

Igor Bondar

*Once upon a time
in
Heaven*

Stories

On the other side of the questions

Early one morning, Doctor Mike Cloud was slowly wandering along a deserted beach. There was nothing special about this walk: he wandered in the same manner every morning, always doing it slowly. This had been going on for three years. This was exactly the amount of time that has passed since Mike resettled in this beautiful deserted place.

Actually, the first time he found himself here was some ten years ago during his regular vacation. During the visit, the place greatly impressed him with its beauty, calmness and some warm silence. So, when Mike decided to quit all his businesses three years ago and live in a quiet and secluded place, the question about the choice of place did not even arise.

He bought a small plot of land on the mountain which provided a splendid view and he ordered a little house from local builders. The size of the house is exactly such that it was cozy but that possible guests passed by due to the absence of free space. After that, Mike built a little swimming pool on the site and bought a second-hand Toyota Land Cruiser all-terrain vehicle of the hundredth series and a small boat on the trailer.

Then, he started to live there. The issue of money was not very important to him because he'd managed to earn a substantial sum during his career. In addition, his share in a small company also brought good income every year. Of course, it was not a great amount of money but it was enough for a quiet, secluded life. Although, it may only seem calm to someone outside of this life.

However, the mental work within Mike did not stop during this time; the years of his previous activity left too many questions, questions that were different and very important for him. The questions begged for convincing answers for which he did not find yet, but answers for which he could not stop searching for.

* * *

Angel Gral was also walking on the sand of the beach near his earthly ward the same morning. He found his beloved Mikey pondering noisily over topics that were important to him – as he usually did. The angel listened to him, skipping some words. He skipped them because all of Mike's thoughts today, like two peas in a pod, resembled his thoughts of yesterday, and his thoughts of yesterday resembled his thoughts of the day before and so on. Nevertheless, Gral listened to him because he did kept the hope that he would someday hear some new important ways of thinking. But so far, it seems that it was only in his dreams.

Although, the main direction of Mike's thoughts was extremely important, the approach to this area itself was

unpromising because the doctor was an atheist and always based his reasoning on scientific or material worldview only. He was a doctor of psychology by training and had worked for a long time in this profession before he moved. All of Mike's knowledge was acquired through the same materialist-psychologists, but only more eminent.

However, Gral was a rare optimist. He strongly believed that the beauty of this place would breach the concrete fence of Mike's worldview, perhaps when he takes his millionth step. Then, the sunlight of true knowledge will finally be able to penetrate through him.

Ultimately, Doctor Cloud reminded Gral of a kind hippo that wanted to hide from everything under his thick skin in order to obtain happiness and calmness, presumably. The angel smiled. Well, there was a chance for him to be calm but, as for happiness, it was absolutely impossible. Gral completely understood that only love, kindness and care for others could bring happiness to a person, and without all these things, the limit of a person's emotionality will only always remain calmness. However, it is quite fragile. The first person who starts to annoy one with his 'stupid' worldview or habits will destroy his calmness, like it was, for example, with Mike's wife Elizabeth.

* * *

At last, Mike arrived at the final stop on the beach where he loved to rest. He had a little folding chair hidden in the sand dune

there. The doctor searched for it but found it in a new location, three meters from the tree under which he had left it. This was not the first time this has happened. Mike could not explain the phenomenon of how his chair was in a new place every time.

He thought of various reasons why this might have happened. The first time it happened, the doctor suspected that perhaps he had bad memory so he began to mark the place where he leaves his chair. He soon realized that it had nothing to do with his memory; indeed, the location of his chair was always different upon subsequent arrivals.

Then, Mike decided that it was some local animals that dragged and dropped his chair for some reason. So, he tied the chair to a tree on his visits. However, he would find the little chair in a new place again. Animals could not have done that.

Mike was now almost sure that it was a prankster or a beautiful she-prankster – oh, how he hoped deeply in his heart – who shifted his chair. Till now, the doctor has not yet discovered who the prankster is nor seen his or her footprints on the sand. Mike has not been able to come up with any other explanations.

Mike, who had met so many different people during his long period of practicing psychology, tried not to think about this too much. At the present moment, he took his chair, placed it near the edge of the water, and sat comfortably taking a thermos of aromatic coffee out of his bag. Being quite calm today, the ocean started to roll, wave after wave onto his legs.

He immersed himself into his reflections. Since early childhood, he had been interested in human psychology,

especially the reasons behind humans' various deeds and emotions. He found this area of study very exciting and useful. The doctor had been reading the works of different philosophers and well-known psychologists since he was fifteen. Many of the teachings resonated with his heart, and some of them he did not accept easily.

Later, when it was time to choose a profession, he applied to the Faculty of Psychology at a university without hesitation. During his study, he extended his knowledge significantly and, at the same time, was acquainted with the main religions and worldviews of people on earth.

At university, he met a lot of cognitive things too. Although in practical terms, he preferred world-renowned psychologists. His attitude to religion was very skeptical. He once heard a phrase that he liked a lot: 'Faith is always violence against the mind'. Mike adhered this position throughout his life. He explained faith to be laziness and the reluctance to investigate and find the right laws. The doctor also helped his patients strictly within the frameworks of his acquired knowledge.

However after fifteen years of his work, the system in which he had believed all his life suddenly began to develop errors. Of course, there were some separate 'drop-out' cases before but the doctor considered them only 'exceptions that confirm the rule'. However, this time, everything was more serious. Events that were difficult to explain happened to three authors of best-selling books in the psychological field – the materials that he was largely guided by – almost in a row.

The professor who created a whole system about how to bring children up properly was suddenly given away to a nursing home at old age by his own children. Another famous scientist-psychologist who was studying the issues of strengthening families suddenly divorced his wife with a bang and, as it became known later, the details were really ugly. One more similar story happened to a well-known psychologist who had given recommendations for obtaining wealth. He went broke completely.

In addition to this all, there was the deterioration between Mike and his wife with whom he had lived for almost twenty years. As a result of all these events, the doctor, who was accustomed to estimate all facts honestly, realized that some elements of the science of psychology to which he had previously firmly believed in seemed imperfect. Following the desire of his soul to sort things out, he decided to withdraw from his work for a while.

* * *

Angel Gral was sitting near Mike sometimes looking at the sea and sometimes at his ward.

‘Well, my dear,’ the most gentle voice in the world spoke, ‘our Mike still has no progress?’

‘Good afternoon Father,’ the angel rose up from the sand with a smile, ‘well, I am waiting here, but still there is nothing reassuring’.

‘Oh, our little hippo has thick skin’.

‘Yeah, even the shifting of the chair does not make him think in the right direction. He starts to think about a mysterious blonde’.

The angel and Father laughed cheerfully.

‘Well, my dear, it seems that the time has come to help you a little bit,’ Father replied, ‘of course, I much prefer it when people correctly understand themselves with the help of their own hearts, but sometimes there are kind but very stubborn people like Mike. To help such people is necessary sometimes. Listen, here is what we are going to do...’

* * *

The next day, Mike found his folding chair in a new place again. Although this time, there was a little violet flower stuck in it.

‘Oh, this is something new,’ Mike chuckled and became entrenched in his mental version of the beautiful and mysterious blonde.

After that, he unfolded and sat his chair near the ocean, got his thermos with coffee out and sat down, taking a first sip.

‘I wonder,’ he thought, ‘will I ever meet the one who always shifts my chair? It would be interesting to ask him or her a couple of questions.’

‘Ask,’ he suddenly heard a distinct voice beside him say.

Mike choked and looked around in alarm. There was no one there. The doctor got even more frightened. He knew better than many people what hearing voices meant. To assure himself that he was sane, he got to his feet and walked around the sand dune. There was no one there. Michael returned to his chair, reflecting.

‘May be there wasn’t any voice?,’ he finally thought with hope.

‘Yep,’ he heard the same voice again. ‘There wasn’t any voice and there wasn’t a flower in your chair’.

Mike shuddered again and looked around. There still was no one near.

‘What the hell is going on here?,’ he muttered aloud in confusion.

‘No, my friend, hell has nothing to do with it,’ the voice was cheerful this time.

It was strange but after such a funny response, Mike suddenly felt calmer. Of course, he understood that he was facing something real and very unusual, and the fear was fighting the scientist’s curiosity with the same force.

‘Who are you?,’ he finally decided to ask.

‘I don’t even know what to answer you, my dear,’ Mike heard the cheerful voice speak again, ‘if I tell you that I am your angel, you will not believe me, and if I say something else, I will lie. I can’t lie. So, maybe you should answer your question yourself, Mikey, huh?.’

‘Angel? What angel?’, the doctor asked incredulously.

‘That is what I said!’, he heard a thoughtful reply.

Mike fell silent for a few minutes, thinking.

‘Can I take a look at you? Well, if you are an angel indeed,’ he finally spoke with interest again.

‘No, Mikey, people can’t see angels on earth.’

‘But they can’t hear them as well,’ Mike reasoned, ‘but I can hear you right now.’

The angel laughed aloud.

‘You are right. But in this case, Father took pity on you because He really wants you to move forward in your reflections.’

‘And this Father can’t take a little more pity and reveal you to me?’, continued the restless doctor.

