

Irina Bjørnø

Kaleidoscope

English edition



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Kaleidoscope. English edition

«Издательские решения»

Vjørnø I.

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Stories from our life — with salt and paper, with smile and tears, with love and hate. Like the picture in Kaleidoscope — life's kaleidoscope.

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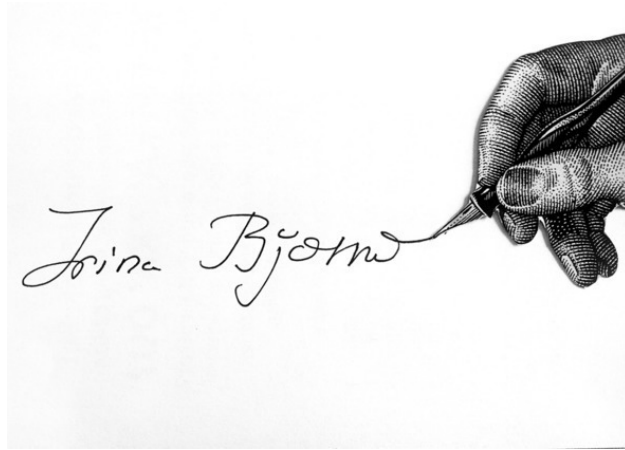
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Introduction

It's all in them – as Good as Evil, Love and Horror.
Both Life and Death – enlarged by a microscope.
And 26 are landing on the paper
To catch the fate of people's Kaleidoscope.

I. Bjørnø

All of my work (all of my stories) is a fantasy of the author. All matches of names and events are pure coincidence! My style is mystical realism.



TREASURE HANT

The gift

Everyone is given a gift in his life. One person receives a small one, another – the great, some for loan time, and some – forever. Each and everybody. The gift – to write books and to make new discoveries, the gift – to comfort people or the gift to entertain and to make the people forget their life's problems for a moment, the gift – to organize the life in a better way or the gift to love one. Everyone gets his own, personal and unique gift.

Dimitry had got a strange gift from his fate, not many people in the world had such a gift: he was able to find fake banknotes and stock bonds and sort them out from the real one printed in the National Bank. He could not only distinguish but feel fake signature on the bank check or bank bonds. He didn't know how he managed to do it. He just "knew" it as a famous chef knows how much salt or spices should he add into the famous sauce. And Dimitry – he felt the money, he felt it with his whole body, brain, fingers, as a pianist feels the music, as a lover feels the woman body – with all his cells, with the whole being. He had been working in the financial department of criminality in the Scandinavian National Bank for many years. There were only a few experts in the world like him, but he could work without ultraviolet light lamps or infrared devices, except his antique magnifying glass, which he had got from his grandfather and used daily.

Being an expert in false money banknotes he was involved in the investigations dealing with controversial cases of signature's forgery on people wills and other securities papers, and he had never made a mistake. NEVER!!!

His work was paid fairly well, and it was enough to have a little house with a garden, a car and a small pension in private insurance company. He loved his job, as well as his cold Nordic country, purged by winds, with the most socialistic system in the world with a rich welfare with equally distribution of social benefits among the not so big and rather generous population.

People in his country were neither particularly the rich nor the noble, in spite of the oldest royal house in the world and fairytale of world famous H. C. Andersen about princes and princesses, where a simple driver monthly wages was the same as a bank clerk wages. Dimitry was used to it, even though he was differed from the other Scandinavians because of his name.

His name showed his belongingness to the history of Russia. He was called Dimitry Romanoff, was a prince by blood and a surviving relatives of the Tsar Romanoff's deadly affected branch. He was the offspring of the family which managed to escape from Peter the Third's repressions and was the survivor relative of Peter the Great.

He was born in Switzerland, but moved to Scandinavia many years ago, when he had remarried his second Scandinavian and totally not-noble wife.

For many years he had lived in the shadow of storms that raged in Russia in connection with the building of so called "New Russian mafia-controlled capitalism" model, but from time to time the rumours that some political groups in Russia would wished to see the Romanoff's dynasty to sit on

the patriarchal throne of mother Russia and to take the responsibilities for the fortunes of the people, suffering from the greedy post capitalist criminal bands, reached him.

