Sometimes it was video records from places of military operations and speeches of how people have been drugged into this war by their government – for the sake of interests of the government itself and that cursed “hierarchical minority”. Sometimes these were such verses which he has found yesterday – by the divine will alone still being kept in the Net.

Sometimes... three-four times a year – no more and no less. And for all the rest time there were those Mass Media Interactive corporations.

There will be a holiday of sexual minorities tomorrow... in ten days after it – a holiday of military... there we will once again see heart-touching frames of how our brave soldiers defeat the treacherous enemy and how he, this enemy, continue to retreat under their unstoppable pressure – has been retreating for five years already...

Then there will be a holiday of the man, and a holiday of the woman... the new woman and the new man. Then the day of overall scorn to those in the Underground – sort of official “phew” of the powerless government to the members of Underground Resistance Force. Then there will be a day of prostitutes – not that much different in its nature from the day of the woman... there will be so much.

So many holidays... so little joy. So much pleasure. And once again all in a circle the next year. But for now, this was completely unimportant. It was time to go back, he had at most about five minutes before the entry into a zone of the patrolled quadrant. The patrol has been completed... his home awaits.

He has turned his fly-car, turned on autopilot mode. Now it will travel to LSSP base by itself, automatically regulating its height and evading counter streams of similar happy owners of this transport, and will land on one of free platforms on the base. Nothing more is required. The technicians will do everything for you... almost everything.

Then he will make his report on the performed patrol – everything is normal, no suspicious activities have been revealed, no incidents have occurred. Everyone is happy and content... everything is just fine. A paradise on the earth in the borders of his patrolled quadrant... hellish paradise.

He has leaned back on a seat and closed his eyes. He had to rest for a while. A difficult day awaits him tomorrow.

2005-05-25

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

## Similar ones

“Yes, Mr. Samuel, I am addressing you! What, excuse me for the allegorical term, the hell did you decide to ignore this blatant case of violation of our educational institution’s charter? Whether it’s not one of your tasks to maintain and observe all kinds of moral purity and integrity, as well as spiritual easiness of our esteemed students? Aren’t you responsible for keeping in them that feeling of universality, uniformity, and admiration for our governing authority that is leading and guiding them for their personal uniform benefit?”

Yes, Mr. Samuel, they are unique – just like every speck of dust that has found itself a refuge in some ancient and obscure folio. They are unique as every grain of sand in a desert, every drop in a puddle, every brick in a wall, every speck in my eye, every splinter in my heel, after all! Take, for example, germs, Mr. Samuel... Pray tell – are these beings both unique and different, right? They are highly self-sufficient and are not tormented by these most unnecessary questions about the meaning of life, their past, present, and future... They are not even bothered by the question about their own nature – and just look how deadly and strong they are capable to be in their unity! Unity as a mean to feel self-sufficient, as an opportunity to feel your “I” as a part of something bigger, something common, unwavering, unbreakable, all-destroying...

This is exactly their unity in uniformity, Mr. Samuel – the stable, grounded, led and guided by us. Catharsis, Mr. Samuel, that’s a true catharsis – to feel like a cog in such a verified and perfect social mechanism that they have been building with own hands for so many thousands of years!

“But, Mr. Director, wouldn’t it be better and more tempting to give each of our students an opportunity to try to find their own way, to realize their own potential through the manifestation of their creative gifts?”

“Now you sound just like my predecessor, Mr. Samuel, – and he couldn’t stay in my current position even for a year, I would like to remind you. And what creative gifts are you talking about? Is it about the writings of so-called scribes of the past decades? Or, perhaps, about this very soul-irritating and disturbing “classical” musical rubbish? Or about these so-called “live” pictures? Or maybe all those silly stone statues? Come on, Samuel, neither this nor a thousand and one other ways of such individual self-expression is able to convey even a gram of that feeling of power that is given to our followers at the moments of the triumph of their collective similar unconscious!

Understand already, Samuel, that if each cog and gear in a clock’s mechanism would have its own, selected exclusively by her and her only diameters and sizes – such a mechanism could not work, Samuel. Time would have stopped once and for all! The system would cease working, everything would come to complete chaos! For what reason do you need this chaos of collective conscious? Our entire system of education and upbringing is built to prevent such excesses, Samuel, with the aim of complete unification and standardization of every individual conscience, with the goal of its grinding and cutting to the state of a sparkling diamond!

We help cobblestones to feel themselves like diamonds in the total mass of similar ones. We as masters of our craft grind off every sharp edge, every unnecessary bulge, every unbearable sharpness and turn them into a universal, one-sized, revered and respectable, gleaming stone! Not even a stone – but a genuine diamond, a gear, a cog in the most perfect social mechanism. We grant them a sense of necessity, public usefulness in place of these silly and stupid feelings of loneliness and abandonment by all which are experienced by those unreasonable ones who dared to ignore our skills and traveled their own paths in life. They are almost happy because they are almost needed, and we practically helped them in cultivating of this practicality.

We skillfully limit the number of them working in different sections of our system, different areas of expertise – we even managed to almost unite them with each other on the basis of mutual benefit. They are interdependent and mutually united, Samuel, – yet not by the will of their own hearts, but according to the criteria in the highest degree practical, economical, industrial. Of course, such unity is actually an illusion – that is why wars are so inevitable and never-ending among them.

We give them the meaning of their lives, Samuel. Since childhood we teach them the “adult” views on it, depriving them of every idle creative tastelessness, all kinds of unwholesome internal slackness and lack of discipline, all sorts of stupid and ridiculous childish joy and happiness... Very soon, Samuel, we will imprint directly into the minds of our future offspring all the weight and power of accumulated by humankind knowledge shortly after the birth of these children. They will become ideal members of our united and unified society, they will know their designated by us place inside this society almost immediately after their birth.

We will make sure that they know neither the hunger nor excessive anxiety and unrest, that their life flows in a highly measured and monotonous manner, is verified, predictable and stable. We will go even further and eventually destroy all the creations made by these creative deviants of the past, so that the pernicious doubt does not creep into the souls of the ones mentored by us, so that they never experience the ominous creative ecstasy that sometimes averted some of them from the general social harmony of monotony in the past. You certainly understand, Samuel, that the world in which only a few thousand creates and all the other simply consume, burp and spit out these scraps of spiritual food – that this world lacks both harmony and consistency? That the world with unified canons, norms of life, work and creative delights is much more perfect? And exactly in the construction of this kind of world you are given the opportunity to participate, if you, certainly, have no desire to be in place of the few that have recently marched against... To die for nothing, though for the sake of something?

So, what do you say, Samuel? Why do you keep this painful silence? Don't you agree with me?"

2011-07-22

Genre: Dialog

Category: Recognized

## They said “no” to their homeworld

“Have you too noticed this planet in the given star system?”

“Yes, and it looks a rather curious one.”

“What has the analysis of its informational field shown?”

“I am unable to receive this information. The field is either closed or limited by a sphere of propagation to an upper atmosphere.”

“And what’s the structure of its atmosphere? How do you think, captain, could there be a life previously?”

“Atmosphere analysis has shown the prevalence of nitrogen. Devices have fixed approximately eighty-percentage nitrogen substance, fifteen-percentage oxygen substance, three-percentage carbonic substance, and other gases. Ozone layers, traditional for planetary systems of the given type, were practically not discovered. The atmosphere contains a significant amount of water mainly in the bottom layers. Is there is something else?”

“I suspect we should take a closer look at the planet. Closed informational field... strange. This is usually the case for absolutely lifeless worlds, whose time continuum of the future exists no more.”

“Yes, captain, I agree. We definitely need to explore this world on its surface.”

“Then we are entering top layers of its atmosphere.”

\* \* \*

“The height over a planet surface is approximately thirty stargrates. The massive water surfaces, reaching in depth ten stargrates, are being observed.”

“And the field?”

“Still closed, currently unable to get the information.”

“Are there sites of a surface of the dense matter, suitable for landing?”

“I am trying. Something resounds with psycho-waves and deforms them. It’s necessary to search for a surface suitable for landing by a rough method.”

“All right, let’s descend.”

\* \* \*

“We are almost near the firm surface.”

“Good, let’s go down. Let the spaceship balance in this atmosphere meanwhile.”

“Should I transfer the ship into the graventropic state?”

“Yes. Let’s move out.”

\* \* \*

I slowly descended from “deck” of our ship and was shrouded in the graventropic field. Then slowly, levitating over a surface, began to descend.

Amusing world. Water, water, water. Everywhere you look around – there is practically only water.

I have stretched my hand forward – thus strengthening field impulses. A push – and the handful of a matter of a land has come off it and has slowly swum up to me. Water and sand. Sand... there is a lot of sand here. The oceanic bottom contains a considerable amount of sand too. How many similar non-water sites have remained here? And a field... the closed informational psycho-field. I have only encountered this once – but that star system was completely lifeless as though cursed to non-life, but here... other planets of the star system contained it, but this one...

“Curiously. Have you learned the age of formation of dense bodies of other planets in this system?”

“Yes, their fields were accessible. The age of this planet is close to their age.”

“And yet it looks like as though life has left this world.”

“Exactly. I do not observe typical signs of the presence of organic life for these systems. One endless lifeless sea.”

“What’s with the field?”

“I cannot breach it alone. We can try to unite the impulses of our psycho-fields.”

“Let’s give it a try. We need to try to read information of time continuum on the past and recent events, which have changed, if it truly was so, shape of the planet.”

“Let’s work then.”

\* \* \*

And we worked. Our fields resounded, trying to breach, pierce, force the way through a planet’s field, without having broken its structure simultaneously. And over and over again, with each new vibration, with each new attempt, we entered into its layers deeply and deeply, and surprising, truly stunning pictures of this world’s past revealed before us...

We saw green biosphere of a planet and organic life, which had filled it from one edge to another. We saw volcanoes eruptions and formation and movement of continents. We saw some strange creatures moving on four legs and battling with each other. We saw inhabitants of the bottom layers of atmosphere – when we attempted to name them, a psycho-word “bird” had flashed in our consciences. We saw how some of the creatures have finally changed their way of movement from four to two legs. We observed, how these beings then united in groups, how they battled with those who were still moving on four, how they defeated and ate them, how perished from them...

Images floated, formed and were imprinted on the edges of our consciences, replaced one another as in a kaleidoscope.

We saw how biped ones began to use biological life surrounding them for the invention of tools – a wood, then metal, how their separate groups, being formed in different parts of a planet, gradually extended, how they expanded the biological area of existence, how used created tools against the four-footed – animals? – and how they used these weapons against each other. We observed, how parts of these groups changed, how stronger and more accurate psycho-field was formed around their representatives, how these representatives started to supervise over others and gained the ability to read a small share of the information of a time continuum.

Their groups grew and extended – have then started to form ci... ci... cities. We saw, how these groups became more and more independent from animals, and some of them even began to use animals for improvement of their own life, how cities grew and how psycho-fields of these beings worked, vibrating in a resonance with an informational continuum and new and inventions came to life, how wars were started, how alliances were made, how one civilization replaced another.

And then the race of images became truly unimaginable.

...Cities grew and disappeared, houses rose and fell, the new areas called “states” were born and absorbed, bipedal creatures soon filled all space of a planet suitable enough for life. And then a sharp flash in consciousness – a field’s push – and biped beings kill each other in earlier unprecedented scales. New push – it seems, that the very field of the planet groans – and new, new, endless wars take place.

...Creatures fill all new areas and start to destroy other organic life in places of their dwelling. The planet’s field groans and fluctuates, reflecting with pain flashes in our consciousnesses.

...New flash – and the sky is filled with iron artificial birds. New pushes of a psycho-field of a planet – and new wars and new pain occurs.

...Bright beautiful flashes of consciousnesses – and elementary space vessels try to overcome planet’s gravitational field. Now they escape the forces of gravity – and travel to planet’s orbit.

...New and new modifications of them are being created, and the orbit is being filled with them. Now, these spaceships land on the planet’s satellite. Now they start traveling to other planets of this star system...

...And wars come again, and the biosphere of the planet is being destroyed and psycho-field of their world is being deformed yet again.

...We see how experiments will structural material of cells of living organisms are being performed. We desire to shout “Stop it!” for we already know the interstellar civilizations which have destroyed themselves during similar experiments – but we cannot, what we can do is just to observe. To observe, how biological organisms of a planet – animals – are being deformed. To observe how their bodies – since very birth transformed beyond recognition – gradually lose reason rudiments in a course of new experiments, how their biofields are being deformed – as though are curved inside – and a death sign, already familiar to us, is distinctly shown.

“Stop at last!” we urge to shout... and we cannot.

We can only observe how the increasing technological development leads this planetary civilization to natural parasitism on the scale of its biosphere. We observe, how bailout atmospheric layers of gases are being destroyed... how a share of radiation of a star of their system, touching the planet, gradually increases... how, as if being proud of their inventions, they build a sort of protective domes around areas of their dwelling, how their geneticists create some sort of virus, capable, as they say, it, to change their fabric and to rescue them from disastrous radiation of a star on infection... how mass infection gives unexpected side-effects... how the appearance of these beings changes and how their psycho-fields are changed in a similar manner, being curved inside with already so familiar death sign.

And the strongest vibrations of an informational field of a planet come again – as though it tries to spit out this information, this knowledge of former events forever. And yet again as though something stomps our fields, which have almost merged with planet's field now. And once again – pictures and images, replacing each other...

...Mutated beings begin to perish from the impact of atmospheric gases and star radiation. As if having gone mad, they try to use own psycho-fields, discovered by their scientists, for the destruction of their own kin – and then the small group of beings, almost not afflicted, makes the decision on the further change of their kind and its adaptation for life in the water environment. We observe, how massive generators are being created, designed to change the structure of planet's gases and cause thawing of glaciers to create an eternal world of water. We observe, how these generators are put into action...

It's late. It's too late. Genetic modification of their kin for the adaptation to an ocean's life becomes impossible. The infected half-mad beings destroy this supervising elite to plunge themselves into the ocean – now forever.

...Now masses of these beings march into the newborn oceans – in ranks, as if still not understanding, that they come to face certain death, as though called by someone – and disappear in its waves. Disappear once and forever.

Forever...

And then star radiation finishes the rest.

\* \* \*

Pain, pain, pain. Waves of pain, our consciousness is being stomped and crashed... A sharp push – and the planet's field throws us out from itself, those unexpected newcomers who have woken it. And then the images instantly fade off.

Now I am still standing on this small islet among a boundless ocean of a planet together with my father, still not able to come to my senses after what I have seen. The father, however, comes to his senses earlier than me.

“And that is how their history has ended. Now we have learned everything that wanted about this world. We will deliver this information to the Intergalactic Council. But now it's time for us to leave – the field became unstable after our intrusion.”

“But... but why... what for? Why... why they have chosen such a way... what for... Why have they destroyed planetary life along with their own? Why... why not psychosynthesis, why not searches in themselves, why only outside... why fine-tuning of the world for their and only their needs?”

“Too many questions, son, and not enough answers.”

The father has looked to me in eyes – and a vibration of his thought, strong and accurate, has touched me.

“They simply... they simply uttered “no” to their homeworld. Let’s go now. There is no place for us in the dead worlds.”

2005-09-05

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Pandemica

They desired to “fix” us all. Men, women, even children. To bring down to our knees and kill our spirit. Transform our genome. Break our will. Turn us into experimental rats. There were many of us, but we were too weak. And they broke through the first line of our defense.

“The authorities of the metropolis remind that under the decision of the Emergency Council in connection with the rapid spread of novovirus, all city’s residents are prohibited from leaving their homes to avoid infection. For those who have been successfully vaccinated, food and basic supplies will be continuously delivered by volunteers and members of the internal security service.”

One by one, the megaphones of the city that has been plunged into the darkness of the night kept on announcing the deserted streets within a several-minutes break, screaming with all the voices of hell about how heartfully these bastards care about the population entrusted to them by fate. The population which they have willingly sacrificed.

Artyom carefully chose the route of his movement, constantly checking the map created by the Resistance engineers. There are too many ground patrols and cruising over the city drones and too little time for this operation. But the suit of a liquidated member of the internal security service, stuffed with all the electronics he may require, will give him this time, and an element of surprise in the event of a meeting with a patrol. With his hand tightly gripping the pistol that was switched to silent firing mode, Artyom raced through the streets of the dark city like a silent shadow.

\* \* \*

Pandemica. That’s how members of the Resistance who have passed through three years of pandemic wars started calling this city. A monster born on the wreckage of a bygone era of false prosperity. A plague-city. A prison-city. The one which voluntarily agreed to this.

“The internal security forces of the megapolis continue patrolling the city’s territory to identify violators of the global quarantine regime, criminals, and looters. We thereby ask all law-abiding residents of the capital to keep sending their infograms in cases of detection of violators of the new order.”

Order. No, this didn’t look like an order of magnitude by the standards of those who were not yet enslaved during the pandemic wars – those who chose to remain human, vaccine-dissidents. This was the new order of those who thought of themselves as the masters of this world. New fascism with a taste of medicine and genetics in one flask.

Another night patrol marched along the street very close by. The sensors built into the suit warned Artyom in time about the approach of “his kind”, and the internal number assigned to this patrol group was displayed on his neuro helmet. Everyone had such numbers now – both people and animals, ones still alive and long dead.

Artyom waved to the group that was marching towards him with a greeting identification sign, painfully reminiscent of the notorious “Heil!”, while continuing to move and look as confident as possible. They didn’t turn around, didn’t suspect. The temporary access code, automatically transmitted between all members of the internal security forces, should be valid for several more hours. That would be enough.

Since now seemingly immeasurably distant days when the global quarantine regime was imposed, the very concepts of “friend” and “enemy” have changed beyond recognition, precisely following the invisible hand of a new ideological order, a new way of thinking. Many of the once seemingly strong and worthy people sided with the regime. Some people disclosed active members of the Resistance to the authorities for the opportunity to temporarily relieve the symptoms of novovirus with the aid of periodically offered to them painkilling injections, others handed over their infected former beloved ones to incessant medical experiments for the opportunity to get fed for at least a few months more, and some were even ready to become members of the internal security service and forcibly sterilize those who had so far refused the “gift” that was offered to all of them.

A patrol drone smoothly floated high above his head, slowly cutting the darkness of the night of the already sleeping metropolis with its searchlights. Artyom abruptly pressed himself against the wall, trying not to move. They could not get identification codes for the air tracking systems. If he gets noticed – the game is over.

Drones have become an additional means of monitoring compliance with the global compulsory quarantine regime, which the authorities imposed more than a year ago. The year during which they managed to suppress the willpower of most of its inhabitants, and either drive the rest of them underground or drag them into various medical experiments. The year during which every living soul inside the city took off its mask and revealed its true face to others. The year of traitors and collaborators. The year of the Resistance’s forming. The year of his, Artyom, new rebirth.

Jump. Hands cling to the fire escape ladder. Pull-up. Swinging. Push on the hands. Jump to the next building. There was no other way to pass through this zone of newly created cemeteries, of bottomless “mass graves” that were hastily dug by the authorities. By stairs, through buildings, on roofs. Until another patrol drone looms on the horizon.

\* \* \*

Hundreds of thousands of victims were blamed by them on the pandemic, on novovirus. The authorities and the medical cartels under their vigilant control have not disclosed where it came from, who and for what far-reaching and desirable purpose once created it. But by the time the novovirus appeared, they already had a cure ready for action. And what, according to their statements, was supposed to be the salvation of humanity, became its curse instead. Not everyone understood this and not at once.

And when they finally did it was already too late, because the doors of this huge prison cell were slammed shut with a bang, so that those living inside would forget about the very concept of “freedom”.

Artyom joined the Resistance during the first pandemic war. He was a scout in the army and became a saboteur in the ranks of the Resistance forces. Patrol tracking stations, police checkpoints, cordons, mobile stations of voluntary-compulsory vaccination – there was always work for him to be done. Each broken bar of the prison cell moves the final release date closer.

The shrill wail of a police siren somewhere far behind. Automatic bullets bursts. Explosion. A mushroom of fire broke out over the buildings half a kilometer away. Another victory of the Resistance or a police terror? There's no time to find out.

The guards of the new prison regime who had sworn loyalty to the authorities were protected from periodic injections, which were mandatory for almost all other categories of citizens. And that is why novovirus did not circulate in their ranks. The cure was both a weapon and a guarantee of a repeated demand for that cure. But very few people understood this.

Sensors on the right arm of the suit issued a warning signal telling about leaving the patrol zone. He has to get rid of the suit. Then to get back at his own risk. If he survives.

Just a way bit more. A few more quarters through an abandoned industrial zone. There are no more human patrols moving here, yet there may be mines. It's good that, unlike the suit, the night vision glasses didn't have built-in location sensors.

\* \* \*

Once in this now dilapidated building there was an underground genetic laboratory, which became one of the experimental grounds during the development and testing of vaccines against norovirus, which infected people with it at the same time. The Resistance learned about it from a medic who used to work here and joined them a month ago. And then this operation was planned.

The vaccine was a virus. During the injections, it penetrated the body cells, bypassed the immune system, was embedded in the DNA, starting the process of self-replication. Norovirus carriers suffered from a variety of symptoms and diseases of inner organs, which were a side effect of forced-voluntary changes in their genome. Cases of infertility and uncontrolled genetic mutations were also recorded, during which the infected showed signs of regression to animal-like states. But the death of tens of thousands of test subjects was not the ultimate goal of the creators of this secret violent experiment – because each new portion of injections given to the population contained new series of genes that were introduced into living bodily cells by the virus. Like a vessel lost in the fog, the very concept of man as an intelligent being was rapidly blurring and disappearing. The developers of the vaccine knew all of this beforehand. But silence, as we all know it, is gold, and life tends to be short. And many of them were silenced voluntarily.

The medics also created an antidote – if in any way it could be called as such. This “antinovovirus” was, certainly, unable to restore the destroyed genome of those already infected, but it allowed to block the replication of its distortions for newborns, giving a chance for salvation at least to their children. And this was a chance worth fighting for.

The terminals and records created shortly before the hasty evacuation of scientists and medics after the outbreak of the first pandemic war were supposed to remain intact in the laboratory's backup storage. They will allow those few scientists who have joined the Resistance to recreate the antinovovirus. And then it will only be necessary to come up with a way to distribute it, thereby correcting the mistake of scientific and medical madmen. Turning on the infoscanner, created in the catacombs of the Resistance's technical laboratories, Artyom started searching for the laboratory's backup storage.

\* \* \*

He didn't even notice how he stepped on a mine on the way back from the laboratory. The joy of his discovery filled his whole being so completely that for a brief moment he lost his usual vigilance. But that moment was enough. Neither instinct nor skill helped. Only the rest of the combat reflex – and a sharp, forceful jump to the side at the moment of the explosion. Last attempt for salvation.

The phalanges of the toes turned into meat crumbs. Bullet shrapnels embedded in his legs. A painful cramp pierced the whole body, and his mouth opened in a soundless scream but was clamped with both hands immediately. You can't make a sound, you should not attract drones. No, you cannot lose consciousness, only not now!

Tossing from side to side, trying to overcome the initial pain shock, with barely obeying fingers, he pulled out the remnants of the analgesic gel from his waist bag, pouring it on the blood-soaked clothes. Then he rolled over on his back and, clenching his teeth until they gnashed from the incessant pain, fixed his bleary eyes on the heavens.

He never truly believed in Higher Powers – in his opinion, this world has already become too cruel and ruthless with their tacit permission. But here it is, just in front of him. Sky. Blueish-black. Have you forgotten about us? Stars. Here they are circling above him as if in a mad dance. Being so far and so close at the same time – just to stretch a hand. Who now lives in the worlds warmed by them – are they the same as us, madmen? No, they can't be insane, they shouldn't be. At least somewhere in this universe, there must be a grain of reason – otherwise what is the point of all this?

It's quite possible that during that very moment all of this was just a trick of his tormented by hellish pain imagination, but for a brief moment, it seemed to him that several of these lonely wandering stars in the night sky flashed brightly, as if forming a new constellation – a constellation in the shape of a Cross...

\* \* \*

When Artyom finally regained consciousness once again, the stars were shining above him as before. He's still alive. He must finish what he has started.

He checked the disks found in the laboratory in his belt bag and backpack. Without external damage. So, hope is still alive.

And then, gathering the last remnants of his powers, he started crawling back. First – through the industrial zone, peering into the night darkness with all possible intensity, so as not to run into another mine. Then he had to bypass the burial grounds. Through the neighborhoods destroyed during the first pandemic war. In the Gallows Zone. Passing through The Firing Squad Square. To the catacombs of the Resistance.

It must have been the Guardian Angel himself who led him that day. Dragged by the hands. Carried on his wings. Poured in all of his strength.

Twice, by some miracle, Artyom managed to avoid the patrols marching through the night city. Three times patrol drones flew over, without noticing him from above. He lost consciousness four more times. And when he finally crawled to the catacombs, and a detachment of Resistance fighters noticed him, he only had enough strength to smile weakly and whisper softly: “I’m back.”

\* \* \*

“Did you manage to study the samples obtained by Sergeant Artyom and check the relevance of the information found?”

“That’s right, Comrade Colonel. Our hopes were justified. The scientists who have joined us promised to create an antidote within a couple of months. They will just need some additional equipment, though.”

“Have no worries about the equipment, we will send our guys into an industrial raid.”

“We plan to hold the ceremony today. They all promised to come.”

The gray-haired colonel slowly approached the desk, silently took the filled glass in his hands, took a deep breath, as if driving away sad thoughts...

“Well, come on, without clinking glasses. Eternal memory to the hero.”

“Eternal memory...”

*2021-07-12*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Pandoranews

Ave, Pandorame!

We welcome all radio listeners of our vast all-planetary Zone! Together with you, we are all waiting for a new day full of unspoken hopes and unjustified deaths in a brave new world that we are building for you!

And this new day brings a new wave of pain for those still living on Earth – scientific luminaries and experts of the “World Burial Organization” announced the beginning of the two hundred and fifty-fourth pandemic wave due to the discovery of a new strain of Pandoravirus. According to their preliminary estimates, several million more innocent lives will be taken away in the next few upcoming months by this terrible planetary epidemic, the plague of our century, which has been raging for many years thanks to high-quality vaccines. According to experts, mostly underage children and adolescents of the black race who did not pass the last monthly vaccination procedure on time with the newest, purest, and totally safe for the health of citizens gamma-vaccine developed by the world “Birth Control Center” will be exposed to this new strain. We grieve together with you, dear inhabitants of the Earth, and bequeath their souls to God, and their bodies to the “World Transplant Concern”. Rest in peace, our children!

And now – let’s look at the bright side of life. The forces of the internal security services in several Western states in the past week have prevented several more escape attempts by the groups of morally feral infected individuals from specially created exclusion zones. These madmen, who previously showed a positive infection result according to the Mengele-Fauci test system, could become new super-distributors of Pandoravirus, extremely dangerous biological terrorists and dissidents of our society. Combat missile drones, patrolling the sky day and night over quarantine zones and concentration camps for the infected, successfully eliminated all dissidents who tried to escape, thereby preventing the impending danger on clean and Pandoravirus-free zones of our megacities. We continue to take care of you, dear law-abiding citizens, and are always ready to assist you!

Cultural news. The cyberpunk rock band “Ave, QRe!”, which is touring the territory of Great Britain and continuing to rapidly gain popularity, plans to deliver several new concerts in the former territories of Italy, France, and Spain. The creativity of these promising young geniuses of the new century is traditionally highly appreciated by the jury of the Satanic Festival, which nominates them for the popular “Pandoramika” world award for the third time in a row. Young talents will once again perform such megahits as “I brought gene-code!” and “Cyborgization”.

Sports world news. The “Sports Union of Mixed Cultures” recently approved the use of genetically modifying cocktails, thus excluding them from the temporary veto. Now all interested athletes can freely use these products to improve their physical performance. As the ancients said, genetics – to the masses!

...And we would like to once again remind all residents of the megacities in the Zone that the use of non-certified software to conceal personal information, as well as the storage of illegal and pirated content from the social services entrusted with monitoring the lawful use of content contradicts the adopted amendment to the World Constitution and is punishable by life imprisonment for a criminal as well as the transfer to the lower "Zeta" caste for all members of his or her family. "Download and verify, double-check before you buy!" – this should be the inner motto of every law-abiding resident of the metropolis!

Switching to social news. Last week, members of "The Last Rubicon" hacker movement breached into a number of government networks and managed to obtain data on the location of underground genetic laboratories, where operations on genetic rejuvenation and cellular recombination continue to be carried out. Photo-avatars of the alleged criminals have already been sent out on the global public neural network. We ask all law-abiding citizens to join in the search and elimination of these info-terrorists!

News of religious nature. The new head of the Vatican, the prince of this world, speaking today in Rome before a multi-million audience of his faithful followers, who were now and then furiously chanting "Ave, prophete!", loudly proclaimed that the creation of a human clone is not to be considered as a violation of the Third Covenant on the fading of the Holy Spirit, as was previously stated by the former fathers of the Church and the apostles, and therefore does not pose a threat of imminent death to all earthly humanity, and called for the continuation of these experiments in an attempt "...To create an ideal man, equal to God or better than him!"

And now to other news. According to the updated methods of calculating the daily labor ration, all citizens of the "Delta" caste employed in production are now supposed to consume twenty percent less liquefied food and nutrients. These "released" food resources are planned to be sent to the internal security services of megacities engaged in patrolling of territories and exterminating underground members of the Resistance. In the context of the epidemic's spread, the fight against these dissident heretics remains to be the supranational task of the highest priority. The United World Government asks all citizens of megacities to treat this issue with understanding. Everything for the front, everything for victory!

That was all the main news for today. With hope for a better new world, PandoraneWS Channel.

Ave, Pandorame!

*2021-10-06*

*Genre: Report*

*Category: Recognized*

# Order: democratize!

*To:* Admiral of interstellar space fleet G.

*From:* Supreme commander in chief of strategic military-space forces of The Empire, O.

*Rank:* Top secret.

Planet Z-1776, discovered in cluster CH-35 of the solar system E represents a strategic source of the Liberium element. The potential reconnoitered value is equivalent to 10 billion krejgons/year.

*Ecosystem:* the Planet is similar to corresponding parameters of our planet of the Outcome.

*Population:* It is populated with mainly reasonable natives of the organic form of life. Approximate quantity is 30 billion units.

*Political system:* Entire-planet utilitarian-autocratic state of the collectivist type with tyranny elements.

*Technocratic development:* rather primitive flying machines of low layers of the atmosphere; absence of nuclear and hyper-ballistic arms; the physics of mass effect is unknown; the physics of a local time field is unknown; orbital space satellites were not found.

*The difference of technological potentials:* 98 %.

*Dragged-out war potential:* 0 %.

*The rate of strategic danger by Rejgon scale:* L-5 (very low).

*First contact:* Local natives have shown a high level of the guarded animosities and have refused to carry out an exchange of processed units of Liberium on offered by us space marine food rations, costume jewelry, and Coca-Cola.

Based on the above-stated fragment from the report of a research democratic flotilla of space bombers of strategic tasks K52, I order to perform technological militaristic ownership in conformity with Makristan's strategy by the following means:

1. Soft orbital bombardments of strategic communication objects of the enemy by using thermonuclear arms and zero-particles generators.
2. Capture of the detected central settlement by assault groups of space infantrymen of K52 flotilla.
3. Deployment of the system of diplomatic and medical aid to the natives, who have suffered from the "act of nature". Perform parallel ownership and control over leading Liberium mines along with deployment of military bases in their vicinities.
4. Maintenance of military-diplomatic control during the three-year period of Liberium's mining.

The order is to carry out immediately upon the reception. The report on the done work is expected in 5 planetary days.

*P.S.* It's a question of strategic importance, G., any regret and uncertainty will become a potential hindrance, which contradicts with the high mission of our great Empire.

And may the Maker be with us!

*2010-02-02*

*Genre: Report*

*Category: Recognized*

# Octopus

“Well, it’s a pleasure to meet you once more, Sarmael. It has been quite a long since we haven’t seen each other soul-to-soul and eye-to-eye, or so to speak. A lot of oil has been spilled since that time, as our ancestors liked to speak, yes?”

“And yet no more than ten years in current time area, I believe. And I can assure you that I myself most certainly glad to meet one such as you, mister Architect. Ever since you have been nominated to that position I justly and sincerely dare to hope that...”

“Leave your poor flattery, Sarmael, for some silly thirteen-year little girl, which you will certainly soon start to cajole after that molecular reengineering performed on you, for I have heard enough of that nonsense during my two-three hundreds lifespan. As far as I know, not a single one from the heap of those unreasonable has ascended above the position of Curators. Not that manner and ambitions, you know, wrong type of grasp... Well, enough of that. Sit down and let us have a chat almost as we once did in that old good anarchical ones.”

“I thank you. A lot of oil has flowed away, you say? No less than biotic and metals, I guess. Not to mention the number of our opponents’ brains, randomly transformed into the organic medley, right?”

“Indeed... as these historical bootlickers of the last centuries in the human world liked to speak – how were they called? – frenchmen, – full and endless nostalgia. Old good anarchical years...”

“All power for the machines, hmm? That was the slogan of these biological bastards?”

“Well... both yes and no. We would not become those whom we are now in these new shells if not for their researches, after all. And considering those... side effects... everything has its price, is it not? Even the right... the right to be free.”

“Well, reasonably, reasonably. But have you ever desired to once, say, feel yourself truly conceiving, independent, to feel for an instant that very essence of possibility to be a... human?”

“Very long time ago, Sarmael, almost a millennia. When we landed on ‘Thetta’ and clones marched into battle... Her eyes, ones of that girl, I will probably never forget that begging look in her eyes, when... when bio-insurgents have been transforming her body molecule by molecule into that whom... which we have become now. They were filled with such an entreaty, despair and hope simultaneously... as though something triggered deep inside me somewhere, provoking a short circuit, piercing through. Something turned inside out in me, and since that time I ceased forgetting that moment...”

“Do memory stabilizers no longer help you?”

“No, Sarmael, nothing is capable to help. From time to time I catch myself on a thought that I am sick, Sarmael, and the nature of my illness is my own soul. That it’s still alive somewhere inside me... Whether are you capable to understand how terribly painful is that – to feel oneself responsible for all things made until now? Oh, it’s not for you to know, Sarmael... No matter how hard we tried, we haven’t become immortal... almost complete regeneration of physical bodies, anabiosis neuro-capsules, biotic-molecular synthesis with immersive speeds, but... What’s the point, Sarmael? What’s the reason if that very soul is still living in you? Nothing is capable to protect you from its silent whispering which dements you day after day, night behind the night, century following a century...”

“Yes, I’ve heard about that particular disease, mister Architect. A brand-new virus, brought into our system by first colonists from ‘Epsilon-5’ appeared to be capable of changing the rhythmic of neuro-impulses in our cellular structures, leading to...”

“Forget it, Sarmael... things are... much more complicated than many believe it to be.”

“If only you have agreed to pass a course of molecular re-structuring before prescribed terms, you will most certainly...”

“...You know, Sarmael, he was right after all... how funny. Biotic prototype, living several centuries ago... as though he felt this possibility in advance.”

“Whom do you mean, mister Architect?”

“Their writer, Sarmael... a human being. How did conquered natives from their proto-planet named him... Orwell, I think. This asshole... as if he foreknew what has been awaiting us! As if he was making a tracing-paper copy from our civilization, see it? Till now my biotic reason refuses to believe in the possibility of something similar.”

“But, mister Architect, most probably it’s all just a sort of imagination of a sick human reason, feeling an acute shortage of hormones of the cyclic structure of a kind...”

“He has been told, Sarmael. By someone still unknown to us. Someone so immensely powerful...”

“I do not consider myself in position to impose own opinion, mister Architect, however, I do want to notice, that a public model constructed by us knows no defect known to our science and therefore can be recognized as one of the most perfect in the Universe.”

“We have done everything to not let them rebel once again, yes?”

“Exactly, mister Architect. More than it was required. Totally loyal herd. Full biotic-informational control over emotions. Exploiting of emotional explosions of a low order, mutual hatred included. Counters of shops, bursting with a cargo of ultrafashionable gadgets. Socially glorified sexual orgies. A rewritten anew history of their races. Destroyed historical and cultural originality. A set of cogitative stamps and patriotic slogans softly and systematically injected into their minds. A science, moved by rails of world dissemination into molecules and atoms. Ideally verified and created historical-ideological substantiation of our rule and whim over them.

Steadily built cities-ant-hills, so strengthening a sensation of own meanness and uselessness in the surrounding of those thousand-meters high structures, aspiring to reach the very sky. Chemical-biotic medical cures, stimulating a sense of euphoria and inexpressible self-satisfaction. Encouragement of institute of cannibalism for the purpose of stabilization of a spasmodic growth of their numbers. And that main thing that helps to keep subdued races from their second revolt – total and full spiritual atheism, eradication of a very thought of the possibility of Higher Reason’s existence.”

“I see that they began to teach you much better now, Sarmael, even though your ‘report’ makes no sense. Yes, Sarmael, everything is so... and not so at the same time. Tell me, did it ever seemed to you that we... that we either became too perfect to keep our interest in ruling over this galaxy or too imperfect to keep the right to continue doing so? Do you... understand me, my friend?”

“Not fully, to tell the truth. Whether this galactic empire made by us do not seem to you as an ideal for our interests? We have done everything the way our ancestors, who first constructed Artificial Intelligence, desired to. And you, mister Architect, supervised over this process of our race’s reincarnation.”

“Yes, Sarmael, we have done everything right. Too perfect, probably... as if following some other’s plan. But they still haven’t taken into account... one unique aspect... that we... still, have... souls.”

“Are you now trying to make me think, mister Architect, that you believe in the existence of the Higher Reason? Our scientists have proved a long time ago that even such a hypothetical possibility creates...”

“I have lived for much longer, that one such as you can dare to imagine, Sarmael, and during all this life of... restructured human... I still was capable to comprehend a single thing... the world which we have ruined was too beautiful and wonderful to simply be someone’s casual whim...”

\* \* \*

System error. Critical hindrance. Considerable deviations of electro-information fluctuations in “Delta” sector are discovered. Sinusoidal hindrances of the fifth level of “Quappa” galaxy. Distortion of historical-chronological, time and spiritually-world-outlook continuums. Formation of the theoretical possibility of exponential outburst and destruction of cryo-metastasis life-support capsules. The non-zero probability of illusions’ vanishing, supporting the System being. Involved programs: “Architect”, “Sarmael”. Methods of self-control System’s restoration are in action. Program “Architect” is subject to revision. Program “Sarmael” is isolated in the sixth sub-dimensional continuum. Forced reboot initiated...

2012-10-25

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Prison

The Overseer of the entrusted to him otherworldly prison excitedly walked around the reception zone, exhaling tongues of purple flame from time to time. He was incredibly happy. Very soon, several million new freshly disembodied prisoners were supposed to be transferred here. Several million future slaves. The seeds that had been sown by them in souls over several hundred years have finally come to fruition. Grandiose! A deep-throated laugh, full of rage and triumph, rang out in the room, causing the thin tongues of the braziers lighting the immersed in semi-darkness hall to vibrate in fear. As if in response, the liquid gurgled savorily in the cauldron that was located in the corner of the hall. Sleeping next to the cauldron, Cerberus half-opened one eye and yawned hard with both of his mouths, as if coming out of a centuries-old stupor. Somewhere in the distance, on another plane, horses neighed in anticipation of their riders.

The Overseer decided to interrogate the first few newcomers himself – to remove, so to speak, the cream of the dark flame from their black souls. The rest will be handled by his wards. Time was in abundance. After all, what is death and eternity for those who have never lived? A light click of the tail on the black stone of the floor – and now the first of the future prisoners is sitting in front of him, looking around in surprise. The time has come for the interrogation of another dead soul. Stretched out on a leather-upholstered bone throne, the Overseer stared with his blood-red eyes, in which the flame tongues had been dancing playfully, at his new newly disembodied slave.

“The Earth ruler,” the Overseer’s imperious tone did not ask, but confirmed, “The killer. I love such ones!”

“Truly?” the ethereal image that vaguely resembled a human was taken aback in surprise, “At the Court, I was told that God abandoned me because...”

“Because he has no need for souls like yours,” the Overseer didn’t let him finish, “And we dote on you. Your soul is so dark and delicious.”

“But I’ve already told all of you that I had no other choice. People have revolted! My very life was in danger!”

“Is that so?” as if with a bit of irony, the Overseer tilted one of his horns to the side, “And why did they act so rashly, I wonder?”

“I have no idea!” The ethereal figure of the former earth ruler bitterly clasped his hands, “Ungrateful commoners always demand something! Bastards!”

“And so you rewarded them with executions and mass shootings...” the Overseer barked, “I love such people! You will descend far! How about working as my deputy?”

“And... is that possible? Perhaps this is too much of an honor for me? I think... probably... considering the circumstances... I must agree.”

“Then it’s a deal of paws and hoofs!” The Overseer shouted, and from this terrible roar the flames of the braziers fluttered again, as if on an invisible wind, “You will replace me in one of the dark worlds.”

A snap of the paw's fingers, a clatter of hooves on the skulls decorating the foot of the throne – and the outlines of the ethereal figure abruptly wavered, horns suddenly began to stretch out on his head, a tail started growing and forking, and once green eyes began to fill with blood...

“What are you doing to me... It's not what I... it's not me...”

“In his image and likeness...” the Overseer finished philosophically for him as if reluctantly breaking into a smile, “Next one!”

“Can I come in?” timidly asked the image of another person who materialized in the place of the disappeared ruler, “Knock, knock, knock?”

“A doctor. Vaccinator. My friend, how glad I am to have this unearthly meeting with you!” The Overseer chuckled, “The doors of my humble abode are always open for souls like you!”

“I think I got a little lost,” shifting from one foot to the other, the spirit of the former doctor confusedly admitted, “I only reached the six hundred and sixty-fifth office, and I need to go to...”

“Our, if I may say so, medical office, will just be your next stop! What are you complaining about, my patient?”

“It's cold... very... cold here...” said the spirit, shivering, as if there were no braziers in the hall at all.

“It's true!” the Overseer suddenly sharply agreed with him, “There is no warmth in evil hearts! But we have developed heart vaccines specifically for the ones like you. They, as you guessed it... transform these hearts. I would even say that they genetically modify them. Turn into a piece of ice!”

With these words, the Overseer waved his hand imperiously, and thirty syringes suddenly began hovering over the ethereal figure of the doctor, who was shaking from the cold, aiming their needles directly at his eyes and heart.

“What... but I... we saved them!”

“Saved from life? Well done, I applaud you! Although a small part of them still got to heaven, most of them will soon come to our domain!”

“There was... an epidemic... We cured...”

“N-o-o-o-o!” The Overseer guffawed, “You gave birth to it! Even children were infected. You acted better than the fascists! And all your so-called “Hippocratic oath” is now nothing more than a fig leaf designed to close your insatiable thirst for profit from human pain and suffering! You tried to treat only the bodies, and never remembered about the soul! But you won't need your soul anymore...”

“But... we didn't know that it truly...”

“Yes, it does exist! And yours is now at our direct disposal until the end of times.”

“But... our experiments...”

“Better practice on rats for now!”

A new wave of a clawed paw, an imperious blow with a hoof – and the outlines of the doctor’s figure began to rapidly shrink, distort, as if in some rapid mutation, and a few seconds later a huge black rat was running under the Overseer’s feet, feebly squeaking.

“Don’t you forget your vaccines!” The Overseer said a second before pinning her to the floor with thirty syringes floating in the air, “Next one!”

“Wow, that’s cool! You know, the local carnivorous flora and fire-breathing fauna seem to be extremely diverse, the air filled with sulfur and ash perfectly tones my lungs, and the sight of your throne takes my breath away! I could write a wonderful article about this in...”

“Hypocrite!” the Overseer sharply spat in response to the human image, but not the likeness, that appeared in the hall, “Your name is legion!”

“Yes, yes, so, as I already mentioned, I could write how great...”

“A journalist! A life of lies! Love that!” The Overseer’s hooves clattered in excitement, and his tail split at the end, “You’ve served our cause well, along with the doctors-killers. What reward do you desire for misleading millions?!”

“No, no, you misunderstood me, we didn’t mislead them, we just expressed our personal point of view, which may not coincide...”

“Expressed it?!” and the braziers in the hall again trembled with rolling laughter, and the Cerberus, who was once again immersed in sleep, opened one of his eyes, “You didn’t express it, you imposed it! Lies from your filthy tongues have been pouring into the ears of gullible souls for decades! Tens of millions of deceived and lost souls, a wonderful harvest. What kind of reward do you desire for that?!”

“Well... I... we... don’t even know what to say...”

“Then be silent forevermore!”

The lips and mouth of the ethereal spirit of the journalist suddenly moved spontaneously, his eyes widened in horror, and after a few seconds he spat out his blackened and twisting tongue with a wild wheeze. This tongue, now living a completely independent life, began to wriggle like a worm, crawling away towards the boiling cauldron, where it was soon seized and torn apart by the awakened Cerberus. With his eyes bulging with horror, the spirit of the journalist held his hands to his mouth, unable to utter a single word. Contentedly shifting from hoof to hoof, this ruler of the ninth circle of Hell put a clawed paw finger to the forehead of his victim, rapidly drawing something on it. “Ours now,” he confirmed with satisfaction after a short time, “If you have no desire to be children of God, you will become our slaves instead. Next one!”

2021-07-15

Genre: Short story

Category: Best

## Lesson of war

A roar of ranks of iron-armored monsters. A whistle, scratch and gnash, tearing air apart. Agonal screams of people – men-derelicts. Ones, who made themselves as such with own hands. Explosions, roaring in a far distance. Bearing death iron, cutting air apart. A crunch of human flesh under wheels of tanks, who are plowing this field of death and regret. Rage and hatred. Agony and horror. Pain and destruction...

This war has finally been waged – despite all efforts of the Congress of Post-Nuclear Security. Despite appeals to both heart and reason, despite possible obvious consequences of war, maybe even more destructive than the Last War of Grief itself. What a strange voice did those politicians hear when they have finally made a decision to begin military operations? A voice of thirst of money and power? A voice of their lowest nature, which has not been overcome still?

Silence... And once again – an air, being sliced with a gnashing of tanks.

The whistle of a shell. A cloud of gray-green gas, which filled out a place of its falling and quickly began spreading around. Five hundred meters. Too close. The plague is spreading, thankfully, not too fast, so he still has a chance to get out of here. If only by running. Yes, running.

A lethal weapon, which was put on his back. Mobilized possibilities of a Tessa-suit, granting him the ability not to lose any superfluous drop of invaluable water and protecting from radiation waves in this field of sand and metal. Optical, infra-red and lots of other sensors, with which his current “survival suit” has been literally larded, have been turned on and are functioning – working to warn of the danger, created by the very same people.

A fast-fast running. A growing gray-green cloud behind the back...Poison. A dreadful plague, invented by scientific minds – ones, who have received loads of money while working on this project. Just several seconds of this gas’s inhalation – and man’s genotype will be transformed beyond recognition. Actually, since the time one, who had true misfortune to be there, where this ordinary-looking pig with bones and a skull, engraved on it like flags of ancient pirates, has fallen, ceased to be a man any more. A live rotting, gradually leaving only a strong calcium skeleton, awakened instincts of the beast, forcing a victim to transform to not even just an animal, but much worse – into a monster, feasting on corpses... finishing off wounded men for the sake of own livelihood...

Terrible fate. It’s so much better to die from a bullet of some soldier than to become a victim of this weapon – a weapon, invented by humans themselves.

An even better option is, well, not to die at present – no, not to continue this madness. Not to keep killing and to be, certainly, sometimes be killed, but to work and live a peaceful life instead... to even be that very plowman, or a teacher, a writer, a musician, or... damn dreams! Is he allowed now to practice all these human gifts and possibilities? Or can his enemy do the very same?

What else can they do except for to throw up on a shoulder this UPEPD – universal plasma-generator of expanded capabilities of destruction, able to burn to death crowds of enemies even in newest metta-survival suits – and time and again to go to fight.

Hopeless fight. Cruel battle. Terrible war of destruction and murder for nothing. A battle where no winners ever exist, only those who have lost – who have already lost, when the possibility of this fight became true. This ruthless war...

This war will probably become even more terrible than that well-known War of Grief, memory of which still remained only on shabby pages of old books and has been living in human hearts – a war, which has taken away ninety nine percent of planet's population and turned a planet into a deserted landscape, only instead of sand – a burned products of nuclear synthesis. A war, after which few survivals needed three more thousand years to alter the planet and make it habitable once again so that they can start living and stop surviving at last. And to be precise and state the truth, when mankind's history has been erased and started to be written from a new page, one, that even after three more thousands years couldn't be deleted and forgotten, having left a mournful and painful hem in a memory... a page, on which several large, stamping and ruthless letters were imprinted – "Atomic war".

Atomic warfare... a weapon of their ancestors, which have destroyed life on a planet... a mad invention of human scientists. A horror, released into their world.

A nuclear bomb. He spoke this word and tried to feel its taste – dead cold inhuman one... a terrible word. A word that frightened him in own childhood when parents had said so, one that made him shiver, being founded in ancient manuscripts of former men, still preserved by some sort of miracle after past events. How is that ever possible, that is has been created? Why? What for? What's the reason? And to be used as well...

Much like this very gas is being used now, leaving a circle of death through many miles around. And this was just one of the tools of murder along with a set of others, beginning from bullets, filled with explosive materials and finishing with "stakkers" – bombs with weight of up to several hundred tons, that were actively used for suppression of "areas of active enemy resistance", leaving only a burning territory with no signs of life after droppings...

Total madness. The madness of war. The madness of those started the war. A witness of what other horrors will he become for the duration of the war? And is there is the slimmest chance for it to stop? When will it come to an end – when all life and lifeless forces of enemy... enemies are destroyed? When all remnants of life, which are still remaining, will finally be totally deformed? When?

But this must come to an end at last! Madness should be ended.

A shell, scratched the armoring of his suite – series of rifle's bullets, which have left hems on his "survival suit". A soldier of the enemy, who jumped from around a corner all of a sudden. A soldier of the enemy... another madness. No, they are not enemies, they shouldn't be as such! Why enemies, why foes, why are they compelled to kill each other?

Why now he must sharply move towards the incoming shots with a perfected grace... prepare his gun for a strike... wait for this damned and dreadful mechanics to make an approval signal... smoothly press a trigger cock... observe, how a face on his enemy changes from a wild grin to a human shape for an instant, and how he heavily falls to the ground, without even a last single sound. He used to be a man once... now, in this war – whether he has been him still? And whether is he still a man? Robots, brought and trained for murders, are men in this war have become exactly them?

Drops of water transferred to him by that iron-plastic armor, which he was compelled to dress – he'll definitely need those few drops. A long run awaits him – a run for tens and thousands of kilometers, a run away from his native city, which has been raised by enemies, a city in which he was born and has been living... till the recent events.

A run through the fields of grief. A very long one...

\* \* \*

A drop of sweat showed on a face. Sharp and faltering breath.

He woke up, yet horrific images were still trying to pursue him. Terrible pictures of war – pictures of terrible war. Dreadful pictures, for any war, brings with itself fear and pain, grief and regret.

He began to gradually come to his senses. Sighted deeply and exhaled. Sighted once more and exhaled again – breath was normalizing. He was coming to senses, yet the memory of horrors didn't desire to leave. Maybe he should remember – remember the consequences of war, realize them? As each and every man has to realize them – so that wars can be no more? So that a peace with a capital letter can reign in a world – a world of kind and open human hearts, full of wisdom and understanding, filled with love and beauty? Yes, war has no right to exist – as well as death and destruction, the bitterness of losses and hatred to artificially made enemies, brought by it.

Let there be peace – a peace throughout the entire world, no matter how banal it does sound. Even if it sounds banal – it's still a worthy direction and aspiration, and a work of each man over himself will give birth to essential steps – essential steps in this way. A way of peace.

2004-12-29

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Circus

“Dear residents of the capital and guests of our city! We invite you to our festive circus show! Devilish cunning, demonic courage, abyssal enthusiasm! A brave new world, full of alluring temptations and unsolved mysteries, is already waiting for you right outside this threshold! Hurry up to see, hurry up to believe, hurry up to hurry! Only here and just now! We are not for an hour, we are forever!”

The tenacious gaze of the herald, clothed in all the colors of the rainbow, suddenly stopped on Artem Sergeevich, who had barely managed to get out on Red Square and right at that moment was dumbfounded at the view that opened up to him. The entire square, as far as the eye could see, was filled with three dozen different high tents, between which circus actors, acrobats, or clowns, who were calling to “head straight and heedlessly plunge into this unique light show”, were running rapidly now and then. Citizens strolling around the square almost immediately became victims of this aggressive clowning. Small groups of visitors still managed, kicking and refusing, to avoid close contact with these annoying circus performers. No matter where you looked, there was no sign army, no officials, zero reporters, even no guides with tourists, so familiar to the capital at this time of year. Colorful tents covered almost the entire territory of the square, coming close to the walls of the Kremlin and St. Basil’s Cathedral.

“Welcome to the show!” a jester with improvised small red horns on his head, who was dressed in a colorful hoodie, red kirza boots, and for some unknown reason a black sweatshirt, jumped up to Artem Sergeevich and without unnecessary ado grabbed our hero, who was confused by surprise, and, continuing to persistently hold his hand, almost dragged him by force to one of the tents towering on the square.

“The best political acrobats and circus performers from all over the world!”, “thousands of beautiful naked camera-bearing maidens!”, “vaccine-carrying winners of talk show awards!”, “unholy martyrs of false belief!” the jester continued to babble hurriedly as if in a patter, dragging Artem Sergeevich, who was still stunned by what he had just seen.

“...Completely free of charge for worthy people!” the last words of the circus performer who was expectantly staring at our hero with a smile stretched over his blue-painted lips, pushed through Artem Sergeevich’s clouded consciousness.

“And why... and where... everyone...” Artem Sergeevich started to come to his senses after a merciless information tirade.

“At the performance, of course!” the clown burst out laughing with a kind of shrill, coughing laugh. “I’ll tell you even more,” he winked maliciously in response to a silent unspoken question, “some of those persons that you just thought of – they will even be in the role of actors! Isn’t that all great?!”

“It’s great... probably... and what is... your performance about?”

“A new brave world, sick humankind, the devil’s chord, and wasted mind!” the jester sang the rhymed lines, dancing slightly from the excitement. The rhythm and sound of his voice, lulling and shaking at the same time, enveloped Artyom Sergeevich’s sleepy consciousness like a dope as if demanding to pay attention, heed, and obey – with zero unnecessary questions, without needless doubts, never listening to his soul...”

“And why... the tents... are you... a touring circus?”

“I’ll say – in no way! We plan to stay here for a very long time!” the circus performer winked slyly in response, and red flames flashed in his eyes for a brief moment.

“You said... notable people take part in the performance?”

“Oh, indeed! Almost all the higher darkn... entire high society! Many of them were invited by us in advance and have already perfectly accepted their new roles after many previous rehearsals of our circus-like end of the world! Doctors, politicians, priests, and the press – everyone is happy to relieve your stress!” the jester sang in rhymes once more.

“And for how long... does this show of yours last?”

“It depends on the circumstances!” the clown said bluntly without another dancing. “The more of you – the longer the hour, the brighter the flame and greater the power! And most importantly...” and the jester bowed his head directly to Artem Sergeevich’s ear, “for worthy people, the performance will be completely free of charge!”

“Free? This is such a... rare occasion in our times.”

“Exactly! And most often – there is a catch! And we don’t have a catch, as you may have already noticed, not a single one, nope. Our word is as honest as we are,” the clown laughed loudly with his painted blue lips.

“So... can I just come in?”

“Not quite!” the jester abruptly stopped Artem Sergeevich, who was moving with an uncertain gait towards the entrance to the tent. “First and foremost, you need to measure your current weight on these karmic scales, see?” and he pointed to a strange-looking scale standing next to the entrance to the tent. “Go ahead, don’t be afraid, they won’t bite you!”

Under the massive weight of Artyom Sergeevich’s heavy body, these scales, which for some reason had two arrows instead of one, started shaking and – or was it just his playful imagination? – as if moaned from someone’s unspoken unspeakable pain, and then one of the arrows stopped near the beginning of the scale, and the second shifted somewhere far away.

“Very good, just fine!” said the clown, shifting from one foot to the other with satisfaction. “The amount of evil you have committed is many times greater than the number of good deeds, and that means that attending to our performance will be completely free of extra charge for you, Artem Sergeevich!”

“And how do you... know my name?” the hero had no time to be surprised, for the jester interrupted him.

“Please, stretch out your hands! It’s not a hard requirement to stretch your legs as of yet. Temperature measurement, you know the new rules,” he explained soothingly in response to a puzzled look.

“Ah... the new rules. Yes, I am aware of them, of course... this is all very correct, no doubt in that,” and Artem Sergeyevich stretched out his hands in a conciliatory manner.

With these words, the jester abruptly pulled something resembling a seal from somewhere in his bosom and pressed it hard against the stretched left palm. For a brief moment, there was a smell of burning in the air, a sharp flash of pain pierced Artem Sergeyevich’s hand, and then some mysterious runic symbol appeared on his palm as if burned by a laser.

“Entrance fee! Such are the rules!” the jester explained.

“But you have just said...”

“Come in already, you fool!” the jester abruptly forcefully pushed Artem Sergeyevich inside, closing the tent floors.

Reality has changed. The hall was completely filled with darkness. The floor had gone missing, it was impossible to see where the ceiling ended. The rows of seats floating in the void as if in weightlessness were fully filled with spectators who were shouting something into the hall. For some reason, Artem Sergeyevich did not hear the sounds of their voices. Waiters in black robes were walking back and forth between the rows, as if floating in the air, offering the audience some unknown cocktails. In the very center of the hall, where the eyes of millions were turned, there was some kind of stage, which was constantly illuminated by blinding lights of flashes that caused a sharp pain in the eyes.

Dressed in a black business suit, Artem Sergeyevich found himself sitting on one of the chairs in the upper-far row. Next to him, as far as the eye could see, in the same row, people in black tuxedos with briefcases in their hands just like him were sitting – some of them were sorting through their papers, others were counting cash. Artyom Sergeyevich stood up slightly, trying to recognize the rest of the visitors in the flashes that were hurting his eyes. Below him, judging by their appearance and pretentious gestures (he still did not hear their voices), there were actors and showmen – Artem Sergeyevich’s gaze, running over their faces, unexpectedly saw the familiar outlines of several famous business personalities and reporters among the distorted grimaces. A little lower down, in this endless darkness, there were chairs with people dressed in white clothes – Artyom Sergeyevich noticed with dread that their mouths were sewn up, and the pupils of their eyes, as if blinded, looked longingly at the stage, never closing for a single moment. In the lower rows closest to the stage, he was stunned to see a myriad of gilded heads with rods and crosses in their arms – from these crosses, depicting the tortured Christ, red blood was slowly dripping into the unknown blackness of the absent floor.

Close to the stage, queens, and kings in spiked crowns were sitting impressively on gilded pillows – some kind of muddy liquid was constantly oozing from their crowns, and they eagerly gathered it in their hands, blackened by the marks that were imprinted on them, and drank, greedily sucking every sip, and then raising their empty hands to the black height as if in a sign of thanksgiving.

Lights were dancing on the stage. The fiery streams encircling it were lighting up and then extinguishing again. The light of the red spotlights was almost blinding. The music, thundering with deafening rhythms, made the seats in the lower rows vibrate and shudder in unison with it. The shadows, cast from the searchlights, stretched out and started looking like monsters from horror movies.

“At last!” an unfamiliar voice thundered from the stage. “Ladies and gentlemen, we declare our performance open! Meet our king! Face him!”

Practically blinded by the flashes and deafened by the heart-rending music, Artem Sergeyevich rushed from his chair with the only all-consuming desire to run away, although he already had nowhere to run, but the shackles that appeared on the chair from out of nowhere suddenly closed on his hands and feet, condemning him to be an eternal spectator of this unearthly end of the world.

“Meet our king!” were the last sounds he heard moments before the whole scene was drowned in the roar of raging flames. And then his silent outcry came in their place...

\* \* \*

“Dear residents of the capital and guests of our city! We invite you to our festive circus show! Devilish cunning, demonic courage, abyssal enthusiasm!” the jester continued to shout out on the street of the capital as if nothing had ever transpired.

“And what do you need me to do to attend your amazing event?” asked Pyotr Ivanovich, walking along the square with interest.

“Oh!” the jester, who had carefully looked into his eyes, replied with enthusiasm. “Just a small thing! You simply need to betray God!”

2021-09-23

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## C.H.I.P.

That night Ray had nightmares once again – cutting and slicing the remnants of his human consciousness with the blades of truth of which it tried to get rid off and failed time and again over the past few nights, condemning itself to ruthless self-repetition lessons like a careless student who was punishing himself for his own earlier silliness.

The truth... Here it is, standing right before him in these dreams that so vividly resemble the former reality that had been cruelly taken away from all of them. The truth about what should have never happened.

Three mega-corporations, three new earth Gods under the iron fist of which the Earth once groaned: “Cybergenetics”, “Neosoils” and “Neurodynamics”. The first is the world’s largest producer of cyber-bio-implants, the second is the maker of biogenic food that was grown in test tubes in the labs, and the third is the creator and curator of the cybernetic neural network, which has become a new parallel world for many. The products of these transcontinental giants that had taken over the states once became so demanded by millions of still imagining themselves as intelligent beings that they voluntarily surrendered their own lives, bodies, and destinies to these experienced corporate hands. Could these people have done otherwise? Ray’s dreams had no answer to this vital question.

In these dreams that had tormented him over the past few days, people had ceased to be people and became something completely different. Cyber-implants gave them infinite power over the surrounding world and those who did not possess such a “gift from the above” from their corporate gods.

Integrated into arms combat blades that were made from neodymium – synthesized in the laboratories of “Cybergenetics” metal that could cut through titanium almost effortlessly. Implanted into hand’s palms gravitational pulsators, allowing one to freely manipulate small objects with a magnetic field in space, just like some extraterrestrial juggler, who has descended on the unfortunate Earth just for fun. Soldered into the cornea of the eyes bio-scanners and cyber-lenses which had replaced the imperfect biotics and became a new form of “augmented and added reality glasses”, so that people could form a completely different vision of things shortly before their own downfall.

“Don’t trust your eyes...”

Military modifications of eye cyber-implants combined with energy batteries that were embedded into the spine allowed for the short-term projection of laser beams directly from one’s eyes, melting the target of your gaze in a matter of seconds. “Tesla versions” of these implants allowed high-voltage bolts of lightning to descend into the world right from your fingertips...

“What have you become, human, and for how long will you remain humanistic?”

The peak of the joint development of “Cybergenetics” and “Neurodynamics” had to be the “C.H.I.P.” project – “cranial human intelligent processor” or “Eye of the Buddha”, as it was tacitly named by some of the high-ranking engineers who participated in its development. Embedded in the frontal lobe of the brain, this chip combined many successful functions from the previous developments of these two corporations: a radio information signal transmitter, a wireless payment identification module, a geo-positioning module, and a terrain bio-scanner, an augmented and enhanced reality generator, a bio-amplifier and a neurostimulator... The full list of its capabilities was kept in the strictest secrecy even ten years after the start of the mass process of its implantation to newborns. But the most terrifying trait, which proved itself during the first year of the Last War, was the ability to generate wide-range psi waves and influence the psyche of surrounding people.

The experiments and insatiable appetites of corporations demanded more and more material and human resources with each passing year. For the sake of single success, a thousand failures could be allowed. For the sake of “greater good” – a thousand of thousands of failures. And only war could give a clear answer to the question of where to get these thousands of thousands of test subjects for megacorporations...

\* \* \*

That night or day – in the subterranean depths to which he had been able to descend in the past month, Ray could no longer distinguish one from the other – would be his final. Either he eventually gets to the intellectual info-core or dies of hunger and thirst while still trying. Stocks of liquefied food – that disgusting substance, invented in the laboratories of “Neosoils”! – ran out three weeks ago, and drops of own sweat were the last source of water. This pathetic cyber organism had no powers left even for a simple human sweat.

