

Andrey Prudkovskii



Trilogy of Dhana and the Earth
Book two. War with reptilians

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«Издательские решения»

Prudkovskii A.

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A thousand years have passed since the events described in the first book of the novel took place. Formally, the Earth has won its place of honor in GAIC (The Galactic Association of Intelligent Civilizations). Has the time for prosperity come as expected? All this we shall learn by going on a trip with the heroes of a new novel. They still do not know that they have stepped on a path that will change the fate of their home planets of the Earth and Dhana...

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Chapter 1. Kum

His name was Kum. Why? Because his father was Kum and his mother was Kum. And because he was the last child of his parents, the only one who could continue the Kum generation.

Parents chose a small gloomy planet at the crossroads between two star systems. Here, far from the bustle of the big world, father and mother dug up the stony soil and lowered their last seed into the pit. Many years passed here before their son grew up...

Kum has already taken his roots out of the ground and freely moved around the planet, and his parents grew old, grew into the soil, but, as before, remained slender and beautiful.

Kum came to the spring – a small warm puddle among the cold stones – and drove the water along a narrow groove with a flat stone scoop. He knew that now his parents would be happy to have some water. Since childhood, he remembered this harsh planet: stones, frozen ground through which it is almost impossible to squeeze the roots, and a burning core in the center. Absolute zero on the surface and hot gases inside. Only for his sake his parents decided to take root here.

The first sensation in childhood was water: not cold and not burning, but gentle warm water from the spring, which he absorbed with his whole body... The joy of this remained for life.

As he remembers now: he is 10 years old, his roots have long permeated the entire planet, his father teaches him interstellar signaling.

“Well, son,” the mother says, “If you work so badly, I won’t water you anymore.”

And he, having shaken himself, again begins to learn hard, although it was no longer necessary to water him.

“If you do not learn the alphabet,” says the father, “you will never find a friend for yourself.”

But he himself found, found his mother without any alphabet and without any words in a cold void, where she, exhausted and barely alive, no longer gave any signals...

Mom always loved warmth, but didn’t tell much about it. They lived a life full of fun on a warm planet with warm gentle rains, with soft green grass ... All their children died there. No, not because of an accident – that very soft, tender grass was to blame...

Here is the sunrise of the distant sun. Mom exposes all her leaves to it. It was not easy for her to get used to the local world.

“Good morning,” Kum came to the two old trees.

The father rustled something in response, however, he is unlikely to hear anything now...

For a whole year Kum had been waiting: father and mother were going to bloom. Here, on this desert planet, only Kum could pollinate the flowers, and only he could save the seeds...

And then he will need a wife, since only a woman can, with her affection, awaken to life seeds planted deep in the ground...

The first journey of Kum

So childhood ended. The last look at the trees. It is unlikely that Kum will see his native planet and his parents frozen in endless sleep ever again... He has a long journey through the entire Universe, and the beginning of this path is the worst for a tree. The fire! It is like suicide. The fire! Catalysis! Overfire! Kum soared over his native planet, burning in a dazzling white flame, and rushed away. At the last moment, when the real death was so close, a small black bourgeon burst from the body wrapped in flames. It escaped, slowly turned into a huge translucent flower, which slipped, driven by a cosmic light stream, faster, faster...

In the middle of the black flower, a small bud was blushing containing seeds and what was left of Kum himself. The journey has begun. For cosmic distant places, Kum’s speed was clearly insufficient, but he knew how to increase it almost to infinity.

“Speed... What is speed?” Kum remembered father’s lessons. “Speed is the distance flown per unit of time. And what is a unit of time? This is the simplest tact of your life, the duration of which you can choose yourself! Choose a short beat – the speed will be small, long – the speed will increase. You can achieve arbitrarily high speed ... But at infinite speed, you lose the accuracy of flight control and become very vulnerable.”

Kum increased the duration of his time tact, and the fixed stars around him moved from their orbits and rushed towards him, flowing around him to the right and left. Call!!! – Silence ... Kum did not feel a call, but, like his father some time before, he believed in luck. He believed that he would find in the open spaces that one and only, intended to be a mother to his children.

Every measure of time took a piece of his life... But there was no call...

A little more and he will be lost in the vastness of space without strength and without hope for salvation. So this way his mother could die, if not for the super sense of father. He needs a planet where there would be a magical liquid that gives life to people like him – water!!! Alas, the only option is the desert planet, where there were no rivers or lakes, but somewhere below the surface, Kum sensed water. Kum’s parachute planned slowly to the surface. Silence and emptiness met him below, but something ... something was still here ... on the verge of his feelings and consciousness. The main thing is that the roots felt water in the depth, and soon they started to drink, they drank and could not stop... Then other feelings turned on – there was air and it was warm here ... Kum released the first green sprouts... Not even two hundred measures of life had passed, when Kum found a quite large body and looked around ... What he saw struck him. All the land around was covered with green sprouts, similar to him like two peas in a pod...

Two years have passed (the timing has been changed in accordance with the customs of readers); Kum is ready to continue his journey. He took roots from the ground, moved away from the forest line, the nature of which he did not understand. It’s time to say goodbye to the mysterious planet. Habitually caused a sensation of fire in the lower part of the trunk ... And nothing ... To Kum’s surprise, the fire burning the body during take-off did not start. Repeating hopeless attempts to take off several times, Kum realized that he could not do this. It was all over, Kum’s life lost its meaning... Autumn has come, the autumn of his life, his leaves have turned yellow. And the leaves of the other trees in the forest, too. The autumn forest was silent, and inaudible years passed in silence... Kum slowed down the rhythms of his life and did not notice the time until one day a distant roar rumbled the air of a sleeping planet.

Chapter 2. Masha and the bear

“Petya, where is the promised planet? Do you think I will give birth here in zero gravity? Who promised me an emergency stop?!”

“Sanya! Well, wait a bit, another week – and there will be Junction, there is a hospital and doctors. Without sensitization at Junction, our daughter will remain, as we are, homo, before reaching the level of sapiens.”

“Do you think I can wait for another week?! A baby will be born any day. Why you cannot stop at the Dark? I heard there is a good atmosphere, unlike Junction, where we will stay under the dome. During the first month, they will not sensitize her anyway, and in a month we will start to Junction.”

“You know, the Dark has not been investigated. Not a single ship managed to approach it.”

“And why? Maybe someone died? Not at all, just the pilots had no time! So they declared the planet forbidden. And also because, according to the reports, there was nothing interesting there. Let’s land here and explore this planet. Let us be the first!”

“Well, if you, Sanya, really want this, let’s land here, but not for long, a month – no more.”

A small spaceship with roar went to the surface of an unknown planet. Dense clouds parted, revealing a grayish-black hilly plain.

“Petya, look, look! There is something yellow that looks like an autumn forest ... Come on there!”

“Sanya, do not tell a nonsense! There is nothing on the Dark! I read the reports. It was scanned many times and there was not found anything interesting.”

The yellow spot grew in the windows, divided into parts and really began to resemble an ordinary autumn forest, on the edge of which the pleasure boat of the newlyweds, who had so recklessly started their honeymoon, landed.

“Petya! Oh, what a beauty here! And when the forest turns green, it will be even better!”

Two days passed in lovely household chores. Near the ship a tent house with all amenities appeared. Walking quietly along the edge of the forest, the young people noticed that the leaves in the forest were really green. And one small tree, growing almost in the center of the meadow, was all covered with green leaves.

The next morning the most important thing began. Petya got the instructions for childbirth for novice parents. A disk of an obstetrician was inserted into the slot of a ship’s robot. Alexandra, anticipating unforgettable experiences, put a fresh crystal into the emo video recorder. Petya could not find a place for himself, but his wife was absolutely calm. All equipment was set up, and childbirth promised to be easy, like it was with her mother. Nevertheless, alien technology is a real miracle that has made all women in labor on Earth confident and happy.

From the diary of Alexandra

So, everything was going well! Not quickly, as I hoped, and not without pain... As Verka boasted that giving birth is a pleasure! Not true! The pleasure was then when I cuddled my baby to my chest! Masha! I had a dream that my daughter’s name was Masha. But Petya nearly fainted – what is a weirdo! Quite a good assistant! But the robot didn’t let us down, did everything as it should.

And then there was a month of unforgettable happiness. The forest, rustling with leaves, turned green and smelled. Peter collected leaf samples, examined them under a microscope and went crazy with surprise. He shouted that we had discovered something unimaginable. That we need to call an expedition here. Twisted the radio settings. But there was only noise on the air. The planet’s magnetic field did not transmit radio waves.

Petya dug up a separate growing tree and carefully transported it to the ship's greenhouse. It was time to go on...

But the ship's reactor could not be started. What happened there, I don't know. Petya together with the robot disassembles the reactor compartment. Oddly enough, I'm happy with my Masha. I sleep peacefully, walk, sing the songs to her. What a wonderful daughter I have – she never cries, only smiles at me and chirps in her infant tongue.

I have a lot of free time so I took out a notebook, I write, as they did in antiquity, the diary of my life. Moreover, the ship computer is still occupied by Petrusha.

Yes, and I also looked for the mushrooms in the forest and I found them. They say, in ancient times people ate mushrooms. I made mushroom soup. Petya ate and liked it, then tried to escape to his robot. It was hard to stop him! I told him what the soup was made of – and he almost went crazy.

“How could you do this? These are wild plants, they are dangerous! Even on Earth, decent people have long ceased to eat what grows in the wild forest. Don't you remember what the teachers told us?! “We are what we eat! Whoever feeds on wild plants is sure to run wild eventually!”

“Petrusha, well, I can't always eat tasteless pasta, which gives us the ship's kitchen! And these mushrooms smelled so good! It seems to me that I even heard their voice: “Tear us! Eat us! We have grown here for you! “So I could not resist. And you liked the soup too! Do not deny!”

“Liked it! Do you remember how they read the holy book the Bible to us in church? There also the unreasonable woman Eve fed her husband Adam a wild apple. And both of them immediately became savages and could no longer remain in the beautiful paradise arranged by the teachers of The Galactic Association of Intelligent Civilizations (GAIC)! And then there were millennia of savagery, wars, hunger and overwork... Only a thousand years ago we achieved forgiveness and re-joining GAIC. And the first commandment of our Church of Reason: “There is nothing in the wild forests, not to eat together with the savages left from the time of chaos”

“Petrusha, we cannot fly away from here anyway! And run wild, it turns out, so nice! Let us run a little bit wild!”

“Really, nice! But not every day ... We assume that this is not wildness, but an experiment on adapting to an alien planet in the event of a breakdown in the ship's kitchen.”