Dimitry was not interested in politics, but he played a role in Russian emigrant society, which was established in Scandinavia since the time of the execution of Nicholai the Second family and the escape of Nicholai mother, a little fragile and doll-beautiful Minnie – Tsarina Maria Feodorovna, and a sister of Scandinavian king, who was firmly seated on his throne in that time and was beloved by everybody in his rainy homeland.

Dimitry Romanoff was a part of a small circle of titled noble Russian-related persons still living in Scandinavia with their traditions of Russian Christmas bazaar, Faberge Easter eggs with diamonds and rare exhibitions of the pictures and portraits belonged to the Russian Grand Duchess Olga, who ended her life in Canada unknown and in poverty.

These people, who were last peaces of Russian Empire of Tsar Nikolai time assemble together several ones or twice a year on the occasion of birthdays, funerals and the Russian Easter, playing their noble roles in this small society as usual.

Dimitry's Russian language was poor and with a strong French accent, but he would always attended these yearly assemblies with his immensely upstanding neck, holding out his hand ready for the aristocratic and surely Romanoff way to greet others. But no one kissed his hand, and he could not stand that advanced familiarity with kisses on the cheeks. It is at those meetings he felt his "blue blood" of Romanoff's house very vividly, but later, coming back to a little house with a garden, where everything had to be done by himself – he felt different, not as Romanoff with "blue blood", but as best in the world specialist in banknotes forgery, which make him almost the most unique person in the world, and that he was the most proud of.

Russia – always being so unpredictable – suddenly felt great love for everything, connecting with Romanoff, the Tsar, to everything that had gone in the past and trying now to patch the blood holes of its history by insisting on reburial of the exiled Russian Tsarina, little Minnie, who had been lying peacefully since the distant 1928 in Roskilde's Cathedral and now should be reburied next to the glorious Russians Tsars and Grand Duchess, next to her legitimate Russian husband, tsar Alexander III.

She, Minnie, did not actually loved her Russian husband and even was a little afraid of, but political marriages were at her time in vogue, and she could not deny her father's will, who betrothed her first with a gentle and intelligent Grand Duke of Russia, Nicholas, who had suddenly died in Nice, and later to the next living pretender to the Russian throne, big and not so culturally polished Alexander, Nikolas brother.

Dimitry was invited to the ceremony of reburial as a living representative of the Romanoffs House of Glory. He and his untitled wife were sent the first class tickets from the Putin's government and he went to his first meeting with the unknown "Mother Russia" together with some representatives of the Scandinavian Royal House.

He was greeted in the airport with fanfare, the red carpet from the plane into the airport building, a first-class hotel, for which he was never able to pay for himself and the real royal honourers. He had a personal guide: long-legged Russian Natasha who has adorable makeup and latest fashion dress and actually looking like Natasha Rostova from Leo Tolstoy very thick and very famous roman.

She accompanied him and his wife everywhere – during Tsarina Minnie’s reburial, and during their trip to the gold plated Peterhof, and during the excursions into the Winter Palace as well.

Natasha organized tickets for the first row of the Kirov, now Mariinsky Theater on ballet, dinners at best and pricy restaurants in Nevsky Prospect and visits to other palaces, where his firstly crowned and then innocently murdered relatives had anniversary balls, entertainment, dinners, and just lived there everyday life’s.

In one of such country palaces Dimitry met the official delegation of Russians and was asked timidly if he can accept as a gift this “small royal country house” with a hundred of rooms, which is only an hour drive from St. Petersburg and really needs to have supervision and the royal income for keeping the place in proper standards.

Dimitry grew cold inside. He had barely enough money for his own tiny Scandinavian house with the garden, but there was a palace!

“No, thanks, I am used to living in Scandinavia”, said Dimitry politely, but he continued to discuss the proposal with his wife in a hotel later in the night thinking about the life cost of such palace.

“No, and no again!” If only he was elected as the legitimate Russian Tsar and rewarded generously with money. But Russia has had already his uncrown tsar, sitting firmly in Moscow and not intending to shear his responsibility and money with anybody around. Dimitry new that he is not a competitor knowing well the destiny of others who dreamed about Russia and power.

But back to surprising suggestion about the palace close to St. Petersburg: He new for sure, that he would not be able to cover even the monthly expenses for this “small” summer place. He undoubtedly liked the palace, as well as Russian honours, and long legs Natasha, but it was like a mirage, fatamorgana, horrible sleeping dream, which snick secretly into his simple life of a bank clerk.

