

The background of the entire image is a night sky filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy. In the lower portion, there is a silhouette of a mountain range. A person is standing on a prominent peak, holding a flashlight that beams a light up towards the sky. The overall mood is mysterious and fantastical.

A. Belyaev

Underwater farmers

Air ship

"Classics fantasy" 12

A. Belyaev

Classics fantasy – 12

«Издательские решения»

Belyaev A.

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AIR SHIP Little naive, in the spirit of the times, narration. The novel genre can be defined more likely how “the scientific imagination”. Though in the years of writing of the novel of the idea about use of aircraft were already easier than air a little outdated, the quite good attempt of the description of possible long flight was made. Everything turned out childishly and lovely.

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Classics fantasy – 12

A. Belyaev

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UNDERWATER FARMERS

Chapter 1

THE NEPTUNE IVANOVICH IS UPSET

– Jean! Johann! John! Johnny! Dzhiovanni!. Ioann! Ivan! Vanya! Vanyushka!

– And – and – aakh! – someone with pleasure yawned and turned over on other side.

It was heard as bed springs began to creak. Silence. And the first voice starts over again calling with different Yvgonatsiyami, raising, lowering sound intensity:

– Jean! Ivan! John!. – And suddenly shouted from all this: – Vanka, shelmets! Become before me as a leaf before a grass.

– Ah-ah, take foot! – Behind a partition the spring screamed, bare feet zashlepat on a floor. Someone breathed heavily a nose, tinkered in the dark, opened a door, rummaged around at a wall, clicked the switch.

The electric bulb hanging under a ceiling lit golden pine logs of walls, the wide window veiled by a dense curtain of dark blue cloth, a big drawing table at a wall on a table – old issue of Izvestia, drawing accessories, geodetic plans, several books, folders with papers. At other wall on a narrow iron camp-bed lay, having stuffed up hands for the head, the man of average years, dense, broad-shouldered, red-haired, with small moustaches and a small beard a wedge. Blue, widely open eyes stared in a ceiling, and on the left cheek the mark was seen: deep reddish scar.

– Gather, Vanyusha, is time! – told lying on a bed.

Vanyusha once again sighed. Very much he wanted to sleep. It stood in the middle of the room in one pants, sleepy, with the sticking together eyes. His face had childlike softness and roundness of lines, and a black hard hair stood a hedgehog. He raised eyebrows that eyes revealed rather, moved lips and scattered hands in the parties, warming up after a dream. Then approached a window, drew aside a curtain and, looking in an impenetrable gloom, told:

– Darkly still, Semyon Alekseevich!

– Until we gather, just right will be – Semyon Alekseevich Volkov answered.

Vanyushka Toporkov left to other room and switched on light there. This room was same, as well as the first. The bed, a simple chair, the shelf with books over a small little table and a locker at a bed made all its situation. In one of these rooms the oven was not visible. But, if to bend down, under a table it was possible to notice plates of electric heating. This highest manifestation of electrification in house life so did not go to all shape of a timbered izba.

Vanyushka Toporkov began collecting, without ceasing to speak because of a partition. It had a peculiar lack of the speech: Vanyushka did not utter hissing, “ш”, “щ”. Instead of and “и” at it left “ф”, and instead of “и” something between “in” and “ф”, but is closer to “ф”. Favourite its introduction was “the clown take”, and at him it turned out “foot take”. The more he worried, the more burred.

– Semyon Alekseevich. What I had a dream. As though the boluffy feltobryukhy whale came to us, lay on a kryfa nafy at home and crushed him as an egg shell. Mofet it to be?

– The roof will sustain, be not afraid. What you there long potter?

– Now, Semyon Alekseevich.

Vanyushka opened a case and took out a theodolite [51] of the special device, a tripod, a geodetic chain, a rubber bag from there. Having loaded all this on itself, it left to other room. Volkov already rose from a bed and strenuously did gymnastics.

Vanyusha looked at him, involuntarily repeated all his movements, at first slowly, and then, having thrown things on is whole, really. He squatted, got up, swung hands, satisfied bent down, unbent and, at last, finished:

– Ha-arofo, take foot! Morning exercises.

He packed things again and opened an external door of an izba.

For this door, in some distance from it, there was the second door – iron, densely driven. Vanyushka tinkered at a round lock and opened it. Before it the iron chamber opened.

This camera had volume in two cubic meters. Directly before Vanyushka in an iron wall the round door in meter diameter, similar to a big window was seen. In the right wall there was an iron case with the door which is removed sideways, and in left, below, two small round barred openings, on forty centimeters in the diameter were seen.

Vanyushka brought geodetic tools in the camera. After it in the camera Volkov dressed, as well as Vanyushka, entered one pants. Vanyushka opened a case and began to take out strange objects from there: two half masks consisting of a big black rubber nose and the points attached to it. From points there was a rubber holding them, and from a nose (from below – from nostrils) – two rubber tubes. Then Vanyushka took couple of electric lamps with rubber tapes and wires, a satchel, earphones, a dirk and, at last, heavy sandals with lead soles. Volkov and Vanyushka began to put on themselves all this armor quickly. First of all put on the satchels made of ferrous metal then black noses and points. The long tubes which were hanging down from noses they, helping each other, attached to special openings in satchels behind the back. Then put on the devices reminding earphones the head. These devices kept the flexible metal plate which is put on the head. Round earphones were densely attached to ears, and from earphones there were two tubes falling is a little lower than shoulders and terminating in small bells, as in phone tube. By means of a rubber tape on the head lamps were attached. Then travelers buttoned belts on which long dirks were hung up. At last, put on heavy sandals legs, having attached them belts.

Judging by their confident and bystry movements, such masquerade was made very often and became habitual. Nevertheless Vanyushka, having looked at Volkov, at his black huge nose, at convex points, at the dangling tubes ears, the satchel which is sticking out a hump and a shishkovidny lamp on the head, could not refrain from laughter nevertheless.

– Ah, take foot! Directly not the person, and purposely! Directly a dyadyufka from Mars.

Wolves, without paying attention to Vanyushka, densely closed a case, examined a door in an izba, approached a wall both abruptly and strongly turned the round crane. In one of openings suddenly with noise water together with little small fishes rushed. Water filled in naked legs to knees, and when reached a belt, Vanyushka began to jump up: the body did not cool down from warmth of a bed yet, and cool water not absolutely pleasantly tickled it. To get used to change of temperature at once, Vanyushka sat down on a floor and disappeared with the head, without expecting until water reaches up to the top.

In two minutes the camera was filled with water. Lit with a strong electric lamp, in greenish water small small fishes zaplyasat. Vanyushka, feeling that he became easier, rose from a floor and loaded on himself geodetic tools. Volkov unscrewed the round door similar to a window, and shifted it sideways. Before them the dark opening filled with water opened. They stepped through a threshold, height in a third of meter, and came to light. On Volkov's head the electric lamp brightly flashed. Volkov pushed a round door, put out a lamp and stepped forward.

Travelers were surrounded by almost full darkness, but they surely moved ahead. Went on a slope from soft silt. At the left, where there was a coast, and dark green dregs ahead got denser, above water was slightly lighter. Weak rays of light made the way through five-meter thickness of water. And on the right impenetrable darkness stuck together. There was depth, the bottom slope went down there.

Sometimes the naked body was touched by long films of seaweed. Sometimes with scope the humpback salmon [52] will fly and will scaredly wag aside or a fancy small fish agonomat will scratch the bone guards. Vanyushka stepped on a big sink and stumbled.

He took the call which was hanging down from Volkov's ear, brought close to the mouth, blew air from an external opening of a tube and, having pressed strongly lips, told:

– Perhaps, to light a lamp?

– It is necessary to protect electricity – Volkov answered. – Will brighten soon. Let's go on a fukusny track, a bottom more purely and more small there.

They curtailed to the left, to the coast. It became lighter. And the sun rose above over the ocean, sticking hot beams into a cool of waters.

Through a quarter of hour Vanyushka looked up. Now water over the head was absolutely light. Vanyushka saw before himself the shaking seaweed, greenish and brown. Looking at these various figured plants, it was possible to think that they were created by the artist who tried to fill a lack of the original ideas with wealth, care and a variety of finishing. There were seaweed similar to ropes with many knots, seaweed elkovidny, web-footed, taeniod, with rough edges. At distance of two-three meters of Vanyushk distinctly saw these plants, and further everything was veiled, as on the earth in foggy day. Only this fog was special, greenish-gray. Big crabs quickly ran away from human legs, disappearing in thickets. The holothurias trepangs similar to the clumsy worms covered with shoots dug in silt. Numerous small fishes darted about between seaweed.

On a share of sea vegetation only three paints are released by the nature: green, brown and black. But the fauna sports both black, and white, and yellow, and orange, and blue, and violet. When the sun rose even above over the head, Vanyushka saw all this motley magnificence of fishes, mollusks, shrimps.

Deviating more and more to the left, to the coast, Vanyushka came to such place that his head suddenly rose over a water surface. The sun reflected by an easy ripple blinded it at once. When eyes got used a little, he looked at the sky, at the coast... No, after all the elevated world is immeasurably richer with paints, than underwater. As blueness of the sky how many light shades on clouds, mountains what woods what greens of meadows, yellowness of clay and the sands acting at the coast which are washed away by water is amazing.

Vanyushka uvidat the coast covered with the wood, a tea on waves, the Chinese fanza under a high fir-tree which is brightly lit with the sun. As distinctly everything is visible! As though Vanyushka under water looked in badly induced field-glass, and now this field-glass is precisely induced at focus.

Someone touched Vanyushka by a hand. Likely Volkov. Vanyushka wandered about an ocean floor not behind admiring a view. It was necessary to turn to work. Vanyushka plunged into water, took out from a rubber bag a geodetic chain, and Volkov – the book made of plates on which it scratched records by a stiletto. Vanyushka installed the tool, departed on the specified distance, touched the button on the head, and over his forehead the strong electric lamp was lit. Volkov directed the theodolite telescope at light and wrote down corners.

They went down below and below on a sloping bottom. Here it was more dark. Pressure of water was felt: it was more difficult to move, it was necessary to breathe more deeply and more often a nose, letting out the air from lungs through a mouth. Bubbles rhythmic took off from a mouth of Vanyushki which at the same time stuck out lips and blew out cheeks. It found what so to breathe “more tasty”.

Bright light of a lamp lit long films of brown seaweed, huge leaves an agar agar [53], similar to sheets of a burdock and covered with holes. Seaweed slowly waved and reached for the coast – inflow began. Vanyushka departed from Volkov on considerable distance. They exchanged words castanets which were held in hand between fingers.

“Semyon Alekseevich, why the sound so reaches me soon?” – Vanyushka tapped.

“Because in air the sound passes 322 meters, and in water 1450” – Volkov answered.

“And why so?”

But Volkov was busy – not time now to perestukivatsya.

And suddenly Vanyushki's hearing caught some absolutely other sound – the remote percussion. Who it could knock? Perhaps, Pun called to have breakfast? But still early. Makar Ivanovich? But he was not going to put out to sea today.

“You hear?” – vystukat Vanyushka Volkov. “Yes – that answered. – Someone knocks in water”. Volkov and Toporkov stopped work, met together and extinguished lamps, and Vanyushka even undertook a dirk handle. The knock stopped. Vanyushka did not restrain. He pressed the button and again lit a lamp. Green dregs were lit. At distance of five meters not clear figure – more true, an indistinct spot of a spherical figure on human legs loomed. In process of approach of an outline of a figure became more and more distinct. It was now possible to distinguish that on an ocean floor there is a huge person, very slowly swinging veslopodobny hands. His trunk reminded a barrel – so it was thick and кругло. Some more steps – and the old man with the longest gray small beard which fluttered extensively as smoke, at each movement of water approached them. On it there were big points, and the rubber black nose gave to the face a strange look. The long shirt and ports twirled to knees made his suit. On huge bare feet sandals with heavy soles were put on. Around a trunk the network is wound, and in network live fishes fought. This network with fishes also gave to a figure of the old man published such extraordinary barrel-shaped look.

