

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 peak, holding a flashlight that beams a light upwards. The overall mood is mysterious and fantastical.

A. Belyaev

Fight on air

***The person who lost
face***

Cold mountain

"Classics fantasy" 6

A. Belyaev

Classics fantasy – 6

«Издательские решения»

Belyaev A.

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The person who lost face Tonio Presto is a great actor. Tonio Presto is the pathetic freak. The genius with a face of the idiot, the person sentenced to the clown's body. Whether it that the person was sentenced to ugliness is fair, howto penal servitude? The answer to this question in clinic of doctor Zorn...

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Classics fantasy – 6

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FIGHT ON AIR

Chapter 1

IN SUMMER EVENING

I sat on the garden, painted in green color wicker chair at the region of the wide avenue from chestnuts and the blossoming lindens. Their sweet aroma filled air. The setting beams the sun gilded sand of the wide avenue and a top of trees.

How I got here, to this unfamiliar garden? I strained memory, but she refused to serve me. Only yesterday or maybe there was a winter, the eve of New year only several hours ago. I came back home from service, from Kitay-gorod to Moscow to myself on the apartment. Usual tram crush. Angry passengers. All such habitual. Came home and took seat at a desk waiting for a lunch. On a table there was a mobile calendar and showed on December 31.

“Happy New Year! Do not forget to buy a calendar on 19 ... year” – it was printed on this leaf.

“And I really forgot to buy” – I thought, looking at a calendar.

I remember all this well. But further... What was farther? I, apparently, put on earphones of my self-made radio receiver “on system of the engineer Shaposhnikov” on a habit to manage to listen to several radiotelegrams of TASS till a lunch – Muscovites were accustomed “to condense time”. It is remembered, the viscous voice transferred the telegram about the war in China. But some failure was farther in my memory. She refused to serve me. I could not oversleep till summer?! What does all this mean? Riddle! Eventually nothing remained to me more how to reconcile with the happened change.

“If it is the dream, then interesting – I thought. – Let’s look”.

But it could not be a dream. Too everything was real, though is extraordinary strange and unfamiliar.

On the wide avenue, the leaving tape in both parties, people went diversely. Mail all of them were young. I did not see the old men going decrepit gait. All were dressed in the suits reminding the Greek tunics: the wide, surrounded shirt reaching knees, open hands and a breast. This suit was simple and monotonous on breed, but in everyone there was something special, obviously reflecting taste of the carrier. Suits differed one from another in color. Gentle colors – lilac, pale pale-yellow and blue prevailed. But were a tunic and brighter coloring, with patterns and intricate slips. Legs of residents of the unknown country were put in light sandals. The heads with the cut hair – are uncovered. All of them were in proportion put, swarty from suntan, are healthy and cheerful. Among them was not neither thick, nor thin, nor excessively physically developed. And to tell the truth, I could not always sort which of them the young man and who the girl.

Especially one their strangeness struck me: lonely people went, about something talking though was near nobody, laughed, answered questions someone invisible. Everyone held the left hand as though wishing to cover it about the mouth.

“Perhaps, they are mentally ill people? And this park is at a clinic?” – I thought. But then there have to be nurses, doctors, watchmen who would look after patients. However white dressing gowns were not visible. Some passed quite close about me, and then I heard scraps of their lonely talk. But they spoke some unfamiliar language. Where, eventually, I am? And why all of them look at me with such surprise? I, apparently, am pretty well dressed in a suit from Moskvoshvey...

Near me there was a free chair. I wanted and at the same time was afraid that somebody will sit down by me, tried not to fix to myself eyes of these people. Sat with an independent air and listened to melodious music which reached from Apollo’s statue standing near me.

I do not know whether long I stayed in such loneliness if not a case which led me to closer contact with this new world. Absolutely trifling case: I wanted to smoke. I took out a box of cigarettes “Luxury” and lit. This innocent occupation had effect, absolutely unexpected for me.

In spite of the fact that all these young men (or girls) were, apparently, very reserved, they suddenly surrounded with the whole crowd me, looking at the smoke which is coming out my mouth with such amazement as though I began to breathe suddenly a flame. They about something began to speak hotly between themselves the language. I involuntarily was confused, but tried to keep an easy look and even stuffed up a leg on a leg.

At last one of them separated from crowd, approached me and asked:

– Kiu vi (Kiu ви)?

Vee – it is very similar on “you”. What they can ask about? Of course, about the one who I am. Whether it is Esperanto? As annoyingly that I did not learn Esperanto.

– I am Russian, from Moscow.

Asking turned back to crowd, and they started talking about something again. Whether they understood me? Having talked, they suddenly became silent, and that which spoke with me laid a hand to a mouth. In a hand it I noticed a small round black subject. The young man held this subject at a mouth when spoke. Here it that! Phone! Phone without wires. Obviously, radio. In any case, I got to cultural people. We did not dream of such progress of radio in Moscow yet. But what the country what for the people is?

However I had no time to argue. The surrounding crowd pricked up the ears waiting for something. Some impatiently looked at the sky.

“Whether they wait for the militiaman?” – I thought, looking around at a ballot box for stubs. I did not find it and threw a stub on a path. Several people carefully drew near, bent down and with curiosity began to consider a stub.

The crowd suddenly became agitated. All heads rose up. I looked in the same party and saw the point flying in the sky. The point grew in a mosquito, in a fly – someone flew here, – which strange insect with the small, trembling wings. To my amazement, the insect was a person. It quickly fell, smoothly and silently, near my chair. Wings developed behind his back, as at a butterfly. Arrived was in the same tunic, but blue color and from more dense matter. On the head of the person there were no hair at all, the person him differed in nothing from others, only a few wrinkles at his dark, clever eyes said that it is not young any more.

– Vee Russian? – he asked me.

“Translator” – I thought.

– Yes, I am Russian.

I called the surname and gave it a hand. This gesture, apparently, frightened standing near me, and they moved back.

“Translator” with astonishment looked at my given hand, thought of something, smiled, nodded and with some internal effort as though being afraid to dirty the hand, stretched it. This strange Luda, obviously, did not know that such handshake. The translator did not reape my hand as it usually becomes, and only brought the hand and applied to my palm. People around silently observed this ceremony.

– Hello – he told, precisely, as the foreigner, uttering each letter. – I am a historian. My name is Ale. We want to know who you from where you, as well as for what purpose you arrived here are?

Um ... “Arrival purpose”. Possibly, they do not know a different way of the message, except air. However that I can answer it?

– From where – I already told you. I can tell nothing bigger to you because also itself I do not know how got here. And I would like to return to Moscow somewhat quicker.

– To return to Moscow? – Ale turned back to crowd and, obviously, translated to listeners my answer. Exclamations of surprise and laughter were heard.

I began to become angry.

– The right, in it is not present anything ridiculous – I told Ale. – And I, in return, would ask you to answer me who you are and where I am. How this city in what state it is is called?

– You do not become angry, I ask you – Ale answered. – I will explain to you then why your answer caused laughter. I will answer one after another your questions. We are citizens ... – he faltered a little – to be to you clear, I will tell that we are citizens of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

– Es-es-es-Ayr? – I exclaimed.

– Almost so – smiling, Ale answered. – This city – if in general can be spoken now about the cities – Radiopolis – the radio City is called.

– And Moscow far?

– In three minutes of summer.

– We fly rather there, I want...

– Not so soon. You still look at your Moscow. For now we need to talk over about much with you and to find out a lot of things. I hope that by the morning everything will speak.

– Arrest? – I asked.

Ale in thoughtfulness raised eyes up, with a type of the person wishing to remember something, then took out the small book from a pocket, turned over it (“Dictionary” – I thought) and answered with a smile:

– No, not arrest. But simple precautionary measure. Exceptional case. I will explain to you. I will arrive exactly at midnight, that is at ten o’clock.

– Means, earlier?

– It will also be exactly at midnight. We have a decimal account of time. And you are spent so far by Ea. – And Ale something told Ea.

Əa, the young man who the first started talking to me approached me and, having friendly nodded, gestures suggested me to follow himself. To protest, object? What could I make, one against all? I went, hardly keeping up with tripping “escort” as I mentally called him, to the side avenue. Passers darted at me glances in which surprise and curiosity shone. Obviously, they were struck by my suit. We came to the small platform among an oak grove soon. In the center of the platform there were several small aviettes of a design unknown to me, with two propellers: ahead and from above, but without wings and without motor.

My satellite indicated the place for me and took seat itself at management. I followed it. Əa pressed the button. The top propeller was almost silently started turning, and we quickly began to rise steeply. Our flight continued no more than five minutes, but probably we reached the big height as even in the cloth suit I felt cold.

Suddenly sideways from us the huge round platform, not movably groundless seemed. We rose even above and fell by this platform. In the middle of it there was a round iron building with a dome-shaped roof.

Chapter 2

AIR PRISON

“Air prison – I thought. – From here you will not escape. Strange these people: do not know the word ‘arrest’, and build such prisons to which builders of the Bastille would envy!”

My young satellite left, having left me one. I approached the region of the platform enclosed with an iron fencing looked down and involuntarily admired.

Here, above, the sun still brightly shone, and below blue shadows already laid down. All visible platform to the horizon reminded a chessboard, with black cages of the woods and lighter – fields. Some rivers or channels a direct, bluish-silvery tape cut through this chessboard in several places. Houses were not visible in blue of twilight. Having turned to the right, I saw something, forced me to scream. In beams setting the sun Ivan Veliky, cathedrals sparkled gold of the head of the Kremlin churches. There is no doubt, it is the Moscow Kremlin. And still it was not that Moscow Kremlin which was known by me... It was impossible to learn also the Moskva River. It, obviously, straightened. Yauza was not visible at all. I strained sight, trying to regard Moscow from this height. But Ea easily touched my shoulder and gesture suggested to follow it. I obeyed and, having sighed, crossed a threshold of my prison.

Strange, unusual prison! The huge round hall was filled in with light. All walls are filled with cases with books. Regiments are faced by tables with the tools unknown to me similar to the broken cameras and microscopes. And all middle of the room was occupied by the huge telescope. Or they have a special system of keeping of criminals, or... or they have no prisons at all, and I was placed in observatory as the most reliable, difficult place for escape. So it also appeared.