And he returned to his homeland, which was not rich but understandable and predictable Scandinavia, to his small house with a garden and to his job in the National Bank, money security department. He was given by fate only one gift in his lifetime – to “feel” false money, banknotes, bonds, checks, but not to manage this big, confusing and dangerous Russia, where tsars were usually assassinate by shutting, and then their relatives were invited or forced to fill the place of the murdered.

“Oh no! Let them try to find the other Romanoff – a stupid one! I myself feel rather well here!”

Those were the thoughts of one of the last Romanoff’s descent on the way to his job in the National Bank, where he had his own small office with a old chair, and a modern computer, his fathers old amplifying glass, and a bookcase with the files about forgery and false money, many of which had been made in this strange as “true idiot” and unsolved by anyone Russia.

The Countess

The Countess was old and sick. She was overweight, her feet were swollen from gout, and the blood was circulating in her massive body with various drugs, which she was taken from morning till night, and a ‘angina pectoris’ was the precise title of her heart failure, because when she breathed, she did it heavily and noisily as a fat pimply toad seemed to live in it.

She was dying. She was in her late eighties, and she had lived a long life, where she played the role of the Countess every day, and she played this role great. She had fused with this role so much that she started to believe in all the true and invented stories from the life of the countess, which she often was happy to tell to others. In those moments when the audience became still and opened their mouth in surprise, she really enjoyed her life of a real Russian countess.

And now the Countess was sitting on her old, leaky and faded chair with a portrait of her great-grandfather behind her as she assured them all – the Count and the hero of Russian-Turkish war, with fluffy sideburns and horse-faced. She did not want to die.

There was her mother’s gold necklace with five small Faberge eggs on her neck studded with varicoloured stones, which she did not leave day or night.

She wore the ring called “gold baptistry” on the little finger of her left hand, but a huge, Siberian blue diamond with a unique Russian diamond cut – was not there any more: it might have fallen in the hospital, where she spent more and more time, or it was stolen as she was lying unconscious after her next blood transfusion.

But these things, as well as a small brooch with a double-headed royal eagle with big diamonds, which travelled from one blouse to the other, were part of her role of the Countess, and she would never sell them, under no circumstances. She wouldn’t feel herself the Countess without them.

She lived in a small apartment with three small rooms and paid for it from her little pension. The apartment was in an old house with no lift on the third floor, and now for half a year the Countess did not go out, because she could not climb the steep steps up: swollen legs did not keep her heavy body properly any more.

But the prospect of moving to a nursing home for the old was impossible for her. Only in this apartment, stuffed with old Russian paintings, water-colours belonged to sister’s of murdered last Russian Tzar, a portrait of her mother in a ball gown from 1904 and furniture from the study cabinet of Alexander the Third, she felt herself the Countess.

She hadn’t got any children. She met her second husband, a former White officer in Paris, where he had whiled away the life as a taxi driver, so she hadn’t got money for servants, and other Countess’s fun at home.

She loved her phone, especially when it called, and at that moments she seems to came to real life of Countess, when each time she screamed into the phone, not allowing the caller to say a word, “Kisya are you coming to me?”. She named “Kissya’ (or “Pussy cat” in Russian) referring to anybody. She had no more memory for names, except those that she needed for her stories, and the others, she needed in her troubled life of old lady, recorded them carefully in her notebook, which was always next to her chair.

So, she invited persistently all the listeners of her stories and those who might render small, but necessary for her life daily services as cleaning, washing up or buying something eatable. If a man called, then, irrespective of age, she called him “such a little nasty chap” and used to say always the same: “I know you and your dirty thoughts! You want to go to bed with me – but I do not love you.” She didn’t probably love anyone but herself and her role as a real Russian Countess, who lived in exile.

She was born in a foreign country – not in Russia, and the first time came to Russia in the eighties – at the end of Brezhnev’s Empire of the developed socialism. She hated the communists, because she believed that they were guilty for everything that had happened in distant October of the seventeenth 1917.

The Countess’s mother, lady-in-waiting of the old Russian Empress, blowing from Russia and her place in the aristocratic society by revolution strong wind, left Russia together with the mother of murdered last Russian Tzar, with one of her Cossack and her dear spouse. She was pregnant with our Countess at that distant and shaking time. They had taken out of Russia some of the royal furniture, pictures and, of course, compact and smart diamonds which they had sewn in all bras of their dresses.