Kum

The sudden roar and close blow pierced the desperate silence of the autumn dream, having shaken me deeply. I return to the ordinary rhythm of my life with extreme difficulty, so that I can see an invisible show. Next to me a black tubby tree took root, and the raised burnt earth is around. I'm expecting... The two seeds emerged from the gap in the bark. They started wandering around the meadow, apparently, searching for a place to take root.

They couldn't find the place, but they brought many things to the meadow that I cannot describe. Moreover, these two were the true thinking beings, but they were thinking in a different range, which I could hardly comprehend. In the meadow, there was also something non-thinking that helped them transport unidentified sections of the primary tree... I shortened the length of my time tact to keep track of everything they did. My life was filled with significance, the juices went through my veins, my leaves became green. All that transfigured our meadow. Rames, covering a wide region of meadow, emerged around the primary tree. But what happened was even more exciting. I kept waiting for unknown plants to root, but even more interesting occurrence took place. The fatter seed suddenly produced a very tiny one from itself. This was the long-awaited act of creating a fresh seed, judging by their joyous feelings. And just to grow their fresh seed they went to this planet. I'm happy I appeared so close to such a wonderful case!

However, the main task of mine is to get inside the alien tree so that these strange planet visitors could take me on their journey, since I cannot fly yet. I attempted to persuade the visitors to let me

enter inside their tree. It worked! I have been dug up and brought inside. I'm not mentally active yet, as I don't understand how the aliens are going to respond. As the future has shown, my caution was justified. I was surprised by complicated and unknown details from the inside of the alien tree. The most significant thing, however, is that I am immersed in a wonderful terrain containing water as well as nutrients, and the light within the tree was not worse than the sun. Therefore, I didn't even need to boost the time tact to preserve my vitality.

My happiness wasn't ongoing. They brought me out of the tree and replaced me. But now I know how to get into another tree and won't miss the time.

One year passed. The little seed is not rooted, but each day it moves in different directions. The rest ones also do not try to take root. I had the most incredible suspicion that these creatures were not going to take root at all. How do they get the strength to live? In the end I found out – they put in the upper slit of the body pieces of other plants. Very strange creatures! How can they survive if there are no other plants nearby? I don't understand. The Universe is truly full of surprises!

Another year went by, and I started to comprehend aliens better, I even understood how they interact. They can hardly transmit their ideas, but through the upper slit they can emit air vibrations – sounds which contain the data they need. I attempted to imitate their sounds in the night when the aliens hid. It wasn't easy to make a comparable slot with my capacity to transformation. The creation of air stream and the choice of the form and size of inner resonator were much more complicated.

Like me, they cannot take off from this insidious planet. This is not accidentally, I believe. Sometimes I feel something great and all-powerful at the brink of my time perception, and it is precisely the thing that does not want to let us go yet.

From Alexandra's diary

A year has passed. Despite robot assistance, Peter failed to repair the reactor. Mashutka began to walk and speak her first words. Nature amazed us with its generosity. Unknown flowers blooming in the wilderness, a small shrub with beers, similar to strawberries, appeared around the forest. The grass, which covered all the space, was also edible, comparable to the taste of salad. And its bloated roots entirely substituted potatoes, when cooking soups. Peter returned the tree from the greenhouse to its former place, and fortunately the tree greened and whispered with its leaves something unknown. It rained only at night, so it was nice to sleep listening to the rhythmic sound of the rain and waking up from the dispersed light of the invisible sun. The light clouds of the planet did not let in direct rays, but it was for the better.

Once I read a poem to Mashutka:
Gray bunny jumped and jumped,
Sat tailless under the bush.

And then, maybe, it seemed to me, but a real hare peered out from the bushes. Of course, I screamed, "Peter! Peter! It's a hare!"

Peter came running, but my cries scared off the hare. Peter did not believe me and it's such a pity.

Another year has passed. Here's a mild winter, leaves on the trees remain green. There appear to be serious winters for sometimes, because the forest was entirely yellow at our arrival, but the climate was only pleasing us until now. Mashutka and I run and laugh on the edge of the woods and our meadow. We are frightened to go to the woods where obviously unidentified animals can be found. We've seen hares, squirrels, or something very like them several times. And here Peter is simply furious – he doesn't see anything!

Yesterday once again he locked up in the workshop with a robot – he decided to create a weapon following the instance of old weapons. He is going to go hunting, as our ancestors on the Earth did.

Last night I cried bitterly because of Peter! For the last few days he went hunting with his new gun, but he did not meet any animals. And yesterday he called me into the forest, led me to one of the bushes and said: “Look, look, hare!”

I looked – it was really a hare, it sat, moved its ears and did not run away.

And Peter said, “Come closer, do not be afraid.”

I went, and what have I seen? It wasn't a hare; it was a pattern of white bush leaves. The leaves of the bush are green on one side and white on the other. Thus, they generate the unpredictable patterns. It turns out that all the hares and squirrels that we saw with Mashutka were only foliage patterns. It was a terrible insult! I cried all night. I decided that I'm not going to tell my daughter anything about that! Just let her play!

We are sitting with Mashutka on the grass and I read a poem:

Somewhere, there's a squirrel dwelling
In a fir tree; all day long,
Cracking nuts, it sings a song.
Nuts, most wondrous, I am told;
Every shell is solid gold
Kernels – each an emerald pure.

Masha listened to the poem and ran into the forest. In five minutes she comes back and holds out a yellow nut to me.

“Where did you get it?” I ask.

“A squirrel gave it to me. What do they do with nuts?”

We went back to show her how to break a nut. It was green emerald inside the nucleus. I tasted it – delicious. Mashutka ate and liked the remainder of it! I walked into the forest and discovered a hive with the same noodles, where my baby used to walk. Naturally, there were no squirrels. I collected nuts. This is of great help to our meager protein-free diet a lot. About our “wildness” because of the wild food Peter has forgotten a long time ago and happy with us to eat all that the planet gives us.

Four years passed. I think I'm getting used to the idea that I would stay here for the whole life. I teach Masha to read and write. She is naughty and does not want to do that. I begin to persuade her, “If you do not study, I'm not going to tell you fairy tales.” And she likes fairy tales very much.

She especially loves the fairy tale about Masha, the girl who got lost in the forest and got into the hut of the bear. The bear had not allowed her to go back home. Masha tricked him into taking the basket of pies to her parents, and hid herself at the bottom of the basket.

The bear carried Masha home, and stopped along the way and said, “I will sit on a stump and eat a pie.” And Masha from the basket, “Do not sit on a stump, do not eat a pie. I'm sitting high, looking far away.” So the bear brought Masha to her home.

Even now, while I am writing, she is running along the edge of the forest and loudly shouts, “Do not sit on a stump, do not eat a pie. I sit high, I look far away.”

Peter has a new hobby: he intends to discover for his greenhouse at least a seed of alien crops. He's got luck today: a tree in the center of a meadow has flourished. High on the top was an enormous black flower. Excellent lace design, more than one meter in diameter. A red ovary is in the middle. The next morning the flower vanished and a small black seed was discovered under the tree. Peter planted the seed instantly into his greenhouse.

This is the fifth birthday of my daughter. Masha is healthy, cheerful, but I'm increasingly worried about her. Nothing but fairy tales interests my girl. She listens to every fairy tale I tell her, then begins to play it in her favorite forest and changes it... For a couple of days she performs this way before moving on to another fairy tale. After several days, she can go back or start combining

different stories. Masha enthusiastically informs me all that she thought up during a day. I have to say, I can bear it very hard. Peter can't stand it for a long time, so he just run away to his workshop.

The tone of the bear, "I sit on a stump eating a pie," turned out to be very hard to listen to for the thousandth tome. By the way, we just don't have pies, there's nothing to cook it on. The cooker in automatic kitchen only makes nutritious pasta and beverages. Soup, but not pie, can be cooked in the cell for boiling water. In the meadow you can't create a fire. Local trees are not burning.

Peter is happy – his seed has hatched in the greenhouse as a small green sprout. He jumps around it, every day measures the growth rate, brought some device to study the color of the leaves. He says that the spectrum of colors of the tree's leaves in the orangery differs from the same of the trees outside. Unfortunately, the tree in the clearing has not had leaves for a long time, after flowering it withered.

Kum

In the third year, I found that mental contact was possible for Masha, the name of the smallest seed. She stopped next to me several times and heard my thoughts. Now, I can mentally speak to her, but the fear of not being taken on board, as the large tree is called, prevents me.

However, Masha found more interesting companions for herself. She runs into the forest and speaks there with someone very big, but I cannot understand with whom.

I wait and do nothing else, time is gone. The main thing is not to attract the attention of that huge, with which Masha talks every day. Her parents do not understand anything. They don't understand that this huge thinking being will never let Masha go from it if it likes her. That's why I'm silent, pretending to be an ordinary, thoughtless tree.

The other day, I captured the thinking of the seed named Peter that he waited to gather seeds from my bloom. What a weird desire to gather seeds of others?! But as they say, it's plays into my hand. I made them a flower out of my parachute, which is usually used when flying in space. They believed me and danced around me all day long. I shut the parachute the next morning and folded in seed shape...

Hurray! The aim is achieved! I was transported inside their main tree! They are waiting for the first leaves to appear. I don't mind! To Peter's delight, I released a few green leaves. One leave he plucked because of joy. I do not mind him plucking it and just hope that he would not throw me out of the ship.

From Alexandra's diary

Two more years have passed. Masha is seven, it's time for school. Petya and I are ready to give her everything we know ourselves, but Masha does not want to study at all. I bitterly regret reading her fairy tales when she was a child. Masha doesn't want to know anything else. In the morning she shouts, "Mother, I went to bear!" and until the evening lurks in the forest. I'm desperate. Petya tried to find her and take her home a couple of times, but he did not succeed. Masha knows the forest much better than we know it and hides there well, so she cannot be found. She does not reply when we call her. From tomorrow, Peter decided not to let her out of the ship at all until she got used to school discipline.

I am writing the last entry in my diary for those who find this diary know what happened to us.

We seriously started paying attention to Masha as I already wrote. It was high time for her to learn school curriculum. We decided to keep her out of the forest for a couple of days. A heavy wheel closed the lock and posed a barrier that could not be removed for a seven-year-old kid. We didn't discover Masha on the boat one morning, however. The airlock was open. I don't understand how she opened it. We went outside. Peter took a gun not for safety, but only if we move apart in the

forest, to show where he is. We wandered through the wood all day, looking for Masha, but did not find her.