This time, he heard two laughs of different timbre.

‘Okay,’ the angel said after a while, ‘look underfoot.’

Mike looked down on the sand from which the wave had just gone. The sand was very wet and images as good as a mirror appeared. The doctor saw a reflection of himself and a snow-

white creature with wings next to him in the mirror. Mike was amazed.

‘Wow!,’ he finally said in surprise, ‘it is really an angel... and such a beautiful one!.’

‘Thank you. You are not bad too,’ a resonant, merry voice answered in response.

Meanwhile, the sand dried up and the image disappeared. Mike, being very deep in thought, slowly returned to his seat and poured himself a cup of coffee.

‘You know that I do not really believe in all that,’ he said slowly, ‘but I can hear you and even saw you. This is the fact. If all of this is true, Angel, why did you decide to communicate with me?’

‘It will not be easy for you to understand why, Mikey.’ He heard a more serious voice. ‘Right now you are living alone, almost hiding from everyone. But you can believe me that you have friends who love you a lot and take care of you. In all your life, what is more. And this is a good enough reason for me to talk to you.’

‘Do you love me?,’ he asked incredulously, ‘and can I ask for what reason?’

‘You do not have children, Mikey, so it is difficult for you to understand me fully,’ he heard an answer, ‘children are often loved not for something. Well, and you are also honest, kind, purposeful, romantic and dreamy.’

Mike smiled surprisingly.

‘These qualities are important for somebody?’

‘Very important!,’ the angel answered, ‘for your Father, me, and all the bright angels in the world in which you do not believe yet.’

‘Oh,’ Mike muttered back, ‘it seems that today, I need something more serious than coffee.’

‘Well, you have something in the top drawer behind the box of chocolate,’ he heard a hint.

‘Do you know where and what lies in my house?,’ he asked in surprise.

‘Yep! And I even often help you to remember things. Mike, I am your angel! I know everything. Sometimes even better than you do,’ he heard the cheerful voice again.

‘Really?,’ Mike asked in a doubtful tone, then quickly added, ‘then where is my...’

‘In the garage on the third shelf next to the drill’, he heard an instant reply.

‘Hey, wait. I did not even have time to finish what I meant to say,’ Mike said in surprise.

‘Exactly! I can hear your thoughts,’ the angel spoke calmly, ‘that is why it is not necessary for you to even talk out loud to me.’

Mike fell silent in surprise for a while.

‘Listen, angel,’ he said with a hint of doubt, ‘maybe I am losing my mind? Talking to someone, laughing with someone, seeing someone on the sand.’

‘Hmm, it is logical, but frankly it is probably better to lose the mind, like you have, right now.’

Mike laughed for a whole minute at this funny philosophical answer.

‘Yes, I’ve heard a lot about hearing different voices, but I have never heard about cheerful voices with good sense of humor and philosophical ideas,’ he finally said catching his breath. ‘Ok, angel. I give up, I believe in you. By the way, do you have a name?’

‘Gral,’ the heavenly man smiled with relief and joy. ‘However, Mikey, now it is better for us to take a break so that you can think about everything’.

* * *

The next day, Mike was walking to the end of the beach, to the same spot where he liked to sit with a cup of coffee. However today, he was very impatient. Having reached the area, he headed to the sand dune for his chair but soon whistled in surprise. His chair was in the place he’d placed it the day before – for the first time in a long time. The doctor looked around.

‘Gral, are you here now?’

‘Of course,’ he heard a familiar voice, ‘I am always nearby’.

‘Good morning, angel,’ Mike smiled, ‘why have you not shifted my chair today?’

‘Hello, Mikey,’ a cheerful voice reached his ears, ‘why would I do that? I only shifted it in order to make you believe that there is something more than just science in this world. Now you believe it and there is no sense in changing the location of your stool anymore. I am not a wrecker, Mike, but an angel who helps you understand important things.’

The doctor laughed gaily.

‘Actually, I did not think it was a wrecker. I thought it was a beautiful blonde playing with me.’

‘Yeah, two beautiful blondes. One shifts your chair on the odd-numbered days and another one on the even-numbered days.’

Mike rolled with a laugh.

‘You are funny, Gral!’

‘A little bit,’ he heard a response.

After a while, Mike placed a chair on the sand, poured himself a coffee and looked at the sea.

‘You know, Angel, I am very happy that you emerged in my life. My life now is more cheerful and joyful with you.’

‘I am glad too, but I could have emerged in your life much earlier if you had believed in God and the angels,’ said Gral philosophically.

Mike took a couple of sips.

‘Listen Gral. Can you answer some questions concerning philosophy?,’ the doctor suddenly asked with interest, ‘because I am trying to figure something out’.

‘Of course, I can answer many of your questions,’ the angel said modestly, ‘but the question is, will you accept my answers’.

‘I don’t know yet, I must hear them first,’ the doctor said honestly and continued, ‘so, you surely know why I abandoned all my businesses. Tell me please, why are there so many contradictions in psychology?’

‘It will not be the shortest answer, Mikey.’

‘I have been searching for the answer for three years now so I have time’, Mike smiled.

‘Okay, listen then. There is only one Creator of all the bodies and souls in this world – yours, mine and all the others living on the earth and beyond – and this Creator is God.’

The doctor smiled so widely that the angel paused his speech.

‘Why are you smiling?,’ he asked the doctor in surprise.

‘Oh, I am sorry, Gral. I just caught myself thinking that a couple of days ago, I would have run far away if I heard a speech like this one.’

‘You can do it right now.’

‘Er, no!,’ the doctor shook his head negatively, ‘now I am really curious to hear everything’.

‘Ok, then let’s continue. So, like any creator, only God knows the structure of all his creatures exactly and accurately. That means that He knows the reasons for their illnesses and recovery and the causes of happiness and unhappiness. Do you understand this logic?’

‘Well, more or less, I think.’ Mike replied thoughtfully.

‘Then let’s go further. God has never hidden the rules of happiness from His children. Two thousand years ago, He gave them to people through His Son in the form of commandments. Therefore, those psychologists, who in their teaching are closer to the words of the Lord do their businesses more successfully, and with those who step away from them, all sorts of contradictory things start to happen. Instead of healing souls, they often start to nurture false views, selfishness and other things inside of them.’

‘Selfishness?’, Mike asked surprisingly.

‘Of course,’ the angel answered, ‘if a person cannot self-criticize, they will always blame other people. What is that if not selfishness?’

‘I guess I agree with that,’ Mike nodded, ‘and is it possible to understand through some external sign which direction the person goes in his development?’

‘Of course it is. If the person becomes kind, honest, forgiving, and able to perceive self-criticism, then his development is in the right direction. And then, after a time he will come to our world. If he often condemns, deceives, gets irritated, practically does not listen to anyone, then he definitely goes in a different direction.

The outcome of such movement is usually selfishness, depression and so on’.

‘What an interesting approach you have,’ Mike said, reflecting, ‘and what is depression, in your opinion?’

‘Well, a person that is depressed can figuratively be compared to a computer that has picked up viruses. They always ‘crash’ and barely work. The ‘viruses’ in our case are bad deeds, condemnation, lies and insults of a person’.

‘An interesting comparison. I have never heard that perspective before.’

‘You just have never read the words of the creator of mankind before, Mike. That is why you have never heard of it,’ Gral commented.

‘What’s true is true,’ replied the doctor.

‘And as for the words of many people-psychologists, who, by the way, usually end up living their lives in ways that oppose their teachings – you have read about almost all of them,’ Gral said sadly, ‘but these are people’s words. Erroneous views and controversial results are often behind their teachings. And as for God, He has got thousands of proofs of His truth in the form of different miracles as each miracle is a dominance of God against earthly laws, and no one else can do this but only the creator of this world.’

‘Thousands?’

‘Well, yes. Dozens of large-scale miracles in Ancient Israel, hundreds, connected to Jesus Christ, and thousands more miracles

from His followers, the saints. There were more than three thousands saints.'

'Hmm, that's a lot, and is there information somewhere about this?'

'Of course, it is available to everyone. You have just never even looked in this direction.'

Mike fell silent in surprise for a few minutes. Then he looked up again.

'And can these 'viruses' be somehow removed from this person. For example, you can install anti-virus on your computer. So what is the 'anti-virus' for a person?'

'A critical look at oneself and a forgiving one at others,' the angel said briefly.

'Is that all?' the Doctor asked surprisingly.

'That is the most important,' Gral answered, 'but in fact, it is not that easy to do at all. Try to live at least a day this way and you will see that it requires a lot of effort.'

Mike became thoughtful.

'So, do you want to say that if I forgive everyone and be critical of myself, I will be happier?'

'Much happier.'

'Unexpected.' Mike muttered, thinking.

‘And one more thing. You should really forgive people, Mike,’ the angel added, ‘so your attitude towards a person again must become kind as it was before.’

‘Oh, and I was sure that we helped people by giving them a voice, calming them in various ways and sometimes prescribing pills.’

‘Then the number of depressions would not grow that rapidly, Mike. A soul is an incredibly difficult organ and it can’t be healed with pills. They can only take the heartache away for some time, but it is not the way.’

‘But a calm person is better than a restless one, Gral?’