The elderly, but vigorous and cheerful person, with a little Mongolian face type, same hairless as Ale approached me. He hospitably raised a hand as a sign of a greeting, with curiosity studying me. I tried to copy its welcome gesture. Near it there was, apparently, a girl in a blue tunic. She also greeted me. Then the elderly person showed me the door to the neighboring room where I also passed in maintenance of Ea. This room was round too, but it is less. There were no tools. The room was arranged with simple, but convenient furniture and served, obviously, a drawing room or the dining room. The wall had a small white screen from some metal, in square meter size, and near it the black varnished box. Ea suggested me to sit down. This time I willingly executed its offer. I felt a little tired. It is not enough. I was hungry. But how to explain me it?

I prositelno looked at Ea, brought a hand to an open mouth and pretended that I chew. Ea approached me and attentively looked in a mouth. He did not understand me, obviously, thought that something hurts me. I negatively rolled up the head and began to chew and swallow expressively. Surprisingly dull people! I изошрял all the mimic abilities. Ea with breathless attention watched me. At last he, apparently, understood me and, having nodded, left the room. I breathed a sigh of relief. But I had to be disappointed soon. Ea brought a wafer of some medicine and a small liqueur glass of water on a gold saucer to wash down this medicine. I made quite vigorous gesture by a hand expressing my disappointment and sharply discharged its plateau. Ea did not take offense, and grieved rather. Then he suddenly brought to a mouth the hand with phone attached to a palm and told something. Light instantly went out.

“Became angry” – I thought.

Suddenly the screen lit up this world; on it I saw a corner of the room and the Ale sitting in a chair. The image was so live that it seemed to me as if I see the historian through the opened window in the neighboring room. Ale rose, approached the screen and, with a smile looking at me, asked:

– What at you happened? You are hungry? Why you refused a tablet? It needs to be swallowed, and your hunger will be satisfied. We do not chew, we only swallow. That is why Ea also did not understand your mimicry.

– But I did not get used to such food – I confusedly answered, being surprised why Ale told about the young man: “Ea did not understand”.

– Tomorrow we will prepare for you something better, to your Moscow taste – Ale smiled again – and today have supper a tablet. I will be in ten – he reminded.

The screen went out, light in the room flashed.

I, smiling, Ea nodded, took a tablet, swallowed and washed down with water. The tablet was aromatic and left pleasant smack in a mouth. Did not pass also minutes as I felt satiety and gesture thanked Ea. He smiled with a pleased smile. He or she? This question interested me. All these new “Muscovites” so differ from each other both on addition, and on a suit a little that it is difficult to distinguish a floor. As if to me to ask Ea? If they speak Esperanto, then... it is necessary to remember. In Esperanto there are a lot of Latin roots. Man, husband in Latin vir (вир). Let's try.

– Vee Viro? (You man?)

Ќа burst out laughing, negatively rocked the head and playfully ran out from the room. Who could think! Absolutely boy!

Having had supper a tablet, I came to the platform. It was cool. On the dark blue sky six crossing huge light strips which were behind the horizon spread. Precisely easy gold dome-shaped arch covered the earth. It was amazingly beautiful show. Only huge heavy-duty searchlights could create these fiery rivers. When an eye got used to light a little, I saw that on the gold rivers the gold ships – the long, cigar-shaped aircrafts which are scurrying about as shuttles, with amazing speed float.

Having admired this show, I paid attention to some subject reminding a big silk bag. This bag was strengthened on quite high pole, and from it the rope went down on the platform. Several such bags hung also in other places at the region of the platform. Out of curiosity I pulled a rope. Suddenly, before I managed to let go it, pulled me up. The bag rose, with noise revealed in a huge parachute and was thrown overboard the air platform. I grew cold with horror. Fortunately, I noticed something like a trapeze nearby. I took seat on it and departed to a chasm.

Chapter 3

THE SHORTEST NIGHT

It was the shortest night in my life – it filled with the most extraordinary impressions so quickly flew by.

Having unexpectedly broken on a parachute from the platform of air observatory, I got used to the position of the pilot necessarily soon and with interest looked down.

As I fell, quickly grew warm. The breeze carried me aside, towards the Kremlin. Near it I saw a grove of cypresses among which there was a fine marble fountain lit with the ascended moon. These cypresses growing in the open air near the Kremlin walls, struck me. But I immediately forgot about them, attracted with a new show. The parachute transferred me through the Kremlin wall, from Borovitsky gate, and I fell... on the square covered with snow. Staring in disbelief, I took snow a hand. It was the real cold snow, but it did not thaw from the surrounding warm air, even from my hot hand. What for improbable things are created here?

I looked around. There was an extraordinary silence. The moon gilded domes of churches and lit blue sparks of diamonds on the roofs of ancient towers powdered with snow. In one of them, in a small window, with mica instead of glasses, the yellowish spark shone. But on streets it was visible nobody. At the Red porch stood two bearded stremyanny in the warm caftans edged by fur and in fur peaked caps. Leaning on berdysh, they dozed. Trying not to wake them again not to undergo arrest, I carefully bypassed them on the creaking snow and started wandering to the center of the Kremlin, trying to resolve a riddle: in what century I live? My reflections were unexpectedly interrupted with Ale which literally fell from the moon – so quickly it fell on the wings.

– You gave me much a lot of trouble – he told, with reproach looking at me. – You wanted to run?

I was confused and began to assure that everything left incidentally, because of my careless curiosity.

After Ale went down on a double aviette of Ea.

– Well – Ale hasty answered. – You sit down rather, we fly. At least, you visited our museum.

– So it was the museum!

I did not manage to recover as I was installed to the small round room of my air prison already again.

Ale, Ea and I took seat in wicker chairs at a round table. Ale frowned and as though expected something. Very melodious musical chord was heard – as if skillful easy fingers ran on harp strings. The chord sounded and stood.

– Ten hours. Midnight. It was punched by clock radios – told Ale, addressing me. Having laid a hand to a mouth, it asked someone a question in the laconic language. Then nodded – obviously, on the received answer.

“How he hears?” – I thought, looking on Ale.

I noticed in his ear, the small black subject, size about a pea is slightly lower than an acoustical opening. It also was probably the hearing aid.

Unusual silence and concern of my satellites brought me to a nervous state. I took out a box of cigarettes and lit. Ale was lop-sided on smoke and turned away. Ea sat closer to me. Suddenly she strongly began to cough, turned pale and leaned back on a chair back. Then quickly rose and, being unsteady, left the room.

– Stop to smoke – told Ale and, having approached a wall, turned some rychazhok. Air instantly was refreshed. I extinguished a cigarette and carefully laid it in a box.

The door opened. Li, the assistant to the astronomer Tong entered. It gave to Ale a portrait and, having told something, left. Ale nodded and began to look alternately at the brought portrait and at me.

“Compares – I thought. – From criminal investigation department, likely, sent. Was not enough only that I was similar to some criminal!”

But words of Ale calmed me.

– Yes nothing similar – he told, giving me a card. – It is just received on radio from America.

I was struck by artistry of performance. The best photographer of Moscow would envy such work. But the portrait forced me to smile. On it the person whose suit reminded knitted children’s “combination” from wool was represented. Similarity was supplemented by a cap, knitted from the same matter. The neck of the unknown was wrapped by a scarf to the chin. Quite big head without beard and moustaches and even eyebrows reminded the child’s head with a senile look. Only in slightly blinked eyes serious mind and rapacity of a small animal shone.

– What does all this mean? – I asked Ale, having ended survey of a portrait.

– So Americans look – told Ale and took a portrait. – And here’s the thing. We received data that to us the spy is sent. At this moment you appeared...

– And you solved?.

Ale shrugged shoulders:

– Quite clear precaution. There come disturbing times. Possibly, again it is necessary to create Council. This word is familiar to you?

– Certainly. And you do not have it?

– Many years in it there was no need.

– And now?

– And now it became necessary again. Apparently, you really the person from the remote past. Over time we will explain this riddle. For now I can give you some explanations.

– I admit, I do not understand much and very much I want to hear your explanations, but whether it is impossible to postpone them till tomorrow? I was tired to death, and... the dream overcomes me...

I yawned from ear to ear. Ale with curiosity looked at me.

– Really at you always so terribly opened a mouth when there was a wish to sleep? It was called, apparently, зе... зе...

– To yawn.

– Yes, to yawn. I read about it.

Ale took out from a pocket a graceful box from lilac metal, opened it and stretched to me.

– Swallow one of these pills, and your dream and fatigue will disappear.

Having noticed my fluctuation, he hasty told:

– Be not afraid, it is not drug which artificially stimulates nervous activity, like your awful cigarettes. These are the pills neutralizing fatigue products. They are harmless and make the same action, as a normal dream.

I swallowed a pill and suddenly felt fresh, as after good, sound sleep.

– There now you see. Why to lose unproductively a third of life on a dream if this time can be spent more productively! Now you are located to listen to me?

– I burn with impatience...

– So listen.

And, having taken seat more conveniently in a chair, Ale began the story.

Many years revolutionary shocks swept ago across all Europe and Asia. I will not list you stages of this awful, but at the same time and great era. The American capitalists sent the fleet to the aid of European “brothers” on a class, but the fleet was broken by the joint English, German, French and Russian naval forces. Then the scared Americans hurried to go back home, having provided events in Europe to own current, but not losing thirst to profit on death of economic power of the transatlantic

neighbors. However these hopes were not equaled – revolution won. In America disorders of workers began. The American workers asked to help. And we, of course, did not deny to them this assistance...

Ale sadly hung the head and became silent. I with impatience expected continuation of the story.

– But this help did not bring benefit. The American equipment quite seized at this time the new most terrible tool of destruction – death beams. The joint fleet sent by us did not see the enemy: it was exterminated in the high sea by the invisible opponent. Nobody returned from this expedition, except one submarine which incidentally avoided actions of beams, maybe, because floated too deeply. Sailors of this boat told awful details. From the windows which supplied our submarines, having lit with searchlights a gloom of depths of the ocean, seamen saw the falling rain from fragments of the ships, the whole clouds of brainless fishes or with half the burned trunk, incidentally escaped pieces of human bodies. All inhabitants of the sea who got to a killing zone were incinerated. Water in the ocean boiled, and probably on a surface it evaporated. Even at that depth at which there was a submarine water heated up so that seamen nearly died. Action of devil beams, obviously, not only thermal. They destroy fabrics of a live organism by ultrashort electrofluctuations.

– It has communication with radio waves?

– Alas, all this the same radio, but applied for destruction.

– And in what all this came to an end?