The Countess’s mother delivered her daughter in a foreign land, and the desperate mother of the last Russian Tzar became her godmother and in heritage her a large Faberge egg with the gold wagon inside and studded with a lot of Siberian blue diamonds.

This egg was now standing on the table of our Countess, and it had been there for more than eighty years of her long life, but the countess did not dare to take it to the antique specialists, because she was afraid that a somebody could replace the diamonds with glass beads, and she couldn’t distinguish real diamonds from fake ones.

Her mother did not learn the language of the country that had given shelter to her and her husband, so they spoke Russian at home. It was a beautiful old language of Pushkin’s time with rich French expressions inside. So the Russian language of the First World War had stuck in that aristocratic family, which was fighting for their survival in new to them, wet and not too friendly Scandinavian country.

The Countess’s mother was busy with Russian church, which became the center of the Russian emigration at that time, and her father earned his living as a sale consultant in a large international company. He learned a new language quickly and even enjoyed this working life, which was new for him.

The little countess finished best private school and got married a German baron, who didn’t have any money, but title. Then the Second World War broke out, and her Baron as good German went to Hitler’s troops, and she lost her job as laboratory assistant at local hospital because of her German name and her husband’s nazi sympathy.

After her mother and father passed away, she continued doing her mother’s job in the Russian church, where they opened a hospital for Russian soldiers. Her faith in God was undoubted, and she was involved in organisation of everything connected with the church, including the financial part. It gave her some money for existence and possibilities to play the role of the real Russian Countess. She had often appeared on local radio and sent the articles about the history of Russian church –

of source old Russian church – and her personal stories of Russian Countess living in exile to woman's magazines. These old magazines with her interviews and yellowed faded pages from past time, were gathering now dust on her coffee table, waiting for the new visitors, who came round to see her less and less.

She kept her personal stories for them, which she polished to perfection over many years of practice, repeating them again and again. She liked the story of the ladder, which is hold by the angels, and the souls of the dead climbing up on it to the sky, most of all. She used to tell this story a lot, as an example of Russian faith in God. Now, when she became old and was sick, she would not want to accept that it was her time to climb the ladder, wreathed with flowers and supported by angels, preferring to take medicine and suffer, but to be there on the Earth and play the role of the real Russian Countess.

Who knows what will happen to her, in the heavens and what role she would have to play in the company of God? The role of the Earth's Russian Countess had made her happy, and she did not want to part with it.

The Countess closed her eyes, with clumsy made every morning makeup done with her shaking hand, and her sick body fell asleep. But even in her sleep she dreamed of admiration, diamonds, and herself, young and beautiful, who was endlessly dancing at the court ball. That was just a dream.

The Countess deceived herself all her life, couldn't see what was going on, either in this small Scandinavian country or in remote and incomprehensible to her Russia, lulling herself and the others with fairytales about tzars, princes and countesses. That was her role in the life. And she was playing this role, which she had got by chance, until her last breath.

That day, she fell asleep in her old faded royal chair forever, having played the role until the very end of play, the role of last real Russian Countess.

Dedicated to my close friend Countess Tatiana Sergejevna Ladyzhenskaya.

The Danish Miss Pigli

Miss Pigli was thinking, while lying on her side. She was feeling warm and comfortable. Her relatives and friends were next to her. They were standing or lying around in this yard, which was full of wonderful, tasty smelling food, poured into metal trays.

The room wasn't very big and Miss Pigli heard other pigs behind other walls. There were "oinking" and "squealing", but there was neither fear nor anger in the voices around her. Everything was quiet and very nice in this pig's world.

Miss Pigli, her relatives and friends had been here in this yard for two hours already. They were taken here in a big spacious truck, and she remembered the road and the bumpy way with an unpleasant feeling. Why were they taken here from her home?

One of the door opened, while she was thinking about it, and a man, wearing an overall came in with a spade in his hands. Miss Pigli was used to these people with spades wearing overalls from her childhood and wasn't afraid of them. She knew that these people were there to feed them, to wash and to take care of them every day. She thought that their pigs' kin was probably very important, otherwise why people would serve them and fulfill all their whims and wishes. And they didn't have many wishes: just to eat well delicious food, to play with friends, to wallow in a puddle, and to have a warm sleep.