In the evening we sat near the ship and thought what to do. Suddenly, Masha came out of the forest and looked back, as it seemed to me, with fright. Then the bushes crackled, and something huge, black jumped out of the forest and rushed to Masha. Peter reacted instantly and fired. But is it possible to stop such a gigantic thing with one bullet?

This strange bear rushed to Masha and caught her up in the forest. Still Peter was able to shoot the bear in the back... Then it started... A whole herd of bears have probably been troubled by us because they all got out of the bush. Fearful, black, saliva dripping out of acute yellow teeth. We knew we couldn't cope with them. It just took us little time to jump into the boat and close the airlock. I felt a ship's hull trembling from their powerful blows.

Petya said, "Nothing, now I'll fry you," and he started the reactor. He forgot, poor man, that the reactor he had not been working for a long time. But then it suddenly started working. The ship immediately flew up, pushing me and Petya to the floor. We woke up in space far enough from the planet that captivated us. That's all.

Masha died, and now I have no sense to live. I put on my spacesuit and go out into an outer space. Forgive me, Petya!

Kum

I doubt the mental abilities of Masha's parents! Only on the seventh year they discovered that she had long been not their seed! That she has been in contact with the huge thinking being that lives on this planet for a long time. It is so big that I can't measure it. Perhaps it is this entire planet. But my nerds decided to fight IT for their child. Why not talk first, but they made that noise, bang-bang, they almost killed their child in the hustle, but the planet did not doze, it saved Masha, and they themselves, together with the ship were kicked away.

But their foolishness did not end there. First, the one who was called Alexandra put on her spacesuit and jumped out. Then Petya also put on a spacesuit and followed her. What should I do now? I do not have the strength to travel on my own; I do not know how to control their ship. I had to try. I took the roots out of the ground, grabbed a large skein of ropes and also went outside. I tied the rope to the ship, clamped the other end with a branch and flew in search of my suiciders. With the help of a mental signal I found them quickly.

They flew embracing each other and did not react to anything. I tied them with a rope and pulled them back onto the ship. Well, at least, in space, objects do not weigh anything, otherwise I could not cope. I closed the gateway, unscrewed the helmets and let them breathe! Earlier from their conversations I understood that they must breathe.

I returned back to my place and took root, until they woke up! Everything is great! My sufferers laid down in narrow boxes and fell asleep – they said something about anabiosis. But I feel that the ship flies in the necessary direction, and my beloved is getting closer and closer!

We finally arrived; our ship is connected to the big one. I heard the lock of the hatch clicked.

"So what do we have? Two sleeping people. Well, at least, the automation did not let us down ..."

One of the rescuers stuck the needle of the device in turn into the bodies of the sleeping.

"Wake up ... Wake up!"

"I don't want to live anymore! Leave me!" this is Alexandra's voice.

Another needle is injected into her, and she became calmer.

"Doctor, what's wrong with her? Will she live?" this is Peter.

"Complete wildness! She will live, but she will not be allowed to have children. Feral went too far!"

“I told her not to eat those wild mushrooms!” this is Peter again.
“Yes, my friend, unknown mushrooms should not be eaten.”

Chapter 3. Terra and Bess

“Take care of Terra!”

“I do not want to leave you!”

“Terra must grow free! You will be safe in my mother’s forest if you do not decide to look for me mentally.”

“Darling, but how did it happen, why did you open, after all, everything was so wonderful.”

“Well, I could not stand my joy when my daughter was born ... I am guilty! Now I can’t avoid the saucers. And you go! They shouldn’t find you! Goodbye, I feel they are close! Take care of Terra!”

“Goodbye, beloved!”

Three years passed

“Valentina Sergeevna, I cannot live here anymore, I’m leaving to look for Masha. I want Terra to live with you!”

“My girl, how can it be ... And are you not afraid of saucers?”

“They won’t do anything to us! But we will be together.”

“But what about Terra?”

“I want her grow free. When she becomes an adult let her decide her own destiny. Maybe one day we will meet again. I hope, she will forgive us!”

Terra

I said goodbye to my mom as I was three. In the heart of a thick forest, in which my grandma forbade me go, we remained with her in a tiny hut. We have a garden where my grandma and I are planting various greens. In the autumn we gather the harvest. Then the lengthy days of winter are coming. My grandma is nice. In the evenings, she tells me fairy tales. The extraterrestrial generator rumbles silently, heating our cabin. The cat Murka got settled on the generator. My grandma and I are sailing to far-off worlds, the ancient worlds of fairy kingdoms of the Ancient Earth. It’s all in a different way now. The land belongs to the saucers. They fly on their own saucers and take anyone who thinks out loud. So they took dad and mom. Both my grandmother and I also know how to think out loud, but we never do this, so because of that we are not taken away.

And then spring came again. I’m already big, I’m four and I can walk along the edge of the forest. How good it is here! The forest is whistling, singing, rustling. I sit down on a log and listen, listen, listen ... I sit still ... Then the hedgehog jumped out of a bush and quickly-quickly went about his business. And a butterfly sat on my hand and began to clean its antennae with a paw...

Hot days have come and my grandma has removed my dress and my shoes and instructed me, because it is helpful, to run naked and sunbathe! I went around the edge of the woods from that day on, grass pricked at first, but I became accustomed to that. And I saw a girl, very little and also naked, once in the forest thicket. When I stared at her, she stood and checked me closely. We looked at each other and didn’t move for a long time, and then I decided to approach the girl.

“Who are you?” I asked. But the girl did not answer. I ran into the forest and back, and the girl ran with me. We had a lot of fun.

“Bless me,” I shouted in admiration. “And now back.”

“Terra, where are you?” – called my grandmother.

“I’m here, playing with a girl!”

“What girl?”

“Girl, what’s your name?”

“Bess” my friend answered quietly.

“Her name is Bess,” I cried to my grandmother.

“Take her here.”

“Let’s go,” I called my friend, and we, holding hands went to grandmother.

Grandmother was very surprised to see a naked baby who came to us from the forest.

“Poor little soul, you must be hungry?” grandmother bustled about, offering the girl a pie. But the girl did not take the pie, and first of all she rushed to the bucket of water, put her whole head in it – and drank, drank, drank... Grandmother even worried that the baby would drown herself in it.

“I am not surprised,” said grandmother, “there are neither rivers nor lakes near us. And if we did not have a pump that draws water out of the ground, we wouldn’t have anything to drink either. Where did you come from? And how far have you gone from your family! She must be lost! There is nothing to do with that, you will have to live with us! What’s your name?”

“Bess” she said.

“I see, so you will live with us, Bess.”

The little girl just blinked.

“Poor thing, you even haven’t learnt how to speak yet. What happened to your parents? Oh, I understand, of course, they were taken by platers! They probably wanted to hide here, in my forest, but could not escape from the villains? They hid you in the bushes...”

The little girl blinked again.

So Bess lived with us. During the first year she said nothing except her name. Bess ate little, but drank a lot. And she often ran away from home at night, and stared towards the forest, where she lost her parents. She didn’t learn to speak until the second year, but she couldn’t tell us much. No matter how much we asked her about her parents, she didn’t remember anything.

“The girl experienced shock,” my grandmother said to me the unfamiliar word. “Do not ask her anymore. One day, if she wants, she will remember! The main thing is that she is alive and healthy, everything else does not matter.”

Bess

I’m Bess, the girl from the forest. They ask me what I remember, and but I do not remember a lot. The worst thing is thirst! I want to drink stronger and stronger... Then darkness. These nightmares often torment me. I also remember the first time I saw Terra, and then I realized that I was a girl like her, and that she was my future sister... the first time we ran together. “Bless me!” The little sister shouted, and I repeated to her: “Bess”. I could not speak the letter “L” then. After that I drank water in their house! From that time thirst became a thing of the past. It’s such a pleasure to dip your head in a bucket and drink, drink in big gulps! And then run out into the yard without clothes with arms outstretched, and stare at the yellow sun...

“You’re running naked again! I will teach you!” screams grandma. “You’ll catch a cold, hot days are gone! Autumn is coming!”

Grandmother teaches me that somewhere far away live people, and one cannot run naked among them.

“It’s indecent! When you go to the people, remember that!”

I do not care of other people; my grandma and my little sister Terra are enough for me. And we both love the stories that grandma tells us in the evenings. I imagine Terra and I are princesses who one day will fell in love with handsome princes. And we live in palaces, and the grandmother will come to visit us in turn, one day to me and the other to Terra. Yes, but when will we play together? I should think it over, because something is wrong ... And what about princes, what games do they like to play? In fairy tales they all have some battles, some dragons. Their games are so boring. The dragons ... they had better not fight the dragons, but tame them! Yes, grandma, grandma! I understand! Terra and I will tame dragons! And then fly them far, far away! To see everything! We

will take you with us if you want. And see from above our father and mother! And take them away on dragons, and bring them to you!

“Oh, my dear” cried the grandmother. “What an imaginative girl you are! Look, daughters, do not think loudly, because platers will take you away!”

“What are they like, grandmother? Are they scary? Do they eat people?!”

“No, kids, they don’t,” grandma says. “They breed people like we breed tomatoes.”

I can just imagine my father and mother growing up in the beds, far away, at platers’ place ... and how bored they are to sit in the beds, and do not be allowed to go anywhere when they are bred ... Our poor fathers and mothers. “When we grow up, we will definitely save them!” I say. “And we will plant that harmful plates on the beds and let them breed themselves.”

Grandma laughs through her tears:

“Oh, my child! Indeed, let them breed themselves!”

In such a way passed my happy childhood. The most joyful days were the days when we all went together to gather mushrooms in the forest. Grandmother was afraid of getting lost, especially when the sun was hiding behind the clouds. Terra was afraid too, but I was not, as I always knew the direction to the house. And I discovered that grandma, and Terra does not see well at night... But during the day they could distinguish more colors than I do. I always confused blue and green, red and orange.

Here is the other memory. Terra and I are twelve years; we stand near a large mirror in my grandmother’s room and analyze the changes of our bodies.

“Oh, shameless girls!” grandma comes in. “What are you doing here?”

“Grandma, don’t you think that Terra and I look alike?”

“Yes, it is true, you are like twins,” grandma says, “but Terra is white, and you, Bess, are brown.”

Years passed and now we are sixteen... Two days ago died our cat Murka. And then our grandma became ill...

One day she called us to her and said “It’s time for you girls to go out and look for your own destiny.”

“What about you, grandmother?”

“My life seems to be over.” I will die soon. Bury me and leave. I contacted mentally with your parents, granddaughter, they are alive, healthy and miss you very much, they had your little brother, but platers took him away. They don’t advise you to be caught by platers. Platers will not arrive for me, because they realized that I am going to die.