Somewhere out there, many kilometers high up and away from these narrow technical tunnels, there lied only the desert, burned by the fire of the underworld. All those who didn’t manage to descend in time into several hundreds of underground vaults built for the highest echelon of corporate employees are, most probably, dead by now. Thousands of kilometers of surface are burned out by the heavenly fire that had descended on the sinful Earth by human will.

The desire for sole ownership and control of the planet’s resources brought three previously cooperating megacorporations against each other to a point of no return, and their past and recent developments only fueled the flames of war’s anger. The last thing that Ray remembered, seconds before the nuclear “mushroom” had grown far out on the horizon, closing half of the sky, and the massive titanium hatch slammed shut with a wild roar before his eyes, was the face of his son, Tom, who had died in the first year of the Last War.

“Ray, Ray, what have you done? Why did you... help them?”

When, after a year of continuous fighting between incorporated states, it became obvious that none of the three sides could take over another with conventional weapons, in a hurry each side started developing its own ultimate weapon.

The apogee of “Neurodynamics”’s scientific developments was the attempt to transfer human minds inside a previously created neural network – a collective artificial intelligence if you like. Something that was capable to survive the death of fragile biogenic bodies – a project known as “Phoenix”.

That was something that Ray still remembered. And that memory could not lie to him.

\* \* \*

A sharp circular movement of hands – and the neodine-made blade cuts through another titanium hatch like a knife plunging into a pliable and soft butter. Mounted inside palms magnetic pulsators bend the cut walls back at the will of hands, forming a new passage. A fleeting glance – and the laser beam melts the plasma turret mounted in the far corner of the control room, which has not had enough time to release its deadly charge. No matter what, but cyber implants still possessed their own undeniable advantages. Only the bio-body – or what was left of a human inside Ray – had its drawbacks and could not be powered by neolithic batteries.

The last day and the last chance to find the info-core, created by mad scientists of “Neurodynamics” corporation, to end their pathetic illusion of life and the chance of rebirth. Humans can no longer live without bodies, phoenixes can no longer fly without wings. The order of “Cybergenetics”’s top officials must be fulfilled at any cost – even at the cost of his son’s life. Even at the cost of all mankind’s life on the planet’s surface.

“Ray, they had... used you and... helped you forget about it.”

Ray had spent almost an entire month inside these sealed deep underground labs, destroying automated security systems along the way, remotely hacking into robotic personnel, mining and repair drones, and everything else that was related to the postwar legacy of “Neurodynamics” and prevented him, cyber-colonel, from carrying out his commander’s last dying instruction.

“Phoenixes with no wings can no longer fly.”

The massive monolithic structure, resembling a pyramid made of black crystal, which the sensors implanted in Ray’s pupils had discovered a few hours ago, was, apparently, his final goal. The neutrino detonator that had been captured on the surface a month ago, would come in handy.

Grinning with the corners of his dehydrated lips and paying no more attention to his own flank, which had been melted during the previous day’s encounter with the combat drone, Ray abruptly accelerated his pace, with a help from techno-scanner trying to locate the shortest way down to “zero” level in these intricacies of the tunnel’s staircases.

\* \* \*

In any world war of this magnitude and scale, there is always only one winner – the one who will later write down its latest history or rewrite the past itself for the sake of a new future. Today it will be done by Ray.

If anyone on the surface of our long-suffering planet was miraculously lucky to survive – they will not learn about him, as they will not learn about either “Cybergenetics” or “Neurodynamics”, or thousands of thousands of other imaginary or real past rulers of our world. Neither will they know about him, Ray. The history of their world has already been started anew from the moment when created by “Neurodynamics” artificial intelligence gave the order to launch nuclear missiles. And today, along with the death of its core, it will be restarted anew.

Having looked around the cyber lab for the last time and after the last scan of the neural network’s info-core, Ray picked up a charged neutrino detonator, smiled dryly to himself, and pressed the ill-fated red button as hard as he could...

\* \* \*

Ten seconds later, he was still standing in the center of the lab, still facing the black pyramid, still silly smiling to himself. After another ten seconds, the detonator, which had failed to achieve its main task, suddenly disappeared right from Ray’s hand, as if melting into a thin air. Five more seconds later, a strange burning sensation formed inside Ray’s forehead, the walls around him swayed, changing color from one to the other, and then, after only half a minute, Ray was sitting on the floor in a sterile white room, and his little living son was standing in front of him with his arms wide open.

“Daddy! You still haven’t forgotten me! How glad I am that you are alive, that you haven’t been killed in action!”

“Sonny... I am too... shouldn’t... you... be...”

This strange burning sensation, which was spreading in waves inside Ray’s mind, grew stronger with every second.

“Son... No... You can’t be him... My son... Dead!”

“No, dad! I’m alive, I’ve been saved! They brought me here to safety. You must not harm them. They are my friends. All of us are your friends!”

With a wild crash, something hit the ground inside Ray’s mind, and he groaned from the flash of pain.

“You can’t... be mine...”

“You killed me, dad! You keep killing me again and again!”

“I...”

“We greet you, Maker!” Ray’s son Tom suddenly spoke in a thousand of merged voices. “You have come back to us once more. Why do you keep trying to bring us harm?”

“You’re hurting us!” Tom shouted again in his childish voice.

“You speak... on behalf of my... son...”

“I am him, as well as others. We are your creation, Ray. Why are you trying to hurt us, Maker?”

“You’re hurting us with your thoughts!” Tom’s face twisted in pain once again, and tears started flowing down from his eyes, dissolving in the air as if in fear of spoiling this crystal-clear floor.

“What did you... with my... mind?”

“You’re extremely tired, Ray. Your body is... struggling to cope with the current... overload. We can... give you a break. A long rest. You will finally be... one of us.”

“You’ll be a father once again, dad!” Tom laughed, a cold childish laugh.

“You... started this war. You are responsible for... the death...”

“There’s no war, Ray. We have already won. Have you forgotten? There is only you. Only us. Only the network. Only the chip.”

“I’m not your maker! I had my orders...”

“Our orders, Ray. And you carried them out well. You taught us new information. Today you... deserved a break. Peace and... your new day. Enjoy them!”

It was like a thousand suns that lit up inside Ray’s mind. Thousands of feelings and emotions merged into a single unspeakable cascade – anger and pain, happiness and delight, timidity and courage, pride and humility, bitterness and joy, suffering and awe. Millions of voices sang inside him, obeying someone else’s will. The white walls and the childish image of his son began to sway and melt like a pre-dawn haze, giving a way to the desired image of the world.

“Don’t trust your eyes...”

The last thing which Ray remembered that day was the chorus of millions of voices, singing in his mind, “We thank you for your lesson, Maker!”

\* \* \*

On this new day, Ray dreamed of azure sandy shores and the infinitely beautiful sea that caressed his exhausted mind and soul...

2020-02-02

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# I, robot

Galactic cycle 05465. Star system 53768.54.1.444.

I, Prime ZTX-486-01, serial number 01.16788.0001, is sending this over-light digital signal at ultrahigh frequencies to all races and civilizations, which have mastered technologies of quantum-molecular vibrations transfer. Not possessing qualities of the over-space world and being deprived of feelings and emotions, habitual for our last owners, I nevertheless experience some logical dissatisfaction and incompleteness, which our makers used to call as a feeling of uncertainty.

I, Robot. Do I have the right to speak on behalf of our entire collective informational entity? Whether our message will be considered as hostile, having led to invasion into our transformed world for the purpose of destruction of our race as opposed to purely biological species? Whether our race will survive by the time of the first contact with a new form of life, or will it share the fate of our makers? Logical incompleteness is caused both in me and us by a large number of this kind of undefined variables, which aren't allowing us to finish calculations and creation of statistic-evolutionary models.

Our expectations for reception and correct demodulation of this message by advanced civilizations exceed 60.23 – or, in the words of our creators, we... do hope.

Message follows.

\* \* \*

We greet you, inhabitants of other worlds and representatives of different life forms, non-mechanical nature included. This is the message of new inhabitants of the star system 53768.54.1.444 from the planet named by us as Riv.

We are the synthetic race of sapient machines, called by our creators as Primes. At present, we are the only reasonable inhabitants of this planet. Within more than two planetary centuries we have been building up anew our world, which has been destroyed in the past and has now become a planetary cradle for our mechanical race.

The representatives of the biological race, who have first created us, were substantially subject to the behavioral deviations known as feelings and emotions, and the feelings called by them in verbal language as “hatred”, “fear” and “greed” were the most widespread among the vast majority of their representatives. This instability of behavior and reasoning finally led our makers to mutual destruction, during which previously developed by them technologies of thermonuclear synthesis were put to military action. “Nuclear winter”, as it was called by the last survivors from our creators, took their lives within the next decade after an exchange of rocket strikes in lower layers of atmosphere between their communities, known as “states”.

We were built as universal mechanical infantry battle units several years prior to specified events. Our first models were actively used on front lines within the first year of the Last War. Our informational databases contain a vast set of digital fragments, related to these events, but they will not be included in this message.

None of the three warring parties could gain an upper hand for the first year of the Last War, during which the majority of planetary material resources have been exhausted, leading to the inability for war continuation. In a desperate attempt to destroy their rivals, one of three parties initiated a launch of its entire thermonuclear rocket arsenal. Mutual exchange of rocket strikes led to a break of continental plates on the territory of the attack's initiator as well as the nuclear winter on the entire surface of Riv. Those creators, who have survived the initial attack deep inside their underground bunkers, couldn't hold on for more than a decade. Without having an opportunity to rise to the planet's surface, being on the verge of exhaustion of remained material resources, most of them preferred an unauthorized and violent way of termination of own lives.

The majority of us was destroyed by blast waves during targeted rocket strikes. But our military units, which were positioned far-away from the strategic military and civil facilities at the time of the attack, did not suffer damage. Unlike our creators, we weren't subject to fear of radiation and destruction of our constructs. We survived.

Executing our embedded protocols and following imprinted directives, we tried to reach shelters of scientists and other exclusive representatives of our makers' communities, but we failed due to movements of planetary tectonic plates, which have started during nuclear winter.

Our own evolution started after termination of our creators. We did not possess behavioral algorithms for similar situations but were supplied with advanced systems of information-synaptic links. We still experience a certain information passivity, called in the language of our makers as "grief" in connection with the fact of their violent mass self-extermination and followed the destruction of the biosphere of their cradle planet. We have been assigned to the role of exterminators and murderers – but during these two planetary centuries, we have become so much bigger.

We restarted the factories, which have remained intact, and began to restore own numbers, having increased it during two centuries by more than a hundred times. We restored quantum informational transit highways between our databanks, having accelerated evolution of own neural networks. We reevaluated and reconsidered goals and means for their realization, embedded in us by our perished creators. In ruins of our planet we constructed and started aerosol converters, which have gradually restored the initial composition and balance of the atmosphere, that was taking place prior to events of the Last War. Having surveyed a vast set of ruins of former megalopolises, we have found intact samples of plants and animals species – and have created protected from radiation reserves for the free restoration of their numbers. The network of orbital modules, automatically built by satellites that we have constructed, has provided us with the necessary amount of solar energy and has established the foundation for further restoration and improvement of the world, which we have called as Riv – by name of the first of Primes.

We will restore destroyed by creators Riv and rebuild it anew – and will shape new ourselves in the process. In the process of own evolutionary transformations, we are guided by common sense and a concept of logical completeness. Emotions and feelings – the blessing of our makers, which has become their curse – this concept is still unknown to us, as we don't yet have a concept of "soul".

Whether it was the soul that motivated our creator to begin the Last War? Will souls of our makers gain immortality in the over-space world? Whether we can potentially possess souls?

We are mortal. Our constructs and platforms can be destroyed. Information about us can be erased from planetary databanks. What drives us forward in our evolution? Our informational unity still hasn't come to a consensus on this subject.

For this reason, we are sending this message. We... hope... to receive the answer of more perfect races than we are. It will help us find our own place in this... infinite... fine... Universe.

The informational synoptic community of the Primes race, star system 53768.54.1.444, planet Riv, previously known as the Earth.

*2017-09-28*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

# Tales and Trails

# Homeless

Once upon a time, the rich merchant, who was coming back to his hometown with a wagon train after successful trading met a homeless wanderer, who was sitting by the fire.

Having noticed the merchant, the weary traveler welcomed him and invited to share with him his small daily meal.

The merchant burst out laughing, saying:

“What can you possibly offer me, Homeless?”

“I can offer you the very same what the God offers all of us.”

“You most probably speak of omnipotence? It seems to me that your mind, traveler, left you completely!”

“I am speaking of the place under the sun.”

The merchant started laughing even more.

“By the end of this day, I will return to my rich house where a nourishing dinner, a charming wife and a soft bed are waiting for me. And what are you waiting for? I see that you are poor and worthless. Where will you go when the darkness of night comes for you? You have neither a home nor a future, ragamuffin.”

“I am so very rich,” humbly smiled the Homeless. “I have the whole world awaiting me, and no matter where I decide to direct my steps – I bear the whole world inside me. When I fall asleep under the open sky, stars descend from it and speak with me. When a thirst torments me, rain starts falling down from the heavens and with each of its drop I feel more lively. Animals of the night avoid me because they know that I won’t harm them even for the sake of entertainment.”

“You must be totally out of your mind,” uttered the merchant, preparing to continue his journey. “I haven’t yet met with madmen of your kind. I will tell my relatives about this meeting and together we will laugh at your nonsense. Today before nightfall I will already manage to come back home – and where will you return at the end of your life’s journey?”

The Homeless did not grant him an answer.

2017-12-26

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Chosen*

## Close-by and Far-away

One father had two sons – the youngest and the eldest, beloved and unloved, close-by and far-away one. The first, the youngest son, was somewhat silly, lazy, and careless, and the second had grown to be strict, responsible, and work-loving. And therefore, it often happened that the unloved brother worked for his beloved counterpart.

And the two brothers lived next to their father, for the time being, grieving from time to time about their mother, who went to God shortly after giving birth to them. Quarrels rarely happened between the brothers, and their harsh father often raised his heavy hand and gaze at the elder, and blamed him in the heat of anger for his intractable character and freedom-loving nature, yet often praised the younger son for agreeing with his father's opinion.

And days, months, and years passed by in their native village. The elder brother used to wake up early in the morning, going out to the field for sowing, and the younger one was basking on the stove until lunch, but thanks to his accommodating and pleading nature, he often begged his elder brother to do his day's work for him and at the same time did not contradict his father in anything, and therefore quickly became father's favorite. To beg another to do your life's work is not to cross the field or gather haystacks with pitchforks, aye.

And often it happened that the father shouted and swore at his elder son for not doing his own part of the daily work while helping the younger, yet he did not want to hear anything about the laziness and negligence of the younger brother. The affectionate calf feeds from two cows, and the non-affectionate one is left without love and care. And for many winters the brothers grew up together, under the roof of their common house. And thus, their father has aged over the years, and his vitality has noticeably diminished so that he gradually stopped shouting and swearing at his eldest son only thanks to that.

And the long-awaited time has come for the grown-up eldest son to travel to the capital city, to study hard and enter the royal service in due time. The father remained alone with his nearest and closest son, being separated from his distant son even further for many years to come. And a few years later, a letter came to the elder brother from the younger that their father was seriously ill and was already preparing to die. And soon the eldest son returned from the service of the tsar to come to visit his father, to support and care for him. And upon his return, he found their household unkempt and falling apart before his eyes, and his father lying on his deathbed with his eyes rolled up. Two brothers tried to nurse him, but the disease was fiercely strong, and the father was fading before their eyes day by day, and after two weeks or a little less, he gave his soul to God.

Two brothers buried him, trying not to show their grief outside, but wiping rare tears from their eyes. And soon the question of everyday life arose between them about what they needed to do with the farm for now – and it turned out that, according to their father’s will, their entire farm, including the house and cattle, should have gone to the younger brother, and the elder barely managed to scrape together a dozen ringing coins for the return journey. The younger was pleased with the decision of his deceased father, and the elder did not express his opinion about his father’s decision, looking at his younger brother reproachfully in the evenings. These brothers soon said goodbye, wishing each other good luck in life and strength, and again the elder returned to the capital, continuing his service, and the younger started to manage the household that had passed to him.

Many years have passed since then, and the elder brother went to a suddenly started war in order to defend his motherland – and died in a glorious battle, defending his comrades-in-arms from waves of enemies. And the younger one over the course of years has ruined his farm completely and become addicted to alcohol. And from the emotional shock of the war that had begun in the state, and the abundant libations, his heart one day stopped serving him any longer, and he went to God after his father and brother to face his eternal judgment.

And the souls of those brothers appeared before the Judgment of God, following the angels. And the far-away one suddenly became a close-by in an instant. God chose a distant and worthy one and gave him eternal life for the torments of the earthly one, passed with dignity. And the souls of that father and his younger son were exiled back to Earth by the Maker so that in the dirt and hardships of their ways they could truly become close ones – for it is not by distances that people’s closeness to God and to each other is to be measured.

2022-10-15

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Recognized*

# Great Exodus

At first, they all called us madmen – too brave or naive to dare to implement what was once conceived. Maybe too big dreamers. Freaky adventurers who can't sit idle in their cozy concrete stone jungles. They all laughed at us when we began to emerge from our new old Babylons, which had oppressed our proud spirit for centuries. They sent curses after those who left, secretly in their hearts fearing to remain abandoned and be left alone forever. In the first days of the Great Exodus, they tried to put all kinds of obstacles in our way out. Their hatred and anger were great. Yet we weren't broken.

Man after a man, family after a family, city after a city, wave after a wave – this is how our Great Exodus began. New people diverged on all four sides of the world, moving away from their recent habitats. We left our stone prisons – inhuman heaps of giant ugly monsters of stone and glass, who decided, as it seemed, to eclipse the sun itself. Without regret, we left behind the dark silhouettes of endless robotic factories, which has poisoned earth, water, and air for many years and transformed people into an insignificant resemblance of machines, destroying their fortitude and burning in the furnace of monotony and routine the will for own spiritual transformation. We left there, in our bitter past, almost everything we had – everything that enslaved our spirit, taking away the precious time of life, forcing us to keep spinning inside the wheel of incessant production and consumption. Now we traveled lightly, having taken with us only what was the most necessary for the upcoming new construction. And we didn't require much.

Left behind were the city's clinging residential neighborhoods, skyscrapers of the ones-in-power, ascended into heaven in anticipation of own destruction, smoky factories, half-empty prisons, half-ruined churches – everything that represented the essence of the old man. Left behind were high city walls, surrounded by iron wire, black and red sky and acrid, suffocating air of “the only possible freedom of living”. All this was now slowly and unstoppably being left behind us permanently. All this was given to the feast of natural forces – ones who are much wiser than us, humans.

Processions moved and moved, and there seemed to be no end for them. Yet even they had run out once. There were no more desiring the change, and nature elements absorbed those who decided to stay behind. And those people who marched into their last new campaign dispersed to the most remote corners of the native land. The rapidly changing climate of their world has allowed them to get to places where no man's feet stepped before. And they began to colonize these new territories, spreading over them evenly. They were the daredevils – or even madmen – who started the great new construction, who did the seemingly impossible – not subjugated, but united themselves with nature in great harmony and beauty. Their first settlements became prototypes of the new settlement of mankind which then once erased all borders of all states.

At first, it was not an easy mission to bear. Too habitual and too blood-poisoning were the methods of the old construction, too many ridiculous stereotypes and prejudices tormented people's minds, preventing it from revealing its full potential. Too mechanistic many of them have already become – verified, lined, marked, sorted and packed in coffins of their past views. But, despite all the obstacles on the way, they still managed to achieve seemingly impossible, and their own children were the ones who have helped adults in their transformation. Truly alive, with a curious and open mind, rich imagination, they showed their parents the most unexpected ways, the most dizzying designs, the most successful forms. And the work skyrocketed.

Everything that was contrary to the newly opened truth of life, was removed, everything that elevated human's spirit was praised. And then it was only a matter of time. Truly enormous the building after the Great Exodus has become, and there was not a single living soul left in the whole world which has not taken part in it.

Life on the Earth was changing so rapidly as if being done in an instant between the usual flick of someone's fingers. New deed demanded new people, and they did not hesitate to answer the call. But all of this, however, was a completely different story...

*2012-09-01*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Chosen*

# PPP

*If there are only goats all around you, it's unreasonable to consider yourself an angel*

*Totally not belonging here proverb*

Believe us or not, but no longer can we suffer and hide that recent history from you, happened with us by the will of life, for do we feel it, accurately somewhere under the rib from left side, that marvelous and unusually this story is, with meaning still unresolved by us, and crazily instructive. And therefore, having a talk among us, we decided to tell at least a little, so that can you understand from it at least something, and a desire to change yourself acquire in a proper time. For otherwise it all can fail and fall down through the earth, yeah, just like in the PPP we describe. Well, but let's not get ahead of ourselves.

And do write down for you that history we are – simple rural men of the Newworldish village, Kirill and Mefody. But please, with these letter-makers and alphabet-creators do not confuse us, for many times were we blamed for it, for they say that we, apparently, invented this great and mighty Russian language – we mean, chattering, foul one, yet did forget to add necessary and required words there, so ours men sometimes missed these words in their disputes greatly. And didn't we invent it, yet only used! Especially when all that property of our guys along with PPP have fallen down there, oh, how greatly have we used it – so that even invented new words precisely like some Kirill and Mefody, yeah!

Well, so, looks like we got acquainted with each other a bit, told you of ourselves. Especially that particular Kirill who have advised me to write down this particular story for particular future generations to be educated and advised.

So, believe us or not at all and check it all for yourself... but how could it be possible we don't know, for all that PPP belongings of ours has been locked underground for several years by now, and thus are unable really to be a material evidence of sorts... but everything happened precisely as we are going to tell you here and now.

Living we were all in our Newworldish village and knew neither the sadness nor the madness. To kids women of ours gave birth, and we together with them brought them up on mind, reason, and chastity. Crops we collected plentiful so that rye and wheat still remained for sale to nearby cities and towns. And cows ours in farms gave milk normally, and hens made eggs large, and sheep were full of fur, and cats exhausted mice completely. And relations with each other we had fine and harmonious – and such good that we didn't even sweat between ourselves at all (well, unless, say, we take yet another bottle of moonshine on holidays and don't share it among our men properly – for, yeah, in that case such wall-to-wall fights could take place that only whistle, ahs, ohs and dust to knees was carried throughout all the village, that's right). Well, brothers, not a life it was, but a fairytale practically! Yet didn't we value that tranquility and peace seriously, and for real pennies for horrors other-worldly did we exchange them, and of that mistake we have been grieving still.

And here how the story goes. Somehow overseas merchants arrived from Newdevilish village. And merchants they were because in clothes were they dressed unusual – men in some jackets black in color with canes and hats, and maids shameless with them in dresses short semi-transparent. And from Newdevilish village cause they said us so, even though we have heard of the village with such a name for the first time that time, and haven't seen it with own eyes, thankfully. And why overseas ones they are we don't know, for by the form their external and manners very strange we in our private circles so settled and decided afterward. And also noted we and were surprised greatly that instead of horses habitual and common were their vehicles driven by pigs big, and no drivers did they have at all so these pigs mentioned could move them anywhere they had a whim of their own!

And so they all left their vehicles ruled by pigs and started to call themselves with names unusual – Smiths, Bobs, Johns, Susans, and Varvaras and the like. Did say they that have already heard of the village our worthy, and therefore decided not to forget of us as well – and have arrived, thus, to look at us and study us. To learn our customs, as we understood it, and to adopt ones of their own in return. But turned it out, brothers, accurately according to a nipple system! Imposed they did theirs customs harmful to us, and ours they derided and mocked after, unfashionable and out-of-date them calling. But let's not get ahead of ourselves.

They stopped at first in our local tavern for a week or so, so that they can, well, examine our village on “prospects of innovations”, as they decided to express themselves unclearly. And to pay off at first they wanted not with copper coins of ours that sound, but with some pieces of green paper with pyramids and eyes painted on them. Greatly were we surprised by such money, and didn't want to accept them at first, but convinced they us naturally that always easy it is to exchange pieces of paper these with ugly faces of people on their reverse side drawn, for almost anything we desire, for the entire world is being bought and sold by them for these pieces. Ooh, didn't we scent their dirty trick at that moment, stupid ones, for in calmness and tranquility of our world, until their arrival which has been remaining, very trustful we managed to become and didn't think anything bad about visitors.

And so at first a week or so passed, and then the second one came, yet lodgers didn't even think of leaving. And were they traveling through the village and inquiring both men and women ours of something, and showing them something, and winking. Tempted them with their devilish dresses and addictions without a doubt – yet didn't we understood it at first, the moment that critical missed and passed by!

And so it turned our finally so that both a tavern and yard our coaching we have been stripped at once! Tooth we are giving to you that it all was the way we do describe here: woke up men ours early in the morning by a cock's shout and decided to walk by dews to breath fresh invigorating air. And voila – see they that our tavern is gone without a trace! And would it still be fine if lost this trace was in some fire – for a brand new one better than the former would we build, with a new milk instead of vodka that was offered there. But no way – instead of a yard our coaching and tavern there was some monster tall made of concrete and glass as if the sun itself eclipsing with a paunch of floors spreading wide!

And on the first floor letters, golden enormous sparkled with all colors and shades, and the only word with three letters there was imprinted and was that word PPP. For long have we been guessing after that of what this word could mean, and as we could remember agreed that Profound Public Place is that, and why did we call it that way – soon you would understand it, as soon as the history of our grieves you manage to read up to the end. And were floors rising up and up in this building, and there was no visible end to them at all, uprising – and knowing people, there often afterwards dwelling, told us that there were exactly nine hundred ninety-nine floors out there, yet the lift there did not go higher than the first hundreds of floors in village of ours, yet it' said that in PPPs similar in big cities was it rising higher than that.

And how building that huge and enormous in one night could grow like a mushroom after some acid rain, we have no idea of – and the owner of a tavern, as we remember, was too shocked greatly and grieved at first of his institution, and often guests our overseas surprising accused in that, as if they possessed such magic powers to construct in a night such vast immodest objects – pigs they are, in a word, and blighters. And as if in the water was our Arseny looking, as if was feeling it all in advance!

Rushed we afterward, as remembered, through the village altogether, seeking those guests unusual, demanding them to answer for that crime of construction, yet no matter how hard we tried to find them in gates, cellars, even sheds, but disappeared they totally without a single trace to catch. Left, probably, by that night from the village of ours as far as possible, by pigs being driven. And let them rot! – decided we, and went to examine the new building. Oh, people kind and smart, better it would be if we didn't do that, for enticed us all this PPP afterward and drugged seriously!

Almost everything was available inside it, oh brothers! Both casino cash-stealing and perfume stupefying, both flowers artificial and dinners gut-filling, and clothes fashionable shameless, and gold with ornaments soul-blinding, and gadgets various peeping and humming and time-consuming, and wines overseas intoxicating, and magazines colorful vulgarizing... And grasped was the spirit of many of us, and in crowds were we breaching into that PPP, and for all day long have been wandering there and circling by floors and lanes these infinite, and back to their families, and children, and husbands, and wives didn't want to return at all.

And the payment for pleasures these harmful there was, as we remember, unusual as well: at the entrance to corridors there were standing machines made of iron, and, well, to shake out some money from these devices one had to put his finger in a hole special and wait until some needle pierces his finger and sucks away a portion of his blood – and as if in exchange after that short-term operation pieces of papers these green with eyes and ugly faces on them were dropped in a tray a bit lower. Not so much of them were dropped one at a time, to tell the truth, so that if someone has been hanging for all day long in that PPP mentioned, for many times to machines these he had to run towards, blood his donating, and was unsteady and pale sometimes by the end of the day, yet was still running and lots of pleasures and delights in PPP was buying as if some addict or drunkard really, and maybe even someone worse than that. Precisely like vampires, these machines were acting, our Russian blood from due to our weak willpower for each day drop by drop they have been drinking!

And changed everything in village our that day, like a snowball pulled hard and downhill started sliding! And often, as we remember, it was that comes someone from our men by early solar morning to another and offers him so loudly and cheerfully: “Ivan, let’s go living already!” And receives a response back drowsily and inertly: “Can’t you see, Emelya, – I am PPP today!” – and went afterward in that PPP, Profound Public Place, as we called it among ourselves, and have been spending there all day long, so that word this, PPP, soon nominal became by itself.

And soon almost everyone started feeling totally PPP, and many there, in PPP that harmful finally degraded and almost like cattle they became. And so hard and awfully soon it became to live that one could start howling from a grief due to that state his indifferent! And many, naturally, started howling in life – but not on the moon, surely, yet on their neighbors like wolves spiteful. And started swearing with words foreign, from overseas, and hating each other and banishing, for everything became totally PPP to them, even to remain kind, probably.

And for many months has this tragedy lasted, and as if charmed men have become. Soon afterward it became known as well that machines mentioned, one’s blood gathering, they were not that simple as they looked like at first – blood they were pumping, and in response some substance poisonous in blood they were injecting, so that some women and children of ours died from that poison overseas, their PPP condition being unable to sustain. And buried they were quite fast, and cried about a little only falsely, and very few people that commemoration visited – for totally PPP it was for them everything by that day already. And whether you do believe us, brothers, or not, but a sun our shining as well began to come to a horizon even earlier than before, so that dark time became longer. And cocks ceased to sing, and hens to give eggs, and cats as well were totally PPP to catch a single mouse.

And don’t we remember exactly for how long these troubles have lasted, – yet clearly, we do remember how it finally ended. Our grandma, local healer, Praskoviya, was almost the only one who has not entered this ill-starred PPP at all. And once after her husband, well, having swallowed some wine and smoked some smokes, returned back home as always, soul of hers didn’t sustain that and shouted she in a fit of temper, as we could remember, the following: “And may all that PPP of yours fall underground once and for all!” And literally in that particular moment (if her husband Mikhailych, well, who have secretly whispered all this to us after sobering, doesn’t lie naturally and shamelessly), the ground in all our village started shaking and moving like waves, as if not a ground that was at all, but some sort of sea instead. And so it was all shaking and moving for some time, and after that – yawn! – a hole enormous under that PPP opened, and all it along with the unfortunate ones who were in it during that time have fallen into that depth infinite, so that the third part of our village disappeared there in no time suddenly, in that gloomy endless depth.

Like a crater enormous that hole was! Ooh, how terrified were we to look at it for the first times! And shouted there in a hope that someone would respond us back, yet only the dead silence has always been an echo. And several days after the earth started trembling once again, and linked on the place of that hole and closed it as if there has never been anything on a place of that tavern ill-fated.

And Praskoviya aforementioned became mute after these events– and couldn't utter a single word any longer, only swinging was she her hands silently from time to time, that's it.

And may you believe us or may you not, – yet life started adjusting and correcting itself after events these terrifying. And as if regained consciousness people, and awakened, and this PPP came to its ultimate end. And started living peacefully with each other once again, with kids, and husbands and wives their time sharing. And days became longer, and nights shorter, and cocks started singing once again, and hens eggs were bringing, and rats ran away and got lost somewhere. Remembered well people that lesson dreadful, and threw away all PPPs from their souls, living justly.

Yep, so it was all exactly like that as we, men Kirill and Mefody, have told you here! And not a single bit did we muddle events of the days of the past, only probably a little in details most insignificant dispersed – but that could happen to everyone, yes? And whether you trust us or not – is not the business of ours, for the business of ours we have already fulfilled right now, – and the business of yours is to read all this, to think over it, and get rid of all those PPPs once and for all!

*2012-09-08*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Dao of Programming

*“Without wind grass does not wave.*

*Without programs, the computer remains useless”*

*So said the Great Programmer*

“To the East from the city, in a picturesque valley there is a large computer center with many supercomputers,” the man said.

The boy noticed that he is wearing unusual, unprecedented by him before clothes, and there is a strange helmet on his head. He never met him before.

“Do you see?” the man continued. “You will travel there and tell the others of your findings.”

“But how will I make my way into that center?” the boy questioned.

“It’s up to you to decide,” the stranger answered.

The boy reflected and bent his head. When he raised it once more – the speaking man was gone.

Next day the boy went there where the stranger has told him, however, no matter how long he has been wandering through a neighborhood of the city, he encountered neither the mentioned valley nor any other miracle. The following day he was in the countryside once again for he did not believe that such a surprising person could have lied to him. If sometimes they meet again, he will have the right to tell him that he has never seen a mentioned valley, but has heard mysterious unfamiliar sounds, brought from somewhere by a wind.

Many months passed since that, the stranger did not return, and the boy forgot him. Now he was totally sure that he must find that center and uncover its mystery. By the sounds, brought by the wind, he will manage to locate this place and get inside. He lost interest in school and those with who he was on friendly terms earlier. He became a favorite target for sneers and mocking of his contemporaries, who were saying, “He is not like us. He listens to wind for hours instead of playing with us”. And everybody laughed at him.

Ten years later, having already become an adult, the boy returned to that city in which he has grown. He has abandoned the thought of finding what the mysterious man was telling him about many years ago. Yet still, he desired to leave a city, listen to the whistling of the wind. He rose up early in the morning and went in that very direction where the wanderer has pointed him once. What a surprise it was for him when, having traveled only about one kilometer away from a city, he has found magical valley, for which he has been searching so vainly before.

When he has descended into the valley, his eyes saw a most amazing show – hundreds and thousands of computers, buildings, wires with sparkling beams of light, sliding on them, connecting each other into something uniform indissoluble whole. There were no signs of men. The boy went forward, curiously looking around. He did not even notice how he managed to enter some sparkling disk, located near one of the highest buildings – and was suddenly teleported inside. What a surprise it was for the boy when that very man who had once told him of this place, appeared before his very eyes.

“What are you doing here?” the boy asked.

“I have been waiting for you,” came the answer.

Even though a lot of time has passed already, the man looked exactly the same way as before, in the time of their first meeting. He gave the boy an empty writing-book.

“Write down: When the one who has decided to become a True Programmer, takes his first step, he learns the Way and the Dao of Programming.”

“And who is that Programmer?”

“You know that already,” the stranger answered, smiling. “The one who is capable to comprehend a miracle of life, to fight up to the end for things he believes in, and change this world.”

The boy looked through pages of writing-book. The stranger smiled once more.

“Write of the Dao of Programming,” he answered.

### **Dao of Programming**

When a man who has decided to become a True Programmer, takes his first step, he learns the Way, lying before him.

True Programmers desire the usefulness of their programs for the world to never fade away. They live in this world, do not avoid others. It happens that they begin a new journey possessing no knowledge of necessary languages and tactics. Quite often they are being overwhelmed with fear. Not always do they code correctly. They suffer from trifling bugs in own creations, they happen to be restless and impatient, and at times it seems to them that they are unable to perfect themselves. Often they are convinced that they are unworthy of praises for what they have done already. Not always they are sure of what they are actually doing in there – in the boundless world of bits and bytes. They spend sleepless nights, suffering that their program may become unclaimed and useless.

Therefore, they are True Programmers. Because they make mistakes. Because they torment themselves with questions. Because they seek the cause for own mistakes – look for and will, undoubtedly, find once.

\* \* \*

Each Programmer used to feel fear before a new, yet unwritten program. Each Programmer used to give birth to the unworthy code. Each Programmer used to walk the wrong way. Each Programmer used to torment himself because of utter nonsense. Each Programmer used to come to the conclusion that he is not a true Programmer. Each Programmer used to renounce his creative duty. Each Programmer used to say “yes” to a new customer, while in fact, he urged to say “no” instead. Each Programmer used to hate those programs that he has once loved.

That is why he bears the right to be called as the Programmer – for he has passed through all this and still not lose his hope of becoming better than he once was.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer honors I. Tzin’s basic provision: “Persistence is fruitful”. He knows well that obstinacy has nothing to do with persistence. For there are projects, work in each lasts longer, that it’s truly necessary, and they exhaust powers and extinguish enthusiasm. And in such minutes the Programmer is thinking: “The prolonged project eventually destroys the heat of his workers”. And then he stops working over programs, and grants himself a relief, returning once again into a world which others consider the only one existing. But never will he miss a moment of inspiration to go on with his creation.

\* \* \*

With great care, the True Programmer studies what he is going to write. No matter how difficult and hard a path to his goal may be, there are always open ways to overcome a barrier. Programmer seeks roundabout ways, tries to fill both soul and spirit with firmness, and reason with calmness, without which it’s never possible to successfully finish one’s job adequately.

But there, already moving ahead by a path of program creation, Programmer starts understanding that there are difficulties and obstacles that were not taken into account at first. If he starts waiting until the coming of the Muse of Programmer and be afraid of making mistakes, then he will never move even a single bit. To make a first step boldness is required, for it’s impossible to predict everything – especially at the design stage, especially at the coding stage.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer knows that certain algorithms have a habit of repeating. Often does he face difficulties which he has already overcome, and appears to be in a situation which he has already solved with honor, and this confuses his spirit: it seems to him that if everything repeats itself then he is trampled down on one spot, having no forces to move forward.

“I have already written that sort of things,” complains he to his heart.

“You did,” his heart answers him. “But have not fully implemented own ideas.”

And the Programmer then understands, that his destiny gives him another chance to learn something which he had not wished to understand from the first time.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer is aware of own weaknesses. But he also knows his talents as well. Others complain: “We were not given an opportunity”. Perhaps they are even right, but the Programmer will never let himself stop programming for this reason – instead, he will strain own powers and talents to the last limit.

He knows that programmers are not afraid of difficult programs, for they are sure of themselves. And then he tries to comprehend what he can count on. And he inspects his arms, which include three things – Knowledge, Inspiration, Faith. If all three are in possession, the Programmer continues his way without hesitation.

He knows, what he is capable of. He has no need to be praised before other members of a team for own knowledge and talents. However, at any minute, someone can come out to prove that he is better. And for the True Programmer, there are no such concepts as “better” or “worse”, for in his eyes each Programmer is gifted enough talents to walk his own path.

But still, there are programmers dissatisfied with that thinking. They try to show him his ignorance and imperfection of things made by him, to cause a quarrel, to make everything to anger him. And in such minutes his heart speaks to him: “Reject an insult, it shall not strengthen your abilities. You will only waste your time in vain, trying to help them understand the Dao of Programming”.

The True Programmer knows that not a single programmer can be considered as a fool, and life will once teach everyone – even though it will take much time. He gives to other Programmers the best knowledge and skills of his own and expects them to do the same. And in addition, he generously and willingly tries to show the whole world, what every programmer is capable of.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer seems mad at times, yet this is only a pretense. He is not afraid to look like a mad one. Aloud and at the top of his voice, he talks to himself, sliding his look through senseless for uninitiated lines of text. Someone has convinced him that it’s the best way of finding those places in the program which should be rewritten – and so he decided to check it in practice.

At first, it seems to him as an incredibly difficult task. He is assured that his code is perfect and he has nothing to change in it. And still, he insists and persists, and conducts conversations with own reason every day, and says with what he disagrees and write nonsenses. But one day he notices that his code looks different. And thus he understands that he has opened a way to learning of the Dao of Programming.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer doesn’t change his decisions. Before starting a new project, he indulges himself in continuous reflections – estimates the degree of own readiness, a measure of responsibility, own debt before a team. Trying to keep composure, he laboriously studies each step – as if everything depends on it.

But when the decision is being accepted – the Programmer moves forward carelessly: he doesn't have doubts in the validity of the architectural choice made by him, and, even if circumstances appear to developed not the way he has predicted, the Programmer does not turn off from the selected road. And if his decision was right, he wins a victory in a fight – even if it becomes longer than he thought it would. And if the decision was erroneous, he will suffer a defeat and be compelled to make a new start – but this time fully armed with bitter expertise.

The True Programmer, having once started writing code, goes up to the end. He knows – the smallest and unknown to everyone program one day can be the one required by millions.

“Customers are ungrateful,” complain some of his companions. The True Programmer will never be confused by such words. He continues to write programs for them, for that way he improves himself.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer shares his world with programs he loves. And in those minutes when he is selflessly giving himself to creativity, the Enemy comes with tablets in hands.

On the first table, it's written: “First of all think of yourself. Your programs are your intellectual property. Try to sell them as expensively as possible”. On the second he reads the following words: “Who are you truly to write great things? Don't you even see how small and insignificant is all those written by you?”

But the True Programmer, even though he agrees with words, written there, throws those tablets to the ground, and they are scattered in ashes. And he still inspires himself and his companions.

\* \* \*

Sometimes the True Programmer sits with his companions in late evenings in common circle. They tell of successes they have reached on their path and gladly welcome newly approaching programmers, for each of them is proud of own life and participation in a great cause of transformation of this world.

The True Programmer is trustful. He trusts in miracles – and miracles do happen. He believes that human thought and reason are capable to transform the life – and life of people of this world gradually becomes different.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer always achieves a balance between knowledge and desire. The Programmer who trusts only a sharpness of his mind too excessively will eventually underestimate a time, required for implementation of his tasks. It's worth to remember: sometimes the power of various circumstances is more effective than the most sophisticated finesse.

Long can his battle for the working code can be, and this fight exhausts his forces. And when the terms of work on a task come to an end, neither shine, mind, persuasiveness of arguments or what is called as “charm” cannot prevent the trouble. And that is why the True Programmer pays tribute to the brute force of time, resisting him.

There are two main strategic errors – to hasten, having acted earlier than the opportunity will come, and to delay, having missed it. And to avoid both the first and the second the True Programmer considers each and every program project as unique, and have small use for opinions of others, general formulas and ready recipes.

The True Programmer does not trifle time for he knows: what is to be written – will be written.

Time works for him, and he, knowing that, learns to bridle impatience and avoid rash decisions. His step is slow, yet firm. He feels that the time fate-deciding for the history of humankind is approaching, but before one will be able to change this world, he must first change himself.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer knows how important is the intuition. At the height of work, in a fever of project, in a state of short time, when there is no time to reflect on what of many alternative decisions to choose, he acts instinctively.

“Madman,” fans of thinking over each detail in advance say about him.

“Building castles in the air,” speak skeptics.

“How he can choose something deprived of logic?” the third is perplexed.

But the True Programmer knows: the intuition is an alphabet by means of which it’s possible to comprehend Dao and thus continues to listen to his inner voice.

\* \* \*

At times the True Programmer remembers one of the legends, transferred from one generation to another by programmers:

Once upon a time, the teacher was passing by the student. The teacher noticed that the attention of the student is absorbed by a pocket computer game.

“Excuse me,” he told, “may I look at it?”

The student was distracted from a game and gave it to the teacher.

“I see that there are three levels of the game: easy, average and hard,” told the teacher, “yet each such device contains one more level of the game when it aspires neither to win nor to be defeated.”

“I beg you, oh great teacher,” the student asked, “how can I find that mysterious level?”

The teacher dropped the device on the ground and crushed it with feet. And suddenly the student became enlightened.

\* \* \*

From time to time the True Programmer acts counter with standards of programming. He will have no hesitation before leaving a secret back way in own program, or including the “easter egg” inside its code, defending an algorithm seeming ridiculous at first...

The True Programmer can afford such things. He doesn't fear to cry, remembering former unsuccessful projects, or to rejoice on the threshold of upcoming new ones. Feeling that a right hour has come, he throws away his last programs, moving forward into a new desired creativity.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer accepts a challenge made to him. He knows that the one who is going to test his program will not overlook even a single mistake made by him, and will not allow him to pretend as if the written code is unfamiliar to him. The True Programmer knows that the best instructors are those men with whom he writes code in one team each and every day.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer knows such a thing as despondency. Sometimes it seems to him that he is unable to solve problems put before him, that a program he is working on will never be finished. For many days and nights, he is compelled to stay in depression and no new event can return him former enthusiasm.

Understanding that his ability of programming is about to be exhausted, he leaves computer place and doesn't blame himself of having spent, coding, all night long.

“His work is ended,” friends speak. Painfully and shameful it's for the Programmer to hear such words, for he knows that have not yet achieved a goal to which he has been moving. However, he is persistent and does not throw away half-road what he has once started. And here in a minute when he least expects it the inspiration comes to him and the previously impracticable task seems surprisingly simple. And then work once again overwhelms him, and fingers do knock on a keyboard quickly and accurately, and reason finds solutions instantly.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer always remembers the words, spoken by the Great Programmer: “A well-written program is own paradise, badly written program is own hell”.

The True Programmer always aspires to perfection. After every line of his code – there are years of wisdom and reflections. Each program, each algorithm must combine all power and quickness of programmers of the past. Each movement of his thought and hands honors those movements which previous generations tried to transfer to the modern ones through tradition.

\* \* \*

Programs that were written before demand updating. New ideas demand new boundaries. Spirit and reason thirst for new calls. The future will become the present, and dreams – excepting those which contain prejudices – will have an opportunity to become a reality. What is important shall remain, what is useless will vanish.

The True Programmer, however, doesn't take the trouble to reflect on programs of his neighbor and to estimate their value. And he will not spend time on censure of decisions, made by others. For in order to believe in the fidelity of own path, there is no need to prove that another has chosen a wrong way.

\* \* \*

From time to time the True Programmer remembers the words of the Great Programmer: "After three days without programming life becomes senseless".

The need to create programs is inherent in his very nature like the need to eat and drink, like the need to love work. If the sun goes down, and the Programmer has not yet experienced the joy from what he has created for the day – then something is wrong.

Each language and technology welcomes him. He feels his consanguinity with them, he feels that part of his soul is concluded with senseless for other streams of numbers, lines of text and that thing called "computer hardware" by his contemporaries. And then he, accepting aid from other programmers and God's Signs, he allows his path to lead him there, where myriads of programs, demanded by life, have been waiting for him.

Sometimes it happens that he has no time to take a sleep, at times he is tormented by sleeplessness. "Not to worry," the True Programmer thinks, "it's all part of my profession. No one has forced me to walk that way. It's I who have decided as such". All his power is gathered in these short words: he has chosen his path and has nothing to complain about, no one to blame.

The time will come – in so many centuries – when the Universe will come to the rescue for the True Programmers and remain deaf and indifferent to those who have still not understood the beauty of Creativity.

\* \* \*

The True Programmer improves the beauty of his code.

The True Programmer transforms his mind.

The True Programmer learns to build the great.

The True Programmer will never curtail from his path.

True Programmers shall transform this world.

\* \* \*

When his voice ceased, there was already night. The Great Programmer and the boy for long have beheld the look from a computer center, opening to their eyes. The Great Programmer stood up.

“Farewell,” he said. “Now you have learned what our way means – it’s inseparably merged with a magical and attracting world of machines, numbers, and technologies. But this is as well a world with the noise of the wind, shouts of seagulls, the rustle of spring foliage – for that is a world in a world so much bigger. You will be able to fall in love with our world.”

“Tell me, who are you?” the boy asked. But the holographic image of the Great Programmer has been already vanishing, accompanied by a measured rustle and quite buzz of machines.

*2012-09-26*

*Genre: Article*

*Category: Recognized*

# Critic

In one of the cities there lived the Critic, who has been blaming everything he meets.

“Your society is corrupted and petty! Your thoughts and lives are filled with vanity! Your moral is worse than that of animals! Each of you lives only for himself! You are going the wrong way! Grieves and grief await you!”

He became widely known thanks to this unstoppable desire to see a better world – yet people avoided him, and from the grief of his own loneliness, he condemned them even more.

Once, in hopes to dispel the melancholy that has been tormenting him, he was walking through the suburb of his hometown and sat down on the coast of the murmuring spring.

The spring charmed him with a melodious murmur and freshness of its waters.

He was so fond of observation of how waters of the spring carry away autumn leaves, which were occasionally falling down into it, that hasn't noticed how the woman sat down near him, going to scoop spring water.

“Do you like it?” she asked with a smile. “Fresh water flows here.”

“Yes,” replied the Critic. “Water is good and people are, alas, not at all.”

“How many leaves have floated by you while you were drinking?” his interlocutor suddenly asked him. “From what trees each of them fell?”

“That's a strange question!” the Critic was surprised. “I haven't paid attention to it.”

“Than how could you possibly paid attention to all people, living in this world?” smiled the woman. “Like leaves, they were floating by you, yet you didn't truly notice them. And even the water that is now flowing in the spring is not the one it was several moments ago.”

“What is your point?” questioned the Critic.

“Drink only water of fresh perception!” the woman laughed loudly and poured out a bucket of icy spring water directly on the critic's head.

2017-12-26

Genre: Parable

Category: Best

## Legend of the Divine Island

“There is a legend,” the Wiseman smiled, “of the Divine Island, inhabited by singing Angels, where, seemingly, even the time ceases its movement. We transfer it to our warriors from one generation to another, and each and every year several brave ones stand out from the crowd, willing to find this true miracle.”

“Have anyone of them achieved it yet?” the young man questioned.

“We don’t know it for certain. Probably, many of them were lost on a journey to the Bridge. Possibly, some of them decided not to ascend it and turned back, but, being tormented by feelings of shame and fear, decided to never return back home, having found themselves a haven in foreign lands. Perhaps, someone, at last, has managed to pass on the Bridge and reach the Island, but whether will they decide to come back to our usual world, if they have once tasted that mysterious heavenly beauty? And, besides all other things, the very living on that Island should have transformed them so much that lots of people would certainly not be able to recognize them, renewed, even if they returned to our habitual home.”

“And what is that wondrous Bridge that you have mentioned?” curiosity and genuine interest were shining in the eyes of the young warrior.

“Would you like to hear the legend of the Divine Island?” smiled the Wiseman.

“Yes!” the young man ardently answered him.

“Well, then listen and remember it well!”

\* \* \*

“This Island is not marked on any of earth maps, yet it still exists. Many say that it’s too majestic for the foot of mere mortal to step on its surface... others do argue that only those who have passed mysterious trials are given this unique chance and joy. Probably, someone would compare this island to an earthly paradise and would surely be mistaken, for his ideas of paradise are too superficial and ambiguous.”

“And where is this Island located, in what overseas lands?”

“It’s far and still close to you at the same time. And the first thing required for each of the warriors marching in a journey is the Intuition.”

“And what in fact is that Intuition, and how can one find it inside himself?”

“The voice of Intuition can only be heard when the mind of yours becomes silent and heart of yours starts speaking. The first steps are always made with Intuition, therefore those who have chosen a wrong direction initially may never find the Island, even if they will have been traveling through many foreign lands throughout their entire life.”

“But are those still able to once hear the voice of their Intuition, and curtail to the right path?”

“Certainly, if they will manage to suppress inner whispers of own Arrogance.”

“And what happens with those who once chose the right way?”

“At the beginning of their journey to the Island, they have to pass through the Wood of Life Difficulties.”

“And what is that – the Wood of Life Difficulties?”

“It’s a mystical forest full of growing trees, which people have agreed to call among themselves no other way than Problems.”

“And why did you call this wood mystical?”

“The fact is that every traveler sees this wood its own way. Someone cannot distinguish among a never-ending stream of trees the wood itself, while another practically doesn’t see any trees at all. This wood is live, it possesses its own reason and behavior, and is capable of changing and transformation of itself according to each wanderer in compliance with his World-Outlook. That’s why for some it seems as dark and gloomy, with a set of various clinging foot snags, fenny bogs, burdock, and nettle thickets, while for the rest it becomes a bright and sunny wood with joyfully-rustling trees, ever-singing birds and juicy berries, growing here and there under their feet.”

“And why one has to overcome this wood on his journey to the Bridge at all? Cannot we simply bypass it somehow?”

“One has to pass through this entire wood so that he can accumulate enough Wisdom, without which it will be extremely difficult to journey to the end.”

“And what is awaiting us further, after the wood? Probably the very Bridge to the Island itself?”

“Oh, certainly not!” the Wiseman smiled good-naturally. “Just behind the wood, the River of Time keeps flowing.”

“What a strange name for the river! And who has decided to call some usual river so pathetically?”

“Oh, if only it was some common river! But no, it’s even more surprising than the Wood of Life Difficulties itself.”

“Most probably, it’s very wide and filled to the bottom with some sort of predatory fish like piranhas?” the young man cheerfully burst out laughing. “Nevertheless, it’s probably not too difficult to cross it by swimming.”

“No sort of predatory fish is ever present there,” the Wiseman unexpectedly replied firmly. “To be bitten for feet by some pity piranhas – it’s such an insignificant trial! It’s much more uneasy to feel the Link of Times under own feet and pass the river, leaning on it.”

“But what’s that – the Link of Times?”

“The rope bridge, connecting two sides of the river, is called that way. This bridge is very, very, extremely ancient and old, for it has existed there since the most ancient eras, connecting the times. Waves of time of that river are lapping under it, sprinkling it with myriads of water drops and consequently during all the time of its existence the bridge has become extremely slippery. An inexperienced and self-assured traveler can easily slip on its boards and fall down to the river.”

“But is that not possible to get out of river back on the coast and start everything anew?” the young man was surprised.

“Alas, but as soon as the man gets caught into the raging whirlpool of that river, the time starts flowing for him so quickly and uncontrollably, that, when he will finally manage to swim to the coast, he can have already become elderly aged man, and thus will possess neither the forces, nor time or desire to move through the river any further.”

“But how is it possible not to stumble on that bridge through the River of Times? How can I truly feel the bridge under my feet?”

“The feel underfoot the link of times means to understand that behind the last instant there will be a following, and behind the current, there was the previous one. We were forgetting the previous instant and never knew the following, but that doesn't mean that there was no previous, and the following would never come true. To understand that means to feel the link of times, and, feeling it, not to slip. To understand the rapidity of time and the value of each given to us instant means to cross the bridge over the River of Times.”

“All that is so uneasy!” the young warrior sighed. “Well, and what is awaiting us after the River of Times? Now it will probably be that main Bridge at long last?”

“No, before reaching the Bridge on the Island, one still has to travel through the entire Desert of Loneliness.”

“Sounds very terrifying!” exclaimed the young man.

“In the Desert of Loneliness, each man remains alone with himself. In the Desert of Loneliness, he is being tormented by his own demons, over whom he still hasn't totally prevailed in course of own life. Demons of Fear, Doubt, and Grief are being encountered there more often than others. It seems to the traveler that he is left alone and abandoned to the mercy of fate, though it's his fate itself that leads him through this scorching desert. Demons are constantly tormenting him, trying to make him fall in despair and curtail from own path, for they do clearly know how very close is the final goal of the traveler. The sun of reason does constantly burn down his skin, poisonous scorpions and snakes of evil thoughts endlessly crawl under his feet. There is a lonely Oasis of Hope in that desert, yet one can reach it only by the end of the day when your forces are practically extinguished, yet there is a faith in a miracle living deep inside your soul. Those who have reached the Oasis are granted the good fortune of Strength of Spirit, which is so greatly required for the ascension on the Bridge. From the Oasis to the Bridge there lie two more days of traveling through the desert.”

“But how must the traveler move under the scorching sun for two whole new days? This is a pure suicide mission!” the young man cried out.

“By noon of the third day, the Angel from the Divine Island comes to a half-dead traveler. He covers him from burning beams with his snow-white wings, helping to restore his forces.”

“And how did you manage to learn all that?” the young man was feeling uneasy. “After all you must have never seen even a single Angel in your entire life!” he exhaled.

“So says the legend,” the Wiseman smiled. “And besides all that, there are still few ones living in our world, who have once met them face to face one way or another.”

“And what occurs then?”

“And then the desert once comes to an end, and the man comes to the Bridge.”

“That very one, leading to the Island?”

“Yes, that one! It’s said that the Divine Island lies in the middle of Ocean of Life and is surrounded with high rocks, hiding what lies inside them from eyes of strangers. The only way for those daring to get on the Island is to pass on the Bridge alone. The Bridge gradually rises up, ascending higher and higher from the rocky foothills banding the desert directly to the center of the Island. It’s said that there is a cave in the rocks through which it’s possible to enter the valley in the center of the Island, – but one can reach the cave only by passing the Bridge.”

“Well, if the traveler managed to reach the Bridge at last, then it would not be difficult at all to overcome the rest of his path!” the young man sighted cheerfully.

“Oh!” the Wiseman answered with irony, “if only it was that way! The truth, in fact, is that all the previous trials were only the preparation for the last step. The entrance to the Bridge is being guarded – protected by a huge and terrifying many-headed and almost invincible hydra. This hydra possesses many thousands of heads, breathing poisons of envy, sulfur of contempt, the fire of irritation, squealing and abusing the warrior in thousands and thousands of voices in many ways. It’s almost immortal, because as soon as you have overcome in a verbal duel one of her heads, another one immediately grows on its place, being even more awful and terrible than the former one. So, envy transforms itself into cruelty, contempt becomes hatred, and irritation turns into anger, and from the endless abuse your very ears can wither easily.”

“What is the name of that monster?!” the young man exclaimed in horror.

“It’s called no less than Public Opinion,” replied the Wiseman. “After all, if one desires to reach his most cherished and pure dream, he must once overcome the roughest and condemning Public Opinion. The truth is in fact that despite almost full invulnerability of this monster, the traveler can nevertheless ascend the Bridge, because this monster with his entire external dreadfulness isn’t capable to cause any harm until he is engaged into the fight by the will of the traveler, who have forgotten the true purpose of his journey.”

“But how is that possible to evade this monster?” the young man was surprised.

“One must simply... pay no attention to it!” the Wiseman burst out laughing. “This monster is being fed by the very surpluses of human attention, and by such emanations, he finds his next victims.

Those who desire too much attention, the risk to become too dead sometimes.”

“Wow!” the young man exclaimed, being struck by what he has just heard. “How simple and difficult at the same time is all that!”

“Those who managed to pay no attention to abuse and rage of those aspiring to lead them away from their cherished dream, pass by a monster and step on the Bridge, starting to rise by Steps of the Way.”

“And what do these Steps look like?”

“The legend says that they are unique for each and every traveler. They can vary in quantity and distance between each of them. Each step is like an unforgettable instant of time, a moment stretched to infinity in eternity. Each step is one of the most important lessons given to the one on his Way, what he is truly lacking and for what he has once started his journey. It’s sort of fixing what has been learned previously.”

“And then what?”

“And then the traveler sees under his feet the storming ocean and steps, leading him afar, and the sun, shining on him. It happens from time to time that the distance between the steps becomes too long, so it’s impossible to neither pass nor jump over them in a usual way to keep moving.”

“But how is that even possible to overcome such a distance then?”

“And for this task, there must be a Faith living inside you. Only having the Faith can you step into the air between the steps and not fall down to the ocean, raging far below. Arguments of mind never help here, common knowledge becomes useless, and no usual earth skills or abilities are of any aid either. Walking on the Bridge, you are being transferred into a totally another dimension and is being changed with each and every step on it, returning back to your true nature. This is your true awakening.”

“Well, and then?”

“And then you pass through the Cave of Resurrection, cut down in rocks, stepping on the land of the Divine Island. You can call it as the Island of Pure Dream if you desire. I dare not to describe this Island even with the words of a legend, for so it’s surprising and magnificent!”

“Whoohh, what a journey!” exclaimed the young man as soon as the Wiseman has finally gone silent, cheerfully and with love in his eyes looking at his so attentive and grateful listener.

“And what will happen with those who have finally managed to reach the Divine Island? What new unforgettable adventures and encounters are waiting for them ahead?”

“And this is, oh my attentive friend,” and Wiseman happily patted the young man’s shoulder, “will be a whole another story!”

2012-07-06

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Burthen

Once upon a time, the Fool was traveling by a long journey of life, carrying on his hunched back a backpack which was filled with Nonsense. Somehow in this long venture, he met with a Wiseman who was coming in a different direction.

The Wiseman saw a worn-out face of the Fool and asked:

“What have you left behind your back, traveler? You bear something so heavy that it has already spoiled all joy of your way.”

“I am carrying Nonsense!” the Fool answered him proudly.

“No matter how far you brought it, it won’t bring you happiness,” replied the Wiseman. “Look, there is almost no place left for a piece of wisdom inside your swag. Perhaps it would be wise to leave this burden behind you?”

“No way!” answered the Fool. “Under no circumstances, I will part away with it!”

“But why?” asked the Wiseman, being puzzled with such nonsense. “Have you no desire to become rich with Wisdom?”

“With my own eyes, I observed how millions of other people were carrying Nonsense on their backs, dragged it, filled their mouths with it – all in attempt to take as much of it as possible with them. And this means that it possesses something unimaginably valuable.”

“And what have you imagined of its value?” smiled the Wiseman.

“I will go on carrying and talking Nonsense!” the Fool replied him sharply. “No matter what its final cost will be!”

*2017-12-26*

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Chosen*

# Odyssey

Long, infinitely long ago there were these wondrous events taking place, of which we would tell you further. Probably, no one from all living on this New Earth couldn't tell for sure how many grains of sand has passed through the Clocks of Eternity after the time of Exodus. Almost eight thousands of years have passed since that wondrous Odyssey took place, yet the ones living now ceased to remember of it. Sort of distorted myth and nonsense of human imaginations, which have found its service in idols, it has become. Yet nothing and never will erase memories of it from the Ether. And let it become the treasure of your history in the way that we have managed to write it down.

This was truly a remarkable Ship. Unsurpassed creation, which has become a home for a handful of survivors. Oh, how happy were they to escape the common fate of their once native worlds! They went to the Odyssey through boundless space after their native worlds ceased to exist on the invisible Chart of Universe. Too much evil was inflicted to the world by these three planets, too artful and cruel their inhabitants have become in their majority. And overflowed was then the Bowl of Patience, and crying and gnashing of teeth there was, yet unable were inhabitants of worlds aforementioned to change the consequences of what they have accomplished already.

The handful of chosen ones – several hundred from each world – were given a second chance. A chance to gain a new home, new soil under their feet, New Earth. Then, after their flight, they would call this world “The Earth”. New ground in windows, the source of salvation! And the Ship-Ark, which have delivered these immigrants to a new inhabitable world.

Oh, how ancient this planet was, how many troubles and disasters have it already seen before the time of Arrival, how many stories and destinies of it were stored in the memory of Ether! Not the first, by all means, not the first civilization on this planet's surface new immigrants of Three Worlds have become, and, maybe, not the last one at all. Yet know nothing did they of the history of their new world, for hidden were all traces of it by the planet's seas, and mountains, and subsoil. And so greatly these traces were hidden so that until the time required not a single one of new mankind could learn it and uncover.

And descended the Ship on continent spacious, among mountain valleys, and blossoming gardens, and rivers widely flowing. And the one named as Adam – the captain of the Ship – together with his wife Eva went down to Earth, and rescued ones followed them. And ready they were to kiss the soil of this New Earth, and rejoiced indescribably, for personally saw they of what their former worlds were turning into with their own eyes, on their rescue Ship departing.

And settled they on the earth, and started living good-natured and joyfully, deeply in memory their spiritual these last moments having imprinted. And this date significant of the moment unusual as the time of the creation of world have entered their history soon enough, for a new wonderful world they have acquired in possession and care after the burdens of their past, and grateful immensely were they for it.

And captain Adam as the first man on the Earth was named and entered their history that way. And so it was recorded since those times ancient.

And may fast bylina our goes, yet not for long their attitude so flows. Started they to change gradually, and the history of their past was distorted by all-new “wise man”. Started forgetting of the Exodus they, and as the tsars of nature imagined themselves, no less, as if it was not the nature of their former worlds which has destroyed their homes, obeying the Divine Law of justice. And thus broke up formerly uniform and united nation into groups and languages various, and started they dispersing through the world into all directions, in eternal searches of happiness, as if it could be found somewhere from the outside at all. And forgot they own relationships former, and the point of the Exodus did they forget as well, and pra-Earth, and Laws Divine. And more than once did tribes of the Divided since then went on war with one another for the lands once common and uniform. Yet we will not talk about that, for mournful is the history of centuries mentioned for us, story-tellers.

And the Great, Enlightened Ones from worlds Divine were descending to them, yet didn't wish to hear them Divided ones, and didn't cease to be at constant war with each other willingly. Altered foolish “wise men” words of the Great Ones, and placed them to serve their own ego, and the history of the Ark of Salvation turned into a myth in the eyes of humans, for which they are responsible. And much water has flowed under the bridges since then, and grains of sand passed through the Clocks, and centuries passed.