The old man stopped, placed hands, having lowered them down. With thumbs up these hands were reminded by the Neptune's tridents, and the old man – sea god. Volkov and nicknamed him: Neptune Ivanovich Konobeev. Its real name was Makar. He smiled from ear to ear, starting up bubbles and baring healthy long white teeth. Volkov nodded to him and felt his hands.

In them there were no castanets. Volkov was surprised. Than the Neptune Ivanovich knocked in water? The old man had no ear trumpet, he did not know and Morse alphabets and therefore with it it was necessary to speak gestures. Volkov pointed to the castanets and again felt hands of a giant. Makar Ivanovich smiled, showed a mouth – and suddenly zashchelkat teeth. The sound much louder, than from castanets turned out. Vanyushka, having forgotten that he under water, burst out laughing, having released fireworks of bubbles, then has a fit of coughing and nearly choked. It clamped a mouth hands, somehow restrained, but for a while. The new fit of laughter captured it. Then Vanyushka quickly unfastened sandals with lead soles and, having made a start from a bottom, rose up as the children's balloon which came off thread.

It came up on a surface. Waves downloaded it, and the surf incurred to the coast.

Vanyushka emerged near the fishing boat by which two Japanese sat. Having seen the terrible monster which came up from sea depth, Japanese with the eyes expanded for fear jumped in water as the scared frogs, and quickly floated from a chernonosy monster aside. And Vanyush – “and still struck a heat – suddenly zaulyulyukat by an inhuman voice.

On the surface of the ocean it was windy, solarly and cheerfully. It is hard it was possible to laugh, without being afraid to choke. Having laughed much, Vanyushka calmed down for a moment, lying on waves, and looked at the coast. In the distance the fanza under a high fir-tree was seen, stood near a fanza as a tolstenky strong fungus, the female figure, and at the coast howled a dog, having turned a muzzle directly to water. Vanyushka nodded, whispered “foot take!” and, having made a deep breath, fell by a bottom.

It managed to find Volkov and Konobeev in underwater dregs not at once. Inflow on the surface of the ocean carried Vanyushka to the coast, and it had to float over familiar footpaths, being confused in long films of seaweed and from time to time stopping to cut osklizly tapes a dirk. Water squeezed out up. Vanyushka was forced to dive to the bottom, to find for several stones and, having taken them in hand, to go to a way rather “balanced” for underwater travel.

Here somewhere in the distance, in a green haze, the spark flashed and draft beats of castanets were heard. Vanyushka answered with conditional three blows and quickened the pace. Fire moved

towards to it. Vanyushka approached Volkov and Konobeev soon, Volkov grabbed a govoritelny tube of Vanyushki and made such look as though he twists it for an ear, then, having put a tube to lips, told:

– Johnny! It is impossible to be such thoughtless. You risked to die laughing. There are your galoshes!

– It would be the most cheerful death, Semyon Alekseevich – Vanyushka answered, putting on heavy sandals. – Howls! – it added.

– Who howls?

– Hunguz. There will be a scolding Makar to Ivanovich again – and, having addressed Konobeev, Vanyushka put a mouth a tubule and raised a howl, starting up bubbles.

Konobeev's face was suddenly saddened. Eyebrows over big points moved, and moustaches and hair of a beard about a mouth bristled up. "Sea god" was angry or upset with something. It waved hands oars and went quickly to the coast.

– Semyon Alekseevich! I can look though with half an eye how she will abuse it? – Vanyushka asked.

– Jean! You forget about the duties! – strictly Volkov told. They turned to work again.

Chapter 2

“TO FISH – WATER, THE EARTH – TO THE PERSON”

– And Makar Ivanovich quickly went, going to the coast. An ocean floor everything rose. Than closer to the coast, those the soil became more oozy from the alluvial earth and humus. The movement of water was more and stronger felt. The surf adjusted Konobeeva as strong wind. The old man leaned back back and hardly managed to touch legs. If not its huge force, would turn it long ago and cast with waves ashore as the broken ship mast. But Konobeev still fought. However, when it came to a sandy slope where water hardly covered the head, even it, the Neptune Ivanovich, could not resist. The ocean overcame. The surf was helped by the strong wind blowing to the coast. Water masses, elastic as soccerballs, rotating, lifted silt, sand, crabs, shrimps from a bottom, pulled out seaweed and rolled all this together with themselves to the coast and threw out with noise, hissing, a rumble. They, these water spheres, brought down from Konobeev's legs and together with his network filled with fish threw out on a shallow and with deafening hissing were rolled away back.

Big dog – the Siberian laika of gray wool – with the scared yelping, having put the fluffy tail between the legs, jumped aside from Konobeev, then suddenly, choking with joyful bark, ran up to it and began to lick his wet person, damp glasses of points, a rubber black nose, the beard similar to seaweed, huge hands...

“Ah! Ah!” – the dog hysterical screamed; then, having unexpectedly turned on the place a top, rushed off a whirlwind to the fanza standing under a fir-tree. For bark of a dog a fanza there was an elderly tolstenky short woman, with chubby red hands and a red round face. On her head the clean white scarf with black peas was tied; a blue spacious jacket from the Chinese cloth and a black long skirt waved at each movement. The woman a vperevalka, in a duck way, hobbled to the coast.

Konobeev confusedly rose from wet sand and went to it towards, and the dog with joyful bark ran to the woman, to the old man until they met then the laika began to jump around them.

– Hi, old woman! – Konobeev told, shaking network in which fish trembled. – Here I small fishes brought that to you!

But the old woman did not pay to network with fish any attention.

– Remove you though a nasty ugly mug from a face, to look precisely! – she told strictly. – Water. Directly water! Also flows from it, as from utoply. Ha – and – pour! There is nothing to tell. Go, change clothes in dry, perhaps!

– Nothing, I will dry. Now warmly. Yes to me and back soon in water. Work waits.

– Yes you though to tea get drunk. Dampened probably there, in water. Long ago to tea not of saws.

Konobeev it is noisy sighed and took off from himself glasses, a rubber nose and a satchel.

His own nose was the little more beautiful rubber: big, fleshy, friable and in addition overgrown with a gray long hair. Hands with the big, inactive, very widely placed fingers and folded thick skin were surprising. And on palms the old man had real corn pillows. He freely put a hot piece of coal on these palms, without burning.

– However well, we will go, the old woman! With water let fish in the coil. Tomorrow you will weld an ushitsa. The humpback salmon is more, but there is also a herring, ivas...

Konobeev's wife, Marfa Zakharovna, knew that her old man likes to chayevat. For this purpose she also enticed it with insidiousness of the woman into the Chinese fanza where a vein. When Konobeev crossed a fanza threshold, Marfa Zakharovna, quickly moving on a fanza the duck transfer, prepared tea, put fresh bread on a table and, looking at the husband pouring in a huge mouth in a glass behind a glass began to lecture it for “dissolute life”.

– Well have you ever seen anything like it, where it slykhano, that the person how a humpback salmon, in water of veins? To fishes – water, to birds – air, and to the person – the earth. So from time immemorial god put. You got into the wet place.

– However the person by air flies now better than any bird – Konobeev objected, sipping tea.

Marfa Zakharovna did not pay attention to this remark and continued, more and more increasing tone:

– If you married me, and live with me, but not with humpback salmons and seldyam. What you are a husband after that when herring is lovelier to you, than the wife? Forty years lived together, and here on you! As changed the person. Sdurel on an old age of years. I do not want and do not wish. Either I, or herring. Now to the woman free will. Here I will go to a registry office and I will divorce you.

– However ... – there began Konobeev, but choked on tea. The dog began a bark, and because of a door Vanyushka seemed.

– Correctly, Marfa Zakharovna, correctly, mamafa! – Vanyushka shouted, appearing in the doorway in one pants. – Now not an old regime. But only you it is vain, a mamafa, on Makar you serchat Ivanovich. You better would come to live to us...

– What? I! Under water? To herrings? I am not a mermaid, in the name of God, that under water to live. With frogs, with reptiles sea.

– There are no frogs there, Marfa Zakha...

– Yes never!

– And you though looked, Marfa Zakharovna. There very much it is even excellent. In the sea ocean there is felezny mansion caps, and under caps – an izbufka. And in an izbufka and light-, and warmly, and any water – chilly quite. Both the tea, and sugar, and a samovarchik will be.

– You are better trousers a would plot, than to teach old people. Shameless person! And still Komsomol member.

– You are afraid, means?

– I am afraid of nothing. And I do not wish to dampen.

– And here Pun was not afraid. Brisket is more courageous than you. It at us on all hands. Both cooks, and farit, and washes clothes, and washes the floor.

– Washes the floor? Under water?

– Yes that you, really think that at us everything is filled in with water – both floors, and beds, and samovarny pipes? Anything similar! To the land, than in your fanza. Eh, here it is just bad: is not able to cook a dinner of Pun in an our way. As will weld on the Korean kufaniye – only one Ji Zi and bursts with appetite. And if you, Marfa Zakharovna, to us ff made how, you remember, ugoffyal me? I still lick fingers. You to us would cook yes faril and pies fish baked with a fish stuffing and pelmeni...

The praise worked – Marfa Zakharovna was softened, but going down under water, and did not want to hear.

– Come itself here pelmeni are – she answered, having smiled.

– However it is time for us – Konobeev told and began to put on himself a mask and diving vestments.

– My eyes would not look at you! – swinging the head, the old woman told.

– Anything special, however – Konobeev answered and went from Vanyushkaya to the coast towards to the flying waves. Waves roared, foam hissed on sand, splashes flew a rain, and Konobeev safely went forward.

– Hold me! – he shouted Vanyushke when they approached a breakwater. Vanyushka grasped a powerful hand of the old man. The first wave drenched them and nearly brought down from legs.

Having inclined the heads, having nestled to each other, Konobeev and Toporkov were rushed forth. Waves covered them. For a moment the shaggy gray-haired head of Makar Ivanovich seemed once again and disappeared.

Marfa Zakharovna, having put red hands on a round stomach, inclined the round red face. Lips were bent; she was ready to begin to cry. And a dog Hunguz, having approached the water, suddenly raised a muzzle and began to howl. Then angrily began a bark on waves and began to run on the coast, as if wishing to rush after left under water. And again raised a howl, plaintively and lingeringly...

Chapter 3

UNDER FIVE DOMES

It is difficult to move towards on an ocean floor to inflow. It is more difficult, than on the ground against wind during a storm. Konobeev bent the head and rammed it the elastic moving mass of water. And Vanyushka went on the tow, holding hands hips of the old man giant.

When went down in an underwater hollow, at once it became more silent. Here only water “breeze” was felt. Vanyushka was unhooked from Konobeev and raised the head up. The sun was above them the shining indistinct spot. Nervousness on a surface prevented to see sharply outlined sphere as it happened during a calm.

“Midday. It is time to have dinner” – Vanyushka thought.

And at this moment the bell sound was heard. Under water it was heard very distinctly. The bell rang out twelve. In a greenish haze the spark flickered. It the beacon on a roof of the underwater dwelling shone. It was extinguished only when all were assembled. Konobeev straightened a back and quickly went to light. Vanyushka hardly kept up with the leader.