These are the last days in the house of our childhood. Behind the house appeared a mound with a cross on it, as our beloved grandmother wanted. Tomorrow we are ready to go! But where?!

The path near the house runs from North to South. But which way should we go? Out of habit, I go to my favorite place on the edge of the forest; bare feet are especially sensitive to our native land. I raise my hands to the sun.

“The sun, show us the way!”

Its light pours from above, penetrating me through and through, and it seems that something is happening...

Then I realize that we have to go the West. We never went with grandmother in that direction, as there was marshy lowland, overgrown with impassable bushes.

Terra is silent and does not object, she is all in her grief. So I will decide! I wipe the solar dish on the roof for the last time and do not switch off the generator. Let those who come here find a warm hut. I do not take a lot of food, because Terra and I are able to eat everything that grows in the forest. They say that in ancient times people did not know how to do that, and because of that there was starvation. I hope that we will find water at the bottom of lowlands, so I just take a small water-bottle. And, of course, a long rope, it can always come in handy!

For four days we make our way through the bushes on marshy lowland, but ahead, on the high hills, long pines invitingly stand. They are very close, but ahead is the river, though not wide but violent. Terra and I can't swim! We go along the low bank, sinking to the waist in the mud. Here is bending, water with force is striking in the opposite high bank.

One end of the rope I tie to a bush, the other around Terra, and push her into the water. With a squeal she disappears under the water, but a minute later the stream carries her straight to the opposite shore. There she ties one end of the rope to a tree, and I tie myself to my end and throw myself into the water. I cannot get to the shore as Terra did. I am brought to the surface and carried at the center of the stream. The rope tightens, and Terra begins to pull me toward the shore. So we crossed the river, and at the same time washed from the mud.

We continue our way. There's a path ahead in the right direction. After a few steps we see the light and hear someone's voices. There are creatures unknown to us, men-princes our grandmother told us about. Or maybe they are not princes? They sit by the fire. The fire was new to us, too, because my grandmother never put it. The men look at us, both in dirty gray robes and pants, the older one with a mustache and beard, the other a young boy.

"Chicks came to us," says the older one, "take off your dresses and let's have some fun."

I obediently take off my dress, but Terra won't. A bearded man comes toward me with a knife in his right hand. Good knife, I would like to take it with me!

"Well done, chick" he says to me, putting his hand between my breasts. He puts the knife to my stomach. The second guy tries to knock Terra to the ground and tear off her dress. Terra fights back...

"No, they are not princes!" I compress the fingers of my boyfriend with my breasts, at first he smiles, then, when his fingers begin to crackle and break down, screams... and suddenly sticks his knife in my stomach. That's what I need, my stomach muscles pinch the blade so he can't take it out again. The knife is mine!

"They're not people!" he yells, tearing and ripping out his skin, trying to take his hand away of my breasts.

"Pasha run away!" and he disappears around the bend of the path.

I pull the knife out of my stomach, outstretched my arm and poke it into Pasha's hip, which was sprawled on my sister.

Pasha looks at my outstretched hand with horror and rushes away with a scream.

"That is all" I say to Terra "get up". At the same time I put on a dress. In comparison to Terra's dress mine is not even crumpled. My sister gets up and rushes to me crying.

"Bess, are men really so disgusting?! They are not like that in fairy tales."

"Oh, Koschey the Immortal is also ugly enough... Let's put the fire out! The grandmother said that the fires are dangerous, but I'm afraid to come closer to it. Do it, Terra!"

Meat is fried at the stake on metal sticks, the smell is disgusting! But Terra really adores it. Taking a metal bowl from the ground, she throws fire with the ground takes meat sticks with her and starts eating!

"Do you want to taste it, Bess? It is so delicious!"

I flinch in disgust,

"No, eat it yourself! And let's leave the path; otherwise these fake princes will bring here their friends ..."

And again we are walking through our native endless forest. Terra is chewing meat, and I am viewing my trophy – a brilliant knife, blade is two my palms long, the handle is comfortable, leather, with a support for the fingers. The wonderful knife. Gap from it in my stomach is already tightened, only a drop of transparent tar is on the surface...

Terra

I follow my little sister and remember our past life. The adventure with those men woke me up. Everything became special. And especially Bess, such a familiar, my sister. We are so alike and different at the same time, for example, I could get scratched in the forest, could prick my leg, but she...

It had never happened to her. Once a month my grandmother cut my hair to keep it out of the bushes, but she never cut Bess's hair, because it was already short and slightly curly. "It's probably from your African ancestors, like your dark skin" my grandmother used to say. And when I got sick once a month, Bess didn't, but my grandmother was sorry for her and not for me. Bess had never been afraid of anything neither of the forest, nor of the rushing river. The only thing she was afraid of was fire and nothing else, even those nasty men... And now she is walking and mentally greeting trees, and those even respond. "Wait! How do they do that? Can I hear them?! So I can talk to trees! Can I also talk to Bess that way? And no platers can hear me because they will take my thoughts for those of a tree?!"

"Bess, do you hear me?! Bess, we can talk to each other mentally without fear, but not as people talk, but as trees do! And no platers will catch us. They'll think we're trees!"

"Indeed! How could I not have guessed?" rejoiced she. "Now we can always talk, even at a distance, and never lose each other!"

Chapter 4. Rin and Bess

Rin

Today is a holiday, ours came back from war with Homos.

I am sitting on a log near the grandfather and looking at the blazing fire around which are dancing the returned fighters.

“Grandpa, so ours won?”

“No, grandson, to win Homos is not for us! The matter is that platers are near them.”

“Why are we fighting Homos, but not platers?”

“You’re funny! After all platers do not treat us as people at all!”

“Can they beat us easily?”

“Of course! They just do not want to! Our wars are just an entertainment for them. Even Homos are not easy to be defeated, because they are better armed than our people. Today they again drove us away from the field...”

“Have we ever chased them away?”

“Once. But platers interfered... and we lost again.”

“So they fought ours?”

“Not exactly! They turned on brainwash on their saucers and drove ours through the forest almost to the village. Then everyone has a headache during the whole day ... That’s how we live. Look! Mute came out! This is no accidentally!”

“Grandfather, and who is he, this Mute?”

“This, grandson, is a great immortal! He knows everything, understands everything, and therefore does not speak. Go and bring him a jug of milk! He loves milk. Always welcome him, and you will be happy! So the old people said.”

“How old is he?”

“Don’t even ask! He is immortal. He always lived here. And strangely, he never left his place. You know, once one hundred years ago, people wanted to drive him away.”

“And what?”

“He just looked at the attackers... and all of them immediately fled in terror. Such was the case! This Mute is a real sorcerer! Look, look, he’s pointing at something! Hey, people!!!”

The dancing crowd stopped in mid-stride. One even dropped into the fire and jumped back with a curse.

“What are you doing, grandpa?”

“Look! Mute!”

“The Mute was indeed pointing stubbornly at the sunrise.”

“We should go! Mute will not point at something for nothing!”

“Come on, grandpa” the burned man growled.

“Calm down, Fedya, Mute does not show in vain! Come on!”

“Grandfather, may I come with them?”

“Yes, you may, Rin, you are almost an adult. Take just in case our bow with you. You are not still ready to fight like a real man!”

The men grabbed their clubs and trotted through the forest.

I ran ahead of everyone. Eastern part of forests was forbidden. Women did not go there to gather berries and mushrooms, and did not let their children to play there too. There, in the East, lived the meridichi. They always bullied ours and were always ready to steal the lost woman.

I got far ahead and was the first who heard a woman’s scream.

“Let me go!..”

Jumping out on a glade, I saw five healthy men, who were knitting a little white girl. The sixth guy tried to grab the other one, the dark one, but she deftly waved him away with a large knife. He didn't try very hard, though. Then his partners finished knitting a white one and headed out to his aid. I fired and hit the man in the shoulder. The dark one did not yawn and stabbed him in the other hand, so the dazed man fell to the ground and rolled away. The remaining five split up. Two of them ran to the dark one, and three of them began to walk around me. I am not stupid and did not shoot at them because it was impossible to hit a target. I shot the one who was running toward the dark one, and I hit him in his ass. He screamed and stopped. But the second swooped at the girl. I couldn't help her, and I ran.

Behind me, three of my enemies were crashing and cursing. We were heard a mile away, which I was counting on. All three ran to the place where were ours, and then they got it. And I turned back. The dark one and a man laid motionless on the ground, hugging each other, and a pool of blood was spreading beneath them.

Screams were heard behind the bushes, there three trapped meridichi were flogged.

"Do not go in our direction! Do not go!" Ilya said, he always flogged the guilty.

I came to the swarthy one.

"What is your name?"

"Bess, and you?"

"I'm Rin. Come to us, meet my grandfather. We have no mistress; you can live in our hut. And, I feel, Petrya will not let your friend go, she will live in his hut."

"Will she feel good there?"

"Do not be afraid! Petrya is kind to the women. Never offends anyone! Yes, the main thing is to thank the Mute, if not for him, the meridichi would have dragged you to themselves. It's bad to live with them, they are all angry! They even beat their women!"

"Why?"

"I do not know. Probably because of their anger..."

So, talking, we slowly reached the village. At first everyone came to the fence of the Mute and bowed low. The Mute stood, so tall and stern. He was looking somewhere above our heads.

"Bow down!" I whispered to Bess.

"Wait," she whispered back, "let me talk to him."

"He's Mute, he never speaks!"

"Don't interfere," Bess went to the fence and gave a hand to him, and he gave his own in response.

Everyone looked at it in amazement. Both seemed to be petrified, and then the incredible thing happened. Mute came up and opened the wicket-door; the swarthy girl slipped into it and went to the house with him.

The crowd gave a sigh simultaneously. Something unusual was happening. Mute never let anyone into his area, and moreover, never invited.

Bess

Terra and I were wrong not having taking care before. We needed to run away immediately after that bad meeting. And we walked slowly, talking with all the trees we met, and only then, when it was too late, we noticed the silhouettes of pursuers behind.

My cry, "Help!" on a wavelength of the trees could be heard only by the trees, but nevertheless someone answered.

My sister and I were fleeing as best we could, but, of course, they caught up with us. Terra didn't try to resist, she just shouted plaintively: "Let me go!"

They knocked her down and began to tie her up, but I took out my knife. The owner of this knife, who recently ran away from me, approached me, but he was in no hurry to attack.

“Now your sister will be tied up, then I’ll take care of you,” he said, coming closer to me.

“And what are you afraid of?” and I waved a blade towards him.

Suddenly, he jumped up screaming in the place where he stood. An arrow appeared in his right shoulder. And I poked him with a knife in the other hand, and, strangely enough, hit. Then he will know how to attack defenseless girls! He rolled down the grass with a scream.