– It was only the beginning. We tried to apply the air fleet. At that time and our equipment was already highly developed. We had aircrafts operating by the principle of flight of rockets. These vessels could rise above a layer of the air atmosphere, that is it is more than two thousand meters. We hoped to attack the enemy unawares “from the sky”. But the enemy was well prepared. Obviously, on all borders of America from the earth the same invisible, but killing beams were directed up. Hardly our aircrafts made of special metal entered this veil as were burned even not to ashes, and to steam...

And ten hours later terrible disaster rushed over all countries of Europe and Asia. Through the fortieth meridian of northern latitude – across Spain, Italy, the Balkans, Asia Minor, Turkestan, China and the island Nippon in Japan without uniform sound the killing beam which incinerated on the way in a strip hundred kilometers wide all buildings, people, animals, fields, cotton fields, gardens rushed.

– Yes here, look – told Ale.

He approached a distributive board and pressed several buttons with figures, then turned the lever. Light went out, and the screen recovered. I expected to see the movie, but what I saw surpassed all my expectations. It were not “documentary pictures” it there was life. Illusion was full.

Here street of some city...

– Spain – said Ale in low tones.

...All houses along the street obliquely were as though are cut off by some invisible knife which opened internal rooms. Where there passed the awful beam, there were only heaps of ruins, heaps of ashes and garbage. Here and there parts of human bodies rolled. Everything, got to a beam area of coverage, was incinerated. In places the fires burned down. I heard a flame crash, a roar of falling of walls. The escaped mad people wandered among these ruins, vainly trying to find for the family. They sobbed, shouted, sent someone damnations... Here the woman ran with a wild hair and mad eyes.

– Augusto, Augusto! – she shouted. And suddenly, having faced directly me, hysterical laughed loudly...

I heard her laughter, terrible cries of people. The show was tremendous. Involuntarily I turned away.

– Several hours later later accidents are removed – with emotion spoke Ale.

It turned levers, and on the screen the new picture appeared.

– Everything that remained from the Italian town of Marateo of the gulf Polikastra – Ale told.

Several palm trees and heaps of ruins, two swarty, curly children and the old woman in tatters. At one child legs on a knee were annealed. It lay unconscious. The boy is more senior looked at him with silent horror, and the old woman, having inclined over the child, shook the gray-haired ruffled head and howled lingeringly, hysterically as dogs howl... Nearby, with oskalenny teeth and the big glazed-over eyes, the asinine head – one head lay... Leaves of palm trees rustled, stones under the running waves as sad accompaniment to monotonous, tugging at heartstrings, I howl old women rustled... It was too...

– I cannot more – I said in low tones – there is enough!

Ale sighed, turned the lever. The screen went out, and in the room light lit up.

Suppressed just seen, we sat silently.

– I saw these pictures more than once – told at last Ale – but also I cannot still watch them without deep nervousness...

– Yes, it is awful – I answered.

– When our youth sees these pictures, it is lit by such hatred and such thirst of fight that it is difficult to keep her from daredevil acts and the aimless victims. We infrequently show these pictures.

– Tell me, this cinema? – I when nervousness settled a little asked.

– A combination of the sounding cinema and transfer of moving images and sounds on radio. We have a central film archive operating automatically. I put number on this board, the movie necessary to me automatically moves in a movie camera, it begins to work at the screen installed in film archive. Through radio the image and sounds are transmitted to any place.

– Amazingly! And what was farther?

– What could be after everything that you saw? Further persistence from our party could ruin all Europe and Asia. We were forced to stop fight, we will not create equal weapon yet. And our engineers worked over the invention of such weapon much. In this regard we are obliged by much to Li. This is the ingenious young man.

– Li? Assistant to the astronomer Tong? In a blue tunic? Unless it not the girl?

Ale smiled.

– No. This is the young man rather the young man. We grow old not soon. How many, you think, can be to me years?

– Thirty five, the biggest, forty – I told.

– Eighty six – smiling, Ale answered – Li – thirty two, and Ea – twenty five.

I was struck.

– And what was invented by Li?

– He invented means of an obstacle from devil beams. They are not terrible to us any more. It found a secret and productions of devil beams. We were made even by forces.

– And now it is possible to begin fight?

– Not absolutely. Their beams do not punch our invisible armor, and ours – them. We became mutually impregnable for each other, but also only. And still fight continues. Not so long ago by some miracle one more fugitive – the Black made the way to us from America. It worked at coastal obstacles, at east coast of North America. There was a damage of the device radiating protecting beams. Having used it, the Black rushed to the ocean, long floated until it was picked up by any fishing boat, and at last reached our coast. He told that, despite everything cruelty, on unprecedented suppression of workers, in America there is an underground revolutionary work. Revolutionaries got even into the coast guard. We managed to give up them the intercourses. We learned that America, being afraid of our help to their revolutionaries, plans to exterminate us. Having convinced that their beams are harmless to us, the American capitalists decided to send to us spies, having transferred them in the way unknown to us through our air obstacles, to learn our military forces and means, and then to transport here in the same way the agents with destructive beams to destroy “the revolution center” on the place.

- Europe and Asia – good “center”!
- Yes, to destroy a big half of the world. Before it they will not stop! But we are not idle too. Li is close to permission of a task – to find the tool punching all protecting means of Americans.
- But Li is an astronomer?
- The astronomer, the engineer, the artist, the chess player – everything that you want. And in all areas it – the first-class size. Days it gives to the engineering occupations, and works as nights with Tong.
- Also is not tired?
- Li – at least; our youth does not know fatigue. You do not want to sleep?
- I feel perfectly.
- Well, here you see. And so, we received data that one of spies is sent to us. In it it is a high time you appeared. Now you will understand our precaution concerning you?
- Unless I am similar to the American spy? – poluvozmushchenno-polunedoumevayushche I asked.
- Ale shrugged shoulders:
- The ingenuity of the enemy is boundless. Bad that spy, at a view of whom each child will tell: “It is the spy”. You do not take offense. I trust you. But nevertheless some time we still will have to be engaged in your personality. Situation is too serious. Do not worry, you will use freedom.
- Remaining at the same time under supervision?
- Just at you will be to the chicherena, otherwise you will have nobody to throw with questions. I will sometimes accompany you if you have nothing against. By the way, today I will be able to visit with you “the country of memoirs”.
- Willingly – I answered, without deciding to bother it with new questions any more: what it for “the country of memoirs”?
- You have to learn our language, you see as far as I trust you. Study rather.
- With great pleasure, though to admit, I have no special linguistic abilities.
- It will not take a lot of time you. Here, you look – Ale turned on the screen again. On it images of objects began to appear, and their name at the same time sounded, and over the image the inscription appeared. On the screen throughout a minute flew, at least, fifty objects words.
- And well repeat them.
- To my amazement, I repeated them without any work.
- Believe that you will not forget them any more. By the morning you will perfectly master language.
- I do not learn the memory! – I exclaimed.
- we have a small secret which helps memory!. You not just see objects and their verbal image and hear a pronunciation. All these visual and acoustical phenomena are followed by the radiation of special radio waves.
- Again radio!
- Not without reason our city is called Radiopolis. You will hear about radio still more than once. And so, these radio waves strengthen brain perception, deeply imprint in a brain visual and acoustical impressions – the word, accelerate storing process. Only in such way our younger generation also has an opportunity to incorporate a huge number of modern knowledge and to be deeply educated in the most various areas.
- But abstract concepts?.
- You will see them figuratively and will acquire them as easily as the simplest things.
- The door opened, Li and the room was entered also by Ea. I with new curiosity looked at Li. Engineer, astronomer! Directly incredibly. At us in Moscow girls from a ballet school so look.
- This time the astronomer looked anxious. Li quietly whispered to Ale several words.
- Having addressed me, Ale told:

– Important news: we, apparently, found our American a trace. We have to leave you. Be engaged in studying of language so far. In two-three hours I will come for you.
And these surprising people quickly left.

Chapter 4

IN THE COUNTRY OF MEMOIRS

There was an early morning when I came to the observatory platform. Our air dwelling shone in beams of a rising sun as a race car, and below Radiopolis still sank in a bluish haze at dawn.

– Good morning! How do you feel? – I about myself heard a voice of Ea. She spoke the language, but now I have it down to a science. It was no Esperanto as I thought in the beginning though Esperanto was the basis for modern international language, simpler and sonorous.

– I thank you, perfectly – I answered the girl. – Ale promised to accompany me today.

– Here it flies – she answered, Looking in the chasm which revealed under us.

I saw nothing yet.

– Tell how this air construction keeps in air? – I asked.

– The propellers placed under the platform hold it, and gyroscopes give full horizontal stability.

Quite capital construction. Just in case all of us hold several parachutes here.

– On one of which I also made the involuntary trip?

– And it is very happy for the first time – smiling, Ea answered.

– But to set propellers in motion, strong motors and for them the whole warehouses of fuel are necessary?.

– Our energy for all engines is broadcast – Ea answered.

– Again radio!

Below small noise and a voice of Ale was heard:

– Good morning! Put on rather wings, we fly to the country of memoirs!

I put on the wings brought to me by Ea. Ale examined wide belts, crosswisely strapped on my breast, and made instructions how to operate this aircraft, unusually simple on a design.

– Try to rise and fall on the platform – he told.

Not without nervousness I turned a rychazhok at my hip. Sustavchaty wings as at a bat, trembled at me behind the back, and I felt that the soil crumbles under the feet. Instinctively I placed hands and legs, as if being going to fall to all fours. My look was probably very ridiculous, I heard the muffled laughter of Ea.

– Stick to pryamy! – ordered El. – Right lever. Turn. It is more. So. Return. Left lever back.

I smoothly fell.

– Well. We can fly.

I and Ale approached the region of the platform, a vsprygnula on a fencing and... rushed down. It was my third air travel in Radiopolis which left in me the strongest impression. I had to fly once on airplanes. But unless it is possible to compare that bulky, roaring car of my time to these wings which almost you do not feel! For the first time I felt the flying person easy and free as a bird.

Several seconds of flight – and we left the space lit with the sun, having plunged into blue twilight.

Ale flew row, a little ahead, directing the flight to the Kremlin.

Soon under us the fountain already familiar to me in a cypress grove seemed.

Our wings so slightly rustled that we could talk freely.

– These cypresses – I pointed to a grove – are exposed for the summer from a greenhouse?