Through the wood of long seaweed light of a beacon inflamed more and more brightly as travelers moved forward. Vanyushka many times already admired an underwater landscape – and could not admire. As though it got on the unknown planet where all other. Long strips, tapes, cords, ropes of brown seaweed quietly fluctuated, coiling as dozing snakes, the flexible bodies. Among these tapes stretched as the serpentine, wide palmlike leaves of laminarias were sharply allocated.

It was possible to distinguish already and the underwater dwelling soon. From a distance it reminded five domes hemispheres of the Byzantine church: as though the temple failed to the earth to the domes. The house stood in the valley between two cross heights which protected from sea “winds” – inflow and an outflow.

Here it was always silent.

Bright light of an underwater searchlight brought together a great number of the fishes who were darting about between seaweed as raznoperiy birds in the rainforest. Only these birds were silent.

Travelers entered an iron chamber and densely closed behind themselves a door. Vanyushka turned the crane, and water began to go to a pipe. In five minutes strong pumps exempted the camera from water; other pumps filled it with air. Vanyushka and Konobeev took off diving kostima and wet clothes, changed clothes and entered through iron and wooden doors a wooden izba. They were at home.

Under an average, “the public building” from four rooms was the biggest, a dome. In one the general dining room, in another – kitchen from the storeroom, in the third – a reading room and in the fourth – the engine room was located.

Around this big central dome with a beacon four smaller were located. The dome with an exit door directed to the coast was called western. It covered with itself (himself) an izba to two rooms in which Toporkov and Volkov were located. Then followed: a northern dome – there lived the cook Pun and her husband Ji Zi; western – in two rooms of this izba Konobeev and Guzik were located; and, at last, southern – in this dome there were two rooms: one – Guzik’s laboratory workshop, and another – spare – for “visitors” where sometimes spent the night coming from the coast on affairs to Volkov and Guzik.

Vanyushka left to the dining room. It, except an exit door, had two more: directly – in kitchen and to the left – in a reading room. In this room, as well as in other rooms of the central house, there were no windows at all. The strong electric lamp under a ceiling well lit the big, laid by the Chinese pure cloth table with six devices and six stools at a table. Some more spare stools stood at walls. Near

a door in kitchen, the wall had a buffet of the Karelian birch; on a round little table the big samovar, the best friend of Konobeev sparkled the polished sides.

In the dining room still was nobody. Vanyushka pulled a nose, frowned and went to kitchen.

At the electric stove small with high cheek-bones Pun in a blue dress and a white apron pottered. Her jet-black hard hair was smoothly combed and collected behind in the bunch which is chopped off by two hairpins with balls on the ends.

History of its emergence in underwater colony was such is. Volkov employed for work of Korean Ji Zi, or – on the Korean pronunciation – Kye Tsa. Agreed about a payment. Ji Zi received a deposit and in the appointed day was with the girlfriend of life which introduced:

– Пунь.

– Why “Pun”? – Volkov who knew that he “пунь” is a small Korean coin asked.

– Is not necessary to Bolsa – Ji Zi answered.

– And you how many you stand? – asked, smiling, Volkov.

– Hundred пунь will be nurses, and ten nurses will be sink. Here how many I stand. Kan! – Ji Zi answered.

– But why you brought the wife? – Volkov asked, glancing at the woman who was obediently standing near the lord.

Ji Zi was surprised to a question and in perplexity shrugged shoulders:

– As, what for? That it worked.

– But I employed you. And you what you will do?

– I will receive money – Ji Zi answered quietly.

Valkov decided that the woman can be useful in the house on economy, and Ji Zi will start working sooner or later, and agreed to accept Pun who implicitly put on a diving mask and followed the husband in ocean waters. Also implicitly it would follow for it even “to the country of shadows”.

Пунь it was extremely useful member of underwater colony. She cooked a dinner, washed the dishes, the floors, washed clothes, directed purity and still managed to help men with their work outdoors. But Ji Zi of absolutely nothing did not do, except for receiving a salary.

He for days on end rolled on a bed, smoked a tubule. Once Volkov specified to the Korean that he the smoking cuts the cheese. Ji Zi told nothing, put on a diving mask and went to the coast. What it did there, it was unknown. Possibly, in good days lay on the coast. But by a lunch it was accurately.

– Hi, Pun what you to us heaped up today? – Vanyushka addressed the cook, looking in pots and frying pans. A sea cabbage, sauce probably too from seaweed, trepangs, ivas, still some pryano sauce smelling of unknown herbs...

– Halas of a navaratil! – cheerfully Pun answered, shaking a frying pan.

– Shchets! – Vanyushka sighed, but Pun did not understand him and began to come true in something.

She suddenly very quickly started talking in Korean, and its thin voice was distributed as bird’s chatter.

– All right! – patronizing Vanyushka answered and went to library. Walls of this room were forced by bookcases. Konobeev sat at a round table, having bent over the illustrated magazine.

– The mastodon reading the latest political news! – Vanyushka, увидав the old man behind such “improper” occupation burst out laughing. Really, with the bulky body, a huge beard, hands which were capable to strangle a shark but not to address with the book, it somehow did not approach this situation.

– Look, however – Konobeev told, with improbable efforts overturning the korneobrazny not bent fingers the page of the magazine.

– The crab better you would move sheets. What to watch, however? – Vanyushka asked.

Konobeev showed on a picture of the flying airplane.

– Fly, however!

– Well and that? – Vanyushka asked, without having understood that Konobeev in soul continues to argue with the old woman, asserting the right to live under water. And, without expecting Makar Ivanovich's explanations, Vanyushka passed to the engine room.

There smelled especially – “electricity” as joking Vanyushka spoke.

– Hi, Guzik! Today we with you were not seen yet! – cheerfully Toporkov to the young man squatting a back to him about the electrical machine shouted.

– Here to you and two and a half dielectric constant of ebonite! – Guzik answered.

– You talk nonsense, the brother?

– And, it you, Vanya? Hi! – Guzik rose, shook off and faced Vanyushka. Dense chestnut, a little curly hair over a high forehead and big, very transparent light gray eyes, always the thoughtful, looking somewhere afar, as if penetrating material objects – “x-ray” as Volkov was expressed once. These eyes involuntarily attracted attention.

The young electrical engineer, the scientific inventor Mikola Guzik was simple as the child, and is phenomenally absent-minded. But this absent-mindedness belonged only to the outside world and external things, and there was it because that Guzik was able to concentrate so deeply internally that forgot about all surrounding.

– We go to have dinner, perhaps! – Vanyushka told.

– Yes, yes ... – Guzik answered and, having transferred a look of transparent eyes from unknown world heights on a dynamo, again took seat on hunkers and began to potter at the car.

– Mikola-chudotvoret! – Vanyushka cried suddenly and began to shake Guzik for shoulders. – There is enough! Let's go to the dining room! – And it dragged the scientific friend. – Makar Ivanych to have dinner! – he shouted by the way to Konobeev.

In the dining room Volkov already sat. Пунь gave on a table. To everyone's astonishment, Ji Zi did not welcome by a lunch.

– Where Kye Tsa? – Volkov Pun asked.

– ЦОЛТ ЗЯЛ (the devil took) – she answered. – And let!

Guzik could not eat for days on end. But, having taken seat at a table and having deeply thought, he managed to eat imperceptibly for himself and more, than it is necessary. Once he one ate a big frying pan of the liver prepared for all. Now the young inventor was accepted to the sauce made of a sea cabbage and absorbed it with big appetite, penetrating Konobeev an unseeing look.

– And well, let's try! – Vanyushka told, moving to himself a sauce-boat and imposing on a plate.

Sauce was very tasty and nutritious, but Vanyushka discontentedly moved a nose.

– Not that! – he told, having sighed.

– Not habit, and more than nothing – Volkov objected – the sea cabbage is more tasty terrestrial and is much more nutritious. When you get used, will not want another. And I am sure that the sea cabbage will be the same necessary dish at each table soon as potato. Potatoes in the beginning did not want too and were even afraid to eat. The locust, ants, swallow's nests seem to you disgusting, and meanwhile at many tribes these foods are the most delicious dish.

Vanyushka even punched himself a breast.

– Semyon Alekseevich! I feel, I understand! If did not understand, then and on a bottom would not get. For the sake of what I got? For the sake of this most sea cabbage got. But only, Semyon Alekseevich, did not get used I still. Here Marfa Zakharovna treated us with Russian cabbage soup recently. Natural. Ah, it is impossible to forget, Semyon Alekseevich! Beauty! – And suddenly, having slapped Konobeev on a back, Vanyushka exclaimed: – Makar Ivanych, you remember? No, as you want, and we will bring Marfa Zakharovna here. If under water at us Russian cabbage soup begins to smell, absolutely other ocean will be. Beauty! Only as, Makar Ivanych? On what a hook on what bait to us to catch this small fish – Marfa Zakharovna, that is?

Konobeev sighed and even put a spoon aside.

– Still such hook on which it would be possible to catch such independent old women is not made – he answered. – Is afraid of a sin, by stupidity of babsky. Staroverka it at me.

– And you are a conservative too? – Vanyushka asked.

– Was and all left, however! – Konobeev answered. – Temnost.

Makar Ivanovich deeply thought of something, then, without having ended a lunch, rose because of a table and left.

– Misses! – said Vanyushk in low tones, having nodded after Co-nobeevu. – Eh you, a kruchenye-muchenye with this floor, with a long hem.

And Konobeev passed to the room, gloomy, anxious. His dense eyebrows, moustaches and a beard puffed up and continuously moved. He put on a diving suit. The old man wanted on the coast, but he did not decide to show the face to Marfa Zakharovna. And it went far to the South, to investigations. Konobeev very much loved these investigations. Then he reported on all seen under water on Volkov: where what soil where seaweed where they do not grow grow, but can grow.

Konobeev wandered the whole day, returned late at night, settled on a floor – he did not like to sleep on a bed – and began to turn and sigh so that he woke Guzik.

– What do you turn, Makar Ivanovich? – asked it Mikol.

– By bad weather. The typhoon will be – Konobeev answered. – Always I feel!

But not one approach of a typhoon forced it to turn and sigh on – elephant. He felt sorry for the old woman, Marfa Zakharovna who this night turns one in the Chinese fanza under a fir-tree. The fir-tree rustles, the door creaks, the dog barks, and it is one...

It is not a pity for the old woman, but also he can throw water. No, cannot in any way! And how to give up the adjusted business, whether a joke?

Makar Ivanovich began to remember the life up to that moment as it met Volkov.

Chapter 4

UNDERWATER STATE FARM

Konobeev was born and grew up in Primorye. His father was a hunter. And Makar Ivanovich still the ten-year-old boy already went with the father to a bear. How many it laid them then on the century, coming to an animal “in private”! But unlike the father who was present “a forest person” Makar Ivanovich had a public vein. In old time, before revolution, he tried to organize artel of hunters and fishers. But from this nothing left. Konobeev trustfully distributed to members of artel money which he saved, selling furs; he was deceived, left with money and did not return.

After the revolution Makar Ivanovich removed to the ocean coast and was engaged in fishing – at first one, then in small artel from Dalselsoyuz. But from time to time in it the hunter woke up, and he threw a seine and to a jail to undertake the gun and a bear spear. During these hunting hard drinkings Konobeev also met the agronomist Volkov, too the inveterate hunter. They made friends soon as two isty professionals.