The other five finished to tie Terra up. Two rushed straight to me, and the rest to the forest, from where the arrow flew. However, one of these two immediately got an arrow in the ass and immediately lost his enthusiasm, but the last, hefty man with a knife in his right hand, clearly decided to finish with me. He overturned me with his huge body, while trying to knock a knife out of my hand. He was late. My knife was stuck directly into his chest, and, falling on me, he pushed it to the hilt. His knife also appeared under my left breast, it was very ticklish, but I could not do anything – the man was too heavy. Tickling became unbearable, and moving my chest, I slowly squeezed his knife out and covered the cut with tar.

Meanwhile, something was happening in the clearing, someone’s voices were heard... Well, of course, everybody crowded Terra, who, I feel, was all right, but me, who was completely crushed, remained unnoticed. Finally, one saw me and took a dirty, sweaty body away from me, but then he decided to take the knife from me! It will not work! It’s my knife, I won’t give it back! I got up to the laughter of the whole company. I looked around – the same men, sweaty, dirty, but... funny! Not princes, of course, but it’s better to go together with them. The chief immediately went to Terrochka and took her in his arms. The rest were watching... And why does everyone like her so much? Only a young one, with a bow, came up to me. After all, it must be him to help me by shooting from a bow!

And so we went: Rin and I, for Rin was the name of this one with a bow, and others were around the chief with Terra in his hands.

I mentally contacted her:

“How are you?”

“Great, little sister! I like it so much!”

I calmed down. So, everything is fine. Maybe this is her suiter, as grandmother told us?

We came to the place where there were a lot of houses, a village; everything is as we know from grandmother’s tales. And here’s a special house, there a local sorcerer lives. It was him who heard me and sent all of them to help.

I stay and look in the stern face of the sorcerer, listen and hear nothing.

“He does not speak,” the companion whispers to me.

“Come to me,” I hear suddenly, and my legs themselves carry me to the fence. Our hands meet, and our thoughts as well.

“How old are you, girl?”

“I think about fifteen, like my little sister.”

“You are mistaken, baby, you are much older ... I can’t even imagine how old you are. The last time I saw people like you, several thousand years ago ... There was a terrible time, everywhere bonfires were burning...”

I flinched, imagining my mother writhed in flames.

“It was so ... But it will never be so again!”

“Why does everyone call you Mute?”

“I cannot speak with them ... How could I explain this to you? In a word, I am bewitched. And only people like you can remove a spell on me. You are my first hope in the last thousand years. Okay, let’s go to the house, there I will pick up clothes suitable for your status. Recently, I have been collecting different robes, just for the sake of entertainment, – and now it turned to be useful.

I chose a green dress and green beads, and also a belt with a scabbard for my knife. The sorcerer, meanwhile, was looking at my weapon...

“Yes ... The time has come ... So the knife of Granddad Plop, or the great warrior Yek-Gush, has returned. It is unusual knife. It will serve you faithfully. You should have shoes ... oh, you don't need shoes?!”

How he guessed! I hated any shoes since childhood.

“Well, come on, baby, it's better for you to live in a hut with your friend Rin. And the men, I think, will quickly figure out and will not hammer at you!”

“But what about the suiters?” I just wanted to ask.

“The suiters will surely appear, but not here and not now ...” said sorcerer, pushing me to the exit.

Rin was waiting for me and led me to his home. He introduced me to his grandfather. The three of us sat at the table, but I didn't want to eat, I really wanted to drink. I scooped up water from a barrel and drank, drank, drank ... I immediately remembered the first days of my childhood and an all-burning thirst ... How good to drink, and then go to the edge of the woods and dip your feet in fallen leaves ... And deeper, deeper ... And hands higher, higher ... Grace!

Rin came out with me, was staying and saying something, but I did not listen, reveling in the moment. The sun came to the edge of the forest, big and red ... Here is the last ray.

“Let's go home,” Rin called.

Near the house we saw Terra.

“I'm coming to you. There, at Petrya's, everyone is so rude. Women are pushing, cursing... I decided to leave. Petrya did not want to let me go, but his father told him something, and he let me go...

“You're on time, little sister! They have cooked a lot of dishes there, but I don't want to eat. So sit down at the table and eat for the two of us. I will stand at the porch for a while, look at the stars.

So our fate was decided. Terra and I found a new home, new relatives and friends. Life goes on, and the stars are getting closer and closer... Here is one of them blinking... There! There is the one I need so much!

Chapter 5. Adventures of Petya and Kum

Petya

“Yes, my friend, unknown mushrooms should not be eaten, – sentenced the nurse, laying sleeping Alexandra on a gurney – and where now? Pretty, but the sapiens probably euthanize her...”

“In what sense euthanize? Are they going to kill her?”

“Most mercifully, Peter is to put your wife to sleep. This is better than she will be tormented with her sickness, for the rest of her life. And also she will torment all the surrounding sapiens with her thoughts. We, homos, can live peacefully next to an unfortunate person, but the sapiens cannot! That’s it, my friend!

“And what about me?”

“What about you? What are you worried about? You, as a healthy homo, can take a new wife, maybe you can also have children...”

“With a guilty conscience! That I could not save my beloved?”

“What do you want? You had to think first when you put your ship on an unknown planet, where anything could happen to your wife and child! So it happened!”

“But I cannot live without her!”

“Yes, my friend, this is serious ... What should we do with you? Maybe you should be put to sleep, too?”

“It’s better that way.”

“Hmm, there is another option, but you will not like it...”

“Anything just to keep Alexandra alive!”

“Okay, we can send you and your wife to the homos, who are fighting the savages. We are sending there completely hopeless one, from whom there is no use. We will sterilize all women there, since children in war are only a hindrance. But women are also needed there, and don’t think that any marriage laws are being followed. The right of the strong reigns there, and it’s not the fact that your wife will be yours there too.”

“What war? Are the aliens still fighting the savages?”

“No, of course, you misunderstood.” Homos are at war, and aliens are filming an emovideo film about all the vicissitudes of the wild life on a primitive planet. They get crazy money for such shots there!”

“Well, they are bastards, but I agree!”

“This is because you were not sensitized like sapiens, otherwise you would only glorify the wisdom of higher teachers!”

“But I have one more thing – I brought a plant from the Dark. It would be for scientists to study, so that our expedition would not be in vain!”

“This is interesting, I will give it! Let them study!”

Kum

I listened to this conversation very carefully in order to understand how I should behave then. But, perhaps, nothing should be done yet.

Two people came, carefully dug me up, carried me somewhere. Around are the walls, the ceiling, but light ... They planted in the ground, watered. Great!

One tore off my leaf and carried it away. Well, the leaf is not a pity. I follow his thoughts from afar...

“Look, what an unusual leave.”

“Usual, green...”

“No, no, look in the microscope. It has entirely unusual structure. Tomorrow I will take the whole plant and see the sections of the trunk. There, I’m sure that everything is also different...”

I did not like that at all. I did not want to participate in the study of my own slices. Carefully I took the roots out of the ground, transformed them into a kind of legs, and moved along the walls in search of a way out. I found a way out soon, but the door was locked. It’s now, recalling everything that happened, I easily write words such as “walls”, “door”... Then I didn’t know these words yet, which didn’t stop me from understanding what this or that thing was adapted for. I examined the door, spotted a thin gap from below. Well, try to become more flat. I lay down and began to flatten myself... I did it, crawled under the door and moved on. Everywhere is a solid stone, no land, no water! Everything is dead all around! Where should I go? Have I really hit a stone planet where it’s impossible to survive for someone like me? Who to seek help from? The only creature I knew that was good to me was Petya, but he never heard my thoughts. I’ll try anyway ... Asleep! Maybe even in a dream he will hear me? “You are dreaming about me! I feel bad! Come and save me! “And my image in the form of a sprout familiar to him...

I did it! Petya, not waking up, got up and went to my mental call. I didn’t know that people can walk in a dream. So, without waking up, he came up to me and carried me to his tent.

Not waking up, he wrapped me in cloth and put it in his bag. It was dark and narrow, I would tolerate this, if only to get rid of the study of my slices...

In the morning, Peter and sleeping Alexandra were immersed in an aircraft together with others. And so we fly, fly into the unknown.

The main thing is that we fly the right direction and the one that is destined for me is getting closer and closer! Good luck has not left me!

Petya

Arrived. Put into the line, roll call. Alexandra has not woken up yet, I’m swinging her on a cart to a row of one-story gray houses. While they regretted me, they settled me with his sick wife in the same room. The others were taken to a long common hut. However, I think this is not for long. When the wife recovers, the room will be given to other patients, and we will be sent to a common house...

Unpacking stuffs, I discovered a sprout from the Dark. That is strange! And when did I put it in the bag? Most importantly, I even seem to remember a little how I wrapped it in my old shirt... But when? I don’t understand anything at all! What should I do with it? At least in the forest, to the edge. There, no one will pay attention to it. The plant is not to blame for the fact that we drag it back and forth.

By night Alexandra woke up. I fed her what was given to us in the evening, and explained that we should go to plant our sprout. I try not to let her say a word, I’m saying and saying everything myself. I tell her what happened while she was sleeping. I took the knife and gave her a plant to carry. If only she was busy with business, and not with her memories!

Where should we go? Around the camp, spotlights burn – there are probably sentries. Is that between the houses to plant, among the small bushes? So we did, I dug a hole, my wife hold it, while I covered it with the ground. Then we brought some water in several cups, watered it. The ground is damp, it seems that it rains here sometimes... Our fellow traveler will not die here.

And we have new worries, and alas, sad ones. In the morning they took my wife for the surgery. They told me that women should not have children here; it turned out to be the truth. While escorting and supporting her, my alien plant disappeared somewhere. So there are sheer disappointments. And tomorrow, all the men are sent to another war. Everyone was given wooden batons, helmets and wadded jackets.

Kum

I was lucky ... I ended up in a real paradise, such as my mother told me about in childhood. But all in good time. Immediately, as Petya and Alexandra went away from me, I took out the roots from the dirt where they put me, and moved quietly in some direction. I didn't care in which one, if only to find a place where I could live unnoticed. Soon I approached a multitude of trees, but not like the ones on that planet, but alive, real, full of their thoughts. The trees that greeted me as one of them. Of course, these were trees that had not yet realized their essence – grown up trees-children. They thought only of the simplest, they had no idea how to walk, how I walk. But they were my brothers in spirit, and immediately I felt good with them! Down in the ravine a brook gurgled, on the shore, in a free clearing, I took root. Fragrant moisture flew down my roots! Around me is tall grass, which can be dangerous to those who have just pecked from a seed. For me, the grass is not scary...