‘I will try to answer you in a language that is understandable for you. You have a car, Mike. If there is something wrong with it, for example, say the warning lights on the panel immediately lights up. To repair the damage, you will need to eliminate the breakdown itself instead of extinguishing the lights on the panel, right?’

‘Right, so what are you getting at?’

‘The discomfort in the soul of a person is also a kind of a warning light from God. It nudges one when he does or thinks wrongly in his life. The correct way to really help such a soul, therefore, is through reflections on the causes of unhappiness and a search for the solution. The outcome is that such person discovers the correct medicine from the Creator - the understanding of one’s – not someone else’s – mistakes, and to forgive others, to be honest in everything always. Is it clear?’

‘Quite clear and very figurative,’ the doctor smiled.

‘By the way, I can tell you that there are quite a lot of psychologists in the world who intuitively or practically came to similar conclusions themselves.’

The angel went silent. Mike also stopped talking with him for a long while.

‘Oh, Gral, you have given me serious information to reflect on. It seems that I will have to puzzle over it for a long time,’ he said finally.

‘Puzzle over, my dear. But now, you will puzzle over it in the right direction’.

Mike nodded absently in response and immersed himself deeply in thoughts again.

* * *

The next day, doctor Cloud did not go to the end of the beach as he usually did, and he did not go there the next day too. These days were spent reflecting on what he had heard, as well as surfing the internet for further information.

Also during this time, he made several calls, one to his wife. Their conversation lasted for almost two hours. Mike did not know what kind of relationship they were going to have again but he felt warmth and comfort in his soul.

Finally, on the third day he got out of his house and went for a walk to the end of the beach. Having reached the place, he immediately spoke.

‘Good morning, angel. I have not been here for a long time.’

However, this time nobody answered him. Mike was surprised and repeated his greeting several seconds later. Again, silence was his answer. The doctor headed for his chair on the dune, reflecting. Having reached it, he suddenly realized that the chair had been placed in a new place again.

Mike did not understand it. He looked around and suddenly saw a clear inscription on the sand of closest dune’s slope. It read:

‘Everything is right, my dear Mike, but you have to continue on your own. I will always be with you.’

Mike smiled broadly and stepped toward the dune. Suddenly, the sand from the top fell apart until there was nothing left from the text.

‘Okay, my kind angel, I understand everything,’ the doctor said warmly, ‘thank you and your Father a lot for such a big help. I will try really hard not to get lost.’

After that, Mike took his chair and went to the water’s edge. On the way, he stopped and gaily looked at the sky.

‘Angel! If the chair moves along the dune again, can I think that it is the prank of a beautiful blonde?,’ he asked with a smile.

Then, he suddenly heard two cheerful laughs in response.

Near the lake

This day seemed not to be the luckiest one in the Andrew's life. It all started in the morning when he approached the car and suddenly realized that he had forgotten his keys to it. He had to return home for keys and only after that, he started the engine of his favorite Toyota Prado.

There was everything he needed for his two-day rest near the lake in the trunk of the car. It contained a tent, an inflatable boat, a small motor to it, a fishing pole. A bag full of delicious sandwiches was also there, of course. Andrew liked to go to a little-known water area for a weekend sometimes. His reliable cross-country vehicle enabled him to approach the shore of almost any river or lake.

The advantage of such a rest was that he could enjoy the nature in this case without crowds of tourists around. Andrew had already worked as a sales manager for many years in a large company. So, it was more than enough of communication for him with many of dozens of people during the working week.

Fellow googled the coordinates of a new lake which he had recently found and rode into the street. A familiar woman's voice became telling him the route as usual.

Andrew revealed the next trouble after two hundred kilometers since the start. His smartphone started to require politely the connection to recharger. Andrew put his hands into the box where he had a cord and, suddenly, after a few seconds he realized with horror that it was out of its usual place. Considering the fact that

there were about fifty kilometers left to the wild lake, this news did not rejoice him greatly.

Andrew stopped by the side of the road and carefully went through the whole car, searching for the cord. It was nowhere to be found. Guy sat down on the trunk lid, reflecting, and poured himself a cup of coffee. The places in this region were quite deserted and there were absolutely no chances to find a shop with cords in here. Andrew started to sort through the different options in his head.

The power of smartphone was enough for it to work the next fifteen-twenty minutes. Obviously, it wasn't enough to reach the place. Suddenly the guy came up with an interesting idea to copy the plan of this area from the phone to a paper and try to get to the lake using it. He smiled happily to this good thought and quickly sketched a map on the sheet.

Then Andrew immediately took the wheel and drove off. He had to try to drive as far as possible, using the guidance of a working yet smartphone. Soon he turned onto a large unpaved road, and after that onto another, less noticeable one. After the four minutes, Andrew was sadly watching the screen of his faithful friend and helper switched off.

Fellow signed and stopped car at the nearest glade. He decided to have a bite and drink a cup of hot tea. The delicious food gave him optimism quickly and Andrew put his handmade card on the passenger seat more confident. After that, he continued the movement along a narrow forest road.

There was only one turn to the right in his plan in the end of which the lake was supposed to be located. After a couple of kilometers, Andrew saw a small exit from the road indeed and turned there confidently. However, this road started to turn not

right, as it was pointed in the plan, but left and ended up with a meadow soon.

The guy scratched his head in surprise. It was quite obviously, that it was not an exit from the Google but another one. Soon, Andrew returned to the old road and kept on driving along it. Soon he saw another turn to the right. This time Andrew decided not to turn off on it but drive a little bit further ahead. For the next three kilometers, he met two new more turns to the right after which the road ended. Andrew stopped. There was only one turn that was shown on his Google Maps.

‘And which one should I turn to?’ thought Andrew.

Having reflected a little, he decided to turn to the most traveled of these roads. The last exit seemed to be the one. Andrew turned the car, reached that exit and turned the wheel.

‘Eventually,’ he reflected ‘since this road is more popular then I have more chances to meet people here. And those should have phones that will tell me the right direction’.

* * *

‘The new side road was not that short. Andrew drove carefully, attentively looking ahead. It was quite obviously that this exit was used although not very often. After one more turn Andrew suddenly got to a big green meadow. He stopped.

On the right side from the road, there was a beautiful log house behind a small fence. He literally drowned in the vivid greenery that grew around it. There was a small forest lake behind the house. Apparently, it was namely the lake, which he drove to. The

guy sighed with a relief and, having parked the car near the fence, got out of it. The joyful twitter of birds greeted him affably.

Andrew looked around: there were no other buildings in this place. Obviously, the owners of this house liked solitude. Having stretched his legs a little that fell asleep because of a long road, the fellow headed to the gate. He did not find the bell near it, so Andrew decided to pay attention with his voice.

‘Hey, owners! Is anyone home?’ he shouted.

He heard a door slammed inside and a man appeared on the porch a few seconds later.

‘Yes, there is.’ the stranger said with a smile, went down the stairs and headed to the gate.

The owner of the house turned out to be an elderly man of about sixty years with a big beard and kind look.

‘Sorry me, please’ Andrew pronounced with a guilty smile, ‘my phone died and it seems that I am lost a little’.

‘It happens’, the owner of the house commented philosophically and, having opened the gate, outstretched his hand to the guest affably, ‘my name is Nicholas’.

‘Nice to meet you’, the guy replied to the handshake with a broad smile, ‘and my name is Andrew’.

‘Well, get into the house, Andrew’, said Nicholas, ‘let’s drink tea or coffee and at the same time you will tell me how I can help you.’

The fellow nodded in agreement and followed Nicholas along a beautiful path. Then he went up the stairs and entered the house. He crossed the threshold and looked around with interest. It was very light and cozy inside the house. The room was quite large.

Shelves with books occupied almost the entire far wall. Near them, there was an armchair and coffee table with a candle. There was a real stone stove on the other wall, which Andrew had seen only in pictures before. There was a cupboard with dishes behind the stove. A large sofa was placed near the other wall over which there were some icons. In the fourth and the last wall, two doors were visible. It seems they lead to other rooms of the house. In the middle of this room near the stove two chairs and a wooden table was located.

‘Well, come in and get comfortable’, said Nicholas, ‘I have just boiled the kettle. Do you want tea or coffee?’

‘Coffee if it is possible’, Andrew smiled.

After a while, they both drank a fragrant drink.

‘So, Andrew, how can I help you?’ the owner of the house asked the fellow.

‘Well, I don’t know’, Andrew said with a little of doubt, ‘if only you accidentally have a cord to my phone model. The rest was somehow decided - I found the lake and I will definitely stay here.’

The guy took the last model of a popular smartphone out of his jeans pocket and showed it to Nicholas. He smiled embarrassed.

‘I am afraid, young man, I won’t help you much in the matter of electronics. I don’t have a phone’.

‘You don’t have a phone?’ Andrew was sincerely surprised.

‘That happens sometimes’, an elderly man laughed, ‘“I do not even have electricity here. Although I have a small generator in the shed. Sometimes I need it to work with some of my tools.’

‘And what about TV or computer?’ the guy asked again.

‘I don’t have them either’, Nicolas smiled and explained, having saw the guest’s slightly embarrassed look, ‘No, it’s not about money. I just don’t need this all’.