– No, they freely grow here. We changed climate. What are you surprised to? We could reach it in the different ways, but for this purpose there was enough also one radiant energy of the sun. You know that on space in one square kilometer this energy used only for ten percent will be able to perform the work equal to seventy five thousand millions horsepowers. We receive thousands

of millions horsepowers of this energy in one Turkestan: quite enough that not only “to be warmed”, but to put all our cars in action.

Towers of the Kremlin flew under us. We fell by the quiet snow square and put wings. There was an early winter morning.

– We restored the past a century after a century. All old Moscow – your Moscow – is turned into the museum – told Ale. – Flying from a quarter in a quarter, you as if will fly from century to century. Before you all will pass characteristic of this time, from architecture to life trifles.

Ale was right: we really flew from a century a century.

– Let’s come into one of commissariats. Not nevertheless to you to ask me, I want to ask about something you too as at the contemporary of this era, to fill up the historical knowledge – he told, smiling. – You where served?

I answered...

We entered the familiar building. I was involuntarily captured by nervousness. Everything remained still. Whether miracle? Even my desk and on it folders of affairs – everything as I left them yesterday if only it was yesterday.

– Will you be so kind as to explain to me, than you were engaged what your work consisted in?

I was flattered. At last I will be able to offer explanations for this person of unlimited knowledge. I willingly opened the folders and began to explain what my work consisted in. Ale listened carefully. Sometimes it seemed to me that he wants to correct me, but, obviously, I was mistaken: he only not absolutely understood me and asked explanations.

– There is enough – at last he told. – I was finally convinced that you as it is strange, the person from the past. Nobody is better than me does not know last history. And you showed – in the area, of course – such knowledge that any thought of a mystification is excluded.

I understood it not at once.

– Thought of a mystification?. – And suddenly, having understood, I involuntarily reddened from disappointment. – Means, all this was only test?

Ale friendly took me by hand.

– I assure you, the last – he answered. – And now, to smooth unpleasant impression which, I see my cunning necessarily left, we will examine fluently other departments of our museum. For us they also only the country of memoirs, and for you is the country of not given rise future.

And suddenly, without visible communication, he told:

– Yes, yes. I am very glad. Only car? It is interesting to look. – After that, addressing me, explained: – Li reports that he found the broken flying car buried in sand near the Red Sea.

– But it is for thousands of versts!

– For us there are almost no distances – Ale answered. Having taken out the device reminding the tseyssovsky field-glass from a pocket it twisted eyepieces, looking at divisions with figures, and looked, then transferred him to me.

I saw the sandy seashore. From a heap of sand parts of some broken device were seen. Li stood nearby and looked in the same field-glass in the direction to me. Obviously, having seen me, Li smiled and friendly waved a hand. I answered it.

– I am not surprised to range of distance of your field-glasses any more. But how they can see through walls and only what is necessary?

– You see what is necessary by means of exact aiming. And to see through a barrier? Unless it is so surprising for you, familiar with X-ray beams?

– But they not absolutely that.

– New always not absolutely the fact that old, it also differs in that from old – with a smile Ale answered. – We fly!

And we departed to examine Moscow, new to me.

– We rise above. This site – Moscow of the second half of the twentieth century. Along with multystoried skyscrapers you see also those houses which stood in your time. There is already the whole network of the underground railroads and construction of air is begun. Moscow by this time long ago passed old borders and widely spread extensively. At the beginning of the twenty first century we built skyscrapers, but already separated from each other by big vacant sites. You look.

The strange look was represented by this new Moscow. On huge space towered symmetrized as if milestones, skyscrapers to several dozens of floors, with flat roofs.

– For landing of aircrafts – explained Ale.

– One cannot say that this city looked very beautiful – I involuntarily told, looking at the sad square stuck by houses columns.

– But it is more hygienic, than your dense old cities. When we began to build Moscow of skyscrapers, we had many disputes on whether to build these mansions or to start constructions of the cities houses where the multimillion population could live literally under the same roof. A dispute there began our doctors-hygienists who warned against hobby for urbanism, predicting physical degeneration of the population in too artificial living conditions of these cities houses. But we were not so rich yet to finish the cities. These mansions skyscrapers were a compromise.

– To finish the cities?

– Yes, and we were through with them. Eventually density of the population is caused not only a lack of land area as was in New York of the twentieth century, but also relative low cost of “housing concentration”, and also imperfections of ways of communication.

The radio policy – only the old name which remained behind the area. We have no more cities. If you fly by from Moscow to Leningrad, you will find continuous gardens, fields and white lodges scattered among them, but the cities there, in other place will not find.

– But you unproductively occupied the huge land area which could go under crops!

– You do not represent progress of our agrikultura. On square meter we get food more, than you got on the... to tithe. By the way, from where there was this word? Root, apparently, “ten”?

– I do not know – I confusedly answered.

Ale smiled.

– Besides, we produce food in the chemical way. We and now have more parks and flower beds, than fields. Yes, a lot of things changed for these years. We have no cities, we have no government, we have no offices. The category of “sovrabotnik” necessary in due time died out long ago as horses died out. By the way, you still can see several horses in our zoo, and sovrabotnik remained only in the form of museum dummies. They, however, are very similar to the original.

For me it was really the biggest sensation for all stay in Radiopolis. There are no offices, there are no sovrabotnik! It too. Whether Ale jokes? How it is possible to do without sovrabotnik?

– But themselves writes papers? – with the sneer which is not deprived of bitterness I told.

– My friend, at us papers “are not written” at all. I see, you cannot accustom with all these changes at once.

We smoothly fell by a green lawn. Among this lawn, on a sandy circle, there was a cigar-shaped gray subject reminding the zeppelin, but considerably smaller sizes.

Near the zeppelin there was Ea. She still from a distance waved a hand to Ale and shouted:

– More likely, it is necessary to hurry!

I and Ale, without removing wings, entered the zeppelin. Ea followed us and densely slammed a thick door. Bright light flashed, having lit easy chairs, a table, the screen in a corner.

– It is our “Gun”, the most skorostrelny aircraft.

Ea passed forward, for the varnished partition. From there the buzzing was heard, and I felt how a forward part of our aircraft rose.

– We fly – told Ale.

– Why there are no windows here?

– They are not necessary: speed and flight altitude are so big that all of you equally will see nothing.

Where I still fly? What waits for me ahead?.

Chapter 5

ON THE BANK OF THE RED SEA

We rushed on our air shell which was at the same time both the gun, and a kernel. Behind a partition something quietly buzzed.

– Tell, Ale why you, Ea and Li are engaged in searches? Directed “investigation” about me, now you chase all over the world this American spy. Or you combine...

– The scientist’s position with an honorary title of the detective? – asked El. And, having sighed, continued: – I see that it is difficult for you to get used to our social system. I said to you that we have no militia in sense of the word, usual for you. But if you want, we have each citizen – the militiaman or the investigator if it is demanded by circumstances. Each our citizen, without instructions and codes, knows how to protect interests of society. And if the case gave it to face the fact menacing to our order and tranquility this citizen and finishes business.

– But it has also other duties?

– What from this? At the investigator too not one business happens on hands. Obligatory social activities take us about three hours. There is time to be engaged – at least and searches of the American spy.

– You told that obligatory work takes about three hours you. Why you did not specify exact norm?

– Under the code about work? – with a smile asked Ale. – We have no exact norm, there is no code also. If business of it demands – we work! And it is more than three hours. But it happens only in exceptional cases: some casual accidents, natural disasters. Our usual work “at the machine” does not exceed three hours.

– And the rest of the time?

– Everyone is engaged in what he wishes. The main thing and our almost exclusive occupation – we study, study and study. Continuously we fill up the knowledge, we invent.

– And if Who does not want to work even three hours a day? What coercive measures you take against idlers?

Ale looked at me with extreme amazement.

– Forgive, but this time I refuse to understand you – he told. – Unless it is necessary to force fish to float, and a bird to fly? It is their vital sign. The same vital sign, insuperable requirement is for us work.

– But work can be unpleasant, for example hard physical work.

– Physical work is carried out by our slaves.

I even jumped up on a chair.

– Slaves? You have a slavery?

– Well that so surprises you? Enslaved forces of nature, cars – here our slaves. And all of us, free citizens, work not only from consciousness of public advantage – it is the alphabet about which we already forgot – but also because work became for us the second nature long ago.

– What is it? Light went out?!

– Do not worry, I want to look at the card – told Ale.

Before it the square on which outlines of some sea appeared flashed poor light.

– This card moves?

– Yes, it moves because we fly. Our card – the earth. Here... as it you called outlines?. Sea of Azov, here Black. We fly by it.

– Already! So soon...

– Turkey. We will see the Red Sea soon.

– But how you can do absolutely without card?

– Əa directs our air ship on a radio compass. Li sends a radio wave, and we fly in this direction as butterflies on a spark. The mistake cannot be. However, we can if it is necessary, cope according to the card and a magnetic compass...

And, having bent down over the card, Ale told:

– The twentieth degree of northern latitude and the fortieth – east longitude. We in the neighborhood of Mecca. We will be on the place soon.

Some more minutes of flight, and we smoothly fell.

Əa opened a door of our shell, and we left.

Li welcomed us.

– Here, admire – he told, pointing to fragments.

On the seashore in brown sand these fragments of the air ship charred and so crippled lay that it was impossible to define its design. The rostrum probably not less than on three meters buried in sand, having formed in it a wide funnel.

– Judge: whether it was possible to escape at such accident? The American spy died, this time we can be quiet and not continue our searches – Li told.

– Yes, of course – Ale answered and, having climbed up a funnel, began to bypass it, attentively examining. Then he suddenly sat down on sand, sighed and corrected a white helmet on the head.

– Li, you did yourself eye operation?

Li for some reason was confused.

Ale reproachfully shook the head:

– Good eyes, Li, are necessary not only to you personally. Our Union of workers has to have sharp-sighted eyes. Why you did not perform operation?

Having addressed me, Ale continued:

– We, people of the future, stand immeasurably above our ancestors in the intellectual relation. But physical our nature, alas, lost something in new conditions of culture. All of us more lose hair. Əa, remove the headdress...

Əa, smiling, removed a cap and without confusion showed the head on which there was no uniform hair.

– Here you see – continued Ale. – Idea of beauty changed. We find fine the hairless head of the woman and would be horrified by the hairy monster similar the mane on an animal. You do not take offense – he blinked the eyes, looking at me. – Too it is better for you to remove hair not to draw excessive attention to themselves. We will be engaged then in your toilet. And so, hair... Then teeth. You already know that we do not eat some firm food. We do not need teeth. It is natural that they without work become more and more weak. Through several generations people will become absolutely toothless and the lower jaw will turn into a small appendage.