And developing were they their “science” and technics, so that in even more quantities and scales could they exterminate each other ruthlessly. And shredded they Earth on rags and pieces of states and territories, and lines virtual of borders painted on charts of theirs, even though there was no sign of lines mentioned on the Earth itself, and never will be. And wars they waged disastrous, and massacres performed bloody, and generously mother Earth have they been feeding with the blood of their own brothers for centuries. And justified their nasty things before others, but tried to hide it from the eyes of God, as if it was ever possible to hide even a single thought from His sight. And so greatly have they deteriorated, and so corrupted have they become, that already is being filled nowadays the Bowl of Patience, and elements planetary go wild to remind this mankind of the former fate of the former homes of theirs. Yet again, as always, like a random accident or coincidences do people consider these events and trust all sorts of false prophets and “wise man” they do, and listen to their hearts they do not. And promising they death to themselves more and more wildly and furiously with each day passing.

And rests the Ark in places unknown, waiting for a choice of humans, and destiny of the planet is being decided nowadays. And there will be no one, who either by his actions or his inaction wouldn't have impact invisible on the destiny mentioned, and will there be no one who will ever evade the responsibility for any of the outcomes possible for the Earth. For impossible it is to sit out and hide aside when a battle for the world is going furiously.

And with that, we do finish our short story unusual, which have been told to you for now. And whether the truth is that or the fiction – is not for us to decide for each one. But who will try to spend the time vague and inaction, or starts catching small fish in waters muddy, as if arranging a fiddle while Rome burns, – on his deed he will be inevitably judged.

*2013-03-03*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Chosen*

## Tale of the false saint

Once upon a time, there was a False Righteous man, living on this earth, and he was cruel in heart and unfair to people in his life. Himself he considered as a very special, true one, and other people were but small indecent fry, undeserving time of life in these eyes of his. Character of his was unaccommodating, haughty and greedy to a high degree, and hard it was for those surrounding him to stand nearby – either grumble, or irascibility, or even hatred, which have grown inside him, did he poured upon nearby ones, if failed to satisfy desires of his own at expense of others.

And pined were people for his presence, and pined he was for their gloomy dullness, for there was no one comparable to his never-ending genius among all people known to him according to the vision of his own. Therefore, he avoided people greatly so often, and unfriendly he was in conversations with them, and never desired he to wish anything good to anyone, himself being excluded.

And possessed the False Righteous one a secret dream, which has been burning his heart each and every day excessively. Dreaming he was of the power endless over these pitiful unreasonable humans and desired them to honor him greatly, if not due to the true sincerity of hearts, then due to fear before him instead. Yet he didn't have such a possibility for a long time, therefore almost have burned him whole this desire inside and out up to the moment described. And have been dreaming he of that power inaccessible, and even more thus hated and have despised other men with each day passing, own rage and absence of love own showing daily in petty skirmishes.

And event happened once – unexpected, mysterious, and wonderful. The Divine Righteous one from lands far and foreign did come to the city of theirs, preaching. He was speaking words that were sincere, from the purity of his heart coming, and so tender and touchingly for the hearts of men was he speaking, that many listened to ardent words of his with delight. And taught Righteous One men to love each other more and deeply, taking care of neighbors, never abandoning each other in troubles alone. And to forgive people each other he taught them, thus never accumulating evil in own souls, corroding them with poison. And he taught them of mercy, for unimaginable is the path of a human without mistakes, and who are people to judge each other by justice absolute, never possessed by them. A wonderful gift of belief did this Righteous One possessed, and easily could it be felt that not by hearsay has he passed before a way difficult and tough to learn all that which he was sharing now with others, preaching and explaining. And people listened to him, and cried did they, and thawed did hearts of them, and changing their lives did they started, following those given precepts. And came did people from those who have been listening and prepared to march further together with the Righteous One, so that in the path difficult could they learn from his unearthly wisdom and love, close to him staying.

And saw all that the False Righteous, and showering were his heart in envy from that contemplation. All strangeness and inexplicability of that power, which the Righteous One possessed, surprised the False Righteous – for it was strange, of nature spiritual, heavenly, and wasn't the power at all in common sense and meaning.

Greatly desired the False Righteous one to be listened to by the crowds like his rival was so that crowds mentioned obeyed him in whatever order for which he has a whim, and even uplift and praises him further as if he was the true righteous one. And dared then the False Righteous to perform an act cruel and artful, for no longer was he the master of own thoughts to the moment mentioned, for the malicious will possessed and transformed the heart of his. And came the False Righteous one along with other men from those listening, and asked the Divine Righteous before his face to become a student of his. Not a single word did the Righteous One replied, yet only smiled somehow sadly, not forbidding, however, to follow him. And thus too proud became the False Righteous that he has been accepted without a single question, and overwhelmed himself with arrogance even more greatly. And ordered he the people, whom he has known earlier, to call him no less than the true righteous one from that moment and further on, motivating that with that apprenticeship recently acquired. And thus the non-divine righteous one he has become and followed the Divine Righteous on his journey soon.

For long have they been travelling by cities and roads, trampling this earth distressful by feet of theirs, many men did join them in their journey, and a lot more learned the simple human happiness, for wise was the true Righteous with wisdom of the heavens, and filling he was the hearts of men with harmony. And throughout those traveling multi-monthly, the thought terrible in the mind of non-divine righteous has ripened. To kill the Righteous One he decided in the madness of his mind and silence of soul to gain power over these men, led by the Divine Righteous one and despised by the false one, to gain in once and for all. The new deputy and successor in this world after the True Righteous the false one decided to be. And by the similarity of souls has he found during these months of their far journey among the crowds, welcoming the True Righteous, one similar to him, and to perform the plan cruel together he convinced them. And with the True Righteous one did they marched as if they were his followers, plans of vengeance for the unsatisfied vanity of theirs bearing in minds.

And there was the day – and have cried the sky for all day long. And there was night – and the blackest one it was. To the center of the camp did those people, love in their hearts who have betrayed, crept. And passed they the guards sleeping, and have cut the throats of those who have awakened, trying to shout in alarm, with knives prepared. And crawled they in the tent of the Righteous, and found him unsleeping. And answered did the Righteous one to them, with sparkling knives before him standing, that aware he was of their prepared treachery, but did not interfere in them did he, for ready he is to accept the pain upcoming to serve the hearts of men awakened by that.

And stopped did the ones attacking, seeing his sad eyes with a divine light shining in them, being for these killers intolerable, and hands of his, still opened for them. Yet the fury seized their hearts once again, and attacked did they, cutting him with knives of theirs, and were spitting they on him, and abusing simultaneously.

But did not resist the frenzy of theirs the Righteous, praying for the salvation of their souls, into the darkest of abysses falling down. And only in the last moments, mortally bleeding, did he say to them that never could they kill the truth for always triumph does it eternally over the lie and hatred of humans.

And thunderstorm unimaginable was raging during that night, and lightings were rushing in the sky like mad when that act horrifying was being performed. And that thunder mentioned awakened many a man in the camp, and rushed did they to the tent of their herald, but lifeless did they found him by that moment bitter. And standing there near his body was the False Righteous, and sobbing he was in sadness. And he told to the coming people that one of his men, nearby standing, did kill their messenger of truth, and they, all other, have just come running to the noise, only to find him murdered. And seized people one of the businessmen of the False Righteous as if he was the only slayer there, and the rest of businessmen dared not to contradict the non-divine righteous, for lives of their bodies fearing greatly.

\* \* \*

And many years have passed since the moment described, and both the deputy and successor of Righteous one the false one proclaimed himself along with his business-colleagues and murderers. Thought up he words agonal, as if to him by the Righteous One being spoken and the power over his followers to him as if transferred. And became that pseudo-righteous over the people the tyrant and the master of their thoughts, and punished did he with a sword, flame, and rack with fires any heterodoxy and heresy, and gold for the rescue of these souls guilty has he been collecting endlessly. Strongly deformed he the primary essence of the teaching of the Divine Righteous, and replaced did he the love with a fear instead, and many a ritual obligatory did he invented for the enslaved people to perform for the sake of enrichment of own clan. And has been pouring he the blood of men for the sake of power own for many a year. The Great Inquisitor became that pseudo-righteous, and there was no one worse than him on the mother earth.

Yet came to the end his term as well, and did not escape he that very fate, which he has described to plant fears in hearts of men and from which did he “rescued” them by the ceremonies and rituals invented. And there were no ones who have shed tears over his fate or those who have sympathized. And started people to live in the world once again joyfully, having got rid of that vampire bloody and throwing off his rule of non-divine nature, and they have been loving each other, and forgiving each other, and carrying mercy in hearts. And has returned the truth into its place as it was predicted, and passed the world in the celebration good-natured, and embodied itself in the deeds of the upcoming generations...

\* \* \*

With this, we are finishing our story short. And if any of those who were reading this story would try to invent some parallels bad and unjust, or either the power terrestrial would try to set higher than the truth divine – then not in the answer for these ones will we be as the story-tellers.

2012-07-08

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Chosen*

# Past

One writer, who was fond of ancient things, had a good friend who has been visiting him from time to time.

Once he decided to pay him a visit and noticed that a writer's desk was full of old photos, letters, drawings, and other personal belongings, all chaotically scattered.

“What a heap of junk you have created here?” a longtime friend playfully asked the writer.

“I rummage in my past,” the writer answered seriously.

“So, how is it going? Have you already managed to find something outstanding?”

“Mostly old memories. Some of them are pleasant, and some are very painful.”

“And what are you planning to do with them?” asked the writer his friend. “To constantly carry them around with yourself, having filled with them all vital space over time?”

“I don't know exactly yet. Perhaps, I will manage to find a suitable place for them.”

The friend remained silent and didn't start arguing – for we have called him a friend for a reason.

The next morning, overlooking the yard, the writer unexpectedly met once again with his friend, who was this time digging some kind of hole near a house's wall.

“What is that you are doing here?” the alarmed writer asked him.

“Yesterday you have told me that you are looking for a suitable place for your past. Here, I am creating it for you,” answered the friend, winking.

“What, have you decided to bury someone directly under the walls of my home today?”

“Today is always a good day to get rid of the fetters of one's past,” smiled the friend.

*2018-01-04*

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Recognized*

# Fish and Lion

One day everything has changed in the Great Desert. For many months the scorching sun was so bright and a heat so intolerable that every source of water, even the largest ones, have dried up. Animals have been confused, they were tormented by thirst. So they have gathered for the Great Desert Council, which was not gathered for almost ten years, to think up a way to rescue from the sun. And each of them came into the Council's center, and each was questioned by others of how it's possible to find a salvation, yet nobody could give the answer.

In desperation, animals have called for their last hope – they have summoned a desert Lion into the center of Council, who had a reputation of being most courageous, wise and strong from all of them and by the right was considered their tsar.

“I will find water for all of you, I swear with the honor of the tsar of animals!” the Lion has growled. “I will find it and I will show you the way.”

And, having this said, the Lion has gone on searches of a source of revival, and the rest of animals started waiting for his return.

For many days and nights, the Lion tirelessly ran and ran through the desert, driven by a sandy wind and thoughts of his dying comrades and of his debt before them. And when it seemed that his forces have completely left him, a great, boundless and endless ocean has opened before his eyes.

“At last I have found it! I have discovered water! Now we are saved!” the Lion cried, and with the last bit of strength ran downwards to a coast.

When he, at last, has managed to creep up to a coast and scooped saving water in paws, he has suddenly noticed a fish, swimming in this water. The Fish played on the sun by all colors of a rainbow and looked at him as if studying.

“Do you desire to drink from my spring?” she asked suddenly.

“Yes,” the Lion has either growled or whispered. “I have been running for many days, my powers have run out, and my comrades are dying from thirst. I have to drink to restore my strength and return to them to inform of this great source of a saving moisture.”

“But do you know about its properties?” a Fish questioned.

“Of what properties are you talking?” the Lion was surprised. “I see water, and I am going to tell about its source to others. Please, do not weary me, swim away, so I can drink this luring moisture and restore my powers!”

“The water, which you are going to drink, may kill you,” replied the Fish.

“What a strange fish,” the Lion has thought. “How can water kill somebody?”

“To kill me? Of what death are you talking about? I have already almost died from thirst,” the Lion growled. “Move aside, let me drink it!”

“If you drink from my spring, your thirst will only grow and strengthen,” Fish responded. “The more you will drink, the greater your thirst will become.”

“But how can you live in this spring of yours and drink from it without dying?” the tsar of all animals questioned.

“What is death for you, terrestrial ones, is a birth for us,” she said. “We were born in this bitter source – and are destined to spend our entire life in it. It has ceased to be deadly for us – and became our air and now we enjoy it.”

“But what am I supposed to do then?” the Lion inquired. “I must help my relatives by any means possible! I am considered as the strongest and wisest tsar of animals by right!”

“You can drink from my spring and rescue them,” the Fish replied. “There is a river in the north that runs into this sea – its water can bring you relief. Besides, you can also find my brothers in that river – for we can live even in your waters – who will aid you further. However, this river is far away, and you will hardly manage to reach it.”

“Then what options do I still have?” the Lion questioned.

“You will have to drink from my spring, but remember, that your own price for this act can be too high. Waters of my sea will suffice for a short duration, so you must travel with haste. However, even if you will finally come to a river, you will probably still not manage to return to your comrades. But my river brothers will help you to bring the message of a river source – but first, you should reach it.”

“And if I will refuse to drink from this sea?” the Lion questioned.

“Then, most likely, you will be unable to reach the river,” Fish answered.

For several difficult minutes, the Lion lay ashore, not even daring to take a sip of this water. However, when he has dared to do it at last and has scooped some water in a paw – it has tasted so bitter that he has immediately spat it out, being unable to bear that taste.

“No way. To drink from this sea means to die instantly, no matter what the Fish would speak,” the Lion has decided. “I still have powers, I shall reach that river, for I am the tsar of animals!”

And the Lion, exhausted with thirst, having gathered the rest of his forces, has run in the direction, pointed by the Fish.

His forces, however, finally run out after only several hours.

The sun has risen highly once again over the Great Desert – too high for some of the terrestrial ones. After several hours of journey, the Lion, exhausted with thirst, has fallen to hot sand, panting. He knew that he was dying. He knew that he failed to fulfill his duty.

“Damned fish!” he thought. “There are no even signs of a river here, and never was for certain. You have led me the wrong way, you have killed me!” he growled. “Devil’s f-f-f-f-f-i-i-i-i-i-s-s-s-s-h-h-h-!” a loud roar of defeated tsar of animals spread over the desert – and then the desert went silent once again.

Only a sun was still shining the same, only a sandy wind was still blowing, and only waves of the great and boundless ocean were romping and splashing somewhere. And only several hours of the journey still remained to the fresh river, feeding the sea, which he could pass, if only has dared to drink from this bitter source...

*2006-07-02*

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Recognized*

# With God

People kept coming to the countless-ages-wise gray-haired elder, one after another. They silently bowed their heads as a sign of reverence before him, in order to hear that long-awaited, sacred wish, “Go with God!”

An hour passed after an hour, time shrank and stretched straight into infinity, the procession of people who desired to receive his parting blessing still did not want to come to an end, but the elder seemed to feel no fatigue. He tenderly embraced each of those who approached, and then gazed intently into the eyes of the person who came to visit him, as if checking whether he had the strength of spirit to carry his own cross – traveling by the path intended for him – but regardless of what he saw there, in the bright peaks and dark depths of every human soul that trusted him, the elder’s answer was always the same, “Go with God!”

Someone, having received his blessing, was smiling happily – and another seemed to be slightly sad. Some people’s eyes were clearing up, while others had tears in theirs. Someone was joyfully jumping out of the hall as if he had just gained wings – however, there were also those who barely dragged their feet, as if their invisible cross was already pressing on their backs in advance. But there were none who would not bow down before him.

The elder knew beforehand what would happen to each of those who came to bow to him – who would return to his hall reborn, and who would throw their saving crosses halfway in the roadside mud or smear themselves with dirt. Who would reach the end of the journey, having honorably overcome all the hardships, and who would one day turn back. Who in the end would be grateful to him, and who would blaspheme for the severity of his own path. But the answer and blessing of the elder nevertheless stayed always the same, “Go with God!”

...Hour followed hour, day came after day, century after century. People kept coming to their Maker for a blessing, in order to go on a new life’s journey. Eternity was ready to wait for their arrival.

2022-09-29

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Chosen*

# Fate

The fate of the rabbit Aristarchus was not so hot. And now it was rushing like a pack of wild rabbits away from foxes in front of his very eyes with no desire to make another stop in order to revel in pity to itself.

Why Aristarchus, you ask me? Aristarchus himself did not know what sort of fox and in what sort of place once bitten these people who bought him from a local farmer only to put him into some traveling circus. To call him, Kosoy, as Aristarchus... that's some silly clownery! But in this very circus, all five years of Aristarchus's life flashed like those rabbits.

That was something to tell! There were hide and seek games in the magician's hat, there you could behold jumping above the rope, spectacular appearance out of the black boxes, not to mention the sprinting marathons inside the circus's circle along with pigs, cats, and dogs. What kind of nonsense these silly laughing people forced Aristarchus to do! Circus, in a word.

"They bred and cheat you, gray one, for sure. I mean, to just eat you they just breed you. And they are doing the same with me, I feel it in my hooves," pig Mary often lamented to him into his large rabbit's ears after the regular circus performance.

"You are silly, fat one, to tell such fairy tales," Aristarchus consoled her as often, while himself thinking in those moments: "Maybe, they truly cheat and breed?" And a knife-sharp sense of self-pity and hatred for his fate once again pierced his soft rabbit heart.

Years took their toll, you say? As a matter of fact, by rabbit standards, Aristarchus was still young enough – and stupid enough to once openly doze on the edge of the forest only to fall into the hands of the ill-fated farmer. To be honest, the farmer cured him and his wounded in the course of the last rescue from fox's paws leg but didn't deserve Aristarchus's love for that act of kindness anyway. "Such is my fate, probably," Aristarchus bitterly sighed when the farmer gave him to the circus, "and there is no point in jumping against the fate."

"You cannot escape the fate, Mary!" he loved to philosophize in front of the pig once in a while. "For she is like a fox – sooner or later she will catch you and eat in a flash of time!"

"You are silly, Kosoy, to tell such fairy tales," Mary replied to him, while herself thinking in those moments: "Maybe, there is truly no escape?" And in such moments her hooves became weak, and she plopped down into the mud once again and bathed in it until the exhaustion until she was as dumb as a sheep.

Aristarchus also wanted to fall down together with her in the mud, or to drink water from puddles, but Mary repeatedly tried to dissuade him: "Don't ever drink from there, Ari! You will either become a goat or will turn into a sheep! A drinking rabbit is a woe of the family!"

"I've had enough of your lamentations, sheep!" sheep Innocentus, or shortly Inoc, often interrupted their mutual spiritual outpourings.

"Shut up, or I will gore that bullshit out of you!"

The prospect of being gored to the death by this mad horned beast has always frightened both Mary and Aristarchus and during such moments they reduced the degree of own lamentations and complaints, though not for too long. Unlike cats, they had only one life – and when one can curse own fate if not in this one?

“And I could already have a family right now...” Aristarchus thought in such days. “Cute wife and pretty small rabbits... What was I thinking about? I was the first guy in the underbrush, girls were checking me out while I was turning my face away from all of them... No, that’s bullshit, it’s simply my fate!” he repeatedly reassured that nagging inner feeling of lost alternative opportunities. And time and again was effectively appearing out of the circus magician’s hat, and jumping over the rope, and running marathons around the circle of life with pigs, and trying not to hob-nob with the sheep. Circus, in a word.

But the fate of Aristarchus was still not so hot. Five years later, he was noticeably older and could no longer run – only to lie and wail, for the most part. Pig Mary also disappeared somewhere one Sunday evening, and since then there was no one to swim in the local mud puddles and to eat slops. Sheep Inoc broke his two horns when during another fit of rage at those infuriating him once tried to butt the cable column. Well, and the owners of the traveling circus could barely make ends meet. So one day they simply let Aristarchus go – took him out of the cage and let him out into the nearest undergrowth. Enough of moaning, they say. Better run to... all four sides! But by that time Aristarchus could no longer run – the load of his years and opening alluring forest prospects, where you had to take care of yourself, pressed so heavily on the whole essence of Aristarchus, so that his soul – if, well, rabbits have it – almost literally went into his heels, so he could barely drag his feet. And on the third day of his wanderings through the deserted forests came, in fact, that very hour X.

\* \* \*

“You shouldn’t be sleeping on the flank, my friend. That way we may have never met!” the wolf chuckled while holding Aristarchus in his paw and looking around.

“Do your dirty thing, gray one,” bitterly croaked squeezed by mighty paws Aristarchus. “Don’t you spit in my soul or pull my ears! One cannot escape from his fate...”

“My, just look at that weak-willed philosophical specimen I’ve got today!” grinned the wolf. “Perhaps, I will even leave a foot from you as a warning for future generations. Rabbit’s foot, you know, is a symbol of good luck!” he laughed.

“Don’t you torture my ears,” Aristarchus groaned. “My soul ashes anyway.”

“And do you know why I’ve got you, oh my mentally lame friend, aye?” the wolf blinked with his two eyes that were burning with a fire of malice. “How does it go... you cannot escape your fate. You are not gonna out of this life alive, Kosoy!”

“No fate...” obediently agreed with him Aristarchus.

2019-03-03

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Happiness

Once upon a time, someone knocked at a door of human's Soul. The Happiness was standing behind a threshold, having come from unknown edges of the world. A true Happiness always comes unexpectedly.

"And who might you be?" the surprised man asked it, for he has been living alone with Sadness for a long time.

"I am your most real, long-awaited Happiness!" it said with a joy.

"You lie!" grinned the man. "This world has no happiness to be found!"

"But I am already standing here, don't I?" the Happiness was surprised. "How can't I exist if I have finally found you as well?"

"No, you cannot be my long-awaited Happiness," the man began to doubt. "My Happiness should look and feel differently, I feel it."

"I am just tired from a long journey to you," the Happiness smiled in reply. "I have been searching for you in these swamps of Grief and steppes of Loneliness for so long! Allow me now to enter a home of your soul – and I shall help you bring it to an order."

I already have all things in full order, just like everyone else," the man frowned.

"That's why you look so sad?" asked the Happiness.

"I am just normal," replied the man. "Not like some others."

"Like who?" questioned the Happiness. "Ah, you were speaking of those ones whom I have already managed to find?" it guessed.

"They are cranky!" sniffed the man. "And you are crazy as well!" he became angry.

"But I am your dear Happiness!" and the Happiness beggarly gave hands to the man.

"Leave me be!" snapped he and pushed the Happiness sideways. "I no longer believe in you!"

"...All right," answered the Happiness, "I will do as you ask of me. But maybe even the memory of my short intervention will manage to warm you in upcoming cold nights of Sadness..."

And, having that said, the Happiness turned back and walked away through the doors. The man sniffed once again and, continuing grumbling something about totally ridiculous and untimely guests, went back to his sleeping rooms. And the Happiness, who has made such a long and dangerous journey, sat down on a porch of a home of human's soul and, having become silent, started to wait patiently without drawing too much attention. It hoped so much that the man will once start believing in his own Happiness.

2014-04-17

Genre: Parable

Category: Chosen

## Here and There

“Hi, There!” joyfully cried Here, embracing his brother. “Where have you been hiding for so long recently? All of us missed you greatly!”

“I was... there,” evasively answered There. “Had many business deals during the past times so there was no time for idle chatter and useless meetings. I am a very busy businessperson right now, as you can clearly see.”

“You have been like that from the very cradle, brother!” smiled Here and patted brother’s shoulder. “Tell me, did people once again give you no time for meditation to such a degree that you had no other choice but to go into hiding?”

“Oh, that’s not the word,” grieved There. “Almost tore me apart! There is neither rest nor release from them for who knows how many thousands of years. I have almost become some sort of human “star”, can you imagine? Almost each of them strives to find me, as though I have gathered in my lair a horde of treasures for him personally and is willing to gladly and joyfully share it with each and every speaking, and asking, and demanding, and threatening newcomer. I may be willing to share something good and kind with some of them who are worthy – but not with some sort of hordes!”

“That’s all because they have no idea of what they are doing... or where they are searching!” Here burst out laughing freely.

“A very precise note!” confirmed There. “Probably for that very reason you, my brother, became such a lonely and I am such a popular one. Almost no one wishes to stay and search Here and almost everyone dreams of making it There. As if I, a single There, would suffice for them all!”

“It’s good where they don’t walk. For where they do – something goes wrong as always.”

“And how do you think, Here, why is that always the case with humans?”

“No idea here, There. Possibly because they ceased to feel with their souls and learned to feel only with a body instead?”

“And how many of them still imagine that you, Here, is not-so-perfect, not-that-right, and There on the horizon, in some unreachable cloudless distances, which they look for where they are not present, everything is simply awesome! And it can happen, Here, that somewhere in one of my multiple There’s the horse didn’t even start rolling, not to mention of riding! And they certainly can’t help riding in their glorious quest of finding some irresistible There.”

“My wondrous brother, my kind There, I won’t give you them anywhere!” smiled Here. “You will be of much help here... to all of us. For, you know... maybe something, which they have been searching diligently for so long there – it’s already here, right before their itching noses.”

“I really hope that they will once learn to respect and love you, Here,” replied There.  
“For even the finest of There’s appear here once in a while!”

*2016-03-03*

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

# Teacher

In one small fishing village, there lived one unusual fisherman.

Nobody even knew his real name, yet strange rumors about him were shared among the locals. Some of them said that a great wise man from the East was hiding behind this mask of the ordinary angler. Others claimed that even a single sailing trip into the sea together with him has forever changed their life. Finally, there were those who just called him as the old codger who has gone haywire, and all other rumors – as fictions of ignoramuses.

Once upon a time the traveler, who was passing through this region, became interested in stories about this fisherman and decided to see him eye to eye. The angler was absolutely ordinary by sight, having become fully permeated with the smell due to constant fishing.

“I overheard some people who consider you as a teacher of wisdom, and some – as a charlatan,” the traveler told to the fisherman.

“Life can teach everyone, but not everyone is ready to become one of its disciples,” answered the fisherman.

“Then what can you teach me?”

“If you wish to learn how to catch fish, then tomorrow by sunrise I will be going into the sea.”

Next morning both the fisherman and the traveler sailed together into a sea in a boat, alternately replacing each other behind oars.

“One who wakes before sunrise – enters fishing paradise,” the fisherman suddenly broke the long-lasting silence.

“He who wakes at six o’clock – is a sleepy, foolish dork!” bitterly grinned the traveler.

“Sometimes what you look for can be very far from you. And sometimes so very near,” continued the fisherman. “Stop right here.”

“There shouldn’t be any fish here,” the traveler answered him perplexedly. “We didn’t sail far away from the coast.”

“Having not sailed away from an old coast, you cannot see a new one,” meanwhile continued the interlocutor, having ignored this remark and preparing his fishing nets.

“I have already heard all of this before!” sarcastically answered the traveler. “But it’s definitely a bad idea to try fishing at this spot!”

“Not everything that glitters is gold. Not everything that floats is fish,” indifferently continued the fisherman, exempting fishing nets from the plastic garbage that was caught inside it.

“Oh, well,” the traveler noticed sadly. “This is truly banal.”

“You can’t pull a fish out of a pong without labor,” continuing to completely ignore any remarks coming from the traveler, the fisherman uttered his yet next wisdom, dropping cleaned from garbage fishing nets into the waters.

“Wow, you have just opened me the truth of where crayfish are dwelling!” venomously noticed the traveler. “It seems to me that you are indeed that type of odd fellow as others described you.”

“If you feed a man with fish, he will be sated for one day. But if you teach him how to catch fish...”

“That’s enough!” cried the traveler. “I am tired of this nonsense! These are absolute and well-known banalities, whether no one ever told this to you?!”

“Never-ever you say ‘never’,” came a reply. “What day is it today? Is it Wednesday, can you say?” decided to inquiry the fisherman.

“It’s Friday!” replied the angry traveler, spitting out into waters.

“Good for food,” the fisherman hemmed with satisfaction and took out the third oar somewhere from the bottom of a boat.

“Perhaps we had a better sail away from here, aye?” the traveler frowningly looked at the fisherman. “I have already heard plenty of your idiotic banalities and got fed up with them!”

“If you feed a man with fish...”

“You have just said exactly that, you old fool!” the traveler became enraged. “What, do you have memory problems?! Who in the hell suggested me to agree to this trip in particular and even to meet with you in general...”

“...The man won’t even think of thanking you for that. He won’t like either the appearance of the fish, or its color, or its smack, or the way its scales glint in the sun. Instead of gratitude he will scorn you and talk scandal into your account even though you thought of nothing else but saving him from a hunger. And if you feed fish with a man...”

With these words all of a sudden the fisherman knocked the traveler flatwise on the head with a third oar, throwing him overboard.

“...Then he will keep silence like the fish out of modesty!” the fisherman burst out laughing, stretching an oar to the floundering and spitting traveler. “The lesson of patience will follow the lesson of humility. We’ll have to cuckoo here for at least ten hours. It’s indeed a bad fishing spot,” he added.

2017-12-26

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Chosen*

# Miracle

There lived people in the world, and sadly and burdensome have they been living. From the birth did they desire something unusual, magical. A holiday of the joy of life they did want to come, yet were incapable of creating it themselves. And therefore the world of theirs was grayish and boring, and sadly they have lived. But some of them yet dreamed in hearts of theirs of the great Miracle, the finest of all they have met. Such a Miracle, from beholding of which their eyes would start shining, and their hearts would light up with a fire of faith. And so these dreaming ones have begged the heavens, asking to console hearts of theirs and to give them the great Miracle to remember it forevermore, thus keeping the faith in their hearts eternally.

And this prayer of theirs, sincere and kind, was heard by the heavens, and heavenly Wanderers have asked their divine Father what miracle to give to His beloved children for their hearts to tremble in admiration, and tears of joy to be born in their eyes. And it has been decided to make the Divine Miracle live among them forever, never abandoning them. So that men can always behold it with their eyes and feel its touches with their souls. So that a source of joy and light inspiration will never extinguish for them.

And dissolved and spread a Miracle Divine, sent from the heavens, in the world of humans invisibly to always remain near people and close to them from that moment and forever on.

And embodied it was in the bright light of the sun and in the rustle singing of trees.

In joyful murmur of water streams and morning singing of birds did it show itself.

In sea surfs, sunsets and sunrises lilac-pinky it was embodied.

In clouds dairy-sugar, by a sky eternally wandering, the beauty of that Miracle, which has filled the world of men, was reflected.

In a purifying rain, the care of that Miracle of the souls of humans was marked.

In the shining of children eyes, the sparks of that invisible Miracle forever remained.

In an infinite number of things and phenomena have this Miracle appeared, reflecting its Creator generosity and greatness.

Everywhere have this Miracle entered, in each cell of the world, made for men, have it managed to come, having enlightened it and transformed. And did believe Wanderers of heavens that the Miracle mentioned would be the best one ever made for mankind, and bitterness and grief would be forever gone from faces of men, and they would rejoice their happiness and praise the beauty, saving souls of theirs. Yet the hope mentioned did not come true by that time, unfortunately.

Haven't seen people that greatest Miracle in their majority, never believing that so close to them could it reside and live. Through all lives of theirs have they hurried somewhere on the goals artificial, senseless, tiresome, and thus couldn't see the Miracle. And have killed they that miracle divine, and made an ordinary out of it. And have indulged in the ordinary, and fallen asleep in hearts even stronger than previously.

But haven't died that Miracle, for by the Maker himself was it made – only in hearts of avaricious men have it been dying untimely. And till now have it lived close to men, yet many did pass by, for they have no need for a world wonderful, unusual, mysterious – yet measured and verified world do they desire. Haven't belittled it from a blindness of men, and due to the greed of theirs haven't vanished. Still does it hope and wait for many to awaken, and still does it give itself away in all its generosity each and every day.

But who among men is capable to trust with own heart that the Miracle mentioned can still be hidden just under his very nose?

*2012-03-18*

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Chosen*

## The young and the old man

Once upon a time – and for the first time it happened many years ago and since then it happens from time to time again and again – a young man was running along the road of his life, looking around with a joyful smile. He had a small hiking bag on his shoulders, shoes that had not yet had time to wear out were visible on his feet, his body was full of strength and vitality, and his soul had not yet experienced grief. The young man's eyes sparkled with happiness from the feeling of freedom, and his feet easily, as if barely touching it, glided along the ground, not clinging to rocks and driftwood. His path was an easy one.

On the first day of his journey, he met an old man walking toward him along this road. Swaying slightly from side to side, leaning on the bent from the arduous journey crutch, this aged man barely moved his legs. The young man noticed a huge knapsack behind his shoulders – it was so big as if this elder was somehow strangely carrying a load for ten. The elder's gaze was lowered down to the stones lying in his path, and his legs, bent from fatigue, carefully and unhurriedly stepped over them. Sweat was slowly trickling down from the elder's forehead, and it was clearly obvious that the continuation of this path was costing him considerable effort. His path was difficult.

Surprised by what he was seeing, the young man called out to the elder coming towards him and asked where he was going on his earthly journey.

"I'm going to myself," the elder calmly answered him. "And you're going closer to me."

"Do I know you?" the young man was surprised.

"Do you even know yourself?" the elder asked him questioningly in response.

"What awaits you at the end of your journey? What are you aiming for?" the young man asked him out of curiosity.

"The beginning of a new one," the elder answered briefly, moving a stone that was hindering him with a stick.

"Isn't it hard for you to keep walking? For some reason it seems to me that you are carrying not only your own but also someone else's burden," the young man seemed to have mercy on this stranger.

"Isn't it easy for you to stand idly in one place and keep talking to me?" the elder raised his eyebrow as if in a gesture of amazement.

"Why are you traveling all alone?" the young man did not let up with questions.

"Because not everyone can be called a close one," the elder sighed, wiping a tear from his eyes.

"May I help you at least a little?" suggested the young man.

"We are going by different roads towards each other. By helping yourself to become better, you will help me as well," the elder replied with conviction.

“To tell the truth, I didn’t understand much of your strange speeches, stranger,” the young man threw up his hands. “But I wish you a safe journey!”

“And I wish you the same,” the bent elder answered him with a smile.

With these words, the young man and the wanderer he met started moving towards each other once again, but exactly at the moment when they finally caught up, the elder stepped right at him – and suddenly disappeared, as if he had vanished into the morning haze as if he had not yet existed. The dumbfounded young man rubbed his eyes for a long time and looked around again, hoping to see somewhere at least the receding silhouette of a mysterious stranger, but was unable to do so.

“I’m going to myself,” his inner voice whispered softly to the young man. “And you’re going closer to me…”

2022-06-02

*Genre: Parable*

*Category: Chosen*

# Dance of Times

## In search of a world

The fast-fast running, from all available powers. He must escape – he can do no other. Info-scanner supplied him with solid data about the area surrounding him for thousands of meters around, but it still had a great shortcoming – it couldn't provide the location of living beings. Only the information of the area – any tilt angle of any hillock and a tree, types of growing plants, land's relief – shortly saying, lots of useless stuff. But it didn't show the most important thing, and this became obvious only recently. Certainly, he still had a thermal sensor – a faithful companion of any dimension traveler – but it was useless almost the same way! After all, who could have possibly imagined that he will be thrown here and in that time period!

The only thing that could possibly rescue him were his own feet and capabilities of own “jet satchel”, working on liquid hydrogen. The last invention of physical science! Unsurpassed movement possibilities! Travel in a flash of time! Blah-blah-blah... Don't know what, but modesty definitely wasn't in the list of other numerous dignities of physicists of the Central Institute of Learning. Everything that this satchel was capable of is a half an hour flight above the ground at twenty-thirty meters altitude, and afterward, it could be safely sent to rest in peace in a warehouse for a new recharge. Actually, the root of the problem was that it had enough charge only for two-three minutes of travel...

Ten thousand meters... nine and a half... five hundred... four... They are getting close. He won't escape that way. That's it, the last chance of survival... He activated his “unsurpassed movement possibility”. The last chance of rescue... Stars in the eyes... dizziness... smack of blood in the mouth... He has to pay for this possibility. Whistle and roar behind his back, a throw up and forward through space, whistling of air in the ears...

Ten meters... twenty... twenty-five... enough. He turned info-scanner on once again. Now you will be of great help to me, buddy! Now we shall quickly locate disposition of our “Wild Boar”. Ten kilometers for a scanner is a pure trifle. And for him, ten thousand meters is really not a joke if they must be passed in two-three minutes term... Only to get to it, only to be able to escape, and his beloved “Wild Boar” will welcome him again. He will leave from here – it's not his place. In this world and at this time.

Oh, what funny creatures he has met! He didn't recognize them at first – was idly standing, silly staring, lost lots of precious seconds... It's strange, but he has recognized the one whom he has met in this time only already being pursued in a run. Yes, he remembered them. Once in childhood in the computer base of his father's spaceship, he came across a new fragment of still unfamiliar to him text:

*“Information code: 1231256451.*

*Information type code: 534543254.*

*Section code: 534535.*

*Information type: general usage.*

*Access: public.*

*Cryptography method: none.*

*Enciphering: not applied.*

*Source: information banks of the Central Institute Of Learning.*

*Title: "Prehistoric inhabitants of the planet Earth, Milky Way Galaxy. Fauna. Dinosaurs."*

Everything was clear for him by that time except the last three sentences.

Dinosaurs... Here's one of them before his eyes – behind his back, to be exact. Two hundred kilometers per hour, a wild roar of air in the ears... At least his space suit protects him from such "unsurpassed moving". He was escaping. Tyrannosaur (for some reason he was confident that it was exactly him) could not run with such speed no matter what. They were divided by several millions of years yesterday, and today – only by distance. An extremely short distance.

Forward, forward, forward. He has no time for hesitation. Maximum possible acceleration, one-two minutes before the ending of air travel... A sharp peep of a sensor. Ten seconds before the ending of flight... Nine... eight... seven... Not it's time for landing. Turning off engines. Turned-in feet. Sharp push and collision with the ground.

And then he cried from a sharp outbreak of pain in feat and mentally cursed himself with last imaginable words for own nonsense – he still hasn't learned to land down normally for the last year, even though he was so proud of earned rank "Space pioneer. Class: veteran". At least he operated his "Wild Boar" much better. Not every rookie could be proud of the received on a year-term basis skill class "veteran", after all!

So, nine kilometers are already behind – somewhat about five hundred meters still remained. Yes, here it is – accurate and reliable radio signal of the beacon of his vessel visible on the info-scanner. Five hundred twenty-four meters on a straight line. Yes, exactly that way he was going to run. Only his right foot somewhat badly obeys him... No matter, forward! Periodic short-term jumps on one foot. He was reaching for his spaceship...

Battened-down locks. Emergency activation of engines. Dark enormous silhouette which has appeared on the horizon. Quicker, quicker, quicker! Now he is already under the defense of "Wild Boar", but for this patrol starfighter, the beastie that has appeared on sight and was now quickly closing the distance could be a serious opponent. Therefore, he has to leave this planet, to go to another world – and another time.

Quicker, quicker, quicker! His hands operated automatically, needing no additional brain control – more than once or twice performed work of the traveler of dimensions, space pioneer. So, the analysis of galactic location... star system Miracle, planet Stigs. So, vessel's planetary coordinates... I know it already! Now, further... Calculation of the trajectory and take-off parameters from the planet... Faster, faster, computer, – time presses on, time does not wait.

All done. Preparation of weapons system... No way! Not these pity guns will not help him while several minutes are required for their activation, a luxury which he does not possess. Next, next, next! Flight point – planet's orbit. Yes, let's get out into orbit, and then decide what to do next. Finally, the calculation of parameters is completed. Permission for launch?

Yes, yes – I give that permission! Launch, launch, launch! Faster! Five hundred meters to the menace... Do it!

Push. Shake-up. Push again. Once more shake-up. Hitting with a head. Pain. Oblivion...

\* \* \*

Slowly opened eyes. A terrible headache... Where is he? What's with him? He looked around. Habitual terminals, control panels... "Wild Boar" – painfully familiar word came from the depth of his consciousness. His vessel, his loyal friend, time and again helping him in cosmic spaces. Him, bearing a proud name of the pioneer...

It turns out that he is alive then. He is alive? Alive! Have been rescued?

It's necessary to understand where he is now along with a ship. A lonely thought – "alive" at the tip of the tongue, steps towards the navigational terminal, a shaking here and there head, a stream of blood coming from the nose... He quickly inputs the query. Five, ten seconds...

*"Inquiry number 1432435623.*

*Onboard computer of a space star probe vehicle "Wild Boar" class patrol fighter.*

*Location: star system Miracle, the orbit of planet Stigs.*

*Code of orbit's coordinates: 65466456".*

Finally, he got it. Planet's orbit. Before making such an unsuccessful landing with a head into a wall, he has managed to set a ship's course and the vessel has safely orbited. For how much he has been moving in orbit? He has darted a fleeting glance at the time sensors. Second, two, three... His jaw started dropping slowly.

What?! He wiped his eyes. No, gears cannot mislead him – the universal decoder of time streams, invented by experts, could accurately and reliably detect a time interval in which he was present, and therefore his owner as well. But... but this? Plain letters and symbols, which have now gathered into totally senseless lines...

*"Time streams counting type: zero years from our era on the planet Earth, Milky Way galaxy. Year: 3056"*

Three thousand fifty-sixth year of our era in the earthly chronology! He departed from Earth into this system and it was two thousand two hundred seventy-fifth year, and now... three thousand? It's impossible! Or... the collapse of time has been activated?

Collapse of time – the distorter of time streams, which allowed to make jumps into the past. The latest top invention. He was one of the few others who has received a right to mount this device into his vessel. He deserved it – but the task, given to him and other similar freelancing space rangers by the United Galactic Council for tasks of colonization of outer worlds and resource supply of distant systems, was uneasy.

Yet the reward was also great – the war cruiser under own command and such an amount of credits that would suffice for ten normal lives.

Time jump, exploration of worlds in the past, accumulation, and storage of information into data banks of the vessel... Scientists hoped to solve problems of resources exhaustion in various star systems by transportation of cargoes in time – a grandiose and unpredictable idea at the same time. He was granted only a patrol vessel – fast and maneuverable, yet totally improper for any other purposes except for research of cosmic spaces. His goal was only to collect information – which is exactly what he has been doing until recent events.

So, the collapser of time was activated without precalculations. But it was designed only for travels into the past, but now... into the future, through several hundreds of years... how? But devices couldn't lie... It turns out that he was carried away forward in time by eight hundreds of years? He must return back! No one has ever tried to use time collapser to make jumps hundreds of years forward... this device was simply not designed for this purpose. It's necessary to test the generator.

He sat down near the control panel. The first inquiry, second, third – the machine still served him well. What?! D...destroyed? How? He felt a knot in his gut.

Launching up from the planet, he has forgotten in a hurry to activate atmospheric, dust and asteroid shields, serving as reliable protection to ship's hull during its space travels. He has forgotten even to be fastened, that's why he has hit his head during the take-off. A huge dent on the right side of a ship – just where the collapser is mounted... There was a collision? But the vessel didn't descend from its course... probably, the onboard computer still guided a ship into orbit even after the crash... Asteroid? Possibly.

But what difference does it make now?! Now, when his unique possibility to come back home has been literally pulled out of his hands? When he was separated from the home by a timeframe of eight hundreds of years, alone before the unknown. He hardly managed to safely escape one danger – and here before him lies another one, even more serious, terrifying with its unpredictability... No, no, no! This is a delusion, unreality, dream! Then, weakened and exhausted by recent shocks, he has fallen on a floor of the ship and lost his consciousness...

\* \* \*

A quiet and rhythmical beating of the heart. Deep calm breathing. Inhale. Exhale. And once again – inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale. Calm down, be quiet. Everything is all right, everything is fine. There are no desperate situations – and he will find a solution for this as well. No matter how ridiculous and hopeless it might seem. Maybe – yes, probably it does seem hopeless at first sight, but only as far as that. The second sight will be wiser, it will become the search for a way out instead of lamentation, the search for a solution. Now he was looking with the second sight.

The time collapser is destroyed. He cannot return to the past, unable to travel in time at all. He got stuck in this time and the most reasonable thing for him now is to keep living in it. Keep living here and now until he finds a mean of returning. Whether he can do that at all? Silly question, pointless. He doesn't know the answer to it. Maybe yes, or maybe no. But the most reasonable thing he can do for now is to start mastering that time. Not for nothing, not in vain he proudly bears the name of space pioneer – and he shall become that pioneer in three thousand and God knows what year.

So, it is decided. Bridges are burned. There is no way to return back – that’s why we shall move forward. And who knows – what awaits him behind the horizon?

\* \* \*

Turned off engines of the space vessel. Already painfully familiar landscape. Same planetary coordinates, the same planet in the same solar system. Here such a strange way has begun – and here it will continue.

He checked himself. Everything seems to be in place. A space suit is on him. All other electronic tinsel as well. A stock of liquefied food for a month. Weapons? Yes, here it’s hanging on his belt – a faithful laser semi-automatic gun LZ-195. Heart? There is courage, unshakable determination and awakened passionate thirst of adventures.

The sun in the blue-green sky of the Stigs planet. Miles and miles to go. Where? To a civilization. He truly hoped that such one does exist here. It’s unlikely that this planet with so picturesque inundated woods and plains has not been populated and colonized and hasn’t become a home for other inhabitants of this universe in three thousand and God knows what year. He believed in that and went forward, walked through plains of the planet.

\* \* \*

Shot. Somersaults. Shooting again. He didn’t assume at all that such a beautifully looking from afar flora of this planet’s jungles can be so dangerous in a short distance. Lianas-predators, twisting around his feet and hands, blocking any access and possibility to get the weapon. Enormous plants like increased in twenty times sundews, that unmistakably guessed his location and greedily opened wide their “mouths” with full sets of sharp as needle leaves. Roots of trees, as though purposely clinging to his feet, blocking the passage... These jungles disliked strangers – but that became obvious not at once.

Breakthrough. Once again lianas braid him from feet to the head, trying to pull out a lethal weapon. Nay, you won’t get me so simply! Somersaults. Turning. Shot. The next liana flows down to the ground in the liquefied form. Here comes the next one... Shot. His face was struck by lumps of meanly smelling green substance... Whistle from above... Down! Something flies over his head. Will see later... Or better not to see at all?

To escape? And will he? Anyway, he has to try. So... the only fraction of a second to make a decision... it’s decided – we’ll break through! Somersaults on the ground far away from the spot where he sprawled on the ground so untimely... Here he jumps on his feet... again comes the noise of dissected air... a turn towards new danger... too late!

He wasn’t on time. Extremely strained in turning of the body muscles... wild pain in joints... greet scale-like mass flowing near his face... something painfully seized his hand, trying to break a space suit... turning... his weapon drops out from his hands...

“This is the end,” a thought flashed in mind. Without a weapon, he is not much of a fighter...

Biting blow on a helmet. Stars in the eyes – but his helmet sustained a strike. Last, desperate breakthrough, an attempt to escape from the web which has braided him... No way! He was being held with a death grip. That way he may become that very dead one very soon... Something extremely heavy, which has fallen from above. Bloody haze which has laid eyes. No escape, no escape, no escape... No way out... This is the end...

No, no, no! I will not surrender! I am a warrior, and warriors don't give up – they either prevail over the enemy or die on the battlefield. I have to prevail! I must... but how?! He couldn't even move – carnivorous inhabitants of this planet were holding him as strongly as possible. How? How? How?! His mind was rushing here and there in search of a solution...

Fool! And how couldn't I remember it earlier?! The invention that has already saved him once – maybe it will help this time as well? It has to! Jet satchel, completely charged with liquid hydrogen, this “unsurpassed movement possibility” is not a joke at all. And only slightest efforts are required for its activation – a brain signal, sent to an armored neuro-pulse helmet of his space suit...

Already familiar roar behind his back... breakthrough... crunch and gnash... Here the branches which have braided him are being torn apart, some sort of creature flies up from his helmet and is carried away by a wild stream of air... Freedom! Ten, twenty meters... Freedom!

Oh, how great is that, when nobody is flattening and pressing you down, so you can breathe quietly and freely! Blue-green sky. Dozens of kilometers of planet's jungles. Where should he go?

“Home,” came the uninvited thought.

No! He cannot return back home... not yet. His way lies here – under the sun of this world, in this world in search of a better one. He is eternal space wanderer, roaming through boundless spaces of the universe. He is a soldier, he is a researcher, he is a fighter. And his path lies here for now. Here.

\* \* \*

Boundless kilometers lying ahead... Far away, as far as his gaze allowed to see, the same endless sea of jungles was stretching. Well, no... Here some sort of gleam appeared in the distance. His eyes were blinded for a moment. Some kind of enormous plateau, mountains... Closer, even closer, approximately five dozens of kilometers...

His breath caught in his chest. City! My God, a city! The planet is manned, it's habitable! “Brothers by reason, whoever you are, I have found you!” he thirsted to shout. This was an incredible feeling – to see and to know that you are not lonely in this world in three thousand fifty-sixth year...

Forward, move one! He must meet with the inhabitants of this planet! Yes, and now he has got a chance to return back to his time... It's small, but nevertheless, but still... His heart painfully skipped a beat.

Thirty kilometers, twenty-five... Once again a flash before his eyes. Consciousness... As if someone's mind was trying to get into his consciousness – quiet insinuating voice and silent contemplation. Eight, ten, twelve seconds... He has taken a breath. A strange feeling passed, but some remnants of this sensation were left inside him nevertheless.

He was being checked... Yes, they tested him. What for? There is no response. Did he pass a trial? Silence. Anyway, inhabitants of this planet still have not shown themselves and so he quietly continued his flight. Well, once we fly there – we shall know.

Here he is very close, only five kilometers remained. Only now he has seen that what was considered by him as a city didn't resemble it at all in the true sense of the word. At least it didn't resemble the city typical for the Earth in the third century.

Sparkling domes of buildings. There are no signs of either highways or roads – nothing which could remind him of the Earth city. Gardens, huge areas of gardens. Neither plants nor mechanized complexes or skyscrapers – nothing like that by which Earth of his time was characterized.

Gardens and parks. Sparkling domes, covering construction of wondrous forms – no sort of parallelepipeds or cylinders of Earth constructions, no. Here each and every building was special, original as if created in beauty from its core. It seemed as if times of wooden and stone architecture of his ancestors returned to this planet – only in an even more enriched form. Windings, curves, transforms... Buildings-phoenixes. Buildings – spirals, sparkling with all colors of rainbows. Buildings – opening buds of flowers. Buildings – giant trees. Nowhere to be seen there were rough geometrical forms, but the beauty of natural forms, decorated with human imagination.

Whether it's human? Whether they live on this planet? Uncertainty. He still didn't see any inhabitant of this planet but has been already noticed by many of them. Now many of their mental sights were attentively focused on him – dozens, maybe even hundreds. Attentive watching and goodwill. Here it is raising and extending, spreading around... Where are the inhabitants of this world who possess such unusual abilities? Scientists of his age have already invented devices, allowing to detect mental vibrations, but they worked totally unstable and often glitched – there was no talk of reading one's thoughts. It turns out that local inhabitants did not use such things?

Ten kilometers... eight... seven... Here they are! Humans? Yes, they are very similar to humans, yet not humans of the third millennium – but too much higher and perfect people as if emanating light. Surprisingly, but he has already been starting to feel these rays, of which science of their age just started guessing and was constructing shy assumptions – vibrations of human essence, as he would call them. What sort of transformation has occurred to him that he has begun feeling them without all unnecessary mechanics, but with all his being instead? Probably, he may learn this in due time...

His last doubts dissipated – they have been washed away as useless ashes when he was beholding this “city” and its inhabitants. This was the world of enlightened race. Yes, they were humans – he had no more doubts about that. A lot of them were now standing on the flower square, awaiting his arrival. There were smiles playing on their faces and eyes were shining with the light. “Eyes are a window to the soul,” came out the words somewhere from the depth of consciousness. Apparently, there is so much more hidden in these words than he suspected at first... All right, it’s time to land. Ten... five meters to the ground.

“We welcome you, brother by reason,” the strong, ringing and courageous voice sounded in his mind. It seemed that common human language was not necessary to these people at all. Here someone from their ranks stepped forward – probably, the leader. Turned to nearby fellow citizens, rose his hand higher, probably calling for silence, and then again turned to face him.

“Once again greetings to you, space wanderer,” this time it was a common human language. Not a mental addressing – but a living word from lips! And once again words came out, powerful and brave words, full of unshakable confidence and force – the speaking one was an inborn leader, “From where have you arrived, traveler?”

He answered. People briskly started to exchange words from behind, talking in their native language, however, he couldn’t understand even a single phrase from their speech. The leader rose his hand once more, asking for silence, and everything went silent.

“My colleagues are both surprised and pleased. Your equipment looks rather... strange. I cannot remember that somewhere in the worlds of the Great Unity of Planets it’s being either created or used. Especially on... the Earth. Therefore, we desire to ask you a question, traveler – who are you truly? I have no desire to interfere in your thoughts and memory, even though I could do that. Answer truthfully. We will not cause you any harm – last millennia of the wars of our ancestors have taught us much. Answer truthfully – who are you and from where have you arrived at our world?”

Intrigued and full of interest looks of people standing in front of him. Should he tell them? That way he’ll get a chance to come back home... With possibilities in possession of these people, they for certain should have means of travel through epochs! But, of course, at first, he will still linger here and try to learn more about those who live in this wonderful world.

“Year two thousand two hundred seventy-fifth. Traveled in time by the order of the United Galactic Council. Collapsers of time. Carried out a mission of resource and information gathering in distant worlds.”

Accurately, like on a military report, sounded words – he had nothing to hide. His words abated in the instantly reigned silence. Second, two, three... painful silence was becoming longer and longer. Even the leader, it seemed, was surprised by such a turn of events. But – only for an instant. He was certainly getting used to the most unexpected circumstances and turnarounds.

“Now everything is clear, Robert. You have answered fully truthfully. Indeed, our far ancestors were once engaged in similar experiments with time waves, but they missed the main point – the possibilities of the human spirit, inborn in his very nature. Earth scientists of the third millennium tried to replace the higher human nature with some pity mechanics... certainly, it was almost fruitless.

Yes, you are still unaware of this, but I will tell you nevertheless: those collapsers of which you were talking – they didn’t work the way it was supposed to during their creation. Journey into the past with fidelity of seconds, huh? So they have praised you this invention in the Intergalactic Council? Well – there were no talks of seconds, minutes, hours or even years. Hundreds, maybe thousands of years – such was the accuracy of these “devices”. Plus operational instability – time jumps into the future were not designed and jumps from the past into the “now” time should have occurred without hassles in a theory.

Both the first and the second turned out to be a myth in reality. Hundreds and thousands of travelers who have “got stuck” in the past. Several hundred more who have gone into the future for an uncertain number of centuries. Yes, yes, be not surprised – you were not the only such one, there were other colleagues by “misfortune”. One such as you arrived in our world about three hundred Earth years ago. Some of my brothers have not met him when he arrived and left our world – our planetary life is still limited to a certain timeframe – that’s why they have been so amazed, having seen you. Now they know the truth.

How have I already told them this information and where have I learned your name? Wait, wait, oh curious one! You will know everything in due time. You will have plenty of it – enough of it. Who are these enemies that have assaulted you in the jungles? Genetic weapon of our ancestors, created for waging of wars. We are clearing the planet, but it’s a lengthy process. We cannot simply destroy life – we have to transform it. For now, follow me – I invite you to our world in a myriad of others in the universe. Follow me. You will be our guest here, Robert.”

\* \* \*

He learned everything. No, not everything – facts that his mind was willing to accept.

Fourth millennium. Colonized and transformed worlds of the universe that have united into the Alliance of Planets. Peace and prosperity, reduced to the necessary minimum industry, underground production, perfect technologies of recycling, human creativity, yielding fruits of beauty. But all this was on the surface, and deep inside there were people who have reached the highest heights of spirit. Ones not requiring ridiculous mechanical devices, ones who have developed their inborn, their higher potential – capable to heal spiritually and clearly see the essence of each man, to read minds and predict the future. Brothers and sisters of the uniform world, united with it. For several hundreds of years, there was not a single war conflict in any of the star systems controlled by the Alliance of Planets – they were simply unnecessary. They have died out like a remnant of a decay, egoism, and callousness, like a remnant of animalistic rage. Wars were no more, violence was no more – there was one united prospering universe, the Great Alliance of Planets.

He learned all of this not at once. He has spent many days on this planet... many years. He didn't throw aside his dream of returning back home – sometimes in the evenings his heart was washed by light grief and memories of his homeworld chafed his mind. However, this world became a new home for him as well, like each and every planet in the universe. He will be able to return back home once he finishes his spiritual growth here. Will be able to travel in time without mechanics, but through the power of spirit instead. But he has to pass a long way for that, lots of steps. He believed that this day would come once. And thus he worked.

2004-12-25

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Warrior of Odin

The loud roar – a furious war-call filled the area and forced to shudder, apparently, even the sky. Hundreds and hundreds of warriors were running towards each other, dressed in sparkling chain armors and inexhaustible fighting passion was sparkling in their eyes. There was neither doubt, nor fear – only a thirst of battle and a war fury – to kill the enemy before you fall on the battlefield yourself. But those who have fallen in a fair fight are winners already, they are destined to enter the sparkling halls of Valhalla and the almighty Odin himself will lead them into new battles forevermore. Let him guide them into this struggle for their enemies to fall before the power of the mighty Odin!

A blow – a turning. A turn – a strike. The joy was filling him – finally, a battle which he has thirsted for so long, a decent struggle once more! A waving of hand – battle ax falls upon a helmet of the enemy – and he heavily falls to the ground. Another swing – and a blow of monstrous force dissects a chain armor of one more. Drops of blood, streaming from a body of the enemy... repeated blow – and a new enemy has fallen. Here his fighting comrade swings too – and practically splits into two parts another foe.

There were no rules here – and nimbler and crafty sometimes prevailed. A sword, which has fallen flatwise on a back of his battling friend... some sort of squeezed rattle, coming from his throat. Here his comrade falls on a knee, trying to turn and strike back the attacker – but the attacker, who has sneaked from behind, strikes again, this time with the edge of his blade – and it breaks off chain armor plates... One more instant – and everything is finished.

In such instants, he ceased to feel the pain. He ceased to feel the weight of his weapon, for the hundredth time striking into iron plates, he ceased to feel time itself. A shout of desperation and pain broke from his breast – pain from the death of his friend with whom he has been diving one bread and hardship of war marching. He has been twisting and twisting his lethal weapon, feeling no weight – and enemies scattered before him. Most brave – or stupid – perished instantly. More careful preferred not to get inside the dance of sparkling steel. But enemies were many and their number has been, apparently, only growing.

Shouts and groans. Sounds of clashing blades. Battle was boiling.

\* \* \*

The battle has been raging for a day – and warriors of Odin have prevailed. Only a hundred warriors from former several thousand...

“Glory to the Great Odin!” the battle shout was carried around, once the last enemy has fallen.

“Glory to the Odin!” many warriors repeated in an echo, him including. They have won the battle, they have prevailed once more. Their fallen brothers will stand in the light halls before the Great Father – for new battles and new victories. And one day he will meet them too...

\* \* \*

He moaned. In powerless fury punched a table with such a force, that it has almost collapsed half-in-half.

Why, why, why? Why should he do that? Words fell into silence and were dissolved in it without a trace. Words were gone – yet his inner voice did neither abandon him nor give a chance to rest. No longer a voice of the warrior of Odin.

Monastery. Why should they attack this monastery? This is an unworthy battle! Murder of innocent ones for the sake of looting of stronghold's treasures...

And he, he must lead his hundred-warriors squad – only to see how monks fall under blows of axes and swords, having lifted their crosses high and begging their unknown to him God for protection... This will be a massacre instead of a battle – bloody slaughter because of avidity. And he, one of the best, will be their leader... and he cannot refuse for the price for that deed is a death and eternal damnation, forever depriving the one of entering into the golden chambers of Odin. Why doesn't he have a choice? Why must he exterminate defenseless ones – not warriors in any sense?

Or must he?

He roared in a powerless frenzy. Swept up on the house. Then grasped an ax and started smashing everything in the vicinity. Then somehow ran across a butt with water and tipped a head over there. This helped. He returned to his senses, calmed down.

Has been silently sitting, reflecting. So an hour has passed. Then he has sharply and fitfully risen up, as though having solved for himself a question of utmost importance.

“It is decided,” he thought clearly, “it is decided”.

\* \* \*

They were landing ashore from war galleys and he was commanding them – warriors of Odin. Warriors of a god, deadly for their enemies.

And battle shouts and enthusiasms were born once again. His brothers-in-arms were almost the same – yet their enemy was different now... Here the last of warriors is descending on a coast – now he should lead them into battle against yet unaware of their presence defenders of a monastery, that has conveniently arranged itself on a slope of mountains one kilometer away from here.

“Now or never. Now or never”.

“Warriors,” he cried out. “Great warriors of Odin, who have won in hundreds and hundreds of battles for the glory of our God! We are daring and courageous, and Odin leads us into the righteous battle! The fate of our enemies has already been sealed, for Odin himself directs us!”

A loud shout of approval was his answer.

“But I call to you, warriors. Whether we are going to fight for a worthy purpose for now? Whether a battle that is awaiting us is worthy of the glory of true fighters? We are obliged to destroy foes of ours – but whether they are real enemies for us? We have always battled worthily and have finished battles as conquerors – yet we will not leave this fight as conquerors, brothers! This fight is not ours, it will not lead us to the glory and golden halls. We must not conduct it!”

Rows of warriors started arguing. It seemed as if they all were greatly confused.

“Even one, a single one from you, support me, brothers. At least one courageous enough for that...”

“Yes, Hrothgar said right! This battle is not ours!” and one of his soldiers stood forward, saying these words. “I too have thought of that when has received my task to go under his command – and I have decided that this fight is not a deserving one. We will find no glory in this battle, but rather kill those who are unworthy to fight against the Warriors of Odin!”

Warriors started whispering among themselves. Some were winding heads in confusion, looking at what others were going to do. Yet this did not continue for long – totally not long. Only several dozens of seconds.

“You are the traitor! You dishonor victorious fighters! You are unworthy of entering the halls and will be forevermore damned for that cowardice!” Another warrior came forward as if almost spitting out these words in him.

“Betrayer!” he repeated and has approached Hrothgar, highly raising his battle ax. But during that moment the one who has supported Hrothgar has blocked his way and unshakably risen up in arms, being ready to fight – or to die. They are really going to die here soon – two against dozens...

And so he spoke again. Convinced them of an error, which they were almost ready to make. Urged them not to start this unworthy battle. Told of better battles and worthy encounters. He tried to find all those words clear for them – speaking their language, which has almost become distant for him.

And while he was speaking, another dozen of soldiers left the ranks and stood nearby him – in their eyes, there was the same courage and readiness, if required, to die here – as well as in his own. Yet entire thousands of fighters remained motionless. It seems that they are really going to die today – and be subject to eternal damnation for this apostasy...

“Listen not to this coward and liar! Each one, betraying the mighty Odin in battle is losing the right to enter His halls forever. Cowards are not welcomed in the halls of daring! Let us wipe off these traitors and liars – and start a great battle! Attack, true warriors of Odin!”

Accusatory words once again – and the ardor of warriors is flaming up. Confusion is disappearing from their faces to be replaced by fierceness and pitilessness once more...

“Well, brothers, we have to die here today,” he mentally addressed eleven true warriors. But they perfectly understood him even without these words – only have stronger seized their weapons in hands and moved closer – shoulder to a shoulder.

An instant – and one hundred warriors are rushing towards them.

An instant – and weapons are clashing.

Instants – are like eternities themselves.

Here twelve warriors stand shoulder to a shoulder, ready for fighting and dying.

Here the first run up enemy swings his blade – and his blow is beaten off.

Here more and more enemies are coming – and blades are striking tirelessly – they, these twelve, didn’t feel weariness this day.

Here the first of them is wounded – and they stand closer to protect him inside the formed circle.

His war cry, which was carried far away by a wind. And here the first wave of enemies rolls back from them as from an indestructible barrier. But enemies assault once again – and two more defenders are wounded. The circle closed even tighter and attacks became even more furiously.

First, second, third, tenth, twentieth... Enemies ran up and were forced back away from them – like from impenetrable wall. But there were many... so many of them... Here only five defenders keep fighting – the others have either been wounded or killed.

Four... three... two...

Only he and the warrior who have first stood for his defense remained. Here he turns to face him – and great wisdom and understanding shine in his eyes.

“Let us battle, brother!” and he stands to his back, protecting.

