

The Old Fairy-Tale

Once upon a time there was a wise old man. His wife died early. She left him with three sons and a little daughter.

The boys were growing up easily. They didn't know neither illness nor tears nor envy. The wise father never beat them. He didn't educate them with any long and clever morals, but taught them three rules with his own example:

1. Never be afraid of anything.
2. Don't think about your future, but work with all your might now.
3. Don't take anything what doesn't belong to you and be compassionate, not condemning people.

The sons grew up. They were applying their father's rules in their lives. In the meanwhile, the little girl was growing up by being afraid of everything, she was dissatisfied with everything, she didn't notice how her "now" was flying past and she was always dreaming that finally, her real, wonderful and tempting life would start, and it would be noisy and luxurious. The girl used to answer in the following way to her father's and her brothers' questions about what she was dreaming, why she wasn't rejoicing at life, at the beauty of the mountains and streamlets, rivers and meadows.

"What kind of life is it? We are living like bears in a godforsaken hole. Yes, it is beautiful, very beautiful here! The wide distances, meadows and gardens, flowers and birds, the people's songs – everything is beautiful. But there are little people here, they are grey, dressed without any taste! Is that a life? The life is probably in the cities where the crowds of people are racketing, where everybody can do a lot of things, where different songs are, where clothes are colourful, where the things are golden."

Her brothers used to laugh at her. They didn't scold their sister for her childish dreams, but they used to joke that there was the most handsome prince somewhere, he would certainly come to her, he would be fascinated by her beauty and he would take her to his distant, noisy kingdom. Once, one of her brothers gave a hand mirror to her so that she could admire her not only in the water of the river.

The sons grew up, they became strong, and once their wise father told them.

"Well, my children, this is what I have to tell you. A monk from the distant monastery came to me and told me to send all three of you to the wide world. He told me that I have introduced strong fundamentals of honour and kindness to you and that you had to bring them to the world, so that it would be easier and merrier for people to live next to you. Go, my dear sons. Let each of you go alone. Don't take much things and food with you. You are young and you will reach a noisy city by earning your bread here and there. Once you are there, disperse to different directions, you will find your own city where you will be living among people by serving them in the best way possible. This is what the monk asked me to tell you."

The sons became sad, because they had to leave their father, their native house, their dear places, the forest and the mountains, the beauty of which they appreciated so much. But the wise father comforted them by reminding them that there wasn't anything eternal on the earth, except that love and peace which man possessed within himself. We have to part one with another sooner or later anyway, the death will separate us without any mercy, and apparently, there wasn't enough love and peace in the noisy cities, so it was everyone's duty to bring them to people if he succeeded to reach such joy by developing them within himself.

Although the sons didn't calm down at once, at least they reconciled themselves to their fate, and soon they settled down completely when they understood that not only their village, their house or their street existed in the world, but that people and life were everywhere, and they had to unite everything with love.

However, the girl was left uncomfortable. She was sad not because she had to part with her brothers, but because her brothers would go to the wide world, they would be living in the luxury and racket of the cities, while she would stay in the godforsaken place in the grey daily life, unknown to anybody. She was raging against the monk who had told her brothers to leave – the truth was they were well-built and handsome men – while she was told to stay at home, although she was the most beautiful not only at home, but in the entire environs.

And as the days were going by, her vexation became stronger. She didn't want even to help her brothers to prepare for their journey. She didn't believe them that it was difficult for them to part with their loved father and herself. Many times she was trying to ask them to take her with them, but her brothers used to answer her that they had given their word to their father and they had to keep it, and not because she wasn't dear to them, but because they believed their father, loved him and were glad to fulfil his will.

Every one of them was telling her that they would be glad to stay at home, in the wonderful silence and would change the roles with her, but their father's order was the order for their love and will, and although the separation may be difficult, the joy of their desire to serve people would overcome everything, to serve in the way their wise father wanted them to.

The irritated girl used to be exasperated at them, not being able to control herself, she used to accuse her brothers of lie and hypocrisy. She was explaining to them that their father wasn't wise anymore, that he had lost his mind due to his old age and that he was confusing everything, so most likely, he had confused the monk's words, too, she was telling them that, by the way, the monk wasn't very normal as well.

Every time the girl used to face the unshakable endurance of her brothers, so she decided to try to afflict every one of them separately, because she failed to achieve something from her brothers when they were all together.

Her oldest brother retorted her strictly from her very first words and explained to her the secret duty of herself to take care of her father if it seemed to her that he was weak and feeble. He told her many strict and bitter truths, then he added by looking at her sternly.

"You won't be able to get on with people anywhere, because you are merciless and ruthless, you are dissatisfied with your home, you don't value its cosiness, joy and purity. You shouldn't expect that somebody would greet you instantly, you have to hold the spray of peace in your hand yourself and to stretch it to everybody whom you meet. When you act like this, you will see that everything around you settles down if you bring your spray of peace to them. I feel sorry for you, my sister, but I cannot help you in any way. Unfortunately, you have to calm down yourself, and then you will see what an extraordinary miracle our father and our home is."

"I don't need your morals," his sister answered him with irritation. "You think that you are the oldest, so you can moralize us. I will leave this place anyway and find the way to escape to the bright and comfortable life. I'm beautiful, I want to be rich, famous and not to work as a hireling."

"My poor, little sister. And who has managed to disturb your spirit so much? When could you see our arguments or dissatisfaction? Where is that passion for riches within you from? Is the perfect life

only that one which is comfortable? I don't know what life is in the cities which our father is sending me to, but I certainly know that I won't find a better life than next to our wise father, even if I saw thousands of comfortable lives. And you, my poor sister, will be the most unfortunate person until every strange life is alluring you, until you don't love working and can't find peace in your everyday life. Maybe you will be rich, but the people whose life will be richer and more comfortable than yours will always excite you."

"Please, shut up," his sister interrupted him with vexation. "I have already told you, don't overdo it with your morals. I'm the most beautiful here, although there are lots of beauties around. Apparently, I won't make a fool of myself with my beauty anywhere. You don't want to help me and that's all right. Only you shouldn't use our father's wisdom and your obedience as a cover. You are thinking only about yourself! And when the test of your love came, then I saw what it was worthy of. The same your praised peace is worthy of. Well, go then, I'll manage without your help."

His sister slammed the door angrily, ran away from her oldest brother to search for her middle brother who always tried to pamper her with something, who was especially kind to her. This brother was sitting under the tree and putting his leather rucksack in order, which his father had told him to take for his journey. She went up to him and told him by fondling to her kind brother tenderly.

"My dear brother, you've always been the most kind for me among everybody in our home. I hope you won't deny my last request."

"Of course, I won't deny it, my dear. Could you have such a request that somebody could refuse to help you? Quickly, tell me, I will do everything for you."

"Well, so I knew it that I can't be mistaken about your kindness. Here's what I want, my brother. I want to leave for the noisy city with you silently, exactly to the one which you are going to go to. I will be living with you and I will be doing everything for you. Besides, you are so kind, everybody will harm you, take everything from you, and I won't allow anybody to harm you. Here I'm afraid of everything, and there I won't be afraid of anything. And you won't be afraid of anything with me."

Her kind brother laughed at naivety of his sister and answered her.

"You are still an absolute baby, my sister, although you are fifteen years old already. What does that constant word "afraid" of yours mean – I have never understood that and I don't understand it now. All kinds of trifles, which there was no need even to talk about, were always frightening you. I could lay down my life for you if I had to protect you or to support you with my work. But what are you asking me now? I can forgive you for your request solely because you don't understand yourself what you are asking from me. You want me to break our father's order? Is it really easy for him to send all three of us away, to stay old and alone and to do all work at home, at farm and fields? You can't help him, can't you? When he's left alone, he will have to take care of you, too, but he's not afraid of his heavy burden. He understands well that some day the separation with us is inevitable anyway. Because he's wise and he loves us, he's sending us to the distant lands easily, so that we could start living independently while he's still alive, and perhaps, his love will help every one of us to find that real path if we go astray. If you weren't occupied only with yourself, you could be simply kind and you could help our father to stand the silence of our home without us, because there were always so many of us here, there was so much laughter, songs and liveliness which he was used to and loved so much."

"Ah, so that's what your kindness and love for me are worthy of! And you decided to moralize me? That's my loyal brother," his sister gave an ironic laughter.

"My poor sister," her brother told her tenderly one more time. "You accuse me of unfaithfulness because of your ignorance. No, my friend, I'm loyal till the end not only to you and your

friendship, I will be loyal to my father during my entire life, too. Because both he and me – we are as two fingers of one hand. And my friendship with him – that’s our one love, one heart, one wisdom. And I’m loyal to my brothers and to you as hands are loyal to the body. Our path may be different, but our foundation is the same and one. And I cannot double my loyalty, I can only carry my pure tenderness for everybody saintly by loving every one of you. My kindness which you reproach me with and call hypocrisy, cannot be it, because it’s my entire life. Understand that I don’t have another choice if my father told me how I had to continue my life. The God sees how I would like to exchange my destiny with you, to stay here in this blessed silence, in this wonderful air. Where else could you find such meadows and such flowers? Where else such forests and mountains could be found? This is the most wonderful land, isn’t it – there’s so much peace and purity here. And I have to leave all this miracle of light and charm because of the dirt and dregs of a noisy city! But our wise father sees things better than me. And my kindness would be weak if I was thinking only about myself. I love everybody here, there are no bad persons here, it is easy to be kind here. It seems that our father knows how much tired people need kindness in the noisy city.”

This brother was also interrupted by an ironic laughter of his sister.

“It seems that you and your oldest brother are both made of the same clay - hands and fingers of the body. You can’t think of anything better! Your praised kindness is worthy of his morals about peace. Well, what kind of brothers I received by fate! Calm down, I won’t be troubling you with my requests again. But I think that one day you will creep to me yourself with your requests when I’m rich and famous already. You will have to ask me to let you into my wonderful house through the back door.”

“My unfortunate sister... I would be so glad of your glory! But the God can see that you understand glory and riches in a strange way. Be blessed, my poor sister. It is difficult for man to live in such darkness as yours.”

His sister laughed one more time, she mocked at the stupid kindness of her brother again and left. The girl was walking across the big garden of her father, in which wonderful flowers were growing, but she wasn’t paying attention to anything. Boredom was nagging her heart, she wanted only people, people, people. She wanted everybody to admire her beauty, she wanted to be more superior than all others, she never wanted to be alone, she wanted to see balls, amusements, luxurious homes and clothes. In this way, walk after walk, she strayed to the steep slope and saw her third, the youngest brother there, who was sitting on the big stone. The youth was sad, oh how sad he was. His sad eyes were looking at the distance, opening from the steep slope, and his tears were rolling down his fresh face.

And his sister was amazed. She had never seen any tears in her family, except her own when she used to cry by being whimsical, angry or frightened of something. This third brother was notable for his especially easy and merry character. His laughter was echoing during the entire days by filling the whole house with his joviality as if some bells were jingling in it.

Having understood her brother’s heartache and sadness because of his separation with his native places, his sister conceived an insidiousness. She came nearer to her brother, embraced his neck, dried his tears with her lips, sat down on his knees and snuggled up to him tenderly.

“My dear brother. We are the nearest one to another. Don’t be sad and frightened. You won’t leave this place. I have conceived a plan. In the evening when our brothers are getting ready for their journey, I will change into your clothes, and you into mine. You will cover yourself with my shawl as if you had a toothache, while I will hide my plait under your cap as I used to joke many times before. We look like twins, don’t we? Even our father was unable to distinguish us. Everybody will be occupied with their own business, nobody will pay attention to our disguise. Only don’t laugh, because our laughter is different. The day is closing in early now, I can imitate your walk. It is important to leave our home, then I will manage to

settle my affairs. And when our brothers see that all their morals didn't help, they won't leave me in the middle of the way. But you can be calm, I certainly won't come back, and you will stay at home instead of me. You like our home and this life, don't you?"

"Lord, what a baby you still are, my sister. I admit that I was thinking that you understood better the duties of the daughter and the only mistress of the house, but you are still a real baby. We are still playing childish games sometimes, we exchange our clothes and we want our father not to recognize us instantly, but I couldn't even imagine that you were still so childish in serious matters."

"What are you so amazed at? What my childishness has to do with it? I love you and I'm ready to leave this place instead of you. Everything will be all right for you here, and you don't think about me, it will be all right for me everywhere," his sister was speaking to him by snuggling up to him tenderly, although she had suffered a bitter defeat with her older brothers two times already.

"My poor, dear sister," her brother answered to her tenderness, "because of your innocent naivety and purity, you don't even comprehend that you are persuading me to step into a lie and deceit. Well, how could you tell a lie to your father and to your brothers and then start your new life without the truth? What will that life be then? Life is joy, isn't it? The whole power of the day is because you can be happy with your free heart, because you can admire the world and people freely and peacefully. Then you can sing your song joyfully, because it is easy and free in your heart. Then you can appreciate your family and love when no lie oppresses you. Your every action is right and free, and you can brighten every man's life with your joy when no hypocrisy is oppressing you. And I must go to the world if my father tells me to do so. Apparently, the people in the cities don't have much joy, and I have to bring it to them every day, as much as I can do it."