– And it will be beautiful too?

– For the time, of course.

– I represent – I told, smiling – that some Praksitel, the ingenious sculptor of the future, will cut the statue embodying an ideal of female beauty from marble...

– It will have the huge head without hair, a small chin, a mouth without teeth, almost men's constitution, very thin legs and hands, fingers without nails...

– What disgrace! – involuntarily I exclaimed.

– If the gorilla could speak, then at a view of Venus Meditseyskaya's statue he probably would also exclaim: "What disgrace!" would also transfer a loving and delighted look to the chetveroruky, heavy-faced, shaggy companion to life – Ale answered. – Everything is conditional in this world, my friend. Stars in the sky change, lands change, the person changes, his concepts about fine change. We lose what to us stops being necessary. We hear worse, than you, and you – it is much worse, than

our ancestors of the Stone Age, and it is clear: we are not trapped any more by a predator behind each bush.

– Unfortunately, in the world there were still biped predators – thoughtfully told Ea – they it is more terrible than quadrupeds. And, perhaps, this ... – Ea showed on car fragments.

– Yes, this – its Ale interrupted. – I not incidentally asked Li whether he performed eye operation. All of us are short-sighted. Far-sightedness was not necessary to the person of the city. His look rested against walls eternally. We live more freely. Our horizons are wider. We became beings flying. Sharp-sighted sight to us became necessary again. And in the nature so: if the body is necessary if it begins to work strenuously, it develops strenuously. And, I think, our descendants who, perhaps, will live in air more, than on the earth, will find vigilance of eagles again. But we inherited from you, people with a limited outlook of the city, short-sightedness. Also we fight against it. Your points do not satisfy us. With them there are a lot of efforts, they can break. And we simply operate eyes, setting a new crystalline lens. Here Li for some reason does not want to do operation though it is painless and takes only several minutes.

– Tomorrow I will make, at least only to give you pleasure.

– I thank you, Li – Ale answered. – Make and for this purpose and for another. Approach here, Ea what you see?

The girl ascended to an embankment around the fallen shell and looked around. She thought, something is obvious looking for that drew attention of Ale.

– I see that from the center of a funnel to edge there are further deepenings which... um... perhaps, it is possible to take for traces.

– Traces? – Li asked. – Really?

– Whether somebody went here? – asked El.

– No, place absolutely desert. Nobody rose by an embankment.

– And you?

– I ascended only from this party.

Ale passed on sand.

– Here you see – he told – sand very unsteady. It is showered and does not give distinct traces. If to stir sand here so the end of a leg, then just the same hollows turn out.

– What do you assume? – asked confusedly Li.

– I assume, my dear, but short-sighted friend – Ale answered – that our American spy is well.

– But it could not escape in this accident?! Or his bones are stronger than duralumin, and the body and on fire does not burn? – already a little sensitively Li told.

– And who told you that there was an accident? – objected El. – Everything could occur very simply. Mr. spy safely fell on the device, got out, then blew up it.

– But how it then will return back home?

– It or they could arrive on two aircrafts and offer one to cover up tracks.

– And other ship?

– Another can be in other place. However we will continue our survey.

We went on traces, attentively examining them. Traces went on the sandy plain aside and vanished in several meters. On this place in sand there was a small deepening.

– Vanished into thin air? – smiling, I asked.

– On the contrary, rose from the earth on wings. Situation becomes complicated! Locals better us know vicinities. It is necessary to warn them – told Ale.

– I in Mecca have a friend the chess player, to call him? – offered Li.

– Perfectly – Ale answered.

We had put wings behind the back. We turned levers at a belt, wings trembled, and the earth began to crumble under our feet.

– Here once there was a fruitless valley – pointed Ale down to the outspread continuous gardens cut with direct silver lines of channels. Among gardens white roofs of the houses standing far apart were seen. – If you expect to see the Arab city, with its markets, benches, coffee houses, camels and dirt, you will be disappointed. There is no city long ago. I already said to you that we have no cities.

– And here also Vadi, my friend flies, I called him – Li told, pointing to the approaching person with wings.

It was with us soon. We with curiosity examined Each other. And, of course, Vadi was more surprised with my exterior, than I am him. It almost differed in nothing from my satellites, only his clothes were from white fabric yes the person a little more swarty. I, in the heavy suit from Moskvoshvey, with points on a nose and wings behind the back probably had very comical appearance. To me was extraordinary hot, the collar of a shirt became crumpled, hair were disheveled.

– The person from the past, I recommend – told Ale.

– You know about arrival of the American spies?

– Li spoke to me.

– They fell nearby from here and, apparently, departed. It is necessary to find for them by all means.

Radium nodded.

– Report on radio across all Arabia. Look for everywhere. Mobilize youth – children have a sharp eye. Search each fold of mountains, each bush.

Radium once again nodded, looking into the sky. Suddenly he grabbed Ale by a hand.

– You look, Ale, this air ship is not pleasant to me.

All turned eyes towards the sky.

– Yes, it is not our design. Give an alarm signal – told Ale.

The unknown air ship, having drawn a semicircle in the sky, was behind the horizon. Vadi told something in a fist, and in a minute risen as the scared flock of birds, from the earth airplanes departed after the departed air ship.

– More likely, to our “Gun”! – El shouted.

Being dripping with sweat in burning beams of the Arabian sun, I flew behind my satellites to the seashore.

Chapter 6

WHITE LODGE

That evening the American air boat managed to escape prosecution, using quickly come darkness.

– Well, it is necessary to postpone searches. Our Arab companions will watch the enemy. And we fly on the North, to Radiopolis. – And, having looked at the watch, Ale continued: – I have to give a lecture on radio. However you should be arranged on a constant residence – he addressed me.

– We fly to me – offered Li. – I live 56-30-28 on 45-6-2.

– It that, such long name of the street?

– Absolutely not, so we call briefly degrees, minutes and seconds of geographical longitude and width. We have no cities therefore we should give such addresses.

– Where it will be?

– Approximately in those places where there was your Nizhny Novgorod, on Volga. The good place – Ale told.

We flew on our wings to public hangars and took there the small air boat by which rose in an air height.

The dark southern night sky was ispolosovano the shining roads noting a way of air superhighways.

Huge vessels continuously slid on air waves of these shining rivers.

– Where these air giants and where terminal points of their routes move?

– They move on ring lines as celestial bodies, and do not stop anywhere. Each of these air dreadnoughts has the line. It is necessary to us here on that – pointed Li to the second of the crossed lines.

– The more flight ring, the higher it air-line. You see how it is convenient – in air the whole arbor from the crossing air ways!

We dexterously moored to the ship which a little slowed down the movement. Instead of usual (two thousand kilometers per hour) its speed decreased to five hundred in an hour while we caught up with it.

Our boat together with us was entered in the cigar-shaped ship. As if the shark of the atmosphere swallowed a small small fish.

On arrival into place our boat was dumped down. By this boat we reached airfield, left it there, and on “own” wings behind a back flew to Li’s house.

Ale and Ea said goodbye to us and departed to other party.

– You had to fly with changes. This inconvenience should be stood only at long distances. I fly to Radiopolis zhe on the aerobil.

– Collisions do not happen?

– Any opportunity is excluded. At a meeting our aircrafts automatically deviate under the influence of a radio wave aside.

– Here we and houses – Li told, falling by the platform at a white lodge with a continuous window wall on the South.

As soon as Li stepped into the platform, over it the non-transparent light bulb lit up. In the house light also appeared.

– Wait for you?

– No, light is switched on automatically as soon as I fall by the earth. We need to wash and change clothes after the journey. I will lead you at first to a bathroom.

Having bypassed the house, Li opened a door.

– I ask you.

I entered very small room box in which there were no more than four square meters. Naked walls, any situation, only a small case in a corner.

“It is impossible to tell that this lobby was cozy” – I thought.

Li very densely closed behind himself a door, approached a case and took out two antigas masks from there. Giving one of them to me, he told:

– In order to avoid emergence of epidemics – though at us about them it is not heard – each of us, having returned from a long trip, considers a duty to undergo disinfection. Alas, our organism is not adapted for fight against diseases in such measure as our ancestors and therefore all of us focus attention on the prevention of diseases had it. Cold puts us to bed. What to do? It is necessary to be protected.

He put on a mask the person, inviting me to follow its example. Then turned the small crane fixed into the same case where masks were stored, and the room was suddenly filled white as milk, gas. In three minutes also quickly air was purified. Li lit some metal match. It flashed blue fire. He nodded and unmasked.

– Remained gas exactly so much to disinfect our airways. Now we go to a bathroom.

It opened a door, and I was struck. The white bathroom all which is filled in with some special golden light was too huge for the private apartment. In the middle of this room there was such big marble basin that in it it was possible to float freely. On both sides of the pool there was a double number of white columns, and among them there were blossoming plants. In one side of the room there was a black ebonite platform with a chair, and over it something like an umbrella without matter. Near a chair there was a case.

– You sit down – Li told and, having looked at me, continued: – Yes, you should shave and leave your head of hair. Um, we have no hairdressers – at us hair just do not grow, there are no scissors and razors. Let's put, the razor could be got from the museum. But it is the whole operation. It is possible to be cut. Blood, blood poisoning, br-r... Better I to you to a call a product for destruction of hair.

“I will cause a product for destruction of hair” that for strange expression” – I thought.

Li approached the distributive board hidden in flowers and, having told something, pressed several buttons. Did not pass also minutes as in a wall the door which is not noticed by me earlier opened. There was something like a spray.

– From where it? – I asked.

– Sent from a warehouse on an automatic pipe.

Having taken a spray in hand and having wrapped up me a sheet, he asked:

– Allow?

– Please – I obediently answered and blinked, expecting that I will begin to be spryskivat. But Li only fanned me some pryano smelling current of air. And it appeared enough that my hair fell about the heads as cut, and the person took smoothly shaved form.

Li was satisfied with the work.

– Perfectly. You were quit with hair for the rest of life and, the right, so look much better.

Having looked at the hair lying around me on a floor, Li shuddered all over and even turned pale.

– Hair in general are awful, but dead hair are even more awful. Forgive me, but I cannot force to move away them. Perhaps, to cause nippers, brushes?

– Only brush.

– Here the floor is washed automatically – Li as if justified himself. – But hair, they... they can litter pipes. It is better to burn them. You know that, we will burn also your disgusting suit.