Andrew fell silent in surprise for a several minutes.

‘Isn’t it boring to live in such a way?’ he finally asked Nicholas.

‘Boring?’ the question had surprised sincerely the old man. ‘Of course, no. I have dozens of interesting deeds and activities. Besides, I have a lot of good books, wonderful nature and much more’.

‘Really?’ Andrew looked at the owner with an interest. ‘But it would be even more fun with TV, computer and phone’.

‘Well, I don’t think so. All these electronic innovations are only few dozen years old. And before that, mankind lived happily and did not get bored without them several thousand of years’, Nicolas smiled and nodded his head toward bookshelf, ‘Look, all these books were mostly written before electronics emerged in people’s life. And the generally describe their times. Find at least one boring book among them. So, we may not be bored without electronics.’

A guy was reflecting on what he heard for a several minutes, then he stood up and approached the bookshelves. His glance slid along the names and surnames of the authors on the roots: Mark Twain, Dumas, Pushkin, Jules Verne, Conan Doyle. Somewhere deep in the memory, some of these names caused a vague response. Andrew thoughtfully turned to Nicholas.

‘So, you want to say that there are no boring books here at all?’

‘No’, replied the owner of the house, ‘If you want to, you may take them and read yourself.’

Andrew returned to the armchair.

‘Strangely, how is it possible to live now without computer and TV?’ he looked at Nicholas with interest. ‘And if you need to choose and buy something, for example? Now all these can be done in a couple minutes and know in advance about usefulness of this or that product. And there were no information like that before.’

‘Nevertheless, people lived then as well and believe me they were just as happy as you are now’, the elderly man smiled in response, ‘you just mix up the notion of comfort and happiness. Comfort always changes for people indeed. And as for reasons for happiness and unhappiness, they do not depend on it.’

‘I did not quite understand you,’ Andrew shook his head.

‘Well, for example, two thousand years ago grandfathers taught their grandchildren to choose donkeys by the shape of the ears. And everyone was very happy when they succeed’, Nicholas took a sip of his tea with the smile and continued cheerfully, ‘And in a hundred years people will receive all the information through some shades of holograms. We, with our contemporary technologies will seem to them like “dinosaurs”. It’s all relative in this world, Andrew. The capabilities of person always used to change and will always change. However, the reasons of his happiness are unchanged in their essence. They do not depend on the capabilities.’

The guy looked thoughtfully at the owner of the house and tried to comprehend what he had heard.

‘It is difficult for me to understand’, he mumbled honestly.

‘Don’t worry. You will overcome this after some time’, Nicholas smiled confidently, ‘there is something real in you. It is not for nothing that you often go out into nature.’

Andrew grinned.

‘Do you think so? To be honest, before this meeting, I thought that I understood everything in this life. However, what you told me surprisingly seems quite logical as well.’

‘Don’t worry, time will sort all the things out’, Nicholas smiled and asked, ‘Do you want some more coffee or tea?’

‘No, thank you’, the guy answered and, having leaned back in the chair, started to look around.

‘You believe in God, as I can see’.

‘Yes’, nodded a hospitable owner.

‘And I don’t really believe’, Andrew shrugged his shoulders.

‘Everyone believes in something’, Nicholas responded with a smile, ‘And those who don’t believe in God, in fact, must to believe even in much more’.

‘Oh, really?’ the guy surprised.

‘Judge for yourself, they have to believe in science, in laws and theories, in predictions, in insurance, in psychology, and in thousands other things. It is easier to believe in God - He is one’.

The guy laughed out loud because of such an unexpected answer.

‘That’s funny! I have never heard such a version before. But, actually, it is not that boring to live by earthly laws.’

‘Truth can only be understood by comparing’, Nicholas smiled, ‘the life with God is much more interesting. But you should live this life to feel it.’

The guy looked at the icons and sighed.

‘I am not accustomed to hear such thoughts in my life’, Andrew told him honestly, ‘and on the one hand something inside me agrees with you and on the other something resists.’

‘You will sort this all out after some time’, Nicholas said him confidently and added, ‘well, and may be something else will happened’.

‘Wait and see. Ok, dear Nicholas, it’s time for me to leave. Thank you for coffee and for a really interesting conversation’, Andrew smiled warmly, ‘However, it is about getting dark and I still need to put a tent.’

‘You can spend a night in my house if you want. There is a free room in here’, Nicholas offered hospitably.

‘You have already spent so much time on me, enough to abuse hospitality’, the guy replied, ‘Besides, honestly, I would like to be alone now and reflect a little bit.’

‘Ok, as it will be convenient to you’, the owner replied.

After they say goodbye warmly, Andrew get in his car and continued driving along the shore of the forest lake.

- - -

The next day before returning home, he again stopped near the gate of the Nicholas house. Having got on the street, he called the owner out loud to say goodbye to him. However, no one

responded on his call. His new friend must have gone off somewhere on business. Andrew returned to his car with a little regret and continued his way.

* * *

The year passed. Andrew had recalled the conversation with Nicholas near the forest lake many times during this period. Surprisingly, but some simple words of the owner of a cozy house firmly settled in his head for some reason.

Finally, one day he decided to go again to that place. He waited for the closest weekends and found the old coordinates of that lake in his phone. After that Andrew set off an early morning.

However, there was a very unusual surprise awaiting Nicolas in this trip. He spend whole two days searching and driving all the roads of those places. But he did not succeed to find Nicolas, his house, the big green meadow and even the lake.

Rainbow

Rainbow is a decomposition into components of a main, white color. And as for love or happiness, for example, Is it possible to decompose them ‘into colors’?

That was the thoughts that occupied the head of the future young physicist Enrique Fernandez while standing in a line at the butcher’s shop.

The guy had come to this resort town located on the seashore a several days ago. He decided to celebrate his graduation from the university in such a way. As a result of his studies, Enrique had received the master's degree in the area of wave physics. He was always interested in this direction.

At last, the turn of the guy came up. Cheerful and well-fed butcher glanced inquiringly at the thin Enrique. He ordered his favorite pork ribs with branded spicy sauce. After that, he headed to the deserted part of the beach in order to slowly eat his snack, relax and take a swim a little.

* * *

The next morning Enrique decided to climb a large rock that was located in the sea not far away from the shore. The rock was really high and the guy had long wanted to post his photo with a breathtaking view on the background into the Instagram. Of course, he was scared to climb there. But the glory, according to the guy's convictions, always demanded the courage.

Enrique took his smartphone and his telescopic stick for selfie-photo, put this all into a waterproof bag and went into the sea. Five minutes later, he was already getting out of the water on the big stones near that rock. Several quick local crabs immediately gave a way to him. The guy approached the pretty steep wall and looked up. That second he became a little sad. But then, he vividly imagined how many likes his photo from the top of this cliff would get in the Internet. Inspired by such thoughts, Enrique began to climb upward.

Having reach a half of the way, he looked down and immediately decided not to do this anymore because from above everything looked even more horrible. The guy tried to choose the most reliable stones on the cliff for moving forward. He once saw in the program about alpinists that people should rely on three fulcrums and move only the fourth one. That is how he did. And it did not took long to see the deserved results.

In several minutes, tired Enrique finally crawled out to the top. Having sat on a large stone in the middle of the summit, he looked around. The view from that mountain took his breath away. This rock seemed quite large even from the shore. And as for now, it was really scary to look down out of the top. However, the guy, having rested a little, gathered the remains of his courage and took a selfie-stick with a smartphone out of his bag. He combined them together, connected the cord, spread the tripod full length and got prepared for the photo shot.

Having made a couple of photos right on the stone, he looked at the pictures and frowned. His smile in these pictures looked more like a cramping of his facial muscles. The guy made a dozen of deep breaths. He always did this when he needed to calm down. He managed to do that and the next photo shoot went more successfully.

After that, Enrique started to choose the best angle for his photos. He wanted the sea and the shore were both visible in the photo. But most of all, he wanted to show the great height of the rock on which he was now. The guy approached the edge and took his hand away to the side as far away as he could. He pressed the button on the selfie stick, looked, after that, at the photo and winced. The sea and the shore looked good but the height of the rock was invisible.

The guy took a step to the edge then again took his hand away with a stick to the side. The next photo was already more successful. Enrique smiled happily. Such photos on his page in Instagram surely would not have been left without attention. The guy wanted to strengthen the effect of height and took one more step toward the precipice.

Enrique did not have enough time to understand what happened. The stone beneath him suddenly whirled and, after a moment, the unlucky photographer was already flying down along the wall of the rock. A second later his perception of the life turned off.

* * *

A few Angels sat on the cloud and looked at the newcomer.

‘Oh, well, one more super-photographer?’ one of them asked.

‘Yep, the eighth one this week’, the other replied.

‘More than the last week. So who is he?’

‘I’ll take a look. Hmm...you know, this case is an interesting one. A smart guy, just graduated from a serious university. Future scientist-physics and the sphere of a vital interest is very high. It is even a little strange that he climbed on that rock.’

‘The fashion on glory is pervasive now’, another Angel answered philosophically, ‘let me as well look at his story’.

After that, silence settled on the cloud for a while.