His sister jumped up from her brother's knees as bitten, she was even more vexed due to her failure. She stamped her beautiful foot, put her arms akimbo and gave a shout.

"Are you also bothering me with your morals? You shouldn't moralize me, and I shouldn't listen to your morals! You don't see an inch beyond your nose! You don't understand that I was always making a fool of you as much as I wanted and wherever I wanted to! And you! You are bothering me with your fairness and joy. What has happened to you all, you all have lost your mind at the same time or what? You agreed to befool me, didn't you? I won't believe you that people are dear to you and that you want to be of service to them. Just think what righteous persons you are! You are glad because you can escape this godforsaken hole, but you are ashamed to confess that you are happy to leave your father and to get rid of your sister who can see the truth and who can reveal it anytime. You fool declare joy," she was unable to calm down by shouting with laughter always angrier, because she saw that she wouldn't gain anything neither with her tenderness not with her anger. "Your joy is worthy only of a penny if you are a ruthless egoist. A strange monk told us to leave, and we are running to strangers by leaving our own people to die, to rot in this deep, godforsaken hole. But we are going to have a good time in the cities! Oh, you hypocrites, you angry, dishonest liars, what do your own people, your real relatives mean to you?"

The youth stood up from the stone on which he was sitting, and his bright face became darker than a cloud.

"Yes, you are absolutely right, my unfortunate sister, I really was a fool up to now. But you've helped me to get rid of my blindness that was covering my eyes. You've helped my heart to grow many years old in a flash. My heart knew only one joy and could see only one happiness – that's the fairness within people. It couldn't see any lie in them, and it wasn't any sadness in it. It was always easy for me to be happy and joyful under such conditions. Now my heart understood the most terrible thing in man – his lie and envy. And now I understand how it is difficult for one to keep one's joy, how one needs to hold tight

in order not to let one's joy die out in one's heart when lie is in full swing around one and one's envy is tearing the most beautiful thing what God could give to man. Now I understand that God is alive in man if it is possible to hold out and not to give way to despair after seeing how rotting is already destroying the miracle of another man's external beauty. I, the fool, certainly needed this lesson of yours. I will be glorifying compassion during my entire life, because it has opened up my eyes and liberated me from the illusion of beauty. I understood what was the most beautiful within man and what was his integument. O Lord, what would have happened to me if I had found out the truth not here, but in a noisy city? I would think that men were rotting from lies and temptations only there, while here only the saints were living, whom I considered you to be. Now I understand that everything is living within man and that not surroundings are creating man, but that man is creating his surroundings. I understand how strong and brave man needs to be, how calmly he has to go through his meetings and all his affairs, how calm he has to be within himself in order for his joy never to die out. I was still sad only a moment ago, I was grieving because I had to part with my native home and you. Now I understand that our father stays here only because of you alone, and he's sending us in order for us to become tempered and to serve God and His messengers by serving people. I can only sing the songs and amuse people with them. Luckily, here, through you I understood what living within man could be and how impure he could be. How could I sing if this blow had stuck in my throat. Now I have time to become tempered. And believe me, neither my heart nor my voice will ever tremble anymore. I have poured the first tear of my life here because of you. Let it be my last one! I will be singing by glorifying life and joy, trying to awaken everything what the best in man is, his love and compassion, his serenity and not condemnation of others. And I will never be waiting for any favours from the people that I will meet, but I will be carrying my firm and loyal joy to them. Let's go, my sister, God is your judge, but not me. Be blessed such who you are. If you didn't grow up better next to your father, it seems that you will have to search for your own path yourself. Nobody will be able to show it to you anymore. But remember, my dear, don't start any new path from a deception. You won't achieve anything along this path, there's no happiness with a lie not because it is sinful, but because the liar locks himself up in the fortress, he chains himself to the pillar."

Her brother wanted to take his sister's hand and to tell her something else, but the girl pulled her hand out, roared with a rude laughter and shouted.

"Another righteous brother showed up. Three righteous brothers are marching to the city to educate people and to teach them a new life! Watch out, so that they wouldn't put you behind bars, into the fortress for your foolish truth. Then you will send me a message to ask for your freedom, and then I will remind you of this hour. I will remind you of everything and I will mock you no less than you are doing it now for me."

And the girl ran away, she hid from the whole family and she wanted neither to bid farewell to her brothers nor to see them to the far end of the village, although the entire village, from small to big, came to see three young travellers off.

The brothers were walking for a long time. They used to earn their living by working. People everywhere used to accept three well-built, great workers willingly, everywhere they used to rejoice at them and at the songs of the youngest brother, they used to bless them and to see them off, but sometimes they used to nod their heads and tell: "It is rather far off" when the brothers would refer to the city which their father had sent them to.

Nobody knows whether they were walking for a long or for a short time, but finally, they came up to the big city and they found a little house in the city's very centre, on the market square. They rented a room from two old, childless people.

Having rested from their far way, the brothers started thinking on how to continue their way. They had to part for the first time. Every one of them had to solve the matters of their lives for the first time, without any advice from their wise father. It became sad in everyone's heart, they remembered their pure and joyous native home where they were living without any trouble, where there weren't any of the questions in every step: how to behave, what to say to the people they used to meet, how to comfort a sad man.

And the more brothers were thinking about their previous life, about their present, the clearer they could see how much happiness their father had given to them by training their self-confidence and comprehension of what that backbone was around which the whole man's character was formed.

The youngest brother was the first who shook himself from sadness. He laughed with his own laughter – the bells echoed – and he uttered.

“Why are we sad before our separation? Aren't we carrying the image of our dear father within ourselves? Aren't we holding his dear hand in our hands? Can't we hear his blessing voice? All our words and actions now have to be not of our own, but of such a height of honour which our father has given to us. And how well it is for us now, because we understood him, we understood and appreciated his endurance, peace and tranquillity, and now we can prove our endless loyalty with our own actions to him. We aren't going to sit here in sadness, are we? I will take my lyre and I will be the first to move to the south, to search for that big city where I will be destined to serve people with my songs and with my love, as much as I'm able to. Farewell, my dear brothers, I believe that we still will see each other on the earth, happy and by blessing one another. If we aren't fated to meet one another, then I will see one of you in every man whom I will meet and I will give my greeting to him in such a way as though I was greeting you. My task is simple, it is easy for me to leave, I'm carrying only joy on my shoulders, not a difficult feat. Good-bye, my dear, be blessed. I part neither with you, nor with our father, nor with our sister, all of you are living in my heart. Wherever my life would take me, all my songs will be heard for you and through you, because thanks to your love and help I could understand oneness in every man.”

The youngest brother took his lyre, bowed to his brothers and left the city, although it was getting dark already.

Having seen their brother off, the travellers were left alone. They had their supper, helped their hosts to tidy up and told them that tomorrow at dawn they would leave, too. The old man nodded his head, felt sorry for the handsome tenants and asked them.

“Do you know at least where are you going and what are you searching for?”

“We know well what we are searching for, while only God alone knows where we are going,” the oldest brother answered him.

“There are people everywhere,” the middle brother added, “only if we wanted to love them and to get on in peace with them.”

“Yes, you are right. If you aren't seeking after happiness, then you can help people a lot,” the host uttered again, lost in thought. “There's a very big city on the bank of the wonderful and wide river to the north of our rich city, two hundred versts from here. My sister is living there. I could recommend one of you to her. Her son died, he was just like you,” he addressed the middle brother, “he was a good soul, too, well-built like you and healthy. A plague took him away in one night. It exterminated more than half of the city during an absolutely short period of time. Since then the city is abandoned and decayed, everybody is living in poverty there. So, the people are living there like in the city of tears and maledictions, evidently, they have already forgotten the God's name. Everybody is angry one with another, they are scolding, while

some of them, like my sister, have become meek and obedient, they are plunged in such sadness and pain that it is difficult to describe it in words. During our last meeting, my sister was telling me that she understood well how terrible her sins were, that she had lost her son through her own fault. I know that she will die only when the merciful heaven sends a man to her, who will want to become her son instead of the lost one. But who will want to enter the mourning family that is living in the perishing city? I also know the secret thought of my sister that if a youth of the same age as her perished son came to her and stayed in her family as her real son, that would be a sign for her that her sins were remitted and that the toil of her life was passed. If you, my friend," he addressed the middle brother, "are searching for an opportunity to give people help and kindness not in your words, your dreams or vows, then go to the unfortunate city, find my sister who most likely now is impoverished and bring her the heaven's absolution in your heart, with your kindness."

Without asking for anything more, the middle brother took his rucksack, bowed to the hosts, embraced his oldest brother and told him.

"I've found my path, my dear brother. I will try to be a son to the strange mother, I will respect her in the same way as I would do it for my real mother. My task is simple. I will try to remember our dear father's wisdom and nobleness, and I will be living according to his example. Be blessed."

He asked about the road to the perished city and went to the north, not worrying about the dark night.

Having left alone, the oldest brother was still pondering for a long time, but he didn't feel any sense of loneliness, longing or lack of self-confidence. His heart was calm, he understood that his task was more complicated and more difficult than the one of his brothers.

He was thinking for a long time about how to find his own way, how to recognize his own path among the countless paths, how to bring not a call for peace, but the peace itself to people. He looked back for the first time and meditated upon his entire life. He couldn't remember a single time that he would have argued with somebody, that he would have made somebody angry or irritated, but everybody used to settle down next to him, and every strange heart used to find peace.

Only his beautiful sister who was more beautiful than all fairies of the forests never had any peace. Her desires were always surpassing all her possibilities. Whatever presents she used to receive, wherever she was invited, it always seemed to her that it could be done better than it was done for her, and nothing used to make her happy.

The oldest brother was deep in thought why his sister was able to take neither their father's wisdom nor the oldest brother's tranquillity nor the middle brother's kindness nor the youngest brother's joy...

Where did he had to go now? In which country did he have to search for an opportunity to serve people by calling them to accept their circumstances? And he decided not to guess about that what will happen tomorrow, but to live every passing-by moment, every meeting with the whole completeness of his heart. Now he understood his complete liberation from any bonds, from any oppressive and restricting love, any fear, any doubts or worries for his close or distant people.

His father's wisdom pierced the heart of the oldest son through one more time, who had sent all his sons free from any duty or engagement into the distant world. He decided to walk his new path not thinking where he would go or what he would do, but how he would go, what kind of man he would be himself and how he would be carrying his peace to people.

It was dawning on the other side of the window. He looked round the room in which he parted with his beloved brothers, blessed them and the careful hosts, and left silently by trying not to wake up anybody.

Not knowing the noisy city which was still sleeping in this early hour, he was walking down the streets for a long time until he went into the wide road that was leading to the west.

After some time, he met carts loaded with hay, bread, oat, vegetable and fruit; herds of cattle and flocks of fowl – everything what the big city was eating. However, the young traveller was surprised not by the unseen abundance of goodness, but by gloomy, dismal and serious faces of men and women, and sometimes, even the ones of the children who were with them.

Joking lads and mocking maids were nagging at him several times by asking him where such a clever man appeared from, who was leaving the city just before the great fair, before the opening of the merriest show-booths. But the youth wasn't paying any attention to their mockery and insulting words. Nothing was able to disturb the tranquillity of his heart. And the angrier word was cast at him, the clearer it was for him how badly and ignorantly the people were living here, how difficult it was for them to see the beauty around themselves, not only within themselves or others.

He was walking for a long time. The carts were gone already, and the wonderful coaches with expensive harness and dressed people were rolling down. But the faces of these people – who didn't have any trouble for their everyday bread according to their clothes – were also gloomy, angry and rude.

The traveller kept going, he crossed many villages, met many people, but he didn't hear a single pleasant word, nobody even looked at him pleasingly.

The sun was already setting, the herds of cattle were coming back home, while the young traveller was still walking alone, and the world that was alive and noisy was like a dead desert to him, across which he was walking, repudiated by everybody. A shadow of cold began to penetrate into the youth's heart when all of a sudden, he heard a terrible cry for help and saw a ghastly sight: a woman with two little children pressed to the stone was crying with terror, while a furious bull was running towards her. It seemed that neither she nor her children had any salvation.

Having thrown his rucksack down in a flash, the traveller ran in front of the bull, landed on his back like a hawk and seized the ring which was put through the wild animal's nose. Having bellowed with pain, the bull bowed his head down, but the bold spirit's hand was pulling the ring, and the animal began to rush about, to plough the soil with its hoofs by trying to fling the unexpected rider and to tread him down. But the strong hand was holding the ring with such power that the bull couldn't bear the pain and it was roaring horribly with rage.

"Get out from here," the traveller cried to the woman, "hide in your house."

People from all sides were already running towards the terrible roar of the bull, and in several minutes, they shut the tamed animal in the stall which it had escaped unexpectedly.

The traveller was surprised by the gloomy and unpleasant faces of the people one more time. Nobody thanked him for saving the woman and her children, they didn't even ask him who he was, whether he was hungry or needed a shelter for this coming night.