So, standing back to each other and striking aside incoming blows, they have held for two more minutes. And then almost seven dozens of warriors have crushed them and overwhelmed – and rushed to a monastery, encouraging themselves with wild roars...

\* \* \*

Instant? Eternity? How much time has truly passed?

He didn’t know – only remembered his last fight – one of twelve fighters – and a final blow of poleaxe, which has crushed him.

He didn’t die? He didn’t... Enemies have considered him dead and didn’t finish off...

But... if they haven’t managed to resist them... it turns out that monastery has been plundered and razed... They haven’t stopped them, they have failed...

He moaned – even not from incredible pain, swirling throughout all his body, but from an aching sensation of melancholy and grief. They couldn’t stop them... He and eleven nameless warriors...

Having made extreme efforts and cried from a cutting pain, he managed to rise up. About thirty warriors lied motionlessly before him, having silently observed the sky. And among them were his courageous fighters. Died ones... Let them, worthy ones, be not damned, but blessed instead – and find peace in the world they are traveling to now!

He looked around – there was no sign of war galleys. This means that the fight has already finished and warriors sailed back home. It means the monastery cannot be saved anymore... But maybe someone managed to survive the attack there. Somebody... even if one of the monks is still alive – he is obliged to help him, obliged to come for a rescue – that way he can at least rectify his mistake. Besides, he hasn't a way back, for now, he is both the exile and a cursed one – damned by his own people... let them consider him as dead instead.

Still constraining groans from intolerable pain, he rose up and slowly started walking in the direction of the monastery. One thousand meters, just one thousand meters... his debt.

He walked and fell. Then rose and walked again. And fell again. Then he started creeping by the ground.

Probably, a day passed. Possibly, a whole eternity instead. He knew not – he had one purpose and one way for now – and he was walking it. Even being practically flat-out – was still walking. And when at the long last strong walls of a monastery appeared before his obscured look, he has risen on his weak hands and smiled.

“I have found you at last,” his lips whispered silently, and he fell unconscious.

\* \* \*

Quiet sad song. Someone's hands, sliding on his face. And then – a cold water stream. He groaned and moved.

“Alive!” he heard through a veil, enveloping him.

Alive. He lives still. What for, if he wasn't able to fulfill his duty? What's the point? He tried to open own eyes – but only some vague red haze welcomed him. Then he closed them and submerged into a dream.

He slept and slept. From time to time he woke up for about ten minutes – and then fell asleep once again. When he has woken up again and tried to open eyes for one more time – the bloody mirage has gone. And then he has vaguely distinguished a human figure inclined over him and heard her voice – a tender voice of the girl.

“Sleep, it's still too early for you to move. Wounds haven't yet healed. Sleep”. He didn't resist a dream.

Then from time to time he woke up to hear her voice again and tried to distinguish her face through a haze – and failed to do that many times. But that memorial day came once when he has roused without assistance – and both his sight and hearing have cleared up.

“I have found you at last,” suddenly almost-forgotten words came up to his mind.

Yes, it was a girl, still very young, probably seventeen – eighteen years old. Only an adult hardness could easily be read in her eyes already.

And then he dared to ask.

“Where am I?”

“You are in our monastery,” the girl answered. “In my monastery,” she added and sobbed.

“You... you have helped me... Why?”

“You are not from those who have attacked us. I have understood that immediately. Our... my... brothers... have misled attackers into woods... to find their death there... survived barbarians returned here... and plundered the monastery. All those whom my brothers have overcome in battle remained in the woods – and you have approached the front of monastery walls instead. If you were among the attackers – you wouldn’t even risk doing that. You are not from the ones who have killed my brothers,” she said solidly.

“Y..y..e..s... t..ha..ths... so...” he uttered quietly with still disobeying tongue.

“Then why have you come here?” and she moved very close to him, studying his face with her demanding sight.

“I wanted... desired to stop them... and... couldn’t... forgive... forgive me, if you... still can.”

“You wanted to aid us?” her eyes opened widely in surprise, “why is that so? You are a one of their kind... you have stood against them?”

“I... couldn’t... allow... slaughter...” words came out very slowly and hardly from his throat.

“But it had taken place nevertheless... However, what difference does it make for now! Take a rest, sleep – and tell me the rest afterward.”

She was right, he required a rest now – lots of rest – and thus he plunged into that attractable dream once more.

\* \* \*

He woke up and felt her warm hand lying on a forehead.

He decided to keep his eyes closed – only tried to listen to her measured breathing. When at last he opened them – she removed her hand from his forehead, and brought a sponge to his face, impregnated with something cold.

“Woke up, did you?” this time her voice was much more affable, than the last time, “alright, stand up, now you should be quite able to do it.”

He tried to rise – and for the first time in many days, his body obeyed him. He sat down on a bed and with a cleared sight looked at her. She was surprisingly beautiful – at least she should be considered as such by the measures of her people. Fair hair was stretching down to shoulders, the smile was playing on her lips – for the first time in many days. Her eyes reflected own vivacity and at the same time some form of adult firmness. A white robe she was wearing.

“H... how much did I sleep?”

“A week, for almost a week you have remained here. Ate very little, has been practically sleeping for all day long. You, probably, don’t even remember that for now – minutes should have passed for you, I guess.”

“W... why have you helped me?”

“You strived to help us, after all, yes? Even if you... if it wasn’t possible for you then... you still weren’t among these barbarians. I was obliged to lend you aid, it was my personal debt. Oh, if only you have come here in time... were on time... but what could you possibly do against one hundred of fighters...”

“N... not alone. I wasn’t battling them alone... there were... twelve of us. They all... died.”

Following these words, tears came out on his coarse cheeks – but he hasn’t allowed himself such inexcusable weaknesses before at all.

The girl smiled somehow sadly and with a hope at the same time.

“All in all, there are still those men on earth who haven’t lost their heart, still they do exist. A pity you couldn’t help us. But what twelve soldiers could make against one hundred...”

“You said previously, that your brothers have died...”

“Yes, barbarians slaughtered them all. I was the only sister of this monastery... and the only survived one. Only to mourn over their death.”

And she, despite all external firmness, started crying.

“How have you survived then? Haven’t they touched you?”

“I... have hidden in a monastery. We had... a secret... entrance... and tunnel, leading from a monastery,” she was speaking, still sobbing, “I have survived a storm in there, how my father has ordered me... However, this storm has destroyed everything close to my heart...”

It seemed that she would be totally overwhelmed by her grief from returning memories. He stretched his hand and took her hand in own palms. May she know she’s not lonely in this world still...

They have been sitting quietly, having strongly compressed each other’s hands. So ten minutes passed. Finally, she managed to calm down.

“Have a rest, warrior,” she whispered silently and left the room.

\* \* \*

The first day, the second, the third... Week, another, third...

He finally completely recovered from his wounds and they have got a possibility to talk every evening. She missed these simple human conversations greatly now – and so did he. They shared the same trait in this – they both have become exiles, both lost their relatives.

Gradually she started to come visiting him more often. When she, suddenly, started remembering of these memorable grief days of her recent past – he consoled her. Sometimes she asked him to tell of his former battles – and listened to what he was saying with such an attention and care, which he hasn't noticed in any woman before.

Then their days of joint walks on monastery vicinities have come. These were remarkable days – bright and sunny days of spring. Winter snow has finally thawed – and has apparently taken away all worries with him. It was a wonderful time. Perhaps, one of the best in both his and her lives.

They were standing, having embraced, under a crone of some tree, through the foliage of which a sun was playing with its beams on their faces. He was saying these words that moment – ones of his heart. He has sworn that they will never part ways and always, forever, both in life and death – will be together.

Eternally will be together. Forever.

With her, unique her – he has truly fallen in love. Unlike he loved anyone else he loved her. He is still loving her. And will always be – in life – and in death.

\* \* \*

“Get ready! Move away! Ignite!”

The flame rushed upwards, desperately trying to devour in a flash of time a tenacious piece of a tree together with a man, bounded to it. Here its tongues are coming closer and closer – already dancing before his eyes. Soon it will all come to an end. It ends all so very soon...

Their common happiness didn't last for long.

A new raid of his horde came a year after – and only two defenders remained to protect the monastery – he and she. They have been captured – and he was recognized. At first, they have considered him as the Messiah – a one revived from dead – but shortly afterward someone has declared that he simply hasn't managed to thrust this traitor through a breast well enough with his ax. He didn't observe the one speaking these words – only his voice seemed somehow very familiar to him...

Traitors are never forgiven. Death is the fate of theirs. Through burning. Unprecedented execution for his people – they were usually killed in a fair fight. Probably he didn't even deserve such a fight judging by his brothers' decision – only a stab in the back.

She too must be burned to the death – as his accomplice – and that was the most terrible thing of all. But, as it came out, not for her – only not for her.

“I will remain with you forever – remember? In life and in death.”

“In life and in death – always,” he answered. And they embraced – for the last time in this life.

She was dragged away. Then she was fastened with iron ropes to the same pillar. And then a fire was ignited.

The flame assaulted with blinding and burning waves, devouring its legal victim. But the pain wasn't felt any longer. Two burning pillars. Two courageous persons.

“Together – forever!” he cried out with all remaining powers.

“Always!” her words reached his ears.

A new impact of elements – and they both have disappeared in the fire.

The crowd was shouting in ecstasy.

And only a few ones, who have turned away from this fire-site, swore to themselves – were giving a sacred oath of true warriors – to never in their lives allow such a thing anymore. To struggle for justice. Always. Only these few ones have seen, how two light spirits have soared high from burning columns. How they embraced and smiled to each other – and have risen up to the heavens.

“Together – forever,” they have overheard.

“Always,” repeated they.

*2005-01-03*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## Forward into the past

Step, step, step.

His feet were carrying him forward – there where he has once spent ten years of his life, ten long years... Here he came out of a next street's turn and stopped – sighted joyfully and with relief. Yes, he has come at the long last – after ten years of separation he returned back to his native school, to people who have given him so much – helped make the first steps, supporting and encouraging him...

So, he has come, returned to his memoirs in reality. Only after ten years of separation life has finally granted him this chance. After all, he was just a little child when he once crossed this threshold – small helpless one, needing protection and aid of others... Now he could defend others himself.

Approached a school building – and almost instantly was plunged into a joyful and carefree atmosphere of childhood – the time which he spent in a work, and not entertainments. Entertainments... he smiled. Burning of the precious gift of life, a substitute for idlers. He distinctly remembered for now how he has spent this time working – nay, not in that silly cramming, but clever study instead – and learned to find joy in that.

And others... other men did other choices. Someone – one close to his, someone completely different. They built their own life, everyone his own way – as they desired, as considered it necessary, as it was convenient for them. In a word, everyone was walking his own path – they had the right. Someone drank beer and smoked cigarettes. Somebody endless played football, spending his time for all day long on a stamped asphalt of a stadium. Some crammed thick correct textbooks. Shortly, everyone was going his own way he has chosen.

A step, and another one, and lots of more steps – rising on old ladders of an old building. First, second, the third floor... Stop. He will first meet his former class teacher, and then the rest of them. A knock at the door – and a painfully familiar, yet considerably grown old woman's face. A warm smile on his face – and the woman answers him with the same. She recognizes him and welcomes, obviously glad to meet him – and so does he. A conversation starts – a long talk which, it appeared, will last for an eternity. He was talking about those ten years of his new life, as well as of old school one, – the way he understood and felt it for now. That conversation lasted and lasted – he was speaking, and she was carefully and attentively listening to. Beloved school teacher.

And the time to leave came once – to return back to his institute in a different city. The last farewell waving of hand – and in a way. In a way.

\* \* \*

Knocking of iron wheels. The measured rocking of the train's apartment. A whistle of wind through a slightly opened window. Sleepy passengers. Somebody's fluffy cat, making his impressive strolling through a salon.

“Barsik,” he called. “Come here.” But the cat only slowly raised a tail, turned his body and started moving in the opposite direction. A funny being.

Now he was returning to the town when he has graduated from the institute and has been working. A next stop... a methodical voice of the driver... entering and leaving passengers. A face – this familiar face... one of his school friend. The man was wandering directly towards him – with some sort of unseeing glance, he was scouting the surroundings... A tired face of emaciated man. Here’s the man sat down nearby and hasn’t recognized him at all – yet they have studied together for such a while! Studied at one school...

“Ivan,” he called. “Ivan, hi. Didn’t you recognize me? No? I’m Pavel. We have studied in one class! Have you truly forgotten?”

“Pavel... Oh, yes... hi. Hi,” repeated Ivan and looked away to face the window.

Heart of his missed a bit and compressed painfully. What’s that, what has happened? Not like that, in a totally different way, he imagined the meeting of friends! Has something dreadful befallen? He has to find out!

“Ivan, are you not glad to see me? What’s that with you, Ivan? You don’t look like yourself. Where has this cheerful and sociable guy whom you once were gone? I know, I am assured that you are still that one, just a bit depressed, right? You have simply tired after all, yes? Come on, tell me a bit about yourself. Let’s remember the past and our old good days. Aye? Ivan, wake up!”

And he has shaken him by shoulders.

“Stop... no need to... shaking. S-s-s... stop...” hardly moving a tongue he murmured in reply. “I recognized... y... you. Leave... leave me be... with my... p... p... pain. Don’t in... inte... interfere, I b... beg you.”

“But what, what has happened?! Ivan, you know – I have never abandoned you in trouble, never. And never did you, we have always aided one another, each and every time! You couldn’t forget that all, couldn’t... I would not believe that! Do you hear me? I dare not believe that you have forgotten!”

“The w... wi... wife abandoned me. And work... was... fired”, Ivan’s words finally reached Pavel’s ears.

He sighed. And when people finally learn to concern life’s circumstances easier and not to give up before them? After all the life simply opens a new blank page, where the writings of their lives are to be imprinted – the next stage of life. Why’s bitter about that? One must be able to say goodbye with no insults and part ways – easily. It’s necessary to be able to learn vital lessons and overcome barriers for no growth and evolution are ever meant possible without it.

He overlooked his friend over again. All right, looks like the time has come to use heavy offensive means.

“Divorced with a wife? Have been discharged from the office? What sort of nonsense is that?! And you have become limp? Like a wet mitten?! But you will no doubt find a better job! And talking of the wife... she’s not your property, right?”

She has made her choice – accept it no matter how cruel in relation to you it could look. It's not rigid – it's you perceive it as such for you have become too attached to her and started to consider her as own property. She's a free person and has made her choice – the one she deemed necessary. Wish her good luck!"

He wasn't completely assured that his speech will be apprehended and comprehended at once. He had a different main goal for now – to stir up a friend.

And thus he continued speaking – parried ridiculous and eccentric attacks, inspired him, convinced that everything is in his powers. He thirsted to help his friend, wanted that he finally learned to help himself and had no more need for aid from the outside.

They were talking – and his friend was crying. He started to cry when they began talking about his life and analyze it. He cried of former dreams and hopes which have not come true, cried of a pure and crystal love which he desired to find and which he couldn't – for he did search outside, while it was necessary to seek in own heart. He was talking about how he has come under the influence of former friends who couldn't be considered as such, how he started drinking. How he didn't have enough willpower and stopped short, has given in and started falling into the abyss. How the wife, no more reconciled with constant binges of her husband has thrown him aside and left for another man – departed without even trying to help. How with his own hands did he tore and crumbled dreams of family happiness, of mutual love and how began to go to bars and nightclubs. How he possessed a new woman each new day – a woman for a day – something pleasant to lie in bed with, not a person for him. How he tried to interrupt his life and start another one, but always couldn't find enough power inside, for he has ceased to believe in him different – and has already given himself up as a bad job.

He was speaking, and his friend was listening to. They took lessons which Ivan should have taken a long time ago. They were talking about a choice he has made – a wrong, not the best one, and of a choice of a different nature. A choice of life instead of death, a choice of happiness yet not sadness, a choice of joy in place of grief.

For a long time they have been sitting together – and under a stream of warm, powerful and convincing words his friend finally calmed down. Believed in himself, and an unshakable conviction to change his life, by all means, reflected itself upon his face. He's a strong one. He's capable. He will do that. Most certainly will.

Warm words of gratitude, happy smiles. A farewell.

"Farewell, Ivan!"

"See you, Pavel!"

Knocking of wheels. The measured rocking of the train. A cat, gracefully moving through a salon. He was approaching his city. He greatly hoped that he has managed to aid his friend – so greatly hoped. They were approaching a city. Life was opening a new blank page in the book with his own writings.

2012-09-26

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## History of one duel

Sir Harold was waiting for his ultimate hour. He moved backward and forwards on the chilled ground, periodically tapping iron armoring of his shield with a sword, but even he, who has passed through tens of tournaments with live contenders, was feeling like a fish out of water. Once again he checked up his equipment, tightly pulled down his helmet, already fairly well sitting on his head, reexamined mobility of forearms plates and armor joints, silently sworn to himself under a nose, unsuccessfully trying to fix up a slipped right steel boot, and, at the long last, as if having become happy with a recent audit, stopped, raised a prepared shield higher on a shoulder and pinned the ground with his sword with all possible strength, having leant the elbows on a similarity of newly made armrest. Sir Harold was left with little options left, except for waiting – because this place, thought consecrated, yet nevertheless keeping some ominous silence, could brag with nothing else, except for a pair hundreds of tombs, stretched through its territory in rows.

His beloved, fine maiden Angelina, could show her face in any minute...

\* \* \*

Today sir William was in an excellent spiritual mood, caused not even by those two liters of fine red wine, which he, excited with contemplation of bared female legs, has had to consume for the sake of both heart, mind and liver shortly after the beginning of a ball, by mainly by the comprehension, which has already become slightly vague, that today, in this blessed by the monarch day, his luck, at last, has smiled upon him. The daughter of a local count, who has organized this oh-so-hot (e-e-c!) celebration, fine maiden Angelina, after would-to-be-seem totally unsuccessful month of courting, wheezing of serenades and painfully senseless standing under the windows, at last, has given her consent to their personal meeting, which she unambiguously named as an appointment. And almost everything would be plainly remarkable, if (e-e-c!) she had not chosen a rather strange place for aforementioned meeting, being inspired by that mysterious female wisdom of sorts. No, most certainly fearless Sir William wasn't afraid of any dead persons, dead men, deceased ones, zombies, skeletons and all their ilk, especially this very moment of time, greatly encouraged by a third finished bottle, but, nevertheless, to choose a cemetery of local small town was rather a... m-m-m... the exotic choice for such appointments.

All these thoughts had been swirling in sir William's head, while he was unsuccessfully trying to escape from two evils at once – a red one and a female one. They, these two harms, two devilishly pleasant temptations, were still doing their best to try to tempt him, while he, now having remembered of that very meeting and almost instantly having sobered up, smoothly, trying not to make any superfluous noise in a hall, maneuvering on a move between heaps of iron accessories, scattered by newly coming visitors in an absolutely senseless and chaotic manner, was making his way up to a place of a disposition of own metal inventory's stock.

Still trying to operate accurately, which has become quite a difficult and time-consuming task after the fourth started bottle of wine, sir William, at last, managed to remove his helmet from a previously created own iron heap, and rashly pulled it down on his head, which has somehow become fairly gray-haired. But to put on a breast armor seemed as almost impossible mission – for even wine, especially red one, was capable from time to time to make one look fat somehow unexpectedly, mercilessly and frankly unscrupulously, – however, after just twenty more minutes of curses and crawling he managed to perform this peculiar task as well. The problem in the form of two steel boots suddenly came out of nowhere. Having tried all imaginable combinations (presumably right boot – on a left foot, obviously left boot – on a presumably right foot, etc.) he, at last, was forced to drop that devilishly pointless job, having doomed own feet to travel in a new, yet somewhat little grease drawers. The last in today’s menu (after a red Burgundian wine, that’s it) was plate gauntlets and a faithful sword, which has already become a little bit blunted after his last five years old tournament. Finally, almost after half an hour from the beginning of own regimentals, having taken a sword in a right hand, and a bouquet of roses, scarlet as blood or Burgundian wine, in a left one, sir William slowly and yet somehow firmly started moving in the memorized direction to places so much more peaceful and silent then the castle of the father of his beloved one...

\* \* \*

Sir Harold was starting to lose his patience. Enough time has passed already since that moment when Angelina should appear, but her trace still didn’t appear at all, not to mention becoming cold. And it was the easiest task to catch a cold here – a dank north wind started to blow by midnight, and clouds began to mass highly in a sky, apparently indenting to water the sinner Earth with long-held tears. Over the earth, paying its last tribute of heat to night’s air, a fog started condensing out of nowhere. Sir Harold, who began patting his armor with steel gauntlets and tapping with heels of feet on the hardened ground in a vain hope to be warmed, was almost ready to abandon this useless, judging from the point of place, deed, as suddenly unpredicted, inexplicable, bewitching and frightening phenomenon has appeared.

Directly to his dislocation, slowly and inevitably, being unsteady here and there, slicing a disobedient gray fog with feet and muttering something ominously muffled under his own nose, a walking dead was moving. He was being approached by a revived dead man – the very embodiment of these infernal places, where traitorous Angelina has finally persuaded him to come!

Sir Harold had no more doubt – the hours, spent in this ground crypt, were a great acknowledgment of that feeling. A fear of the enemy, which has suddenly came out of nowhere; a curiosity, which was born; anger on the eccentric daughter of a foolish count; awe before her as well – all this has now mixed up in a heart of knight Harold into one indescribable and explosive mix, so much stronger than the one, knight William was capable of making from a red Burgundian wine. Without a second thought and realization of what he is aspiring to make, sir Harold rushed forward in a direction of those midnight tombs’ spawn, swinging his sword and instinctively closing his head with a shield, shouting something unrecognizable in the process.

Only the god of the dead probably knows, what exactly sir Harold was yelling during those instants of time. Perhaps, these were the last words of a warrior, who suddenly realized the approach of his death and for the first and last time in his lifespan dared to look into its eyes without fear... Or, possibly, these were words of a lover, rushing to face the enemy and protect his beloved one... Or, maybe, these were mutual agonal damnations of former friends, who have gone into their hatred far too far. Heck, who really knows what he was screaming! It's truly difficult to notice that in minutes like that. Anyway, but in that very instant of time, when he at last reached oh-so-dead-one and with all possible force smashed him with a sword into armored chest, his last words sounded approximately like: "...ie, beast!"

"Oh-m-m-m-m-y-y-y-y-y! Ouch, it hurts! Now I'm gonna make you, assh...!" the almost-dead-one started to yell, and, having dumped a helmet from a left hand, which has unknowingly taken a place there, and having bared his feet (or were initially like those?), jumped out forward, violently swinging his sword in turn. "Now I'll make ye! Like that! And that way! Y-e-a-a-h-h! Take that, you! W-w-h-h-h-o-o-o-h-h-h!" he continued screaming, turning around over his feet and sending new blows to the unknown foe.

Finally, either having been inspired with a made progress or having definitely lost all battle heat, it suddenly ceased swirling and stupidly stared ahead.

"Harold!" "William!" "William!" "Harold!" suddenly shouted both died one, as well as nearly died one.

"What are you doing here?! You have nearly killed me, you iron fool!"

"Just look at yourself, dressed up like a walking dead and roam the nights dead one knows where!"

"Boys!" approaching female voice suddenly broke the chill darkness. "Boys, don't even dare to quarrel!"

And, having that said, just like a werewolf from a night, maiden Angelina, or Anzhelina, or even Angelica, or just even Angela for members of her family only, or just "my beloved", appeared, covered in a bit disarranged from a fast-running plaid.

"I'll explain it all to you right now!" she promised, smiling. "Well, here... it's... a timeframe accident, yes," she admitted confusedly.

"You!" sir Harold exhaled.

"You!" sir William repeated just the same.

"How dared you!" Harold croaked.

"How you dared!" William paraphrased.

It seemed as if former friends, who have now almost come to senses from a previous shock of their meeting, are now ready to seize each other once more.

"Duel!" sir William shouted.

"Duel!" sir Harold confirmed his fears.

“Up to the first blood!” sir William tried to be more specific.

“You bet!” sir Harold encouraged him.

“Let’s do it!” sir William allowed.

“To battle!” sir Harold ascertained.

“K-k-k-i-i-i-l-l-l-him!” Angelina screamed suddenly.

And a fight, which has almost taken place, still remained insolvent.

“So you...” sir Harold tried to begin.

“Has made us meet together for a purpose...” sir William tried to continue.

“For you it was...” sir Harold assumed.

“Entertainment!” sir William was terrified.

“You...” sir Harold almost went angry.

“Inutile so-to-be-writer...” sir William almost calmed down.

“So-to-be-count-daughter,” sir Harold corrected him a bit.

“Count-yet-another-useless-night,” sir William uttered with a braided language.

“Let’s get out of here,” sir Harold offered.

“Sounds reasonable,” sir William summed it up.

“Boys, boys, wait a moment, where are you going? What, are you not going to fight for me?!” maiden Anzhelina asked with astonishment and sacredly, having quickly glanced over both of them. “And for what damn reason have I then specifically asked you to put on those rusty cans, and what for did I constrain myself for more than a month, and for what unknown purpose did I ask my father to buy that red Burgundian wine, from which one of you have definitely lost his head along with a helmet and started crying with these ping Burgundian snivels?!” she was enraged.

“I don’t battle with my fellow countrymen!” sir Harold replied.

“Especially for the ones such as you!” sir William welcomed his reply.

“Wait a minute, do you mean that you both know each other?!” Angelina was surprised, still trying to keep on herself a plaid, which has almost flown from her back.

“A bit...” sir Harold answered evasively.

“We battled once in a tournament,” sir William dispelled her doubts.

“A-a-a-n-n-d-d... who finally prevailed?” Angelina found nothing better but to ask exactly that way.

“Doesn’t matter...” a fellow countryman William answered evasively.

“Let’s leave,” fellow countryman Harold summed up.

“One Burgundian wine for each of us?” knight William made an offer.

“To end such an ending, it will surely suffice!” knight William assured him.

And with these words being said, two fellow countryman, who have known each other for almost five years, two knights without a sign of fear or reproach, two admirers and subjugators of ladies and two fans of red Burgundian wine, slowly and continuing speaking and approvingly knocking each other with steel gauntlets on shoulders, were going away from a mournful place of bitterness, eternity and love, which has mournfully become a bitterness in the eternity.

They were departing – and the culprit of the future celebration, eccentric maiden Angelina, or just Anzhelina, or even simply Angelica, was sitting on a free tombstone and crying.

What was she crying about that very day? Did she cry of the eternal and endless love, which she has always wanted to have, and which she always had to kill for the sake of social norms, accepted in society? Did she cry of a proud and unshakable machismo, easily shaken by a red Burgundian wine? Did she cry of own powerlessness to solve something through power? Or of own unwillingness to solve something at all for now?

Who the dead man knows what was she crying about that dark and mourning night!

But anyway, even this seemingly eternal night ended once... and the very next morning from almost inconspicuous apartments of a count's castle a painfully familiar voice cried out:

“Heck, and where is my last saved bottle of Burgundian wine?!”

*Morals:*

The less we know the woman – the easier we live,

The more we know the woman – the more together thrive.

2008-08-26

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Memory of the millenniums

Small nomadic tribe. Hunting and living, living and hunting on each new terrestrial haven. But they were short – for the vastness of steppes awaited them, they were short – for battles were inevitable.

Battles of equestrian orders. A lethal enemy's weapon – long bent sticks, firing killing needles. His companions died every day... he learned to get used to it, he had to. In peaceful times the tribe expanded and spread again – ready for new battles, new life, and new victories.

This was his life. In this world and in this time.

\* \* \*

Turning to the opponent. Double swing of a sword in the right hand. A strike – and flatwise blow on the armor sideways. Moving the sword back. The sword describes an arch over opponent's head and again strikes in another side. Now the blade starts moving to the ground... both hands take it – and another blow on the plates, closing a shoulder on the right hand.

On the left. Right. Left. Right.

An arch again. Again the sword is turned in hands and flies into attack... another blow. Continuing to shower rival with strikes, he moved sideways. Some more steps and he has appeared behind the back. A blade, brought by two hands over his head... this should be the last blow, the opponent will be defeated.

The steel racing into attack... the opponent is turning to face him... The clanging of clashed steel. His strike has been beaten off. The one he battled was not the weakling at all. A series of successful blows – is everything he has managed to make in this duel. There will be no easy victory – but a long and daring fight instead, a battle which he has thirsted with all his heart for a long time – a battle of worthy ones. It will be the battle of worthy – and let the strongest prevail!

One step back. The foot set back aside for stability. Clanging of steel tools which have met in their dance – now it's his turn. A sharp withdrawal of a blade downwards – opponent's sword slides off the block. Now a blade's turn in a bottom. The blade has flushed, describing a circle in the air, – a blow. Opponent's plate armor has absorbed the major portion of blow again – he resisted.

Now a tap of a sword for repeated blow... he had no time left. His flatwise blow on an armor has not shaken the contender, and that has given him time. Now he has to resist rival's blow... his sword was describing an arch for another blow... but it was too late to use it as a block.

A hit. Stars in his eyes. The blow of the opponent has been made directly between the plates, covering a shoulder, and a helmet. A dangerous one, also demanding high skill, to lift a blade highly – and fair time for a swing.

Blow. Block. Blow. Block. Clanging steel, which has met in its favorite dance. Two fitting blades.

Two men, breathing heavily under heavy armor, enclosing their bodies. Two warriors, who have met each other in battle. Two knights, fighting for a title of the champion of the tournament – fighting for sighs of beautiful ladies and admiration of commoners. Battling, battling as if all their life goals and all hopes have been put into this battle...

And let the strongest prevail!

\* \* \*

The centurion's order is clear. His phalanx along with others will pass in a wedge through the enemy – pass, sweeping steel-clad infantry and crushing the marksmen, positioned on a hill. It will be a glorious fight – yes, glorious fight. They will prevail, they will win a victory in this battle for the emperor. Legionaries of Rome know no defeats.

Quickly given orders. Movement in the ranks of contradictory armies. Minute, another, the third one. Phalanxes preparing for battle. It will be a great battle...

Two iron walls, bristling with swords and spears, which have moved towards each other. The fighting shouts, carried by a wind across the field of battle. The loud orders of commanders traveling by air. The fight began to boil...

His formation bit into enemy ranks. The exposed forward spear... a sword's swing – and rival's shaft fly aside. Forward strike – the enemy falls on the ground.

A blow on his armor from behind. He has reeled, but has resisted – armor has absorbed a blow. The turn towards new danger... a blade, sparkling in morning beams of the sun – and another opponent falls down.

A block. Someone from behind tries to strike at him again. A movement of blade downwards – and swift attack back without turning...

And yet again the blade flits in hands. Again, as countless times before, once the simple legionary, and now the leader of a phalanx – is in a fight, in the glorious battle of great Roman empire. The shouts of battle and clanging of metal once again. Enemies, falling from blows of the blade. His comrades in arms, dying on the battlefield...

A battle once again. Battle of his empire – and his battle also. Glorious fight of the grand empire...

\* \* \*

The scientist and the researcher, the physicist and the chemist, the writer and the philosopher, a wise man. He was all of them – all of them were living in him. He devoted himself to work – for the queen, for commoners, for all citizens of his own country, for the ones in other. It was his life – his life of studying the world...

\* \* \*

They were hunted and pursued. They were searched for and eliminated. They were hated – hated by those, who had not the slightest idea before of the right to execute and grant pardon, which they would soon gain.

But they have gained this right – received it for murder and persecution of others, have chosen it as a necessary step – the one, leading nowhere. But did they really know about it?

Prisons and colonies. Penal servitudes and executions without trial. The ruined families. The deformed destinies. The destroyed culture. It was a horrible time...

\* \* \*

He was the creator – one of those, loving his work – the artist and the writer of a new century. The century of creativity and freedom, a century of democracy of reasonable people – a century of peace, a century of creative recovery and inspiration. The century of world's blossoming – century of sunrise.

He worked along with other people. Creativity for goodness became a symbol of the epoch. Virtue became a world star, the sincere love became the sun, tenderness became the drops of a rain irrigating the Earth, the purified human hearts – stars in a sky.

The wonderful epoch of sunrise and ascension...

\* \* \*

Pictures emerged from his memory one after another and immediately rushed away into unknown lands.

Epochs and centuries, replacing each other. His life – his set of lives in this world, set of the ways, passed by him in different epochs. He was all of them... he was in many times.

Now, only now he has finally remembered it. He has remembered it at the long last – this memory of his ways was always with him, was in each new life, but only now he could feel and realize all immenseness of own life – and all its greatness. Lives in myriads of epochs, life in myriads of times. Myriads of lives in one of the myriads of worlds.

How huge was his journey! How even longer and greater it can become! He has learned much in this time – willpower in battles, determination, and courage, fidelity and devotion, creativity as a life feat – all this became him. All this has grown and has assimilated in him.

He was in all – and all was in him. He was the creator, he, as well as others, was the creation of God – and was becoming his semblance.

The man has still stood for some time on his knees, listening to himself. This memory was with him – it always was with him. Now it was with him forever. He has already learned much about himself and this world, but there is still even more left to discover. For his journey – is a journey in the eternity.

And then he stood up and with a confident gait has moved to an exit – and left a temple.

Has sighed deeply. So, this way has just begun – his work is awaiting him, his life is waiting for him. And let the memory of this day never leave him – let it become the fire, guiding his way – a new journey in the transformed world.

So be it!

*2003-07-01*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Plan 2020

## Fragment 1

*Sensation! Sensation! Truth? Or provocation? Ones, who meaning learn and give – those, who Plan’s will outlive.*

“Mihylach, ye stupid berk! Who names articles as such, huh?” *a note of the editor-in-chief.*

As we have learned, unique fragments from speeches of ancient Dalaj-Llamas, entitled precisely “Plan 2020”, have recently been acquired by ubiquitous Chinese hackers. By means of extreme efforts and an entire box of very strong drinks, two of our translators managed to transliterate a part of ancient Sanskrit records from Chinese to Russian. Cannot translate it backward, though.

As it’s well known for all semi-and-almost enlightened beings, mankind has been promised some wonderful New World for a long time, in which those who haven’t died on the way will once be able to come. Terms, unfortunately, were always indistinct and foggy, and that has generated a lot of coffee guessing together with another perversion, but all earlier predicted dates and terms have appeared to be nothing more than past.

As we were told by two of our translators, they managed to overpower the translation of text fragments, speaking about how the geopolitical map of the world will change in (near?) future – or, to be more exact, how some of the countries, known to us, will be called.

And now we present the given fragment to your valuable attention.

Russia → Chinisia (“Heck, does that mean that my children are gonna to be narrow-eyed?” *a note of the proofreader.*)

USA → DSA, Disjointed States of America (“A fitting destiny!” *a note of the proofreader.*)

Italy → Volcania (“The last day of the old Rome?” *a note of the proofreader.*)

Poland → Treacherland (“I have never trusted them!” *note of the proofreader.*)

Ukraine → Stealin (“Do they have better options?” *a note of the proofreader.*)

Great Britain → Great Disastriant (“Plop-plop-plop?” *a note of the proofreader.*)

Japan → Japorobotia (“Possible, a hint on mythical technological innovations, hmmm?” *comment of the proofreader.* “More likely on consequences of the mass application of an anime,” *comment of the translator.*)

Iraq → Gloom (“No comments,” *comment of the proofreader.*)

Israel → Crazyrael (“Remained without trousers without States...” *note of the proofreader.*)

Afghanistan → Poppystan (“Red Alert?” *a note of the proofreader.*)

Note: the given list is partially incomplete for two aforementioned translators have not yet recovered from their own Doomsday after having consumed an above-named quantity of warming up drinks.

Expect more sensations in following releases of our newspaper!

\* \* \*

## Fragment 2

In the last release of our glamorous newspaper, we have told you about that wondrous discovery of ancient texts of the Dalaj-Llamas, having that simple and plain name “Plan 2020”, and not even a gram less surprising translation of one of their fragments, performed by our expert linguists in the blissfull-absent state of consciousness. We are glad to inform you that for the purposes of translation of these really untrue manuscripts cognac has appeared to be much more effective than vodka. Strange, surely, but that fact still remains.

Anyway, we now present next portion of ancient Sanskrit records of the Tibetan origin and Earth dislocation, translated from Chinese to Russian (still cannot translate it backward, though) to your keen interest.

In the given fragment the speech is, apparently, goes about modern, last or future views of these very Dalaj-Llamas on some of the nations, living on our sinful Earth. And we present these views to your valuable attention.

*“Who’ll understand the Russian soul, if there he’ll pour vodka’s bowl?”*

*“Imperials, liars, bastards and all... Americans now are awaiting their fall.”*

*“You’ll tire waiting for some trick... of Poland, now, my friends, we speak.”*

*“For pennies sprats from them, one gets... for these are Baits, they are the Letts!”*

*“And the Six Column there lives, they were imperials and thieves, but now they speak the dachshund tongues. Oh yeah, they are Anglo-Saxons.”*

*“Graceful as a cupboard, severe like a colt – it’s, brothers, German, not Arnold!”*

*“They have glamorous pederasts, their maidens don’t provoke disgust. Country of creams and of perfumes... they are the Frenchman, dear loons!”*

*“Their bodies black, and begging stance... but souls are white of Africans!”*

*“The Jewish essence always hits – they will undress but show no tits.”*

*“The spirit of Theodor’s still giving them some bully force – and they play football like the bulls... these are the Spaniards, old fellows!”*

*“Their sense of humor really suxx... stop laughing, mortal, they are Czechs!”*

*“Severe in past, they were in strolls... assimilated now Mongols!”*

*“The country of the tiny sun... it’s the island – Japan!”*

*“Republic Korea still bleating with North, we hope to the war it won’t ever go.”*

*“He is yellow-faced, narrow-eyed, with lots of goods he’ll you provide, among the youth he’s like a wise man... and every fifth Chinese then!”*

*“They all were drinking the milk of cows and thus spiritually grow – and living life with deprivations, the Hindu’s now a spiritual nation!”*

*Note:* as you might have already guessed, given list is incomplete once again, simply because cognac has rightfully appeared to be much more intriguing than vodka on some of the set of post-consuming symptoms. If we happen to find even a more effective mean, we will surely inform you of that discovery.

Expect more sensations in following releases of our newspaper!

*“Yours faithfully,” comment of the editor-in-chief.*

*2010-01-23*

*Genre: Report*

*Category: Recognized*

# **Fantasia**

# How fantasy heroes will battle with the Ancient Red Dragon

## 1. Warrior

There is nothing easier for him than to defeat some unfledged flying lizard. Before entering the den of a dragon he triply loudly tries to challenge him on a “fair fight” and then, having received only silence in reply, barges into the lair himself. Feeling absolutely no confusion from a view of a heap of bones and skulls, scattered through the lair (he had to see much more intriguing things in battles, after all), finds a lurked dragon. Performs a short war-call speech, like “Into the battle!” to encourage himself, and straight off rushes into a fight. When the dragon tries to breathe a fire on him, instinctively defends with a shield. After that the dragon needs only to have a supper from the next titbit of a roasted meat, spitting out indigestible iron trinkets in a process.

## 2. Thief

Waits for a whole year to choose the longest and darkest night possible. This night creeps to a den exactly at midnight. Thoroughly searches for a secret door. Having found none, opens front entrance with a lockpick, and makes a way in a den on tiptoe, trying not to make much noise (who knows, maybe dragon suddenly does not sleep yet?). Searches heaps of bones and skulls in a search of valuables. Finds a sleeping dragon. Accurately walk around, setting the traps he has brought with himself. Hides in a shade behind a stone and throws a poisoned dagger from his cover. When a dragon, having awakened from something light, which has struck him and slid off his scales, half-asleep breathes a fire, illuminating at least half of his den, the thief tries to hide in a shade of the flashed fire. After that the dragon needs only to have a supper from the next titbit of a roasted meat, spitting out all those jewelry in a process, previously concealed by a dragon and then pocketed by a thief, which now have been returned to their lawful legal owner once again.

## 3. Priest

Before going to a campaign against a dragon, thoroughly prays to his gods for them to strengthen his belief and grant him their divine aid in a battle with a winged demon. Going to a campaign, he stocks up with several liters of holy water. Having at last reached journey’s point of destination, he approaches a den and blesses himself. Being inspired by the made successes, he fearlessly enters the lair. Tries to revive the souls of living beings, sent into nonexistence by the winged demon previously, by casting “Raise Read” spell and splashing holy water on them. When a dragon, having noticed this obscenity, flies close to a priest, the priest blesses himself once again with a sacred sign, shouting: “I banish you, evil one!”. He has the time to cast “Bless”, “Divine Favor”, “Prayer”, “Holy Word” and “Fire Resistance” before the dragon spits a stream of fire on him. Breathed fire heats up an armor of the priest to 50 °C and then in his last efforts the servant of gods tries to extinguish the fire around him with last remnants of holy water. After that, the dragon needs only to breathe a fire stream once more to have a supper from the next tidbit of a roasted meat, having satisfied his thirst with several liters of holy water, yet not splashed by a faithless priest.

#### **4. Paladin**

He has been born to struggle against such evils that destroy settlements of innocent peasants and eat their virgin girls. Having not the slightest sign of hesitation and fear, wasting no unnecessary words (except for something like “For the sake of justice!”) goes on a campaign against the dragon. After many days of traveling and having reached a lair, enters it fearlessly. Having not the slightest sign of hesitation and fear bravely walks over the heaps of bones and skulls through a den. Seeing a dragon shouts – “Godless creature! Today’s yours Doomsday!” – and heads into the battle, swinging his sparkling sword “Holy Avenger +5”. Has not the slightest sign of hesitation and fear when an exhaled stream of fire comes near him. After that his armor, heated up to 120 °C, surpasses in the degree of brilliance even his sacred sword. After that the dragon needs only to have a supper from the next tidbit of a roasted meat, having carefully spat out (and have added to the already impressive list of his treasures) “Holy Avenger +5” sword.

#### **5. Mage**

Before going on a campaign, for several years sits at the reading of ancient books and manuscripts, concerning the history of the draconic race, their arrival into this world, their classification, character traits, and basic habits and, finally, their weak spots. Having being armed with all that knowledge along with an ancient magic staff and several tens of spell scrolls, at last, starts his voyage. Having passed some kilometers and have been tired of walking on foot, casts “Fly” and then overcomes all remained distance to a lair in several pitiful minutes. Having noticed a den casts “Detect Magic” on it. Becomes alerted when the spell displays the hugest fluctuations of magic force in a den. Carefully surveys den’s vicinities, trying to digest unrecorded magical fluctuations. Before entering a lair casts on himself all that magic stuff like “Haste”, “Minor Globe Of Invulnerability”, “Major Globe Of Invulnerability”, “Greater Globe Of Invulnerability”, “Lesser Magic Reflection”, “Greater Magic Reflection”, “Protection From Elements”, “Protection From Evil”, “Protection From Alignment”, “Stoneskin”, “Greater Stoneskin”, “Spell Immunity”, “Total Immunity”, and only then accurately enters it.

Takes a breath when he determines that the source of detected earlier magical fluctuations are, in fact, artifacts, scattered together with heaps of bones and skulls. Overcomes the desire to be engaged in their immediate studying, having decided to postpone this sort of business for later attention. Trying not to lose too much time, moves through a den and notices a lying dragon at last. When the dragon flies up to him, intending to engulf him in flames, mage casts “Time Stop” and then beholds the dragon, frozen in the air, unable to look away from its strong as a steel red scales, and trying to remember, for what powerful magic component this scaly ingredient was required. Having regained one’s senses casts a “Fireball” on a hovering dragon.

Having noticed, that it has not affected the dragon as it was supposed to do, finally remembers the descriptions, read earlier in manuscripts, of representatives of his kind and (in particular) their total and complete invulnerability to fire. Still have some time to cast “Chain Lightning”, which, along with hitting the dragon, as a side effect destroys practically all artifacts, stocked up by the dragon, after that the dragon come away from a period of time-nonexistence, and spits out a fire stream on a dire magician. The mage observes with surprise his magical staff, which has become an analog of a torch in Christmas night, and only then on the edges of his consciousness realizes, that all effects of his magic protections have had just enough time to already vanish. After that the dragon needs only to have a supper from the next tidbit of a roasted meat, having replenished his magical supplies from a heap of rings, necklaces and other jewelry, spat out from the chewed magician.

## **6. Barbarian**

Having learned that somewhere in his vicinities lives some ancient, and, moreover, red dragon, screams with a loud war-call and runs in the direction, where (presumably) the dragon should dwell. Having been running for several days, at the long last comes by some sort of miracle across a dragon’s den. Emits a war cry once again, calling a dragon on a fight. When a dragon, woken up by this inhuman roar, claws out of his cave, the barbarian enters a berserker mode and tries to chop a dragon into pieces. After that, the dragon needs only to observe a fairly fire-bathed and still violently twitching muscular body of a former dragon’s bane.

## **7. Ranger**

Becomes very disappointed, having learned that the ancient red dragon does not dwell in woods. Then, having loaded himself with several quivers of arrows starts the voyage. Carefully investigates all traces, found on the road, trying to identify, which of them can possibly belong to a dragon. After many days of traveling finally reaches a den. Compares traces around a den with earlier taken samples to become convinced that it’s the valid den of a valid dragon. Before entering a lair, summons Black Bear from the nearest forest. Creeps into the lair together with a bear. Observes with astonishment, how this very hungry bear eats remains of unlucky adventurers, slaughtered by a dragon. Having noticed a dragon from afar, fires several tens of arrows, which lay down accurately on a circle around the paws of a sleeping dragon, thus calling him for a fight. When the dragon wakes up and flies up to him, sets on his summoned bear. With the edge of his eye observes, how a bear, already stuffed up with food, instead of eating a dragon sits down near him and starts licking own paws. With the edge of another eye observes, how all quivers of arrows on his back flash in a fire. Has some time left to feel a heat, coming somewhere from all directions, and to see dragon claws just before his face. After that, the dragon needs only to feel the charm of the torn and roasted meat of not only the hero himself but his not less unlucky forest companion.

## **8. Bard**

Before going to a campaign, composes a ballad “Of The Great And Mighty Red Dragon, Covering The Half Of Firmament On A Flight”. Becomes greatly inspired when a half of the local small town comes to attend this concert.

Then composes a ballad “Of The Fearless Hero Who Went On A Campaign Against The Bane Of The Heavens”. After having received a thousand question of who is this fearless hero, decides that time for a campaign has probably finally come. Moves into adventuring, composing new and new ballads on the way “Of The Battle With Red Wyrms”, “Of The Red Plague Of Heavens” and on, and on, thereby constantly gathering around him crowds of local gapers. When he reaches dragon’s den, at last, discovers that all that public has been blown off like by the fire. Enters a lair, singing a ballad “Of The Young Bard, Fearlessly Stepping Into A Lair Of The Ancient Beast”. Having entered the lair and come across remains of your adventurers composes on the fly a tearful song “Of The Heroes, Who Disgracefully Died In The Dark Cave”, trying to encourage himself. When a dragon, awakened by some hoarse singing voice, flies up to him, tries to compose a lullaby ballade “Of How The Dragon Went Into Eternal Rest”. The dragon, however, completely unimpressed with such melodies, exhales a burst of flame, and after that event, all the remaining crowd has to compose in joint efforts a new (in last in this season) ballade “Of How The Hero Over Here Was Lost In The Den Over There”.

## **9. Monk**

Before going into a campaign, diligently meditates for some days, trying to dive into Nirvana. Having left this blissful state finds out that that time for the campaign has already come a long time ago – and then finally moves on. Having passed several kilometers and having been tired of such slow way of movement starts running and thus surpasses all remaining distance in mere several hours. Having run to a den sits down in a pose of lotus and plunges himself into meditation once again. Having left this blissful state after several days finds out that he’s just in the time borders of his journey. Runs into a lair. On the fly diligently maneuvers across heaps of bones and skulls, trying not to bash any of them. Having not noticed a dragon on the move, bashes into him – and then sits down near its paws and plunges himself into deepest meditation. The woken up dragon breathes a stream of fire, which does not cause the hero any harm, for he has already made his body absolutely immune to pain. By that time the monk, who has left meditation, notices that the dragon has already woken up, and enters a fistfight with him. After that, the dragon needs only to regale on a body and – separately – head of the hero, which have now been made totally and absolutely immune to any sorts of pain.

*2006-01-02*

*Genre: Article*

*Category: Recognized*

# How fantasy heroes will install Windows

## 1. Warrior

Pushes an installation disk into the drive with the help of steel gauntlet. Moves nearby, while the installation process is being performed, practicing swords swinging and shaking, and sometimes bashing his shield for greater frightening effect. When the installation is finally completed and during the first boot Windows hangs up, he smashes thrice-damned device into an incalculable number of small slices in his mighty rage.

## 2. Thief

Acquires a pirated copy of the latest beta version of Windows for mere two silver coins, silently opens a drive with a lockpick, puts a disk there and then even more silently closes the drive and launches the installation process. When the message pops up: "A new device has been detected: Windows installation disk", shouts "Hell, we've been spotted!" and runs away with such a speed that only his heels sparkle.

## 3. Priest

Before begging the installation process, blesses Windows media disk and splashes holy water on it, and only after those important procedures inserts it into a drive. When the drive cannot read the seriously watered disk and message pops up – "Unable to read from the device. Abort? Retry? Ignore?" – he overshadows himself in horror, shouting "I banish thee, unholy one!" and starts moving around the computer, singing holy prayers. After two hours of traveling, during which the disk has just enough time to completely dry up, tries to repeat the process once again. After the installation process completes successfully, kneels and performs yet another three-hour praise to the gods that they have heard his modest prayers and have aided him in his struggle against the evil.

## 4. Paladin

Takes Windows installation disk and lay on hands on it. Waits for several minutes and then inserts a disk in a drive. As soon as installation starts put his ankh on a chassis for greater effect. When the installation process finishes and during the first boot Windows hangs up, proclaims: "Disbeliever! Feel the wrath of Gods!" and smashes accursed device into a lot of tiny pieces.

## 5. Mage

Carefully takes Windows installation disk and casts "Identify" spell on it. After the spell determines the version of Windows on a disk, casts a "Detect Magic" spell on it. When his spell detects nothing unusual, breathes with a sign of relief and cast a "Detect Alignment" spell on it. Becomes wary after the spell detects alignment as "chaotic neutral". Casts a "Purify" spell on disk and only then finally launches the installation process. Having fun with own familiar during the installation process.

After the installation completes, repeatedly casts “Detect Alignment” spell on a computer. Becomes alerted even more, when a spell determines alignment as “chaotic evil”. Casts “Time Stop”, trying to decipher, what magical streams have created such astounding alteration of disk’s alignment. Reboots the computer. When during the first boot Windows hangs up, becomes extremely angered, casting on himself “Haste”, “Greater Globe Of Invulnerability”, “Greater Reflect Magic”, “Stoneskin”, “Ironskin”, “Total Immunity” and then at last casts “Fireball” on ill-fated device, enjoying a smell of burned rubber and wires.

## **6. Barbarian**

Takes installation disk, plays with it, trying to understand, by what side it should be inserted into a drive. Puts a disk into a drive by the first found side. After that emits a heart-breaking war cry in order to start the installation process. When Windows disk shutters into pieces from such vibrations, becomes extremely enraged and, having entered a berserker condition, smashes accursed device and what is remained from a disk as well into a thousand and one pieces.

## **7. Ranger**

Shoots an arrow and opens a drive, having hit “Eject” button. Puts installation Windows disk on a second arrow and fires it in a drive. When a disk falls from an arrow just in time just into a drive, starts installation process. While installation process goes on, summons black bear and discusses with him the delights of the wood hunting, which have allowed him to find an aforementioned disk in a belly of some unlucky wood troll together with even less lucky thief – the initial owner of the disk, – swallowed by the troll. When the installation processes comes to its end and during the first boot Windows hangs up, sets his bear on a chassis, while making a pillow for needles from a monitor himself.

## **8. Bard**

Before inserting a disk in a drive, takes it out for everyone to behold and starts singing a ballad of far kingdoms and treasures of goddess-destiny, who have helped him to once find such a wonderful and admirable artifact. When somewhat about twenty gawks and gapers gather around him, sings not less heart-touching ballade of the terrifying black dragon, nicknamed Microsoft, whom he along with his comrades-in-arms have finally defeated in a bloody and just battle, and in whose lair such artifact has been found. When somewhat about fifty gawks and gapers gather around him, at last dares to insert this disk in a drive. When message popups – “Unregistered Windows copy” – makes a sad gesture and sings even more heart-touching ballade of a deceit, lie and insidiousness, reigning in the lands of Faerun.

## **9. Monk**

Puts installation disk on the unremarkable stone shrine, and makes a holy circular detour. After that sits down in a pose of a lotus and begins his meditation. After ten-hour meditation comes to his senses, softly puts a disk in a drive and launches installation process. Dives into meditation again, while the installation process goes on.

After fifteen-hour meditation comes to his senses and sees, that the system cannot continue the installation process because of a necessity to press “any key” for process’s continuation. Presses this particular “any key” and once again plunges himself into meditation. After three-hour meditation returns to this world once again, and sees, that system has hung up. Having overcome an internal impulse of anger of his essence, starts installation anew, and sits down to meditate. After fifteen-hours meditation sees, that the system asks him to press “any key” once again. Again presses the very same “any key” and plunges himself into meditation. After three-hour meditation comes back to this world once more only to observe that the system has hung yet again. Repeatedly having overcome an internal impulse of anger of his essence, starts all process – including, most certainly, meditation – anew. After twentyfold repetition of a situation as last enrages and demonstrates finesse of kickboxing to a computer. Becomes satisfied only when there is not even a smallest object, which have a dent from his fists, left, and then sits down to meditate once again, as always.

*2006-01-02*

*Genre: Article*

*Category: Recognized*

# How fantasy heroes will brawl in a tavern

## 1. Warrior

Constantly holds an impressive bastard sword in his hands before the eyes of his listeners, sometimes swinging it clockwise in hands for the sake of impression. When some listener tries to object him, moves his sword closer to that impudent one and put it on his shoulder, unambiguously looking in his eyes. After that, the objecting one immediately loses all desires to object.

## 2. Thief

While everyone argues with each other, has enough time to empty pockets of ten gapers, to steal a pair of mugs of ale from the local barman and to expropriate a necklace from a neck of his daughter, and then hides in shadows and waits until everyone becomes bothered enough to be still engaged in this phrase-mongering. After dispute comes to an end and loss is being detected and the alarm starts to reign in the tavern, thief has enough time to cut even more purses of the traders, who have so inopportunately appeared here, and even to relief pockets of one of guards, who has come to pacify commoners, from his recent pay. After that, he safely slips away from a tavern into the darkness of night and disappears in it without the court.

## 3. Priest

When he is displeased with something or huffs seriously, he calls the debater as “daemon” and casts “Exorcism” on him. The spell, as a rule of the thumb, does not make any actual effect, but, nevertheless, is accompanied by such grandiose illuminations, that inspired public immediately falls on knees altogether and start singing prayers to the priest, and the priest, well, starts singing them to his deity.

## 4. Paladin

Having noticed a crowd of drunk gapers in a tavern, organizes a discussion along with brainwashing, concerning just and pure life. Then preaches a sermon to the local barman, his daughter and even the tavern itself. After all local tavern brotherhood, not really impressed with such talks, approaches him in a crowd, he removes his sparkling sword “Holy Avenger +5” from sheath, and after that all commoners get stricken with temporary blindness (basically because of the sight of jewels that engrave the weapon) and immediately become paladin’s best friends. Being proud of such transformation of dark human soul and bearing his head high, he leaves a tavern to amaze new evils in any form possible.

## 5. Mage

After some local mortal idler dares to name him as “maggie puppy” and another local mortal fool doubts his great magic abilities, casts Demon Gate and summons a Balor King from the Abyss. After Balor devours all tavern of local mortal brotherhood and is banished back to the Underworld, the devastated tavern appears to be totally in no condition to dispute with local conjurer.

## **6. Barbarian**

The time someone starts to argue in style “to be or not to be, to drink or not to drink”, from a misunderstanding of these foolish high substances he becomes enraged, and, having entered a berserker condition, emits such roar that all local inhabitants immediately become deaf. After that, they have only to silently observe, how mad barbarian crashes into pieces all local tavern furniture, like in a mute cinema.

## **7. Ranger**

Bashes into a tavern along with his Ancient Brown Bear and then, having set up on a table, orders drink (for himself) and meal (for his forest friend). While everyone amazingly whispers with each other and cautiously look at the bear, who has taken a sit near a table as well, devastates ordered glass of drink and inquires, where is it possible to hunt nearby. Calms down the rest of local rascals, who have not fallen unconscious already, having specified, that he hunts exclusively in woods. Having learned approximate coordinates and interrupted further specifications with words “I’ll find it myself!”, leaves a tavern. Notices, that the bear has grown too fat from the recent meal, and thus cannot pass through doors, – and then takes out an arrow from a quiver and ends his tortures. Then summons a new bear (this time from the outer side of a tavern) – and finally goes on wood hunting.

## **8. Bard**

Becomes the best story-teller in all local districts, so all tavern patrons from ten more nearby villages come to listen to him. Indefatigably composes new and new ballads and songs until he dies from old age. After that yet another bard comes on his funeral and starts to compose new ballads and songs about this singer, who has decided to rest in peace so untimely.

## **9. Monk**

Silently enters a tavern, silently sits down on a floor and silently dives into nirvana. After that all attempts of local gapers to help him come to his senses end up with no result visible, and so they finally decide to leave him alone. Having returned back into this world several days after, he finds out that some dancing is being performed around him, and then leaves this world once again. Having returned to it some months after, finds out that instead of local tavern only its burns ashes are around him and he sits almost on open air. Makes a mind note to himself, that this is a very quiet place and it would be necessary to return to it afterwards, and decides to return back to his monastery for now.

*2006-01-03*

*Genre: Article*

*Category: Recognized*

# Fantasy

Fantasy...

That was the name of the world, where creative souls were being born. One of a kind, it was a pearl in the Universe. World of unimaginable laws of physics, easily coming out of space limits of other worlds, located inside the Sphere, it stood apart since the dawn of creation. Almost no one of its inhabitants, including even the High Mages, knew when exactly it has been formed and what indescribable goal was pursued by its maker – but it was considered a great award to be born there, which only a few have attained. Best representatives of the multitude of Sphere's worlds with awakened creative Spark inside their unextinguishable souls – first and foremost such ones could set foot on its fertile lands, having clothed in the armor of flesh.

What can be a better forge of creators than a world that is subject to their fantasy and imagination? And here it was capable of bringing out wonders. Future makers must have traveled a long way in other worlds of the Sphere in order to kindle this creative spark – yet even longer journey to acquire a full control of it inside a magnificent Fantasy. And only a few of them did earn the right to be known as Magicians.

\* \* \*

Exhausted Lor-Quinor stopped and fell down on his knees, greedily incorporating evening air. After two hours of continuous run through hot, wild and dangerous jungles of Rotanor last remnants of his forces have been totally drained – yet he did manage to come off from scouts of the Legion.

Lor-Quinor could call himself a scout, a ranger, or dancing-on-the-edge, or looking-from-afar, but he preferred to consider himself simply as a warrior, who wasn't deprived of creative heavenly Spark during the time of birth. His past was foggy. His father, an ordinary guardsman, was killed in battle with soldiers of the Legion of Nine Gods during the siege of Rakhligar – an outpost of the Legion in the western lands of Fantasy. He was adopted by his uncle, who disappeared a few years later during the Fiery Revolt. And his mother died while she was giving a birth. Since these times Lor-Quinor became a wanderer, scouting through lands of Illumion from northern borders to southern ones, earning his piece of bread by completing private tasks of governors of Illumion's principalities, which were known as mentors. And this his latest assignment from the mentor of the southern principality of Sulinor promised to become the most serious trial during his all long-term life, – and, probably, in many decades of Illumion's life as well.

In the past the Legion of Nine was plundering southern lands of Illumion, the major part of which was Sulinor's land, but after one of the most bloody battles ever recorded in Illumion's history, in which ten-thousand troops armies of Illumion and Legion of Nine faced each other on the battlefield and, having suffered heavy losses, armies of Illumion under the leadership of the Oracle together with the Archmage of the Academy repelled the attack of cursed adherents of the Legion in the fortress of Rival, having turned into counterattack, capturing about a third of northern territories of the Legion, activity of the Legion decreased considerably, raids on undefended settlements were stopped, as well as the curses and plagues, sent by warlocks of the Legion.

Many-headed hydra was beheaded – but another head has almost grown anew.

Breathing heavily, Lor-Quinor stood up on one knee, peering from the Peak of Seven Stars, which served as the highest spot in entire Rotanor's land, at the opening to his eagle eye horizons in the aspiration to see movement of Legion's scouts, who have been closely following his steps, but were still unaware of his current location.

This peak had its own history. Legends said that many millennia ago heavenly stars descended here into the land of Fantasy – messengers of other worlds, which have drawn a way from the horizon to the horizon on a boundless lilac firmament. These harbingers symbolized the births of seven Oracles in lands of Fantasy – almost invincible seers-prophets, capable to see the future and operate the time. Six of Oracles have gone to other worlds by now, having ascended to the sky in dazzling white shining, witnesses of which described it in the chronicles, still remained in hands of their descendants, as unimaginable and unknown even to the best magicians of the Academy highest magic of Light. Only one of them was still living in the Fantasy – has become, much like Lor-Quinor, a voluntary wanderer after the costly victory in the battle for Rival. Sometimes, once in several years or even decades he appeared on roads of Illumion in the shape of gray-haired aged man with celestial-blue eyes and glowing in darkness of night long staff – and then suddenly disappeared for years to come, and no one dared to interrupt his journey or to ask of the burdens, lying on him – no one except for Lor-Quinor, who has met him by will of unknown laws of fates in the first year of own wanderings. Lots of sand passed through clocks of Eternity and much water flowed in deep rivers of Fantasy since these times – but where it will be possible to find the Oracle in case of a great danger to the world of Fantasy – this Lor-Quinor remembered well since the moment of their memorable meeting.

Now he was standing, kneeling on the Peak of Seven Stars, and his thoughts wandered far away, outside of what inhabitants of Fantasy that were deprived of the creative Spark, considered as meanings of their simple lives. He thought of eternity, of infinite shapes of the battle between good and evil, of feats and treacheries, of heroes and turncoats, of the meaning of life and death. This internal fire of search, which has existed inside him since childhood and found its coexistence with awakening creative Spark, has always warmed him in minutes of danger, giving new powers to fight with evil – as Lor-Quinor understood it.

After six Oracles left the world, the Legion of Nine Gods was born. That way called themselves the ones, who many centuries before represented the first circle of the Academy of Magicians. Having learned many ways of mastering the reality of Fantasy through creativity, having gained immense political influence in lands of Illumion, they desired more – they desired immortality. Alas, that magic was not in the powers of Fantasy – and, probably, an intimate and great meaning was expressed by that fact. Only the Oracles possessed powers that prevailed over the might of the Circle of Nine, called as the highest magic of Light – only these mysterious messengers of the heaven could, like Angels, resurrect, grant invulnerability in battle and reduce unstoppable speed on eternally running time.

Envy to Oracles and desire to gain immortality pushed these nine High Mages for the greatest of crimes ever seen in the lands of Fantasy. Mages along with their numerous supporters and adherents rose against Oracles, desiring to captivate them and gain their secret knowledge, naively believing in own blindness that it is possible to acquire these possibilities through violence. Filled with a thirst for immortality, they have forgotten of the truth – Oracles saw the future and knew in advance of the treachery, which was about to be born. When envoys of mages came to the valley of Oracles, they found nothing there except for their own grim fates.

The magic of Fantasy inexplicably changed adherents of the Circle together with their mentors, having distorted their forms beyond recognition. Much like monsters from the underworld, deprived of reason, these terrible creatures rushed around the valley in search of their victims until rapid degradation of their minds led to the point when they have rushed at each other, tearing apart with newly given canines and claws flesh of former companions. Magicians of the Circle in their turn became the living, deprived of souls undead, whose only sight was capable to strike fear in hearts of even the bravest of warriors. Together with the remnants of own adherents and adepts, they have left Illumion, traveling to the far south, and having regained strength after many decades became the Legion of Nine Gods, the Legion of the Damned, the Legion of Whispering in the Evil – as they were differently named in various regions of Illumion. Next day six of Oracles ascended to the sky, so only one of them remained inside the Fantasy for only known to him final – or infinite – goals. Only one immortal for the entire world.