‘Yes, he is not an ordinary selfie-photograph, indeed. Look how many interesting and profound questions he had have during the year!’

‘I see’, the first Angel agreed, ‘It seems that we have to ask the Father’s advice in this case.’

Other Angels nodded in agreement.

* * *

Enrique heard a speech beside him and opened his eyes a little. Two white Angels sat opposite him and chatted among themselves. The guy closed his eyes back quickly.

A stream of different thoughts poured into his head but then, he suddenly remembered the last selfie on the rock. All the thoughts immediately faded away somewhere. All but one.

‘All right Enrique, open your eyes already. We anyway know that you hear us and we know all your thoughts’, guy suddenly heard a calm voice.

He raised his eyelids obediently.

‘Good day’, Enrique said politely just in case and looked around.

Right in front of him, two snow-white Angels sat on some pieces and looked at him affably. The place itself, where he was right now, resembled a beautiful botanic garden.

‘Hi Enrique’, the Angels said almost synchronously.

The guy looked at them with wide eyes.

‘I understand that I fell from the high rock and died. And now I am in the another world. Is it so?’ he asked.

‘Closely,’ the Angel who was on the right nodded to him with a smile, ‘Only you are not in the another world but in the present

one. This world is the main one. You came to Earth from here. And all people come back here, too’.

‘It is clear,’ Enrique shook his head after several seconds and looked at the interlocutors with interest. ‘Are you Angels? I just believe in God a little and I read something about it.’

‘This time you hit the nail on the head’, Angel who was on the left nodded back to him, ‘I am your Angel Alos. I have been with you all your life. This Angel is Eton. He is dealing with different accidents on Earth.’

The Angel on the right friendly nodded to the guy.

‘Well, you came here because of an imprudent attempt to make your photo on the rock’, Angel Alos continued.

‘And, unfortunately, guy you are not the only one unlucky photographer on the Earth. If you knew how many people are now injured or even die as a result of chasing such “cool photos”’, Angel Eton continued, ‘this common fashion on selfie brings such results’.

‘And is there something wrong with making selfie?’ the guy asked, having noticed a strange intonation.

‘No, there is nothing bad with it’, Angel Alos smiled, ‘If you do it moderately, there is nothing wrong with taking some pictures and showing them to your friends or relatives. It is absolutely normal.’

‘But not everyone can do it moderately. And when the life of a person comes down to making and showing of one’s photos – it is much worse. Actually, not only selfie but also the other options of constant admiration for one’s own appearance. All these is already called self-admiration or boasting, that are the varieties of

pride’, Eton added, ‘However, for God and for all of us who lives in Paradise, only modesty is valuable, not pride.’

‘Well, and if a person risks his life in order to make an unusual selfie-picture that means that one’s is longing for glory. It is a kind of a strong pride’, Alos continued and smiled, ‘Although your case, fortunately, seems more like a simple stupidity and following the fashion.’

Enrique comprehended what he had just heard.

‘Yes, it is fashionable now to make selfie in some cool places. Many people have such photos, but I still did not have’, he smiled sadly, ‘And, I guess, I won’t have ones’.

‘We’ll see’, Angel Eton said, looking at him attentively.

‘By the way’, the guy started up with interest, ‘could you please explain me the issue of modern fashion on the Earth and about tastes in more details. I reflected about that several times and now I have an opportunity to know everything. How does it all look like?’

‘You see, Enrique, of course there is the notion of “taste” in your and in our world. In our world in the heart of taste is harmony. In your world disharmony also exist. What is the difference between them? For instance, all the flowers on a meadow a very beautiful despite the fact they are all different. It is an example of diversity from God on the territory of beauty and harmony.

‘Well, and if a person likes something more gloomy. Isn’t it a manifestation of taste and harmony? There is no such things in Paradise at all?

‘So, Enrique, you want to say that someone from Paradise might like, for example, a burnt forest or something like that? No,

my good man, you won't meet such tastes in our world', Angel Eton smiled.

'But I know many kind guys that like black color and dark pictures'.

'You are right, my dear. People can get used to disharmony. For example, some seemingly ugly fashion after a while on the Earth often becomes habitual and even 'attractive' for many people', Eton smiled, 'But in fact it still remains ugly'.

'Or, for example, it is like with the worst songs in a new album. I know for sure you faced with this. After you listen to it dozens times, they often start to seem more beautiful to people, as well. But it is wrong again. There are many different examples of adaptations from other areas. Advertising, for example, use this tendency of a person a lot', Angel Alos added, 'However, only the first perception of a person through his intuition is a true one feeling of harmony from God. And things that people start to 'like' after they watch or listen to dozens of times is mostly a result of a gradual habituation to some kind of disharmony.'

'Hmm, interesting', Enrique said and suddenly looked around, 'Angels, can I take a walk a little here? I want to look at something unusual in your world'.

'Of course', Angel Alos replied with a smile, 'Let's go. We will show you something here. Well and you can meanwhile ask us whatever you want.'

* * *

After a while they returned back from their walk. The guy went with burning eyes, under the impression with everything he

saw. However, amazing landscapes around him did not prevent him from asking new questions. His last question that he asked Angels was the role of money on the Earth.

‘But there is nothing bad in having a lot of money or some things?’ he asked.

‘No, of course there is nothing bad in it’, Alos smiled in response, ‘Here, it is not about what person has but how he relates to this all. And it is bad only when people no longer own things but things started to own them.’

‘How is it?’ Enrique looked at his Angel with interest.

Alos smiled gaily.

‘Have you ever watched children playing in the sandbox?’

‘Well,’ the guy became thoughtful, ‘of course, I saw, but did not watch on purpose. And why are you asking?’

‘Watch one day more attentively’, said Alos. ‘Pay attention to how seriously children are fiddling around with simple sand. What they do there is very important for them’.

‘Well, may be. And what is the conclusion from all this?’

‘Are the things that they do are important for you?’ Angel replied his question with a question.

‘Of course, no’, Enrique shrugged his shoulders, ‘This just games for children, and they play in simple sand’.

‘That’s it,’ Angel smiled, ‘do you think that for the inhabitants of Haven people’s businesses on the Earth seem more serious than the games of children for you?’

The guy was about to say something but, suddenly, immersed in his thoughts for a long time.

‘So, you want to say that...’

‘Namely. All people’s businesses for us are just as serious as children’s games in a sandbox. All human’s bodies will disappear one day as well as their different plans and activities. Earth is a kind of enormous sandbox of Lord. There are a lot of different sand there and many different children. Serious and funny children, uppity and simple, kind and not very kind. But just children.’

‘Children...’, the guy said the last word of angel thoughtfully, ‘such an interesting theory’.

‘Actually, Enrique it is a reality’, Angel Alos corrected him, ‘The reality which every person will see in a moment of leaving this “Earthly sandbox”’. In the way you see it now, for instance.’

Here guy reflected for a while.

‘I have never thought about it before’, he finally said.

‘Unfortunately, you are not the only one’, Angel Eton smiled sadly, ‘And if you reflected more about that then Earthly goods would not be able to become too important for you. Well, and if you reflected about it every day, then something more would open for you. And a beautiful Heavenly tale would become a reality of your life.’

‘And Earthly reality would turn out to be an amusing fairytale’, Alos continued. ‘You can keep on playing it as long as you want. But it would not be able to become too serious for you. And it is the only way, friend, how people can lose their importance to different values of the world’.

The guy fell silent for a while again.

‘Angels, and what for does God need this sandbox with people?’

‘With children, my friend. It is the sandbox with His valueless children’, Angel Alos corrected him, ‘because real values can be born in this sandbox. Real and very, very big ones.’

‘Values? What values?’

‘They all are not external, Enrique. Everything external on the Earth disappear sooner or later. Real values can only be internal. They are called kindness, love, faith, forgiveness, honor, desire for sublime and beautiful and so on. They all are invisible for an eye on the Earth. But after the end of the earthly life they are the only ones that remain visible’.

‘Do they look beautifully?’ the guy suddenly asked.

‘Very beautifully, Enrique!’ his Angel laughed.

‘Oh, well, and what will be with the ones who do not have all these qualities?’

‘They will look very ugly after life. And our world will have nothing to do with them. The Son of the Father told people about that many times when He was on the Earth two years ago.’

‘Nothing at all?’

‘Do you like to bring mud and rubbish in your house? Similarly, there is no need in darkness in the Paradise.’

‘I see’, Enrique sighed and suddenly looked up with interest, ‘Angels, I often think about what love and joy consists of? Can they be decomposed into the components as, for example, white color is decomposed into the rainbow’s colors’.

Angels exchanged their glances.

‘It’s an unusual question, Enrique’, Alos smiled. ‘In general, love is the pinnacle of everything that exist. To make it clear to you, I’ll try to compare it with a boundless beautiful sea. Of

course you can try to decompose this sea into parts and you will get water, salt, fish, corals. But individually they will never be as beautiful as the sea’.

‘Moreover, only head always ‘decomposes’ something into parts and our heart only always loves. And these are not only two different organs, Enrique, these are two different worlds’, Angel Eton interrupted. ‘Light and rainbow is physic science. And love and happiness is always God. So, just love, fellow, and be glad that you have such a great happiness – an ability to love’.