The tired youth gave a sigh and decided to pass by this village, too, where his help was accepted so ungratefully. He could see the last shack already and he decided to spend the night close to the highroad, hungry, when the door of the last shack opened, and his saved woman appeared on the doorstep.

“Please, come in, don’t loathe our poor supper, rest under our roof. You must be coming from far away, you look tired. Don’t loathe our misery, come in. I cannot find any words to thank you for your service. You saved both my and my children’s lives, didn’t you?” the woman was speaking to him by wiping her tears and inviting the traveller to her poor shack.

There was only one room in the shack, but the floor was washed cleanly, a clean tablecloth was spread on the table, and ordinary, but clean dishes were put on it. Her frightened children were also washed and dressed cleanly.

Having taken the guest inside, the woman invited him to the closed yard where the washbasin was arranged next to the well. She gave him some soap, a clean towel, she offered him to wash himself without restraint, because there wasn’t anybody else in the house, except her and her children. She told him to come back to the room where they and the supper would be waiting for him.

The traces of difficult work and exhaustion could be seen on the woman’s face which was young and very beautiful. Her sad and weak voice was painful, and one could feel not only sadness, but also despair from her entire figure. Now her voice was reflecting an infinite gratitude to the man who had saved her life.

When the guest came back to the room, the woman seated him on the wooden chair, put a white plate full of evaporating, sweetly smelling soup in front of him and gave a big slice of bread to him.

“Eat, my friend. This plate and this place belonged to my dear husband,” the hostess uttered, and the tears began to pour down her cheeks. “What is your name, our dear rescuer? Without your fearlessness and your gigantic power, now we would be lying, killed by the bull, right? Those people who came running to help you weren’t even going to move when they heard my cry. When my husband married me, he brought me from far away, while it is a custom here for men to marry only their own women. That’s why we fell into disfavour here. My father-in-law gave the worst lot to my husband, and we had to feed ourselves from the trade by making our living with difficulty. Everything was all right, we still used to make both ends meet, but then my husband left for the city a year ago – and we still don’t have any news from him. Some of them say that he died in the hospital, while the others say that he was killed on the road during an argument among drunkards. But it doesn’t seem to be the truth, he was calm and kind, he never drank hard and he couldn’t argue with anybody.”

And again, the tears were pouring down the woman’s cheeks. She wasn’t eating almost anything, she was feeding her children and kept pouring some soup for her hungry guest, while telling him how much she was worn-out by trying to maintain her small farm, but she didn’t have time to reap the entire patch of corn, and the grassland wasn’t mowed down yet. The God alone knew how she would feed her cow and what she and her children would eat. Immersed in thought, the hostess was speaking to her guest sadly, evidently, she was glad at the rare possibility to talk to a well-wishing man about her misfortunes.

“Sister, my name is Alexander. Consider me to be your brother, while I will be an uncle for your children. I will stay with you and I will be working for you as a worker, while you will call and consider me to be your brother. I’m not hurrying anywhere, I will be in time where I’m going to. Show me your sythe, I need to hammer it out and to whet it. When we mow down the grass and dry the hay, then we’ll get down to the rye. Don’t grieve, pluck up your courage! When your husband is back, then I will leave. Believe me, not my hand has saved you from death, but the hand of my compassionate and wise father who has told me to go to the world and to carry peace to people. If I have saved you from the real death with his hands, then I will save your farm with his hands, too, and I will take both you and your children out of the jaws of starvation. Trust me, settle down. Laugh merrily by meeting every new day and live it in the

way as though your beloved husband was walking next to you. Train your children to joy, not to your permanent tears. Well, let's go, show me where your scythe is."

The guest's words sounded strange to the woman, and at the same time, as though it became brighter in the shack, as though it became not so cold and hopeless in her tired heart. She took Alexander into the hallway where all household tools were placed in good order and came back to the shack to her children. The children somehow came to life again, too, they were snuggling up to their mother and asking her whether the big uncle would stay with them.

While she was putting her children to bed, she was glad to hear the new sounds at home where the steps and voices only of her children and herself were the only signs of life for a long time already.

Alexander was labouring at the scythe for a long time, finally, he put it in order and came back to the shack. The children were sleeping for a long time already, while the hostess was embroidering by the little lamp.

"The scythe is ready, now it is time to sleep. Is there any little room where I could settle myself? Besides, my dear sister, I don't know your name," he told her merrily when he looked at her sleeping children.

"There's a little room in the loft, but I don't know whether it'll be all right for you there. It is very small, but the bed is comfortable there. And my name is Marta," the woman answered him when she noticed the kind Alexander's look at her children, and it became warmer in her heart.

Having taken the second little lamp from the stove, Marta accompanied the guest upstairs, thanked him for his kindness, blessed him again for saving both herself and her children from death and went downstairs.

For the first time, the dark night didn't see any Marta's tears, for the first time since her husband was gone, it was silent and calm in her heart. Having crossed her children and sent love to her gone husband, Marta went to sleep and was deep in thought about Alexander's words: "Laugh merrily by meeting every new day and live it in the way as though your beloved husband was living next to you." Marta was trying to think how she could imagine that her husband was always with her if he wasn't here, and nobody even knew where he was, but her fatigue and experienced fear overcome her thoughts, and soon Alexander was the only one who wasn't sleeping in the little shack. He put the little lamp out, opened the small window of the stuffy room, sat down next to it and, while looking at the play of the shining moon and the clouds, he was deep in thought about his father.

"I would like to know what my father is thinking about my act. Did I act properly by staying here to work for these helpless children and Marta? Maybe I didn't need to stay here, maybe I had to go to the noisy city where I was told to carry my peace?"

The youth remembered his father who would never leave the matters of his neighbours without any attention, how sometimes he used to send his sons to the neighbouring villages in order to help those families which had difficulties to manage their household for some reason. And the deeper he was in thought, the easier it became in his heart, the simpler and righter his own act seemed to be to him.

"Ah, father, if I could hear at least one word from you, I would be so happy," the youth thought for a while, left the window opened and went to sleep.

Alexander was asleep instantly, because he was tired after his long journey, his fight with the bull, his work when he was putting Marta's household tools in order and after all his experiences of the day.

And he saw a strange and unusual dream. It was so real, as though he had really seen and heard everything himself. He thought he heard his father's voice, he could see him, too. As though he was standing by the window that was left opened and telling him.

"Why do you doubt, my son? Not that day is important which will break, but that one which is flowing by now, isn't it? Did you do something wrong by saving the lives of three souls? The higher man's spirit is rising, the simpler his acts become, and it is easier for him to forget about himself for happiness of other people. Don't worry about anything and remember only one thing: whatever you do, do it till the end, wherever you will be living, don't lose your good fame for at least a moment. And it doesn't matter whom you ever have to associate with, don't condemn people. People here are gloomy and angry, they think only about themselves. They don't understand how one could be living his day, not searching for any benefit for oneself. Don't judge them, but smile to them calmly. I'm sending you not to educate them, but to show them the miracle in man, his living light with your own living example in your work and life. Don't think about what will happen next. Live and work while you are needed here. Life will show you both the day and the hour when you don't have to stay here anymore. Live and don't wait for any gratitude for your work, because it is mine. I have sent you to be my legs and my hands, my head and my heart on the earth. Live on the earth while your work is needed here for me."

Alexander wanted to thank his father for his words, he jumped out of his bed and saw that day was already breaking. He heard Marta's voice which was calling him to go downstairs for the breakfast. Alexander was surprised, he was unable to perceive in any way where his father disappeared, why the morning was here already if the moon was still shining a while ago. Marta's voice could be heard for the second time.

"Alexander, get up. You told me to wake you up at dawn yourself, didn't you? I'm sorry that I have to disturb your sleep, but I don't dare to disobey you," Marta was talking to him, while standing on the stairs.

"I'm coming, Marta, just a moment," the youth answered her merrily and ran to the well.

Soon, having left the children for the loyal dog to protect, Marta and Alexander went to the grassland. The way wasn't long, everybody was still sleeping, they weren't even driving their cattle to the pasture yet. When Marta took Alexander to the grassland, she started crying again, because everybody had already mowed the hay down and had taken it home.

"Marta, why are you crying? It'll take no more than three or four days of work for me here. I'm a great mower," the youth said to the unhappy woman, smiling.

"Ah, Alexander, you are wrong. You alone won't finish it here even in a week. Besides, when I remember the previous joy how me and my husband used to mow the hay down and rake it, as though my heart is pricked with a needle," still crying Marta answered him.

"My sister, it isn't good to remember your past with tears if you say that you still love your husband. This is a big ingratitude for him. You are thinking only about yourself, how it used to be, what you have lost. While I say this to you: don't waste your time crying. Live fearlessly, call your husband and think that he's next to you in every moment. Try to act in such a way that he would be glad of your actions, that the shadow of your heartbreak wouldn't obscure his face, but that the light of your smile would shine for him and make his path easier in any dark wherever he would be. Don't linger now, too. Go home, prepare

the dinner, take your children and come here with them. I will mow a lot of grass down before dinner. Bring another rake, we'll turn, dry and haystack it in the evening. Run joyfully, just look that I couldn't see any tears anymore."

Marta wiped the tears, tried to smile, but there was only a grimace instead of a smile.

"Not good, oh how not good it is," Alexander told Marta again and he began to mow the hay down with his heroic gestures. "Were the children, such kind children, given to you so that you would obscure their lives with your tears? Think about them. Try to amuse them and to make them happy with your every word. Especially today when the bull frightened them not so long ago. Try to do it in such a way that they would forget their fear for cattle. Run home quickly and come back here with dinner."

Marta hadn't heard such kind words for a long time. Nobody was interested in her affairs, children and life for a long time. A fervent wave of gratitude overflowed the woman's heart, she smiled joyfully and told him.

"Forgive me, dear Alexander. You have comforted and cheered me up so much that it is beyond expression. That day of my life was happy when I was nearly killed by the bull. I will be glorifying that bull during my entire life and I will thank destiny for the experienced horror. I run, my friend," and Marta gave a laugh. She hadn't laughed with such joyful and clear laughter for a long time, and she ran away as she used to do when she used to race with her husband.

Alexander was left alone in the silence of the blissful and flowering grassland and he began to think about his father's words which he dreamt of in the night. As soon as he started pondering about them, his father's voice seemed to him again and it seemed that he could hear his words clearly.

"My son, you are never alone! I'm always with you if your heart is calm, if your thoughts are pure and if you are doing your everyday work joyfully. There are all kinds of work. Some of them are simple, some are very complicated. But all of them are important only as much as much you are creating them with me, for me by weaving only one knowledge into them in every moment: everything what is living in a visible form, - everything is Eternity distributed into drops. And every drop of Eternity – that's a separate world. Man is one of the forms of Eternity. The whole world of passions, as well as the whole world of beauty is hiding within him. There aren't people who would possess only prevalent, spiritual powers, but there are people who are great, diligent persons, who dedicate lots of their strength for searching and perceptions about how to enter the path of love and how to give love itself to their loved ones so that it wouldn't be too heavy for them. There are lots of loving people, but there are few of them who can give their love by not demanding any wealth or gratitude in exchange for it. There are lots of mothers and fathers who love their children, but there are few of them who wouldn't oppress their children with their love. Rarely parents are able to respect their children and themselves within them so that they would be friendly to them and educate them with joy. Few of parents can understand the link between the living workers of the earth, whom they can see, and the same workers of heaven, whom they cannot see, and therefore, they are unable to educate their children properly and joyfully. Do your everyday work and comprehend that you are linked with the entire universe not only with your thoughts and your work, but also with your every breath. If you woke up in the morning and gave a gloomy sigh, you've already started your link with people in the wrong way. Then everybody whom you will meet, although he doesn't know anything about your gloominess and irritation, won't respond to your greeting so joyfully and simply as he would if your heart was free from worries about yourself and if your simple kindness was light and calm. Remember my words and realize them in your earthly work: one cannot disconnect oneself from other people, one can only strengthen people's happiness and peace with one's own restraint and peace, or one can litter up people's paths with one's passions, unrestraint and constant thoughts about oneself even more. Don't doubt. In every passing by moment, act simply and calmly, with the whole completeness of

your feelings and loyalty, then none of the moments of your life won't vanish in vain, although it would seem to you that you are doing the work of the least importance."

Alexander saw Marta with her children from the distance. She appeared on the turn, and his father's voice fell silent. His worry caused by the doubts about his deed settled down. In his thoughts he thanked his father for his help and for enlightening of his consciousness, and he understood that there was no big or small work, that it wasn't so much important how soon he would reach the city where he was destined to live. It was important only to tune the real perception of honour and kindness within himself with his ability to render this perception to every man whom he would meet.

"Only if I could always remember that the fire of Life was burning in every man, that I would serve it and address it and not that what I saw as a temporary form," Alexander thought for a while.

Marta who brought her children and dinner was looking at the Alexander's mowed down grass even with fear.