The sun has risen! Life shone around with all its colors, it sounded and sang. Many creatures flew and sang around me. Some of them were significantly smaller than me, some of them were much more. Small creatures sang in thin voices, those that were bigger and sang for real. I never dreamed of ever seeing such beauty. Here is one of them sat right on my branch and began to sing. I stood motionless, afraid to frighten off a miracle. How happy should be all thinking beings, possessing such a beautiful planet!

I decided that I should learn everything about the life of such wonderful creatures. In the end, I am free to choose the shape of my body, why do not I become like an ordinary thinking being of this planet. The only problem is the size. I should be the size of an adult, not a child. And this problem is solvable, in a year I can quite gain the necessary weight.

Chapter 6. Legends of Golden age

“... And it was in those distant times when the magic flying Fox ruled the Earth. And all-all, even aliens, had to obey him. Then people lived happily, and aliens fulfilled all their desires! So it was, my children!”

“Grandfather, well, this cannot be! – Rin wedged into the conversation, while Terra and Bess were fascinated by grandfather’s tales about bygone times. “I will never believe that aliens could fulfill our desires!”

“Here from those times and we have remained unbreakable solar generators that are on the roof of almost all of our huts.”

“I heard, and now you can get such a generator from aliens.”

“Do you know the price?”

“Does it matter how expensive it is? It is almost eternal.”

“Price: one generator – one person.”

“Why do they need a man, after all, they don’t eat him!”

“And they turn this person with their magic into an alien.” It seems that man remains the same, but does not remember anything about himself the same, but he immediately understands all the alien things ... So it becomes one of them! They say all the aliens appeared that way.

“Yes, grandfather, all this is so unusual and strange ... How would I check if this is true?”

“How do you check? After all, these are all things of old days, which aliens do know, but they are unlikely to tell you everything.”

“And here you can check,” Bess interposed into the conversation. “Dumb lived in those days, and he knows everything.”

“But Dumb doesn’t talk!”

“He doesn’t speak with you, but maybe he will tell me!”

“Let’s try! If this is true, then you need to invite the elders of the village, and indeed everyone who wants to listen to the bygone times.”

“Let’s go! – Bess first got up and went outside.

Mentally she already called out Dumb and asked permission to invite the whole village to his hedge to talk. Dumb agreed and went beyond the threshold to the bench. He was strict, pulled up with a wide belt, his suit made of canvas with many pockets resembled the ancient costumes of warriors of previous centuries, and perhaps it was just such a suit. As always, Mute was silent, but his eyes were fixed on Bess. Behind the fence, curious people began to gather, and young people and old people came...

“I can answer through this thinking one you call Bess,” said Bess, and added: “These words have been conveyed to me by Dumb. You can ask him questions, I will give answers.”

“But he himself can’t?” – the question came from the crowd.

“He cannot. It is forbidden to him!”

“Okay, let him tell us about the times of the magic flying Fox.” What is true in these legends and what is not? Rin asked. —“Is it true that then was the Golden Age of mankind and the aliens were in our service?”

“This is a long story. Much of what is being said is true, but it is not quite so. Yes, there was a time when the ruler of the Earth was the magical Fox, but in fact – Leva, nicknamed the Little Fox, who spent his childhood in a fox hole and was raised by foxes. At first, the Little Fox did not know how to speak, he only mastered mental speech, and sometimes his abilities increased many times – to such a level that he could perceive the thoughts of other thinking creatures, both on our planet and from other planets. His teacher was mother Rose, who was actually Raegle from the planet of Dhana.”

She taught him all sorts of alien things like flying over the earth and turning into a fox. Then there was a time when the Earth received its status in the GAIC (The Galactic Association of Intelligent Civilizations) and chose its ruler. So, Rose was then a representative of all mankind, and it was she who talked with representatives of the GAIC, and Levushka the Little Fox was with her even at that moment significant for the Earth. Everyone thought that it was Rose who was appointed the official ruler of the Earth, especially since it was she who began to rule after that. Then it turned out that Levushka the Little Fox was declared the ruler, since it was he who was able to mentally speak with everyone – both neighbors and distant civilizations, but he transferred his responsibilities to his adoptive mother Rose because of his young age.

“But legends say that it was he who ruled the whole Earth?” surprised Rin.

“Unfortunately, Rose died tragically. I still regret that I did not save her, although I had such an opportunity. At that time, I worked for aliens and should not have helped her. After her death, the aliens were supposed to take control over the Earth, but it turned out differently – the power was in the hands of Levushka the Little Fox. He could have disposed of it wisely, for example, by ordering me to become his adviser and help in the fight against aliens, but he gave me the order to be silent, not to speak with people even mentally and not to leave anywhere from this small section where I have been living since almost a thousand years.

“But how are you talking to us now?” – a voice was heard from the crowd.

“You can talk with Bess, she is special and thinks differently from the rest, the ban does not apply to her. More precisely, I cannot explain to you.”

“What happened next?”

“Fox did not know how to rule, power passed to the emperor of the country Khem – Van Jen, who, however, loved Fox for helping him to overthrow the former cruel sorcerer-emperor. Van Jen often invited Fox to visit him, so that he would show the people his tricks for turning into a flying fox. In those days, Van Jen often sent rich gifts to Fox and his family, so the village where he lived was really prosperous. And Fox lived right here, in that house. Naturally, your legends describe the times of the magic fox as the Golden Age of humanity. The reality, alas, was different. The Khem Empire depended greatly on alien technology, as it happened in the days of the former emperor. Gradually, aliens seized power over the entire empire, and after the death of Fox and Van Jen, the rulers of the Earth were always elected among Khems, loyal to aliens. So to this time, aliens dominate the Earth.”

“And how did Fox live, did he have a wife, children? Was he happy?” – That was Terra’s question.

“Fox had a wife Raisa and two children: the eldest son George and daughter Valya. His wife was ill and died early, so that he raised children himself. The son inherited great telepathic abilities from him, while his daughter did not have any abilities. She early married a simple soldier who guarded the village from evil people. The son did not marry and lived with his father until his death. After the death of Fox, George left people and went in the wild forests, and his further fate is unknown.”

“What happened to Valya’s children?”

“Just usual things. Lived, married, gave birth to children. Many of you are her descendants, and at least Rin is one of them. Many Valya’s descendants had great telepathy abilities. I secretly covered some of them so that they would not be taken away by aliens, some of them I saved this way, some could not be saved. Now I’m on your side. The orders of Fox broke my previous connection with aliens, and subsequent rulers of the Earth did not care to restore it. And now the only one chance to defeat aliens is to choose the ruler of the Earth from your own people. Then this ruler can remove the Fox’s spell from me and order me to help him in the fight against aliens. But this fight will be very difficult!”

“What should we do?” asked one of the elders.

“You need to choose someone with the greatest telepathic abilities and provide him with the support of all thinking ones that you can find on Earth. The strongest on the planet now is Bess. Although there is another thinking one with similar abilities, but he was not born on Earth, and therefore is not suitable for rulers. Then it is necessary to telepathically contact the leadership of the GAIC and demand the appointment of a new ruler of the Earth. It is more convenient to do this in the thousandth year of the aew, when the ruler should be re-elected anyway. So your time is short, only one year.”

“But how is this possible? We can’t fly like aliens through the sky and visit the remote villages of the wild.”

“There is a little hope for people now. In one empire of Khem, which is under the complete control of aliens, there are now more people than on the rest of the Earth. But not only people think. You have legends about the flying ‘little folk.’ They can also be persuaded to join an alliance against aliens. If Bess tries, she can also find many other thinkers, sometimes completely unlike humans, but nevertheless born on Earth, and therefore having the same rights, to choose a ruler. If they recognize Bess, that will be enough.”

“Are ordinary trees considered to be thinking?” Asked Terra. “For example, my sister and I greeted them all the time, and they answered us.”

“No, nothing will come with trees. They will not be able to understand what we want from them, nor what aliens are, nor what the ruler of the Earth is. And without understanding, their consent means nothing.”

“Is it true,” Rin asked, “that for every alien generator they take a man and turn him into an alien?”

“Partially true. They don’t turn him, but send it to a device for exchanging souls. The human body receives the soul of an alien from a distant star system, and the human soul flies to those distant lands and since then lives on a foreign planet.”

Kum

At night, the air is clear and the stars hang very low above the head. But now the sky begins to brighten, and small droplets of precious moisture rise as the mist from the river, covering me from all sides. I swim in this fog, I drink it with all my pores. The first ray of the sun breaks out from behind the trees, the fog, thinning, rises higher, disappearing into the blue of the sky. The first tail splash is a fish in the water, the first slap to the shore is a frog. She warms her green back, preparing for the morning concert. The translucent bubbles behind her ears puffed out, and the first “cua-cheche-cheche-cheche” spread over the river.

During the night in the sand by the river, a track of dug sand appeared again, as if someone was making his way directly beneath its surface. This time I decided to find out everything thoroughly. I came closer and felt with a thin root the course of an unknown creature. According to the stroke width, it was no more than a centimeter in thickness. Continued the study – the course goes along the river, then turns onto a grassy slope. Lengthened the spine, here the course went steeply down. You’ll have to dig a bit to see this mysterious night visitor... Oh – I had to dig a hole half a meter deep among the plexus of roots. But I found him, no matter how he tried to get away from me. Amazing creature! A soft satin abdomen with two tails on the end, and a chest protected by chitin armor in front, a small head with antennae and large serrated paws with a turn outward. Perfect for digging. Release the creature onto the sand of the beach. Now it runs along the water, turned a little higher, goped a hole with its antennae and began to dig. A minute – and it disappeared from sight, only the soil is cracking from above, showing the direction of travel. But then the cracks disappeared, the creature went digging deeper. So I met another miracle on this amazing planet.

“Look! Look! This is it! The same as in the legends!” the mental voices of unknown creatures came very close. Looking closer, I seem to have seen or felt. They were here, and like not here. Quite transparent, but still quite real.

“It sees us! It hears us! It will play with us!” Squealed thin voices.

“Who are you?”

“It can talk! We are what we are, we do not call ourselves! We exist, and we play. People call us elves, forest spirits, little people. But people are all deaf and heavy, how can we play with them? It used to be, during the time of the magic Fox, there were light people who played and lived with us. And now there are no such...”

“How do you fly? I don’t even see wings like other flying creatures have.”

“We do not need wings! After all, we live on a magical planet. Here everything happens at will, just ask, and you will be lighter than fluffs. Our planet is so kind! Try it yourself!”