– What? To burn a suit? No, I thank you!

– But why it to you? I to you will cause a fine suit of our breed.

Near me there was one more door. Li opened it and told:

– In this small room there is a waste incineration furnace. I you very much ask to throw hair, a suit into the furnace and...

– You know that, we disinfected it, killed all microbes of the twentieth century, we will leave it as a museum subject – I used cunning, wishing to save the suit from fire of this house crematorium.

– Well, I agree. Let me take of you measurements. Your suit will be whole, but you after all will put on another. Here so. You much above me. What color you prefer?

“I would be good in golubenky, devil take it” – I thought.

– Black, gray, as a last resort olive.

– Well. I will cause a suit. For now undress and swim for a while in the pool. Throw linen into this hatch in a floor.

Li left.

I undressed and began to go down on white steps to water. But hardly fingers of my leg touched water, I screamed from surprise, having felt pricks thousands of needles.

– Forgive – I heard Li’s voice about myself though it was not in the room – I forgot to warn you – water of an elektrizovan. We cannot do without it, electricity is a massage for our nerves. I will reduce current now.

Li entered, turned the lever, undressed and plunged into the water.

Having swum for a while and having dived, we left. Bathing in electric water miraculously refreshed me.

– Now one more electrization – Li told. – Sit down on this chair.

I obediently took seat on the chair standing on the black ebonite platform. And suddenly since the ends of rods of “umbrella” streams of pale lilac light zastruitsya.

– Electric shower. Well?

– Yes... yes... about – it is very good – I told, feeling as the criminal sentenced to death on an electric chair. However everything was safely.

– Now here here – Li continued to dispose of me – pass to this case. This is, so to speak, the automatic doctor-controller. Give your hand. So. It here.

Li applied to my pulse and heart of a plate, attached to cords, and turned off light. On the screen there was a shining curve, it noted blows of my heart.

– Yes, heart at you is a little not as it should be – Li told. – Let’s look at a stomach, lungs.

On the screen the image of my internals appeared.

– Lungs as it should be. But the stomach is strongly reduced. Obviously, on one chemical food pills it is difficult for you to exist – the organism did not get used yet. I will order to you something like porridge and mousse. At us also not still passed to pills. There are fans of more “essential” food though all these dishes very easy and semi-fluid.

Li lit fire.

I sighed, having remembered a good piece of meat. But it was not necessary and to dream of it. They for the sake of me will not kill the last cow of a zoo?

– Well, at you everything is relative as it should be. And I will accept electromassage.

Li, улегшись on a long bench, pressed the button, and suddenly from under a bench some hands cores terminating in spheres, handles, rakes got out. All these “hands” attacked on Li’s body and began to rumple it, to rub, poshlepvyat, drum, iron.

From outside it seemed, perhaps fell into clutches some terrible arachnoid insect. Well, perhaps saved me though from this pleasure. I, probably, would shout for fear, broke joints of these metal paws and fell down from a bench.

But Li felt excellently, turned over with a side sideways and repeated:

– Well, perfectly!

At last this execution came to an end. Li quickly rose and put on in a pure blue tunic.

– And here to you – he told, giving me the same tunic from silvery fabric.

I put on. And when looked in the big mirror fixed into a wall did not recognize himself. At me not only head, but also eyebrow hair disappeared. The suit gave me the strangest look. “To seem on Kuznetsk in such look” – I thought.

– Now five minutes of rest. You lay down on this wicker chair.

We laid down. Light went out again. Suddenly the wall against us as if fell, opening a view of the seashore. The moon lit breaks of waves. Palm trees quietly shook. I admired a show.

– I love this corner of the Mediterranean Sea – Li told. – And often I cause it. Transfer on radio – he added. – Let’s have a rest, and I will acquaint you with my wife.

– You are married?

– Yes, we go.

The screen went out. Light lit up again. We left a bathroom.

Having opened an adjacent door, Li told:

– Ying, here the person from the past with which you wanted to get acquainted.

I entered the room which I took for a lobby, and saw Li’s wife. It stood at an opposite wall. Having hospitably smiled to me, she made welcome gesture a hand.

I went to the young beautiful woman, on a habit giving a hand. But she did not raise the hand, and I remembered that at these new people of handshake are not accepted. I took still a step and hit the head against an invisible barrier. The woman burst out laughing, but immediately constrained the laughter and addressed the husband:

– Li, you unless did not warn our guest?

– I believed that he already got used to our screens – Li told.

Again screen! I was sure that I see the living woman, but not her image.

– I will leave you so far – Ying told – in ten minutes we will have supper.

The screen went out. When the room was lit with usual light, I inspected it and once again was surprised. The room was three times less bathroom and is absolutely deprived of furniture. Naked walls without uniform ledge, ornament. Really it is the only living room?

Li smiled, having noticed my surprise.

– Your dwelling is very modest – I told.

– But it is convenient and hygienic.

Li pressed a leg one checker of a parquet floor, and suddenly from a floor the round table on a round column and two chairs rose.

– You sit down – Li told.

We took seat.

– Ask – with a smile offered Li.

Really, I had to ask endlessly.

– Ale spoke to me – I began – that you have no government, there are no employees, there are no officials. But how you conduct the economy? Here you caused to me a suit. Means, someone has to keep account.

– The account at us is put is exemplary. All this becomes very simply, mechanically now. I cause the necessary thing. Mechanically she moves from a warehouse and is sent on a pneumatic pipe here. At the same time the counter celebrates a holiday of this thing. The same automatic counter sums up the results. And by the end of the year we know what need at us for Tom’ or other subject what annual gain, how many it is necessary to prepare for the future. We have no changing fashion, and some stocks pass from year to year. So in all consumer goods, up to flying cars.

– But there has to be some control? Unless you have no abuses at all?

Li in perplexity raised eyebrows.

– What abuses can be? I will call to myself the excess air boat? Why it to me? Unless I can depart on two at once? I can also sell it to nobody, first, because we have no money, and secondly because everyone can take that it is necessary for it. For the same reason there is no sense to steal

or appropriate. We have no crimes of this sort at all. And not that we became more moral, and just crimes lost any purpose. We have everything that it is necessary to us. Here you told that the dwelling is very modest. But what is necessary for healthy life? Light. You see fine lighting for night.

– Electricity?

– No, bacteria.

– Bacteria?!

– Yes, the shining bacteria. And this floor-to-ceiling window for the sun. We have an ideal ventilation and heating in which, however, there is no special need as we made winter-proof all climate of our latitudes. What else?

– But cultural requirements: music, books, pictures?

– You still will get acquainted with our art, our cultural requirements.

– One more question: where there is your wife?

– On Southern Altai. Doctors prescribed it mountain air.

– Long ago?

– Two years. But for us there are no distances. We often visit each other, we meet and we speak also frequently as though we lived in one room. There are spouses and who are very loving who constantly live at distance thousands of kilometers and find it convenient. In general you should understand one thing: never before – at least at us in Europe, Asia and Africa – the mankind did not live such close-knit, solid family in spite of the fact that certain members of this multimillion family physically are more scattered, than earlier. We are in constant communication. I have friends everywhere – from a pole to a pole, and I conduct with them continuous conversations. We often have meetings, “congresses” where we discuss our public affairs. But we do all this if we want, without leaving the room.

Light went out, the screen was lit.

– Well, here and I – told Ying.

It seemed to me that it approached our table and took seat in a chair near the husband.

– Children will be today? – Li asked.

– To told me what he guards in Arabia, by all means wants to find the first for the spy, and Tsal...

– Here and I!. – and one more “ghost” – the young man very similar to Li approached a table.

“It has such big children!” – I thought.

– Today we will feast – Li told, having acquainted me with the son. – It is necessary to show to this antediluvian person, as we are a good judge of a good dish and pleasant drink.

Chapter 7

“I SEE EVERYTHING, I HEAR EVERYTHING, I KNOW EVERYTHING”

Li pressed the button at the table edge, and suddenly on a table there were two devices and extraordinary narrow as chemical flasks, high shot glasses.

At the same moment on a table of the wife of the engineer, Ying, dishes also appeared – she caused them.

Li lifted a shot glass and suggested me to look at liquid on light. The shot glass seemed a range. Liquid was poured by layers, and each layer, without mixing up with others, had the coloring.

– Drink slowly, small drinks. In this liquid there is no alcohol at all, but there is something another, harmless and... you learn.

I on the advice of Li began to drink very slowly. I cannot give my feeling. It was some flavoring symphony. Taste changed all the time, and each drink brought me inexplicable pleasure. I felt extraordinary clarity of thoughts and some special cheerfulness.

– It is not artificial raising of nerves, but clarification of a brain from toxins – poisoning products – Li told.

– Never before I felt such flavoring pleasure – I told.

– You still will strengthen it this dish – and Li moved up to me mousse.

– Tasty? – asked, smiling, Ying.

– Amazingly – I answered.

The son Li with pleasure savoured the same mousse on the table, on the screen.

– You still study? – I asked the young man.

– Why “still”? – he answered with a question.

– Because you are young. You study at some school or university, here that I wanted to tell.

– At school? At university? – again bewildered the young man asked.

“Really Li has such silly son?.” – I thought. But I had to be convinced soon that I hurried with the conclusion.

– He does not understand your thought therefore – stood up for the son Li, as if guessed my thought – that we have no school age and we have no schools.

Seeing my amazed person, Li explained to me:

– Still your time put to itself a task to bring closer school to life. On this principle you built the labor school. We managed to carry out this principle, as they say, for all hundred percent. The school and life merged at us together, or if you want, life and practice became our only school.

– But theory?

It is studied also, but this studying does not come off life and practice.

Having drunk from the long shot glass, Li continued:

– It is necessary to tell you that the control of our cars is so simple that even teenagers cope with them and do it very willingly. Even standing at “machine”, they can listen to lectures on radio.

– Again radio!

– Yes, radio destroyed that school what was in your time when it, to a greater or lesser extent, tore off from life. Radio teaches us from a cradle to a crematorium. We study always and everywhere. We fill up the knowledge at work if it does not require special attention, and on walk, even during the air travel. We listen to lectures of the most great scientists, we are present at experiences, we watch the formulas appearing on the screen. Only where the first-hand experience is necessary, we resort to things – flasks, machines, drills. But they always to our services – and in factory laboratories,

and partly and at home. For chemical experiments we, for example, can always cause on the house everything to us necessary.

– You are probably surprised even more – Ying told – if you learn that we almost do not read books.