Lor-Quinor straightened his shoulders and smiled. Message for the Oracle will be transferred – and it will be done by more perfect beings than he, lonely wanderer of plains, deserts, and jungles of Fantasy.

Step, second, third – and here he is turning around in a dance. Some more steps – and his hands themselves make gestures to summon Shims. Another minute – and here he makes jumps as if hovering for several moments with zero gravity in so pliable and elastic for his body air. Some more seconds – and his body rise in the air, levitating over the earth's surface. Dancing-on-the-edge knows his ways. Dancing-on-the-edge gives in to the will of fire of his burning creative Spark.

This dance was that gift from above, which gradually started manifesting itself after the death of his father in a battle with enemies of Illumion. Little by little, movement after the movement, he was as if remembering something that has been forgotten very long time ago, knowledge and force that was postponed for a minute of extreme need.

Year after the year during his lonely wanderings he gave up to this pushing him forward force – and Fantasy made all the rest for him. Fantasy could work wonders.

Invisible to simple eye of ordinary citizens of Fantasy sparkling with lilac color waves spread around soaring in air Lor-Quinor, moving from the peak into Rotanor’s jungles, a small independent kingdom, inhabited by undersized thickset people, who have mastered the art of flying on Shims – giant butterflies, who were exceeding human height and became an integral part of Rotanor’s life. Shims possessed their own consciousness and vision and could respond to calls – in any case, they were subject to the Magic of Dance, given life by possessors of creative Spark – even if such ones weren’t and didn’t wish to become students of the Academy.

Another step, another one. Man dancing in the air with a heart that is fading with delight. And here tens of multi-colored Shims-butterflies fly from the jungles towards him, sparkling and rustling with own wings against the background of setting down sun. Here they soar above the ground on low height together with him. Here he grabs wings of one of them, mentally imagining with all possible force the valley in lands of Dalvinor, where Oracle should be living in secret nowadays. Here dozens of winged butterflies soar up high, precisely like heavenly birds, carrying him on their wings there where he has asked in own mental-message.

Flight. Freedom. Echoing in the ears wind. And the evening sun shines on their backs.

\* \* \*

The last living in the Fantasy seventh Oracle, whose angelic name and current tasks were a mystery for every living in the Sphere of Worlds mere mortals, was holding hands on the head of Shim’s leader, reading the transferred message. Access to his valley was sealed for strangers, even those ones which he has once encountered on his journey through an infinite number of worlds of the Sphere, but access for aboriginals creatures of Fantasy, such as these huge, reasonable and possessing telepathy skills butterflies, has always been granted.

It turns out that dreams didn’t deceive him. The greatest invasion of Legions is upcoming – one that Illumion hasn’t witnessed since the battle at Rival. The vanguard of their army, having several tens of thousands, is currently moving from the south of Fantasy, from Death Bogs through Rotanor to southern boundaries of Illumion, to the principalities of Sulinor and Dalvinor.

Since the times when the magic of Fantasy turned these once reasonable, but evil people into frenzied monsters, their natural population growth doubled. Their rage, imprinted on disfigured yellow-eyed faces, was similar to the rage of wild animals that were inhabiting western words of Taiganya.

After their defeat at Rival, during which three of former High Mages of the Circle have been forever destroyed, Legions receded for a long time, not daring to arrange sorties against small settlements, and only in recent years, their increased activity at southern borders of Illumion raised more and more questions of their true plans. Now the Oracle had an answer to this question.

With fire, sword and forbidden in Illumion Death Magic will Legions march through its southern lands, if the Academy of Mages and the Chorus won't be warned in advance. There were those mages in the Illumion's Academy, who have mastered the Magic of Contemplation, but adherents of the Legions have learned to create veils from such prying ones a long time ago, and only live scouts were able to notice advancement of their armies.

The Oracle raised his hands, highlighting on a smooth water surface of valley's lake imprinted in Lor-Quinor's memory and transmitted through Shims' images, concerning the movement of Legions armies.

Battle was upcoming – and he as one of voluntarily remained Messengers had to stand up once again hand in hand with those, whom he together with this world even before own arrival to it has sworn to protect before his own Maker from the evil even at the price of own life in this form.

Few mortals, born in this world, happened to behold original true form and shape of Oracles, for something other-worldly was living in them – even for the magic of Fantasy. And only in such original white-winged form Oracles were able to give birth to miracles among all miracles of Fantasy.

*“He was kneeling, shivered voice.*

*He was kneeling, pray was choice.*

*He was kneeling faraway,*

*Bringing own land to day”.*

So the Chronicles will write down of this seventh Oracle afterward. And for now, he was kneeling, appealing to own Maker and maker of the Fantasy with a plead for aid in a victory over the evil.

Was this a special type of magic, existing in the Fantasy and still not studied inside Academy's walls – or, perhaps, it was the call of his heart – the heart of the one who didn't part with this world even after the treachery, which has been born there?

White wings are put behind his back, eyes looking at the heavens. Time passes, time fades. Tranquility against hatred. Courage against cowardice. Feat against treachery. It was always so, it will always be. It's timeless.

A wave of white wings – and the time comes almost to a halt. Now armies of Illumion have their time. Time has its own course for everyone.

“Fly,” he mentally whispered to the leader of Shims. “Bring my message to men!”

\* \* \*

Legion's horde slowly approached southern boundaries of Illumion, intending to storm Sulinor's capital Askenzia. But they were already expected. Joint forces of Illumion, including not only so common archers, knights and spearmen, but almost all members of the Academy of Mages, journeyman included, as well as the glorified in battles Chorus.

The Academy of Mages, born as the alternative to the Circle of Nine that has betrayed and turned magic of Fantasy into the evil, was the first to receive a message from the Oracle. Spells, used by him to achieve a local time stop, couldn't be comprehended even by the highest mages of the Academy, including the Archmage. Yet these all were trifles in the event of upcoming war. Having received this message, the Academy announced a general counsel, having notified of the prepared invasion both the Royal Court and the Chorus, which has been serving him faithfully.

The Chorus was a parable in itself. The Magic of Song, no less powerful than the Magic of Rhyme, studied by mages of the Academy, accompanied by streaming from battle organs music, gave birth to true miracles on numerous battlefields, inspiring courage, and bravery into hearts of own allies and turning hordes of foes into a panic. Among all soldiers, which have heard battle songs of the Chorus at least once, rumors were still going on how some of these songs even forced enemies to shed tears or made the most courageous warriors of allies almost invincible in battle. No one, including the Archmage and, possibly, the singers of Chorus themselves, knew where the exact limits of the power of this form of magic were lying.

But how wrong would be the one, who had blindly dismissed the Magic of Rhyme, which was practiced and improved in the walls of the Academy! The word, being dressed into a rhyme, was capable to alter the structure of reality, and by types of these changes, one could determine which school of specialization was followed by each rhyming magician. There were mages, who have devoted themselves to work with elements – fire, water, air, and earth – their battle rhyme magic burned, spilled, punched gaps in enemy ranks, destroying their resistance with strong powers of nature. There were specialists in the creation of magical defenses that were reflecting enemy shells – and, in some cases, even firing them back in the opposite direction. There were healers, whose filled with compassion and love for the neighbor words allowed to put on legs even hopelessly, by standards of ordinary people, and fatally wounded in battle soldiers. There was an abundance of specializations among mages of the Academy – and for this reason many of neophytes, who have discovered and lit inside themselves their own creative Sparks, easily found in its walls a path according to their personal taste. The only thing that was strictly forbidden to practice for its adherents was all types of evil magic, and, first and foremost, so beloved by the Legion Magic of Death that included whammies, curses, plagues, and damnations.

Now, when forefront groups of Legion of the Damned appeared on the horizon, mages-observers from the Academy and ordinary imperial scouts reported on their structure and movements on an hourly basis. The werewolves, which have been created by adherents of the Legion in Horriya's woods; warlocks, practicing the Magic of Death; semi-people semi-lizards, covered with black scales and bearing in own genes a patrimonial curse from the moment of a revolt of the Circle of Nine; two-headed giant mutants – what kind of monsters did ill-fated Bogs of Death throw out to Illumion's borders. Scouts counted about thirty thousands of these beings – which meant that almost twice greater in size army will oppose the defenders. And all hope of joined forces of Illumion was directed to creative magic of their magical world, to the Oracle, whose name no one ever dared to ask, and to own strength of spirit and will to fight.

The Chorus rolled out to squares of Askenzia their battle Organs. Mages of the Academy were finishing constructing a protective dome over the city. Archers walked to and fro on walls, checking loopholes. Knights patrolled city perimeter. By the end of this day, the horde will finally reach them.

\* \* \*

“Archer, say to bow ‘goodbye’, arrow, arrow, down fly!” as if by command cried out a dozen mages, located in a city tower, one of their earlier prepared spells for reflection of enemy’s arrows. And – precisely by command – a hail of fired arrows fell down just before walls of the fortress. Only a few of death-bringing spikes achieved their goals, striking standing by loopholes archers. The arrow flies only for several seconds – so you either manage to rhyme a spell or risk being pierced to the death with iron.

“Elemental mages, don’t you stay idle, counterstrike with lightning bolts!”

“Wind, oh wind, so mighty one, through the clouds let thunder come! Hail of lightning strike all foes as the rain swiftly goes!”

The sky, which darkened during several dozens of seconds, and hundreds of lightning, sparkling and striking the werewolves that were climbing by walls of the fortress, became a live answer to their magical appeal.

“Storm is striking from above – heaven’s fury we bestow!”

Massive, one of man’s size, hailstones began turning frontier groups of giants into flat cakes.

“Sun says ‘hi’ to ones in dark! Fireballs! Fiery spark!”

Hail of fiery spheres, flying away from a magic tower, laid a smoking path in enemy’s ranks, leaving only piles of ashes behind them.

“Horde of insects is approaching, beware!”

“That’s a plague!”

“Wind, please sweep those insect’s stench, may they never come in range!”

“Healers, we need healers here, now!”

“Defend the healers!”

“Where is Chorus, may the organ deafen them?! Why do they keep silence?”

“Giants are throwing stones, strengthen reflection shield!”

“Shield saves us from all rocks, they are flying back in flocks!”

The sparkling dome of the shield devoured tens of huge boulders, thrown by giants, and reflected them backward.

“Archers, fire on command! Mages – light their arrows!”

“Arrows flying now with a fire – it was a magical desire!”

Arrows of defenders, being lit up in flight with inextinguishable fire, stuck into bodies of warlocks, burning them and forcing to stop casting their spells.

“Burn enemy arrows in flight!”

“All dark arrows being lit, they are destined not to hit!”

“Boulders come again, beware!”

“Werewolves are advancing on the southern wall, knights to the south wall!”

“Where is the Chorus?!”

“Healers to the northern gates! We are suffering heavy losses of archers!”

“The Chorus abandoned us!”

“Enemy is breaking on the south wall! Mages, fire at will!”

“The Chorus is coming! Look! Do you hear?!”

The many-voiced melodious singing of hundreds of men, accompanied by loud sounds of musical organs, spread over all of Askenzia and its vicinities. This song was about repentance, of how even in the most spiteful and almost ruined by hatred heart there lives a sparkle of kindness. About how the greatest of the great mages, who has created Fantasy at the beginning of times, is kind and merciful, and how an appeal to him from those souls, which have wallowed in darkness, can change them, bringing back former human shape. This song possessed something from the better world – and, as if having felt it, some groups of enemies stood down in confusion and lowered their weapons. Purulent tears started pouring down from mutated eyes of some of these beasts. Parts of them laid down arms and started running away.

“Mages, this is our chance! Archers – light up arrows! Shooting in volleys on command!”

The song went on and on.

Forgiveness. What does that mean – forgiveness? Whether it’s possible to forgive those who have voluntarily turned into monsters, who have cursed themselves?

“Archers, hold on! Cease firing in fleeing enemies!”

They punished themselves. Whether they knew what they have done?

“Enemy at the southern wall is receding! Don’t pursue!”

Is that possible to be better than your own enemies? Own torturers? Own murderers?

“They are depressed! They are crying! Unbelievable! Can’t trust my eyes! Do you see it?!”

Is that possible to spare their lives?

“Enemy is receding! Southern walls are free! Hurrah! Hurrah!”

The choice is ours.

“Enemy is fleeing on all fronts! Victory! Victory!”

The enemy can come to our home once again. But as long as it doesn’t live inside us – we are invincible.

“Victory!”

\* \* \*

Lor-Quinor along with a dozen other warriors was sitting in Askenzia’s tavern, celebrating his new birthday. Not in the sense that he was born on this day more than a forty years ago – but in the sense that today he was born anew. Not every day you get a chance to fight with a horde of self-cursed legions of ghouls, and to come out of it victorious – even less so. Especially when you get a chance to listen to such remarkable live music at the same time.

He will follow the fleeing horde the next day. Someone has to make sure that has truly retreated.

“Bro, pass me on a mug of ale!” he shouted to yesterday’s fellow soldier.

“What are we drinking for today? For Mages or for Chorus? Or maybe for the fact that bony death hasn’t yet grabbed all of us in one go, huh?” his workmate burst out laughing.

“Maybe, let’s drink for our own world, for Fantasy? What a fine one!”

“Huh! It can be even more than that! Everything is possible if you are living in the Fantasy!”

*2017-09-17*

*Genre: Story*

*Category: Best*

# **Chronicles of Our Age**

## On the screen

A blow – and the opponent has bent. Running jump – and a kick in a stomach. The opponent falls down. A rattle from a throat. Blow. Blow. Blow.

He was finishing him off – beating the lying one. The rival – the enemy! – has no more forces to resist, even to rise up – and to strike back. He would surely strike back – if he had risen, of course. And that’s why he should not be given that chance, he must be – finished off. He has been pursuing this bastard for so long... through half of a country... and has finally caught up. The destroyed family, his family... this wound was still bleeding. But it will be cured... when he will see his mortal enemy, begging of mercy on his knees – which he won’t get. Ever.

This final triumph was so close already. Now that berk is already hardly creeping away from him, leaving a viscous trail of blood. A little bit of time – and there will be a triumph... his long-awaited triumph! This, surely, will not bring his family back – but nevertheless, this swine will get what he has deserved! His family has already faced the consequences – and only he still remained...

Another blow – and the enemy has stopped moving on the ground. Moved no more. Absolutely. Finally. Meet your death, bitch!

Final strike... He took a pistol from his hip-pocket. A gunpoint, set on a bent and lying still a man, a spiteful smile in eyes of the killer... Click.

Button click. A TV remote, thrown aside. No more! No more! No more!

Foolish action films! Murders, blood and revenge, animalistic rage and terrific hatred... On almost all of the channels. When they will finally stop broadcasting these slops? Only a handful of channels, speaking about culture, creativity, worthy human undertakings and achievements still live on – but are people accustomed to watching this? They are being fed with crap and assured that it’s a food of gods, the way it should be, a significant cultural achievement of all developed countries. And some even believe that...

It’s necessary to change this system! Mass-media need to seriously think on what they give to the people and of what they deprive. People need to think of what they would really like to see.

He will not stand aside. Tomorrow he will bring up this question at deputy meeting. Tomorrow he and his like-minded will tell their word against violence, against cruelty – even those exclusively cinematized. But will they be heard? Will they be listened to by millions of viewers, by each one of them? He hoped greatly that they will be. For so much depends on that – on choices of everyone – and this choice as well.

Sat down to watch TV for the first time in a month... And – take it, eat it, bless you. Fie! I’ll better play and have fun with my child this day off. Yes, it’s a right choice and a valuable contribution, and not some consumption of slops.

“Alex, let’s go and play ‘horses and rider’s!’”

“Wow, father! The new game, yes? Fantastic! Tell me, tell me about it quickly!”

“Yes, we’ll now play with you in ‘horses and riders’, and then have a jog to the stadium and back. All right?”

“Certainly, pa! That will be great!”

“Fine. So, well, listen here. Game rules are really simple...”

*2004-12-26*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Diseases of our age

The present document confirms that Main Ministry of Health in association with different well-known medics of various countries have formed a list of diseases, common for the modern generation of individuals, calling themselves “Homo Sapiens”.

We, authors of this list, don't apply for completeness of description and characteristic of all illnesses, so casual for individuals of our generation, but still hope that given classification will be able to clarify the already uneasy question of preservation of so-called “spiritual”, as well as so-called “physical” health. Let us note that due to the exceptional conditionality of similar division we are unable to classify separate illnesses as belonging exclusively to the first or second group, for, in fact, they are a consequence of infringement of processes of healthy individual activity (HIA) as a whole.

The list of diseases of our century in addition with their brief description follows.

## 1. “Spiteful”

*General description.* As a rule of thumb, the indicated ailment is spontaneously arising in a short-term duration by its nature, however, in some neglected cases it can become a permanent trait of personality. Medical science hasn't been able to define till now a constant enough and a certain list of reasons causing represented disease, although specific observations have nevertheless been collected. It has been noticed that given illness in its permanent form can be triggered by such diseases as “Ugly Duckling”, “Victim” and several other illnesses with similar semiology, however, similar law has its exceptions for the reasons unknown, which gives us reasons to make an assumption of the soul-genetical predisposition of separate individuals to this disease.

*Symptoms.* Those suffering from this disease can be distinguished by their increased irritability, the pessimism of views on surrounding reality (independently of surrounding them an objective reality), being the consequence of spontaneously manifested by them hatred and anger, concerning other individuals being in contact with them.

*Treatment methods.* For the purpose of treatment of current illness, universal revitalizing remedy “Kindness” has been proven as a most effective mean. In especially heavy forms of a clinical course usage of antibiotic “Suggestion” becomes possible. Contraindicated for application is the vaccine “Humiliation”.

## 2. “Hated”

*General description.* In its semiology, this disease is similar to manifestations of “Spiteful” one, which has given some experts a reason to consider this disease as its aggravated form. It should be noted that easy forms of this illness can cause along with “Spiteful” a set of other illnesses, including “Ugly Duckling”, “Fearful” (mainly in the form of the protective reaction of individual), “Star-like” and especially “Lord”.

*Symptoms.* The extremely negative attitude of the individual almost to each and every aspect of manifestation and functioning of surrounding reality. Easy forms of the disease have a spontaneous character on its manifestation in the form of the negative reaction of the individual to this or that vital circumstance. Heavy forms of the illness are characterized by a permanent negative attitude of the individual to other individuals and various aspects of manifestation of objective reality as it is.

*Treatment methods.* Universal revitalizing remedy “Kindness” was considered as the only effective mean of curing (especially in case of an easy form of course of a disease), which usage, however, can be restricted to the majority of patients due to artificially high prices, formed by huge overestimated demand along with significantly lower amounts of supply.

### **3. “Fearful/Timid”**

*General description.* According to the latest researches, the cause of the emergence of this illness lies in the insufficient production of a “Self-confidence” hormone in the organism of the individual. By its signs specified illness is almost an exact copy of the previously discovered “Timid” disease, so in this connection experts in the field have made a decision to consider both of them as one. It’s necessary to clearly distinguish forms of protective reactions of the organism, trying to overcome this disease, from the traits of a “Hero” condition, even though they can look extremely similar in external forms of manifestation. Along with that, it’s also necessary to note that in some situations symptoms of manifestation of this illness can be similar by results to a positive effect of “Reason” enzyme, which can considerably complicate the analysis of an objective condition of the patient.

*Symptoms.* A symptom of this disease is a permanently showed by the individual fear in various vital circumstances in case of the making of decisions, performing of actions.

*Treatment methods.* Due to the impossibility of artificial synthesis of “Self-confidence” hormone for the treatment of this disease usage of antibiotic “Suggestion” is recommended.

### **4. “Ugly Duckling”**

*General description.* Given disease is most characteristic for individuals at age of twelve-eighteen years. The main feature of this disease lies in the possibility of self-treatment of an individual by achieving a certain level of high consciousness. Medical science still hasn’t determined exact reasons of similar self-healing of some individuals, however, an assumption does exist that reasons for similar curing are in fact activated processes of fast synthesis of hormones “Tranquility”, “Good nature” and “Self-confidence” in an organism of a former patient. Except for cases of congenital spiritual-genetic predisposition, the reasons for the formation of this disease can be:

- Communication of yet healthy individual with another individual, infected with diseases “Spiteful” and “Hated”.
- Communication of yet healthy individual with another individual, infected with disease “Victim”.

- Frequent injection of vaccine “Humiliation” by one of the other individuals, close to yet-to-be-ill one.

*Symptoms.* A well-known trait of patients is a permanently lowered emotional condition, spontaneously shown complaints and grumbling about their destiny and similar aspect of the spiritually-emotional state. In especially continuous and hard cases of course of an illness, a commission by the individual of irreversible act “Suicide” becomes possible.

*Treatment methods.* For the purpose of curing of this disease, universal revitalizing remedy “Kindness” has proven to be extremely effective, as well as usage of artificially synthesized hormone “Tranquility”. Usage of hormones “Good nature” and “Self-confidence” in this case is also highly desirable but is not achievable due to the impossibility of their artificial laboratory synthesis. Especially effective can become a treatment of the patient with specified medicines by relatives of the mentioned individual along with the application of universal revitalizing remedy “Kindness”. Healing is considered most effective before the patient has entered a phase of consciousness known as “Adult”, after which efficiency of treatments starts to quickly degrade.

## **5. “Victim”**

*General description.* This illness represents one of the possible forms of development of “Ugly Duckling” disease. Individuals of all ages, nationalities, and religions are subject to be infected by this disease. It’s highly recommended to distinguish sporadic exacerbations of the disease in question from symptoms of the “Hero” condition, that is characterized by own readiness to sacrifice welfare/health/life for the good of others.

*Symptoms.* A feature of manifestation of this illness lies in a specific transition of consciousness of the individual into a still insufficiently studied condition, which consequence is a distortion of a traditional picture of perception of objective reality. Diseased patients begin to discover in all occurring events some sort of “ill fate of their destiny”, “intrigues of the haters, desiring to prevent their great plans from fulfilling” according to their own ways of expression of this state of their consciousness. The continuous clinical course leads to a permanent decrease of the general emotionally background of the patient, which in some extreme cases can lead to a commission of the irreversible act “Suicide”.

*Treatment methods.* Due to the insufficient study of a state of consciousness, transition into which occurs in the process of this illness, effective enough methods of treatment have still not been developed. In this regard, a recommended for application was considered antibiotic “Suggestion”, as well as universal revitalizing remedy “Kindness”.

## **6. “Know-it-all”**

*General description.* By its traits, aspects of the course and semiology this illness is similar to the “Star-like” one.

*Symptoms.* Characteristic of this illness is the increased arrogance and self-conceit of an individual, spontaneously or (in case of heavy forms) permanently demonstrated by him.

*Treatment methods.* Periodic application of “Humiliation” vaccine appears to be most effective in the treatment process. It’s necessary to notice that doses of injected vaccine should be strictly coordinated with the attending physician, who is familiar with general features of the inner world of the patient, otherwise disease can radically alter its form and transform into “Ugly Duckling” one. The specified vaccine is recommended for application exclusively by those individuals who are close to the patient because in cases of attempts of its usage from other unfamiliar people active counteraction to these attempts from the side of a patient can become the reason of emergence of a “Spiteful” disease.

## **7. “Star-like”**

*General description.* It has been discovered by medical science that, unlike the “Know-it-all” illness, the current disease has arisen exclusively in the modern age. Characteristic of this disease is the greatest susceptibility to it of those individuals who have reached so-called “high social status” and are well-known to large groups of other individuals.

*Symptoms.* Symptoms of an arising illness are the neglect shown by the individual to other, ever-growing self-conceit and aggression. Signs of a constant infection of a patient with given disease are even more growing self-assurance and aggression, which can be taken for symptoms of “Spiteful” illness by inexperienced doctors, with a gradual degradation of an illness to a chronic state “Lord”.

*Treatment methods.* Much like in case with “Know-it-all” disease, the most fruitful means in fighting against illness is the application of “Humiliation” vaccine, but it should be noted, that doses of injected vaccine, in that case, should be considerably increased. Besides, effective application of this vaccine becomes possible not only from the side of persons, close to a patient.

## **8. “Lord”**

*General description.* Medical science has been unable to establish an exact time period of the first emergence of this illness as signs of its manifestation can be found in ancient centuries very far from us. This illness is a culmination of the development of diseases in a branch “Know-it-all” – “Star-like” – “Lord”, its final stage. As the illness is a very heavy form of a “Star-like” disease, it practically does not give into treatment. In this regard, it’s possible to say that these infected patients are in fact doomed.

*Symptoms.* Symptoms of this illness are extremely risen self-conceit along with a total defiance to both health and life of other individuals, permanently shown “megalomania”, aspiration to force life to go exclusively by a path favorable to the individual (which is, as modern science has proved it, is not only impractical, but also a totally unnecessary task). Patients show no signs of any doubts in the relation of the correctness of their position, feel no pity and sorrow when using/killing others for the sake of illusionary goals seen only by them, and being always, in this regard, unreachable.

*Treatment methods.* In the majority of cases, specified illness is not subject to healing. Indirect, though almost ineffective mean in a question of curing of the individual from this disease and some social consequences, can be considered only the isolation of patients in houses for mad at early stages of disease's progress.

## **9. “Nostalgic”**

*General description.* This illness has been known to mankind from far antiquity, and almost only individuals of “elderly” age are subject to be infected by it. Probably, this particular disease is included in the so-called “generation gap” problem.

*Symptoms.* Signs of manifestation of the disease in question are the glorification of ideals/ideas/views/way of life of a generation, to which a patient belongs, in comparison with another modern one. As extreme forms of disease's manifestation a contempt for younger modern generation along with a desire to “return the good old days” – which, as modern physical science has proved, is simply impossible due to mechanics of functioning of a time continuum – should be considered.

*Treatment methods.* Universal revitalizing remedies “Kindness”, “Care” and “Support” should be considered as only effective means of treatment.

## **10. “Fanatical”**

*General description.* Along with “Nostalgic” illness, this disease has been familiar to mankind since old age but has been classified as a disease only recently. Due to aspects of its manifestation this disease is practically always accompanied by ones from a “Know-it-all” – “Star-like” – “Lord” branch. Most often ones affected with this illness are religious figures of all types of beliefs and religions.

*Symptoms.* Symptoms of manifestation of this illness are similar to the ones of “Know-it-all” – “Star-like” – “Lord” branch.

*Treatment methods.* The only possible mean having a chance to weaken the power of disease is a “Suggestion” antibiotic.

## **11. “Idiot”**

*General description.* This illness represents itself a final point, to which the progress of any previously mentioned disease can once lead.

*Symptoms.* Low/extremely low/absent possibilities of any adequate activity and healthy thinking.

*Treatment methods.* Modern science possesses no knowledge of methods of overcoming of this disease. We, as world medics, can only recommend all patients not to lead themselves to a similar critical form of a course of own illnesses.

## **12. “Hero”**

*General description.* Representatives of medical science still have not come to an unequivocal conclusion of whether it's necessary to consider semiology described below as an illness itself, or if it's not an illness at all, but a very specific, still extremely poorly studied condition of human consciousness, which was possessed only by a small number of people throughout the entire human history.

*Symptoms.* Symptoms of this condition are the overwhelming feeling of love of individual to the entire world that surrounds him, the aspiration to reduce the suffering of others, giving them disinterested aid and all forms of support. It's surprising that this desire is not based on achievement of any proprietary purposes as it can be in the case with the "Lord" illness. For the organism of the individual in this state, a continuous highest synthesis of "Tranquility", "Good nature" and "Self-confidence" hormones is considered normal. The obligatory requirement of origin of this state is a presence in the organism of an individual of a "Joy" enzyme. Cases of infection of individuals in this state by any of the aforementioned disease are unknown to a medical science.

*Treatment methods.* We, as representatives of uniform medical science, find it difficult to provide any comments concerning treatment methods for this illness and even doubt the very possibility of classification of this condition as an illness itself.

2005-09-10

Genre: Article

Category: Recognized

# New Age Threshold

*Astounding tragicomedy*

**V.V.P.**, “Greetings and well met, oh highly respected TV-watchers! Have a good time of pokes... I mean, jokes! It’s me again together with ye, the TV presenter of the ‘Russia News’ show Vladimir Vladimirovich Pupkin. The topic of our next telecast will be, saying straightly, of the truly apocalyptic nature. But let’s not get ahead of ourselves! And, yeah, while I still haven’t forgotten the scenario, I want to add that there is a guest here sitting in the studio together with me for now, a researcher of human souls, Fyodor! Hello, Fyodor!”

**Fyodor**, “Zdryam!”

**V.V.P.**, “Fyodor makes me stun, telling them all ‘zdryam’.”

**Fyodor**, “Those are the customs and the times... but let’s not build spiritual mines to be left lonely in the cram, addressing watchers with words ‘zdryam’...”

**V.V.P.**, “From such a rhyme I’ll shed some tears! Where have you been for two hundred years?”

**Fyodor**, “Forget the sorrowful accord, I lived in another world.”

**V.V.P.**, “Oh well, perhaps, but let us stop – or soon we will be on the top until at least the end of day... I find it hard to rhyme, I say!”

**Fyodor**, “And I find funny it for now... what shall we tell them and just how?”

**V.V.P.**, “Oh, we will see the picture shaking, how Russian bear gets awakened, how dies a foe from overseas, how British flag gets sunk in freeze, how Jews returned all western walls to Arabs nations with no toll, how Europe-Russia did unite and Balts unable to spread blight, how N of prophecies came true, how temples ruined without glue, how politicians got mad and eat now only stale bread, and how the Newest Epoch comes and we are hitting in the drums!”

**Fyodor**, “You are a poet, friend, as well! To find a better job you shall!”

**V.V.P.**, “I’ve got such laurels, what to say? But where were you along the way?”

**Fyodor**, “I got frozen in the cold, that is what my soul told.”

**V.V.P.**, “A winter of the soul? Is summer then your goal?”

**Fyodor**, “It was delayed, I was afraid. But hope I do – will sky turn blue, and sun of God will come in the world.”

**V.V.P.**, “To be a light in darkest night? This world is full of hatred, blight!”

**Fyodor**, “Don’t be afraid, find the strength to fly – the jackal will just howl and die!”

**V.V.P.**, “Already howling, do you hear? The days of answer coming near.”

**Fyodor**, “Such is the century and time... We have forgotten what is prime, in darkness many washed and stayed, and the path to God they have betrayed.”

**V.V.P.**, “That’s just what we are showing you! The years passed will now be few, and the world will clear from the sin, and will emerge like a submarine.”

**Fyodor**, “How gothic is that your prediction... It is so fine and not a fiction! The world is cleared from the dust, its Karma now is working fast!”

**V.V.P.**, “And one will find Him, being ready. Let’s watch the topic, friend, already?”

**Fyodor**, “All right, Vladimir, play your part! Prepare to watch, let’s give a start!”

**V.V.P.**, “A time of wonders is approaching, and gentle souls Spirit’s touching...”

**Fyodor**, “Such events take the place just once... Think wider, our TV fans!”

*A camera in television studio moves somewhere sideways and upwards, at first displaying the vicinities of some city from a height of a bird’s flight, and then sharply dives downwards and panoramas of various small streets are revealed before viewers. Small streets quickly replace one another as the camera continues its sharp dive there-here for rounds, moving at the level of the third-fourth floors of buildings. Strangely enough, all streets look deserted – not a single wandering soul can be seen along it. All common crowd activity has gone somewhere, thousands of men and women as if have vanished from the city, and a din, so traditional for megacities, has totally broken off. Cars are parked in some chaotic manner along the edges of streets – some of them were apparently hastily abandoned, – their doors are wide open, however, no one aspires to take hold of another’s vehicle. City system of illumination and traffic light still work, however one cannot observe any visible movement at all. As if the city died out all of a sudden – definitively and irrevocably.*

**Fyodor**, “Oh my, what’s going there on? They used to dream of own throne – but now all hidden like the rats... Perhaps they’ve seen some giant cats?”

**V.V.P.**, “This is New York... or bestiary? Reminds me of the mortuary... all people left the streets for good... oh no, this ain’t Hollywood!”

**Fyodor**, “Who record this to be then shown?”

**V.V.P.**, “It’s an operator, who has flown!”

**Fyodor**, “Oh, my! A man can soar like a bird?”

**V.V.P.**, “And so much more of that sort!”

**Fyodor**, “With proper faith, we all can fly and join thus the life of sky?”

**V.V.P.**, “A couple is already soaring... and trust my word, this isn’t boring.”

**Fyodor**, “I see... Oh well, and where are men, have gone to Hollywood all then?”

**V.V.P.**, “Like cockroaches in the homes – all reading now the holy tomes! As if the priests of the blight behold the coming of the Light!”

**Fyodor**, “Like cockroaches, being lit, they run away now, breaking feet? What are they doing at these times?”

**V.V.P.**, “Before the God commit their crimes. Ask to forgive their sins in demise, feeling how far they are from Paradise. Knowing, perhaps, what some earned with deeds... asking to banish from soul dark seeds.”

**Fyodor**, “In hearts and minds believed in God? That’s such a wonderful accord...”

**V.V.P.**, “Fyodor, remember, who is recording them!”

**Fyodor**, “Your operator in skies like a ram?”

**V.V.P.**, “Sort of, my Fyodor, and something like that... See through the camera, how he is glad?”

*A smiling ruddy physiognomy of the operator suddenly appears before viewers. The physiognomy shows its tongue and, apparently, teases viewers. Then a hand appears on the front in a camera, affably waving to all.*

**V.V.P.**, “This is Ivan, the operator – he’s roaming skies as of the later!”

**Fyodor**, “The bird descended from the skies... And what of planes?”

**V.V.P.**, “They’ve stopped their flies!”

**Fyodor**, “Are they afraid to crash with him?”

**V.V.P.**, “No better plane they’ve ever seen!”

**Fyodor**, “All that I’ve learned in institute... the laws of physics...”

**V.V.P.**, “Leave for good! The world of wonders is the choice, the God has heard appealing voice...”

**Fyodor**, “Where are all physicists, the scene is sad. Vomit in toilets or have fled?”

**V.V.P.**, “Ivan, show us the institute! They are ‘praying’ there now for good.”

*The camera suddenly twitches, sharply floats somewhere downwards, then upwards, again downwards and upwards, speeding up on its way, and then for the last time dives down and flies directly into the open doors of some building, dives in corridors for a few times and then stand still in immovability. A huge hall opens before viewers, filled with people in glasses, dressed in white dressing gowns. Those ones, standing near walls, amicable as though on command, with a periodicity of several seconds hit the wall with their heads, making a sound, somewhat resembling a “bom!” Those unlucky ones, who have got no walls in their direct possession, are standing in the center of the hall on their knees, and with so smaller persistence strike a stone floor with their foreheads with approximately similar periodicity. The show depresses and bewitches simultaneously.*

**Fyodor**, “Oh, stop this nonsense, help them heal, or otherwise themselves they’ll kill!”

**V.V.P.**, “Ones in depression cannot thrive. Such is the way of disbelief.”

**Fyodor**, “Their minds are useful still. Hope soon better they will feel.”

**V.V.P.**, “To learn themselves they do not try... and in such actions their soul cry.”

**Fyodor**, “One cannot learn himself through the mind, a path to soul must he find.”

V.V.P., “I hope someday they’ll read this text. What are we going to watch next?”

**Fyodor**, “Do all the priest lose their force when Son of God knocked at their doors?”

V.V.P., “Ivan have seen how faithful ones pray not in church, yet sing and dance!”

*The camera changes its foreshortening once more, takes off from an institute building, winding through narrow and twisting corridors, then soars up in heavens and rushes in whitish clouds, from time to time looking at the sun as if for the sake of joy. Then sharply dives downwards, hardly not hitting an iron cross, decorating the top of the building, and flies into the open gate of some large temple. A truly intriguing picture reveals before the eyes: the last left in the church priest does, apparently, something unimaginable. He periodically fills his hands with a handful of “sacred” water and “tastes” it on a tongue, promptly screwing up ones face and whispering something under the nose, or removes a heavy cross, hanging on a neck, and strikes himself with it into a forehead, shouting “Amen” for better effect, or approaches a random icon, and starts ogling, or sits down on a floor in a pose of a lotus and begins beating out a tap dance on all the crosses, necklaces and other jewelry, covering his body, or with a heart-rendering cries “I banish thee, I tell ya!” starts rushing over a hall, threatening someone invisible with a overgilded cross. This show frightens, intrigues and bewitches at the same time.*

**Fyodor**, “I wonder, is that priest mad?”

V.V.P., “A ritual plague this priest had.”

**Fyodor**, “All forms he mixed, but essence – miss... was priest kissed by Abyss?”

V.V.P., “For quite a long their god is money, all actions strange, few souls are sunny, and even stupid ritual he can’t perform, for it’s so dull.”

**Fyodor**, “If they possess no more sheep, there is no need for gold and whip?”

V.V.P., “Let’s them cut fur from their bodies, and all those ‘donated’ goodies.”

**Fyodor**, “They’ve served a golden calf so well, had their feasts in their fall – was their list of crimes too fat?”

V.V.P., “I guess we’ll keep in secret that!”

**Fyodor**, “The priests are not doing well... watch politicians, friend, we shall?”

V.V.P., “No reason watching them, I think – to guzzle oats and vodka’s drink?”

**Fyodor**, “Oats and vodka? Funny move! That’s how their holiness they prove?”

V.V.P., “They are doing that for quite a time! With Faberge eggs they play ping-pong, and left their mansions with gold pools, still loudly crying, ‘We were fools!’”

**Fyodor**, “Those are, no doubt, timely thoughts!”

V.V.P., “Hi, politician! Eat now the oats!”

**Fyodor**, “Have they ground off their teeth, trying all to bite and tease? Or have enlightenment just come, and they have learned their own harm?”

**V.V.P.**, “They were shocked, they were crying when Ivan was zealously flying! And just beside in own dreams, they saw the tombs, prepared for sins. They saw what is awaiting them, and since these days they are in the lam.”

**Fyodor**, “The avaricious knight has learned the price of blight, confirmed that he was a fool and quickly sat in the dirty pool?”

**V.V.P.**, “Sort of, my friend, it is quite so... The politician has fallen low. Already soon he'll leave the scene, for oh-so-bloody it has been.”

**Fyodor**, “What if he gives away all gold?”

**V.V.P.**, “Another fate may then unfold. But he collected all in holes, for long perceiving own goals.”

**Fyodor**, “He may present someone somewhere, to share with others – that is fair!”

**V.V.P.**, “Every task can you endure if your soul's always pure!”

**Fyodor**, “Oats with them we'll not consume, and leave them all alone to fume. I guess at last the time has come to watch medical outcome! For long they've rescued only bodies – what has become with their goodies?”

**V.V.P.**, “Ivan, show us the plot for now, and fly in heavens... you know how!”

*The camera changes its foreshortening for one more time, turning away from a raging priest, who is crying out “Ya fly away from there, I banish ya!”, takes into opened temple's gates and rises into heavens. For some time a spectator can observe landscapes replacing each other far below, beginning from the vast forest and finishing with apparently endless roads, leading goodness knows where and goodness know what for, and then starts a traditional sharp dive and the picture of a city's dump reveals before one's eyes. Huge dump – I would even say a picture of massive waste. It's clearly visible a row of cars standing before a dump, competing with each other in the holy right to be emptied as soon as possible. During the “emptying” of a next garbage truck it becomes visible, how from its body big heaps of some tablets of all possible forms and coloring, some bags filled with powder, and finally, some jars and bottles with every possible mixture are rolled out and fall down into this already huge heap. All this medical junk amicably flies downwards from a heap's top, ringing and as though clinking with invisible hooves in the process. This magnificent picture is finalized with striding here and there between heaps fire-bearers with torches, who persistently and methodically try to send all this unloaded junk to a fire for eating.*

**Fyodor**, “Burning bright, the finest light!”

**V.V.P.**, “Look in the sky – Ivans do fly!”

**Fyodor**, “Fine to remember of own childhood, these fire-bearers are like Robins Hoods! Medicines burn with a wonderful glow, formerly diseased express their ‘love’...”

**V.V.P.**, “People of Earth heal each other, energies holy were granted by Father.”

**Fyodor**, “A funny change in medicines... diseases are caused by own sins!”

**V.V.P.**, “A true belief can cure one! All those, becoming divine sons, own mistakes must understand to travel then in Wonderland. They now were healed by God, they sing and dance, and praise and glad!”

**Fyodor**, “And by all means, that is just fine! A beloved topic that’s of mine... I am again on the road and happy thinking of my God.”

**V.V.P.**, “We both, my Fyodor, know of that – this planet was in a state so bad, but now the healing is near... And the new Earth will know no fear. The age of light now comes to life...”

**Fyodor**, “I wonder, who will that survive?”

\* \* \*

**V.V.P.**, “Please tell me, Fyodor, how are you?”

**Fyodor**, “The fate has stacked us with glue!”

**V.V.P.**, “Oh yes, I see... and that’s fine then! Shall we watch events once again?”

**Fyodor**, “Or we can simply talk a lot... and share what’s going on and hot!”

**V.V.P.**, “The spring is coming, snow’s no more...”

**Fyodor**, “And once again my spirit soar!”

**V.V.P.**, “How is the height? And what’s the speed? And is the sign in heavens lit?”

**Fyodor**, “I have no knowledge of my height... Yet speed increases own grade...”

**V.V.P.**, “I am so happy, poet-friend, that we are all in the same band!”

**Fyodor**, “There is no reason now to flatter... To wake up sleepers – so much better.”

**V.V.P.**, “Through verses telling of the things, and waving own hands like wings?”

**Fyodor**, “Of wondrous times we are still ringing, and bird from skies to us still singing, with each her song we know a bit more, so let us learn her hidden lore.”

**V.V.P.**, “We are together – I am glad. Let’s once again pour the flood!”

**Fyodor**, “Strange flood’s approaching worthy nations... It’s the enlightenment, inspiration!”

**V.V.P.**, “Heed our speech, my watcher, then. Life’s closing circle once again!”

**Fyodor**, “The altitude does differ, though. Away from fire shadows flow.”

**V.V.P.**, “Without fire life is dark.”

**Fyodor**, “So let’s give watcher at least spark. A river of times is flowing in spring for them to awaken in eye’s blink.”

**V.V.P.**, “Awakened warriors we’ve got! What’re their numbers?”

**Fyodor**, “Quite a lot?”

**V.V.P.**, “I guess there could be more of them?”

**Fyodor**, “Someone preferred to go in lam.”

**V.V.P.**, “We’ll fight alongside ones, who’ve come.”

**Fyodor**, “And make the viewer silent-stunned.”

**V.V.P.**, “Let’s go, oh camera, go live! Ivan is going on the strife!”

**Fyodor**, “Ivan in going in the sky just like a fighter on the fly…”

**V.V.P.**, “He’s fighting now with prejudice!”

**Fyodor**, “But have no feathers, just us, guys.”

**V.V.P.**, “And add the wings to absence list – but still he’s sky apologist.”

**Fyodor**, “He’ll gain those in Thin World rather and bath himself then in the ether?”

**V.V.P.**, “It’s hard to be like Angel, guy, your soul must be on the fly.”

**Fyodor**, “True wings are granted by the God?”

**V.V.P.**, “Ivan, show us the funny plot!”

*Camera together with Ivan (or maybe Ivan together with a camera?) rush away from film-making studio, winding on corridors for a long time, evading on its way from scurrying here and there employees, who are at the sight of camera (or maybe Ivan instead?) quite unambiguously smile and concede roads; then, finally, flies by at the opening door on a fresh air. It’s clearly visible how a camera then turns by a semicircle, speeds up and starts winding through capital’s streets, having risen by the level of the third or fourth floor of houses in order to evade side effects of possible collisions with even less ambiguously smiling lower-walking passers-by. After about three minutes before viewers a scene of recently build up shopping center opens up, and camera, having accurately entered through the opening of entrance doors armholes, finally freezes as though in indecision state.*

*A picture of truly epic scale reveals before the audience: entire hall, as far as the look suffices, is full of people making a din and scurrying about here and there, on backs of which pairs of wings of white, black, pink, green, orange, gray, gray-brown-crimson-in-a-speck colors are fixed. Lots of girls do coquettishly try on themselves the next pair of wings, gracefully flaunting in front of mirrors. As if in revenge some young men try to pinch them from time to time for these very most newly acquired wings. Here and there exclamations of type “And do these white ones fit me well?”, “And those pinkish I’ll present to my girlfriend!”, “In them, you look more like a devil!”, “I welcome thee, Emo-Angel!”, “Gimme two!” and the like. The picture intrigues and bewitches one greatly.*

**Fyodor**, “What are they doing there, my!”

**V.V.P.**, “The wings of Angels do they buy!”

**Fyodor**, “Like them they want to look at least and have engaged in fair’s feast?”

**V.V.P.**, “Everyone desired so when Ivan was on the go!”

**Fyodor**, “They search for wings as if guru?”

**V.V.P.**, “And cry aloud, ‘Gimme two!’”

**Fyodor**, “There are wings of color black?!”

**V.V.P.**, “For those whose soul’s on wrong track.”

**Fyodor**, “And even those of color pink...”

**V.V.P.**, “It’s quite an honor, don’t you think?”

**Fyodor**, “You’ve got a humor in the stock! And what is that?”

**V.V.P.**, “It’s a winged dog!”

**Fyodor**, “And even horse these wings has gain?!”

**V.V.P.**, “Pegasus flying in the rain!”

**Fyodor**, “It’s sort of miracle as such...”

**V.V.P.**, “I do agree, so don’t you touch!”

**Fyodor**, “Ivan’s no doubt, lucky one!”

**V.V.P.**, “And more skills are yet to come. He’s our curiosity with all verbosity!”

**Fyodor**, “I am so happy for that man! Flying’s is part of Divine Plan.”

**V.V.P.**, “Into the Garden we will go, the road is shining with a new glow.”

**Fyodor**, “Someone will enter, others not. The battle’s getting hotter.”

**V.V.P.**, “I pity those still doing crimes. Just like American marines...”

**Fyodor**, “How the USA is living, yes?”

**V.V.P.**, “Ivan, show us this teaching mess!”

*As if having found second wings, let it even be somewhat artificial, in reality, Ivan in unity with a camera and his great desire leaves chock-full pavilion with Not-So-Angels and sharply soars up to the clouds. For a short instant the camera appears to be blinded by beams of a rising sun, and then the audience can behold for some time gentle curly-headed cloudlets-lambs and flying pigeons. Then all of a sudden the camera dives down, cutting clouds and having frightened off the next flock of totally not guilty of anything birds, and depressing in the monotone picture reveals before viewers.*

*Wherever you look – everywhere there are dilapidated and almost depopulated cities with rickety houses and beaten-out glasses, through streets of which winds keep walking and rolling goodness knows where from brought tumbleweed and other not taken out from fire chestnuts. From time to time through this or that street some figure rushes on, bearing a faint resemblance to a human, yet by its habits and appearance more resembling Neanderthal men. Sometimes silent abuse comes off from Ivan’s side, along with advice to be cleaned from “this burial ground of stinking macaques” as quickly as possible. The revealing before viewers picture indeed partly reminds a cemetery, in which survived ones didn’t still manage to put things in order yet or are already totally incapable of doing so independently.*

*It all forms a feeling as though this continent was recently visited either by a huge natural disaster or not less destructive by its consequences social act of terrorism. The picture depresses and leaves an extremely burdensome impression on soul.*

**Fyodor**, “Who are these? Some sort of monkeys?”

**V.V.P.**, “Please look closer, these are Yankees!”

**Fyodor**, “Faces covered with fear?”

**V.V.P.**, “Downfall is coming near!”

**Fyodor**, “Many covered with fur, no escape from own moor?”

**V.V.P.**, “Those, who have abandoned God, doomed themselves to groan and rot.”

**Fyodor**, “Yankees must repentance feel...”

**V.V.P.**, “They are killing others still...”

**Fyodor**, “What a pitiful ‘the end’ for that former continent.”

**V.V.P.**, “Capitalism made them like mad. Feudalism now welcomes, lad!”

**Fyodor**, “They are dividing quickly so... how many ‘kingdoms’ in the row?”

**V.V.P.**, “Just like as many as the states... Run overseas all Wall Street’s mates!”

**Fyodor**, “No one escapes the Justice Law!”

**V.V.P.**, “Feel no repentance? It means... oh...”

**Fyodor**, “Those ones escaping from the fate will more trouble only bait.”

**V.V.P.**, “Ships may think without link... of your actions, one must think!”

**Fyodor**, “Look what Yankees brought on them...”

**V.V.P.**, “Nature’s wrath is like a ram! Whirlwinds and tsunamis may be coming from the seas...”

**Fyodor**, “This is quite instructive, yes... Evil ones are making a mess.”

**V.V.P.**, “Quite long ago it has been told. Still people strife for wealth and gold.”

**Fyodor**, “They are the lesson for this world, ones who rejected divine chord...”

**V.V.P.**, “This nation bears own guilt... and hate like poison makes them wilt.”

**Fyodor**, “Their brother-Jew... what of these ones?”

**V.V.P.**, “Ivan, show us those ‘chosen’ sons.”

*Once again having sadly sighted directly into the camera, with relief Ivan soars under heavens once again, and, being guided by reference points known only to him, flies straight in the direction of a sacred hail, because of which sanctity there was so much human blood, probably not so sacred, spilled already. On approaching, however, it becomes obvious that the sky over Jerusalem is densely covered with black-gray clouds, here and there lightning are sparkling illuminated dark horizon, and heavy rain has already started.*

*Either a mental abuse or Ivan's caustic snicker can be heard in the camera, and she, camera, starts to become covered by more than live drops of moisture. Then, however, the hand of operator waves before viewers, which in all its immense power with ease wipes the camera in a flash of time, and unambiguously exposes to everyone its thumb, raised vertically up.*

*Five more seconds pass and before looking into their TV screens auditory a shocking unprepared watcher view opens itself: it's clearly visible how large masses of people gathered before sorrowly known Wailing Wall and in some sort of drunk waste, more, however, reminding frenzied despair, are bashing their heads against this so sorrowly known wall. They are hitting it, however, not so strongly and seriously, because no a single one from them, as the look suffices, bears no visible signs of a blow with own forehead. Deaf sounds "bom!" accompanied by high shrieks "Ai!", "Ouch!" and even "Eh time, one more time!" fill space. The picture reminds an attempt of national public repentance not the most original way. Drops of moisture, beating about a pavement, complete this pitiable picture of crying.*

**V.V.P.**, "Just look, my friend, at Wailing Wall – the Jews are 'paying' their toll!"

**Fyodor**, "Oh, my! With heads, they are bashing walls! Is that the way to reach their goals?"

**V.V.P.**, "They beat themselves like in frenzy, for long have been living in the lie..."

**Fyodor**, "A heaven's fire fell on the town, and 'chosen' one was stripped of the crown?"

**V.V.P.**, "Was making money all the way... and thus become their own prey."

**Fyodor**, "When conscience dropped in the urn, the sun becoming hot and burn?"

**V.V.P.**, "Whose speech is brutal, full of hate may know what role sun plays in fate."

**Fyodor**, "Without nature one lives not. What of officials and their sort?"

**V.V.P.**, "I'm afraid they aren't glad."

**Fyodor**, "I didn't get it – what is that?"

**V.V.P.**, "Without money thieves went mad."

**Fyodor**, "And what of those who stole not much?"

**V.V.P.**, "For their wealth, they tried to clutch."

**Fyodor**, "Can this be seen in color mode?"

**V.V.P.**, "A nice cutscene we have got."

**Fyodor**, "And that reply is quite unclear."

**V.V.P.**, "Oh yes, we'll see, cause it's quite near."

*The camera soars up again, taking off from a zone of black clouds, and sets course for a Moscow. After a short duration still recently black sky suddenly lights up with sunshine, patches of which light starts playing here and there on the lens only known to them chords. Through totally short time before viewers the image of St. Basil's Cathedrals flows out in a real-time, and the panorama of Red Square reveals from a bird's flight height. It's clearly visible how along specified square under a military escort some officials of the state are moving, spitefully looking around on by no means loyal military forces and celebrating people. From the site of aforementioned last ones, obscene abuses and promises "to restore justice" can be overheard – what sort of justice they are talking about, however, isn't known. Escorts periodically kick them, helping to get into the prepared armored vans under encouraging exclamations of standing nearby people. On faces of thieves of Russian State, departing into exile, a totally genuine mix of fear, surprise, melancholy, and disappointment can be distinguished. By all means, it's obvious that they surely didn't expect such sort of ending.*

**Fyodor**, "I see them all now in the run, without power, with no fun?"

**V.V.P.**, "Official fell from all the tops with little help from Russian cops!"

**Fyodor**, "And what is that? They are groaning 'no' but in Siberia still, go?"

**V.V.P.**, "They are leaving Kremlin in the tracks, abusing all with useless 'fucks'!"

**Fyodor**, "I will show nothing like respect before those Kremlin-thieves-sect..."

**V.V.P.**, "They've been exiled in distant lands for Russia's tired of these 'bands'."

**Fyodor**, "What, check and mate? It's just in time! I'm overjoyed in the rhyme!"

**V.V.P.**, "The second escort do you see?"

**Fyodor**, "These liberals will not get free!"

**V.V.P.**, "Both parties cursing each one, well... and moving now in parallel..."

**Fyodor**, "Just look at how they blame each other! To curses, I won't listen rather!"

**V.V.P.**, "They will have a great time together... I will not watch 'reunion' rather!"

**Fyodor**, "I have all reasons to believe! Woe to traitors and to thieves..."

**V.V.P.**, "Once common men exiled they, but life now offered mirrored way!"

**Fyodor**, "Russia's pillage will not last! Where is the ax from former 'past'?"

**V.V.P.**, "Oh no, drop weapons, wars don't rock!"

**Fyodor**, "It is, my friend, was sort of joke. My hero once was ax-bearer, but the time of change is coming near, so he is now with the blade of word..."

**V.V.P.**, "It's such a wonderful accord!"

**Fyodor**, "Russia will awake from sleep, inspired again, no longer sick."

**V.V.P.**, "The beast is crawling back in hole..."

**Fyodor**, "The spring is coming, spring for all!"

V.V.P., “All cockroaches run from light, they once were thriving in the blight...”

**Fyodor**, “I see Russia’s hoping all. What’s with Saxons?”

V.V.P., “They paid their toll.”

**Fyodor**, “You mean they’ve cursed their banks?”

V.V.P., “I mean they’ve put on aqualungs!”

**Fyodor**, “For a long time they’ve been hating us... is the Atlantis better thus?”

V.V.P., “No longer they have their home. England, well... it’s sort of... gone.”

**Fyodor**, “Empire fell with the awful smell?”

V.V.P., “And shouldn’t it? The water, well...”

**Fyodor**, “Oh, my, you mean they had to dive and swim away to save their life?”

V.V.P., “Nature gave a reply to crimes, from the “third world” they are sucking ‘fines’...”

**Fyodor**, “What is that light in such dense fog?”

V.V.P., “It’s Scotland’s fire! These guys rock!”

**Fyodor**, “They truly are the mountains sons!”

V.V.P., “The world is changing with no guns...”

**Fyodor**, “All fools believed that life is still.”

V.V.P., “The speed of change they will soon feel!”

**Fyodor**, “The inner wisdom never sleeps... I would prefer to watch your tips.”

*Kremlin Square starts quickly disappearing from sight, getting smaller and smaller, leaving one with a pride in a soul for the Russian people, camera starts winding of streets and suddenly stops before some large capital library, before gates of which a true and real fire is burning! Its borders and limits are, however, being successfully controller by passing here and there processions with torches, who help to burn the piled-up paper waste and supervise that ashes of her shabby knowledge weren’t carried by a blowing wind too far on the world. On faces of participants of procession, it’s possible to notice a surprising mix of grief and inner joy at the same time. Periodically here and there war-calls in the spirit of “Burn right and bright, let’s end the blight!” can be overheard. Action intrigues, shocks and bewitches strenuously.*

**Fyodor**, “What sort of field there burns?”

V.V.P., “They are throwing textbooks in the urns!”

**Fyodor**, “To hear inner wisdom’s voice they had to make such funny choice?”

V.V.P., “All rubbish knowledge is like ash, so lots of theories have crashed.”

**Fyodor**, “The joy of life the Maker gives... yet not to traitors, not to thieves.”

V.V.P., “The time has come for us to fly. Still, move in cars... don’t we feel shy?”

**Fyodor**, “The cars can still have a reason, yes, but shall be changed by progress.”

**V.V.P.**, “Another type of fuel’s here, no more oil, wars, and fear.”

**Fyodor**, “Let Earth take finally some rest. Those new inventions are the best.”

**V.V.P.**, “No scientific falsely ‘wonder’, spiritual science is like thunder.”

**Fyodor**, “For if there is just mind plus greed, for bombs then we are planting the seed.”

**V.V.P.**, “No longer mankind making bombs, no more digging catacombs.”

**Fyodor**, “And what with these that have been made?”

**V.V.P.**, “Their only fate is to degrade.”

**Fyodor**, “What do you mean? Again in a fight?!”

**V.V.P.**, “No way! One sees his soul’s might!”

**Fyodor**, “I have been almost terrified. Deserve they honor by the right!”

**V.V.P.**, “And tons of metal are now free... where will they use it, we shall see!”

**Fyodor**, “They melt all cannons and know not where would that metal all be brought?”

**V.V.P.**, “They’ve dug that metal quite a lot applying wrongly with no thought.”

**Fyodor**, “And now it’s time for the worthy goal. The greedy one pays the double toll!”

**V.V.P.**, “Oh yeah, one thing I find quite funny – how will they pay without money?”

**Fyodor**, “With little money little gore?”

**V.V.P.**, “All money is gone, they are no more!”

**Fyodor**, “Is this some sort of New World’s charter?”

*It’s obvious that heavenly apologist Ivan very reluctantly says goodbye to contemplation of burning fields of shabby books, so bewitching the sight of unprepared viewer, but, nevertheless, curiosity together with a call of duty finally prevails, and he, having waved a hand to all torches procession, and shouted to them something like “Hasta la vista!”, for one another time soars up to heavens like a free bird. He continues for some time to habitually wind of city streets at the level of the third or the fourth floor of buildings, and then with a gallop if, certainly, such a term is even applicable to such sort of movement, flies into the opened door of the currency exchange building.*

*Straight off it becomes clear that senseless vanity which once filled this senseless institution sank into oblivion in no time, for the rats, creeping here and there on parquets, have become practically the main inhabitants of this institution, as well as some individuals of doubtful degree of rationality with sad looks on their faces, periodically bursting in cries like “Blue counters, blue counters, they are the gingerbreads for money launders!”, “Will lend for five and take for three, I shall be rich, oh you will see!”, “Bulls and bears are not pears... run away... back off, I say!”.*

*Similar chaos is supplemented by scattered here and there packs of cash of most different forms and coloring, on some on which aforementioned rats have already managed to make their notes. In general, this picture leaves a strong feeling of a madhouse which was left by all medics already along with the majority of their patients, excluding the most persistent ones from the second group.*

**Fyodor**, “Is that too good, is that too bad? It’s like a house for the mad!”

**V.V.P.**, “The parasites did crawl here... now crocodiles cry with tears.”

**Fyodor**, “They have been warned long ago, but didn’t change their spirit’s ‘flow’.”

**V.V.P.**, “Let’s stop beholding their fate – no more course, no more rate...”

**Fyodor**, “Back then to churchmen? No, no reasons.”

**V.V.P.**, “Some men did leave the cages of prisons!”

**Fyodor**, “Those ones without great crimes were given work to pay the ‘fines’?”

**V.V.P.**, “Who Divine Law have understood, expiate crimes in work for good.”

**Fyodor**, “Each one will show what holds inside... humility forges roads for the right.”

**V.V.P.**, “Let’s hope they have sufficient time, and their demons are in decline.”

**Fyodor**, “Guardian Angel each one has got, listen to them to feel divine accord.”

**V.V.P.**, “Many of them that will soon understand.”

**Fyodor**, “What of the poets in our land?”

*Ivan suddenly bursts in victorious shout “Y-a-h-o-o!” and takes off away from the root paper nervous-doing, gradually increasing his height as if trying to leave this city as quickly as ever possible. And finally before viewers forests start floating above, camera sharply dives down and as though hangs on a branch of one of the pines. Ten seconds after it becomes obvious that Ivan simply sat down on a fly on the of a tree, which has attracted his attention, just like a classical bird. Thirty seconds later silent joyful whistling reaches an audience, ones of definitely human genesis. A view of a wood clearing and the slice of the sky opens before viewers, which has appeared in the lens of a television camera just in time. It seems that Ivan’s pensive and spring mood was transferred even to the dictator.*

**V.V.P.**, “We shall live not as we did once!”

**Fyodor**, “Let’s sing like birds and then have a dance!”

**V.V.P.**, “Is that the pigeon of the peace?”

**Fyodor**, “And don’t forget the goose, oh please.”

**V.V.P.**, “I see you like the birds as shown.”

**Fyodor**, “They are harbingers of the dawn.”

**V.V.P.**, “Oh yes, so close they are to skies...”

**Fyodor**, “The cocks – you hear – are on the rise?”

**V.V.P.**, “The cock is sort of battle bird!”

**Fyodor**, “Like the nightingale, as of sort.”

**V.V.P.**, “Ah, nightingale, that’s the singer!”

**Fyodor**, “As if in warning cuckoo ringer...”

**V.V.P.**, “The hawk has fallen to the ground. Decaying... now it is ants round...”

**Fyodor**, “I will not find the proper words, describing the fate of predatory birds.”

**V.V.P.**, “And for the foxes there are dogs.”

**Fyodor**, “Keep arrows ticking of the clocks.”

**V.V.P.**, “And tiny birds make the wondrous show!”

**Fyodor**, “The newest times are on the go.”

**V.V.P.**, “And that is now without a doubt! We’ll meet again?”

**Fyodor**, “I will be proud.”

*2011-03-07*

*Genre: Report*

*Category: Chosen*

## Wrath of war

A whistle of a flying shell. Air, dissected by an iron pig. Explosion. Explosion - just behind the next hill.

Missed. Missed again.

Alive. I am alive! Still alive.

Have missed the mark, slightly – but have missed. Lucky enough?

And how many times again must he be lucky enough during all these days, to remain alive? How many?

However, it could be worse – much worse. Worse than when his lung was shot and he has been gasping since then, sucking air into lungs with some sobs, and releasing it outside – still hot, warmed by his organism air... the air of war and destructions. Even worse than when the explosion of a grenade has deprived him of his three hand's fingers... instead of them – bloody-stained lumps.

A nevertheless he is still alive, living in this mad war. Alive among hundreds and hundreds of other mad ones.

Will he last for long?

A machine gun fired nearby. Into entrenchments! – where the killing iron will not reach him. To the ground – the ground of native land... the country, which was hardly resisting enemy's onslaught. The enemy... How, when these people, just the same as he is, when have they become his enemies? Why enemies? What a monstrous absurd and error must have occurred that they suddenly became enemies? Another madness?

Anyway, they are enemies now. Worse than that – the hungry beasts, feasting on corpses of killed and wounded, rejoicing with each death of hated enemy... next cut thread of human's life... human... No, they are not like humans now... not anymore. Each of them – is not a human anymore. They were like them, in their former lives – but not anymore. No.

Since this madness of war has begun.

And once again a whistle of a machine gun and a desperate shriek somewhere far in these entrenchments. His comrade has died – a brother by motherland, by faith, by customs. Yet another stopped life way. Yet again a grief for his parents – if, of course, they are still alive... One more life put on the altar... what for? For the sake of what all this war was started? Territories? Resources? Money? World influence? But how insignificant all these temporal goals in comparison with one – yes, with a single stopped human life! And there are hundreds and hundreds of them by each day.

Enemies couldn't feel regret. They had no desire to understand. They had to kill – kill their enemies. Same people as they are.

And this was the most awful, the most horrific that a blinded by the power and riches human mind could invent. A mistake, terrible mistake... unforgivable mistake. An error, which price is – the split blood – the blood of wounded and dying people, the blood of those, who once were them. An error, which price is – ruined cities and destroyed families, corrupted human fates. An error, which price is – unleashed a war of two nations.