I did not understand how this is possible. I expanded my thoughts so that they cover the entire planet as a whole, with all its creatures – large and small. The many-voiced chorus of other people’s thoughts seemed to tear me apart. But then I felt some kind of melody in this choir, like an unknown conductor managing it. I was delighted with his art!

“Yes! Yes! It’s like that!” Squeaked voices nearby. “Now just ask.”

“How?” And then I felt an amazing ease. Only the roots kept me in place, and I took them out. My body easily soared into the air and flew after a light breeze.

“You did it! You did it!” Squealed the voices around me. “Now fly with us!”

Chapter 7. Amorous affairs

Bess

I am the only one who can save this miserable world. So Mute says. Yes, and he also asks to call himself by his real name – Radogast. I'll try, but it's hard to relearn, he's still Mute-Radogast. So, I have to organize here a completely new business, called the "connection of four." Radogast says that this is an effective weapon against the forces of evil. First we need to find four people with good mental ability, and Radogast himself will hide us all from the platers, so that they don't know ahead of time what we are doing here. I found three of them at once – me, Terra and Rin, but who will be fourth? In the village everyone is busy, it's not easy to get them to do something completely unusual...

Then Terra brought Fedka:

"Here! Look how cute he is"

I look, what an absurd guy, mentally asked him: "Do you want to work?" He just smiles and stares at me.

"Who did you bring, sister, he cannot hear anything at all?!"

"Well ... You try, maybe that will turn out, he is so funny, so cute."

"Okay, as my grandmother said any port in a storm. Sit in a circle." Terra, of course, strives to put Fedka next to her. "It will not work, he will sit opposite, otherwise, you will hug each other instead of work."

"But, Bess!" cries Terra...

"Later, later! After work, I will fulfill any of your requests, but for now, close your eyes and focus. We begin, some kind of a silent song and we will sing it in chorus. I will control you as a conductor, Terra, you sing a melody of love – this is closer to you. Rin, you pick up her melody and direct, like an arrow from a bow, in an expanding spiral around us. Fedya, what is there to come up with for you? Suppose you don't hear anything, but you can mentally help us all. Imagine that you are a bonfire that warms us all.

"It is possible," Fedya agreed, "I always loved to imagine, because of this I often got into situations..."

So we had our first connection of four. It seems that everything worked out. Even Fedya was all glowing – he tried so hard to help us all. We woke up in the evening. There are screams on the street – our rural drunkard and the bully Grisha is running. He screams that he has been bewitched, his head is cracking. I don't feel sorry for him – you need to drink and curse less.

"And now," Terra says, "you must fulfill your promise."

"What, sister?" I completely forgot that I promised something to her.

"You said that you would fulfill any my request."

"Okay," I remembered, "what do you want?"

"I want you to put on my dress and go outside for a walk."

"Why, sister?"

"There Petrya is waiting for me, and I want to walk with Fedka. After all, you look like me, in the dark Petrya will think that you are me."

"And what will he do to me?" I continued.

"Well ... It's okay," Terra draws, "if you do, then you'll find out. You want to know everything. So go, experiment..."

"Okay," I say, "it is fine for me."

I change clothes and think it's really interesting to be in the place of my sister and find out why all the guys in the village chase her.

I went out into the street cautiously. Strong hands gently pick me up and carry me, carry me somewhere into the forest. Good! I wish my beloved would carry me like that and then kiss me...

The bristly face tickles my lips. Alas, this is not my dear.

“You’re not Terra, who are you?”

“I am Bess, and I also want to kiss ... But not like that!”

“Of course not,” answered Petrya, “Kiss the Terra – the head burns and goes round, and you? I don’t understand anything, because you are also a woman. How many women I kissed, but I didn’t have that, so that’s nothing at all, as if I was drunk and kissed a birch.”

Petrya laughed – he remembered, since he had been drunk – he took a birch for a woman ... Well ... and kissed. Petrya was still hugging me, but somehow already detached. Then the moon came out from behind the clouds.

“Yes ...” said Petrya. “Or maybe you’ll throw off your dress, let’s look, maybe you’re not a woman at all.”

I took off my dress and Petrya stared at my body, and then gently ran a hand over my chest, lower, lower...

“And nothing,” he pronounced the final verdict, “you look like a woman, but there is nothing truly woman in you. So I touch you and nothing, I don’t want anything at all ... So I didn’t feel it before... Okay, get dressed, let’s go for a walk.”

“Let’s go, we’ll talk at the same time,” I answered.

We moved through the bushes to the path, then along the path to the river.

“Aren’t you cold?” Petrya took off his jacket.

“No,” I replied, “I never feel cold, even in winter I can walk in one dress.”

Petrya thoughtfully put on his jacket back.

“Petrya,” I asked, “and why are all the women in your house so rude? Terra said that they immediately began to push each other.”

“So that’s why she left, and I thought she didn’t like me,” Petrya was delighted.

“Well, how we cannot like you,” I answered, “but Terra likes other guys, many of them younger than you, not so skilled, but for some reason Terra likes them more.”

“Really?” Petrya became sad. “Ah, these wives!!! Well, I’ll teach them!”

“Or maybe they are right in something?” I asked at random. “So father told you something about this...”

“And father ... He said that the three wives in the house are too many, and I will not be able to feed four, and they will fight each other because of the housework.”

“Perhaps he is right?”

“Yes, right, right! I know it myself! But Terra is so cute; she hugged me as gullibly as I carried her in my arms! I always wanted to be with her!”

“Probably, bad luck!” I added. “I also want to be loved, hugged, kissed like Terra, but nothing works!”

“So no one wants to kiss you?” surprised Petrya.

“No,” I said sadly. “Only Mute still supports me, says that my dear will come. And I believe! Will come! But when?!”

“It’s ok,” Petrya gently stroked my back, “there is your dear, I also believe in it! And what have you been doing all day?”

“They trained in thought transmission,” I answered him silently, with the help of thought.

“What are you doing! What are you doing!” He waved his hands at me. “Is that possible?! Platers will come and take you away!”

“Don’t be afraid,” I answered, “now Mute covers us. And when we accumulate strength, we will show these platers!”

“Not only the platers,” Petrya spoke excitedly, “the scouts report that we will be attacked by the meridichi squad from day to day, and we will have to guard around the village every night.”

“There is no need for a guard, because now Mute can help us, by the way, in fact his name is Radogast. In case of danger, he will wake me up.”

“Well wake up, then what? What will you do against these reivers?”

“And I will wake all of you, well, those who can hear thoughts. Are there many of them?”

“Yes, almost half of the village. I wonder how all the platers didn’t reach us...”

“This is clear, Radogast covered you all! Tomorrow you should gather those whom you can rely on, I will show how you can defend the village without any fights.”

So, talking about everything, we walked with Petrya all night.

Saying goodbye to him in the morning, I said:

“But you’d better stop watching Terra. She doesn’t really love anyone yet. Let her choose whom she needs.”

“So she will foolishly go to this muff Fedka!”

“Or maybe she needs this one? Don’t bother her! Perhaps Fedka will become less foolish with her.”

“Well, you know!” Petrya thought. Then he waved his hand and, striding quickly, disappeared around the bend of the street.

I opened the door to my hut.

“So how it was?” Terra rushed to me. “You liked him? Did you kiss him?”

“We kissed, but I didn’t like it,” I answered, “I am not his type too.”

“And what did you do in the forest until the morning? His wife came to us, she wanted to quarrel with me, but she saw Fedka here with me and ran away.”

“Well, walked, talked ... And what about you and Fedya?”

“Oh, Bess, he knows how to kiss! As Petrya’s wife ran away, we also went for a walk. You know, there, on the landing by the big long house, there were dances today. I have never danced in my life, so Fedka taught me. He crushed my foot a couple of times, painfully, to a bruise. But it is so cool! Not bruises, of course, but dancing! You must try too! You’ll like it!”

The next day I met with Petrya and showed him how to make a connection of four. He easily understood everything and promised to teach it three of his friends. And then I had to fight off one of his wives. She tracked us down. However, I didn’t really try, because it hurts ordinary people when they beat each other, but I don’t. The poor wife injured all her hands beating my body. Well, rightly so.

And after a couple of days at night, we repelled the attack of the reivers – meridichi. At the command of Radogast, in different parts of the village we started two concerts of a connection of four. The result was astounding. The entire army of attackers was fallen down in pain. They rolled on the grass and howled. They shouted that they would never go our way again. And the one who persuaded them to this deal will be caught and beaten so that he wouldn’t do it again.

Yes, Fedka was also impudent and under the pretext of connecting four completely settled in our house. Granddad even gave him a separate room, for an extra man is always needed in the house, even if he is so foolish.

Chapter 8. Winter worries

Kum

Air games with a flying folk did not deviate me from the main course, which always led me to the one that was destined for me. After several days, I felt that she was very close. I was drawn to this settlement of people in the middle of the forest. But I could not find my beloved among the trees surrounding the village. In the village itself there were only people, and one of the girls for some reason was especially interesting for me. This unnatural craving for a human being should be dealt with. But how? At least I could try to copy one of the small human beings running around the village, my weight allowed me to do this. The only difficulty was the clothes, but similar clothes were hanging on the ropes near the houses, and it was not difficult to get them.

So imperceptibly another child appeared in the village, running with the other kids. I passionately wanted to be next to the girl I liked, I wanted to quietly touch her. Everything turned out as I intended. Running along her I stopped and touched her hand at the moment when she turned away. It seems that lightning has slipped between us, we both startled. I immediately ran away, and she frantically turned her head in different directions, trying to understand what happened.

It was she, my betrothed! She, like me, only pretended to be a person. But it was too early to meet her. We were too different, even in size. I should have approached her as an equal, and not as a small child. I must run before she finds me. The latter is quite probable – I immediately noted her powerful mental field, which means, respectively, no less ability to search for thoughts. Drowning out all my thoughts, I took off into the air. A flock of small folk immediately surrounded me and began to twitter:

“Fly! Fly! To the South! South! Winter will come soon, it will be cold and uncomfortable here!”
And we flew.

“I want to go there where good people live and where there are a lot of trees,” I said.

“We know such a place! We know! There are nice people, funny, always dancing! And there are a lot of trees! And it’s hot there, even in winter!”

“And I don’t want any scientists studying trees!”

“Do not worry, only good people live there!”

Forests flashed beneath us, then they were replaced by solid grasses. Then blue ribbons of rivers appeared. Then was the endless blue of the sea, over which we flew during day and night. And down below, several times I saw the ships on which people sailed across the sea. Then there were gray sands and mountains, and finally, the green square of the forest where we landed.