People in overalls did all these things for pigs: they washed them under the water jet, removing their excrements, cleaning their yards, pouring them warm hogwash made from steamed barley or wheat.

Sometimes pigs were given the leavings from beer production being to ferment oil cakes of barley with wort and hop. It was favourite dainty for sows and for herself, Miss Pigli.

Miss Pigli was born in Denmark on a pig farm, her mum was an old pig, who had many piglets. She didn't know that there were three pigs corresponding to every living person in Denmark and that due to them, pigs, this small country had the opportunity to build free schools, hospitals and the seniors centres. Sows were an important chain in assistance for unemployed people as the taxation from selling pork (Denmark took the third place in the world selling pork to Japan, England and other countries) was sufficient enough for developing the tiny kingdom of Denmark.

Miss Pigli didn't know about it, but she sensed herself as an important 'person' who people worked for, devoting their time, strength and life. Miss Pigli really enjoyed such a position.

She liked her pig farm, her mum, her brothers and sisters and the people, who made her life easy and comfortable. In these people's world pigs' money was respectable and desired and moreover, pork had been preferred food for Vikings since olden times. They enjoyed eating fried cracklings of well done fore ends of pork cooked in a stove with mustard and horseradish.

Sows played an important part in the women's beauty as well: lipsticks and facial cream had some lard and the beauties' legs were warmed with the boots made from the pigs' skin. Danish men used strong hog leather to produce trousers' belts and for irreplaceable wallets which were made from the same hog leather for keeping indispensable money. Diabetic patients were grateful to pigs for insulin, produced from viscera of these farm animals.

People used pigs for their senseless social animals experiments, because pigs were the next intelligent animals after dogs and monkeys.

Miss Pigli didn't know anything about it, but she had an idea that she was an important figure in this world. Why then neither Muslims nor Jews liked her or her brothers, she couldn't understand that.

Was she really worse than silly rams or always frightened, dung smelling sheep with felted hair? Her meat was more delicate than old goat's or smelling mutton one. She looked like a small plump baby as by structure as by smell.

Miss Pigli couldn't understand these people with their religions, the God, and thousands of silly rules, but here in Denmark she was loved and she was considered as the national animal, even the holly one for the descendants of great Vikings, for whom the Christmas and the fried pork were almost the synonyms.

When the representatives of the Allah countries started to move to Denmark in the 90-s, who didn't love those pink snots and curious round eyes, Miss Pigli and her family thought that their time was over and people would no longer serve the pig's family, but nothing like that happened.

Farms were not closed and pork processing plants didn't stop working, so pig's money flew through the taxes distribution system into the pockets of orthodox Muslims as well as their five-times prayer – Salat (Namaz). They went to the Danish municipalities and received their benefits for life, paid for with the money from pork's sale, they kept those obtained without any labour money in wallets, which were made from pig's skin, and their wives and daughters put on their lips bright lipsticks made from pork fat.

And what about Allah? Maybe he had not seen these deviations from its rules, as he didn't notice the migration of orthodox Muslims to the country of atheists, pig-eaters and alcohol drinkers?

Miss Pigli looked at the man, who nodded his head:

“It is time, dear,” he started to push her to the open door gently but firm.

Miss Pigli looked once more into the man's eyes and saw there no anger, no danger. She grunted funny and went into a long corridor. Her brothers and sisters were following behind her without fear or doubt. The next door opened in front of her, and she found herself in a dark room. While she was thinking out where the exit was, she suddenly lost her consciousness. There was no air around her but some gas, made her close her eyes and calling her to sleep. Miss Pigli fell down on her side and at the same moment fell asleep – without pain, without violence. The floor under her went away, but she was fast asleep. When her body left this dark room on the transporter, the trusting heart of Danish Miss Pigli was still beating – as calmly as it did when she was alive.

She was driven up to the man clothed in iron gloves and an apron – like a medieval knight in the last tournament. He picked up the pig carcass by a hook and suddenly thrust a tube, sharpened on one side like a knife into Miss Pigli's chest. The tube was very sharp and went straight into the heart of Miss Pigli. From there, a stream of lively, warm blood of definitely dead piglet gushed out. The blood flowed into the special container and later black bloody pudding and medical drugs would be made from it.