"Why are you so surprised, Marta? Our father has taught us all kinds of work, he would always tell us to do every work as easily and resourcefully as possible. I have my own way of mowing, that's why I work faster than others. Don't stand and be amazed in vain, grab the rake and start turning the somewhat dry grass. Look how the sun is scorching! I will mow the swath down till the end and come to help you, then we will have our dinner," Alexander told the amazed woman.

Marta seated her children in the shadow under a tree and went to the bushes on the other end from where Alexander had started mowing the grass. She was working in grasslands and fields for many years, she saw some great mowers, too, but she couldn't even imagine such an exceptionally strong man. She was trying to work as fast as she was able to, but she was unable to keep up with Alexander in any way, who had already mowed the whole swath down, and with the rake in his hands, he was already catching up with her by turning the grass.

Marta's thoughts were jumping without any logic. Now it seemed to her that her entire past had vanished somewhere, as though there weren't any difficult years of loneliness, unbearable work and tears, as though Alexander had always stayed with her, - she was feeling so self-confident and calm next to him. Then her thoughts would jump again, and fear would nag her heart – what would happen to her when Alexander would leave suddenly as he came, and her husband wouldn't come back? How will she be raising her children alone? What will happen to her cow and her house? Her thoughts were always flying back to her experienced pain and tears, and Marta couldn't see the shining sun, the birds chirping joyfully, she didn't feel the smell of the grass and the beauty of entire nature.

"Why are you so gloomy, Marta?" suddenly she heard Alexander's voice, who caught up with her.

"Somehow I feel unhappy in my heart, I have suffered so much, and what will happen in the future? There's only an obscurity – that's why fear is oppressing my heart."

And Alexander understood why his father was telling him about the passing-by moment. He understood that man is living on the earth and he is always thinking what has happened and what will happen to him, while his "now" is flying past anyhow and he doesn't even notice that passing-by "now". His futile, insignificant and not finished thoughts are oppressing his spirit and man cannot live happy and joyful, but he's afraid even of that what isn't here yet or what has already been.

“Marta, by glad, because we are mowing down the grass, your children are playing, and you will have great hay. Why are you looking forward, Marta? Turn the grass merrier, we’ll finish the swath and sit down to dine.”

Marta nodded her head, it was clear that she didn’t understand what it was to live now and not to think about what would happen tomorrow, but she didn’t tell him anything. She hadn’t finished her swath yet, while Alexander was already sitting with the children, and all of them were inviting her to dine.

Alexander was mowing the grass down till the late evening. He sent Marta and the children earlier to take the cow from the pasture and told them that he would be home late, only for supper. The voices of leaving Marta and her children hadn’t yet fallen silent when Alexander heard his father’s voice again, only this time he could hear his words even better.

“My dear and beloved son. Wherever you are, I will be with you. Whatever you do, if your thoughts are pure, I will be with you. Try to choose your thoughts, protect and keep your bright and bold thoughts and chase away your gloomy thoughts. There are neither diseases nor a bad man’s fate, there’s only that fate which he has created for himself, fate is the after-effect, fate is the result of his own thoughts and actions. Don’t worry if you cannot hear my voice for a long time. Keep doing everything as you have started and one day you will hear me again. Remember this firmly: you and me, the moon and the sun, the grass and the trees, any man and any living being, everything is he, the great, the only mind of the universe which is expressed differently in every form. There’s no death, don’t be afraid of it and explain to everybody that he is immortal, that his Self is God which cannot die and which exists everywhere. If anybody has to die with difficulty when a disease is tormenting him, it means that man was controlled by bad thoughts, self-love and gloominess which has brought him to such an end. Be joyful, choose pure thoughts, don’t separate from the universe and you won’t know any diseases. The beginning of them all – that’s fear and self-love. Protect your heart from rubbish, and your body will stay strong and tenacious of life.”

The voice ended. Alexander was standing in the grassland for a while, he thanked his father for his care one more time and he kept working until the very nightfall, he didn’t even notice when it became dark. Alexander came home, took supper, caressed the children a little, and from this day on his life was running by working and clearing everyone’s daily routine with his smile. And even the gloomy and rude neighbours began to talk to Marta’s brother, to Marta’s worker.

...

“The second son’s journey, his life and his lessons”

The second son left, full of energy. He was walking for a long time, searching for the way to the terrible city. Everybody whom he used to meet and to ask about the city was looking at him with fear and telling him: “My friend, don’t you want to live anymore? You will die there because of the plague, and even if you stay alive, you will become sickly from the townspeople hostility. You’d better go with us. We have lots of work to do, our soil is great. We’ll help you to build a house, you will take a wife and you will be living with pleasure. Our girls are beautiful. Stay here, throw your thoughts about that ill-fated city out of your head. You won’t be able to help anybody there, you’ll only ruin yourself.”

But the traveller wasn't listening to any tempting offers. He was dying to reach the poor woman's house, and even if he hadn't seen her yet, he was telling her this in his thoughts: "Dear mother, stay calm. I'm coming to you as fast as I can. Don't shed your tears. Life is sending forgiveness and comfort to you as you have asked. I would like to pick up all your tears and to change them into joy so much. Believe me, you will be my mother, and I will be serving you in such a way as I would do it for my real mother."

And the middle brother was meditating upon his many new thoughts during his long journey. People, whom he was telling why and where he was going to, used to disturb his thoughts with their talking many times. The conversation with one old man affected the youth especially strongly. Having found out that the traveller's goal was to become the son of the strange woman, the old man told him.

"Well, you've thought of a very difficult job for yourself. For man to accept a strange child to bring up is difficult, too. He has to find love for him as for his real child, and that is almost impossible to do. And in your case, mother of a grown-up man! How can you respect and love her in God's presence when you haven't seen her yet? What if you don't like her? Then you can hide it from people, but you cannot hide it from God and from your conscience."

The youth fell to thinking and he didn't know what to answer to the old man. He had really seen and heard many times that kind people were trying to ease others' lives and they were taking their children to their houses. But often they had to return the children back to their parents, because the children were irritating them, they were always making them talk in a raised voice, so there was always a mutual dissatisfaction and even tears of the children.

The further the youth kept walking, the stronger the old man's words were nagging his heart, like rust. And he couldn't find any answer to this, but he knew without fail that he wouldn't refuse his task or step back. And the middle son began to pray to his wise father by asking him to help him understand his tormenting question and to tell him how he should act. He lay down in the shade of the trees and he dreamt as though his father came to him and told him.

"My dear son. It seems to you that Kindness – that's your human quality. But in truth, this isn't your quality, but the God's quality, who is living within you. It cannot change because of the qualities of those people whom you give your kindness to. And you give it to them not because you want or you don't want to do so, and you give it not to that man who is visible with your eyes, but to that Light which is living inside of every person whom you meet, which is eternal and invariable as your own Light which you know as Kindness within yourself. If your Kindness is pouring out of your heart as the God's little part within yourself, then it was given to that little part of God which you were able to see. And then there aren't any reasoning left that people, children or grown-ups may be "strangers" or "your own" to you, that they irritate you or disturb the harmony of your everyday work and your home. You didn't see them when you gave shelter to them or helped them, but you were praying to Him, the Only One when you were associating with them. And now, don't be afraid of anything. Go to that woman whom your heart has called your mother bravely and easily. Trust your heart's wisdom and calm, bring your joy to That one who is living inside the woman's case.

From this day on, stop thinking that people are separated, existing separately. There's only one universal soul that is living in all earthly forms. Don't try to bow to all these forms with your work, but pray to the Only Soul simply and easily in all its incarnations which you'll meet. In the moments of confusion or lack of confidence, always call for me, so that those moments would pass faster. Each of such moments clogs the exit for pure power from your heart, and the surface of your heart becomes hard, it gets encrusted with rind and little knots. It doesn't matter how short the periods of passing doubts would seem to you, you can feel the difficulty that is preventing for kindness to get out your heart, as though a partition would rise between you and another person. Go joyfully. Don't push people away from you, don't refuse to

listen to their opinions, but smile to their childish twaddle when you see their foolishness and an absolute ignorance of the real essence of things. Your kindness given like a prayer, like a greeting of the Only One in man penetrates not into those visible cases of his, which submit to death and dispersion, but into that Eternal which doesn't change and which you glorify with joy that you were able to give your Kindness to the man you met. Live your working day easily everywhere a meeting stops you and know that there was a day if the smile of your greeting has helped the Only One in the universe to expand and to shine brighter from your meeting with a man. It isn't important how the circle of the Only One shined and expanded on the earth. It isn't important how you've helped a man to express Him wider, but it is important that your Kindness has awakened your neighbour's Kindness for an action.

From now on, live not within the boundaries of time and place where everything submits to change, dispersion and death, but in the entire universe by greeting the Unchangeable who is living within every visible form everywhere. Be blessed, stay calm in all situations of life and pass your prayer to His Only One without any words and morals. There are countless worlds in front of you, which you cannot see. And a countless abundance of forms is living in all these worlds. Never forget to bless all the worlds and to send your greeting to every bright brother wherever he would be living and whatever form of his work and actions would be. Your prayer, your greeting to man's fire depends neither on place nor on time, but it depends only on your purity, fearlessness and kindness."

The middle son woke up as if washed by the living dew, it was so easy and joyful for him. All his doubts seemed to be ridiculous to him, and he kept walking by looking at people whom he met in a completely different way. Apparently, people were looking at the youth differently, too, because nobody was inviting him to his home and they didn't call him strange or surprising anymore. Nobody was persuading him to stay or to refuse his plans to go to the terrible city. People acknowledged his task and became even kinder to him. More often someone's compassionate hand used to shove a modest parcel into his hands, while their lips used to whisper him modestly: "Take it, for the God's sake. That's not much, I'm sorry about it, but maybe it'll come in handy to you." Mostly, those were wonderful girls or completely old men who were doing this.

Finally, the middle son reached the city and found the house where he had decided to become help and joy to his foster-mother. He stepped into this house by remembering his father's words well, which he had told him in his dream.

As soon as he entered the yard, he saw the woman who was sitting in the porch instantly. She wasn't old yet, her face was tortured by heartache and disease.

"Hello, mother, I've come to you to replace your lost son. Accept me instead of him and allow me to help you with your work."

"Go with God, young man, do you understand what you are talking about?" the frightened woman answered him. "My house is infected, a disease has spread to our quarter. This time only a few people died, but the disease continues for many weeks, it exhausts people to death. Leave as soon as possible. I don't have strength even to talk to you. I cannot give you anything, because it's everything dangerous and infected where the disease is."

While the woman was talking to him, she was panting and when she was uttering the last words she swayed and almost fell down. The youth threw his rucksack off his shoulders, took the woman on his hands and told her.

"Don't be afraid of anything, mother. Only tell me where I should take you and stay calm. I'm here in time to nurse you."

The woman raised her hand with difficulty and showed him the door to the room silently. The tears were rolling down her face when the youth put her to bed which, evidently, wasn't made for a long time already. The air in the room was heavy and stuffy, there was a lot of rubbish on the floor which also weren't swept for a long time. The youth opened the window, he was smiling to the crying woman and he was absolutely calm.

"Mother, don't cry. I've told you that I've come to nurse you. Now I will give you something to eat. The good people knew that soon I would need their goods. I will cook the milky porridge and an egg for you. Just tell me where your stove is?" the youth asked her by looking about, not being able to see anything similar to a stove anywhere.

The woman showed him a heavy, motley curtain in the further corner of the room. Having pulled the curtain, the youth saw a little stove, a heap of rubbish and some fire-wood next to it. Soon he made the fire in the stove, cooked the meal and fed the patient who fell asleep after the meal instantly. Having taken advantage of her sleep, the guest put the room and the porch in order, took the rubbish and the buckets with the stagnant water out and sat down by the bed to wait for his foster-mother to wake up.

His thoughts came back to his father's words. He remembered his native house, compared his father's words to his own life, ran through his father's behaviour year after year attentively and he made sure that his father was living exactly in the same way as he was telling him in his dream. He was trying to remember his father's angry or irritated face or at least one of his words uttered in a raised voice, but he couldn't remember anything, except his always kind words, his kind-hearted smile which sometimes used to flash with humour.

He started examining the face of the sleeping woman attentively. There was so much torture and anxiety in this aging face! The youth felt sorry for the poor woman from the bottom of his heart and in his thoughts he said to himself: "I will love you with my entire heart, I will live with you, as though my father was next to me, as though the most important matter of my life was to replace your son and to awaken joy within you. I will live next to you in such a way that your heart would rest and Light would expand within you. I will try to transfer fortitude and belief to you that my father is next to us, that he can see and hear everything what we are doing. I will be serving you sincerely, and you will make sure that not only the bond of blood makes people happy. When you make sure of it, you will find your new goal of life yourself – to give the simple kindness to people. Then I will continue my way, and you will need neither crutches nor support anymore. A man needs them only while he is thinking about himself. As soon as he stops thinking about himself and when his first thought is about the matters of the person whom he meets, since then his days are flowing easily and joyfully, and joy is ringing in his heart."