On the shore of the lake, I released my roots. The ground was warm and tasty, and a stream of life-giving moisture rose from the depths. I completely surrendered to the ecstasy of food absorption and growth. Everything else has disappeared from my perception for many months of life in the form of a simple tree.

Bess

The autumn time has come. Everybody was busy with harvesting vegetables for the winter. Men were digging potatoes, carrying huge pumpkins, zucchini, cabbage, carrots. Women carried baskets of mushrooms from the forest. Late apples were picked. With the first frosts, it will be possible to collect viburnum and ashberry.

I worked with everyone, and at night I tried to reach out with my thoughts to those thinking ones in the nearest forests that were unknown to me. Lately, it seemed to me all the time that someone was carefully looking at me. But not with my eyes, but somehow differently, as if I see him somewhere

nearby: in a flock of kids playing on the street, in the autumn wind blowing along the street, in the first drops of autumn rain... Every day this feeling became stronger, and once someone touched my hand. This touch was thunderous throughout my body. For a moment I lost myself, stopped seeing and hearing. Moment – and it's over. I looked around. Everything was as usual, no one noticed anything. The sun was going over the edge of the forest, and only the belated kid was running around the corner to his mother. But I knew that it happened! The main event of my life has happened! But how? What? Who? I didn't understand anything.

“Over time, you will understand! It really was a sign for you!” I heard the calm voice of Radogast in my head. “He will come to you when he is ready! In the meantime, do not get distracted, my daughter, you have a lot to do. Which thinking ones do you feel near the village?”

“You know, recently there were a lot of them in the clear sky above our heads. It seemed to me that they were twittering like birds, but about what – I just cannot understand. And now there are none.”

“Ah ... little folk,” replied Radogast, “it could only be them. They are really here, and not quite here. Not everyone can see them. Only one thing I'm afraid of is that there is no use of them. This little folk is very unpredictable. And who else do you feel?”

“Yes, I feel all kinds of animals, among them there is still someone, it seems, is very large, with shaggy thoughts, I cannot say more precisely. It seems to me that his appearance is a match, I imagine him big and shaggy.”

“Forest man. He is a loner, he is unlikely to contact you.”

“Can there be thinking ones underground?”

“I feel distant and very sharp thoughts of others that come from somewhere below,” I replied. – “It's as if someone lives deep down too.”

“Wow, what did you feel!” answered Radogast. “I don't even know whether we should contact them. These are our enemies, the enemies of all mankind, but they are also enemies to aliens. Yes, perhaps, in the fight against aliens, they can help with their voices. But then ... do not expect mercy from them! They don't need us either!”

“Who are they?”

“The ancient masters of the Earth, gone underground during the disaster. Then the forests burned, and the earth melted and flowed in lava flows. And then solid ice covered the Earth for millennia. Now they would like to come to the surface, but they are afraid of us – people. And not without a reason! Human has an inborn aversion even to the appearance of these creatures. I see that their thoughts prick you like needles. Alas, people are incompatible with them. They can help, but only for their own benefit. Try, contact them – it won't be any worse! Do not even think about asking them for something! If they need anything, they will ask themselves!”

After a couple of days, I still managed to contact them. The sizzling guest crawled right into my thoughts – slippery, rummaging around ... I accepted him and showed him all our plans. He returned a week later and hissed:

“We agree.”

“How many of you?”

“They know! And you don't need to know that!”

I was glad when he disappeared from my thoughts.

Meanwhile, real winter has come. Time to sour cabbage and play snowballs. Terra and I first saw skiing and ice skating. We had nothing like this on a farm in childhood. Soon I mastered both of these devices. But Terra didn't want to. In general, lately she has somehow become sad, and her character deteriorated right at once. Every now and then her demanding voice was heard:

“Fedka – there! Fedka – here! Bring that! I want this!”

Fedka ran like crazy. And I looked and was surprised. I never knew that my sister has such habits. And no one stopped her, neither the lathered Fedka, nor Rin. And granddad – so he also smiled!

This winter, I became very close with Rin. He was the one who taught me to ski and skate. He and I took a long ski trip to that shaggy one. I warned Rin in advance where we were going so that he would not be scared. And not in vain! The view of the forest monster was really creepy! But the thoughts were calm. I heard them like this:

“Well, why are you coming to me?”

I tried to explain our problems to him, but he closed his thoughts and quietly disappeared behind the trees. As Radogast warned, I did not succeed with him.

A couple of months passed, and finally something wonderful happened – a quiet, gentle voice found me:

“Good business, girl! We are all with you!”

“Who are you and how many are you?”

“There are three hundred and seventy-seven of us, not counting the children.” We are near you, but not quite here. And our village is called Kitezg grad. And there are seventy-seven of such secret settlements on the Earth. We will let everyone know the news, and all of them will support you on the day of voting!”

Rin

All the same, what scoffers are girls in our village! While we were children, it was so good to play together. And then as if something had happened to them – and you won't go outside without hearing teasers from your former friends. You can't just approach them, everyone has become just impregnable. When Bess has come to us, my life changed for the better. Together with her, I went to Mute and listened to the amazing stories through her. And once, going out into the street, I heard another teaser, sung in a sweet girlish voice:

Rinchik walked with Bess,

Rinchik kissed with Bess!

And then I thought – why not, because I like Bess. And she treats me completely differently from the rest of the guys in the village, and by age we are about the same. And the girls will stop teasing me if Bess and I have everything for real. One evening I went to Bess and laid out to her all my boyish thoughts. She laughed.

“Nothing will come of it! Do you even know how to check whether a girl suits you or not?”

“No, I don't know, and how?”

“Very simple. Take my hand and say what you feel.”

I took Bess's hand. It was very cold.

“Are you cold?”

“No,” said Bess, “I just don't want to work as a stove.”

“I cannot do that. My hands are always warm.”

“Don't get distracted,” Bess reminded, “tell me what you feel now?”

“Nothing special ... I feel your chilling hands ... And what should I feel?”

“If I were your girlfriend, you would definitely feel something.”

“My girlfriends are not here, they all laugh at me! They say that I'm still small.”

“If you just need to prove something to your friends, you can stay here for the night. I usually don't sleep in bed. From childhood, I got used to go out of the house for a night and sleep somewhere in the thicket of the forest. No matter how much they scolded me, they never taught me to sleep humanly.

“Bess, you are different,” I said.

“Of course,” Bess answered me, “the same thing Mute says, he also says that my beloved will be different either, and that he will come soon.” With these words, Bess stood up and quietly slipped into the darkness. I was left alone in her room. Woke up in the morning, Bess, humming, changed clothes. Then we left the room together, frightening Fedka. Now the whole village will know that I was with Bess. Fedka – he doesn’t know how to keep secrets.

After breakfast, we walked with linked arms to the house of the Mute. The girls looked at us from all windows, flattened noses behind the glasses were visible everywhere, but there was not a single child on the street. I was proud of myself! Then no one dared to say that I was still too young!

That time we asked the Mute to tell us what interesting have happened on Earth over the past thousand years and how it turned out that all power was in the hands of aliens.

“Call him Radogast,” Bess corrected me and began retelling the history of our planet.

“As you know, for the first 300 years after the end of the world the Emperors of Khem country ruled on Earth, which is far to the East of us. And the Emperor had a wise adviser from aliens – Gilk the Wise. He was not only wise, but also almost immortal. And until now, he would probably be alive; still everything is done according to his advice. But people of the country on the far Western continent did not like this adviser; they did not want to admit the results of the universal vote and decided to overthrow the rule of aliens. Moreover, they had an undeniable force in the form of a rocket with a neutron bomb that could wipe out an entire continent. So they would have canceled the alien rule, because aliens are not allowed to kill the original inhabitants of Earth, but there happened a terrible eruption of a volcano on that Western continent. And this eruption was so powerful that the whole mainland became deserted. Well, we have had difficult years too. The first year was of heat and fires, then three years of frigid weather. Then the aliens took care and fed everyone with concentrates, warmed us up with their eternal generators, so that they deserved great gratitude from the entire surviving population of Earth!

Since then people started talking that aliens are arguably able to do everything, aliens are the main thing for us ... And aliens have started their unknown activities. Under the pretext of teaching “illiterate” earthlings alien schools appeared ... Those who managed to graduate and successfully pass the exams are called sapiens since then and those who failed are called homos. And the rest, uneducated are simply savages. By the way, these sapiens, even though they have abilities, knowledge, and telepathy have lost a lot. They are pathetically obedient; they can neither fight nor swear. So when the aliens decided to shoot emovideofilms about life on the “wild planet Earth”, they had to organize fighting units from the homos. Well, they didn’t have to persuade our people, they would only be excited to fight. But sapiens are also necessary: for work in factories, for space flights ... So every month they fly around the Earth on their saucers and listen to thoughts. If anyone “thinks out loud”, they would grab him right away and send to the sapiens school or into the “house of brilliant children” for breeding.”

Gilk the Wise

Everything was fine, but something tormented me on the verge of my understanding. I was always wary of my superpowers, because they were denied by orthodox science. I didn’t want anyone to know that I put faith in my dreams. They were disturbing. For some reason, I had mares of those muffs who recently lost their daughter on an unknown planet ... What would it mean? I requested a detailed report of this incident. What was bothering me here?! Rereading the report for the tenth time, I finally drew my attention to the description of a sprout of the unknown fauna from the alien planet. The report said that it was given to scientists for research, but then not a word of its outcomes. I had to call these scientists and shout at them to make them confess. They are sapiens, in fact, should have immediately informed that the sample had disappeared.

“How could it disappear?”

“It couldn’t dig itself out! Probably somebody has done that, and now it’s gone...”

The last thread to pull was those two sims, I wondered if they knew something. I found out that they are in the camp for war actors. I had to go myself, since I no longer relied on sapiens. I revealed that both were placed in a medical isolator. As expected, these sims just attracted trouble. She tried to commit suicide when a local guy held her. He rushed at this guy with his fists and of course got a concussion. I will have to give an order to guard these losers for a while, I still may need them. Meanwhile I took care of the man, Peter. I easily got myself into his consciousness, and then even deeper. What I discovered alarmed me in earnest. The creature that they brought from Dark turned out to be rational one, and not just rational, yet very sensible, even able to control the actions of people. From the subconscious of Peter I pulled everything! It narrated how he carried the sprout to the ship, as if of his own free will. And how they were saved in space, when they both tried to die, and how at night in a dream Peter brought the sprout from the laboratory and hid it in a bag, and how he and his wife planted a sprout near the house and lost it the next day. Most importantly, I received from Peter the imprint of the thoughts of this unknown creature. The imprint is clearly inhuman, completely in a different range, where the trees think.

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