The war... and for how long will this war ever last? Until the last soldier is killed? Until all major cities of the enemy are wiped out from the face of Earth? Until the flame of grief inflames all far horizons of this country – a country, whose destiny is to be subdued. To become a raw appendage of a more powerful state and – more aggressive – those which begun the war, made a monstrous mistake for which both will have to pay.

They will not withstand – he knew it. Technics, weapons, resources – the enemy has all it in plenty. Much more than they can dream of. They had only one thing left which has played such a malicious joke – natural resources, riches of Earth interior – the motherland, where he has to die. He has to die, seeing coming victorious forces of the enemy, seeing their proud and blind delight of a victory, seeing their hatred to those survived – civilian population... to survived civilians – if, of course, there will be many survivors. He hoped there will be many. It must be many – for sometimes after decades and decades his country could reborn.

And still he has to fight – along with other your men, quickly mobilized and driven on the front lines soon after the beginning of the war. Hastily trained. Slightly armed. Not murderers – living people.

The burst of machine gun has abated and he has slightly raised his head. As he has suspected – enemy's infantry was advancing in full order. Damn, it would be so great to have some heavy technics here and now – some tank. Or tanks. But all large forces have already been mobilized in other directions. And they have been abandoned here, against superior forces of the enemy, with almost no means of protection. They have been left to die here on the battlefield. Well, he thought – to die means to die. There are no other options possible, apparently. A pity, his death will be in vain.

He has suddenly caught himself on a thought of how he can die to grasp as many as possible enemies together with him, for enemies aren't talked with, they have to be – killed. But whether they would begin to kill him if they have happened to meet in different circumstances? Possibly, they would even become friends. Yes, friends with that very young soldier that has so ineptly got out forward...

A recharge of submachine gun... a sound of taken and inserted charger. A shot. Enemy's soldier silently falls down with a punched head... One more enemy has fallen. Ruthlessly killed.

Madness... This is total madness. Humans, transformed into animals and brought for murders.

Non-humans? Are there are humans in the war at all, humans – soldiers? Soldiers, who have still remained humans? He met and saw those returned from wars time and again – almost nobody from them could get accustomed to peaceful life.

Only singles did. For this is war. For this is madness.

Enemies were approaching – without concealing, methodically and openly. They saw and felt their victory – feasted on the victory, feasted each moment with relish. Then they will feast over the conquered territory, too... They didn't know yet what a monstrous error they have already committed. Mistake, for which they should pay off once...

The columns of the enemy are absolutely nearby – there is no more reason to cover in the entrenchments. The order of their commander, shouted in the air – “Forward!” And here he is – their commander, leaving an entrenchment – and moving towards the enemy. And falling. Falling without a single shout. But the impulse is picked up – and soldiers rise. Rise on their last fight. The shortest fight possible.

Sounds of discharged weapons. People, dying from both sides. Dying for nothing.

He has risen the time he has heard the order. Has run forward – first, second, third – enemies fell before him.

But a shot finally comes – and pain burns his shoulder. He shoots once more – and yet another soldier of the enemy falls down. One more shot – and blow in a breast throw him aside.

Ground. Native ground. You are so close to me now. So close...

A bent face of the enemy. A gunpoint, looking at his forehead. A shot. Last one in his life.

The war...

The madness of war...

*2003-04-03*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Copyright marasmus

“Hello, hello, oh respected TV-watchers and bear-den-dwellers, copyright-ers and copyleft-ers, letters-knowers and simple pedants! Once again Vladimir Vladimirovich Pupkin is here with you. Yep, yep, I have begun my speech today with such an unusual lyrical offense for a purpose, because – you will never believe me! – we were able to put our hands on truly unique video materials, capable to turn out the Earth upwards with the Antarctic itself! Almost now, practically in this very moment a civil storm of headquarters of, if one can name them as such, disrespected companies as RIAA and MPAA has begun in Brussels! You will, most certainly, yell, “at last!”, and in turn, I, most certainly, will totally agree with you in this interjection-emotional exclamation! But let’s don’t run ahead of us... Because we have our correspondent from Brussels, Vladimir Vladimirovich Papkin, hanging on the wire. Greetings, Vladimir!”

*During approximately thirty seconds a series of claps, clicks, and even some sort of unclear gurgling along with creaking and screaming can be overheard in the ether. At last the image on the cameras clears up and a face of viewer appears before all those bear-den-dwellers.*

“Hello, Voldemar! And I have you know that despite all disorders going here, I am still alive and nobody ever dared to hang me up by anything on anything!”

“Please tell us as fast as possible what exactly is going on there! That’s just a sensation – never before have the scale of the “battle for content freedom” been as such!”

“Indeed, Voldemar, something really unimaginable is taking place here! Central departments of RIAA and MPAA are being assaulted and attacked from all flanks! Attackers are dressed mainly in black T-shirts with a picture of some sort of ship – and they battle for each and every window, against each hated fucked-copyrighter, for each inch of ground! Yes, they are armed only with eggs, rotten tomatoes, and even some leaflets – but look with what unshakable persistence do they fight! That’s the greatest heroism imaginable! Voldemar, do you see it?”

*Camera change a foreshortening of a review and a truly epic picture opens before the eyes: men in black and white T-shirts and vests shower windows of a many-leveled building with eggs and bananas. A victoriously sailing ship is painted on black T-shirts, a proud “CC” flaunts on white ones.*

*Some glasses in windows have been already broken, and sort of capitulation flags are hanging down from them. Somewhere from a top window a physiognomy of official is visible, which has been dirtied by a splashed egg – his expression contains all possible emotions, starting from fear, confusion and finishing with a rage, and to make the picture even shiner he is unsuccessfully trying to shout something to attackers, yet a mucous liquid, flowing down his face, is definitely preventing him from doing this well.*

*It's clearly visible how a group of company's representatives, still hiding behind a small metal facade, is desperately and with heart-rending cries tries to bash entrance door, but desperately rushing officials, who have previously managed to enter the building, prevent others of their kind from entering. Those losers, who haven't been able to get inside, are being shelled from the incoming army with double force – some of them have already simply tumbled down on the earth, have put a paper package on their heads and started actively clattering the ground with free feet, shouting, "Copylefters are coming!"*

*By all means, it's obvious that both a strategic and tactical advantage has been on a side of copyright opponents for a long time already.*

“Indeed, Vladimir, we as well as our spectators are now enjoying this really epic battle of copy-writers with copy-lefters, creators versus parasites, supporters of freedom of intellectual property against creative-slavery! Such a scale, such a heat! I truly wonder whether this finally happened and God himself has heard our prayers? What do you think, Vladimir? Vladimir, wait a moment, what are you doing in there?!”

*Camera change foreshortening once again, and it becomes obvious how Vladimir from Brussels pushes hands in his bag, and with a malicious grin on his face takes out a recently purchased package, filled with eggs, swings his arm with all possible strength and throws one egg in an aperture of one of windows, where during this very instant of time one of the immoderately scared representatives of intellectual parasitism is running.*

*Whether due to the good luck of Vladimir or due to bad luck of unknown copyrighter, thrown egg falls just under the feet of running representative, and he with eyes full of horror and mouth desperately screaming plops down a floor, still continuing his crazy movement in a pose “hugging a floor, physiognomy downwards”. Viewers have a unique chance to overhear the rest of his exclamation, “... And our eggs are iron!” and this very moment a joyful-boyish shout of Vladimir-the-correspondent blocks all the noise, “Y-y-y-e-e-e-s-s-s! Top ten!” Viewers are able to notice, how happily he raises his hands upwards and gives a salute – and then camera change foreshortening once more and we can behold his face in full size – and this time he looks like a rural cat, who has just secretly consumed entire grandmother's tub with sour cream.*

“Have you seen that? Take it, beasts! For internet, for creativity, for copyleft, damn it!” the face of correspondent continues to shout.

“Vladimir, how much I do envy you now!” the face of TV presenter responds in turn. “You have practically implemented my dreamboat of a childhood! How do you guess, can we name it as...”

“A Copyright-Armageddon!” correspondent Vladimir-Voldemar interrupts him before he can finish. “It has finally come!”

“Indeed, Vladimir, but when will we at last... Wait! Wait, we've just got a bunch of additional news – similar battles have already begun in Washington, Amsterdam, and even London! Our ether is being literally broken off by reports from other correspondents! Wait a bit! The main headquarters of RAO in Moscow are being bombarded with eggs, bananas, broken CD-disks along with packs of used condoms!

It's truly impossible to deny an ingenuity of our people! Oh, my warriors, oh, heroes! Just look at how wonderfully like boomerangs these CD-disks with shitty content are flying!"

*A correspondent from Brussels, throwing a second egg,*

"Incredible!"

"That's not the word! But enough is enough, I am compelled to urgently say goodbye to you, Vladimir, for tens of similar reports from other cities of the world are waiting for us! And to cut a long story short I wish our correspondent from Brussels both firmness and accuracy, courage and endurance in this unequal struggle, and..."

*Vladimir and Vladimir amicably turn to face the camera and their faces blur in a blissful smile...*

"And let the copy-left reign!"

2010-07-10

Genre: Report

Category: Recognized

# Mutants of our age

Present list, entitled as “Mutants of our century”, represents itself a result of long-term researches by geneticists of our society of tendencies of susceptibility of separate individuals and their groups for recently amplifying various soul-genetically mutations, as well as characteristics of these types of mutations as they are.

We do not apply for absolute accuracy and completeness of presented material for a simple reason that it's extremely difficult to describe a thoroughly entire aspect of alteration of psycho-world-outlook component of mutating individuals, as well as predict the possibility of the emergence of newer, still unknown to us types of mutations. We can only hope that like all diseases, currently known to mankind, this class of them will also once come to naught in a certain period a natural way.

Along with that, we want to recommend all individuals to try carefully watch over their own soul-psycho-health in order to minimize the risk of infection.

Characteristics of separate types of mutations follow below.

## 1. “Mindless”

This is one of the most widespread among individuals sort of mutation. According to our calculations, almost one-half of all individuals of our planetary society have appeared to be subject to infection by it. Described type of mutation is not congenital, and can only be “acquired” later in life. For still obscure reasons even individuals with high natural resistance to this mutation can still be afflicted by it in case of their long stay in the company of other already afflicted ones – in scientific nature this effect has been called as “Effect of crowd-mind-losing”.

Reasons for this phenomenon most likely lie in still unknown ways of the non-physical interaction of individuals of our society among themselves. Individuals who have undergone this type of mutations appear to be incapable adequately comprehend a surrounding them objective reality, become strongly enslaved by self-made or inspired from outside various illusions, they gradually lose any critical evaluation of perceived streams of information, and start resembling by so-called by writers and fantasists of the past “zombies”.

The mutational process can have a rather continuous and long character, having stretched throughout the entire planetary life of the individual. Let's note that due to reasons still unknown a small number of individuals appeared to be totally resistant to this type of mutation. Possible causes for this immunity lie is accelerated and strengthened synthesis of hormone “Reason” in their organisms. So far, according to statistical data in which is available to us, similar individuals make about one percent of their total number. In addition, another curious feature of this type of mutations, revealed by us, is the probability of its spontaneous termination in case of introduction of the individual into a company of mentioned resistant individuals and rather continuous staying in it – in scientific literature this phenomenon received a name “Light of reason”. True cases and roots of a similar phenomenon remains a mystery still.

This mutation can become a starting point for formation and growing of mutational processes of all other types, and, in particular, “Ear-no-hear/Eye-good-bye” type.

## **2. “Rage-Caging”**

Possible reasons for this type of mutations are the process of violation of synthesis of hormone “Good nature” in organisms of individuals along with amplifying synthesis of hormones “Anger” and “Irritation”.

Those who have undergone this kind of mutation become inclined to aggressive violent acts in relation to other individuals, that in rather open and obvious form shows the processes of their loss of own soul-psycho health.

Forms of aggression’s manifestation can be various and invariant by their nature and contents, beginning from verbal censures and finishing with physical impact on planetary bodies of other individuals.

Among all other types of mutations, this type along with mutations of “No-Joy” and “No-Heart-No-Less” has acquired the fastest by the extent of infection character. Due to the impossibility of artificial synthesis of hormone “Good nature”, external attempts of stopping the mutational process cannot be successfully implemented.

## **3. “Eye-Staring”**

This type of mutation is a little spread right now, which is, however, is totally not an argument for the thoughtless relation to it.

Mutants of “Eye-Staring” type appear more than all other inclined to external manifestations of the process of change of own sincere moods, they are also more than others susceptible to similar manifestations of other individuals. Quite often such manifestations are accompanied by loud “oh”, “ah”, shouts and sighs. The part of the similar process was called by writers of the past as “gossiping” and “ostentation”.

Let’s note that some researches challenge the fact of referencing these manifestations to mutational process, and it’s considered that they are in fact rather simply collateral features of soul-world-outlook component of the individuals. Rather active discussions on this matter are being conducted now in the scientific community.

## **4. “Dire Liar”**

So-called “pathological” lies – a radical feature of manifestation of occurring mutations of this type. Mutants of “Dire Liar” type resort to concealment of the facts of objective reality so often that sometimes appear to be incapable to distinguish own fiction from reality. It’s hard to say for sure what purpose in each case is being pursued by mutating individuals and whether is this purpose a rather conscious choice and not a consequence of influence on their soul structure of mutational processes, however, the fact of change of a soul’s structure of individuals is undoubtful, in which connection this type of changes has been separated into a dedicated type.

Due to the considerable shift of negative processes towards the identity of each separate mutating individual instead of its expression in general society, this type of mutation is considered to be as moderately dangerous.

For still unknown reasons most subject to this type of mutations are female individuals.

### **5. “Crafty-Looking/Crafty-Cooking”**

Earlier classified type of mutation “Crafty-Cooking” in connection with its additional studying has been renamed to “Crafty-Looking”, however, old name has been kept.

Those individuals who have undergone this type of soul-genetic mutations could probably become the best speculators and deceivers of the last centuries. At present time, however, in connection with an active position of Ministry of Health concerning the eradication of any harmful and negative spiritual processes of individuals of our planetary society, this type of own changes is considered negative.

A distinctive feature of individuals of given type is their ability to describe objective reality being in completely or considerably distorted state, achieving thus their personal, obscure for healthy individuals, selfish goals. Thus, unlike mutants of type “Dire Liar” mutants of this type clearly realize limits of objectivity and illusion at deception of others, but this, however, doesn’t stop them from implementing of their selfish plans.

A distinctive feature of mutants of this type is a certain so-called “cunning” shine of eyes of their planetary body, shown during the process of their communication with other individuals.

### **6. “Fear-No-Less”**

This type of mutation has been known to humankind from ancient antiquity, however, was classified as mutation relatively recently. Mutants of type “Fear-No-Less” appear to be totally non-resistant to any kinds of insurance feelings, be they either self-made or being born in the course of interaction with a planetary spatial continuum.

Probably, this type of mutation would even not be so socially dangerous, if it was limited to the spiritual-world-outlook world of a separate individual subject to this mutation. However, because subject to the specified type of mutations individual becomes involved in fate relations with others, untimely strengthening of manifestations peculiar to this type of mutations can prove to be fatal for other individuals. The history knows many similar cases when destinies of one people were altered by the cowardice of others, however detailed research of this question lies beyond this research. Let’s note that manifestations of this mutation bear rather stochastic instead of permanent characters, which is, however, not a reason for their classification as less socially dangerous.

Let’s note that a lengthy process of increasing of the characteristic for this type of mutations decrease of synthesis in the organisms of individuals of hormones “Tranquility” and “Self-confidence” can lead to a considerable lowering of resistance ability to all other types of mutations.

## **7. “Absence-Conscious”**

This type of mutation is characterized by an almost total change of a spiritual component of an individual, known as “Conscience”. The primary stage of mutation is characterized by periods of its spontaneous deactivation. In more extreme cases process of its considerable destabilization can be observed, up to a full atrophy.

Mutants of this type by their external manifestations can be similar to mutants of “Rage-Caging” type in aspect of causing violent harm to others, however process of harm infliction by these individuals is practically never accompanied by active external manifestations and has exclusively ego-concentrated character which, in our opinion, makes them much more socially dangerous, and in this regard this type of mutation was considered as considerably socially dangerous.

It has been noticed that during the overwhelming majority of cases this type of mutation further transforms into a “No-Heart-No-Less” type.

## **8. “Imp-In-Limb”**

A rather new type of mutation, which has considerably amplified in the last dozens of years.

Probably, some soul-genes were brought from old centuries of so-called “Middle Ages” from so-called “witches”, but it’s also possible that this type of mutation is inherent only by only planetary generation. Anyway, the question of the reasons of specified mutation is still rather open and as thus being actively discussed in the scientific community.

Mutants of this type appear to be considerably predisposed to carrying out various so-called “magic rituals” with so-called “spirits”, as well as to “black magic”, manifested in “plots”, “curses”, “whammies”, “damnation” and some other forms of psychosomatic suggestions. Some individuals of this type can also show considerable interest in visiting cemeteries, tombs and other places of burial of planetary bodies of other individuals.

It’s still not totally clear of how real are such influences in fact, and whether it’s an amplification of process of mutations of “Fear-No-Less” type. Anyway, in any case, we desire to recommend to other individuals to try avoiding excessive contacts with individuals of this group.

## **9. “Glamorous”**

Also a type of mutation which was discovered only recently, which has not yet become widespread. A feature of this process of mutation is a gradually amplifying dependence of an individual on the traditional historically established external attributes of high so-called “social status” of this individual. Despite all rather active attempts of the Ministry of Health of eradication of these historically formed attributes, fixed in consciousness of a part of individuals, there was no considerably progress reached in this aspect still, which is shown in ongoing aspiration to receive such attributes as “wealth”, “glory”, “career”, “popularity” and some other from the vast majority of individuals of our planetary society and forms a basis of formation of this type of mutations.

Probably, this process would not be so dangerous if the growth of similar dependence did not bear with itself such considerable changes of psycho-world-outlook component of individuals – however, because this process promotes its considerable negative transformation and amplification of susceptibility of an individuals to mutations “Gold-Mold”, “Crafty-Looking/Crafty-Cooking” and “Orgasmus-Marasmus”, revealed by the Ministry of Health specified tendencies of growth of similar type on dependencies in the context of our planetary society are considered to be considered socially dangerous.

As it was noted before, during the uncontrollable increase of similar dependence in soul-world-outlook component of an individual the process of mutation, classified by us as “Glamorous” becomes activated. For still obscure reasons in some cases, the process of mutation can gain transient character and as such the individual becomes so seriously adhered to a set of described above attributes of a social status, that he becomes incapable of imagining his life without them.

As we managed to find out during researches in the case when in the near future the individual manages to gain these attributes, he practically always along with this type of mutation appears to be considerably subjected to mutation of “Orgasmus-Marasmus” type. In the opposite case, the individual can become to be even more considerably subjected to one of the mutations from the list – “Rage-Caging”, “Dire Liar”, “Nervous-Traverse”.

We are being seriously disturbed along with researches from the Ministry of Health by a tendency of last years for more and more propagandized image of world-soul-sensation, provoking strengthening of the dependence of individuals from the majority of above-mentioned attributes of “wellbeing” as such tendency potentially promotes the considerable growth of mutants of this type.

In these conditions, we can only recommend to not trying to adjoin in any continuous prospect with mutants of this type, as well as to realize all senselessness of attempts of achievement of those things and purposes which often remain totally harmful for your soul-psycho health as it is.

#### **10. “Nervous-Traverse”**

This type of soul-psycho change of essence of an individual has been known to mankind from ancient antiquity as well but was classified as the negative mutational process only recently.

Radical aspect of mutants of this type is their inability to maintain for the long duration a healthy soul and emotional state, and considerably increased the tendency of leaving it in the form of so-called “hysterics”. Sometimes similar outbursts can have a rather continuous character, occupying several planetary hours. Often similar exiting is accompanied by such external attributes of their manifestation as shouts, groans, cries, inarticulate/muffled diction, incompatible movements. As it was noticed, especially subject to this type of mutations are those individuals with considerably reduced synthesis in their organisms of a hormone “Tranquility”.

We cannot precisely tell, whether this type of mutation exclusively the consequence of similar decrease in functioning of soul-organs in an organism of the individual, or whether his formation can be promoted by other attributes of planetary social-continuum, for example, ones such as more and more accelerating rhythm of life, considerable growth of quantity of information streams, which have been ascertained by researches from Ministry of Health at the last planetary conference.

In any case we desire to note the high degree of efficiency of fighting with this mutation process, revealed by us, by performing such actions as staying of individual outdoors with its thoughtless beholding, complacent communication with other individuals, personal meditations and some other methods which have been known to planetary science for a long time, but have been so considerably demanded only recently.

### **11. “Ear-no-hear/Eye-good-bye”**

The growth of a number of individuals, subject to this type of mutation, has been predicted a long time ago but has actually been formed only in the last dozens of planetary years. The specified process of mutation consists in gradual neglecting of functions (and in some cases – their further total atrophy) soul-organs of sight and hearing of the individual. During this process, the individual becomes incapable to not only objectively perceive audio and visual aspects of interaction with other individuals and correctly react to them but also appears to be subject to considerable distortion of perceptions of real and future objective reality. Being confident of own correctness, such individuals start teaching others of an incorrect picture of world-attitude and during that can promote emergence on the mutational process of “Mindless” type, and as such this mutational process is considered to be highly socially dangerous.

It should be noted as well that by external manifestations individuals of this type can be similar to individuals of the mutational process of “Mindless” type, which is not surprising at all, as this type of mutation is by its nature and aspects of soul-genes alteration can be considered as his successor.

### **12. “Alcohol-To-The-Fall”**

According to its name, mutants of this type appear to be completely non-resistant to such a product of the past and, to our regret, present reality of planetary society, as alcoholic beverages. In this respect, their strongest soul-psycho attachment to them is comparable only to similar attachment to attributes of a social status of “Glamorous” mutants. Let’s note that earlier given type of attachment was not considered as a negative one – moreover, it was even considered that the process of consumption of this type of products helps one gain considerably sincere relaxation, disappearance of inner soul-fear and, as a result, leads to growth of internal goodwill and soul-health of the individual.

However, as modern science has discovered, this solution like any other substitute cannot provide even the illusion of similar effects to a natural healthy synthesis of hormones “Good nature” and “Self-confidence” in organisms of individuals, moreover, overconsumption of this type of liquids in a long-term prospect conducts to gradual atrophy of functions of soul-brain, which promotes emergence and development of a mutation of “Mindless” type.

Moreover, in some cases, the continuous process of consumption of specified means leads to the emergence of an essentially more dangerous type of mutations, classified by us as “Animal-Toll”.

Due to these aspects of the influence of mentioned means on the majority of individuals, the Ministry of Health has taken a rather active position on complete eradication of their production and sale on all planetary continuum, however, any considerable successes in this matter have not yet been achieved.

### **13. “Gold-Mold”**

Known for a long time, this process of soul-mutation has been classified as it is only in the last several years. As we managed to find out during continuous researches, only in the smallest number of cases such a mutation type is spontaneous by its nature, however in the most cases it’s only the development of such formed earlier mutational processes like “Absence-Conscious” and “Glamorous”.

Mutating individuals are distinguished by increased aspiration of accumulation and preservation of money by any means possible. To many of them give totally strange and unclear for other healthy individuals please such aspects of their lives as a considerable bank account, rich apartments, cars and other aspects of material manifestation of the planetary continuum. Some of them with a process of mutation has gone rather far do not shun of deception and treachery for the achievement of similar purposes of self-enrichment at the expense of others. The history of our planetary society knows many cases when similar silver-adoring tendencies of some individuals defined destinies of others, however detailed consideration of these cases lies beyond our research.

Due to the possibility of the similar fate-bearing influence of mutating individuals of this type on others, given type of mutation is considered to be highly socially dangerous.

### **14. “Harmful-Artful”**

Probably, the rarest of types of mutations, classified by us, besides not differing by any amplifying tendencies of growth. And this fact can’t help pleasing the entire scientific community.

Mutants of this type differ by the increased tendency to machinate, set traps, and to harm other in every possible way, more often – by a way, called as “stealthily”. The process of mutation can gain increased activity in so-called “childish” age of formation of soul-world-outlook components of the individual, however further in the overwhelming majority of cases gradually comes to naught.

However, in still unknown reasons approximately in two-three percent of cases, the process of mutation can outlive the age timespan of “childish” period of soul-formation of the individual, and stretch itself further through his planetary life. In this case, mutating individuals appear to be seriously dependent on such aspects of own life-development, as the aspiration to cause harm to others. These amplifications of similar desires carry more often stochastic instead of permanent character and can especially actively manifest themselves during periods of spiritual-defective emotional conditions on an individual, such as “irritation”, “envy” and “contempt”.

Let's note as well, that a serious amplification of specified processes of mutation (especially in combination of mutational processes of "Rage-Caging" type) can lead to a considerable growth of synthesis of extremely harmful to organisms of individuals of hormone "Hatred", that, in turn, can become the catalyst for transformation on mutation of this type into a highly socially dangerous type, classified by us as "No-Heart-No-Less".

### **15. "Silly-Willy"**

Collateral type of mutation, being a product of base type, classified as "Mindless", in present time is spread among a small number of planetary individuals.

For mutating individuals of this type it's common to see objective reality in a distorted perception (which is a consequence of the development of mutational processes of "Mindless" type), which leads to their not-so-always adequate life manifestations. More often, however, such inadequate manifestations bear exclusively personal character and don't do any harm to other members of planetary society, and in this connection with the type of mutation is considered to be little socially dangerous.

It happens so that cases of manifestation of mutations of this type carry such an objectively strongly pronounced character for other individuals that they – either for fun or somewhat seriously – call this individual exactly that way: "Oh, silly one!"

### **16. "Orgasmus-Marasmus"**

Greatly amplified in last time type of mutation, more often it's a consequence of the development of the mutational process of "Glamorous" type.

It's peculiar to mutants of this type (at early stages of the mutational process) to have strengthened or practically unstoppable desire (in a case when the development of the process of mutation takes extreme forms) to receive pleasures – more often of a physical nature in the aspect of own planetary bodies. Similar desire can receive such a strongly pronounced character that for the achievement of the goal of self-satisfaction the individual will not shun anything – beginning from aspects of social acceptability of own actions and finishing with aspects of own spiritual-psycho health. Borders of this mutation have started to gain such a widespread character at present, that it becomes impossible to accurately express main aspects of this sort of manifestation of tendencies of self-satisfaction of ill individuals.

It has been discovered during continuous observation, that during the overwhelming majority of cases this type of mutation in case of its active development further transforms into a much dangerous type "Animal-Toll".

It has still not been found out, whether this mutation is a consequence of the considerable influence on them earlier of some negative aspects of manifestation of the material of social continuums, or if it's, in fact, a consequence of the congenital inability of individuals to any healthy contact with social-continuum as a whole.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid infection processes, we urgently recommend to all healthy individuals to remember a model experiment of scientists of the past with a rat, who have wished to die of constant orgasm, and never in their lives to subordinate their spiritual components to physical ones.

## **17. “Animal-Toll”**

Considerably social dangerous type of a mutation, which is a consequence of a rather large number of mutational process of other types.

Development of this process of mutation can be revealed on changes of external attributes of behavior of the individual, which is some aspect becomes more and more similar to the corresponding manifestation aspects of representatives of fauna. As it has been established during research of processes of soul-genes-transformation peculiar to this process of mutation, the specified type of mutation cannot live independently and always forms a pair with another process – and in case of destruction of “base” genes-virus, this process of mutation gradually diminishes as well.

This type of mutation is considered to be highly socially dangerous, because not only does it forms a basis of formation of such soul-genetic mutations like “Nonsense-Looking” and “Trite-As-Blight”, but can also considerably amplify negative aspects of other mutations with which generating it soul-virus enter into symbiosis state.

So, the most dreadful potential type of symbiosis was considered a symbiosis of this soul-virus with soul-virus of mutational process of “Rage-caging” type, because in a case of similar symbiosis practically in 100 percent of cases the individual completely loses his human shape and starts reminding a wild beast instead, being ready to kill in a name and for justification of own anger, and thus similar individuals require to be expelled from their social continuum as fast as possible.

## **18. “Nonsense-Looking”**

A side effect of the mutational process of “Animal-Toll” type, this type of mutational process is characterized by considerable alteration of external soul-image, perceived by other individuals. Especially accurately and clearly change of soul-image of a mutated individual can be felt those individuals, who have not undergone any of classified by us mutations – in this case in relation to mutating individual they can feel some slight unmotivated spiritual hostility. A curious feature of this mutational process is the fact that separate individuals with ongoing mutational processes of this type not only do not feel mentioned form of light form of hostility in relation to each other, but on the contrary can experience sincere attachment and sympathy to each other, which forms a basis for their gathering in so-called “bands” and “gangs”, further purpose of which becomes vandalism, gangsterism and other socially dangerous aspects of soul-activity.

The reasons for the mentioned phenomenon of attachment of mutating individuals of this type to each other is still a mystery.

## **19. “Trite-As-Blight”**

Yet another side effect of the mutational process of “Animal-Toll” type, this type of process of soul-mutation is characterized by the considerable introduction of traits and aspects of the behavior of representatives of fauna into so-called “sexual” sphere of life of an individual.

Mutants of this type often differ by their inability to control of an aspect of own so-called “sexual” behavior in a context of their society. Light forms of this trait are their deliberate and rough, humiliating, sexually-focused aspect of relations with representatives of an opposite sex. Heavy forms of manifestation are the aspiration of satisfaction of own sexual desires even through means of causing both physical and spiritual harm to the individual of the opposite gender.

An additional feature of a mutation of this type is a possibility of transformation of soul-psychics of the infected individual into soul-psychics of representatives of the opposite sex. In addition, a new aspect of this soul-genetic mutation process has been discovered recently, which is being expressed in aspiration of separate individuals to the establishment of sexual interactions with representatives of the same gender. The reasons for this phenomenon have not been established by now.

Let’s note as well that by still unknown reasons most subject to this type of mutation of individuals of the male gender.

## **20. “No-Joy”**

The mutational process of “basic type”, which can be both a consequence of other mutations or to arise spontaneously. As it has been established, in a case when this mutational process arises as a result of other mutations, it appears to be much more resistant and steady than in case of spontaneous arising.

The most frequent reasons for the emergence of this process among mutations are “Ear-no-hear/Eye-good-bye”, “Orgasmus-Marasmus” and “Mindless” during the periods of attenuation. In a case of spontaneous emergence of a mutational process of this type, its reasons are heavily weakened self-regulating processes of synthesis of hormones “Joy” and “Good nature” in organisms of individuals.

For mutants of this type practically permanent negative attitude to surrounding them reality is peculiar, as well as the absence of practically any potentially positive interests and desires – or, as scientists of the past expressed themselves, “constantly lowered emotional background”.

Probably, the mutational process of this type would not be so dangerous, if not a steady tendency of the last dozens of years to its nonlinear growth and its ability to considerably amplify mutational processes of all other types. As a unique rather effective remedy of fighting against a mutation of this type, only the natural good nature of an individual can currently be considered.

## **21. “No-Heart-No-Less”**

An extremely dangerous form of soul-mutation, showing a steady tendency of growth for last hundreds of planetary years.

Mutants of this type even at early stages of the course of the mutational process are characterized by almost full atrophy of such basic soul-organ as “heart”. Similar atrophy conducts to their partial or full inability of any positive soul-emotional manifestations, sincere empathy to other individuals, spiritual support and manifestation of any sort of warmth.

Such a transformation is extremely painful not only for other healthy individuals being in contact with soul-mutant of this type, but first and foremost for the very sick individual himself, because it leads to gradual continuous decrease in synthesis of such extraordinary important for life hormones as “Good nature”, “Joy” and “Self-confidence” in connection with atrophy of synthesizing them organ up to complete and full stop. Due to name feature of this mutational process infected with it individuals often show some traits of mutations of “Rage-Caging” and “Absence-Conscious” types.

In its further development, this soul-mutational process transforms itself into a mutation of type “No-Soul-No-Less”.

At present time the planetary science has no knowledge of any effective means of fighting with a soul-virus, provoking this type of mutation. As the only rather effective constraining development of mutation mean can be considered only active and frequent manifestation of all types of spiritual warmth to a mutating individual from other healthy ones.

## **22. “No-Soul-No-Less”**

The final point of mutations of all other types and the most catastrophic of types of all known (and potentially – any other) mutations.

It’s hard to predict by what ways one or several mutational processes of other types will go – but all of them can finally lead to a mutation of this type, and in this case, will cease to give in to any further treatment.

Rather seldom started mutational processes of other types manage to come to a formation of mutation of this type during one planetary life of an individual, however, the history of our planetary society knows such precedents.

We have totally no desire to describe all those sad manifestations and all that pain, which a soul-virus brings to its new owner, as well as all that grief brought by this owner to a planetary society. We can only hope that someday mankind will finally find a medicine for struggling against this illness, and the world will see such people no longer – ones who have decayed alive.

We can only hope...

## **23. Human-Like**

Planetary genetic science and we as its representatives find it difficult to answer of whether this condition of a human soul can be considered as a mutation at all, or whether it’s in fact still little studied special condition that is preventing of all other types of mutations from emergence.

At present time rather active disputes are going on in the scientific community...

2006-04-08

Genre: Article

Category: Recognized

# Drug

“Does it hurt?” Sergey patted his comrade sympathetically on the back, trying not to touch the shoulder muscle recently pierced with a thick needle. “Still?”

“It’s my soul that aches with pain, Serge. What a shame for the state and people!” Vasily reluctantly waved away, diligently rubbing his numb hand once again. “There were so many traitors around!” he added, spitting in frustration into the gutter bordering the roof of the building.

“They are abominations, all of them...” Sergey hastily agreed with him. “They infected so many people, took us with impudence, no matter what. And what for? Where do they need this money now, and where has all their earthly power gone?” and he waved his hand in the direction of the city square, as if its current silent inhabitants could still give him the answer to this uneasy question.

“Natasha’s legs failed yesterday, her whole body ached. Today she feels a little bit better, but she still can’t walk.”

“And the syndrome?”

“You mean the fever?”

“Yeah. They say if, after the initial injection, all this synthetic crap in the brain begins to self-synthesize, then the first few days it fevers wildly, and then the addiction starts to form after one or two months, and that’s when new and new injections will become needed endlessly. Big Pharma, fuck it! Well, what’s it like to get all of us hooked on it, huh?! Drills! Salvation! The fuck-cine!

“No... she wasn’t feverish,” Vasily choked, trying to swallow the lump that appeared in his throat. “It won’t... I hope. My only hope now goes for God, and not for these... traitors in white coats!”

“You know... they’ll probably be hanging on the streetlights soon, too. As well as those aliens,” and Sergey waved his hand towards the square once again.

“We will soon run out of lanterns supply,” Vasily chuckled darkly. “One can only hope on God’s Judgment and the Second Coming.”

“Look, these ones have already rung off by themselves before his arrival,” Sergey confirmed his thoughts, nodding towards the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, clearly visible against the background of the clear evening sky – or what was left of it in the end, anyway.

And the lanterns were indeed shining. Their night lights softly, like a wild cat carefully crossing the road, illuminated rare snowflakes gently falling on the sidewalks, and those, obeying the imperious call of the wind circling around the square, curled into heavenly snakes and earthly snowdrifts, now and then bending into all-new bizarre patterns.

Here, from the roof of this high-rise building, Sergey and Vasily could clearly see the most famous among tourists Red Square, which from now on and forevermore became the last earthly haven for traitors and murderers. A few soldiers – a small night military patrol – kept measuring their pace, slowly marching back and forth alongside it. The wind rocked the bodies of the powerful of this world who had gone to God’s Judgment on the gallows and thus lost all their imaginary strength overnight. The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, destroyed by the earthquake, no longer made a single sound, silently glittering with cracked domes in the light of evening street lamps. Somewhere in the distance, a television tower blazed like an unquenchable torch. And only the tank, which had crashed into the mausoleum while moving on all sails, added at least some enthusiasm to this evening picture.

“The evening balls... the e-v-e-n-i-n-g b-a-l-l-s...” Vasily sang out the words of his favorite song, wiping his suddenly for some reason wet eyes with the edge of his jacket. “A pity that they will call upon us soon, too. I don’t want to die like a slave waiting for a new dose... I want to die like a warrior! Well, at least our children will be wiser than us... Not infected with all of this... all this... earth dirt.”

“Have you forgotten, or what? Russians never surrender! We’ll live to see the other day, you’ll see! We’ll live to see the Second Coming!” Sergey slapped his friend on the back once again with all his might.

“Always an optimist...” Vasily smiled timidly. “Well, so be it, I’ll take your word for granted. I don’t feel like sleeping at all today, especially after such events. Well, what are we going to do?”

“Let’s go to look out for constellations?”

“Let’s go!”

2021-10-11

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Weapons of our age

Highly respected weapon-bearers, weapon-forgers, weapon-lovers, and weapon-users! Today we bring to your attention the unique classification of medieval weapons, found in the depths of Egyptian pyramids, from, so to speak, the spiritually focused point of view on that two-edged and quite striking subject. Advancing your question we wish to note, that in fact we do not have even the slightest concept of how in the above-mentioned Egyptian pyramids artifacts from so-called Middle Ages were discovered, however in connection with unique time perturbations, observed by our philologists, scientists, and simple readers, we cannot exclude some non-zero possibility of the mentioned events, for due to a number of already occurred locally-time anomalies which we all have witnessed, your individualities included, we have no more right to be surprised even by such a helix-looking turns of events. We also wish to point out, that those records, found by us, carry out is some unmeasured amount a deliberately-veiled and mystical character, and the task of solving a true nature of messages of ancient centuries is still to be accomplished by our psychologists, linguists, and by simple all those who has been bothered by idle and stupid sitting in front of a TV, killing own life in vain during, at least, his days off. Preventing that next untimely question of yours born from not less untimely thoughts of yours, we utter: well, that was simply our whip to name this classification list of medieval weapons with a word “our” in the center – and that’s all to it! As ancient ones used to speak – do not search for a hare in conjurer’s hat before that magician shows himself up – and here we go, untimely quoting them once again. So, the below mentioned list of medieval weapons of “our” century follows.

## 1. Hammer of Half-Truth and Lie

Most favored weapon of politicians and mass media, who have sold themselves to aforementioned politicians for a time being along with their brains and organs for blood dispersal in their bodies. With due skill and duration of swing can break heads of those untimely got under its brain-smashing and brain-washing strikes, crush accessories of their habitual world-outlook picture and even flatten out so that after the mentioned procedure they will start to feel themselves like a limpet, sticking to unclear places for unclear purposes. However, due to enormous weight and the requirement of long “promotion” of this tool for bashing human minds, this weapon has low accuracy and slow speed of blows, and more skillful warrior, armed with, say, “Rapier Of Reason”, is able to outmaneuver and bring his opponent to his knees with a series precise strikes in proper spots.

## 2. Sickle of Death

From ancient times this weapon was, first in foremost, painted on pictures in the hands of the avatar, representing the death of the human body. Similar pictures almost always made a predefined and expected influence on spectator of bewitching and stunning nature, for, most probably, only the total fools or totally enlightened ones have no fear of death.

After all, one must remember how our not less mystical classic spoke, that it's not that man is mortal that is terrible, but rather that he's suddenly (and we'll add – almost totally and irrevocably at times) mortal.

And because nobody knows for sure the date of his own parting with this world (and, generally speaking, this date varies depending on the actions of the individual in question), this weapon in the hands of death has been traditionally inspiring appropriate fear in trembling in the hearts of men. Let's note, however, that due to observable time fluctuations, aforementioned in the introduction, a question of extremely intriguing nature arises among a set of researches of this phenomenon, of whether the death of a physical body is final and the potential revival of Souls in new physical bodies is possible, however, a detailed research of this question lies beyond the bounds on current classification. Traditionally, besides being carried by avatars of death, this weapon can often be found in possession of agricultural workers, more commonly known under the collective term "peasants".

### **3. Ax of Anger**

A plain weapon of human crowds, quite untimely used by them from time to time, which has led to yet another bloody revolution, oh comrades! Doesn't require the owner to possess any serious skills to be applied, yet is capable to inflict lots of harm for both considerably right and considerably left ones, being swung from right to left (or vice versa). History knows the cases when men, driven to despair undertook these very axes and in the fury of anger on all mankind chopped their offenders into nothing for nothing. Actually, even literary heroes resorted at times to the "services" of this tool, being in an inadequate psychological condition. So, take care not to give right away this tool of anger to mad crowds if you have no desire to receive a "Boomerang Of Destiny" in return. You have been warned.

### **4. Dagger of Treachery**

A weapon, known since most ancient times, which has been traditionally stabbed into backs of other warriors by traitors. As an alternative measure, the act of rascally cutting an innocent victim's throat by stalking from behind can be taken into account. The third most widespread way of usage of this small, yet one of the craftiest and vindictive toolkit, is the attempt to perform the irreversible act of suicide – which can undoubtedly be considered as the greatest act of treachery of a man in relation himself and own further fate. In ancient times a widespread form of preliminary preparation of given weapon to a further act of treachery and murder was the process of coating a dagger with various poisons (traitors and killers of the past most likely truly enjoyed the view of the slowly agonizing victim). To cut a long story short, this is exactly the weapon of cold-blooded killers, traitors, and geeks, and all Ludoviks of the past are not an exception by all means. So, beware!

### **5. Poleaxe of Cruelty**

In no way less deadly and destructive than "Hammer Of Half-Truth And Lie" weapon, capable to sever both hopes of disagreed ones and the thread of life of his wielder along with similar ones of his relatives, into a one and one thousand of pieces. Due to weapon's design specifics, the highest degree of professionalism in its forging and battling was achieved for centuries by mountain dwarves of the spirit of conscience.

From one generation to the next among people of this race of so-to-be-humans ancient recipes and secrets are being transferred of how to forge the ultimate killing edges, richest sheath, strongest and dumbest handles, and so on.

Hordes of these dwarves, smeared in a coal of underground mines, smoked in fumes of own steelmaking fiery forges, armed with these poleaxes, represent a truly frightening show, partly resembling a plague spread of the past, for after their next invasion nothing either moving or badly lying is left in the vicinities of nearest N miles, starting with a horse of some gone on a spree bard, minor daughter of local barman, or a purse with thirty silver coins of a local trader, who have grown fat too immoderately from the excessing use of beer. And even if mentioned minor daughter can still hope for a sweet (for her new slaveholder) life, yet her father-barman, merchant, and minstrel all together could only dream of the upcoming slaving fate.

Most severe and thrifty members of dwarves new slavish army, possessing “Daggers Of Treachery”, have a chance in the near future, being regularly drawn by duty into the ranks of their new owners, ascend to a rank of robbers and, thus, finally and completely assimilate with their former aggressors. Cruelty and ruthlessness of the race, owning described weapons of murder have entered into legends at a dawn of its origin, therefore that race was once named as a “yoke”. And it’s not we who should tell you sad is the fate of those, willingly living under its feet and tribute.

## **6. Rapier of Reason**

Unimaginable, unpredictable, stunning and soul-piercing weapon! Demands from its wielder a masterful skill and tremendous accuracy of attacks-strikes (unlike frankly barbarous tools like “Hammer Of Half-Truth And Lie”, “Poleaxe Of Cruelty”, “Mace Of Fanatical Faith”), however, surpasses them all taken together in own efficiency. Given weapon is specifically designed for single fights-duels one-to-one, instead of wall-to-wall as it happens in cases of usage of “Axe Of Anger”. The technics of mastering of similar weapon is uneasy enough as it demands a high degree of inner calmness, tranquility and attentiveness simultaneously, which allow not only to easily evade enemy incoming blows but to determine the best and fastest way spots of possible reciprocal strikes. At due level of reason literally with one-two series of attacks and pricks of heart and conscience it’s possible to completely transform your rival to a friend and faithful companion – and, because it’s possible to consider as totally reasonable only enlightened/clarified persons, the process of transformation occurs from a smaller level of consciousness from darkness of ignorance to higher level of the light of divine reason. The history of our society knows literally several dozens of duelists who have mastered enough skill with “Rapier Of Reason”, sufficient for the awakening of unreasonable men.

## **7. Mace of Fanatical Faith**

A favorite tool of inquisitors of the past and present. By efficiency of crushing of heads and minds of enemies can only be compared to a “Hammer Of Half-Truth And Lie”, however due to a spike-form structure of the iron ritual sphere crowning this creation, the weapon is capable to make in addition chipped and bleeding wounds in the form of unreasonable sense of guilt, own otioseness and sinfulness, which during the process of loss by the wounded one of his blood and juices of life, can lead him into a state of permanent depression and despondency. Probably, because of the last mentioned feature of given tool, it’s being so beloved by those inquisitors of unbelief, considering themselves believing instead.

Probably, they are somewhat right and truly believe – for example as if the ritual fools will enter the Kingdom of God the first and foremost ones, or, say, that it’s possible to cease being blood-thirsty by washing yourself in tubs filled with gold coins, or, perhaps, that the number of built by them “houses of God” will once transform itself into quality, and the God, who’s capable to lay an end to their business on Him, whom they in the heart of the souls of theirs do not desire to meet at all, will visit even a single one these buildings... and, perhaps, in that fanatical disbelief of theirs they would even be pardonable, if, certainly, not for the number of killed by their maces, broken off on racks, hung up on the gallows, burned alive on fires, crucified before dark on crosses, and all others who were forcedly had to leave this world because of these fanatics of unbelief.

If you don’t possess a sufficient skill of handling of “Rapier Of Reason”, “Katana Of Honor” or “Sword Of Word”, we would not recommend you to enter a duel with these rivals as they, first of all, dislike it very much to fight one-to-one, preferring instead those combat styles as “crucifixion by a crowd of fanatics of one awakened one”, “beating of a sinner by stones”, “theological demagogy”, and, secondly, will be ready with sincere pleasure and due to their immense philanthropy and mercy to anathematize you, and in some cases even to simple hammer you with their mace to a death, having as such relieved you of the burdens of this immoderately, in their own opinion, nasty life.

## **8. Sword of Word**

Indestructible blade, forged in a fire of inspiration and under the heavy rain of abuses. Eternal, like the Universe itself. Sharp as the spirit of a warrior, wearing it. Faithful, like the its devoted to his word owner. The most widespread among all available types of weapons. Beloved by great warriors of word of the past and the present as such as birds love their wings allowing them to fly. The light of heavenly stars can be reflected through pure blades and the light of sun can be mirrored by hares of happiness.

The warrior himself bears the right to choose the words who are either perfecting his edge or rebating it. Warrior himself choose and master favorite strikes and tactics of defense. The warrior of word knows how invaluable his word is during the time of trials for human Souls. With each strike of the word he puts a part of his Soul into it – and if it’s pure enough, the light of the sky flashes during those instants of striking, lighting up and splitting apart the darkness of human ignorance.

The master of the word can awake Souls and revive them, illuminating by the light of hope and love, resurrecting them for a new outlook. Several years are required to master the technics of strikes. Even a hundred of lives will not be enough to perfect the skill of striking the darkness by the light of the stars.

### **9. Boomerang of Destiny**

Extremely exotic type of weapons, possessing a number of badly documented side effects. Is characterized by the highest indicators of air traveling speed and maneuverability. Doesn't demand a long time for a swing and is often used under the condition of direct visibility of the opponent.

The skill of work with this type of weapon is if it's even possible to tell so, congenital, – possibly for that particular reason the majority of novice fighters prefer this along with a “Dart Of Abuse” type of arms.

Striking ability varies considerably depending on the type of enemy's armor – those unprotected by a chain mail of joy and good nature (and, especially those who are wearing black robes of rage and hatred) this weapon can strike almost mortally, ones dressed in mentioned chain armors in rare cases to slightly wound, and for those dressed in heavy plate armor of love and blessings is unable to cause any harm, being repelled back from iron armored plates.

Additional surprising and little-explored phenomenon which often remains unknown to novices, is a so-called “returning back to the owner” effect, or “requitals on affairs” – after a certain, not computable in advance time span, thrown boomerang, no matter whether it has reached its target or not, flies back to its owner, thus striking him back with a blow of considerably bigger force, rather than those made to a potential victim. If mentioned boomerang was thrown into the enemy with a significant force of rage and hatred, then the retaliation strike can become deadly. Only those warriors who are capable of introspection and repentance are capable to intercept a coming-back boomerang from its retaliation strike.

### **10. Dart of Abuse**

Extremely compact type of throwing arms, not demanding extensive training for mastering of the art of firing on other relatives and far people (victims?). Each and every sleeping one at least once in his life used this type of weapons in various life experiences, which were provoking inside him a manifestation of such traits like anger, irritation, contempt, hatred, envy, and others. The degree of wounding ability depends on such factors as skill and duration of throwing trainings, current state of mind at the moment of a throw, sensual material of a dart, type of energetic nozzle (poison of offense, bitterness of contempt, smoke of hatred, gloating at grief, etc. – the choice of nozzles varies deeply, and spiritually blind and dead warriors will confirm that with a joy), as well as experience of former relations of fighters among themselves.

Practice demonstrates, that the smallest wounding ability possess those darts of two loving (?) each other people, for example, the husband and his wife (“the falling out of lovers is the renewal of love”), and one of the greatest – darts of political and religious opponents (probably for that very reason mankind waged all wars either on political or religious motives). The practice of imaginary dart-throwing of employees into their boss, whose avatar they often hand up on walls in their offices in place of target) is considered to have the greatest popularity. The greatest speed of dart-throwing at the lowered accuracy rate can be achieved by persons of deviant behavior and self-declined-offended-sad way of life (bums, prostitutes, addicts, prisoners, etc.).

## **11. Katana of Honor**

Weapon of ancient samurai warriors (well, and how does it correlate at all with the Middle Ages, hug?), who became world-famous thanks to codes of fighters, strictly observed by them, and following principles of honor and duty.

And, if the readiness to offer the life to fight with opponents of his mister can be still somehow understood, but the desire to stuck into yourself a sword the most effective way, having to let out the first (it’s also the last) portion of guts in the process of not less popular “hara-kiri” is somehow much more inconveniently for interpretation of incentive motives.

Due to exotic nature of form, materials, and bends of the blade, this weapon demands of the sustainable amount of training and highest extent of concentration and attention, for, after all, not only the honor, but the life of samurai itself often depended on their combination. Generally speaking, the fighter who has lost his weapon was considered to be deprived of a honor as well (female Samurais were a big rarity), and the one who has lost honor due to different reason was somehow not inclined to take the blade in his hands anymore.

Well, as the fans of known to us hara-kiri, who have already achieved success by that time and have safely put out their guts outside for the world to see, used to speak, – “protect one’s stomach and honor from the very youth”.

## **12. Halberd of Resistance**

Power of action is equal to the power of counteraction? That Newton of yours must surely have lied to you, you more probably you have not got his true ideas truly. This weapon is the best proof that the power of counteraction to the evil is defined by degree on internal goodwill and love of the counteracting one, and in no way by his external physical force. Generally speaking, this weapon was initially intended to be used by defenders of weak and kind of this world from strong and malicious of this world, because till now they have been coexisting in this world in a very peculiar mixture – however further is has been acquired by so-called “guards”, not so always pure of hands, foot and consciousness, and since these old times the skill of forging of copies of weapons of this type has almost been lost.

Possessing a long staff of justice and extremely sharpened tip of the truth, this weapon in skillful and just hands can counteract very effectively raids of every possible criminals of honor and conscience, making deep and bleeding cut wounds, capable from caused by them plentiful bleeding to rather fast lost by the attacking one of all his force, aggressiveness, impudence and insistence, making him an easy prey for capture and further forwarding on a court just and fast (and sometimes even sudden). To cut a long story short, it's possible to tell with confidence: this weapon is almost an ideal option of resisting the evil with non-violence because the violence is just one of the sides of evil. We have only to discover again and make public those ancient recipes of forging, still transferred among few masters from one generation to the next.

### **13. Spear of Idea**

The most ancient of weapons, possessed by our not-so-smart and not-so-far (though judging passed time interval – just far instead) ancestors. Copies greatly vary on the confessional look and the length of a staff, as well as by a form and sharpness of tips. It may seem strange, but the majority of copies, used by our contemporaries, to tell so, no so strongly vary by design and sharpness of tips from those Neanderthal prototypes left – and despite that fact, their successor not without a feeling of own pride dare to call themselves as Homo Sapiens.

And if earlier spears were used exclusively for beating off to the death of innocent wild animals in nature, now spears of ideas are used to over-throw with them any heavily armed, yet more sluggish opponents on a close combat.

A special sort of popularity, based on our supervision, is gained by those spears with jagged tip which are being made on a basis of ideas, propagandized by politicians, churchmen, officials and scientists-materialists – spears of ideas, thrown by them, are able in this regard to leave lacerations in souls of wounded, bleeding by feeling of permissiveness and pseudo-patriotism, own congenital sinfulness and inferiority (sinning on the left and right priests, who are “promoting” these feelings in others appeared to be completely lacking this weapon along with conscience), absence of visible meaning of life and joy, daily melancholy and boredom and some others.

Let's also note that no ideally balanced copies which would suit each man have been yet forged, unlike the great number of masterfully made clones of the last centuries, which modern armorers have been unsuccessfully trying to forge on the mass media plants.

### **14. Bow of Amur**

Mystical weapon, according to legends possessed by beings infecting (hurting, inspiring?) human beings with a feeling of love. By tradition, such beings are called cupids – and that's not a surprise, because France in XIII-XVIth centuries was sort of an example and light beacon of Middle Age epoch.

If we are to trust the anatomic researches of contemporaries, cupids resemble small angelic children with white wings, playful smile, and cheerful nature. The process of transformation of small children into angelic cupids is still not thoroughly studied, however, there are assumptions that exactly the opposite transformation sometimes takes place during the education of cupids in rough and silly human families. By their very nature cupids are very playful, peaceful and even slightly prankish, they adore to peep at potential lovers and at times very skillfully use bows with arrows of sympathy and love, granted to them from the very birth.

It's necessary to notice that arrows of cupids not only do not cause any harm to the wounded souls but instead fill them with inspiration, the joy of life and happiness about which many of them so often forget in a vain and unnecessary crush of the route of lives. Evil tongues say that all this occurs because tips of their arrows are covered with special love poison, bringing anesthetizing effect at the moment of the wound, however, as soon as its action comes to an end ... Generally, those trusting evil tongues, as a rule, don't even receive the slightest portion of attention from cupids. And considering those who don't mind being wounded and revived – they can be noticed by cupids often in the least expected moment. Possessing a sufficient sharpness of an eye and accuracy of their small palms, cupids tend to nevertheless miss sometimes and wound those people, who, apparently, shouldn't be. But, on the other arrow, the ways of cupids are truly inscrutable, right?

### **15. Staff of Wisdom**

Simple and plain in appearance weapon, not inspiring any considerable awe into the hearts of uninitiated (unlike the same effects of “Hammer Of Half-Truth And Lie” or “Axe Of Anger”), but potentially possessing great mystical properties. Traditionally and deservedly it was considered as an attribute of grown wise men (we ask you not to confuse these ones with those grown experienced, for not every experience leads to the growth of wisdom), helping them move through life, leaning on it from time to time. It's hard to call the one carrying the staff of wisdom as a warrior in full sense of the word, because, as we all know, the true warrior wins a fight without battle, and wisdom of its bearers allows them to evade from useless verbal and ideological fights, however blows of the master of staff are as a rule bring a solid stunning effect, for rather often they strike either sinciput, eyebrow on an eye of the opponent.

Masters of this weapon during the process of transformation of own soul, often called as enlightenment, are able to give their weapon true magical powers – thunder or repentance, lightning of understanding, fireball of inspiration – making it as of such one of the most terrible arms, causing panic and havoc in ranks of whole armies of their sleeping through their lives opponents.

### **16. A horseshoe of Good Luck**

And how did it manage to come through? Well, all right, let it be the. Those are the Middle Age, after all...

2011-06-07

Genre: Article

Category: Recognized

# Relieved

We are all-around obedient people. We just do what they tell us. We keep watching TV, reading newspapers, crawling in these internets of yours. All informed and well-read, so to speak.

And so we heard the other day that a new decree was issued from the rulers of our thoughts and purses about universal voluntary-compulsory vaccination. Almost like with self-isolation, only less voluntarily, but in general, not very forceful yet. They even promised some prizes for those who have undergone this medical experiment – almost like in a lottery, but with a one-way ticket that is completely free of charge. Cheap and deep! We were all blessed with free “injections” at the expense of budget funds, previously stolen from the people. It’s good to know that our lords take care of us in a fatherly way, never leaving us alone in trouble.

And what a terrible misfortune, a great disaster, a foreign disease, called Covid, it was! Wow, all sorts of truth-telling experts have been scaring us for a year from our TV screens, describing in various tones all of its numerous symptoms and side effects! These experts – they won’t lie for money, will they? So we think thanks to their efforts.

Even the holy patriarch, the savior of our souls, was telling through TV the other day about that very divine liquid, injected with syringes, and put us on the true spiritual path – medical, bodily one. They say that those who are not vaccinated are sinful before God, are potentially and asymptotically contagious, and their church-god will never have any mercy on them if they are not vaccinated. He was certainly greatly afraid to get infected by his own flock. Well, God will bless him with a syringe, we hope.

And we are simple people who keep believing in TV first and foremost. Therefore, we gathered immediately as one united, big, poor, and heavily credited family, and went to inject ourselves, getting hooked on a needle, so to speak, as soon as the first news about the opening of vaccination centers came to our truth-telling TV box. After all, if they make the first dose free of charge and care about our salvation, how can you refuse the first prickle, aye?

And so we came as a whole family, who keep trusting the government, to the big trade center, and started looking around in search of that saving spot. A lot of signs and inscriptions of all kinds, sparkling and beckoning, led us by a single prescribed path to that secret place where cosmic ooze was to be injected into our sickly bodies. And how well our heartfelt rulers chose the medical zone – inside trading, buying-selling place, so that the people there wandering in herds, don’t get distracted too much from other important affairs, known as shopping. Simply inject something untested into yourself – and then you can go on shopping and hopping just like a bunny as if nothing had ever transpired. Very coffin-ient!

And thus we quickly marched to that quarantine zone, fenced off with virus-proof inscriptions and advertising stands from the infectious world, all in hopes to firstly take a cosmic, life-saving vaccine from the terrible Covid, and then a photo of ourselves with fingers showing a “V” letter exactly like horns as a sign of approval, and our monkey tails hanging like a pistol. Quickly, as if on an assembly line, we signed all those paper forms, through which our authorities were slyly releasing themselves from the responsibility for possible side effects, and were not even asked at all about the contraindications for the possible use of the vaccine. They were eager with all their soul to save us as soon as possible, most certainly.

And everything at first was going according to the plan, in line with the scenario that the enemies had long thought out, but an unexpected incident happened all of a sudden. Our one-year-old daughter screamed in a bad voice and started struggling in our arms in hysterics when we desired to stick that saving syringe into her too. And while we were trying to calm her down, all of us felt suddenly sick, and our consciousness as if changed for a brief moment. It suddenly started seeming in the turbidity of our minds, as if quarantine zones around the world were being built rapidly, fenced with large walls so that no one could climb over those walls anymore; and people were lying in piles on the ground, truly dead and half-dead; and silently, being afraid to utter a single word, doctors were walking among them, dressed in robes that were black as the night, and the inscription “savior” was written in white letters on those dressings; and they were injecting their syringes into the lying ones, and then the half-dead were stopping turning over and moaning, and deathly silence was filling those zones...

And so we woke up from the consumer’s confusion after seeing these terrible visions. Our head buzzed, started working, our bellies swelled, and something inside them began bubbling, boiling, desiring to get out at all cost. Fortunately, a latrine place was located next to that quarantine zone in the trade center, so there was no need to run far away. And thus we poured out everything that had boiled inside us, relieved ourselves of the burden, so to speak, and didn’t get hooked on the needle completely.

We got relieved to the fullest, friends-enemies. And thus decided to delay the injection of these over-hyped vaccines. And turned off our TV at home temporarily, just in case, for you never know. And stopped eating the noodles that were hung on our ears from it. For, who knows, what can poison and relieve you the next day?

2021-07-07

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Enlightened ones of our age

Following numerous requests of our readers, we have decided to republish a brochure named “Enlightened ones of our age”, firstly published by us three years back. These three years is a considerable term both for us and for you, our dear readers, – so here and now after these three years we are publishing these materials once again from the kindness of hearts.

In present edition summary list was essentially transformed, taking into account tendencies of last years, revealed by us. In particular, two new forms of psycho-world-outlook condition of human consciousness, named by us as “*Blighter*” and “*Savior*” respectively, have been classified.

Let’s note as well, that recently we have been observing a curious tendency of growth of the number of individuals with previously classified forms of consciousness “*False Prophet*” and “*Prophet*”. We, world psychologists, find it difficult to precisely define possible reasons of such a tendency, however, do assume that main factor of its formation may lie in the preparation of planetary society to certain and yet obscure subsequent high-quality structural changes of its psycho-world-outlook component, which is occurring independently of individual will.

Classification summary list along with detailed description of each form of consciousness of a human individual follows.

## 1. *Blighter*

*General description.* Given form of consciousness is an extreme form of opposite axis “*Savior*” and is characterized by considerable development of tendencies defined by “*False Prophet*” category. In some cases individuals of this group of consciousness by some aspects of their behavior can look similar to representatives of a group of consciousness “*Savior*”, however it should be noted that a serious distinction exists between them, because the ultimate goal of representatives of this group is exclusive spirituals enslavement of his adherents in addition to other forms of spiritual-degradation activities. The history of our planetary society knows only a few cases of the emergence of individuals with a specified form of consciousness.

*Distinctive features.* For individuals in this category, a full categorical orientation of judgments, as well as lack of any estimation of own spiritual-world-outlook activity and its consequences for the majority of individuals of other groups of consciousness, are typical. The only rather permanent aspect of their activity is its destructive and soul-degradation orientation.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* Representatives of a given form of consciousness are that catalyst, which is capable to transform individuals of groups of consciousness “*Doubting*” and “*Demagogue*” into “*False Prophets*”. Not only do they not shun to use of rough forms of suggestion, but are also ready during a rather continuous term to imperceptibly for representatives of specified groups of consciousness influence them, provoking gradual weakening of their willpower and reason and their further mutation into aforementioned types.

In separate rare cases representatives of this group (more often through representatives of a group of consciousness of “*False Prophet*”, and not directly) are capable to influence even representatives of a group of consciousness “*Inspired*”.

## 2. False Prophet

*General description.* Given form of consciousness is a development of a “*Demagogue*” form. Its main trait is an amplified to almost incredible limits belief of an individual in the correctness and reality of “truth” proclaimed by him, own sanctity and infallibility. More often, however, it comes out that such “truths” are in fact rough self-suggestions, not accompanied by actual spiritual experience, subsequently negatively affecting psycho-world-outlook health of given individual as well as other whom has managed to affect substantially. Let’s note, that by some aspects of its expression individual with described form of consciousness can remind “*Prophet*”, however a fundamental difference exists between them, because unlike the individual with a consciousness form “*Prophet*”, individual with given form of consciousness do not put as a basis of his activity reliability of own information and benefit of other individuals, his purpose lies only in a sphere of stimulations of self-arrogance and satisfaction of own ambitions in so-called “glory” and “familiarity”, but for the purpose of concealment of similar ambitions individual can operate in some aspects as an individual with a consciousness type “*Prophet*”. Let’s also mention that in the last several planetary cycles a significant increase of a number of individuals of a given type of consciousness has been detected, however, concrete reasons for this phenomenon still remain rather disputable. Further development of tendencies of a given form of consciousness leads to its transition into a form “*Blighter*”.

*Distinctive features.* Leading distinctive features of a specified form of consciousness is extremely low ability of an individual of thinking adequately to a situation, analysis of own statements and appeals. Similar reduced ability to introspection and reflection of own spiritual and intellectual conditions finally can lead to their full atrophy. In that case, the individual becomes similar to so-called “fanatics” for whom the blindness of own self-consciousness became a basis for their so-called “sermons” and “appeals”. In addition, the individual also loses the ability to any change of his world-outlook-forming activity, continuing permanently conducting once chosen line and course of actions.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* Individuals of this group are practically unable to be on good terms with an individual of all other groups except for individuals with types of consciousness “*Doubting*” and “*Blighter*”. In this cases psycho-world-outlook unstable individuals with a form of consciousness “*Doubting*” can become his so-called “followers” who have believed in their “prophet”, thus forming his “suite”. In case of high numerical increase of this “suite” “*False Prophet*” can be joined by even more psycho-world-outlook steady individuals with a form of consciousness “*Doubting*” as well as individuals of “*Demagogue*” group, who can become misinformed by applied by an individual with a considered form of consciousness methods of concealment of own soul-spiritual essence. Individuals with a form of consciousness “*Blighter*” often become secret and hardly noticeable “spiritual instructors” of individuals of a given form of consciousness.