While the youth was sinking into his thoughts, they were merging with his father's thoughts more and more, and it seemed to him that not he was talking to himself, but that his father was sending a blessing word to him again. And such joy, such peace filled the whole existence of the youth that it seemed to him that he had never experienced a happier day during his entire life. He gave a smile to the people's opinions about his difficult and terrible deed which he was undertaking. He equated his current life not with a deed, but with a victorious joy.

He looked at the sleeping woman's face again and noticed that its expression began to change. A reconciliation and peace, that peace with which joy begins, appeared on her face instead of sadness and anxiety. The youth didn't have time to be amazed at such change when the woman moved, opened her eyes and extended her hand to him with the smile.

"Is it for real? Are you really next to me, my son?"

“Mother, I was protecting your sleep for a long time. Lately, it seemed to me that you were feeling better, that your disease wasn’t tormenting you so much anymore.”

A disappointment flashed through the patient’s face, a cloud of sadness lay upon it again, but she stood up with all her might, extended her hands towards the guest and told him.

“I’m stupid, forgive me. I dreamed of my son for the first time since his death. And I saw him as alive, so I even mixed him with you and when I woke up I was unable to understand instantly where the illusion of the dream ended and where the reality started. Therefore, I didn’t smile to you, so kind and friendly, instantly. But you understand yourself who the real son for his mother is. In the future, I will try to be thankful to you as much as I can.”

“Come, come, mother. Don’t think about your gratitude to me and about your son’s death. Only imagine that he’s alive and that he’s always thinking about you, just like you are thinking about him. But how has he always look at your tears, your anxiety, your suffering? You haven’t thought about it, but if you fall into thinking, then it will turn out that your son is to blame for your suffering. While you are mourning over him, you are accusing him of your misfortune. And all your tears are flowing through all his current affairs and marking everything with the sign of heartache. And in truth, that’s you who should tell everybody how pure and saint with his love to you he was, how he was taking care of you, how he was trying to fill your every day with liveliness and peace. Now try to prove to everybody that he was living next to you not without reason, that an eternal memory about his work for you remained within your heart and that you want to thank him for his life with you not with your tears and sadness, but with your work for your close people. With that happy and peaceful work which he didn’t finish, because he left you so early, but which you will do for him. Think about his liberation, about how you can help him to become free, and not about your sadness. It doesn’t matter how much you would ask Mother-Life and all wise men why your son died so early, - you won’t be able to receive an answer, because the crying eyes cannot see the truth. One is always crying for oneself, although one is thinking sincerely that one is crying for others.”

“It has never occurred to me that my tears could cause trouble to him, but now, my friend, as though I’ve become enlightened, as though the lightning has flashed across my thoughts that a living connection is existing among people, although they cannot see each other. Thank you. Be my son whom destiny has sent to me. I’ve been thinking many times that if Compassion sent me a youth who wanted to be my son, I would know that I was forgiven, that I could expect to expiate the whole falsehood of my life. I would try to love my son sent to me, to give all powers of my heart and thoughts to him anew, I would glorify the God’s world within his personality, and now when you’ve come I didn’t meet you with anything, except my yearning and tears,” the woman was talking to him, still crying.

Her son stroked her hands extended to him tenderly and answered him.

“It doesn’t matter how you’ve awakened, - the time has passed already and carried your act off. If at this moment you tell me that with your spirit you have understood how you should act in your life, then why should we talk so much about the past? Get up, get better and let’s both of us bring the certitude into all our actions every day that exactly this ordinary work is the most important and fundamental. We’ll be living like this with our attention and kindness concentrated, and let everything else happen as well as possible for everybody. Let’s not waste our time for words. I can see that there isn’t any fire-wood and water left. Tell me where can I find them so that I could cook some porridge?”

“I will explain everything to you, but tell me what’s your name? My dear son’s name was Boris.”

“And my name is Gleb. Well then I’m your son’s brother,” the youth gave a laugh.

“It is so strange, my new and dear son Gleb,” his mother told him, lost in thought. “Since his childhood, my Boris was always telling me that he would certainly have his brother Gleb, but I haven’t give birth to his brother, and Mother-Life has sent Gleb to him only when he’s gone already.”

And the streams of tears were running down the woman’s cheeks.

“Mother, you are crying again, but it must be difficult for Boris now. Your wish has come true, you aren’t alone now, but you still cannot send your joyful smile of greeting to him, so that it would be easier for him. What do you think? We have just decided to live joyfully, so that it would be easier, simpler and merrier for everybody who is next to us, but that one whom you call to be your closest and dearest one you’ve upset again, you’ve burdened his path by pouring the new bog below your feet from your tears.”

“I won’t be crying anymore, Glebushka. You see, there’s the woodshed over there. There is the fire-wood placed there, you only have to chop it into little bits, and when you turn around the woodshed, you will see a streamlet with a small waterfall. There’s great water there. And the view is wonderful there, Boris loved it very much there.”

Gleb took the buckets and pretended that he didn’t notice how his mother mopped the tear secretly when she was uttering her son’s name...

And Gleb’s days began to run calmly. In some time, he put the entire home in order, he repaired the roof, revived the whole farm, and his mother’s health was improving day after day. Her tears were rare, her face was always merrier, her voice was always brisker. However, her habit to be afraid of people, which was formed during the years when disasters befell both on the city and on herself, was still of great vitality...

Gleb was making lots of efforts to fight against his mother’s fear, but anyway he managed to overcome this obstacle, too, and he persuaded her to open the gates, the doors and the windows and to allow people to visit them.

“Mother, think a little. Why were you living this day? In order to be afraid of something? Then you cannot occupy any place on the earth anymore. You are afraid of something, consequently, you are walking with death and not with life. You haven’t passed your kindness with your greeting to any person – hence, only death was living within you, and you within it. In the meanwhile, your greeting to a person has to be – Life with God and for God. If there wasn’t such greeting with people, then this day didn’t bring anything, except death to you, so why should you be afraid of it? You shouldn’t be afraid of it, because you weren’t living during this day.”

Little by little, experiencing all stages of fear, through big trouble and suffering, his mother was making herself free from the clutches of fear, which were burning her, although she was often disappointed in bold behaviour of her new son who was walking across the contaminated city fearlessly, she was reproaching Gleb that destiny had sent him to help her, but that he wasn’t even thinking about her.

“I couldn’t even imagine what happiness was to live on the earth when my heart was free from fear, it was so easy and calm to work,” once Gleb’s mother told him. “When you used to tell me that it was important only that what and how you were doing now, it seemed to me that simply you were still a child and that only childish thoughts were in your head, that the most important thing was to be a serious and practical person – to take care of his and his loved one’s tomorrow. Not long ago, I understood what you were talking to me about when you were stating that life – that’s “now”. Only that “now” of yours has

explained to me how man needs to liberate his heart and thoughts, to clean them namely in this moment, because the future moment was born from the current one.”

“And the current moment is obscuring those eyes which are crying and it doesn’t allow to see them clearly,” Gleb gave a laugh by embracing his mother.

“No, my son, my eyes aren’t crying anymore and they can see clearly what they have to do, so that the power of joy was born.”

The days were passing by, his mother and her new son made lots of friends in the city. There wasn’t any request which their hospitable home would push away. Every person was comforted when they were leaving their currently peaceful house which once was buried in tears and sadness. Everybody who was leaving their house used to think: “Well, at last I’ve found some faithful friends.”

And as though some partitions within the hearts of the new Gleb’s acquaintances were melting away, which were hindering them to be ordinary men up to now. Earlier, some of them were thinking how to keep their superiority against men they used to meet, some were trying to be useful for their relatives with all their might, the third ones believed in God strongly and they wanted to teach everybody whom they used to meet how they needed to live, they valued them only according to their own ideals, the fourth ones were trying not to waste their time in vain, they were trying to educate people with their every word and action by thinking that namely that was their greatest merit, but an ordinary kindness wasn’t flowing from their hearts. Only after meeting Gleb, many of them understood that not the people whom they used to meet were preventing them to be kind, but that the plates of conditionalities were placed within themselves, on which they were drawing different reflections of the people they used to meet by seeing not the Eternal, but temporary within them.

It would become brighter and merrier within every heart as soon as she used to see what was preventing her own simplicity in the relations with people. Many of them who used to tell the following before: “And where should I take that joy from?” – now they were smiling to their previous ignorance that was the only cause of their poorly spent day.

In his thoughts, Gleb often used to come back to his parting with his brothers. He didn’t worry about his oldest brother. He always used to see his unshakable peace in all circumstances of life, he felt himself and noticed how another person’s peace was increasing when he was next to Alexander. He was certain that his oldest brother not only would fulfil his task, but he would exceed it.

However, his thoughts about his youngest brother, the handsome singer, were disturbing his heart and worrying him. How will be the handsome boy living in the big city alone? Will his wonderful song be the sufficient way to unite with people? Not everybody liked songs, needed them and were able to respond to this language of love, did they?

And the youngest brother who left first was the last who reached the big, unknown city. He was walking for the longest time, because already during the first night he met three homeless travellers and joined them.

He didn’t have time to walk five versts when in the darkness of the night he heard a silent cry, it was a child’s cry – so it seemed to him. The traveller stopped, listened attentively to the cry, went out of his big way and went towards the roadside trees. A little dog appeared in front of him, he sniffed at him, jumped up, licked his hand a little, began to howl and ran forward as though by inviting him to follow him. He followed the dog and saw a ten years old girl under some blossoming, sweet-scented bush. She was holding a boy’s head on her knees and crying bitterly.

“Why are you crying, dear girl?” he asked her, bent down and started stroking her head.

“My little brother is dying. Look, he doesn’t answer anything to me anymore. And without him, both me and our little dog Whity will also die. We were making our living only because my brother was playing the violin, I was singing and dancing, while Whity was jumping and doing conjuring tricks which we have taught him to do. We had bad luck today. We didn’t earn anything, and nobody accepted us to stay overnight. I was thinking that we would have time to reach the city while it was still light, but my brother became so weak that he could hardly walk, and we were overtaken by the night here.”

The girl was crying while she was telling him about it, and he could hardly understand her mumbling words. The traveller sat down on the ground next to her, spread his warm cloak and laid the poor boy on it. He put his little pillow under his head, which his father had told him to take with him and which he didn’t want to take by considering it to be an unnecessary superstition. Now he gave a smile by putting it under the boy’s head, thanked his father in his thoughts, who had to repeat his words twice.

By lending an attentive ear to the weak, but even boy’s breathing, he explained to the girl who was still crying tenderly.

“Girl, don’t cry, your brother isn’t dying, simply he has become weak because of hunger and tiredness. I have some milk, bread, eggs. Soon we’ll eat to satiety. Now you drink some cold milk, have some bread and feed Whity. I will try to pick some dead wood and branches, we’ll make a bonfire, cook some porridge for both your brother and ourselves. Forget about your heartbreak. Now I am with you, and everything will be all right. You are a brave girl, aren’t you? Well, then show an example to everybody, don’t cry, otherwise your brother will wake up and he also will start crying. As you can see, Whity is already howling. Be strong, wipe your tears, feed the doggie quickly and eat something yourself.”

The youth stood up and went to pick some dry branches for the bonfire, but the little hand held him by his skirt.

“Did the God send you to us? You are a guardian angel, aren’t you? Now you won’t leave us alone, will you?” the girl was asking him fearfully.

The youth gave a joyful laugh from the child’s naivety, squeezed her trembling little hand, stroked her little head and answered her.

“Believe, believe from the bottom of your heart, trust till the end that lost children don’t exist in the world. Everybody will find his own happiness if he is working honestly. Believe me as much as you can. It is unimportant who I am, but it is important that your meeting with me has brought you joy, that both you and your brother became happier, merrier and more cheerful. Eat, feed your doggie and don’t think about anything else anymore. If I told you that I’m going for some fire-wood, I will find it, and we’ll be cooking our supper. Just don’t cry.”

Soon the night guardian came back with the fire-wood, the bonfire flamed up, warmed the children and the dog, and when the boy woke up, the porridge was already prepared.

The hungry boy was amazed and he couldn’t understand for a long time that he could see the hot porridge with the butter for real, and not in his dream. In the meanwhile, the guardian angel who didn’t want to take any reserve ration of food for his journey was thanking his brothers who had achieved their goal, and he was as happy as the hungry children.

When the heated and satiated, poor wandering musicians fell asleep with their doggie, all of them wrapped up in the rescuer’s cloak and pressed to him, the rescuer himself began to think out a plan

of his upcoming actions. This first meeting of his was just in time. With his lyre and his songs, he couldn't be of more use to anybody except these begging poor things.

He remembered his home, his father, his joyful childhood, his little sister. So often he was trying to teach her his songs and to cheer her up! But every time, with vexation, she used to interrupt him by telling him that she was bored with the childish amusements, that they were singing and laughing so much in their home that both songs and laughter had bored her to death already.

He remembered his father's words which he often used to say to his daughter by looking at her gloomy face: "My poor baby! Only the angry persons need neither songs nor laughter."

The traveller remembered how his father was tormenting himself by seeing always gloomy face of his daughter. Now, while being surrounded by the comforted and calmed down orphans, he remembered his last meeting with his sister, his sadness and tears because of the parting with her whom he loved, he remembered his pain, disappointment and the blow from his sister's words.

