



Gennadiy Loginov

The Tower of Hanoi



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Loginov G.

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Sometimes, you cannot upset the hosts by being late for dinner, and moreover — your absence may please them. Especially if you weren't invited, even if you ran at full speed. What is left to do in this case? Upon finding yourself in a crowd of lonely entities.

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*Creativity is that marvelous capacity to grasp mutually distinct realities
and draw a spark from their juxtaposition.*

Max Ernst

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“The King is dead, long live the King!” this news spread around the country instantly, plunging the people into shock. In principle, that didn’t surprise anybody, because there had never been a monarchy in these parts since time immemorial.

However, at least one citizen did not share the general mood that day: at this time, Valdemar was hurrying for dinner, and the latest news did not interest him much. Something else caused his anxiety: he was at least ten minutes late. And his parents were depressed when Valdemar arrived home late. However, they were basically depressed that Valdemar came to their house.

Crossing the black brick road, he climbed the stairs and pressed the doorbell. After a short time, he heard footsteps from behind the door, then a conductor appeared on the threshold. He was wearing a workers navy dressing gown with an employee badge, and invited Valdemar to go inside and take an empty seat in the passenger armchair near the fireplace. Thanking him, Valdemar handed the serviceman his gloves, a cane and a cylinder, which had ticket number “1XV34II” stamped on its underside.

Shutting the door, the conductor took a final look into the peephole and rang the doorbell from his side. The trolleybus building slowly made a turn of 180°, moving from Dali Square to Magritte Avenue. Having slowed down for a while, it gave way to a spacious street passing by, with red brick houses and hungry enveloping smoke which rose from their exhaust pipes. A multicoloured flock of paper pigeons flew in the smoky-humid sky over the sleeping city.

Following them with his eyes, Valdemar sighed: his delay today was due to the sundial, which he had forgotten to turn ahead yesterday.

Sometimes, looking at the sky, Valdemar was afraid that one day he might stumble and fall upwards, into this vast starry abyss, not having time to grab onto something in this flight – a balcony, a lightning rod or even a weather vane, at worst. Falling is very simple – it’s enough only to relinquish the hold of feet on the ground. Probably.

Taking the latest issue of yesterday’s newspaper left by someone, the man decided to pass the time by solving another crossword puzzle: in the end, now he just had to sit and wait...

Nevertheless, a mere trifle captivated his attention completely: having guessed the next diagonal word, Valdemar suddenly realized that he had missed dinner completely while the building was making one more circle. Irritably tearing up and crumpling the paper, he vengefully threw it into the maw of an insatiable flame. Then Valdemar immediately jumped up from his seat and started to go around in circles, gaining momentum. As a result of all this gloomy, but vigorous walking, he left his footprints on the walls and ceiling, to the great discontent of the conductor. But there was no need to rush anymore, so Valdemar retrieved the newspaper from the flame, put out the fire, flattened the crumpled sheet, glued the pieces together and placed the paper back in its original location.

However, there was also a positive side of all this: as now he definitely wasn't late anywhere. Valdemar stopped leaving tracks, gathered his belongings and, bidding a fond farewell to the serviceman, went out onto Magritte Avenue. In the middle of the street, not far from the stairs leading into space, the majestic Monument to a Man towered. It was not dedicated to any particular person but was a monument to man in general. It had no nameplate, signature or official title, but his size was truly immense.

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