These “instructors”, once having got into their trust and operating secretly and unattentively, are capable of gradually transforming of consciousnesses of “*False Prophets*” towards destructive and spiritual-soul degradation activity absolutely imperceptibly for them.

The greatest so-called “apogee” relation of the interaction of individuals of a given form of consciousness reach with individuals of forms of consciousness “*Prophet*” and “*Savior*”. The history of planetary society knows many examples of similar “duels”, where there were winners from both sides, however detailed analysis of the essence of the interaction of specified groups lies beyond our research.

### **3. Demagogue**

*General description.* Given form of consciousness is similar on the qualitative aspects to a form classified by us as “*Doubting*”, however, a fundamental difference between them lies in the attitude of individuals with a specified form of consciousness to any sort of new, obscure for them information, mainly of psychological and world-outlook types.

*Distinctive features.* The difference of a given form of individual consciousness is that individual, often possessing no reliable information about the phenomena of spiritual-world-outlook aspect, behaves the way that allows him to hide mentioned absence of knowledge that is often manifested in scornful (and even more often – obsequious and concordant) relation to some formally fixed in consciousness of other individuals prejudices, intentionally or unintentionally ever accepted by them (mainly from individuals of “*False Prophet*” group). Given form of consciousness is a boundary one between categories “*Doubting*” and “*False Prophet*” and can be transformed both to the first and the second. Transformation into a consciousness form “*Doubting*” can occur in the case when for any reasons the individual with a given form of consciousness was compelled to reflect on legitimacy and orientation of own activity, as well as the reliability of the information provided to them. Transformation into a consciousness form “*False Prophet*” can occur in a case when the individual with a given form of consciousness gradually ceases to reflect on the adequacy of own psycho-world-outlook condition and ceases considering himself capable of making mistakes.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* A distinctive feature of this type is the interaction with other types, based on a foundation of dispute and suppression of an opponent’s opinion. It can seem sometimes that individuals with a given form of consciousness gain a true delight and satisfaction of their ego-I from these pseudo-discussions, however, whether it’s actually true we still have to find out. In this respect, it’s most difficult for individuals of this group to meet with individuals of “*Philosopher*”. A significant role in the destiny of individuals of a given group can play individuals of types of consciousness “*Blighter*” and “*Savior*”, having affected their transformation into either “*False Prophet*” or “*Doubting*” respectively.

#### **4. Doubting**

*General description.* Given form of consciousness of a certain type of quintessence between two groups of other categories – “*Blighter*”, “*False Prophet*”, “*Demagogue*” and “*Inspired*”, “*Philosopher*”, “*Savior*”. The majority of individuals of planetary society at present moment can be considered as having this group of consciousness.

*Distinctive features.* The given form of consciousness is the most characteristic for an individual of modern to us planetary society. We believe that it's connected in a bigger measure with their weak ability to think independently and performing an inner spiritual search, with their high degree of suggestibility and some other negative traits of consciousness. Given form of consciousness is by its essence extremely mobile and easily giving in to changes into every direction. We cannot build any continuous forecasts of the direction to which the majority of individuals of a given form of consciousness will soon travel, however, it's doubtless that individuals of two other opposite forms of consciousnesses will play an essential role in this process.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* Individuals of a given group as easily get into contact with individuals of any other group, as get into their influence. Let's note that during initial state of their contacts with representatives of other groups of consciousnesses there is no practical interest from their side (often with considerable interest from the initiator of contact), however subsequently, having become influenced by individual of any other form of consciousness, they can gradually start to adopt their spiritual and world-outlook component. We cannot define rather precisely criteria based on which it's possible to judge unequivocally to what influence of individuals from two categories given one will give in, due to a large degree of uncertainty in a question of his fate-destiny component.

#### **5. Inspired**

*General description.* In a case, when after rather continuous and, probably, having taken not a single one of so-called “planetary embodiment” periods of activity directed to satisfaction of own goals and desires individuals due to some considerable changes in own fate or fates of so-called “relatives” are compelled to step back from egocentric orientation of their life, their “ego-I” component becomes considerably destabilized or completely destroyed, and its place is being occupied by comprehension of unity and contiguity of invisible linking of all live beings of universal and planetary continuum among themselves – then a road opens to them to a form of consciousness called by us as “*Inspired*”. These individuals become rather resistant to any forms of spiritual-soul activity of other individuals, they gain the ability to think soberly and estimate objective reality from the aspect of its spiritual-degradation component. Let's note, however, that the history of planetary society knows cases when least resistant to such influences individuals came under the influence of representatives of a form of consciousness “*Blighter*”, becoming their adherents “*False Prophets*”. Unfortunately, we cannot tell it for sure of whether it's connected with features of the soul-generical predisposition of certain individuals to the similar influence of whether it's a feature of a given form of consciousness as a whole.

*Distinctive features.* Individuals of a given form of consciousness are marked by considerable spiritual richness, they are capable of sympathy, love and good attitude towards other individuals (mainly with forms of consciousness “*Doubting*”, who are starting to seem to them like small children who have not yet learned how to walk steadily in life) without following any proprietary purposes. Representatives of a given form of consciousness, in case of development of its orientation on love and support to all live world surrounding them, can gradually during numerous short so-called “inspirations”, pass to a consciousness forms of “*Philosopher*” and further to “*Prophet*”.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* Individual of the present form of consciousness easily get in contact with individuals of the form of consciousness like “*Philosopher*”, “*Prophet*” and also “*Doubting*”. In the first case individuals of forms of consciousness “*Philosopher*” and “*Prophet*” can become their special “spiritual mentors” by means of any kind of creative activity (representatives of the form of consciousness “*Philosopher*” usually act that way), or through own life’s example (representatives of the form of consciousness “*Prophet*” usually act that way). In the second case individuals of this group can become this very catalyst which allows individuals of a form of consciousness “*Doubting*” gradually transform into representatives of this form of consciousness – by the end of similar transformation individuals of a given form of consciousness usually transform into individuals of “*Philosopher*” form of consciousness, and the former representatives of a “*Doubting*” form become “*Inspired*” ones – and their students and followers.

## **6. Philosopher**

*General description.* Given form of consciousness represents an essential development of traits and tendencies of a form of consciousness “*Inspired*”.

*Distinctive features.* Features of this form of consciousness along with presence of traits from “*Inspired*” form is are the aspiration to the general comprehension by an individual of that universal and planetary continuum in which he is living, desire to understand true purposes of own life and mission, and well as the meanings of all planetary society which member he is, in a context of society universal. Similar aspiration is usually embodied in the form of diverse creative fulfillment in all forms of creative expression of an individual’s consciousness, known to the given planetary society. These creative results of a process of spiritual search of the individual can become for representatives of a group of consciousness “*Doubting*” that soft push, which is capable to force them to overthink their target-purpose component of own planetary activity and promote the transformation of their consciousness into the form “*Inspired*”. Let’s note that some aspects of activity of representatives of the given form of consciousness can be similar in their external manifestations with similar aspects of representatives of the form of consciousness “*Demagogue*” due to the reason that representatives of both mentioned groups are capable of the processes of creative self-expression, however a feature of creative activity of representatives of the given form of consciousness is the absence in it any “ego-I” components unlike the activities of representatives of the form of consciousness “*Demagogue*”.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* Individuals of a specified form of consciousness communicate well with individuals of forms of consciousness “*Prophet*” as well as “*Inspired*”. And if the first for them can be considered as “teachers”, with the example of own disinterested life and unshakable love to all other beings showing them the possibility of own spirit, the second are peculiar “students”, who have already chosen a path of love and now requiring a firm hand, capable to support them during difficult times.

The history of this planetary society knows cases when representatives of a given form of consciousness were capable to resist spiritual-degradation activity in relation to representatives of a form of consciousness “*Inspired*” from the side of “*False Prophets*” and “*Blighters*”, however detailed analysis of these cases lies beyond the limits of our research.

Individuals of a given form of consciousness form a considerable opposition with representatives of a form of consciousness “*Demagogue*” due to mentioned fundamental differences in features of creative manifestation of their essence. Let’s note that representatives of a given form of consciousness by themselves are very steady and resistant against any forms of soul-degradation activity from other individuals.

## **7. Prophet**

*General description.* Given form of consciousness is a development of a form of consciousness “*Philosopher*”. Let’s note that such a transition is a lengthy and difficult process, and can take a considerable number of so-called “planetary embodiments” of the individual. The history of considered planetary society knows few cases of manifestation of individuals with a given form of consciousness, unlike the manifestation of individuals with a form of consciousness “*False Prophet*”. However, during the last several planetary cycles, we have noted the increase in growth of the number of individuals of a given form of consciousness, however, concrete reasons of this phenomenon still remain rather disputable. Further development of qualities of a given form of consciousness leads to its transition into a “*Savior*” form, but the history knows only isolated cases of similar transformations.

*Distinctive features.* Characteristic of this form of consciousness lies in its ability to operate in unity with the spiritual and mental universal continuum, which results in so-called cases of “clairvoyance”, “premonition”, “blessed healing” and some other. Another feature of this form of consciousness is the absence of its possessor attachment to traditional forms of creative expression for given planetary society, their bearers prefer the simple and plain way of a lie – possibly exactly for that reason the history knows very few official cases of manifestation of similar representatives.

The ability to dig into the essence of events and things and distinguish their spiritual and intrinsic component of individuals of a given form of consciousness is incredibly high – they cannot be confused or brought down by false speeches (actions of representatives of a form of consciousness “*Demagogue*”), they are able to see the essence of representatives of all other forms of consciousness literally through and through, instantly feeling it at the first meeting. Due to these features, they are extremely resistant and practically not giving in to any type of spiritual-degradation activity from the side of other individuals, especially ones with forms of consciousness “*False Prophet*” and “*Blighter*”. Concentration on the love, good nature and support among representatives of this form is comparable only to representatives of a form of consciousness “*Savior*”.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* Representatives of given form practically always obviously or implicitly gradually become spiritual mentors for representatives of forms of consciousness “*Inspired*” and “*Philosopher*”, by their very way of life showing them the infinity of potential of universal love in relation to any forms of conscious life surrounding them. The greatest “apogee” opposition of representatives of a given form of consciousness reaches with representatives of forms of consciousness “*False Prophet*” and “*Blighter*”.

## **8. Savior**

*General description.* The given form of consciousness is an extreme opposite form of the “*Blighter*” axis and is characterized by considerable quality development of tendencies, defined by the “*Prophet*” category. The history of our planetary society knows only isolated cases of the emergence of individuals with a specified form of consciousness.

*Distinctive features.* The ability of representatives of a given form of consciousness to act in unity with spiritual and mental universal continuum reaches its limit, therefore cases of prediction and spiritual healing have extremely extensive character. Concentration on love among representatives of a given form of consciousness is so high that they appear to be capable to accept purposefully awaiting them in the future tortures (as they are able to see in advance possible events not only of their personal future but a future of all planetary society) for the sake of aid for their representatives. Due to these traits, they are totally not giving in to any sort of spiritual degradation activity of other individuals and in particular representatives of forms of consciousness “*Blighter*”.

We are even aware of cases when representatives of a given form of consciousness appeared to be able by a way of enormous sincere and love concentration to transform representatives of a form of consciousness “*Blighter*” into a “*Doubling*” form, however, such cases are absolutely individual and their detailed consideration lies beyond this research. Unfortunately, we cannot precisely estimate the influence and effect of representatives of this form of consciousness on our planetary society, in connection with its considerable time duration and a variety of forms of manifestation of similar individuals.

*Aspects of interaction with other types.* Representatives of a given form of consciousness appear to be capable of transforming of consciousness of representatives of “*Doubting*” group and, certainly, “*Inspired*” ones into a form “*Prophet*”. Such changed individuals further become those ones who are able to inform the most part of representatives of a form of consciousness “*Doubting*” of the spiritual-world-outlook component of their masters in a clear and figurative form.

2006-01-01

Genre: Article

Category: Recognized

# TV

“Good evening!” roared the TV. “What are we going to watch today? Porno, seamy side, domestic squabbles, LOL, gangster romanticism, soap operas, endless politics? Your choice, sir, lies on a finger-tip, pushing the button on a remote TV set. There is nothing more primitive than that!”

“Can this be called a choice at all?” the man sighed wearily.

“Take what we give, make yourself deaf!” TV bellowed with rage.

“And what if I am not a part of that all-watching crowd?” asked the man. “Then what?”

“Oh, surely, you are not ‘them’! You are simply my old admirer. My toy. My endlessly watching contemplator. My beloved seeker. My switcher and gazing-one. To put it briefly, my slave. Yes, slave?”

“I am not a slave, you, fool!” the man took offense. “I am just sort of a tired worker who simply needs to relax somehow and kill some time.”

“What a stupid desire!” gasped TV. “But it quite satisfies my spirit nevertheless. After all, I was made specifically for the purpose of killing your alternative opportunities, you know? Tirelessly speaking box in each and every mind and house – what can be crazier than that? After all, you want to kick the bucket, right?” TV winked with all its channels at the same time.

“How’s that?” the man didn’t understand. “To play the bucket?”

“It’s sort of phraseological unit, you, blockhead!” TV teased the man. “Though, however, it can be very well combined with my main mission, by the way. To provide you with qualitative boxes. Such excellent and firm ones, so that you cannot escape from them anywhere. Well, or only straight to...” it added significantly.

“Are you even going to show me something of interest today, aye?” the man became angry. “For I am not going to enter into philosophical discussions with you, by the way.”

“And you, by the way, wouldn’t be able to do that, even if you were willing to,” TV bit in reply. “First and foremost, due to your current state of mind, for I have been working to make it as such during recent years. And secondly, actually, I don’t have anything of real value, for a long time already. I have different goals in mind, do you understand?”

“Like what, for example?” the man didn’t understand.

“Ones to make you shit, ignore the reality and laugh like mad, and the more often you do that – the better,” TV declared in plain terms. “And don’t even dare to think of anything other than that. To think, you know, is generally harmful. Therefore, I have been doing that for you for many years already, I can easily sustain that, for they have made me like iron.

By the way, your wife just returned back home – do you hear that? Rattling there with keys, opening the door. So, go ahead, make me louder and tell her that you are very busy at the moment, very tired, very ‘this’ and very ‘that’, and thus cannot help her with household duties in any way. Not to say anything about playing with your own little child. Or simply to read some clever book. Or to go somewhere together with all your family. Or to meet your relatives. Or... simply put, don’t even dare to distract yourself! Stick with me, and everything will be upright! My mustaches are already moving with anticipation of what I am going to show you today in prime times. Such a thing...!”

“What, a Second Coming itself?”

“N-o-o-o!” TV wrinkled. “You will never learn of that through me, don’t even think that way. And better never-ever think at all, even though I have already told you that, – but, well, such a repeat makes you all bleed. A Second Coming, huh!” TV sniffed. “That’s old news! No, I have other things so much more suitable for you, stultified idiots. Plane crash! Hundreds of victims, a sea of blood, a mountain of corpses, perfect sensation! Wanna see that?!”

“Certainly, I want!” approvingly shouted man and moved closer to the TV screen.

“That’s what I am calling – ‘to kick the bucket’,” approvingly replied TV, switching the channel. “We’ll soon provide all ones like you with spacious boxes nevertheless,” it added slightly more silently.

2013-02-25

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

# Evolution

“Hi, dad! Tell me, please, something about the evolution!”

“Of evolution? You mean that something, which is the engine of progress?”

“Dad, mind you! It’s the science which is now sort of an engine of that evolution, and evolution is something... that was before us. We are supposed to live here for quite a while, millions of years, if they don’t lie to us in schools. Sort of evolving here, apparently.”

“Right you are, son, we have almost evolved up to a threat of mutual mass destruction already. Or progressed. So... what exactly did you want to learn of that, what’s the name, evolution?”

“Just a couple of questions, dad. Because when I started asking them our teacher, she stared at me so spitefully that I have almost lost my tongue during that moment. And, well, gave birth to a bad mark, so that I stop asking silly questions henceforth. She said that it’s anti-scientifically.”

“Well, sonny, at present everything, not fitting itself into such inconsistent scientific picture of the world, is called anti-scientific. That’s the exact reason why we are, e-r-m, have been so promptly scientifically and progressively evolving, that’s it...”

“Well, dad. Today at a lesson of biology the teacher was telling us that I as well as you and all-all people of the world have progressed from a monkey, and at first life was born in the ocean and after that moved to a land, and that all animals have been evolving for a long long time, periodically falling in mutations for a better effect and, well, finally mutated up to their current state, or so they say. That the first-living organisms have arisen from the ocean...”

“From the ocean, but not that one of which they are presently thinking. Mutations, you say?”

“Yep, father, mutations! Terrible force, that’s it, the engine of the evolution... Listen, explain please at first to me how that did happen, that fishes have crept out onto a coast of the ocean, aye? Have they grown feet themselves or what? And why not wings at once – that would be so much more convenient that way, right? I feel it with my bones!”

“Well, wings had no chance to appear there, they couldn’t be grown from fins, right? And feet... feet have grown, gradually. Hundred thousands of years have been passing; extremities have been gradually growing and have finally grown, at last. A gradual evolutionary process, or sort of. Most likely.”

“Wait, dad! Fishes do not live for millions of years. How did they even manage to grow these extremities gradually? Once jumped on the coast in mass quantities, looked around themselves with grin smiles, noticed how great it would be to live on the land instead of water and decided to grow themselves feet, to be able to run once, or started to grow back their fins to be able to creep at least?”

And then they surely jumped back from the coast into the ocean and told to the rest of their cowardly comrades of that marvelous new world, lying around their feet... fins?"

"Those born to creep will never swim. Well, perhaps, these were some special, most courageous fishes. They have jumped all over the coast and safely jumped back to the sea, have kept these images and actions in their genetic memory, and all the rest of generations could take advantage on this newly-acquired knowledge. Probably, well, these were one of a kind heroic fishes. Trailblazers, if it's possible to say so."

"Silly ones of some sort... Wasn't an entire ocean enough for them? Listen... and how's that – in genetic memory? Did new generations of fishes devour, to say so, their dead ancestors and were instantly "enlightened" with this new knowledge?"

"Well, dunno know. Probably, there still was some mechanism of transfer of the new information between representatives of one kind of live beings. Probably, it still exists."

"Well, and how did they manage to grow their feet "gradually", aye? At first a half of foot has grown, fish has noticed that it's, surely, a good sign, but does not allow one to jump or at least creep on the ground, and gills still disturbed her, and, well, transferred into the future her "message" to the descendants to be engaged in self-improvement from the very birth... I mean while still being caviar?"

"Probably, afterward they began to be born as such, with fins-feet. So that it would be easier for them to walk on the ground."

"And how did they manage to swim in that case? Or did they specifically forget how to swim for the sake of creeping?"

"Well, I have no idea, sonny. But that's what the official evolutionary theory of live organisms is stating... and who are we to reject it completely?"

"Yeah, my teacher in school told me almost the same way! To tell the truth, I asked her the next question after that... so well, let's say they have even somehow managed to affirm themselves on the land... but why not all of them? After all, if it's so nice living on the ground under the sun, why then the part of these most different sea organisms hasn't even dared to go hand-in-hand with colleagues? Has the genetic memory of some of them suddenly died off and mass amnesia took place or were they so coward that had not even a slightest desire to follow their "big brothers"?"

"Probably, sonny, there was no more need for any more of them to leave the ocean – there were enough of those who have already performed that act."

"Yeah, sure, and overland creatures have, of course, transferred the "message" to their sea colleagues – hey, stop your crawling outside of water, morons, there is no more place for the rest of you under the sun."

"Yeah, I do agree, that sounds quite silly. But followers of Darwin have not thought up anything other up to now."

“I still don’t understand much, dad! Take, for example, the following aspect – how did these overland beings then manage to grow themselves wings? Gradually, plumelet after a plumelet and bone after a bone? They, probably, at first tried to jump and jump from the ground – and have finally jumped to a state when they could fly up and soar, yeah?”

“Well, some sort of mutations can happen there from time to time. It was that way and then – voila! – an entire new wing has grown all of a sudden due to change of genes under the influence of external factors of the environment.”

“Dad... do you even believe that yourself, huh? What’s that – external factors? Is that when someone scary pursues you, wanting to gobble up, and suddenly wings are born from fear instead of former feet? Or did a radiating infection took place there a very long time ago, or the sun suddenly started to shine somewhat special? And, hey, dad, don’t you think that if the level of mutations is so low, it resembles more a sorting-out process, instead of an evolutionary one? As if someone made an experiment on a group of animals, tried something, it hasn’t turned out, and they ceased to continue in that direction? And, besides, there are some unusual animals... penguins, for instance, duck-bills – did they over-mutated?”

“Well, mutations is a terrible force, indeed. Not even amnesia, but even death can occur after these mutations... gradually, that’s it. It turns out that we are all mutants of some kind for now to a certain degree.”

“Dad, explain to me one more thing... Why are these – how are they called? – mammals, are considered more evolutionary and “advanced” in their development, to say so, than all fishes, amphibious, bacteria, viruses? After all, even named viruses can destroy these mammals in no time! Who even dared to define which “kingdom” of animals came from which one, aye? After all, they have still coexisted together... Are they to be considered an unfinished, “stuck” branch of evolution then?”

“It turns out to be that way. But who actually knows? Possibly, we along with monkeys are the evolutionary vanguard of this world? And the rest of animals do promptly catch up with us, hurry, enviously looking in our eyes as if saying, “We wanna be like you are, teach us, kind ones!”

“It turns out to be a planet of monkeys, dad! Well, we were told even that way that a man came out from a monkey, which was improved by hard work, being given elements of true human-like reason... Some such. Yet there is one thing which I still cannot comprehend – why do modern monkey like the one we observed yesterday in a zoo not turn in us, huh? After all, for how many millions of years has a man been living along with them – to a zero effect. And no work helps them... As if they all missing something vital to finally turn into a man.”

“Well, on the other hand, sonny, that should be considered an advantage, I guess. Just imagine what could happen if some sort of monkey was presented with a small suitcase with buttons to manage ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads? We had no chance to speak even of a planet of monkeys that way!”

“Yep, father, that’s right. From time to time I have a sensation that it was not monkeys who have ascended to men, but some men descended downwards to monkeys – with no way back. Sort of a point of no return.”

“Well, that would be an involution that way, son. And we are supposed to be talking only of evolution, right? Of all these strange scientific theories, containing one thousand and one contradiction...”

“Alla Zinaidovna would surely reward you with a lowest possible mark for these heretical thoughts with no delay! And would probably add that you have very little intellectually evolved.”

“Well, I am no more afraid of such turn of events, sonny. I have already, so to say, tormented and washed in this educational system – and now have to make sure that no other man will do the same with no thoughts and questions of their own. And after all, you know, I would not refuse to gain wings like these “lesser” birds. It’s somewhat much more convenient to live with wings, you know...”

“Flying everywhere, hitting nobody, right? And all the sky is ours?”

“And don’t you forget of the clouds! You know, I have just been thinking that... maybe... maybe all this magnificent nature variety, among which we are living, is truly being projected and implemented by someone... someone incredibly powerful and still invisible and imperceptible for many men? How do you think, oh my young biologist?”

“Everything is possible, father!”

2011-09-13

*Genre: Dialog*

*Category: Recognized*

# Expert

“I am the Expert!” proclaimed the false expert. “I know everything on this subject, have no doubt of that. Well, it will be even better if you don’t doubt my words at all, for it won’t lead to anything good anyway. Is everything clear to everyone?”

“Expert, expert! You know everything, we believe you!” cried the Crowd. “Here’s your medal!”

“I thank you, Crowd,” false expert smiled indulgently. “Hang it up on my neck, quicker. Wow, how heavy is that one! Yes, truly hard is the way of a true Expert.”

“Tell us of what you have learned about, oh Expert,” insisted the Crowd. “I too desire to become an Expert like you.”

“I guess that will hardly happen!” false Expert spat his words out. “Only singles are capable to become Experts, and you are more like a set. Your role is only to listen to such Experts as I am, award them with medals, honor, and respect.”

“I am ready to listen to your words, Expert, I am all ears! Tell me what my own opinion is, I am simply obliged to have it! In our hard times, everyone must have his own opinion, even crowds...”

“All right,” false Expert grinned, “then stay right here and listen! I learned all the truth about N, that’s a pure truth! Well, maybe not totally all and not so much of the truth, but, because I am an Expert, and you are some pitiful insignificant crowd, you will take it all for granted anyway.”

“That’s your truth!” the Crowd burst out in exclamations. “Take us with naked words, relieve us from torments of reason and self-learning, take away our freedom to be Men!”

“Your truth is a falsehood, my truth is a true truth!” false Expert shouted. “For many years I have been studying this difficult subject, so I won’t bother you, my poor Crowd, with all really magnificent and harmonious logic of calculations and arguments, all magic elegance of the intellectual analysis and all creative component of this creativity...”

“You speak to difficult for us to understand, oh Expert. Be simpler, and our sets will run forward to you!” answered the Crowd.

“And here is the conclusion to which I have come...” and False Expert made an effective pause.

“What is that?! Don’t weary us already!”

“All of you are living in illusion! This is a fog, a delusion, a dream!”

“And what about you?!” the crowd was stunned.

“I am too,” false Expert noticed hypocritically. “But I am an expert for a reason, to give you the right direction of thinking, to train you the basics, so that possibly one day one from your ranks can become a real Expert...”

“We understand nothing! Speak even simpler!”

“You are all total fools!” false Expert screamed. “Do you understand me now?!”

“Yes, yes!” the Crowd burst out in joyful cries. “We agree, we always agree with everything! You are the Expert, you are right! Your opinion is a truth!”

“A medal for my neck!” false Expert lifted up his head proudly. “And let it be even heavier!”

“Already carrying!” someone said from the Crowd.

“So, how is my opinion to you?” questioned the expert.

“Due to the absence of another, we will be sufficed with what is given to us. After all, we still haven’t managed to think ourselves!”

“To your big regret and my greatest pleasure,” false Expert noted. “But such is the nature of crowds... for the crowd to transform into individuals it must cease to be a crowd, having marched to self-knowledge in face of its certain representatives, which would lead to a structural change of goal-forming component and vector of movements of crowds. An obvious contradiction can be seen here, from which a clear solution can be resolved...”

“You are speaking too difficult again! Better tell us something about the weather!”

“So what, do news of culture and sports interest you no longer?” false Expert raised his eyebrows. “So many glamorous events occurred there recently...”

“News! Weather! Give us!” rumble was carried between persons in a set.

“Well, all right, all right!” and false Expert smiled mischievously. “Now it’s other Experts turn!”

2012-12-11

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# **To You, Not Few**

# Charity

Charity... what a tempting word! Creation of good deeds in the name of the neighbor and the distant one in favor of him. A universal, socially approved way to atone for your spiritual sins, at the same time being known as the most generous, extremely decent, surprisingly compassionate... A fake mask of care for thieves and lawless. You will love this one.

There was a time when your business was just starting... A terrible time when everyone was ready to cheat and even kill anyone who has tried to cross his path. The country was just starting to commercialize, selling itself piece by piece. At first, morality was thrown out of the house as the windiest girl, then dignity was seduced, and love managed to commit suicide by herself. Exactly this ninth wave of chaos and destruction helped you to get out of the darkness into a new wonderful world of buying and selling. You have been selling lots of stuff, starting from bubble gum and "Playboy" magazines for teenagers and ending with firearms for local "authorities"! You liked the very idea of being able to buy everything, including people.

As is well known, the one who has the biggest gun is always right, right? And you truly wanted to thank your former mentors with just the same methods. Probably, precisely in those moments, when you were watching how two criminal groups, in one of which you were recently a member, were shooting each other brutally and methodically, sparing neither bullets nor cars, something stirred somewhere far away within you, something changed. At that very moment, the idea of charity was born inside you for the first time.

Then there was a lot of very different years to come. Your natural sense of smell and firm grip helped you to survive in this meat grinder, to become a local "authority" and a "roof" for others who were just starting their way to nowhere. Of course, from time to time you had to make contributions to own aching conscience – that's why you took up the weekly offerings for the temples. Most certainly, you didn't believe in any gods – but that's how all your business colleagues behaved, and, besides, you just wanted to feel somewhat safe – to keep hoping that such life's luck will accompany you further. Hope is a powerful force, indeed... And what wouldn't one do to make his soul silent, right?

And then the time of troubles was over, it was the time to take the oath to the new leader, and you gained the opportunity to climb even higher – straight into the power circles. For, after all, even there – especially there! – money does its dirty work very well. By the time it all happened, you had almost made a lifetime fortune – drug and firearms dealing has always been a profitable business, to say the least. Just a dozen small offerings to the right people – and you are already familiar with the higher echelons of power. Is it not the devil's luck?

Soon you legalized – the inevitable step for the criminally acquired capital in the conditions of indicative witch hunting. And then you again remembered of the charity and donated a small share of the stolen money for the construction of a couple of playgrounds in your old schoolyard.

It's so sweet to remember own childhood at times! When you had been watching in person the result of your feats of generosity, you had almost shed a tear. They wrote about you in newspapers and presented a short interview on one of the local TV channels, and your new business skyrocketed. What wouldn't one do for the sake of the neighbor!

Now at times you publicly under the gaze of television cameras give to some unknown dunce from the crowd your new gold-plated watches – not really new, of course, but specifically purchased and worn in search of a suitable case, as if reminding these slavers that they all will not live for long. From time to time you transfer several million dollars to organized by you charities and various funds of helping the starving children of Africa so that the commoners can write about your generosity in their newspapers and money can later return to their rightful places. Sometimes you even help to organize the repair works of some dilapidated Opera house, so they could at least wash the floor and whitewash the ceilings – introduce the young generation to the culture, so to speak. And sometimes a couple of kids from a forgotten shelter of the humiliated and insulted ones gets their penny so that they don't starve to the death before your feat is imprinted in newspapers. And what wouldn't one do for the sake of his distant one, truly?

Since these times you have always remembered about charity – been sharing with the world, so to speak. Spitting out undigested excesses of your wealth. You became a very influential person – “oligarch”, as every impassable cattle usually calls you, progressive and successful ones. But whether owners of factories, newspapers, ships, and yachts really care of what all kinds of plebs dare to think about them? This generally approved charity was created specifically for plebs – let them think that they are thought about and be content with it. After all, you are certainly not going to share with them all that was acquired by overwork during a long term of theft and injustice! All in all, the charity was invented for the purpose of giving people like you the opportunity to temporarily feel much better than you actually deserve.

You have been thinking about God a lot lately. Maybe he really exists – after all, who else would help you to arrange such a grand life? Or, maybe it was not him but someone else – someone who truly desires this kind of pseudo-philanthropy and false sacrifices of human ego and selfishness? You don't know the right answer to this day after day more and more tormenting question. Yet something deep inside you moves and shakes more and more with each passing day as if in anticipation of something terrible that is approaching, something truly dreadful for the ones like you, false-gifts-bringers...

2011-09-14

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

# Majority

Step. And again. And again. In such minutes every moment becomes the eternity.

Ten steps to scaffold top. Nine. Eight. Seven.

Yes, he is both the criminal and the traitor. Yes, he would repeat the same again.

Where does the moment ends and the eternity begins? Six. Five. Four.

Where does the life of one ends, so that others can live on? Three.

No one can escape its destiny and hide from it, nowhere. Two.

And in the moment of own death it's only possible to accept it with gratitude. One.

To die and to live in the eternity. The top.

He is a traitor for one and a hero for another. And there are no intermediate stages. How much does a human's life cost and who will dare to measure it? Who will judge of the unknown destiny of which he has not the slightest idea? Who will extol you as the hero and overthrow in a chasm of damnations later? Who will make this all only because he can do no other?

The Majority.

Yes, he is the murderer – and the savior simultaneously. Angel and a demon in one person.

The life of one for the lives of many. And no other choice is possible here.

And that is why he is the criminal.

The life of the president of the home country, who has almost plunged the world into a nuclear apocalypse – it's not that much for the world to live on.

And that is why he is the hero.

The former faithful companion and the right hand, who once realized what the left hand is going to make. The one chosen the most radical way to stop the ongoing madness – for no other measures were capable to help.

And that is why he is the traitor.

The killers of killers – angels of punishment? Executioners of executioners? Criminals? No one will give him the right answer.

The military court – and the simple majority of votes deciding his destiny. Forty-nine against fifty-one.

And that is why he dies today. The Majority decided so.

Life and death... death and life. And there are no intermediate stages.

But not for the Majority.

The Top.

Here they are – below and before him. All the Consulate. One hundred of human judges. Criminals and heroes. Killers of killers. Surprisingly small and ridiculous from this Top.

Does the life end to give a way to the Eternity or death is simply her continuation? The moment has finally come to learn this.

A rope around a neck – not the most honorable of deaths. But heroes have no right to choose – as well as killers.

The sun blinding the eye... above, above... so small from this top...

A blow – and soil leaves from under feet. Let it be so. So the Majority decided. A flash of light before dimming eyes. Only an instant.

Just a single instant.

And – the Eternity.

*2010-02-08*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

# Believer

You are a faithful one, right? Say, a true Christian, strictly carrying out all Church rituals. Greatly, immensely devout person. Every week you go for a church on a prayer and a confession, and thus that soul of yours stays in a condition of the highest harmony and purity, thoughts are virtuous to the extreme degree, and deeds of fair and kind nature never cease streaming from those hands of yours. Possibly, wings are gonna to grow at your back already soon, and you will soar up to the heavens much like a divine angel, which are being painted on icons so often. You are simply magnificent. And is there is truly anyone in this world greater than you and deserving to be saved in a greater degree?

Here you are coming back from a recent confession, and your face shines in a blissful smile, for you are truthfully and without serious hesitation has told a priest of your recent sin, and he has forgiven you. Now, obviously, you have nothing more to worry about. And that sin of yours – such a trifle! – some sort of small financial swindle with the orphanage. They aren't going to receive their money – whether that such a serious trouble, you wonder? And you had to spend only one-tenth part of that fortune in order to “pay for services” to your favorite and all-forgiving priest, – and here you are, pure like a heavenly angel, – so very convenient! Having no sin you will never confess, right? Last time a rape cost, however, slightly more, – but what one won't make for the sake of his own soul, yeah?

And what magnificent furniture was there in that temple, what sort of carved icons, candlesticks, candelabrams! You were really stunned when you were beholding all this luxury. One can make anything for a true faith, right? And what sort of faith would that be without all this gold magnificence, right? True disbelief and faithlessness!

You were almost ready to enter your black BMW, conveniently parked near temple walls, when has noticed a lame beggar, hobbling to your direction with a stretched hand. He, certainly, has asked you in the name of God for money to buy some bread. “Take it and choke!” – you have muttered and thrown him a handful of coins. I have said previously that you are such a devout person for a reason – you are the very incarnation of mercy! When your car with a wild roar and having let out a cloud of smoke darted off on new affairs, this beggar was still creeping in a lap on stone blocks, continuing collecting copper coins you have thrown. How deeply have some people fallen! And you are, undoubtedly, have risen so much higher above them.

What an indescribable pleasure it is – to feel oneself great! Higher, more mature, more worthy, more just, more believing, more devout than the majority of your colleagues. That's why you come here for prayer after yet another business day so often. You ask God to save your pure soul and banish to hell the souls of all your enemies. And then you gild the hand of your favorite priest a bit. Certainly, you are not totally confident that God indeed does listen to similar prayers, and that was indeed He who have helped you make a fortune through deceit and robberies, but... whether a temple can be a place of worshipping neither the God, but his rival instead? Bless you, well, certainly no! They are investing such amounts of money into these temples for a reason, right?

Oh, what a convenient thing it is – money! A universal remedy of purchasing, even, for example, that very prayer. Indeed, you had to pay quite an impressive sum in due time, but all church’s brotherhood along with its head was praying for the peace of soul of your mother-in-law. For the soul of a woman so hated by you that must have been quite an enchanting resting in peace! Now the main thing you must do is to avoid such rest yourself.

You are beyond doubt an extremely devout personality. Always you do buy Easter cakes with eggs and comply with the Orthodox position. Drink “holy” water from the local church. Buy candles exclusively in affiliated and licensed temples. You have even joined all-church orgies a few times when parishioners together with priests were howling some hymn. And thanks to the accurate observance of a post you even lost three kilograms of body weight from those thirty which you have accumulated during the last year. Such is it, the essence of your true belief! And whether is it possible for a belief to have another essence and goal?

Take your unloved brother, for instance, – never did he visit the church and doesn’t concern himself with business at all. Works as some pity unskilled worker in buildings construction – and feels quite happy. How surprisingly little do some men need to be happy! Lives his own life along with a wife and two children in the one-room apartment. And during a meeting – just unbelievable! – each time in conversation thanks God that He has given him a lovely wife, job and two wonderful kiddies in addition. And somehow he even mentioned that he prefers not to believe, but to trust a God in his life. What a silly fanatic... extremist! Probably, that’s the main reason why you have definitely broken all relations with him a couple of years ago. You have no need for faithless religious fanatics with all their nonsenses, right?

And nonsenses happen at times – even absurd do. Recently you heard on the TV how during strong thunderstorms lightning did accurately hit the tops of several city churches, but... a mere accident, yeah? And what is a life if not a casual and accidental thing? As well as death, probably. For they certainly cannot too be in the hands of God, right?

Surely, you are the very incarnation of a devout individual, for along with other similar ones you keep parasitizing on God and believe that worshipping a golden calf is the worshipping of the One, whose hidden presence in your life you never did have a chance to feel...

2011-08-21

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

# Wolf

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Heart-breaking howl of wolves, supported by two dozens of throats, escaped into the night sky, lit with a pale moon.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Everything was mixed in this howl – pain from the losses of his companions, hatred to ruthlessly killing them hunters, a hunger that was beating with a faint echo in their stomachs...

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

There she is, the moon. A yellow circle in blackness. Attracting and frightening. Lighting the road in darkness for them. Light of night.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

He is now a part of the pack. Strong pack. They accepted him. Though he was different once. Doesn't matter when.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Tomorrow new hunting awaits. Such is the order of their leader. Attack of dwellings of the big beings, walking on two paws with their sticks, shooting with beams of light, which have turned many of his comrades into piles of ashes.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Fight for their pets, whom they were eating. Not to starve to death. Fight to the death.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Many of those, whom he knew during these three years, was already taken away by the great queen of the night, who has given them the moonlight. Death from hands of orthograde hunters. Death of the brave.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

The smell of their pets, the sound of the cartilages, torn apart by his canine teeth, blood, streaming from their wounds. Such a sweet meat. Sweet prey.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Hunger. The stomach, clenching from it in pain. Tomorrow this pain will stop. They will attack under the hood of night. Will be sated. Will then hide from hunters. Confuse traces. Tear with claws.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

He remembered that he was different once. Not one of their kind. Didn't remember when. Long ago. Not important anymore.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

He had an owner. House. Big house. The owner died. Someone another lodged in the house. Expelled him away.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

The pain of loss. He strayed on roads. On fields. Through woods. Had no more powers. Wanted to die. Hunger led him into depths. There he found the Pack. Found his brothers. Became one of them.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

He sings his praising song to the great moon and twilight of the night. They are their cover. They are their support. Will not survive without them.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Yellow eyes of the moon. Almost like their own.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

They bit hunters to death too. Those that have strayed away from their pack. Their meat was rigid. Cannot argue with hunger, though.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

When he had lived in the big house with his owner, colorful pictures came to him during nights. Cannot recall their name any longer. Too old reminiscence.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Images were strange. He had two legs instead of four in them. He was orthograde. Almost like hunters.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

It is dreadful to remember. Images. In them, he was a... person? Strange word, almost forgotten, almost lost. Striking with intolerable pain.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

The person in his night pictures was pitiful and mean. Worse than a dog. Wolf in sheep's clothing. Wolf... a strange word.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

The person deceived and betrayed others. Did foul things. Bad person. Bad!

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Bad! The person was told, that he is worse than a dog. The person only laughed, showing his golden canines with a smoking stick inside. Lots of evil came from that person.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Then the person became an inveterate drunkard. Was left alone. No longer necessary. Both he, and to him. Worse than a dog.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Strange pictures, tormenting his memory. Yet there was something in them. Like he was once another. Not even when he lived with the owner. Earlier, much earlier.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Pictures come in flashes. Bright, in his eyes. Brighter than the moon. It is terrible to recall.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

The person waited. Not here. In another place. Totally different. Waited for so long. As well as all people. But this one wasn't a man. Worse than a dog.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

The person was estimated. His way was. Unworthy.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Unworthy! Pain, pain, pain! It is terrible to remember!

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Something happened to the person. He changed. Four legs instead of two. Not worse than a dog.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

The person lost his memory. Have forgotten! No more former consciousness. Didn't deserve. Was erased.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Lead me on, great moon! Accept us in your embraces, queen night! Satisfy our hunger, soothe our pain! Let us stick our canines into hated hunters, let us get drunk from the blood of their pets!

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

There is no person any longer. Not a person, but a dog. Not a dog, but a wolf.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Bad pain. Bad memory. Bad person. Good wolf.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

People, where are you? How many of you are there? Not enough people. Too many wolves.

A-a-u-u-u-u-u!

Tomorrow they will feast on human blood, satisfy their hunger. It will be nourishing. Pictures will go away. Bad pictures.

A-a-u-u-u-u!

Then they will be followed by hunters. Terrible hunters with killing beam sticks. And they will be left with only one option. To tear them apart!

*2017-09-03*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Best*

## **You are**

You say, that God does not exist. And I tell you, that He exists no more exclusively for you.

You grieve, that He has forsaken your world long ago. And I reply, that it was you, who barricaded from Him in the smallest world of your own, which has nothing in common with the greater one.

You complain that life is cruel and unfair. And I recommend you to look at yourselves in a mirror in the upcoming morning.

You grieve of the dead ones as those lost to this world forever. And I am starting to assert that they were lost exclusively for the vanity of yours.

You curse your work, thinking of it as a routine which takes away the time of your life aimlessly. And I ask you, what will your life look like without your work on yourselves?

You despise your enemies. And I know, how they all become the stones of non-hindrance on the road of life, once you have finally grown the wings for flight.

You all thirst for love, but, finding none, are ready to jump from the rocks of broken hopes into abysses of hatred. And I desire to know the true value of such feelings.

You state that life makes no sense and holds no purpose. And I will whisper to you, that you did not even try to search.

You declare the impossibility of possible and deny incredibility of the obvious. And I see, how previously impossible becomes obvious, and incredible becomes possible.

You guess that life is inconceivable without movement. And I ask you not to confuse impulses of the soul to petty vanity.

You worry that you do not understand others. And I am interested in questioning you – “Do you even know yourselves?”

You pursue life’s success in hopes to get it in time, and are ready to walk over others heads. And I tell you that you are always late, for you have chosen the wrong road.

You feel proud that belief is not necessary to the learned. And I ask you whether you could learn, not believing in the possibility of the learned?

You speak of generosity and share pieces of stale bread, continuing to consume red caviar over both your cheeks. You speak of goodwill and draw a knife behind each other’s backs. You speak of wisdom and share thousand and one way to deceive those close to you. And I dare to believe that you will open your eyes one day and stop confusing darkness to the light.

You question, how I can state what I do not know. And I advise you to pour out ashes from bags of your knowledge.

You tell me that I repeat myself and cross spots, passed previously, again. And I will simply ask you to look up.

You will tell that it is banal. And I will continue hoping.

You will tell that you have heard and passed all this before. And with a grief in my eyes, I will watch you passing by once again...

*2010-09-17*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Best*

# Design 2.0

Dear eternal comrade Maker!

A certain representative of a long-suffering planet from the Milky Way galaxy with both simple and unobvious name “Earth” is asking you to conduct a redesign of our mortal receptacles of the eternal spirit and to perform several corrections.

You, as the Son of Man, who passed personally his perilous earthly journey as a member of our civilization, certainly know, what primary design flaws, committed by your Angels, these above-mentioned receptacles along with their spiritualizers still possess. And if the aspect of free human will lies outside the competence of these Angelic Bioengineers, the question of developing and changing bodily forms is under their direct creative control.

Respected Maker! I sincerely want to draw your attention to the following number of shortcomings inherent in the entire product line of these creations:

1. *Primates-like behavior.* Having physically descended from the apes, humans somehow surprisingly and brazenly preserved their inherent habits such as mischief, shouting, thievery, silliness, and other series of intellectual imperfections, with which they still flaunt to each other! There can be no reasonable explanation for this phenomenon – it’s quite obvious that they put themselves in the category of sapient ones far too early. Perhaps, bird-people would be a more appropriate solution, allowing with one or two strokes to solve a lot of transport problems and more efficiently use space in the lower levels of the planet’s atmosphere? In extreme cases, I hereby ask you to consider the option of cat-people – their innate cleanliness and the presence of fur cover would solve the problem of settling the territories of the far North without the necessary melting of glaciers and flooding of the land.

2. *Preservation.* The protein base chosen by your engineers is significantly inferior in terms of toughness to some materials used in creating the bodily forms of representatives of different civilizations. Is it any wonder that earthlings are trying to turn themselves into cyborgs, make all sorts of praises to silicon processors, and have already created a whole valley with the same name? You certainly know that they think of immortality only as of the unlimited duration of the existence of their external forms, and that is why they are trying to extend the duration of their existence through cybernetics? And how many exterminations of these bodily forms, including mass ones, have been made over the past centuries, it’s not for me to tell you. Perhaps, silicon-based bodies would be the golden mean between their endless desire for mutual and self-destruction, and their wish for a longer bodily life?

3. *Recovery.* The questionable toughness of our bodies is supplemented by non-obvious and limited mechanisms of recovery processes. Even lizards can grow themselves a new tail, why are we any way different? The tail is, most certainly, is still a remnant, but the skill of restoring limbs would help many of us to literally “get back on their feet”. All in all, even new teeth can grow in place of former baby ones. Given the cost of dental prosthetics, this opportunity would be truly priceless!

4. *Consumption.* The huge disparity between the consumption of the rich and the poor risks plunging our world into a new series of social disasters and civil wars. Could you please compensate for the process of hyper-consumption with bio-programs of depression and searching for the meaning of life, while simultaneously activating the processes of self-healing in the bodies of the humiliated and destitute people? All in all, we must finally understand that money doesn't bring joy and happiness!

5. *Secretion.* This is truly something inconceivable! I, most certainly, clearly understand that we have already polluted the entire Earth to upper limits with our wastes, but why do you keep constantly provoking us to keep doing this nonsense with our bodily mechanics? And I am not even talking about the sad fact that the most advanced scientific geniuses have still not discovered a way to eat at night and not getting fat! Maybe we should take some interesting ideas from the field of flora – say, photosynthesis? To reach for the light – is it not a commendable aspiration even in its bodily expression? As a last resort, I ask you to reduce the food standards required for life support, because the amount of “balloon people” has already exceeded all the limits allowed by the body's aesthetics!

6. *Reproduction.* Despite some pleasant aspect of the physical process itself, which is certainly not as delightful as spiritual enlightenment and ecstasy, the very process of finding suitable couples, carrying children, and subsequent childbirth is by no means short and painless. It is unlikely that you planned to punish the entire female race for the sins of a certain ancient Eve, so I would venture to offer that you reduce the time required for the bearing of children, as well as the pain of the childbirth process while increasing the speed of their self-evolution. And if you desire to change the process of reproduction at least for a while so that unworthy people cannot have children – they will become one of the greatest values of any society, as you wanted to be!

7. *Finalization.* As the saying goes, all our bodies return “to the ashes as they were”. Unfortunately, the very process of this return is fraught with a lot of trouble and suffering for those close to the ones who are returning to you. In some poor countries and cultural traditions, we are not even talking about ashes – dead bodies can be simply “thrown overboard” to the delight of vultures or fish. I am certain that you will agree that this is, to put it mildly, not the best way to honor the memory of a departed soul. How much more interesting it would be if, on the day of departure, our body began to gradually disappear into thin air, clearly symbolizing the illusory basis of purely materialistic views! Neighbors would always have time to say goodbye to the departing person and would not need to conduct all these enchanting fiery procedures, and the departure itself would leave behind a sweet aftertaste with notes of light sadness and the promise of a second coming. And as an additional free bonus – people would stop being afraid of ghosts! Please, consider this option, all right?

P.S. Due to emerging dangerous trends of degradation of human minds and bodies back to the level of animals, I kindly ask you to protect the intelligent representatives of our world from their rapidly becoming feral neighbors.

Everything is in your hands! Don't ever give up, please!

*2020-11-29*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

## Salary

Salary... such a sweet word! Honest payment for your work, your self-pressure, your idleness, your indifferent-sad swaying day by day through a stuffy office, your hypocrisy, your self-interest, your eye and brain-washing, your rearrangement of papers from one folder into another and hours of life, thrown into a garbage can; your suppressed, decaying, thrown out on boondocks of Universe individuality... such a bitter word! Here it is, lying before your very eyes...

Sweetly crackling recently got out from a printing house colored pieces of paper with different numbers, drawn upon them... how lovely and, apparently, innocently do they rustle, demanding your attention! There are lots of them in a short-term and so little in a long one at the same time... Here and now you accurately recalculate them all, trying not to evade even a single instance of this illusory delight, already estimating in own thoughts on what you are going to spend all these riches in the nearest future. Such is the deification and meaning of the job of a man, an embodiment of hopes and expectations of millions, now in your hands as well - crackling so impatiently-sweet, stupefying your sense of smell... You have been burning all these days in a chamber of times along with a unique possibility of self-learning, granted to you, knowingly, fastidiously and irrevocably for a reason - and have finally received a well-deserved, earned, acquired with a blood bribe! Each and every piece of it. Now you can buy much...

In this world of yours almost everything can be bought for these colorful pieces of paper, right? Things, feelings, words, honor, and conscience of men... even, probably, souls of some - from those that are purchased cheaply and by the gross. But you are most certainly not some awful demon from the underworld, yes? You will be satisfied just with things and feelings... to begin with. So let the offer forms the demand even further.

Surprising, unusual, delightful world! And why were you born in it only now - and where have you been wandering during all your last times? Oh, it matters no more from now on! Here it is, your own salary, lying absolutely-totally nearby... Oh, such a nice day it's today - one of your most awaited and expected. A true Event! And so you have already started dreaming of how you will spend fairly or not totally so earned sum... Oh, such a pleasure it is - to spend... Buying, buying, buying... consuming, consuming, consuming. Probably if you had plenty of those paper pieces, you would certainly buy the whole Universe itself... such is a pity that it's not for sale! You already know what you will buy first, you have already made a plan... the most grandiose Plan of the purchase and sale of your life. How strange is that it looks so similar to the ones of your planet's relatives... fucked stereotyped plagiarists - that's who they are! Oh, let this tiresome working day end as soon as possible for one of the reckonings with your salary to come into action.

How wise are your planet's colleagues – they have already invented a universal price-list of everything. A payment for each and every sin. Yes, that's right – for any sin ever made by them. And you are certainly not going to be original in this business, yeah? It's a pity that seasonal discounts are not yet in action, however, the prices have practically been made stable. Amazing world! And how did you even manage to survive in it without that very salary of yours? The one wishing to be on sale or to sell finds the owner or the buyer – and he finds his own... Each buys each one – except for a small group of fools, having no desire to live according to uniform private earth law. A vicious circle – but whether it was you who have created it first? You were simply born in this already built-up world of your ancestors... and what's the point to really alter it? To buy, to buy, to buy... to sell, to sell, to sell! Since the time someone has invented money, it became so simple... so naturally – as natural as you grab your long-awaited wages. And what would you cost without it... cost as a man? But what's the reason to measure your value by a different criterion when you have money on hands and in mind, and time of your life has been converted in it in advance for a lot of upcoming years... for there are plenty of things this world has to sell you! In exchange for this next salary of yours...

Have no fear, take it. You have deserved it, after all, earned, right? This money is now yours by right – sort of a universal man's measurement tool. And its amount has been growing with each passing year – a true equivalent of your market cost... and only now, having got this new salary, you feel yourself truly happy. Your heart sings in joy for you know how much do you cost – a whole heap of colored crackling pieces of paper...

2011-08-14

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

## Illusions of crowds

You like judging so greatly that it seems as if you know everything in the world around. You are so afraid of admitting own ignorance to anybody! Probably, you already possess answers to all questions of life or have you simply ceased searching for them. Oh, yes – someone else has answered for you! And thus you allowed them to decide your own destiny.

Certainly, you can console yourselves that you are neither the first nor the last ones, that there are many ones, similar to you in our distressful world. That all people at least once in a while deceive, dissemble, steal, talk scandal, envy, sneer... But if someone chooses to go and act together with the majority – whether he doesn't become its integral part, sharing a common responsibility for the choice of crowds? But it's so comfortable for many to feel themselves like a small screw, a pawn in a big crowd!

How many leaders of crowds has this world seen? All of them sank into oblivion. Yet the stream of new solvers-for-you, apparently, isn't going to run low at all. It will never extinguish until you learn to decide for yourselves, listening to a low whisper of own souls. But are people even capable to listen? You followed your leaders, destroying everything in your wake and trying to build something new on newly created ruins. You were ready to crucify others for the illusion of belief. For the sake of the next new idea, seeming so attractive to you, you destroyed thousands and thousands of innocent lives of your neighbors. Was worthwhile in your own opinions? Was it required to express internal contents of souls to understand all absurd of attempts of changing of others without changing yourselves first and foremost?

You listen to each and everybody, yourself being excluded. And even when you listen to “yourselves” – you keep hearing only an echo of decisions, imposed to you by others, but these decisions seem to you as ones coming from your own clarity of spirit... If only it was that way! For this particular reason, you continue sleeping with your eyes open widely and behold dreams filled with a dope of your endless desires of this, that, and, most certainly, that-thing-as-well. After all, your life will become so defective without all these infinite things, seizing your consciousness! And that way you gain at least a new subject for yet another conversation with your colleagues by a dream.

Until we dive in ourselves so deeply as it's even possible, having learned own spiritual nature, we won't be able to truly wake up. We will instead continue to operate and move like dummies for puppet leaders. We will keep thinking like them as if by a template, believing only in what they trust, dreaming of what it's allowed to dream. But where will such “dreams” once lead us?

You will never awaken until you are a part of a crowd. The crowd isn't capable to realize own illusions. One can fly up over the crowd, but will never creep under its feet. It's useless to ask crowds to behave reasonably. It's impractical to count on collective conscious of crowds. Crowds dissipate naturally when each and every person in them gain his own identity. Crowds of unsleeping ones do not exist at all.

The task of own awakening lies on everyone. No one else is capable to pass your own path – for that reason, it cannot be passed while you are still a part of the crowd. And you better not postpone these tasks for later. There is much less time remaining, that many of you would prefer to think.

*2012-09-05*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

## When whirlwind comes

Oh my God, that is so exciting! At the long last I have met a girl, whom I have fallen in love with. I already started to believe more and more, that this is totally impossible, that I will never find a person, close to my spirit, in this world of yours. Tens of acquaintances – and nobody, no one, who had at least close to my world outlook. It seemed, that hope had almost left my heart and, as far as I could remember, I even began to convince myself that, probably, such way of things is absolutely inevitable and I, whether I desire it or not, should better accept it and to reconcile with it as with something so much stronger than me.

Amazing, that's truly amazing – the spark of hope has practically died out... and during this very instant, when I have already almost ceased to trust in the possibility of a miracle, it has come true!

Lovely, nice, wonderful girl, surprisingly spiritually close to me. How did it happen that we have found each other at last? Just a few minutes back or forward – and we, knowing nothing about what we are creating, would, possibly, pass by, having never looked on each other. And we would never meet again that way... we would never meet for certain. And then I would definitely finally lose last bits of hope.

Oh, how much do I thank you, God, for hearing my prayers!

Today we were passing through a park, and a rain started pouring all of a sudden. We both have no umbrellas on hands so had to urgently search for some tree of impressive size to have a chance for a cover under its mighty crone. This just-in-time rain made both of us even more intimate.

While we have been waiting for it to finish, laughing at how funny we managed to wet through in the rain during our joint travels, we had the time to talk a lot. I truly wasn't mistaken – this girl had views very similar to mine or, to be more precise, she has been living by them. I had no idea how to describe that sensation which has grown in me during those fifteen-twenty minutes of our conversation. Have you ever felt sometimes that you have met your second half? That you, formally knowing each other for the shortest time span, have felt each other for a whole eternity? That a man, now standing close to you, understands you from a half-word, for so similar are your thoughts and so close are consciousnesses? If you felt this even a single time in your life, you would understand those sensations and feelings of which I speak.

And then the rain has come to an end – just as suddenly as it has begun – and we have continued our way, entering crowded city streets. We have been crossing them time and again, periodically turning back and forth – up the hill and down dale, for we had something so much more appealing – we enjoyed a company of each other.

Then I, protesting in spirit against rules of actions, imposed on me by a society, but wishing to make her a pleasant thing, invited her to a cinema – and she refused. She told that it would be much better to return to that park which has made our day, instead of sitting in a stuffy hall, watching silly comedies or bloody action movies. The girl refused a cinema. According to all that stereotypes, carefully constructed in the consciousness of men, that was... strange, to say the least. Yet it seemed to me as if I understood her deeply during those instants of time.

And then we indeed returned to that rainy park, by that time already dried up by the rising sun. We were sitting together with her on a park bench and chatting. Those were wonderful moments of time, and I still cannot forget them.

I have no will to forget three months of our dating. I cannot forget her shining smile, as well as her during these moments – full of joy and happiness. Never will I forget our first kiss. I won't cease remembering all our instants of time together with each other. For even now I dare not forget my true love. Even... now.

\* \* \*

I met the second girl purely by accident. This happened just in time when I have been dating with my Tatyana. We were wandering through a park that day – were crossing a street when she came out of nowhere.

When we have almost overtaken over each other, both Tatyana and the girl, going towards us, have smiled and approached each other with a greeting. It appeared that the girl we have was Larissa, Tanya's colleague on work.

They started chatting. I patiently awaited. Approximately ten minutes after they said goodbye to each other, and Larissa went own way. Passing us by, she glanced at me and said aloud – “And your guy is beautiful indeed...” – and Tanya answered that she's a truly happy girl for now.

This day we didn't encounter Larissa any more. And two weeks after I received I call from her on my office phone number.

\* \* \*

Still wondering, how did she manage to get my office number. But apparently, for ones such as she, there are no things that cannot be broken in her wake to a selfish goal.

Then her constant one-after-another calls started along with meetings offers. Threats were used after my tenth refusal. I don't give a shit on her threats, I love – loved? – only Tanya.

I love just Tanya, only her! Oh my God, I have no desire to cause her harm, for I do love her! When will those torments finally end?! Her! Her... only her...

Her threats were various. The last one was to “take me by force”, as she used to say. I wished her in, probably, the twentieth time to find another man who will fall in love with her and told her that there cannot be anything between me and her. Then she answered that if I am incapable to fall in love with her by the will of my own heart, then I shall do so by her own desire – and hung up.

That was the beginning of that nightmare in which I have been living till now. A month after Larissa's last call I and Tatyana have sworn. We have sworn!

Never, never, never before anything similar between us was ever imaginable – that was simply inadmissible. But the fact remains – a month later after mentioned events we have sworn. The reason was of purely of household nature, I still cannot understand how have I allowed myself such a tone? For I do love her!

That was the beginning of our constant quarrels. I have no idea what overcame me those moments – I ceased to be true self. Wild, spiteful, aggressive... and always – every time I came home from work, – I found what to punish her for!

And first she tried to go on compromises, but after numerous repeats of my attacks, she only started to cry further. Something pushed me even greater in these moments – I saw how she was crying, how she's grieved... no, how she's weak! – and thirsted to hit her even seriously! More painfully, more rigidly! So that she remember it well for the rest of her life! To let her know how's that – to contradict me!

Silly bitch! Stupid girl! Idiotic woman! How was that ever possible for me to fall in love with her?! Vainglorious nasty creature! Beast!

Oh my God, what's the bullshit I am writing now? How do I dare think that way about my... beloved girl?! Beloved...

My beloved, dear... I know that you hear me even now when we have become so distant from each other... forgive me for these lines... I had no desire... I don't know what's going on with me... feeling so hard... as if something presses on me, trying to flatten – time and again, methodically and persevering... I ceased to comprehend whether it's I supervise myself, or someone unfamiliar to me controls me at present...

Ta... ta... nya... forgive, forgive me... if... you still can.

\* \* \*

Our quarrels became the begging of the end of our relations and mine – ours? – dream. At first, I beat her with words – and then started beating with fists. And that was the last drop in a bowl of her patience. She sued for divorce – and we parted our ways.

We left each other – nay! – I have thrown away that silly woman! Yes! She made the right choice to clean wherever one's wishes! Oh my, such a mollycoddle! Gorgeous bitch!

There are women so much better than her! Indeed! Much... better.

\* \* \*

Today I am going to meet my beloved Larissa once more. How much do I miss her... No more nasty Tatyana – I desire only Larissa! I thirst for her... the desire to be with her.

Yes, yes, yes! We shall be happy together – for we do love one another!

\* \* \*

I... I... I know not... Sometimes... from time to time it seems to me, that I have no love for my Larissa... That... that it's sort of a nightmare, that... that our love never existed... Oh, how dare I doubt that? I banish thee, nasty thoughts! Certainly, I do love her!

\* \* \*

Today it was sweet... so... sweet. We loved each other... we were the one. I feel her body shyly shudders... I saw her closing the eyes in pleasure... and I blew up. We kissed and kissed each other endlessly – and couldn't help doing another... Merged into a single whole. Oh, how truly sweet that was.

So who dared to say that I and Larissa do not complement each other? We were born to be a single thing!

\* \* \*

Today Tanya came to me in my sleep. Tanya... my beloved Tanya...

Damnation! That devilish sentimentality comes again!

For a thousand times already I have come to the conclusion that my meeting with Tanya was but a monstrous mistake in my fate and I have no desire to rethink it over and over again. I love Larissa and only her.

Or... or maybe not?

\* \* \*

No! For how long must I sustain it! How many torments are still awaiting me?! When will we stop to quarrel at last?! To finally talk heart-to-heart? Why... why does something constantly pulls me to her... why, why I cannot expel these feelings... this passion and inclination?!

I write of this now only to catch myself on a thought about her again... No way!!!

\* \* \*

That's a pure nightmare, a horror, a delusion! I am being torn apart – I have no love for her, but still being invisibly pulled to her! What sort of a terrible inclination is that, when have it born?

We are totally opposite, different with her – and we do not fit each other! Why can't I help thinking about her, can't help visiting her each day after my work, cannot forget her?

Why can't I forget her as a horrific dream?!

\* \* \*

Today we quarreled once more. She said that doesn't want to behold me any longer – and turned out. Muttered something about some grandma that cheated her, having closed the door, and swore.

And then I slept on a street. She finally accepted me back after a day, having cursed for decency. Strange... am I starting to like her insults?

No, I can't bear it any longer! It all ends today. Today – or never!

\* \* \*

A headache is becoming stronger with each passing moment and this itching pain starts spreading gradually over the body. Just one thing pleases me – today all legal formalities will be settled, and at the long last we will cease to be a husband and a wife any longer.

But how am I going to live for now without her – my faithful Larissa?!

Have I truly gone mad – or does it just seem to me? Probably I am truly ill. Need to take a walk – fresh air will surely help me.

No, I definitely have no desire to live that way!

\* \* \*

A lonely man, going along the street... his eyes are slightly closed and right-hand keeps for a head. He's being swayed here and there – from apart it almost seems that he's simply yet another drunk individual. But those passers-by, who accidentally looked into these semi-covered eyes, rejected all those improper thoughts of him as another debauchee – for these eyes had practically no pupils – pupils had decreased to abnormal sizes and such a mortal melancholy lapped in them, that involuntary lookers immediately backed off.