Volkov lodged in Primorye not so long ago. Earlier it worked in Belarus on collective-farm construction. But it had an uneasy nature. Having bored with work of the land surveyor, it was attached to one scientific expedition which went to the Far East. Beauty and an originality of this edge so captivated Volkov that he remained to live there.

It had the true intuition of the hunter and a keen eye. If Konobeev “cost” four tens bears, then Volkov had other merits: it with own hand killed two tigers – a quite good experience for the beginner. However, it had to kill one tiger, having incidentally come across it and defending. Only exclusive composure and resourcefulness saved it life. The tiger was killed, but, already dying, managed to scratch a cheek to Volkov one claw, having left a mark for the rest of life.

Sitting at a fire, Konobeev and Volkov told each other infinite stories from hunting life.

One morning they came to the seashore. There was an end of October. Weather was extremely silent. In the ocean the outflow bared shallows with the heaps of seaweed which are swept together on them. Near the coast two Japanese were engaged in strange occupation. One of them sat in the square-tipped boat loaded with the bamboo branches connected in a bunch. The second Japanese, having put a naked leg on edge of the boat, other leg, leaning all weight of a body, stepped on the conic spade which had two handles as in children’s stilts. Lifting and lowering a spade, it moved along a boat board; following it, his companion took bunches of bamboo branches and stuck them in a bottom.

Such show for the first time was necessary to see Volkova.

– What do they do? – he asked Konobeev.

The old man grinned.

– Cabbage is planted!

– No, really?

– However really cabbage is planted – Konobeev answered. – Sea cabbage.

– But it is not cabbage, but bamboo branches.

– Well, bamboo branches. You what piece Vit: when the sea cabbage releases a seed...

– Disputes?

– Any disputes. Ordinary seed. A seed it flies to water as dust by air. And these bushes detain a seed. And on this place cabbage will begin grow. The place Here superficial, convenient in order that then pal-uumn-with hooks to break cabbage. Here they also sit down branches. The kitchen garden is parted, so, it seems as underwater farmers. However to us climb! Closely they on islands, have no place to move, here and climb. Yes something one Japanese gather us? And Americans what is done? An eye would not be seen! One cats in [54] thousand are exhausted.

– Makar Ivanych, it that it? Illicit requisition of public property? – Volkov heard someone's young voice and turned back. It was faced by the cheerful swarthy young man, sparkling white teeth. On it the cap, a sweatshirt and leather trousers filled in huge fishing boots with tops was put on the track is higher.

– Vanyushka? Hi! – Konobeev responded and, having addressed Volkov, explained: – Vanyushka Toporkov in our artel works. Komsomoliya. You what not at work? – he asked Vanyushka.

– Day off I, Makar Ivanych! I speak: what does it become? Hello, the citizen – he greeted Volkov. – As they dare to plunder property!

– I and that speak... Closely at them – Konobeev answered.

– I know what is close – Vanyushka was not appeased. – Yes who plunders? Helpers of Toyama of Riokitsa, industrialist tolstopuzy. He will also sell to the Japanese poor this cabbage for four is expensive, and the poor again hungry will be. To drive them from here without any diplomatic notes. Hey you! – he shouted, having threatened a cockleshell on Japanese. – Shoo from here! What take for a disgrace, foot! Shoo, shoo! – And he resolutely walked to the boat directly on water, lifting clouds of splashes.

Japanese quickly talked about something between themselves, then put a spade in the boat and undertook an oar. The boat disappeared soon.

Three – Konobeev, Vanyushka and Volkov – took seat ashore. Over them with shrill shouts seagulls flew. Somewhere aside cormorants pulled. Absolutely near people sandpipers quietly went and pecked.

Makar Ivanovich took out a tobacco pouch, filled greenish tobacco a tube with a short mouthpiece, lit, dragged on and began to speak slowly:

– However now a sea cabbage very little at us get. And earlier got much more. To China, to Japan sold... And what it is so much good in vain vanishes! It is a pity to look!

– Millions of millions – Vanyushka supported.

– Yes, and if to ourselves to undertake cultivation of a sea cabbage as it is Japanese do – Volkov thoughtfully told – we could decuple collecting and sale of cabbage. And if to mechanize all this, to mechanize...

– State farm! About! – Vanyushka exclaimed. – It... it, foot take what it? Export goods. Currency! And? What will you tell, the grandfather Makar?

– However it would be good – having thought, Makar Ivanovich answered.

Vanyushka suddenly jumped, as from a hot plate. He punched the right hand a palm left and started talking, as on a meeting:

– Citizens, who for underwater state farm? Unanimously! Ah, take foot! This will be number! – And he was lost in day-dreams, taken by extraordinariness of the idea: – We will work under water in diving suits. We will build at the bottom the real cities. Let's carry out roads. Let's set electric lamps. And on this underwater road we will go by underwater cars to underwater acquaintances! Here so take foot! We will work at underwater tractors... And how, telephone wires can be laid in water? – he asked Volkov.

It is possible, it is only good to isolate them. Cables is called. We will have phones, both radio, and an ear every day because with fishes in one apartment. Directly water having heated fish soup you eat!

It abandoned Volkov with questions: whether well under water it is visible, heard sounds which are made over water as life would change if the mankind lived in the ocean.

– Explained to us – he said – that all live left water. And here if both monkeys, and the person developed in water?

– However far was enough! – Konobeev told. – We about Cabbage began to speak. – These words cooled Vanyushki's imagination and returned him to practical questions.

– Before thinking of living under water, it is necessary to think of improvement of diving suits – Volkov told. – In modern diving suits long you will not work and too it is difficult and expensive. Our task has to come down to getting the correct economy – to plant a sea cabbage in the Japanese way on new grounds. Japanese can stick the bamboo branches only at very small depth where water over a plantation at an outflow does not exceed one-one and a half meters. Their imperfect tools do not allow to work deeply. You will not make a conic spade too long, otherwise it will be difficult to handle it, and to plant bushes in the made holes, diving from the boat, too difficult and tiresomely, at a considerable depth and it is impossible. If to design the good, convenient diving suit which is not connected with a certain base, then the area of underwater plantations can be increased in many time. It is possible to mechanize, of course, and digging of poles though we should not dream of underwater tractors and cars so far. The tractor without fuel will not move, and burning under Water...

– It is possible to move electricity – Vanyushka was not appeased. – Here wait, I will write to the friend to Leningrad. He is an electrician and the inventor. It works in laboratory of the academician Ioffe. Heard about it? He to us – not Ioffe, but my friend, Mikola Guzik – and diving suits will think up, and underwater tractors. Or perhaps and Ioffe will help. Brainy small!

– However on all this the coin is necessary – Konobeev damped a youthful ardor of Vanyushki again.

– And there is a lot of? – Toporkov by the trembled voice asked, having turned the head to Volkov.

– It is a lot of – that answered.

There came the pause. Three heads strenuously thought. Vanyushka, having forgotten about money, again dreamed, Konobeev remembered the failures with the organization of artel, and Volkov thought whether it is possible to create underwater state farm at least on the most modest beginnings. Certainly, it is possible to make a lot of things, even without moving on an ocean floor. The main issue in money. Business new can also meet natural mistrust...

– Currency! Here it! Take it! – Vanyushka shouted, continuing to weave thread of the dreams, and so waved a hand that frightened off a flock of the birds pecking almost at his legs.

This time no practical decision was made. However the foundation was laid. These three incidentally met persons represented already some force. One without another they could hardly make something and would probably be limited only to the fact that would dream of underwater plantations and returned everyone to the affairs. But at addition of these three human sizes, contrary to school arithmetics, the sum was equal to three plus X. This X was as if percent on the capital of the joint work. Not without reason the boiling water weighs slightly more, than at a freezing temperature. Vanyushka, Konobeev and Volkov supplemented each other. Vanyushka had “fire”, the imagination, courage of the thought which is not connected by old prejudices, scintillating enthusiasm of youth. Konobeev had practical wit and long-long knowledge of life, and Volkov had knowledge and persistence on achievement of goals. Fire burns, water extinguishes fire. But if on fire of Vanyushkiny enthusiasm to warm up cold water of konobeevsky Life experience in a copper of volkovsky knowledge, then steam which will move the car can Turn out!.

Friends (they were already the friends connected by the general idea) decided to meet in several days.

Chapter 5

MIKOLA GUZIK'S LETTER

In several days Volkov, Konobeev and Vanyushka met on in advance agreed place on the seashore.

– There is a business on a harmony! – Vanyushka exclaimed. – I wrote to Guzik to Leningrad. It, you understand, from shock crew it is sent in addition in higher education institution. Brainy small. And my friend. At one time we together worked with it, there and made friends.

– However nothing will leave this business – Konobeev unexpectedly told, moving with moustaches and dense eyebrows. – I spoke with our collective manager. I ask it: that supposedly if to begin to part cabbage as Japanese whether it is possible on it money from artel to receive or from Dalsoyuz. And the manager speaks, as there is nothing to think. To plant cabbage, speaks, there is nothing; one surf, speaks, casts thousands of tons ashore, and perishes, to neither itself, nor people. Evona, how many! – and Konobeev pointed to heaps of the decaying seaweed cast by waves ashore.

– And look! It that? – Vanyushka exclaimed, pointing to the boat in which two already famous Japanese sat. They continued to plant bamboo bushes. – Show to our manager.

– That case tenth, however – Konobeev objected. – Japanese at themselves pull out all sea cabbage to the last bush, one may say, language lick a bottom, and at us what? Хы! Dog in the manger.

– And you what told earlier? – Vanyushka flared up.

– Said that it is quite good.

– Semyon Alekseevich! What is it? – Vanyushka who reddened for nervousness and disappointment asked. – Same labor desertion. Disbelief!.

– I think that Makar Ivanovich is not right – Volkov answered. – Does not follow at all from the fact that we badly use the natural wealth that we also should not use them. On the contrary, it is necessary to use what the ocean casts ashore that is still stored in its waters, and what can be created the hands. I guided some references. Now we extract seaweed over eight thousand tons, and in one thousand eight hundred eighty fifth more than ten thousand were extracted! – Vanyushka whistled. – Then we sold cabbage to China as foodstuff. Makar Ivanovich is right – now we get less, than earlier. Listen further. The chemical researches made not so long ago showed that the sea cabbage really contains many nutrients and is suitable also for food of the person, and for a cattle forage. It contains from six to thirty percent of protein also a little fat – about a percent one and a half-two. Thus, in cabbage there are all substances, necessary for food. The Japanese cabbage of “amanora” is rich with a protein [55] and is very good nutrient. Japanese great masters to make various foods from an amanora. They put the dried-up cabbage in seasonings or eat it separately prepared. Amanora canned food with bean soy turns out especially tasty.

– Heard? – asked Vanyushk Konobeev, significantly nodding.

– However I heard all this when still you did not exist – the old man responded.

– We could send cabbage both on internal and on external the markets. But a sea cabbage – Volkov continued – it can be used not only as nutrient. From its ashes very valuable fertilizers as in it there are potassium salts turn out. America gets these salts from seaweed for many million dollars annually. At last, in seaweed there are a lot of salts, iodine, bromine and even arsenic. In 1916 —1917 there was here a plant which gave up to one thousand kilograms of iodine a year. “The Lyaminaria of a digitat” contains three percent of iodine and to twenty five Percent of carbonic potassium. Are most often eaten “ulva” from green seaweed, “porphyry” and “redimeni” – from red, “alyaria” and “lyaminariya”.

– And how much it is possible to get seaweed? – Vanyushka asked.

– One American calculated that in the Pacific Ocean only one species of seaweed – “macrocisyew” – can give sixty thousand tons of an annual harvest. And stocks of all species of seaweed cannot now even be considered.