– Yes, it is right – confirmed to Li. – We use sound transfer more.

– But how to allocate from a broadcast that it is necessary for you? At you hundreds of radio stations at the same time have to work?

– Each radio station operates on the wave, and length of these waves differs not only with meters, but also centimeters and even millimeters now. And we absolutely easily allocate the necessary station even if its wavelength differs from a wave of other station in only several millimeters.

– And then – Tsal efficiently declared – these stations are not much as you assume. Our network of radio stations is built on system of zone time, or, otherwise to tell, on longitude degrees – one station by fifteen degrees as time differs for an hour, considering for your time, through each fifteen degrees. Therefore from the west bank of Africa to east coast of Asia we have only ten main radio sets which fill with radio waves everyone the fifteen degrees of longitude from a pole to a pole. There are, however, still central radio stations, their radius of action covers all our territory. But we use them only for communication with ten zone.

– You did not tell about radio stations for transmission of energy yet – Li added – but I still will acquaint you with them. Yes, radio made huge changes to all public life, changes about which you probably did not dare and to dream. Radio abolished need of a physical assemblage of people. It was great hygienic achievement, and at the same time radio pulled together people in public sense. Radio destroyed not only old school, but also old theater, cinema. We have no stuffy, overflowed with public cinemas, theatrical and concert halls, audiences.

– Why don't we acquaint our guest with theater now? – Ying offered.

– Perfectly – Li agreed – for this purpose we do not need to run behind tickets and to trudge by your awful trams.

The second white wall of the room suddenly, as if by magic, turned into the stage if only what I saw, it is possible to call a scene. I not only never saw such art wealth, such situation, such scenic and lighting effects, but also did not assume that they are possible. Melodious music accompanied acting. It was the new kind of art. The speech turned into singing, and then it seemed that there is an opera. Gestures and the movements were natural, but are so merged with a musical background that it would be possible to call it some new ballet. Light changed the coloring together with a melody and seemed the shining sounds. It was some synthetic art.

I sat as fascinated and was upset when the screen went out.

– Here we also visited theater – Li told. – Our theaters have no auditorium at all. They have only a huge scene and a bigger room for scenery and cars. We have only ten theaters.

– On zone time?

– Yes, too on zone. Only ten troupes, but all of them consist of the first-class actors and artists. As you can see, art also became property of everything as science... Really? I listen. Eight – D, seven – C? Quite right! – Having turned back to me, Li told: – My friend Vadi, the inveterate chess player, told me that he resolved a task which I set to it.

– And where it now? – I asked.

– Everything traps the American spy, flying over the Red Sea. Yes, chess – Li continued – a never-dying game. But also it does not satisfy us any more. We exhausted almost all possible combinations. Everyone new is an event. We have new entertainments, new sports and arts which, unfortunately, are inaccessible to you. We, for example, feel the real esthetic pleasure, watching the course of solution of problems of the higher mathematics. Our mathematical geniuses carry away us the creativity nearly more than you were carried away your “divine” the tenor. In this modest room we can have everything that gives art, knowledge, life. Each of us can tell: “I see everything, I hear

everything, I know everything”. At least, I can know everything from a treasury of science and to see everything that is created in the world...

Li's speech was interrupted with some strange sound reminding the remote factory beep. This sound Li, Ying and Tsalya for some reason disturbed. They with concentration became silent. In the come silence the voice sounded:

“Hallo. Radiopolis speaks. All. We managed to receive radio from America. Workers rose on protecting radio constructions, occupied shore radio station in the hands and managed to tell us that, despite awful terror, the revolt expands. Ask about the help. Last words of the radiotelegram: “We perish from devil beams. Help...” On this radio terminated.

The turned pale Li rose.

– Unfortunate. They are burned by these devil beams. It is impossible to hesitate more.

Having addressed the screen, Li told:

– We still will meet today.

The wife and the son nodded. The screen went out.

– It is necessary to alert our forces which still served peaceful work – Li told. – We fly with me, by the way, you look at our power plants.

* * *

However this night we did not manage to examine power plants.

Radium, solving chess problems, did not forget to observe the horizon sharp-sightedly. He reported soon that the enemy air boat appeared in the sky again that the squadron of Arabs pursues it, but lags behind.

– The boat flies on the North. Try to bar it a way.

In a few minutes I and Li already flew by our air boat towards to the enemy. Vadi on radio directed our flight. Li lit a board of a peculiar periscope, and we saw the approaching boat of the enemy, and behind it as flock of birds, the airplanes pursuing it flew. Suddenly one airplane flashed and began to fall.

– They died! – I exclaimed.

– Fortunately, apparently, is not present – Li answered. – The American burned beams only an airplane wing.

– But pilots fall.

– It is not terrible.

– How it is not terrible?

However before I asked this question, pilots opened wings behind the back and began to decrease smoothly.

– And what if the American starts up a destructive beam in our boat? – I asked with alarm.

– Its surface is impregnable. My invention – Li modestly told. – Its mass application is just adjusted.

The mad pursuit began. Americans flew on the North. Our boat did not lag behind. When morning came, I saw white spaces through a periscope.

– Snow? – I asked.

– Yes, we behind the Polar circle. Mr. spy, apparently, directs the way to America through the North Pole.

We entered a strip of continuous fogs and clouds soon. Even the strong searchlight could not find the enemy.

– Proklyatye! – Li swore. – If America did not disturb, we would make winter-proof also a pole. As a matter of fact, we could make it and now, but benefits do not reward energy expense. Really it will manage to disappear?

However spies, obviously, had a purpose to remain by all means within the European Russia – I call in own way – and to execute some assignment.

We were told that the boat is found behind us, considerably to the south. It went at big height, but it was managed to be found.

We departed on the South. The whole squadron of the same boats, impregnable for devil beams, surrounded the enemy.

– You can incinerate the boat of spies? – I asked.

– It is also impregnable for beams, as well as ours. We can lay down an ordinary explosive shell only.

Obviously, seeing itself surrounded from all directions, the spy suddenly produced volt, absolutely unexpected for me: the boat went vertically up. Our boats followed it.

We moved to a stern. Probably it was very difficult for pilot to operate in such situation.

– Where it? To Mars? – I asked.

– A little lower – smiling, Li answered. – Fortunately or to a regret, both its and our boats are constructed not by the principle of rockets which can fly in vacuum. They move by means of the screw of the special device. You look, the boat reduces speed. Air becomes more and more seldom and does not serve as a support to the propeller. We catch up. But we should rise even above to lay down an explosive shell from above. Whether our car will take out? Perfectly! It does not go further. Still a little... It is lucky... Here...

But at this moment the air boat of the enemy as a shell, crashed down down, and after it also we departed to a chasm. I thought that at me heart will burst.

– Accident? – I asked, choking.

– No, only a trick of the enemy – Li answered, sitting on a chair back.

I looked at a periscope.

– What is it? Sea?

– Yes, Black Sea.

– It crashed down in waves. He died?

– At all. The boat under water also well floats as flies in air. It did not manage to disappear in the sky, and he tries to take refuge in water.

Before the water surface our boat stopped.

– And we?

– You see, other boats already dived after it. The others will be on duty on a surface. From here it is difficult for it to leave. I cannot remain more here, it is necessary to hurry on survey of power plants. But at first we will give rest to our pilot. On the coast. A stop, decrease – Li told.

The boat smoothly fell. The door of a cabin of the pilot opened, and on a threshold Ea appeared.

– Again you? In this dangerous undertaking? – with surprise I asked.

– Unless it is dangerous only to me? – without posing the girl asked.

– Oh, it at us the good fellow, one of the best and bravest pilots. Was tired?

– At all.

– Then we fly rather on the heliostation.

Chapter 8

THE SUN UNDER THE YOKE

The air ship began to take away the screw height.

– We fly to the solar region which once was called Turkestan – Li told. – There we get solar energy. But it is not the only power source. If I began to describe to you all ways of getting of energy by us, you should listen not one days. It is enough to tell that we left coal long ago, it remained too little. It seems, there is no more force of nature which we would not use. We get energy, using wind work. We subdued volcanic forces, terrestrial magnetism and terrestrial electric currents forced to work. To we serve atmospheric electricity. Even a thunder-storm which has no time with horror worshipped as terrible god, we harnessed on service to mankind. Sea waves, sea inflows and otлива – our workers-athletes. I do not speak about water engines any more. We measure culture height by the number of the consumed kilowatts now. And, I think, it is the most right and exact measuring instrument. We overtake all boundless amount of the energy received by us in the central accumulators and from there we extend on radio in all corners of our countries: on the Earth's surface, into the sky where our ships, fly to ocean depth for our underwater vessels and even under the earth. Well, here we, apparently, also arrived – Li told.

Our air ship softly fell, and I left a cabin. As the ship interior was well lit, I involuntarily blinked the eyes from a bright sun. It hurt the eyes to pain. I was in the south. But this light as though became brighter, is more dazzling.

– Put on dark glasses – Li told, giving points. – You did not get used to this lighting.

Having put on glasses, I saw that the sun, how many the huge mirrors reflecting it blinded me not so much. These mirrors had the form of the truncated cone. On its axis the boilers surrounded with a glass case were located. Special adaptation with the clockwork turned mirrors after the sun.

– You see how all this is simple – Li told. – The mirrors put at an angle collect sunshine in one focus and heat water to a boiling point. Steam turns out It puts electrical machines in action, and energy as I told you, is broadcast.

People in the same suits, as well as he, neither the person, nor an exterior not differing from it approached Li. Li spoke with them about difficult technical questions, throwing words and terms, unclear for me.

When we remained one, I asked:

– You talked probably to engineers. But where workers? I would like to look at them.

Li took of me an amazed look.

– Workers? What such special workers you look for? All of us are workers. One of us knows a little more, another is less, one is more talented, another less, here and all difference. But more true, perhaps, to tell that we have all – engineers. Because each of our workers knows more, engineers of your century thought.

With undisguised surprise I looked at work of these “engineers”. Here nobody shouted, disposed, everyone knew the role, all worked in coordination as musicians in orchestra without conductor.

– You are surprised with this “kontsertnost”? – asked me Li. – Yes, there is a small secret here. Of course, here the large role is played by a simple habit to collective work. Remember at least bees who are able to work so amicably, without interfering with each other. But our situation is slightly more difficult. When we should perform urgently the work demanding participation of working masses we use transfer of a thought on distance. Invisible you “conductor” directs and coordinates actions of certain workers and weight in general.