"Ah, if I was able to bring consolation and joy for people during my entire life as in this moment. If trust and cheerfulness remained in people's thoughts from meeting me, as in these two hearts which are pressed to me like this during this first night. Let my meeting with them be blessed! The sun is rising! I will sing about this first meeting of mine, let my words fly into the world, perhaps, it'll become easier for somebody because of my song. Hear me, my wise father, bless me and direct me to the new life!"

And, having taken his lyre into his hands, having looked at the children and the doggie who were sleeping calmly at his feet, he broke into a song by greeting the dawn. It seemed that he had forgotten about everything. In this moment, with all might of his thought, he was living only within beauty, he was praying only for one thing: to live by uniting people with beauty, by awakening its need in their hearts, the need to work harmoniously for them.

Having finished his song, the traveller looked round and saw that the children were on their knees from both of his sides, with their little hands put for the prayer, while the doggie was standing on his back pads next to his feet and moving his front ones. The happy traveller wanted to laugh already, but he heard the girl's words.

"Uncle, now I really know that you are a guardian angel. Only the angels are able to sing like this. Ah, if we could learn this song from you! Then probably, people would always give us some bread and not turn us out of their houses for the night. Monk, do you think I could learn this song?" she addressed her brother.

"No, Fani, you are never able to sing like this," the boy answered her, "but don't be dispirited, I remembered the whole song and I will be able to play it with my violin, while uncle will tell you the words and you will sing it in your own way. Uncle, won't angels be angry if we sing it according to your words?" he asked the unexpected fellow-traveller very seriously.

"My naïve children, don't ram any fairy-tales into your heads," he answered Monk joyfully. "Life isn't a fairy-tale, and you know it very well from your own experience, although it is short, but sad. I'm exactly the same man like you, I also don't have my own home like you and I'm also a wandering musician like you, without any money and bread. Life which always knows what it is doing has sent me to you and you to me, so that we could live in the world easier and simpler. Throw all sorts of delirium about the travelling angels who are saving children out of your dear heads and believe strongly that your entire salvation, as well as your entire life, is in your own hands. If you are cheerful, if you don't cry because of the difficult work, but you are working joyfully, your life will be the happiest. Let's not waste our time, let's pick some fire-wood, I still have some coffee and milk left, we'll cook our breakfast and decide how we should

live. Monk has to rest today, but tomorrow we'll set out to our great path. I believe that we'll earn some living and that we won't have to starve. We'll make our new program during this rest day, we'll reconsider it well after breakfast and now, let's go to work."

The new troupe of musicians rose joyfully to pick up some cones and dry branches for the bonfire, because the trees on the roadside which they saw at night seemed to be like a little forest. The time flew by as the merriest feast for both the children and Whity who was running after them. It seemed to them that there wasn't any happier morning up to now. Having fed his new family, the youth told them.

"Well, my brother, play your song with your violin for me, I'll see whether you were boasting of it or you really are a master."

"Oh, uncle, if you knew Monk, you wouldn't be talking like this," Fani whispered him reproachfully.

The boy took his violin in silence. It was the real, big violin of the grown-up. He tuned his violin in an especially tender way, stroked it like a living being and told the youth by surprising him with his seriousness.

"This is my father's violin. He was playing the violin perfectly, but he used to say to me that I would play it better than him. Sometimes when I used to play the violin, he would weep and tell me this: "My God, what am I guilty of before you that I have no possibility to let this genius child to study?" Since Fani says that you are a guardian angel, then you'll understand yourself whether my father was right and whether I have to study somewhere."

Monk began to play, and the traveller recognized that song which he was singing in the morning, at dawn instantly. But it was sounding strangely to his ear. As the author, he admitted that the song was both that one and not. The boy was playing it in such an original way that now it seemed to the singer to be much better conveyed. It was difficult to believe that these sounds were flowing from the little fingers of the boy and not from the little pipe of the miraculous creature who was singing in a human voice. The Monk's melody needed only words. It filled up the youth's heart. He was sitting amazed, not being able to take his eyes off the little, serious, concentrated and feeble figure of the boy who was absorbed in himself. When the little musician stopped playing, he looked at his guardian modestly and asked him again silently.

"What do you think, our guardian angel? Am I worthy of studying? Has God sent you to us, so that you would become our guardian and help me and my sister to become artists? If you knew how Fani can sing and dance, then most likely, you would pity us. Allow me to play again, and Fani will sing and dance for you. Perhaps, at least she seems to be worthy of studying for you, our dear, compassionate guardian angel."

The youth was touched to the bottom of his heart. He jumped up, lifted the boy up like a feather, pressed him to his heart and kissed him heartily several times.

"You aren't only a great violinist, but you are a great musician, too, my dear boy, my joy, my wonderful meeting which life has sent to me so undeservedly. I promise to you that the best teacher will teach you, even if we had to sail across the sea because of this."

He sat down, seated the boy, the girl and the doggie on his knees and continued his thought, while stroking all three of his foundlings.

"First of all, my dear children, remember very well, once and for all: I'm exactly the same man, just like you, I've never seen any angels or been in their company, just like you. From now on, I'm your

oldest brother and I will have to replace your father for you in the best possible way. In this way, this question is solved. Life isn't a fairy-tale, everybody is working on the earth, and we are going to do exactly the same. I hope that it'll be easier and merrier for you with me. Now we are going to think a little what a program we have to prepare, so that people would like it, and we would always have bread and a shelter for the night. We'll go to the nearest small town along the big road where all travellers stop and organize our first performance there, which now we are going to conceive and to discuss."

Pretty soon, three artists accommodated one to another, only the fourth one, Whity, required more of their attention. Finally, the hard-working dog understood all the details of his role, and when Monk rested enough, the new troupe set out to the road.

"Uncle, wait," Fani stopped everybody. "If you say that you aren't an uncle angel and if you don't want us to call you like this, then tell us your human name, otherwise nobody will believe that you are our brother."

"My name is Apolon, call me your brother Apolon, just as I used to be called in my family," the youth answered them by hurrying the children, because the sun was high in the sky already.

The new family of musicians were very successful in the nearest small town. It was the market day, most people were in a cheerful mood because of the successful market and they rewarded the beautiful children and their young guardian generously for their songs and dances.

The children weren't so happy and satiated, they weren't sleeping in such clean beds as today a long time ago, because their earnings didn't allow them to rent a separate room. They were already admiring their new clothes and shoes in several days. Now they were always satiated and self-confident. All three of the little artists were idolizing Apolon. And only sometimes, snuggled up to their guardian modestly, they used to stroke him with their little hands and whisper timidly to him.

"Brother Apolon, you will never leave us, right? We won't be able to live without you anymore."

"I will take you to the big city. You will be studying there, and I will be singing and earning money for your studies. This is our program. Why are you thinking so often what is going to happen in the future! Your short and difficult life had to teach you that we didn't know a single tomorrow, that only this day existed. Be happy, sing and play, learn well and that's it."

The weather was favourable for the young troupe. Many times they heard all kinds of tempting offers from rich people, many were trying to allure the children from Apolon, silently they were promising wonders to them, but nothing was able to tear their hearts off Apolon, besides their only dream was studying. Every time there were less versts left to the great city, every artist already had a fat wallet, because they were working hard, they were always developing their program which was successful everywhere.

"You know, Apolon," once Monk told him, "although I've made sure that you always tell the truth, but I still cannot believe that you aren't an angel. You are so kind and you sing so well that when man is listening to you, he is all drowned somewhere. Please remember, maybe any of your grandfathers or grandmothers were related with the angels. Well, at least a little relationship is linking you to the angels. Remember, I ask you very much, you must have only forgotten about this," Monk was talking to him bitterly by showing the nail of his little finger to him.

Apolon gave a cheerful lough and answered him.

“You see when you are playing your father’s songs, then not only the entire man is drowned, but as though the whole universe disappears with him. Your sounds make everybody lapse into silence: both the birds and the dogs. But I don’t suspect you and I don’t think that you are hiding your angelic descent from me.”

“Oh, I’m a man, the most ordinary man. As far as I remember our father and mother – people were always persecuting all of us for our belief. But I cannot explain it to you what that belief of ours was and why the people were harming us because of it. Sometimes our father used to comfort our poor mother and tell her: “Don’t be sad, Garani. They are blind men full of superstitions. Go nobly, don’t go out of your way, and life will reward either us or our children. Believe till the end and instead of your tears, smile to the ignorance of the hearts which are persecuting us when they are trying to please their God so much.”

Monk was silent for a while, then he added bravely.

“I think that our father wasn’t wrong. We met you, consequently, life has rewarded us instead of them. I believe that you will help me to study, and I will become an artist, as my father used to tell me.”

“And I will be learning to dance. I want nothing more in my life as to dance,” Fani uttered and threw her arms round her older brother Apolon’s neck.

“I don’t know whether it is the truth that you want only to dance, my dear sister, but I can see clearly that now you want only to sleep,” Apolon told to the laughing girl while laying her to bed. “Children, sleep now and tomorrow we have a performance – it’ll be our rehearsal before we reach the great city. We’ll have to draw attention to ourselves, so that great teachers would want to teach us. Have a rest, concentrate your strength, so that tomorrow you would be cheerful and full of energy, while I’m going for a walk.”

Having left the children under an attendant on duty supervision, Apolon left the inn and sat down on the secluded bench in the park. He wanted to stay alone for a while and to think about everything what had happened to him during this time. As soon as he started to remember his brothers whom he hadn’t seen and about whom he hadn’t had any news for so long, he heard the steps and saw a woman who was muffled herself up in a shawl hurrying towards him.

“I noticed that finally you went out alone, without your unbearable children who are always clung to you. Don’t try to deceive me. I’ve been watching you for the whole month already and I’ve found out your entire story. People told me that the children have clung to you on your way, they aren’t your true relatives at all, as you are telling to everybody. One can see from your manners that your origin is very high and that you cannot be a wondering musician in any way. I don’t know what has pushed you into this path, but I think that I shan’t be far out in saying that an unhappy love has made you to hide yourself and to hide your name. But perhaps, your unhappy love isn’t so much unhappy as it seems to you. You had to notice that both me and my father were always trying to take part in your performances, we were sitting in the first rows and we were the most generous of all your listeners. I linger everywhere intentionally, so that you could catch up with us. My father adores me and he will do everything for me, he doesn’t like my attention to the wondering musician, attention of the richest bride around to the strange man. Therefore, I came to tell you that I’m interested in your fate. Come to my father to work as his assistant. Although he is haughty, but I will force him to invite you at our table, and then we can see each other often and unhindered. You will be working as his assistant for a while, you will show your efforts as far as my father’s business is concerned, you will become his senior assistant, then I will be giving you some money secretly, you will become his companion and then you can ask for my hand already. But I insist you on leaving your

nasty foundlings. There are many cloisters in our big city, so you can leave them there. I will give you some money for their maintenance. Now answer me quickly whether you agree to my terms? I was feeling your passionate look directed to me many times, I know that I'm beautiful and that it is impossible not to fall in love with me. Don't worry for the big distance that separates us. I will get everything what I ever want to. Leave all our matters for me to solve. I know that this meeting surprised you very much. I understand your perplexity and silence. But don't worry, although I'm the mistress of these lands with my riches and my beauty. I'm the mistress, hence I can ignore everyone's common opinion and I can act in any way I want to. Answer me quickly, because my father may be back from the inn in any moment, he loves to sit with his friends there for a while, in the evenings."

The girl threw her shawl down and moved nearer to Apolon. The aroma of her black plait and the glittering rings on her hands, her black eyes, her stout figure, even her rather sharp and commanding voice – everything was just like his sister's. The youth who was turning red and white several times during the entire speech of his companion because of his insulted manly pride remembered his father, he remembered where and why he was going, he stood up, bowed to the stranger and answered her absolutely calmly.

"Thank you very much for your attention to my fate, but you were wrong about everything. I left my home not because of my unhappy love, but because my father has told me to do so, and I have a business to do. I won't leave the children, because they are my most real brother and sister, and their fate is my fate, and one cannot escape one's fate. I'm a poor trader, and I cannot trade love at all. Besides, at the moment, not women are in my thoughts and in my heart, but that path of God about which you have no idea. I'm the least suited for you from all the men whom you could choose for yourself..."

The girl jumped up like bitten. She muffled herself up in the shawl again and interrupted Apolon in a hissing, furious whisper.

"You, unfortunate beggar! You, comedian! I will avenge you cruelly. You won't earn a penny in our city. I will avenge you in such a way that you'll remember it till your very death."

"If I've deserved such punishment, let the God's will happen through your hands, but there isn't and there won't be any anger for you in my heart. Live, I will always bless you, it doesn't matter how much evil you would do for me. God is living within you, exactly as in every other being, and sooner or later you will certainly find him within yourself."

As though an astonishment flashed through the girl's face, but she didn't answer him anything, she gave a sharp laugh by reminding him of his sister again and vanished in the dark.