– Evona, however? – Konobeev told, having run widely a hand from the North on the South. – On coast of all Strait of Tartary to a bay Plastun, on coast of Sakhalin and for the midday even to Korea. It is incalculable as sand sea!

The new emergency meeting was convened by Vanyushka when he received the answer from Mikola Guzik.

“You, Vanyushka, ask me about diving suits. The best of them – Japanese. It is the device which Closes a nose and eyes (glasses). In the Japanese suits it is possible to plunge about 80 m. It is deeper it is difficult to fall in such devices (water pressure: immersion on each 10 m increases pressure approximately by one atmosphere). For deeper immersion there are rigid devices In which it is possible to fall by depth of 200 m. In such device pressure of water is absorbed by walls. Average immersion in the soft device – 40 m. But also at rigid and at the soft device the diver is connected with the base (air supply). Release of the diver from base (relative) can be reached by supply of the device with compressed air. But this “release” as I told, relative. The diver cannot gain full independence of base already because in water it is difficult to be guided (at a depth of 8 m in daylight it is possible to see in the horizontal direction not further 2—4 m).

So the situation with the existing devices is. But...”

Vanyushka interrupted reading and, having raised a hand forefinger up, told:

– There is a most interesting further!

“... but the invention our laboratory of the new compact accumulator opens the big horizons in the most numerous scopes of electric energy including in diving business. Imagine a small box – like match. And here this box which you can easily put in a waistcoat pocket (if you already got a vest) contains the electricity reserve sufficient in order that throughout several days to move the car with speed limit. “Power plant” in several honeycombs of horsepower is hidden in your waistcoat pocket. You can be lit, be heated by this energy week, can rotate it mill millstones, set machines, tractors in motion. I decided to use the accumulator to diving business. You gave me the idea! I will create absolutely new type of the diving device.

You probably know that the oxygen necessary for breath, in the nature more than is enough. In the atmosphere of its 23%, in crust – 47,2%, and in the seas and oceans – 85,8%, that is are more, than in air and crust, combined. This oxygen should be extracted only from water. And it is possible to take it by means of electrolysis. By means of the accumulator the diver will receive air from sea water, decomposing water electricity. All “laboratory” for getting of oxygen will be located behind the back in a box with size no more marching satchel. But it is not enough. The same accumulator will give current and for a strong lamp in one thousand and more candles. The lamp will be located over the head of the diver and to light to him underwater vicinities on several tens of meters. At last one more. In the satchel you can have not one, but two, three, ten accumulators. You “will soak up” electricity of the whole power plant in accumulators. You will become walking power plant. And you will be able to use electric current in one direction: for rotation of the small screw which will allow you to float with big speed. You understand what prospects of an ego opens? You will become the real sea inhabitant, you will float tens and hundreds of kilometers under water. You will not need to have any base with which you would be connected. If you want, you will be able even to lodge under water. Your plan about underwater agriculture interested my many friends scientists. They consider this plan quite feasible and promising. Now I conduct experiments, I design the new diving device. When everything is ready, I will write to you. Report how there are at you affairs with the organization of underwater plantations. This thought so interested me that, perhaps, I will not keep and I will arrive to you to try my diving suit.

M. Guzik”.

Vanyushka lowered the letter on knees and looked at listeners. On them the letter, probably, made a great impression, especially on Volkov who understood in it much more, than Konobeev. An impression the fact that scientific people know about cultivation of underwater cabbage in Leningrad and that they find this business feasible and good made on Makar Ivanovich. At all the mood was lightened. Konobeev slapped on knees huge lapishcha and told a deaf bass favourite:

– However!. Leaves so – it continued after a pause – that things are shaping up. A stop behind money.

– Makar Ivanych, you said now that nothing will leave this business.

– In Leningrad people more cleverly than our manager sit – Konobeev answered.

– Now it is only necessary to obkhlopotat this business – Vanyushka told. – We will go to Dalkraysoyuz, to Amurselsoyuz we will be pushed, all regional institutions by oblazy. And if here we do not find support, we will reach Moscow. On such business money has to be. And we will find them! In flat cake we will break, and we will get!

Also settled upon that.

From this day began for underwater farmers of “purgatory”.

In one regional establishment they were accepted by the gloomy person wearing spectacles. He listened to them, smoking a cigarette and pinching from time to time a redenky mochalny small beard. Sometimes raised the right eyebrow that at it expressed surprise, sometimes hardly an edge of lips and folds in corners the century considerably grinned. Vanyushka decided to act directly this time and stated all plan about underwater agriculture, about the underwater plantations spread by divers about grandiose figures of production of cabbage. He did not decide to tell only about underwater tractors. But also what he told was enough to force the gloomy person to cheer up. At the end of Vanyushki's report the gloomy person showed even the curve teeth bared by a smile. It is necessary to do it justice, he was able to listen.

When Vanyushka ended, wiped the sweated forehead and took seat on a chair as the defendant, the told last word, the gloomy person, without ceasing to smile, corrected points and told:

– So! – The voice it with hoarseness did not foretell anything good. – Grandiosely! Perfectly! – It dragged on a cigarette and, having changed tone on a business tongue twister, unexpectedly began to pour words as peas: – But whether it is necessary to make all this underwater fuss, my dear? Whether you what space is occupied by the Far East region know? – The gloomy person rose and pointed to the map hanging on a wall. – Here, admire!

– Saw! – not really kindly Vanyushka answered.

The gloomy person looked on him strictly as the teacher on the pupil who interrupts the teacher and continued:

– The Far East occupies the space in two million seven hundred seventeen thousand seven hundred square kilometers. You understand what is a large object? For an example it is possible to tell that on the surface of the Far East region Italy, Belgium, Romania, Portugal, Czechoslovakia, Finland, Denmark, France, Germany keep within moreover there will be a surplus almost in half a million square kilometers. And in all region it is less population, than in one Moscow! If density of Dalkraya was such as, say, in Poltavshchyna, that is about seventy five people per square kilometer, then in our free places it would be possible to place hundred seventy eight million five hundred sixty thousand people – it is more, than in all USSR! Is where to disperse! Lands plenty. We still far did not develop this huge site of the terrestrial land. Plow, spread plantations, you sit down kitchen gardens how many for your soul it is necessary. Arrange state farms, collective farms, farms. Whether it is simpler, than to climb under water to spread a sea cabbage? – And the gloomy person victoriously looked at Vanyushka over points. Vanyushka did not give up.

– But unless it contradicts one another? – he asked. – Let whom want plows the earth, and we want to plow an ocean floor because it will give us export goods, currency. We wish to use natural wealth of edge. We...

But the person wearing spectacles was against “fantastic projects”.

Friends left with anything. How many still such debates, skirmishes, a talk they before, at last, the necessary sums were released had to conduct! Worker correspondents wrote correspondence, rustled, “brawled”. Volkov and Vanyushke had to visit even Moscow.

Chapter 6

IN “MORE-OKIYANE”

The most difficult and boring period of the organization came to an end. Further business began. In May there arrived Guzik with several diving suits. This arrival was the whole event in life of underwater farmers. Test of devices was coming. Guzik, Volkov, Konobeev and Vanyushka left on the boat. The ocean was quiet, weather excellent.

Friends had a cheerful, joyful mood. Having settled down on the deck of the boat, Guzik showed devices and offered explanations:

– This – a “summer” suit. It is arranged as the Japanese diving suits for small, rather, depth – meters to seventy. Summer I call it because all it consists only of a nanosnik with points, a lamp yes of a satchel laboratory where the accumulator turns sea water into oxygen. Having put on such mask the person and having bound a satchel for a back, it is possible to fall by a bottom naked that, of course, is pleasant only in warm season when also ocean water is warm. In such “suit” from a nose and points you will have full freedom of movement. It is very valuable to underwater works. These devices I brought a couple so far, but it is possible to make them much in a short space of time.

– Let’s outdo Japanese! – cheerfully Vanyushka told, trying on a mask. – Well! Very well! – he laughed loudly, glancing at himself in a small pocket mirror. Konobeev stretched a lapishcha to the second device. But Makar Ivanovich was waited by disappointment. The rubber nanosnik covered only the tip of his nose – the myasist Makar Ivanovich’s nose was very big yes.

– Not with your nose a diver to be, Makar Ivanych! – Vanyushka joked. – To seven god bore this nose, to one got. However, if to cut off from kilograms, then, maybe, and will enter.

– However there is nothing to scoff – Makar Ivanovich sensitively answered. – And there is nothing bad. It is told: the nosovity, the krasovity.

– Do not mourn, Makar Ivanovich. I to you will make the device by the special order. Rubber also will be enough for your nose – Guzik calmed the old man.

And the announced Vanyushka already sverzitsya overboard in the mask, dived, but came up outside soon, having nearly choked. He did not get used to inhale oxygen a nose yet, and to exhale carbonic acid a mouth. It was necessary to get used to the device.

– You will manage to swallow sea water still! – Guzik shouted to it. – Climb, listen further!

Vanyushka was lifted aboard.

– Harafo, only water in a mouth climbs! – Vanyushka told.

– It is a “winter” suit – Guzik continued the explanations. – It is, actually, usual diving inert, except for the fact that supply with oxygen comes from own “gas generator”. But here, however, there is one more small improvement – he modestly declared. – In matter – a suit lining – there are metallic threads which are connected to the accumulator. Threads can heat up and give heat. In such suit it is possible, without being afraid to catch cold, to fall to ice waves of the Ledovity ocean or to rise by height in ten thousand kilometers over the Earth’s surface.

At last the last – the rigid device for underwater depths – was continued by Guzik. – In it it is possible to plunge on three hundred meters and more. It is supplied with especially strong lamps. I do not know whether this device is required to you. Already “and depth of fifty meters the bottom opustevat, and at a depth of four hundred – there are no large seaweed. Sea flora is concentrated on the narrow strip going not further in one hundred and fifty nautical miles from the coast. And all infinite extent of a bottom of the seas is farther and deeper is the desert deprived of any vegetation.

– Yes, but the rigid device can be necessary for us for the research purposes. Eventually the ocean floor is studied far not fully – Volkov objected.

That time on a bottom of the sea Volkov and Vanyushka plunged, and cob-nosed Konobeev only with envy looked at them and grunted with such upset look that Guzik felt sorry for the old man, and he promised to produce a nanosnik in the handicraft method here, on the place, in the temporary laboratory.

And already in the following trip Konobeev with pleasure pulled a black rubber tire on the pear-shaped nose. In big points, with a huge black nose, with a gray-haired small beard and long moustaches it looked extraordinary comical.

– Directly water! – Vanyushka shouted, rolling with laughter.

– Even more important, the Neptune – sea god! – Volkov responded, echoing Vanyushke.

– Neptune Ivanych! Great!

And followed Konobeev this “Neptune Ivanych”.

* * *

Fishermen and hunters live in the world of a case, good luck, risk, an adventure, surprise. It leaves a special mark on their psychology. The everyday situation deprived of sharp experiences, surprises and risk seems to them boring and fresh. They need an eternal game with fire, dangers; they need novelty and sharpness of impressions. Such is there was also an old man Konobeev. Hunting feelings and instincts over the years did not die away, and inflamed in it stronger. His gray eyes under shaggy black eyebrows came to life, lit up sparks when he had to fight against waves or a wild animal. And now the new pleasure, untried feeling, perhaps, the whole chain of new adventures was necessary to it. Poor Marfa Zakharovna! It was waited by new tests, a new strip of loneliness. When it was asked where the husband, she only hopelessly waved a hand.