– Transfer of a thought on distance?

– In it there is nothing surprising. Ale spoke, as in your time already knew that any thought is followed by the radiation of electromagnetic waves. We developed in ourselves high sensitivity to perception of these waves. And by means of transfer of a thought on distance we managed to create ideal labor “artels”.

– But whether the personality suppresses it?

– In you the individualist did not die off yet – smiling, Li answered. – We have no contradictions between the personality and society. Everything that is useful for society, is useful for the personality. Time will come – continued thoughtfully Li – and energy of a thought will replace with itself radio. At least, in the field of exchange of thoughts. We sometimes and now resort to this way of a talk.

– What intolerable heat! – I told, choking with heat.

– Let’s go down to adits, there you freshen up – offered Li.

– Shakhty? – I asked.

– And here you will see – Li mysteriously answered.

And we went down on sloping gallery on the wide platform which is underground.

– You get into the elevator, it will be rather.

The elevator transferred us to depth of two tens meters.

Having gone out of the elevator, I saw that I am in the middle of a huge round hall with a high vaulted ceiling. Soft light filled in this to the hall. Extensively from it there were wide tunnels.

We went deep into one of these tunnels leaving afar. I with pleasure inhaled clean fresh air. The tunnel all extended, and at the end of it I saw something, forced me to stop from surprise. It seemed, I see a mirage in the desert. Before us the huge tropical garden grew. Among magnificent, juicy vegetation fountains streamed. Paths were strewn with golden sand. In the middle of a garden the quiet lake of extraordinary pure blue water was based. The great number of birds flew between trees, filling air with chatter and a rustle of wings. And over all this is blue bed curtains of the sky or glass – I could not define it – with huge sun in the middle.

– In this underground city there live employees of our solar station – Li told. – Isn’t that so, good corner? So it is pleasant to much here that they spend underground all the free time, enjoying silence, a cool, fine air and a sunlight which is transferred by system of mirrors here. Radio screens allow them to see everything that happens in the world on the Earth’s surface. Their rooms differ in nothing from my white lodge. If we have time, I will show you a remarkable aquarium, a zoo...

Li’s words were interrupted with some roar which was distributed over our heads. Li pricked up the ears.

– We go rather on a surface, there something happened – he told.

We quickly rose and left rather entered the hot furnace of bright beams of the Turkestan sun.

At the same moment I saw a strange thing: on a clear sky the small black cloudlet was suddenly formed directly over our heads.

Suddenly dazzling even in beams of the sun the lightning cut through a cloud and, having slashed on the sky, struck in the mirror collector of sunshine. I involuntarily bent down from the followed thunderclap. Splinters of a mirror scattered as a golden shower, in different directions.

– Rated sportsman! – Li cried.

But people already knew what to do. Did not pass also minutes as in different places from under the earth crowds of people with various tools began to be shown. It seemed as if someone dug out a huge ant hill and all ants came to light.

I never had to see that people worked with such speed and organization. They were not less than several honeycombs, and nevertheless neither shouts, nor orders were heard. Everyone kept at a distance, worked as a part of well harmonious car. Nobody disturbed anybody. Neither vanities, nor crush. One bore spare mirrors, others moved apart step-ladders, others sorted splinters. Did not pass also several minutes as solar installations were corrected, the garbage and the remains of mirrors

are carried away. People left under the earth, and anything else did not remind of destruction. I was delighted with this extraordinary organization and involuntarily remembered Li's words about the orchestra directed by the invisible conductor by means of thought radiation.

– However what has happened?, From where this unexpected thunder-storm? – I asked Li when everything settled.

– Work of Americans – Li answered. – They condense atmospheric electricity at distance and cause a thunder-storm. Obviously, we had a temporary break of an air obstacle somewhere. Enemies also used it to put destructions to our power plants. But another time they will not manage it. Recently I put storm rated sportsmen. Unfortunately, they were not applied still, considering, as the air obstacle quite protects us.

I did not notice how Ea approached us. She told Li that spies are caught that in the last fight they destroyed two of our ships, but at the same time died also.

– And then ... – Ea bent to the ear of Li and whispered something. I was surprised to this excessive precaution.

Li nodded it and, having addressed me, said also in low tones:

– Now we act.

Then he added, having a little raised the voice:

– The moment is too serious. Extra care is necessary. We go.

Chapter 9

LAST FIGHT

In the sky as far as there were enough eyes flocks of birds were visible. It was possible to think that somewhere crows were flown to a lodging for the night from all over the world. But it were not birds, and the air ships among which there was also ours.

– Atlantic Ocean! – Li shouted, trying to outvoice noise of wind behind walls of our shell.

Atlantic Ocean? Whether long ago we were in Turkestan? Resolutely, these people won against time.

The picture developed below forced me to scream from surprise. All seashore was filled by extraordinary beings who could be taken for the terrible died-out animals. It were some strange fresh-water and air animals. Though they were similar at each other, one of them, having reached the region of the low coast, plunged into waves and, obviously, continued the way under water, others floated on a water surface, others flew over the ocean.

– Isn't that so, it reminds a picture of the primitive world? The herd of terrible pangolins goes on a watering place! These are our fighters. They equally well feel on water, under water and in air.

They were thousands, perhaps, hundreds of thousands. And thousands of the air ships flew in air. "What destructive war! – I thought. – At such number of participants in one day millions of people can die".

– How many the person contains your army? – I asked Li.

– You wanted to ask probably how many kilowatt? – he answered with a question.

I looked at it bewildered.

– These tools of destruction conceal in themselves billions of kilowatts of energy. And people? Seventy three persons, considering also us.

– But allow who operates all these vehicles?

– These cars have no people. The small number of the people making all our "army" operates the movement of cars at distance, on radio.

– So, means?.

– Means, it will be more war of cars, than people. "That at whom the equipment is higher" will win – so, apparently, spoke also in your time?

In this the world, new to me, I absolutely lost idea of time. Winning against huge speeds of movement against space, these people won also against time. I could not define how many minutes or hours our flight over the ocean continued. Flying at reckless speed, we as though wanted to catch up with the sun. Its last beams still gilded high clouds over us when Li told:

– We fly up to coast of America.

I looked at it and saw that, against usage, he was excited.

– Day came – he told – when the destiny of the world is decided. – Whether we will die or our enemies will die, but the globe will not be divided into two half any more. But I am sure that they will die. We cannot die because for us – the future, and they – the last gloomy page of the past.

Li did not manage to tell this phrase, as well as I already distinctly saw the American coast.

Some more moments, and our ships already flew over the coast, crept out of the ocean, quickly covering with the bulky black bodies the low coast. The place was desert. We flew much more quietly, and I could consider a gloomy landscape well. The coast of otly rose and passed into the extensive plain which regions vanished in a haze of the approaching evening. "The quite good base, is where to be developed – I thought. – But why there is no enemy? We, obviously, took them unawares".

Searchlights flashed, and at once over the plain “blue day” came. Bright blue light lit distances, and I saw a strange thing: because of the far wood slowly as elephants, moved some beings reminding huge centipedes... They went to the deep cleft crossing the plain.

– These are bridges – Li told. – Obviously, already learned about our arrival.

– Bridges? Walking bridges?

– Old piece – Li answered. – At us you unless had not to see? Their foundations are mobile as legs. These legs people, of course, operate. Operate from far away. And bridges go and become into place...

And bridges are silent, efficiently continued the procession, reached a crevice and began carefully as the horse lowering legs in water to grope the soil. The same minute I noticed that legs of “live bridges” are extended, grow, will not grope a bottom yet. Thus they get over through crevices until the forward end of the bridge lays down on the opposite side. And the bridge is ready. Did not manage to adjust bridges a crossing as the huge tanks creeping on the ground, and the sky appeared from behind the wood as a cloud of a locust, became covered by aircrafts.

We went down on the earth. Our air ship was placed in a deep crevice. Li spread out before himself the card of fight. It was the special, shining card where all picture of fight was reflected. At the same time on the card there were hardly noticeable buttons.

Fight was started.

However, the word “fight” did not approach what I saw. Some fight of elements was an ego. In the sky the air ships collided as two thunderclouds. These clouds vomited from themselves fire sheaves. The ships faced, crashed in spills and fell to the ground heavy rain of metal splinters and the shining rain of the melted metal. The mad round dance turned steel birds in a pursuit one after another, a tornado rose above clouds, fell almost to the earth, were carried away by a whirlwind aside and again came back. The clouds of steel birds spilling fragments on the earth thinned and again were condensed from the new flown ships. It was are innumerable, there was no end.

What happened on the earth was not less terrible, amazingly, fantastically. Unexpectedly for me amphibious tanks released huge claws from steel bodies and rushed at each other as huge ants or without restraint angry scorpions. They “stung” each other fire streams, to pieces tore steel claws steel bodies, scattering metal fragments far around. Did not pass also hour as on the place of the smooth plain the whole heap of fragments, ashes, pieces of the melted Metal grew. But this mountain lived, teemed as an ant hill. Tanks broke through the courses in this mountain, everywhere looking for the opponent.

The fact that in all this spontaneous fight, in all these cars there was no person was most surprising. In the field of battle not human blood, and the melted metal was shed, not heaps of meat, but steel fragments rolled. Li was right. It was in true meaning of the word war of cars. People somewhere sat, sat in the distance and directed cars which as though became living beings.

I saw one of these living beings animating dead cars before myself. It was Li.

He already regained self-control. At least, it was externally quiet. Having inclined over the card flickering fosforichesky light he watched closely the events in the field of battle, somehow understanding all this confusion of the spots flashing according to the card, shadows and beams, from time to time gave someone short orders to a loud-hailer and continuously pressed the keys strengthened on the card. I saw how from each its touch dark specks move on the card, and peering into a periscope – as packs of the ships and dense ranks of tanks, *повинуясь* to his hand, move diversely. If not this periscope, then, looking at Li, it was possible to think that he is busy with a game in chess.

“Eventually, this war is not so terrible – I thought, without introducing aloud the idea not to prevent Li. – And, perhaps, it is more humane than former wars. Here not people, and cars perish”.

– But behind cars there are people, their life and wellbeing.

Who told it – Li or I thought aloud? That minute I could not realize it. I looked at Li. His face frowned. He nervously squeezed lips and several times pressed the same button. But she, probably, did not act. I looked in a periscope and saw that our tanks stand on one site as paralyzed, and enemy strenuously exterminate them.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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