Apolon went even further in the park and sat down in the darkest place where nobody could see him anymore. He was feeling some kind of disharmony within himself. That wasn't a longing or a sorrow, but his thoughts about his father, about his loneliness without him were pouring from his heart like a moan or a complaint...

"Apolon, do you remember how you were sitting on the same bench several years ago, full of sad thoughts and pain because of parting with me? My voice gave you cheerfulness back then, I showed you the way how you should move forward without any fear, not showing your sadness to the children, how you should infuse them with self-confidence in all circumstances and strengthen their joyfulness with your own tranquillity. Your loyalty for my precepts haven't swayed. You didn't lament that as the precept I gave you the lesson to serve the masses of people by binding you with two orphans-beggars and their dog for many years.

Now your children are independent, well-known in their own spheres of art, and it is time for you to leave them by instructing them to serve people in their turn, as well as they are able to do it.

Don't be so sad for leaving your children whom you love like your closest relatives. Leave the last conditionality of your personal attachment and go to those places which I will show to you.

There aren't any superstitiously blessed places on the earth, but there are some places where many saint, selfless and pure people have purified the atmosphere of the earth around their living places in many miles with their pure joy during many years.

You will visit several of such places and leave there the symbols of Wisdom which I will tell you to and which you will perpetuate there yourself. Some of them, which I will tell you, you will bring to the people whom you will meet in the form of songs, cantos and prayers. An especially sacred part of them you will hide in the earth and in the stones. Those whose hearts will be pure will be able to see the Power of their Light. Those who are searching for the Truth and for the paths to it will try to settle there for many centuries.

Don't think that by travelling around the world you will leave my precepts to a certain sects or people who can see God only in their rituals. You will be travelling not for the believers, but for the sinners, searchers and for those who want to become free.

You were sitting here several years ago – the youth who hadn't yet known the whole abyss of sins and sorrows, the whole darkness of people's fall and hypocrisy. Here you have forgiven the woman and blessed her, although she poured you with poison of lie and malediction for your push away, bodily love. And just like your heart managed not to condemn her, but to extend the gift of love from the Only One for her, just so my heart united with your heart in Love of the Only One for your daily work.

That person is free, and God is living and shining within him, who didn't condemn his enemy and forgave her, who forgave her not with his mind, but with all his great and humble Love.

That person is free, and God is living and shining within him, who didn't accept the brilliance of external gifts, but who acknowledged the right to live for a nobody by noticing Me within her.

That person is free, and God is living and shining within him, who tore himself away from his family and understood love as the main body of Eternity in every person he meets, who doesn't regret for the bliss of his past, who isn't sad for his present and who isn't afraid of his future.

Go to those places which I will specify to you without any fear, easily and joyfully. Start the path in those places for meetings and liberation of dispirited people, so that the time of awakening could come nearer, exactly like the man leaves the seeds of Light by sacrificing his soul for his friends-relatives – and then the new power is born for the people's liberation.

I'm not loading you with a joke. My work will tie into your days not with a heavy burden, but your hands will be carrying the beauty of the cup of love, so that I could share with people their heartbreaks and the burden of their yoke. Pour fire from the cup of life into those places where you will bury the symbols of wisdom, so that it would be easier for people to open up the purity of their hearts and to hear my manifestation.

You didn't call me, my loyal son, but you were working on the earth as I had told you to. Your loyalty to me wasn't in your dreams and vows, but it was in your ordinary, daily matters. Now joy is opened within you. Go, fulfil my lesson and wait for my next instructions."

Not the same Apolon, still very young, was sitting on the bench now by remembering the first performances of the wandering musicians when he met the little orphans. The boy who was learning and working a lot since that time now was astonishing the world. The girl who was singer and dancer became celebrity. The orphans didn't forget their old dog and now they considered him to be their best friend, they were spoiling him and making his old age as easy as they could. They asked Apolon to visit that place where they met and to organize the concert in that city where they were accepted so cruelly seven years ago.

Now a young, mature man was sitting on the bench, he was broad-shouldered, tall, and his face was radiating. Only there was something in that young face that didn't allow people to act too unrestrictedly when they were next to him, to talk some vulgar things and to scold. Everybody whom Apolon's eyes were looking at wanted to hide his brutal characteristics and to show more of his beauty and nobility.

Now, having heard his father's voice, which he hadn't heard from that time when he was sitting here for the first time, and his heart was bleeding, as though he all changed. Now it seemed to him that he was waiting namely for this calling of his father for several days already. He understood that his task, that task which had delayed him before the great plan of actions, was now finished.

He was sad that he didn't have any home and family, that he was lonely back then, - and life sent him family, home and cosiness. He got to know the whole personal happiness of family and understood that it was an illusion, too, that Eternity wasn't there where the passing-by happiness was, but there where It was living Itself. And Eternity is living there where man is creating.

Apolon's thoughts flew in the vortex by his entire experience of all this period. He understood that people certainly needed to find the paths to creation, otherwise they would suffocate in this atmosphere of death which became predominant everywhere where searching for one's freedom and peace of one's heart ended.

He understood why his father needed his centres of Light, why he needed the places where the people free from passions were living, and the new wave of happiness and triumph overflowed his heart. Now his personal separation with his close and beloved children seemed to be so easy and unimportant to him, and he could understand even better why his father wasn't crying or sad by sending all of his sons into the world. Apolon understood what his father was able to see in the path of each of his sons and whom he was serving by tearing them off from his heart and from the native nest.

Apolon was already prepared to get up from the bench and to go to the hotel which was built instead of the old inn when a woman muffled in the shawl stopped him.

"Mister, have pity on me, please come with me. The house of my master and my mistress isn't far away from here. I'm the old suckling mother of my current mistress. It's almost seven years already when my mistress is suffering and growing sickly from an unknown disease. No one of the doctors is able to help her. We were told that the violinist came with his doctor and that you've learnt everything in the big cities. Don't be angry with me because I've disturbed your peace. The husband of my mistress will show gratitude to you by paying you big money, while I'm begging you to come with me in the name of the eternal God. My mistress doesn't believe in anything, and when I'm talking about God to her, she's scolding me and asking me why my God doesn't set me free from my slavery, why I'm unable to get Him to give her any help and health. Mister, have a pity on me," the woman was talking to him by sobbing and going on her knees. "No, don't get me up, allow me to kneel at your feet. As though a blessed warmth is pouring from your feet into the wounds of my heart, and my old sin isn't burning me so much. I'm to blame for everything, mister. I was exceptionally beautiful, and my previous master bought me as a dowry for his

daughter. My young mistress was kind, she used to pity me and do me favours. Everything was all right for some time, but the young master started looking at me more frequently. Everything ended in such a way that I became pregnant and gave birth to my daughter, my current mistress. I don't know what has happened between my master and my mistress, but they took my daughter from me on the second day after delivery, and in the evening, they took me to their house and settled me in the room next to my kind mistress' bedroom. I didn't see her for a very long time. My girl was already two years old when once I was invited to enter my mistress' room. Ah, mister, a lot of life has flown past since that time, while the hour of that terrible meeting is still standing before me. She was lying like a skeleton, weazened, yellow like a wax, while her eyes were burning like shining lamps."

"Come closer, you poor, unfaithful slave," she told me silently. "Take this string. No one knows its age, it is precious. It has imbibed all my tears, moans and complaints, but I have put my great forgiveness into it, too. My grandmother gave it to me and told me: "Your happiness is in it." Ah, how I was crying where that happiness was by pressing this string to my bosom. My lungs didn't hold out my tears and sorrow, my health broke down, and the more I was suffering the clearer I could understand that no happiness was eternal, only kindness was eternal. And I have forgiven you, I told them to record your daughter as my true daughter. Live with her in this house, take the string, let it be your happiness and teach you to forgive and to love in such a way that you could see not only your own happiness, but also happiness of other people. Death is already next to me. I'm not afraid of it, and you don't be afraid of it, too. It'll set me free from my suffering and liberate the place for you in this house for your better life. Remember only one thing: be loyal till the end to those people whom you've chosen for yourself and teach them holiness of love."

"She gave me the string and fell flat on her back. I thought that she had died already. I was horror-struck. I wanted to run away, but my master entered the room and looked at me hatefully. Having seen the precious string on my neck, he attacked me by shouting: "You've already robbed us! Give it back to me immediately!" But all of a sudden, my mistress rose and told him in some frenzied, whistling voice: "Not she, but you've robbed both me and her. Give the string back to her. Keep the secret of my daughter's birth, and let my slave live next to her as her suckling mother and nurse for as long as she'll be living on this earth." With these words, she fell down for the second time, so that she wouldn't rise anymore. "Go to your room and don't dare to smack in my eye," the master told me secretly. Since that time I'm living next to my young mistress as her suckling mother, but I failed to teach her love about which the deceased was telling me. My life in this house was always terrible, I was always afraid of leaving my room, and since that time when my current mistress became sick I'm begging only death for myself and I'm trying to find that power of love in the string, which my kind, deceased mistress has rendered into it. Let's go, mister, perhaps you will save the patient's life. I'm asking you for this not because I'm afraid that her father could kill me, probably death would be even easier than my life for me, but because I'm frightened that my unhappy daughter won't find any peace for her soul. I'm sure that the black demon of evil, the demon of raging love is holding her tightly in his paws, as he was doing and still is doing it to me up to now. Don't refuse to examine the patient, come with me," the woman was sobbing, while throwing her arms round Apolon's feet.

Having lifted the woman with difficulty, he seated her on the bench next to him, took her hand and told her tenderly.

"Calm down, my friend. We cannot go anywhere until you calm down completely. If you want to help a man as quickly as possible, you have to control yourself as soon as possible until you reach total self-control, you have to forget about yourself and think only about that man. Now you are asking me to help your daughter. Look back at your life. Stop crying and think for a while why you've failed to fulfil the precept of your deceased mistress. You were her beloved friend, she confided her secrets to you, while you

deceived her cruelly. If you had confessed everything to her, she would have forgiven you, and if not happiness, then at least peace would have become prevalent at your home. If you hadn't concealed lie in your heart and if you hadn't slandered the deceased before her husband, then there would have been peace at your home. You loved and you still love your daughter, but with your milk, she was drinking your hypocrisy, your jealousy, your hurt pride and your excessively sensitive self-love – the characteristics of the slaves. Let's go. Press your precious string to yourself and call for the power of love of the deceased who has forgiven everything to you. In this only hour of your life, feel free from all lies, all chains which you yourself and other people have put onto you and stand before God, only before Him alone, as though everything had disappeared, you died and you were standing in the universe, - you were standing with your entire truth before Him."

Apolon helped the woman to get up. Now she was absolutely calm, and they went into the thick darkness of the night. The way wasn't long. The woman took him into the dark, soundly asleep home. She accompanied him to the big, luxurious room by using the lantern, which was empty and hardly lit. She went behind the heavy door-curtain which separated a part of the room.

In several minutes, she was back again by inviting the guest to go with her. She raised the door-curtain before him and let him go to another side in silence.

A strong aroma was in the room, the air was stale and hot. Several lanterns with the fragrant oil were burning in the luxurious, Oriental room. Regardless of the lanterns, the room was hardly lit. Apolon could hardly see the woman who was lying on the high sofa, motionless.

"Suckling mother, is that you?" a voice could be heard from the sofa.

The voice was weak, and it seemed to Apolon that he had already heard this rather dry and sharp voice.

"Mistress, I brought the new doctor for you. Everybody is talking about him here that he's very learned and that he has helped many people," her suckling mother answered her unusually tenderly and friendly.

"You grow stupid every day, not only every year," her mistress answered her with great sarcasm. "For how many times I have to repeat to you that I don't want to see any doctors and that I have enough experience to see their shortsightedness by taking into account my disease. You cannot bring me a clairvoyant, can you? Apologize to the doctor and take him out. Ask my husband to pay him for disturbing him," the patient was talking to her, not opening her eyes.

Apolon went up to one of the lanterns, took it in his hands and lifted it above the patient's head. Being dazzled with the unexpected and bright light, the patient opened her eyes and rose a little in her bed suddenly. From the angry expression of her face, one could expect a lot of sharp words for another doctor who dared to violate the order of this house. But the first glance cast at the face of the man who had come here interrupted her thought. Having fixed her motionless gaze on him, the patient gave a shout.

"You? You? Is this really the truth? My whole disease is you, you wicked demon! How did you dare to cross the threshold of my house? Get out you, old fool," she shouted at her suckling mother by showing the door to her. "Don't dare to enter here until I call you. And if somebody enters the room while I'm talking to this man, your head will fall off."

Having bowed to her threatening mistress obediently, the suckling mother cast a pleading glance at the guest and left the room silently.

“Why did you come here? Did you know where she was taking you?” the patient addressed Apolon.

Having placed the lantern to its place, he came back to the woman’s bed and told her.

“I didn’t know where I was taken to or what I would find here, but I knew that I’m coming to the suffering soul, that’s why I came here.”