Konobeev should fall by an ocean floor, that ocean which ruthlessly absorbed fishermen, their networks and production; to go on a visit to fishes, to look how they live-live there. In a diving half mask Konobeev felt like the fantastic sea tsar. Guzik, worrying a little, explained to the old man as it is necessary to inhale and exhale air, but Konobeev waved away with such look as if it all life went in this half mask and was born at an ocean floor.

– However I will not choke! – he spoke. – Here only one is bad: it is impossible to smoke there. Make favor, Mikol, think up somehow that I with a tube could go. – Guzik, laughing, promised to think up.

Konobeev well remembers how he for the first time in a shirt and ports (so the old man considered more decently – he did not recognize pants) fell by an ocean floor. Water was cool and pleasantly pricked the tempered body, forcing to move quicker, as on a frost. With breath Makar Ivanovich is an excellent swimmer and nyrets – coped soon, starting up a stream of bubbles through a mouth. During a calm from a surface it was easy to determine by these bubbles where there is a diver.

Having plunged into the mysterious twilight of a seabed, Makar Ivanovich from pleasure sniffed and walked in depth. Lit a lamp. On light was going to look at incredible quantity of fishes on an unprecedented show. They were curious not less people.

“Fishes, fishes, how many! – Konobeev thought, coming to fishing delight and being enough them directly with hands. – What disappointment, did not occupy network! However now you will not leave me!” – And he walked on the underwater wood of seaweed, surrounded with hordes of the fishes shining sides at turn as silver knives. It was so amusing, extraordinary and beautifully that Konobeev suddenly, having forgotten where he is, began to guffaw with all the might lungs, having started up so many bubbles on a surface that sitting on the boat seriously were disturbed for the old man. However, bubbles soon began to appear regularly, but they were removed further and further. They died it is visible soon.

Konobeev for the first time walked several hours in a row, almost till the sunset. Returned excited, shining.

– Well and life under water, however! – he told. – And why people on the earth live, but not in the sea-okiyane?

Chapter 7

TYPHOON

As it was pleasant to wander in novel tracks of an underwater taiga, Makar Ivanovich had to constrain the hunting passions and to set to work. And works was more than enough.

The Japanese fishers and poachers who were darting about at our coast with surprise and displeasure glanced at a big white tent which appeared in one night on the bank of the small river flowing into the ocean. It was “general staff” where there lived Vanyushka and Volkov. Soon near this tent others appeared; in several days on the coast there were navezeno many boards, logs, bricks. Saws began to squeal, began to knock axes. Temporary barracks began to grow.

Among the invited workers was many Japanese and Chinese who had to prepare cabbage as it prepares at them in the homeland. And the Russian workers studied at Japanese and Chinese. Volkov cared for that the export goods met all requirements of foreign consumers of a sea cabbage. The seaweed taken from water washed out in special tubs, cleared of sand and silt, sorted manually, once again cleared, small izrezyvat and put even layers of a certain size on the bamboo mats outspread in the open air in inclined situation. From these layers of seaweed dry plates turned out. The dried-up plates which stuck together in zhelatinoobrazny weight were torn off from mats and pressed for giving of uniform thickness to them. Tiles in 25x30 centimeters developed on ten pieces and accurately communicated. Volkov drew great attention to that tiles were prepared accurately and equally as chocolate bars.

Thoughtful Guzik, having stood once ashore where these works were performed, told:

– Human hands are well arranged, but they could be arranged even better. – And, having sat several evenings over drawings and calculations, he constructed the simple, but very expediently arranged machines for sorting and cutting of seaweed. After that work went even quicker and more accurately.

Volkov and Guzik's efforts were crowned with success. The Japanese and Chinese buyers wholesalers estimated quality of the Soviet preparation soon and began to show the increased demand. Old Japanese merchants, having received samples, long rumped in hands flexible, thin as writing paper, plates, looking narrowly to purple brown I blossom with light specks and slightly brilliant surface, weighed on a hand, smelled, tried on tooth, admired accurate processing and packing – and declared:

– Yes, it is good!

It was necessary to double, treble, decuple number of workers soon. Work was humming. The seaweed cast by storms and waves ashore also did not vanish. They were burned through in ashes, extracting alkalis, or brought to the small plant for iodine getting. For the first half a year the plant gave more than two thousand kilograms of an exit of iodine.

However it was necessary to get seaweed so far in almost exclusively old Japanese way on rather small places: workers by boats slid along coast with poles in hands. On the end of poles were крючья by which seaweed were hooked and taken on a surface and kept within on the boat while it was not filled up to the top. Production was brought to the coast and again sailed “to pinch a grass” as Vanyushka spoke. He could not wait to transfer rather work to a bottom and to start underwater farm vehicles: tractors, mowers...

Volkov, Vanyushka, Guzik and Konobeev daily fell in diving suits by an ocean floor and went on the future underwater plantations, performing nivelirovochny and geodetic works.

From the first steps it became clear what huge prospects are opened by diving processing. While Japanese could process in the usual way plantations at a small depth in three-five meters,

the underwater farmers supplied with guzikovsky diving suits had an opportunity to work at depth of several tens meters. And it expanded the area of an underwater agrikultura on many thousands of hectares. At a depth of twenty – fifty meters it was not necessary and to sow huge spaces: they were already covered with dense thickets of the seaweed rich with iodine.

In the summer, at the end of June, the strongest typhoon burst. Konobeev the first predicted his approach on mysterious, to one to it to the known signs. The day before he long looked at a clear sky, at a blue quiet smooth surface of the ocean, smelled air, inflating nostrils of a nose fleshy, overgrown with hair, swung the head and grumbled:

- There will be a storm, however. The typhoon goes. It is advisable to remove a tent.
- We will strengthen it – Vanyushka carelessly told. Konobeev waved hopelessly a hand:
- Than you will strengthen, however? The typhoon turns out trees with a root and not that zakrepa. It is necessary to leave. To go to a cave.

Guzik was disturbed for the tools – in his tent there was a marching laboratory and many valuable precision instruments and devices. Near the coast there was a mountain with a big cave where Guzik also transferred the treasures. The skeptic Volkov did not wish to move a little though Konobeeva managed to be insisted on that put away diving suits in a cave nevertheless.

Night was silent, stuffy, damp. Any leaf did not shiver on a tree. The nature as if stood waiting. Volkov sat in the tent and by the light of the electric lamp fed by the same accumulator worked, having inclined over a simple pine table. Vanyushka on other table clicked on accounts, at the same time listening to a broadcast. Suddenly he raised the head and a finger which considered, and looked at Volkov.

The lock of a fine reddish hair went down on Volkov's forehead, blue eyes by the light of a bulb seemed almost blue. The shadow deepened a scar on a cheek. Lips were densely compressed, the forehead is furrowed with the easy folds speaking about the big tension of a thought. Vanyushka sat without having stirred, with the raised middle finger of the right hand. Then suddenly came off a chair and rushed to Volkov, having forgotten to remove earphones from the head. It pulled for itself (himself) the radio receiver and nearly broke a lamp.

– Semyon Alekseevich! Makar Ivanych told the truth! – Vanyushka by uneasy and a little solemn voice exclaimed.

– Do not disturb, Johann – Volkov responded and began to move lips, collecting scattered thoughts.

– Semyon Alekseevich! – Vanyushka did not lag behind. – Put belongings and let's go in a cave to Guzik! The typhoon all right! Now arose to the east of the Philippine Islands on the seventeenth of June. The first days it went quite slowly and by June twenty second reached only coast of China. Here it changed the northwest direction and, having turned on the northeast, moved already with very high speed. The twenty third it blew over Korea, having caused very heavy rains, and tomorrow, the twenty fourth, wait for it at our coast. Here, take foot! Makar Ivanych? Also radio is not necessary to it! A scent feels, the hairy nose. – Vanyushka kept silent, and when he started talking again, his voice sounded is even more disturbing more solemnly: – Semyon Alekseevich! There is a typhoon. Slyfite? And? Fumit the wood? Here, take foot as hoots!

Volkov listened. The tent had no wind yet, but the strange rumble as though somewhere nearby there passed the gradovy cloud came nearer. Konobeev entered. It was quiet, as always. How many typhoons he saw on the century, both on the coast and in the high sea, in a fragile fishing small boat! Eyebrows of the old man moved severely, and more than ordinary moustaches puffed up.

– However gather, Semyon Alekseevich! – just he told. And, without expecting the answer, began to get quickly huge ruchishcha of a thing and to carry away them. Volkov grunted and began to help.

The rumble increased. The ocean heavy sighed and made new unusual sounds – “aa! aa!” – as if became angry that it, the old man, eccentric wind awakes. More and more deeply and above his

breast which overgrew foamy waves fluctuated. But the old man ocean was not fated to fall asleep this night. The sky still sparkled stars and the new moon which as though is washed up – such it was pure and transparent. And Konobeev hurried.

– Perhaps, will pass by? – Volkov asked. He did not want to ruin a tent.

– However hurry up! – instead of the answer Konobeev grumbled, loading himself with two tables, four chairs and a folding bed.

When Volkov carried things in a cave and came back to a tent behind others, month did not seem purely washed up any more. It became dim and as though turned yellow. Jerked the first wind gust.

And the old man ocean already grumbled: “Aha! Aha!” At last you were, a typhoon!

Yes, it was. Waited for it, and still its emergence was unexpected. He during a moment of an eye brushed away stars, poured on the sky as the octopus sepia, lead clouds, threw the grown dull month somewhere, pressed an air paw the earth, flattened the woods, lashed water flows, mixed borders of the sky and the earth in circulation of water and air columns, twisted hundreds of thousands of tons of water, the sky and ocean in plaits, connected by a small knot, several minutes cast the nature into primitive chaos... The barometer fell to seven hundred forty – “lay in a faint”.

Volkov stood at an entrance to a cave when by it rushed as quickly flashed wing of a seagull extended a panel of a tent which was not managed to be removed in all length. Together with it the coat, a blanket and geodetic tools of Volkov were carried away. The tripod was found many days later zakinuty on top of a high fir-tree, in ten kilometers from the parking lot. But careful Guzik triumphed: it kept all tools.

Konobeev comfortably settled in a corner of a big cave and strong fell asleep under howl of wind and noise of a rain. And Vanyushka could not sleep. The typhoon affected it excitingly as a thunderstorm, as the fire as all outstanding. To it it was terrible and cheerful. There was a wish to sing, shout, move. It was necessary to think up something, to allow to be discharged to nervous tension. Outside you will not look out – will carry away as a tent. And what if to go to examine a cave? Vanyushka offered Guzik. But that already plunged into the contemplate nirvana, long answered inattentively, yet did not understand what from it is demanded, and rather intelligibly answered:

– Do not disturb, I consider!

Volkov also refused. Konobeev slept. Vanyushka discontentedly grunted.

– In that case I will go one.

He put on a back a satchel with the accumulator and tied a lamp to the head. Having thought a little, also the nanosnik with points put on.

The lamp brightly flashed, having lit the dark greenish arches of a cave.

– Farewell, I go! – Vanyushka told and walked in depth.

Chapter 8

CAVE ECHO

Under the arches the silence reigned. Ears were free from earphones, and Vanyushka heard how the echo threw noise of steps from a wall to a wall. Strange echo! As though it not one went in a cave, and several people walked ahead, behind, from sides... Here in such situation legends of spirits, doubles, ghosts arose. Vanyushka did not trust all this and still felt a chill in a back when, having shouted, heard a many-voiced echo: the cave played sounds, throwing them as a ball.

– Oh! – Vanyushka shouted.

“Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!” – the cave moaned.

Vanyushka forcedly laughed, the cave picked up his laughter, carrying away peals it is farther and farther until they stood somewhere away...

It is good that Vanyushka has such strong lamp! At bright light it is not terrible.

The further Vanyushk moved forward, the cave walls became more elegant, richer, more beautiful. Fantastic laces stalactites went down from a ceiling. From a cave bottom towards to them edges of stalagmites rose. Here and there stalactites met stalagmites, forming the elaborate columns reminding the Chinese carving on ivory.

The cave was narrowed, extended. Its arches sometimes hung so low that Vanyushke was necessary to bend the head, and then unexpectedly rose highly up, as in the Gothic temple. In extensive and high halls the dark entrance failures dispersing in different directions corridors gaped. Vanyushka, not to get lost, decided to turn always in extreme left pass. Several times he came into deadlocks, got out of them and again turned to the left. At last reached a big cave which walls were covered with greenish, pink and red crystals. Here and there these crystals burned as blood drops, in other places shone an emerald of a young grass. Vanyushka admired an unprecedented show.

“Perhaps, they are gemstones. Here take wealth, foot!” – Vanyushka thought, slowly directing light of a lamp to one, to other party. Having lit the soil under legs, it uvidat stony descent, otly running down. In depth, in a wall there was a dark opening. “Underpass!” – Vanyushka thought. He safely moved down and suddenly screamed from surprise. Legs touched absolutely invisible cold water or something like that cold as water. Cold gas? Vanyushka kicked – and the fountain the sparkling splashes flew up. Yes, it is water! Never before in Vanyushke’s life it was necessary to see such pure, transparent water. It was more transparent than the best glass. The bottom of the underground lake was visible throughout to the slightest pebble. From this cave there was only one exit – back, except for a dark opening under water, the leader under the earth somewhere. And what if to go forward, to this dark opening?

Vanyushka once again tried water. It is cold! But he got used to bathing. It is necessary to plunge only at once!

Vanyushka attached a nanosnik, connected tubes to the device producing oxygen and plunged into the water. Water immediately filled the tank in a satchel, and the device began to emit oxygen.

Water was so cold that Vanyushka nearly ran out on the coast, but constrained effort of will itself and forced to move ahead.

The entrance to the underground tunnel was quite low. Vanyushke was necessary to be bent. The lamp lit granite walls which contracted more and more closely. Vanyushka floated, grabbed. In one place there was fear that it will not be possible to creep further. But when this bottleneck was overcome, the tunnel began to extend quickly. Walls were moved apart, the arch rose above water level. Vanyushka emerged on a surface and uvidat that he is in the huge cave filled with water. The stalactites which were hanging down from a ceiling of a cave reminded strange monsters.

Monsters reached for water and were reflected in it; the bottom from a gray-green stone was visible absolutely distinctly. The great number of fishes swam in this underground lake where there was no vegetation. What these fishes, besides a consuming similar ate? Vanyushka hooked a hand one fish of a strange look – prickly, dry, nonflexible – and was convinced that it was absolutely blind. Instead of eyes it had only small deepenings. All fishes of this lake never seeing light were blind! Vanyushka surveyed cave walls under water and was convinced that they have several side channels through which fishes incessantly swam in and came up. Perhaps, in the neighbourhood there were reservoirs which contained all necessary for maintenance of life of this blind kingdom.

Having crossed the lake, Vanyushka came to the coast and went on huge, all to the narrowed tunnel. And suddenly he shuddered and stopped, to something attentively listening. No, everything is silent. Seemed to it. These are probably echo whims. Unless there can be people here? Vanyushka took some more steps forward and again stopped. This time the human voices muffled by distance – as though men's and women's – about something arguing rather distinctly reached it. Who are they, these people and where they are? How could make the way here? Vanyushki's curiosity was excited excessively. He decided to creep with unnoticed and to observe unknown. Closed a palm lamp light, having left only a small ray, and, carefully going, went aside from where voices reached.

Voices were distributed more and more clearly, closer and closer, and before Vanyushka there were only fruitless, dead arches of a cave. Ahead the stone ridge which was not reaching cave top was seen. Behind cover of this ridge of Vanyushk could approach unnoticed on a short distance. It was now possible to sort separate words.

– Look, Boris Grigoryevich what strange whitish reflected light on the cave arch! – told a female voice.

Vanyushka involuntarily raised the head up and uvidat that one beam of the lamp covered with a hand gives a small reflection On the cave arch. This reflection was also noticed by someone, being on other side of a stone ridge. Vanyushka hurried to extinguish a lamp. At the same time he noticed the fluctuating, amplifying, growing dim reddish light on the cave arches. Such light could proceed only from a fire.

– It seemed to you – the male deep voice answered. – Shadow play... Yes, so I also speak – continued a male voice after a small pause. – Me as Chekhovian Epikhodov, twenty two misfortunes pursue...

Vanyushka heard not only human voices, but also reaching from where a buzzing, wind noise, storm howl... Everything spoke simply; Vanyushka, having made an arch, wrapped all the time on the left, had to leave to edge of a mountain chain in which there were caves. In mountains, obviously, was available several caves connected with each other by internal transitions. People also came into one of these caves, taking cover from a storm as well as Vanyushkina friends. But what people are?! Vanyushka crept to the edge of a rocky ridge and glanced, taking cover between stones.

It uvidat a big cave. Through a narrow entrance opening wind rushed and shook a fire flame. Closer to an exit, at a fire, the person covered with a fragmentary tulupchik lay; judging by legs in blue trousers and the Chinese footwear, it was the Chinese. On other side of a fire the tall broad-shouldered person – bald, with shortly cut moustaches and black eyebrows sat. This person held on a stick over a fire a teapot.

“The odd fellow – Vanyushka thought. – And tea plainly is not able to boil, and too, on caves gads”.

And even closer to Vanyushka against the background of a flame of a fire the figure of the woman or girl, average height who is well put in a short skirt and a kepi on the head was accurately allocated. Vanyushka saw only a black silhouette. With arms akimbo and having raised the head up, the girl looked at the cave arch, obviously expecting whether the strange light thing will repeat.

“Young and, probably, beautiful” – Vanyushka solved.

Without hanging the raised head, the girl took several steps forward and suddenly screamed: her legs touched water, cold, transparent to invisibility.

– There is water! Who could think? – the girl with astonishment told, drawing aside a leg.

“And you came across this focus, my dear” – Vanyushka thought and, without having restrained, quietly laughed.

– Ah! – scaredly the girl screamed. – Here someone is! I heard laughter.

– Everything seems to you, Alenka. I did not think that you are such coward – the man with a teapot told. – You would help me to hold a teapot better. The hand was tired. This echo here it. You shouted, the echo repeated.

– But I shouted “ah”, and the echo repeated “ha-ha-ha” – on the contrary moreover cubed. So does not happen.

– And well, shout! – the man offered. The girl shouted shortly and abruptly again: “Ah!” Vanyushka came to have fun a thought. He suddenly answered, lowering tone: “Ah-ah!”

The girl raised hands to the head, and the man dropped a teapot in a fire. The Chinese under a fragmentary short fur coat zavorochatsya, rose and began to listen.

– Strange echo! – the man told, trying to pick up a stick a teapot for the handle. – What misfortune! Alenka! Because of your echo I dropped a teapot.

– It not an echo – the girl answered. – The echo cannot change tone height. There is a person. – And, having taken several steps forward, she asked: – Who there?

Vanyushka quietly moaned, then suddenly thumbed the big black nose and round glasses of points because of stones. The girl shouted and moved back. The Chinese with lamentations ran out from a cave; the man at a fire sat, having widely opened eyes and having even slightly opened a mouth. Then felt at himself in a hip-pocket, took out the revolver, grabbed burning головню and rushed to a stone ridge behind which Vanyushka was.

What to do? To shout “do not shoot” or to run away? Vanyushka decided to play up to the end a role of “cave spirit”. He suddenly ran to the lake and plunged into the water.

Having fallen by a bottom, turned back to the coast and watched that will be. The man ran up to water, aimed and shot. Thanks to refraction of beams in water the bullet did not hit the mark. Vanyushka waved hands, turned and disappeared in the tunnel.

“Tomorrow I will see these people and I will tell them everything – he thought. – For now let poudivlyatsya”.

Vanyushka returned to a cave where there were Volkov, Guzik and Konobeev.

Makar Ivanovich continued to snore; Guzik as Buddha’s statue, sat with the drawn-in legs and with the stone look turned in space depths. Volkov dozed off near Konobeev, but woke up at Vanyushki’s entrance.

– Where you were unsteady? – he asked.

Vanyushka significantly waved a hand:

– Such affairs, Semyon Alekseevich! I now not the person, and pefferny echo. Tomorrow I will tell everything, and now to sleep!. – And, having quickly removed from itself the diving device, Vanyushka settled.

His snore joined Makar Ivanovich’s snore soon.

Chapter 9

ON TYPHOON SHOULDERS

In the morning wind ceased, but the ocean roared and stormed with an awful force. It was necessary to spend the night in a cave. Behind morning tea of Vanyushk told about the night adventure in underground labyrinths. He solved, despite a rain, now to move off in searches of yesterday's people whom it so puzzled and to get acquainted with them. The slim silhouette of the girl against the background of a fire did not go at it out of the mind. This silhouette was drawn to it on rocks, clouds, far mountains – everywhere...

It would be much more pleasant to travel to a rain in one pants, but Vanyushka dressed up: put on long trousers, yellow boots and a sweatshirt. This dress, extraordinary for such weather, forced even Guzik to go down from the nadzvezdny heights to express surprise, Volkov pretended that he does not notice yellow boots of Vanyushki, and Konobeev slapped oars hands on hips and told briefly favourite:

– However!

Bending down under strong streams of a rain, Vanyushka went to wander about neighboring caves. Without special work it was succeeded to find that in which he saw at the night of people at a fire. But alas! Now in this cave was nobody. Ashes of a fire were still warm. The come unsoldered teapot lay on black coals. A can “bull-calves in a tomato”, an empty box from under cigarettes, a becheva piece – here everything that remained from unknown travelers. Yes at the exit of Vanyushk found the Chinese shoe. The scared Chinese, obviously, having dropped it from a leg during flight, did not dare to return behind it any more. Now about this cave, probably, the legend will be put!.

Vanyushka bypassed a cave several times, examined all corners behind a stone ridge... It is empty! And any traces which would specify where travelers went. Really it, Vanyushka, so frightened them that they left, without waiting for dawn? And why he did not get acquainted with them last night? Vanyushka could not forgive himself it.

It returned to the cave all wet, dirty, tired and angry. Resembled up and down and suddenly declared that now will fall by a sea bottom.

– Yes you also will not reach water! Look what again becomes – Volkov told, pointing to an exhaust outlet of a cave. Through a frequent grid of a rain the storming ocean and trees shivering under a terrible pressure of wind was visible.

– I will very just reach – Vanyushka stubborn answered. – I went to look for a cave.

– Then it was more silent, and now it was again played.

– But it is at the bottom silent. Fishes probably also do not know what here is created. Semyon Alekseevich and as well as not to go? You know, typhoons both will set in, and will go to twist. The joke to tell, from June to November they twirl! However, not continuously, nevertheless blow yes blow. So, all of us this time will be idle? Already all work stopped ashore. As you want, and I will go. It is not sat to me.

Vanyushk was taken by a black nanosnik and points.

– Put on at least semifixed diving suit – Volkov advised. – Look, the whole water mountains fall upon the coast. They will smash you, will crush as an egg shell.