* * *

‘Well, Enrique, the Father decided to return you back on Earth. You are a good man and you can do a lot of useful things in your life’, suddenly said Angel Eton.

The guy smiled cheerfully.

‘And how are you going to do this?’ he asked after a while.

‘You will see’, Angel Alos smiled, ‘But there is one thing. On Earth, you will forget about us and about our conversation with you. It is a custom to act like that in such situations’.

Enrique looked on Angels with anxiety.

‘How can I forget this? A have known so much useful and interesting things for myself!’

‘Actually, this information has been described long time ago in many earthly books, which are many years old’, Angel Anton shrugged his shoulders, ‘So, people always can read and look at this information.’

‘But you know, Angels that now this is not very fashionable on the Earth’, the guy resisted desperately, ‘In addition, there is no one in my surrounding who can give me a correct piece of advice in this area’.

Angels exchanged their glances, reflecting, and then, looked upward inquiringly. Enrique also looked up hopefully.

‘Ok, dear, let it be your way. Father agreed. However, we will ourselves chose the form of bringing the information to you’.

‘Thank you!’ The guy smiled happily, then, looked up and quietly added, ‘thank you...’

‘Well now, let’s say good bye’.

The Angels stood up with smile and hugged Enrique tightly.

‘Our dear, return back on Earth and try to understand everything carefully. And we will look forward to you after the end of your earthly life. And remember that we are always near to you.’

‘Thank you very much for everything!’ the guy responded warmly.

* * *

Enrique instantly came to his sense due to falling into cool water. He opened his eyes and started to swim quickly towards the surface.

Having hung his head out over the water after a few seconds, he looked around. The rock from which he had just fallen was just a couple of meters from him.

‘How did it happen that I fell right into the water?’, he thought, ‘I could have crushed on these stones! Oh never will I do these selfie again. It is even very good that my smartphone and selfie-stick have drowned!’

After that, Enrique swam back to the beach. From time to time, he stopped and looked back on a high mountain and shook his head in horror.

* * *

That night, Enrique had a very unusual dream. In this dream, he fell from that high cliff, not into the sea, but on the rocks. And then, he found himself in the other world. There, he had a long conversation with two good angels.

As the guy woke up, he spent the whole morning thinking about the topic of that unusual conversation. Some strange feeling remained in his heart after this dream. Enrique felt that this nocturnal dialogue didn't look like his usual dreams. Besides, all the answers of his nocturnal conversationalists seemed more than interesting to him.

Finally, tired of all these thoughts, he decided to switch a little and turn on his laptop to check the news. However, when he got to his page on social networks, the guy suddenly froze in amazement.

In plain sight on his page, there was a picture of him smiling and standing on top of the cliff, from which he had fallen into the sea yesterday. And this picture was just wonderful...

Eve

Adam lay in the Garden of Eden, feeling boring. High above him, there skimmed colourful clouds and snow-white Angels flew somewhere there. Below the Garden, on the Earth, there were running, swimming and flying various animals, birds and fishes. But Adam was slightly apathetic anyway.

He tore off a grass blade that grew near him and put it in his mouth. At that moment, in the sky above the first human, there appeared a caring face of the God. His warm eyes looked at His own creation somewhat thoughtfully.

‘Hello, my dear Adam,’ the kindest voice sounded.

The man threw the grass away and quickly rose to his feet.

‘Hello, my God,’ he replied with a smile. ‘I’m glad to see You!’

‘So am I. How are you doing?’ the Creator enquired.

‘Well’, Adam laughed out, ‘I’ve decided to rest here a little and lie on the grass.’

‘Have you given names to all of the earth creatures?’ the God asked him again.

‘Oh, yes! I even already renamed a couple hundred,’ the human being replied.

‘Perfect!’ the God nodded. ‘Do you talk to My Angels sometimes?’

‘Certainly. I talk to them constantly,’ Adam smiled. ‘I’m chatting with them all my free time. They are nice!’

‘Great!’ the creator smiled in response. ‘Well, do you walk around the Garden of Eden from time to time?’

‘I do this every day. It’s so beautiful there,’ the man replied.

‘Splendid,’ the God pronounced slightly thoughtful. ‘You know, Adam, I’ve just been watching you and it seemed to me that you are bored a little, aren’t you?’

‘Nothing can be hidden from You, my God,’ Adam bent his head down. ‘I do feel bored a little, speaking frankly. You see, at first everything seems interesting to me, but then, it gradually becomes more boring. I am really sorry for that.’

‘You don’t say so, my dear, nothing to worry about. As for Me, I and the Angels do not feel bored,’ the God replied and thought for quite a long time.

‘Alright, my dear Adam’, finally He began speaking, ‘I will try to invent something that you will never be bored from.’

‘Thank You!’ the human being shouted cheerily.

‘Well, it’s nothing at all, nothing,’ the God replied to him honestly.

The next day, there appeared the first woman on the earth – Eve.

* * *

For the following seven thousand years, there happened much in relations between men and women. And there was love and

hate, laughter and tears, jealousy and adultery, wrath and reconciliation, revenge and forgiving, and many, many more.

But never has it been boring for men since...

IQ

Steve Hellenberg was sitting in a cozy chair in his living room thinking. His entire thoughts were only about the note that he had just read. In this note, a very serious scientist from one of the Scandinavian countries had performed quite an interesting analysis with sensational conclusions.

According to his data, IQ scores among young people have been steadily falling in recent years. And this is despite the fact that they had steadily increased almost every year over the past two decades. Of course, Doctor Hellenberg who currently works a teacher at a university couldn't have worried less about this issue.

He thought about it for some time, picked up the note again and carefully read the last two paragraphs – the part with specific statistical figures.

* * *

Marko, a third year student at a marketing institute, planned his day in the morning. First of all, as always, he took his inseparable smartphone to check how much time it would take to get to the institute. The screen showed him '47 minutes' by public transport, specifying the changes, and '32 minutes' by car. Marko didn't have a car yet.

After that, the student looked at the class schedule of his girlfriend, Lucia. She finished classes at quarter to three in the afternoon. The young Italian googled "best discounts" from the cafes near his house. Today's best offer was from the Japanese café called "Sushi World". Marko smiled, remembering that his girlfriend had just recently dreamt of Japanese cuisine. He chose meals and ordered delivery for six in the evening. After that, Marko sent Lucia a message. To do this, Marko found a ready-made template on the smartphone that had the most suitable meaning.

As Marko solved this question, he quickly finished his homework. He printed an essay he found on the Internet the day before, as well as a short report on the topic "Marketing in the construction industry".

As he finished, the guy put the papers in the bag and headed outside. On the way, he stopped at the climate control unit and pressed a couple of buttons. As a result, the temperature in the small rented apartment should soon fall to a cost-effective 15 degrees and rise again to 23 degrees by the time he gets back.

Quite pleased with himself, Marko walked out the door. Once again, his day was well planned from early in the morning into the evening. He closed the door, took out his smartphone and sent a message to one of the addresses. After that, the alarm system in the apartment was immediately activated.

* * *

Two snow-white angels were sitting and talking on the shore of the beautiful Paradise Lake.

'Yesterday my Steve was thinking a lot about the note I planted. Well, about the falling of IQ scores among people' said the Angel named Slaugh.

Another Angel named Olite looked at him with interest.

'Do you think that he'll manage to understand this information correctly?'

'He's a capable guy!' Slaugh nodded optimistically. 'He's understood quite correctly a lot of difficult things in his life before. I really hope he'll also interpret this important note correctly.'

Olite smiled warmly in response and then sighed.

'Yeah, my friend, humanity today is really fascinated by all this modern stuff. And barely anyone seem to be interested in finding the negative side of that. The note on the falling of IQ scores is one of the very few on this topic.'

'That's true, Ol. People are becoming more and more accustomed to various convenient services and programs, and they think less and less for themselves. They don't understand that thinking is really important. After all, thinking is kind of like a human muscle. If it's not trained, it becomes weaker and weaker.'

'Right,' Angel Olite nodded. 'As a result, a person who thinks and reflects less becomes simpler and simpler. And then he does

not need deep books and serious thoughts. Something superficial and short is quite enough.'

'That's right,' Angel Slough smiled. 'It's like parks on earth now. More and more people prefer to ride some electronic rechargeable devices lately, instead of the usual bikes, skates or just running. Of course, it's more convenient, but how will one get strong muscles and healthy body then?'

'Indeed, my friend, one should accept convenience but keep the useful side. Unfortunately, not all of them understand this.'

'That's true. Thinking in general is extremely important for people. After all, a reasonable man stays reasonable as long as he keeps thinking. And, IQ scores are a very serious indicator. They reflect a person's ability to analyze, his ability to see the most important things in life, regardless of scenery. If IQ scores are high, then it's easier to find the true meaning of life. What can one reach without thinking?'

'Yeah, not a single computer program hasn't led a person to God yet. It's a fact. And as a result, people live for only seventy-eighty years of mortal life instead of Eternity. So smart for "modern civilized times".'

The Angels were silent for a while.

'Perhaps your Doctor will figure out something really important in this issue?' finally, Angel Olite spoke again.

'I hope he will, my friend' Angel Slaugh smiled. 'I really hope, as always...'