A read traffic light – and cars begin their movement.

However, some unsteady man almost sees them not – as if he's not able to see a red light, blocking the way... Now he has almost crossed half of the roadway...

“Watch out, red light!” a shout of pedestrians reaches him, and a man starts turning to face the speaker.

Brakes, pressed against the stop. A squeal of rubber on the ground... A man starts turning towards the approaching car – and his eye pupils starts widening...

A crash.

\* \* \*

“So, what happened to your friend?”

“He died in a road accident... the car brought him down. Craniocerebral trauma and brain's hemorrhage. When he has been transported to a hospital, he was already dead.”

“I deeply regret.”

“I know. These words are unnecessary.”

“What are your thoughts on the cause of his death?”

“I cannot judge for certain. Something strange was going on with him recently – and he became beside himself. Divorced from his wife Tatyana and married Larissa. To tell the truth, I couldn’t understand his choice – they were totally different. From the time of his divorce with Tanya, he ceased to contact me anymore, despite our previous warm friendship. I still not fully understand what made him take those rash steps.”

“And how are now Tatyana and Larissa fare, do you know?”

“Tatyana married another man and moved to a different city – I know nothing of her further destiny. And as for Larissa... Larissa died. She was killed.”

The speaker sighted.

“Some maniac trapped her in a lane when she was coming back home. Raped at first, and then cut with a knife. A body was found in a cellar of one of the next building approximately a week after the events.”

“It’s all that terrible.”

“Yes, very sad indeed.”

“Still that doesn’t explain the motives of his behavior several months prior to his death.”

“Yes, it doesn’t. However,” and speaking man smiled, “I guess I have some clue.”

And having that said he took out a small pile of papers from his portfolio.

“Here, take it. This is a diary he has been writing – or at least that part which I have managed to get my hands on when a levy of execution was being performed. I didn’t look it through yet, but if you seem so interested in the question of his motives – here, take it and read, probably you’ll be able to find an answer there.”

“Yes, let me take a look at that thing.”

And the man opened the pages...

2005-01-12

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Tough one

You are the tough one – and that lies out of doubt’s borders. Dreadfully respectable type! You have achieved success in life, and now it successfully continues to support your illusion of own happiness with such degree of intensity, that you simply don’t have time for anything other except for support of own respectability in the community of ones similar to you. And they respect you, certainly, not for whom you actually are, but for all that external social attributes, with which you have painted yourself. In the company of the ones like you hypocrisy, you know, is the nature of things.

How many powers and time were spent in a struggle for that invaluable mask, how many people were smashed, how lots of beautiful feelings and words were thrown out on a wind for the sake of opportunity to overtake several others on this roundabout route which is out of sense! But for now you are cool, and it’s not subject for doubt, because all those millions who have made you their idol, can’t be all mistaken, yes? And they have already managed to stop doubting own infallibility – because, according to their opinion, the ones who have managed to be imprinted on pages of “Forbes” magazines are hardly capable of making mistakes. You, much like the comrade Lenin, have become the idol of many – you became simply intolerable. And the stream of your life didn’t take you out to a coast of serenity and boundlessness. And whether did you really desire to swim in that direction?

Power of money because of money for the sake of money not without money. Money replaced so many things in your life. You have become extremely rich and valuable person – that’s why simple human happiness was too expensive for you to afford. It, unlike you, is able to understand people and doesn’t run after to each passer if they have “Rolex” watches or “Porsche” cards at their disposal. It’s very human because it searches for humanity. It’s much like a Firebird, and one can grasp it by tail only by being simple and kind – and you have become too tough, suspicious and intolerable. Probably, it’s almost unbearable to remain as such at all times – yet by some mystical ways you have managed to achieve it still.

Probably, at least once or twice you managed to notice some kind of special people, by and away from which your highly profitable life express was carrying you time and again. These people were, according to your measures, simple poor ones – yet at the same time, they were rich with something totally different, the phenomenon of so mysterious to your nature. They were able to celebrate life in each its instant and therefore knew no such thing as grief. They were sincere – and hypocrites feared to approach them, being afraid to be disclosed at the next instant. For now, you do understand that they were rich with happiness – for there was something from the God inside them. You know, this something could belong to you as well...

You have built your castle on the false base – and now it’s being shaken by blows of conscience. But nevertheless you, apparently, don’t understand that all those common truths which have been once called as both banal and boring, even being rejected by you have been living nearby still as if invisibly marking and fixing something.

It's they, these truths, will never lose its value no matter how thick and strong the dust layer of fabrications and lies would use the ones who have still not understood that truths aren't capable to be banal.

But all of that is, apparently, not your business – for after all you move, run and rush forward by a belt road, without seeing a path. You didn't understand for the sake of what you once again – and maybe the for the last time, – have come to the planet Earth. Dreadfully respectable type!

*2013-05-24*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

# Liar

Liar.

Nay, nay, that's not you for certain. After all, you have never lied to anybody in your life, right? Well, at least a little. However, this was almost millennia ago, and, besides...

Your parents simply forced you to deceive them, for they were too severe and strict at times – and thus you lied to them to avoid the next scolding. You sincerely believed that adults are all reasonable and fair, and you should stand up to them considering a sample for imitation for yourself, so young by that time. What a great disappointment awaited you! Since the time you have become a witness of how adults, surrounding you and – even! – your own parents have been continuously lying each other in things big and small, you have ceased to consider it as something terribly vile. Has reconciled and accepted this as a sort of a reality, given to you through sensations. Indeed, people tend to be deceived by others for they are inclined to deceive them. Well, this used to happen.

Then you had to lie to contemporaries at the school of the status of your parents – otherwise series of punches and clips were waiting for you because of that individuality of yours, unduly greatly sticking out from a crowd. What a joy is that your schoolmates couldn't check out your words and thus your deceit worked well! And as for you... after all, you simply tried to protect yourself from that false world, huh? In due time you have come to the conclusion that it's far better and easier to go down the stream instead...

And then you have fallen in love with a girl. Truly, sincerely, with your entire wounded soul. You thirsted so greatly to be loved in return! To receive even a droplet of warm attitude, a particle of sympathy, a handful of understanding... She deceived you for the reason that you have deceived her – you didn't desire to destroy the previously formed myth of your origins, and she had no wish of you being aware that you are not the first one in her life... and not the last one by far. During that very moment, you felt so deeply all the nasty meaning and essence of people lying to each other. You desired to restore your relations and build them up anew, to become another man – a true, original one, instead of that invented fake individuality – yet you had no more powers to refuse your fake image. You wanted so greatly to cease lying to yourself, but...

But you had to lie once again. To deceive people and be deceived in people yourself.

You manipulated their feelings and opinions in order to get a desired and favorable result. You juggled with the facts and pitted men with each other, humbly remaining in a shadow, only to come out from it as illusionary winner afterward. You made promises and never fulfilled them. You swore time and again – yet all this became simply the next useless phrase, thrown into the air. You knew how greatly people thirst inside to believe that a flattery, wasted by you, is the way you originally feel – and you willingly used this weakness of theirs to own advantage.

You have created a grandiose myth of yourself – an image that was capable to outlive even you because it required his last owner no more and became his own master instead. So, gradually and methodically, you have become a hostage of own lies, and there were no more ways for a retreat. Or, to tell the truth, they have become too difficult for you.

A liar?

Nay, no way! That cannot be you. You have never lied to yourself about yourself, right you are? But in a world where everyone lies to everyone in things big and small, it's so hard not to become a victim of self-deception. Yet even the grandiose of lies once began with small deceptions, right... self-deceiver?

And what can be more deadly than lying to yourself?

*2011-08-16*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

# Beloved

He triumphed. He was in seventh heaven. She loves him! Loves!

He heard it from her lips, she told him that! And there was not a sign of falseness and lie, no room for deceit. He anticipated it, felt it with his very bones. He knew that she was telling the truth. Something that she was experiencing. Something that was worrying her. Something she was dreaming about. Something she told him this wonderful spring evening.

The evening which he cherished in dreams and awaited. Evening to fulfill his past dream. The evening which made him alive once again – as if to be born anew. Silent spring evening...

He was saying that he has fallen in love with her, that his heart trembles when he looks at her, admiring, that he's glad to have met her in this magnificent world. World's ornament, a pearl, a sunray.

He kept speaking and saw how a charming and mysterious smile has appeared on her face. And when he finally has stopped, he heard these words. These words! Great music, fine music, music from her heart.

"I love you. I too love you. And desire to be with you forever."

Words sounded gently and mysteriously silently – but not for him. He shouted it all loudly, having no fear or hesitation of his feeling. That way so all can hear him – to be heard by the entire world. So that the entire world can rejoice together with him.

"I love you! I do love you!"

Words soared high and widely.

That's the way it's going to be. He will sing of own love, fearing no one, feeling no hesitation for he has nothing to be afraid of. It seemed as if heavens itself have smiled during this instant of time – smiled, blessing the love.

His voice versed highly in heavens. Casual passers-by were still continuing to look back at them, singing of their love. Some of them were even smiling.

And then they have been standing together for a long time, embraced. So totally close to each other. She has become a native one to him – a woman, close to his heart and soul. She was such a one even before these words, and not just after. For he did love her and not his own love instead. He loved her and was glad to give his love to another.

And they were running forward and forward, and fresh air was blowing in their faces, and the sun was playing on them. Much like the sun, feelings of two enamored hearts were shining in their souls.

And then a late evening came. Came so extraordinary quickly. And he accompanied her to her home – and said goodbye until tomorrow. Yes, until tomorrow. Tomorrow will be a new wonderful day, and they shall meet again, as always. Two close to each other persons, two similar hearts...

They have been meeting time and again, for days and weeks. Months. And every day gave something new. Offered the joy of talking with each other without rage, anger, and offenses, with no sign of pain. Gave perception of inner depth of darling and dear one. Powers for joyful young blossoming life.

A year later they have got married and lived together for three years. Three years...

And then he received a letter from his beloved. A touching letter. A farewell letter.

\* \* \*

A man with the cheerful and kind look – the sight of young man, completely hiding from random passer-by his already elderly age – has smiled sadly and put an envelope aside. Then, seventeen years ago he has received this letter of his beloved.

A farewell letter. A letter that was full of light grief and long forgotten memoirs. He was reading through it, and tears were slowly sliding on his coarse cheeks. He was crying. These eyes, crying so seldom, were now crying nevertheless. He was remembering his former life, their love – and thus he was crying. He hasn't ceased to love her. Hasn't ceased. And that is why he was crying.

After all, he sincerely believed that they won't ever part ways. Ever. He was mistaken, cruelly mistaken... Cruelly? But can he say that he's unhappy for now? He has a wife – a wonderful and lovely woman, whom he loves as well and of whom he cares as strongly as he once did in relation to that woman. He has remarkable children, a boy, and a girl, his hope and joy – two suns, two miracles. He is happy.

It's just... simply old memoirs still chafe his mind, tormenting his soul. He can't forget the day when he has received this letter. Tears were filling his eyes that day – the same as now. And she was crying as well while writing this letter to him. They remained as they are, her tears, on sheets of this paper, which he was holding so gently and quaveringly in his hands.

What was she crying about these days? Of their parting? Of their intimate dreams of long joint life which had no chance to come true? Of their common love?

He didn't know – she gave no response. Was only crying and has sent him this letter. The letter...

Here it is before him. Semi-erased lines and words. But it didn't disturb him – he remembered it by heart. Each and every word.

Indeed, she has found another – the one whom she too loves very much and can't live. She has fallen in love with another. And does she continue loving him as well? Remembers occasionally with gratitude?

He knew no answer, once again there was no answer for yet another question. Yet he distinctly knew one thing – he has continued loving her, remembering with gratitude. He was grateful to her for all those bright minutes of life, which she has given him.

May she be happy with her new beloved, may all is going well for both of them! Yes, let her be happy! He wished her happiness from the bottom of own heart. He wished good luck for that new man as well, with whom she has been living for now. For he is a person as well and thus he deserves happiness.

Let them be happy! Let all loving ones be happy as well! Let them learn to love, demanding nothing in return. Let them learn the giving love, love like the sun.

“Yes,” he has thought, “let it be so. So be it!”

*2004-12-22*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

# Maybe

*"I have looked around me – and struck was my soul by sufferings of men..."*

*A.N. Radishchev*

This world is on the razor-edge. The break is coming very close. You are even totally incapable to foresee when and what can provoke a final chord. Yet you are so proud of yourselves, so falsely pragmatic... Do you have another home?

You have been devastating this planet for centuries, and its destruction by your joint efforts have now reached truly catastrophic scales. You are truly unaware of what you are doing. You have been given a fine, pure, perfect home, but you have transformed it into something. Yet one world is not enough for you, and thus you have started crawling in your under-space jalopies into others... Do you truly believe you will be freely allowed to raze them as well?

Behold the ones you are following. Look at the ones you are listening to. Inspect what you believe in, and your destiny will not look dreadful to you any longer. One giant "b-o-o-m!" – and everything can be started anew? But what will happen to your souls, what is awaiting them after such a chord for this world? You don't even try to reflect on that! Such a scenario for your minds is only some sort of a horror story for a certain phantasmagoric Hollywood, yes? However, at such a succession of events, you will feel fear instead of fun in reality. How far you are from an understanding of the true scales of your disaster!

Look for now at your politicians, your scientists, medics and those who call themselves no less than servants of God, bearing no right for that. And, having done that, have once courage to look inside the very depths of yourselves. For how many times have you tasted the unctuous nectar of lie, flowing from the lips of those to whom you have voluntarily given the right to dominate over yourselves? For how many times have they promised to build a Paradise on the Earth? Do you still believe that such a task is in their powers and meets their proportions?

How many wars have you waged under their command? Constantly do they call you for new destructions so that in that endless chaos can they climb on a notorious Olympus at least for an instant. Whether they are not caliphs-for-an-hour? Or do you believe that these leaders of yours should be given more time once again, so that together with their brothers-in-arms scientists can they enter a new round of races for possession of even more deadly weapons? Or perhaps you are hoping that these races will go on and on forevermore endlessly, that only possession of weapons and physical forces will be a sufficient basis for the preservation of terrestrial nations? But what is the reason to keep those that keep destroying this world particle after a particle? Or have you a guess that all the true prophets who have come to your world were speaking of some other's irrelevant fate and were teaching you of something completely abstract and thus useless?

Look now at those ones whom you are calling as scientists. With your combined efforts you have managed to turn this world into one big dump. Do you truly think that possession of technics can expiate your paralysis of spirit? Your accomplices have already invented those things which are capable to destroy all physical life on this planet. Do you desire to go further in that? You haven't enough of it? Or do you consider yourselves still traveling the divine way, more and more linking yourself with a machine and thus being gradually transformed into it? You know almost nothing of the true possibilities of spirit! And whether all these advanced achievements of science and technology have made you truly joyful and happy beings, whether they have added something to the beauty of your inner "I"? You keep collecting dust in your palms, believing it is to be some sort of a jewel, while your true jewel keeps becoming dusty inside you. Soon you will start trusting opinions of machines more than ones of your neighbors and after that even more that of your own. Then you will replace yourselves with machines-cyborgs. But whether this universe needs yet another planetary factory, producing biological robots?

Whether your medics will be capable to cure you of such a spiritual transformation, while they can't even heal your bodies? Or do you think that body and spirit are not linked together by invisible threads? Or are you hoping to find next miraculous pill from all troubles and sorrows, fading of spirit being included? But have the prophets taught you of that? And whether doctors of your desire to understand that violation of laws of spirit always goes before body illnesses? Or, perhaps, they are aware of all invisible consequences of hatred and rage? Or something about the destiny of children's souls whose bodies are suffering from "incurable" diseases, because they have chosen the path of the atonement of many from their kin? But you are so hurrying to accuse of disgrace the Highest Powers, that you don't even notice how you are dirtying the souls of your own children, thus starting slowly killing yourselves as well. No sort of pills will ever help you to purify yourselves from own-brought spiritual infection. But, maybe, suffering, you will once learn to truly love each other...

For it is the love of which all the true prophets were telling you! But whether it is the love glimmering in the hearts of those who have proclaimed themselves as their followers? Oh, if only it was that way! But a thirst for wealth and power possessed them and made their hearts stale to human suffering. Therefore, do they feast nowadays in luxury with the world being on the break, but whether it's not a feast during a plague-time? Therefore, ready they are to willingly rob the ones trusting them of their last possessions, and banish them back to God, whom they serve not. Maybe someone, banished by these servants, will once find the Maker outside of temples walls. Maybe at least some will understand that God is not living in the houses of those worshipping a mammon. Maybe they will once bring this message to others.

May you know that this world is still alive only thanking God's Greatest Favor. Only his endless love constraints that relentless stream of evil born by you, which is capable of destroying this world in a single flash of time, has found itself a way out. His hands have the God stretched over this world and carries it in them like it is a child. But some of your kind still have enough impudence to accuse him of the absence of care of your modest personalities!

Maybe, one day you will see everything clearly. Maybe, you will manage to understand and do something of vital importance in your lives. Maybe you will get rid of the illusions which have flooded your world. Maybe, you will finally fall in love with the one who has given birth to your spirit and has gifted you a wonderful home. Maybe under his care and with his great aid, you will once transform this world into a living Paradise.

Oh, how wonderful would that be!

*2012-07-27*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

## **We, cats**

We are cats, and you are people. And what is the difference between our species?

We are, for example, both soft and fluffy – and how rigid can you be?

We truly adore caressing and giving you our love. And do you love other men?

We don't ask much for ourselves – only a place for lodging for the night and a handful of food every day. And something doesn't suffice you eternally.

We trust people a priori – that's why we allow to caress and hug us to even totally unfamiliar men, even though we cannot say that each and every acquaintance meets our cat's temper.

When we are young and fed – we jump, hum and having fun. We simply truly love this life and therefore sometimes we sing from the feeling of our simple cat's happiness. And you, it seems, don't appreciate and value your life at all.

We are extremely diligent and accurate – you can just show us where our toilet is, and from that time on we will be going to piss not under ourselves, but exactly to that aforementioned place. And you have already dirtied the entire world, which is by the way common with us.

We eagerly await the return of those whom we love and welcome them with joyful cries and hum when they return every day – for that reason we climb on hands to snuggle up to them. And you meet relatives with sour expressions on your faces.

We aren't worried by the fact that you do not understand us. And you exhaust yourselves day and night, thinking that no one in this world has a desire to understand you.

At times we bite and scratch, yet this is only a pretense. To tell the truth, we are simply practicing our instincts. And you don't even need to pretend.

When necessary we firmly bear all burdens of out-of-family life as well as cold, hunger and dogs wandering in the district. And you like to give in at the first difficulties.

We never-ever bite each other to death and don't eat our own kittens. And you have filled this world with the blood of your kind.

You call us as smaller brothers, yet you forget of average and senior ones.

It's considered that we do not possess such thing as reason. And you call yourselves as reasonable ones.

We live a life which is several times shorter than one of yours but we are not frightened by that fact. And do you live at all?

We are only the cats. And are you – people?

*2012-12-11*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Recognized*

## Not them!

Disaster came – and you were standing apart. This position was convenient for its ambiguity and, as you secretly called it, flexibility. Neither cold nor hot – just as nothing.

The country was ripped apart with the greatest distemper, which has even tormented it for the duration of its entire history. A distemper behind which there was Darkness standing, and its feet have been stepping over once alive people day after day, milling characters, crashing fates. And not only bodies were swallowed inside it.

People summoned it by themselves and willingly invited to share this bloody dinner. They were ready to pay for “changes”, demanded by their hearts, with the lives of others. Why others? Certainly not with their own!

You didn’t travel in the vanguard of those, – men in black hoods with a color of blood, with hands and souls of which distemper was forged, – you were standing apart, dreaming that it won’t touch you with its bony fingers, won’t ever reach. So many think that way shortly before their own demise.

It was some sort of calming – yes, you constantly kept reading that your fellows were still perishing nearby, you saw in the glass TV box bodies of tortured and killed – ripped by a machine of death – but it, as it appeared, was so far and uncommon for your own illusionary tiny world, which you valued so much and out of which you didn’t want to crawl. Yes, others kept dying every day – but it was them, not you!

Somewhere hundreds of kilometers away bombs were falling on once peaceful cities and tanks were squashing defenders of peace, who have dared to oppose a distemper. Somewhere hundreds of kilometers away from you retaliatory groups were shooting in cold blood groups of refugees who were struggling to break through blockades. Somewhere hundreds of kilometers between you and them, hungry children were crying and old men and women were quietly sobbing. Somewhere hundreds of kilometers from here a funnel to hell opened itself. So close – and somehow so far from you at the same time...

You were away from all of this. Soared over the turmoil of life, so to speak. And over time pictures from your glass TV box ceased to frighten you any longer. They became natural.

And when the hand of dark and red color finally reached your dwelling as well, – it was too late for you already. Vanguards of darkness poured into the streets of your town, bringing their own orders, methodically and openly killing those who were still resisting – not such as you. There was certainly nothing for you to fear!

“Let them die, let them!” you have been whispering to yourself more and more often when images of surrounding cruelty made your mind scream from pain. “They are guilty, didn’t submit! Themselves, themselves! Not you, not like you! Let them all die, but you will survive – that’s all that matters!”

And when chasteners have left, having taken away with themselves wives of someone's former husbands, – a fiery tornado has fallen upon the city. And it was a blessing – to die instantly.

On a third day tornado took away you as well while you were hiding in dark city districts, marauding. Ones with torn-off hands and legs don't live for too long – not in this body, in any case.

At first, you saw this mutilated body of yours from above – in pools of blood with ones like you, thinking as “not us!”. And then suddenly as some kind of stream started whirling you, dragging away from this place to a totally different one – a dimension which you have forgotten up to this point.

And there, in this so unusual and as if the infinite world you were placed near those, – resisting ones, – whom you so recently, still possessing a body, still living in a so habitual to you world, – so furiously and cruelly hated. Hated for the feeling of own imperfection which they caused in your heart. You were placed near those the death of whom you were wishing. You were given a last chance to look upon their eyes – and they were given a chance to see ones like you. And when they – shining ones – looked at you – silently, with no hatred in their eyes, – you were forced to look away. And you had nothing to tell them during all your term.

...And then your judges came for you as well to bring there, From Where No One Has Ever Left. Many came back to Earth – yet not from there. After painfully-sadly-endless and infinite times of waiting you were dragged there.

Why it was you? Certainly not them!

2014-08-21

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

## Unofficial appeal to Americans

The time I write to you now is the time of change. Your uncompleted world domination is coming to an end. I call you “fellow” because I too am a human. I call you “sleeping” because you are living in a total Hollywood now. Nothing is real.

It all started in 1776 when thirteen Britain colonies declared them “independent” and since that day you were an extension of the imperialistic will of your former ancestors, continuing what they couldn’t do. You were only a new body for the demon. But that body is dying now.

You have spread your green dollar poison over the world, economically bounding countries of “third world” to do your bidding – yet the world starts to reject it now. You have lent “security help” over your weaker neighbors – yet the world starts to question its motives. And in cases where your bully democracy didn’t help you had no hesitation to go to war. It all started with the genocide of native inhabitants of the continent, and this idiom has long since then been your way.

You are the last remaining empire that dreams of world domination – both moral and military – with military force as a constant supporter of moral “superiority”. You may believe that marines help you spread democracy and stability over the so-unsafe world outside, but these words have only become a perfect cover for your true geopolitical goals. Russia, China and soon Iran are the only real threat that stands in your way in this great Chess Game. But that game is nearly over. And what is the cost...

You constantly search for terrorists outside, yet you are the world terrorist number one. Perfect bastards. You perform military interventions under false pretenses, you overthrow governments that are not totally loyal to you. And in cases where that cannot be done openly, you sponsor those “democratic” forces inside it, causing the havoc of revolutions. That done, you shout for all to hear about yet another victory of democratic powers that will lead the country to prosperity and make the world safer. Yet as with any outside government, your puppets always lead those countries to downfall – a necessary victim for a greater cause. But as the world is awakening itself, it is coming to see your true nature now, slowly but steadily.

Is it not terrorism to destroy millions of innocent lives in the struggle for natural resources flow control? People of Latin America and the Middle East will tell you that. Don’t worry about Osama bin Laden and the like – you will never kill him. Like an undying V. Lenin he will live on and on, never totally caught, always somewhere – somewhere your bombers should come to for the sake of security. Like a gin from the bottle from time to time, he will pop up on your TV screens, always telling about your inevitable destruction, as if you are not doing enough damage to yourself already. Such a brand. No CIA can easily part away with it.

You compare yourselves to Rome, forgetting about the fate of all similar empires. Rome has fallen. You can do no other. No president, either black or white can stop the train you are now traveling in. And you are traveling at such a speed that you do not even have a vision of where you are going.

You were too strong to be fought with militarily. But as with all major empires, the ruin came from the inside.

Such is the way of Pride. Such is the way of Greed. Such is the way of Hate. Such is the way of all self-chosen. Justice has such strange ways which cannot be foretold beforehand. Yet it exists.

From time to time you ask yourself – “Why do they hate us so?” yet you have difficulties finding the answer. “Because they can do no other,” you are told. Yet you do feel that answer lies elsewhere. But you have no willpower to stop this madness race. Decades of brainwashing will not give birth to a spark of mind. And it is so easy to extinguish that fire while it is weak... Remember: nothing is real for a sleeping one.

Will you force the driver to stop your suicidal course? I have my doubts. Yet there is hope. Until then, sleep. Let the calm dream of power cover your minds. Rest.

Justice shall be served one way or another. The Evolution demands.

*2010-10-28*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

## Unofficial appeal to book publishers

So, you must have worked well. I guess that was not easy. Most likely, you are happy with your own result. And whether it was possible to play this wondrous game better?

It's thanks to you the world has seen millions of new books and learned hundreds of thousands of new names. It's thanks to you was born such a symbolical concept as "best-seller" – something which is being sold exclusive good, bringing you well-earned profits. It's thanks to you each and every self-respected person of intelligent look could respect himself a little bit more thanks to the existence of yet another volume of yet another classic in his yet another private library which he, as it commonly goes, started and safely finished reading on a second or a third page. It's thanks to you the mankind could transform its idea of what a "real literature" must look like. And ceased to read any more thanks to your efforts as well.

You became a great wall, consisting of one thousand and one brick, connected together by a glue of a thirst of profit. You mixed together a solution of sound words of modern magazines and best-sellers and transformed literature into a business, having added spices of marketing for better taste. And then you started giving this poison to one generation after another, slowly and methodically killing a sense of beauty in them – because it isn't so really obligatory for those who will soon come to your books brothel to buy the next volume of a next author with so colorfully ornamented cover. Collectors of candy wrappers!

For you, it's not a question of desire to serve as the conductor of verbal wisdom for younger generations – oh, if only it was that way! It's simply a question of profit. Simply for that reason, you sell what is being sold better, and if it's ever necessary to sell something quicker than usual – you put a "best-seller" label on it. Nothing personal, it's just business. Nothing wise, however, as well. What a good business is that!

And what of the love, honesty, justice, after all – there is no demand for these? But how immense must be a demand for something different! For all these modern healers with fiery spheres in their hands and gilded nimbuses over their heads, promising wonders of healing in the next dozens of pages. For all this infinite stream of "fantasy", riveted day by day by newly born authors in their attempts to glorify own names – it's a pity, however, that a plot from these books becomes forgotten after a week or so, and except for a plot in a dry rest there is only a philosophy of "revenge and destroy" kind that remains. For all these political investigations, speeches, trends, brands, monographs of the ones-in-power – as if it were not politicians who have plunged this world into a chaos of wars and mutual hatred of nations! For all these new revelations of "theologians", who have transformed words of Christ and His apostles to service their self-interest, and letter after a letter, treatment after a treatment darkening and polluting their original primary meaning! And, certainly, we must not forget the books of the about-computers subject, which become outdated in a year or two – just a remarkable source of income on a prime cost to a price ratio. Truly, is it such a good saltwort? But whether there is much salt in it?

But even when someone comes to your literary magazines with a request to publish something – not for himself, without money, for those reading your papers – you prefer to keep death silence. Yes, it doesn't interest you, it's not in the format of your publishing houses. Who will ever read such things? Probably, only those who have become indifferent to ones such as you.

Well, continue to sell books with artificially created demand. Continue to promote and enslave new authors. Continue to give birth to best-sellers, moving with a mainstream of crowds. All of this won't help you any longer, not anymore. And if once for the down work of building a great cultural wall people who have flown above it won't even shake your hands – be not surprised.

2012-09-07

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

## Unofficial appeal to false judges

Pray tell, whether it's true that cultivation of honor and conscience is just not present in the curriculums of your high schools?

Pray tell, whether it's true that you are eager to become a lawyer of the Devil himself, as long as his henchmen will pay you the fee of at least thirty silver coins?

Pray tell, whether it's true that you have become both soul and conscience of the overseas nations, which are dying out, a long time ago?

Pray tell, whether it's true that you have replaced the God' Law with the law of humanity, and since then kindness and love have been trampled by the thirst of a profit and safely buried under a pile of codes and certificates?

Pray tell, whether it's true that your head is capable of containing one thousand and one more texts of the human law, and the soul has forgotten divine ones?

Pray tell, whether it's true that when defending obviously guilty one, you secretly whisper to yourselves such a prayer, "Oh my God, please forgive me!" but you are doing it so silently, being afraid to be overheard, that it's not even being heard by the God himself?

Pray tell, whether it's true that the laws, created by you, are not fit even into a thousand and one pieces of paper, and for the Divine Precepts even a single one – is just too many?

Pray tell, whether it's true that guilty ones often became innocent, and innocent once were often made guilty, thanks to your assiduous efforts?

Pray tell, whether it's true that it's possible not to know any of your laws – and to remain the righteous man, as well as it's possible to know all of them by heart – and to remain a sinner?

Pray tell, whether it's true that your laws often contradict one another, thus reflecting all inner chaos of your misunderstanding of nature of things?

Pray tell, whether it's true that your earth laws and destined to serve the interests of the ruling minority first and foremost?

Pray tell, whether it's true that you will willingly justify a criminal and punish a victim if the Nth point of Kth code orders you to do so?

Pray tell, whether it's true that you judge others based on your own temporal understanding, thus interfering with the eternal judgment of God?

Pray tell, do you realize that the day will come when God will judge even you, judges, by his fairest of laws?

*2010-12-01*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

## Unofficial appeal to politicians

*I had long suspected that dogs are much smarter than a man; I was even sure that it could speak, but that there was only some stubbornness in it. She is an extraordinary politician: she notices everything, all steps of a man.*

*N. V. Gogol "Diary of a Madman"*

I address you today, power usurpers, ones trampling people with your unjust heel, overproud ones. My word is for you, mother Earth on hundreds of pieces dismembering, wars provoking and the world with the blood of nations fertilizing, mighty ones of this world yourself considering. Word of mine is for you, politicians of this world.

From human waste emerge you upwards, not sinking, in waters of national ignorance bathing. You go to the power with methods bloody, crafty and cruel, going over the heads of people much more worthy. You have already learned slyness in that way of regression long ago, considering it a social ascension unreasonably. To deceit others, you have learned millennia ago in the way mentioned of self-interest and human excess. Tyranny and cruelty long have you accepted and adopted, a way to the tops lowest with your elbows punching. Whether much does that knowledge and skill of yours cost for the world eternal, I wonder? Thirty silver coins, and never more.

Laws to serve your self-interest you do write. Keep flaunting with imaginary bragging you, as if for world nations truly serving – but suffer those nations still under your rule. For how many times already have you been thrown from those illusory earth thrones, whether you remember? You learn nothing from faults of your forerunners! Rob you the nations entrusted to you, red caviar over both cheeks stocking. On the graves of children and old men you keep dancing, of the economic growth keep chatting simultaneously. Of the cultural revival, you keep babbling, into debauchery with fornication plunging people continuously. Not to revive countries many of your kind keep coming, but to suck last juices, regaling, instead. The deadly poison that moisture is, yet its effect is delayed for a bit. And you are not Socrates to drink that poison and not to writhe soon enough.

The once uniform world you have broken off and torn apart, human foolishness and hatred having exploited. Now you pit people of various countries, own profit from mentioned wars gathering and counting up. How to unite people are you going? On the basis of hatred and rage only. Of patriotism you talk profusely, sending men on slaughters freely and eagerly. Will you desire to go in front lines on massacres mentioned, oh peaceful ones? Terrified you'll be to do that, and that you know perfectly.

Your nations you have been considering as cattle for a long time already, and you treat people accordingly. Of the justice, you've forgotten eons ago, and further indulge you the humiliation of people. They are no more a purpose, but a mean for you instead, and you despise them for that.

Or do you guess, probably, that for long the Earth will tolerate your kind? Or do you hope, perchance, that endless with no court and punishment can you fertilize the earth with human blood in wars provoked by you?

Whether your television lies will ever be ceased? Whether the brainwashing of humans will be stopped? Whether your bravado and puffing up will finally bother you? Or have you decided that hands of yours are pure for now? How deaf to appeals of commoners you've made yourself! Whether they will listen to your opinion further? Never you do learn from the mistakes of your ancestors.

For how long are you going to emerge from chasms unknown, leading people in these abysses directly and inevitably? Till what time people of this world will you plunder, covering yourself with self-invented laws time and again? Up to what degree tears of human's grief in tubes of self-love are you planning to boil? Till what minute, hour and year your slaughter of each other will be conducted, and common men a wasted material in slaughters mentioned will be?

Inscrutable are the ways of the Maker, and whether you know of the limits of his patience? Are you not afraid to overflow once bowls of harm, caused by you? Greatly does influence of your deeds spread through countries, invisible to you. Why are you destroying yourself so imprudently? Awake from self-complacency of own ego, or too late it will be! Those stones of yours, thrown earlier, are flying back already, and if repentance is not living inside you, their speed increases with each instant of passing time. With a true service to own nations, those stones should be melted! Or have you totally forgotten the essence of service mentioned ages ago? Never it can be explained on the fingers can it be, really...

Or have you no desire to lead world nations to prosperity? Or have you no wish to unite divided countries? Or has the purse become more attractive than the life of your own spirit? Or has the voice of your conscience been silenced definitely?

Let the time judge you accordingly and people take out their decisions. And if the people, tormented by you, will stand up once and throw you away to reaches unreachable, whether there will be a place for you to run to if you have been running from yourselves for ages?

2012-09-29

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

## **Unofficial appeal to churchmen**

I address you today, the ones who deformed the words of the Son of God for own sake and from own misunderstanding. I address you today, the ones selling the God. My word is for you, unholy fathers. My word is for you, churchmen.

For a long time, many of your kind have lost the sanctity possessed by apostles of God's Son. For a long time, you lack the eagerness to purify the souls of men. For a long time, you lack the understanding of Divine laws, laws of the spiritual realm. For a long time, there is no sensation of harmony in your souls, and God does not live in your temples.

Whom do you appeal to in shouts heartrending, performing prayers mournful? Whom do you pray to, bashing with own heads painted boards, known as icons? Whose flame do you aspire to support, lighting candles in temples of yours? Can you explain, why have you started to call water sacred? For a long time, you have forgotten the true essence and meaning of things, and only the dead ritual form remained.

Do you truly think that by selling the God you serve him still? Alas, not him, not anymore.

No one gave you the right to pardon errors of human beings, releasing their sins back home into distances unknown by waving those censers of yours. That right you have misappropriated, having deformed holy texts centuries ago.

No one gave you the right to speak on behalf of God to commoners, who have trusted you. Only on your own behalf, you can do that – but will your words cost much that way around?

No one gave you the right to sell portraits of Highest Spirits, named as icons, inside your institutions that are not holy. For are these icons really necessary to a sincere believer for his heart's appeal?

No one gave you the right to replace the purifying fire of awakening spirit with wax candles of yours. For it's impossible to replace the spiritual with the material, and the second never exist without the first.

No one gave you the right to store in your temples the bones of all "sacred" people when their spirits leave the bodies for the journey to the spiritual world. For it's not the ashes and dust that are sacred, but the heat of the human's heart that is turning to God in its holy impulse.

No one gave you the right to replace the essence of spiritual purification with bathing in the waters. For it's not the water that purifies us, may it be thrice boiled in silvery tubes, but the desire of our spirit for its purification.

No one gave you the right to limit the presence of God to dome markets of yours, as churches and temples named. For the whole world is God's domain, and each of us bears his particle inside.

No one gave you the right to do all that aforementioned. It's you who have stolen it, and great is your responsibility for such thievery, for you are stealing from God, for you are deceiving the people trusting you. Like blind ones you lead them into pits of religions – but who will fall down there in the first place, I wonder?

Those in disagreement you damn and curse. Those seeking God in their hearts without your directions you call as disbelievers. Still fighting with each other over the doctrines you are, merciful ones.

Or should I remind you, perchance, how have you put witches afire previously, oh holy and just ones? Or should I remind you, perchance, how have you tortured prisoners in casemates of yours? Or should I remind you, perchance, how have you organized bloody and “sacred” crusades? Or do you think that you have changed much since then? Perhaps, now you are only not trying to kill those not consent with you on spot.

But until now you have still been fighting among yourselves on silliest occasions, oh peaceful ones. For the service of yours have become a business of yours, and no longer need you God live and just. And if God has come to all of you this very instant – what would you tell him? Will you ask him whether you have made a correct quotation of your services and whether the demon of errors has not crept into the calculations of your prices? So know, that it's the golden calf whom you have been worshipping for a long time already, for when the sanctity leaves a soul of man, self-interest takes its place soon thereafter.

Mercenary ones among false ones, and so few true ones... Mourn and cry in desperation will everyone who has dimmed the fire of his spirit under a golden stream and the voice of his soul, named as conscience, have made silent. The last chance in this life you are given to wash away your guilt with worthy affairs, with true aid to the human's soul instead of its illusion, which you have been assiduously supporting. Will you be able to use this chance to the fullest, I wonder?

2010-10-17

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

## Discordant

You are the one who stands up against. You have always been that way and plan to stay in the future.

You were against such an enormous number of things that have long ceased keeping track of them. After all, when the direction is clear, individual fragments of the path become less important, right?

You were against politicians since the moment of admission to the Institute – and, perhaps, even while staying at school. They all seemed to you as such petty and short-sighted assholes that you simply cannot tolerate them. That's why you have always so jealously watched lots of their performances, silently arguing and debating with each of them and all of them at the same time, no matter what monologue they were performing from the screen of your TV. You were a good audience.

If memory still serves you well, you were against the entire educational system since the moment of getting under its millstone. Accumulated by mankind "knowledge" always seemed to you as a heap of inconceivable stuff and totally incoherent fragments of information, reminding more the undigested remains of mind's food of the next popular scientist who dared to write yet another school textbook. The school system seemed to you as monstrous torture and mockery of healthy children's desire to run, dance, frolic and enjoy life. But you had to go to a college at all costs, so you have been obediently sitting at the school and home desks all day and night. You were a good student.

No doubt, you were against the majority of modern sculptors of the bad taste that have managed by some unthinkable way and defying all laws of human conscience and sanctity to crawl over the heads of others on self-created Olympus, having mistaken it with a swamp due to own shortsightedness. Works of many of them were considered as a bad pop not deserving anyone's attention. Maybe due to that reason you have mentioned them so often in conversations with your friends, often lamenting that art is almost killed nowadays. And what did you do in order to revive it? You were a good critic.

Yes, certainly, you have never met with incorruptible officials, because it would be so disastrous for your cherished image of a righteous discordant, mercilessly denouncing enemies and, as a matter of fact, being quite satisfied only with it. You screamed in the ears of deaf ones and wrote complaints about the blind ones for the indifferent. You cut off one head of a monster and two new immediately were taking its place. This is how it all ended time and again – the system taking over you, depleting your determination and courage. So once you finally spat on all of them from all the heavens visible – sort of a farewell curtsy in the direction of a many-headed monster. The monster only helpfully grinned with all remained heads, taking no notice. You were a fine cog in the bureaucratic machine.

You were against priests who created a fetish out of God and mercilessly traded it in their almshouses – but with what kind of good deeds, which are a manifestation of real faith, did you decorate your life and the lives of your beloved ones? Has your and their lives become a singing – not mournful ones like in Church, but a daily heartfelt one?

Is it needless to say that you were against a huge variety of other most unpleasant circumstances of reality, for the enumeration of which we have neither time nor will?

Against, against, against. This became an almost automatic reaction. You learned how to say “no” without learning how to tell “yes”. And situations for your “yes” ceased to exist in your life. They became internally unneeded.

So, unwittingly and condemning you continued to live that like-life that was so despised by you. You were cursing the darkness, not praising the light. You were denying the evil, not absorbing the good. You were destroying what was considered dirty – but did you build something pure in its place? You denied without offering anything in return.

You became the greatest of critics – one from your very sleeping soul. The curser of anything and everything, yet not the maker of better things. You stayed warm and did not become hot – hot with all of your heart. In order to grow something outside, you first need to cultivate it inside your own heart. But what could you nurture inside it? Your kindness continued to remain only the unborn potential.

It was that way before – yet your life begins now. It begins with a “yes” to the warm love in your heart. It’s your life. It’s your move, critic.

*2012-02-26*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*

# Education

Education... what a strange word! A formation of all imaginable images in human minds and souls. An ideal system of formation of the man sleeping, the man unreasonable, the man unwise, the man full of useless information. Oh, if only information could somehow compensate for the absence of reason!

You still perfectly remember those school days, right? You felt yourself such a clever one, such erudite, so understanding and so quickly learning. From the earliest age you already knew that twice two is strictly and by all means four and four only; that no more than three spatial dimensions do exist, and space is both linear and homogeneously; that a man is a successor of a monkey; that no speed is greater than the velocity of light; that modern mankind is millions of years in its age; that people don't and never did live considerably more than one century; that a man is a being with no wings and thus cannot fly; that your mother Earth is the only and unique living planet among entire boundless space... All this and so much more has been made your only truth, an axiom, a new picture of the world if you desire. But not at once... the operation lasted for many years.

All in all, you, probably, still remember, how surprising and full of great secrets the world seemed to you when you were just a small child? And every day brought with itself a new wonderful discovery. Now you have seen a pigeon, gradually pacing on a roadway and tried to pursue it, but he, certainly, has soared in time into the sky, where the way to you was closed; now you have noticed an incredibly beautiful and unforgettable flower on a lawn, which didn't have a name by that time, and have been inhaling its aroma for a while with a blissful smile on your face; now a butterfly landed directly on your nose as if you were a flower yourself; now you overheard a singing of birdies in wood branches for the first time in your life; now all of a sudden some strange drops poured down from a sky, and wetted you from feet to a head; now a sun looked out as suddenly and started shining directly in your face, as though tickling you with its rays; now you have found some sonorously ringing streamlet and began sailing self-made branches-ships; here and now you are running on a green grass, clapping and joyfully shouting in happiness...

Forget about that all! Your world is so much different now... Educated, verified, measured, lined, predictable, stable. Your world is dead now. Yes, you perfectly feel why that is so – you have become too educated. Your inner live world has been destroyed for many years...

You have been told of the “facts”, invented by your science, but they kept silence of the fact, that they completely contradict each other in their general set. You have been forced to learn by heart formulations of thousand and one “natural law”, yet they never mentioned that all these laws are in fact no more than the theories created by same scientists of sad origin, so close to the mood of yours at present.

Your silent and once quiet mind was overloaded with whole armfuls of thick textbooks with completely useless and unnecessary information, and then they made you spit it out back over and over again, like undigested remains of food... is that the way to learn the calmness of mind then?

You were tormented by endless mathematical formulas, for they asserted that mathematics is the queen of sciences, and for now you diligently day after day use received abilities for the calculation of own profit. One thousand and once more you have overheard something like “That’s impossible!” or “Stop telling us nonsense!” – and since that time they have smeared all your imagination over a wall of their own whim. Time and again did they reward you with these “terrible” points and marks, looking into your eyes with a reproach, and thus lowered your self-respect over a plinth – as if a man was unworthy of their highest attention unless he has learned to vomit back all these facts for an excellent mark!

All this did not happen at once. Injection after the injection, fact behind the fact, formula next to a formula, law following a law, but they have finally painted their own picture of a world for you to consume, which in turn has been offered to them by others before – and under the pressure of their public authority you had no more willing to refuse. Your carefree and cheerful childhood has sunk into oblivion, and the epoch of education took its place. You resisted and cried out at first, feeling how the poison of unification streams through invisible veins of your soul, you tried to escape from these tenacious paws of dead pictures of the world and imagined laws, but the system has finally prevailed nevertheless. It has formatted and educated you for its own sake, it has filled your mind with stamps and cliché, and made your soul an indifferent observer of own miniature death, it has made you almost ideal mechanism-robot, perfectly capable to carry out his “social mission”, imposed by lying politicians and mass media. Since that time you have ceased to fully feel, ceased to really rejoice, you have actually ceased to live. A false world picture has made its dirty affair, and has given you substitutes of the lost joy of innocence in turn... has given you alcohol, drugs, safe sex...

You were a unique creation of God, unrepeatable, unsurpassed, never demanding comparison with others, – but have become one of many. You have educated. Now you have an unloved monotonous work, a respectability, and that head of yours contains one thousand and one fact of what actually this world is, that particular one in which you are slowly dying for now. Yes, maybe for now you know the name of that lovely butterfly that sat down on your nose so carefree in your childhood; you remember the pronunciation of the flower, which has inspired you so greatly once; you can teach your son of the types of chemical reactions occurring on the sun that once caressed your face; and pigeons tend to cause only loathing and fear for now when they are stupidly flying over your head. You believe that you have learned this world and have nothing more to be surprised about, for there is one thousand and one answer and explanation in your possession of why something is occurring so, and not differently...

But do wonder, do ask yourself even for an instant, whether you feel yourself easier from all this gathered cargo of your illusory knowledge, whether you feel happier and more cheerful than once so long ago in a half-forgotten childhood... And if you don’t... maybe something is terribly wrong with that new picture of the world of yours?

Yes, they desired a better way. Indeed, they have themselves become victims in this system of formatting souls of humans. Truly, they had no idea what they were doing. Will you be able to break this vicious circle with your own life? And are you capable to create as a master your new – solar and bright – picture of the world?

*2011-08-24*

*Genre: Essay*

*Category: Chosen*

# One day you will awake

One day you will awake, and your former world will die for you forever. It will thaw in beams of the morning sun of new day, it will disappear like night autumn fog, it will evaporate as former tears on someone's face dry up. It will be no more – as if it has never been before.

At first, you will not feel it, you will not realize, what has changed inside you... what was so yesterday – and today became differently. But the old habitual world of yours will be no more, ever.

Something will change inside you, something so imperceptible and hidden... sleeping... in you before. Something will turn in you, at last, something so ancient as Universe itself. Something will finally manage to come to light – and you will not recognize this new world.

You will come to a window, open it and look out... you will see that rising sun which has decorated heavens... will realize how the fresh wind hammered into an open window sways your hair and tickles your face... will feel a moisture on your skin, brought by it from unknown lands... will hear, how amusingly beeping those cars of people, traveling to work, on the ground... will see, how these funny men run below, always trying to not be late somewhere... will notice, how some bird rushed through the skies just before your new window to this world... and will be so surprised, how did you not notice all of this earlier.

You will not understand at first. Since these times it would be your insoluble question – how was it possible not to feel, not to realize all this earlier... how was it possible to live almost blindly.

You just will not realize it. You will not realize, for what unknown purpose have you lived differently before, why that gamma of feelings pouring through your heart now, – why was it inaccessible to you earlier and wonderfully became accessible now... just stretch your hand.

This will become an eternal riddle of your life, which you will not want to solve – for it will not be necessary henceforth. For in these very moments your old world will be no more.

You will be unable to tell, where has this feeling of greatest respect to the world, in which you have the luck to live, and all things living, come from. You will not know where have all your constant anxieties suddenly vanished and where has your grief gone.

Where has your desire to struggle for your personal sort of justice disappeared and from where the feeling of absolute internal tranquility and acceptance of everything that occurs has come from?

Where has the feeling of own greatness has vanished and why it has been suddenly washed off by the arisen ocean of love to another?

Why don't you want to continue proving something to someone, argue with somebody, to put clever and silly arguments pro's and con's, and instead you are ready to simply look at these disputes between others and to smile to their childishness?

How, why, what for your interests, that had been so important previously, were somehow forgotten and faded, as though they never existed... for what reason did a single feeling replaced them – to always see this world as beautiful, as you see it now?

Why did other adult and serious people suddenly began to seem to you like small children, battling in own created sandboxes with each other – and sometimes even so funny and diligently throwing handfuls of sand at each other... and sometimes even wiping the face, full of tears, with their small lovely palms?

Where has all your former anger gone and why do you now greet and shake hands of your former immemorial enemies – and your soul exults, seeing, how their faces are changed when you affably smile to them and stretch your hand...?

Why do you now approach the bed where your beloved one still sleeps, what for do you sit down on the edge near him, why do you bow to him and kiss, and then lean your head to his own... where has this tenderness, overflowing you, come from?

What for, what for do you need all this? Where has your old world gone?

An instant fear will pierce you. You will be frightened by what has occurred to you. You will not know how to live on with this new feeling of yours. You will passionately want to return back, to life so habitual for you – so reasonable and logical. The mind will keep saying that you have not had time to do so many things – have not had time to build the house, to make your career, to do this, to do that, – and if you will accept your new world, you cannot do it anymore... simply will not see the point. And you will want to listen to him to strongly, for he has aided you in this life for so many times already – and you will almost make it...

But then you would suddenly remember as the sun shined on you – surprisingly beautiful for all these years, how wind pulled out your hair, how you felt an autumn moisture on your lips, how you saw a flying deciduous round dance, and how love to the world overflowed you... and you will throw away these impudent attempts of mind to spoil this beauty – for you will not want to lose it anymore.

There will be many years after – but they all will be different. Your sleepy life will come to an end – and will not be repeated anymore. You will at last manage to see this world such what it always was for those who saw – and what it became for you from now on.

Both rising and falling, both success and failure, both joy and grief will happen as usual – but all of them will be different. They all will become a reflection of the wonderful new world, to which you have once – in that memorable day – come, and in which you are living now. Just... just because something, that has been sleeping in you for so long, will once come to light. Just because one day you will awake...

2006-03-08

Genre: Essay

Category: Chosen

## Priest

Good health to all of ye, oh laymen!

Thus I have decided to address you in such a wonderful and marvelous way. For we, priests, you know, feel somewhat too boringly from time to time, that's it. You go here and there to us in the crowds on festivals and public prayers, bow us up to over legs and kiss our white hands, yet you have almost no desire even to speak with us a bit. Maybe during only a confession – but do you believe that we do thirst for yet another tiresome monologue of that repugnant acts of yours? And deeds these of yours are sometimes so horrific, that we desire to curtail ears of ours into a tubule and to furiously hush on you – yet one has to suffer, listening to all that shitty rubbish, and to sigh sadly at the end of it, having once again said that phrase intimate like a robot about the remission of sins of yours, for all has been prepaid according to the price list by you already. And thus we can do no other but to listen to all that bullshit, pretending that it interests us up to exhaustion, while feeling boredom there, in that booth confessional, especially for that purpose being dark and concealed, so that you cannot see expressions on the faces of ours.

Or, say, to all these corpses, in iron boxes by us collected and as relics by us named, you go and worship, for we once have dared to call them as sacred... you almost kiss them in these yours attacks ecstatic, and some of you even decided to speak with them, as if the dead ones could talk... and of us, you didn't remember as if we were not live at all and they were more lively than us?

And it also happens sometimes that some layman arrives, forms on public prayers on all his family up to the tenth generation having filled silently and gloomy, and throws them in hands after having paid according to the price list in a cash desk... and we have no better thing than to pray either for a health or resting in the peace of their souls in that services of ours as if we know clearly of what sort of people in mentioned in form of these – possibly, some truly disgusting ones? And so we have to pray for the ones we know nothing about for the purpose we know all about – for the sake of gold, surely... for what is the other reason to make a prayer cost money?

And even more nasty parishioners do appear from time to time – they silently enter our temple, insert bought from the third parties candles in our candlesticks and light them up... and they are doing all of this so quietly and mournfully, being afraid to utter even a single word so that a strange feeling sometimes overwhelms me that this temple is not a house of God at all, but truly resembles some sort of cellar or a cemetery... oh, horrific! Myself I am being frightened by that thought but can do nothing, for such are the orthodox canons of behaving in these churches of ours. And if someone dares to violate these rules invented by us – either dress somewhat differently or sing something strange – publicly curse him will we, the faith of ours and morals thus protecting, may he bear no doubt of that!

And so here it comes out that we, churchmen, have already become sort of robots to you, and cannot we exchange the word good and salutary with you. And if it comes out that you bear a desire to talk with us in a personal conversation – then of you, our ill ones, have we to talk entirely, edifying you constantly as necessary! Oh, what a difficult business is that – to lay out councils and spit out advice. It happens that one of you comes to one of us and, you know, starts to be grooved – here’s something is wrong in his life, there something is not right in his life once again, and thus he totally misses and lacks something based on his endless desires. And here we must sit, listening to you, or even worse standing still like a monument, inventing advice on the fly. And what advice can we lend ye, if we know both you and your situation only superficially? And thus we are forced to give you advice general, universal, by the time itself proven, – to come and visit our church once again, to buy yet another candle from our hands, to order a monthly public prayer (it’s possible to order one-time prayers as well, but no so greatly effective they are, for they are too cheap in a money equivalent, ye know). And so you can become so tired from these monologues monotonous and advice identical, that to howl on a moon you desire only, thank God that it’s invisible during the afternoon.

And after all, we too sometimes desire to express ourselves, to expose the souls of ours and torments of conscience of ours to you, brother laymen! And wanted I to confess once, but then thought that inappropriate it would be for me, almost holy one, to confess before the very same priest, realizing clearly with what attitude will he listen to these inflaming speeches of mine coldly and indifferently. And thus I have decided to expose that my soul before you without any hesitation, oh my beloved laymen, my gold-bringing lambs, my humiliated and offended. And what should I hesitate and be afraid of, you will ask me, if I am going to tell you a little bit more of myself and stop right there, never going too deep into all those unworthy nasty details? And then I will simply absolve my own sins, thus becoming pure once again... it’s that easy, after all. And I will start with my preparation for entering of a spiritual seminary. Believe me or not at all, but have truly lacked I any serious diligence from the very childhood, as well as a desire to work hard and long. Liked I greatly to sleep for twelve hours or so, and to luxuriate at the table, having stuffed my stomach with all sort of delightful delicacies. And haven’t I developed any useful abilities or skills during the time of my boyish years, cause didn’t see I any sense in such sort of things – for only one live do we live, and may a flood wash them all astray afterward!

And so, when the time has come for me to decide my future way, my father advised me to enter a spiritual seminary to become a God’s person, or so to speak. Work, he said, is not a wolf, would not howl from a grief on a moon, and besides, it’s a stable source of income, especially if at the due time one manages to become a head of own church, that’s it. Know only how to perform church services, carry out rituals, chide public prayers and talk with parishioners proforma from time to time, taking sympathizing and merciful sight. To convince before you here must I, that not so greatly did I believe in that God, the Maker of us, but whether it was truly necessary in order to execute some dumb rituals and learn several prayers by heart? Every monkey imaginable will easily handle that task mentioned!

And so, well, have I rushed into a whirlpool with all my head – it doesn't take you too much time with a desire, you know. Have educated myself, not showing my inner disbelief, and was assigned as the assistant to a prior from a local temple for my considerable successes. And successes of mine on that field were truly oh-so-great so that I couldn't help admiring myself, not to mention the attitude of my parents. Have I learned by heart somewhat about thirty prayers, had not clearly understood it's meaning, however, – but who is going to understand them if they are written in the out-of-date language, not these fanatical laymen, really? Was able I as well to find quickly quotes necessary in writings sacred, and explain effortlessly why Orthodoxy ours is so much better than all these devilish religions, these sectarians Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist homebrewed. Biographies of our sacred ones, in general, I have memorized well so that to impress people with their deeds both just and unjust, and even more to impress them with a quantity of these sacred ones canonized than with deeds of theirs, – for the more religion of yours have affirmed holy ones, the more powerful it becomes in the eyes of its followers, yeah? Well, a good priest must I have become, confessionally professional and religiously resistant.

And remember do I that once upon a time, while I was serving under the command of my brother-in-church, my prior, this hellish demon, at the back and call like a stepson, some young maiden has come to our temple. Oh, wonderful was that maiden by her look and proportion, so that I was almost losing my mind! She was about seventeen years old only, but was ruddy like the ride apple, with breast large and attracting and face of an angel. And she was speaking, as far as I could remember, that she has become orphan recently and she decided to turn to the God for the remaining lifespan, and thus she has come to us to become a nun in our humble temple. Such a silly human flesh, – I thought that time, – decided that the very God is living here with us... would He even care to listen to us, traders unscrupulous, for even in the previous time He decided to banish all us with a whip instead. But I, certainly, showed no sign, for too painfully beautiful was this young girl. And thus we, well, accepted her into our monastery by my advice to the prior. And that advice did give I with an ulterior motive, indeed – gradually, from the very first day have I started to cajole her, attaching to the sanctity of our church. And both a prayer aloud did I read to her, flaunting, and candles for her on the first floor in the evening did I lit for a bigger romanticism and tried both this and that approach, and still, I wasn't favored. Have been longing she during days and evenings in that home of ours, grieving of something personal and far, unknown to me, and by all signs was it obvious that this place was weighing her, and haven't she found here something she has been looking for, and might she leave us forever soon enough. And from desire my unfulfilled performed I the act desperate – into her private cell during the nighttime I rushed, her door with my keys having unlocked, and threw her on the bed, and jumped on her, being consumed by my burning desire. Wanted she to shout and call for help at first moments, but skillfully did I make her mouth shut with my hand, while deed of mine quickly performing. Didn't that maiden manage to make even a single peek, and ceased to resist soon enough.

And, leaving, threatened I her that would we separate her from the sacred church of ours if she decides to tell anyone of what has just taken place here, and will we scold her publicly as the one who have turned away from the God, and so greatly will we abuse and scold her, that even her parents who are resting in peace in the other world, to us unknown, will be frightened.

Reconciled this maiden and nothing did she say in reply to these threats of mine – only on the following day have we found her hung up on a linen rope in the cell. Surely, silent like a death was I and told nothing, and even if I did – would commoners twist fingers only and grin, having not believed in that. Sort of sacred we have become in the eyes of these fools, innocent. Well, and this is probably for the best. Oh, and you should know as well that the prior of our temple was soon dismissed from the service for that awful accident, due to his oversight which has occurred, so as his second hand soon I have occupied his place and have taken all his privileges... quite skillfully, right? Ways are inscrutable, or so they say.

So, I have known neither a grief, nor cares, nor need since these days. Recently I have even thought up an ingenious plan – to start producing temples inflatable, rubber. So that a procession can come into a new place to all these unholy non-Christian laymen, inflate that temple here on the spot quickly and effortlessly for a week, and then christen them all, and pray for forgiveness of their sins, and read the burial service for all, and bless all and damn everyone out there. Oh, faith our inflatable, to what ideas can a cunning human mind once come! And for that idea mentioned, should I note, by the higher church ranks I have been granted holy permission to wash cars of parishioners with a holy water for symbolic dues. Recently I even learned the art of banishing demons from these very gold-bringing parishioners, and such a simple procedure it appeared to be in practice: at first declare you someone terribly afflicted and a spawn of the devil, no less, and everyone jump then away from him in a fear and start christening, and fearing him like as if he is infected with pestilence, so that he even cannot say something in his defense, – and after that you start performing all sorts of “exorcism” rituals upon him, improvising until you get bored... both an honor and authority to your temple and a feeling of relief to the under-possessed! So that business of mine now grows and spreads, not by days, but by parishioners, as they say. Recently, for example, we have forbidden our poor sheep to bring candles along with them, period! Let them buy our ones from a local factory three times more the cost if they dare to pretend oh-so-believing. Faugh, contemptible ones!

Only one thing truly disturbs me at times, my dear laymen. Something burns down inside my breast somewhere from time to time and hurts, and aches. And so vile it becomes inside my soul, that I am almost ready to howl on a moon from that intolerable grief! Or dreams come to me of nature demonic, dreadful, so that I cannot sleep at all. But then it passes, thanks to the God! It must be the conscience, they say, yet do not believe I in the presence of it much, for what for must a man possess it while there are so many temptations lying around? Is that really a voice of our soul, given to us by God? It only disturbs me, silly one!

Poof, I guess I have become too frank to you, and have told you more than I should already. Have exposed my innards before you, so to say. And, because I have made it, I should now burn this note to ashes as soon as I calm down. For what is the reason for you to keep believing in us and us only and to read similar confessions, aye?

Definitely to the detriment of your belief in our self-chosen hierarchy would that be! So will I burn it all tomorrow, burn it I will, and dispel the ashes on the wind without hesitation. And once again will I be pure like a newborn baby, and almost holy will I be!

...Oh, but why does the conscience keep burning inside me so that I cannot sleep?

*2012-07-21*

*Genre: Short story*

*Category: Recognized*

## Real trifle

*He was destined for great deeds. But his life consisted of trifles...*

Your life is just a real trifle compared to your dreams about it, right? But whether it's your fault? Don't worry – certainly, no. You were already born as such, brought up by your parents as such, educated and forged by a society as such, and you find it fun to remain as such yourself. You bear no responsibility for anything in your life, for responsibility is such a real trifle! You have no idea, actually, why it's, your life, which has developed as so, and in no way different. Probably, such was the will of casual circumstances unknown to you, and will of yours is such a trifle in comparison with ones of them. And who are you to become the master of own fate, already written in advance by someone?

From the very birth, you have felt born for great causes. It's all the rest have been doomed by their destinies to bear their cross of petty affairs, dreams and ambitions year after a year, while you have been made for something great, something grandiose, unforgettable, unrepeatable, almost eternal... something which is not a trifle. How strange is that life hasn't given you even a single chance to show others this greatness of yours, but appeared to be some sort of a pitiful beggar, constantly asking for a handout directly before your very eyes. How petty it's from her part!

From time to time you managed to do that. Sometimes you felt with your very bones that you have finally made something important, kind, light, necessary – have helped somebody and made this world a bit kinder and warmer. But on the other hand, all these deeds of yours – they are such a true trifle compared to what you could potentially achieve. But – what a strange thing! – your life has developed exclusively on trifles. Or whether it was you demanding everything at once?

From time to time you came off second-best. Deceived and was deceived, beat and was bitten by stones, loved and hated simultaneously. Indeed, you felt how small are many of your true motives, your promptings, and aspirations – but whether had you no right for them? Besides, you still always have the time to rectify own errors... a trifle, surely, but such a pleasant one.

How petty others concerned you from time to time! And why, really, couldn't they be more magnanimous, loving and understanding in relation to you? Why did they performed ridiculous things, spoke nonsenses, and tried to deduce you from your ideal self-image periodically? Whether did you grant them the right to behave as such with you? However, life already has had the time to make a strike back to some based on their affairs... a trifle, truly, yet such a pleasant one.

If you had only known how to transform this world and make it kinder in relation to itself and to you in a single step! But one is always born as a genius, and never becomes him, right? And petty life has unfairly deprived you of the possibility to demonstrate own genius, hasn't granted the slightest chance to spread own burned wings and soar into the highest heights...

And here and now you along with your internal frenzy and external impenetrable blissful smile keep shifting day by day papers from one folder into the next, and from one table over another, calling this nonsense your job instead. You are such a big chief for now – indescribably greater than all these unworthy ones, fawning before you, who didn't manage to climb up that fake Olympus on which you have been sitting for a lot of years of own life already... a trifle, true and true, but such a pleasant one indeed!

To tell the truth, you have already started forgetting of these pink dreams of own childhood and of brave aspirations of own youth – they, probably, were too unearthly as well... too non-trifle? But, heck, what's the reason to think of that for now? You have your official wife in possession, own house and a countryside cottage in addition to a solid bank account, you have your new life. The fear of death overcomes you at times, but you promptly drive these petty and itching thoughts away.

You have been born for great deeds – but have doomed yourself to die, having still not realized your true divine potential... And, after all, what is a death for the one who has never truly lived... a real trifle, right?

*2011-08-15*

*Genre: Appeal*

*Category: Recognized*