The Miss Piglet's carcass went on for a further butchery. The transporter was long and there were about twenty people, each doing their job, transforming Miss Pigli's body into meat, viscera, skin and bones. There was a packing machine at the end of the transporter and boxes, already packed with pieces of fresh pork.

Most fresh meat and heads with eyes and noses were sent by air to Japan, where the price depended on the freshness of the meat and was reduced with each hour passed. The remaining parts were sent for processing with slower traffic to different parts of the world.

Miss Pigli's parts found themselves in Paris, London, Hong Kong, Berlin, Parma, and many other places of our planet. Even in the small shops of Damascus, with their leather goods, even in hospitals of Tel Aviv and Tehran, where the insulin was used to treat local Muslim people eating too many sweets, and therefore suffering from diabetes.

Miss Pigli was omnipresent and indestructible, continuing to live her 'lives' in the bodies and on the skin of others. She kissed the lips of Parisian women and covered with hijab Syrian ones. She was keeping the lives of children in hospitals in Iraq. She warmed old legs of the Jews in Jerusalem with her skin. She was indestructible and eternal. Like the God who created her. Like the Allah himself, who cursed her.

The Pilot

Carl was born and lived in cold, rainy Scandinavia. He was blond, blue-eyed, and tall with a trained athletic, muscular body. He was a pilot in international Scandinavian airline. He earned good money and loved his work. He travelled all around the Globe and visited almost every corner of our small, but comfortable for life, planet.

He was part of the international brotherhood of pilots, who met each other in the bars of five-star hotels, where pilots stop at night, resting between their flights. In the bars they drank – beer, whiskey, soda and exchanged flight news. English was the language used to communicate in with a special pilot accent.

Many pilots knew each other by face, some even by name, from years of stopping in the same hotels, where the windows were tightly shut and could not be opened – sealed like the windows in airplanes, locking out almost all the noise around the never sleeping airports. But pilots were accustomed to these strange, artificial conditions of life and felt great in these elite five-star night shelters offering first class breakfast.

Carl was married and had three children – blond, blue-eyed Scandinavian pretty babies – nice and slender. His wife worked as a priest (or perhaps more correctly – priestess) in the Protestant Church after her theological education at the university and specialisation as a Protestant priest.

She read sermons on Sundays and holidays for parishioners who believed in the Protestant God. She dressed in a black long dress with a white starched collar that made her head, with her short slightly curly hair, look like a cauliflower on a plate. She handed out to the parishioners small, round, crispy wafers in their mouth as a sign of the renunciation of all the sins they accumulated over the week, or for a longer period, and gave them sweet port wine to drink in silver glasses, wishing that they forget their sinful deeds forever.

But they came again and again, maybe because they forgot about their promises to God, or maybe because they liked port wine. They sang Protestant hymns together with great enthusiasm, calling to the Protestant God in their churches and hoping that he would like their songs.

The church had a separate house where the family lived, the pilot along with his wife-priestess – for free, as a supplement to her professional activities. Priest in Scandinavia receive a fixed salary, not from God or the parishioners who visited God's house very irregularly, but from the state, which through the tax system ensured the existence of a state religion with the church buildings, priests (both sexes) and their families, limited official support only by only one, Protestant God, as reflecting of the Scandinavian system of believes.

Protestant churches – are simple, painted white with primitive altars without the magnificent gold ornaments and statues that are present in the Catholic or Orthodox churches – have been more affordable for the small Scandinavian country with socialist orientation and the most developed democracies of majorities.

Priests annually have had a three-week vacation from God, which the pilot family spent in their cabin in the woods, not far from the sandy beach. The pilot ran in the mornings along the beach, preparing his lean body for new overloads during the flight, and his wife spent her days lying in the

sun trying to forget about God and the parish. She devoted all of her free time to life in the woods, picking berries and cooking sweet jam from forest raspberries.

They inherited the forest cabin from her father, also a priest, who had accumulated enough money in the service of the Protestant God to afford the small house in the woods, not far from the sandy beach.

So they lived. The pilot flying around the globe, carrying passengers and their baggage, his wife served in the church, following the traditions of the reformer Martin Luther – who loved to drink beer and did not want to follow the Catholic celibacy. Their children were well brought up, polite, and attend a private school. Everything was fine, worked out in detail. And then one day...

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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