Giuseppe

Seventy-two year old Giuseppe was dying. For his whole life, he thought that it could happen sometime and somewhere to someone else but certainly not to him. But now, death came precisely to him. Giuseppe knew that for sure. He knew this because of some inner knowledge, with all his being. Now death whispered calm, quiet and uncompromising words: "That's all."

All Giuseppe's plans and dreams suddenly lost their sense. The past? He didn't even think about it now. He didn't want to think about anything at all. He stood at the dawn of some completely new and unknown period and was completely overwhelmed with this feeling. Of course, he was afraid of what happens next. But did he have a choice?

A few minutes later, life began to leave his body. This was as real and inevitable as the sun hiding beyond the horizon. Perhaps for the first time in his life, Giuseppe could not do anything, prevent it somehow or at least slow things down. This realm of being was completely beyond his control. As if he was sitting in the car of a sealed shut train, which was leaving the territory called "life" and drove into an unknown tunnel called "death". A second later, Giuseppe died.

* * *

Or rather, he guessed that he died. Just because he suddenly saw his own still body below. However, Giuseppe's perception of life had not changed - he could somehow feel, hear and see the world around him. Deep down inside, he also felt an incredible lightness and joy - the real joy - which he didn't feel in a long time on Earth. Or maybe never before.

After a while, Giuseppe suddenly began to rise above the room with his body, above the house, and then, he was flying inside some bright corridor in an unknown direction. Again, there was nothing he could do about it.

* * *

The end point of his flight didn't look like any of the places he had ever been before. Perhaps, it only vaguely resembled some beautiful park, all decorated with twinkly lights for a holiday. Everything here was incredibly beautiful, and at the same time, it radiated a light of all possible colors and shades from the inside. The air was filled with delicate, beautiful scents.

Giuseppe looked up. Little colored clouds were floating in the sparkling turquoise sky.

'Hello, Giuseppe,' he suddenly heard a voice right next to him.

Giuseppe quickly turned around and froze in surprise. Right in front of him was a beautiful white Angel with big wings folded behind his back.

'Hello,' replied the newcomer in an uncertain voice, keeping his eyes on the interlocutor.

He radiated a beautiful light too. However, his eyes seemed a little sad to Giuseppe.

'Well, you've just finished your earthly course,' the Angel said.

'I guess so... I don't really understand anything yet,' replied Giuseppe. 'How do you know me?'

'I'm your Angel and my name is Alaso. Your whole life, I was next to you.'

'My Angel? Amazing! Nice to meet you, Alaso!' Giuseppe smiled broadly.

After that, he began to ask the Angel about many things that were very interesting to him now.

Alaso answered Giuseppe's questions in detail. He told him about the order of the world that was yet unknown to him, about different fates of people after their mortal life.

* * *

'And what will happen to me?' Giuseppe suddenly asked the Angel after a while.

'I don't know,' he honestly shrugged. 'Father will have to decide that. You've certainly done a lot of good things in your life. But, there were also the bad ones.'

'The bad ones?' Giuseppe was genuinely surprised, 'but I tried not to do anything bad in my life.'

The Angel looked at him sadly.

'I have to disappoint you, my dear. You didn't always succeed. Do you want to see the bad things that you've done?'

Giuseppe nodded. At the same moment, he seemed to be connected to some huge information space. Events from his past life began to float in front of him. They were so bright that he believed they were real again. One episode quickly changed to the next, and there were a lot of them.

Here he was as a child, stealing a toy from his friend, and here, he breaks the ban of his mom. Here, he deceives his wife, and here, he takes it out on a poor child. There were plenty of such episodes. Hundreds, if not thousand.

As Giuseppe watched this, he bowed his head lower and lower. Finally, it was over, but no one said a word for a long time.

'Wow, there was a lot,' finally said Giuseppe.

'Yes. And that's apart from the bad deeds that you sincerely repented for. Father forgave you and didn't show you them,' the Angel nodded.

'Do I have any chance to get to a good place?' Giuseppe asked quietly.

'You do,' the Angel replied.' Father is very kind and you've done quite a few good things. But, let's wait for His final decision. You can be sure that it will be fair.'

Giuseppe sighed.

'Can I do something now to help myself?' he quietly asked his Angel again.

'Not anymore,' he shook his head. 'You've had seventy-two years for that.'

Giuseppe sighed. His Angel sighed too. Together, they waited for the decision of his fate.

Extraterrestrial intelligence

At the department for the study of extraterrestrial intelligence, the work was in full swing since morning. As it usually happened on Mondays, they processed the information received over the past week.

All in all, five cases occurred during this time: two signals of some kind were received from the depths of the galaxy and three unidentified flying objects were seen in different parts of the planet. One of them was seen by an aircraft pilot in the Caribbean islands, the second - by a farmer in New Zealand, and the third - by a navigator of a vessel near the east coast of Africa.

Only the farmer managed to take a blurred picture of a UFO. Other witnesses didn't have a camera at hand at the right time. Sound signals, of course, were recorded with special equipment.

All in all, nine scientists worked in this Department. The project has been led by Professor Karl Hortman for eleven years already, and Doctor Silvio Botini has been his deputy and assistant all this time.

This morning, the Doctor and Professor were studying the big blurred picture from the New Zealand farmer on a large screen.

'No, Karl, I still think it's the front of an alien ship' Silvio said and pointed with a pen at the sharpened bright part of the picture. 'Look closely at this place.'

'Perhaps, perhaps' Karl shook his head pensively. 'But to me it still looks like a wing. Remember those pictures from Alaska taken in 2007? There were was something similar.'

'Sure I do' Silvio's eyes lit up. 'At that time, we visited the reindeer-herder who took these pictures.'

'Professor Hortman,' they suddenly heard a pleasant woman's voice nearby.

The scientists paused and looked at the most charming employee of the department standing next to them, Caroline Gloss.

'What's that, Carol?' the Professor said.

'The signals that we've recorded recently' the young woman said with her doe eyes, 'there's nothing unusual about them. They're the spitting image of those that we get from the Southern Cross.'

'Very nice,' Karl replied. 'Thank you very much and get back to your work.'

After that, they followed her with their eyes to the workplace.

'What were we talking about?' the Professor finally asked again.

'We were arguing what is in this picture - the front part of an alien ship or its wing,' Silvio reminded.

'Exactly' Karl nodded and looked cheerfully at the Doctor. 'But I'm sure we'll not argue about Caroline's design.'

'Never!' Silvio agreed with laughter. 'Well, Prof, let's go get some coffee with a bun for breakfast? And then get back to our work.'

'With pleasure' Karl replied and they moved down the corridor to the institute's cafe.

* * *

Three angels were sitting on a cloud and talking cheerfully.

'Yeah,' Angel Alt shook his head. 'On the one hand, I'd like them to see more of these UFOs, and on the other hand, that's not a good idea. After all, they will exaggerate this topic more than they should.'

'Indeed,' Angel Beth echoed his words. 'It would be better for them to think, believe, hope and search.'

'Right!' Angel San laughed. 'After all, it's like living a fairy tale for them. And a fairytale is always a good thing! Look at my Caroline - she has watched all the movies from "Star Wars" and "Men in Black" series twenty times or so already!'

The angels burst out laughing.

'And our scientists also watch them quite often' Angel Beth added.

'Nice!' Angel Alt smiled. 'Usually, it's hard to make them think about fairy tales, but with such job they think about it all the time.'

'And the most important thing is they're growing up kind and honest at the same time, trying to help everyone, trying to find something valuable in the grand Universe,' Angel San added.

All the angels again smiled contentedly.

* * *

The Doctor and Professor ate the first bun in a flash, and ordered another one after a quick thought. Just to improve positive thinking.

'Oh, man, we've been searching for these aliens for so many years. I wish I could take a little peek at them for myself,' Silvio said.

'Tell me about it, buddy. That is my biggest dream. I envy so much all those people who saw them!' the Professor echoed. 'How

happy they are to glimpse the secrets of the grand Universe! Although they often don't even realize that...'

'Yeah,' the Doctor nodded. 'It happens all the time. The one who doesn't even need it meet this at every step, and the one who needs it most of all... What a pity!'

'Come on, cheer up, buddy. We are only a little bit over fifty. I'm sure that the best is yet to be. That's what I've firmly believed for many years,' the Professor said, taking the second bun from the plate.

* * *

Three angels in heaven looked at each other.

'Oh, I feel so sorry for them sometimes,' said the most sentimental Angel San. 'Maybe we should give them something just once?'

'I was thinking about it too' Angel Alt agreed. 'After all, they've been searching for these UFOs over and over for so many years already. Poor things!'

'Maybe we should ask Father together then?' Angel Beth proposed quietly. 'Well, at least slightly, to reveal to them the secret...'

The three of them looked up half-heartedly.

'Why are you looking at me like that?' they heard the kindest and most cheerful voice from above. 'I also want to treat them somehow. But they'll make such a fuss among people! And there is enough confusion already...'

'Yes, we understand it, Father' Angel San said on behalf of everyone. 'We're sorry for asking such nonsense.'

'Okay, okay, my good ones. I really like them too. They're so funny! All right, I'll think up something special' the Father said. 'Well, so that they won't hurt anyone later.'