“Ah, that’s how it is! Probably, you wanted to see a young beauty by dreaming to preach a sermon for her,” the patient gave a biting laugh. “You can admire the work of your own hands. Where my youth is? Where my colours are? I’m completely exhausted from sadness and the witchcraft with which you have enchanted me. Now admire the results of your behaviour! You were casting fiery glances at me, you bewitched me with them, and then, in the last moment you were frightened, you ran away and left me. It’s great that you came yourself. I had already decided to find you anyway and to put you to prison for your witchcraft.”

“Poor woman, I’m so sorry that you are still feeling anger and hatred for me with which you left the park seven years ago. The whole eternity has flown by since our meeting, while you haven’t made any move forward, and everything around you is telling you about your hatred. Think for a while, for whom, starting with yourself, it became merrier and easier because you are trying to shift your mistake on me or on my witchcraft. If I had had a goal to make my career with the help of the rich family and rich home, even then I couldn’t have responded to your love, because you wanted to create your happiness on the misfortune of the orphans whom life had sent to me. I don’t have any want to reproach you, I have even less desire to dig in the past which is gone already. If now I’m talking to you about it, then I’m doing it only because I want to explain to you that I didn’t see you a single time during my performances. And my fiery glances, if they seemed to you to be like this, rose from those songs which I was singing, from those actions which we were performing with my little artists, and I didn’t have any time to examine the audience. Both with my songs and my performances, I was glorifying joy and love for my father who has sent me to fulfil one of his tasks. If I tried to explain to you what kind of the task it was, you wouldn’t understand anything from it. But you can and you have to understand that in order to fulfil any task, man has to know what the selfless love is from his everyday experience.”

A sharp laughter interrupted Apolon.

“Are you continuing your sermon on the bench? You fool, a pitiful comedian, you’ve fought your way to the educated doctors and now you are trying to become the same pathetic, hypocritical moralist! That’s why life has given this second meeting with you to me? You’ve filled my heart with poison, my veins are full of your poison. Neither food nor luxury nor my beauty which I loved so much can distract, comfort or divert me from your unbearable image. Your hated figure is burning my brain all day long and in the night, it is drying my body, making the hair from my plait rare. And you dare to talk about the selfless love? If this is your attitude, you must leave everything and live next to me. You are hypocrite, all your words about love and help are nothing else as old, not valid coins which you are clanking by alluring the fools.”

“I will argue with you. Every man’s day – that’s his actions within it, and not his words. Look at yourself, seeing your unfortunate state, I can also see your actions during those years, but I’m not a judge to them. If you want to see my actions during those years, if at least from them you want to decide about some of my fruits of selfless love, then come to the concert tomorrow and listen to my little orphans. If you are following any news about art, you must have heard the Monk’s name, he is my foundling and now he’s the most famous violinist who’s giving concerts with his sister who is also the famous singer and dancer. If you really decided to listen to their concert, I will give you an advice: order to take you out from

this terribly stuffy room into the pure and fresh air and drink this powder six times per day. This will make you stronger, you will have a good sleep, while the fresh air will disperse a part of the poison with which you are poisoning yourself by breathing the stifling aroma of your perfume.”

Apolon put a small box with the powder on the table, which he took out from his pocket, bowed to the hostess and turned towards the door, but the patient told him again.

“Stop, I cannot believe that the fate has brought you to me only to preach a sermon to me. You have to help me. Take your witchcraft off me, I’m dying because of it. Don’t you understand even now that not my hatred is killing me, but my mad, unquenchable love. In every moment, with every sigh, every sunbeam, every bit of bread I’m full of the desire to see you, the desire that you would love me...”

“Think for a while whether there is any sense in your words? If you loved me in the way as you say you do – continuously, faithfully, till the end – then how could you marry somebody else? If you love a person, then he’s the only one and there aren’t any others. If you tell me that you love one person, but you are living with another one, then check it out and you will understand that you don’t love anybody, except yourself. That’s how it is, my poor friend. You always loved and you still love only yourself, and therefore, you can never find any happiness and reconciliation anywhere. If you keep behaving like this persistently, if you continue your argument with the God and your fate in this way, you’ll only kill yourself by living your entire life without any meaning and use for the universe, being a misfortune and heartbreak both for yourself and your loved ones. Stop thinking that you are ill. You are strangling yourself with your thoughts only about yourself, while man is created in such a way that he cannot live in the poison of his self-love. Man has to have a possibility to love somebody else without himself, so that he could liberate a place from his egoistic thoughts within his organism, otherwise he will suffocate from the poison which is called self-love, fear, arrogance, pomposity. Forgive. Now I have to go. You won’t be able to understand me now anyway. But if you listen to the concert and want to see me again, then send your mother-slave to me, whom you had to set free a long time ago.”

“All right, let it be as you say it. I will try to drink your powder and I will listen to your music. I doubt whether such a magic music exists from which people would get better. But let it be, I will come. And my slave is my suckling mother to me, an ordinary nurse, and not my mother-slave as you said it, although she’s dedicated to me till her death.”

“Try to find your happiness in several directions at once. Take a good look at your slave whose face you have never seen very well, although she was next to you during your entire life. Perhaps, with your eyes free from self-love, having thought well about her, and not about yourself, you will find something new and unexpected for yourself, too.”

“You ask me riddles,” the patient told him in a tired voice. “Go, and I will try to breathe out the poison if it is mine, and not yours. I’m only afraid that all of it is only your fantasy and, to all appearance, your little musicians aren’t any better than any beggar comedian.”

She hit a small gong with the mallet, and her suckling mother entered the room with her face covered with the shawl.

“See the guest off and come back with four slaves, I want to sleep on the flat roof tonight,” she said to her suckling mother by giving a nervous laugh.

Having left the patient, Apolon came back to the park again. His thoughts were spinning about his sister, because these meetings of the night reminded him of her voice and the cruelty of her character.

His thoughts came back to his father again. Why did his father send all his sons into the wide world, without whom his life has become vain and poor? And why did he keep his daughter for himself, whose thoughts, behaviour, ideals and goals didn't conform with his own work for people at all? Why has such cruel daughter who's seeking only for her personal goals fallen to their father's lot, who's almost a perfect man?

Apolon meditated upon all his meetings during this year again. He's seen so many monasteries! He's come across so many different sects and religions! And everywhere everybody was talking how they were searching for the God, for His paths, but their words were flying like irksome flies, not reflecting the actions of their hearts.

Rarely, he used to meet people who weren't telling some fanciful words to him, but who could smile to everybody. When Apolon used to meet such people he always knew that their love was a living power, that other people brightened up next to them and they kept carrying this smile of theirs as their own kindness.

Why is the cruel daughter living with her kind and wise father? What was the meaning of such meeting in life?

Apolon was unable to find any answer. He kept going forward and didn't even notice how he left the park, saw the bonfire and went towards it. An old man was sitting by the bonfire and he was persuading his dog affectionately, so that it wasn't barking at the passer-by without necessity, because he was a kind man.

"And how can you know that I'm a kind man. Perhaps, I'm very bad person, even a robber?"

"No, my friend. I'm old and almost blind already, but I've seen many people. When a kind person is walking, he's all radiating, and it is easier to breathe next to him, and when an angry person is walking, then there's only darkness round him, and he smells of a stench. You'll see those human nasty things yourself when you grow old. You are young, and you all young people are judging like this: beautiful – kind. No, young man, don't think that if the girl is beautiful, then her soul is beautiful, too, and the truth is living within her. Also don't pay attention to the fact that she's living next to her spiritual and wise father, and next to her kind brothers. Sometimes, such daughter is living in a peaceful family only because the nasty things of her heart wouldn't suffocate her, and their attempts to ruin the girl completely become hopeless due to her father's wisdom and her brothers' light."

It seemed strange to Apolon that he was unable to find an answer to his questions, and here an old man, an old beggar whom he happened to meet answered him, although he didn't ask him his question. Apolon took a seat near the bonfire and wanted to know why the old man was alone and homeless.

"Sit down, my brother. Here the porridge will be ready soon – don't be proud, treat yourself," the old man was speaking to him politely. He spread his shabby coverlet for Apolon and made more place for him near the fire.

"Thank you, old man, I'm not hungry, but I will sit next to you for a while with pleasure, because you have astonished me very much. I was walking and thinking to myself: why the girl is beautiful, but her heart is cruel and she's living with her wise and kind father. And you answered to my question, even if I didn't ask you to."

"You see, I have already told you that an age opens up the thoughts of the person whom you meet if you try to serve God. As soon as you came up to me, I saw the girl whom you were thinking about. I

also saw your home and your father in it. Only the girl isn't there anymore, she ran away from home, but now she doesn't have any peace as well."

Apolon became surprised even more and he asked him.

"Old man, tell me how did it start for you that you could see from the distance?"

"My brother, I can't even describe everything like this. I was living in a monastery for a long time. I was a servant there. And the monk to whom I was serving was never speaking to anybody, he was only holding his rosary in his hands and whispering his prayer silently. And he was uttering one and the only prayer. When he was always whispering it, I also got used to work with it. So when I was hacking fire-wood, cooking the porridge or patching his and my own shabby clothes, his simple prayer was always murmuring in my ears like a melody of the waves. And I noticed that my monk began to smile more often to me. Since he didn't like to speak much, I wasn't speaking as well. It would happen that he would smile to me, then I would bow to him, then he would smile even more and bow to me. Sometimes, he would fall silent for many hours and sit like numb. Well then I would take his rosary silently and repeat his prayer. Once he came to his senses after one of such sittings of his and told me: "Tomorrow I will die. But you know firmly that death doesn't exist, only people decided to name it like this. Take my stick, my rosary and leave this place. If you are living purely, I will always be with you, and you will know what to tell to every person. I will show to you the thoughts of those persons whom you will have to tell something. And you will be hearing my voice – what to tell to whom. Go, don't look for any shelter in your life, and remember that death doesn't exist. There's only life, eternal, the Only One. Serve to it in every person. When the time comes to leave the earth for you, you will see me if you are serving to the God faithfully in every living soul." I've already been travelling for a long time, and I always succeeded to tell the words of my kind monk correctly to everybody. He's always been my loyal fellow-traveller. When I stop somewhere – a man comes to me, and he always receives my answer by not asking anything from me. My guardian tells me to tell you this:

"If you keep walking faithfully – you will approach love. You were thinking that you could only sing, but you realized that your song was also Love. Don't trouble yourself by thinking why you were told to put the symbols of Wisdom in the special places. Know that the most brutal wars of people will be taking place in those places many times, and the Wisdom there will create the centres of the people's rescuing. Three paths are stretching before you: peace, kindness and joy. But all of them unite into Love. And that person who is able to walk the path of Love, he will become aware himself not only of all misfortunes of the earth, but he will be able to give the purest fire of his cup to people. Go straight from here. Don't linger. Don't think about how your children are going to live. Life for everybody – that's only his own form. And nobody is able to help him until his passions are living within him, which surpass love. Go and be strong. Don't think about the temporary meetings, because now you have another task. Send my old man to your children and to the angry woman, I will tell everything to him how he should speak to them. He will help them."

Apolon was looking at the talking face of the old man in amazement, and now it was absolutely different – it was bright and radiating. Not doubting at least for a moment, Apolon was sitting next to the old man while he was eating his porridge, then he helped him to put his several belongings into his bag and took him to his room in the new hotel where everybody was fast asleep. Having put the old man to bed, Apolon threw his cloak on his shoulders, took his lyre, some bread, money and left.

Having arrived on board of the Italian ship here, Apolon was walking with the caravan for a long time, and finally, he reached the Ganges river. He had to keep walking until he found the necessary place in Indian woods. Here, all of a sudden, he heard his father's voice.

“Put the last Symbol of Wisdom in the pit at the foot of the rock, cover it with stones and come back to me. There will be a Community in that place, which will support people in hard times. People from different paths, religions and searching will be able to come to that Community, but only those whose hearts and minds will unite in harmony. Those stubborn persons who won't be able to achieve harmony during their lives from centuries to centuries will live in more distant places where your task isn't to leave my symbols. Come back home, be blessed. Exactly like you were loyal to me during this life, exactly in the same way your loyalty will become stronger in your next life where the cup of Fire will become like the earthly death for you.”

Apolon was lost in thought during his entire way back, and now nobody would have recognized that joyful and handsome youth who once left his father's home with the lyre in his hands in this lean and ragged traveller.

The ascetic face of the traveller was radiating an exceptional and bright peace, his tender voice was raising even the disappointed people's spirits, and he came back home with people's blessings.

The further you are walking your path of knowledge, the easier you have to understand who is leading you along the path and how you can take part in the joint life of the universe.

Only that person is living the life of the universe who learns not only to see God in every man, but also to respect him in his daily routine.

That person who will learn to highly respect the Fire of the man whom he will meet, will associate with those who are walking in the advance-guard as with the leaders of his time.

Having reached this stage, the person never comes back to his next incarnations, but he passes on to the path of the genii and he continues his path by being led of those who are invisible to people. They never lose their self-control in any moments of the earthly life.

Having read these lines, understand again: there are no secrets, ranks or conditional divisions into high and low ones. There's only liberated Will and Love, the vision liberated from conditionalities, the Joy liberated from sorrows.