– That the truth, the truth – Vanyushka answered and got into the semifixed suit fitting a body. The rigid cover at a breast assuming water pressure was feature of this diving suit.

– Good-bye, companions! – Vanyushka told and put on a space suit the head. Volkov helped it to attach a satchel with the device delivering oxygen in a space suit. Vanyushka started at way.

Between falling on the coast of waves there passed only several seconds. For this short period of Vanyushka wanted to reach a breakwater. But of it there was nothing and to think Heavy lead soles and not less heavy lead suit connected freedom of movement on the Earth's surface. Vanyushka resembled along the coast and, having waved a hand, went back. However Volkov was mistaken, thinking that prudence won. Vanyushka departed from the coast and, having made an arch, ascended to high break. The bottom of break had quite deep water, and Vanyushka plunged here into the water more than once and dived. Now he decided to use this place to fall by a bottom, avoiding collision with waves.

Vanyushka waited when the wave broke against the rock, and rushed down. It was risky too. The following wave if he did not manage to fall rather deeply, could hurt him against the rock. Volkov attentively looked, standing at an entrance to a cave, on waves. Vanyushka is not visible. It, obviously, plunged into depth.

– However look at the sky! – Volkov uslykhat Makar Ivanovich's voice. Volkov raised eyes up the direction specified by Konobeev's hand.

Among the shaggy worrying lead clouds the ominous dark stain was formed. A spot everything increased – and suddenly from its center the funnel which, rotating with the terrifying speed, began to go down below and below as a trunk of a terrible animal seemed. At the same time on the surface of the ocean under a black cloud someone invisible mixed waves in one bubbling weight. This weight, rotating about all the accelerating speed, it began to be made buldge out, turning into the funnel turned by the pointed end up, and rising towards to the funnel which was going down from the sky.

– Tornado! – Volkov told. He already had to see tornadoes – constant satellites of a typhoon. But this time the show was extremely interesting.

Both funnels – going down from a black cloud and rising from the surface of the ocean – connected, having formed the huge water column extending below and above. This column moved on the surface of the ocean with a speed of thirty five kilometers per hour. Having looked at the top end of a water column, Volkov saw that in that place where this column joined clouds, it as if passed into very long water pipe which was sharply allocated in the lighter color on a black background of a cloud. This pipe continuously coiled as a huge snake. Sometimes “snake” curled in knot, and on this place Volkov saw a black circle with even more black point in the middle. This water pipe was one and a half times longer than the tornado and vanished somewhere away in clouds. It was terrible to look at the terrible rotating water snake. Here the tornado turned pale, the pipe became torn at the top end, and at the same time the tornado at the lower end tore. The lower funnel was leveled with the surface of the ocean, and top, turning, rose to clouds and disappeared in a black cloud... In a few minutes the phenomenon repeated – again the huge column moved on the surface of the vzbalamuchenny ocean. And once again the tornado tore, and its lower funnel, gradually falling, rushed off towards the coast and there broke. It was visible how this funnel flew on the coast and fell to a high slope. The whole Niagara waters suddenly began to rage on coast slopes, falling to the ocean.

– However to the enemy you will not wish to be in the ocean at this time – Konobeev told. – And it was necessary.

In twenty minutes tornadoes disappeared. The sky was cleared. Far in the east one column which bent and slowly as if hardly, moving the North still was seen. Here and he turned pale, became torn below and disappeared.

Quickly carried away clouds on the North. The sun looked out soon. And by a lunch the sky was already cloudless, wind ceased, only the ocean continued to throw on the coast a wave behind a wave.

Vanyushka did not return to a lunch. There passed hour after an hour, its everything was not. Volkov, Guzik and Konobeev began to worry. Konobeev decided to move off in searches though it was not easier to find Vanyushka at an ocean floor, than a needle in hay.

– However, maybe, broke it a wave about the rock! – Konobeev spoke. – I will look! – And Konobeev fell in a diving suit from the same place from which jumped in Vanyushk's water. Rummaged around all bottom around the rock, but Vanyushki did not find.

And by the evening, at a sunset, Vanyushka was brought on a self-made stretcher by workers of trade. They found it in ten kilometers from a cave.

When Vanyushka finally recovered, told the friends what happened to him.

– Not any person manages to drive on a back of a typhoon and to survive – it so began the story about the extraordinary adventure. – I jumped off in depth safely and went. Did not light a lamp – it would help me with water, muddy from sand and silt, a little. Reached a hollow which is meters in forty from the coast, you know? There it was absolutely silent. Water almost did not move. The storm slid over my head. I quietly went on a bottom. “Now it is possible to light a lamp” – I thought. Pressed the button. And, how you think what I saw? Take foot, fishes! Multitudes! Them was here so many that I positively had to force the way through them as though I got to a seldyany barrel. You understand? They jammed here into a hollow for fear that the storm will cast them ashore. The clever creature, though does not speak! Here both herring, and cod, and humpback salmon, and ivas different zhestkopery, both big, and small. And even U-2014\do not chase one after another \not before: stomachs save.

And, how many there seaweed in this hollow – a great lot! Directly the copper of fish soup with cabbage turned out. And seaweed do not move, quietly. Unless fish big will set only what alga, then brown tapes slightly will stir and again will stand. There are I, go, small fishes before me barrels sparkle silver, blue, copper, red, I go and I rejoice. As it well leaves: there, over the dining room, the end of the world, and at me here peace and harmony, and I dry go! Warmly to me and it is dry. Here, I think, I will sit out here until fishes upward get, then, so it will be clear that to a storm the end.

I passed several steps and began to notice that as though from where a breeze incurred. Very quietly began seaweed to turn in one party, and at small fishes some concern is noticed. All of them turned towards to a breeze and began to move is disturbing as if are whispered. From where, I think, a water breeze pulled? Perhaps, I got to such stream? Returned back meters on five – nothing similar. That is I want to tell, as here a breeze. Means, it is not a stream, and that for some reason all water in a hollow started moving as though who began to stir with a big spoon. And the farther, the it is more. And all in one party. Stretch strings of a tape of seaweed, small fishes with fins as the ship screw during a storm, and everything carries them, and me together with them work. Tried to go against the stream. Where here!

Really, I think, and here it is necessary to rest in bed? Not otherwise. I did not manage to lay down as suddenly the strong current raised me from the earth and pulled somewhere aside. I hands, legs for the earth, for seaweed – help nothing. Carries me together with all fish people in the unknown direction, turns around, exactly on a roundabout.

Here, has to admit to you, I became puzzled a bit, the lamp forgot to extinguish, though I was not helped by it with such incident. In eyes zaryabit; fishes, seaweed were weaved into one cover.

Well I also drove here!. As a tea leaf in a glass of tea when a spoon quickly sugar is stirred, and I flew. It is good what did not take the breath away because oxygen at me own. And heart faded, I will not begin to hide.

And suddenly I feel what me not only twists, but also lifts, just as on a corkscrew up. What for a parable such?. And suddenly for one moment I see daylight. Also I see that my head leaned out of a water column which over the sea rose and spins, and I spin together with it. I saw the coast and mountains with the wood, and the broken fishing boat dived in a column water ashore and again. And me so twirled that I legs and hands picked up closer to a body, any minute will tear off. Near me some fish spins, huge, here though embrace her. Once more I looked out on light of a column water, and it in half became torn, and the lower part in which I was, on the coast rushes. Downloaded, twirled me so that I fainted. And recovered – I cannot move; strongly banged and to pant – there is no oxygen...

Well and here, thanks, workers appeared in time and opened a space suit. Recovered the breath. If the tornado did not become torn, would lift me above clouds, I would crash down from there – and kaput. Then that on a tornado I drove, on the typhoon. You do not joke with me, now I am a person special.

Near Vanyushka fishermen found a dead shark, the inhabitant of the southern seas, with the belly unstitched on rocks. Right there contents of her stomach rolled: a back part of a pig, a forward part of a ram, the head of a thoroughbred bulldog, a ship scraper, a pocket of a checkered coat with the Tayms newspaper, the whole storeroom of a cod, two enameled mugs and a young shark.

Yes, Vanyushka got off lightly. After his story Konobeev told several cases from the long fishing practice when fishing boats were seized by a water tornado. And he does not remember a case that at least one of people returned live of this travel.

Chapter 10

HOUSEWARMING

– No, without underwater dwelling it is impossible for us in any way – Vanyushka said. – Here the storm behind a storm, the ocean growls, to it will not be risen, throws out you back as what garbage. And live we at an ocean floor, to us storms would be at all. We would go, Semyon Alekseevich, on a sea-okiyana bottom yes removed plans. You are an inventor, Guzik, and you have to us invent such underwater house that neither the tornado blew off it, nor the whale crushed. You can?

– What? Where? Whom did the whale crush? – Guzik asked, flying from transcendental heights. – Underwater house? Well, I think of it long ago. Everything is calculated, weighed, considered. – And it began to develop the plan.

Underwater houses have to be built from iron and are so strong connected to the soil that no typhoons destroyed them. Fresh water can be carried out on pipes from the coast or to freshen sea water. At last, it is possible to put boreholes in a seabed and to look fresh water. There is nothing improbable that under a seabed there will be a river or the lake of fresh water. Air, as well as water, it is possible to receive on pipes from a surface not to spend reserves of accumulator electricity for getting of oxygen from sea water. Отопять it is the most convenient electricity. It is possible to give, of course, heat of steam or hot water from the coast on the pipes which are well isolated, but it is more difficult. Electric heating, electric kitchen, electric lighting. In order that in winter it was not cold, it is possible to cover iron walls with special structure with pith sawdust from within as it becomes by the Arctic ships that there was no internal “sweating” of walls.

– And why not iron caps from within a tree – the benefit is very cheap material? – Volkov offered. – The tree, in addition, will well isolate from cold of surrounding water...

– ... which nevertheless has almost all year temperature above zero – Guzik picked up. – It is possible also wooden – he agreed. – But first of all iron for caps is necessary, gland is a lot of.

– And it is the most difficult to get it – noticed Vanyushk. – Our blast furnaces are always hungry as sharks. How many them feed with iron, all is not enough. It is impossible to take away from them. It is advisable somehow to find

– To find for iron mines and then to extract ore? – Volkov asked. – Long story.

Why mines?

– However – Konobeev inserted, lighting up a tube – on I give the seas how many this iron lies! Thousands of poods!

– From where? – Vanyushka asked.

– That, from where. You are small, is young. His Naklali there, on the Bottom when you on light were not. In nine hundred to four – the fifth year, here when. When were at war with Japanese and they to us naklat. That. Together with stones of the vice admiral Makarov iron lies. I served then in the Vladivostok squadron which was ordered by Essen. What only Did not see enough what has not heard much! Good it is not enough. How many the ships how many people died! On one Petropavlovsk seven hundred people, in the Tsushima battle seven thousand: “Varangian”, “Korean”, Yenisei, the “Boyar” “Guarding”, “Terrible”, Petropavlovsk... At Tsushima the whole two squadrons to a bottom went. It is impossible to count the Port-artursky fleet before delivery of fortress almost all is destroyed. Gland, iron, how many!

– Yes, but also Tsushima and Port Arthur not close. Besides in Port Arthur many sunken vessels are lifted for a long time by Japanese.

– Many and not all. Is, however, closer than Tsushima. The Vladivostok squadron was weak hunted for merchant Japanese ships more. Only once entered sea battle at the Gene... Genzana –

the town such is in Korea, and there even sank the Japanese transport Kinshiyu-Mara. And several merchant small ships were sunk not really far from here. I, perhaps, and the place found.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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