'Thank you so much, Father!' the three angels shouted in joy.

'Wait a minute. I haven't even started thinking yet' they heard cheerful laughter.

* * *

The following Monday, the Doctor and Professor looked through the weekly news again. This time, there were three sound signals and two sightings. Unfortunately, no one took any pictures.

The Professor was about to put the news aside when he caught sight of the screen of a desktop computer. One new email was flashing in the special inbox, which was known only to Silvio.

'Doc, did you send me anything to my private e-mail?' he asked his friend who was sitting nearby.

'No, I only planned it,' Silvio smiled. 'In twenty years or so, I'm going to mention you as the main heir in my last will. Well, and then I'll send this document to your email.'

Both scientists burst out laughing.

'Look, I've just received some email. To my private inbox which no one knows' the Professor explained and clicked the file on the screen.

For ten minutes, there was only silence in the office.

'Doc, come here' Silvio heard his friend's voice, which sounded strange.

By his intonation he guessed that something extraordinary has happened. Doctor Botini went to the Professor's desk, rolling a chair. As he settled, he looked inquiringly at Karl. He nodded at the screen.

'Read.'

'Hello, Professor Hortman' the Doctor began to read the message. 'We know all about you. And also we know that you have wanted to meet us for a long time. Today, the higher intelligence of the Galaxy made a positive decision on this matter. Our main condition is: you must keep all information top secret. The only person you can take with you is your friend, Dr. Silvio Botini. So, our meeting will happen in seven days at noon in the following place...'

The Doctor got chills as he was reading the text.

'Is this a joke?' he said quietly when he finished reading the email.

'No' the Professor replied. 'That's what I thought too, at first. But at the end of the email they mentioned some facts from, um... my younger days. No one could know this. Sorry, mate, but I deleted this part. Nothing special, just some foolish things from my youth...'

At this moment, Silvio noticed that his friend's ears blushed a little.

'Well, serious affairs began have us!' the Doctor said happily and excitedly.

'Man, I told you that the best was yet to be!' the happy Professor echoed with a broad smile. 'Here it comes.'

* * *

One week later, at ten in the morning, the Doctor and Professor untied a small boat from the pier, which they had rented the day before. In addition to the standard boating set, there was a large suitcase on the back seat. In the suitcase, there were the main findings of their research over the past twelve years. They were carefully compiled by Caroline Gloss. However, she didn't even know why her bosses needed all this stuff. Also there were a couple of phrases by the inhabitants of the Galaxy, which, as they thought, they managed to decipher.

Besides, this suitcase contained their formal suits for the meeting. And there was a nice box lying in a corner with a couple of gifts for the aliens, which demonstrated the high technical and creative level of the inhabitants of Earth. There was a nicely printed periodic table of elements and a CD with a collection of the best songs by the Beatles.

As they came out of the port, they turned right to the channel between the Hamilton and Dent islands. An hour later, their boat touched the beach sand of a small uninhabited island. The scientists jumped out of the boat and pulled it to the shore.

'Oh, yes' the Professor looked around with blazing eyes. 'What a perfect place for the meeting of humans and aliens!'

'That's true! It couldn't be a better place' the Doctor said cheerfully. He was so excited about the forthcoming meeting with the aliens that he still had chills on his back for the third day already.

After that, they pulled the heavy suitcase to the shore, put on their suits and waited. It was still a few minutes before noon.

'Do you think they'll come from the sky or from the sea?' the Professor asked.

'Of course, from the sky. After all, they're not sailors but aliens' the Doctor replied reasonably.

At noon, three snow-white Angels came out of the local forest. Their wings were folded behind their backs. Gently stepping on the sand, they moved towards their wards, who couldn't keep their eyes off the sky.

'Sorry, you're probably waiting for us,' Angel San spoke up to them cheerfully.

Four intelligent eyes in formal suits stared at the unusual sight.

'Hello, dear aliens' the Professor finally got his voice back first. 'Welcome to our hospitable planet Earth!'

'Hello, dear citizens of the Galaxy!' the Doctor echoed. 'We are more than happy to have this contact with you.'

'Hello, our dear Karl and Silvio!' Angel Alt said with a smile. 'However, we're actually not aliens. We are your heavenly Angels.'

'Perhaps, we'll disappoint you a little' Angel Beth entered into the conversation, 'but aliens, um... do not exist. Well, that's about it...'

'But you have us and we're from the sky, too!' Angel San finished their speech on a happy note.

Four intelligent round eyes stared at the angels, listening to their unusual speech and tried to smile politely, to top it all.

* * *

After an hour of the angels' explanations, the Doctor and Professor finally began to understand something. And they even had the first reasonable questions.

'So, if there are no aliens, why do you let many people believe that they exist?' the Professor asked.

'Father gave the freedom of will and choice to all people,' Angel San replied, 'so they can believe anything they like.'

'Two thousand years ago, my dear Karl, the Son of God explained to people who and how exists beyond the earthly world. And He proved it with hundreds of miracles. This information is freely available and anyone can see it. Has anyone hidden the truth from you? You are hiding from it with your own free will, like many others,' Angel Alt smiled. 'And as for the aliens... Well, it was your idea to go to the frozen Alaska and look at some blurry picture taken by a reindeer-herder. You're running as fast as you can towards it.'

The scientists finally smiled for the first time.

'That's why aliens are a completely fictional story imagined by people without any serious facts' Angel Beth continued, 'like many other theories on earth. But people have the opportunity to believe what they want. Father gave them this right.'

'But why did he give us this right?' Doctor Silvio asked with interest.

'Conscious search of a person is important. At the same time, the person's kind of work doesn't really matter. Aliens or beekeeping, what's the difference? After a person leaves the earth, he no longer needs neither one nor the other,' the Angel began to explain. 'The main thing for people on earth is to become kind and honest, everything else is of secondary importance. And all these thoughts about aliens are not that bad, especially for

unbelievers. It make them think there's something more than just the physical world and that's good.'

'Besides, this alien stuff is an infinite source for all sorts of creativity and fantasies. How many wonderful books and movies have been created by people on this topic!' Angel Alt added with a smile.

'I absolutely agree with that' the Professor smiled. 'But I have one more question then. Why can't God bring up good creatures on other planets too? This version is often found in the movies. Then the aliens would fit perfectly into this picture.'

'You see, Karl, if the Lord needed more intelligent creatures, he wouldn't need to create other civilizations. It was enough for Him to make the size of the earth a little bit bigger,' Angel San smiled. 'Proper education of people is the most difficult process you can imagine. You haven't read about it, but it implies a seven-thousand-year stage of the constant evolution of human souls on earth - from the time of Adam to our days. Without such moral "school", any civilization doesn't have meaning for its Creator. And, without meaning, it just cannot appear in the Universe.'

'Besides, my dear ones,' continued the Angel Alt, 'all good souls look alike after mortal life. Well, like me and my friends. That's why it makes no sense to create excessive diversity in the Universe to get the same in the end. Do you understand this logic?'

'I think so' the Doctor nodded and smiled. 'That's why all our "evidence" about aliens was so unconvincing?'

'It couldn't be very convincing at all, my dear. Otherwise, this theory would become popular and distract people from the right way,' Angel Beth smiled in response.

'Then maybe now we have a reason to dissuade people from the existence of aliens?' suddenly offered Karl.

'There's no reason to dissuade someone as well' Angel Beth said. 'Let someone believe in aliens. Let them search for them in the universe, seek for contacts with them. Let them try to make friends with aliens and adopt their high technology. The main thing is to devote yourself to this work. Or to any other work. And to do this, people should really believe in what they're doing.'

The Professor and Doctor looked at each other in deep thought.

'And what should we do now?' the Doctor asked the Angels quietly. 'We don't believe in aliens anymore...'

* * *

Two years later.

'Well, Doc, last time our honey was much tastier, that's for sure' the Professor said after licking the spoon.

'As for me, this one is good, too' Silvio shrugged with a doubt. 'But if you want to, Prof, let's move our hives ten kilometers closer to the mountains. The honey here is certainly much more flavory.'

'Let's wait a little more, Doc' the Professor replied. 'Caroline should be here soon, she'll bring some food and newspapers.'

'Well, and we'll give her honey for the entire Department, as always' Silvio smiled.

'Of course! She really needs something sweet now. As we did once...' the Professor said. 'After all, she is the head of the Department now. Rumor has it, she's really good at searching for aliens...'

Both scientists burst out laughing.

'Well, that's fine, Carol's got eight more years. And after that, we'll tell her the truth about these aliens, as we promised Angel San,' the Professor said.

'Oh, sure we'll tell!' Silvio smiled. 'And maybe show someone... Let's ask our angels about this tomorrow, when we'll play lotto with them.'

'For sure,' the Professor nodded and stretched himself. 'By the way, Doc, isn't it time to have some coffee with our awesome honey buns?'

www.DolphinsDivingDreams.com

All books "Once upon a time in Heaven" series:

www.bookfaceyourself.com

CONTENTS:

On the other side of the questions.....	2
The lake.....	22
Rainbow.....	31
Eve.....	45
IQ	47
Giuseppe	51
Extraterrestrial intelligence	55